

## Vietnam and Japan boost agricultural cooperation

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On August 20, Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Tran Thanh Nam and Japanese Vice Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Maitachi Shouji reached an agreement in Tokyo.

Minister Nam briefed on Vietnam's pilot project of 1 million hectares of high-quality, low-emission rice in the Mekong Delta, and said Vietnam is in dire need of resources to support capacity building for cooperatives and farmer households. He then proposed that Japan coordinate efforts in implementing capacity building programmes for cooperatives engaging in the project, especially in digitalizing chain management, monitoring and evaluation for emission reduction.

Minister Shouji for his part appreciated Vietnam's initiative and said Japan will help improve capacity building for cooperatives and farmers involved in agricultural extension, first and foremost to implement the pilot project, and then in standard raw material areas being developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. He expressed interest in supporting and creating conditions for competent agencies such as the Japanese Embassy in Vietnam, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and Japan's non-governmental organizations to support Vietnamese training facilities in this regard.

According to the vice minister, the agricultural extension service is the basic foundation to help transfer science and technology advancement, train farmers and cooperatives to change production models, and access science - technology markets.

The two sides also sought to create conditions for Japanese and Vietnamese businesses to carry out joint cooperation projects in the fields of organic agriculture, digital technology in agriculture, logistics, and agro- forestry and fishery trading.

Nam proposed that the Japanese side encourage its businesses to cooperate with Vietnamese businesses to invest in organic farming and digitalization in agriculture. He also requested that the Japanese delegates to speed up the process of approving a document allowing Vietnamese pomelo to enter its market, while considering risk and pest assessment for passion fruit and butter from Vietnamese cow milk.

Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has also directed its relevant agencies to soon complete procedures for Japanese grapes to be imported into the Vietnamese market, while considering documents for Japanese peaches and puffer fish to enter the market.

The two sides are expected to sign the medium- and long-term vision of Vietnam - Japan agricultural cooperation for 2025 - 2029 in the first quarter of 2025. They are expected to continue to open markets for each other's agricultural products, and take advantage of free trade agreements of which both sides are members, to increase trade exchanges.

Japan is currently one of Vietnam's important agricultural, forestry and fishery export markets, accounting for about 7.5% of Vietnam's total annual agro-forestry and fishery export turnover.