Farmers’ Perception of Sustainability Issues of Agricultural Development:
A Field Level Study in Japan
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The scientists and policy makers think about the issue of sustainability in agricultural development from their own background and research experiences. Sometimes there remain gaps in thinking compared to the realities of field conditions. While the farmers have their practical experience of years together and have seen changes in the sequential development in agriculture. Considering these important matters, farmers’ perception of field level issues of sustainable agriculture has been considered as the central theme of this study. However, the study additionally investigated about farmers’ felt needs in achieving sustainability and also explored relationships between 20 selected characteristics of the farmers and their perception.

To secure data, 60 farm family heads (20 of each of small, medium and large farm size holders) were interviewed from Osa village of Shobara city of Hiroshima prefecture in Japan. Besides other descriptive statistics, Chi-square test was conducted to assess the difference among the farmers of three different categories in respect to their individual characteristics and perception. Additionally, Cramer’s ‘V’ was calculated based on Chi-square values. Correlation coefficient (r) was computed (P<0.05) to explore relationship 20 twenty selected individual characteristics of the farmers and their perception.

It seems to be encouraging that farmers in the study area perceived the sustainability issues of agricultural development in a favorable way. Chi-square value shows that there is no significant difference between the perception levels of different categories of the farm holdings. The ‘r’ values show that farmers’ planning orientation, status of land ownership and irrigation potentiality were positively and only attitude towards use of agrochemicals was negatively correlated (significantly) to their perception. In response to the opinions of the farmers, it is thought that chemical input intensive farming may be shifted gradually towards low input or organic farming which may reduce environmental degradation to a great extent. Finally, study argues that community based and technical information in achieving sustainable agriculture needs to be provided to the farmers through different ventures of concerned organizations.