



Working with Stakeholders to Build a Sustainable Future

The Ajinomoto Group seeks to contribute to society through its businesses and understands how important stakeholder communication is. The Group actively pursues input, studies it and incorporates it into business activities as appropriate. The Group highly values stakeholder engagement, believing that the global issues the world now faces can only be resolved when all stakeholders act together.

Dialogue with sustainability expert Lester R. Brown

What needs to be done to resolve sustainability issues through business?

In February 2012, Ajinomoto Co., Inc. had the honor of a visit from Lester R. Brown, one of the world's leading experts on food and the environment. Brown offered a range of suggestions regarding the action that the Ajinomoto Group can and should take as a corporation with global business operations in the fields of food and health.

Extensive knowledge of food and amino acids helps solve social issues

Chieko Ishijima: The Ajinomoto Group views global sustainability, food resources, and healthy lifestyles as the most challenging issues facing humanity in the 21st century. We believe that the technologies related to food, nutrition, and amino acids that we have developed over many years can be helpful in trying to solve these problems. Human activity is rapidly becoming a burden on the planet, and food and national security are being threatened. We are eager to hear your opinion on how the Ajinomoto Group can and should try to make a difference through its global

food business.

Lester R. Brown: As I look at the world today, I see two nutrition problems: one is a lifestyle characterized by a lack of sufficient exercise and an excessive intake of

calories, and the second is under-nutrition, people not getting the nutrients needed for a healthy lifestyle. Interestingly, the number of people affected by these two problems are roughly the same—1 to 1.5 billion people in each category. So, anything that can help with these problems is a major act. Amino acid fortification is an important part of food relief. The Ajinomoto Group is ideally positioned to advance public thinking on the importance of this issue to help people in positions of responsibility in governments and international assistance agencies to understand amino acid fortification and its importance in food aid projects. One way to accomplish this would be research on amino acid intake among populations around the world to identify the amino acids of which people are not getting enough.

Ishijima: Using amino acids to address the problem of nutrition has been one of the Ajinomoto Group's missions since its founding, and we are actively working on it still. Amino acids are one of the building blocks of life itself. We believe that, with our extensive understanding and proper application of amino acids, we can continue to provide new technologies that will help not only with nutrition for humankind, but support all life on Earth.

Brown: The Ajinomoto Group talks about the importance of ecosystems, and that is certainly important for agriculture and food production. We see very clearly that we are overusing Earth's natural systems. We are over-pumping aquifers, over-plowing land, destroying forests, overfishing, eroding the land,



Chieko Ishijima
General Manager,
Environment & Safety
Department,
Ajinomoto Co., Inc.

We are now faced with saving not just the natural environment, but saving civilization itself. We are going to have to begin, as individuals and as corporations, to engage the big issues in a major way if we are to win this battle.



Lester R. Brown

Founder and president of the Earth Policy Institute. Born in New Jersey in 1934, Brown graduated from Rutgers University, earned a master's degree in agriculture and public administration from Harvard University, and served as director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service. He coined the groundbreaking term "environmentally sustainable development" some 30 years ago and was dubbed by the *Washington Post* to be "one of the most influential thinkers in the world." His latest book, *World on the Edge: How to Prevent Environmental and Economic Collapse*, has also been published in Japanese by Diamond Inc.

and discharging carbon into the atmosphere. All of these things are undermining our economic future.

We used to talk about saving the planet, but we are now faced with saving civilization itself. We cannot afford to lose this battle. We are not going to save civilization unless we as individuals and as corporations take a strong stance on solving these issues on a global scale and push our governments to do so.

Ishijima: We pride ourselves on the fact that, as a company closely connected with the daily lives of people, we can help to transform food cultures into something more sustainable. We have the technology and expertise to do this. We hope to make a contribution as part of the greater social system by sharing this know-how across the planet.

Readdressing how individuals and corporations tackle global problems

Brown: It sounds to me as though the Ajinomoto Group is taking some very good steps—in Thailand, for example, using boilers that burn rice straw as fuel to effectively use the by-products that the company generates. But what I have not heard anything about is the extent to which the Group has a policy of developing solar or geothermal or wind or other renewable energy for its own operations. I have not heard any references to a corporate policy of becoming carbon neutral, for example. I would suggest that the Group's stance on this sort of an effort and the details of how it will develop in this area need to be made clear.

Ishijima: You are absolutely correct. Having gone through the Great East Japan Earthquake and ensuing nuclear accident,

Japan is now at a major turning point with regard to the way the country uses energy. What message do you have for us on this point?

Brown: What happened in Fukushima has changed energy policies in countries all over the world. When we think about what might happen on the climate front, we must fundamentally re-think our future. We are clearly seeing more and more extreme climate events like hurricanes, flooding, and tidal waves recently that are causing major damage around the world. Things are changing, and the question is, "How do we respond to these changes? How do we translate this into energy policy?" We must rethink these issues.

Ishijima: Thank you very much for your suggestions. You bring such a wealth of knowledge to the subject and play such an active role in so many areas. You are having such an impact on the future, and at the Ajinomoto Group we hope to do the same through our business activities.

Brown: It has been fun meeting with a company that is even older than I am. I am pleased to see the Ajinomoto Group incorporating a basic understanding of the environment into its day-to-day operations. We have to ask ourselves what is our role as individuals and as companies like the Ajinomoto Group in changing the perception and understanding of global issues. How do we change things at the global level?

What can we do at the corporate level to change world climate policy? This is the true question for our generation. I am pleased to have had the opportunity to talk about these issues today.

Dialogue with CSR expert Malini Mehra (March 2012)

Highlights

The optimal approach to sustainability for global corporations operating in new emerging economies

In addition to supplying products designed to support sustainability, global corporations must help with efforts to transform consumer attitudes and behavior. Collaboration with NPOs is critical to these efforts. Corporations must also be clear about the outcomes that they expect from such collaboration.

The Ajinomoto Group's business and human rights

Nutritional improvement and food security are critical and basic human rights issues that are directly linked to the business of the Ajinomoto Group.

Malini Mehra

An Indian national, Malini Mehra, founder and CEO of the Centre for Social Markets an NPO in India, has worked on sustainability and human rights issues across the world as a campaigner, educator, writer, strategist and policy maker for more than 25 years. Presently she advises major corporations such as Unilever, Kimberly-Clark and BHP Billiton, and serves on the board of directors of the Global Reporting Initiative and Chinadialogue.net. She has worked in the United Nations, including as an adviser to the Secretary-General on UN-civil society relations, and was the architect of the United Kingdom government's Sustainable Development Dialogues with China, India, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa.



Involving All Stakeholders in Discussion on Sustainability

The Ajinomoto Group believes that a sustainable future can only be achieved in collaboration with all members of society. The Group highly prioritizes dialogue on how to build the most desirable future. To encourage this type of communication, the Group creates a variety of opportunities for dialogue about what every one of us can do.

Discussions on a Sustainable Future

First Ajinomoto Group Sustainability Forum

March 6, 2012 at the Ajinomoto Group Takanawa Training Center

The Ajinomoto Group held its first Ajinomoto Group Sustainability Forum to provide a venue for discussing issues of sustainability and exploring the idea of a sustainable future. Some 300 participants, mostly members of the general public, came together to consider the relationship between the planet and life and discuss the sort of actions that begin at the dinner table that can support this relationship. The second forum was held in December 2012 at Eco-Products 2012.



Keynote Address

From Carbon to Nitrogen—The Age of Dynamic Equilibrium between People and the Planet



Shin-Ichi Fukuoka
Biologist

Citing the latest research, Shin-Ichi Fukuoka spoke about “dynamic equilibrium,” defining it like this: “The cells in any living organism are constantly being replaced. On a material level, the ‘me’ of yesterday and the ‘me’ of today are different, but I still continue to be myself. Life is dynamic, and yet it is constantly in balance.” Expanding, Fukuoka remarked, “Life, the environment, and nature are all continuously rejuvenated in pursuit of equilibrium. On a material level, carbon gets the attention, as demonstrated by the focus on carbon dioxide emissions. But we overlook the nitrogen cycle. Nitrogen is an essential component of protein, and the global balance of it is collapsing. We need to restore the nitrogen cycle in order to restore the dynamic equilibrium of the planet as a whole.”

Panel Discussion

My Lifestyle within the Global Cycle—On a Sustainable Future That Starts at the Dinner Table

The five-member panel facilitated by TV presenter and news anchor Mitsuyo Kusano reexamined the relationship between food, lifestyles and the planet. The discussion incorporated audience members’ hopes and desires with regard to the future of food, which were submitted in advance, as well as the panelists’ views on what individuals can do to protect life for the future.



Mitsuyo Kusano
TV presenter and news anchor



Manabu Akaike
President, Universal Design Intelligence, Inc.

With the democratization of information through social media, blogs, and other channels, a trend is emerging where individuals plan and act on their own for a sustainable order. This is likely to push the world toward a more autonomous social order. Passing through this phase, we are expected to enter a new one of naturalized societies into which natural systems have been integrated. Consumers will need to change their purchasing styles, as well. We should contribute to the creation of viable business models by actively investing in positive initiatives.



Aiko Yamauchi
Marine Programme Fishery Officer, World Wide Fund for Nature Japan

Once upon a time, sustainable use of the planet’s resources was the norm, but modern lifestyles mean that we are borrowing half of the resources we use from future generations. Fisheries in particular are increasing their stock, and fish breeding is impacting the environment. Consumer behavior is equally important. When purchasing fish, consumers need to choose seasonal catches, know the origin of the fish or the fishery, and buy only the amount of fish they need and at a reasonable price. We need to think about whether the seafood we buy is actually sustainable.



Yoko Maki
Director, Environment Bureau, City of Kawasaki

In the 1950s and 60s, Kawasaki was a city of considerable pollution. In the ensuing years, environmental technologies developed, and both residents and businesses worked hard to address the oil crisis, waste, and other problems. Today, Kawasaki seeks to be a leader in the environment and life sciences. The city has a number of power plants fueled by renewable energy, has set up recycling displays and venues for companies to present their CSR activities, and promotes eco-cooking among residents. All of these initiatives emphasize ecological practices in a modern, industrialized city.



Chieko Ishijima
General Manager, Environment & Safety Department, Ajinomoto Co., Inc.

A food manufacturer’s business depends on agriculture, livestock farming, and fisheries. We must consider the sustainability of society and the planet while minimizing our impact on the environment. This cannot be accomplished with a single-minded focus on business. At the Ajinomoto Group, we consult with consumers in providing guidance on how to select environmentally friendly products. We think an ecological lifestyle starts at the dinner table. We hope to involve everyone in a virtuous cycle.

Suggestions for ecological lifestyle

Eco-Products 2011

December 15–17, 2011 at Tokyo Big Sight

The Eco-Products 2011 exhibition is the largest environmental expo in Japan, attracting more than 180,000 visitors over three days. The Ajinomoto Group set up a booth featuring its eco-products. The booth also introduced ideas for an ecological lifestyle that begins at the dinner table, encouraging visitors to take part in the fun with quizzes and food samples.



Dialogue with investors

Ajinomoto Group ESG Small Group Meeting

July 5, 2012, Tokyo

The Ajinomoto Group held an Environment, Social, Governance (ESG) Small Group Meeting for investors. Following a presentation on the Group's approach to sustainability, the 12 invited investors and analysts took part in a lively discussion on a range of topics that included business and food resources in newly emerging economies.



International cooperation events

Global Festa Japan 2011

October 1–2, 2011 in Hibiya Park, Tokyo

The largest international cooperation event in Japan, Global Festa Japan, features some 300 participating groups. Ajinomoto Co., Inc. featured panels in its booth introducing its initiatives around the world and participated in workshops and panel discussions. The company outlined its Ghana Nutrition Improvement Project and other international cooperation projects, as well as the support that it has provided the recovery efforts in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake. The event was a good opportunity to engage in dynamic discussions with a variety of stakeholders interested in international cooperation, including NGOs, UN agencies, and students.



More than 1,000 people visited the booth, and the discussions were lively.



The panel discussion featured the AIN program, a corporate effort involving international cooperation.



Workshop presentation with CARE International Japan and Plan Japan on the project in Ghana

Participating in international discussions

Japan Pavilion at Rio+20

June 13–24, 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The Japan Pavilion at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) was developed in close cooperation between the public and private sectors to address the theme, "Japan's Green Innovation: Power of Recovery and Kizuna with the World." As a global food company originating in Japan, the Ajinomoto Group was one of the exhibitors at the pavilion. The Group's booth focused on discussions of sustainability, as well as tips on food resource sustainability around the world and the sustainable use of natural capital.



Visitors from around the world asked questions and offered their impressions of the Group's products and activities.

