



## Nippon Restaurant Enterprise Co., Ltd Recycling Resources, Growing Vegetables

The Tomobe Recycling Farm grows organic vegetables using compost made with organic waste from JR East trains, stations, and stores. It has been a long road, but a lot of effort combined with trial and error has transformed this rocky field into a land of rich harvests.

It was in June 1998 when Nobuyoshi Shibuya, who was then working in a JR East dining car, first set foot on this land that was originally a railway yard. Squeezed between the outbound and inbound tracks of the JR Joban Line, the drainage was terrible. "Can this really be transformed into a farm?" "Is it really possible to grow anything here?" Mr. Shibuya, who at the time had no experience with farming, had many doubts.

But through great perseverance, employees from Nippon Restaurant Enterprise Co. (NRE) and from its farming subsidiary, Nisshoku Estate, reclaimed the land. By September, after three months of continuous effort to collect stones, tires, and railroad ties, the plot had transformed into what looked more like a farm.

This Tomobe Recycling Farm was born from NRE's strong principles on food safety. NRE started its move to

emphasize product quality more than eight years ago, with initiatives to ensure the soundness of food production. This is a project that started with the ideas of "acquiring growing techniques for organic vegetables," and "using resources wisely."

Agriculture is a struggle with nature. After opening the farm, the work was even more difficult. The fertilizer is made by adding about 40 kg of cooking oil waste and a bit of water to each ton of compost from organic waste. This method uses no chemical fertilizers and no pesticides, but because the plants easily attract insects and disease, it takes three times as much effort to grow things. Weeds grow wild, and even after spending two weeks clearing weeds, they soon start to take over the land once more. It is also necessary to clear away stones on a regular basis. Last year, the farm was flooded by a big typhoon. Those involved have learned all about the difficulties of farming.

There is a constant repetition of hardship and failure. That is why the satisfaction at harvest time is so great. "What makes me the happiest is when someone who eats this food tells me it's delicious," says Mr. Shibuya, beaming with pride. Vegetables that are good for nature and the body also have a great taste.

The crops planted here include spinach, Chinese cabbage, *chingensai*, green onions, crown daisy, potherb mustard, mini-tomatoes, cucumbers, cabbage, *daikon* radishes, onions, potatoes, eggplant, and taro and red potatoes. The variety is great, from leafy vegetables to root crops. "It's just like raising kids, you can't grow good vegetables unless you're constantly involved," he says. On the 30,000 square-meter plot, fresh vegetables are awaiting harvest today.



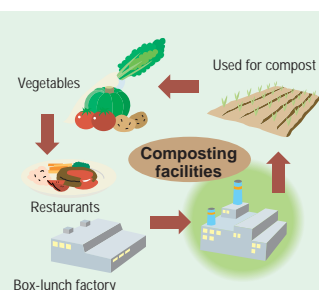
### Nobuyoshi Shibuya

Manager,  
Tomobe Recycling Farm  
Nippon Restaurant Enterprise Co., Ltd.

"I never imagined I would ever get involved in farming. But today my purpose in life is to use my hands and grow vegetables."



The Tomobe Farm's vegetables are being used at NRE's noodle shops. Organic waste from the shop goes back as nutrients to grow more food.



Composting started at the Kita-Toda headquarters in September 1998. Since April 2001, the NRE Food Recycling Center has collected all food leftovers, organic waste and uneaten food from NRE restaurants, the Yayoi Kaikan and JR Tokyo and Ueno Stations (including leftovers from *bento* lunch boxes separated from non-organic waste) for use at the Tomobe Farm, JA Yasato and contracted farmers. The vegetables that are grown then become food ingredients for bento, employee cafeterias, and station restaurants, etc. In fiscal 2004, 1,053 tons of organic waste were composted.



Staff include six persons (three employees from Nisshoku Estate, on loan from NRE, and three local housewives). Main harvests in fiscal 2004 included onions (27 tons), cabbage (3 tons), *daikon* radish (13 tons), and potatoes (10 tons). The plot's area is 27,725 square meters. There are plans to increase this to 33,725 square meters.