

Hokkaido Shizen Energy and Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine collaborate on carbon neutrality and sustainable development in Tokachi



On August 20, 2024, Hokkaido Shizen Energy Inc. (Hokkaido Shizen Energy) and Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine signed a collaboration agreement to conduct proof of concept (PoC) and research of agrivoltaic farming with the aim of achieving carbon neutrality and contributing to sustainable development of the agricultural and livestock industry of the Tokachi region of Hokkaido.

Background and Objective of the Collaboration

The Tokachi region is one of Japan's leading agricultural areas, with vast fertile farmland where vegetables are cultivated with heavy machinery, and it also has the highest number of cattle (for milk and beef) in Hokkaido, making it an important food base for Japan. On the other hand, it faces major challenges for a sustainable agriculture and livestock industry, such as a shortage of successors, a lack of human resources, and pressure on business operations caused by recent price surges in fertilizer and fuel prices due to unstable international conditions.

In the Tokachi region, the Tokachi Subprefecture is leading a unique regional effort to achieve "Zero Carbon Hokkaido," a goal of virtually eliminating greenhouse gas emissions in Hokkaido prefecture by 2050. As agriculture is the core industry in the Tokachi region, there are many biogas power generation facilities that convert cow manure into thermal electricity. In addition, while it has the most sunlight hours in Hokkaido, the amount of annual rainfall and snowfall tends to be lower, making it suitable for solar power generation. As a result, the region has a very high potential for the implementation of renewable energy.

To take advantage of the characteristics of this region, Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine and Hokkaido Shizen Energy have decided to collaborate as the leading hub in Japan. Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, whose mission is to "contribute to regional and international societies by training individuals who have skills in sustainable agriculture to protect our food resources," practices education and research aimed at solving global issues from the forefront of the agriculture and livestock industry. Through the PoC of agrivoltaic farming, both parties aim to contribute to the realization of carbon neutrality and sustainable development of the region by promoting the social implementation of agricultural practices for the next generation.

Hokkaido Shizen Energy was established in March 2024 as a local company rooted in Hokkaido with the aim of enhancing regional vitality in Hokkaido by developing renewable energy development projects that coexist with the local community and providing comprehensive decarbonization solutions to customers and partners, including local governments and the local business community, as well as the agricultural and livestock industry and academic institutions.

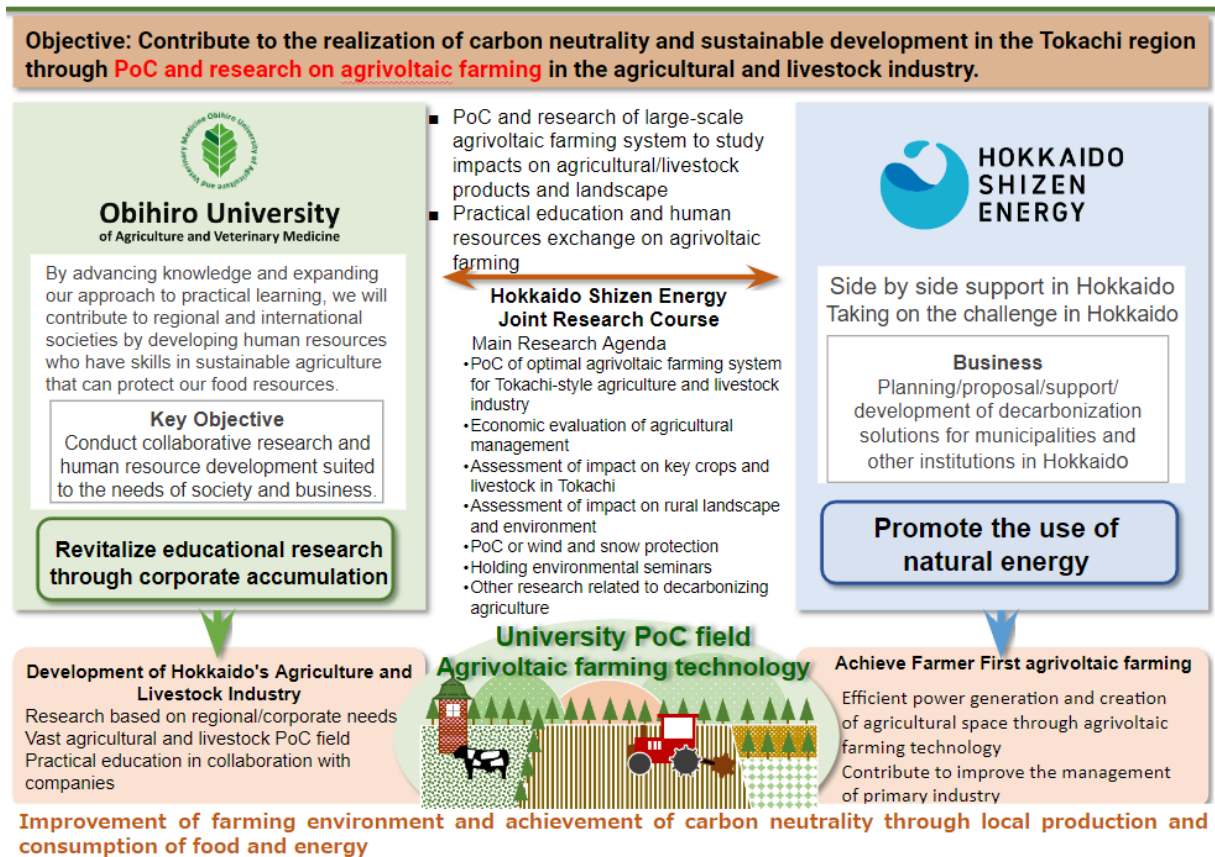
Currently, in the field of agriculture and livestock, Hokkaido Shizen Energy is conducting PoC and research in collaboration with Rakuno Gakuen University to explore the possibility of coexistence between renewable energy and agriculture using vertical solar power generation equipment. In addition, the company is developing projects in other regions of Hokkaido to stabilize the management for agricultural and livestock producers and achieve decarbonization through the coexistence of renewable energy and agriculture.

Collaboration and cooperation items under this agreement and future plans

1. Matters concerning the promotion of joint research and dissemination of research results
2. Matters concerning the implementation of education
3. Matters concerning the transmission of information, etc.
4. Other matters that may be required upon mutual consultation

Specifically, the two parties are considering the establishment of a joint research course under this agreement, as well as the PoC of large-scale agrivoltaic farming using vertical solar power generation equipment.

Figure 1 Collaboration image



Hokkaido Shizen Energy's vision is to create Hokkaido's future with the community through renewable energy while protecting Hokkaido's remarkable nature. Hokkaido Shizen Energy will work with the community to promote a sustainable decarbonized society and envision Hokkaido's future through decarbonization.

Hokkaido Shizen Energy Inc.

Established in March 2024. In Hokkaido, where diverse energy sources such as solar power, wind power, biomass, and geothermal energy are abundant and further introduction of renewable energy is expected, the company aims to promote local decarbonization as well as contribute to local economic development, including the agriculture and livestock industry.

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