

IRSA - CONGRESSO MUNDIAL DE SOCIOLOGIA RURAL (01/10/2025 A
20/01/2026) - IRSA 34 - DIVERSE TRANSITIONS OF FARMING AND
PEASANTRIES

**BEYOND LOSS AND PRESERVATION: PLACE-BASED AGRIFOOD
KNOWLEDGE AS A LIVING PRACTICE IN RURAL JAPAN**

Nami Yamamoto (nm_yamamoto@meiji-u.ac.jp)

This paper examines place-based agrifood knowledge as a living practice, focusing on how it is engaged with and reworked by incomers in rural Japan under contemporary social conditions. Such knowledge has long been a key component of sustaining livelihoods in rural communities. It is shaped through the interaction of agriculture grounded in ecological cycles and everyday food and community practices, including preservation and cooking, reciprocal sharing, and seasonal agrifood rituals. Historically, this knowledge has supported household and community-level food security and rural sustainability.

However, under postwar agri-food modernization, these locally embedded food and agriculture practices and the knowledge came to be undervalued within policy frameworks. While often reduced to symbolic representations of food culture, the significance of this knowledge in connecting everyday practices, ecological cycles, and food security was largely overlooked. In this context, this knowledge remained outside institutional recognition and was maintained

primarily by women within gendered divisions of labor. As these knowledge holders age, many such practices, along with their knowledge, now face the risk of disappearing.

Recent debates on food and agricultural sustainability and research on traditional ecological knowledge have highlighted the importance of food practices, ecological relations, and livelihoods, yet have focused largely on migrants, Indigenous peoples, and the Global South. Consequently, there remains limited understanding of how locally embedded agricultural knowledge in rural contexts of industrialized societies is reinterpreted under conditions of agricultural and food modernization.

Addressing this gap, this paper draws on case studies in rural Kyoto to examine how lifestyle-oriented incomers engage in farming grounded in ecological cycles and related food practices. Through farming, preserving, sharing, and eating, they rework place-based agricultural knowledge under value frameworks different from those centered on profitability and efficiency, enabling locally embedded food and agriculture knowledge to find renewed forms of continuity through contemporary urban experiences and values.

Palavras-chave: place-based agrifood knowledge; foodways; rural sustainability; incomers; rural japan.