

2. History of dairy farming and milk

■ the origin of the cattle domestication

Estimating from the numbers of ruins, the first animals human has kept for the purpose of milk would have been probably goats and sheep which were mild in temper, available in big numbers and with higher milk production yield.

The Aurochs (ancestral to cattle) having been domesticated in the Neolithic eras (6000-7000 BC) was said to be the origin of the livestock cattle. Also the drawing on the slate of the time was found as an evidence of Mesopotamians using milk already in 4000 BC.

Milk drinking habit was thought to have spread through two routes, one with Aryans towards India through Middle East, and the other with Germanic people towards Northern Europe through Central Europe.



■ The origin of dairy farming in Japan

In Japan, bones of domesticated cattle were discovered from the ruins of Yayoi era 400 BC. The cattle which were kept in Japan at that time were thought to have been brought by the travellers from Asia where mainly in China cattle were domesticated.

Milk was introduced to Japan in Asuka era. According to the records from early Heian era, Fukujo who had become Japanese after traveling from Kudara (South Korea) has presented processed milk "So" to the Emperor Kotoku (644-654). The Emperor was very pleased and gave him the surname "Yamatokusurinoomi" and the job title "Chichiosanokami". After this event, Nyugyuin (the Department of dairy cows) was established in the capital, and milk produced there was presented to the Imperial Court.

In Japanese, the word "Daigomi" is used to express deep flavour and real pleasure. "Daigo" was the name given to the premium dairy product in ancient times, which was meant the best of 5 tastes in Buddhism. In the dictionaries of Heian era, "Raku" was explained to have been produced by boiling milk, and "So" was made of "Raku" and became "Daigo" and "Nyubei". "So" was thought to have been condensed milk and "Daigo" and "Nyubei" were probably cheese. Those days, milk and cheese were mainly consumed by aristocrats, but this habit has eventually disappeared as livestock consumption became prohibited with the influence of Buddhism.

Modern dairy farming was known to have originated from three white cows imported by Yoshimune Tokugawa, 8th Shogun of Tokugara in 1727 (Kyoho 12, Edo era) which were bred in Mineoka farm of Awanogo (Chiba pref. present).



"Hakugyuraku" which was made with milk produced there by adding sugar, boiling and drying was treated very important as medicine and nutritious food, but milk was still for people of high ranks.

■ Extension of milk and change of diet

Milk became a drink for the common people only in Meiji era after the westernisation. In 1863 Mr. Tomekichi Maeda studied the technique of milking and treatment from the Dutch man Mr. Pero, and he started the first Japanese milk processing and retail business in Yokohama. Meiji government promoted the nutritious value of milk as dairy farming was considered as one way of developing Hollaido.

The popularization of milk was accelerated during Sino-Japanese War and Russo-Japanese War, because injured soldiers drank milk as a nutrient.

In the beginning, milk was sold out of sodden barrels by measures such as a scoop. Eventually milk was sold in tin cans and in glass bottles and became widespread.

During the post war period with shortage of food, potatoes and vegetables were main diet. This weight has gradually shifted towards beans and animal foods such as dairy products, eggs and meat. As a result, dietary pattern and the balance of nutrition got better providing full energy. School lunch has started at primary schools around this time. School lunch with milk, bread, margarine and 1 or 2 side dishes can be said as the first step towards westernised diet.

During the period of rapid economic growth which lasted nearly 20 years from 1955, intake of European and American style food products such as milk, butter, cheese, meat and eggs has increased. With more and more food being imported, market was flooded with diversified and internationalized food, and Japanese dietary habit was quickly being matured.

From 1970 when quantity and quality of food was getting satisfied, Japan hit the time of so-called satiation, and consumption of dairy and meat products grew fast by drawing an upward steep curve.

Also at this time, the changes in eating style were noticed, and European and American style restaurants such as family restaurants and hamburger shops were expanded in the national scale. We can eat any food at any time in anywhere, but health disorders such as obesity and high blood pressure and adult diseases among young people are becoming a big concern.