



Niigata Award



In Memory of Sano Touzaburo

Niigata International Food Award

THE SEARCH FOR FOOD INNOVATORS CREATING A BETTER LIFE

9th

Guidelines for Candidate Recommendation

Secretariat of the Niigata International Food Award Foundation

Niigata City Office Furumachi Annex 6F

1010 Furumachidori 7-bancho, Chuo-ku, Niigata-shi, Niigata-ken, 951-8063 JAPAN

URL : <https://www.niigata-award.jp/en/> E-mail: info@niigata-award.jp

※The "Niigata International Award for Food" is carried out with a subsidy from Niigata Prefecture and Niigata City.



In Memory of Sano Touzaburo Niigata International Food Award 9th Guidelines for Candidate Recommendation

The Award

1. Theme : "Food & Life"

The theme of 9th Niigata International Food Award : "Toward Food Security and Sustainable Food Production and Supply"

2. Goal : "THE SEARCH FOR FOOD INNOVATORS CREATING A BETTER LIFE."

3. Purpose

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations have warned that the world is facing a global food crisis. This is due to factors such as the pandemic, the invasion of Ukraine and other conflicts, significant climate change, as well as the sharp rise in energy, fertilizer, and feed prices. According to the WFP, approximately 828 million people are currently suffering from hunger.

Furthermore, the United Nations has set the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the year 2030 as a target. One of these goals is to achieve "Zero Hunger," which strives to eradicate world hunger.

In recent years, innovative methods and technologies in the field of food technology and agriculture technology (FoodTech and AgTech) have been developed and implemented to enhance food production and supply. Cross-industry collaboration and cooperation are bringing about significant transformations.

The "Niigata International Food Award" recognizes individuals and activities that have significantly contributed to improving the quantity and quality of food, promoting health, welfare, and peace for people around the world. This award was established to contribute to solving and improving global food challenges by honoring those who make notable contributions.

About Niigata

Since long ago, the city of Niigata has produced strong agriculture and food industries and is widely known as a major rice and other food production center in Japan. It is a rural city that integrates food production, distribution, dietary culture, food research, food education and other food-related human activities.

Who is Sano Touzaburo

Historically, farmers in Niigata had no other choice but to struggle with water and mud as they grew rice in the lowland paddies with water sometimes rising almost up to their waist.

Mr. Sano Touzaburo, President of the Kamedagou Land Improvement District in Niigata city (1923 - 1994) took on the challenge of changing the harsh working environment and turned the area into a solid food production base by converting the muddy paddies into beautiful rice fields to grow the best rice in Japan. In addition, he contributed extensively to community and regional development by strengthening the link between the rural and urban areas in the region.

Mr. Sano was also one of the pioneers in Japan's international cooperation in agriculture. He applied his experiences in Kamedagou to improve the infrastructure for food production increase in the Sanjiang Plain, Heilongjiang Province in China.

The Sano Touzaburo Memorial Niigata International Food Award is so named in remembrance of Mr. Sano and many other forefathers who established the reputation of Niigata as a major "home of foods" in this country and in the hope that many more Sano's will emerge on the international agricultural scene.

In 2024, in recognition of his achievements, Mr. Sano was awarded the title of Niigata City Honorary Citizen.

Instructions for nomination (to replace "Screening Rule" , "Eligibility" and "Considerations.")

1. Judgment criteria

- (1) Whether or not the nominated activity is international, regional or individual in scope and the achievements are novel and creative in nature.
- (2) This award is not meant to pass judgment and praise the academic value of a study. Rather, the focus is on new discoveries or development activities that are long-term and sustainable and are expected to help make people's lives better and leave a strong impact on the rest of the world.
- (3) That the activity has a potential for the future, even though it may not be very well known or not fully accomplished at this point.

2.Niigata International Food Award: Outline of the prizes Areas of research/activity

1) Production and supply, 2) Food and health, 3) Food and education

Some examples

- 1) Food Processing (Food Processing, Inventions and Innovations, Food Preservation)
- 2) Increased Food Production (Innovative Breeding, Technologies, Cultivation Practices, Land Improvement, Irrigation, and Flood Control)
- 3) Improvement and Development of Food Distribution
- 4) Food Safety and Food Enhancement (Food Safety and School Meals)
- 5) Health Promotion through Functional Foods (Food Functionality, Nutrition, and Disease Prevention)
- 6) Addressing and Approaching the Issue of Food Loss and Food Waste
- 7) Food and Agriculture Education (Educational Models, Food Education Activities, Food Culture, Promotion of Traditional Cuisine)
- 8) International Collaboration and Support Activities in the Food Sector
- 9) Sustainable Conservation and Assurance of Food Resources (Aquaculture, Cultivation, Nature Conservation, Environmental Protection, and Fisheries Resource Management)



- (1) **Grand Prix** One winner: Diploma and trophy with a cash prize of 10 million yen

(The cash prize will be split if there are two or more winners.)

The prize will be awarded to an individual/organization whose research and activities are highly evaluated globally and significantly contribute to the problem solving and development of food in the world.

- (2) **Sano Touzaburo Special Prize** One winner: Diploma and trophy with a cash prize of 1 million yen

The prize will be awarded to an individual/organization whose research and international (whether global or regional) cooperation or assistance efforts have resulted in significant achievements.

- (3) **The 21st Century Hope Prize**

One winner:

Diploma and trophy with a cash prize of 1 million yen

The prize will be awarded to an individual/organization whose research and practical activities have the potential and feasibility for contributing on a global scale and are extremely likely to develop and produce positive results in the future.

The “Springen” Trophy



The trophy received by the winners of the past four awards is titled “Springen,” a creation by Prof. Ryohei Miyata, an internationally-renowned metal craft artist (Ex-currently Commissioner, Agency for Cultural Affairs of the Government of Japan, Ex-President of Tokyo University of the Arts). The theme of this masterpiece is “Leap and Hope.”

Two dolphins jump courageously in the air to move forward into the future.

* No winners may be found for any prize categories.

3. Eligibility

- (1) The nominee may be of any nationality, gender or creed. The deceased may not be nominated.
- (2) Achievements made by a person or a group of persons in the service of a government agency will not be considered for the award, unless the achievements of the individual or group in question went above and beyond their basic responsibilities at the government agency.
- (3) No person or group may be nominated who has won an internationally renowned award such as the Nobel Prize, World Food Prize, Japan Prize and Kyoto Prize.

4. Selection and decision

The 9th Niigata International Food Award Screening Committee chaired by Professor Emeritus Hideaki Karaki will select the candidates for the award and the Board of Directors of Niigata International Food Award Foundation (NIFAF) will decide the final winners.

5. Award ceremony

The award ceremony will take place in Niigata City, Japan in November 2026.

6. Nomination procedures

- (1) **Nomination period:** **Monday, September 1, 2025 through Friday, December 26, 2025**
Nominations must be received by the final day of the nomination period (Japan Standard Time)
- (2) **Number of nominees:** Up to 3 nominees may be named for each of the prize categories. One group counts as one nominated person for this purpose.
- (3) **Nomination form:** The NIFAF Nomination Form must be filled in using either English or Japanese language.
- (4) **Multiple nominations:** An individual or group may be nominated for more than one prize category at the same time.
- (5) **Previous nominations:** Nominations made in the past and not selected will be accepted.
- (6) **Self-nomination:** One may nominate him/herself or his/her group for the award.
- (7) **Confidentiality:**
 - 1) Nomination information will be kept confidential.
 - 2) However, nomination information for the 21st Century Hope Prize may be disclosed for the purpose of promoting joint research with a firm or organization or of facilitating commercialization, so that the nominated research will be commercialized or otherwise put into practical use at an early opportunity.
- (8) **Nomination documents:** As a general rule, nomination documents submitted will not be returned.
- (9) **Nomination submission:** **Please send your nomination documents either electronically or by post.**
Any supporting materials may be sent by CD, DVD or other electronic medium.
- (10) **To be sent to:** E-mail: info@niigata-award.jp
Mailing address: Niigata International Food Award Foundation Secretariat
Niigata City Office Furumachi Annex 6F
1010 Furumachidohri 7ban-cho, Chuo-ku Niigata-shi, Niigata-ken 951-8063 JAPAN
- (11) **Website:** <https://www.niigata-award.jp/en/>
The nomination form can be downloaded from this website.
- (12) **Others:** Submission of additional information and/or materials may be requested in the course of the selection.



■ The 1st “Niigata International Food Award” Laureates



Main Prize:Dr. Monty Patrick Jones : Sierra Leone Executive director of Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa / **Sano Touzaburo Special Prize:**Prof. Yuan Long Ping : China Chief director of China National Hybrid Rice Research & Development Center / **21st Century Hope Prize:**Dr. FUJIMORI Fumihiro : Japan Associate Professor of Domestic Science Dept. Tokyo Kasei University

■ The 2nd “Niigata International Food Award” Laureates



Main Prize:Ms. Josette Sheeran : USA Ex-Executive Director of World Food Program / **Sano Touzaburo Special Prize:**Prof. UMEBAYASHI Masanao : Japan Professor Emeritus of Mie University / **21st Century Hope Prize:**Mr. Nnaemeka C. Ikegwounu : Nigeria Executive Director of Small Holders Foundation

■ The 3rd “Niigata International Food Award” Laureates



Main Prize:Mr. TSUBOI Tatsushi : Japan National Crops Resource Research Institute (Uganda) JICA Expert / Senior Adviser for Rice Farming Technology) / **Sano Touzaburo Special Prize:**Dr. C.L.Laxmipathi Gowda : India International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) Deputy Director for General-Research / **21st Century Hope Prize:**Dr. NAKATA Hiroyuki : Japan Applied Biological Chemistry Department, Agriculture Faculty, Niigata University

■ The 4th “Niigata International Food Award” Laureates



Main Prize:Dr. IWANAGA Masaru : Japan Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS), Former Director General, International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) / **Sano Touzaburo Special Prize:**Dr. MASUMOTO Takao : Japan Director, Division of Regional Resources Engineering Institute for Rural Engineering National Agriculture and Food Research Organization (NARO) / **Sano Touzaburo Special Prize:**Dr. Marcy Nicole Wilder : USA Senior Research Scientist Fisheries Division Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences / **21st Century Hope Prize:**Dr. UGA Yusaku : Japan Principal researcher, Breeding Material Development Unit, Division of Basic Research, Institute of Crop Science, National Agriculture and Food Research Organization

■ The 5th “Niigata International Food Award” Laureates



Grand Prix:Dr. ARAI Soichi : Japan: Guest Professor, General Research Institute, Tokyo University of Agriculture, Adviser, Group for Food Functionality Assessment, Kanagawa Institute of Industrial Science and Technology (KISTEC) / **Grand Prix:**Dr. Jeyakumar Henry : United Kingdom Director, Clinical Nutrition Research Centre, Singapore Institute for Clinical Science Professor, Department of Biochemistry, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore / **Sano Touzaburo Special Prize:**Mr. MURATA Yoshihiro : Japan Chairman, Japanese Culinary Academy / President, KIKUNOI CO.,LTD. / Chairman, ALL JAPAN FOOD ASSOCIATION / **21st Century Hope Prize:**Dr. MAENO Kotaro : Japan Researcher, Crop, Livestock and Environment Division, Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences(JIRCAS)

■ The 6th “Niigata International Food Award” Laureates



Grand Prix:Mr. NAKAMURA Tetsu/ Peshawar-kai / PMS(Peace (Japan)Medical Services) : Japan NAKAMURA Tetsu MR. : Representative of Peshawar-kai in Afghanistan / Executive Director of PMS / **Sano Touzaburo Special Prize:**Dr. OTSUBO Kenichi : Japan Fellow, Institute of Science and Technology, Niigata University / Professor for Research, Niigata University of Pharmacy and Applied Life Sciences / **21st Century Hope Prize:**Dr. YANO Hiroyuki : Japan Unit Leader, Food Resource Utilization Unit, Division of Food Processing and Distribution Research, Food Research Institute, National Agriculture and Food Research Organization (NARO) / **Prize for Bright Future of Niigata:**Mr. EGAWA Kazunori : Japan Principal, Egawa Professional Engineer Office (Technical Discipline: Agriculture / Former-Director of Niigata Agricultural Research Institute Food Research Center)

■ The 7th “Niigata International Food Award” Laureates



Grand Prix:Dr. José Graziano da Silva : Brazil, Italy Former Director-General UN FAO / Director General of the Zero Hunger Instituto (Instituto Fome Zero) / **Grand Prix:**Dr. NAKAMURA Teiji : Japan President of Kanagawa University of Human Services / President of The Japan Dietetic Association / **Sano Touzaburo Special Prize:**Mr. NAKAYAMA Teruya : Japan Kitac Corporation Chairman and executive director / **21st Century Hope Prize:**Dr. SAITO Kazuki : Japan Africa Rice Center Principal scientist / **Prize for Bright Future of Niigata:**Dr. ITO Yoshiomi : Japan SnowBiz,Inc. CEO

■ The 8th “Niigata International Food Award” Laureates



Grand Prix:Dr. Guntur Venkata Subbarao : India Senior Researcher, Crop, Livestock and Environment Division, Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS) / **Grand Prix:**Ms. Kate Kelland : United Kingdom Chief Scientific Writer at the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) / Former Global Health and Science Correspondent at Reuters / **Sano Touzaburo Special Prize:**Dr. HATCHO Nobumasa : Japan President, Agricultural Development Consultants Association / Professor Emeritus Kindai University / **The 21st Century hope Prize:**Dr. BEPPU Shigeru : Japan Deputy Chairman and Director of the Japan Disaster Food Society / **Prize for Bright Future of Niigata:**Ms. ARAYA Rieko : Japan Agricultural Produce Ritz Co., Ltd. President and CEO / **Prize for Bright Future of Niigata:**Dr. MITSUI Toshiaki : Japan National University Corporation Niigata University, Institute for Social Innovation and Cooperation・Professor

The titles of the award recipients are those held at the time of the award.