

New Zealand Scientists Visit the University of Shizuoka

On July 2nd 2008, three distinguished scientists from New Zealand visited the University of Shizuoka for an exchange of views about research in functional food. New Zealand is a country in which functional food is an active area of research, and members of the country's research community have expressed an interest in carrying out collaborative research with universities and other institutions in Japan. The New Zealand researchers that visited the University of Shizuoka were Dr. Paul Moughan, Director of Riddet Institute, Massey University; Dr. Margot Skinner, Science Leader of Functional Food & Health, HortResearch; and Dr. Julian Heyes, Science Group Manager of Fresh Whole Foods, Crop & Food Research. After a meeting with Dr. Masaru Nishigaki, President of University of Shizuoka, several seminars were held.

In Seminar 1, Dr. Heyes gave a lecture entitled "Whole, fresh and functional: a New Zealand perspective on vegetables and human health", Dr. Skinner presented on "HortResearch-science discovering the goodness of fruit", and Dr. Moughan introduced "The Riddet Institute – advancing knowledge in foods and biologicals". Over forty people, including Global COE program members, faculty, and graduate students participated in the seminar. Afterwards, the scientists visited the laboratories at Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences.



In the afternoon, Seminars 2 and 3 were held, in which four members of the University of Shizuoka Global COE program talked about the program's four main research projects. In Seminar 2, Dr. Hiroshi Oshima of the Laboratory of Biochemistry lectured on "The search for new biomarkers and the development of methods for evaluating the safety of food and medicine", and Dr. Toshinao Goda of the Laboratory of Nutritional Physiology talked on "Applications of biomarkers predicting subnormal metabolic/health status towards personalized nutrition/drug usage". In Seminar 3, Dr. Shizuo Yamada of the Laboratory of Pharmacokinetics and Pharmacodynamics talked about the "Elucidation of the mechanisms of drug-functional food interactions and database construction", and Dr. Yasuyuki Imai of the Laboratory of Microbiology and Immunology discussed the "Development of functional food and effective use of undeveloped resources after food processing". After that, the scientists from New Zealand visited the laboratories of the Graduate School of Nutritional and Environmental Sciences.



An informal meeting to facilitate further discussion was held in the evening. It was attended by twenty people, including the three New Zealand scientists and two other guests, Global COE program leader Dr. Naohide Kinae, and professors from the

University of Shizuoka.

The organizer of the exchange, Dr. Tsutomu Nakayama of the Graduate School of Nutritional and Environmental Sciences, would like to thank the three distinguished researchers for visiting the university, and would also like to thank the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology for arranging preparatory meetings between the two countries.

Comments received from the New Zealand scientists:

We have received comments from the New Zealand scientists stating that, as there are many scientists at the University of Shizuoka conducting research closely related to their own fields of investigation, they would like to strengthen the relationship that has been established with these researchers, and would like to actively promote exchange with the university.

(Written by Tetsuji Yamakawa, Satoko Nakai, and Philip Hawke)