

[FY2025 edition]

## Best Practices on Acceptance of Specified Skilled Workers in the Agricultural Field

### Shiramizu Farm Co., Ltd.

- After 6 years of planned management and discussions between both sides, increasing the number of specified skilled workers to 20, and that of specified skilled workers (ii) to 3 –

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| <p><b>Basic information</b></p> <p>Location: Yaese-cho, Shimajiri-gun, Okinawa Prefecture<br/>Shiramizu Farm Co., Ltd. (100 years have passed, and it has been a company since 2018)<br/>Cultivated crops: Mainly small chrysanthemums in fall and winter (80%), okra, etc., in spring and summer (20%); Small chrysanthemums: about 3 million<br/>Cultivated area: 12 ha (open field)<br/>Employee composition: 1 Japanese (clerical management) + 20 specified skilled workers (all Indonesians)<br/>Specified skilled worker (ii): 3 workers ⇒ 3 persons who have passed the exam (one person's status of residence was also changed)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |
| <p><b>Characteristic initiatives (improving work efficiency and creating a comfortable work environment)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Based on planned management efforts, work efficiency and sales were improved, and the number of specified skilled workers increased accordingly.</li><li>(2) Personnel allocation was reviewed flexibly through labor-management discussions. Two specified skilled workers were selected as leaders to create a work environment that fosters independence</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                    |
| <p><b><u>1. Six years of management efforts and talks have increased the number of foreign workers</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Concept and specific measures of what kind of efforts have been made over the past six years<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) When we learned about the establishment of the Specified Skilled Worker System, we were among the first to start accepting specified skilled workers.<br/>Since we hired them, we have informed them that we wanted them to “think ahead and work,” and currently we have selected two long-experienced specified skilled workers as leaders. We have a system in place to convey the instructions from the company representative in both Japanese and their native languages to improve operational efficiency.</li><li>2) In response to the request from specified skilled workers, we prepared a schedule table that everyone can check. We feel that the specified skilled workers are now able to judge the gap between busy times and off-times, and are able to set priorities for work. In addition, we have permitted long-term temporary homecoming (2 to 6 months) for getting married, trying to</li></ul></li></ul> |                                                                                    |

conceive, etc., based on discussions so that specified skilled workers can voluntarily decide the period and number of those who leave for their temporary homecoming.

- 3) In addition to the leaders, we have come to see workers who can take responsibility for the management of tillers and sorting machines, and we feel that they have developed a sense of autonomy. We have also accepted requests from specified skilled workers, and have improved the structure and number of workers of the team, so we believe their work environment is favorable.
  - 4) We have been thinking about “how to make the work environment comfortable” in the eyes of employers all the time, and as a result, the number of specified skilled workers who would like to work in our company has increased. Thanks to the long-term engagement of specified skilled workers, we have been able to build a stable production system, and sales have increased by about 2.6 times compared with 6 years ago. The expansion of business scale has also led to an increase in the number of specified skilled workers.
- (2) Increasing the basic salary by 100 yen per hour above the minimum wage, and reflecting the work performance in the bonus instead of using a salary increase system based on evaluation
    - 1) Regarding personnel evaluation, there were many opinions that “everyone is working hard” and “I don’t want that system.” We do not conduct personnel evaluations on individuals because we feel that the evaluation of colleagues who are familiar with each other may cause division in the workplace and that it is better for everyone to be in a state of being highly evaluated.
    - 2) They sometimes perform beyond the expectations of the management, and we feel that creating an environment that is comfortable to work in is more beneficial, so we give preferential treatment to those who have worked for many years in the form of bonuses, such as an addition based on years of service. Leaders are selected by the management in consideration of the level of trust in their work and the level of understanding of Japanese, and they receive a managerial allowance.
    - 3) The idea that the work is reflected in hourly wages and that reasonable wages are paid for working hours matches the sense of specified skilled workers well, so we set the hourly wage at about 100 yen above the minimum wage to provide more than the minimum wage.

## **2. Career advancement, etc., of specified skilled workers**

- (1) The management encourages workers to take and pass the exam for Specified Skilled Worker (ii) by providing a cash reward for those who have passed the exam. As the number of experienced employees increases, it becomes easier to provide instruction, so we welcome specified skilled workers (ii).

Specified skilled workers (ii) can be accompanied by family members, so it seems to be difficult to provide the same treatment to specified skilled workers (i). In the future, if a family member of a specified skilled worker (ii) comes along, we will support them while talking to them as needed.
- (2) When foreign workers take the exam for Specified Skilled Worker (ii), they will definitely need support from their employers. We support specified

skilled workers by checking together matters they are not familiar with. As a result, there are currently three workers who have passed the exam.

- (3) We are considering preparing our own dormitory in the future to make the environment even better. We plan to listen to the opinions of specified skilled workers and give consideration to making the dormitory a facility that suits their culture, too.
- (4) By creating a comfortable working environment for specified skilled workers, we can employ many employees, and we have heard that many Indonesians would like to work in our company. There are also those who wish to work in our company again after they retire and return to their home countries.

**\*Interviews with foreign workers**

**(Mr. Suriana with the specified skilled worker (ii) status)**



**(Mr. Dewa with the specified skilled worker (i) status (who passed the exam for Specified Skilled Worker (ii) and is a person in charge of work))**



**(1) Why do you work in Japan?**

**Suriana:** There are not many jobs back home. Japan is also a clean and safe country. I had been working for 3 years as a technical intern trainee and have worked for 7 years as a specified skilled worker in Japan.

**Dewa:** I helped my parents with farming in my home country, and then became a technical intern trainee in Ibaraki Prefecture. My income in Japan is much higher compared to Indonesia, so I am working to save money.

**(2) Tell us about your work. Is it comfortable to work in your workplace, and what makes it worthwhile?**

**Suriana:** Cultivating chrysanthemums and working with okra can be difficult at times, but I am now used to making mulch and operating machines (tailors) and enjoy my work.

**Dewa:** Right now, we are preparing for chrysanthemum cultivation, and

harvesting will be from late November to May. In terms of cultivation management and work, I give instructions as a person in charge of work.

**(3) Is there anything you pay particular attention to at work?**

Suriana: I wear work clothes with fans, especially during the hot summer season. I am also trying to change my driver's license to a Japanese one, but it is quite difficult.

Dewa: Yes. Especially during summer, it can be hot and tough, so I pay attention even at work. Work clothes are equipped with fans, and I give instructions for what the next work will be. I give instructions in Japanese and Balinese to avoid misunderstandings.

**(4) How is your residence? Do you interact with local residents?**

Suriana: It is very good. I also talk to the elderly lady next to my residence about greetings and cultural differences between the two countries.

Dewa: There are many Japanese people living in the apartment, but we greet them properly. We also participate in events such as local river cleanups.

**(5) Why did you decide to acquire the specified skilled worker (ii) status?**

Suriana: I don't know about 10 years from now, but in the future, I want to bring my family and work for a long time.

Dewa: I'm 31 years old, but I want to work for a long time, even after I get married.

**(6) What kind of efforts did you make to pass the exam for Specified Skilled Worker (ii)?**

Suriana: I studied using online textbooks and other materials for two hours every day for two months. Some words, such as technical terms, were difficult, so I passed the exam on my third try at the 5th year, which is the limit for the length of visa for specified skilled workers (i).

Dewa: It was difficult, but I came to understand it after watching Japanese videos, too.

**(7) As a specified skilled worker (ii), how long do you work and how do you think about the future?**

Suriana: Because I want to work for a long time. Other people who work here also say that they want to get the specified skilled worker (ii) status and work for a long time.

Dewa: I would like to work like my parents and be a CEO of a company in agriculture in my home country.

**(8) What are your future goals, and the future plan in your home country?**

Suriana: My child is just 1 year old, but in the future, I would like to bring my family and work in Japan for a long time. The annual income from agriculture in Bali is about 600,000 yen, but I would like to have my own business by expanding the scale.

Dewa: I am not married yet, but I would like to marry my girlfriend in my home country and work in Japan for a long time.