

Professor Misato Norimoto won both Japan Prize of Agriculture, and Yomiuri Prize of Agriculture

The Japan Prize of Agricultural Science in fiscal year 2005 was awarded to Professor Emeritus Misato Norimoto. The Yomiuri Prize of Agriculture was also given at the same time.

The Japan Prize of Agricultural Science was established in 1925 and is widely recognized as the most authoritative prize in the field of agriculture. The winner is selected from candidates nominated from the membership of forty eight related academic societies in the field of agriculture.

Professor Norimoto has made a distinguished contribution in the field of wood science, and the prize was given to a series of his work for “Construction of a model which relates physical properties of wood to its structure, and its application.” Wood is viewed as a key material for supporting a sustainable society in the near future. However, due to the complicated composite structures at various scales from molecular to ordinary use levels, the studies of wood physics in each level remain disconnected with each other. Consequently, the physical processing techniques of wood have been so far like putting a temporary patch over each problem. In spite of this trend, Professor Norimoto systematically elucidated relationships between wood structure and its physical properties at a wide variety of levels, and proposed a simplified model for connecting them. He further developed a novel technique for transforming low density, low strength wood, such as sugi, to high strength and durable material by controlling moisture, heat and pressure. These techniques were based on his study of wood structure and physical properties mentioned above. The pioneering work of Professor Norimoto could form the basis of a new field in wood science working towards a sustainable society.