

Aioi

## Sweet, refreshing, confidence in taste

Yano Melons will be available in stores from the 29th



Yano Melons at the beginning of the harvest (Kamidoi, Yano-cho, Aioi City)

The harvest of "Yano Melons", a specialty product of Yano Town in Aioi City has begun. The fresh sweetness and juicy flesh of the fruit are attractive, as the temperature reaches 40 degrees Celsius in the greenhouses during the day and the farmers who have worked hard will hand-cut each melon from the vines. From the 29th, the melons will be sold at produce shops run by JA Hyogo Nishi, as well as at the roadside rest area Michi no Eki Aioi Peironjo (Roadside Rest Station) and other farmer's direct shops in Aioi City. Seven farmers belonging to the "JA Hyogo Nishi Yano Melon Committee" grow the melons, and approximately 4,500 melons are shipped annually. Each farmer is responsible for sowing the seeds, cultivating, harvesting and shipping, and from this year

onwards, the name of the farmer and date of the best time to eat are listed on each melon. Hide-nori Kamaji (age 62), the head of the club said proudly "We can do this because we are confident in our abilities." Mr. Kamaji grows about 900 plants in four vinyl greenhouses. His wife, Miyuki (age 56), works hard managing the greenhouses in the extreme heat to ensure that the leaves are not infected with disease. "If you take your eyes off of them for even a moment, the disease will spread in the blink of an eye. From morning to night, it's harder than raising children" laughs the mother who has raised three children.

Featured in the morning edition of the Kobe Shimbun on July 26th, 2019.

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Depending on the size, each melon ranges in price from ¥ 520 to ¥ 1,620.  
JA Hyogo Nishi West Harima Agricultural Life Center  
TEL 0791-52-2224 (Daisuke Ito)

Sayo

Tranquil sight of Koinobori (carp streamers) in rice terraces Okidani  
Rape blossom fields too are already decorated Fukusawa

Carp streamers swaying in a field of rape and cherry blossoms in full bloom (Fukusawa, Sayo-cho)



Koinobori fluttering in the rice terraces (Okidani, Sayo-cho)

Before the Boys' Festival on May 5, red and green Koinobori are being raised in the Ekawa area in Sayo. They are waving merrily over the rice terraces and rapeseed fields in the valley to the delight of people passing by.

Since about four years ago, Koinobori that have not been used anymore have been collected and as May approaches they are hung up. In the Otsuokidani area, which is listed among "Japan's top 100 rice terraces", about 20 Koinobori are hung across the valley on a 100 meter wire. There they can be seen

fluttering in the wind against the majestic backdrop of the rice terraces.

In Fukusawa, part of the same town, Koinobori of about 7 meters length is swaying in a field of rape and cherry blossoms in full bloom. Masateru Kimura (age 75), a local resident says: "These are very difficult times with the COVID-19 pandemic but maybe the beautiful scenery of the Ekawa area will cheer you up".

Originally, Koinobori were enough to hang them across the Ekawa river which flows through this area. But the

donated Koinobori suffered a lot of damage over the years and now there are only four. And even those four are on the verge of breaking around the mouth with which they are tied to the pole. Kimura urges people to donate any Koinobori that are not in use anymore. His telephone number is 0790-84-0192.

In both areas, Koinobori will be hanging there until the end of May. (Mika Katsuura)

Featured in the morning edition of the Kobe Shimbun on April 12th, 2020.

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Ako

## Ako City Tourism Campaign

Young Women's Road Trip PR  
Popular 2-minute Video



#女子旅 #赤穂 #グルメ  
女子旅 in 赤穂市 兵庫県 (1日目) Ako City, Japan - 2020 Winter travel -

A scene from the video "Hokaru Ako" (Courtesy of Ako Tourism Association)

Ako City and the Ako Tourism Association are running a tourism campaign "Hokaru Ako" to promote young women's travel by driving to Ako for an overnight stay. Two young women traveling together posted a 2-minute video on YouTube of their enjoyment of Ako Hot Springs, local specialty oysters, stylish cafes and other "Instagram worthy" spots. It has been viewed more than 658,000 times. In order to attract women in their 20's and 30's who do not know much about Ako, the city commissioned the Tourism Association to develop a campaign making use of a national government subsidy to promote regional development. The project was awarded to Nishinippon Shimbun Media Lab through an open bidding proposal process.

"Hokaru" is a coined word meaning "to feel pleasantly warm". In mid-January, two women were filmed while enjoyably spending their holidays at Ako Castle ruins, Misaki, Sakoshi and so on. Drone shots were taken at Iwatsuhime Shrine in Misaki and Myoukenji Kannondo in Sakoshi, with scenes from the sky inserted into the footage. Satoshi Yasuda, Director of Ako Tourism Association, said "Young people who visit Ako can post their photos on the members-only social network site (SNS) which will create a PR ripple effect. Please experience the charm of Ako where you can relax before the Seto Inland Sea." (Masaru Sakamoto)

Featured in the morning edition of the Kobe Shimbun on May 28th, 2020.

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