

For Immediate Release

Sumitomo Forestry Co., Ltd

Lawn production business at disaster areas along the coast
Commencing “Kibo no Shiba (Lawn of Hope)” Project in
Higashimatsushima City, Miyagi Prefecture

Changing affected lots into green pieces of land

Sumitomo Forestry Co., Ltd. (President and Representative Director: Akira Ichikawa; Headquarters: Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo; hereafter “Sumitomo Forestry”) and its affiliate Sumitomo Forestry Landscaping Co., Ltd. (President and Representative Director: Kanpei Tokunaga; Headquarters: Nakano-ku, Tokyo; wholly-owned subsidiary of Sumitomo Forestry; hereafter “Sumitomo Forestry Landscaping”), together with Miyagi Prefecture’s Higashimatsushima City (Mayor: Hideo Abe), Tomita Trading Co., Ltd. (President: Yasuji Tomita; Headquarters: Tsukuba City, Ibaraki Prefecture), Yotsuba Farm (President: Koutaro Atami; Headquarters: Higashimatsushima City) and others, announced the commencement of the “Kibo no Shiba (Lawn of Hope)” Project.



The project aims to effectively use land¹ along the coast that were devastated by *tsunami* during the Great East Japan Earthquake, giving them a new lease of life by changing them into production sites for lawn. Sumitomo Forestry Group is responsible for the project in areas such as planning and proposition, soil investigation at the production sites, provision of technical knowledge for growing of lawn, grant of production rights to its original lawn, and purchasing and sales.

¹ These are damaged housing lots bought by municipalities under the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism’s policy to promote collective relocation for disaster prevention.

The plan is to produce lawn that can grow even on soil damaged by seawater, using two of Sumitomo Forestry’s original varieties: “Winter field” which has been proven to be tolerant to salt, and “Avison field” which has excellent initial growth compared to normal grass and is tolerant to dry weather.



Weeding by volunteers

Experimental planting in the affected lots along the coast commenced in April 2015, and weeding was carried out in July by volunteers made up of employees from the related companies. The announcement was made following the confirmation that the lawn is growing well. Experimental planting was carried out in an area of approximately 2,500 m², and may be extended to 10,000 m² if the lawn continues to grow well. Delivery is expected to commence in autumn 2016.

Background

Sumitomo Forestry conducted soil investigation aimed at the effective use of affected lots, and found that salt from the *tsunami* still remained in the soil, with possible impact on vegetation growth. In addition, the affected lots are scattered along the coast, and it was difficult to generate ideas for putting them to effective use, as few of them are of sizes that can be put to better use. In February 2015, anticipating the prospect that its original lawn can grow even on land damaged by seawater, Sumitomo Forestry Group submitted a proposal to Higashimatsushima City to produce its original lawn on the affected lots.

Regarding the decision to carry out the project

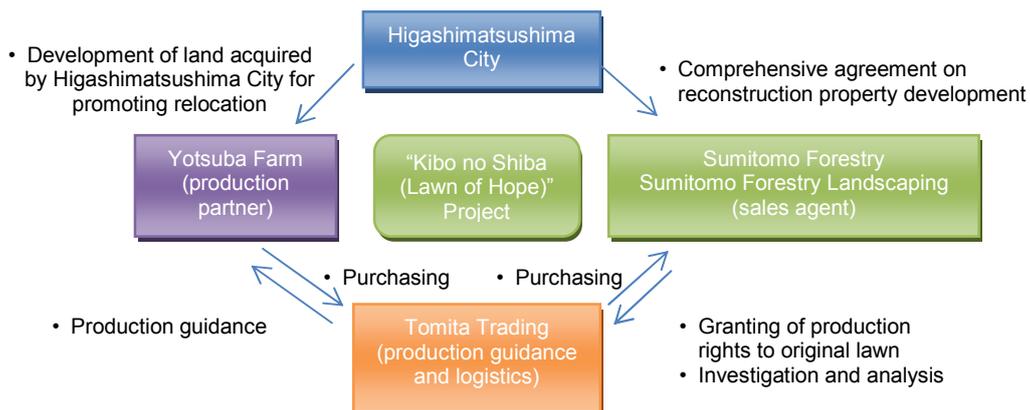
Market competitiveness as a new agricultural product is expected as there are few lawn production areas in the Tohoku area. It can be grown on land without irrigation facilities. Little effort is required for production, and as the harvest period does not overlap with other agricultural products, it can be a new product for existing farmers. With reasons such as a certain demand from all over Japan, it was decided to carry out this project.

This project is the first case in Higashimatsushima City where affected lots are used as industrial land, and it is hoped that by working with local companies, employment opportunities can be generated and the landscape of the affected lots can be improved.

In April 2014, Sumitomo Forestry established the Forest and Landscape Research Center as a central agency to apply the Group's total strength in businesses related to trees and greenery. As the center has already been supporting restoration in the disaster area working with trees and landscaping, the planning for this project was carried out by the center. There is great meaning in putting the affected lots, which are difficult to use, to good use, and also being able to contribute to creating a new industry.

Sumitomo Forestry Group will continue to work as one to support the restoration of the Tohoku region.

■ Relationship diagram of project participants' roles



■ Overview of experimental planting

Planting location	Ushiami, Higashimatsushima City, Miyagi Prefecture
Planting area	2,500 m ² (may be expanded to 10,000 m ² depending on growth conditions)
Commencement of experimental planting	April 2015

■ Major activities and agencies

Lawn selection survey	Sumitomo Forestry, Sumitomo Forestry Landscaping
Coordination of agencies	Higashimatsushima City
Lawn cultivation	Sumitomo Forestry Landscaping, Tomita Trading, Yotsuba Farm

■ Type of lawn being planted—Sumitomo Forestry’s Original Variety
Winter Field

This variety is used in places such as parks, baseball and soccer fields. At the Sendai Seaside Park, while other plants withered after being damaged by seawater, “Winter field” continued to survive after the disaster, proving its high tolerance to salt.

Avison Field

A stable variety² of Japanese lawn developed by Chiba University and Sumitomo Forestry’s Tsukuba Research Institute through selective breeding.

Compared to the usual variety of Japanese lawn, this variety has excellent initial growth, is tolerant to dry weather, and does not grow overly tall. It is effective for low maintenance areas, such as rooftop gardens with low maintenance and cost, and parks that are infrequently tended to.

² A variety that has undergone generations of selective breeding in order to obtain stable characteristics.