



When the Tractor Breaks Down...

At Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine in Obihiro, Hokkaido, three training participants are learning how to fix, maintain and adapt common agricultural machinery and equipment. One training participant is carving a screw thread into a thin rod which he has stabilized in a vice. Dominic Kamau, from Kenya, is clearly engrossed in the task.

"It's very nice!"

Associate Professor Tadatashi Satow's exclamation



Dominic Kamau learns how to make a screw under the tutelage of Associate Professor Tadatoshi Satow at Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine.

BOTH PHOTOS: IMASATOSHI SAKAMOTO

ricultural machinery and equipment. Making screws is one of the basic skills they learn to this end. Studying alongside Kamau is another training participant from Kenya and one from Benin.

Kamau is working at the Agricultural Technology Development Center in Kenya, promoting the use of agricultural machinery and equipment. "Most of our agricultural machinery and equipment are from other countries, so we need to fix them to make them suitable for Kenyan soil," says Kamau. "On this course, I'm learning techniques and ideas to achieve this."

Kamau's parents work in agriculture, and Kamau himself has also helped out in the fields since his childhood. His feelings for agriculture are therefore strong.

"I try to talk directly with farmers and identify their problems in planting methods and farming machinery." Kamau says he feels particular joy when this helps him to resolve a problem.

"Agriculture is the backbone of Kenya's economy. When I return, I would like to take what I learned here and encourage the use of machinery in Kenyan agriculture. Once machines become common and improve production efficiency, it should increase farmers' incomes and improve their lives."

after seeing the finished screw causes Kamau's face to light up in a smile.

Kamau is taking part in a training program on agricultural techniques that JICA hosts for training participants from developing countries. Based at JICA Obihiro International Center, the course offered practical training, field trips, and lectures from January to March, 2011 designed to teach training participants the techniques needed to maintain and improve ag-



Dominic Kamau and fellow training participants learn how to operate a tractor.