

Discussion Meeting with the Consumer Affairs Agency (CAA)

# **Policy Recommendations for Resolving Purchasing Inequality and Promoting Ethical Consumption**

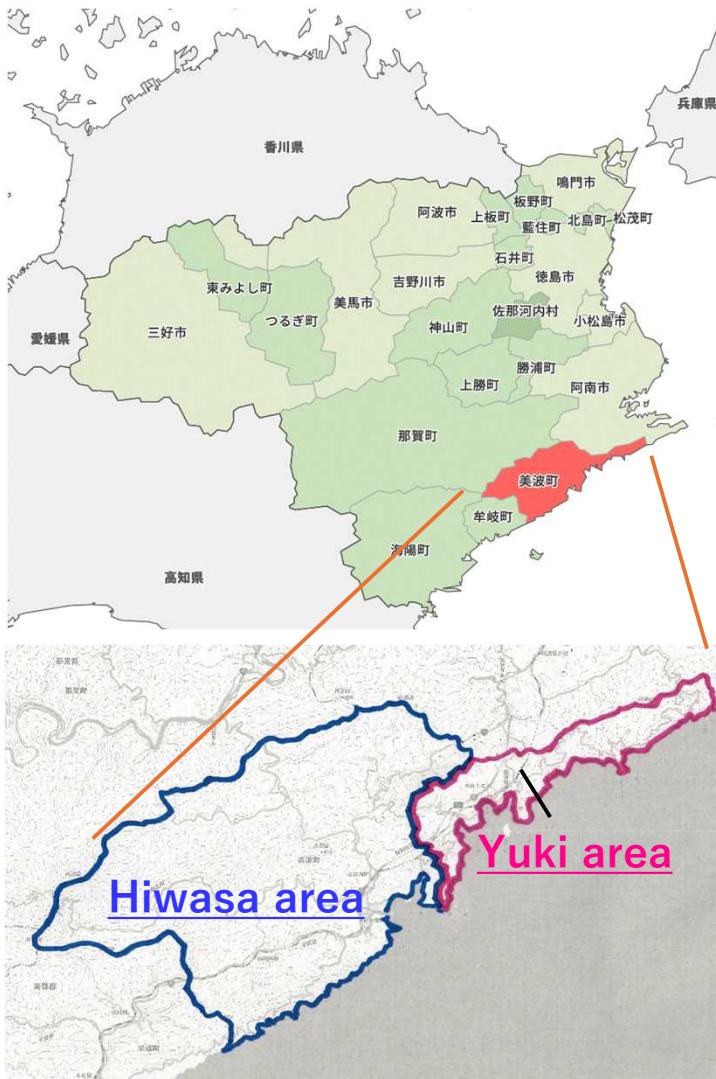
(Based on the Current State of Food Access in  
Minami Town, Tokushima Prefecture)

**For National Government, Local Authorities, and Businesses**

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# Natural Assets of Minami Town, Tokushima

## History and Geography



## Specialties and Tourism Resources



Ria Coastline Topography  
(Mountain and Sea)



Yakuoji Temple, (Major site for  
warding off misfortune)

## Key Primary Industries



Hiwasa Sea Turtle Museum



Coastal Fisheries



Roadside Stations as  
Industrial Distribution Hubs



Koriki Forestry for Charcoal  
Production

# Ethical Consumption and the Current State of Purchasing Inequality

## Ethical Consumption

- Ethical Consumption refers to consumer behavior that considers factors such as the environment, human rights, local economies, and welfare, etc.
- This concept addresses the issue of social inequality characterized by people who cannot afford to purchase goods or lack access to healthy food options
- Ethical consumption involves consideration for the entire food lifecycle (production, distribution, and consumption) and is therefore a consumer behavior that does not ignore people who have difficulty accessing food

## Social Background and Purchasing Inequality

- Declining birthrate and aging population
- Store closures and reduced transportation means in rural and mountainous areas
- About 8.24 million people nationwide were categorized as “shopping-disadvantaged” as of 2020 (METI)
- The rise of e-commerce widens the information gap for those who remain unfamiliar with digital technology

## Current State of Minami Town

- Population decline (Loss of 2,626 residents over 14 years) and rising aging rate (36.3% → 49.4%)
- Population predicted to halve by 2045
- Settlements scattered across mountainous areas and coastlines, lack of public transportation
- Many “transport-void areas” exist
- Weakening and decline of industrial foundations, including small retailers and primary sectors like fisheries

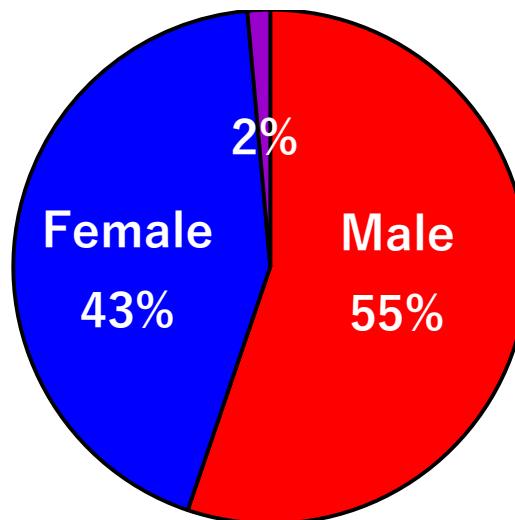
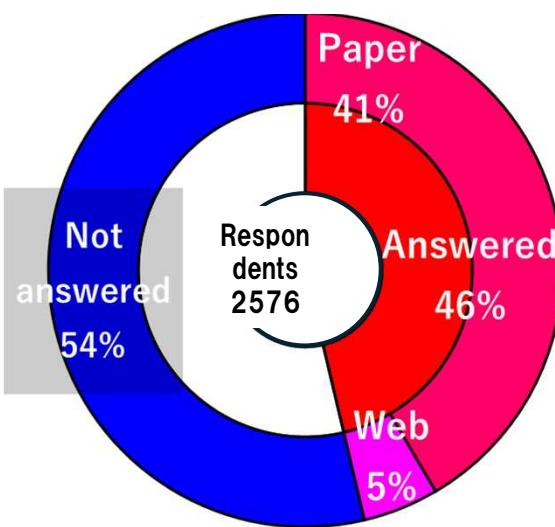
General Information	
Area	140.74km <sup>2</sup>
Population	5,653
Households	3,035
Male	2,663
Female	2,990

As of March 31, 2025

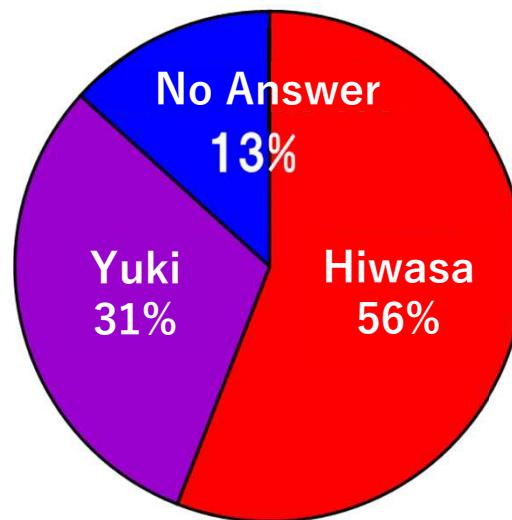
# Minami Town Resident Survey Results

Mailed to all households in Minami Town from the end of 12/2024 through the end of January 2025  
(Responses accepted until 03/15/2025)

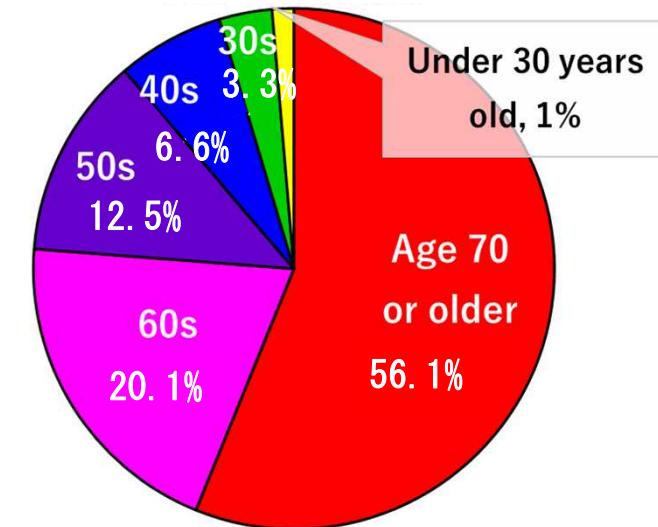
Resident Survey Response Rate



By Area



By Age



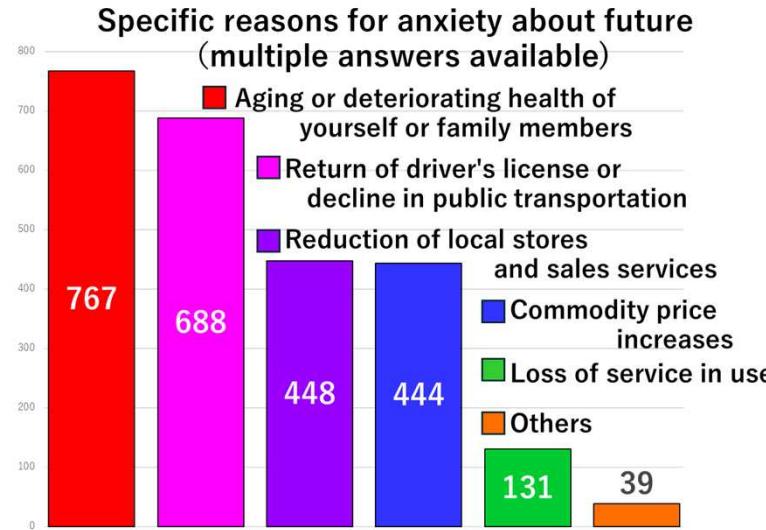
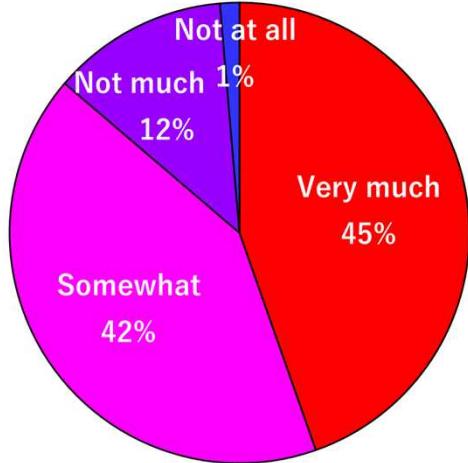
Valid response rate: 46%  
90% of responses were via paper  
⇒ Suggests lack of digital communication/adoption

Hiwasa and coastal areas saw higher response rates, which tend to have poor transportation access

More than 75% of the respondents were elderly, highlighting the aging population, where household heads are often seniors.

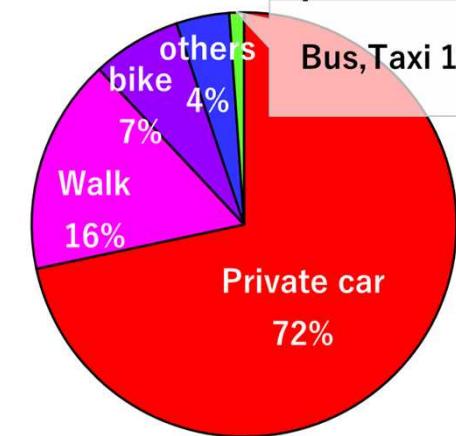
# Food Purchasing Anxiety and the Challenges for Ethical Consumption

## Reasons for Shopping Disadvantage Anxiety

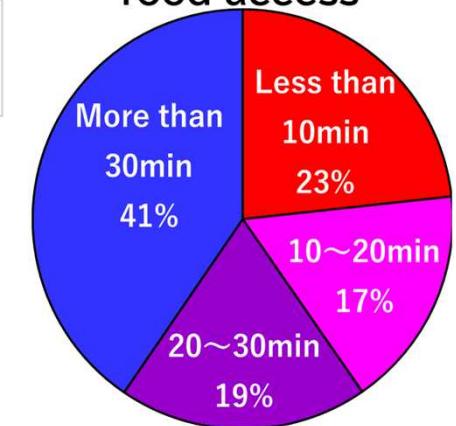


## Food Purchasing Access Means and Time

### Means of transportation



### Travel time for food access



- Nearly 90% are worried about the future, and is **expected to increase further**
- Anxiety from perceptions of their own declining capabilities
- High demand for home delivery services
- Services that minimize resident travel are highly valued

- **Over 70% travel by private car**
- 60% of households need over 20-minutes of travel time
  - For many residents, a single shopping trip requires a lot of time and effort

# Policy Recommendations for Resolving Purchasing Inequality and Revitalizing Primary Industries

Challenges	Solutions
Increase of shopping disadvantaged residents due to aging and driver's license surrender	Expand mobile sales services (economic circulation <b>WITHIN</b> the town)
Decline of primary industries, which are directly linked to the local economy; Lack of successors, decline in farm workers, and increase in abandoned farmland	Reform primary product distribution = Expand sales promotion in customer-oriented areas (roadside stations); Capital inflow from outside the town = Sales channels expansion (economic circulation <b>IN and OUT</b> of town)
Disparity between areas lacking mobile sales services	Expand services into underserved areas by increasing the number of mobile sales units
High initial investment needed to launch mobile sales; Increasing costs due to rising vehicle maintenance and fuel costs	Ensure sustainable business operations by establishing a subsidy system
Lack of widespread digital information (digital divide)	Analog awareness activities using newsletters and circulars for residents who prefer face-to-face and non-digital communication

## Our Recommendations

- ✓ **Subsidy system** to partially cover the purchase and lease costs of mobile sales vehicles, fuel costs, etc.
- ✓ Provision of **detailed information** about mobile sales services through effective use of local government newsletters and other sources

# The Ideal Vision for Minami Town (Based on Our Recommendation)



Establishment  
of a  
coexistence  
model



Road Station HIWASA  
道の駅「日和佐」

Maximize the utilization of  
the large consumption  
market generated by  
900,000 annual visitors



Economic  
circulation  
within the town

Residents as both  
consumers and producers



Enhancement of resident well-being

Economic  
circulation  
outside the town

- ✓ Sustainable town development for Minami Town
- ✓ Establish as a model for others

Ethical consumption, as we see it, involves consumption practices that allow for equal and sustainable food access, even in areas with food inaccessibility, ensuring strong consideration for the local economy.

**Thank you for your attention**