



**Weekly Wire**  
**East Asia and Pacific**  
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**JAPAN: Agriculture with Other Disciplines and Businesses**

The Agriculture Ministry will support Japanese universities in establishing agriculture research centers in their non-agriculture departments, which is unprecedented. For example, an agriculture center in an engineering department may develop an automated cultivator that processes information obtained via satellites; or an agriculture center in a brain science department may research the relation between foods and stress. The Ministry will also support the collaboration between agribusiness and other businesses. Examples are that a robot manufacturing company may produce assist suits for elderly and women farm workers; and an automaker may advise agribusiness organizations on production management. This efficiency in agriculture would potentially assist Japan in being ready for the enforcement of tariff reductions in case the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement is signed.

*Note: This is a summary translation of an article in Nihon Keizai Newspaper – 1/7/2014*

**JAPAN: S&T Agreement with Turkey**

Turkey and Japan signed an agreement to jointly establish an S&T university in Istanbul. The University will invite Japanese faculty members to primarily train young engineers to be prepared for a newly-established nuclear power plant in Turkey in 2017, and also in other natural and social sciences departments.



*Note: This is a summary translation of an article in Jiji.com – January 7, 2014*

**JAPAN: Drug-Discovery Supercomputer**

RIKEN will commence operation of its world's fastest "drug-development supercomputer" some time in 2014. To be installed within the RIKEN Advanced Institute for Computational Science in Kobe, the supercomputer is capable of analyzing protein 100 times faster than the presently-fastest (in Japan) all-purpose supercomputer "K." The drug development-specific supercomputer took Yen 800 million (\$8 million) for development, and can achieve protein analysis in one day while it takes 100 days on the "K" computer.

*Note: This is a summary translation of a Nikkei Article – January 14, 2014*



**AUSTRALIA: Plants Can Learn**

Dr. Monica Gagliano, a researcher at the Australian Research Council, and her colleagues trained Mimosa plants' short- and long-term memories under both high and low-light environments by repeatedly dropping water on them using a custom-designed apparatus (Mimosa folds its leaves in

response to the drop). Gagliano's research shows how Mimosa plants stopped closing their leaves when they learned that the repeated disturbance had no real damaging consequence. Mimosa plants were able to acquire the learned behavior in a matter of seconds and as in animals learning was faster in a less favorable environment (i.e., low light). Most remarkably, these plants were able to remember what had been learned for several weeks, even after environmental conditions had changed.

<http://www.sciencealert.com.au/news/20141601-25169.html>

#### **KOREA: More Foreign University Campuses in Incheon**

The plans to open more branches of foreign universities in South Korea's Incheon Free Economic Zone are back on track. George Mason University will open at Incheon in March 2014, offering programs in Economics and business administration. In fall 2014 the Ghent University will open to offer courses in bioengineering, and the University of Utah to offer communications, psychology and social work programs. Other potential future partners include the US-based University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Russia's Saint Petersburg State Conservatory and China's Tsinghua University.

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140125083851321>

#### **New Zealand: Australasian Computer Science Week**

The Australasian Computer Science Week, a multi-conference event for computing discipline leaders, researchers and educators in the region, took place at the Auckland University of Technology, during the week of January 20. The conference is held every five years in New Zealand and this is the first time in 20 years that it was held in Auckland.

<http://www.news.aut.ac.nz/news/2014/january/all-facets-of-computer-science-to-be-explored-this-week>

#### **SINGAPORE: National U of Singapore (NUS) President Chair the Global University Leaders Forum**

The World Economic Forum (WEF) appointed NUS President Tan Chorh Chuan as the Chair of its Global University Leaders Forum (GULF) for a two-year term commencing 2014. The GULF, which comprises 25 presidents of the world's top universities, was created by the WEF in 2006 to offer university leaders a key global engagement channel for high-level dialogue on issues of higher education and research with other sectors, including the business community. It also seeks to foster collaboration between universities in the areas of significance for global policies.

<http://news.nus.edu.sg/highlights/7267-nus-president-appointed-as-chair-of-the-wef-global-university-leaders-forum>

