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## Japanese aid to upgrade VN rural roads, irrigation systems

**HÀ NỘI** — The Japanese Government has announced that it will provide US\$86,470 to help upgrade farm roads and irrigation systems in Thiệu Hưng Commune, Thanh Hóa Province.

The grant was made yesterday at a signing ceremony which marked Japan's decision to extend its non-refundable aid to purchase some of the necessary materials for upgrading roads and irrigation systems in the commune.

The project entitled *Up-*

*grading Farm Roads and Irrigation Systems in Thiệu Hưng Commune* is expected to irrigate about 725ha of arable land, increasing cultivated land in the commune by 37ha, and contributing to improving production and living environment of the commune's population of 6,300 people.

The Thiệu Hưng Agricultural Co-operative, one of nine nation-wide agricultural co-operatives receiving financial and technical assist-

ance from Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) experts, will manage the project.

The co-operatives, modelling themselves on Japan's General Agricultural Associations, are engaged in providing irrigation and drainage services, eliminating diseases of crops and domestic animals, managing electrical supplies, fostering co-operation in producing and shipping rice seeds, supporting agricultural business, and jointly purchasing farming equipment.

The commune suffers from a poor irrigation network. The irrigation canals, which are a fundamental part of agricultural infrastructure, are not made of concrete, and tend to leak, lowering harvests in the region. Moreover, dirt farm roads hamper the smooth transportation of agricultural products. — VNS