



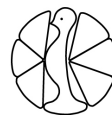
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IBURITO



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SHIROHATO GROUP

News Release

May 25, 2026

To Members of the Press

Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Co., Ltd.

Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Agri Co., Ltd.

IBURITO

Shirohato Food Corporation

Assessing a Production Model Led by Local Farmers

Joint Demonstration Project for Sweet Potatoes for Processing Launched in Noboribetsu, Hokkaido

**Collaborating with Shirohato Food Corporation with the Aim of Establishing Hokkaido
as a Sweet Potato Production Region with its Own Regional Brand**

Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Co., Ltd. (headquartered in Minato-ku, Tokyo; led by President and CEO Masahiro Miwa) hereby announces that it will launch a joint demonstration project to evaluate a local farmer-led production model for processing sweet potatoes in Noboribetsu, Hokkaido (hereinafter the “Demonstration Project”). For this project, the Company is partnering with its subsidiary Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Agri Co., Ltd. (located in Muroran-shi, Hokkaido; led by President and CEO Seiji Suzuki); as well as IBURITO (located in Muroran-shi, Hokkaido; led by Representative Director Yasuhiro Susumago), a General Incorporated Association serving as a regional platform for the sustainable development of the Iburi region of Hokkaido; and Shirohato Food Corporation (headquartered in Moriguchi-shi, Osaka; led by President and CEO Toshikazu Nagao).

In this Demonstration Project, local farmers will take the lead in cultivating sweet potatoes for processing on farmland in Noboribetsu, Hokkaido, while Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Agri will oversee project planning, implementation, and coordination among stakeholders. In addition, IBURITO will provide practical support for local operations, while Shirohato Food will provide expertise related to processing and product development.

Note that under this Demonstration Project, Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate, Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Agri, IBURITO, and Shirohato Food will not lease, borrow for use, occupy, use, or derive profits from the farmland. Local farmers will be responsible for managing the farmland and making farming decisions.

The companies involved will assess the feasibility of producing sweet potatoes for processing in Hokkaido based on the growth conditions, yield, quality, suitability for processing, and other factors studied in the Demonstration Project. In the future, we aim to establish Hokkaido as a sweet potato production region, and in cooperation with Shirohato Food, we will study the possibility of using Hokkaido sweet potatoes to create processed products, as well as turning them into a regional brand.



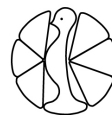
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■ Background Behind the Demonstration Project

Through its real estate business, Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate has been involved in local land use, community development, and the formation of industrial infrastructure. To further advance these efforts, in December 2025, we expanded our real estate business segment by entering the agriculture business and established Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Agri. (*1)

As our first project, we began cultivating apples in Muroran, Hokkaido. (*2) In May 2026, we held an apple tree planting ceremony, marking our first step in operating our agricultural business in Hokkaido. Going forward, we plan to examine the possibilities for a variety of crops, taking into account the characteristics of each region.

With the aim of becoming an agri-developer that connects and grows with the local community, Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Agri will coordinate with the local community as it carries out its business activities.

This joint Demonstration Project for processing sweet potatoes is part of our efforts to assess the potential for expanding into a wider variety of crops in Hokkaido. In recent years, demand for sweet potatoes and processed sweet potato products has been growing, and in light of climate change and other trends, the potential for new production areas has been attracting attention.

By examining the possibility of producing sweet potatoes for processing in Noboribetsu, Hokkaido, with local farmers taking the lead in cultivation, we aim to create a new regional industrial model that includes turning the area into a production region with its own regional brand and carrying out processing and distribution.

*1: [Entering the Agriculture Business with the Establishment of Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Agri Co., Ltd.](#)

*2: [First Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Agri Co., Ltd. Project Launched: Apple Tree Planting Ceremony in Muroran, Hokkaido](#)

■ Overview of the Demonstration Project

In this Demonstration Project, local farmers will take the lead in cultivating sweet potatoes for processing, while Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Agri will oversee project planning, implementation, and coordination among stakeholders. While local farmers will retain primary responsibility for farming operations, IBURITO will provide practical support such as arranging personnel and equipment on site, coordinating with stakeholders, and assisting with record keeping. Leveraging its expertise in sweet potatoes used for processing, Shirohato Food will provide advice and assess the potential for future product development and regional branding.

Item	Details
Project Name	Joint Demonstration Project for the Production of Sweet Potatoes for Processing in Noboribetsu, Hokkaido
Project Location	Farmland in Noboribetsu, Hokkaido
Demonstration Area	Approx. 5 ha
Evaluated Crop	Sweet potatoes for processing
Primary Farmers	Local farmers
Project Lead	Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Agri Co., Ltd.
Local Practical Support	IBURITO
Cooperation for Processing and Product Development	Shirohato Food Corporation
Demonstration Period	Scheduled for May 2026 to March 2027



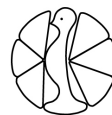
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■ Roles of the Four Companies

Under this Demonstration Project, local farmers will be responsible for managing the farmland and making farming decisions. Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate, Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Agri, IBURITO, and Shirohato Food are responsible for providing support for and advancing the Demonstration Project according to their own roles. They will not lease, borrow for use, occupy, use, or derive profits from the farmland.

Companies and Organizations	Key Roles
Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Co., Ltd.	Advance new business research, regional development, and business development for the group as a whole
Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Agri Co., Ltd.	Plan and carry out the Demonstration Project, coordinate with stakeholders, and examine business potential
IBURITO	Provide on-site practical support; arrange personnel, equipment, etc.; and coordinate with local stakeholders
Shirohato Food Corporation	Provide expertise on sweet potatoes for processing and examine the potential for processing and product development
Local farmers	Manage farmland, cultivate crops, and make farming decisions

■ Future Plans

Through this Demonstration Project, we will assess the feasibility of growing sweet potatoes and their suitability for processing in Noboribetsu, Hokkaido, and based on the results, we will study the potential for future commercialization.

In the future, we aim to establish Hokkaido as a production region for sweet potatoes used for processing, and in cooperation with Shirohato Food, we will study the possibility of using Hokkaido sweet potatoes to develop processed products, as well as turning them into a regional brand.

In addition, by combining the regional development expertise cultivated by the Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Group over the years, the regional network of IBURITO, and the processing and product development expertise of Shirohato Food, we will work to create a new regional industry with agriculture at its foundation.

■ Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Co., Ltd. Profile

Trade Name : Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Co., Ltd.
Address : AKASAKA INTERCITY AIR, 1-8-1 Akasaka, Minato Ward, Tokyo
Representative : Masahiro Miwa, President and CEO
URL : <http://www.nskre.co.jp/>

Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Agri Co., Ltd. Profile

Trade Name : Nippon Steel Kowa Real Estate Agri Co., Ltd.
Address : 1-4-4 Nakajima-honcho, Muroran-shi, Hokkaido



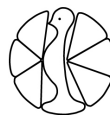
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Representative : Seiji Suzuki, President and CEO
Established : December 12, 2025
Capital : 100 million yen
URL : <http://www.nskre-agri.co.jp/>

■ IBURITO Profile

Name : IBURITO
Address : MORUE Nakajima, 1-4-4 Nakajima-honcho, Muroran-shi, Hokkaido
Representative : Yasuhiro Susumago, Representative Director
URL : <https://iburito.jp/>



IBURITO

■ Shirohato Food Corporation Profile

Trade Name : Shirohato Food Corporation
Location : 1-4-10, Keihanondori, Moriguchi-shi, Osaka
Representative : Toshikazu Nagao, President and CEO
Business Description : A comprehensive food manufacturer engaged in the production, processing, and sale of potatoes, octopus, and pumpkins
URL : <https://shirohato.com/>



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