Transformation of Towada as a Horse-breeding Region from the Late 1950s to the Early 1980s: Focused on the Changes of Livestock Breeding

KAMIGATA Chika

Many households used to raise domestic animals for farming, transport, and fertilizer production, but the number plunged due to the mechanization of agriculture and the spread of automobiles. What changes this sharp drop in livestock numbers brought to ranching regions? This paper focuses on Towada City in Aomori Prefecture as a case study to examine the changes in livestock breeding in ranching villages. Towada is located in a long-established horse breeding region where the livestock industry is still dominant. In this region with a cold climate that makes farming unprofitable, livestock, especially horses, used to be an important source of income for farmers. Horse breeding was a major livelihood, and horses were invaluable. Nowadays, however, only a few farmers breed horses. Instead, beef cattle and pigs have become popular as livestock in the city. How horse breeding was replaced by cattle and pig breeding? What factors influenced the choice of livestock to breed? In order to answer these two questions, this paper analyzes the actual situation of Towada from the late 1950s to the early 1980s, when the city went through a significant change in livestock ranching. Chapter 2 examines statistics and municipal bulletins to draw a whole picture of transformation of livelihood breeding in Towada. It is aimed to identify exactly when horse breeding was replaced by beef cattle and pig breeding and why this shift occurred. Chapter 3 focuses on two communities with different characteristics, examining the changes in their livestock breeding. It is aimed to reveal how the livestock that used to be raised around the communities were monopolized by certain people in certain areas. Chapter 4 presents that laboriousness (how laborious it would be to raise the animal) and profitability (how profitable the animal would be) were important factors that influenced the choice of livestock to breed. Farmers developed a preference to less laborious and more profitable animals while they were raising their incomes from other than livestock by operating side businesses or expanding agricultural land.

Key words: Horse-breeding region, livestock, pollution, livestock market, laboriousness and profitability