

Altogether, there are 2 300 consumer co-operatives, with a membership of 4 million households, and total sales of about ¥1 317 billion (\$12.7 billion Cdn), or accounting for 1.3 per cent of total sales of the retail industry in 1985. About 60 per cent of co-op stores are small, having floor space of less than 100 square metres. Some, however, are full-size supermarkets.

The other type of co-operative is the agricultural co-operative, Nokyo. Nokyo is an enormous nation-wide agricultural organization with about 5 million member households. Among Nokyo's many activities is its "A Co-op" chain of food stores, which in 1985, consisted of about 2 000 stores with sales of ¥800 billion. The "A Co-op" is active in the development of co-op brand products.

Both the agricultural and consumers co-ops are growing, improving their organizations, and expanding their range of services. Consumer co-ops alone are expected to increase sales by 33 per cent to ¥2 000 billion (\$19.2 billion Cdn) within a few years.

Specialty Stores

Specialty stores are the largest retail and food retail distribution channel in Japan in terms of the number of stores, employees and sales. Specialty stores are defined as stores which employ face-to-face selling and make over 90 per cent of their sales through certain product categories like produce, fish, alcoholic beverages, etc.

In non-food sectors, specialty stores are steadily losing their market share to the larger specialty store chains. In the food sector, however, the major competition is the supermarkets and convenience/mini-super store chains. The specialty stores' loss of business to the supermarkets has been slowed by the law limiting the size of new stores, but the general trend over the last decade has still been towards continued growth in the overall market share of self-service stores.

Others — Small Retail Stores

Small retail stores, commonly known as mom and pop stores, constitute a major part of the retailing sector and amount to some 520 000 stores in Japan. These stores usually handle several product categories such as food, beverages, household goods, etc.; they are small and only marginally profitable. The mom and pops often have a loyal customer base.

These small retail stores are declining only slowly. The stores are legally protected from intrusion into their neighbourhoods by large supermarkets. Many, however, may join voluntary or convenience store chains, which will provide operating know-how, volume discounts and personnel training.

4 Department Stores

The following section is divided into two parts. The first is a ranking by sales of the top 50 department store companies in Japan giving such basic information as the address, the number of stores, the 1987-1988 sales volume, and the food and beverage percentage of total sales.

The second part is a more detailed outline of each of the top 12 department stores. This outline is made up of a description of the major features and activities of the store, and a table giving basic operating data.