

Green Consumers (Environmental Citizens)

1. Why Does Japan Lag Behind the Rest of Developed Countries?

On the contrary, why does Europe promote advanced environmental policies? In Europe, even early phases of the industrial revolution caused serious pollution. However, the sharing of common borders compelled Europeans to pay close attention to this pollution and to address it as a critical international problem. This raised people's awareness on environmental problems. Thus, the geographical difference between European countries and Japan is a factor, but the existence of "green consumers" can explain these differences more completely.

2. What is Green Consumer?

A green consumer is an environmental-friendly consumer. These consumers have recently become more influential in making changes in the field of environmental awareness.

- **Green Consumers are those**

- Who do not buy any products harmful to the environment
⇒ companies become more environmentally conscious.
- Who express their intentions, demand environmental protection and vote politicians who ignore environmental issues out of office.
⇒ politicians become more concerned with environmental issues.
- Who participate in society and in environmental protection activities
⇒ society as a whole becomes aware of the significance of environmental issues.

3. What will happen if the number of green consumers increases?

In Europe, the majority of citizens are green consumers. In Japan, however, that figure lies at around 1 percent. This difference is reflected in a lack of environmental awareness in the political, economic, corporate and public spheres.

- **Information on environmental problems will increase:**

Although information on environment degradation is available in Japan (but not enough), few citizens pay attention to, or act on this information. It is crucial that more and more people become concerned with environmental issues and openly expressed their opinions and ideas to the public.

- **Companies will change:**

If a majority of consumers choose not to purchase environmentally-harmful products, then manufacturers would be forced manufacture environmentally-friendly products and this will have a profound positive effect on society.

- **Politics will change:**

It is critical that more people express their values; “life over wealth, environment over development,” and vote for politicians who advocate such agendas. It is also important to write letters to government and the media, participate in public forums and reprimand politicians who ignore environmental issues. These actions will change not only politicians but also laws.

- **Society will change:**

If environment-related information increases and products and laws become more environmentally-friendly, this will help transform not just people’s awareness and behaviour, but also our current society and our future.

Network Earth Village is an information network for green consumers. The Network issues monthly newsletters, sending the latest information on environmental problems to its members every month.