

1910-1980s

Harvesting using a light railway



- High cost of maintaining engine and tracks (Although the island has a circumference of 21km, the railway had a total length of 27km)
- Difficulty in loading/unloading

1980s onwards

Harvesting using a harvester vehicle and trucks



▲ People interviewed for this feature (from left): Kiyohide Okiyama (JA Okinawa), Chikatoshi Okiyama, Kazunobu Aragaki, Shoichi Kumada (Daito Seito Co., Ltd.)

For the islanders, sugar cane is the only industry that protects their continued livelihood; if it were to disappear then the island itself would lose its value as a place for habitation. Protecting the sugar cane industry is therefore essential for keeping the island functioning as a home for its people and also, in a sense, for maintaining a presence for Japan on the island.

Contributing to Improving Sugar Cane Productivity

It is necessary to ensure sustainability in order to further develop the sugar cane industry on Minami Daito, and for this to be achieved, the critical point is to improve productivity. For the islanders the perennial challenge is to realize greater efficiency in harvesting and transportation. For many years a light railway known as the "sugar train" was used to transport sugar cane on the island. However, growing maintenance costs for the railway engine and tracks meant that the islanders gradually shifted to using trucks; the railway was completely dismantled in 1983. Currently the method considered to be the most efficient is to have trucks run alongside a large harvester to collect and transport the sugar cane.

In 1998, the Hino Motors sales company Okinawa Hino Motors, Ltd., submitted a proposal to provide a specially customized "Ranger FT"\* truck for harvesting to Daito Seito, which was searching for a more efficient way to transport sugar cane. The company purchased 31 of these FT Trucks. At the time this was a completely new venture for Okinawa Hino Motors, but the order was successfully won by listening carefully to the concerns of both Daito Seito and the local farmers.

Harvesting sugar cane presents a variety of unique challenges: (1) the need to ensure that tire width matches the ridges in the field, as trucks need to directly enter the field to run alongside the harvester; (2) the importance of boosting the height of the chassis so that it does not damage ridges in the field; (3) ensuring that trucks can easily run at the same speed as the harvester; and (4) ensuring consistent traction and passability on uneven surfaces. Okinawa Hino Motors has worked consistently with the people of Minami Daito to resolve each of these and other challenges.

The original trucks that were purchased by Daito Seito are still in use today thanks to careful and attentive maintenance.

Special Feature 1 Sharing in the Joys of Life on Minami Daito Island Special Feature 2 Origins of "Total Support"

Delivering Successor Vehicles for the Next Generation

Since around 2006, new challenges related to improving productivity have been the focus. These included measures to reduce the turning circle of trucks in the sugar cane fields and also to boost the payload capacity, so that each truck could carry more sugar cane.

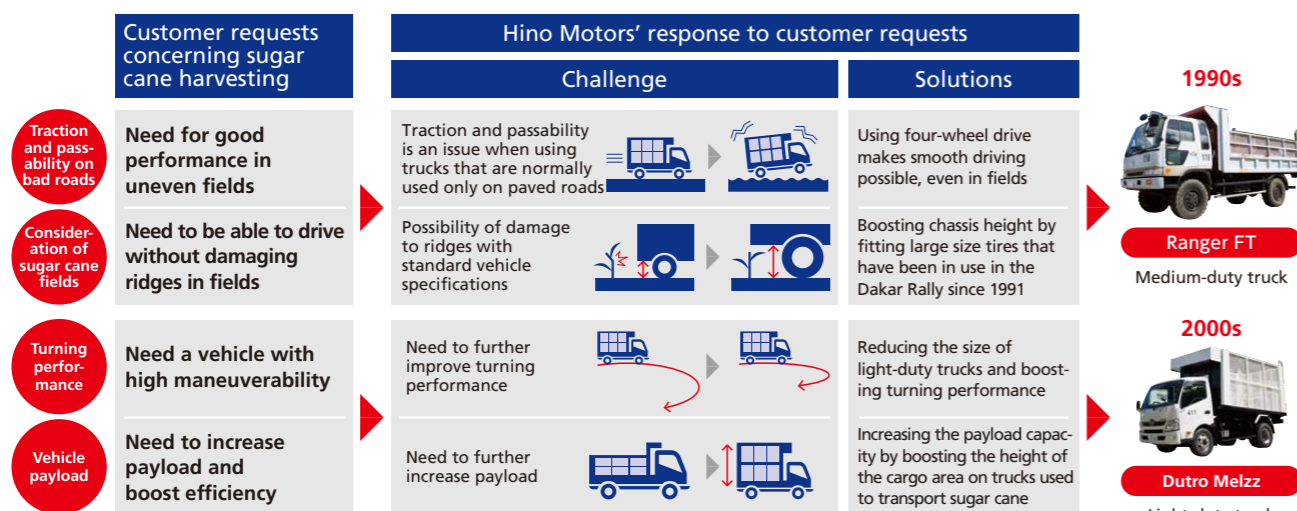
Okinawa Hino Motors focused on the challenge of improving sugar cane harvesting efficiency, identifying the customer's needs and worked in cooperation with Daito Seito and JA Okinawa through a two-year process of repeatedly testing new prototype vehicles and submitting proposals. In 2016, it was decided that Hino Motors trucks would be selected as the next-generation vehicles to add to the original fleet. Although the new vehicle does not have all the performance attributes of the FT trucks, through a process of customizing the standard specifications of the light-duty truck Dutro Melzz, it has been possible to boost transport efficiency by approximately 30%, which is what led to the decision to



▲ The immaculately maintained Dutro Melzz trucks of Daito Seito Co., Ltd.

adopt it as an appropriate next-generation vehicle. The sight of Hino trucks being loaded with golden sugar cane and moving it to the sugar processing plant is a part and parcel of the daily scenery on Minami Daito from winter through spring. Aspiring to deliver on its slogan, "Trucks and Buses That Do More," Hino Motors will continue to contribute to the sustainable development of Minami Daito.

Customer Requests and Hino Responses



● Even when reducing the size of light-duty trucks, their payload capacity has been boosted to exceed that of current medium-duty trucks (2.3 t to 4 t).

VOICE



**Working to Ensure Sugar Remains the Key Industry for Another Century**

**Tatsuji Okiyama**  
President and Representative Director  
Daito Seito Co., Ltd.

Hino Motors is an indispensable partner for the sugar cane industry on Minami Daito. When we first introduced Hino trucks I was still farming myself, so as someone well-acquainted with local conditions I made various requests. When we requested the replacement of the trucks in 2014, Hino Motors accurately grasped the challenges we face on the ground, with the result that they provided us with excellent trucks that fit the purpose. In recent years the number of young people working in the sugar cane industry on Minami Daito has remained stable, which is excellent news, and helps to maintain the island's vitality. I hope that Hino Motors will continue to support our business long into the future.

\* Ranger FT: A four-wheel drive, medium-duty Hino Ranger truck.

**Continuing to Provide Trucks That Support Island Life**

Right: **Hirosuke Fukuzato**  
President and Representative Director  
Okinawa Hino Motors, Ltd.

Left: **Shigeo Higa**  
Sales Division Manager, Deputy General  
Manager Sales Department, Member of  
the Board



When Daito Seito was first considering the introduction of trucks to run alongside the sugar cane harvester, I met with Mr. Okiyama, who is now President of Daito Seito, but back then was still involved directly in sugar cane farming. I learned about the various challenges the farmers faced from him. We made various customizations in response to harvesting conditions, creating a vehicle based on our broad knowledge, including technology that was under development for use in the Dakar Rally at the time. We were overjoyed when our efforts paid off and we received the original order, which led to an ongoing relationship with the island. Although new successor trucks have also been introduced since, I am always deeply impressed to see the trucks from the original order still running smoothly, thanks to maintenance that keeps them looking just like new.