



# Providing a range of financial functions as a member of JA Bank and JF Marine Bank

Director and Managing Executive Officer  
Member of the Board of Directors  
Co-Head of JA and JF Business Support

**AKIYOSHI Ryo**

## Business overview

### JA Bank and JF Marine Bank

JA and JF are independent financial institutions providing financial services finely tuned to the varying requirements of different regions, individual members and users throughout Japan. To provide these retail services more efficiently and effectively, the Bank at the national level works together with JA Shinnoren and JF Shigyoren at the prefectural level to operate integrated businesses in the form of JA Bank and JF Marine Bank.

JA Bank not only provides agricultural loans and other financial support for production activity but also offers appropriate financial products and services tailored to customers' life events, such as starting work, getting married, buying a house and retiring, and supports stable financial asset building and management. We call these services the "life-plan support business," through which JA Bank provides mutual fund and will trust services, as well as various financial services such as savings, settlements and housing loans. Incorporating services provided by other businesses operated by JA (such as guidance, economic and mutual assistance services) enables us to serve customers of all ages in a way that only a comprehensive service provider can.

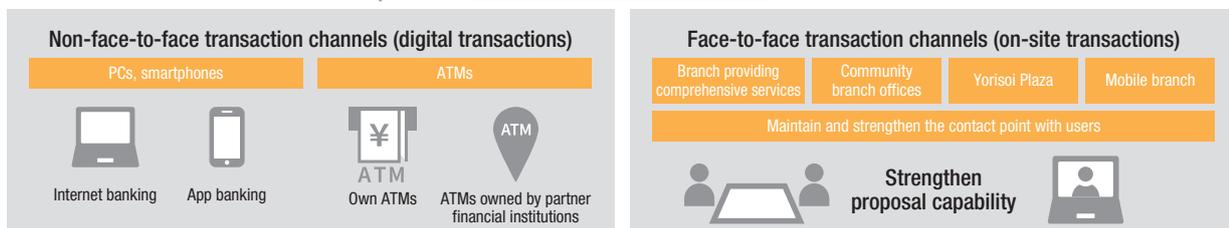
We are also strengthening and expanding our non-face-to-face transaction channels by enhancing the functions of JA online banking and the JA Bank app. In addition, we are restructuring our face-to-face transaction channels via, for example, full-service branches staffed by specialists and client-relationship managers and Yoriso Plaza facilities that strengthen points of contact with users while increasing the Bank's efficiency.

JF Marine Bank leverages its expertise as a financial institution specializing in the fishery industry and also provides lifestyle support loans and business succession consultations to help customers manage life events, thereby supporting the lives of people and areas dependent on the fishery industry.

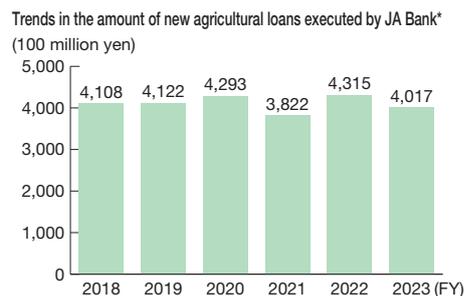
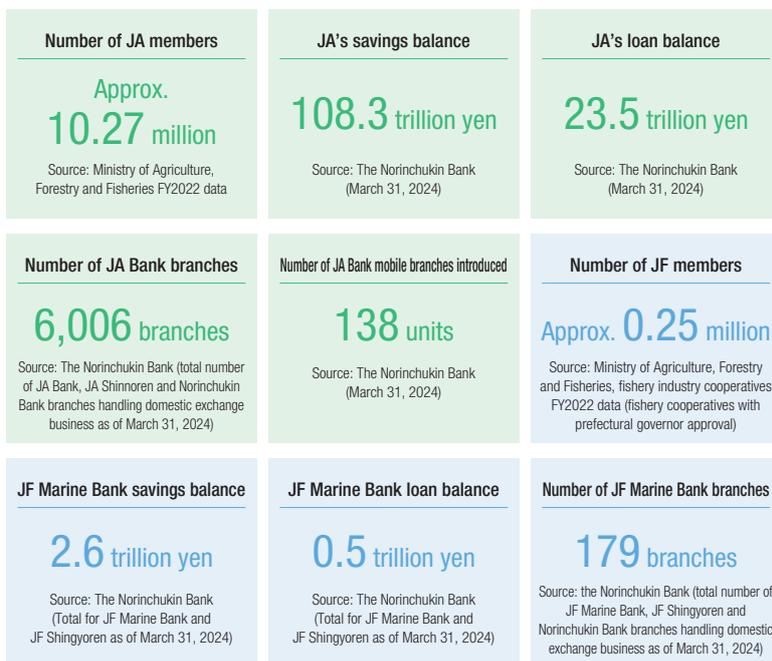
### Offering new value to daily lives of local communities



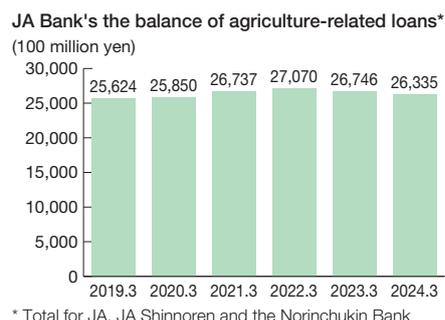
### Establish an optimal structure to address the needs of members and users



## JA Bank and JF Marine Bank by numbers



\* Total for JA, JA Shinnoren and the Norinchukin Bank



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## The Norinchukin Bank's role in the Retail Business

The Norinchukin Bank plays a role as the nationwide headquarters for the business conducted by JA Bank and JF Marine Bank.

In addition to strategizing and planning products and services for JA Bank and JF Marine Bank, the Bank works with them to determine how best to market these products and services to members and users. We have determined JA Bank Medium-Term Strategies (fiscal 2022-24) and JF Marine Bank Medium-Term Strategies (fiscal 2024-26) as overarching nationwide strategy. Strategies tailored to the requirements of individual prefectures and to those of individual JAs and JFs are then devised and implemented based on these.

The Bank also provides the digital infrastructure and unified administrative procedures that JAs and JFs use nationwide. We coordinate a range of requirements from the provision of a settlements network to ensuring regulatory compliance.

The issues that individual JA and JF institutions encounter vary, including by region. We are currently encouraging and supporting individual JAs and JFs in clarifying their optimal management strategies, while respecting their autonomy. The Bank also provides the requisite management guidance and support to individual JA and JF institutions based on the JA Bank Basic Policy and JF Marine Bank Basic Policy in order to ensure the stability and soundness of the JA Bank System and JF Marine Bank System.

## The Retail Business in our Medium-Term Vision

### The business environment in 2030 (Retail Business)

- We see a growing need for further operational efficiency enhancement and business transformation amid change in the conditions underlying JA's and JF's businesses, including the shrinkage and ageing of the Japanese population.
- Migration from rural to urban areas is gathering pace. The value and expectations society places on JA and JF institutions as full-service providers key to regional economies and infrastructure is increasing as concern about primary industries grows and other industries enter the scene.
- We are transitioning to a world in which all generations utilize lower-cost non-face-to-face channels for simple financial transactions as a result of rapid advances in digital services. The desire to consult a trusted financial institution strongly rooted in its local community, particularly regarding asset management, remains high, however. The ability to provide expert face-to-face advice could be a source of competitiveness for a financial institution.

### Concept for Achieving Our Vision for 2030

The Bank has a tight focus on the uses of digital data in, for example, the provision of business support, and aims thereby to improve credit business efficiency and to provide advanced services to users.

In order to maintain our business base, we must provide the kind of value that encourages users to choose our services as well as utilize digital technology that appeals to a broad customer base. We aim to achieve this by improving the user interface (UI) and user experience (UX) of our non-face-to-face channels, including via partnerships with other businesses.

We will double down on current initiatives to enhance JA and JF management and their ability to propose solutions to users.

## Main Initiatives

### Initiatives relating to the 2024 Noto Peninsula earthquake

#### Support for JA Bank and JF Marine Bank users affected by the earthquake Disaster support desk, emergency savings account payments

JA Bank and JF Marine Bank have been working to provide support to users affected by the earthquake by swiftly setting up a disaster support desk and promoting user awareness about the type of financial support available. In addition to establishing disaster relief funds to quickly respond to the recovery funding needs of those affected by the disaster, they have also provided support to existing loan users regarding the use of the natural disaster guidelines and loan forbearance.

As an emergency measure, JA Bank allowed JA users in Ishikawa Prefecture to withdraw savings at any JA nationwide without presenting their passbook or registered signature stamp, while JF Marine Bank did the same for users within the JF East Japan Shingyoren service area. JA Bank pulled together to provide financial services tailored to the support of earthquake victims as a single integrated entity, for example allowing them to notify losses and apply for the reissue of passbooks and cash cards, as well as withdraw savings, at other JAs. There have been more than 2,000 such requests as of the end of March 2024.

#### Dispatch of mobile branch vehicles

JA Bank has been using mobile branch vehicles since fiscal 2016 with the aim of providing financial services that connect agricultural and regional users, and thereby contribute to local communities. A total of 138 of these vehicles were in service by the end of March 2024.

A JA that cannot conduct business as a result of damage sustained in a natural disaster can request support from a mobile branch, which is dispatched after investigations as to which area is best placed to send one. After the Noto earthquake, a vehicle was dispatched from JA Kamiina in Nagano Prefecture to JA Noto in Ishikawa Prefecture, some of whose branches were unable to operate for this reason, to provide financial services to their users.



JA Kamiina's mobile branch vehicle (in front of JA Noto)

### Non-face-to-face service initiatives

#### Improving JA Bank app user satisfaction

JA Bank launched the JA Bank app in December 2019. This is now widely used, with around 2.7 million downloads by the end of fiscal 2023. Because older users make up a large proportion of JA Bank's user base, the JA Bank app is designed for a simple user interface (UI) and user experience (UX), making it easy and intuitive for anyone to use. It won a Good Design Award in 2021.

With the world rapidly shifting to digital interactions, JA Bank recognizes the importance of providing virtual services with high user satisfaction. It sees the app and other non-face-to-face channels as new points of contact with users, and will continue to work to improve user satisfaction by adding and expanding functionality.



JA Bank app

### Initiatives to strengthen proposal-making that puts customer interest first

#### Asset Building Support Program to strengthen proposal-making

JA Bank introduced an Asset Building Support Program in fiscal 2018 in order to strengthen its ability to propose solutions to users. Under this program, the Bank seconded employees to JAs so that they can learn how to make proposals aligned with users' asset building and asset management needs by, for example, accompanying JA employees on visits to users.

Our fiduciary duty to customers (business guided solely by the interests of the customer) requires that we recommend a package of products and services based on a thorough understanding of a user's needs, rather than selling particular individual products.



Employees undergoing Asset Building Support Program training for proposal-making

## Case study Mobile branch vehicle dispatch following the Noto Peninsula earthquake



JA Bank System Business  
Transformation Division  
Senior Manager, Cooperative  
Bank System Digital Planning  
Group

**JINBO Naoki**

### Helping to meet post-disaster financial needs in the spirit of mutual support

Many of the members, users and employees of JA Noto, which serves the cities of Wajima and Suzu and towns of Anamizu and Noto in Ishikawa Prefecture, were affected by the earthquake that struck the Noto Peninsula on January 1, 2024. It was hard to predict when some branches would be able to reopen given the damage to facilities such as branch buildings and ATMs.

JA Noto initially resumed business by sending its own mobile branch vehicle to the parking lots of affected branches. However, as it became impossible to meet the growing volume of transactions with a single vehicle, JA Noto requested the Bank dispatch a further mobile branch vehicle.

The Bank investigated which areas might be able to spare a vehicle. When we asked JA Nagano Shinnoren, it emerged that JA Kamiina uniquely within Nagano had two mobile branch vehicles and was able dispatch

one of them.

JA Kamiina had only a very short time between agreeing the request and dispatching the vehicle, and had to make preparations very quickly. They said they received warm encouragement from cooperative members and users, being dubbed a “friend in need”. I really felt the spirit of unstinting mutual support for fellow JAs and their members and users when JA Kamiina handed over water, food and other supplies along with the mobile branch vehicle.

During the one-month it served JA Noto, JA Kamiina’s mobile branch vehicle appeared to be a really big help in responding to the financial needs of JA members and users in the anxious days after the earthquake, clocking up 2,579 user transactions, including deposits and withdrawals, and passbook registrations.

## Case study JA Bank app development to support the spread of non-face-to-face services



JA Bank System Business  
Transformation Division  
Customer Service Platform Group

**NAKAMOTO Makoto**

### Pursuing user satisfaction by listening to the improvements users ask for

The advance and spread of digital technology is making it even more important to be able to complete straightforward financial transactions, such as checking your account balance, on a smartphone, and the number of JA Bank app users continues to grow by the year.

I see my role and that of the app development team in achieving JA Bank’s purpose as increasing the wellbeing of users and other stakeholders by providing high-quality, unique virtual financial services. In developing the app, we are constantly asking ourselves how we can make it easier to use as well as how to

appeal to more users to use it.

Users have kindly given the app high app store ratings. They have commented favorably on its simplicity and ease of use, the helpfulness of being able to confirm your account balance and transaction details at any time, and the convenience of not having to go to the bank counter or ATM. They have also asked us via app stores and our call centers to make it even more convenient. In response, we are leveraging our agile development\* strengths to improve the quality of the app on a timely basis.

\* Our development system prioritizes the development of functions users tell us they most want and we release these sequentially as soon as they are available.

## Case study Asset Building Support Program to enhance JA employee proposal capabilities



JA Bank System Retail Innovation,  
Consulting and Practice Division  
Life-Plan Support Business  
Practice Group

**TAKAKI Yusuke**

### Supporting customers’ futures by understanding their life plans

We see the Asset Building Support Program not merely as a training program but also as an organizational initiative to transform the way JA evolves and the way it relates to its customers.

For this reason, we engaged in repeated dialog with JA management to promote this program for about six months before we started seconding staff. Moreover, JA’s that have introduced the program have seen an upskilling in proposal-making and this has fed through into growth in mutual fund sales.

Customers have told us that they did not previously realize they could seek advice from JA about asset management, and that the thorough and careful explanations they received eliminated any concerns they had about buying mutual funds. The program is

designed to support our users in steadily building and managing their assets by offering them appropriate proposals. I see the role of our team as lessening user fears about the future and enhancing their sense of satisfaction (in other words, pursuing their best interests).

Going forward, we plan to focus on also providing services virtually (for example, our JA Bank Investment Trust Net Service) and restructuring customer contact by fusing the real with the digital. This program, however, will help us to continue enhancing JA Bank’s core strength of proposing solutions to our customers face-to-face, and to help more JA members and users to achieve a richer, fuller life.