Japanese robot-wolf to protect farms

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Picture: © TV Asahi

Technology has come to the rescue of Japanese farmers. For thousands of years they have tried to keep animals away from their farms. However, engineers have invented the "Super Monster Wolf" to finally scare away wild animals that want to eat crops of rice, pumpkin or sweet potato. Super Monster Wolf is a solar-powered scarecrow robot that looks like a real wolf. It has lookalike wolf hair, big scary teeth and red LED eyes with infrared sensors. It also has 48 different wolf howls and other noises so animals never get used to it. Super Monster Wolf will be used to keep animals like wild boar and deer out of rice paddies, farms and fruit orchards. Farmers lose millions of dollars of crops every year to hungry animals.

Members of Japan's Agricultural Association (JA) took part in trials of the Super Monster Wolf in nine locations across Japan. JA spokesman Chikao Umezawa reported that the robot wolf significantly reduced crop losses. He said it was more effective than an electric fence at keeping animals out. The robot can sense movement up to one kilometre away and immediately make its scary sounds. The robot will start being mass produced from next month. It will be 65cm long and 50cm high. The price is $4,800 but farmers will have the option of renting the wolf by the month. Japan's farmers are hoping that this new electronic aid will finally stop wild animals eating their crops.

Sources: *treehugger.com / bbc.com / chibanippo.co.jp*

Writing

Farmers should let wild animals eat some of their crops to help nature. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

technology / rescue / farms / wild animals / solar-powered / scarecrow / rice paddy / trials / losses / electric fence / movement / farmers / option / wolf / electronic / aid

True / False

a) The article says Japanese farmers loved animals for thousands of years. T / F

b) A super monster-wolf wants to eat pumpkins and sweet potatoes. T / F

c) A new robot wolf has scary green eyes. T / F

d) The robot wolf will help scare away deer and wild boar from rice paddies. T / F

e) Japan's architectural association (JA) took part in trials of the wolf. T / F

f) An agriculture spokesman said the wolf was better than electric fences. T / F

g) The robot wolf will go into production next month. T / F

h) Japanese farmers will be able to rent the robot wolf on a monthly basis. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

1.	**rescue**	a.	farming
2.	**tried**	b.	fields
3.	**scare**	c.	attempted
4.	**howls**	d.	successful
5.	**paddies**	e.	help
6.	**agricultural**	f.	frighten
7.	**trials**	g.	choice
8.	**effective**	h.	saving
9.	**option**	i.	tests
10.	**aid**	j.	cries

Discussion – Student A

a) What do you think about what you read?

b) What do you know about wolves?

c) Do you think the Super Monster Wolf will work?

d) What do you think of the price of the wolf?

e) Would you buy a robot dog to guard your house?

f) Should wild animals be allowed to eat crops on farms?

g) Would you like to be a farmer?

h) What questions would you like to ask the inventors?

Phrase Match

1. Technology has come to the rescue
2. scare
3. eyes with
4. rice
5. Farmers lose millions
6. Members of Japan's agricultural
7. in nine locations
8. the robot wolf significantly
9. more effective than an electric
10. farmers will have the option of

a. infrared sensors
b. of dollars of crops
c. fence
d. association
e. away wild animals
f. reduced crop losses
g. renting the wolf
h. of Japanese farmers
i. across Japan
j. paddies

Discussion – Student B

a) What do you think of robots?
b) How can robot animals help us?
c) What problems do farmers have?
d) How can farmers scare away animals?
e) Do you think animals will be afraid of the Super Monster Wolf?
f) What do you think of the name 'Super Monster Wolf'?
g) What do you know about rice paddies?
h) Why do scarecrows rarely work?

Spelling

1. come to the <u>rseecu</u>
2. engineers have <u>vdintnee</u> the "Super Monster Wolf"
3. <u>csrea</u> away wild animals
4. LED eyes with infrared <u>esrsnso</u>
5. rice <u>addeips</u>, farms and fruit orchards
6. <u>iionmlls</u> of dollars
7. took part in <u>tlrais</u>
8. nine <u>antolsico</u> across Japan
9. more <u>ftveeifce</u> than an electric fence
10. being mass <u>redodpuc</u>
11. have the <u>opinot</u> of renting
12. this new <u>neecrioctl</u> aid

Role Play

Role A – Rice
You think rice is the most important crop. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their crops. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): wheat, banana or corn.

Role B – Wheat
You think wheat is the most important crop. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their crops. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): rice, banana or corn.

Role C – Banana
You think banana is the most important crop. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their crops. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): wheat, rice or corn.

Role D – Corn
You think corn is the most important crop. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their crops. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): wheat, banana or rice.
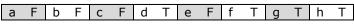
Speaking – Crops

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important crops at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- rice
- potato
- onion
- wheat
- garlic
- tomato
- banana
- corn

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. c	3. f	4. j	5. b
6. a	7. i	8. d	9. g	10. e

Answers – True False

a F	b F	c F	d T	e F	f T	g T	h T

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.