

Nojiri Rice Terrace Irrigation Water

There is a hand-dug tunnel that diverts water from the Asahi River into a series of irrigation channels that lead to Nojiri all the way from Yaeji, more than 12 kilometers away. The system was constructed nearly 300 years ago and is still in use.

Prior to the construction of the channels, the rice paddies along the route were dependent on mountain streams and springs for water, making them vulnerable to drought. A group of 31 farmers in Nojiri proposed the irrigation system to secure a stable water supply in 1737, and it was completed in 1740. It was built before the machine age, so people used only hand tools to dig through the rocks and soil, passing through mountains and valleys. The tunnel is equipped with sluice gates, so the water flow can be stopped when a typhoon or rainstorm approaches. Nojiri has remained free of water shortages thanks to this historic feat of civil engineering.

In addition to rice, the Nojiri fields produce edible herbs and flowers, Awa Bancha tea, and citruses such as *yuzu*, *yuko*, and *sudachi*.