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Dr. Ishimoto Masao is the Director-General of the Institute of Crop Science (NARO). He joined the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) in 1983, and his research interests are understanding and improving crop function at the molecular level especially in legume crops. In recent years, he is working to implement 'Smart breeding' driven by big data in various crops. He works as a project manager of 'Development of data-driven breeding system' in the Cross ministerial Strategic Innovative Promotion Program 2 (SIP2) "Technologies for Smart Bioindustry and Agriculture". He received his Ph.D. from the University of Tsukuba in 1993, and he earned the Japanese Society of Breeding Encouragement Award in 1996 and the Japanese Society of Breeding Award in 2015.