

Pursuing Knowledge with Positive Attitude ----Practical Study of New Farmer-Training College's Innovatory Mechanism

Xintao Yao and Keqin Liu

Lishui Vocational and Technical College, Lishui, China

Email: yxt315@sina.cn

[Abstract] The Chinese national program, “A Practical Study of the New Farmer Training College’s Innovatory Mechanism” is coming to an end. During the three-year study period, researchers conducted comprehensive literature reviews, field surveys, authored a book, and applied relevant achievements therefrom. Based on current studies on farmer training in China and other countries, this article describes the farmer training model tested in Lishui city and how it would be applied across China.

[Keywords] Farmer-Training College; Training Model; Innovatory Mechanism; Drive; Conserving Mechanism

Introduction

The Farmer Training College was established with the goal to improve agriculture skills among Chinese farmers (Liu Keqin, Hu Dehua, Wang Ruimin, Chen Ruping, Zhan Hongyi, Pan Yaoting, Han Min, & Zhong Yang, 2014). Moreover, researchers of the “Practical Study of New Farmer Training College’s Innovatory Mechanism” program propose to promote an effective path toward establishing effective training for farmers in China. With the benefit of Chinese national funding, their studies led to the publication of *Pursuing Knowledge with a Positive Attitude*. As one of the achievements of the program, this book contains essential information pertaining to the training models and mechanisms of a farmers’ college. This model would later be applied nationwide, is another achievement of this program.

Current Studies on Farmer Training

Current Studies on Farmer Training in Japan, Korea, England, France, Holland, Canada and the United States

In the book, *The Study of Chinese and Foreign Countries’ Farmer Training*, Li Bingshan and Zhao Fangyin (2006) describe the current status of farmer training in Japan, Korea, England, France, Holland, America, and Canada. Japan and Korea both contain relatively small populations, so the agriculture products’ scales in both countries are also small. As a result, government guidance as related to national legislation is important, and thereby, the multiple-level-oriented and targeted farmer training is established (Li & Zhao, 2006). In contrast, the European model used in England, France, and Holland possesses a more family-dominated structure. In those countries, farmers are trained by governments, universities, and research institutes to obtain certification (Li & Zhao, 2006). In the United States and Canada, the farming is considered a large-scale sector and require farmer training colleges to play a key role in farmer education (Li & Zhao, 2006).

Current Studies on Farmer Training of China

China still enjoys many traditional forms of farming. Nevertheless, it is the “New Generation of Farmers” that are required to be up to date in their knowledge and skills. These farmers are expected to produce using modern scientific methods and apply strong management procedures (Liu, 2008). Furthermore, it is vital that these farmers be trained to know and understand all laws applicable to them (Bao & Zhu, 2012).

Farmers must also obtain the educational tools necessary to prosper in the area of management. As farmers are the main part of the agricultural market, they need to know how to maximize benefits and attain profits (Yin Ying, 2009). It would also be best for farmers to learn to be creative, which requires further educational training (Zhu, 2013). Such creativity will guide farmers to explore new areas in agriculture, and their training could be based on differing models depending on various farming techniques.

Achievement of the “Practical Study of New Farmer Training College’s Innovatory Mechanism”

Condition for the Study

The “Practical Study of New Farmer-Training College’s Innovatory Mechanism” program is based on the study conducted in Lishui, a city located in the southwestern part of Zhejiang province. Agriculture is the most important industry in Lishui (its terrain is ideal for agricultural research), where farmers comprise almost 80% of the city’s population. Based on the study of Lishui’s agriculture, researchers seek to adopt a reliable model to be used in the farmer training college and subsequently apply it on a nationwide scale in China.

The Target of the Farmer Training College

The Farmer Training College was established for the purpose of improving Chinese farmers’ agricultural skills. As such, it is imperative that advanced farming techniques serve as an incentive to enhance overall agricultural production and income generated from applying such new techniques.

While agriculture remains the most important industry in Lishui, a few problems for farmers still exist: promoting agricultural products in several markets presents a significant challenge; the quality of some agriculture organizations and enterprises is less than ideal; and some specialized farmers’ cooperatives, agricultural organizations and enterprises do not possess strong management skills. The Farmer Training College could solve these issues by providing a new model for farmer training based on strategic and specialized marketing and management skills.

The Farmer Education Innovatory Mechanism

For common enterprises, innovatory mechanism means using every beneficial resource to improve efficiency. When it comes to farmer education, the innovatory mechanism means applying full use of resources toward improving agriculture. Therefore, the Farmer Education Innovatory Mechanism needs financial support from the government. Another potential resource for training farmers is funding from local colleges. By combining these two beneficial resources, the farmer training college would be able to establish the innovatory mechanism.

Under the concept of “Farmer Education Innovatory Mechanism,” farmers are trained in an appropriate way. Researchers in the “Practical Study of New Farmer Training College’s Innovatory Mechanism” program compare different models of farmer training and point out the limitations of these existing models. Given the results, they discover improved research methods and propose these for the farmer training research.

The evaluation system for the Farmer Training College must connect theory to practice. The performance-related assessment for farmer training is a new proposal promoted by researchers in this program, and this evaluation system is consistent with the following criteria: specified performance evaluation; controlling value orientation of the three core contents; and creating the innovative mechanism through the “multiple representation and complementary” evaluation method.

The Drive of the Farmer Training College—Technical Skill

Technical skills drive farmers to be creative. Under this concept, farmers can be separated into several types. To use technical skills in agriculture as the drive, local colleges and universities play significant

roles. Creative technical skills are essential toward developing improved and industrialized agricultural methods. Based on this requirement, local colleges and universities devote themselves to developing problem-solving research methods and activating creative technical skill mechanisms.

As the main constituency trained to use improved agricultural technology, the new generation of farmers need to be safeguarded and supported. Researchers of this program suggest that it should also be required to (1) improve the new generation of farmers' physiological problems, (2) to improve their social status, and (3) to improve the raising of funds and allocation thereof for agriculture and construction.

Advanced Management Skills of Conserving Mechanism

Advanced management skills for specialized cooperatives and agricultural enterprises were studied by researchers in this program. Only with advanced management skills will the farmers, specialized farmers' cooperatives, agricultural organizations and related enterprises receive the necessary support. This means including the aforementioned training in more advanced managerial and marketing skills as well as appropriate business models.

In China, independent farmers join specialized farmers' cooperatives to gain more benefits; therefore, they operate as enterprises which serve farmers by giving them the most recent technological guidance. The researchers in this program have found out that those farmers who join in the specialized agriculture cooperatives have adapted income structures, leading to an increase in overall revenues.

However, in most specialized farmer cooperatives, there are still issues related to marketing. The unbalanced marketing structure is not conducive to the farmers' cooperatives. To solve these problems, researchers in the "Practical Study of New Farmer-Training College's Innovatory Mechanism" program suggest reducing the number of marketing channels, building more specialized farmer cooperatives, and improving management skills in the marketplace.

Researchers in this program also suggest applying the Boston Matrix, as agricultural products can be divided into four types: children, stars, cows and dogs. The premise behind this approach is the notion that specialized farmer cooperatives and/or agricultural enterprises require various agricultural products derived from different strategies.

There are different types of individuals and organizations working in the agricultural sector, including production, processing, sales and service. For these individuals and organizations, it is necessary to optimize human resources by maintaining a high level of energy, which leads to effective and efficient productivity. Researchers also suggest using the O2O model, thereby placing agricultural products online while allowing for customers to purchase those same products offline as well.

The Farmer Training College Serves the Society

The Farmer Training College serves the local communities by providing more technologically advanced instruction and construction. As the main leader of the farmer training college, local colleges and universities need to be "target oriented"; that is, they need to determine how to best serve local agriculture. Under the concept of "target oriented," local colleges and universities must establish teacher awareness of all the specific needs related to the agriculture sector. In turn, it behooves leaders in higher education to establish a laudable platform for teachers to serve both the greater society and local communities. The role of higher education toward improving agriculture nationwide cannot be understated.

To further support the field of agriculture, educators could join agricultural enterprises and/or organizations as technical instructors. By integrating industry and education, the emergence of productive agricultural models could be achieved - continually reviewed and revised - and thereby enhance farmers' ability to serve consumers in cities as well as in the countryside.

The Model of the Farmer Training College

The first step toward establishing a viable Farmer Training College entails creating an engaged learning community, including biological study groups and innovative approaches from local colleges and

universities. The learning community would include students who have mastered advanced technological skills following training. In addition, teachers must convene to discuss methodologies and curricula relevant to educating farmers. The learning community must also emphasize teacher training given the rapid rate at which technology advances. As such, the new mechanism of local colleges and universities aims to identify and create new targets in order to enhance their status as leaders of both the greater society and smaller communities. Finally, researchers of this program are strong proponents of language training. The inclusion of training models and language learning courses designed to help farmers' needs is essential.

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