

Overview of Rural Development Administration (RDA)

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The Korean Rural Development Administration (RDA) has played a vital role in the development and dissemination of agricultural technologies to improve agricultural productivity and increase farm income.

Table 1. Major changes of rural development administration (RDA) by period

Period	Direction
1960s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of National agricultural research & extension system (1960s): Rural Development Administration under the Rural Development Act (1962) - Introduction of basic technologies for variety breeding and for pest & disease research - Consolidation of agricultural R & D and extension of the central, local, and National Agricultural Cooperative Federation
1970s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Green Revolution (1970s) : Increase in food production, reinforcement of extension - Attainment of rice self-sufficiency by developing and disseminating high-yielding rice (Tong-il, 1971) - Improvement of the diet and nutrition of farm village residents
1980s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - White Revolution (1980s): Overcoming seasonal constraints, and improvement in labor productivity - Start of year-round production of fresh vegetables with greenhouses and mulching cultivation techniques - Use of mechanized plowing, sowing, and harvesting. Also supplied technology for high-quality products
1990s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality Revolution (1990s): Production of high-quality agricultural products and cost reduction - Increase in R&D investment to cope with changes in the global market due to UR and WTO - Developing high-quality horticultural seeds and realizing economies-of-scale and automation of farming
Recent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Value Revolution (2000s) : Focusing on Environmentally-friendly, healthy, functional and high value-added products with the application of cutting-edge technologies - Promotion of export-oriented, environment-friendly and functional products with added-value by applying advanced technologies including IT, BT, ET, and NT to agricultural sector

(1) Development of Agricultural R & D

The core mission of the RDA is to conduct agricultural R&D to meet the real needs of farmers. RDA enhances the value of agriculture by breeding new and good varieties that are competitive in the global market, developing technology to ensure food security, promoting technology to produce export-oriented products, and commercializing technology to serve the real needs of farms and markets. The RDA has contributed to upgrading Korean agriculture through constant agricultural R&D and technological developments.

RDA actively supports the promotion of the seed industry. Korea is becoming a global powerhouse in the seed industry by efficiently managing genetic resources and breeding new varieties. Also, the RDA has boosted its research on soil management, pests & diseases and eco-friendly farming to supply safe food.

The RDA actively identifies and addresses the issues and problems farmers encounter by surveying their technological demands and developing agricultural technology for stable food supply. To increase food production and food self-sufficiency, the RDA develops new varieties, agricultural machinery and processing technologies to enhance farm productivity and competitiveness.

(2) Extension of agricultural technology

RDA provides customized extension services and also disseminates technologies to reduce costs and produce high-quality products. The RDA actively identifies and addresses the issues and problems faced by farmers by surveying their technological demands and providing extension services to meet the real needs of farmers.

RDA utilizes various tools and methods to disseminate technology such as training, demonstration, consultation, brochures, and leaflets. The organization strengthens the capacity of agricultural specialists and farm management skills, strives to train experts in different careers and technical levels, and provides tailored agricultural technology education and management consultation. The RDA applies advanced IT to agriculture, employing the Internet, SNS, smart phones and the latest IT to upgrade its services and technology. It works together with city and county agriculture research and extension centers to efficiently disseminate new seeds and technologies. It also expands its technology and services by collecting, processing and disseminating new information and technology as well as by upgrading its consultation systems such as management diagnosis and prescriptions.

Table 2. RDA's budget and number of employees

Unit: million US dollar

	2014	2015	Number of workforce	Ph. D. in Staff (%)
Total	623.6	668.0	1,856	69%
R & D	418.2	433.0	1,165	74%
Extension	157.2	170.7	95 (8,282)	64%
Other	48.2	64.3	596	N.A

Note: the value in parenthesis is the number of extension staff in local government

Source: RDA

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