

The Farmers' Academy ushers in the Agriculture 3.0 era

Dr. Hwang-Jaw Lee, PhD

Board Director, Taiwan Flowers Development Association



Ever wanted to try your hands at farming? Ever wanted to put your green thumbs to the test? Look no further than the Farmers' Academy, a virtual academic network established by the Council of Agriculture (COA) to cultivate the next generation of farmers.

The era of Agriculture 1.0, which included the Stray Bird and Gardener programs in 2006, revitalized the nation's agricultural sector by generating renewed interest in farming and subsequently producing younger generations of farmers. Then came the age of Agriculture 2.0, where the COA's 2008 policy of joint farming helped farmers expand their operations by pooling together resources. The launch of Agriculture 3.0 began with the 2011 establishment of the Farmers' Academy, the COA's cloud computing solution to the transference of agricultural knowledge. With the extensive educational programs now in place, Agriculture 3.0 is seen to bring forth stable, quality and lush growth in the nation's agricultural sector.

Agriculture 101: Beginners are welcomed

If each farm-beginner can be compared to a budding seed, then the COA's Farmers' Academy can be viewed as the perfect greenhouse for aspiring farmers. Introductory programs, designed to give an overview of the entire sector, cover key agricultural concepts and operations while students tour real farmlands and markets.

From novice to guru: One, two and three levels – it's that easy

After completing the introductory level, novices can move onto a wide range of basic, intermediate and advanced courses. Courses on the basic level will walk farm-beginners through the production of different agricultural products for consumption; then through the internship opportunities offered at the end of basic courses, farm-learners can gain real-life experiences in working under various weather, tussling with soil and manning equipment.

Intermediate-level courses, which require prior internship or work experience, offer instructions to farm-beginners on their specialized areas of knowledge while advanced courses incorporate elements from business management; participants can learn from successful case studies and draft their own marketing plans. Industry leaders and business people are also invited to present keynote speeches and to share their personal experiences with students in the COA's higher-level programs.

Introducing the agriculture cloud: The era of digital farming begins

The COA's Farmers' Academy is setting the bar high by introducing the agriculture cloud computing system, a virtual network that will enable participants to log into their courses from anywhere, at anytime of their choosing. The digitalization of all academic programs related to agricultural production, distribution and management, means that farmers won't have to take time off their demanding schedules to go to school – the Farmers' Academy is only a click away!

Read, set and go! Free business consultations from the COA

After completing their terms at the Farmers' Academy, farm-beginners will be eligible for more assistance such as business consultations, farming partnerships, agricultural subsidies, participation in local farmers' markets, etc.

Date submitted: July 14, 2013

Received, edited and uploaded: July 19, 2013