

Reform and Construction of Grassroots-level Agro-tech Popularization System

Zhen Zhong

Assistant Professor

School of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development

Renmin University of China

INTRODUCTION

To implement The Law on Agro-Technical Popularization of the People`s Republic of China and other CPC Central Committee documents to advance Reform and Construction of Grass-roots-level Agro-tech Popularization, in 2013, the central finances allocated 2.6 billion yuan to launch National Subsidy Projects for Reform and Construction of the Grassroots-level Agro-tech Popularization in 37 regions of provincial level, covering almost all agriculture counties. Provincial authorities elected 2287000 technical instructors, constructed 10,498 science and technology demonstration bases and trained 2.085 million model farmers-which brought 35.68 million fellow households along-and 538,000 grassroots-level agro-tech promoters in the leading industries of farming, animal husbandry and fishing. Through the subsidy projects, the Agriculture Ministry strengthened the supervision and management, introduced agro-tech to villages and rural households in an all-round way, supported the development of modern agriculture and achieved notable progress.

Main method

1) The innovation was expanded and the content of the subsidy projects was raised. Demonstration country of agro-tech popularization was set up. First, to further strengthen agro-tech popularization system and raise efficiency of services, the Agriculture Ministry and the Finance Ministry established national demonstration county based on references, support demonstration counties to play a leading role to explore new models and mechanism for agro-tech popularization. Second, fund allocation for subsidy project was connected with performance evaluation. The Agriculture Ministry adjust finances in accordance with the region`s performance last year, reducing fund for the top ten regions, which greatly boosted enthusiasm of participants. Third, agro-tech popularization services were promoted with modern methods. The Agriculture Ministry promoted informational service to improve its work, opening internet book stores on agro-science and technology in 1400 counties, opening 200,000 personal accounts and providing platform for farmers and technicians to learn and practice science and technology.

2) The key link was grasped to ensure the fine implementation of subsidy projects. First, the construction of science and technology demonstration system was strengthened and the channel connecting achievements of agro-tech and science with production was cleared. In accordance with the distribution of leading industries, every county constructed two to three pilot and demonstration bases for agro-tech popularization system with the help of research

facilities, large family farmers, agriculture-related enterprises and specialized farmers' cooperatives, to import, test, demonstrate new breeds, technologies and tools and trained personnel. Secondly, focusing on the training of science and technology instructors and demonstration households. Based on the principle of openness, fairness and free will, three to five households engaging in large scale and high quality operation and farming were selected in every village, to lead 30~100 surrounding households to learn advanced science and technology. A patch of instructors were elected to provide guidance households by households. Third, the construction of talent pool was launched. The plan of training tens of thousands of talents in agro-tech popularization was implemented. 10,000 talents in agro-tech popularization was elected from county-level. They are classified and trained. At the same time, training files for agro-tech personnel were established and training management system was put forward, laying a solid foundation for training grassroots agro-tech personnel.

3) Standardized management was adopted to ensure efficiency of the projects. First, organization and leadership were strengthened. Coordination facilities were established in pilot provinces and counties, to implement relative policies, make implementation plan and strengthen supervision and management. Leading committee led by local authorities for subsidy projects was established in every pilot county. The non-administrative system from the ministry to the provincial and county levels was established. Secondly, guiding opinions were issued. In 2013, the general offices of the Agriculture Ministry and the Finance Ministry issued Guiding Opinions on Reform and Construction of Grassroots-level Agro-tech Popularization System, putting forward requirements on objects, tasks and focus for the projects. Third, management featuring two handbooks, three signs, one platform and one database was adopted. Technical Instructor Handbook and Science and Technology Demonstration Households Handbook were issued to record the implementation of the projects. The pilot and demonstration bases were asked to erect signs, technical instructors were asked to wear ID cards and demonstration households were asked to put up signs outside their doors. The digital platform for agro-tech popularization communication were established to realize information management

4) Strengthening performance management to give full play to finance the subsidy of projects. In 2013, the Agriculture Ministry makes plans for performance evaluation of subsidy projects. Evaluation teams were organized for field trips to evaluate the performance of every county. Experts were organized to give comprehensive evaluation to province and write evaluation reports. Evaluation was connected with location of finance where the best will be rewarded and the worst will be punished. To promote the implementation of policies, evaluation will also be linked to local finances.

Major achievements

1) Construction and reform of grassroots agro-tech popularization system were deepened. Through subsidy projects, local authorities constantly deepen reform on management of agro-tech popularization system at county level. First, the non-profit nature was clarified, non-profit portfolio were implemented to stabilize the talent pool. Second, the policy of "one connection and two coverage were implemented, to increase the salary of grassroots technicians to the level of other administrative institutions staff. Third, the guiding role of count-level authorities to agro-tech popularization was strengthened. By the end of 2013, county-charged agro-tech popularization institutions accounted for 60% of the total number,

so that agro-tech popularization could return to their business and focus on agro-tech popularization services. Fourth, leading local authorities to increase investments into agro-tech popularization. In 2013, provincial finances allocated 880 million yuan to agro-tech popularization. City and county authorities also increased their investments for the work.

2) Enthusiasm for agro-tech popularization was constantly increased, efficiency was raised. Agro-technicians enthusiasm for field trip was boosted. Through subsidy projects, the agro-technicians were more willing and able to go to the countryside. Differentiating good and bad performance to boost the personnel's enthusiasm. On average, agro-technicians carried out 11.6 field trips last year. The quality of agro-technicians were raised. Training grassroots agro-technicians with the help of subsidy projects. To learn through practice and practice through learning. Training agro-technicians through various channels and by various levels. Intensive training was carried out for backbone agro-technicians by means of concentrated training and field trips. The methods were hailed by trainees. Third, performance evaluation was strengthened. Local authorities carried out three-way evaluation for agro-tech popularization. Based on evaluation results of the Agriculture Ministration, local authorities evaluated the performance of agro-tech popularization personnel and households. The good was rewarded while the bad was punished.

3) Agriculture production and farmers' income were increased. Via subsidy project, the construction of agro-tech popularization system was improved and the development of leading industries was boosted. According to statistics, output of leading industries of various regions increased by more than 5%, especially for those demonstration households. In 2013, peanut output from demonstration households of Shandong Province were up by 58.6 kg than the past three years, up by 16.3%. Vegetables output was up by 729.4 kg, up 15.9%. Fruit output was increased by 350 kg, up by 18.5%. Authorities of Henan Province selected 110 breeds and 120 techniques for promotion. In 2013, total eclipse of the wheat disease prevention and control area reached 25.013 million tons, and increased to 595,000 tons. The output of rapeseed hit historical high of 1.226 million hectares, 136.2 kg per unit and 2.5047 million.

Date submitted: April 15, 2016

Reviewed, edited and uploaded: April 19, 2016