

Coping with Climate Change and Ensuring Food Security

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In recent years, global climate change has caused instability in agricultural production and supply of staple foods around the world. In response, and on the basis of concepts drawn from “risk management,” on June 15 of 2010, the COA convened a “Conference on Policies to Adapt Agriculture to Cope with Climate Change.” At the same time, the COA joined the special task force on “Policy Planning for Climate Change” convened by the Council for Economic Planning and Development of the Executive Yuan, and has proceeded with research in the field of “Agricultural Production and Biodiversity” under the National Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan (2011-2016). Such programs help to integrate the work of different ministries, with the COA playing its own particular role in each.

In the future, depending upon the level of risks, a food security system will be constructed that will incorporate (a) technology to improve the ability of food industries to overcome negative environmental trends, (b) a data monitoring and evaluation network which will include data about the climate and environment in Taiwan and about changes in domestic and international markets, (c) even more effort to protect the land and water in forest areas, and (d) stronger support for biodiversity, in order to ensure sustainability of agriculture development and food security.

Constructing a food reserve mechanism

Under the regulations governing the keeping of a national rice reserve, issued by the Executive Yuan in September of 2006, the government ensures that an adequate and stable supply of rice is available to consumers through measures such as purchasing of domestic rice at guaranteed prices, government purchasing of rice from abroad, and release of public stocks to the market.

In order to ensure food stability and security in the ROC and the Asia-Pacific region, the COA has called for the creation of an APEC Emergency Food Reserves Mechanism, to be organized cooperatively by APEC economies, thereby allowing the burden of risks to be shared. If any participating economy faces a situation in which extreme climate change affects the stable supply of food, it could receive food aid through this mechanism. At the August 2010 APEC Food Security Forum, held in Taipei and attended by nearly 100 representatives from 20 economies, delegates unanimously recognized the value of building an APEC food reserve mechanism. In October of 2010, at the APEC Ministerial Meeting on Food Security, held in

Niigata, Japan, Ministers adopted the initiative of Taiwan to convene another forum (to which all APEC economies would be invited) on how such a reserve mechanism would operate. Through these steps we have clearly made a concrete contribution to safeguarding regional food security.

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