

State Surrounding the Cooperative Farm Extension Service

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INTRODUCTION

The Cooperative Farm Extension Service (CFES)¹ in Japan has engaged in the guidance and extension of new agronomy technology on farmers after WWII. The central and prefectural governments have jointly managed this service in such a way that the former covers necessary budget and the latter implements farm level activities. The role for modernization of post war Japan's agriculture, which this system has played, is very important.

The concept of CFES has been fundamentally revised over the last 10 years. Each prefecture had no need to establish extension centers due to the revision of the Agricultural Improvement Promotion Act in 2004. Moreover, in 2006, the central government transferred most of a source of revenue for CFES to prefectural governments. Each prefectural government could become free to distribute this fund to policy areas where it prefers, so the amount of budget for CFES has declined. The traditional system of CFES has weakened for sure and forced to change.

In this article, I will summarize and translate the MAFF's document which was published to explain the situation of CFES². This translation is not the official publication of the MAFF.

TRANSLATION

State Surrounding the Cooperative Farm Extension Service

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- CFES plays a role in promoting agricultural policy agendas at the farm level, through extension workers supplying technological and managerial support and directly contacting farmers, and through their function to bridge experiment between research institutions and farmers.
- The central and prefectural governments manage CFES. The central government makes the basic management principle, supplies the extension grant, implements the examination of national qualification and training opportunities and constructs the system of cooperation. Depending on the state of each region, each prefectural government places extension

¹ "Cooperative" means that the central and prefectural governments manage the extension system in the manner of cooperation.

² If you wish to read by original language, refer to the MAFF's website (http://www.maff.go.jp/j/seisan/gizyutu/hukyu/pdf/meguru_jyousei_h270518.pdf).

instructors in extension centers and supports occurrences of innovations in regional farming through making manuals and holding training seminars of new technologies developed in experiment and research institutions.

- Extension instructors have to pass the examination of national qualification. The number of them tends to decline and is 6,732 at the end of FY2013 (**Table 1**). Extension centers rearrange and strengthen their function from the perspective of sophistication of CFES and administrative reform of local governments. Ninety percent (90%) of extension instructors are placed in 366 extension centers. (**Table 2**). The central government supplies the extension grant for compensating a portion of cost which is necessary for prefectural governments to manage CFES. Most of this grant, in 2006, was transferred from the central government to prefectural ones due to “the trinity reform³” (becoming general funds), while ensuring to keep the basic concept of CFES which is indispensable to promote policy agendas (**Table 3**).
- We review the division of roles between extension instructors who have public status and private sector, and intend to strength support to farmers by deriving total power consisting of various interested organizations. CFES will focus on the area which public agencies should manage, for example, introducing new varieties of seeds, supporting new entry farmers and coping with the global warming and natural disasters. CFES will aggressively publish its information to the private sector. CFES will cooperate with general corporations to utilize ICT technologies which they have developed, and with leading farmers in regional farming to revitalize regional society and to rear new entry farmers.
- CFES will especially focus below four areas; support for sustainable development of agriculture; support for ensuring stable supply of foods; support for revitalization of rural areas; supports for restoration and revival from the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Table 1. Trend in extension workers

		1998	2003	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Extension Workers		10,634	9,637	8,084	7,777	7,628	7,545	7,457	7,382
Extension Instructors				7,720	7,341	7,204	6,997	6,849	6,732
Rate of Change from the Previous Year	Extension Workers	-1.4%	-2.3%	-3.3%	-3.8%	-1.9%	-1.1%	-1.2%	-1.0%
	Extension Instructors			-6.2%	-4.9%	-1.9%	-2.9%	-2.1%	-1.7%

Source: The MAFF. *Survey about Organization and Management of CFES*.

Table 2. Trend in Extension Centers

	1998	2003	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Extension Centers	510	456	387	373	369	369	366	366
Local Branches	62	55	142	133	131	131	132	128

Source: The MAFF. *Survey about Organization and Management of CFES*.

³ “The trinity reform,” from 2003 to 2006, was implemented by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in order for the reconstruction of national finance. It also simultaneously implemented the transfer of tax revenue source to local governments, the reduction of subsidies and the reduction of tax and grand allocations.

Table 3. Trend in budget for CFES

		(100million yen)								
		FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013
The Extension Grant		713	679	661	620	586	572	558	537	519
Rate of Change from the Previous Year		-4.4%	-4.8%	-2.7%	-6.2%	-5.4%	-2.5%	-2.5%	-3.6%	-3.5%
Breakdown of Source of Revenue	The Central Government	218	36	36	36	36	36	32	27	24
	Prefectural Governments	495	643	625	584	550	536	525	510	495

Source: Surveys by The MAFF.

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