

Establishment of Public Consensus Agricultural Policy Committee

Dr. Jeongbin Im

Professor, Seoul National University, Korea

With the slogan of “New government, new agricultural policy: We will open our ears and think of the public!”, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) has established the Public Consensus Agricultural Policy Committee as a place for interaction with the public to foster public understanding and social consensus on the essential value of agriculture and rural communities in April 2013. The Public Consensus Agricultural Policy Committee will become the passage to communication with the public and promotion of agricultural policy. Through this, MAFRA will enhance confidence in agricultural policy and increase public understanding and interest in the essential value of agriculture and rural communities.

The committee will be co-chaired by Minister Lee Dong-phil, Korea Food Education Network representative Hwang Min-yeong, and Korea National Council of Consumer Organizations (KNCCO) chair Kim Yeon-hwa. There are 162 members in the committee including farmers, food industry workers, consumer representatives, scholars, press, local government representatives, and the general public. The Public Consensus Agricultural Policy Committee has 16 general public members. They are students, volunteers, consultants, village leaders, publishers, university professors, promotion experts, field farmers who are selected through a public contest to promote agricultural policy on the public level.

The committee is divided into six subcommittees (① happy rural community, ② hopeful agriculture, ③ trustworthy food-consumer, ④ livestock for public consumption, ⑤ smart agricultural policy, ⑥ special subcommittee) for in-depth discussion and collecting diverse opinions. The subcommittee is composed of 25 experts in each field.

The activities of the committee will be focused on major projects chosen in connection with government projects. The committee has initially conducted some concrete forms to the five agricultural policy projects: ① growth of the agri-food industry, ② establishing welfare for rural communities, ③ increasing farm incomes, ④ stable supply of safe agrifood, ⑤ improvement of agricultural and livestock product distribution). These are to achieve the agricultural policy vision of the new government such as bountiful agriculture, active rural communities, and inspired people.

The committee made objective evaluations of previous agriculture and rural communities, major policies, and projects in the food industry through the perspectives of the public and farmers. The committee also gathered diverse opinions of all levels and discussed major policy projects necessary for continuous development of agriculture, rural communities, and the food industry. There was also discussion about agricultural issues requiring social consensus such as increasing the value of agriculture and rural community, participation of major companies in agriculture, and improvement of the direct payment program.

Specific projects to be discussed further will be selected by each subcommittee after a general

meeting and subcommittee meeting. The subcommittee is planning to hold meetings two or three times a month focusing on major projects. Once or twice, these meetings will be held in public to reflect the public opinion.

The government will apply the results of discussion to the agriculture, rural community and food industry development plan (five-year plan) that is being established according to the agriculture, rural community and the food industry's fundamental law. This will increase the effectiveness of the discussion and the sentiment of the policy. The committee will meet quarterly after July 2013 to discuss agricultural issues that need social consensus.

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