

## **Young-farmer Public-sponsored Course at Mingdao University Opens for 30 Enrollments**

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### **Source: Council of Agriculture (COA)**

Mingdao University located at Changwha County will launch a Young-farmer Public-sponsored Course next year in order to educate more young generations dedicated to the agricultural sector. The Council of Agriculture (COA) sponsors 30 students free college enrollments. President Kou Chu-Hsun of Mingdao University said that they wish to provide incentives in promoting technological and organic farming techniques for young farmers to get higher income by benefiting from the Department of Post-modern Agriculture.

President Kou was worried of the current old generation of farmers whose average age is 62. He believed that it is necessary to get more young generation of farmers to upgrade the agricultural development in Taiwan. Department of Post-modern Agriculture is sponsored by COA to start the first agricultural professional public-sponsored class in central Taiwan to offer free 4-year college degree, waiving a total of NT\$400,000 tuition fee per enrolled student.

The COA said that the salary for the teachers at the above program is equal to the general public-sponsored program. The public-sponsored students must participate in the agricultural sector after graduation, with additional government resources to conduct privileged counseling, low-rate entrepreneurial loan, and assistance of farmland acquisition.

The Department of Post-modern Agriculture at Mingdao University has been devoted to eco-friendly farming, with 7-hectare organic certified farmland at a 12-hectare farm. Students underment farm practice with a recent organic rice harvest in the 2<sup>nd</sup> season of 2016.

The director of Post-modern Agriculture Department, Chen Chung, said that the shortage of young farmers could not be blamed unless more superior agricultural infrastructure should be done to attract more young generation to invest themselves in the agricultural sector. For example, the German and American farmers have certification system to ensure high professions. Farmers in those countries are used to get up-to-date knowledge and be able to use computers and mechanic technology in farming. In addition, a well-established farmers' association integrates resources to raise the agricultural efficiency.

The COA suspected that "if hard-working people are necessary in producing crops but without good prices, what then can motivate young people to join?" The Department of

Post-modern Agriculture promotes organic farming to raise agricultural quality and food safety. More importantly, the Department intends to create more value in young farmers in terms of marketing and profitability.

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