

## **Plan for Alleviating Farming Human Resource Issues**

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In order to alleviate the lack of farming human resource, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) has announced measures to promote the current impetus towards returning to farms and rural villages in August 30, 2013. The main goal of this plan is to encourage stable settlement of new farmers coming from non-agricultural sector and urban areas.

Return to farms and rural villages are increasing every year, due to an increase in urban residents pursuing a diversified life and well-being value through pastoral living as well as due to the retirement of the post-war generation who was born between 1955 and 1963. Households returning to farms and rural villages are continuously increasing from 880 households (2001) to 27,008 households (2012).

The greatest difficulties experienced by farm and rural village returnees are lack of information, housing and farmland during initial settlement, and conflicts with local residents. As such, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs has announced the establishment of a method to promote the movement, by focusing on solving such difficulties, with the goal of reaching 30,000 households returning to farms and rural villages by 2017.

Government is planning to actively provide the useful information which is needed from prospective farmers and rural villagers through tailored promotional activities, by holding establishment expositions and strengthening a one-stop system with a range of information focused on the Center for People Returning to Farms and Rural villages. In addition, as prior preparation for a successful return, the Ministry is planning to expand and reorganize training for returnees and support for the early settlement of those wishing to establish farms.

Moreover, the Ministry has considered details based on past results, such as the development and distribution of standard programs to resolve conflicts with local residents, alleviation of financing conditions and housing purchase funds, and supply of job information. First, the Ministry will provide job information on the Center for People Returning to Farms and Rural villages website through a post called 'recruitment in farm and fishing villages' for those with insufficient financing and capability, training focusing on job employment and establishments through demonstrative operation of a 'middle manager training course' in connection with agricultural corporations, and consultation and comprehensive information through establishment expositions.

After selecting outstanding field coordinators (30 people in 2013) under the tentative title "field professor for farm and rural village returnees," from among successful returnee farmers, the coordinators will help support stable settlement and field consultation. Related promotional activities will be immensely strengthened to implement a service for 'tailored promotional activities for farm and rural village returnees,' by social groupings including women's groups, military men, North Korean refugees, private corporations, and urban public corporations, and different promotional activities will be sought by operating a moving consultation center participating in various events for urban dwellers and retired people.

Projects to form a sojourn to farm establishment support center and movements to amend guidelines for financing funds to support settlement and new establishments will be made, such as promotion of establishments, farm technology, and farm adaptations. The guidelines have been amended to provide a maximum of KRW 240 million (KRW 200 million for establishment, KRW 40 million for housing), instead of excluding such amount from applicants who have already received other policy funds, by alleviating the support conditions for housing purchase financing last July, and is expected to provide huge support to the those wishing to return to farms.

Moreover, when people are able to procure a certain quota or place of payment when supporting establishment funds for the dairy sector, the guidelines will be amended to provide up to KRW 200 million, from the current KRW50 million limit. Two 'sojourn farm establishment support centers' will be built every year to allow those wishing to return to farms and rural villages to prepare new establishments and experience opportunities, such as understanding farms, adapting to farms, and establishment practice, while living 1 or 2 years with their families. A center is being built in Chungbuk's Jecheon, and Gyeongbuk's Yeongju, with tenants to be invited in the latter half of next year.

In addition, the government will support stable settlement for returnees by providing information on leasing farms owned by the Korean Rural Community Corporation, and the availability of houses around the nation on the Center for People Returning to Farms and Rural villages website. The initial economic costs for returnees are expected to be reduced by providing information on leasing farms and available farm houses.

Moreover, the government is planning to enact a law under the tentative name 'Act on the Promotion and Development of Farm, Fishing, and Rural Village Returns,' containing a definition of and support basis for farms and rural village returns, in order to procure a continuing system and policy basis. The enactment of laws relating to farms and rural village returns has been continuously proposed as a core task to promote the movement, and based on the enactment of such law in the latter half of the year, more systematic and varied support measures are expected to be available. The characteristics concerning promotion offarm and rural village returns are that a detailed policy was established and provided from a consumer perspective, based on existing policy results, by providing differentiated and tailored training for each occupation, household, and worker, and by developing and distributing a 'conflict resolution standards training program' to resolve conflicts with local residents.

This vitalization method for returning to farms and rural villages is expected to support effective and stable settlement for those who have already moved, or wish to move, to farms and rural villages. It will contribute to enhancing farm promotion and alleviating manpower issues in the farms by encouraging people to return to farms and rural villages.

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