

Conservation Direction for Premium Agriculture Land in Taiwan

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With the combination of the Agricultural Development Act amendment (de-regulation) in 2000, and open trading of agriculture land and legacy issues from land reform; arose a set of issues. Arable land have been divided from five hectares to 0.25 hectare, non-farmers were allowed to apply for the farmhouse constructions, non-agricultural facilities flooded on agricultural land which caused environmental pollution, and land degradation. All these issues, plus climate change affect agricultural development, productivity, food safety, farmers' livelihood, and sustainability of agriculture.

Over the years, due to urbanization, agricultural land has become a hot commodity which was intensely sought-after by many non-agricultural sectors. The overall execution and reinforcement of agricultural land management fail to deliver the agriculture policy of 'agricultural land used for agriculture businesses'. Facing the global climate change and ensuring stable domestic food supply, protecting agricultural land and related resources become the key focus which emphasized on the following:

- re-consolidation of agricultural land and resources;
- re-definition of premium land;
- re-examination of the existing agricultural land management practices
- creation of incentives for agricultural land use
- creation of high quality agriculture business environment

Based on the goal of agriculture policy 'Healthy, Efficiency, and Sustainable Agriculture', policy directions to re-define premium agriculture land and protection, are listed below:

1. Competitive Agriculture Business Environment

Premium agricultural land is the core of a competitive agriculture business environment. Policy making should facilitate it, planning and promotions should be centered around it, and it should be used to support the development of new markets, new farmers, and new villages.

2. Premium Land, Top Priority

Consider premium agricultural land as the base of the agriculture industry which supports core production, leisure agriculture and culture/heritage development. Premium agriculture land should be protected and should be considered as top priority for policy/resource deployment. Expansion of conservation and protection of premium agricultural land should be considered.

Classification of land should be defined and developed from bottom-up premium production zones.

3. Management Mechanisms

Strengthening management and monitoring mechanisms are essential to maintain a high-quality agriculture business environment. Agricultural land development should be based on the holistic view of agriculture, the banning of urbanization or commercial constructions on agricultural land, and there should be tight control of construction of farming facilities in order to fully deliver the policy of "Agriculture Land, Agriculture Business".

4. Business Intelligence

To support refinement and deployment of policies, it is mandatory to establish information systems for data collection and strengthen business intelligence on industry, farmers and food consumption.

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