

How Taiwanese smallholder farmers built an association for marketing

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Abstract

Various agricultural associations have strived to support the development of farmers around the world. In Taiwan, a number of agriculture associations have been established. Some of them are legal bodies represented by strong organizations, others are loosely organized groups, but all of them deserve to be recognized. Associations can assist smallholder farmers in price setting, communication and promotion, to improve their market position. In Taiwan, most farmers are small and operate independently. After joining the World Trade Organization in 2002, the Agriculture Authority was compelled to facilitate the formation of collaborative marketing groups as a way to exploit local characteristics and the diversity of agricultural products, to enhance competitiveness and minimize the harm to local farmers from imported products. The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) initiated agriculture clusters as a means to bring smallholder farmers together. Clusters are the smallest unit of agribusiness in Taiwan. As more farmers join clusters, some of them develop into cooperatives which enable them to expand their economic and management scale. The aim of this study is to investigate the conceptual development of agriculture clusters.