

Scaling Up Ecological Farming in China through establishing Farmers' Professional Associations

Increasing competitive pressures as well as growing requirements regarding food quality and safety poses continuous challenges for small-scale farms worldwide. Based on in-depth interviews, this research analyzes the organizational structure of Farmers' Professional cooperatives (FPCs) in promoting agricultural sustainability in China by highlighting the roles of FPCs in scaling up and standardizing agricultural production. Three cooperative models are identified—FPCs mainly led by large-scale farms, FPCs mainly led by private enterprises, and FPCs mainly led by external forces (e.g., experts/scholars, NGOs, and foreign donors). Case studies are used to analyze these three models. Although both small-scale farmers' organizations and ecological farming have been widely documented, little research has combine these two to address potentials and challenges of promoting ecological farming for small-scale farms through establishing farmers' organizations. The experiences in China also have implications for better addressing the needs of poor and small-scale farms in other countries.

Key words: Scaling up, Ecological agriculture, Organic Agriculture

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