How to Encourage Young Generation to Engage in Farming: Korea’s Case

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Abstract
As the share of the agriculture sector in the Korean economy has decreased since the 1970s, the Korean agricultural workforce has also declined and workers in their twenties and thirties became scarce, which led to a lower rate of agricultural labor productivity. Since the 1980s, Korea has been trying to secure young generation into the agriculture sector and rural areas by launching new programs such as the Farm Successor Fostering Program (1981), Korea National Agricultural College (1997), and Special Agricultural Program in Agricultural Schools (2006). While each program has its own outcomes, the greying of Korean farmers is likely to continue because of the less favorable public perceptions of agriculture, farm youth decrease, old farmers retirement and entry, and agricultural school graduates’ scarce entry into farming. In order to solve these problems, this study suggested the following measures: activating education about agriculture; fostering selected agricultural high schools; strengthening agricultural colleges’ role in fostering agricultural workforce; linking retiring farmers and new farmers through farm corporations; launching intermediate organizations in charge of regional agricultural workforce; and supporting capital formation of young farmers.

Keywords: agricultural workforce, ageing, fostering young farmers

1. Korean Agricultural Workforce
Korea has the traditional golden phrase “Agriculture is the fundamental foundation of the country.” Korea was a traditional agriculture-oriented country until the 1960s. In 1970, 48.2 percent of total economically active population in Korea worked in agriculture, and agricultural value-added accounted for 26.6 percent of the gross national income (Table 1). However, the national economic development strategy had put emphasis on commerce and industry – shipbuilding, construction, electronics, and the automotives – that became primary engines of growth. This is when the agricultural workforce began to move into these industries. Since then, the share of agriculture in Korean economy has been declining and the agricultural workforce has also shrunk. In 2010, only 6.3 percent of the total economically active population worked in agriculture, and agricultural value-added as a percentage of gross national income went down to 2.4 percent.

In most developed countries, national economic growth was accompanied by the decrease in the share of agricultural sector. The problem lies not in the decline, but in the ageing of agricultural workforce. The share of agricultural workforce aged 60 and over was 6.4 (1970), 11.2 (1980), and 23.7 percent (1990) (Table 2). In 2000, it was over 40 percent and finally in 2010, it was 55.9 percent. A bigger problem is that the share of agricultural workers who are in their twenties and thirties, the future generation in agriculture, is declining fast. In the 1970s, 57.6 percent of total agricultural workforce was under the age of 40, but the percentage dropped

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to 22.1 percent in 1990 and down to 6.4 percent in 2010.

Table 1. Change in agricultural workforce and agricultural value-added in Korea (unit: billion won, thousand persons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gross National Income (A)</th>
<th>Agricultural Value Added (B)</th>
<th>B/A Ratio (%)</th>
<th>Economically Active Population (C)</th>
<th>Agricultural Workforce (D)</th>
<th>D/C Ratio (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>2,763</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>10,062</td>
<td>4,846</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>10,386</td>
<td>2,559</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>12,193</td>
<td>5,339</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>38,774</td>
<td>5,576</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>14,431</td>
<td>4,654</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>84,061</td>
<td>10,173</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>15,592</td>
<td>3,733</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>186,690</td>
<td>14,998</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>18,539</td>
<td>3,237</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>398,837</td>
<td>22,828</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>20,845</td>
<td>2,403</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>578,664</td>
<td>24,939</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>22,134</td>
<td>2,243</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>864,427</td>
<td>25,832</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>23,743</td>
<td>1,815</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1,174,753</td>
<td>27,832</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>24,784</td>
<td>1,566</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2. Change in age structure of Korean agricultural workforce (unit: thousand persons (%))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>29</th>
<th>40-49</th>
<th>50-59</th>
<th>60+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1,533</td>
<td>1,260</td>
<td>1,058</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>4,846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1,559</td>
<td>1,177</td>
<td>1,180</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>5,339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>898</td>
<td>1,309</td>
<td>979</td>
<td>4,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>3,733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>1,056</td>
<td>3,237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>672</td>
<td>2,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>2,243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>1,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>1,566</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Korea has one of the oldest populations of farm holders among developed nations in agriculture. In Korea, the ageing of farm holders is more serious than the ageing of agricultural workforce. In 2013, the average age of farm holders was 65.4. The share of farm holders aged 60 and over was 67.3 percent and that of farm holders aged 70 and over was 37.7 percent. For the international comparison of farm holders’ ageing, the age group ratio of less than 35 years to 55 years and over is shown in Table 3. The EU-27 average in 2007 for farm holders (A) who were younger than 35 years was 6.1 percent and for farm holders (B) who were older than 55 years, it was 56.8 percent. The ratio of A to B (the ratio of young to elderly farmers) was 0.107. As of 2011, the ratio in the United States was 0.121. The United Kingdom, Italy, and etc. had the oldest farming populations with the ratio of 0.04. Whereas, the ratio in Korea was even worse: in 1990, the ratio was already 0.186 passing that of 2007 France; in 2000, the ratio was 0.045 similar to that of 2007 UK; In 2013, the ratio dropped to 0.004.
Table 3. Ageing of farming population in selected countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Less than 35 years % (A)</th>
<th>55 years and over % (B)</th>
<th>A/B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>0.257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>0.193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>0.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>0.088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>0.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-27</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>0.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>0.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>0.186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>0.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Korea’s agricultural labor productivity is at a standstill recently. It had grown rapidly until the 1990s, showing over six percent growth per year (Figure 1). From that year, its growth rate began to fall. It dropped to 3.5 percent in 1991-2000, and over the last decade it almost stopped growing.

Fig. 1. Annual average growth rate of Korean agricultural labor productivity

Compared to Korea’s total labor productivity of other sectors, agriculture shows a consistent decline (Figure 2). Agriculture and other sectors total labor productivity levels were similar in the 1970s, but the difference widened starting in the 1980s. In the 1990s, the agricultural labor productivity level was half of the total labor productivity level, and now it is almost 1/3. In 2010, value-added per economically active person in all industries was KRW 47.4 million while the agricultural workforce generated value-added equivalent to KRW 17.8 million.
Korea’s agricultural labor productivity is much lower than that of other advanced countries. France and the Netherlands have output per farmer that is over USD 60,000 in 2010 (standard price of 2004-2006), while Korea is only 1/9~1/10 of this level.

2. Policies for Youth Entry into Agricultural Workforce

2.1 Farm Successor Fostering Program

The Farm Successor Fostering Program was the first government program to secure young generation in the agriculture sector and rural areas. It is one of the long-lasting programs of the Ministry of Agriculture’s (MAF) policy history, which started in 1981. Apparently, many young people had left rural areas for their new jobs in cities since the 1970s. The program’s basic idea is as follows: once you are selected as a farm successor, you can get financial support from the government; however, you are not supposed to leave for a certain period of time. Otherwise, the money should be returned to the government.

The program’s target group is the young generation. When the program started, the age limit was 30 years old. It was assumed that it would bring the amount of one’s agricultural income close to that of urban workers’ income, given that one worked in a farm for at least ten years and reached the age of 40. However, as time went by, young people in rural areas became scarce and the age limit had risen up to 40 years old in 1992, and again to 45 years old in 2004. Recently, many citizens tend to migrate to rural areas after the 2008 economic crisis. Many of urban to rural migrants wanted to engage in farming. The ministry was trying to include them into agricultural policy. As a part of these recent political efforts, the Farm Successor Fostering Program’s age limit was extended to 50 years old in 2013.

If you are selected as a farm successor, you could get support for the new farm establishment up to KRW 300 million (USD 300,000), which is not free but a loan with low bank interest payable in 10 years. Almost half of the program quota is assigned to agricultural
school graduates and the rest to farmers with less than 10 years of farming experience. In addition to financial support, the recipients could get professional education and training for six months, which started two years ago.

For the past 40 years, over 130 thousand young farmers have been supported. Almost 90 percent of them are still engaged in agriculture. The recipient farmers account for about 10 percent of total farm holders, and literally they are distributed nationwide at the rate of almost three persons per rural village (Korea has 36,000 rural villages). The original purpose of the program was to foster one leading young farm successor per rural village. You could say the goal was already achieved, but the political and social needs for the program are not yet met.

**2.2 Korea National Agricultural College**

Due to the agreement of UR negotiation and embarkment of World Trade Organization (WTO) in the 1980s, the era of infinite competition throughout the world also came across the field of agriculture. Opening of the agricultural market to the world signaled to agricultural schools that the government was going to give up the industry. Since 1990s, many of agricultural schools started changing school names and department names as well as educational curricula. In order to cope with the difficult situation in the agricultural sector and to enhance the competitiveness of the field, the need for fostering elite members leading the development of agriculture became urgent. Therefore, the Korea National Agricultural College (KNAC) was established in 1994 to breed professional farm managers as proposed by the presidential advisory organization, the Agriculture and Fishery Development Committee.

The purpose of KNAC, now Korea National College of Agriculture & Fishery (KNCAF, newly opening Aquaculture course in 2010) is to foster elite members leading the development of agriculture and rural communities with international views. There is a priority admission for people with farming background and agricultural high school graduates. Students get special grants like free dormitory and tuition, special exemption from military service and priority for Farm Successor Fostering Program. After graduation, they are supposed to farm for six years, which is twice the schooling period.

The college has a particular education system (sandwich training system): first year in school, second year in agricultural field, and third year in school again. In their first year, the students get basic education in agricultural philosophy and basic agricultural skills. During the second year, the students go out of school and experience agricultural skills and management knowledge in the farm. Some of them go abroad for almost 10 months to experience foreign farms. In the final year, they get problem solving education and are guided to design their own farm management plan.

The annual entrance quota is about 300 students for 10 agricultural departments - food, industrial, and vegetable crops, fruit tree, floriculture, beef and dairy science, and swine and poultry science, forestry and landscape architecture, and horse industry (the last two departments were newly setup two years ago). KNCAF has produced over three thousand graduates from 1997 to 2000. After the 3-year education, the first graduates came out in the year 2000. Out of all graduates, about 90 percent are working at farms and 10 percent are out of farms. Farm income of the graduates is double or more as compared to the average farm
income.

2.3 Special Program in Agricultural Schools

Other than KNCAF, to revitalize existing agricultural schools’ role in producing young farmers, two special programs were launched in 2006. One is for agricultural high schools and the other is for agricultural colleges. These programs encourage agricultural students to undertake agricultural business through on-the-job training so that more students can be involved in the business. The specific contents of the program vary every year. The program is generally divided into two areas including specialized education focused on the field experience and revitalization of agricultural high schools.

As of 2011, the special programs for agricultural high school were offered by 10 high schools for 5,184 students - Gyeongnam Jayoung High School, Gongju High School of Life Science, Gimje Jayoung High School, Boeun Jayoung High School, Suwon High School of Agro Life, Yeoju Jayoung High School of Agriculture, Jeonnam Life Science High School, Cheongju High School of Agriculture, Hongcheon High School of Agriculture and Korea High School of Life Science. The education program is set by grade and stage. The first grade is a stage of exploration, second is a stage of basic practice, and third is an advanced practice stage.

Also in 2011, the special program for agricultural colleges was offered by 11 universities and colleges for 1,645 students: Kangwon National University, Kongju National University, Jeju National University, Gyeongnam National University of Science and Technology, Gyeongsang National University, Chonnam National University, Chonbuk National University, Sunchon National University, Chungbuk University, Kyungpook National University, and Cheonan Yonam College. Such program included farm visit, farm internship, lectures on successful farmer stories, collaboration with agricultural high schools, and overseas agricultural experience. Along with such programs, job search program for agricultural college students called Job Map Project was provided to make right decision on being involved in agribusiness.

Still, the tangible outcome is not clear, but the Korea Agency of Education, Promotion, & Information Service in Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries or EPIS (2012) reported that many students who passed the program improved their farming knowledge and skills. However, Ma (2008) showed that not a small number of students had changed their future career plan into the field of agriculture.

3. Problems and Alternative Measures

3.1 Problems

While the above programs on securing young generation in farming have their own outcomes, the greying of Korean farmers is likely to continue due to less favorable public perceptions of agriculture, farm youth decrease, old farm retirement and entry, and agricultural school graduates’ scarce entry into farming.
The public kept a high level of awareness of the importance of agriculture. In 1999, 77.5 percent of the population viewed agriculture as a basic industry that is vital to the state economy. It further increased to 88.4 percent in 2006 and 89.6 percent in 2012. However, the attractiveness of agriculture as a career gradually decreased. According to the Korea Rural Economic Institute’s (KREI) annual survey on public perception of agriculture (1999-2012), 63.1 percent of the public agreed to have their children engaged in farming in 1999 (Figure 3). The number rapidly decreased to 45.7 percent in 2007 and 28.9 percent in 2012. The number of the youth and young adults in farms who are potential agricultural workforce has also decreased. Those under the age of 30 were 63.6 percent in the 1970s, 43.7 percent in the 1990s, and 20.1 percent in 2010.

As the expected retirement age of farmers rises, age of entry for new farmers is also rising. According to the research conducted by Chae and Park (2012), farmers’ expected average age of retirement are 74.4, which is 12 years longer than the average age of retirement of farm holders (62.3) (Figures 4 and 5). It is not so different from the average of life expectancy of Korean adults, which is 77 years old.

![Fig. 3. Public who agree to have their children engaged in farming](source: KREI, 1999-2012)

![Fig. 4. Expected retirement age of Korean farmers.](source: Chae and Park, 2012)
As more and older farmers retire later, the average age of new entrants to farming is rising. The average age at entry to agriculture is 52 years old for new farmers whose experience in farming is less than five years. On the other hand, it is 29.8 years old for farmers with 20-25 years of farming experience, and 20.3 years old for those with more than forty years of farming experience.

In terms of quantity, the number of agricultural schools - an important route to foster agricultural workforce - has declined. In terms of quality, the trend of rural-urban migration is shown by the changes in the name of schools, departments, as well as curriculum. All high schools in 1960 were originally agricultural high schools, and the number reached 133 in 1969 (Figure 6). In 1972, the number of agricultural high schools started to decrease, as 43 were turned into academic, technical, and vocational high schools in the name of reorganizing inadequate agricultural high schools. The number of schools went up briefly to 75 in 1980, but it continued to decrease since. In 2010, there are only 23 original agricultural high schools in the country.

Along with the decline in quantity, agricultural school is becoming more and more distant
from agriculture as a primary industry in its contents of education since the 1990s. First of all, in the past ten years, most agricultural schools have removed the traditional name of agricultural school and have chosen ambiguous names that evade clear industrial distinction. As a result, now it is difficult to tell if the school or department is agricultural or not. When it comes to four-year colleges, starting with Seoul National University in 1992, for the name of college of agriculture was changed to College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, while others changed to College of Agriculture and Life Environment, College of Life Sciences, College of Life Science and Natural resources, etc. The name of college of forestry was changed to College of Forest Science or College of Forest and Environmental Sciences. Moreover, the name of college of animal husbandry was changed to College of Animal Resources Science and then changed to College of Animal Bioscience and Technology. There were many changes in the name of department (major) as well. Department of food sciences was one of the few departments that kept the traditional name. For example, the department of agriculture changed its name to the following: plant resource, crop producing engineering, plant applied science, plant resource applied engineering.

With the abovementioned trends, the graduates’ entry into farming has become scarce. Recently, only one percent of agricultural high school graduates (less than 100 students) entered farming. The number of graduates from the four-year agricultural colleges in the past three years is around 100 annually, which is less than the number of graduates from Korea National College of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Table 4. Career after graduating from agricultural high school: 2008~2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Higher Education</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Farming</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>6,714 (100.0)</td>
<td>4,798 (71.5)</td>
<td>1,005 (15.0)</td>
<td>126 (1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>7,305 (100.0)</td>
<td>5,447 (74.6)</td>
<td>1,305 (17.9)</td>
<td>63 (0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>6,977 (100.0)</td>
<td>3,922 (56.2)</td>
<td>2,134 (30.6)</td>
<td>17 (0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>7,123 (100.0)</td>
<td>2,739 (38.5)</td>
<td>2,615 (36.7)</td>
<td>44 (0.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>7,037 (100.0)</td>
<td>5,184 (73.7)</td>
<td>1,089 (15.5)</td>
<td>85 (1.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Source: National Association of Agricultural Teachers. (2008-2012)

3.2 Alternative Measures

3.2.1 Activating Education in Agriculture

Agricultural education should be strengthened. Securing agricultural workforce needs to be approached in an aspect of life-long learning, broad, and long-term perspective. Investment in fostering potential agricultural workforce should be expanded targeting preschoolers, elementary, and middle school students, and the public, beyond the farmer-centered approach (Figure 7).

Fostering potential agricultural workforce needs to be approached at the level of improving the public’s agricultural knowledge, thereby securing potential agricultural human resources, and cultivating policy supporters even if they are not engaged in farming. The younger the target age is, the bigger the effect of investment in nurturing workforce (Heckman, 2008). The target should be expanded from those who are engaged in or are preparing to engage in farming to younger students. Beyond the existing passive image of agriculture and rural
areas, it is needed to present an active image that agriculture is an important industry in charge of our food requirements, a promising industry using IT, BT, etc., and that rural areas as the foundation of our lives.

Fig. 7. Returns to investment in human capital over the life cycle
(Source: Heckman, 2008).

3.2.2 Fostering Selective Agricultural Schools

With efforts for increasing agricultural workforce’s inflow, it is needed to secure stable and new workforce by strengthening investment in agricultural schools. Agricultural schools are vocational schools for professional education that were established for this purpose. Recently, many agricultural education institutions are changing into non-agricultural ones. However, there are still many schools for fostering agricultural workforce. Each school has teachers or professors in charge of education by agricultural field and educational facilities. Before the condition gets worst, it is needed to help the schools play their roles by increasing investment in them.

It is necessary to assist about ten bases of agricultural high schools by province centered on self-management agricultural schools and schools only for agriculture. Integrated management of existing agricultural schools’ material and human resources, establishing a plan to foster agricultural high schools linked to local demand for agricultural workforce and promoting investment and cooperation of local governments’ agriculture-related agencies are necessary. Also, contests for agricultural majors and principal and teacher invitation systems are required, and the autonomous operation of the curriculum should be strengthened for education, which is centered on capacity needed in the field, beyond the existing subject-centered curriculum.

Agricultural colleges should be reformed to foster workforce related with farming and be linked with key local agricultural high schools. To strengthen agricultural colleges’ link with the agriculture scene, the farming-centered education system is needed in order to cultivate each region’s agricultural successors through special admission for jobholders and so on, in addition to the existing subject- and discipline-centered curriculum for those who want to be
employed in industries or disciplines including life science. The actual farming- or work-
centered education system should be operated from selecting students to running programs. 
Graduates from the farming-centered education system could become professional farmers 
engaged in agricultural production in rural areas, or agricultural education instructors, or 
farming consultants as agricultural experts with business skills.

3.2.3 Links Between Retiring Farmers and New Farmers Through Farm Corporations

Agricultural corporations are contributing to revitalizing local agriculture in many aspects; 
as a means of effectively using local agricultural resources of large, medium, and small farms, 
and as actual agents of organizing local agriculture. Nevertheless, they have not developed into 
sustainable agricultural enterprises by securing agricultural workforce.

New farmers including those returning to farming are facing many constraints such as 
difficulties of securing farmland, learning production technology, and assimilating into rural 
communities for stable and successful settlement. Settlement incubating for new farmers, based 
on individual farm, has many limits. However, agricultural corporations have a lot of areas to 
use various experiences of those who returned to farming including farm accounting, sales and 
marketing, and the establishment of farming plans, and have less possibility of individual 
interests entangled.

The agricultural workforce development policy or program for elite farming unit should 
be changed from existing support policies centered on individual farms to the cultivation of 
agricultural corporations. At the same time, employing those returning to farming (external 
workforce) needs to be promoted to strengthen the function of agricultural producers’ 
organizations as incubating organizations for new farmers’ settlement. Specifically, it is 
necessary to expand policy support to the organizations including support for labor costs, 
management consultation, and securing joint farmland. If corporations with transparent 
accounting and labor management ability employ and train new farmers, the corporations 
should be paid for some part of education and training costs that the farmers pay for a certain 
period. In addition, improving those corporations’ employment conditions with a hopeful 
vision and stable job is required to establish the standard employment regulations including 
working hours, days off, and holidays in consideration of the nature of agriculture.

A program is needed to help retired farmers without their successors to transfer their farms 
to new farm households effectively. Farmers who plan to retire have a strong desire to return 
the capital they invested in agriculture, so they do not usually transfer their farms to others 
easily. New farmers have many difficulties in securing quality farmland and scaling up farms. 
In farm transfer, various interpersonal and financial problems can occur, and it is important to 
understand the system of taxes and farmland transfer. Major advanced countries including EU, 
Japan, and US, have already carried out projects for supporting farm transfer to solve problems 
that can occur in the process and to enable retired farmers and new farmers to devise and 
implement proper farm transfer plans (Ma, 2011). To prevent retired farmers’ farmland from 
being sold to non-farmers or being fallow land, and to continuously use it for agricultural 
production by farm transfer, consultation through farm visits and education for farm transfer 
are needed.
3.2.4 Setting Up Intermediate Support Organizations in Charge of Regional Agricultural Workforce

The current system of Farm Successor Fostering Program has improved through trial and error, but it has not worked well in many regions. Majority of local governments have operated organizations for the selection of agricultural successors and follow-up support separately. Also, in case of many local governments, people in charge of agricultural technology centers, the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF), and organizations related to support to farming successors do not know about many recent changes in guidelines, evaluation, and application standards for the project. Accordingly, those who apply for agricultural successors have difficulties in getting correct information.

Some local governments did not update data on successors engaged in farming after selecting them. The main reason of this problem is that related agencies’ persons in charge are changed often, and that the Program is considered one of many works, as many local governments do not place more weight on this project than other activities. That is, most on-site problems related with the project result from lack of interest at the local government level and personal capacity of people in charged in the field.

To foster agricultural successors and help their successful settlement, it is necessary to establish intermediate support organizations (local agricultural workforce support centers) that will continuously provide professional services despite changes in related administrative workforce. Through the organizations, those who apply for Farm Successor Fostering Program will be able to receive related consultation anytime, prepare evaluation materials related with selection, and get systematic information on loans linked with financial institutions. Applicants will also be able to receive support related to the systematic development of professionalism more suitable for each region including education, consultation, learning groups, and personal learning information.

The organizations can also support settlement of those who return to farming and rural villages; seasonal agricultural workforce including foreign workers; mentoring by linking leading farmers with new farmers; farm connection by linking retired farmers with new farmers; and agricultural high school and college students’ employment in agricultural corporations. The organizations can also conduct activities so that various projects for fostering agricultural workforce are delivered to demanders in a package through links among major agricultural agents and resources in the regions (agricultural schools and corporations, farmers’ groups, the NACF, agricultural technology centers, etc.)

Due to the nature of these works, the form of social enterprises will be suitable to organizations supporting the Farm Successor Fostering Program. If the organizations as social enterprises are revitalized in regions, they will facilitate participation of non-agricultural experts or agricultural college students (as the organizations’ agents or clients), thus linking existing private and public resources in agriculture in the project more systematically (social economy centered on agricultural successors).
3.2.5 Supporting Capital Formation of Young Farmers

To enable the Farm Successor Fostering Program to bring external workforce to rural areas, and make them settle down and engage in farming, strategies are needed to encourage the inflow of people who are not from a farming family or who does not have sound farming background, but have capacity and will. It is most important to induce these people to form assets for farming by stages. In this context, this study suggests introducing an Individual Development Accounts System.

The Individual Development Accounts System for new farmers helps them prepare funds related to farmland, facilities, and operating funds in phases voluntarily. According to a recent survey, new farmers point to economic capital including farmland, facilities, and operating funds as the biggest obstacles to entry (Ma, 2008a). The central and local governments support policy funds, a lease on agricultural machinery, and the farmland bank, but related problems have not been solved fundamentally due to most new farmers’ lack of basic economic assets. As for this, many implications can be drawn from the case of the US that introduced the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Accounts program recently.

Individual Development Accounts are the individuals’ financial accounts to which private donations and government subsidies at a certain rate are added, if beginning farmers save a small sum of money to form capital for farm management. In the US, 15 states are conducting the demonstration projects. These projects enable capital formation in the long term - different from short-term subsidy-centered policies. It also helps beneficiaries to set a goal of capital formation and to achieve it actively. Through this, beneficiaries can make their future more positive by thinking that they can coordinate their lives independently.

Summary (in Korean)

농업인력 문제를 전담할 중간지원조직 지원, 신규 농업인의 영농 자본 형성을 지원할 제도적 지원 등의 방안을 제시하였다.

References
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