

Policy Evaluation on Farmland Scale Operation: A Case Study of Sansheng Town

HE Ge^{[a],*}

^[a]School of Economics and Management of Sichuan Agricultural University, China.

*Corresponding Author

Address: 211 Huimin Road Wenjiang District, Chengdu city, 611130, China

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Abstract

Evaluation is important for effective on-going policy implement. In view of econometric techniques including models are not so suitable for evaluating policy, explanatory policy evaluation method is presented to evaluate the policy of farmland scale operation taking Sansheng town for an example. The results shows that the policy achieved some performance including its help to overcome the limitation of the farmland fragment, take full advantage of farmland and shift of rural surplus labor forces. Meanwhile there is some issues should to solve so that the policy could be performed more better such as disequilibrium, inefficiency operational mode, inefficiency in absorbing and employing more rural surplus labor forces and non-perfect market mechanisms. To make it better, some policy suggestion was demonstrated including strengthen further the understanding of the great significances of farmland scale operation, Correctly handle the relationship between the market mechanism and macroeconomic control, to speed up legislation in farmland scale operation ensure it legal, To create a complete and well-established institute environment.

Key words: Policy evaluation; Farmland scale operation; Land use right

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INTRODUCTION

Fragmentation is the separation of parcels of land into ever-smaller pieces, with like uses interspersed with unlike uses (Reid, 2004). Land fragmentation may impose detrimental effects on agriculture in three ways: (1) creating inefficiency; (2) hindering agricultural modernization; and (3) making it costly to modify its adverse effects by consolidation schemes (Tan, 2005). Therefore, allaying farmland fragment by Scale operation is not only inevitable requirement of specialization, standardization, enlargement, intensification for Chinese agricultural sector, but also necessary choose of efficiency supply of agricultural products to ensure national food security. Farmland scale operation is also an inevitable trend of improving agricultural comprehensive productivity, enhancing risk resistance capacity, increasing market competitive ability and realizing modern agriculture for China.

To promote farmland scale operation, all levels governments in China have adopted legal, economic and social policies. Evaluation, which involves assessing the worth of a policy (Richard, 2011), composed of process evaluation and impact (or outcome) evaluation, is important for effective on-going policy implementation. Process evaluation focuses on the implement process, and examines whether or not a policy was, or is being delivered as planned while outcome evaluation concentrates on the results of implementation for target groups, and in particular on the extent to which implement achieves what was expected of it. To make evaluation results more scientific and reasonable, various policies evaluation models have recently been proposed. For policy evaluation, econometric techniques including models are not so good not only because of too many parameters have to be estimated, but also because of many assumptions underlying a model. In terms of them, it is

doubted whether the outcomes could be representative of the real-world outcomes of a policy. To eliminate ill effects and make the results more operational, explanatory policy evaluation method is presented.

1. FARMLAND SCALE OPERATION POLICY IN SANSHENG TOWN: STATUS AND PERFORMANCE

1.1 The Status of Suburban Farmland Scale Operation in Sansheng Town

Sansheng town is located in the south-east of Chengdu city, bordered with Longquan district to the east, drawn near Shangliu county to the north, connected with Liujiang community to the west and Chenglong community to the north. Sansheng town, which is consisted of 10 villages and 73 teams, covers an area of 14.17 km² with the population of 15.50 thousand, among which 71.43% are farms. The total area with scale operation has been increased with the development of rural economy and rapid urbanization recently. Statistics from field investigations shows that total area with scale operation has reaches up to 3760 mu, accounting for 17.90% of the total arable land area (21000mu), involving in more than 1200 households up to the terminal of 2010. Most of them, which amount to nearly 2500mu, is 80% of the total area with scale operation, has been formed scale operation by the transfer of land use right. It has been learnt by field investigation that the most scale operation of farmland in Sansheng town is the project of huaxiang farmer houses, which covers Jiangjiayan, Da'an bridge, Wanfu and Chenjiayan village altogether 4 villages. Hongsha village. Its total area with scale operation is 1683mu, accounts for 60.21% of the total arable area. Among them, hongsha village has formed the scale operation with an area of 923mu, which is accounted for 75.29% of its total arable area, Wanfu village 148mu, accounted for 40.54% of its total arable area, Chenjiayan village 126mu, accounted for 39.75% of its total arable area. Jiangjiayan village has not really formed land scale operation because of being far away from city centre except that few farmers transformed their farmland use right to others before they went to out for a job. While da'an village had a small scare operation, which the scale operation area accounted for the total arable one is no more than 4%.

1.2 Policy Performance of Farmland Scale Operation in Sansheng Town

For china, farmland scale operation policy has been inevitable trend of development of the rural economy, reflecting the objective requirements of rural productive forces development, promoting the adjustment of agricultural product structure with great effect, and laying

a good foundation for agricultural Industrialization. The farmland scale operation policy has been achieved the following policy performance.

1.2.1 Overcame the Limitation of the Farmland Fragment

Farmland scale operation policy overcame the limitation of farm households' small scale scattering management, such as high cost, difficulties in making use of technology by the transfer of farmland use right, which could centralize the small scattering management, allay the phenomenon of farmland fragment. Moreover, farmland scale operation could make agriculture sector develop at large scale, which should be increased cost then be raised efficiency. It lead to traditional agriculture develop towards modern agriculture with the character of specialization, large scale, commercialized.

1.2.2 Took Full Advantage of Farmland and Increased its Efficiency

Farmland scale operation policy improved human resources distribution efficiency through farmland centralized and confirming its new usage according to the principle of efficiency, with different farms have different efficiency in managing farmland so as to it is always transferred from lower efficiency usage to higher one. It encouraged rational flow and optimum integration of agricultural factors including land, capital, technology and labor. This favor the division and specialization of agriculture, making agricultural has marched on the way of specialized division, large scale production, industrialized production and enterprise style management. It reached to realization of the ultimate goal of making full use of farmland.

1.2.3 Helped Promote the Transfer of Surplus Rural Labor Force from Primary Industry to Secondary and Tertiary Industry

Farmland scale operation policy has changed part of farms who are occupied in their farmland when in their seasons while others in not their seasons. After have being carried out farmland scale operation policy, when they have fixed incomes in cities, they can move their families there and contract their land to other farmers. So the policy of scale operation cast off restraint of the farmland for the farmers who can live on their family by other incomes more than them for farmland. This is also advanced surplus rural labor force to transfer from agricultural industry to non-agricultural one. Population concentrated from rural region to urban region has promoted the process of urbanization and modernization of agricultural. In all, the policy of farmland scale operation has helped promote the transfer of surplus rural labor force, enhance agricultural labor productivity, optimize rural economic structure and increase the income of farmers.

2. FARMLAND SCALE OPERATION POLICY IN SANSHENG TOWN: ISSUE

2.1 Disequilibrium in Different Village Because of Location Advantages

Farmland scale operation is not only necessary to those villages which is near to city center, but also necessary to far away from it. However, driven for economical profits, it is easy to carry out the policy of scale operation because the near village's farmland has more non-agriculture usage while the further village is somewhat difficult in carrying out it. For instance, hongsha village has a good performance in farmland scale operation not only because its location advantage but also because of good non-agriculture industry, including village tourism, floricultural and catering. This demonstrated that hongsha village has a most area of farmland use right transfer reaching up to 923mu, accounting for 75.29% of the total arable area. As far as Jiangjiayan and Da'an village were concerned, much more undeveloped than hongsha, more needed to centralize operation. On the contrary, they have a not so good policy performance.

2.2 Inefficiency Operational Mode

By large, there are different modes for the transfer of farmland use right including contract, spoken agreement and stock etc. Some of them are market-oriented with higher efficiency, others are not with lower efficiency. It is obvious that higher efficiency scale operation mode should be more taken. While it is found farmland scale operation has been mostly by collective in Sansheng town. The collective put the farms' land together then let it leased if a certain individual or firm need a plot land to deal with it. In practice, this mode is lower efficiency than joint stock system but it can both ensure the farmer's income and individual and firm's requirement for the farmland, just because of this, the farms has been more receipt this mode to make their land leased although its inefficiency. Theoretically the joint stock system is somewhat higher efficiency but few have been taken because of being lack of some conditions such as rural land marker, fairly complete and systematic financial institutes. Most importantly, farmland scale operation by joint stock system is much more risky than the other mode. The farmers had little ability to take market risks despite of its high efficiency.

2.3 Inefficiency in Absorbing and Employing More Rural Surplus Labor Forces

It is well-known that farmland scale operation has been on the premise of rural surplus labor transfer. It made the farmland scale operation impossible when the rural surplus labor could find a rather fixed job to do. After the household contract responsibility system, the rural region economy has developed a lot and rural non-

agriculture economy has enlarged fast. But so far today, it can't provide adequate employment opportunities for rural surplus labor forces. In this situation, some farmer especially elder or lacking of other labor technology had no choice but to live on their farmland. It showed by field investigation to hongsha village that farmer's dependence on farmland is not so strong because of good opportunity to find a job beyond land. There are up to 80% farmers has being willing to get their farmland leased, and more than 20% farmer have been still willing to do so after they got another job. While only 2% farmers have been not willing to get their farmland leased because they preferred to have their farmland acquisition to get much more cash. However, the cost of lease is much higher than the net benefit because of being far away from city center, where the land mostly been used to plant vegetable.

2.4 Non-Perfect Market Mechanisms

Market mechanism has played a fundamental role in land resource redistribution. It is essential for market mechanism that there have been adequate medium, by which the demand side and the supply side reach to balance. There is still no complete media for rural land market in Sansheng village. It affected directly the rational distribution and optimum integration of agriculture production factors including land, capital, labor and technology because of non-perfect market mechanisms lead to being short of land market media and information asymmetry.

3. FARMLAND SCALE OPERATION POLICY IN SANSHENG TOWN: PROPOSAL

3.1 Strengthen Further the Understanding of the Great Significances of Farmland Scale Operation

The more scarce resources, the more need to allocate it efficiently. China has a large population with a less farmland. To support himself, China should carry out the policy of farmland scale operation. It is not only necessary for rationally allocating all factors of production including land, capital, labor and technology accelerating rural economy development, but also necessary for promoting readjustment of rural industrial structures and the shift and transforming of surplus labor force from rural region to urban. It also bears substantial significance for establishing rural market economy system. Farmland scale operation should abide by the purposes of "to develop rural economy and to increase farmers incomes", should set up operation by intensive and large scale. The scattering operation or farmland fragment should be changed by encouraging farmer household transfer their farmland use right.

3.2 Correctly Handle the Relationship Between the Market Mechanism and Macroeconomic Control

Whether the relationship between the market mechanism and macroeconomic control or not depend on how to deal with two other issues: one is whether the farmland scale operation is necessary or not, the other is by what forms to realize the farmland scale operation. It has been deemed that there are three requirements should be met to implement farmland scale operation policy: (1) economy development; (2) decreasing of dependence of farmland; (3) more income. So farmland scale operation should be implemented where the basic requirements have been met, abided by the principle of market economy, with the agreement of the farmers. Market-oriented farmland scale operation has the most efficiency, the minimization cost and least resistance. The government can't implement farmland scale policy in which the basic requirements have been not met by administrative means. Those regulars such as regular the rate of farmland is not worthwhile to promote either. To achieve the above goal, farmland scale operation is going to adheres to the following basic principles: (1) protecting the farmers' basic interests and maintaining rural social stability on the basis of household contract management; (2) following the collective land property; (3) acting in the interests of farmers.

3.3 To Speed up Legislation in Farmland Scale Operation Ensure it Legal

To make farmland scale operation in accordance with law, a farmland scale operation law should be made so that it can solve these issues including defining land property, formulating the standard of compensation, distribution of income, the management of transfer, the conciliation of dispute. By this, the farmland scale operation should be followed a legal track.

3.4 To Create a Complete and Well-Established Institute Environment

The key factor to promote farmland scale operation is to properly solve these problems such as the farmers' employment and rural social security. Firstly, rural labor forces should improve their ability of employment by being trained so that they can find a job beyond agriculture sector. Secondly, the farmer who lost their farmland should be expanded employment channels and be provided numerous job opportunities; finally, it's necessary to set up a rural social security including multilevel system of medical security, based on different rural circumstances of society and economy to ensure farmers' health and needs for hospitalization.

CONCLUSIONS

The policy of farmland scale operation in Sansheng town achieved good performance meanwhile met some issues. To make it better, some measures including strengthen further the understanding of the great significances of farmland scale operation, Correctly handle the relationship between the market mechanism and macroeconomic control to speed up legislation in farmland scale operation ensure it legal and to create a complete and well-established institute environment should be taken.

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