



IYFF. ASIA CONTINENTAL MEETING. NEW DELHI 23-25 March, 2010

FAMILY FARMING IN SOUTH KOREA

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A) Introducing the country: Location and population

It is called The Republic of Korea or South Korea and is called Nam Joseon by North Korea. The administrative districts of Korea are composed of one special city, 6 metropolitan cities, 9 provinces. Korea is only divided country in the world and the Korean war ended in truce after the cease-fire agreement in the year of 1953.

The population of Korea is 48,544,401 (2006), GDP per person is 27,647\$(2008). The source of income in Korea is manufacturing industries and the field of IT has been drawing a lot of money from abroad.

Agricultural industry rate in all industries is about 3%, self-sufficiency of the food is about 27%. The rest of them depends on importing and there is little poverty.

The situation of Korean food security is that most of agricultural products have been warned except rice. Korea is the third country of all the other countries in OECD which are in food self-sufficiency. The nutritive condition of the nation is in good condition so far and meat consumption is growing due to Westernized eating habits.

The population of agricultural industry is about 3 million which is 7% of the population of Korea. Family farming in past tends to change to large-scale farming.

Farming population is decreasing in rural areas due to the hard intensity of farming and the rate of older people in farming is increasing. The major product is rice. The land ownership is 330 square meter as the smallest and 33,000 square meter as the biggest. The people who own the biggest large-scale farming own more than 165,000 square feet of the farming land.

B) The importance of family farming in Korea

The family farming in Korea is decreasing and is changing to market farming because family farming cannot earn much money. There are too many people in Korea compare to the small size of the land so that farmers can only get 60~70% of the wages of that of workers in cities.

Farming in Korea is planned to be the assurance for future national security and an eco-friendly business. Therefore, people can rest in countryside and farmers can draw money not only from producing farm products but also from tour business.



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Farming does not have big influence on Korea's economy, however, producing rice which is a major crop in Korea by farmers themselves means that farming in Korea would not be harshly affected by rising in farm products prices.

C) Threatens to family farming and their organizations

In Korea, farmers should take care of every part in farming from producing to processing and even to marketing. However, they can not earn enough money since processing costs too much. Moreover, farmers cannot ignore the quality of farm products since there are FTA and DDA that threaten agriculture in Korea. The way of farming in Korea is changing from pesticide producing to organic producing and to more eco-friendly farming.

There are many farmers' associations in Korea. Some represent certain products and others such as KAFF represent agriculture itself. These farmers' associations have great influence on policy making of the Ministry of food, Agriculture, forestry and Fisheries in Korea. Farmers' associations speak for all the farmers in Korea and they make recommendations to the government, discuss them and make solutions.

In the past, farmers' associations had risen their voices when the president of KAFF was the minister of the Ministry of food, Agriculture, forestry and Fisheries in Korea. That was the time when farmers had chance to see the minister and speak for farmers themselves.

The meeting hall for agricultural sector is planned to be built in near future. The agricultural meeting hall in France will be benchmarked as a role model and this meeting hall will be used as a place where farmers' associations can gather their opinions and suggest them to the government.

Young people in Korea do not consider the agriculture as their future jobs because they cannot earn much money as farmers. It is not possible to produce anything without any land although they want to. As mentioned above, there is little land and many people in Korea so that young people cannot afford to buy the land unless they inherit their parents' land.

Moreover, even farmers themselves do not want their children to be farmers since it is such a hard work and vulnerable to natural disasters such as typhoons or floods.

D) Initiation of response to the problems and challenges

People can hardly be wealthy as farmers in Korea. They can afford their own food or clothes since GDP is high in Korea but farmers are poor compare to workers in cities. Only few farmers can be successful as rich farmers. We are trying to export our products not just as products themselves but as well-made food and make high-quality food with changing the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in the past to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries now. We do not sell cabbages but Kimchi and not apples but apple juice since exporting raw agricultural products does not have merit in world-wide market with FTA that allows importing low price agricultural products from abroad.



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E) Conclusion

It is clear that agriculture has been going through hard periods until now. However, giving up the agriculture is not the way to solve the problems. Agriculture will get the limelight as an important industry that could prevent global warming and extreme climate change.

Korean dishes are getting popular abroad nowadays. Introducing Korean dishes like, Kimchi, Bibimpop, Makgeoli and Tteokbokki is also the way of introducing Korean agricultural products. Just simple farming cannot bring success to us. Farmers themselves as well as farming have to keep the pace with fast changes in the world. Only those who try to get much information and study hard would be successful and support their family.