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Risk Governance and Agricultural Economics Research from the Perspective of Future Generations

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In October 2006, I gave an academic lecture on the present condition and the future of agricultural economics research in the agricultural faculty, taking into consideration the academic externality and the welfare of the agricultural economics students of future generations, and expressing gratitude to the seniors who have provided guidance and encouragement to date. This paper is based on that lecture.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the academic externality in the agricultural economics of future generations, through reference to “the social governance” of the risk to the environment and food, which can also be said to be the negative legacy of the industrial-state era, based on the present condition of the agricultural economics research in the agricultural faculty.

At the beginning, it was stated that we are currently in the process of converting from industrialist studies to post-industrialist studies, but unfortunately much agricultural economics research fails to present new visions and values suitable for post-industrialist studies, and that the quest for potential and possibility cannot be said to be a success. This is because of the tendencies of specialist supremacy in the period of construction/development of industrial nations, which remain deep under the double division circumstances.

In the conversion to post-industrial studies, above all, an escape from the specialist supremacy of single generation thought and a sincere response to the relationship between nature and generations should be sought in agricultural economics research. To attain the goal, the promotion of collaborative creativity of the highly productive agricultural faculty is expected and required.

When we look at the social governance with regard to the risk to the environment and food, which can be said to be the negative legacy of the industrial-state era, the current situation of Japanese food safety policies and WTO agreements are still introducing risk analysis systems.

However, these risk analysis systems have several limitations. There, the potential of agricultural economics research, with regard to how reforms and remodeling should be carried out, was clarified.

Furthermore, in order to respond to this, it was pointed out that how we collaboratively create the specialist knowledge of each of the specialist fields in the agricultural faculty is a new agricultural task.

Finally, it was stated that agricultural research involving sustainability, science and the creation of participatory intermediate knowledge has actually begun, and that agricultural economics research has the potential to exercise leadership in such cross-mediatory research.

Problems and Prospects for the Korean Dairy Industry

Suk Jin Cho (Yeungnam University, Korea)

The dairy industry in Korea has achieved remarkable growth over the past three decades, mainly supported by the rapid expansion of fluid milk consumption. However, at the Uruguay Round, Korea failed to build proper tariff barriers for formulated butter and mixed milk powder, which have strong competitiveness, fungibles for butter and milk powder. Therefore, both have only single-rate tariffs of 8 percent for formulated butter and 36 percent for mixed milk powder.

Consequently, following the enactment of WTO agreement in 1995, domestically manufactured dairy products lost markets due to the increased imports of formulated butter and mixed milk powder. And the dairy industry in Korea has suffered from raw milk in excess of fluid milk use. Drastic policy changes including a two-tier price system have been introduced as the stock of milk powder reached unprecedented high levels in June 2002.

Also, a committee consisting of producers, processors, university professors, cooperatives and government officials was formed to discuss dairy reforms. The committee reached a consensus on the introduction of a marketing quota. However, the details of the quota system are still to be settled, since producers and processors failed to bridge the gap regarding the methods of moving to realizing the quota.

Nevertheless, the Korean dairy industry needs an early settlement of dairy reforms based on the marketing quota, to secure stabilization of dairy markets. For this, producers and processors need to negotiate a new system under which both can be represented on an equal footing. Also, the government has to play a more active role in suggesting arbitration acceptable by both parties.

In addition, dairy farming in the future is required to maintain environmentally friendly management by establishing an area-wide mixed farming system and providing consumers with safe and fresh dairy products at reasonable prices.

Induced Technical Progress in Wheat Breeding Research and the Recharge of gene resources; A distance function approach

Yoko Fujii (Hokkaido University, Graduate School of Agriculture)

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the technical change in Japanese wheat breeding research. The recent policy change has linked wheat prices to wheat quality. This quality-based price system has transmitted market demand to wheat farmers. And it may increase the farmers' demand to high quality wheat. Wheat breeders are now urged to offer the high-quality wheat, specifically the one with high protein-content (HPV). Breeding research can be regarded as the production process of the technological knowledge. We focus on this seed producing process, and analyze the breeding result by taking qualitative result into analysis.

We applied the induced technical change, and an output distance function is employed to withdraw the technical change rate and its biases. Output distance function allows us to analyze multi-output production system, and price data are not necessarily required. We use Norin number as the proxy of the technology variable. The result implied that the breeding research has been "protein-favoring", so that the research resource is allocated efficiently to meet the farmers' demand, i.e. to develop the desirable new varieties, HPVs.

Also, we investigated the effect of "Recharge" of the gene resource. We created the recharge rate from the pedigree data, and investigated the effect on the technical change. The technical change is significantly affected by this recharge rate. Therefore, it is important to encourage the researchers' interaction both domestically and internationally, and we may have to pay attention to the internationally strengthened property right, which may restrict the researchers' access to gene resources.

An Analysis of Expenditures on Activities in Community Agreements Based on the System of Direct Payment in Hilly and Mountainous Areas: The Case of Community Agreements in the Hokkaido Dairy Farming Region, Japan

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This paper calculated the “individual farm management support ratio,” which means how much grant-in-aid for the System of Direct Payment in Hilly and Mountainous Areas was expended on direct support of dairy farms in the Hokkaido dairy farming region, Japan. We analyzed on the supposition that if this ratio is more than 50 percent, this system, which makes a point of direct payments according to community agreements, is not suitable for dairy farms in this area. The results supported our hypothesis.

Consumer Evaluation Analysis of Products of Hokkaido Food Original Certification System Using Internet Research Methodology

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The purpose of this study is to clarify consumers' evaluation of the Hokkaido food original certification system by Internet research methodology. As a result of our analysis, we found the Hokkaido food original certification system makes possible the promotion of Hokkaido food brands. As for the reason, respondents have an image that safety is high, and about 80% of respondents may buy even at a high price for food certified in this system.

A Hedonic Study of the Effects of Area of Production on Japanese Rice Prices

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The purpose of this study is to test the hypothesis that the area of production is a more significant factor influencing rice prices in Japan than the variety and taste of rice. We estimated a hedonic price function relating rice prices and the three factors influencing them. The results support our hypothesis that the area of production has the most significant influence among the three factors.