

The Role and Function of Agricultural Land Use and Planning – From the Perspective of Land Use Planning in Germany

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Abstract

After the Agricultural Development Act was amended, farm land was open for sale and restrictions to dividing farmland were relaxed. Furthermore, farmers without their own dwelling houses were permitted to build farm houses on farmland, which makes the problems of managing agricultural land use more complicated. They not only affect rural landscape and the ecology, but also challenge the policy of “agricultural land for farming use only” openly. Specifications of constructing farm houses need to be incorporated into the category for overall development planning for the rural community. Requirements for improvement in the quality of farmers’ lives and rural development should be taken into account and based on the policies of farmland management and agricultural land for farming use only so as to ensure agricultural functions in production, life, ecology and recreation and leisure purposes.

In this study, the role and function of land use planning in Taiwan will be investigated from the aspects of land-use planning and agricultural land use in Germany. Besides, the problems of agricultural land use in Taiwan will be expounded by current legal regulations and the system so as to propose solutions and re-position the role of land-use planning for reference of decision-making and sustainable development of land resources in Taiwan.

Key words : Agricultural Land Use, Agricultural Land Use Planning, Germany

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Introduction

Land is one of important national resources and a significant foundation of economic activities. Along with fast economic development and increase in industrial activities and population growth, types of land use tend to be diversified and complicated. Demands of non-agricultural land use for residence houses, industry and commerce use, transportation and other public construction purposes are increasing. Distribution and use of land resources in Taiwan have always been based on enhancement of economic power for a long term, reasonable allotment and utilization of such resources are neglected causing continuous occurrences of land use conflicts. Scarcity and non-increment of land and development of industry and commerce not only result in complexity of land use, but also easily manifest the importance and function of the role played by land use and planning.

Being lack of one complete and strict land management system and specifications for land-use planning, Taiwan has no guidelines to follow for fair distribution and use of land-use resources. Conflicts between individuals and public interest occur and different departments in charge of economic affairs can't provide efficient control in dealing with competitions and disputes over the use of limited land. Accordingly, inadequate agricultural land use is increasing and ecological and agricultural production environment becomes difficult to maintain leading to polluted and spoiled environment and landscape and chaotic urban and rural construction. Such irregular and unharmonious development also brings deterioration of the living environment and the quality of life.

German land-use planning and control has a long history and excellent development experience. In addition, they also have a strictly organized national land planning system, which not only maintains agricultural land resource and the production environment efficiently, but also directs reasonable distribution and use of limited land resources to cope with public interest. The role and function of land use planning in Taiwan will be investigated from the aspects of land-use planning and agricultural land use in Germany. Besides, the problems of agricultural land use in Taiwan will be expounded by current legal regulations

and the system so as to propose solutions and re-position the role of land-use planning for reference of decision-making and sustainable development of land resources in Taiwan.

Role and Function of Land Use Planning

A National Land-use Planning

Planning of national land resources should be directed to achieve the goals of conservation, development and reasonable distribution and utilization for balanced industrial development and improvement in the quality of life and working conditions of the residents.

The guidelines for national land-use planning in Germany are primarily based on Territorial Order Law (Raumordnungsgesetz, ROG for short) which is also a critical legal basis of land-use planning for state governments. According to ROG, the objective of land-use planning in Germany is to “protect the residents by providing a healthy living and working environment with appropriate economic, social and cultural conditions.” [ROG §2-(1)]

In order to realize the goals above, according to German ROG, the primary principles of territorial planning include building nationwide evenly quality and healthy living conditions and working environment. Moreover, based on the consideration of the significance of agriculture to production, living and nature, the principles are emphasized to save farmland resources for better utilization. They can be explained in detail as below:

a Develop living conditions of even quality (Gleichwertige Lebensbedingung)

(a) General economic and social conditions and cultural infrastructure must be improved in regions, where living conditions as a whole are far below federal average or where such a fall back could be expected in the near future. In the townships of such regions, the living conditions of the inhabitants – in particular, housing, transportation and supply – must be improved. Within reasonable distance, towns should be developed to be local centers with educational, cultural and administrative facilities.

(b) Development of better living and working conditions and better economic and social structure should be given priority in remote regions so that they can at least reach national average. It should be the primary task to establish educational, cultural, transportation, supply and administrative facilities.

b Build a healthy living and working environment and balanced economic, social and cultural conditions

(a) Territorial planning should guarantee and further develop a territorial structure of regions with healthy living and working environment, balanced economic, social and cultural conditions.

In regions where such a structure does not exist, measures of structural improvement must be introduced. Development planning must be coordinated with existing transportation and supply systems and available transportation and supply services.

- (b)Densely populated residential and business areas must encourage maintenance, improvement or establishment of a territorial structure providing healthy living and working conditions and balanced economic, social and cultural conditions.
- (c)General economic, social and cultural facilities must be improved in regions where living conditions are below national average or where such a fall back can be expected in the near future.
- c Maintain natural life-support systems (Natuerliche Lebensgrundlagen), develop agriculture and forestry, preserve natural resources and landscape
 - (a)Territorial planning must guarantee and support the use of land for agriculture and forestry, which are the important production sectors of overall economy. Cultivation and conservation of farmland (Landeskultur) should be encouraged. Land particularly suited for farming should be used for other purposed only if absolutely necessary. The same is true for forestry land.
 - (b)Sufficient population density must be aspired for rural areas as well as an adequate economic potential, and sufficient jobs also outside of farming and forestry.
 - (c)It is not only due to its economic significance and its importance to preserve farming that agriculture is developed as a productive economic sector in rural area but also because of its importance to ecological balance especially conservation of water and soil.
 - (d)Appropriate use of land will protect ecological and environmental balance, natural life and landscape, and enhance the quality of recreation.
 - (e)It is worth attention and cares to use, cultivate, develop and protect land, landscape, forests and recreational areas. It is worth particular attention and cares to protect clean water and air, guarantee water supply and prevent noise.

d Save and value land resources

We should save and value land resources. Land particularly suited for farming should be used for other purposes only if absolutely necessary. The same is true for forestry land.

In Germany, a graded system of territorial planning is organized in an efficient way (Note 1).

All levels of government -- federal, state(Länder), regional and local are charged with its implementation. Public participation is involved in the planning process. Furthermore, the system is highly decentralized. In other words, decision-making is not only reserved at the highest level, but also the lower levels play a very important role (Note 2).

The main purpose of this planning system is to reach the goal of a regionally balanced

Note 1 : Liu, C.Z., Land-Use Planning and Control, Paper presented at the 7th Joint Board Meeting of the Sino-German Association for Economic and Social Research, May 24-28, 1988 Bonn, F.R. Germany.

economic, social and ecological development through harmonization of all planning activities.

If the principles are carried out in an efficient way, the working and living conditions in rural area shall be improved so as to restore its vitality and to strengthen competitiveness of agriculture.

B Agricultural Land Use and Planning

The fundamental purpose of agricultural land use is to maintain the operation mode of family farms and increase agrarian production and income. Therefore, the basic role and function of agricultural land use and planning are to realize the objectives as follows:

a Maintain agricultural land resources efficiently

Rural areas are not only the places of producing grains, but also the sites of natural resources and ecology to be maintained, which serves to be a good choice of physical and mental relaxation, recreation and leisure

for industrial population. Furthermore, maintenance of agricultural land resources and agricultural production is particularly important because of the following:

- (a) For sufficient food provisions required
- (b) For a good living environment with adequate green spaces
- (c) For places of recreation and leisure
- (d) To prevent the agricultural service industry from being affected or declining due to decrease in agricultural land causing agricultural withering because of lack of support from the agricultural service industry.
- (e) Conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural purposes without any plan may burden the government with investments in public facilities leading to consumption and expansion of national financial expenses.

b Improve agricultural structure and enhance agricultural competitiveness and willingness of farmers for farming

Important objectives of agricultural land use planning include improving the agricultural production environment, promoting the agricultural structure improvement, Joint increasing farmers' income and enhancing the willingness of farmers for farming. Currently, farmers are not strongly motivated for farming due to lower agricultural profit. In addition, farm size structure is narrow, small, fragmentary, scattering and irregular. It will be really difficult to apply modern production techniques to such a bad agricultural land situation. Not to mention to increase agricultural productivity and farmers' income.

Accordingly, agricultural land use planning ought to be based on enhancement of the

Note 2 : Lipinsky, E.E., Integrated Development Planning of Rural Areas in Germany, Paper presented to the 10th Board Meeting of the Sino-German Association for Economic and Social Research, Sept. 1991, Taipei.

mobility of agricultural land, improvement in the agricultural structure, solving the problems of small-scale farming system and acquisition of a reasonable income for farmers.

c Specify agricultural land conversion in a reasonable manner.

Due to scarcity of land resources, agricultural land conversion becomes inevitable during the process of economic development. Properties of agricultural land differ from those of non-agricultural land. Non-agricultural land makes use of the carrying capacity of land mostly; however, in addition to that, soil fertility and arability and an excellent environment for agricultural production are further required for agricultural land. Consequently, rational use and planning of agricultural land resources is critically important to meet land requirements for overall national economic development and to protect the productivity of excellent agricultural land resources. In this way, irregular scattering or leap-frog expansion of non-agricultural land may be prevented and pollution and damage to the agricultural production environment can be avoided. The role and function of agricultural land use planning is to take expansion and requirements for non-agricultural land into account so as to specify conversion of agricultural land in a reasonable and orderly way instead of hindering good agricultural land for production.

The first and second objectives of agricultural land use planning are to solve the problems of land use within the agricultural sector; nevertheless, the third objective is to cope with the impact of development of non-agriculture sectors upon the agriculture by devising rational specifications for agricultural land conversion.

Issues of Agricultural Land Use in Taiwan

- Contradiction and Falling

Agricultural Development Act have been reviewed and amended many times since its promulgation for implementation and agricultural land use has always been the major focus and category, which reveals the significance of agricultural land issues. Agricultural Development Act modified and passed in 2000 resulted in a major reformation of agricultural land policy since the previous policy of “farmer’s ownership of agricultural land and agricultural land for farming purpose” was changed to the policy of “release of farmer’s ownership of agricultural land and putting agricultural land for farming purpose into practice.” Besides releasing agricultural land and lifting the limitations in dividing agricultural land, landowners were allowed to build farm houses on the agricultural land of their own for living improvement. Does the permission of building houses on agricultural land contradict the policy of “agricultural land for farming purpose only” from the perspective of the functions of agricultural land use, including agricultural production and ecological and landscape maintenance? It is an important issue for consideration.

A Agricultural Land Use specified by Agricultural Development Act

Related advantageous and disadvantageous articles of agricultural land use specified in the Agricultural Development Act are listed in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1 Advantageous & Disadvantageous Articles of Agricultural Development in
Agricultural Development Act

Advantageous Articles for Agricultural Land Use and Agricultural Development		
The Agricultural Development Act	Article	Description
Article 8 (General Planning for Agricultural Land Use)	Competent authorities may formulate general plans for agricultural land use in order to establish a farming mode of producing the crops that best fit the land according to the natural environment features, socio-economical situations, technical conditions, and farmers' will for the use of any given piece of agricultural land pursuant to the land use zoning regulations stipulated in the Regional Planning Law and the Urban Planning Law.	An integrated plan for agricultural land use at the right place for right crops is established for efficient agricultural land-use.
Article 10 (Changing Agricultural Land Use)	The designation or the changing of agricultural lands to non-agricultural purposes shall be done in ways that do not affect the integrity of the production environment and shall be subject to the approval of the competent authorities. Requirements as well as procedures for the said changing-over shall be subject to the governance of applicable laws yet to be drafted.	Delimitation and conversion conditions for agricultural land are specified to ensure agricultural land use and integrity of agricultural production areas.
Article 13 (Concert Concerted Planning for Farmland Consolidation)	In promoting farmland consolidation, the competent authority of land administration shall formulate overall planning in concert with the agricultural and water conservancy authorities and shall also take supportive measures in implementing the said plan.	Related agencies plan and cooperate in promoting farmland consolidation jointly for successful operation.
Article 20 (Arable Land Lease Contract – Applicable Laws)	Arable land lease contracts signed after the implementation of this revised Act of January 4, 2000 shall be governed by this Act; the 37.5% Arable Land Rental Reduction Act shall then be no longer be applicable. Matters not provided in this Act shall be governed by the Land Law, the Civil Law, and or other applicable laws.	Farmland rent contracts are inapplicable to the regulations governing reduction of farm rent to 37.5 percent, which contributes to rationalization of a tenancy system.
Article 22-1 (Farmland mobility)	The competent authority may award and assist farmers' organizations in trading, leasing and entrusting agricultural land for mobility and efficient use of agricultural land.	It helps to mobilize farmland and expand the management scale of the farm.
Article 25 (Designation of Special Agricultural Zones)	The competent authorities shall, in concert with various authorities concerned, designate agricultural production zones in accordance with the distribution of agricultural resources, the production environment and the needs for development, and, depending on the market demand, provide guidance in the establishment of special agricultural zones of an appropriate scale to implement planned production, manufacturing, storage and sales. Within the said special agricultural zones, government -designated public construction projects are eligible for government grants or receiving assistance with loan applications.	Special agricultural zones are set up for farmland use and development of economy of scale.
Article 26	Farmers engaged in co-operation in compliance	Farmers are encouraged to

(Organization of Co-Operation Classes)	with the requirements set by the competent authorities may organize production and marketing co-operation class to take charge of the operation activities. The said classes already submitted application to and recognized by the competent authorities at city or county/municipality government are eligible for the assistance from their respective competent authority.	form agricultural production and marketing co-operation teams for integrating regional productive resources and agricultural land use.
Article 30 (Encouraging the Expansion of Farm Scale)	The competent authority shall offer rewards to encourage family farms to expand their scale of operation, and shall appropriate funds, provide grants, or assist the application for loans. The said operation scale expansion may be achieved through co-operation, mandated operation, or other modes of farming.	Family farms are awarded to expand their farming scale for improvement of agricultural structure.
Article 37 (Land Value Incremental Tax Exemption)	Agricultural lands in use for agricultural purposes may apply for exemption of the land value incremental tax when transferred to a natural person.	Agricultural land transfer is exempted from land value incremental tax to reduce the cost of buying land for farmers and to help them expand their farm scale.
Article 38 (Favorable Treatment of Estate Duty, Farmland Tax, and Gift Tax)	The agricultural land in use for agricultural production and the crops thereon when taken by inheritors or legatees, the values of the said land and crops shall be exempted from estate duty and exempted from farmland tax for ten years from the year of taking of the estate. In the event pursuant to the first paragraph, when there are more than one inheritor and group consultation decides to have one inheritor to inherit the land and pay other inheritors cash compensation, the competent authorities shall assist with the application of a 20-year land loan.	Farmland inherited by one child is encouraged to prevent land from being divided, which benefits expansion of the farming scale.
Article 41 (Farm Expansion Promotion)	In the event of family farms purchasing or exchanging arable lands at the same or an adjacent site to expand the operation area or to facilitate agricultural activities, provided the total area of the land thus acquired plus the original arable land is less than five hectares, the new additional part of land shall be exempted from farmland tax for five years. With respect to the funds required for the purchase of the land or for necessary cash compensation, the competent authority shall assist the farm in seeking a 20-year loan.	Farmers are encouraged to buy or exchange their cultivated lands of the same or adjacent site to enlarge their farm size structure.
Article 55 (Encouraging Green Agricultural Activities)	To ensure the sustainability of agricultural production resources, and to reduce the impact of agricultural import on domestic agriculture, the competent authorities of agriculture shall provide rewards to encourage environment-friendly activities such as setting aside agricultural lands or reforestation.	Setting aside agricultural lands or reforestation maintains agricultural production and the ecological environment.
Article 59 (Encouraging Senior Farmers to Retire From Farming)	In response to the impact of agricultural globalization and liberalization, senior farmers shall be encouraged to retire from farming while young professional farmers shall be getting involved to participate in agricultural production	Senior peasants are awarded to retire for rejuvenation of tillers and improvement in the agricultural structure.

	system in order to enhance agricultural competitiveness and to accelerate agricultural restructuring.	
Article 66 (Vocational Training)	To expand the scope of farm operation and to encourage farmers to change their career path, the competent authorities shall, in concert with the competent vocational training authorities, provide vocational training to farmers who quit farming, and assist them in seeking a new career.	Farmers are encouraged to switch to another profession, which helps to enlarge the cultivation scale of current peasants and improve the agricultural structure.
Disadvantageous Articles for Agricultural Land Use and Agricultural Development		
	Article	Description
Article 8-1	To install fixed agricultural facilities on the agricultural land, a permit of utilizing the agricultural facilities needs to be applied first. In addition, a building license has to be applied as required. For those agricultural facilities with an area of less than 45 square meters and one-floor buildings, a construction permit is not necessary.	If a construction permit is not necessary for installing fixed agricultural facilities on the agricultural land, excess hardware equipment and facilities may be installed for inadequate land use (like building factories), which is not only bad for agricultural production, but also harms the agricultural production environment and the landscape.
Article 9-1	To promote construction in the rural areas, utilize agricultural land efficiently and maintain the production environment, county/city competent authorities may ask owners of agricultural land for their opinions for planning and conducting development and use of agricultural land by readjustment land or section acquisition with related agencies jointly to cope with plans for local agricultural land resources and overall rural development requirements.	If there is no strict regulation for agricultural land development, inadequate use of land and aimless development will worsen the problem of loss of agricultural land.
Article 16 (Arable Lands Division and Division Prohibition)	No single piece of arable land shall be divided if each of the divided area is less than point two five hectare. Exceptions are as follows. 1. In the merging with a piece of adjacent arable land through purchase, division for the purpose of merger is allowed. Two or more than two pieces of adjacent lands of the same ownership are allowed for division or merger if the total number of land piece under registration after the act remains the same. 2. The part of the land partially changed to non-arable land pursuant to governing laws and the unchanged part with co-ownership but separated management may be divided. 3. Arable lands inherited after the enactment of this Act of January 4, 2000 may be divided as single ownership. 4. Co-owned arable lands before the enactment of this Act of January 4, 2000 may be divided as single ownership. 5. The land governed by the “37.5% Arable Land Rental Reduction Act” may be divided and owned separately by the leaser and the lessee, provided both parties agree to terminate the lease agreement through	Loosening restrictions to dividing agricultural land will result in a smaller, fragmentary and irregular farm scale, which does not help to agricultural land use and improvement of agricultural structure.

	land division. 6. Non-agricultural land consolidation region to be changed to serve as farm irrigation roads. 7. Other lands deemed necessary for the implementation of land policies, agricultural policies, or for the purposes of national development, and approved by the central competent authority may be divided.	
Article 18 (Regulations on Farmhouse Building for Farmers Without a Farmhouse for Their Own Use)	Farmers who acquire agricultural lands after the enactment of this revised Act of January 4, 2000 and do not possess a farmhouse for their own use may apply for the construction of a farmhouse with the approval of the competent authorities at the city or county/municipality, either as a part of a concentrated village or in isolation on the land of their own, provided the construction does not affect agricultural production environment and the development of farming villages.	Piecemeal houses built on farmland not only result in fragmentary agricultural land, but also do damage to agricultural production and the ecological environment.

B Contradiction and Falling of Agricultural Land Use

It is not difficult to find plenty of contradictory and conflict articles in the Agricultural Development Act concerning agricultural land use (Fig. 1), which does not help efficient utilization of agricultural land and hinders sustainable development of agriculture.

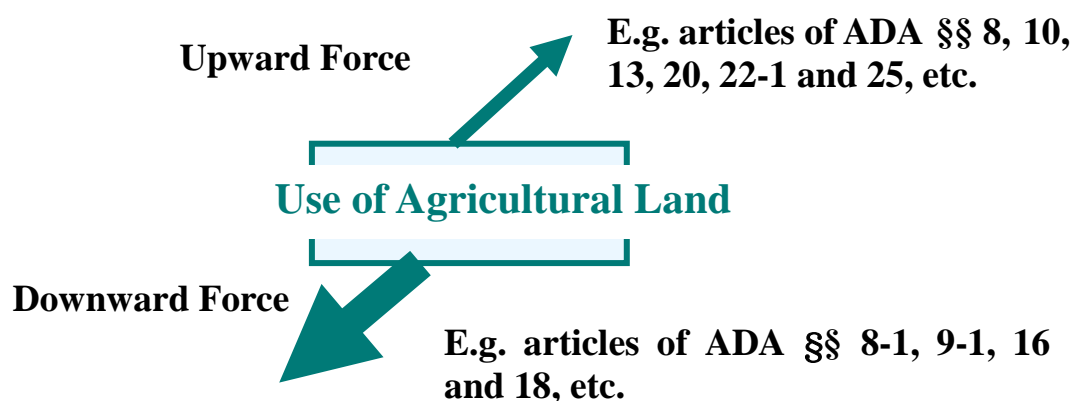


Fig. 1: Upward & Downward Forces for Agricultural Land Use

a Loosening restrictions to dividing agricultural land deviates the goal of improving the agricultural structure and causes loss of agricultural land resources.

To cope with the necessity of joining the global community and increase agricultural productivity and competitiveness, continual improvement and adjustment of the agricultural structure is required. Hence, division and subdivision of agricultural land needs to be specified effectively or avoided. Restrictions to dividing agricultural land are lifted after promulgation of the Agricultural Development Act. Property rights of the farmers may be protected though; however, the goal of improving the agricultural structure will never be achieved.

The policy of “agricultural land for farming use only” is self-explanatory. If the agricultural

land for agrarian production is divided and subdivided again and again, how can agriculture be managed and modernized? In what way will agricultural productivity and competitiveness be increased? Does it mean the purpose of “agricultural land for farming use only” won’t exist any more along with loosening the restrictions to dividing agricultural land and permission of farmhouses built by land owners on the farmland?

Improvement over agricultural production conditions has always been the top priority for the government and a great deal of major agricultural investments, including farm land consolidation and establishing special agricultural zones. Nevertheless, if the government loosens or even repeals the restrictions to dividing agricultural land and becomes active in promoting farmland consolidation and concentration of scattering farm land to improve the agricultural structure, how will be explained the waste of agricultural investments and the contradiction of agricultural policies?

Thanks to the opening of farmland and loosening the restrictions to dividing agricultural land, plenty of non-peasants coveting the benefit of building farmhouses will purchase small-scale agricultural land in the name of farming and build houses actually. In this way, previous vast farms will disappear and the rural landscape of green fields will be gone; instead, a great number of houses will be built causing loss of agricultural land. Excess division of farmland not only makes large-scale agricultural production impossible, but also destroys the landscape in the countryside.

b Farmhouses built on farmland contradicts the policy of agricultural land for farming, endangers the environment and landscape and causes wastes of public investments.

The main reason of allowing peasants to build houses on farmland is due to lack of long-term planning and development of rural villages where the farmers dwell. The original rural villages were old, declined and under development for lack of integrated planning leading to insufficient spaces for construction, inadequate public facilities and a bad living environment. As social and economic development grows, children of the farmers need to have a spacious living environment. Confined to insufficient places for houses and a limited space for development in rural villages, farmers are permitted to build their own houses on their cultivated lands.

However, farmhouses scattering around farmland imposed impact upon the traditional rural landscape and the waste water and waste from the farmhouses caused water and soil pollution and jeopardized the agricultural production environment. The quality of the farm produce is not improved and national health is affected due to unsafe food sources. In addition, fragmentary constructed farmhouses increased the cost for public facilities, which not only results in scattering and incomplete infrastructure, but also causes waste of public resources and governmental investments.

Solutions to Agricultural Land Use and Planning in Taiwan

There won't be any dispute over making agricultural land open to public as long as the policy of agricultural land for farming use only can be put into practice. The basic problem is the regulations of building farmhouses on farmland in Article 18 and loosening restrictions to dividing agricultural land in Article 16 of the Agricultural Development Act. Consequently, solutions to management of agricultural land are proposed as follows:

A From the aspect of land use – Farmhouses should be built on the places for buildings in the rural villages.

In principle of agricultural land for farming use only, farmland is the site where farmers cultivate for agricultural production. The farmhouses where farmers live should be constructed on the places for buildings in rural villages.

As a result, the permission to build farmhouses on farmland is contradictory to the policy of agricultural land for farming use only indeed. A radical reformation is to regulate farmhouses should be constructed in the places for buildings in the rural villages so that the objective of agricultural land for farming use only can be realized exactly.

B Overall development planning for the rural community – construct an excellent living environment in rural villages

As stated above, the reason why farmhouses were allowed on farmland was due to lack of planning on early days, which resulted in a narrow living space, bad ambient lighting and ventilation and insufficiency of public facilities. Places for building houses were not enough and infrastructure was incomplete. As the surroundings were hard to improve efficiently, farmers were permitted to build their own houses on their farm land.

Along with social and economic development and improvement in the agricultural structure, planning for development of modernized rural areas should take the following into consideration:

- Requirements for industrial modernization development include facilities for agricultural production and small-scale business development in rural areas.
- Requirements for expanding the lands for housing in rural villages consist of necessary living facilities and housing for farmers' families.
- Requirements of land for public facilities in rural areas will be used for the green belt, squares, parks and places for exercise, etc.
- Requirements for preserving rural landscape and ecological conservation include habitats for animals and plants and natural flowing of rivers and creeks, etc.

The old rural villages can be renovated by reconstruction and innovation of farm houses

and enhancement of public facilities for life improvement. Besides, the usage of rural buildings can be changed so that the old but historically significant farmhouses may be maintained and preserved. For improvement over production conditions, modern farming techniques and management modes can be applied and common agricultural facilities may be acquired to meet the requirements for modernized agricultural development. The flourishing prosperity of heyday in the countryside will be revived.

The importance of overall development planning for the rural areas is obvious since it not only influences agricultural production, farmland use, rural landscape and improvement in farmers' livelihood, but also affects the overall economic development in the countryside and the harmonization and coordination between urban and rural areas.

C Policies of rural planning and farmland management serve to be the best strategy to improve rural life and realize the policy of agricultural land for farming use only.

It is apparent that integrated rural development planning may create sufficient space of development and living for villagers and farmers. The quality of life for farmers is enhanced as they have a good and comfortable place to live in the rural areas. Accordingly, places for building houses are reserved for farmers, who will devote themselves to agricultural production on their farmland naturally.

Upon completion of overall planning in the rural areas, the lives of farmers are improved and policies governing farmland management can be implemented exactly. Farmhouses are only allowed in the places for buildings in the rural villages if necessary and the objective of agricultural land for farming use only will be put into practice. Therefore, the issues of building farm houses resulted from the opening of farm land and inconsistent use of agricultural land will be solved readily.

Conclusion

After the Agricultural Development Act was amended, farm land was open for sale and restrictions to dividing farmland were relaxed. Furthermore, farmers without their own dwelling houses were permitted to build farm houses on farmland, which makes the problems of managing agricultural land use more complicated. They not only affect rural landscape and the ecology, but also challenge the policy of "agricultural land for farming use only" openly. Unclearity of the role and function of land use planning causes a number of farmland management problems and influences the environment for agricultural production, the ecology and the rural landscape leading to tremendously significant impact upon agriculture, rural areas and overall social and economic development.

When we discuss the issues of managing agricultural land use, we should also ensure the limited resources of agricultural land can be utilized efficiently and the policy of agricultural land for farming use only will be performed exactly in addition to the consideration of taking

care of the farmers and promoting their welfare. Complete measures and good planning will be required to accomplish this objective. The one and only way is a close partnership of rural development planning and farmland management policies. Specifications of constructing farm houses need to be incorporated into the category for overall development planning for the rural community. Requirements for improvement in the quality of farmers' lives and rural development should be taken into account and based on the policies of farmland management and agricultural land for farming use only so as to ensure agricultural functions in production, life, ecology and recreation and leisure purposes. In this way, requirements for transitional social and economic development in the countryside may be met, farmers can be satisfied with their work and lives and a good and solid foundation for sustainable development of agriculture and prosperity and progress in the rural regions may be laid.

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