

# Core and Common Members in the Genesis of Farmer Cooperatives in China

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**This paper addresses the genesis of farmer cooperatives in China in terms of the actors. Empirical results from a multiple case study indicate that the genesis of cooperatives in China is due to entrepreneurial farmers and the government, rather than a bottom-up, collective action process of many small farmers. Copyright © 2013 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Most small farmers face small-scale production problems, powerful intermediaries or retailers, and missing markets. It is therefore to be expected that solutions will emerge to address these problems. One of the solutions is a farmer cooperative. It is an enterprise collectively owned by many farmers in an adjacent stage of production. Its primary aim is to serve the interests of farmers. Farmer cooperatives are established by small farmers to realize economies of scale, to build countervailing power, to gain access, and to provide member services.

Farmer cooperatives emerged in the Western world at the end of the 19th century and started later in other parts of the world. Various stages of development in their evolution have been distinguished by Cook and Plunkett (2006): genesis, growth, emergence of internal conflicts, recognition and analysis, and options choice stages. The initiation of farmer cooperatives turns out to vary across countries. The member orientation of cooperatives makes it likely that members

initiate the cooperative, but there are also many cases where other parties have been important in the genesis of cooperatives, such as national or regional governments, or local entrepreneurs. This article addresses the genesis of cooperatives in China.

The earliest Chinese cooperatives were named People's Community Cooperatives. In the 1950s, they appeared under the planned economy and Marxist tradition. People's Community Cooperatives were established by the central government and characterized by collective ownership, central planning, and state embeddedness (Xu, 2005). People's Community Cooperatives disappeared several years later. They were restructured into people's communes in 1958. Almost all (99%) farmers joined the people's commune (Sun, 2006). Different from the primary and advanced cooperatives, the people's commune is characterized by collective and centralized ownership by the commune rather than farmers. All members transfer their production land and tools to the commune. Farmers were merely workers who are paid equally.

A new model of cooperatives, characterized by farmer ownership and market economic orientation, began to be established in the 1980s. We refer to these cooperatives as farmer cooperatives (translated as 'farmer specialized cooperatives' in Chinese). There

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were 26 400 farmer cooperatives at the end of 2006. Since the promulgation of the National Farmer Cooperative Law in 2007, the number of farmer cooperatives has increased very rapidly. By the end of March 2012, there were 552,300 farmer cooperatives with 43.0 million members in China. Around 17.2% of Chinese farmers have joined cooperatives.<sup>1</sup>

There is a scarcity of data about the genesis of cooperatives in China. The contribution of this article is to address empirically the genesis of farmer cooperatives in China with the research question ‘Who are the main actors in the genesis and early development of farmer cooperatives in China?’ Section 2 delineates the genesis stage of the life cycle of cooperatives. Section 3 presents the methodology. The data and descriptive analysis are presented in Section 4. Section 5 discusses the results. We conclude in Section 6.

## 2. BOTTOM-UP VERSUS TOP-DOWN INITIATION

Three types of initiation regarding farmer cooperatives are distinguished in this section.

### 2.1. Bottom-up Initiation

Various countries have experienced the bottom-up initiation of farmer cooperatives. A number of examples are presented. The German wine cooperative Moselland<sup>2</sup> has its origins in the 19th century. Small wine-growing cooperatives were formed regionally by many individual growers. Various mergers between regional cooperatives have resulted in the current large cooperative Moselland eG. In Germany, timber merchant Hans Tenhaeff organized, together with several farmers, farmers into a fruit and plant growing association in 1910. Their aim was to develop a modern production and marketing system for agricultural and decorative plant products. A subsequent process of investments, mergers, and takeovers resulted in the current horticultural cooperative Landgard (Landgard, 2012). Cooperatives have also been initiated by key persons in a village or province, or farmer organizations. Priest Van den Elsen has been instrumental in setting up many cooperatives in the south of the Netherlands (Internationaal Cooperatief Centrum, 2012). Most agricultural cooperatives in the Northern USA evolved through Farmers Union, a farm lobbying group created by small farmers. This nonpolitical, bottom-up organization emerged as a response to market failure. Golovina and Nilsson (2009, pp. 225 and 230) state

more generally that ‘... cooperatives experiences historically and internationally ...’ show that they are ‘... grass root organizations’.

These examples do not imply that the bottom-up emergence of cooperatives goes fast or emerges at all. It requires that somebody steps forward to initiate the farmer cooperative and that somebody becomes the leader of the cooperative. This not only requires various skills but also is time consuming to provide this collective good for the entire membership. Qualified persons may therefore not take the lead, despite the collective need to start a farmer cooperative.

### 2.2. Top-down, Government

There are various cases in the world where cooperatives are initiated top-down by the government. We provide examples from the USA, Spain, and Russia. Olson (1965) describes that in the early 1900s, the Farm Bureau was crucial for the formation of cooperatives in the states Illinois and Indiana in the USA. The Farm Bureau was created by the government and benefited farmers through provision of technical aid and education.

The Franco regime in Spain introduced the Law of Cooperatives in 1942, which set up and organized agricultural cooperatives in Spain so as to be compatible with its government and social strategy. Thereafter, legislation was set up for rural credit cooperatives and also agricultural cooperatives, where the rural credit cooperatives initially loaned only to agricultural entities.<sup>3</sup> The cooperative legislation was clearly ‘top-down’ and resulted in setting up cooperatives. The case of Spain illustrates that farmer cooperatives are frequently considered as instruments for governments to structure society.<sup>4</sup> However, the eventual success of the agricultural cooperatives was ‘bottom-up’ initiatives carried out by a rejuvenated cooperative sector in the 1980s. Investment in technology is a key feature, as is the dissemination of such technical knowledge.

A top-down initiation of farmer cooperatives by the government occurred also in Russia. Post 1990 farmer cooperatives are organized, financed, and managed by governmental bodies. Farmers are then invited to become members of the cooperatives without investing any money. Farmers do not have any capital share in the cooperatives (Golovina and Nilsson, 2009). This type of cooperative is usually characterized by unallocated equity, collective decision making, and equal treatment, which impede a profitable functioning of cooperatives. These cooperatives are therefore more legislation oriented and service oriented.

Gardner and Lerman (2006) argue that this is more likely to happen in the economic environment of transition economies. However, the prospect of such cooperatives is limited because of farmers' low trust and low level of dependence on these cooperatives (Golovina and Nilsson, 2009).<sup>5</sup>

### 2.3. Top-down, Entrepreneurs

Farmer cooperatives may also be initiated by entrepreneurs, including entrepreneurial farmers, entrepreneurial officials who used to work in governmental departments related to agriculture, and entrepreneurial businessmen engaged in agricultural products (Huang and Xu, 2006). This type of cooperative is commonly seen in China. Entrepreneurs who initiate the cooperative are members of cooperatives and generally hold the essential and scarce production factors, such as knowledge regarding production technologies, asset capital, marketing capabilities, and social networks (Lin and Huang, 2007).

## 3. METHODOLOGY

To develop a better understanding of how cooperatives are organized in China, we employ a rigorous descriptive micro-analytic approach. A multiple-case study is developed to describe and analyze the start

up of farmer cooperatives in the Zhejiang province, China. The sample consists of 37 farmer cooperatives. Data are collected from documents and first-hand interviews. First, documents such as statutes and by-laws of cooperatives were collected. Second, face-to-face individual interviews with chairpersons or managers were conducted in order to collect primary data. Face-to-face individual interviews with cooperative members were carried out during March 2011 and June 2011. The chairperson or a manager of each cooperative in the survey was interviewed. The questionnaire is provided in Appendix A.

It is important to recognize that cooperatives in different parts of China vary in their stage of development. Cooperatives firstly came into being in eastern China where the economy and market levels are more developed and agriculture is more industrialized. Cooperatives in western China are still in the start-up phase. Within the population of farmer cooperatives in China, we surveyed a sample of cooperatives in Zhejiang province. Zhejiang is located in the southeast of China (Figure 1) and is one of the most developed provinces in China. The GDP per capita of Zhejiang province was \$7690, ranking first among the provinces in China, whereas the GDP per capita of China was \$4382 in 2010.<sup>6</sup> However, the average arable land area per capita is smaller than 0.4  $\mu$  (1 ha = 15  $\mu$ ) in Zhejiang, whereas the national average plantation land area per capita is 1.38  $\mu$  in 2010.<sup>7</sup> Because of its scarcity



Figure 1. Map of China.

of land and its relatively developed economy, Zhejiang specializes in high value products, such as fruit and vegetables. We focus on fruit and vegetable cooperatives during the field investigation to ensure relative homogeneity of cooperative enterprises.

Zhejiang province was chosen as the survey area for two main reasons. The first reason is that Zhejiang is leading the way of farmer cooperative development in China, in terms of both quantity and performance. There were 3916 farmer cooperatives with a total membership of 270,000 in Zhejiang in 2006.<sup>8</sup> At the end of 2010, there were 20 678 farmer cooperatives with a membership size of 768,000.<sup>9</sup> Among these cooperatives, more than 70% of them are row crop or field cooperatives, whereas the other 30% are livestock cooperatives. Fruit and vegetable cooperatives are the two most common types of field cooperatives. Fruit cooperatives account for around 40% of crop cooperatives, whereas vegetable cooperatives account for around 30%. The number of cooperatives has been increasing rapidly, and farmer cooperatives are playing an increasing role in agriculture markets in Zhejiang.

Second, Zhejiang put into practice the Zhejiang Farmer Cooperative Law in the beginning of 2005. It is the first provincial and official cooperative law in China. The National Farmer Cooperative Law in China was promulgated on July 1, 2007, which was based on the Zhejiang Cooperative Law. It implies that cooperatives in Zhejiang are considered to be leaders in cooperative organizational design.

Random sampling is used. We chose 50 farmer cooperatives randomly from the documented list of cooperatives provided by Zhejiang Agricultural Department, all of which are vegetable and fruit

cooperatives. These 50 farmer cooperatives are distributed over different cities of the Zhejiang province. We failed to interview members of five cooperatives that we initially chose, because of unavailability of interviewees. Therefore, we interviewed members from 45 farmer cooperatives. A questionnaire was counted as valid when there were no significant inconsistencies between the information collected from members of a cooperative and no important information was missing. An example of an inconsistency of information is a substantial difference between a chairperson's capital share reported by the chairman and the chairperson's capital share reported by others. A reason may be that a chairperson may try to hide the truth about his capital shares by offering wrong information when he owned shares beyond the ceiling of shares required by the Law. We discarded this questionnaire when we were not able to find out the verifiable information. Among all the cooperatives visited, data from eight of them were discarded because of missing information or informational inconsistencies. We have therefore 37 cases.

#### 4. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The data are provided in Appendix B, and the descriptive statistics are presented in Tables 1–4. Table 1 shows that all the cooperatives in the survey were founded between 2001 and 2006. Products of these cooperatives were in fruits and vegetables. Most cooperatives (83.7%) had their production bases within a local city.

Table 2 presents the membership size and members' geographical distribution of the farmer cooperatives. Two thirds of the cooperatives had

**Table 1. Genesis, main product, and geographical scope of 37 Zhejiang fruit–vegetable cooperative (2011)**

		Number of cooperatives	Proportion (%)
Total number of cooperatives		37	100
Genesis	2001	1	2.7
	2002	10	27.0
	2003	11	29.7
	2004	6	16.2
	2005	7	18.9
	2006	2	5.4
	Main products of cooperatives	Fruits	28
Vegetables		7	18.9
Vegetables and fruits		2	5.4
Geographical scope of production bases	Within a local village	4	10.8
	Within a local town	15	40.5
	Within a local city	12	32.4
	Within a local province	1	2.7
	Nationwide	4	10.8
	International	1	2.7

**Table 2. Membership size and location of 37 Zhejiang fruit–vegetable cooperatives (2011)**

		Number of cooperatives	Proportion (%)
Total number of cooperatives		37	100
Membership size	<100	7	17.9
	[100–200)	25	67.6
	[200–500)	3	8.1
	≥500	2	5.4
Geographical scope of the membership <sup>a</sup>	Within a local village	8	21.6
	Within a local town	20	54.1
	Within a local city	8	21.6
	Within a local province	0	0
	Nationwide	1	2.7

<sup>a</sup>The location of the membership is different from the location of production base because some farmers rent additional lands from farmers within or beyond their own village.

**Table 3. Number of core members in 37 Zhejiang fruit–vegetable cooperatives (2011)**

No. of core members	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	40
No. of coops	1	11	3	13	1	4	2	1	1

**Table 4. Education levels and working experiences of chairpersons of 37 Zhejiang fruit–vegetable cooperatives (2011)**

		Number of cooperatives	Proportion (%)
Total number of cooperatives		37	100
Education levels of chairpersons	Below primary school	1	2.7
	Primary school	8	21.6
	Middle school	20	54.1
	High school	7	18.9
	College and university	1	2.7
Working experiences of chairpersons	Used to be a village head or worked in governmental department	15	40.6
	Did product transportation and sale	11	29.7
	Ran a company	6	16.2
	Was a large farmer	5	13.5

membership sizes between 100 and 200. Three fourths of all cooperatives had their membership within a local town, whereas only one of the 37 cooperatives had a beyond city membership.

All the cooperatives in the survey had a merged body of the management and the board. Members of the management and the board are referred to as core members, because of their key roles in the farmer cooperative. A core member holds relatively large shares and is in charge of at least one of the key businesses areas (management, input purchasing, production, product purchasing, marketing, accounting, and so on). Other members are referred to as common members. The number of core members is presented in Table 3. There were on average six core members in the cooperatives in the survey, accounting for 3.5% of the membership. In addition, Table 3 shows that there are usually three, five, or seven core members,

which implies that numbers of core members tend to be an odd number. The cooperative with 40 core members is a nationwide cooperative having multiple production bases all over China and also one production base in Vietnam. In each of the production base, there were a few core members, which contributed to the large number of core members.

To become a core member in a cooperative, at least one of the following conditions needs to be met. First, a core member is usually one of the initiators of the cooperative. Exceptions are possible. A member joining the cooperative after its founding may also become a core member because of distinct capabilities. This happened in only one farmer cooperative we surveyed. Second, a core member is generally good at management and marketing and/or has an important network with downstream buyers and processors. Examples are a chairperson who used to be the village head is

good at organizing farmers; a chairperson who used to do transportation and sales has many skills in marketing and is able to establish a broad marketing portfolio of products; and a chairperson who used to run a company tends to guide the cooperative into the direction of demutualization. Farmers with greater asset capital, human capital, and social capital have a higher probability to obtain authority, economic benefits, or political benefits. In addition, the education level may also influence human resources. The education level of chairpersons was significantly higher than the average education level of farmers in China. Table 4 shows that 75.7% of chairpersons had middle-school education and 21.6% had high school education, whereas the average proportion of farmers in China having middle school education was 48.1% and having high school education was 11.6%.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, two fifths (40.6%) of the cooperative chairpersons were or used to be a village head or worked in a governmental department; 29.7% of them used to do product transportation and sales; 16.2% of them managed a company before initiating cooperatives; and finally 13.5% of the chairpersons were large farmers.<sup>11</sup>

## 5. DISCUSSION

This section addresses the membership size and locality of farmer cooperatives in China (Section 5.1) and the actors involved in the genesis of these cooperatives (Section 5.2).

### 5.1. Membership Size and Locality

The two distinctive features regarding farmer cooperatives in China are the small membership size and locality. There are at least four reasons. First, local farmers have similar nature conditions such as climate and land. The nature conditions basically determine the specialization of a town or city in terms of industries and varieties of products. It is therefore much easier for local farmers to act collectively because of their similar products as well as similar production technologies.

The second reason is that farmers from the same town or city have the same cultural and economic backgrounds, which implies that they are exposed to similar situations in information collection and market access experiences with large markets. These common experiences make cooperation easier.

Third, farmers from the same village or town usually know each other well and they usually have a high degree of kinship (Huang and Xu, 2006). The mutual trust between members facilitates farmers' cooperation and meanwhile can save on governance cost of the cooperative. Additionally, the same dialect within some area contributes substantially to smooth communication. As a result, the costs of decision making and coordination would be relatively low if there is mutual trust and members speak the same dialect.

Last but not least, the dominant position of the core members in the management of farmer cooperatives matters to a large extent. The management of Chinese cooperatives is seldom professional. All chief executive officers and the chairpersons in the cooperatives in the survey were members. Member managers may lack detailed knowledge of markets and management, compared with full-time professional managers (Sexton and Iskow, 1988). So, they have to limit the membership size and also limit the membership within a certain area to ensure the homogeneity of interests of the members.

### 5.2. Actors

This section addresses the importance of core members, common members, and the government in the genesis of farmer cooperatives in China.

#### 5.2.1 Core Members

Farmers in China differ in asset capital, human resources, and social resources. In China, some farmers have substantial capital, marketing capabilities, and/or social or professional networks. They are often entrepreneurial and are referred to as 'elite' farmers. Examples include persons who used to manage private enterprises, those who used to work in the agricultural department, or persons having information about the product supply chain. Meanwhile, there are also common farmers, good at farming, but not experienced at marketing or management. Most farmers in China belong to this latter category. These differences determine different production and marketing strategies as well as different objectives between alternative groups of farmers. Farmers with high capabilities seek to realize entrepreneurship rents in terms of capital investment and authority through the management of cooperatives, whereas common farmers are satisfied by selling their products at reasonable prices. These entrepreneurial farmers organize common farmers into farmer cooperatives. A vital feature of cooperatives in China is therefore that they attract key production factors (Xu, 2005). A core

member generally holds more shares of the cooperative and correspondingly has more income rights, whereas a common member is expected to patronize the cooperative but is seldom involved in the operational decision making. Although it is essential that common members produce and provide products that meet the demand of consumers, yet more important is that core members use their capabilities to enhance the value of cooperative enterprises by downstream value-adding activities and acquire higher profit in markets.

The background of a chairperson generates benefits for the farmer cooperative. The experience of working in governmental departments improves the chairperson's social capital and sequentially enhances his or her capabilities in acquiring information, whereas the experience of doing product transportation and sales, managing company, and being a larger farmer implies that the chairperson has more opportunity to access markets, which enhances the chairperson's capabilities in information collection and marketing.

### 5.2.2 Common Members

Common members are farmers who buy a small amount of capital shares or pay an entry fee to join a cooperative. They transact with the cooperative but are seldom involved in the management or operation of the cooperative. Common members therefore can be regarded as participants in the cooperatives. They participate in cooperatives mainly to pool risks and to obtain services provided by cooperatives such as input supply and marketing services (Sun, 2006). Hence, different from the core members' profit-seeking objective, common members are usually risk adverse and are satisfied by procuring services and stable prices.

Farmers obtain cooperative membership by buying capital shares. According to our investigation, in most cooperatives, a farmer needed to buy at least one share of capital. However, in a small proportion of cooperatives, one share is bought by more than one member when they lack money.<sup>12</sup> One share of capital can range from 500 Chinese yuan (\$77) to 2000 Chinese yuan (\$308).<sup>13</sup> Hence, common members make small contributions to the finance of cooperatives.

In addition, common members usually do not participate in decision making. In 34 (92%) of 37 cooperatives surveyed, decisions were made only by core members without the participation of common members, whereas in the other 8% cooperatives, core members still dominated in decision making yet with

the participation of common members. Therefore, common members participate marginally in decision making.

### 5.2.3 Government

The genesis and development of Chinese farmer cooperatives are not only due to the desire of entrepreneurial farmers but also driven and influenced to a large extent by the government. There are various aspects of the relationship between the government and cooperatives. First, initiation of farmer cooperatives is to a large extent promoted by the government. The start-up stage of cooperatives in China began in the 1980s and entered into a period of rapid development in the 2000s. This development was reinforced in 2007 as the National Cooperative Law was promulgated.

Second, the government supports cooperatives in various ways, particularly with tax relief and subsidies. Normally, subsidies are for infrastructure of villages, and investment in storage and processing equipment. Subsidies are important to cooperatives at the start-up stage because of cooperatives' inability to raise sufficient capital. In addition, the government supports cooperatives by providing them production technique training and product promotions, and establishes competitions with rewards for brand establishment. No matter how important the role government plays, the initiation of farmer cooperatives in China is essentially due to market forces as well as farmers' desire for investment. The government accelerates or normalizes the development of cooperatives.

Third, not only cooperatives do receive support from the government but also the government uses cooperatives to realize some economic and political objectives. From the perspective of its economic function, the development of cooperatives can increase farmers' incomes and promote the local economy, industrialization, and the agricultural supply chain (Xu, 2005). Cooperatives organize small farmers to realize production standardization and product brand establishment, which are difficult for individual farmers. From the view of its political function, cooperatives naturally have an antipoverty function (Xu, 2005; Wu and Xu, 2009). The government both collects information and voice from farmers and implements various policies via cooperatives. The voice of small farmers is organized and receives more attention because of the existence of cooperatives. Farmer cooperatives help the government also to carry out policies more efficiently and effectively. Therefore, the

government takes advantage of cooperatives to carry out governmental activities such as technical extension, development of industrialization, and subsidizing poor farmers.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The number of farmer cooperatives in China has grown very rapidly since the promulgation of the National Cooperative Law in 2007. The genesis of cooperatives in China is dominated by entrepreneurial farmers' economic ambitions and the government's economic and political objectives, rather than the small farmers, if the evidence in this study can be generalized.

There are many possibilities for further research. We formulate two possibilities. First, one of the concerns regarding the development of farmer cooperatives in China is that they do not emerge bottom-up. Core members may be crucial for the genesis of farmer cooperatives in China, but farmer cooperatives will not survive if they do not serve the entire membership. The specifics of the genesis process of farmer cooperatives in China may have an impact on their subsequent development. For example, the dominance of a small percentage of the membership, that is, the core members, may have an effect on the involvement of all members in farmer cooperatives in the subsequent stages of the life cycle of farmer cooperatives in China. Additionally, various farmer cooperatives in China have features similar to some farmer cooperatives in the Western world, such as differentiation between members in terms of quality premiums and voting rights and a focus on one product. This is allowed by the Cooperative Law.

Second, the genesis of farmer cooperatives in China is a top-down process dominated by the government and entrepreneurs, rather than the common members. This seems to reflect the development of China during the last decade. China is on the one hand a country with one party and a large government, but on the other hand, provincial governments seem to have considerable impact on local economic developments. It will be interesting to see whether there is an imprint of the specifics of the country (Stichcombe, 1965) on the subsequent development of farmer cooperatives or that the interaction between the legal system and the economic incentives facing members in a farmer cooperative dominates (Williamson, 1996).

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## NOTES

1. Data source: The Ministry of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China. Available at <http://www.moa.gov.cn/>
2. Moselland. June 29, 2012. Available at [www.moselland.de](http://www.moselland.de)
3. Giagnocavo (2010) addresses the resulting co-evolution of agricultural and rural credit cooperatives in the Spanish province Almería. Statistics regarding the number of 'top-down' cooperatives formed and the percentage of the cooperative market share in various sectors are presented by Cervantes and Fernández (2008). Núñez-Nickel and Moyano-Fuentes (2004) show that Andalusian cooperatives in the olive oil and milling industry have an advantage over their commercial rivals and are robust to a regime being hostile to the democratic tradition in cooperatives.
4. Greece is another example of a country where cooperatives are considered as an instrument for political parties (Iliopoulos and Valentinov, 2012).
5. Carroll *et al.* (1988) present evidence that the organizational structure and the behavior of agricultural cooperatives are strongly affected by the structure of the Hungarian state, where Hungary had a communist system with one party and various decentralized economic forms.
6. Data source: China Statistical Yearbook 2011.
7. Data source: Ministry of Land and Resources of the People's Republic of China. Available at <http://www.mlr.gov.cn/>
8. Data source: Agricultural Department of Zhejiang Province. Available at <http://www.zjagri.gov.cn/html/main/gb2312/index.html>
9. Data source: Zhao *et al.* (2011).
10. National Bureau of Statistics of China. Available at <http://www.stats.gov.cn/>
11. A large farmer is defined as a farmer whose production area is much larger than the average production area in the local village and who needs to hire full-time workers in production.
12. We do not have the data regarding the proportion of cooperatives in which a member was required to have at least one share of capital and that of cooperatives in which more than one member can together have one share.
13. On the basis of the exchange rate at the time of the survey, 1 Chinese yuan equals to \$0.154.

## APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

### A. Basic information of the cooperative

- (1) Name of the cooperative;
- (2) The name of the city that the cooperative is located;

- (3) The year of the establishment of the cooperative;
- (4) Membership size of the cooperative when being established;
- (5) Current membership size of the cooperative;
- (6) Fixed capital of the cooperative when being established;
- (7) Current fixed capital of the cooperative;
- (8) Share capital of the cooperative when being established;
- (9) Current share capital of the cooperative;
- (10) Total shares of the cooperative;
- (11) Main products of the cooperative;
- (12) Total production areas;
- (13) The brand of the cooperative's products;
- (14) Total sale volume of the cooperative last production year;
- (15) Total sale value of the cooperative last production year.

### B. Membership of the cooperative

1. Geographical scope of the membership;
  - (1) Within local village;
  - (2) Within local town;
  - (3) Within local city;
  - (4) Within local province;
  - (5) Nationwide.
2. Geographical scope of members' production basis;
  - (1) Within local village;
  - (2) Within local town;
  - (3) Within local city;
  - (4) Within local province;
  - (5) Nationwide;
  - (6) International area.
3. What is the basic membership rule of the cooperative?
  - (1) Open; (2) Limited; (3) Closed.
4. If there is an open membership rule, then please specify the reasons why the cooperative chooses this rule;
5. If there is a limited membership rule, then please specify the requirements that a farmer has to meet to entry the cooperative;
6. If there is a closed membership rule, then please specify the reasons why the cooperative chooses this rule;

7. Please describe the exit rule of the cooperative.

### C. Information of the chairperson

1. Name of the chairperson;
2. Age of the chairperson;
3. Gender of the chairperson;
4. Telephone number of the chairperson;
5. The education level of the chairperson;
  - (1) Lower than primary school;
  - (2) Primary school;
  - (3) Middle school;
  - (4) High school;
  - (5) Higher than high school.
6. The equity capital shares of the chairperson (%);
7. Other jobs that the chairperson is engaged in currently;
  - (1) Being a technician of some governmental department;
  - (2) Being a member of another cooperative;
  - (3) Being a village head;
  - (4) Selling agricultural input materials;
  - (5) Working in a company;
  - (6) Running a company or being a manager of some company;
  - (7) Others. Please specify.
8. What did the chairperson do before becoming a cooperative member?
  - (1) Farming;
  - (2) Worked in some governmental department;
  - (3) Been a village head;
  - (4) Sold agricultural input materials;
  - (5) Procured and sold agricultural products;
  - (6) Worked in a company;
  - (7) Ran a company or been a manager of a company;
  - (8) Others. Please specify.
9. The technological level of the chairperson;
  - (1) Very bad;
  - (2) Worse than average;
  - (3) Medium;
  - (4) Better than average;
  - (5) Excellent.

**A 基本信息:**

- 1 合作社名称:
- 2 合作社所在县市:
- 3 合作社成立年份:
- 4 合作社成立时的社员数:
- 5 合作社当前社员数:
- 6 合作社成立时的固定资产:
- 7 合作社当前固定资产:
- 8 合作社成立时的股金总额:
- 9 合作社当前股金总额:
- 10 合作社当前总股份数:
- 11 合作社主营产品:
- 12 合作社生产总面积
- 13 合作社产品品牌:
- 14 合作社上一年度的总交易量:
- 15 合作社上一年度的总交易额:

**B 合作社社员的社员资格**

- 1 社员主要来自于:
  - (1) 本村; (2) 本镇; (3) 本县; (4) 本市; (5) 本省; (6) 全国各地
- 2 社员的生产基地主要分布在:
  - (1) 本村; (2) 本镇; (3) 本县; (4) 本市; (5) 本省; (6) 全国各地; (7) 拥有国外基地
- 3 合作社的入社条件:
  - (1) 开放性社员资格;
  - (2) 限制性社员资格;
  - (3) 封闭性社员资格。
- 4 若合作社采取开放性社员资格, 采取这个政策的原因是:
- 5 若合作社采取限制性社员资格, 那么农户入社需满足什么条件:
- 6 若合作社采取封闭性社员资格, 采取这个政策的原因是:
- 7 请描述合作社社员的退社条件和程序 (是否允许退社, 退社条件, 退社的返还股份计算等)。

### C 合作社社长/理事长信息

1 社长名字:

2 社长年龄:

3 社长性别:

4 社长电话:

5 社长教育程度:

- (1) 小学以下;
- (2) 小学毕业;
- (3) 初中毕业;
- (4) 高中毕业;
- (5) 大专或本科以上。

6 社长股金占合作社总股金的比例 (%):

7 社长目前所从事的其他工作:

- (1) 某些政府部门的技术人员;
- (2) 村长/村支书等村级干部;
- (3) 除了该合作社以外的其他合作社的成员;
- (4) 经营农资公司或商店;
- (5) 其他公司的普通员工;
- (6) 经营公司或是公司的管理人员;
- (7) 其他。请说明。

8 社长在成为社长之前的工作经历:

- (1) 从事农业生产;
- (2) 政府部门工作;
- (3) 村长/村支书等村级干部;
- (4) 经营农资公司或商店;
- (5) 从事农产品返销;
- (6) 其他公司的普通员工;
- (7) 经营公司或是公司的管理人员;
- (8) 其他。请说明。

9 社长的农业生产技术水平就全体社员来说, 处于:

- (1) 很差;
- (2) 中下;
- (3) 中等;
- (4) 中上;
- (5) 前茅。

## APPENDIX B: DATA

**Table B1. Genesis, main products, and geographical scope**

Coops	Genesis	Main products	Geographical scope of members' production bases
1	2003	1	1
2	2003	1	2
3	2002	1	6
4	2003	1	6
5	2004	1	2
6	2004	1	3
7	2004	1,2	3
8	2003	1	2
9	2003	2	3
10	2002	1	3
11	2002	1,2	3
12	2002	1	2
13	2006	2	6
14	2002	1	4
15	2002	2	5
16	2003	1	3
17	2003	1	2
18	2002	1	2
19	2001	1	7
20	2005	1	2
21	2005	1	2
22	2005	1	3
23	2005	1	2
24	2002	1	1
25	2002	2	2
26	2003	2	1
27	2003	1	2
28	2004	1	3
29	2005	1	3
30	2004	1	2
31	2002	1	6
32	2003	2	3
33	2003	2	2
34	2005	1	3
35	2005	1	2
36	2006	1	1
37	2004	1	2

Main products: 1, fruits; 2, vegetables. Geographical scope of members' production bases: 1, within a local village; 2, within a local town; 3, within a local county; 4, within a local city; 5, within a local province; 6, nationwide; 7, international.

**Table B2. Membership size and composition**

Coops	Membership size	Geographical scope of the membership	No. of core members	Education level of chairpersons	Working experiences of chairpersons
1	132	1	5	3	2
2	46	2	3	3	3
3	173	3	9	3	2
4	250	2	5	3	4
5	108	2	8	2	1
6	103	3	4	3	2
7	135	3	3	4	4
8	103	2	3	2	4
9	103	2	3	2	1
10	705	3	5	5	3

(Continues)

**Table B2. (Continued)**

Coops	Membership size	Geographical scope of the membership	No. of core members	Education level of chairpersons	Working experiences of chairpersons
11	100	2	5	4	1
12	108	1	4	3	2
13	120	2	3	3	3
14	132	2	5	4	2
15	1321	3	5	2	3
16	125	2	3	3	2
17	102	2	7	3	1
18	109	2	4	2	2
19	328	6	40	1	1
20	50	2	5	3	2
21	68	2	3	2	1
22	78	1	3	4	2
23	135	1	7	2	1
24	128	1	5	3	1
25	47	2	7	4	1
26	31	1	7	3	1
27	120	2	5	3	4
28	109	2	2	4	1
29	120	2	3	3	1
30	287	2	3	3	1
31	158	4	5	3	3
32	120	3	5	3	3
33	152	2	3	4	2
34	86	3	5	3	2
35	137	2	8	2	1
36	103	1	5	3	1
37	102	1	6	3	4

Geographical scope of the membership: 1, within a local village; 2, within a local town; 3, within a local county; 4, within a local city; 5, within a local province; 6, nationwide; 7, international. Education level of chairpersons: 1, below primary school; 2, primary school; 3, middle school; 4, high school; 5, college and university; 6, others. Working experiences of chairpersons: 1, used to be a village head or worked in governmental department; 2, did product transportation and sale; 3, ran a company; 4, a large farmer.

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