Experience in Supporting Livelihoods for Farmers in Thai Nguyen Province, Viet Nam

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Abstract:
In the context of international economic integration, it is extremely important to support the livelihoods of farmers in Thai Nguyen province in particular and in Vietnam in general. The article has focused on studying the experiences of some provinces of China and Japan, and two localities of Hanoi and Vinh Phuc on livelihood support for farmers, thereby drawing lessons for Thai Nguyen province.

Keywords: Policy, Farming households, livelihoods, Thai Nguyen

1. Introduction:
As a province in the Northern Midlands and Mountains region of Vietnam, Thai Nguyen has advantages in terms of nature, weather, and climate for the development of the agricultural industry. However, in the face of the current requirement of accelerating the industrialization and modernization of agriculture and rural areas, the livelihoods of farmers in the province are facing slow improvement and are affected by many environmental conditions. To overcome those difficulties, the provincial government has implemented many support policies for this population group. However, the implementation of the policy still has many shortcomings. In such a context, it is very important to study the experiences of countries and some provinces in Vietnam in supporting the livelihoods of farmers.

2. Experiences of some countries on livelihood support policies for farmers
2.1. Livelihood support policy for farmers in Hunan Province, China

Through the document disseminating experience of solving livelihoods for countries, UNDP in India summarized the experience of China and showed that to solve livelihood problems for farmers in general and some regions in particular, it is necessary to harmonize both the protection of existing livelihoods so as not to lose them and the improvement of livelihoods to increase them. So in the past 30 years, China has made great strides in improving people's livelihoods, reducing the poverty rate from 31% to 1.6%. This is considered the most effective poverty reduction movement in the world. Hunan Province, China has developed a livelihood support policy for farmers that is suitable to the local situation and is a lesson for the Government of Vietnam in general and the Thai Nguyen provincial government in particular in ensuring livelihoods for farmers.

*Some models of land accumulation in Hunan province.

Land is an important factor influencing the livelihood strategies of farm households in China. Family land assets have an effect on off-farm employment and these effects can be positive or negative. On the one hand, land is an asset that provides financial support to households who rent land and where a market for land rentals develops. [1]. On the other hand, members of wealthy farm households with more land can do more off-farm work. [2] [3]. Land scarcity could spur rural Chinese workers to work in non-agricultural markets. [3].

China has a distinct system of land ownership. The household responsibility system, adopted in China in the early 1980s, first replaced collective farming and separated land use rights from land ownership. [4] [5].
Through fixed-term contracts, village collectives, known as village authorities, officially own the land, but each household has the right to use the land for their productive activities [6]. Initially, the land was subdivided mainly according to household size, the contract term was only 15 years. Due to the principles of equality, each household receives several parcels of land allotted based on soil fertility, irrigation conditions, location, etc. [7]. As a result, small, highly fragmented, and frequently adjusted parcels of land have become prominent features of household farmland in China. The average farm size of a Chinese household is about 0.5 hectares divided into several plots. In addition, land reallocation is subject to demographic change and threatens the security of property rights of rural landowners. Faced with the above-mentioned challenges, the Chinese Party and Government have issued several guidelines to guide and direct the extension of the agricultural land contract period, creating conditions for people to transfer their contracts and business rights, contributing to the concentration and accumulation of land in rural areas to serve production and business.

As a major agricultural province of China, the land accumulation in Hunan province is said to be representative of the whole of China with typical land models in some districts and cities of the province. Currently, land contract transfer in Hunan province exists in three forms, including the form of transfer (contract transfer) between households; the form of transfer (contract transfer) to specialized cooperatives; form of circulation (consignment transfer) for enterprises. The selling price of each type of land is not the same, depends on the location of each land area, and is regulated by the Government (based on the market). In Hunan, land transfer prices are higher than the national average. The following are some models of land accumulation in Hunan province.

First: Model of land circulation, and collective economic development in Khai Tue village.
Khai Tue village in Truong Sa district, Hunan province established a cooperative in 2013 to promote the movement of land, accumulation of land and mountains for this cooperative to do business. Farmer participation in the cooperative means the transfer of land to the cooperative. The model implements the “5 currencies” mode to stimulate farmers to actively participate. When participating in the cooperative, farmers will enjoy the following types of money: minimum security money, compensation collected from the declaration, employment remuneration, and additional retirement benefits for people over 60 age, money to distribute dividends due to efficient business.

Based on land circulation, Khai Tue village has continuously established professional cooperatives (cooperatives for rice, pig farming, fresh fruit, and vegetables), organized for farmers to produce, search for markets, etc. At the same time, cooperatives also provide many services such as technology, capital for agriculture, product consumption, and business promotion.

Second: Model of cooperation between different entities to develop professions in Truong Sa district.
From 2012 until now, Phieu Phong Son village, Tich Phuc village, and Tuong Phong village of Truong Sa district have cooperated with Tue Nhan - Hunan Agricultural Technology Co., Ltd to develop modern tourism and rural economy, and homestay tourism. Tue Nhan's model has the special feature of attracting modern enterprises with economic strength and business capacity in the market, building into a new mechanism to attract collectives of villages, enterprises, and multi-party farmers. family, the village collective is in charge of contacting and exchanging between enterprises and farmers; Enterprises invest capital synchronously in the movement of land, and farmer households invest a small amount of money to renovate residential areas, engage in business to become a tourist attraction, and guide in the village, mobilizing idle resources. cooperated with Tue Nhuan Company, forming a new model of cooperation "enterprise + village committee + farmer household".

Third: Model of mixed land planning in Tam Long Ha.
Tam Long Ha is located in the northeast of Truong Sa city with "7 parts of mountains, 2 parts of water and 1 part of fields". The unique feature of Tam Long Ha is to solve the development problem of farmers, which is based on land but not on land, on agriculture but not on agriculture. To plan land in the village, the Land Rights (Land Property Rights) Production Investigation Team was set up by the Village Committee. From March to May 2010 clarified: (1) Which land is contracted land, farmers and farmer households have business rights, (2) which land is collectively owned, (3) which land is allowed to build houses, (4) specific use situation.
of each type of land such as area, location, production conditions, production cost, exist problems in business. After grasping the status of the land, Tam Long Ha carried out the land transfer according to the principles of law, equality, and voluntariness. Hunan province identified Tam Long Ha village as a pilot place for collective business construction land transactions. 300 acres of village land have been planned into projects that can be traded by village collective participation. For residential land, Tam Long Ha village re-planned, demolished old houses, recovered land, then gathered the planning into a concentrated area, built adjacent houses for people in the village, and excess land used for business. With this approach, the land business model has been formed and brought high efficiency, people in the village can diversify their income sources.

* Capacity building for farmers

For the agricultural industry to develop towards large production and generate high livelihood results for farmers, China's Hunan province has taken the lead in implementing the "Farmer College Student Program", and has achieved remarkable results in poverty reduction in the rural areas of the province. Under the overall coordination of the Organizing Committee of the Hunan Provincial Party Committee, the "Farmer College Student Program" in Hunan has established an organization assurance mechanism coordinated by the Party Committee and various government agencies. implementation case. The organizing committee is responsible for inspecting the import of farmers and university students, and selecting and employing personnel after training; the Department of Education is responsible for guiding the work, and developing teaching plans and talent training plans; the finance committee is responsible for funding the arrangement; the human resources department and the social department are responsible for issuing the certificate of professional competence; implementation and management of specific teaching.

Addressing the age problem of university students who are farmers with poor backgrounds, schools in the province have focused on renovating the program system, teaching methods, and assessment methods, and at the same time offering three Module courses including rural general quality; agricultural skills; and farming skills. The general quality module covers party building in the countryside, accounting, and other courses, the professional engineering module includes 10 courses such as rural land planning and rural finance, and the Vocational skills module mainly covers practical technologies such as animal husbandry, cultivation and processing. In addition to online learning, 3-4 days of focused practice will be held every month, and the final assessment results will be reported to the Organization Department.

Thus, to support the livelihoods of farmers, Hunan province has used many different support policies, notably models of land accumulation, and flexibility in the application of land policies. of the central government into the reality of the province, combined with improving the capacity of farmers through the "Farmer University Student Program".

### 2.2. Livelihood support policy for farming households in Niigata Prefecture, Japan

Niigata is a prefecture located on the Sea of Japan side of the Hokuriku subregion, Chubu region on the island of Honshu. With the characteristics of nature, Niigata has the conditions to become the key agricultural economic region of Japan. Farmers are the core of agricultural development, which has led to the Niigata prefectural government having policies to support farmers' livelihoods.

First: Optimizing agricultural land.

After World War II, the Japanese government implemented radical land reform. All farmers are entitled to share their land, but most of them own a few fields or small plots. Production activities are quite fragmented, relying on labor as the main, difficult-to-apply machinery, science, and technology. With the motto not to let farmers leave their fields, Japan has set up many barriers to prevent private companies from participating in agricultural production. However, the land is now abandoned too much, farmers are not productive. Therefore, Japan has made appropriate adjustments and implemented them in the leading agricultural province Niigata.

For idle farmland, the Niigata prefectural government investigated the agricultural land use situation and attempted to regenerate the idle farmland by incentivizing loans to intermediary organizations that manage farmland.
Concentrating agricultural land for farmers by the following measures:

Support individuals and organizations based on the basic concept of promoting the strengthening of Shibata City's agricultural management base, and guiding them to accumulate agricultural land.

To accumulate agricultural land for individuals and organizations, the Niigata prefectural government took advantage of farms and used an intermediate farmland management project. In addition, the Agricultural Commission will collect information from intermediate land management organizations. In the consolidation and exchange of plots, Niigata has implemented small plots of fields together, the area of the plots can be larger than before and are adjacent to rural roads, improving the efficiency of the irrigation system. The successful implementation of land consolidation and exchange of plots will help cut production costs due to the use of modern machinery, thereby improving the livelihoods of farmers in the province.

Second: Niigata Prefecture has supported farmers' livelihoods by developing a cooperative economy. At present, agricultural cooperatives in Niigata Prefecture have a big role in attracting and effectively supporting the livelihoods of farmers in the province. The Niigata Provincial Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives consists of 19 different cooperatives such as forestry cooperatives, fishery cooperatives, consumer cooperatives, etc. The activities of agricultural cooperatives in the province are regulated by the Law on Agricultural Cooperatives and many specialized laws and operate in the spirit of "mutual assistance", which means that the members work together and help each other.

When participating in agricultural cooperatives in the province, farmers will be supported in production techniques and agricultural management, sharing modern machinery and equipment, and consuming common products. Currently, agricultural cooperatives also provide financial services related to deposits and loans that are managed or represented by the cooperative. To support financial capital for farmers, the Agricultural Cooperative Bank was formed. This bank accepts savings deposits from cooperative members and lends them to people in the province.

A special feature of the Niigata Prefectural Agricultural Cooperative is that it has recently increased its activities with the local community with activities: welfare activities for the elderly and children, and support for farmers' markets. For the benefit of the community, these services can be used by local people, not necessarily members of the Cooperative.

Thus, participating in the cooperative will help farmers reduce the cost of exporting and transporting goods to the market. In addition, members can share machines with other members, and support in borrowing. This enables farmers to get better livelihood outcomes.

2.3. Experiences of some provinces in Vietnam on livelihood support for farmers

2.3.1. Livelihood support policy for farmers in Hanoi

* Policy on vocational training in Hanoi

Vocational training for farmers has long been an urgent issue and is the key to helping farmers improve their capacity and create livelihood activities while learning a job.

To improve the effectiveness of vocational training to support the livelihoods of farmers, Hanoi has directed that vocational training support activities be conducted only for those subjects and localities that need it; while improving the quality and ensuring the output for learners.

By Decision No. 1956/QĐ-TTg dated November 27, 2009, of the Prime Minister approving the project "Vocational training for rural workers until 2020", every year Hanoi City promulgates the Plan on Vocational Training for rural workers in Hanoi City. To improve the quality of vocational training, the Hanoi Department of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs has guided localities to survey the needs and aspirations of each household to serve as a basis for developing plans and submitting them to the City People’s Committee for approval. According to Plan No. 31/KH-UBND, dated February 12, 2020, on "Vocational training for rural workers under Decision No. 1956/QĐ-TTg in Hanoi city in 2020" of the City People's Committee, In 2020, Hanoi still maintains vocational training support for workers similar to previous years. However, the number of
supported workers is only 13,100 people, a decrease of 3,000 people compared to 2019, a decrease of more than 10,000 people compared to 2018, to focus on improving quality.

* Credit policy in Hanoi.

To support farmers to access financial capital, in the first 6 months of 2019, the City Farmers' Support Fund increased by more than 38.2 billion VND, bringing the total fund to 593 billion VND. Accordingly, the Fund has been disbursing more than 104.3 billion VND to 5,006 households from 211 projects.

In addition, the Association coordinated with the Bank for Social Policies to entrust loans with a total outstanding balance of over VND 1.9 billion for 62,372 households. Coordinating with the Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development to implement credit policies for agricultural and rural development with a total outstanding loan of more than VND 1.4 billion for 22,491 households.

Along with that, the Association at all levels has mobilized officials and members to participate in activities to help each other with more than 4,000 working days, 5.1 billion VND, 1.2 billion VND in interest-free loans, over 67,000 trees, seed…; mobilized to support 381 million VND to build and repair 11 houses for poor households.

2.3.2. Livelihood support policy for farmers in Vinh Phuc

* Policy to support farmers in buying agricultural machines

In the Industrial Revolution 4.0, mechanization in the field of agricultural production is a factor that not only helps farmers increase labor productivity but also improves incomes and livelihoods. However, the purchase of machinery and equipment for production requires a large amount of money, beyond the ability of farmers.

Under Decision No. 07/2016/QĐ-UBND of the Provincial People's Committee on promulgating regulations on the implementation of several mechanisms and policies to support the restructuring of the agricultural sector in Vinh Phuc province in the 2016-2020 period according to Resolution No. 201/2015/NQ-HÐND of the Provincial People's Council; Decision No. 2129/QĐ-CT of the Chairman of the Provincial People's Committee approving the estimate and providing funding for the implementation of the Program to support the purchase of agricultural machinery in 2016 (phase 1). In 2016, the Provincial People's Committee allocated the budget to the Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Center (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development) to support farmers in the province to buy agricultural machines to serve production. Accordingly, the Provincial People's Committee supported the purchase of 215 agricultural machines for 215 households engaged in agricultural production, with a total cost of more than 3.4 billion VND, including machines such as Milking machines for dairy cows; grass cutters for dairy cows; crushers and mixers for pig and chicken feed; earthmoving machines with a capacity of 15-35 horsepower; four-row transplanters (support 50% of the budget) and earthmoving machines with over 35 horsepower; six-row transplanters (maximum support 75 million VND/machine). In 2019, Vinh Phuc invested more than 11 billion VND to support farmers in buying agricultural machines, mainly cow milking machines, lawn mowers; crushers, mixing feed for pigs and chickens; earthmoving machines with a total of 628 machines, currently deployed in localities. In 2020, the province will support nearly 16 billion VND to buy agricultural machinery for local farmers. Accordingly, the province supports the purchase of 145 new cow milking machines; 22 lawn mowers; 24 feed mills for chickens and pigs; 290 earthmoving machines; 7 seeders; 25 transplanters; 280 machines on the bed; and 30 combine harvesters. The level of support for each agricultural machine is not more than 50% of the cost of buying a new machine.

To ensure that the source of support is by the regulations, the right subjects, and maximizes the effectiveness, Vinh Phuc strengthens propaganda and publicizes the province's policy of supporting the purchase of agricultural machines; coordinates with the district and commune agriculture departments to do a good job of appraising the number of machines, types of machines, and the level of support for each type of
machine; instruct farmers on technical measures of operation, maintenance, etc. to help farmers in the district use agricultural machines in production, bringing high economic efficiency.

The level of support for farmers to buy machines for agricultural production is 50% of the new purchase cost, but not exceeding 75 million VND/machine for land-working machines with a capacity of over 35 horsepower; transplanters and combine harvesters, not more than 8 million VND/machine for the machine to raise beds, 25 million VND/machine...

According to the Center for Agriculture and Fisheries Extension of Vinh Phuc province, the support to buy agricultural machines now focuses on machines for production and harvesting. The tillage machine has the function of plowing, raising beds, weeding, tilling, and slitting ditches for crops such as rice, corn, vegetables, etc. to help farmers reduce labor and increase labor productivity. nearly 2.5 million VND/ha compared to manual labor. The earthmoving machine is used to mill the soil to make the soil smooth, helping farmers to reduce labor because they do not have to plow and harrow manually, reducing the cost of making land from 80,000 to 100,000 VND / pole.

* Vocational training policy

To improve the quality of farmers' labor, help them have stable jobs, meet the needs of the labor market, and gradually shift the labor structure in the locality. To improve the quality and effectiveness of vocational training to create jobs; To increase income and improve the quality of life for rural workers, Vinh Phuc province has set out the Vocational training plan for rural workers for the period 2017-2020 of the People's Committee of Vinh Phuc province No. 5719/KH- People's Committee July 28, 2017.

In 2019, Vinh Phuc province aims to organize vocational training for 1,146 workers with an estimated budget of nearly 5 billion VND. The province will organize vocational training at the elementary level and under 3 months for 570 laborers in agricultural occupation groups, and 576 workers in non-agricultural occupations; in which female workers account for at least 40% of the target. Vinh Phuc province strives that after training, 80% of the trainees will have new jobs or continue to do the old jobs with higher productivity and income.

For vocational training to be effective, Vinh Phuc province strengthens the leadership and direction of the authorities at all levels in the implementation of vocational training and job creation in the locality; mobilize the participation of the whole political system, from commune, district and provincial levels; promote propaganda, vocational counseling, and career guidance.

Vinh Phuc province also promotes activities to introduce jobs and support workers to work abroad. In 2018, Vinh Phuc province had about 2,000 export workers working in the main markets of Japan, Korea, and Taiwan (China); participating in manufacturing fields such as mechanics, food processing, electronics; apparel, and agriculture.

* Land policy

The land is considered the main means of production for farmers. In Vinh Phuc, there are over 86,920ha of agricultural land; over 34,300 ha of non-agricultural land, and nearly 2,200 ha of unused land. However, it is extremely difficult to accumulate land, change plots, and accumulate land towards large production. Therefore, Vinh Phuc has made significant breakthroughs and has policies to support land accumulation for farmers.

Specifically, since 2014, the People's Committee of Vinh Phuc province has issued Decision No. 2311 on a pilot project on financial support for organizations, individuals, and farmer households to gather fields for winter crop production. That can be considered as the first breakthrough to encourage and support organizations and individuals to invest in land accumulation.

That year's winter crop, a total of more than 3.1 billion VND was directly supported by people who accumulated land to produce crops of corn, soybeans, peanuts, vegetables... Especially, with models agglomeration with an area of 1ha or more is supported with a maximum of 2 million VND, 727.8ha of crops and leafy vegetables of all kinds are supported.
By 2015, the People's Council of Vinh Phuc province continuously issued two Resolutions 201 and 202 in just one day (December 22, 2015) on specific support policies to encourage enterprises to invest in agriculture and agriculture, villages and support the restructuring of Vinh Phuc's agricultural sector in the 2016-2020 period.

In one section of the Resolution, it is clearly stated: Support organizations and individuals (not businesses) to rent land use rights with a scale of 2 hectares or more for mountainous areas, 3 hectares or more for the remaining areas for crop production. large scale, a minimum lease term of 10 consecutive years or more, and adjacent to the immediate area. The support level is 5 million VND/ha/year for the first 5 years.

Continuing, in 2016, when the land accumulation movement was forming quite clearly, the People's Committee of Vinh Phuc province issued Decision No. 07/2016/QĐ-UBND on promulgating regulations to implement several mechanisms and policies. agricultural restructuring book.

Such a breakthrough support policy on land has not only helped promote land accumulation in Vinh Phuc towards large production but also helped farmers improve their livelihoods.

3. Conclusion

Through studying the experiences of some countries, some lessons can be drawn about policies to support livelihoods for farmers for the Thai Nguyen provincial government as follows:

Firstly: Developing village communities to build new-type cooperatives, is a necessary factor for farmers to access social capital and thereby get high livelihood results. Establishing the right cooperative organizational structure is key. The Cooperative Organization creates cooperation among the grassroots cooperatives, rather than the national or regional agricultural cooperative organization which is the superior of the village and commune cooperatives. The establishment of the cooperative organizational structure also creates cooperation between grassroots cooperatives and related organizations and businesses to provide market information to farmers so that they can produce the right food. needed by the market, creating a large market for Cooperatives, promoting the advantages of scale, and promoting the number of self-employed people.

Second: Support to improve the capacity of farmers is very important, this is the main factor to help promote the livelihoods of farmers. In addition, it is necessary to have policies to attract young people to work and live in rural areas, to join the contingent of farmers to take advantage of the advantages of young people such as the level of information technology, science and technology level, and youth... The provision of information shows that the effective capture, reception, and use of information is one of the important factors for sustainable livelihood development for farming households.

Third: It is necessary to have a land policy suitable to each national and local situation. The policy of land consolidation and exchange, and land accumulation will meet the requirements of agricultural development in the direction of large commodities, thereby supporting the livelihoods of farmers. However, according to experience from Hunan province, China, Niigata province of Japan, and some provinces of Hanoi and Vinh Phuc, this policy should be implemented step by step cautiously. The successful implementation of the policy of land accumulation depends greatly on the capacity of local authorities. Therefore, it is necessary to create conditions for local officials and authorities to learn and improve their experience so that they can promote their creativity and proficiency in applying policies in practice in the locality.

Fourth: For farming households, capital is an important factor to help improve their livelihoods and improve their living standards, thereby contributing to the economic development of the province and the country. Therefore, the credit support from agricultural cooperatives in Niigata province is a lesson for Thai Nguyen province, both to help support farmers to solve the problem of lack of capital and at the same time to help solve the difficulties of farmers. current banks and credit institutions when lending to farmers.

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