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Agricultural Extension Policies in Turkey

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Abstract: Agricultural extension services are mostly carried out by Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) in Turkey. Furthermore, there are producer organizations, private companies and consultants, volunteer establishments etc. which are making extension studies as entities and enterprises. In this study, the policies related with aimed and implemented agricultural extensions in Turkey were mentioned and in this context, the projects put in practice for activating the extension services are analyzed.

Key words: Agricultural information, agriculture, agricultural extension, Turkey, extension policies

INTRODUCTION

The foremost function of agriculture is to provide food security for society. The conscious application of agricultural production and getting maximal crop from unit area are closely related with agricultural extension studies. To achieve this goal, agricultural extension has important tasks such as informing producers about agricultural developments, ensuring the motivation and harmonization of producers to those developments.

With increasing importance of the knowledge for agriculture, importance of managing and protection of national resources and getting forefront of the roles of woman at rural areas; new researches have been begun recently at agricultural extension. By these studies, it has come up again that agricultural extension is indispensable for development.

In this study, progress of agricultural extension policies at Turkey was examined. The objects of extension policies are generally directly related with the agriculture policy and development aims for each country. These objects can be changed according to the conditions. Even though, there were different extension approaches at different years in Turkey regarding with those objects, public extension were performed mostly. Moreover, it could be possible to see extension projects and services implemented at rural areas where decided by various producer organizations and volunteer establishments.

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION AT TURKEY

Agricultural extension studies in Turkey were started long ago. Different attempts to modernize of agriculture, to offer innovations to farmers and to provide agricultural development were implemented at various periods. For instance, arranging 1st Agriculture Congress in 1931 is important. In this congress, agricultural structured was surveyed, reports were prepared and important decisions were taken to teach agricultural techniques to farmers and to encourage producers for implementing those techniques. Organization of extension had started in 1943 at Ankara, Eskişehir and Manisa provinces and was completed at all provinces in 1958 (MARA, 2004).

In Turkey, almost all extension services are currently performed by public sector. According to the current structure, at central level Extension Department and Woman at Rural Development Department under General Directorate of Organization and Support are responsible for extension services. Also, Farmer Training and Extension Branches at provincial state, District Directorates at towns and village Group Agriculture Centers at some villages are responsible for farmers' training and extension facilities.

Within the context of annual programs prepared by MARA, various teaching methods (demonstration, farm days, farmer meetings, farmers' courses, investigation visits, inspiring competition, exhibitions, conferences, brochures, posters, circular letters, TV-radio programs etc.) are utilized for the extension programs and trainings which are oriented towards introduction and guidance of new techniques with respect to the skills and knowledge of farmers.

Planned Periods

It was stated on 1st Five Years Development Plan (1963-1967) that required cooperation would be provided for implementing extension, research and training facilities as a whole. Additionally, it was indicated that collaboration would be obtained with organizations out of Ministry of Agriculture to perform agriculture services in accordance with agriculture policy. To achieve the goals stated on the plan; need to increase extension facilities and to use effectively and required precautions to be taken for fulfilling estimated number of vehicles demand to increase services were specified (Anonymous, 1963).

On 2nd Five Years Development Plan (1968-1972), an association with Ministry of Education was aimed to carry on giving importance to mass education and in-service training. Mass Education was emphasized as complementary for formal education and also considered to be taken into account separately from formal education for its importance. Encourage of inputs and modern vehicles usage and provision of sufficient supply were stated to accelerate technological development at all areas of Agriculture and to make widespread. Furthermore, concentration to the solutions of technological problems faced at extension and research services was aimed (Anonymous, 1968).

At 3rd plan period, it was stated that important progress was occurred on using modern inputs, investments, organizations and agricultural production at planned periods; however, it could not reach to planned level. Also, it was indicated that Land and agriculture reform proposing structural change could not be realized (Anonymous, 1973).

At 4th plan period, an effective land reform, democratic cooperativization, re-organization and support for peasants, establishment of a new production formation by village-cities were stated to be used for increasing prosperity and hastening rural development. Extension services so as to spread the usage of modern techniques would be arranged according to product priorities and projects; also would be monitored permanently and evaluated regularly. Moreover, establishment related with agriculture were stated to be organized (Anonymous, 1979).

There were problems about extension before 1984. But, technical extension studies which carried on during this period had significant effects on productivity of the crops. Extension staffs were also interested with other tasks such as managing and other issues (MAFRA, 1987). Due to deficiency of finance, Technical Agricultural Directorates had difficulties to supply fuel. Consequently, that affected the visits of extension staffs to villages negatively. Also, personnel having required knowledge for preparing pressed extension products could not be employed (MAFRA, 1984).

Furthermore, at period before 1984, projects were performed with the help of World Bank and International Agricultural Development Fund. In these projects, studies generally were performed with the publication units which were established except from the current extension services.

Agricultural extension and applied research project was mentioned on 5th five years development plan and also it was noted that a new structure and process would be gained on technological transfer of the Project. As organizing extension facilities at provincial level by this model, findings of the survey were declared to use for farmers and their problems (Anonymous, 1985).

Activating survey, extension and training facilities and strengthening themselves were aimed at VI. Five Years Development Plan (1990-1994). Expansion of information flow between farmer-extension staffs-researcher and cooperation between the establishments related with agricultural extension-research were stated to increase. Moreover, agricultural extension and applied research project was to continue by expanding its scope (Anonymous, 1990).

Deficiency of research, training and extension services at agricultural sector was stated on VII. Five Years Development Plan (1996-2000). Necessity to transfer the results of extension and researches for enhancing quality and efficiency of production was emphasized. Furthermore, focusing on trainings of farmers and technical personnel was accepted. Restructuring of MARA with new law to make it more effective was planned. Also, prior rural development projects were intended to carry on and new projects were started to implement (Anonymous, 1996).

Because of the deficiency of agricultural extension services, efficiency was affected negatively and proceeding of this period was meant on VIII. Five Years Development Plan (2001-2005). Therefore, improving of human resources and participation from every stage were emphasized. Strengthening of institutional capacity, troubleshooting of problems observed on institutional service flow, efficiency on distribution of sector resources and producing rational resource use, strengthening producer organization were signified to focus on. Reorganization of institutions of agricultural extension, training of farmers and education according to the improvements and re-assessment of existing training and extension systems would be re-evaluated. Also, private extension would be especially taken into account by revising its role at public publication (Anonymous, 2000a).

In order to take effective measurements about training human resources needing for new duties and responsibilities, number of qualified employees in public sector would be increased and required precautions would also be taken for the permanent training of existing personnel. Participation of the producers organizations to the public services of training and extension seem to be limited, so it was notified at IX. Five years development plan that research and development studies carried out by public main service institutions were required to be revised to support related institutions activities. In order to decrease the problems of agricultural unproductiveness, hastening land consolidation studies, strengthening producer organizations, activating training and extension facilities were decided to be taken into account firstly.

So, as to increase producer incomes and productivity consistently, training and extension services about subjects such as food hygiene, animal health, phytosanitary, irrigation, using of qualified seeds, fertilizers and pesticides at the stages of agricultural production and marketing were stated to increase for providing food safety from farm to fork. To implement the services mentioned above, producer organizations with reinforced structure including young and woman producers were concentrated on. Moreover, it was

aimed to focus on animal husbandry activities for getting relatively high value added tax(vat), animal amendment, struggle with animal diseases and pests, pasture adjustment and rearranging of use, increasing producing of qualified seeds and extension services, because it was also aimed to raise competitive power before accession period to European Union (Anonymous, 2006).

Despite alterations which made on various periods, problems at structure of MARA could not be solved and in addition to this new problems came up. These problems, which MARA faced with, averted MARA to give better services to agriculture. Vertical and Horizontal Communication between central and provincial directorates could not be provided at intended level (Anonymous, 2000b). These problems caused the background of new studies for getting extension service more effective.

Attempts Made on Extension System During Last 25 Years

Agricultural Extension and Applied Research Project (TUYAP)

With the financial help of Turkish Republic and World Bank, TUYAP was carried out as 2 parts parallel to re-organization. To get new structure and process to extension system were aimed by TUYAP. In this model, by re-organization of extension facilities at village level it was planned to transfer of survey findings to farmers and farmers' problems to Research Project.

Training and visit approach was applied at TUYAP. Main principle of this approach is to visit the farmers at regular periods. Knowledge level of extension staffs was intended to improve with permanent and regular trainings performed at domestic and abroad regions by the project.

Especially, TUYAP, starting in 1984, had significant contributions to Turkish agriculture (World Bank, 1999).

Village-centered Support Project to Agricultural Production (KÖYMER)

KÖYMER or 1000 agriculture volunteers to 1000 villages project was begun to implement in 2004 in Turkey and came into force at 01.07.2004. Project was the first in terms of using agriculture consultants employing in villages for extension studies.

Basic principle of this 3-years pilot Project, KÖYMER, is based on giving services to farmers and to inform producers at the field and therefore by rising income level of farmers they can buy consultancy services from agricultural engineer and veterinarians. Within the scope of the Project, 901 agricultural consultants began to work under MARA in 2006. But, because it was 3-years pilot project, KÖYMER was ended on 31 December 2006 (MARA, 2010a).

Development of Agricultural Extension Project (TARGEL)

In light of the experiences gained by KÖYMER; TARGEL was started to carry out from 01 January 2007 for increasing the contribution of rural area to country economy, decreasing development inequalities between regions by rising living standards of rural population, reaching a population frame compatible with sustainable and stable development goal, protection and using of environment and natural resources.

Two thousand an five hundred working regions were constituted throughout Turkey within the scope of TARGEL. Agriculture engineers, aquaculture engineers or veterinarians were assigned to these working regions by considering their agricultural structures. Province Quotas were determined by General Directorate of Organization and Support. It was decided that employed personnel would take their wages according to performance and thus,

Performance-based charging system was first implemented by MARA in Turkey and also it was declared that technical personnel would stay in designated central villages and would carry services to the rural villages (MARA, 2010b).

Supporting of Agricultural Extension Services Project

Project was started to implement at 15 provincials in 2003. Purchasing modern training instruments which would be helpful to realize extension activities (demonstration, farm day, farmers meeting, farmers study visit, incentive competitions, printed publication products etc.) of Provincial Directorates more effectively and raw materials using for extension activities were performed within the project. A 26 technical personnel working at provincial directorates were identified for forming the Agricultural Extension Training Group expressed in the Project and trainings of that group were accomplished. In 2004 number of provinces implementing the Project was increased to 33 and it was raised to 42 in 2006. Modern training instruments and demands of raw materials using for extension activities were fulfilled at the provinces implicated to the Project afterwards.

Within the scope of supporting of agricultural extension services project; application basis of agricultural extension and consultancy services and application basis of agricultural extension and consultancy training services were prepared and came into force on 08 September 2006 with the approval of Ministry (MARA, 2010c).

Agriculture consultant certificate was given to the persons participating Agricultural Extension and Consultancy Trainings Organized by Universities/Professional institutions.

Workshop of woman at rural region intended for woman producers was held on 15-17 October 2008 by department of Woman Farmers. Because 15 October is the World Farmers Day; this workshop was held at Denizli, Eskişehir and Trabzon as regional workshops.

Prevalent Farmer Training Project (YAYÇEP)

YAYÇEP can be given as an example of using TV for extension studies in Turkey. In 2009, MARA that was performing agricultural extension studies began to use TV to support extension studies implementing traditionally and also to expand the range of extension studies. Different from other extension studies, YAYÇEP covered items such as registration, training, examination, certificate and awards. Subjects to deal with for every training period were determined according to policies executed by the Ministry. Farmers could register for the determined subjects by means of Provincial and District Directorates. Implementation of I. YAYÇEP was proved to be successful in a research made in Tokat provincial (Kızılaslan and Gurler, 1998).

By making country-wide evaluation surveys and after considering farmers demand, principle of permanent training and factors such as developing technology; project was decided to be continued as II. YAYÇEP in 1999. Some of these programs were displayed on TRT and private channels (MARA, 2010d).

YAYÇEP was presented as one of the best researches at using information and communication for averting poverty in Johannesburg World Sustainable Development Summit between 26 August, 4 September 2002.

By publishing the book endeavors made since 2002 via internet, YAYÇEP has started to provide service at international (especially for Turkish people living abroad and Asian Turkish Republics) arena.

Other than YAYÇEP, there are programs in Turkey broadcasting agricultural subjects on TV. Training and extension project of GAP region is one of them and it was approved by

State Planning Organization (SPO) in 1995 and started to implement. Within the frame of this project, 5 training movie was made in 1995, no film production due to lack of project subsidy in 1996 and movies has started to shoot regularly since 1997. 551 TV film and 50 spot films (totally 601 movies) were produced until the end of 2007 within the project.

As from 06 February 2007 MARA prepared Agricultural Drought Action Plan (TAKEP) by detailing the studies of related with Managing Agricultural Drought which were mentioned in the report prepared together with Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources. Within this framework movies were shot about Global Warming and Agriculture Extension Campaign, Global Warming and Agriculture, Water and Soil, Water Usage in Agriculture and they were sent to national TV channels and local TV channels by means of Provincial and district Directorates.

Out-Public Extension

Especially by the alterations occurred in Turkey after 1980, a restructuring at agricultural extension services seemed as an obligation. Process of reducing the strength of public sector in agricultural extension which were realized as a consequence of planned studies in most developed countries, was started in Turkey and continued.

Although, there are a great number of establishments working for extension in Turkey other than public institutions, services of these establishments are limited with constant regions and subjects and also seems to be minor when compared with countrywide.

Presently, major institutions and enterprises performing farmers training and extension studies are chambers of agriculture, cooperative societies, producer unions, Agricultural Consultancy enterprises, press/mass media devices, industrial foundations based on Agriculture, universities and volunteer companies.

Applications of Leader Farmer Project aiming to form a consultancy model for farmers to develop their establishments by helping each other and working collectively are considered as the most effective and concrete extension services of chambers of agriculture and Union Of Turkish Chambers Of Agriculture at the field of agricultural services (Anonymous, 2000b).

Leader farmer project has started with opening of project office where 2 German experts are working in Tekirdag provincial that were selected as pilot region in 1986 with the collaboration of Agriculture Chambers Union of Turkey and German Agriculture Union. Studies with introduction theme were carried out at first year and first consultancy group with interested farmers (mainly big-sized producers) was formed at center of Tekirdađ in following years. All the groups formed until 1992 took the legal status of association. Farmer Consultancy Associations founded as a part of Leader Farmer Project are the organizations established by farmers' own initiative and these associations target to give agricultural consultancy services by the agriculture consultant employing for the members. Currently, there are 4 leader farmer consultancy associations at Tekirdađ and totally 11 leader farmer consultancy associations at Şanlıurfa, Polatlı, Silivri, Bafra, Ceylanpınar, Osmaniye and Yüreğir. Half of (50%) the expenses of these associations are reimbursed by MARA and Agriculture Chambers Union of Turkey and the other half (50%) of expenses are reimbursed by member farmers. Union Of Turkish Chambers Of Agriculture is not only an institution for finance but also makes co-ordinations throughout foundations of associations; provides technical support to associations and controls those associations (UTCA, 2010).

The most widespread extension activities performed by volunteer establishment are Development Foundation of Turkey (TKV) activities. This non-profit and volunteer

organization was established in 1969. Aim of TKV is to increase social life levels of small farmers and rural bodies having a low income by increasing their incomes. Working principles can be summarized as having income-growth activities, participation of the groups worked for, organizing (cooperation society, association, union, enterprise etc.), assessment of local resources. There are studies such as integrated poultry, apiculture projects, carpet business projects and other various agricultural subjects having extension component subjects through study topics (Anonymous, 2000b). Unlike from traditional development projects not-having required connections of components, TKV defends to realize and to integrate of improving human resources, training, rural credit and marketing support in one system. TKV actualized the field practices by participation of target groups, organization considering stability and integrity of activities, meeting the roles with stakeholders (public and private) suitable to form a model (DFT, 2010).

One of the volunteer institutions, TEMA, was established on 11 September 1992 to make erosion problem a current issue and to search solutions for this problem. TEMA Foundation performs various projects to prevent nature and environment, to gain tree and forest affection to the society, to enhance meadow-fields and to struggle with desertification.

CONCLUSIONS

There has not been a change at extension system in Turkey when searching the periods since founding of Republic. Different extension approaches has been carried out in the extension system.

Because extension services are performed mostly by public sector in Turkey, it also brings the problems of public sector except from extension services. These problems of Turkey are seen at all the countries where extension services are carried out buy public sector. The problems mentioned above are tried to be solved by attempting new extension approaches at different projects. Then, in the light of gained data, that attempted approach is evaluated whether it is going to be continued or not.

No matter which system is used for extension systems, a holistic concept shall be applied. Furthermore, extension studies shall be comprehended as the studies including not only transferring new production technologies to the formers but also credit facilities, organizations, protection of environment and natural resources, socio-economic structure of village, health conditions and infrastructure of village.

In extension programs, especially participation of farmers shall be paid attention and an awareness shall be created for farmers about their own businesses. Extension studies shall focus on improving human resources and also extension messages shall be participatory and shall assist to farmers at decision-making instead of being mandatory.

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