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The Ecological Responsibility of the Government in the Sustainable Development of Agriculture

Sustainable development of agriculture has formed its foundations in the China's sustainable economic and social development plays an irreplaceable role. But at present, China has faced many problems in the course of the development of sustainable agriculture:

1. Extensive agricultural production and low levels of modernisation: In China's economic growth GDP, at least 18% of it rely on the overdraft of resources and ecological environment; population growth far exceeded the load capacity of the ecological environment, resulting in the destruction of the environment; rural industries release large amounts of waste and the increasing amount of garbage and sewage water discharged has led to severe pollution of the environment. These factors have impeded the sustainable development of agriculture.

2. Faced with competition from foreign agricultural products, some rural areas in China have implement methods which consume resources excessively and even destroys the environment in order to lower the cost of agricultural products; with the continuous improvement of China's openness, the shift of foreign pollution technology, as well as the combination of foreign capital, cheap domestic rural labour and cheap natural resources, China's vast rural areas have become a venue for production and discharge of pollutants; globalisation has also affected China's native biological resources, as can be seen by the threat to China's native biological resources as caused by the increasing demand of rare resources and genetically modified products in the international market.

Under these circumstances, the government, as the overall controller of the national economy, must be active and play its ecological role in managing agriculture, bearing the responsibility of developing sustainable agriculture.

The government's ecological responsibility refers to the government's duty to consider the capacity of the ecological environment in China's social and economic development, ensuring ecological balance and harmonious development at the same time. In view of China's situation, the government should play out its responsibility in strengthening its eco-responsibility through both "active" and "passive" means.

a. Passive eco-responsibilities

Do its best to deepen ecological awareness and promote the concept of ecological cost. This can be realised in several forms: start from the fundamentals of education, set up various levels of educational classes which promote environmental ecology; strengthen the value and sense of responsibility of environmental ecology among rural areas, link local conditions with performance, wages and benefits, and conduct strict examination and assessment; increase ecological awareness among farmers through the use of

documentaries or publicity videos, allowing them to experience what ecology is, what environmental protection is, as well as the significance of ecological and environmental protection. This will allow farmers to develop a whole new mindset quickly, providing a firm foundation for the sustainable development of agriculture.

b. Active eco-responsibilities

(1) Clarify the government's main role and responsibility in the innovation of agricultural science and technology.

(2) Adjust the rural agricultural structure, develop eco-agriculture and cyclic agriculture.

(3) The government should levy rural eco-taxes, develop ecological compensation, introduce the use of green stickers, control the negative effects of external economies, and provide institutional assurance for sustainable agriculture.

(4) Adopt the 'green GDP' as an important indicator for assessing rural civil servants.

(5) Increase rural and agricultural investment as well as intensity of service, call for more social forces to improve on the basic conditions of rural public goods.