

Organizations and Activities of a New Leading Farmer Extension Model in Turkey

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Abstract: With this study, the organization and the activities of four leading farmer association established in Thrace Region of Turkey in 1986, in the center of Tekirdag and in Muratli, Corlu and Malkara districts of Tekirdag, were discussed as the result of the common studies between Turkish Agricultural Chamber Union (TZOB) and German agriculture unit (Deutsche Landwirtschafts-Gesellschaft, DLG), German Agricultural Technical Cooperation (Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, GTZ) that the German Agricultural Ministry (Bundes Ministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, BMZ) commission. The results according to the observation are determined every year by the management committee in leading farmer associations and the other organs. In a very democratic method and environment although the managements in Turkey have a hierarchy order. The highest organ of the association is the general committee (members). The management committee gives importance to the information flow between farmer adviser and the members and the appointment of the farmer adviser and the income-expense of the association and auto control is so powerful in the structure of the association. The most important problem is the leave of the farmer adviser specialized in the communication with the farmers with the leader farmer associations for the attractive salary offers of the private sectors. For this reason, employing new farmer adviser to leader farmer associations, at least two years affect the publishing activities of the leader farmers negatively. Application of the individual and group training by only the leader farmer associations among the farmer associations in Turkey and at the same time the encouragement of the member farmers to the congress and conferences, growing new products, making of the trial and demonstrations successfully in spite of the current conditions in Turkey play an important role in the extension of the reforms of the leader farmer project in the rural region.

Key words: Leader Farmer, Extension, Turkey

INTRODUCTION

Leader farmer associations established first with leader farmer project in 1986 in Turkey, were realized as a result of the common studies of German agricultural technical cooperation entrusted by German Agricultural Ministry (Bundes Ministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, BMZ) and German Agricultural Association (Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, GTZ) and Turkish Agricultural Chamber Union (Türkiye Ziraat Odalari Birligi, TZOB).

Total agricultural land of Turkey that has 70 million population is 47 million ha. In 56% of this land, field crops, fruit and vegetable production is made. The share of agriculture in GNP in Turkey reduced to 12,1% in 2000, which was 26% level in 1980. The share of agriculture sector that constitutes 57% of total exportation value in 1980, reduced to 10,3% in 2000. Also, food industry had a 12% share in total exportation in 2000. The ratio of the employers in agriculture sector to total employment reduced to 35,5% from 62,5% between 1980-2000 [1, 2]. Agriculture, the share of which decreased relatively in GNP and total

exportation, still keeps its importance in economy from the point of view of the relation with nourishment directly and the high ratios of the employment and active population in the sector. The average size of the agriculture farms is 7,7 ha in Turkey. The existence of agriculture establishments as small establishments makes the agricultural publication services difficult.

Agricultural education in Turkey started first with the agricultural technical schools opened in Istanbul, Adana, Izmir and Bursa in 1880-1900. After the establishment of Turkish Republic Government (1923), first agriculture faculty was established in Ankara in 1933. The number of the faculties of agriculture in Turkey is 22 in 2000-2001. 35,5% of students is female. In a year, average 8000 students graduate from these faculties and 49% of these students female students [3]. But, these students who graduated generally take theoretical lessons in agriculture faculties. Inner service training courses aren't enough for the graduates who will give qualified agricultural extension service in their professional studies [4-6].

Establishments that give agricultural extension service in Turkey were divided into four groups by their status: (a) public establishments, (b) profit aimed

establishments, (c) none profit organization and (d) outer source pilot agricultural extension projects.

Among the public establishments that give agricultural publication service, Agriculture province directories organized in 81 provinces and related with agriculture ministry take an important place. Profit aimed establishments produce and market agricultural food-machine, fertilizer, seed and agricultural medicine. Outer source pilot agricultural extension projects are agricultural extension projects supported by the World Bank. Among the none profit organizations, cooperatives have strong position by numerical and the number of member in Turkey. But, the management is in the administration of the government and thus as in the public establishments, a centralist structure is seen in cooperatives.

Nowadays, in Turkey we see the leading farmer associations that were established with leading farmer project as the establishment that solves the problems by the participation of the farmers, that is not related to Agricultural and Rural services Ministry meaning that they work independently. The leading farmer associations that carry agricultural extension service to association members are observed with interest by the other regions of Turkey. The recent number of the leading farmer associations raised up to 11 with the other leading farmer associations. At the same time the leading farmer associations that were established in Thrace region of Turkey were called the attraction of other developing countries. Among the countries that came to Turkey for recognizing the leader farmer associations, we can count Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Cyprus and Kenya.

The aim of this study was to present the organization and the activities of 4 leading farmer associations that were established as leader to Agriculture and Rural affairs in 1986 not the information and opinion of the interests. At the same time, this study has the abstract of a part of the researches that were made in 1996 basing on the observation named as Agricultural extension Service Model applied in Tekirdag Leading Farmer Groups and a research on the extension of the extension activities [5].

Research Findings

Establishment and Aim: At first, leading farmer project model faced to the understanding and difficulties of both Turkish establishments and the farmers. Because, Turkey has a hierarchy arrangement in management. For this reason, taking instruction position from Agricultural and Rural Services Ministry is supreme. Especially in agriculture sector, as the ministry is supreme, a free area isn't seen for the attempts of the farmers. The first stages, this position presents both the application of leading farmer project and the extending this project in the country.

Among the understanding and the difficulties of both Turkish establishments and the farmers, "Leading Farmer Project" was begun to apply in Turkey by publishing in official newspaper on December 27, 1986. The application of leading farmer project was realized in three steps between a) 1987-1989, b) 1990-1992 and c) 1993-1994.

At the first step of the project, the members were determined. At the second step, the study groups occurred and these study groups were transformed to farmer association. Also, in this step, legal status was gained to leading farmer groups and formality could be gained in the scope of association law by forming a farmer association from each study group. With this aim, an association was established from the farmer groups in the center of Tekirdag and in district Muratli, Corlu, Malkara of Thrace region. Average 90-120 farmers are the members of each farmer association for the establishment of the associations. Stabilization of the number of association members are preferred for the success of the project. A farmer adviser who can be able to assist to the agricultural problems of the farmer groups was appointed to these associations and at the same time, they were educated by Germans both in Turkey and in Germany by taking pains to the education of the farm adviser. Also, professional seminars, days and essays were materialized form regularly and trips to Germany were arranged for the member farmers in order to be able to observe the agriculture establishments in Germany. In this way, technical and theoretical information of the farmers were expanded. At the third step, studying of the farmer groups independently was begin to apply and these studies were observed and controlled regularly. With this aim, a farm adviser office was established in TZOB center department which is in Ankara.

According to the research results, in spite of the traditional hierarchy structure in Turkey, the leading farmer associations in Turkey are not in hierarchy structure with their current structure. Their different directions from the cooperatives and similar farmer associations models in Turkey is that they manage themselves, they are not directed from Agricultural and Rural Services Ministry. Leading farmer associations solve their agricultural problems by the scientific support of related German (DLG and GTZ) associations and with the ability and participation they obtained by this support.

The aims of the leading farmer associations were determined as follows:

- * Training and informing the members in agricultural administration, agriculture economy agricultural technology and in general agriculture subjects.
- * To help the farmers in order to realize the economic and technical agricultural activities and guide them to management studying.

Table 1: Financing of Leader Farmer Project (%)

Years	Expenses	GTZ	TZOB	Members
1987-1991	Personnel expenses	100	-	-
	Administration expenses			
1992	Personnel expenses	62,5	25	12,5
	Administration expenses	25	25	50
1993	Personnel expenses	30	55	15
	Administration expenses	30	20	50
1994	All expenses	25	50	25
1995	All expenses	15	50	35
1996	All expenses	5	50	45
Since 1997	All expenses	-	50	50

- * Transferring the experiment results gained in scientific research and application to member farmers.
- * Contacting with agriculture aimed industrial, scientific and professional establishments.
- * Arranging seminars to the farmers in agricultural subjects.
- * Arranging experiment, farm days with the member farmers in agricultural fields and arranging journeys in Turkey and abroad.
- * Encouraging the member farmers to group studies in all activities.
- * Employing enough Agriculture Engineers as farmer advisers for realizing all these activities.

Financing: Financing of leading farmer project was received by German Technical cooperation association (GTZ) from 1987 to the end of 1991. But since 1992, support of 612 was begun to restrict. The expenses that TZOB and leader farmer associations must counter were increased. Thus, since 1997, as planned before, % 50 expenses of the leading farmer associations were obtained by the membership fee collected from leader farmer associations (Table 1).

The income of leading farmer associations and spending of this income is under the control of management committee. Sixty seven percent of this income is spent for the monthly fee of the farmer adviser. Thirty three percent is spent for the expenses of the office element (secretary), office rent, telephone, PC, car, furniture, journey and others.

The association of leading farmers and making this organizational model alive is impossible without the material and moral support of German and Turkish establishments. Because the association incomes are consisted of only the membership salaries. As there are average 100 members in each group, rising the membership fees make the farmer participation difficult. As the incomes of the farmers are less, getting more fee is impossible from them.

For this reason, until 1998, for each member, constant monthly fee was taken but since 1999, membership dues of each members was determined according to the

agriculture land size. According to this, member farmers the agriculture land of whom is great pay more dues (Table 2).

Table 2: Determination of Monthly Membership Dues in Leading Farmer Associations

Agricultural land size (da)	Monthly membership dues (Million Turkish Lira)
- 200	11
201-500	13
501-1000	15
1001 +	18

1 \$ = 1,5 million Turkey Lira (June, 2004)

As collecting the dues from the banks is difficult and expensive in the banking system in Turkey, assignment of the farmers from the bank to association account and pursuance of this from association management committee cause many problems. For this reason, the membership dues must be collected from the members with receipt. In the first years, this duty was done by the farmer adviser but as this position abases the prestige of the publisher to the farmers, collecting dues is done by the accountant.

Management and Organization: Farmer associations established with the leading farmer project is dependent on the association status according to Turkish Republic laws. Their most important difference from the cooperatives is, the authority and the responsibility in the leading farmer associations are not dependent on Agricultural and Rural Services Ministry but belongs to the management committee of the association.

Leading farmer associations consist of three organs which are management committee, control committee and general committee. Management committee is chosen from the members every year and consists of five persons. Control committee is chosen between the members and consists of three persons. The general committee consists of the members and it is the highest organ of the association. The selection of both the management committee members and the other organs of the association is done with secret vote and in a

democratic way. Until today, it wasn't encountered by any bad event.

Also, the leading farmer associations are coordinated by the two coordinators determined commonly by TZOB and DLG and thus, common working of 4 leader farmer association and operation of the information relation is provided.

As each association determines their own management committee, the management committee of each association commissions a farmer adviser (agricultural engineer) for their own farmer group (leader farmer association) and they are obliged to pay the monthly wage of the farmer adviser. At the same time, the management committee is responsible from the agricultural problems of their farmer group.

In the farmer studying group, information are transferred regularly from the publisher to the members and management committee. As the management committee takes information from the farmer adviser and members and the members can be able to take information from the farmer adviser and management committee and they can transmit their requirements to the farmer adviser and management committee. The bureaucratic handicaps seen in public establishments aren't seen in the leading farmer associations. All events aren't done in a secret way. Auto control is so powerful.

According to the determinations; 20% of management committee members are primary school graduates, 25% secondary school, 30% high school, 25% university graduates.

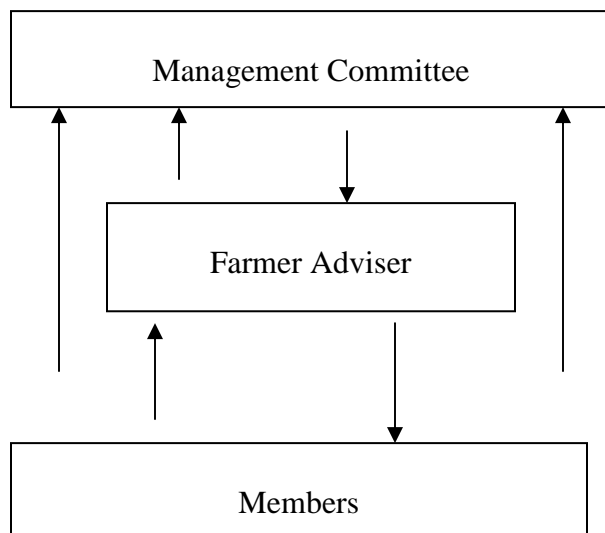


Fig. 1: Organization Scheme of Leading Farmer Associations

In each leading farmer association, a room in an office of an association is assigned to each farmer adviser for executing the necessary activities orderly. At the same

time, this room is the study room of the management and control committee, it is the meeting point of the members for reaching to the management committee and the farmer adviser personally or by telephone and meetings are arranged here (Fig. 1).

Farmer advisers are generally faculty graduates. But as the farmer adviser personnel education in Turkey is impossible except the weekly 2 h agricultural farmer adviser and communication lesson, farmer adviser personnel in leading farmer association learn to contact with the farmers and agricultural extension methods. In normal conditions, adopting of the farmer adviser to the work materializes in a year. Where as, now, the longest duty period for a farmer adviser is 9 months. Because, although the agriculture engineers in Turkey are strained to find a job, monthly salary offers of private sector to the farmer adviser are attractive. This position affects the employing qualified personnel in leader farmer associations negatively.

The bureaucratic obstacles seen in leading farmer associations aren't seen in public establishments. Members can contact with the management committee and the farmer adviser in each hour of the day. The relation between the management committee and the publishers continue in a coordinate way.

Activities: As understood from leading farmer association registrations, the main purpose in the study groups in yearly work distribution is to drive the farmer adviser service to the farmers, to inform the farmers for applying the agricultural reforms and to train the farmers. For this reason, as can be seen from the yearly activity registrations of leading farmer associations, more importance is given to individual education. Yearly studying capacity of working groups is approximately 2300 h. When the distribution of these activities is examined, the individual training is in the highest ratio with 44%.

The farmer adviser in leading farmer associations carried out the individual training in the companionship of the coordinators at first. The individual training is generally done by going to the farmer in the village coffee house, in the field or in the house of the farmer. However, necessary information is given to the farmers when the farmers come to the office or when they call the office. In special times, farmers are called. It can be reached nearly all the farmers by telephone. In the worst probability, transmitting message to the member farmers and demanding to call the publishing office is possible. All the members are called including a program or information related with the agricultural problems are taken and given from the members.

In the individual training, generally solutions are searched for the problems related with the agricultural production of the farmer. For example; using fertilizer and taking soil sample or using agricultural chemicals and their time of appreciation. Besides in these meetings, information is given about the meeting,

seminar etc. that will be arranged in the future about the agricultural production. At the same time, the actual news are reached to the member farmers. For example; the price of the product, the product needed to be planted in the following year.

In an other research [7], it was determined that 100% of the leader farmer association members take the information about the agricultural subjects from the leading farmer association. At the same time, according to this research result, it was determined that 100% of the farmers who are not the members of leading farmer association take the information from the neighboring establishments in the village and 18,3% benefit from the leading farmers.

Table 3: Yearly Activity Distribution of the Leading Farmers

Activity area	%
Individual training	44
Group education	12
Demonstration	13
Seminar	7
Communication with the association	7
Attending to the meeting, course	4
Office works and individual training	13

As seen in the table, group education constitutes 12% of yearly activities of the leading farmer associations. It was observed that group education was carried out in a discipline by skinning of political events. Each member knows that talking about the events and political developments during the training and it was obeyed to this in a discipline. The members were satisfied from this application.

Group training is generally done when the necessary and important subjects must be discussed. For example, definition of the cultural plant produced by the leading farmers in a region or production techniques, fertilizer usage, taking soil sample, nourishment of the cattles, nourishment of the fawn. Group training is done by the participation of the members who are interested with the subject, not with the invitation of the member establishments determined before. The numbers of the participants are determined approximately. Generally in group education, the number of the participants is between 10 and 30.

The participants aren't invited by post. Because the invitations done by post take at least one week as the post distribution system works slowly. For this reason, the farmers are invited with from farmer to farmer communication method by telephone or telling themselves. With this invitation, subject, meeting place and hour is announced. Meeting is generally done in a restaurant. Even if the training place isn't suitable in the desired level, training tools are prepared before. At the same time, the speaker comes as prepared to the subject.

Education meeting done in a restaurant is always with food and drink. Expenses are shared by everyone equally according to the participant number. The training meetings with food consolidate the friendship and sincerity. Taking alcohol can cause unnecessary discussions or flooding especially in Islamic countries. But, till today, in leading farmer members, any flooding and a disturbing event wasn't seen.

Beginning of the group meetings in the determined place and time is necessary. But, generally, the meeting starts half an hour late. The opening speech is generally given by the coordinator and the presenting the agenda subject of the subject expert follows this. In the meetings that pass democratic, each farmer can state their opinion. A democratic discussion environment occurs. Speaking right is given to each participant is wanted. Meetings continue in a sincere atmosphere. It wasn't encountered that any meeting finished as a result of a discussion until today. In the group education meetings carried on in a sincere environment, information trade continues between the farmers and farmers, farmer adviser, coordinator and management committee members democratically.

In an other research [7], in the last five years it was determined that 100% of the member farmers of the leading farmer association attended to the group training that the leading farmer association performed regularly but it was determined that the farmers who weren't the members of leader farmer association didn't attend to the group training. Ninety five percent of the farmers in Thrace Region are the members of any farmer association. But, these farmer associations don't make individual or group training [8, 9]. This shows that in the general of Turkey [10] none of the farmer associations except leading farmer association make individual or group training that are very important for the extend of the technologic reforms in the agriculture. The farmer advisers perform demonstrations besides individual or group training. Also, leading farmers give importance to seminar and communication with the establishments. As seen from the yearly activity registrations, arranging ratio of the demonstrations is 13%. These are the activities, for example a new kind of seed, etc. produced by the leading farmer association. On the other hand, the ratio of each communication activities of the leading farmer association with seminar and committee. These are generally the informing meetings that the expert persons invited from private and public establishments as a result of the coordinate study of the management committee and farmer adviser give to the leading farmers. Also, generally the leading farmers attend to the meetings arranged by private and public establishments in the companionship o the management committee and the publisher. The arrangement ratio of these kinds of activities is 4%.

In an other research [7], in the last five years, it was determined that 100% of the leading farmers attended to lecture and demonstration, but also it was determined

that the farmers who aren't the members of leading farmer association in the same village attended to the lectures and 7,7 of them attended to the demonstration. This shows that the leading farmer associations established in the scope of leading farmer project, play an active role in the extending of agricultural reforms and consequently in rural progress.

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