

## Farmland –Access Policy for Young Farmers and New Entrants

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### ABSTRACT

*Farmland access problems faced by the young generation of farmers have recently become problematic. To address this issue, this study investigates the challenges of traditional land tenure arrangements faced by young farmers and new entrants. Five creative farmland-access public programs that support young farmers and new entrants in the USA, the UK and Taiwan are explored. The policy measures of five creative public programs are then discussed. Finally, suggestions with further considerations for the problems of small average size and fragmentation of farmland holdings in the Asian and Pacific region are provided.*

Keywords: Farmland- access policy, young farmers, new entrants, policy measures.

### INTRODUCTION

A major concern in the farming sector is the reduced rate of entry into farming by young generation and of retirement by older farmers. In 2012, the average age of principal farm operators in the USA was 58.3 years, and thirty-three percent were aged 65 years (USDA, 2014, p.3). In the UK, the median age for holders was 59 years, and thirty-two percent of holders were aged 65 years (DEFRA et al., 2012). In Taiwan, the average age of farmers was 62 years and approximately forty-four percent of farmers were older than 65 years in 2010 (Kuo, 2014, p.3). These figures are often presented as an argument to illustrate the urgency of the ageing problem and to call for public policies to support young farmers and encourage new entrants into the agricultural sector.

Researchers generally agree that the ageing problem in the farming sector is a risk to the development of the agricultural industry; the specific threats are food security, market competitiveness, environmental sustainability as well as viability of rural areas. Older farmers are viewed as having low productivity and reluctant to adopt new technologies and environmentally friendly farming methods. In contrast, young farm operators are believed to have relatively greater potential to drive structural change, improve efficiency and innovativeness in agricultural sectors (Zagata and Lostak, 2013, p.2). Studies also suggest that new entrants tend to have a high tolerance for risk, a willingness to undertake training, a greater openness to adopting new technologies and a more intuitive interest in improving the environment than some, but not all existing farmers (DEFRA, 2013, p.8).

Few young farmers and new entrants are entering farming. Although the definition of young farmers, new entrants, beginning farmers and new farmers varies, in the UK and Taiwan, only 14 percent (DEFRA, 2012, p.9) and 7.92 percent of farmers were under 45 years old respectively in 2010, while in the USA 15.83 percent of principal farm operators were under 45 years old in 2012 (USDA, 2014, p.3). A 2009 report by the USDA Economic Research Service in the USA found that beginners have two main obstacles: high start-up costs and a lack of available land for purchase or rent. They also have less income from their farms and more off-farm income, and they are less likely to rent farmland than established farmers. The 2011 National Young Farmers Coalition report on beginning farmers, *Building a Future with Farmers*, had similar results (Freedgood and Dempsey, 2014, p. 2-3). Milne and Butler (2014, p.3) similarly argued that current young entrants to farming in the UK must overcome three key barriers: difficult access to land, high start-up costs and low and uncertain returns. Nonetheless, although farmland is a prerequisite for farming, Freedgood and Dempsey (2014, p. 1) and Katchova and Ahearn (2014, p.1) further pointed out that securing access to farmland is very challenging.

The specific objectives of this article are threefold: (1) to investigate the challenges of access to farmland by traditional land tenure arrangements faced by young farmers and new entrants; (2) to explore the creative public programs that support young farmers and new entrants in the USA, the UK and Taiwan; (3) to discuss the policy measures of five programs and to provide suggestions with further considerations for the problem of small average size and fragmentation of farmland holdings in the Asian and Pacific region. Before turning to the main task of exploring and discussing, a few remarks should be made concerning different approaches used to define young farmers, new entrants, beginning farmer and new farmers as mentioned above. In this article, a young farmer is defined as a farm holder of a young age while a new entrant is defined as a person aspiring to break into farming (Zagata and Lostak, 2013, p.4-5), including those who have

started farming and those who not yet begun to farm (Sheil, 2002, p.2) such as potential new entrants of former student of subjects related to agriculture.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. The second section explores the challenges of farmland access under the traditional land tenure arrangements faced by young farmers and new entrants. The creative public programs that support young farmers and new entrants in the USA, the UK and Taiwan are explored in third section. Then policy measures of gaining access to farmland are further discussed.

## CHALLENGES OF TRADITIONAL LAND TENURE ARRANGEMENTS

Bromley (2008, p. 233) postulates that there is no such thing as land—there is only land tenure. Land tenure is simply the culturally particularized ideas of land. Thus, farmland access is governed by the land tenure system. Farmers generally gain access to farmland in three ways: purchasing, leasing and inheritance. Recently the traditional land tenure arrangements for young farmers and new entrants have been challenged by increasingly dramatic demographic, economic and social changes. Loria et al. (2013, p.1) asserted that even in a nation as vast as America, access to farmland is still the biggest challenge for new farmers

### 1. Purchase

Purchasing farmland is the traditional route for entering the farming sector. For young farmers and new entrants, purchasing farmland is unrealistic and difficult. Firstly, the demands on farmland continue to rise; the amount of farmland available for farming has steadily declined. Where industrialization and urbanization are pushing into productive agricultural areas, large amounts of agricultural land have been converted to nonfarm use. In the UK, the loss of agricultural land to development is continuing with about 11000hectares developed from 2001-2009(The Reading University). In the USA, from 2007 to 2012, the amount of farmland decreased from 922,095,840 acres (373,167,074 hectares) to 914,527,657 acres (370,104,272 hectares). Although this represents a decrease of only 0.8, the steady decline has resulted in a 72 million (29,138,000 hectares) decrease in agricultural land since 1982. (Farmland Information Center, 2014) In Taiwan, from 1990 to 2010, farmland decreased from 890,000 hectares to 813,000 hectares, which is a decrease of 8.7 percent. (Cheng et al, 2014, p.13)

Secondly, farmland costs are high relative to the potential returns in farming. High land costs are considered particularly challenging for young farmers and new entrants to acquire farmland to farming. Young farmers and new entrants who want to purchase farmland must also compete with established farmers and non agricultural investors. Additionally, the incentive to hold farmland because of the expected increase in value after conversion is increasing. The limited supply and high demand for farmland increase its price. Therefore, purchasing farmland is more difficult for young farmers and new entrants.

### 2. Leasing

Another traditional route to accessing farmland is by leasing. Leasing is a great arrangement for young farmers and new entrants, particularly for those who do not have family succession or resources to purchase farmland. Leasing provides a cheaper alternative to purchasing and an opportunity to establish a farming business gradually with affordable farmland. However, young farmers and new entrants attempting to access farmland by tenancy must still compete with established farmers, as they may be able to offer higher rents.

Note that the farmland policy itself can have adverse impacts. One example is the 37.5% farm rent reduction program in Taiwan. To protect the rights and interests of tenant farmers, the 37.5% Farm Rent Reduction Act provides that farmland leasing shall be made in written agreement, rent shall not exceed 37.5% of the total annual yield of the main crop, the period of leasing shall not be shorter than 6 years, and landlords cannot take back their farmland at will. Moreover, if the landlord decides to terminate the lease agreement, the landlord must compensate tenants one third of the publicly proclaimed land value after deducting the Land value Increment Tax in case the farmland was converted for non agricultural use. Although the 2000 Agricultural Development Act excluded the application of the provisions, farmland owners still have limited institutional trust that results in unwillingness to lease their farmland, particularly with a written lease agreement. Owners who lease their farmland must worry about the attenuation of their property rights and depreciation of land value. Some owners make verbal agreements for short term leases to prevent the above problems. This ongoing anxiety about leasing farmland has a damaging impact on the tenancy system in Taiwan.

In England, the County Farms Estate has historically played a key role in helping new farmers without family succession prospects gain entry into farming at an affordable cost. However, this institution has declined as many of the small landholders (county farms) of the county council have either been sold off or amalgamated into bigger holding with result that fewer holding are available for new entrants. (Ingram and Kirwan, 2011, p.918) Currently, County Council farms are often let for shorter terms to encourage tenants to move on and provide further opportunities for the new entrants that follow. Pressures on Local Authorities budgets have led to some consideration or actively selling these farms (Fursdon et al., 2013, p.20)

### 3. Inheritance

A typical route into farming is through family inheritance. In England, the main entry route into farming remains intergenerational transfer within a family (ADAS, 2004a, p. 9 ,52).However, studies show that British farming is in a succession crisis (Lobley, 2010,p.849). Historically, inheritance has also been the most common way to acquire a farm in the United States. Recently, the family succession pattern appears to be shrinking. For instance, a recent Iowa study found that farm acquisition by inheritance decreased from 35% in 1997 to 23% in 2007. (Parsons, et al., 2010, pp.10) These phenomena may result from the pull of attraction of other sectors and push of the entry challenges

of low retirement rate in farming. Early retirement schemes (ERS) of the European Union (EU) are employed to ease the entry and exit barriers to agriculture. The early retirement policy is often combined with policy of aiding new and/or young farmers to enter business. From the economic point of view, early retirement schemes are often a subject of critique (Zagata and Lostak, 2013, p.16). In England, the government took the view that an early retirement scheme would be poor value for money (ADAS et al.,2004b, p.5). Fellmann and Mollers (2008, p.20) concluded that the introduction of an ERS in Croatia would probably not be good value for public money as the costs incurred can be expected to clearly outweigh the likely benefits. Bika (2007, P.267) also reported that the ERS did not increase the rate of retirement in the long run and mostly did not encourage transfer outside the family.

In Taiwan, inherited farmland tends to be distributed equally among children. The Agricultural Development Act provides 20-year loans and tax reductions to encourage sole inheritance of family farms so as to prevent farmland from being subdivided into small pieces and fragmented. However, the cost of paying out non-inheriting family members then causes another problem, *i.e.*, high farmland prices

In summary, for young farmers and new entrants, the challenges of gaining access to farmland by traditional land tenure arrangements are as follows: (1) high costs of purchasing farmland in relation to the potential returns in farming;(2) the limited supply of farmland resulted from the steadily loss of farmland for non-agricultural use;(3) competition with established farmers and non-agricultural investors; (4) adverse impacts of farmland policy; and (5) low rates of retirement by older farmers.

## **CREATIVE PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

In response to the challenges faced by young farmers and new entrants, many countries have established creative public programs to help gain access to farmland. Five creative public programs in the USA, the UK and Taiwan will be discussed as follows.

### **1. Federal Programs in the USA--CRP Transition Incentive programs**

According to United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency (FSA) (2014), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), created in 2002, is a voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is not farmed or ranched. The CRP participants establish long-term, resource conserving vegetative species, such as approved grasses or tree(known as covers) to control soil erosion, improve the water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost -share assistance. Continuous sign-up contracts are 10 to 15 years in duration. The Transition Incentives Program (TIP), which was established in 2008, assists in the transition of expiring CRP land from a retired or retiring owner or operator by renting (at least 5 years) or selling their land to beginning, veteran or social disadvantaged farmer or rancher to return land to production for sustainable grazing or crop production. The CRP-TIP provides two years of additional rental payments to farmland owners.

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (2014) reported that The CRP—Transition Incentives Program is designed to achieve the following goals. The first goal is to help beginning farmers compete with more established farmers and farmland investors in access CRP land. The second goal is to support land conservation by helping beginning farmers develop and implement a conservation plan. The third goal is to encourage retiring farmers to rent or sell to beginners, which strengthens the fabric of local farming communities. Moreover, due to the high demand for the program, FSA expended all of the available funding for CRP—TIP. In just a few short years, over 1700 producers covering more than 111,290 hectares of land were enrolled in 26 states.

Farm Service Agency implements TIP and CRP on behalf of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation (USDA, FSA, 2014). The characteristics of CRP-TIP are as follows. (1) Although programs generally help farmers gain access to farmland, they may not necessarily help the beginning farmer. The CRP-TIP pays specific attention to beginning farmers and ranchers. (2) The linkage of CRP and TIP is an adaptive response to the needs of the farming sector, *i.e.*, to help deal with entry-exit problems. (3) Land conservation continues, and farming methods are becoming environmentally friendly.

### **2. State Program in the USA—Delaware Young Farmers Farmland Purchase and Preservation Loan Program**

The Delaware Young Farmers Farmland Purchase and Preservation Loan Program, created in 2011, helps young farmers acquire farmland while advancing the farmland protection goals of the state. The program makes a 30-year zero-interest loan available to beginning farmers to purchase land. In exchange, the State Agricultural Lands Preservation Foundation receives an agricultural conservation easement on the land to be acquired (Farmland Information Center, 2015). By the end of 2013, the program had loaned \$ 6.3 million to 20 farmers (Freedgood and Dempsey, 2014, p.14).

According to the Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Act, the program has the following main conditions: (1)the loan recipient must be at least 18 years of age and no older than 40 years of age; (2) the loan recipient must have at least 3 years of farming- or agricultural-related experience ;(3) the farmland subject to purchase must contain at least 15 tillable acres ( 6.07 hectares); (4) the maximum total amount of loans provided to an individual recipient must not exceed \$500,000; (5) the maximum loan amount for any loan must not exceed 70% of the appraised preservation easement value of the farmland property which is being purchased and subject to perpetual preservation easement, *i.e.*70% of appraised value of development rights of the farmland.

The Delaware Young Farmers Program is administered by Delaware Department of Agriculture and State's Agricultural Lands Preservation Foundation. The main characteristics of Delaware program are to offer opportunities for young farmers to access capital to buy farmland and

to create a permanent easement. The permanent easement prohibits future development to maintain its use for farming. The permanent easement is intended to lower the market value so that the land is affordable to future young farmers.

### **3. Fresh Start initiative in Cornwall, UK**

Fresh Start (FS) initiative was launched nationally in December 2004. In the early stages of the program (March 2005), a pilot initiative was launched in Cornwall (Fresh Start in Cornwall) by the Cornwall Agricultural Council's Development Team. Its aim was to facilitate entry into, and exit from, farming. Subsequently, however, the scheme focused solely on new entrants and the setting up of FS Academies (Ibery et al., 2009). The matchmaking element of Fresh Start comprises following steps. The co-ordinator of FS matched applications according to the apparent compatibility of their requirements, expectations, background, inputs, *etc.* Typically, the first step was for the new entrants and older farmers to exchange details. If interested, they were then given the opportunity to meet together, along with the co-ordinator and a consultant who could provide subsidized business support. If the applicants were still interested after this meeting, the consultants would begin the process of negotiating and detailing the joint venture agreement (Ingram and Kirwan, 2011, p.922).

The package of measures provided by Fresh Start included matchmaking, business support, mentoring-personal support, training, retirement and succession planning, rural housing provision, and financial engineering. From 2005-2008, joint venture opportunities were offered by seven older farmers and were sought by six new entrants (Ingram and Kirwan, 2011, p.922). The performance of the Fresh Start initiative in Cornwall during 2005-2008 was evaluated by the Countryside and Community Research Institute (2015). The institute concluded that, if judged on the hard outputs alone, FS has not achieved its stated objectives. However, the soft outcome has been emphasized by many of those interviewed, who argued that, collectively, a positive contribution has been made to both the situation of new entrants, and more widely to the vibrancy of the land based industries in Cornwall. Ingram and Kirwan (2011, p.926) suggested that the social processes and personal relationships between those involved should be taken account of and there may be a case for more formalized (neo-feudal) triadic arrangement (involving the government, landlord and new entrant) to help remove the risk of exploitation and to provide the right conditions for a long term and more secure farming future for new entrants.

The Fresh Start, funded by the Objective One Program of European Union, ran by the Cornwall Agricultural Council in partnership with Business Link and Duchy College (Ingram and Kirwan, 2011, p.922). The Fresh Start scheme has the following characteristics. First, besides matchmaking, FS took an innovative approach by offering a package of measures that were intended to make use of existing schemes and projects, where possible, as Ingram and Kirwan (2011, p.922) described. Secondly, FS in Cornwall is a long term arrangement of farm joint ventures rather than a short term solution for both landlord and new entrants.

### **4. Small Landlords and Large Tenants Program in Taiwan**

The Small Landlords and Large Tenants Program was launched nationally in 2009. Its main purpose is to encourage elderly farmers or farmland owners who have no capability to farm or who have no interest in farming to lease their farmland to young farmers or to farmer organizations. The E-farmland Bank, which is managed by Local Farmers Associations, was established to provide information about the sale and lease of farmland. The program provides young farmers with opportunities to purchase or rent farmland to increase their farmland scale, and assists elderly farmers in leaving the farming sector. An early retirement scheme is provided for landlords over 65 years old. Besides the matchmaking services, low interest loans and subsidies for farmland improvement and establishment of farm business are offered to large tenants.

In 2013, the Small Landlords and Large Tenants Program linked with the Adjusting Farming system and Activating Farmland Program. By the end of 2013, the program had matched 25724 small landlords with 1578 large tenants. The farmland available through the program was 11268 hectares. (Kuo, 2014, p.6) Thus, large tenants with self-owned land had an average of 8.4 hectares of farmland, which was approximately eight times the amount held by average farm household in Taiwan. Additionally, the average age of large tenant farmers is 44 years, which is much younger than the average age of 62 years for all farmers in Taiwan.

The Small landlords and large tenants program implemented by Council of Agriculture and Local Farmers Associations has the following characteristics. Like the Fresh Start initiative scheme in Cornwall, it offers a package of measures that were intended to make use of existing schemes and projects, where possible. The program is mainly designed to enable young farmers to rent instead of to purchase farmland to increase their farm scale. However, the farmlands rented through the program are mostly small in scale and scattered in location. Accessing farmland in contiguous acreages to promote farming efficiency will be the new challenge for young farmers and Local Farmers Associations as well as Council of Agriculture.

### **5. Agricultural Enterprise Zone Program in Taiwan**

The Agricultural Enterprise Zone (AZE) Program launched in 2007 established agricultural safe production bases to make farming a profitable business for farmers and to ensure the sustainable use of farmland. Adjacent farmlands over 100 hectares will be selected for the AEZ program. Young farmers are encouraged to rent farmland in the AEZ to expand their scale and become large tenants. Local Farmers Associations are guided to become the management body of the AEZ program. In the AEZs, Farmers Association, production and marketing group, and individual farmers are encouraged to sign a farmland utilization agreement to cohere the intention of sustainable use of farmland. Council of Agriculture and local governments facilitate the integration of small farmers in AEZs and agro-enterprises into the agricultural

value chain. The incomes of farmers are also improved by proper organization of production and marketing, technical support and training, and expert guidance.

In the very beginning of the AEZ program, Local Farmers Association, as a management body, should collect essential attributes of the people, farmlands, water resources and farming industry in the AEZ to set up an information platform, by the assistance of Council of Agriculture, for the management of AEZ program. Based on the cadastral map, the system can present spatial or geographical data. To help young farmers gain access to farmland, Local Farmers Association can use the system to present spatial maps of different group of farmers according to the age needed in the AEZs. The system can also properly display the geographical map of fallow farmland. The above two maps and core crop map are very useful for Local Farmers Associations to actively connect young farmers to farmland and farmland owners to make good farmland access and farmland use decision. However, a problem encountered by young farmers renting farmland in AEZs is that farmland owners have limited institutional trust and unwilling to lease out their farmland with written agreement as abovementioned.

The AEZ program is implemented by Council of Agriculture, Local Government, and Local Farmers Association and supported by universities as well as China Productivity Center. The AEZ program requires the Farmers Association to take an active role in helping young farmers gain access to farmland since young farmers are the main participants of contract farming agreement and the leader in the production and marketing group in the AEZ. In cases of farmland owners who are unwilling to lease to individual farmers but willing to rent to the Farmers Association, the Association can be as a large tenant to rent the farmland and provide the opportunity for young farmers to participate the farming. A strong link between young farmers with farmlands and the Farmers Association agro-industry helps to integrate the value chain for young farmers.

Table 1 summarizes the eligible farmer, land tenure arrangement and organization involved in the five creative public programs in the USA, the UK and Taiwan.

Table 1. Eligible farmers, arrangement and organization of the five programs

<b>Program</b>	<b>Eligible farmers</b>	<b>Arrangement</b>	<b>Organization</b>
CRP-TIP	Retired or retiring owner or operator	Rent or sell farmland to beginning farmer	USDA, Farm Service Agency on behalf of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation
Delaware Young Farmers Program	Young farmer	Purchase of farmland and at same time the State Foundation acquired agricultural conservation easement on the farmland	Delaware Department of Agriculture, State Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation
FS Initiative in Cornwall	Older farmer and new entrants	Joint venture followed by takeover of farm business	Cornwall Agricultural Council, Business Link, Duchy College, European Union
Small Landlord and Large Tenant	Older farmer and young farmer, large tenant	Leasing	Council of Agriculture, Local Farmers' Association
AEZ Program	Young farmer, large tenant	Leasing	Council of Agriculture, Local governments, Local Farmers' Association, Universities, China Productivity Center

The policy measures of five creative public programs are further discussed to understand how they help young farmers and new entrants cope with the challenges of high costs of purchasing farmland in relation to the potential returns in farming, the steady loss of farmland for non-agricultural use, the need to compete with established farmers or non agricultural investors, and low retirement rate by older farmers in farming. Moreover, due to the large differences in the average sizes of farms in the USA, the UK and Taiwan, the policy measures for small-scale farming are further discussed.

Firstly, both CRP Transition Incentive Programs and Delaware Young Farmers Farmland Purchase and Preservation Loan Program are incentive-based programs. The CRP Transition Incentive Programs encourage retired or retiring farmland owners or operator to transit their farmlands so that the beginning farmers can access to farmland by purchasing or leasing. The purpose of the program is to facilitate entry to and exit from farming in the USA. Note that, the CRP-TIP program requires substantial funding. For example, the 2008 Farm Bill provided \$25 million total over five years to fund the program and the 2014 Farm Bill increased the mandatory funding level to \$33million total over five years (National sustainable agriculture coalition, 2014). The Delaware Young Farmers Program provides opportunities for beginning farmers to access a 30-year zero-interest loan that reduces the high start-up costs to purchase farmland. The State Foundation simultaneously acquires the conservation easement, which means that the farmland is permanently preserved as farmland. The policy measures have two objectives: reducing the high start-up costs and decreasing the loss of agricultural land to development.

Secondly, the Fresh Start Initiative (FSI) in Cornwall, unlike the short-term arrangements of early retirement scheme, is a long-term joint venture in which the new entrant relies initially on the older farmer providing most of the capital requirements while the young farmer provides the variable inputs and day-to-day management (Ingram and Kirwan, 2011, p.919). The objective of the FS is to enable new entrant to buy into an existing farm business, gradually taking over managerial control (Ingram and Kirwan, 2011, p.918). It reduces entry-exit barriers through a continual process of matchmaking, joint venture, and takeovers of farm businesses.

Thirdly, both Small Landlords and Large Tenants Program and Agricultural Enterprise Zone Program are also incentive-based programs. In both programs, the Local Farmers Association uses the vital farmland information and enabling platform to gather relevant information and to provide matchmaking for leasing. Another objective of the AEZ program is to decrease the loss of agricultural land. The AEZ program also facilitates integration of small farmers and agro-enterprise into agricultural value chain improves young farmers farming income that can lower the barrier to gain access to farmlands and improve the chance for farm viability.

Notably, unlike large-scale farms in the USA and the UK, those in Taiwan and countries in the Asian and Pacific region are characterized by small-scale farming. In these countries, young farmers have difficulty increasing their scale by purchasing farmland. However, in matchmaking for leasing, the policy measures may further consider to the economic viability of small-scale farming and contiguous acreages for young farmers and new entrants. Farmland access policies should also be designed to make use of existing schemes and projects as employed by Fresh Start in Cornwall, UK, and to provide support to facilitate the integration of small farmers and agro-enterprise into agricultural value chain as used by the AEZ Program in Taiwan.

## CONCLUSIONS

To achieve food security, environment sustainability and viability of rural areas, the recently emerging problem of farmland access by young farmers and new entrants must be solved. This study explored and discussed five creative farmland-access public programs that support young farmers and new entrants in the USA, the UK and Taiwan. The policy measures employed in the five creative public programs can be used as a reference by policy makers.

Providing funding for incentives to retired and retiring farmland owners and operators can facilitate entry to and exit from farming by leasing or selling their farmland to young farmers and new entrants for sustainable crop production.

The government might provide a 30-year zero-interest loan to young farmers and new entrants to purchase farmland so as to reduce the high start-up costs. Additionally, the government should simultaneously acquire conservation easements of the purchased farmland to decrease the loss of agricultural land to development.

A continual process of matchmaking, joint ventures, and acquisition of farm businesses is needed to reduce entry-exit barriers.

Vital farmland information must be made available, and an enabling platform must be developed to provide information and to assist in matchmaking for leasing.

Support for the integration of small farmers and agro-enterprises into the agricultural value chain is needed to improve the income of young farmers and new entrants, to reduce barriers to access to farmland, and to increase farm viability.

Generally, policymakers tend to accept what is done elsewhere and seek to emulate success. To assess what can be learned from the experiences of other countries, institutional environments and institutional arrangements in other countries should be taken into account. The major problem for framers in the Asia-Pacific region is the small average size and the fragmentation of farmland. Improved farmland-access policies that provide viable and contiguous acreage for the young farmers and new entrants are needed to establish a sustainable farming sector and lead agricultural development to a brighter future.

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