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AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT

COMMITTEES IN NORTH KOREA

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- NORTH KOREA -

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AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEES IN NORTH KOREA

The following is a full translation of an article titled, "Let Us Raise the Function and Roles of Agricultural Cooperative Management Committee," appearing in Minju Chosun, P'yongyang, 28 May 1960, pp 2, 3.

The Editorial Office of this newspaper has received a number of inquiries about ways and means of improving the efficiency of management committees of agricultural cooperatives. Such inquiries have come from officials of people's councils and from those who are responsible for the management of agricultural cooperatives including comrade PAK Nae-chun, Chairman of the management committee of the Amnoggang Agricultural Cooperative in Pochun kun, Yanggang province. We present the following article in the hope of helping our workers in their efforts to improve the efficiency and roles of management committees of agricultural cooperatives.

The primary function of the management committee of an agricultural cooperative is to increase the efficiency of production and to find ways of maximizing production. Our experiences show that the success of such work depends upon the revolutionary zeal of the masses and the interest of the members of the cooperatives in increasing production. For this reason, leaders of cooperatives must increase the enthusiasm of members for increasing production by all means. The importance of the function of the management committee lies precisely here.

It is important to abide by the principle of distribution according to labor and to carry out strictly the system of granting material privileges to successful work teams. As is well known, the common income of an agricultural cooperative is distributed among its members according to the amount and quality of work performed by them. This means that the amount of distribution is proportionate to the amount of the work performed. Therefore, one whose labor has produced more and better goods receives more. This principle stimulates

the interest of members of cooperatives in material goods, thereby increasing the efficiency of production. Moreover, it cultivates a communistic attitude toward labor among members of cooperatives.

One of the key problems in carrying out the socialistic principle of distribution is the determination of the workday. The workday is a unit for measuring the quality and amount of labor and serves as a standard for distributing products. Various types of labor performed within a cooperative are computed on the basis of the workday. The work norm and grades for various types of work are determined on the basis of the amount of labor required. The number of workdays for a worker is calculated by comparing his work output with the work norm determined by his cooperative. Therefore, members of a cooperative receive the same number of workdays for the same amount of work performed irrespective of their sex or age. Accordingly, the amounts distributed to such members are equal. However, if the number of workdays is not fairly determined, the principle of equal distribution for an equal amount of labor cannot be realized. Therefore, an accurate determination of the number of workdays is a necessary condition for realizing the socialistic principle of distribution.

Computation of the workday is not simple statistical work, but rather a complex administrative and political problem, because unsavory trends such as selfishness may develop in this kind of work. For instance, one might try to find an easy way out of such a simple job as ploughing. For this reason, we must realize the importance of computing the number of workdays. In order to determine accurately the number of workdays, efforts must be made to evaluate the amount of work performed on the basis of job classification and the work norm, and furthermore, in light of actual working conditions.

A larger number of workdays should be assigned to the types of work requiring a greater degree of skill and more hardship. We must not repeat the mistake of creating wide discrepancies among the amounts of profits distributed by assigning an excessively large number of workdays to skilled workers. In the past, such discrepancies were created when a number of cooperatives assigned an unreasonably larger number of workdays to those who were engaged in construction work and fish farming than the number assigned to those who had transplanted rice seedlings, although rice transplanting does not require skill but heavy labor.

The management committee must discuss with members of the cooperative the required amount of labor for each grade of work and bring up the work norms thus determined for adoption by an annual meeting or meetings of the deputies of the cooperatives. The work norms must be determined with the view of stimulating enthusiasm of the members for increased production.

Once these amounts are adopted for the purpose of computing the number of work days, those who increase production by taking the initiative and using new techniques should receive the number of work days according to the amount of work performed [rather than adopting a new basis of computation]. This policy is adopted in order to popularize advanced techniques of production. However, when new techniques are widely popularized or when their usefulness has been tested, the amounts of labor required for those types of work will be raised to a higher level. In this way we hope to insure continued technological progress.

To repeat, we must try to compute accurately the number of work days for each worker, first, by adopting a realistic amount of labor required for the type of work he is doing, and second, by evaluating accurately the amount and quality of the work he has performed.

One of the important points to be stressed here is that only the work performed in common with other workers falling under the same job classification should be considered for the purpose of evaluating the amount and quality of work performed. If the cooperatives require their members to do some non-productive work, their income per work day will decrease and consequently their enthusiasm for work will fall. Therefore those who are on the management committees should try to let the members do regular work prescribed by the cooperative and minimize their participation in non-productive labor.

The work day for each worker should be computed every day and entered in their workday pocket book so that their confidence in the cooperative and enthusiasm for work will be increased. Since the scale of work teams has been expanded, it will take much time later if the work day is not computed daily, and also the tendency of computing it in a haphazard manner will set in.

At the same time, the members of the team computing the workday should be carefully selected, and their discipline should be strengthened. The management committee must announce

the number of workdays for each worker on time every month. The announcement of the numbers of workdays is aimed not only at insuring uniformity between the number of work days entered in the work day pocket book of each member and the official record kept by the cooperative, but also to stimulate a sense of competition among the members.

The income of a member of the cooperative is determined by the number of workdays earned and the value assigned to the work by that particular cooperative. Therefore, it follows that the income of an individual member of a cooperative will increase as the total income of the cooperative increases.

The new instruction given by Premier KIM concerning the system of granting "material privileges to a successful work team" will contribute to agricultural production and the material welfare of farmers and has a great political and economic significance in our efforts to strengthen the collective consciousness and creativity of the people. This instruction was issued by the Premier when he made an on the spot inspection of party organizations in Chongsan-ni, Kangso kun.

In order to carry out this instruction accurately, management committees must establish the standards for grant-privileges to work teams. If the standards are set too high, the people would not have an incentive to attain or surpass the standards, and if they are set too low, the people will adopt a negative attitude and seek leisure and thereby decrease production.

The next point to be noted by the management committee is to plan and carry everything out thoroughly. At the Expanded Plenary Session of the Party Committee of Hamgyong Pukdo, Premier KIM Il song stated:

"We are now united as a single family. A whole ri [village] has been transformed into a family. The head of the household is the chairman of the management committee [of the agricultural cooperative] or the Party organ or the people's association. Everything must be carried out according to plan."

The people's economic plans indicate the policies of the Party to bring about a planned and balanced growth of the national economy. Therefore, every plan made by an agricultural cooperative must accurately reflect on the guiding lines and policies of the Party.

The basic means of production of the agricultural cooperative is land. Therefore, the primary source of income for a cooperative is agricultural products, particularly grains. For this reason, efforts must be made to concentrate on the increased production of grains by making the best use of the labor force, farm implements, livestock, facilities, and funds.

This does not mean that the production of any other kind of goods ought to be discouraged. Since there is a seasonal change in the availability of labor depending upon the growth of grains and the development of livestock, a great deal of the labor force may be left idle seasonably if only one aspect of farming is overemphasized. In order to use the labor force fully, plans should be made to organize multi-crop farming, which consists of different types of farming requiring different lengths of time. Thus, livestock farming, vegetables growing, extraction of vegetable oils, the handicraft industry, apple growing, and silkworm raising can be integrated.

A scientific survey of the geographical conditions of the cooperative and all means of production including land and farm implements, must be undertaken in order to make realistic plans. To make a scientific and realistic plan, positive steps should be taken to allow the participation of the masses. This is because the plans will be carried out by the masses and that untapped resources and new methods can be exploited only when the creativity and wisdom of the masses are fully mobilized.

Plans adopted by the general convention of the cooperatives according to the popular will possess characteristics of laws. Therefore, once plans are adopted they must be carried out and overfulfilled as a matter of obligation. Adopting an economic plan is only the first step toward establishing a planned economy. The fate of the plans is decisively dependent upon the activities of the management committee of an agricultural cooperative. The management committee must explain systematically the contents of the plans, the methods of carrying them out, and the material interests to be brought about for the members when the plans are fulfilled to members of the cooperative.

At the same time, the management committee must plan carefully the ways and means of carrying out the plans. We must try to increase agricultural production along the basic lines of continuously improving irrigation projects already

completed, using more electricity and machines in farming and raising livestock, and using draft animals and some machines rather than relying completely upon large machines such as tractors and automobiles. We must also discard outdated farming methods, adopt as a matter of obligation new methods of farming, use every bit of land, grow plants suitable for the land, expand the land for multiple farming, use more fertilizer, plough deeply, plant seeds with a proper distance so as to increase productivity and the total amount of production. One of the key factors for successful planning in agriculture is to make plans in such a way that the available labor and material force can be concentrated on key types of farming in which the cooperative is engaged, and to carry on the farming on time.

Therefore, it is most reasonable for us to modify the organization of work teams in the light of the instruction given by Premier Kim at the party meeting in Chongsan-ni of Kangso kun.

It is suggested that the management committees of agricultural cooperatives discontinue work teams carrying on subsidiary functions, and instead reorganize the work teams as a whole so as to place a greater emphasis on the agricultural production work team. It is also suggested that under the agricultural production work team, a number of sub-work teams be established in the fields of vegetable, livestock or silk-worm raising. Or a team dealing with seeds and another dealing with livestock and still another dealing with farm implements may be established according to the needs of a particular cooperative.

In addition to reorganization of the work teams, the management committee must also organize systematically the various processes of production by such means as making monthly plans for the work team, inspecting the activities of the work teams from time to time, and requiring the work teams to make work plans for each five-day period. Time lost in farming cannot be regained.

Certain processes in farming cannot be carried out off season. Therefore, the management committee must keep a firm hold on key elements of the cooperative and carry out its functions by planning thoroughly and executing the plans accurately.

No matter how good plans are adopted, they cannot be realized unless the operation plans of the management committee

are not geared to the plans. There are two types of plans made by agricultural cooperatives. One is called the prospective plan, and the other the current plan. The current plan is further broken down into the annual plan and the working plan. The annual plan encompasses the annual production plan, income and expenditure estimates, and the annual production goals for each work team. The work plan includes the monthly work plan and the five-day work plan. Since all these plans are interrelated, the management committee must try to make its own plan in the light of these plans. In drafting its plan, care must be exercised to distinguish the degree of importance of the various works so as to protect the key production sector of the cooperative, and to carry on farming on time.

The operations plan must be worked out in the light of the annual production goal of the cooperative, and will consist of an annual plan, a seasonal plan, and monthly plans. The monthly plan should include the meetings scheduled for the month and the projects to be carried out. Monthly work plans to be distributed to work teams should be prepared separately. Here, the work to be done by members of the committee and the work to be carried out by persons who are in charge of particular fields must be clearly distinguished. The chairman of the management committee must work according to the operations plan of his committee. It is hoped that the chairman will work out his own ten day plan based on the monthly work and operations plans.

One of the important tasks of the management committee is to abide by the democratic principles of management and to allow active participation of members of the cooperatives in the work of the management committee. The basic charter of agricultural cooperatives now in force drafted by our Party and adopted by the national meeting of agricultural cooperatives stipulates that the democratic rights and the creative wisdom of the members of cooperatives be promoted. The charter was drafted after examining the present conditions of the agricultural cooperative movement in our country. The point to be stressed is that the members of management must think in terms of the needs of the revolutionary masses and reject subjectivism, bureaucracy and dictatorship by the committee staff.

The agricultural cooperative is a collective body in which farmers are voluntarily united under the leadership of the Party, in which all means of production including lands are owned collectively, and production and distribution are made according to socialistic principles. Therefore,

the owners of the cooperative are the farmers themselves. All the problems of the cooperatives must be decided at the general meeting of the members themselves according to their will and the cooperative must be operated according to the decisions adopted there.

The management committee is elected by the general meeting, is responsible to the general meeting, and manages the cooperative according to the decisions of the meeting. Members of the cooperative place their confidence in the members of the committee whom they have elected, and confide to them all the means of production and property of the cooperative including lands and machinery. Therefore, the responsibility of the members of the management committee is heavy and therefore, the members of the management committee are duty bound to be faithful servants of the people and discharge their duties with a strong sense of responsibility and honor. If they fail to carry out this duty they immediately lose their mandate, and thus they must be judged by the people. Therefore, there is no ground whatever for the members of management committee to feel a sense of superiority or authority toward the members of cooperative.

Thus, Premier KIM pointed out at the party meeting at Chongsan-ni; "The best teachers of the chairman of the management committee are the farmers. One chairman must learn from them, and then can be their good leader."

Keeping the instruction of Premier KIM, members of management committee must share the experience of the farmers, candidly discuss problems with them, become sincere students, and thus become their good friends and supporters.

Democratic principles can be put into practice in carrying out collective works within cooperatives. In order to maintain leadership over the members, it is important for the management committee to organize meetings and utilize them effectively.

If the general meeting or the meeting of deputies is not held on time, members of the cooperative would feel that they had been excluded from the work of the management committee, and thus their democratic rights violated. One of the most important functions of the management committee is to call the general meeting or meetings of deputies regularly according to regulations and to report on their work at these meetings.

The general meeting is held not only to discuss problems of common general interest but also to bring popular control and inspection to bear upon the work of the management committee.

However, there are a number of cooperatives where a general meeting of the members or meetings of deputies are not called. An extreme example is Tumok Agricultural Cooperative in Changdo kun, Kangwon province where such meetings were never called and instead all the problems of the cooperatives were settled by the chairman of the management committee in a dictatorial manner. In order to enable the meetings to serve as a means of demonstrating democratic principles, the management committee must plan the meetings carefully.

There are many ways of conducting meetings, but when there is a problem with which the members in general have to be familiarized, it is proper for the management committee to take it up for discussion among its members and then let each member of the committee test the findings with the members of the cooperative. Then, the committee should write up a report summarizing the opinion of the members of the cooperative so that it can be presented at meetings. In this way, the opinion of many members of the cooperative can be presented to the general meeting and the questions presented can be discussed in a short period of time.

The general meeting of the members of the cooperative and meetings of deputies should take up only basic problems within the jurisdiction of the general meeting as provided by the charter of the cooperative. For instance, the meetings can discuss major decisions of the Party and Government, the production and distribution plans of the cooperative, organization of work teams, determination of the base labor amount for each job, admission to the cooperative and expulsion, the determination of the scope of acquiring new property and disposing of the property of the cooperative, the management committee's report on the financial status of the cooperative, and the report of the inspection committee.

Minor problems which can easily be dealt with by the management committee should not be brought up to the general meetings. Such practices were evidenced in a number of cooperatives.

The adoption of good plans important though it is, is only a beginning of the work. In order to insure the realization of plans, it is necessary to conduct political work prior

to the launching of the plans. Even if plans are unanimously approved at general meetings, members of the management committee must penetrate deeply into the members of the cooperatives and explain to them again implications of the plans and discuss with them the ways and means of carrying them out. It is necessary because there will be some members who may not know as much about the plans as desirable although they might have voted for the plans. The members in general must have a unified view about the plans. In this way each member of the cooperative will take an interest in the work of the cooperative, contribute more constructive views, and carry out the plans voluntarily. At the same time a comprehensive view of the variety of operations carried on by individual members, and profitable experiences or shortcomings can be detected so that new ways of promoting production can be found. This will also enable the management committee to familiarize itself with the actual conditions of the cooperative so that it can take actions to deal with difficult problems as they arise, heighten the sense of responsibility and creativity of workers engaged in specialized work, and discipline them systematically.

The management committee must define clearly the functions of its members including the chairman, vice chairman, technicians, accountant, statistician, warehouse keeper, store keepers, and tighten rules so that each one of them can carry out his function dutifully.

The Inspection Committee of the agricultural cooperative is responsible for inspecting the over all functions of the Management Committee. The Committee inspects Party decisions [sic] decisions of general meetings of cooperatives, or meetings of deputies, management and custodians of common property within the cooperative, the evaluation of the number of work days for each worker, and finance and accounting. All these activities fall under the jurisdiction of the management committee. The Inspection Committee reports to general meetings or meetings of deputies on their inspection over these activities of the management committee. Therefore, it is important to improve the efficiency of the Inspection Committee in order to improve the work of the management committee.

It is extremely important to improve Communistic discipline among members of agricultural cooperatives. It is because feudalistic and capitalistic ways of thinking are still lingering in the minds of some members in spite of the fact that socialistic relations of production are now prevailing in rural areas. The Management Committee, therefore,

must not concentrate exclusively on production but make attempts to eradicate outmoded ways of thinking from the minds of the people. We must convince the members of the superiority of the social systems and the cooperative system over capitalistic institutions. We must let the members protect socialistic institutions and socialist achievements, defend them against our enemy, eliminate selfishness, cherish common property, fight against the misuse and abuse of property, and combat the lack of enthusiasm about participating in common work.

We must especially nurture the sense of industriousness, love of labor, enthusiasm to take part in common labor, and obedience to rules and laws. At the same time, their patriotism and the sense of dedication to the cause of socialism led by the Soviet Union must be strengthened. They must study the revolutionary heritage of the Party so that they may become dedicated fighters for the Party.

The rural population is now faced with the problems of technological and cultural revolutions. The sooner we solve these problems, the faster can we transform the countryside culturally, and match agricultural growth with industrial progress. For this reason, the management committee must try to raise the level of general and technical knowledge of the members and improve public health and sanitary services.

The tasks presented to the Management Committee are indeed broad and important. In order to accomplish these tasks, the Management Committee must always follow the directions given by the party organizations. The party organizations, on the other hand, must familiarize the members of cooperatives with the guiding lines and policies of the Party, organize them tightly to carry them out, and particularly raise the leadership roles of party members. At the same time, control over the management of agricultural cooperatives and productive labor must be strengthened. In these ways, the functions and roles of the Management Committee can be raised and the great tasks presented to those who are in charge of managing agricultural cooperatives can be carried out.

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