

techman / April 24, 2011 01:04PM

[\[Food Security\] Minor Cereals, Taiwan's New Idea for Reconstructing Food Security](#)[Food Security] Minor Cereals, Taiwan's New Idea for Reconstructing Food Security ([Chinese Version](#))

Taiwan Environmental Information Center, TEIA (2011/04/22) The rapid rise of grain prices during 2007 to 2008 induced a global food panic, in response to which several countries had tried to find solutions increasing food security. For instance, South Korea and Japan had increased their food independence rates to 44% and 40% (the rates are still growing up) in order to reconstruct the national food security. Taiwan's present food self-sufficiency rate is 32%; whether the present agricultural policies can help the country of narrow farming lands with high dense popularity increase the food independence rate became a target of the general public interest. Although the President Office has elevated food security up to the level of national security responding to the food panic, no concrete solutions have ever been proposed yet by now. On April 21, a workshop on the relation between minor cereals industry and the increase of food self-sufficiency was held in National Taiwan University, hosted by the Department of Agronomy; industrial, official, academic and civil groups representatives attended to the event. The experience exchange of the farmers from different areas all over the country raised a challenge to the "misconception" in Taiwan's agricultural administrations and policies, that a lot of grains cannot be grown in Taiwan.

Director of the Hengchun Branch of Livestock Research Institute, Council of Agriculture, Jia-Sheng CHEN (trans. temp.) proposed an idea that to grow organic corn and soybean in turn can not only make farming activity more environment-friendly but also increase the utility rate of the farmed grains. He said, the misconception the governmental officials tended to believe in, that many kinds of grains cannot be grown in Taiwan, is not due to the natural reasons, but other reasons such as cost and price concern. He said, the government needs to sort out the reasons so that more suitable solutions may be found.

Director-General of a civil group promoting contracted wheat farming in Taiwan, Hsiyuan Bakery, Ming-Huang CHENG said, wheat can actually be grown everywhere in Taiwan. The farmers older than sixty years old in Taiwan are still in possession of memories and feelings about wheat, so it should not be difficult to reform the farming skills. He suggested, the government should release wheat original seed and help the farmers with differentiating wheat flavors and tastes.

Besides, feed takes a major share of the minor cereals industry. Consultant of Taiwan Feed Industry Association Jun-chen LIN (trans. temp.) said, the local corn is fresh, non-genetic modified and fine quality, so the product is always welcome to the buyers. He suggested, when the market scale reaches certain extend, a bidding platform will be needed. He also suggested that the government should build a clear grading system to benefit fair trade.

Professor Yu-hui CHEN at the Department of Agricultural Economics, NTU, pointed out that the predicament of Taiwan's food security is caused by two factors. One is that the global food prices are controlled by some monopolistic enterprises; the other is the natural environment of narrow farming land and highly dense popularity. Although the rice self-sufficiency rate reaches 96.9%, the minor cereals has only a independence rate of 1%, apparently disproportionate to the rice. Hence, Professor CHEN suggested, the subsidy policy needs to be diversified; beside of the feed grain (corn), soybean, wheat etc. should be included as well.

Minor Cereals Production and Marketing Group of Alishan Township (trans. temp.) representative Pei-jen YANG (trans. temp.) said, the farmers in Alishan grows organic, native Job's tears (*coix lacryma*) and small red beans for a long time. However, the insufficient production demands more and more farming lands year by year. YANG said, most of the minor cereals can tolerate drought, and the traditional farming skills demand no fertilizer. However, the aboriginal farmers are never the concern of the agricultural policies, so that, for instance, the farmers need to rent farming lands of these organic minor cereals. YANG asked the experts in the symposium to help find solutions progressing the production in the aboriginal areas.

Further Information:

[Taiwan Environment Information Center 2011/04/22](#) (Chinese)

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[National Science Council International Cooperation Sci-Tech Newsbrief](#)  
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Edited 2 time(s). Last edit at 04/24/2011 01:13PM by techman.

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