

THE ROLE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHAMBERS OF AGRICULTURE IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE RURAL AREAS: CASE OF TR72-CENTRAL ANATOLIA DEVELOPMENT AGENCY REGION OF TURKEY

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Abstract

This paper was made with a view to determine the role of the Turkish Chambers of Agriculture in the rural development. In order to reach the aim, Kayseri, Sivas and Yozgat provinces in the TR72-Development Agency Region of Turkey were chosen as the research area. Data obtained via survey from the chambers of agriculture in the region constitute the main material of the research. The survey data belonged to 2017. According to research findings, the chambers of agriculture were determined that they played a significantly role in rural development: They had took on a task significantly in formation of the agricultural product prices, balancing of the input prices in the market, registration of the farmers and recording of the farming files. They subsidized agricultural inputs price than the market price such as fertilizer distribution, disinfection, cleaning of the fields, input sales. Furthermore, they carried out free activities such as construction of the village roads, opening of the water canals. While they carried out these services, they encountered important problems, especially in financing. In the study, for increasing the of role of the chambers of agriculture in rural development and solving of their current problems, router suggestions were also presented.

Key words: Turkey, the chambers of agriculture, agricultural economics, rural area, rural development

INTRODUCTION

The thing that stated with rural development is all the activities regarding the socioeconomic development of the rural areas. In other words, the workings encompassing applications such as agriculture (garden, field, animal husbandry etc. activities), forestry, fishery, health, small entrepreneurship, rural industry, ecology, environment, tourism, water, housing, education, technology, woman, child and landlesses' employment are with the scope of the rural development (Gülçubuk, 2017). According to another definition, rural development is the activities made for solving of the problems such as not actualization of the efficient and the quality production in rural, the inadequacy of employment opportunities, lowness of the rural and agricultural education, inadequate mechanization, the insufficiency of the capital required for investment and the migration to the city (Bahtiyar, 2014).

Rural areas in Turkey's economic structure have a great important. According to the data of 2017 year, in Turkey, rural employment made up the 19.5 per cent of the total employment, rural population 7.7 per cent of the total population and agricultural income 11.6 per cent of the gross domestic product. For rural development, rural organizations are required. Thanks to rural organizations, it is easier to enlighten the farmers at every stage of the agricultural activity.

The chambers of agriculture, professional association of the farmers are in public qualification like other non-governmental organizations. They are established by laws and theirs authorized bodies are elected by members. The central district and affiliated districts of each province are acknowledged to be activity field of the chambers of agriculture. They fulfill their tasks with strength they take of members such as other professional associations.

The first of the chamber of agriculture in Turkey was established with rules coming into force in 1881. Today, their number has reached 774. The Union of The Turkish Chambers of Agriculture, upper organization of the chambers of agriculture was founded in 1957 and it gone into action by being published in the Official Gazette dated 23.05.1957 and 9614 numbered (Resmigazete, 2017). In Agency Region, the first of the chamber of agriculture in Kayseri province was established in 1963, in Sivas province in 1960 and in Yozgat province in 1964. The Turkish chambers of agriculture provide services in fields such as farmers' registry, the determination of the product prices, laboratory services, procurement and input sales, soil analysis and agricultural struggle.

But in different countries of the world, the chambers of agriculture were specified to have been more active in agriculture. According to Compagnone et al. (2013), the French Chambers of Agriculture historically played an important role in the modernization of the agriculture in France and they were deeply affected from changes that necessitated the reorganization of the agricultural systems. In the research done by Fongang Fouepe and Mbangari (2017), it was determined that NOWEFOR known as the Organization of North Western Farmers in Cameroon was directly representation activity of the farmers and has move attribute a movement founded in 1995 to register the Cameroon's Western Region and restart the growth. Also Spiewak et al. (2016), agricultural organizations played an important role in political decision-making at the local, national, and EU levels.

In this study, as the research area, Central Anatolian Development Agency was selected. The reason was that the Agency Region had been the largest surface area geographically within 26 Development Agency constituted in Turkey general. In addition, it forms 9.45 per cent of the total agricultural land, 7.60 per cent of the total surface area and 3.0 per cent of the total population of Turkey. The main purpose of the Agency covering Kayseri, Sivas and Yozgat provinces was to prepare the sub-structure necessary for the multidimensional development of the area (Oran, 2017).

In this study, the examination of the role of the chambers of agriculture in rural development was aimed. This study holds great significance that it is the only study in the own field and a reference for similar studies in future in Turkey.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials

The main material of this research consists of the data obtained via surveys from 43 chambers of agriculture in the Agency Region. Survey data belonged to 2017 period. Notes taken as a result of the researcher's observationst was also used as main material. Also secondary data from (internet and relevant documents) were used in addition to the primary data.

Methods

In this research, as method, "Full Counting Sampling Method" was used. Survey forms were prepared in accordance for purpose and filled by interviewee from the chambers of agriculture. The participation rate to surveys of the chambers of agriculture was 100 per cent. The target audience in the surveys was chairman or authorized persons of the chambers of agriculture. During survey, without wasting time required informations were reached.

In the analysis of the data Microsoft Excel program was used in determining chi square test and descriptive statistics. After necessary arrangements, the data were presented in tables and the situation was tried to be determined. In the analysis, researcher's observations were also important to reach the bottom line easierly.

RESULTS

Situational and functional analysis of the chambers of agriculture examined

Research findings on the current status, services and activities of the chambers of agriculture are presented below.

Distribution of the chambers of agriculture according to members

Distribution of the chambers of agriculture according to members is given in table 1 and figure 1. According to this study, the chambers member of agriculture is 2.500 members representing 18.60%, those with 2501-5000 is also representing 32.50%. Kayseri province had the maximum share with 13.90% member. Yozgat province follows Kayseri province with 11.60%. However, in Kayseri province there are no chambers of agriculture with more than 10000 members. While 31.90% of the total members is in 5001-7500 group, 27.10% of which is in more than 10000 group and 20.60% of which is in 2501-5000 group. The chambers of agriculture have total 237373 members. According to frequency table, average number of the member is found to be 5320.

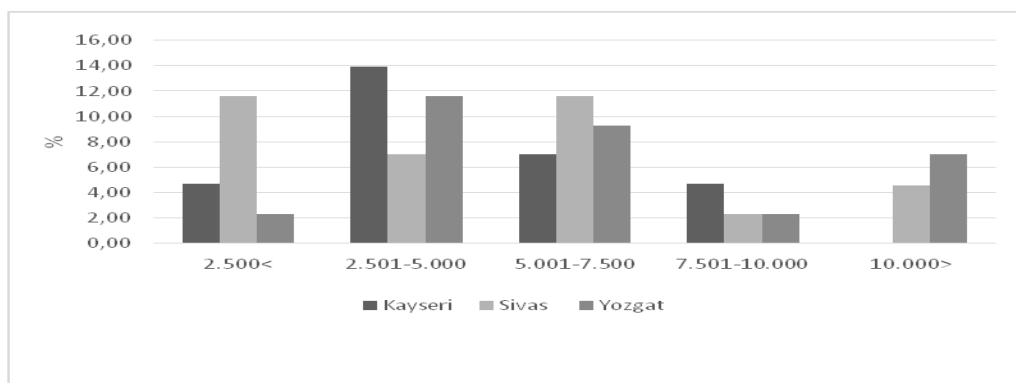


Fig.1: Distribution of the chambers of agriculture according to members.

Table 1. Distribution of the chambers of agriculture

Groups (the number of the member)	The chambers of agriculture		Total member	
	Number	%	Number	%
Up to 2500	Kayseri: 2	4.70	4560	1.90
	Sivas: 5	11.60	7915	3.30
	Yozgat: 1	2.30	1166	0.50
	8	18.60	13641	5.70
2501-5000	Kayseri: 6	13.90	22862	9.60
	Sivas: 3	7.00	10423	4.40
	Yozgat: 5	11.60	15741	6.60
	14	32.50	49026	20.60
5001-7500	Kayseri: 3	7.00	19116	8.10
	Sivas: 5	11.60	29343	12.40
	Yozgat: 4	9.30	26944	11.40
	12	27.90	75403	31.90
7501-10000	Kayseri: 2	4.60	17651	7.40
	Sivas: 1	2.30	8713	3.70
	Yozgat: 1	2.40	8568	3.60
	4	9.30	34932	14.70
Over of 10000	Kayseri: -	-	-	-
	Sivas: 2	4.70	23589	9.90
	Yozgat: 3	7.00	40782	17.20
	5	11.70	64371	27.10
Total	Kayseri: 13	30.20	64189	27.00
	Sivas: 16	37.20	79983	33.70
	Yozgat: 14	32.60	93201	39.30
	43	100.00	237373	100.00
Average number of the membership= 5.320				

Input services of the chambers of agriculture

Input supply services of the chambers of agriculture are given in table 2. When table is examined, it is seen that the chambers of agriculture in Yozgat province are more advantageous than Kayseri and Sivas provinces in terms of both member and input supply. 50.00% of the total sale stores is in Yozgat province. Moreover, it is the only place where input dealership is made.

The rate of those that have to ownership of the service building is found to be 69.8% and the rate of those that hired the service building is 30.20%. It is determined that 9.30% of the chambers of agriculture has only tractor, 32.60% of them has only farm equipment and machine and 9.30% of them has both tractor and other farm equipments and machinery. 39.50% of them has no tractor and farm equipment and machine. Those suppling suitable seed is at the rate of 25.60%, those suppling pesticide is at the rate of 27.90% and those suppling seedling and sapling is also at the rate of 16.30%. The rate of the chambers of agriculture suppling laboratory service for soil analysis is 16.30% and the rate of those suppling suitable for seed is 25.60% (table 2).

In the research, it is determined that annual income of the chambers of agriculture is mainly obtained from recording of farming files. In other words, income taken as cash and calculated according to unit land' size is the most important income source of the chambers of agriculture. In 2017 year, this is calculated as £ 0.73 per decare. It is determined the chambers of agriculture also provide income of selling input and agricultural activities. However, they never created the added value because they are made with a view to service. Annual expenditures of the chambers of agriculture consist of personnel wages, insurance premiums, tax, rent, fuel, energy and water expenditures. In addition, it is determined that 10 per cent of the annual income is paid to Union of the Turkish Chambers of Agriculture as union dues. It is also determined remaining income (in case of it is) is used for input procurement, purchase of the farm equipment and machine and rural service.

Rural development activities of the chambers of agriculture

The chambers of agriculture are at the forefront of organizations taken part in rural development activities. As also understood from the activities of the chambers of agriculture in the area, it is seen that they contribute to agricultural sector from input supply to balancing of the input prices in market, from determination of agricultural products' prices to technical knowledge service and consultancy and so on (table 3).

At the same time, it is determined that they perform a subsidy service of input price than market price such as certificated suitable seed, pesticide and fertilizer sales and seed sieving, fertilizing, pest control, picking the fieldstone, suitable seed and pesticide sales; also render some free agricultural services such as making the village road with grader, opening the water channel with dipper dredger etc. For example, in the Agency's average, certificated suitable seed sales price is found to be 1.65 €/kg, pesticide sales price to be 75 €/lt, fertilizer sales price to be 1.400 €/tons, seed sieving fee per tons to be 20 € and corn drying fee per tons to be 80 €. In market it is determined that these have come true from 2.0 €/kg, 100 €/lt, 1.750 €/tons, 30 € and 110 €. In the area average, fertilization fee is found to be 100 €/day, pest control fee to be 35 €/day, silage corn harvest fee to be 110 €/day and fieldstone picking fee to be 50 €/hour. Their values in market are 150 €, 60 €, 150 € and 90 € respectively (€; the Turkish currency). In short, the chambers of agriculture perform at least 40% cheaper than the market of the agricultural services. When Chi square test is applied to table 3, test results show that the chambers of agriculture have influence upon rural development ($\chi^2 = 4.74$).

The chambers of agriculture also provide their participant to agricultural fairs so that farmers can see in situated developments in farm mechanization. It is shown up that all of the chambers of agriculture cooperate with other occupational chambers and related organizations, and 16.30% of which does soil analysis with laboratory service. In the research, it is understood that farmer education and publication services have been carried out by other agricultural institutions, not the chambers of agriculture.

Problems and recommendations

In the research, it is determined that they come up against a lot of problems mainly financial. In table 4, regarding problems that chambers of agriculture encounter, numerical and proportional informations is given. When the table is examined, it is determined that the chambers of agriculture have been exposed to financing, legal and regulatory, authority and responsibility, the weakness in government-the chamber of agriculture relation and farmer education and publication problems. Similarly, 65.10% of the chambers of agriculture states that there have the organization problem in the society, 32.60% them had problems the personnel deficiency and 27.90% of them in relation with the chambers of agriculture of farmers.

As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the chambers of agriculture in the Agency come up against a lot of problems problems and these problems are collected in 5 groups.

- *Financing problems*: In this research, it is seen that financing problem is the most important problem of the chambers of agriculture. As also explained in the previous section, it is specified that as financing source of the chambers of agriculture is income obtained from recording of the farming file. Besides this, even if they take advantage of agricultural activities, it is determined that they don't create any added value because they don't seek profit. In connection with this: "Ziraat Bank has to offer proper solutions by making arrangements in institutional credits; government should provide farm equipment-machine, equipment and technical staff support; farmer registration and filing unit fee should be increased; resource amount allotted for agriculture must be increased or resources transferred from agricultural sector to other sectors must be directed again for agriculture", so that the chambers of agriculture can play more active a part in rural development, they need not have a trouble with financing.

Table 2. Input services of the chambers of agriculture examined.

Research area		Those being the service building ownership	Those being the commercial outlet	Those being the laboratory	Those being the only tractor	Those being both tractors and farm equipments and machinery	Those being the only farm equipments and machinery	Those providing the fertilizer	Those providing the suitable for seed
Kayseri	Number	10	1	1	2	3	5	-	2
	%	23.30	2.30	2.30	4.70	7.00	11.60	-	4.70
Sivas	Number	11	1	1	-	-	5	-	3
	%	25.60	2.30	2.40	-	-	11.60	-	7.00
Yozgat	Number	9	2	5	2	1	4	5	6
	%	20.90	4.70	11.60	4.60	2.30	9.30	11.60	13.90
Toplam	Number	30	4	7	4	4	14	5	11
	%	69.80	9.30	16.30	9.30	9.30	32.50	11.60	25.60

Cont. Table 2.

Research area		Those providing the seedling and the sapling	Those providing the pesticide	Those providing the feedstuff	Those being the fertilizer dealership	Those being the suitable seed dealership	Those being the seedling and the sapling dealership	Those being the farm equipments and machinery dealership	Those being the pesticide dealership
Kayseri	Number	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	-
	%	6.90	7.00	2.30	-	-	-	-	-
Sivas	Number	2	1	1	-	1	-	-	-
	%	4.70	2.30	2.30	-	2.30	-	-	-
Yozgat	Number	2	8	3	4	3	2	4	6
	%	4.70	18.60	7.00	100.00	7.00	4.70	9.30	13.90
Toplam	Number	7	12	5	4	4	2	4	6
	%	16.30	27.90	11.60	9.30	9.30	4.70	9.30	13.90

Table 3. Examining of rural development activities of the chambers of agriculture.

Activity	The scope of the activity and unit price	Number	%
a) Farm machinery: - Suitable seed sieving selector - Barley crushing machine - Corn drying machine - Fertilization (farm fert.) machine - Bolt machine (roller) - Subsoiler - Pest control machine - Silage corn harvest machine - Fieldstone picking machine - Grader - Tractor	- Suitable seed sieving: 20 ₺/tons - Barley crushing: 35 ₺/tons - Corn drying: 80 ₺/tons - Fertilization: 100 ₺/day - Soil bolt: 35 ₺/day - Breaking the stiff soil: free - Pest control: 35 ₺/day - Silage corn harvest: 110 ₺/day - Picking the fieldstone: 50 ₺/hour - The making of the village roads: free - The usage in agricultural activity	2 2 1 3 1 2 3 1 3 1 8	4.70 4.70 2.30 7.00 2.30 4.60 7.00 2.30 7.00 2.30 18.60
b) The calculation of the production cost of agricultural products	The calculation of the production cost of agricultural products and submission to The Union of The Turkish Chambers of Agriculture	43	100.00
c) Production and income increment	As a result of the farmers' become conscious and bringing them in agriculture	43	100.00
d) The determination of the agricultural products minimum price	Making a suggestion to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry regarding the minimum price	43	100.00
e) Farmers' informing and becoming conscious	To inform farmers in agricultural matters	43	100.00
f) Farmers' registration process	In return for farmer' registration and recording of the farming files. they demanded from farmers 0.73 ₺ per decare (2017)	43	100.00
g) Input procurement	The chambers of agriculture contributed to balancing of the input price in the market by procuring input for farmers. The average sales price; Certificated suitable for seed: 1.65 ₺/kg Pesticide: 10 ₺/lt Fertilizer: 1.400 ₺/tons The seedling and the sapling:5 ₺/num. The feedstuff: 1 ₺/kg	11 12 5 7 5	25.60 27.90 11.60 16.30 11.60
h) Laboratory services	The chambers of agriculture analysed soil with laboratory service they established. Fee demanded for this transaction was 35 ₺ per sample (50 decares is accepted as a sample)	7	16.30
i) Rural employment	Studies made for development of the rural area	8	18.60
j) The attendance of a fair (agriculture fair)	The chambers of agriculture encourage the farmers' attendance agriculture fairs	23	53.50
k) The cooperation with other organizations	(The Union of The Turkish Chambers of Agriculture, Agricultural Organizations, Title Deed and Cadastre and other professional chambers	43	100.00

Table 4. Problems of the chambers of agriculture examined.

Problems	Number	%
- Those who have financing and resource problem	43	100.00
- Those who have authority complexity problem	43	100.00
- Those who have legal-regulations problem	43	100.00
- Those who have government-the chamber of agriculture relation problem	27	62.80
- Those who have farmer education and publication problem (due to the authority complexity)	43	100.00
- Those who have organization problem		
- Those who have personnel insufficiency problem	35	81.40
- Those who have farmer-the chamber of agriculture relation problem	14	32.60
	12	27.90

- *Authority complexity:* Another problem of the chambers of agriculture is that they are in authority conflict with other agricultural organizations. For example, it is that farmers' education and publication activities are authorized by both the chambers of agriculture and other agricultural organization. However, in the research, it is determined that these activities are only performed by other agricultural institutions. In addition, according to item 3 of the Law of the Union of the Turkish Chambers of Agriculture, the chambers of agriculture are authorized about "to propose making the necessary arrangements for the development of the agriculture". However, in practice, it is determined that the government is no account of the proposals of the chambers of agriculture. The chambers of agriculture are organizations who know the best the agricultural problems of the area. Their views and proposals have importance for rural development. Another matter regarding the authority complexity is that farming files is supplied by agricultural institutions (10 ₺ in 2017), but farmers are recorded by the chamber of agriculture. Existing authority complexity should be solved and these duties should be transfer to the chambers of agriculture forthwith.

- *Regulation problems:* Another of problems of the chambers of agriculture in the Agency Region is regulation problems. Connected these problems, it is understood that there is different law and structurings in Turkish agriculture and this inhibites the activity of the chamber of agriculture. In reality, there are producer unions which have union as name and very different legal bases in the world of the Turkish agriculture. For example, in 2004, in addition to the Law of the Chambers of Agriculture and the Union of Chambers of Agriculture with 5200 number Law of Producer Unions is enacted and started to be supported a different structuring. It is seen that dispelling of the regulations problems regarding organization is useful for the chambers of agriculture in the area.

- *The government-the chamber of agriculture relation problems:* In this research, it is determined that government-chamber of agriculture relation is a weak. It is clearly specified that unions and organizations in Turkish constitution have to be encouraged and supported. As a principle, it is natural that professional associations may contact politics. But, ideological policies and organic relations with any political party may harm the organization movement and the chambers of agriculture. Political connection should be related to agricultural policies and producers' problems. Producers should regard the chambers of agriculture like their own institutions, not like government institution. As to Europe, the chambers of agriculture play a more part in agricultural policies. Central governments receive opinion of the chambers of agriculture and keep in the preliminary plan. Government give some of agricultural service authority to the chambers of agriculture and it provide financial support. In particular, in Germany and Holland, the chambers of agriculture play a part actively in farmers' education, and they implement the government-supported counseling system in agriculture. In France, the chambers of agriculture carry out estate transactions of the agricultural lands besides the recording of the producers and publication services. In the European Union countries about half of the agriculture-based industries is the producer organizations'. When the Turkish Chambers of Agriculture are established, the French Chambers of Agriculture are taken as a model.

- *The other problems:* As other problems, it is seen that there are organization, personnel insufficiency and farmer chamber of agriculture relation problems.

In this study, it is observed that there isn't enough mentality of organization in the study area and therefore people look at organizational structure coldly. Whereas producers should be organized to farm more learnedly, reduce production and marketing costs and find new markets. Already, organization at the rural level is also one of the aims of the rural development. Hereby, getting together and organization mentality should be installed for solution of the common problems in local societies (Yıldırak, 1991). Those that is important is cooperation, assistance and solidarity. For this reason, the chambers of agriculture have farmer gained organization experience. In other words, the chambers of agriculture are essential for a strong farmer organization. The prevalence of the organizations in rural areas will encourage both participation and contribute for settlement of the democratic institutions in the country.

In the area, it is seen that 32.60% of the chambers of agriculture has the problem on personnel deficiency and 27.90% of which has the problem on farmer-chamber of agriculture relation. It is primary of this problems that farmers are quick in their transactions, and they appeal to the political channels.

DISCUSSION

In the research concerning the chambers of agriculture, It is seen that they are locomotive of the rural development. The chambers of agriculture in the Agency play a part in prevention of the skilled labor's transfer to other sectors from agricultural sector, agricultural employment, production, productivity and income increase, determination of the agricultural product prices', transfer of technological developments, knowing of input use, balancing of input prices, prevention of unsteadiness in input prices and development of organization mentality in the rural societies. Thus, this study will contribute significantly increase of the awareness in the matter of benefits that the chambers of agriculture could provide in terms of organization and participating.

In the Agency Region, there is adequate resource potential (rural population, agricultural land and farm equipments-machinery etc.) in order that the chambers of agriculture could serve more active. In addition, there are also transportation opportunities in order that agricultural products could get easy access to market and process. These opportunities all provide important advantages for farmers to make the best of agricultural lands and products.

Income obtained from farming files in existing state is low. Besides, it is determined that electricity, fuel and rent expenses, especially personnel expenses are also very high. All of these delimit the activities of the chambers of agriculture in rural development.

For the solving of the financing problems of the chambers of agriculture;

- The transfer to the chambers of agriculture of the farming files provided from other agricultural institutions in return for a certain price,
- The increasing of the unit filing fee,
- That the government should support with cheap credit or farm machinery to the chambers of agriculture,
- That technical staff employment should be carried out by the government,
- To work up into an attractive sector state the agriculture,
- The government may devote the service building for the chambers of agriculture or contribute to its hire,
 - Farmer education and publication activities, agricultural courses, the preparation and the supervision of the agricultural projects should be carried out by the chambers of agriculture.

As a result, in spite of all its problems, the Agency Region which is composed of agriculture as its economy take an important place in the rural development of Turkey. If the roles of the chambers of agriculture in agriculture increase and they are government-supported and a producer-oriented, they can become effective much more in the rural development.

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