



Thesis Abstract

Management of an Agricultural Cooperative in a Transition Economy: the Case of Tam-a Agricultural Cooperative, Gia Dong-thuan Thanh-Bac Ninh-Vietnam

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This study is about a cooperative in a transition economy (a centrally planned economy on the way to becoming a socialist market economy). The study was undertaken to: 1) describe the characteristics of the old style agricultural cooperatives vis-à-vis the new agricultural cooperatives; 2) identify the reforms that were introduced to the cooperative movement; 3) determine the efficiency and effectiveness in the management of the Tam-A agricultural cooperative as a representative sample of the new style agricultural cooperatives; and 4) identify the problems and obstacles met by the agricultural cooperative, including its role in a socialist market oriented economy.

The differences between the old style cooperatives and new style agricultural cooperatives could be described as: 1) one where organization is based on individual/household needs, 2) volunteerism is high, 3) organization type is small and diversified, and 4) business operations are dictated by the market, among others.

The reforms that were introduced were 1) a decentralized structure; 2) top-bottom-up planning, 3) democratic leadership, and 3) involvement of the members in the central process together with management and audit committees.

The results of the study showed that: 1) The Tam-A agricultural cooperative was relatively managed effectively and efficiently as shown by the profits earned by the agricultural cooperative; 2) Agricultural support services provided to its members resulted in higher incomes for members, both on-farm and off-farm.

However, problems still affect the operations of the new style agricultural cooperatives like Tam-A. Among the problems are: 1) Shortage of capital;, 2) Low level of educational attainment particularly of those in the important committees, 3) The still low perception of the important role of the cooperative in bringing about development, and 4) Ambiguous boundary/relationship of the new style cooperatives and the local government.