



Farmland Tenure Security in China: Influencing Factors of Actual and Perceived Farmland Tenure Security

Guangcheng Ren (1,2), Xueqin Zhu (1), Nico Heerink (1,2), Ekko van Ierland (1), and Shuyi Feng (2)

(1) Department of Social Sciences, Wageningen University, Wageningen, The Netherlands, (2) China Centre for Land Policy Research & College of Public Administration, Nanjing Agricultural University, Nanjing, China

Tenure security plays an important role in farm households' investment, land renting and other decisions. Recent literature distinguishes between actual farmland tenure security (i.e. farm households' actual control of farmland) and perceived farmland tenure security (i.e. farm households' subjective understanding of their farmland tenure situation and expectation regarding government enforcement and equality of the law). However little is known on what factors influence the actual and perceived farmland tenure security in rural China. Theoretically, actual farmland tenure security is related to village self-governance as a major informal governance rule in rural China. Both economic efficiency and equity considerations are likely to play a role in the distribution of land and its tenure security. Household perceptions of farmland tenure security depend not only on the actual farmland tenure security in a village, but may also be affected by households' investment in and ability of changing social rules. Our study examines what factors contribute to differences in actual and perceived farmland tenure security between different villages and farm households in different regions of China. Applying probit models to the data collected from 1,485 households in 124 villages in Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Liaoning and Chongqing, we find that development of farmland rental market and degree of self-governance of a village have positive impacts, and development of labour market has a negative effect on actual farmland tenure security. Household perceptions of tenure security depend not only on actual farmland tenure security and on households' investment in and ability of changing social rules, but also on risk preferences of households. This finding has interesting policy implications for future land reforms in rural China.