

Research on the Problems and Countermeasures of Rural Land Circulation in Yibin

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Abstract: Land is a fundamental resource for human survival, closely related to agricultural development, rural progress, and farmers' income increase. Therefore, studying rural land circulation issues not only helps improve the land circulation market, enhance farmers' enthusiasm for land circulation, but also achieves efficient utilization of rural land resources. Taking Yibin as an example, this paper analyzes the issues in its land circulation process, such as low willingness of farmers to circulate land, lack of guidance on land circulation prices, and irregular circulation procedures. Based on this, corresponding countermeasures and suggestions are proposed from the perspectives of intensifying policy publicity, ensuring farmers' basic living needs, improving the land circulation market, and standardizing land circulation procedures. These measures aim to create a favorable environment for land circulation, steadily advance the sustainable development of land circulation in Yibin, and accelerate the process of rural socio-economic construction.

Keywords: Land Circulation; Scale Operation; Food Security.

1. Introduction

China is in a new stage of agricultural and rural modernization, with agricultural scale operation being the direction and goal of modern agricultural development. Rural land circulation is crucial for achieving agricultural scale operation. Since the reform and opening-up, China has implemented the household contract responsibility system to address food production and farmers' subsistence issues. In 1986, the Land Administration Law clearly stipulated that rural land belongs to the collective, with land contracted to households, and farmers legally enjoying the right to contracted management. Agricultural production adopts a dual operating system combining unified and decentralized management, resulting in a separation of land property rights into ownership and contracted management rights. With continuous economic and social development, breaking the low efficiency of agricultural production allocation caused by decentralized farmland management and promoting agricultural scale and modernization have become the focus of rural reform. In 2014, the "Opinions on Guiding the Orderly Circulation of Rural Land Management Rights to Develop Moderately Scaled Agricultural Operations" officially proposed implementing the three-right separation and parallel management of rural land ownership, contract rights, and management rights. Its core content is to encourage the circulation of land management rights on the basis of stabilizing land contract rights, aiming to revitalize the land factor market, broaden the scale and scope of land circulation, and thus provide conditions for scale operation. In 2016, the State Council issued the "Opinions on the Measures for the Separation of Rural Land Management Rights," forming a clearly stratified, rationally structured, and equally protected three-right separation framework, providing strong support for guiding the orderly circulation of rural land. In recent years, the No. 1 Central Document has repeatedly emphasized actively implementing the three-right separation measures and accelerating the circulation of land management rights to support various forms of moderately scaled operations. In 2024, the Third Plenary Session of the

Twenty-Second Central Committee of the Communist Party of China clearly proposed to deepen land system reforms, optimize land management, and provide services, guidance, and supervision for the circulation of management rights.

Driven by policies, China's land circulation has flourished. According to data from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the nationwide circulated area of rural contracted land was only 58 million mu in 2004, reaching 604 million mu in 2022, which is 10.41 times that of 2004. With the advancement of urbanization and the intensification of the aging of the agricultural population, land circulation still has significant room for development in the coming period. However, in recent years, land circulation has not developed significantly, with the proportion of contracted cultivated land circulation nationwide stabilizing at around 35% [1]. Based on analyzing the current situation of rural land circulation in Yibin, this paper clarifies the problems existing in the current land circulation process and proposes corresponding optimization countermeasures to address specific issues, thereby promoting the rapid economic development of rural areas in Yibin.

2. Definition and Modes of Land Circulation

The essence of rural land circulation refers to the circulation of rural land contracted management rights, where farmers, under the principles of equal consultation, voluntariness, and compensation, obtain land management rights through different methods. Traditional circulation forms include subcontracting, leasing, exchanging, and transferring. Specifically, subcontracting involves farmers transferring their contracted land to other farmers or organizations for cultivation within a certain period, with the original land contracting relationship remaining unchanged. The subcontracted enjoys land use rights and bears corresponding obligations. Leasing involves farmers renting out their land contracted management rights to lessees, who pay rent. Both parties clarify rights and obligations through a lease contract. Exchanging is when farmers mutually

exchange land contracted management rights to meet their respective production or living needs, typically involving adjustments to land location, area, or quality. Transferring refers to farmers permanently transferring their land contracted management rights to other farmers or organizations, terminating the original land contracting relationship, with the transferee becoming the new land contractor.

With continuous social progress, innovative modes such as shareholding cooperation and trusts have been explored[2]. In the shareholding cooperation mode, farmers invest their land contracted management rights to establish shareholding cooperatives or companies, jointly manage the land, and share profits and risks according to their shareholding ratios. The trust mode involves farmers entrusting their land contracted management rights as trust property to trust companies or other trustees for management and disposal to obtain stable trust benefits.

3. Practical Significance of Land Circulation

Through the above forms, farmers transfer idle land to new agricultural operating entities such as farmers' professional cooperatives, family farms, agricultural enterprises, and large grain farmers. Their centralized management of land can improve the issue of scattered and fragmented land resource distribution, realizing large-scale, intensive, and modernized land development.

3.1. Land Circulation Enhances Rural Collective Economic Vitality

As a common economic platform for farmers, collective economic organizations, through unified management and operation of land circulation, promote large-scale land operations, eliminate boundaries between land parcels from different households, reorganize land, jointly cultivate large areas, engage in orderly and large-scale planting, increase land operating area, and improve land utilization efficiency. The overall asset and resource value of the village collective increases, and its profitability also rises, thereby enhancing the collective economy's strength and improving its financing environment. This in turn supports the construction of rural infrastructure such as village roads, water conservancy, electricity, and the internet[3], improves farmers' quality of life, beautifies the rural living environment, and provides an economic foundation for rural appearance and rural civilization construction.

3.2. Land Circulation Helps Ensure National Food Security

With the rapid advancement of urbanization and industrialization, China's industrial structure has undergone significant changes, and a large number of rural young and strong labor force have been transferred to the secondary and tertiary industries, resulting in the hollowing out and aging of rural areas. The loss of the rural population has led to the phenomenon of land abandonment becoming more and more serious, and the elderly are unable to effectively carry out agricultural production due to the limitations of their physical and technical capabilities, resulting in the irrational use of cultivated land, the difficulty of improving the level of agricultural technology, and the level of rural productivity has been significantly affected, which directly affects the total

grain output. Therefore, in the process of land circulation, farmers give the right to operate their contracted land to others, giving birth to large grain growers, enabling large-scale and intensive grain production, ensuring the reuse of abandoned cultivated land, concentrating high-quality cultivated land in the hands of efficient agricultural producers, improving the level of specialization, scientificity, and modernization of agricultural production[4], optimizing the variety structure of grain, enhancing the overall output and quality of grain, ensuring the sustainability of grain production, and ensuring national food security.

3.3. Land Circulation Promotes Agricultural Modernization

Land circulation provides broader development space for new agricultural operating entities, attracting more technology and capital investment, forming large-scale agricultural production bases, and supporting the construction of large agricultural enterprises. Specialized agricultural enterprises and cooperatives introduce advanced agricultural technologies and management models, conduct more scientific planting planning based on market demand, resource endowments, and climatic conditions, upgrade technology in production, processing, and sales, optimize rural production structures, promote the improvement and extension of agricultural industry chains, and enhance the competitiveness of agricultural products[5]. Under the centralized operating model, agricultural operating entities can more easily form brand management, promote the marketing and sales of high-quality agricultural products, thereby enhancing the profitability of the overall industry chain. Through the application of modern technology, agricultural production efficiency and product quality are significantly improved, also driving the vigorous development of emerging industries such as leisure agriculture and tourist agriculture.

4. Current Situation of Land Circulation in Yibin

Yibin is located in the southern part of Sichuan Province, at the junction of Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou provinces. It sits at the confluence of the Jinsha River, Min River, and Yangtze River, with an overall terrain that is higher in the southwest and lower in the northeast. The climate is subtropical monsoon humid. With a total area of 13,283 square kilometers, Yibin had a permanent resident population of 4.618 million by the end of 2022. Yibin is a major agricultural city in Sichuan Province. In recent years, Yibin has attached great importance to the circulation of rural land management rights. Through policy guidance, business guidance, and standardized management at the levels of target tasks, methodologies, and policy measures, rural land circulation has exhibited characteristics of increasing area year by year, diversified business entities, diverse circulation forms, and appropriate scale of operation, effectively promoting the development of agriculture and rural economy. Overall, the total area of contracted farmland management rights circulation in Yibin is currently 1,619,100 mu (a Chinese unit of area, approximately equal to 0.0667 hectares), accounting for 21.24% of the contracted farmland area. Among them, the circulation area exceeding 30 mu is 995,100 mu, accounting for 61.46% of the total circulating farmland area. There have been 860 cases of standardized circulation

of land management rights through rural property rights exchanges, with a transaction amount of 2.88 billion yuan and a transaction area of 351,700 mu, accounting for about 5.6% of the total farmland area.

5. Problems Existing in the Process of Land Circulation

(1) Low Willingness of Farmers to Circulate Land

Land is the foundation of farmers' survival, their basic reliance, and even their lifeblood. Farmers have deep hopes and feelings for the land, considering it as the last line of defense for their livelihood. They believe that as long as they have land, their lives are secured. As such, they prefer to manage the land crudely or leave it uncultivated rather than circulate it. Additionally, most farmers have limited education and conservative mindsets. They believe that circulating land can only bring in a small amount of rent and does not provide significant economic benefits, while they are forced to bear multiple risks such as land damage, landlessness, unemployment, and rent default, leading to their low willingness to circulate land. Due to the lack of scientific and effective production skills, most farmers adopt traditional farming methods, directly affecting land production efficiency and hindering the progress of land circulation.

(2) Lack of Guidance on Land Circulation Prices

The land circulation market has not yet formed a standardized price system, and there is a lack of a third-party land valuation platform, and there is a phenomenon of following the trend and blindness in land circulation pricing, which is very easy to raise the price of land circulation. The high price of land circulation affects the enthusiasm of large grain growers. For example, a certain large grain household has transferred about 1,000 acres of land for grain planting in the local area, and the circulation price is 500 yuan per mu a year, and the annual land circulation cost needs to cost 500,000 yuan. On the other hand, the non-grain conversion of land also drives up the price of land circulation. By investing in agriculture, social capital changes the use of the transferred land for growing grain, and instead uses the transferred land for planting high-yield cash crops and agricultural tourism. Since the benefits of non-grain conversion of transferred land are much higher than the profits from using transferred land for growing grain, this has not only produced the phenomenon of bad money driving out good money, but also indirectly encouraged the unhealthy trend of peasants raising the price of land circulation.

(3) Irregular Transactions in Rural Land Circulation

The irregularity of land circulation transactions severely restricts their effectiveness, often leading to unequal benefits and causing some farmers to suffer due to information asymmetry. Moreover, land circulation lacks legal safeguards. Farmers generally lack legal knowledge, and contract terms are unclear, with rights and obligations not being clearly defined. This exposes farmers to greater legal risks in the circulation process and dampens their enthusiasm for land circulation. Many land circulations are spontaneous among farmers, and many farmers choose to give their land to relatives and friends for cultivation through "verbal agreements" rather than signing written contracts to regulate the rights and obligations of both parties. This privately conducted circulation lacks necessary procedures and formalities, resulting in unguaranteed related interests and subsequently generating numerous contradictions and

disputes.

6. Countermeasures and Suggestions

(1) Enhance Farmers' Willingness to Circulate Land and Improve the Service and Safeguard Mechanism

Increase the promotion of relevant laws, regulations, and benefit mechanisms related to rural land circulation, so that farmers can see the positive effects and prospects of land circulation, boost their confidence, and fully enjoy the benefits brought by land circulation, thereby changing their attitudes towards land circulation. After land circulation, farmers are no longer traditional farmers in the sense that their various safeguards and treatments should be completely equivalent to those of urban residents. Therefore, to ensure the rights and interests of farmers after rural land circulation, it is necessary to improve the safeguard mechanism for farmers after land circulation, strengthen the employment safeguard mechanism construction for farmers after rural land circulation, consolidate the level of rural old-age insurance, improve the rural medical insurance system, and establish mediation institutions for land circulation disputes, such as land circulation service institutions and land contracted management dispute mediation and arbitration institutions, to fully leverage their mediation function in land circulation disputes. By addressing farmers' concerns and ensuring their basic living needs, land circulation can proceed smoothly.

(2) Improve the Rural Land Market Mechanism and Establish a Land Circulation Market

To improve the market-oriented transaction mechanism for land, government and agricultural management departments should promote diversified methods of land circulation, allowing land resources to be traded through open and transparent methods such as bidding and auctions, thereby promoting fair trading and reasonable pricing of land resources and enabling efficient mobility of land resources among different agricultural business entities. On this basis, establish a dedicated land circulation market to reasonably assess the actual value of land, helping farmers better understand market dynamics and policy changes, obtain the latest market trends, land demand and supply conditions, and provide farmers with necessary information and guidance to make more informed decisions. Additionally, strengthen supervision over the land circulation process, reduce false transactions and fraudulent behaviors, ensure that the use of circulated land is consistent with agreements, and enable the land circulation market to operate healthily and orderly.

(3) Strengthen Supervision of Land Circulation Contracts and Standardize Land Circulation Procedures

The land circulation contract is the legal foundation for land circulation transactions. The contract should clearly stipulate various terms of land circulation, including the circulation period, rent payment methods, liability for breach of contract, and other contents, to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of both parties and strictly implement the land circulation registration and filing system, ensuring proper archival management and dynamic supervision of filed land circulation projects. To this end, a unified, simple, and standardized transaction process should be established to make it easier for participants to understand and follow, effectively guiding land circulation behavior towards standardization, reducing illegal operations and blind circulation, and lowering legal risks. During implementation, relevant departments and institutions should be encouraged to conduct regular promotional and training activities to raise

farmers' awareness of land circulation procedures, thereby enhancing their awareness of standardized operations and promoting the development of land circulation in a more standardized direction.

7. Conclusion

The circulation of rural land is conducive to promoting appropriately scaled operations, alleviating the problem of abandoned farmland, and safeguarding China's food security. With the introduction of modern agricultural technology and equipment, new agricultural business entities can more flexibly respond to market demands, promote the integrated development of agricultural product production, processing, and sales, enhance the market competitiveness of agricultural products, and significantly improve economic benefits. By standardizing land transaction procedures and safeguarding farmers' land rights, we can accelerate the process of rural land circulation in Yibin, inject vitality into the local rural economy, and promote the realization of agricultural modernization.

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