Development of Leisure Agriculture in Fujian Province

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Abstract This paper analyzes the developmental advantages of leisure agriculture in Fujian Province of China. It then summarizes the developmental characteristics of leisure agriculture. Finally, some policy proposals on the development of leisure agriculture in Fujian Province are put forward.

Key words Leisure agriculture; Fujian Province of China; Development research

In recent years, the Party Central Committee and the State Council have attached great importance to the development of leisure agriculture and rural tourism. The Central Committee Document No. 1 in the year 2007 points out that agriculture has the functions of food security, raw material supply, employment income, ecological protection, sightseeing leisure projects, and cultural heritage. Central Document No. 1 in 2008 points out that development level of township enterprises, cottage industry and rural tourism can be improved, and the development vigor of county economy can also be enhanced by income of non-agricultural employment. Premier Wen's Government Work Report in March 2007 has highlighted the significance of actively cultivation of the tourism, culture, leisure projects, health and other consumption hot spots. "Leisure" is written into the Government Work Report for the first time.

Leisure agriculture refers to a new type of agricultural production and management using pastoral landscape, natural environment, facilities and other agricultural resources to offer the public tourism and leisure projects, and enhancing people's life experience about agriculture, peasants and rural areas. It is a new area of the expansion of the agricultural functions after combining with agricultural products processing, rural culture, farm life, the agricultural, animal husbandry and fishery production. According to statistics, the total tourism income in mainland China in the year 2007 is 154 billion U. S. dollars. Among them, 40 billion U. S. dollars come from rural leisure tourism1. Fujian Province is located along the coast of southeast China near the South-East Asia. Fujian Province connects Pacific Ocean in the east with suitable climate and well-developed transport. It is a link of the travel network connecting the Yangtze River Delta, the Pearl River Delta, Central China and Taiwan. In addition, facing Taiwan across the straights, Fujian is affected by the development of agricultural cooperation between Fujian and Taiwan and the Taiwan tourism agriculture.

The development of agriculture in Fujian Province has a unique advantage in regional differentiation.

1 Advantage analysis of the development of leisure agriculture in Fujian Province

1.1 Suitable climatic conditions Fujian Province is located in sub-tropical and semi-subtropical regions, basically belonging to subtropical oceanic monsoon climate with abundant rainfall, mild climate, hills behind and the sea in front. Fujian Province is rich in agricultural resources, such as rice, fruit and a variety of sub-tropical cash crops. In addition, regional climate differences of Fujian Province are relatively great. Southeastern coastal area of Fujian Province belongs to south subtropical climate, while the northeastern, northern and western areas are central subtropical climate. Therefore, there are differences in agricultural allocation and crop species. Pastoral landscapes in Fujian also have their own characteristics, which has laid an important foundation for the development of leisure agriculture.

1.2 Rich tourism resources Fujian Province has abundant resources with diversified type. The natural tourism resources are in relatively high grade, and some of them possess a monopolistic advantage. Fujian Province has one World Natural and Cultural Heritage, 4 State Historical and Cultural Cities, 45 Key Historical Sites under State Protection, 11 National Key Scenic Spots, 6 National Nature Reserves, 9 National Forest Parks, 2 National Geological Parks, 4 provincial-level historical and cultural cities, 6 famous towns, 5 famous villages, 247 Cultural Relics Protection Units, 24 scenic spots, 28 Nature Reserves and 19 Forest Parks. The unique tourist attractions have laid a foundation for the development of agricultural tourism, such as the Wuyi Mountain, the Xiamen Gulangyu and the Putian Meizhou Island.

1.3 Long history of agricultural culture Fujian Province has a long history of agricultural culture with distinctive features. Tea culture and Hui'an Women culture are the two representatives. As the home of Oolong tea, Fujian Province has more than a thousand years' history of tea culture. Written record of tea is 300 years earlier than the famous book Tea Class-
sic in ancient China. Skill of making Wuyi Rock Tea was regarded as the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage in the year 2006, and became the only state-level intangible cultural heritage among tea. Hui women culture is famous for its enduring hardships and working hard. The charming and mysterious Hui women clothing has made its name both at home and abroad. In a word, the vast rural areas have a long history and diversified culture and customs, which have laid a profound and simple basis for the development of leisure agriculture and rural tourism. Besides, Fujian Province has a large number of high-quality products, such as Fuzhou jasmine tea, Dehua porcelain, Hui stone carving, Anxi oolong tea, Mingxi precious stones and swords. These traditional products not only offer consumers a rich food source, but also offer favorable conditions for the development of leisure agriculture and rural tourism projects.

1.4 Promising market At present, construction of economic zone in western coast of Fujian Province has made a good start with coordinated economic and social development. This has provided good economic base and consumption potential for the development of leisure agriculture. GDP of Fujian Province in the year 2007 has reached 9160.41 × 10^10 yuan, increasing by 15.1% compared with the last year according to the comparable price. Per capita net income of peasants is 5467 yuan, and per capita disposable income of urban residents is 15505 yuan. Family Engel's coefficients of rural and urban residents are 46.1% and 38.9%, respectively. According to the consumption power, per capita consumption expenditure of urban residents is 11055.13 yuan in 2007. Among them, expenditure of education, culture and entertainment services reaches up to 1426.34 yuan, 38.8% of the Engel's coefficient shows that after meeting the basic needs of food and clothing, people's consumption gradually shifts to culture, tourism and other fields. In addition, Fujian is the famous hometown of overseas Chinese. It is the ancestral home of 80% compatriots from Taiwan, more than 800 thousand compatriots from Hong Kong and Macao, more than 10 million Chinese citizens living abroad and persons of Chinese descent, who are the main and stable potential sources of leisure agriculture. Reception of international tourist arrivals of Fujian Province has reached 288.7 × 10^5 in the year 2007, increasing by 15.5% compared with the last year. Among them, the number of compatriots in Taiwan is 100.8 × 10^5[2].

2 Characteristics of the development of leisure agriculture in Fujian Province

2.1 Rapid speed of development Leisure agriculture in Fujian Province rises in the 1980's. With the rapid development of the economy of Fujian Province in recent years, living standards of urban and rural residents are constantly improved. Affected by the leisure agriculture in Taiwan and the Cross-strait Rural Tourism Development Plan, recreation and tourism activities are enriched with innovative management model and rapid development speed. According to statistics, national demonstration sites of agricultural tourism in Fujian Province increases from 2 sites in 2004 to 14 sites in 2006. So far, leisure parks with certain scale have broken through 100. Among them, number of agricultural tourism projects is 62 (Fig.1); and there are 40 leisure tourist attractions. In addition, projects under construction and cooperation projects between Fujian and Taiwan are increasing.

Fig. 1 shows that development of leisure agriculture in Fujian Province has relatively strong regionalism. Most of the leisure agricultural projects distribute in eastern area of Fujian Province, especially the coastal areas. Zhangzhou region and eastern coastal area account for about 70% of the total leisure agricultural projects in Fujian Province, which are mainly the ecological farm, agricultural science and technology park, suburban forest park and other high-tech leisure agricultural plans.

![Fig.1 Distribution of leisure agriculture projects in Fujian Province](image)

2.2 Diversified types Due to the differences in natural resources, human resources, agricultural resources, geographical situation and economic conditions, the development type and mode of leisure agriculture have shown the characteristics of diversification in Fujian Province. At present, according to the resources division, there are sightseeing orchard, sightseeing tea garden, sightseeing garden, coastal fishery, folk custom and so on. From the functional point of view, there are mainly sightseeing farm, leisure farm, scientific and technological education park, forest park, and hot springs resort. Leisure agriculture can be divided into 6 types according to the comprehensive survey on tourism objects and activities.

2.2.1 Garden agriculture type. It is a pattern of leisure agriculture giving consideration to agricultural production, technology demonstration, and science education. The advantages of modern agriculture can be shown by advanced modern science and technology, and the promotion and demonstration of agronomic technology, such as Tea Science and Technology Demonstration Garden of Wuyishan City, Xiamen Eco-technology Tourism Demonstration Garden, and Putian Changtai (Jiulonggu) Modern Agriculture Sightseeing Garden. Modern agricultural high-tech is closely combined with production, demonstrations, tourism, and education by these leisure agricultural projects.

2.2.2 Experiential agriculture type. This is a common leisure agricultural project, which mainly means that consumers can
experience the actual agricultural production, farming culture, special local flavor, and leisure agriculture by participating in agricultural production activities, living, working and eating with peasants, such as Yongtai Tianmenshan Agricultural Tourism Park, Luyuan Leisure Farm Resort, and Longyan Yunding Tea Garden Resort. These leisure parks mainly reflect the process of picking, and the spice of agriculture.

2.2.3 Folk culture type. It can explore the leisure projects by fully exploiting the rich folk resources, and effectively using the natural landscape, such as Wuyishan Ancient Guangdong Village, and Hakka Earth Building Complex. In recent years, She Village in eastern Fujian and the Hakka native place in western Fujian have provided overnight accommodation in farmhouse or village hotel by utilizing their unique culture or customs, so that tourists can fully enjoy the local customs and unique folk culture. But this model still needs to be further improved due to the limited local economic level and low building conditions.

2.2.4 Ecological landscape type. As the name implies, ecological landscape type is a leisure agricultural project relying on a unique landscape with the characteristics of utilizing natural ecological and environmental resources, the objective of which is tourism operation, such as Longhai Longjia Ecological Leisure Farm, and Baishuiyuan Ecological Leisure Area. Ecological landscape type is characterized mainly by landscape features. It reasonably carries out planning in the park, while maintaining the natural characteristics. Tourists are attracted by the unique ecological landscape. Thus, good economic and ecological benefits can be produced.

2.2.5 Leisure fishing village. This is a brand new leisure agricultural project combining tourism with fishermen's way of life. It makes visitors get close to the fishermen's life, and enjoy a natural ancient custom of fishing by reconstructing the fishing vessels and living in the home of fishermen. Leisure fishing village has developed rapidly in Fujian Province, because it has many coastal cities, such as the Jiupeng Xishui Village Fishing Village of Zhangping City, and the Paradise Fishing Village of Fuzhou City.

2.3 High comprehensive benefit Most of the leisure agriculture parks in Fujian Province are near the well-known tourist sites. They have stable tourist source and notable economic benefits by relying on the major cities and towns. Some places systematically plan and design the ecological agriculture park or ecological tourist farm integrating the ecological agriculture, ecological forestry, ecological tourism, and science and technology demonstration park by developing and utilizing the barren hills and slopes, the beach along the lakes or rivers, and the lowland fields, based on local characteristic resources and regional advantages. These leisure agricultural parks have played an important role in promoting peasants' income increase and socialist new countryside construction. Until the year 2006, annual direct tourism revenues in agricultural tourism demonstration sites of Fujian Province is above 300 million yuan, which promotes the sales income of more than 1 billion yuan, and employs thousands of labor forces. Leisure agriculture has already become a new growth point of agricultural economy in Fujian Province, and has obtained better social and economic benefits.

3 Policy suggestion on the development of leisure agriculture in Fujian Province

Leisure agriculture in Fujian Province has good development trend, and has obtained certain achievements. But it is still in its starting stage. Therefore, there are certainly many difficulties and shortcomings during the development of leisure agriculture, which are mainly shown in the lack of agricultural culture basis, poor management, small scale, repeated development, inaccurate market positioning of projects, untight combination of agriculture and tourism, uneven geographical distribution, lack of macro-control and guidance during construction, and no protection or development mechanism. Leisure agriculture is a new engine to spur the domestic demand under the background of financial crisis. Development of leisure agriculture in Fujian Province should be tightly around the socialist new countryside construction, promote the construction of the "first two areas", and make leisure agriculture become a new way to increase peasants' income, and a new platform to exchange information between Fujian and Taiwan.

3.1 Exerting government's management and macro-control on leisure agriculture The successful experiences of leisure agriculture in Taiwan and foreign countries have shown that government has played an important role in leisure agriculture. Government support for industry is particularly important in the initial development stage of leisure agriculture. Firstly, government should formulate appropriate financial policies. An important problem in the development of leisure agriculture in Fujian Province is the serious shortage of financial resources. Government should consider allocating certain funds in financial support for agriculture projects to sustain the development of leisure agriculture. Related fiscal and taxation policies should be made for some high-tech leisure agricultural projects in order to encourage independent innovation of enterprises. Meanwhile, government should give appropriate support for credit, trade and investment. Secondly, government should institute regulations or management methods suitable for the development of local leisure agriculture. It is necessary for government to make appropriate management methods for leisure agriculture projects, especially the planning of leisure agricultural park, including the setting condition, application procedures, subsidy mode, land-use direction, infrastructure scale, resources and environmental protection, checking and accepting method. All these can ensure the healthy development of leisure agriculture.

3.2 Exerting the coordination function of association; making corresponding industry standards As the management organization of an industry, the major role of industry association is to make corresponding industry standards, to provide staff training, and to restrict the conduct of enterprises in the same industry. While developing leisure agriculture, government should actively promote the formation of industrial cluster of leisure agriculture. And association should play the role of
bridge between market and member enterprises. Blind development of leisure agriculture can be effectively avoided by instituting corresponding industry standards and regulating the access mechanism of enterprises. Therefore, we should strengthen the construction of association, actively develop the members of leisure enterprises, and set up demonstration base for the development of leisure agriculture at city and county levels. Meanwhile, we should also give full play to the technical training and technology communication functions of the associations, improve the overall quality of association members, and enhance the decision-making and service level of association by organizing investigation, academic forum, academic exchange, tutorial class and so on.

3.3 Establishing the service system of leisure agriculture taking technology and information as the main body. Compared with other types of agriculture, leisure agriculture pays more attention to high-tech research, development and application. Fine varieties at home and abroad are introduced and cultivated, and the advanced technology and equipment are also introduced in order to arm leisure agriculture with high-tech, and to greatly enhance the quality of agricultural byproducts, and to achieve the increase of both tourism income and agricultural sales revenue. Therefore, construction unit of leisure agriculture project should work closely with colleges and research institutes, carry out leisure agriculture construction by relying on these research institutes, and take the road of the integration of production, research and study and the coordinate development of science, education and enterprises. Government should be a go-between of the two sides, and offer information, human resources and other services for the construction of leisure agriculture projects.

3.4 Raising multi-form funds with multi-channels. At present, development funds of leisure agriculture mainly come from government-directed input. Especially in the initial development stage of leisure agriculture, most of the funds are supported by government. However, funds needed for the development of leisure agriculture is far from being solved. More importantly, diversified channels for raising funds should be found out. And the socialized investment and diversified finance is an important way for in-depth development of leisure agriculture, and is the only way to develop the tourism industry under market economy. Leisure agriculture should absorb all the major scenic spots as the strategic partners taking limited company as the vector to increase the capital. Thus, Tourism Development Company Limited is finally set up in order to raise capital funds. At the same time, rural banks can invest in leisure agriculture units by deepening the rural financial reform and encouraging rural credit cooperatives.

3.5 Strengthening cross-strait exchanges and cooperation; achieving mutual benefit and win-win situation. Leisure agriculture in Taiwan started relatively early, and has obtained remarkable achievements. Taiwan has accumulated some experiences in government guidance and support, improvement of service system, department labor division and cooperation, product development and so on. Fujian Province is adjacent to Taiwan, and its development of leisure agriculture is of great significance to the development of China. In order to enhance the development level of leisure agriculture, Fujian Province should actively promote cross-strait cooperation and exchanges, organize related personnel to conduct investigations and exchanges with Taiwan and foreign countries, establish strategic alliance with Taiwan, and introduce technology, talents and scientific research in order to promote the development of leisure agriculture in Fujian Province.

References

福建休闲农业发展研究

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摘要 先是分析了福建省发展休闲农业的 4 大优势: ①气候条件适宜, 福建省气候区域差异较大, 各地区形成了具有其各自特色的农业园区, 为休闲农业的发展奠定了重要基础; ②旅游资源丰富, 自然旅游资源类型齐全, 品位较高, 少数自然资源资源具有垄断优势; ③农业文化悠久, 茶文化和茶文化是其典型代表,广大农村具有丰富的民俗风情; ④市场前景广阔, 福建省海峡西岸经济区建设开局良好, 为休闲农业的发展提供了较好的经济基础和消费潜力。其次, 概述了福建省休闲农业发展的 3 个特点: ①产业发展速度快, 休闲观光活动内容日益丰富, 经营模式不断创新, 休闲旅游景点和同台合作项目不断增加; ②类型多样化, 福建省休闲农业发展类型与模式呈现多样性, 从观光对象和活动项目来考察, 分为园区农业型、农业体验型、风景文化型、景观生态型以及休闲渔村; ③综合效益高, 休闲农业成为福建省农业经济新的增长点, 产生了较好的社会和经济效益。最后, 提出了促进福建省休闲农业发展的 5 点建议: ①发挥政府对休闲农业的宏观调控和管理; ②发挥协会的协调作用, 制定相应的行业标准; ③建立以科、信、主体的休闲农业服务体系; ④形式多样的地筹集资金; ⑤加强两岸交流与合作, 实现互利共赢。关键词 休闲农业; 福建省; 发展研究