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Book Reviews

Longworth, J.W. (ed)(1990), **The Wool Industry in China - Some Chinese Perspectives**, Inkata Press Pty Ltd, Mount Waverley. Pp. xv + 105, ISBN 0 909605 71 8

This collection of essays, written as *benchmark* papers by the Chinese collaborators in an Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) project with the University of Queensland, presents a very timely situation analysis of the Chinese wool industry. The book is edited and introduced by John Longworth of the University of Queensland, while the authors of the essays are researchers from the Chinese Institutes of Rural Development and Agricultural Development.

The Wool Industry in China provides a fascinating picture of an industry, highly productive, yet still in its infancy, of a country with rapidly developing skills in a strategically important area to the Australian wool industry. While China is becoming our closest competitor in the production of fine wool, it also is emerging as a significant client with the potential for further rapid expansion in demand.

The initial chapters of the book provide a detailed picture of the overall industry, covering wool production, the current marketing arrangements and an overview of the Chinese textile industry. The focus then turns to an assessment of the economic development in the pastoral regions of China. The final three chapters provide a more in depth consideration of the industry in one of the most significant provinces for production and processing - the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (IMAR).

While the primary purpose of the authors is to detail the current situation in the Chinese wool industry, all essays also look to the future of the industry - this being consistent with the objective of the ACIAR project that this book

has arisen from. Sections such as *Future Prospects - Wool Production* and *Towards a Better Wool Marketing System* provide specific suggestions for enhanced future productivity. Others, considering specific problems faced in handling the problems of land degeneration and overgrazing in the pastoral region, provide an interesting parallel to the current situation in the Australian pastoral zone.

From the production perspective it is obvious that the industry has considerable room for increased improvement through enhanced husbandry practices. Although social and cultural features are likely to ensure that a very distinct Chinese industry is retained, the suggested application of more modern selection and herd management practices will bring changes in the overall productivity of the Chinese industry. However, the authors also indicate the nature of the domestic market for wool - far more a luxury one (with an annual per capita consumption of .29 metres of woolen fabric) than is the case in Australia - and thus recognises the potential for rapid expansion in the domestic market as changes in the domestic economic situation occur.

Although a very detailed background is provided to both the number of sheep produced and to the rural structure involved in wool production, this is at the very broad level. One area noticeably missing is specific details of wool quality - the tabulation of wool sheep is only two broad categories, above and below the 25 micron level. Similarly, specific details of herd management are provided mainly through discussion of the development of animal husbandry on family farms - these detailing the number of different types of animals managed and the size of such operations.

The wool marketing structure provides a mechanism by which information is passed

back to the production sector, so impacting on future supply. A detailed coverage of this system extends to a recognition of areas for possible improvements in the government controlled structure - thus improving the efficiency of the system and better satisfying the expanding demand. The author recognises the benefits that could come from the establishment of more competitive marketing mechanisms which provide better links between demand and production.

China is seen by many as an emerging force in the textile market. However, although the chapter on textile manufacture extensively details the capacity of the system, it provides less detail on its export potential. More detailed information would have been useful in the discussion of later stage processing, and in particular, garment manufacture. An additional problem in this chapter is in the unclear tabulation of the material - this may reflect some difficulty in the translation process but has a minor impact on the level of information.

Overall, the authors provide a very detailed account of the Chinese industry. The different essays allow a considerable insight into the operation of the industry under very different social, economic and institutional constraints to those operating in other major wool industries. The importance of the Chinese wool industry, both through its impact on world demand for greasy wool and also future production of woollen products, make this book of particular interest to many readers.

Helen Klieve, *Queensland Department of Primary Industries, Brisbane.*

The Journal of Business to Business Marketing, Hawthorne Press.

Reviewing a journal is different from reviewing a book, especially when the journal review is based upon the introductory, charter issue. The reviewer not only has to read, analyse, and evaluate the contents as for a book, but must

also make judgements about future editions and their content and the extent to which the journal will meet the needs of the members of the Society. In this review, the major consideration will be the role of the JBBM within the needs and interest of the AAES. It will be assumed that any journal is both a vehicle for learning and a vehicle to showcase academic ideas, that is, a place to read and a place to publish.

According to the acceptance guidelines, "JBBM is dedicated to the publication of high quality manuscripts that build a theoretical framework or develop applied theory that contributes to the improvement of management knowledge. We seek to be on the forefront of knowledge contribution in business marketing." To this end, the JBBM may be a reasonable vehicle for potential publication.

The adoption policy, although meritorious in design, perhaps is slightly naive. Reviewers are used on a two to one basis; if a paper is submitted from a North American source, it will be reviewed by two North Americans and one international referee; if the paper comes from an international source (from the North American perspective), there will be two international referees and one from North America. This is a sound step for review impartiality. Unfortunately, it is not known how much effort will be taken on the part of the editorial board to match the reviewer to the submitted paper by area of expertise and geographical location.

A potential major problem with the JBBM as a publishing vehicle is that many academics may doubt the quality of the journal. Recently, the publisher, Hawthorne Press, has launched a number of narrow segment targeted journals. The early weak review policies of the publisher have lowered the acceptance of these journals. To allay some of the original concerns with quality, traditional review processes have been instituted with each new journal offering. As a result of this

change, although still of questionable stature, Hawthorne Press journals are beginning to improve in academic acceptance.

The permeance of the JBBM is another concern. Many new journals have had initial launchings just to 'test the water'. Editors and publishers have launched new journals initially to see if there is enough interest to maintain publication. If the demand doesn't develop it may be withdrawn from the market. This situation is not a positive one for potential authors.

The viability of JBBM as a resource outlet also depends upon the editor's definition of business-to-business. Many of the agriculture and agri-business interactions are business operations. Anytime the needs of two business organisations coincide, there are viable business to business activities. It would appear that the JBBM is more suited to the agri-business side, with respect to publications and everyday interest.

The charter issue contained three articles, five book reviews and a review of book reviews. The articles appear to cover an adequate range of topics, which include; assessment of value of product offerings, the selection of a consulting firm and the social infrastructure of corporate buying decision making. All three of the articles are well presented in a format that is precise, yet comprehensible.

The range of topics bodes well for the future dimensions of the publication. The editors do not appear to have adopted a narrow definition of business to business marketing. The role of an instrument of learning is perhaps the JBBM's greatest asset. Throughout the world, opportunities and innovations in the business fields are emerging. Although historically Australia has relied upon agriculture and agri-business for growth and development, the situation is beginning to change. Rather than just commodity marketing Australians are starting to export food technology, management ex-

pertise, marketing skills, research capabilities, innovation and even packaging and processing equipment. All of these activities involve intense interaction with other businesses. Business interactions are an important dimension of successful business development. Few firms, if any, are able enter a foreign market directly. All must coordinate with existing businesses for primary and secondary support.

Marketing consists of a wide range of activities, beginning with the introduction of a product and ending with the concept of project completion. As such, the marketing function is heavily involved with interactions of people, consumers and other businesses. Business to business interactions are being thrust upon much of Australia's agriculture and agri-business society. Value-added products are the "in" concept of the new economic thrust. To achieve the value-added concept it will be necessary to use the changing trends in Asia and elsewhere to a positive economic advantage. Rising incomes, an emerging middle class, changes toward western style dietary habits and other trends offer opportunities for growth in the Australian agri-business economy. If Australian enterprises are to capitalise on these opportunities in the global food industry, they will need a more market responsive and marketing driven approach than now exists.

When the agri-business industry creates not only basic food products, but the skills and technologies that other countries will want to buy, jobs will be created in agri-business enterprises and food companies which are not solely based in primary production and manufacturing. Where the personal and business skills for international ventures are lacking it will be up to the businessmen and entrepreneurs to educate and help themselves. For this the JBBM may provide a basis for learning.

In summary this new journal may be a very needed and important addition to the research literature. The topic of business to business is

timely and relevant. If the launch is successful, the JBBM may fill a vital niche for marketing development.

The proliferation of the narrow market journals such as the JBBM can be viewed both as a blessing and a problem. By its existence, specific interest topics, that would never been published before are given a showcase. But as the journals increase in practicality, there is a tendency to decrease in stature. However, if the need is real for a large enough portion of the population, it will succeed.

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Grant, W. (1991), **The Dairy Industry: An International Comparison**, Dartmouth, Aldershot, Pp. 128, ISBN 1 85521 1173

This study of the dairy industries and dairy support policies of a number of major producing countries represents an attempt by a political scientist to (p. 1) 'review the causes of, and possible solutions to' the problem of surplus production of dairy products, and its associated costs, in the advanced industrial countries.

Wyn Grant does not succeed in this aim. What he does provide is a reasonably up-to-date review of dairy sector arrangements in the EC, the US, Canada, and New Zealand. The account of US policy gives an illustration of both the power and methods of the dairy lobby and the limits to this, with the apparent link between contributions of the Associated Milk Producers Inc., (AMPI) and Mid America Dairymen Inc., to the Nixon campaign and changes in the milk support price constituting the basis of one of the counts of impeachment against President Nixon.

The pros and cons of different supply reduction arrangements such as quotas and herd buyout schemes are discussed, as are GATT arrangements and the early part of the Uruguay Round.

Overall the book is of interest to anyone involved in the international dairy trade or dairy support arrangements. However, it is based mainly on secondary sources rather than any personal involvement, and as a result lacks 'behind the scenes' insights or any genuinely new view of policy making and support arrangements.

In his first chapter Grant discusses a number of models of the policy process which have been developed by political scientists. These include mesocorporatism, the policy community and the negotiated economy. While these models provide a perspective which goes beyond public choice theory and recognises the role of governments and other institutions in the policy process, they are not used effectively by Grant to explain the causes of, or provide solutions to, the problem of the over-supply of dairy products in advanced economies. The discussion of US policy in the text makes evident the relationship between interest groups and the policy process in the US. The discussion of EC policies is less successful, relying heavily on news reports and other sources and failing to clearly indicate the role and importance of the Community's supranational institutions, its member states, and individual political parties and interest groups at the member state level.

This relatively short book (128 pages) is made worthwhile for those with an interest in the international dairy sector by the detail Grant provides on policies. However, it fails to add significantly to the understanding of policy formation or the dynamics of policy change, or to indicate convincingly that political scientists do have a substantial contribution to make in this area, beyond the provision of perspectives which are interesting but not greatly ex-

planatory. In this it is similar to the recent work of another political scientist, Smith (1990), on US agricultural policy. Smith's findings also indicated the need to go beyond public choice theory to understand the UK policy process, and he argued that for the UK it was best understood as a mediated form of corporatism. However, his work dealt only with UK policy making, where from 1973 agricultural policies were made in Brussels and imposed on the UK, with the UK 'policy

community' having only limited influence on them.

References

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Heather Field, *Griffith University, Brisbane.*