

Solutions in the Current Development of Agriculture in Thai Nguyen Province

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ABSTRACT

The article focuses on analyzing the development of agricultural economy in Thai Nguyen province, Vietnam, within the context of its significant role in improving people's lives and contributing to political stability and national security. Summarizing the efforts and achievements of the Party and local government, the article highlights the remarkable socio-economic development in Thai Nguyen in recent years. The article evaluates the measures and policies implemented to promote agricultural economy, ranging from strengthening perspectives and understanding of its role to linking production structure with processing industry and markets. Notably, emphasis is placed on the benefits of farmers, with specific support measures such as crop restructuring, investment in technology, and enhanced market access and financial support. However, the article also points out existing limitations such as the underutilization of local advantages, necessitating improvements in management models and the removal of social barriers. The conclusion emphasizes the need to continue refining mechanisms and policies, while also developing new rural models to ensure the sustainable development of agricultural economy in Thai Nguyen in the future.

Keywords: Agriculture, Thai Nguyen, new rural development, policies

I. INTRODUCTION

Vietnam identifies agriculture as the backbone of the economy, contributing to improving people's lives, maintaining political stability, and social order. Ensuring food security is a crucial element of national security and a prerequisite for safeguarding human life. As an agricultural country, a significant portion of the population nationwide is engaged in this sector, making agricultural development particularly important. Economic development in agriculture is essential for Vietnam to overcome its underdevelopment. After more than 30 years of implementing the renovation policy, our Party,

State, and people are striving to turn Vietnam into an industrialized country, consistent with the general development and changes in the world economy. Accelerating agricultural economic development is currently one of the top priorities that will decisively contribute to the industrialization and modernization of the country.

Thai Nguyen is a mountainous province located in the midland and northern mountainous region, playing a role as a gateway for economic and social exchange between the midland and mountainous areas and the Red River Delta region. With its favorable location, in recent years, Thai Nguyen province has experienced remarkable economic and social development, consistently ranking among the top 10 provinces with the fastest growth rates nationwide. To achieve these achievements, the provincial Party Committee has implemented various strategies for economic development. Among them, agriculture is one of the important directions for industrialization and modernization.

In the process of leading the local agricultural economic development, the provincial Party Committee of Thai Nguyen has thoroughly grasped and flexibly applied the Party's policies, devising strategies that align with the local realities. They have identified key tasks and priorities for directing agricultural development and strengthened the application of scientific and technological advances in agricultural production, considering it a breakthrough to rapidly increase crop and livestock productivity and quality. Thanks to efforts in agricultural development, the average annual growth rate of the value of agricultural, forestry, and aquatic products in Thai Nguyen province reached 4.22% during the period of three years (2020-2022). In 2022, the value of agricultural, forestry, and aquatic production (at comparable prices) reached 15.26 trillion VND, an increase of 4.14% compared to the same period in 2021. The value of agricultural products per hectare of cultivated land (at current prices) reached 123.2 million VND per hectare, an

increase of 23.2 million VND per hectare compared to 2019. The total grain production reached 457.28 thousand tons, equivalent to 107.3% of the target for 2025. Fresh tea production reached 260.07 thousand tons, equivalent to 95.3% of the target for 2025, an increase of 8.7% compared to 2019; the value of processed tea products reached 10.4 trillion VND. Vegetable production reached 282.53 thousand tons, equivalent to 104.6% of the target for 2025, an increase of 15.5% compared to 2019. The total volume of various types of meat reached 212.83 thousand tons, an increase of 54.4% compared to 2019. During the three years (2020-2022), afforestation covered 13.35 thousand hectares, including 757 hectares of protective forests and 12.59 thousand hectares of production forests. The total area of large timber forests in the province is 1,194 hectares; the area converted from small timber forests to large timber forests is 112.5 hectares. 1,332 hectares of forest have been certified for sustainable forest management under FSC (SA-FM/COC), equivalent to 95.1% of the plan for the 2021-2025 period. The forest coverage rate reached 47.06%, exceeding the annual target of 46% or more; the percentage of rural people using safe water for daily life and hygiene reached 95.5% (the target for 2025 is 98%). (Data from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Thai Nguyen province). From there, the strengths of the locality have been exploited to develop the agricultural economy, and the targets for agricultural, forestry, and aquatic development set by the provincial Party Committee have been basically achieved.

However, alongside the advantages, in the process of leading the development of the agricultural economy, the provincial Party Committee of Thai Nguyen still faces challenges that need to be addressed: failure to fully exploit the local advantages for agricultural development; ineffective solutions to encourage enterprises to invest in agriculture; ineffective resolution of social issues caused by the process of industrialization and modernization. From these achievements and limitations, it is necessary to draw solutions for the development of agriculture in Thai Nguyen province in the coming time.

1. Accurate awareness of the role of agricultural economy and selecting appropriate directions and solutions for the local conditions

Thai Nguyen province possesses vast rural areas, with agricultural labor accounting for 38.7% of the total workforce in the province, the highest labor proportion. Apart from providing food for

rural and urban areas, industrial zones, ensuring food security for the province, agriculture in Thai Nguyen also serves the processing and export industry, contributing to environmental landscape, service, and tourism development, especially eco-tourism (in the Tan Cuong Tea Area –Nui Coc). By intensifying the implementation of the Central resolutions, enhancing research, investigation, and survey on agriculture and rural areas, the awareness of the provincial Party Committee regarding the role of the agricultural economy has become more accurate and comprehensive. The Party Committee has clearly defined development orientations for agriculture, such as shifting from striving for increased output and quantity to improving quality and value; exploiting the potential of economic components; encouraging enterprises to invest in agriculture; strongly restructuring the economy; enhancing the application of scientific and technological achievements in agricultural production; seeking markets for agricultural products. The correct perception of the importance of the agricultural economy is the basis for the provincial Party Committee to determine the right direction and appropriate solutions for the locality in each specific stage.

2. Integrating the restructuring of the agricultural economy with processing industry and market demand

The restructuring of the agricultural economy is an essential measure to overcome the closed, fragmented, and low-productivity agricultural sector and move towards a large-scale commodity production, high productivity, thereby increasing income for laborers. Therefore, when shifting to commodity production, farmers must base their choices of crops and livestock on market demand to select those with the highest economic value. The provincial Party Committee of Thai Nguyen has implemented various solutions to integrate the restructuring of the agricultural economy with processing industry and market demand. These include planning the development of agricultural production to form concentrated production areas linked with investment in processing technology; implementing mechanisms and policies to support credit for cooperatives, enterprises, and rural households in developing production and business; enhancing access to credit; continuing to allocate preferential credit capital, encouraging credit institutions to lend to agriculture, farmers, and rural areas. In 2022 and 2023, the Provincial People's Committee directed departments, sectors, and localities to review, supplement, and improve mechanisms and policies

to promote the development of agriculture and rural areas towards supporting the resolution of difficulties and obstacles regarding land in agricultural production, converting crop structure on paddy fields, developing centralized livestock farming; applying advanced scientific and technological advancements to produce safe, high-quality commodity products; supporting the development of deep processing, refining, high-tech processing, and product preservation; supporting the construction of brands, promotion, production linkage, product consumption, attracting investment in agriculture and rural areas.

3. Developing the agricultural economy in line with the interests of farmers

As farmers constitute the direct labor force in agricultural production to generate food and sustenance, the development of the agricultural economy should aim to continually improve the material and spiritual lives of rural residents. It involves constructing a comprehensive, modern, and sustainable agricultural sector geared towards large-scale, high-yield, high-quality, efficient, and competitive commodity production, ensuring both short-term and long-term national food security.

Given this context, in the process of industrializing and modernizing agriculture, the Party has consistently focused on the genuine interests of farmers. By adhering to the Party's viewpoint, the provincial Party Committee of Thai Nguyen has devised solutions to address the existing production difficulties faced by farmers. In the agricultural sector, the province has advocated for the conversion of inefficient cultivated land into high-yielding, high-quality crops, investing in scientific and technological machinery and equipment for production, providing support to farmers in terms of seeds and capital for stable production and livelihood improvement, promoting market access for agricultural products, and advancing rural infrastructure development with the principle of State and people working together.

These measures have yielded positive results, linking the restructuring of the agricultural economy with that of the rural economy. The landscape of Thai Nguyen's rural areas has changed positively: Agricultural mechanization has been significantly promoted. The use of machinery, replacing manual labor, not only aids the workforce but also substantially increases labor productivity and efficiency. Electrification has been implemented across the entire province, resulting in the revitalization of rural areas in various aspects and delving into deeper exploitation to serve socio-economic development and enhance farmers' lives: effectively supporting irrigation, intensive farming

to increase crop productivity, expanding winter crops, bolstering investment in agricultural machinery, food processing, milling, transportation, particularly electricity for production in craft villages, industrial clusters. Irrigation has been ensured for agricultural production. The application of biotechnology in production has generated high-yield, high-quality livestock breeds and crops, providing commodity value for farmers. The development of handicraft industries has created employment opportunities for laborers. Thanks to the growth of craft village industries, villages and households have had capital for investment, improving and enhancing infrastructure, transportation, building schools, stations, cultural centers, rural electrification, constructing solid and elegant homes, investing in machinery and vehicles technology.

4. Building an effective new rural model

The construction of rural areas towards modernization, comprehensive development, and sustainability, closely linked with urbanization, ensures substantial essence and deep, efficient integration for the benefit of the people. Continuously refining the criteria for building new rural areas, enhancing the model of advanced new rural areas, and upgrading village-level and communal-level new rural areas. This is achieved through close integration between socio-economic development and strengthening national defense and security, ensuring sustainable socio-economic development in border, coastal, island, and disadvantaged areas. Investing in the construction of synchronized, modern rural infrastructure, connecting with urban areas, especially large peri-urban areas, towns, and townships, gradually approaching urban infrastructure and services; modernizing transportation infrastructure, digitization, culture, education, healthcare; providing clean water according to standards. Urgent and resolute handling, overcoming environmental pollution issues.

5. Improving mechanisms and policies for agricultural production

Continuously perfecting the institutional framework and policies regarding agriculture, farmers, and rural areas. Enhancing and supplementing policies and laws on land to ensure sustainable, efficient management and utilization of agricultural land, promoting accumulation, concentration, flexible and efficient use of paddy fields. Establishing mechanisms to regulate and allocate budgets to ensure the balanced interests among localities with large areas of paddy fields,

large forest areas, and other areas; supporting the improvement of the livelihoods of rice and forest growers. Developing financial markets, microfinance; perfecting agricultural insurance policies, developing farms, household economies, collective economies, production and business cooperation; strengthening links between cooperatives, forming associations, cooperative alliances.

II. CONCLUSION

Agriculture always plays a crucial role in the overall socio-economic development of the country in general and Thai Nguyen province in particular. Thai Nguyen province has always correctly understood the role and position of agriculture in the industrialization and modernization process. Therefore, agricultural development is essential, a strategy in the socio-economic development process of Thai Nguyen province. In leading the local agricultural economic development, the provincial Party Committee of Thai Nguyen has thoroughly grasped and flexibly applied the Party's viewpoints, setting forth appropriate strategies in accordance with the local realities. From there, exploiting the province's strengths to develop the agricultural economy; thus, the targets for agricultural, forestry, and aquatic product development set by the province have been fundamentally achieved. The proposed solutions have helped Thai Nguyen province continue to formulate basic strategies and orientations for agricultural development in the coming years.

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