



Evaluating the Implementation, Challenges, and Solutions of Policies for Cultivating New Professional Farmers: A Policy Network Theory Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Cultivating new professional farmers is key to promoting agricultural and rural modernisation. The governments issue policies for cultivating new professional farmers and have gradually shown a network structure in the implementation process. With the help of policy network theory, this paper analyses the policy implementation network structure of the new professional farmer cultivation policy, including policy communities, professional networks, intergovernmental networks, producer networks and issue networks. Under the influence of the interaction between various networks, my country's new professional farmer cultivation has achieved specific results regarding overall goals, influence and recognition. However, there are also difficulties, such as prominent contradictions between policy communities and intergovernmental networks, weak internal coordination of intergovernmental networks, and marginalisation of professional and issue networks. To this end, it is necessary to regulate and balance the interactive relationship between various network entities to seek a solution: first, clarify the responsibility boundaries of policy communities and intergovernmental networks, improve the quality of interaction, enhance the collaborative ability of intergovernmental networks, and innovate governance models; third, pay attention to the diverse demands of professional networks and issue networks, and increase public discourse power.

Keywords: Professional Farmers; Policy Implementation; Rural Revitalisation; Policy Network Theory, Policy Community

1. INTRODUCTION

The innovative practices in agricultural transformation in East China focus on the new professional farmer training model and highlight how the model enhances farmers' technical skills, entrepreneurial capacities, and adaptability to modern agricultural demands. It emphasises fostering sustainable development and integrating advanced training techniques, policy support, and stakeholder collaboration by underlining such initiatives and their transformational potential in modernising agriculture and improving rural livelihoods while addressing challenges like uneven implementation and resource constraints (Meng et al., 2024). New professional farmers play a crucial role in driving agricultural modernisation and rural revitalisation strategies, making them key contributors to the broader goal of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (Liu et al., 2022). Their impact ranges from individual employment to ensuring the "vegetable basket" security at the societal level.

The first question addresses the definition of new professional farmers, distinguished from traditional farmers by their updated technical skills, development concepts that align with modern needs, and agricultural production management strategies. These new characteristics are not solely derived from the title or spontaneously formed in social practice; they require external support for their development, as farmers face certain limitations in self-transformation. It leads to the second question: How can new professional farmers be cultivated? Cultivating new professional farmers involves transforming and reshaping traditional or potential farmers. Therefore, the significance of cultivating new professional farmers is as crucial as the farmers' value. At the practical level, both central and local governments have issued key documents to promote the cultivation of new professional farmers. The policy window was opened at the central level with Central Document No. 1 in March 2012, which focused on fostering new professional farmers. In December of the same year, the Ministry of Agriculture launched the "Pilot Work Plan for Cultivating New Professional Farmers," initiating a nationwide pilot program (Xia, 2023).

Building on practical experience, the Ministry issued the "13th Five-Year Plan for the Cultivation and Development of New Professional Farmers" in 2017, aiming to increase the number of new professional farmers to over 20 million by 2020. Every year thereafter, Central Document No. 1 introduced further requirements and measures for cultivating new professional farmers. Locally, governments have issued policies aligned with central guidelines but tailored to regional needs. For instance, in 2015, Guangxi implemented a new professional farmer training project through its "10+3" characteristic agricultural industry promotion action. In 2017, Heilongjiang established a "one-main-multiple-partner" education and training system, with farm radio and television schools (farmers' science and technology education centres) as the core, supported by agricultural vocational colleges and other local institutions. Under a relatively complete policy system, China's new professional farmer training has achieved notable results. First, the number of new professional farmers has skyrocketed. Second, the structure of the latest professional farmer team has progressively improved. Third, the industrialisation level of new professional farmers has continuously advanced, but challenges in the training process remain concerning (Li, 2023).

On one hand, there is insufficient endogenous motivation for farmers to participate in training. Factors such as perceived risks and time costs deter farmers from engaging in social training programs. Moreover, some enterprises and training institutions exploit the situation for profit by engaging in fraudulent practices such as enrolling participants without providing actual training. On the other hand, training resources for new professional farmers are relatively scarce (Yin, 2020). An inadequate teaching staff makes it challenging to address the dual needs of theoretical and practical training. It also highlighted that the current implementation of the new professional farmer policy does not fully align with the established goals, and there are significant challenges in the execution process.

At the theoretical level, experts and scholars have conducted multi-dimensional discussions on the new professional farmer training policy. One area of focus is the policy changes for new professional farmers. Scholars have traced the evolution of farmer training policy since the People's Republic of China was established, recognising the training of new professional farmers as the latest phase in the farmer training policy reform (Wang & Qi, 2019). Some scholars have concentrated on the core issue of individual development in the context of these policy changes (Wang & Kang, 2021).

Wu (2022) has examined the impact of income expectations and environmental perceptions on the effectiveness of the latest professional farmer training policy through behavioural economics. Yan and Li (2023) have utilised the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) PART tool to develop an evaluation index system for assessing the implementation of this policy. Zhang et al. (2018) have explored performance evaluation and improvement strategies for the policy using the Context Input Process Product (CIPP) evaluation model. Wang and Liu (2022) focused on the policy goals of the new professional farmer training initiative. They analysed the practical problems and optimisation strategies for new professional farmer training in China from the perspective of the policy goals of the program.

These studies offer fresh perspectives for analysing and assessing the current state of new professional farmer initiatives. They often focus excessively on the policy by examining the interactive relationships between stakeholders during its implementation and underlining why its challenges remain unexplored. Culturing new professional farmers spans multiple central and local departments vertically and involves individuals and other social groups horizontally. The interactions between these subjects are complex and intertwined, aligning with the essential characteristics of policy networks to analyse the relationships between multiple subjects and their dynamics during the implementation of the new professional farmer policy. It can explore the policy effectiveness, identify implementation challenges and propose solutions. Such analysis is vital for creating a more reasonable policy for cultivating new professional farmers and promoting high-quality agricultural development.

2. THEORETICAL BASIS AND APPLICATION ANALYSIS

2.1 Network Theory of Policy Implementation

Policy implementation is the critical process that transforms policy ideals into reality, making it a cornerstone of the entire policy cycle. Despite its significance, theoretical research on policy implementation lagged behind other stages, such as policy formulation. It was not until the early 1970s that Western academia focused on this area, particularly in the United States, sparking what became known as the "policy implementation movement." Two distinct research models have emerged in the study of policy implementation. The first, influenced by the classical administrative model, focuses on administrative organisations and their activities. It has led to the development of a "top-down" approach, which examines the flow of actions from policymakers to administrative officials. The second model arose with the evolution of democratic politics, highlighting the limitations of the classical administrative approach. Policy implementation increasingly relies on the participation of various social organisations and individuals. Research has shifted toward a "bottom-up" model and explores how non-policymakers influence the implementation process, emphasising the roles and tensions among diverse stakeholders (Zhao, 2022).

The two models differ not merely in perspective; neither is superior. They provide insightful information about numerous facets of policy implementation and capture the unique features of policies across time. However, the complexity brought about by the participation of numerous stakeholders in implementing social policies presents difficulties for both models as society dynamics change. The complex relationships between various actors cannot be adequately explained by either the "top-down" or the "bottom-up" approaches. Policy network theory developed as a result of this gap provides a more thorough framework for examining the interactions of various actors in policy implementation. Policy network theory emerged in the United States during the 1950s and has been continuously refined and expanded. As an

extension of network theory into policy science, it seeks to describe and explain the policy process within the context of heterogeneous and fragmented interactions between the state and society (Zhang, 2019). Due to the contributions of Marsh and Rhodes (1992), policy network theory has become a key framework for analysing multiple policy actors and their complex interactions, as it emphasises the relationships between actors in the policy network, including correlation, dependence and complexity. In the model proposed by Marsh and Rhodes, policy networks are categorised into five distinct types: policy community, professional network, intergovernmental network, producer network, and issue network. While policy network theory addresses the overall policy process, it equally applies to policy implementation analysis.

This applicability stems from two key factors. First, policy and implementation share a "process" characteristic while focusing on the interaction and relationships between policy actors and explicitly highlighting the dynamics and tensions between various execution agents. Second, as societal values diversify and governance structures evolve, the traditional "top-down" or "bottom-up" implementation models have proven insufficient for many aspects of policy implementation, which now exhibit network-like characteristics. Thus, employing policy network theory offers a more accurate and comprehensive explanation of modern policy implementation processes.

2.2 The Implementation of Network Policy on Cultivating New Professional Farmers

Cultivating new professional farmers represents an advanced form of farmer education in the modern era. Within learning villages, it has become a significant component of adult and lifelong education. At this new stage, the internal dynamics of this initiative are undergoing profound changes. The participants in the cultivation process have expanded from a traditional bilateral relationship between the government and rural vocational schools to a diversified framework that includes governments, vocational schools, enterprises, and other institutions. Additionally, the scope of cultivation now spans multiple dimensions, including politics, economy, and culture, highlighting its cross-border and symbiotic nature.

The policy implementation network for cultivating new professional farmers consists of vertical interactions between central and local governments and horizontal connections among social organisations and individuals, resulting in a complex web of interconnected relationships among numerous parties. Initially, each participant engages in activities consistent with the policy and frequently relies on common resources to collaborate. However, differences in the interests of various stakeholders often lead to inconsistent policy implementation intentions and, in some cases, conflicting objectives. Using the policy network analysis model (dialectical model) proposed by Rhodes and Marsh (1992), the structure of the policy implementation network for new professional farmer training reflects this complexity, as illustrated in Figure 1.

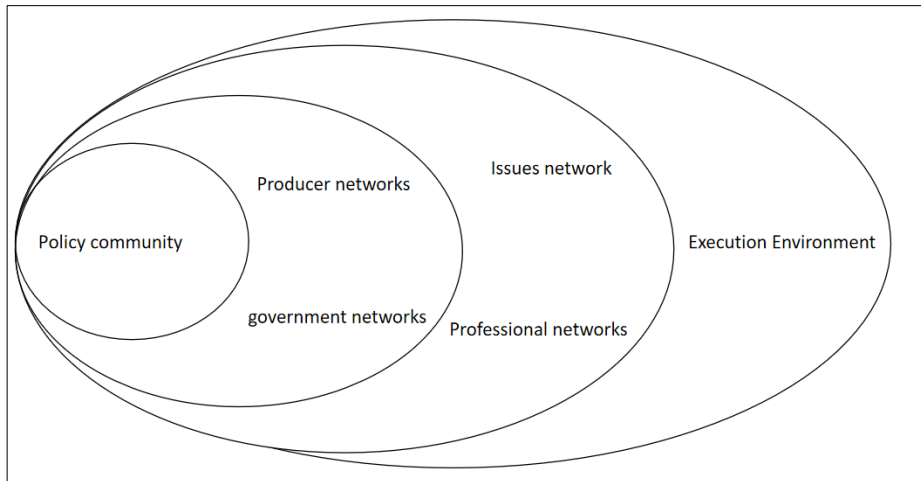


Figure 1. Network structure of the policy implementation of new professional farmers training (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992)

The policy implementation network for cultivating new professional farmers is structured into several interconnected layers, each with distinct roles and responsibilities. At the network's core is the policy community, comprising the most influential departments of the Party and the State, such as the Central Government, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. These entities maintain relatively stable, interdependent, and cooperative relationships. As the most authoritative members of the policy network, they are responsible for the top-level design and supervision of the new professional farmer policy.

The inter-governmental networks and producer networks form the next layer, located at the centre of the network. It includes local government departments below the provincial level, such as those managing education, rural agriculture and finance. These entities interpret central policies, adapt them into actionable local strategies, and utilise their organisational resources to implement them. Their internal coordination plays a critical role in determining the effectiveness of policy implementation. The producer network comprises key practitioners, including secondary and higher vocational colleges, enterprises, institutions, industry associations, and other organisations. These stakeholders provide essential resources for training, such as educators, courses, teaching venues, and skill-development equipment.

On the periphery of the network are the professional networks and issue networks. These include experts, scholars, and academic groups that address challenges in cultivating new professional farmers. Individuals can make recommendations and may contribute to policy development. Given their high level of expertise, participation in this network requires a significant level of professional qualification.

On the other hand, the issue network comprises a diverse range of social individuals and organisations interested in the policy, such as social media platforms, potential farmers, and the general public. It has the broadest spatial distribution and the largest membership and frequently provides suggestions on policy implementation through channels like social media, books, and newspapers. However, their dispersed nature and relatively low influence limit their ability to shape policy discourse.

Implementing the policy for cultivating new professional farmers operates within a broader implementation environment, where a "center-edge" logical relationship defines the connection between the policy network and its outcomes. Most entities within the network assume multiple roles, creating a dynamic system of interdependence and competition for interests. The interactions among these network entities significantly influence the effectiveness of policy implementation.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study collected secondary data to establish policy implementations by reviewing several recently published research papers and browsing the internet. Analysing the effectiveness of public policy implementation is a fundamental step in public policy evaluation. The policy for cultivating new professional farmers encompasses numerous aspects and involves complex relationships among diverse stakeholders. Evaluating its implementation efficiency helps to test and forecast the anticipated outcomes, thus improving the overall quality of policy execution. However, the evaluation of policy performance is the value of judgements with facts of practical developments of new professional farmers.

From the perspective of policy network theory, evaluating the effectiveness of this policy involves examining the interactions among different network actors and their respective impacts. Dunn (2015) focused on three key dimensions: achieving overall policy objectives, the broader impact of the policy, and stakeholder satisfaction. Each dimension sheds light on the effectiveness of the policy's implementation through the lens of the interactions among various network participants.

3.1 Strong Leadership of The Policy Community Enables: The Overall Goal to Be Continuously Achieved

The spatial structure and composition of rural society define the fundamental characteristics of rural areas. Farmers, as the primary agents of regional action, have historically influenced the pace of rural modernisation. Traditionally, farmer training followed a technical logic to enhance productivity and achieve economic prosperity. However, cultivating new professional farmers demands transitioning from traditional to modern agricultural technologies with significant advancements in mindset, business acumen, and ideological awareness aligned with contemporary needs and modernisation goals. Cultivating new professional farmers is a pivotal initiative for rural revitalisation, reflecting the nation's commitment to achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and serving as the core foundation of relevant policies. Despite its importance, farmer cultivation has long been confined to remote and grassroots areas. Challenges such as inadequate supervision mechanisms and limited financial resources have hindered the effective implementation of these policies, reducing their overall impact.

In the new era, to enhance the quantity and quality of new professional farmers, central government leaders have focused on strategic planning and financial support to ensure the systematic execution of farmer cultivation policies. Since introducing the "new professional farmer" concept in 2012, China has progressively developed a robust policy framework for farmer cultivation. Key directives, such as the "Several Opinions on Accelerating the Development of Modern Agriculture and Further Enhancing the Vitality of Rural Development" (2013), the "Several Opinions on Comprehensively Deepening Rural Reform and Accelerating the Promotion of Agricultural Modernization" (2014), and the "Rural

Revitalization Strategy Plan (2018–2022)," have consistently emphasised the critical role of new professional farmers in advancing agricultural and rural modernisation (Liu et al., 2022). Additionally, with coordination from entities like "the Ministry of Finance" and "the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs," policies such as the "Measures for Subsidising Students of Secondary Vocational Education for New Professional Farmers" have been introduced. These initiatives provide unified funding guidelines and offer essential economic support, ensuring the effective implementation of cultivation policies.

At the same time, a comprehensive and multi-level mechanism for cultivating new professional farmers is being established and refined. For example, the National Farmers' Education and Training "12th Five-Year Plan" (2012), also known as the "Development Plan," introduced mechanisms for multi-subject participation, resource input, and feedback, all of which have actively facilitated the implementation of policies aimed at cultivating new professional farmers. Significant progress has been made since the initiation of pilot programs for cultivating new professional farmers. In terms of individual economic income, by 2017, 27.7% of new professional farmers had exceeded the per capita disposable income of urban residents (Wang, 2018). By the end of 2020, the total number of new professional farmers had surpassed 20 million (Zhao & Kang, 2020).

Under the central government's overall coordination, a skilled team of new professional farmers with expertise in business, management, and technology is being developed. This group has become instrumental in leading regional villages toward economic prosperity, advancing the construction of rural ecological civilisation, and enhancing rural governance. Their efforts have directly narrowed the urban-rural income gap and indirectly boosted agricultural productivity, further bridging the divide between urban and rural income levels (Liu et al., 2022).

3.2 Effective cooperation between intergovernmental networks and producer networks has continuously expanded their influence

Within the policy network, intergovernmental networks and issue networks possess distinct resources and interest demands significantly influence policy implementation because of the interplay between these interests. The critical aspect of implementing the policy for cultivating new professional farmers lies in the interaction between intergovernmental and producer networks, which aligns closely with the "public governance" paradigm in education policy, from refining the central government policy to practical on-the-ground training. The collaboration between these networks highlights the social value of cultivating new professional farmers and directly impacts the policy's effectiveness. While primarily leading the cultivation of new professional farmers, local government departments have also acted as active participants. They have adapted and refined the policy to align with regional development needs and characteristics, making it more scientific and practical while minimising conflicts between the policy and regional realities.

Additionally, local governments have shifted away from monopolistic approaches, stepping into a supportive role by providing material resources and oversight services for the producer network. Simultaneously, entities such as vocational colleges, enterprises, institutions, and industry associations train new professional farmers under the overall coordination of local governments. These entities leverage their unique resources to ensure government departments meet their essential interests accordingly while practice and continuous exploration enhance their training content and methodology.

The lessons and insights acquired from these endeavours provide crucial knowledge for future initiatives. Close collaboration with government departments has become a vital foundation for effective policy design. A comprehensive "working mechanism" has been established through mutual coordination and adjustments, characterised by government leadership, agricultural department guidance, coordination among relevant departments, and broad participation from social forces. This approach effectively addresses issues like "fragmentation" in cultivating new professional farmers and has successfully nurtured many new agricultural business leaders, modern young farmers, and practical rural talent leaders.

With this effective interaction, the producer network is becoming increasingly market-oriented, and the expanding number of entities within the network are actively participating in the cultivation process. It leverages the strength of technology, equipment and teaching expertise to enhance the overall quality of training. Consequently, the producer network is no longer the weakest link in the policy implementation framework for cultivating new professional farmers.

3.3 The Mutual Balance Between the Intergovernmental Network and The Issue Network Gradually Improves the Recognition Degree

The intergovernmental and issue networks aim to maximise their interests by leveraging their respective resources and organisational capabilities. However, their relationship is often characterised by a dynamic of "granting" and "being granted," such an equilibrium is broken when their interests diverge and negatively impact policy implementation. Maintaining equilibrium between these networks is crucial for ensuring that implementing a new professional farmer training policy will effectively address the needs of both parties.

Local government departments have optimised the stratification and classification of new professional farmer training organisations, reflecting an internal balance within the intergovernmental network. They have established a three-level coordination mechanism involving provinces, cities, and counties by adhering to stratified and classified policy implementation requirements and assigned specific levels of training and responsibilities based on adult learning characteristics and agricultural production practices.

Additionally, local governments have balanced the selection of diverse stakeholders. First, when choosing training providers, intergovernmental network authorities adhere to established standards and procedures, leveraging vocational colleges, agricultural research institutions, enterprises, and other resources per market-oriented and open principles. Second, in selecting training participants, the program is open to all farmers or potential farmers, with only minimal requirements for age and education. For instance, some provinces accept candidates with a basic "cultural foundation" and "learning ability," while others allow "accumulated advantages" like social and technical resources to compensate for educational limitations (Zhao & Kang, 2020).

Finally, local governments have adjusted the allocation of fiscal benefits to incentivise participation. They provide financial subsidies tailored to different types and levels of new professional farmers to motivate their involvement, which is extended to training teachers, vocational colleges, enterprises, and

institutions. This effectively mobilises and attracts broader social participation in new professional farmer training programs.

When farmers gain cultural capital and their economic income, with the implementation of various incentive measures, training new professional farmers has gained widespread recognition and acceptance among the public, significantly contributing to improved agricultural efficiency (Vu et al., 2019). This approach allows farmers to remain in their hometowns while earning a stable income through modern farming practices, make an appealing option for farmers and potential farmers.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Contradiction Between the Policy Community and The Intergovernmental Network Is Prominent, And the Policy Implementation Efficiency Is Low

In the policy implementation framework, the policy community holds a central position, creating a predominantly top-down relationship with the intergovernmental network, which emphasises the absolute authority of the policy community and the absolute obedience of the intergovernmental network and does not necessarily translate into efficiency. It contributes to tensions between the policy community and the intergovernmental network while implementing new professional farmer training policies. The interaction between these entities usually resembles a game process, which can lead to inefficiencies and hinder the effective execution of training policies.

The lack of accountability within the policy community has left the intergovernmental network struggling to implement policies effectively. Central authorities design the policies for training new professional farmers as macro-level strategies to support nationwide rural revitalisation. Because of their highly generalised and open-ended nature, it is often challenging for local governments to interpret and operationalise them. As a result, local authorities may downplay or deprioritise these policies, hindering their effective implementation.

For instance, the "Rural Land Contract Law of the People's Republic of China" permits the transfer of land contract management rights. The absence of supportive policies encourages paid transfers, and the lack of a standardised market for such transfers leads new professional farmers to significant risks in agricultural production (Wang & Zhang, 2019). It highlighted the need for the policy community to provide more precise and actionable guidelines to aid local governments in executing these policies.

Additionally, cognitive deviations exist in how executive entities within the intergovernmental network perceive and implement policies. Two prevalent issues are evident. First, driven by "economic rationality," some local governments attempt to "subtract" from the policy execution process, symbolically implementing policies without substantive action. For example, while some local governments claim to prioritise funding for training new professional farmers, they fail to establish precise financial arrangements. Second, an over-dependency on the direction of central government with insufficient regional innovation leads to a mismatch between the cultivation goals and the unique developmental needs of specific regions. It ultimately reduces the efficiency and effectiveness of policy implementation.

4.2 Ineffective Internal Coordination in The Intergovernmental Network and Chaotic Policy Implementation

Implementing policies within a multi-level government framework in a national policy system characterised by a complex hierarchical structure and multiple horizontal entities is inherently more challenging than in a more straightforward, linear system (Zhang, 2019). The role of the intergovernmental network in the policy implementation structure is to bridge the upper and lower levels. The efficiency of interaction among its internal entities significantly impacts the overall effectiveness of policy execution.

The "13th Five-Year Plan for the Development of New Professional Farmers in the Country" emphasises that the agricultural department should lead the cultivation of new professional farmers, with close collaboration from related departments such as education, human resources, social security, and finance. However, a cohesive and collaborative working relationship has yet to be established in practice while these departments are involved.

Firstly, the issue of management entities operating independently is prominent, and each government department has distinct functions in implementing the new professional farmer cultivation policy. These departments often impose work requirements on subordinate units based on their specific interests and technical expertise. Because the independent role of the management system may create confusion in policy implementation combined with varying priorities and demands, leading to the wastage of resources. For instance, a regional survey revealed that 49% of farmers believed that "management was chaotic," and 33% noted that "content was repetitive" (Zhang et al., 2018).

Secondly, there is a lack of adequate supervision among government departments. At the same time, the absence of jurisdictional authority over departments overseeing the performance of specific entities in policy implementation becomes challenging. Professional and technical barriers further complicate verifying and evaluating implementation outcomes. Over time, this reliance solely on the actions of the producer network for feedback, without systematic reflection within the government network, undermines the macro-level policy positioning capacity of government departments. This lack of internal evaluation and coordination hinders the effective execution and refinement of policies for cultivating new professional farmers.

4.3 Professional And Issue Networks Are Marginalised, And Participation in Policy Implementation Is Limited

The policy implementation gap highlights the disconnect between policy intentions and outcomes, often arising from failure to implement realities (Zhang et al., 2019). Analysing the policy implementation network for cultivating new professional farmers reveals an imbalance in the network structure. When policy stakeholders and intergovernmental networks hold dominant roles, professional and issue networks occupy marginal positions. Because the uneven distribution of power diminishes the status of professional and issue networks, it dampens their enthusiasm for expressing policy-related concerns and asserting their rights.

The main issue is the limited involvement of professional networks in cultivating new professional farmers, which may offer valuable insights and recommendations through channels such as policy proposals, advisory reports, academic publications, and professional contributions; their influence is often fragmented. Although some members of professional networks may also belong to intergovernmental networks and participate in policy implementation, their collective interdependence is weak. Consequently, their contributions often impact only the early stages of policy discussions and fail to shape final resolutions. Experts and scholars suggested policies for enhancing credit support and improving social security frameworks, which may lead to comprehensive evaluation systems for cultivating new professional farmers. At the same time, such proposals remain unimplemented (Zhao, 2022; Zhao & Kang, 2020).

Issue networks' participation in this policy area is similarly limited. Despite being the most extensive stakeholders in the cultivation process, their engagement is minimal. Such stems from a general lack of public awareness about the importance of cultivating new professional farmers and a perception that such efforts have limited impact. The insufficient training infrastructure and teaching resources cause low cultivation efficiency and create conflicts with the interests of the intended beneficiaries.

Moreover, policy regarding the cultivation of new professional farmers has failed to attract significant societal attention. The role of new media groups in publicising and supporting the policy has been minimal, reducing awareness and engagement. Finally, there is insufficient interaction between professional and issue networks, and differences in concentration and expertise, loosely organised networks, and variations in spatial reach led to restricted and subpar interactions. This lack of collaboration hinders the ability to address shared challenges effectively and compromises the policy's overall implementation.

5. DISCUSSION

During the policy implementation process, a firm structure can be formed when members of an organisation share consistent values, interests, and information while possessing abundant resources. From the perspective of addressing contradictions between the policy community and the intergovernmental network in cultivating new professional farmers, such a "strong structure" is essential for establishing a high-quality interactive relationship (Zhao & Kang, 2020). First of all, the policy community should be clear about its responsibilities. On the one hand, it must absorb practical experiences from cultivating new professional farmers and integrate insights from international practices. It includes strengthening the top-level design of supporting policies, clearly defining critical details such as the identification and subsidy standards for new professional farmers, and providing robust policy guarantees for local governments. These measures help reduce inefficient implementation caused by ambiguous rights and responsibilities. On the other hand, it is necessary to adhere to its core position, pay attention to the inspection of the implementation of the policy of cultivating new professional farmers, and establish and improve the supervision mechanism and feedback mechanism.

Secondly, the intergovernmental network should strengthen policy learning. Local governments must thoroughly study the relevant policies of higher-level departments and grasp the value of policies, interests and pertinent information. Such a comprehensive approach facilitates consensus on building the policy of cultivating new professional farmers and innovating again based on regional practices and actual needs.

Finally, the policy community should offer tailored assistance to intergovernmental networks based on their strengths and weaknesses. This collaborative approach ensures that the unique challenges of different regions are addressed effectively, thereby enhancing the overall success of the policy implementation process. The challenges government departments face in cultivating new professional farmers are not due to a lack of capacity but rather the isolated efforts of functional departments, which result in the underutilisation of resource advantages. To overcome this challenge, all government departments must clarify their social responsibilities, leverage organisational capabilities and collaborate with other departments to achieve policy objectives.

First, it is essential to coordinate the relationship between vertical government departments. While vertical departments operate within a hierarchical command-and-execution framework, effective implementation requires "top-down" guidance and "bottom-up" feedback. Front-line departments that cultivate new professional farmers need practical support from superior departments to address challenges effectively, reducing the burden of excessive administrative requests and enabling smoother execution.

Second, information communication between horizontal departments should be strengthened. Effective information communication is the fundamental premise for efficient cooperation between departments, especially in increasingly complex practical problems. Information technology and other platforms have the characteristics of speed and convenience, which can basically overcome the geographical barriers between departments and should be widely used in implementing policies for cultivating new professional farmers. This platform should be oriented both inside and outside government departments, strengthen the deep understanding of the cultivation of new professional farmers among departments, and jointly solve relevant problems in policy implementation.

Finally, the agricultural department must coordinate resources and resolve key issues. The department should adopt a macro perspective focused on the public interest of cultivating new professional farmers, which involves addressing department tensions and conflicts, actively engaging with their suggestions, and collaboratively formulating policies. By fostering inclusive discussions and balancing interests, the agricultural department can harness collective wisdom and ensure the effective implementation of cultivation policies.

5.1 Pay Attention to The Multiple Demands of Professional Networks and Issue Networks

Public policies are created for the public and must ultimately serve their needs. However, without transparency and public involvement, policies lose their purpose, and their practical implementation may diminish significantly. The marginalisation of professional and network issues may prevent them from expressing their policy demands or interests, which leads to challenges in policy execution. Therefore, intergovernmental networks and policy communities must recognise and address the diverse needs of professional and issue networks while implementing policies, such as training new professional farmers. Enhancing public participation and giving them a voice is crucial to successful implementation. Thus, to resolve the persistent issue of limited public participation and representation, adjustments must be made based on the structural characteristics of the policy implementation network. First, policy communities and intergovernmental networks must prioritise the involvement of professional and issue networks.

In the early stages of policy implementation, key stakeholders, such as new professional farmers, experts, and scholars, should be consulted to make scientific predictions. Maintaining close contact with participating groups and seeking feedback is vital during implementation. Post-implementation, multi-level and multi-form research involving all stakeholders can help identify key issues and facilitate necessary corrections. Second, social public opinion should be leveraged to promote a new professional farmers' training policy. Government departments must strengthen positive messaging by showcasing new professional farmers' critical role in exploring their glorious mission and significant achievements in rural revitalisation. At the same time, an optimising level of efforts should be made to improve societal understanding of their contributions to enhance their professional standing and provide appropriate recognition for individuals or groups with exceptional accomplishments in this field.

Third, professional networks must actively engage with issue networks for extensive research and collaboration. Professional network actors should focus on problem-solving through field and classroom research. Cultivation subjects and participants must uphold their social responsibilities by collaborating with experts and scholars in structured discussions and providing feedback on the cultivation process. Besides this, social media and other sources effort should highlight the developments and challenges in cultivating new professional farmers by enhancing the voices of diverse stakeholders and fostering a societal appreciation of their value. Such a holistic strategy will foster a supportive atmosphere that promotes the development and success of emerging professional farmers throughout society.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that new professional farmers are pivotal in achieving agricultural and rural modernisation. By analysing the implementation process through the lens of policy network theory, this paper highlights the complex interplay between various network entities, including policy communities, professional networks, intergovernmental networks, producer networks, and issue networks. While notable progress has been made in meeting the policy's objectives, challenges such as conflicts between policy communities and intergovernmental networks, weak coordination among intergovernmental networks and the marginalisation of professional and issue networks continue to hinder effective implementation.

Hence, establishing more apparent roles and responsibilities by overcoming challenges enhances intergovernmental collaboration and empowers marginalised networks to increase their inclusivity and public engagement. Consequently, new professional farmer cultivation policies can be optimised by maintaining a balanced and coordinated policy network, laying a solid foundation for sustainable agricultural development and rural revitalisation. The study underscores the importance of leveraging policy network theory as a framework to address the complexities of policy implementation in a fragmented and interdependent governance environment.

Implementing the new professional farmer cultivation policy can be enhanced by clarifying policy communities and the role of intergovernmental networks and responsibilities to reduce conflicts and ensure effective coordination. Strengthening intergovernmental collaboration is also vital, focusing on improving communication and streamlining operations among local government departments to address weak internal coordination. Additionally, marginalised networks such as professional and issue networks must be empowered by recognising their diverse needs and providing platforms for meaningful participation in the policy discourse.

Governance models should be innovated to accommodate the dynamic interactions between various policy entities, ensuring flexibility and adaptability in implementation. Increasing public engagement through awareness campaigns and participatory mechanisms can align policy objectives. By adopting these measures, the policy framework for cultivating new professional farmers can achieve greater inclusivity and efficiency and significantly contribute to shifts toward the modernisation of agriculture and rural development.

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