

Agricultural groups and cooperatives in Turkey

Agriculture de groupe

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(1) Informations communicated by the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture.

It is known that cooperatives have a great influence on economic and social development. Especially in the countries where national economy largely depend on the agricultural sector, and agricultural enterprises are small and insufficient, organization in this sector in the form of agricultural groups and cooperatives — is being considered necessary for development.

Today, cooperative organizations are largely accepted in socially, economically, and culturally developed countries such as U.S.A. and most of the European countries, and the positive activities of the cooperatives in agricultural, and other fields impact the creation of a stable economic development in a large scale.

Developed and developing countries of present day attach necessary importance to the agricultural cooperatives in development activities.

Because of the nature of the agriculture, farm people in all countries are face to face with various risks. Production possibilities and thus their income are limited in comparison with other sectors of the economy. This sector, as a result of this fact, has to be supported and organized more than the others.

Some of the countries are at the top from the point of cooperation in agricultural sector aiming the development of economical possibilities of the population occupied in this sector. Cooperation activities in Turkey also had not been started in recent years.

As the cooperation activities had been started in neighbouring western countries under the philosophy of Rochdale, Raiffeisen and Schulze-Delitsch, Turkey had also started cooperation activities nearly in the same period and parallel. We may say that these activities had been started in Turkey by Great Turkish Statesman Mithat Paşa in the year 1863. When he was the governor-general of the Tuna Province of the Ottoman Empire in 1863, had established the Country Savings Banks. The spirit of these establishments was « mutual aid » principle.

They were the credit cooperatives, in a way and the first steps to the establishment of the present Agricultural Bank and Credit Cooperatives which are the only agricultural credit resources in Turkey.

The above mentioned establishment had been the first experiment in this field

and after that, in 1924, 1929 and 1935 agricultural credits had been loaned. These activities had been developed under the laws of Agricultural Credits numbered 2836 and Agricultural Sales Cooperatives numbered 2834 beginning from the year 1935.

In the following years of Independence War, great leader ATATURK had expressed the importance and the necessity of the cooperatives briefly with these words « There is no doubt that cooperation makes the communities stronger. Establishment of the cooperatives means the joining of all the possibilities, minds and skills ». Protection and development of the cooperatives had also been expressed in one paragraph on this subject in the Constitution.

Main cooperatives are shown below which carry out their activities in various branches of the agricultural sector in Turkey, today.

1) Agricultural Credit Cooperatives

They carry out their activities under the special Law put in force in the year 1935 and numbered 2836 and the « Act of Main Principles » which had been prepared according to this law. There were 1991 Agricultural Credit Cooperatives in 1969 and 11,293,811 members of them, 49 per cent of the farm families in the regions are the members of these cooperatives.

2) Agricultural Sales Cooperatives and the Unions

These cooperatives and unions are being established under the Law, put in force in 1935, numbered 2834 and « Main Principles Act » aiming the sales of plant products and animal products, produced by the farmers, under favourable conditions in domestic and foreign markets.

There were 556 Agricultural Sales Cooperatives in 1969. 430 of them had joined to 33 unions. Number of the members is 214,870.

3) Production Cooperatives of the Sugar beet Producers

The aim of the establishment of these cooperatives is to realize the joint of

Table 1 : The Cooperatives and The Members

	1965		1966		1967		1968		1969	
	Number	Members (000)	Number	Members (000)	Number	Members (000)	Number	Members (000)	Number	Members (000)
I. Agricultural Cooperatives										
Credit Cooperatives	1 774	1 000	1 823	1 912	1 879	1 316	1 948	1 266	1 971	1 300
Sales Cooperatives	231	143	263	148	227	154	418	189	460	250
Irrigation Cooperatives	—	—	348	8	512	57	626	81	796	98
Sugar beet Production Coops.	18	330	18	330	18	370	19	388	19	388
Tea Production Coops.	15	18	15	34	16	35	17	35	18	35
Forestry Products Coop.	9	1	9	1	19	5	26	6	44	12
Sea Products Coop.	36	6	38	7	44	10	56	12	85	30
Multi-Purpose Production Coop.	128	5	298	12	316	20	328	22	350	25
Mono-Purpose Production Coop.	1	0.2	2	0,5	7	2,5	14	5	16	6
II. Other Production Cooperatives.										
Handicrafts Cooperatives	461	142	478	143	498	153	514	155	530	160
Building Cooperatives	1 889	153	2 628	165	3 067	240	2 842	200	3 000	250
Education and Publication Coop.	7	—	7	3	7	3	7	3	15	15
Transportation Coop.	1	—	4	3	14	6	17	7	24	20
III. Service Cooperatives										
Public Security Cooperatives	264	100	311	115	265	137	404	144	500	250
Marketing Cooperatives	17	—	28	12	29	13	70	20	90	35
Insurance	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	1	2
Consumption and Social help Coop.	477	63	525	96	548	126	574	136	737	165
Tourism Cooperatives	—	—	—	—	2	0,5	8	2	10	3
	5 525	2 285	6 798	2 992	7 621	2 651	7 889	2 673	8 666	3 044

the producers to the establishment of new sugar factories and to the activities of the Turkey Sugar Factories on the development of sugar beet growing. Their activities are being carried out under the general rules. 19 cooperatives had been established beginning from the year 1951. 8,000 villages in 50 provinces and 405,000 farm families are the members of these cooperatives.

4) Mutual Aid Cooperatives of the Tea Growers

These are being established under the general rules aiming the provision of equipment especially fertilizers, insecticides and herbicides and other materials necessary for tea production activities, to the members with lower prices. At the end of the year 1969 the number of these cooperatives was 30 and had 55,230 members.

5) Water Products Cooperatives

They are being established under the general rules, aiming the development of production of the water products and the provision of the necessary materials for production with lower prices. Though the number of them is nearly 90, only 30 cooperatives are active today, and have 2000 members.

6) Soil Conservation and Farm Irrigation Cooperatives

They are being established under the general rules and leadership of the General Directorate of Soil Conservation and Farm Irrigation, aiming the application of the projects relating to irrigation, soil conservation and land improvement activities. There are 819 cooperatives in this field.

7) Rural Development Cooperatives

They are being established under the « act of main principles » relating to the subjects of « Production - Marketing - Building Cooperatives » which was prepared under the general rules by the Ministry of Rural Affairs in the year 1965. There were 686 cooperatives and 40.500 members of them in the year 1968.

The subjects of these cooperatives are relating to the agriculture and there are also some other cooperatives in Turkey which have many members, such as : Security Cooperatives of the Tradesmen, Cooperatives of the Artisans, Construction and Consumption Cooperatives.

For the application the advanced technology in developing agriculture cooperative organizations, which must properly fit in the present farm structure of the country, is becoming more important.

A new Law of Cooperatives had been put in force, dated 10-5-1969 and numbered 1163, considering the necessity for improvement of the old law. The new one had been prepared taking into consideration all of the principles relating to the cooperatives in the developed countries.

Improvements that this new law brought into this field make it possible to create a new atmosphere of expectations on the activities of the cooperatives in Turkey.

Under the new law of cooperatives, top level organization and training possibilities of the members and the personnel of the cooperatives will be improved and the cooperatives will become regional and national federative organizations, thus will be in a better position to meet the needs of the agricultural sector.

There are also some other agricultural organizations in Turkey, such as « Farmers Unions » and « Chambers of Agriculture ». Farmer's Unions are not Cooperatives and are being established rather under the general rules relating to the societies. Chambers of Agriculture are established with a special law at the county level, and their national organization is called « Union of Chambers of Agriculture ». The aim of these agricultural organizations is the cooperation of the producers in their professional activities for their economic and social benefit.