

The development of agricultural cooperatives in Turkey

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

Turkey, in spite of her considerable progress in the development plan period, is still predominantly an agricultural country. Studying the 1969 and the 1970 data it is observed that 28.9 % of GNP and 80.4 % of the total export are secured from agriculture.

According to the 1970 census the Turkish population is about 35.5 millions. About 65 % of this population consist of agricultural population which lives in about 36.000 villages.

Emphasis is being given to the cooperative movements, since the cooperative activities affect the Turkish economy. The number of the agricultural credit cooperatives increased from 1948 in 1968, to 1968 in 1969. Along with this increase in number of agricultural credit cooperatives, a substantial increase in the number of members and the cooperated villages has also been achieved. The number of cooperated villages has increased from 21,091 to 21,351 and the members from 1,266,160 to 1,300,000. About 50 % of the presently operating cooperatives, as shown on table 1, are the agricultural cooperatives.

When the activities of the sales Cooperatives are examined the same development is observed. The 1969 data indicate that 460 sales cooperatives are operating. This cooperatives possess a total of 273.3 million TL. guaranteed, 118.4 million TL. paid and 104.7 million TL. reserve capital.

These cooperatives which have been outlined endeavour to serve their members in various aspects of agriculture. Considering the realized progress of the cooperatives it is seen that they contribute to the economic and social development of the communities. Agricultural credit cooperatives in Turkey mainly try to lead and to serve their members in all aspects of agricultural production activities. The sales cooperatives perform the purchase and sales of the produces of the members.

The proposed success would be difficult to achieve by the farmers who operate

individually. Therefore, the cooperatives and the related activities are becoming more important in agriculture.

Necessary credits are given to the members in order to achieve production goals. Therefore a total of 6.6 billions TL. has been secured as short, medium and long term credit for the various agricultural activities in 1969. A sum of 4.7 billion TL. of this total has been directly given to the farmers by the Agricultural Bank and 1.9 billion TL. through the cooperatives. An increased total to 7.8 billion TL. has been allocated for the same purpose in 1970. In addition to these credits, sales cooperatives has also been provided with the necessary loans. This loan was 2.1 billion TL. in 1969 has been increased to 2.3 billion TL. in 1970. Testing the activities of the cooperatives it is seen that they are contributing to the improvement of the traditional agriculture.

About 80 % of the farm holdings which are scattered over 36.000 villages consist mainly of the small and medium size farm units. The sizes of these farm holdings vary between 1 and 200 Dekars. The fragmentation mostly exceeds 10 parcels. This deficiency also requires cooperative activities which could tackle the problems of efficiency in agriculture.

The application of modern technology and better inputs is contemplated in agriculture in order to increase the productivity. However the implementation of these proposed measures could not give the expected results on these small farm holdings.

In order to achieve an increased production by applying modern technology and the related inputs effectively, more emphasis is being given on the encouragement of the farmers cooperatives in the planned development period.

Therefore, the cooperatives are being regarded as a more efficient and important tools in the production and marketing process in Turkey.