

Greening China's Agriculture Sector: The roles of the state and civil society in the development of organic agriculture

Key Takeaways:

- The food safety crisis, the rising middle class alongside the heated GMO debates facilitated the rapid growth of the domestic market for organic and other ecologically produced food in China.
- Three ecological food standards were promoted by the state to address the growing demand. Diverse organizational structures of production emerged in rural China, reflecting the unique political and social system.
- Chinese organic farmers adopt various ecological approaches in farming, which resemble a combination of Chinese tradition, culture and modern technologies.
- The Chinese government provided various support to the organic sector for land access, finance, training and education and marketing. Yet, these supports enhance consolidation in the sector and exclude the majority of smallholders.
- Alternative food networks (AFNs) emerged in the late 2000s in response to the limited access to government support, the lack of consumer trust, and the growing demand for healthy food. They demonstrate alternative values, practices and marketing channels and have been actively leveraging the social media and personal connections for community building.

Suggested Readings:

- Yanyan Li, Zhenzhong Si, Yuxin Miao and Li Zhou. 2022. [How does the concept of *guanxi*-circle contribute to community building in alternative food networks? Six case studies from China](#). *Behavioral Sciences*, 12(11): 432.
- Zhenzhong Si, Theresa Schumilas, Weiping Chen, Tony Fuller and Steffanie Scott. 2020. [What makes a CSA a CSA? A framework for comparing CSAs with cases of Canada and China](#). *Canadian Food Studies*, 7(1): 64-87.
- Zhenzhong Si. 2019. [Shifting from Industrial Agriculture to Diversified Agroecological Systems in China](#). *The Reclaiming Diversity and Citizenship Series*. UK: Coventry University.
- Steffanie Scott, Zhenzhong Si, Theresa Schumilas, and Aijuan Chen. 2018. [Organic Food and Farming in China: Top-down and Bottom-up Ecological Initiatives](#). New York: Routledge.
- Zhenzhong Si, Theresa Schumilas and Steffanie Scott. 2015. [Characterizing alternative food networks in China](#). *Agriculture and Human Values*, 32(2): 299-313.
- Steffanie Scott, Zhenzhong Si, Theresa Schumilas and Aijuan Chen. 2014. [Contradictions in China's path to zero food safety risk: State- and civil society-driven developments in the ecological agriculture sector](#). *Food Policy*, 45(2): 158-166.