

# **The Possibility of Cooperation Among Farmers' Specialized Cooperatives in China: A case study of the Guoren Green Alliance, Beijing**

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Since the introduction of the Farmers' Professional Cooperative Law of the People's Republic of China in 2007, farmers' specialized cooperatives have formed rapidly in China. By the end of 2014, there were totally 1.29 million farmers' specialized cooperatives registered in the State Administration for Industry and Commerce of the People's Republic of China with a total capital of 2.37 trillion yuan. Despite the increase in number, farmer's specialized cooperatives in China have encountered several challenges when faced with fierce competition in an open market. On one hand, small scale, shortage of development funds, as well as the lack of professional management put obstacles in the way of cooperatives' further development. On the other hand, decentralized structure based on the household-responsibility system has brought a challenge to the Chinese government in supervision of such a large number of farmers' organizations. Reorganization of farmers' cooperatives at a higher level seems to be crucial at the current stage. In order to examine the possibility of cooperation among farmers' cooperatives, a pioneer organization named Guoren Green Alliance in Beijing was chosen to conduct a case study.

Guoren Green Alliance was founded in 2006 under the supervision of the Rural Construction Centre of Renmin University of China. It dedicated itself in the early stage to forging a platform for small-scale farmer households from seven farmers' cooperatives to exchange knowledge and expand sales. With the rise of China's middle class, a number of attempts have been made by the Guoren Green Alliance in recent years not only to improve the competitiveness of farmers' cooperatives but also to connect rural and urban communities. In this research we investigated four groups in Guoren Green Alliance, including two farmers' specialized cooperatives (Nanmazhuang Village farmers' specialized cooperative and Huzhai County farmers' specialized cooperative), one community-supported agriculture farm (Little Donkey Farm), and one consumers' cooperative (Guoren rural-urban mutual aid cooperative, formerly known as Beijing civilized consumers' cooperative), to have an inside view of Guoren Green Alliance's network with a focus on the internal cooperative mechanism among one another. Hopefully, this research would shed light on the further development of farmers' cooperatives in China.