

## Deepening reform for China's long-term growth and development: the role of rural development

Welcome to this special issue of *China Agricultural Economic Review (CAER)* on "Deepening reform for China's long-term growth and development: the role of rural development"!

Rural development has a very important role to play in achieving China's long-term development. Without rural development and prosperity, China cannot become developed and prosperous. To contribute to the discussion of the importance of rural development and to explore approaches conducive to rural development, the Chinese Economics Society Australia and the Rural Development Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences jointly organised an international conference in Beijing in December 2014, with the theme of "Deepening reform for China's long-term growth and development: the role of rural development".

Contained in this *CAER* special issue are selected papers from the conference. It is hoped that the publication of these papers will further stimulate the interests of researchers and policy makers in discussing and addressing issues related to China's sustainable development, focusing on the role that rural development can play.

The ten articles published in this special issue have attempted to address China's long-term development, esp., rural development, from various perspectives. Some have brought novel contributions to the discussion. Major issues tackled include: rural infrastructure (Wang and Sun), rural-urban migration (Jiang, Zhang, Qi and Zhou), rural income (Cheong and Li), income inequalities (Chen), rural poverty (Liu, Li and Su), food security (Zhu), the adoption of GM crops (Xu, Wu and Luan), efficiency and impacts of trade and investment (Cai and Song; Chen; Fan, Zhang, Liu and Pan; Zhu), and water safety (Ge and Wang).

Admittedly, the number of papers that can be included, hence the number of issues discussed, is limited due to space constraints. There are other important issues that deserve study as far as promoting rural development is concerned. Some examples include: the provision of rural healthcare, the quality of rural education, the impact of the household registration system, rural market development, the availability of agricultural extension and education, reforms to land ownership, the rehabilitation and protection of rural natural environment, and rural cultural life. Studies with concerted efforts and innovative approaches to make improvements will all contribute to promoting China's rural development.

Perhaps, at a broader level, research efforts are needed from scholars and policy makers to contribute to the development of long-term rural development strategies for China. In the strategies, how China's rural areas will look like at a given future point of time is clearly projected; the development goals are clearly set; and the achievement of the goals can be measured at various stages. If the stage-wise goals are not achieved, causes are investigated and responsibilities are attributed. It is possible that, to achieve the overall strategic goal, it may take a long time,

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e.g., 30, 50, or 80 years. The length of the time, however, is less an issue so long as the goals are realistic. What is important is that, this way, there are clearly defined goals to pursue. After all, goals cannot be achieved if they have not been set. Guest editorial

**Sizhong Sun and Zhangyue Zhou**

*College of Business Law and Governance, James Cook University,  
Townsville, Australia, and*

**Zhixiong Du**

*Rural Development Institute, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences,  
Beijing, China*

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