

There are clear signs of individual contributors attempting to improve accessibility between disciplines – the explanation of the sampling methods used by a social scientist for example. The abstracts have also been edited to convey the main message of each article even if the chapter itself focuses on a more specialist audience.

An important limitation in the book as a whole is the focus on the 'local' and relative lack of consideration of other major drivers of change in coastal zones. The corporate actors that were critical to the intensification of shrimp farming in Asia are not featured, the story being largely presented as one of smallholders and Government. Agri-industry has underpinned the rapid development of shrimp farming from the supply of inputs to connections with global markets and hastened its spread between countries. This focus on producer communities has also led to a neglect of broader issues such as the growth in processing industries and associated impacts on employment.

On balance, however, the editors have done a creditable job in assembling this collection of quality multi-disciplinary perspectives on such an important issue.

David Little

*China's Agricultural Development—Challenges and Prospects*. Edited by Xiao-Yuan Dong, Shunfeng Song and Xiaobo Zhang. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, (2006), pp. 311, £65.00. ISBN -10: 0-7546-4696-3. doi:10.1017/S0014479706444902

This book is part of an Ashgate series on The Chinese Economy. Most chapters are selections from an international symposium on China's rural economy held in China in June 2004. The book is in three parts: Part 1 is an Overview of Challenges and Options. It opens with insights on the High Performing Asian Economies by the Nobel Laureate R. W. Fogel. Two chapters define three key problems of Chinese agricultural development: low farmer incomes, with wide inequalities between both urban and rural incomes and the wealthy east – and poor rural west; with World Trade Organization entry, the issue of long-term grain supplies and high domestic costs of production; and, finally, weak rural organization underlying poor protection of farmers' rights and increasing land conflicts. Three further chapters examine suggested solutions, the final one draws lessons for China from Taiwan's experience in rural organization. Parts Two and Three of the book are econometric examinations of some of these issues. Part Two has five chapters on The Performance and Potentials of China's Agriculture. Part Three has four chapters on Agricultural Risk Management. The potential of domestic agriculture to meet future Chinese food requirements is of global interest. Part One of this book can inform a wide audience, Parts Two and Three will be of most interest to professional economists focussed either on China or on world food markets.

Mike Collinson

*Grains in China: Foodgrains, Feedgrain and World Trade*. By Zhang-Yue Zhou and Wei-Ming Tian. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing (2005), pp. 255, £55.50. ISBN 0-7546-4289-1. doi:10.1017/S0014479706454909

This book provides a systematic overview of recent trends in China's grain production, consumption and trade. It examines these trends in the light of the changing policy environment within which the Chinese agriculture operates and the significant demographic changes driving changes in consumption patterns in China. A notable feature is the focus on the demand and supply of feedgrains, which is timely because the feed use of cereals is expected to be the most dynamic element driving the world cereal economy in future years. Another key feature is the attempt to provide regional grain balance sheets that highlight significant inter-regional variations in performance of the grains sector in China.

As is well recognized, the performance of China's grain sector has significant implications not only for China but also for the world grain economy. Future trends are projected by constructing a range of alternative scenarios in which the accession of China to the World Trade Organization, the resultant changes in agricultural policy and the policy responses of the Chinese government to emerging trends are the key elements. These scenarios constitute the most important contribution as they provide a substantial empirical foundation for policy discussions on China's grain sector strategies. They also reinforce the key message that complacency about China's 'grain problem' is not warranted in spite of surpluses in some recent years.

It would have been useful if the book had also provided insights into factors driving changes in productivity in Chinese agriculture and its competitiveness – in particular how policy changes have affected the incentives to invest in productivity enhancement and increase production.

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