

## タイの粳米担保融資制度の社会的コストと農民への便益

総合研究開発機構 江川 暁夫

タイでは、農民が自ら収穫した粳米を担保に融資を受ける「粳米担保融資制度」(rice mortgage schemeあるいはpaddy pledging schemeと訳される)が運営されてきた。元来この制度は、米市場の価格安定化と農民の緊急的な資金の工面のための制度として機能していたが、2001年に、低所得者農家の所得水準の向上と安定化を企図して、政府が融資額を市場取引価格より高く設定すると、この制度をあたかも政府による米の買入れ制度として利用する農民が増加した。2009年にこの制度は廃止されたが、2011年に制度が復活し、融資額が市場価格よりはるかに高い水準に設定されると、この制度を利用できる農民はすべからくこれを利用し、米を高値で政府がほぼ独占的に買い入れる制度と変容した。この制度の問題点は様々指摘される中、この制度がタイの社会的厚生を高めていなければ、制度の見直しや廃止を検討する必要が生じる。

本報告では、上述の問題意識に関し、粳米担保融資制度がタイ国内の所得格差の是正（社会的厚生 of 改善）に寄与しているかどうか、また、制度改革がタイの所得格差の改善に寄与するかどうかを、タイの農家・非農家それぞれの所得分布関数を導出した上で、定量的に考察した結果を示す。その結果は次の通りである。

- (1)本制度は、低所得農家のウェルフェアの向上という観点で行われているにもかかわらず、収穫量が少ない貧困農家が本制度を利用できないため、農家間の所得格差は悪化する。
- (2)一方で、財政均衡主義を導入すると、納税者である比較的所得の高い非農民部門から農民部門へのトランスファーとなり、所得格差の悪化幅は半減するが、なお所得格差は制度再開前と比べて悪化し、納税者の所得税率も0.90%ポイント上昇する。
- (3)制度への批判の中に、財政支出分のうちの農民の取り分が少ないというものがあるが、農民の取り分を増やせば所得格差は更に悪化する。
- (4)制度利用に上限を設けると、財政均衡主義を導入した時とほぼ同じ所得格差悪化の抑制効果を持つ。
- (5)低所得農民が制度にアクセスできるようになれば、所得格差は改善することとなり、これに制度利用の上限を併用できれば、更に所得格差改善効果は大きくなる。
- (6)上記(5)の制度改革があったとしても、直接的な所得再分配政策に比べれば、所得格差改善効果は20分の1程度である。

政府が低所得者のウェルフェアの向上を真に目指すのであれば、そのための政策としては効率が悪い同制度の融資額を引き下げて本来の緊急融資と価格安定化の機能を復活させた上で、低所得者の所得水準の向上と安定化は、より効率性の高い直接の所得再分配政策などに任せるべきであろう。

# Thailand's Rice Mortgage Scheme: Its Costs for the Society and Benefit for Farmers

Akio Egawa

National Institute for Research Advancement

In Thailand, a policy measure called “Rice Mortgage Scheme” has been implemented. The scheme allows farmers to borrow money from a governmental lending organisation with their rice paddies as a collateral. Initially, this scheme was designed for helping farmers with urgent need for money and stabilising rice prices in the market. However, once the government raised the amount of lending per tonne of paddies higher than market prices in 2001 for a purpose of improvement and stability of incomes of farmers, the number of farmers participating in this scheme had increased. They used the scheme as if it were a government's incentive to “buy” rice paddies from them. Although the scheme was abolished in 2009, it restarted in 2011 and attracted almost all the farmers with rice paddies to sell. As a result, this scheme no longer worked as urgent lending and price stabilisation but as contributing to government's monopolisation of rice supply to the markets. As various problems with the scheme have been pointed out, the scheme would be necessary to amend or abolish if it contributes to improving income inequality of the whole country as the government aimed.

My report will refer to this concern with a derivation of income distribution functions for farmers and non-farmers individually and an examination of quantitative analysis using the functions. The results of checking whether the scheme contributes to improvement of income inequality and whether the requested improvements of the scheme would work plausibly for income distribution are as follows.

- (1) In spite of the purpose of the scheme to improve welfare of low-income farmers, it results in worsening income inequality, mainly due to the fact that low-income farmers produce enough rice paddies to sell to the market (or governmental lending organisation).
- (2) For the reform of the scheme, the introduction of pay-as-you-go principle under which non-farmers should be taxed for it would relax the worsening of income inequality to some extent, due to the fact that the taxation would work as a transfer from the richer group to the poorer. However, income inequality would not improve despite of non-farmers' additional tax burden equivalent to 0.9% to their income.
- (3) Although there is a criticism stating that the proportion of budget going to farmers is small, a reform to raise the ratio of farmers' receipt of the benefit would further worsen income inequality.
- (4) Setting a ceiling of the use of the scheme would have an effect of relaxing worsening income inequality. The extent of the effect would be almost equal to the case described in (2).
- (5) If low-income farmers could access the scheme, income inequality would be improved with the scheme. If this situation would be followed by setting a ceiling of the use of the scheme, the effect of income inequality improvement would be greater.
- (6) Even if the reform described in (5) would be implemented, its efficiency on improving income inequality would be about 1/20 compared to that for direct income redistribution policies.

If the government is truly to improve the welfare of low-income farmers, it should have the scheme play the role in urgent lending and price stabilisation of rice as was initially assigned to the scheme, by reducing the “government-set price for rice paddies”, and take an effort to implement more direct ex-post income redistribution programmes in order to realise improvement and stabilisation of the income of poor farmers in the most effective way.

Keywords: rice mortgage scheme, social welfare, low-income farmers

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