

Original Research Article

How does the systematic points system promote the development of green and quality agriculture: Based on a case study of Youxiqiao Village, Hunan Province

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Abstract: This paper takes Youxiqiao Village in Xinhua County, Hunan Province as a case to explore the mechanism and practical path of the systematic points system in boosting green and quality agriculture. It finds that from the perspective of "institution-technology-morality" synergy, the points system deeply integrates with the demands of green and quality agriculture, forming a complete innovative model for coordinated rural governance and agricultural development. The model defines behavioral boundaries and reward-punishment standards through institutionalized rules, supports full-process supervision and transparent operation via technological tools, and fosters endogenous motivation through moralized recognition. Linked by the points system, the three dimensions effectively solve problems such as difficult supervision, insufficient incentives and lack of recognition in the promotion of green and quality agriculture, providing a replicable path for the high-quality development of green and quality agriculture under China's rural revitalization strategy.

Keywords: points system; green and quality agriculture; rural governance; rural revitalization

1. Problem presentation and literature review

As China's rural and agricultural development enters a critical stage of transformation and upgrading, green and quality agriculture, which balances ecological protection and agricultural product quality and safety, has become a key direction for agricultural modernization and sustainable development. In December 2024, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs issued guiding opinions to accelerate the comprehensive green transformation of agricultural development. The Fourth Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee clearly deployed the modernization of agriculture and rural areas and required coordinated development of technological, green and quality agriculture. However, in practice, green and quality agriculture faces challenges including high production costs, difficult production supervision, low farmer participation and weak consumer trust, which restrict its large-scale promotion. Solving incentive and constraint problems through institutional design has become an important research topic.

Existing studies mostly focus on a single dimension of institution or digital technology, lacking in-depth analysis of their interaction and synergistic mechanism. As an important rural governance tool, the points system starts from village regulations, externalizes moral values into behavioral norms, stimulates endogenous momentum, and acts as an "adhesive" for the deep integration of institution and technology. Relevant studies show that the points system can reshape rural communities and lay a governance foundation for green and quality agriculture.

Youxiqiao Village has innovated rural governance through a systematic points system, resolved the collective action dilemma, promoted the green transformation of agricultural production, and realized the leap from barren hills to green banks and from deep poverty to common prosperity. Based on this case, this paper reveals the internal logic and practical path of the points system in promoting green and quality agriculture, and provides experience for similar regions.

2. Theoretical basis and analytical framework

(1) Three-Dimensional Elements of Green and Quality Agriculture from the Perspective of New

Institutionalism.

Based on W. Richard Scott's systematic new institutionalism, this paper holds that institutions include formal rules, informal norms and cultural cognition. The three pillars of regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive jointly shape individual and organizational behaviors. The institutionalization of green and quality agriculture relies on the synergy of three core elements:

Institutionalized rule systems are the foundation. They clarify rights and responsibilities, set behavioral boundaries for agricultural production, and encourage compliant behaviors while punishing violations. In Youxiqiao Village, institutionalization is reflected in village regulations on fertilizer and pesticide use, ecological protection and green production standards, shaping villagers' recognition of institutional rules.

Technological support is the carrier and enhancer. Modern information and monitoring technologies realize precise and transparent supervision of agricultural production, solving information asymmetry and ensuring the implementation of institutional rules. Digital platforms integrate governance technologies, create public space for villagers' participation, and guide standardized behaviors through points ranking, strengthening institutional constraints.

Moral internalization transforms formal rules into cultural cognition. Through value guidance and cultural cultivation, agricultural producers internalize green and quality agriculture into shared beliefs, turning external constraints into intrinsic pursuits. This moral recognition also needs consumer participation to form a market consensus of "high quality for high price" and a sound development ecosystem.

(2) "Institution-Technology-Morality" Synergistic Framework.

This paper constructs an "institution-technology-morality" synergistic framework to analyze how the points system promotes green and quality agriculture. The three elements are integrated by the points system: it converts institutional requirements into quantifiable indicators, realizes dynamic monitoring through digital platforms, and forms moral incentives through points display, redemption and ranking. The points system promotes the integration of formal rules, informal norms and cultural cognition, driving the development of green and quality agriculture.

In this framework, institutionalization provides rules for technology application; technology offers tools for institutional implementation; morality creates an identity environment for system operation. The points system binds the three elements and activates their interactive effects, helping green and quality agriculture transform from concepts to actions and from norms to consciousness.

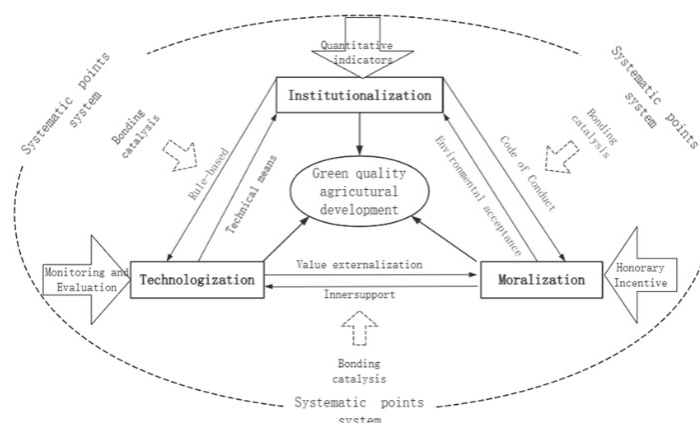


Figure 1. Synergistic analysis framework of "institution-technology-morality".

3. The Youxiqiao model of promoting green and quality agriculture via the points system

3.1. Overview of Youxiqiao Village and its green transformation

Youxiqiao Village is located in a limestone arid area with low per capita arable land, once a provincial-level poor village with fragile ecology. Since 2007, led by the village Party branch, the village has adhered to the concept of "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets", implemented strict ecological protection rules, and carried out large-scale afforestation, raising the forest coverage rate to 92.8%. It has developed green agriculture and rural tourism, realizing the transformation from poverty to prosperity.

By 2024, villagers' per capita annual income reached 23,600 yuan, village collective income 2.78 million yuan, and total assets over 100 million yuan. The village has won more than 60 national honors, and its points system governance model has been promoted to nearly 80,000 villages nationwide.

3.2. Essence and characteristics of the Youxiqiao model

The core of the model is to integrate institutionalized rules, technological support and moral recognition through the systematic points system, forming a new path of green agricultural development featuring self-governance, rule of law and rule of virtue. It has three typical characteristics: Systematic design. The points system covers rural governance, industrial development, business services, Party member management and cadre assignment, with detailed indicators for ecological protection, agricultural input use and green production technologies, turning abstract green concepts into operable norms. Dynamic adjustment. Since 2007, the points system has upgraded four times from manual 1.0 version to market-oriented 4.0 version, adapting to the development needs of green and quality agriculture through technological integration. Shareholding linkage. Points are linked to village collective economic shares, realizing "points quantification - share conversion - dividend realization". Green production behaviors are converted into economic benefits, strengthening moral recognition and stimulating endogenous impetus.

4. Mechanism of the points system in promoting green and quality agriculture

4.1. Institutional normative mechanism: From village regulations to points details

Youxiqiao Village has established a multi-level rule system for green agricultural production: The first level is village regulations, regarded as the "basic law" of the village, clarifying bottom-line requirements such as restricting fertilizer and pesticide use and banning firecrackers. The second level is points management rules, breaking down principles into 35 reward indicators and 41 penalty indicators covering green production and environmental protection, forming a "positive incentive + negative constraint" mechanism. The third level is operation rules, refining scoring standards, data collection and review processes to ensure fairness, forming a closed loop from principles to guidelines for green and quality agriculture.

4.2. Technology-enabled mechanism: From manual management to digital governance

The digital points platform promotes efficient, transparent and precise supervision of green agriculture in three ways: Digital data collection. The village assigns a unique QR code to each household, realizing real-time recording and uploading of farmers' green production behaviors through mini-programs, improving data accuracy and rebuilding village publicity. Platform-based points management. The "Shanzhimei" mini-program realizes online application, review, announcement and inquiry of points, ensuring transparency and villagers' right to know, enhancing system credibility. Data-driven decision-making. The platform analyzes behavioral data to identify problems and provide targeted support for policy formulation, such as organizing green control training for farmers with low compliance points. Digital technology reduces operation costs, improves governance efficiency, and strengthens the fairness and authority of the points system, providing technical support for green and quality agriculture.

4.3. Moral internalization mechanism: From external constraints to internal recognition

The points system guides villagers to internalize green production norms into moral recognition through three paths: Public opinion supervision. Regular points publicity creates an atmosphere of catching up with advanced; high-point households gain respect, while low-point households face public pressure, turning green production into a reputation issue. Exemplary leadership. Party members and cadres take the lead in green production, afforestation and voluntary labor, driving villagers to follow and spread green awareness. Cultural cultivation. Regular exchange meetings and training activities strengthen green ecological culture, making ecological protection and green production voluntary values. Moral internalization turns hard constraints into soft habits, forming endogenous driving force for green development.

5. Design and implementation path of the points system

5.1. Design of points rules

The points system adopts the "three-up three-down six-step revision method" to collect public opinions,

ensuring rules reflect villagers' will. It sets basic points and management-construction points, covering agricultural production, sales, resource conservation and pollution control. The system is piloted for one year, revised dynamically, and has been updated eight times from version 1.0 to 4.0, maintaining adaptability.

5.2. Pathways to green and quality agriculture development

Ecological awareness cultivation and production transformation. Points assessment encourages afforestation and green production, promotes ecological models such as rice-fish farming, and converts points into economic benefits to accelerate green transformation. Industrial system construction and integration. The village forms a "one village, multiple products" green industrial pattern, builds industrial bases, strengthens brand building, and develops agriculture-tourism integration to extend the value chain. Regional coordinated development. The village promotes the points system experience to surrounding areas and nationwide, playing a demonstration role and forming a regional coordinated development pattern.

6. Conclusions

The systematic points system promotes green and quality agriculture through the synergy of institution, technology and morality, solving practical problems in green agriculture promotion. The success of Youxiqiao Village lies in systematic design, dynamic adjustment, benefit linkage of "points to shares to dividends" and digital management support. The points system turns green concepts into actions, providing a replicable model for agricultural green transformation in similar regions.

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