

**Progress Report of Integrated Sustainable Development Project at Wanxing Township,
Shidian County of Yunnan Province
(2022 to 2023)**

1. Project Overview

Wanxing Township is located at the western border of Shidian County, Yunnan Province. **It consists of 7 villages**, including Wanxing, Changlangba, Xiazhai, Zhongshan, Dong'an, Dashui and Niuwangtang. **About 40% of the villagers rely on farming** for their livelihood. This includes cultivating green peas, corn, or raising pigs. However, the local **infrastructure is inadequate, and due to low levels of education among the villagers as well as outdated farming and animal husbandry techniques, farmers lack bargaining power**. In addition, the pandemic in the past few years has led to **job loss for many migrant workers**, forcing them to return home to farm, which added pressure to rural employment. According to the Wanxing Township Government Report in 2020, the **average net monthly income per capita was only RMB 770**.

Furthermore, smallholder farmers lack the awareness on environmental protection and **frequently use chemical fertilizers and pesticides**. This does not only drive up **production cost but also leads to soil, air, and water pollution** which is detrimental to the sustainability of agriculture and raises food safety concerns.

In 2022, Heifer Hong Kong launched the Wanxing Township Project, aiming to **support 900 low-income farm households**. The project seeks to improve farmers' income and improve the environment through the development of **beef cattle production and eco-friendly agriculture**.

Through the **establishment of 7 farmer cooperatives**, the project will **provide smallholder farmers with technical training on raising cattle and promote circular agriculture** that integrates animal husbandry with crop farming. We **encourage farmers to use silage as cattle feed and plant high-yield forage grass, reducing the use of pesticides and fertilizers**. This approach will effectively **increase productivity, improve the environment and drive sustainable development** in local agriculture and animal husbandry.

Lastly, Heifer Hong Kong helps cooperatives **build partnership with both government and corporations**, enabling them to leverage local natural assets while integrating resources from multiple collaborative platforms. Ultimately, this will **empower disadvantaged smallholder farmers to become self-reliant**.

2. Project Progress

Objective 1: Increase farmers' income by developing circular agriculture which integrates crop cultivation with animal husbandry

- **Distributed 500 high-quality Simmental and Angus cattle** to 500 households. Purchased insurance for the cattle. Some of the cows have given birth to a total of **196 calves**. Together with the existing cattle, the current total no. of cows is 2,196.
- The first batch of farmers has **cultivated 934 acres of forage, providing ample nutrition** for the cattle.

- **Blood tests and vaccinations** have been administered to the cattle for disease prevention and to ensure their health.
- 345 person times of training sessions were conducted on topics such as **cattle prenatal care, calf rearing and disease prevention**. 150 person times of on-site demonstrations were provided, 14 technical personnel were trained up.
- An additional 400 farmers are preparing for and learning about cattle procurement.
- The Zhongshan Village Farmer Cooperative is **developing organic tea** and aiming to produce **500 catties of dried tea leaves**. The cooperative members have learned tea processing techniques and are exploring product development opportunities.

Objective 2: Establish service-oriented farmer cooperatives; cultivate a sense of mutual help among villagers

- **7 village-level farmer cooperatives have been formed** and operated by dedicated personnel, providing services such as **collective purchase of agricultural supplies to reduce costs, deliver training on animal husbandry and offer services on feed and agricultural product processing and packaging**.
- In addition to providing training on operation and financial management, four cooperative leaders participated in a **marketing workshop for agricultural product development in Beijing**, thus helping smallholder farmers maximize their economic benefits.

Objective 3: Improve awareness on environment protection and public hygiene; organize activities to care for those in need

- Farmers learn to keep cattle in pens and shift away from traditional grazing practices, thus **reducing damage to the natural environment**.
- The cooperatives in Dong'an and Niuwangtang teach farmers to use **cattle manure as organic fertilizer for composting, hence reducing the use of chemical fertilizers**.
- Zhongshan Village Cooperative helps farmers decrease the use of pesticides and fertilizers through the development of organic tea.
- Women's Self-help Groups were set up to organize activities such as making dumplings and **visiting the elderly** as well as **community cleaning** during Women's Day, Dragon Boat Festival and Double Ninth Festival.

3. Project Story



Yang Zhi, aged 61, is one of the first project farmers in Wanxing Township. After joining the cooperative, he decided to participate in the beef cattle industry and managed to purchase a pregnant Simmental cow for about a quarter of the usual price. "At my age, I can't do other types of work, but now I can raise cattle and take care of it every day. It contributes significantly to my family's income throughout the year. I feel very happy."

Yang, the project farmer and his newly bought cattle

Since the establishment of the farmer cooperatives, the project team actively sourced high-quality cattle by visiting cattle farms and explored different breeds, as well as provided training to project farmers on breed characteristics and disease prevention. After discussions, the cooperatives decided to collectively purchase quality Simmental and Angus cattle for smallholder farmers at reasonable prices. After inspection, the project team purchased insurance, attached ear tag and gave vaccinations to the cattle. Heifer Hong Kong's project will continue to provide technical training and support through the cooperatives, aiming to address issues such as funding shortage and a lack of animal husbandry skills, thereby developing beef cattle production in Wanxing Township.

The recipient farmers are also committed to "Pass on the Gift" after 18 months by sharing the equivalent value of the livestock's offspring as well as knowledge and techniques with other families in need. This practice will facilitate more smallholder farmers to develop beef cattle production and multiply the impact of donations, eventually achieving sustainable development in the communities.

4. Photos



Technical personnel visit farmers regularly to teach animal raising techniques



Project staff visit cattle farms to source for the right breed



Technical personnel provided inspection to ensure cattle quality and health



Dong'an Village organized dumpling making activity to care for the elderly



Farmers learn tea roasting techniques



Cooperatives help members to purchase agricultural supplies collectively and save cost



Women's group organizes the villagers for a community clean-up



Project farmers sign "Passing on the Gift" agreement