

Science and technology communication oriented towards china's rural population

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As a large developing country in which agriculture constitutes a major part in its national economy, China supports 22 percent of the world population with no more than 10 percent of the world's total arable land. Compared with the rest of the world, the rural areas in China demonstrate its peculiar characteristics as well as similarities. The wide expanse of rural areas with somewhat too large a population, low per capita possession of natural resources, small-scale house-hold operation, low productivity and an underdeveloped rural infrastructure, all these have had a serious negative impact on the communication of science and technology in the country's rural areas. Although there is tremendous demand for science and technology in the rural areas, the badly insufficient educational capacity hinders a fast and effective popularization of science and technology among the rural population.

Therefore, there is large room and broad perspective for developing informal science education that suits the conditions in China's rural areas. Entrusted by the Chinese government with the responsibility of promoting and organizing science and technology popularization activities all over the country, the China Association for Science and Technology (CAST) and its local organizations have in the past 50 years and more, with the aim to enhance the scientific awareness and practical skills among the rural population, unfolded large-scale science popularization and training campaigns and made due contributions to the development of human resources in rural areas of China.

Having bidden farewell to the era of shortage of agricultural produce, China's countryside has as a whole developed into the well-to-do stage, with the primary task of economic restructuring and increasing the income of farmers. At the beginning of the new century and with the country's accession to WTO, the science and technology popularization work in China's rural areas has to meet the new challenge of further enhancing the scientific quality and skill level of the rural population so as to better serve the needs of the ongoing restructuring of rural economy and modernization.