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**Factors Influencing Chinese Agricultural Students' Intentions
towards Larger Dairy Farm Management Jobs**

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Abstract

Larger dairy farms are recognised as the desired model and an increasing trend in the Chinese dairy industry. However, the ability to develop larger dairy farm models is restricted—not by financial issues, but by a lack of capable managers. Agricultural students tend to be the main resource for the knowledge and skills required on contemporary larger dairy farms; thus, attracting them is a topic of concern. However, most research on Chinese agricultural students has identified a reluctance to work in agricultural jobs. The career choice intentions of Chinese students has only attracted research interest in recent years, and tends to treat graduates in general regardless of majors. Moreover, motivation research in China has concentrated only on urban employees. Thus, the existing research does not match the urgent need to identify ways to attract students to this field of employment. There is a need for research that specifically explores agricultural students' intentions to work on larger dairy farms.

This study employs a conceptual model that combines motivation and career choice, based on job attributes theory and social cognitive career theory. By using a quantitative research method among students in two domestic agricultural universities, this study explores students' expectations and perceptions of larger farm management jobs, particularly in the dairy industry, and the factors influencing their intentions to work in these jobs. This study uses a descriptive method to address the research objectives, and a regression model to investigate the influencing factors.

The findings show that personal development is the most highly ranked students' expectations. The expectation of stable job was positively linked to the larger dairy

farm management jobs choice intention, whereas expectations of social dignity, high payment and developed region were negatively associated with this job choice intention. In aspects of perceptions of larger farm management jobs, especially dairy, people who perceived this job equivalent to raising animals were more likely to choose this job. And negative perceptions led to the negative intentions to choose this job, such as this job was not beneficial to find a boyfriend or girlfriend, this job brings inconvenience because of remote locations. In contrast, personal factors—such as voluntary enrolment, farm-related experiences and previous considerations of working on a larger farm—were significantly correlated with positive intention. Regarding contextual factors, parental influence was negatively correlated with intention, while school career support was positively associated with intention.

This study is the first attempt to investigate the factors influencing Chinese agricultural students' intentions to choose employment in larger dairy farm management jobs. The findings confirm the relevant theory regarding motivation and career choice intention, and the importance of the current cooperative programmes established between dairy farm enterprises and universities. This study recommends future research on agricultural students that involves more practical fieldwork experience—preferably in a direct context in larger dairy farm management roles—to further knowledge in this field.

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