

# Study on the Revitalization and Reuse of Idle Land in Rural Areas in the Context of Rural Revitalization

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**Abstract:** In the context of implementing rural revitalization, the problem of idle land in rural areas has been an unavoidable issue. A large amount of agricultural land in rural areas is occupied, and there are more and more residential bases and abandoned plants, and the phenomenon of idle land needs to be solved urgently. This paper takes idle land in rural areas as the research object, based on the causes of idle land in rural areas, analyzes the risks of idle land in depth, and proposes corresponding countermeasures and suggestions to revitalize idle land in the light of the actual situation, in order to fundamentally solve the problem of idle land in rural areas.

**Keywords:** Rural Revitalization; Rural Idle Land; Revitalization and Reuse

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## Introduction

With the rapid development of social economy and the acceleration of urbanization, the contradiction between human and land has become increasingly acute. The country has launched the strategy of "rural revitalization" to stimulate farmers to actively participate in building a beautiful countryside, enhance farmers' sense of access, and maintain social harmony and stability in rural areas. In rural areas, the problems of abandoned arable land and inefficient land use are becoming more and more prominent. A large amount of idle land in rural areas will have a negative impact on the implementation of rural revitalization strategy. If left unattended, it will inevitably intensify the conflict between people and land and increase the difficulties of rural construction. The revitalization and reuse of land resources is of great importance to the realization of rural revitalization strategy.<sup>[1]</sup>

## 1. Definition of idle land in rural areas

Idle land is land that has been left idle for a long time and not fully used. From the social point of view, this land is not developed and not used by people or government. It has two main characteristics: firstly, it is arable land that has exceeded the growth cycle of crops, and secondly, it is land that is not fully utilized as a resource and does not serve its purpose for society. Idle land can be divided into two types of idle land in cities and towns and idle land in rural areas. In general, land that has the function of cultivation, or can bring benefits is considered as unused land if it is abandoned or unused for a long time<sup>[2]</sup>.

## 2. Reasons for the formation of idle land in rural areas

Idle land in rural areas is formed, firstly, with the accelerated urbanization process, the siphoning effect of cities on rural labor is getting stronger and stronger. Second, there is a big gap between inputs and outputs. Urbanization has accelerated and production costs have increased dramatically. Third, some of the rural idle farmland flow unreasonable. The laws and regulations on rural land transfer are not perfect. Fourth, it is constrained by the traditional culture. Rural farmers who go out to work are not willing to transfer their land<sup>[3]</sup>. In addition to the aforementioned agricultural and non-agricultural lands, there are also lands that have no utilization value. In addition, overuse has resulted in unavailable or inefficient use of land<sup>[4]</sup>.

## **2.1 Policy factors**

The policy reasons for the large amount of idle land in rural areas: First, the main source of income for local governments is the sale of land, and the large-scale and unscientific land grants for sale have led to a large amount of high-quality land being auctioned off, increasing the possibility of abandonment. Some local governments also transfer land to developers and companies for free or at low prices in order to attract more funds, resulting in large areas of land being abandoned and left unused; second, governments at all levels only care about approval, regardless of the aftermath, and officials at all levels of government and departments only care about performance assessment, indifferent to the large amount of idle land.

## **2.2 Economic factors**

Land idleness is not simply a matter of economic development. The economic problems in rural and urban areas are completely different. Most of the educated and physically capable laborers choose to go out to work, while women, old people and children who stay at home find it difficult to manage and cultivate the land effectively. Second, due to the "scissors difference" between agricultural and industrial products, the trade deficit between agricultural and industrial products has been widening, causing a sharp rise in raw materials and production costs of agricultural products, making farmers reluctant to farm for a living.

## **2.3 Ideological factors**

In addition to the above-mentioned reasons, there are also conceptual reasons for the idleness of rural land: First, the farmers' concept of "small farmers" makes them reluctant to cultivate and transfer their land, resulting in uncultivated arable land. Even if farmers are willing to transfer, the complicated policy of land transfer will result in farmers not transferring their land even if they are not willing to cultivate it; second, because land is the "lifeblood", the traditional concept of land protection is difficult to adapt to modern agriculture; third, because land ownership is unclear, resulting in similar plots of land not taken over.

## **3. The risk of idle land in rural areas**

### **3.1 Rural economic risks**

In the current environment, farmers going out to work makes the labor resources in rural areas more scarce, which makes the problem of idle land more prominent and plunges the rural economy into depression, thus inhibiting the economic development of the country. As far as the economic development of China's rural areas is concerned, there is still a certain degree of relative poverty despite the fact that poverty eradication has been largely completed <sup>[5]</sup>. Therefore, the development and revitalization of the countryside can only be promoted if the land is fully utilized. Although many people have gone out to work to improve the income of farmers, if all these unused lands are utilized, the income brought by agriculture is relatively substantial, which will be of great help to promote rural revitalization.

### **3.2 Food security risk**

Idle land reduces the area of arable land, degrades the growth function of crops, and if left unused for a long time, the physical properties of the soil deteriorate, making it less fertile or even lost. As the main food supply force, the danger of large amount of idle land for food security is obvious, and our country faces a problem of feeding 1.4 billion people with limited land. On the surface, our country's food production is increasing every year, but all of this is done by chemical fertilizers and soil fertilization, which will affect our future development and thus our food security. The implementation of the "rural revitalization" strategy is crucial to ensure the food security of the Chinese people, so the series of problems that arise from idle land cannot be tolerated.

### **3.3 Ecological and environmental risks**

From the perspective of ecological environment, rural area is a complete environment, and if a large amount of unused land exists in rural areas, it can easily lead to soil barrenness and soil fertility decline. The disposal of rural waste directly affects the ecological environment of the countryside and the increase of rural productivity and sustainable development. It not only occupies a large amount of land, but also creates environmental hazards by polluting the surrounding water bodies and soil.

## **4. Suggestions for countermeasures to revitalize and reuse idle rural land**

### **4.1 Policy Countermeasures**

First of all, idle land in rural areas should be cleaned up and classified, and relevant laws and regulations should be formulated to restrict enterprises from engaging in massive land hoarding and enclosure activities for profit, and to increase penalties. The idle land held by contractors should be recovered in due course, and they should be ordered to pay for the unused land, and a scientific and reasonable recovery system should be formulated. Secondly, the dynamics of idle land should be monitored using relevant technical means, the registration of each piece of land in each village should be strengthened, and verification should be conducted on a household-by-household basis, and unused land should be cleaned up and filed in a timely manner. Finally, a reasonable evaluation system should be established to reduce the phenomenon of the government selling a large amount of land in order to increase its political performance. Under the guidance of policies, idle rural land should be cleaned up, idle rural residential bases should be registered, and places with conditions can take the lead in implementing a reclamation system; scientific and reasonable planning and revitalization of idle land should be carried out.

### **4.2 Economic countermeasures**

Faced with a large amount of unused land, it is important to firmly seize the opportunity to develop rural revitalization. Improve the basic conditions in the countryside so that farmers can have access to medical care in the villages and their children can go to school nearby. Increase various subsidies for food production and invest more in agriculture. Liberalize the transfer of land and house bases, so that farmers can voluntarily transfer their unused land. At the same time, increase penalties for long-term abandonment by imposing annual fines and replacing taxes with fines, depending on the circumstances, to increase the cost of land hoarding for businesses. Further reduce the cost of land transfer and promote land transfer. Those who illegally occupy public construction land must be forcibly reclaimed; the government should provide appropriate financial subsidies for surplus arable land in rural areas, in addition to policy support.

### **4.3 Ideological countermeasures**

First, we should conduct extensive publicity through the network to make farmers change their mindset; establish network access to agricultural knowledge to ensure that basic agricultural technology knowledge can be realized at home. Second, we should reason and move to publicize the risks of idle land in place to stimulate the enthusiasm and initiative of farmers. Fourth, in the process of using and developing idle land in rural areas, farmers are encouraged to actively develop unused arable land. Farmers will be made aware of how unused land affects rural revitalization, better understand the urgency of revitalizing and utilizing unused land, and actively cooperate with government staff. This process will both enhance farmers' awareness and enable the effective use of idle rural land.

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