

Current Status and Strategic Research on the Development of Agricultural Products in Guangdong Province under the Background of Cross-border E-commerce

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Abstract: Cross-border e-commerce has gradually become an important driving force for the development of Guangdong Province. Cross-border e-commerce of agricultural products injects new vitality into the agricultural economy in Guangdong Province. This paper analyzes the current situation of agricultural product development in Guangdong Province under the background of cross-border e-commerce. It also analyzes the existing problems in cross-border trade of agricultural products, such as the imperfect agricultural product logistics system, uneven product quality, and insufficient talent for cross-border e-commerce. In response to these issues, measures are proposed to strengthen the construction of the logistics system, establish a standardized system for agricultural products, and focus on talent development in cross-border e-commerce of agricultural products. These measures provide decision-making references for promoting the healthy development of cross-border e-commerce of agricultural products in Guangdong Province.

1. Introduction

In July 2021, The General Office of the State Council issued the Opinions on Accelerating the Development of New Forms and Models of Foreign Trade, which listed cross-border e-commerce as the first new form of foreign trade, clearly proposing to expand the development space of foreign trade, improve the efficiency of foreign trade operation, and further promote the innovation and development of cross-border e-commerce. In December 2021, the General Office of the Guangdong Provincial People's Government issued the Notice on Several Policy Measures to Promote the High-quality Development of Cross-border E-commerce, which is not only an important measure to promote the high-quality development of cross-border e-commerce, but also an effective way to promote the expansion and quality improvement of new trade formats. Guangdong Province is China's largest economic province, is also a large agricultural province, characteristic agricultural resources are rich, agricultural products have extremely high international competitiveness, agricultural product supply and demand market is deeply embedded in the global trade

network[1].Relying on Internet technology, cross-border e-commerce has distinct advantages and strong development momentum in recent years, which has created new opportunities for agricultural products to expand international market share. Therefore, this paper combines Guangdong agricultural products with cross-border e-commerce, and promotes the upgrading and transformation of agricultural products export trade.

2. Development status of cross-border trade of agricultural products in Guangdong Province

2.1. Guangdong Province has obvious geographical advantages

With its unique geographical location and obvious resource advantages, Guangdong Province is at the forefront of China's reform and opening up, and is of great strategic significance to China's economic development. Guangdong Province is an important part of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, with the location advantage of facing Southeast Asia and adjacent to Hong Kong and Macao. It is also an important hub of China's "Belt and Road" Initiative, forming a major international channel for exchanges between the mainland and overseas[2].With the dividend brought by geographical location and unique agricultural resources, Guangdong Province has driven the development of cross-border e-commerce in the province and accelerated the flow of economic elements of agricultural products. Statistics show that the import and export scale of agricultural products in Guangdong Province reached a record high in 2022, with the total import and export trade reaching 330.18 billion yuan, an increase of 28.1% year-on-year, accounting for 14.8% of the total import and export value of agricultural products in the country. Among them, the export value of agricultural products was 115.77 billion yuan, up by 69.1 percent. In 2022, the import and export scale of cross-border e-commerce in Guangdong Province reached 645.4 billion yuan, an increase of 95% year-on-year, and the scale exceeded 30% of the national total. This shows the rapid development of cross-border e-commerce in Guangdong Province.

2.2. Policy dividend for the development of cross-border e-commerce of agricultural products

The sustainable development of cross-border e-commerce enterprises and foreign trade of agricultural products in Guangdong Province cannot be separated from the support and guarantee of government policies. By February 2022, Guangdong Province has set up a total of 21 cross-border e-commerce comprehensive pilot zones to achieve full coverage of the province. In February 2016, the Implementation Plan for Promoting the Development of Rural E-commerce in Guangdong Province was issued, providing new opportunities for the development of rural e-commerce in the province. During the 14th Five-Year Plan period, Guangdong Province will further improve the relevant policies for the development of cross-border e-commerce of agricultural products, such as promoting the standardized construction of rural e-commerce industrial parks and grassroots demonstration stations. Chenghai District of Shantou City and Lishui Town of Nanhai District of Foshan City have successively become comprehensive pilot areas of "cross-border e-commerce of agricultural products", taking cross-border e-commerce of agricultural products as a breakthrough and B2B export as the main direction, and continuously improving the development environment of cross-border e-commerce through the new model of the whole process of cross-border e-commerce of agricultural products, and promoting the development of the whole industrial chain and business mode of cross-border e-commerce. Promoting industrial transformation and upgrading [3].

3. Problems in the development of cross-border e-commerce of agricultural products in Guangdong Province

3.1. The agricultural product logistics system is not complete

The inadequate logistics system is a significant problem that hinders the development of cross-border e-commerce in agricultural products. Compared to other categories, agricultural products have unique attributes such as large quantities, diverse varieties, and difficulties in storage and preservation, which impose higher requirements on transportation timeliness and packaging.

In particular, ensuring the transportation efficiency of fresh agricultural products is challenging. Guangdong Province started relatively late in the electronization of agricultural product logistics, and the standardization level of logistics infrastructure is low, making it difficult to swiftly transport agricultural products to the demand side. The inadequate agricultural product logistics system consumes significant logistics costs and time, affecting the economic benefits of agricultural products and limiting the development of cross-border trade in agricultural products in Guangdong Province.

3.2. The quality of agricultural products is uneven

Despite the increasing trade volume and transaction value of cross-border e-commerce in Guangdong's agricultural products in recent years, the production and sales of agricultural products are still affected by the quality of the products themselves. Specifically, due to the lack of information technology awareness among some farmers and insufficient understanding of the market situation, they blindly pursue economic benefits, focus only on quantity while neglecting quality, and resort to cutting corners to save costs. This results in a lack of guarantee for the quality of agricultural products [4].

In May 2023, the Guangdong Provincial Administration for Market Regulation released the results of the first-quarter food safety supervision and random inspections. The overall rate of non-compliance with food safety standards was 1.78%. By variety, the non-compliance rates for dairy products, grain processed products, meat products, and edible agricultural products were 0.12%, 0.21%, 0.84%, and 4.11% respectively. The most prominent issue was the excessive pesticide residues, accounting for 36.84% of the non-compliant samples. Other factors included microbial contamination, heavy metal and other element pollution, excessive veterinary drug residues, and the improper use of food additives, accounting for 14.04%, 12.04%, 11.64%, and 10.75% of the non-compliant samples respectively.

These results indicate that the current quality of agricultural product production in Guangdong Province does not meet the requirements of safety standards. The standardization of agricultural products is still incomplete, and food safety is not fully ensured.

3.3. There is a shortage of e-commerce talent

Although cross-border e-commerce in agricultural products has experienced rapid development in recent years, it requires professionals with expertise in agricultural products, e-commerce, foreign language communication, logistics and distribution, marketing, and supply chain management to support and manage the complexity and uniqueness of this industry. While Guangdong Province has a relatively abundant talent pool, it struggles to keep pace with the rapid expansion of the e-commerce sector. Currently, the talent for cross-border e-commerce in agricultural products is mainly concentrated among local farmers. However, the overall quality of this group needs improvement, and they lack in-depth understanding of professional knowledge.

Furthermore, Guangdong Province faces various challenges in talent development for cross-border e-commerce, including a lack of specialized courses and a tendency to prioritize theory over practical skills. These issues result in businesses being unable to recruit high-quality professionals, hindering the innovative development of the cross-border e-commerce industry.

4. Development strategies for Guangdong's agricultural products in the context of cross-border e-commerce

4.1. The construction of the logistics system needs to be strengthened urgently

Promoting the construction of cross-border e-commerce logistics infrastructure and improving the agricultural product logistics system is a necessary prerequisite for cross-border e-commerce enterprises to achieve high-quality development [5]. It is also an important guarantee for promoting the transformation and upgrading of cross-border e-commerce and enhancing development efficiency. On one hand, it is necessary to plan and build modern logistics parks and centers, further optimize the park services in cross-border e-commerce comprehensive test zones, and actively promote the coordinated construction of urban and rural logistics facilities. On the other hand, it is important to promote the use of cloud computing, big data, Internet of Things, and mobile communication in cross-border e-commerce logistics. This includes implementing logistics tracking and follow-up for cross-border e-commerce products, updating logistics information in a timely manner, continuously improving the intelligence and digitization of cross-border logistics transportation, actively exploring new cross-border e-commerce logistics models, and building a modern logistics system.

4.2. Establishing a standardized system for agricultural products

The development concept of agricultural products in cross-border e-commerce should focus on high-quality branded agricultural products as the theme, and further strengthen the standardization of agricultural production to ensure the quality and safety of agricultural products [6].

Firstly, the government should collaborate with departments such as the Market Supervision Administration to strengthen the quality standards and regulation of agricultural products. This includes establishing a sound quality testing system, conducting comprehensive supervision and random inspections throughout the entire process of agricultural products, and ensuring that product quality meets the standards.

Secondly, relevant documents regarding agricultural product production standards should be formulated and promulgated. Strict standards should be set for the use of pesticides, fertilizers, and other substances in the agricultural production process, and greater emphasis should be placed on the standardization of agricultural products. This will contribute to the transformation and upgrading of agricultural product brands in Guangdong Province and further enhance consumer confidence in Guangdong agricultural products.

4.3. Cross-border e-commerce talent cultivation

The development of cross-border e-commerce for agricultural products is closely related to the quantity and quality of e-commerce talents. Therefore, efforts should be made to enhance the cultivation and construction of talents in the field of cross-border e-commerce for agricultural products. Firstly, local governments should take the lead in formulating relevant guidance policies. Universities and cross-border e-commerce companies should collaborate to establish talent cultivation standards based on the talent requirements of different positions in cross-border

e-commerce. Secondly, universities should emphasize the combination of theory and practice. It is not enough to simply impart theoretical knowledge; students should be given opportunities for practical training. The curriculum should be targeted, practical, and adaptable to the current situation. Lastly, enterprises need to provide attractive benefits and transparent promotion mechanisms for cross-border e-commerce talents. This will help retain excellent talents and provide them with platforms to showcase their abilities. The important role of talents in the development of cross-border e-commerce enterprises should be fully utilized, assisting in building a versatile e-commerce workforce.

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