

## How to Increase the Interest of the Younger Generation in Working in the Agricultural Sector?

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| Article History                                                                   | Abstract                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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| <p>Received: 06 June 2023<br/>Revised: 05 Sept 2023<br/>Accepted: 11 Nov 2023</p> | <p><i>In Indonesia, the percentage of the younger generation working in agriculture is currently lower. Given that the younger generation makes up a larger portion of the workforce than other generations, the decline in their numbers is a serious issue. According to BPS data, there were only 20,500 young workers in South Sulawesi in 2022 compared to 36,576 in 2018. This indicates a decline in the number of workers in the region between 2018 and 2022. This has dropped by 43.96%; further investigation into this issue is crucial. Therefore, the primary goal of this research is to determine the reasons behind the younger generation's disinterest in working in the agricultural sector. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with a narrative research design using an auto-ethnographic approach. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique with a total of 10 people from a total of 178 Agribusiness students class of 2021, Hasanuddin University, Makassar. The study's findings indicate that the following factors contribute to the younger generation's disinterest in jobs in agriculture: 1) Unfavorable opinions about agricultural labor, which are typified by the notion that it is heavy, dirty, and less prestigious. 2) Stereotypes based on gender: women aren't supposed to work in agriculture. 3) Relative to other sectors, income is thought to be lower. 4) The absence of funding and the unpredictability surrounding agricultural enterprises. 5) The social environment, particularly that of peers and family. 6) Limited availability of contemporary technology. 7) A lack of knowledge about the advantages of working in agriculture.</i></p> |
| <p><b>CC License</b><br/>CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0</p>                                      | <p><b>Keywords:</b> Younger Generation, Lack of Interest in Agriculture</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

### 1. Introduction

In addition to being a significant source of foreign exchange earnings for the nation, the agricultural sector provides life for the vast majority of Indonesians and viewed from the number of people when measured by labor force participation (Sayifullah & Emmalian, 2018). It is important to take into account the skills of the workforce because labor can play a crucial role in the success of regional development (Sakdiyah. 2023). For this reason, labor absorption plays a crucial role in promoting economic development (Pratama & Hidayah. 2023).

Since the agricultural sector produces practically all food, agriculture and food are inextricably linked. Production success depends on several supporting factors, one of which is the quality of Human Resources (Setiani et al, 2021). The advancement of the agricultural sector in Indonesia is significantly influenced by human resources (HR) (Monica, 2022). According to Aarsal (2020), there is a correlation between the competitiveness index and the welfare of farmers, and that human quality of farmers has an impact on raising the competitiveness of agricultural entities.

Farmers are among the key players in the agricultural industry (Novitasari et al., 2020). As members of the millennial generation, prospective young farmers have a critical role in reviving the older

farming generation that still holds a dominant position in the agricultural industry (Aziza et al., 2022). Then, according to Zhu et al. (2021), youthful peasants are more advantageous to agricultural development in the long run than middle-aged and old peasants because they have better levels of education, physical power, flexibility, and adaptability.

Yodfiatfinda (2018), however, claims that the issue that has recently gained attention is the decline in the number of agricultural laborers. This issue affects not just the country as a whole but also other nations like the EU. According to Lontakis et al. (2021), one of the main problems with EU agriculture is the number of young farmers is dropping.

The decline in the number of young farmers is considered one of the main weaknesses of European Union agriculture. As with Indonesia, the shortage of young farmers is a very urgent matter that needs to be addressed immediately. This is in line with the presentation by Anwarudin et al (2020) that the low share of young farmers in Indonesia should be a serious concern for the government in future agricultural development programs.

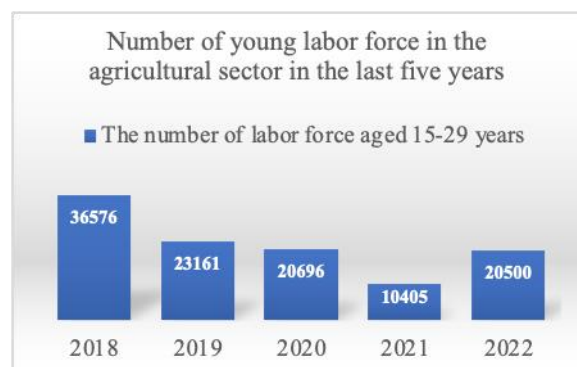
The younger generation's interest in choosing agriculture in the future is eroding due to facts and opinions about the agricultural sector that are less promising for enhancing the economy and quality of life, low human resource quality, and increasingly narrow agricultural land (Arvianti et al., 2019). As a matter of fact, Werembinan et al. (2018) found that the younger generation at the research location held a negative perception towards the agricultural sector. According to Setiawan et al. (2019), youth interest in agriculture is waning a result of the industry's declining appeal when compared to non-agricultural sectors in terms of future personal welfare security. This is certainly something that is very unfortunate considering that the contribution of young workers has an important role.

### Young Generation's Perception of Agriculture

Young people are very important resource required for every nation's development (Twumasi & Jiang, 2019). Young farmers face barriers which hamper the establishment and farming enterprises (Eistrup et al, 2019). The fact that so many workers in the agricultural sector leave the industry to work in other fields indicates that people find farming uninteresting and view it as a lowly profession because it's always hot and dirty (Sopha, 2022).

The observed global increase in the youth population and unemployment have become a source of concern and currently attracts considerable attention in many discussions on international development (Fasakin et al, 2022). A black campaign for agricultural students is created when publications about agriculture primarily feature news about agricultural disasters like pest attacks, floods, droughts, and puso (Susilowati, 2016). Girdziute et al (2022) also explain that youth's unwillingness to work in agriculture is mostly affected by gender, area of residence and youths' belief that work in agriculture does not provide any opportunities for self-realization.

The younger generation's lack of interest in working in South Sulawesi province's agricultural sector demonstrates the following:



**Figure 1:** Graph of young agricultural workers in South Sulawesi. 2023

Source: BPS South Sulawesi Province (2018-2022), data processed. 2023.

The number of young workers, or those between the ages of 15 and 29, is declining, as seen by the graph above. One major issue facing the employment sector is the reduction in the number of young workers. In the last four years, there has been a relative decline in the number of young people involved in the workforce, but in 2022, this number will begin to increase again. The agricultural industry is currently facing significant challenges as more and more farmers are retiring while the younger generation is hesitant to take over the roles played by previous generations in this industry.

Drawing on previously described literature and the aforementioned data, it can be inferred that the issues raised are not limited to easily solved problems but also encompass broader issues. Therefore, the goal of the research is to more thoroughly determine the background that contributes to the younger generation's disinterest in working in South Sulawesi Province's agricultural sector.

## 2. Material and Methods

In order to perform qualitative descriptive analysis, this study combined a narrative study research design with an auto-ethnographic approach. In order to conduct data analysis, this method places a strong emphasis on interpretation and in-depth reflection on the researcher's personal and cultural experiences (Creswell, 2019). Qualitative characteristics highlight natural features and in-depth data analysis to uncover the meaning behind phenomena that seem real. Generally speaking, they are based more on descriptive aspects of field data (Kaharuddin, 2021).

In-depth interviews with informants and documentation studies were the methods employed to collect data. Purposive sampling was used to choose informants from among students enrolled in Hasanuddin University's Agribusiness Study Program in the Department of Agricultural Socioeconomics at the Faculty of Agriculture in Makassar.

Hasanuddin University (Unhas) agribusiness students as informants in this study with the understanding that no graduate decide to become a farmer in 2022. According to data from the Tracer Study, which surveyed Hasanuddin University's agribusiness graduates, the majority of alumni are employed by government organizations and private agricultural enterprises. There are 1,181 students studying agribusiness at Unhas. Ten students from different parts of South Sulawesi Province made up the selected informants.

The number of informants is flexible, so if the researcher feels that the data gathered is insufficient, they can add more informants at any point during the research process. In case the data is adequate, researchers have the option to decrease the quantity of informants. If the chosen person or subject is uncooperative during the interview, you can even switch the informant. This entails choosing informants based on predetermined standards pertinent to the study issue (Heryana, 2018).

### Data Validity

The reliability of data and information in research is contingent upon several factors, including the researcher, the sources or research objects, and readers, particularly those with specialized knowledge or a close connection to the field. It is crucial for researchers to make precise observations, identifications, or measurements in order to guarantee the validity of the data. It is imperative for the researcher to demonstrate the genuine relevance of the data pertaining to the concepts being studied to the ideas, norms, judgments, or experiences being measured and analyzed. To ensure the validity of the research data, the researchers in this study employed source triangulation as a methodology. A triangulation table of the sources used in this study is provided below:

**Table 1:** Source Triangulation for Data Validity. 2023

| No. | Theme   | Sub-Theme                                                     | Observation | Interview | Document |
|-----|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|
| 1.  | General | Response to the agricultural sector                           |             | ✓         |          |
|     |         | The role of the younger generation in the agricultural sector | ✓           | ✓         | ✓        |

|    |                        |                                                                        |   |   |
|----|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|
|    | Understanding          | The younger generation's views on work in the agricultural sector      | ✓ | ✓ |
|    |                        | Response regarding the lack of young people in the agricultural sector | ✓ | ✓ |
|    |                        | Interest in the agricultural sector                                    | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2. | Personal experience    | Agribusiness students' interest in careers in the agricultural sector  | ✓ | ✓ |
|    |                        | Experience working directly in the agricultural sector                 | ✓ |   |
|    |                        | Practical experience or internship in the agricultural sector          | ✓ |   |
|    |                        | Background less interested in agriculture                              | ✓ | ✓ |
|    |                        |                                                                        |   |   |
| 3. | Obstacle factor        | Jobs in the agricultural sector lack prestige                          | ✓ | ✓ |
|    |                        | Difficulty getting involved in the agricultural sector                 | ✓ | ✓ |
|    |                        | Narrow land control                                                    | ✓ | ✓ |
|    |                        | Parents' job                                                           | ✓ | ✓ |
|    |                        | Environmental influences (family & friends)                            | ✓ | ✓ |
|    |                        | Current lifestyle                                                      | ✓ | ✓ |
|    |                        | Non-agricultural income is more promising                              |   | ✓ |
|    |                        | Economic factors                                                       |   | ✓ |
|    |                        | The most significant factor                                            |   | ✓ |
| 4. | Support and Facilities | Positive aspects that are often overlooked                             | ✓ | ✓ |
|    |                        | Government support                                                     | ✓ | ✓ |
|    |                        | Availability of facilities                                             | ✓ |   |
| 5. | Closing                | Alternative careers outside the agricultural sector                    | ✓ |   |

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### Agribusiness Students' Understanding of Work in the Agricultural Sector

In order to effect change in a nation, students, who represent the younger generation in Indonesia, need to receive a sufficient education to broaden their perspectives (Jannah & Sulianti, 2021). Pupils with intelligence have the ability to propose novel ideas that can lead to transformation (Khaerunnisa, 2023). In order for them to advance agriculture using their knowledge, agribusiness students, being a younger generation educated in the agricultural sector, are expected to have positive opinions and perceptions of the agricultural sector (Suprayogi et al. 2019).

The Agribusiness Study Program, Faculty of Agriculture, Hasanuddin University, which annually graduates educated human resources in the agricultural sector, is expected will be able to make a major contribution to agricultural development. However, not all Agribusiness Study Program students have the same interest in agricultural development, especially in the direct processing sector.

The study's findings revealed that students had differing perspectives on agriculture. Among the difficulties encountered by agricultural workers were heavy lifting and unclean work, which was particularly tough for women because men made up the bulk of the workforce. A number of informants also noted a decline in the productivity and competitiveness of the agricultural sector, as well as a lack of innovation in agriculture practices. Makabori & Tapi (2019) contend that the

relationships ingrained in the social structures and formations that contextualize agriculture cannot be divorced from the shifts in how the younger generation views the field going forward.

Conversely, there is a favorable perception of the agricultural sector's role as the foundation for meeting stable and long-term food needs. Several informants underlined how crucial it is to work in this industry to guarantee that there are enough food sources for people to survive. They consider working in the agricultural industry to be a noble profession that significantly improves daily living.

It is also known that Indonesia's agriculture industry is dealing with a number of issues, including a shortage of skilled laborers and a lack of people who are willing to enter the field. However, a number of informants thought that agriculture involved a wide range of stages, from upstream to downstream, and that the work was diverse and broad. Thus, in keeping with this, agricultural students are expected to be able to contribute and develop their scientific fields to the fullest extent possible for the future development of sustainable agriculture, according to Irwandi & Kharisudin (2022).

According to this study, students studying agribusiness have a sophisticated understanding of the agricultural industry overall. They understand the difficulties and issues that face us, but they also understand how crucial agriculture is to our ability to survive. This understanding highlights the need to preserve and grow appreciation for the work done by farmers while simultaneously promoting innovation and boosting the agricultural sector's competitiveness.

### **Personal Experience of Work in the Agricultural Sector**

The study's findings demonstrated that a number of interviewees had an interest in and a good experience with growing plants in their backyard gardens or by participating in farming organizations like Millennial Farmers (TANAMI). Despite the challenges and trial-and-error that some faced, this experience enhanced their interest in agriculture. Still, most informants do not consider agriculture as their primary job or a reliable source of income. The perception of hard agricultural labor, a lack of funds, and a lack of interest in practical agricultural courses at the college level are some of the factors that come to light.

Some information, like in the case of TANAMI, highlights opportunities to grow businesses in the agricultural sector and focuses on various aspects of agricultural business. Even though they have family experience in agriculture, some informants are less inclined to pursue a career in farming, especially if the income from farming is insufficient to meet their family's needs. Some people also notice changes in their immediate surroundings, such as the sale of agricultural land to make way for an industrial area or the sale of land due to rising land prices.

The interview results as a whole demonstrate a range of experiences and interests in the agricultural industry. Many informants still see agriculture as an extracurricular activity, hobby, or sporadic source of income, even in spite of their interest in cultivation activities and awareness of business opportunities. The main factors forming attitudes towards careers in the agricultural sector are perceptions of heavy work, disinterest in course practice, and environmental changes.

### **Background to the Lack of Interest of Agribusiness Students as the Young Generation in Jobs in the Agricultural Sector**

The results of multiple informant interviews suggest that there are a number of intricate underlying reasons why the younger generation is not interested in pursuing careers in agriculture. Novitasari et al. (2020) provided additional explanation for this, stating that the younger generation's lack of knowledge about current agricultural developments and their perception of the agricultural sector as less promising, hopeless, and associated with poverty were the main causes of the decline in interest from this generation.

One of the main things influencing the interest of the younger generation is negative perceptions of work in the agricultural sector, particularly those related to the idea that the work is heavy and dirty. This assertion is in line with the findings of a study conducted by Nugroho (2018), which found that the unfavorable perception of agriculture is due to mud in the fields, labor-intensive hoeing, low product/harvest prices, low wages, the fact that the harvests sold generate relatively little revenue, and

the kind of work chosen as a last resort. This assertion serves as one of the explanations for the younger generation's disinterest in jobs in agriculture.

Obstacles arising from gender stereotypes also included the belief that agriculture is a male-dominated field that demands physical labor, particularly from women. One of the informants, Sarina, made the following claim, which she stated above:

*"As a woman, the view that agriculture is dominated by men, requiring labor and rough work, makes me less interested in being involved in agriculture."*

But as you can see from a number of earlier studies, women play a significant role in agriculture. Gailhard & Bojnec (2021) disclosed that research from various nations indicates that women farmers, especially farm wives, play an important role in the development of new farming income.

The younger generation's career choices are found to be greatly influenced by their social environment, which includes peers and family. If people in the community tend to view success outside of farming, this could lead to a bad perception of jobs in this industry.

Aside from that, the younger generation is primarily influenced by economic factors, wherein they seek employment that offers greater income and financial security. The main draw for the younger generation is the perceived higher income in the non-agricultural sector, but the main obstacles are the lack of financial support and the uncertainty that comes with it. The most common explanation given by informants for this is as follows:

Imran stated that:

*"When my parents still owned land, I saw the lack of income they earned. So with this experience I am motivated to be serious about my education and look for work outside the agricultural sector which can provide a much greater income."*

Then according to Sarina:

*"Because the income from direct agriculture is still confined to raw materials and is therefore lower, I want to become an entrepreneur in the . Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector. Processed agricultural products, on the other hand, have a much higher selling value and can yield higher income."*

Access to contemporary technology is another important factor. Comparing the agricultural industry to other industries that interest them, younger generations perceive it as being less modern and technologically connected.

Environmental factors play a major role in influencing the decision of the younger generation to enter this field, particularly for families who own agricultural land. Even with their educational background in agriculture, interviewees expressed a greater desire for a career outside of agriculture in order to pursue what they saw to be higher levels of economic stability. The main causes of the younger generation's disinterest in actively participating in the agricultural sector are, in general, a lack of knowledge about the benefits of working in agriculture, negative perceptions, a lack of support, and other complicated factors.

### **Government Support and Facilities for Young Generation in the Agricultural Sector**

There are notable differences in the degree of government support and awareness for the younger generation of South Sulawesi who are interested in a career in agriculture, according to the findings of interviews conducted with several informants from different regions. Two informants, Rosmiati and Ripudji, acknowledged that they were unaware of any government initiatives or programs that could assist young farmers in their community. Other informants said they had never heard of any specific support from the government.

According to Rosmiati:

*"I am not aware of any government facilities or assistance aimed at piquing the interest of the younger generation in agriculture in Bulukumba Regency, either through programs or training."*

In the meantime, as stated by Ripudji:

*"I haven't heard of any government programs or assistance for the younger generation in agriculture, especially in Makassar City. I may be missing out on information about such programs."*

On the other hand, some informants asserted that genuine attempts were being made by the government to offer assistance to the upcoming generation of farmers. Ichwan, for instance, gave encouraging details about the government's allocation of land in Pinrang for the cultivation of millennial farmers. Aside from that, Nabilah disclosed that Makassar offered specialized agricultural training for Generation Z, with partnerships between the government and businesses that funded youth interest in the agricultural industry.

In conclusion, there is still a lot of variation in the conditions under which the government offers assistance to youth who are interested in the agricultural industry in the area. While some areas are making noticeable progress, others might not have taken any noteworthy action as of yet. Consequently, it is advised that the government take a more proactive role in interacting with the younger generation and enlisting them in various initiatives and rewards that will heighten their curiosity and engagement in the agricultural industry.

### **Career Alternatives Outside the Agricultural Sector**

Several inferences about the younger generation's disinterest in the agricultural industry can be made based on the findings of interviews with them about their career goals. Due in large part to the stable economy, regular income, and benefits that come with working in an office, the majority of informants tend to favor a career in the private sector or as office workers. The main things that are thought to make working in the agricultural sector less appealing are uncertainty factors. These include plant diseases, weather risks, and fluctuations in commodity prices.

Some informants, nevertheless, are also motivated to start their own business or work in the private sector as entrepreneurs. They believe that the private sector offers more exciting and cutting-edge career options, including chances to manage, innovate, and succeed financially. Having broad access to business networks and information through social media and the internet is another factor that is seen to be supportive of choosing an entrepreneurial path.

The desire of several respondents to continue working in the agricultural sector is another conclusion, but financial limitations are the main barrier. After they have amassed enough money, a few of them intend finally intend to return to farming. Others have aspirations of becoming prosperous farmers or even venturing into the trading of financial instruments like stocks and cryptocurrency.

However, some informants expressed a desire to carry on the family business, suggesting that family customs and inheritance factors continue to be significant motivators for some members of the younger generation to stay in the agricultural industry.

Therefore, a variety of factors, such as economic uncertainty, the desire for a more dynamic and modern career, capital constraints, family heritage and traditions, and financial constraints, can be responsible for the younger generation's lack of interest in working in the agricultural sector. In order to pique the interest of the next generation and guarantee the agricultural sector's sustainability, this understanding can serve as the cornerstone for efforts to empower and develop the sector

**Tabel 2:** Comparison of Results 2023

| No | Research result                          | Previous Research                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Negative perception of agricultural work | Young workers' perceptions that, despite their precarious employment, working in non-agricultural or industrial sectors in metropolitan areas look more impressive (Setiani et al, 2021). Because of the muddy rice fields, labor-intensive hoeing tasks, low product/harvest prices, low wages, relatively low crop prices, and the fact that agriculture is a last-resort industry, it is sometimes |

|                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                 | referred to as dirty work (Nugroho, 2018)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 2. Gender stereotypes                                           | Gender had a negative effect and significantly reduced the willingness to work in agriculture, women were less likely willing to work in agriculture than men (Girdziute et al, 2022). Next to class, gender also emerged as a shaper of young people's dispositions towards farming. This became where custom prevents daughters from inheriting land. As a result, women depend entirely on their brothers, father or marriage for future access to farmland (Huijsmans et al, 2020). One industry that is strongly tied to gender issues is agriculture, beginning with the uneven allocation of labor and the excessive weight placed on women with ambiguous work status (Ibrahim & Mufriantje, 2021). |
| 3. Low income                                                   | The formation of the general public's mindset shows that non-agricultural income is higher than the agricultural sector (Nugroho, 2018).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 4. Lack of financial support/capital                            | The availability of capital is a major tool to encourage youth's participation in agriculture (Twumasi & Jiang, 2019). YF (young farmer) face several barriers when trying to establish and sustain their farming businesses. Commonly identified barriers include the high start-up costs, the difficulties in setting up an agricultural enterprise that is economically viable (Eistrup et al, 2019).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 5. Environmental Influence                                      | Because it can affect the younger generation's interest in carrying on with family-owned farming operations, family support is crucial for the younger generation (Junaedi, 2020).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 6. Access to modern technology is limited                       | Farmers' perceptions of the relative advantage of taking up a new technology or practice are important to adoption outcomes (Greenhalgh et al, 2019). Ghanaian youth admit that agriculture is "small-scale, dirty and low-tech farming" which is described as the opposite of modern work and therefore less desirable (Sumberg et al, 2017)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 7. Lack of understanding of the positive aspects of agriculture | young people need to be sensitised to the opportunities offered by farming, and trained to take advantage of them by approaching farming as a business (Sumberg et al, 2017).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

#### 4. Conclusion

It is possible to conclude from this research that the younger generation's disinterest in working in agriculture is a complicated and multifaceted phenomenon. The results of the investigation into the reasons behind the youth generation's disinterest in jobs in agriculture are as follows. 1) Unfavorable opinion of agricultural labor, defined by the idea that it is heavy, filthy, and less prestigious. 2) Stereotypes based on gender: women aren't supposed to work in agriculture. 3) Relative to other sectors, income is thought to be lower. 4) The unpredictability and lack of funding for agricultural ventures. 5) External factors, particularly those originating from peers and family. 6) Limited

availability of contemporary technology. 7) A lack of knowledge about the advantages of working in agriculture.

### Suggestion

Therefore, in order to shift the paradigm and provide more alluring and encouraging environments for the younger generation to be more interested in and actively involved in developing the agricultural sector, comprehensive and coordinated efforts from the government, educational institutions, and other stakeholders are required.

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