

# The Importance and Place of Family Farming in the World and in Turkey

Aysun YENER

**Abstract**— More than 3 billion people in the world live in rural area and nearly 2,5 billion work in the sector of agriculture. Enterprises which make agricultural production have the rank of family farmer. 56% of total agricultural land is operated by family farming. 85% of total agricultural area in Asian Countries, 62% in Africa, 83% in North and Central America, 68% in Europe and 18% in South American countries are run by family farming. In Turkey, 23% of the population lives in rural area and live off agriculture sector. When all these factors are considered, family farming has an important place throughout the world. Therefore UN and FAO declared the year 2014 “International Year of Family Farming”. Though there is not a clear definition of family farming, some countries started their study by making definition of family farming. According to the definition of FAO, disregarding gender, family farming is the vegetable, animal production, fishery and forestry activities carried out by using family labor force. According to the European Commission family farming is accepted as family corporation. In order to keep production sustainable and efficient of family farmers who conduct traditional production, official definition of family farming was done in United States of America and some Southern American countries. Size of land was defined according to income and production resources in Mexico and according to the income of household. Although there is no specific definition of family farming in Asian countries and in Turkey, agricultural family businesses have an important place in the economy of country. Therefore, structure and development of family farming was analyzed depending on the literature.

**Keywords**— Family farming, farming, rural area, Turkey.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Family farming is the enterprises where family-based activities are run regardless of gender. Family farming which based on family labor force and gives particular importance to sustainability of natural resources and environment has a crucial place throughout the world. Therefore UN and FAO declared the year 2014 “International Year of Family Farming”. Of all 570 million agricultural enterprises in the world, 500 million are run by family farming and 457 million enterprises has less than 2 hectares of production field [1], [2], [3]. Family farmers which compose 95% of total enterprises in the world run 56% of total land in the sense of agricultural field [4]. Agriculture sector is quite important for countries throughout the world.

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Developing countries compose four third of world agricultural production and agricultural sector covers 30% of their GDP in most of these countries (1). 23% of the population lives in rural area in Turkey and live off agricultural production. 99,28% of nearly 3 million agricultural enterprises are family enterprises. Agricultural sectors covers 8,34% of GDP [5]. As it can be understood from here, family farming is one of the most effective components of agriculture in food production both in developing and developed countries [6]. In fact, 842 millions of people are starving throughout the world. Therefore, agricultural sector in which food production is done is quite important as main sector [7].

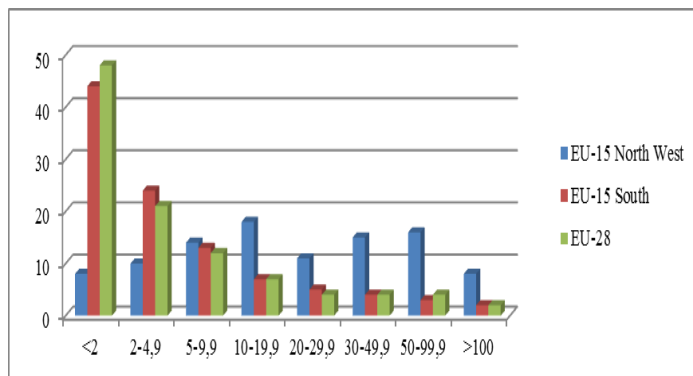
In order to keep production sustainable and efficient of family farmers who conduct traditional production, studies started by making an official definition of family farming which is quite important in the World and in Turkey was done in United States of America and some Southern American countries [8]. There is no clear definition of family farming in Asian countries or in Turkey. With this study, the importance of family farming throughout the world was stated and suggestions were put forward.

## II. FAMILY FARMING ACCORDING TO COUNTRIES

Since family farming is effective in decreasing poverty, protecting agricultural diversity, food security, sustainability of natural resources and environment, preventing migration from rural to urban area, protection of cultural values; current status of family farming was analyzed according to countries below.

### A. Family Farming in European Union

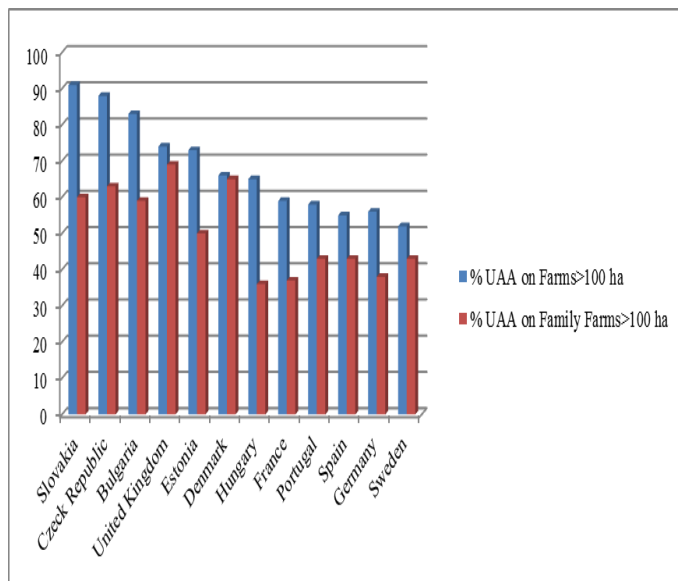
In AB-28, family farming is defined as agricultural organization where all risks related with agricultural enterprises are adopted. Enterprises which conduct family farming provide majority of their capital from family and most of their income from enterprises. There are 13 million agricultural enterprises in European Union averagely and 97% of these enterprises are enterprise owners [9]. Average land width of these enterprises is 14,2 hectare and 85% conduct family farming. 68% of total agricultural land is run [10].



Resource: [9].

Fig. 1 Distribution of Enterprises in AB-28 According to Land (%)

As it is seen in Graphic 1, 48% of enterprises in AB-28, 8% of enterprises in North-West Europe have less than 2 hectares of production land. These enterprises sustain their activities based on family labor force. Land sizes of enterprises which conduct family farming in European Union are quite different when considered in the sense of employment capacity and size of enterprise [10]. Family farming is carried out not only in small but also in big enterprises.



Resource: [9].

Fig. 2 Distribution of Enterprises which run Agricultural Area of more than 100 Hectare in AB-28 and make Family Farming (%)

According to Graphic 2, more than 50% of total enterprises are composed of enterprises which have more than 100 ha. And more than 40% of these enterprises are composed of family farming. The number of enterprises which conduct family farming is quite a lot in England and Denmark [9].

### B. Family Farming in Mexico

There are 5,4 million agricultural enterprises in European Union averagely and 81,3% of these enterprises are enterprise owners. Mexico Ministry of Agriculture, Husbandry, Rural Development, Fishery and Nutrition [11] classified enterprises conducting family farming in three groups namely subsistence family farming, family farming in transition process and consolidated family farming [11], [12].

TABLE I  
AVERAGE SIZE OF FAMILY ENTERPRISES IN MEXICO (HA) AND AVERAGE INCOME (\$)

	Subsistence Family Farming	Family Farming in Transition Process	Consolidated Family Farming
Farm (%)	17,4	56,8	25,8
Average Size (ha)	3,4	5	4,7
Average Annual Income (\$)	1308	2726	3403

Resource: [11], [12]

As it is seen in Table 1, family farming in Mexico was calculated according to land size and income resources. This classification contributes to policy makers and rural investors. Mexico Ministry of Agriculture, Husbandry, Rural Development, Fishery and Nutrition [11] support enterprises conducting family farming with various programs such as equipments and infrastructure investments, capacity increase [13].

### C. Family Farming in Brazil

For enterprises to be regarded as family farming in Brazil; they should be run by the family, have 5-100 ha land and their income should only be obtained from farming income.

TABLE II  
AVERAGE ENTERPRISE SIZE (HA) OF FAMILY ENTERPRISES IN BRAZIL AND AVERAGE ENTERPRISE INCOME (\$)

	Number of Farms	Average Farm Size (ha)	Average Income per Farm(\$)	Family Farm (%)	Share of Land (%)	Share of Production Value (%)
Family Farm	4.367.902	18,4	13.884	84,4	24,3	37,5
Other	807.587	309,2	126.628	15,6	75,7	62,5
Total	5.175.489	31,8	31.283	100	100	100

Resource: [12]

In Brazil which is at the top of the list in agricultural production order in The World, although family farming surpasses compared to other enterprises in the sense of production value. 24,3% of total land is operated in Brazil and 37,5% of total agricultural disposal [14].

### D. Family Farming in China

There is still no clear definition of family farming in China. However, when the general structure of Asia countries are considered; family farming is considered as enterprises which have less than 2 hectares of land, managed by household and

used family labor force in it [15]. Average size of enterprise is 0,5 hectares. It is estimated that there are 193 million enterprises which have less than 2 hectares of land [15], [16], [17]. 95% of the total land in China is run by small enterprises [18].

*E. Family Farming in India*

There is no official definition of family farming in India. There are nearly 117 million enterprises which have less than 2 hectares and it composes 80,6% of total enterprises and 43,5% of the total land is run by family farming [19], [16]. Classification of agricultural enterprises in India is done as small, medium-sized and big enterprises and given in Table 3.

TABLE III  
DISTRIBUTION OF ENTERPRISES IN INDIA (%)

	% Distribution	% Land Distribution
Small (<2 ha)	80,6	43,5
Medium-sized (2-10 ha)	18,1	44,7
Big (>10 ha)	1,3	11,8

Resource: [16]

As it is seen in Table 3, although small enterprises in India are more than medium-sized enterprises, they are close to each other in the sense of agricultural land they run. Since they cannot attain modern techniques and grow scale, incomes of small enterprises are insufficient [19].

*F. Family Farming in Turkey*

23% of the population in Turkey lives in rural area and live off agricultural production. The share of agriculture in employment is 24%. Although the share of agriculture has decreased nearly 50% in the last 20 years in employment, still one person out of 4 is employed in agriculture sector. 51,4% of population is man labor force, 46,1% is woman labor force and 2,5% is child labor force in agriculture sector. 47% is unpaid family worker [5].

There are nearly 3 million agricultural enterprises in Turkey and generally classified according to their size. According to Law of Giving Land to the Farmer no 4753, enterprises which have between 0-500 decare of land are small-scaled agricultural enterprises and named as family farming. Classification of enterprises is given in Table 4. According to this classification, 99,28% of enterprises conduct family farming [5].

TABLE IV

LAND USE STATUS ACCORDING TO ENTERPRISE SIZES IN TURKEY

Size of Enterprise (da)	Number of Enterprises (da)	%	Total Land	%
Total	3.022.127		184.348.223	
-5	178.006	5,89	481.987	0,26
5-9	290.461	9,61	1.952.471	1,06
10-19	539.816	17,86	7.378.022	4
20-49	950.840	31,46	29.531.619	16,02
50-99	560.049	18,53	38.127.032	20,68
100-199	327.363	10,83	43.884.395	23,8
200-499	153.685	5,09	42.075.497	22,82
500-999	17.429	0,58	11.218.554	6,09
1000-2499	4.199	0,14	5.476.930	2,97
2500-4999	222	0,01	695.541	0,38
5000-+	57	0	3.526.175	1,91

Resource: [20].

As it can be understood from Table 4, nearly 84% of enterprises are below 100 decare according to 2001 Agriculture count. These enterprises conduct 42% of total agricultural land [21], [22].

TABLE V  
DISTRIBUTION OF ENTERPRISES ACCORDING TO ECONOMIC SIZE AND TYPOLOGY CLASSIFICATION (%)

Typology Class	Economic Size Class (TL)	Economic Size Class (TL)										
		0 - 000	2 000 - 4 000	4 000 - 8 000	8 000 - 13 000	13 000 - 17 000	17 000 - 26 000	26 000 - 35 000	35 000 - 86 000	86 000 - 200 000	200 000 +	
	Total	100,0	34,5	24,7	23,9	8,5	3,3	2,9	1,2	0,9	0,2	0,0
P1		100,0	47,5	18,4	18,0	6,8	2,9	2,6	1,7	1,6	0,5	0,0
P2		100,0	48,1	19,8	11,1	2,3	4,9	3,6	7,3	2,8	0,1	0,0
P3		100,0	40,9	25,7	20,9	6,5	2,2	2,4	0,7	0,6	0,1	0,1
P4		100,0	21,8	26,8	29,4	12,1	4,0	3,9	1,5	0,5	0,1	0,0
P5		100,0	65,0	-	17,7	2,5	1,1	-	-	4,1	0,5	0,0
P6		100,0	30,0	29,3	25,9	8,0	3,1	2,1	0,7	0,7	0,1	9,0
P7		100,0	21,0	30,4	27,6	10,5	4,8	4,2	0,8	0,7	0,0	0,0
P8		100,0	27,8	26,3	28,2	9,5	3,7	3,0	0,9	0,7	0,1	0,0

- P1:** Specialist Field Crops Farming
- P2:** Specialist Horticulture
- P3:** Specialist Permanent Crops
- P4:** Specialist livestock holdings
- P5:** Specialist granivores
- P6:** Mixed Cropping
- P7:** Mixed livestock holdings
- P8:** Crop production or animal production or Sheep and goat Breeding

Resource: [5].

As it is seen in Table 5, enterprises which make agricultural production generally have 0-8500 TL income. 34,5% of total enterprises have 0-<2.000 TL, %24,7 have 2.000-<4.000 TL, %23,9 have 4.000-<8.500 TL and %8,5 have 8.500-<13.000TL income [5].

Family farming which has such an important place still has no official definition. However in the report of Ninth Development Plan Vegetative Production Specialization Commission, when “population per enterprise in size of agricultural enterprises” are considered, it can be said that agriculture in Turkey are in the level of subsistence enterprise. Great majority of agricultural population make traditional production and enterprises are small family enterprises [23].

### III. SOME STRUCTURAL FACTORS WHICH EFFECT FAMILY FARMING IN TURKEY

In Turkey, primarily Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Husbandry; universities, research institutions and other non-organizational institutions observe and analyze socio-economic structure of "National Family Farming" with workshop, congress, panel and researches. In this sense, macro level studies are carried out in the frame of family farming about organization, financing and supports, marketing and product evaluation, share of woman in family farming, child labor, education, publication and consulting. In the sense of enterprises about family farming, micro level studies are carried out and there is a need for especially contribution in sustainability and supply of family requirements which are basic aims of international family farming.

### IV. RESULTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Nearly 47% of world population lives in rural area (World Bank, 2014). Great majority of this population live off agricultural production. Enterprises which make agricultural production generally do family farming. 72% of enterprises which conduct family farming in 161 countries have less than 2 hectares land, 12% have 1-2 ha land [1]-[4]. These enterprises run 56% of total agricultural land and use family labor. When agricultural data in the world are considered, it is seen that great majority of agricultural production is met by family farming. Labor force in family farming is quite important for being stable capital. 23% of population in Turkey lives in rural area [5]. This population generally works in agricultural sector. There are 3 million agricultural enterprises in Turkey and 99,28% of these enterprises do family farming. 84% of these enterprises have less than 10 decare of production land. They run 42,02% of total land [5]. Family farming has a dominant role in the world and in Turkey. Therefore first of all definition of family farming should be done in the world and in Turkey. Family farming is important for enabling balance of urban and rural area. However, with the effect of popular life style of young section, there is migration from rural to urban area due to insufficient service opportunities. Policies should be developed in order to prevent migration of active population from village to cities. Awareness is raised in public opinion through regulations such as symposium, congress, workshop, exhibition and local product markets etc. and the importance of family farming should be expressed. While policies are made in order to make larger-scale agriculture enterprises in recent years in Turkey, policies should be made considering sustainability and future of family farming. Moreover, rural development institutions should give priority to projects which support family farming.

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