

AGRICULTURAL RESTRUCTURING ASSOCIATED WITH NEW RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN AN GIANG PROVINCE (2015-2020): POLICIES AND RESULTS

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ARTICLE INFO		ABSTRACT
Received:	03/4/2025	Developing agriculture, farmers, and rural areas is a core policy of the Communist Party of Vietnam. Based on the Party's perspectives, localities have implemented various creative approaches tailored to their advantages, achieving positive outcomes. During the 2015-2020 period, An Giang province introduced several policies to promote agricultural and rural development towards modernization, focusing on implementing the agricultural restructuring scheme in connection with new rural development. This paper employs historical, logical, synthetic, and statistical methods to examine An Giang province's policies. It explores the leadership, implementation, and outcomes of agricultural restructuring linked to new rural development in recent years. The research findings indicate relatively stable agricultural sector growth, a positive economic restructuring in agriculture, stronger market linkages in agricultural production through various cooperation models, improved farmer incomes, and a progressively developed rural landscape. The study provides practical scientific evidence for policy-making in agricultural restructuring and new rural development in the coming period.
Revised:	19/6/2025	
Published:	19/6/2025	
KEYWORDS		
Agricultural restructuring		
New rural		
Policy		
Results		
An Giang province		

TÁI CƠ CẤU NÔNG NGHIỆP GẮN VỚI XÂY DỰNG NÔNG THÔN MỚI Ở TỈNH AN GIANG (2015-2020): CHỦ TRƯỞNG VÀ KẾT QUẢ

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THÔNG TIN BÀI BÁO		TÓM TẮT
Ngày nhận bài:	03/4/2025	Phát triển nông nghiệp, nông dân và nông thôn là chủ trương xuyên suốt và nhất quán của Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam. Trên cơ sở quán triệt quan điểm của Đảng, các địa phương đã triển khai thực hiện với nhiều hình thức, cách làm sáng tạo dựa trên lợi thế và đạt được những kết quả tích cực. Trong giai đoạn 2015-2020, tỉnh An Giang đã có nhiều chủ trương, chính sách đề thúc đẩy nông nghiệp, nông thôn phát triển theo hướng hiện đại, trọng tâm là thực hiện đề án tái cơ cấu nông nghiệp gắn với xây dựng nông thôn mới. Bằng việc sử dụng các phương pháp lịch sử, logic, tổng hợp, thống kê, bài viết nhằm khảo cứu đường lối, chủ trương của tỉnh An Giang trong lãnh đạo, tổ chức thực hiện và kết quả tái cơ cấu nông nghiệp gắn với xây dựng nông thôn mới những năm vừa qua. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy, tăng trưởng ngành nông nghiệp tương đối ổn định, cơ cấu kinh tế nông nghiệp chuyển dịch theo hướng tích cực, sản xuất nông nghiệp gắn chặt hơn với thị trường thông qua các mô hình liên kết, thu nhập của người nông dân được cải thiện, diện mạo nông thôn ngày càng phát triển. Qua đó, nghiên cứu góp phần cung cấp thêm luận cứ thực tế cho việc hoạch định chủ trương, chính sách của tỉnh trong cơ cấu lại ngành nông nghiệp và xây dựng nông thôn mới giai đoạn tiếp theo.
Ngày hoàn thiện:	19/6/2025	
Ngày đăng:	19/6/2025	
TỪ KHÓA		
Tái cơ cấu nông nghiệp		
Nông thôn mới		
Chủ trương		
Kết quả		
Tỉnh An Giang		

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34238/tnu-jst.12473>

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1. Introduction

An Giang province has a natural area of over 3,536 km², with more than 80% of the land used for agricultural production. The province's population exceeds 1.9 million, with approximately 68% residing in rural areas. An Giang is recognized as a key agricultural region of the Mekong Delta and the country, playing an important role in ensuring national food security and promoting agricultural exports.

In recent years, An Giang has focused on restructuring its agricultural sector in conjunction with the new rural development program. This is reflected in policies issued and directed by the provincial Party Committee and local government. Agricultural restructuring is considered a core element of the province's economic restructuring strategy, aligning with economic and social development plans. At the same time, An Giang emphasizes sustainable agricultural development by integrating environmental protection measures and climate change adaptation solutions.

Over the years, research on the policies of the Party and the State, as well as the actual situation and solutions for agricultural economic development and new rural construction at both national and regional levels, has resulted in several notable studies.

Based on an assessment of Vietnam's agricultural restructuring from 2014 to 2020, Nguyen Thi Mien [1] affirmed that most of the set targets had been achieved, even surpassing expectations. However, the restructuring process still faced numerous barriers, negatively impacting sustainable development. The author proposed seven groups of solutions to further promote agricultural restructuring in the coming period. Pham Thi Huong Diu [2] emphasized that to promote rural development and identify suitable approaches in the new context, it is necessary to further clarify and flexibly apply theoretical and practical issues in new rural development, particularly at the grassroots level. Vu Van Long and Dao Son Hai [3] analyzed the policies and achievements related to the Party's leadership in high-tech agricultural development associated with new rural development in Vietnam from 2008 to 2021. Based on their findings, they proposed solutions for implementing the model of "ecological agriculture, modern countryside, civilized farmers" in accordance with the vision set forth at the 13th National Congress of the Party. Le Van Bay and Duong Van Son [4] assessed the state of agricultural economic development during the new rural construction process in Pho Yen town, Thai Nguyen province, in recent years. Their findings suggested specific solutions to promote agricultural economic development in line with the local urbanization orientation.

Do Hang Nga and Nguyen Van Nghi [5] synthesized and analyzed the policies and results of the Party's leadership in agricultural economic development in Muong Te district, Lai Chau province, from 2015 to 2022. They derived key lessons to enhance leadership effectiveness in the next phase. The research of Tran Thi Hong and Luong Thi My Chai [6] focused on state management in new rural development in Vo Nhai district, Thai Nguyen province, from 2018 to 2022. By analyzing limitations and challenges, the authors proposed solutions to improve the effectiveness of state management in this field in the coming period. Nguyen Thi Thu Ha [7] examined green agriculture development in connection with new rural construction in Phu Binh district, Thai Nguyen province. The study evaluated achievements and proposed specific land policies, capital sources, and digital transformation solutions to enhance agricultural production efficiency and promote local sustainable development. Bui Tam Trang [8] analyzed the implementation of the Party's agricultural policies in Dong Nai province from 2008 to 2021. The study found that the Dong Nai Provincial Party Committee flexibly applied policies suitable to local conditions, contributing to comprehensive and sustainable agricultural development and enhancing competitiveness in domestic and international markets.

The aforementioned studies have analyzed the current situation, identified causes, and proposed solutions to develop the agricultural economy and build new rural areas in Vietnam and specific localities. These studies aim for comprehensive, efficient, and sustainable agricultural and rural

development. Some research confirms that the Party's policy on agricultural development and new rural construction is appropriate while also drawing lessons to refine and implement this policy in the next phase. However, no systematic study has yet examined the policies and implementation results of agricultural restructuring in connection with new rural development in An Giang province during the 2015-2020 period. Therefore, this paper aims to clarify the policies of the An Giang Provincial Party Committee on agricultural restructuring and new rural construction during this period. By analyzing official documents and practical implementation by the Party Committee and local government, this paper will highlight key achievements, utilizing a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods to ensure a comprehensive assessment and provide scientific and practical foundations for future policy-making.

2. Research methods

The research content is carried out using the following methods: literature review, historical analysis, logical reasoning, synthesis, and statistical analysis. These methods are applied based on reports from the Provincial Party Committee and the People's Committee of An Giang province to clarify the province's policy orientations and assess the outcomes of agricultural restructuring in conjunction with new rural development during the period 2015-2020.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Policy and leadership of the An Giang provincial party committee on agricultural restructuring in connection with new rural development

Resolution No. 26/NQ-TW, dated August 5, 2008, of the 10th Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, on Agriculture, Farmers, Rural Areas, defines the strategic role of agriculture, farmers, and rural areas in the country's industrialization and modernization process. This resolution sets forth the goal of developing a comprehensive, modern, and sustainable agricultural sector that fosters large-scale commodity production with high productivity, quality, efficiency, and competitiveness while ensuring national food security in both the short and long term. It also emphasizes the construction of modern rural infrastructure, rational economic structures, and production organization models that integrate agriculture with industrial, service, and urban development planning. Additionally, it envisions a stable rural society rich in cultural identity, with an educated population, environmental sustainability, and a strengthened political system under the Party's leadership.

In line with the Central Party's resolution, the An Giang Provincial Party Committee issued Plan No. 18-KH/TU on October 14, 2008, regarding agriculture, farmers, rural areas; Resolution No. 05-NQ/TU on September 15, 2011, on new rural development; and Resolution No. 09/NQ-TU on June 27, 2012, on the development of high-tech agriculture in An Giang province for the period 2012-2020, with a vision to 2030;...

During the 2015-2020 period, the An Giang Provincial Party Committee continued to issue key policies, including Action Program No. 04-CTr/TU on July 18, 2016, on the national target program on new rural development for the 2016-2020 period, and Action Program No. 08-CTr/TU on November 11, 2016, on agricultural development for the 2016-2020 period and orientation to 2025. The Party Committee emphasized the principle that "Agricultural development must be integrated within the overall economy, synchronized with industrial and trade-service development. Production must focus on depth, enhancing value per unit of agricultural land, aligning with market demand, and increasing farmers' incomes" [9, p.4]. Regarding new rural development, the An Giang Provincial Party Committee outlined that "New rural communes should have a developed socio-economic foundation and progressively modernized infrastructure. Rural incomes and living standards should be continuously improved. The economic structure and production organization models should be rational, linking agriculture with rapid industrial and service development in rural

areas while aligning rural development with urbanization planning. Essential infrastructure projects serving production and rural livelihoods must be fundamentally completed” [10, p.3].

On February 10, 2017, the Provincial Party Committee issued Action Program No. 12-CTr/TU on major policies to continue innovating growth models, enhancing growth quality, labor productivity, and economic competitiveness in An Giang province for the 2016-2020 period. This program reaffirmed that “The transformation of growth models must be closely linked with economic and social breakthroughs, restructuring the economy with a focus on agricultural restructuring in connection with new rural development, positioning tourism as the province's key economic sector, and developing human resources to serve priority industries” [11, p.2].

Implementing the Party Committee's policies, the An Giang Provincial People's Committee issued Decision No. 929/QD-UBND on June 2, 2015, approving the agricultural restructuring plan for An Giang province until 2020. The Provincial People's Committee identified agricultural restructuring as the core of the province's economic restructuring, ensuring alignment with socio-economic development planning while integrating environmental protection for sustainable development in the context of climate change adaptation. The plan aimed to shift the agricultural economy by increasing the share of the aquaculture and livestock sectors while reducing the proportion of crop production and stabilizing forestry. Additionally, it sought to develop rural service industries, improve rural incomes and living conditions, and contribute to national food security, political stability, and sustainable poverty reduction.

During the 2015-2020 period, the An Giang Provincial People's Committee issued various directives to implement these policies, including Decision No. 1004/QD-UBND, dated April 11, 2016, approving the research program on crop and livestock restructuring and sustainable agricultural development in An Giang for the 2016-2020 period; Action Program No. 251/CTr-UBND, dated May 27, 2016, to implement the pilot project for completing and expanding the new model of agricultural cooperatives in the Mekong Delta region, including An Giang, for the 2016-2020 period; Decision No. 3310/QD-UBND, dated November 21, 2016, approving the implementation plan for the national target program on new rural development for the 2016-2020 period; Decision No. 1066/QD-UBND, dated April 5, 2017, approving the implementation plan for the provincial party committee's action program on agricultural development for the 2016-2020 period, with an orientation to 2025;... Furthermore, the An Giang Provincial People's Committee issued various mechanisms and policies aimed at achieving the core objectives of: 1. Establishing a comprehensive and sustainable agricultural development framework; 2. Enhancing the material and spiritual well-being of rural populations; 3. Transforming the rural landscape comprehensively in the new era. At the same time, various governmental agencies, departments, and socio-political organizations issued specific directives to translate the Central Party and Provincial Party's policies into action.

3.2. Achieved results

3.2.1. Implementing restructuring and building a comprehensive agriculture towards modernization; strongly developing industry and services in rural areas

The province's agricultural sector has undergone positive changes thanks to the implementation of the agricultural sector restructuring plan. The production structure has shifted towards large-scale, high-quality commodity production to increase value, promote sustainable development, and adapt to climate change and the actual production conditions of the locality. During the 2015-2020 period, the average annual growth rate of agricultural production value reached 3.1%, which was higher than 2.4% recorded during the 2010-2015 period [12, p.92]. The internal structure of the agricultural sector has shifted in a positive direction. The share of traditional agriculture decreased from 81.8% in 2010 to 76.9% in 2020. In contrast, the fishery

sector's share increased from 17.6% to 22.3% over the same period, while forestry production remained stable (Table 1).

Table 1. *Structural transformation within the agricultural sector of An Giang province (2010-2020)* [12, p.93]

	2010	2015	2020
Agriculture	81.8%	81%	76.9%
Aquaculture	17.6%	18.1%	22.3%
Forestry	0.6%	0.9%	0.8%

By the end of 2020, the province's rice cultivation area reached over 637,000 hectares, with a harvested output of 4.014 million tons. High-quality and fragrant rice varieties accounted for over 75% of the production area. The fruit tree area reached 17.43 thousand hectares, mainly mango, with a production of 167 thousand tons. Aquaculture covered 3,310 hectares, with a total output of 496 thousand tons. Forest protection efforts maintained an area of over 13,700 hectares [13, p.4].

The province developed specialized large-scale production areas such as fruit trees (Tri Ton, Cho Moi), vegetables (Chau Phu, Long Xuyen), sticky rice (Phu Tan, Chau Phu), and concentrated pangasius farming areas in Long Xuyen and Chau Phu. Many enterprises had invested in production linkage chains.

Agricultural and aquatic product processing industries continued to play a key role, with 21 export enterprises, a total storage capacity of 428,360 tons of paddy and 566,250 tons of rice. The drying capacity reached 545 tons per hour, and the milling capacity reached 600 tons per hour. The province had three export-oriented fruit and vegetable processing plants and 29 craft villages providing jobs for over 15,661 workers [13, p.5].

Overall, during the 2015-2020 period, An Giang province maintained large-scale agricultural production of key agricultural commodities such as rice, aquaculture, and vegetables, significantly contributing to national food security.

3.2.2. Promoting the application of science and technology in agricultural production; strongly developing biotechnology and seed production

An Giang province promoted the application of scientific and technological advances in agricultural production, investing in the entire process from seed production to cultivation, harvesting, preservation, and processing of agricultural and aquatic products. By the end of 2020, the province had selected and restored several suitable plant and livestock varieties such as short-term sticky rice, specialty rice, floating rice, My Duc longan; produced all-male giant freshwater prawn seed; artificially reproduced several freshwater fish species; and bred high-quality parental snakeskin gourami. As a result, high-tech agricultural production accounted for over 32% of the total agricultural value, with value-added reaching 62% of the sector's total value.

Mechanization in rice production was promoted, with land preparation mechanization reaching 100%, laser land leveling applied to 500 hectares, motorized irrigation covering over 98% of cultivated land, and mechanized harvesting reaching 98% [13, p.15]. These improvements helped reduce post-harvest losses and enhance production efficiency.

Several high-tech agricultural models have been implemented, including mechanized rice transplanting for seed production, integrated technical advancements in rice production, IoT-based water management, and the use of drones for pesticide application. These solutions, combined with laser land leveling and mechanization in sowing and spraying, increased rice yields by an average of 0.2-0.3 tons per hectare and reduced production costs by 15-20%. The total high-tech cultivated area, including rice, vegetables, and fruit trees, reached 91,363 hectares out of 734,715 hectares of total cultivated land (accounting for 12.4%), increasing farmers' incomes by an average of 20% compared to traditional farming methods [13, p.16].

The aquaculture and seafood processing sector in An Giang developed rapidly, with an expanding export market. The province promoted the application of technical advances and best farming practices according to international quality standards such as Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) and Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP),... The closed-loop aquaculture production model, from farming to processing and consumption, continued to expand, contributing to the industry's added value and sustainability.

3.2.3. Developing organizational models linked to agricultural product consumption

Agricultural cooperatives in An Giang province had increasingly operated effectively under the 2012 Cooperative Law, generating profits and reinvesting for expansion. Cooperatives play a role in uniting farmers and stabilizing local production. Services provided by cooperatives and cooperative groups, including irrigation, plowing, agricultural material supply, internal credit and agricultural product consumption, have improved in quality and timeliness. As a result, farmers have reduced production costs, increased profits, improved incomes, created jobs and contributed to poverty alleviation and socio-economic stability. By the end of 2020, the province had 181 agricultural cooperatives with 12,877 members, including 19 cooperatives engaged in value chain-based production and consumption linkages with enterprises. The average revenue per cooperative was 2.34 billion VND per year, with an average profit of 185.56 million VND per cooperative per year [13, p.12].

Implementing Decree 57/2018/ND-CP on encouraging enterprises to invest in agriculture and rural areas and Decree 98/2018/ND-CP on cooperative development and linkage in agricultural production and consumption, An Giang province promoted investment and supported nearly 40 enterprises in production linkages through 20 cooperatives and 10 cooperative groups. The large-scale field model was implemented with the participation of 15 to 21 enterprises annually, with 10 to 14 cooperatives and 8 to 21 cooperative groups signing agricultural product consumption contracts with farmers. In the aquaculture and seafood processing sector, closed-loop production from farming to processing and consumption was strengthened. By the end of 2020, 85% of the aquaculture area was invested in or linked with enterprises.

3.2.4. Building new rural areas in conjunction with economic-social infrastructure and rural urbanization

Rural socio-economic infrastructure was identified as a critical breakthrough in the development of new rural areas in An Giang province, contributing to notable achievements, particularly in transportation, irrigation and electricity. Rural roads were extensively developed, effectively connecting commune centers with district hubs, as well as facilitating access between hamlets and across agricultural fields, thereby meeting both mobility and goods transportation needs. The irrigation system was continuously constructed and upgraded to support agricultural production, disaster prevention, and climate change adaptation. The rural power grid was modernized to ensure a stable electricity supply for both production and household consumption. Infrastructure for education, healthcare, culture, and markets was also significantly upgraded. In addition, postal and telecommunications networks were extended to the commune level, and information technology was widely implemented. As of the end of 2020, all communes in the province had met the criteria for irrigation as well as information and communication. Additionally, 73.3% of communes met the transportation criteria, 85.3% satisfied the electricity criteria, and 53% fulfilled the standards for educational infrastructure. Furthermore, 69% of communes met the criteria for cultural facilities (Table 2).

Positive developments were observed across culture, society, and the environment. Grassroots movements such as “All people unite to build a cultural life” and “All people unite to build new rural areas and civilized urban areas” were widely promoted, contributing significantly to the enhancement of rural cultural and spiritual life. Educational quality remained stable and showed gradual

improvement. Vocational training programs and rural employment initiatives were effectively implemented. The grassroots healthcare system was strengthened through facility upgrades and enhanced human resources, ensuring widespread health insurance coverage at the commune level. Environmental protection efforts also advanced, with increased public awareness of resource conservation. By the end of 2020, 89% of communes had met the healthcare infrastructure criteria, 80% fulfilled the criteria related to health insurance participation, 85.3% satisfied the housing standards, and 94% met the requirements for access to clean water (Table 2).

Thanks to the joint efforts of the political system and the people, the new rural development program in An Giang province achieved significant results, bringing comprehensive improvements in infrastructure, as well as the material and spiritual lives of the people. By the end of 2020, the province had three district-level units (Thoai Son district, Chau Doc city, Long Xuyen city) meeting the new rural district standards; 60 out of 116 communes met the new rural standards, including 17 communes that achieved advanced new rural standards.

Table 2. *Number of communes meeting new rural development criteria in An Giang province in 2020* [13, pp.7-9]

Criteria	Number of Communes Meeting the Criteria (2020)	Percentage
Transportation	85/116	73.3
Irrigation	116/116	100
Electricity	99/116	85.3
Schools	61/116	53
Cultural infrastructure	80/116	69
Information and communication	116/116	100
Rural markets	104/116	90
Healthcare	103/116	89
Housing	99/116	85.3
Health insurance	104/116	80
Access to clean water	109/116	94

3.2.5. Some limitations

During the period 2015-2020, the agricultural restructuring process associated with new rural development in An Giang province achieved certain results. However, overall, the proposed objectives were not fully and comprehensively realized. Agricultural production remained fragmented and unsustainable; the transformation of the rural economic structure-especially in remote and isolated communes-progressed slowly. In addition, the industrial, commercial, and service sectors did not develop in line with the practical needs of the locality.

The linkage between production and consumption within the agricultural value chain remained weak. The application of high technology and the development of clean agriculture had yet to reach the expected scale and effectiveness. The agricultural market lacked stability, while the competitiveness of products remained limited. Although some specialized farming areas and zones designated for livestock development had been planned, the actual implementation faced many challenges, primarily due to inadequate technical infrastructure.

Efforts to mobilize social resources and attract private investment in agriculture and rural development were still limited. Maintaining and improving the quality of new rural development criteria in areas that had already met the standards was not truly sustainable, particularly with regard to criteria related to the environment, income, and social order and safety. Rural infrastructure in some localities was deteriorating due to a lack of resources for regular maintenance and repairs.

Poverty reduction results were not sustainable. The poverty rate among ethnic minority communities remained high, with uneven reduction rates across regions. Overall, rural residents had low income levels and limited capacity for savings; their living conditions-especially among ethnic minorities-continued to face many difficulties.

4. Conclusion

From 2015 to 2020, the An Giang Provincial Party Committee thoroughly implemented the Central Party's policy on agricultural, farmer and rural development. It directed and organized the restructuring of agriculture in conjunction with new rural development, achieving positive results. Through this leadership process, the An Giang Provincial Party Committee has drawn several valuable initial lessons that can be referenced and applied to enhance the effectiveness of agricultural economic development and rural construction in the new phase. First, farmers' income should be taken as the foundation, with farmers as the key actors in the development process; rural development should be regarded as a strategic priority, and agricultural production as the foundation of the province's economic growth. Second, it is essential to mobilize diverse social resources to invest in agriculture and rural areas. Third, the role of cooperative economies and production organization should be promoted. Production should be restructured along value chains, with the development of large-scale fields and high-tech agriculture. Fourth, investment from enterprises in the agricultural sector should be prioritized and encouraged to drive agricultural development toward high value-added production, thereby increasing farmers' incomes. Finally, it is necessary to harness and promote the consensus of the entire political system and the people, under the leadership of the Party, to successfully build new rural areas.

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