

"Become a Farmer" Variety: A Review of Commercial Passwords to Unlock the New Dimension of Agricultural Product Sales

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Abstract: The centerpiece of this study is a phenomenal variety show entitled "Become a Farmer". In the current marketing environment for agricultural products, problems such as low brand awareness or ineffective marketing strategies are common. In addition, insufficient attention has been given to how various programs can stimulate agricultural product sales. The core research question is to explore the specific ways in which "Become a Farmer" promotes the sales of farm products. To address this, the study adopts literature review method. Through deep learning, the show drives sales through immersive essential marketing, creating an attractive brand story and building effective traffic conversion mechanisms. In short, the research should help to improve the agro-industrial chain, fill existing research gaps, and provide valuable theoretical and practical reference material for new ideas on the economic development of farmers. These findings are expected to offer valuable guidance to agricultural producers, sellers, and policymakers, facilitating the transformation of the agricultural sales industry in the new media era.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital economy, digital knowledge and information are crucial in production, and modern information networks underpin economic activities. As a result, the agricultural product sales scenario has transformed remarkably. The advent of e-commerce platforms has removed geographical barriers in agricultural trade. In 2022, China's online sales of agricultural products reached 533.8 billion yuan (Yu and Xu, 2023). Consumers are getting used to buying produce on the Internet as e-commerce platforms offer more choices and lower prices.

In the context of agricultural products, many lack a distinct brand identity. This absence of a well-crafted brand IP makes it arduous for farmers and agricultural enterprises to charge premium prices (Jia, 2024). Despite the widespread application of brand IP theory in other industries, there is a dearth of research specifically applying this theory to the branding of agricultural products, especially in the context of new media promotion. When it comes to the price - formation mechanism, it is affected by production costs, supply-demand imbalances, and insufficient

price regulation (Wang, 2022). Producers often find it challenging to set stable and reasonable prices. The 4P theory (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) from marketing theory can be used to analyze this issue. In the case of agricultural products, the lack of effective marketing strategies in terms of product positioning, pricing, distribution channels, and promotion methods exacerbates the problem. However, most existing research on the 4P theory in the agricultural sector focuses on traditional marketing channels, and there is limited exploration of how these elements can be optimized in the new media environment. With the rise of new media, variety shows have emerged as a powerful medium with great potential for promoting agricultural product sales.

Nevertheless, the current academic and practical research in this area is severely lacking. Most marketing theory applications in the agricultural product sales have concentrated on traditional advertising, e-commerce platforms, and offline promotions. There is a big gap in research in applying marketing theories such as brand IP theory, 4P theory, and consumer behavior theory to entertainment programs that promote agricultural products. There are few empirical studies on how diversity affects the

marketing of agricultural products, and there is no understanding of the specific mechanism or validity of promotion methods.

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So this study aims to reveal how the variety program "Become a Farmer" promotes agricultural sales and to fill this gap. The core research question is to understand how the show leverages scene-based marketing, brand-story crafting, and traffic-conversion mechanisms, drawing on relevant theories, to drive agricultural product sales. Stage-based marketing is an important aspect of marketing theory, building an immersive scene about the product in the performance. By doing so, we were able to stir up emotion in the audience and motivate them to buy. However, there is little research on designing and effectively implementing stage-based marketing to popularize agricultural products in breed exhibitions. Based on brand IP theory, brand-story crafting endows agricultural product brands with emotional and cultural connotations, enhancing brand attractiveness. However, few studies have investigated how to create compelling brand stories in the context of various shows to promote agricultural products. The traffic transfer mechanisms that can be analyzed by consumer behavior theory focus on the conversion of program viewers into consumers of agricultural products. Empirical studies on the specific factors and strategies that have influenced this transformation process are lacking in the context of various programs for promoting agricultural products. This paper will adopt the literature review method, comprehensively collecting, reading, and analyzing relevant literature. It will conduct an in-depth content analysis of "Become a Farmer" to identify the show's marketing elements. Applying brand IP theory, 4P theory, and consumer behavior theory will explore how these elements promote agricultural product sales. Finally, conclusions will

be drawn to summarize the research findings and their implications for upgrading the agricultural industry chain.

2 CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT SALES

In the current pattern of agricultural development, the marketing of agricultural products has exposed many problems. A series of severe challenges and deep-seated constraints are becoming stumbling blocks to the high-quality development of agricultural economy. It needs to be deeply analyzed and solved. Domestically, China's economic development and rising living standards have contributed to the continuous expansion of the agricultural product market. The sector comprises diverse market participants, including individual farmers, agricultural enterprises, and cooperatives. Furthermore, traditional agricultural product suppliers are increasingly adopting e-commerce platforms, intensifying market competition through various digital sales channels. Internationally, while China's agricultural exports have remained stable overall, since 2019, the sector has experienced consecutive years of negative growth. The export of key agricultural products has been impacted by multiple disruptions, including production halts, declining global demand, limited international shipping capacity, and soaring freight costs. Research indicates that the primary constraints on agricultural product sales include insufficient brand development and promotion, as well as inefficiencies in the price formation mechanism. These challenges significantly hinder marketing competitiveness and the sustainable development of the agricultural sector. As a unique communication paradigm, brands aim to build a trust relationship with consumers. Their personal characteristics constitute the cornerstone for consumers to identify and establish connections with various products or services. The process of creating and implementing a brand, that is, brand promotion, is a highly complex and dynamic field of knowledge. It must fully consider the factors such as market positioning, consumer psychology, competitive situation, communication channels, etc (Natalya et al., 2020). David A. Aaker's Brand Equity Model (1991) remains a foundational framework in brand management, categorizing brand equity into five dimensions: Brand Awareness, Perceived Quality,

Brand Association, Brand Loyalty, and Other Proprietary Assets. Brand equity represents a collection of tangible and intangible assets tied to brand names, logos, and associated perceptions, which can enhance or diminish product value. In 2022, the output of agricultural products under regional public brand of agriculture in China increased by nearly 55% compared with 2012, and the sales volume rose by nearly 80%. This led to a 65% increase in the income of local farmers. However, many agricultural product brands do not fully consider their resource advantages, target market needs and consumer preferences. It results in the same brand positioning and difficulty standing out in the market. The brand of agricultural products is insufficient in the aspects of visual image, brand story and cultural connotation. There are serious shortcomings in the exploration and shaping of cultural connotations. They do not have accurately positioned based on scientific market research and analysis. They also have not been able to deeply explore the unique values and personal characteristics of the products, such as unique planting technology, regional characteristics, historical heritage, etc. This makes the brand lacks the support of its profound cultural heritage, making it difficult to establish lasting and stable emotional connections and cognitive preferences in the hearts of consumers. Thus, they fail to form lasting vitality and strong market competitiveness. Meanwhile, there are many well-known agricultural product brands in specific areas. These brands compete with each other in the market. However, due to the lack of effective market norms and guidance, it disturbs the order of the brand market to a certain extent and increases the complexity and disorder of market competition (Liang, 2020).

Another critical issue is the flawed agricultural product pricing mechanism, which creates substantial barriers to sales. Agricultural prices are influenced by various factors, including market supply and demand dynamics, production costs, and policy interventions. However, the current pricing system struggles to reflect these variables accurately and in real time. The price volatility of agricultural products in China exhibits strong cyclical patterns. Since 1978, agricultural prices have undergone seven distinct fluctuation cycles, each varying in duration, intensity, and unpredictability. Among agricultural goods, vegetables exhibit particularly high price volatility. For instance, spinach prices are among the most unstable, with a 40.38% probability of experiencing price fluctuations exceeding 30%, whereas garlic prices remain more stable, with only a 1.82%

probability of fluctuations exceeding 30%. On the one hand, agricultural product production has seasonal and cyclical characteristics with long production cycle and high adjustment difficulty. When market demand suddenly changes, it is difficult for the products supply to respond quickly. This results in the severe price fluctuations. On the other hand, the production costs cover seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, labor, etc. These costs fluctuate frequently in different years and regions, but the mechanism fails to fully consider its changes. It causes the prices to differ from the actual value. At the same time, although policy regulation has played a certain role in stabilizing agricultural product prices, there is still a delay and different standards in the implementation. It is difficult to stabilize price fluctuations accurately, which further aggravates the instability of prices and brings many uncertainties to the sales. Developing different agricultural product prices according to different consumer groups is the basis for maximizing benefits. We must grasp the groups and consumption levels fundamentally, providing them with corresponding products and services, and formulate prices to meet the purchasing preferences and the market needs (Acharya, 1997).

3 IP SHAPING AND CONSTRUCTING EMOTIONAL CONNECTION OF AUDIENCE

3.1 Growth Entertainers Cultivating Mode

The reality show "Become a Farmer" is the first large-scale work documentary variety reality show with the theme of farming in China. It recorded a team of 10 unknown guys in the entertainment industry growing up from "farming beginners" to new farmers. In recent years, the agricultural modernization level of China has been increasingly growing, which led to the decrease of traditional manual work. A great number of agricultural practitioners swarm into cities and promotes the process of urbanization instead. Therefore, as an agriculture-related work documentary variety show, "Become a Farmer" brought a feeling of freshness to audience living in the society with urbanization and modernization as the main tone. They were not familiar with soil, weather at all during the beginning of the show. Then they were working like the exact farmers and achieved helping farmers eventually. Different from some other life variety shows, "Become a Farmer" selected guests

without fame in the entertainment industry. Through a series of interactions like vlogs, Weibo community and live broadcast, audience can witness the steps of their growth thoroughly. Just as the incentive of "Cultural Participation" can make media content no longer distributed by specific media producers, consumers can construct, conformity, rebuild, share and spread via websites, social media and Internet platform instead (Hao, 2017).

The show encouraged audience engagement by prompting them to share personal farming experiences and create dedicated social media entries. Additionally, through interactive games and events on social and e-commerce platforms, audiences were provided with opportunities to contribute to the program's narrative, thereby deepening their emotional investment and engagement.

Filmed continuously for two seasons spanning approximately 400 days, the program meticulously documented the personalities and interpersonal dynamics of its cast. Each participant exhibited distinct characteristics, yet they cooperated and complemented one another throughout various challenges. Events such as "Transporting 30 Tons of Organic Fertilizer", "Unfolding 4,000 Pots of Roses" and "Tree Planting in Minqin" highlighted their evolving teamwork and individual growth. Conflicts - whether natural or strategically edited by the production team - added layers of authenticity, enhancing the audience's immersive experience. French literary theorist Denis Diderot emphasized that compelling theatrical plots should be dynamic, with character conflicts and interests intersecting to create dramatic tension (Diderot, 2008). Unlike scripted film and television productions, reality shows capitalize on audience curiosity about celebrities' authentic personalities and emotions, particularly when conflicts, resolutions, and character development unfold organically.

3.2 Brand New IP Driving Audience's Feeling and Commercial Potential

This passage considers that despite the sincerity and diligence of guests and programme groups, there are still several reasons for the popularity of "Become a Farmer". The first is that this show choose "Agriculture" as a basic tune. Agriculture is the primary industry and basic industry of national economy in China. It presents strong sense of gravitas and weight, which reveals a strong "Sense of conflict" against entertainment show. While agriculture is also a traditional industry in China, most audience have experienced it personally or mediatly during their

growth. In this way, they can generate resonance and curiosity to a "Farming" variety inevitably. They are curious about how can 10 beginners learn to do farm work and whether they are making a show firstly. Then they are really caring about the significance of agriculture. As China has always been a big agricultural country ever since, there is a feeling for land rooted in everyone's heart. Fei Xiaotong pointed out in "From the Soil" that society of China was native soil described from basic level (Fei, 2019). The popularity of this show precisely verified audience's curiosity and familiarity of agriculture, along with recognition of cultural identity of farming culture.

"Become a Farmer" broke the routine as a variety show. During the recording of the program, an agricultural development Co., LTD called "Ten Diligent Guys" (which sounds like 10 suns in Chinese) was set up due to Dunhao Jiang's proposal and was conferred by all the 10 guests. The guests took "Ten Diligent Guys" as a new brand and made a series of innovation and attempt. This mode showed audience and other corporation strong commercial potential and social impact. "Ten Diligent Guys" was a brand new, highly personalized IP witnessed by the user. The word "IP" is an abbreviation of "Intellectual Property", meaning intellectual property, referring to the subject's exclusive right to the intellectual property it creates (Xin, 2003).

As per Levitt's product life cycle theory (Levitt, 2004), the IP associated with "Ten Diligent Guys" transitioned from its introduction stage to the growth stage as the show gained visibility and traction. By engaging in philanthropic initiatives such as farmer assistance programs and community-driven social campaigns, the brand cultivated a highly loyal consumer base, differentiating itself from traditional agricultural brands and celebrity-endorsed ventures. The strong emotional connection fostered among fans effectively propelled "Ten Diligent Guys" into the maturity stage, cementing its status as a sustainable and marketable IP.

Understanding audience expectations and the evolving IP community is critical to maintaining engagement and long-term viability (Yuan, 2017). Fans were not only spectators but active participants, engaging with supplementary content through behind-the-scenes footage, Weibo interactions, live streaming, giveaways, and merchandise sales. This interactive dynamic allowed audiences to derive personal fulfillment from their participation, thereby reinforcing their emotional attachment to the brand. Consequently, "Ten Diligent Guys" emerged as a highly valuable commercial and cultural IP. Its influence extended beyond the program itself, as

evidenced by the transformation of the filming location into a popular tourist destination. Capitalizing on this momentum, local authorities strategically invested in tourism development. On 2023 Conference on Quality Development of Culture and Tourism established by West Lake district, Hangzhou, a culture and tourism programme "Ten Diligent Guys - Farming Planet" based on this IP received a total investment of 380 million yuan. At the same time, the authority planned to build an agriculture, culture and tourism experiencing base in Sandun town, West Lake district. It will be a new landmark consisting of restaurants and fairs for parent-children interaction in Yangtze River Delta region (Zhou, 2024). This IP is used to promote some advertisement and helping-farmer live likewise. It brings considerable economic benefit and attention to advertisers, Cultural and Tourism Bureau and agriculture from various regions.

4 CONVEYING THE REAL VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

The variety program "Becoming a Farmer", in the form of a documentary, systematically presents the production, ecology, and cultural values of agricultural products and builds a basis for recognizing the multifaceted values of marketing agricultural products.

4.1 Production Value: Strengthening Consumers' Understanding of the Labor Value of Agricultural Products

This program describes the production process of agriculture in detail. Planting rapeseed indicates that the soil is preparing to fight, such as breaking the soil and sowing the seeds correctly. Noteworthy is the natural way to control the parasites. The rim shrimp model always shows daily tasks such as monitoring water quality and supplying enough shrimp and food. You can see the arduous journey vividly through the agricultural scene. This will make them more willing to price their products. Exclusive videos showcasing unique agrarian techniques to improve consumer understanding of labor and buying opportunities (Ren and Li, 2024). Research on the use of information and communication technology (TIC) in agricultural sales also shows that visualization of production processes significantly increases consumers' understanding of the value of work. The findings align with the project's strategy of relaying agricultural details in real time (Banu et al., 2017).

4.2 Ecological Value: Promoting the Concept of Green Agriculture and Expanding the Product Premium Space

Based on the principle of sustainability, organic agriculture emphasizes not using synthetic fertilizers or pesticides. This is in line with the idea of green marketing, in which consumers increasingly opt for greener products (Yao et al., 2025). The rice-shrimp farming model exemplifies ecological balance, reinforcing the premium perception of organic agricultural products (Wang, 2022).

4.3 Cultural Value: Constructing Brand Narratives and Expanding Market Boundaries

Agricultural products have become cultural symbols through brand value theory. The "Ten Diligent Guys" share stories of generations-old - old local shrimp-rice farming traditions, including related festivals and rituals. Researchers explained the origin of "shrimp heals ocean". This is a traditional holiday. People are grateful for the blessings of nature. As part of the festival, villagers could celebrate in a big way and participate in the harvest. Stories like this convey a sense that agricultural products are connected to breasts. By doing so, it becomes not just food but something that evokes emotions and memories (Xie and Zhang, 2024). The "live + variety show" model analyzed by 4I theory analyzes the direct interaction with the audience. Guests answer questions, share experiences, and offer virtual farm Tours. The multi-dimensional content output of the variety, including social media and behind-the-scenes content, strengthens the connection of the brand culture (Liu and Li, 2024). In terms of functional value, a cultural story gives consumers a good understanding of the source or features of the product, which can enhance the product's credibility. From the level of emotional value, these factors bring emotional resonance to consumers, enabling them to choose specific products. Spread the country's culture to society and increase the brand's awareness and beauty. Overall brand value increases. This transforms products into items with emotional value, expanding the market audience (Duan and Zhao, 2024).

5 CONCLUSIONS

Despite the rapid growth of online and offline agricultural product sales, challenges persist, including insufficient brand development, inadequate

consumer insights, and unstable pricing mechanisms. By analyzing "Become a Farmer", this study highlights how variety shows can serve as effective platforms for agricultural branding and sales expansion. The findings suggest that future programs should incorporate in-depth product storytelling, strengthen e-commerce collaborations, and prioritize long-term brand development to optimize agricultural marketing strategies. As the integration of variety shows and agriculture continues to evolve, innovative models are expected to emerge, contributing to the transformation and advancement of the agricultural industry.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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