

Title The evolution of the Chinese vegetable supply chain
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Abstract

China is playing an increasingly important role in the world vegetable markets. Over the past three decades, the development of the Chinese vegetable sector has evolved in three phases, each with its specific type of supply chain, namely the controlled supply chain system, the disjointed supply chain system, and the co-operation supply chain system. Each type of supply chain system existed or exists in a particular institutional environment. This paper identifies different marketing functions and chain characteristics for each vegetable supply chain system. Two dimensions – ‘complexity’ and ‘strategic importance’ – indicate the type of supply chain. The study shows that the Chinese vegetable supply chain is evolving towards more complexity, making it more difficult to manage. Firms intending to enter and operate in these markets must therefore take into consideration several important issues: the importance of product quality and safety, the complexity of co-ordination along the supply chain, and the involvement of local governments.