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CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

**BEYOND “COMPANY + FARMERS”: MULTI-ACTOR GOVERNANCE AND
TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA’S LIVESTOCK CONTRACTING
REGIME**

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This paper rethinks China’s livestock contract farming beyond the dyadic lens of “company + farmers.” Drawing on a comparative case study of two contracting modalities—(1) “company + smallholders” and (2) scaled “company + farms” and/or clustered production arrangements supported by local governments and finance—this study conceptualizes livestock industrialization as a multi-actor governance regime linking agribusiness firms, producers, village and township authorities, financial institutions, and technical-service systems. Empirically, the analysis leverages a mixed qualitative dataset that the author can access through work in a leading Chinese agribusiness, including internal program documents, standard operating procedures and training materials, contract templates and settlement rules, operational records, and interviews/field observations with managers, technicians, producers, and local stakeholders. The paper traces how governance is accomplished through standardized inputs

and biosecurity protocols, digital monitoring and performance evaluation, financial intermediation and infrastructure provision, and contractual mechanisms that structure entry, compliance, risk-sharing, and exit. It argues that these arrangements generate territorially embedded development effects—such as employment creation, technical upgrading, and local fiscal and infrastructure projects—while simultaneously producing differentiated inclusion, shifting compliance and disease/market risks downstream, and reshaping rural stratification and dependence on corporate-led production systems. By foregrounding multi-actor governance, the paper contributes to debates on contract farming, agri-food industrialization, and territorial development in the contemporary rural world.

Palavras-chave: multi-actor governance; contract farming; livestock industrialization; agribusiness–state relations; risk allocation; territorial development; rural stratification.