

秧苗在手，米香於心—守護水稻 原種的職人 陳瑞明理事長

林如玲¹、曾一航²、邱燕欣³

在臺中市霧峰區的五福里，阡陌之間稻浪起伏，這片土地長年穩定生產二期稻作，是「霧峰香米」的重要製作產區。而在稻田背後，默默守護水稻品種純度與品質穩定的育苗職人陳瑞明理事長，已在此耕耘近五十載。

陳理事長於 17 歲開始務農，因早期農民需以「倒退嚕」的方式進行人工插秧，彎腰曲背，頂著烈日或風雨，非常辛苦。故在民國 65 年農林廳推動農業機械化，理事長毅然投入水稻育苗產業。回憶起當年

機械插秧初上路，幾乎無人看好，外界認為他撐不過兩年，直到一位 80 歲阿伯的一句話鼓勵：「孩子，你繼續做，總有一天大家都會老，還是得靠機器啊。」。這句話，成為他堅持信念的力量。他努力試驗盤根技術，思考如何讓秧苗根系旺盛、盤附良好，成功被「捲」起供機械插秧。他說，最難的往往就是最值得的，當秧苗從田裡整齊成列地被取起、順利插入大地的那一刻，那份從挑戰中淬煉出的成就感，是他一生中最難忘也最驕傲的記憶。



圖 1. 陳理事長與其所栽培之「台農 71 號」水稻原種田

- 1 種苗改良繁殖場種苗檢驗科 副研究員
- 2 種苗改良繁殖場種苗檢驗科 助理研究員
- 3 種苗改良繁殖場種苗檢驗科 副研究員兼科長

種苗臉譜

如今他所經營的「五福水稻育苗場」已成為霧峰地區最大規模的育苗基地，一期可育成 12 萬片秧苗，二期約 10 萬片，主要品種為「台農 71 號」與「台南 11 號」，是在地最穩定的秧苗供應者。由於長期深耕產業、熱心服務，他被推舉為臺中市水稻育苗協會及農業機械耕作服務協會理事長，甚至擔任 14 縣市聯合會的理事長，皆為無給職，卻始終親力親為、樂於奉獻。

除了實務經驗豐富，他亦持續學習，主動參與農改場與農民學院課程，並樂於將實戰經驗回饋學員。他的教學深受歡迎，大家都說：「還是理事長教得最實在！」。民國 104 年，他曾獲霧峰區香米冠軍。他強調，要種出好米，必須熟悉品種特性、掌握天氣與水分管理，並視稻作如孩童般用心照顧。他堅信霧峰土地條件良好，只要管理得宜，臺灣米不輸日本米。

多年來，陳理事長持續投入水稻原種

及採種的倍增繁殖工作，不僅強化田間雜草的管理，更深入了解各品種的特性。田頭田尾細心去偽去雜，確保種原純度，看似瑣碎的工序，實則是經驗與智慧的累積。對於水稻良種繁殖「三級制度」，他深表肯定，認為是維繫品種純度、保障產業穩定的基石。他指出，若沒有原種、採種的分級繁殖與檢查制度，市場上將充斥混雜品種，嚴重影響稻米品質與品牌信任。隨著原種戶年齡漸長、接棒人力短缺，他坦言，原種田的田間管理需投入大量勞力與時間，若現行水稻三級繁殖制度未能依實際生產環境進行滾動式檢討與優化，現有之設置費、合格種子費等獎勵措施，已難以提供足夠誘因吸引年輕農戶投入原種繁殖工作。

隨著民衆米食消費習慣的改變，近年水稻育苗場數自全盛時期的 1,200 多家銳減至目前僅存五、六百家。陳理事長指出，面對農業人力日益缺乏，目前政府推



圖 2. 陳理事長正進行水稻播種作業

動小型農機補助政策，若能將如鏟裝機、紙模插秧機等關鍵機具納入補助範圍，將有助於減輕作業勞力負擔，提升產業效率。

談及自己與水稻的關係，他說：「那是我永恆的朋友。」從少年時的志氣，到今日的執著，是他一生的熱愛。「說不做也想過，但真的放不下。這裡面有我的智慧、有我的感情。」每當種子檢查通過，

他的喜悅與成就感，無法用言語形容。而對種苗改良繁殖場執行田間檢查與室內取樣的夥伴而言，每一次的田間檢查與室內取樣，不只是例行任務，更是與一位真正職人的一期一會。在陳理事長身上，我們看見了對土地、對品種的深情與承諾。他的堅持，讓我們更加相信：只要有人願意用一輩子的時間，守護一粒好種子，臺灣稻米的未來就有希望。



圖 3. 水稻原種種子整齊堆疊，外包裝貼有封籤，並預留通道供抽樣人員進行取樣作業



圖 4. 水稻秧苗於田間育苗

Seedlings in Hand, Fragrance in Heart - Master of Rice Foundation Seed Cultivation, Chairman Chen Rui-Ming

Ju-Ling Lin, Yi-Hang Tseng, Yen-Hsin Chiu

In Wufu Village of Wufeng District, Taichung City, waves of golden rice sway gently across the fields. This land has long been a stable rice-producing area with two annual cropping seasons and plays a vital role as a contract production zone for the renowned "Wufeng Fragrant Rice". Behind these fertile paddies stands a dedicated master in rice seedling cultivation-Chairman Chen Rui-Ming-who has spent nearly five decades safeguarding the genetic purity and quality consistency of rice varieties.

Chairman Chen began farming at the age of 17. In the early days, rice transplanting was done manually, forcing farmers to bend

over and walk backward under the scorching sun or in pouring rain-an extremely strenuous task. In 1976, when the Agricultural and Forestry Department promoted agricultural mechanization, he made a bold decision to enter the rice seedling industry. He recalls that in the early days of mechanical transplanting, few believed in its potential. Many doubted he would last more than two years-until one day, an 80-year-old elder offered him words of encouragement: "*Child, keep going. One day we will all grow old, and we'll have to rely on machines.*" That simple sentence became the driving force behind his unwavering dedication.

He diligently experimented with root-



Figure 1. Chairman Chen with his large agricultural machinery

binding techniques, exploring ways to cultivate seedlings with strong, healthy root systems that could form a solid mat-ready to be rolled up and used for machine transplanting. "The most difficult things are often the most worthwhile," he says. "When the seedlings are neatly lifted from the nursery and transplanted into the field in uniform rows, the sense of achievement born from overcoming challenges has become one of the proudest and most unforgettable memories of my life."

Today, the "Wufu Rice Seedling Nursery" operated by Chairman Chen has become the largest seedling cultivation base in the Wufeng area. It produces approximately 120,000 seedling trays during the first cropping season and about 100,000 trays during the second season. The main rice varieties cultivated are Tainong No. 71 and Tainan No. 11, making the nursery the most reliable local supplier of rice seedlings.

Due to his longstanding dedication to the industry and his enthusiastic service, he was elected chairman of both the Taichung Rice Seedling Association and the Agricultural Machinery Cultivation Services Association. He also served as chairman of a federation representing 14 counties and cities. Despite all these positions being unpaid, he remains hands-on and committed, always willing to give back to the farming community.

In addition to his wealth of hands-on experience, Chairman Chen remains a lifelong learner. He actively participates in courses offered by agricultural research stations and the

Farmers' Academy, and he generously shares his practical knowledge with fellow trainees. His teaching is widely praised, with many saying, "No one explains things as clearly and honestly as Chairman Chen!" In 2015, he won the Wufeng Fragrant Rice Championship. He emphasizes that producing premium-quality rice requires a deep understanding of varietal characteristics, precise management of weather and water, as well as the same care one would give to raising children. He firmly believes that with proper cultivation practices, Taiwan-grown rice is every bit as good as Japanese rice, thanks to the excellent conditions of the Wufeng region.

Over the years, Chairman Chen has remained dedicated to the multiplication and propagation of foundation and certified seeds for rice. He has not only improved weed management in seed fields but also gained in-depth knowledge of the traits of each variety. From one end of the field to the other, he meticulously removes off-types and foreign plants by hand to ensure the genetic purity of the seed stock—a process that may seem tedious but is actually the result of accumulated experience and wisdom.

He highly affirms the importance of Taiwan's three-tier rice seed propagation system, considering it the cornerstone for maintaining varietal purity and ensuring industry stability. Without a tiered seed multiplication and inspection framework, the market would be flooded with mixed or impure varieties, undermining both rice quality and brand trust.

However, with the aging population of foundation seed growers and a lack of younger successors, Chairman Chen acknowledges the increasing difficulty in managing foundation seed fields-tasks that require substantial labor and time. He emphasizes that unless the current three-tier propagation system undergoes continuous review and adaptive improvements aligned with real-world production conditions, existing incentive measures such as field setup subsidies and certified seed bonuses will no longer suffice to attract young farmers into this critical stage of seed production

With the shift in consumer rice-eating habits, the number of rice seedling nurseries in recent years has sharply declined-from over 1,200 at its peak to only 500 to 600 today. Chairman Chen points out that as agricultural labor becomes increasingly scarce, the government has introduced subsidy programs for small-scale agricultural machinery. However, if key equipment such as seedling loader machines and paper pot transplanters could be included

in the subsidy coverage, it would significantly reduce labor demands and improve operational efficiency across the seedling cultivation sector.

When asked about his relationship with rice, he smiled and said, "It's my lifelong companion." From youthful ambition to a lifetime of devotion, rice has been his enduring passion. "There were times I thought about giving it up," he admitted, "but I simply couldn't let go. My knowledge and emotions are deeply rooted in this work."

For the staff of the Taiwan Seed Improvement and Propagation Station conducting field inspections and laboratory sampling, each visit is not just a routine task-it is a once-in-a-lifetime encounter with a true master of the craft. In Chairman Chen, we see a profound love and unwavering commitment to both the land and the rice varieties he protects. His persistence affirms our belief: As long as there are people willing to dedicate their lives to safeguarding a single good seed, the future of Taiwanese rice will remain bright.



Figure 2. Chairman Chen performing rice seeding operations