

TRANSCRIPT: CHI-CHUNG CHEN INTERVIEW

Dr. Chi-Chung Chen · Minister of Agriculture in Taiwan

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An interview with Dr. Chi-Chung Chen, Minister of Agriculture in Taiwan. Chen is a Class of 1999 Agricultural Economics graduate from Texas A&M and an inducted member of the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry.

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Please introduce yourself and tell us about your career.

My name is Chi-Chung Chen. I entered department of ag econ in 1994. In 1999, I earned my PhD degree from my advisor, Professor Bruce McCarl. I also worked for him for two years, so in 2000, I came back to Taiwan. So, I was in National Chung-Hsing University in middle of Taiwan, so after I came back to Taiwan, I worked for academic institution, so at that time I was an assistant, assistant professor. Then, after three years, I was promoted for associate professor, and professor, and then distinguished professor. In 2016, I came to central government. The first position I was is a deputy minister in terms of agriculture, which is similar like USDA. Right now, I am a minister in council of agriculture in Taiwan.

What do you value most about your experiences at Texas A&M?

The first one is I had lots of time to do research, so I could spend my whole time on research and getting the paper published. That's the first one. The second one is... I do enjoy watching lots of sport, including NBA basketball, baseball, and also football. Last, the second one — the third one is I have a very good family life, especially for the life quality in College Station. That's a very unforgettable experience.

What impact has your degree from Texas A&M had on your professional career?

I have a very, very good training during my PhD career, especially for, for me to work for Professor Bruce McCarl. Such experience allowed me to do lots of research and get paper published; that's the second impact. So, this let me free, you know, have a successful academic career in Taiwan.

What has been the biggest challenge in your career? How have you faced it?

For me, it's myself. When I try to explain this question, it's... for my academic career for — even when I work for the central government, we may have some difficult time, but we don't have biggest challenge. Our challenge is from ourselves. So, to me, when I set up a goal, after I reach the goal, I need to set another step forward, another goal to be achieved. That is the most important for us. If we do this, I think we don't have any challenge to us.

What is your proudest accomplishment in your career?

My story is really simple and easy. I just work hard and especially, especially when I was a professor in National Chung-Hsing University, the first job for me was to do good research. The second one is ... because I am a professor, I need to teach student how to learn more knowledge from econ, from econ knowledge. That was the most important job for me, so actually I don't have too much accomplishment to say, but when you do your job that's the most important for me, and also for university, and for society.

Besides hard work, what does it take to be a successful professional?

I think the most important, key factor is passion. You've got to have passion. That is really important, so I didn't.. that is where I will end the question.

What kind of goals do you continue to set? How do they help you to grow?

I always set a goal for temporary, for example like, for example for the next five years, I will set a goal, and first of all, right now for my job, I am a Minister of Council of Agriculture, so my goal is very easy: just try to let Taiwanese farmer make more money. So, overall, policy helps to follow this goal, and so my job is try to make this goal to be accomplished. If I finish, then I will pursue another goal. So, that's my whole life, and this has been for my personal life philosophy.

How do you balance your career with your family life?

Everyone is equal. We only have 24 hours, so when you spend more time on your research, I think you will get lost, you know, when you were lost to spend time with your family, so how do you prioritize... that

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we got use... our time for efficiency, which mean, like, if you ... when you do the research, you find you could, you know, finish your research in a short time, when you spend more time on your research. If you find you have a difficult problem to solve, and that you cannot find that, you just, you know, go around, go back to your home to spend with your family. Maybe you will find a way to solve this question and you can better your, your research. So, everyone could find, find a way to finish, finish this work, but the most important is which one is your first priority in your mind. If we say in your utility, your family is in you, your utility, your research in your utility, so, you will, you know, follow your priority to arrange your time.

What advice do you have for Agricultural Economics students who are about to graduate and start their careers?

The first one is you got to work hard for your research. The second one is you got to have the passion. Maybe +1, you got to work smart. When I say you got to work smart, it's when you do research, you cannot do by your own. You've got to do research with, for example, for some famous professor. That will be easy for you to get a paper published. I think that's the way.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

I mean, if I was successful career in my academic, or in my current job in central government, I think all credit goes to my PhD advisor Professor Bruce McCarl, and also for our Department of Agricultural Economics because I have such honor to get PhD degree from depart — ag econ department and also have a honor to work for my advisor, Professor Bruce McCarl. He's let me, let me you know like, I came here to Taiwan to have a successful career and also for the career in central government, so I'd like to express my high appreciation to my advisor, Professor Bruce McCarl, and also for ag econ department.

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Transcribed by
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