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LI AND TANG RESPOND

Wei Li's basic objection to our editorial "China's New Road to Tobacco Control: Tobacco Crop Substitution" is that tobacco crop substitution, by itself, is not enough for tobacco control. We are not claiming that tobacco crop substitution is the whole solution and, indeed, welcome the opportunity to explore additional solutions.

Tobacco crop substitution is not a "tobacco control" mechanism. Its effectiveness comes from raising the standard of living for farmers by providing an alternative to tobacco crops. No policy or control had to be enacted for the farmers.

Supportive tobacco policies, such as the one in Linxiang County, indicate that tobacco crop substitution is having an impact and is a credible threat to domestic tobacco production. The fact is that, in 2006, the township government of Yuxi allocated 200 000 yuan (about US \$25 000) as a work fund for increasing the production of tobacco leaf and 300 000 yuan (about US \$38 000) as an extra award once the farmers achieved the planting goal for tobacco.¹ Later, in 2009, the municipality of Yuxi became the lead advocate for tobacco crop substitution.² In 2013, the State Tobacco Monopoly Administration enacted a mandatory "redline policy" for tobacco acreage reduction in all 11 tobacco-producing provinces

nationwide.³ This illustrates the complexity of the issues in tobacco control and the conflicts of interest from the central government directives to the State Tobacco Monopoly Administration and the China National Tobacco Company. Tobacco crop substitution will not by itself reduce the supply of tobacco. Policies such as reducing subsidies for planting tobacco and restricting imports should also be addressed. Just as multiple strategies are needed on the demand side, multiple strategies will be needed for the supply side.

Under China's "One Belt, One Road" development, Chinese enterprises along the "Belt and Road" countries have made an investment of US \$8.59 billion. The China National Tobacco Company imports tobacco from Zimbabwe and other African countries that are part of the Belt and Road Initiative. The China National Tobacco Company has identified Southeast Asia and West Asia as the focus for opening up overseas markets.⁴

The road to tobacco control is long and winding for China and countries worldwide. The challenge is to forge various effective strategies for a grand alliance between health and agriculture, and between the supply side and the demand side for tobacco control and smoking prevention. **AJPH**

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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