



# Clean Agriculture Newsletter No.11

## Clean Agriculture Development Project

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This is a technical cooperation project over five years (2017-2022) funded by JICA, targeting four Pilot Provinces (Vientiane Capital, Luang Prabang, Sayabouly, and Xieng Khouang). It aims at promoting clean agriculture, namely Organic Agriculture and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), based on market needs in the Pilot Provinces.

### Recent Topics of project activity

#### 1. Organizing PMU meeting

A Project Management Unit (PMU) meeting was organized in Sayaboury province on 14th January 2021 after being postponed due to COVID-19. This was the first time a joint meeting involving the 4 provinces was held with 30 participants, including staff from CASC, Deputy Director, head of the crop section, staff from each provincial agriculture and forestry office (PAFO), and personnel from the JICA Laos office. Each province made a passionate presentation about the progress of activities, outputs, issues, and draft activity plans despite the cold, being below 10 degrees on the day. After that, the JICA expert explained a draft of the revised Project Design Matrix (PDM) and activity direction for 2021 based on the revised PDM. It was shared among the participants that the Project would focus on the activities 1) the production and supply of organic agriculture products (mainly fruit and vegetables) by OA farmer groups, and 2) expanding markets and sales channels in 2021. Those activities are directly connected to output 1 and 2 described in the draft PDM.



Group photo of participants at the PMU meeting.

In the afternoon, the participants also visited farmers in the field who participated in the activity of introducing greenhouses last year. It was a meaningful opportunity for them to

deeply understand the promotion of clean agriculture under different socio-economic conditions. The PMU meeting was also reported on by Sayabouly province local news outlets.



An agricultural field visit to Nalao village.

#### Greetings from new Japanese staff

Expert on farming systems: Shinji HIRONAKA

Nice to meet you! My name is Shinji HIRONAKA. I have been dispatched to Laos since November 2020. I am an expert in the field of farming systems for the Clean Agriculture Development Project. I worked as a researcher in the horticulture branch of Okinawa Agricultural Research Center, as a farming instructor in JA (Japan Agricultural Cooperative) Okinawa, and as a Japan Overseas Cooperative Volunteer of JICA in the field of improvement of agricultural cooperatives in Ethiopia. I have also worked as an associate expert in the rural development department of JICA head quarters. In that time, I was responsible for managing technical cooperation projects in Indonesia and East Timor. After that, I worked as an expert in the field of agricultural product distribution and sales on the “Project for increasing farmers households’ income through strengthening domestic rice production in Timor-Leste.”

To promote organic agriculture in this Project, the key is to establish cultivating techniques and pest control methods, and not rely on chemical fertilizer and agricultural chemicals. Safe and secure agricultural production needs to make organic fertilizer using locally available materials and establish a pest control method with highly attractive and repellent effects. I would like to conduct sustainable technical transfer by considering health for the producers and consumers and continually increasing farmers' incomes.



Mr. Hironaka enthusiastically inspects a farm site in Nalao village.

## Voices from OA fields

This section introduces the opinions of key people involved in promoting organic agriculture in the target provinces. In this issue, we visit Ma-mua farm located in Doungbouddee village, Vientiane city.



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**Ma-mua farm**  
**(Owner of the farm:**  
**Mr. Ma Mua-songda)**

Ma-mua farm is located in Doungbouddee village in Saythani district of Vientiane city. They produce mainly fruits such as papaya and rambutan on more than 20 ha of agricultural land. The annual sales in OA products have reached about 400 million kip. The highest selling product was previously papaya. However, many other farmers started to sell papaya, so their best selling product is now rambutan.

Mr. Ma, the farm owner, earned a master's degree in agriculture from Hungary in the 1990s. After that, he worked in the Department of Livestock and Fishery under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. He has been involved with his farm since 1996. He has been designated as a model farmer and traveled to Thailand to learn organic agriculture. Although he practiced agriculture with a low amount of pesticide, he officially became a member of the OA group in 2007 when the OA market opened in Vientiane city.

His daughter, Ms. Sengphachan, has tried something new, and her efforts have been a breath of fresh air for the farm. "The same kind of vegetables were being sold in the OA market. I wanted to sell something that Laotians had never eaten before." One day, she saw a YouTube video of a Thai farm that introduced corn that you can eat raw. She contacted the farmer in Thailand via direct call. The Thai side responded enthusiastically by providing the corn seeds and gave her technical guidance in Saraburi province of Thailand. The new corn variety is now being sold in the OA market.

The farm frequently connects to customers through Facebook, with 30% to 40% of some crops reserved for regular customers via social media. She even sometimes delivers the products to regular customers without additional charge because she loves to see their smiling faces.

Mr. Ma wants his daughter's family to inherit his farm in the future. He would like to go on an overseas trip, including to Japan. Meanwhile, Ms. Sengphachan would like to continue to produce fruit and plans to expand with a greenhouse for growing corn that consumers can eat raw.



Mr. Ma (left) and Ms. Sengphachan.