



Clean Agriculture Newsletter No.19

Clean Agriculture Development Project

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

Recent Topics of project activity

1. Result of OA (Organic agriculture) market survey

The market survey was conducted on 4, 8, and 11 of September 2021 at ITECC (International Trading Exhibition and Convention Center) OA market, which opens every morning of Wednesday and Saturday. Staff from Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO) in Vientiane Capital and District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO) in Saysetta District, and OA committee members of Vientiane capital conducted an interview survey with the objective of strengthening the OA market. This is the 3rd survey following the rainy season (August to October) in 2019 and the dry season (February) in 2021. There were 180 consumer responses, 63% of women and 37% of men. Part of this result is described below.

First, those who responded that “the products are organic” as a reason to come shopping in the OA market increased from 65 % in the 1st survey, to

71 % in the 2nd survey, and 87 % in this survey. Those who responded that “the products are safe” also doubled from 34 % in the 2nd survey to 61 % in this survey (Table 1).

Second, those who responded that “the price is rather expensive” was 37%, which decreased by 10% compared to the 1st survey. Those who responded that “the price is reasonable” was 58%, which increased by 9%. While the price of vegetables usually increased during the rainy season, there was no difference in consumer awareness of the price between the rainy season and the dry season (Table 2).



(Picture) Interview to consumers

Table 1: Reason why consumer come shopping in the ITECC OA market (Multiple answers best 3)

	2021/9	2021/2	2018/8-10
Products are organic	87%	71%	65%
Products are safe	61%	34%	No question
Products are fresh	61%	64%	7%

Table 2: Price setting in ITECC OA market

	2021/9	2021/2	2018/8-10
Too expensive	1%	5%	1%
Rather expensive	37%	35%	47%
Reasonable	58%	59%	49%
Cheap	1%	1%	0%

It is recognized that consumer awareness and appreciation of the OA market and OA products has increased over the past few years. To improve the OA market, 28% of consumers responded “parking lot placement and management”, 20% responded “reducing the use of plastic bag”, 13 % responded “attaching a price tag”, and 12 % responded “measuring against COVID-19”, etc. Besides, 50% of consumers responded “using SNS (Facebook and YouTube)” to promote the OA market. Based on the survey results, activities for the “Strengthening of the OA market” will be conducted.



(Picture) Group photo by the surveyor

2. Project activities during lockdown period caused by COVID-19

Lockdown measures have been implemented since 20 of September due to a rapid increase in community-acquired COVID-19 infection in Vientiane capital. Individuals involved in JICA activities, except for some regions, are required to work at home. The counterpart agency also switches to homeworking or rotating. It is a difficult situation to carry out activities in collaboration.

Based on the perspective of “Do what you can while you can”, each Japanese expert who are responsible for output 1, output 2, and public relations has carried out activities using his ingenuity to the fullest.

For output 1 in the field of farming system, Organic Agriculture (OA) Technical Manuals have been distributed on YouTube. In order to restart the activities in the fields immediately after cancelling the lockdown, PowerPoint files for the Technical Manuals that are planned to distribute have been created.

For output 2 in the field of business promotion, the results of a survey on OA market, which provides OA vegetables and fruits, have been summarized. In addition, a survey plan for collecting information for the terminal evaluation has been prepared.

In the field of public relations, “public relations with the help of videos” which have a strong visual effect are developing. Videos showing OA production sites and the market not only in the Vientiane Capital, but also in other target provinces were distributed on Facebook. Video editing is carried out continuously for the next distribution.

We do not know exactly how long the lockdown measures will last until now. But we will do our best to the extent that we can. Thank you for your continued support.

3. Distributing Video on Facebook

The project distributes various videos on Facebook as a public relations work.

As of October 22, 2021, 13 types of PR videos, including Lao and English, and 3 types of OA Technical Manuals (Lao) are available on Project Facebook. Please check them.



(Picture) PR-video on pesticide residue test with many views

Voice from OA fields

The opinions of key stakeholders in promoting organic agriculture in the target provinces were presented. In this issue, we focus on Mr. Siphandone Manithie from Naxao village, Luang Phabang District, Luang Phabang province.



(Picture) Mr. Siphandone (the most right) and his family

Naxao village is located on the way to Khuang xi water fall which is famous as a tourist spot of Luang Phabang. It takes about 20 minutes by motorcycle and 15 minutes by car to visit. Mr. Siphandone’s family started organic agriculture in 2012. Many types of vegetables like choi-sum, morning glory, lettuce, mint, lemongrass, etc. are grown in about 0.3 ha of farmland. The main selling destination is the OA market that opens in the city. Prior to being impacted by COVID-19, some of the favorite vegetables of foreigners were sold at relatively high prices in restaurants and hotels located in the city. For example, carrots sold at 60,000 kip per kilogram and lettuce at 40,000 kip per kilogram.

Mr. Siphandone said “many consumers buy organic vegetables for health rather than price”. Although vegetables cannot be produced in his farmland from March to May due to lack of water, he makes a great deal of ingenuity. For example, he is trying to improve the soil by using the smoked husk of job’s tears from the nearby factory. He plans to increase fruit production, like avocado and papaya.