



# Clean Agriculture Newsletter No.24

## Clean Agriculture Development Project



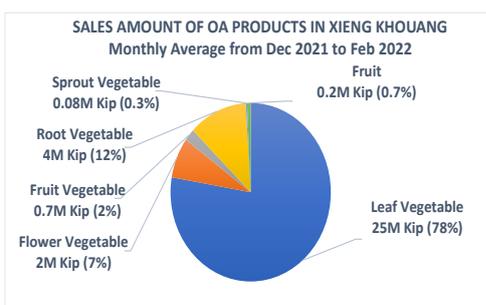
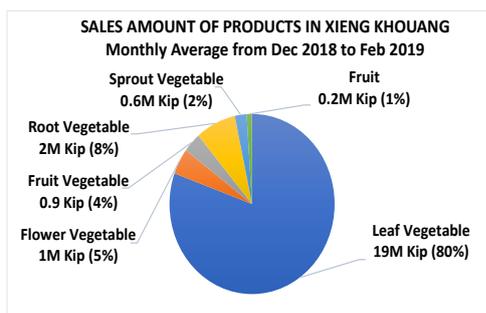
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This project is a technical cooperation for five years (2017-2022) funded by JICA, targeting four Pilot Provinces (Vientiane Capital, Luang Phabang, Xayabouly and Xieng Khouang). It aims at promoting clean agriculture, namely Organic Agriculture and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

### Recent Topics of project activity

#### 1. The end-line survey results related to the OA market in Xieng Khouang

The project collected information on sales volume and sales amount of agricultural products, including vegetables and fruits, in the organic agriculture (OA) market. It is a part of an end-line survey. This issue presents the survey result at the Sibounhuang OA market in Xieng Khouang. It is conducted at the same as Vientiane Capital. The original schedule was significantly shortened due to COVID-19, and the survey was completed within three months December 2021 to February 2022. The graphs below show monthly vegetable and fruit sales amount compared to the baseline survey conducted early in the project.



The survey result shows the monthly sales amount for the survey period has increased by 33 %, from 23,888,000 to 31,727,000 kips. The sales volume has also increased by 10 %,

from 3,013 to 3,314 kg. One of the features of Xieng Khouang is a high percentage of leafy vegetables in sales, which is around 80 %. (It is around 45 % at ITECC (International Trade Exhibition and Commercial Centre) OA market). Sales amount of root vegetables has increased twice. Top 10 items with the highest percentage of sales are 1) mixed leafy vegetables 10.9 %, 2) Garlic 10.4 %, 3) Chinese cabbage 9.7 %, 4) lettuce 8.6 %, 5) cauliflower/broccoli 7.4 %, 6) cabbage 6.9 %, 7) choy sum 6.1 %, 8) carrot 4.7 %, 9) scallions 3.2 %, and 10) coriander 3.1 %. Of the 10 products, the products whose sales have been dramatically increased from the baseline survey are Garlic (3.1 times), cauliflower/broccoli (2.1 times), Chinese cabbage (1.7 times), and mixed leafy vegetables (1.6 times). These products can have a significant effect on the overall increase in sales. The sales volume at the OA market was 21 kg/time, and the sales amount was 200,000 kips/time. In particular, the sales amount per time at the OA market was approximately one-fifth of the ITECC OA market in Vientiane Capital of the same period.

#### 2. On the Job Training (OJT) on Organic Agriculture (OA) Standard, and Internal Control System (ICS)

The project organized a joint kick-off meeting on August 25<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) last year by collaborating with the clean agriculture standard center (CASC), which is the main counterpart agency, the provincial agriculture and forestry office (PAFO) in Vientiane Capital, and the 6 district agriculture and forestry offices (DAFOs) in Vientiane Capital. The project organized the meeting prior to the implementation of activities related to the “improvement of the organizational structure and management of the farmer group” (introduced in No.18<sup>th</sup> issue of the newsletter in September 2021).

The meeting found out the issues including 1) lack of documentation for cultivation history, including cultivation planning and organic agricultural inputs, and 2) unclear checking points and items pointed out for improvement in the internal checking system (ICS) conducted within the group.

After that, the activities for solving the issues were stagnant due to the influence of the COVID-19. Finally, the project carried out the OJT on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022.



(picture) group photo of participants



(Picture) Mr. Thavisit, the director of the CASC, giving an opening remark (left)

This OJT is for internal auditors (ICS inspectors) and the DAFO staff who support ICS operations. The ICS inspector is in a position to instruct farmers in the group to

work on the production in line with OA Standards. Based on the documents submitted by the farmers, he or she visually checks the field and cultivation conditions, according to the check items if farmers produce agricultural products safely. Finally, the ISC inspector holds meetings to report on the results and submit the report to the OA group.

Through this training, we would like to expect the ICS inspector and DAFO staff to lead to safer and more secure agricultural products.



(Picture) atmosphere of training

The OJT teaching materials at this time will be distributed on the CASC YouTube channel as the Organic Agriculture (OA) Technical Manual. So please take a look.

### 3. On the Job Training (OJT) on “Agricultural management (land area and yield)”

It is extremely rare for farmers to correctly grasp the field area at production sites in developing countries. It is also difficult to

understand the need to grasp the yield. The same tendency can be seen in Laos, where small-lot, multi-item production is



(Picture) Group photo of participants

conspicuous in a small area (3,000 m<sup>2</sup> or less). And when asking farmers about the field area, they get answers such as 3 ha, 1 ha, and 0.5 ha. In other words, the farmers do not understand that 1 ha = 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> correctly.

Therefore, the project carried out OJT on May 12<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) to target the CASC, which is a counterpart agency. The Staff learned about field area and yield, which are fundamental items for understanding agricultural management.



(Photo) CASC staff counting steps



(Photo) CASC staff calculate the number of ridges and seedlings after measuring the field area

In this OJT, we first conducted a field survey using the number of steps, assuming a farmer cannot purchase a tape measure.

Next, we conducted a survey using a tape measure to understand the existence of the error from the first survey and how different from the correct area. In the lecture, the participants learned how to calculate the area of the entire field. They also counted the number of ridges and the number of seedlings per ridge. They finally can calculate the yield, and the income obtained from the unit price.

The CASC staff who took the OJT this time will be the next instructor and will conduct the OJT to the OA group. The “Agricultural Management (Land area and yield)” implemented this time will also be distributed on the CASC YouTube channel as an Organic Agriculture (OA) Technical Manual. Please take a look.