



Clean Agriculture Newsletter No.25

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.

Greeting for the project termination

Chief Advisor: Mr. SAKUMA Hiroyuki

As you know, the Clean Agriculture Development Project will terminate on November 8, 2022. I was appointed as chief advisor in November 2019, and three years have already passed. At the beginning of my assignment, I checked the progress of the activities and compiled the activity direction and basic plan from 2020. However, due to the spread of COVID-19, three JICA experts temporarily returned to Japan from early April to Mid-September, 2020. During this period, the program for the introduction of greenhouses was implemented as planned cooperated, and guided by the Clean Agriculture Standard Center (CASC), the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO), and the District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO). A total of 56 greenhouses were completed in this program.



(Picture) in the office

It can be the result of utilizing the experience of the program conducted in the previous year.

Of course, not

all experiences lead to immediate results and some experiences may be accompanied by bitter experiences and failures. Although the project will be completed with trial and error due to the COVID-19 crisis, I hope that the experience of the project will be utilized in various activities. And I am looking forward to seeking what kind of flowers will bloom and bear fruit.

Finally, I wish you all the best in your health and success.

 Khop Chai Lai Lai

Summary of the activities

Output 1 : Farmers/farmers groups in pilot provinces are strengthened for the production of OA products corresponding to market needs.

As the activities of Output1, we worked on the improvement of production techniques and their dissemination, and the improvement of the organizational structure and management of farmers' groups.

During the visits to the target provinces, including Vientiane Capital, Xayabouly, Luang Phabang, and Xieng Khouang Province, the following situation became apparent.

The first is that there were few YouTube Channels for agriculture technical manuals in Laos. When Lao farmers learn agricultural techniques, they use their smartphones to watch YouTube channels in Thailand. It seems to be difficult for the Lao farmers.

The second is that the DAFO staff visits to the farms have not been satisfactory due to the budget shortage. It is a great constraint because the DAFO staff has the role of disseminating techniques to the farmers.

(picture) Donated 100 agricultural bookkeeping books as learning materials to Dongkhamxang Agricultural Technical collage

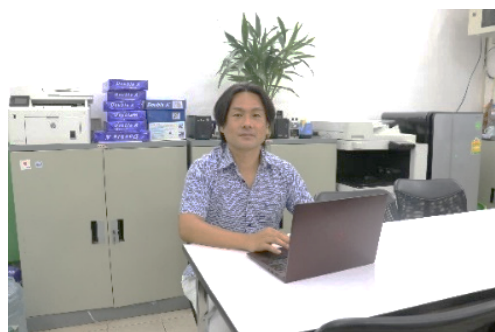


Under the above situation, it was necessary to devise ways to improve and disseminate cultivation techniques and to improve the organizational structure and management of farmers' groups. Therefore, we created a video manual on "Organic Agriculture (OA) Technical Manual" using YouTube, which is unique to modern times. Based on the concept of "learning materials that anyone can learn anytime, anywhere", we have made it possible not only to view but also to download and print the Lao and English versions of each manual on YouTube.

In addition, since it is possible to view it in areas where internet access is possible, it was created in a form that can be used all over Laos and other agricultural organizations.

With the cooperation of OA farmers' groups and counterpart organizations, we have created 24 manuals on cultivation techniques, farm management, Internal Control Systems (ICS), etc. related to organic farming. However, we do not believe that this knowledge and techniques will lead to technical transfer immediately. This is because these knowledge and techniques are just one "type" in practicing organic farming.

I hope that the farmers will practice these "types" and create even better "types" by themselves in the future.



(Picture) Mr. Hironaka who is responsible for farming systems

Output 2 : Sales of OA products in Pilot Provinces is promoted.

As the activities of Output 2, we worked on diversification and expansion of sales channels, strengthening OA markets, and stimulating demand for OA products. At the end of the project, we would like to give an overview.

Regarding the diversification and expansion of sales channels, the OA market accounts for more than 90% of the sales channels for OA farmers. As with other sales channels, we worked to develop a value chain through business matching targeting retailers, distributors, and processors. Although there

was a period when it was difficult to carry out activities due to the COVID-19 crisis, transactions are now being conducted between the OA farmer group and the distributor (Organic House) and ice cream manufacturer (Ban Ban Ice Cream). Although the current handling volume is not large, we believe that we were able to demonstrate the potential for diversification and expansion of sales channels.

Table: Reasons for using the OA market (multiple answers best 3)

	2021/9	2021/2	2018/8-10
Organic production	87%	71%	65%
Safety	61%	34%	No question
Freshness	61%	64%	7%

Regarding the strengthening OA markets, we have not yet been any visible results. However, from the three ITECC OA market surveys conducted from August 2019 to September 2021, it was confirmed that consumers' awareness and evaluation of organic agricultural products (vegetables and fruits) has increased. In addition, through this survey, the OA farmers actually learned the importance of managing OA market parking lots, diversifying the varieties to be sold, and PR through SNS.

Regarding the stimulating demand for OA products, we were unable to arrange a large-scale event. Instead, we created a PR video, including interviews with OA farmers, and sent it out through SNS (Facebook). In addition, although the scale is by no means large, we held events such as public pesticide residue tests and video viewing, mainly in the OA market.

(Picture) the event at ITECC OA market (May 2022)



