

SUSFORM-NOW (LDC) News No 18: **How to make a contour line?**

Contour plowing is one of the essential techniques for sustainable slope farming. Rice terraces, which have been practiced more than thousand years, are similar to the contour plowing (Picture



Picture 1. Rice Terraces in Dien

1. Material for A frame

1. Wood/ bamboo rods: 3 pieces (2~3 m rods: 2 pieces, 1~1.5 m: 1 piece). Rods should be straight and light weight.
2. String
3. Stone/ metal weight
4. Bolt and washer (if available).

However, the farms in the Dien Bien Mountains have not applied contour plowing. Contour plowing should be applied to sustain the farming in the slope.

It is not necessary to use expensive equipment. You can make your own with local materials and need simple theory to operate. The equipment is called “A frame”. LDC conducted workshop on A-frame assemble and its basic operation using with miniature model.



Picture 2. Rice Terraces in Dien Bien

2. How to make A-frame

Step 1. Cut two rods into 2 meters. Make sure they have the same length.

Step 2. Cut one rod into 1-1.5 meters.

Step 3. Assemble the three rods into “A” (Not “A”!!) -shape, and tie them with strings or bolt them together with washer.

Step 4. Make a “Center Mark” on the center of the short rod.

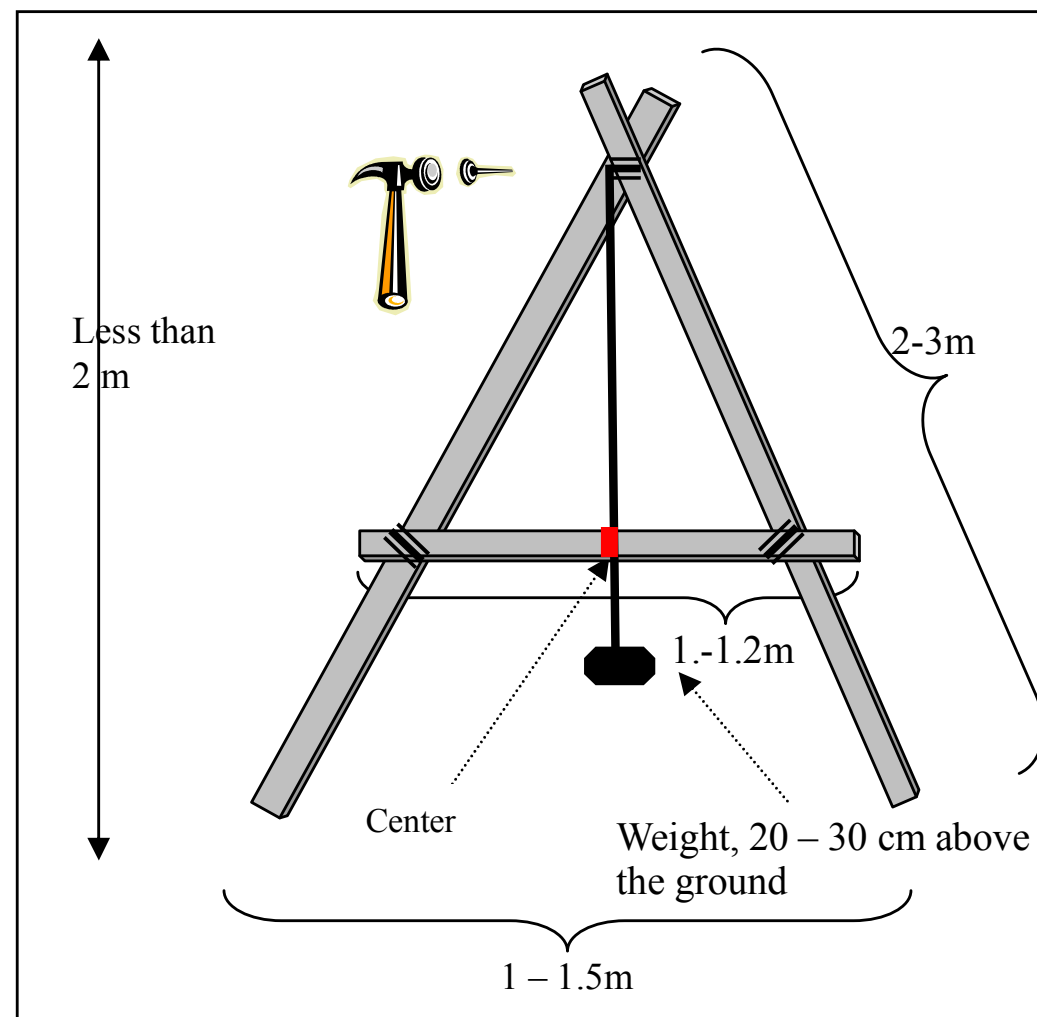
Step 5. Tie the weight with string.

Step 6. Tie the tip of string to the top of the A-frame. Adequate height of the weight is 20~30 cm above the ground

Tips:

Adjust the size of the A-frame according to your height. The height of “A” should not be more than 2 meters and the width should not be more than 1~1.5 meters.

Skilled users or a tall person can use larger A-Frames with 2.5 meters height and 1.5~2 meters width. The wider is the width of an A-frame, the more difficult it is to handle on steep



Picture 3: A frame



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