

Final summary report of SUSPER (Sustainable Development of Peri-Urban Agriculture in South-East Asia)

Rapport final de SUSPER

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SUSPER

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1.8 Baseline Characterization of Urban and Peri-urban Vegetable Production in Vientiane

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The following report attempts to characterise the urban and peri-urban agriculture of Vientiane municipality.

First, even though Vientiane is the capital of the country, one can say that it remains a rural town. Agriculture is present throughout most of the urban districts and in the towns, in particular along the Mekong riverside. The natural ecosystem of Vientiane municipality can be defined as the Mekong riverside plain. The cultivated ecosystem can be divided into three main zones according to the water resources: (1) the floodable riverbank land oriented towards high value-added vegetables in particular during the dry season; (2) the non-floodable highlands where houses are set with fruit trees and/or rainy season vegetable gardens; moreover, in some remote non-floodable alluvial terraces of Vientiane municipality, slash-and-burn rice cultivation is still practised; (3) the floodable lowlands where rice predominates in the rainy season and to a certain extent vegetables are cultivated during the dry season if water is available. Although 54% of interviewed farmers own poultry mainly for their own consumption, livestock, in particular large stock, is not so important, as producers are shifting from the use of draft animal power to the hand tractor.

On average, despite fluctuations, Vientiane municipality basically covered the rice demand of the 652,400 inhabitants of the city in 2002. Vegetables produced by the city's surrounding districts are also potentially sufficient. However, due to the seasonality of the production, the capital must import vegetables during the rainy season and export some to the other 18 provinces of the country. It seems that this is an increasing trend, as vegetable production has increased considerably in recent years, concentrated mainly on two districts and showing quite different cropping calendars according to the production location.

Picture 7 - Tomato production in Sikhottabong (@ P. Moustier)



Nevertheless, the majority of the farmers in Vientiane are rice farmers, producing twice a year if water is available, first for their own consumption. Among the 237 surveyed farmers (which purposely included 18% non-vegetable farmers and 82% vegetable farmers), 18% were pure rice cultivators, 18% pure vegetables producers and the rest (64%) a mixture of both. A farmer family cultivates on average 1.4 ha, although there are major differences. A large part of the farm families are also part-time farmers. It seems that the young members of the family have a tendency to work

outside (50% of the sampled families have at least one member working outside), bringing home a relatively high income (440,000 kip/month on average). The young generation is better educated than the older ones, and this trend may increase in the following years.

The production means are mostly owned by the farmers, whose families originate mainly from Vientiane: 93% are landowners, the rest rent their land from a few landlords. And 46% of the interviewed farmers own irrigated land.

Peri-urban agriculture is therefore seen to be on a growth curve, although the main problems stated by farmers are (1) the low profitability of the production (high input costs and low output prices); (2) pests control and (3) access to inputs like pesticides, seed and fertilizer.

1.9 Aquaculture Systems in Ho Chi Minh City

Author(s): Le Thanh Hung

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A survey of 73 fish farms was conducted from March to May 2002 to evaluate the characteristics of peri-urban aquaculture systems in four districts of Ho Chi Minh City (HCM City).

At present, aquaculture systems and production in the peri-urban areas around HCM City are well adapted to the environment and economic context. Polyculture, in which two or more species of fish are bred in the same pond with each species consuming different types of food, and fish culture/livestock or aquatic plant integration are the dominant activities. Tilapia is the main species. However, other species such as giant gouramy and carp are also raised in peri-urban areas.

Profit-cost analysis shows that an integrated polyculture system (fish and water vegetables for example) is more profitable than monoculture, by a factor of one fifth.

Fish farmers are faced with a lack of capital, insufficient trade skills and water pollution, particularly in villages near inner districts such as Tan Kien and An Lac.