

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

Rapport final de SUSPER

Edited by
Paule MOUSTIER

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SUSPER

**Sustainable Development of Peri-urban Agriculture
in South-East Asia Project**
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For more information contact:

Dr. Paule Moustier
Food Market Researcher
CIRAD-Malica
19 Han Thuyen, Hanoi
Email: paule.moustier@cirad.fr
Website: <http://www.cirad.fr> - <http://www.malica-asia.org> - <http://www.avrdc.org/susper>

Dr. Manuel Palada
Head, Crop & Ecosystem Management Unit
AVRDC-The World Vegetable Center
P.O. Box 42, Shanhua, Tainan, Taiwan 74199
Republic of China
E-mail: mpalada@avrdc.org
Web site: <http://www.avrdc.org>

around retail marketing areas and also by the small volumes transacted (less than 200kg/day for wholesalers and retailers) The 'jumbo' (tuk-tuk) is the dominant mode of transport.

Suppliers and buyers have regular relationships and occasional relationships with variable suppliers. Profit margins are quite small (10-40%). The market can be considered as competitive, yet the characteristics of the marketing chains and the market places make access to market information quite difficult.

Vegetables varieties that are difficult to produce during the rainy season in Laos compete with imports. The research found that at least some Chinese kale, round tomatoes and olive tomatoes, big Chinese mustard and cucumbers are imported. Pakchoy (or choysum), small Chinese mustard, lettuce, yard-long beans and cherry tomatoes are exclusively from Lao producers. In the beginning of the rainy season, imports accounted for 22% of Chinese kale, round tomatoes and cucumbers, 15% for olive tomatoes and 2% for big Chinese mustard. On the whole, when considering the nine vegetables studied, imports represent only 8% of the total.

When comparing Lao and Thai products, traders indicate the following advantages for local products: taste, alleged reputation for food safety; and for imported products: availability and appearance. Prices are similar or slightly lower for local products (2-12%).

These results show that the development of local production in the rainy season is a major strategy to produce additional income opportunities for farmers and traders, and decrease consumer prices. This implies the need to train farmers in terms of pesticide and variety use, as well as in new technologies for off-season production (including tomato grafting).

The comparative advantage of Thailand for producing in the rainy season has to be assessed by further research. Further research could also assist in developing ways of promoting the vegetable safety of Lao products if they are confirmed as better than Thai vegetables.

2.19 Negotiation Tools for the Commodity Chain in Vientiane

Author(s): Jean François Lecoq (CIRAD)

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As a first step to initiate a dialogue among stakeholders in the vegetable commodity chain, a meeting with stakeholders in the vegetables sector was prepared in early December 2002 with the Department of Agriculture of the Lao Ministry of Agriculture. This meeting aimed at informing local stakeholders of some preliminary findings from the production and market surveys carried out by the project (component 1 and 2) and identifying with participatory methods market opportunities and issues for vegetable sectors development in Vientiane peri-urban area.

The report gives an overview of the vegetable sector of Vientiane province in terms of production and marketing based on the analysis of the data collected by the production and market surveys of SUSPER project. The results of the meeting held in Vientiane in early December 2002 are presented. Seasonal adaptation of the production to the market demand and reduction of price instability appeared as major issues for the development of peri-urban agriculture and especially vegetable production. Details were given on crops and months of the year where production should be developed. Some recommendations for further steps are given in the conclusion.