

# Country Brief

## International Workshop on IPM and Marketing

### **Country : Bangladesh**

**IPM since:** 1981, actively promoted by DAE with FAO support among rice farmers using FFS from 1990 onwards and upscaling and diversification (e.g. expansion into vegetables) from 1996 onwards with FAO, UNDP, DANIDA, CARE support.

**Estimated number of farmers trained:** 875,500

**Estimated number of trainers**

**currently active:** 2,100 ( DAE's 900 & Farmer Trainers-1,200 )

**Main crops involved:** Rice, vegetables (eggplant, cauliflower, cabbage, country bean), cotton and fruits

### **Main issues/problems encountered with respect to marketing of IPM produce:**

Vegetable farmers have problems with low price of product at the peak season. Some try to avoid this, for example tomato growers harvest early the green fruits and use ethylene for quick ripening so that they can sell the tomatoes earlier for a higher price. Potato farmers who have access to cold storage facilities use this to store their produce and sell it later when prices are higher.

### **Brief description of marketing initiatives or strategies for IPM crops that have been developed and introduced (if any):**

The Danida funded Agricultural Extension Component (AEC) is an IPM/ICM project that organizes FFS for farm families. The male farmers get training on rice production and female farmers are supported to increase production of vegetables in their homestead gardens. They also get training in nutrition, management of homestead gardens and preparation of farm yard manure. During the FFS the farmers are encouraged to form a farmers club. The farmers together make an annual plan to continue their work in ICM/IPM and also plan to start income generating activities (IGA) for the group. Marketing of farm produce could be one of these IGA. But Bangladesh farmers have generally no experience with marketing and starting businesses. The project is therefore now developing a short course (4-days) on organizational management and entrepreneurship development for all existing IPM/ICM farmers' clubs. With this it is expected that more clubs can start small businesses (for example seed business, food processing, etc.).

The DAE part of ADB funded National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) has started in 2007 and works with common interest groups (CIG) to strengthen their marketing position. These CIG could be farmer club members that were started by the AEC (these are IPM/ICM farmers or could be newly formed groups with a common interest (for example a group of farmers for a particular vegetable or fruit).

The Hortex Foundation, a partner of NATP, is an organisation for promoting private sector agencies interested and involved in export of fresh fruits and vegetables. Normally, they provide technical services to any interested group of farmers/individuals /business organisations for growing and exporting fruits and vegetables. At present-and apart from regular nation-wide promotion activities, Hortex Foundation is working with NATP in 10 upazilas.

### **How many farmers participate:**

The initiatives that have been started by AEC (i.e. organizational management training for farmer clubs) is targeting up to 12,000 farmer clubs. Of each club 3 members including one female will receive the training (i.e. 45,000 farmers directly involved) but the support is expected to bring benefit to all club members (on average 40 to 50 farmers per club, both male and female).

The NATP project currently facilitates the organization of about 6,000 common interest groups (15-20 farmers /group), involving IPM/ICM clubs members. Another 6,000 groups will have benefited from such assistance by June this year, totalling about 12,000 groups of farmers. A total of 18,000-24,000 farmers will thus be involved.

**How successful has it been (e.g. in terms of better prices for farmers, higher volumes sold, better market linkages, empowerment, etc):**

The marketing initiatives have just started in AEC and NATP and thus not possible to assess successfulness of these initiatives.

**What were the main obstacles, if any:**

Main obstacles are that the farmers who have been trained in IPM/ICM projects are generally small, marginal poor farmers with little education and with poor access to marketing information and facilities. The AEC project support group/organization development so that marketing initiatives can be organized as a group.

**Lessons learned from the marketing initiative/strategy and points that need further improvement:**

The AEC project is now in the process of “upgrading” the farmer clubs by additional training on organizational management and marketing. In future, some of these issues could already be addressed during the FFS. However, the ICM FFS curriculum is already overloaded with many different –and mostly essential- topics and it may be necessary to extend the duration of an FFS. There are more reasons to extend the duration of an FFS because crop farmers often also have a strong interest in activities of livestock, poultry and fisheries, which can help them to generate more income. An FFS with a wider curriculum could address Integrated Farm Management in which crops, fish and livestock are combined together with support for marketing initiatives. The curriculum for such type of FFS would probably have to be spread out over an entire year.