

Country Brief

International Workshop on IPM and Marketing

Country: Cambodia

IPM Programme active since: 1993

Estimated number of farmers trained: 150,000

Estimated number of trainers currently active: 700

Main crops involved: Rice, maize, mung bean, watermelon and vegetables (yard long bean, eggplant, tomato, cabbage, etc.)

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

- The legal framework to recognize IPM products has not been developed. IPM products have only been promoted through farmer communities.
- There are no specific labels, no certification and inspection for IPM products. There are no organizations or institutions officially recognized to provide accreditation for IPM production.
- Insufficient promotion of IPM produce as being safe and good for health. Therefore, only a small number of consumers know the benefits of - and are willing to pay more for - IPM products.
- Lack of awareness on the negative impacts of pesticide residues on human health. Hence, consumers are not able to appreciate the higher quality of IPM products.
- Little or no price premium given to IPM produce. In many cases, farmers produce quality IPM products but when they sell them, the middle men mix these with non-IPM products and sell them at the same prices. As a result, IPM farmers are not encouraged to produce IPM products.
- Organic Farmer Associations are faced with the problem of high cost for accreditation and certification. Since they cannot obtain certification from internationally accredited certification bodies, they cannot sell their products (e.g., organic rice) to international markets.

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

How long has the marketing initiative/strategy been operational:

How many farmers participate:

- Organization of farmers who completed vegetable FFS as associations for chemical-free vegetable production. Facilitation of access to markets at district and provincial towns. These initiatives, carried out for some years starting in 1998 in close collaboration with the nongovernmental organization Srer Khmer benefited approximately 100 vegetable growers.
- Organization of farmers who completed rice FFS as associations for chemical-free rice production and facilitation of market access at district and provincial towns and Phnom Penh capital. In some provinces stores for selling chemical-free rice produce were opened and operated. These initiatives, carried out since 2002 in close operation with Provincial Departments of Agriculture, have benefited approximately 5,000 rice growers.
- Organization and registration of farmers, who completed IPM-FFS, as associations for organic rice production. Market access facilitation to markets in Phnom Penh capital and overseas markets in Europe. These activities, implemented since 2002 in cooperation with GTZ and the nongovernmental organization CEDAC, have benefited about 2,500 farmers in six provinces.
- Promotion of IPM products through the creation of IPM village/communes and facilitating of market access and links to food safety projects. Under this initiative, some Provincial Departments of Agriculture have provided "safe products certification". This work, started in 2003, has involved thousands of farmers.
- A big number of IPM farmers have been practicing chemical-free crop production and have established linkage with CEDAC for marketing their produce. CEDAC now has chemical-free/organic shops and restaurants. CEDAC has been involved in marketing IPM produce as

early as 2000, but has only recently opened shops and restaurants in Phnom Penh and in the future, in other urban areas of Cambodia.

- In 2004 in Siep Reap province under assistance of the Provincial Department of Agriculture and the nongovernmental organizations Huriddo and Srer Khmer, a few hundred IPM farmers organized themselves into a chemical-free vegetable producer group and entered into contracts with some hotels and restaurants as to supply IPM products.
- In 2008 in Svay Rieng province under assistance of the Provincial Department of Agriculture, a few hundred IPM farmers organized themselves into a safe/chemical-free agricultural production group/alliance and entered into contracts to supply safe rice and vegetables to some casinos at the Cambodia-Vietnamese border in Svay Rieng.
- In 2008, GAP standards and guidelines were developed in Khmer based on the ASEAN GAP. These guidelines are expected to be endorsed and issued for use countrywide in 2009 by MAFF. GAP will be incorporated into the FFS curriculum for farmers. A system for accreditation and certification is currently being developed.

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

- In general, farmers got better prices for IPM products. However, because the premium was not very high, most farmers were not motivated enough to continue their IPM practices.
- Higher volumes of products were sold. However, supply was not consistent because it fluctuated according to the season and there was a shortage of supply during the off-season.
- Farmers have better market linkages and they have been empowered to work together and negotiate with buyers.

What were the main obstacles, if any:

- Lack of legal framework and funds to consistently support production, certification and marketing of IPM produce.
- Most initiatives have not been operationalized very well mainly due to problems on the production side. Production fluctuates based on the season and in most cases there is a shortage of supply in the off-season that makes it difficult to make year-round contracts with buyers.
- Most urban consumers still prefer to buy good-looking imported fresh fruits and vegetables from Thailand and Vietnam.
- No private sector partners involved in managing the IPM and organic produce supply chain. When project funding is terminated, public sector activity and support for marketing of IPM and organic produce evaporated.
- The competition with chemical companies is high and most companies employ powerful strategies that make it difficult to encourage farmers to grow chemical-free or organic produce.

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

- It is not possible to promote IPM products nationwide if there is no recognition from the Government and if there are no regulations on standards and certification in place. Therefore, it is very important to obtain support from the Government to establish a responsible body and develop regulations and a system to support the marketing of IPM produce.
- One of the key problems is insufficient supply of produce throughout the year that makes buyers reluctant to enter into contracts with farmers. Hence, it is important to improve and increase year-round production through the improvement of the IPM-FFS training curriculum. Where feasible, farmers should engage in off-season production using facilities such as green houses and improve production planning for example making use of cropping calendars based on ecological zones.
- It is important to work through the Directors of the Department of Agriculture and Provincial Governors to connect farmers' group with markets such as hotels, restaurants and casinos.

This is particularly necessary and effective for provinces such as Siem Reap and Svay Rieng that are visited by many tourists. It is also worthwhile for other provinces to follow this strategy, i.e., linking up IPM farmers with buyers and consumers.

- Role of the private sector vital to the development of an efficient and profitable organic and IPM supply chain.
- Membership in IPM Farmer Associations can be very useful in addressing production and marketing issues and concerns. Alliances of IPM farmers' groups (national and provincial alliances) can support each other in term of technical expertise, volume of production and marketing. It is also important to support farmers so that they can avail of credit to invest in production because most of them lack capital.
- Awareness raising to provide information on both the adverse effects of pesticides especially on health and environment as well as benefits of IPM products as safe food to the public. The use of various forms of media such as radio, television, newspaper and leaflets to raise awareness is very important. More work should be done on raising awareness so that consumers, both inside the country and overseas, will know more about the benefits and higher quality of IPM and organic produce so that they are also willing to pay more for such produce.