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|---|--------------------|
| Development of a Fresh Cacao Grading System Using Participatory Mechanisms in Nan Province
<i>Tansiphorn Na Nan, Pimsiri Tiyyon, Thitipat Weeplian, Phanomsak Tomjai, Phannida Baiya, Supanida Thongpan, Apichaya Feepakpro, Wirakan Nortao, Thofan Kakham, Apinan Phanphuet, Ampika Chuamor and Supin Sangsuk</i> | Article No. 256613 |
| Adding Value to Tilapia Production and Creating Product Recognition by Tilapia Business Cooperation Network, Phayao Province
<i>Kittisak Srepirote, Kamolpong Ratanasanguanvongs and Burin Buntavong</i> | Article No. 256614 |
| Cement Pond Rice Cultivation for Food Security in Ta Muang Sub-district, Ubon Ratchathani Province
<i>Phengkamon Marnarath and Piyamart Tupmongkol</i> | Article No. 256615 |
| Development of Community Craftsmen's Skills in Construction Work to Alleviate Poverty in Ta Muang Sub-district, Ubon Ratchathani Province
<i>Chantha Thanawattanawong and Sirisuda Sanew</i> | Article No. 256616 |
| Development of Distribution Channels for Community Product of Elderly School Members in Hua Ngom Subdistrict, Chiang Rai Province
<i>Bungon Sawatsuk, Wasna Pithakpol, Somchart Tana, Pratoomporn Yingthongchai, Wilawan Kumpuan and Sarawut Jompa</i> | Article No. 256617 |
| Tube Sedge-Based Poverty Alleviation Model of Thale Noi Community, Phatthalung Province
<i>Apinan Aue-aungkul, Sanit Srichookiat, Pornpan Khemakhunasai, Tiptiwa Sampantamit, Samak Kaewsuksaeng and Nattapong Jitnirat</i> | Article No. 256618 |



Development of a Fresh Cacao Grading System Using Participatory Mechanisms in Nan Province

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Abstract

Cacao is a continually growing crop in Nan Province of Thailand. However, a reliable sorting system for fresh cacao is lacking. Farmers and agricultural cooperatives lack the knowledge and experience to effectively manage their produce. Consequently, the quality and quantity of fresh cacao do not meet market demands, and determining distribution prices becomes challenging. This situation leads to unreliable income for farmers. This study addresses the issue by developing a system for quality selection of fresh cacao in Nan Province through a participatory certification mechanism. The network involves 72 farmers, five agricultural cooperatives from five pilot districts in Nan Province, and a market network. The operation involves the following steps: 1) Collecting qualitative data on fresh cacao produce, including weight, length, diameter, and weight of seeds per fruit, and standardizing the quality system for fresh cacao; 2) Developing a fresh cacao quality screening system using participatory mechanisms and quality criteria such as Grade A, Grade B, and Grade C; 3) Enhancing understanding of the fresh cacao quality selection system through workshops on environmental management, designed to increase the quantity and quality of fresh cocoa and facilitate quality selection according to fresh cocoa standards; and 4) Transferring knowledge to improve cocoa production capabilities, cocoa plantation management, and disease and pest management. As a result, farmers saw their income increase by an average of 72.17 percent, while cooperatives experienced a 102.9 percent income increase. Moreover, the quality of cocoa products met more than 80 percent of buyers' needs. The fresh cacao quality selection system has the potential to foster sustainable cocoa businesses in Nan Province.

Keywords: Nan province, Cacao, Grading system, Participatory mechanisms, Supply chain



Adding Value to Tilapia Production and Creating Product Recognition by Tilapia Business Cooperation Network, Phayao Province

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Abstract

Ban Tam Sub-district, Phayao Province of Thailand is a fishing community area. Farmers have formed a cooperative called "Ban Tam Tilapia Cooperative" with 90 members, and their average daily production capacity is 5 tons. However, they face marketing challenges, particularly in terms of pricing and dealing with middlemen in the fish trade. To address these issues and enhance tilapia production and awareness, a research study used online surveys to assess consumer perceptions. The collaborative network of the tilapia business enterprise include the Ban Tam Tilapia Cooperative, fish farmers, restaurant owners, and tilapia consumers. The study found that consumers who are interested in and purchase tilapia base their decisions on the quality of the fish. The strategies for enhancing value to tilapia production and creating product awareness through the collaborative network of tilapia business enterprises are 1) Establishing a network for operations, 2) Increasing the value of tilapia through processing and involving farmers in the process, 3) Designing product label and quality certification symbol Phayao tilapia, and 4) Creating awareness through using media and communication technology results in collaboration in tilapia business. As follows, the Ban Tam Tilapia Cooperative produces fresh tilapia products, trimmed into pieces, and packaged. They also produce frozen tilapia products. The brand logo is "Nil Phayao Chumpathong" and the product brand is "Pla-Tam." Marketing channels and online distribution channels are used. Restaurant operators have tilapia dishes on their menus. As a result, the cooperative can sell tilapia at 60 Baht, up from 52 Baht, and increase their income by 36,000 Baht (about 1,025 US dollars) per production cycle.

Keywords: Phayao province, Tilapia business, Operation network, Value addition, Creating awareness



Cement Pond Rice Cultivation for Food Security in Ta Muang Sub-district, Ubon Ratchathani Province

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Abstract

Ta Muang sub-district, located in Don Mot Daeng district, Ubon Ratchathani province of Thailand, is known for its high concentration of poverty-stricken households and limited arable land. The primary causes of poverty in this area are recurrent natural disasters, including floods and droughts, which disrupt traditional rice cultivation practices. As a result, local households struggle to produce an adequate food supply, particularly rice, throughout the year. To address these formidable challenges, an innovative approach to rice cultivation in cement ponds has been developed through collaborative efforts of various stakeholders. This method of rice cultivation is resilient to natural disasters and requires minimal land space. The project involves 84 low-income households and comprises eight key activities: 1) Gathering input and feedback from the target low-income households, 2) Allocating the budget for purchasing cement ponds, preparing suitable locations for their placement, and soil preparation for rice cultivation, 3) Conducting field trips to observe experimental rice fields and rice genetic conservation plots, 4) Providing training on rice cultivation techniques to achieve high-quality and maximum yield, 5) Implementing rice cultivation in cement ponds, 6) Promoting the use of organic or Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) methods in rice cultivation within cement ponds, 7) Facilitating knowledge exchange and learning sessions among the target low-income households regarding rice cultivation in cement ponds, and 8) Summarizing the lessons learned from the project. Cement ponds can be installed near the homes of the participating low-income households or in communal areas within the community. This approach does not demand extensive agricultural machinery or a large labor force for maintenance. Moreover, it enables rice harvests at least three times per year, resulting in an estimated production of 96 kilograms of rice per household (equivalent to 60 cement ponds). As a result, participating households can save approximately 2,880 Baht annually. The rice planting project in cement ponds aligns with the development plan of the Tha Muang Subdistrict Administrative Organization, aimed at ensuring food security that is tailored to the conditions, context, and potential of impoverished households.

Keywords: Ubon Ratchathani province, Food security, Rice cultivation, Cement pond, Poverty



Development of Community Craftsmen's Skills in Construction Work to Alleviate Poverty in Ta Muang Sub-district, Ubon Ratchathani Province

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Abstract

Ta Muang Sub-district, Ubon Ratchathani Province of Thailand is an area being prone to natural disasters. Community craftsmen have the potential to build boats to evacuate people and property, and repair houses after flood situations. However, these community craftsmen lack proper knowledge in accurate construction calculations, technical skills, and certification according to labor skill standards. Therefore, the objective of this research is to enhance human resources by developing vocational skills for community craftsmen and creating income opportunities through the following processes: Step 1: Participatory involvement of stakeholders in the area to identify and understand the root causes of problems; Step 2: Data collection on community craftsmen in Ta Muang Sub-district; Step 3: Designing a curriculum for developing vocational skills for community craftsmen in the area; Step 4: Implementation of community craftsmen's skill development through training and practical work experience in real-life situations; Step 5: Evaluation of community craftsmen's skill development in Ta Muang Sub-district, involving the participation of the Ubon Ratchathani Regional Skilled Labor Development Institute 7. In this step, the Institute conducts evaluations of the skill development program for community craftsmen in Ta Muang Sub-district. The institute provided training courses for 107 community craftsmen in the light brick wall course, product assembly welding course, and advanced solar for agriculture course. As a result of the training, 99 community craftsmen successfully obtained certified vocational skills in accordance with the respective training courses. Among the participants, 25 craftsmen specializing in lightweight brick wall construction experienced a 114.29% increase in income, and 10 craftsmen specializing in product assembly welding saw a 142.86% increase in income. Additionally, by applying solar cell systems in their households, 8 households managed to reduce their expenses by 400 Baht (about 11.40 US dollars) per month, while one household replaced fuel with solar cell systems, leading to a reduced monthly expense of 1,480 Baht (about 42.15 US dollars). Furthermore, the project also included activities for skilled community craftsmen, such as establishing a social network for construction craftsmen in Ta Muang Sub-district to provide assistance to households affected by disasters, benefiting 28 households. Additionally, houses were constructed for community members as part of the Baan Mankong Rural Project.

Keywords: Ubon Ratchathani province, Skill development, Construction workers, Labor skill standards, Poverty alleviation



Development of Distribution Channels for Community Product of Elderly School Members in Hua Ngom Subdistrict, Chiang Rai Province

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Abstract

The community products crafted by elderly members of Hua Ngom Sub-district School in Pan district, Chiang Rai province of Thailand, are manufactured and distributed within the local community, exclusively catering to its members. Nonetheless, a lack of engagement with external markets and the absence of a comprehensive marketing strategy are apparent. Consequently, this research endeavors to establish distribution channels for the community products fashioned by the elderly members of Hua Ngom Sub-district School in Pan district, Chiang Rai province. This pursuit employs a participatory research approach, engaging the management team, elderly students, a group of community product producers (comprising 20 individuals), and agricultural product consumers in Chiang Rai province (totaling 400 participants). The research process encompasses the following steps: 1) Assessment of the potential within the elderly group in Hua Ngom sub-district, 2) Examination of consumer behaviors, 3) Cultivation of knowledge and marketing management tailored to community products and 4) Development of marketing management for community products. The outcomes of this study serve as a blueprint for steering and promoting the community products of the elderly group within Hua Ngom Sub-district School in the subsequent ways. In the short term, our approach involves constructing a well-defined management framework for each department, raising group awareness through online social platforms such as Facebook and LINE, cultivating trust, and enhancing the group's product appeal through strategic branding. The initial target market will be the local community in Pan District, including venues such as Pracharat Market, distribution points, product exhibitions through networking, and online sales platforms. Additionally, opportunities regarding members of Hua Ngom Sub-district School and bedridden elderly individuals at the Quality-of-Life Development Center in Hua Ngom Sub-district will be explored. The long-term plan is to establish partnerships with community markets such as hospitals, food delivery services, and nearby hot pot restaurants. It is anticipated that these initiatives will result in a projected revenue increase of 40.84%.

Keywords Chiang Rai province, Hua Ngom subdistrict, Development of distribution channels, Community products, Elderly school



Tube Sedge-Based Poverty Alleviation Model of Thale Noi Community, Phatthalung Province

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Abstract

In the Thale Noi sub-district, Kuan Khanun district, Phatthalung province of Thailand, there resides a group of vulnerable individuals facing challenges such as limited access to education, low income, and scarce employment opportunities. Despite these difficulties, this group possesses valuable traditional knowledge and skills in the art of tube sedge weaving. Their primary source of income comes from producing and selling these bags to middlemen and their typical income is 200 Baht per day. To address the pressing issue of poverty within this community, a poverty alleviation model was devised, known as "Tube Sedge Weaving against Poverty." The central idea was to enhance the production skills of this group to create higher-quality products, thereby commanding better prices in the market. The "Krajood Wannee" community enterprise played a pivotal role in this endeavor, serving as mentors and providing standardized skill development opportunities to 41 members of this vulnerable group. This poverty alleviation strategy had a dual focus: 1) Enhancing Knowledge and Skills: The target group's capabilities in production and marketing were fortified, bolstering both their human and economic capital. This encompassed comprehensive skill and knowledge development in various areas, including crafting techniques, raw material preparation, natural dyeing processes, embroidery techniques, stitching bag handles, and ensuring product quality. Furthermore, the participants received training in marketing skills, covering aspects such as brand creation, logo design, content-driven marketing strategies, and the innovative approach of live-stream sales tactics, 2) Community Enterprise Establishment: The "Lenoi Craft" community enterprise was founded to unite vulnerable individuals and involve them in these training programs. Consequently, participants acquired advanced knowledge and skills in both production and marketing. As a result, noteworthy transformations occurred within the target group: six individuals became proficient product design trainers, 19 participants became skilled in raw material preparation, three excelled in natural dyeing, 16 mastered weaving, nine honed their embroidery skills, and another nine became proficient in quality inspection. These enhanced skills led to increased revenues, with unfinished bag sales to "Krajood Wannee" totaling 512,100 Baht and additional income from sales in department stores amounting to 164,626 Baht. The establishment of the "Lenoi Craft" Community Enterprise marks the inception of social opportunities, facilitated by various support mechanisms from the public sector, playing a crucial role in empowering Thai community enterprises and fostering economic growth.

Keywords: Phatthalung province, Tube sedge, Poverty alleviation, Pro-poor value chain, Production skills development