

Sampran Co-op Research Project 2nd

Executive Summary

Sampran Co-op Research Project, in its second year, is a continuity of the first year's project where Suan Sampran (Rose Garden Riverside) is the core of 6 community network groups with support from Kasetsart University and Thailand Research Fund. The Project has 3 main objectives: to develop system of knowledge transfer to the community, to find ways to upgrade agricultural products to organic status and to study ways to develop supply chains for organic agricultural products. The Co-operative Academic Institute of Kasetsart University plays an important role in the knowledge transfer from organic farming techniques to farmers at the start of the supply chain, through to production, harvest, packaging and marketing at the end of the supply chain. Forms of training vary from group lectures on certain topics related to organic farming through to hands-on training at the community network farms.

Development at the start of the supply chain is a gradual process, whereby researchers expect to sought farmers with honest consciousness who would remain with the Project in the long run. Monthly group lectures are organized at the Sukjai Community Market, Suan Sampran, where speakers are university lecturers, government officials, experienced farmers or local experts. Past topics include organic farming techniques, pest control, production methods and holistic health. Visitors to the market are welcomed to join as it is important to educate the consumers to have more awareness with organic agricultural products.

Sukjai Community Market was established in November 2010, primarily as a venue to promote organic products for the community network groups. It's opened every weekend from

10am – 5pm where visitors can find organic vegetables, fruits, herbs and homemade local delicacies. As mentioned earlier, there is a monthly open lecture on topics related to organic farming and natural health.

Ways to upgrade farming methods to certified organic level is a long term process. Researchers would regularly visit network farms giving them advice on organic techniques as well as checking if any chemical products are used. At the end of the supply chain, random tests on chemical residues are carried out at the Sukjai Market every two weeks. Severe action is taken to vendors found with products containing harmful chemicals. This reassures product quality to consumers and weeds out dishonest farmers.

Thus, the Project promotes organic farming to the Sampran community and fair trade by connecting directly producers to consumers. It's a model where development and knowledge transfer in a community is enhanced with the help from a local private enterprise as a core. In the long term, we hope to see the following developments with the Project: 1. Upgrading certain farms from chemical-free status to certified organic. 2. Development of management of the middle of supply chain of the network group. 3. Development of Sukjai Community market with products accreditation and expansion of its network.