

Phuc Thanh, Hoa Trung Commune, Dong Hy District, Thai Nguyen Province

Field Visit Site

June 10, 2008

Overview

1. Physical Location:

Phuc Thanh is a hamlet of Hoa Trung commune, Dong Hy district, Thai Nguyen province. The hamlet is about 5km from the district centre, 7 km from Thai Nguyen city, and about 106 km from Hanoi to the North. It is bordered by Na Long hamlet in the North, Song Cau town in the East, Trung Than hamlet in the West and Lang Nam in the South.

2. Geographical location:

Phuc Thanh lies on the low hilly area with a 200-metre-peak in the West. The cultivation land is terraced form.

3. Climate:

a. Two clearly divided seasons:

- Dry season: From November to April (cold)
- Rainy season: From May to October (hot)

b. Temperature:

- Annual average temperature: 22°C
- Highest Temperature: 32.2°C (July)
- Lowest Temperature: 3°C (January)

c. Rainfall:

- Annual average rainfall: 2,097 mm
- Highest rainfall: 3,008 mm (1995)
- Average humidity: 82%

4. Traffic:

Phuc Thanh is located 2 km from the National Road No2 Hanoi-Thai Nguyen-Cao Bang (see Apendix). Interhamlets path and road from the locality to the main road have been concreted, which take traffic easy.

5. Economic and technical centres:

Phuc Thanh is in the area of tea tree, a long time industrial tree, with Song Cau Farm and a 13.5-ton-capacity black tea manufactured factory. This is a resource for collecting local fresh tea and transferring techniques to native people.

6. Land:

Total natural land are : 114 ha

- Agricultural land: 55.36 ha (48.56%)

+ Cultivation land: 32 ha (58% of agricultural land)

+ Field: 1-crop-field: 12 ha
 2-crop-field: 20 ha
 3-crop-field:

Subsidiary crops land:

Long time industrial tree (tea): 23 ha
Aquaculture (fish): 0.36 ha

+ Forest land: 45 ha (39.47%)

Natural forest: 14 ha
Artificial forest: 31 ha

- - Land tenure: 4.64 ha (4.07%)
- Ohters (river, road,etc): 9 ha (7.90%)
- Given "land using right" certifiacte: 87 households

An interview applied to 50 households showed that the largest area for tea planting of the family was 7,200 m² and the smallest was 420 m², every household owned atleast 220m² of rice-field. This is a result of struggles of the Government in "Land for Tillers" program. However, the difference in land owning between the households still remained.

7. Economic condition:

In 1990s, 24% of households in Phuc Thanh commune had to buy rice because most of their field was 1-crop.

Main farming production:

During that time, rice was the main crop of the area with average productivity of about 100 - 120 kg/Northen "sao" (about 360 square meters) and on an average, the per person was 230 kg of food per year.

Turning to plant tea:

The harvest time is from April to October, the average yield of tender tea leaves is about 20 - 25 quintals per ha. Fresh tea then is often subjected to preliminary and sold in local market.

Local people used to live in poor condition. But, within 10 years (1996 - 2006), living standard is improved with assistance of the government and CCA project in building water pump station.

In the past, farmers only grew 1-crop-paddy with average output was 25 - 30 quintals/ha, nowadays, with applying advanced techniques, they cultivate 2 crops of paddy per year with productivity of 40 - 45 quintals/ha, average food per person is 421 kg/year (2005).

Tea productivity is increased by 80 quintals/ha as a result of intensive cultivation and applying advanced techniques such as IPM.

Animal husbandry

- Big cattle: 37 head
- Pigs: 350 heads
- Poultry: 560 head
- Goat

Non-agricultural jobs:

No.	Career	Number of household	Market
1.	Brick maker	07	Internal market
2.	Brick layer	10	
3.	Carpentry	03	
4.	Agricultural services	02	

These careers is taken beside agricultural production and income from these non-agricultural jobs occupied 35% of total earning of the family.

Infrastructures:

- Electric water pump station: 01
- Transformer station: 01
- Sewerage system 1,300 m
- Interhamlets path: + Concreted path: 04 km
- + others: 07 km
- hamlet hall: 200 m²
- Day care centre 60 m²
- Electric insecticide sprayer 01

Poverty condition:

A survey conducted in 50 households in March 2006 showed that:

- 12 prosperous households with average earning of about over VND 1,000,000/person/month (24%)
- 18 households had enough to live in easy circumstances with average income of about VND 500,000 - 1,000,000/person/month(38%)
- 14 households were average at about VND 300,000 - 500,000 of income per person/month (28%)
- 6 poor households with earnings per person per month of about VND 200,000 - 300,000 (12%)

It can be said that, nowadays, there is no starving household in the hamlet, and number of rich, prosperous and average households is increasing by days.

This result can be seen in:

- 100% of households had strong house
- 90% owned TV set
- 100% were covered with National Electricity Grid,
- 80% had motorbike
- 100% of school-age children studied in schools, living standard of the people were increasing rapidly.

Earnings and payings condition:

Earnings:

- Average earnings of the households was VND 32,500,000
- Net revenue: VND 27,300,000
- + Income from farming: - Average: VND 6,163,800/household
- Highest: VND 22,000,000
- Lowest: VND 2,400,000

The main resource of income from farming was from tea cultivation. Some family also process black tea so their income could be higher than the ones who did not do. However, rudimentary methods in processing was a shortcoming which gave different quality of black tea.

Moreover, market for tea was unstable and that lead to heedless attitude of the farmers in processing tea. But, they could not stop producing tea.

- + Income from animal husbandry: - Average: VND 7,500,000/household
- Highest: VND 36,000,000

They got benefit mostly from breeding white chicken.

+ Income from handicraft: - Average: VND 3,784,000/household
 -Highest: VND 199,000,000

Main handicrafts: brick making, non-agricultural jobs

+ Income from members who worked far from family:
 - Average: VND 6,629,000/households
 - Highest: VND 73,000,000

Most of them were guest workers in Taiwan and Malaysia, they worked as maids, manual labors. However, income from this resource was not stable especially when their contracts finished and they had to go back to Vietnam.

+ Income from other resources: - Average: VND 13,172,000/household
 - Highest: VND 18,000,000

The main resources were from working in services of other people, and from salary.

Payings:

- Daily subsistence expenses: -Average VND10,706,000/household/ (57.50%)
 - Highest VND 36,500,000

- School fees: - Average VND 1,553,000 (7.26%)
 - Highest VND 7,200,000

- Health care services: - Average VND 372,000 (1.99%)
 - Highest VND 4,000,000

- House repairing: - Average VND 4,644,000 (24.94%)
 - Highest VND 83,000,000

- Others (funeral, wedding,...) - Average VND 1,560,000 (8.37%)
 - Highest VND 4,000,000

Total paying: - Average VND 19,160,000/household/year
 - Highest VND 99,000,000
 - Lowest VND 4,300,000

Of which: - Paying for daily subsistence expenses: 57.5%
 - Paying for school fees: 7.26%
 - Paying for health care services: 1.99%
 - Paying for House repairing: 24.94%
 - Others: 8.37%

Evaluation:

Total income per household per year: VND 32,500,000

(33.4%) - From agricultural production: VND 11,943,800

- From handicraft: VND 3,784,000 (10.5%)
- From members who worked far from family: VND 6,629,000 (18.54%)
- From other resources: VND 13,382,000 (37.44%)

Comparing between net revenue and total paying:

- Net revenue of 2005 VND 30,895,000
- Total paying: VND 19,160,000
- Leftover: VND 11,735,000

8. Social condition:

1. Population and people:

The hamlet had 116 households 2 villages, 86.2% of which worked in agricultural sector.

Population: 429	Male: 223	Female: 206
Labor force: 260	Male: 152	Female: 108
Peoples: 5 peoples:	Kinh :	88.6%
	San Diu	3.72%
	Chinese	1.84%
	Nung	4.84%
	Tay	1%

2. Civil social organizations of the hamlet (CSOs)

The hamlet is considered as an administrative unit with one leader who is responsible every movement and action of the locality.

CSOs of the hamlet:

- Youth union (15 members)
- Famers' union (75 members)
- Women's union (45 members)
- Veterans' union organization (25 members)
- Elderly union (38 members)
- Vietnam Communists party cell (22 members)

The relationship between these CSOs is regulated by the party cell which leads the implementation of policies and laws given by the government at every levels, especially policies in developing agriculture and rural area, and poverty-alleviation movements.

The CSOs's task is to guid and monitor every activities of related members, as well as to exchange experiences with other CSO in local handover meetings.

Cooperatives organization:

- Phuc Thanh Cooperative had been established and worked in accordance with cooperative's laws of Vietnam and 7 principles of International Cooperative since 1996
- In 2001 : 73 members
- 2003: 76 members
- 2005: 96 members

Activities:

- Soil services
- Science and techniques services (introducing and selling breeds and fertilizers)
- Credit services (idecapital)
- Market
- Irrigation services

9. Environment:

1. Water environment and farming habits:

As mentioned above, before 1995, PhucThanh met difficulties in irrigation system when the main water resource was from rains and there was no river in the locality. During that time, farmers only could cultivate one paddy crop per year. Nowadays, with an electric water pump station, this problem had been addressed, the farmers could farm 2 paddy crops, in some areas they also could cultivate 3 crops per year, in some higher areas, subsidiary crops like corn, sweet potato, vegetable, beans were cultivated, and productivity has been improved.

2. Fertilizing:

In paddy-fields, muck is used for basal fertilizing, and chemical fertilizer is for top dressing. Tea is planted in hills with 100% of fertilizer is chemical.

3. Changing harvesting time of tea:

Normally, tea was harvested from June to October (in rainy season) when the productivity was higher but lower quality. Some farm households have changed this harvesting time, from autumn to winter or spring, combine with watering tea tree. This can make the quality of tea higher.

4. IPM:

Training courses and pilot models in IPM gave initial results, but this has not been popularized.

Extension and science and techniques transferring activities:

1. Cultivation:

Paddy was the main crop of Phuc Thanh.

Since 2000, local farmers applied advanced techniques in farming paddy, such as:

- Cultivating Khang Dan seed
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- Result: - Average output in spring season was 48.6 quintals/ha
- Average output in crop season was 45.2 quintals/ha

- IPM for paddy and tea tree
- Rice sowing in hard soil
- Rice sowing in tray
- Keeping warm for young paddy tree by covering nylon over the field
- Balancing fertilizers (NPK)

Intensive farming combining with IPM method helped many farmhouseholds improve the average productivity.

Industrial tree:

Tea is considered as a way for poverty-alleviation movement of the local farmer. As a result, many household got rid of poor condition and living standard had been improved, some farmhouseholds even got rich. However, low quality varieties (90% of the varieties are Midland), simple processing system still remain as shortcomings which limit the development of the locality.

2. Forest:

Basically, local forest had been cutten over and only desert land left. In recent years, these areas has been recovered by allocating land and forest program given by the government. As a result, 32ha of artificial forest (eucalypus and acacia)has been planted and protected.

3. Animal husbandry:

- Pig raising: on a verage, each household raised 3 units (some farmhouseholds raised over 10 units). Farmers had been trained about feeding sow and inoculation against epidemics techniques, and cleaning stable

- Fowls raising: local farmers had not been trained about raising fowls techniques, and their activities were taken unpromptedly.

9. Human resource condition:

1. Education level:

- Primary level: 73 people (17%)

- Secondary level: 345 people (80.4%)
- High school: 11 people (2.6%)
- University level: 0

Generally, most of the householders had completed secondary education level, and they had ability to acquire basic and advanced techniques actively.

There is no local extension worker, this is a shortcoming should be improved.

In 2005, only one training course held in the locality which could not meet the demand of local farmers to approach advanced techniques.

2. Science and techniques standard condition:

100% of local leaders has not passed technical training. However, they still can apply new techniques into their farm works effectively.

In every training course, participants were given technical documents and had chance to join in pilot models.

2. Production habits and experiences:

When Vietnam was still a colony of the French, Phuc Thanh was a tea plantation. Since then, local farmers accumulated experiences in planting, harvesting and manufacturing tea. And Phuc Thanh took an important part to make the brand of Thai Nguyen tea be well-known in the international market. However, some following points still remain as shortcomings which make the productivity and quality of tea product still cannot meet the requirements of many strict markets:

- Low quality variety
- Simple manufacturing system
- Unbalance fertilizing
- Abused chemical fertilizers.
- Lack of environment protection and antieroding measures.

10. Some suggestions to develop local human resource (within FPE Project framework)

1. Training of Participatory (TOP)

a. For farmers:

- Planning family-based economy with the participation of the local farm households, base on inner and outer forces (“problem tree” and “SWOT”)

In fact, 95% of the local households cannot build a plan to develop the economy of their family themselves systematically. If this problem can be improved, the result will be better.

How to do?

- Opening training courses about advanced methods
- Every household should join the pilot model that they like most
- 10 model farmhouseholds who make best production plans should be supported from the project in 3 years.

b. For local leaders:

- Training course about TOP should be organized for local leaders, and they should build plans to develop the local economy in 5-year-phase

2. VAC pilot models (Garden - Pond - Stable)

- V (Garden): Most of the garden in Phuc Thanh is hilly where litchi is planted.
- A (Pond): area of water surface in Phuc Thanh is small, especially in dry season. This makes aquaculture of the locality cannot develop.
- C (Stable)
 - Establishing feeding Mong Cai crossbred hog group with a goal to support breeds to local farmers
 - Setting nourishing honey bee
 - Encouraging farmers to grow Red Worm to supply food to raise other animals

In general, local farmers should be supported techniques, varieties, and tools by the project.

3. Community development:

- Reinforcing and improving roles of cooperative in implementing advanced techniques.
 - Heightening local people's knowledge in monitoring and evaluating project activities.
- Building taste groups in breeding bee, Red Worm, manufacturing tea, etc.

4. Training courses to carders:

As mentioned above, Phuc Thanh has CSOs, such as Youth union, women's union, farmers' union, veteran's organization, elderly's union, party cell, and an economic organization is the cooperative. In order to develop the human resource of the local, firstly, the leaders of these organizations should be improved first by training courses about the roles and responsibilities of relevant organizations.

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