

Second LSFM Regional Training Workshop  
**Complying with Market Requirements on Food Safety and Product Quality**  
January 19 to 23, 2009  
Monoreach Angkor Hotel, Siem Reap, Cambodia

## **WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS**

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### **I. PRELIMINARIES**

The workshop opened with a round of introductions by the participants, followed by messages from the Cambodian hosts.

**Welcome Remarks.** Dr. Yang Saing Koma, CEDAC President, stressed on the importance of the workshop's theme as the key to bridging the gap between farms and markets. Huge opportunities in the market await yet farmers are unable to benefit from and take advantage of them. He said complying with market requirements on food safety and product quality is a crucial element to accessing especially the international market. We have seen that the farmers have not been able to comply, he added. But then there is also the issue of lack of enforcement of laws which is an added advocacy arena for those working in this field.

Dr. Koma traced the history of CEDAC as leading to this important realization about the market and how to really improve the lives of the farmers. He said CEDAC started work on support for farmer productivity. They eventually realized this alone was not enough. They started to link farmers with markets, particularly on chicken and cucumber. Then they realized that the work on marketing called for a set of skills and attitudes that are entirely different from those that they knew worked for community development. There are new dimensions of difficulties, including traders who earn by cheating. In the end, there is no substitute for product quality with verified standards of safety and excellence in beating the odds. He is confident that compliance with product standards will eventually be achieved by the farming communities through steady steps starting with initiatives such as this one.

**Keynote Message.** Dr. Tan Boun Souy, Deputy General Director of the National APSARA Authority, expressed that initiatives on food safety and product quality are "very close to our hearts." He related that, five years ago, Apsara created a program on product quality and development for the improvement of livelihood essential in contributing to sustainable communities. He affirmed the observation by Dr. Koma that communities do not get much benefit from this recent development. A majority of the farmers are able to produce only enough for their own consumption. They have very little extra product left for the market. Indeed, linking farmers to market as a development approach requires enhanced productivity and improved quality. For partners supporting the farmers in this endeavor, Dr. Souy said there is great need to participate in policy formulation on food safety and product quality standards, which, right now, does not exist in Cambodia and in many other countries.

**Program Orientation.** Ms. Marlene Ramirez, Secretary General of ASIADHRRRA, observed that the workshop will not only be about what should be done, but also about what is really happening on the ground. She noted that more than half of this workshop’s participants participated in the first one too. The continuity of learning and networking is built in while spaces are at the same time opened for the participation of new players. Ms. Ramirez related that for AsiaDHRRA, this endeavor has long been overdue, and that it is high time for AsiaDHRRA to be working regionally in this field. The LSFM, supported by the ASEAN Foundation, involves the mapping of market initiatives in four countries (Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Indonesia), capacity-building, and partnership building through working groups and an advisory committee. Ms. Ramirez observed that the project operates in a context where many NGOs try, but only a few succeed. The strength of being ASEAN (“ten nations, one community”) could really be harnessed to meet the challenges ahead especially given the ASEAN vision of achieving the integration blueprint by 2015. While AsiaDHRRA is currently engaging Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam in LSFM, it has plans of expanding to Lao, PDR, and Myanmar. ASEAN Foundation is committed to making investments in knowledge and skills-improvement in this particular field.

**Overview of Workshop Objectives and Design.** Mr. Florante Villas, LSFM Regional Project Coordinator, presented the workshop objectives, content, outputs, methodologies, and program schedules, and briefly introduced the resource persons and guests.

## **II. SESSION ONE: FOOD SAFETY AND PRODUCT QUALITY ISSUES & PROBLEMS**

For the *Philippines* Mr. Luis Caballero Jr., Vice Chairperson of Zamboanga Sibugay High Value Marketing Crop, presented their community’s experience in maintaining food safety and quality standards for *calamansi*. In terms of maintaining product quality, this involved the processes before planting, the maintenance requirements during planting season, as well as the safeguards during picking, sorting, and storage. Mr. Caballero enumerated the following issues and challenges: (1) Some farmers / pickers do not follow the guidelines in size and maturity of *calamansi* during picking; (2) Branches dry out due to excess water and fungi; (3) Regular monitoring of an accredited agriculturist is needed; (4) An official monitor is needed during sorting; (5) Some farmers, especially those who live far from farm-to-market roads, tend to go back to old farming practices.

For *Cambodia*, Mr. Noun, chicken producer from FNN, presented Cambodia’s experience in marketing dressed chicken. He related that chicken feeds during the dry season are not sufficient. They also experience difficulty in transporting the product given the great distances of markets from the farms. Because of these, the traders are able to really push down the price. They buy live chickens and slaughter them after three days. This situation has led to questionable claims about hygiene and safety that affects the credibility of dressed chicken as a product.

Representatives from *Vietnam* reported the following issues and concerns with regard to their product, tea: limited farmers’ access to knowledge and information about food safety and product

quality; poor processing techniques and equipments; limited quality management and limited access to product quality certificates; and difficulties in trade market development.

From *Indonesia*, Mr. Haryono introduced their organization as consisting of 60 cooperative groups of farmers in the forests of Sumatra that have 30 member-households each. The group helps in marketing ten tons of organic rice per month by ensuring that market demands are met and by lending to farmers in need. Since they process rice manually, the main obstacle is in drying seeds especially during the wet seasons. As small farmers, they face obstacles in marketing and product quality, and would like to have some information on the practices in food safety and product quality in other countries. They also have 50 farmer-members who are into honey production. This could be expanded to include a greater number but the organization's capacity to organize them is limited at the moment. They are now starting to market the honey to Bina Desa outlets even as the product quality is not yet fully developed.

### **III. SESSION TWO: THE IMPORTANCE OF STANDARDIZATION OF FOOD SAFETY AND PRODUCT QUALITY**

Dr. Wen-chi Huang, Execom member of the AsiaDHRRRA and its Chairperson for LSFM Project Advisory Committee, discussed about the nature and definition of product (food) quality, standardization processes, and the importance of certification. She cited specific cases of agricultural food product traceability in Taiwan to illustrate her points, which are helped by bar code-scanning and inquiry using 3G cellphones and the internet. Dr. Huang also related about the Han Kwan Fruit and Vegetable production cooperative which introduced modern production techniques and innovations in developing multi-faceted marketing strategies for enhancing competitiveness in the market.

### **IV. SESSION THREE: ISSUES OF FOOD-BORNE DISEASES/ILLNESSES AND IMPACT OF GM FOOD**

#### **Part One: Issues of Food-Borne Diseases /Illnesses**

Winfried Scheewe, DED, Marketing Consultant to CEDAC discussed about food-borne illnesses in terms of its definition, effect and impact, transmittal, and origination (from and through food). He also discussed its causes (fungal spoilage, pesticide residues, industrial chemicals, bacteria) and symptoms. He enumerated the major food-borne illnesses (such as salmonella and e-coli) and common problems of food-borne diseases. He noted that the looming climate change will probably worsen some problems, such as higher temperature and moisture and more flooding and extended droughts due to polluted water, which may lead to new problems with food-borne diseases. In conclusion, Mr. Scheewe cited Dr. Lederberg who said, "Microorganisms are opponents with whom we cannot race on their terms." The best we can do, he said, is to try to avoid conditions in which harmful microbes can develop.

## **Part Two: Hidden Threats From Genetically-Modified Crops**

Mr. Scheewe traced the history of GMOs as originating in the '80s, pioneered mainly by Monsanto and other companies (Bayer, Pioneer, Syngenta). He discussed the nature and processes of GMOs as artificial organisms, the types of GMO crops, and its risks for consumers especially the risks due to GMO transformation process. He said that something unforeseen could come out of the unnatural process, and residues of such experimental accidents could go to the consumer. The harmless protein in one organism could be harmful in another. He explained that one study has shown that rats fed with GMO potatoes had lesions in their intestines. Four studies, three of which have been published, raised the specter that human beings have been accumulating toxins in their bodies from eating GMO crops and food products. The problem in terms of food safety is that food products made from GMO crops are not labeled as such. He cited that nine percent of global primary crops are GMOs, and in 2006, around 100 million hectares in 22 countries are planted to GMOs. Citing Bt corn and soya GMO products as case studies, he observed that humanity has been turned into a pack of guinea pigs catching cell-damaging residues without their knowledge. He cited studies in Russia, Germany, and India supporting this observation, but the USA with its massive interest in GMO kept ignoring the facts. Mr. Scheewe related about Europe's policy banning GMO, and stressed the producers' responsibility to ensure that the foods they offer to consumers are in compliance with ethical and legal requirements. He is strongly in favor of rejecting and/or banning GMO products from the market.

## **V. OPEN FORUM ON SESSIONS ONE TO THREE**

The forum and discussion which was opened after the first three session presentations yielded the following insights and exchanges:

- The pressure to feed the hungry has become stronger globally given population increase, and the growing scarcity of resources caused mainly by climate change and environmental destruction. This presents a major challenge to those advocating for food quality and product safety. In the Philippines, particularly, the government (through its Department of Science and Technology) declared that the only way to meet the rising demand for food is to maximize soil potential through GMO. Advocates can challenge governments and commercial companies by asking them to address the question of equity, as oftentimes the problem of food scarcity is caused by wrong distribution rather than low productivity. It can be argued that food safety and product quality are not the problem, but that, the privilege few get more at the expense of the hungry majority.
- Another challenge to advocates is the economic reality of farmers. They shift away from sustainable agriculture and opt to use of fertilizers and pesticides to ensure productivity and higher incomes. This is a common experience particularly in tropical forest areas where organic matters degrade fast. A lot of public information campaign needs to be done to influence consumers' spending pattern to make them choose well to give farmers who are

into sustainable agriculture a fair chance. The message that the farmers are doing what they can to keep the consumers healthy must be conveyed. Conversely, the farmers must be made aware of the dangers and risks accompanying the use of fertilizers and GMO seeds. Particularly, the inputs from Session Three must be discussed at the community level at every possible chance.

- One of the biggest challenges in helping farmers meet food safety and product quality standards is the market competition presented by commercial products. Taiwan tried to meet the challenge by maximizing the potential of internal markets. Farmers are grouped to learn and benefit from one another. The opinion of experts in grading products is also sought to establish the superior quality of organic produce. For the Philippines, experience with Masipag rice made farmers realize that inorganic farming is more costly in the long term because inorganic methods make them dependent on seed and fertilizer manufacturers and producers. Organic rice production is now seen by enlightened and informed Filipino farmers as more viable, especially recently as Filipino consumers are showing more willingness to pay a higher price for organic rice. In the case of Cambodia, competitiveness of organic farming produce is a little more difficult to achieve because of the soil's low level of fertility. Still, an awareness of the harmful consequences of pesticides and fertilizers can help change purchasing habits of Cambodian consumers.
- In the enforcement of product quality standards, the Philippine experience with *calamansi* farmers showed that democratic means of implementation and enforcement works. It was further observed that farmers are (expectedly) culturally unable to adopt fast to new farming methods. Not giving up on the demands of discipline worked, eventually.

## **VI. SESSION FOUR: FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS CODEX ALIMENTARIUS – A BRIEFING ON INTERNATIONAL FOOD SAFETY BODY AND ITS DYNAMICS**

**Presentation.** Mr. Peter Hoejskov, Food Quality and Safety Officer of FAO Regional Office in Asia Pacific, started his presentation with a discussion on the importance of food safety and standards. He cited that food safety and control systems provide: the basis for inspection, testing, and certification activities; guidance to industry, consumers, government and other players in the food supply; and a general view of requirements for international trade in food. He explained the meaning of Codex Alimentarius, and introduced the founder and members of the CODEX Alimentarius Commission. Mr. Hoejskov further related its objectives, strategic goals, and strategic plan for CCAASIA. He discussed the Commission's structure and management, subsidiary bodies, organizational chart, standards, food safety areas of concern and the CODEX process for standards development. He listed the Commission's achievement so far, and explained Codex in relation with WTO agreements. Finally, he discussed about international food safety regulations and standards, CODEX trust fund and FAO capacity-building programs, private food quality and safety standards in relation to CODEX, and the general challenges of private food safety standards. In conclusion, he stated that all countries have an interest in ensuring that CODEX standards protect human health and achieve this without hindering trade and economic development. External assistance by organizations and an internal commitment by countries to provide the needs for effective participation in CODEX are both essential to achieve

this, he added. Mr. Hoejskov also noted that one of the main challenges for CODEX is the rapid development and implementation of private standards and requirements, and that, goodwill based on an understanding that development of relevant standards is a shared responsibility should enable CODEX to keep moving forward.

**Open Forum.** The following ideas and insights were shared in the open forum after the presentation:

- CODEX does not provide certification and is not a mandatory requirement. It provides a set of minimum requirements-- not standards— that producers, governments, and distributors can choose to adopt voluntarily. Private companies have another set of stricter standards as CODEX provides only the minimum standards. Farmer organizations can have the option to refer to CODEX's minimum standards and/ or copy from and modify other existing standards.
- Standards set by private companies are basically decided by the market requirements. No one group or mechanism monitors or regulates them.
- In the case of Taiwan, the national standards for product quality and safety are clear but farmers find difficulty in complying so they opt to follow, for the meantime, at least the minimum standards. However, for products for export, a clear certification process should better be observed.
- While it is important for governments to have standards that are workable, it will also help if farmers and producers see that protecting their own products also works for their own self-interest. It is not only a matter of compliance with government requirements, but more about doing what is beneficial for one's own good. It is not merely about getting a seal of certification, but more about building a good reputation to make one's produce more competitive in the market. It's because, in the absence of national standards, market requirements will be the ones to decide.
- CODEX allows for different levels of participation and it is very much up to the CODEX contact persons to invite the relevant players. While there is the perception that CODEX is dominated by big business interests in the food service industry, it is really up to the countries to make use of CODEX mechanisms and to involve small scale farmers and cooperatives.

## **VII. SESSION FIVE: MECHANISMS FOR PRODUCT QUALITY AND FOOD SAFETY**

### **Case Presentation 1 – Tips for Entry into the Market**

**Presentation.** Mr. Guarin, Executive Director of Upland Marketing Program (UMP), introduced the work of his NGO and related about its nearly twelve years of experience in selling directly to supermarkets. He said that direct selling to supermarkets is inevitable given the worldwide trend of increasing rate of grocery sales due to various factors, such as the modernization of procurement, increasing incomes, and the growing preference of buyers for safety and convenience which the supermarkets can offer. He explained about the three waves of supermarket diffusion and noted that

increasingly, supermarkets are adding more and more carts of fresh produce (vegetables, fruits, fish, pork, beef and chicken), fully allowing retail purchases for such just as the public markets would. More and more have flocked to the supermarkets instead of the usual public wet markets, as the latter has stricter standards for food safety and product quality. In some countries, such as in India, prices in supermarkets are even lower than other outlets. He related the major concerns for suppliers who are dealing with supermarkets, which are volume and reliability/ availability of consistent supplies of products. He narrated UMF's experience to illustrate the point about the need to meet the high standards set by the supermarkets, and their requirement for consistent, steady supply of products in huge stocks or volume. He also talked about mechanisms for product quality and food safety, and the matter of who sets the standards (public, own, private). He said that observing standards involves a lot of cost and effort, and standard setting will not really work if production remains small scale. He gave examples of products that cost less to produce in good quality if done on a large-scale basis. Dealing with supermarkets means dealing with the issue of scale, which determines cost benefit and recovery for suppliers. In conclusion, Mr. Guarin said that compliance per se will not make the products sell, but it is in really knowing, and giving, what the customers like.

**Open forum.** The following clarifications and sharing of experiences were raised in the open forum that followed:

- Generally, all modern retail markets are lumped as 'supermakets.' In the Philippines, anything that has below three counters (except 7-11) are considered groceries and not as supermarkets. In the Philippines too, the standards observed by groceries / small retail stores are not as strict as the standards observed by the big supermarkets.
- The Cambodian farmers' experience in linking with market has been mainly through cooperative and farmer-owned stores. Organic rice and sugar have been the major produce, but the volume of sale has not yet matched the demands of the big supermarkets. Product quality control was done internally, through farmer groups organized by CEDAC in 2003. The farmer groups function as one another's product inspectors, and CEDAC issues certification that the products were produced organically. In the long run, the farmers and CEDAC will have to think about sustainability of farmers' organizations after the latter phases out its assistance and support.

## **VIII. SESSION FIVE: MECHANISMS FOR PRODUCT QUALITY AND FOOD SAFETY**

### **Case Presentation 2 – Certification Systems**

### **Case Presentation 3 – Levels of Food Safety and Quality Control System**

**Presentation.** Mr. Jing Pacturan, Chairperson of Organic Certification Council of the Philippines, started his presentation by enumerating the factors that drive product quality and food safety. These include consumer demands, environmental concerns, health concerns, social concerns, and government requirements for international trading. He then related the various reasons why

certification programs exist, and explained the meaning and definition of certification. He enumerated the various types of certification, and enumerated and explained the different types of mandatory and voluntary certification. Finally, he explained about organic certification in terms of what organic agriculture is, why the need for such, the balance of interest (where trust is the operative term), the certification process, and the validity and cost of certification. On the levels of food safety and quality systems, Mr. Pacturan discussed the different types of community-focused guarantee systems, its features, external controls, and risk assessment.

**Open Forum.** The following ideas and clarifications were raised in the open forum:

- Certification is not advisable for low levels of production-- it will cost the farmers and the producers too much. Especially for organic rice, huge volumes help greatly reduce the cost of certification. It is always a question of volume and viability.
- Organic certification does not totally assure food safety because it does not cover food processing. It only certifies that certain agricultural products were produced organically, but it does not include quality control over post-harvest handling and processing of food products.

## **IX. SYNTHESIS: EMERGING MECHANISMS FOR PRODUCT QUALITY AND FOOD SAFETY ASSURANCE / GUARANTEES**

Mr. Villas presented the synthesis of emerging mechanisms for product quality and food safety assurance / guarantees in terms of requirements and mechanisms for food safety, product quality, and mechanisms for product quality for the various types of markets, namely: general markets, and mandatory markets (supermarkets, processor markets and export markets). (See Annex A for the synthesis matrix)

Mr. Hoejskov observed it is always difficult to put complex realities in a template and that there are a lot of overlaps in actual situations. He further noted that product quality and food safety cannot be mixed though they go together.

## **X. WORKSHOP BRIEFING AND WORKSHOP MECHANICS ADDRESSING FOOD SAFETY AND PRODUCT QUALITY AND POLICY PROGRAM AND SUPPORT**

Mr. Villas asked each country group to try to answer the following guide questions, keeping in mind the commodity that each of them are now marketing under the LSFM project:

- What are the major standards or requirements for the said commodity at different aspects/level (e.g. food safety, government licensing, formal market, internal controls)?
- What are the issues/problems/concerns/needs in complying with standards / requirements?

- What specific activities (training, technical assistance, finance/funding, policy advocacy, etc.) to undertake to address the identified issues or problem?
- What support (from national or regional level) do you need to be able to undertake the above-mentioned activities?

Country groups were given 45 minutes to an hour for this workshop.

## **XI. PLENARY REPORTS AND WORKSHOP RESULTS PRESENTATIONS**

The *Cambodian* presentation on organic rice explained about the internal control systems that they observe in the farms for quality control, and the marketing of organic rice which they undertake through cooperatives. They lamented the absence of a national standard for organic rice in their country. They would like to advocate for a national law for standards given the general absence of public standards for food especially for export products. The Ministry of Energy recently organized a seminar on food safety which they attended.

In response, Mr. Hoejskov said it is important to distinguish between laws and standards. Standards are not laws, and one does not have to have a national law in order to observe and practice standards in food safety and product quality. In addition, the standards that apply to export products are not the standards of its originating country, but those of the countries where they are being exported to. Mr. Pacturan agreed and added that it is not necessary to have a commodity-specific set of standards. He has seen broad national standards (e.g. organic agriculture crops) work for specific products. Finally, he suggested that the Cambodian team can refer to existing national standards in defining Cambodian national standards.

*Vietnam's* VNFU referred to their LSFM Project Report for 2008 in making responses to the workshop questions. Their project report identified market research, documentation and popularization, market information management, policy lobby, and capacity building as among the key result areas. Each key result area has a set of indicators, target, output, and list of activities to be undertaken.

Dr. Huang inquired if VNFU's reason for getting product certification is merely to comply with government requirement. She opined that certification is largely a voluntary policy and need not be mandatory. It is part of one's being competitive in the market and is therefore really beyond legislation and/or government certification.

*Burma's* presentation centered on their need to gather information at the moment, and then to use these to develop their own programs and action plan for food safety and product development.

Mr. Hoejskov inquired if it is possible, given the current political setting in Burma, to gather information from communities. Ms. Ramirez related that the above sharing from Burma is reflective of the current realities in this country, and that even its own government has already communicated its need for capability-building in this area.

The *Philippine* presentation referred to their plans of getting more information from, and developing links with, government accreditation bodies. It also considered what the cost implications of expanding the market in terms of getting certification for food safety and product quality. Finally, it committed to keep community processes and consultations intact, and to make use of existing participatory processes at the ground level in the operation of mechanisms for food safety and product quality standards.

Mr. Guarin suggested there is no real need to comply with government (i.e. Department of Trade and Industry) standards if there are no immediate plans of going into the open market. He further encouraged the group to identify the standards they aim to comply with as early as possible so they know what capabilities to develop to achieve these. Capability-building should be more forward-looking so that they would not have to retrain once they apply or open their products to other markets, he added.

*Thailand's* team related that it is yet unable to choose a product to market among the following: rice and corn, sugar, palm oil and rubber. It plans to go into networking, product development, finance management, and organizing and will need assistance from their partners in these areas.

*Indonesia's* team reported that broken rice resulting from humidity and the lack of solar drier is one of the difficulties encountered by their farmers, in addition to government taxes and continuing internal inequalities. Their plan of action includes improving post-harvest handling of rice, urging the local authority to lower rental for drying facilities and machineries, asking government to provide more warehouses to farmers. At the regional level, they will appreciate assistance in terms of getting access to regional fora on the subject matter where they can learn from the sharing of information and experiences.

Mr. Hoejskov suggested they should look into the market potential of organic rice given that district governments also produce the same. Dr. Huang, on the other hand, asked them to give the plan to seek help from private sector a little more thought given that the private sector is one of their competitors.

## **XII. FIELD VISIT REPORTS**

The workshop participants were divided into two groups for the field visit. They spent from 7 am to 3 pm of Day Three (Thursday, January 22) visiting the farms and interacting with farming communities.

The first group visited Teuk Vil station, a research, demonstration, training and exchange visit station of target farmers and target groups from other NGOs. Here, SRI technique is tested and demonstrated. EM and composting are also tested and demonstrated in different kinds of crops, e.g. vegetables, rice, fruits and others. Teuk Vil Station is supported by funds from APSARA Authority which is a certain percentage of the revenues from the Angkor Wat admission fees. After the visit to Teuk Vil station, the first group visited farming communities in Angkor Thom district where they interacted with farmers practicing composting and sustainable agriculture, and where they met with the finance officer of the

village's saving cooperative. They were also happy to witness community's preparations for a wedding ceremony. The first group ran out of time for sharing and reflection.

The second group visited organic farm in Ba Kong, a nearby public market, and one of CEDAC's distribution center for organic rice. The following insights and learnings were shared by the group:

- Shifting from conventional to organic vegetable farming results to reduction in production cost and improved yield which allow farmer to increase its capacity to supply existing market
- Price premium for organic product cannot be enjoyed by farmers without the presence of effective intermediation mechanism that will develop the link between them and the appropriate market
- Consumer awareness is necessary to build the market for organic product
- Consolidation of individual small-scale farmer is necessary to meet the required market volume
- Technology transfer and capacity building interventions are not enough to upscale the volume and quality of organic production, the following support services should likewise be advocated to ensure expansion of success cases:
  - Accessible credit
  - Pre and Post-harvest facilities
  - Organizing farmers

(See Annex C for PowerPoint presentations of field visit reports.)

### **XIII. WORKSHOP EVALUATION AND CLOSING PROGRAM**

Ms. Ramirez expressed sincere appreciation of the solidarity and support provided by the members of LSFM TWG, namely, Mr. Guarin and Mr. Pacturan, and of Mr. Scheewe and Mr. Hoejskov for graciously serving as this workshop's resource persons. She also extended deepest gratitude to CEDAC who has been this workshop's generous host, Gifts and tokens were given to them by Dr. Huang in behalf of AsiaDHRRA.

Mr. Hoejskov who was asked to share a parting message said he found the last workshop on workplans quite interesting. He suggested the country teams to be more realistic and to not be overambitious in wanting to do everything. He said there are some good examples in the field to learn from. He encouraged them to start with what is already there. In response to Ms. Ramirez' query on opportunities for partnership, Mr. Hoejskov said FAO is currently doing case studies which it will be happy to share with AsiaDHRRA. He encouraged those with specific proposals to write a short concept note to FAO.

Ms. Ramirez, affirmed that AsiaDHRRA will start with what are already in the field, especially in the pilot countries. On the notion of technical assistance training, she said AsiaDHRRA will link experiences and match needs with expertise. Ms. Ramirez added that AsiaDHRRA is in the process of mobilizing potential projects as they are committed to do follow-up work on LSFM. She hopes that all these efforts at the regional level will continue to cascade at the country levels. In the end, it will be up to the countries to be consistent and persistent with following up plans and activities.

Ms. Sudaporn Sittisathapornkul, Chairperson of Asian Farmers' Alliance, was asked to give the closing remarks. She said most farmers in Asia lacked the knowledge in food safety and product quality. What she learned through AsiaDHRRA's workshops, both in the first one and this one, is very important for the farmers. She thanked AsiaDHRRA for consistently remaining as AFA's big supporter. She expressed thanks to the organizers of the workshop, and gave gifts of appreciation to AsiaDHRRA, CEDAC and FNN.

Last but not the least, Ms. Ramirez thanked members of the AsiaDHRRA staff for making the workshop possible. On this note, she drew the session to a close.

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## **ANNEXES**

- A Synthesis Matrix on Emerging Mechanisms for Product Quality and Food Safety Assurance / Guarantees
- B Plenary Reports and Workshop Results Presentation  
(Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia)
- C PowerPoint Presentations of Field Visit Reports