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## Obstacles Affecting the Implementation of Organic Vegetables in Thailand

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### Abstract

Organic agriculture is the most dynamic and rapidly-growing sector of the global food industry. In Thailand, production of organic crops is undertaken mainly by smallholders, farmer groups or by large agro-enterprises using organised groups of contract farmers. Estimates indicate that certified organic production increased from 2,147 ha in 2001 to 22,550 ha in 2006, equivalent to 0.11 % of the country's total agricultural area (21 million ha), representing an increase of over 950 % over the 2001 hectareage. Constraints to limited implementation of organic vegetables need to be found.

The objectives of the research were to investigate constraints of organic vegetable production and market in Thailand and to formulate recommendations for improving the system. Data were collected from the best practice of farmers, and processors/handlers such as Rai Thon Nuey (Dare to sweat farm), Rai Plook Ruk (Thai Organic Farm), Suwannabhumi Organic Co.,Ltd., and Swift Co.,Ltd. The techniques of semi-structured interview and observation were used. Empirical analyses and documentary analysis were applied.

The results showed that constraints of organic vegetable production consist of 1) biophysical constraints, low soil fertility, water shortage, irregular rainfall and pest, 2) economics constraints, high initial cost, high labour cost, high transport cost, and market, and 3) knowledge constraints lack of understanding about problems on farm such as nutrient balance, crop-environment, post harvest management, waste management, and consumers' perception. The important problems of organic vegetable farming are the farmers know what are problems on farming, the fundamental cause of all problems, problem solving, the way leading to problem solving, the problems mentioned in vegetable system are obstacles to extend organic farming to conventional vegetable farms. Sharing problems, knowledge and exchanging the know-how should be considered.

**Keywords:** Organic farming, organic vegetables, Thailand, vegetable system