

# Obstacles Effecting the Implementation of Organic Vegetables in Thailand

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## Introduction

Vegetable production is essentially a small-farm venture that benefits thousands of families in urban, peri-urban and rural communities. In recent years however, production costs have increased by about 50 - 60 percent. Most farmers are compelled to use family labour in order to cut costs and remain competitive in local markets. High costs compel resource-poor farmers in limiting their inputs, such as fertilizer and agro-chemicals resulting often in crop losses and lower outputs. Often, there is an overuse of harmful chemicals, which endanger the health of consumers and pollute the environment (FAO, 1999). While organic agriculture is the most dynamic and rapidly-growing sector of the global food industry (Ellis et al, 2006).

## Objectives

To investigate constraints of organic vegetable production and market in Thailand, and to formulate recommendations for improving the system.

## Methodology

Data was collected from the best practice farmers, and processors/handlers: 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 for data collection. Empirical and documentary analyses were applied.

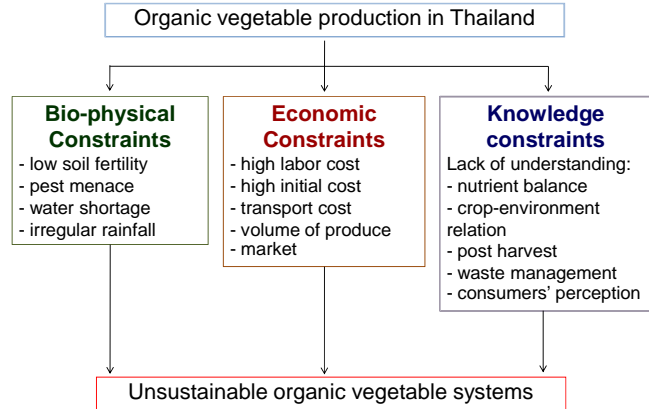


Figure 1: Constraints of organic vegetable production system



Picture 1-2: Organic vegetable farm and its problem on farm

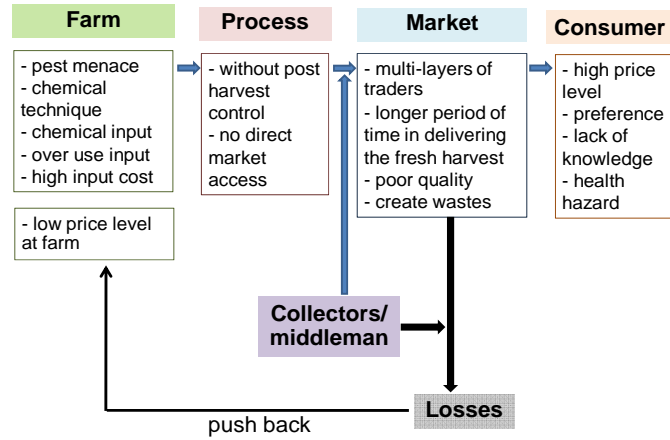


Figure 2: Problems in vegetable system

## Results

### 1. Constraints and problems in organic vegetable system

Constraints of organic vegetable production consist of bio-physical, economics and knowledge (Figure 1). The important problems of organic vegetable farming are farmer don't know what is problem on farming especially on production technique, the fundamental cause of all problems whereas the farmer try to do farm follow the certification or market, then they do not see the problem origin and cannot solve problem that occur on farm.

### 2. Problems in conventional vegetable system

These are one important obstacles of vegetable organic farming implementation. On farm, pest due to chemical use and over use, these conduct to high input cost. After harvest, producers pack their produce without any post harvest control and collectors or middleman collect produce. The produce changing hand through many layers of traders before reaching main markets and retailers, longer period of time in delivering the fresh harvest to consumer create wastes and can greatly damage product quality without post harvest control. Significant cost and profit-taking are added on at every layer. They finally reach consumers in poor stage, relatively high price level. These threaten of enhancing organic vegetable system.

### 3. The 4 steps of problem-solving

The way leading to solve the existing problem may be sharing such as experience, problem, and knowledge, exchanging know-how and understanding the nature. Moreover, the 4 steps of problem-solving should be considered (Figure 3).

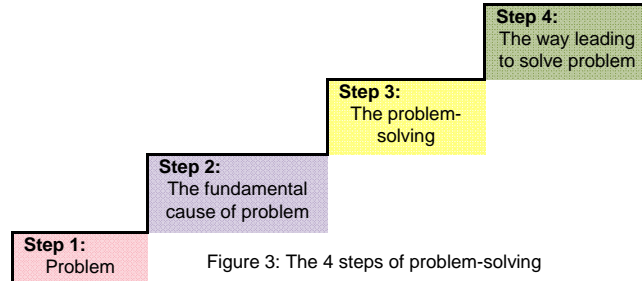


Figure 3: The 4 steps of problem-solving

## Conclusions and recommendations

Constraints and problems of organic vegetable farming are usually occurred on farm and also market system whereas the problems in vegetable system are the obstacles to expanding organic farming to conventional vegetable farms. Sharing of problems, knowledge, and exchange know-how should be taken into consideration. The most important thing is the farmer must understand problems and be able to manage and apply knowledge to solve them.

## References

Ellis, W., Panyakul, W., Vildozo, D. and Kasterine, A. 2006. Strengthening the Export Capacity of Thailand's Organic Agriculture: Final Report. An EU-International Trade Centre Asia Trust Fund Technical Assistance Project.  
FAO. 1999. The Vegetable sector in Thailand: A Review. Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.