



Market Potential of Hornet (*Vespa* sp.) in Eastern Shan State, Myanmar

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Background

- Eastern Shan State, a border gate to Thailand, Laos, and China, is known for its diversity in ethnic groups such as Shan, Burma, Kachin, Lisu, Ann, Akha, Wa, Danu, and Larhu.
- A big variety of edible insects can be found in that region such as bamboo worms, silkworms, cicadas, hornets, and crickets, which are mostly eaten by these ethnic groups.
- Unlike other edible insects, hornet is very rare because harvesting is very dangerous and can even cause death.
- But it is available in Eastern Shan State in various forms.

Objectives

To examine the present use and the market potential of hornets.

Methods

Conducting observations in the research areas and face-to-face interviews with local people, including hunters, wholesalers, processors, retailers, and consumers.



Photo 1: Interviews with local people

- Hornets are the most expensive edible insects; prices vary according to the size and form of the hornet.
- Availability is seasonal starting in August and ending in November.
- Hornets are sold on the market in various forms such as fresh alive, fried, or mixed with alcohol.
- Besides human consumption, hornets are also used with medicinal purpose.
- Mixture form of hornet and alcohol is used to protect and cure strokes and inflammatory diseases.



Photo 2: Raw type of hornets



Photo 3: Processed form of hornets
a) mixture of alcohol and hornets
b) deep-fried hornets

Results

- Six types of marketing chains can be distinguished depending on
 1. collected amount of the hornets,
 2. market distance,
 3. location of the hunter's village and collecting area,
 4. economic condition of the villagers,
 5. freshness of the hornets, and
 6. form of the product.
- As hornets are rare and expensive, most of the locals are able to buy them only once per season for eating purpose.
- Mixtures with alcohol can be used many times by adding more alcohol.
- Thus, only few portion(less than 5 % of total hornet) is used for medicinal purpose.
- According to wholesalers, 75% of the hornets from Kyaingtone market is transported to border areas of China, Laos, and Thailand, where about 50% of consumers are foreigners.

Conclusions

- Hornet is a prospective product for earning foreign income, however, it is difficult to export hornet larvae alive legally.
- Commercial processing technologies to add value and export to neighboring countries should be developed.
- Although hornets have been used as a traditional medicine, few scientific research exist.

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