

Title Development of new processes for evaluating and implementing new improved horticultural supply chains operating in south-east Asia

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Abstract

We have developed a new process to assist farmers, traders and extension agents to improve horticultural supply chain practices in the transitional economies in South East Asia. In South East Asia, 30% of the total population lives below the poverty line. Over 80% are involved in agriculture. Globally, consumer concerns on food safety and product quality have led to the implementation of new food safety systems, but implementing these quality assurance systems is resource demanding, time consuming and expensive for farmers. Many major retailers have implemented their own quality assurance and product standards leading many farmers, collector agents, traders and exporters to believe that this is a means of excluding them from higher value markets. Compared with developed countries, supply chains in the transitional economies are longer, often including twice as many participants, and are based on traditional practices which are difficult to change. Targeted training can however support improved performance outcomes for both small-scale farmers and downstream supply chain partners. We have been assisting mango and pomelo farmers in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam and stone fruit farmers in the mountainous regions of Vietnam, Thailand and Lao PDR to evaluate their existing supply chains and develop new improved supply chains. This paper discusses the processes we have used to improve the performance of supply chains for these groups of farmers.