

Rationale for the selection of safe vegetables in Hoai Duc and Thuong Tin districts, Ha Tay Province (Red River Delta)

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Summary

The Red River Delta is considered to be one of the most developed areas in Vietnam with low ratio of poor families. Yet the absolute number of poor families (2,203,000 in 2005) is very high (even higher than that in the area with the highest poor family ratio in Vietnam). Agriculture in the Red River Delta is now in the process of market integration, facing different threats and challenges to which farmers are experiencing great difficulty in adapting and remaining competitive in the market.

Research facilitating the cooperation of poor farmers in production and distribution is critical for agriculture product improvement, competitiveness enhancement and good market participation.

Ha Tay is a province located in the Red River Delta adjacent to Hanoi where all the challenges typical of agriculture during globalisation are found. Ha Tay was therefore selected as a location for potential project impact.

Fresh vegetables are an absolute staple in the daily diet of the Vietnamese. Agricultural production in the Red River Delta is now transforming to focus on vegetable production due to its significant profit potential in comparison with rice production. However, the current situation of vegetable safety is worrying. Though the Government of Vietnam has devoted a lot of funding during the last 10 years to facilitate safe vegetable production for farmers, safe vegetables are commonly mixed with non-safe vegetables in the market, and their source is difficult to identify, even in supermarkets.

With economic integration, farmers should be changing their production methods with quality promotion in mind. If not, their products certainly cannot be competitive in the market and poor farmers in particular will be at high risk of being shuffled out of the game.

It is critical therefore to support poor farmers and small producers in the area of proper management of production and distribution of safe vegetables.