

## **THAI 'SMART' FARMERS TAKING LEAD IN CLIMATE-SMART PRODUCTION**

### **Three provinces part of SRI-LMB project on improving crop standards making rice production profitable and climate-smart**

The Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Thailand has been engaged since 2013 in studying sustainable intensification of rice involving “Smart” farmers of Thailand in a part of the regional project titled “Sustaining and Enhancing the Momentum for Innovation and Learning around the System of Rice Intensification (SRI-LMB). The project is also working in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, under one umbrella funded by the European Union (EU) as part of the Global Programme on Agricultural and Research for Development.

*“Growing rice with less chemicals, more organic manure, cutting down on costs of cultivation and increasing yield, as has been done in the SRI-LMB project, is good for the farmer”* says [Mr. Sumitr Kate-klam](#) the Deputy Governor of Uttaradit province, Thailand during the Farmer’s Congress and National Workshop held in Uttaradit on 29-30<sup>th</sup> March 2018. *“SRI is not just about growing healthy and profitable crops but it also helping out in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions from the rice sector”*. Says “Dr. Abha Mishra, the Director of the ACISAI Center and Team Leader of the SRI-LMB project. *“Indeed, with SRI practices, the yield at smallholder farmers’ fields has increased. We thank all agencies for supporting such a wonderful project in Thailand especially the European Union (EU) for their funding support to the project”* Says [Khun Prayoon Dangkong](#), the Director of the VTDC Center.

The event was jointly organized by the AIT and VTDC Center, Ministry of Education, Thailand. The purpose of the event was to showcase some of the successful SRI innovations, done by the smart farmers, and share the outcomes from the implementation of the farmers participatory action research that were carried out in nine districts of three provinces of Thailand, Surin, Sisaket and Uttaradit involving more than 5000 farmers.

Approximately, 300 person participated in the event that included more than 200 farmers from all three provinces, deputy Governor, Director of VTDC Center and VTDC staffs, representatives from Department of Non-formal and Informal Education’s local office in Surin, Northern Regional Institute for Non-formal and Informal Education, Surin Vocational Training and Development Center for Thai People along the Border Areas, Department of Agriculture, Rice Research Center, Sub-district Administration Organization, Brain Bank, NFE trainers, SRI-MAS Malaysia, Foodtech solutions and AIT.

The SRI-LMB project is led by the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Oxfam, SRI-Rice of Cornell University, the University of Queensland together with the local ministries, and NGOs.

The main points of the workshop included development of knowledge and capacity of farmers to produce high quality rice using low inputs, low chemicals, and at a low cost. The focus was on conservation of natural resources. Diversification of the rice farming system –

integration of legumes and other locally available options – along with reduced input use for cost saving and straw incorporation to the soil for enhancing soil fertility were suggested as among the options to strengthen smallholder agriculture development. As a part of recommendation, the workshop emphasized to continue working on soil problem and environment, shortage of water, quality rice production and on working on market compliances making rice sector competitive, efficient and smart in changing climate scenario.