

Women Farmers Harvesting Success

I opted to magnify my skill to harvest more profitable and healthier rice

Ms. Thavee Yakham

Ms. Thavee Yakham is one of the SMART Farmers of Northeast Thailand who opted to work with SRI ideas as she appreciates that she doesn't need to buy any additional inputs to test this technique. She participated in a season-long SRI training program organized by the NFE Center in Surin in collaboration with AIT in early 2014. Soon, she shifted from cultivating rice as per local practices, to managing her crop according to the principles of the System of Rice Intensification (SRI).

Her choice of variety was 'Blackberry', which fetches nearly three times the price as that of local varieties because of desirable eating and storage qualities. Even under adverse weather conditions that season, with lower rainfall in the early months, her crop stand was good. Compared to previous years, she harvested almost double the grain quantity, about 6 tons/ha.

She is one of the farmer trainers who is leading farmers' participatory action research in Tha Tum district of Surin province, and she encourages other farmers in her community to join her innovative journey that she has started with SRI, as a part of the SRI-LMB programme.



“SRI is good for me because I am able to harvest a good and profitable crop, even with less seed and fertilizers and with less water”.



Single, younger and wider spaced plant taking climate variability in its stride



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If you love what are you doing, you will be successful

Mrs. Mee Yang from Vientiane province of Lao PDR attended the season-long training on SRI techniques during the dry season of 2015 as a skeptic. After all, she was an experienced farmer who for years had grown rice organically on her 1.5 ha land in Nonhai village of Meun district. The idea that with SRI practices it was possible to get more yield by transplanting young 15-day-old seedlings, just one per hill, with a wider spacing of 30 x 30 cm, and maintaining the soil on her field just moist for a couple of weeks during tillering stage, not flooded, did not make much sense to her initially. But the training provided her with an opportunity to observe and learn.

Soon, she adopted the similar practices on her field and found that the yield of her local paddy variety “Khao Deng” was more than 4 tons/ha, as compared to about the 2 to 2.5 tons/ha she got previously. The costs of production were also reduced, starting with a reduction in her seed rate from 80 to 8 Kg/ha, as she transplanted only single seedlings/hill and that too with wider spacing. Previously, she was transplanting randomly and densely with 6-7 seedlings/hill . There was lower labour requirement for seedbed preparation, for uprooting and transporting seedlings, and for transplanting which all contributed to lower costs/ha.

Mrs. Mee Yang now thinks that even though there is a snail problem in her village, which can be worse with continuous flooding, practicing SRI is very useful for farmers. They need to adapt their water management to achieve both pest control and better rice production. As one of the 10 farmer-trainers of Meun district, she leads the capacity-building action research training in her village. This involves other farmers to refine SRI techniques for better adoption locally, such as optimizing their water management schedules.

Mrs. Mee Yang



“SRI is good for organic rice cultivation, which leads to higher yield and better price for farmers’ produce, while reducing their cost of production.”



Refining SRI technique for better adoption



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Mrs. Ho Thi Luong



“Although, I am old, I still love to attend SRI training as I get new ideas and new knowledge to harvest better



Attending SRI training is always useful

Do what you can, with what you have, where you are

Mrs. Ho Thi Luong is a 56-year-old farmer from Vietnam. Rice cultivation is very important to her. She produces about 1 to 1.3 tons of “Sao” rice on her paddy field, approximately 0.3 ha land. While this is the main source of staple food and some income for her household, it is insufficient to meet all her needs. So she has to spend long hours in trading in the local market.

In the spring season of 2016, Mrs. Luong participated in the season-long SRI training organized by the Crop Production and Plant Protection Sub-Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. She started adopting some of the practices that she learned on her fields.

After transplanting 1-2 seedlings per hill when they were still only at the age 2.5-3 leaf stage, making wider spacing between plants with only 35 hills/m², she observed more robust plant growth. At the time of tillering, when she kept the soil just moist instead of continuously flooding it with water, she noticed the development of stronger root systems, better tillering, and more capacity of the crop to withstand lodging. With lower incidence of pests and diseases, she sprayed the crop only once, rather than 2 to 3 times as is the normal practice. With lower costs of cultivation, she managed to get half a ton (500-550 kg) of paddy from an area of 1000 m², even with partial adoption of the SRI practices. This was an increase of 22 to 38% over her regular yields. She now has more market surplus of rice, and plans to double the area under SRI practices in 2017.



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Simplify Simplify

Mrs. Tea Sarim is a SMART farmer from Cambodia working with the SRI-LMB project. She participated in a season-long SRI training for farmers and later became one of the smartest farmer trainers to transfer knowledge of SRI techniques to other farmers in her community. This 57-year-old farmer enlightened many women farmers with SRI farming techniques in her small village called Deim Pour in Angkor Chey district.

Before, when she practiced conventional farming, she was unable to feed her family well. She was able to harvest only 2.5 tons/ha. Within three years of working with SRI practices, she now harvests more than 6 tons/ha, despite spending less on seeds, water, labour and other inputs. Being the breadwinner of the family, this mattered a lot to her. And like most Khmer women, she works very hard, being involved in both, household and agricultural activities.

Conventional rice cultivation took up a lot of her time and labour. But with adoption of SRI practices, not only is Sarim able to provide for her family better, her workload in rice cultivation has reduced by about 20 percent. Today, she is very happy with the results of SRI and able to support basic and other commercial needs of her family.

Realizing that SRI can mean significant positive changes to farmers' livelihoods, she is very keen to help her peers learn about and adopt SRI practices.

Mrs. Tea Sarim



“Most women farmers in my village are poor and uneducated. It is hard to teach them complicated skills, so we simplified our approach to transfer knowledge to them”.



Healthy seedlings really matter



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