



High productivity models in the agricultural sector

A variety of agricultural systems or models have been developed over the centuries based on the socio-cultural, economic, topographic, climatic, and resource conditions prevailing in each local community. They have either succeeded and endured or failed and been discarded, depending on the degree to which they have been able to increase the productivity and income of farmers. In this present age of intense environmental concerns, sustainable agriculture (SA) adds a new dimension to determining the viability of these systems. A number of SA systems/models were discussed at a recent APO seminar on Agricultural Models for Higher Productivity held in Bangkok, Thailand, 1–5 July 2002. The implementing agency was the Thailand Productivity Institute. Seventeen participants from 14 member countries and five resource persons took part in the program.



Participants visiting Chachoengsao Rubber Research Centre

In their presentations, the resource speakers covered the following topics: 1) Enhancing sustainability and growth through integrated farming systems; 2) Cooperative marketing: organizing farmers for greater competitiveness; 3) Contract farming: linking small farmers with processors/marketing firms; 4) Precision agriculture: use of information technology in farming; and 5) Vertical integration: integrating agricultural production, processing, and marketing under a single management. Field visits were made to a marketing organization for farmers and the Chachoengsao Rubber Research Centre.

Among the successful models discussed in the seminar were integrated farming systems, contract farming, cooperative marketing, group farming, and vertical integration. Many of these models are being promoted by governments as part of their development programs. Some of the country-specific models highlighted for special study were: 1) A countryside business model in Taiwan which promotes new types of business such as agro-tourism for rural dwellers; 2) The development of the idle land model in Malaysia which encourages entrepreneurs to lease idle lands from their owners to grow

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“Creativity and new ideas are usually achieved at the interface of different functions and disciplines, as different perspectives are brought to bear.”

Jean-Philippe Deschamps

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Asian Productivity Organization
Hirakawa-cho Dai-ichi Seimei Bldg. 2F
1-2-10 Hirakawa-cho, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 102-0093, Japan
Tel: (81-3) 5226-3920
Fax: (81-3) 5226-3950
E-mail: apo@apo-tokyo.org
Web site: www.apo-tokyo.org



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food crops organically; 3) Intensive production systems in Singapore such as hydroponics; 4) The intercropping system in Pakistan involving the planting of a main crop with other suitable crops; and 5) The diversified integrated farming system in the Philippines which promotes the cultivation of high-value crops, livestock raising, and processing and marketing of farm products by agrarian reform beneficiaries.

The key success factors in these systems/mod-

els, as evaluated by the participants, are: 1) supportive government policy, including the provision of economic incentives; 2) adequate production and marketing infrastructure; 3) commitment of all parties concerned; 4) development of human resources; 5) good marketing linkages/tie-ups; 6) favorable business environment; 7) sufficient financial and technical support; 8) competent management; 9) guaranteed fair market price for products; and 10) production and sale of safe, high quality, and competitive products. 