Organic Agriculture in Thailand

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Origin of OA in Thailand
the collapse of modern agriculture in the early 1980s

- market instability
- dual cost-price squeeze
- Increasingly frequent incidents of health hazardous
- Widespread of fresh-water fish diseases linked to agro-chemical residue pollution
Organic Development

- Two parallel initiatives since mid 1990s
- Capital Rice Co., Ltd. and Green Net’s organic jasmine rice projects
- Followed by the establishment of ACT and other small and medium scales producers in late 1990s
- Moving into agribusiness stage with the take off growth
Organic Development

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Growth of Organic Agriculture in Thailand
Thai Government Projects

- DEP’s “Pilot Project on the Export of Organic Farm Products”
- DOA and TISTR “National Organic Standard Guideline for Crop Production”
- DOA’s organic crop certification scheme
- DOF’s organic aquaculture standard
- ACFS’s national organic standards
- Organic jasmine rice project in Surin
Organic Production

- 8,900 hectares of farmlands are under organic management
- 0.04% of arable land
- rice, vegetables, fruits
Rice & field crops: 59%

Fruit & vegetables: 40%

Others: 1%
Organic Certification

- ACT (Organic Agriculture Certification Thailand)
- DOA’s Organic Crop Institute
- Northern organic certification
- Foreign certifiers (BAC, Soil Asso., BSC, Ecocert)
Marketing

- domestic through green shops, supermarket
- exports (mainly to Europe)
- farmer markets
- direct to consumer e.g. box scheme, CSA's
Lessons Learn (1)
(OA as development tool)

- Organic farming is an important tool for rural development
- Ecological and natural resource conservation
- Economic well-being through premium and fair trade
- A learning process of farmer, building confidence and dignity
- Creating a more equal relationship between rural and urban sectors
Lessons Learn (2)
(OA as development tool)

- Extension not certification is not the first priority
- Quality (product and service)
- Quantity (economy of scale)
- Recognizing / accepting your limits, especially for producer organizations
- Trading is a tool that local development organization must learn how to use
Conditions for Success

- Supply chain management is necessary
- Fair price and transparency is fundamental
- Producer organization is important
- Shared responsibilities between different organizations
- Professionalism
What Thailand can offer

- Training grounds on OA extension and ICS
- Training grounds on organic certification
- Training grounds on alternative marketing