

Northern Thailand SRI network

1. Meeting summary

Date	25 February 2010
Place	ISAC (FARM)
Invited Participants	13 organizations from Northern Thailand (30 persons): 2 organizations from Phrae, 2 organizations from Nan, 1 organization from Phayao, 8 organizations from Chiang Mai
Participants	29 persons (see detail in attachment)
Goal and objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To initiate SRI network activities, • To exchange knowledge and management for extension of organic rice cultivation and marketing <p>Objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation, introduce each organization and individual SRI practices • To review SRI promotion in Northern Thailand such as information related to production techniques as well as training and extension, • To understand the limitations related to promoting SRI for possible adoption in northern Thailand views • To determine the extent of SRI promotion within the partnering network in Northern Thai, such as coordinators, information sources, etc.
Fee	1,000 baht (non-Chiang Mai, will provide transportation 50% and no charge)
Co- organization	ECHO Asia Regional Office, www.echonet.org Phone 081 992 0274 Green Net, www.greennet.or.th Phone 02 277 9380
Coordinator	Klaus Prinz, ECHO, <klaus.prinz@gmx.net >
Meeting facilitator	Vitoon Panyakul, Green Net, <vitoon@greennet.or.th>
Summarizing	Nittha Poeyjanthuk and Vitoon, Green Net

2. Important contents of the meeting

2.1 Local practice of direct single-seeding method by Kru Pratum Suriya

Ms. Pratum Suriya lives in Mae-tang District, Chiang Mai Province. In the year 2001 she retired from Watanothai School where she taught Chemistry for 30 years. She began to engage in integrated farming as she had intended for several years.

On her property (10 acres) she began to practice Sufficiency Economy Agriculture, according to the New Theory and model recommended by H.M. King Bhumibol Adulyadej and other because her own accounts showed that conventional farming practices did not bring satisfactory economic results and also led to various health and environmental problems.

With integrated farming management, according to HM The King's New Theory concept, the land is divided into 3 parts,

- one part for paddy field for growing rice and soybean
- one part for orchard farm and cattle/buffalo raising
- one part as a pond for storage of water and raising fish with natural fish food.



Ms Pratum has received national recognition, receiving a Royal Award (2009) for her work as a volunteer with the Cooperative Accounting Department (CAD) in teaching farmers to do appropriate accounting, thus assisting them to adapt to sustainable agriculture practices.

Through observation and experimentation she developed a method of alternative rice cultivation by using natural inputs and direct seeding of 2-3 grains * /hole. This method includes aspects of conserving of seed and water as well encouraging improved root development and thus can be regarded as a variation of SRI methodology.

* *Ms Pratum selects rice seed from dehusked , unpolished grain in order to choose grains that follow desired varietal characteristics, are perfect smooth and shiny, and not diseased.*

2.2 SRI initiated by Joko Community Learning Center

Joko Community Learning Center is a non-governmental organization operating in Tambon Muang Jung, located 15 km from Nan city in Nan Province. The center initially promoted SRI methodology for improved seed production as shown below.

First step: Joko's staff conducts village forums to learn about problems and limitations in rice cultivation. Frequent problems encountered are lack of rice seed and the low quality of seedlings.

Second step: Conduct SRI research activities with villagers who are interesting with SRI via farmer field schools (allowing participation in research, data collecting and information analysis).

Third step: Duplicate activities in the fields of farmers, focusing on strong, young seedlings for transplanting and transplanting of single seedlings.

Fourth step: Gathering of information from each plot to take back to center for the exchange of experiences, to develop appropriate production technology and for each farmer to gain quality rice seed for planting and sale.

Other participants shared outlines about their SRI practices. Most of them are learning by doing on their own land.



2.3 Dr. Abha Mishra

Dr. Abha Mishra, from the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok, also gave an overview of natural rice production efforts, including SRI, taking place in other regions of the country, including parts of northeast Thailand and Ratchaburi. Activities include the integration of various green manure cover crops for soil improvement.

2.4 Summary from participants' experiences

Location	Variety	Seeding age (days)	Space (cm)	Water level for weed mgt. (cm)	Yield (kg/ha)	No. of farmers	Type of farmer training
Phayao	Mali 105	15-30	30-50, depends on soil quality	Lower water level 60 days after transplanting	5,625 – 6,000	3-4	10 times/year - 40 persons per time (on behalf of Ministry of Agriculture)
Phrae	Kor Kho 6	14-20	30	Normal	3,750 (milled rice has better weight)	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No trainings • Demonstration plots • BAAC made documentary video
Mae-Ai, Chaiprakarn	Sanpatong	20	30	Flooding, plus stepping on weeds to push into soil	5,625	5	Networking
Chiang Dao	Red jasmine rice	8-12	30	Used hand weeder		1	Learning by doing
Mae-rim	Japan rice/ Red Rose Rice	12	25	Lower water level	Japan: 4,000 Red Rose Rice : 3,600	1	First time
Nan	10, sticky, non-sticky, jasmine, etc	25-30	20	Normal		355	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plots where seed was produced and selected for sale • School plot • Farmer's plots

According to information above, it was found that organizations and farmers in northern Thailand are interested in SRI even though they do not necessarily emphasize all accepted SRI practices. Instead, they modify methods to make the approach more appropriate to their situation. However, they all reported practicing single seedling transplanting using seedlings not over 30 days old. Spacing of seedlings ranged 20-30 cm. Some farmers experimented with SRI alone. Others participated as groups, learning through farmer field schools and some received assistance from the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC; a state enterprise under the Ministry of Finance). The yields are satisfactory with an average yield of about 3,125 kilograms per ha, depending on rice varieties. Common problems were weed management and appropriate control of water level. Some groups have tried to develop manual weeding machines. There are about 396 farmers practicing SRI methodology in northern Thailand.



3. Northern Thailand SRI Network

During the meeting, participating NGOs and farmers considered the significance of establishing coordination efforts within a network. In order to share points of view about networking the participants formed three groups to brainstorm and determine possible direction. Each sub-group analyzed five topics/issues and gave suggestion about how to work together over the next 2 - 3 years

	Important Issues Concerning SRI Practices	Suggested Joint Activities Over the Next 2-3 years
Sub-group 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Economic circumstances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rice prices are increasing • Select varieties suitable for market requirements 2. Produce appropriate media for passing on information, e.g. farmer field school demonstration farm 3. Environment (water level management) 4. Limited SRI technique and equipment e.g. weeding machine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange experience 1 time per year (every February) • Set up organic rice learning center • SRI network study tour

<p>Sub-group 2</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are persons interested in SRI (e.g., organic farmers) who truly understand SRI 2. SRI training curriculum (materials/information); appropriate locations for training in each step. 3. Good varieties of rice 4. Land preparation 5. Water management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange experience and seed grain on network level • Conduct participatory SRI research among SRI network • Build knowledge base and develop curriculum and materials
<p>Sub-group 3</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote SRI demonstration farm 2. Create network 3. Encourage government agencies to support SRI activities 4. Encourage villagers' participation to develop and extend SRI methodologies 5. Identify suitable rice varieties for SR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRI Demonstration farm • Working through a network • Expose SRI information to a broader audience



Summary of exchange by the 3 sub-groups of northern Thailand SRI network

- Not necessary to establish formal network since each organization already has a big work load. But if a formal network should be set up then it would be necessary to have a responsible facilitator/office. Participants agreed to defer this issue and clarify later.
- Klaus Prinz will update a contact-list of persons/organizations who are involved and interested in SRI methodologies .
- Participants agree to have a meeting every year and share the expenses.

Appendix.

Meeting program

Time	Activities
7.45 - 8.00	Registration
8.00 - 8.30	Introduction by ECHO and Green Net
8.30 – 9.00	Case Study: Local initiative (SRI adaptation) to organic rice production by Khru Pratum Suriya
9.00 – 10.00	Participates introduce themselves and their SRI experience: Each organization to share how they promote SRI, where they work and the extent of the work (number of farmer who practice SRI); all groups to know ahead of time with regard to information they need to prepare
10.00 - 10.30	Coffee break: BAAC * video from Phrae Province * Bank of Agriculture & Agricultural Cooperatives
10.30 – 12.30	Overview of SRI promotion and farmer practices (how SRI is promoted and results): Attendees to present their SRI promotion techniques (using PowerPoint - maximum 10 slides) explaining training/extension activities and application of SRI techniques, including paddy field management, each group (12 groups; 10 minutes each)
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 14.30	Analyze SRI promotion and farmer application: Divide into 3 sub-groups; each group to analyze limitations related to SRI work experiences; and gather suggestions related to how to proceed together.
14.30 – 15.00	Sub-group presentations
15.00 – 15.30	Coffee break
15.30 – 16.30	Developing a future regional SRI network; what, how, why and when
16.30 – 17.00	Summarize and close the meeting

Overview of SRI promotion in northern Thailand (Northern Thailand SRI Diagram)

