

Research Title	The development potential of organic upland. A case study of the agricultural community, Karen village of Ta Phoen Khi Suphab Buri Province.
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This study is of a qualitative and quantitative research type where its main purposes were 1) to study the environment of the farming area of Karen community in Ta Pern Kee Karen Village, 2) to study the context of current farming including knowledge and understanding about organic farming, 3) to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) in order for the development of organic farming to take place and 4) to provide guidelines for the development and promotion of organic farming. The target population in this study consists of 57 families of Karen farmers in Ta Pern Kee Karen Village and 1 official in Pu Toei National Park who has involved with farming of Karen in Ta Pern Kee Karen Village. The results are as follows:

1. The general environment of the farming area of Karen community in Ta Pern Kee Karen Village, Suphan Buri Province is relatively upland and open-air. It is away from industrial plants and main roads as its location situates in intricate mountains. Water supplies for agriculture are derived from a source of upstream water therefore no contamination of chemicals or direct exposure to toxic chemicals has been found. It may have been contaminated by agricultural chemicals in the vicinity, however. It was also found that most farming areas have been exploited with chemicals and fertilizers for a period of not less than 10 years. Such the farming type has consequently become crucial barriers to organic farming.

2. The context of farming, knowledge and understanding about organic farming showed that the sample groups of population are almost farmers who have been farming for over 10 years. The major crops planted are corn and upland rice respectively. The farming land per household is more than 26 Rais and is mostly in the form of ownership holding (these arable lands have been allocated by the Pu Toei National Park). The cultivation of dominant crops has been made once a year with the

use chemicals in the amount recommended in the manual. The duration of chemical use from the past till present is more than six years with the main purpose to get rid of grasses and weeds and its sub purpose to increase productivity. Most farmers have never been trained on organic farming only a few people had some training but they never put it in real use. For knowledge and understanding about organic farming, it was found that most sample groups of population have knowledge and understanding about organic farming in a fairly low level and the most knowledge they know about is the farmers who use chemicals in farming have often faced with chronic health problems. The second is the knowledge that extracts from herbs like Siamese neem, galangal, lemongrass, basil and sweet basil can help prevent and eliminate insects respectively. The third is that the yield from organic cultivation gives a cheaper price than the yield obtained from chemical farming. Finally, farming with organic fertilizers in an ongoing and long-term manner could give a lower yield.

3. SWOT analysis for the development of organic farming has been revealed as follows: For Strengths 1) The area is suitable for organic farming due to its fairly upland and open-air landscape which is away from industrial plants and the main roads, 2) The water is suitable for organic farming as it is derived from a source of upstream water thus it is free from any toxic contamination, 3) Most farmers have begun turning their attention to organic farming. For Weakness 1) The current farming land has been exposed to chemicals and fertilizers for over 10 years, 2) Most farmers have no knowledge about organic farming, 3) Most farmers are accustomed to and sticking with farming with chemicals and fertilizers, 4) there are no relevant departments to give support seriously and continually. For Opportunities 1) the yield of organic farming is a market demand, 2) The yield from organic farming is higher in price than that obtained from chemical farming, 3) Organic markets in Thailand and overseas are growing steadily and 4) the Pu Toei National Park is ready to promote and support organic farming for farmers. For Threats 1) the soil in the farmland degrades and lacks fertilities so it takes quite a long period of time for rehabilitation, 2) Organic farming is a complex process and takes a longer time for produce to yield and most importantly the farmers are loaded with burden of liabilities and expenses to be responsible for 3) Organic farming requires perseverance and high patience and most current farmers lack these characteristics. Moreover, they are still accustomed to and sticking with farming with chemicals.

The findings from the study at all. In conclusion, the agricultural areas of the community Karen village Southbank odd talents. There are not enough potential to develop organic farming within 1 year and it takes more than one year before the first period of transition to organic agriculture. It is very important to the promotion of knowledge about organic farming among farmers. Including restoration of agricultural land, the soil is fertile. Which is a key factor to the success of organic farming.

Guidelines for development and promotion of organic farming and the period of transition from chemical farming to organic farming for Karen farmers in Ta Pern Kee Karen Village, that need to be considered by relevant departments are as follows:

- 1) Promotion should be made by organizing a seminar on organic farming to farmers as well as providing them with serious and continuous follow-up and counseling after training
- 2) A network of leader farmers who are community leaders should be introduced in order to help raise awareness and attitudes towards organic farming,
- 3) Farmers should be encouraged and promoted to perceive the importance of using organic manure, live-plant fertilizer and bio-fertilizer in their farming as to help improve soil fertility
- 4) For farmers, promotion on learning how to reduce the use of chemicals in farming should be continuously encouraged,
- 5) Promoting the farmers to seriously pay attention on organic farming should be made by providing them a study tour to organic farms of the leader farmers or to underlying and successful organic farming networks and
- 6) The Pu Toei National Park should cooperate with government agencies that involve directly with agriculture to help enforce organic farming concretely.

However, in order to successfully develop and promote organic farming during the transition from chemical farming to organic farming of farmers in Karen community in Ta Pern Kee Karen Village, the government agencies and local authorities concerned should support and promote organic farming seriously and continuously so that sustainability of organic farming could be achieved henceforth.