



Pesticides? No thanks, say donor-backed farmers

Hanoi, 1 December 2016 – More than 1,000 farmers, primarily from Vietnam’s ethnic minority communities, are bringing new chemical-free, donor-funded products to market. Vietnam’s Ministry of Industry and Trade and Hanoi People’s Committee are hosting the Vietnam Regional Specialty fair at Vincom Megamall Royal City in Hanoi from 1-4 December, which features mostly corporate-backed products. But in one corner of the convention centre are a number of items backed by the non-profit sector: rice, ginger, coffee beans, pork, chicken and vegetables.

Supported by New Zealand’s Aid Programme, Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and World Vision Vietnam, nearly 1,500 farmers in Huong Hoa and Trieu Phong districts of Quang Tri province learned a strict natural farming methodology that prohibits any use of chemical products, including pesticide, herbicide, chemical fertilizers and preservatives.

With a budget of more than US\$ 3 million, the projects targeted the area’s neediest farmers to boost incomes, while ensuring the country a safe food supply, protecting soil fertility and safeguarding water sources.

“Following this natural farming method, I compost organic fertilizer using agricultural waste and livestock manure. I use ginger, chilli and garlic to prevent pests and treat plant diseases. Although this process requires more efforts, but it is not harmful to my health,” said Nguyen Thi Lan, a farmer in Trieu Phong district.

Tom Wilson, Head of the New Zealand Aid Programme, said: “Our partnership with World Vision is delivering real benefits to coffee, ginger and cassava farmers of Quang Tri. By helping farmers with safe production techniques, and linking them to markets, we are seeing real increases in household income. For example, the coffee farmers have shifted their focus from producing big volumes of coffee to producing the highest possible quality. They take pride in how good and clean their coffee is; they are starting to build a brand based on quality; and they work with reputable dealers and processors. New Zealand is proud to be doing our part in helping the farmer households build a sustainable economic future.”

An additional 1,000 farmers will soon join this production circle to offer more safe and quality agricultural products to the market.

“Sustainable economic development is the key to poverty elimination and in turn, the well-being of children. We constantly seek cooperation with governments, institutions, and the corporate sector to realize this philosophy, replacing temporary traditional aid hand-outs with the provision of tools and market linkages for needy farmers to create lasting impacts,” said Tran Thu Huyen, National Director of World Vision Vietnam.

The organic food industry in Vietnam is still nascent and unregulated, with the country’s first certification standards expected in 2017. Consumer demand for organic products has grown alongside a growing number of news reports on the harmful effects pesticide-laden or tainted food products pose to the environment and personal health.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

** **World Vision** is a Christian relief and development humanitarian organisation, working to improve the quality of life of people, especially children, who are marginalised and living in poverty. World Vision helps all who are in need regardless of their religion, race, ethnicity or gender.

World Vision started working in Vietnam with emergency relief assistance in 1988 and opened an office in Hanoi in 1990. Since 1990, World Vision has implemented many relief and development programs, partnering with the Vietnamese government, other non-governmental organisations and communities. World Vision's long-term development programs are currently operated in 39 districts of 14 cities and provinces throughout Vietnam.

** **The New Zealand Aid Programme** delivers New Zealand's official support for developing countries. The purpose of New Zealand's aid is to develop shared prosperity and stability, drawing on the best of New Zealand's knowledge and skills. The programme supports sustainable development in developing countries to reduce poverty and contribute to a more secure, equitable and prosperous world.

The New Zealand Aid Programme spends approximately NZD 10 million per year to focus on sustainable economic development (agriculture), human resource management (education), and disaster risk management in Vietnam. Currently the New Zealand Aid Programme is implementing six projects at six provinces in Vietnam, plus an ongoing scholarship and an English language training programme; and two new projects to be launched mid-2016. The Programme integrates environment and climate change, gender equality and women's empowerment, and human rights issues in Vietnam. This will help deliver sustainable, inclusive outcomes, including for economic development.

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