

Abstract

The study of “The Roles of Leaders in Knowledge Management of the Farmers’ Organic Rice Farming: a case study of natural farming group in Thamo Sub-district, Prasat District, Surin Province” has its goals to study the roles of leaders in knowledge management of the organic rice farming, and also to study the problems and obstacles as well as factors related the leaders’ knowledge management.

The results of the study revealed that the roles of leaders in knowledge management of the organic rice farming can be divided into 3 periods. The first period starts with formation of group while the leaders’ roles are self learning and develop themselves through field study, training programs, practical experiments, and sharing of lessons learned among leaders and group members. As the second period, extension of the group outreaches and makes it known to public. The leaders take the roles in knowledge management as a facilitator to promote and support the farmers to engage in learning and practice. The third is identified by the roles of leaders in the search of markets to extend the distribution channels for products and create new activities of organic farming. Meanwhile, leaders assume the roles of more complicated work, and adopt learning in determination of prices and marketing system with the focus on fair trade.

Roles of the leaders in knowledge management on the organic rice farming during the past 3 periods are as follows: 1) Invitation and introduction organic rice farming to the farmers 2) Serving as a good model in practice 3) Training to provide knowledge and concepts, along with formulation of rules and regulations 4) Demonstrations 5) Giving of consultations at all times 6) Encouragement of farmers during the learning period 7) Sharing of lessons learned among members and leaders, as well as members and external network, in which the leaders need to serve as a coordinator and a facilitator for the learning process, and 8) Arranging other learning activities for the farmers.

Problems, obstacles, as well as factors related the roles of leaders in knowledge management include: 1) knowledge in organic farming standards 2)

farmers' values towards motivation by the price of agricultural products and conveniences. 3) climate is an uncontrollable factor, consequently members have to make use of chemical fertilizer 4) Support from members of the families. 5) the number of labor force in the families for the whole year farming.

Factors of inclination for success are: 1) leaders who serve as a practitioner and a good example for the farmers in a concrete form. 2) learning process, contents, and approaches 3) group structure with flexibility and participative management system within the group 4) relatives and kindred relationship among the group members.

Recommendation from the study pointed that Thamo sub-district's natural farming group should keep records of data or compile the body of knowledge of the group, in order to create a database or body of knowledge for the group to have the benefits in dissemination of knowledge and experiences prepared in the form of documents or other medias to minimize the steps of knowledge transfer.

Recommendation for further study will be the study on knowledge management of farmers in Surin Organic Agriculture Cooperative Ltd. at the network level with international marketing.