

Thesis Title

The Attitudes of Tea (Pickled Tea) Growers towards the Conservation of Forest Resources at Tambon Pa Pae, Amphoe Mae Taeng, Changwat Chiang Mai

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to survey tea farmer's awareness and attitudes regarding forest conservation, and to asses various problems the farmers have in tea production. One hundred and twenty seven tea farmers in the Pa Pae sub-district of Mae Tang, Chiang Mai, were interviewed. Survey responses were analyzed using standard descriptive statistics and correlation analysis.

The majority of farmers believed that tea is a good crop for forest conservation and had a positive attitude towards forest conservation, inter-planting fruit trees in their tea plantations. However, they believe that, while the production of pickled tea is not the major cause of deforestation, it contributes significantly to deforestation. They perceive that the major one that cause forest destruction was illegal logging and shifting cultivation. The majority of the farmers plan to continue producing pickled tea because it is profitable, the investment is low, and it is a way of life passed down from their ancestors.

The research also aimed to find the correlation between attitude towards conservation and ethnicity, age, education, size of land holding, work experience, and income. It was found that only age and size of land holding were significantly related to attitudes toward conservation.

Two of the most important problems facing tea farmers regarding the production of pickled tea are: marketing, and the scarcity of fire wood. Most farmers are interested in planting other crops in addition to tea but are restricted by limited water. Water shortage has led to forest tea plantations which do not require much water and can perform satisfactory during the shortage period.

The researcher believes that forest tea plantations should be continued because this method of crop production is well suited to the highland and farmer's way of life. Methods of increasing productivity should be examined. In the near future tea

will remain a golden crop for highlands areas. Considering pickled tea, the environment for pickled tea production is still favorable. However, various local conditions and requirements for pickled tea production, along with its appropriateness and compatibility with the farmer's particular circumstances, should be taken into the consideration. Measures to conserve the forest should be developed and implemented. These measures should be compatible with the society at large and not environmentally destructive. If such measures are implemented, this forest-tea plantation system would be sustainable and should not cause the environmental degradation in the future.