

ABSTRACT

Abstract of thesis submitted to the Graduate School of Maejo University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in Business Administration

FACTORS AFFECTING SELLING BEHAVIOR OF RUBBER GROWERS IN THE LOWER NORTHEASTERN REGION OF THAILAND

BY

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MAY 2000

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The purposes of this research were to study 1) personal, economic and social factors of rubber growers in the lower northeastern region; 2) their selling behavior; 3) relationship between their personal, economic and social factors and their selling behavior; and 4) their problems and suggestions concerning rubber-selling. The data was collected by means of questionnaires from 304 rubber growers owning plantations with tapped rubber trees in the lower northeastern region: Buriram, Surin, Srisaket and Ubon Ratchathani, and analyzed through the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS for Windows Version 7.5).

The findings revealed that most of the samples were men, 31–59 years old and had completed an elementary level of education. They had 4-6 family members; 1–3 of them contributed labor in rubber plantations. They received 50 % of the income obtained from rubber selling as their wages. Rubber growing was their sub-career and

their annual agricultural income was lower than 50,001 baht without other sources of income. They had no non-agricultural debt, and their agricultural debt was less than 50,001 baht per year. Their rubber growing was subsidized by the Office of the Rubber Replanting Aid Fund. The research also revealed that all of them had their own 1–50 rais plantation, with their own production facilities, and had their rubber tapped for 3–4 years. The amounts of rubber were very high from July to December and the price depended on the Price Support Scheme. The distance from the factories to the markets was 1–30 kilometers. All of them were members of Rubber-plantation Agricultural Associations and contacted district agricultural officers and the officers working in the Office of the Rubber Replanting Aid Fund. The information about rubber markets and prices was received through radios and televisions.

With regard to their rubber-selling behavior, it was found that all of the samples delivered their rubber to the Price Support Center in trucks by themselves due to the Price Support Center's honesty, fairness, high prices and acquaintance. The selling decision was made by the owners of plantations. Not over 300 kilograms of rubber was sold each time, twice a month, at the delivered price. Payment was made in cash or monetary transfer through the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives. Prices varied with quality of rubber, which was graded before selling. The first quality rubber was easily sold as graded.

Personal factors i.e. sex and age and economic factors i.e. agricultural income, and quantities of raw rubber sheets produced daily were significantly correlated with selling behavior while social factors were not.

The rubber growers' problems were insufficient capital, buildings, materials and equipment for rubber production; few buyers; inconvenient transportation; long distance between production and selling points; and governmental agencies' procedures in the price support scheme. It was recommended that rubber growers should collectively sell their rubber in order to raise their income levels.