

ABSTRACT

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OPERATION OF FARMER GROUPS IN CHIANGMAI, THAILAND

By

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The purposes of this research were 1) to compare personal, economic and social characteristics of the 3 classes of farmer groups' committees; 2) to compare the operations of the 3 classes of farmer groups; and 3) to find out problems and recommendations concerning the farmer groups' operations.

The samples in this research were 262 committee members, selected by stratified random sampling, of the farmer groups in Chaingmai province, consisting of 64 committee members from Class A (successful), 84 from Class B (moderately successful) and 114 from Class C (least successful). The data were collected by means of pretested interview schedule and processed through the SPSS/PC⁺. The findings were as follows:

The farmer group committees had an average age of 49 years, 4 members per household and family annual income of 100,363 baht. Most of them had finished primary education, married and stayed together. They had an average farm size of 11 rai, served as committee members for 6 years, and had average attendance at a training course of twice a year. The comparison by means of the F-test revealed significant differences in family income, farm size, duration of service as committee and training experience. No significant difference was found when considering age and number of household members.

Concerning the farmer groups' operations, the committee members' satisfaction with fund raising and provision of farm supplies was at a moderate level; knowledge diffusion and welfares, a low level; and farm product collection and provision of farm tools and machinery for rent, a very low level. The comparison by means of the F-test showed significant differences in all activities of the three classes of the farmer groups.

The committee members indicated fund raising a moderately arising problem; provision of farm supplies, knowledge diffusion, provision of farm tools and machinery for rent and the members' welfares, infrequently arising problems; and farm product collection, a least frequently arising problem.

It was recommended by the respondents that the agencies in charge should provide farm machinery and help the farmer groups by providing loans of a low interest rate in time of need and according to priority. Also, the government should provide assistance to the groups with debts due to losses caused by natural disasters.