

THESIS TITLE FACTORS AFFECTING DECISION MAKING IN INTEGRATED
FARMING PRACTICE OF FARMERS IN IRRIGATED AREA OF
MAHASARAKHAM PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to find out physical, biological, socio-economic, and extension and communication factors which were associated with the decision making of farmers in integrated farming practices. Consequently, the finding will be considerably applied to integrated farming system improvement and promotion, in accordance with physical and potential of farmers especially in irrigated area. The specific objectives were to study; (1) integrated farming systems in irrigated area of Mahasarakham Province, (2) comparision of physical, biological, socio- economic, extension and communication factors between farmers who did and did not practice integrated farming and (3) case study of farmers who did and did not practice integrated farming. The combination of quantitative research and qualitative research were used. Each of thirty farmer households

who did and did not practice the integrated farming was used as a unit of analysis. Semi-structured interview schedule and systematic observation schedule were tools of data collection. T-test, arithmetic mean, percentage were statistical methods of data analysis. The research findings were as follows.

Integrated farming system in irrigated area of Maharashtra Province was the integration of crop-fishery-livestock, particular rice, fish, vegetable, fruit tree, swine, cattle and poultry production. Five integrated farming systems were classified as (1) rice-rice + fishery + vegetable + poultry production, (2) rice-rice fishery + vegetable + poultry production + fruit tree, (3) rice-rice + fishery + vegetable + poultry production + fruit tree + swine production, (4) rice-rice + fishery + vegetable + poultry production + fruit tree + cattle production and (5) rice-rice + fishery + vegetable + poultry production + fruit tree + swine and cattle production. Generally, all of systems consisted of rice, fishery, vegetable, fruit tree and poultry production, for home consumption. But there was some difference in the swine and/or cattle production. The farmers house was not located in cultivated area which was convenient for raising and feeding of animal, the noise and smell pollution, were the main factors of animal production. Nevertheless, there was heterogenous in same system of each family in the term of magnitude of enterprise and amount of activities management, including with product utilization because of the differences in their knowledge, skill, experience, production objective and environment which affected the production efficiency of farmer.

Factors affecting to decision-making on conducting integrated farming system of farmers in irrigated area in Mahasarakham Province were; (1) Physical and biological factors; the insufficient water for irrigation, the housing located in cultivated area or closed to, fruit tree cultivation as minor crop, opportunity for animal and fish raising. (2) economic factors; big amount of land holding, no home industry, (3) extension and communication; good or high opportunity to be visited by extension worker, closely contact with development agencies and study tour on integrated farming activities.

The existing problems and constraints of two farmer groups were as follows : (1) inequality and inconvenient of water using due to the ineffective use of water using agreements and rules, (2) insufficient support from government officials and agencies in term of knowledge, skill and other materials for their problem-solving to continue their integrated farming. For the better integrated farming promotion, the recommendations were, (1) farmer participation should be encouraged in water distribution and irrigation system management and maintenance determination, (2) intensive visit system employment, improve training system, and efficiency of official, and the coordination among related agencies, particular team work spirit should be performed. For further study should be done on the trend of the changing of integrated farming pattern in this area, the investigation of appropriate extension method for integrated farming, with similar titles but in different time, space, and research methodology in order to reconfirm the consistency and validity of this finding.