Crop production training boosts productivity

Ten years ago, Ngo Thi Vi only produced 120 to 150 kg of rice per sao in a good season. Today, her yields have risen to between 200 and 220 kg per sao (1 sao = 360 m²).

Ngo Thi Vi farms in Dong Mai village, Trung Nghia commune in the Yen Phong district of Bac Ninh province, Vietnam. She has been farming to support her family of three children since 1990. In 2003, she was invited to attend a responsible use training workshop offered by CropLife Asia. Through her enthusiastic participation, she learned to do a number of things differently that have made a huge difference in the productivity of her crops – and the quality of life for her family.

Back in 2003, two agronomists came to the farm and instructed Ngo Thi Vi on several aspects of crop production, including how to choose the best varieties for her farming operation, how to prepare the seed and seedbed, how to sow the seed and then how to select only the most robust seedlings for transplanting.

The course finished up with a session on how to safely and effectively use crop protection products to minimise the damage to her crops from insects, weeds and disease to improve both crop yields and quality.

“10 years ago, the productivity of our rice was only 120 to 150kg/sao. Now it is 200 to 220kg/sao.”
Today, the family consistently produces two rice crops a year plus some vegetable crops. With the knowledge of integrated pest management and how best to use crop protection products, the family has almost doubled their crop output and income, depending on the price of rice.

“We used to save seed for 3 or 4 crops. But since the training, we now purchase rice seed for every single crop and it’s much more productive.”

“We now know how to use pesticides – what pesticide to use for each stage of the rice crop. And we’re also now using crop protection products on tomato, kohlrabi, cabbage and other vegetables,” says Ngo Thi Vi. “It’s totally different than in the past.”

Prior to the training, she and her husband found it very difficult to maintain a home for their three children. They didn’t have much land and their rice crops were not very productive. “We didn’t know how to differentiate good seeds from bad seeds or which seeds are highly productive,” she says. “We used to save seed for 3 or 4 crops. But since the training, we now purchase rice seed for every single crop and it’s much more productive.”

Land titling laws in Vietnam are complex but in their simplest form, land rights are earned. The more productive your crops are the more land you will be able to lease and the more income your family will be able to earn. Land rights correspond to higher income and access to credit.

“This bodes well for the family’s future. Life is not as difficult as it once was. Pest control in the fields and paddies is much easier to manage which means she and her children have time for other life enhancing activities. Her children have now all finished secondary and high school and have come back home to help with the business of farming. “Life is now easier with higher income and we don’t have to work as hard as before,” she says.

Her experience is not unique in Vietnam. In fact, since 2000, Vietnam has moved well beyond their history of chronic food shortages to being the world’s second largest rice exporter. (Source: The World Bank)