Developing improved farming and marketing systems in rainfed regions of southern Lao PDR

**Overall objectives**

1. Identify potential livestock feeding and management options, and adapt and evaluate these with farmers at key sites using action research-learning cycles.
2. Identify productive forage species adapted to the specific lowland conditions of southern Laos, quantify year-round feed availability, and investigate forage conservation options, in on-station experiments and with farmers at key sites.

**Working on what?**

- It was decided to focus on cattle:
  - Cattle is abundant
  - Management is simple
  - Feed is easy to grow
  - Market potential was seen as high

- Later activities included
  - Improved chicken raising
  - Building up resources for further projects

- One major necessity was capacity building
  - Basic livestock knowledge
  - Specialized technical knowledge
  - Working with farmers
  - Reporting
  - Data collection
  - Management of experiments
Work environment

• Physical conditions
  • Sandy infertile soils
  • Unpredictable rainfall patterns
  • Alternating flooding and drought
  • Good road conditions if not very remote
  • Around urban centers more crop than livestock syst.

• Social/political conditions
  • Much lower project density than in north
  • Especially DAFO with very poor HR
  • DAFO basically without any budget
  • Interest of local politicians often low
  • Mining and logging skews income schemes in uplands

Introducing forages to farmers

Doing what where?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Savannakhet</td>
<td>Outhomphone</td>
<td>Cattle fattening, planting material, chicken raising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phalanxai</td>
<td>Planting material</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phin</td>
<td>Cattle fattening, planting material</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sepon</td>
<td>Cattle and goat raising</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nong</td>
<td>Cattle fattening</td>
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<td>Champassak</td>
<td>Phontong</td>
<td>Cattle fattening, chicken raising</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soukhouma</td>
<td>Cattle fattening, planting material</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mounlapamok</td>
<td>Cattle fattening</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Planting material resources**

- Forage areas between 2 rai and 2 ha established for planting material

**Project flow and constraints**

- DAFO capacity and interest biggest constraint
- All DAFO staff that delivered were women!
- Interaction between PAFO and DAFO variable
- Generally supporting attitude at PAFO level

**Project flow and constraints**

- Project flow slow, due to seed multiplication
- Knowledge/confidence had to be developed
- Farmer interest often low
- Opportunity costs a serious issue (Thailand)

**Seed multiplication**
**Students**

- Students have been employed 2x
- Easy to find, colleges and Unis supportive
- Students level generally basic
- Difficult to produce publishable data

**Most successful project sites**

- Highest potential for livestock systems work:
  - Outhomphone: Ms Phetsakhone committed, some mixed systems, small grazing area
  - Phin: Ms Bangohn committed, mixed farming systems but not transitional, good market access
  - Soukhouma: Ms Oudom reliable, large animal numbers, poor natural grazing grounds

**Thank you.**