

Abstract

# Do GAP Practices Improve Market Access for Vegetable Farmers? A Case Study from Vientiane Capital, Laos <sup>†</sup>

Maiyer Xiong <sup>1</sup>, Gomathy Palaniappan <sup>2,\*</sup> and Laurie Bonney <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Agriculture, National University of Laos, Vientiane 7322, Laos; xmaiye@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup> School of Agriculture and Food Sciences, The University of Queensland, St Lucia, Brisbane, QLD 4072, Australia

<sup>3</sup> Agrifood Value Chain Innovation, University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS 7001, Australia; lawrence.bonney@utas.edu.au

\* Correspondence: g.palaniappan@uq.edu.au

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**Abstract:** A case study on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) of vegetable was conducted in 2018, with an objective to understand whether GAP practices improve market access for vegetable farmers in the Lao PDR. The case study was conducted in Nasala Village, Xaythany District, Vientiane capital, Lao PDR. The data was collected using 10 semi-structured interviews and one group discussion with Nasala farmers. The results were summarized based on the themes such as community characteristics, market access and farmers' perception about GAP. The Nasala community has 585 households, majority being farmers with 50% of them growing vegetables with an average farm size of 1.5 hectare. District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO) introduced GAP practices as a pilot project to 28 farmers in Nasala in 2014 through farmer trainings. The DAFO pilot project enabled Nasala farmers to export Thorny Coriander to Japan during 2016–2017. Nasala farmers sold 50 kg/day of Thorny Coriander for about one year at the price of 15,000 kip/kg in comparison to 7000–10,000 kip/kg at the local market. Farmers agreed that they were motivated by the market incentives and collectively sold the produce by alternating production for continuous supply. This export opportunity was withdrawn after the pilot period resulting in no incentives to practice GAP. Farmers agreed that GAP enabled them to produce better quality, healthier and safer vegetables. However, the barriers to GAP are lack of government policies, institutional support, inadequate incentives and complex certification process. To enable farmers to continue GAP practices appropriate supporting system must be developed.

**Keywords:** market access; collective action; smallholder farmers; Good Agriculture Practices; community characteristics; training

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