

Annual Meeting on Lessons Learnt and Reflection upon SRI 2008-2009

On Friday, 21st August 2009, SRI-Secretariat of General Directorate of Agriculture of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and CEDAC with financial support from OXFAM America (OA), organized a Meeting on Lessons Learnt and Reflection upon "The System of Rice Intensification (SRI) 2008-2009" at the meeting hall of MAFF, in Phnom Penh. The meeting was chaired by the Honourable H.E Dr. Chan Sarun, Minister of MAFF. 120 people including MAFF officials from 24 provinces of Cambodia, teachers and students from the Royal University of *Agriculture*, Prek Leap National *School of Agriculture and* Kampong Cham Agriculture School, SRI farmers and a number of NGOs representatives from OA , HEKS, FAO, CEDAC and GTZ. Objectives of the meeting were to:

- Review and evaluate the progress of SRI work and prepare the work plan for the next season
- Present and discuss the results of the SRI work from other agencies
- Discuss and modify the SRI database systems
- Discuss and exchange experiences in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and identify strategies to improve SRI implementation

In his keynote remarks, Dr. Yang Saing Koma, CEDAC's president reviewed the history of SRI; in particular, the first field trials on SRI in Cambodia were implemented by CEDAC in year 2000 with 28 farmers in five provinces. Currently, more than 100, 000 families are applying SRI methods throughout 24 provinces of Cambodia. According to Dr. Yang Saing Koma, SRI is expected to reach every village in Cambodia by the next five to ten years.

Finally, Dr. Yang Saing Koma stressed that in order to apply and maintain sustainable rice production, two main points must be seriously considered. They include the building up of humus of top soil and local seed selection purification. He also calls for more actions to protect both rice stubble and frogs.

Mr. Brian Lund, Regional Director of Oxfam America (OA) said that SRI has the capacity to increase the yield and the economic return of Cambodia and it helps a significant number of poor farmers in Cambodia. "SRI clearly has the potential to help so many Cambodian out of poverty," he added. However, through our working partners, we will identify new aspects; new ways and new complementary technologies that will improve SRI. Moreover, Oxfam America certainly intends to continue supporting the development of SRI in Cambodia.

Finally, H.E Dr. Chan Sarun, Minister of MAFF, in his closing remarks, requested that the three state universities of Agriculture encourage more students to study and research on SRI for their final thesis. He recommended to his officials from 24 provinces to focus on seed selection and post harvest management of the farmers. Dr. Chan Sarun finished his remarks by saying that "farmers will come out of poverty if they do SRI".