



Thailand, OASIS

Since the last update in August, the lives of farmers who are part of our project in Thailand have not been made any easier by the pandemic. Despite all the hurdles, 23 families invested in the water infrastructure. Over this short timespan (August – December 2020), no fewer than 13 families (56.52%) have used the new water infrastructure (hydrological cycle in the reservoirs). By reusing the water collected to irrigate the vegetable beds and rice fields, the farmers significantly reduced water consumption.

The pipes laid in the rice fields to analyse the water level are called pani pipes and are used to determine when to irrigate the crop. As soon as the water table falls below a certain level, the field should be irrigated. 18 families have attended training in the use of pani pipes. However, due to the drought situation, 12 families were unable to measure water level. Six families were able to analyse the water level in their rice fields and adjust the irrigation timings accordingly.

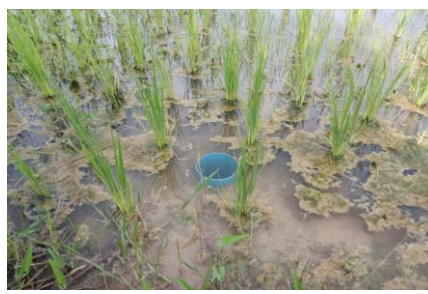
The 2020 harvest is largely finished. Due to the severe drought, the cooperative suffered a loss of around 35% of the total harvest.

Of 672 farmers in all (96% of whom are certified organic), 190 (28%) joined in 2020. The percentage of women is also steadily rising, and is currently 61% (407 farmers). Altogether, the farming families farm an area of approximately 2000 ha, which is an average of 3 ha per family.

The farmers underwent the annual certification process between September and October 2020 and, by the end of November, the organic agriculture association (ACT) had audited and inspected all the organic farmers.



Water resources



Pani pipes in a rice field



Organic inspection by ACT



India, Nature Bio Foods

The harvest in India is largely finished. It is estimated that this harvest will be around 8 – 10% higher than in the previous year. However, exact quantities cannot be determined until the entire harvest is finished.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, the teams at our partners Nature Bio Food and Partners in Prosperity were able to run training courses on improved management of the rice fields. These took place between June and December 2020 and a total of 1200 participants attended. 62% of participants were women.

The project continued to support efficient water management and the infrastructure needed for this. Work on the first pump wells to irrigate rice fields in the Betalghat region is now complete. The pump wells provide the farming families with secure access to water, removing their dependence on main water channels that are sometimes the subject of disputes. The “Water and Environment Group” (WEG) is now endeavouring to supply solar power to the pump, to provide sustainable and economical access to irrigation and thereby create a replicable model project.

Furthermore, the Fairtrade premium has been used to finance the purchase of water filters, which are now available to 500 households. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, however, final implementation will be delayed by around 3 months.

It is not just in the fields that investments are being made! In Nanpara and Ramnagar, a total of 250 solar street lights have been installed and solar torches have been distributed to around 500 farming families. The lighting helps farming families in various ways, and are particularly useful as protection against snakes.

Many training courses were run online, including those on “Cow dung management”. 211 farmers took an interest in improved use of slurry and attended a total of 11 virtual training sessions on the Zoom platform. Importantly, the project gave farming families with a biogas plant access to training on maintaining these units.



Solar lamp for farmers



Biogas plant



Solar street light