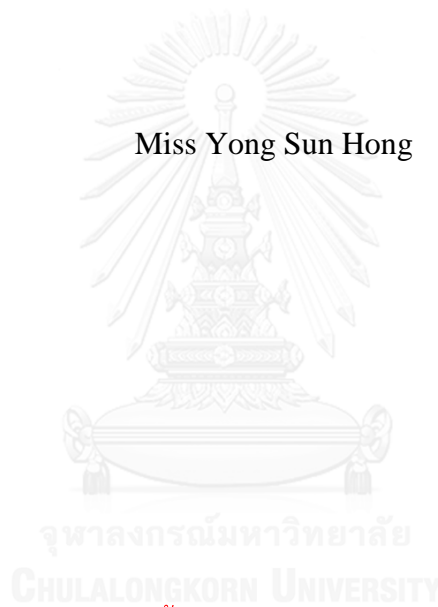


PROMOTING ORGANIC FARMING FOR FARMERS' EMPOWERMENT: THE
ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH KOREA AND THAILAND

Miss Yong Sun Hong



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การส่งเสริมเกษตรอินทรีย์เพื่อสร้างอำนาจให้เกษตรกร: บทบาทของรัฐบาลในประเทศเกาหลีใต้
และประเทศไทย



วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
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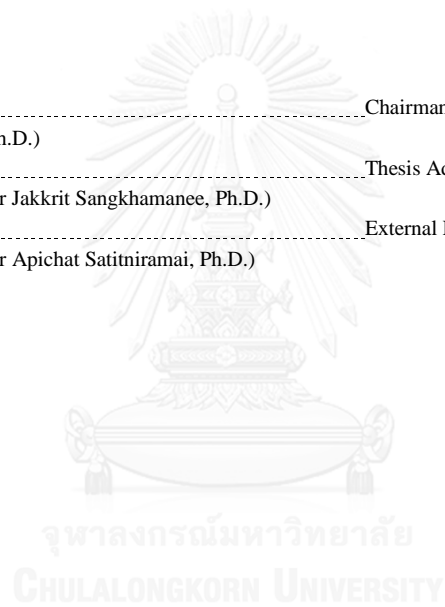
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ขง ชัน สอง : การส่งเสริมเกษตรกรอินทรีย์เพื่อสร้างอำนาจให้เกษตรกร: บทบาทของรัฐบาลในประเทศเกาหลีใต้ และประเทศไทย (PROMOTING ORGANIC FARMING FOR FARMERS' EMPOWERMENT: THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH KOREA AND THAILAND) อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: จักรกริช สังขมณี, หน้า.

ด้วยอัตราการเพิ่มขึ้นของปัญหาวิกฤตด้านอาหารนานาชาติ ปัญหาอันตรายต่อสิ่งแวดล้อมที่กำลังทวีความรุนแรงขึ้นเรื่อยๆ และความเสื่อมถอยที่เพิ่มมากขึ้นในอุตสาหกรรมด้านการเกษตร เกษตรกรรมแบบอินทรีย์จึงกลายเป็นทางเลือกใหม่ให้กับข้อบกพร่องของการทำการเกษตรแบบเดิมๆ การเพิ่มความตระหนักรู้ของความสัมพันธ์ทางด้านอาหารและความเป็นอยู่ที่ ดีได้เกิดเป็นแรงกระตุ้นในการทำการเกษตรแบบเกษตรอินทรีย์ซึ่งแผ่ขยายไปในสังคมนานาชาติและกรณีศึกษาต่างๆ ก็ได้ยืนยันความเชื่อที่ถือกันว่าเกษตรอินทรีย์นั้น มีผลประโยชน์ทางเศรษฐกิจมากกว่าและเพิ่มอำนาจให้กับเกษตรกรมากขึ้น ถึงแม้ว่าประเทศไทยจะเป็นผู้บุกเบิกในการริเริ่มการนำแนวคิดเกษตรอินทรีย์มาใช้ในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ การขาดระบบที่มีเสถียรภาพและแนวทางการกำกับดูแลที่มีประสิทธิภาพนั้น ได้ปล่อยให้เกษตรกรอินทรีย์ต้องตกอยู่ในภาวะไม่ต่างอะไรกับทารกแรกเกิด แม้จะมีทรัพยากรอุดมสมบูรณ์ในที่ดินทำกินมากมาย ในบรรดาตัวแปรสำคัญที่แตกต่างกันออกไปที่เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของเครือข่ายเกษตรอินทรีย์นั้น การทำวิจัยจะมุ่งเน้นไปที่บทบาทของรัฐบาลผู้ซึ่งเป็นนิติบุคคลที่สนับสนุนการส่งเสริมและเผยแพร่เกษตรอินทรีย์ในด้านเทคโนโลยี เม็ดเงิน การศึกษา และจัดตั้ง กำกับดูแลการพัฒนาระบบเกษตรอินทรีย์ที่มีเสถียรภาพสำหรับเกษตรกรซึ่งเป็นสิ่งสำคัญในการพัฒนาอุตสาหกรรมเกษตรอินทรีย์ในภาวะเริ่มต้นนี้ ในแง่การวิจัยนี้จะลงรายละเอียดค้นคว้าบทบาทของรัฐบาลในการจัดระบบและการมอบสถาบันที่สามารถสนับสนุนเกษตรกรอินทรีย์ในประเทศไทยโดยผ่านการประเมินนโยบายการส่งเสริมการขายเกษตรอินทรีย์ของเกาหลีใต้และกรณีศึกษาเกี่ยวกับหมู่บ้านที่มีการพัฒนาโดยได้รับความช่วยเหลือจากรัฐบาล ด้วยกระบวนการเปรียบเทียบ การวิจัยนี้จะสรุปด้วยการอภิปรายว่ารูปแบบนโยบายชนิดไหนของเกาหลีใต้ สามารถนำมาปรับใช้ได้ และแนะนำข้อเสนอเชิงนโยบายสำหรับการปรับปรุงต่อไป

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YONG SUN HONG: PROMOTING ORGANIC FARMING FOR FARMERS' EMPOWERMENT: THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH KOREA AND THAILAND. ADVISOR: ASST. PROF. JAKKRIT SANGKHAMANEE, Ph.D., pp.

In the upsurge of international food crisis, intensifying environmental hazards, and protracting setback of agricultural industry, organic farming emerged as an alternative to the shortcomings of conventional farming. Increasing awareness of food security and well-being has stimulated the growth of organic agriculture in the international community, and various studies have corroborated the widely held belief that organic agriculture bears more economic benefits and empowerment to the farmers. Although Thailand has been a pioneer in instigating organic efforts in Southeast Asia, absence of a stable guiding system and effective governance has left the organic agriculture at an infant stage despite rich resources in vast arable land. Among different key actors that constitute the organic network, the research will focus on the role of government as a guiding and supporting entity that supports the promotion of organic agriculture in technology, seed money, education, as well as establishing and governing a stable organic development system for the farmers is crucial to develop the infant organic industry. In light of this, this research will take extensive investigation into the role of government in systemizing and providing workable institutional support for promotion of organic agriculture in Thailand, through assessment of South Korea's organic promotional policies and a case study on a village that has developed through government assistance. Through comparisons, the research will conclude with a discussion of what kind of policies can be applied from the South Korean model, and suggest policy recommendations for further improvements.



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Student's Signature

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Advancement of technology together with the homogenization of world economy has triggered extensive use of chemical, pesticides, and hormones which have successfully accelerated the crops' growth cycle, but left soil intoxications that ramified into various environmental hazards, and farmers' subordination to market forces.

Conventional farming in the contemporary society brought prosperity and increased access to food. Commercialization of agriculture enabled the global community to have cheaper access to necessary food and allowed farmers to gain profit. However, continued development gave way to surplus of crops from production imbalance which placed the farmers in unfavorable position when bargaining with distributors and wholesalers. Today, this is one of the problems conventional farming encounter which discourages the farmers to engage in farming but turns them away from the field that they have spent most of their lives in. In the case of Thailand, according to Bello, Cunningham and Li Kheng Poh's book "A Siamese Tragedy" (1999), farmers deserting their land for urban immigration owes largely to the government's subordination of agriculture to the urban-industrial sector as well as the assimilation of agricultural production to the world market through invasive commercialization(Bello 1999). Absence of durable policy to retain and secure farmers' income and livelihood to supplement such deficiency has placed farmers on a price seesaw.

For Thailand, in the upsurge of international food crisis, intensifying environmental hazards, and protracting setback of agricultural industry, organic farming emerged as an alternative to resolve market instability and health hazards that farmers and consumers had to encounter alike (UNESCAP 2003). Both consumers and producers grew aware of the hazardous effects of chemicals accumulates and develops into illnesses. The Natural Resource Defense Council

found higher incidence of childhood leukemia, brain cancer and birth defects that result from early exposure to pesticides (F 2010, 26 May). Thanks to increased awareness on the effects of pesticides, Consumers' genuine interest about healthier and cleaner food continues to grow, inviting further development of organic industry. As such, demand for organic agriculture is vast in developed countries where lifestyle is shifting from fast-produced cheap consumption into health-aware, slow, and well-being food.

On the supply side, a well-structured flow of organic farming is opt to build resistance to market's price force and allow the farmers to develop their own price deciding mechanism. Farmers can direct their farming strategy as to how much to grow, what crops to grow, how to package, market, and sell, which in turn enhances agro-diversity, reduces dependency on external markets, and most importantly, enhances farmer control over the way food is produced and consumed (Vandergeest 2008).

Thailand has undoubted comparative advantage in agricultural sector, with plentiful supply of natural resources, land, and tropical weather. Given this favorable environment, it is expected that organic farming will provide a good transitional point from the conventional chemical farming, environmentally sustaining natural growth cycle, and economically attuning to the growing demands of organic products.

Organic agriculture ensures food security for the consumers. The World Food Summit of 1996 defines food security as people having access to "sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life" (Organization). Growing awareness of safe and nutritious food has accelerated the demand for pesticide-free, environmental-friendly, and organic food. Since the 1990s, the global market for organic products has steadily and rapidly grown at about 20 to 25 percent per year, reaching an estimated US\$33 billion in 2005 (Ellis 2006). Consumers worldwide have come to learn that organic products are superior in overall aspects in comparison with that of conventional produce (Bryne 1991). On the supply side, organic agriculture acts as a vehicle for economic empowerment of the producers. Household income of organic families could be increased through the implementation of premium price for organic produce. The improved income could enhance purchasing power, to prevent farmers from encountering problems in terms of access to other commodities. Thus,

food security is related not only to productivity, but also the financial conditions of the farmers' families (Pattanapant 2009). Practical experiences, various reports, and outcomes of many intergovernmental meeting have highlighted the development opportunities offered by organic agriculture for developing countries' farmers, particularly small-scale farmers (UNCTAD. 2004). Reports on rural development initiatives state that organic agriculture can both improve environmental degradation and reduce poverty level (Hossain 2001). Empirical researches depict a clear relationship threat between organic agriculture, food security, and producer's economic development (IFAD 2003). This important link is further corroborated by reports drafted by CEDAC, confirming that organic initiatives have contributed to poverty reduction, especially to people around the poverty line. Dr. YingYong Paisooksantivatana from the Faculty of Agriculture, Kasetsart University predicted in a personal interview that the value of organic products will be recognized and prized by more consumers in coming years. Consumers interested in organic products are growing in numbers as they become more aware of health issues, preserving the environment and illnesses likely to arise from consuming unhealthy, pesticide-dependent products. He further stated that the power of organic agriculture dwells on how organic procedure is executed and maintained throughout the whole processing. As farmers master the practice, they will win more trust from the consumers and product loyalty will be established (Paisooksantivatana 2011). One of the major advantages of organic practice for the producers is that the organic products can be processed or manufactured into value-added products which will return increased income to the farmers. This is where the farmers' specialty, creativeness, and planning come to the spotlight. Farmers can empower themselves by choosing what kind of products to produce. As farmers maneuver the wheel on what and how to produce, they can experiment with their products on different kinds of value-added processing. For example, extracting organic ginseng or herbs to be added as ingredients of cosmetics can return higher amount of profit for the farmers as its processing steps adds greater value to the products. Whereas conventional farming focused on cash crops for large quantity at minimum cost, organic farming enables farmers to control the quantity of crops produced as well as the input put into it.

Having production “under control” as to what, how, and how much to produce is the how this research define the key factor to farmer’s empowerment.

However, the promising future of organic farming seems to be fictional to the farmers in Thailand as insufficient seed money, loss of stable income during transitional period, and complications of organic procedure and training discourage the farmers from transferring to organic farming. Not many farmers can afford such process without external help. Moreover, absence of durable policies and government assistance in supporting the producers are another critical shortcoming that hampers the growth of organic agriculture. Such a case does not only pertain to Thailand, but is also evident in neighboring countries like Laos. According to Mr. Sombath Somphone, Director, Participatory Development Training Center (PADETC), Lao PDR, farmers are increasing showing interest in organic agriculture, but the absence of supporting system from the government is blocking the farmers’ accessibility to organic farming (Somphone 2011). From UNESCAP case studies on Asian countries, it argues:

“It is clear that organic development so far is largely in the hands of farmers and the private sector while government support is lagging behind. There is little expert support for organic farming in Thailand. As no official research and development is available, the private sector and NGOs are left to develop organic farming competencies by themselves.” (UNESCAP: 2003)

Researches on technical skills and how-to-organic farm are conducted in departments of horticulture and agriculture of universities and academic institutions throughout the country, the Faculty of Agriculture, Kasetsart University with research on about bio-fertilizers, bio-pesticides, and natural enemies underway. These technical researches aim to improve the existing organic farming techniques by modifying the errors and experimenting new techniques. In applying these findings to the field, government’s assistance on implementation, further research, and on establishing incentive systems for farmers to enter is necessary (Paisooksantivatana 2011).

Government’s support for establishing a strong base for organic farming in forms of seed money, policy, and education is not only necessary but crucial to the infant organic industry and will have effects on its later developments. The government serves as a focal point in designing the plan for the organic industry and allocating

resources to support it in financial, educational, institutional terms. It holds an important role in funding the industry, educating the farmers through agricultural extension, and devising policies that can help key players involved in organic network. The scope of government support is multifaceted; it can be direct, in forms of cash subsidy, or indirect, through policies that set the ground for organic network and yield the fruit later as the industry develops; it can be measurable, by observing the solid numbers indicated by production and income increase of farmers for instance, and not measurable, such as the effect and outcome of government-run projects on a particular region. Successful implementation of government policies therefore, will positively influence the growth of organic industry whereas inefficient and disorganized government support will precipitate negative outcomes and disintegration in the organic network.

Recently, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha has publicized a 364.5-billion-baht stimulus package, injecting cash of 15,000 baht each for more than three million rice farmers nationwide aimed to boost the economy for the next three months. Deputy Prime Minister Pridiyathorn Devakula said in the interview with Bangkok Post, “This measure will really boost the economy since we will directly pay cash into farmers' deposit accounts”, and projected next year's economic growth to be 4-5 percent. This scheme, allegedly implemented to give a direct helping hand to the poor farmers to cope with the financial burden, brought heated controversies and criticisms. The scheme is viewed to have been implemented to win the favor from farmers through an immediate transfusion of dumping of money to impress the debt-driven farmers, without a constructive institutional support to practically help the farmers empower themselves through a workable solution (Chatrudee 2014). Many economists and agronomists criticize this plan to be short-lived, inefficient, and unconstructive from the fundamentals. Surprisingly, this is not the first time where Thailand has implemented such a short-lived, inefficient policy to instantly solve what is more complicated, fundamentally erred system. Throughout history, the Thai government has projected financial aid and short-term projects as a panacea to more perplexed problem that require institutional, legislative, practical, and empirical support. This incident was a mirror that reflected Thailand's long history of poor policy formulation and implementation and government corruption. This research will look into how

such limitations have hindered the growth of Thailand's Organic industry and what can be recommended as remedial measures.

Although several country case studies on Asian Countries' organic agriculture point out the limitations and setbacks of the government in developing the organic industry, not every country failed to establish a workable organic network. For example, South Korea has been nurturing organic agriculture industry for the past 20 years has actively took the lead in supporting the organic industry to develop into what it is today. This research will explore South Korean government's policies and projects directed towards promoting organic farming. The overarching focus of this work will be analyzing successful organic farming policies and supporting projects by the Korean government and discuss its applicability to the Thai organic agricultural industry. Like Thailand, Korea was predominately agriculture-based economy in the past where people derived their livelihood from farm products. Rice production accounts for majority of total agricultural produce for both countries, as rice accounts for an important percentage of the people's diet. The development of Organic Farming in Korea was not so eminent until the past decade, when the government started to take the lead in dictating and guiding the direction of the organic industry. Studies comment on the substantially strong and effective policy making and implementing power of the Korean government, and such is evident from the solid advancement of organic industry. The literature review in the following chapter will discuss the development of Korea's organic farming and reveal the contents of government support that has been adopted to foster organic farming and increase the economic livelihood of the farmers in general. Then, through a case study of a model village that developed on government support, I will discuss how the village grew as an organic agricultural village through government support and its impact on farmers' livelihood and empowerment. I will also look at other income generating activities on farm that augments to the village's economic earns. Among the many key players that are involved in organic practice, this research weighs more on the importance the government's role as a guiding entity to initiate a well-organized, workable organic network that sets a good precedent that future organic practices can refer to as guiding principles.

As Korea-Thai cooperation in entertainment, education, commerce has been jazzed up in the past few years, I wanted to compare and contrast the policy making and implementing of both governments and explore their similarities, differences, and distinctions in organic agriculture. As Korea's organic agriculture in making a steady growth through government support, this research aims to explore those assistance that merited the organic farmers and inspect its applicability to Thailand with expectation of a similar level of outcome. There is one assumption in discussing the discourse, which is that the villagers or farmers are willing to take on the organic practice. Thus, methods to persuade farmers into organic farming from conventional farming will not be discussed.

1.2 Research Questions:

What were the Korean government's prominent organic farming policies which have fostered the growth of organic agriculture and can it be practiced in Thailand to attain similar outcome?

- a. What are the successful policies the government implemented to promote organic farming in Korea?
- b. What are Thailand's prominent organic agriculture policies and what are the limitations to them?
- c. How did the model village benefit and develop from Korea government's policies and projects?
- d. How can these model/policies be applied to Thai system to improve the productivity and benefits of Thai agriculture and farmers and what are the limitations to actualizing it?

1.3 Research Objectives

- To analyze the policies and projects adopted by the Korean government and assess its benefits and practicality on Korean farmers.
- To examine the development of a Korean model farm through government assistance

- To discuss the limitations and setbacks of Thailand's current organic farming policies that hinders growth and suggests means to improve the situation.
- To assess the applicability of Korean model to Thai system and discuss the possibilities and limitations in benchmarking the Korean model.

1.4 Research Methodology

- Quantitative research:
 - Statistical Data on Korea and Thailand's agricultural sector:
 - Cumulative data on Organic Farming: Conversion rate, estimated cost, organic certified production rate, organic production growth rate.
 - Analysis of statistical data will precede qualitative research to get an idea of current status and size of organic practice in Thailand and Korea. Thus, before conducting qualitative research, quantitative data will be collected from existing sources and evaluate the current system.

Primary sources were obtained through personal interviews with key informants:

1. Mr. Jeong Hwa Hong, Professor, Department of Food Science, Inje University, Korea. (25 Aug, 2011)
2. Mr. YingYong Paisooksantivatana, Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Faculty of Agriculture, Kasetsart University. (21 Aug 2011)
3. Mr. Vitoon Panyakul, Representative, Greenet Cooperative, Thailand (5 Oct 2014)
4. Mr. Nateepat Pitinidhipat, Marketing Executive, Greenet Cooperative, Thailand (5 Oct 2014)
5. Mr. Byeong Seok Jeong, Deputy Director of Horticulture Business Division, Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Korea (28 Sep 2011)
6. Mr. Hyung No Joo, Chairman, Preparatory Committee for Federation of Organic (Chungnam) (23 Nov 2011)

7. Villagers of Mundang Village, Hong Seong Country, South Chung Cheong Province, Korea (23 Nov 2011)

Access to up-to-date statistical data of organic practice in Thailand and research resources in English was limited. Most of the secondary resources of this research were from publications of international organizations, NGOs, and scholarly articles and thesis from international journals. Statistical data and analysis of Korea's organic agriculture were obtained from publications from academic and governmental institutions including Rural Development Administration, National Agricultural Cooperative Federation, Ministry of Agriculture, Korea Rural Economic Institute (KREI), and other educational institutions.

Qualitative research consists of three parts:

1. Literature review, further analysis of existing literature and other written works acquired during research on field
2. Set of Interviews with key informants including professors at universities' department of agriculture/horticulture, community leader, officers from related department of the government, cooperatives.
3. Field research of model village in Korea that has benefited from government policies and assistance, personal communication with villagers, pictures taken while touring around the village.

Collected data and existing literature was compiled and analyzed to be the content of this work.

Literature review was conducted continuously throughout the research, mostly through data provided by the Faculty of Agriculture of Thailand and Korea, Kasetsart University, and existing scholarly articles, books, and other research papers on Thailand's organic farming. Most of the literature data on Korea's organic policies were obtained from Ministry of Agriculture of South Korea, which was more reliable and up to date than other existing information on Korea's national information database. Literature reviews on the development of Korea's organic practice was collected from existing research papers and internet. Significant part of the research

was done online and through visits to different academic institutions and government-run institutions for interview and data collection. Personal interviews with key informants, i.e professors from Department of Agriculture, members of organic cooperatives, leader of organic community, and villagers were important source of empirical background and field-based knowledge.

Field research was conducted in two model farms suggested by Mr. JEONG, Byeong Seok, Deputy Director of Horticulture Business Division, Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Korea. Out of the two, this research will focus on Mundang Village, HongSeong Country, located in Chung Cheong Province of South Korea. Field observation and interview with the village leader was conducted. Interviews focused on asking what kind of government support the village received initiating the organic practice and also what they benefited from such policies.

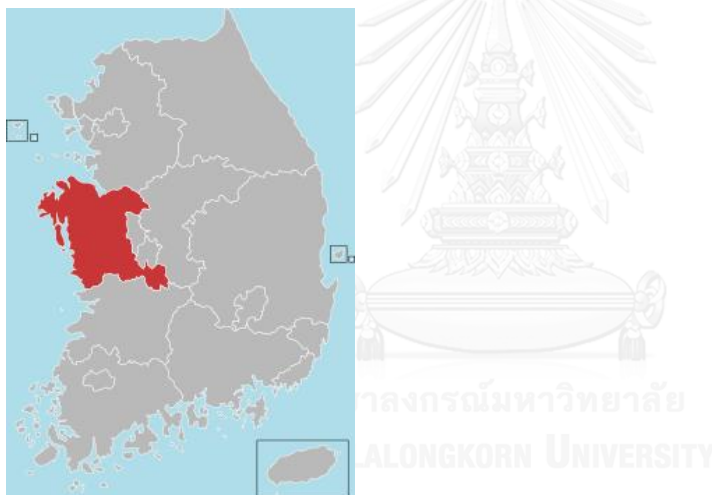


Figure 1 South Chung Cheong Province

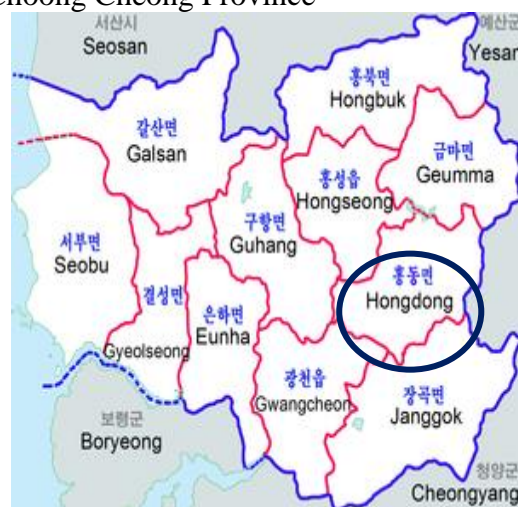


Figure 2 HongDong Subdistrict within Chung Cheong Province

1.5 Scope and Significance of Research

This research, in its core, is directed to the benefit of farmers, in which they will be dictating their own production, processing plans, and ultimately gaining bargaining power in market by producing competitive products through organic farming practice. It is proven by many studies that organic products could be sold at much higher prices than conventional products as they promote healthy consumption (Kilcher 2001), thereby returning better income to farmers (Rigby 2001). The paper safely confirms, through existing data and information that organic practice will bring about more economic benefit, improved livelihood, and increased empowerment to the farmers. It seeks to find paths that the farmers and the organic practicing area will benefit most out of, path that will bring economic empowerment to the farmers.

Under the rapidly globalizing and homogenizing society, farmers' position has been dwindling in determining the important process of production, transportation, and supply and instead remained subordinated to the middle men that dictated the market prices. Formerly one of the largest agrarian society, Thailand's rapid urbanization and development has not only decreased the number of farmers but their power in the market as well. The situation has been compounded by the government's passive attitude to the flows of the market and ineffective implementation of policies and remedial measure for the farmers' betterment. Out of many factors that leads to successful organic practice, this research believes that the government's role carry more weight than any other key players. Thus, through assessment of Korea's government policies and assistance and a case study of an organic village that has developed from receiving and successfully implementing such assistance, this research will analyze the efficient government support that has fostered organic agriculture and brought farmer's empowerment in return. The following literature review will examine and discuss Korea's organic farming policies and projects adopted to promote organic farming. It will then evaluate the current situation of Thailand's organic farming and discuss its shortcomings, in comparison to that of Korea's. Then, through a case study of a village in South Korea that has developed successfully through government's assistance, it will evaluate of Korean government's role in devising efficient policies and remedial measures to attain the

goal of economic empowerment of farmers through organic farming and explore how the village benefited from such assistance. This research will conclude with the lessons we can learn from the Korean model and its applicability, limitations, and recommendations for Thailand's organic practice.

This study is relatively new to the existing literature in that it will analyze external model from another country and implement its features applicable to the Thai model to strengthen farmer's position on price processing, and introduce techniques, institutions, and programs that can augment to farmer's empowerment together with increased income. Korea has exported farming machineries, seeds, and other technical goods to Thailand, which opens door to more policy oriented information exchange. This work, hopefully, will provide an opportunity for future exchange between the two countries in discussing efficient policies for organic development betterment of the producing community.

1.6 Research Limitations

Access to statistics and quantitative data on Thailand's organic agriculture were limited due to linguistic reasons and thus most of the secondary sources were obtained from English journals. Field research was to be conducted in late 2011 which was canceled due to the big flood that inundated the organic farming site in Nonthaburi. Time limits were another limitations to conducting the research as the writer was employed full-time effective December 2011, and had limited time to work on the research since then to date.

Another significant limitation to the research paper was that students, including the author herself, were informed by the program officer of the final submission deadline less than 24 hours before the actual deadline. Miscommunication between the Graduate school and the MAIDS program has resulted in early submission of the thesis, about 15 days earlier than initially announced date. Thus, for the reader's note, this version of thesis remains incomplete in some areas were not given sufficient time for revisions and amendments.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

What is Empowerment?

“Empowerment” became a popular term in development literature over the course of years yet the conceptual meaning of the term varies in context. Malhotra et al. (2004) argues that common themes of empowerment include gaining power and control over decisions, resources, a notion of independence, choice, dignity, self-reliance, control, freedom, and capability. This is a very comprehensive and overarching definition of how empowerment can be defined in many ways, but this too contains many undefined concepts in it, leaving the term still vague and ambiguous.

According to Hiroshi Sato (2005), the process of empowerment has three steps. First, the actors become aware of the “problems” they face. Second, they build their capacity by obtaining knowledge and skills from external actors. Third, from acquiring knowledge and skills, they change the social relationships around them in order to implement their knowledge to resolve their issues (Sato 2005). The plight of farmers in conventional farming is that they are forced into the multi-national retailers and are incapable of accessing market opportunities with enough income to maintain their living. In 2007, more than 500 farmers from 80 countries hosted a World Forum for Food Sovereignty (WFFS) calling for food security, fair market prices, and their control of their own development (Beban 2008). Those farmers who recognize the problem seek help from NGOs, institutions, and within themselves to tackle the situation and resolve the problem. It is difficult to solve the shortcomings internally within the community due to limited information and experience of the farmers. As such, an external input of knowledge and skills is necessary to blow the breath of improvement into the farm. A well-suited, applicable, and doable external model is essential for an infant organic industry to mock model after. Once an external model is appropriately and successfully implements, it is the responsibility of the community to customize the model to suit their way and created own uniqueness while maintaining the organic standard and product quality.

John Friedmann (1992) narrows the scope of empowerment to household level and divides it into three kinds of power: social, political, and psychological. Social power is concerned with access to “bases” of household production, such as information, knowledge and skills, participation in social organizations, and financial resources. Political power concerns the access of individual household members to the

process. Political power is not only the power to vote but also the power of voice and of collective action. Psychological power is described as an individual sense of potency, the feeling of power that one is competent, able, and willing. Friedman criticized the focus of economic empowerment in most of development projects, asserting that economic empowerment did not ensue or guarantee political and social empowerment, and was only benefiting certain sections of the community (Friedmann 1992).

However, this research finds confidence in economic empowerment in that it will entail other forms of empowerment over time. The overarching theme of this research is how organic farming will bring more profit to the farmers, which eventually will grant them more bargaining power in the market, and give more choices and options to plant their future and improve the livelihood. Increased income for farmers, likely with other industries, means that more input can be afforded for investment purposes- that is, farmers will be able to invest their sources into projects, machineries, vocational trainings, and technicalities with increased income, to explore other ways to further gain income through value adding procedures. Such investment will create a productive cycle of improved skills, widened scope of value-added processing and diversified products.

Economic Empowerment:

Economic empowerment, on an aggregate scale, is suggested to be best achieved through international and premium price channels which is facilitated through partnerships between the state, NGOs, and business sectors. The term itself largely conveys the meaning of income increase and economic growth- how to make money and what to make it with. In the agricultural context, economic empowerment is mainly divided into two parts: linking with business or finding an alternative marketing channel. Those for profit and cash crop trade calls “not to be afraid of linking with business” (Kirby 2006) and refrain from becoming a “subsidy-based society” (SDC 2007). Other NGOs and non-profit organizations seek for alternative marketing channels than linking to profit-oriented retailers. As long as the farmers have confidence in their products that they are competitive and distinguished, the former approach does not pose much of a problem. Competent products will naturally

obtain bargaining power to negotiate with the business sector. This is also a part of empowerment. However, the core of the problem for farmers lie in its lack of processing capability and market access which leaves them with no choice but to sell their crops at low price to these retailers, who in turn guarantee market access. Learning from these experiences, organic farmers sought for alternative distribution and sales channels through the help of NGOs and by creating farmer's union. In Korea, cooperatives like Hansalim and Saeng Hyeop cuts off the mid-margin that retailers have profited from, and ensure quality products with cheaper price. Cooperatives predetermine the quantity to be produced with set price and inform the farmers in advance, resulting in consistent price and farmer's production control.

It is up to the farmers to decide which channels they will take on and the decision making process is also exercising empowerment. Economic empowerment in this research will be defined as the increase in farmers; ownership and control of their production. Organic farming is meant to achieve such economic empowerment by taking control of their resources and producing value added products which are to be sold in the market. Bringing economic change for themselves in ways they want will eventually empower the farmers both psychologically, socially, and politically by achieving equality and voice of producers. Thus, this research will focus on economic empowerment of farmers or simply put, how organic farming can bring more income and economic ownership, where they control their economic activities. In order for economic empowerment to be achieved, a strong, systematic, and stable network of key actors in organic network is necessary. Among all the key players in the organic network, the government holds a crucial role in laying a stable groundwork and in assuming the role as a liaison that coordinates between relevant parties and provide necessary and relevant assistance in a timely manner. Initial follow up effort of the government will give rise to a durable organic network where the farmers can be empowered.

Organic Farming and Economic Empowerment:

Organic farming emerged as an alternative development plan in the agricultural industry which is often considered a vehicle for poverty reduction as well as repairing environmental degradation (Hossain 2001). Research from developing

countries commonly to lower production costs in organic system as less external inputs are used (Rosegrant 2005). The output yields more revenue as organic products can have price premiums of up to 300 percent in the international market (Setboonsarng 2006). Even without the price premiums, farmers practicing organic agriculture achieve sustainable yields and gain more income as the farmers diversify the products through value-adding processes.

Economic empowerment means that the farmers are able to own their economic ownership over the commodity, service, or any types of labor of their choice. Earning enough income to maintain their livelihood and furthermore invest in other areas for development, is what economic empowerment pursues, and this is conceptually in line with organic farming, which the farmers diversify their production by choosing what to produce, when to produce, and how much to produce. Organic agriculture can also produce processed goods that add value to the product, adding to the price premiums. Organic farming brings empowerment in many aspects, and emphasis is on economic empowerment in that fully understanding and practicing organic agriculture, will ultimately result in increased livelihood and income through competitive production schemes. In order to actualize this plan, collaborative coordination and cooperation between key players of Organic network is vital.

Key Players of Organic Network

The following diagram outlines major key actors in the organic network and their relationship. The key independent variable is “government support” that promotes organic farming

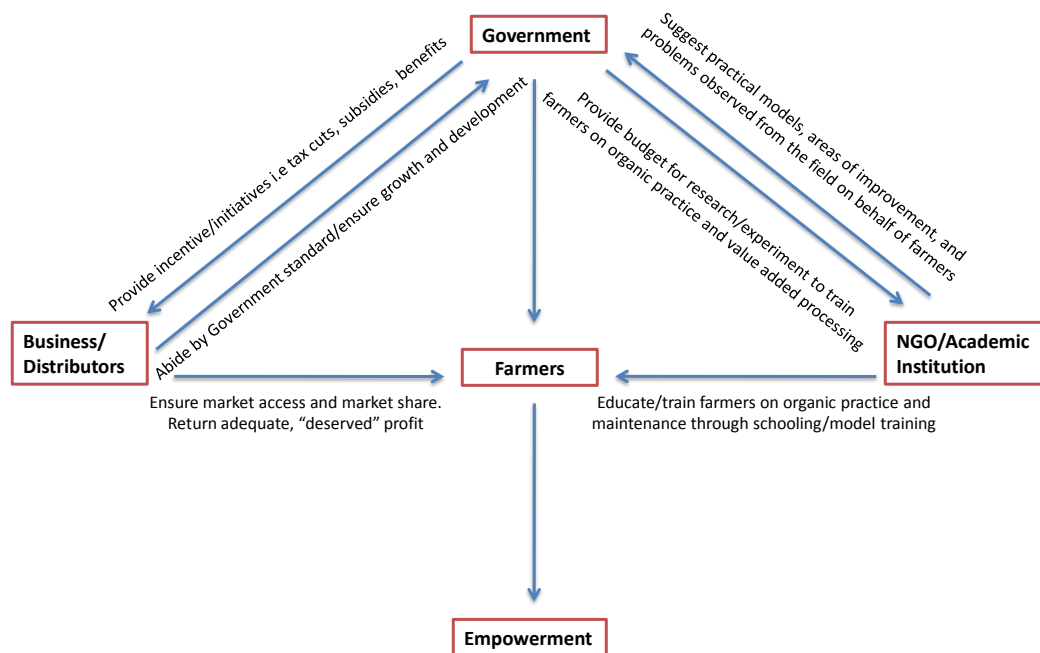
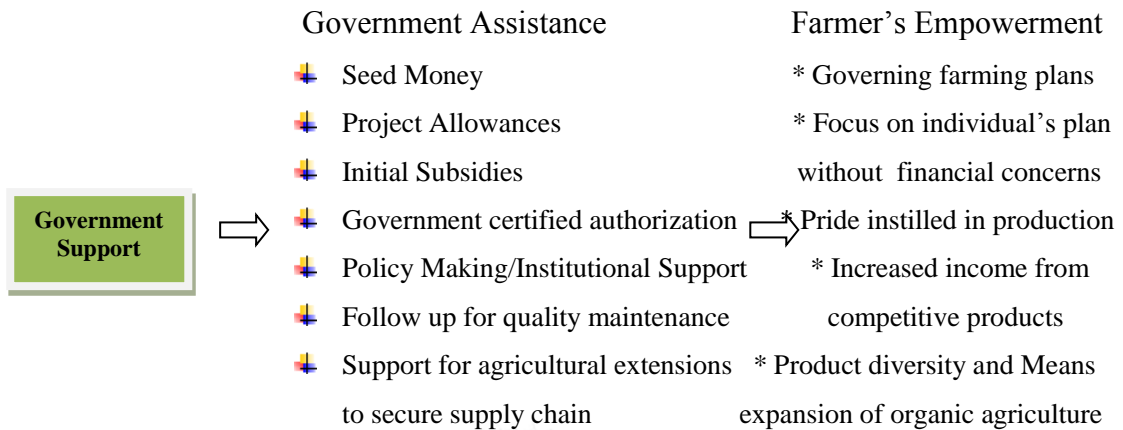


Figure 3 Key Actors of Organic Network

Among other key players that assist and coordinate with farmers in organic practice, this research will place more weight on government's role in actualizing a workable organic promotion for farmers which is expected to ensue farmer's empowerment. The role of government is central to the network of actors because of its institutionalizing and executing power of policies and regulations that will both establish and guide how the organic practice will play out. Government's role is even more crucial if the industry is at an infant stage. In the absence of a well-established organic system which directs coherent interaction between key players, no other parties are as influential as the government in initiating a concrete structure of organic model in which the industry will grow on. All involved parties of course, will have their own carefully devised blueprints of best practices for promoting organic farming. The authority of the government to evaluate plans, leverage the risks, and devise positive outcome is expected to augment greatly to best organic practice. Moreover, its legislative power to institutionalize and implement policies will be the powerhouse of organic practice that will accelerate towards expected outcome. Not only is government support capable of policy making and implementation, but it is

also the core source of financial assistance to initiate different projects and maintain them.



Above diagram outlines the form of government assistance that can bring about farmer's empowerment. Seed money, project allowances, and subsidies are some of the fundamental assistance government can provide at the infant stage of organic farming where the farmers can utilize the resource to establish the ground and infrastructure needed to start organic practice. Certification, organic fertilizers, soil neutralizing, machinery, and other instruments and infrastructures need to be equipped in order to start the organic farming process. Many farmers are discouraged to take on organic farming due to the absence of these equipment, or the expensive costs for securing such pre-requisites. Government assistance in securing these equipment and providing subsidies to make up for initial income loss will help farmers to focus on their farming strategy without worrying about financial setbacks. Policy making and institutional support is vital to sustain the quality of organic farming for the producers to produce organic produce that abides by the standard and in turn buys trust from the consumers. Policies to secure supply channel to access market and promote organic production will encourage farmers to produce quality, premium products to compete in the market. Supporting agricultural extensions such as NGOs, academic institutions to forge a network of services and education for farmers, is expected to educate the farmers with the context of organic farming, its importance, and the empirical experience of how to develop their organic practice into secondary, and services sector. The following chapters will discuss in detail of how

government assistance in multilateral aspects can promote organic farming that beget farmer's empowerment.



CHAPTER 2 -South Korea's Policy Formulation and Implementation on Organic Farming

2.1 Introduction

Korea's Organic Farming gained momentum in the early 2000's after the nation's economic development has reached a highpoint in which it entailed the importance of food security, environment, and natural cycle. Over the past 10 years, aggregate organic production increased by 60 times and the environment-friendly farming has recorded a steady increase of 26 percent every year. Subsequently, private sectors such as Pulmuone, a prominent organic food company in Korea, have tripled in its income in 4 years(Ji 2011). Likewise, Korea's interest in organic farming is visible in the quantity of researches conducted by various research institutions, government affiliated bodies, and academic extensions, which has tripled in the past 10 years. Whereas organic farming researches decades ago were focused on strategies for technical development, Mr. Byeong Seok Jeong, Deputy Director of Horticulture Business Division, Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Korea states that contemporary research on organic farming is gearing more towards processing organic goods to produce high value products, ensuring supply chain, and devising income-generating plans through organic practice, now that access to technical part and education is solidly grounded. Reflecting such trend, government policies adopted are purported to assisting the development of organic agriculture in general, aim to establish a constructive organic network where all its key players cooperate to bring about the best outcome.

Increased awareness for food security, health, and environment in the recent years engendered more revitalization in the rural areas to promote organic agriculture, which is now a booming industry in Korea. This chapter will briefly discuss the history of Korea's organic farming, and the development of government assistance in the past decades as an effort to promote, improve, strengthen, and solidify organic farming. The following pages will look at the evolution of Korea's organic policies,

evaluate the present government assistance and discuss the effect of the government's effort in promoting organic farming. A note beforehand, Environmental-Friendly Farming in Korea encompasses all low-chemical, non-chemical, and organic farming. The term Environmental-Friendly and Organic is often muddled. Therefore, all policies referred to as Environmental-Friendly include Organic farming in its boundary.

2.2 Political Economy of South Korea in Organic Agriculture

Organic Agriculture movement was initiated in 1970 by 20-30 pioneering Christians of Hongdong region, on the grounds of Christian values and belief in sustainable living. Production groups and consumer groups assembled to establish Korean Organic Farming Producer and Consumer Union (KOFPCU hereafter), who pioneered the establishment of regional cooperatives. The establishment of producer and consumer unions and the expansion of regional cooperatives set the background for the formulation of the government's organic farming promotion acts in years to come (Kim 2014).

South Korea has experienced radical changes from being a predominantly agricultural society into a fast-growing industrial society within one generation. The share of agriculture in agriculture decreased from 17.6 to 3.2 in 2004 (Song 2006). The government has employed various protectionist policies to maintain self-sufficiency and food security for staple crops. The turning point of Korea's agricultural industry was in the 1990s when South Korea signed the Uruguay Round of Multinational Trade Agreement (UR) along with the members of GATT which forced the Korean agriculture to open up its market and welcome the influx of agricultural imports by cutting trade-distorting subsidies protection measures. Since its ratification, the Korea government faced sour criticisms, often very extreme and radical, from farmers, activists, and NGO workers committed to securing rural economy and farmers' livelihood.

Since the UR negotiations, the Korean government has more budget and resources to the agricultural sector, especially on improving infrastructure to maintain adequate level of domestic production. Promotion of organic farming policies introduced during this period as a new wave of development and as a part of

restructuring in the agricultural sector. The government set environmentally friendly farming as a major policy framework since the mid-1990s and has been implementing the five-year plan since 2001, as a means to stimulate declining rural vitality from aging rural population and revitalize the regional economy.

Another impact on the emergence of organic policies were the interest groups' The farmer's union of Korea zealously protested with the results of the agreement, criticizing that the government gave in to the international market forces without considering the fate of farmers. Uruguay round was a national concern of Korea at the time, as farmers were technically and strategically unprepared to combat the cheap products from outside. Signing the agreement was significant in that it was Korea's first free trade agreement to be enacted and has relinquished too the pressure of countries with comparative advantage in agriculture to open up the domestic agricultural market which has been protected for a very long time. As a remedy and a solution to this unprecedented event, the Korea government decided to switch its agricultural policies towards organic agriculture to promote high quality, value-added products with price premiums.

The newly elected President Kim, Dae Jung was from the Democratic Party whose votes were mostly cast from Chung Cheong and Jeolla Province, the breadbasket and main farming region of the Korean peninsula. The farmers' union and the farmers of the rural areas expected the President to protect their interest amid the pressures from the international community. The Organic Farming Promotion Act, enacted in 1998, was a response to the farmers' groups protest and plea to secure their stand before the free trade agreement. The farmers' union had launched various strikes to demand for compensations and rescue plan for the agricultural industry in the face of free trade. Public demonstration, protest, and strikes are a unique trait of the Korean cult that has developed over the years. Different interest groups, especially from the labor union, unites by region and gather in front of the Seoul City Hall or the central business district and launch a sit in protest, chanting the slogans until they receive media attention and government officers invite them to the negotiating table. The defining characteristic of Korea's demonstration is that they can be very extreme at times to garner media and political attention. Workers and farmers wield steel pipes, damage police cars, and even set themselves on fire to make the ends meet.

These protests are usually organized by Civil groups, unions and other activists as a noisy bargaining tool. Such extreme protests forces the government to take some sort of action to defuse anger and maintain order in the society. During the WTO talks in 2005, about 15,000 South Korean farmers demonstrated in Seoul by marching to the National Assembly. One farmer stabbed himself to death and other farmers committed suicide to protest against the opening of agricultural industry. Fierce protesting is innate in the Korean history and culture that has been practiced over hundreds of years, even to date. Such a strong voice from the contesting interest groups, civil organizations, and civilian unions places pressure on the government to react or provide a remedy. This would prolong for an extended timeframe and more extreme incidents are opt to occur. The South Korea government, over the course of decades, has learned to respond to these demands quickly, either by calling to demonstrators to the table or offering a plan B. Fortunately, the enactment of Korea's organic farming policies was staged as a result of coalition between the key players, farmers, NGOs, private firms, and the government, who were in favor of promoting organic agriculture to compensate for the negative effects of UR.

Farmer's union and Civil groups

Korea is widely known for aggressive and systematic labor unions that tightly unite to voice their interest against the hierarchal and patriarchal culture of Korean system. All workers' union in Korea including the farmer's union, is very strong in nature with little percentage of members digressing from the group. Members of the group of union integrate around one strong purpose and a charismatic leader, who is often portrayed in media as radical, zealous, and sometimes pugnacious. The farmers' group is not much different. South Korean farmers usually belonged to regional cooperatives but their dissatisfaction with the government cooperatives' lack of support some farmers turned to independent, religious organizations, such as Christian Farmers Association. These groups, which were viewed as dissident organizations by the government, performed a variety of services for farmers and also took public positions on government agricultural and price policies, sometimes using mass rallies (Shaw. 1990). In the late 1980s when the government moved to open

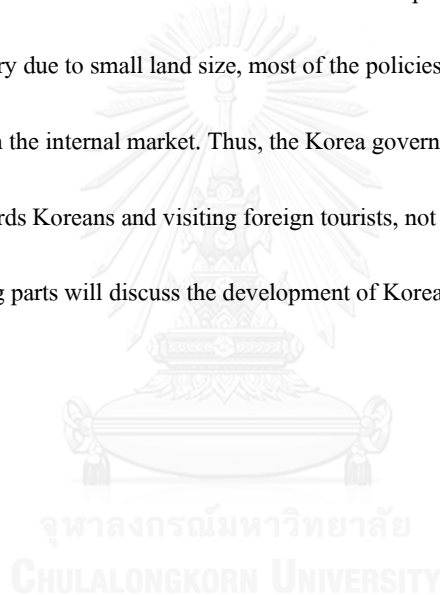
domestic market to outside, farmers became increasingly active in large-scale protest rallies against both the government and the major political parties.

The Korean farmers' strong bond, interwoven with the support of NGOs and civil society garnered expanded support from the public and exerted pressure on the government. The Kim Dae Jung administration and the majority of its cabinet members were from the Democrat party, who were supported by non-private sector groups such as the Farmers, rural dwellers, and religious groups. Fearing breakdown of the farms in the face of globalization, rural population had cast their vote on Kim Daejung of the democrat party in the Presidential election of 1998. President Kim could not resist the forces of free trade, but allocated a significant percentage of national budget into agriculture, and have set promotion of organic agriculture as the national agenda to distinguish domestic products from conventional imports. Mr. Jeong stated in the interview that the Korean government noted the growing awareness of organic agriculture in European countries and was more profitable for the farmers to shift to organic farming from conventional, to develop specialty and maintain competitiveness (Jeong November 13, 2011).

The civil union and the farmers' group however, do not passively expect the government to devise a plan for their future but push for policies and assistance that are tailored to their plans. Interest groups assembled in village or regional level, with the assistance of NGOs, conduct researches and scrutinize available information released by the government and lobby for policies that can merit their collective interest. The related ministry calls for project proposals in every district for from farmers' groups, civil groups, and NGOs bidding for government assistance. Response rate is quite high and many groups submit proposals, complaints, and recommendations to the government which helps the government to understand the status quo and look into the areas needing support. Active involvement of civil societies and farmers group fueled the development of organic farming in Korea as they continuously researched, practiced, and proposed best practices of organic

agriculture and garnered for government support in areas needing institutional, financial, and systematic support.

Organic Farming Promotion emerged as a resolution and a breakthrough of the political and economic threat the government faced from signing the UR and the uprisings of the farmers and interest groups involved in agricultural industry. This external factor has led the government to initiate promotional efforts through consulting academic extensions, farmers, provincial governments, and NGOs. This wave of change has allowed the farmer groups that longed for assistance were able to benefit from pilot projects and policies. As Korea's main market is within country due to small land size, most of the policies are directed to fostering organic products' competitiveness in the internal market. Thus, the Korea government's non-farm promotion of organic culture is also directed towards Koreans and visiting foreign tourists, not exporters and other export countries. In light of this, the following parts will discuss the development of Korea's organic agriculture and examine the policies.



2.3 Development of Korea's Organic Agriculture

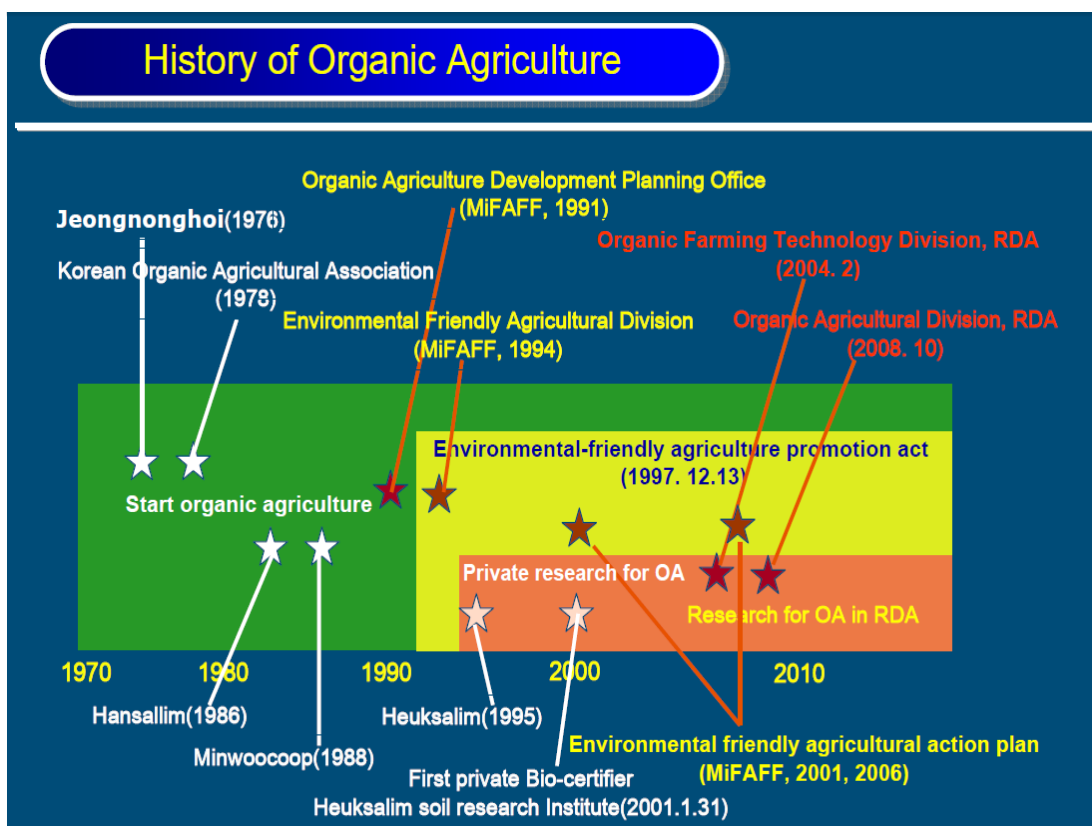


Figure 4 History of Organic Agriculture. Retrieved from Presentation by Sang Beom Lee, NAAS, Korea, November 2009.

Period	Characteristics
Period 1: Producer-led (1975-1985)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-arranged associations, Jeong Nong Hoe (1976), Korean Organic Farming Research Association (1978) established. - Korean Organic Farming Research Institute began Organic Farming in 22 farm holds in YangPyong, Korea - Propagation of Japan's Organic Farming techniques and the establishment of Korea's Environment-Farming Association established
Period 2: Co-led by Producers and Consumers (1986-1990)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organic Farming develop to become Farmers' self-arranged campaign - Beginning of direct selling of agricultural products - Birth of City-level cooperatives (Hansalim, Minwoo Living Cooperative, etc) - Regional Cooperatives established
Period 3: Cooperatives-Led (1991-1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heuksalim, Hansalim (Co., Ltd), Poolmoo Cooperatives, Hansalim Association for distribution established
Period 4: Co-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Association of Distribution established (Present day Doore

led by Cooperatives and Government (1995-2000)	association of Cooperatives) - Environment-Friendly Farming Promotion Act enacted - Certification for Organically processed agricultural products begins - Enactment of Consumer Cooperatives Act
Period 5: Government-led (2001 - present)	- Standard for quality control devised in accordance with Codex and IFOAM 2001 - Service Quality Certification for standard products and environmental-friendly products distinguished - The 1 st Environmental Friendly Farming 5 Year Plan implemented (2001-2005) - The 2 nd Environmental Friendly Farming 5 Year Plan implemented (2006-2010) - The 3 rd Environmental Friendly Farming 5 Year Plan implemented (2011-2015)

Table 1 Organic Development in Korea by periods (Kim 2014)

Korea's development of Organic Farming can be divided into 5 periods. Korea's Organic practice was built on the traditional cyclical farming method and further propelled during the first period of the 1970s by some pioneering Christian farmers and other interested parties, who in 1976 organized the first organic agriculture association of Korea, JeongNongHwae, followed by Organic Agriculture Association (1978). During this period, the infant organic industry was led by producers through gatherings and campaigning amongst the farmers, but the producers struggled with securing supply channel to reach the consumers (Kim 2014). The 2nd period was the emergence of NGOs, religious and private cooperatives such as Hansalim (1986) and Minwoo Cooperatives, the very first cooperatives that channeled and distributed organic products in the city. Cooperatives collected produce from the farms and sold them in big cities. These cooperatives were the milestones of Korea's organic farming as their persistent lobby to the government and activities to raise public awareness later obtained government's support. The 3rd period marked an active establishments of cooperatives organized in the cities, directed to the favor and benefit of consumers. The price and quality of the produce depended on the consumers' demand and the cooperatives at this period were in favor of consumers than producers. It was at the beginning of the 4th period when the government stepped into action in promoting organic agriculture. In 1994, the Kim Young Sam administration established Environmental Friendly Agricultural Division to support, organize, and plan a workable network for organic agriculture and in 1997, Environment-Friendly Farming Promotion Act was enacted. During this time, the

government established certifications for organic products in an effort to solidify organic standards and ensure that producers abide by the organic standards that the consumers can trust. Today, the organic industry is de facto government-led. The Korean government formulated and implemented the Environmental Friendly Agriculture Action Plan and is reviewed and revised every 5 years. The 3rd action plan, devised in 2011, highlights organic agriculture as the important area needing government support. Meanwhile, private research institutions were founded one after the other, attuning to the growth and propagation of Organic Agriculture. Heuksalim Soil Research Institute was founded in 2001 as the first private Bio-certifier, and the Rural Development Administration (RDA) also started extensive research on promoting organic agriculture by opening Organic Farming Technology Division as part of its organizational tree in 2001, followed by Organic Agriculture Division in 2004.

Organic farming was first initiated by the farmers, and the cooperatives took the lead in favor of the consumers, and now the government is leading the industry in securing a working network between key players, including producers, consumers, businesses, agricultural extensions, and many more to foster organic agriculture industry as a whole. Mr. JEONG, stated in a personal interview that the Agricultural division has launched various projects that benefits all key players of organic network, providing financial assistance and institutional support to farmers, academic sector, research institutes, and cooperatives (Jeong November 13, 2011). The 5-year plan is a blueprint of the national effort to foster environmental friendly and organic farming.

2.4 Korean Government's Promotion of Organic Farming

The South Korean government has over the past decade has put forth concerted effort in implementing various policies, granting numerous financial assistance and organizing government-run projects in an effort to promote and foster Organic Farming. Today, the South Korean government is credited for its strong support to the organic industry and its funding remains the main driver of Korea's Organic research. The underlying impetus of Korean government's active promotion

of organic farming is the Uruguay Round, one of the multilateral negotiations of GATT (General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade) that aimed to reduce agricultural subsidies and enforce free trade among the consigning countries. Korea was a member nation and the Uruguay Round came into effect in 1995. In an effort to compensate for and assist the farmers whose livelihood was placed in jeopardy, the government turned their wheel towards promoting Organic and Environmental-Friendly, seeking to take the opportunity as a chance to boost the agricultural industry through distinguished, premium products that has both price and product competitiveness in market.

The following section will introduce key policies and assistance implemented by the Korean government to foster organic farming and support farmer's empowerment. Micro-level policies such as the entry level policies aimed at supporting those that initiate organic farming as well as macro-level policies for long term development and project funding. According to Mr. JEONG, the government's assistance on the agriculture gearing towards organic farming over conventional farming in order to promote the benefits of organic farming to both producers and consumers. "The ministry of agriculture is well aware that organic returns higher income to the farmers in the long term and enables to shape farmers' empowerment in a holistic approach," he said (Jeong November 13, 2011).

Since the Kim Dae Jung administration of 1994, the final stage of Uruguay Round, the Korean government mobilized resources and funds to create bodies within the government, fund agricultural extensions as a consulting entity to devise a plan to promote organic farming as a revitalizing catalyst to Korean farms straggling with influx of cheap agricultural imports and plummeting price. The government's official and full-scale involvement in Organic Farming began in 1997 with the enactment of Promotion of Agricultural Manufacturing and Quality Control Act, which later was revised as Environment-Friendly Farming Promotion Act, a legislation that entailed direct payment program and a regulatory system to promote organic agriculture and encourage farmers to participate. National Agricultural Products Quality Management Service (NAQM) was designated as the government body responsible for regulating and supervising environmental-friendly produce (Phillips 2005). In 1999, the government launched a project to build Environment-Friendly Farming Village,

which provided farming materials, infrastructure, and other assistance needed in villages that engage in joint-organic farming practice. Upon laying a solid groundwork for organic agriculture through establishing certification systems and enacting legislations to promote organic farming through direct payment program, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries launch its first massive promotional plan, the 1st Environmental Friendly Farming 5 Year Plan in 2001. The following chart delineates the content on the 1st 5 Year Plan.

Contents of the 1st Environmental Friendly Farming 5 Year Plan (2001-2005)

	Goal	Means
Production Policy	Policy to reduce pollution and improve environmental sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce of chemical materials - Organic waste recycling through animal excrements - Establishing groundwork for environmental friendly farming (soil, water for agricultural use) - Development and dissemination of Environment-Friendly Farming
	Assistance project for Environmental-Friendly Farming practicing villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project for developing Environmental-Friendly farming practicing zone - Direct payment scheme for farms practicing Environmental-Friendly Farming
Distribution Policy	Enactment of Environmental-Friendly products quality certification system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certification system enacted in accordance with Agricultural and Fisheries Quality Control Act (1993) - Report system run in parallel with certification system - Integrate systems into certification system in accordance with the newly revised Environment-Friendly Farming Promotion Plan (2001)
	Revitalization of Environment-Friendly Produce Supply System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing loan and financing distribution (Purchase funds for supplier groups, consumer groups and distribution groups)
Consumer Policy	Promote mutual understanding between producer and consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activities to raise awareness of Environment-Friendly certification system - Projects and campaigns to inform consumers of agricultural and rural areas condition and promoting rural-urban exchange of information

Table 2 Contents of the 1st Environmental Friendly Farming 5 Year Plan (2001-2005) (Jeong 2006)

Inferring from the production policy, the government initiated direct payment scheme for farms practicing organic farming. One of the major deterrents of initiating Organic Farming is the immediate income loss of the farmers during the conversion period. Land contaminated with pesticides and other chemical fertilizers need at least 3 years to detoxicate soil and prepare an organic-suitable soil condition. Farmers need to invest time during this period receiving training, planning out and preparing for organic practice, but this period also entails income loss. In order to compensate for the income loss, government provided direct subsidies and financial aid as an incentive for the first three years of conversion period. The amount of subsidy differs between non-chemical farming and organic farming, and the farms eligible of the subsidy are those in between 0.1-5 ha in size. These farmers will be required to take training courses to ensure proper execution of required procedures. Mr. JEONG stated in a personal interview that the Ministry of Agriculture is ready to support the farmers who convert to organic farming, as it sees the benefit in long term. "Farmers are often discouraged to convert to organic farming because of income loss in the first few years. The Ministry of Agriculture is working on policies to support the farmers until the organic practice gains momentum. We hope to see an uptick of organic conversion with such assistance scheme." As of 2011, Korea provided direct financial assistance for newly converting farms for a period of 3 years. The 5 year plan points out that European countries (England, France, Germany) continues to provide cash assistance after 3 years upto 5-6 years to ensure that organic standards are maintained and solidified (Department of Environment Friendly Farming (DEFF) 2011).

IPM, INM technology was supplied to the farmers, a technology purported to reducing chemical agricultural materials to produce safe crops and sustain the environment. Stricter certification system was enforced to maintain the quality of organic produce. All participating farmers of Environmental-Friendly Farming were obliged to sign an agreement that requires participants to abide by the all the instructions of the agreement, record the usage of chemical fertilizers, and attend training classes arranged by the government body (Kim 2014). The 2nd Environmental Friendly Farming 5 Year Plan is a continuance of the 1st plan with an addition of

expanding NACF sales stores increased funding for assisting direct sales for Environmental-Friendly products, and increased self-help cost for Organic farms.

Contents of the 3rd Environmental Friendly Framing 5 Year Plan (2011-2015)

	Goal	Means
Production Policy	Create sustainable Environmental-Friendly Agriculture product base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construct Environmental-Friendly Farming village - Create Environmental-Friendly Farming Zone - Create Specialized Organic Farming Complex - Expand farms dedicated to raising green manure crops - Provide assistance to Environmental-Friendly productions
Distribution Policy	Revitalization of Environmental-Friendly Products distributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide funds to promote direct transactions of Environmental-Friendly products - Expansion of concessionary chains and directs sales stores throughout the country - Expand Environmental-Friendly exports
Consumer Policy	Revitalization of Environmental-Friendly products consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase of regular members in living cooperatives for Organic products

Table 3 Contents of the 3rd Environmental Friendly Framing 5 Year Plan (2011-2015) (Department of Environment Friendly Farming (DEFF) 2011)

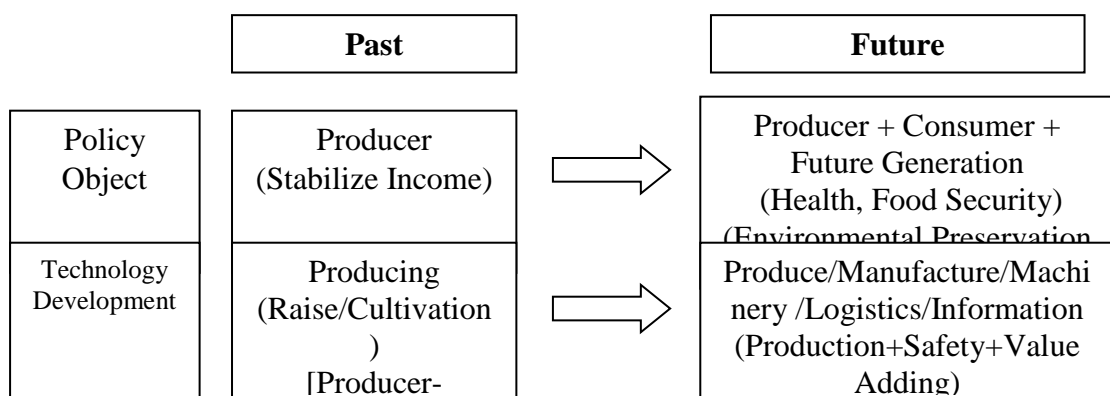
The 5 year plan, renewed for the 3rd time in 2011, aims to support the organic network in every steps of the procedure, with most of the focus on constructing more Environmental-Friendly zones complexes to enhance systematic expansion of Organic Farming. More emphasis is placed upon production policy, which entails more favorable environment for the producers. As the groundwork for organic farming and distribution has been established and working, the 3rd plan went a step forward towards creating a zone, complex, or regions dedicated to environmental-friendly farming where production, manufacturing, storage, sorting, distribution, and sales can be all executed at once. The production policies aim to unite all production levels into a cluster to reduce cost of logistics, systemize the distribution channel, and cut manufacturing and transferring cost. Pilot projects were launched with stricter standards of organic practice, and many villages applied to receive project allowances and other instrumental benefits. Additional funds for establishing on-farm processing

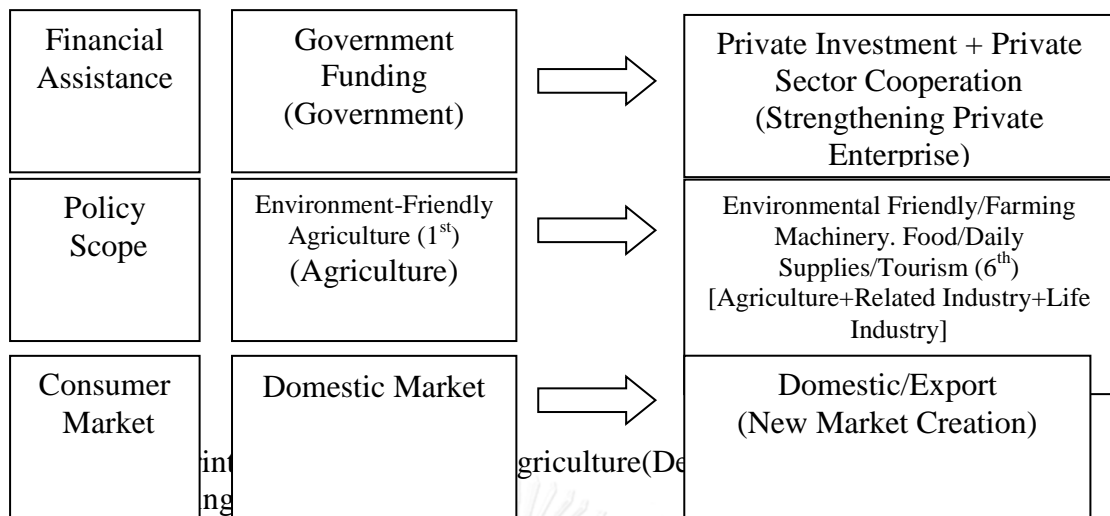
instruments and materials were granted for collective and community farming working to expand organic practice throughout the region.

The initial financial support to lure more entry into organic farming continued throughout the 3rd plan. Soil conditioners and organic fertilizers for newly entering farmers or those converting to environmental friendly farming were also provided. As of 2011, the ministry of agriculture provided more than 800 tons of soil conditioners and 300 tons of organic fertilizers. In an effort to revitalize distribution systems, funds for expanding concessionary stores and direct sales market were granted, and further subsidized and mediated taxes for organic-only distributors to promote and enlarge number of organic distributors. Stricter membership-based production centers are organized to develop new brands and joint marketing among organic producers and sellers. Department stores are also encouraged to expand the corners allotted for organic products (Song 2006). The following section depicts the change of Korea's policies on Organic Farming from the past.

2.5 Korea's Recent Plan on Organic Farming Promotion

The 3rd revision of the Environmental-Friendly Farming plan is the most updated and on-going policy framework of Korea at present. It marked a shift in policy paradigm from production-oriented scheme to product enhancement plan through adopting various value-adding strategies which is expected to bring about sustainability and stability in the organic agriculture. Below diagram, retrieved from Korea's 3rd revision of the Environmental-Friendly Farming 5 Year Plan, delineates the government's past and present outline and the shift in policy paradigm of the nation's organic scheme in key words:





Inferring from the diagram, the government started off focusing support on the producers, by stabilizing the system and structuring the network, and now it poses a more aggregate approach, moving towards expanding the scope to export market and involving other industries in the organic network. In first years of government support, the policy object was the producers, and the policies were directed towards stabilizing the income of producers and ensuring good operation of organic practice. In technology development sector, the government focused on agriculture techniques to raise the crops according to organic standards. As the farmers absorbed the agricultural techniques over the years, the government's focused shifted to industries that ramify from the growth of organic industry: Manufactured goods, daily supplies, and tourism. The biggest source of financial assistance in the past was undoubtedly government funding; now that the organic industry has evolved from infant stage, the development plan looks to encouraging more involvement of private sector in investing in the development of organic sector. With the improvement and growth of these factors, the government is consequently expecting an expansion of organic market internally, and an outreach to the international market and creating new markets. It also takes a step forward from the production-oriented promotion to an off-farm income through funding rural village agro-tourism. Compared to other nations, Korea has a very vulnerable rural income structure, and the government is focusing on increasing off-farm income by promoting rural village tours and establishing complexes where tourists can experience the traditional organic practice

along with the village's unique culture. The latest plan depicts the goal of structuring and stabilizing the nation's organic industry to the point where it could not take a leap forward and shift its frame from domestic stabilization to market activation through engaging other key players into the network and lessening the part the government used to play in developing the organic industry.

The 1st and 2nd revision of the 5-Year plan met progress as targeted which paved the way for the 3rd revision to further the effort to expand organic farming, both in size and solidity. Now that the initial establishments were solidified, the government shifted the policy paradigm from production to more of fostering an integrated system of organic agriculture through enhancing development of manufacturing, processing, technology, supply chain, education, quality controls, and ultimately, sustainability. The promotional plan of the 3rd round of the 5-Year Plan is detailed as follows:

2.5.1 Expansion of Organic Village

In the 3rd revision of Environmental Friendly Farming 5-year development Plan, one of the core schemes of the government is to create and expand Organic Farming Villages that specializes only in Organic Farming. According to the plan, the Ministry of Agriculture predicts that an organic conversion at a village level, rather than household level, is significantly more beneficial and productive in terms of executing organic farming, producing, manufacturing, and sales.

The plan suggests to:

- create a complex/sub-division that specializes in Organic Production, where all complementary infrastructure, tools, machineries, and services are accessible. This will pave way to expansion of organic infrastructure.
- Provide support for Organic branded products
- Out of 1020 (as of 2010) Environmental-Friendly Village, assess and evaluate the outstanding village and set the village as the model for Organic Farming Village.

The Ministry of Agriculture has been encouraging organic farming through financial assistance programs for regions of villages willing to convert. Upon careful

review, MOA has selected villages that are both willing and capable of establishing organic villages, and plans to provide project allowances, and financial, institutional, and education support to serve the cause.

2.5.2 Direction for Organic Model

-standard: Constituent (Farm), Farming Area, Organic Certified Area, Select villages that show strong dedication and commitment for organic farming

- Project content – Provide support for Logistics, processing infrastructure, Restaurant, Experiencing venue, collective infrastructure.

- Yearly evaluation. Accredited and manage those villages selected as Organic.

The Korean government takes a central role in establishing an organic village that can in the long term be self-sufficient and productive in organic practice. For an organic village to operate as a whole, a systematized and well-divided operation is crucial.

Through these efforts, According to a report by Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (2011: 12), production of environmental-friendly goods have increased by 20 percent every year. Low-pesticide farming rate has decreased significantly, and subsequently organic farming rate has increased as a result. The report predicted that organic farming will account for 20 percent of the agriculture sector by the year 2020.

<Income difference between conventional farming and environment-friendly farming>

Comparative differential from conventional farming	1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year	4 th year	5 th year
Organic Farming	-211	-176	-126	-17	58
Non-Chemical Farming	-200	-159	-119	-22	31

Table 5 <Income difference between conventional farming and environment-friendly farming>

Inferring from the table above, Organic Farming has bigger loss of income than Non-Chemical Farming in the first 3 years, but catches up from the 4th year and yields more income in the 5th year. This is one of the compelling reasons as to why the government encourages organic farming over non-chemical farming, which has less

requirements to meet and relatively easier to convert from conventional farming. In order to promote organic farming, the government provides 1 more year of subsidy after the conversion period. Such policy denotes that the government of Korea weighs organic farming more advantageous or essential for the betterment of farmers in long term.

2.6 Korea-Thai Cooperation in Agriculture

South Korea and Thailand had cooperative relationships, engaging in collaborative research projects on agricultural development since 1999, and have launched several projects together.

Korean RDA (Rural Development Administration) has launched KOPIA (Korea Project on International Agriculture) in effort to promote Korea's advanced agricultural technique and procedures to neighboring countries in Asia. In February 2002, RDA of Korea and DOA (Department of Agriculture), Thailand has agreed to establish KOPIA center in Thailand, which will share Korea's agricultural skills, information, and techniques to local farms,

In an effort to enhance this active partnership, this research will examine South Korea's example of government support for promotion of domestic farming, and evaluate its applicability to Thailand. The main question to be addressed is what kind of initial or systematic support government can provide for promotion of growing organic production.

South Korea and Thailand had cooperative relationships, engaging in collaborative research projects on agricultural development since 1999, and have launched several projects together. Korean RDA (Rural Development Administration) has launched KOPIA (Korea Project on International Agriculture) in effort to promote Korea's advanced agricultural technique and procedures to neighboring countries in Asia. In February 2002, RDA of Korea and DOA (Department of Agriculture), Thailand has agreed to establish KOPIA center in Thailand, which will share Korea's agricultural skills, information, and techniques to local farms (Bae 2 March 2012). Exchange in organic farming techniques and policy framework however, has not developed as of present day, but is expected in the future as cooperation and information exchange develops.

Chapter 3

Evaluation of Thai Organic Policy and Limitations

3.1 Introduction

With the abundant resources and rich land suitable for commercial farming, Thailand's agriculture has been the leading industry that consist significant percentage of the national income. Like Korea, Thailand's culture roots on an agrarian society where approximately 50 percent of total population or 5.8 million households derive their livelihood from. However, focus on manufacturing, commercializing, and exporting farm products is masses brought prosperity to Thailand's export middlemen and non-agricultural industry whereas debilitating the agricultural industry with the prices racing to the bottom, and leaving the environment heavily polluted. Nipon Poapongsakon states in his work "The decline and recovery of Thai agriculture: causes, responses, prospects and challenges" that Thai agriculture is considered a sunset industry as growth of the non-agricultural sector in the 1990s adversely affected agricultural industry (Poapongsakon 2006). The reason behind such phenomena is that the chemical fertilizers and pesticides are imported, and its prices are increasing each year, negatively affecting the farmers' income. Thailand imports 25 billion baht worth of chemical fertilizers a year and its pesticide imports amount to seven billion baht annually, meaning that Thailand spends around 32 billion baht each year on imported chemical fertilizers and pesticide (Anuluxtipun 2006).

The dual cost price squeeze drove farmers to the edge of bankruptcy when prices of agricultural products plummeted while production costs rose yearly. Thus, millions of small-scale farmers were driven to indebtedness and forced out of the farm (Panyakul 2003). The absence of government policies to protect the farmers from the price squeeze further deteriorated the farmers' position as private enterprises played its hands in the market by manipulating the price systems through price collusions. Consequently, farmers suffered marginalizing of their income, returning most of the benefits and profits to the agrofood corporations, and private enterprises. Such condition invites an alternative rural development policy to revive the regional

economy, agricultural sector, and the livelihood of farmers, who account for a significant percentage of Thai population.

Organic farming emerged as an alternative to counter adverse effects caused by conventional farming, minimize cost of agricultural inputs, and increase the income of farmers. Surprisingly however, organic farming is not a recent phenomena; it was practiced in small scale and later developed through local farmers' knowledge, resulting in collective mobilization of farmers in the 1980s with the establishment of Alternative Agriculture Network (AAN), intended to foster sustainable agriculture activism in Thailand.

Organic farming is luring for the suppliers in that it appear as a way to change the transaction power of products from buyer-driven to producer driven by adding values to products which is more profitable than conventional mass productions that remain submissive to the market's price deciding power (Poupon 2008). Organic practice reduced dependency on external markets and enhanced farmer control over the way food is produced and consumed. Prayote Charoensuk states in his work that the small-scale organic farmers he interviewed indicated that their income from organic produce is 10% - 50% higher than conventional produce, due to higher prices of produce and saving cost from not using chemical fertilizers (Charoensuk 2003). According to a research by Agricultural Research and Development Office, Region 5, DOA, MOAC conducted in Chainat Province in 2001, Net income of Pomelo produce recorded 41,407 Baht for conventional farming while Organic reached 50,972. For cucumber production, net income of conventional farming was 11,928 Baht and Organic farming was 13,201 Baht. Higher income return of organic farming over conventional farming was corroborated through other studies and researches conducted throughout Thailand. In a research by United States Publications titled Organic Agriculture and Rural Poverty Alleviation: Potential and Best Practices in Asia, the author concludes that organic farming generates higher employment opportunities than conventional farming and also improves family income. As Thailand's urban economy develops, there is an increasing awareness in defects of pesticides and the need for healthy food consumption, which results in increased demand for organic and environmental friendly produce. The supplier can benefit from increased income from higher market prices, and also the products can be

customized and moderated into various value-added processed goods which add even more value to it. Organic produce is a win-win strategy for both producers and consumers as the consumers are able to access healthy and nutritious food and the suppliers are able to earn increased income by selling good produce. Besides the civil society and organization, organic farming gained momentum through the royal institution, which is also technically, Non-governmental.

However, he critiques that the government policies to promote organic farming have not been practical and serious. Existing works examining Thailand's organic farming commonly stipulates that increased income and improved living standard for farmers converting to organic farming is impeded by inefficient system and lack of institutional support by the government and related departments. This will be further discussed in following pages.

Thailand's organic sector is showing a steady increase, yet it still remains at an infant stage of development. There is no well-developed organic extension methodology or network available at the moment (UNESCAP 2003). Researches on Organic Farming have increased with the organic advocacy efforts, yet those are predominantly skill and method based technical approaches. Although comprehensive studies and reports suggest works to be done and policies to be implemented to foster organic practice, extensive research on government support and policies is not a mainstream study. Devising an example to merit farmers and support their empowerment would be relatively a new approach in this field.

This chapter will briefly discuss the development of Organic Farming in Thailand and the role of different actors in supporting its development. Thailand's organic farming industry grew out of civil society and Non-governmental organizations that instigated organic movements from the grassroot level dedicated foster environment-friendly farming for the collective betterment of farmers and producers alike. I argue that with the existing support and mechanism built by these civil organizations, well-strategized and strong government support is not only vital but necessary in further strengthening empowerment of organic farming practitioners. From this point, I will explore Thai government's policies aimed to foster organic farming, organizational arrangement of Thai government, and suggest limitations of the policies and organization loophole of Thai government practiced towards organic farming.

3.2 Political Economy of Thailand in Organic Agriculture

Organic Agriculture in Thailand emerged over the surface in the 1990s, in a combination of three major trends: increasing public awareness of healthy living, as an alternative to the crisis face in the farm sector from declining productivity of high-input cash-crop monoculture, and the rise of environmental awareness. During this time, organic agriculture was dynamically and rapidly growing in the global food industry. Its growth from a small-scale niche market to a US\$ 26 billion market sector in 2004 has made “organic” an international phenomenon (Lorlowhakarn 2008). As Thailand is a major exporter of agricultural goods, ranking 15 in the world, the Thai government recognized the need to attune to the changing trends. With the upturn of Millennium, the value of exports has decreased, mainly due to the impact of bilateral FTAs and introduction of stringent food safety and traceability legislation by the EU and other importing countries. As a measure to comply with the rules of Thailand’s major export venues, the Thai government announced in a Cabinet resolution in 2005 its goal to transform Thailand’s agriculture and to increase the importance of organic production systems. As agriculture export involves more interest groups than domestically produced and consumed agriculture, the government received considerable lobby and pressure from different interests groups including farmers, logistics industry, and private firms, trading companies, multinational corporations, and NGOs. The convergence of changing trends, conjoined by the growing interest key actors in the agricultural and export industry, has prompted the government to take action with the promotional strategies for organic farming which took off in 2001 with the ratification of national agenda for organic promotion.

The Cabinet has set up a national organic agriculture committee to advise the government on policy formulation, in which the private sector was not represented. Contrary to South Korea that has actively employed NGOs and private sectors in consultation, private sectors and NGOs were not represented in the committee during policy-devising process. Both countries staged a state-led effort on organic farming promotion, but the policy-making process in Thailand was more of a top-down process with few mechanisms

for consultation with the stakeholders, whereas the Korean policy-making process was a mixture of top-down and bottom-up approach. The specifics of the policy-making development will be discussed further in the later part of the research.

Thailand's organic agriculture is outward-oriented, with its major market outside of Thailand, leaving only an insignificant volume for the domestic market. Demand for organic products in domestic goods is growing every year, but still a significant amount of products are supplied as exports. Exports have a bright future for Thailand as the demand for agricultural goods in the international market is exceeding the available supply. Rice, tropical fruits, and vegetables, is Thailand's major products which is also the most demanded products by the world market. However, it is important to note that domestic export cannot be considered separately. Development of the domestic market for organic products supports the export market by stabilizing the organic sector by easing supplies fluctuating and diversifying the products. A mature domestic market can also absorb export surpluses and produces that fall short of export specification. Compared to Korea, Thailand has more comparative advantage in expansion of organic agriculture as its agriculture land area is 6 times bigger than that of Korea, and with this large landmass, labor, and resources, it has been the leading exporter in agricultural goods. Whereas Korea's drive for launching Organic promotional polices was inward, to generate competitiveness in the agricultural products amid the influx of cheap imported goods after the FTAs, Thailand's drive was outward, in an effort to meet increasing international demand for organic products.

Reflecting such trend, Thailand's initial organic policies were focused on establishing organic certification services. Mr. Panyakul of Greenet stated in a personal interview that the government's promotion of organic agriculture is skewed too much to the certification, failing to support other important infrastructural, institutional, and educational necessities. Mr. Panyakul further explained that the government's top-down policy making and implementation is a chronic problem that is rooted in the Thai bureaucratic and political system, where the government decides on the direction of a national plan or project and orders other key actors

to comply with and tailor to the devised plan. On the grassroots level however, many part of such plan in not feasible, impractical, and often unrealistic. The following sections will discuss in detail the development of Thailand's organic agriculture and limitations to the policies implemented for promotion.

3.3 Development of Thailand's Organic Farming and Policies

Table 15. Recent chronology of organic development

Year	Key events
1991	Chai Wiwat Agro-industry and Capital Rice Co started an organic rice project in Chiang Rai and Phayao.
1992	Alternative Agriculture Network organized its first national conference, requesting the Government to promote sustainable agriculture and organic farming. First Fair Trade rice from Surin was exported to Fair Trade groups in Europe.
1993	Green Net established.
1994	First public fair on "Chemical-Free Food for Health and Environment", Bangkok. Capital Rice began selling organic jasmine rice in Thailand and overseas.
1995	ACT was established, and first Thai organic crop standards were drafted.
1996	IFOAM-Asia Regional Workshop on "Certification for Organic Agriculture and Alternative Market".
1997	ACT commenced organic farm inspection and certification.
1999	Thailand Institute of Technological and Scientific Research, the Export Promotion Department of the Ministry of Commerce, and the Department of Agriculture (DOA), started drafting organic crop production standards.
2000	ACT obtained IFOAM accreditation and its first certified products appeared in Thai markets. The Cabinet approved US\$ 15.8 million (633 million baht) to support a three-year pilot project on Sustainable Agriculture for Small-Scale Producers. The project was coordinated by the Sustainable Agriculture Foundation and covered 3,500 farming families
2001	DOA published organic crop production standards. First IFOAM Organic Shrimp Consultation held in Thailand.
2002	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative (MoAC) established National Office of Agricultural and Food Commodity Standards (ACFS), responsible for implementing/enforcing national agricultural and food standards as well as accreditation.

Year	Key events
	ACFS completed drafting "Organic Agriculture: the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organic Agriculture". They cover crop production, livestock and aquaculture. Swiss Government recognized the competency of ACT, allowing ACT to conduct organic inspection and certification according to the Swiss Government's organic standards. First produce bearing "Organic Thailand" label appeared in the Thai market.
2003	First major international conference on organic agriculture held in Thailand – the 2003 International Organic Conference, co-hosted by FAO, Green Net and Earth Net Foundation. The Surin province set up a large-scale organic project, planning to convert 16,000 households (with 37,760 ha.) into organic jasmine rice farming, of which 2,735 households (covering 2,735 ha) would apply for organic certification from ACT. ACT was recognized by the Swedish competent authority for organic certification according to EU regulation 2092/91.
2004	ACFS launched an accreditation programme for organic agriculture. The Organic Agriculture Fair was organized by the MOAC and the Cabinet resolved that organic agriculture would henceforth be part of the national agenda.
2005	A government programme for organic is launched.

2005	* The government set aside a 1,215.9 million baht budget for the implementation of National Agenda on Organic Agriculture for 2005/06. 23 public agencies were involved. The main objective was to reduce the use of agro-chemicals in conventional farms. * Many governors started organic project in their provinces, but two large scale conversion projects were in Surin and Buriram where thousands of organic rice farming were planned.
2006	* Thai Organic Trader Association (TOTA) registered * national organic action plan was drafted with supports from the International Trade Center * Siam Paragon introduced Gourmet Market with organic ranges
2007	* Thai organic slow down after domestic political instability and military took over of the government * National Organic Development Strategic Plan was established * Certification Alliance (CertAll) established
2008	* Political disarray continues * National Organic Action Plan was approved by the government with a budget of over THB 5 billions planned for 5 years * ACT applied for Canadian recognition (was approved in 2009)
2009	* TOTA started organic incubation programme to increase organic enterprises * ACT applied for EU recognition
2010	* ACFS participated in GOMA activities * TOTA-MoC-GTZ collaboration on local market developments
2011	* MoC initiated Organic & Natural Expo and Organic Symposium, focusing on ASEAN region * National Organic Development Strategy ended, no new plan was developed

Table 6 Development of Thailand's Organic Agriculture(UNESCAP 2003)

3.3.1 Early Stages – Formation of NGOs

The development of Thai organic industry owes largely to private sectors and NGOs more than government institutions (Poupon 2008). Like Korea, Thai organic

movement began in the 1980s with the effort of pioneering farmers and local NGOs came together to establish the Alternative Agriculture Network (AAN) to foster sustainable agriculture activism in Thailand (UNESCAP 2003). The AAN now provides a discussion forum for experience sharing and policy advocacy for sustainable agriculture, including organic farming. Organic development passed its formative years in the 1990s, with major key NGOs like AAN, Green Net, and ACT. The “Green Net” was established in 1993 by a group of individuals assembled to advocate for environmentally and socially responsible enterprise (Charoensuk 2003). It soon became the leader of organic food wholesaler, pioneering in several organic agriculture initiatives in Thailand, including the founding of a national organic certification body known as the “Organic Agriculture Certification Thailand” (ACT). The Green Net actively engaged in research and development of organic products, promoting community enterprises, quality assurance for community enterprises, farmer field school for organic agriculture, and organic farming technology and promotes socially-responsible and environmentally-sustainable production, trading, and consumption.

3.3.2 The Royal Project- Thai’s stimulus for Organic Agriculture

The Royal Project was initiated by His Majesty King Bhumibol in 1969 with an aim to encourage hill tribe people to stop their “slash-and-burn” practices and it aims to create consciousness on the conservation of forest and watersheds and furthermore introduce sustainable and environmentally friendly ways in utilizing and conserving land and resources. It was an effective plan to shift the interest of people away from smuggling and selling illegal narcotics such as Marijuana leaves and to improve regional economic by promoting agriculture industry in the rural areas. The Royal project, initiated to promote self-sufficient economy in the rural areas, is consistently expanding and led to general acceptance from the public. As a result, the project has converted part of its production to certified organic farms, and is continuing to work on producing value-added manufacturing (Foundation.). When economic crisis hit Thailand in 1997, His Majesty the King advised the Thai people to change their economic philosophy to cope with present economic adversity and withstand future economic insecurity- which was later called the Philosophy of

Sufficiency Economy and acted as a guiding principle in drafting the 9th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2002-2006). The performance however was not very significant; it was very much under the targeted goal. The royal project to promote a “self- sufficient economy” by His Majesty the King further augmented to the acceptance of self-sufficient sustainable agriculture among public agencies and the Thai public.

The Royal Project was registered as a foundation in 1992 and later in 1994, Doi Kham Food Products Co., Ltd. Was founded to operate business by buying agricultural products from the Royal Project Foundation and farmers in the area at fair prices. The fruits and vegetables are processed and distributed under the brand “Doi Kham”. The Royal Project Foundation raise fruits, vegetables, herbs, flowers, mushrooms, tea, coffee, as well as other value added products such as muesli, wine, pasta sauce, snacks, and fruit juices. Through many people mistaken the Royal Project as government-run umbrella project that involves other sub-government entities, it is actually run by the Royal family. Thanks to the loyalty and love people have for his Majesty the King, the Royal Project has raised awareness among the Thais on the importance of clean food and organic practice, which gave rise to increased formulation of organic farming promotion plans as will be discussed below.

3.3.3 5-Year Plan - Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan

The first and a critical point in the promotion of organic agriculture were reached after the AAN movement convinced the Thai Government to include sustainable agriculture principles in the Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001). Thai Government’s centralized involvement in organic farming 5 Year Plan 5 years in advance of Korea, which launched its first Environmental Friendly Promotion Plan in 2001. Below is an excerpt from the plan pertaining to Organic (sustainable) agriculture:

1. Upgrade farmers’ capacities to plan production under, and make decisions on the adoption of, sustainable agriculture methods.
2. Encourage farmers to adopt sustainable farming practices:
 - a. Support the provision of water sources for small farms, marketing services- particularly services for the transportation of agricultural output

- to the markets – and accurate information services to help farmers make good and timely decision about selling produce.
- b. Provide the necessary production inputs for agricultural restructuring, by promoting the use of crop varieties and animal breeds with high resistance against prevalent diseases.
 - c. Promote interdisciplinary research to find farming systems which are harmonious with nature taking into account local wisdom and environments in each area – and to develop organic substances to replace currently used agricultural chemicals.
 - d. Provide long-term soft loans to facilitate agricultural restructuring.
 - e. Improve the quality of agricultural produce by setting quality standards, particularly subjecting produce to strict tests for lead residue and set up coordinating mechanisms between the relevant agencies.
3. Adjust the government's role from the sole promoter of agricultural activities to coordinate between relevant parties, so as to support and provide farming alternatives for needy farmers according to their needs and consistent with the state of markets and existing conditions in each area. Farmers will thus be able to make informed agricultural decisions and to map out efficient production plans. Government officials should be helped to understand their proper roles as facilitators for the agricultural restructuring outlined above.
 4. Encourage NGOs and the private sector to play a greater role in the implementation of the agricultural restructuring outlined above, in coordination with the public sector. They could take part in seeking new markets and providing farmers with adequate management and other necessary skills and techniques.

(UNESCAP 2003)

This comprehensive plan in theory is an epitome of an ideal role of government on the promotion of organic agriculture. It plans to support the agricultural inputs and resources, agricultural extensions and research institutes, coordinate between relevant parties to meet farmers' needs consistent with the state of markets, and encourage NGOs and private sectors to play a greater role in the implementation of the organic

agriculture practice and management. The actual affect and efficiency of this plan however, remains controversial. National Study on Thailand commented that although the plan provided a favorable policy environment for sustainable agriculture, no concrete plan of activity was proposed or implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives until the Assembly of the Poor held a massive rally and forced the government to finance the Sustainable Agriculture Pilot Project (UNESCAP 2003). The Ninth and Tenth Plan, (2002-2006, 2007-2012) is said to be drafted in an even vaguer language regarding the framework for sustainable agriculture. Seconding this argument, Mr. Panyakul, Representative of Greenet Cooperatives, stated in a personal interview, “Every government has plans. Even the most unprepared government has grand plans. Whether you implement it, or how you implement it, is important” (Vitoon Panyakul 5 October 2014). He further criticized that the government ironically, does not want to involve private sectors and farmers when drafting policies for the benefit of farmers and private sectors in Organic Agriculture. The government’s monopolized, top-down approach to policy making resulted in failures to implement policies, and did not bring about expected outcome upon implementation. In the preparatory period of the 8th National Economic and Social Development Plan, only selected large-scale private companies are welcomed in the activities and NGOs and farmer organizations, who are the actual key players in the organic network, were excluded, which led to project failure and waste of public budget.

Policy and project failure from the government’s inefficient implementation of policy is evident from the beginning of the plan. The initial effort of the government was focused on drafting a workable certification system Organic certification than structuring a network between key actors for a coherent exchange of information and transactions. There are two major organic certification systems in Thailand, the ACT (Organic Agriculture Certification Thailand), a private certification system subsidized with funds from the Green Net Cooperatives, and Organic Thailand, registered under the Ministry of Agriculture. ACT inspection and certification is more internationally recognized by certification bodies in European countries and Canada. It was the first certification body in Asia to be accredited with the International Organic Accreditation Service. In an effort to establish a more authorized and trusted

certification system that outweighs ACT, the government initiated an organic standards and certification service and the final draft was adopted in 2000. During the process of standard drafting however, relevant organizations did not have the opportunity to participate, especially those from producer and consumer organizations. The public meeting consisted of 25 minute presentation and a 5 minute for questions and comments (UNESCAP 2003). This rubber stamp certification was adopted as the first official Standard for Organic Crop Production in Thailand (SOCPT). In comparison with ACT and IFOAM's basic standards for organic farming, SOCPT falls short of complying with several standards, and in some area SOCPT requires much higher standards than the former two, which however, is impracticable.

3.3.4 National Agenda for Organic Agriculture (2005)

By 2005, Organic agriculture was a major element of the country's National Agenda. The Thai government endeavored to promote its organic agriculture by creating another 5-Year program, the "National Agenda for Organic Agriculture" that involves many ministries and departments for unified effort of supporting 4.25 million farmers to use organic inputs instead of agro-chemicals and converting 850,000 farmers to organic agriculture within five years (Vandergeest 2008). The National Agenda's Organic Agriculture is a new government program implemented since October 2005. The five-year program It was a first step towards achieving organic practice.

- In 2008, the Ministry targeted to train 75,000 farmers of organic conversion and was active in advertising the importance of ecological food and its benefits to the public (UNCTAD. 2004). Despite the effort to promote organic industry, the Thai organic practice lacks a well-structured, workable model of policies and support from the government. The absence of political will and policy consistency resulted in little coherence within different government agencies to promote the plan brought about insignificant outcome. 26 agencies from six ministries were involved in this program and a budget of US \$31.5 was allocated. Despite the efforts, poor coordination among public agencies on promoting and supporting organic agriculture as well as lack of

comprehensive support for producers during conversion resulted in project failure. The upside of the project however, was that it had a tangible and constructive plan to convert 13.6 million hectares of conventional agriculture areas into organic agriculture areas, where the use of organic fertilizers and bio-pesticides would be mainly promoted (Mingchai 2008). In order to accomplish this objective, the policy emphasized on the complete substitution of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides with organic fertilizers and bio-pesticides (Thapa 2011). Whereas the past plans were vague in the wordings and impracticable in real life, National Agenda for Organic Agriculture formulated tangible policies that could be implemented in practice.

3.3.5 National Organic Development and Action Plan (2008)

Since 2008, the government launched a 5-Year National Organic Development Plan and a 5-Year Action Plan with a budget of 5 billion Thai Baht. In 2009, an additional budget of 923 million Baht was granted for over 100 projects that were proposed by government agencies. The National Innovation Agency, Ministry of Science and Technology, serving the secretary of the Working Group on the Knowledge and Innovation Strategy of the NODP, were designated to coordinate various projects in both planning and implementation. Projects were proposed, drafted, and implemented by government officials and related agencies within the government, with inadequate, if not minimal, consultation from the farms and NGOs to understand the grassroots problem and context of the situation. Thus, the policies were misdirected and inefficient as the politicians which resulted in unsuccessful policy implementation (Mingchai 2008). Interviewees stated that those involved in the organic movement have not seen a significant, if any, accomplishment from these projects and doubts that allocated budgets did not come through but was “lost on the way”.

The action plan, building on existing policies and measures of the Thai government, was expected to make contribution towards a vibrant and thriving organic sector in Thailand. The NIA (National Innovation Agency) of Thailand stated in a report released that :

“..the Government will play an enabling and facilitating role, with effective and transparent mechanisms in place to support and oversee the sector, open up new markets (domestic and exports) and uphold national standards as well as international obligations. Prioritization of training, research and accreditation related to organic agriculture will also serve to stimulate and support the sector, particularly for smallholders. Through the blending of traditional knowledge and modern science, new and innovative production technologies will open up new market opportunities, revitalize rural communities and contribute to environmentally sustainable social and economic development.(Lorlowhakarn 2008)

The recommendations listed below are intended to support the above principles, and implementation mechanisms are proposed for each of the seven strategies identified below:

Strategy 1: Broaden the production base for organic agriculture

Action 1.1 Implement additional support measures to facilitate conversion to organic systems

Action 1.2 Support the establishment of organic production clusters in the private sector

Action 1.3 Support contract farming in organic agriculture as an effective vehicle for poverty alleviation

Action 1.4 Invest in technologies and processing facilities to enhance value-added and exploit new market opportunities

Action 1.5 Support the organization of growers in regard to joint distribution, storage and transport infrastructure

Action 1.6 Strengthen the ongoing bio-fertilizer initiative spearheaded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

Strategy 2: Enhance capacity and streamline the existing regulatory structure

Action 2.1 Review the public sector certification system and improve access by smallholders

Action 2.2 Review and strengthen the voluntary National Organic Standards to improve understanding and enhance their value to farmers

Strategy 3: Prioritize research into organic agriculture

Action 3.1 Identify and address the role and potential contribution of organic agriculture to national goals for sustainable development

Action 3.2 Establish a national organic research and development centre and national organic information database

Action 3.3 Earmark additional funding for multidisciplinary research in order to address key challenges

Action 3.4 Encourage researchers to examine and evaluate traditional knowledge about pest control treatments, working in close collaboration with farmers and local communities.

Strategy 4: Enhance and upgrade training and extension services for organic farmers

Action 4.1 Promote organic agriculture through a participatory community-level approach

Action 4.2 Initiate and support training programs for farmer groups to help them set up internal control systems as further options to reduce compliance costs for smallholders.

Strategy 5: Develop the domestic market for organic goods

Action 5.1 Conduct market research in order to understand consumer preferences and behaviour

Action 5.2 Private sector stakeholders should strengthen their representation through greater participation and support for the Thai Organic Traders' Association

Action 5.3 Introduce a pro-organic public procurement policy by public agencies

Action 5.4 Establish an effective market information system for organic produce

Action 5.5 Initiate public awareness campaigns to stimulate demand and promote consumption.

Strategy 6: Expand the export market for organic goods

Action 6.1 Extend additional support for exporters through global marketing outreach initiatives, liaison and export facilitation processes

Action 6.2 Review and maximize potential of innovative marketing channels for organic produce

Action 6.3 Provide an effective global market information service for organic exporters.

Strategy 7: Establish Thailand as a leader and centre of excellence at regional level

Action 7.1 Lead initiatives to foster cooperation between governments in Asia on harmonization of national regulatory regimes and sharing of experiences on key issues.

Action 7.2 Foster regional collaboration among private-sector certification bodies

Action 7.3 Develop training courses for organic conversion schemes at regional level

Action 7.4 Establish a regional organic trade association.

(Lorlowhakarn 2008)

The strategies outlines some of the basics in promoting organic farming such as providing training and education by related academia, NGOs and the government themselves, as well as financial assistance such as extended credit and soft loans.

These are both practical and helpful policies that could greatly benefit the producers as they take on the organic farming practice. The plan also suggests establishing an organic cluster where production, processing, packaging, logistics, and sales can be done all at one spot. This is both impractical and unrealistic given the current situation of Thailand's organic industry at its infancy, thus it seems far-fetched.

The plan calls for the Ministry of Agriculture to strengthen bio-fertilizer initiative, which actually by in large contradicts Thailand's recent effort to boost Genetically Modified Products in the farms. Mr. Panyakul of Greenet stated in a personal interview that Thai government should create a favorable environment for Organic Farming, by putting a halt to GMO promotion, which goes completely against the natural cycle of organic farming. Conflicting and contradicting policies within the country acts as a stumbling block that makes organic promotion difficult to gain momentum.

Prioritizing and enhancing research and education into organic agriculture is an imperative strategy that will set strong groundwork for the farmers through extensive training and education programs. In reality however, the government does not have much support measure for agricultural extension that work most closely with the farmers on the frontline. Instead, the government is criticized for inculcating their standard and vision of organic farming, which are often outdated, uninformative, erred, and even contradictory. Due to such incompetency, producers are unable to access accurate and competitive information, which private sectors can deliver through competition with one another. Fostering cooperation between governments in

Asia has been actively implemented by the NIA through forums, food expos, and exhibition held on a yearly basis which invited clients, producers, and bureaucrats from neighboring countries and East Asia. Such measure had make Thailand's organic industry known to other Asian countries and successfully promoted Thai organic products.

The strategies seem to be headed to the ideal direction where the organic agriculture should step towards, yet its action plans has political, economic, and institutional limitations. Most of the actions plans were not implemented, or implemented with insignificant effect. Through the strategy outlines a clear conducts, the standards of practice fall short of the goals, and still has a long way to go to achieve this set of ambitious goals as an infant industry.

Inferring from the outcomes of major policies that Thailand has implemented so far, chronic limitations to policy making, implementation, and management exists. These limitations might be something all Thai government agencies share in common, but for the following section, limitations to Thailand's Organic agriculture policies in particular, will be listed and discussed.

3.4 Limitations of Thailand's Organic Farming Policies

- a. Political disarray
 - Organic industry gained its momentum when the provincial government and the central government implemented large scale conversion projects of organic rice farming. The kick off however did not bear much fruit as Thailand's political situation slowed down the national economy and stagnated organic movements at the same time. Political instability which has stagnated policy implementation in the recent years, is also affecting the promotion of organic farming as cabinet and ministry appointees are reshuffled, facing frequent changes even before policies can be drafted or implemented. Political unrest precipitates policy stagnation and inefficiency in the general public which hampers policy implementation.

- b. Inefficient operation and poor coordination among internal agencies

- Evident from the vague wordings and impractical goals of the Eight National Economic and Social Development Plan, the implementation of plans and policies is often criticized as inefficient and intangible. The plan was fabricated with utopian ideal of organic network without the presence of constructive, measurable, nor tangible means to reach such goals. The goals itself are either impractical, or of low expectation which can be achieved easily without pursuing strategic plans Policies often do not reflect the reality. For example, the government has proposed Organic Zoning Plan where villages have their own fertilizer supply plan, and turn a certain area into a complete organic zone. This however, has failed over the years as the progress was not adequately evaluated, and is difficult to draw lines to segregate organic zone from other zones as the soil detoxication from conventional farming affects the soil shared by organic farms. Moreover, lack of coordination among internal agencies in executing the policies has exacerbated the situation. Korea's Rural 20 agro-tourism policy for example, was by the. Conflicting Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MIFAFF) with external assistance from Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Commerce. Such coordination is not a norm in Thailand's political culture as recurrent incidents where contrasting interest amongst ministries have froze policy implementation. Lack of coordination and cooperation among different departments in implementing policies is considered one of the most chronic problem Thai politics should tackle. It can be understood that due to the sensitivity of politics between ministries, the plans and policies remain vague and intangible to avoid conflicts among the ministries while still stipulating to attain the idealistic goals.
- c. Corruption
- As Sompol Kiatphaibool, vice chairman of the Anti-Corruption Organization of Thailand has commented in the National Anti-Corruption Commission, corruption is the biggest problem in Thailand that has become a part of Thai mindset (Kanabosh 2014). A certain level of

corruption exists in all societies, but the problem with Thailand is that corruption is so deeply ingrained that those who do not work within the corruption system will be kicked out. Corruption within the government, between government and private sectors, can affect budget formulation and resource allocation. Unchecked and excessive discretion in budget formulation and processing easily leads to political corruption. Corruption is a major impediment to any centralized effort of the government to invest and develop organic farming industry, as the effort will scatter into different interests, resulting in another recurrent situation of stalemate and inefficiency. South Korea for example, has thousands of civil organization that monitor and investigate corruption in both the public and private sector, but the government has the highest authority in the country, and their corruption thus, can be abused with impunity.

d. Lack of Education policies

- Currently, training for Organic farmers is provided different actors, government, NGOs, and private institutions. There is no well-developed organic extension methodology available at this point; the most successful and efficient organic conversion program is the ones provided by NGOs. Government extension employs a top-down conventional training program consisting of lectures than on farm hands-on activities that are more practical to enhance farmers' understanding. The Farmer Field School, organized by NGOs, adopts field activities and group-building activities to strengthen producer organization and formulate management recommendations that farmers feel necessary. Sessions are organized for half-day during crop season which enables the farmers to accumulate technological knowledge for organic farming and gradually learn organic process throughout the season-long program (UNESCAP 2003). Mr. Panyakul asserted that the grass-root problem of lack practical and helpful training and education for farmers is due to the government's ignorance of the organic practice compounded by their demand to control trainings and education of the farmers without consulting NGOs and private sectors with

more expertise in the field. He further added that it is impossible to gain trust on the benefits of organic farming if the government officials do not fully understand and believe in the concept of organic farming.

Empowerment through education happens at the extension level and therefore, it is more favorable for the government to entrust the private sectors and NGOs to provide high-quality training. Through bidding process, the government can employ the most competitive and constructive program which will breed benign competition among the private sectors to develop more supportive training programs for the farmers. Training programs, information campaigns, and policies ensuring education among the farmers and consumers alike are crucial in organic agriculture's future development, and the government needs to take proper measures to actualize an efficient training and information transfer rather than monopolizing the operation through government agencies.

e. Lagging management and follow up system

- Delayed operation and response from the government often deters the farmers from entering Organic practice. In Maharasakham province for instance, farmers can request the Department of Agriculture for certification when vegetables are ready for harvest. However, DoA officials could not carry out the necessary procedures for 2-3 weeks. As the farmers could not wait for too long due to their vegetables getting withered, they were left with no choice but to sell the vegetables in local markets without legitimate certification (Thapa 2011). Prompt response and support of the government is critical for the farmers as delayed response can beget ramifying problems that lead to disintegrated organic structure and uncertified sales of organic agriculture.
- The Thai government has been giving lump sums away to rural households as a short-term remedial measure to alleviate poverty and subsidize living cost, rather than devising a systematic follow-up and evaluation and plan. Critiques have often scrutinized such actions, dubbing it as “Dumping money for populism” to gain popularity from the rural population, who

holds majority of the votes. Such short-lived policies are transitory and not self-sufficient. Tangible policies with clear purpose and direction needs to be established as a durable solution to develop organic industry so that it acts as a guiding principle for other sub policies and projects that could branch out.

f. Supply chain, promotional strategies

- One of the problems with organic agriculture is the absence of a tangible supply chain to ensure the circulation to and from suppliers and consumers (Louis 2006). As Shepherd (2007) puts it, it is unrealistic to expect farmers to suddenly become entrepreneurs of the organic industry and “chain owners” who control the supply chain and can dominate the supply channel to benefit their stance (Shepherd 2007). An ideal picture would be that the farmers have the capacity to manage processing, transport, and retail and actively bridge between different social and economic sectors, but in reality, it is difficult to expect farmers to assume this role especially if the organic industry is in its infancy. Thus, the government’s role in promoting a coherent coordination in the market through ensuring supply chains is important.

g. Culture of Bureaucracy and uniformity

- The organic farming policies during the 1990s to mid-2000s were public policies determined by the government through the committee of politicians, and the implementation plan was devised by the government. Simply put, Thailand has a very uni-centric approach towards policy implementation where the government is centered in the political system and the beneficiaries are left in the periphery. This clearly does not serve the purpose to help the producers by implementing policies that would actually be of help. The politicians in the central authorities make decisions about the target and criteria, the policy determination might not conform to the current context of the country and might further complicate the situation through unsuccessful policy implementation (Mingchai

2008). As policies are mainly driven by government sector rather than civil society and private sector, less power and authority is given to the NGOs and private sectors, which results in inefficient coordination between key actors as development is instructive rather than cooperative. This leads to disconnected cooperation and misguided development which can result in policy failure. It is suggested that the government role be confined to providing support, assistance, and guidance over micro-managing the operation. Relegating authority to other key actors in the field is important to empower all actors to communicate and cooperate with one another is essential.

- Adherence to uniformity in policy implementation is another limitation that hampers efficient implementation of organic policies. Thai politics have a culture of uniformity where the government determines a direction and specifics of a policy or system which then, needs to be applied in unison throughout the whole country. This culture of bureaucracy compounded with uniformity bore recurrent inefficiencies in policy implementation. Uniformity does not allow diversity or uniqueness that might be conditional to certain regions; instead, standardized practice is enforced to all circumstances, leaving little or not room for adjustments and elastic measures to integrate with local conditions. The top-down culture of bureaucracy compounded with enforcement of uniformity poses a serious limitation to development of organic farming in Thailand. A more flexible and elastic policy making procedure is desired to meet with the context of each regions and farms that are different in characteristics and crop diversity.

3.5 Case studies

The following sections will briefly discuss the government's policy implementation to foster organic farming in each the provinces of Chiang Mai and Mahasarakham, and how it had impacted the region.

3.5.1 Chiang Mai Province

In 1997, the Ministry also funded the Pilot Project on Sustainable Agriculture Development for Small Farmers, which by 1999 was administered by local organizations in 3 provinces, including Chiang Mai. Chiang Mai has the most favorable weather condition out of all regions in Thailand, as organic is more productive in cool weather. A large percentage of Thailand's organic agriculture in total is practiced in Chiang Mai province. There is an uptick in the expansion of organic agriculture, yet the farmers are still reluctant to engage in organic farming due to complicated agricultural practices, certification process, and because conventional time requires shorter time in production with a quick turnover. Farmers practicing organic farming were convinced into organic farming through the exchange of experiences of other organic farmers, and participation in training sessions and Farmer Field School program offered by agricultural extensions and NGOs (Pattanapant 2009). Although the Thai government is allocating more budget and resources to provincial governments to foster organic farming, major constraints to its development exist. In the case of Chiang mai, major constraints can be classified into 4 categories:

- a. The characteristics of farmers
- b. Organic production processes
- c. Organic certification
- d. Extension services for the promotion of organic agriculture

(Pattanapant 2009)

It is difficult to beat the cheap food policy of Thailand which has been practiced for decades, and brought subsequent income to the nation. Thai farmers have for long practiced conventional farming and they have a tendency to resist new methods that does not fall under their conventional practice. Farmers are reluctant to practice organic farming since it takes more time and labor, and in turn prevents them to take up work in factories or other off-farm jobs after spraying pesticides. Furthermore, although studies have proven that organic farming bring better income through price premium, farmers believe that yields would be reduced following conversion to organic agriculture and their shape, size, and color would not suffice the consumers.

Thus, they believe that organic agriculture could not return good income (Pattanapant 2009).

Regarding the organic production processes, organic farmers encounter many problems such as growth of weeds during the rainy season that entails extra labor, plant diseases, insect infestations, and stunted growth of off-season vegetables due to unfavorable environmental conditions. Certification, to the farmers seems expensive and unreliable. Although subsidies are granted for organic certification, many organic farmers fear to rely heavily on non-governmental organizations fearing that they might withdraw the subsidy or cancel payment of the certification fee (Pattanapant 2009).

Ironically, another constraint in fostering of organic agriculture in Chiang Mai was the agriculture extension services of government agencies. Initially, organic agriculture has been promoted and supported by NGOs and the trend continued until recently, government agencies joined the promotion, bringing with them extension activities that focused on organic fertilizers. Farmers in Chiang Mai however, observed that extension officers still believed in the positive impacts of conventional farming over organic farming, and moreover, promoted chemical usage to reduce production risk. It is difficult to buy the trust of farmers and educate them with the benefits of organic farming if the instructor themselves remain controversial. Seconding this argument, Mr. Panyakul stated in a personal interview that farmers are not interested in organic farming and are not convinced by its potential to bring about economic empowerment because the government officers themselves do not believe in the benefits of organic farming, and are merely relaying the information that they have been told to instruct and not the expertise and empirical experience that the farmers will benefit most out of. Absence of professional knowledge and spirit does not pave way for the government to lure farmers into organic practice.

3.5.2 Case study – Mahasarakham Province

Agriculture is the primary economic driver in north-eastern Thailand, generating around 22 percent of its regional product, which is higher than the country's average of 8.5%. Consistent with the national policy of sustainable agriculture promotion, the government has implemented organic vegetable farming

(OVF) pilot projects in several provinces, including Maharashtra. Below table shows

Table 1
Organic vegetable farming promotion projects implemented in Maharashtra province.

Project	Agency Involved/year	Objective of the project	Activities
Small Farmers for sustainable agriculture development	Alternative Agriculture Network (AAN) 1991–2001	To encourage small farmers to adopt sustainable agricultural practices suitable for location-specific agro-ecological conditions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capacity building through farmer-to-farmer learning process 2. Creation of a research and development system integrated with local wisdom 3. Provision of basic infrastructure facilitating production and processing of agricultural products
Health promotion project	Organization of Network Development 2005–2008	To promote the production of organic vegetables for household consumption and for sale.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blood tests of farmers exposed to synthetic pesticides 2. Training courses on the use of organic fertilizers and bio-pesticides 3. Personal technical advice on OVF 4. Establishment of green markets in the villages
Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) project	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives	To motivate farmers to produce synthetic-inputs free vegetables.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality certification 2. Creation of awareness on health safety measures while producing and processing agricultural products

Table 6 Organic Vegetable Farming Promotion Projects in Maharashtra Province (Pattanapant 2009)

Findings from this research indicated an influential role of fellow farmers and their local wisdom on organic practicing farmers, which was evident from the case study in Chiang Mai. A common perception of farmers in both regions is that advice and recommendation from their fellow farmers are more convincing and reliable than the advice from NGOs and Government Agencies (Jinrawet 1995). Both provinces recognized the positive influence of motivational and capacity building programs on the adoption of organic farmers. Findings from Thapa & Rattanasuteerakul's work reveal that those farmers who have been motivated to grow organic vegetables by the GOs, NGOs and fellow farmers, and the farmers who had attended training courses, had the tendency to continue raising those vegetables.

Policies implemented in Maharashtra province were mainly promotional ones to raise awareness to the farmers on the benefits of organic farming and to curb further usage of chemical fertilizers. Activities and trainings were provided, which were preliminary to other forms of government support. The study found that trainings and information sessions raised awareness of the farmers, but they would be more interested to practice Organic Farming only if the required amount of organic fertilizers is accessible or provided by the government. As the province is still at an infant stage of organic practice, the farmers heavily rely on government assistance, in

forms of financial, educational, and institutional support. This is also because growing organic vegetables has not been lucrative in Mahasarakham as the vegetables could not fetch premium price for premium quality. Thus, financial assistance or a policy providing good financial incentives is necessary to lure more farmers into organic practice and to increase their income.

The provincial DoA has been made responsible for issuing the necessary certification upon request by farmers. Based on the provision for certification, the farmers could initially request the DoA for certification when vegetables are ready for harvest. However, the DoA officials could not carry out the necessary tests on the vegetables for 2-3 weeks. Since the farmers could not wait for so long due to the risk of their vegetables getting withered or spoilt, they have no other option but to sell the vegetables in the local markets even without any certification. This vicious cycle of delayed response which led to sales of uncertified products, resulted in consumer distrust for organic goods in Thailand.

CHAPTER 4

The Successful Case of Organic Farming in Korea: A Case Study of Mundang Village

4.1 Introduction

A case study and field research on a model Organic Farming village was conducted at Mundang Environment Friendly Agricultural Village per suggestion by Mr. Byeong Seok JEONG, Head officer of the South Korean Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery, as one of the role model villages that have successfully developed and expanded from government assistance. This chapter will briefly look at the history of Mundang village followed by the exploration of how government assistances have augmented to its development in various areas. My argument from the findings is that the government's involvement and support in various aspects, not only financial, is crucial in powering the village into developing as a successful Organic Farming practicing village when in line with the willingness of the villagers to actively employ government assistance to promote Organic Farming. The findings in this chapter were from interviews with Mr. Joo, the village leader, Mr Jeong, other villagers encountered during a tour around the village, and through existing case study reports.

Mundang Village is located in HongSeong district, South Choong Cheong Province, a region West of South Korea often dubbed as the nation's breadbasket. It is about 1640 acres in size and is home to some 1600 households and 3,300 inhabitants. Surrounded by mountains on its South, East, and North with the Sapkyochon (river valley) running along its West and South bordering the reservoir, Mundang is often referred to as the "Mandated location of Environmental-Friendly Farming." Led by Mr. Hyung-No Joo, Chairman of Preparatory Committee for Federation of Organic, South Chung Cheong Province, the village is equipped with the organic spirit where its constituents live in harmony with the nature and values the importance of environment and organic food for healthy life.

Villagers started to practice organic farming as early as 1977 and made a ground-breaking innovation in Korean agricultural by becoming the first to adopt organic rice farming practice of using ducks to catch insects and weeds. Originally, the movement was instigated by few pioneering villagers and over time developed to a village level as more and more villagers came to be aware of the health and environmental hazards conventional farming cause on their community. One of the villagers interviewed stated that he wanted to hand down a clean, safe, and sustainable living condition to their descendents and thus decided to cooperate with other villagers who conceded with the idea. Mr. Joo assumed responsibility as a leader to unite the villagers under one central goal- to practice organic farming to preserve the nature and promote sustainability that can be handed down to the next generations. Today, Mundang village's rice farming accounts for more than 80 percent of the village's production income, producing about 13,000 tons of rice annually. Not only is the village known for its specialty in organic rice farming through ducks, but it is also known for its ardor for cultivating next generation's organic activists through education. Mundang is also home to Poolmoo School, an alternative education institution that teaches organic farming, rural area revitalization, and community led business models that acts as a pillar of the nation's organic movement. The impact of education and the role of Poolmoo School in Mundang village will be discussed in detail in following pages.

Over the course of 40 years, Mundang has gained momentum in stabilizing and its organic practice in various areas and now it is recognized as the Mecca of South Korea's organic practice. Through such effort, Mundang was selected as one of the Information Network Villages (Invil) designated by the Ministry of Security and Public Administration. Information Network Village Building Project was devised by the Korean government to reduce the digital divide between rural and urban regions by increasing availability of e-government services and to increase income level of local residents by boosting regional economy through e-commerce and regional tourism which is expected to improve the quality of living in the rural communities. Through various factors that inspired vitality, Mundang village has went beyond organic practice to attain a truly organic community where its constituents are genuinely committed to preserve the nature, maintain good teamwork with fellow

villagers for sustainable living, and earning well-deserved earnings from innovative income generating programs.



Figure 5 Mr. Hyung-No Joo in the mouth of Mundang Village. The signboard reads “The Organic Farming Region – Welcome to Hongdong-Myon, the Origin of Duck Farming” (Picture Taken: 21 Nov 2011)

4.2 Adopting Organic Rice Farming using Ducks in Mundang

Rice farming with ducks is a method of rice farming that relies on ducks to eat insects and weeds, which began in Japan in the 1990s and spread to nearby rice-growing countries such as South Korea, China, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Thailand. Farmers release 15 to 20 ducklings into a rice paddy about 1,000 square meters around one or two weeks after the seedlings have been planted. Ducklings will pick pests and weeds from the paddy which subsequently reduces the exhausting handpicking labor of the farmers without using pesticide or herbicides as well. Moreover, the ducklings' droppings become an important source of natural fertilizer. They also stir up the soil in the rice paddy with their feet and bills which increases the oxygen content of the soil, making it more nutritious for the seedlings. And when it comes time to harvest the rice in the fall, the ducks have grown fat and can be sold for

meat. By allowing farmers to grow crops organically and also raise ducks to sell as meat, this method is said to kill two birds with one stone (Network. 2002).

Mr. Joo and his fellow villagers studied the duck farming techniques by bringing back related academic articles and resources from Japan and presenting themselves before the Japanese farmers, asking advice and technical know-hows. The leaders endeavored to persuade the villagers into uniting as a village to work on organic development plans in earnest. It was not welcomed at first, due to complicated certifying procedure and transition time it entailed, however, consistent effort of the leaders educate the villagers of the promising vision of organic agriculture and its benefits on the village in the long run, the villagers, one by one, realized the necessity of organic agriculture. Not only did the leaders merely present the plan before the villagers, but proved its readiness to execute the plans by establishing relevant committees and boards to actualize the specifics of the plan. As more and more villagers came onboard Mundang village started to take on the structure of an all-organic village. In a personal interview, Mr. Jeong Hwa Hong, Professor of Department of Food Science, Inje University, South Korea, explained that there is a deeply rooted loyalty and trust for a leader figure in the Korean culture, which makes it easier for a community to unite and maintain a cohesive relationship under strong leadership. Thus, well-integrated leadership conjoined with the spirit of the village's constituents has created synergy which resulted in progress and development as a strongly integrated community directed towards organic movement.

Before Mundang Village adopted Organic Rice Farming using ducks in 1994, only few households in Mundang were practicing organic agriculture and the people's perception of preserving environment and valuing healthy food was immature. They were reluctant to engage in laborious work which yielded crops slower than conventional produce, but concerted effort of the leaders in persuading the villagers finally won their minds as time went by. The core drive that spread organic movement throughout the village lies in the fact that organically produced rice cost was sold at distinctly higher price than that of conventional produce, coupled with the ratification of Uruguay Round, which activated free trade of agricultural products with those countries with more comparative advantage in agriculture than Korea (Ha 2013). Higher price of organic produce acted as the initiating incentive of farmers

who also realized the need for distinguished farm products that are competitive in the market. In establishing and expanding a strong network of organic agriculture however involved key players from various sectors, including NGOs, academic institution, business sectors, farmers' union, and the government. All the stakeholders in the network played a vital role in developing today's Mundang, but in this research, spotlight will be placed on discussing what kind of government assistance has benefited the village and how their interactions have unfolded in the past twenty years of the village's development.



Figure 6 Ducks picking insects and weeds. (Picture retrieved from <http://www.jejusori.net/news/articleView.html?idxno=61294>)



Figure 7 Mundang Village. Picture taken: 21 November, 2011 4.3 Government Assistance in Mundang Village

Traces of government assistance in Mundang village are evident in various areas. The following pages will discuss the government's assistance in financial support, policy, market supply, agri-tourism, and education.

4.3.1 Financial Assistance:

A common form of government assistance for developing infant industries in any countries providing seed money which can be in form of lump sum, investment for capital and infrastructure, machinery, and other necessities essential for a good kick off. Mundang Village has benefited from such financial support from the government through the course of 20 years. The most efficient and affective of these supports will be discussed and evaluated in the following paragraphs.

In 1993, Mundang Village received 2,000,000 Won (2,000 USD) from the Hongseong county rural development office to purchase ducks and other material costs which was recorded as the first ever government grant to be issued to farmers

nationwide(Hong 2004). Though the amount was minimal, it is significant in that the government has set a precedent in direct financial assistance to those who need them for start off. To combat the negative effects The Uruguay Round might have on the local agricultural industry, the Ministry of Agriculture approved of Mundang Village's Organic Rice scheme and expected it to prove that domestic agriculture is still capable of competing in international market as long as it has distinguishing factors.

Two years later, Mundang again received an investment of 50,000,000 Won (50,000 USD) from the provincial governmental office as an experimental village for Environmental-Friendly Farming. This lump sum was used mainly to reorganize farming space, build infrastructures, buy machineries, set up RPC (Rice Processing Complex), and cattle stalls for ducks to be housed. These infrastructures, to be shared with all households engaging in Duck Rice Farming, united the households more cohesively as a village entity as individuals were able to reduce cost and streamline production procedure.

Government assistance was galore in the 2000's. Met with the government's new initiative, the 5-Year Environment-Friendly Farming Development Plan, Mundang Village was secured a total of 11,000,000 USD government aid as project allowances for 2 sets of District Development Project and Organic Experience Program. District Development Project, a government initiative to support districts that endeavor to stimulate regional economy through collective enterprises, selected Mundang Village as one of the model villages that had good potential to achieve the goals and develop. Whereas financial aid in the 1900's were more focused on investing for infrastructure and facilities, 2000's was directed towards establishing agricultural extension such as Environmental Farming Education Centers and agro-tourism facilities and environment-preserving facilities that added value to the village as a Environmental-Friendly Village.

Environmental Farming Education Center is a village-run community facility established in accordance to the village's core values of free access to environmental farming education for all village inhabitants. The center introduces Mundang Village's history, its 100 year Development Plan, division of Mundang's collective works, and also provides newest information on organic farming, market trends, and

other visual and textual resources on environmental friendly farming. The center act as a hub for all villagers and scholars not only provides secondary resources such as thesis, books, researches, and visual aids, but also providing opportunities for visitors to experience organic farming through Organic Experience Programs. Also, Mud-experiencing facility, swimming pool, Traditional Korean Housing Inn, Community museum, and Sauna facilities were established. Financial aids in the 2000's were used more to build income-generating facilities, such as rural-experiencing and housing facilities, than agricultural production facilities. Mr. Ryu, Geun Chol, staff of Environment Education Center stated in a personal interview with Ha, Myeong Eun (Ha 2013).

“Upon being selected as the Green-experiencing village in 2000, we received about 2,000,000 USD, we transformed our village into a information village and promoted more use of internet and technology in the village. From 2005 to 2009, we build village museums and traditional Korean houses to tourists to experience, thanks to the government's General development plans. We also constructed small water parks, reorganized hiking routes and renovated facilities for pleasant stay of the visitors”. (Ha 2013)

The continuance of government assistance owes largely due to Mundang's excellent performance over time. Transparent use of government assistance for developmental purpose, systematic follow up, and performance evaluation added with desirable outcomes. Also, the villager's eagerness to bid for financial aid, corroborated with their well-developed plan to present before the reviewing committee of the government was a pivotal factor. Whereas the government assistance in 1990's were hierarchal and handed-down according to their standards and goals, farmer groups of any level could submit a plan for their community and request for a grant. From the Kim Dae Jung administration of 2000, the government allowed farmers to choose the project they want to engage in, and come up with a best practice plan tailored to their needs and advantages.

“We submitted the plan for Environmental Farming Education Center. And the government accepted it. Since then, we requested for government assistance with our plans. Since the Kim Dae Jung administration, we had the right to say “I want to start this project”.(Ha 2013)

Supplier-based approach of government funding since the 2000s allowed the Mundang villagers to work out a development plan devised by and tailored to the interest of their villagers. From the government's stance, Mundang's plans were worthy of investigation and their past outcomes and follow ups have gained credentials which gave them advantage in the model-village grant selection process. From the villager's side, government assistance and aids were helpful in that it served their purpose of development and furthermore foster villagers' empowerment by not merely dumping cash into the village, but by authorizing a project formulated and organized by the villagers themselves and providing concrete assistance to execute the plan into practice.

4.3.2 Cash Assistance and Fertilizer Subsidy

Abovementioned government grants are byproducts of Korean government's umbrella policy and development plans for fostering organic agriculture. One of most popular policy assistance scheme employed by the municipal government to lure more farmers into organic farming are direct cash distribution policy with provides 3 years of cash assistance to those transferring to environmental-friendly organic farming, in accordance with the 5 Year Plan for Environmental Friendly Farming. It is purported to make up for 3 years of income loss during the soil transition period where the farmers have to rest the land for 3 years to detoxicate the soil from the accumulated chemicals from pesticides and fertilizers and prepare it for a condition fit for organic farming. Such policy is pivotal for farmers and households that leave the familiar practice to step into the new method of organic practice. Municipal government will evaluate on the soil condition after 3 years of soil neutralization, and decided whether to provide cash assistance for another year if necessary.

Those households of Mundang Village that does not engage in organic rice duck farming, raise organic vegetables and fruits for sales. These households use duck wastes as natural fertilizers but the quantity is insufficient to cover the farmlands. For these households, organic fertilizers are distributed to support and encourage the farmers to continue organic practice. As animal wastes produced within the village are sometimes not enough to cover all areas, Mundang Villagers use both organic fertilizers and animals wastes.

4.3.3 Supply Channel

In 1994, Mundang Village and National Agricultural Cooperative Federation signed a contract cultivation agreement, which fixed the price of organic crops productions. National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF) is a organization created by the Korean government that acts as a umbrella organization for Korean agricultural cooperatives and conducts variety of agricultural/non-agricultural activities including agricultural supply, agricultural marketing, banking, education, and support services. NACF is supervised by the Ministry of Food, Forestry, and Fisheries, and the banking unit by the Financial Services Commission (Choi 2006). The Korean government has fixed the minimum price for a sack of normal rice as 53,000 Won (51 USD) and 75,000 (72 USD) for organic rice. The NACF abides by this price and the contract is based on the fixed price mandated by the government (Joo 22 November 2011). More time and effort is invested in organic farming than fast-yielding and mass-produced conventional farming, price fluctuation in market is one of the major reasons that drive farmers away from organic practice which is why such measure is a pivotal safety measure to secure villagers' income stability. By guaranteeing a fixed price of the products, farmers do not have to worry about possible plummeting of crop prices due to supply and demand imbalance, natural disasters, and other external factors. This way, the farmers can plan the quantity to be produced and be prepared to react flexibly to unforeseen circumstances. The government's support in guaranteeing minimum price is a very preliminary and important measure for the suppliers as it acts as an incentive for the farmers to prolong their effort in organic farming instead of turning away from it due to precarious market situations. As the price is fixed, the farmers are obliged to produce certain minimum quantity of crops in accordance with the contract with the cooperatives, and the cooperatives in turn secures shelf space for the organic products in department stores, mega-markets, organic wholesales market, and other outlets. Since 2013, Mundang village signed a contract with Dure living cooperatives, a member of NACF which secured the village's shelf-space in sub-stores of the cooperatives which is spread out in large numbers throughout the country (Kim 2014). As seen in the picture below, Mundang village arranges with the agricultural

associations or companies who channel the products to department stores, mega-markets, and direct sales market. NACF for example, runs organic retail marts called Hanaro Mart, which offers variety of organic products from their member farms to customers. As inadequate and insecure supply chain is often mentioned as the most critical factor in failure of organic supply channel, the role of regional cooperatives and agricultural corporations as a channeling stronghold is pivotal in transporting products to various locations for customers from all around to have easy access to healthy food. Cooperatives and agricultural companies account for a bulk of the village's supply channel

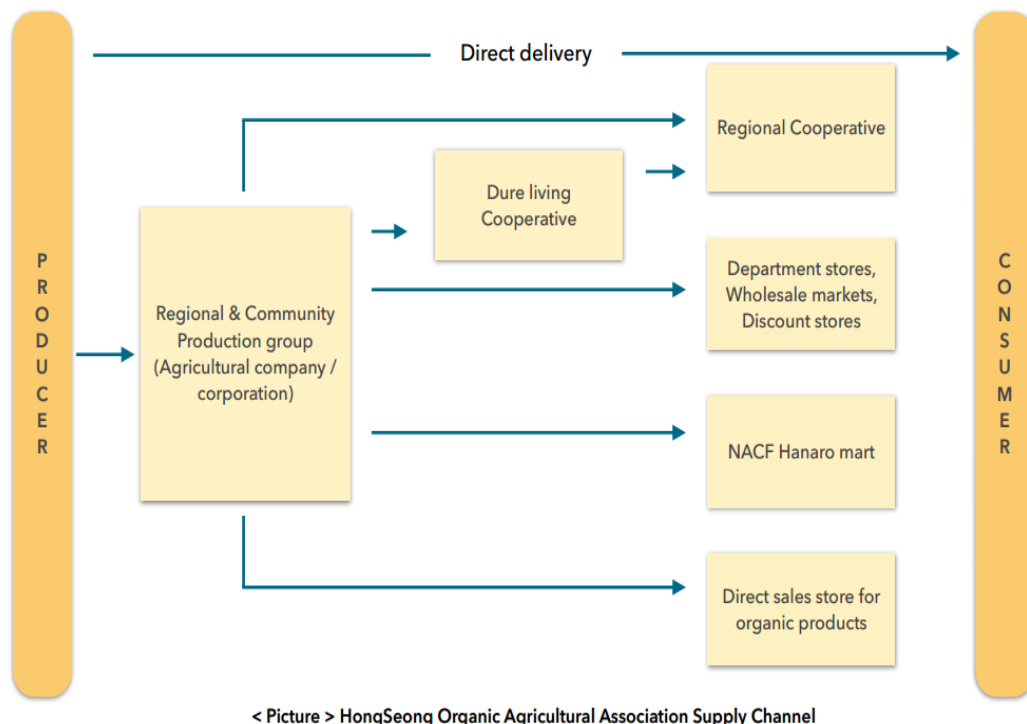


Figure 8 HongSeong Organic Agricultural Supply Channel
(Kim 2014)

Other supply channels not present in the picture include organic wholesale outlets throughout the country, schools, and internet malls, which are channeled independently. Internet malls are expanding in size and quantity in general and more customers are learning of Mundang Village's through the internet malls, advertisements, and blogs. As customers become more aware of the benefits of organic goods through media and internet, their sales through internet delivery will increase and subsequently secure loyal customers who purchase the products on a

regular basis. Continuance of such benign cycle is what the villagers call the strong bond between customers and producers powered by trust in quality.

Another important source of supply for Mundang Village is local schools. All Korean schools, public or private, provide lunch meals for students, and using organic ingredients for these meals is a win-win strategy for both parties; parents will be content with their children eating good, safe food, and the farmers will secure fixed supply. Growing number of parents associations in public schools are requesting the school shift their meals to all-organic meals for the health of their children. Some politicians and mayors are assessing to pass a bill obligating all-organic meals for children under 18 years old. It is especially advantageous for school near the Mundang village since logistics cost is minimized and is able to make quick additional orders straight from the farm in times of need. More schools are looking into taking all-organic lunch meal programs for the health of the children. Mr. Hee Jeong Ahn, the governor of ChoongCheong Province, where Mundang Village is a sub-district of, as emphasized the importance of local-food consumption and is continuing to secure local supplies of organic food for all public schools in the province. So far, 144 contracted foodservice out of 200 is consuming environmental-friendly food grown within the province (Hur 2014). As Choongcheong Province citizens mainly engages in agricultural sector, the provincial government, in coordination with municipality, continues to follow up on securing supply channel through linking local produce to public schools and government agencies. Mundang village, on its end, aims to advertise the importance of organic food for children and young adults in their formative years, until all schools throughout the province adopt all-organic meals for their students. As the number of schools adopting all-organic meals is increasing, they expected that nearly all schools in the country will adopt all-organic school meals in five years time.

Mr. Ahn stated in his inaugural address that production initiative for organic agriculture will continue and the government will support certification procedure, quality assurance, establishing agricultural infrastructure, value-adding techniques, and any necessary measure to promote and foster organic agriculture. He especially stressed the importance of secure supply channel above all other factors, to foster organic agriculture- in order to forge success, he promised to formulate a most

efficient supply route in coordination with the NACF, Farmer's Union, and agricultural cooperatives. Choong Cheong Provincial government is currently working to securing direct routes to supply organic products to markets within the province (Hur 2014).

4.3.4 Agro-tourism

Recently, Mundang has lured tourists and students through their agri-tourism programs that offer tourists and students the opportunity to experience the organic practice and learn about the benefits of organic food through various activities. Activities in program include on-farm rice-threshing and harvesting activities which the tourists can also experience with the guide of local villagers. Skilled craftsmen invite tourists to make organic soap from farm products from the wide selection of vegetables and fruits. Housewives of the village gather tourists to make tofu from the beans locally and organically cultivated from the farms and make Kimchi from the fresh organic vegetables. Feeding ducks, catching grasshoppers and driving tractors around the village is another attraction offered for the children's activities. The village, as a center of environment-friendly farming, also displays various farming equipments and relics which aimed to help visitors develop better understanding of rural community and foster deeper appreciation of agriculture. Some of village facilities include environmental education center, a small museum of farming tools, rice-polishing mill, cattle farms, and community warehouse. Mundang provides cheap accommodation for tour groups who wish to enjoy these activities over the course of few days. Groups who wish to stay for an extended time to enjoy the organic lifestyle ranges from individual families to elementary and secondary school students on their field trips. University students regularly stay for about a week or two to experience the organic life and help the local villagers during the harvesting season. This practice is called *nonghwal*, a culture rooted in the Korean universities where the students gather in large numbers and visit the farms throughout the country for a period of 2 weeks to help the farmers and learn about the environment and agriculture. Villagers commented that they are moved and happy to see young generation eager to learn about nature, community, organic and self-subsistent lifestyle which they believes is a core value of human life often belittled in contemporary society. Extended stay in the

village with cheap accommodation can enable the students and visitors can engage in an extensive program of Mundang Village and also experience the traditional Korean housing that is unique to the region.



Figure 9 Bungalow for pleasant stay for large groups (Students and large number of tourists)



Figure 10 Traditional Korean style house *Picture retrieved from <http://www.mundang.invil.org>*

Mundang's income generating efforts through tourism culminated in 2010 when it was selected as one of the 20 villages representing the Rural-20 Project. Developed by the South Korean Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries with the aim of introducing the beauty of Korean rural villages to the world over, the Rural-20 project features tourism courses and activities under four broad themes ("Experience," "Nature," "OrientTraditional Culture," and "Well-being") encompassing twenty select villages in South Korea that retain beautiful natural environments and local traditions (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs). The government devised this plan to promote the boast of beautiful scenery and well-preserved traditional culture of Korea's wonderful rural areas that were previously relatively unexposed to foreign tourists. It was the first official governmental-level project launched to introduce and promote Korea's rural areas as tourist attractions, aimed to vitalize Korea's rural tourism.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs, in coordination with Ministry of Tourism, disseminated brochures and videos in three languages (English, Chinese, and Japanese) on the Rural-20 to Korean language institutes, embassies, major tourist information centers, and overseas offices of the Korean Tourism Organization. As a result, more foreigners came to learn about the rural villages in Korea and this project, initially launched as a pilot project in momentum of G-20 Summit in 2010, regularized the project to meet the growing demand. Now, the Ministry selects 20 villages every year to introduce other hidden wonders of Korea's rural setting. This project launched by the government helped boost the regional economy and creates jobs in the rural areas.

Mundang, with its rich activities, cozy accommodations, and strategized tourist programs, was one of the most visited villages of the projects by the foreign tourists. The tourists witnessed the famous duck farming method, tried the organic rice and vegetables from the field, and had the Kimchi-making and tasting experience. Other attractions nearby included mud sauna, 2nd hand bookstores, and craft workshops. The village's annual income has improved over the years with continuous effort to find competencies in their village through non-product, servicing, tourism and experiencing activities.



Figure 11 Foreign tourists in Mundang Village. Retrieved from <http://www.rural20.kr/>

4.3.5 Education - Poolmoo School of Agricultural Technology

The Poolmoo High School of Agriculture opened in 1958 and the Poolmoo Community College of Ecological Agriculture in 2001. The founder, LEE Chan-Gab proposed to “revive our people through education centered around the rural community, through educating minds, and through teaching both humanity and ability” and another founder Joo Ok-Roh spoke of “citizens living side by side helping one another on a platform of trust built of education.” Mr. JUNG, Seung Kwan, Principal of the Poolmoo School stated, “The nature of the education is rooted in the fact that the school is within the community. With this in mind, we have been able to train agricultural successors, practice organic farming, move towards energy independence, revitalize local culture, create bonds with farmer organizations and other communal organizations, and have greater understanding of our own area.” (Jung 2009). According to Mr. Jung, true organic practice for development and empowerment cannot be accomplished without education of skills and spirit. Mr. JOO, in his personal interview, backed Mr. Jung statement by emphasizing that

Mundang Village would have crumbled if it was not for the strong will of learning of the villagers and the integrated education curriculum of the Poolmoo School.

Poolmoo School is registered under the Ministry of Education, and receives direct assistance and benefits from the government. Poolmoo School was founded as a private community school aimed at local development through organic farming, but was later granted formal registration under the Ministry of Education, for its founding principle of “Development through sustainability for the betterment of community”, which was in line with Ministry of Education’s pursuit for “Education for contribution to community”. The goals of Poolmoo school is to bring sustainability in rural towns, raise awareness of preserving environment and sustainable development through ecological education, sharing knowledge about organic farming with students, local organization, and other Asian organizations, maintaining sustainable livelihoods, promoting diversity in nature and culture, and Initiating new local organizations in cooperation with the local community (Jung 2009). All the programs implemented by the school endorse these values and is directed towards both students and villagers alike.

In order to accomplish the sets of goals, Poolmoo School employs following teaching methodology to its students and community constituents:

1. Education through classes

- Practical training in the field: Learning basic farming skills through “guided experience” from fellow students and teachers. Students carry out activities that are coordinated by their group, just as the agricultural community does.

- Field trips led by local leaders and experts to experience carpentry and ecological studies and seeing first hand realistic business models for farms. Question and answer session with farmers and organization personnels are arranged accordingly.

- Students will select a topic of personal interest to develop a thesis and present their finding at the end of the year.

2. Student Participation in local community activities

- Students participate in educational programs: Agricultural education (rice planning in May, harvesting in October), ecological studies (studying the

biodiversity within rice paddy fields from June to September), and horticultural education (yearlong programs with local students with disabilities).

- Students will participate in the school's subsistence association by helping to run communal cafes, gardens, and communal stores. Through such experience students will learn institutional skills, such as how to run and initiate cooperative associations.
- Students will interact with village inhabitants by participating in community festivals, sporting events, and other students' performances.
- Town lectures become school lectures – Lectures are not only held in classrooms but throughout different locations in town, open to locals and students alike.

3. Local Activities of the School

- Education in ecologically sustainable agriculture and ecological energy use such as solar energy and bio gas.
- Lectures and symposiums about organic farming for local farmers and experts from other countries and study/research groups are mobilized with local farmers to explore improved farming methods.
- Programs Uses school spaces to work with local community people to organize and run cooperatives ventures, such as carpentry workspaces and used book stores.
- Program aims to strengthen education solidarity within the village through introducing horticulture experience program with disabled students, ecological education program, and agricultural experience program.

4. Cultural Exchange Between Farmers of Asia

- Exchange programs with international schools from Bangladesh, Japan, and Cambodia and through such interactions, students learn new methods of agriculture and find ways that better suit local ecology. Korean students visit foreign countries and experience their organic farming, and vice versa.
- Sharing Asian Rural Cultures through International Games, Symposiums, and Conferences held by member countries (Cambodia, Japan, Bangladesh).

Many of the lectures are open to village residents and the residents also become field teachers and teach the students of the community's organizations and functions, which creates a strong, lasting relationship between the villagers and students. One of the many successes of the Poolmoo School is that many of the graduates of Poolmoo Community College of Ecological Agriculture decided to settle down in rural areas and became a valuable constituent of their local communities. They initiated local cooperative associations and other organizations and movements. Most of them also run small organic farms. As they are practitioners of organic farming and a valuable community member at the same times, the graduates become key individuals who apply knowledge and institutional skills they gained from college into their communities. These graduates become a crucial revitalizing force in aging rural communities. They not only practice organic farming on their own farms, but also for the good of the entire local agricultural community by becoming members and leaders in Local Farmers' Association and Local Subsistence Association).

The outstanding advantage of Poolmoo School is that it enhanced students' educational potential by utilizing the vibrant resources of the local area and combining it with the well-structured educational program. The School, as Mundang's educational center, actively gathers new methods and information on farming techniques from within and outside the country and supply such information to local farmers. Through this process, the school and the farmers together can learn from the

experiences of other countries and exchange not only farming techniques, but also cultural assets for deeper understanding.

The Ministry of Education supports, funds, and periodically evaluates the performance of Poolmoo School as a vocational and alternative education institution. In 1989, it was officially approved to be registered as a public high school under the Ministry of Education. The Ministry strives to encourage students to engage in organic agriculture by subsidizing Poolmoo's school's tuition and semester fees to an affordable cost. The provincial office of education ensures to subsidize cost for dormitories and activities fee for students, in an effort to allow students to fully engage in education without worrying about high cost of education and living. To secure the students from agricultural regions from leaving for an urban setting, the office of ChoongCheong Province provides affirmative advantages for students from rural villages and those falls under lowest quintile of household income.

Government's support to Poolmoo School begets further education and benefits to the local community. Poolmoo School is a solidified academic extension in which its graduate prolongs and penetrates the legacy of education throughout the Mundang community by forming local associations to augment to community betterment. Poolmoo School Subsistence Association was established with the opening of school, which later branched out into the local community, drawing in organic farmers and growing to 800 farmers. This allowed a firm base in which organic farming continued to expand (Jung 2009). Hongseong Eco-Friendly Crop Group, Poolmoo Livestock, Hongseong Ecological Town Association, and Hongseong Organic Farming Association also stems out of from the Poolmoo school, with majority of its members graduates of Poolmoo School. These associations were activists that devoted their lifetime to fostering organic farming throughout the area. Their effort has brought new opportunities, shaping Mundang Village into an entirely ecologically sustainable village. Mundang now serves as a model for other communities as a community developed through the effort of scholars and pioneering organic farmers who were well-trained and thoroughly educated with organic spirit from Poolmoo School.

Organic farming is an outstanding farming practice to bring empowerment for farmers, as the farmers plan, dictate, and decide what to produce, how to produce, and

how much to produce. Financial assistance is indeed a very important at the early stages of initiating organic farming, but the most important role of the government, insisted is to create a workable system and institutions that organic farming can bloom out of. The central role of the government in promoting organic farming is to aid the farmers financially, institutionally, and educationally so that the farmers are fully equipped and aware of organic farming, and the benefits of it. When asked about the most important factor to promote organic agriculture for farmer's economic empowerment, most of the villagers in Mundang Village pointed to education. Villagers of Mundang, as the living history of organic agriculture development with abundant empirical experience, could not emphasize enough of the importance of education as the fundamental of understanding and implementing organic farming. Above all else, the villagers stressed the importance of government's role in providing a good agricultural extension and education services to farmers who convert to organic farming. As the pioneering village of organic farming, Mundang believes that education for the farmers should precede financial assistance in organic farming and that economic empowerment for farmers can be achieved only if the farmer truly understands what organic agriculture is, what it entails, and the philosophy of self-sustainability that overarches it. Mundang village is home to the Poolmoo School of Agricultural Technology, a central academic institution of South Korea's organic industry where farmers learn and practice the true spirit of organic farming.

South Korea brought organic farming methods from Japan and the pioneer of such effort was the Poolmoo School. The local farmers visited Japan to learn advanced organic farming methods, and brought five books on organic back and translated them into Korean. Now, with over 500 farming households and 8.5 square kilometers of agricultural land dedicated to organic farming, Mundang is called the Mecca of South Korean Organic Farming. Korea employed and internalized the learnings from other countries' trial and errors. The Korean government acknowledges the importance of education in equipping the farmers with the fundamental concept of agriculture, and how to generate income and livelihood from there.

4.4 The Mundang Village 100 year Plan

Mundang Village 100 year Plan was organized by the Mundang Villagers and drafted by the scholars interested in the development of the village in an effort to provide a guideline to what goals the village should accomplish over the next 100 years under the umbrella of a core philosophy. The overarching theme of the 100 year Development Plan for the Sustainable Rural Community” is realizing a sustainable rural community where a region-specific specialized production system through environmental farming secures the competitiveness of agricultural products and function as a base of sustainable agricultural society (Yang 2000). The plan aims accomplish 4 major projects. First strategy is to be economically self-sustainable through specializing in organic rice farming using ducks and promoting “Green Tourism” to lure more urban populations to visit the village and thereby reducing the urban-rural divide. Second strategy aims to establish information centers where villagers can have free access to resources, attract young farmers to root in organic agriculture and reinforce sense of belonging among the villagers and revive the community culture. The third strategy is to preserve and maintain the community’s ecosystem at its natural state. The fourth strategy aims to use conserve energy by using natural energy and promoting garbage recycling and natural water cycle (Ha 2013).

This village development scenario depicts an agri-utopia desired by the residents of Mundang and the values they conform to. The 100 Year Plan describes in detail an overview of Mundang’s eco-village development plan which reflects the residents’ commitment to transform Mundang into a sustainable agricultural society (Yang 2000). Mundang is promoting various projects that fall under each theme of the 100 year plan, tracks the progress, and evaluate the successes and shortcomings of each project for improvements.

The villagers, led by several environmental activists and villagers, came together to establish a centennial plan of the village that acts as a blueprint and a guidance to establish “Eco-Friendly, sustainable, and self-reliant regional economy”, an overarching theme of the Village’s purpose. The villagers requested an NGO called Green Korea United and Professor Byoung-E Yang of Seoul National University to help them establish the “100 year Development Plan of Mundang for the

Sustainable Rural Community”. The development of Mundang Village is directed towards realizing a sustainable rural community that specializes in organic production system through environmental farming which will further enhance the competitiveness of their agricultural products. Mundang residents and representatives, together with NGOs and related academia, are continuously preparing a ground plan to actualize sustainable rural society through organic farming (Yang 2000). This plan includes the core principles and a solid ground plan that stipulates the values the village has to abide by and the guidelines that points to how such values can be achieved through what means. Such plan, when corroborated by government assistance, emits the synergy effect which in this case, resulted in a positive outcome and visible development of the village.



CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The literature review of the research discussed the South Korean government's policies and assistance programs to promote organic farming and how it had empowered the beneficiaries. Then, Thailand's history of organic farming was briefly introduced and explored limitations and shortcomings that had hampered growth of the organic industry. The previous chapter revealed the finding from a model village in Korea looked at how it developed through the government assistance. This chapter will discuss Thailand's recent policies towards agriculture, what Thailand can learn from the case of Mundang Village, and the meaning of empowerment in the context of government context. This research will conclude with the discussion of applicability of Mundang's case into Thailand, and its limitations, followed by recommendations for improvement.

5.1 Challenges in Thailand's Recent Policies Towards Agriculture

The role of government in solidly grounding a working organic network cannot be emphasized enough. It has a central role in guiding, supporting, and implementing policies and projects that could lay groundwork and foster organic farming, an infant industry that is dependable on the institutional, financial, and policy support by the government. The government needs to assume the role as a leading key actor that strategically coordinate between NGOs, farmers associations, private sectors, and academic sectors to structure a durable and working organic network that operates coherently in cooperation with each and every key actors. Cognizant of the need, the Thai government has over the past decades, came up with and implemented various policies to foster organic farming, all to not much avail. The concern for the importance of alleviating rural poverty and boosting regional economy in the rural areas is still on-going, which is a green light to the potential of organic farming expand as an alternative agriculture. However, inefficient policy implementation of the government has placed the fate of organic agriculture in state

of limbo, stuck between internal conflicts within the government, recent political unrest, and the culture of bureaucracy. The recent policies towards agriculture reflect such chronic problem, and are more remedial than durable.

Upon assuming office, the Prime Minister Mr. Chan-O-Cha has called for a reform in rice farming and innovation in the agricultural sector. He talked about general concerns of rice farming including strategies for increasing productivity, reducing production costs, and went on to mention the importance of relying less on chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and providing incentives for farmers to engage in environmental friendly and organic farming to preserve the nature as well as gaining competency through distinguished, uniquely processed products to meet the increasing demand of healthy food. Raising the issue was both relative and important. Green light is on as the government is aware of the benefits of organic farming and willing to pursue its developments. However, it is always easily said than done; it reflects the concern the government has for the industry, but does not mirror the concern of farmers nor propose a durable solution to current limitations (Prateepchaikul 2014).

The most recent project launched a stimulus package of 364.5 billion-baht, aimed to boost the economy over the next three months. Part of the package included a cash hand-out of 40 billion baht to low-income rice farmers to subsidize the cultivation cost, compensate for the recession, and as an incentive for farmers to thrive on amid economic recession and political disarray. It was designed to help poor farmers with less than 15 rai of farmland, who is suffering from minimal income and losses from low crop prices. The municipal governments have handed out 6,000 – 15,000 Thai baht per household to those farmers registered with the agricultural bank. Although media aired positive responses of the farmers obtaining the lump sum, wide criticism of the government in its inefficient implementation and non-sustainable, short-lived nature, is pervasive in the political and academic field. Throughout Thailand's policy making history, such instant happiness did not resolve the systematic errors and inefficiencies in the agricultural system, which is more fundamental for the development of agricultural sector (Reporters. 2014).

The Yingluck Shinawatra administration's rice-pledging scheme, one of the main policy projects the administrations and put forth effort into, was just another example resulting in policy failure. It offered pledging prices 40-50% above market prices for a paddy was rice, leaving behind a debt of 580 billion. Similar cash-injecting program has also been implemented during the Democrat's administration, which handed out 2,000 Baht cheque to boost economic growth and the Small-Medium-Large Village fund also included cash handout program (Chantanusornsiri 2014). The government continues to claim that such subsidy policies will result in better standard of living for Thai farmers, by boosting the prices of farm produce. However, critiques calls for immediate halt to such scheme, dubbing that it's a short-lived emergency "injection" that not only is waste the tax payers's money, but does not serve the purpose of bringing improved livelihood for farmers in a sustainable manner. The program brings instant growth and temporary relief to the farmers, but not empowerment. It reflects Thai government's top-down to fix what is a systematic problem through transitory measure such as cash injection. Another criticism points to the fact that these cash handouts took place towards the election period, as a populist policy to garner more votes from the rural population. Subsidy programs thus, blurred out its colors as it did not serve the purpose to alleviate the farmers burden to raise productivity. Such rice price support affects the organic rice sector as well, and is a potential hindrance to growth.

Limitations to Thailand's policies towards organic policies are grounded on mainly on cultural, bureaucratic, and political reason which ramifies into policy failures. It is difficult to reform the rooted culture of conservative bureaucracy within the Thai political system, which is not flexible and welcoming to changes, and even if a reform policy is drafted, executing and implementing in practice still follows the old ways. Lack of coordination among ministries also hampers effective implementation of policies; contradicting interests and factionalism divides the effort when it needs to be united to serve a common purpose. The Korean government's Rural 20 program, aimed to boost rural economy by promoting agro-tourism, was led by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries in coordination with Ministry of Tourism, and earnest support of the provincial and municipal governments. Thailand has also shown collective effort in Royal Project, a project designed by his Majesty the King,

and it is widely advertised within the country and outside. New policies involving Organic farming however is having trouble integrating different key actors into devising a comprehensive plan. Surprisingly, farmers and NGO workers finds the fault in the government.

As Thailand's agricultural industry was export-oriented, it has for decades practiced massive plantation with heavy reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Transition to an organic environment is a complete change in the way of life. At least 3 years of soil neutralization is required to for transition and governments have devised subsidies and cash assistance policies to compensate for the income loss during this period. As Thailand's agriculture industry is bigger in size that that of South Korea's, takes time for Thailand to devise a durable system to provide cash assistance to all farmers converting to organic farming. Thus, the Thai government has took a gradual step towards the conversion, by promoting use of organic fertilizers and less pesticides instead of offering a direct cash assistance for those converting to organic farming. During such process however, it was reported that many extension officers and government officers that were dispatched to evaluate and follow up on the progress of organic farming in rural areas did not believe in the positive impacts that organic farming will bring and moreover, promoted the application of chemicals to farmers to reduce production risk. Discrepancies in the belief of government officers implementing the policy, and the core of policy itself, are bound to spur confusion and mistrust among the key players involved in the organic network, leading to the reluctance of farmers to engage in organic farming, inferring from the uncertainty of authoritative figures in promoting it.

Another decisive factor in deciding the fate of organic development is how well farmers, consumers, and other key actors are networked and how coherently knowledge, experience, technology, and information on organic agriculture are exchanged and trained to all parties. Updated information should be shared by and accessible to all parties to be utilized for development planning, marketing, and enhancement of support services, and the best way to relay such information is through training and education programs. Lack of educational policies and a constructive training program pose a significant deterrence to the development of organic farming. Without a well-organized, informative, and practical training

program for the farmers, the organic agriculture is not sustainable and will be unable to be prolonged in the future. Thai government has provided trainings to farmer through government extensions, but it did not bear much fruit. The trainings provided by the government were more of a top-down conventional training modules where the farmers are summoned to participate in a half-day lecture on “how to organic farm”. Report by the United Nations stated that trainings by the NGOs and private extensions are more competitive and practical for the farmers to learn through empirical experience and hands on experiments on farm. The research calls for the Thai government to relegate its training to private sectors and NGOs who are more informed through experience, of the practices in the field. Educational policies should also be introduced to empower farmers through education. Laying a solid groundwork for education is one of the fundamental step Thai government should take on in order to ensure accurate practice of organic farming in accordance with the local and international standards.

NGOs and private sectors emphasize the role of the government as a supportive actor, not as a central entity that runs the industry, and even excludes government from the key actors of organic network. Although the importance of government in assisting and setting directions cannot be undermined, their opinion is somewhat agreeable if it is deciphered in the context of Thailand’s political culture. The ideal role of the government in promoting organic agriculture, in the framework of this research, is to act as a central entity that lay a solid groundwork for the infant organic industry through providing strong initial support and integrate the key actors by offering necessary assistance, through various policies and projects. The findings indicated that the Thai government was rather over-centralized and sometimes monopolized in playing its role as a coordinator. It formulating the policy, farmers, private sectors, and NGOs, were left out, and their policy advocacy was not taken into consideration. Rather, the government has mapped out the strategies and actions plans on the organic development plan and enforced the other parties comply with the standard. It practiced top-down policy implementation which was sometimes inappropriate and inapplicable in the field. Government participation in the community level was absent, as well as local initiatives to begin the organic development effort from the ground level. The top-down approach also emphasizes

uniformity, enforcing the standard in all regions without giving rooms for adjustments and flexibility. Such rigid, inflexible practice of policy implementation will be yet another hindrance to the promotion and development of organic farming.

5.2 Lessons Learned from Mundang Village

Policy implementation

The distinguishing difference of policy framework of Thailand and South Korea is that whereas Thai government employs a top-down approach, South Korean government employs a mixture of top-down and ground level approaches. Both governments were identical in that they mapped out the blueprint for the direction of organic development through 5-Year strategy and action plans, but went different ways in implementing them. Whereas the Thai government practices uniformity in implementation of policies throughout all farms, the Korean government assessed and evaluated farms and groups bidding for the financial assistance and support from the government. Korean government provided the standard and direction of where the organic development should be headed, but the specifics and contents of the development was relegated to the discretion of the groups, villages, and farms to chose their own method and strategy in doing so. Model environmental-friendly village selections, Rural 20s, and Invil projects were some big ones among the many bidding projects by the Korean government aimed to boost regional economy and support the distinguishing characteristics and unique organic projects of each region on which they could develop on. Mundang Village won all three projects with its specialty of Organic Rice Farming using ducks. Lump sums of project allowance were granted, and the municipal and provincial governments were assigned to follow up with the progress and ensure that the assistance was used transparently and appropriately. Upon establishing infrastructures, machineries, purchasing cattles, and maintaining land conditions fit for organic agriculture, Mundang village devised a 100-Year development plan that thoroughly detailed their goals, strategies, and expected achievements in yearly basis. With this plan, Mundang was selected as the model Environmental-Friendly Village and won the investment from the government. The government evaluates the progress of the village annually and decided whether to continue the assistance. Such incentive ensures the village to actively work on the

developments and the government is able to assess progress and check whether the standards are maintained.

Rather than a hierarchal, top-down approach which could results in policy failure, Thailand can encourage NGOs, farmers' group, and private sectors by offering financial assistance and necessary support to those willing to engage and develop organic project in their unique way. Allowing the farmers to formulate their own plan, and providing assistance in actualizing it, is a form of good governance and an ideal of the government not as a dictator, but a facilitator. In this way, farmers are able to advance towards self-sustainable development

Financial assistance

Over the course of 20 years, Mundang village has obtained big project allowances that the government has provided as a new initiative to foster Environmental-Friendly Farming. The projects were designed to boost competitiveness in Korea' agricultural products following the Uruguay Round which placed domestic produced agricultural goods in disadvantageous condition. The first project allowances were used to purchase farm machineries, cattle, and build community-shared working spaces. Towards the end of the century, Mundang Village was able to request for government assistance with their project plans. Such supplier-based approach of the government funding allowed the villagers to take on the development plan devised by, and tailored to, the interest of its constituents. This project allowance was granted initially to help establish an organic village, but is later expanded into agro-tourism, technology, and manufacturing. Such form of government assistance empowered the farmers by not merely dumping cash into village, like the cash injections recently launched in Thailand, but by supervising and supporting a project formulated, organized, and implemented by the villagers themselves. A careful selection of the regions with good potential and willingness to achieve the organic development, followed by concrete and durable provision of support is what the Thai government can learn from the Korean government in empowering the farmers through promotion of organic farming.

Education

One of the most revered policies of the Korean government on development of Organic farming is their education policies. The Poolmoo School, under the Ministry of Education provides vocational training for secondary students and college students who want to indulge in Organic Agriculture. The school receives direct assistance and benefits from the government and provides free trainings and lectures for Mundang residents. It acts as a powerhouse in revitalizing the community, and instills community bond and spirit among the villagers. The school enhances students' education by utilizing vibrant resources of the local area backed by well-organized lectures. As the village's education center, the school supplies information and updated techniques of organic agricultural to local farmers. Through such process, the community actively exchange information and cultural values which in turn gives a strong sense of community spirit and loyalty. The government actively recruits the next generations' organic practitioners by subsidizing tuitions, providing dormitories, and quality education curriculum. Again, the government is limited to a supportive actor, relegating lectures, curriculum formulation, and other contents to the experts, consisting of NGO specialists, professors, and experienced organic farmers who are most aware of the conditions and shortcomings of organic farming through empirical experiences in the field. Rather than dictating the strategies of promoting organic agriculture in a national level, ensuring that the farmers are receiving accurate, competitive, and empirical education and training from trained and experienced specialists, is the important responsibility that the government should take. Empowerment is not handed down. Empowerment can be achieved through innovations powered by good education

Agro-tourism

Thailand's organic policies are still in an infant stage where most of the strategies are focused on production. Mundang Village, during its first take-off period, was not different from what Thailand is going through now. Once the production policies were stabilized however, Mundang did not put a stop sign to their development but spilled over into other service sector such as the Agro-tourism. The Korean government expanded the support for organic agriculture into tourism and local enterprises. A joint effort of the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Tourism

lured many foreign tourists to the unexplored beauty of Korea's rural areas, including the Mundang Village. The government provided assistance in tourist attraction program and accommodations for both domestic and international tourists to spend few days in the village experiencing how organic agriculture works, thereby increasing awareness of the visitors on the benefits of organic farming and promoting the unique products of the Mundang Village. The Northeastern Province of Thailand can adopt a similar plan to lure tourists into the organic-experience tourism where the visitors can engage in farming during harvesting season, and engage in various activities that could be done on farm.

Government accountability

Like most of the countries around the world, both Thailand and Korea's organic movement hatched from the farmers and NGOs who have practiced organic agriculture as a means of life to sustain the environment and maintain healthy livelihood. When the role of government factored in, the two countries' path to development diverged. Whereas Korean government remained consistent and focused on promoting organic agriculture through reinforcement policies on projects based on its 5 Year Plans which have been evaluated and revised periodically, turbulent political situation in Thailand compounded with frequent reshuffles in cabinet had disallowed conditions for policies to be implemented in a stable manner. To the farmers and producers, continued effort of government is a sign of commitment that buys credibility and a stimulus to keep on with the development efforts. It is difficult to endure the painstaking time and effort invested into organic practice if the supporting entity, the government, performs precarious operations and instable policy implementations. As a governing entity of the nation, it is important for the government to display stability in policy direction and implementation to gain trust from the farmers. Like Mundang, farmers will continue the organic practice despite the difficulties they encounter, as long as the government, an authoritative and paternal figure in Korea, is there to support their endeavor.

5.3 “Empowerment” as a Concept in Government Support for Organic Farming and its Limitations

Empowerment, as discussed in the beginning of the chapter, is having the power and control over decision as to, in the context of organic farming, chose where and what will be produced, how to carry out the task, and making income out of it to sustain and further improve their livelihood. Similarly, economic empowerment in the context of this research means increase in ownership and control of their productions. In order for the farmers to exercise such empowerment however, a strong foothold of organic network should precede. The establishment of such groundwork, this research argues, owes largely to the role of the government as a central entity that initiates, directs, the development of organic agriculture in a national level and also coordinate between key actors of organic network and provide support to them according to their needs.

The policies of the Thai government towards organic farming and agriculture in general, do not contain the concept of empowerment. The core limitation of Thailand’s policy in promoting organic farming for the empowerment of farmers is the absence of the concept of empowerment in its policies. It has for a long time, employed top-down policy implementations where the government acts as a center and the instructor of development plans without sufficient consultation with non-governmental key actors or taking into considerations their stance on development. Its over-centralized operation handed down policies that were enforced to be enacted in uniformity, disallowing modifications and customization in each farms. Such hierarchal implementation of policies does not pave way to empowerment but digresses completely off of it. Moreover, such method of policy implementation nurtures the beneficiaries to depend completely on the government without individually exploring different options that paves way to development. This can create a culture where the farmers can be viewed as a baby bird that can do nothing productive but to wait for the mother bird to feed the slug into their mouth. Farmers should not look to the government as the only succor for development, but should be motivated and committed to take on to the development of their kind. The role of government is stimulating the farmers could be in various form such as providing financial incentives, subsidies, and projects, but the most important of all, is to

provide accurate information and training for the farmers to learn, practice, and be empowered with. Only well informed and empowered farmers can complement the development efforts and plans. A comprehensive and well-strategized plan is imperative as guidance, but the actors who play out the strategies needs to be well-informed, spirited, and convinced with the government and its plans in order to carry it out efficiently.

5.4 Implication of Korean Model to Thailand's Context – Possibilities and Limitations

It is dangerous to apply the “one size fits all” idea or model into the development context, as various factors and country conditions require different measures that are appropriate to its needs. Thus, this research does not intend to impose the Korean model onto Thailand, and affirms that it is both impossible and irrelevant. The purpose of the research is to learn from the successful case of government assistance and explore to what extent it can be used to improve various areas of organic farming in Thailand. As the two nations are expanding their exchange in information from entertainment and education to agriculture, the research finds hope in the possibility of exchange in technology and policy framework in promoting organic agriculture between the two countries.

Thailand does have some favorable opportunities to developing and implementing successful policies like that of Korea. It has more export opportunities than Korea as the organic markets are growing overseas, which implies that it is only a matter of time for Thailand to be the leading country in organic production if a structured and efficient organic network system meets the abundant land and resources Thailand has compared to other countries. Thailand has even more opportunities in export markets than Korea, since its production capacity significantly larger. The enactment of National Agenda for Organic Agriculture also poses a favorable policy environment for Thailand. It implies that the government considers the agenda important and is committed to its development. However, the main limitation lies in the instable political system which hampers the realization of the National Agenda for Organic Agriculture. The government needs to remain consistent to the plans without making frequent changes or even mulling policies and projects

that were planned. If the government itself cannot lead the continued effort, the bureaucracy needs to take on the role of carrying the policy in a continuous and effective manner. Another limitation to effective execution of policies is the lack of cooperation between government sectors. Due to conflicting interests and bureaucratic issues, it is difficult for projects that involve multi-ministries and departments to make good progress. It is important that different actors unite under one cause and work to achieve the common goal.

Korea's 5 Year Plan is a good model that started off with production support and later expanded to other elements such as education, building up of demand-supply chain, and promoting agro-tourism. As Thailand's plans are still geared towards production process, it should also start to cover long term encouragement and other income-generating activities like agro-tourism of the area and home stay. The importance of education could not be stressed enough. As stated by the leader of Mundang Village, well-educated farmers will be empowered to explore their development options in organic agriculture and thereby complement the government's goal of improving farmer's livelihood through organic agriculture. It is more favorable for the government to relegate the role of education to agricultural extensions that have more knowledge and on-field experience than the government, and ensure that quality training is delivered to the farmers by supporting, monitoring, and evaluating the extension on a regular basis.

The government's role again, is not a dictator, but a facilitator. It is important for the government strengthen multi-actor network by coordinating between key actors and providing support in establishing the network. Providing assistance in securing supply chain and logistics is imperative to develop a sustainable organic network where the government does not have to take the burden of subsidizing farming and distribution. Also, organic farming should be a viable option, not a forced, top-down implementation by the government. The villagers of Mundang were ready and willing to take on the organic practice with the support of government. Similarly, the Thai government should seek for such communities that have the potential and spirit to develop organic practice and needs government assistance to actualize it.

Promoting organic farming involves many factors and key actors. Financing, education, logistics, servicing, and many more factors need to be planned in an overall fashion prior to the implementation of policies as partial support often fails due to discontinuity along the process. A comprehensive picture of the development needs to be both holistic and specific at the same time to monitor the development direction and make adjustments to digressions. Korea provided a holistic empowerment to the farmers by strategizing the development from production to distribution to consumption, whereas in Thailand, partial or fragmented empowerment was promoted due to lack of holistic policy comprehension and implementation. Thailand still has unlimited potential in emerging as the leading nation in organic agriculture. Once the lessons learned in Korea are implemented appropriately to the Thai context, its farmers will be empowered through organic agriculture to produce healthy goods and services that bring good economic return as well as improved livelihoods(Yang 2000).

The logo of Chulalongkorn University, featuring a central emblem with a crown and a sunburst, surrounded by a circular border with Thai script.

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APPENDIX



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VITA

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