



Leaving the bustling streets of Bangkok behind, the trip leads us to the province of Suphanburi. Suddenly the picture changes: Rice fields line the streets, farmers are working in the fields. After a three-hour trip, the eye is caught by the building of Suriya Sriphothong's farm. There are rice plants all around, the wind blows through bamboo stalks, bananas, sugar cane and mango trees.

Suriya is 35 years old and has diversified his business some time ago. He plants rice on less than a hectare and uses the remaining two hectares for other crops: "Eight years ago, I took over the business from my parents and I knew that I had no chance with rice alone." The young man is very satisfied with his rice field, in a few weeks it will be time for harvest. Fertilisers and crop protection products are part of his production inputs, well measured and applied expertly. Suriya leans over his rice plants and lovingly holds a small insect in his hand: "Look, this species is only found among farmers who know how to handle crop protection products."

In 2014, a TV reality contest was launched by BRIA and BASF (Thai) Limited in collaboration with the Rice Department and the Thai Farm Channel. "Farmers Love Safety" featured two teams of farmers from two major rice producing provinces, Suphanburi and Ayutthaya.

The teams competed in sharing knowledge with farmers in the surrounding communities. All activities were recorded and broadcast in the form of a both entertaining and educating TV show. The final production was aired on the popular SMILE Farmers program on Farm Channel from October 2 to December 18, 2014. Members of the two teams were trained in responsible and judicious use of crop protection products (CPPs) at the Rice and Farmer School of the Rice Department.

In the TV reality contest, Suriya has been part of the Suphanburi team. After participating in the Rice Department training, he and his team had trained 35 neighbours in the first session, the second class was attended by an impressive 106 participants.



Training Topics

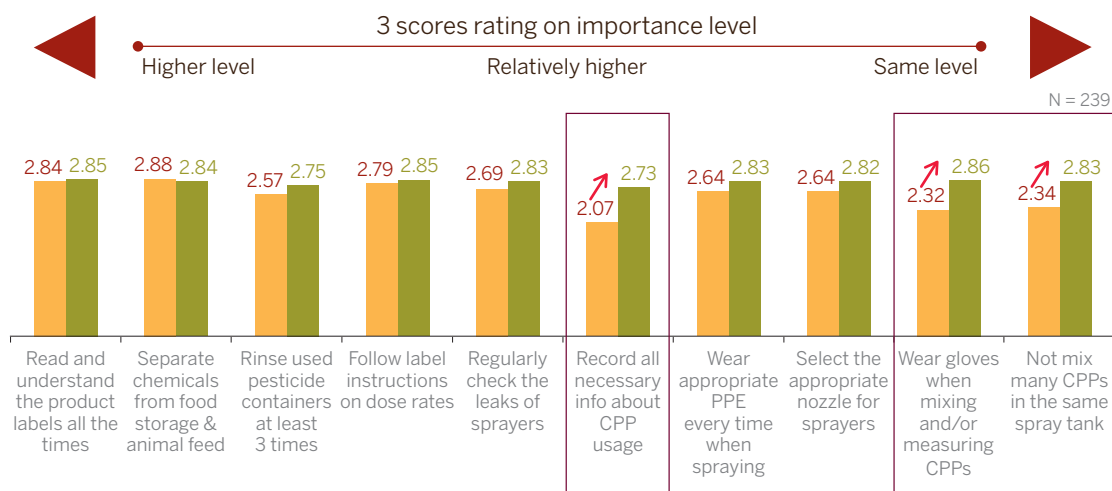
- understanding risks and effects of improper use of CPPs and reading product labels
- effective and proper use of application equipment and CPPs in the field
- effective protection of farmers and the environment while using CPPs, including guidelines on proper personal protective equipment (PPE)

The young man points out the challenges: “It was pretty difficult to motivate the farmers to come to our trainings. Some of them think that they won’t be able to learn anything new, others are not willing to drive the distance and many obviously do not care if they do not work safely.” Suriya mobilised his contacts in the community and convinced many colleagues to come, even those who were not really interested in the beginning. The team came up with quizzes to entertain the participants and included practical exercises. In Suriya’s opinion,

the combination of training and TV show is perfect: “The audience can see once again how they should work and what to look out for. This helps to enhance the information, reaching out to an even greater number of farmers.”

A total of 276 farmers joined the training sessions. 62% were more than 50 years old and 77% had an annual income of less than or equal to 180,000 Baht. The majority owned 30 rai (12 acres) of rice field.

Pre and Post Training Evaluation of 10 Aspects Related to Safe and Effective Use of Crop Protection Products.

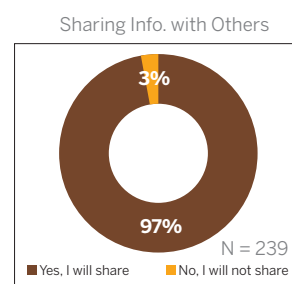
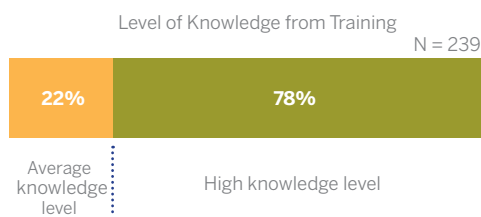


The farmers learned about the benefits of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which is an effective and sensitive approach to pest management that keeps pesticides and other interventions to levels that are economically justified and minimizes risks to human health and the environment. After the training, the participants displayed higher awareness of the safe and effective use of CPPs and the majority was willing to change to proper, safe and effective use of CPPs. 78% stated that the newly

gained knowledge from trainings was useful and 97% even showed willingness to share the knowledge with others. The TV broadcast was expected to reach at least 10,000 farmers in these two rice producing provinces as well as others receiving Farm Channel. The extended outreach will also motivate more young farmers and women to get involved, which is of particular interest for BRIA.

Assessment of Level of Knowledge from Training

78% say the knowledge gained from the training is very useful and 97% are willing to share the knowledge from the training with others.



A second phase of the TV show with a wider topic range is going to start. The outcomes of this and the preceding activity help to reach the set objectives of BRIA Thailand, including that trained farmers adopt recommended farming practices and reduce the application of harmful pesticides.

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