

Developing vegetable value chains to meet evolving market expectations in the

Key details

Location Philippines

Duration Start Feb 2019

End Jun 2024

Budget

Commissioned organisation Applied Horticultural Research, Australia

Partners

Applied Horticultural Research, Australia; East West Seed Company Inc, Thailand; Landcare Foundation of the Philippines Inc; NSW Department of Primary Industries, Australia; Visayas State College of Agriculture, Philippines

AUD 3,113,477

Project Leader

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Program	<u>Horticulture</u>	
Project code	HORT/2016/188	





Overview

This project aims to improve the capacity of selected vegetable supply chains in the Philippines to deliver vegetables that better meet consumer expectations in terms of quality, food safety, nutritional value and price.

Filipinos have been found to eat 25% less vegetables than what is recommended by the World Health Organisation. The reasons for low consumption of vegetables include availability, affordability and other cultural and dietary factors including the perception of quality and safety of vegetables.

Market expectations are changing in the Philippines, as consumers are increasingly interested in purchasing vegetables that are certified as safe to eat. However, vegetable farmers are not well trained in the appropriate use of pesticides and continue to use unsafe pest control practices involving broad-spectrum and persistent insecticides, resulting in excessive pesticide residues in harvested crops, and exposing farm workers to pesticide poisoning.

A better solution, to be explored and developed by this project, could be a scaled good agricultural practice system which could be readily implemented, linking with the market understand what consumers want and attract a premium price for certified safe-to-eat, high quality vegetables.

Expected project outcomes

- Understanding the food safety, regulatory and consumer environment in which vegetable value chains operate.
- Developing, testing and refining a staged good agricultural practice protocol to supply consumers with safe vegetables in the Philippines.
- Developing and evaluating technologies and capacity to deliver a good agricultural practice protocol in selected vegetable value chains.

Summary of outcomes to date

2021–22

- Six pilot value chains have been established in Leyte and Mindanao. Some of the 130 farmers involved are now receiving 48% higher prices on average compared to traditional markets with sustained linkages to markets such as supermarkets, concessionaires, hospitals, fast food chains and public market stalls. The farmers are increasing their supply of high quality vegetables produced according to PhilGAP protocols.
- Three project pilot farms in Leyte have now achieved PhilGAP certification with another six farms soon ready to be certified. Since becoming certified, one farmer has achieved a price premium of PHP20/kg for his vegetables and has setup a

GAP certified stall at the traditional local market. An easier to implement, 'stepped-PhilGAP' training system has been developed, and all project pilot farmers have completed at least 2 out of 4 levels of PhilGAP compliance training.

- A new onion industry is now commercial in Leyte as a direct result of project activities. Successful trials of onion crops in lowland areas of Leyte led to ongoing commercial production by pilot farmers. The project is now focussing on other high value crops which have not been widely grown in Leyte, such as garlic, carrots, and strawberries.
- A new PhilGAP safe vegetable store is now operating in the Baybay wet market. The project has gained support from the Baybay city government to develop a PhilGAP certified section of the Baybay market.
- A Rapid Market Analysis in Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, and Leyte has shown that farmers need to connect to niche value chains since the market for GAP certified vegetables is immature and, in most cases, there is no price premium for GAP within a market – better prices are achieved through linking to higher value markets.
- Food safety testing capacity has improved at Visayas State University (VSU) as a result of the project and testing on pilot farms has identified microbial contamination in irrigation water, soil, manures, crop protection products and harvested crops. Interventions were trialled in the Philippines and Australia and include the use of withholding periods following the application of manures to soil or contaminated irrigation water to crops.

