



**PROJECT «NETWORK FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
THINK-TANKS FOR COUNTRIES IN MEKONG SUB-REGION (NARDT)»**



Regional research

Agricultural innovations review in Sub-Mekong region countries

**Communal economic and technical team model in Kien Giang
province – Viet Nam**

1. Introduction

In the process of carrying out their production activities, farmers are always supported by the State's agricultural extension services through participating in training courses on models, and technical support from extension staff. However, with a 3-level organizational model including the country (National Center for Agriculture and Fisheries Extension), Provincial Agricultural Extension Center, and District Agricultural Extension Station. In each commune, there is a grassroots agricultural extension that cannot meet the needs of technical support for people in the development trend of agriculture and rural development. Therefore, the technical support is often not timely, especially in the risks of livestock and crops (pests and diseases). That is not to mention the technical support or advice on non-technical issues such as the consumption market, the supply of input materials, etc.

Realizing these "breaks" of the current agricultural extension system, Kien Giang province took the lead in establishing a commune-level economic and technical team to connect farmers with the market (input, output, science, and technology) to facilitate their production and promptly handle difficulties and obstacles, reduce risks and accelerate the application of scientific and technological advances to practice increasing income and improve living standards. countryside.

2. Model development

The model of economic and technical groups has been implemented by the Department of Agriculture and Agricultural Development of Kien Giang province since 2006. This is also the first province of Vietnam to successfully implement the model of agricultural economic and technical groups. commune to send agricultural extension workers to the grassroots. At present, the Agricultural Extension Center has 116 agricultural economic and technical teams located in 116 communes in the province (including three staff specialized in cultivation, animal husbandry and fisheries) and 12 agricultural extension workers in the remaining communes. There are the teams of agricultural extension workers who work side by side with farmers, transfer science and technology, significantly contribute to improving the lives of farmers, changing the face of the countryside with practical jobs. In addition, the Economic and Technical Team also contributes to advising commune leaders in fields related to agricultural production in the locality.

The staff in this economic and technical teams are district agricultural extension officers who are sent to communes with a basic salary from the budget of agricultural extension, but they only guarantee the basic salary, not counting their seniority and seniority. salary increases over time. While the localities supported by arranging working rooms at the headquarters of the Commune People's Committee for the staff of the economic and technical team to live and work. Some places also enthusiastically support monthly electricity consumption, gas money for brothers to travel; District Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Center is equipped with working desks, computers with internet connection, purchasing documents, etc.

During the operation, the staff of the Economic and Technical Team coordinated with the authorities and mass organizations at the grassroots level to open nearly 5,000 classes of technical dissemination for nearly 139,000 turns of farmers to absorb the following contents: rice cultivation, vegetables, aquaculture, livestock, and poultry farming. In addition, economic and technical groups also coordinated with institutes, schools, program managers, centers to open 1,947 thematic classes for each type of crop and livestock for 52,443 turns of farmers, while also regularly monitoring the activities of 175 clubs Department of Agriculture Extension in the province.

Staffs of Economic and Technical Team and farmers



Source: IPSARD's Research Team, 2022.

Demonstration models and science and technology transfer were also carried out by this group. For rice, the Technical and Economic Team has propagated certification for 14,852 farmer households with a total cultivation area of 3,864 ha; intensive farming model "3 decrease - 3 increase" for an area of 1,433 ha with an average of 1 ha per farmer.

For vegetables and fruit trees, the economic and technical teams have implemented 137 models: growing vegetables in net houses, using agricultural mulch in green vegetable production, making use of the bare land around the house to grow straw mushrooms, reishi mushrooms. abalone mushrooms...

In the field of livestock, poultry, aquatic products, economic and technical groups have helped farmers implement many effective models, such as fattening beef cattle, raising reproductive cows, raising pigs, chickens, and ducks. whole biology, raising snakes and elephants, intensive and semi-intensive black tiger shrimp farming, raising blood cockles in coastal alluvium...

In the field of agricultural mechanization, economic and technical teams have actively participated in the demonstration of mechanical machines and equipment for production such as combine harvesters, rice dryers; participated in assisting many farmers in legal procedures to get preferential loans to buy agricultural machines.

In addition to professional work, the staff of the Economic and Technical Teams also participate in many other activities in the locality such as coordinating with veterinary specialties to do vaccination, plant protection to grasp the epidemic situation and other activities. agricultural project programs, new rural construction (as production models), rural vocational training.

Thus, the establishment of the commune-level economic and technical team has well solved the link between farmers and the market, promoting the application of advanced production models. This model has brought scientific and technical knowledge to farmers faster and more efficiently. In particular, the problems arising in the farming process of the people are consulted and solved by a team of technicians in a timely manner to reduce losses and increase production efficiency.

Institutionally, applying this model in Kien Giang province has provided lessons learned to build management and operation for community extension groups that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development introduced in the process of renewal of current agricultural extension network in the new situation.

3. Opportunities and challenges of the model

The biggest opportunity that the economic-technical team model brings to farmers in the farming process is timely and effective technical support through state agricultural

extension activities. The connection between farmers and technical staff is more frequent and closer. This model requires the preparation of knowledge and understanding of agricultural farming practices for staff in the team, minimizing conservatism and lack of dynamism.

These activities have helped the technical staff to have conditions to practice in real life and from that they can accumulate a lot of experience to improve their professional qualifications, skills, and knowledge.

This model is good lessons for the implementation of the model of community extension network in the agricultural extension renewal strategy of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

During its operation, the Technical and Economic Team also encountered many difficulties and challenges. Firstly, with low wages, it is difficult to mobilize a contingent of highly qualified staff. Many technical staff, although working for a long time, still receive only low salary according to their trained qualifications, so they are not satisfied with their work. Moreover, the budget allocated to the economic-economic team is too low, only enough to maintain political activities according to the functions and tasks set out, but not yet be able to do more services for farmers to earn additional income.

4. Conclusion

The model of the economic and technical team in Kien Giang province has partly brought out positive aspects in connecting agricultural extension activities with farmers in the process of agricultural and rural development in the area. Demonstration models are adopted by people faster. Diseases on crops and livestock are monitored in a timely manner and effectively reduce significant economic and environmental losses. The agricultural extension team works side by side with farmers on transferring science and technology, significantly contributing to improving the lives of people and changing the face of the countryside with practical jobs. In addition to the role of transferring technical advances, the Economic and Technical Team also contributes to advising commune leaders in fields related to agricultural production in the locality.

From the important contributions of the Agricultural Economic and Economic Team over the past time, it can be affirmed that the position and indispensable role of the agricultural extension network activities at the grassroots level in the development of

agriculture, farmers, and rural areas. More importantly, the operation of the grassroots agricultural extension network also has great political and social security significance, especially in remote and isolated areas; contributed greatly to the National Target Program on hunger eradication and poverty reduction, agricultural restructuring, and new rural construction of Kien Giang province.

With these advantages, the economic and technical team model can be good lessons learned for the development of the community agricultural extension system in the future.