

## PREFACE

This study is an attempt to investigate the various aspects of marketing of farm products from producers' perspective in Block S4, Sekinchan, with special emphasis on the problems faced by them and how these problems could have been solved. It is presented in six parts.

The introduction in Chapter I explains the methodology adopted and the scope of the investigation while Chapter II gives the general background knowledge of the Sekinchan Irrigation Area and Block S4.

The marketing of seven selected farm products is presented in the proceeding three chapters on the basis of types of products marketed. Chapter III attempts to examine the marketing of padi from its various aspects; Chapter IV the marketing of vegetables and Chapter V the marketing of maize and sweet potato.

My conclusion in Chapter VI is an attempt to show what I consider to be the marketing problems faced by the farmers in Block S4 and most likely also by other farmers in Sekinchan, taken as a whole and based on the findings of the preceding three chapters. In the light of present condition, recommendations are given at the end of the chapter for Sekinchan as a whole.

# A STUDY OF ASPECTS OF MAKING FROM PRODUCERS' PERSPECTIVE

## IN BLOCK S4, SEKINCHAN

### A SYNOPSIS

This report presents statistical data on various aspects of marketing of farm products from producers' perspective, as a basis for activities designed to improve the marketing system in particular and the welfare of the peasant farmers in general. The data were collected on off-season padi crop of 1965 and six selected off-season crops of 1964 from 25 farmers who operated the lots in Block S4, Sekinchan.

The information on various aspects of marketing is presented according to types of produce studied.

The products were not generally of high quality, according to farmers and dealers interviewed and from the writer's own observations. They were also of low degree of uniformity which made efficient marketing difficult. 80% of the farmers interviewed operated three acres of padi land each, while for each type of off-season crops, the scale of production was even smaller, for each farmer cultivated a combination of three or four crops on a padi lot.

Gross yield was low and that the farmers did not know the exact acreage under each type of off-season crop, which might therefore result in a marketing surplus for one crop and too little supply for another. The off-season <sup>crops</sup> in particular, experienced variation in supply during the harvesting period, hence price variation.

Padi was sold to the local cooperative rice mill societies limited and also to private padi dealers who were the shopkeepers/money lenders. The sale outlets for off-season crops were mainly local wholesale merchants/agents and outside dealers who were mostly if not all, wholesale merchants/retailers.

The pricing system was unsatisfactory. The price of padi was "fixed" so to speak, by the local cooperative rice mills and the private padi dealers at \$13.80 per pikul, regardless of degree of moisture content and cleanliness and the quality of the produce. For off-season crops, the price was fixed on the basis of supply in Sekinchan and forces of supply and demand in neighbouring towns plus the personalities and knowledge of the farmers.

The farmers were shown to be mainly financed by the shopkeepers in the sense that goods were allowed to be taken on credit during the planting seasons. This resulted in farmers' obligation to sell to

padi to these shopkeepers and a "a little" higher price for the more "expensive" items like farm implements etc.

There was no true grading done. Padi for sale was not dried and winnowed, though little cleaning was carried out.

Packing methods for vegetables were unsatisfactory and the storage facilities at local dealers' shops were highly inadequate.

Weighing instrument called "Daohing" in Malay was used which encouraged cheating. Handling was rough and unintelligent, both on the farms and at the shops.

Transport facilities were also inadequate especially during the middle of the harvesting period when supply was maximum and demand for lorries was the highest. As a result produce had to be stored away for three or four days in case of padi and one or two days in case of off-season crops.

The farmers had to face the risks of price variation, the very low level of minimum price for off-season crops, particularly vegetables, and the risks of selling to the "wrong" dealers.

Market information was greatly lacking in Block S4 and the whole of Sekinehan, to assist farmers in making decisions right from the time of planting until the produce had passed out of their hands on the market.

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