



Nedspice- Farmers Partnership Programme Update February 2017

Nedspice believes that backward integration and sustainability are the main challenges for the food industry in the years ahead. To ensure that spice farming remains financially attractive and offers a sustainable livelihood for farmers Nedspice has initiated the development of backward integration programmes for farmers in Vietnam, India and other countries we work in. This ambition is laid down in the Nedspice-Farmers Partnership Programme which defines the approach, key principles as well as the expected results. See below an update on the latest activities for the NFPP projects in Vietnam and India.

Vietnam Pepper

First observation during the field visits and farmer's interviews in Binh Phuoc indicates that the crop yield for 2016-17 may be the same as last year. The field team is closely monitoring this situation. Harvest is expected to start in February of 2017.

Field activities

- Internal audits have been performed for the annual Rainforest Alliance audit in Jan/Feb of 2017.
- Monitoring program: mapping the agricultural chemicals used by farmer members to sort out the high-risk farms for collecting purposes later.

NFPP Development

During 2016 key activities took place to strengthen the NFPP position such as:

- Loc Ninh: opening ceremony for 2 pepper cooperatives joining NFPP.
- Local authorities and Dutch Consul General visit our factory in Binh Duong.
- Dong Xoai: workshop of national & regional MARD/AEC's (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development / Agriculture Extension Center) on pepper production sustainability.



Training

Right after the harvest finished in May 2016, more technical training was provided to farmers to support them to start the new crop season in the right way. During the training session, the usage of crop protection chemicals was strongly focused on to ensure the control of residues at the early stages of farming practice.

Limiting chemical residue is really the key issue in pepper growing at the moment. All related stakeholders are working together to improve the situation in the years ahead. A positive signal for control is the Government's action to stop or find alternatives for certain crop protection chemicals.

Rainforest Alliance Certification

The RA annual audit result and Certificate have been issued by RA. The new certificate is including CoC (Chain of Custody) standard and valid from April 8, 2015 to April 7, 2018. RA also announced the revised certification standard that will come into force from July 1 2017 onwards.



Sustainable pepper commercial activities

We collected 1200 tons from 523 farmer members, 90% of farmer members sold their pepper to us.

Labour

The farms in our NFPP program are small with average acreage of about 1-2 HA per household. This means they mostly use the family labour forces to manage their farm during the year but they do hire extra workers for season activities such as harvesting, fertilizing, farm cleaning etc. The current size of the programme creates jobs for 523 households and more than 6000 hired workers a year.

India Cumin

Objective: For the last four years we have been expanding our cumin project. The focus for 2017 will be on improving efficiency and consistency. We will do this by bringing in high end IT technology, effective training sessions and thorough validation of field trials.

Area screening, farmer selection and sowing were completed in December 2016. Germination was delayed owing to warmer weather. Farmer Training on soil preparation and good agricultural practices was conducted in all the areas. A full-time cumin agri specialist joined us for conducting extensive farmer awareness and training.

Improvements for customers:

- Cumin guaranteed to meet Japan/US/EU norms through careful area and farmer selection.
- Comprehensive sampling plan for accurate results in analysis.

Area & Farmer Selection:

- There will be no expansion for the cumin project in 2017. The project size has grown from 80mt to 1200mt over the last four years. It was decided to improve excellence & efficiency from the current registered farmers.
- Pest and weather monitoring station for data build up was installed.
- USAC (Unilever Sustainable Agriculture Code) implementation in the existing area.

Sustainable Agricultural practices:

- Training programs and demonstration on occupational health & safety are in progress.
- Integrated pest management awareness programs and better use of natural resources management study is in progress.



Introduction of NFPP mobile app:

Last year we introduced the digitalisation of the farms on a trial basis. Since then we have seen good reviews and we saw the benefits of introducing IT technology to our project farms. This prompted us to develop our own NFPP app customised to our project. This new app will be extensively used in the project. NFPP project farms will be converted into Smart Farms using this technology and the complete project will be digitalised:

- We can see updates on what the farmers are doing on their land.
- Farm data storage on cloud based server, historical data can be built up.
- Farmers can see how they make progress year after year, which is very cumbersome under the current general trade practice of farm diaries.
- We can estimate the crop and alternative plans can be made if required.
- Smart alerts can be broadcasted by village or by region.
- Weather forecast to help farmers and NFPP staff prepare for contingency.
- Traceability will be online.



India Better Turmeric Initiative



Objective: After continuous four years' expansion of the turmeric project, the focus is on improving efficiency and consistency and on improving the post-harvest practices.

Crop Information: Crop is at pre-harvest stages currently and is maturing (i.e. gaining flesh/weight). By January the maturing process will be over and harvesting will be done by February. Yields are expected to be down by 10-15% compared to last year due to rain fall shortage and increased dry weather. Qualities are expected to be better in Andhra Pradesh, we don't see much of crop damage due to pest attack.

Farmer training on post-harvest management practices were conducted and awareness programmes on occupational health and safety are in progress.

Field Staff training on sustainable agricultural practices, post-harvest data and traceability recording were completed. Training programmes on biodiversity, natural resources management and occupational health were also completed. Campaigns on safe storage and handling of agricultural chemicals are in progress. Demonstration on crop protection chemicals handling and after wash measures conducted and activities of Better Turmeric Initiative (BTI) have begun. Nedspice BTI project has set up its own post harvesting processing unit in Kadapa district. The unit is designed to waterwash the fresh turmeric fingers and scrub off any remaining mud. Steam boiling and drying on concrete yards, under covered /protected area. The whole process will ensure lot traceability and hygienic processing.

