Extension approaches to scaling out livestock production in Northern Lao PDR

Description:
The project aims to assist the Lao government in fostering further adoption of improved livestock production by adapting extension methods and staff development approaches across five northern provinces in Laos.

The research is funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) to the value of $400,000, running from 2007 to 2011. Researchers include Dr Joanne Millar, Project Leader (ILWS), Anne Stelling, Research Officer (ILWS), Viengxay Photakoun (CSU Masters Student) and Boualy Sendara, Project Coordinator (NAFES).

Objectives:
1: Adapt livestock extension approaches to targeted poor districts in northern Laos
2: Evaluate the cost effectiveness and on ground impacts of a range of capacity building techniques being used for livestock extension staff

Methods:
Researchers from CSU and the Lao National Agriculture and Forestry Extension Service use action research methods to train district extension staff in working effectively with farmers and evaluating the social, economic and environmental impact of their work. Research methods used include semi-structured interviews with national, provincial and district staff, staff workshops, farmer interviews and focus groups, field observation and competency surveys.

An evaluation of a government and NGO partnership approach to expanding legumes for pigs was also conducted from July to October 2008 using interviews with government and NGO staff (see report 49 below).

Findings to date:
Farmers who attended the cross visits have doubled their forage area and increased cattle, pig and goat numbers. District extension staff have developed competencies in running cross visits and developing case studies but need capacity building in facilitation and mentoring. Capacity building methods used in livestock projects include workshop and onsite training, on the job learning, mentoring, monthly meetings, farmer field schools, cross visits and study tours.

Policy implications and anticipated outcomes
Recommendations for further extension training and mentoring of district staff have been taken up by the Livestock Development Project in Laos aimed at reducing poverty for 20,000 upland households.

Publications:


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