

CHAPTER IV

KEY POINTS FROM FIELD OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. OBSERVATION: There have been some study tours to other villages of the same tribe, but usually for one-day only.

SUGGESTION: More study tours, especially of two or three days duration, would allow more opportunity for exchange of ideas. On one day trips, most of the available time (and participants' energy) goes into traveling back and forth to the training.

2. OBSERVATION: Village problems seem to be identified by the project rather than by the villagers. Also, there seemed to be a degree of peloria: the same activity is conducted in several villages because it is more convenient for the project, e.g., "it wouldn't pay to bring seeds to only one area, rather than for the farmers."

SUGGESTION: A formal problem census conducted with the villagers, e.g., at a meeting in the village, would make the problems be more villager ideas. The Project provides each village a list of "available"

project options. When all villages always accept all project "options" and all villages do the same project, it appears that both "problems" and "solutions" are imposed from outside.

3. OBSERVATION: Project extension personnel visit villages only on an irregular basis, one or more times a month. There were fewer visits during the rainy season, when all-important agricultural activities take place.

SUGGESTION: If one extension agent were assigned responsibility for three villages and he LIVED IN THE VILLAGE FULL TIME he would be able to provide better service. Consider having these in-village agents join Doi Sam Mun Highland Development Project monthly meetings for their in-village extension workers; consider asking Doi Sam Mun to help train ADRA in-village agents. Consider study tours to Sam Mun villages for ADRA extension agents.

4. OBSERVATION: Villagers said that coffee beans dried and turned black on the tree and some trees died. They had notified no one of this and did not know what to do to solve the problem. Soybean production had problems with plants failing in some villages.

SUGGESTION: If there were a permanent project extension official in the village, problems such as these could be brought to the attention of expert extension agents in a timely manner. In addition, the villagers could learn how to contact extension experts themselves when the project ends.

5. OBSERVATION: Some village fields are on land where erosion could be a serious problem. There was evidence that the villagers are aware of the need for soil and water conservation. Villages had maps of the village which showed the location of buildings, but not fields.

SUGGESTION: More training on the benefits and methods of soil and water conservation would help. Maps of farmers' fields, reaccomplished annually, would provide visual documentation of moves from steep slopes to more suitable areas. This is done effectively by the Doi Sam Mun project.

6. OBSERVATION: No evidence of preparation of villagers to maintain water supply systems was seen.

SUGGESTION: Water users groups, trained on how to maintain and repair water systems would be beneficial. Water user groups should be established first as a prerequisite

to any new water project.

7. OBSERVATION: Little interaction/cooperation with government officials (agricultural extension, forestry, etc.) was evident.

SUGGESTION: Knowing who government officials are and letting them know what the project is doing could aid cooperation and overall project effectiveness.

8. OBSERVATION: In at least some villages, the headman alone kept the records for loans of seed, etc., from the project.

SUGGESTION: If these records are kept by a village committee, record keeping becomes more a village rather than an individual function. Training the committee on how to keep books, etc., would be a worthwhile undertaking for the project.

9. OBSERVATION: The project provides fertilizer, pesticide, seed to villagers at cost exclusive of transportation (FOB Chiang Mai), then collects the repayment for these loans and maintains financial books and collects loans repayments.

SUGGESTION: It is suggested that villagers be taken to the market when inputs are to be purchased and that the cost of transportation be added to the loan price of the inputs. This would help villagers prepare to obtain their own inputs and pay real costs when the project terminates. If loans are repaid to a village revolving fund rather than to the project, villager self-help ability can be increased. This requires a village fund COMMITTEE to be formed and trained. Then the committee can loan to villagers at below market interest rates (currently 3% to 5% per month).

10. OBSERVATION: Project termination for each village is set at a specific number of years.

SUGGESTION: Consider 'graduating' villages when they have met present conditions/goals. This would allow limited project resources to be used where they will do the most good as new, needy villages could join the program and village able to help themselves would do so.

11. OBSERVATION: Villagers have some understanding of watersheds and their importance for agricultural production.

SUGGESTION: This subject would be suitable for extended training by the in-village extension worker. Encourage paddy development. Promote alley cropping with *Leucaena leucocephala*.

12. OBSERVATION: Merchants go to the villages to buy produce at a price equal to what the project offers according to many villagers.

SUGGESTION: Consider putting project marketing efforts into helping villagers sell as a group to merchants to get better prices rather than having the project purchase and resell commodities.