



Lowering the Negative Environmental Impacts of Rice Cultivation

Pesticides are widely and commonly used in Vietnam in the cultivation of rice. Around 160,000 tons of pesticide are imported and used nationally every year for rice and other crops. Currently about 10% of pesticides used are dumped indiscriminately in fields, in the form of used packaging and bottles. Pesticides, used without due care and attention, can cause damage to the environment: polluting water, soil and air, and have harmful effects on the health and livelihoods of communities.

The USAID-funded Vietnam Forests and Deltas (VFD) program has been teaching farmers about the risks of improper use and disposal of pesticides and fertilizers in four provinces – Nam Dinh, Long An, Nghe An and Thanh Hoa. By decreasing the amount of fertilizer and pesticides used in growing rice, while also ensuring proper disposal of waste products and packaging, costs and environmental impacts can be significantly decreased. In addition, improved practices can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and slow climate change.

In one of the districts where VFD is promoting improved practices, Hai Hau district in Nam Dinh, farmers currently use about 30 tons of pesticide a year. Working on a 5-hectare demonstration area, VFD has organized two training courses for 60 farmer households, and supplied and installed five collection tanks to collect waste from pesticides and fertilizers. The waste collection tanks are installed in the middle of cultivation areas, and act as both a convenient disposal point and constant reminder to use the chemical products carefully.

The success of these disposal points has prompted the local government to install 60 more garbage collection tanks. Hai Hau has now become a leading example of proper disposal of agricultural waste, a significant factor in protecting the rural environment. As a result of VFD support, in addition to improved environmental management, farmers and authorities are reporting an average yield increase of 11.5%.

This is one of the ways the VFD project, with the support of USAID, is protecting the environment, promoting green growth and tackling climate change in Vietnam. This work on low emission rice production has not only generated economic benefits but also contributed to an increased understanding of environmental protection and safe farming methods.

Ms Nguyen Thi Nguyet, a farmer from Hamlet 8, Hai Ha commune said, "Since the installation of garbage collection tanks, the environment in the cultivation areas has improved significantly; chemical packaging and bottles have been collected and disposed properly; people have been aware of the importance of keeping the environment clean by no longer throwing waste from pesticides and fertilizers indiscriminately."



Pesticide packaging waste in Hai Ha



A waste collection tank funded by VFD project



A farmer collecting garbage from plant protection chemicals in Hai Ha commune



A farmer collecting garbage from plant protection chemicals in Hai Ha commune