

Development through Vegetables



Millennium Development Goal 1: Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty

A greater source of prosperity

Vegetable production provides one of the best sources of jobs creation, and is a key means for helping to overcome hunger and poverty.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) committed the world community to halving the number of people living in absolute poverty and hunger by 2015. Despite initial successes, improvements could not be sustained on a long-term basis. For more than 800 million people in the world - one in every five in developing countries - hunger continues to be a daily reality.

Although there is sufficient food production on a global scale, food insecurity in many developing countries represents an ongoing challenge.

Vegetables create more jobs

Horticultural crops generate more jobs per hectare, on-farm and off-farm, than any staple-based agricultural enterprises. This benefits farmers and landless laborers in both rural and urban areas. The move from cereal production towards high value vegetables contributes to employment opportunities in developing countries. In developing countries it is foremost women who benefit, since they play a significant role in vegetable production. Besides creating jobs on farm, value-addition to horticultural crops creates new

jobs in associated agri-businesses and further down the commodity chain from the producer to the consumer.

COUNTRY	AVERAGE NUMBER OF LABOR DAYS PER HECTARE		
	Cereals	Vegetables	Increase (%)
Cambodia	81	437	440
Vietnam (southern)	111	297	168
Vietnam (northern)	216	468	117
Bangladesh	133	338	154
Lao PDR	101	227	125
Philippines	93	185	99
India	80	124	55

A recent study (see table) by Lumpkin & Weinberger (2005) documents this powerful impact: the vegetable sector is a job engine; the share of jobs related with vegetable production and other activities rose up to more than 400%.

Vegetables pay off

Vegetable crops can generate higher profits and incomes than staple crops, especially when land is relatively scarce and labor is abundant. The value of horticultural products per unit area is significantly higher than the value of the staple crops. Although the costs of inputs such as labor can be higher, the profits are higher and the income thus generated can be used for many different purposes from overcoming hunger to providing access to education and health care.

AVRDC - The World Vegetable Center is the principal international center for vegetable research and development in the world. As a not-for profit institute, research activities at AVRDC aim to alleviate poverty and malnutrition in developing countries through improved production and consumption of vegetables.

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