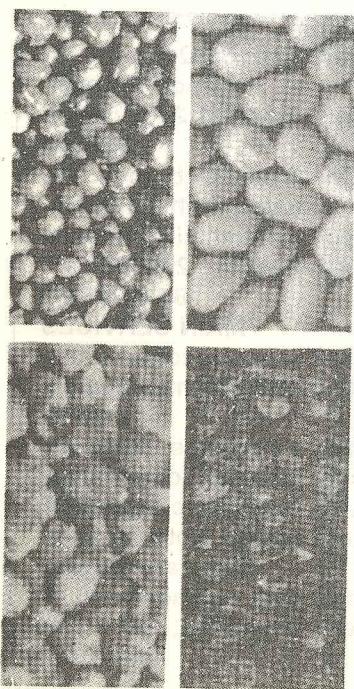




REALITY AND SOLUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRO - FORESTRY - FISHING ECONOMY IN MINH HÃI

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Minh Hải is a province lying in the southern pole of Vietnam, at the end of the Mekong Delta with the natural surface of 769,000 ha, accounting for 2.95% of the country's total area.

Agriculture with an area of 405,000 ha, occupies 4.9% of the country farming land, of which some 300,000 ha is used for growing rice. Yearly rice yield is over one million tonnes. Concerning pig husbandry about 390,000 pigs are marketed (over 32,000 tonnes). Duck flocks are well raised, reaching 4-5 million ducks per year.

Forestry takes 175,000 ha with two original ecological systems of forest such as one of sea water flooded forest (mangroves, aegiceras...) and another of fresh water flooded forest

came into being long time ago and is well-known in the Mekong Delta with a yearly yield of 12,000-15,000 tonnes of various kinds for consumption.

Minh Hải's population approximates 1.7 million of which 80% is working in the field of agro-forestry-fishing with above 590,000 laborers. There are 11 districts and towns with 119 wards and villages and 1,000 hamlets and 300,000 households. However population growth rate is still too high (about 2.2%), more than the country's average rate.

Agro-forestry-fishing economy in Minh Hải still bears features of dispersal, small-size production, and backward level. Water conservancy system to reclaim land in agriculture is poor and less effective. In agriculture coefficient of using land is still too low (1.03 turns per year), lowest in comparison with other areas in the Mekong Delta. The frequent salty penetration may threaten farming production. Forest safeguarding is weak, mangrove and malaleuca forest of thousands of hectare were annually destroyed by cutting and burning. Infrastructure, services network in the rural areas, capacity of marketing agricultural products on a large scale are underdeveloped. Employment and labor liberation problems in the countryside are not well settled. There are not yet effective and durable plans in agro-forestry-fishing, so the production still has many disproportional sides. The province do not yet make best use of ecological economic models in accordance with each ecological system, different economic areas such as ecological systems of sea water flooded forest, fresh water flooded forest, garden, agriculture...as well as proportion between breeding and catching with preservation of resources, exploiting and rebuilding resources with investment.

Transferring technology of exploiting, producing, processing agro-forestry-fishing products in harmony with features of ecological areas is not yet planned clearly. Tasks of technical scientific R & D and agro-forestry-fishing stimulation are less effective.

Resources planning for production is not stable. Environment protection and resources development are not strengthened and organized, even so far the province hasn't had regulations of safeguarding environment. In particular, evaluating the impact of the projects to improve agro-forestry-fishing on environment is played down. This just caused waste in using resources and ineffective exploitation of agro-forestry-fishing resources, at the same time raising product quality wasn't encouraged, thus output of products used

(malaleuca forest). These systems play decisive role in economic development, scientific research, environment protection. They are valuable in ecology and supply many precious special products such as boa, snake, turtle, bee honey, shrimp, fish and are places to preserve resources of birds and wildlife.

Minh Hải has over 134,000 ha area of breeding fishing products for consumption and export with high economic value and 307 km coastline prolonged from east to west, this is a large fishing farm with surface of 86,000 km², possessing great fishing potentials.

Seaproducts productivity reaches over 100,000 tonnes per year of which there are many products of high value for export such as shrimp, fish. In particular, the total bred shrimp productivity annually met with 30,000 tonnes. Thus Minh Hải is a biggest place of feeding shrimp in the whole country and in the Mekong Delta. Fresh water fish is a traditional product which

for consumption and export is lower than that of products made. Moreover environment pollution can be caused due to spontaneous production, production without environment protecting sense and the balance of economy and ecology in the agro-forestry-fishing field can be broken.

Policy on supporting production was not applied, capacity of expanding market was limited. Therefore Minh Hải has not attracted many international capital sources invested in agro-forestry-fishing. These restrictions if not removed will be hindrance to the province's agro-forestry-fishing production.

However, agro-forestry-fishing production has recently made new improvements. The alteration of agro-forestry-fishing structure aiming at producing goods had promising signs. The market economy has strong influence on many fields. Some following figures of goods sold out of the province worth considering: In 1977 there were only 11,000 tonnes of rice marketed outside the province, then this amount reached 350,000 tonnes in 1992. Similarly, 10,000 tonnes of pig in 1977 then 19,000 tonnes in 1992; 12,000 tonnes of fishing product in 1977 then 82,000 tonnes in 1992.

From the above mention it can be seen Minh Hải has great agro-forestry-fishing potential serving for consumer goods and export. It has gathered essential conditions but to assure sustainable development, agro-forestry-fishing economy here have to meet other important conditions. This should be paid full attention to in orientating durable plan of ecological economy as well as agro-forestry-fishing production for export and consumption. The province should have appropriate policies and solutions to agro-forestry-fishing structure alteration, targeting at producing goods for export and consumption, simultaneously secure firmly sustainable development, natural resources preservation and environment protection.

PLAN TO REARRANGE PRODUCTION

When changing into the market economy, goods production, particularly goods for export is stimulating strongly agro-forestry-fishing economy to meet with economic development. This leads to considering effectiveness of this resource. Thus, demand for plan of rearranging production is indispensable to accord with the market economy.

To do this the province should base on results of investigating and evaluating previous national programs of Cà Mau peninsular, on specific ecological areas, combine the country's

socio-economic development strategy with that of the locality with the new development viewpoint in the market economy and international cooperation in the period of open door policy. At the same time this is done on the basis of improving ecological economy and protecting durably environment so as to make plans for agro-forestry-fishing development. Planning should assure effectiveness of agro-forestry-fishing production, be in harmony with ecological features, enhancing productivity and quality of agro-forestry-fishing products used for processing and export. The plans should focus on orientating strategy and sustainable economic development. Every economic sectors should be made safe to invest in their businesses. Also, the plans should make conditions favourable for international cooperation and build agro-forestry-fishing areas having a scale big enough to export products to foreign markets.

MATTERS OF FARMING LAND AND RECLAIMING LAND

The radical matter of agro-forestry-fishing is to define clearly the right of using land. This is important foundation on which different economic sectors can feel safe to pour their money into agro-forestry-fishing development. Therefore Law of Land should be quickly implemented. In fact, this matter is still burning in Minh Hải. Minh Hải has two different ecological systems as one of seawater flooded forest and another of fresh water flooded forest with very different ways of exploiting, investing and developing. Regarding land there are ways of salty affection and aluminous affection. Thus the province need measures to reclaim land to make best use of agro-forestry-fishing potentials according to different requirements. To do it when having planned, the province should invest in forming system of surrounding dykes and sewers to prevent fresh water ecological system from salty affection and vice versa. Each kind of ecological system (salty, fresh) should be protected distinctly to develop.

Reclaiming land is a great task using many measures such as removing alum and salt, chemical settlement, cultivating technique in accordance with each land area, rotation of crops, diversifying plants and bred animals.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Measures of science, technology and environment have impact on stabilizing and improving firmly agro-forestry-fishing economy. It is needed to focus on the following orientations:

Investing in building strong

material foundation and training scientific and technological staff in order that they have enough skill and capability to assure the providing of firm scientific evidences for the authorities' decision in planning development strategy for the locality. They also can help evaluate influence of projects on environment in order to safeguard environment and exploit suitably natural resources.

Transferring appropriate technology to agro-forestry-fishing economy to exploit effectively and rebuild potentials of this economy. Concentrating on R & D and plant seed and animal breed suitable for export and consumption on a large scale. Focusing strongly on study and transfer of processing technology serving for large size export. Enhancing agro-forestry-fishing encouragement both in form of transferring and producing technique, simultaneously producers are required to take high responsibility.

Tasks of inspecting, controlling and protecting environment should be taken account of properly. The province need concentrate its power to prevent environment from destruction and downgrading due to influence of investment projects, at the same time safeguard environment for sustainable development of agro-forestry-fishing potentials, and its ecology.

POLICY MATTER

Implementing the Law of Land should be soon completed. Long term stable plans, agro-forestry-fishing should be well realized according to each ecological system. Law on Environment protection should be formulated and stipulations of safeguarding environment and examining development projects regarding environment need issuing.

The government should have policy to encourage appropriate technology transfer to rural production and various ecological areas by flexible and effective taxation, especially to areas the government want to develop and products for export and consumption.

State control or business management should comply to laws and the central unified policy. Policy of population and family planning need be strongly pushed up because high population growth rate currently give bad effects to socio-economic development.

Developing agro-forestry-fishing economy in Minh Hải is a great issue which needs proper and effective strategy so as to make high profit durably, at the same time protect and improve the resources and environment, preserve ecological environment for our descendants.