

Economic Activities in An Giang During the Flood Season

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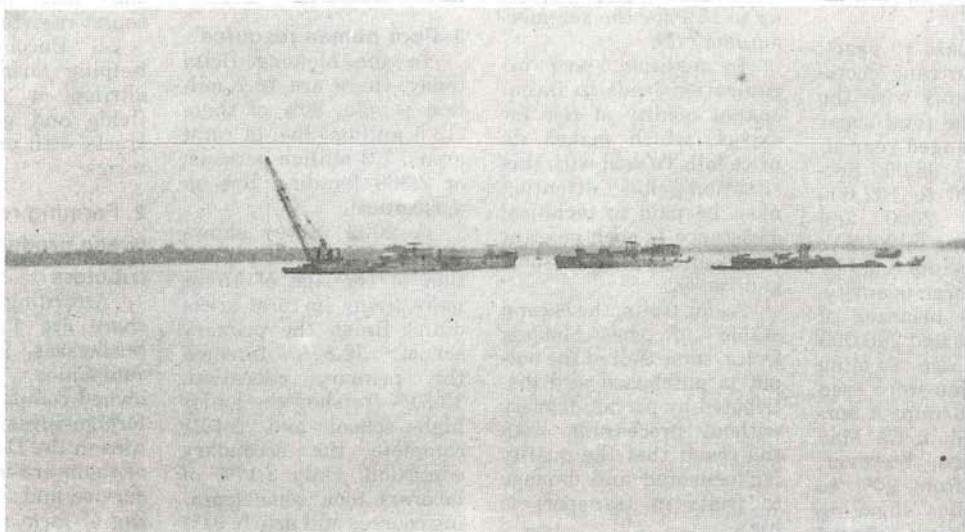
An Giang is bordered by Đồng Tháp (northeast), Cambodia (northwest), Kiên Giang (southwest) and Cần Thơ (southeast). Its borderline with Cambodia is some 100km long. It has 11 districts, or 150 communes, including two mountainous districts of Tri Tôn and Tịnh Biên. Its area is 340,623 hectares (262,986 hectares of farming land and 18,165 hectares of forest.) Its

as a source of both benefit and damage. After 1975, the concept "living with flood" came into being along with the notion that the flood only caused damage. In flood seasons in 2000, 2001 and 2002, water rose to a medium level (from 4.2m to 4.5m at Tân Châu), it was easy to make money without working too hard. In 1998 when the water didn't rise high, the income fell. When the water rose too high, as in

activities during the flood season in order to ensure jobs and income for local residents. The Plan, based on geographical conditions and the market demand, was carried out by the Service of Agriculture and Rural Development in co-operation with district authorities and the Service of Industry and it produced good results. In the 2003 flood season, 18 models grouped in three businesses were introduced

2002, because the price of rice was on the increase. The average yield of this crop was 4.7 tons a hectare and the total output was 297,770 tons. Engaged in this model were 105,018 laborers from 74,131 families.

- Growing the third crop of vegetables: 6,840 hectares equaling 119.16% of the planned target and 2,104 hectares higher than the 2002 area. This model employed 17,100 laborers



population in 2003 was 2,152,736 persons with 449,580 families; 76% of the population (or 339,849 families - 1,627,875 persons) lived on the agriculture. As for its racial structure, 91% of its population is Vietnamese; 4.08% has Chinese origin; 4.31% is Khmer and 0.61% is Champa.

In the past, local residents did many jobs to make money during the flood season and they tended to think of the flood

1961 and 1966, they couldn't do anything but move to high areas and stayed there for a month waiting for the water to fall. But after that month when the water started to fall, they could work on the waters to make some living. Their experience shows that the flood brings about some benefits if we know how to get them.

After the 2002 flood season, the An Giang government introduced the Plan 31 directing economic

and supported by local governments. They are as follows:

1. Crop - growing business

This business included five models attracting 136,657 laborers from 98,470 families:

- Growing the third rice crop: In 2003, the area of this crop reached its peak of 63,011 hectares equaling 108.83% of the planned target, 27,659 hectares higher than the area in

from 13,959 families.

To meet the market demand during the flood season, many poor families grew various kinds of vegetables on a total area of 4,646 hectares making an average profit of VND20 million per hectare. Reality shows that vegetable brings about a profit from two to four times higher than the rice does.

Generally the production of three crops a year varies over times and places but the most area in

An Giang is used for growing three crops of rice; two rice and one vegetable crops: 839.2 hectare; one rice and two vegetable crops: 621 hectares and three to four vegetable crops: 1,254.5 hectares.

- Growing rice on high-level fields: Some 7,000 laborers from 5,840 families engaged in this model growing rice on 2,375 hectares (2,375 hectares in Tri Tôn and 4,633 hectares in Tịnh Biên.)

- Growing floating rice: In 2003, the area used for this crop was only 1,723 hectares out of 4,130 hectares of flood plains because the flood came late and the water level wasn't high enough. This model attracted 1,723 laborers from 1,149 families.

- Producing other crops in the flood season: There were 5,808 laborers from 3,391 families engaging in this model. They produced various kinds of vegetables on low fields, ponds or lakes within the circle of dykes and earned from VND5 to 10 million a hectare.

2. Seafarming during the flood season

This business included five models employing 8,627 laborers from 5,336 families.

- Raising caged fish of small scales for the domestic market: In 2003, 2,710 laborers from 1,141 families raised fish of various kinds in 1,335 cages (increasing by 655 cages in comparison with 2002.) The total output reached some 3,609 tons fish. A family running from 18 to 30 sq.m. of cage after a flood season of five months could earn from VND8 to 15 million (with the average price of VND8,000 to 15,000 per kilo.)

- Raising shrimp and fish on rice fields: Some 700 laborers from 416 families engaging in raising shrimp or fish on 354 hectares, increasing by 47 hectares compared with 2002. The total output was

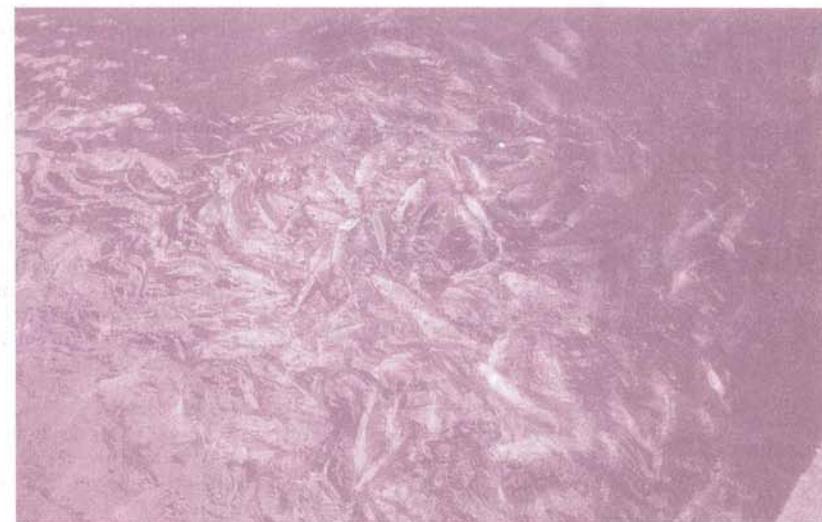


Photo by Hoàng Tuấn

266 tons. A hectare for raising fish brought in from VND5 to 10 million, while the shrimp brought in higher income: from VND15 to 25 million.

- Raising shrimp or fish in bamboo-surrounded waters: This model was carried out by 97 families (most of them were poor ones) on a total area of 48.6 hectares. It provided full-time jobs for some 50 laborers. The total output was some 30 tons. A hectare could bring in from VND10 to 15 million.

- Raising fish within circles of net: Some 35,000 sq. m. of waters was used in this model with 1,182 families (most of them were poor ones). It provided full-time jobs for 1,421 laborers and its output was 1,354 tons. A survey showed that an area of 8 to 10 sq. m. produced a profit of VND2 to 4 million.

- Raising fish in closed ponds: This model attracted some 2,500 families and provided jobs for 3,738 laborers. The output during five months of the flood season was 18,690 tons. Due to legal trouble in the

American market, the price of fish fell with the result that most families suffered losses.

Besides the seafarming, the animal husbandry also developed in Tri Tôn and Tịnh Biên, two mountainous districts less affected by the flood.

3. Services

Many services were useful during the flood season. There were 12 main services employing 33,832 laborers (they are very poor). The making of

handicrafts from some kind of duckweed enjoyed a boom last year (the number of these concerns rose from 1 to 10) and employed some 1,000 laborers in the last flood season with an average personal income varying from VND300,000 to 450,000 a month. Laborers who pick duckweed from rivers and canals could earn some VND15,000 for a working day. The following table will provide more details of these services.■

Table 1: Services during the 2003 flood season

Service	Laborers engaged	Personal income per month
Making dried and fermented fish	460	450,000 - 600,000
Knitting and weaving	3,370	300,000 - 600,000
Making fishing hooks and fishing accessories	2,057	300,000 - 450,000
Making sampans	2,243	600,000 - 1,200,000
Basket and bag weaving	5,572	300,000 - 450,000
Making broom	385	300,000 - 450,000
Making fishing net and mat	996	300,000 - 450,000
Snail catching	4,025	15,000 - 20,000
Earth transporting	1,424	30,000 - 50,000
Duckweed picking	1,000	15,000 - 20,000
River fishing	12,000	15,000 - 20,000
Grass cutting for cattle	300	20,000 - 25,000
Total	33,832	