

Vinh Long lies on the Mekong Delta, having convenience for transport, suitable conditions of soil and climate for the development of the garden economy. Last year this economy brought the province in VNĐ 280 billion, taking 18% of farming output value. Thus, the important measure to alter agricultural structure is to develop the garden economy. However there are actually many problems to solve in this sector.

Of 32,293 ha of perennial planting land, 11,567 ha (36%) is occupied by monocultural orchards, the rest is mixed gardens with not high yield. It can be seen by the following figures: longan monocultural orchards: bringing in VNĐ 24.2 million per ha a year (equal to 27 tonnes of rice paddy); rambutan: VNĐ 19.76 million (= 22 tonnes of rice); orange: VNĐ 35 million (= 39 tonnes of rice); tangerine: VNĐ 27.8 million (= 31 tonnes);... mixed gardens: VNĐ 7.75 million (= 8.6 tonnes of rice)...Income from monocultural orchards is three times bigger than that from mixed gardens. Garden economy development obviously have to put emphasis on monocultural orchards, but not common gardens. Besides, monocultural orchard development can give jobs to 77,500 laborers, build the raw material area for processing, export, make active contribution to rural and agricultural alteration, implement "eradicating hunger, reducing poverty" movement...Each farming households recognizes the reality and tends to transform mixed gardens into monocultural orchards. But there comes not a few difficulties in the process of realizing, that is:

- Lack of invested capital: on average 2 to 4 million đồng per hectare is needed in garden reformation. This sum is rather big against the income of the farmer owning mixed garden, whereas it takes 4 to 5 years to refund the invested capital. The State investment is still limited. Only 6.76% of farming households can be loaned by banks, but most of them earn good living.

- Lack of concern about seeds and planting technique: farmers are hungry for seeds to reform their gardens, especially high yielding seeds. New techniques are not yet widely publicized. Farmers cultivate mainly by experiences...Therefore they did not enjoy high yielding crops. In addition, fake seeds cause damages to farmers.

- The market for these products is not stable and depends upon private traders. One of important outputs of garden economy is export, this market is still uncertain. Currently, only dried

VĨNH LONG'S AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURE ALTERATION

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longan is exported to China, but the quantity is not big and the price is unstable. Fresh fruits are mainly consumed inbound, thus they do not have big economic values.

- Infrastructure such as transport, water conservancy, processing industry, both insufficient and downgraded..., restricts many potentials of garden economy.

- The State management policy

lacks uniformity and details, as a result there is not yet proper investment for monocultural orchard development. Tax policy does not stimulate production. For example: tax rate for mixed garden: 300-500 kg of rice per ha; whereas for monocultural orchards: 500-700 kg/ha.

Although so far farmers have transformed 2,000 ha of mixed garden into monocultural orchard, but the area of mixed garden reached 20,700 ha, accounting for 64% of garden land of the province. This is tremendous potential needed to exploit. To be able to change mixed garden into monocultural orchard, some following measures need taking:

- Investing properly in monocultural orchards. This is seen as a first key to reforming mixed garden. The number of households to be invested occupies 71.89% of total households based on the cooperation of the government and the people. The State should focus on infrastructure for production and product consumption. Moreover just investment is also essential for studying in seed reformation, technical transfer. Banks should grant some fund to farmers to transform their mixed gardens because this investment will produce profit for both sides.

- Tax policy should be suitable, tax rate have to be assessed on the basis of soil quality so as to give impetus to monocultural orchard development. Tax should be reduced in the period of capital construction of the households reforming their mixed gardens.

- Improving agricultural stimulation and techno-scientific services, forming garden associations to help farmers develop economy and raise business efficiency with the specialized organizations' support.

- Cooperating and joint venturing with foreign businesses to set up processing plants, aiming at marketing quickly products, improving economic efficiency, creating jobs at the spot. Contemporarily, each household needs to be supplied tools, to be trained in processing technique for each kind of fruit.

- Transferring longlasting land use right to farmers in order that they feel safe to transform their mixed gardens and invest effectively. There should be price support policy for some kinds of fruit. Avoiding double taxation for producers.

Taking the above measures synchronously will certainly make great progress in mixed gardens reformation in Vinh Long Province. This will positively contribute to fast alteration of agricultural structure, making new countryside comfortable ♣