

# **Vietnamese Good Agricultural Practices: implementation and stakeholder's perceptions in vegetable sector in Dalat - Lam Dong - Vietnam**

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## **Executive Summary**

Food safety has been emerging as an important concern in Vietnam since its agriculture was restructured and promoted towards commercialized in the early 1990s. More market access to agricultural (chemical) inputs, changes in farming population structure, and increasing demand for higher cropping yield have contributed to increasing dependence of farmers on chemical inputs for their farming practices. Consumer's health is threatened by contaminated foods. Environment is polluted. Farming productivity has been reduced which is challenging farmer's welfares. These problems, together with increasing demand for agricultural exports with stricter quality requirements, have contributed to initiatives on promoting greener and safer farming production in Vietnam. Lot of relevant policies have been issued of which VietGAP is a new effort of Vietnamese governments in coping with problems on foodsafety as well as unsustainable farming practices. It is even considered as an initiative for Vietnam to catch up with international food standards. Issued in 1998 and implemented with a huge budget since then, it has been reported that a large number of technical training on VietGAP has been provided to local extensioners and farmers, and thousands of farmers certified by VietGAP together with supports on facilities, so far.

This study aims to explore understanding and perception of different stakeholders such as farmers, consumers, traders, and local policy makers/extensioners toward VietGAP as well as clarifying issues and challenges faced by these stakeholders in promoting and adopting VietGAP. Through interviewing different stakeholders in Dalat City, Lam Dong province – an well-known vegetable production area in Vietnam – this study helps clarifying bottlenecks in VietGAP development in vegetable sector in Dalat in particular and Vietnam as a whole.

So far, VietGAP has been costly pushed by governments through policies & programs with very moderate achievement in Vietnamese vegetable sector. Numerous & unrealistic VietGAP criteria make VietGAP not only expensive but bureaucratic to farmers to follow. In addition, government's approach in VietGAP promotion has not yet designed effectively to help farmers realizing importance and benefits of VietGAP for their (long-run) farming productivity, and associated welfare of the farm population in particular, of the publics and the environment in general.

Given the poor resources of Vietnamese governments and other stakeholders – mostly characterized by small scale and technically poorly equipped - a better prioritizing of VietGAP targets is needed. The study results suggest that macro policies on VietGAP as well as safe vegetable production need to be better designed with more careful consideration on local conditions, types of crops, and seasonality for future greening agricultural development strategies in Vietnam.