

CASE STUDY



Behind the production of natural fertilizer of Otdomsoriya Cooperative: the motivation of Mr. Seom Sao, head of production unit

Mr. Seom Sao is a 48-years old farmer and is also the vice-chief of his village and a BoD member of Otdom Soriya Cooperative. He lives in Trapang Thlan village, Takeo province. He has been actively involved in agroecology since 2014 and has learnt and tested different AE practices. For instance, he worked on producing earthworms for selling and could get a net income around 125\$ per year. Mr. Seom Sao has around 2.5 ha of land on which he cultivates rice, vegetable and raises cow, pig, and chicken. He just started to concentrate more on vegetable production and his income from vegetable has increased to 600\$ per season. This good result motivated him to convert 450 m² of rice field to vegetable fields. As one of AE farmers, he appreciates to have an easy to access the market for his AE products.

He understands that to have commercial success in vegetable growing, soil fertility is the main key factor. However, applying natural fertilizer in the farm is a big challenge for the members of the cooperative due to the limited access to natural resources around the houses, and to the low quality of natural compost fertilizer produced by those farmers.

In 2015, he participated in the first experiment of Bokashi. He found that with quantity 3 times less than “saving compost”, Bokashi still produced better yield. This research has inspired him and the BoD of Otdomsoriya Cooperative. With support from ADG, a market research has been conducted and found that there is pretty much demand from members and local farmers for Bokashi fertilizer.

To respond to the need of local producers and with the support from ALISEA and UPSCALE program, the BoD of Otdomsoriya Cooperative decided to produce Bokashi fertilizers by using as much as possible the local resource, that were collected by local farmers including members of 6 cooperatives in the region. Currently, Mr. Seom Sao is head of production unit of the cooperative. His role is to ensure the quality and quantity of Bokashi and bring it to the market. He has involved in many experiments since 2015 to improve the quality of the fertilizer.





**Why using Bokashi or Natural Fertilizer Produced by Otdomsoriya Cooperative?
The case study of Ms. Nhem Sokly, professional vegetable producer in Takeo**

Ms. Nhem Sokly, 49 years old, is a farmer living with her two daughters in Por Presh Song village, Taphem commune, Tramkork district, Takeo province. She is a professional organic vegetable grower

supplying for a retailer in Phnom Penh. She has a pound which allows her to produce vegetable almost the whole year. She has collaborated with AFSA and UPSCALE program since 2011 and has received different trainings from the program. However, one of the challenge to produce organic vegetable at commercial level is is to have enough natural fertilizer for the farm. Nevertheless, the quantity of natural inputs around the house is not sufficient to produce a required quantity of fertilizer that could supply for a whole year of vegetable production. The access to external natural fertilizer like cow dung is difficult due to distance and organic fertilizer provided by company are not trusted and reliable. The insufficiency of organic matter for the vegetable lead to decrease yield and generate more disease to the plant. As woman and mother, it is difficult for her to produce proper compost because first she doesn't have time to look for inputs sufficient enough at a time of the production; and compost take quite long time for her to wait. The practical solution for her is collect all the inputs and waste from the house and puts them continuously in the compost house; it is called saving compost and she take those saving compost when she needs. However, this saving compost doesn't provide efficient nutrient or microorganism compared to standard compost.

As professional vegetable producer, she is very enthusiastic in finding new technics to improve her farming condition. She decided to participate in the experiment of Bokashi produced by Otdomsoriya Cooperative. She appreciates the quality of the natural fertilizer; it provides better result than her saving compost with affordable price. She will continue to support this product form the cooperative. She mentions that *"I am really happy*



that I could get a higher income this year from vegetable production, around 3,275\$. I have never bough vegetable from outside and I have stopped using chemical fertilizer since I collaborated with the Program. My own compost is not enough so I bought Bokashi from Otdomsoriya to make my vegetable soil better. I think that when I become more older, the soil will become more fertile, I will get more yield and more income with less work."