

## **Case 2. Ms. Mai Thi Dung, Hoang Nam Commune, Nghia Hung District**

I was born and grew up in Thai Nam Thinh village, Hoang Nam commune, Nghia Hung district, Nam Dinh province. My current job is teacher at Hoang Nam commune's kindergarten. With an amount of salary of 4 million/month, my family's life have difficulties as our children are small and we have to spend money to feed them and let them go to school as well as family's regular costs. In addition, the issue of food safety is our family's concern because of each family member's health.

I want to do something to raise my income, improve my family's live, especially create clean foods to self-provide my family in particular and our surrounding neighbours in general.

### **Chance to cultivate earthworms.**

I was lucky to be introduced by Hoang Nam commune's Women's Union to participate in the training course on earthworm raising held by Nghia Hung District's Women's Union in combination with the Research Centre by Gender, Family and Environment in Development (CGFED). Thanks to the training course, I gained knowledge of earthworm raising, how to make foods with rich organic protein to raise livestock and poultry to produce clean products with cheap cost but high profits and settle environmental pollution in the community.

At the training course, we approached the model of closed livestock raising through raising earthworms. This is the first time I have chance to learn deeply about the model of closed livestock raising. At the training, we were taught with theory and practice in combination, promoting the teamwork spirit; solidarity, help each other during the production and livestock raising process.

### **Earthworm raising: both improve the economy and protect the environment**

Being elected as leader of the earthworm raising group of Nam Thinh village, Hoang Nam commune with 7 group members, I often uphold the spirit of self-learning, creativity in work to motivate other members to participate actively. After attending the training course on earthworm raising techniques, I decided to bought the earthworms to raise immediately. During the earthworm raising process, I called to directly discuss with the expert and shared with my group members if there existed any technical problems.

We organize monthly group meetings to exchange experience, knowledge of livestock raising, how to process foods. In addition to help each other to develop family's economy, we also promote the spirit of solidarity, mutual affection between group members via activities of the group's support fund, members help each other to improve better. Each group member contribute 100,000 vietnamdong/month as the shared fund so that members with fund difficulties have chance to loan to build up facilities, buy livestock breed to develop farming production. Besides, the group also have fund to organize visits members if being ill. In general, since raising

earthworms, group members raise pigs and chickens much better than before with their income raised by 1.5-2 million vietnamdong/month.

Previously, we used to flush livestock and poultry dungs and garbage directly into the road or river. Since having the program of earthworm raising up to now, we have selected and processed all kinds of dungs of livestock and poultry, glass, garbages and straw waste to make foods for earthworms. From the earthworms, we processed organic foods used in livestock and poultry breeding, contribute to clean the environment. Earthworm humus are used to fertilized the plants, both being good nitrogen and disperse insects, reduce diseases for plants and do not have use pesticides. Since we do not have to exposed to chemical fertilizers, pesticides – toxic chemicals for women's health. Previously, if women have to fertilizer from 3-4 times of nitrogen and must spray pesticides from 1-2 times for planting, thanks to the earthworm humus to fertilizer the plants, we do not have to use any inorganic fertilizers and do not have to spray pesticides as we plant vegetables with earthworm humus, and there exists no worms in vegetables.

However, during the implementation process of model of earthworm raising and organic livestock raising, we have difficulties, especially the approach to techniques of organic raising and planting. Thus, I myself and my group members always desire to be supported by women's union at levels and CGFED to help us having knowledge of organic raising and planting, so that we could implemented the highest efficiency production process.