



4 January 2008

Published by Communications



## In Search of Clean and Green: Organic Vegetables in Asia

While experts ponder the new trends 2008 will bring, the latest news from Southeast Asia make one topic a potential hot marketing issue for the future; organic vegetables. A growing demand for organic foodstuffs in developing countries suggests this is more than just a passing fad.

Food safety is a growing concern among Asian consumers, and organic farming is seen as one answer. In December, more than 600 scientists, managers, company representatives and farmers from provinces in the south of Vietnam discussed ways to expand the cultivation of vegetables and herbs grown under safe, hygienic conditions. This move is a result of severe food safety problems that alarmed the country recently. Contaminated vegetables are assumed to have been the cause of outbreaks of illnesses such as acute diarrhea. Only 10% of the domestically grown vegetables consumed in the country were considered “clean”; that is, farmed with few pesticides and clean water. The current area growing clean vegetables is very modest, yet the actual potential production is much higher. Due to a lack of nationwide standards, consumers are reluctant to spend 5-10% more on supposedly healthy and clean vegetables. Sustainable improvements will require more concerted efforts between policy makers, farmers and companies.

Such efforts to produce certification are a key issue for organic farmers in Thailand. While there is an organic certification process in place for exported products, a similar certification standard for domestically sold organic foods is missing. Demand for such a service is growing from such groups as “green thinking” entrepreneurs in the country who can see the potential of the industry. Thailand ranks as one of the world’s leading food exporters and has aspirations to become the “kitchen of the world”, however the kingdom currently ranks 13th among Asian organic food producers.

The changing domestic market for organic foods in Asia is also showing up in changes to the local retail scene. This week, Jakarta saw the arrival of a new organic supermarket in the island nation’s capital. “Farmers Market”, as it is named, stocks everything from vegetables to spices, and has already announced that its prices are competitive and affordable. It will compete with its older rival “Ranch Market” which for over ten years has been supplying the local organic food market.

#### Sources:

Vietnam: Cultivating more organic vegetables farms, 18 Dec 2007

([www.vnagency.com.vn](http://www.vnagency.com.vn))

Indonesia: supermarket offers organic produce, 2 Jan 2008

([www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com))

Thailand: Organic farming sprouts slowly, 19 Dec 2007

([www.bangkokpost.com](http://www.bangkokpost.com))

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## New Popular Magazine Now Available in the Library



*Scientific American* (Chinese) –  
January 2008

- Source: Fang-chin Chen/Communications

## Travel

**Dr. Gregory C. Luther**, 13 January-10 February, to Aceh in Indonesia, in to initiate the Baseline Survey, examine research trial sites, and plan for the upcoming Vegetable ICM Workshop, Training of Trainers, adapted Farmer Field Schools, and additional research trials; in West Java, to: (1) examine field trials and visit collaborators with the SANREM CRSP SE Asia project; (2) visit the Indonesian Vegetable Research Institute; (3) visit ASFARNET Indonesia (Asian Farmers Regional Network), as requested by the DG; in Central Java, to visit the Institute for Rural Technology Development (LPTP: Lembaga Pengembangan Teknologi Pedesaan), a collaborating NGO on the IDRC proposal.

**Dr. Manuel C. Palada**, 13-18 January, to Indonesia, to conduct a training workshop on chili pepper production for project collaborators and farmers in Aceh; to monitor on-going on-farm trials on chili and develop work plan for cucumber trials in 4 projects sites in Aceh; 19-23 January, to Bangkok, Thailand, to deliver lectures on advanced agricultural technologies/practices to ARC training participants in Kamphaengsaen; 24-27 January, to Phnom Penh, Cambodia, to visit and monitor on-farm trials on drip irrigation; to discuss plans for the 2008 dry season trials and review publication of a drip irrigation manual with IDE.

**Dr. Madhusudan Bhattarai**, 13-25 January, to Indonesia, to provide training to the project staff in implementing the Baseline Survey in Aceh, pre-testing of the household survey questionnaires, and monitoring of the household survey task.

- Source: Yvonne Ting/ASU

**Drs. Rémi Nono-Womdim and Mel Oluoch**, 6-11 January, to Uganda, to visit Partner Seed companies and Namulonge Agricultural Research Institute. The aim of the visit is to strengthen collaboration with the partners, to visit evaluation trials carried out by the seed companies, and to attend Victoria Seed Company field day which features AVRDC varieties. The visits will be made under the auspices of the RCA Rockefeller, BMZ, and vBSS funded projects.

- Source: Dr. Mel Oluoch/AVRDC-RCA

## Upcoming Seminars

There will be two seminars in headquarters next week. The venue will be in the 3rd floor Conference Room. All are welcome!

**Speak 1 : Dr. Surya Bhattarai**  
Crop and Ecosystem Management Unit  
Biotechnology/Molecular Breeding

**Topic : My journey to AVRDC: research on vegetable crops under too much and too little water**

**Time : 1400-1500 hours, Thursday, 10 January**

**Speak 2: Dr. Peter Juroszek**  
Crop and Ecosystem Management Unit

**Topic : Development of AVRDC's Organic Vegetable Program—review, current status and outlook**

**Time : 0900-1000 hours, Friday, 11 January**

- Source: Dr. Kathryn Hamilton/Seminar Coordinator

## News from the Food and Dormitory Services Unit, HQ

Due to the increase in cost of baking supplies, effective 4 January 2008, the prices of various desserts in the Cafeteria will be adjusted.

因烘焙物料持續上漲，餐廳自製點心售價將自 97 年 1 月 4 日起調整如下：

Item	Description		Unit	Price (NT\$)	
Cake	Almond Cake	杏仁蛋糕	Loaf (條)	120	
	Apple w/ walnut Cake	蘋果核桃蛋糕	"	150	
	Banana w/ walnut Cake	香蕉核桃蛋糕	"	150	
	Banana Cream Roll	香蕉鮮奶卷	"	260	
	Brownies w/ walnut	布朗尼核桃	"	150	
	Cheese Cake	乳酪蛋糕	"	180	
	Chocolate Cake	巧克力蛋糕	"	120	
	Chocolate w/ cheese Cake	黑森林蛋糕	"	180	
	Coffee Cheese Cake	咖啡乳酪蛋糕	"	180	
	Coffee w/ walnut Cake	咖啡核桃蛋糕	"	150	
	Fudge	法吉	"	170	
	Pie	Apple Pie	蘋果派	each (個)	280
		Cheese Pie	乳酪派	"	350
		Cherry Pie	櫻桃派	"	280
		Lemon Pie	檸檬派	"	230
Lemon Cream Pie		檸檬鮮奶派	"	260	
Mango Pie		芒果派	"	230	
Mango Cream Pie		芒果鮮奶派	"	260	
Mulberry Pie		桑椹派	"	230	
Mulberry Cream Pie		桑椹鮮奶派	"	260	
Orange Pie		橘子派	"	230	
Orange Cream Pie		橘子鮮奶派	"	260	
Peach Pie		水蜜桃派	"	230	
Peach Cream Pie		水蜜桃鮮奶派	"	260	
Pumpkin Pie		南瓜派	"	250	
Strawberry Pie		草莓派	"	260	
Strawberry Cream Pie	草莓鮮奶派	"	290		
Walnut Pie	核桃派	"	330		