

**Titles :** Earning a living and health perspectives of the vegetable growers, Sainoi District, Nonthaburi Province

**Key words :**

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### **Abstract**

Sainoi District in Nonthaburi Province is well-known as a vegetable growing place. Since it is situated on the outskirts of Bangkok, its products not only serve the people in that area but were also put on sale in several fresh food markets and stores in Bangkok. This qualitative study was aimed to develop the knowledge and understanding of how vegetable growers earned a living and viewed their health. The sample comprised 12 families of vegetable growers, living in Sainoi District, Nonthaburi. The data were collected in real situation using observation and in-dept interview. The recorded data were discussed their coverage and adequacy and then analysed by content analysis. The more data were collected, if needed. The consultation among researchers and consultants were held from time to time in order to share experience learned, then the results were summarized.

The results could be summarized as follows:-

Entering to vegetable growing occupation: The sample gave reasons why they decided to be vegetable growers that growing vegetables is similar to growing rice. They had experiences and the family members were available labours. The land was divided among siblings from generation to generation, so the inherited lands they got were too small to grow rice. In addition, growing vegetables needs less capital but produces quick income.

Learning process and development in occupation: It was found that the vegetable growers have learned all the time. They learned how to take care of the vegetable they grew, to produce more yields with less cost, to make their products more attractive to the market, and to prevent themselves from the hazard of pesticides. The extent to what they learned was related to their wisdom, enthusiasm and the opportunity to access to information. They received information from the radio, the middle-men, and the markets and by sharing information among themselves. Some of them even learned from observing Chinese vegetable growers in the village. The development in their occupation could also be observed. Some families changed from growing labour intensive vegetables to flowers, some became middle-men while the others turned to organic fertilizers and pesticides.

In terms of health perspectives, they perceived that chemical fertilizers were plant's nutrients and not harmful to health but they believed that using pesticides were hazardous to their health and consumers'. For most of them who were still using chemical pesticides gave reasons that it was economically and technically necessary but they have taken protective measures while using the pesticides. They reported using some techniques to decrease the effect of hazardous substances e.g. stopped using before harvest, took Rang Jued (a kind of herbs) to excrete toxic substances, drank Coke to burp, and some even have set apart a plot of land to grow vegetables for the family. Feeling healthy and fit to work prolonged the utilization. However, they were afraid of having their blood examined. As for those who turned to organic substances reported their endless efforts and how much they were proud of their products and health status.

The knowledge and understanding gained from this study are beneficial for teaching & learning and can be applied when providing health education. Further studies on health promotion and healthcare seeking behaviours of vegetable growers and proper strategies to provide health education are recommended.