

## WETLAND AND AGRO-ECOLOGICAL FARMING RECOVERY

### Mekong Delta, Viet Nam

Also known as the “rice bowl” of Viet Nam, the Mekong Delta experiences seasonal variations in water quality and availability, with floods in the wet season and water scarcity and high salinity in the dry season. Deepwater or floating rice is a type of rice native to this area and which requires no pesticide and low use of fertilizers to grow. However, in the past 40 years, the total area of floating rice has given way to the extensive building of dykes and high yielding rice varieties, resulting in increased water scarcity and reduced soil fertility.

Since 2013, cultivation of floating rice has been promoted to farmers and consumers by running promotional campaigns on television, in newspapers, at conferences, forum, and workshops. Spreading awareness on the benefits of cultivating floating rice helped increasing its market value proposition. Under the Sustainable Mekong Research Network (SUMERNET) initiative, several trainings were held to deepen farmers’ knowledge on sustainable farming practices, and improve their marketing and communication skills. Farmers have been involved in the project by sharing their local knowledge, and co-designing the research scope with the scientific team.

The cultivation of floating rice has enhanced biodiversity, providing a suitable habitat for freshwater fish and birds, aquatic flora and other resources such as straws that are beneficial for crop production in the dry season. Promoting floating rice cultivation has increased food security and improved community resilience towards the impacts of climate change in the Mekong Delta. Farmers have in fact been able to use floating rice straw as mulches to grow vegetable crops during the dry season, such as cassava, leeks, chili, corn. New market opportunities have also arisen, with more and more customers willing to pay a higher price for this product. Growing floating rice also has a cultural value, enabling farmers in the Delta to keep their traditional agricultural methods and lifestyle.



<http://www.sumernet.org/content/first-steps-toward-wetland-and-agro-ecological-farming-recovery-mekong-region>

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Photo taken by Van Kien Nguyen