

# Lao National Organic Agriculture Forum

## “Organic Agriculture in Lao PDR: Overview”

23 March 2012

Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR

# Policy Context

- 8<sup>th</sup> national economic development plan's goal to lift economic status from less developed country by the year 2020 through a strategy of sustainable economic growth and people-centred equitable development
- 8<sup>th</sup> congress of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party in 2006: should embark on agriculture development which is stable, sustainable, clean, non-toxic and low cost

# Policy Context

- DOA restructured the Crop Multiplication Center and changed its name to Clean Agriculture Development Center (CADC) - approved by MAF on 9 June 08
- CADC covers 4 areas, i.e. information, technical development, inspection-certification, and food processing and 4 agricultural systems
  - safe conventional agriculture,
  - good agricultural practice (GAP),
  - pesticide-free agriculture and
  - organic agriculture

# History

- Started with NGOs who introduced the concept “sustainable agriculture and organic farming” since late 1990s
- Sustainable farming technologies and practices were incorporated into various training, like NAFES, NGOs etc.
- Thousands of farmers have been trained
- No market linkage planned, the products were sold as conventional with only few were sold as natural products or pesticide-free products with slight premium prices
- mid 2000s, market linkage was introduced as opportunities of organic agriculture as poverty eradication became apparent

# History

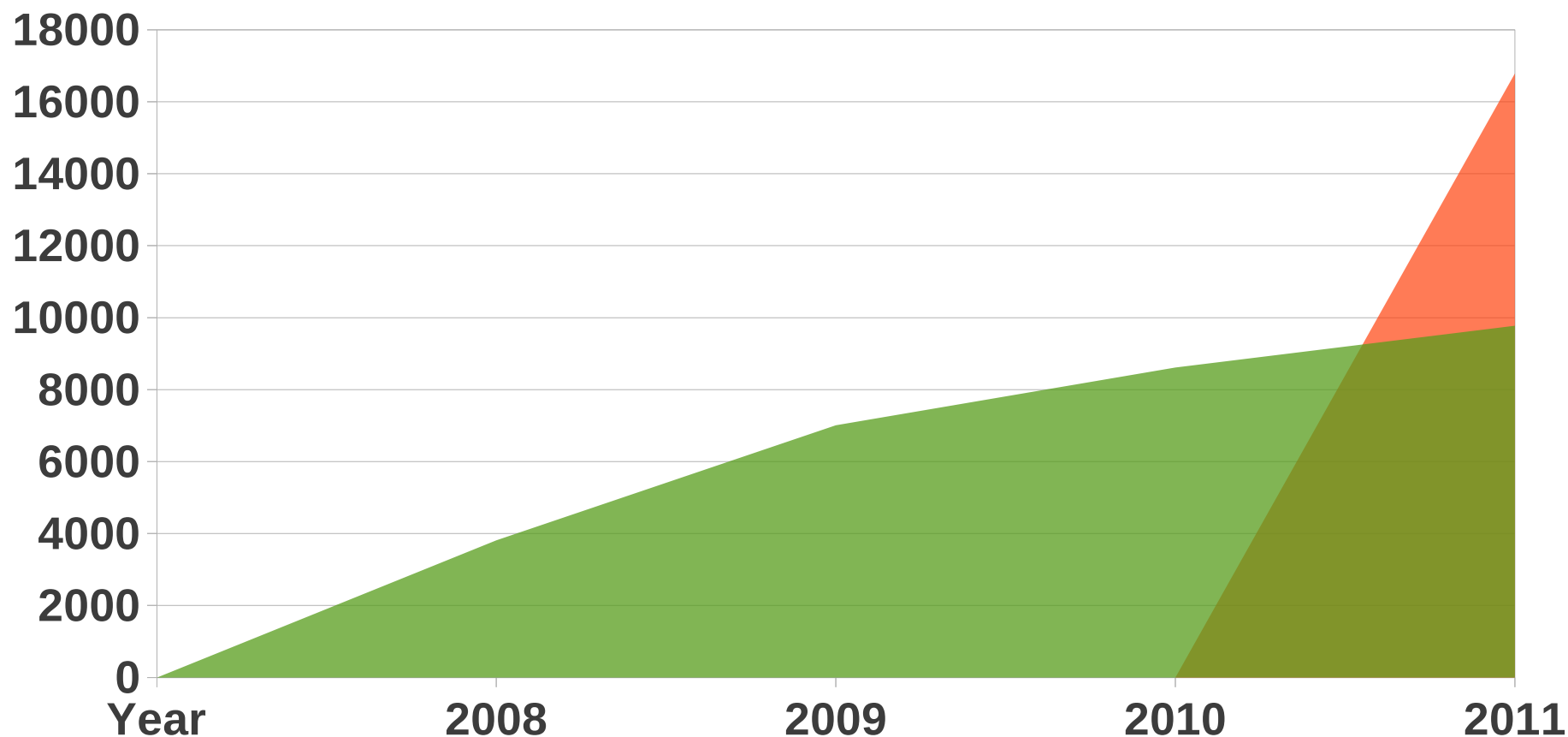
- 2004 The collaborative project between HELVETAS and DOA launched PROFIL
- 2005 Lao organic standards was approved by MoAF
- 2006 first organic certification of tea, Lao Farmer Product
- 2008 Lao Certification Body was established by CADC, DoA
- 2009 LCB started organic inspection/certification services



# Extent of production & market

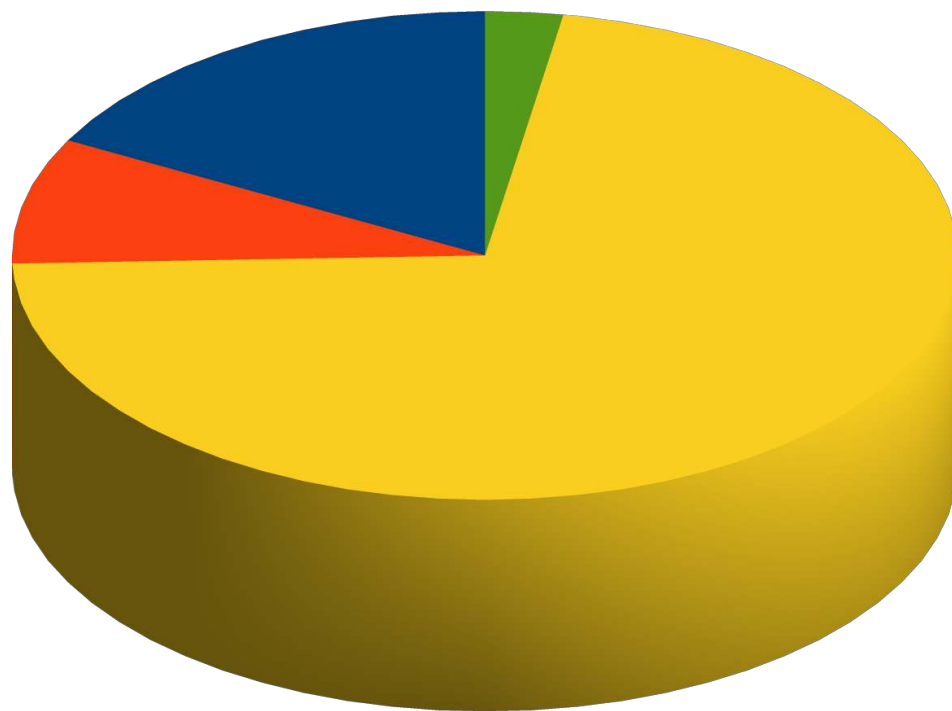
- A very early development
- Largely under subsistent production => “organic by default”
- Several wild products collected from forest or fallow land which can be certified as organic
- Only few commercial agriculture projects in Laos received organic certification
- Domestic organic market growing rapidly, since started weekend market by PROFIL in December 2006
- Average sale 24.758 million kip and 2.49 tons of vegetables and rice are sold weekly (111 organic farmers non-certified) end of 2008

# Extent of production & market



■ 2535 farmers with 9,776.63 ha (plus 16,786 ha for wild harvest) in 2011

# Extent of production & market



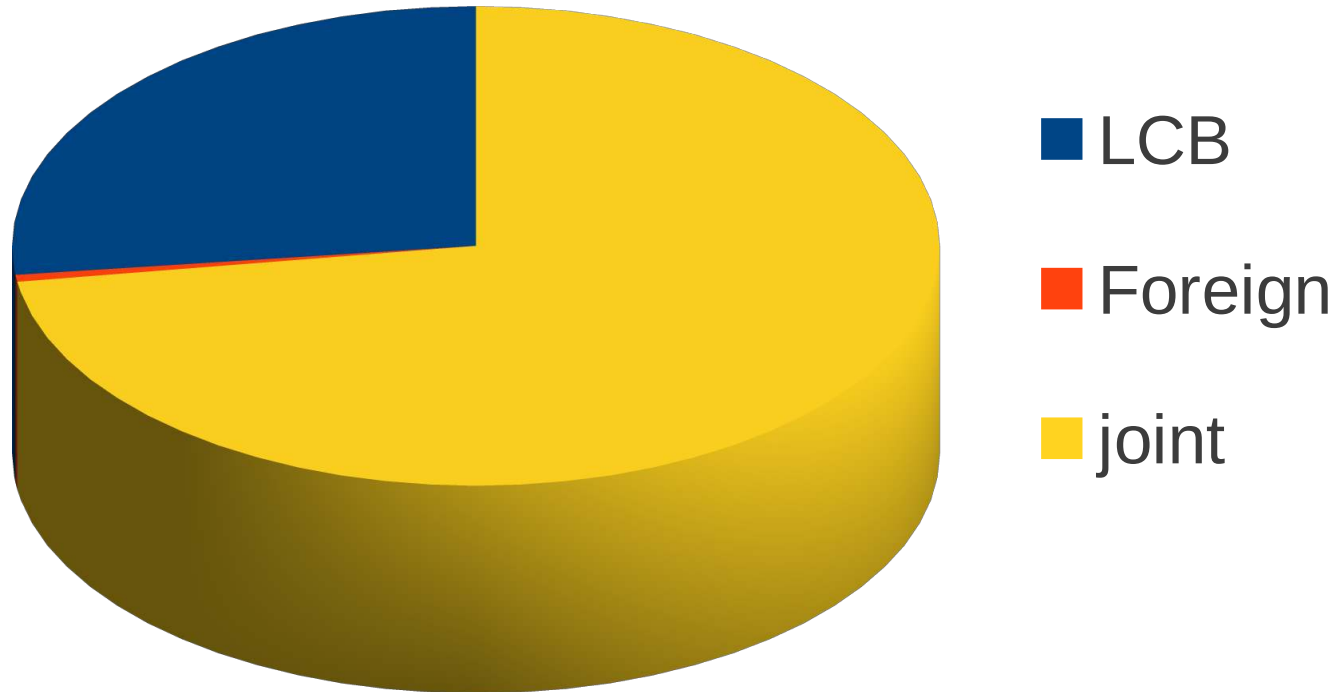
- rice
- v&F
- Coffee
- other



# Standards and Certification

- 2004, DOA and PROFIL developed organic standards, covering organic crops production and wild harvest, approved by the MAF Dec 05
- PROFIL assist DOA to develop a national organic seal
- DOA began developing local certification body, Certification Body (LCB) under the CADDC in 2008
- A handful of foreign organic certification bodies offer services in Laos, all have their base in Thailand, e.g. ACT (Thailand), BCS (Germany), ICEA (Italy) and Bioagricert (Italy)
- LCB joined the Certification Alliance

# Certification by



# Training and research

- Several NGOs offers training on sustainable agriculture, but few on organic farming (Helvetas, Oxfam Belgium, Oxfam Australia, CIDSE, SAF)
- NGOs have their own project site, mostly working in collaboration with national or local government agencies
- NGO network: Sustainable Agriculture and Environment Development Association (SAEDA)
- Currently, no education institute in Laos offering subject or course on organic or sustainable agriculture
- no research specifically on organic agriculture by local researchers

# Govt Policy & Programmes

- In 2006, The MIC, assisted by ITC, initiated a national export strategy plan ==> aiming “to develop organic agriculture ...”
- The strategy plan was approved by the Minister of Industry and Commerce in mid 2008 and it is expected to be approved by the cabinet in December 2008
- DOA setting up a regulatory framework for organic and safe food production, under term “clean agriculture”, but no oversight of certification body (e.g. accreditation or registration of CBs)



# Participants' introduction

- Name
- Organization
- Your activities related to organic agriculture
- Comments on the presentation
- Key issues to move forward Lao organic agriculture sector