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Abstract

The objective of this study was to investigate general conditions in term of cost, marketing, business management as well as problems in commercial giant freshwater shrimp culture, of the giant freshwater shrimp farmers. Twenty households, drawn by simple selection, of the giant freshwater shrimp farmers in Ban Toom, Tambon Bouban, Amphoe Yangtalad, Changwat Kalasin, were included in this investigation.

The findings showed that, in demographic conditions, majority of the heads of shrimp farmers' families were male, married and lived in their family with 44.15 years of mean age. Their highest level of education was Prathom 4. Their major occupation was giant freshwater shrimp culture and secondary career was employment. On the average, there were 3.95 family members in a family. They possessed 8.3 rais of land and had 6.1 year experience in giant freshwater shrimp culture. In 2001, average net cash income for household was 274,876.15 baht. The mean total cash they generated from giant freshwater shrimp culture was totally 223,111.35 baht. The mean amount of money loaned for giant freshwater shrimp culture was 138,750 baht. Upon data collection period, the farmers had mean debt 53,250 baht. The mean cost of giant freshwater shrimp culture per rai was 24,465.52 baht. The mean income per rai was 31,873.05 baht, which meant their net income was 7,407.53 baht.

In marketing of giant freshwater shrimp, it revealed that the samples sold their most of their products to wholesale merchants (98.89% of the total output). Surprisingly, the middle men were those who determined the price. The mean distribution price was 133.77 baht/kilogram. Most of the farmers did not take measurements of the shrimp to distribute. There were four channels of shrimp distribution. The mean marketing cost of wholesale merchants was 7.71 baht/kilogram. The mean marketing cost of retail merchants was 6.18 baht/kilogram. The total marketing margin was 36.23 baht/kilogram. In business management of production, it showed that the mean number of the household labors was 2.4 persons. The mean area of giant freshwater shrimp culture was 7 rais. The mean number of shrimp ponds was 3.8 ponds. Most of farmers culture giant freshwater

shrimp twice a year. In 2001, the subjects cultured approximately 535,000 giant freshwater shrimp. Which could produce 1,661.50 kilogram of giant freshwater shrimp.

The problems of giant freshwater shrimp culture were that the water in the shrimp ponds was contaminated since the irrigation was suspended for maintenance. The other potential problems found were cheating from nursery supplies, poor quality of shrimp breeds, shrimp diseases, fluctuation of shrimp price, and high price shrimp feedings, respectively. By the way, giant freshwater shrimp practices obviously showed no effect upon environment due to the fact that water from the activities was drained to irrigation canals and eventually to Poa river.

Recommendations are here made. The farmers should set the shrimp culturing group so that they can make production plans, dig storage ponds, take measurements of shrimp for contributions and produce shrimp under standard size for negotiability. For government sectors, it is important that they count for giant freshwater culture and productions through dispatching technical officers to transfer know-how of shrimp culture to farmers. In addition, the government ought to partly deal with any potential difficulties of the farmer, follow up, introduce qualified shrimp breeds and distribute shrimp breeds with affordable price.