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Abstract

The objective of this study is to investigate the general management of the people organization in producing the mulberry tea. Its emphasis is placed on marketing including the marketing cost, consumer behavior for the mulberry tea, problems and obstacles in market development of mulberry tea, and to conduct the action research on market promotion of the mulberry tea. This is the case study of the Farmer Group of Ban Hin Herb - Silathip (FGHS) which is located in Tambon Pra Yeun, Amphur Pra Yeun, Khon Kaen Province in the Year 2004. The study employs the method of observation and participation with the group of producers of the mulberry tea, the market test through sale promotion, and interview of the opinion and needs of the consumers. There are 4 sample groups, i.e. the consumers within the village (where the Farmer Group is located), the neighboring villages, the Khon Kaen City, and other provinces. As for the consumers in other provinces, the interview was performed through telephone.

It was found that the total number of group members of FGHS were 118 and they had several activities. The mulberry tea enterprise was initiated since 1999 and there were 10 members who joined this activity. They named their product "The Mulberry Tea of FGHS" and there were 3 types of product, the green tea, the string tea, and the instant tea. The product was placed at the One-Tambon-One-Product (OTOP) shops, office of the group within the village, the annual festival of Khon Kaen province, and postal parcel delivery. It was found that there was a limited number of places where the product was sold and the shortage of market promotion. The members of the group did not have the skill in market management. The highest amount of sale of mulberry tea was through the order by telephone from the customers in other provinces which was 49.32 % of the total sale.

The researcher made the experiment by introducing the market promotion by distributing the leaflet of the usefulness of drinking the mulberry tea of

the FGHS to the public at all three OTOP shops in Khon Kaen City. It was found that people showed interest of the product though might not immediately purchase. The free distribution of the sample of the product of the size of 10 grams each to the consumers within the village of Ban Hin Herb – Silathip together with a free taste of drinking the product made them impressed of the good taste of the mulberry tea and it helped to increase the amount of sale of the product to more than 111.06 percent.

From the interview of the customers of all 4 groups, it was found that 38.09% of those who were within the village expressed that the product was relatively more expensive comparing with other medicinal herb beverage. 52.13% indicated that the cheaper price would be the good market promotion. But for villagers in the nearby villages 45.55% said that the FGHS should place the product more in the village grocery stores for the wider access of the customers. 37.17% said that the price reduction would help the consumers to buy the product where 36.28% said that the purchase of the product came from the free distribution of the sample. But for the customers in the Khon Kaen City 35.48% said that they did not purchase the mulberry tea because the packaging of the product was not attractive and up to the standard and 58.33% said they drank the mulberry tea together with other medicinal herb beverages. For the consumers in other provinces 50% said that they stopped drinking the mulberry tea because the inconvenience for buying the product and 54.55% drank the mulberry tea together with other medicinal herb beverages. 57.4% of the consumers in other provinces had the opinion that the group should expand the marketing access of the product. Regarding the taste of the products the customers of all groups were satisfied the natural taste of the mulberry tea without any other flavors.