

Impact of Forage R & D in SE Asia Case 1



Our cattle used to wander far from the village and were easier to shoot than catch! Now, with forages, they return to the house where we can feed them better

Keeping free-range cattle is like hunting

Like all farmers in Houei Hia village (Xieng Ngeun district), Singh used to allow his cattle to wander in search of feed. The roaming cattle regularly damaged crops and he had to pay fines each year. It used to take 2-3 days to find the cattle and, being wild, they were difficult to catch. Many were lost in the forest, wasting all his efforts.



Forages tame and improve

Singh started to evaluate new forage varieties in small plots in 1997. He liked the fact that they stayed green in the dry season so year by year he expanded the area. He began to tether his animals close to the house and feed them cut forage. Calves born and fed forages grew more quickly (his 10 month old calf sold for more than his neighbour's 12 month old calf). His wife fed 'Stylo' to her pigs reducing the fattening time from 5 to 3 months.

A new family livelihood

With 1 ha of forages Singh spends just 30 minutes to collect grass to feed his expanded herd of 5 cows, while his wife collects 'Stylo' to fatten pigs and goats. To make livestock the basis of the family's livelihood, Singh is establishing a new area of forages and is fencing it with barbed wire.

