

Vietnam focuses on shrimp-forest and shrimp-rice farming

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Vietnam's Ca Mau Province has expanded its area under the shrimp-forest and shrimp-rice models to farm clean products for export and ensure farmers earn sustainable incomes.

The southernmost province has developed models that use advanced farming techniques and increase cooperation among stakeholders in production and consumption. Many local shrimp processing companies have signed contracts to develop value chains with cooperative teams and co-operatives with a total of 3,500 household members.

The province People's Committee has allowed the Minh Phu Seafood Corporation and Loc Troi Group to tie up with Thoi Binh District and other localities to pilot a link-up between companies and farmers adopting the shrimp-rice model.

Thoi Binh district has 18,500 hectares of land under the model, the largest area in the province. Farmers breed black tiger shrimp or white-legged shrimp in the dry season and grow rice in the rainy season on the same fields. Many have also been intercropping giant river prawns and rice for almost five years now. To improve the efficiency of the model, district authorities have trained thousands of farmers in it since 2020. The rice varieties, which include ST25 and ST24, winners of awards as the world's best, have short maturity periods and can resist saltwater and drought.

Tran Nam, who farms shrimp in a mangrove forest locally, said in the past, he had not been aware of the advantages of breeding shrimp in mangrove forests and paid little attention to the model, so the creatures on his farm were often affected by diseases.

“Shrimp bred under the shrimp-forest farming model has few disease threats and offers high and steady incomes. His family has been earning nearly VND200 million (US\$8,000) a year in recent years after adopting the model.

Shrimp farmed in mangrove forests can be harvested in four months. Nguyen Van Phuc, head of the Thoi Binh District Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, said the effectiveness of the rice-shrimp model was increasing by the year, with the average yield of the grain rising from 3.8 tonnes per hectare in 2013 to 4.8 tonnes in 2021. The black tiger shrimp yield has doubled since switching from the traditional model to 320kg per hectare.

Besides shrimp, farmers also breed creatures like mud crabs and fish in mangrove forests.

The province has also developed cooperation chains for other agricultural products such as clean high-yield rice in Tran Van Thoi District, speciality rice and shrimp farmed alternately in paddies in Thoi Binh District and vegetables in Ca Mau City’s Ly Van Lam Commune.

Many cooperation chain models have proven successful in recent years, helping shift agriculture towards commercial production and exploiting the advantages of each locality.