

AIRGRAM

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FROM - Vientiane

SUBJECT - Land Allocation Status Report

REFERENCE -

This airgram contains information concerning the background, objectives, procedures, and status-to-date of the refugee land allocation program.

Background

Traditionally, 95% of the Lao population has made its living directly from the land. In such an agrarian society, access to arable land forms the basis for self-sufficiency for most people.

The RLG has on its books Law No. 57/3, dated 8 January 1957, which relates to the granting of rural vacant lands. Through a provision in the law a person may be granted a cultivation permit for a piece of land, not to exceed certain limitations in size, which gives him temporary title to the land. The permit holder then has 3-5 years in which to develop the land after which time he may be granted full ownership.

In order to expedite the allocation of permanently arable land to refugees, a series of meetings involving RLG/MSW Resettlement and USAID/ORA, AGR, PWD officials were held on 8, 16, and 19 June 1972 to plan a cadastral survey and to establish procedures for granting cultivation permits.

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DRAFTED BY JWilliams:GCopgrove mhb		OFFICE ORA	PHONE NO. 6247	DATE 9/19/73	APPROVED BY DIR:CAMann
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Objectives

- A. The objective of allocating land to the refugees is to establish the primary base for attaining self-sufficiency.
- B. The objective of the cadastral survey is to:
1. Delineate exactly how much permanently arable land is available for refugees. The premise upon which land is suitable for permanent cultivation is that it is paddy land and/or upland not requiring rotation outside the boundaries of the plot.
 2. Delineate privately owned land within the reserve areas, and,
 3. Divide available permanently arable land into plots of 1-4 hectares, depending on classification of land, for allocation to refugee families. It should be noted that if a refugee has been able to locate a piece of land on his own he may immediately apply for a cultivation permit.

Procedures

In general, the steps for allocating land to refugees are:

1. RLG designates a refugee reserve area.
2. The Chao Muong (district chief) makes a public notice through the Tassengs (sub-district chiefs) and Nai Bans (village headmen) to indigenous villagers living within the reserve area to register their land within a specified period of time.
3. The Muong (district) land committee, made up of various local Muong officials, Tassengs, and Nai Bans, delineates those areas within the reserve boundaries which belong to local inhabitants. The unclaimed land is then declared available for refugees.
4. The available land is then correlated with land classification maps prepared by USAID/AGR Soils Section to determine suitable areas to be surveyed.
5. Teams made up of RLG Cadastral Service, MSW, and USAID financed surveyors are assigned to the designated areas. USAID also provides a TCN Technical Advisor, per diem, logistic and equipment support as required.

6. Once the survey of a given area is completed a lottery is held for allocation of land.

7. The recipient of the parcel of land then submits a request to the Khoueng (provincial) office for a cultivation permit. The Khoueng office then prepares a cultivation permit and issues it to the refugee.

In spite of the fact that the Chao Muongs make a public notice for all people owning land within the reserves to register their claim prior to the survey, it frequently occurs that new claims are made by indigenous villagers and various other people both during and after the survey. When this happens the following steps are taken:

1. The Muong Land Committee reviews the claim and in many cases the problem is resolved at this level.

2. If unable to settle the claim at the Muong level it is forwarded to the Khoueng Land Committee.

3. If the problem is not resolved at the Khoueng level the question may then be brought before the National Assembly or some other higher authority.

Status-to-date Land Allocation

Country-wide, a total of 11,098 hectares of land have been surveyed for allocation to refugee families. Of the total, 3,671 hectares have been distributed to 2,094 families. Cultivation permits have been issued to 315 families and paperwork is in process for the remaining 1,779 recipient families.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Surveyed To Date</u>	<u>Distributed To Date</u>	<u>Cultivation Permits issued To Date</u>
Vientiane Plain	6,550 ha	523 ha	315
Seno	1,050	1,050	In process
Thasano	1,700	1,700	In process
Houei Nam Pak	398	398	In process
Phou Ba Chiang	<u>1,400</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	11,098 ha	3,671 ha	315

The following is a narrative report on each area.

A. Vientiane Plain

Since the cadastral survey began in August 1972, some 3,550 hectares of potential farm land have been surveyed. The first lottery for allocation of land was held in February 1973 and the first 50 cultivation permits were issued to refugees in Reserve Area #5 on the Vientiane Plain. To date, 523 one-hectare plots have been distributed and cultivation permits awarded to over 300 refugee families. The following covers each of the 10 refugee reserve areas on the Vientiane Plain.

*3 schools in the AREA
- my calcium ext 2 rooms
- 2nd floor - 6 " "
- 1st floor - 6 " "*

Reserve Area #1 - Hat Deua: There are now approximately 1,200 refugee families in this 8,000 hectare reserve area. The cadastral survey of this area has not begun but it is expected to be accomplished during this fiscal year.

*+ 12 at Nam
Phot 3*

Reserve Area #2 - Nam Cheng: There are 671 families registered in this 8,500 hectare reserve. Except for a 30 hectare section, which General Thonglith Chokbengboun, Military Commander MR V, agreed to give to refugees in this area, no further survey work has been done. Survey work will be completed this fiscal year.

- Mekong/Tarnise SCHOOL

Reserve Area #3 - Y-Lai: There are 451 families in this 4,600 hectare reserve. Of the total area, 2,058 hectares have been determined as potential farm land. A cadastral survey of this area has been completed; however, only 151 one-hectare plots have been allocated. The majority of the remaining area is contested.

*Passport
+ 3 by Rotary*

The land problems in this area have been referred to the Khoueng Committee. The Committee made its first major decision in mid-August when it decided not to uphold an individual claim of 350 hectares. The Committee, after reviewing all the evidence, determined that 80% of the land claimed by the individual was taken after the area had been declared a refugee reserve area. He was allowed to retain 20% of the land. This hopefully has set a precedent which will speed up the judiciary process for settling other claims of this nature, as well as discourage future attempts at land grabs.

Reserve Area #4 - Ban Phao: There are 178 families in this 2,000 hectare reserve area. The first priority in surveying this area was for paddy land. The soil classification map showed 36 hectares, which were surveyed. The Muong Committee, however, later determined that 53 hectares belonged to indigenous villagers. The remaining 33 hectares were distributed with

*3 permanent at Phou Sai II
6 built by 200 at Ban Phao - old
01/498 - 3 was in reference -
110. G.S. area*

cultivation permits. Plans for this year include a survey of upland areas for allocation to the remaining 143 refugee families who have not been allocated land.

See previous comments on area 5 -
Reserve Area #5 - Dong Kalume: There are 541 families (refugees) living in this 3,000 hectare reserve. As in Area #4, the first priority for surveying was potential paddy. Soils maps indicated 163 hectares which were surveyed. After final review by the Muong Land Committee, 101 hectares were awarded to the refugees and the remainder reverted back to local villagers. Additional upland areas will be surveyed for distribution this fiscal year.

Ministry of Social Welfare equipment was used to clear some 25 hectares of land for production this past planting season.

Reserve Area #6 - Nasone: There are 398 refugee families living in this 5,300 hectare reserve. A total of 1,660 hectares of upland have been surveyed and divided into 4-hectare plots. This is adequate for all families living in the area. A lottery is expected to be held during September 1973. Although one large section of Area #6 was claimed by an individual after the area was established as a reserve, this has not created a problem as land is adequate for the number of people now in the area.

NO PERMANENT CONSTRUCTION TO DATE.

Reserve Area #7 - Nong Sa: There are 656 refugee families living in this 2,200 hectare reserve. By slightly exceeding the boundary of the reserve area, 2,282 hectares of potential upland farm land was surveyed (the original soils map indicated 1,959 hectares of potential farm land within the boundary).

6 PERMANENT AT NONG SA I (SOUTH YUN)

Approximately 40% of the land surveyed is now contested. A lottery for the uncontested land is scheduled for September 1973.

Reserve Area #8 - Hat Suan: There are 210 refugee families in this 4,600 hectare reserve. The first priority was given to the survey of potential paddy. A total of 272 hectares were surveyed and 208 hectares allocated. The cultivation permits are now being signed by the Khoueng office. A survey of upland areas is scheduled to begin in October 1973.

6 rooms at VEUN KHAM #2

Reserve Area #9 - Ban Thin: This area has not been officially opened although there are 279 families living just outside the boundary. The area contains 10,500 hectares. The cadastral survey of Area #9 is scheduled to begin in October 1973.

6 permanent rooms at Ban Thin.

Reserve Area #10 - Ban Thon: This area of 79,400 hectares is uninhabited by refugees and may be used as an alternate area should it become necessary to thin out some of the other areas.

B. Hin Heup

There are 325 refugee families in an area of 6,000 hectares. A preliminary land classification survey has been made. After the high priority surveying of the Vientiane Plain is completed, a survey of the Hin Heup area will be made. The refugees in this area are utilizing the land effectively, and no land ownership problems are anticipated.

C. Seno

This area contains 525 refugee families on 6,000 hectares. Each family has already been assigned a 2-hectare plot for developing into paddy or diversified crops and necessary forms for issuance of cultivation permits are in the proper RLG channels.

D. Thasano

There are 1,100 refugee families on 8,000 hectares. To date 1,700 hectares have been surveyed, divided into 2-hectare plots, and distributed. Additional land is being sought for the remaining 350 families who have not yet received their farm plots. The Ministry of Social Welfare has received necessary forms for issuing cultivation permits to those who have already been issued land.

E. Houei Nam Phak

There are 214 refugee families on 900 hectares. Two hectare plots have been assigned and the cultivation permits are now being prepared in Pakse. There have been no land problems.

F. Phou Ba Chiang

There are 1,142 refugee families on 10,000 hectares of land. A survey is now under way to divide the land and forms are in Pakse for issuing cultivation permits once the survey is complete. To date, 1,400 hectares have been surveyed. There have been no land problems.

G. Kheng Ngeun-Muong Nane

There are 600 refugee families on 31,000 hectares of land. Although the land is all upland, it is adequate to support the present population indefinitely. However, with the high potential for development in the area, it is necessary that the land be surveyed and cultivation permits be issued to those settling in the area. Plans for the survey call for its accomplishment within the next 18 months.

Existing land laws, procedures for acquiring permits, titles, etc., have been gathered together by USAID. These documents are being translated and, along with USAID procedural instructions, put into handbook form for distribution to Area Coordinators and Refugee Operations Officers. Lao version of this Handbook will also be distributed to appropriate Lao government personnel at the Province and District levels.

Copies of the English version of the Handbook will be forwarded to AID/W when completed.

For WHITEHOUSE *Wain*