Reviewer's report

Title: How do we sell the hygiene message? With Dollars, Dong or Excreta?

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Reviewer: Quan Le

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Referee Report
Manuscript: How to sell the hygiene message? With Dollars, Dong or Excreta?
Authors: Jensen PK, Pham DP, Knudsen LG

This is an interesting paper addressing an environmental health issue in Vietnam. However, I think this manuscript is a note based on a larger scale research project. I recommend the authors to rewrite the manuscript in a form of a research paper. Major compulsory revisions are recommended.

I have some specific comments as follows.

1. On page 5, the authors state that the annual production of excreta including ash is 150 kg excreta per person per year. However, the family production is 300-400 kg excreta including ash per year. This implies that each family consists of 2-3 adults or 2 adults with young children. What is an average size of a household of North Vietnamese farmers? I would expect a large size household.

2. The authors want to address the benefit of the poorest 20 percent of the rural farming population by a saving of 12% of the annual household income. This seems to be a small group compared to the entire population of Vietnam. However, at a national level, the authors claim that the excreta economy would generate about US$ 53 million, or a saving of US$ 75 million with artificial fertilizer import expenditure. This is not a feasible study in terms of environmental health at a macro level. It is not feasible for Vietnam to promote an excreta economy at a national level based on 84 million people living in both rural and urban areas. The environmental cost and public health expenses would add up to more than US$75 million.

3. In the conclusion, the authors state that health authorities in Vietnam need to come up with new interventions that accommodate the farmers’ need for non-expensive fertilizer. What would be the authors’ policy recommendations based on the extensive research in this areas?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.