

**TRAVEL REPORT
STUDY TOUR ON DAIRY PRODUCTION, PROCESSING and MARKETING for PHILIPPINE DAIRY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND DELEGATES**

About Thailand:

Thailand is situated in the heart of the Southeast Asian mainland, covering an area of 513,115 sq. km. and extends about 1,620 kilometers from north to south and 775 kilometers from east to west. Thailand borders the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Union of Myanmar to the North, the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Gulf of Thailand to the East, the Union of Myanmar and the Indian Ocean to the West, and Malaysia to the south. Its capital is Bangkok.

Thailand is a warm and rather humid tropical country with monsoonal climate. Temperatures are highest in March and April with average temperature of 28 oC to 38 oC and humidity averaging between 82.8 % to 73%.

It has a population of approximately 62 million of which around 6 million live in the capital city, Bangkok. Their official language is Thai while English is widely spoken and understood in major cities, particularly in Bangkok and in business circles.

The Delegates:

The delegates to the study tour were composed of 5 personnel from National Dairy Authority (NDA), 1 from Philippine Carabao Center (PCC), 3 Dairy Farmers and 1 journalist.

The Tour:

We arrived at Bangkok International Airport at 5:00 pm Philippine time. Ms. Jum welcomed us at the airport and brought us to Zonta Dairy Village, Ratchaburi Province after we had a sumptuous dinner at a seafood restaurant. We had our rest at Zonta Dairy Village guesthouse.

On the second day, Ms Jum briefed us about the tour and gave some protocols and guidelines. Then a tour around the village followed where we met some of the dairy farmer members of Zonta Dairy Farm. One farmer-couple makes silage to be supplied for the farmers within the village. Dairy farming in Zonta Village is a family endeavor. Husband and wife help in doing the activities in the farm. The wife even cuts and carries grass for the cows and assists in the milking of animals. She even assists in the preparation of silage. I noticed that Thai people are very industrious. They do not hire labor to help in their farm. Each farmer has an average of 20 cows and uses a milking machine in milking their cows. We also visited the best and outstanding farmer in Zonta. They consider him the best because he first settled his animal loan obligation before buying appliances and building a new house. The couple still supports all the dairy activities.

Third day was spent at the Zonta Dairy Plant. The plant has a capacity of 1000 liters per hour. On the average, it processes 3,000-5,000 liters per day but only 4 personnel were employed. One person does the raw milk testing, one is the operator of the plant equipment, one is a packer, while the last one is acting as manager and quality officer. The plant is very efficient with a 50 liter capacity heater that can cook their 5,000 liters milk and a small ice bank that can cool down their milk. We also made ice cream, butter and yogurt in the plant. They have ice cream maker. Most of their milk produced is served to the Milk Feeding Program of the government. They are now changing their plans to concentrate in the commercial market. They plan to have a dairy store in the highway of the province where they can sell to passers-by.

We also visited one of the universities in Thailand, the Nooban Chamuang Ratjabhat University in Ratchaburi Province. The university helps communities especially the farmers in terms of research for farm development. One of the major supports they provide is the making of biogas that serves the school canteen and nearby houses of the school. Their HRM – Tourism students assisted in the preparation of our food and accommodation while we stayed in Zonta Village for free.

Other places we visited:

1. Nong Pho Dairy Cooperative at Ratchaburi Province. Nong Pho Dairy is the largest coop in Thailand. Their milk production on the average is 170,000 liters per day with 5,000 dairy farmer-members. They have UHT and Pasteurized Plants. 70% of their milk production goes to the UHT process and is served to the Milk Feeding Program while 30% goes to the commercial market in the form of liquid milk, ice cream and yogurt. Aside from milk, they also make feeds for the cows which are bought by their farmers. They have a dairy bar for passers-by, a grocery store and a gasoline station which caters to farmer members and outside customers. Farmers deliver in milk trucks and milk tankers.
2. Side trip to Nong Pho Dairy farmers and witnessed that the farmers raise their cows just beside or under their houses and practice cut and carry.
3. Visited the farm of the Thai Holstein Association Chairman. He has a very clean farm with 1,200 head dairy cattle. He uses the bucket type milking machine and employs 7 persons for his dairy farm. He is very scientific in his dairy farming. In fact he makes his own feeds and TMR for his cows. Average milk production per cow is 30 liters per day. He supplies milk to Nestle Thailand. He make 6 kinds of feeds which are given according to the age of his cattle. He knows what is the right feeding at a certain time and age of the animals. The farmer is an engineer by profession but his main source of income is dairy.
4. Dairy Promotion Organization (DPO)- is like NDA in the Philippines. They manage their own dairy farm from herd management, processing, marketing and research and training. They also have eco-tourism. The DPO was established by the government. The first activity of the DPO was to take over the Thai Danish Dairy Farm. They are tasked to promote dairy farming, train farmers and buy and sell dairy products. They are the first to have UHT Plant in Thailand. They are also in charge of the Milk Feeding Program of the government which entrusted US\$433 million budget to them. They also regulate the price of raw milk all over the country and their average milk production is 120,000 liters per day. Cooperatives deliver milk to DPO in tankers with 50,000 liters capacity.
5. Farm Chokchai. This is a private dairy and tourism center. Their production is 30,000 liters per day. Aside from their dairy products they also earn income from tourists who visit their farm. They have 1 million tourists per year on the average. Farm Chokchai is one of best venues to learn dairy farming activities, milk product processing and love of nature. They have other lines of business like feed production, seed production and steak restaurants.
6. DELMAX Machinery. Manufacturer of filling/packing and capping machines of dairy and other beverages and sauce products. They have very hi-tech machinery that can produce machines according to the needs of the customers. Their workers are 100% Thai.

7. Feed and Silage Business in Ratchaburi. They supply their products to dairy farmers around their province. Zonta Dairy farmers get their feed supply in this company. I observed that they employ females to bag and weigh the silage.

8. We also visited the company which builds all kinds of tanks, like water and milk tanks, from small to big sizes like milk tankers.

General Observations:

1. Government support is strong in Thailand that is why their farmers are successful.
2. Thais are very industrious and disciplined.
3. They have the culture of helping each other to grow, especially helping the farmers.
4. Their dairy business started small but because of strong government support, Milk Feeding Program for sure market and the seriousness in their business they become big.
5. The pricing scheme for milk is done favorably for both farmers and cooperative.
6. There is no dole out in Thailand. Every support given by the government is being paid for by the farmers. The support is readily available when it is needed.
7. Universities and government agencies provide free services on community development, research and laboratory services to farmers.
8. Their dairy plant is designed efficiently so that it does not require many personnel to man the plant.
9. Given the right attitude, support, and research and management it is not impossible for Philippines' dairy business to grow big because Thailand is like the Philippines in terms of climate. Their grasses and feed materials are also available here. Our dairy breeds and genetics are almost the same.

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Prepared by:

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