

Members and local delegates gather for the Asian Agro-Marketing Forum in Yangon, Myanmar



Myanmar – Three meetings were organized by AFMA at the UMFCCI Building, Yangon, Myanmar. A few weeks before the Myanmar National Election, the 15th General Assembly (GA) and 30th Executive Committee (EXCOM) meeting of AFMA was held on 13th October 2010. There were seventeen participants including members, ex-officio members and observers. The chairman for both meetings was Mr. Win Aung, Vice President of UMFCCI, Myanmar. The GA was an opportunity for AFMA members to meet and elect the Chairman and Vice-chairman for years 2011 and 2012. Once again the majority of committee voted for the continuation of FCI, India, represented by Mr. Siraj Hussain, as a chairman of AFMA, and SAG, China, represented by Dr. Han Jizhi, as the Vice Chairman. Mr. Sien Win Hlaing was reappointed as accounts auditor for AFMA in the year of 2011-2012 for the 3rd term. The status of the association was discussed in a lively fashion. It was decided to develop new approaches for discussion next year, based on more information being available. Budget plans, as well as remuneration restructuring, were approved by the board. The GA also agreed on future plans and noted the progress made by AFMA.

On 14-15 October 2011, the Asian Agro-Marketing Forum was held, in collaboration with an exceptionally supportive host, the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI). The two-day event was held as a forum on the 14th and a study tour on the 15th. Participants attending the meeting included AFMA members, local public and private organizations and the local media. Approximately 20 participants were foreigners and 25 participants were local.

At the opening we received a keynote address from Mr. Than Aung Kyaw, Director, Directorate of Trade, Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar. The Forum was divided into two sessions. Country experiences of various key speakers, including from Thailand, China, Myanmar, Malaysia and India were presented during the first session. Then, in the second session, the floor was opened for a panel discussion on Postharvest Technology and Processing in commercial use. The Asian Agro-Marketing Forum was an initiative of the AFMA Secretariat to be a platform where members can come and share with other members their progress on activities and their achievements. It is planned to be an event that helps to promote both the association and technical exchange in the region. The Forum brought good experiences of successful initiative such as the development of farmers' market (Parsar Tani) in Malaysia. The panel discussion gave answers to participants who asked how to select farmer to grow organic produce. Others asked for more details of practical postharvest handling techniques. Participants included international NGOs working in Myanmar, consulting firms, food processing and food export companies and representative from several embassies in Yangon.



A field trip was organized on the second day of the Forum. The two locations visited were the New Golden Gate beans and pulses importer and exporter and Thaug Win Industry, which produces machines for rice mills. It was learned during the visit that rice milling machines can be produced and maintained locally. However, the milling technology is basic and demand for the products is not so great. It could be observed that since the labor cost is low there is no incentive for a factory in Myanmar to invest in a sophisticated machine.