



Go Organic 2009, 19-21 August 2009, Thailand

The International Symposium on Go...Organic 2009 The Approach of Organic Agriculture: New Markets, Food Security and a Clean Environment was held in Bangkok from 19-21 August 2009. There were 334 participants from Thailand and abroad. Around 20% of participants were from abroad, the rest were Thai. They were from universities, private companies and government institution, respectively. It was a big event that gatering 52 oral presentations and 83 post presentations altogether. For this event AFMA provided media support to regional network and we had table to deliver free publications and welcome for membership application.

From this symposium, the organic agriculture in many countries in Asia was imitated and promoted by government such as China, Bhutan, Vietnam and Thailand. It was suggested by Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) that the development of organic agriculture has to lead by business companies, however support from government is necessary in order to reduce the cost and to overcome the complicated regulation of getting a certification.

It is known that demand of organic products in Asia is driven by import countries in Europe, America and Japan. However, we should not underestimated the demand of domestic market. A good case was presented by Mr. Tai Seng Yee, Marketing Director of Zenxin Agri-Organic, a Singaporian company running business is Johor, Malaysia. The products of company gained NASAA organic certification. They have Organic Park for visitors to come, taste, enjoy activities and buy back home the products. Mr. Tai pointed out about consumer trend that "Taste is number 1 factor affect buying decision and branding locally is to please every customer".

The last day was the industrial visit to River Kwai International in Kanachaburi province which took 3 hours drive from Bangkok. The company was established in 1986 to process baby corn and sweet corn. Later it included the production of fresh organic, conventional and ready to eat fruits and vegetables into the line. Their major market is for export in which accounts for 95% of total production. In 2008, sales turnover was 1,650 million baht (48 million USD). Participants visited one of company's farms called Ladthong Research Station which has total area of 12 Ha. The farms were divided to many subplots base on buyers and certifications. Participants were welcomed and took to visit papaya, banana, chili, okra and dragon fruit production, preparation of herbal pesticide, production of organic fertilizer and the production of predators and parasites for pest control. Mr. Soonthorn Sritawee, Chief of Operation Officers, said the major challenge for organic production is soil and pest management. And the successful of farm management is to balance the ecological system.