



MY MEETING NOTES

Transformation in Agricultural and Food Economy in Asia
9th Asian Society of Agricultural Economists International Conference
Emerald Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
January 11-13th 2017



The ninth International Conference of the Asian Society of Agricultural Economists was organized at Bangkok, Thailand in collaboration during 11-13 January 2017. Dr. Prakashkumar Rathod and Mr. Prakash P reflect on their participation at this event.

THE CONTEXT

The 9th International Conference of the Asian Society of Agricultural Economists was organized at the Emerald Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand in collaboration with, Kasetsart University, Thailand Development Research Institute and Agricultural Economics Association of Thailand Under royal patronage during 11-13 January 2017 (<http://agri.eco.ku.ac.th/asae2017/>). We were two of the 300 delegates to attend the conference that was represented by agricultural economists, development practitioners, policymakers, academics, researchers, and students. The attendees came from 18 countries (including 12 Asian countries).



Delegates at the 9th ASAE international conference

The main theme of the conference was 'Transformation in Agricultural and Food Economy in Asia', with the following sub-themes.

- Rural transformation processes in Asia: experiences, lessons learned and challenges.
- Food value chain development in Asian countries
- Changing consumer behaviour

- Technological innovations supporting agricultural development and agricultural transformation
- Institutional innovations supporting agricultural development and agricultural/rural transformation
- Demographic changes: their implications on agricultural production and food consumption
- Prospects of Asian agriculture under the regime of AEC and other trade agreements in the Asia and Pacific region and beyond
- Agriculture and sustainable development goals
- International cooperation in facilitating agricultural and rural transformation

PROGRAMME

INAUGURAL SESSION

The opening address was delivered by Dr. Jariya Sutthichaiya, Secretary General, Office of Agricultural Economics on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. Dr. Sutthichariya emphasised that Asia has experienced remarkable economic growth in the past 4-5 decades and accounts for one third of the total global economic activity, thus plays a significant role in the world economy. Dr. Jariya opined that, although agricultural GDP and the share of employment in agriculture has declined significantly in some Asian countries, agriculture is still the sector that engages over 700 million workers that is about 40 percent of Asia’s total employment.

TECHNICAL SESSIONS



Oral presentation by Prakash. P

The conference comprised of one keynote presentation, six plenary sessions, 110 parallel oral presentations, six poster presentations and a visit to a local wholesale food market. The technical sessions were organized by FAO, IRRI, TDRI-ERIA, World Bank and Leibniz University of Hannover, Germany. Few of the important topics covered were as follows:

Speaker	Topic
Dr. Jikun Huang, Professor at School of Advanced Agricultural Sciences, Peking University and Director of China Centre for Agricultural Policy	Facilitating inclusive rural transformation in Asia
Mr. Isara Vongkusolkit Chairman, the Mitr Phol Group Chairman, Thai Chamber of Commerce	Modern agriculture and role of the joint private-public-CSO committee
Prabhu Pingali, Professor, The Charles H.Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University.	The transition from food to nutrition security in Asia

Steven Jaffee,
Lead Agricultural Economist, The World Bank's
Agricultural Global Practice

Food policy in the shadow of
skyscrapers

Dr. Mark Rosegrant,
Director, The Environment and Production Technology
Division, International Food Policy Research Institute.

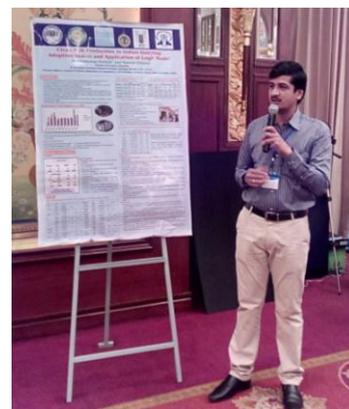
Agricultural transformation, climate
change and sustainable development

Prasarn Trairatvorakul,
Director, Thailand Sustainable Development Foundation
(TSDF), Former Governor, The Bank of Thailand.

Applications of sufficient economy
philosophy and the principle of work
in agricultural and rural development

Poster Presentations

A total of six posters were displayed during the conference period. I presented my poster on the topic, 'Clean Milk Production in Indian Dairying: Adoption Status and Application of Logit Model'. It was very interesting to note that even posters were given importance equal to oral presentations, which is not the case in majority of other conferences and seminars. I interacted with delegates about the importance of clean milk in national and international markets.



FIELD VISIT- TALAAD THAI MARKET

On 13th January 2017, we visited the *Talaad Thai*, the largest wholesale food market in South East Asia which transacts more than 12,000 metric tons of products daily (<http://talaadthai.com/eng>). It is the trading point for farmers, buyers, and sellers of large quantities of locally produced and imported food products. The primary product categories traded are fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, rice, crops, flowers etc. The purpose of this visit was to expose the participants to the largest food market in South East Asia. This market functions under the private sector which has created a platform for producers and buyers to interact with each other and set reasonable prices for goods. We learnt how the different products are grades and packed in this market.



OUR IMPRESSIONS

Participants & Presentations: The conference was announced well in time with a well drafted brochure of the meeting. The papers were chosen for quality which is proven by the the fact that

participants had to modify the abstracts as per suggestions by the organizers. Further, the full paper was also collected one month in advance for compilation into proceedings (http://agri.eco.ku.ac.th/asae2017/download/9ASAE_Proceedings.pdf). It was different from other conferences where the major focus is on the total number of participants and presentations rather than quality. The participants were deeply engaged in technical sessions and discussions.

Time Management: All sessions including the inaugural program ended well within the scheduled time. Since the presentations were of good quality and full papers were already available in the proceedings, the speakers could focus on the presentations which helped the participants to easily understand the content. All participants and organizers managed the time effectively for presentation and allotted more time for discussion after each presentation.

Use of Social Media: The conference used social media like Facebook, Twitter etc, for extensive publicity through which announcements and schedules were well communicated. Additionally, photos of this event were updated for the benefit of the participants.

Market Visit: Visit to the market was an excellent learning experience for us, as it is unusual to find such a large scale, highly organized market in India. This was a unique opportunity as other conferences usually focus on sightseeing rather than academic and learning experiences. We rarely had such educational field visits as a part of other conferences.

Box 1: The Asian Society of Agricultural Economists (ASAE)

The Asian Society of Agricultural Economists (ASAE) is a recognized association of agricultural economists and related professionals who focus on research/development studies in Asia.

It aims to:

- foster the application of the science of agriculture economics to better the conditions of Asian rural people and their associated communities,
- advance knowledge of agricultural processes and economic organization of Asian agriculture, food, resources, and environment, and
- facilitate communication and exchange of information among those concerned with rural welfare throughout Asia.

ASAE engages in activities within the sphere of its objectives and what may have been authorized by the ASAE Council, such as international and regional meeting and seminars, and the publication of reports. A major conference of the ASAE is held every three years.

FINAL REMARKS

The participation in the conference was greatly beneficial to us in terms of gaining additional information and knowledge about advanced research, like Propensity Score Matching (PSM) and Economic Surplus Model in social sciences. At the same time, we could understand the relevance of interdisciplinary research in agricultural sciences, since the social science subjects like extension and economics are parallel. Further, this conference was important for all the delegates as we received good information from different sessions and from knowledgeable plenary session speakers. This conference helped us in interacting with eminent scientists working worldwide, sharing ideas/ experiences with them and establishing new professional contacts.

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