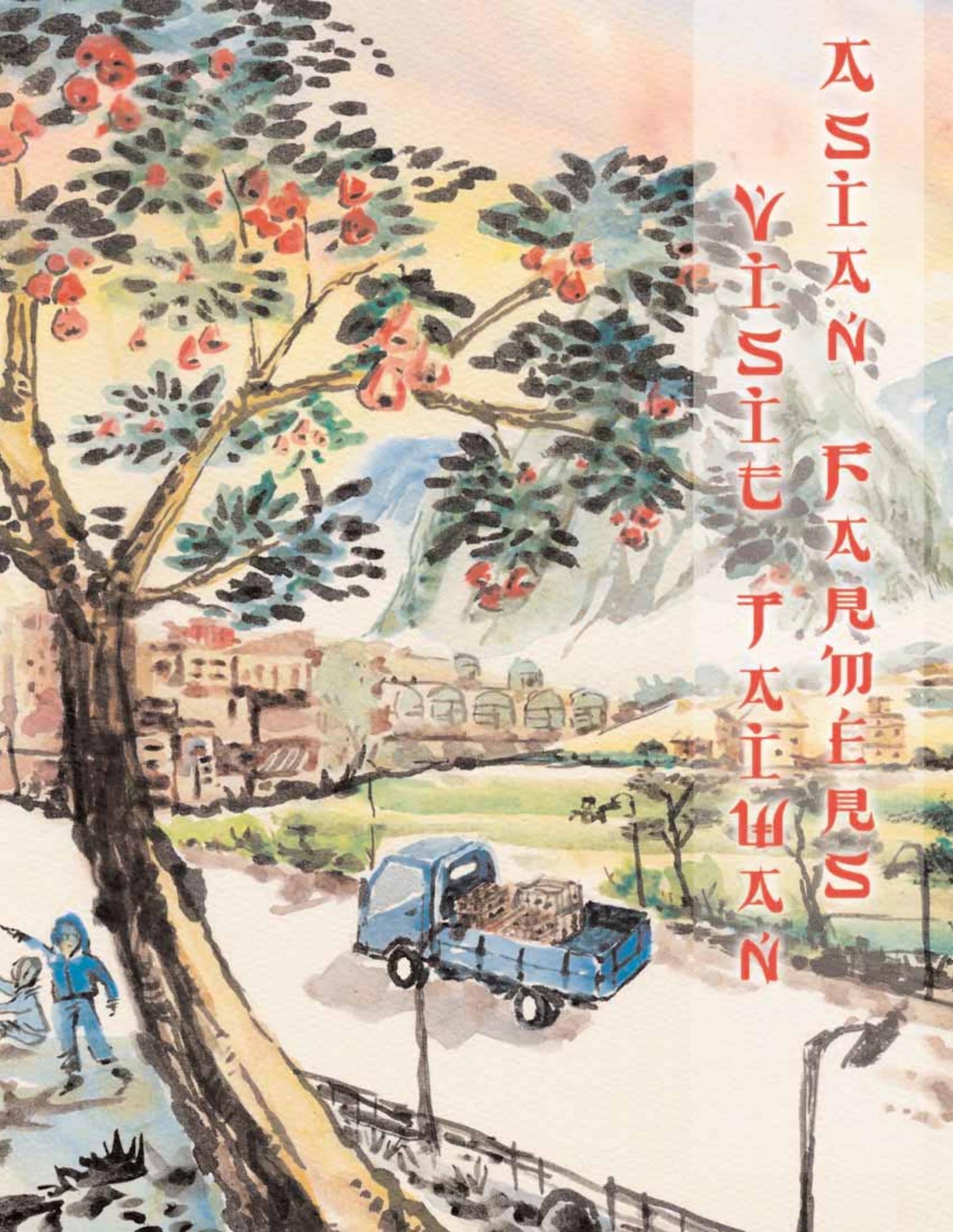


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The Asian Farmers' Exchange Program

The Asian Farmers' Exchange Program is AsiaDHRRRA's major initiative in sustaining the dialogue, sharing of knowledge, and building of linkages among farmers and NGO leaders in Asia. Specifically, the project aims to:

1. Facilitate the sharing of experiences and insights on local productivity systems development, rural enterprise development, and farmers' network building and strengthening;
2. Establish linkages between and among farmers' organizations and cooperatives from Asian nations; and
3. Initiate preliminary discussion on future united regional advocacy efforts on issues such as food security, sustainable agriculture, and farmers' cooperation.

Ultimately, the program's main success criterion is the formation of a strategic Asian rural alliance for greater advocacy and for the benefit of the poor Asian farmer.

About AsiaDHRRRA

The Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia or AsiaDHRRRA is a regional partnership of eleven (11) social development networks and organizations from ten (10) Asian nations.

AsiaDHRRRA envisions Asian rural communities that are just, free, prosperous, living in peace and working in solidarity towards self-reliance. To achieve this vision, AsiaDHRRRA's mission is to be an effective

- a. Promoter and catalyst of partnership relations as we create opportunities for genuine people-to-people dialogue and exchange;
- b. Facilitator of human resource development processes in the rural areas; and
- c. Mobilizer of expertise & opportunities and facilitator of processes for the strengthening of solidarity and kinship among Asian rural communities.

These roles interplay as AsiaDHRRRA pursues its two-pronged goals of:

1. Strengthening of members and network relations, and
2. Building of Asian rural solidarity.

The publication of this monograph was made possible with the support of MISEREOR



Asian Farmers Visit
于太田田太

*A Chronicle of the Taiwan Leg of the Asian
Farmers' Exchange Program
17-24 August 2003*

AsiaDHRR
Asia Partnership for the Development of
Human Resources in Rural Asia



The Participants of the Taiwan Leg of the Asian Farmers' Exchange Program

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Welcome to Taiwan!

The Taiwan Farmers' Exchange Visit (Taiwan FEV) is a fruit of TaiwanDHRRA's endeavors to fulfill AsiaDHRRA's mission of creating opportunities for genuine people-to-people dialog and exchanges. This is a plan that took some years to materialize; and was delayed further by the onslaught of SARS in Asia.

We had three major objectives for the Taiwan FEV. These are: (1) to understand the agricultural development in Taiwan; (2) to increase and start the dialog among Taiwanese farmers with Asian countries and (3) to

stimulate the Taiwan farmers' interest and awareness to have direct contact experiences with Asian farmers.

To achieve these objectives, we employed several strategies that combined learning in classroom and in field settings. First, we gave various lecture-discussions using various audio-visual aids such as maps, bulletins, videotapes and powerpoint presentations. We started with a general background about the country to inform the participants about the historical and economic background of Taiwan. Aside from that, we also gave an orientation of Taiwanese agriculture

through maps, bulletins, videotapes and powerpoint presentations. At the National Training Institute for Farmers' Organizations (NTIFO) – we had lectures on agricultural policies and agricultural development in Taiwan. We discussed the history and developments in agriculture, agrarian reform and Farmers' Associations in Taiwan.

At the National Pintung University of Science and Technology (NPUST), we learned about animal science, agricultural machinery, agribusiness management, daily operations in the production and marketing teams of FAs, and food processing techniques.

Secondly, we ensured direct contacts between the Taiwan FEV participants and the Taiwanese farmers through two home stays, and accompanied by interpreters). On purpose, twice we invited host families to have dinner with all participants. We likewise paid courtesy calls and exchanged ideas with representatives from government, especially the Council of Agriculture, academe and research institutions, and leaders of farmers' associations and agricultural cooperatives

Thirdly, we ensured a balanced site visit. We saw the southern and northern parts of Taiwan as well as its mountain and sea areas. We saw different crops with various farmers' and fishers' groups using both organic and regular farming. We went to regular farms, leisure farms as well as high-tech farms, after-harvest processing and packaging plants, wholesale and retail outlets using regular and e-commerce systems.

Fourthly, we held reflection sessions at the middle and at the end of the Taiwan FEV.

These were to collect our thoughts, learnings and insights and provide clarifications when needed.

Taiwan's advancements in agriculture was a result of strong collaboration between the government and the farmers. Many of the technologies being taught to farmers came from the various researches by the government. Also, the innovation and industriousness and smartness of Taiwanese farmers have helped in the agricultural development.

During this Taiwan FEV, we tried to be very open with all we know. We did not show the details of the operation. What was most important was for all of us to think globally, and to know more about our friends in other countries. Our purpose was to let everyone know what we are trying to do and hopefully this knowledge will be useful to you.

We hope we have achieved our objectives and all the Taiwan FEV participants found this event a fruitful one! For the readers of this

monograph, we hope you will have a feel and a glimpse of what we all saw and learned and the friendships that we have forged and strengthened as we spent eight days together, traveling and meeting farmers; and fishers' associations all over Taiwan.

Lastly, we would like to thank the Taiwan Council of Agriculture and Agriterra for supporting this event. Our sincere gratitude also to National Pingtung University of Science and Technology (NPUST) and the Taiwan Wax Apple Development Association (TWADA) and the Wenzao Ursuline College of Language (WUCL) for co-hosting this event. Special mention to the student volunteers of NPUST and WUCL who have given superb logistical assistance and warm Taiwanese hospitality. Our thanks goes also to AsiaDHRRRA and AFA who have provided technical assistance and backstop work .



DR. BOSCO LEE

President, TaiwanDHRRRA



17 August 2003

By Jun Virola

日記付本

We immediately saw action on the morning of the first day of the Farmers' Exchange Visit (FEV) in Taiwan, as we visited the Fong-Shan Tropical Horticultural Experiment Station and the Flower Center of the Taiwan Sugar Company in Kaohsiung county.

We traveled in style, aboard a spacious tourist bus, driven by one of the most skillful and careful drivers I have ever known, and with no less than the Dr. Bosco Lee himself, President of TaiwanDHRRA and WUCL, playing the role of a tourist guide for all of us. His impromptu speeches were informative, enlightening, and sprinkled with a heavy dose of humor and witticism.

The Fong Shan Tropical Horticultural Experiment Station boasted of numerous tropical fruits and products, imported from various parts of the world, and carefully experimented upon and developed. These will be later propagated to farmers in Taiwan. No wonder they have such good export-quality fruits to various countries.

The Flower Center of Taiwan Sugar Company, on the other hand, was our first encounter of a leisure farm. What used to be a sugar plantation was now a beautiful garden of various blossoms and a recreational area for families. Nearby was a honey bee production house, and a display store for various products made from the sweet syrup. She mentioned that some of the sugar plantations in Taiwan were converted into leisure farms when the sugar industry of Taiwan became uncompetitive in the world market.

We then had buffet lunch at the Flower Center, hosted by Ms. Shao-Gi Chen, the manager of the Flower Center. It was sumptuous;

大 島 中 心 七 千 六 百 萬 人 的 台 灣



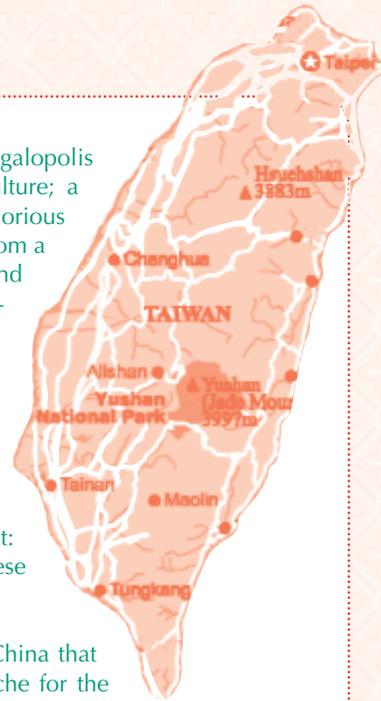
Taiwan is a modern industrialised megalopolis clinging to the fringes of an ancient culture; a string of teeming cities at the feet of a glorious mountain range. It's traditional noodles from a 7-Eleven, aboriginal tribes in mini-skirts and a day of temple rituals followed by water-slide rides.

If you step outside chaotic Taipei you'll discover why Taiwan is known as Ilha Formosa, 'the beautiful island'. Mountain peaks puncture a sea of clouds, slick black volcanic rock wraps the coastlines and waterfalls shroud themselves in mist: Taiwan is a computer-generated Chinese watercolour.

But it is precisely Taiwan's history with China that has caused the most friction and heartache for the Taiwanese. The continuing tug-of-war between the People's Republic of China on the mainland and the Democratic Progressive Party on Taiwan is often prone to take on the complexion of a civil war, albeit one that has not, as yet, developed into an all-out brawl. Mainland China insists on the truth of 'one China' while Taiwan has managed the impossible tightrope act of agreeing, in principle, to one China but acting, in practice, like an independent republic.

Full country name: Republic of China
 Area: 35,563 sq km
 Population: 22.5 million
 People: Taiwanese (84%), Aboriginal (2%), Chinese(14%)
 Language: Chinese
 Religion: Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism
 Government: Democratic Progressive Party
 Head of State: President Chen Shui-bian

GDP: US\$247 billion
 GDP per capita: US\$16,100
 Annual Growth: 4.8%
 Inflation: 3.1%
 Major Industries: Machinery, electrical equipment, electronic/ computer goods, textiles, clothing
 Major Trading Partners: USA, Japan, Hong Kong



after a while, I thought I wouldn't be able to walk properly because I ate too much

In the afternoon, the FEV formally opened at the auditorium of WUCL, where we met our hosts, TaiwanDHRRA, WUCL, and NPUST. We then listened to a lecture on Taiwan by Dr. Bosco and viewed a video entitled "Taiwan Has Stood Up."



Then, we had our group photo taken outside the room. Our photographer fixed our attention to him with his peculiar "prrrt" sound, and generously took a shot from each of the more than a dozen cameras that the participants lined up in front of him.

Back at the Chinatrust Hotel that evening, we were treated to a banquet, which was attended by no less than Dr. Chang-Hung Chou, President of NPUST. We went through the amazing challenge of surviving twelve dishes of delicious Chinese food, had the most pleasant exchange of stories and laughter with other participants, and ended the evening with the Taiwanese, Vietnamese, and Japanese participants singing to the videoke, emboldened by a few shots of wine and the applause and cheers from the rest of us.

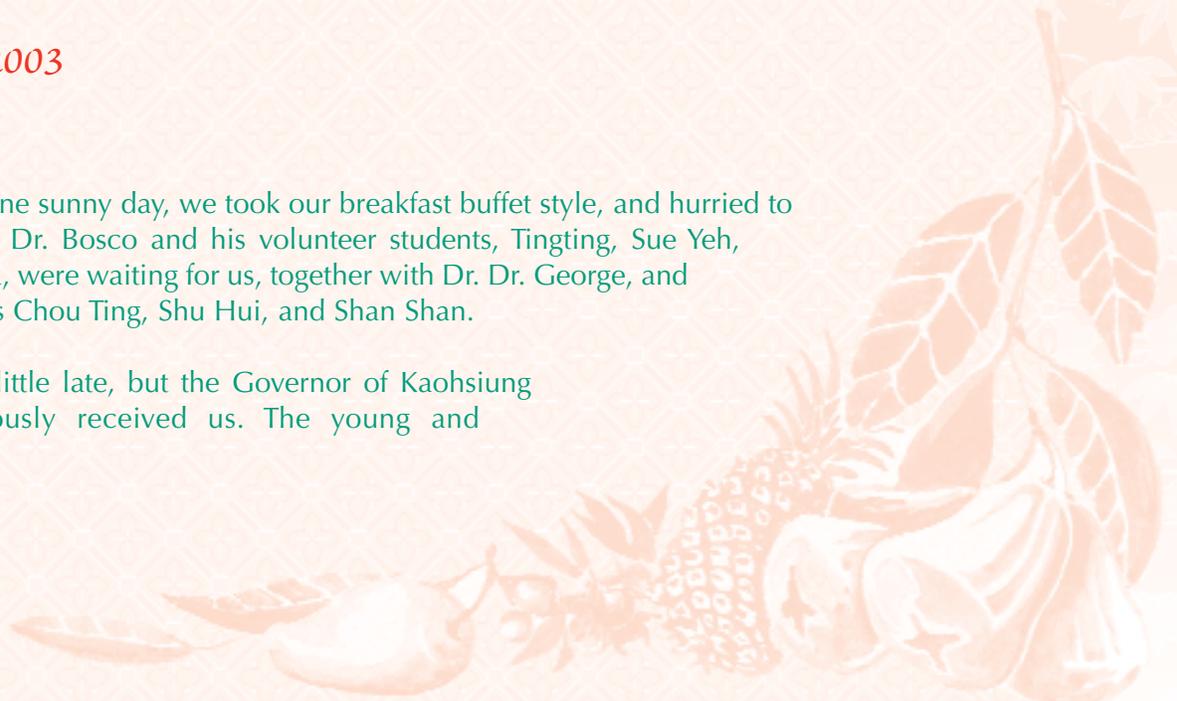


18 August 2003

By Jun Virola

Rising up to a fine sunny day, we took our breakfast buffet style, and hurried to our bus, where Dr. Bosco and his volunteer students, Tingting, Sue Yeh, Cindy, and Trina, were waiting for us, together with Dr. George, and NPUST students Chou Ting, Shu Hui, and Shan Shan.

We were a little late, but the Governor of Kaohsiung County generously received us. The young and





dynamic governor, we later learned, was himself the son of a farmer. He was glad to give us an overview of Kaohsiung county, its high quality tropical fruits, and its hardworking farmers. The exchanges with the farmers from the different Asian countries was enlightening and made everyone feel that we really come from the same region. Before we left, our Thailand and Japan participants

presented simple gifts of moon cake and paper fan to the Governor, who in turn gave each one of us a CD about Kaohsiung.

Beating the clock and with the gentle pressure from Dr. Bosco, we shuttled to the Farmers' and Fishermen's Association (FFA) South Information Center, where we met the General Manager. The FFA is a computerized information center serving farmer associations in all the 15 counties. It was amazing to see that they were using internet technologies and automated teller machines for all their transactions with farmers. That was really a far cry from the low tech and often very inefficient systems in many developing countries.

We learned about the roles and functions of farmers associations from the lecture of Mr. Han-Jun Shiao. Many of the FAs were organized, when Taiwan was colonized by Japan, farmers were organized into farmers' unions in different townships or regions. However, we learned that because of bad business loans given by FAs in the past few years, when economy was in recession, many of them no longer had operation funds and had to auction properties to recover.



We also learned that agrarian reform succeeded in Taiwan because of political will and the presence of supportive legislators. Chang Kai Shek, a hero to many Taiwanese, was determined to implement agrarian reform, although he was seen as a dictator by Western standards.

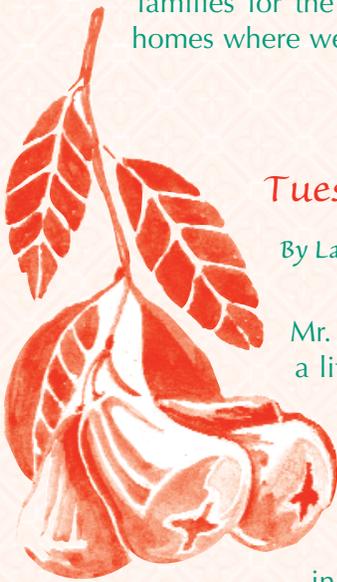
To the disappointment of our organic vegetable farmers from Japan, we learned that standards for organic farm products were difficult to set in Taiwan because of many factors involved, such as soil contamination. What was

being promoted is the GAP (Good Agricultural Process) products, not organic products. Furthermore, organic farming was a very touchy issue for a lot of Taiwanese farmers.



We also visited the fruit farm of NPUST and the class by Dr. Chung-Ruey Yen, and also Animals Farm and the class by Dr. Liang-Chou Hsia. We felt like space astronauts when we donned blue suits and covered our feet with plastic slip-ons. Those were to prevent the spread of any infection. The animal farm used modern and high-level technology. It was amazing that hog farms did not emit any smell at all.

In the evening, we had dinner at a cozy restaurant where we met our host families for the first time. After dinner, our host families took us to their homes where we spent the night.



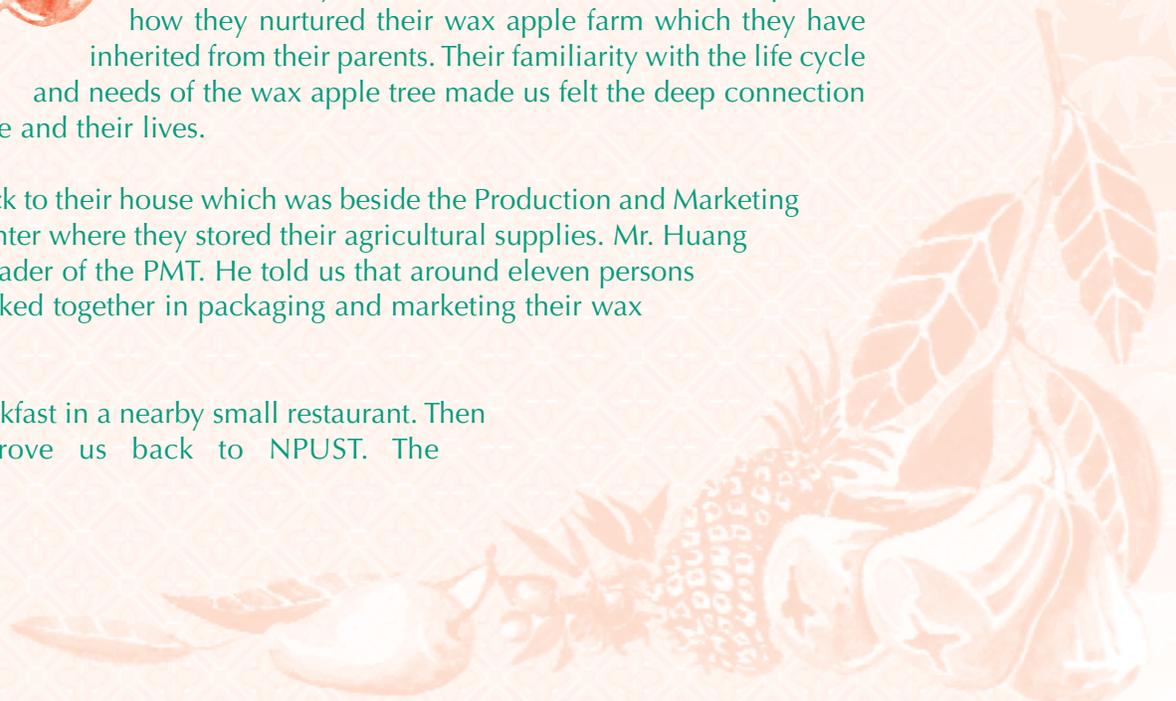
Tuesday, August 19

By Lany Rebagay

Mr. Huang, a wax apple farmer and our foster father woke us up a little before six in the morning. He took us to his wax apple and betel nut farm which was just a five minute walk from their house. We found Mrs. Huang in the farm, perhaps she was already there while we were still sleeping. They enthusiastically toured us around the farm and explained how they nurtured their wax apple farm which they have inherited from their parents. Their familiarity with the life cycle and needs of the wax apple tree made us felt the deep connection between the tree and their lives.

We went back to their house which was beside the Production and Marketing Team (PMT) Center where they stored their agricultural supplies. Mr. Huang was the team leader of the PMT. He told us that around eleven persons in his team worked together in packaging and marketing their wax apples.

We had breakfast in a nearby small restaurant. Then Mr. Huang drove us back to NPUST. The



participants had another official group photo taken, this time at NPUST and with all the foster parents.

At NPUST, Dr. Wenchi Huang gave a one-hour lecture on Agribusiness. One of the challenges of Taiwan's agriculture was its declining contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which only accounted for 1.9 %. However, more than 25 % of GDP came from the Agribusiness sector which included those enterprises which used agricultural products e.g. food processing etc. Farming, she said, should be treated as a business. For it to become sustainable, farmers should learn to employ efficient means of carrying out the routines in the farm. It entailed good quality control to compete in the market. The Taiwan government initiated the formation of various production and marketing teams (PMT) to gain economy of scale.



After that, we had another interesting lecture on food processing, given by Dr. Ming Chung Wu. We were amazed by the many ways of how raw agricultural products can gain additional value through food processing. He brought samples which we gamely tasted. He said that through product innovation, Taiwan's canned, ready-to-drink Mr. Brown coffee has reached the world market. Later, he guided us to the food factory where we saw various processed food ranging from dried fish, banana wine, etc.



In the afternoon we visited the Supermarket owned and managed by a farmers' association. We also went to Kaohsiung District Improvement Station where we learned the various crop improvement efforts undertaken by the government through its agricultural experiment station.

We then traveled to Chen Chin Lake. It was raining when we arrived at the lake but despite it we could not help but appreciate its beauty. We were reunited with our big luggages transported from Chinatrust hotel where we first stayed.

After dinner, we had a good reflection session. Most of the participants mentioned that the homestay was a good opportunity for each one to have a dialogue with Taiwanese farmers. The exposure to various

groups made the participants realized that there should be a wide range of collaboration among various sectors to achieve genuine development. The participants also mentioned that they were impressed by the modern technology being adopted by farmers which made their production very efficient.



Wednesday, August 20

By Lany Rebagay

Today, we visited the distribution center of various vegetable packing stations owned and managed by the Zihguan farmers' associations. We were impressed by the level of sophistication they employed in the quality control and packaging of agricultural products. We were also struck when we learned that 45 % of the retail cost of the agricultural commodity found in the supermarket went to the packing station who provided the quality control, storage, packaging and distribution of the goods.



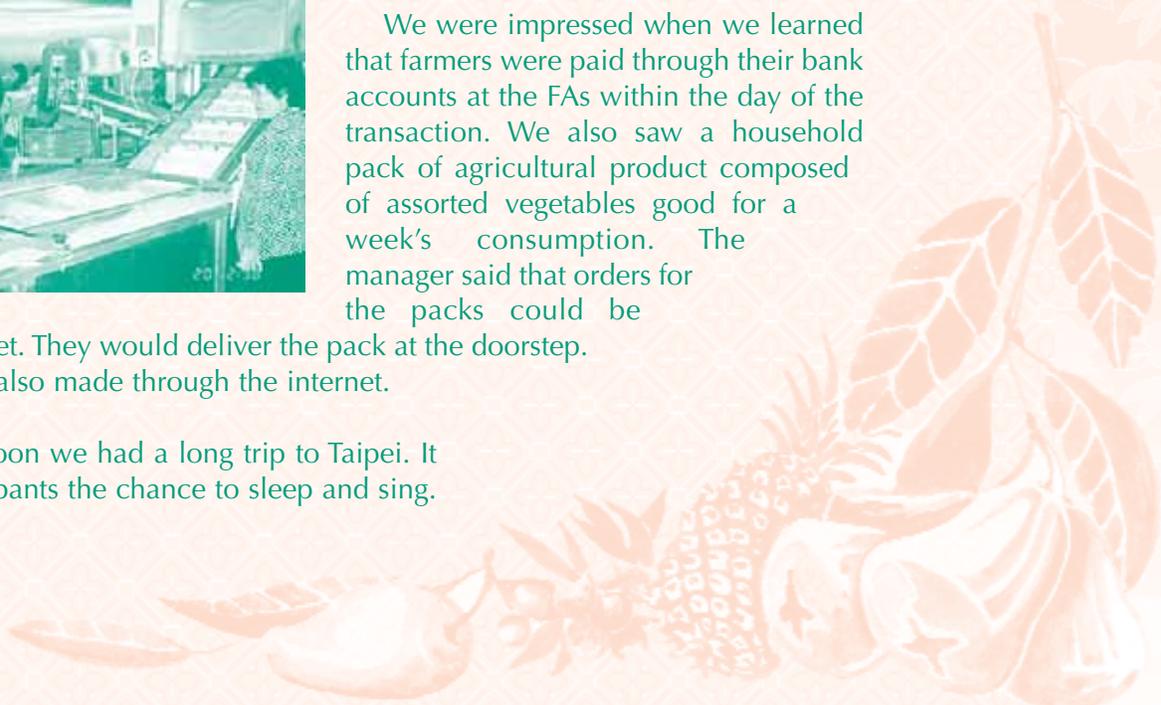
There was a long discussion concerning the price determination. We realized that the production and marketing teams (PMT) get good prices for their produce because they could decide which wholesale market to sell them compared to an individual farmer who only gets the average wholesale price based on Taipei or Kaohsiung wholesale trading centers.



We were impressed when we learned that farmers were paid through their bank accounts at the FAs within the day of the transaction. We also saw a household pack of agricultural product composed of assorted vegetables good for a week's consumption. The manager said that orders for the packs could be

made via internet. They would deliver the pack at the doorstep. Payments were also made through the internet.

In the afternoon we had a long trip to Taipei. It gave the participants the chance to sleep and sing.



The bus has a good karaoke system which provided the “singers” from among the participants to pour their heart out. We arrived Taipei almost 7 pm. We stayed at the National Training Institute for Farmers’ Organization (NTIFO) , built through the efforts of various farmers’ associations in Taiwan. After dinner we had a cultural program where each country delegation was asked to present a cultural number. We had lots of fun. We enjoyed the action songs and the stories.



Thursday, August 21

By Marlene Ramirez and Lany Rebagay

At the Council of Agriculture

We took another group picture at the NTIFO; then we hurried to the bus and proceeded to our meeting with the Council of Agriculture.

We had a meeting with Dr. Chiu, a member of the Taiwan’s Council of Agriculture for 31 years who presented the government’s agricultural policies and programs with an impressive video presentation. He noted that as far as farmer participation in policy making is concerned, the Taiwanese farmers have not yet fully realized their power. They don’t have a combined voice until recently when they badly felt the impact of trade liberalization. Farmers’ Associations, agricultural cooperatives and other farmers groups started to come together to voice out their concerns about government policies and the impact of WTO on them. Last November 2002, in a rare show of force, 120,000 farmers took part in a demonstration in Taipei to present their demands to the government, which was forced to grant them.

At the Fuji-An Leisure Farm

We proceeded to a Leisure Farm at Fuji-an Village. The road was narrow and steep so we had to get off the bus and made a short walk to the farm. We were met by Mr. Ong, the owner of the 9,000 sq. meter leisure farm. This farm is frequented by local tourists, young people and city



dwellers who want to learn more about farming. It earns 30,000 NT per month (USD\$ 882), perhaps more than what it used to earn as a regular farm. It was indeed a good model of how farms having difficulty operating as a production farm can be made economically viable. The group enjoyed their organically produced snack food. Each participant received a souvenir from the owner. We also left a token of appreciation for their kind hospitality.

Input on the Strategy of Agricultural Development in Taiwan,

By Dr. Chiu Yung-Chung, PhD., Councilor
Council of Agriculture, Executive Yuan



After lunch, we came back to NTIFO to listen to the lecture of Dr. Chiu focusing on the Agricultural Development history of Taiwan. Though it was an unholy hour, nobody fell asleep. Dr. Chiu excellently delivered his talk, capturing our attention and interest. He stressed that strategic choice on the type of agricultural intervention has to be done by the government. For Taiwan land reform was a strategic decision that

unleashed the energies of the farmers leading towards increased farm productivity due to their security over the land. He also mentioned that human resource development coupled with system and organization build-up is an important factor in agricultural technological innovation.

He shared that the strategy used by their government in the 60's was "feed the people, before your teach". He said that this was mistake. "Feed First" had a political context that made the farmers too dependent on government. Education should have led the farmers to the knowledge of self-actualization of their farms and ushered a more sustainable form of agriculture development. Education could have made the farmers more prepared today to meet the challenges of globalization. It could have made the Taiwanese farmers smarter, more competent and competitive, and independent.



Dr. Chiu was very candid in saying that Taiwan's membership in the WTO is a strategic gain for the country, politically, even though it spelled disaster and will continue to hurt the agriculture sector. When asked about the importance of regional (Asian level) organizing, e.g. AFA, he affirmed the need to have regional platforms since our countries face the

same issues. It is important that the agricultural development framework be reviewed to look into broader rural development concerns and to expand our vision. He noted the need to promote a sustainable rural development paradigm (not just increased production but also culture, humanity and environment), which is not clearly interpreted in an agriculture development framework.

Lastly, he encouraged everyone to continue to organize, dialogue, intensify exchange of information and to pursue joint programs.

In put on Farmers' Association Movement in Taiwan

By Dr. David Lin, NTIFO



We had a short break after Dr. Chiu's lecture then we came back to listen to the lecture of Dr. Lin on the History of Taiwan's Farmer Association. Through his presentation materials he walked us through the history of farmers' movement in Taiwan, dating back to 1900. There are now a total of 304 Farmers' Associations at the provincial level in Taiwan offering a host of services to its members. It is important to note that these are not organized at the national level. The

political context in Taiwan did not encourage their coming together as a united body and bigger voice.

Another interesting point in his presentation is the farmers' population by age where close to 50% is above 45 year old. This indicates that Taiwan is also facing an ageing farming population issue.

Of interest as well was his discussion about the major crisis that hit the farmers in the country. The regional economic recession, the negative backlash of WTO and the stiff competition faced by their agricultural products with neighboring China are major causes from the external side. With stricter financing rules, many of the credit facilities being run by FAs are being terminated or privatized (taken over by commercial or government banks). Internally they view bad credit operations, poor integration and cooperation among farmers, absence of a national farmers organization and leaders, and lack of creativity and investment in human resource development as reasons why the agriculture is in a crisis.

The recent "anger" rallies of farmers moved government to propose that existing credit facilities

of FAs still be used as depository of government money. Ten years ago, the FAs generate a big part of their profits from their credit operations but this was hurt by the recession. Another response was the creation of a Senior Farmers' Pension, which others view as not sustainable and only politically motivated.



After his lecture we had a better understanding of the evolution of the farmer association and cooperatives in Taiwan and the dynamics of farmers' relationships with their government. Obviously the government provided a lot of policy support to their sector. But there are also other external realities that even their own government will not be able to provide.

After dinner we went to Taipei's night market.



Friday, August 22, 2003

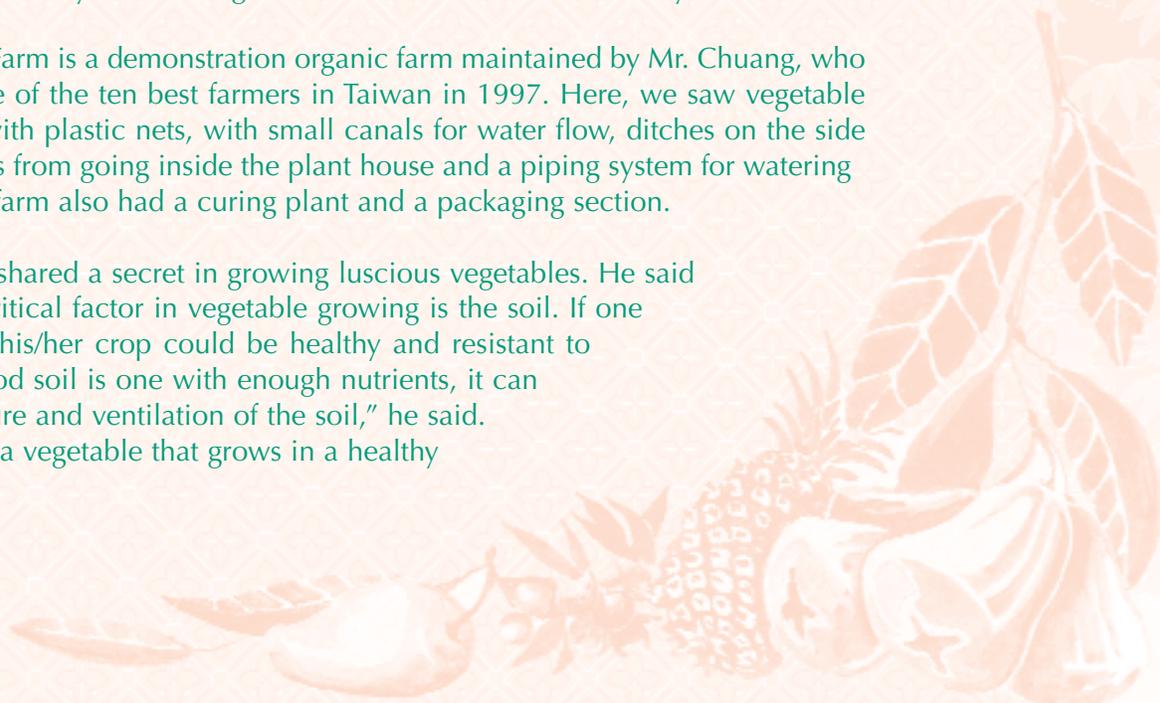
Esther Penunia

Fu-Lon Farm

We were already on the road at seven a.m., for a breakfast session in Fu-Lon Farm in nearby Taoyuan County. We were met by Mr. Chuang and his wife, who eagerly invited us to a hearty breakfast of mantao, siopao, eggs, pork, soya cakes (tokwa), vegetables, doughnuts and cakes. We savored the fresh and warm soya milk prepared by Mr. Chuang himself at around 6 am of this day.

The Fu-Lon Farm is a demonstration organic farm maintained by Mr. Chuang, who was chosen one of the ten best farmers in Taiwan in 1997. Here, we saw vegetable plots covered with plastic nets, with small canals for water flow, ditches on the side to prevent snails from going inside the plant house and a piping system for watering the plants. The farm also had a curing plant and a packaging section.

Mr. Chuang shared a secret in growing luscious vegetables. He said that the most critical factor in vegetable growing is the soil. If one had good soil, his/her crop could be healthy and resistant to diseases. "A good soil is one with enough nutrients, it can keep the moisture and ventilation of the soil," he said. "The surface of a vegetable that grows in a healthy





soil has an oily layer which protects the plant from damaging insects”, he further added. Holding a leaf cabbage in his hands, he emphasized that a healthy vegetable has a healthy root system, that is, it has many roots. He asked us to have a taste of the leaf cabbage. All of us said that it was sweet, crispy and tasty; how we wished all vegetables tasted that way!

Marketing his organic products was not a problem, Mr. Chuang said. He sold his products directly in several schools. Four other farmers were doing organic farming in this county, and while they had the same brand names, they carried different code numbers.

Fu-Ten Farm

Where Mr. Chuang gets his organic fertilizer was of interest to many FEV participants, as he needed 20 tons of quality organic fertilizer for every hectare of land! Our next stop, which was at nearby Fu-Ten Farm, was the answer.

“You are visiting a most advanced vegetable farm in the whole world,” Dr. Bosco proudly announced. It was indeed! We were awed by the sweet pea sprout farm where every farming task was done by machines, except the task of putting sacks of sweet pea seeds in a very large round containers. We can’t believe that with this technology you can be a farmer without your hands touching the barren soil! This sweet pea sprout farm daily harvested 7,000 trays.



The production of organic fertilizer in this Fu-Ten Farm was a big endeavor as well. Everything were plant-based waste (like roots and upper stem of newly harvested sweet pea sprout). Its area has 11 dividing walls that provides space for the first to the last stages of organic fertilizer production. The smell being emitted by the organic waste diminishes as we go from the first partition to the next. Mr. Chan, the Fu-Ten farm owner, uses a big tractor to mix the fertilizer.

Mr. Chan had a stroke at 40 years old. From then on, he became a vegetarian and devoted most of

his time in growing organically-grown vegetables. Before visiting his farm, he first gave a video presentation of the technologies he used as well as a briefing material. He also gave us blank sheets of paper where he asked us to write our feedback and comments. We admired his humility and dedication for the improvement of his farm, inspite of it being widely acknowledged.



Yun-Wan Leisure Farm

The next farm we visited was a leisure farm located in Taichung County. This county had already recovered by 70% from the damage wrought by a strong earthquake in 2000.

A hearty dinner awaited us in the farm, where we were served a delicious dessert of potato and yam with pure goat's milk. Outside the dining area was a large fruit-bearing loncan tree. Some of us happily picked bunches of loncan after dinner. It was the first time I ever saw such tree.

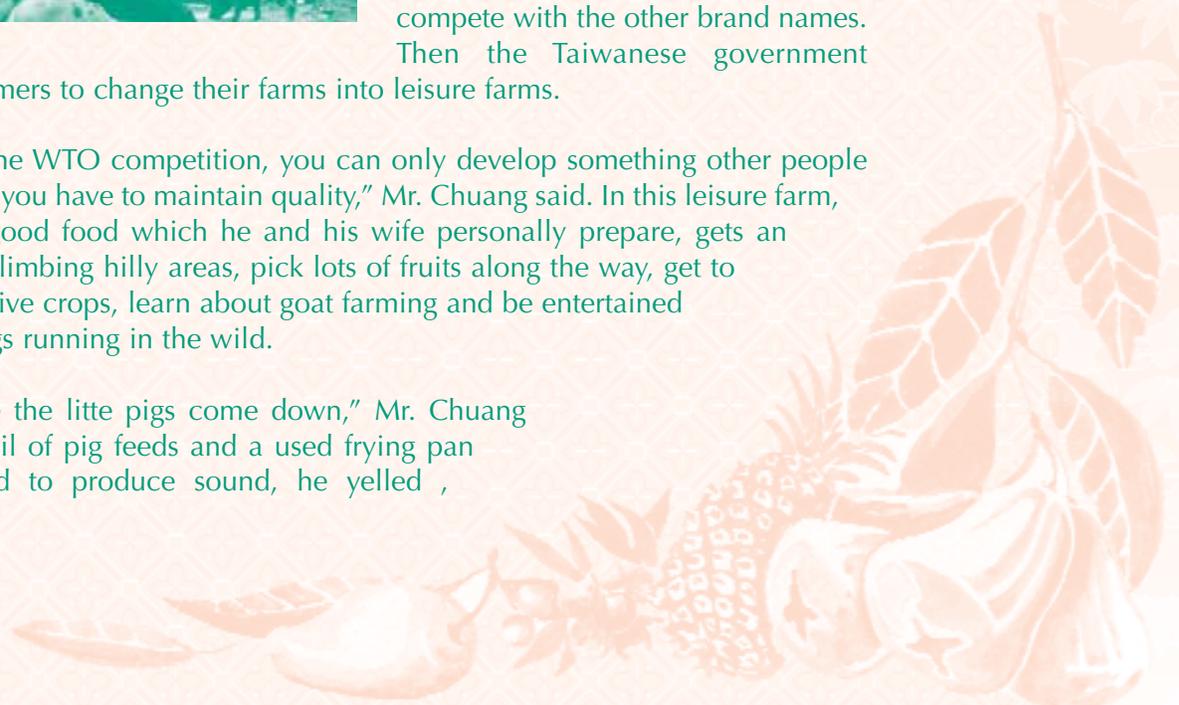


This leisure farm was at first only a goat farm. In 1982, Mr. Chuang, the farm's owner, went to the USA to learn about dairy farming. He then realized his 10-hectare farm was still too small for it. So he decided to have a goat farm instead. He imported 40 goats for an expensive amount of 1000USD. At the beginning, he sold pure goat milk. But then, he couldn't compete with the other brand names. Then the Taiwanese government

encouraged farmers to change their farms into leisure farms.

"In facing the WTO competition, you can only develop something other people need. And then you have to maintain quality," Mr. Chuang said. In this leisure farm, tourists enjoy good food which he and his wife personally prepare, gets an experience of climbing hilly areas, pick lots of fruits along the way, get to know many native crops, learn about goat farming and be entertained by 100 little pigs running in the wild.

"I can make the litte pigs come down," Mr. Chuang said. With a pail of pig feeds and a used frying pan that he banged to produce sound, he yelled ,



walking slowly up the steep road. We followed. After several minutes of yelling, the little pigs (of the native, black variety) came running down, piglets in tow with their mothers, scouting for food! It was quite an amusing sight! Sang Jun of SKorea took the frying pan and yelled some more, and some more pigs came running down! All of us tried to yell together. The pigs just kept on coming! We teased Dr. Bosco and the Thailand group, who was host of the day, to do that with us so that all participants will gather quickly as the pigs did. "But we must have feeds for you!" they teased back.



"The leisure farm earns", Mr. Chuang said. "We try to work closely with the schools. If the visitors take their meals here, then going up the hills is free. We do everything so they enjoy while learning ". It was just simply amazing, especially when we learned that only 7 workers work in this big farm.

Yujing Farmers' Association



After that, we traveled down south for about three hours, to Yujing, the mango county. A third of the county's total area (or 2500 hectares) was devoted to mango plantations. We first went to the four-storey Mango Information Exhibition Hall, owned by the Yujing Farmers' Association but subsidized by the Council of Agriculture.

"This may be the only kind in the whole world," said the Director of the Association's Extension Department as he guided us through the rather hot corridors , briefly explaining the history of mango planting in Yujing, and the different mango varieties. Many of the participants were almost fooled by the seemingly natural plastic mangoes at the exhibit hall!

"I am sorry no one is around with me today , as almost all workers are busy in the packing area", the Director further added. There, we were met by the General Manager. Baskets and baskets of real big, reddish mangoes greeted us too! Around 50 workers were in the place, many of them women, who were

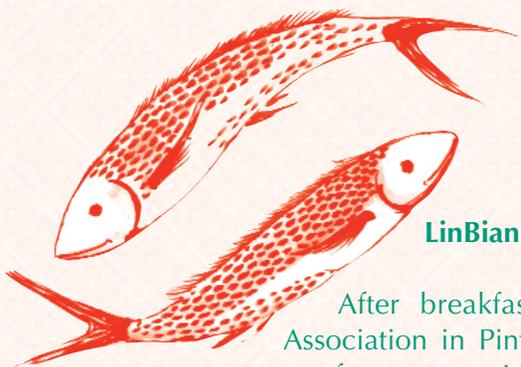


sorting the mangoes according to size, weight, and Grades (A or B). The mangoes were being packed in small 9-kg. boxes and will be shipped to Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Mainland China and Hongkong. Each box costs around 200 NT (US\$ 6).

“How come this whole area does not smell of mangoes?”, asked Marlene. “Because they are not yet ripe,” came the prompt answer, as

participants picked the biggest mangoes around and posed for photographs. “We are very lucky we are able to see the mangoes, this is the last harvest for the year,” Dr. Bosco said. We saw some farmers unloading their harvests from their motorcycles. Farmer as he is, Sang Jun helped a farmer unload his product. We left with the challenge to do crop-based farmer organizing on a scale big enough to earn profits from collective marketing of the produce.

After dinner, we went back to Cheng Chin Lake Activity Youth Center where we spent the night. We in the AsiaDHRRA secretariat finalized the plans for the closing program and talked with the Cambodian participants on how they were. We were concerned that Ou Ron was sick and discussed what we could do for him to get better. Meanwhile, some of the participants had a stroll in the beautiful lakeside, while some had a good chat.



Saturday, August 23 2003

Esther Penunia

LinBian Fishermans' Association

After breakfast, the group proceeded to LinBian Fisherman's Association in Pintung county. “Today's schedule is very different; we move from mountains to oceans, LinBian is near the sea, ” Dr. Bosco explained. The LinBian FA's aquafarm was a 300 hectare fish farm, 75 hectares of which was devoted to milkfish fingerlings. “Only in the countries of Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan and Philippines do these fingerlings live”, Mr. Chi, our resource person said. And even then, we in the Philippines import fingerlings from Taiwan. “Filipinos are milkfish eaters,” our resource person said. So why can't we not have enough fingerlings for domestic consumption?





The response seemed to be in the technology they used and the scale of operation. Water for the ponds are directly pumped from the ocean. For fingerling raising, it is necessary to have fresh salt water. After three weeks, they will drain the water; then pump new water again. The newly collected water has to be dried under the sun for one week before putting another set of fingerlings.

The whole farm was divided into many smaller ponds, each for a special purpose - e.g. some ponds for raising fingerlings, some for raising adult fishes, some for mating the fishes.

“Counting the fingerlings is a very boring job,” our resource person said. “I count them with a song”, he said, as he started singing and counting, much to our amusement and to the little kids gathered around the fingerling pond. Dr. Bosco started a guessing game. “Guess how many fingerlings there are in this pond,” he pointed. “Ten thousand”! “Twenty Thousand”! “One million”! I offered a wild, unsure guess. “ One hundred thousand!” It was the right answer. Dr. Bosco pointed to some tally chalk mark beside me, where it was written 100,000. Later on some teased me I guessed right because I saw the mark.

This aquafarm was also a leisure farm. How come? Migrant birds go to LinBian riverbanks during summer. Birdwatchers watch from the farm; in the process they come to know about the farm as well . In winter, seagulls fly over the county. Birdwatchers come and in the process learn about wax apples which are in season by then.



LinBian Farmers' Association

We had a very short walk to the office of the LinBian Farmers' Association, where we were briefed on LinBian county and its FA's work by the General Manager, using a video presentation. The county's agricultural population is 8,500 . Out of this, 2,800 were full members of the FA, and around 1,900 were associate members. Around 800 farmers were wax apple growers, organized mainly into production



and marketing teams. Their product was being sold wholesale in North Central Taiwan. They said that the wax apples in LinBian are very good because the temperature in the county is consistent, mild, and there is ocean water.

Unfortunately, the LinBian FA was one of those whose credit department was taken over by the commercial bank. Because of that,

the FA had to reduce its personnel and kept only 1/5 of the original workforce. At present, the FA is trying to improve its marketing department in an effort to make more money. Several things they are doing is discovering more recipes with wax apple as an ingredient and, in cooperation with a university, analyzing the nutrients of the wax apple. "At present, it is an expensive product because it is something new and not many are producing it," Mr. Chi said.

Mr . Chao-Yu's Wax Apple Farm

After lunch, the group dropped by the wax apple farm of Mr. Chao-Yu, who was one of the local FEV participants. Mr. Chao-Yu explained his wax apple tree pruning technology which he developed himself. This involved cutting branches and leaves to allow more sunlight to penetrate the fruits. This will in turn give the fruit a red color spread more evenly on the fruit.



Nanjhou Vegetables Production and Marketing Team

The group also dropped by the Nanjhou Vegetables Production and Marketing Team Farm where a technology for grafting pumpkin and bitter gourd seedlings was demonstrated. The grafting will make the bitter gourd more highly resistant to diseases. The process seemed so simple, but Dr. Bosco said it was not as simple as it seemed. The secret was in finding compatible seedlings. Also, a farmer needed a special growing room where temperature is controlled. Before we left, the farmers gave each participant a wax apple key chain as souvenir.



The Taiwan Wax Apple Development Association (TWADA)

The group then proceeded to the office of the TWADA, one of the host organizations of the Taiwan FEV. We were delighted to see real big, red wax apples on the conference tables! We helped ourselves and took pleasure in eating the sweet and juicy fruit. Marlene kept holding on to her second share. Dr. Bosco, who was seating beside her, said, “ the longer you hold it, the lesser it will become sweet.” It seemed like a joke, but what if it was true? Marlene decided to eat her second wax apple, lest Dr. Bosco get it from her.

Ming Fei Chan, TWADA Director General, led five other TWADA leaders in a panel discussion on TWADA, again with the aid of a video presentation. We learned that wax apples were being exported to Russia, Canada, Singapore, China, England, Dubai, Korea and Japan. The industry association has already developed a packaging technology that has improved the fruit’s shelf life.



In the course of the discussion, Ka Vic from the Philippines noted that there were no women TWADA Board member. He asked whether there were plans of improving women participation in TWADA, and gave as example his organization’s (PAKISAMA) efforts in strengthening women’s participation in the organization. One TWADA Board member answered, “in Taiwan, men are masters. Women are in the homes.” The comment sparked several frowns and grunts , mostly from women. Dr. Bosco was quick to add: “ In Taiwan, both men and women are equal. They receive the same training. It’s different from the Philippines. Let us not stir the boat.” For me, the discussion just showed that each one asked questions or give recommendations based on their judgment, and that judgement is based on own experiences and principles being upheld. We need to understand where the person is coming from when s/he gives a comment. But also, we need to understand the realities and the value system of the other. And most of the time, initial discussions should dwell first on these realities. This is to forge a better understanding among persons, groups and organizations.

Linlwo Fruit Production and Marketing Team

The last stop for the day was the Linlwo Fruit Production and Marketing Team (PMT) office. Light brown hats bearing the Team’s name and logo were distributed to the participants. Dr. George , Sec. General of TWADA

and a professor of NPUST, gave a lecture on the Operation of Production and Marketing Teams through a powerpoint presentation. The lecture gave a fitting summary of the lessons shared by the various production and marketing teams we met during the FEV as it discussed major marketing techniques employed. He highlighted the importance of the use of computers and information technology in production and marketing.

For dinner, the Linlwo PMT prepared traditional Hakka meals consisting of various preparations from rice. Hakka is one of the indigenous groups in Taiwan, and Dr. Wen-Chi is proudly a Hakka. We took turns wrapping rice in special banana leaves. Our host families joined us for dinner. We had an enjoyable but short videoke after dinner. Some of us wanted to stay on to sing and dance but our host families were eager to bring us to somewhere else (e.g. a night market). So, one by one, the participants with their host families left the place.



Homestay

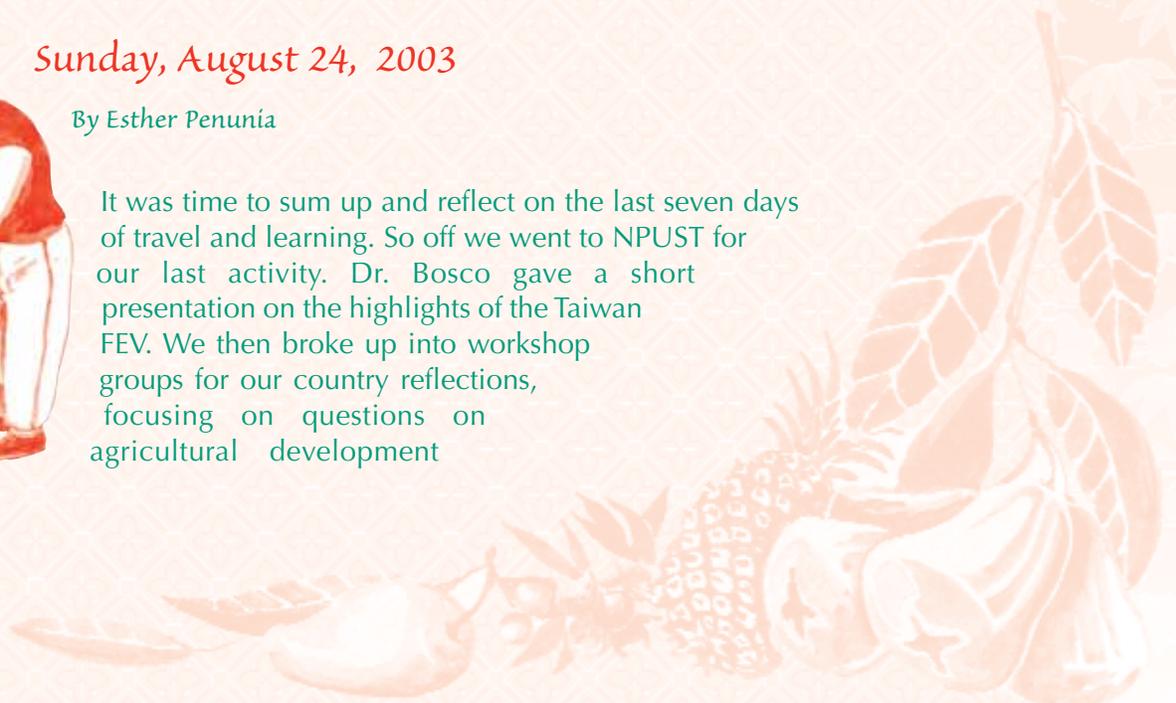
At our foster home, our foster mother, Mrs. Huang, asked us if it was okay for us to get some of her used clothes. As we seemed to have the same body size, I was excited as I tried the first few clothes she brought out. Then, she was bringing more and more clothes that it fitted one whole luggage! Lany and Amy, my co-participants, found it hard to resist because our foster mother was so sincere in giving the clothes to us. After that, we had a quick, refreshing hot shower and had videoke till midnight.

Sunday, August 24, 2003

By Esther Penunía



It was time to sum up and reflect on the last seven days of travel and learning. So off we went to NPUST for our last activity. Dr. Bosco gave a short presentation on the highlights of the Taiwan FEV. We then broke up into workshop groups for our country reflections, focusing on questions on agricultural development





technologies in Taiwan, WTO and globalization, and recommendations for future FEVs. After the report of each country, Esther did a short synthesis of the reflections.

To formally close the FEV, a short program was prepared. Ka Aning Loza, Chairperson of AFA, gave the opening remarks, where he recalled all the past FEV's, which were all

very successful like this one in Taiwan. The representatives from the North Asia, Southeast Asia and Mekong sub-regions also delivered their messages. It was followed by a 3-minute MTV presentation of the Taiwan FEV highlights and the awarding of certificates of participation, plaques of appreciation, and gifts.

Then, it was the turn of the hosts to deliver their messages. Dr. Dr. George emphasized that the Taiwanese farmers were very happy to receive the farmers from other countries. Dr. Wen-Chi reiterated that the university is open to visitors and that they are happy to share their resources with the farmers. Dr. Bosco gave special recognition to everyone who were involved in the preparation and conduct of the Taiwan FEV.

Then, Mr. Soetrisno Kosumohadi, Chairperson of AsiaDHRRA gave the closing address. He cited Taiwan's comprehensive agricultural development policy and response to globalization. He encouraged the participants to use AFA as a means to improve products and cooperation at the regional level. He was glad about TWADA's intention to join AFA and encouraged JaDHRRA to persuade Japanese farmers' organizations to also join AFA. Finally, he gave his thanks to the foster families.



On our way to the First Restaurant for the FEV's last lunch, each of us received a 3-kilo vacuum packed organic rice, given by Mr. Tai-Neng Chen, a TWADA member and organic rice grower. The gift was heavy and bulky, but we didn't mind at all (especially when we have tasted the rice in our own homes!). Our hearts were full of thanks for the generosity and hospitality that all our Taiwan hosts showered on all of us. Our hearts and minds were inspired by what the Taiwanese farmers had achieved and are still striving to do.

1. What Struck You Most?

- ◆ the size of farm , even if small, is productive
- ◆ Taiwanese farmers can do food processing very well
- ◆ information is available to farmers
- ◆ a separate production and marketing team works well
- ◆ homestay program was good, there was good dialog with farmers
- ◆ training program of Farmers Association was good
- ◆ political need of Taiwan to be admitted to WTO to the detriment of the farmer-agricultural sector
- ◆ we need to get together – beyond the borders
- ◆ we should make consumers aware that agriculture is different from industrial sector; make consumers aware of the benefits of good agriculture
- ◆ japanese farmers can invite students to their farms (like the NPUST animal farm)
- ◆ hospitality of the hosts- we feel we belong to the same family
- ◆ dynamism of the Taiwan Wax Apples group: they have good products, they have good information materials; they are strong
- ◆ Taiwanese farmer has the skills; are organized , has a good business
- ◆ Taiwan is a small country but is a strong country
- ◆ Taiwan has good farming technology
- ◆ we need to keep our indigenous farming technologies
- ◆ the lecture on vegetable/fruit processing
- ◆ wax apple as a benchmark product
- ◆ high level of agricultural development and technological application of Taiwanese farmers
- ◆ a special experience – to know many friends from other countries, know more about agriculture

2. Insights Re: Taiwan Experience In Joining WTO

- ◆ little time to learn about this more (Vietnam)
- ◆ not yet ready (Indonesia)
- ◆ Taiwan has a long term program to respond to the issues brought by WTO
- ◆ agricultural development long range and very systematic



- ♦ challenge: the Indonesian farmer has no land so cannot produce; no political will from govt to promote agriculture ; lack of capacity and human resources(Indonesia); thus need to form a strong farmers' organization
- ♦ we need solidarity for globalization concerns
- ♦ Taiwan is a strong country
- ♦ we need subsidies from government
- ♦ challenge: wide range of collaboration needed by various sectors ; the need to identify benchmark products of each country
- ♦ learning: the importance of following international standards of products ; farmers should also become processors and marketers of their products for value added and higher income
- ♦ even stronger countries like Taiwan gets affected negatively by WTO, this however has challenged them to compete
- ♦ need to strengthen lobbying work in each country vis-à-vis WTO
- ♦ quality more important than quantity

3. Things Helping Me Get the Most Out of this FEU

- ♦ materials/hand-outs given; perfect both in general and agricultural info
- ♦ host organization and student assistants very helpful
- ♦ very supportive 2 presidents (Wenzao, NPUST)
- ♦ very good ,effective lecturers
- ♦ good explanations
- ♦ good visual tools
- ♦ discussions about experiences of other countries
- ♦ homestay
- ♦ asking more questions, follow-up more on the lectures presented
- ♦ willingness to learn and share by farmers
- ♦ experience of coming from the same farming sector
- ♦ sufficient preparation for the FEU
- ♦ learning by doing
- ♦ experiences of others , museum helped us know more about agriculture

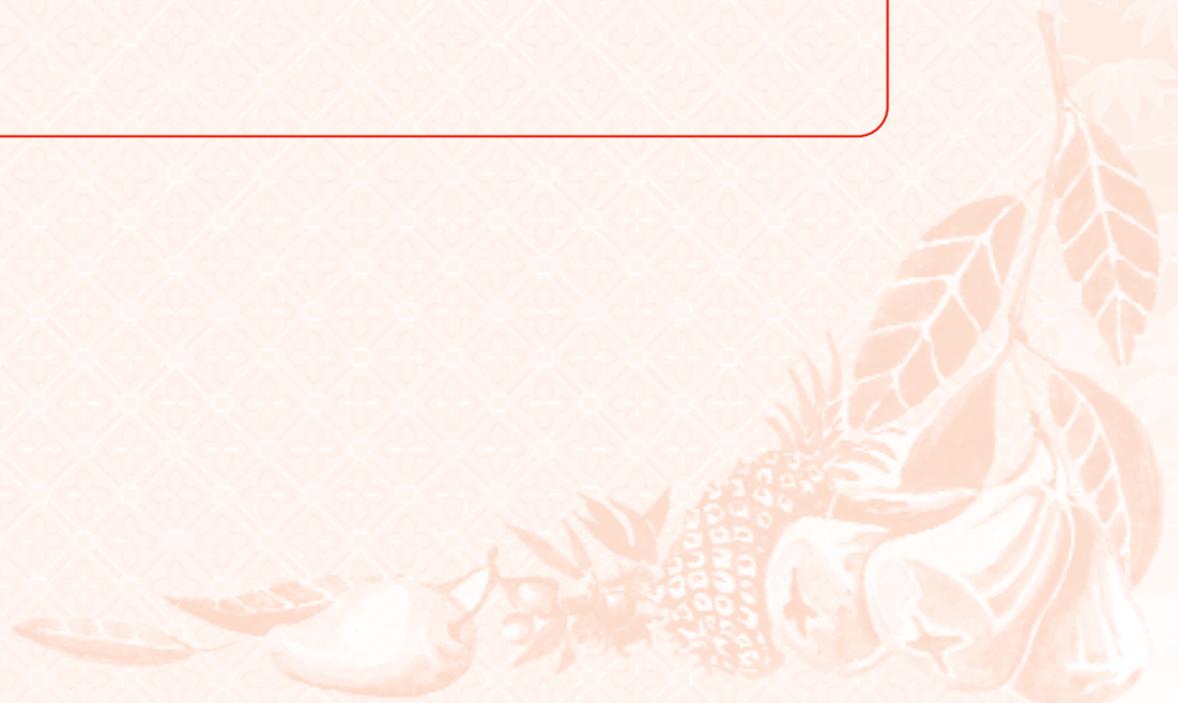


4. Difficulties in FEU

- ◆ some people talk very fast, difficult for translation
- ◆ little time for Question and Answer
- ◆ communication problems- lack of sufficient communication due to language barriers and access to communication tools
- ◆ little English
- ◆ too tight schedule
- ◆ little time to interact with local farmers
- ◆ sometimes questions not answered
- ◆ sometimes too much information provided

5. What We Can Do to Make this FEU Really Fruitful and Meaningful

- ◆ more time to meet with farmers from other Asian countries
- ◆ read the materials again
- ◆ longer homestay
- ◆ better knowledge of the country context to have more fruitful discussions
- ◆ discuss and respond to globalization issues in solidarity with each other
- ◆ explore exchange of products between and among countries
- ◆ more discussions, dialog on experiences among countries
- ◆ visit small farmers, not government farms (Cambodia)
- ◆ have more program for leadership development
- ◆ to have follow-up communication
- ◆ help participants feel comfortable and enjoy the visit in Taiwan



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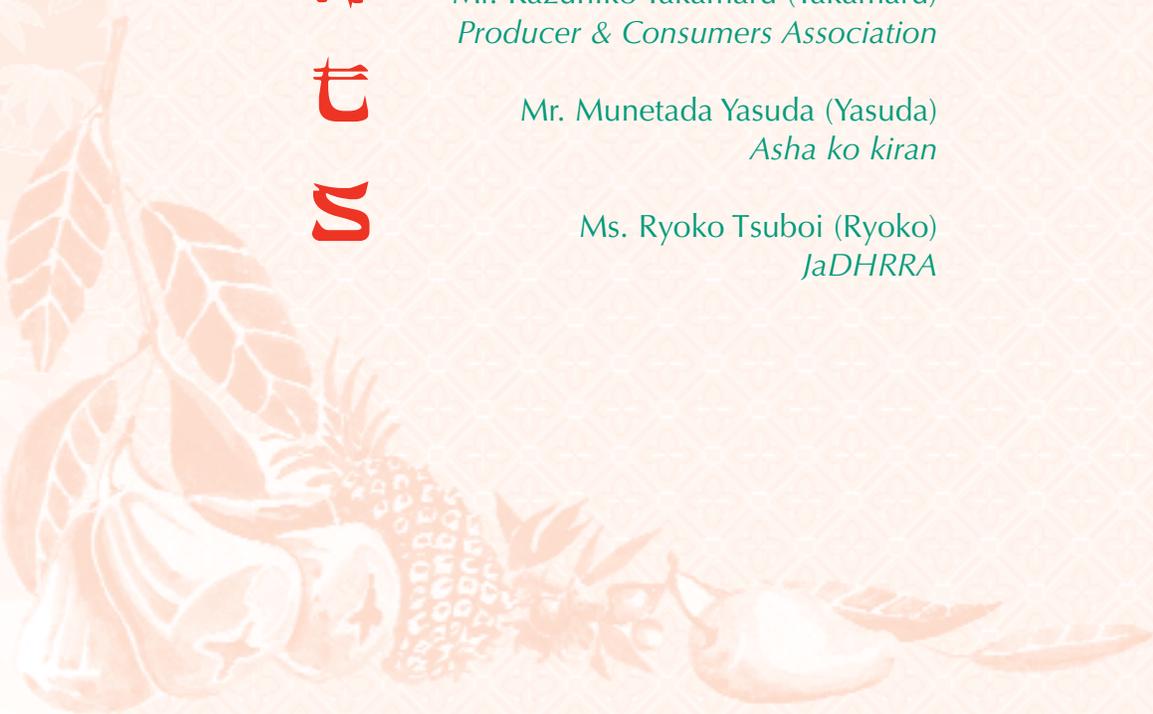
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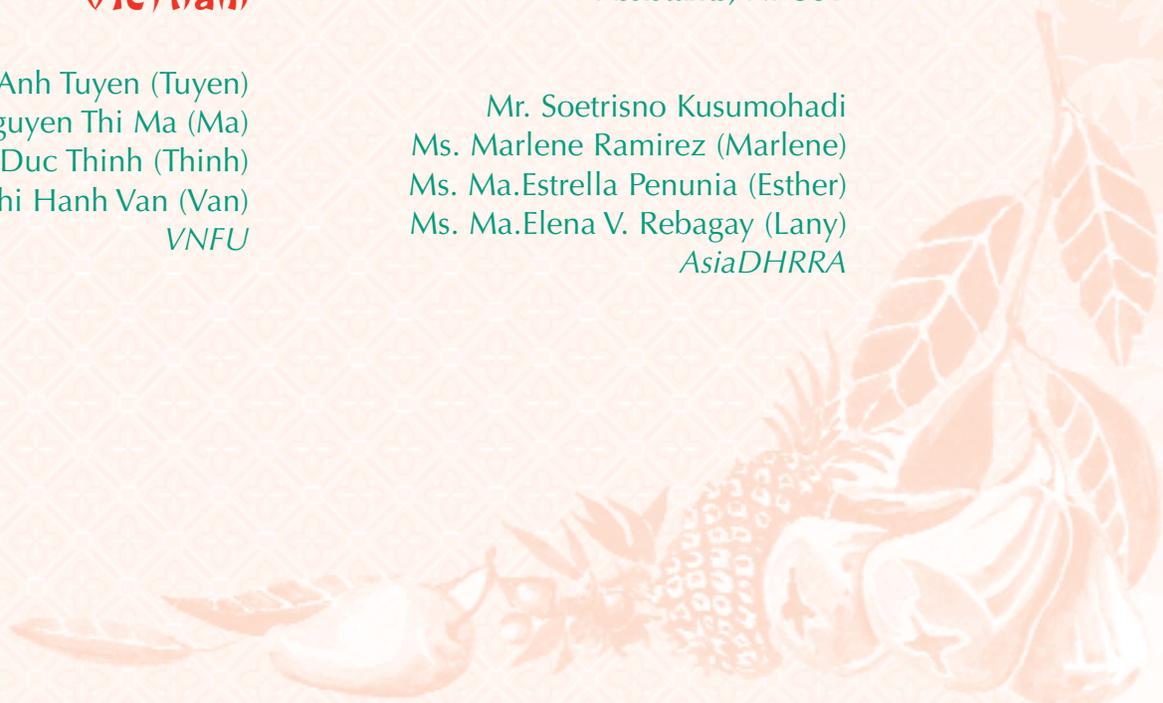
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