

Food and Agricultural Policy Workshop
and Field Trip Report

Bangkok, Thailand
July 31 - August 8, 1981

Charles K. Mann

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Summary	1
Background.....	1
Dr. Snoh Unakul's Opening Remarks.....	2
Mr. Kosit Panpiemras' Presentation.....	3
Dr. Snoh Unakul.....	4
George Delehanty's Presentation.....	5
Theodore Panayotou's Presentation.....	6
General Observations on the Project Presentations.....	6
Status of the Projects.....	8
Detailed Analytic Review and Follow-Up.....	8
Project Timing and Additional Resources.....	8
Thai Development Institute.....	9
George Delehanty Transfer to Kenya.....	10
Overall Observations on the Visit.....	11

Food and Agricultural Policy Workshop
and Field Trip Report

Bangkok, Thailand July 31-August 8, 1981

Charles K. Mann

Summary

CKM and David Dapice participated in the technical review of the preliminary analytical results of the Thai Food and Agricultural Policy Research Group. While there is still considerable distance to go, the group has made truly impressive progress both in the rigor of the analysis and in the spirited collegial, critical give and take which has developed within the group. Dr. Snoh Unakul's rise to the position of virtual economic czar simultaneously with his continuing leadership of the group assures strong linkage with the policy process. The question of George Delehanty's transfer to Kenya should be discussed with Dr. Snoh by LDS/JEJ/RKD during his visit to the U.S. in September for the IFPRI Board Meeting. GED will plan to visit Kenya around October 10 to discuss the situation there with Ralph Campbell and various Kenyan officials and university individuals. Several unforeseen requirements have arisen making it desirable to use the funds faster than anticipated with some modest replenishment prior to project termination. This must be reviewed with JEJ/JAP.

David Dapice played a valuable role in providing technical advice to the researchers and a perspective on what is being done in several other countries in food and agricultural policy analysis. His long-term association with the RF projects allowed him to invest the time needed to develop an excellent knowledge of the structure of agriculture of the RF project countries and of their major policy issues. This increased the value of his contribution and confirms the wisdom of RF stressing the long-term commitment of individuals to the various projects.

Background

The RF is providing support to the Thai Food and Agricultural Policy Research Group. With assistance from GED and Theodore Panayotou, Dr. Snoh, Director-General of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), organized a group to carry out research on important policy issues facing the government in the food and agricultural sector. It is his hope that the group will provide the start toward a new policy research institution linked with government but with its own independent status. RF funding began in September 1980 and consists of a grant and appropriation totalling \$172,800 plus a grant to the Agricultural Development Council to provide the half-time services of Theodore Panayotou through June 1983. RF is also providing the half-time services of GED.

(cont'd)

CKM/Food and Agricultural Policy Workshop & Field Trip Report
Bangkok, Thailand - July 31-August 8, 1981
page 2

Researchers within the group are affiliated with Kasetsart and Thammasat Universities and the NESDB. A workshop where planning papers were presented was held February 4, 1981 where RF/New York was represented by LDS, BEA, and JEJ. On his way to Indonesia, RF consultant David Dapice visited project personnel in Bangkok from February 20-24.

During President Lyman's visit to Bangkok in July 1981, an overview of the project was presented by Dr. Snoh and the group. The workshop, held August 5-6, was to review in detail the preliminary analytical work of the group. GED requested CKM and Dapice to participate. The workshop's purpose was: to permit both outside and intra-group critique of the analytic frameworks proposed; to review preliminary analytical results and further data requirements; to strengthen inter-project linkages; and to highlight issues from the policymakers' perspectives. Inasmuch as the presentations of Dr. Snoh, Mr. Kosit, GED, and Panayotou were given from notes rather than prepared talks, they are presented in more detail than the other presentations for which the full papers are available in CKM's office.

Dr. Snoh Unakul's Opening Remarks

Dr. Snoh chaired the opening session of the workshop. In addition to project personnel and various NESDB staff members, there were present also a representative from the Bank of Thailand and several interested Ministry personnel. Because of a U.S. government interest in helping to start a 'Thailand Development Institute,' AID Mission Director Donald D. Cohen and US Economic Counsellor Robert Brungart also attended.

Dr. Snoh reviewed the origins of the project going back to his presentation to the RF/New York staff in September 1980. He had been extremely pleased to be able to present at his home the preliminary review of the group's progress to RWL and LDS. He indicated that the group reflects the efforts of the Thai Government to bring together important elements of their "technostructure," their universities, their bureaucrats and policymakers, each with their own perspective. With the benefit of the interlocking nature of the analysis done by the group, and by working together, the group could multiply their efforts. He said that with this diverse composition, the group represented "Thailand in miniature: a microcosm"; academic researchers and technocrats backed up with the external resources of The Rockefeller Foundation.

Dr. Snoh said that the work is progressing satisfactorily. This workshop provides an opportunity to "take stock." He indicated that Mr. Kosit is "my chief lieutenant" which he quickly amended to "chief captain" in both this project and in their rural development efforts of the NESDB.

(cont'd)

CKM/Food and Agricultural Policy Workshop and Field Trip Report
Bangkok, Thailand/ July 31 - August 8, 1981
page 3

Mr. Kosit Panpiemras

Mr. Kosit said that the NESDB has completed its setting of priorities for the 1980s. Over the past 20 years, Thailand has grown at a satisfactory rate of growth. However, there are two areas needing particular attention. This 20 years of growth has left some regions without substantial benefit from the growth and, secondly, there have been high social costs associated with the growth: rapid urbanization, slums, migration, unrest, even the beneficiaries themselves are still unhappy. Lastly, there has been substantial costs of this growth in the form of pollution, monopoly, depletion of natural resources, and inappropriate marketing and pricing systems.

To minimize these problems, they need to discover the appropriate policies. A single policy such as the present "growth with stability" is no longer suitable. They need a more diverse set of policies. This underscores the need for more policy research to help clarify what policies can provide a more balanced development in the future. They have now begun to talk about growth which minimizes the adverse side effects and costs.

In framing the development plan, they have tried to recognize all these costs and their relationship to growth. Their starting point has been the "New Development Policy" in which rural poverty is recognized as the number one factor. While they are not a poor country, there are so many poor people that there must be a major push to minimize poverty in the next five years. The poverty is concentrated in the rural areas. If it cannot be reduced, they cannot get good growth. The NESDB is developing a typology of rural areas and using research to inform the policymakers better about the nature of the problem. In contrast to the traditional bureaucratic view of only one or two major ways to develop the rural areas (such as road-building) they are trying to develop appropriate policies and strategies for each type of area. The government has announced 246 poverty districts and is designing a specific package for each area. The general principles are to help people help themselves more, stress high popular participation, low-project costs, non-social welfare projects. For the next budget year, 15 projects have been designed as poverty packages for particular areas and were accepted by the Budget Committee on August 4.

Implementation is a particular problem. They have tried the Korean approach, the Israeli approach, the Taiwanese approach. They must develop "The Thai approach." Accordingly, there will be a high-level policy committee on rural poverty. The NESDB staff will prepare the agenda and the first meeting will take place on August 14. The Policy Board will set the general guidelines; staff will operationalize these projects which will go to the Budget Bureau for funding. They will start planning work for the projects earlier than in the past and work a full year in advance. They have convinced the policymakers that there should only be four Ministries involved at the outset: Interior, Agriculture, Health and Education. They will try to "link all the bits into one single system which runs from the county to the national level." The province will be the coordination point. They will coordinate both a bottom-up and top-down approach. The Prime Minister's Office has issued standing regulations to start this process. He noted that in the course of devising these new arrangements, "many toes were stepped on."

(cont'd)

CKM/Food and Agricultural Policy Workshop & Field Trip Report
Bangkok, Thailand/ July 31-August 8, 1981

page 4

He stressed again the main themes - "the typology into poverty areas; the development of specific projects (15), and the new organizational arrangements. However, they obviously cannot concentrate all national policy only on poverty areas. The non-poverty areas must also be linked; policies must be designed to assure that these linkages are compatible with national objectives. The Food Policy Research Group's efforts can help to show these linkages. "There must be a design behind the pieces so that they are all linked together; all must be parts of a global view. There must be some relationship, an appropriate relationship, between the rich and the poor areas."

One overriding theme is a focus on productivity: "where? how? why?" They will stress particularly improving private productivity in defining the appropriate role of the government. In the past, there was large government investment in the rural areas which has not been well utilized. There is much investment in irrigation but the water control structures at the farm level are not well developed. Moreover, the potential flexibility of irrigation has not been utilized to diversify the range of crops.

While they have developed a strategy for the poverty areas, he is sorry that they do not yet have a strategy for the non-poverty rural areas equally well worked out. However, for overall guidelines they are going to stress the utilization of existing investment, more private participation in the basics of rural development (including agriculture), better organization, and small industry. For the poverty area, he is confident that they can "field answers" but he is not so sure for the non-poverty areas.

Dr. Snoh Unakul

Dr. Snoh made several more observations following Mr. Kosit's speech. In the introduction, GED noted that "...we are all working for Dr. Snoh." Dr. Snoh noted that his point of view is that he is working for them. He stressed that his is a process-centered image of growth. The decision-making of the country must retool to serve these new concepts. Resources must be rechanneled to back up the new strategy. The overall style is not a personal one but part of a national development process. He is working for all of the group and together they are all working for the nation's development. He believes that the policy research going on is making these concepts much clearer, helping to interpret and operationalize projects and lay out broad national policies. This analysis supports the national decision-making process. He also noted the new National Rural Development Committee and indicated that those new arrangements are being put before the (new) National Administrative Reform Council and that he expects to have the backing of the Ministry of Finance and the Budget Bureau in adopting program budgeting. The annual budgets will be related to the five-year plans (although since the plan is not ready yet, this cannot start at once.)

(cont'd)

CKM/Food and Agricultural Policy Workshop & Field Trip Report
Bangkok, Thailand/July 31-August 8, 1981
page 5

An evaluation coordination and monitoring system is being established at the NESDB. He considers all of this part of a process, not a person-centered organization. He stressed again that he does not want to see a "return to an ego-centered concept."

He emphasized Mr. Kosit's stress on the fundamental framework underlying the project, namely the linkages between various categories of rural development areas. The principal issues are utilization, productivity, and participation. He again thanked Mr. Kosit for his presentation and asked GED and Theodore Panayotou to expand on these various issues as they related to the Policy Research Group's work.

George Delehanty's Presentation

GED provided some additional background on the group and on the project as well as a perspective on the RF food and agricultural policy program. He touched upon the transformation of the University Development Program to the Education for Development Program, which stressed the more effective utilization of university resources in development. He also indicated the growing Foundation concern for the utilization of benefits of technical agriculture rather than simply the development of the techniques. These various interests are being blended within the food policy program in the attempt to bring together the analytic intellectual resources which the Foundation has helped develop with its agricultural sciences productivity contributions. The RF seeks to build capacity and to bring together the benefits of past investment in university development with an applied focus on policy analysis which can be linked to the policymaking process. A special focus is the attempt to define the interrelationship of problems and the nature of such linkages. He reviewed the make-up and objectives of the Policy Research Group in the light of these principles, stressing the mobilization of analytic resources, the creation of linkages, and the linking of various technical specialties.

GED reviewed how these principles have been incorporated in the policy research project design. One-half of the projects take a commodity approach focussing on both input and output aspects of Thailand's principal crops, livestock and fisheries. The other projects deal with particular problems: employment both as a major objective in its own right and as a linkage among all the projects; nutrition as a subject of special concern, particularly with respect to groups at high nutritional risk; irrigation as a key input.

GED noted the academic's traditional concern: "When we write something, will anyone read it?" This problem has been addressed in the project through Dr. Snoh's chairmanship which serves to connect the project directly with the NESDB and feed the results into the policy process.

(cont'd)

CKM/Food and Agricultural Policy Workshop & Field Trip Report

Bangkok, Thailand/July 31-August 8, 1981

page 6

GED concluded that this workshop represents the first serious attempt for all participants to come together for a full review of the preliminary analytical results of the six groups' work. He encouraged constructive suggestions, critique, and discussion. He observed that the overall framework guiding all the projects derived from Dr. Tinbergen proceeding from general goals to specific objectives to targets. To achieve these targets the government has both qualitative and quantitative instruments which serve to relate the outcome to the objective. Qualitative instruments can change the context within which economic activity takes place, whereas quantitative instruments are such things as levels of taxation, subsidies, and prices. He asked Theodore to elaborate further on the framework.

Theodore Panayotou's Presentation

Theodore, picking up on Mr. Kosit's talk, noted that Thailand seeks optimum growth subject to constraints of environmental and social cost. They wish to have a vigorous level of growth subject to an acceptable level of income disparity. The government's role in part is to reconcile or make compatible the economic and social objectives. He reviewed the rationale for the six projects. The commodity focus addresses productivity by crop; irrigation is addressed separately because of its dual importance both for productivity and for the distribution of income; rural labor calls attention to employment as a means of improving the distribution of income and emphasizes the key role of migration in linking economic activity across regions. The demand for agricultural products is an important aspect of the project in that the research must reflect the possibility that improving production may depress prices and, hence, potentially farm income. Of particular concern to the group is the need to balance the need for greater foreign exchange earnings with the objective of cheap food for the urban areas. The attention to animal protein reflects both its significance in reducing malnutrition as well as a concern for making effective use of Thailand's comparative advantage in fisheries. Moreover, given the potential export constraints on feeds (corn and cassava) the issue must be addressed of exporting feed in the form of meat rather than as feedstuff.

General Observations on the Project Presentations

After these introductions, the presentations began by the individual project leaders. Rather than summarizing these in this trip report, there are available from CKM both the overview statements which each group prepared for the presentation to RWL and LDS and the full papers themselves as desired.

In the review process, each group spent roughly 30 to 40 minutes presenting its results with about an hour for discussion. The presentations were self-confident and effective. It was obvious that a great deal of care and thought had gone into the presentations. In a number of instances, effective graphics facilitated understanding of non-economists. The critical and constructive contributions of the group upon one another's work was impressive. Discussions were animated. In fact, even the coffee breaks were taken at the table while the discussion continued except for five to ten minute "rest stops" between sessions.

(cont'd)

CKM/Food and Agricultural Policy Workshop & Field Trip Report

Bangkok, Thailand - July 31-August 8, 1981

page 7

David Dapice and I had an opportunity to read through the papers before the presentation. David's technical knowledge of the field and methodological technique were impressive, articulate, and welcomed by the group. I will not presume to pass judgment on my own contributions, but the group responded warmly to the observations and suggestions.

The substance of the analysis has developed impressively since February. Dean Sopin was particularly effective in critiquing the papers more from a lay policymaker's point of view. He pointed out the need to go beyond the technical parameters, elasticities, etc., to give more plain language policy advice. Theodore responded effectively to his observations, noting their usefulness to the group and going on to develop an analogy which was useful throughout the workshop. He observed that these analytical structures (profit function, consumer/producer surplus analysis, Gini-coefficients) represented only the skeleton of the final product. As one would not recognize a human from the skeleton alone, so these analyses need to have muscle, flesh and brain added before they will represent the intended final product. However, without the analytical skeleton, they would be as so many traditional "policy studies" are: simply masses of flesh with no analytical skeleton whatsoever. In the final report, he noted that most of the technical information will be included in appendices. Nevertheless, he stressed the importance of this sound analytical underpinning for each study if they were to have meaningful and useful results. If they lapsed simply into producing descriptive rather than analytical reports, the product would not be useful.

There was a continuing dialogue throughout the sessions on this point: quantitative vs. qualitative research, analytical vs. descriptive. In his closing, GED characterized the discussion as representing a creative tension among three views: a) the institutional view focussing on actors, motivations, consequences; b) the functional point of view, more traditional agricultural economics, production, marketing; and c) the modified commodity approach focussing by commodity on the impact of various policies on employment, nutrition and farmer income.

In my concluding observations, I stressed four points: 1) As they continue to develop their analyses they press harder to put themselves in the role of the policymaker, to try to identify the problems as seen from that side of the table. They might even consider role-playing in their working sessions with one taking the point of view (the role) of the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Finance, etc. It would be useful to try to talk more to people in the operating Ministries to find out more how they perceive the problems which this research can help to solve. In a later session, Theodore and GED urged upon them more reading of current news to pick up "hot policy issues";

2) As noted earlier, while inputs were included in the project titles, they have been relatively slighted. The supply of inputs, their pricing and their nature are likely to be crucial to the effort to improve productivity. This importance should be reflected adequately within the projects.

3) Dean Sopin had observed that if someone has already calculated elasticities, "...why don't we use their estimates?" I took some issue with this noting the importance of learning by doing. Since these estimated elasticities range widely by researcher, one must develop some criterion for deciding which to use.

(cont'd)

CKM/Food and Agricultural Policy Workshop & Field Trip Report
Bangkok, Thailand/July 31-August 8, 1981

page 8

In making judgments as to which estimates are most "reasonable," one must understand analytically how they were derived. The only way to gain real understanding of this is by going through the exercise oneself. As Dr. Chaiwat Kinjong has now generated his own estimates of elasticity, he can readily determine from looking at the work of others how their approach differed, why their results are different, and which approach appears most reasonable. Almost by definition, building analytic capacity will not happen if a ground rule is simply taking at face value existing estimates for all policy parameters;

4) Responding again to Dean Sopin's observation that since the policy-makers have not listened in the past, "why will they listen in the future?", I noted some policy research in Turkey I had been involved in dating back to 1972. Despite the urging of Turkish policy analysts for nine years, no change in the policy was made. On my May 1981 visit, the head of the relevant office came to me excitedly to announce that finally, after all these years, they had changed completely the policy in accordance with what had been recommended over those past nine years. The researchers should not be discouraged if there is no immediate acceptance of their policy advice. One never knows when the climate may suddenly change and "enlightened policies" suddenly become enacted.

Status of the Projects

As to the general status of the projects, the Employment Project is the least well-developed and the least analytical. The adoption of technology component of the Irrigation Project is the only one which runs some risk of actually being "wrong" and generating misleading policy signals. The disparity between the "reach" and the "grasp" is greatest in the livestock element of the Livestock/Fisheries Project. The subject matter is broad, analytical tools are not yet defined, and the data so poor as not to justify its use in statistical analytic procedures.

Detailed Analytic Review and Follow-Up

On Friday, August 7, the project leaders, principal associates, and our RF group met for lunch and then adjourned to Kasetsart for an afternoon devoted to expanding more on particular technical points in the analyses. Following up this session, David Dapice will provide a page or two of written comments and suggestions on each project. I have a list of specific research studies and materials which our student interns will locate, copy, and we will send to the group. I outlined for the group the various supporting services which we have and plan to develop.

Project Timing and Additional Resources

Working from a month-by-month matrix on the blackboard, Theodore led the group through a scheduling exercise and review of resources needed. The outcome of this was an agreement to complete the individual project analyses by April 30, 1982, which represented a compromise between his proposed six months and their proposed twelve. Several of the groups will conduct field surveys before completing their analyses so they cannot quickly write up their results.

(cont'd)

CKM/Food and Agricultural Policy Workshop & Field Trip Report
Bangkok, Thailand/July 31-August 8, 1981
page 9

In several cases, the group agreed that there was need for survey data beyond what the present budget can accommodate. The synthesis and overview paper will be completed by the end of August 1982. Later, GED suggested the usefulness of bringing together with the Thai participants some of the researchers from other RF country projects. CKM noted that the International Agricultural Economics Association meeting will be in Jakarta, August 24 to September 2, 1982. A review of the Thai project could be held in connection with people en route to the conference.

There was also a strong feeling that the group needed a statistical assistant and a means to centralize the statistical information they are collecting so it will be available to all in the groups and also for further use beyond this particular project. After the session, CKM, GED, and Theodore discussed the possibility of a microcomputer to facilitate this task. There are substantial delays and difficulties in using the main frame computers for these analyses. Theodore was enthusiastic about the possible contribution of such a micro. He and GED will check on local sources of support. CKM will see whether John and Barbara McMullen could be available to spend some time with Theodore in September when he will be returning from an IDRC conference in Canada. If it appears that the micro would be suitable, he could physically carry it back with him. Otherwise, time lags would be too great for it to make much contribution to the project.

CKM will explore with JEJ and others whether and how additional resources could be provided once the group advises on the estimated amounts needed. (In a subsequent discussion, JEJ indicated his strong belief that existing main frame computing facilities should be used in the project.)

Thai Development Institute

As described by Dr. Snoh at the RF in September 1980, there is a substantial interest in the creation of an independent policy research institute in Thailand. Dr. Snoh saw the food policy project support by RF as providing seed money for this enterprise. There has been substantial development in bringing this institution along in the planning stages. AID Director, Dr. Don Cohen, informed us that AID has \$4 million available to support policy research in Thailand and he anticipates most of this going toward the proposed TDI. He sees either Dr. Vinyu or Dr. Snoh as the likely leader. The Ford Foundation has provided a three-month consultancy to Dr. Vinyu to carry out detailed planning studies on how such an institute might be organized, staffed and initiated. (Copy of terms of reference are available from CKM).

Don Cohen indicated that Dr. Vinyu may be accepting an assignment in Malaysia. While Dr. Snoh would be an obvious choice for the leadership of a Thai Development Institute, he is so busy that it is hard to see how he could manage that with his present job. Ammar Siamwalla is returning to Thailand and he is another possibility for leadership. (GED believes some people would object to Siamwalla's appointment). Another factor in the current equation is the strong bid being made by the Harvard Institute for International Development to play a facilitating role in the creation of TDI. David Cole has written to Dr. Snoh, following up earlier visits, stressing his past involvement in the creation of the Korean Development Institute in Harvard's capacity for assisting in this case.

(cont'd)

CKM/Food and Agricultural Policy Workshop & Field Trip Report
Bangkok, Thailand/July 31-August 8, 1981
page 10

AID seems to see this as quite a logical development with HIID advisors bridging the gap between the creation of the Institution and the development of its own in-house capacity.

Given the availability of the \$4 million and the pressures to get it committed, it seems likely that these developments will come about sooner rather than later. Cohen also indicated that Dr. Snoh is looking for an individual (presumably expatriate) who can "translate" the various analyses of the plan into clear policy statements. Cohen asked if we had any suggestions. David Dapice suggested Peter Timmer's recent food policy doctoral student now at Chulalongkorn University. AID can pay for such an individual under its grant. (either American or Thai).

George Delehanty transfer to Kenya

(William Young, GED, Theodore Panayotou, CKM, David Dapice)

With Bill Young and Theodore, we discussed how such a transfer might be handled to minimize any potential negative impact on the Thai project. Theodore observed that as Dr. Snoh had become so busy, it is increasingly difficult for him to make time for the project. The researchers rarely see him and feel increasingly removed. Theodore expressed some concern that GED's departure might occasion a withdrawal of interest in the project by Dr. Snoh and/or researchers. Dr. Snoh's feelings on this point would be crucial as to how the researchers themselves responded. Both because of Dr. Snoh's need to cancel his concluding talk to the workshop (due to the press of business) and to the judgment that LDS probably would be the best person to review with him GED's situation, we did not discuss the issue with Dr. Snoh. He is coming to the U.S. for the IFPRI Board Meeting in late September. Hopefully, it would be possible for LDS, JEJ or RKD to review with him GED's disengagement from the project in the least disruptive fashion.

On the Kenyan side, we agreed that it would be useful for GED to visit Kenya after Ralph Campbell has arrived. Therefore, he will stop on his way back to Thailand from home leave sometime around October 10.

I stressed to Theodore in particular that GED's transfer in no way suggested any diminution of our interest in this Thai project. In fact, the amount of services we can provide from New York will increase rather than decrease.

Another factor in providing continuity to the RF/Thai project will be its smooth integration into TDI as that institution takes shape. This is another area it would be useful for LDS/JEJ/RKD to address with Dr. Snoh. There is wide agreement that the most effective research leader (Director of Research?) would be Ammar Siamwalla. As we anticipate GED's transfer to Kenya, it might be that RF can play a facilitating role in bringing Ammar into a relationship with TDI. One obvious mechanism would be some sort of additional stipend, research fellowship, or some such arrangement. LDS/JEJ/RKD may wish to discuss this with Dr. Snoh in the context of GED's departure and the development of TDI. Theodore in particular noted that while it was the RF which put in the key financial and intellectual resources to develop a core analytical group, the Ford Foundation has now come along with a very small investment and has taken a leadership role in the development of the nuts and bolts organizing effort for the Institute (Vinyu consultancy).

(cont'd)

CKM/Food and Agricultural Policy Workshop & Field Trip Report
Bangkok, Thailand/July 31-August 8, 1981
page 11

Overall Observations on the Visit

Several dimensions of the RF contribution to this capacity development oriented project were particularly striking. First, the analytical growth apparent within the working group could not have been brought about by periodic visits of outside experts. GED, Theodore, and the group have met eight to ten times in long working sessions at Kasetsart. It was obvious that there had been substantial analytical training going on during the sessions. The Professor Kumpol Puapanichya whom I had met in May 1979 was, by August 1981, a transformed individual. While one can argue whether or not the "profit function" is the most suitable technique for policy analysis, the confidence was impressive with which Dr. Kumpol presented his profit function analysis to the group. There is absolutely no question that GED and Theodore have facilitated a major improvement in capacity. I see no way that this could have been done without a resident individual. The sort of intellectual advances that were apparent among the group can only come about through something like these "tutorial like" working relationships applied to specific problems.

A second striking point is the high degree of complementarity between GED's and Theodore's contributions. GED, with his training in industrial organization, has a highly developed sense of the institutional framework within which food and agricultural policy takes place. He also raised many excellent questions of overall research design and basic analytic considerations. Theodore is the group's taskmaster in introducing analytically rigorous models to the group. He has a great gift for simplifying what, for many, are intimidating mathematical models. He has a nice sense of the descriptive tendencies of most LDC research and strong feelings about the need to insert the analytical skeleton into the often sagging scarecrow analysis. Both individuals have developed a marvelous rapport with the group that has generated a real esprit de corps within the group. They have helped to build the group's professional self-confidence, to encourage them to challenge one another, and develop a real pride in the product they are producing. The project group has set a high standard for themselves and they are very obviously proud of it.

Despite his obvious pride in the group's performance, GED maintains his ability to see what has not been accomplished as well as what has. He correctly observes that while the projects may be impressive relative to where they started, realistically they are not better than most Thammasat Master's degrees. Moreover, the project leaders are remarkably out of touch with the flow of current events. Their reading in the literature is minimal.

They have undertaken so many research commitments that they give insufficient time to any of them. In one sense, this is the price of a successful project. For example, IRRI has planned on doing a profit function-based analysis of some rice farming systems in Thailand and, upon discovering that Kumpol has mastered this technique, are enthusiastic to commission him to do the study. Another insight into the group's progress is the reaction of Dean Sopin.

(cont'd)

CKM/Food and Agricultural Policy Workshop & Field Trip Report
Bangkok, Thailand/July 31-August 8, 1981

page 12

Throughout the workshop, his contributions challenged the researchers to move beyond their narrow technical analysis, challenged them to demonstrate how their analytical recommendations were going to change minds which preceding analyses had left unaffected. However, unlike his original comments -which were those of an outside critic - his criticisms this time clearly were more those of an inside participant challenging the group to do a better job rather than an outside critic denigrating its usefulness altogether. His criticisms were welcomed by the group as strengthening the final output. My impression is that he has become less skeptical of the value of this enterprise than he was at the outset. Rector Phaitoon, attending part of the sessions and making constructive suggestions, was also a big plus.

In thinking about the network dimension of the various RF food policy projects, it will be a great advantage to have GED in Kenya while Theodore is still in Thailand. This will improve the cross project interchange of ideas. In this respect, it is interesting that Kutlu Somel is a leading international expert on the analytical use of the profit function. This assures a commonality of interest between parts of the Turkish research group and the Thai group. It is interesting that both adopted this analytical technique completely independently of one another. (Indeed, it is doubly interesting in that one is Greek-inspired, one Turk-inspired -an interesting minor contribution of the project toward better international understanding.)

/rls