

Advanced agribusiness management for SMEs

Today's agribusiness executives and managers operate in a rapidly changing, volatile, technology-driven, consumer-focused market. This dynamic environment poses greater challenges to executives and managers of agribusiness companies in staying competitive. They have to explore new products, business models, and even organizational structures that could increase their efficiency and overall productivity to strengthen their market position.

The APO organized a workshop on Advanced Agribusiness Management for Executives and Managers of SMEs, 29 July–2 August, to expose participants to the latest thinking in strategic management, marketing strategy, and other relevant ideas. Subsequently, this would help enhance their leadership and managerial skills to improve the productivity and competitiveness of their agribusinesses. The workshop also discussed related issues, along with the capacity development needs of agribusiness executives and managers in APO member countries and recommended measures to address them. The workshop was organized with the Thailand Productivity Institute. The first day was an open international seminar on Trends in Advanced Agribusiness Management, attended by 35 local participants and 17 overseas participants from 13 countries.

The program combined a structured learning environment featuring frameworks and analytical techniques for decision making, new agribusiness-specific cases, and sharing best practices among participants from the Asian region. Some of the topics covered were global trends and key drivers in agribusiness, opportunities and challenges for agribusiness in Asia, examples of value chains in agribusiness,

innovative marketing techniques, and capacity development needs of agribusiness executives and managers in Asia.

Expert Dr. Ralph D. Christy, Director, Cornell International Institute for Food, Agriculture and Development and Professor of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA, com-

mented, "The workshop was very dynamic given the good mix of participants. The APO should organize more of this type of course to address the needs of agribusiness executives in the region by exposing them to insightful real-life cases."

Participant Martin Kong Fen Nyap, General Manager, Sabah Tea Sdn. Bhd., who holds an MBA from a US university, found the workshop useful, stating, "I appreciated the content of the program, especially the case studies and the group discussions. I also learned about the competence of other countries in agribusiness." Participant S. Amal Arunapriya, Director of Agriculture, District Secretariat of Kegalle, Sri Lanka, thought that the participatory approach was successful, commended the resource persons, and suggested "after two or three years, organize a workshop to review progress, inviting the same participants." 🌐



Dr. Christy, resource person from Cornell University, clarifying a point on strategy formulation in agribusiness during a workshop session.