



## APO-Cornell University cooperating on Asian agribusiness executive course

**U**nder a three-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) to develop agribusiness executive management workshops, the APO and Cornell University held a pilot workshop, 21–25 July, in Bangkok with 20 agribusiness executives and academics from 13 countries participating, along with officials of the Thailand Productivity Institute (FTPI) and members of its Agriculture Advisory Committee from the government, NGOs, and private sector. Also attending were the Director of the Agriculture Department of the APO Secretariat Joselito C. Bernardo, Director of the Cornell International Institute for Food, Agriculture and Development (CIIFAD) Dr. Ralph D. Christy, Dr. Rosa Rolle of the UN FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAORAP), and resource persons from the USA, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The workshop series will be held annually for the three years to develop managers of agribusiness in the Asian region.




*Experts and participants in the workshop on Advanced Agribusiness Management. Photo courtesy of FTPI.*

CIIFAD Director Dr. Christy, who is also a professor of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University, pointed out that, “Cornell has a rich pool of experts among its alumni in Asia who could contribute resources, experience, and expertise to the course.” Through its network of NPOs, the APO will identify candidates for future workshops in the series and assist Cornell University in identifying agribusinesses for case studies.

The MOU stemmed from the recognition that opportunities in agribusiness in Asia are expanding rapidly with economic growth. At the same time, factors such as shifting consumer trends, changing government regulatory requirements and policies, stiff competition, and climate change pose new challenges to agribusiness managers. To enhance their competitiveness, agribusinesses must explore innovative strategies, business models, and organizational structures to increase efficiency and productivity. The APO-Cornell workshops will expose participants to the best practices taught in business schools and acquaint them with productivity tools tailored to agriculture. Case studies will be used extensively to illustrate strategic decision making and leadership.

In the pilot workshop, the case analysis technique, current and emerging challenges in agribusiness, strategic management innovations, and leadership roles in Asian agribusiness were introduced. “This workshop exceeded my expectations, provided new tools for business evaluation, and new perspectives on trends and emerging business opportunities. I am very glad for the opportunity to attend this course and receive a certificate bearing the APO and Cornell logos,” stated Nalaka Kaushalya Mohotti, Head of the Strategic Business Development Unit, Hayleys Agricultural Holding Limited, Sri Lanka.

During the panel discussions, participants recommended that the APO and FAORAP also cooperate in other areas in areas of common interest to agribusiness development in the region. Dr. Rosa Rolle of FAORAP responded that, “The APO and FAO have been cooperating in several projects and we will continue to explore strengthening such cooperation in specific areas of common interest, which could result in greater synergy.”

The intensive five-day workshop also provided participants opportunities for networking with peers and observing best management practices and state-of-the-art facilities of C.P. Intertrade Co., Ltd., in Ayuthaya, one of the leading rice trade-related companies worldwide. 

September–October 2014  
Volume 44 Number 5  
ISSN: 1728-0834

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The APO News is published bimonthly by the APO Secretariat. The online edition is available at: [www.apo-tokyo.org](http://www.apo-tokyo.org).

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