

An Interview With Mrs. Sarapee Yuadyong, Managing Director, Chiwadi Products Co. Ltd., Thailand, by Wilaiwan Twishsri.

Mrs. Sarapee is Managing Director, Chiwadi Products Co. Ltd., Thailand. She has been working for the grass root community especially in the coconut producing area of Maklong Tajeen of Samut Songkram province, Thailand. She is a recipient of various Thailand government awards for her success in applying science to community product development. The Associate Editor of COCOINFO INTERNATIONAL has had an opportunity to interview Mrs. Sarapee Yuadyong. Below is the excerpt of the interview.

Cocoinfo International (CI): I am very pleased to have a face to face interview with you. How do you begin and involve with community development?

I was a tourist to this area and knew that local people faced the problem with waste management. As a tourist, I and my family usually love to visit tourist destination at Ampawa district which is not too far from Bangkok. In my visit, I met a group of housewives at home stay at Baanrimklong, Tambol Baanprok, Amphur Muang, Samut Songkram province and knew that they faced the problem with food waste management. Then, we discussed about this issue. The ultimate goal is to protect firefly habitat that seems to be the last biggest source available in the country.

As a microbiologist by education background and invited lecturer, I brought back this important issue and did some more work in cooperation with Kasetsart University. I tried to find out how to make use of the waste in tourism area by using microorganism orchestra or symbiosis fermentation technology to transform organic waste to organic fertilizer. Through our guidance and



Mrs. Sarapee (left) and Mr. Romulo N. Arancon, Jr., APCC Executive Director

supervision, the villagers can produce the organic fertilizer. It is done by a kind of batch, liquid and solid fertilizer.

All of their products have been registered as compulsory for organic fertilizer products from the government. Chiwadi assists them for the marketing; buy their fertilizer and sell under Chiwadi brand. This project has been carried out 40 families in Samut Songkram province. We are proud to say that every month we eliminate 4 tons of food waste.

That is my first successful undertaking for the tourism area.

(CI): How did you start with coconut sugar producing community?

As I have organic fertilizer under the brand of Chiwadi, I have a chance to explain about the product to the grass root people, some of whom are coconut farmers and sugar makers. I observed that all of them aged between 50-65 years old and 22% of them aged more than 65 years old. Where are the rest? We

are neglecting our ancient wisdom. Are we ready to lose this out in the next 5-10 years. I'm knocking my head hard. I thought to myself, how to sustain this community if all of them pass away, will the coconut sugar production still take place in this area?

Later on, I embarked on my own project to produce high value product from coconut drawn from the charm of nature. The potential product was coconut syrup. It took me a year to go on production trials of coconut sugar syrup from thought to full implementation of this organic product. My efforts paid off when I got the National Innovation Agency (NIA) award for **the Coconut Sugar Syrup from Design Innovation Contest 2011**. In this event I won the runner up for food design from the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Government of Thailand. I am proud to be the runner up and I feel more motivated to continue developing to study further about coconut product development, in particular at that moment the better packaging design.

That is the beginning of my involvement which was later followed by many other projects.

(CI): Could you tell us how you introduce the coconut processing technology in the community ?

I brought the sap and coconut sugar sample and analyzed their physical and chemical characteristic. Interestingly, I found that they have mineral contents and low glycemic index. They can be further processed to other high value products; however, they need hygienic processes.

In house training by our own staff, who is expert in this area, was done for the sugar processors including examination until they become confident and really understand the word "specification management". 8 communities received all equipments purchased by our own investment. I asked farmers to use plastic containers or preferably bamboo instead of aluminum container for sap collection, to filter the sap, by provided a special cloth, to check Total Soluble Solid (TSS) by using Hand reflectometer to approximate the sugar content. We do not need to produce end product in the form of coconut paste as usual, we just need to minimize the water content of sap and make it hygienic, more concentrated to become syrup which looks like honey.

In the production process, after cooking for sometimes, the sap becomes concentrated and needs to be checked again its TSS as we instructed and other measurable parameters. When TSS reaches our standard (80 °Brix), the syrup will be put in stainless container before putting into LLDPE plastic bags. This is a special plastic bag with heat resistance up to 98°C and cool resistance at -18°C. This is hygienic practice we introduced to the community. The finished syrup from farmer is our raw material and we buy this syrup in a bit higher price than coconut sugar paste.

(CI): Have your products been certified by any certifying body?

Because nothing can be good without the good start that's what we, Chiwadi, care for. We carry a batch of raw material to complete its processing step at a recognized factory (C&A products Co.Ltd.) that already

has GMP standard, the HACCP certificate, ISO 9000, *Halal* certificate, quality control system, etc. All of the labels use languages that international people would like to get available. "If you like to do thing, you have to get it right", this is Chiwadi concept.

We have registered our products in Thailand and Asia. We followed all customer requirements e.g. HACCP, ISO, *Halal* etc. It is important to obtain the national and international standards for the product and to obtain the organic farm certificate from a credible certifying body to pave the construction base and scaling up the market.

The latest certify body is USDA organic stamp from Bioagri Cert from farm to products that is now being assessed at the final step. We expect to get the certificate by 2013.

(CI) What is the key of your success in the product development?

The development is to get molecular restructure from crystal to liquid form. Our focus is on organic products which have niche market and potential buyers who pay a premium price to organic products. We packaged our products into more premium market, it is more appealing for people with lifestyle orientation. Likewise we would like to promote organic products as a part of healthy life style.

Recently, we have been marketing our Coconut Sugar Syrup to Singapore, New Zealand and Australia.

After I got NIA award for the Coconut Sugar Syrup, I have collaborated with my American

colleague who won “Pent Award in 2008”. Later on, I developed a new product - a juice based coconut sugar with the brand name of “Fruii”. So far we have already exported Fruii to various countries, for instance USA, New Zealand, Sweden, Malaysia, UAE, Taiwan and Hongkong. Fruii ranges cover Coconut Lime with coconut pulps, Ruby Pineapple with Nata de Coco bits, Lychee with Nata de Coco bits and Lychee Fruit with aloe vera bits.

I brought the NIA prize back to the community as initiated from the community with the budget awarded from the Ministry of Science and Technology and my own pocket for investment in design, packaging, equipment and utensil and product analysis cost.

(CI): What is your target for coconut sugar product?

Chiwadi led the gathering of existing coconut sugar makers in Samut Songkram as starting point to form organic coconut sugar community network covering Mae Khlong – Tha Jean region accounting for 4 provinces: Samut Songkram, Samut Sakorn, Ratchaburi, and Nakhonpathom.

I am willing to help and work for sustainable agriculture in these provinces. The provincial government has also implemented a project to expand the organic producing area. I try to find more market share, so we, the community producers, can increase our production which eventually will lift up the community livelihood and income.

(CI): What have you envisaged for the opportunity after the AEC in 2015?

ASEAN will become borderless 2015 and it will drive congregation of business group. I have started the sugar business cooperation with my Indonesian friends. We, Chiwadi, is marketing the products in Indonesia as we consider the huge population as well as the availability of raw material - coconut sap in the country. We would work closely and collaborate with Indonesian partner to expand our market. Collaboration with foreigner is important.

(CI): At present, how many products produced by Chiwadi and how to market your products?

At the beginning, we have organic fertilizer. Later on, we have products from coconut sap such as organic coconut sugar syrup, organic coconut sugar paste for cooking, fruit juice based coconut sap, and new arrival product is coconut cider vinegar which is similar to apple cider.

For each product, we also have customer target group. For example, coconut syrup with the brand name of Chiwadi, this product is for health conscious group, fruit juice based coconut sap with the brand name of Fruii which sounds like happier and healthier after drinking is for young generation or teenagers. The later product can be placed on convenient stores located in Gas/Petrol stations.

For coconut sugar paste for cooking, we have domestic market in Phuket and we are going to brand our coconut sugar “Tam ma nan” meaning “have been for long” indicating ancient wisdom which is still relevant up to now. This product is targeted for middle to lower income group of Thai customers.

For the new arrival - coconut cider, it is intended for customers who go on diet and want to lose their weight, internal organ detoxification, acid-alkaline balance and boost precursor for immunity productions.

(CI) Did you get any support from Thai Government ?

Yes, let say, we were found by OAIN, Organic Agricultural Innovation Network, Rajamangala University of Technology who started they believe even before we can see our own potential. This is the first government support that has brought us up before any floors. With the support, pull and push that drive us to immerse in organic innovation, we won the Food Design Award from the National Innovation Day on 5th October 2011, We got a Research grant awarded by the National Innovation Agency, Thailand for clinical study to analyze Glycemic index in our coconut products and to assure safety for diabetic consumers including other chemical analysis that unlock our inquiries technically. In my view, our product was informally promoted by participating in government contest. This is one option to promote our product, if the product is really good and has won government award, we hope the consumer will support us.

Importantly, since Chiwadi with collaboration with provincial government officer has set up MaeKlong Tajeen Organic Coconut Network set up. We always invited from provincial government to join the exhibition that is good opportunity for us to promote our products.

Beside, Fruii was also supported by Industrial Federation of Thailand for innovation coupon to enable its implementation.

Later this year 2012, Office of Senate Thai government has also awarded Chiwadi Products Co., Ltd. as the only food company in 15 SMEs that receive honorable certificate for bringing Science and Technology to Excellence on 5 November 2012.

The hottest recent news is Chiwadi Products Co. Ltd. has been selected as one of top ten best businesses for innovation company. The award will be granted on 24 December 2012 by National Innovation Agency, Ministry of Science and Technology.

(CI): What is your vision for the coconut community?

We insist that the innovative modern products should be produced by keeping ancient wisdom in perspective and belief, it is the best way forward to keep sustainable business and environment in this changing world.

My vision is to focus on inter-dependence simply means that the community depends on us and we depend on coconut community. It is the only way to

hold on each others. The community is to produce best organic natural coconut products sincerely to the factory. The community is to ensure sustainability of the products thoroughly and consistently. We as consumer pay and repeat orders, expand usage for better vitality, better living and health. We really expect a lot from community as well as community do expect sincerely, continuously purchase from us.

As we deeply see more and more that coconut products cater for human being - human best nutrients, the coconut community is controlling well being of world population. To this picture, coconut community needs to be developed proactively to prepare for innovations that catch up to daily lives that change constantly. If we can work together across countries, we can lead innovations systematically, dynamically and much faster. To work with coconut community is the best thing to do in life.

(CI): Lastly, can you briefly introduce your products and tell us, how can interested



Chiwadi Coconut Sap Syrup and Fruii, Ready to Drink Fruit Juice

buyers access more information or place an order?

- Chiwadi Coconut Flower Syrup : Low Glycemic index sugar, good source of potassium
- Chiwadi coconut flower cider vinegar : Acid-Alkaline balance, detoxification, activate immunity production
- Fruii ready to drink fruit juice sweetened with coconut nectar, a happier, healthier juice drink.
- Spadin organic humic for soil amendment, release nutrient in soil, stimulate root production.
- Chiwadi Fish Compost granules, powder and liquid organic fertilizer for growing plant.
- Chiwadi Matana Malee liquid organic fertilizer for flowering.

Order can be placed through:
[http://www.thaitechno.net/t1/home.php?uid=39393;](http://www.thaitechno.net/t1/home.php?uid=39393)
<http://www.chiwadi.com>

For overseas interested parties, they can visit our website at www.chiwadi.com and place an order through our website and direct contact to us to info.chiwadi@gmail.com;
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(CI): Thank you very much Mrs. Sarapee Yuadyong for sharing your valuable experience especially about the organic coconut product processing business with our valued readers.



Various Chiwadi Products