



Rural Training Center-Thailand

2010 RTC-TH Jan Upate

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Community-based environmental education for the self-sufficiency and sustainability of small rural family farms

ชุมชนตามสิ่งแวดล้อมศึกษาเพื่อการพึ่งตัวเองและยั่งยืนชนบทขนาดเล็กครอบครัวฟาร์ม

You may post questions / comments to the Discussion area of our website

Children's Day at Na Fa Elementary School



A parachute canopy for the outdoor stage.

January 8, 2010 was Children's Day at Ban Na Fa Elementary School. The RTC-TH donated food treats for the children and provided photography services for the event. The one day event was filled with a variety of activities: awards presentations, group and individual competitions and games, and a gift exchange.

As the day progressed, families stood by as spectators with younger siblings not yet in school joining the students. Former students also attended and assisted teachers.



Students and teachers prepare presents for the gift exchange to take place later in the day.



The students assemble for the flag raising and morning prayer.

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The event begins with presenting various students with recognition awards.



A song and dance competition between groups of mixed grades.



A water balloon relay race gets everyone excited.



The blind-folded make-up beauty contest adds levity.



Musical chairs is among the fun and games.



The adrenalin rush of a good balloon stomping contest.

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Families sit on the sidelines as spectators and share in the excitement of Children's Day.



Former students volunteer and assist their teachers in the many tasks and activities.



Pre-school siblings are welcomed to join the festivities.



School officials, local village leaders, and visiting government dignitaries attend Children's Day.



Homegrown Food Security

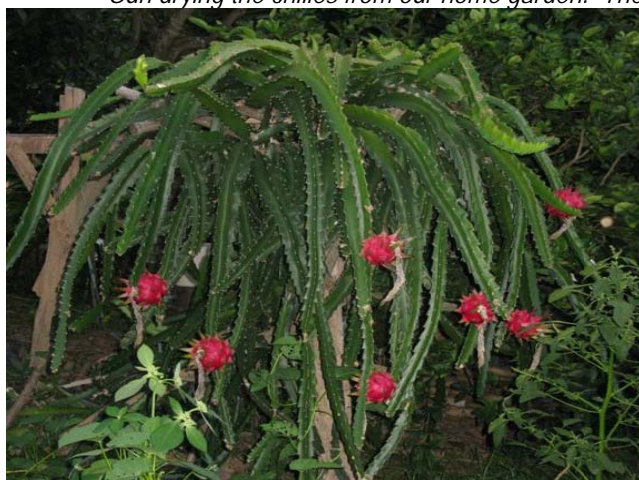


Jord bringing home fresh vegetables from the farm.

From the garden and farm, we are thankful for an abundant, safe, and nearby food supply. Since we are not farming commercially, we don't put a monetary figure on the value of our crops. Instead, we focus on the value of the intangible measures of "happiness, satisfaction, sense of security and well-being" and similar quality of life impressions. We consider personal satisfaction and comfort to be "priceless." And our food supply is a few footsteps from the kitchen door.



Sun drying the chilies from our home garden. The farm garden supplies chilies for the farm kitchen.



Dragon fruit is a family favorite. We have white and red varieties and hope to add yellow to the garden.



The farm is about 1.2 km from the house. It produces the annual rice supply, fish. Poultry and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables for home consumption. Surpluses are sold to generate cash or exchanged for food items we don't grow. 🌐

Changes Afoot for the Ban Na Fa Area

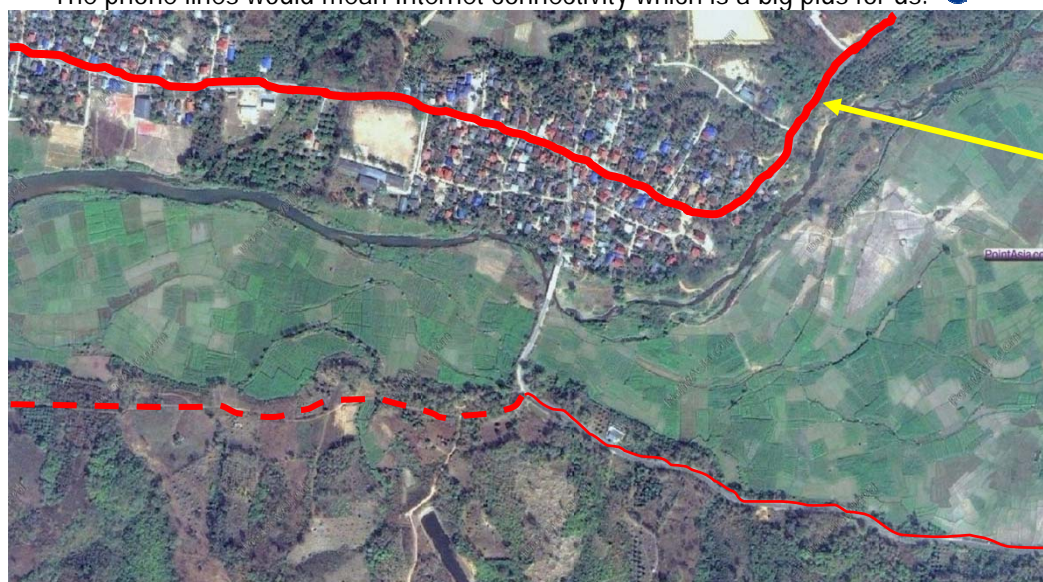


An automated wireless stream gauge installed on the Ban Na Fa bridge over the Nam Yang.



A new reservoir is being planned next door.

- **Expanding power and phone grid.** This expansion would follow the new road and bring the lines past the main farm and the Jatropa farm. This means “free electricity” for both parcels under the current Thai government economic policies as we tend to have low power consumption at these sites. The phone lines would mean Internet connectivity which is a big plus for us. 🌐



The existing narrow road goes through Ban Na Fa (solid red line) and other villages which limits traffic speed and volume. The new road (dashed red line) bypasses villages and hopes to increase commerce.

“Sparky” and “Sam” Arrive for our IFS and Community Service Programs



In May and June 2009, we contacted C-FEE (Clean Fuel Energy Enterprises, Inc) in the Bangkok area about modifying one of their all electric vehicle designs for our IFS (Independent Fuel Systems) projects integrated with our community service program of EmComm (Emergency Communications). The result was a collaboration that produced “Sparky, the Batt-mobile” (due to the 8 rechargeable batteries he carries), and “Sam, the Volts-wagon” (carrying 2 batteries). This lets each unit function as separate EmComm radio stations (on mobile, on portable).

Long range plans call for using Jatropha SVO (straight vegetable oil) as an on-farm produced biofuel to generate our own electricity to recharge the batteries, supply the farm’s electricity, and to sell the surplus to the Thai government.

Both IFS and EmComm fit with the RTC-TH self-sufficiency and sustainability goals. 🌐



In times of emergencies, Sparky and Sam can be deployed to help in local disaster EmComm.



“Sam” carries 2 batteries (~250 am hrs of power)



“Sparky” carries 8 batteries (~1000 amp hrs of power); 2 batteries in front, 2 midships, 4 in the rear.



We plan to use Jatropha SVO to generate electricity on the farm.

New Environmental Activity: Smog Check Service



The smog check service is located at the major highway intersection in northern Nan Province.

We had an opportunity to take over a business from one of Saifon's aunts. The business involves government required vehicle inspection and registration services. The environmental aspects of this business had an appeal for taking direct action to help the local environment. After vehicles are 3-5 years old, Thai law requires they be safety and smog checked annually. Many people can't afford the time to wait at the vehicle registration office. They are willing to pay an additional service fee. We make one trip weekly and handle a number of vehicle registrations *en mass*.

The location was also a prime consideration for us. Directly across the highway are the District government offices, the District Police Station, Post Office, Water Department, and Telecommunications Tower. This physically positions us for networking with these government offices for future RTC-TH training programs and EmComm (Emergency Communications) efforts. As many of you know, one of our RTC-TH slogans is "It is better to network than to not work."



Located at the largest highway junction in Northern Nan Province, across from the District government offices (SW corner) and the District Police Station (NW corner).



The Vehicle Inspection facility/building.



View of Doi Phu Kha to the Southeast

Representing C-FEE in Northern Thailand



Our collaboration with C-FEE (Clean Fuel Energy Enterprises, Inc.) to build Sparky and Sam yielded an unexpected bonus. A resort in northern Nan province is interested in C-FEE's electric tuktuk.

C-FEE called us with an offer to represent their product to the resort. If a sale is completed, we can earn a commission on each unit sold. This seems to be a testament to the RTC-TH saying "It is better to network than to not work."

Our initial contact with C-FEE was for a custom modification of one of their electric vehicles. We wanted an demonstration alternative clean energy vehicle which could also play a role in our

EmComm effort. C-FEE management was impressed with our attitude and community service work, and contributed to the effort with matching materials and labor.

C-FEE's all electric vehicles help to reduce air pollution as well as noise pollution. The vehicle is very quiet to operate. All you hear is a quiet whirring whisper from the electric motor.

"Sparky, the Batt-mobile" is a real eye-catcher. The distinctive appearance has turned many heads of car, motorcycle, and truck drivers as well as bus passengers who pass. Many times, people on motorcycles do a double take when they see "Sparky."



"Sparky" on display in a key position for high visual exposure along a major highway.



"Sparky" makes an eye catching display at the major highway junction.