



**International Student Exchange Program Between
The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture and
Kasetsart University (Thailand)
2002 Report**



The third consecutive year of UT's cooperative student exchange program with Kasetsart University was held April through June, 2002. As in the previous two years, UT hosted a delegation of Kasetsart University faculty and students for a one month study tour in Tennessee and Kasetsart University hosted a delegation of UT students for a one month study tour in Thailand. The host institution was responsible for all ground transportation, food and lodging expenses. The study tours emphasized both the respective country's culture and a broad overview of agricultural and natural resource industries. All participating students also experienced a homestay.

The Thai delegation included faculty coordinators Dr. Lop Phavaphutanon, Group Leader, Faculty of Agriculture, and Ajarn Rachanee Maneekul, Faculty of Forestry, and 15 students. In addition, Dr. Songkram Thammincha, KU Vice President for the Sriracha Campus and Liaison Officer for the UT linkage, and Mr. Somsakdi Tabtimthong, Assistant Director, KU Division of Foreign Affairs, accompanied the group during their first week in Tennessee. The Thai group arrived April 19 and departed May 20. Their state-wide technical tour included Big South Fork National Recreation Area, Smoky Mountain National Park, Sweetwater Valley Farm, Monterey Mushroom Company, NK Seed Packaging and Distribution Center, Jack Daniels Distillery, Waterfall Farms (Tennessee Walking Horse operation), Saturn automotive assembly plant, Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Ames Plantation, West Tennessee and Milan Experiment Stations, Clifty Farms, Tosh Farms (swine operation), Replogle Enterprises (a large sawmill), and a variety of on-campus activities. Cultural stops included Museum of Appalachia, Sequoyah Museum, Tennessee Aquarium, the Hermitage historical park, Opryland Hotel, a riverboat ride in Memphis, and of course many shopping excursions. Highlights of their tour and the daily schedule can be found at http://www.agriculture.utk.edu/ipanr/exchanges/thailand/2002kustudents/KU-UT_student_exchanges.htm.

The UT group included faculty coordinators Dr. Robert Orr and Dr. Kelly Robbins, Dr. Mark Fly, and students Jeremy Williams, Ag Business; Stephanie Tarwater, Environmental Science; Matt Bowling, OHLD; Charlene Belles, Food Science & Technology; Megan York, Environmental Science; Susie Genualdi, Environmental Science; John Rutter, Ag Econ; Beth Collier, Animal Science; Teal Hickey, Animal Science; Nathan Coleman, Animal Science; Kristin Moseley, PSLs; and Stuart Hale, Forestry Wildlife and Fisheries. The group traveled to Bangkok Thailand on May 31 and returned home June 30. The technical tour included visits to the Kung Krabaen Royal Development Project located on the coast of Chantaburi Province, Chantaburi Horticultural Research Center, KU's Trad Agroforestry Research Center, Baan Pred Nai's mangrove community forest protected area, KU's Sriracha Fishery Research Station, Nong Nuch Tropical Gardens, KU's Nong Pho Animal Hospital, Supa Orchid (Thailand's largest commercial tissue culture operation), Fresh Meat Co., Ltd. (swine slaughterhouse and meat-packing operation), KU's Tab Kwang Swine Research Station (located in Saraburi Province), CP Group - Meiji Co. (milk products processing plant), Farm Chok Chai (a vertically-integrated dairy and agro-tourism enterprise), Khao Yai National Park, and a variety of tours and activities at KU's Kamphaengsaen and Bangken Campuses. Cultural sites included the Grand Palace, Wat Phra Keow (Temple of the Emerald

Buddha), Bang Pa-In Palace, Ayuthaya Historical Park, the Floating Market at Damnoen Saduak, Pra-Pathom Chedi (the largest Buddhist Pagoda in the world), and the Historical Image Museum. Tour highlights and the daily schedule can be viewed at:

<http://www.agriculture.utk.edu/ipanr/exchanges/thailand/2002utstudents/utstudentsinthaailand.htm> .

To gauge program impact, pre- and post-tour surveys were completed by all participating students. A summary of results from all three years of the program follows. Clearly, all participating students learned much about the host country's culture, society, and agricultural and food industries (figs. 1-4). Both Thai and U.S. students found the host country's agricultural techniques and agricultural education system to be more highly developed than they had anticipated (Figs. 5 and 7). The level of U.S. agricultural diversity was somewhat more progressive than the Thai students had initially assumed whereas U.S. students responded similarly in both the pre- and post tour survey (Fig. 6). Both Thai and U.S. students rated their homestays as the highlight of their experience.

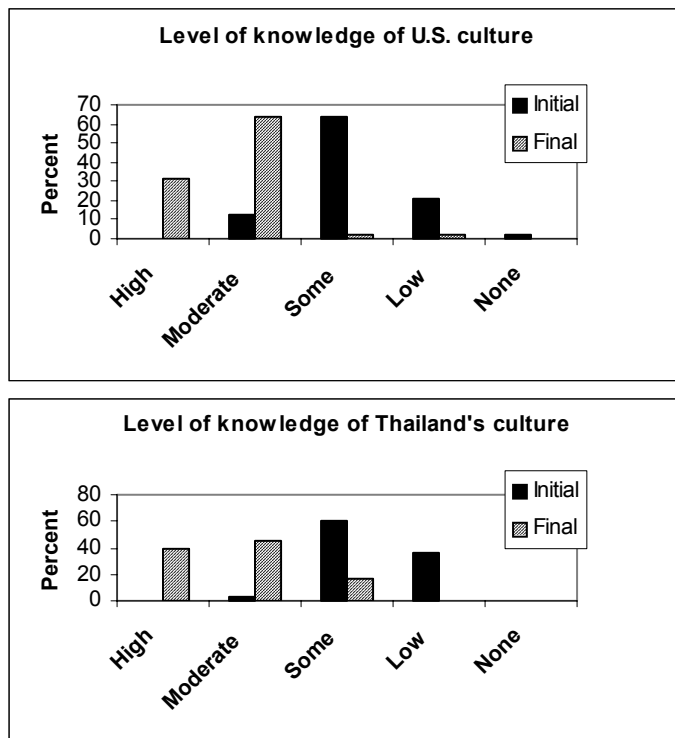


Fig.1. Pre- and post-tour assessment of Thai students' level of knowledge of U.S. culture (top); and U.S. students' knowledge of Thailand's culture (bottom). Data for all 3 years were combined; pre- and post-tour differences were significant ($P < .01$)

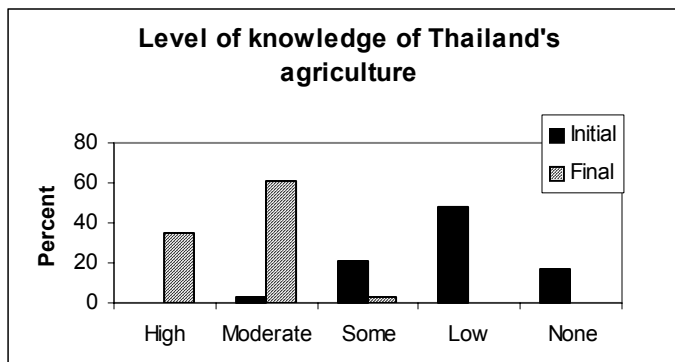
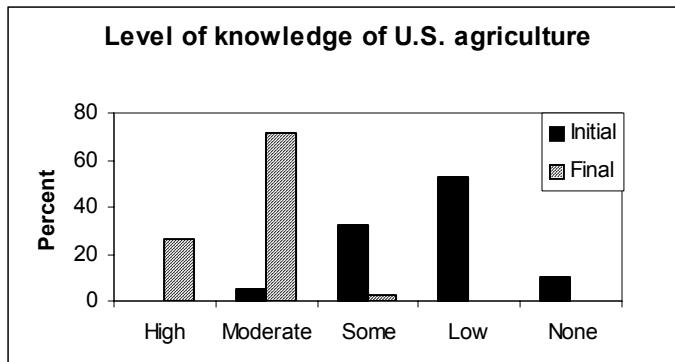
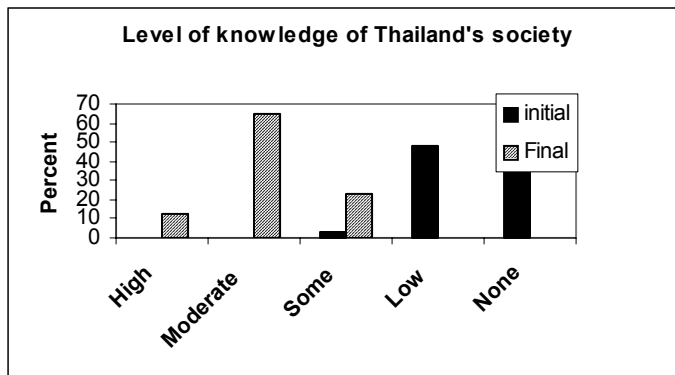
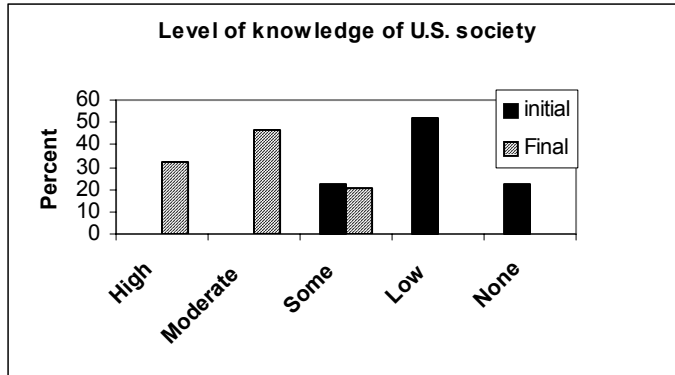


Fig.2. Pre- and post-tour assessment of Thai students' level of knowledge of U.S. society (top); and U.S. students' knowledge of Thai society (bottom). Data for all 3 years were combined; pre- and post-tour differences were significant ($P < .01$)

Fig. 3. Pre- and post-tour assessment of Thai students' level of knowledge of U.S. agriculture (top); and U.S. students' knowledge of Thai agriculture (bottom). Data for all 3 years were combined; pre- and post-tour differences were significant ($P < .01$)

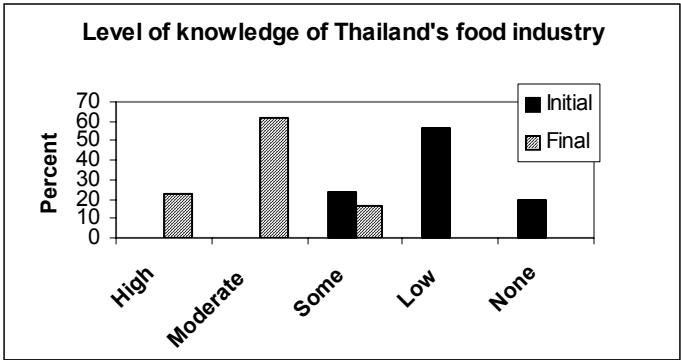
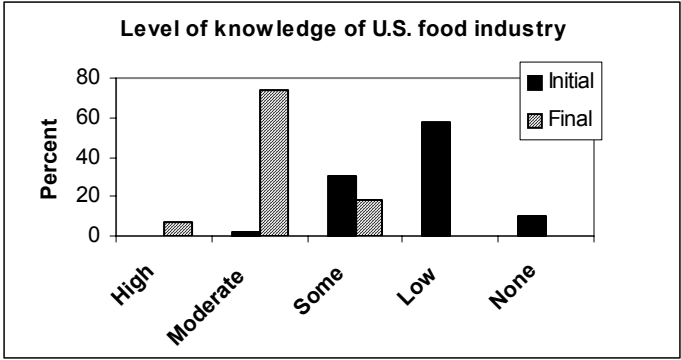


Fig. 4. Pre- and post-tour assessment of Thai students' level of knowledge of U.S. food industry (top); and U.S. students' knowledge of Thai food industry (bottom). Data for all 3 years were combined; pre- and post-tour differences were significant ($P < .01$)

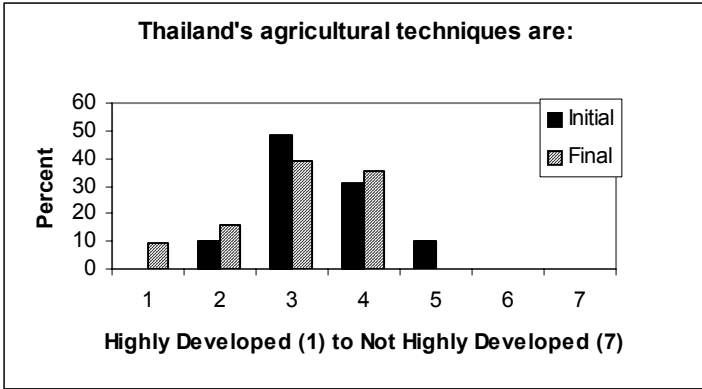
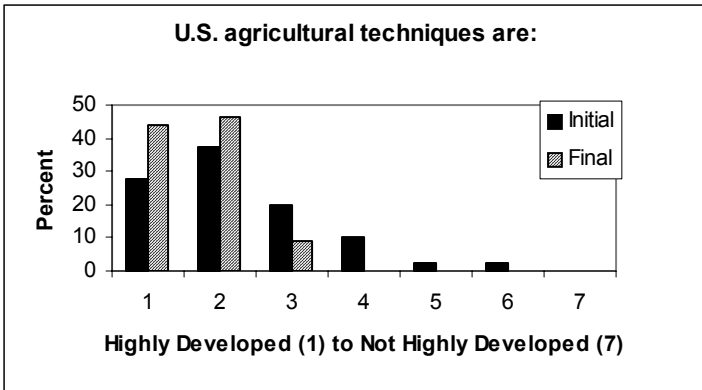


Fig. 5. Pre- and post-tour assessment of Thai students' opinion of U.S. agricultural techniques (top); and U.S. students' opinion of Thai agricultural techniques (bottom). Data for all 3 years were combined; pre- and post-tour differences were significant ($P < .01$)

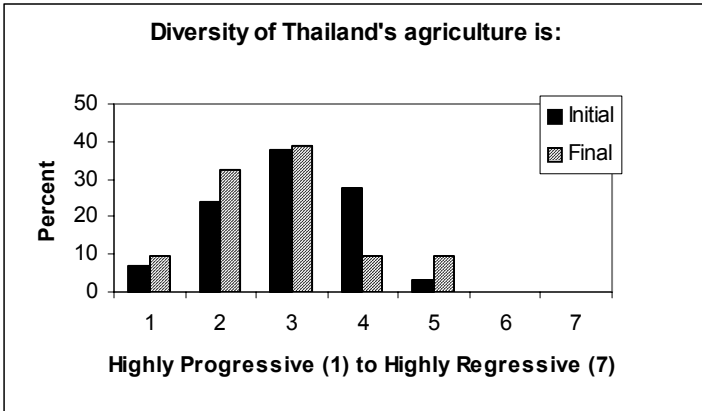
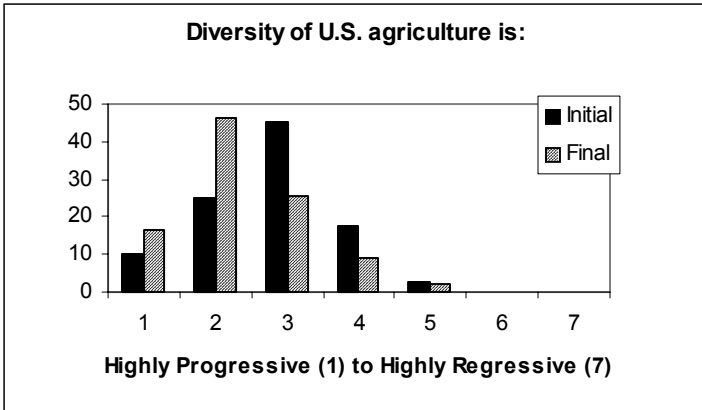


Fig. 6. Pre- and post-tour assessment of Thai students' opinion of the level of diversity of U.S. agriculture (top); and U.S. students' opinion of the level of diversity of Thai agriculture (bottom). Data for all 3 years were combined; pre- and post-tour differences were significant ($P < .01$)

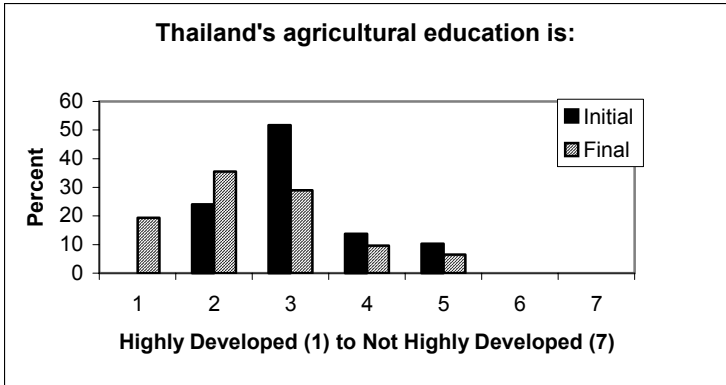
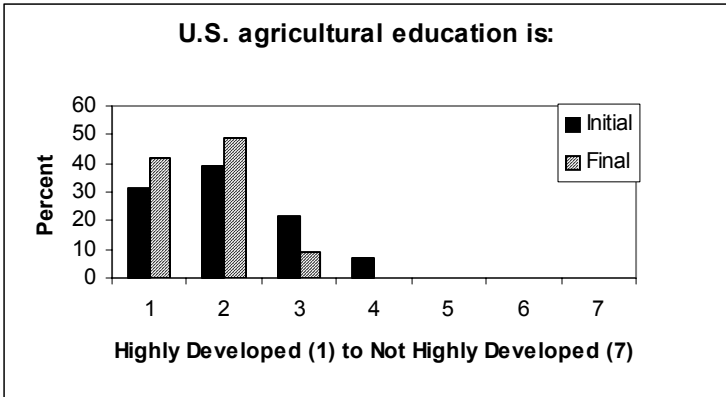


Fig. 7. Pre- and post-tour assessment of Thai students' opinion knowledge of U.S. agricultural education (top); and U.S. students' opinion of Thai agricultural education (bottom). Data for all 3 years were combined; pre- and post-tour differences were significant ($P < .01$)

June 2002 marked a change in senior KU administrators, including the retirement of KU's President Dr. Thira Sutabutra, who was an enthusiastic supporter of the cooperative exchange program. We were fortunate to have the opportunity to meet the incoming president, Dr. Viroch Impithuksa and briefly discuss continuation of the exchange program. Based on that discussion and the subsequent efforts of Dr. Songkram Thammincha , a commitment from KU to continue the exchange program was made. Dean Mary Albrecht similarly committed to continue CASNR's financial support of the program.