Mae Mu, 2/8/99
Tambon Mae Najon
Interviewers: Jean, Bia, Mun, Soonthorn
2 villagers with three onlookers – headman and tambon council member answered all questions

Village Baseline Survey
Population:
Households: 63 (with other villages about 90~).
Ethnicity: Karen
List of names: Received

A. Infrastructure

2. Health Clinic: in M.5 next door
3. Telephones: Use a solar power telephone (from govt) but it doesn’t work.

4. Electricity: Last year received (41)
5. TVs:
6. Vehicles (pickups): 2 Motorcycles: 10~
7. Other Facilities:
   Temple just built last year – same area as school. But doesn’t have a monk there all the time.
   They have had Christians in the village for over 20 years. Catholics came first and Protestants came after. Before then they were animists. Became Christians first – but now have some Buddhists (perhaps because of marriage?)
They have a village water system from the mountain (gravity fed) built in
8. Roads: 10 km of dirt road from Mae Najon, took us about 30 minutes. Built in 26. But now O.B.J. just came two days before to level the road (improve it a bit with grating). They were actually doing this for the road to Mae O and this village asked if they would just do there extension at the same time.
   Seasonal Use: Cannot pass some places during the rainy season.

9. Travel to Market (most frequently used means of travel): They take their motorcycles either to Mae Najon or all the way to Mae Chaem. There is no passenger vehicle.
10. Travel time: MCh?. 30 min., Hot? ChM?

B. History

1. When was the village established?

There are two other small villages that are part of this Mu 4. But the map and questions seemed to revolve around this main village.

The village started with 3-4 households about 300-400 years ago. They came from Mae Suk (west of there). Came because they found this place where they could have paddy and plenty of water. When they got there they started planting upland fields first and then slowly opened up the
paddy fields.

C. Land

Have 200~ paddy area. Suan 400~rai. – expanded over 20 years ago in order to use all area that was suitable for agriculture.

1. Land Area:
   Upland area that they plant every year (same place) is about 40 rai. They have other places that they still do shifting cultivation that adds up to 510 rai. In these fields they plant for 3-4 years and then move on to another plot in another of these upland areas. This area is divided up into about 5 areas.

Ten yrs ago:

The paddy land is the same because they can’t expand it anymore. They also said that the upland area is probably the same too as they still do rotating fields. In the area they called (suan) orchard or garden, however, people have expanded to use any appropriate land so this area has probably increased over ten years.

2. Irrigated by run-of-river: Water comes from two small rivers – Mae Mu (large) and Mae Mu (small). These irrigate the paddy fields that they have. These can be used all year, but the last two years they have been quite dry. They have not been able to plant all the paddy area in soybean as before.

3. Irrigated by other means (well, pipe):
   They have a village water system that is gravity fed from the mountain. Built in 39. But the water isn’t very clean because it comes straight out of the river – but they have enough all year.

   Last year it only rained twice – the reason they gave for the dryness of the rivers.

4. Forest:

Have agreed within the village that the forest land that they use should only be used for personal use such as homes and food etc. Don’t need to ask permission to use the community forest, but they will not let people sell things out of the forest. They also have a conservation forest that is just outside the village boundaries (as drawn on the map). They say that they don’t go in there to cut but can gather plants etc. They have not measured either forest area and so couldn’t say how large they are. They did say that the conservation forest area is large.

They had someone cut to sell before and they told him not to cut and sell – only for use.

Don’t have problems with others coming in.

They also have a small forest area that they keep to cremate people who have died.
They have a small area reserved for animist ceremonies that they do every 7-8 years.

5. Home-gardens:

They plant mangos and bananas in orchard garden areas. Some of this they may sell, but not very much (or not regularly). This area has fruit trees, but they also plant field crops in between sometimes. It is this fruit orchard area that has expanded over the past ten years. They also plant vegetables for personal use.

6. Prevailing land quality/soil description:

7. Tenure:

They have a few rai of NS3 – only four people and this is in the paddy.

Also have some SK1 – more than NS3 but not sure how much (didn’t seem like very much).

Otherwise don’t have any title.

There are about 5 plots of paddy land that belong to people in Mae Najon. They said that this land was sold long ago to these families.

8. Any communally controlled land? (specify)

9. Major crops and rotations:

Have always planted rice – both paddy and upland. This is still their major crop. They started planting soy about 10 years ago and just started planting corn 3-4 years ago. They plant soybean in the dry season in the paddy fields. They also plant some soybean in the orchard area during the rainy season. They plant the soy near the road in the orchard area.

They usually plant all the paddy area to soybean (200 rai) but this year less because not enough water.

They plant the corn in the area that is upland but fixed. They plant a very little bit of corn in the orchard areas as well.

Not everyone had paddy and some people very little paddy. So not everyone has enough rice to eat. Some people have extra though and sell to others.

If not enough paddy they will plant upland fields. The area they plant in the upland fields depends on the amount of labor they have in the family. It can be up to 4-5 rai if enough labor. Some people also only have upland area. In the orchards and the upland fields they depend on the rain and so can only plant one crop per year.

District ag suggested soybeans but villagers themselves asked about corn. No one is member of the ag cooperative. One of the tambon council members contacted (CP likely) the company about planting corn for seed. He was the one who was responsible for the project. He actually provided all the capital for the 8 rai that were planted. But others did the planting. CP gave 30% of the capital required. The other 70% was a loan from this individual to the farmers who planted. Five people planted the seed corn and two people did not make any money. They are now in debt to the tambon council member (not to CP). The other 3 people made just enough to cover their loans. They think
off the debt.

Everyone has some land, but they may only have upland fields.

Income mostly comes from agriculture 65% and other than that comes from wage labor. They work for people in Mae Najon and they know them because they live close by and they even know the children there (means they are close).

They use all the paddy and orchard land every year. Only in the shifting area that they leave fallow.

25% of the people have enough rice to eat.

But they rotate between crops between years sometimes.

When they decide what to plant they usually think about price first. They figure what they will earn. For example the price for corn has been stable. If already milled price is 3 Bt./kg. Soy has been 7-8 Bt.

For labor if they have more labor they will plant more area (doesn’t fit into decision about which crop).

The most area ever planted to corn has not been more than 5 rai. Anyone who plants more than just a little, if they don’t have enough labor they hire from within the village.

They also go to do wage labor for 60-70 Bt. in Mae Najon. But now it’s 40-50 Bt. within the village now.

10. **Major changes in land use by crop:**

   Used to use buffalo to plow the paddy but now use tractors. Started using tractors around 12 years ago in the paddy. (Probably have added to the number of tractors over time). Now they have 10 small tractors and these are rented out as well. 1,400 – 1,500 per area which is about 5 rai and people have to buy their own fuel. This is enough for their village if they rent (but not everyone owns their own). If they don’t have the money to rent the tractor they can pay in rice. Each tractor usually plows 3-4 plots (3-4 people).

   The headman thinks they will plant more corn in the future because it uses less labor.

   Last year only planted about 5 rai of seed corn – if you include regular animal feed corn then probably up to 10 rai.

12. **Major land investment decisions?**

   They don’t have terraces in the shifting area because nature is enough. In the other upland areas that are fixed are lower and don’t need. Also the Watershed development project came in (when Soonthorn came first) but the budget ran out before they did any terraces there.
Don’t have terraces except in the paddy which have been built for over 100 years. The villagers built themselves.

13. **Major agricultural problems** –

The biggest agricultural problem last year was pests and disease. With rice it was brown hopper and they have never seen this in twenty years. Didn’t used to have any problems with pests. This year production decreased by 50% because of the hopper.

Soybeans also had a problem with pests but not sure what kind.

Second largest problem is with soil which is not very good – loss of fertility (speaking about the paddy land). The cause is that they’ve used the land for many years about 10 years in the same place. They’ve seen that if you use fertilizer the production is much much better (like double that without). Now a person who doesn’t use fertilizer will get about 30-50% produce than person who does. So it’s necessary to use (but we’re not sure how many people use fertilizer).

Don’t use fertilizer in the upland fields (except for corn it seems – see below).

For soybeans not many people use fertilizer. But for corn they do use fertilizer – have to use.

The biggest ag problem before was that production wasn’t very good. So it wasn’t worth the labor (when they didn’t use fertilizer).

14. **Other areas of concern or interest at village or community level.**

17. **Effect of economic crisis?**

Every year they usually have middlemen come to buy rice from them (for example). But last year fewer middlemen came to the village to buy rice and they set a very low price. And the farmers didn’t sell the rice because of the low price.

The other effect is that the price of living expenses has increased. When asked what specifically they said usually things to eat and that they use every day. They usually buy these things in Mae Najon or Mae Chaem. For things that are brought to the village they will charge about 1 Bt (for a 10 Bt. item for buying in the village.

Things that are 5 Bt. in Mae Chaem are about 7 Bt. in Mae Najon and then about 8 Bt. in Mae Mu. (Note: we bought ice cream sticks in Mae Najon that were indeed about 2 Bt. more than in Mae Chaem).

People in Mae Najon hired fewer people last year. People in Mae Najon don’t have enough work and so they hired fewer people from Mae Mu.
Before they usually helped people plant and harvest (etc.) corn.

**D. Major sources of information**

1. Agricultural development or other projects in village: When begun?

Don’t get much help from govt.

IPEC – Some Thai project that gave money to villages that were doing good activities. They had a fertilizer bank that this IPEC gave money for. The villagers have had this for many years. They have used fertilizer for over 10 years (but using more more recently). IPEC also helped with an animal raising project (pigs).


G.K.K.J. came in last year (40)

OOB. Came in 26.

Women’s Health – A housewives group from mae Najon came to teach people in Mae Mu about nutrition (they are supported by the health clinic in Mae Najon).

They also have a housewives group in Mae Mu and receive money from each family 100-200 Bt. in order to use for crisis or emergencies. But the money is gone now and the group dissolved. They tried again but still didn’t work. They had problems with a couple people in the group that gives it problems. This second time they still have the group (but with problems).

Church - They have activities in the village each week. But they have a time when a teacher comes to teach in the dry season, but each year it will be a different village.

2. Credit institutions: (When people need money where do they borrow from?)

T. – Only four people are members of the ag bank.

No members of S.

Village Fund – G.K.K.J. same as other villages. O.O.B. also gives (plantation industry). They both have given money into this fund to be used for ag loans.

Also have Songkroh Mubaan that is used for people who are sick or in crisis. This comes from the health ministry.

Also have a budget to combat AIDS and they used this money to support their sports teams (don’t know where from – but probably also from health).

3. Where do people learn about market prices?

Middlemen that come to the village come from Mae Najon (I think they are from Mae Najon).
4. Where do people learn about job opportunities and wages outside amphoe?

5. Where do people learn about agricultural crops and technologies?

   District ag came to suggest soybeans.

**E. Labor and migration**

Do people leave the village to look for work elsewhere?

Yes, a few have gone to the city (Chiang Mai) to work as drivers or selling things. They go for a year or more (not just seasonal). But only about 10 people and these are all men. (Our passenger later confirmed this rough number – he said about 7 – and he added that they tend to be the younger men in the village). The passenger also said that kids go outside the village to study highschool (Mae Najon or Mae Chaem) and also some go to boarding school (where?) He estimated that there are about 20 kids studying outside the village right now.

In the past two years with the bad economy 2 people have returned and they are just working the land like before.

No one has moved to another place. And no one has moved in. The expansion comes from expanding families.

The other place that people go to work is Mae Najon for wage labor. They go when they are done with work on their own land and have been doing this for many years (maybe 20).
F. Prices – 1=last year, 2=two to three years ago, 3=10 years ago

In Mae Najon they pay people from there more.
Tractor Services: - 1. 1,400-1,500 Bt/plot (5-6 rai), 2. Same as last year, but have to buy own fuel. 3. Used buffalo.
Farm Gate Corn (animal feed) –1. 2-3 Bt/kg  2. 2-3 Bt
Farm Gate Soybean: 1. 8 Bt/kg   2. 7-8 Bt/kg   , 3. 7-8 Bt/kg
Fertilizer: Bat Brand 1. 450 Bt./g, 2. 340 Bt/g, 3. 250-280 Bt./g
Gasoline: Super Benzene – 1. 12 Bt./l, 2. 10 Bt. 3. Didn’t buy (buy in Mae Najon)
Herbicide: Kamuckson 1. 185 Bt./l  2. 110-120 Bt/l  3. Didn’t use (started using 5-6 years ago) then it was 100-105 Bt./l
Pesticide: U Brand 1. 450 Bt/l, 2. Didn’t use
Milling Cost: 1. Bt/t , 2. Bt/t, 3. They have one rice mill in their village
Rice (Consume): (regular rice)
1.  450 Bt./g, 2. 300 Bt./g  3. 2-3 Bt/kg (within village only)
Rice Sell:
1.  6 Bt/kg, 2. 4-5 Bt./kg, 3. 2-3 Bt/kg
Canned fish
1.  10 Bt.,  2. 8 Bt.  3. 7-8 years ago only 5 Bt.
Fish Sauce – don’t buy – use salt
Cooking Oil:
Don’t use – use pig fat (lard).
Detergent:
1. 12 Bt. small box, 2. 7-8 Bt.  3. 5-6 Bt.
Large things they will buy in Mae Najon or Mae Chaem and hire a car to send. They will charge for example about 3 Bt. per sheet of roof.
Cement:
1. 120 Bt./g, 2. 75-80 Bt.  3. Didn’t have

Notes: This village is probably the most remote of our sample. The road is steep and somewhat rough in places – though our songtaew truck could make the trip at this time (dry season). Unfortunately, we met inside the headman’s house and only had the headman and tambon council member there to answer. There were three others (men and one older woman) who came and went but didn’t participate. We did ask for many people, but again this didn’t work and we couldn’t invite onlookers to participate as we were so closed off.
This may have been because others could not speak Thai well. The headman is only 30 years old and is new to the job. Both he and the O.B.T. guy were very nice and helpful (Thai is very good). A passenger we took out told us that the former headman was an older guy and this time they chose a young guy. Most of the village is Christian (75%) but split between catholic (there’s a church) and protestant (no church yet). With another 25% Buddhist. They say no one has come into the village though there were just half the amount of households 10 years ago (30~). They said that this is just from families expanding. They had a very nice map already drawn of the village that they did last year. They said they did it because govt officials would visit and want to know what areas they are using. So, very convenient for us and took less time to interview the map.