

Fisheries Cooperatives

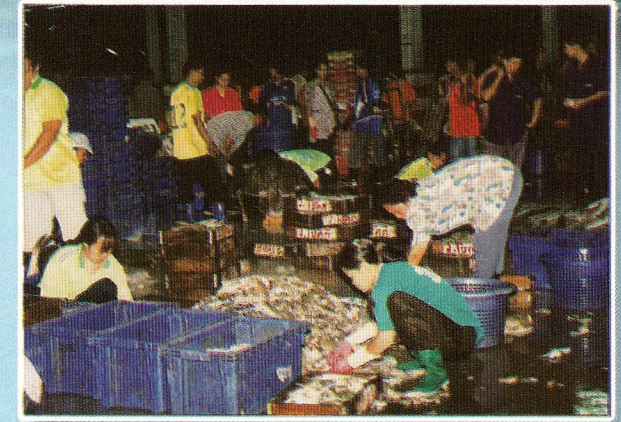
Fisheries cooperatives consist of members who involve in fishing activities, both freshwater and seawater. The main purpose is to deal with production and marketing problems through joint purchasing, access to loan funds, increased knowledge of the fishing industry, and promotion of natural resources conservation.



Background

The first fisheries cooperative named Pissanu Fishery Cooperative, Ltd. was established in 1949 at Krabangpongnook canal, Phrom Phiram district, Phitsanulok with 54 fresh water fisherfolk members. At that time, the cooperative activities were focused on land allocation, marketing, processing aquatic animals, and obtaining a concession. The cooperative also introduced new fishery techniques and promoted the preservation of aquatic animals. Until 1970, the government's policy was to designate all canals around the country as public canals so that people had freedom to fish in them. The objective in obtaining a concession, however, was not achieved so it decided to collaborate with the Phrom Phiram Agricultural Cooperative, Ltd. Presently, there are three categories of fisheries cooperatives based on their members' occupations:-

1. Sea Fisheries Cooperatives have members involved in the following types of fishing:
 - large fishermen who go fishing outside Thailand's territorial waters;
 - middle fishermen who fish within Thailand's territorial waters; and
 - small (traditional) fishermen who go fishing within 3,000 meters offshore.



2. Brackish Water Fisheries Cooperatives have members who are involved in shrimp and brackish water farming, including the cultivation of aquatic animals.
3. Freshwater Fisheries Cooperatives are those whose members are involved in the farming of fresh water fish and other aquatic animals (e.g. frogs).



Objective

Fisheries cooperatives generally have the following objectives:-

1. To sell aquatic animals and/or processed products of its members;
2. To sell fishing equipment and other necessities to members;
3. To provide loans to members;
4. To accept member deposits;
5. To disseminate knowledge related to fisheries, both technical and business; and
6. To provide welfare to members (and their families) in times of crisis when their occupations may be at risk.

Business Activities

Activities of fisheries cooperatives include:

- Sale of members' products. The cooperative collects aquatic products from members for sale in the market. This gives them good bargaining power in product pricing.
- Purchase of goods. The cooperative obtains fishing equipment and other necessities for sale to members at reasonable prices.
- Savings and loans.
 1. Loan Fund. The cooperative obtains low-interest funds and loans them to members for fishery investment.
 2. Deposits. The cooperative provides two types of deposit accounts to members- savings and fixed deposits.
- Fishery service. The cooperative also provides various services to members (e.g. setting up a fish market, digging and improving fish ponds and training in new fish farming techniques).

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