



Doing Good That Is Good™

The newsletter of FARMS International, Inc.

Special Field Report: Lahu Churches in Northern Thailand Blessed by FARMS Program: July 2012

Providing revolving entrepreneurial loans to poor Christian families - Gal. 6:10

Dear Friends of FARMS,

FARMS International has been partnering with the Thailand Lahu Christian Churches association since 2003. This association has over 50 churches in Northern Thailand near the border of Myanmar. The impact of the FARMS loan programs has had a wonderful effect on the Lahu believers and their Churches. I trust you will enjoy reading the testimonies we recorded on a recent field visit. God truly is working among the Lahu churches.

The Lahu people:

The Lahu, like many of the hill tribes in Thailand have their origin in South West China. The Lahu migrated from China into Burma, but over time many were forced out of Burma due to severe oppression of the hill tribes. By 1870 numerous Lahu had fled to Thailand. This flight continued through the 20th century and is still occurring today. Although many sources report that the Lahu are 20% Christian, the Joshua Project estimates that only 3% are evangelicals. About 36,000 Lahu live in Thailand out of the nearly 500,000 worldwide. Even though their numbers are small, the Lahu Christians of Thailand are demonstrating a desire to reach their villages and neighboring countries with the gospel as you will see in this report.



Lahu Field Report:

My wife Pat and I had the privilege of visiting our programs in Thailand this past January. It was a great time of encouragement for us. God is using the program of FARMS in exciting ways. We were able to travel to several Lahu villages and visit the families and their churches that you are helping through this ministry. In addition, we did some theological training at the Thailand Lahu Christian Churches' Bi-vocational Training Center in Chiang Mai. This center has about 50 students in a four year program designed to train them theologically as well as vocationally. The aim is to have workers trained to teach others the scripture and support themselves when needed. These students, mostly married couples, will go back to their villages as pastors and teachers. Some will eventually be sent as missionaries to countries with Lahu populations. FARMS will be helping the graduates with income generating projects. It was a real thrill for us to fellowship with these dedicated students.

Blessings in Christ,

Joseph Richter
Executive Director



A video of their singing is on our web site

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Ikong and Lucy live in a Lahu village in the far north of Thailand. Their village is on the Kok Noi River, which translates to “Little Kok River”. The main Kok River is a tributary to the large Mekong River. Their village is reachable by a long dirt road that winds up into the hill country. Ikong and Lucy shared that their life was very difficult before they had an opportunity to receive a loan from the FARMS Lahu committee. They used the loan to buy a rice field. Because of this, they no longer need to buy rice for their family. Also, because rice growing is seasonal, they are able to do other work which provides cash income. They saved their money and with it just recently completed a new home for their family. In addition to having rice for their family, they also provide rice to their pastor. God has truly blessed this thankful and faithful family.



Ikong, Lucy and son Daniel with FARMS coordinator, Marting Chaisuriya



Joseph and Lily are a delightful couple, filled with the joy of the Lord! They used their FARMS loan to buy a female water buffalo (\$660). Over a few years she produced three offspring, which they sold in 2011. Through the sale they earned \$2,000! With part of their profit (\$660) they bought a diesel tiller for preparing rice fields for planting. They said the tiller will earn them a good income as they use it to plow their neighbors' rice fields. The rest of their profits were used to build a beautiful new home. Joseph and Lily shared their thankfulness for FARMS by saying that their home was also ours and inviting us back for another visit. Lily also gave a beautiful handmade Lahu vest to Pat as a sign of her deep appreciation. The photo on the left captures their sincere thankfulness. Remember them in prayer.



**Joseph and Lily's new home
(Inset is their old house)**



Lahu are by tradition hunter-gatherers, so we had some great vegetables from the jungle

Mr. Kali Jadi and his wife Nati are very active in their church. The husband shared a fascinating story from his life in Burma. He has some severe scaring on his face, which he explained happened on a hunt in the jungles of Burma. The story is that his fellow hunters spooked a bear that ran toward him and attacked him. He grabbed the bear hard and the bear let him go! But he was severely hurt. He is happy to be alive!

Their project was buying a mother buffalo with a calf. They said they lost one calf, but they have a new one (see photo) and the mother is pregnant again. They were very thankful for the help from FARMS. The income from selling the young buffalos will greatly help this dedicated family.



Pastor Diyee has been the pastor of Bethel Church for five years. His family had started a coffee plantation several years ago, but the plants were not doing very well. He secured a \$330 loan from the FARMS Lahu committee to buy fertilizers for his trees, which are now producing a bumper crop of coffee. His trees were very healthy looking and hanging heavy with ripening beans.

This year his family harvested over 2,000 pounds of raw Arabica coffee beans! These beans will sell for around \$6,000.00. With his profit, he plans to buy a new truck for farm and family use. He was thrilled with how his family is prospering.

But, there is more to this story. Pastor Diye shared how there are seven coffee growing families in his church that have been helped by FARMS. **The tithing from just these members has been 100,000 baht or \$3,400.00. This would mean that the project profit from these project holders totaled \$34,000!** My wife, Pat asked if they are doing any outreach. The pastor beamed as he shared that **the church voted to use 40,000 baht of their tithes to support a Lahu church planting missionary in Myanmar (Burma)!** He also shared that he was able to cross the border and visit their

missionary last December. His enthusiasm for what God is doing through their church was heartwarming to say the least. This is what FARMS International is all about; enabling local churches to do their own evangelism and even missions. Note: To see a video of Pastor Diye's testimony, go to our web site www.farmsinternational.com.



Adokoia, his wife and their youngest child work the coffee plantation. They also have three married children. Their loan of \$330 was used to buy fertilizer for his trees. They reported that they sold 4,400 pounds of fresh coffee (before shelling) this year. Besides coffee, they are test growing macadamia nuts. Their nut trees seem to be doing very well and this high value crop could be a source of new income for this hard working family.



New crop - Macadamia nuts



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Lahu Church in Kok Noi, Thailand

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