

## State - run university provide thought for food

The establishment of its Office of Business Affairs in 1995 enabled state-run Suan Dusit Rajabhat University to expand with fewer restrictions.

The university, known as the Home Science Secondary School when it was set up in 1934 as a school for women, was ready to share its knowledge and skills in food technology with the public. Its first project was to supply food and services for more than 10,000 athletes and staff at the 13th Asian Games in Bangkok in 1998.



Suan Dusit rice is available in limited areas but is viewed as a prestigious brand.



Pitauk Chancharoen.  
Food for the masses.

“The project enabled us to manage a standard kitchen to make food for the masses.”

said Asst Prof Pitauk Chancharoen, vice-president for business affairs.

Suan Dusit is known for its high quality of Thai dishes and bakery products, as well as its expertise in catering to large groups of people, which provides good experience for students. When the university opened its international culinary school in 2003, it received a warm welcome from the public. Nearly 200 classes have been organised so far.

"The school used 60 million baht to build a large kitchen equipped with modern equipment, according to Thanapat Saengrungreung, assistant director of the culinary school. Those who graduate from the school have the skills to prepare delicious food for their own consumption and for sale," he said.



Thanapat Saengrungreung.  
Graduates have top skills.



The expansion has continued with new businesses such as Suan Dusit Place hotel, Dusita drinking water and Suan Dusit Rice Mill to support its food operations. Kittisak Wasantiwong, manager of the rice mill, said its organic Hom Mali rice project was initiated with an objective to produce rice for its 2,500 staff and 30,000 students on all campuses every day.



Kittisak Wasantiwong,  
manager of the rice mill,

"The project also allows us the knowledge and management to produce premium-quality organic rice from the beginning to the finished product," he said.

The organic rice project started in 2004 with the support of the Agricultural Extension Department, with 80 farmers in Phitsanulok and Prachin Buri participating. However, only a few passed the stringent requirements for chemical-free farming.

It took another two years for the team to direct farmers to adjust their practices, and now 40 farmers, covering 2,000 rai of rice fields, have passed the test with verification by the Earth Net Foundation. The paddy is sold to Suan Dusit Rice Mill, which pays them 10-15% higher than market prices.

Mr Kittitsak, a graduate of Suan Dusit Rajabhat University, said the rice mill project in Prachin Buri has become a learning centre for organic rice methods, as well as post-harvest and pre-harvest management to lower costs.

Suan Dusit rice is available in limited areas, he said, but several private companies are interested in becoming partners for local distribution and export, viewing the brand as prestigious and already a well-established name.



Suan Dusit  
The Office of Business Affairs