

No place at the top for chickens

Achara Pongvutitham reports on a businessman who aims to stay in front through diversification and the use of advanced technology



How many farmers would it take to feed 200,000 chickens? Fifty? Maybe 100? The Charoen Pokphand Group, the country's agro-conglomerate giant, is coming up with advanced farm technology that will set a goal: just one farmer to do them all.

The group's chairman and CEO, Dhanin Chearavanont, announced this initiative and credited his top management for undertaking more technology to strengthen the group's competitiveness. This was not a dream, Dhanin pointed out to the industry. This was a crucial move to strengthen not only CP's competitiveness but also Thailand's, and this had to be achieved as quickly as possible.

As a leader in the food business, the group's manufacturing complex in

Nakhon Ratchasima has already installed a modern computer system with satellite link to control many closely operating compartment farms simultaneously.

As an influential businessman, Dhanin's ideas and vision always have an impact, not only on the food industry but also on the country's growth path.

Nonetheless, Dhanin is also the group's image, judging by what most people think of CP.

Indeed the two top answers to a general poll on recognition are Dhanin and chicken, and while Dhanin is CP's figure-head, CP is also one of Thailand's big food brands.

CP is an agro-business conglomerate giant in Asia. In addition, the group's Chia Tai brand is well recognised in China, where the company set up its second empire after Thailand.

“**Raw materials in the world are ours. Also, we can employ the people of the world, whether they are Thai, American, European, whatever nationality, and tap their expertise.**”

The group was established in Thailand by Dhanin's father, Chia Exchor, and the business was later expanded to include animal feed by Dhanin's eldest brother, Charan.

CP has been operating in Thailand for 80 years and Dhanin has been at its helm for more than 50 years, spearheading the group to the front line of the world's food industry.

Led by Dhanin, the group has achieved revolutionary progress. The CP Group was the first in Thailand to import machines to mix and pack feed meal and it began exporting fresh chicken 30 years ago, to earn Thailand the honour of being one of the world's leading chicken exporters.

Dhanin's initiatives – such as an integrated manufacturing plant, “Kitchen of the World”, food safety measures,

“one farmer feeding 200,000 chickens” concept, as well as mergers and acquisitions, strategic partnerships and research and development ideas – have made Thai manufacturers and investors sit up and listen to him.

In floating his latest idea to CP's management, Dhanin suggested they realise the importance of “outsourcing” strategies, explaining, “We are now entering into borderless trade so the group should focus on global resources.”

Dhanin always says that the markets of the world are ours if we want to take them.

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► Page 52