

# ARTICULATING PUBLIC AGENCIES, EXPERTS, CORPORATIONS, CIVIL SOCIETY AND INFORMAL SECTOR IN PLANNING FOOD SYSTEMS IN BANGKOK

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Photo 1: Damnoen Saduak in Bangkok is one of Thailand's largest floating market!

Bangkok is the capital of an agricultural producing country. There are full-time and part-time farmers, modern and conventional markets, and mainstream and alternative food chains. Roughly 13,800 full-time farming households cultivate about 71,200 acres in the peri-urban areas of the city (Policy and Planning Division 2012). While the full-time farmers are market oriented, the part-time farmers that grow small-scale food within the inner city are subsistence, leisure and recreation oriented. About 130 community gardens also exist, developed by these part-time farmers and play significant roles in building a sense of community as an interactive public space (City Farm Program 2014). There also are 3 main central fresh food markets. Retailers transport food from these facilities to sell at the 337 local traditional fresh food markets in the inner city. Some retailers also sell vegetables directly at customers' houses by carrying food on a truck as a mobile market while some become street vendors. The amount of food actors in this informal sector is roughly 1,600 to 1,700 (Bangkok Soi Index 2016). They improve the access to food for at least 225,907 urban poor households in 1,266 poor communities (Community Organisations Development Institute 2008).<sup>2</sup> Apart from that, fresh and frozen foods are also sold in modern trade markets. Instant foods, in particular, are easy to find at the approximately 1,109 convenience stores located in every corner of the city (Working Group on Food for Change 2012). For the customers seeking for



Figure 1: Peri-urban farming areas in Bangkok

alternative markets, the city has a lot of green markets, shops and food box delivery services<sup>2</sup>. The Bangkok food systems are shaped by various forces, and the different forces are driven by different actors through their planning exercises. Key actors include public agencies, planning experts, food corporations, civil society and informal sector. Their roles are played in multiple scales, and to see the articulation of difference actors and their planning practices is to understand how food systems of this city are created.

### **THE DIFFERENT FOOD ACTORS**

#### **STATE-LED PLANNING FOOD SYSTEMS: WORKING TOGETHER AMONG PUBLIC AGENCIES AND THINK TANKS**

The planning of food systems in Bangkok is firstly driven by the cooperation of central, regional and local governments that are guided by self-sufficiency principles promoted by the King. The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), which is the regional government, takes care of the whole Bangkok metropolitan region. BMA performs several food related tasks. It plays a role in analysing the importance of farm lands,

in the peri-urban areas, to feed the city dwellers. It controls land use in order to maintain peri-urban farming areas as a green belt. BMA also develops and maintains agricultural infrastructure, particularly the irrigation systems.

BMA, in cooperation with the central government, also built central fresh food markets. These markets, including 'Talat Thai' and 'See Mum Mung', distribute fresh food from peri-urban farms enabling inner city retailers to transport food to sell within the city. Thus, the central markets also play an essential role in bridging rural, peri-urban and urban areas by providing good access to food provision.

The establishment of the central markets was done in parallel with the control of the quality of hundreds of local fresh food markets scattered within the inner city. The BMA rates the quality level of those local markets and provides incentives to local markets to improve their hygiene. BMA also plays a role in facilitating the investment of food corporations within the city by building supermarkets, hypermarkets and convenience stores that can be accessed by each urban community.





Photo 1: City farming training course provided by Laksi local government

Local urban communities are governed by the District Administration Offices (DAOs), which work under the BMA plans. These local governments<sup>4</sup> promote not only nutritious food, but also healthy food and the well-being of city dwellers. Building upon the King's ideas, 50 DAOs in Bangkok launched a variety of programmes to support farming in the city, such as the establishment of urban farming learning centres. Some DAOs also created their own initiatives, such as the development of a rooftop garden and organisation of city farming training courses. They promote organic food production and markets in their area. Some of them also link ordinary people to private sector businesses by facilitating the contract leasing of vacant private lands<sup>5</sup>.

Professional urban planners and planning think tanks also played an important role. 'Smart Growth Thailand' was one of the agencies which supported academic and technical assistance to the food agenda planning process. This consultancy proposed the idea that conserving peri-urban farmlands also protected against the problems related to urban sprawl. It influenced

the BMA to consider zoning the centre of each urban community to enable the development of food markets (Bunyapavitra 2015). Planning think tanks from academic units in public universities advocated developing technologies to enable vertical farming in urban settings and promoted urban agriculture as a method to mitigate climate change. For example, Kasetsart University experimented with 'lightweight soil and food growing plants' for use with vertical gardening and created a vertical garden campus lab to be a model promoting green universities. Thammasat University, Chulalongkorn University and Mahidon University integrated urban farming and water governance agenda and supported the calculation of draught and floods compensation for urban farmers. With their supportive researches, the BMA has changed the focus from supporting rice production to support aquaculture. Farmers have agreed with the change as they can sell their soil, from digging pond, to the building sector.

### **CORPORATION-LED PLANNING FOOD SYSTEMS: CONNECTEDNESS OF AGRIBUSINESS, RETAILERS AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES**

Food corporations also play a large part of planning the production, process, and distribution of a variety of instant foods and some fresh foods. Large agribusinesses own the modern retail trade system throughout the whole country, including thousands of hypermarkets, supermarkets and convenience stores in Bangkok. The top 25 largest stores were built on a total land area of 1,157 acres, which is more than the total land used to build the 25 largest public parks in Bangkok<sup>6</sup> (Thai Climate Justice 2012). They also attempt to develop their own brands. Traditionally they cooperate rather than compete with one another and have established close links with the central government and BMA by supporting political parties. They have benefitted from national and regional policies throughout modern Thai history.

It should be noted that the Green Revolution has affected the Thai food regime since 1961 when the first Thai national development plan 1961-1966 included it as a strategy for development. The government changed the way people grow food; increasing productivity by supporting research about agricultural science and technology and by promoting chemical fertilisers (National Economic and Social Development Board 1961).

As a result of the Green Revolution, a few large agribusiness monopolising the majority of farming production, technologies, food process and distribution throughout the country (Leaunjumroon et al. 2011). These companies also control hybrid seeds valued at roughly 55 million US dollars per year amounting to 97% of the total Hybrid seeds used in Thailand (Thai Seed Trading Association 2011). Large agribusinesses also shaped consumer food culture and partly affected the reduction of local food variety as the growth and expansion of their modern trade system has gradually destroyed small and medium enterprises as well as the local food system within the city.

However, the importance of large agribusiness should be taken into account in parallel with the criticisms. It should be recognised that

some large agribusiness promoted company training programs that everyone could access and which could lead to promotion (particularly '7-11'). In addition, they provided effective food distribution services which benefit small retail and wholesale food businesses; some of whom helped large agribusiness by distributing their products such as seeds, fertilisers and technologies to small-scale urban farmers.

Social enterprises also are a new type of food corporation which promotes a different approach. These private companies focus on sustainable agribusiness, such as organising green markets; opening green restaurants; publishing magazine providing farming experiences and know-how; and, opening farming training centres<sup>7</sup>. These companies both earn money from agribusiness and contribute to the promotion of alternative and more sustainable food production and markets. Although these initiatives could not challenge structural injustice of food regime, they contribute by proposing a pathway toward a more resilient food supply chains and more inclusive growth.

### **CIVIL SOCIETY-LED PLANNING FOOD SYSTEMS: THE COLLABORATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANISATIONS**

Non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations (referred to as civil society) also play a role in planning food systems by facilitating the expansion of household, community and institution gardens within the inner city especially in poorer communities. They complement rural agriculture by promoting safe, healthy and fair local food systems. They also support neighbourhood planning and the role of urban agriculture by raising environmental awareness, adapting to climate change, managing wastes (reuse and recycling) and facilitating learning for urban kids. They also propose alternative food sources and distribution by promoting short food supply chain through the development of weekly green markets, food fairs and vegetable box delivery directly from the producers to customers involved by social enterprises.

This civil society-led groups also promote community building practices. For example, a





Photo 2 (top): The backyard of 'Health-Me' green restaurant

Photo 3 (bottom): Weekly green food market

sense of community was instilled through the development of common edible green spaces. These collective gardens were planned and developed by the collaboration of communities and the Sustainable Agriculture Foundation, the Media Centre for Development, the Working Group on Food for Change, and the City Farm Association. Larger collaboration was present in the cases where poor communities were the target, such as the ones where the Slum Dwellers Network and the Informal Labour Network were engaged. These civil society organisations start by advocating alternative food movements and then began to promote local food systems. They have strengthened various part-time farmers through resources provision, knowledge transfer, network development, and the facilitation of their exchanges. At least 98 well-organised collective gardens from about 130 are active in the network (see Figure 2). These collective vegetable gardens are involved by roughly 4,900 people. They commonly grow vegetables and herbs that are used in cooking Thai foods, such as holy basil, sweet basil, Chinese kale, chili, eggplant, spring onion, lemon, morning glory, mushroom, peppermint, lettuce, coriander, cucumber, cabbage, ginger, and galanga. Some fruit trees are also planted, such as banana, guava, mango, tammareen and papaya (Mahasarakham University 2013).

### **EVERYDAY PLANNING FOOD SYSTEMS: THE EMERGENCE AND TRANSFORMATION OF STREET FOOD AND MOBILE MARKETS**

The Bangkok food system also is characterised by the daily life practices of street food vendors and mobile markets (including floating markets). This everyday service has no specific pattern and yet it plays a role in making Bangkok a lively city with plenty of food. The amount of street food vendors and mobile markets is not static, but responds to stimulus such as the changing seasons, food demands and economic conditions. The vendors in each street can change at any time as a result of decisions to move to other places or changes in employment. There are more than 30 vendors along some streets especially in commercial zones, such as Khawsarn, Sukhumvit and Sealom roads. It can be estimated that each small street

would have about 10 street vendors and mobile markets. So, as there are 166 small streets in Bangkok (<http://th.soidb.com/bangkok/soi/index.html>), the estimated total number of street vendors and mobile markets in Bangkok can reach 1,660.

Most of these people make decision on a daily basis, especially those who sell food on trucks (*Rod-Kub-Khaw/ Rod-Pum-Poung*) and food on boats. These everyday food distribution practices go beyond the limitations of other methods as they can access at the household scale and make pro-poor food distribution by proposing cheap food. Their activities can make some middle and upper classes feel irritated by their loud voices, messy food arrangement and unfashionable food types. However, no one can deny that they play an important role in enhancing food diversity as they provide a variety of food from different sources apart from those of the modern trade system. They also distribute local vegetables and seeds. Their role also includes that of local food guardians; conserving the local traditional food types and species in the same time that they create and protect unintentionally biodiversity in the city.

### **PLANNING APPROACHES AND INSTRUMENTS**

Public Agency Planning - Planning food systems in Bangkok is firstly driven by the cooperation of public agencies and professional planning think tanks. This state-led planning includes the conservation of the peri-urban agriculture as a green belt and the development of irrigation systems by using physical land-use planning as the instrument. They also support food distribution by developing central fresh food markets that facilitate retailers to distribute food within the inner city.

The state-led planning is based mostly on physical land-use planning accomplished by professional planners. Supportive data is collected by the Policy and Planning Division working under BMA in cooperation with academic units from public universities. Some information is delivered by DAOs, but the comprehensive plan was made at the regional scale before each DAO needed to make its operational plan, which focus on implementing the objectives in







the comprehensive one within their authority and territory.

Technical and legal planning documents that directly relate to the promotion of food systems include the City Planning Act 1975, the Land Development Act 1982 and the Bangkok's Comprehensive Plan 2013. The City Planning Act 1975 establishes the foundation of urban planning culture in Thailand by which peri-urban agriculture is conserved as a cultural heritage of Thai cities (Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning 2016). Since then agriculture has not been alienated from the city characteristics. Regarding the Land Development Act 1982, its article 16 influences the protection of farmlands in the fringe of Bangkok and the development of irrigation systems, as such fertile lands proved to be best for growing foods (Land Development Department 2016). Although this act then has been replaced by the Land Development Act 2008, the language of article 16 remained. For the Bangkok's Comprehensive Plan 2013, the previous two acts and the Building Control Act 1992/ 2015 are enforced at the same time that food markets and silos, for storing agricultural products, are zoned within the inner city. The comprehensive plan also promotes small-scale farming in the inner city particularly where it is zoned for housing (Department of City Planning 2013).

Apart from that, there are other planning approaches and instruments that relate to food systems promotion either indirectly, or which have spatial implications which affect food systems. To begin with, there are the four year strategic plans adopted by BMA and DAOs. Some of these strategic plans aimed to control the quality of food and market hygiene using specific measurable outcomes (Bangkok Metropolitan Administration 2013; Klongtoei District Administration Office 2015; Laksi District Administration Office 2015). They also framed follow-up action plans related to the urban food agenda, such as the Environmental Quality Management Plan, the Global Warming Reduction Action Plan, and the Green Space Action Plan. The idea of edible green space is recognized by the Bangkok Green Space Action Plan 2009, while community gardens are promoted formally by the Bangkok Environmental Quali-

ty Management Plan 2012-2016 (Environment Department 2012, 2009). The Global Warming Reduction Action Plan 2013-2018, on the other hand, proposes measures to increase the number of public gardens and trees along the roads and green buildings. One strategy is to promote the planting of fruit trees, such as tamareen and mango. Another one promotes the reuse of organic wastes in gardening and farming activities (Environment Department 2013). Another state plan, called 'Bangkok 2020', looks forward to the future Bangkok and requires sustainable urban food systems<sup>8</sup>. This plan addresses the role of peri-urban farming areas to enhance urban resilience and envisions that such areas can be an emergency food source and floodways for draining water to the sea in the time of severe flooding (Policy and Planning Division 2015).

Agribusiness planning – Secondly, Bangkok food systems are planned by large food corporations. While agribusiness influences state-led planning, they also have their own strategic business plans. These plans control agricultural industries and the modern trade system which dominate the city food chains and seize the largest portion of food distribution.

In general these plans are coordinated with state-led plans and other business plans. For example, they planned to enhance profits from the market shares ruled by the state-led plans and those market segments influenced by other food corporations' plans. They also identify desired changes to new governmental regulations, such as the changes of Bangkok's comprehensive plan. After a terrible flood that affected 72% of the whole Bangkok area in 2011, it was found that some large agribusiness planned to adapt by learning the lessons from the interruption of food supply. They propose to increase distributive units to manage risks; an action which benefits the whole Bangkok food regime by enhancing the resilience of the existing urban food systems.

Civil Society Planning – Thirdly, civil society organisations also play a role in planning food systems by bringing about the expansion of household, community and institution gardens within the inner city. Civil society-led planning





Planning tools	To promote									
	Peri-urban farming	Agri cultural infra-structure	Collective/ community garden/ vacant land lease contract	Fruit tree planting	Green building/ Vertical farming	Organic-healthy food/ reuse/ training	Food market/ silo/ transport./ hygiene	Green/ farmer market/ shop/ restaurant	Producer-customer relations (eg. CSA/ PGS)	Pro-poor food distribution/ local seeds/ food diversity
City Planning Act 1975	/									
Land Development Act 1982/2008	/	/								
Building Control Act 1992/2015					/					
Comprehensive Plan 2013	/		/				/			
Environmental Quality Management Plan 2012-2016			/	/	/					
Green Space Action Plan 2009				/	/					
Global Warming Reduction Action Plan 2013-2018				/	/					
Bangkok 2020	/		/	/	/					
BMA strategic plan	/	/		/	/	/	/			
DAOs strategic plans			/	/	/	/	/	/		/
Large food corporations' business plans							/			
Strategies of social enterprises					/	/		/	/	
Scenario 2033 of NGOs			/	/	/	/		/	/	/
Community/ neighbourhood plans			/	/	/	/			/	

Table 1: Key focuses and the connection of various planning tools

proposes alternative food sources and distribution that promotes both safety local food and fair food supply chain. They also support spatial neighbourhood planning to highlight the role of urban agriculture in enhancing social cohesion, raising environmental awareness, and managing wastes.

Civil society-led planning adopted scenario and participatory planning approaches but in their own way. They made a plan called 'Thailand desired food and agricultural system 2033' by brainstorming experiences and visions of different civil society organisations using deliberative panels. So, it can be claimed that this plan is a shared vision of a network of civil society organisations. They dream to see the expansion of organic food production to 50% of the total farmlands, to see 50% use of local seeds, and food portion produced in the city grow until it can feed the total Thai population by 2033 (BioThai 2013).

To make the scenarios possible, civil society organisations also stimulate communities to do spatial community and neighbourhood planning. This approach encourages advocacy and collaborative planning. In their planning vision, community empowerment is one of key goals to be achieved to reach others. The network of civil society organisations expect that urban communities will be the main agent in reforming food and agricultural systems. The civil society organisations support community planning as a tool for raising awareness using a bottom up approach to creation the local food systems. They encourage farming communities to keep their lands, to strengthen their co-operatives, to change their production to be more sustainable, to develop farmer markets, and to think about their alternative energy (BioThai 2013).

Aside from the highlights of each key planning instrument above, the connection of various planning tools is that they share some focuses and complement each other as shown in the Table 1.

Informal foods vendors, a lack of long range planning – Lastly, the Bangkok food systems is characterised by the daily life practices of street food vendors and mobile markets. This everyday planning has no specific patterns and particular

instruments, but plays a role in promoting food diversity and making Bangkok as a lively city with abundance of food

## **THE CITY FARM PLAN A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT**

While all of the food actors have specific agendas, there are planning interrelations between the various food actors. For example, the public agencies and food corporations develop shared visions to achieve their mutual benefits. While the corporations are influential in making urban food related plans, they also adjust their plans to fit in the changing state-led plans and regulations. Civil society organisations interact with corporations and the public agencies. Civil society organisations critique large corporations that create and monopolise the food regime, and the civil society groups also develop a link with public agencies. They implement the state-led planning, rather than fight it, and learn to work and share resources with social enterprises. The governments regulate and facilitate street food vendors and mobile markets by recognising that they determine the identity of Bangkok. Without them, there is no Bangkok that everyone gets used to. The role of BMA, in particular, helps facilitating co-functions of formal and informal distribution activities. The BMA, for example, bridges formal and informal food actors by negotiating to use outer space of modern supermarkets for traditional food vendors. As a consequence, customers, who go to the mall, usually have choices to choose of going inside the mall for the service of formal distribution system or of staying outside for the service of the informal one.

In addition to this organisational interaction, the City Farm Programme has become a meeting point for all the actors and their different planning practices. Public agencies, experts, some corporations, civil society and informal sector were put together to plan the ideal food system to serve Bangkok and to insure its sustainability. This process found that the concept of sustainability was controversial with different interpretations, but that this collaborative process helped to define a meaningful way forward.

The City Farm Programme began in 2010 and was funded under the Food and Nutrition



Programme of the National Health Promotion Foundation, part of the Prime Minister's Office. It has been co-managed by a multitude of civil society organisations with cooperation from the public and private sectors. With such characteristics this programme can also be seen as an interaction plan. The emergence of the programme was a result of the concern about urban food insecurity (regarding poor quality and the increasing price of food) as well as the intention to implement the King's idea of low-input farming in an urban context. The programme has been granted 7 millions Baht annually (about 235,000 US dollars). Some of this amount were used to support 50 collective/community gardens each year (35,000-50,000 Baht or about 1,170-1,670 US dollars). The rest is for organising training courses and alternative food markets, providing inputs, sharing farming knowledge, promoting wide-range food initiatives, doing public campaigns, and managing fixed and operating costs of the programme itself (Mahasarakham University 2013).

With regard to the expectations of many participants, initiatives made under the umbrella of the City Farm Programme have resulted in unintentional collaboration. A good example began when the Laksi DAO, as a local government, developed its rooftop garden and opened it to public as a learning centre. This DAO also worked with various civil society organisations which played a key role in organising training courses on urban farming. Other DAOs, learning from this experience, developed their own rooftop garden and secured BMA support with organise training courses. However, the demand for training increased beyond the DAOs capacity. So, social enterprises stepped in by proposing alternative city gardening training courses and the City Farm Programme agreed to support them to start up.

As a result, there has been an expansion of rooftop garden installations throughout the city in locations such as private buildings, temples, schools, and even hospitals. As the demands for rooftop gardens grew, university experts from Kasetsart University engaged with the programme and proposed the use lightweight soil and food growing plants. This programme could be applied to reduce structural stress on host

buildings. They also conducted research on the relationships between the design for rooftop gardens and energy efficiency.

In parallel with the growing number of individual-based farmings, civil society organisations, led by the Sustainable Agriculture Foundation, have worked to promote community gardens in the city. Part of the City Farm program, civil societies also facilitated by local DAOs, encouraged community committees in their jurisdictions to participate in the programme. For example, the Slum Dwellers Network and the Informal Labour Network (as civil society organisations) helped to introduce the programme to the informal sector.

Similarly, the Working Group on Food for Change, another civil society organisation, lead the organisation of local seeds donations from the rural and peri-urban farmers to the urban communities and groups developing collective gardens. In the case that some community leaders required know-how knowledge, the programme managers asked DAOs and social enterprises to organise training courses for them for free. As a result, a lot of collective gardens have emerged in Bangkok and their networks were created to share and learn from each other (Boossabong 2012).

Food production also benefitted by the promotion of marketing opportunities. Apart from sharing and selling products to neighbours, the Green Market Network, as a network of social enterprises, played a key role in developing alternative markets, such as green markets, green fairs and the direct food delivery from producers to customers. Some green restaurants, particularly the ones selling vegetarian foods and promoted local food systems, also agreed to buy their products from these urban farmers.

From these examples, it can be seen that there is an articulation of public agencies, experts, social enterprises, civil society and the informal sector in planning food systems at different entry points and different scales. Their articulation helps to develop multiple food chains ranging from various ways to grow food to many food distribution initiatives that have spatial implication at the wider scale.



Photo 5: 'Pinchareun' community garden supported by the City Farm Programme



Photo 6: Rooftop garden of Laksi local government



Photo 7: Sharing and learning event at 'Tung-songhong'



## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Through different planning practices, different impacts are made and they either complement each other or bring about paradox. The intended impact was to improve the food system of Bangkok and to increase food security and sustainability. Other objectives were to augment public infrastructure development with the investment of agribusiness and to complement the modern food trade system with street food vendors and mobile markets, which can guarantee that the poor and marginalised will be able to access food.

The key lesson learned from Bangkok is that food systems are too complex to be covered by a the single all-inclusive plan which addresses the multiple scales and mixes of formal and informal activities, which have been developed by the multiple stakeholders. We discovered that the best approach was to integrate and facilitate an articulation of multi-scalar, sectorial, spatial and strategic planning practices from each of the various food actors. In this way, this layering of plans allows us understanding how food systems really work in the fragmented and pluralist societies. Such an approach also avoids the pitfalls of large scale collaboration and consensus building, which is both difficult to do and which can conceal the structural injustice and embedded conflicts. Our experience proposes the example of integrating food into urban planning networks in which spaces are opened up for everyone to participate in creating their prospective food systems.

We have also learned that the encouragement of urban farming is an integral part of our food planning. Many Bangkok dwellers, particularly the poor, have moved from rural area to live in the city and have farming skills. For many farming not only provides food, it also heals their feeling of homesick and opens the window of opportunities.

Moreover, civil society organisations cannot plan to create more sustainable food chains without the cooperation of social enterprises, with their corporate social responsibility plans. On the other hand, the paradox, from different planning practices, occurs from the different goals of large agribusiness and civil society organisations. While the former aims to con-

trol food systems, the later dreams to create just-food systems by which lay people have the power of determination.

To cope with conflicts of interests between the different food actors, the governments believe that growth and sustainability can be achieved together. While large food corporations operate for maximising their profit and alternative forces make for gradual reform, the governments support both sides by having two faces; one is to promote food actors who advocate for more sustainable, local and fair food systems, while another is to protect agribusinesses as they determine macro economic growth.

Thus, the food governance structure includes various food actors by which the governments, at the centre, allow different actors to contribute to the food system in their own ways. Two different approaches still battle pave the way toward more or less sustainable, local and fair food systems. Although large food corporations seem to be the evil, their existence and power stimulate the collaboration of alternative food actors, who realise that they need to work together to be stronger for bargaining with those food corporations.

The active role of some local governments, civil society organisations and social enterprises respond more to such social values by making the city dwellers' increasing concern with sustainable, local and fair food systems influence the strategic changes of agribusinesses. Apart from that, as food exports from Thailand were affected by testing which found about 330 millions dollars of chemical contamination in four years (Thailand Foundation for Customers 2012), the central government started to force large food corporations to improve their supply chains to be more organic. This is a good sign about moving forward in a better way and might enable agribusinesses and civil society organisations to meet at some point along the way.

Finally, it should be also noted that Bangkok's efforts to integrat food into urban planning was greatly facilitated by the support of the Thai King, who is our symbolic and spiritual leader. As he is respected as the father of the country, his speeches promote growing food in developed areas using low-input methods, his support for self-reliance, and his encouragement of urban farming in 'Jitlada garden'<sup>9</sup> (located in the inner

Bangkok) become positive forces that stimulate a lot of urban dwellers to follow his example and grow food in the city. Plural actors, whether they agree with his idea or not, do not disagree and usually refer to his speeches and practice to legitimise their plans and actions. For example, recently, the Agriculture and Co-operative Bank announced a program to give a credit to part-time urban farmers who intend to borrow money to follow the King's footpath. ♦

*Unless otherwise credited, all photos in this article were taken by the author.*

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#### ENDNOTES

1 Retrieved on July 3rd from <http://globetrottingstiletto.com/globetrotting-bangkok-thailand/>

2 The estimated number comes from a consideration of the housing aspect. Most of these people (79%) live in the renting lands, rooms and houses, while the rest (21%) enters the lands of others without permission (trespass to land).

3 For those who are members of community supported agriculture (CSA) programmes.

4 This chapter differentiates regional and local governments by considering their scales – not by the Thai legal status.

5 The contracts mostly agree upon 3-5 years by which the owners can ask for returning their lands by notifying 4 months in advance (Ms.J.Tongput 2013, pers. Comm., 24 April).

6 Roughly 158 acres

7 For farming training business, the number of farming trainees in 2013 is roughly 1,000 and they led to the extending practices on urban farming about 3,000 by which this number tends to be increased continuously (Health Promotion Foundation 2013).

8 However, it is different from other strategic plans in that it discusses the analyses of risks and possibilities in the future without making specific recommendations.

9 'Jitlada garden' is the city farm that covers 100 rai (about 39.54 acres) inside the territory of the 'Dusit palace' located in the inner city of Bangkok. The farm is supervised by the King and aims to experiment initiative farming technologies and practices. There are rice field, dairy farm, horticulture and aquaculture there.

10 Retrieved on July 3rd from <https://www.justgola.com/a/damnoen-saduak-floating-market-1978046566>

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