



poultry worker organizing in Thailand

**IUF Global Meat Workers' Conference
Omaha, November 1-3, 2011**

Thailand's poultry industry

- **10th largest producer of broiler meat**
- **5th largest exporter of broiler meat**
- **92% exports are cooked chicken meat**
- **largest exporter of cooked chicken**
- **85% of exports to Japan and EU**

corporate environment

- **66 processing plants**
- **25 frozen foods plants**
- **13,000 farms**
- **6 major companies**
- **integrated producers processing 3.85 million birds/day**
- **cooked meat production**
- **feed, hatcheries, farms, retailers, restaurants**

corporate environment

- 1. Charoen Pokphand (CP)**
- 2. GFPT (Nichirei Food)**
- 3. Cargill Meats Thailand**
- 4. Betagro (Ajinomoto)**
- 5. Thai Nippon Food**
- 6. Grampian**

corporate environment

Cargill Meats Thailand

- **2 plants Saraburi and Korat**
- **9,500 workers**
- **fully integrated hatcheries, feed mills, processing facilities**
- **owns or contracts farms in 22 provinces**

corporate environment

Cargill Meats Thailand

- **80% exported to Japan, EU, Canada & Hong Kong**
- **McWings to EU, Hong Kong**
- **June 2011 - new US\$110 million investment**
- **expansion of Korat plant**
- **additional 2,000 workers**

organizing environment

- **600,000 workers**
- **150,000 workers in processing**
- **85% women**
- **migrant workers (Burma, Laos, Cambodia)**
- **only one plant union**
- **union density is 0.0007%**

working environment

- **low basic wages (US\$5.60 to US\$7.50/day)**
- **no standard wage increase**
- **wage deductions**
- **PPE costs deducted (8 to 15% of basic wages)**
- **forced overtime**
- **restricted toilet breaks/rest breaks**
- **target quota bonus scheme**

working environment

- **discrimination/unequal treatment**
- **migrant workers**
- **housing/dormitories**

Cargill Meat Saraburi

- **4,000 workers**
- **260 migrant workers (Laos) in chicken sausage/meatball plant**

organizing strategy 1

- **joint project with ILO on Avian Influenza H5N1**
- **research/mapping**
- **training workshops on H5N1**
- **access to workers**
- **access to government agencies**
- **access to employers**
- **ILO endorsement**

organizing strategy 2

- **contacts in 14 factories**
- **50,000 workers**
- **Poultry Workers Rights Network**
- **130 worker activists**
- **workshops/training on H5N1**
- **health & safety rights training**
- **trade union education**

organizing strategy 3

- stop illegal wage deductions for PPE
- policy intervention through ILO
- ILO national tripartite conference 20 January 2009 Labor Ministry clarified **“employers must provide PPE to workers for free”**
- **“PPE is free”** awareness campaign
- posters/pamphlets in 3 languages

organizing strategy 4

New Labor Protection OHS regulations (2006)

- **compulsory OHS committees**
- **5 out of 11 committee members must be workers' reps**
- **workers' reps elected in ballot**
- **2 year terms**
- **demand implementation**
- **challenge fake or ineffective committees**
- **train activists to get elected**

organizing campaign

- **public campaign**
Stop Bird Flu! = Protecting Poultry Workers = Protecting the Public
- **move from OSH committees to trade unions**
- **win union recognition**
- **organize across 14 factories**
- **national recognition**



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