

# The FSP in Thailand – Where does it fit and what can it achieve ?

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## Forage R&D activities in Thailand

From 1994 to 1996, the Government of Thailand launched the Reformed Agricultural System Project which aimed to increase farmers' income. Under this project, rice and cassava areas were replaced with livestock farms. At the same time, the Department of Livestock Development (DLD) actively promoted dairy production. This expansion of beef and dairy production has increased the demand for improved forages which, in turn, has led to new research on forage species and methods of establishment, management, and utilisation. The research and development (R&D) efforts are spearheaded by the DLD and several Universities. The Division of Animal Nutrition in the DLD has a Forage Research Section, which is responsible for forage R&D for the whole country. In 1997, there were 45 forage research projects being conducted in eight animal nutrition research centres (Fig. 1).

### Selection of species

Most forage species being evaluated were introduced from other countries. Regional evaluations of 40 of the most promising grasses and legumes are being conducted at 25 forage stations and 8 animal nutrition research centres to identify the species best adapted to local environments. To date, three grasses (*Brachiaria ruziziensis*, *Panicum maximum* TD58, and *Pennisetum purpureum*) and three legumes (*Stylosanthes hamata* cv. Verano, *Stylosanthes guianensis* CIAT 184, and *Desmanthus virgatus*) have been identified as most promising.

Other forage species that show promise but need to be evaluated further for their potential forage are *Paspalum atratum* BRA 9610, *Setaria sphacelata*, *Brachiaria brizantha*, *Brachiaria decumbens*, *Arachis pintoi* cv. Amarillo, *Centrosema pascuorum* cv. Cavalcade and Bundy, *Chamaecrista rotundifolia* cv. Wynn, *Aeschynomene americana* cv. Lee and Glenn and *Macroptilium gracile* cv. Maldonado.

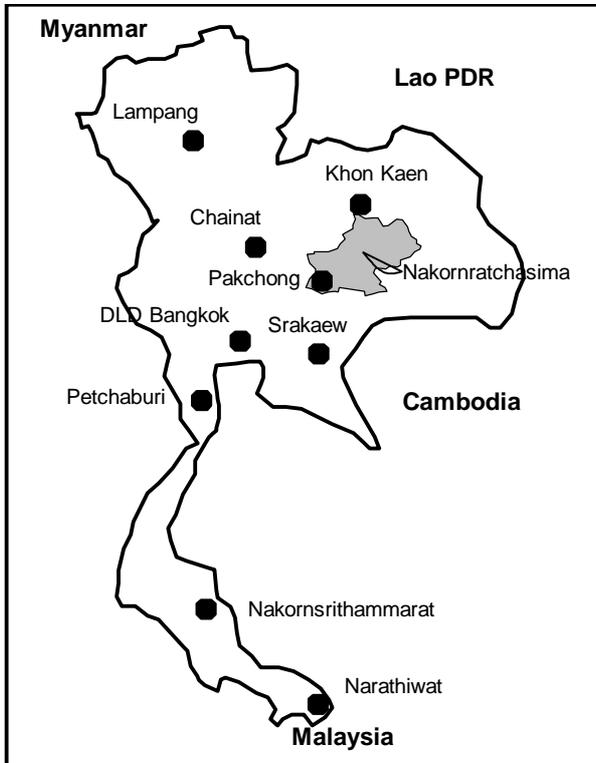


Fig. 1. Location of animal nutrition research centres in Thailand.

### Establishment, management, and utilisation of forage crops

Successful establishment of grasses and legumes lies in the choice of appropriate species and appropriate methods of establishment, including land preparation, sowing rate, and seed treatment. Many trials have been (and are continuing to be) conducted in Thailand to determine the best methods of establishment for promising species mentioned earlier (Thinnakorn and Wittayanuparpyuenyong 1992, Egara and Kodpat 1992).

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