



A dust problem of sugarhouse in Kanchanaburi province

An air pollution includes dust exposure, biomolecules and other hazardous objects in the earth's atmosphere that cause diseases, human death and kill other living creatures. The air pollution occurs in both densely populated cities and industrial zones as the Office of the Ombudsman received a complaint from Kanchanaburi resident who resides in the sugarhouse neighborhood and has got a health effect of dust.

The complainant reported that his house is located nearby one of the sugarhouses in Kanchanaburi, of which its yearly operational period of sugarcane juice extraction is December – February and its dust exposes into the complainant's housing area. This caused a trouble to the complainant and a health effect to his child who has a cancer illness. Previously, the complainant had ever filed in his appeal to several related agencies and there was no action undertaken. He, then, appealed to and requested an assistance from the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman received the complaint and performed fact findings through discussions with related agencies – at the Office of the Ombudsman – including the Pollution Control Department, Regional Environment Office 8th (Ratchaburi), Kanchanaburi Provincial Office, Tha Muang District Office, Wang Sala Subdistrict Municipality Office, Kanchanaburi Provincial Industry Office and Kanchanaburi Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment. Following were the conclusions.

1. Assigned Kanchanaburi Provincial Office to arrange the working group for issuing actions to prevent and resolve the dust problem effecting the complainant and local residents. This was a collaboration among related central and provincial authorities which include the Pollution Control Department, Regional Environment Office 8th (Ratchaburi), Kanchanaburi Provincial Industry Office, Kanchanaburi Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment, Kanchanaburi Provincial Office, Tha Muang District Office and Wang Sala Subdistrict Municipality Office.
2. Assigned Kanchanaburi Provincial Office to report actions in preventing and resolving dust problem to the office of the Ombudsman, within given timeframe.



3. Assigned Wang Sala Subdistrict Municipality Office to promote, for an acknowledgement of local residents, actions in preventing and resolving dust problem.

Later, the Pollution Control Department and Kanchanaburi Provincial Industry Office reported that the Pollution Control Department in collaboration with the Regional Environmental Office 8th (Ratchaburi), Kanchanaburi Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment, Kanchanaburi Provincial Industry Office and Wang Sala Subdistrict Municipality Office performed fact findings, carried out an environmental quality inspection around that sugarhouse and had following conclusions.

1. The inspection of sugarhouse dust problem revealed the dust emission along the roadways in sugarhouse and all over the parking area of sugarcane trucks. Pieces of bagasse and dust hoarded on the roadway surface were dispersed by commuting trucks because of irregular schedules of water spraying. The dust particles from the extraction process were spread over the surrounding areas of sugarcane juice extraction house. The house was not fully covered so the dust from extraction process was spread out. And the front and rear ends of bagasse storage were unprotected. The pieces of bagasse were left outside the storage and next to the community area with only a net in between. There was a water spray but it didn't fully cover the whole area. When it was blustery, the bagasse pieces could be then spread out.

2. The value of opacity measured in the sugarhouse stack varied from the standard value stated in the notification of Ministry of Industry RE: The opacity of smoke emitted from a stack of boiler from a factory, B.E.2549.

3. The measurement of air pollution in the sugarhouse stack was inaccurate according to the provision of law. Such the test result was incomparable to the statutory standard value.

4. The atmospheric dust measured around the residential area nearby sugarhouse neighborhood complied with the notification of the National Environment Committee Issue 24 (B.E. 2547) RE: The standard level of air quality in the generic atmosphere. However, during the physical test, there were dust particles including black and white soot spread around the residential area nearby the sugarhouse.

5. The filter cakes were left on the bank of Mae Klong River and created an effect to the environment and residents nearby.



Kanchanaburi Provincial Industry Office requested the Western Industrial Pollutions Research and Warning Center to carry out the air emission test. The test revealed that the emission value was incompliant with the notification of Ministry of Industry RE: The emission standard from a factory, B.E. 2549.

The performance reports of related agencies demonstrated that this sugarhouse operation failed to comply with applicable laws. Kanchanaburi Provincial Industry Office, then, ordered the sugarhouse to have all filter cakes receded or properly disposed by authorized disposal dealer and prosecuted it for unauthorized discharge of sewage externally.

Later, the sugarhouse took actions per orders and paid its fines. Regarding the air pollution test of which the test result varied from the value as set forth in the notification of Ministry of Industry RE: The emission standard from a factory, B.E. 2549 and regarding the opacity value that varied from the statutory standard value, Kanchanaburi Provincial Industry Office ordered the sugarhouse to improve the facilities and prosecuted it following the Factory Act, B.E. 2535.

In addition, the Ombudsman assigned authorized officials to the site to follow up, with related agencies, the execution of problem solutions. Per this site visit, the Ombudsman had following decisions and recommendations in addressing this complaint.

- Authorized Kanchanaburi Provincial Industry Office to inspect the air quality in the sugarhouse stack within 15 days of its B.E.2564/2565 juice extraction period and report the test result to the Ombudsman. In case the test result states a variance from the standard value, Kanchanaburi Provincial Industry Office, by virtue of Section 39 of the Factory Act B.E. 2535, consequently issues an order to close the factory.
- Assigned Wang Sala Subdistrict Municipality Office to keep the sugarhouse strictly enforce to the law and report the outcome to the Ombudsman.