

Thailand's Humane Coconut Harvesting Techniques

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Thailand's coconut production meets or exceeds international standards in safety, quality, flavor, environmental sustainability, and social welfare - including animal rights.

Unfortunately, some social media publications, read and viewed out of context, have confused modern industrial harvesting with traditional, now comparatively inefficient techniques.

The current, standard commercial harvesting method for Thai coconut industry is to use a 'Mai-soi', a long pole with a knife attached at the end which the harvester uses to cut the stalk of the bunch. A bunch has approximately 10-30 nuts which can be quite heavy. Picking 10-30 nuts with one cut is fast and cost-effective. To cushion the fall, the Mai-soi is angled to have coconuts fall in a canal next to the trees. The Thai coconut industry is constantly looking to improve the equipment and techniques to harvest coconuts even more efficiently and economically.

Thailand does have small agro-tourism farms where family farmers have trained monkeys to pick coconuts. This traditional way of life is not unlike the traditional Western practice of sheep herding dogs - a mutually beneficial coexistence in which complementary skills are combined to achieve a goal. Much like sheep dogs, these monkeys are considered by farmers to be family members.

Coconuts are a commodity product. Thailand's commercial coconut growers and industry are too large-scale to rely on pre-industrial techniques. They harvest coconuts by combining human labor with modern farming tools, not monkeys.



Thank you for pictures and videos from Theppadungporn Coconut Co., Ltd.

Accordingly, Thailand invites all persons interested in the Thai coconut industry to view the Mai Soi harvesting process in action on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/fZInCTVYESE>. This practice has been widely used among major Thai coconut manufacturers.

For additional information about the Thai coconut industry, please feel free to contact the Thai Food Processors' Association.

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