

## Veasna Neang



Veasna Neang grew up in Cambodia during the many years of civil war witnessing the horrible destruction caused by the Khmer Rouge and the long lasting war. When he got an opportunity to come to BYU-Hawaii and earn an undergraduate degree, he took it wholeheartedly. He came to BYU-Hawaii in the Winter of 2001 with a determination to get an education that will benefit him as he returns to his home country and helps building the poverty stricken country. He decided to major in International Business Management and worked hard in succeeding academically. In the summer of 2004, a few months before his graduation, he went to Cambodia for an internship. While he was in Cambodia, he was exploring possible business opportunities. One day, as he was talking with his brother who recently returned from a trip to China, his brother told him that two things are needed in Cambodia: construction and pigs.

Thinking about it, Veasna realized that, after a long civil war, construction is definitely needed in Cambodia, but it would take a lot of money to go into a construction business. However, a pig-related business would require much less money to start with. Veasna decided to do some research to check if it really was a good business opportunity. Throughout his research, he found out that as a result of the recent outbreaks of the bird flu in South East Asia, many people have turned to eating other meats than chicken and duck, but more than 50% of the domestic meat consumption is imported from the neighboring countries, mostly Thailand and Vietnam, and the cost of importing is high and the delivery time is too long. Also, he found out that there are lots of Chinese people in Cambodia, and Chinese eat a lot of pork. He even found a local butcher who would be happy to buy pork from him if he could provide grown pigs every month at a cheaper price than imported meat. This set of circumstances convinced Veasna that there is a significant need for pork meat in his country, and that if he could produce it, people would buy it because it would be faster and cheaper to buy from him than to buy from other countries.

As soon as he returned to the school in the fall, he pursued the dream of starting his own business. He discussed his idea with Greg Gibson, the director of CIE and Robin Porter, an entrepreneur-in-residence at the School of Business who gladly agreed to mentor him and help him develop his idea into a viable business plan. By the time of his graduation in December 2004, he was able to convince his mentor Robin Porter to fund his business and mentor him as he runs his pig farm in Cambodia.

Four years after coming to BYU-Hawaii, Veasna returned to his home country of Cambodia equipped with education, mentors who have wealth of experience and knowledge of business, and funds to initiate his own business venture that will allow him to contribute to the development of his country and alleviate the poverty, a vision he envisioned at the time of his coming to BYU-Hawaii.



Since returning to Cambodia, he has built a covered piggery with an impressive water system that is used to keep the piggery sanitary. He has developed a system whereby a maneuver from the pigs is directed to a large fish pond which will be used to raise several harvests of fish during a calendar year. He has built a sturdy corrugated metal fence around the entire property, and has added a stone supply room for the feed, a large water tank, and an electric pump to deliver water from the well that he

dug. And there is also a sleeping facility for the workers. All this has been accomplished in less than 6 months. He is already fattening up his second patch of pigs. He currently has two patches of 25 pigs each.



In his recent trip to Cambodia, Greg Gibson was able to meet with several prominent businessmen and professionals including Mr. Nang Sothy who will be able to provide a wealth of knowledge to Veasna. Mr. Nang Sothy is the Director General of Cambodian Chamber of Commerce and is considered to be the owner of the largest pig farm in Cambodia. After meeting with Greg Gibson, Mr. Sothy expressed his willingness to help Veasna to start a breeding operation for his pigs and agreed to be a personal mentor to

Veasna. During his trip, Greg Gibson has established a local mentoring network that will assist Veasna and other BYU-H graduates.



With the support of the mentors, BYU-H education and an excellent work ethics, Veasna has a bright future for achieving his goals of being a business owner and contributing to the development of his home country.