

Containers Full of Dishes

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Jiraporn Tangpiroontham is the President of dish antenna manufacturer INFOSAT

INFOSAT in Bangkok, Thailand, has only been in existence since July 2006. Surprisingly enough, the primary reason that this company was founded was because of the World Cup soccer tournament: everyone in Thailand wanted to set up a dish but there were simply no more to be had. "We produce as many as 5000 dishes every month", explains Jiraporn Tangpiroontham, "and if necessary we can push that to 8000." Jiraporn is the president of the company and also happens to be the wife of Niran Tangpiroontham, manager of INFOSAT Intertrade, one of the largest satellite wholesalers in Thailand.

INFOSAT manufacturers wire mesh antennas that range in size from 1.6 to 3.1 meters in diameter. The parts for each dish are produced from the supplied raw materials in their manufacturing facility and are then prepared for shipping. "We have four pickup trucks and two heavy transport trucks that we use to deliver the antennas to our customers and to our overseas shippers for export", explains Jiraporn.

80 of the 3.1-meter antennas can fit into a 20-foot container. That same size container can also pack in as many as 200 of their 1.6-meter dishes. "You can get a container of large dishes for US\$ 11,200 while a container of the smaller antennas will set you back only US\$ 7000", says Jiraporn as she starts her sales pitch. This means that a single 3.1-meter dish costs about US\$ 140 and a 1.6-meter antenna runs only US\$ 35. "These prices are FOB Bangkok. Those that purchase in these quantities we refer to as Mega Dealers", comments Jiraporn. A General Dealer can purchase antennas in smaller quantities starting with 10 but then of course the price goes up.

90% of their customers prefer to have their dish in black. Jiraporn is not too happy with this: "if we didn't have to paint them, they would be 10% cheaper and the natural aluminum is much more resistant." Jiraporn has 30 employees working for her. A rather large loudspeaker fills the entire facility with music and once every year all the employees are invited to a three-day excursion. "We are like

a large family", comments Jiraporn proudly. The employees work from Monday to Saturday for eight hours each day.

Jiraporn is considering expanding their product exports. "We are looking for wholesalers all around the world, wherever large dishes are used", she says and then adds, "and that would be everywhere, wouldn't it?"



INFOSAT's manufacturing facility in Bangkok. The blue entrance door is normally closed and is constantly protected by a security guard.



One of INFOSAT's pickup trucks. Boxes of coaxial cable can be seen in the foreground.

From Wire Mesh to Container: How a Wire Mesh Dish is Produced

1: From the three-meter long aluminum rods, the segments are cut to size and then pressed into the proper shape using the machine in the background.

2: Quality Control: the curved segments are tested for precision.

3: The curved segments are placed on a form and then welded together.

4: The wire mesh arrives precut in rectangular shapes and is placed on a metallic form of a panel and then cut to size. The result is the triangular shape of the panel.

5: The wire mesh panels are placed alongside each other and then screwed together.

6: Here the mounts are assembled. The customer must decide if the antennas should have a fixed-type mount or a mount to accommodate an antenna motor. Only the smallest 1.6-meter antenna can be fitted with a combination mount.

7: The rods for the polar mount holder are cut to size.

8: Multiple panel segments are packed together according to size. The shipping cartons are custom cut to size on site.

9: The end result: all of the materials are manufactured, packaged and ready for the container for deliver around the world.

