

### **Anticipated Trends in 2000-2001**

According to the 1999-2000 opium cultivation survey, the 25 percent reduction in gross opium cultivation this past year was due to increased efficiency in the opium eradication campaign and the fact that more farmers have moved to cultivation of legitimate crops. From April to May 2000, unfavorable weather conditions resulted in a failed crop for farmers who had decided to move cultivation to the dry season.

Opium cultivation during the 2000-2001 season is expected to increase for the following reasons:

- The continued high prices offered for raw opium, especially wholesale prices.

- Drug financiers will attempt to re-gain losses brought on by eradication and poor weather conditions.

- High-density cultivation along the Thai-Burma border of Mae Hong Son, Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai provinces will increase along with the demand for raw opium needed to support heroin refineries located in neighboring countries. In addition, the recent population influx toward the Thai border opposite Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai provinces will result in an extension of cultivation areas.

- Prices for legitimate agricultural products remain low while wages, fertilizer, and herbicides are expensive.

- Deforestation will increase due to attempts to open new areas to grow legitimate crops such as rice, corn, and ginger. Farmers will also exploit these lands to grow opium poppy.

- An increasing number of opium farmers will seek out methodologies such as interval seeding and multiple cropping which are designed to thwart eradication and increase yield.

### **Plans for the 2000 - 2001 Opium Eradication Campaign**

Members of the Royal Thai Government's Narcotic Crop Control Board have agreed on the following measures to improve the efficiency of the upcoming opium eradication campaign.

1. From August 2000 until May 2001, interagency opium eradication teams will concentrate on the high-density cultivation areas in Mae Chaem and Om Koi districts in Chiang Mai province.

2. Surveillance and patrol missions, designed to meet with farmers in the field during the opium planting season in order to provide them with information on the illegality of opium, will be increased.

3. Law enforcement action will be taken against drug financiers and growers of opium.

4. Development assistance designed to provide farmers with alternatives to illicit opium cultivation will be expanded.

5. Information systems used to manage and evaluate trends in opium will be updated and improved.