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Alcohol

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Alcoholism has increased, with 4.1% of Thais now addicted to alcohol.

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The government still has insufficient control over the advertising and distribution of alcohol. Acquiring a license to sell alcohol is easy, because the deposit required is small, and the excise tax is low. This has contributed to a rise in the number of Thais addicted to alcohol, which has increased from 1.5 million to 1.8 million.

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There has been a striking increase in the problem of alcohol abuse. A survey conducted by The Administrative Committee of Substance Abuse Academic Network found that in 2001, somewhat less than 1.5 million Thais, or 3.5% of the population aged 12 to 65, consumed alcohol at least 20 days per month. Twenty days per month qualifies as alcohol addiction. By 2003, the number of Thais drinking 20 or more days per month had increased to 1.8 million, or 4.1% of the population. The number of traffic accidents in which alcohol was a contributing factor increased 5 times between 2000 and 2004, from 1,811 to 9,279. One of the reasons for Thai people's heavy consumption of alcohol is weak regulation by the government.

2004, there was a fall because of a Cabinet Resolution introduced in July 29, 2003, restricting the hours in which alcohol advertisements could be broadcast on television and radio. The Cabinet Resolution did not, however, restrict advertising through other media, such as newspapers or roadside boardings, and advertisements in these media increased rapidly.

The fees charged for licenses to sell alcohol are extremely low. The fees for Thai alcohol are currently only 110 baht per year, or 0.3 baht per day. The fees for imported alcohol are 1,650 baht per year, or 4.5 baht per day. Moreover, alcohol taxes are very low. This is particularly true for rice whiskey, where taxes have not even kept up with inflation. In fact, the government has reduced taxes on rice whiskey, on the grounds that it is a community industry. Rice whiskey has therefore become the drink of choice in rural areas. It is the easiest type of alcohol to buy and the cheapest way to get drunk.

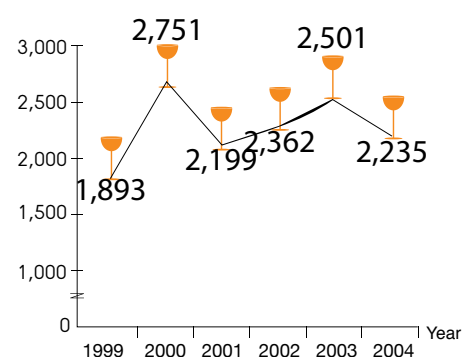
Note: In 2005, a Cabinet Resolution raised the tax on some forms of alcohol, but not rice whiskey and beer. The legal time during which alcohol can be sold was reduced from 12 hours per day to 10. It is important to monitor enforcement of the new rules.

Tax rates for alcohol

Type of alcohol	Tax rates Percent of value	Baht per liter
<i>Non-distilled</i>		
Beer	55	100
Wine	60	100
Traditional beverages	25	70
<i>Distilled</i>		
Lao khao (rice whiskey)	25	70
Mixed spirits	50	400
Special spirits	50	400
Brandy	40	400
Whisky	50	400

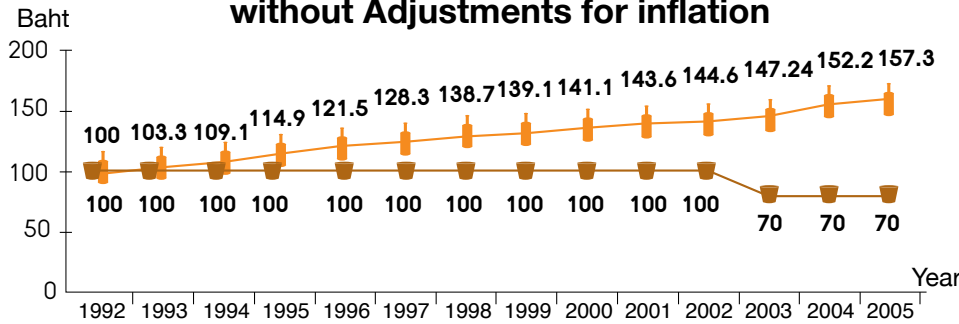
Source: The Excise Department, Ministry of Commerce, 2005

The advertising budget of the alcohol industry



Source: A C Nielson 2005

The tax on Rice Whiskey, with and without Adjustments for inflation



source: * The Excise Department, Ministry of Commerce, 2005
 **Adjusted for inflation by the Center for Research on Alcohol Abuse, using data from the Ministry of Finance

■ Tax on rice whiskey *
 ■ Tax on rice whiskey with adjustments for inflation **

Regulations on the Advertising of Alcohol: Cabinet Resolution 29 July 2003

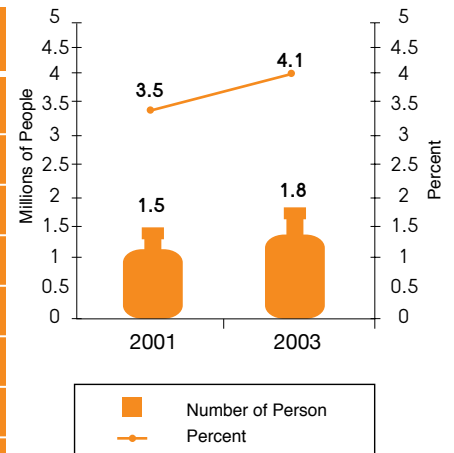
- Radio and television stations are banned from broadcasting advertisements for alcohol and tobacco between 5 am and 10 pm.
- There are controls over the content of advertisements played between 10 pm and 5 am
- No advertisements are permitted with 500 meters of a school or other educational institution.

Alcohol advertising budgets, various media

	2003	2004	2005
Total	2,501	2,235	-10.6
Television	1,727	1,412	-18.2
Radio	172	87	-49.1
Newspapers	236	346	46.5
Magazines	61	69	13
Movies	222	239	7.6
Billboards	78	62	-20.7
Advertising from vehicles	2	12	582.8
Advertisements in shops and restaurants	3	8	147.8

Source: AC Nielson, 2005

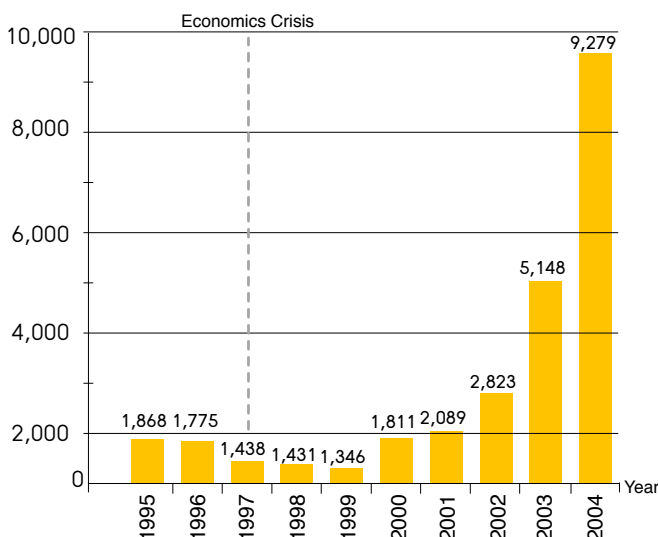
Trends in alcohol abuse



Source: The Administrative Committee of Substance Abuse Academic Network, 2005.

Note: consuming alcohol at least 20 days per month.

Statistics on Accidents Caused by Drunk Drivers



Source: Data Center, National Police Office

Fees for Licenses to Sell Alcohol

Type of license	Type of distribution	License fee
1	Wholesale sales all types of alcohol, including Thai and imported alcohol	8,250 baht per year
2	Wholesale sales of Thai alcohol	1,650 baht per year
3	Retail sale of Thai and imported alcohol	1,650 baht per year
4	Retail sale of Thai alcohol	110 baht per year
5	Retail sale of Thai and imported alcohol, for period not exceeding 10 days	110 baht per year
6	Retail sale of Thai alcohol, for period not exceeding 10 days	55 baht per time
7	Sale of Thai alcohol in clubs Sale of imported alcohol in clubs	110 baht per year 220 baht per year

Source: Excise Department, 2005