



Thai Government moves forward the "Agriculture produces - Commerce markets" approach to boost agricultural export growth and accelerate the utilization of FTA through GAP / GMP certification

Ms. Ratchada Thanadirek, Deputy Spokesperson for the Prime Minister's Office disclosed the means to boost the export of agricultural products, a group of products with high growth opportunities. The government has adopted the "Agriculture produces - Commerce markets" approach by driving the integrated work of both public and private sectors and farmers. These will be achieved through efficient and standardized production consistent with consumer needs as well as good marketing management in the international market and making the most of the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs).



The trend of 2021 found that agricultural exports would increase compared to the previous year. The Office of Agricultural Economics reported the increase of export of Thai agricultural product during January to February this year with the largest growth of fruits and vegetables. A full year growth of 1.9-2.9% is expected, with livestock sector will expand by 1-2%, fisheries will grow by 0.1-1.1%, agricultural services will rise by 0.2-1.2% and forestry will grow by 1-2%.

Thailand has FTAs with 18 countries out of 13 agreements. In 2020, export of agricultural products totaled US \$ 14,876 million, an increase of 2.3% compared to 2019, which accounted for 71% of the export of agricultural products to the world markets. With the benefits of the FTAs, Ministry of Commerce (MOC) together with the Farmer Council, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC) and the Thai Chamber of Commerce encouraged Thai farmers and entrepreneurs to utilize FTA agreements in order to increase export opportunities.

The fruit export market valued 104 billion baht last year. MOC has set up a work plan for online business matching among buyers, importers and dealers from abroad. The recent event in March was participated by many countries such as China, Singapore, Indonesia, India, United Arab Emirates, United States, Argentina and Spain, creating negotiations of not less than 1.8 billion baht.

What will build consumer confidence in Thai agricultural products is the quality and safety. MOAC has planned to certify 120,000 GAP (Good Agricultural Practice) farms, including 65,000 fruit farms (mainly longan, durian, mangosteen, young coconuts and mangoes which require GAP certification for export), 21,000 vegetable farms and other 33,000 farms such as coffee and peanuts. For livestock and fishery products, the Ministry will continue to improve farms across the country

to meet GAP and GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice) as well as HACCP, which is a quality control system used as a trade condition for export. For concerns about climate fluctuation which is the major risk for agricultural sector, the government has already taken preventive measures such as monitoring the water level, application of systematic water management and development of agricultural alert system.

MOAC is in the process of conducting a research project to promote the development of crop insurance which will be completed in the next 6 months. This will reduce the impact of natural disasters to cover all kinds of agricultural products. It is expected to reduce the budget for disaster compensation for farmers by up to 100,000 million baht per year if the budget is changed to be in the form of insurance where farmers can sustainably manage their own finances. These will lead to the elevation of well-being and quality of life of Thai farmers. Even under the circumstances of COVID-19 causing the global economy to slow down, Thailand's export of agricultural products has grown in the opposite direction of other sectors.

Adjustments to changes by farmers and entrepreneurs is necessary, both in terms of production and marketing strategy developments. Prioritizing quality and safety as well as making use of the benefits from FTAs will lead to increased incomes which the government is expediting its supports, said Ms. Ratchada.

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