



สำนักงานที่ปรึกษาการเกษตรต่างประเทศ
ประจำกรุงวอชิงตัน ดี.ซี.

Office of Agricultural Affairs - Royal Thai Embassy - Washington DC

Virtual Seminar on Participation in Preclearance Program for Export of Irradiated Fruits for Export to the US

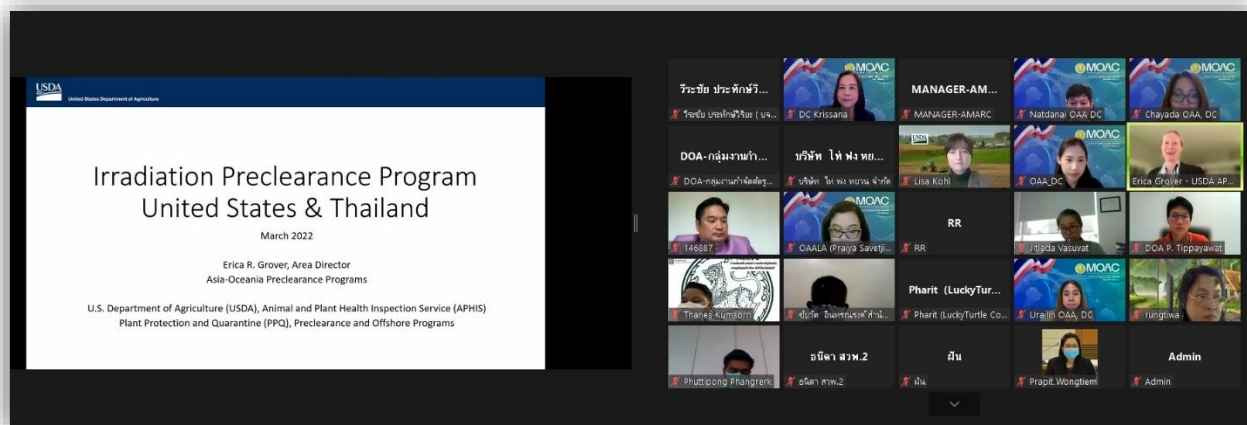
Office of Agricultural Affairs, Royal Thai Embassy, Washington DC hosted the virtual seminar directly from the US on **Participation in the Preclearance Program for Export of Irradiated Fruits to the US** on Wednesday March 16th, 2022 with interest from over 130 registered participants from Thailand including fruit exporters, packing houses, farmers, academia, private laboratories, relevant government agencies and interested parties.



The Preclearance Program between Thailand and the United States Started in 2007. There are 7 Thai irradiated fruits permitted for export under the Program which are mango, longan, lychee, mangosteen, rambutan, pineapple and dragon fruit. In November 2021, USDA (US Department of Agriculture) has just announced approval of pummelo as the eighth item. Commercial export of pummelo is expected to commence in the 2022 fruit season. This virtual seminar is held with the objectives to provide an overview of the Preclearance Program and increase the export of irradiated fruits to the US.

Mr. Rapibhat Chandarasrivong, Director-General of the Department of Agriculture (DOA) gave opening remarks emphasizing Thailand as one of the world's major exporters of tropical fruits with high demand from global consumers. Export of Thai fruits to the US has been halted for the past 2 years due to COVID-19 outbreak due to the inability to transport fruit across regions in the country from lockdown. He believes that this year, when the global covid situation is unraveling, exports will be able to return to normal again.

Mr. Rapibhat used to hold the position of Minister (Agriculture) at the Office of Agricultural Affairs in Washington DC between 2005 and 2012. He was the driving force behind the Preclearance Program for fresh fruit exports to the US. Fresh fruits are subject to pest risk analysis performed by the importing country. DOA and APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) - USDA worked together to facilitate international trade. Under the Preclearance Program, there will be an APHIS-USDA inspector stationed in Thailand during the fruit export season to inspect goods before exporting to the US. Upon arrival of the fruits in the US, they will not be quarantined for reinspection making it available for immediate distribution. Despite receiving approval to open the market for 7 - 8 types of fruits, at present there is only mangosteen that has the potential to export from Thailand. While other fruits in particular, Nam Dok Mai and Green Savoey mangoes are still in high demand with ample opportunities. The Director General also mentioned the smuggling of non-irradiated fruits from Thailand to the United States. It is an illegal act and needed to immediately stop. DOA will strengthen necessary measures and enforce against the smugglers.



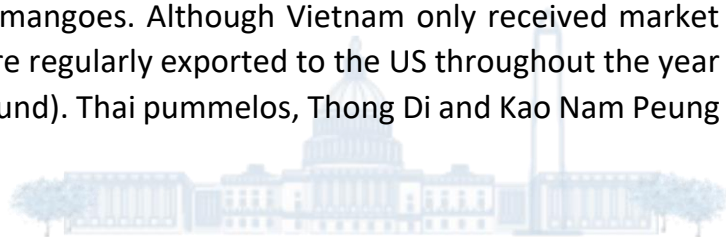
Ms. Erica R. Grover and Ms. Lisa Kohl, APHIS-USDA officials, in charge of the Preclearance Program on the US side, said that the Preclearance Program had benefited Thailand and Thai exporters. If pests are detected before export, the fruits can be re-treated, processed or sent to other markets. This reduces the risk of being returned

from or destroyed in the US. Alternative treatments or reduced irradiation intensity below 400 Grays is possible. DOA as the primary responsible agency may present new information or evidence to the USDA for consideration. This can be coordinated through Dr. Jitlada Vasuvat, APHIS-USDA Agricultural Specialist, based at the US Embassy in Thailand. Dr. Jitlada serves to support and coordinate the Preclearance Program in Thailand

Ms. Saluckjit Phankumm from the Plant Protection Research and Development Office, DOA, provided details about the registration processes for orchards, packing houses and exporters of irradiated fruits under the Preclearance Program. The packing houses and the orchards shall be inspected. Inspection of packing houses, randomly inspection of fruits prior to irradiation, confirmation of pest analyses and issuance of phytosanitary certificates are jointly conducted by DOA and APHIS-USDA inspector stationed in Thailand.


Dr. Sompote Valyasevi, Managing Director of Agri Active Co., Ltd., which is the Cooperator for the Preclearance Program coordinating among exporters, packing houses, irradiation facilities, DOA and APHIS – USDA, revealed that the project cost exceeded 10 million baht annually. The expenses covered irradiation costs, management fee, salary and associated costs for the APHIS-USDA inspector. If there is a large amount of exported products, the average inspection fee per unit will be reduced. The company also provides consulting services to packing houses and exporters on technical issues such as preparation for GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices) audit. Advice is also given on packaging specifications both in terms of shape of the boxes and strength of the packaging materials. Packaging is often the main problem for irradiated fruit exports causing many exporters to leave the business. In addition, the company also provides information on the reliability of importers to prevent and avoid financial damage to Thai exporters.


Ms. Praiya Savetjinda, Consul (Agriculture) at the Royal Thai Consulate - Los Angeles, provided information on the tropical fruit market situation in the US. Many Thai fruits do not require irradiation such as durian, coconut and tamarind. These fruits are highly popular and have the highest market share. Only irradiated mangosteen is being continually imported from Thailand but tend to decline. The season for mangosteen imports from Mexico and Guatemala is different from Thailand. Thai mangosteen therefore still has a lot of opportunities and potential in the US market. Vietnam is a major competitor, especially for irradiated mangoes. Although Vietnam only received market approval a few years ago, mangoes are regularly exported to the US throughout the year despite the high prices (US\$10 per pound). Thai pummelos, Thong Di and Kao Nam Peung



varieties, have the market opportunity in the US, despite having competitors such as local grown pummelos from Florida and California and those imported from China. Their taste is not as good as Thai pummelo. The best time to import is during Chinese New Year (January-February) and the Moon Festival (September-October).

สถานการณ์ตลาดผลไม้สดเขตร้อนในสหรัฐฯ





ความต้องการบริโภค

- ❖ เติบโตอย่างต่อเนื่องในช่วงกว่า 10 ปีที่ผ่านมา
- ❖ สินค้ามีวางจำหน่ายในตลาดหลักมากขึ้น
- ❖ การประชาสัมพันธ์ทำให้เป็นที่รู้จักมากขึ้น รวมทั้งความคุ้นเคยด้านโภชนาการ
- ❖ โดยเฉพาะในช่วงสถานการณ์ระบาดของโควิด-19 ผู้บริโภคมีความต้องการอาหารเพื่อสุขภาพมากขึ้น และต้องการบริโภคผลไม้แปลกใหม่ (exotic fruits)

- ❖ ถึงแม้สหรัฐฯ จะปลูกผลไม้เมืองร้อนบางชนิดได้ในบางมลรัฐ เช่น ฟลอริดา ฮาวาย และแคลิฟอร์เนีย แต่ปริมาณยังไม่เพียงพอต่อความต้องการ
- ❖ ผลไม้สดเขตร้อนที่นำเข้าจากต่างประเทศ อาทิ มะม่วง มังคุด ทุเรียน มะพร้าวสดทั้งผล ลำไย ลิ้นจี่ เงาะ สับปะรด และแก้วมังกร
- ❖ การนำเข้าผลไม้สดเขตร้อนดังกล่าวต้องผ่านกระบวนการกำจัดโรคและแมลงก่อน เช่น การฉายรังสี เป็นต้น

As for the Preclearance Program in the 2022 season, Dr. Sompote, the Cooperator, expects the Program to begin after Songkran Festival (mid April). However, financial feasibility needs to be considered in the implementation of the Program, particularly order confirmation from US importers.

Office of Agricultural Affairs, Royal Thai Embassy, Washington DC
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