



สำนักงานที่ปรึกษาการเกษตรต่างประเทศ
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Office of Agricultural Affairs - Royal Thai Embassy - Washington DC

"Chalermchai" to Make Thailand Become the Organic Hub of ASEAN



"Chalermchai" expedites Thailand's becoming the Organic Hub of ASEAN, showcasing the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives' work of expanding organic farming beyond the target of 1.5 million rai.

"Alongkorn" assigned to launch a new proactive plan to come up with the "Sustainable Urban Agriculture Development Project" to enhance people's quality of life.

Mr. Alongkorn Ponlaboot, Advisor to the Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives and Chairman of the Executive Committee for Sustainable Agriculture in Urban Development, gave a keynote speech on "Sustainable Urban Agriculture from Post-COVID-19 to the Next Normal" at the seminar on Organic Agriculture in Urban Areas, organized by the National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS). His speech includes six important issues:

- 1) Five Agricultural Reform Strategies of Dr. Chalermchai Sri-on, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives

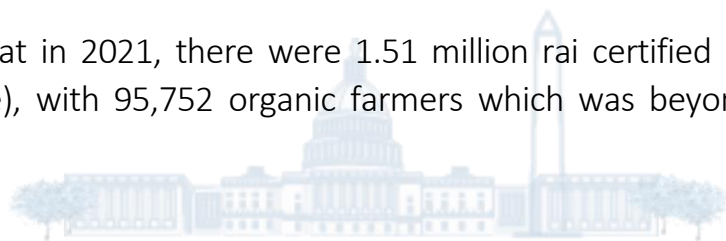
- 2) Examples of projects and policies of other countries, and guidelines for developing green cities
- 3) Sustainable Urban Agriculture Development Project (SUAD Project)
- 4) Five systems of sustainable agriculture
- 5) The structure for driving the sustainable agriculture policy of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC)
- 6) Organic Agriculture Action Plan 2023-2027

Mr. Alongkorn said that Dr. Chalermchai Sri-on, the Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives, chairman of the Sustainable Agriculture Development Board, recognizes the importance of solving the urban food insecurity problem. In 2019, it was the first time that Thailand had more urban population than rural areas. This has reflected the expansion of urbanization. However, urban communities can produce less than 10% of their own food, which is an essential reason for MOAC to expedite the development of Urban Agriculture, especially in the situation of COVID-19 and the Next Normal. Urban Agriculture must be developed in parallel with Rural Agriculture. The MOAC established and proceeded with the Sustainable Urban Agriculture Development Project and assigned Mr. Alongkorn as its chairman. This project will proactively work with various network partners. It has six objectives as follows:

- 1) Sustainable urban agriculture development
- 2) Increased green areas
- 3) Lowering PM 2.5 and greenhouse gas emissions
- 4) Air quality improvement
- 5) Elevating people's well-being
- 6) Building a green economy, which is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations in dealing with global climate change.

Moreover, MOAC encourages organic farming under the vision "Thailand is the leader of organic farming in ASEAN, according to the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy, and will be recognized internationally by 2022". During the past 5 years (Fiscal Year 2017–2021), there have been 342 projects in total to promote organic farming. This effort is aimed at increasing the organic farming area by at least 1.3 million rai, involving at least 80,000 organic farmers, and increasing the value of organic agricultural products by an average of 3% annually.

The result has turned out that in 2021, there were 1.51 million rai certified as organic farming (public and private), with 95,752 organic farmers which was beyond



MOAC's target. MOAC is implementing the Organic Farming Action Plan for 2023–2027, which includes four development issues: 1) Promoting research, technology development, innovation and organic agriculture database, 2) Improving production and management capacity throughout the organic supply chain, 3) Upgrading the standards and certification system for Organic Farming, and 4) Developing marketing strategies and raising awareness about Organic Farming.

In this regard, the MOAC has been allocated the budget of 851.10 million baht to support 94 projects related to organic farming including 1) 48 projects totaling 176.8 million baht involving research and development, innovation, database development, and knowledge transfer to farmers; 2) 21 projects totaling 552 million baht aimed at developing organic food production and organic farming management and 3) 25 projects totaling 122.2 million baht to improve marketing, services, and organic farming standards.

The "Sustainable Urban Agriculture from Post Covid-19 to Next Normal" seminar was a virtual seminar organized by the Division of Standards Promotion, National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS).

The objectives were to reinforce a good understanding of policy and importance of urban agriculture that plays a role of building food security in urban communities, as well as supporting the urbanized agricultural areas as a source of community food production, increasing food self-sufficiency, and elevating people's well-being and the economy as a new normal for living. The participants consisted of 280 government officials responsible for organic farming, farmers and general public interested in organic production and sustainable farming in the community.

In addition, there were panelists who shared their knowledges, such as Ms. Praiya Savetjinda, Consul (Agriculture) at the Thailand Office of Agricultural Affairs in Los Angeles, sharing her perspective on "Urban Organic Farming, a Case Study of the United States of America", Associate Professor Dr. Ekkarat Ketwal, Deputy Director of Resources and Environment Institute of Nutrition Mahidol University, sharing his perspective on "How to eat and get away from diseases in the Next Normal", Mr. Weera Sornpraang from Res-Q Farm, the inspiration farm of unlimited agriculture, and Mr. Charee Boonwinit from LungRee Farm, an Integrated Organic Farm, sharing his perspective on "Success Case: Sustainable Agriculture for Urban People". There was also a panel discussion on "Urban Sustainable Agriculture in the Next Normal Era". The panelists included Mr. Anantachoke Saksawat from the Food Bank Network Manager of Thailand, Mr. Yossapon Boonsom



from Phoom Architect, and Managing Director of Chama Company Limited, and Mr. Chakrit Pocharueng from Hat Yai Vegetable Garden Group.

Source: <https://thestatestimes.com/post/2022030435>

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