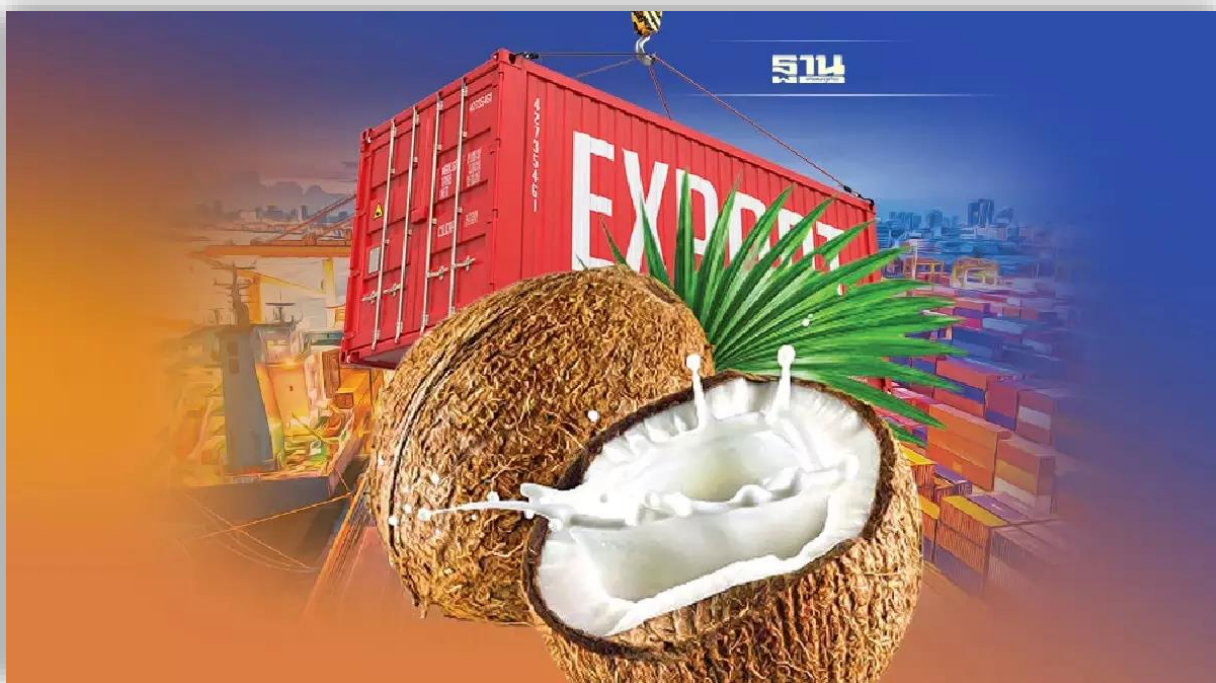




สำนักงานที่ปรึกษาการเกษตรต่างประเทศ
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Office of Agricultural Affairs - Royal Thai Embassy - Washington DC

Thailand Promotes “Monkey Free Plus” to Recover Coconut Milk Export, Valued at 13 Billion Baht



Director-General of the Department of Agriculture (DOA) unveils a plan to defend the ban on “monkey picking coconuts” which adversely affected export of Thai coconut milk valued at 13 billion baht. The industry welcomes the new image to be promoted globally in order to regain confidence of trading partners and international consumers.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) alleged that coconut harvesting by monkeys is abusive. It has impacted the Thai coconut industry and the export of the products to foreign countries especially the United States, Canada and Europe. DOA has been aware of the situation and trying to resolve the issues by promoting hybrid dwarf coconut trees for new planting. The short trunks will no longer require monkey labor in harvesting. Nevertheless, the problems still persist.

Mr. Rapibhat Chandarasriwong, Director-General of DOA told “Thansettakij” that he assigned Mr. Sombat Tongtao, Deputy Director-General of DOA to discuss with the private sector including Theppadungporn Coconut Co., Ltd. and Chiwadi Products Co. Ltd. as well as Thai Coconut Oil Conservation and Development Club in order to resolve the problem in a sustainable manner. DOA has a plan to establish “Monkey Free Plus” program. The initiative will not only certify coconut plantations on food safety system but also assure that monkeys are not used for harvesting. The program will guarantee that products obtained from “Monkey Free Plus” program will not involve monkey labor. This will help restore the consumers’ confidence abroad. The meeting attended by the private sector and concerned parties agreed with the initiatives and will collaborate by implementing a pilot project.

In September, Theppadungporn Coconut Co., Ltd. and DOA will organize a training for farmers and packing houses supplying coconuts to the company on Monkey Free Plus certification program. The system will lead to a sustainable coconut production without animal abuses. Soon he will chair a meeting between stakeholders and concerned parties to provide information on the implementation of Monkey Fee Plus program. The outcomes of the meeting will be shared at the International Workshop on GAP in Kerala, India during September 2-4, 2022. As a member of International Coconut Community (ICC), he will bring up the Monkey Free Plus issue to discuss with Dr. Jelfina C. Alouw, Secretary-General of ICC located in Jakarta, Indonesia. Prior to the ICC Session/Ministerial Meeting in November 2022, in order to include Monkey Free Plus in the public relation policy, other 19 members of the ICC will be invited to join the Monkey Fee Plus certification scheme as in Thailand.

Mr. Wisit Limluecha, Vice Chairman of the Thai Chamber of Commerce and Honorary President of the Thai Food Processors’ Association expressed his appreciation to DOA for stepping in. The entrepreneurs have been working on their own for the past 2 years to certify coconut plantations. As a government agency, DOA’s oversight or creating a guarantee label should help increase trading partners and international consumers’ confidence. They will be reassured that Thai coconut products are not derived from monkey labors. These collaborative efforts will boost a good image for the country.



Previously, the news on monkey abuses in picking coconuts were widely spread. Over 25,000 retailers in the US and Europe have stopped selling famous brands of coconut milk from Thailand. Some consumers stopped buying after PETA reported that Thai coconut milk was linked to animal abuse. These have caused severely adverse effects to the export of Thai coconut milk.

Thai coconut milk product is famous for being a high value export commodity. During 2017 – 2021, the export totaled 1.3 billion baht annually. A number of retailers in the US, in particular, have stopped carrying Thai coconut milk. It has a huge impact on exports because Thailand is the number one exporter of coconut milk to the US market, accounting for more than one-third of the total exports.

Source: <https://www.thansettakij.com/economy/trade/535572>

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