

Thailand launches 3 fertiliser measures over Hormuz crisis

The prolonged war in the Middle East, now stretching beyond one month, has affected imports of crude oil, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and fertiliser from the region, as cargo vessels can no longer pass through the Strait of Hormuz.



Nantapong Chiralerspong, director-general of the Trade Policy and Strategy Office and spokesman for the Ministry of Commerce, outlined the response to the fertiliser situation, saying previous assessments of fertiliser stocks had been based on the volume already available in the country.

Together with shipments expected to arrive as normal, those estimates had suggested an adequate supply. But the situation changed after the Strait of Hormuz was shut, preventing fertiliser vessels from arriving as planned. Urgent adjustments are therefore needed to avoid disruption to the agricultural sector, through three measures as follows:

- Accelerate negotiations to source fertiliser imports from countries not affected by shipping routes through the Strait of Hormuz. The government and private sector are currently in talks with four target countries, Malaysia, Brunei, Kazakhstan and Russia, to diversify supply risk. Negotiations are still underway.
- Step up diplomatic coordination to allow five fertiliser cargo vessels to pass through the Strait of Hormuz. The Commerce Minister has been holding discussions with relevant agencies and the Iranian ambassador to Thailand since March 31, 2026, and has submitted the names of all five vessels in a request for facilitation, as the shipments are important raw materials for production and a key cost factor for Thai farmers.
- Work with the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, as well as the private sector, to adjust fertiliser formulas to suit planting areas, reduce dependence on chemical fertiliser and urea, and promote greater use of organic fertiliser over the long term to help ease the impact of shortages.

According to the latest stock position as of March 15, 2026, Thailand had about 1.116 million tonnes of fertiliser remaining. In the second half of March 2026, another 0.037 million tonnes of urea were expected to arrive, which could be used to produce a further 0.25-0.3 million tonnes of mixed

fertiliser. This would help bolster reserves during the transition period while negotiations continue and the vessels await clearance.

Five fertiliser ships may yet pass through the Strait of Hormuz

The Ministry of Commerce believes the clearest and quickest option is to push for the five fertiliser vessels to pass through the Strait of Hormuz as soon as possible, because the cargo already exists and can immediately enter the domestic distribution system. If successful, this would help ease concerns over fertiliser supply beyond April.

Nantapong said it was important to create a common understanding of how farmers use urea. Urea is only one ingredient in actual use, and farmers do not apply 100% urea in every situation. Instead, urea is a component, or a “base fertiliser”, in many blends. In the past, fertilisers containing relatively high proportions of urea, around 30-35%, have been used, so urea itself will not run short.

He said that although there had been reports that fertiliser might last only until April 2026, imports were in fact still coming in, albeit in smaller volumes, because all countries were also facing fertiliser demand. Thailand still had urea stocks, but they had to be managed carefully. The Ministry of Agriculture and operators were therefore advising farmers to switch to formulas using less urea so that available supplies could be stretched and remain in use for longer.

“We do not want people to panic that fertiliser will run out this April, because imports are still coming in, just in smaller volumes. Fertiliser formulas therefore need to be adjusted by reducing the share of urea in order to extend usage for as long as possible under lower import conditions. The Ministry of Commerce already has measures in place to deal with the situation,” Nantapong said.

Fertiliser stocks may last only until April 2026

Earlier, Commerce Minister Suphajee Suthumpun said the conflict in the Middle East had directly affected the supply chain for the country’s key raw materials, particularly chemical fertiliser, petrochemicals and products that must be transported through the Strait of Hormuz.

At present, a total of five cargo vessels are stranded in the area and unable to enter, leaving domestic stock sufficient only until around April. This is down from the earlier assessment by the fertiliser association that reserves in the country would be enough until August 2026.

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