

Soft rice output in focus amid rising demand from the health-conscious



Several breeds of soft rice have become increasingly popular among health-conscious consumers, Owat Yinglarp, director of Bureau of Rice Production Extension and deputy spokesman of Department of Rice, said.

“Many domestic and overseas consumers are following the trend of organic foods, and soft rice is among products in high demand because of its low sugar content,” he said.

“A joint research by the Department of Rice and Mahidol University revealed that the Kor Khor 43 soft rice is around 20-30 per cent lower on the glysemic index than Hom Mali Jasmine Rice 105. It is a good alternative for consumers who prefer white rice to brown rice, especially those who have diabetes or kidney problems.”

Owat explained that although brown rice has more fibre and is considered healthier, kidney disease patients have to limit their consumption due to the higher amount of protein, which can strain the filtration function of the kidney.

“The Kor Khor 43 rice has low light sensitivity and is resilient to rice blast disease,” added Owat. “It can be harvested within 95-105 days after planting, with an average yield of 560kg per rai, making it excellent for farmers in flood-prone areas. The Kor Khor 43 also has a pleasant aroma when cooked, similar to Jasmine rice.”

“Thailand exports relatively low volumes of soft rice compared to other rice. The breeds that need more promotion in the international markets are Kor Khor 21, 45, 59, 77, 79 and Phitsanulok 60-1,” said Owat.

“The Department of Rice aims to promote the planting of soft rice in crop year 2020-21 over at least 2 million rai by providing subsidy to soft-rice farmers in selected areas. Currently farmers buy seeds of soft rice for around 200,000 rai. They should increase the produce soon to match market demand.”

Source: The Nation Thailand on 11 June 2020

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