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สำนักงานปลัดกระทรวงเกษตรและสหกรณ์

Cabinet nod to 1,000 baht aid for farmers,
2-baht per kilo increase in sugar



The Cabinet agreed on Tuesday to provide financial aid to farmers at a maximum of 20,000 baht per family.

Commerce Minister Phumtham Wechayachai said the Cabinet gave the go-ahead to the Agriculture and Cooperatives Ministry's proposal to grant aid to farmers at the rate of 1,000 baht per rai of farming land.

Each family will be eligible to receive aid for a maximum of 20 rai of farming land, or no more than 20,000 baht, he added.

The Agriculture Ministry will consult with the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives on details of how to disburse the funds. The discussion may be held on Friday or next Monday, and the money should be handed out within a month, Phumtham, who also doubles as deputy PM, said.

He added that the Cabinet has also approved the Cane and Sugar Board's proposal to increase the retail price of sugar by 2 baht per kilogram.

Initially, the board wanted to boost the price of sugar by 4 baht per kilo from the end of October, but the Cabinet put this on hold for two weeks by declaring sugar as a controlled commodity.

The Cabinet's resolution to regulate sugar prices led to protests by sugarcane farmers, who said they were planting their crops at a loss and wanted the price of sugar to be increased to offset their losses.

Phumtham said the Cabinet agreed to just a 2-baht increase to the price of sugar, but rejected the board's demand for another 2-baht increase to be put towards an environmental fund. The fund is meant to be spent on encouraging farmers not to burn their harvest.

Sugarcane farmers like setting fire to the crop, so only sugarcane is left and it is easier to harvest. However, this practice has been blamed for worsening air pollution.

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