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สำนักงานปลัดกระทรวงเกษตรและสหกรณ์

New policies raise prices paid for agricultural products



The prices paid for several agricultural products have increased in the past six months thanks to the Commerce Ministry's new policies, minister Phumtham Wechayachai said on Thursday.

These policies include advanced planning of future product management, produce distribution nationwide under a collaboration with the Department of Internal Trade and Thailand Post, keeping a fruit directory of both domestic and export markets, improving rice breeds and developing new farming zones, he said.



Phumtham, who is also a deputy prime minister, said that in the past six months the prices of Hom Mali and sticky rice rose by 12%, tapioca by 49%, oil palm by 9%, rubber by 22%, corn for animal feed by 6%, shallot up 27%, and oranges by 57%. Prices of export fruits also went up significantly, such as durians to 205 baht per kilogramme and mangosteen to 100 baht/kg.

Phumtham attributed the ministry's success to the efforts of all officials with related agencies and private partners, who have been working to improve their understanding of the products and use modern technology to solve existing problems.

The deputy PM said the top priority among agricultural problems is the cassava mosaic disease, which has caused Thailand's tapioca output to fall behind global demand by 20%.

Together with private partners, the ministry launched a smart farmer project in Nakhon Ratchasima to teach new and existing farmers the techniques to prevent the disease and limit its spread, he said.



Phumtham said the ministry is also negotiating for a government-to-government contract to sell rice to Indonesia, and expects the deal to be concluded in March, in time for the harvesting season of Thai rice.

"I believe Indonesia wants Thai rice. Our prices may be higher than those of our competitors, but our rice quality is also second to none," he said.

Phumtham added that the ministry is also working on G2G deals with other countries, but declined to reveal the details to prevent price undercutting by competitors.

According to the Thai Rice Exporters Association (TREA), Vietnam secured 400,000 tonnes of a 500,000-tonne order made by Indonesia in January. The rest of the order went to Pakistan and Myanmar, while Thai exporters secured no part in the deal.



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