



## WEEKLY UPDATE ON ASEAN PLUS THREE RICE SITUATIONS

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### **Cambodia**

***The sixth edition of the Cambodia Rice Forum will be held in January 2018 to tackle problems in rice sectors, due to Cambodia Rice Federation (CRF).*** The three-day event, 16-18 January 2018, will bring major stakeholders in rice sector together to discuss the future of local rice industry and create a joint effort to increase rice production and exports. According to the problems with sub-standard infrastructure, high logistical and production costs, and tougher competition abroad, the local rice industry has been struggling to turn profits and remain competitive. During the forum, participants will deliberate on which local rice brand should be pushed on the international stage. The selected one will be given priority in marketing campaigns that seek to promote Cambodian rice to international buyers. While, representatives of companies and farming associations will also discuss solutions and devise long-term strategies to tackle with the problems.

**Source:** Khmer Times. (2017, Dec 13). *New forum to tackle problems in rice sector.*

### **Lao PDR**

***Training workshop will help local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) boost rice exports to China.***

Laos continues to face challenges in sale of rice products, especially regarding quality and competition with suppliers from other countries. Also, due to a lack of right knowledge, many farmers were growing the crops with regardless of export standards. Resulting in this year, even though China agreed to purchase 20,000 tonnes of rice from Laos through the Xuanye (Lao) Co., Ltd., the country has only been able to supply 4,200 tonnes of rice. The training workshop, which was co-chaired by Lao Agro Processing Association, Trade Facilitation and Policy for Business Section, Trade and Product Promotion Department under the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and participants from the government and SMEs sector, was set with the aim to enhance opportunities for Lao's agricultural products to access the Chinese market. In the workshop, all participants will be allowed to exchange knowledge and discuss problems with previous exported products in the hope of reducing future problems, and also given a detailed explanation of the export management procedures and destination-specific requirements to help boost rice exports from Laos to China.

**Source:** Vientiane Times. (2017, Dec 15). *Lao SMEs training to boost agriculture exports to China.*

### **Myanmar**

***Myanmar hits the highest level of exported rice volume in 50 years, since 1930s, according to the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.***

In the current 2017-18 fiscal year, Myanmar has exported over 2 million tonnes of rice, worth 600 million USD, which is the highest volume of rice exports in 50 years. Rising in Myanmar rice exports was due to higher

demand from key markets such as China, and other countries in Africa, Asia, and Europe. Myanmar has already signed to export 300,000 tonnes of rice to Bangladesh under the government to government (G2G) agreement, and also been negotiating with China and Sri Lanka for rice exports under G2G. According to rising demand from international markets, Myanmar rice exported target are estimated to increase up to 2.8 million tonnes of rice worth a maximum of 800 million USD in this 2017-18 fiscal year, said assistant secretary of the Ministry of Commerce and joint-secretary of Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

**Source:** The Myanmar Times. (2017, Dec 19). *Myanmar rice exports highest in 50 years in 2017-18*; and The Global New Light of Myanmar, (2017, Dec 15). *Rice exports this FY exceed target*.

## **Philippines**

***Replacing rice import quota with 35 percent tariff will bring down rice prices by up to 7 Pesos per kilogram, according to Department of Finance.*** Due to the expired rice import quota or the quantitative restrictions (QR), the government will replace QR with tariffs which would bring several benefits to the economy. In accordance with the Finance Undersecretary, a 35 percent import tariff on rice in lieu of restricting import volumes will drop rice prices up to 7 Pesos (0.14 USD) per kilogram, while encourage private traders and lead to an influx of cheaper rice in the domestic market. Lower rice prices would benefit the majority of poor households that spend at least 20 percent of their budget on rice, adding that this will also help free some 730,000 Filipinos from poverty, said the authority.

\* 1 USD = 50.266 Pesos

**Source:** The Manila Times. (2017, Dec 19). *Rice prices to drop with QR removal*; and Philippine Daily Inquirer. (2017, Dec 18). *DOF: Replacing rice import quota with 35% tariff to slash prices by P7 per kilo*.

## **Viet Nam**

***Rice products which are produced in accordance with VietGAP or GlobalGAP standards will be certified under the national brand "Vietnam Rice".*** VietGAP or GlobalGAP standards refer to good agricultural practices to produce clean and safe farm products. This is one of the regulations drafted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) to build, promote, manage and certify the national brand – Vietnam Rice – for Vietnamese rice exports. According to the MARD, although Viet Nam exports 5 to 7 million tonnes of rice per year, the country earns revenue less than Thailand and India who's already famous for their rice products. Beside this, Viet Nam is also facing a great competition from the rice brands of the aforementioned countries. Thus, speeding up the promotion of the national rice brand is one of the urgent solution to help increase the value added and export revenue, said the MARD. The draft regulations on building, promoting, managing and certifying the national brand for Vietnamese rice exports are expected to be finalised in December.

**Source:** VietNamNet. (2017, Dec 18). *VietGap standards to merit national rice brand*.

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