# WEEKLY UPDATE ON ASEAN PLUS THREE RICE SITUATIONS

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## Brunei

***Brunei is trying to create a better-yielding rice strain to increase production.*** Regarding the effort to increase rice production and reduce heavy reliance on rice imports, the Government of Brunei Darussalam is working to create a higher-yielding rice strain that can produce 10-12 tonnes per hectare a season. Last year, in collaboration with Indonesia's Biogene Plantation, the government introduced a high-yielding strain named Sembada (188) with a capacity for 8 tonnes per hectare a season. The government also worked with a Myanmar firm to develop a hybrid rice strain called Thiti with the capability to reach 8 tonnes per hectare and hopes to introduce the rice variety in 2020. Moreover, the government currently collaborates with Yuan Longping High-Tech Agriculture, a China-based institution, to create hybrid rice that can produce an even higher yield. Even though the country is looking for hybrid rice with the capability to produce 10-12 tonnes per hectare, the highest yield so far was 9 tonnes per hectare due to some challenges with the country's soil condition, according to Brunei's Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism.

**Source:** MenaFN. (2019, Jul 20*). Brunei to boost rice output, ease rice imports.*

## Thailand

***Thailand's rice planting will be delayed as drought hits the country.*** The Thai government has asked rice farmers to delay planting rice because of drought as well as the pumping of water from reservoirs for irrigation threaten households supplies. Thai rice farmers usually plant their main crop in May, the beginning of the rainy season, for harvest during August and October. However, the rain has been sparse while drought has been declared in more than a dozen provinces in the northern and northeastern rice regions. In the meantime, the pumping of water to keep crops alive had led to a serious depletion of reservoirs. The biggest impact would be on jasmine rice, which is planted in August for harvest by the end of the year and grown largely in the northeast. According to the Meteorological Department, Thailand is going to experience the worst drought in a decade as rainfall in the main rice-growing regions was at 12 percent below an average. While rain in August and November was expected to be 5 to 10 percent below average.

**Source:** Bangkok post. (2019, Jul 17). *Dept warns of worst drought in decade.; and* Reuters. (2019, Jul 22). *Thai farmers asked to delay rice planting as drought bites.*

***Chiang Mai province is planned to delay rice planting and raising fish to prevent water shortage in the province.*** The Chiang Mai provincial administration will seek cooperation from farmers to delay planting rice and raising fish in rivers when the water level is low. According to Deputy Governor of Chiang Mai, the remaining water would be enough for consumption rate at about one million cubic meters per month. However, water reservoirs in the northern province could not be released for irrigation purpose. Therefore, farmers should refrain from planting rice for now, while farmers who raise fish should stop after harvesting. The provincial administration will do its best to help farmers, who planted crops earlier, to get compensation. Besides, the provincial administration was considering

digging underground wells in the southern part of the province, which is outside existing irrigation projects, to prevent water shortages in the future. The officials will also relocate water pumps in the southern districts from downstream to upstream of reservoirs, resulting the pumps could draw water to alleviate the water shortage, added Deputy Governor.

**Source:** The nation Thailand. (2019, Jul 22). *Chiang Mai tells farmers to delay planting rice, raising fish.*

## Viet Nam

***Viet Nam receives support in applying remote-sensing technology in rice production from Switzerland.*** On 17 July 2019, in Hanoi, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) signed an agreement to implement the project on "Remote Sensing-based Information and Insurance for Crops in Emerging Economies–third phase" (RIICE 3). Under the agreement, the SDC will provide non-refundable aid worth 365,000 CHF (nearly 369,000 USD) for the project. The funding aims to carry out the final steps to integrate RIICE into MARD's rice cultivation and production monitoring system. Viet Nam has applied technologies such as remote sensing and cloud computing to assist relevant sides in the rice-production value chain. With such technologies, agricultural agencies can promptly access accurate data resulting in improving efficiency in rice production as well as the management of natural disaster risks. The project has helped Viet Nam promote agricultural restructuring, especially in the context of climate change. The overall aim of the project is also to reduce the vulnerability of rice farmers in low-income countries in Asia and beyond.

*1 USD = 0.99 CHF

Source: Nhan Dan. (2019, Jul 18). *Vietnam receives support in applying remote-sensor technology in rice production.*

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