



## WEEKLY UPDATE ON ASEAN PLUS THREE RICE SITUATIONS

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### Cambodia

#### ***Cambodian rice exports to China tends to increase significantly this year.***

From January to October 2019, China imported 40 percent rice of Cambodian rice, which was more than the same period last year. According to the Secretariat of One Window Service for Rice Export Formality (SOWS-REF), Cambodia shipped 457,940 tonnes of milled rice to foreign markets, a 5-percent higher than the same time last year. Of this volume, the shipment of 184,844 tonnes of milled rice was sent to China. As the Chinese government allowed Cambodia to export 300,000 tonnes of rice to the country, this year, Cambodia is confident to achieve the goal. Moreover, earlier this year, the President of the People's Republic of China pledged to increase the rice quota by purchasing 400,000 tonnes of rice from Cambodia in order to boost bilateral trade between the countries. After achieving 300,000 tonnes of rice exports, Cambodia will start working towards the new target of 400,000 tonnes for the next year.

**Source:** Khmer Times. (2019, Nov 15). *China's rice imports from Kingdom on the rise.*

### Thailand

#### ***The government was urged to focus on rice variety improvement after failing to win the prize for the second year in a row.***

The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC) was urged to prioritise the development and improvement of Thai rice varieties after Hom Mali rice failed to win the World's Best Rice award for the second year in a row. The 2019's award went to ST24 rice from Viet Nam, while Cambodia's premium fragrant rice, Malys Angkor won the honours in 2018. Hom Mali rice had won the honours in 2009, 2010, 2014, 2016, and 2017. Missing the award twice in a row indicates that the rivals have been continually working on developing their products. Regarding the price, Hom Mali rice goes for 1,100-1,200 USD a tonne, whereas Vietnamese rice is priced at 600 USD a tonne. This is a worry for Thailand as the Vietnamese product is almost half the price of Thai rice. If nothing is done to improve the quality or create a big difference, Thai rice may become a thing of the five-year past because buyers will switch to the cheaper ones, according to the Thai Rice Exporters Association (TREA).

**Source:** Bangkok Post. (2019, Nov 18). *Farmers urge action after top rice fails to win prize.*

### Viet Nam

#### ***The falling in Vietnamese rice prices cut down the country's rice export revenue.***

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), from January to October 2019, Viet Nam exported 5.56 million tonnes of rice worth 2.43 billion USD, up 6.1 percent in volume but down 9.1 percent in value year-on-year. The downward rice prices, which sometimes hit the lowest in 12 years, were the major reason behind the fall in rice export revenue during the period. In the first nine months of this year, the average rice price was 435.6 USD per tonne, a 13.4 percent drop from the same period last year. Viet Nam has faced difficulties in exporting rice to China. The figures dropped considerably since 2018 as China has high rice stockpile and looked to

diversify its suppliers. Also, a lack of new contracts and decreasing demand from the Philippines, the major market of Viet Nam, have pressured on Vietnamese rice prices. Therefore, amid this situation, it is necessary to remove obstacles in exports to China, while exploring new markets, especially Africa and ASEAN, as well as to develop processing and enhance the rice value chain.

**Source:** Vietnam Plus. (2019, Nov 13). *Rice export revenue suffers from price drop.*

***An organic rice variety of Viet Nam awarded the world's best rice in 2019.***

On 12 November 2019, Viet Nam's organic rice variety from the southern province of Soc Trang named ST24 was crowned the world's best rice at The Rice Trader (TRT) World Rice Conference 2019 in Manila, the Philippines. This is the first time that Vietnamese rice has been awarded this title. The ST24 variety is recognised as a specialty of Soc Trang province, which was developed by a group of Soc Trang-based agricultural engineers. The variety has a capability to yield up to 8.5 tonnes per hectare and can provide 2-3 crops per year, adding that it has been planted widely in the Mekong Delta region, as well as other localities, since 2010. The ST24 was officially recognised as a national rice variety in last March. Meanwhile, it was considered as a climate-resilient one in the Mekong Delta as it can adapt to saline and aluminous soil and is suitable for rice-shrimp or inter-cropping areas.

**Source:** Bizhub. (2019, Nov13). *Viet Nam's rice crowned the best at 2019 World Rice Conference.*

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