



WEEKLY UPDATE ON ASEAN PLUS THREE RICE SITUATIONS

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Philippines

The Philippines is preparing to export an initial of organic rice to the United States (US) in February 2020.

According to the Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA), Mindanawon farmers will start the initial organic rice shipment of 500 bags, weighing 50 kilogrammes per bag, to the EU in the next month and it is currently in an ongoing preparation. The rice was produced by farmers of the North Cotabato-based Don Bosco Multipurpose Cooperative, which own the Bios Dynamis brand. Additionally, the regular shipment is expected to begin in April 2020, with rice supply coming from the province of South Cotabato, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, and Davao del Sur. Besides, the MinDA has yet determined the actual number of farmers involved in the export to the US but estimated that it would involve around 300 hectares of farmland planted with organic rice.

Source: Minda News. (2020, Jan 21). *Mindanao organic rice farmers to export to US beginning next month.*

Thailand

Thailand's 2020 rice exports are forecast to fall to the lowest in seven years.

According to the Thai Rice Exporters Association (TREA), Thailand's rice exports in 2020 are expected to drop to 7.5 million tonnes,

which is the lowest in seven years since Thailand exported 6.6 million tonnes of rice in 2013, as the strong baht reduces country's competitiveness against competitors. Thai rice export volumes have declined for two consecutive years since hitting a record 11.60 million tonnes in 2017. The grim forecast came after Thailand fell short of its initial 2019 target by exporting 7.8 million tonnes of rice. Furthermore, the prices of Thai 5 percent broken rice remained high well into 2020 mainly due to the baht appreciation, which was Asia's strongest-performing currency in 2019 with appreciating by nearly 9 percent. Apart from this, the drought also threatens to reduce supply in 2020 and driving up local rice prices.

Source: Reuters. (2020, Jan 16). *Thailand's 2020 rice exports forecast to fall to lowest in seven years.*

Myanmar

Myanmar is set to expand the fortified rice programme nationwide in 2020.

According to the Department of Social Welfare (DSW), the fortified rice programme among preschoolers will be expanded nationwide in order to improve children's health and reduce nutritional deficiencies. The programme has been operated to the preschool level in Yangon and Mandalay regions and it is expected to extend to other parts of country this year. However, the DSW can currently supply fortified rice to only preschools that are near wholesale market because of high transportation costs, especially in the remote area. Regarding this, the department is negotiating with the millers to ensure an adequate supply and create wholesale markets to cover the whole country, as aiming to cover all pre-primary school.

Source: Myanmar Times. (2020, Jan 22). *Government to expand nationwide fortified rice programme.*

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