



WEEKLY UPDATE ON ASEAN PLUS THREE RICE SITUATIONS

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Cambodia

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) join hands in improving Cambodia's rice sector.

On 20 May 2020, the Cambodian MAFF signed an agreement with the IRRI to improve the country's rice sector by enhancing the analysis, productivity, and resilience of values-chain networks. Cambodia places strategic importance in strengthening the role of the agriculture sector with rice based-farming systems, which are keys to generating jobs, ensuring food security, reducing poverty and developing rural areas. While Cambodia's rice sector continues to develop, new challenges will occur, such as climate change, pests and diseases, drought, decreasing productivity, and environmental degradation. Therefore, the IRRI's research will be crucial to address these challenges.

Source: The Phnom Penh Post. (2020, May 20). *Cambodia, IRRI ink agreement to promote rice.*

Philippines

The Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) allots cash aid worth about 1.5 billion pesos (29.5 million USD) to support the rice farmers.

The DBP has disbursed an unconditional cash aid to the 270,000 rice farmers, with 5,000 pesos (98.51 USD) of cash aid each, worth over 1.458 billion pesos (28.7 USD) in total. This assistance is under the Rice Farmers Financial Assistance (RFFA) programme of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and it covers rice farmers in 33 rice-producing provinces who have cultivation land ranging between 500 square meters (0.05 hectare) to two hectares. The cash aid distribution aims to help farmers to cope with an ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and to compensate for the income loss due to falling prices of unmilled rice.

*1 USD = 50.74 pesos

**1 hectare = 10,000 square meters

1 square meter = 0.0001 hectare

Source: Inquirer. (2020, May 22). *DBP disburses P1.5B in cash aid to small rice farmers.*

Thailand

Ministry of Commerce (MOC) uses blockchain technology to boost the organic rice trade and elevate agriculture sector.

The MOC has registered a domain for Thai farm and food products, TraceThai.com, which is part of an ongoing project in supporting Thai farmers and Thai organic rice exporters. The local organic rice was chosen by the office as a pilot product because of its high value and export potential, as well as its well-established verification and standardisation processes. The goal of the project is to provide systematic verification for buyers and importers by using the blockchain system, which is transparent, secure, and trustworthy character, as aiming to generate the stronger trust and better response to the demand of consumers. Additionally, the project will support trade facilitation in the digital era,

increase the efficiency of cross-border trade, reduce costs, and elevate the whole value-chain of Thai agriculture.

Source: Bangkok Post. (2020, May 20). *Organic rice gets trade boost.*

Thailand expects to harvest 24.56 million tonnes of rice this year.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC), the Rice Policy and Management Committee forecast that from November 2019 to April 2020, the Chao Phraya river basin would have 5.5 billion cubic meters of water, which would cover 59 percent of the country's water supply. Regarding this, the committee resolved the issue to boost rice crops over the 2020-2021 period by allocating 59.88 million rai (9.5 million hectares) to the grain, of which 27.5 million rai (4.4 million hectares) for jasmine rice, 2.084 million rai (333,440 hectares) for Pathum Thani rice, 13.48 million rai (2.1 million hectares) for normal rice, 16.25 million rai (2.6 million hectares) for sticky rice, and 559,000 rai (89,440 hectares) for specific types of rice. All this farmland is expected to produce up to 24.56 million tonnes.

*1 hectare = 6.25 rai

1 rai = 0.16 hectare

Source: Nation. (2020, May 22). *Irrigation dept bets on big rice harvest this year.*

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