



WEEKLY UPDATE ON ASEAN PLUS THREE RICE SITUATIONS

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Lao PDR

Laos targets 4.1 percent agricultural growth in 2026 to strengthen food security and exports

Laos' Ministry of Agriculture and Environment aims for 4.1 percent growth in the agricultural sector in 2026, with the sector expected to contribute 20.7 percent to the gross domestic product (GDP), driven by stronger food security, export expansion, improved land management, and sustainable development. In the first half of the year, Laos expanded market access for 84 agricultural and livestock products, including 41 approved for export to China. Agricultural exports reached 752 million USD in the first five months, led by bananas, cassava products, watermelons, and coffee. Livestock exports totaled 81.2 million USD, and timber and forest product exports reached 158.6 million USD. In addition, the ministry is promoting modern farming technologies, strengthening cooperatives, improving land registration, developing carbon credit regulations, and advancing digital land management systems. These initiatives are part of a broader strategy to enhance economic resilience, promote green growth, and support long-term rural development.

Source: Vientiane Times. (2026, June 30). *Agriculture ministry boosts exports, targets 4.1 percent growth*

Philippines

USDA forecasts Philippines' rice imports to reach 5.7 million tonnes in 2026

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has raised its 2026 forecast for Philippines rice imports to 5.7 million metric tonnes (MT), citing lower domestic production caused by rising input costs, shrinking planting areas, and potential water shortages. The USDA expects Philippines milled rice production to fall to 12.3 million MT, due to higher fertiliser prices and reduced farmer incentives weighing on output. The agency also warned that low reservoir levels and the risk of a moderate to strong El Niño later in 2026 could further reduce harvests. The higher import forecast exceeds the Philippines Department of Agriculture's estimate of 4.8 million MT, highlighting continued reliance on imports to maintain domestic rice supplies despite government support measures for farmers.

Source: Vietnam Plus. (2026, June 29). *Philippines forecast to import 5.7 million tonnes of rice in 2026.*

Thailand

Thailand launches free AI training to help farmers and agri-SMEs boost online sales

The Thai government has partnered with Meta to launch a free AI and digital business training programme for at least 2,000 farmers and agricultural SMEs, helping them build brands, create online content, and use AI tools to grow sales through Facebook and Instagram. The initiative, led by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, and Meta, aims to reduce farmers' reliance on intermediaries by enabling direct access to consumers and international markets.

Source: Vietnam Plus. (2026, June 30). *Thailand, Meta provide free AI training for farmers, SMEs.*

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