WEEKLY UPDATE ON ASEAN PLUS THREE RICE SITUATIONS

No. 493
11 - 17 November 2026

The Philippines

Philippine Rice Imports Near Record High Amid El Niño Threat

The Philippines imported 4.49 million MT of rice as of 29 October 2026, already exceeding the 3.39 million MT imported in the whole of 2025, with Viet Nam accounting for 62.3 percent (2.79 million MT) and Thailand 14.8 percent (666,201 MT). The volume was close to the 2024 record of 4.8 million MT. The Department of Agriculture (DA) will continue imports to offset an expected 900,000–1 million MT decline in domestic production due to El Niño, which had caused 9.99 billion PHP (156.73 million USD) in agricultural losses as of 11 November 2026.

*1 USD = 63.74 PHP

Source: Inquirer.net. (2026, November 16). *Rice imports balloon as El Niño ravages farms.*

Thailand

Thai Rice Exports to ASEAN Surge 109 percent in First Nine Months of 2026

Thailand's rice exports to ASEAN surged 109 percent year on year to 1.25 million MT during January–September 2026, raising ASEAN's share of Thailand's total rice exports to 25.2 percent from 9.7 percent in the same period of 2025. Malaysia and the Philippines were the fastest-growing regional markets, with combined shipments to the two countries exceeding 750,000 MT. The Department of Foreign Trade attributed the increase to rising demand, food security measures and confidence in Thai rice quality, noting that stronger ASEAN demand helped offset slower exports to other markets, particularly the Middle East. Thailand will continue to improve rice quality, develop new rice varieties and enhance productivity and cost-effectiveness to meet growing regional demand.

Source: Thai PBS World. (2026, November 11). *ASEAN emerges as key growth market for Thai rice exports.*

Republic of Korea

Republic of Korea's Rice Production Falls for Fifth Consecutive Year in 2026

According to the Ministry of Data and Statistics, the Republic of Korea's rice production fell for the fifth consecutive year in 2026, declining 0.9 percent year on year to 3.5 million MT, the fourth-lowest level since records began in 1965. The rice cultivation area also dropped 1.1 percent to a record low of 670,000 hectares, reflecting changing dietary habits and government efforts to control production while encouraging farmers to diversify into other crops. Despite lower overall output, rice yield increased 0.2 percent to 524 kg per 1,000 m^2 (0.1 hectare). South Jeolla Province and Gwangju were the largest producing areas, with combined output of 736,000 MT, followed by South Chungcheong (681,000 MT) and North Jeolla (526,000 MT).

*1 hectare = 10,000 square metres

Source: The Korea Herald. (2026, November 13). *S. Korea's rice production falls for 5th year in 2026 amid changing diets.*

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