



MOAC to impel Thailand towards becoming the superpower of the world cricket market

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATIVES, THAILAND / OFFICE OF AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS, LOS ANGELES

The global market for crickets is becoming very lucrative. It is Thailand's goal to develop its reputation as the leader in this market. Dr. Chalermchai Sri-on, Minister of Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC) has seen the golden opportunity to push Thailand forward as a superpower of the world cricket market through his policies by (1) assigning all the integrated agencies to raise the cricket farming operations to meet standards, (2) generating income for Thai farmers (3) driving Thai agricultural and food industry to become the world's kitchen. In the meantime, the Office of Agricultural Economics (OAE), in response to such policies, revealed the potential of "Agriculture Produces and Commerce Sells" strategy that in line with the King's science for sustainable development, and will provide its Big Data to drive the agro-industry in the New Normal era.

Due to the increasing trend of cricket consumption in the world and the popularity of Thai crickets among the export markets, especially, the United States, European Union, Japan and China. This is resulted in a rapidly expanding export markets with growth rate of up to 23 percent per year. In addition, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has been encouraging people around the world to consume crickets as a good source of protein. Also, it is inexpensive, easy to find locally and can be prepared or processed in a variety of ways such as fresh, fried, frozen, crispy roasted or canned.

Based on this, the MOAC has established a policy to promote cricket farming by assigning agencies under the MOAC to develop the standard of cricket farming which will help building trust in the products; and also supporting breeding which will lead to an increase in productivity. This will ultimately result in an increase of the farmers' income.

The MOAC also targeted the expansion of the cricket farming area in the Northeast region of Thailand, under "The Northeastern Economic Bio-Insect Agriculture Project", This is expected to increase the Northeast Gross Regional Product (GRP).

Currently, farmers gather into a large plot of land to farm the crickets. The popular species they raise including *Gryllus Bimaculatus* Degeeer, *Teleogryllus Testaceus* Walker and *Modicogryllus Confirmata* Walker. The major cricket farming areas are located in the province of Khon Kaen, Kalasin, Nakhon Phanom, Buriram and Maha Sarakham.

In the year 2018, there were more than 20,000 cricket farms nationwide, with a production capacity of over 700 tons/year and total value of over 1,000 million baht/year. The average cost of production was 41 baht/kilogram, the raising period ranges from 45 - 50 days/generation (6 generations/year) and with the average selling price of 80 baht/kilogram generated average net income (profit) of 163,464 baht/year

Cricket farming is not only easy to do but also supporting the environment. In addition to be used for household consumption as food, it can also be used as animal feed, and most importantly, it can be exported. This will help towards the development of Thai agro and food industry and raise Thailand to be the world's kitchen.

Mr. Rapibhat Chandarasrivongs, Secretary-General of the Office of Agricultural Economics (OAE), was participating in a forum of "The food industry in the future: the future of the Northeast", The first meeting of the year 2020, "Northeastern Crickets for the Future of the Food Industry", was held at Kosa Hotel, Khon Kaen Province. The participants included the representatives from the Federation of Thai Industries, Khon Kaen University, Maha Sarakham University, National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards, and Department of Livestock Development.

Mr. Chandarasrivongs, stated that, to propel the cricket promotion policy, OAE has planned to: (1) Integrate with relevant agencies in accordance with the Minister of MOAC's "Agriculture Produces and Commercial sells" approach. (2) Create strategies that are in line with the 20-year national strategy to drive the cricket industry forward; the promotion and development of bio-based agriculture new economic insects in the Northeast. (3) Cooperate with all sectors to promote cricket farming in accordance with the sufficiency economy based on the King's science guidelines for sustainable development. (4) Develop a network of cricket farmers and young smart farmers and integrate them with the Center for Integrated Economic Insect Innovation Research and Development.

Importantly, as an agency that operates a database on agricultural economy, OAE has been integrated with 22 agencies under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and with other external ministries to share National Agricultural Big Data Center's (NABC) database. This database is linking the production and marketing information for policy management based on "demand driven", which targeting on premium product markets, as well as niche markets

Therefore, OAE is ready to provide information in various fields including crops, livestock and economic insects. This includes production and marketing data to support and participate in driving the agricultural and food industry and improving the livelihoods of farmers in the New Normal era following sufficiency economy and sustainable development.

Source: <https://www.ryt9.com/s/prg/3143586>

Thailand Office of Agricultural Affairs, Los Angeles
July 2020