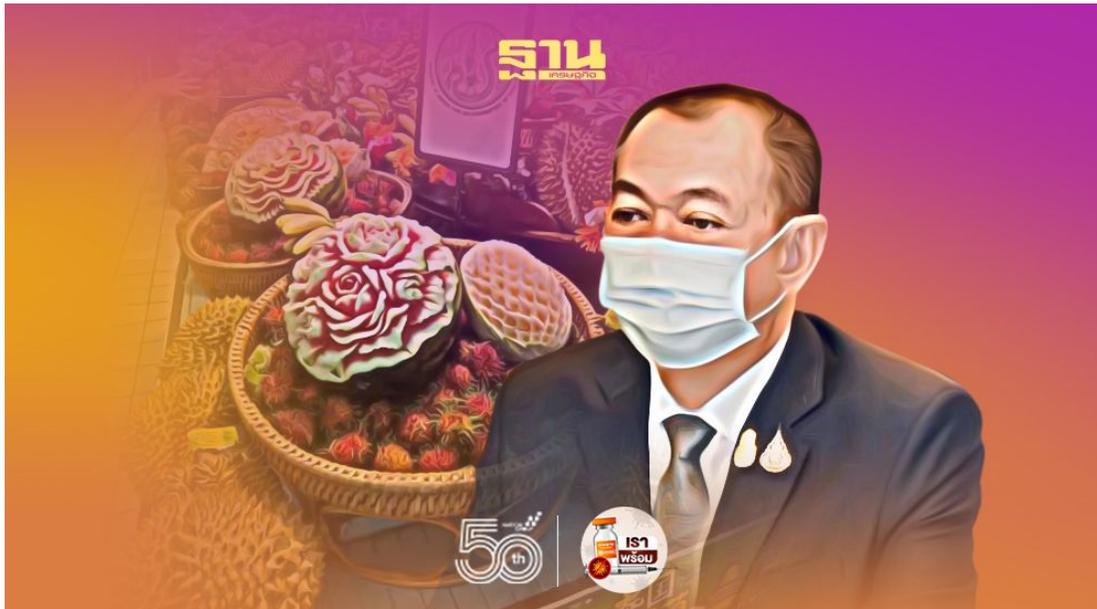




## MOAC: Shaping up Thailand's Air Cargo as ASEAN's Agricultural and Food Production and Transportation Hub



The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC) has moved forward with "5 strategies" and joined hands with the private sector to overcome the Covid-19 crisis. It will accelerate the development of air cargo and set up a Center for Agricultural Product and Food Quality Inspection to increase export potential. The pilot project is to be launched at Don Mueang Airport before expanding to Suvarnabhumi International Airport. The ultimate goal is to become the ASEAN's Agricultural and Food Production and Transportation Hub.

Mr. Alongkorn Polaboot, Advisor to the Minister of MOAC, revealed on June 13, 2021 that Minister Chalermchai Sree-on has instructed the relevant agencies to accelerate the development of the air transport system or Agriculture and Food Air Cargo Terminal (AFCT) for





the export of agricultural and food products. This will be done by establishing a “Center for Agricultural Product and Food Quality Inspection” later.

The pilot project will begin at Don Mueang International Airport. The next priority is Suvarnabhumi International Airport and then expanding to regional airports that are ready, such as Chiang Mai, Khon Kaen, Hat Yai, Phuket, etc. This will increase the country's competitiveness in the agricultural and food sector and provide an opportunity for Thailand with respect to the Covid-19 crisis.

Mr. Polaboot explained that exporting agricultural and food products requires convenience, promptness, and delivery to end customers around the world with quality and international standards while maintaining freshness, cleanliness, deliciousness and extending the shelf life of food for consumption or sale.

The Center for Agricultural and Food Quality Inspection at the Cargo Terminal will provide certification services for agricultural products and food for export according to the conditions of the importing country and complying with international standards. The agricultural products and food comprises of crops, fishery and livestock products. The center will provide general service to customers and act as a one-stop area for achieving the goal of becoming ASEAN's agricultural and food production and transport hub.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted the flow of exports and imports of agricultural products in the past year, the Food Institute projected an estimate of Thai food exports to be worth 1.08-1.10 trillion baht in 2021, an increase of 10.2-12.2% comparing to last year's contraction from the impact of COVID-19.

The close cooperation among the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the Ministry of Commerce and the Private Sector is an important mechanism to support the export of safe and international standards equivalent Thai agricultural and food products. This clearly plays an important role in maintaining the confidence of the international market, increasing





the volume and value and substantially bringing a positive impact on the overall economy of the country in the future.

Mr. Polaboot further stated that this project is part of Dr. Sree-on's strategic move on "Production Lead Market". The strategic drives include 5 strategies and 15 main policy guidelines. Of these, the "Production Lead The Market" is the main strategy to reform the agricultural sector and the development of a logistics system in agriculture responding to the supply chain changes as well as export and import facilitations.

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