



WEEKLY UPDATE ON ASEAN PLUS THREE FOOD SECURITY RELATED INFORMATION

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Lao PDR

There are two projects from the World Food Programme funded by the U.S. Government for supporting education and nutrition for Laotian children. School Meal Programme, since 2008, aims to provide a nutritious snack or lunch for around 140,000 children in 1,450 schools across seven provinces each day whereas the Local and Regional Purchase Programme is to link school meals with local agriculture production, to build capacity of smallholder farmers and to create a local market. Reportedly, every dollar invested in school meals, economic returns from health, education and productivity when those children grow up range from three to eight dollars.

Source: Lao News Agency (2017, Mar 13). *U.S. and WFP Promote Children's Education and Nutrition.*

Philippines

The National Food Authority (NFA) urgently needs to import rice to replenish its inventory for effective responses to the needs of emergency or calamity victims in the coming lean months. The NFA has to immediately

import 250,000 tonnes of rice within April 2017 for prepositioning the stocks across the country. In addition, the NFA has been prescribed by the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council (LEDAC) to maintain a rice buffer stock to last for 15 days at any given time and for 30 days at the onset of the lean months from July to September, based on daily consumption requirement of 32,150 tonnes or 643,000 bags.

Source: National Food Authority (2017, Mar 27). *NFA Needs Rice Imports for Food Security Buffer Stock.* News.

Thailand

Government agencies have offered assistance to farmers in several provinces affected by the drought crisis. In Nakhon Ratchasima, artificial rains were operated to save crops and to raise water in Lamtaklong Dam for household consumption in summer. In Chainat, water were released daily from the dam to keep saltwater away for healthy ecosystem whereas farmers were asked to abstain from growing off-season rice. In Trat, local authorities were drilling underground water to help residents suffering from a water shortage.

Source: National News Bureau of Thailand (2017, Mar 23). *Govt agencies helping drought-affected farmers.*

Viet Nam

The average water level of many parts of the Hong River has remarkably reduced in recent years, negatively affecting agricultural production and livelihoods in the northern lowland and midland areas. The lowest point of water level was at 2.2 metres while depression of the river bottom and excessive sand exploitation are the reasons. This situation has been worsened by low rainfall in the northern region. The Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development has annually cooperated with related units to

take water from hydropower reservoirs as a supplement to ensure enough water for 630,000 hectares of rice of 12 localities in the midland and lowland areas. Other actions include water situation reviews and upgrades of irrigation systems, also.

Source: Viet Nam News (2017, Mar 25). *Falling Hong river water levels hurting VN agriculture.*

China

Researchers found that a high level of surface ozone pollution is causing problems on rice situation in China. This pollution stems from nitrogen oxides emissions from cars and industries, causing rice yield losses by as much as 2 percent. This figure is serious because 30 percent of global rice production comes from China. However, rice yield losses in China will be higher due to forecast of increased ozone pollution. This can harm global food security through increase in rice price by 20 percent in coming years, leaving poor countries at increased rice of malnutrition and starvation.

Source: The Straits Times (2017, Mar 23). *China's surface ozone pollution damaging rice yields, threatens global food security: Study.*

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