



WEEKLY UPDATE ON ASEAN PLUS THREE RICE SITUATIONS

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Cambodia

Milled rice exports fell 3.4 percent due to a lack of paddy in warehouses.

According to a report from the Secretariat of the One Window Service for Rice Export Formality (SOWS-REF), during January to March 2018, milled rice exports dropped around 3.4 percent to 161,115 tonnes of rice, compared with 166,678 tonnes in the same period of 2017. In February alone, only 50,683 tonnes of milled rice were exported, 12.7 percent less than the 57,127 tonnes in 2017. In the next three months, rice exports will not increase as it is difficult to buy paddy for processing to meet demand, said vice-president of the Cambodia Rice Federation (CRF). In addition to the fragrant rice and premium rice, Cambodia could lose Malaysian market which would turn to Viet Nam instead due to the lower price, said CEO of Amru Rice, one of the leading rice exporters in Cambodia.

Source: Khmer Times. (2018, Apr 6). *Paddy rice shortage hits exports.*

Indonesia

The Ministry of Agriculture has allocated 1.45 billion USD to modernise rice sector.

The money has been allocated to the four state-owned enterprises in the food sector for the development of post-harvest infrastructure in order to collect efficiently farmers' production. On 3 April 2018, the

ministry organised a meeting with the mentioned enterprises to discuss about modernisation of rice industry, cutting short the supply chain of rice for farmers, and reducing the price at the consumer level. According to this, the four companies have been tasked with efficient collecting the farmers' paddy in production areas in a bid to cut short supply chain and lower the price. To make farmers get a better price, the ministry also aims to accelerate the post-harvest process with a focus on the provision of dryers, combine harvesters, rice milling units, and packaging units, said the Agriculture Minister.

Source: ANTARA News. (2018, Apr 4). *Ministry allocates Rp20 trillion for post-harvest infrastructure.*

Myanmar

Rice exports hit more than 3.5 million tonnes in 2017-18 fiscal year.

From 1 April 2017 to 23 March 2018, Myanmar has earned over 1.11 billion USD from the exports of 2.89 million tonnes of rice and 620,696 tonnes of broken rice via border trade and sea trade to 57 countries. Border trade represented 1.81 million tonnes worth 607 million USD, while sea trade represented 1.69 million tonnes worth over 506 million USD. Last year, the total rice exports via border trade accounted for 70 percent, while 30 percent for sea trade. For this year, rice exports via sea route has increased to 48 percent due to the extension of rice market. By 2020-21 fiscal year, Myanmar expected to export up to 4 million tonnes, earning 1.5 billion USD in value, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

Source: Eleven Myanmar. (2018, Apr 7). *Rice export earnings hit over \$ 1.11 bln in 2017-2018 FY; and Xinhua. (2018, Apr 7). Myanmar earns over 1.1 bln USD from rice export in FY 2017-18.*

Philippines

The Philippines plans to order an emergency purchase of 250,000-tonne rice to beef up depleted state stockpiles.

In accordance with the National Food Authority (NFA) rice shortage at present, President Rodrigo Duterte, on 5 April 2018,

ordered NFA Administrator, Jason Aquino, to proceed the emergency importation ignoring the NFA Council approval. Regarding to this, NFA Administrator has ordered the emergency importation of 250,000-tonne rice under the government-to-government (G2G) scheme. The NFA will purchase rice from the governments of Viet Nam and Thailand where the country has an existing memorandum of understanding (MOU). The initial shipments are expected to arrive by the end of May 2018 through the ports in Cebu, Davao, and Manila. In addition to another 250,000 tonnes of rice earlier approved via the government-to-private (G2P) scheme, which was set to arrive the country by May, was seen to delay the arrival of rice to June or July 2018, due to lengthy process for procurement. Therefore, the 500,000 tonnes of rice will be imported to the Philippines this year.

Source: CNN Philippines. (2018, Apr 7). *Duterte to NFA: Ignore council, import rice*; The Manila Times. (2018, Apr 7). *Emergency rice imports ordered*; Philippine Daily Inquirer. (2018, Apr 7). *PH to import 500,000 MT of rice this year*; and Reuters. (2018, Apr 8). *Philippines plans to import 250,000 tonnes rice via open tender*.

Viet Nam

High import demand continues boosting Vietnamese rice exports. According to the Chairman of the Vietnam Food Association (VFA), in late March 2018, the State Logistics Agency of Indonesia (Bulog) signed contracts to purchase 300,000 tonnes of rice from Viet Nam and 200,000 tonnes from Thailand. Bulog invited the Vietnam Northern Food Corporation (Vinafood 1) and the Vietnam Southern Food Corporation (Vinafood 2) to supply the rice. The contract will be carried out from April to July this year. Also, the Philippines, another major market, will import 250,000 tonnes of rice from Viet Nam and Thailand to augment its rice reserves. The auction of the Philippines will open in May this year. Meanwhile, rice import demand from China and Malaysia has also helped warm up the Asian rice market, promising good prospects for Viet Nam's rice shipment in the second quarter.

Source: Vietnam Plus. (2018, Apr 4). *Import demand continues boosting Vietnam's rice export*.

The Mekong Delta has become vibrant since mid-March 2018 in accordance with abundant rice supply. About 980,000 hectares of winter-spring crop in Mekong Delta, the biggest rice hub in Viet Nam, had been harvested as of 29 March 2018 with average productivity of 6.5 to 6.6 tonnes of paddy rice per hectare, according to the Agriculture Ministry's Department of Crop Production. Additionally, this year's Vietnamese rice exports could reach 6.7 million tonnes due to shipments to China and expansion in other markets, predicted The US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Source: Vietnam Plus. (2018, Apr 4). *Import demand continues boosting Vietnam's rice export*.

China

Chinese scientists found a gene that increase rice yields in saline soil. The gene, named STRK1, is essential in reducing the harm caused by high salt infiltration, while increasing salt tolerance of rice, according to the research by Hunan University and Shanghai Institute for Biological Sciences under the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The achievement of the research team led by Professor Liu Xuanming and Lin Jianzhong was published in the latest issue of "Plant Cell". Salinisation of cultivated land affects the growth of grain crops and threatens food security. Even rice is the dominant grain crop in China, it is vulnerable to high salt environments which the country has 100 million hectares of saline-alkali land. Therefore, the STRK1 can help increase rice yields in saline soil and lay a foundation for related studies in breeding, said the Professor Lin.

Source: Xinhua. (2018, Apr 8). *Chinese scientists find gene that increases rice yields in saline soil*.

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