



สำนักงานที่ปรึกษาการเกษตรต่างประเทศ
ประจำกรุงวอชิงตัน ดี.ซี.

Office of Agricultural Affairs - Royal Thai Embassy - Washington DC

Ministry of Ag seeks to prevent and resolve burning agricultural areas causing PM 2.5 pollution



Captain Thamanat Prompao, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives chaired the meeting of the Committee on Prevention and Resolving PM 2.5 Pollution in Agricultural Sector. In attendance were executives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC) and Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. The meeting was aimed at determining preventive measures and solving the problems derived from burning rice, corn and sugarcane farming areas. Lessons learned and problems encountered from the past year were taken into consideration and used as a guidance for this year operation. The meeting was updated on current PM 2.5 pollution, burning situation, MOAC actions during 2022/2023 as well as challenges faced by concerned agencies.

MOAC is planning to prevent and resolve the burning issues for 2023/2024 through proactive implementation. There 3R principles to adhere to are **1) Re-Habit:** Encourage farmers to change their behavior of planting crops without burning in accordance with GAP PM 2.5 Free Standard **2) Replace with Perennial Crops:** Promote the planting of perennial crops such

as fruit trees in the highland to replace crops leading to land burning such as corn and **3) Replace with Alternate Crops:** Promote changes in types and methods of growing crops on level ground, and utilize upcycling leftover materials to create economic value and benefit the soil.

Concerned agencies were assigned to conduct activities including 1) Prevent burning and induce behavior changing of 28,855 targeted farmers in 60,750 rai (approx. 24,000 acres) by organizing stop burning campaign. Farmers are encouraged to manage agricultural waste instead of burning it, such as plowing in stubble or plant residues, converting into value-added biomass energy, making organic fertilizers, transforming into animal feed crops and reserved supplies as well as borrowing agricultural machinery to gather leftover materials in the field. 2) Start a pilot project on production of animal feed corn in accordance with GAP PM 2.5 Free standard, targeting 2,644 plots and 25,162 rai (approx. 10,000 acres) in Chiangmai and Payao provinces and 3) Conduct research and development to determine factors affecting the decision to burn waste materials in the rice fields.

For the long-term plan for burning habit reduction, which will result in sustainable reduction of tiny particle dust problems, farmers are encouraged to practice and become GAP PM 2.5 Free certified farming by MOAC. Private sectors are urged to pay a higher price for these products. In addition, farmers will be encouraged to change their cultivation patterns in both highland and plain areas. Supporting funds will be available during the waiting period prior to harvesting. Legume seedings will be provided. Markets will be arranged to purchase the supplies. The KICK OFF event has been scheduled for December in Chiang Mai featuring no-burning agricultural land campaign.

There was also discussion on the establishment of the technical cooperation agreement between MOAC and Future Earth Thailand Consortium. The cooperation will involve 7 regional educational institutions which are the North - Chiang Mai University; Lower North - Naresuan University; West - Mahidol University; East - Burapha University; Northeastern - Khon Kaen University and Suranaree University of Technology; South - Prince of Songkla University and the Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency (GISTDA). The collaboration will lead to sustainable solutions for air quality problems through national and international research and innovation networks.

Source: <https://mgronline.com/politics/detail/9660000103539>

Office of Agricultural Affairs, Washington DC
November 2023

