

Thai farmers urged to embrace smart farming technologies

Agricultural Extension Department launches new initiative in partnership with Siam Kubota

Recognising that agricultural technology has become increasingly vital for Thai farmers as they face mounting challenges from climate change and evolving market demands, the Agricultural Extension Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives is responding to these challenges through a renewed partnership with Siam Kubota, launching the second phase of a smart-farming initiative.



The agricultural sector contributed about 1.5 trillion baht to Thailand's economy last year, accounting for 8% of gross domestic product, with more than 10 million households nationwide working in the sector, Peeraphan Korthong, director general of the department, told a press conference on Monday.

"To maintain productivity, achieve stable income, and reduce production losses, it is essential to adopt technology for collecting data on changing environmental conditions and accurately analysing associated risks, including weather forecasts, temperature, light intensity, and soil and water nutrients, and utilise digital technology for analysing and controlling environmental conditions," he explained.

The department has been working to strengthen farmers' resilience against climate-change impacts through adoption of science and technology.

This initiative aims to help farmers diversify their produce and income sources while boosting their competitiveness in the face of rising temperatures, which affect cultivation practices and both the quantity and quality of agricultural products.

Peeraphan emphasised that the agricultural sector must embrace both existing and future scientific innovations to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in production and consumption.

The partnership with Siam Kubota represents a concerted effort to promote the adoption of modern technology to elevate the country's agricultural productivity and efficiency.

The initiative also addresses another crucial challenge: the ageing demographic of Thai farmers, with most currently over 50 years old. The programme seeks to attract younger generations to the sector through the implementation of smarter, more environmentally conscious farming practices.

Building on this foundation, Siam Kubota has announced the second season of its “Kubota Kla Ta Plook” project. Waraporn Osathaphan, senior executive vice-president of Siam Kubota Corporation, highlighted the significance of agricultural innovation in the global context.

"Agricultural innovation is currently one of the world's fastest-growing fields, as we transition into a new era of farming where innovations and solutions are employed to solve problems and enhance efficiency. Agricultural innovation will transform agriculture across the world, reduce resource consumption, protect the environment, and enhance sustainability in the agricultural sector," she said.

Phicharinee Ruksree, first runner-up from Season 1 of the programme, emphasises the broader benefits of participation beyond technological adoption.

"In addition to acquiring essential knowledge, tools, and technologies vital for improving farming practices, participants will have a valuable opportunity to connect with fellow farmers nationwide and access social media networks that can effectively promote their products and services," she said.

At the heart of the initiative is the Kubota Agri Solutions (KAS) application, a comprehensive digital farming tool that provides real-time data-management capabilities.

The app enables farmers to monitor and optimise their agricultural operations through precise measurements of land conditions, water usage, humidity levels, and fertiliser requirements.

Through the KAS Crop Calendar On LINE feature, farmers can systematically manage their entire cultivation process, from initial soil preparation through to harvesting, while implementing alternate wetting and drying (AWD) rice farming techniques that reduce both costs and methane emissions.

The success of the project's first season has already demonstrated tangible benefits.



The winner, Ithiphat Iamsaman, a farmer in Singburi province, achieved remarkable results: an 18% reduction in costs, a 35% increase in yields, and a 35% expansion in profit margins. Beyond financial gains, he reported improvements in financial literacy and management skills.

The second season, themed "Eco-friendly Rice Field", will focus on developing rice fields using the innovative KAS Crop Calendar On LINE system. The competition is open to teams of three members, aged 20-50, each with 1-5 rai of rice-farming land. Contestants must employ Kubota agricultural machinery throughout the growing process and use smartphones or computers to record data through the KAS Crop Calendar On LINE.

The competition will run from June through December 2025, with prizes worth 1 million baht and Royal Trophy Cups from Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. Grand-prize winners from each of the four regions will receive Royal Trophy Cups and 150,000 baht per team, while runners-up will receive 50,000 baht per team.

"At Siam Kubota, we believe that 'Kubota Kla Ta Plook' Season 2 will expand awareness of modern farming and align our practices with evolving global agricultural trends as well as promote sustainability and contribute to a better environment," Waraporn said.

The company aims to increase its network of smart farmers from 1,000 to 5,000 in the coming year. It also plans to enhance its application and farming database to include a wider range of agricultural crops, such as durian, taro, potatoes and corn, in addition to rice.

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