

Thailand's agricultural exports surge to THB1.54 trillion Jan-Oct

Thailand's agricultural sector chalked up a trade surplus of over 900 million baht in the first 10 months of the year, driven by strong export performance, a senior official of the Office of Agricultural Economics (OAE) said on Thursday.



Total agricultural trade value climbed to 2.15 trillion baht between January and October, representing a 6.49% increase compared to the same period in 2023, the office secretary-general, Chantanon Wannakejohn, said. Exports reached 1.54 trillion baht, while imports stood at 610 billion baht, resulting in a trade surplus of 926.663 billion baht.

The top five agricultural products exported by Thailand were rice (168.685 billion baht), fresh durian (130.352 billion baht), natural rubber (95.927 billion baht), processed chicken (87.009 billion baht), and dog or cat food (79.071 billion baht).

The top five imported agricultural products were soybeans (56.613 billion baht), oil residue and other solid residues obtained from soybean oil extraction (43.780 billion baht), frozen skipjack fish (32.452 billion baht), wheat and meslin (31.820 billion baht), and other flavoured foods (28.131 billion baht).

Thailand's main trading partners for agricultural exports are China, ASEAN, the United States, Japan, and the European Union. These countries already have free trade agreements with Thailand, except for the United States and the European Union.

The office deputy secretary-general, Kanjana Kwanmuang, observed that Thailand's agricultural trade trends in the first 10 months of 2024 remained competitive globally. However, she acknowledged that the sector was not immune to the complexities of global trade, which include economic slowdowns, geopolitical tensions, and climate change.

In response to these challenges, particularly the re-emergence of the "America First" policy under US President-elect Donald Trump, Thailand is adopting a multi-faceted approach to mitigate its trade risks. To address these concerns, the country is actively negotiating free trade agreements (FTAs)

with other nations, with the aim of reducing trade barriers and promoting the growth of Thai agricultural products globally.

Thailand is also diversifying its raw material sources to reduce dependence on a single country or region, thereby minimising the impact of any potential disruptions in global supply chains. Furthermore, the country is focusing on improving the quality and standards of its agricultural products to maintain competitiveness in an increasingly globalized market.

The detailed statistics on trade in agricultural products with major trading partners in the first 10 months of 2024 show that China accounted for 460 billion baht in agricultural products traded between the two countries. Thailand had a trade surplus of 290 billion baht with China.

Thailand's major export products to China included fresh durian (24.5 billion baht), natural rubber (18.8 billion baht), sugar (14.3 billion baht), starch made from cassava and other fruits and nuts (12.1 billion baht). The country's main imports from China were fresh grapes and other fruits (11.5 billion baht).

ASEAN accounted for 501 billion baht in agricultural products traded between Thailand and ASEAN member states. Thailand had a trade balance of 190 billion baht with ASEAN.

The United States accounted for 188 billion baht in agricultural products traded between Thailand and the US. Thailand had a trade surplus of 117 billion baht with the US.

Japan accounted for 159 billion baht in agricultural products traded between Thailand and Japan. Thailand had a trade surplus of 135 billion baht with Japan.

The European Union accounted for 136 billion baht in agricultural products traded between Thailand and EU member states, giving Thailand a trade surplus of 43 billion baht with the EU.

Looking ahead, while the agricultural sector has shown strong performance, it faces challenges such as global economic uncertainties, climate change, and geopolitical tensions, the office said.

To maintain its competitive edge, Thailand must continue to invest in research and development, promote sustainable agriculture practices, and explore new markets.

The office emphasised the importance of diversifying export markets and reducing reliance on any single country. Additionally, the agency highlighted the need to strengthen supply chain resilience and adapt to changing consumer preferences.

Source: The Nation Thailand on 12 December 2024

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