

Thailand switching to low-carbon rice to meet net-zero goal

The Agriculture and Cooperatives Ministry is promoting low-carbon rice cultivation to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, tackle global warming and boost competitiveness in the global market.



Rice production is among the sectors where Thailand is targeting emission reductions to achieve its goal of carbon neutrality by 2050, Agriculture and Cooperatives Minister Narumon Pinyosinwat said on Monday.

Agriculture ranks as the country's second highest GHG emitter after the energy sector, according to 2019 data. Methane from rice cultivation accounts for 40% of emissions in the Thai agriculture sector.

Narumon said the push for more eco-friendly cultivation covered more than 4.9 million rice farming households and more than 70 million rai of farmland.

The Rice Department has implemented a wet-and-dry rice cultivation method, focusing on water management to reduce methane emissions, she added. The department is helping some 3,300 farmers in 22 provinces implement this cultivation method, she said.

Wet and dry cultivation can cut GHG emissions by 30%, mitigate climate change and PM2.5 air pollution, promote transition to a low-carbon economy and boost farmers' income, Narumon said.

The Agriculture and Cooperatives Ministry is also promoting microorganisms rather than burning as a way of clearing rice straw and stubble, mitigating environmental impacts and boosting soil fertility, the minister added.

“Currently, we can produce 10 million rai of low-carbon rice in the Chao Phraya River basin, using wet and dry rice cultivation, nitrogen fertilisers, and crop burning reduction with microorganisms,” she said.
