



Thai Perishables

Smart Planning and High Standards Are Keys to Steady Growth

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สินค้าเกษตรของไทยที่สร้างรายได้ให้กับประเทศเป็นจำนวนมากในแต่ละปี นอกจากข้าวและยางพาราแล้วยังมีสินค้า perishables ที่ครองส่วนแบ่งของตลาดอยู่ทั่วโลก และมีความต้องการจากตลาดต่างประเทศเพิ่มขึ้นทุก ๆ ปี

โดยองค์การอาหารและเกษตรแห่งสหประชาชาติ (FAO) คาดการณ์ว่าในอนาคตปริมาณความต้องการสินค้าประเภทอาหารจะเพิ่มสูงขึ้น โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งประเทศที่กำลังพัฒนาอย่างรวดเร็ว เช่น ภูมิภาคอาเซียน รวมทั้งมีมติให้ทั่วโลกต้องเพิ่มผลผลิตในภาคการเกษตรมากขึ้น 20 เปอร์เซ็นต์ ภายในปี 2028 โดยให้ทุกประเทศช่วยสนับสนุนด้านการเกษตรอย่างเต็มที่ ทั้งในด้านารช่วยเหลือผู้ส่งออกสินค้า การลดหย่อนภาษี ราคานโยบายอาหารสัตว์และระบบชลประทานเพื่อหลีกเลี่ยงปัญหาอาหารขาดแคลน

Smart Planning and High Standards Will Keep Thai Perishables Competitive

Agricultural products make a substantial contribution to Thailand's revenues. In addition to such well-known commodities as rice and rubber, Thai perishables are dominating markets around the world. The Food and Agriculture

Organization forecasts a surge in demand for food in the near future, particularly in developing countries such as those in Southeast Asia – hence its urging that countries all over the world increase food production 20 percent by 2028 by providing such incentives as support to its exporters as well as lowering taxes and fertilizer and farming costs.

Thai exporters are facing the challenge of getting their perishables to global markets, and there is no faster way to do it than by air. Therefore, developing the logistics infrastructure and supply chain capabilities to support this mission is essential.

The Thai fruit and vegetables market is clearly segmented by destination. Shipping these goods by sea is the norm to markets in China and throughout Asia, while air freight is the mode of choice to European and Middle Eastern markets.



Indochina, Myanmar, Hong Kong, China, Latin America, Eastern Europe and India with a growth rate of 32.1 percent.

Today's high fuel prices have affected exports of every kind, particularly perishables that are tied to air freight. In addition to the higher shipping costs, exporters of perishable are also affected by higher fertilizer prices as well as bad weather conditions that ruin their crops.

Mr Chusak Chuenprayote, Managing Director of Kampaengsaen Commercial Co Ltd – better known as KC Fresh – a leading exporter of perishables to the EU, says that “today's high costs of fuel, fertilizer and shipping have greatly impacted perishables exports and raised the cost of doing business, but at the same time, we are not likely to see price increases for these products. If the situation continues, we will be under a lot of pressure to compete in difficult

circumstances and it's hard to see what the market will be like for us in the future. However, by managing the supply chain more efficiently and with better logistics infrastructure in place, exporters will have a better opportunity to control quality, standards and safe delivery of their products, which will help the sector grow and become more sustainable.”

“Europe is the key market for perishables shipped by air,” Mr Chusak says. “However, that market contains so many strict regulations and such high standards that only a small number of Thai exporters can penetrate it. The European market has the highest requirements in food safety: fruits and vegetables must be free of toxins, and sorting and packaging must be strictly controlled and certified to be able to back-trace to each procedure.



Mr Chris Catto-Smith

The Commerce Ministry has announced that this year's export income will reach USD 55,481 million, an increase of 22.22 percent, with growth in all commodities but most notably agricultural products where exports increased 34.6 percent even while asparagus, onions, chili, baby corn, mushrooms and some other vegetables decreased from 2,782 million baht to 2,707 million baht.

Thailand's overall export market is continually expanding in the key markets of ASEAN, the EU, the United States and other European countries with a growth rate of 23.5 percent. It is also expanding in new markets like Africa,



“KC Fresh became a leading exporter of perishable goods by establishing a strong supply chain with best management practices.

Customers soon relied on us as we produced only grade A products for the export and domestic markets. Therefore, exporters that are looking to grow their perishables exports should look into controlling quality, product safety and the standards that are required by the market.”

Exporters are also urged to better understand the numerous processes involved in shipping their goods in order to extend the shelf-life of their products. Mr Chris Catto-Smith, Managing Director of Cool Cargo Co Ltd, air cargo specialists for perishables, says that “Thailand’s fresh products are in high demand in markets all over the world. However, competitively Thailand still lags behind many of the key perishables exporting countries.

The main reason for this is the lack of knowledge and expertise in logistics for these types of products.



Perishables require special care and special packaging and packing as well as adequate temperature control throughout the entire supply chain.

Most of the problems arise from damaged goods or goods with shortened shelf-lives that result from inadequate temperature control during the transportation stages.

Mr Catto-Smith urges “exporters to use solutions that can accurately control the quality of their goods from origin to destination to minimize damage, carefully selecting packaging material that does not harm the environment and can be recycled for future use. Temperature control must occur at the packaging and packing stages at the factory throughout transportation to the airport, at the cargo terminal, during aircraft loading, at the destination airport and right to the consignee.”

As for Suvarnabhumi Airport’s Perishables Center, which was initially intended to modernize Thailand’s perishables exports industry, many problems remain to be solved. Currently, exporters make use of Thai Airways’ cargo terminal as well as Bangkok Flight Service’s terminal, both of which have allocated space to perishables handling. In its push for greater efficiency in perishables shipping,

Thai Airways Cargo (TG Cargo) launched an initiative in 2007 with the cooperation of the Thai Airfreight Forwarders Association, Munich International Airport and Cargogate Flughafen Muenchen to establish a distribution center for perishables in Munich to distribute Thai perishable goods throughout Europe.

The center will be an important channel for Thai agricultural goods en route to major markets on the Continent.

Mr Chusak says that “the cooperation to establish the perishables distribution center at Munich Airport represents a good opportunity for Thai products and is a strong display of interest in Thai agricultural goods. It also presents an opportunity to Thai exporters to be a part of managing the facility in order to gain the efficiency needed to compete in this market.

However, the success of the center also depends on Thai exporters’ readiness to comply with the strict regulations and standards of the EU.

“Today, shipping perishables through Suvarnabhumi remains quite a hassle as there is a lack of clarity in rules, regulations and Free Zone procedures for this type of cargo.

Everyone is waiting for the Airports Authority and the government to solve the problems. There have been petitions and requests urging the concerned organizations to proceed on such matters but there has yet to be any feedback.

Anyway, the bottom line is that the Airports Authority needs to come up with solutions urgently and should start up a perishables center that distinguishes this type of cargo from others in order to gain competency and opportunity for the country in exporting perishables.” The high prices of fuel and agricultural problems have pressured the government to look for ways to assist exporters and farmers.

Many projects have been initiated and many contracts have been signed to expand the market for Thai agricultural goods, such as the recent deal with France’s leading retail group to import more than 2,000 tons of longans, mangosteens and other fruits to distribute in stores throughout Europe and around the world.

In another recent project aimed at promoting fruits from Thailand’s south, the government brought buyers from China, the US, Singapore, Iceland, France and England to meet with sellers of Thai fruits located in the region.

The government has also been working on the country’s logistics development.

Mr Surapong Suebwonglee, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, says that “the government is negotiating with Thai Airways to start up a freighter airline to support exports of agricultural goods that will be increasingly in demand in the future.

There are also plans to establish a pre-export packing center that provides high-standard packing that meets the requirements of the buying markets.”

Although the government has been engaged in various projects to promote the country’s agricultural sector, exporters and farmers are looking for a more concrete approach, whether it is in the form of a perishables center at Suvarnabhumi Airport, a price guarantee for their crops, or a tearing down of the barriers that that impede agricultural trade.

