



## สำนักงานที่ปรึกษาการเกษตรต่างประเทศ ประจำกรุงวอชิงตัน ดี.ซี.



### Minister of Agriculture joined a VDO Conference with executives of MOAC addressing operations under the COVID-19 situation

Mr. Chalermchai Srion, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives, revealed after joining a VDO Conference with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC) and executives that all Departments needed to closely monitor, prevent and prepare for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreaks. He acknowledged the situation reports from all Departments under the MOAC. He assigned the Departments to regularly update the situation of the outbreaks to MOAC COVID-19 coordination center. The Permanent Secretary is tasked to command MOAC Inspector Generals to follow up on the COVID-19 issue as well as agricultural impacts from drought. A weekly report is expected.

He stressed that the Royal Irrigation Department shall allocate budget for local employment. This will help relieve immediate problems for farmers and people who are returning to their hometowns at this time. They can work in farms for a living. Department of Agriculture will be responsible for servicing while reducing unnecessary bureaucracies. Department of Agricultural Extension is assigned to monitor local situation and regularly report to the headquarters for future problem solving. Office of Agricultural Economics is tasked to increase online trading opportunities for agricultural commodities and closely monitor national agricultural production. Department of Livestock Development is assigned to perform active surveillance for animal disease epidemics.

“As the government has established measures for the government agencies to follow, all involved are required to strictly comply with the cabinet’s resolutions. While conducting field work, one must protect himself using cloth face masks. One to two face masks are provided for each field officer. This will raise awareness among people for self-protection. However, working in such critical conditions shall not adversely affect the core missions of the Ministry. Thailand shall survive by agricultural practices including plants, fisheries, livestock and processed products. This will enable Thailand to overcome the crisis and quickly recover. MOAC officers must work real hard to achieve the Ministry’s missions. However, I am certain there will be no shortage of food and consumer necessities. People shall not panic. The Ministry will continuously work to ensure trust among Thai people.” said Mr. Chalermchai.

Mr. Anant Suwannarat, Secretary – General of MOAC added that the Thai government has established the Centre for COVID – 19 Situation Administration and designated a relevant committee to work under the Prime Minister chairmanship. As a part of the Committee, MOAC also set up a Center for coordination in order to support and manage the COVID – 19 outbreaks. The Center has the Agriculture Minister as a special advisor and is chaired by the Secretary-General. Each Department is required to establish a corresponding operation unit to work and exchange information among each other.

MOAC has conducted risk assessment for both during and post-crisis in all dimensions in order to keep abreast with the challenge. Emphasis is places throughout food supply chain including transportation, distribution, food quality, reasonable pricing, agricultural inputs as well as servicing and communication, for example at the import inspection posts. Resource mobilization and budget allocation, as well guideline for agricultural rehabilitation, shall be prepared for Level 3 epidemic and post epidemic.

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