



**“Chalermchai” aims Thailand as the global hub for edible insect protein to support farmers as an alternative choice during Covid-19.**

Mr. Alongkorn drives the policy by networking with various universities to establish “Insect Technology Center” to support 20,000 insect farms and help establishing novel food industry and agricultural startups to penetrate the global market worth 30,000 million baht.

Mr. Alongkorn Ponlaboot, Advisor to Minister of Agriculture and Cooperative, the committee chairman for driving the Agricultural Policy 4.0, gave a remark on October 15, 2020 that Dr. Chalermchai Sri-on, Minister of Agricultural and Cooperatives aimed Thailand as the global hub for edible insect protein production. Cricket farming will be promoted among farmers to generate income. Concerned agricultural agencies were assigned to educate farmers and improve cricket farming standard currently accounted for more than 20,000 farms. These would bring trust on the products among domestic and international consumers.

Mr. Alongkorn added that the policy was in accordance with FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) direction announcing that “insects are the source of food for the future”. FAO anticipated that world population would continue to grow with the increased demand for meat consumption by 30% within 15 years. Promoting insect protein consumption is one of the best strategies to cope with demand for food in the future. Research studies on Future Food and Novel Food indicated that “insects” contained all essential food elements necessary for living including high contents of vitamin B2, B12 as well as omega 3, 6, 9 and fiber. This is the only fiber obtainable from animals which helps balancing the intestines. In addition, insects contain more than 10 essential amino acids. Cricket is the best choice among million insect species. According to the data from Research and Markets, during 2018 – 2023 edible insects around the world had the Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 23.8 %. In 2023, the market value is expected grow to 37,900 million baht. Asian possesses 30-40% share of the world market. The rest will be distributed among Europe, Middle East, Africa, Latin America and North America. Data obtained from the Thai Department of Agriculture revealed that at least 194 insects in

Thailand contain nutritional values such as cricket, short tailed cricket, grasshopper, worm and silk chrysalis. Thailand is presently known as the global hub of insects for export.

Mr. Alongkorn informed that insect protein is considered Super Food and Future Food. Production, processing, marketing and supporting the Thai startups need to be improved. Insect Technology Center has been established under the Agritech and Innovation Center (AIC) by collaboration between Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and at least 4 universities e.g. Chiang Mai University, Mae Jo University, Kasetsart University among others. Research and Development using technology to improve genetics, production, processing into a variety of products such as fresh, frozen, fried, roasted, canned and powder for use as an ingredient for bakery products. They can also be processed into pasta, protein bars, flour, snacks and protein shakes. Countries in Europe, Latin America, East and Southeast Asia, USA and Canada have expressed significant interests in insect consumption. Export from Thailand has been increased with rapid growth of 23% annually, particularly in the US, EU, Japan and China. In order to ensure trust among consumers, National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards has established the general standard on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for Cricket Farming (TAS 8202-2560).

Department of Agricultural Extension promoted forming of large scale farming among insect farmers, particularly cricket farming. Currently there are 11 large scale cricket farms including 469 farmers, occupying 848.5 rai area in 10 provinces which are Kalasin, Khon Kaen, Nakhon Phanom, Buriram, Pichit, Phitsanulok, Maha Sarakhum, Lopburi, Sa Kaeo and Sukhothai. The production totaled 1,100 tons. Assistances are provided to interested farmers who wish to improve their cricket farm standards. House cricket, ground cricket and short tailed cricket are species recommended for farming as an alternative choice to make a living or additional income during COVID situation. At present, Thailand has the capacity to produce 7,000 tons cricket annually, adequate to serve both domestic and export markets. Department of Sericulture has trained more than 20,000 farmers to develop silk chrysalis into food products which are now in high popular demand.

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