

Title Tropical fruit production in Thailand
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Abstract

The total fruit area in Thailand covered about 1.55 mil. ha in 2003, with an overall production volume of just over 12.69 mil. t. The overall quantity of fruit exported in 2003 was about 1.31 mil. t, worth around Baht 39,293.1 mil. It was about 6.5% of total agricultural products. The top earners among fresh fruits are longan, durian and mangosteen while in the frozen fruit group are durian, pineapple and longan. Pineapple contributed more than 40% of both quantity and value of canned products. Besides pineapple, canned longan, lychee, mango and rambutan were also exported. Thailand is one of the largest fruit producers and exporters. For example, it is the world's largest producer of pineapple, and largest exporter of canned pineapple juice, satisfying 54% of the world demand. Thailand is also a major producer and exporter of longan, durian, mangosteen, lychee, mango, pomelo and rambutan. Thai tropical fruits can be divided into two groups; in the first group are fruits of major economic importance and with a great potential to support the demand to both local and oversea markets; they are durian, longan, mangosteen, lychee, mango, pomelo, rambutan, pineapple, young aromatic coconut and tamarind. The second group comprises a number of less economically important fruits, which are cultivated with a view of meeting the local demand rather than for export purpose, they are santol, java apple and sugar apple. A national policy committee on horticultural crops has been set up to firstly define policy and facilitate implementation of research and development, focusing on improvement of quality, economic efficiency, marketing and trade. Secondly, the Department of Agriculture has developed programs in 1999 for Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) in order to improve productivity and quality of fruits at farm levels. Thirdly, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives has established the Agricultural Product Export Promotion Center in 1998 to promote production techniques ensuring yield, quality conforming with international standard, gain worldwide recognition. It is the so-called 'one stop service' to speed up documentary procedures for Champion Products which include durian, longan, orchid and rubber. But it will also include major fruits such as mangosteen, mango, pineapple and pomelo. Lastly, the government has set a policy to encourage producers to meet standards set by FAO Codex, SPS and HACCP for all crops, including Thai fruits. Hence, the food safety project was one of the main projects focused in the DOA to improve clean, green and healthy products from the farm to the table and increase the quality and value for export.