

**OIE DIRECTS DEVELOPMENT OF FOOD INDUSTRY
ESTABLISHES PRODUCT QUALITY & IMAGE, AND CONSUMER CONFIDENCE**

The Office of Industrial Economics (OIE) advised that the development of the food industry needed to increase product standardization compatible with international norms, improve the production process, packaging, and use of resources. Creating product quality, a marketable image for the product, and consumer confidence contributes added-value to exported food products.

Dr. Somchai Harnhirun, Director General of the OIE, said the MPI of food exports in 2013 slumped 7.6%, a value of more than 800 billion baht when compared with 2012, due to a changing global economy. Thailand's food industry was predicted to contract only 5%, an improvement from the previous year. Thailand had advantages over Myanmar and Laos in terms of raw materials; therefore, consumers purchased raw materials and exported food products from Thailand as they believed in Thailand's product quality. In addition, Thailand had more experience in food exports than China and Vietnam. Moreover, water and carbon footprint concepts were applied by the food sector in assessing water utilization, deficits, and pollution levels, as well as pursuing global industrial development guidelines for environment protection.

Thai Soon Foods Co., Ltd., located in Nong Khai, is an example of a food manufacturer exporting nutritious products, such as concentrated tomato juice, sweet corn in syrup, dehydrated jackfruit, and nata de coco. The company has met the criteria of standardized management systems and was awarded the ISO 22000 for food safety management, Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), and Halal food certification. Major exporting destinations were Japan (70-80% of total exports), Taiwan, Hong Kong, and ASEAN countries.

Nevertheless, the development of Thailand's food industry should adhere to the National Industrial Development Master Plan, as outlined by the Ministry of Industry. The OIE has initiated and introduced the plan to food manufacturers as a guideline in creating product image, credibility, and consumer confidence in Thailand's food products.

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