

Developing Mechanisms and Processes Capable of Handling Health Impacts Resulting from ASEAN Integration, Especially for Food and Agricultural Food Products

The Fifth National Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on Developing Mechanisms and Processes Capable of Handling Health Impacts Resulting from ASEAN Integration, Especially for Food and Agricultural Food Products¹,

Informed that ASEAN Community integration will bring about broader trade opportunities; increased employment and income for the people; increased economic growth for the country; diversity in product trade, including the trade of food and agricultural food products; and increased distribution of goods between countries,

Concerned that member countries' establishing of common quality standards for food and agricultural food products may not be completed in time for the movement of such goods, causing discrepancies in product quality standard among the countries; and that increased trade volume heightens food safety risks,

Concerned that inefficient risk analysis systems may result in economic loss associated with product recall; create impacts on the health and lives of consumers; and effect health care and health service expenses,

Aware that food safety and quality standards is an important issue; that it is a component of Thailand's food management strategy and part of various relevant agencies' strategies; and that food safety and quality standards readiness is therefore a necessary and urgent component of ASEAN Community integration,

Aware that applying strength from the local community, which understands and is informed of problems, to protect oneself and one's family is a sustainable approach for preventing and addressing problems; while support from other participating players will contribute to efficiency of the food safety management and monitoring system, in which the community takes part by setting policies to prevent and address issues,

Has, therefore, passed the following resolutions:

1. Requesting the National Food Commission, food and agricultural food product quality and safety oversight agencies, and promotion and support agencies to set precise policies and plans in preparation for ASEAN integration as follows.
 - 1.1 Intensify oversight by developing supervision systems; increasing imported food and agricultural food product check points; and increasing the frequency and scope of monitoring, in accordance to risk levels throughout the product food chain.
 - 1.2 Increase investment in expert personnel capacity building; increase the capacity of laboratories; and provide efficient, modern, sufficient, and adequately distributed tools and equipment.
 - 1.3 Take into consideration the equal balance of civil society representatives from consumer organizations; representatives of academia; and private sector representatives; when appointing committees, sub-committees and working groups. The selection of civil society sector representatives must be transparent and fair.
 - 1.4 Develop Thailand's food safety risk analysis systems to be on par with those of the international community.
 1. Agencies responsible for monitoring, supervising production and import of food and agricultural food products; and producers of food and mentioned goods are requested to focus their efforts on complying with quality control

systems set according to appropriate standards; namely, the Good Agricultural Practice principle, the Good Manufacturing Practice principle, the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points, and the Rule of Origin; in order to ensure consumer safety.

2. Requesting the Ministry of Public Health to be the focal point; and in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives and other related agencies, develop mechanism to integrate food safety information into a system which is unified, up-to-date, easily accessible and easily connected to the public.
3. Requesting the Ministry of Interior to assign provincial governors to appoint or review or provide systems, development mechanism, processes, and strategic plans capable of handling food and agricultural food product health impacts resulting from ASEAN Community integration; with participation from qualified persons, the people's sector, and relevant agencies.
In case inter-provincial efforts are required, provincial group mechanisms may be set up as appropriate.
4. Requesting relevant government academic institutions, research agencies, and research funding agencies to place emphasis on promoting and supporting health, science, economic, social and cultural research on impacts of ASEAN Community integration; with respect to food and agricultural food product safety.
5. Requesting the Secretary-General of the National Health Commission to report progress to the 6th National Health Assembly.

¹ Document Health Assembly 5/Main 9