

China lays focus on ASEAN countries for agri imports

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China is importing durian from Thailand, bananas from the Philippines, passion fruit from Vietnam, longan from Cambodia and coffee from Malaysia. Agricultural products from ASEAN countries are being sold in the Chinese market. This is because of China-ASEAN cooperation in agriculture.

Once China accounted for the vast majority of Taiwanese fruit exports, but China banned pineapples, sugar apples, wax apples, citrus and other fruits since March 21.

Japan became the largest market for Taiwanese fruit exports accounting for 46.2 per cent in 2022, meanwhile, China accounted for only 1.6 per cent. As a result, Taiwan's agricultural product exports to Japan in 2022 reached \$850, a year-on-year increase of 11 per cent.

China focused on ASEAN countries for fruit import. According to Kao Kim Hourn, ASEAN general secretary, China has been ASEAN's largest trading partner for the past 13 years,

China's agricultural investment in ASEAN countries accounts for 40 per cent of its total overseas investment in the sector. The trade volume of agricultural products between China and ASEAN reached \$61 billion in 2022, topping other countries and

regions worldwide, according to Sui Pengfei, director-general of the international cooperation department under China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

According to China's General Administration of Customs, around 1,500 kinds of agricultural and food products from ASEAN have been exported to China. High-quality agricultural varieties and technologies from China have also boosted the development of agricultural industries in ASEAN countries.

The Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences has cooperated with ASEAN countries to carry out projects such as new variety breeding, green and efficient cultivation technology demonstration, and intensive processing of tropical agriculture products, said Xie Jianghui, deputy director of CATAS.

The academy has signed cooperation agreements with 25 scientific and educational institutions in ASEAN countries, such as Kasetsart University in Thailand and the Royal University of Agriculture in Cambodia.

A total of 50 agricultural technology training courses have been held in ASEAN countries by CATAS. Eight cassava varieties cultivated by the academy have been promoted in Southeast Asia, with a total planting area of more than 10 million mu (67,000 hectares).

South China's Hainan province is building several cold chain logistics and trading centres to process and store tropical agricultural products for ASEAN to strengthen connections between the two tropical-product markets.

In recent years, Hainan and ASEAN countries have jointly carried out research and development and utilisation of excellent tropical fruit and vegetable resources while deepening cooperation in the planting and processing trade, seeing a steady increase in imports and exports of tropical agricultural products.

Hainan will make good use of the free trade port system and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership to promote the deep integration of industrial chains, supply chains and value chains between China and ASEAN countries, said Xie Jing, vice-governor of Hainan province. China mainly exports fish, garlic, citrus, apples, condiments and other products to ASEAN and imports fruits, vegetable oils, aquatic products, grains and other primary agricultural products from ASEAN. If the two sides keep improving their trade level, the related trade volume in agrarian products may reach \$100 billion in the next five to seven years.