

Mitr Phol ramps up its targets under environmental commitment

TOP PRODUCER TO BOOST AREA OF SUGARCANE FARMLANDS THAT MEET KEY GLOBAL STANDARDS

SIRIVISH TOONGUM

THE NATION 18

THAILAND'S largest sugar producer Mitr Phol Group aims to sharply increase the area of its contracted sugarcane farmlands in Thailand and those of its own that meet key international production standards.

The company says the total farmland area under the internationally recognised Bonsucro certification standards will reach 400,000 rai in 2021, up from the present 44,137 rai.

Currently, the combined total area of sugarcane farmlands under its contracts and those of its own operations is around 2 million rai in Thailand.

The group's chief operating officer Buntoeng Vongkusolkiet said that the Bonsucro certification is another major factor that elevates the competitiveness of Mitr Phol sugar on the global market.

Buntoeng said the recognition from the certification helps to make its products better meet the discerning demand of consumers as well as international business partners who impose improved sustainability standards across their entire supply chain and opt for sustainable raw materials with widely recognised international certification.

Under the group's target, it aims to expand the area of its farmlands that can achieve the Bonsucro standard to 105,000 rai in 2018, before rising to 197,000 rai in 2019, 320,000 rai in 2020 and 400,000 rai in 2021.

Mitr Phol Group was the first sugar producer in Thailand and the second in Asia to be certified under the Bonsucro standard in 2016, covering 11,245 rai around the Mitr Phu Kieo Sugar Mill in Chaiyaphum province.

In 2017, additional sugar production lands around the Mitr Phu Kieo Sugar Mill, as well as those covered by the Mitr Phol Danchang Sugar Mill in Suphanburi province, attained Bonsucro certification.

Those additions raised Mitr Phol's total Bonsucro-certified area to 44,137 rai, with combined raw sugar production capacity of 39,914 tonnes annually.

Established in 2008, Bonsucro is a global non-profit organisation that aims to mitigate the environmental and social impacts caused by business operation in the sugarcane and sugar industries. It has more than 470 members in 42 countries.

Sander Van der Linden, plant director of Corbion (Purac) Thailand, one of Mitr Phol Group's key customers and the world's leading manufacturer of lactic acid and bioplastic materials, said that nowadays consumer awareness of environmentally sustainable products is steadily increasing.

He added that Corbion, as a leading bioplastics producer with ambitions to promote sustainability in the entire value chain, expects its sugarcane suppliers to fulfil their obligations under the company's responsible sourcing commitments.

The supply chain should align with the Bonsucro standards, from production procedures and the management of the ecosystem to the compliance with laws and regulations as well as respect for human rights and labour standards, Van der Linden said.