

Events around Us

Thailand Compiling Fruit Insect Data for New Zealand for Opening New Markets

Mr. Udon Hunhawut, Director of Plant Variety Retention Research Group, Crop Promotion Research and Development Office under the Department of Agriculture, revealed that Thailand has opened a free trade area, effective on July 1, 2005 onwards, with New Zealand. It is an opportunity for Thai agricultural products, particularly lychee, longan, mangosteen, durian, and fresh ginger, to enter and increasingly expand the markets in New Zealand. These products have a high potential for export. With regard to exporting these products, the Department of Agriculture has hurriedly compiled name lists of plant insects of the respective fruits and submitted them to New Zealand for consideration to set up the criteria for importing Thai fruits.

There are more than 338 types of plant/fruit insects collected by the Department of Agriculture and surrendered to New Zealand for pondering. Of those insect types, 70 are lychee insects, 96 longan insects, 56 mangosteen insects, 78 durian insects, and 38 ginger insects. Currently, New Zealand is in the process of analyzing plant insect risk if each fruit to be imported has insects that have to be retained or not. This would prevent retained plant insects accompanying the products from getting in and reproducing in the country. The said insects include fruit flies and butterfly worms, including lychee aphides, which pierce into the fruits of longan and lychee.

Initially, New Zealand has already checked on two types of insects for lychee and longan by requesting Thailand to present additional details about how to eliminate some types of plant insects. The Department of Agriculture expeditiously does so to build trust on New Zealand. For the 2006 production season, it is expected that Thailand will be able to export five types of fruits to the markets in New Zealand, originally importing only two, all varieties of mangoes, and fresh pineapples with stems on. Now, the Department of Agriculture has proposed a draft to rectify some articles in new laws concerning strict control and analysis and retained plant insect risk in agricultural products.

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