

Incentives and Policies for the Packaging Industry



Introduction

Thailand's food industry is renowned worldwide for its rich and diverse culinary heritage. With its vibrant street food culture, traditional dishes, and innovative gastronomy, the country has become a global culinary destination. This article explores the various aspects of Thailand's food industry, including its traditional cuisine, street food culture, agricultural practices, and the impact of tourism on the sector's growth.

Traditional Thai Cuisine

Thai cuisine is a harmonious blend of flavors, colors, and textures. It is characterized by the delicate balance of sweet, sour, spicy, and salty tastes. Traditional Thai dishes often incorporate aromatic herbs and spices such as lemongrass, galangal, chili, and basil, which give them their distinct flavors. Rice is a staple in Thai cuisine, served alongside a variety of dishes, including curries, stir-fries, and soups.

Thai cuisine showcases a wide range of regional specialties, each with its unique flavors and cooking techniques. From the fiery and tangy dishes of the Northeastern region to the coconut-infused curries of the Southern region, Thai cuisine offers an incredible variety of flavors and textures to explore.

Street Food Culture

Thailand's street food culture is legendary and an integral part of everyday life. Sidewalks and markets come alive with the enticing aromas of freshly cooked dishes, attracting locals and tourists alike. Street vendors offer an array of affordable and delicious options, from noodle soups and grilled meats to tropical fruits and refreshing beverages.

Thai street food provides an immersive culinary experience, allowing visitors to interact with local vendors and sample authentic flavors. Iconic street food dishes include pad Thai (stir-fried noodles), som tam (spicy papaya salad), and moo ping (grilled pork skewers). Food markets like Chatuchak Weekend Market in Bangkok and the Night Bazaar in Chiang Mai are bustling hubs where locals and tourists gather to indulge in the diverse street food offerings.

Agricultural Practices

Thailand's food industry relies heavily on the country's fertile agricultural resources. The warm climate and abundant rainfall support the cultivation of a wide range of crops, including rice, fruits, vegetables, and herbs. Rice, as the main staple, is cultivated extensively, with both traditional and modern farming practices.

The government has been actively promoting sustainable agricultural practices to ensure food security and environmental conservation. Organic farming methods have gained popularity, emphasizing the use of natural fertilizers and pesticides. This shift towards sustainable agriculture has led to the availability of organic produce in local markets and an increased focus on farm-to-table initiatives.

Tourism's Impact

Thailand's vibrant food culture has been further fueled by the country's thriving tourism industry. The influx of international visitors has played a significant role in popularizing Thai cuisine globally. Tourists seek authentic culinary experiences, exploring local markets, participating in cooking classes, and indulging in street food adventures.

To cater to the demands of a diverse clientele, Thailand has witnessed the emergence of upscale restaurants, fusion cuisine, and innovative culinary concepts. Internationally acclaimed chefs have set up restaurants in major cities, blending Thai flavors with international influences. This fusion of traditional and contemporary culinary styles has resulted in a dynamic dining scene.

The growth of food tourism has also given rise to food festivals and events that celebrate Thai cuisine. The annual Vegetarian Festival, Songkran Food Festival, and Bangkok Street Food Festival attract both locals and tourists, showcasing the richness and diversity of Thai food.

Conclusion

Thailand's food industry is a vibrant and integral part of the country's cultural fabric. The traditional cuisine, street food culture, sustainable agricultural practices, and the influence of tourism have contributed to its flourishing growth. From the bustling streets lined with street food vendors to the upscale restaurants offering innovative fusion cuisine, Thailand's food industry caters to a wide range of culinary preferences.

In addition to its cultural significance, the food industry also plays a vital role in Thailand's economy. The sector provides employment opportunities for millions of people, from farmers and fishermen to chefs and restaurant staff. It contributes significantly to the country's GDP and exports, with Thai food products being sought after globally.

Thailand's government recognizes the importance of the food industry and has implemented various initiatives to support its growth. This includes promoting food safety and hygiene standards, encouraging small-scale farmers to adopt sustainable practices, and investing in culinary education and training programs.

Moreover, the rise of e-commerce has transformed the food industry in Thailand. Online platforms and delivery services have made it more convenient for consumers to access a wide range of food products and dining options. This digital transformation has opened up new opportunities for food entrepreneurs, allowing them to reach a broader customer base and diversify their offerings.

Despite the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, the resilience of Thailand's food industry has been evident. Restaurants adapted by implementing strict health and safety measures, offering takeout and delivery options, and exploring innovative ways to engage with customers virtually. This adaptability showcases the industry's ability to weather challenging times and evolve with changing consumer needs.

Looking ahead, the food industry in Thailand is poised for continued growth and innovation. The country's unique culinary heritage, emphasis on sustainability, and openness to international influences create a fertile ground for culinary creativity. As Thailand attracts more visitors and continues to promote its food culture, the industry is likely to expand further, elevating Thai cuisine to even greater heights on the global stage.

In conclusion, Thailand's food industry is a vibrant and integral part of the country's cultural identity and economy. From its traditional cuisine to the bustling street food culture, Thailand offers a diverse range of flavors and culinary experiences. With sustainable agricultural practices, the influence of tourism, and a growing focus on innovation, the industry continues to thrive. As Thailand's food scene evolves, it will undoubtedly continue to captivate the taste buds of both locals and international visitors, solidifying the country's position as a culinary destination of choice.

Thailand issues new regulation to monitor sealed foods prices

The Chairman of Central Committee on Prices of Goods and Services issued a notification regarding the 'Prices and Details Concerning Semi-Finished Foods Packed in Sealed Containers' B.E. 2565 (2022) (the 'Notification'), which was published in the Ministerial Information Bulletin No. 10860 of 1 November 2022. The Notification is the result of a review by the Central Committee on Prices of Goods and Services on the power exercised regarding the provision of prices and details concerning **semi-finished foods packed in sealed containers**. It is concluded that business operators must continue to notify the prices and details concerning semi-finished foods packed in sealed containers. The purpose of this is to monitor price levels, ensure the fair provision of these goods, and protect consumers.

Scope of the notification

By virtue of Section 9 (2), (3), Section 25 (4), (5) and Section 26 of the Act Governing Prices of Goods and Services B.E. 2542 (1999), the scope of the Notification is as follows:

1. The Notification is enforced in all localities throughout the Kingdom for a period of one year beginning the day after its initial publication unless a new notice is issued prior to the end of this period.
2. The Notification requires that the name, trade name, selling prices, buying prices, sale discount,

sale plan, and method of sale relating to payment, sale promotion, size, category, weight per unit, be notified by the manufacturer, the hirer for manufacture, the sole distributor of semi-finished noodles packed in sealed containers. The prices notified must be the price on the day this notice comes into effect, and notification must occur within thirty days from the date of effect.

3. If a business is operated the day after the date of enforcement, the same collection of individuals listed in (2) must notify the same data in paragraph (2) at least fifteen days before the goods in question are sold.

4. Any data notified by case the manufacturer, the hirer for manufacture, the sole distributor of semi-finished noodles packed in sealed containers under the Notice of Central Committee on Prices of Goods and Services No. 53 B.E. 2564 (2021), Re Notification of Prices and Details Concerning Semi-Finished Foods Packed in Sealed Containers, dated 1 July 2021, shall be considered as notification under (1) for this notice.

Prices or descriptions that vary from what has been notified

5. No manufacturer, hirer for manufacture, or sole distributor of semi-finished noodles packed in sealed containers shall sell goods that differ from the description notified, nor sell it higher than the prices notified, except where granted permission from the Secretary-General.

6. Applications to the Secretary-General under (5) shall be according to the Procedures on Consideration Price Fixing and Changes of Notified Particulars or Prices B.E. 2545 (2002) dated 16 August 2002.

7. If one of the individuals listed in (2) has submitted an application for permission to change the data or the prices differently from that notified, it shall be regarded as submission of an application for permission from the date of enforcement of this Notice.

Process for notifications

1. The notification under (2) or the application for permission under (6) shall be submitted to the Secretary-General per the forms prescribed by the Secretary-General at the Office of the Central Committee on Prices of Goods and Services, Department of Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce.

2. The notification under (1) may be registered by a reply post, by facsimile, or by electronic mail, whereby the date of daily stamp of the post office of the place of origin shall be regarded as the date of notification.

- Regarding facsimile, the date of receipt of such notification shall be considered the date of intention to file a notification.
- Regarding electronic mail, the date of receipt of such notification shall be the day the electronic mail accesses the database system of the Office of the Central Committee on Prices of Goods and Services.

3. The notification under (2) by facsimile or by electronic mail shall be completed only when the manufacturer, the importer, or the sole distributor of the manufacturer or of the importer, has sent the original to the Secretary-General.

4. The manufacturer, the importer for sale, the sole distributor of the manufacturer or of the importer, who wishes to file the notification by electronic mail shall sign in the memorandum of agreement on notification of electronic data according to the bases and procedures prescribed by the Secretary-General.

Extensions on notification

The Secretary-General has the discretion to extend the period of time before the lapse of the said period when a request is received by the manufacturer, the importer for sale, the sole distributor of the manufacturer, or the importer. However, an extension requires exceptional circumstances or necessity on behalf of the applicant. For an extension to take Secretary-General is required to issue an order to extend the period thereof, before the lapse of the said period, except in the case of *force majeure*.

Public health regulation of foods obtained from genetically-modified organisms

The Minister of Public Health issued Notification (No. 431) B.E. 2565 (2022) in April, regulating foods obtained from genetically-modified organisms (GMOs). The Notification prescribes supervisory measures intended to protect consumer health. These supervisory measures include the requirement that all GMOs produced, imported, or sold must pass a biological food safety assessment (Assessment) for submission to and review by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA Thailand).

This Notification prohibits the manufacture, import, or sale of GMOs with two exceptions. Those two exceptions are GMOs that have already been approved by FDA Thailand or passed the required Assessment. **Approved GMOs** are included in Schedule 1, annexed to the Notification No. 431, and include specific maize, soybean, and microorganism strains. Schedule 6 lists genetically modified maize and soybean strains that have **not been approved**, but may continue to be produced, imported, and sold while the Assessment is ongoing. This provisional permission extends for five years beyond the enforcement of the Notification No. 431, but may be revoked at any time if the food in question fails the Assessment.

The biological food safety assessment ultimately evaluates four qualities and standards. Foods obtained from GMOs must:

1. Not pose a heightened health risk in comparison to the conventional counterpart.
2. Have nutritional value or required properties equal to the conventional counterpart.
3. Meet the qualities and standards for foods as mandated in applicable Ministry of Public Health notifications.
4. Meet any other applicable qualities and standards required by the Assessment results and supporting documents or evidence.

GMOs subject to assessment are divided into **three categories**: foods obtained from genetically modified plants, microorganisms, or animals. The respective Assessments are substantially similar with a few additional requirements specific to GMO type. Assessments must be conducted by the National Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, the National Science and Technology Development Agency, or another safety assessment agency recognised by FDA Thailand. Results of the Assessment must be submitted with supporting documents and evidence to FDA Thailand for permission and approval to produce, import, and sell foods obtained from the GMO under consideration.

Assessment requirements are included in Schedules 2 to 4. Schedule 5 concerns **methodology standards** for academic analysis. The individual who submits the Assessment results to FDA Thailand has an ongoing duty to notify governing administrative bodies of new scientific findings relating to the GMO. All new information must be submitted to FDA Thailand, the National Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, the National Science and Technology Development Agency, or another FDA Thailand approved assessment agency without delay.

Foods obtained from GMOs, which have passed biological food safety assessments conducted by the following organisations, are exempt from the Assessment requirement:

1. Joint scientific advisory bodies of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and World Health Organisation (WHO).
2. WHO expert advisory panels and committees.
3. Specific to enzymes used in food production, those which meet the standards detailed in the Ministry of Public Health's Notification Governing Enzymes for Use in Food Production are also exempt.

The required supporting documents for foods obtained from genetically modified crops are listed in Schedule 2. These documents must be submitted to FDA Thailand along with the Assessment results. The documents included in Section 1 apply to GMOs in this category generally. Section 2 applies to foods obtained from stacked genetically modified plants. Stacked genetically modified plants are reproduced by conventional breeding methods between transgenic parental lines of genetically modified plants. Required documents include those that describe characteristics of the genetic modification, nutritional composition, and an assessment of the allergen risk the GMO may pose.

Schedule 3 lists the supporting documents required for foods obtained from **genetically-modified microorganisms**. Microorganisms are divided into **four categories**:

- **Category 1** – foods which contain microorganisms that can multiply or transfer genes.
- **Category 2** – foods which contain microorganisms that cannot multiply or transfer genes.
- **Category 3** – complex products from which any remaining microorganism or new gene has been eliminated.
- **Category 4** – chemically defined compounds and substances from which any remaining microorganism or new gene has been eliminated.

Required documents include assessments of the likelihood a microorganism may inhabit the human gastrointestinal tract and develop a resistance to antibiotics.

Schedule 4 lists the supporting documents required for foods obtained from **genetically-modified animals**. Required documents include details concerning the animal's development and food processing information.

How to obtain a food licence in Thailand

The food licence application consists of the following steps:

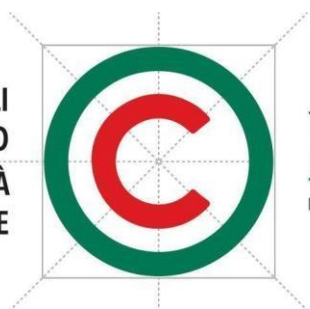
1. Provide the required documents to the appropriate local office.
2. Once the application has been submitted, MPG will arrange for the official inspection. At this stage, additional documents might be required. Note that the employees should be present during the inspection to explain some food-making processes.
3. All Thai employees must pass an exam at the district office to obtain a certificate.
4. Upon confirmation that all is in order, the officer will issue the food licence.

The following documents are required:

1. Company affidavit, not older than six months.
2. Registration document of the building.
3. Original consent letter or copy of the lease agreement (affixed with a stamp duty).
4. Copy of the ID card and home registration of the director of the company.
5. Copy of the ID card and home registration of the owner of the business.
6. Power of Attorney.
7. Completed and signed SorAor1 application form.
8. Map of location.
9. Photos (print out) in front of and inside the restaurant.
10. Interior layout of the restaurant (interior floor plan).
11. Total space of the whole restaurant in square meters.
12. Proof of ownership (on a case by case basis), such as sale and purchase agreement, title deed (all pages), or construction permit

Note that the food licence must be renewed every calendar year (valid until 31 December).

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