

1. Ministry Floats Plan to Boost Tuna Value

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) of Vietnam recently held a workshop on how to develop a tuna value chain in the central coastal province of Khanh Hoa. According to the Ministry, this would increase the value of products and improve the living standards of fishermen. Often, fishermen do not pay attention to investing in processing technology because they can easily sell their tuna by total weight to local buyers without strict regulations related to quality control, health and sanitary guarantees as required in the overseas markets.

Creating a whole chain of fish production is a matter of concern in Vietnam. According to MARD Minister Cao Duc Phat, in order to benefit from the value chain, Vietnam has to clarify matters like what kind of ship would be good for catching tuna or what fishing techniques need to be used. And tuna business needs to take fishermen's interests as their core goal.

To produce tuna in the value chain, the development of a modern fishing fleet, combined with a marketing strategy and the construction of logistic fisheries services should be implemented together, added Phat.

<http://vietnamnews.vn/economy/258347/mard-floats-plan-to-boost-tuna-value.html>



2. Shrimp Producers Face More Scrutiny for Chemical Usage

The Prime Minister (PM) of Vietnam has recently directed relevant ministries and State agencies to monitor shrimp production and trade in the country more strictly. Under the Directive 20/CT-TTg, the PM asked the chairpersons of coastal provinces and cities with large seafood production and trading activities, such as Ca Mau, Bac Lieu, Soc Trang and Kien Giang, to increase the supervision and inspection of seafood production, processing and trade to prevent the contamination of these products with banned chemical residues. Those violating the rules will be strictly sanctioned in accordance with the Decree 178/2013/ND-CP.



The PM also entrusted the MARD and the Ministers of Public Security, Industry and Trade, and Finance to jointly draft and submit a project to improve the control over and prevent the use of banned chemicals in shrimp production and trade.

Stricter sanctions might be imposed on such illegal activities as the PM has asked relevant ministries to study whether the use of banned chemicals in shrimp production and trade could be added to the list of new crimes in the Penal Code.

The Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers has also been instructed to spread awareness among enterprises and shrimp farmers, and to ask them to pledge not to use banned chemicals in shrimp production and trade.

<http://vietnamnews.vn/economy/258429/shrimp-producers-face-more-scrutiny-for-chemical-usage.html>

3. Vietnam Targets *Tra* Fish Supply Chain to Enter EU Market

Vietnam plans to develop a sustainable *Pangasius* supply chain to increase its exports to the European Union (EU), its leading export market, according to a recently-held conference in Ho Chi Minh City.

Pangasius production and processing in Vietnam now has a high commitment to international standards, food safety and environmental and social responsibility.

In addition, VietGAP is being widely applied in *Pangasius* farming in Vietnam with regulations on sustainable development equivalent to standards of GlobalGAP. These will be compulsory by 2016.

The Decree 36/2014/ND-CP of the Government of Vietnam (GoV) on raising, processing and exporting *Pangasius* is the foundation for improving quality of *Pangasius* filets.

The GoV has always paid special attention to developing the image of Vietnamese *Pangasius*. It even developed a master plan for production and processing, and has invested in research and technology and infrastructure, such as fish stock and quality management centres.

<http://vietnamnews.vn/economy/258547/vn-targets-tra-fish-supply-chain-to-supply-eu-market.html>



4. Organic Waste to be Turned Into Renewable Energy

Renewable green energy will be created from organic waste discharged in industrial-agricultural activities in the Mekong Delta region through a new project funded by the Japanese government.



Researchers of the project are said to have proposed using sludge and bio-wastes from shrimp ponds to produce electricity with a new generation of fuel cells developed by Kyushu University, Japan.

With technology support from Kyushu University, Vietnam can develop a closed-cycle shrimp farm model, where electricity and heat energy are produced from bio-gas (from waste in shrimp farming) at high efficiency (90 per cent) over a large area.

<http://vietnamnews.vn/environment/259278/organic-waste-to-be-turned-into-renewable-energy.html>

5. What Types of Businesses Benefit from ISO Standards?

The International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) establishes standards to measure and monitor the quality of processes, products, materials, and the organisation of management systems of information. Every company that wants to operate in a global marketplace must master ISO standards in order to be successful and competitive. Here are examples of types of companies that benefit from ISO standards.

ISO 9001 is recommended for small businesses. All the processes can be written to help employees understand what's necessary to keep the company productive, efficient, and safe. Small savings can be realised by incorporating ISO 9001 standards within the organisation. With the small savings, instrumental changes can be made to make small businesses more profitable and sustainable.

Car manufacturers are prime candidates for ISO standards. Automotive manufacturers have learned to increase productivity, innovation, and efficiency with ISO standards. This can also help people improve safety, quality and reliability.

Semiconductor manufacturers need to have a controlled environment in the clean rooms to manufacture semiconductors. Processes that operate according to ISO standards will be more efficient and foster more productivity in the environment

The retail industry is also concerned with increasing customer satisfaction with products and services. When ISO standards are used to monitor quality relationships, revenue typically improves.

When assembling a cell phone, computer or television, it requires a process that is both efficient and accurate. ISO 9000 standards are designed to ensure that the technology that's assembled operates according to specifications.

<http://www.isoready.com/what-types-of-businesses-benefit-from-iso-standards/>

6. EU Could Ban Vietnamese Produce if Imports Fail on Food Safety

The European Commission (EC) recently warned that it would ban the import of five kinds of Vietnamese fruits and vegetables (basil, capsicum, celery, bitter melon and cilantro) if Vietnam does not comply with EU's food standards, reports the Vietnamese Ministry of Industry and Trade's Department for the European Market.

According to the Department, the EU's Directorate-General for Health and Consumers (DG-SANCO) said that the EU would impose the ban if it receives five notifications of interceptions of Vietnamese fruits and vegetables due to food safety and phytosanitary reasons between February 01, 2014-February 01, 2015.

The EU issued the warning after DG-SANCO received three notifications from EU member countries about the presence of harmful organisms in basil and bitter melon imported from Vietnam. DG-SANCO had also received in early 2014 a report from an EU member country about the detection of harmful organisms in wood packaging material from Vietnam.

On October 12, 2014, Vietnam temporarily paused quarantine license for the above-mentioned vegetables, fruits exported to Europe till January 31, 2015 in an effort to maintain its position in the EU market, said the Post-import Plant Quarantine Center under Vietnam's MARD's Department of Plant Protection.

<http://vietnamnews.vn/economy/261098/eu-could-ban-vn-produce-if-imports-fail-on-food-safety.html>



7. Central Region Takes Biofuel Lead

The National Oil and Gas Group (Petro Vietnam) has opened three biofuel plants with total capacity of 300 million litres per year in order to meet increasing demand for green energy.

The Dung Quat plant alone provides the central region with 1.5 million tonnes of E5 per year, Deputy General Director of Petro Vietnam Nguyen Sinh Khang said at a conference in Da Nang city recently.

Da Nang, Quang Ngai and Quang Nam were leading the way when it came to promoting biofuel due to their efforts to raise awareness about environmental protection, he said.

Nguyen Van Hoi, Deputy General Director of Binh Son Refining and Petrochemical Company (BSR), said the company had supported its fuel agents with VND350 per litre of E5.

The central city of Da Nang will completely replace RON 92 with E5 at its 118 retail filling stations in the next month, while Quang Ngai plans to stop selling Mogas 92 by the end of 2014.

Binh Son Refining and Petrochemical Company said the company would provide 24,000 cubic metres of E5 for Da Nang, Quang Nam and Quang Ngai in October and November.

Vietnam is currently participating in the development of an international standard on "Sustainability criteria for bioenergy" under the auspices of the ISO.

<http://vietnamnews.vn/economy/261369/central-region-takes-biofuel-lead.html>



8. Safety, Quality Key to Export Growth

Ensuring food safety and security as well as higher-quality products would enhance the sustainable development of Vietnam's agricultural sector, attendees said on October 15, 2014 at a EuroCham seminar that discussed the status of the industry.

Thierry Rocaboy, an expert in the agribusiness and agrifood industry, told seminar participants that the country's food production for consumption had expanded greatly, with Vietnam now playing a major role as a large exporter of farm produce. However, he noted that export prices had remained low due to the quality of products, and that food safety, especially herbs and seafood products, were still of concern. The value added to products was also low as materials were not locally processed

Marieke Van Der Pijl, Vice Chairwoman of the Food, Agri and Aqua Business Sector Committee of Eurocham in Vietnam, said food safety was a key issue as demand for higher standards had increased from both export and local markets.

Further steps are needed to achieve efficient and effective food safety control, and co-operation with neighbouring countries should be enhanced to address cross-border food-safety issues. Improved food-safety management and enforcement would also help export growth, she said.

Also speaking at the seminar, Alain Cany, Country Chairman of Jardine Matheson Vietnam, said the sector should develop measures to create brands for Vietnamese farm produce in an effort to increase export value.

Arie Veldhuizen, Agricultural Counsellor at the Dutch Embassy in Ha Noi, said: "The key for Viet Nam to ensure food security and sustainable development should be based on science and technology".

The country should focus more on restructuring the agricultural sector to improve productivity, quality and efficiency, ensuring sustainable food security while protecting the environment, he said, adding that efficient co-operation among different stakeholders was also needed.

<http://vietnamnews.vn/society/261458/safety-quality-key-to-export-growth.html>



9. Vietnam Joins European Seafood Trade Web

Vietnam would join the Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES) in granting certificates for seafood exports to the EU, the government portal www.chinhphu.vn reported on October 11, 2014.



TRACES is a trans-European web-based network for veterinary health that notifies, certifies and monitors imports, exports and trade in animals and animal products around the world.

The National Agro-Forestry-Fisheries Quality Assurance Department (Nafiqad) said it has sent a dispatch notifying the European Commission Directorate General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO) of its participation in the network after receiving a proposal from the Directorate.

Nafiqad suggested that DG SANCO should provide specific guidance and organise training courses for relevant Vietnamese authorities and employees of Vietnamese enterprises involved in exporting seafood to the EU.

The Department said joining TRACES would enable it to simplify certification procedures, promptly inform authorities and businesses of the conditions of goods and restrict the falsification of documents.

<http://vietnamnews.vn/economy/261337/vn-joins-european-seafood-trade-web.html>

10. Unfair Competition, Absence of Standardised Products Hurt Vietnamese Fruits

Vietnam's fruit exports to the US, South Korea, and Japan remain modest due to a lack of standardised products, plus unhealthy competition among local firms, even though many Vietnamese-grown tropical fruits have been allowed to enter these strict markets, statistics showed.

Since 2008, the US, Japan, South Korea, Chile, Taiwan and New Zealand have opened their doors to Vietnamese dragon fruit. Rambutan has also been accepted by these strict markets.

However, Vietnamese fruit exporters say they lack adequate supplies for the fruits and face fierce competition from Thailand and Taiwan. Exports of Vietnamese rambutan to the said countries have posted even lower volumes and expanded by almost zero percent thanks to harsh competition, according to industry insiders.

The real volume of Vietnamese dragon fruit exported to the US as compared to the potential for development there is "just a drop in the ocean," said Vuong Dinh Khoat, General Director of Hugo Co., a fruit exporter in Ho Chi Minh City. Khoat said the problem facing fruit exporters is that they cannot source enough standardised products to increase export quantities.

Nguyen Hong Hung, a former Deputy Director of Yasaka, a food irradiation company based in the Southern province of Binh Duong, pointed out another reason behind the poor penetration of Vietnamese dragon fruit into Japan. There are a large number of exporters who sell dragon fruit to this East Asian country, and some of them have competed by reducing their prices, Hung said. Many Vietnamese catfish and rice exporters have been hurt by this unhealthy competition method, in which export prices are constantly lowered, he added.

While Vietnam used to be the only exporter of dragon fruit to Japan and the US, the country now faces challenges from Taiwanese and Thai competitors, according to Nguyen Huu Dat, Director of the Post-Entry Plant Quarantine Centre, under the Vietnamese MARD.

Taiwan used to import thousands of metric tonnes of dragon fruit from Vietnam, but is now able to grow the fruit on home soil and has passed procedures to export to Japan, Dat said. Thailand is also taking steps to export irradiated dragon fruit to the US, he added.

<http://tuoitrenews.vn/business/23212/unfair-competition-absence-of-standardized-products-hurt-vietnam-fruit-in-strict-markets>



11. ITU Standardisation Bureau to Lower Barriers Among Industries

South Korea's Lee Chae-sub, who was elected to head the International Telecommunications Union (ITU)'s standardisation office, said that the body would strive to lower barriers in the ICT realm to further bolster convergences among industries and generate new opportunities.

"The ITU will first help in creating new markets with new ideas," Lee told reporters in his first press meeting after the election. "South Korea has a lot of new ideas, but there are limits for them to tap the global market."

Lee said he would especially focus on lowering "barriers," adding that the core of the ICT lies in "convergence" and that the bureau can lend support to solve the issue.

The ITU is an information and communications arm of the United Nations that sets technological standards, allocates radio frequencies and satellite orbits and works to improve the quality of communication services.

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/yonhap-news-agency/141024/itu-itu-standardization-bureau-lower-barriers-among-industri>

12. Standardisation Helps Reduce Trade Deficit

Standardisation is an answer to reducing trade deficit and it provides a common platform for fair competition amongst producers and manufacturers of different segments of gross domestic product of the country, says Engr. M.A. Jabbar, Director of Board of the Pakistan Standards Quality Control Authority, former Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and Member of the Board of Governors of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute. Talking to the media on October 15, 2014, Jabbar, said the World Standards Day is being celebrated during the month with the selected theme of 'Standards Level The Playing Field'.

The concept of the theme is just and fair understanding of philosophy of political economy. A level-playing field sought by least developed countries and developing countries in conducting global trade has a real sense value encompassed by the standards which provides a common platform for fair competition.

Above all, the satisfaction of consumers and fair valuing the resource of earning paid for in acquiring the produce, product and service is fundamental to the standards against which the saleable and consumable ingredients for the civil societies are brought in the market, said Jabbar. The beauty of the standards is the available traceability against which the manufacturers of economic segments can self corrects themselves against the received complaints from consumers, he added.

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=254528>