

A global qualification with **local benefits**



What was *the market situation*?

Thailand's durian export market is worth around 115,000 million bhat – or 3 billion euro – and is forecast to grow by 10% in 2022, driven largely by increasing demand from China. It makes a huge contribution to both the national economy, and the fortunes of farmers, who rely on the crop for livelihoods. But retaining access to this market becomes more difficult every year – especially in the time of COVID-19. For some time, farmers and product collection centers have needed to meet certification standards such as GLOBALG.A.P. before their

produce can enter key countries such as China; now, alongside this, they also need to meet strict COVID-safety and hygiene standards. This means not just following processes for handling goods and training workers accordingly – it also means documenting those processes. The export market commands higher prices than the domestic market. It can make a big difference to farmers' livelihoods. How could we give them confidence that those livelihoods were future-proofed against rising standards?

What were *the challenges*?

Thailand's durian production is mainly smallholder-based, with farms typically 3–5 hectares in size. That means a lot of farms, each of which needs at least one trained and certified farmer who can oversee processes according to government standards. Each farm also works with a collector who buys the fruit from them – and this person must also be suitably certified. All in all, there are a lot of people who need to be compliant with export requirements. The training required for certification is not easy, and it also needs to be renewed every three years. After two years of strict limits on farm visits and goods transportation owing to COVID-19, a solution was needed that would make the training available to as many farmers as possible, on their terms and without disruption to their activities. The government's Department of Agriculture needed more training capacity than it could provide on its own – and on top of this it needed a training partner who could provide a high standard of course content and delivery.



What was *the solution*?

In Thailand's Eastern Region 6 – which contains the durian-producing areas of Chanthaburi, Rayong and Trat – the government's Office of Agricultural Research and Development found a way to bring farmers closer to gaining international certification: by using Bayer as a partner to deliver BayG.A.P. training to farmers and prepare them to earn the national ThaiG.A.P. certification. The office's director, Chonlathee Numnoo, is a long-standing collaborator with Bayer, and was confident selecting Bayer to be involved in this project. BayG.A.P. is a global standard, covering far more than durian – so the course needed to be delivered in a specific way that served the particular needs of this crop and location. This is where Kasetsart University, a famous agricultural academy in the region, got involved. Its associate professor Dr. Chainarong Rattanakreetakul took the lead in executing customized BayG.A.P. training events to transfer the most relevant knowledge to the farmers and get them ready to pass the ThaiG.A.P. assessment. With an initial intake of 1,000 farmers identified, training was run in two-day sessions, ensuring farmers could get 'up and running' in a short time. Then, Bayer-appointed agronomists followed up with ongoing in-field advice, both on good practices and on requirements for documentation and transparency. Eventually, this would lead to verification that the farmer was compliant with ThaiG.A.P. standards for export produce.

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“At Bayer, we are looking forward to continuing this project in a new way. During the restrictions of the last two years, we have not been able to get in touch with the BayG.A.P. community in the same way. But from 2022 onwards, we will be able to connect with them again. Face-to-face activities have been set up.”

// Nattapong Thadsri, Fruit Crop Manager, Bayer Thailand



THAILAND

What did *we* achieve?

Nearly all of the 1,000 farmers have now achieved the required certifications. What is more, thanks to the aligned approach between Bayer, the Department of Agriculture and Kasetsart University, the farmers – and the government – found this easier than the other routes they could have taken. Everything they needed was delivered in one place. The BayG.A.P. course is rigorous, but because Bayer took an active role transferring the required knowledge to farmers and highlighted the key points relative to their situation, the farmers had a high success rate. They gave strongly positive feedback on this approach. Not only have they gained a deeper knowledge of why certain agricultural practices work, and better documentation of what happens on their farm; they have also guaranteed their market access for coming years, and the supply of durians into the export market.

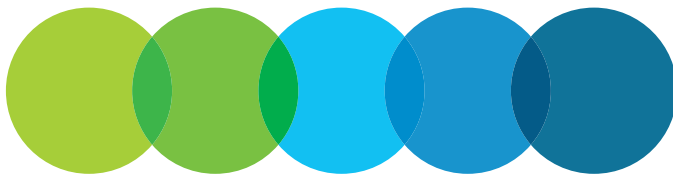
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“The BayG.A.P. course makes a significant difference in preparing us and our businesses for the future. On completing the entire course, we receive a certificate from Bayer that gives a third-party guarantee of our understanding of good agricultural practices and readiness for ThaiG.A.P.”

// **Certified Durian farmer, Thailand**

About Food Chain Partnership

Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of the need for healthy nutrition. Food Chain Partnerships help to supply consumers with high-quality fresh produce, which forms the basis of a healthy diet. But such partnerships can only succeed if they involve every player in the food chain – from the farmer and processor to the exporter or importer and retailer. The Crop Science Division of Bayer has the global experience and cutting-edge expertise to create a successful partnership at every level.



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