

Thailand to Host ASEAN Rubber Day 2013

Thursday, April 04, 2013: The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives is scheduled to hold ASEAN Rubber Day 2013 to provide greater investment opportunities for the rubber industry and show Thailand's readiness to become the world's leader in rubber production and trade. The event will take place at the Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort and Spa in Phuket province, in the South, from 10 to 12 April 2013. The Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Mr. Yuthapong Jarassathian, said that a meeting of rubber producers, traders, and other people involved would be held during this event. They will discuss ways to develop the rubber industry and exchange research innovations in order to add value to rubber and rubber products. Participants will come from 13 countries, comprising 10 ASEAN members and China, India, and Japan. Mr. Yuthapong said that the rubber industry plays an important role in the country's employment generation and exports. Thailand has great potential in rubber production because of its abundance in raw materials. Continued economic growth in Asia, especially in Japan and India, has led to greater demands for natural rubber and has boosted prices. Thailand is now the world's largest rubber producer and exporter, followed by Indonesia and Malaysia. The rapid growth of the automotive industry will contribute to expansion in the rubber industry and related businesses. Rubber exports earn Thailand more than 400 billion baht annually. The Director General of the Office of the Rubber Replanting Aid Fund, Wit Pratuckchai, said that the Cabinet had designated 10 April each year National Rubber Day in commemoration of Phraya Ratsadanupradit, who planted the first group of rubber trees in Thailand in 1899 to pioneer the rubber industry. The Office, under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, has decided to organize ASEAN Rubber Day 2013, as part of the National Rubber Day celebration this year. The highlight of ASEAN Rubber Day 2013 will be a seminar on the direction and growth of the rubber industry in ASEAN and its trading partners. Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra will preside over the opening of this event, and former Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohammad will give a special lecture concerning the Malaysian rubber industry. There will be workshops on several interesting topics, with both Thai and foreign resource persons, and a field trip for the participants. Rubber production in Thailand accounts for one third of the global production. The Board of Investment classifies the manufacture of natural rubber and rubber products as a priority activity. Eligible investment projects in the industry receive benefits, such as tax breaks and exemption from duties on imported machinery. Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia - the world's top-three rubber producers - jointly established the International Tripartite Rubber Council. Reuters