

## How to Improve the Quality of Natural Rubber in Thailand?

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The standards for raw rubber and block rubber in Thailand were established more than six decades ago with the implementation of strict production and quality control. Ribbed smoked sheets (RSS), a practice in place for over a century, are graded by visual examination based on The Green Book which is disputed in the trade industry. In response to the challenges in RSS production, the Rubber Research Institute of Thailand, Department of Agriculture, has pushed the first Thai Agricultural Standard (TAS) on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) in 2013. Subsequently, in 2018, the Rubber Authority of Thailand (RAOT) further contributed to standardization efforts by advocating for the implementation of TAS on GMP to produce crepe rubber. Over the following years, from 2019 to 2022, an additional set of five standards were introduced. These covered Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) to produce fresh latex and cup lumps rubber, as well as GMP for latex collection centers. Additionally, standards related to product certification were established, emphasizing adherence to scientific properties. These include Premium Grade RSS and Premium Grade Thin Brown Crepe Rubber. The announcement of Premium Grade Air Dried Sheets will be anticipated in the future as TAS. These standards aim to align with established quality benchmarks, ensuring that buyers are content with the product's quality. The expectation will lead to a significant price of more than 2 baht per kilogram.

The National Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards Office has designated the Rubber Authority of Thailand (RAOT) as the competent authority for both GAP and GMP standards. This strategy has provided farmers with incentives to engage in compliance, supported by academic knowledge and budgetary assistance. A study between 2018 and 2023 revealed that RAOT has successfully certified more than 6,000 farmers involved in rubber farming for GAP standards. This certification covers an area exceeding 60,000 rai. Furthermore, over 100 farmer institutes have received GMP certification, surpassing the capacity of 30,000 tons per year, with an estimated value of over 60 million baht annually. These diverse standards not only ensure product quality but also facilitate the traceability of raw materials. The implementation of environmentally friendly waste management aligns with the EU Deforestation Free Regulation (EUDR) and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Beyond elevating quality standards, this approach contributes to the overall sustainability of communities, society, and the environment. It reflects a commitment to responsible and sustainable rubber production in Thailand.

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