

PROGRESS ON SEED REGULATIONS: ASEAN ASPECT

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ABSTRACT:

The ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) has various policy framework that address issues related to agriculture and forestry. The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint (2025) states “ensuring food security, food safety and better nutrition, gaining from access to global market as well as increasing resilience to climate change, natural disasters and other shocks”. Moreover, the Food, Agriculture and Forestry (FAF) Vision (2016-2025) states “A competitive, inclusive, resilient and sustainable Food, Agriculture, and Forestry (FAF) sector integrated with the global economy, based on a single market and production base contributing to food and nutrition security and prosperity in the ASEAN Community.

To attain food and nutrition security, the ASEAN region has to increase its productivity particularly of the crop sector. Seed is a vital component in crop production, therefore, the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Crops (ASWGC) has indicated in its strategic plan of action the activities related to enhancing the quantity and quality of production with sustainable, green technologies, resource management systems and minimize pre- and postharvest losses and waste. Among the activities identified in this strategic thrust is to promote the usage of quality seed for small farmers to increase agricultural production through wider adoption of seed production technology to enhance yield and productivity; develop regional seed guidelines (seed production and certification); and harmonization of national seed guidelines with the adopted regional guidelines are some of the enabling policy environment to tackle the issues on food and nutrition security.

The speaker will also provide insights on global policy trends that influences seed regulations in the ASEAN region including the evolution of seed policy regulations, seed laws, international treaties on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, registration and certifications, policy response to genetically engineered crops, plant breeding and intellectual property rights, Farmer’s rights, biosecurity, and how seed plays a crucial role in climate change and disaster preparedness.

The ASEAN Member States have both differences and commonalities in their Seed Acts or Plant Variety Protection Acts. How the ASEAN region could harmonize their policy regulations on seed production and promote seed trade while protecting the farmers and their rights are great challenges that the ASEAN region has to address in the future. In this future direction, the speaker would provide some views on the direction of the ASEAN Seed Council and the ASEAN Seed Hub.