

AGRO-FOOD INDUSTRY

Biotechnology-Based Agro-Industries

Thailand's agricultural sector has a number of important industries where biotechnology is or can be applied in. These are livestock, sugar, animal feed, cassava, aquaculture, fertilizers, pesticides, vegetable and fruit canning and seafood canning.

The development of agro-industry will create linkages between the agricultural sector and the industrial sector. The linkages will help increase production and exports, and assist Thailand's development into an industrialized country.

Thailand's low level of research and development activity in industry means the growth of technology based industries is highly unlikely. There is a low probability that technology developed in research laboratories will drive the technology based agro-industries as in developed countries such as Canada. The majority of industries will have to rely on imported technology to bridge existing capability and production gaps.

Biotechnology will have important impacts on the development of new crops, plants and animal species. Prospects are bright for the development of insect and disease resistant plants in Thailand through genetic engineering. Initially the effects will be in the rice, maize and legumes due to large plantation areas.

The animal feed industry should expand to satisfy the need created by the increase in livestock production and aquaculture. Thai animal feed firms are highly competitive in export markets and it is expected that these firms will invest in technology development to remain competitive.

Source: Thailand Development Research Institute, Thailand's
Capability in Industry, 1989.