

## **CAMBODIA: University expands its faculty for rubber**

**Following rising yields from plantations and growing demand from global markets, rubber will receive its own faculty at the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) by mid-year, officials said.**

The initiative had been proposed by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Chan Sarun last year to coordinate with the sharp expansion of rubber plantations in recent years, according to the officials.

“We noticed local and foreign investment companies who maintained rubber plantations were getting year-on-year yield increases to go along with the increasing global consumption, but our human resources to serve that area were lagging,” RUA rector Ngo Bun Than said.

A rubber faculty already existed at RUA, but previously was small, according to Ngo Bun Than. It now requires a separate faculty in order to become specialised in the industry, he said, adding that he had already drafted the curriculum after meeting with experts.

He said he expects the program to launch mid-year.

Cambodia hopes to transform itself into one of the top 11 major rubber producers in the next few years, according to statements from officials.

Ly Phalla, director general of the General Directorate of Rubber, could not be reached for comment. He previously said the Cambodian government’s goal is to eventually increase total plantation area to 300,000 hectares, which will produce around 290,000 tonnes by 2020. Total hectares in 2010 were 181,400.

Lim Sunleang, owner of the Memot Rubber Plantation in Kampong Cham province, said he supported the decision for a new rubber faculty.

“That’s good for the development of human resources for these expanding rubber plantations ... because right now we have a shortage of human resources and experts in the field,” he said.

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