



PRESS RELEASE

The Royal Thai Embassy wishes to make some clarifications on the allegation regarding the treatment of monkeys in Thailand's coconut industry as follows;

- Wildlife conservation and animal welfare is an important issue in Thailand. The Royal Thai Government, NGOs, and private individuals have worked together to improve animal welfare in Thailand by raising public awareness and enacting relevant legislation.

- In this connection, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce Jurin Laksanawisit chaired a meeting on 8 July 2020 to address the issue. Gists of the meeting are;

1. The Thai Food Processors' Association (TFPA), in particular Thai Agri Food Public Company Limited and Theppadungporn Coconut Co., Ltd. (producers respectively of "Aroy-D" and "Chaokoh" brands of coconut milk) confirmed that monkeys are NOT used in harvesting the coconuts which are processed into coconut milk.
2. These firms stated that they have entered into MOUs with major Western retailers/ importers and with their suppliers to ensure that there is no usage of monkeys in the supply chain; an auditing process, including random inspection, is in place to ensure this.
3. Nevertheless, to ensure increased consumer confidence, the TFPA will work with its members to implement a more stringent traceability system (with trace code on packaging) to guarantee that there is no mistreatment of animals in the food production process.

- Thailand has the following legislation on animal welfare namely; (1) the **Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act B.E. 2562 (2019)** under which the monkey is a protected species and therefore ownership requires registration. While the law allows monkey to be used as labour, it is an offense to trade or bring monkey from the nature; offenders can be jailed and/or fined, (2) the **Cruelty Prevention and Welfare of Animal Act B.E 2557 (2014)** which proscribes any act of cruelty to animal without justification; offenders can be jailed and/or fined. Any mistreatment of animals can be reported directly to the local authorities, and (3) the **Criminal Code Section 381** which proscribes any act of animal maltreatment or the unnecessary killing of an animal by subjecting it to a painful state; offenders can be jailed and/or fined, **and Section 382** which prohibits the imposition of excessive work on ill, senile or immature animal; offenders can be subject to the same penalties.

- The use of monkeys as labour should also be understood in the local Thai cultural context. In many parts of southern Thailand, monkeys have traditionally been raised and trained to pick coconuts for the livelihood of villagers, similar to other parts of the world where dogs and falcons are trained to assist in hunting or sport. And likewise, while the practice of retaining animals for traditional uses do exist in Thailand, they are unconnected with the modern efficient industrial manufacturing process. Acts of cruelty towards animals are individual acts, and violate the relevant legislation described above.

- Thailand is committed to promoting animal protection, welfare, and rights, and it expects all parties to work together in the spirit of constructiveness and transparency.

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