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## Thai-German Meat Product eyes AEC



Jantana Puapatanakajorn, managing director of Thai-German Meat Product Co Ltd

THAI-GERMAN Meat Product Co (TGM), a producer of processed meats including sausages, ham and bacon, has invested Bt1.2 billion in a new robotic plant on a 12-rai (2-hectare) plot in Wellgrow Industrial Estate in Chachoengsao, aiming for more export markets in the Asean Economic Community (AEC).

Managing director Jantana Puapatanakajorn said the new plant would be another milestone in the company's growth strategy by expanding its production capacity to meet rising demands in the Kingdom as well as expanding its exports strategically into the AEC, as well as the European Union and Japan. It will allow the company to increase production capacity by about 150 per cent.

"We have invested 15 million euros [Bt570 million] in importing new machinery from Germany featuring universal standards for the production of good-quality food products at the highest efficiency. The new machinery will be computerised and operated by a robotic system allowing the factory to stock a lot of ingredients each time.

"The computer system will work around the clock to ensure that the entire production process will not be touched by human hands. It requires a small number of staff to control the production process," Jantana said.

"The new plant will be the most modern facility at the forefront of innovative production in the country. We will be able to blend the best production technology while maintaining the best standard of TGM sausage products. We hope to lead the processed-food industry in Asean [after] the implementation of AEC, to be effective by the end of this year," she said.

Songwut Puapatanakajorn, 32, TGM director and a member of the third generation of the family since it formed the business 52 years ago, said the company achieved total sales of Bt1.9 billion last year, up 8 per cent from the previous year, and expected its sales to exceed Bt2 billion this year. The company expects its annual sales to reach Bt4 billion within five years.

"We also plan to increase our export contribution from 10 per cent currently to about 25 per cent in five years," Songwut said.

He said that the new plant, which is in the same industrial estate of the existing facility, would occupy 20,000 square metres and would start its operations officially next month. It will be five times the size of the existing plant.

"We will move the production of ham and bacon products to the new plant, which will have capacity to produce 90 tonnes of those processed foods a day. Meanwhile, our existing plant, also at Wellgrow Industrial Estate, will produce sausage, salami and cotta products at the total capacity of 40 tonnes a day.

The new plant will serve the company's growth for the next eight to nine years," Songwut said.

He said the company began exporting its processed meats, particularly sausages, to Cambodia 15 years ago, the first to do so. The company currently holds more than 50 per cent of the market in that country.

"We have been exporting our products to Laos and Myanmar for less than a year. We are also looking to export to Vietnam as well as relaunching and rebranding our products in Brunei," Songwut said.

He said Vietnam had been recognised by the company as a high-potential market thanks to its large population of about 80 million. Vietnamese also consume four times as much pork as in Thailand. In Brunei, its major customers are expatriates who work in the oil industry.

