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Press Release

CropLife Asia joins the call to #BreakTheBias this International Women's Day

Over 65% of region's female farmers cite gender disparity as a key issue in new research

Singapore, 8 March 2022 – This International Women's Day, CropLife Asia is calling on fellow food and agriculture stakeholders across Asia to #BreakTheBias in addressing gender disparity issues that persist in the region. The continuing inequalities between women and men are an obstacle not only to agriculture and rural development but also to achieving sustainable and equitable food systems.

In 2021 research commissioned by CropLife Asia and conducted by leading agricultural and animal health market research company Kynetec, over 65% of female farmers surveyed from Southeast Asia's biggest agricultural-producing countries revealed that they have experienced gender inequality in farming. The highest number of farmers sharing this perspective came from Thailand (87%) and Indonesia (73%). Thai and Indonesian female farmers noted the lack of access to capital, financing and resources as key areas where they faced inequality. Additionally, those in Indonesia also cited lack of access and training opportunities as another area of gender disparity.

These findings and others came to light through the *2021 ASEAN Farmer Sustainability & Resilience Study*, a research initiative to learn more about how regional farmers are coping in the face of growing food production challenges. Through the initiative, Kynetec surveyed 525 corn, rice, fruit and vegetable farmers across Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

"The safe, secure and sustainable supply of food we depend on in Asia would not be possible without female farmers," said Dr. Siang Hee Tan, Executive Director of CropLife Asia. "While these women play an essential role in regional food systems, they are often at a disadvantage compared to their male counterparts with access to resources, services and opportunities. Ensuring our region's female farmers are enabled and empowered to realize their full potential is a responsibility shared by all of Asia's food and agriculture stakeholders

The Southeast Asia region has more than 100 million smallholder farmers, and the agriculture sector employs 26.7% of all working women on average in ASEAN¹. However, these percentages likely underestimate women's full contribution to agriculture as their work is not always captured fully in official statistics. Although women are seen as the backbone of the rural economy, they only receive a fraction of the land, credit, inputs such as improved seeds and fertilizers, agricultural training, and information as compared to men. As part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is a need to ensure that no woman is left behind, including rural women working in agriculture.



Helping Asia's Farmers Grow

Empowering and investing in rural women has shown to significantly increase productivity, reduce hunger and malnutrition, and improve rural livelihoods – not just for women but for everyone. Because of cultural attitudes, discrimination and a lack of recognition for their role in food production, women often do not enjoy benefits of extension services and training in new crop varieties and technologies. The vast majority of studies have found that differences in yields between men and women exist not because women are less skilled but because they have less access to inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizers and equipment. The yield gap between men and women farmers averages around 20-30%ⁱⁱ. The outcome of that yield gap would be monumental, boasting a 2.5–4% increase in total agricultural production in developing nations and reducing hunger by 100–150 million people.ⁱⁱⁱ

More findings from the *2021 ASEAN Farmer Sustainability & Resilience Study* are scheduled to be released this year.

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About CropLife Asia

CropLife Asia is a non-profit society and the regional organization of CropLife International, the voice of the global plant science industry. We advocate a safe, secure food supply, and our vision is food security enabled by innovative agriculture. CropLife Asia supports the work of 15 member associations across the continent and is led by six member companies at the forefront of crop protection, seeds and/or biotechnology research and development. For more information, visit us at www.croplifeasia.org.

For more information please contact:

Duke Hipp

Director, Public Affairs & Strategic Partnerships

CropLife Asia

Tel: (65) 6221 1615

duke.hipp@croplifeasia.org

ⁱ [Strengthening Women's Entrepreneurship in Agriculture in ASEAN countries © OECD 2021](#)

ⁱⁱ Farmingfirst.org/gender-gap video, source:FAO

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.transformationholdings.com/agriculture/investing-in-women-smallholder-farmers/>