

## ACFS to elevate standards of native chicken breed farming

**Ms. Doojduan Sasanavin**, Secretary-General of the National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS), said the ACFS is currently working with the Department of Livestock Development and related agencies to complete drafting of the agricultural standard "Good Agricultural Practices for the Farming of Native Chicken Breeds". The new standard is intended to provide retail farmers with guidelines to operate and upgrade the farming of native chicken breeds to be in conformity with the standard, as well as inspire and encourage quality and safety improvement of the meat of the native chicken breeds in order to gain wider acceptance from consumers and match market demand. Significantly, it also helps reduce the risk of pandemics in poultry, while boosting agricultural productivity for farmers, thereby ultimately enabling them to enjoy higher income and a better quality of life.



The newly-introduced standard encompasses the rearing of Thai native chicken breeds and crossbred chicken, and specifies regulations on the free-range farming of native chicken breeds. Free-range farming allows the birds to fully express their natural behavior, such as searching for food, preening and eating plants, grass or insects, which is significantly different from the farming methods generally employed by commercial farms raising chicken for meat and eggs. The regulations specify that the farm must have sufficient space for chickens to roam freely outdoors in natural surroundings and have enough trees or shade where the birds can rest. The farms must have a minimum of 40 percent of total area devoted to grass and vegetation to provide sufficient

food sources for the chicken, with a variety of plants in rotation. If the green areas of the farm are insufficient, the farm is required to seek outsourcing supplies. The chicken must be allowed to roam freely outdoors for at least eight hours a day.

Ms. Doojduan added that today raising native chicken breeds is becoming increasingly popular among farmers. Many retail farmers raise native chicken in their backyards for household consumption, while some farmer groups have gone further with commercial-scale operations. The modern trade market is also requesting farmers to improve their farming operations to meet standards in order to achieve better quality products, which will subsequently increase consumer confidence.