

## New Farm Boosts Betagro's Pork Market Share

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**THAILAND - Betagro Group is investing over 300 million baht in a new hog farm located in Lop Buri province in an effort to beef up its pork business.**

The expansion is part of the group's 4.1-billion-baht investment for 2011-13 and is aimed at bolstering the swine business, one of five core operations of Thailand's leading agricultural firm, **Bangkok Post** reports.

Last year, Betagro reported 68 billion baht in sales, up from 61 billion in 2011, with animal feed and poultry making maximum contributions.

Located in Chai Badan district, the new farm has the capacity to produce 2,500 great-grandparent pigs (GGPs) from breeds such as Large White, Landrace and Duroc, according to executive vice-president Vasiit Taepaisitphongse.

Mr Taepaisitphongse said: "Our 10th hog farm is part of our commitment to quality and food safety.

"It is in full compliance with international farm standards, especially the use of animal-friendly buildings that promote animal welfare."

The farm is also equipped with European-standard electronic sow feeders using RFID (radio frequency identification) for improved traceability and feeding efficiency.

The automatic feeding system helps minimise the stress of the pigs, improving feed conversion rate and overall productivity.

"They are healthy and free from infectious diseases and have higher fertility rates," said Mr Taepaisitphongse.

Scheduled to be fully operational by the end of 2014, the farm will be a major supplier of fattening pigs for the S-Pure premium pork brand.

The swine business, including processed food, contributes 4 billion baht to Betagro's annual sales. The share is even greater when cooked products such as ham and sausage are included.

Betagro has set an ambitious goal to be the pork-export leader in the next few years, with volume of 140,000 GGPs projected.

The group expects to supply more than 3 million pigs a year for its processing plant within the next five years, up from fewer than 1 million now.

Thailand's overall pig production is estimated at 13.7 million fatteners this year and 14 million in 2014.

Run by Betagro Hybrid International Co, the new farm has biogas technology to aid waste management, lessen bad odours and eliminate disease.

Elsewhere, Betagro last month opened a 1.1-billion-baht animal feed factory at its Lop Buri hub to take advantage of the growing livestock industry.

The group hopes the expansion will help Betagro meet its goal of 5-10 per cent sales growth this year.

*ThePigSite News Desk*