

electronics, computers and optical products (5 percent); wood processing and products from wood and bamboo (5.1 percent); and crude oil and natural gas (9.7 percent).



Among key industrial products that posted high IPI increases in January were alumina (35.7 percent); bar and angle steel (30.3 percent); powdered milk (16.2 percent); NPK fertiliser (15.6 percent); monosodium glutamate (15.4 percent); processed seafood (13.8 percent), automobiles (11.7 percent) and fabric (8.7 percent).

According to GSO General Director Nguyen Thi Huong, the national economy has recorded positive signs of recovery.

In order to promote production growth, the **GSO** suggested ministries, sectors and localities proactively develop plans for safe production and business in adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic developments and in accordance with conditions of each locality and enterprise, especially at concentrated industrial zones, Huong said.

The State Bank of Vietnam needs to have an appropriate credit policy so that credit institutions can support pandemic-hit businesses in resuming their production and business, she added./.

*(Source: VNA)*

## VIETNAM'S PEPPER EXPORTS FORECAST FOR GROWTH THIS YEAR

The Vietnam Pepper Association (VPA) reported that pepper was sold at 90,000 VND (3.98 USD) per kg last year on the domestic market, almost doubling the previous year's 48,000 VND, after a constant reduction over the last few years.

The average export price of Vietnam's pepper in December 2021 reached 4,703 USD per tonne, a sharp increase of almost 70 percent on the year 2020.

The average export price for the whole year reached 3,593 USD per tonne, up 55.2 percent compared to 2020.

Therefore, Vietnam's pepper export turnover in 2021 rose by 42 percent compared to 2020 to 938 million USD, although the export decreased by 8.5 percent in volume to 261,000 tonnes.

The association forecasts that Vietnam's pepper exports will rebound from the first quarter of 2022 with an estimated world purchasing demand of 130,000-160,000 tonnes, while the country's total annual output is only about 150,000 tonnes.

Moreover, the quality of local pepper is improving and the VPA is supporting local enterprises to promote the processing of pepper and branding.

The US is the largest pepper importer of Vietnam, and the recovery of the economy will lead to an increase in pepper demand. Meanwhile, Vietnam's pepper has a competitive advantage compared to products  
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