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MANILA BULLETIN:

DA-BAR, IRRI launch digital platform for agri tools

BY GABRIELL CHRISTEL GALANG

May 25, 2024 12:43 PM

Digital agriculture tools and services (DATS) have been made accessible through a newly launched online platform made by the Department of Agriculture - Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR) and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

D4AgPH, a recently released digital platform was made to assist local agriculture offers and help farmers leverage collected data to improve the country's agriculture community through an online presence.

The agri researchers designed the public online site to promote data-driven decision-making in terms of the Philippines' rice-based food systems.

"D4AgPH came as a result of an IRRI-led national assessment and inventory of existing DATS," IRRI explained. "The assessment aimed to understand the country's digital agriculture landscape and use collected data and insights to help support the DA's digital transformation strategy, as outlined in the 2023-2028 MASAGANA Rice Industry Development Program [MRIDP]."

Agriculture Undersecretary for Rice Industry Development Christopher Morales said that MRIDP underlines the idea that digitalization would help uplift the agriculture sector, especially as the DA is pushing toward modernization efforts.

"D4AgPH is a crucial strategy for attaining sustainable agricultural development and likewise ensures that our farmers are equipped with appropriate tools," he added.

Additionally, DA-BAR Director Junel Soriano said that the platform would open avenues for dialogue and knowledge exchange for a more resilient and inclusive agricultural sector.

The D4AgPH features digestible and responsive interface that can view the list of DATS and detailed information, generate insights on the distribution of the tools through the agri-food value chain, and allow innovators and developers disseminate over 67 DATS which are grouped according to several use cases.

"Mapping the distribution of the DATS across the agri-food value chain shows 61 percent are specifically tailored to address challenges and opportunities related to crop production and more than 30 percent, focused on production and inputs, were developed and maintained by government agencies such as PhilRice, Bureau of Plant Industry, and other DA agencies," IRRI elaborated.

Moreover, the research institute said that the platform is 50 percent ready to be expanded, as 19 percent are in the pilot stage and 29 percent are being readied for commercialization.

"Mobile applications also emerged as the predominant distribution channel through which users access the DATS," they added.

Moreover, IRRI studied out the DATS against several scaling ingredients across 10 fields, to identify strong and weak spots for developers and other stakeholders.

The scaling scan revealed that most of the agri tools were strong in terms of their technology, user awareness and demand, finance mechanisms, and knowledge and skills; meanwhile, they are in need of better monitoring and evaluation, evidence generation, and better links on supply and demand, as well as invite more collaborative efforts beyond the agriculture sector.

“Many new digital tools are coming online these days which poses so many opportunities. This D4AgPH is a great start; it provides us with a mechanism that will help us to prioritize and identify effective tools as well as partners that we can collaborate with,” said IRRI Senior Scientist Stephen Klassen stated.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/25/da-bar-irri-launch-digital-platform-for-agri-tools>

MANILA BULLETIN:

More farmers get land titles as government continues agricultural land distribution

BY AARON RECUENCO

May 24, 2024 09:27 PM

More farmers were given the opportunity to own agricultural land as the Department of Agriculture continued to distribute parcels of lands, the priority are local farmers who have been tilling farm lands for years.

The agricultural land distribution is an offshoot of the New Agrarian Emancipation Act which President Marcos signed in July last year and is targeting to benefit around 610,000 farmers across the country through 1.7 million hectares of agrarian reform lands.

The law also makes the farmers debt-free of agrarian arrears worth P57.65 million.

In Lake Sebu, South Cotabato for instance, farmer Nelson Oloy was finally awarded the land title under the Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT) Project after farming a land for 20 years.

He is one of the local farmers in Central Mindanao and Zamboanga Peninsula region who received land titles from the President during the awarding event for Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) in Koronadal City on May 24.

"If it weren't for the President, I would have not owned the agricultural land which I have been farming for 20 years," said Oloy in local dialect.

The same happened to Nolly Sumangil of Barangay Supit in Titay town who also waited for around 20 years before finally given the land title.

Local officials of Mindanao, led by Cotabato Governor Emmylou "Lala" Taliño-Mendoza and South Cotabato Governor Reynaldo S. Tamayo have expressed gratitude to Marcos for fulfilling his campaign promise of genuine land reform.

In his speech during the event, Marcos said he was happy to personally distribute the land titles to ARBs, adding that the land distribution is part of his "Bagong Pilipinas" program.

The President also committed to distributing more lands in the next few years: "I hope that the distributed land titles would help uplift farmers' lives and eventually fulfill their dreams for their family and country."

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/24/more-farmers-get-land-titles-as-government-continues-agricultural-land-distribution>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Close to 200,000 hectares of crops may be devastated by TD 'Aghon' —DA

BY JEL SANTOS

May 24, 2024 06:37 PM



Nearly 200,000 hectares (ha) of standing crops may be affected by tropical depression (TD) "Aghon", the Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Friday, May 24.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) reported that Aghon will cause stormy conditions over Eastern Visayas and the eastern section of Southern Luzon from Saturday to Sunday, May 25 to 26. It added that some parts of Central Visayas may also encounter rains and gusty winds as a result of the tropical depression.

The DA said the tropical depression is expected to hit Region II, Region V, Region VIII, and Region XIII.

Based on the data of the agriculture department, the said regions have a total of 199,268 ha of standing crops.

The total area includes 160,400 hectares of rice and 38,868, the agency noted.

According to the DA, the rice area comprises 30,340 hectares (18.92 percent) in the seedling and vegetative stages and 41,395 hectares (25.81 percent) in the reproductive stage.

“Those areas under the maturity stage contribute to the remaining 88,665 ha (55.28 percent),” the agency stated.

For corn, the DA noted that 15,210 hectares (39.13 percent) are in the seedling and vegetative stages, while 5,884 hectares (15.14 percent) are in the reproductive stage. The agency noted that those under the maturity stage contribute to the remaining 17,774 ha (45.73 percent).

The DA has advised farmers and fishers to harvest mature crops and make use of post-harvest facilities.

Farmers are instructed to secure seed reserves, planting materials, and other farm inputs, as well as feed and water for livestock.

As such, the DA said they should relocate animals, farm machinery, and equipment to higher ground.

The agency emphasized the importance of ensuring sufficient feed and water for relocated animals.

Farmers should also clear drainage systems in irrigation areas and rice paddies to prevent flooding, it added.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/24/close-to-200-000-hectares-of-crops-may-be-devastated-by-typhoon-ghon-da-1>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Agri-truckers to benefit from toll-fee discounts starting June

BY GABRIELL CHRISTEL GALANG

May 24, 2024 01:31 PM

Agricultural truckers will receive toll discounts to help them save on costs, the Department of Agriculture (DA) announced.

Under the Agri-Trucks Toll Rebate initiative, all DA-accredited truck drivers will be exempted from the recent hike in toll fees starting June 1.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. commended the decision of President Marcos and the transportation sector for the toll discounts, stating, “This move should help reduce price pressures on food products and ease the burden on consumers.”

This initiative has been undertaken by the DA, Toll Regulatory Board, the Department of Finance, and the Department of Transportation, with the help of the Manila-Cavite expressway, North Luzon expressway, Subic Clark-Tarlac expressway, Muntinlupa-Cavite expressway, and South Luzon expressway.

The DA expressed gratitude to the tollway operators in Luzon for the provision of free toll fees which would help alleviate the inflation on agricultural products, especially rice.

Aside from cutting back the transportation expense, the agriculture sector will continue to seek other ways to lower the prices of agricultural products such as farmer support which would boost outputs at a lower cost.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/24/agri-truckers-exempted-from-toll-fees-starting-june>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Marcos urges Congress: Allow NFA to import rice to stabilize prices

BY ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS

May 25, 2024 09:25 AM

AT A GLANCE

- The President said amending the RTL is just one of the measures undertaken by the government to improve the lives of Filipino farmers amid various challenges to their livelihood.

President Marcos has urged Congress to allow the National Food Authority (NFA) to import rice as doing so would lead to the stabilization of rice prices.



President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. (Malacañang photo)

Marcos said this as the government works to amend the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL).

According to the President, allowing the NFA to import rice would help farmers and the public, especially consumers since it would stabilize prices in the market.

However, he pointed out that the RTL prohibits the NFA from importing rice.

“Kung pagbibigyan tayo ng ating Kongreso na makapag-import na [ang NFA], makikipagsabayan na ito. Ito naman talaga ang unang [dahilan] kung bakit tinayo ang NFA (If Congress would allow the NFA to import rice, it would make it competitive. This was the reason the NFA was created in the first place),” Marcos said.

The President said amending the RTL is one of the government’s ways of improving the lives of Filipino farmers amid various challenges to their livelihood.

“Marami tayong ginagawa (We’re doing a lot),” he said.

In addition to amending the RTLA, President Marcos said the government is looking for weather-proof varieties to strengthen the country’s production while the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech) will provide pieces of machinery to farmers.

Marcos believes the government’s initiatives would streamline farm production, eliminating the need for middlemen.

For consumers, he said the government is fixing the ports, farm-to-market roads (FMR), and other infrastructures to improve the transport of all products of farmers and fishermen.

President Marcos said the value chain of agriculture is also being improved by strengthening production and providing machinery, market intelligence, and technical information to the sector.

The government is also providing farmers with fertilizers and pesticides to increase their output.

During typhoon season, the President said government financial assistance programs like the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) are implemented to aid needy farmers.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/25/marcos-urges-congress-allow-nfa-to-import-rice-to-stabilize-prices>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Pork overpriced, producers confirm

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

May 25, 2024 | 12:00am



A vendor arranges meat up for sale at Paco Public Market in Manila on February 1, 2024.

STAR / Edd Gumban

MANILA, Philippines — Pork is overpriced at P420 per kilo in the market, farmers' group Pork Producers Federation of the Philippines chairman and AGAP party-list Rep. Nicanor Briones said yesterday.

In a radio interview, Briones said that while there was a slight movement in the farmgate price of pork, the liveweight cost is only P220 per kilo.

“The additional cost should only be P120 (per kilo) so retail price of pork kasim (or shoulder) should only be P340 (per kilo) and for pork liempo (or belly), it should be between P370 and P380 per kilo,” Briones said.

Based on the monitoring of the Department of Agriculture in Metro Manila markets, the retail price of pork ham is between P300 and P380 per kilo and pork liempo, between P340 and P420 per kilo.

Briones said that the local hog production is still affected by African swine fever (ASF) and the high temperatures brought by the current El Niño phenomenon.

“There is still a shortage in the local supply as the problem of the ASF is yet to be addressed. The hogs are still suffering from diseases and there is also mortality,” Briones said.

He added that despite the issue on the local supply, the importation of pork persisted.

“There is no reason for shortage as the volume of imported pork is still big so we have enough supply,” he said.

According to Briones, the government should encourage hog raisers to repopulate to boost local production.

At the same time, Briones said Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has committed that the ASF vaccine would be available before the end of the year.

“Within this year, hopefully, the ASF vaccine will be launched especially for starters and fatteners. It is effective in Vietnam and it will encourage the hog raisers to repopulate once the vaccine is available,” Briones noted.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/05/25/2357663/pork-overpriced-producers-confirm>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Toll rebate for agricultural trucks begins June 1

[Ramon Efren Lazaro](#) - The Philippine Star

May 25, 2024 | 12:00am



Motorists traveling from the northern provinces to Metro Manila experience light to moderate traffic at the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX), as seen from the Bocaue Toll Plaza in Bulacan on January 2, 2024.

STAR / Jesse Bustos

MANILA, Philippines — Trucks transporting agricultural products will be exempted from toll rate increases and receive rebates starting June 1.

“This program aims to protect the welfare of the general public by minimizing the impact of toll rate increase on the overall inflationary situation to ensure the stability of food prices,” Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) executive director Alvin Carullo said before the weekend.

Covered by the program are the Manila-Cavite Expressway, North Luzon Expressway, Subic Clark-Tarlac Expressway, Muntinlupa-Cavite Expressway and the South Luzon Expressway.

To qualify for the toll rate increase exemption, agri-trucks should be accredited by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and should have valid Autosweep and/or Easytrip RFID accounts.

Qualified agri-trucks should first register their RFID accounts with their respective toll expressway concessionaires and operators.

Easytrip RFID account holders may visit the NLEX Balintawak Customer Service Center and the CAVITEX Parañaque Customer Service Center.

Autosweep RFID account holders meanwhile may visit the C5 Office, Petron Commerce, Petron KM 44 Northbound, Calamba Customer Service Center, SLEX Greenfields, Southwoods Northbound, Southwoods Southbound, Sta. Rosa Northbound, Sta. Rosa Southbound, Star Toll Lipa Customer Service Center and Tarlac Customer Service Center.

Enrollees will be required to submit their original DA accreditation certificate, a copy of the vehicle's official receipt or certificate of registration, a valid ID and their Easytrip/Autosweep card.

Lastly, they will have to fill out and submit the Agricultural Trucks Toll Fee Increase Exemption Form provided by the Customer Service Center personnel.

Submitted documents will undergo a verification process within seven working days. Enrollees will be notified of their enrollment status via their registered email addresses.

Once approved, agri-truckers will enjoy a toll rebate that will be credited to their RFID accounts every Wednesday of the following week.

As part of monitoring and to prevent abuse, spot checks will be conducted to ensure enrolled trucks are transporting agricultural goods/products. Non-compliance may result in disqualification from the program.

The program will initially run for three months, subject to evaluation for possible extension.

“This move should help reduce price pressures on food products and ease the burden on consumers,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu-Laurel Jr. said as he gave assurance that the government is finding more ways to reduce retail prices of agricultural products.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said there are at least 956 truckers accredited by the DA that are covered by the rebate.

The program was launched by the TRB, Department of Finance, Department of Transportation and the DA in collaboration with the toll expressway concessionaires and operators of CAVITEX, NLEX, SCTEX, MCX and SLEX.

Cabbage prices drop

A farmers' group in Benguet reported a slump in the farmgate price of cabbage as it went down to P2 to P3 per kilo but the retail cost remains high.

Based on monitoring of the DA in Metro Manila markets, cabbage is sold at P100 per kilo.

Benguet Farmers' Cooperative manager Agot Balanoy said the farmers in Benguet were forced to bring their produce back to their farms amid the low wholesale price of cabbage.

“The cost of production of cabbage ranged between P15 and P17 per kilo, so if the farmgate price is P2 to P3 (per kilo), we are already suffering losses,” Balanoy said in a radio interview. — **Bella Cariaso**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/05/25/2357746/toll-rebate-agricultural-trucks-begins-june-1>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

President Marcos to Congress: Pass amendments to RTL

[Helen Flores](#) - The Philippine Star

May 25, 2024 | 12:00am



"We did this so that we could control the price of rice because the price of rice increased too fast," Marcos said in an interview in Koronadal City when asked about the government's support for farmers.

Bongbong Marcos / Facebook Page / RTVM

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MANILA, Philippines — President Marcos renewed his call to Congress yesterday to pass an amendment to the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) that seeks to restore the price stabilization and supply regulation functions of the National Food Authority (NFA).

"The latest thing we're doing is amending the RTL, the Rice Tariffication Law. We did this so that we could control the price of rice because the price of rice increased too fast," Marcos said in an interview in Koronadal City when asked about the government's support for farmers.

“So if our Congress gives us permission to import, we will go along... This is actually the first – why the NFA was created,” he added.

The House recently approved on final reading the measure seeking amendments to the RTL.

The House version of the bill allows the NFA to, in the following order, purchase local milled rice; purchase up to a maximum of 30 percent brought in by accredited importers at cost and, as a final recourse, once all domestic sources have been exhausted, directly import rice, subject to explicit authorization from the agriculture secretary, if the buffer stock requirement is still not sufficient.

The RTL amendment is also expected to bring down the price of rice by P10 to P15 per kilogram.

Marcos earlier said he would certify the bill as urgent to bring down rice prices, which currently stand at P50 to P60 per kilo.

The RTL, enacted in 2019, allows unlimited entry of imported rice to the country in a bid to keep prices low due to larger supply.

It also bans the NFA from buying and selling rice.

“The NFA was established to stabilize the price (of rice),” Marcos pointed out.

Meanwhile, the NFA in Bulacan clarified that it is still buying palay at the government-supported price of P30 per kilo amid radio reports on Thursday that it has ceased its palay procurement program.

Rhona Talens, officer-in-charge of NFA Bulacan, told The STAR in a text message that “palay procurement operation in NFA Bulacan is ongoing in San Ildefonso warehouse.”

A farmer leader from San Miguel town, Simeon Sioson, confirmed to The STAR that he erroneously reported in a radio interview that the NFA Bulacan has stopped buying palay in the province.

Land title distribution

Despite bad weather, Marcos pushed through with the distribution of land titles to agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in Mindanao yesterday.

Marcos distributed more than 4,900 land titles and extended assistance to farmers of Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga Sibugay at the Zamboanga del Norte Convention Center in Dipolog City.

Of the figure, 1,211 land titles were given to Zamboanga Sibugay, 2,211 to Zamboanga del Norte, and 1,534 to Zamboanga del Sur.

The President also turned over more than P15 million worth of farming tools and equipment to increase production and ease the work of 15,773 ARBs.

Earlier in the day, he led the distribution of more than 4,000 electronic titles and certificates of land ownership award (CLOAs) to ARBs in Region 12 in Koronadal City.

A total of 3,167 e-titles and 1,184 CLOAs were distributed to 4,271 ARBs in South Cotabato, North Cotabato, Sarangani and Sultan Kudarat.

Marcos said he would not stop until all land titles are distributed to ARBs. —
Ramon Efren Lazaro

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/05/25/2357745/president-marcos-congress-pass-amendments-rtl>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

President Marcos set to visit Brunei, Singapore

[Helen Flores](#) - The Philippine Star

May 25, 2024 | 12:00am



President Ferdinand Marcos Jr Bongbong Marcos / Facebook Page

MANILA, Philippines — President Marcos is expected to advance the country's position in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) when he addresses top military officials and experts from different parts of the world in Singapore next week, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said yesterday.

Marcos will deliver the keynote address at the 21st Shangri-La Dialogue organized by the International Institute of Strategic Studies on May 31.

Before the Singapore trip, Marcos and First Lady Liza Marcos will visit Brunei on May 28 to 29 upon the invitation of Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah.

DFA Assistant Secretary Aileen Mendiola-Rau said several memoranda of understanding will be signed with Brunei, including those on priority areas ranging from agriculture to food security, maritime cooperation and tourism.

The President is the first Philippine leader to address the Shangri-La Dialogue, Asia's premier defense summit, according to Mendiola-Rau.

Marcos' visit was upon the invitation of former Singapore prime minister Lee Hsien Loong.

Mendiola-Rau said she expects the President to touch on the maritime disputes with China in his keynote address.

“I presume for all meetings and as well as the speech of the President, his keynote address, this (WPS) issue will be touched but I do not wish to preempt the statements of the President,” she said.

Mendiola-Rau added that the summit is expected to include a delegation from China.

“Only one leader delivers this address every year, and President Marcos was given the distinct honor for this year’s Shangri-La Dialogue,” Mendiola-Rau said.

DFA spokesperson Maria Teresita Daza said the Shangri-La Dialogue “gives a good platform for a country to actually expound and articulate its position on key issues.”

The Philippines has countered China’s repeated aggression against Filipino vessels in the WPS. Beijing continues to disregard the 2016 arbitral ruling favoring Manila and rejecting its expansive claims in the South China Sea.

Through this Shangri-La Dialogue, Mendiola-Rau said, the Philippines will have the opportunity to provide the stakeholders “an important source of accurate, objective information on international strategic issues important to the region.”

Started in 2002, the Shangri-La Dialogue is an annual inter-governmental security forum held in Singapore. It is organized by the IISS, a leading think tank specializing in security and defense issues.

The dialogue brings together defense ministers, military leaders and senior defense officials, as well as business leaders and security experts, from across the Asia-Pacific, Europe, North America and beyond to discuss critical security challenges.

On the sidelines of the defense summit, Marcos will also meet with the new Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and new Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, Daza said.

The Philippines and Singapore commemorate the 55th year of their diplomatic relations this year. Singaporean Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan recently visited Manila.

Mendiola-Rau said Marcos is also likely to have several side meetings with some heads of governments during the event.

Brunei visit

Meanwhile, economic cooperation is likely to top the agenda during the bilateral meeting of Marcos and Bolkiah, Mendiola-Rau added.

“As you know, Brunei is a powerhouse in terms of energy but they are also a good market for us,” she said.

Mendiola-Rau said Marcos' first state visit to Brunei would provide an avenue for the two Southeast Asian leaders to "take stock of the progress of our commitments and ongoing bilateral undertakings, and fine-tune them accordingly."

"Aside from being part of the tradition of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) leaders visiting fellow ASEAN countries, this state visit is in line with the President's commitment to continue exploring avenues for economic growth and job opportunities for Filipinos as the business forum is aimed to boost trade and investments into the country," she said.

Daza said the President will also meet with the Filipino community and business leaders living in Brunei and highlight the contribution of more than 25,000 Filipinos there.

The Chief Executive will also engage with top business leaders in Brunei at a forum aimed at promoting trade and investment relations between the two nations.

Daza said the Philippines and Brunei are "strong regional partners" and are members of the ASEAN, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area.

The Philippines and Brunei are also claimants to the disputed South China Sea.

Diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Brunei were established on Jan. 1, 1984.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/05/25/2357751/president-marcos-set-visit-brunei-singapore>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

P1.5-B worth irrigation project in Cotabato town to start soon

[John Unson](#) - Philstar.com

May 25, 2024 | 3:44pm



Cotabato Gov. Emmylou Taliño Mendoza and representatives from the National Irrigation Administration and the China Waters Sinopeak Construction discussed the potentials of the P1.5 billion worth irrigation project in Tulunan town during a dialogue last Friday.

Philstar.com / John Unson

COTABATO CITY, Philippines — Officials of the Cotabato provincial government and the National Irrigation Administration are now preparing to implement a P1.5 billion worth irrigation project covering 900 hectares of rice farms in Tulunan town in the province.

Cotabato Gov. Emmylou Taliño Mendoza and engineers from the NIA-Cotabato Irrigation Management Office, Antonio Egoc, Godfrey Respicio and Jalandie Mipantao, and representatives from the China Waters Sinopeak Construction agreed to cooperate in overseeing the project during a conference at the provincial capitol in Kidapawan City on Friday.

Mendoza told reporters on Saturday that her administration, the engineers of NIA in the province and two senior officials of the firm contracted to implement the Tulunan Small Reservoir Irrigation Project, the Chinese nationals Hu Fengting and Na Ding Ding, shall together ensure its completion based on a final work plan.

“The provincial government wants full transparency and accountability in the implementation of that project that farmers in Tulunan municipality so need to boost the production of their rice farms,” Mendoza said.

Mendoza, who is chairperson of the multi-sector Regional Development Council 12, said having a new irrigation facility in Tulunan is a longtime wish of rice farmers in the municipality.

Officials of the Tulunan local government unit and their constituent-barangay leaders have assured to help monitor the construction of the P1.5 billion worth irrigation system that shall benefit thousands of rice farmers in the municipality.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/05/25/2357849/p15-b-worth-irrigation-project-cotabato-town-start-soon>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

RCEP conditionalities critical for agriculture

By: [Ernesto M. Ordoñez](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 02:10 AM May 25, 2024

For our transformation of agriculture to continue, it is critical that Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) conditionalities are met. On Feb. 21, 2023, the Senate ratified our RCEP membership, but specified certain conditionalities.

If not met, the ratification states: “The Senate of the Philippines may recommend to the President the withdrawal of the agreement.”

In line with this, the Senate Special Oversight Committee on the RCEP Agreement scheduled a hearing on Oct. 25, 2023, on the conditionalities’ implementation. After a six-month postponement, it was rescheduled to May 22.

However, because of the recent Senate reorganization, this was cancelled last May 20. This cancellation is very disconcerting. Here is why.

The Agriculture Alliance, composed of farmers and fisherfolk (Alyansa Agrikultura-AA), agribusiness (Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc.), and science and academe (Coalition for the Agriculture Modernization in the Philippines), agreed with the RCEP ratification, provided it had six conditionalities.

These conditionalities were also previously approved by the International Trade Committee of the Philippine Council of Agriculture and Food, and are now in the RCEP ratification document.

The Senate hearing is an important activity to ensure that these conditionalities are actually implemented. Though there has been partial implementation, more action is needed. Four of these conditionalities are discussed here.

Smuggling and corruption

The first is the proper use of the Department of Agriculture's (DA) budget. Over the last decade, our DA budget has averaged 2 percent of the total government budget, compared to Thailand's 4 percent and Vietnam's 6 percent.

-third of this already small budget was in unliquidated and unexplained expenses, indicating significant corruption and waste. This happened consistently in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

To prevent this repetition, the RCEP conditionality is to restore the abolished effective public-private sector committee on DA budget monitoring for transparency and accountability. This process was started last Jan. 5 by Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel, Jr., shortly after his appointment.

It is hoped that the actual budget monitoring will start soon. This is because there are six more months this year when this corruption and waste can continue.

The second is the restoration of the abolished public-private antismuggling interagency committee reporting to the President. The two times it was operational reduced the smuggling rate by 25 percent and 31 percent. Both times, the committee was abolished because it was allegedly too successful and caught "big fish."

This committee has not been restored. However, the DA created its own committee with some good results. Yet, since RCEP ratification, they have not been able to meet the Customs Commissioner to discuss problems and recommendations. A Senate hearing will surely remedy this problem.

Information and clustering/consolidation

The third and fourth conditionalities refer to information and cluster/consolidation. For information, we cannot make good decisions if we have faulty information. Largely because of this RCEP conditionality, the DA information budget of P267 million in 2023 was increased 10 times to P2.27 billion in 2024.

Similarly, the conditionality of clustering and consolidation of the average two-hectare farms to achieve economies of scale is now also supported. Thailand has a Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, which largely accounts for their agriculture exports in 2022 reaching \$43 billion, compared to our \$8 billion. This conditionality has resulted in a P3-billion budget for this year.

However, for both these components, these budgets are distributed in different DA units, with little coordination. This has to be executed soon to get the needed optimal unified strategy and synergy.

Our future agriculture development is largely dependent on how these RCEP conditionalities are effectively implemented. If the Senate hearing on RCEP is cancelled, these conditionalities may be forgotten. The Senate should consider postponing, instead of cancelling, the RCEP hearing to the earliest possible date. This way, these conditionalities can reach their full potential.

The author is Agriwatch chair, former secretary of presidential flagship programs and projects, and former undersecretary of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Trade and Industry. Contact is agriwatch_phil@yahoo.com

[https://business.inquirer.net/460360/rcep-conditionalities-critical-for-agriculture'](https://business.inquirer.net/460360/rcep-conditionalities-critical-for-agriculture)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Marcos asks farmers to help provide cheap, quality food for Filipinos

By: [Jean Mangaluz](#) - Reporter / [@JMangaluzINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 11:48 AM May 24, 2024



FILE PHOTO: A farmer transplants rice seedlings at a rice field in Pulilan, Bulacan, on Monday, February 26, 2024. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. urges agrarian reform beneficiaries to help the government provide cheap and quality food for Filipinos. INQUIRER / GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday urged agrarian reform beneficiaries to help the government provide cheap and quality food for Filipinos.

The President's appeal comes as he distributed a total of 5,918.44 hectares of land to farmer beneficiaries from South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sarangani, and Sultan Kudarat.

“Inaanyayahan ko kayo na makipagtulungan sa mga ahensya ng gobyerno upang magamit ninyo nang wasto ang mga lupaing ito at makatulong sa karagdagang suplay ng mura at dekalidad na pagkain para sa ating mga kababayan,” said Marcos in his speech.

(I encourage you to cooperate with government agencies to adequately utilize these lands and help provide our countrymen additional cheap and quality food.)

Marcos also reiterated his order to the Department of Agrarian Reform to expedite land distribution to farmer recipients.

The president assured the public that the government would help farmers raise their income.

Marcos has traveled to different parts of the country to help distribute land to agrarian reform beneficiaries.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1944363/marcos-asks-farmers-to-help-provide-cheap-quality-food-for-filipinos>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Marcos vows to address farmers' woes amid El Niño, La Niña

By: [Julie M. Aurelio](#) - Reporter / [@JMAurelioINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:02 AM May 25, 2024



GOV'T SERVICE President Marcos meets with farmers in Mindanao to assure them of government assistance amid the drought brought by El Niño and as the country braces for La Niña. The President also led the distribution of land titles to agrarian reform beneficiaries during his visit to Koronadal City on Friday. —PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

President Marcos on Friday assured land reform beneficiaries that the government would not stop in addressing the problems that they face amid the El Niño phenomenon and the forthcoming La Niña.

The President made this promise as he traveled Koronadal City in South Cotabato province and Dipolog City in Zamboanga del Norte province to distribute certificates of land ownership awards and e-titles to 8,727 agrarian reform beneficiaries.

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In a speech in Koronadal City on Friday morning, Marcos sought to allay the beneficiaries' concerns over the prolonged dry spell and drought from El Niño and the expected impact of La Niña later this year.

“We will continue to address the challenges faced by the agriculture sector because of the El Niño and the threat of La Niña, and other effects of climate change. We will not tire of going around the country to bring the government's services to you,” he said.

On Thursday, the President was in Tawi-Tawi and Maguindanao to turn over P50 million in financial assistance to El Niño-hit farmers and fishermen in Tawi-Tawi, Basilan, Maguindanao del Sur, Maguindanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur.

Directive

This month, he visited several areas in Mindanao such as Iligan City, Cagayan de Oro City and General Santos City, to bring aid from the Office of the President.

Marcos also reiterated his directive for the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) to fast-track its distribution of e-titles and certificates of land ownership award in order to finish the implementation of the land reform program by 2028.

“I urge the DAR to hasten the distribution of lands and coordinate with different government agencies in order to expand the services for our farmers. The government is your partner in improving your yield and lives,” the President said.

In Koronadal City, the President led the distribution of 4,351 titles covering 5,918.44 hectares to 4,271 beneficiaries in South Cotabato, North Cotabato, Sarangani and Sultan Kudarat.

On Friday afternoon, he went to Dipolog City to distribute 4,956 titles covering 7,214.7 ha to 4,456 beneficiaries in Zamboanga Sibugay, Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga del Sur.

In an interview with reporters in Koronadal, Marcos reassured that he would try to finish the distribution of lands to farmers.

“We will try our hardest. Of course, my ambition is to finish it before my term ends. This will not stop until all qualified beneficiaries receive their land titles. Even if I am no longer in office, we will see to it that the distribution of land titles will go on,” he said.

Agrarian Reform Secretary Conrado Estrella III vowed to carry out the President’s orders.

“If we cannot print the titles by ourselves (government agencies), we will outsource it. What is important is that we distribute all land titles before [Marcos] steps down,” Estrella added.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1944602/marcos-vows-to-address-farmers-woes-amid-el-nino-la-nina>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Philippines: world's largest rice importer again

By: [Dr. Teodoro C. Mendoza](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

04:17 PM May 24, 2024



Farmers work in a rice field in Bulacan on April 24, 2024. (AFP)

The Philippines is once again the world's largest rice importer, projected to import 4.1 million metric tons (MMT) this year, surpassing last year's import of 3.9 MMT. This projection, made by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), raises concerns and questions about the country's rice supply and consumption practices, despite the Department of Agriculture's (DA) claims that the impact of El Niño on rice production is minimal.

Is there a rice shortage?

Despite the ongoing El Niño phenomenon, the DA asserts that rice production remains strong. However, rice traders are purchasing unmilled rice, or palay, at prices up to P30 per kilogram, significantly higher than the National Food Authority (NFA) rates. This delay in NFA's response to market conditions resulted in missed opportunities to stabilize prices earlier in the harvest season.

If the effects of El Niño are indeed minimal, why is there a need to import such a large quantity of rice? The discrepancy lies in the data used to calculate rice demand. The

USDA's figures are based on a per capita consumption rate of 151.3 kg, which should be recalibrated to a more realistic 119 kg per capita. Using the latter figure, the national rice demand would be around 13.09 MMT, rather than the inflated 16.643 MMT.

Current rice yield and deficit

Even accounting for El Niño, the DA reports that rice yields remain relatively unaffected, with a total yield of approximately 19.6 MMT of unmilled rice, equivalent to 12.543 MMT of milled rice. After accounting for seeds, feeds, and other uses, the actual deficit should be about 2.51 MMT, not the alarming figures suggested by the inflated consumption rate.

The fundamental purpose of rice importation is to ensure an adequate supply, avoiding scenarios where consumers face long lines and high prices. However, over-importation could discourage local farmers from planting more rice and striving for higher yields.

The NFA plays a crucial role here, as current legislation in Congress aims to repeal the Rice Tariffication Law, which effectively abolished the NFA's role in price stabilization. The NFA should aim to maintain a 60-day buffer stock instead of the current 7 to 9 days and be allowed to import directly, ensuring that the nation's food staple is not left in the hands of private traders whose primary goal is profit.

Addressing food prices

Current food prices are significantly lower than their true value, factoring in inflation and peso devaluation. For instance, the price of well-milled rice today is only about one-third of its inflation-corrected price from the 1970s, which should be around P150 per kilogram.

Several measures can be taken to improve both supply and demand sides of rice production and consumption:

Supply-side measures:

- 1. Revive food-growing culture: Encouraging citizens to grow their own food can significantly bolster food security. This approach has been part of human civilization for thousands of years and should be revived.**
- 2. Small-scale food production: Aggregated small-scale food production can be substantial. Family farms and gardens can sustain food supply in the long run.**
- 3. Sustainable agriculture: Pursuing biodiverse, integrated, and organic-sustainable (BIOS) agriculture can provide a more reliable food source. Organic farming requires less energy and is more consistent with declining fossil fuel supplies.**

Demand-side measures:

- 1. Diversify food sources: Reducing reliance on rice by supplementing with other carbohydrate-rich crops like corn and sweet potatoes can help achieve self-sufficiency.**
- 2. Minimize food wastage: Consuming unpolished rice, which is more nutritious and yields higher milling recovery, can save significant amounts of rice.**
- 3. Rethink meat consumption: Adjusting meat consumption and utilizing livestock that do not compete directly with human food can make a substantial difference.**

Conclusion

As the Philippines navigates its role as the world's largest rice importer, it is essential to implement strategies that balance imports with local production and ensure food security. Sustainable practices and efficient use of resources can help mitigate the need for excessive imports and support the nation's farmers. This multifaceted approach requires concerted efforts from the government, private sector, and the general populace. Encouraging local food production, adopting sustainable agricultural practices, and diversifying dietary habits are crucial steps toward achieving a stable and secure food supply.

Moreover, policy reforms and effective governance are needed to empower institutions like the NFA to play a more proactive role in stabilizing rice prices and maintaining adequate buffer stocks. Addressing issues such as corruption and ensuring transparency in rice trading and importation processes will also contribute to a more resilient rice sector.

Ultimately, achieving rice self-sufficiency and reducing dependence on imports will not only benefit the economy but also enhance the nation's food sovereignty, ensuring that every Filipino has access to affordable and nutritious food. The journey towards a more sustainable and self-reliant rice industry is challenging but imperative for the future of the Philippines.

ABOUT

THE

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<https://opinion.inquirer.net/173953/philippines-worlds-largest-rice-importer-again>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Fisherfolk to lawmakers: You only remember us during elections

By: [Faith Argosino](#) - Reporter / [@FArgosinoINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 07:55 PM May 24, 2024



Candelaria, Zambales fisherfolk —Photo by Joanna Aglibot

MASINLOC, Zambales — “Kapag eleksyon kilala mo kami? Pagdating sa problema hindi niyo kami kilala?”

(During elections, you know us, but when a problem arises, you forget about us.)

Nolly Delos Santos, a fisherman from Sta. Cruz, turned emotional as he aired this sentiment before the lawmakers present during a public consultation and a joint hearing held by the House committees on [national defense and security and WPS here in the province](#).

Delos Santos was among those whose livelihood was negatively affected by China’s increased aggression in Scarborough (Panatag) Shoal, also known as Bajo de Masinloc.

“Ito po, deretsahan po, deretsahan po ang sinasabi ko sa saloobin ko po, ‘wag po kayong sumama (ang loob) sa aming mangingisda, hirap na hirap po kami, hindi po sapat ang ayuda, malayang pangangisda lang po ang kailangan namin,” he stressed.

(I will say what I really but don’t get offended by us fishermen. We are having a hard time, and government assistance is not enough. What we need is to fish in the area freely.)

The fisherman also asserted that fishing in Scarborough Shoal has helped him previously sustain his family’s needs and provide for his children’s education.

“Mangisda kami, hinarang kami ng BFAR (Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources) sinasabi wala kaming ID. Kumuha kami ng ID ng BFAR sa Pampanga para maging malaya kami. Nung nakakuha kami mangisda kami sa ibang shoreline, China naman ang kalaban namin. San ba talaga kami mangingisda, ang tanong namin sa sarili namin ngayon,” Delos Santos further lamented.

(We are fishermen, but BFAR stopped us because we don’t have any ID. When we got our ID, we were able to fish freely in Pampanga. But on other shoreline, China is the enemy. Where can we freely fish? That’s the question among ourselves.)

“Ang sabi ko sa mga anak ko, hinto muna kayo anak dahil di na kaya ng Papa niyo. Dahil ito po, dinadaan ko na lang po sa luha, dinadaan ko na lang po sa inyo dahil ngayon lang po kayo bumaba, ramdam naman ninyo siguro ang kahirapan namin. Dahil pagdating sa mga buyer maraming huli, kaunti ang benta dahil sa utang,” he added.

(I told my children to stop studying because your Dad can’t do it anymore. Because of this, I’m living in tears. I’m just airing this to you hoping you understand our hardships. Because when it comes to buyers, many are late, sales are low due to debt)

Apart from him, other fisherfolk have their concerns and personal experience dealing with the Chinese Coast Guard’s harassment and bullying in Scarborough Shoal.

Upon hearing their grievances, Zambales 1st District Rep. Jefferson F. Khonghun suggested that BFAR's budget be increased to help the agency address the needs of the fisherfolk in the province.

He likewise pointed out that BFAR provided 60 to 90 feet of ship for fishermen in Subic, but Leonardo Cuaresma, spokesperson of fisherfolk in Zambales and a member of the New Masinloc Fishermen association, said that they have not received such assistance.

Konghun said the agency might have been fooling the fishermen instead of assisting them.

Earlier, Zambales 2nd District Rep. Doris Maniquiz revealed Zambales fisherfolk experienced a series of water cannon attacks by the CCG last week and in February, respectively.

Based on her description, the vessels attacked by the CCG were used for deep-sea fishing with 25 to 35 fishermen and crew aboard.

The lawmaker added that the livelihood of around 1,000 fishermen from Masinloc and 400 from Sta. Cruz was affected by the CCG's presence in the West Philippine Sea.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1944580/fisherfolk-to-lawmakers-you-only-remember-us-during-elections>

REMATE:

Halos 200K ektayang pananim nagbabadyang masalanta kay TD ‘Aghon’

May 25, 2024 09:28



MANILA, Philippines- Halos 200,000 ektarya ng mga pananim ang maaaring maapektuhan ni tropical depression (TD) “Aghon”, base sa Department of Agriculture (DA) nitong Biyernes.

Iniulat ng Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) na magdudulot si Aghon ng pag-ulan sa Eastern Visayas at sa silangang bahagi ng Southern Luzon mula Sabado hanggang Linggo, Mayo 25 hanggang 26. Dagdag nito, ilang parte ng Central Visayas ang maaari ring makaranas ng pag-ulan at malakas na hangin dahil sa tropical depression.

Inihayag ng DA na inaasahang tatama ang tropical depression sa Region II, Region V, Region VIII, at Region XIII.

Batay sa datos ng agriculture department, ang mga nasabing rehiyon ay may kabuuang 199,268 ektarya ng standing crops.

Pinayuhan ng DA ang mga magsasaka at mangingisda na anihin na ang mature crops at gamitin ang post-harvest facilities.

Gayundin, nagpaalala ang DA na ilipat ang mga alagang hayop, farm machinery, at iba pang kagamitan sa ligtas na lugar.

Nag-abiso rin ito na kailangang linisin ang drainage systems sa irrigation areas upang maiwasan ang pagbaha. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/halos-200k-ektayang-panananim-nagbabadyang-masalanta-kay-td-aghon/>

REMATE:

Babala: Manok na may cholera ‘wag kainin – DA

May 24, 2024 17:56



DUMAGUETE CITY – Hinimok ng Provincial Veterinary Office (PVO) sa Negros Oriental ang publiko na huwag kainin ang mga manok na apektado ng fowl cholera, na karaniwang tinatawag na “dungoy” sa diyalekto, kahit na hindi ito naililipat sa tao.

Sinabi ni Jaymar Vilos, PVO information officer-designate, sa isang ulat na ang fowl cholera o “dungoy” ay naiulat sa bayan ng Pamplona noong unang bahagi ng buwan.

Ayon kay Vilos, lumabas sa inisyal na ulat mula sa local agriculture office na pitong magsasaka sa naturang bayan ang nawalan ng kabuuang 94 na manok na dinapuan ng “dungoy” sa Barangay Poblacion Pamplona.

“Ideally, kapag ang isang sakit tulad ng fowl cholera ay kumalat sa isang populasyon ng manok, ang mga patay na manok ay dapat na agad na ilibing o sunugin,” sabi niya, ngunit may ilang tao na naiulat na nagluto at kumain ng mga ito.

Ang kolera, gayunpaman, ay agad na napigilan.

Ngunit hindi pinapabayaan ng PVO ang kanilang pagbabantay dahil tinitiyak din nito ang mga ulat ng isa pang sakit na nakakaapekto sa mga manok, ang Newcastle Disease o “atay” sa dialect, na naiulat na nahawaan ng ilang manok sa hilagang bayan.

Ang sakit ay hindi rin naililipat sa tao, ani Vilos ngunit idinagdag na mas mainam na ligtas na itapon ang mga infected na manok dahil maaari itong makaapekto sa ibang mga manok.

Nanawagan siya sa mga magsasaka na iulat ang mga sintomas ng kanilang mga manok upang maisagawa ang pagbabakuna bilang preventive measure para sa iba pang mga manok sa mga kalapit na lugar.

Nananatiling walang avian influenza ang Negros Oriental. **RNT**

<https://remate.ph/babala-manok-na-may-cholera-wag-kainin-da/>

REMATE:

Cebu isinailalim sa state of calamity sa El Niño

May 25, 2024 15:34



CEBU CITY- Isinailalim sa state of calamity ang buong probinsya ng Cebu dulot ng matinding pinsala ng El Niño phenomenon sa mga pananim at kabuhayan ng mga residente.

Sa ipinalabas na executive order ni Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia na inaprubahan ng provincial board, inirekomenda ng Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council na magdeklara ng state of calamity ang buong probinsya ng Cebu.

Ayon kay Garcia, ang matinding init ay naging malaking banta sa pangkabuhayan lalo na sa agrikultura,

pangingisda at mga alagang hayop, gayundin sa provincial at district hospitals dahil sa pagtaas ng bilang ng mga nagkakasakit sanhi ng matinding init ng panahon.

Naging banta rin sa buhay at mga ari-arian ng mga Cebuano ang pagkakaroon ng grass fire at mataas na paggamit ng elektrisidad dahilang para magkaroon ng rotational outage.

Sa pamamagitan ng pagdeklara ng state of calamity sa buong probinsya ay lalong mapabibilis ang paglalabas ng pamahalaan panlalawigan calamity funds o quick relief funds para mabawasan ang epekto ng tagtuyot. **Mary Anne Sapico**

<https://remate.ph/cebu-isinailalim-sa-state-of-calamity-sa-el-nino/>

REMATE:

PBBM sa Kamara: NFA payagang mag-angkat ng bigas

May 25, 2024 14:24



MANILA, Philippines- Hinikayat ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. ang Kongreso na ipasa ang panukalang amyendahan ang Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), na magbibigay pahintulot sa National Food Authority (NFA) na mag-angkat ng bigas at patatagin ang presyo.

Sa isang panayam, sinabi ni Pangulong Marcos na sa oras na payagan ang NFA na mag-angkat ng bigas, makatutulong ito hindi lamang sa mga magsasaka kundi sa pangkalahatang publiko lalo na sa consumers, dahil mapatatag nito ang presyo ng bigas sa merkado.

Ang pag-amyenda sa RTL, ayon sa Pangulo, ay isa lamang sa mga hakbang na gagawin ng pamahalaan para

mapabuti ang buhay ng mga magsasakang Pilipino sa gitna ng mga hamon sa kanilang kabuhayan.

“Kaya’t kung pagbibigyan tayo ng ating Kongreso na makapag-import na (ang NFA), makikipagsabayan na ito. Ito naman talaga ang unang (dahilan) kung bakit tinayo ang NFA,” ayon kay Pangulong Marcos.

Kamakailan ay inaprubahan ng kamara sa ikatlo at huling pagbasa ang panukalang amyendahan ang RTL, sa ilalim ng House Bill 10381, na mayroong 231 affirmative votes, 3 negative votes, at 1 abstention.

Sa ilalim ng batas, “the NFA shall be allowed to – in the following order – purchase local milled rice; purchase up to a maximum of 30 percent brought in by accredited importers at cost; and as a final recourse, once all domestic sources have been exhausted, directly import rice, subject to explicit authorization from the Agriculture Secretary.”

Maliban sa pag-amyenda sa RTL, sinabi ni Pangulong Marcos na tumitingin din ang gobyerno ng weather-proof rice varieties para palakasin ang produksyon ng bansa.

Sinabi pa ng Pangulo na magbibigay ang Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech) ng makinarya sa mga magsasaka.

“Another government focus is cutting out the middlemen in agriculture to ensure higher profit for farmers,” ayon sa Punong Ehekutibo.

Para sa consumers, sinabi ng Pangulo na inaayos na ang mga daungan, farm-to-market roads, at iba pang imprastraktura para maging maayos ang transportasyon hindi lamang ng bigas kundi maging sa lahat ng produkto ng mga magsasaka at mangingisda.

Aniya pa, ang value chain ng agrikultura ay naging maayos na rin sa pamamagitan ng pagpapalakas sa produksyon at pagbibigay ng makinarya, market intelligence, at technical information sa nasabing sektor.

Magbibigay din ang pamahalaan sa mga magsasaka ng fertilizers at pesticides para maitaas ang kanilang output.

“During the typhoon season, government financial assistance programs, such as the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, are implemented to aid needy farmers,” dagdag na wika ng Pangulo. Kris Jose

<https://remate.ph/pbbm-sa-kamara-nfa-payagang-mag-angkat-ng-bigas/>

Marcos trusts modified Rice Tariffication Law to regulate rice prices

By Charles Dantes May 25, 2024, 11:42 am

President Ferdinand Marcos stressed that the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) would regulate the surging rice prices, citing the need to allow the National Food Authority (NFA) to import rice.

Speaking on Friday, President Marcos highlighted the importance of modifying the RTL to benefit farmers and consumers by stabilizing market prices.

“If Congress permits the NFA to import, it will help stabilize rice prices, fulfilling its original mandate,” he said.

The President noted that amending the RTL is part of broader government initiatives to support Filipino farmers facing various challenges.

These remarks were made during the distribution of Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOAs) and e-titles to farmers at the South Cotabato Gymnasium and Cultural Center.

In addition to RTL amendments, President Marcos highlighted other agriculture-related initiatives such as exploring weather-resistant crop varieties and providing machinery through the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech) to enhance agricultural productivity.

The President said infrastructure improvements such as fixing ports and farm-to-market roads are underway to facilitate better transport of agricultural products.

According to the President, the government is also enhancing the agricultural value chain by strengthening production and offering market intelligence and technical information. Further support includes providing fertilizers and pesticides to boost output and financial assistance programs like Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) during the typhoon season to aid affected farmers.

<https://www.manilastandard.net/news/314451101/marcos-trusts-modified-rice-tariffication-law-to-regulate-rice-prices.html>

Iloilo prepares for cloud seeding

By Rjay Zuriaga Castor

May 25, 2024

THE province of Iloilo, the hardest-hit by the El Niño phenomenon in the region, is preparing for the planned cloud seeding operations set for next week.

The Iloilo Provincial Agriculture Office (Pagro) convened an emergency meeting on May 23 with the municipal agricultural office and the Bureau of Soils and Water Management to collect data on crops that could be vulnerable to the heavy rainfall expected from the cloud seeding.

Pagro head Ildefonso Toledo said that crops that may be affected if the rains caused by the cloud seeding persist include high-value crops like watermelon that are susceptible to damage from excessive water if the rains persist.

He further reminded farmers to consider their planting patterns to reduce the risk of losing their crops.

"If it's no longer appropriate to farm, and given the state weather bureau's forecast, they should avoid planting since it's a risk," he advised.

He pointed out that the agricultural damage recorded by the province were mostly from farmers who planted during the third cropping season from October to November.

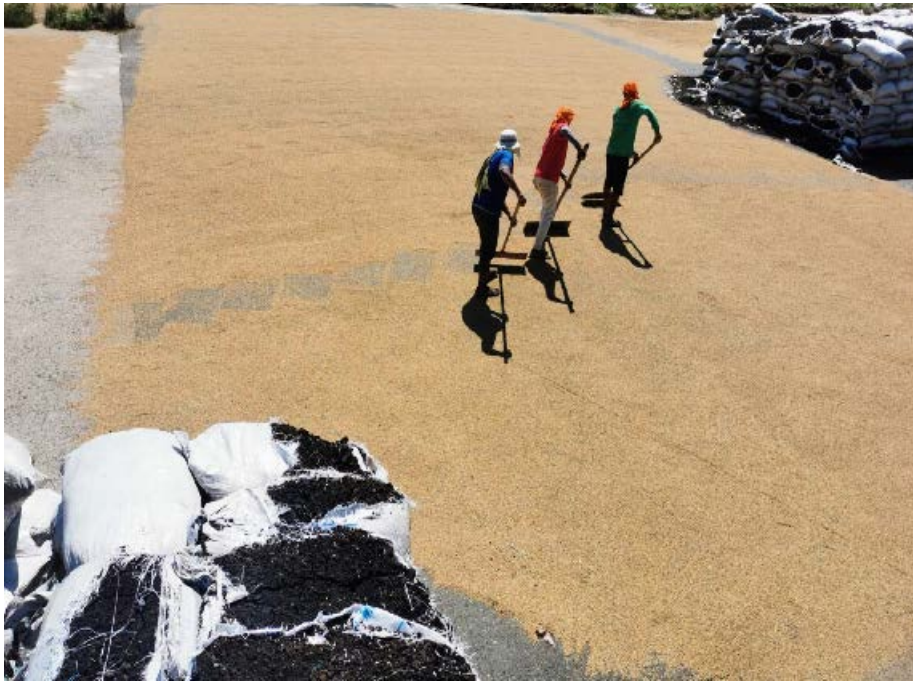
Based on the latest data from the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, the production loss in Western Visayas has increased to P1.5 billion, affecting a total of 37,223 farmers and fisherfolk.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/25/regions/iloilo-prepares-for-cloud-seeding/1948240>

Typhoon-resilient rice, more competitive NFA key to local food security–Marcos

Samuel P. Medenilla

May 25, 2024



Farmers in Pulilan, Bulacan, dry their rice harvest in a field after a typhoon battered the country, causing the rice to get wet. This climate-related event has led to a low selling price of 12 pesos per kilo, as many rice fields in the area were submerged in floodwater.

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. said securing typhoon-resilient rice varieties and a more competitive National Food Authority (NFA) are among the priorities of his administration to ensure local food security.

In an interview with reporters in South Cotabato on Friday, the chief executive disclosed the government initiatives to boost rice production through the distribution of machinery to farmers and developing new rice varieties.

“We are improving our production. We are looking for new rice varieties, which will be resilient and not easily affected by typhoons,” Marcos said.

He said they will also provide farmers with fertilizers, market intelligence, and technical information to enhance their production.

To keep the price of rice affordable, he reiterated his support for the ongoing efforts in Congress to amend Republic Act 11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL).

Under the proposed legislation, Marcos said he wants the NFA to compete with local rice traders and retailers by restoring its power to buy, sell and import rice.

“We are doing this so we can control the price of rice due to the surge in its price,” Marcos explained.

The proposed legislation is pending in Congress.

The President also said his administration will continue to prioritize the construction of farm-to-market roads to help reduce the logistics costs of farmers in selling their crops.

He said they are also mainstreaming contract farming wherein farmers and buyers agree in advance the terms and conditions of their production and marketing of farm products.

“So these systems were dissolved in the last many years. That is why we have to reform them,” Marcos said.

He made the remark after leading the distribution of more than 4,000 electronic titles (e-title) and Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOAs) to Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) in Region 12 on Friday.

Marcos also turned over more than P15 million worth of farming tools and equipment to 15,773 ARBs.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/25/typhoon-resilient-rice-more-competitive-nfa-key-to-local-food-security-marcos/>