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**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Department of Agriculture chief completes ‘dream team,’ biggest in agency history

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

May 27, 2024 | 12:00am



Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The “dream team” of Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. is already complete, with 26 undersecretaries and assistant secretaries, the biggest number in the history of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

In an interview, Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said that the last official to be appointed to complete the dream team was Assistant Secretary for administration Allen Kristopher Anarna.

“According to Secretary (Tiu Laurel), his team is already complete. The last to join was Assistant Secretary Anarna,” De Mesa said.

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At least 13 were appointed as undersecretaries and 13 officials were designated as assistant secretaries.

De Mesa said that the last appointment for the undersecretary post to be issued by the Office of the President was Undersecretary for policy, planning and regulations Asis Perez.

“We were waiting for his (Asis appointment paper), it already came out,” he added.

Aside from Asis, the other undersecretaries are Roger Navarro (operations), Christopher Morales (rice industry development), Allan Umali (administration), Nora Oliveros (finance), Drusila Esther Bayate (fisheries), Zamzamin Ampatuan (Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao), Mercedita Sombilla (bureaus), Agnes Catherine Miranda (attached agencies and corporations), Deogracias Victor Savellano (livestock), Jerome Oliveros (special concerns and official development assistance), chief of staff Alvin John Balagbag (inspectorate and enforcement) and Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero (high value crops).

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/05/27/2358144/department-agriculture-chief-completes-dream-team-biggest-agency-history>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Department of Agriculture seeks more funding for high-value crops

Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas - The Philippine Star

May 27, 2024 | 12:00am



A farmer prepares the field for rice planting in Sitio Sinarol, Siniloan, Laguna on January 4, 2024.

STAR / Michael Varcas

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is seeking an eight fold increase in its budget for its high-value crops (HVC) program next year to improve the productivity of around 30 commodities and expand exports of key commodities.

Based on its budget proposal, the DA wants P16.772 billion for its HVC program in 2025, about 765.54 percent higher than its P1.937 billion budget this year.

The exponential increase that is being sought by the DA is aimed at providing “transformative interventions” to almost 30 high-value crops in the country, Agriculture Undersecretary Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero said.

The budget of the HVC program has been between P1.5 billion and P2 billion in recent years, which is quite small since the program covers a lot of commodities nationwide, she said.

“(We want) to address farm productivity of our major crops, especially those that are exported like bananas, provide value addition and address high post-harvest losses (of commodities),” Caballero told reporters in a recent interview in Malaybalay, Bukidnon.

A portion of the proposed higher budget would be used in producing and providing quality planting materials to farmers and encouraging them to embrace balanced fertilization to hike their productivity, the agriculture official said.

To do so, the DA aims to establish tissue culture laboratories for some high-value crops, such as potatoes.

The DA would also invest in various research and development measures to improve the quality of the country's crops and even protect their varietal identities.

For example, Caballero said, the DA wants to improve the pungency of local garlic without the need to make them bigger since the country produces smaller-sized garlic.

The DA would also embark on a DNA fingerprinting project for ube, coffee liberica and garlic to preserve the local identities of these high-value crops compared to other countries.

Furthermore, the department aims to slash post-harvest losses by establishing multi-purpose cold storage chiller facilities in key production areas as well as provide value addition opportunities to farmers through dehydrators, Caballero said.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/05/27/2358096/department-agriculture-seeks-more-funding-high-value-crops>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# DA: Enough rice supply, stable prices

**Bella Cariaso** - The Philippine Star

May 27, 2024 | 12:00am



Workers arrange sacks of National Food Authority (NFA) palay or unmilled rice inside their warehouse in Balagtas, Bulacan on May 22, 2024.

STAR / Miguel De Guzman

MANILA, Philippines — A ranking official of the Department of Agriculture (DA) has given assurance of enough rice supply and stable price of the grains even when the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) questioned the alleged discrepancies in data issued by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

In an interview, Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa maintained that all the data used by the DA were based on official figures from the PSA.

“All the data that we are using came from them (PSA)... we have 1.64 million metric tons beginning inventory for quarter one. Our import data and production level also came from PSA. We have production data of 4.68 million metric tons times .654 because it is for palay, in rice form, that’s 3.02 million MT plus imports,” De Mesa pointed out.

He added that the imported rice for the first quarter reached 1.1 million MT.

Raul Montemayor, FFF national manager, questioned the continued discrepancies in the rice production and inventory data from the PSA, saying the wrong figures could mean tight supply of the staple in the coming months.

He said that based on the latest PSA inventory report, the country's rice stocks totaled 1.64 million MT as of April 1, 2024, which is sufficient for only 44 days.

Montemayor also said that the stock levels derived from the Jan. 1 starting inventories plus the actual rice output and documented import arrivals during the first three months of the year showed the April 1 stocks at 2.46 MT, or good for about 66 days consumption.

He noted that there is at least an 800,000-MT discrepancy in the data from PSA, which is equivalent to 22 days.

De Mesa said the PSA needs to meet with the DA and concerned stakeholders to address the issues raised against the agency.

De Mesa also downplayed warnings on the possible tightness in rice supply.

“Based on our projection, on the data that we have, we have 60 to 66 days (rice stock inventory) ending quarter one... We have enough supply even going through or moving towards lean season mid-August until mid-September prior to the next harvest for the wet season,” De Mesa said.

He maintained that the retail price of rice remains stable between P48 and P53 per kilo for well-milled rice.

“If we analyze the retail price from mid-January until mid-February, it did not move. Until now, practically, we are still between P48 and P53 (per kilo) for well-milled rice and the prevailing price is from P50 to P52 (per kilo), so it is very stable,” De Mesa noted.

Still, Montemayor has underscored the need for the PSA to review its data gathering methodologies and synchronize them with the information systems of the DA in order to avoid confusion and miscalculations in determining actual rice stock levels and outputs.

## **Cheaper pork**

Meanwhile, the DA entered into an agreement with supermarkets in an effort to sell cheaper pork amid the spike in retail prices, which reached as high as P420 per kilo.

De Mesa said the DA National Livestock Program initially got the commitment of Robinsons Supermarket and Atkins Supermarket to sell pork products at lower prices.

“The National Livestock Program talked to several supermarkets and by today (Monday), cheaper pork will be available (initially in Robinsons and Atkins supermarkets),” De Mesa.



De Mesa said that the pork products to be sold would be lower by P10 per kilo.

“It will be cheaper by P10 per kilo compared to the prevailing prices and the program will run for two months. They (personnel of the National Livestock Program) also have ongoing negotiations with SM, Ayala and Puregold,” De Mesa said.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/05/27/2358154/da-enough-rice-supply-stable-prices>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# DOTr endorses Philtrak proposal to convert PNR railway into BRT

**Rainier Allan Ronda** - The Philippine Star

May 27, 2024 | 12:00am



Passengers alight from the train at the Philippine National Railways (PNR) Tutuban Station in Manila on March 11, 2024.

STAR / Ernie Penaredondo

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Transportation (DOTr) has endorsed to the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Center the proposal of the Philtrak consortium to convert the decommissioned at-grade trackways of the Philippine National Railways (PNR) in Luzon and Panay Railways Inc. (PRI) in the Visayas into a bus rapid transit (BRT) line using hybrid electric road train (HERT) technology developed by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

Philtrak consortium CEO Francis Yuseco Jr. said the DOTr, as well as the Department of Agriculture, has expressed support to their proposal to make use of the abandoned or decommissioned trackway of the PNR and PRI and put in place a “farm-to-market digital logistics integrated backbone” (FMDLIB) system that will be a cargo and passenger transport line ferrying agricultural produce as well as people in Luzon and in Panay island.

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“Once the PPP Center evaluates it accordingly, it endorses it back (to the DOTr),” Yuseco said in a recent media briefing. “Then, we can proceed with this.”

“In the Philippines, we only have two railways. The PNR and the Panay Railways. Panay Railways has been decommissioned for over 39 years. The PNR, 90 percent has been decommissioned for over 30 years,” Yuseco said.

“But these are patrimonial assets. These are the assets of Filipinos that we use for the present. The PNR rehabilitation projects in Metro Manila are going to be fully elevated. So we’re going to use the ‘underneath’ or at-grade trackways.”

Transportation Secretary Jaime Bautista said the FMDLIB is a 1,079-kilometer completely walled-in and fortified at-grade level of the PNR on 30-60 meter width railway.

“The project will be implemented by Philtrak Inc., sans government equity, sovereign guarantee, and taxpayer subsidies,” Bautista noted.

Philtrak had signed a memorandum of understanding with the DOST in 2018 to adopt the HERT technology developed by the DOST Metals Industry Research and Development Center for an initiative to rehabilitate and convert the long decommissioned Panay Railway line which used to run from Iloilo City in Iloilo to Roxas City in Capiz.

In the original plan, the consortium envisioned to deploy an initial fleet of 40-passenger, 17.8 meters long, fully-airconditioned ERT units at the line.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/05/27/2358097/dotr-endorses-philtrak-proposal-convert-pnr-railway-brt>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Nueva Ecija farmers receive P137 million machinery

Ric Sapnu - The Philippine Star

May 27, 2024 | 12:00am



Up to 61 farmers' cooperatives and associations as well as local government units (LGUs) benefited from the mechanization program of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF).

[pia.gov.ph](http://pia.gov.ph)

SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga, Philippines — Farmers in Nueva Ecija have received P137 million worth of machinery from the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PHilMech).

Up to 61 farmers' cooperatives and associations as well as local government units (LGUs) benefited from the mechanization program of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF).

May Ville Castro, chief of the PHilMech facility management and field operations division, said 70 machines including 59 tractors, seven threshers and four rice reapers were distributed to farmers' groups and LGUs.

Castro cited the implementing rules and regulations of Republic Act 11203 as basis in determining the beneficiaries of the RCEF mechanization program.

Rice-based farmers' cooperatives and associations were prioritized in the accreditation by the Department of Agriculture.

If a particular area has no qualified farmers' cooperative and association, or if these groups fail to meet the requirement, the LGU may become the beneficiary and will oversee the operation of the machinery.

Castro reminded recipients of the machinery to observe proper use and maintainance.

“May all these be used for the right purpose so we can achieve its objective, which is to lower production cost and reduce losses,” Castro said.

To ensure efficiency, the PHilMech conducts training on the proper use and management of the machines.

Farmers who are non-beneficiaries may use the machines at affordable rates. Proceeds will be used for the maintenance of the apparatus.

“Beneficiaries should charge less than the prevailing price in the private sector to allow fellow farmers to use the machines,” Castro said.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/05/27/2358227/nueva-ecija-farmers-receive-p137-million-machinery>



**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Fishing with Filipinos in Panatag Shoal

**Miguel de Guzman** - The Philippine Star

May 27, 2024 | 12:00am



Filipinos show their catch after fishing in Panatag Shoal amid the China Coast Guard's continued aggression in the West Philippine Sea.

Miguel De Guzman

MANILA, Philippines — Amid China's aggression in the West Philippine Sea, Filipino fishermen don't run out of stories about their daily activities at Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal.

Atin Ito Coalition on May 16 accomplished its second civilian supply mission to Panatag Shoal in the West Philippine Sea, wherein China Coast Guard and maritime militia vessels reportedly set up a blockade to stop the convoy from reaching its main destination.

An "advance team" on May 15 arrived within 25 to 30 nautical miles of Panatag, also called Bajo de Masinloc, and distributed fuel and other supplies to fisherfolk

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It may have been an eventful day for volunteers, but for the 30-crew F/B John, it was just another fishing day.

Captain Junar Ytac, with more than 25 years of experience manning a fishing vessel, said they travel 12 to 14 hours from Masinloc or Subic, Zambales to their fishing area near Bajo de Masinloc, one of their closest fishing grounds.

They have more than 20 buoys in the West Philippine Sea to mark their fishing area. Some of it reaches as far as a few nautical miles away from Reed Bank near Palawan.

Fishing usually takes three days to a week in the open sea.

They would travel to one buoy for a day, then travel to the next buoy to check for more fish.

Kenmark and Gerald, some of F/B John's youngest crew members, recalled their experiences and told The STAR that we were lucky the sea was quiet that night or cameras would have been drenched.

Edwin, F/B John's newest crewmember, is thankful to be a fisherman.

"Even though it hasn't been a year since I've been a fisherman, I'm thankful because I've worked many jobs already. Sa pagiging mangangalakal, mangookra, kargador, dito sa pangingsida alam ko gaganda buhay ko," he said, citing jobs ranging from junkshop worker to stevedore.

By 3 a.m., the crew prepared to cast their net. Fish gathered and glowed under the vessel.

By 5 a.m., they started to reel the net.

Around 7 a.m., they transferred their catch to an ice-filled container.

"We didn't catch much but this is enough to feed our families," a crewmember said.

The crew cooked paksiw na bangus and sinigang na baboy and shared more stories until disembarking at the port in Subic.

The STAR bonded with the F/B John crew for two days.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/05/27/2358157/fishing-filipinos-panatag-shoal>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Marcos signs law to account for Philippines' natural resources

Gaea Katreena Cabico - Philstar.com

May 26, 2024 | 4:13pm



This photo taken on Aug. 19, 2023 shows mining operations in Brooke's Point, Palawan.

Jazmin Tabuena for Philstar.com

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has signed a law establishing a system that will provide the government with an accounting of the country's natural resources.

Republic Act 11995, also known as the Philippine Ecosystem and Natural Capital Accounting System (PENCAS) Act, establishes a government-wide accounting framework to support economic and environmental policymaking, value ecosystem services, and develop measures for ecosystem protection, conservation and restoration.

Marcos signed the law last May 22 on the celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity.

Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga earlier said that PENCAS will not only determine the economic value of ecosystems, but will also result in better management of natural resources and improved climate and disaster resilience.



## **PENCAS framework**

Natural capital refers to plants, animals, air, water, soils, ores and minerals that provide ecosystem services such as air and water filtration, flood protection, carbon sequestration, pollination of crops and habitats for wildlife.

The PENCAS framework will include, among others, a list of the officially designated statistics on the depletion, degradation and restoration of natural capital, environmental protection expenditures, pollution and quality of land, air and water, environmental damages and adjusted net savings.

The Philippine Statistics Board (PSA) will oversee the implementation of PENCAS, developing and maintaining the compilation of natural capital accounts as well as the environmental and ecosystem accounts.

PSA will create an Environment, Natural Resources and Ecosystem Account Services (ENREAS).

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), meanwhile, will provide national capital accounting data to PSA.

In its Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) system, the DENR will ensure that the natural environment, ecosystem services, and natural capital are framed as opportunities, benefits or assets that may be put at risk.

The National Economic and Development Authority, Department of Agriculture, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Professional Regulation Commission, Department of Finance, Department of Energy and Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development will also be tapped to implement the law.

## **Measuring nature**

Last week, a toolkit called “Sukat ng Kalikasan” (measurement of nature) was launched.

Developed by the United States Agency for International Development-Sustainable Interventions for Biodiversity, Oceans and Landscapes (USAID-SIBOL) and the DENR, Sukat ng Kalikasan provides a standardized practical guide for planning, monitoring and addressing threats in protected or conservation areas.

Sukat ng Kalikasan identifies six categories divided into two classifications. The first focuses on species and their habitats at the ecosystem, landscape and seascape level. The second classification is related to regulation and maintenance of ecosystem services and the social, economic, and cultural values of an area.

“Customized for the Philippine context, its objective is to appreciate the values that our ecosystems provide, so that we are in a more resilient position to manage our natural resources sustainably while achieving our development goals,” DENR Undersecretary Ernesto Adobo Jr. said during the launch last week.

Adobo said the signing of PENCAS will institutionalize the use of Sukat ng Kalikasan. This, he said, will lead to more effective natural resource management to reduce biodiversity loss, increase private sector engagement and investment, and make more resilient communities and economy.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/climate-and-environment/2024/05/26/2358079/marcos-signs-law-account-philippines-natural-resources>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

## **P600-million palm oil project starts rolling**

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 02:04 AM May 27, 2024



INQUIRER STOCK PHOTO

**Garcia Refinery Corp. (Gareco) has started construction of its P600-million palm oil refinery in Soccsksargen, the first of its kind in Mindanao, that could help advance the local industry.**

**The facility, which will become the first modern locally developed refinery in the island, will produce high-quality palm oil derivatives such as palm olein, palm stearin, margarine and other products for both the local and international markets.**

State-run Land Bank of the Philippines (Landbank) extended a P450-million loan to Gareco, which is part of the AC Garcia Group of Companies, for the development of the planned refinery in Soccsksargen comprised of South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos City.

Landbank said earlier the refinery would generate employment opportunities and expand the company's workforce from five to as many as 50 workers composed of a mill manager, supervisors, operators, mechanics, electricians, laboratory analysts and staff for administrative and marketing functions.

“The refinery mill is expected to make oil palm products more accessible and affordable for the local market, and serve as a stable source of income for oil palm growers from Sultan Kudarat and Maguindanao,” the bank added.

Gareco had formed partnerships with 63 farmers to manage 3,065 hectares (ha) of farm land planted to palm oil trees.

According to the Department of Agriculture, the potential supplier of palm oil nuts is much bigger considering that in Sultan Kudarat alone, palm oil trees have been planted on 14,000 ha of farm land.

“The establishment of the first palm oil refinery in the Soccsksargen region underscores the immense potential for growth and development within the palm oil sector,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said.

“This embodies the aspiration of the industry stakeholders to become a dynamic, innovative, and self-sufficient industry that provides benefits and stable supply of vegetable oils for the country,” he said.

Tiu Laurel expressed the DA’s commitment to proactively “nurture the growth and development of the palm oil industry” after the five-year Palm Oil Road Map has recently been updated to support the industry.

The blueprint covers programs, activities and projects to address concerns of the industry as well as serve as a reference in sourcing funds to implement industry projects.

According to the blueprint, the proposed strategies to advance the industry include the expansion of areas to meet our domestic needs for food security, the development and adoption of available and appropriate technologies, and the enhancement of market access through standards development and efficiencies of production and enforcement of appropriate policies.

**It also entails strengthening collaboration and convergence. —JORDEENE B. LAGARE**

<https://business.inquirer.net/460894/p600-million-palm-oil-project-starts-rolling>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Marcos signs new law requiring ecological accounting

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:31 AM May 27, 2024



PPA POOL

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has signed into law Republic Act No. 11995, or the Philippine Ecosystem and Natural Capital Accounting System (Pencas) law.

Pencas law provides the government mechanisms to carry out an accounting of the country's natural resources.

The law is more than just a law that adds another layer of bureaucracy since it supports the National Integrated Protected Areas System and requires economic accounting frameworks in accordance with international standards.

The Pencas law tasks the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) to oversee the law's implementation through an interagency working group.

The Department of Agriculture will assist the PSA in generating the National Capital Accounting information while the Department of Environment and Natural Resources will report on associated ecosystems. —Melvin Gascon

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1945178/marcos-signs-new-law-requiring-ecological-accounting>



**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Coffee production hampered by small scale of growers' farms

May 27, 2024 | 12:03 am



REUTERS

By **Adrian H. Halili**, *Reporter*

COFFEE farmers in the Philippines operate mostly small-scale farms, limiting their ability to rapidly ramp up production, according to Nestlé Philippines, Inc.

Nestlé Corporate Affairs Head Joey Uy III said: “The average farm size is one to two hectares. ... given the size of their land, it might not be enough,” Mr. Uy told reporters at the weekend.

Smallholder farmers — those with between one and two hectares of land – account for an estimated 80% of Philippine coffee production.

These growers are typically located in Mindanao area, where about 70–80% of coffee is produced, because the climate there is suitable for growing coffee.

The Philippines imports the majority of its coffee requirements, mostly from Vietnam, as local production cannot meet demand. Local coffee can service about 38% of market needs.

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“The medium-scale farmers have five hectares. And then (there are) big farm land owners as well. So, it varies,” Mr. Uy said.

“But our focus is on the small farmers. We want to consolidate them into associations or work with cooperatives,” he added.

The company requires about 40,000 metric tons of coffee per year at its Cagayan de Oro processing plant.

He said Nestlé conducts technical training for coffee farmers to improve the yield of the high value crop to 1 metric ton per hectare. The company trains 4,000 to 8,000 farmers per year.

He added that yields have also increased due to the use of regenerative agriculture, which aims to maintain the fertility of the soil.

“We also bring back the health of our land. Normally, when you always harvest, you also uproot the nutrients. So, we practice regenerative agriculture as well,” he said.

“That means that we have to practice balanced fertilization and not to be fully dependent on chemicals into the land. So we try to inject composting, agroforestry, intercropping, covered crops, in order to bring back the health of the land,” he added.

The government’s Coffee Industry Roadmap seeks to increase the self-sufficiency rate of the industry to about 47%.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is proposing a budget of P32 billion next year for high-value crops.

“We have like almost 30 crops to look into. So, the mechanism now is to introduce transformative interventions to address farm productivity,” Agriculture Undersecretary Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero said.

The DA is also planning to put up multi-purpose cold storage facilities to minimize post-harvest losses of high value crops.

“It’s still a proposition, but while waiting for 2025, we are doing our due diligence. We are going around to see where we have a competitive advantage for a particular crop in a particular location,” Ms. Natividad-Caballero added.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/05/27/597414/coffee-production-hampered-by-small-scale-of-growers-farms/>



**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Catch landed at regional fishports up 34.6% in April

May 27, 2024 | 12:02 am



Buckets of fish are sold at the Navotas fish port in this file photo. — PHILIPPINE STAR/MICHAEL VARCAS

FISH landed at regional fishports (RFPs) in April amounted to 60,256.88 metric tons (MT) in April, up 34.6% year on year, the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority (PFDA) said.

In a statement, the PFDA said the April total was “the highest fish unloading in the recorded history of PFDA and a 9% increase from the March unloading,” it added.

The General Santos Fishport Complex reported deliveries of 28,027.19 MT, up 21% from a year earlier.

Deliveries at the Navotas fishport totaled 23,344.29 MT during the month, against 23,149.47 MT a year earlier.

Both fishports reported record deliveries during April.

The PFDA said that the Lucena Fishport landed 3,152.15 MT, while Bulan Fishport in Sorsogon received 2,030.36 MT.

The sole PFDA fishing complex in Visayas, the Iloilo fishport, landed 2,570.82 MT in April.

It added that the Zamboanga Fishport and the Davao Fishport landed 752.43 MT and 307.03 MT respectively.

The PFDA said that Sual Fishport in Pangasinan reported deliveries of 69.93 MT, while the Camaligan Fishport in Camarines Sur reported 2.68 MT. “All RFPs experienced a significant jump in their month-on-month records,” it added.

Fish volumes rose 9% from a month earlier. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/05/27/597413/catch-landed-at-regional-fishports-up-34-6-in-april/>



**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Carabao milk, meat output expected to decline 20%

May 27, 2024 | 12:01 am



farmer guides his carabao on dry and cracked farmland in San Juan town, Batangas, April 18, 2010. — REUTERS

THE PHILIPPINE Carabao Center said that production of carabao (water buffalo) could drop this year due to the effects of El Niño on the supply of animal feed.

“We are estimating that production would drop by around 20%,” PCC Executive Director Liza G. Battad said on the sidelines of an agriculture event last week.

Ms. Battad added that the prevailing effects of El Niño on agriculture have caused volumes of carabao feed — mainly rice straw — to decline.

The “super El Niño” impact on rice straw has a follow-on effect on both milk and meat production,” she said.

Each carabao typically consumes 40 kilograms of feed per day.

“Our real concern is feed. And at the same time, when it’s too hot, breeding is affected” she added.

Ms. Battad said that this could cause the breeding efficiency of carabaos to drop by 2% next year. The typical breeding time takes about 10 months.

“Our hope is to really contract artificial insemination services. And we will deploy them to areas where there are lots of animals to breed,” she added.

She said artificial insemination could sustain the momentum for building up herd at the cooperative levels.

Carabao males are typically used for meat, while females are kept from slaughter to specialize in dairy.

“We have more than 300 cooperatives that invested in their processing and consumer products,” she added.

Milka Krem is the PCC’s carabao milk advocacy program through which it hopes to “commercialize many products,” she said.

The government is aiming to increase dairy production to 80 million liters of milk per year by 2028, including carabao milk.

The US Department of Agriculture projects dairy demand in 2024 to rise 3% to 3.5 million MT in liquid milk equivalent. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/05/27/597415/carabao-milk-meat-output-expected-to-decline-20/>

# **DA takes steps to prep against ‘Aghon’ impact**

By Othel V. Campos

May 26, 2024, 11:30 pm

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is taking proactive measures to assist farmers and fishers in preparation for the impact of Tropical Storm Aghon.

The DA has also started gathering information on agricultural areas at risk through situation reports from DA regional field offices (RFOs).

The DA will also maintain close coordination with DOST-PAGASA to monitor the storm’s path and intensity, and collaborate with national and regional disaster risk reduction management (DRRM) offices, along with local government units, to prepare for the storm’s impact

The DA is urging farmers and fishers to take precautionary measures. Farmers were advised to harvest mature crops as soon as possible, utilize available post-harvest facilities for storage to minimize crop loss, and secure seeds, planting materials, other farm inputs, animal feed, and water for livestock to ensure farming activities can resume quickly after the storm.

Moreover, the DA urged farmers to move animals, farm machinery, and equipment to higher ground to avoid floodwaters and minimize damage. Relocated animals have sufficient food and water to prevent additional stress during the storm, the DA added.

The Department, likewise, engaged agriculture stakeholders to clear drainage canals and rice paddies of any obstructions to prevent flooding and protect crops from waterlogging.

On the other hand, fishers were advised to conduct early harvest of fish to minimize post-storm losses and mobilize post-harvest equipment and facilities for processing and storage.

The DA reminded fishermen to secure fishing vessels in safe harbors or higher ground to protect them from strong winds and rough seas, and refrain from venturing out to the seas due to potentially rough sea conditions that could endanger lives and damage boats.

The DA DRRM Operations Center will continue to provide updates on the situation as Tropical Depression Agathon develops.

In its latest storm update, PAGASA maintains a forecast of wind strength at 62 kph up to 88 kph in the next 24 hours accompanied by heavy rainfall.

Tropical storm Aghon will gradually accelerate northwestward while intensifying until it exits the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) by Wednesday.

<https://www.manilastandard.net/news/national/314451602/da-takes-steps-to-prepare-against-aghon-impact.html>

# Fish deliveries highest so far for the year in April – PFDA

By Janine Alexis Miguel

May 27, 2024

THE volume of fish delivered in April totaled 60,256.88 metric tons (MT), representing the highest unloading volume for this year, the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority (PFDA) reported.

The latest figure represents a 9.0-percent increase from the 55,277 MT of fish delivered in March and was also the highest volume recorded since the year started.

Among the regional fish ports in the country, the General Santos Fish Port Complex recorded the highest unloading with 28,027.19 MT of fish delivered, indicating a 4.17-percent increase from the previous month's 26,904.01 MT.

The Navotas Fish Port Complex, one of the largest fish ports in the country, also maintained its upward trend with 23,344.29 MT of fish delivered, higher by 10.82 percent from 21,064.79 MT.

The Bulan Fish Port Complex also sustained growth in its monthly unloading volume with 3,152.15 MT, a 30.1-percent jump from 2,422.95 MT recorded in March.

The Lucena Fish Port Complex also maintained a positive growth in fish deliveries with 2,030.36 MT of fish, higher by 20.31 percent from 1,687.55 MT.

The PFDA also reported that the Iloilo Fish Port Complex unloaded 2,570.82 MT of fish for a 12.39-percent increase from the previous month's 2,287.43 MT.

Fish ports in Mindanao, including Zamboanga Fish Port Complex and Davao Fish Port Complex, recorded 752.43 MT (12.63-percent increase) and 307.03 MT (41.77-percent increase) of fishery and non-fishery products, respectively, unloaded.

Likewise, the Sual Fish Port and the Camaligan Fish Port both showed recovery from their previous month's record, with 69.93 MT (185.43-percent increase) and 2.68 MT (68.9-percent increase) of fish delivered to their consumers, respectively.

Last month, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. backed the upgrading of over a dozen regional and subregional seaports into deepwater ports to reduce the costs of delivering food across the archipelago.

Tiu Laurel said that this will require around P30.1 billion in four years and will result in the subregional seaports accommodating fully laden Panamax vessels.

The agriculture chief also supports the PFDA's goal of using the regional ports as entry and exit points for agricultural items to reduce the cost of transporting farm and fishery products across the country.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/27/business/top-business/fish-deliveries-highest-so-far-for-the-year-in-april-pfda/1948589>



# Stable inflation rate recorded in Region

## 7

By Kaiser Jan Fuentes

May 27, 2024

**CEBU CITY** — Central Visayas maintained a stable inflation rate for two months after recording an inflation rate of 3.2 percent for April 2024, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA 7) said.

PSA 7 Director Ariel Florendo said that there was no significant movement in average prices of goods and services since March, indicating economic stability in the region.

However, he said that the region's inflation rate for April remained relatively high compared to previous months.

The inflation rate in Central Visayas in February was 2.7 percent and 2.5 percent in January.

He added that it stood lower than the national headline inflation of 3.8 percent for April this year and the region's inflation rate a year ago, which was at 5.5 percent in April 2023.

Florendo said that stable inflation is conducive to a healthy economy, as it maintains the purchasing power of the currency.

Inflation, the gradual increase in prices of goods and services, affects the value of money over time, reducing its purchasing capacity.

Meanwhile, he said that food and nonalcoholic beverages recorded a 61.5 percent share; restaurants and accommodation services with 12.4 percent share; and housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels with 8.4 percent share.

These were identified as the top contributors to the region's overall inflation.

Florendo said the food inflation in the region rose slightly in April from 4.2 to 5.2 percent, primarily driven by increases in vegetable, tuber, plantain, cooking banana, and pulse prices.

He said that the increase in food inflation could have been influenced by the drought brought by the El Niño phenomenon.

However, he said that this rise was lower than the food inflation rate during the same period a year ago.

Among all highly urbanized cities and provinces in Cebu, Mandaue City had the highest inflation rate at 7.6 percent for April.

Mandaue City's 7.5 percent inflation rate in March was also the highest.

The inflation rate in Cebu City decreased to 4.6 percent from 4.7 percent in March, while Lapu-Lapu City saw a slight decline to 5.5 percent from 5.6 percent, and Cebu Province's rate dropped to 0.2 percent from 0.3 percent.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/27/regions/stable-inflation-rate-recorded-in-region-7/1948601>

# Damage to agriculture due to El Niño at P9.46B

By Victor Reyes

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May 27, 2024

THE National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) yesterday placed the cost of damage to agriculture of the El Niño phenomenon at P9.46 billion covering 13 of the country's 17 regions.

El Niño is a weather phenomenon that increases the likelihood of below-normal rainfall conditions that may lead to dry spells and droughts.

In a situation report, the NDRRMC placed the cost of damage to agriculture at P9.46 billion in the Ilocos region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, Western Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao, Davao region, Soccsksargen and CAR.

Mimaropa, Cagayan Valley and Western Visayas were listed as the top three regions that recorded the highest cost of damage to agriculture, with P2.61 billion, P2.06 billion, and P1.71 billion, respectively.

The NDRRMC also said the El Niño has hit the income capacities of 175,063 farmers and fisherfolks, damaging 163,709.49 hectares of crops.

At the same time, the NDRRMC said 429 cities and municipalities in 11 of the country's 17 regions are under a state of calamity due to El Niño.

It said 126 of these cities municipalities are in Central Visayas, while 119 are in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Also under a state of calamity are 71 cities and municipalities in Western Visayas, 40 in Cagayan Valley, 32 in Soccsksargen, 21 in Mimaropa, 10 in Northern Mindanao, three each in Ilocos region and Zamboanga Peninsula, and two each in Eastern Visayas and the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR).

The Council also reported that nearly 4.5 million individuals in 13 regions have been displaced by the phenomenon.

It said 1,153,147 families or 4,428,621 individuals have been affected in 5,386 barangays in the Ilocos region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Mimaropa, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao, Davao region, Soccsksargen, BARRM, and CAR.

There are no affected population reported in the four remaining regions of the country, namely National Capital Region, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, and the Bicol region.

The NDRRMC report showed the three regions with the most number of affected population are Western Visayas (453,651 families or 1,700,879), Soccsksargen (200,317 families or 751,769 individuals), and BARMM (126,368 families or 623,231 individuals).

It said P1.13 billion in assistance have been provided in Ilocos region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao, Davao region, and Soccsksargen.

Last March, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) reported that while El Niño is already weakening, its effect will persist until this month.

PAGASA said La Niña, a climate pattern that characterizes above average rains, may follow the El Niño period and start in the June-July-August season.

[https://malaya.com.ph/news\\_news/damage-to-agriculture-due-to-el-nino-at-p9-46b/](https://malaya.com.ph/news_news/damage-to-agriculture-due-to-el-nino-at-p9-46b/)

# Refinery a boon to palm industry

By Jed Macapagal

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May 27, 2024

The Department of Agriculture (DA) said the P600-million palm oil refinery owned by the Garcia Refinery Corp. (Gareco) in Sultan Kudarat can help spur further development of the palm oil industry in the country.

The newly-inaugurated Gareco is the first palm oil refinery in Soccsksargen region and is funded with loan from the Land Bank of the Philippines.

The agency said the facility will produce high-quality palm oil derivatives such as palm olein, palm stearin, margarine and other products for both the local and international markets.

“The establishment of the first palm oil refinery in the Soccsksargen region underscores the immense potential for growth and development within the palm oil sector. This embodies the aspiration of the industry stakeholders to become a dynamic, innovative and self-sufficient industry that provides benefits and stable supply of vegetable oils for the country,” said DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., in a statement.

Tiu Laurel said the Gareco refinery will provide employment to oil palm farmers, laborers and other stakeholders.

Gareco has formed partnerships with 63 farmers to manage a total 3,065 hectares of farm land planted to palm oil trees. With this, the region is set to be a bigger supplier of palm oil nuts since Sultan Kudarat already has 14,000 hectares of land planted on palm oil trees.

Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority showed the country produced a total of 540,643.52 metric tons (MT) of fresh fruit bunch of palm oil in 2023, a 1.4 percent growth from 2022's 533,398.52 MT.

[https://malaya.com.ph/news\\_business/refinery-a-boon-to-palm-industry/](https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/refinery-a-boon-to-palm-industry/)

# **‘Nescafe program raised coffee output of PHL farmers’**

**Ada Pelonia**

**May 27, 2024**

**Farmers in the Philippines increased the productivity of their coffee plantations through Nescafe’s program last year, an official of Nestle Philippines said.**

**Nescafé Plan 2030’s latest progress report showed that farmers in Honduras, India, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam achieved a 5-percent to a 25-percent increase in coffee productivity per hectare (ha) compared to 2022.**

**Jose Uy III, senior vice president and head of corporate affairs at Nestlé Philippines, said some 8,000 farmers that the company trained were able to produce 1 metric ton (MT) of coffee beans per ha.**

**However, Uy said this is still lower than 2 MT per ha average output of Vietnam, where the Philippines imports most of its coffee requirements.**

**“Kulang pa kasi tayo [Output is still not enough]. We want coffee production to rise to Vietnam’s level,” Uy told reporters on the sidelines of the Farmers and Fisherfolk Month Celebration and Kick-off of the Robusta Coffee Planting Season in Bukidnon.**

**He said farmers must practice regenerative agriculture, which improves biodiversity and protects soil fertility by restoring the land’s nutrients.**

**“The key is that we also bring back the health of our land. Normally when you always harvest, you also uproot the nutrients so we practice regenerative agriculture,” he said.**

**Among these regenerative farming practices are composting, agroforestry, cover crops, and intercropping.**

**“We want farmers to not be just dependent on coffee because you can harvest coffee only once a year. Nestle wants to teach farmers to become agripreneurs, to do intercropping.”**

**Uy said the company would encourage farmers to also plant abaca, high-value cash crops or coconut.**

**He said this is in keeping with the company’s goal of helping the Philippines become self-sufficient in coffee and eventually export the commodity.**

**“That is what we envision (exports), but the sufficiency level of Philippine coffee is below 50 percent so we still have a long way to go.”**

**An industry roadmap prepared by the Department of Agriculture indicated that the country’s coffee self-sufficiency level is only 15 percent.**

**The DA’s coffee roadmap intends to increase the country’s self-sufficiency in coffee to 39.46 percent and the farmers’ average yield to 2 MT per ha by 2026.**

**<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/27/nescafe-program-raised-coffee-output-of-phl-farmers/>**

# **Palm oil refinery opens in Soccksargen**

**Ada Pelonia**

**May 27, 2024**

**The new refinery built by Garcia Refinery Corp. (Gareco) will help spur the development of the local palm oil industry, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).**

**The DA said Gareco had formed partnerships with 63 farmers to manage a total 3,065 hectares of farm land planted to palm oil trees. The potential supplier of palm oil nuts is much bigger since Sultan Kudarat alone palm oil trees have been planted on 14,000 hectares of farm land.**

**“The establishment of the first palm oil refinery in the Soccksargen region underscores the immense potential for growth and development within the palm oil sector. This embodies the aspiration of the industry stakeholders to become a dynamic, innovative, and self-sufficient industry that provides benefits and stable supply of vegetable oils for the country,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said in a statement.**

**Soccksargen refers to a region in Mindanao that groups South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos City.**

**“The new Gareco refinery brings more than just infrastructure; it brings hope and opportunities. It will create job opportunities for local communities in Soccksargen, providing employment to oil palm farmers, laborers, and other stakeholders involved in the palm oil value chain. It is likewise poised to stimulate economic growth in the region, thereby enhancing the quality of life for many,” Laurel added.**

**The DA said the palm oil refinery, which is funded with loan from the Land Bank of the Philippines (LandBank), will produce high-quality palm oil derivatives such as palm olein, palm stearin, margarine, and other products for both the local and international markets.**



**Laurel said the DA through the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), “is committed to proactively nurture the growth and development of the palm oil industry.” He added that the five-year palm oil roadmap has recently been updated to support the industry.**

**“The department is committed to collaborating closely with stakeholders, including the private sector partners such as GARECO, in addressing challenges, promoting innovation, and ensuring the inclusive growth of the Philippine palm oil industry.”**

**<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/27/palm-oil-refinery-opens-in-socsksgen/>**

# **Record-high fish unloading posted in April at 60.2K MT**

**Ada Pelonia**

**May 27, 2024**

**THE Philippine Fisheries Development Authority (PFDA) recorded its highest fish unloading in the agency's history in April with 60,256.88 metric tons (MT) delivered in the country's regional fish ports (RFP).**

**The volume last month was also higher compared to last year's 44,721.05 MT.**

**The agency said that April's catch represented a 9-percent increase from the previous month's unloading.**

**"All RFPs experienced a significant jump in their month-on-month records," the PFDA said.**

**It added that the General Santos Fish Port Complex accounted for nearly half of the total unloading record delivered to consumers for the month at 28,027.19 MT. The Navotas Fish Port Complex trailed behind with 23,344.29 MT of unloading volume.**

**The Bulan Fish Port Complex and Lucena Fish Port Complex had a positive fish unloading trend for April. The Luzon ports unloaded 3,152.15 MT and 2,030.36 MT of fish to consumers, respectively.**

**For the sole Visayas port, the Iloilo Fish Port Complex recorded a "steady and increasing" monthly fish unloading volume since January as it unloaded 2,570.82 MT of fish last month.**

**Meanwhile, the Zamboanga Fish Port Complex and Davao Fish Port Complex had 752.43 MT and 307.03 MT of fishery and non-fishery products, respectively.**

**The PFDA noted that the Sual Fish Port and Camaligan Fish Port bounced back from their previous month's record, with 69.93 MT and 2.68 MT of fish delivered to consumers, respectively.**

**<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/27/record-high-fish-unloading-posted-in-april-at-60-2k-mt/>**

**ABANTE TONITE**

# **PBBM tutok sa agri, turismo, pagkain sa Brunei trip**

**May 26, 2024**

**Ilang mga kasunduan ang inaasahang pipirmahan sa Brunei kaugnay ng nakatakdang biyahe ni Pangulong Pangulong Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. sa naturang bansa sa May 28-29.**

**Sinabi ni Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Spokesperson Teresita Daza na isinasapinal na nila ang mga lalagdaang kasunduan na may kinalaman sa agrikultura, turismo, food security at maritime cooperation.**

**Prayoridad aniya ng administrasyong Marcos na palakasin ang agrikultura ng bansa kaya sa bawat bansang binibisita nito ay laging kasama ang naturang sektor sa mga pinapasok na kasunduan.**

**“We are actually currently in the process of finalizing text for several MOUs (memorandum of understanding). The MOUs that we are working with, with the Brunei insight will include priority areas ranging from agriculture to food security, maritime cooperation, tourism,” ani Daza.**

**Gagawin ni Pangulong Marcos ang state visit sa Brunei sa imbitasyon ni Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah.**

**Pagkatapos ng state visit sa Brunei ay didiretso ang Pangulo sa Singapore para sa dumalo naman sa isang pandaigdigang forum. (Aileen Taliping)**

**<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/05/26/pbbm-tutok-sa-agri-turismo-pagkain-sa-brunei-trip/>**