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MANILA BULLETIN:

2,318 Tayabas City farmers affected by ‘Aghon’ receive aid

BY DANNY ESTACIO

Jun 3, 2024 10:04 PM

TAYABAS CITY, Quezon – Two thousand, three-hundred eighteen farmers in this city affected by typhoon “Aghon” have been provided with agricultural assistance.



FARMERS affected by tropical cyclone ‘Aghon’ receive agricultural assistance from the government. (Photo via Danny Estacio)

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Mayor Lovely Reynoso-Pontioso here said recipients received seedlings, fertilizers, and farm equipment, from the Department of Agriculture worth P16.1 million.

Minda Dalmacia, one of the beneficiaries, thanked Pontioso, Quezon Rep. Mark Enverga, and the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office 4-A for the much-needed assistance.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/3/2-318-tayabas-city-farmers-affected-by-aghon-receive-aid>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Solon's pro-fishermen bill gets crucial backing; 'urgent' status sought

BY ELLSON QUISMORIO

Jun 3, 2024 10:05 AM

AT A GLANCE

- Kabayan Party-list Rep. Ron Salo has bared over the weekend that the Fisherfolk Council of Leaders adopted a resolution requesting President Marcos to certify his pet measure, House Bill (HB) No.1977, as urgent.
- The bill seeks to create Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR).



Kabayan Party-list Rep. Ron Salo (Rep. Salo's office)

Kabayan Party-list Rep. Ron Salo has expressed his unwavering commitment to empowering local fishermen, which he says play a critical role in the country's economy.

This, as Salo bared over the weekend that the Fisherfolk Council of Leaders adopted a resolution requesting President Marcos to certify his pet measure, House Bill (HB) No.1977, as urgent.

The bill aims to establish the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR)--a pivotal step toward improving the management and sustainable development of the country's aquatic resources, the veteran solon said.

The measure has been pending with the House Committee on Government Reorganization since Aug. 2, 2022

"The creation of the DFAR is essential for better management and sustainable development of our aquatic resources. It will significantly improve the livelihoods of our fisherfolk and enhance food security in the Philippines," he said.

As one of the world's top fish-producing nations, the Philippines ranked eighth globally with a recorded production of 4.26 million metric tons of fish in 2023.

The Fisherfolk Council of Leaders is comprised of selected fisherfolk leaders from national and local levels. Each year, in May, coinciding with the celebration of Farmers and Fisherfolk Month, one national fisherfolk director and 16 regional fisherfolk directors are appointed for a month-long term.

"Despite the sector's importance, it faces significant challenges, including a progressive decline in fish catch, overfishing, and the degradation of essential marine habitats such as coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass, and algae beds. These challenges necessitate urgent and focused management and conservation efforts," said the fisherfolk regional representatives.

The council was formed through the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources' (DA-BFAR) Fisherfolk Directors Program.

The symbolic role reversal under the program allows fisherfolk to act as regional directors. This provides them the opportunity to influence policy and management directly.

The resolution seeking the urgent passage of Salo bill was adopted at the end of the celebration of Farmers and Fisherfolk Month on May 30, 2024.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/3/solon-s-pro-fishermen-bill-gets-crucial-backing-urgent-status-sought>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Albay solon pushes AI in Philippine agriculture

BY NINO N. LUCES

Jun 3, 2024 04:12 PM

LEGAZPI CITY, Albay – Albay Rep. Fernando Cabredo on Monday, June 3, pushed artificial intelligence in Philippine agriculture to boost and improve production of farmers after attending the AI Governance Day at the Artificial Intelligence for Good Global Summit in Geneva, Switzerland recently.



CABREDO (FB)

Cabredo, vice chairman of the House Committee on Information and Communications Technology, said that AI has a significant potential to transform agriculture and solve global food challenges.

He narrated that AI can provide accurate pricing information for farmers, reduce food waste using advanced tools to minimize waste, improves food safety monitoring, and precision farming boosts productivity with better seeds and fertilizers.

For food system, he said that AI makes food production, distribution, and consumption more efficient.

Cabredo said that AI could help government in crafting action plan, policy and infrastructure, create supportive policies and invest in digital infrastructure for rural areas, education, and training.

"The insights from the AI for Good Global Summit are crucial for modernizing Philippine agriculture. Embracing AI can improve food security and sustainability. The time to act is now," Cabredo said.

He said that as one of the vice chairmen of the House Committee on Information and Communication Technology, he is dedicated to driving technological advancements in the Philippines.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/3/albay-solon-pushes-ai-in-philippine-agriculture>

MANILA BULLETIN:

JTI: Anti-agri economic sabotage law to cut tax losses

BY XANDER DAVE CEBALLOS

Jun 3, 2024 12:52 PM

A tobacco company said that ratifying the anti-agricultural economic sabotage bill will minimize the losses from the government's revenues and farmers.

Japan Tobacco International (JTI) said that the increasing illicit cigarette trade in the Philippines poses a significant threat to the nation's economy including its agricultural sector.

JTI General Manager John Freda said the quick enactment of the bill would send a strong message to smugglers and their accomplices about the government's serious commitment to address the worsening problem of illicit.

"Once the law is ready for full implementation by the mandated agencies, the government has an additional potent weapon in its arsenal to wage war against smuggling syndicates," Freda said.

"We are looking forward to its full implementation. The crime of tobacco smuggling is indeed an act of economic sabotage because, put simply, it robs the nation's coffers. Not only does it deprive government of much needed tax revenues but illegal trade cheats everyone: society, consumers and legitimate businesses," he added.

Under the proposed law, tobacco smuggling as economic sabotage carries heftier penalties of life imprisonment and a fine of thrice the value of the agricultural and fishery products subject to the crime.

The bill also repeals the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016 with tobacco – either in its raw or finished form – joining rice, sugar, corn, pork, poultry, garlic, onion, carrots, fish, and "cruciferous vegetables" on the 'economic sabotage' list.

Estimates from Congress and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) put the foregone losses from illicit tobacco trade between P60 billion and P100 billion a year.

Meanwhile, the BIR earlier said that the government has so far lost P6.6 billion in excise taxes as of this year due to the illegal trade of tobacco.

The JTI official also said, proceeds from illegal tobacco sales often finance larger criminal activities such as corruption, the smuggling of drugs and weapons, human trafficking, and terrorism.

Freda also congratulated Sen. Cynthia Villar and Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga, chairpersons of the Senate and House committees on agriculture, respectively, for successfully shepherding the proposed measure in the committee level to the bicameral conference panel.

The Senate version was principally authored by Villar while the House bill was jointly filed by Reps. Ferdinand Alexander “Sandro” Marcos and Margarita Ignacia B. Nograles.

JTI Philippines had previously called for stiffer sanctions against cigarette smuggling even at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, despite intensified law enforcement actions.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/3/jti-anti-agri-economic-sabotage-law-to-cut-tax-losses>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

DA to revive abandoned Cordillera rice terraces

04:35 AM June 04, 2024



HERITAGE SITE The Batad rice terraces in Banaue, Ifugao, shown in this April 2013 photo, are the most picturesque of the terraces that make up the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's World Heritage Site. But a number of terraced farms in Ifugao have been abandoned by their owners and the Department of Agriculture wants to rehabilitate them in the coming years to help improve the country's rice production. —Ev Espiritu

BAGUIO CITY, Philippines — Abandoned or idle rice terraces in Ifugao province would be brought back to life under a new government strategy to sustain the granaries of the Cordillera, agriculture officials said.

Department of Agriculture (DA) Assistant Secretary for Logistics Daniel Atayde said here last week that the agency would include in future annual national budget allocations the repair of popular centuries-old terraced farms in the Ifugao towns of Banaue, Kiangan, Hungduan and Mayoyao, which have been named as a World

Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco).

Mountain Province also boasts of rock-walled terraces that grow the rice for its communities, including those in the town of Sagada. In other upland Cordillera towns, farmers carved out vegetable gardens by following the natural contour of the mountains.

The new DA allocations would rebuild broken terraces and finance the reactivation of idle terraced farms to improve productivity, added Jennilyn Dawayan, DA Cordillera director.

Dawayan and Atayde joined local chefs who cooked a giant paella, using the Cordillera's heirloom rice called "tinawon," at Burnham Park here on May 30 during the closing ceremony for this year's Farmers and Fisherfolk Month celebrations.

"As policy, the government will make sure full rehabilitation of the terraces means making sure the revived paddies are productive," Dawayan told the Inquirer.

The Cordillera terraces are unique for its indigenous water engineering system that placed the mountain-carved terraces beneath "muyong" (community forest) to conserve rainwater, reduce soil erosion and regulate run-off water flowing down man-made or natural canals to layers of rice paddies ("payao"). The muyong forests also provided timber for woodcarvers.

Dawayan said DA would determine the number and condition of abandoned terraces to determine how much rehabilitation funding should be included in next year's budget.

Outside the World Heritage Site, smaller rice terraces were converted into vegetable gardens to maintain the family businesses, Banaue Mayor Joel Bungallon had said in March.

Aging farmers

Radiocarbon dating of the terraces by the Ifugao Anthropology Project led by US-based archaeologist Stephen Acabado and uncovered relics placed these man-made wonders as 400 years old.

However, for over two decades, upland communities have struggled with abandoned family-owned terraces because young generations refused to farm or have moved to the cities to learn modern trade skills at the prodding of their own parents, according to archival reports and studies.

The high number of aging farmers and their workers were also among the observations listed by the Unesco after it declared the Cordillera terraces as a World Heritage Site in 1995. Recent demographic profiles put the average upland farmer in their mid-50s.

This phenomenon was also recorded when the Ifugao terraces were declared as a globally important agricultural heritage system in 2011.

Dawayan said DA researchers learned that many terraced farm owners are open to assistance, mainly from community members who would rebuild their payao and grow “tinawon” in exchange for a share of the harvest.

Government can pursue this strategy by tapping programs of other agencies, like the Department of Labor and Employment, that subsidize workers willing to farm idle terraces for a harvest share, said Dawayan.

Ifugao has a similar community support system, the traditional “chawwa,” where neighbors take over untended payao for a share in production. In 2016, then Banaue mayor and now Ifugao Gov. Jerry Dalipog employed chawwa to revive 341.7 hectares of idle terraces to supply a popular restaurant. —Vincent Cabreza

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1947759/da-to-revive-abandoned-cordillera-rice-terraces>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Filipino-Chinese business group backs lower rice tariffs

By: [Alden M. Monzon](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 08:48 AM June 03, 2024

MANILA, Philippines — The Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (FFCCCII) supports the suggestion of Finance Secretary Ralph Recto to further lower the tariff on rice from the current 35 percent.

Recto earlier bared the government's plan to temporarily reduce rice tariffs further until the end of 2024 "presumably", citing the importance of reducing the price of the staple in the local market.

In a statement, FFCCCII president Cecilio Pedro said lowering tariffs holds the potential to address inflation worries for Filipino consumers and promotes economic stability.

"This initiative aims to alleviate the inflationary pressures caused by high rice prices," the group said.

The group said the move aims to make rice more affordable, citing that imported rice contributes substantially to the country's supply of this staple.

For the proposal to push through, Recto said that the Tariff Commission would have to conduct a hearing soon.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) would also need to be consulted before President Marcos Jr. can issue an executive order that will modify the rates, he added.

Opposition

On the other hand, the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) said they are vehemently opposing the move, explaining that the P5 per kilo reduction seen resulting from lowering tariffs could depress palay prices by P3 per kilo — considering that “cheap” imported rice would be “dumped” into the markets.

The farmer’s group argued that rice growers could incur total losses of P33 billion, based on a harvest of 11 million tons of palay during the second half of the year.

Additionally, the FFF said the government could incur foregone customs revenues of P10 billion under the assumption that an additional 2 million tons of rice will be imported in the second semester.

The FFF said such revenues are, by law, earmarked for rice farmers’ productivity programs.

“Together with the losses from lowered palay prices, farmers stand to lose a total of P43 billion from the proposed tariff cut for 2024 alone,” the group said.

<https://business.inquirer.net/462060/filipino-chinese-business-group-backs-lower-rice-tariffs>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Tariff cut on imported rice: A gamble local farmers won't take

WRITTEN BY: [KURT DELA PEÑA](#)

June 03, 2024



RICE COMPOSITE IMAGE from Inquirer file and stock photos

MANILA, Philippines — “Haan nak agtalonon (I will stop tilling my land already).”

Lauro Manipon, a 63-year-old farmer in Pangasinan said this as he expressed exasperation over the government’s “neglect of farmers,” especially now that the Department of Finance (DoF) has proposed a slash in the tariff rate for imported rice.

“Sikami lattan iti kanayon a kakaasi (We are always disadvantaged),” he told INQUIRER.net, pointing out how tough life is for palay farmers. “Kanayon kami laengen nga mabaybay-an (We are always neglected).”

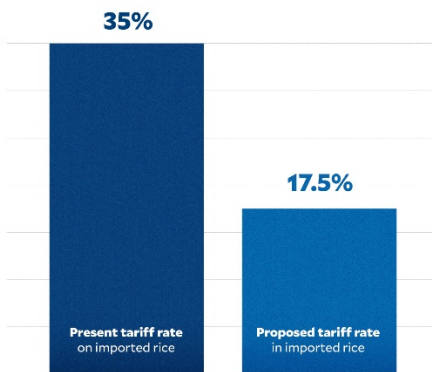
Last week, Finance Secretary Ralph Recto stated that to bring down the price of rice, the government has to reduce the tariff rate for imported rice from 35 percent to 17.5 percent, saying, however, that he would leave the decision to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

This, as he pointed out the need to strike a balance between 112 million consumers and three million palay farmers all over the Philippines. “[There should be] a good balance,” Recto said.

Easing inflation

Based on data from the DA, which was stated by Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa, reducing the 35 percent tariff rate would bring down the retail price of rice by P4 to P5 a kilo.

The Federation of Free Farmers criticized proposals to slash tariffs on imported rice.



As pointed out by the Department of Agriculture, lowering the tariff rate to 17.5% would bring down the retail price of rice.

P52 - P54/kg

Price of imported well-milled rice (as of May 28, 2024)

P52 - P54/kg

Price of imported well-milled rice (as of May 28, 2024)

INQ | SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

GRAPHIC Ed Lustan/INQUIRER.net

Last April, inflation accelerated to 3.8 percent from 3.7 percent in March because of higher food and transportation costs, the Philippine Statistics Authority said.

PSA data indicated that rice inflation eased to 23.9 percent in April from 24.4 percent in March. A kilo of imported well-milled rice is worth P52 to P54 as of May 28, 2024.

It was last year when President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. issued Executive Order No. 50, to keep the already lowered tariff rate of 35 percent till the end of 2024.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. last year issued Executive Order No. 50, which maintained the already lowered tariff rate of 35 percent till the end of 2024, but as the government seeks to bring down the retail price of rice, Finance Secretary Ralph Recto said the tariff rate has to be further slashed.



Recto said he is leaving it to the Department of Agriculture, stressing that the interests of local farmers and consumers should all be considered.

3 MILLION
LOCAL RICE FARMERS



112 - 115 MILLION
RICE CONSUMERS



INQ | SOURCE: DOF CHIEF RALPH RECTO

GRAPHIC Ed Lustan/INQUIRER.net

As pointed out by Recto, reducing the tariff rate on imported rice could bring down the retail price of the grain by September, when world prices of the commodity are expected to go down.

The DoF stressed that the government is set to lose “less than P10 billion” in revenues should it decide to reduce the tariff rate on imported rice to 17.5 percent.

Imbalance

But while the DoF said that it was willing to let go of that amount to control inflation, its proposal did not sit well with palay farmers who are already struggling to make a living out of their yields.

As the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) said, the proposed reduction in the tariff rate could further depress palay prices by P3 a kilo when cheaper rice is brought into the market, where domestic rice is likewise sold by millers and traders.

“This could result in a loss of P33 billion to rice farmers, who normally harvest 11 million tons of palay in the second half of the year,” the FFF said in a statement.

It pointed out, too, that assuming an additional two million tons of imported rice in the second semester, the DoF proposal would mean less revenues that are “legally earmarked for rice farmers’ productivity programs.”

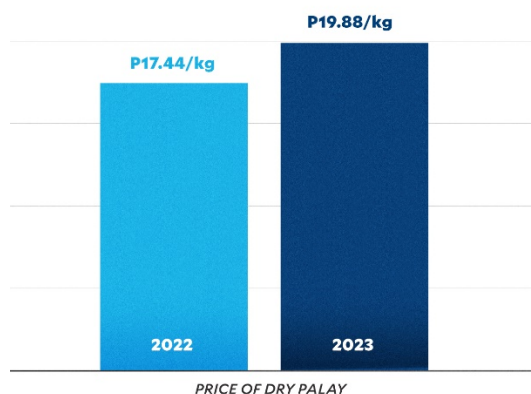
Together with the losses from lowered palay prices, the FFF said that farmers stand to lose a total of P43 billion from the proposed tariff reduction for 2024, or P14,333 for each of three million local farmers.

This, as when cheaper imported rice is brought into the market, local farmers struggle to compete, leaving them with no option but to sell their harvest at a low farm gate price.

Laying bet

Based on data from the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), the production cost of palay in 2022 was P14.98 a kilo, while the farm gate price of dry palay was P17.44 a kilo. This rose to P19.88 a kilo in 2023.

But when imported rice becomes cheaper, local farmers would struggle to compete, leaving them with no option but to sell their harvest at a low farm gate price.



INQ | SOURCE: PHILIPPINE RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The DA, however, said that even with a reduced tariff rate, farm gate prices would not be affected a lot because the National Food Authority's buying cost is now P23 to P30 a kilo for dry palay.

For Raul Montemayor, FFF national manager, the government should instead look for alternative ways to bring down the retail price of rice without neglecting local farmers.

“Government can just buy rice locally or even import – if absolutely necessary – and distribute these to poor consumers through its KADIWA and other outlets,” he said.

The private sector can take care of supplying unsubsidized rice to consumers who can afford to buy them. Tariff cuts are not needed since import prices are expected to go down soon anyway, as stated by Secretary Recto himself,” said Montemayor.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1947613/tariff-cut-on-imported-rice-a-gamble-local-farmers-wont-take>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Asia-Pacific economies must build up rice reserves to stabilize prices, ADB says

June 3, 2024 | 8:26 pm



REUTERS

ASIA-PACIFIC countries must build up their reserves of rice while ensuring there is no market abuse to take advantage of shortages, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said.

“To address these challenges, governments and stakeholders must adopt a multifaceted approach that addresses both short- and medium-term concerns,” Pilipinas F. Quising, senior economics officer, and Shiela Camingue-Romance, economics officer at the ADB Macroeconomics Research Division, said in a blog.

“Consistently adopting a reactive rather than proactive approach often results in short-term fixes that can worsen long-term problems,” they said.

Rice is a major staple in the Asia-Pacific, where the Philippines is projected to remain the world’s biggest rice importer next year, according to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The commodity accounts for up to 70% of daily caloric intake and a major share of the food price basket across Asia.

Global rice prices have risen 38% between December 2022 and December 2023, the bank said. “Despite a slight decline to an average of \$613/metric ton in March, prices remain 29% higher than they were a year ago,” the ADB said.

Continued shocks from the El Niño weather phenomenon have also yet to become apparent in the region, it added.

“The persistence of El Niño until the second quarter, coupled with the possibility of transitioning into La Niña later in the year, poses continued risks to rice production.”

To curb risks to rice supply and prices, the government must strengthen market transparency and monitoring to prevent price manipulation and hoarding, the ADB said. It must provide targeted subsidies to vulnerable populations.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. has yet to sign a bill seeking harsher sanctions against agricultural hoarding, smuggling, and other forms of market abuse.

Asia-Pacific countries must also build up rice reserves to ensure steady supply and dampen volatile prices in the medium term, Ms. Quising and Ms. Camingue-Romance said.

“However, efficient management, transparency, and proper storage and distribution infrastructure are crucial for ensuring effectiveness, preventing corruption and spoilage, and guaranteeing quality and accessibility of the reserved rice,” they added.

Philippine rice inflation eased slightly to 23.9% in April after peaking at 24.4% in March, the Philippine Statistic Authority reported.

Governments should also invest in modern agricultural technology and infrastructure, and push for crop diversification to strengthen resilience against climate shocks, Ms. Quising and Ms. Camingue-Romance said.

Damage to agriculture caused by the El Niño dry spell has topped P9.5 billion, the Philippines’ Department of Agriculture (DA) said last month.

Countries must also share best practices and ensure open trade to better manage rice supply and prices in the region.

The Department of Finance is studying a proposal to cut tariffs on rice imports to 17.5% or 20% from the current 35% rate.

“Countries in Asia and the Pacific can effectively foster stable and sustainable rice markets by promoting international collaboration, sharing knowledge, implementing focused interventions, and using financial assistance and technical expertise from their partners,” the ADB said.

Regular-milled rice was selling for P49.55 a kilo and well-milled rice P51.42, according to DA price monitors. Imported well milled rice was P52.98/kilo. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/03/599360/asia-pacific-economies-must-build-up-rice-reserves-to-stabilize-prices-adb-says/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Economic sabotage bill may deter tobacco smuggling, JTI says

June 3, 2024 | 8:26 pm



BoC

THE impending economic sabotage bill is expected to help the government minimize lost revenue from tobacco smuggling, cigarette maker JTI Philippines said.

“We are looking forward to its full implementation. The crime of tobacco smuggling is indeed an act of economic sabotage because, put simply, it robs the nation’s coffers,” JTI General Manager John Freda said in a statement.

“Not only does it deprive government of much needed tax revenue but illegal trade cheats everyone: society, consumers and legitimate businesses,” he said.

Last month, the bicameral conference committee report on the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage bill was ratified.

It seeks to repeal Republic Act No. 10845 or the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act. It will also introduce stiffer penalties for smuggling, hoarding, profiteering, and cartel-like behavior in regard to agricultural and fisheries products.

Mr. Freda said the illicit tobacco trade is “growing at alarming levels” and threatens the economy, particularly agriculture.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) estimates that the government lost P25.5 billion in taxes from illicit tobacco last year.

This year, the BIR is hoping to collect P324.56 billion in excise taxes, with tobacco products being counted on to generate P152.4 billion.

The tobacco industry has so far contributed around P46.69 billion to the excise tax collections as of April 2024.

Mr. Freda said that the impact of tobacco smuggling extends to farmers, local government units, retailers and consumers, and revenue collection agencies.

The proceeds from the illicit trade also “often finance much larger criminal activities such as corruption, the smuggling of drugs and weapons, human trafficking and terrorism.”

Mr. Freda said that once the bill is signed into law, it will “send a strong message to smugglers and their accomplices of the government’s serious commitment to address the worsening problem of illicit trade in tobacco.”

“Once the law is ready for full implementation by the mandated agencies, the government has an additional potent weapon in its arsenal to wage war against smuggling syndicates.” — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/03/599361/economic-sabotage-bill-may-deter-tobacco-smuggling-jti-says/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

More information and educational programs needed to get fisherfolks insured

June 3, 2024 | 8:20 pm



PHILSTAR

The fisherfolks do not see value in insurance due to the lack of information and educational programs from the local government, Fredel B. Mued, leader of *Nuvuyuntun Yang mga Tagbanua tung Calauit at Quezon*, stated in an interview last Friday.

“Hindi ganap ang pagkaunawa ng mga mangingisda ang kahalagahan ng insured siya at hindi, dahil wala rin masinsinang ginagawang information and education campaign ang local government,” [The fisherfolks do not see the difference between getting insured and not, because the local government does not have enough information and education campaigns] Mr. Mued said.

At the 2024 National Coastal and Inland Fisheries Summit last May 31, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Regional Director (Region IV-A) Sammy A. Malvas added that convincing fisherfolks to be insured is a struggle for the department.

“Ang pinakamaliit na portfolio is fisheries. We have covered 13M farmers and fishers for the past nine years but we only have 85,000 fishers insured out of millions. Ganon lang siya kaliit,” [The smallest portfolio we have is on fisheries. We have covered 13M farmers and fishers for the past nine years but we only have 85,000 fishers insured out of millions. That’s how small it is] he mentioned.

Further, he claimed that social capital is also one of the reasons why fishermen choose not to get insured.

“We know that maraming calamity sa Pilipinas but we still don’t buy insurance right? Kasi ang ating culture for Filipino, at least with that study...is hihingi na lang ako sa neighbors ko na may kaya or puntahan si mayor, or I will call my relative abroad...to help me with the damage,” [The Philippines faces a lot of calamities and yet Filipinos still don’t buy insurance because it is part of our culture – to depend more on our relatives abroad and political figures in case of emergencies] Mr. Malvas stated on the reasons behind uninsured Filipino fishermen.

“We don’t see the value of insurance at least in our society. That’s one major cause at the micro-level and apart from education,” he added.

To aid in the difficulty faced by fishermen, Rocky Sanchez Tirona, the Global Program Lead for Fish Forever at Rare, shared that the organization is conducting seminars and workshops to help educate the fisherfolks about their insurance literacy.

“What’s been helpful are really insurance literacy, workshops where we actually help them understand what insurance products are, how they work and all that. So I think having the government, local government as the partner for doing things like that is really important,” Ms. Tirona said. – **Almira Louise S. Martinez**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/03/599369/more-information-and-educational-programs-needed-to-get-fisherfolks-insured/>

PCA: 88% of P7.5-B coco sector fund released

By Janine Alexis Miguel

June 4, 2024

THE Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) said that 88 percent of the P7.5 billion fund for the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan (CFIDP) had been released to agencies and that a significant boost in program implementation was expected for this year.

The PCA reported to the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF) that P6.6 billion of the total fund was released as of May 2024. The PCA and PCAF-National Sectoral Committee on Coconut held a discussion last May 28.

Kreisha Marielle Roque, acting manager of the PCA Program Management Office, said that despite implementation delays, certain agencies, including the PCA and the Agricultural Training Institute, had already begun carrying out their assigned roles as part of the program.

Moreover, the PCAF approved a policy resolution recommending that the Department of Agriculture, through the PCA, broaden the program's scope of beneficiaries. The PCAF said that this would ensure that every coconut farmer benefited from the CFIDP.

Additionally, all implementing agencies must ensure that regular coconut farm workers and farmers are included as beneficiaries.

National Coconut Farmers Registry System (NCFRS) to improve services provided to farmers and other stakeholders.

To expand the registration of coconut farmers, the PCA is focusing on empowering field staff at the barangay level by providing them with the necessary skills for encoding and validating farmer information.

In line with this, the PCAF committee asked the PCA to consider issuing identification to all registered coconut farmers for easier authentication of eligibility when accessing grants and benefits under the CFIDP.

Included in the said benefits is Philippine Crop Insurance Corp.'s (PCIC) Coconut Tree Mortality Insurance for farmers of the crop who either own, rent or operate 5 hectares or less.

Eligible farmers registered in the NCFRS receive free insurance for up to 1 hectare and a built-in death benefit of P10,000, provided the insured farmer is under 80 years old.

PCIC said that it was targeting to cover 400,000 coconut farmers this year. To attain that, all 13 PCIC regional field offices and 55 provincial offices are actively conducting extensive information caravans and mass enrollment activities, in partnership with the PCA.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/04/business/top-business/pca-88-of-p75-b-coco-sector-fund-released/1949820>

BFAR: WPS protection crucial to PH's marine resources sustainability

By Jed Macapagal

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June 4, 2024

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) emphasized the importance of protecting the West Philippine Sea (WPS) citing its impact in the overall integrity of the country's marine resources.

"There is an interconnectivity of marine resources and whatever damage experienced in the WPS will have an impact to nearby oceans. We need to preserve the WPS so as not to compromise the sustainability of resources there," said Nazario Briguera, BFAR spokesperson, at the Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon public forum yesterday.

Briguera said there are 300,000 registered fishers from the Philippines in the WPS.

BFAR also said around 11 percent of the country's marine captured fisheries also comes from the WPS.

The agency also emphasized that the government has been providing support to affected fisher folks in the WPS especially for livelihood activities.

Briguera said at present, fishermen are not being stalled despite China's declaration of a unilateral fishing ban in the disputed area.

He said China has no basis in detaining fishermen in the WPS by June 15.

BFAR said the agency will be guided by the directions set by the National Task Force on the West Philippine Sea.

Earlier, the Chinese coast guard issued an order authorizing its personnel to detain foreign boats and its crew that are in the West Philippine Sea for charges of trespassing.

"If China proceeds with that (detainment of fishers), it means another violation as it has no basis under any international law. We always say that the sovereign rights of the Philippines is strongly anchored in the UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea)," Briguera said.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/bfar-wps-protection-crucial-to-phs-marine-resources-sustainability/

DA ban on UK meat not seen to raise beef prices

Ada Pelonia

June 4, 2024

THE detection of mad cow disease should not cause a spike in the price of imported beef, according to the Meat Importers and Traders Association (MITA).

MITA President Emeritus Jesus Cham issued the statement after the Department of Agriculture (DA) slapped a temporary ban on live cattle and meat imports from the United Kingdom where the classical Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) was detected. BSE, commonly known as mad cow disease, was found in South Ayrshire, Scotland.

“[The United Kingdom] supplies mid-range beef products to the Philippines. The volume is less than 3 percent of total imports so the impact would be small,” Cham told the BusinessMirror via Viber.

Figures from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) showed that meat imports reached 273,640 metric tons (MT) from January to March this year, higher than the 265,517 MT recorded in the same period in 2023.

Beef imports from the UK stood at 1,015 MT from the 35,319 MT total in the first quarter of the year, based on BAI data.

Meanwhile, the DA said mad cow disease could lead to fatal nerve damage in cattle, and its possible spread in the country could “undermine the livestock industry and compromise food safety.”

“Given the potential risk to the consumers and to protect the local livestock industry which plays a significant role in the Philippine economy and was valued at P260 billion last year, Secretary Tiu Laurel has imposed a temporary import ban emphasizing the importance of precautionary measures to safeguard public health,” the DA said in a statement.

The department added that the zoonotic disease could cause Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans and manifest through brain shrinkage and deterioration.

It said there are plans to implement more stringent inspections of all arrivals of meat and meat by-products derived from cattle, including live animals and bovine processed animal proteins, at the ports of entry to ensure that only non-infected and safe commodities should enter the country.

“Imported beef is staple fare in both fast-food and high-end restaurants, and a key ingredient in processed and canned food. Thus, in order to facilitate continuous trade while mitigating the possible risk of spread of BSE infection, all shipments coming from the United Kingdom that are already in transit, loaded or accepted unto port shall be allowed provided that the products were slaughtered or produced on or before 10 April 2024,” the DA said.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/04/da-ban-on-uk-meat-not-seen-to-raise-beef-prices/>

REMATE:

BFAR wala pang natatanggap na ulat sa panggugulo ng China sa pangingsda sa WPS

June 3, 2024 18:38



MANILA, Philippines – Inihayag ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) nitong Lunes, Hunyo 3 na wala pa itong natatanggap na ulat ng pagpigil ng China sa mga mangingisdang Pinoy na mangisda sa West Philippine Sea sa kabila ng unilateral fishing ban ng nasabing bansa.

Sa panayam, sianbi ni BFAR spokesperson Nazario Briguera na hindi kinikilala ng ahensya ang ban ng China sa lugar.

“Sa ngayon, wala naman tayong natatanggap na ulat na pinipigilan na ang ating mangingisda kaugnay nitong nilabas ng China na unilateral declaration patungkol sa fishing ban,” ani Briguera.

“Malinaw po ang posisyon natin dyan katulad po ng posisyong ng Department of Foreign Affairs noong nilabas nila yung protesta, hindi po natin ito kinikilala. At walang dahilan para po huminto sa pangingsda ang ating mga mangingsda dyan sa WPS,” dagdag pa niya.

Ayon kay Briguera, mayroong nasa 300,000 mangingsda sa West Philippine Sea na nag-aambag sa 11% ng marine capture fisheries ng bansa.

Nauna nang kinondena ng Pilipinas ang fishing ban ng China dahil lumalabag ito sa international law at tumatapak sa soberanya at maritime rights ng bansa.

Inanunsyo naman ng Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) at BFAR kamakailan na paiigtingin pa nila ang presensya sa Bajo de Masinloc upang masigurong makapapangisda pa rin ang mga Filipino sa lugar sa kabila ng fishing ban ng China. ***RNT/JGC***

<https://remate.ph/bfar-wala-pang-natatanggap-na-ulat-sa-panggugulo-ng-china-sa-pangingsda-sa-wps/>

REMATE:

Paglikha ng fisheries dep't pinasesertipikang urgent kay PBBM

June 3, 2024 08:57



MANILA, Philippines- Ikinasa ng fisherfolk council na nilikha sa pamamagitan ng programa sa ilalim ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) ang resolusyon na humihikayat kay Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. na isertipikang urgent ang panukalang magtatag ng departamentong mangangasiwa sa aquatic resources ng bansa.

Ang pangunahing may akda ng House Bill No. 1977 o ang Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR) Act ay sii Kabayan Partylist Rep. Ron P. Salo.

“The creation of the DFAR is essential for better management and sustainable development of our aquatic resources. It will significantly improve the livelihoods of

our fisherfolk and enhance food security in the Philippines,” wika ni Salo.

Binanggit ang isang pag-aaral, iginiit ng mambabatas na ika-walo ang Pilipinas sa buong mundo sa naitalang produksyon na 4.26 million metric tons ng isda noong nakaraang taon.

“Despite the sector’s importance, it faces significant challenges, including a progressive decline in fish catch, overfishing, and the

degradation of essential marine habitats such as coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass, and algae beds. These challenges necessitate urgent and focused management and conservation efforts,” ayon sa pahayag, batay sa Fisherfolk Regional Representatives.

Binigyang-diin din nila ang “need for a dedicated Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources to institutionalize science-based methodologies in fisheries management, thereby enhancing productivity, competitiveness, sustainability, resilience, and inclusiveness of the sector.”

Base sa solon, binubuo ang fisherfolk council ng mga piling pinuno sa buong bansa. Tuwing Mayo, nagtatalaga ang konseho ng national fisherfolk director at 16 regional directors para sa isang buwang termino, na nagbibigay-awtorisasyon sa kanila “to influence policy and management directly.”

“The Fisherfolk Council intends to immediately submit their resolution to the President, Senate President, and Speaker of the House of Representatives, seeking support for the immediate passage of this vital legislative measure,” ani Salo. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/paglikha-ng-fisheries-dept-pinasesertipikang-urgent-kay-pbbm/>