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**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Crafting of salt industry roadmap to uplift livelihoods of countless Pinoys--solon

**BY DEXTER BARRO II**

Jun 5, 2024 09:00 PM

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## AT A GLANCE

- Kabayan Party-list Rep. Ron Salo says the establishment of a Philippine salt industry roadmap will help unlock the industry’s “vast potential” to uplift the livelihoods of Filipino salt farmers.



(Pixabay)

Kabayan Party-list Rep. Ron Salo says the establishment of a Philippine salt industry roadmap will help unlock the industry’s “vast potential” to uplift the livelihoods of Filipino salt farmers.

“This initiative is more than just policy-making; it is about revitalizing an industry with immense potential and ensuring the livelihoods of countless Filipinos who depend on it. I am confident that through our collaborative efforts, we can create a thriving, self-sufficient, and globally competitive salt industry,” he said in a statement.

Salo gave this remark following the conduct of the second workshop for the roadmap, which he said was

consistent with the provisions of Republic Act (RA) No. 11985, otherwise known as the Philippine Salt Industry Development Act.

He particularly cited Section 4, which mandates the formulation and establishment of a Philippine salt industry roadmap.

Organized by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), the workshop was attended by representatives from different government agencies, local government units, state universities and colleges, and stakeholders from the private sector, which form part of the participants in crafting the roadmap.

As one of the principal authors of the measure, Salo says the full enactment of the law is necessary in ensuring the development and enrichment of the salt industry.

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“This measure represents a significant paradigm shift in policy for the salt industry as it adopts a developmental approach, a 180-degree turn from a purely regulatory approach,” the lawmaker said.

“With this law, salt has ceased to be an orphaned commodity. It has now found its new home – the [BFAR] of the Department of Agriculture (DA),” he added.

Salo, who grew up in the salt-rich province of Pangasinan, emphasized that the salt industry plays a crucial role in the livelihood of many Filipinos.

“This personal connection reinforces my commitment in seeing this initiative through to success,” he shared.

The veteran congressman further noted that the Philippines once had a thriving salt industry in the 1990s when nearly 85 percent of the country's annual salt requirement was sourced locally from provinces.

However, the country failed to maintain the productivity of the industry, which led to heavy reliance on imports, he said.

He explained that this triggered the loss of several livelihoods, decreased income due to importation, and heightened vulnerability to food supply chain disruptions.

With the law’s implementation, Salo expressed optimism that the challenges faced by the industry will finally be addressed.

“Such effective implementation is the key that will unlock the vast potential of the industry,” he underscored.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/5/crafting-of-salt-industry-roadmap-to-uplift-livelihoods-of-countless-pinoys-solon>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Senators split on rice tariff rate cut

**BY DHEL NAZARIO**

Jun 5, 2024 04:05 PM

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Senators have expressed differing opinions on the newly approved reduction tariff on rice by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) that has already been approved by President Marcos.

NEDA Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan said that the reduction tariff on rice from 35 percent to 15 percent and additional government subsidies will lessen the cost of rice to P29 per kilo for the poor.

Tariff rates on corn, pork, mechanically deboned meats, sugar, vegetables such as onions, shallots, garlic, broccoli, carrots, cabbage, lettuce, sweet potatoes, cassava, coffee substitutes, complete feeds, and feed preparations will remain the same.

Senate President Francis "Chiz" Escudero, who agrees to the move, said in an interview that there's a legal basis for the President to adjust the tariff rates while Congress is on break

"Sang-ayon ako dahil ang pinakamalaking rason kung bakit tumataas ang inflation sa ating bansa pangunahin ay yung pagtaas ng presyo ng pagkain at pangunahin sa pagkain pagtaas ng presyo ng bigas (I agree to this because the main reason why inflation is ballooning in the country is the increase in the price of food and rice is on top of this)," he said.

When Congress resumes its session, Escudero said that any lawmaker who's against it can file a bill to correct what they think is lacking or wrong in what the President did. He added that it would not come from him.

Regarding the concern about the influx of foreign products, Escudero said that this is always the case when there is tariff reduction but he mentioned that the Department of Agriculture is not limited when it comes to this and has the power to ensure that local producers will not be affected and will be protected.

"Kapag pumasok ang purong dayuhang supply hindi naman tayo pwedeng dependent na lamang doon dapat manatiling malakas pa din ang ating domestic production ng anumang uri ng pagkain (When imported supply enters the country, we cannot be dependent on it we have to maintain a strong domestic production of any food product)," he added.

Meanwhile, Sen. Imee Marcos opposed the move saying that this will result in the swelling of imported products in the local market.

"Ayokong lagi niyo akong ginagawang kontrabida, pero hindi ko naman masisikmura ito (I don't always want to come out as the villain, but I cannot stomach this)," she said in a statement.

President Marcos, who chairs the NEDA Board, approved the new Comprehensive Tariff Program for 2024-2028, which extended tariff rates until 2028.

"Ano ito? Inuudyukan ba natin silang magpakamatay na lang? Di ko maintindihan! Makukuha pa ba ito ng dasal? (What's this? Are we encouraging them to just die? I cannot understand it. Are prayers even enough?)" she added.

Sen. Risa Hontiveros said that they are studying the move since it concerns farmers' groups and other rural sectors who have already expressed their disapproval to the move.

She mentioned that all agricultural countries are using reasonable tariff rates to support domestic producers.

"So pinag-aaralan po namin kung ano ang magiging legislative action namin doon (We are studying what our legislative action will be on this)," she added.

Sen. Joel Villanueva said that while reducing the tariff is a good step, he believes that economic managers must focus more on long-term solutions to the food supply problems.

"Kailangan pong magkaroon ng mas kongkretong plano at hindi band-aid solutions para paigtingin ang lokal na produksyon ng mga produktong agrikultura (There has to be a concrete plan and not band-aid solutions to improve the local production of agricultural products)," he said.

"Dapat nating bigyang pansin ang epekto nito sa kabuhatan ng ating mga magsasaka kagaya ng pagbibigay ng sapat na tulong at safety nets sa ating mga magsasaka, lalo na ngayong panahon na mas madalas na extreme weather events (We have to take note of its effects to the livelihood of our farmers such as providing ample assistance and safety nets especially now with the presence of extreme weather events)," he added.

Villanueva mentioned that there must be an analysis if this step to reduce the tariff rate until 2028 is the right move and that they will monitor this especially when they tackle the national budget.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/5/senators-split-on-rice-tariff-rate-cut>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Mayor assures aid for farmers affected by Kanlaon eruption

**BY GLAZYL MASCULINO**

Jun 5, 2024 11:00 AM

BACOLOD CITY – Almost 1,700 farmers in five barangays in Canlaon City, Negros Oriental were affected by the eruption of Kanlaon Volcano on Monday night, June 3.

In a press briefing on Tuesday, June 4, Mayor Jose Chubasco Cardenas said that there were 655 farmers in Barangay Pula, 290 in Barangay Masulog, 396 in Barangay Malaiba, 291 in Barangay Lumapao, and 48 in Barangay Linothangan who are affected.



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**SUGARCANE farmers tend to their field in Canlaon City, Negros Oriental on Tuesday morning, June 4, with Kanlaon Volcano on the background. (Photo courtesy of Donald Garsula via Canlaon City Online)**

Cardenas said the city has an appropriation for assistance for farmers and said they will submit the list and will hold a meeting with the Department of Agriculture (DA).

“We will be plotting strategies and systematic approaches on how to give the assistance to the farmers affected in the eruption,” the mayor said.



Cardenas thanked the provincial government and congressmen in the districts of the province for helping the city in assuring that the necessary support will be extended to the people of Canlaon as the local government cannot finance all of these alone.

Gov. Manuel Sagarbarria said the provincial government has an allocation for 2,000 farmers in Canlaon as the province is currently under a state of calamity due to the El Niño phenomenon.

“Although it has not yet released, we are planning to give a half sack of rice to each affected farmer. We will just have to double time the releasing so that we can give the immediate support during this time of crisis,” he added.

Sagarbarria said that they will prioritize Canlaon once the resources are available.

The governor also said that the provincial government has provided food packs and hygiene kits to the city as well as augmented five mini-dump trucks which helped transporting evacuees to evacuation centers. “I’ll leave it here (Canlaon) for a few days if something gets worst,” he added.

Sagarbarria said that he has deployed ambulances to augment the Canlaon District Hospital.

“The hospitals are prepared and we have also augmented medicines from other hospitals, including doctors, oxygen tanks, and all that may be needed during this time,” he added.

“We can quickly purchase whatever we can, whatever is needed that we see, we can add more because technically, we are under a state of emergency from a previous calamity,” he said.

The city government of Canlaon has activated its incident command system and coordinated with various hospitals in neighboring areas.

“I instructed health personnel to visit the five barangays to see to it if the sulfur odor is still present. We will advise those with comorbidities to go down to the evacuation centers,” Cardenas said.

Cardenas said the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is ready to enforce a mandatory evacuation if needed, adding that they have standby vehicles to be used if there is a need to transport residents to evacuation centers in the city proper.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/5/mayor-assures-aid-for-farmers-affected-by-kanlaon-eruption>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **Samar town imposes lockdown on pork meat to stop ASF spread**

**BY MARIE TONETTE MARTICIO**

Jun 5, 2024 01:35 PM

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TACLOBAN CITY – A full lockdown on swine and pork meat has been enforced in Calbiga, Samar to prevent the spread of African Swine Fever (ASF) following the positive results of blood samples taken from hogs in Barangay Calingonan, Calbiga.



**THE town of Calbiga, Samar recorded a positive ASF case.**

The Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO) conducted tests on blood samples from two separate piggeries in Barangay Calingonan on May 29 due to ASF suspected as the cause of recent swine mortalities in the area.

The results revealed one positive case of ASF while the other sample tested negative.

Mayor Red Nacario issued an executive order outlining the necessary actions to address the ASF outbreak and its implications on food security in the municipality.

Juan Paulo Cabueños, chief of the Municipal Agriculture Office in Calbiga, emphasized the urgency of implementing a lockdown to contain the virus and prevent further spread among swine populations.

Precautionary measures such as animal quarantine have been in place prior to the confirmation of the ASF case.

Prior to the issuance of the official executive order, a zero movement policy has been enforced in Barangay Calingonan, restricting the transport of swine and pork meat.

Despite calls to avoid mass culling, the MAO is conducting extensive blood sampling of swine within the red zone, a one-kilometer radius from the initial outbreak site.

While culling healthy swine remains a possibility, the focus is on containing the infected areas and preventing further contamination, MAO added.

"Even during last week, with the results had yet to be known, animal quarantine in several areas within the red and yellow zones were already implemented," Cabueños said.

A new suspected case of ASF has been identified in an adjacent piggery, raising concerns about the virus' potential spread.

The ASF outbreak in Calbiga followed previous reports of infections in the neighboring town of San Sebastian. Investigations are ongoing to determine any link between the recent cases in Calbiga and those in nearby areas.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/5/samar-town-imposes-lockdown-on-pork-meat-to-stop-asf-spread>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **Bohol distributes free fiberglass motor bancas to fisherfolk**

**BY CALVIN CORDOVA**

Jun 5, 2024 01:23 PM

CEBU CITY – Fiberglass motorized bancas were distributed for free to fishermen in the towns of Daus and Calape in Bohol province.



**MOTOR bancas made of fiberglass were distributed to fisherfolk in Bohol province. (Contributed photo)**

The distribution of 28 units of 22-foot motor bancas at the Calape Sports Complex on Tuesday, June 4, is a project of the provincial government of Bohol through the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPA) in partnership with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources-Central Visayas (BFAR-7).

Acting Bohol Gov. Dionisio Victor Balite urged the recipients to take care of their motor bancas as he assured that the provincial government will continue to provide more support to fishermen and farmers in the province.

He emphasized that the administration of Gov. Aris Aumentado “is tirelessly seeking cost-effective and efficient strategies to improve the lives of Boholanos.”

Balite was joined in the distribution by OPA officer-in-charge Dr. Larry Pamugas, executive assistant on agriculture and fisheries Nila Pinat, Salvio Madanguit, fish buy-back executive assistant, Calape Mayor Julius Herrera, Daus Mayor Roman Bullen, and municipal agriculture officers and fish technicians from the beneficiaries' LGUs.

Pamugas said each boat is worth around P100,000.

He said fiberglass boats are easier to clean and maintain compared to those made from other materials.

Pamugas added that with proper handling, a fiberglass boat can last 10 to 25 years and a well-maintained one can even surpass 50 years.

Beneficiaries of the project were fishermen who were affected by typhoon "Odette" and the pandemic.

At least 100 boats have been distributed across Bohol with the provincial government looking to distribute 130 more bancas in the future.

Pinat urged the fisherfolk to support the conservation and protection of the marine ecosystem as the province continues to fight illegal fishing.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/5/bohol-distributes-free-fiberglass-motor-bancas-to-fisherfolk>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Marcos orders BOC, DA to ensure 24/7 shipment processes

BY ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS

Jun 6, 2024 06:18 AM

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## AT A GLANCE

- Marcos said there should be three eight-hour shifts to ensure circadian operations across all government services related to logistics and supply chains.

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President Marcos has ordered the Bureau of Customs (BOC) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) to deploy teams 24/7 to ensure uninterrupted shipment processes nationwide to accommodate the arrival of more ships into the country.



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

Marcos said this during his fourth meeting with the Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC) – Infrastructure Sector Group on Wednesday, June 5.

During the meeting, the President said there should be three eight-hour shifts to ensure circadian operations across all government services related to logistics and supply chains.

"In this business, there's no after-hours. It can – it's ready 24/7," he said.

"So, let's not put an extra team, let's just keep it running. Whatever you have there in the day, let the same number of people that you have all 24 hours," he added.

According to the PSAC, this process will ensure continuous inspection, clearance, and payment processes, significantly reducing costs and time, particularly on the x-ray scanning operations of the BOC and DA's office tasked to inspect reefer vans.

PSAC Strategic Convenor, Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. President and CEO Sabin Aboitiz presented to President Marcos their recommendations during the meeting.

The PSAC is a group established under the Marcos administration to help the government deliver on its commitment to transform the Philippine economy by bridging the public and private sectors. It is led by experts across six main sectoral groups: agriculture, digital infrastructure, jobs, health care, infrastructure, and tourism.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/6/marcos-orders-boc-da-to-ensure-24-7-shipment-processes>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# For cheaper rice: Romualdez hails PBBM's reduction of imported rice tariff

BY ELLSON QUISMORIO

Jun 5, 2024 11:59 AM

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## AT A GLANCE

- "Mr. Rice" House Speaker Martin Romualdez has praised President Marcos' move to slash the tariff for imported rice from a hefty 35 percent to just 15 percent.



**House Speaker Martin Romualdez (left), President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. (Speaker's office)**



"Mr. Rice" House Speaker Martin Romualdez has praised President Marcos' move to slash the tariff for imported rice from a hefty 35 percent to just 15 percent.

"The import levy reduction and the direct sale of imported rice by the government through its Kadiwa centers should bring down the retail price of rice substantially, especially for consumers," Romualdez said in a statement Wednesday morning, June 5.

Through these Kadiwa centers, the government is able to sell to consumers much cheaper rice, which is the staple food of Filipinos.

Romualdez says the effort to reduce rice prices is consistent with the Marcos administration's goal of making the staple available and affordable.

The leader of the 300-plus strong House of Representatives says rice farmers should not worry about the assistance they receive from government, which are funded from the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF). The fund is provided for under Republic Act (RA) No. 11203, or the Rice Tariffication Law.

Romualdez noted that as per official data last month, the RCEF had accumulated P16 billion from import tariff collections.

"This means that the government has enough funds to help farmers, while it is trying to bring down rice prices through the import tariff cut and direct Kadiwa sales," he stressed.

The Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats (Lakas-CMD) president pointed out that the House advocacy of returning the rice importation mandate of the National Food Authority (NFA) is also meant to make rice affordable.

The rice importation mandate bill remains pending in the Senate.

"We should find a long-term solution to the rice price issue," said Romualdez.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/5/for-cheaper-rice-romualdez-hails-pbbm-s-reduction-on-imported-rice-tariff>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# ASF: 58 provinces still under 'red zone'

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

June 6, 2024 | 12:00am



Data from the BAI's National ASF Prevention and Control Program showed that as of May 31, hog farms in three provinces in Ilocos, five in the Cordilleras, four in Cagayan Valley, six in Central Luzon, four in Calabarzon, three in Mimaropa and five in Bicol were among those that remain infected with the swine disease.

MANILA, Philippines — Fifty-eight provinces are still classified as red zones for African swine fever or infected with ASF, according to the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI).

Data from the BAI's National ASF Prevention and Control Program showed that as of May 31, hog farms in three provinces in Ilocos, five in the Cordilleras, four in Cagayan Valley, six in Central Luzon, four in Calabarzon, three in Mimaropa and five in Bicol were among those that remain infected with the swine disease.

Five provinces in Western Visayas, three in Central Visayas, four in Eastern Visayas, two each in Zamboanga peninsula and Northern Mindanao, five in Davao, two in Soccsksargen and five in Caraga are also under the red zone.

The report does not include the outbreak of ASF in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), where six barangays in Lamitan, Basilan have been placed on lockdown due to rising cases of ASF.

Lamitan Mayor Roderick Furigay said the entire city has been classified as red zones.

BARMM was formerly classified as a green zone or ASF-free.

Despite the problem with ASF in 13 regions, the BAI said 453 cities and towns are now classified as pink or buffer zones.

Ninety-three municipalities were upgraded to yellow or surveillance zones from pink, the BAI said.

Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the Department of Agriculture signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the Department of Health, including its attached agencies the BAI and Food and Drug Administration, to allow the BAI to assist the FDA in evaluating animal vaccines and biologics.

Tiu Laurel said that under the MOA, the FDA would issue the license to operate to manufacturers, traders and distributors as well as retailers of veterinary drugs and products.

Aside from ASF, Tiu Laurel said highly pathogenic avian influenza has affected local poultry and hog industries.

“This MOA will significantly strengthen our fight against transboundary animal diseases,” Tiu Laurel said.

“By enhancing our regulatory framework and fostering greater cooperation among key agencies, we can better safeguard the animal industry, secure the livelihood of our farmers and mitigate the impact on our economy,” he said.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/06/06/2360610/asf-58-provinces-still-under-red-zone>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Farmers: Rice tariff cut a stab in the back

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

June 6, 2024 | 12:00am



The National Economic and Development Authority Board, chaired by President Marcos, approved the new Comprehensive Tariff Program for 2024-2028, which includes the reduction of rice tariff for in- and out-quota rates from 35 to 15 percent.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — Cutting rice tariffs to 15 percent is a stab in the back of the country's three million rice farmers and the grain industry, according to the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF).

The National Economic and Development Authority Board, chaired by President Marcos, approved the new Comprehensive Tariff Program for 2024-2028, which includes the reduction of rice tariff for in- and out-quota rates from 35 to 15 percent.

“NEDA has deprived industry stakeholders of their right to genuine consultation and due process,” FFF national manager Raul Montemayor said yesterday.

“Normally, proposed tariff changes undergo hearings conducted by the Tariff Commission. Recommendations are then given to the NEDA Board. This procedure was not followed before the lowering of the rice tariff,” he explained.

Montemayor recalled that during the 2023 Senate hearings on the ratification of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership trade treaty, the executive branch assured rice farmers that rice and other sensitive agricultural commodities would not suffer diminution in tariff protection for the duration of the agreement.

“That honorable commitment has been rendered worthless by the NEDA Board,” he said.

“Our experience since trading in the rice industry was liberalized under the Rice Tariffication Law and tariffs were lowered also on non-ASEAN rice imports, (it) has not been salutary. Our dependence on imports from the volatile world market has grown from 10 percent of total domestic consumption to around 25 percent. Rice retail prices have risen,” he added.

Claims that the 15 percent rice tariff will provide a major and lasting relief to consumers are “more a shot in the dark than a probable result,” Montemayor said.

## **Stakeholders**

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. yesterday met with industry stakeholders as part of Marcos’ directive to reduce the retail price of rice in the country.

“President Marcos wants more affordable rice prices to ease the financial strain on consumers, particularly the poor, as well as relieve price pressures that have kept inflation elevated and interest rates high,” Tiu Laurel said.

Marcos has lowered rice tariffs until 2028 to bring down rice prices to P29 per kilo, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said.

Tiu Laurel said the Department of Agriculture (DA) has started the trial selling of rice at P29 per kilo at select Kadiwa centers.

During the consultation, rice industry stakeholders vowed to cooperate in lowering rice prices.

The newly approved tariff rates aim to ensure access and affordability while balancing the interests of consumers and local producers, Balisacan said.

This would benefit poor households, including beneficiaries of the government's conditional cash transfer program or the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, he said.

## **Lower prices**

Cutting rice tariffs from 35 to 15 percent will substantially reduce rice prices in the market, Speaker Martin Romualdez said yesterday.

"The import levy reduction and the direct sale of imported rice by the government through its Kadiwa centers should bring down the retail price of rice substantially, especially for consumers," Romualdez said.

Farmers should not worry about the government assistance they receive through the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund set up under the Rice Tariffication Law, he noted.

As of May, the fund had accumulated P16 billion from import tariff collections, he added.

"This means that the government has enough funds to help farmers, while it is trying to bring down rice prices through the import tariff cut and direct Kadiwa sales," he said.

House Deputy Minority Leader Mujiv Hataman also welcomed the tariff cuts.

"We welcome the executive order being prepared to reduce the tariff rates on rice and other commodities, as this also aims to reduce the price of rice in the market. The lower the prices, the better for everybody," he said. –

**Delon Porcalla, Cecille Suerte Felipe, Roel Pareño, Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/06/06/2360683/farmers-rice-tariff-cut-stab-back>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Kanlaon eruption: 2 areas under state of calamity

[Gilbert Bayoran](#) - The Philippine Star

June 6, 2024 | 12:00am



A man walks on volcanic mud along a road in Barangay Biak na Bato in La Castellana, Negros Occidental two days after the phreatic explosion of Kanlaon Volcano.

Image from Mt. Kanlaon Natural Park Office

MANILA, Philippines — The city of Canlaon in Negros Oriental and the municipality of La Castellana in Negros Occidental declared a state of calamity on Tuesday, a day after being hit with ashfall and sulphuric fumes as a result of Kanlaon Volcano's phreatic eruption.

La Castellana Mayor Alme Rhumyla Mangilimutan confirmed yesterday the flow of lahar in Barangay Biak na Bato, with roads no longer passable in the aftermath of rains.

Mangilimutan called on residents to remain calm and avoid the path of lahar flows, which carried debris including trees and rocks.

She also ordered the forced evacuation of residents in the affected barangay, in anticipation of more lahar flow in the evening. Heavy equipment has been dispatched to clear barangay roads.

Farmlands in six barangays of La Castellana at the foot of the volcano were almost covered by ashfall, which reached three more barangays.

A total of 232 affected families are staying in different evacuation centers of La Castellana and being fed by the municipal government, aside from the food packs being distributed to them by the local and provincial government and other agencies.

Mangilimutan earlier declared the “suspension of work in all government offices and agencies except those with functions that involve the delivery of basic services, disaster preparedness and response and other vital services.”

Following the declaration of state of calamity, Mangilimutan said prices of basic commodities have been controlled, in coordination with the Department of Trade and Industry, after she noted an increase in the price of face masks.

More than 1,500 residents in three cities and three municipalities of central Negros fled from their homes shortly after the eruption on Monday evening.

Canlaon City Mayor Jose Chubasco Cardenas also declared the suspension of work in government and private offices on Tuesday. While the situation in the city is back to normal and volcanic activity has simmered down, Cardenas emphasized that restriction within the permanent four-kilometer danger zone should be strictly observed.

Gov. Eugenio Jose Lacson, who visited La Castellana on Wednesday, said “all those moved to evacuation centers have been told to remain until Alert Level 2 will be downgraded.”

Displaced residents of three barangays in neighboring La Carlota reported that 200 families are either staying at evacuation centers or with relatives, according to the city disaster risk reduction and management office.



## **Lahar warning**

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) has warned of possible lahar flows following the eruption earlier this week coupled with rains in the area.

Phivolcs monitored mudflows in several areas surrounding the volcano.

Visual reports were also sent to Phivolcs in the vicinity of Brgy. Biak na Bato, La Castellana town yesterday. State volcanologists said the current mudflow could progress into lahar if heavy rains continue.

Meanwhile, sulfur dioxide emissions from the volcano reached the second highest ever a day following the eruption.

SO<sub>2</sub> emissions reached 4,113 tons per day on Tuesday, as voluminous emissions reached 2,000 meters and drifted to the southwest and northwest.

There were also 53 volcanic earthquakes recorded.

## **OCD assistance**

The Office of Civil Defense (OCD) and its regional counterparts in Western and Central Visayas are working with concerned agencies and local authorities amid Kanlaon's restiveness, Civil Defense Administrator Undersecretary Ariel Nepomuceno said on Wednesday.

"There are established preparedness and response protocols that serve as guides to address this emergency. Our regional counterparts are there, on alert, to directly assist the local DRRMOs," he said.

"The anticipated needs are also being tackled in the series of coordination to ensure that needed support will be extended immediately. We need to be ready. OCD is ramping up its efforts in collaboration with concerned agencies and local authorities for possible prolonged emergency," he added.

OCD and several members of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council convened on Wednesday afternoon to discuss the situation and preparedness for possible future explosions of Kanlaon.

Science Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. during the meeting reiterated a warning to avoid the four-kilometer permanent danger zone around Kanlaon.

## **Agricultural damage**

The Department of Agriculture on Wednesday began assessing the damage wrought by the eruption of Kanlaon Volcano to the agriculture sector, a ranking DA official said.

“We have yet to determine the damage as it is not the priority right now, although we are already coordinating with our regional field office. They are reporting to us but they cannot give us yet (an assessment),” Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said.

De Mesa also assured farmers affected by the ashfall of assistance, noting that the DA can tap the P1-billion Quick Response Fund.

“Once they (farmers) are ready to plant and want alternative livelihood, we will give them the support,” he said.

For his part, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources spokesman Nasser Briguera said that BFAR is determining if there are fishponds affected by the eruption of Mount Kanlaon.

“Right now, we have alerted our provincial fishery officers. We are yet to receive the actual report from the ground. But just the same, we already alerted our office. They are ready to respond to the affected fishermen.”

The Sugar Regulatory Administration said it is closely monitoring the situation of about 23,000 hectares of sugarcane farms that could have been affected by the eruption of Kanlaon.

## **Red Cross ops**

The Philippine Red Cross has mobilized its resources and personnel as it provided humanitarian assistance to affected families in Negros following the eruption of Mt. Kanlaon.

“We already have people in Negros, we have already prepositioned one tanker, we have four ambulances, we have two food trucks in the area and we have about 200 volunteers working in the evacuation centers,” PRC chairman Richard Gordon said during the Kapihan sa Manila Bay forum on Wednesday.

Gordon said if there are more areas affected, they would be deploying more volunteers. PRC chapters near Negros Occidental have been on high alert and are closely monitoring the situation.

The humanitarian organization has established first aid stations to provide medical attention and psychological first aid, distribute face masks and conduct welfare tracing.

In La Carlota, PRC teams are assisting evacuees at the New La Carlota Evacuation Center.

## **Aerial survey**

Utilizing two of its helicopters, the Philippine Air Force conducted an aerial assessment of areas affected by Mount Kanlaon's increased volcanic activity in Negros on Tuesday.

With the DSWD in Central Visayas and the OCD in Western Visayas, the 205th Tactical Helicopter Wing led a rapid damage assessment in Moises Padilla, La Carlota, La Castellana, Bago City and Canlaon City.

PAF public affairs office chief Col. Ma. Consuelo Castillo said the aerial inspection was done as part of a swift response effort to determine what help needs to be provided to affected areas.- **Romina Cabrera, Michael Punongbayan, Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas, Rudy Santos, Ghio Ong, Bella Cariaso, Mark Ernest Villeza**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/06/06/2360704/kanlaon-eruption-2-areas-under-state-calamity>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# No resignation offer from 2nd MB member in 'ghost' mess

[Keisha Ta-Asan](#) - The Philippine Star

June 6, 2024 | 12:00am



**BSP Governor Eli Remolona.**

Remolona New BSP Governor Eli Remolona

MANILA, Philippines — The other Monetary Board Member (MBM) linked to the ghost employee scandal in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) has yet to file a resignation letter, even as bankers and government officials were shocked over the involvement of their former colleague.

The other MBM remained firm about not quitting days after Tolentino handed his resignation letter to Malacañang.

BSP Governor Eli Remolona Jr. earlier said the central bank is waiting for word from Malacañang since MBMs are appointed by the president of the Philippines.

The fate of the two members involved in the scandal lies with President Marcos, who has yet to make his decision regarding the issue.

In January, the BSP was able to identify four ghost employees who received the benefits and salaries without reporting for work. It is currently taking administrative action against these individuals.

The BSP earlier said the Monetary Board would function normally despite the ongoing investigation involving two of its members and would continue to do so as long as there is a minimum of four members to perform the duties of the MB.

“Despite the concerning nature, the central bank’s proactive approach to addressing the issue, combined with its track record of sound monetary policy and role in maintaining economic stability, suggests that the impact on financial markets may be managed and short-lived, if any at all,” Security Bank chief economist Robert Dan Roces said.

“As the BSP continues to handle the situation transparently and decisively, it can help maintain confidence and minimize any lasting consequences, particularly given the resilience of the Philippine economy and the central bank’s history of sound decision-making,” Roces added.

Current and former officials at the Department of Agriculture were shocked by the controversies involving Tolentino, who was a former DA official.

One source, who had worked with the embattled MBM in the past, described Tolentino as a good man with utmost integrity who is incapable of doing illegal and unscrupulous actions.

“He is a good man. He is not corrupt. Masyado siyang matino (He is too decent),” the source said.

Another source said that Tolentino has a “lot of delicadeza” as he chose to resign instead of his name being “dragged in the mud.”

The source added that Tolentino could have been caught in the current administration’s “cleansing” of officials appointed by former president Rodrigo Duterte.

Tolentino served as an assistant secretary and eventually an undersecretary for planning, policy and international trade of the DA from 1986 to 1993.

Tolentino was also the founding executive director of the Agricultural Credit Policy Council, an attached agency of the DA that focuses on facilitating credit access to local farmers, from 1987 to 1990.

In 2020, Tolentino received the Lifetime Contributor Award from the DA for his efforts in contributing to the development of the country's agriculture sector and for reforming the agricultural credit policy system.

"Indeed, rice has been my life's work. I worked on rice in various agencies, in various countries, in various roles and capacities," Tolentino was quoted as saying in a previous DA news release.

"In 1986, when I started working at the Department of Agriculture under (then) secretary Carlos Dominguez, I also happened to be working with Dr. William Dar, who was then the director of the Bureau of Agricultural Research. I was lucky to have those two men to work with, and they have both inspired me throughout my career," he added.

## **CA: BSP, PDIC execs guilty**

The Court of Appeals (CA) has found executives from the BSP and Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC) guilty of indirect contempt for disregarding a court order to reopen AMA Rural Bank of Mandaluyong for over two years.

In an 18-page ruling written by Associate Justice Mary Charlene Hernandez-Azura and concurred with by Associate Justices Victoria Isabel Paredes and Florencio Mamauag Jr., the CA 12th Division found that the officials acted in bad faith, considering that the delay of more than two years in complying with the court order to reopen the bank and return its assets seized five years ago has no good justification.

"This court is compelled to conclude that the delay is deliberate, given that the procedural complexities highlighted by Respondents do not align with the actual simplicity of the instructions of the Court," the CA decision stated.

With the verdict, the appellate court imposed a fine of P30,000 on 18 former and current BSP and PDIC officials.

Those found accountable are former finance secretary and BSP Monetary Board Member Carlos Dominguez III; former BSP governors Benjamin Diokno and Felipe Medalla; former Metrobank president and MBM Antonio Abacan; MBM V. Bruce Tolentino and PDIC officers Roberto Tan, Eduardo Pangan, Rogelio Guadalquiver, Maria Antonette Brillantes-Bolivar, Mylene

Fariñas-Pasamba, Mary Rosary Lagman, Reynaldo Tansioco, Juan De Zuñiga Jr., Aurora Ignacio, Pamela Angeli Solis-Ty, Nelson Portacio and Elaine Deticio.

The BSP stopped AMA Rural Bank's operations and placed it under PDIC receivership in November 2019.

The CA, however, nullified this decision in 2020 and instructed the BSP and the PDIC to restore the bank's operations and return assets worth P436 million.

Instead of complying, the BSP and PDIC officials imposed various measures which resulted in delays, including demanding a meticulous document turnover, seeking a temporary restraining order from the Supreme Court (which affirmed the CA decision favoring AMA Rural Bank) and filing criminal charges against the closed bank.– **Daphne Galvez**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/06/06/2360708/no-resignation-offer-2nd-mb-member-ghost-mess>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# **HIGHLIGHTS: THAIFEX Anuga Asia 2024 draws record crowd of 85,000, sets stage for Asia's F&B boom**

Philstar.com

June 5, 2024 | 5:05pm



Held last May 28 to 31, the 32nd edition of THAIFEX Anuga Asia 2024 spotlighted products, innovations, solutions and trends in regional and global food scenes that are shaping the F&B industry's future.

Photo Release, Philstar.com / Jap Tobias

NONTHABURI, Thailand — With a record-breaking 85,850 visitors from 131 countries and regions, THAIFEX Anuga Asia 2024 has cemented its status as Asia's premier international expo for the food and beverage industry, setting the stage for significant growth and development in the Asian F&B market.

Held last May 28 to 31 at the IMPACT Exhibition and Convention Center in Nonthaburi province, Thailand, the 32nd edition of THAIFEX Anuga Asia 2024 spotlighted products, innovations, solutions and trends in regional and global food scenes that are shaping the industry's future.



The high turnout at THAIFEX Anuga Asia 2024 highlights the increasing significance of the Asian F&B market on a global scale, with a notable jump from last year's 78,764 visitors and a remarkable 22% surge in international attendees, emphasizing its worldwide appeal and the heightened interest in the Asian F&B sector.

Themed “Beyond Food Experience,” here's what went down at the five-day event in Thailand:

## Koelnmesse emphasizes how cross-border collaborations can boost Asian economy



This year's edition showcased the products of 3,133 exhibitors from 52 countries

Photo Release

In a press conference, Koelnmesse Managing Director and Vice-President Asia Pacific Mathias Kuepper said THAIFEX can contribute to boosting Asian economy by providing a platform for collaborations. It can help address concerns that the food supply chain is facing today such as logistics and raw materials.

“It's really critical to set this in motion once a year, and then we have a year for people to go back and do their business and trade, and then return here next year and be inspired again,” he said.

Additionally, Lynn How, THAIFEX - Anuga Asia project director, highlighted Koelnmesse's various initiatives aimed at supporting farmers and producers in exporting essential raw materials from their countries.

"We organize workshops to provide insights into how other companies conduct their business in Asia or internationally. Furthermore, we run hosted buyer programs where we bring buyers to them," she said.

## **THAIFEX – Anuga Asia gets United States Department of Agriculture endorsement**



Robert Frank Godec, United States ambassador to Thailand and Gerald Böse, president & chief executive officer of Koelnmesse

Philstar.com/Jap Tobias

Koelnmesse announced that starting in 2025, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will officially endorse THAIFEX – Anuga Asia, showing a joint commitment to boosting global business opportunities and economic prosperity.

The announcement came from Robert Frank Godec, the United States Ambassador to Thailand, and Gerald Böse, President and CEO of Koelnmesse, at the opening of the United States Pavilion at THAIFEX – Anuga Asia 2024.

This partnership will open up new doors for the US food industry, helping both small and large companies explore and expand in Asian markets. By bringing in more top-notch US products to the trade show, everyone—from exhibitors to visitors—will get access to a wider range of innovative ideas and solutions.

## Filipino businesses showcase the taste of the Philippines



Visitors get a taste of the Philippines at the Philippine Pavilion.

[Philstar.com](http://Philstar.com)/Jap Tobias

For the ninth year, Philippine exporters showcased their products at this year's show, presenting Filipino offerings on the international stage through the "Taste of The Philippines" Philippine Pavilion.

Supported by the Philippine Food Processors & Exporters Organization (PhilFoodex Inc.), along with the Department of Agriculture, Department of Trade and Industry, and Philippine Exporters Confederation (PhilExport), 25 Philippine-based exporters joined forces to exhibit a diverse range of products, spanning from snacks and beverages to canned goods and condiments.

PhilFoodex President Ruben See shared with **Philstar.com** that the Philippines secured \$79 million in deals and sales from the expo last year, with banana chips, dried mangoes, canned seafood, coconut and coco-related products leading the way.

As regional competition grows fiercer and the Philippines offers similar products to its neighbors, See emphasized the rising significance of regular participation in the show for Philippine businesses and exporters, enabling them to attract buyers seeking similar products.

Notably, Filipino snack brand OSH Oh So Healthy emerged as a finalist in the event's TastelInnovation Awards for its line of "guilt-free" snacking treats, crafted from 100% real fruits and veggies without frying or oil.

According to the brand's profile, OSH is committed to supporting local agriculture by sourcing its products from local producers who advocate for a sustainable and diversified future for farmers.

## Consumers look for “multi-dimensional” food: Koelnmesse



From left: THAIFEX - Anuga Asia Project Director Lynn How, Koelnmesse Managing Director & VP Asia-Pacific Mathias Kuepper and Koelnmesse General Manager - Food & Food Technology Exhibitions Wendy Lim

Philstar.com/Jap Tobias

This year's food show unveiled several key trends driven by evolving consumer preferences. Convenience, plant-based options, and sustainability were among the most prominent.

Kuepper of Koelnmesse emphasized that when it comes to the Asian market, most trends still center around personal health. Consumers are increasingly interested in the origin, sourcing, packaging, and health impact of their food choices, including whether it's organic.

Moreover, Koelnmesse elaborated that today's consumers are looking beyond just health. They seek "multi-dimensional" food that meets all of their needs rather than just one.

For example, consumers might want food that is not only organic and healthy, but also that convenient and is produced sustainably.

"It's a challenge for manufacturers, but I believe it's essential for consumers to understand what they're putting in their bodies. That's a very clear trend," Kuepper stated.

## Spotlight on innovations in the F&B scene



Stellar food products and solutions were featured in the event.

[Philstar.com/Jap Tobias](https://www.philstar.com/jap-tobias)

Visitors to the THAIFEX – Anuga Asia 2024 fair were left amazed with numerous innovations that can shape the future of food.

For instance, Fundodai from Japan showcased a completely clear soy sauce that looks like water. This innovative product allows dishes to retain their vibrant colors while still delivering the classic soy sauce flavor.

Another example is a PCR testing kit made by Korean company Genelix, which can accurately check the presence or absence of animal species in a food by analyzing the genes of raw food material and food products.

For beverage lovers on the go, Vinca is making Sicilian Organic Wines travel-friendly by offering them in convenient cans. These cans replace traditional glass bottles and are lined with a special resin material to ensure the wine stays fresh for years.

Additionally, as part of the trends, this year's edition also saw the first-ever Alternative Protein flavor and taste contest.

CPF Global Food Solution Public Company Limited emerged victorious in the "Best Taste" category with their plant-based Thai Green Curry Gyoza. HA LI FA PTE LTD also claimed the "Best Texture" award for their innovative zero-cholesterol EPL Mushroom Ball and vegetable ball.

Malaysia's MORNING ARCH Sdn. Bhd took home the "Best Aroma and Innovation" double win for their Hello M'arch Quinoa Noodle Meal Kit made with high-protein wheat flour and organic quinoa, all free from MSG, artificial colors and preservatives.

THAIFEX Anuga Asia 2024 is organized by Thailand's Department of International Trade Promotion (DITP), in collaboration with The Thai Chamber of Commerce and Koelnmesse. The next edition is slated for May 27 to 31, 2025.

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***Editor's Note:*** *Philstar.com is an official media partner of THAIFEX Anuga Asia 2024. This story was produced from a visiting program in Thailand hosted by the organizers.*

<https://www.philstar.com/lifestyle/food-and-leisure/2024/06/05/2360344/highlights-thaifex-anuga-asia-2024-draws-record-crowd-85000-sets-stage-asias-fb-boom>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Rice inflation rate slowed down in May 2024 — PSA

[Gabriell Christel Galang](#) - Philstar.com

June 5, 2024 | 11:46am



Workers are unloading truck load of rice at the warehouse of the National Food Authority (NFA) in suburban Manila on October 7, 4014.

AFP / Jay Directo

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported a slow growth in rice inflation between April and May 2024, as well as a slight decrease in its retail prices.

In a press conference on Wednesday, national statistician Claire Mapa presented that there has been a substantial decrease in the overall rice inflation last month from 23.9% in April to 23% in May.

For comparison, the specific commodity had a 22.6% inflation rate in the beginning of the year, dubbed as the highest record since 2009 with a rate of 22.9%.

Despite rice's sustained inflationary trend, Mapa noted a decline in the average world price of rice, particularly in countries like Thailand and Vietnam, which in turn impacts retail prices in the Philippines.

“Continuously, bumababa ang average world price of rice halimbawa sa Thailand and Vietnam (Continuously, the average world price of rice have been declining in countries such as Thailand and Vietnam),” he said during the press briefing.

“In terms of world prices, it is going down so that’s why we’re seeing a also a slight decreases in the retail price of rice in the country,” the statistician added.

According to the Department of Agriculture (DA) price watch, the well-milled rice sold in public markets during the last day of May stood at P48 to P55 per kilo, while regular milled rice was priced around P45 to P52 per kilo.

During the start of the month, the DA observed prices ranging from P49 to P50 per kilo for regular milled rice, maintaining the same average throughout the month for well-milled rice.

Mapa is expecting possible changes in prices with the tariff reduction backed by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) the day before.

NEDA Secretary Arsenio Balisacan explained that lowering tariff rates from 35% to 15% would improve accessibility and affordability of commodities, particularly rice, and alleviate price pressures.

The statistician also noted that this could also pose a domino effect.

“Pag bumaba ang presyo ng bigas due to tariff, bababa ang price and inflation which would trigger a reduction in inflation moving forward. (If the rice prices go down due to tariff, price and inflation will go down and would trigger a reduction in inflation moving forward),” Balisacan said.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/06/05/2360552/rice-inflation-rate-slowed-down-may-2024-psa>



**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# DOH notes increase in rabies cases in 2024

By: [Zacarian Sarao](#) - Reporter / [@zacariansINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 07:29 PM June 05, 2024



This photo taken on July 15, 2019, shows a pet dog being injected with rabies vaccine during the local government's anti rabies campaign in Manila. September 28 is the World Rabies Day to spread awareness about rabies prevention. (File photo by NOEL CELIS / AFP)

MANILA, Philippines — Rabies cases in the country increased in 2024, after the Department of Health (DOH) recorded a total of 169 cases as of May, which is higher than the recorded infections in the same period last year.

According to the DOH in a statement, the total recorded human rabies cases from January to May 2024 is 13 percent higher than the 150 infections recorded in the same period last year.

“Among the cases reported, 156 (92 percent) had a history of dog bites, while 10 (6 percent) cases with a history of cat bites, and the remaining 3 cases reported a history of bites from other animals,” said the DOH.

As of May 11, Soccskskargen reported the highest cases at 21, followed by Calabarzon and Bicol with 18 cases each.

The infections resulted in a total of 160 deaths or a case fatality rate of 94.67 percent. The remaining nine cases, on the other hand, are still being verified by the department.

The DOH then reminded the public to vaccinate their pets against rabies at three months old, and every year after.

“Rabies is a viral infection that can be transmitted to humans through animal bites or even scratches, most commonly by dogs and cats,” said Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa.

“Death caused by rabies is inevitable once infection begins, that’s why we urge all pet owners to be responsible and get their pets vaccinated against rabies. This not only protects the animals but also significantly reduces the risk of transmission to humans,” he added.

Furthermore, the department also reiterated its call for an additional budget of at least P110 million for the Department of Agriculture to give way for the widespread animal vaccination program.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1948599/doh-notes-increase-in-rabies-cases-in-2024>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# DA sees rice price drop in July; farmers grumble

By: [Alden M. Monzon](#), [Jordeene B. Lagare](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:30 AM June 06, 2024



**RELIEF FOR CONSUMERS** Rice prices are expected to decline next month once imports at a reduced tariff start arriving in the country. —Grig C. Montegrando

MANILA, Philippines — Consumers can start benefiting from lower rice prices as early as next month following the government’s decision on Tuesday to slash the tariff on imports, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Wednesday.

“We will do everything within our power, especially those granted to the (DA) under the Price Act, to make sure the substantial cut in rice tariff will translate to a significant reduction in the retail price of the grain,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said in a statement.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said in a media briefing that consumers could start buying rice at reduced prices by July at the earliest or August at the latest.

“Probably in a month’s time we can expect the price reduction. If it will be implemented [immediately], we can expect changes in selling prices within July because it’s only June now,” he told reporters, noting that it normally takes about two to three weeks before rice imports, particularly from Vietnam, arrive in the country.

The Philippine Statistics Authority on Wednesday said it expected a decrease of P6 to P7 a kilo due to the tariff reduction, while National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) Secretary Arsenio Balisacan earlier noted that rice prices could go as low as P29 for poor households.

### **Farmers not happy**

However, the agricultural group Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) said the tariff cut was a “stab in the back” and spelled the likely “death blow to the country’s three million rice farmers and the rice industry as a whole.”

“That the tariff [cut to 15 percent from 35 percent] on rice [imports] will provide major and lasting relief to consumers is more a shot in the dark than a probable result,” FFF national manager Raul Montemayor said.

“Meanwhile, the impact of Neda’s decision on the morale and productive efforts of our rice farmers will be hugely discouraging,” he said in a Viber message, referring to the approval on Tuesday by the Neda board, which is chaired by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., of the new Comprehensive Tariff Program (CTP) from 2024 to 2028 that cut rice tariff and kept the prevailing low rates on other agricultural products.

Montemayor noted that the country’s reliance on rice imports has increased but retail prices have also risen.

“Our experience since trading in the rice industry was liberalized under the Rice Tariffication Law and tariffs were lowered also on non-Asean rice imports has not been salutary,” he said.

Montemayor added that industry stakeholders were “deprived” of their right “to genuine consultation and due process,” pointing out that the usual procedure in deliberating on any proposed tariff changes was not followed wherein the Tariff Commission conducts hearings on such proposals before submitting recommendations to the Neda board.

FFF has claimed that the tariff cut could result in a P33-billion loss to rice farmers and has voiced concerns about lower tax revenues from rice imports, the proceeds of which are legally earmarked for rice farmers’ productivity programs.

### **Subsidies, safeguards**

In a bid to alleviate the plight of farmers, a group of Filipino-Chinese businesses on Wednesday called on the government to provide subsidies.

Cecilio Pedro, president of the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc. (FFCCCII), said they expected local farmers to suffer from lower prices for their output once domestic supply is boosted by imports made cheaper by the tariff cut.

“So, the suggestion is for the government to subsidize. The government should buy the palay from the farmers at a little higher [price] as support for our farmers,” Pedro said.

For its part, the DA said it would seek to fill through the agency’s budget the potential shortfall in the funding for the Rice Competitive Enhancement Fund (RCEF).

“Our priority is to ensure that our rice farmers will continue to benefit from the Rice Fund created under the Rice Tariffication Law, and is confident it will be extended

until 2030 to improve the lives of millions of impoverished rice farmers,” Tiu Laurel said.

Some P10 billion from rice tariff collections are earmarked annually for the RCEF, which is used to provide high-yielding seeds, empower farmers through various training sessions, distribute farm machinery, and offer credit support.

Official data showed that as of last month, the fund had a balance of P16 billion.

The DA also said certain safeguards were in place to protect local farmers, including a stricter monitoring of the entry of illegally imported food products, especially rice.

### **Consumers to benefit**

Despite the impact on local farmers, the FFCCCII is supporting the tariff reduction, noting that this has the potential to address inflation that has burdened Filipino consumers.

Lawmakers also welcomed the tariff cut on rice imports, with Speaker Martin Romualdez noting that the tariff reduction was aligned with the administration’s commitment to make rice affordable for Filipinos.

“The import levy reduction and the direct sale of imported rice by the government through its Kadiwa centers should bring down the retail price of rice substantially, especially for consumers,” he said.

House Assistant Majority Leader and Zambales Rep. Jay Khonghun described the President’s decision as “a much-needed relief for our countrymen.”

“It is a clear indication of his administration’s focus on making essential commodities affordable and accessible to all Filipinos. This move will help stabilize rice prices and prevent any potential supply issues,” Khonghun said.

“This policy will help mitigate the effects of inflation and ensure that rice remains affordable for everyone,” added Davao Oriental Rep. Cheeno Miguel Almario.

House Deputy Minority Leader and Basilan Rep. Mujiv Hataman, meanwhile, was cautiously optimistic about Neda's predictions that the new policy could bring down rice prices from P50 to P29. —with a report from Krixia Subingsubing

[https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1948739/da-sees-rice-price-drop-in-july-farmers-grumble?utm\\_source=\(direct\)&utm\\_medium=gallery](https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1948739/da-sees-rice-price-drop-in-july-farmers-grumble?utm_source=(direct)&utm_medium=gallery)

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Negros sugarcane crop yields could fall due to Kanlaon ash

June 5, 2024 | 8:44 pm



PHILSTAR FILE PHOTO

THE Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) said that the ash ejected during the Kanlaon Volcano eruption could affect sugarcane yields on Negros Island due to increase in the acidity of the soil.

“With the current results after the ash fall, if this is not washed out by rains, we will need soil rejuvenation in affected sugar lands to bring it back to the ideal state, and that is a long term (project),” SRA Administrator Pablo Luis S. Azcona said in a statement on Wednesday.

Tests in the area around the volcano yielded pH readings of 4.14 for the cane leaves and 5.06 for the soil. A pH reading of below 7 indicates acidity.

The reading of 6.48 pH last week, before the Monday eruption, “should have been ideal,” he said.

Citing a report, the SRA said that the more immediate impact of volcanic ash is physical damage to the leaves, reducing their capacity for photosynthesis, as well as disruption of the chemical makeup of the soil, which can all lead to reduced yields.



“It is too early to tell whether the volcanic ash will cause so much damage on crops as it has been raining on the affected places and so hopefully the acidity will be diluted,” Mr. Azcona said.

The SRA added that long-term effects on crops could include nutrient imbalance in the soil, compaction, erosion and chemical leaching.

“About 23,000 hectares in four sugar mill districts may have been affected by the volcanic eruption,” it said.

The SRA’s research and development arm had recommended the use of cover crops, irrigation by washing off plants and soil, and applying lime or organic matter to neutralize soil pH if ash fall continues.

The SRA had sampled cane fields in La Castellana, Moises Padilla, Pontevedra and La Carlota City, all in Negros Occidental. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/05/599952/negros-sugarcane-crop-yields-could-fall-due-to-kanlaon-ash/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# **BFAR: More LGUs to be enlisted in illegal fishing monitoring scheme**

June 5, 2024 | 8:43 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/ MICHAEL VARCAS

THE Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) on Wednesday said it hopes to enroll more municipalities in the use of its Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing monitoring system.

“We have more than 900 coastal municipalities. Right now, *ang gumagamit ay nasa* 395 (current users are 395), so we are looking at expanding the number of local government units using (our system),” BFAR Chief Information Officer Nazario C. Briguera told reporters.

The IUU Fishing Index and Threat Assessment Tool (I-FIT) determines the vulnerability of communities to IUU fishing.

“The I-FIT data highlights a broader spectrum of the IUU fishing that is meant to serve as a benchmark in assessing the country’s exposure to IUU fishing, which should serve as the criterion for monitoring progress,” BFAR OIC Director Isidro M. Velayo, Jr. said.

Trade agreements, particularly with the European Union (EU), require the Philippines to observe international norms for labor rights, human rights, and illegal fishing, among others, making IUU monitoring a key component in keeping the Philippines eligible for trade privileges.

The BFAR also launched the Fisheries Sharing Hub on Investigation, Enforcement, Litigation, and Detection System (FishSHIELDS) which equips local enforcers digital tools to identify, prevent, and apprehend IUU fishing cases.

The monitoring system was developed in partnership with the US Agency for International Development.

Mr. Briguera said that the I-FIT platform will help diagnose the prevalence of IUU fishing in a particular area, while FishSHIELDS serves as the response system for illegal fishing reports.

“It does not need to be online; it can be offline. And then it will be received by fisheries personnel or law enforcers. From there, there will be coordination in the local government units (LGUs) for a real-time response,” he added. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/05/599951/bfar-more-lgus-to-be-enlisted-in-illegal-fishing-monitoring-scheme/>

**MANILA STANDARD**

## ***Tariff cut to drive down rice prices by P6-7/kg, says DA***



By Othel V. Campos, Darwin G. Amojelar & Maricel Cruz

June 6, 2024, 12:30 am

The Department of Agriculture (DA) anticipates a P6 to P7 per kilogram (kg) drop in rice prices once the government successfully enforces the proposed tariff cuts to 15 percent from 35 percent.

“We are confident that this substantial reduction in tariff will finally be felt by Filipino consumers,” said Agriculture assistant secretary Arnel de Mesa in a Zoom briefing Wednesday.

The DA anticipates a price decrease by August, coinciding with the expected arrival of imported rice from Vietnam within the next 3 to 4 weeks. With a landed cost of P46-P47 per kilo and additional expenses factored in, the retail price of imported rice is projected to reach around P52 per kilo.

De Mesa assured farmers that the P10 billion Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) allocated for them will remain unaffected, since the tariff-related support is mandated by law and is a fixed amount.

He also explained that while the National Food Authority's (NFA) participation in the local rice market is limited, its buying activities influence palay (un-milled rice) prices.

Currently, elevated palay prices are attributed to recent NFA purchases, which often set the benchmark for traders in the market.

Despite rice imports constituting roughly 20 percent of the Philippines' total rice inventory, the DA is continuously working to reduce import costs.

Local rice production remains a significant contributor, with milled rice output reaching 13.5 million metric tons (MT) from the 20 million MT palay harvest in 2023. This harvest marked a record high, exceeding the previous record of 19.96 million MT set in 2021.

While the final figures for the 2024 harvest are yet to be determined, some concerns have been raised. The DA acknowledges the potential for a slight decrease due to El Niño weather conditions that affected farms in the first quarter of the year.

However, estimates based on standing crops as of February 2024 suggest a possible increase in palay production for the January-March period compared to the same period in 2023.

On this note, Agriculture secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel met with rice stakeholders to find ways to reduce the cost of rice.

“President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. wants more affordable rice prices to ease the financial strain on consumers, particularly the poor, as well as relieve price pressures that have kept inflation elevated and interest rates high,” he said.

Global grain prices have been raised since India banned the export of non-basmati rice in July last year and worries over supply constraints due to El Nino.

The weaker peso has also lifted the price of imported rice. The domestic market has not been spared, and higher grain prices bolstered inflation above the central bank's target range, forcing the monetary authority to keep key interest rates high.

The government has started trial selling of rice at P29 a kilo in selected KADIWA centers.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) agrees with the DA's prediction that cost of rice would drop by P6 to P7 per kilo due to a recent reduction in the tariff rate for imported rice.

PSA chief and National Statistician Claire Dennis Mapa said the board of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) approval of a reduced rice tariff will lead to lower rice prices.

Mapa also said the drop in rice prices would have a large impact on inflation for rice and overall inflation.

Rice inflation stood at 23 percent in May, slightly lower than the 23.9 percent in April 2024.

Mapa said rice contributed 1.7 percentage points to the 3.9 percent inflation rate in May. In May 2023, inflation rate was higher at 6.1 percent.

The May inflation figure brought the national average inflation from January to May 2024 to 3.5 percent or within the government's target of 2 percent to 4 percent.

The NEDA Board earlier agreed to reduce the duty rate on rice to 15 percent for both in-quota and out-quota rates from 35 percent until 2028.

"This decision aims to lower the price of rice further and make it more affordable. Based on the latest inflation report of the PSA in the past three months, rice contributed about two percentage points (or over 50 percent) to the headline inflation," Balisacan said.

"Reducing rice tariffs is expected to bring down rice prices for consumers while supporting domestic production through tariff cover and increased budgetary support to improve agricultural productivity, especially as global rice prices remain elevated," he added.

Balisacan said the upward price pressures for rice are driven by the effects of the El Niño phenomenon that are felt worldwide, as well as increasing demand given our steadily growing population and economy.

Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez on Wednesday lauded the decision of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to cut the tariff for imported rice from 35 percent to just 15 percent.

"The import levy reduction and the direct sale of imported rice by the government through its Kadiwa centers should bring down the retail price of rice substantially, especially for consumers," Romualdez said.

He said the effort to reduce rice prices is consistent with the Marcos administration's goal of making the staple available and affordable.

The leader of the 308-strong House of Representatives said rice farmers should not worry about the assistance they receive from the government, which are funded from the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund set up under Republic Act 11203, or the Rice Tariffication Law.

He added that official data showed that as of last month, the fund had accumulated P16 billion from import tariff collections.

“This means that the government has enough funds to help farmers, while it is trying to bring down rice prices through the import tariff cut and direct Kadiwa sales,” he stressed.

The House leader pointed out that the House advocacy of returning the rice importation mandate of the NFA is also meant to make the staple reasonably priced.

However, the rice importation mandate bill remains pending in the Senate.

“We should find a long-term solution to the rice price issue,” he said.

As this developed, Deputy Minority Leader and Basilan Rep. Mujiv Hataman has welcomed a Palace decision to reduce tariff rates on rice as a means to tame inflation and arrest the continuing rise of the prices of basic commodities.

“For me, rice is supposed to be somewhat of a great equalizer. This is a Filipino staple. Both the rich and the poor should have rice on their tables. But in our time, poor Filipino families can no longer afford the price of rice and other food,” Hataman expressed.

“This is why we welcome the executive order being prepared to reduce the tariff rates on rice and other commodities, as this also aims to reduce the price of rice in the market,” he added.

<https://www.manilastandard.net/news/314455893/tariff-cut-to-drive-down-rice-prices-by-p6-7-kg-says-da.html>

## *Rice tariff reduction a troubling decision*

By The Editorial Board

June 6, 2024

ON Tuesday, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) announced that it had approved a range of tariff adjustments, most notably a sharp reduction in the tariff rate on imported rice from the current 35 percent to 15 percent. The move is intended, NEDA Director General and Economic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said, to curb inflation, about half of which is accounted for by inflation of consumer food prices, particularly rice. While controlling inflation is certainly a reasonable objective, the country's experience with the manipulation of rice tariffs suggests that this is a largely ineffective tool to achieve that and, in fact, is likely to have even more costly unintended consequences.

The drastic cut in the rice tariff, which was originally recommended by Finance Secretary Ralph Recto, is part of the Comprehensive Tariff Plan (CTP) 2024-2028. The changes in the plan appear to be a mixed bag of sensible and questionable choices. Among the other changes in the revision of tariffs, an exercise that the government conducts every five years, reduced tariffs on other food commodities such as corn, pork and mechanically deboned meat were extended up to 2028. Other reduced tariffs were also extended, covering various agricultural and industrial goods.

One sensible decision of the NEDA board was to merge tariff lines on some chemicals and chemical products, textiles, machinery, and transport equipment to simplify the tariff structure. On the other hand, another dubious decision, along with the questionable move to slash rice tariffs, was to further lower tariffs on imported coal, presumably to help control electricity rates. As the Philippines exports about 65 percent of its own coal production, adjusting the



tariff on coal imports certainly appears to be a tangential move with respect to the problem of elevated prices.

Likewise, addressing rice price inflation through a tariff reduction is almost certainly applying the wrong solution to the problem. NEDA has claimed that the lower tariff will "ensure access and affordability while balancing the interests of consumers and local producers," but past experience has shown this is not the result that can be expected. In a joint statement issued on Tuesday by a collective of 12 agricultural groups joined by Pangasinan 2nd District Rep. Mark Cojuangco, it was pointed out that previous reductions in tariffs have simply led exporters in countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, India and Pakistan to raise their prices. Not only does past wholesale price data seem to support their argument, it simply makes sense. From an exporter's point of view, a reduced tariff provides some margin to increase prices so that the net price level for the import customer remains the same.

The rice tariff reduction also appears questionable in light of data released by the Department of Agriculture (DA) on the same day the tariff decision was announced that indicates the production of palay (unmilled rice) for this year is robust, in spite of losses incurred due to the El Niño. The DA said that domestic production was still on track to hit 20.44 million metric tons this year, higher than the 20.06 million metric tons in 2023. That output, as well as support for farmers affected by the drought, is made possible in large part by the funding provided under the Rice Tariffication Law, which has now been severely undermined by the tariff reduction. The Department of Finance (DoF) has estimated the new tariff will cost the government about P10 billion in revenue, but it will almost certainly cost the agricultural sector several times that.

What's done is done, of course; even though the agricultural groups have called for the decision to slash the rice tariff to be retracted, the complex process of developing the CTP has already been completed. And in any event, the policymakers responsible for it in the DoF and NEDA should not be expected to react until some real-

world data is gathered to confirm they made a bad decision. When that happens, however, we hope they have the same enthusiasm for correcting their mistake that they did in making it in the first place, for the sake of Filipino farmers and consumers who will bear the consequences of it.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/06/opinion/editorial/rice-tariff-reduction-a-troubling-decision/1950100>

# *CLSU offers agri, food tech services to MSMEs*

By Jerry M. Hernandez  
June 6, 2024

MICRO, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Nueva Ecija and nearby areas can now avail of various services offered by the Central Luzon State University (CLSU) through its Agriculture and Food Technology Business Incubator (AFTBI) program.

The services include facilitating the transfer and commercialization of matured technologies developed by the university's researchers, as well as providing training and mentorship, business counseling, and product development and improvement.

CLSU-AFTBI Director Pablo Rafael Jr. said the program is aimed at assisting the MSMEs in growing and commercializing their products in the world markets.

"In the facility, our inwall incubatees are using several lines of equipment, such as meat processing lines, drying lines, juice lines, freezing lines and smoking lines. It also has storage facilities, a laboratory and a bakery," said Rafael.

In terms of training and mentorship, the program focuses on areas such as business plan development, food handling, sanitation, feasibility studies and business model canvas.

Rafael added that the program also offers "tailor-fit" training based on the specific needs of the participants as identified in the needs assessment.

"From product development to marketing, we provide training for that. The approach [of AFTBI] is holistic. So, we provide all the necessary training for our incubatees to ensure that their businesses will take off in the market; to ensure, to a certain extent, that their business operations will be successful," he said.

The program's services are also available to students and aspiring entrepreneurs who are interested in utilizing the technology available at the university for their business endeavors.

"To all those who want to start a business and improve their products, you are welcome here at CLSU-AFTBI. We are open to discussing the technologies and services you need," Rafael added.

CLSU-AFTBI is a program funded by the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development of the Department of Science and Technology.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/06/regions/clsu-offers-agri-food-tech-services-to-msmes/1950172>

# *Inflation slightly higher, still within target in May*

By Niña Myka Pauline Arceo  
June 6, 2024

INFLATION edged up in May as power, housing and utility costs grew at a faster pace, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported on Wednesday.

At 3.9 percent, the result was marginally higher than April's 3.8 percent. It was lower than the 4.0-percent median in a Manila Times poll of economists, but fell within the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) 3.7- percent to 4.5-percent estimate for the month.

Core inflation, which strips out volatile food and energy items, decelerated to 3.1 percent from 3.2 percent.

Inflation, which has now risen for four straight months, has defied expectations of a breach of the 2.0- to 4.0-percent target, although the BSP warned that the outlook remained tilted toward the upside due to potential increases in food, transport, power and fuel costs.

"Looking ahead, the Monetary Board will consider the latest inflation outturn in its upcoming monetary policy meeting on 27 June 2024," the central bank said in a statement.

"The BSP also continues to support the National Government's nonmonetary measures to address supply-side pressures on prices and sustain the disinflation process," it added.

Average inflation remained within target at 3.5 percent. While the central bank still expects a breach moving forward, it said that full-year inflation was expected to be within target for 2024 and 2025.

## **Rice inflation drops**

The PSA, in a statement, said May inflation was "primarily influenced by the higher year-on-year increase in the index of the housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels at 0.9 percent during the month from 0.4 percent in April 2024.

Transport costs also rose, by 3.5 percent from 2.6 percent.

Food and alcoholic beverages still accounted for over half — a 56.6-percent share or 2.2 percentage points — of overall inflation.

Food inflation, meanwhile, slowed to 6.1 percent in May from the previous month's 6.3 percent.

Rice inflation, which contributed to the uptick in inflation from the previous months, declined to 23.0 percent last month from 23.9 percent in April.

The drop in food inflation was also driven by a slower year-on-year increase for vegetables, tubers, plantains, cooking bananas and pulses of 2.7 percent from 4.3 percent and a drop in fish and seafood inflation to zero from 0.4 percent.

## **Govt to pursue reforms**

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan, in a separate statement, said the government was increasing its efforts to combat "persistent inflation drivers."

"The government will continue to implement lasting policy reforms to ensure we address the drivers of food and nonfood inflation sustainably. We want to maintain a macroeconomic environment conducive to investment and high-quality job creation," he added

Balisacan noted that the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board had reduced rice tariffs to 15 percent from 35 percent for both in-quota and out-quota imports until 2028.

Also approved on Monday was the extension to 2028 of reduced tariffs on corn, pork and mechanically deboned meat.

The NEDA Board approved the new Comprehensive Tariff Program for 2024-2028, a strategic move to ensure access and affordability to essential commodities while balancing the interests of consumers, local producers and the economy," Balisacan continued.

"On the part of the Executive, we will continue to find supply-side solutions to help manage the price increases of other commodities and keep inflation within the target range in the months to come."

### **Rate cut outlook**

HSBC Global Research economist Aris Dacanay, meanwhile, said inflation could still go beyond 4.0 percent but added that the government's move to lower rice import tariffs would help keep the rate under control.

"The base effects are pretty much unfavorable, [that's why] we do still believe that inflation will breach target," he told reporters on Wednesday.

"It will go beyond 4.0 percent," Dacanay added, forecasting a range of 4.0 to 4.5 percent until July.

If the tariff cuts take effect soon, however, the rate could even touch the lower end of the BSP target and give the BSP leeway to start cutting interest rates early.

"Cutting the tariff rate represents a total shift in policy, posing a large downside risk to our view that full-year inflation in 2025 will average 3.8 percent," Dacanay noted.

"That said, investors will need to monitor the implementation of the policy since its timely and successful implementation could vastly

change the inflation outlook, and thus, the policy rate outlook," he added.

"Cutting ahead of the Fed (US Federal Reserve), however, will still be tricky and would depend on how fast the disinflationary impact of the tariff adjustment would come through," Dacanay said.

The BSP has said that it could start easing in August, ahead of the US central bank that is expected to only do so in September.

Lower interest rates, however, could make investing in the Philippines less attractive and the BSP's less hawkish stance has led to the peso hitting 19-month lows.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/06/business/top-business/inflation-slightly-higher-still-within-target-in-may/1950162>



# *Rice price drop seen 'between P6-P7/kilo'*

By Janine Alexis Miguel

June 6, 2024

RETAIL prices of rice could go down by almost P7 a kilo in the next few months following the government's approval of lower import tariffs, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Wednesday.

"The potential price reduction will be between P6 [and] P7 per kilo in rice," Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said of the impact of a National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board decision to slash rice duties to 15 percent from 35 percent.

"[I]t's impossible not to feel that in imported goods," he told reporters, noting that rice imports account for about 20 percent of domestic stocks.

Amid fears that the loss of import revenues would lead to reduced funding for the Rice Competitive Enhancement Fund (RCEF), Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said any shortfall would be covered by the DA's budget.

"Our priority is to ensure that our rice farmers will continue to benefit from the rice fund created under the Rice Tariffication Law," Tiu Laurel said.

The RCEF has an annual allocation of P10 billion dedicated to farm mechanization, providing better seeds, funding technology improvements, farmer training and other financial support.

The agriculture chief also called for an increased budget for fertilizer subsidies and financial support for the National Food Authority to maintain a reasonable buying price for palay and ensure that rice farmers can still make a profit.

The average price of rice in Metro Manila markets was at P49 to P60 per kilo as of late last month.

On Tuesday, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said the government was looking to lower rice prices to P29 per kilo.

The P29 per kilo goal will be "at least for the poor, because we will complement this tariff reduction with the direct subsidies to the poor and vulnerable... but overall, with the tariff reduction from 35 to 15 percent, everybody will benefit from that..." he added.

The NEDA chief noted that high rice prices were behind a current rise in inflation and, over February to April, had contributed about 2 percentage points or over 50 percent to headline inflation.

Overall inflation has now risen for four straight months, having edged up to 3.9 percent in May from 3.8 percent in April. Rice inflation remained high last month but declined to 23.0 percent from 23.9 percent.

The rice tariff cut was part of a new comprehensive tariff program approved by the NEDA Board on Monday "to ensure access and affordability... while balancing the interests of consumers and local producers..."

The move was criticized by agricultural groups and on Wednesday, the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) said that the sector should have been consulted.

"NEDA has deprived industry stakeholders of their right to genuine consultation and due process," FFF National Manager Raul

Montemayor said, adding that the tariff cut was "more a shot in the dark" rather than a guarantee of lower prices.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/06/business/top-business/rice-price-drop-seen-between-p6-p7kilo/1950157>

# *BPI's BanKo offers loan program for farmers*

By Earl John Alfaro  
June 6, 2024

BANK of the Philippine Islands' (BPI) microfinance arm BanKo on Wednesday launched the Agri NegosyoKo Loan program, aimed at improving the livelihood of small-scale Filipino farmers, in collaboration with agri-tech firm Agrilever.

"The Philippines is an agricultural country, and to sustain and expand farming opportunities, we must support our farmers with programs that help them grow their businesses," BanKo President Rod Mabiase Jr. said.

The loan program offers farmers a comprehensive package, including customized loans, financial education, protection and streamlined application processes.

There are also incentives for responsible behavior that will help enhance the farmer's productivity, efficiency and economic well-being with the help of Agrilever.

Agrilever will provide its dedicated app, which offers digital agronomy services, market access, flexible financing, crop insurance, and weather systems to help guide farmers on optimal agricultural practices.

"Coupled with [Agrilever's] technological expertise, we will empower farmers and aggregators with opportunities for easier access to financing, technologies to help yield higher crops, and manage production with cost-efficiency," BanKo Chairman Jojo Ocampo said.

BanKo is offering a 2.3-percent monthly interest, payable at the end of the farmer's harvest season, to ease their financial burdens.

"[W]hat they are now able to get as loans here [in BanKo is] very reasonable, 2.3 percent per month," Mabiassen said.

BanKo currently serves about 10,000 farmers on an P800-million loan portfolio and targets reaching 15,000 in the first year of the program. According to Mabiassen, BanKo's total microfinance portfolio is close to P12 billion.

In 2023, BanKo disbursed P14.96 billion in business loans to over 200,000 borrowers and expanded its network with 26 new branch-lite units across the country.

Currently operating in 77 out of 82 provinces and 125 cities, BanKo serves as the sole representative of BPI in 152 areas.

Shares of BanKo parent BPI closed unchanged at P120 each on Wednesday.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/06/business/corporate-news/bpis-banko-offers-loan-program-for-farmers/1950148>

# ***BFAR bans fishing in Davao Gulf***

By Philippine News Agency

June 6, 2024

TO preserve the marine resources of the Davao Gulf, the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources 11 (DA-11) has started enforcing the closed fishing season for pelagic fishes in the Davao Gulf from June 1 to August 31.

In a statement, DA-11 Director Macario Gonzaga said commercial fishing vessels that use bag nets, ring nets and small mesh fishing nets would not be allowed to fish in the gulf.

Likewise, municipal fishing operators are prohibited, and the ban also applies to commercial fishing with vessels from 3.1 gross tons (GT) to more than 150 GT.

The 11th closed season is formally contained in the DA and the Department of the Interior and Local Government Joint Administrative Order 2 titled "Establishing Closed Season for the Conservation of Small Pelagic Fishes in Davao Gulf."

Gonzaga said the annual closure allows fish stocks to replenish and facilitate the reproduction and growth of marine resources, emphasizing that the closed fishing season policy is an initiative to also conserve and protect the fishery resources in the country.

"The 11 years of implementation indicated significant results not only for the protection of our marine resources but also for the benefit of our small-scale fisherfolk," he said.

Davao Gulf, located in the Southeastern part of Mindanao, is a diverse marine ecosystem spanning 520,000 hectares.

Based on the DA-11's scientific studies, Davao Gulf is a key biodiversity area in the Philippines, having been identified as one of the 34 biodiversity hot spots in the world. It serves as a feeding ground for 11 species of cetaceans, such as sperm whales, killer whales and bottle-nose dolphins.

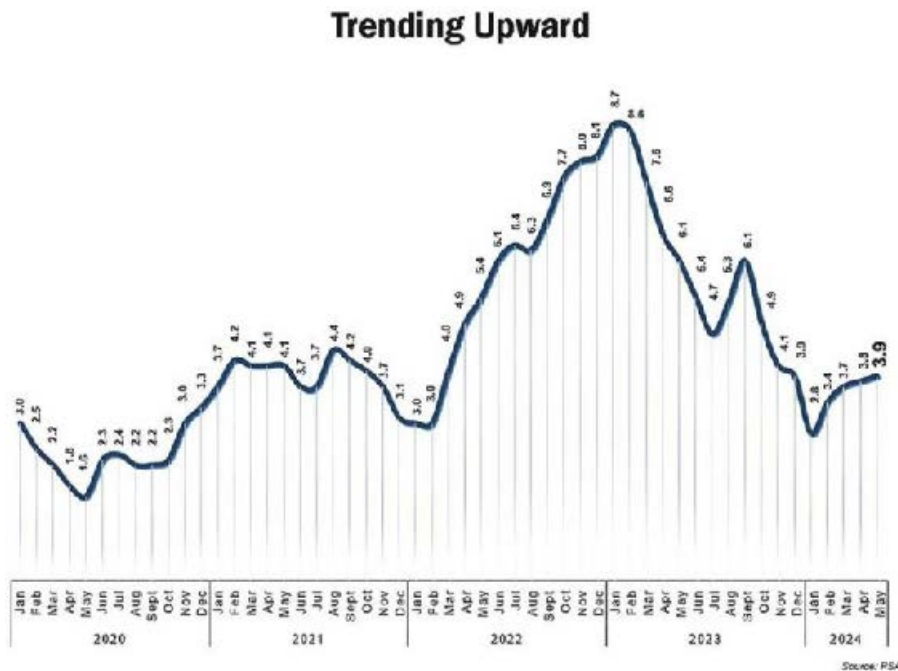
The Gulf is also the nursing ground for five endangered turtle species, including hawksbill, leatherback and olive ridley. It also serves as the final catchment for runoffs, erosion and effluents from several regional watersheds.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/06/business/agribusiness/bfar-bans-fishing-in-davao-gulf/1950087>

# FASTEST IN 4 MOS: Inflation hits 3.9% in May

By Jimmy Calapati

June 6, 2024



Prices of key consumer products continue to rise in May as inflation increased to 3.9 percent from 3.8 percent the previous month, data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed.

May's reading is the fastest in four months and brings the national average inflation from January to May to 3.5 percent.

Core inflation, which excludes selected food and energy items, slowed down to 3.1 percent in May from 3.2 percent in the previous month.

Claire Dennis Mapa, national statistician and civil registrar general, said the uptrend in the overall inflation "was primarily influenced by the higher year-on-year increase in the index of the housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels."

"The faster annual growth of the transport index also contributed to the uptrend of the overall inflation. In contrast, food and non-alcoholic beverages and alcoholic beverages and tobacco indexes registered lower inflation rates during the month," Mapa said.



Eli Remolona, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) governor, said the May inflation of 3.9 percent is within the BSP's forecast range of 3.7 to 4.5 percent.

"The inflation outturn is consistent with the BSP expectations that inflation could temporarily accelerate above the target range over the near term due to adverse weather conditions on domestic agricultural output and positive base effects," Remolona said.

He, however, stressed the "BSP expects average inflation to return to the target range for full year 2024 and 2025."

"The risks to the inflation outlook continue to lean toward the upside. Possible further price pressures are linked mainly to higher transport charges, elevated food prices, higher electricity rates, and increase in global oil prices," Remolona said.

"Looking ahead, the Monetary Board will consider the latest inflation outturn in its upcoming monetary policy meeting on June 27. The BSP also continues to support the National Government's non-monetary measures to address supply-side pressures on prices and sustain the disinflation process," the BSP chief said.

#### Top contributors

Mapa said the indexes of clothing and footwear; health; recreation, sport and culture; restaurants and accommodation services; and personal care, and miscellaneous goods and services also registered lower increases, adding that the top three commodity groups contributing to the May overall inflation were food and non-alcoholic beverages; restaurants and accommodation services and transport.

"Food inflation at the national level slowed down to 6.1 percent in May 2024 from 6.3 percent in April. In May 2023, food inflation was higher at 7.5 percent," Mapa said.

He said the deceleration of food inflation in May was mainly brought about by the slower year-on-year increase in vegetables, tubers, plantains, cooking bananas and pulses index.

This was followed by rice with a slower annual increase of 23 percent during the month from 23.9 percent in April. Fish and other seafood also contributed to the downtrend with zero percent inflation rate in May.

However, higher annual growth rates during the month were observed in the indices of meat and other parts of slaughtered land animals at 1.6 percent in May from 1 percent in the previous month.

"Food inflation shared 55 percent or 2.1 percentage points to the overall inflation in May 2024. The top three food groups in terms of contribution to the food inflation during the month were cereals and cereal products; meat and other parts of slaughtered land animals; ready-made food and other food products," Mapa said.

## Efforts stepped up

National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said the national government is “continuously stepping up efforts against persistent inflation drivers.”

“The government will continue to implement lasting policy reforms to ensure we address the drivers of food and non-food inflation sustainably. We want to maintain a macroeconomic environment conducive to investment and high-quality job creation — an environment that would allow us to hit the Marcos Administration’s development targets by 2028,” Balisacan said.

“To help manage food inflation, promote policy stability and investment planning, and enhance food security, the NEDA Board has agreed to reduce the rice duty rate to 15 percent from 35 percent for both in-quota and out-quota imports until 2028,” he added.

Balisacan said the NEDA Board also approved the extension until 2028 of the reduced tariff rates on corn, pork and mechanically deboned meat under Executive Order No. 50, s. 2023.

“The NEDA Board approved the new Comprehensive Tariff Program for 2024-2028, a strategic move to ensure access and affordability to essential commodities while balancing the interests of consumers, local producers, and the economy. At the same time, we recognize the need to help our farmers by modernizing our agricultural sector,” he said.

Balisacan further emphasized that one of the Marcos administration’s priorities is to raise productivity so that the country can sustainably reduce food prices and shield consumers and the economy from the price volatility of food commodities in the global market.

“On the part of the Executive, we will continue to find supply-side solutions to help manage the price increases of other commodities and keep inflation within the target range in the months to come,” he said.

Also, to mitigate the impact of elevated food prices on the poor and vulnerable sector, the Department of Social Welfare and Development and relevant agencies are set to implement the Food Stamp Program nationwide in July.

This program expects to cover one million households by 2027 from the initial 300,000 families in 10 regions.

## In the regions

Inflation in the National Capital Region (NCR) accelerated to 3.1 percent in May from 2.8 percent in the previous month. The main driver to the increase of inflation rate in the area was the higher annual increment in the heavily-weighted food and non-alcoholic

beverages and the faster annual growth rate of housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels index.

Inflation in areas outside NCR was observed at 4.1 percent in May, the same annual rate recorded in April. Higher annual increases were observed in the indices of housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels; transport; and information and communication.

PSA said five regions in areas outside NCR exhibited higher inflation rates in May, with Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao remaining as the region with the highest inflation rate for the fourth consecutive month at 5.9 percent, while Region I (Ilocos Region) still registered the lowest inflation for the fifth consecutive month at 2.3 percent.

[https://malaya.com.ph/news\\_business/fastest-in-4-mos-inflation-hits-3-9-in-may/](https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/fastest-in-4-mos-inflation-hits-3-9-in-may/)

## *‘Rice tariff cut could boost growth with more spending’*

Cai U. Ordinario June 6, 2024

THE reduction of rice tariffs could have a net positive effect on the country’s economic growth by boosting household consumption, according to an economist from HSBC.

In a briefing on Wednesday, HSBC Asean economist Aris Dacanay told reporters that the maximum impact of the rice tariffs, assuming a zero savings rate, is a 1.4 percentage point (ppt) addition to GDP growth.

Given that consumption accounts for 70 percent of GDP and households spend about 10 percent of their budgets on rice, reducing prices by 20 percent means a 2-percent savings on household budgets, which could lead to a 1.4 ppt increase in GDP growth, Dacanay explained.

“If all the unleashed household savings or freed up household savings goes to buy goods that are domestically produced and all of them are spent, nothing is saved, then the potential, the highest, the maximum [additional] growth it could deliver is 1.4 ppts,” Dacanay stressed.

Dacanay considers the reduction of rice tariffs to 15 percent from the 35 percent rate “a large downside risk” that has the potential to boost growth and hasten the slowdown in inflation.

However, he said, given that the news of the shift in policy came only on Tuesday, HSBC has not yet included it in its inflation and growth estimates for this year.

Currently, Dacanay still sees inflation increasing above 4 percent. The impact of the lower rice tariffs on inflation will only happen once the tariffs are already in effect.

Once in effect, lower rice tariffs will not only have an impact on the country’s inflation rate but also the Monetary Board’s decision to cut key policy rates.

Dacanay said if inflation reaches the lower-bound of the 2 to 4 percent target range, this will allow the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) to cut key policy rates ahead of the US Federal Reserve.

“A big reduction in inflation would raise the BSP’s real policy rate and widen its spread from the Fed’s. If so, this would be an opportunity for the BSP to, perhaps, cut faster than the Fed when both central banks are already within their easing cycles,” Dacanay said.

“Cutting ahead of the Fed, however, will still be tricky and would depend on how fast the disinflationary impact of the tariff adjustment would come through,” he added.

Dacanay said that for now, the BSP may cut policy rates by 25 basis points (bps) this year and deliver another 125-bps cut next year in increments of 25 bps or 50 bps, depending on the schedule of the Monetary Policy Board meetings in 2025.

“Amidst uncertainty over the Fed’s trajectory, risks are tilted towards the BSP shifting to a more hawkish stance to support the Peso. The door to cut ahead would be larger if the current account deficit becomes narrower if the real policy rate spread with the Fed widens further, or if the Fed sends dovish signals. But none of these are our baseline. We continue to expect the BSP to cut after the Fed in the fourth quarter of 2024,” he said.

Meanwhile, the country’s economic growth is expected to exceed 6 percent in the second quarter on the back of base effects and lower inflation.

It can be noted that GDP growth in the second quarter of last year only reached 4.3 percent, the lowest since the first quarter of 2021, when the economy contracted by 3.8 percent.

Dacanay added that HSBC has not yet revised its full-year GDP growth forecasts for the Philippines since it is waiting for the implementation of the rice tariff cuts.

HSBC’s growth estimate for 2024 is an average of 5.8 percent, and for 2025, a growth of 6.1 percent.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/06/rice-tariff-cut-could-boost-growth-with-more-spending/>

## *National government focusing on food, nonfood inflation—DOF*

Reine Juvierre Alberto

June 6, 2024

FINANCE Secretary Ralph G. Recto said on Wednesday that the national government is addressing food and non-food inflation through mitigation measures to safeguard the public's purchasing power.

This, after the inflation rate increased by 3.9 percent in May 2024, faster than the 3.8 percent in April but slower than 6.1 percent in May a year ago. The slight uptick in inflation was driven by the increased price of housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels and transport.

“We are vigilantly tracking persistent inflation drivers and employing a whole-of-government approach in crafting data-driven policy measures to effectively counter their effects in a sustainable manner. Our top priority is to ensure that the majority of Filipinos, especially the poor and vulnerable sector, benefit from these interventions,” Recto said.

With the slow growth in rice inflation in May at 23.9 percent, the Department of Finance (DOF) said high rice prices remain a key concern.

To combat this, the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) Board approved on Monday, June 3, the tariff reduction of imported rice from 35 percent to 15 percent for both quota and out-quota rates until 2028 to temper rice inflation.

“In May, inflation for the bottom 30 percent of households was higher at 5.3 percent, and rice inflation made up more than 80 percent of this. The current Neda Board agreement aims to alleviate the plight of all Filipino consumers, especially the most vulnerable,” Recto said.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) estimates a P6.00 to P7.00 reduction in rice prices per kilo after the slashing of tariff rates.

The reduced tariff rates by at least 15 percent on corn, pork and mechanically deboned meat under Executive Order No. 50, s. 2023, until 2028 was also maintained by the Neda Board.

Furthermore, trucks transporting agricultural goods are exempted from toll rate hikes starting June 1, 2024, to prevent the second-round effects of toll rate increases on food inflation.

The Department of Agriculture (DA), meanwhile, is also conducting ongoing consultations with operating units and regional offices on the rollout of the plan, the DOF said.

To further protect consumers from elevated electricity prices due to Meralco's proposed cost recovery, the DOF said the Inter-Agency Committee on Inflation and Market Outlook (IAC-IMO) has proposed to the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) a staggered implementation of the cost recovery scheme over at least 12 months to mitigate its inflationary impact.

“Rest assured, the government is continuously formulating sustainable solutions that will manage the price increases of other commodities and keep inflation within our target range. The solutions on the food security front are guaranteed to work in tandem with our long-term goal of modernizing our agriculture sector,” Recto said.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/06/ng-focusing-on-food-nonfood-inflation-dof/>

## *Government sees lower rice retail price, but FFF outlook dim*

Ada Pelonia

June 5, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) hopes that the reduction of rice tariff to 15 percent would drive down retail prices of the country's staple, but a large farmers group called it a "death blow" to the country's rice farmers.

"We will do everything within our power, especially those granted to the DA under the Price Act, to make sure the substantial cut in rice tariff will translate to a significant reduction in retail price of the grain," Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said in a statement on Wednesday.

Citing the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the DA said the PSA estimates a potential price reduction between P6 and P7 per kilo of rice, the high price of which has kept inflation elevated.

It added that the PSA sees rice accounting for 1.7 percentage points in the May headline inflation of 3.9 percent, while the staple would contribute 3.7 percentage points to the 5.3 percent inflation for the bottom 30 percent income household.

The agriculture chief said the DA plans to fill through the agency's budget the potential shortfall in the funding for the Rice Competitive Enhancement Fund (RCEF) which allocates P10 billion for farm mechanization, provision better seeds, funding for technology enhancement and farmer training, and other financial support.

"Our priority is to ensure that our rice farmers will continue to benefit from the Rice Fund created under the Rice Tariffication Law [RTL], and is confident will be extended until 2030 to improve the lives of millions of impoverished rice farmers," Laurel said.

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said in a press briefing in Malacañang on Tuesday that the government would provide other services to



farmers, who would be affected by the lower RCEF, to bolster their productivity. (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/05/phl-cuts-rice-tariffs-to-temper-inflation/>)

Meanwhile, Laurel said the department would also seek Congress' support for a bigger budget for fertilizer subsidy and financial backing for the National Food Authority [NFA] to maintain a reasonable buying price for palay to ensure that "rice farmers make a profit from their hard work."

The NFA earlier noted that it would need over P16 billion next year to fund the procurement of palay from local farms and build additional storage and drying facilities to improve its buffer stocking capacity.

Laurel said the NFA and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) would also be encouraged to continue with their contract growing projects to create a good market for rice farmers willing to join the program.

FFF: Tariff cuts a 'death blow'

THE government's optimism is in contrast to the outlook of the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF), which said the reduction in rice tariffs is a "death blow" to the country's rice farmers.

"The Neda board's decision to reduce rice tariffs from 35 to 15 percent is a stab in the back of, and very likely the death blow against, the country's 3 million rice farmers and the rice industry as a whole," the FFF said in a statement.

According to Balisacan, the government's move aims to lower the price of rice further and make it more affordable for consumers.

The government expects the tariff reduction to stabilize rice prices in the next four years and tone down inflation.

For the farmers group, however, the agency's decision "deprived" industry stakeholders of their right to genuine consultation and due process.

"Normally, proposed tariff changes undergo hearings conducted by the Tariff Commission. Recommendations are then given to the Neda board. This procedure was not followed before the lowering of the rice tariff," the FFF said.

The group said the Executive Branch assured rice farmers that rice and other sensitive agricultural commodities would not suffer any diminution in tariff protection for the duration of the agreement during the 2023 Senate hearings on the ratification of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) trade treaty.

“That honorable commitment has been rendered worthless by the Neda Board,” it added. The FFF said their experience since trading in the rice industry was liberalized under the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) and the reduction of tariffs on non-ASEAN rice imports “has not been salutary.”

“Our dependence on imports from the volatile world market has grown from 10 percent of total domestic consumption to around 25 percent. Rice retail prices have risen,” the group said.

“That the 15 percent tariff on rice will provide major and lasting relief to consumers is more a shot in the dark than a probable result. Meanwhile, the impact of Neda’s decision on the morale and productive efforts of our rice farmers will be hugely discouraging.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/05/government-sees-lower-rice-retail-price-but-fff-outlook-dim/>

# *DA agency to assist FDA in testing veterinary vaccines*

Ada Pelonia

June 6, 2024

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will allow the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) to evaluate animal vaccines and biologics that aim to stop the spread of viral diseases that threatened the local poultry and hog sectors.

In a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Health (DOH), the FDA is mandated to issue a License to Operate (LTO) to manufacturers, traders and distributors, and retailers of veterinary drugs and products, including vaccines and biologics.

The FDA should also issue an LTO to BAI for manufacturing or importation and the issuance of certificate of no objection for BAI's importation of vaccines and biologics for its evaluation and research.

Among the animal diseases that hound the livestock and poultry industry are highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and African swine fever (ASF), both of which are contagious viral diseases.

“This MOA will significantly strengthen our fight against transboundary animal diseases such as African swine fever and highly pathogenic avian influenza.

By enhancing our regulatory framework and fostering greater cooperation among key agencies, we can better safeguard the animal industry, secure the livelihoods of our farmers, and mitigate the impact on our economy,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said in a statement.

“At the DA, we are fully committed to the agreement as a means to ensure the safety and efficacy of veterinary drugs and products, not only for the well-being of our animals but also for the protection of public health.”

The BAI is expected to conduct evaluations to determine the safety and efficacy of both local and imported vaccines and biologics, and endorse private applications to the FDA for the issuance of certificate of product registration to local and imported veterinary products and provide the FDA with evaluation reports.

“This collaboration between the two agencies is testament to the renewed commitment of the government to strengthen its presence in securing the public welfare,” FDA Director General Samuel Zacate said in his message.

“We pledge to provide the necessary resources, expertise, and support to BAI as it undertakes its responsibilities under this agreement. We pledge to uphold the highest standards of quality and safety in the veterinary sector.”

The latest BAI monitoring released on May 28 revealed that ASF is present in 9 provinces, with 16 municipalities and 30 barangays affected by the disease.

Data from the attached agency of the DA also indicated that bird flu continues to affect 8 provinces and 127 barangays in the country.

The DA said the ASF vaccine, which entered the third phase of trials, may be launched within the year.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/06/da-agency-to-assist-fda-in-testing-veterinary-vaccines/>

# *‘Ginger supply tightening on rising demand from food processors’*

Ada Pelonia June 6, 2024

The increasing demand of food and beverage manufacturers for ginger, a popular ingredient used in making Filipino dishes, is putting pressure on the price of the crop, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Agriculture Undersecretary Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero issued the statement after the DA’s latest price watch report as of June 3 showed that the price of ginger in the National Capital Region jumped to as high as P280 per kilogram.

“We must understand *na ang luya hindi lang natin ginagamit pangluto* [ginger is not solely used in cooking]. This is also being used now for processing,” Caballero told reporters on Tuesday.

“*Nag-aagawan ngayon ng supply* as to for household or for processing [Households and processors are now competing for the available supply].”

Caballero noted that manufacturers add ginger to beverages like tea, which is regarded as a remedy for coughs and colds.

“Aside from its traditional use, this product is also being positioned as a specialty product to enter the markets that would support organic, natural, homeopathy remedies,” she said in mix of Filipino and English.

“If we have to make sure that there’s stability in prices, we must be able to produce in two market streams: one for household and one for processing.”

Caballero said the DA plans to beef up the supply of ginger by sourcing it from various provinces.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/06/ginger-supply-tightening-on-rising-demand-from-food-processors/>

# *Improving dairy industry is key to fighting undernutrition—experts*

Rizal Raoul Reyes

June 6, 2024

Undernutrition remains a serious problem among Filipino children aged five to 10, with approximately 2.7 million children being too short for their age, potentially affecting their cognitive and physical development.

In a recent forum, Professor Liezel Atienza, Director of the Institute of Human Nutrition and Food at the University of the Philippines Los Baños, explained that milk and dairy products help diversify the diet and can benefit both nutritionally vulnerable people and healthy people when consumed in appropriate amounts.

“Milk is a nutrient-dense beverage. One glass of milk provides the calcium, protein, potassium, and vitamins equivalent to several other foods. Alternatives to dairy milk are still not as nutritious, especially for certain dietary needs,” said Atienza during the celebration of World Milk Day held in Makati City on June 1, 2024.

Enhance cognitive abilities

Magdalene Carriaga, School-based Feeding Program Focal Person of Department of Education, said milk has been scientifically proven to enhance students’ cognitive abilities and academic performance.

In the forum, a whole-of-society and a science-centric approach were emphasized to improve both the development of the dairy industry and the consumption of milk by Filipinos.

National Dairy Authority OIC Administrator Gavino Alfredo Benitez said the Philippines faces an astronomical challenge to improve its milk production.

“As of 2023, the Philippines produced approximately 18,000 metric tons of milk, accounting for about 0.8 percent of the country’s total milk consumption of 1.937 million metric tons. Increasing local milk production is seen as a strategy to promote food security, help solve malnutrition and increase the income of farmers in the dairy sector,” Benitez shared.

### Skilled dairy personnel

Benitez also pointed out the dearth of skilled dairy personnel in the country is also a major reason why the local dairy industry cannot move up. “When we went to New Zealand, we found out that 60 percent of their dairy farms are managed by Filipinos,” he recalled.

The challenges facing the dairy industry are poor feed and management practices, high production costs, lack of dairy infrastructure, water scarcity, poor mechanization, low reproductive efficiency and high wastage/high perishability of milk.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Benjamin Albarece said improving the genetics of the cows is important to boost the production of milk in the country. “We’re still producing one percent of the local milk production,” he said.

Scientists at the Philippine Genome Center believe in improving the gene pool of the local cattle livestock towards improvement in production.

To address the low productivity of dairy animals in the Philippines, the PGC said University of the Philippines Los Baños partnered with the Department of Agriculture Region 7 and the local government of Siquijor province, with support from USAID—STRIDE, to develop a local dairy breed using the three-way breeding strategy with the Siquijor native cattle as foundation stock.

### Partnerships

Albarece said partnerships with the various stakeholders sharing the same objective would help in uplifting the dairy industry. “Through meaningful collaboration with various sectors, we see a clear path towards accelerating the development of the Philippine dairy industry,” said Albarece.

Hosted by Alaska Milk Corporation (AMC) in celebration of World Milk Day, the forum, which centered on the theme “Celebrating the Goodness of Dairy,” discussed the power of milk and the goodness of dairy.

Star Estacio, Marketing Director of AMC, said the private sector, particularly milk brands, have a role to play in promoting milk consumption as part of a balanced and healthy diet.

“As milk brands, we play a pivotal role in advocating for milk consumption as part of a balanced and healthy diet,” said Estacio.

“By educating consumers about the comprehensive nutritional benefits of milk and ensuring access to high-quality yet affordable dairy products, we can contribute significantly to fostering healthier communities. Our commitment extends beyond merely providing products; it’s about making a meaningful impact and enhancing the overall well-being of families,” she added.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/06/improving-dairy-industry-is-key-to-fighting-undernutrition-experts/>



**ABANTE TONITE**

## *Luya sumirit presyo sa P300 per kilo*

June 5, 2024

Gumagawa ang Department of Agriculture (DA) ng mga hakbang upang matugunan ang mahigpit na suplay ng luya na nagresulta sa pagtaas ng presyo nito.

Sa pinakahuling monitoring sa presyo ng luya, ayon sa DA, umabot na sa P280 kada kilo ang presyo nito sa ilang palengke sa Metro Manila. Pero umabot hanggang P300 kada kilo ang presyo ng luya noong nakaraang dalawang linggo.

Sinabi ni DA Undersecretary Ching Caballero nitong Miyerkoles, Hunyo 5, na para matugunan ang mahigpit na suplay ng luya, tinitingnan na ngayon ng kagawaran ang iba pang lugar malapit sa Metro Manila na maaaring may available supply ng naturang produktong agrikultura.

“We are monitoring now kung saan mga area na meron pang supply na available so we can bring in through the Kadiwa system,” ani Caballero.

“Ang ginagawa namin ngayon ay i-schedule ang production sa mga lugar na hindi pa nata-tap noon para gawin ang production for commercial use,” dagdag pa ni Caballero bilang tugon aniya sa mga ganitong sitwasyon. (Riz Dominguez)

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/06/05/luya-sumirit-presyo-sa-p300-per-kilo/>

# ***P7 tapyas sa kada kilo ng bigas posible – PSA***

[Angie dela Cruz](#)

June 6, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Tinaya ng Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) na magkakaroon ng mas mababang presyo ng bigas sa merkado sa pagtapyas ng taripa sa imported na bigas.

Ito ang sinabi ni PSA chief Dennis Claire Mapa kaugnay nang pagbibigay ng go signal ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. para bawasan ang taripa ng imported na bigas ng hanggang 15% mula sa kasalukuyang ipinapataw na 35%.

Ayon kay Mapa, sa kanilang inisyal na pagtaya, nasa P6 hanggang P7 kada kilo ng bigas ang maaaring maging bawas na tiyak mararamdaman ng mga mamimili.

Anya, magresulta rin ito sa mas mababang rice inflation na siya naman pangunahing nakakaambag sa pangkalahatang inflation sa bansa.

Gayunman, sinabi ni Mapa na kailangan pa ring bantayan ang ilang factors gaya ng mataas na palitan ng piso sa dolyar na maaaring makaapekto sa presyo ng bigas.

Sa monitoring naman ng PSA, patuloy ang mabagal na pagbaba ng average na presyo ng bigas sa mga pamilihan at maging sa world market anya ay bumababa rin ang presyuhan.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2024/06/06/2360636/p7-tapyas-sa-kada-kilo-ng-bigas-posible-psa>

**REMATE:**

## **Inflation rate umarangkada sa 3.9% noong Mayo – PSA**

June 5, 2024 13:52



MANILA, Philippines- Patuloy ang pagsirit ng presyo ng “consumer goods at services” sa Pilipinas para sa ika-apat na sunod na buwan noong Mayo.

Ito’y sa gitna ng mabilis na pagtaas ng ‘utility at transportation costs’ sa nasabing panahon.

Ayon kay National Statistician at Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) chief Claire Dennis Mapa, ang inflation o ang pagtaas ng presyo ng mga kalakal at serbisyo, tumaas sa 3.9% noong Mayo mula sa 3.8% rate noong Abril.

to ang “fastest inflation reading” ngayong taon at pinakamabilis sa loob na anim na buwan nang pumalo ang inflation rate sa 4.1% noong Nobyembre 2023.

“May’s print is slower compared to the 6.1% rate recorded in May 2023. Last month’s inflation print brought the year-to-date inflation rate to 3.5%, still within the government’s target band of 2% to 4%. It also fell within the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas’ (BSP) projection range of 3.7% to 4.5%,” ayon sa ulat.

Samantala, inaasahan naman ng BSP ang average inflation na makababalik sa target range para sa buong taon ng 2024 at 2025.

“The risks to the inflation outlook continue to lean toward the upside. Possible further price pressures are linked mainly to higher transport charges, elevated food prices, higher electricity rates, and increase in global oil prices,” ayon sa BSP.

“Ang pangunahing dahilan ng mas mataas na antas ng inflation nitong Mayo 2024 kaysa noong Abril 2024 ay ang mas mabilis na pagtaas ng presyo ng Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels sa antas na 0.9%. Ito ay may 56.8% share sa pagtaas ng pangkalahatang inflation sa bansa,” wika ni Mapa.

Sinasabing sa partikular, nakita ang pagtaas ng presyo sa liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) sa 9.% mula 8.3% (month-on-month) habang nakita naman ang pagbaba ng presyo sa elektrisidad sa -8.5% mula sa -11% noong Abril.

Ang pangalawang commodity group na nakapag-ambag sa mabilis na May inflation print ay ang transportasyon na may 3.5% rate mula 2.6% (month-on-month), at share na 43.2% sa overall inflation acceleration sa panahon ng nasabing buwan.

“Ang nag-ambag ng malaki sa pagtaas ng inflation ng Transport ay ang mas mabilis na pagtaas ng presyo ng mga gasolina, na may 5.2% inflation; at diesel, na may 7.2% inflation,” paglalahad ni Mapa.

Nakadagdag pa sa “pressure” ng Transport index ang pagtaas sa passenger transport sa karagatan na 1.5% mula -23.3%.

Hinggil naman sa Food inflation, nasubaybayan ang galaw ng food items sa “basket” karamiwang binibili ng pamilya, bumagal sa 6.1% noong Mayo mula sa 6.3% noong Abril.

“The slower food inflation in last month was mainly brought about by the slower year-on-year increase in vegetables, tubers, plantains, cooking bananas and pulses index at 2.7% from 4.3% in the previous month,” ayon sa ulat.

Sumunod dito ang bigas na bumagal sa 23% mula sa 23.9% noong Abril.

Nakapag-ambag din ang isda at iba pang seafood sa pagbaba sa 0% inflation rate noong Mayo mula sa 0.4% noong Abril.

“Higher growth rates, however, were seen in the meat prices at 1.6% from 1% month-on-month; while ready-made foods and other food products rose to 5.3% from 4.8% in April,” ayon sa ulat.

“The government will continue to implement lasting policy reforms to ensure we address the drivers of food and non-food inflation sustainably. We want to maintain a macroeconomic environment conducive to investment and high-quality job creation — an environment that would allow us to hit the Marcos Administration’s development targets by 2028,” ayon kay National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Secretary Arsenio Balisacan.

“To help manage food inflation, promote policy stability and investment planning, and enhance food security, the NEDA Board has agreed to reduce the rice duty rate to 15 percent from 35 percent for both in-quota and out-quota imports until 2028,” patuloy ng opisyal. **Kris Jose**

<https://remate.ph/inflation-rate-umarangkada-sa-3-9-noong-mayo-psa/>

**REMATE:**

## **Tapyas-rice duty rate aprub sa NEDA para sa target na P29/kg bigas**

June 5, 2024 12:07



SINABI ni National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan na ang pagtapyas sa taripa sa bigas mula 35% sa 15% at karagdagang subsidiya ay makababawas sa presyo ng bigas at maging P29 kada kilo ito para sa mga mahihirap.

Sa press briefing sa Malakanyang, sinabi ni Balisacan ang pag-adjust sa tariff cuts sa bigas ng 15% hanggang 2028 at subsidiya mula sa gobyerno ay makagagaan sa paghihirap at pasanin ng mga mahihirap na pamilya.

“We are, the Department of Agriculture, is aiming for the reduction to P29 per kilo at least for the poor because we will complement this tariff reduction with direct subsidies to the poor and the vulnerable so they could access the food at P29 per kilo,” ayon kay Balisacan.

“But overall with the tariff reduction from 35 to 15 percent, everybody would benefit from that,” dagdag na wika ng Kalihim.

Aniya pa, ang subsidiya ay nasa uri ng ‘cash’ at idadaan sa programa ng pamahalaan gaya ng Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program upang maiwasan ang “leakage.”

“We are also ramping up the implementation of the implementation of food stamp program,” aniya pa rin.

Winika pa ni Balisacan na ang epekto ng rice tariff cuts ay hindi naman magiging kasing laki habang world prices ay nananatiling tumataas subalit ito’y maaaring “substantially ease the upward pressure on domestic prices.”

Nauna rito, inaprubahan ng National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board, sa pangunguna ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. ang Comprehensive Tariff Program na naglalayong I-calibrate ang kasalukuyang tariff rates hanggang 2028.



Inaprubahan din ng board ang rekomendasyon ng on Tariff and Related Matters (CTRM) na bawasan ang taripa sa ilang kemikal at coal briquettes para ma-improve ang energy security at mabawasan ang input cost para makatulong na matiyak ang kanilang availability sa reasonable halaga, sa gayon, suportahan ang mas maraming ‘stable’ na electricity prices at suplay sa bansa.

Samantala ang tariff rates sa mais, baboy, mechanically deboned meats, asukal, gully gaya ng sibuyas, shallots, bawang, broccoli, carrots, cabbage, lettuce, kamote, cassava, coffee substitutes, complete feeds, at feed preparations ay mananatiling pareho.

Ayon kay Balisacan ang koleksyon mula sa rice tariff ay wala namang matinding epekto dahil magpapalaki pa nga nito ang economic activities at mapabubuti pa ang kapakanan ng mga ‘vulnerable households.’

“The remaining tariff is quite substantial, 15 percent pa rin yun,” ayon kay Balisacan.

Ipinag-uutos ng batas na ang Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund, ipinatupad noong 2018, dapat na paglaanan ng P10 billion kada taon para sa susunod na anim na taon para suportahan ang mga magsasakang filipino.

Ang P10 billion budget para sa RCEF ay mula sa tariff collection mula sa imported rice.

<https://remate.ph/tapyas-rice-duty-rate-aprub-sa-neda-para-sa-target-na-p29-kg-bigas/>

**REMATE:**

# Produksyon ng Ilocos ‘white gold’ bubuhayin ng DA

June 5, 2024 09:35



MANILA , Philippines – Sinabi ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na hinahangad nitong pataasin ang produksyon ng bawang sa 20 porsiyento ng kabuuang demand ng bansa sa susunod na taon sa tulong ng muling pagbuhay sa “white gold” sa Ilocos Region.

“Itong bawang ibabalik natin ulit as the white gold for the Ilocos Region. Magdadala kami ng mga siyentipikong interbensyon at, kasabay nito, ang mga multiplier na sakahan upang makagawa ng mga buto at palawakin ang mga lugar ng produksyon,” sabi ni DA Undersecretary for High-Value Crops Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero sa isang panayam, na binanggit ang pagganap ng industriya sa rehiyon. noong ’80s at ’90s.

Kabilang sa mga target expansion areas ang mga sakahan sa Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, at Mimaropa; at sa Nueva Vizcaya, Quezon, at Lanao del Norte, bukod sa iba pa.

Sinabi ni Caballero na ang 20-porsiyento na pagtaas ng produksyon ay “magagawa” kung isasaalang-alang na ang bawang ay galing sa lokal.

Ang mga multiplier farm sa sandy-soil areas ay dapat ding gamitin para sa produksyon ng native na mga seedling ng bawang upang mapalakas ang reliability sa seed system, aniya.

Sinabi ni Caballero na nakipag-ugnayan na ang DA sa mga kooperatiba para magamit ang mga biniling bawang mula sa Batanes bilang planting materials para sa darating na planting calendar simula sa Setyembre.

Sa ngayon, ang bansa ay gumagawa lamang ng 2 porsiyento ng kabuuang 130,000 metriko tonelada (MT) na lokal na demand, na may mga presyo ng native na bawang na tumataas na aabot sa PHP400 kada kilo sa Metro Manila. *Santi Celario*

<https://remate.ph/produksyon-ng-ilocos-white-gold-bubuhayin-ng-da/>