

## CLIPPINGS FOR TODAY JUNE 21, 2024

### A. MANILA BULLETIN:

DA builds 211 facilities in Mimaropa to boost agricultural production

PBBM, DA officials dared to eat aging NFA rice in 'Bigas 29 program

Gear up for impacts of La Niña, DENR tells Mines and Geosciences Bureau

Marcos tells El-Niño-hit Surigao del Sur residents to brace for La Niña

Marcos administration committed to provide better lives for Filipinos, says DILG chief

Key infra projects in Surigao del Sur halfway done, Marcos says

Marcos vows to turn Butuan City into trade, industry hub

Farmers, fisherfolk receive financial assistance from Bulacan LGU

A farm called freedom

### B. THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

State agencies spending their budgets faster

Armyworms destroy crops in 3 Negros areas

DA wants importation of infected goats probed

Government may lose P1.18 billion monthly – farmers

### C. PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Romualdez appeals for lower tariffs for PH goods entering Japan

Marcos allots P1.5 billion for building of new schools in Caraga region

The promise of farmland consolidation

### D. BUSINESS WORLD:

Initial demand estimate for P29 rice at 69,000 MT/month

### E. MANILA STANDARD:

El Niño-hit CARAGA residents receive P158M in government aid

## **F. THE MANILA TIMES:**

**Central Luzon top rice producer in 2023**

## **G. BUSINESS MIRROR:**

**FMJr delivers P160-million aid to drought-hit Caraga**

**New road in World Bank agriculture program links Davao del Sur fruit producers to markets**

**PHL paid more for imported rice in January to April**

**DA keen on importing staple for government food program**

**Government aims to raise coffee output to meet growing demand**

**BPI: New lab to improve seed production in Eastern Visayas**

## **H. REMATE:**

**PBBM, DA execs hinamon: ‘Aging’ NFA rice tikman sa harap ng publiko**

**Marcos: Caraga region nagtamo ng P700M agri losses sa El Niño**

**‘Aging but good rice’ ibebenta ng NFA ng P29 kada kilo**

**2 baybayin sa Samar postibo sa red tide!**

**Paggamit ng drone sa panahon ng wet cropping season kinokonsidera ng DA**

**Pag-import ng bigas ng Pinas lalala pa sa tapyas-tripa – USDA**

## **I. PEOPLE’S JOURNAL:**

**El Niño-hit farmers, fisherfolk in Caraga region get gov’t aid from PBBM, DSWD**

**SEARCA in talks for PH-Thailand diplomatic ties’ diamond jubilee**

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# DA builds 211 facilities in Mimaropa to boost agricultural production

BY JERRY ALCAYDE

Jun 20, 2024 06:44 PM

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro – The Department of Agriculture has reported that 211 facilities have been built in the Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, and Palawan or Mimaropa region to boost agricultural production.



**CALAPAN City Mayor Malou F. Morillo (right) presents a fertilizer discount voucher from the Department of Agriculture to female farmer-beneficiary. (Mayor Morillo FB)** Christopher Banas, DA-Mimaropa regional executive director, said these facilities, such as warehouses, processing facilities, sheds, animal houses, greenhouses, and Gulayan sa Paaralan at Barangay, are intended primarily for the department’s food security program.

Banas also said that four cold storage warehouses are being constructed for onion growers in Occidental and Oriental Mindoro. These facilities located in the towns of Rizal, Sablayan and San Jose, Occidental Mindoro and Bulalacao in Oriental Mindoro have a capacity of 20 bags per storage house.

Banas added that 140,350 hectares of farm lands in Oriental and Occidental Mindoro and Palawan have been planted with hybrid rice this year and 1,625 with corn.

He said they are eyeing higher agricultural outputs with a minimal cost of production in line with Malacanang's Masaganang Agrikultura, Maunlad na Ekonomiya program which promotes the full use of modern machineries in rural areas and high-yielding variety of seeds.

Meanwhile, 700 farmers here received fertilizer discount vouchers amounting to P2.3 million.

Mayor Malou F. Morillo, who accompanied DA personnel in the distribution activity, commended the farmers for their sacrifices and commitment as she vowed to empower the farming sector and ensure food security in the city.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/20/da-builds-21-facilities-in-mimaropa-to-boost-agricultural-production>

# PBBM, DA officials dared to eat aging NFA rice in 'Bigas 29 program

BY JEL SANTOS

Jun 20, 2024 03:56 PM



Farmers' group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) on Thursday, June 20, dared President Marcos Jr., Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. and other DA officials to cook the aging NFA rice the government plans to sell to the people and consume it in front of the public.

Earlier, the National Food Authority (NFA) Council, chaired by Laurel, approved a plan to sell aging NFA rice buffer stocks at P29 per kilo.

Dubbed "Bigas 29," the program will provide affordable rice to those who belong to vulnerable sectors — persons with disabilities (PWD), solo parents, senior citizens, and indigenous people (IP).

“Ang tanong namin kay Pangulong Marcos Jr., DA Secretary Tiu-Laurel at iba pang opisyal ng gobyerno, ito bang Bigas 29 ay handa nilang kainin at ipakain sa kanilang mga pamilya? (Our question to President Marcos Jr., DA Secretary Tiu-Laurel, and other government officials is: Are they willing to eat this Bigas 29 themselves and feed it to their families?)” KMP chairperson Danilo Ramos asked.

In an earlier statement, the DA said the rice they will sell in the program may be aging, but it is still "good."

By selling aging rice to vulnerable sectors, Ramos said the government chooses to look down on poor Filipinos rather than resolve the high prices of rice and other food products.

"As a largely agricultural and rice-eating country, Filipinos deserve quality and affordable rice which our farmers can produce sufficiently if only the government grants substantial subsidy and support to the local rice production," Ramos added.

According to KMP, the DA's Bigas 29 is "nothing more than a pathetic attempt" to lower the country's high rice prices.

Ramos said that Bigas 29 only highlights the lack of interest of the DA and the current administration in solving the rice price crisis in the country.

"Ganito rin ang ginawa dati sa bukbok rice na gusto ng DA na ibenta at ipakain sa masa. Lumang bigas na nakaimbak sa mga NFA warehouse ang ibebenta sa mahihirap sa P29 kada kilo, samantalang naisiwalat na ang ginawa ng NFA na nagbenta ng P25 kada kilo ng bigas sa mga traders (A similar approach was previously taken with the weevil-infested rice that the DA wanted to sell to the public. The old rice stored in NFA warehouses will be sold to the poor at P29 per kilo, despite revelations that the NFA had sold rice to traders at P25 per kilo)," he said.

The KMP lamented the agriculture department's plan to import 363,697 metric tons (MT) of rice to support its Bigas 29 program.

"Only rice importers and rice traders will benefit from the Bigas 29—a repackaged rice importation program of the Marcos Jr. regime," the farmers' group stated.

Per the DA, they target to roll out the Bigas 29 program nationwide in early July.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/20/pbbm-da-officials-dared-to-eat-aging-nfa-rice-in-bigas-29-program-1>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Gear up for impacts of La Niña, DENR tells Mines and Geosciences Bureau

**BY JEL SANTOS**

Jun 20, 2024 01:39 PM



DENR Usec. Joselin Marcus Fragada (JEL SANTOS/MANILA BULLETIN PHOTO)

As La Niña is expected to start affecting the country in July, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has ordered the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) and its field offices to prepare in order to mitigate the extreme weather phenomenon's potential impacts.

The DENR said it recently issued a memorandum mandating MGB regional directors to activate their Operation Centers (OPCENs) and to help in the conduct of Pre-Disaster Risk Assessments (PDRAs) in close coordination with their respective Office of Civil Defense (OCD) regional office counterparts.

The memorandum was signed by DENR Undersecretaries for Field Operations Juan Miguel Cuna and Joselin Marcus Fragada.

Fragada said the DENR directed the MGB to equip concerned local government units (LGUs) with updated geohazard maps and conduct information, education, and communication activities.

“The most proactive measure we are undertaking at this point is first to, once again, reiterate to the local government units that we have geohazard maps available and we've distributed

them,” he said in an ambush interview on Thursday, June 20.

“And we'd like to be able to actually educate these people, more the communities. In light of the landslides that occurred early this year, last year, we'd like to be able to prepare the communities. So, it's more coordination with the LGU, OCD, disaster preparedness,” the undersecretary went on.

Meanwhile, Fragada said that the DENR has identified over 100 “susceptible areas” in the country, or those locations which are prone to various hazards.

He stated that there are currently over 60 large-scale mining projects in the Philippines registered with the environment department.

The DENR noted that it has long set strict safety rules and regulations on large-scale mining operations.

“DENR Administrative Order No. 2000-98 or the Mine Safety and Health Standard specifically provides for the mine safety and health standards in mining operations,” it stated.

“It provides for the creation of a multi-partite monitoring team composed of representatives from the MGB, concerned local government units, the operating mining company, Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) and other concerned agencies and entities, tasked to regularly conduct inspection to check on environment and safety measures in the mines site.”

As such, the DENR said mining projects are mandated to employ at least one full-time safety engineer and safety inspector to oversee the implementation of safety measures in the mine sites.

### **Agri sector's preparation**

Earlier, the Department of Agriculture (DA) instructed its field offices nationwide to brace for the adverse effects of heavy rainfall, which is anticipated to cause more significant agricultural damage than El Niño.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary for Operations U-Nichols Manalo said the agency has been coordinating with farmer groups for drainage water management for farms.

The agriculture department is now looking into areas that have been affected by La Niña in its past 16 episodes in the country, he added.

Citing past episodes of weather phenomena, Manalo said La Niña has caused greater damage than El Niño.

Based on the last El Niño bulletin of the DA, the impact of the phenomenon on the agricultural sector has resulted in P9.50 billion in damage, affecting 175,063 farmers and fisherfolk.

It reported that 13 regions across the country have been affected by the dry spell, including the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol Region, Western Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Central Mindanao, Davao Region, and Soccsksargen.



On June 4, state weather bureau PAGASA (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration) announced that the El Niño phenomenon had ended in the tropical Pacific Ocean and said that La Niña usually follows strong El Niño events. It added that a 69 percent chance of La Niña developing in the months of July, August, and September.

PAGASA noted that La Niña increases the likelihood of above-normal rainfall conditions in various parts of the country. Adverse impacts such as floods and landslides are expected to affect vulnerable areas and communities.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/20/gear-up-for-impacts-of-la-nina-denr-tells-mines-and-geosciences-bureau-1>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Marcos tells El-Niño-hit Surigao del Sur residents to brace for La Niña

BY BETHEENA UNITE

Jun 20, 2024 01:31 PM

President Marcos urged residents in Surigao del Sur to prepare for the looming La Niña in October.



Surigao del Sur residents (Photo courtesy of PPA/Yummie Dingding)

Marcos told them to brace for La Niña as he recognized that the El Niño has affected almost 12,000 farmers in Caraga Region.

“Ngayon naman ay kailangan nating paghandaan ang tag-ulan na inaasahang magdadala ng higit sa normal na buhos ng ulan sa darating na buwan ng Oktubre (Now we have to prepare for the rainy season which is expected to bring heavier rains in October),” Marcos said on Thursday, June 20.

Marcos, however, assured them that the government has prepared funds and food supply in times of calamity.

“Bagaman ang hiling natin ay wala nang maranasang pinsala o aberya sa panahong ito, nais kong malaman ninyo na handa ang pamahalaan kung sakali man mangangailangan tayo ng

pondo at mga suplay ng pagkain sa oras ng kalamidad (Although we wish we could no longer experience calamity and disruption this time, I want you all to know that the government is ready in case we need fund and food supply in times of calamity),” he told them.

Marcos said this as he led the distribution of various government assistance in Tandag City on Thursday.

He also assured them that the development of the region will continue as he announced that [key infrastructure projects in Surigao del Sur are halfway done](#).

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Various aids were given to almost 12,000 El Niño-affected farmers, fisherfolks, and their families on Thursday in the province.

Marcos said over P60 million are to be distributed to Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur through the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

Some P10,000 in cash assistance will be distributed to 9,195 beneficiaries under the DSWD’s Ayuda sa Kapos ang Kita (AKAP) program and another P10,000 presidential assistance to farmers, fisherfolk and selected families.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/20/marcos-tells-el-nino-hit-surigao-del-sur-residents-to-brace-for-la-nina>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **Marcos administration committed to provide better lives for Filipinos, says DILG chief**

**BY CHITO CHAVEZ**

Jun 20, 2024 01:25 PM



DILG Secretary Benjamin "Benhur" Abalos Jr. (File photo)

The Marcos administration remains "sincere and duty-bound" to uplift the lives of the Filipino people, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Benjamin "Benhur" Abalos Jr. stressed on Thursday, June 20.

He emphasized this during his message at the opening program of the distribution of government assistance to farmers, fisherfolk and their families were affected by the effects of the El Niño phenomenon in Tandag City, Surigao del Sur.

Coinciding with the 64th Araw ng Surigao del Sur, a weeklong celebration commemorating the founding anniversary of the province, the DILG stated that President Marcos Jr. distributed various assistance to identified farmers, fisherfolk and local families in a ceremony at the Surigao del Sur Sports Complex.

Among the highlights of the event was the turnover of farm machinery, equipment and other support services amounting to P6 million from the Department of Agriculture (DA) XIII to

farmer cooperatives and associations in Surigao del Sur. These include a four-wheel drive tractor, a multi-commodity thresher, a hauling truck and a corn mill, the DILG chief said.

"The President handed out P10,000 in cash assistance to 10 select beneficiaries from Surigao del Sur and another group of 10 beneficiaries from Agusan del Sur to provide immediate financial relief to local residents," Abalos said.

Additionally, Abalos disclosed that Marcos also turned over a P12.48 million check to the Surigao del Sur government while Agusan del Sur received P50 million to enable the provincial governments to implement various developmental projects that will benefit the communities.

Meanwhile, Abalos said the government was also relentlessly pursuing lawful measures to combat the country's illegal drug menace.

He said the President ordered the arrest of drug personalities and dismantling of drug dens in the country.

"Asahan niyo na ang ating kapulisan at kawani ng PDEA ay patuloy sa pagganap ng kanilang tungkulin sa pagsugpo ng ilegal na droga (Expect that the police force and PDEA personnel will continue to perform their duties in stopping the illegal drug trade)," Abalos vowed.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/20/marcos-administration-committed-to-provide-better-lives-for-filipinos-says-dilg-chief>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Key infra projects in Surigao del Sur halfway done, Marcos says

**BY BETHEENA UNITE**

Jun 20, 2024 12:42 PM

Major infrastructure projects in Surigao del Sur are halfway to completion, President Marcos assured the province.



President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. interacts with the beneficiaries of government assistance during the distribution of presidential assistance to farmers, and fisherfolk at the Oval Surigao Del Sur Complex on June 20, 2024. (Photo courtesy of PPA/Yummie Dingding)

“Masaya ko ring ibinabalita na ang ilan sa mga proyekto nating pang-imprastruktura ay nasa kalagitnaan na ng pagpapagawa (I am glad to inform you that some of the infrastructure projects are halfway finished),” Marcos announced during the distribution of aid to farmers and fisherfolk in Tandag City, Surigao del Sur on Thursday, June 20.

Among the projects are the Cabadbaran-Putting Bato-Lanuza Road, which is already 44.7 percent finished; the East-West Lateral Road at 61.09 percent; and the rehabilitation of the Tandag Airport.

The Cabadbaran-Putting Bato-Lanuza Road is a priority project of the administration. It involves road widening and upgrading to reduce travel time between Agusan del Norte and Surigao del Sur from three hours to one hour and 15 minutes.

The East-West Lateral Road connecting Agusan del Sur to Bukidnon via Agusan-Malaybalay Road, on the other hand, includes road opening and upgrading, construction of two concrete bridges, and drainage and slope protection structure with road safety devices.

It is also expected to facilitate inter-regional linkages of Caraga and Northern Mindanao, and reduce cost of transporting agricultural products to trading centers.

Meanwhile, the improvement of the Tandag Airport is undertaken to ensure a more convenient travel experience for residents in the region.

The President was in Surigao del Sur on Thursday to lead the distribution of various aids to almost 12,000 El Niño-affected farmers, fisherfolks, and their families.

He said over P60 million are to be distributed to Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur through the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

Some P10,000 in cash assistance will be distributed to 9,195 beneficiaries under the DSWD's Ayuda sa Kapos ang Kita (AKAP) program and another P10,000 presidential assistance to farmers, fisherfolk and selected families.

The Chief Executive added DA will provide farm machinery, equipment and credit assistance. TESDA will distribute livelihood starter tool kits and training allowance to beneficiaries in Surigao del Sur.

DOLE, under the Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP) Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/ Displaced Workers (TUPAD), and the Government Internship Program, shall provide financial assistance.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/20/key-infra-projects-in-surigao-del-sur-halfway-done-marcos-says>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Marcos vows to turn Butuan City into trade, industry hub

**BY BETHEENA UNITE**

Jun 20, 2024 03:37 PM

President Marcos has committed to develop Butuan City into the center of trade and industry in Caraga Region.



President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. (Photo courtesy of PPA/KJ Rosales)

“Katulad ninyo, nagsisikap ang pamahalaan upang lalo pang maging matatag ang Butuan bilang sentro ng kalakalan, industriya, at pamamahala dito sa Caraga (Like you, the government is also working to boost Butuan to be a center of trade, industry, and governance in Caraga),” Marcos said during the distribution of government assistance in Butuan City on Thursday, June 20.

The President also promised to continue bolstering the region’s agriculture and fishery sectors.

“Naghandog din ang ating pamahalaan ng karagdagang binhi at makinarya sa pagsasaka upang mapabuti ang inyong ani at mapagaan ang inyong hanapbuhay sa araw-araw (The government is also providing seeds and machinery for farming to help improve and make your livelihood easier),” Marcos said in his speech.

Marcos also cited the implementation of the National Rice Program, National Corn Program, and High-Value Crops Development Program nationwide, including Caraga.



Among the government's major agricultural interventions in the Caraga Region from January 2023 to May 2024 are the allocation of P774.95 million under the National Rice Program, P220.50 million under the National Corn Program, and P68.93 million under the High-Value Crops Development Program.

A fishery infrastructure is also being built with the ongoing construction of the P60-million Bislig City Fish Port to ensure fresh fish supply to the city and Surigao del Sur, Marcos said.

In his speech, the Chief Executive stressed that the recovery of El Niño-hit farmers and fisherfolk is crucial to sustain progress in the region.

“Naniniwala kami na ang pagkalinga sa ating mga magsasaka at mangingisda sa mga panahong tulad nito ang susi upang muling makabangon at makatulong sa pagpapanday ng isang mas masagana at maunlad na Bagong Pilipinas (We believe that helping the farmers and fisherfolk in times like this is key to the recovery and forging a progressive new Philippines),” he said.

He also acknowledged the efforts and sacrifices of farmers and fisherfolk, which, according to him, not only show their incomparable love for family but also demonstrate their pure intention for the Philippines.

Meanwhile, a total of P158.15 million in financial assistance was handed over to the local government units (LGUs) of Caraga as part of the administration's support to farmers and fisherfolk affected by the El Niño phenomenon.

Marcos led the distribution of P12.48 million in financial assistance to Surigao del Sur; P50 million to Agusan del Sur; P46.84 million to Butuan City; P28.26 million to Agusan del Norte; P10.57 million to Surigao del Norte; and P10 million to Dinagat Islands.

Butuan City was placed under state of calamity on June 13, 2024 due to El Niño, affecting around 3,694 farmers and fisherfolk and causing P699.54 million worth of agricultural losses.

The President also extended P10,000 cash assistance each for 9,195 beneficiaries in Surigao del Sur and 4,650 beneficiaries in Agusan del Norte and Butuan City.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/20/marcos-vows-to-turn-butuan-city-into-trade-industry-hub>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **Farmers, fisherfolk receive financial assistance from Bulacan LGU**

**BY FREDDIE VELEZ**

Jun 20, 2024 10:18 AM

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Some 1,069 farmers and fishermen from the towns of San Miguel, Obando and San Rafael, who have been affected by El Niño, each received P5,000 financial assistance, food packs, and fertilizer from the provincial government at The Pavilion, Hiyas ng Bulacan Convention Center on Tuesday, June 18.

The Provincial Agriculture Office distributed the assistance to the farmers whose crops were affected by El Niño in San Miguel and San Rafael, and fishermen from Obando who experienced incidents of fish kill.

“Nararapat lamang na kayo ay alagaan, suportahan, at bigyang pansin sapagkat, unang-una, kayo ang naglalatatag at nagbibigay ng pagkain sa hapag kainan ng mga Pilipino at ng mga Bulakenyo. Salamat po sa inyong pagsusumikap, pagpupursigi (It is appropriate that you are taken care of, supported, and given attention because you are the ones who lay and provide food on the table of the Filipinos and the Bulakenyos. Thank you for your hard work and perseverance),” Gov. Daniel Fernando said.

Vice Gov. Alexis Castro assured the beneficiaries that the Provincial Government will not neglect the agricultural sector.

According to Jimmy Bernardino, a farmer from San Miguel, El Niño has a big impact on their lives because their income has significantly decreased.

He said their income was only sufficient for their daily expenses, therefore, the financial assistance he received will be a great help for him to make a new start on farming activities.

Meanwhile, the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) emphasized the importance of having enough supplies and equipment for the rainy season brought by La Niña.

They advised everyone to have an emergency kit containing food, water, medicine, and other essentials to be prepared for all types of disasters.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/20/farmers-fisherfolk-receive-financial-assistance-from-bulacan-lgu>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# A farm called freedom

**BY YVETTE TAN**

Jun 21, 2024 06:50 AM

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## AVANT GARDENER



I've always maintained that farming is the Filipino dream, and that growing your own food is a path to freedom. Malaya Farms is proof of this.

Malaya Farms is a permaculture farm in Calauan, Laguna. It was founded by Rishi Mandhyan, a tech worker currently based in the US. "This has been something that I've been dreaming about since I was a kid," he said, citing the book *Farmer Boy* by Laura Ingalls Wilder, author of *Little House on the Prairie*, as an inspiration.

There was also a summer when he was six or seven, where they moved to a house in Parañaque with an empty lot beside it. "I started planting stuff. It started with stealing popcorn from the kitchen and planting it, then it went into stealing potatoes, cutting it into pieces then planting it... and I would get so much joy. At the end of the summer, me and my brother would harvest some of it... I didn't know anything back then but I was just proud that I was able to do something. That's... where it started."

Moving out of the country intensified his desire to run a farm. "I started to see how agriculture is being done in different countries that I lived in and I kept thinking that if I get the opportunity, I want to bring this back. I want to challenge the norms."

That opportunity presented itself in 2019, when he started Malaya Farms on a 2,500 sqm and 6,500 sqm lot, just under a hectare, the typical farm area for a smallholder farmer. "This doesn't seem like a lot of land for people who are trying to get into agriculture but I wanted to prove that even in small shareholder space."

Mandhyan didn't have a background in organic agriculture, but he didn't let that stop him. The Chef's Table episode on Chef Dan Barber's farm-to-table restaurant Blue Hill at Stone

Barns introduced him to the concept of permaculture. “The only input we generally bring in is our first set of seeds, and from that we try to collect as much as possible.”

He joined several Facebook groups, where he met practitioners who guided him on what to do. He also read books and watched videos. There was a lot of trial and error. Things started to turn around when they began working with Dream Agritech, a farming consultancy run by ex-researchers from UP Los Baños. “I’ve learned from failure that I had to go reach out,” Mandhyan said.

“We’re at the point now where we have logged enough learning over the last three years we’re able to run operations on our own.”

The farm grows a variety of produce, from salad vegetables like four to five varieties of lettuce, kale, and arugula to everyday fruits and vegetables like saba, cassava, blue ternate, pechay, and eggplant. “My whole goal is everything that you’d ever need in your household... I want to be able to supply that.”

They’ve also planted citrus and neem trees, which will take some time before the first harvest. “...we’re about to start bringing in animals, things like chickens and goats, that way it’s a full loop,” Mandhyan shared. “For the customers who have started [ordering] on a weekly basis, what we’re hoping... is every now and then, you’ll be finding... eggs in your bag because that’s what we were able to pick up on the farm.”

The farm has yet to acquire its organic certification, though it does follow natural farming practices as prescribed by their consultants.

On-site operations are run by Mandhyan’s youngest sister Karishma and their sister-in-law Ana. The farm currently offers weekly vegetable subscriptions on their Instagram page, their main base of operations until they launch their website. Customers receive the produce on the same day it’s harvested. “[We] start harvesting at 3 a.m., wash the produce by 3:30, dry it, and pack it by four to take it to your household by seven or eight.”

Mandhyan has a lot of plans for Malaya Farms. “We’re on the lookout for partnerships with restaurants, schools, and food producers.”

They’re also venturing into value-added products to enhance the flavor profile and extend the shelf life of their harvest, as well as offer livelihood opportunities to the women in their community. There are also plans to open up the farm for educational tours and farm stays.

Being stationed far did not stop Mandhyan from focusing on food security and building his version of the Filipino dream. “My big mission here has always been to change how we think about agriculture in the Philippines today,” he said. “My hope is it gets to a place where it becomes an education site and if that’s something I can pass on to people around me, it’s great.”

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/21/a-farm-called-freedom>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# State agencies spending their budgets faster

[Louise Maureen Simeon](#) - The Philippine Star

June 21, 2024 | 12:00am



Data from Department of Budget and Management (DBM) showed that notices of cash allocation (NCAs) picked up by 11 percent to P1.89 trillion as of end-May from the P1.71 trillion in the same period last year.

Businessworld / File

MANILA, Philippines — The government ramped up its releases of cash allocations as state agencies continued to post higher spending rates as of end-May.

Data from Department of Budget and Management (DBM) showed that notices of cash allocation (NCAs) picked up by 11 percent to P1.89 trillion as of end-May from the P1.71 trillion in the same period last year.

Government agencies, on the other, hand recorded a higher utilization rate of 94 percent during the first five months of the year compared to last year's 91 percent.

NCAAs are disbursement orders by the DBM to government banks servicing the release of funds to agencies. State agencies are expected to use the NCAAs to pay for the cash requirements of their programs and projects.

A higher utilization ratio indicates greater capacity of agencies to implement their programs and projects.

More than 70 percent of NCA releases were secured by line departments at P1.41 trillion. The remaining P485.48 billion was directed to other agencies, especially state-run firms and local governments.

By sector, other agencies managed to utilize 99 percent of the allocation, covering the internal revenue allotment, special shares and other transfers for LGUs.

Line departments, on the other hand, registered a better utilization rate of 92 percent or P1.3 trillion for the NCAAs they received as of end-May. Same period last year, the spending rate was only 88 percent.

By departments, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the Department of Education (DepEd) still obtained the highest NCAAs worth P368.34 billion and P267.94 billion, respectively, in the five-month period.

Data showed that DPWH's utilization rate remained at 94 percent while DepEd also retained its spending rate at 96 percent.

As of end-May, only the Commission on Human Rights recorded a 100 percent utilization rate.

Other agencies that recorded above 90 percent utilization rate as of May are the departments of Energy, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Health, Human Settlements and Urban Development, Interior and Local Government, Justice, National Defense, Science and Technology, Social Welfare and Development, Tourism and the National Economic and Development Authority.

Also included are the Congress, Commission on Audit, as well as state universities and colleges.

On the other hand, the Commission on Elections registered the worst utilization rate as of May at only 46 percent of its NCAAs totaling P5.71 billion out of the P12.46 billion allocation.

The Department of Migrant Workers came in second with a utilization rate of just 59 percent at P2.82 billion out of P4.77 billion, while the Department of Agriculture came in third with a spending rate of 66 percent.

Last year, the DBM released a record P4.45 trillion worth of NCAs as the government expedited programs and projects that could help the country recover from the pandemic.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/06/21/2364312/state-agencies-spending-their-budgets-faster>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Armyworms destroy crops in 3 Negros areas

[Gilbert Bayoran](#) - The Philippine Star

June 21, 2024 | 12:00am



A fall armyworm feasts on a rice crop.

Department of Agriculture-Philippine Rice Research Institute

**BACOLOD CITY, Philippines — Up to 125 hectares of sugarcane and corn crops in three areas in Negros Occidental have been destroyed by armyworms.**

The office of the provincial agriculturist said the infestations affected 208 farmers.

**A report received by Gov. Eugenio Jose Lacson said the worms destroyed 82 hectares of sugarcane in Himamaylan.**

The worms devoured 45 hectares of corn in Binalbagan, Himamaylan and Isabela, according to provincial agriculturist Dina Genzola.



The Department of Agriculture said the worms usually consume turf grass, but could attack any vegetation along their path.

Neem oil-based sprays or biological agents such as earwigs, spiders and predatory wasps can be used to control these worms.

Rep. Emilio Bernardino Yulo of the province's fifth district yesterday said the local government started spraying chemicals on affected fields in Himamaylan, with the help of the Sugar Regulatory Administration and private companies.

Yulo said the armyworm infestations may have been caused by changes in the weather.

During dry season, the worms stay close to the ground and later move up to feed on leaves and fruits.

Aside from armyworms, earworm infestations were also reported in the villages of Cabadiangan, Carabalan and Mambagaton in Himamaylan City; Camang Camang and Cansalongon in Isabela, and Santol in Binalbagan.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/06/21/2364391/armyworms-destroy-crops-3-negros-areas>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# DA wants importation of infected goats probed

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

June 21, 2024 | 12:00am



Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. on November 6, 2023.

STAR / Jesse Bustos

MANILA, Philippines — Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has ordered an investigation into the importation of goats infected with Q fever.

Laurel issued the order after receiving reports that local goats in Sta. Cruz, Marinduque – where the imported animals were taken – contracted the disease.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has yet to determine the country of origin, the date of arrival and the number of goats, whose importation was reportedly allowed by the Bureau of Animal Industry.

Tiu Laurel created a three-member fact-finding team to identify people behind the alleged anomaly.

He designated DA Assistant Secretary for policy and regulations Paz Benavidez II as chairperson of the fact-finding team, with Assistant Secretary Carlos Carag and legal services director Willie Ann Angsiy as members.

Tiu Laurel said the panel would recommend filing of charges and suspension of officials found liable for the importation.

He directed all bureaus and offices of the DA, including its attached agencies and corporations, to assist the fact-finding team by providing documents needed for the investigation.

The panel was given 30 days from the creation of the special order to submit an initial report on the matter.

The United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention said Q fever is a disease caused by the bacteria *Coxiella burnetii*, which affect animals such as goats, sheep and cows.

People can contract the disease by breathing dust contaminated with the infected animal's feces, urine, milk and birth products.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/06/21/2364393/da-wants-importation-infected-goats-probed>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Government may lose P1.18 billion monthly – farmers

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

June 21, 2024 | 12:00am



National Food Authority rice stocks.

NFA

MANILA, Philippines — The government will lose at least P1.18 billion monthly with the National Food Authority Council's decision to sell old rice stocks at P29 per kilo through Kadiwa stores, the Federation of Free Farmers said yesterday.

The NFA needs to subsidize P6 per kilo or P414 million monthly to service 6.9 million households if the palay was bought at P23 per kilo, or P1.18 billion monthly if the palay was procured at P30 per kilo, FFF national manager Raul Montemayor told The STAR.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. on Wednesday said the NFA Council, which he chairs, has approved the recommendation to sell aging but good NFA rice stocks at P29 per kilo through Kadiwa stores.

Under the Bigas 29 program, vulnerable sectors like persons with disabilities, solo parents, senior citizens and indigenous people who collectively comprise 6.9 million households, or over 34 million Filipinos, will benefit from the P29 per kilo of rice.

“Per the Philippine Statistics Authority, NFA’s inventory in rice equivalent as of May 1 was only 69,000 metric tons. If the report that the NFA will sell 10 kilos per month to 6.9 million poor households is correct, that means the NFA’s existing buffer stock as of May 1 will be depleted in just one month,” Montemayor explained.

The NFA reported that it bought 3.365 million cavans of palay in the first half of 2024 after increasing its buying price to P30 per kilo, he noted.

While rice stocks as of May 1 could be considered aging stocks, those that have been bought recently will start deteriorating after two to three months in rice form and five to six months in palay form, Montemayor said.

“There are reports of the possibility of NFA importing rice notwithstanding the provisions of Rice Tariffication Law (RTL),” he said, referring to Republic Act 11203 which prohibits the NFA from importing rice.

Tiu Laurel earlier said the DA plans to import 363,697 MT of rice to augment national buffer stocks, while the NFA will procure 559,535 MT of palay from local farmers.

Proposed RTL amendments to allow the NFA to import rice are still pending in Congress.

The House of Representatives has approved the proposed measure on third and final reading while the Senate is still deliberating.

Tiu Laurel said the government aims to roll out the Bigas 29 program nationwide in early July.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/06/21/2364404/government-may-lose-p118-billion-monthly-farmers>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Romualdez appeals for lower tariffs for PH goods entering Japan

By: [Gabriel Pabico Lalu](#) - Reporter / [@GabrielLaluINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 05:35 PM June 20, 2024

House Speaker Martin Romualdez –File photo from the website of the House of Representatives

MANILA, Philippines — House Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez is appealing for lower tariffs on products from the Philippines entering Japan so that it can get a bigger share of agricultural items there.

Romualdez made this appeal on Thursday during a meeting with Japanese lawmakers for the Japan-Philippines Parliamentarians Friendship League (JPPFL), led by Chairman Hiroshi Moriyama, a member of the Japanese House.

Specifically, he asked for a review of the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA), a deal involving mutual investments and free trade.

He said the review could underscore a stronger commitment between the two countries, after the first-ever trilateral summit in the United States. “We believe that a review of the (JPEPA) especially after the recent trilateral agreements, would show support and solidarity. This request aligns with our past efforts and aims to foster a better and more conducive relationship between our countries,” Romualdez said.

According to Romualdez, such a review is important since the Philippines’ market share of some agricultural items had dipped, as in the case of bananas which have dropped from 90 percent to 78 percent.

“This decline is not necessarily due to specific circumstances but rather the [COVID-19] pandemic and current regional conditions,” he said, noting that trade between Japan and the Philippines has decreased by 12 percent.

Romualdez said that Moriyama, a former agriculture minister, acknowledged the request to resume the JPEPA review and “expressed his willingness to consider it.”

Philippine Ambassador to Japan Mylene Garcia-Albano, who was present at the meeting, expressed concerns about the drop in banana exports to Japan.

“The majority of our banana exports come from our region. We are very concerned with the decline in banana exports to Japan,” Garcia-Albano, a former Davao City lawmaker, said.

“We hope that with the general review of JPEPA, we can address the differences in tariffs imposed on bananas, aiming to level the playing field with other countries like Vietnam, which enjoys a zero percent tariff,” she added.

The JPEPA is seen as a more effective method to address this trade issue, even if both countries are members of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

This is not the first time though that the Philippine government sought a review of the JPEPA. In November 2021, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said that it wanted to get a better deal for its agricultural products entering Japan, which is why renegotiations have stalled.

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/240156/fwd-romualdez-on-seeking-better-terms-reduced-tariffs-on-ph-agri-products-entering-japan>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Marcos allots P1.5 billion for building of new schools in Caraga region

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

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 11:40 AM June 20, 2024



President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. delivers a speech as he distributes aid in Surigao del Sur on June 20, 2024. (Photo from RTV MALACAÑANG)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said on Thursday that P1.5 billion has been allotted to build new schools in the Caraga region.

**Marcos has been traveling nationwide to distribute various aid to qualified farmers, fisherfolk and local families.**

“Maasahan din ninyo ang patuloy na pagsulong namin ng edukasyon at kalusugan dito sa Caraga,” said Marcos in his speech in the distribution event in Surigao del Sur.



(You can expect that we will continue to advance education and health here in Caraga.)

“Nakapaglaan na tayo ng higit sa P1.5 bilyong para sa pagtayo ng mga bagong silid-aralan at halos kalahating bilyon piso para sa pagpaayos sa lumang silid-aralan,” he added.

(We have allotted more than P1.5 billion to build new school classrooms and half a billion to restore old classrooms.)

Marcos said that in addition to this assistance, 170 scholars from Caraga will also receive aid from the programs of the Commission on Higher Education.

For its part, the Department of Agriculture provided farmers with equipment and other support services amounting to P6 million.

Marcos also gave P12.4 million to the Provincial Government of Surigao del Sur and P50 million to Agusan del Sur.

The beneficiaries also received various aid from the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Department of Labor and Employment, and the Department of Trade and Industry.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1953238/marcos-allots-p1-5-billion-for-building-of-new-schools-in-caraga-region>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# The promise of farmland consolidation

By: [Meliton B. Juanico](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:11 AM June 21, 2024

It's good to see that President Marcos has personally distributed land titles to agrarian reform beneficiaries, following his signing of the Agrarian Emancipation Act last year which condoned the farmers' outstanding debts. With debt condonation, farmers will be free to sell or lease their land, although there's a proviso that they are not allowed to sell it for a period of 10 years.

The theoretical effect of debt condonation is a more vigorous and free land rental market that will allow farmer beneficiaries to invest in more land improvements, transfer the lease of the land to more productive farmers or entities, and engage in more promising contractual schemes such as farmland consolidation.

Based on the experience of agriculturally advanced countries, farmland consolidation—which formally groups contiguous and proximate farm lots—tends to enable the agriculture and fisheries sector to achieve economies of scale, and thus achieve cost-efficient production, harvest, processing, and marketing operations that subsequently increase their income.

Over the years, the average farm size in the Philippines has dwindled from 3 hectares per family during the 1980s, to the current size of only 0.9 ha. Too many small farmers working on atomized farmlands causes many problems down the supply chain line, including vulnerability to the exploitative monopolistic power of middlemen. Also, many of the country's fishers remain unorganized and tied to the use of small fishing boats.

Actually, land consolidation was formally started by the Agricultural and Fisheries Mechanization Law of 2013 that promoted contiguous farming as one of the flagship programs of the Aquino administration. In 2022, the Duterte administration issued Department of Agriculture (DA) Memorandum Circular No. 21 that provided supplemental guidelines on what it termed the farm and fisheries clustering and consolidation (F2C2) program.

According to Ernesto Ordoñez, 1,296 clusters have already been formed covering an area of 779,596 ha as of this writing. However, this number is still too small as it covers only 5 percent of land that can be potentially developed. Thailand, which has been ahead like other neighboring countries in the implementation of farmland consolidation, reached \$42.3 billion worth of agriculture and fisheries production in 2023, which is six times that of the Philippines' \$7.1 billion.

According to the DA, an average of 292 clusters were formed from 2022 to 2023. This may not be a bad clustering rate and, if maintained, will accelerate the consolidation of the remaining 4,818,404 ha of our arable lands within the next few years. However, there is still a need to study the quality and completeness of our current clustering processes for the farm lots—whether they be corporate farming schemes, cooperatives, farm clusters, irrigators' associations, private initiatives, or block farming schemes.

A study conducted in 2022 by Bawita, et al. on the extent of Philippine agricultural consolidation has observed that a viable and successful farmland cluster must observe the following factors: water, funding, social preparation, management, technical requirements, national agency for monitoring and evaluation, and establishment of model farms.

With regard to funding, the DA has to increase the budget for its F2C2 program, given that its program budget in 2024 was trimmed by 14 percent to only P145 million. The study also said that social preparation has been a problem since it involves getting the stakeholders to accept a novel project and to participate in its implementation.

To me, however, the most important factor that should be thoroughly evaluated are the technical requirements that include farm layout and sizing alterations that would allow large-scale mechanization, and the formulation of a master plan that would indicate farm layouts, irrigation, drainage, and infrastructure facilities. These procedures are expensive and take time to implement, such that an in-depth study is really needed to evaluate the extent of their implementation if we want our current F2C2 program to succeed. —————

*Meliton B. Juanico is a retired professor of geography at the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy at the University of the Philippines Diliman, and is a practicing licensed environmental planner.*

**<https://opinion.inquirer.net/174606/the-promise-of-farmland-consolidation>**

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Initial demand estimate for P29 rice at 69,000 MT/month

June 20, 2024 | 8:48 pm



PHILSTAR FILE PHOTO

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it initially estimates demand for subsidized P29 rice at 69,000 metric tons (MT) per month, though this total is expected to fluctuate depending on consumer response.

“Of course it will change, it not exact. It will really depend on how many will avail of the program. We will not force them to buy,” Agriculture Assistant Secretary and Spokesperson Arnel V. de Mesa told reporters on Thursday.

The National Food Authority (NFA) council on Wednesday approved the sale of ageing rice stocks to individuals classified as poor or otherwise vulnerable.

“We want to reach to as many members of our vulnerable sectors. We will be needing about 69,000 MT of rice every month,” he added.

The DA proposed to import about 363,697 MT to replace the ageing stocks that will be disposed of under the “Bigas 29” program.

“The priority is still to use the NFA stocks, because we don’t have the clearance to import yet,” Mr. De Mesa said.

The DA’s plan is estimated to cost the government between P1.39 billion and P1.53 billion per month.

Beneficiaries of the rice subsidy program are estimated at more than 34 million vulnerable individuals, which include persons with disabilities, solo parents, and senior citizens, apart from those below the poverty line. Each beneficiary is entitled to purchase about 10 kilograms per month. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/20/603304/initial-demand-estimate-for-p29-rice-at-69000-mt-month/>

## *El Niño-hit CARAGA residents receive P158M in government aid*



*EL NINO AID. President Marcos shakes the hand of one of the 12,000 farmers, fisherfolk and their families who were affected by El Niño in the CARAGA region.*

By Charles Dantes

**June 21, 2024, 12:25 am**

President Marcos on Thursday distributed P158.15 million in aid to nearly 12,000 farmers, fisherfolk, and their families affected by El Niño in the CARAGA region.

The aid supports the region's development and addresses the impact of the drought.

During visits to Surigao del Sur and Butuan City, Marcos handed over financial assistance, including P12.48 million to Surigao del Sur, P50 million to Agusan del Sur, P46.84 million to Butuan City, P28.26 million to Agusan del Norte, P10.57 million to Surigao del Norte, and P10 million to Dinagat Islands.

“Just like you, the government is working hard to make Butuan even stronger as the center of trade, industry, and governance here in Caraga,” President Marcos said in his speech during the distribution of aid in Butuan City on Thursday.

P60 million will be distributed through the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), including P10,000 in cash assistance for 9,195 beneficiaries under the DSWD's Ayuda sa Kapos ang Kita

(AKAP) program and another P10,000 in presidential assistance for farmers, fisherfolk, and selected families.

House Speaker Martin Romualdez's office also provided five kilos of rice to each beneficiary.

The DA will supply farm machinery, equipment, and credit assistance. TESDA will offer livelihood starter tool kits and training allowances, while the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) will provide financial aid through various programs.

President Marcos urged residents to prepare for the upcoming La Niña season, assuring readiness with funds and food supplies for potential calamities.

The CARAGA region, comprising Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Dinagat Islands, Surigao del Norte, and Surigao del Sur, continues to receive government support to mitigate the effects of natural disasters.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314461863/el-nino-hit-caraga-residents-receive-p158m-in-government-aid.html>



## *Central Luzon top rice producer in 2023*

By Jerry M. Hernandez

June 21, 2024

CENTRAL Luzon has contributed 18 percent to the total national production of rice with 3.63 million metric tons of the crop in 2023, keeping its tag as the rice granary of the Philippines.

During the fourth episode of the "Kapihan sa Bagong Pilipinas" of the Philippine Information Agency, Department of Agriculture (DA) Officer in Charge and Regional Executive Director Eduardo Lapuz Jr. said that the region also topped in onion production, contributing 55 percent to the national output last year.

It also leads in the production of chicken meat with 34 percent contribution to the national output, duck meat with 28 percent, and duck eggs with 55 percent.

In the same year, the agency's Production Support Services distributed P2.22 billion worth of seeds to 91,559 farmers across 158 farmers' cooperatives and associations (FCAs). Fertilizer distribution amounting to P931.52 million, benefited 363,408 farmers in 43 FCAs.

Other planting materials worth P3 million and P6.17 million worth of animals were also distributed for numerous FCAs, along with the provision of agricultural machinery and equipment totaling P249.79 million, benefiting 448 FCAs.

This equipment included 1,657 units of farm production-related machinery, postharvest machinery, and facilities.

"We also invested P78.06 million in irrigation network services, benefiting 329 FCAs in the region," Lapuz said.

Lapuz added that the agency constructed 56 FMR projects in 2023, covering 112.38 kilometers and costing P1.35 billion, noting that these projects, funded by the DA and implemented by the Department of Public Works and Highways, have significantly improved rural infrastructure.

Aside from these, the Philippine Rural Development Project also made significant progress in Central Luzon.

"Under the Investments for Rural, Enterprises and Agricultural and Fisheries Productivity or I-REAP component, we implemented P673 million worth of projects, benefiting 174 FCAs," Lapuz noted.

The Intensified Building Up of Infrastructure and Logistics for Development or I-Build component saw investments of P2.19 billion that improved the lives of 76,613 households.

Farmers from various FCAs expressed gratitude for the support received.

Tabon, San Jose Farmers Association Chairman Marlene Bernardino from San Luis, Pampanga commended the interventions provided by the high-value crops program.

"The vegetable seeds, machinery, and equipment have helped us overcome challenges posed by climate change and fluctuating prices," said Bernardino.

Nueva Ecija farmer Arnel Serrano, on the other hand, benefited from the Custom Service Facility for Onion-Based Farmers.

"We now pay cheaper fees for using tractors from the cooperative, and we can pay after harvest. This has saved us money and effort," he said.

Meanwhile, DA Central Luzon aims to boost production to ensure a sufficient supply of staple foods and enhance the livelihood of farmers in the coming years.

This year, DA Region 3 secured a budget of P9.04 billion for various programs and projects, with a significant 60.95 percent allocated to the rice production program.

"A substantial part of our budget, over P2 billion, will also support farm-to-market road (FMR) projects and other locally funded initiatives," Lapuz said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/21/regions/central-luzon-top-rice-producer-in-2023/1952465>

# *FMJr delivers P160-million aid to drought-hit Caraga*

Samuel P. Medenilla

June 21, 2024

**PRESIDENT Marcos on Thursday distributed financial aid amounting to P160 million to farmers and fishermen who are reeling from the effects of the El Niño phenomenon in the Caraga region.**

**Aside from the assistance from the Office of the President, other government agencies like the Departments of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), of Labor and Employment (DOLE), of Trade and Industry (DTI) and of Agriculture (DA) also brought aid to the beleaguered farmers and fishermen.**

**Marcos said the financial aid is expected to benefit the 12,000 farmers and fishermen, whose livelihoods suffered from the dry spell and the accompanying drought.**

**Agusan del Sur received the highest allocation with P50 million followed by Butuan City with P46.84 million. The other local governments that received aid from the OP are Agusan del Norte (P28.26 million); Surigao del Sur (P12.48), Surigao del Norte (P10.57 million), and Dinagat Islands (P10 million).**

**“May this help we bring today, alleviate the hardship [that] you are [going through] in your daily search for a living,” Marcos said in Filipino in his speech during the distribution of Presidential aid to farmers and fishermen in Tandag City, Surigao del Sur on Thursday.**

**He also visited Butuan City in Agusan Del Norte, where he led a similar distribution aid initiative.**

**The assistance provided to the affected agricultural workers include the P10,000 cash aid distributed by DSWD through its Ayuda sa Kapos ang Kita (Akap).**

**They were also provided livelihood assistance through DOLE's Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP) and emergency employment under the agency's Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/ Displaced Workers (Tupad).**

**The DTI provided them with capital to help them start their businesses, while the DA gave them farm machinery, equipment and credit assistance.**

**The President said the assistance also aims to help the affected agricultural workers to prepare for projected above normal rainfall by October.**

**This after the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) projected the country could feel the impact of La Niña by the last quarter of the year.**

**Last week, the OP extended P190 million worth of aid to El Niño-affected areas in Cagayan Valley.**

**As of June 13, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) estimated the cost of the destruction wrought by the dry spell on agriculture at P9.89 billion. The agency said a total of 183,455 farmers and fishermen were affected.**

**<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/21/fmjr-delivers-p160-million-aid-to-drought-hit-caraga/>**

## *New road in World Bank agriculture program links Davao del Sur fruit producers to markets*

**Manuel Cayon**

**June 21, 2024**



**Officials led by Malalag Municipal Mayor Peter Paul T. Valentin, Provincial Project Engineer Gina Chua, Pitu Brgy. Captain Yolando Amboc grace the turnover ceremony for the new road that has boosted the hopes of fruit-producing areas in Davao del Sur.**

**DAVAO CITY—Remote fruit production areas of Davao del Sur are expected to be more accessible to the markets after the World Bank-funded agriculture program turned over the 5.99-kilometer farm road to the local government.**

**The Department of Agriculture XI-Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP XI) disclosed it just finished and turned over the farm-to-market road in Malalag town to local authorities.**

**It said this should provide farmers better market access and reduce the transportation cost of their produce.**

**The farm road cost P110.9 million and was turned over to the provincial government on Wednesday.**

**It said the 5.99-km rehabilitated road under the PRDP I-BUILD subproject traverses the mango production areas, including the coconut, cardava, lakatan, and Cavendish bananas, corn and cacao production areas in the four barangays of Ibo, Bulacan, Pitu, and Bolton, all in the municipality of Malalag.**



**In a turnover ceremony on June 19 in Malalag, Marc Adrian Baddongon, head of the I-Build component of DA-PRDP Regional Project Coordination Office XI, said the success of the project “is a result of the collective effort and active collaboration.”**

**“The rehabilitation of Ibo-Pitu, Malalag FMR is funded under the World Bank’s second additional financing and European Union co-financing grant with the Provincial Local Government Unit of Davao del Sur, and the Municipal LGU of Malalag,” Baddongon said.**

**DA Regional Director Macario D. Gonzaga said farm roads “allow farmers to transport their produce more efficiently and reach a wider customer base.”**

**“With this subproject, we are expecting an increased trading activity of farm products in the communities as it will reduce the travel time from 26 minutes to 16 minutes per trip. We are also expecting an increased income among farmers as it will reduce the hauling cost of commodities and inputs from P40**

to P30 per sack, and transport losses from an average of four percent to one percent,” Gonzaga said.

He said the subproject will also improve access to social services because it will be easier for people in rural communities to access essential services like education, healthcare, and government assistance.

Representing the Davao del Sur Provincial Governor Yvonne R. Cagas, Marc Douglas IV C. Cagas thanked DA-PRDP “for pooling resources for the people of Davao del Sur, particularly to the 11,040 beneficiaries of the said subproject.”

“We hope that this strengthened partnership will continue to benefit the people of Davao del Sur especially in increasing farmers’ productivity and income as well as their quality of living,” Cagas said.

**Malalag Municipal Mayor Peter Paul T. Valentin, Provincial Project Engineer Gina Chua, Pitu Brgy. Captain Yolando Amboc, and Kudos Peers Construction Corporation President Josue Bacolod also witnessed the turnover.**

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/21/new-road-in-world-bank-agriculture-program-links-davao-del-sur-fruit-producers-to-markets/>



# *PHL paid more for imported rice in January to April*

**Cai U. Ordinario**

**June 20, 2024**



**Workers carry sacks of rice inside a mill in Kalasin province, Thailand on, November 20, 2023.**

**Rice imported by the Philippines in the first four months of the year was more expensive compared to last year, according to the latest data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).**

**Data obtained by the BusinessMirror showed the average unit value of imported rice, based on freight on board (FOB) costs, in the past four months averaged 0.52 US cents per kilo, 23.81 percent higher than the 2023 average of 0.42 US cents per kilo.**

**FOB, according to Philippine Institute for Development Studies Senior Research Fellow Roehlano Briones, does not include tariff and insurance costs.**

**This year, the highest unit cost of rice imported by the country was recorded in March, when it reached 0.53 US cents per kilo. The country's import bill, in FOB terms, amounted to \$189.45 million for 355,524.161 metric tons (MT).**

**The lowest was in January and February, when the unit cost averaged 0.51 US cents per kilo. In terms of total cost and gross kilos imported, the country's import bill for rice, in FOB terms, was higher in January than in February.**

**In January, the FOB value of imports reached \$239.135 million for 470,876.255 MT of rice.**

**As the country imported more rice in April, the FOB value of shipments amounted to \$264.45 million for 506,352.722 MT of rice.**

**Meanwhile, in the past 32 years or between 1991 and 2023, the highest average cost of rice imports per unit value was recorded in 2008 when it hit 0.73 US cents per kilo.**

**The Philippines was one of the countries that grappled with the global food price crisis in 2008, when rice prices hit record levels.**

**The staple was cheap in the early years of the new millennium, based on PSA data. Average rice prices in 2001, 2002 and 2003 were below 0.20 US cents per kilo.**

**The lowest cost was recorded in 2001 and 2003 at 0.17 US cents per kilo. The average price of imports in 2002 reached 0.18 US cents.**

**In terms of total import cost, the highest paid by the Philippines was in 2008, when it had to shell out \$1.778 billion for the staple. That year, PSA data showed that the country imported 2.44 million metric tons (MMT) of rice at a unit cost of 0.73 US cents per kilo.**

**In terms of the total import volume, the highest was recorded in 2022 at 3.85 MMT. The FOB cost of rice imports reached \$1.54 billion at a unit cost of 0.3 US cents per kilo.**

**Earlier, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations said the average prices of Vietnamese and Thai rice went up in the January-to-May period.**

**Figures from the UN agency indicated that Vietnamese 25 percent broken, the variant usually imported by the Philippines, surged by more than 28 percent during the 5-month period. As of last month, its average price was at \$560.20 per metric ton (MT), more than \$100 higher than last year's \$436.40 per MT.**

**Vietnam's 5 percent broken, another variety that the Philippines buys from its Southeast Asian neighbor, was more expensive by more than \$100 per MT this year. In January to May, it averaged \$588.60 per MT, compared to the \$456.10 per MT recorded in 2023.**

**Thailand's quotation for its 25 percent broken was slightly higher than that of Vietnam at \$592.80 per MT. The average price of the variety during the 5-month period was higher than last year's \$488.30 per MT. Thailand's quotation for its 25 percent broken was slightly higher than that of Vietnam at \$592.80 per MT. The average price of the variety during the 5-month period was higher than last year's \$488.30 per MT. (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/13/vietnam-thailand-rice-prices-higher-in-january-to-may-fao/>)**

**Image credits: [Luke Duggleby/Bloomberg](#)**

**<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/20/phl-paid-more-for-imported-rice-in-january-to-april/>**

## *DA keen on importing staple for government food program*

**Ada Pelonia**

**June 20, 2024**

**The Department of Agriculture (DA) plans to import rice for a government program that aims to sell rice to the poor through Kadiwa centers at P29 per kilogram (kg).**

**The DA is keen on purchasing 363,697 metric tons (MT) of imported rice to augment the government's stockpile which it plans to sell under the Bigas 29 program.**

**According to the agency, the program will benefit persons with disabilities, solo parents, senior citizens, and, later, indigenous peoples (IP), who collectively comprise 6.9 million households or over 34 million Filipinos.**

**Each beneficiary household is entitled to purchase 10 kilos per month, requiring a monthly rice supply of 69,000 metric tons (MT).**

**“This program primarily aims to provide rice at an affordable price of P29 per kilo for the vulnerable sectors of society,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said in a statement, adding that it would address the minimum basic needs of individuals below the poverty threshold.**

**Despite the NFA selling price being higher than the previous P25 per kilo, the DA said it is a “very deep discount” to the prevailing market price to ensure that poverty-stricken Filipinos have access to their main food staple.**

**It added that the NFA selling price was raised to moderate government subsidy for the program.**

**“A dry run of the cheaper rice program is already underway in select Kadiwa centers and has been well-received by potential beneficiaries,” the food agency said.**

**The agency said Bigas 29 dovetails with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s vision of a food-secure Philippines, where basic commodities are affordable and easily accessible, especially to poor Filipinos.**

**Laurel told the NFA Council that the program’s implementation, given the monthly target volume, procurement cost, and selling price, would incur a social cost between P1.39 billion and P1.53 billion per month.**

**Meanwhile, the NFA is set to procure 559,535 (MT) of palay from local farmers—a volume equivalent to the amount of rice to be imported by DA. The estimated cost of securing rice buffer stocks to cover 19 days of national consumption is at least P28.39 billion.**

**The government plans to roll out the Bigas 29 program nationwide in early July.**

**Republic Act 11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law states that “in the event of any imminent or forecasted shortage, or such other situation requiring government intervention, the President is empowered for a limited period and/or a specified volume, to allow the importation at a lower applied tariff rate to address the situation. Such order shall take effect immediately and can only be issued when Congress is not in session.”**

**<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/20/da-keen-on-importing-staple-for-government-food-program/>**

## *Government aims to raise coffee output to meet growing demand*

**Ada Pelonia**

**June 20, 2024**

**The Department of Agriculture (DA) wants to increase coffee output to meet the demand of processors.**

**“We have to make sure that those farms that were given planting materials before are assisted in terms of increasing their productivity,” Agriculture Undersecretary Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero told reporters during a media briefing on Tuesday.**

**“We want to see where are these farms so they can be assisted in terms of producing the beans.”**

**She said the production of quality beans would require the right postharvest facilities that would enable farmers to observe the correct drying and fermentation process.**

**“The space of coffee is one big exciting industry to look forward to.”**

**According to Caballero, the department provides assistance to boost the productivity of farmers.**

**“The DA through High Value Crops Development Program provides production inputs including quality planting materials and fertilizers to increase productivity in support to our coffee farmers,” Caballero told the BusinessMirror via SMS.**

**“We also continue to establish post-harvest facilities such as coffee drying, beans storage, and processing and packaging equipment and capacitate farmers to adopt Good Agricultural Practices and Good Manufacturing Practices to produce quality coffee.”**

**Caballero also called for support for Liberica coffee beans, which she said was one of the best varieties of coffee in the world and that the Philippines is “lucky” to produce them.**

**“We would like to position ang ating kape sa pamamagitan ng paggamit ng [our coffee though the use of the] Competitiveness Enhancement Measures Fund (CEMF) para mailatag yung suporta sa [so we can roll out the support for] Liberica,” she said.**

**State budget documents for 2024 showed that the DA receives a competitiveness enhancement measures fund under Republic Act 8800.**

**For this year, the DA has a P250-million budget, which the documents stipulated, must be used by the department in implementing programs that would “promote the competitiveness of agri-fishery industries affected by increased imports.”**

**<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/20/government-aims-to-raise-coffee-output-to-meet-growing-demand/>**

## *BPI: New lab to improve seed production in Eastern Visayas*

**Ada Pelonia**

**June 20, 2024**

**The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) opened a new laboratory that aims to bolster the seed testing capabilities of Eastern Visayas.**

**The attached agency of the Department of Agriculture (DA) said its new Satellite Seed Testing Laboratory in Catarman, Northern Samar would ensure the availability of quality planting materials and improve seed production in the region.**

**According to Ruel Gesmundo, BPI Assistant Director for Regulatory Services and concurrent Chief of the National Seed Quality Control Services Division (NSQCS), this is “critical” in ensuring the provision of quality seeds particularly inbred rice seeds to Northern Samar.**

**Ronaldo Calamba, OIC-Chief of NSQCS-8 Catarman, is hopeful that the facility will help increase the number of accredited seed growers and plant nursery operators that will supply quality planting materials in the region.**

**Loida Ultra, Chief of NSQCS-8, shared the “pitiful” situation the lab and its personnel experienced, especially during the monsoon season.**

**For his part, BPI Director Gerald Glenn Panganiban encouraged the NSQCS-8 Catarman to harness the laboratory’s potential to serve the stakeholders more efficiently.**

**Based at Zone 3, University of Eastern Samar, Catarman, the facility is a result of the collaboration between the local government units of the Province of Northern Samar, University of Eastern Philippines, DA-RFO8, and the Philippine Rice Research Institute in Catarman.**



**Funded by the DA's National Rice Program, the BPI said the facility will cater seed testing and certification programs that will "contribute to the prosperity of the region's farming community."**

**<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/20/bpi-new-lab-to-improve-seed-production-in-eastern-visayas/>**

**REMATE:**

## **PBBM, DA execs hinamon: ‘Aging’ NFA rice tikman sa harap ng publiko**

June 20, 2024 18:08



MANILA, Philippines- Hinamon ng farmers’ group na Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) nitong Huwebes sina Pangulong Marcos Jr., Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. at iba pang opisyal ng DA na tikman sa harap ng publiko ang “aging” NFA rice na balak ibenta ng gobyerno.

Inaprubahan ng National Food Authority (NFA) Council, sa pamumuno ni Laurel, ang planong ibenta ang aging NFA rice buffer stocks sa presyong P29 kada kilo.

Tinauriang “Bigas 29,” magbibigay ang programa ng aboy-kayang bigas sa mga kabilang sa vulnerable sectors — persons with disabilities (PWD), solo parents, senior citizens, at indigenous people (IP).

“Ang tanong namin kay Pangulong Marcos Jr., DA Secretary Tiu-Laurel at iba pang opisyal ng gobyerno, ito bang Bigas 29 ay handa nilang kainin at ipakain sa kanilang mga pamilya?” pahayag ni KMP chairperson Danilo Ramos.

Naunang sinabi ng DA na ang bigas na ibebenta nila sa programa ay paluma na subalit “good” pa rin.

Sa pagbebenta ng aging rice sa vulnerable sectors, sinabi ni Ramos na pinipili ng pamahalaan na hamakin ang mahihirap na Pilipino sa halip na resolbahin ang mataas na presyo ng bigas at iba pang bilingin.

“As a largely agricultural and rice-eating country, Filipinos deserve quality and affordable rice which our farmers can produce sufficiently if only the government grants substantial subsidy and support to the local rice production,” dagdag ni Ramos.

Base sa KMP, ang Bigas 29 ng DA ay “nothing more than a pathetic attempt” upang ibaba ang mataas na presyo ng bigas sa bansa.

“Ganito rin ang ginawa dati sa buklok rice na gusto ng DA na ibenta at ipakain sa masa. Lumang bigas na nakaimbak sa mga NFA warehouse ang ibebenta sa mahihirap sa P29 kada kilo, samantalang naisiwalat na ang ginawa ng NFA na nagbenta ng P25 kada kilo ng bigas sa mga traders,” wika ni Ramos. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/pbbm-da-execs-hinamon-aging-nfa-rice-tikman-sa-harap-ng-publiko/>

**REMATE:**

## **Marcos: Caraga region nagtamo ng P700M agri losses sa El Niño**

June 20, 2024 17:07



MANILA, Philippines- Sinabi ni Pangulong Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. nitong Huwebes na halos P700 milyon ang nalugi sa agriculture sector sa Caraga region dahil sa epekto ng El Niño weather phenomenon.

Pinangunahan ni Marcos ang pamamahagi ng presidential assistance sa mga magsasaka, mangingisda, at mga pamilya Butuan City Sports Complex sa Butuan City, Agusan del Norte.

"Ayon sa aming datos, naapektuhan [nito ang] labinlimang porsyento ng inyong kabuuang populasyon at tatlumpung porsyento ng inyong kabuhayan," bahagi ng talumpati ni Marcos.

”Tinatanghalos halos tatlong libo at pitong daang magsasaka at mangingisda naman ang tuwirang naapektuhan ng El Niño, samantalang nasa pitong daang milyong piso naman ang nalugi sa ating agrikultura sa buong rehiyon,” dagdag niya.

Inihayag ng Presidential Communications Office na isinailalim ang Butuan City sa state of calamity noong Hunyo 13 dahil sa El Niño, na nakaapekto sa halos 3,694 magsasaka at mangingisda.

Ipinamahagi ni Marcos ang P158.15 milyong financial assistance sa local government units ng rehiyon bilang bahagi ng suporta ng administrasyon sa mga apektadong magsasaka at mangingisda.

Personal na iniabot ng Pangulo ang mahigit P12.48 milyong financial assistance sa Surigao del Sur; P50 milyon sa Agusan del Sur; P46.84 milyon sa Butuan City; P28.26 milyon sa Agusan del Norte; P10.57 milyon sa Surigao del Norte; at P10 milyon sa Dinagat Islands. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/marcos-caraga-region-nagtamo-ng-p700m-agri-losses-sa-el-nino/>

**REMATE:**

## **‘Aging but good rice’ ibebenta ng NFA ng P29 kada kilo**

June 20, 2024 09:53



MANILA – Inanunsyo ng National Food Authority (NFA) Council s ang pag-apruba sa programang Bigas 29, o ang pagbebenta ng “aging but good” stocks ng bigas sa mga piling benepisyaryo sa Kadiwa sites simula Hulyo.

“Ang programang ito ay pangunahing naglalayon na magbigay ng bigas sa abot-kayang presyo na PHP29 kada kilo para sa mga mahihinang sektor ng lipunan,” sabi ni Agriculture Secretary at NFA Council chairperson Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. sa isang pahayag.

Iginiit niya na ang Bigas 29 ay naaayon pa rin sa food security at affordability targets sa ilalim ng administrasyon ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

Kabilang sa mga target na benepisyaryo ay ang mga solo parents, senior citizens, persons with disability (PWD), at kalaunan ay Indigenous People (IP).

Samantala, tiniyak naman ni Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa ang magandang kalidad ng “aging” NFA rice na sumasailalim sa laboratory tests.

“Hindi maglalabas ang NFA ng stocks na unfit for human consumption. So, may procedure naman sila diyan kung talagang hindi na nabenta iyong mga lumang-luma na. Pero hindi naman umaabot doon,” paliwanag ng opisyal.

Sinabi ni De Mesa na ang palay ay itinuturing na “luma” kapag ito ay nai-stock sa loob ng anim na buwan, habang ito ay tatlong buwan para sa giniling na bigas.

Karaniwang ibinebenta ng NFA ang mga stock nito sa Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Office of the Civil Defense (OCD), at local government units (LGUs), bukod sa iba pa. **RNT**

<https://remate.ph/aging-but-good-rice-ibebenta-ng-nfa-ng-p29-kada-kilo/>



**REMATE:**

## **2 baybayin sa Samar postibo sa red tide!**

June 20, 2024 09:41



TACLOBAN CITY – Kinumpirma ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) ang pagkakaroon ng nakakalason na red tide sa mga sample ng tubig na nakolekta sa dalawang bay sa mga lalawigan ng Samar.

Sa pagbanggit sa pinakahuling resulta ng laboratoryo, sinabi ng BFAR na ang mga sample ng tubig-dagat na nakolekta sa Irong-Irong Bay sa Catbalogan City, Samar, at Matarinao Bay sa mga bayan ng General MacArthur, Quinapondan, Hernani, at Salcedo sa Eastern Samar ay naging positibo para sa mga nakakalason na mikroorganismo na nagdudulot ng paralitiko. pagkalason sa shellfish.

Sinabi ng fisheries bureau sa isang pahayag na bukod sa pagbabago ng tubig, ilang salik din ang naging sanhi ng pag-ulit ng red tide sa dalawang lugar.

“Kabilang sa mga ito ay ang mga agos, direksyon ng hangin, at ang pagkakaroon ng mga sustansya at sikat ng araw, halimbawa, na mga potensyal na nag-aambag sa sitwasyong ito,” sabi nito.

Hinimok ng bureau ang publiko na iwasan ang pangangalap, pagbebenta, at pagkain ng lahat ng uri ng shellfish at *Acetes sp.*, na lokal na kilala bilang “alamang” o “hipon,” mula sa mga bay na ito.

Ang mga isda, pusit, hipon, at alimango ay ligtas para sa pagkain ng tao basta’t ang mga ito ay sariwa at hugasan ng maigi, at ang kanilang mga laman-loob, tulad ng hasang at bituka, ay inaalís bago lutuin.

Regular na sinusuri ng BFAR ang mga sample ng tubig sa pamamagitan ng rehiyonal na laboratoryo nito upang matiyak na ang mga shellfish na nakuha mula sa iba’t ibang mga look ay ligtas para sa pagkain ng tao. *Santi Celario*

<https://remate.ph/2-baybayin-sa-samar-postibo-sa-red-tide/>

**REMATE:**

# Paggamit ng drone sa panahon ng wet cropping season kinokonsidera ng DA

June 20, 2024 09:29



MANILA, Philippines – Sinabi ng Department of Agriculture (DA) nitong Lunes na sinisikap nitong gamitin ang drone technology para matulungan ang mga magsasaka sa pagtatanim ng palay para sa tag-ulan.

Sa isang panayam, sinabi ni DA Undersecretary for Rice Industry Development Christopher Morales na maaari nitong dagdagan ang kahusayan sa pagpapakalat ng mga buto, pataba, at iba pang farm inputs gamit ang farm layout mapping. “Pwede mong piliin, i-set yung rate ng (the rate of) spacing, and it can minimize yung wastage ng mga nagamit,” sabi pa nito.

Ayon kay Morales na ang teknolohiya ng drone ay maaari pang bawasan ang tagal ng seeding mula oras hanggang limang minuto kada ektarya, gayundin ang haba ng araw ng pagtanim.

“Kung ipupunla ko pa, ita-transplant mo pa, it will take 10 days or so. Pero kung direct seeding, naka-ready na iyong plot mo, kapag gamit ng drone diretso na siya, magsho-shorten iyong number of days,” ayon pa kay Morales.

Kaugnay nito plano ng DA na ipamahagi ang teknolohiya ng drone sa mga magsasaka na kasama sa mga rehistradong kooperatiba ng magsasaka at clustered farm.

Samantala, ginawaran ng DA ang mga kabataang magsasaka para sa kanilang makabagong henerasyon ng mga bagong produkto, serbisyo, at pagpapaunlad ng organisasyon, bukod sa iba pa, para sa Youth Farmers Challenge (YFC) noong Hunyo 6.

Humigit-kumulang PHP6.1 milyong cash grant ang iginawad sa 12 pambansang awardees ng YFC Start-Up Component na nagkakahalaga ng PHP300,000 bawat isa; pati na rin ang P500,000 sa bawat isa sa limang nanalong negosyo.

Kabilang sa mga awardees ang mga batang magsasaka na may edad 18 hanggang 30 taon.

Kabilang dito ang mga kabataang magsasaka sa likod ng Kilusang Wais sa Agrikultura at Kaalaman Kasama ang mga Katutubo (KWAKTUTUBO), Andrea's Quail Farm & Hatchery, SirJuan Agriventure: New Generation's Philippine Native Chicken Raising, Wagling Cattle Enterprise, EcoGrow Agritek, Clawseth Aquafarm, MagRice App, Coco Chill Processing, Pilipinya Agercolo Leaf Fiber, Calabaza Deli, Qfarmercegen Eco Farm, Sikwate Tea Hub; pati na rin ang Sanagi Agriculture Farm, HealthyBite Food Processing and Preserving ni Reynro Herrera, Increasing Specialty Coffee Production: Quality in Our Locality, Rancho Velasco Agricultural Farm, at Prince Cacao Products Manufacturing. *Santi Celario*

<https://remate.ph/paggamit-ng-drone-sa-panahon-ng-wet-cropping-season-kinokonsidera-ng-da/>

**REMATE:**

# **Pag-import ng bigas ng Pinas lalala pa sa tapyas-tripa – USDA**

June 20, 2024 08:40



MANILA, Philippines – NAKAHANDA ang Pilipinas na panatilihin ang posisyon nito bilang nangungunang global rice importer ngayong taon at sa mga susunod na taon.

Ito ang naging pagtataya ng United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Inaasahan ngayon ng USDA na ang rice imports ng Pilipinas ay umabot sa 4.6 milyong metriko tonelada ngayong taon at mas tataas sa 4.7 milyong metriko tonelada sa 2025. Ang pigurang ito ay kumakatawan sa tinatawag na “upward revision” mula sa naunang pagtataya ng USDA noong Mayo, pumalo ang pag-angat sa 4.1 milyong metriko tonelada para ngayong taon at 4.2 milyong metriko tonelada para sa 2025.

“The surge in rice consumption is primarily attributed to reduced tariffs on the commodity,” ayon sa USDA.

Makikita naman sa data mula sa Bureau of Plant Industry na “as of June 6”, ang rice imports na may kabuuang 2.17 milyong metriko tonelada ay naitala, may majority (1.59 million metric tons, o 73% ng kabuuanl) nagsimula sa Vietnam.

Sa naging pagtataya naman ng gobyerno, ang retail price ng imported rice ay inaasahan na bababa ng P6 hanggang P7 kada kilogram simula sa buwan ng Agosto.

Ang shipments ng bigas na may kinaltasang taripa ay nakatakdang dumating sa bansa sa susunod na buwan.

Ang forecasts para sa retail prices ng mga imported rice ay base sa pagtataya ng Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

“Monitoring conducted by the Department of Agriculture in public markets in Metro Manila indicated that well-milled rice is currently priced between P48 and P55 per kilogram, while regular rice ranges from P45 to P52 per kilogram,” ayon sa ulat.

“Imported well-milled rice is priced between P52 and P55 per kilogram, while imported regular rice falls within the range of P48 to P51 per kilogram,” ayon pa rin sa ulat.

Ang special variety imported rice ay ibinebenta ng P57 hanggang P65 per kilogram, at ang premium imported rice ay sa presyo ng P50 hanggang P62 per kilogram.

“In comparison, domestically grown rice is available at P56 to P65 per kilogram for the special variety and P50 to P58 per kilogram for the premium variety,” ayon sa ulat. *Kris Jose*

<https://remate.ph/pag-import-ng-bigas-ng-pinas-lalala-pa-sa-tapyas-tripa-usda/>



**PEOPLE'S JOURNAL:**

# El Niño-hit farmers, fisherfolk in Caraga region get gov't aid from PBBM, DSWD

Thursday, June 20, 2024 Journal Online



In the government's continuing effort to assist El Niño-stricken farmers, fisherfolk and their families, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. was joined by Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Rex Gatchalian and other Cabinet secretaries in the distribution of aid and presidential assistance to select members of these vulnerable groups in Caraga region on Thursday (June 20).

“Batid ko ang matinding dinadanas ninyong hirap nitong nagdaang El Niño. Halos labing dalawang libong magsasaka dito sa Region 13 ay naapektuhan. Hinding-hindi namin nakalilimutan ang ating mga kababayan dito sa Surigao del Sur. Kaya po narito kami para personal na ipahatid ang tulong mula sa pamahalaan,” President Marcos told the beneficiaries at the Surigao del Sur Sports Complex in Tandag City, which was the first stop of the Presidential team.

(I am aware of the severe hardships you have endured during the recent El Niño. Nearly twelve thousand farmers here in Region 13 were affected. We will never forget our fellow countrymen here in Surigao del Sur. That is why we are here to personally deliver the assistance from the government.)

Among the assistance turned over by the Chief Executive were farm machinery, equipment and other support services such as four-wheel drive tractor, a multi-commodity thresher, a hauling truck, and a corn mill.

The President also turned over a check for Php12.48 million to the Provincial Government of Surigao del Sur and Php50 million to Agusan del Sur that can be used for various developmental projects to benefit the community.

The DSWD led by Secretary Gatchalian provided Php10,000 cash aid under Ayuda sa Kapos ang Kita Program (AKAP) to some 9,195 beneficiaries composed of farmers, fisherfolk, and their families affected by the dry spell.

“Kaya naman, ikinagagalak kong ihatid sa inyo ang sampung libong cash assistance para sa mahigit siyam na libo na makatatanggap dito sa Surigao del Sur sa ilalim ng AKAP ng DSWD,” the President said.

(Therefore, I am pleased to announce that we are providing ten thousand pesos in cash assistance to over nine thousand recipients here in Surigao del Sur under the AKAP program of the DSWD.)

The AKAP provides social assistance to individuals who may not have access to the regular forms of assistance since they do not belong to the poorest population.

To qualify as a beneficiary under the AKAP, the individual must belong to the low-income category, such as those whose income does not exceed the statutory minimum wage.

The President said in his speech that the DSWD has already provided almost Php9 billion in aid to beneficiaries in Caraga under the agency’s various programs and services.

“Nakapamahagi na tayo ng halos siyam na bilyong piso mula noong Enero noong nakaraang taon dito sa Caraga sa ilalim ng mga programa ng DSWD. Kagaya ng Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS), at LAWA AT BINHI (Local Adaptation to Water Access and Breaking Insufficiency through Nutritious Harvest for the Impoverished), at iba pa,” President Marcos pointed out.

(We have already distributed nearly nine billion pesos since January of last year here in Caraga under various DSWD programs. These include the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS), LAWA at BINHI (Local Adaptation to Water Access and Breaking Insufficiency through Nutritious Harvest for the Impoverished), and others.

After the distribution in Tandag City, the Presidential entourage proceeded to Butuan City to also personally extend various assistance to the El Niño affected farmers, fisherfolk and their families.

“Sa pangunguna naman ng DSWD, mabibiyayaan ng cash assistance na nagkakahalaga ng sampung libong piso ang nasa apat na libo at pitong daang makatatanggap mula sa Agusan del Norte at Butuan City sa ilalim ng AKAP,” the President said during the distribution of assistance at the Butuan City Sports Complex in Barangay Libertad.

(Under the leadership of [DSWD](#), around four hundred seventy beneficiaries from Agusan del Norte and Butuan City will receive cash assistance amounting to ten thousand pesos each under the AKAP.)

President Marcos also turned over monetary assistance to the City Government of Butuan and the Provincial Governments of Agusan del Norte, Surigao del Norte, and Dinagat Islands.

Aside from Secretary Gatchalian, other officials present in the two aid giving activities were Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Benjamin ‘Benhur’ C. Abalos Jr., Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) Secretary Leo Tereso Magno, and Special Assistant to the President (SAP) Secretary Antonio Ernesto Lagdameo Jr.

<https://journal.com.ph/el-nino-hit-farmers-fisherfolk-in-caraga-region-get-govt-aid-from-pbbm-dswd/>

**PEOPLE'S JOURNAL:**

## **SEARCA in talks for PH-Thailand diplomatic ties' diamond jubilee**

Thursday, June 20, 2024 SEARCA



SEARCA Center Director Dr. Glenn Gregorio (second from the left) presents a mini replica of the SEARCA Growth Monument to Thai Ambassador Tull Traisorat (center). Looking on are Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission Rangsant Srimangkorn (second from right), First Secretary Witsarut Piyavongsomboon (rightmost), and Deputy Director for Administration Joselito Florendo (leftmost). The SEARCA Growth Monument consists of 11 stylized human figures linked internally on a square base, symbolizing synergy amid the diversity of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) member countries toward a more prosperous Southeast Asia. SEAMEO is SEARCA's mother organization.

Thai Ambassador to the Philippines Tull Traisorat visited the Philippine government-hosted Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) to discuss joint efforts in a year-long celebration of the 75th anniversary of Philippines-Thailand diplomatic relations this year.

The envoy was accompanied by Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission Rangsant Srimangkorn and First Secretary Witsarut Piyavongsomboon. They were received by SEARCA Center Director Dr. Glenn Gregorio and other SEARCA officials.

Traisorat began by lauding SEARCA's significant contribution to [agriculture development](#) and food security in Southeast Asia, especially in Thailand. He also thanked the

Center for its continuous support to the Thai people through scholarships and training programs.

The emissary then announced a year-long anniversary celebration focusing on people-to-people connections under the banner of “Moving Forward to A New Era of Closer Friendship and Common Prosperity.” He invited SEARCA to participate in various events, including the kick-off celebration held last June 14 at Dusit Thani Manila and a symposium in August 2024.

In keeping with the focus on people-to-people connectivity, Gregorio proposed a symposium that would involve organizations within the Los Baños Science Community that have collaborated with Thailand. This would directly showcase existing connections.

To further strengthen ties, Gregorio also suggested a networking lunch focused on exploring public-private partnerships. The invitees would include Team Thailand Plus, a group comprising Thai officers from the Royal Thai Embassy Manila, Thai ministries (Foreign Affairs, Commerce, Defense Attaché) and Navy Attaché, along with Thai conglomerates investing in the Philippines and SEARCA’s network of institutions.

Building on these ideas, Ambassador Traisorat proposed a joint collaboration between SEARCA and the Embassy on an anniversary exhibition.

The ambassador also shared insights from the visit of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn to Banayon Elementary School in Leyte, Philippines in February 2024. He highlighted the school’s participation in a collaborative project with the Philippine Department of Education and championed by Princess Sirindhorn that promotes better nutrition and health among young students.

Traisorat explained that Banayon Elementary School implements a unique approach based on Thailand’s “sufficiency economy philosophy,” which emphasizes moderation, prudence, and social immunity. The school has established rice and vegetable farms, fishponds, and hydroponic facilities that follow these principles. Students harvest and sell the produce, with the proceeds going into a central fund used by the school. This successful model has extended beyond the school grounds, reaching the households of students and teachers, and even the wider community. Impressed by this initiative, Traisorat expressed keen interest in discussing the project with SEARCA and exploring its inclusion in the anniversary exhibition.

In response, Gregorio shared the success of SEARCA’s School-Plus-Home Garden Program (S+HGP) and its related projects on biodiversity enhancement and enterprise development in Busuanga, Palawan and Cambodia. He said SEARCA will invite Banayon Elementary School to participate in upcoming S+HGP activities.

Gregorio led the [SEARCA](#) delegation to the reception hosted by the Royal Thai Embassy in Manila on June 14 at Dusit Thani Manila, celebrating the 75th anniversary of Thailand-Philippines diplomatic relations.

<https://journal.com.ph/searca-in-talks-for-ph-thailand-diplomatic-ties-diamond-jubilee/>