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# Solon hopes Rice Tariffication Law amendments bill gets Senate attention

BY DEXTER BARRO II

Jun 23, 2024 02:13 PM

## AT A GLANCE

- Camarines Sur 2nd district Rep. LRay Villafuerte remains hopeful that the proposed amendments to the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) would become a top concern for the Senate amid the rising costs of rice.



(MANILA BULLETIN)

Camarines Sur 2nd district Rep. LRay Villafuerte remains hopeful that the proposed amendments to the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) would become a top concern for the Senate amid the rising costs of rice.

This, after House Speaker Martin Romualdez bared that the Senate and the House of Representatives were close to reaching an agreement on the proposed overhaul of the RTL, as embodied in Republic Act (RA) No. 11203.

In a chance interview with reporters, Romualdez said that reforming the five-year-old law was a “focal point” in his meeting with Senate President Francis “Chiz” Escudero.

Villafuerte, a lead proponent of the House-approved version of the RTL amendments, says he is hoping that senators will make it a priority to pass their counterpart version once Congress resumes sessions on July 22.

“We are hopeful that the proposed law on the timely overhaul of the five-year RTL will indeed be among the top concerns of our senators as a way to cut rice prices by as much as half to P30 a kilo or below from the current market range of P50 to P65,” he said in a statement Sunday, June 23.

Senator Cynthia Villar chairs the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform that is tackling this proposal.

Following President Marcos' order to reduce rice import tariff which is expected to slash the retail cost of rice, Villafuerte says the proposed amendments will lower the market prices even further.

“With rice accounting for a sizeable share of the food expenses of Filipinos, most especially of poor or low-income families, writing a law to amend RA 11203 by restoring certain regulatory and trading powers of the NFA (National Food Authority) to intervene in the market and make the staple more affordable and accessible for our consumers is one way for us lawmakers to help take the edge off sticky inflation,” the lawmaker explained.

However, several senators—including Villar herself—have opposed this proposal to restore the NFA’s power to import rice during emergency situations.

According to Villar, the sitting president must have this special power and not the NFA.

Meanwhile, Villafuerte pointed out that this proposed power shall only happen as a “last resort” of the government to address food security emergencies.

He said the oversight functions of Congress will enable legislators to keep track of the implementation of the would-be law to deter the NFA from possibly abusing its trading tasks, as what had happened in the past when it was still empowered to intervene in the market.

Under the House-approved House Bill (HB) No. 10381, Villafuerte said the NFA should be allowed to buy palay from local farmers or import the staple, but only with the approval of the Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary.

As pointed out by Speaker Romualdez, the proposed RTL amendments is expected to lower rice prices to P30 a kilo or below. Current rice prices range from P50 to P65 a kilo

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/23/solon-hopes-rice-tariffication-law-amendments-bill-gets-senate-attention>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Confectionary and ice cream market sweetens up the business scene

**BY CHINO S. LEYCO**

Jun 23, 2024 06:12 AM

The confectionary and ice cream market in the Philippines is experiencing robust growth, projected to increase by eight percent annually, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This expansion is being fueled by Filipinos' passion for sweets and the positive shifts in the country's economic landscape.

Filipinos exhibit a deep-rooted love for desserts, embracing a wide range of traditional and contemporary sweet treats. Desserts hold a special place in the Philippine culture, being an integral part of everyday life and special occasions.



San Miguel Foods photo

As the country's economy demonstrates progress and the middle class expands, accompanied by rising disposable incomes, consumers are increasingly inclined to indulge in high-quality confectionary items and artisanal ice creams. This changing consumer behavior presents a lucrative opportunity for manufacturers to introduce innovative products that cater to the evolving tastes of Filipino customers.

As such, the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) is urging US suppliers to "expand their footprint, with niche opportunities for established brands, private labels, and 'free-from' options" in the Philippines' sweets market.

"Fueled by Filipinos' fondness for food indulgences, rising disposable incomes, and increasing urbanization, the \$1.2 billion confectionery and ice cream market is expected to see robust growth of eight percent annually through 2028," the FAS said in a June 20 report.

The Philippine sweets market will expand faster than the projected five percent per annum across the entire Asia-Pacific region, with sales seen reaching \$1.8 billion in 2028, the FAS said.



"Filipinos, particularly those in the upper and upper-middle income brackets, enjoy indulging in imported confectionery and ice cream, not only as after-meal treats but also as popular gift choices," the FAS noted.

"Though price matters, they prioritize quality and unique flavors and are willing to pay more for established brands and innovative offerings," it added.

In 2023, a third of the products sold in the market were imported, worth \$390 million. American sweets exports accounted for only six percent, or \$23 million, of Philippine retail sales last year.

According to the FAS, the top-selling sweets in the Philippines were chocolate confectionery, which cornered 38 percent of total sales; ice cream (34 percent); sugar confectionery (25 percent); and gum (three percent).



USDA Facebook page photo

Local food manufacturers dominate the market with a slice of two-thirds of sales.

The FAS noted that Gokongwei-led Universal Robina Corp. (URC) sells the most chocolate and sugar confectionery in the country.

Tycoon Ramon Ang's San Miguel Foods is a major player in ice cream sales, competing with Froneri and Unilever-RFM. Columbia, another homegrown brand, is also popular in the gum and sugar confectionery segments.

"The United States captured a 15 percent share of chocolate confectionery imports. This highlights the potential for growth in other categories, where US market share currently sits at three percent or less. Achieving growth will require navigating competition from regional players who benefit from zero-tariff trade agreements, as well as competitors from the EU and UK," according to the FAS.

As the Philippines' confectionery market gears up for continued growth and innovation, the stage is set for a flavorful journey, with both local and global players vying for a share of this burgeoning and dynamic market landscape.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/23/confectionary-and-ice-cream-market-sweetens-up-the-business-scene-1>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Marcos formalizes rice tariff cut

**BY BETHEENA UNITE**

Jun 23, 2024 01:43 PM

President Marcos has formalized the reduction of tariff rate on rice from 35 percent to 15 percent.



MB File Photo/Mark Balmores

The rice tariff cut was formalized through Executive Order No. 62 which also ordered the modification of nomenclature and tariff rates on various products to ensure continuous supply of goods and to protect the purchasing power of Filipinos.

By issuing the order, Marcos acknowledged the need for a new multi-year and comprehensive tariff schedule that will provide transparent and predictable tariff structure.

The new tariff schedule, he said, will also allow businesses to engage in medium to long-term planning to improve productivity and competitiveness, facilitate trade and enhance consumer welfare.

“The implementation of an updated comprehensive tariff schedule aims to augment supply, manage prices, and temper inflationary pressure of various commodities, consistent with the Philippine national interest and the objective of safeguarding the purchasing power of Filipinos,” Marcos said in the EO signed by Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin.

Among the salient features of EO 62 include the maintenance of the current Most Favored Nation (MFN) tariff rates, ranging from zero percent to 65 percent, on various agriculture and



industrial products including natural gypsum and anhydrite; frozen potato fries; various agricultural products (onions, shallots, garlic, broccoli, carrots, cabbage, lettuce, sweet potatoes, and cassava); coffee and coffee substitutes, and salt.

Used in trade treaties for hundreds of years, the MFN clause requires a country providing a trade concession to one trading partner to extend the same treatment to all.

Reduced rates of duty on maize at five percent in-quota rate and 15 percent out-quota rate; meat of swine at 15 percent in-quota rate and 25 percent out-quota rate; and mechanically deboned meat (MDM) of chicken and turkey at five percent will be maintained.

There is also a reduction of the tariff rates on solid sodium hydroxide, zinc peroxide, and clinical trial kits to three percent and coal briquettes to zero percent.

The order also features merging of tariff lines on certain chemical and chemical products, textile, and machinery and transport equipment.

The current reduced rates of duty (zero percent to one percent) on products covered under EO No. 12 (s. 2023), will be maintained and there will be expanded coverage to include e-motorcycles, e-bicycles, hybrid and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles, battery, hybrid and plug-in hybrid e-buses and e-jeepneys, completely knocked down e-vehicles of all types, and nickel metal hydride accumulators.

Under the order, the comprehensive tariff schedule will apply upon effectivity until Dec. 31, 2028.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/23/marcos-formalizes-rice-tariff-cut>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Q fever a serious threat to agri-industry – DA

[Romina Cabrera](#) - The Philippine Star

June 23, 2024 | 12:00am



Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. on November 6, 2023. STAR / Jesse Bustos

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) said that Query or Q fever could be a serious threat to the local agri-industry following the first reported case in the country.

“This is a serious threat to our industry. Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel mentioned Q fever be taken seriously because even if it is a mild zoonotic disease, it is still zoonotic and can be passed to other people and our ruminants,” DA spokesman Arnel De Mesa said over radio dzBB.

De Mesa added they are coordinating with the Department of Health (DOH) as humans, who have been in contact with the goats, should be traced.

“We have already depopulated all the goats through the Bureau of Animal Industry. We are now conducting contact tracing for all possible contacts of animals and humans,” he said.

There were 66 goats that were part of the imported goats from the US but De Mesa said they are also tracing other animals within the 500-meter radius in the surveillance area for depopulation.

A total of 94 imported goats were culled to prevent the spread of the disease.

He noted this is the first Q fever case in the country and has to be reported to the World Organization for Animal Health as the goats have already left the government facility prior to the positive results.

He said they are investigating possible liabilities of the importer of the goats, which arrived in the country in January from the US.

They are eyeing possible blacklisting of the importer if found to be negligent.

The imported goats were transferred to a state-run breeding farm in Sta. Cruz, Marinduque in February after spending a month in quarantine in Pampanga.

Meanwhile, the DOH has warned the public not to go near animals suspected to have Q fever while a study to find out risks to humans is being conducted.

“If exposure is suspected, please consult with the nearest hospital or clinic,” the DOH said in a statement.

At the same time, the health department said there are ongoing efforts to check its effects on humans.

Q fever is caused by the bacteria *Coxiella burnetti*. It is a usually mild zoonotic disease found in animals that can be transmitted to humans, especially among farmers and animal handlers who are in frequent contact with infected animals.

Human to human transmission is rare.

According to the DOH, symptoms in humans develop within two to three weeks after exposure, and are commonly non-specific and mild.

“They include fever, fatigue, headache, cough, nausea and vomiting. Q fever can be cured by antibiotics that are widely available in the Philippines,” the DOH added.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/06/23/2364881/q-fever-serious-threat-agri-industry-da>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Familiar brew: Nestlé, DA perk up homegrown coffee with ‘agripreneurs’

By: [Tina Arceo-Dumlao](#) - Business Editor / [@tinaarceodumlao](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 02:14 AM June 23, 2024



SEASON STARTER Officials of Nestlé Philippines and the Department of Agriculture join Arnold Abear, a farmer-beneficiary of the “Nescafé Plan” initiative, in a symbolic planting of a Robusta tree to mark the start of the coffee season as well as the celebration of the National Farmers and Fisherfolk Month at the Bukidnon Integrated Coffee Center. —PHOTOS FROM NESTLÉ

Behind every steaming cup of coffee in the morning, which many Filipinos simply cannot do without, are hardworking farmers who unfortunately do not always get the appreciation and support they richly deserve.

Nestlé Philippines and the Department of Agriculture (DA), however, are keenly aware of their outsized contribution to the economy and to people’s very survival.

The two institutions, thus, celebrated National Farmers and Fisherfolk Month in May by recognizing 24 outstanding coffee farmer groups from Northern Mindanao and Soccsksargen—two of the top coffee-producing regions in the country.

These award-winning groups are among the first to receive fertilizer support from the Mindanao Robusta Coffee Project (MRCP), a joint project of the DA and Nestlé Philippines.

Aimed to improve the production and sustainability of Robusta coffee farming in Mindanao, the MRCP is a five-year agreement between the DA and Nestlé to energize every step of the coffee value chain through five main areas. These are research; fertilizer assistance; upskilling of farmers; establishment of coffee centers; and logistics and marketing.

The fertilizer assistance was also an offshoot of the research trial conducted by University of Southern Mindanao and Nestlé Philippines that will provide the best model of fertilization using a combination of organic and inorganic fertilizer to boost coffee yield.

This contributes to MRCP's main objective, which is to develop appropriate and cost-effective, climate resilient production technologies for Robusta coffee, the main ingredient in instant coffee.

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, Robusta is the most-produced type of coffee, accounting for more than 70 percent of the country's total coffee production. Unfortunately, this is still not enough to meet the country's growing needs.

At present, the Philippines can only produce 38 percent of what it needs, which means it has to rely heavily on imported coffee—mainly from neighboring Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam—to meet local demand.

While it is lamentable that the Philippines has to import so much coffee, it also presents an opportunity for local coffee farmers to earn more by meeting the demand and thus help minimize the country's exposure to fluctuations in global prices and foreign exchange volatility.



**PRIZED PICKINGS** Farmers check robusta beans.

## **Smallholders**

Nestlé is doing its share in boosting local production through its Nescafe Plan, which seeks to help coffee farmers become “agripreneurs,” increase their yields and income through better coffee varieties, planting techniques and quality inputs.

Smallholder farmers are the primary beneficiaries as these farmers, who till about one to two hectares each, produce as much as 80 percent of the Philippine’s entire coffee output.

Consumption increases every year but production has not been able to keep up with the demand due to key challenges.

These include aging trees, limited farmer’s access to quality planting materials and funding as well as climate change that has wreaked havoc on the planting cycle and planting conditions.

Nestlé Philippines chair and CEO Kais Marzouki, however, has assured these farmers of the company’s unwavering support, given that it is also in the multinational company’s best interest to source as much coffee from local producers as possible, to be processed at its coffee processing plant in Cagayan de Oro.

“As the country’s largest coffee manufacturer, we prioritize domestic sourcing from smallholder coffee farmers rather than imports, to contribute in the long-term to the growth of agriculture and the economy. We envision a future when the Philippines will be self-sufficient, perhaps even resume exporting coffee,” Marzouki said in a statement.

The Nescafe Plan, through its initiatives such as Project Coffee+ in cooperation with GIZ (the German state agency for international cooperation), demonstrates the advantage of training farmers in entrepreneurship, good agricultural practices, and regenerative agriculture to safeguard their farming resources for continued and greater productivity, and adapting to climate change.



CASH CROP Cheryl Caballero, Agriculture Undersecretary for High-Value Crops, examines robusta trees.

## **Biz school**

Since Project Coffee+ began in 2018, 1,500 farmers in Bukidnon and Sultan Kudarat have completed training in coffee-based diversified farming and agricultural entrepreneurship through the Farmer Business School.

To sustain efforts to upskill farmers on Regenerative Agriculture, Nestlé Philippines has embarked on the second phase of Project Coffee+ to train another 1,500 farmers, with added focus on regenerative agriculture in the production of Robusta.

Apart from the increase in yield, farmer participants also succeeded in doubling their net farm incomes, said Nestle. As a result, more than 80 percent of Project Coffee+ beneficiaries have already crossed the poverty threshold.

The DA, meanwhile, is allotting resources and effort to drive the production of high-value crops including coffee.

Under its High-Value Crops Development Program, the DA is committed to provide end-to-end support for farmers and producers through education and training programs, as well as provision of equipment and tools that will help them produce high-quality and high-yielding crops.

To mark another year of cooperation, DA and Nestle representatives planted a Robusta tree at the DA office in Bukidnon, signaling the beginning of the coffee planting season for 2024 to 2025.

This also came with the call for more farmers to adopt regenerative agriculture to reduce the impact of climate change while preparing the farms for the next generation of coffee farmers.

These regenerative farming methods that should make the farms more productive while keeping Mother Nature happy include intercropping, composting, agroforestry and planting of cover crops to improve biodiversity and restore nutrients of the soil, contributing to improved coffee quality and quantity.

With Nestle and DA helping more farmers adopt these proven methods to significantly increase yield, the Philippines should see more coffee proudly grown and harvested by Filipino farmers for Filipino consumers.

<https://business.inquirer.net/464904/familiar-brew-nestle-da-perk-up-homegrown-coffee-with-agripreneurs>



**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Who profits from the soaring price of cocoa?

Agence France-Presse / 06:23 PM June 23, 2024



A farmer holds cocoa beans at a farm in the village of Offoumpo, near Agboville on April 7, 2024. (Photo by Issouf SANOGO / AFP)

Paris, France — Though cocoa prices on the financial markets have soared, the rise is benefiting cocoa growers, bean processors, speculators and chocolatiers in unequal measure.

In March, prices rocketed to more than \$10,000 a tonne in New York after a poor harvest in West Africa due to a combination of bad weather conditions and disease devastating aging plantations.

times higher than last year.

## **Wide gaps between producers**

In Ivory Coast and Ghana, the world's largest cocoa producers, prices are set by the authorities in October on the basis of the previous months.

But by that point the harvests “have already been largely pre-sold”, said Tancrede Voituriez of the French agricultural research and cooperation organization CIRAD.

This reduces the impact of cocoa price fluctuations — whether upwards and downwards.

As a result, small-scale producers, who generally earn barely enough to live on, did not immediately benefit from the surge.

That said, the authorities raised the price of the intermediate crop in April by 50 percent to between \$2,300 and \$2,500 per tonne — a modest rise compared to what the farmers could charge on the international exchanges.

In countries with less regulated systems, such as Cameroon, Nigeria, Ecuador and Brazil, growers managed to pocket more from the trend.

There, farmers have been allowed to sell their beans to buyers willing to approach the prices paid on the financial markets.

But that deregulated approach comes with risks of its own.

“Soaring prices have made production more attractive,” David Gonzales, coordinator of the Peruvian Chamber of Coffee and Cocoa, told AFP.

The fear is that there will be an excess of cocoa in three to five years’ time — the time needed for farmers hoping to cash in to grow new trees — causing prices to tumble back to earth.

### **Middlemen in the hunt**

The major processors who grind the beans into butter, liquor or powder — notably Switzerland’s Barry Callebaut, America’s Cargill, Singapore’s Olam — generally negotiate a large part of their supplies in advance.

But some contracts have not been honored, forcing them to scour for urgently needed cocoa at high cost and in some cases to slow down production.

Barry Callebaut reported in early April that it had drawn more than usual from its cash reserves to finance bean purchases, but had enough cocoa on hand to meet demand.

Other smaller intermediaries may find it difficult to advance the funds needed to adapt to the higher prices.

Yet there is one group of middlemen who would have been delighted at the price rises.

“The smugglers would have done very nicely there,” Steve Wateridge of commodity firm Tropical Research Services told AFP.

He said black marketeers could have taken advantage of the system in Ivory Coast and Ghana by buying cocoa at slightly above the fixed prices and selling the beans on the open market in Togo, Guinea, Liberia or Sierra Leone.

### **Mixed fortunes on the markets**

Cocoa prices have risen because supply has fallen short of demand for the third year running, according to the International Cocoa Organization.

Investment funds that sensed the changing wind bet on higher prices, pocketing a profit in the process.

But from January onwards, prices became very erratic, even beyond the liking of funds with a taste for speculation.

Many investors withdrew from the market altogether: the number of traded contracts fell from 334,000 in mid-January to 146,000 in April, according to Saxo Bank’s Ole Hansen.

“You can’t blame the speculators for artificially inflating the prices,” Wateridge added.

On the other hand, trading houses and chocolate makers tend to guard against price reversals by betting against the financial markets, in this case on falling prices.

After the markets proved right and prices soared, several had to bank more funds to cover their potential losses.

Others short on cash have had to abandon their bets, which technically obliges them to buy back contracts on the market.

This, in turn, automatically pushes up the price of cocoa even further.



EU Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius(C) handles cocoa beans during a visit to a farm near Agboville on April 7, 2024. (Photo by Issouf SANOGO / AFP)

**Chocolatiers adapt**

Given the time lag between the cocoa harvest and the production of a finished bar, the cost of chocolate on the supermarket shelves should not in theory have soared for industry giants Mars, Mondelez, Nestle, Hershey's and Ferrero.

"We are largely covered as part of our forward contracting for the remainder of the year," Nestle's chief executive Ulf Schneider confirmed in April.

But as time goes on, rising raw cocoa prices will eventually hit their bottom line.

To avoid passing on the cost to consumers already hit by soaring inflation, manufacturers could alter their recipes — increasing the proportion of hazelnuts in Nutella, for example — or reduce portion size.

Even for artisan chocolate makers, the cost of the raw cocoa represents only a small part of the finished product.

"There's a big margin" on chocolate bars, Sebastien Langlois, the co-founder of French Cocoa Company, told AFP, dampening the impact of soaring bean costs.

His company, which sells organic and fair-trade products, has not yet raised its prices, he added.

<https://business.inquirer.net/464921/who-profits-from-the-soaring-price-of-cocoa>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# BoI seeing increased investor interest in agriculture projects

June 23, 2024 | 7:27 pm



REUTERS

THE Board of Investments (BoI) said it is seeing increased investor interest in agriculture, after investment promotion agencies (IPAs) were empowered to approve projects with higher investment thresholds.

In a statement over the weekend, the BoI said the higher thresholds at IPA level approved by the Fiscal Incentives Review Board (FIRB) helped stimulate interest in farming projects.

On Feb. 2, the FIRB, through Resolution No. 003-24, increased the threshold to P15 billion and below from the previous P1 billion and below.

Since then, the BoI has approved six agriculture projects valued at P13.38 billion.

Agriculture attracted the most investment with P6.05 billion, while the transportation and storage industry drew P3.95 billion, the BoI said.

The approved investments include the registration of a new producer of processed chicken, a dairy farm, and a cold-storage facility.

“Recent approvals with investments ranging from P1 billion to P15 billion highlight the benefits of increased investment thresholds for the agriculture sector,” Trade Secretary and BoI Chairman Alfredo E. Pascual said.

“These projects, upon completion, will drive the adoption of new technologies and strengthen food security. This is crucial to meet the rising food demand and sustain resilient agricultural systems despite climate change and other challenges,” he added.

Since the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises law was implemented in 2021, the FIRB has approved 28 projects valued between P1 billion and P15 billion, valued at a combined P126.61 billion.

Meanwhile, the FIRB approved 15 projects involving over P15 billion in investment, amounting to P835.89 billion.

“This increased project cost threshold for IPA approval affirms the government’s push to streamline business processes and manage incentives prudently,” Mr. Pascual said. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/23/603638/boi-seeing-increased-investor-interest-in-agriculture-projects/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Fishport landed volume up 55% in May at 66,587.86 MT

June 23, 2024 | 7:25 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/ MICHAEL VARCAS

THE catch landed at regional fishports rose 55.5% by volume in May, according to the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority (PFDA).

In a report, the PFDA said the landed catch was 66,587.86 metric tons (MT) during the period, up from 42,814.9 MT a year earlier.

Month on month, fish deliveries rose 10.5% from April levels.

The PFDA said the increased fish catch came despite the “lingering effects of El Niño and the onset of the rainy season which may have affected fish and fishing activities.”

The General Santos Fishport Complex reported deliveries of 34,747.19 MT, more than double the 15,788 MT booked a year earlier.

Deliveries at the Navotas fishport increased 18.7% to 23,312.20 MT during the month.



The Iloilo fishport reported volume of 3,172.54 MT, followed by Bulan fishport in Sorsogon with 2,310.55 MT and the Lucena Fish Port Complex with 1,817.06 MT.

The catch landed at the Zamboanga fishport was 898.94 MT, while that in Davao was at 222.389 MT.

It added that fish landed at Sual, Pangasinan was 78.7 MT during the month. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/23/603635/fishport-landed-volume-up-55-in-may-at-66587-86-mt/>

**REMATE:**

## **Q fever-infected goats isinailalim sa depopulation – DA**

June 23, 2024 13:13



MANILA, Philippines – Isinailalim na sa depopulation at condemnation ang mga hayop na apektado ng Query o Q fever, sinabi ng Department of Agriculture (DA) nitong Sabado, Hunyo 22.

Sa Saturday News Forum sa Quezon City, sinabi ni DA Assistant Secretary Arnel De Mesa na ginawa ng pamahalaan ang naturang aksyon matapos na magpositibo sa Q fever ang mga imported na kambing mula sa Estados Unidos.

“Noong na-confirm ng series of laboratory tests itong Q fever, doon sa 94 na kambing na naiangkat at nakarating ng Marinduque, iniutos po agad ng ating Kalihim iyong kagyat na depopulation or condemnation noong mga nasabing kambing magmula pa doon sa quarantine areas sa Pampanga,” ani De Mesa.

Isinagawa ang depopulation sa lahat ng mga kambing at baka sa lugar na pasok sa 500-meter radius ng infected site.

“Natapos po iyon kahapon o noong isang araw iyong depopulation noong mga kambing at baka na nandoon sa surveillance area at tuluy-tuloy din naman iyong contact tracing na ginagawa,” dagdag pa ng opisyal.

Nakikipag-ugnayan na ang DA sa Department of Health para imonitor ang kalusugan ng mga residenteng naninirahan sa apektadong lugar lalo na ang mga farm worker.

Ayon sa US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, posibleng mahawaan din ang mga taong makalalanghap ng alikabok na kontaminado ng dumi, ihi, gatas o birth products ng infected na hayop.

Kabilang sa mga sintomas nito ay lagnat, chills, fatigue at muscle pain.

Inilagay naman ng DA sa temporary ban ang pag-iimport ng mga kambing mula sa US hanggang sa matukoy na ang source ng sakit.

“Tuluy-tuloy iyong imbestigasyon nitong nangyari para masigurado na hindi mauulit itong paglabas ng Q fever, kasi ito iyong kauna-unahang pagkakataon na na-confirm natin na may Q fever tayo,” ani De Mesa.

Ang mga imported na kambing ay dumating sa Pilipinas noong Enero 11 at dinala sa quarantine facility sa Pampanga para sa mandatory 30-day quarantine, maging ang blood sampling at testing.

Lumabas ang positibong resulta para sa Q fever noong Pebrero 6.

Sa kabila nito, ang ilang mga kambing ay nailipat na sa Marinduque at sumailalim sa hiwalay na serye ng mga testing noong Marso 11.

Ang unang confirmatory test gamit ang reverse transcription – polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test ay may positibong resulta noong Hunyo 19, na sinundan ng kaparehong resulta sa final confirmatory test noong Hunyo 20. *RNT/JGC*

<https://remate.ph/q-fever-infected-goats-isinailalim-sa-depopulation-da/>

**REMATE:**

## **Modified duty rates magpapababa sa presyo ng imported na bigas ng P6 ‘gang P7**

June 23, 2024 09:05



MANILA, Philippines – Sinabi ng Department of Agriculture nitong Sabado, Hunyo 22 na magpapababa ng P6 hanggang P7 sa presyo ng mga imported na bigas ang pagbabago sa import duty rates ng ilang commodities.

“Ini-expect natin, ayon na rin sa unang pagtaya ng Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), na bababa ang halaga ng imported na bigas from six to seven pesos because of this tariff reduction,” pagbabahagi ni DA Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa sa isang news forum.

Ani De Mesa, sa ilalim ng EO 62, ang tariff reduction para sa bigas ay ipatutupad bago ang Hulyo 6, 2024, o 15 araw matapos itong mailathala. Ang tariff reduction naman para sa commodities ay eepekto 30 araw matapos ang publikasyon nito.

“So kung July 6 siya magiging effective, we can expect within August na magkakaroon na ng mga darating na bigas kung i-a-apply agad ‘yung bagong tariff scheme sa bigas,” sinabi pa ni De Mesa.

Sa ilalim ng Executive Order No. 62, ang ilang commodities katulad ng animal products, plants, pharmaceutical needs, chemicals, at iba pa, ay ilalagay sa Most Favored Nation (MFN) rates of duty.

“There is a need for a new multi-year and comprehensive tariff schedule that will provide a transparent and predictable tariff structure, and allow businesses to engage in medium- to long-term planning to improve productivity and competitiveness, facilitate trade, and enhance consumer welfare,” saad sa EO.

“The implementation of an updated comprehensive tariff schedule aims to augment supply, manage prices, and temper inflationary pressure of various commodities, consistent with the Philippine national interest and the objective of safeguarding the purchasing power of Filipinos,” dagdag pa. *RNT/JGC*

<https://remate.ph/modified-duty-rates-magpapababa-sa-presyo-ng-imported-na-bigas-ng-p6-gang-p7/>

**REMATE:**

## ‘Bigas 29’ program ilulunsad Metro Manila, mga piling lugar

June 23, 2024 08:52



MANILA, Philippines – Ilulunsad sa Metro Manila at mga kalapit na probinsya ang programa ng pamahalaan na magbebenta ng mga lumang bigas sa halagang P29 kada kilo lamang.

“Initially po ito ay gagawin lamang sa mga piling lugar at mga KADIWA Centers natin. Pero ang sa amin naman pong pagpupulong sa Department of Agriculture (DA), ang intensyon po nito ay talaga po namang maging nationwide pero kailangan pong i-pilot muna sa mga KADIWA Centers,” sinabi ni National Food Authority (NFA) administrator Larry Lacson sa panayam ng DZBB nitong Sabado, Hunyo 22.

Ang programa na tinawag na ‘Bigas 29,’ ay limitado lamang para sa vulnerable sector katulad ng mga benepisyaryo ng conditional cash transfer program ng pamahalaan, persons with disabilities, senior citizens at solo parents.

Nauna nang sinabi ng DA na makikinabang sa programa ang nasa 6.9 milyong pamilya o 34 milyong indibidwal.

Siniguro naman ng NFA na ang mga lumang bigas na ibebenta ay dekalidad at dumaan sa inspeksyon.

“Mayroon tayong sinusunod na standard na kapag sinabi mong nakatatlong buwan na ang bigas, pwede na natin siyang i-consider as aging stock. Pero in reality, tatlong buwan na bigas, hindi po old stock ‘yan. Sa papel lamang natin nasasabi na aging stock ‘yan,” ani Lacson.

“Tsaka po hindi naman kami naglalabas ng bigas sa NFA, whether it’s a regular rice natin na zero to three months or three months above, nang hindi po nasuri,” dagdag pa niya. *RNT/JGC*

<https://remate.ph/bigas-29-program-ilulunsad-metro-manila-mga-piling-lugar/>



**ABANTE:**

# P29 per kilong bigas hindi patapon – DA

- Abante News
- June 22, 2024



Tiniyak ng Department of Agriculture (DA) nitong Sabado na ‘Bigas 29’ program ng ahensiya ay susuplayan ng mga de-kalidad na uri ng bigas.

“Actually, magagandang klase ito na bigas kasi matandaan natin ang NFA (National Food Authority), ang bigas niya ay galing doon sa locally-procured palay... na magaganda iyong mga palay,” paliwanag ni DA Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa sa isang news forum sa Quezon City.

, habang tumatagal lalong sumasarap at nagiging mas good quality lalo na iyong up to one year,” pagtiyak pa niya.

Binanggit pa ni De Mesa na ang ibebentang lumang stock ng bigas ay sasailalim sa laboratory at sensory test ng NFA.

“Ito three months at para mas sigurado pa na maayos talaga, mayroong test – laboratory at sensory test na ginagawa ang NFA sa bawat batch na nilalabas especially sa mga aging stocks natin,” ani De Mesa.

Inaprubahan ng NFA Council ang ‘Bigas 29’ program upang makapagbenta ng abot kayang bigas sa mga piling benepisyaryo sa bansa. Target nito ang 6.9 milyong pamilya o 34 milyong inbidwal.

Sinabi pa ni De Mesa na ang mga ibebentang lumang stock ng bigas ay tumagal lamang ng tatlong buwan sa bodega, habang anim na buwan ang mga palay na binili sa mga magsasaka at gigilingin pa.

“Nagkaroon na tayo ng trial period ngayon, ongoing, para makita natin iyong mga posibleng logistical, administrative and financial concerns na gusto namin maging maayos bago magkaroon ng rollout, again, within July,” ani De Mesa.

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/06/22/p29-per-kilong-bigas-hindi-patapon-da/>

# Marcos signs EO to reform tariff rates



By Charles Dantes

**June 22, 2024, 12:10 pm**

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has approved Executive Order (EO) No. 62, reforming tariff rates and nomenclature to ensure a steady supply of goods and protect Filipinos' purchasing power.

The new multi-year tariff schedule, effective until December 31, 2028, aims to enhance productivity, trade, and consumer welfare.

“The implementation of an updated comprehensive tariff schedule aims to augment supply, manage prices, and temper inflationary pressure of various commodities, consistent with the Philippine national interest and the objective of safeguarding the purchasing power of Filipinos,” Mr. Marcos said in the EO signed by Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin.

It maintains the current Most Favored Nation (MFN) tariff rates of 0 to 65 percent on various products, including agricultural and industrial goods, while reducing tariffs on maize, swine meat, mechanically deboned chicken and turkey, rice, and other key commodities.

The order also merges tariff lines for certain chemicals, textiles, and machinery, expanding reduced duty rates (0 to 1 percent) to include various electric vehicles and components.

Reviews of MFN rates will be conducted periodically, with rice tariffs reviewed every four months.

Endorsed by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board, the changes are designed to manage prices, temper inflation, and support long-term business planning.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314462703/marcos-signs-ao-to-reform-tariff-rates.html>

**MANILA STANDARD**

# First Couple to aid farmers, fishers in Negros Occidental and Antique next week



By Caloy Lozada

**June 23, 2024, 6:47 pm**

Bacolod City — President Marcos will visit Negros Occidental and Antique on Thursday, June 27, 2024, to lead relief efforts for farmers and fisherfolk under the Presidential Assistance to Farmers and Fisherfolk (PAFF) program.

Mayor Alfredo Benitez confirmed the visit during a media briefing in Bacolod City, highlighting the preparations already underway by presidential personnel for the anticipated arrival of the Chief Executive.

The President's visit aims to provide financial support to individuals facing economic hardships, with a special focus on the agricultural and fishing sectors.

President Marcos will personally oversee the distribution of cash assistance to around 10,000 beneficiaries in Negros Occidental. Out of these, 3,000 recipients are from

Bacolod City, while each of the other districts in Negros will receive aid for 1,000 individuals.

Accompanying the President is First Lady Liza Marcos, who will lead a separate initiative called the “Laboratoryo para sa lahat” (LAB for All) project.

This program is designed to offer essential laboratory and healthcare services to underprivileged individuals, who struggle to access government-provided healthcare.

The project, a collaboration among various government agencies, local government units, and the private sector, aims to serve a total of 1,500 beneficiaries.

Meanwhile, Antique Governor Rhodora Cadiao confirmed to Manila Standard that after the visit to Negros, President Marcos will proceed to Antique to distribute similar financial assistance to the community there.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314462995/first-couple-to-aid-farmers-fishers-in-negros-occidental-and-antique-next-week.html>

# Tariff cut seen to lower rice prices by P6-P7/kilo

By Catherine S. Valente

June 23, 2024

PRICES of rice are expected to drop by P6 to P7 per kilogram (kg) in the coming months with the lowering of the rice tariff, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Saturday.

The reduced tariff is provided under Executive Order (EO) 62 issued recently by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

"So, we expect, according to the first forecast of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), that the price of imported rice will decrease from P6 to P7 because of this tariff reduction," Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said during a Saturday News Forum in Quezon City.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., through Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, on Thursday approved EO 62 to formalize changes to the 2024-2028 tariff program.

The order will effectively cut the rice levy from 35 percent to 15 percent.

De Mesa said the validity of EO 62, particularly on the rice tariff reduction, was 15 days upon its publication, or by July 6, while those for other commodities would take effect 30 days upon its publication.

"So, if it takes effect on July 6, we can expect that within August, there will be the arrival of imported rice. If such a tariff is applied immediately, there's a new tariff scheme for rice," he said.

The DA anticipates a price decrease by August, coinciding with the expected arrival of imported rice from Vietnam within the next three to four weeks.

With a landed cost of P46 to P47 per kilo and additional expenses factored in, the retail price of imported rice was projected to reach around P52 per kilo.

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

President Marcos' campaign promise is to reduce the price of rice to P20 a kilo.

At a Palace briefing earlier this month, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said the move was seen to bring down the price of rice to P29 a kilo.

"The Department of Agriculture (DA) is aiming for a reduction [to] P29 per kilo, at least for the poor, because we will complement this tariff reduction with the direct subsidies to the poor and vulnerable so that at least they could access the food," Balisacan said.

De Mesa said that EO 62 did not aim to set aside local production of Filipino farmers but to ensure affordable prices of imported commodities.

"Again, our priority is still the local production," de Mesa said, debunking impressions that EO 62 aims to provide more income to foreign farmers than Filipinos.

The DA officials said the government was looking for ways to reduce rice tariffs and eventually reduce rice prices in the Philippines.

Prices of rice in the country are also affected by the movement of prices in the international market, he said.



The review aims to determine if there are significant changes in prices of commodities in the international market, particularly on rice, that have to be determined by the Tariff Commission or by the government, he added.

Meanwhile, de Mesa assured beneficiaries of its "Bigas 29" program that they would be provided with good-quality rice.

He said the aging rice stocks would undergo the National Food Authority's (NFA) laboratory and sensory test.

Aging stocks are rice that has been stocked for three months and palay or unhusked rice that has been stocked for six months.

The Bigas 29 program, recently approved by the NFA Council, aims to provide affordable rice worth P29 per kilogram for select beneficiaries.

De Mesa said Bigas 29 would benefit about 6.9 million households or approximately 34 million individuals.

Among the beneficiaries are the vulnerable sector, including members of the government's conditional cash transfer program, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and solo parents.

De Mesa said the DA was addressing logistical, administrative and financial concerns to ensure a smooth rollout of the program next month.

"We have an ongoing trial period so that we can see those possible logistical, administrative and financial concerns that we want to be fixed before having a rollout, again, within July," he said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/23/news/national/tariff-cut-seen-to-lower-rice-prices-by-p6-p7kilo/1952726>

# Govt readies measures against La Niña

By Catherine S. Valente

June 23, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) on Saturday said it would employ various interventions in anticipation of the impact of the La Niña phenomenon.

In a news forum in Quezon City, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said the interventions included water management and distribution of flood-tolerant rice varieties.

"We are now preparing for La Niña. There's only a La Niña watch. La Niña has not started yet; it is expected in the last quarter," de Mesa said.



Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa

**De Mesa said a major intervention for La Niña, where above-normal rainfall was expected, would be water management.**

He said the agency through the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) would also ensure that irrigation systems were up and running.

"So, we ensure through NIA and then our regional field offices that these irrigation systems are in good order," he said.

In addition, de Mesa said the DA would continue to build water-impounding projects to store rainfall during the dry spell.

Earlier this month, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) declared the end of El Niño.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. reminded local governments to stand ready for the effects of La Niña and assured farmers of the government's preparedness.

"Your government is here at all times. During the dry season and the upcoming rainy season, we are ready to support you all," Marcos said.

The Department of Energy, for its part, has started its preparations for the La Niña phenomenon to avoid or mitigate damages to transmission lines.

Pagasa said La Niña may develop within June to August.

La Niña is characterized by unusually cooler-than-average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific.

The climate pattern is usually associated with above-normal rainfall conditions. Its potential adverse impacts include floods and landslides in vulnerable areas.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/23/news/national/govt-readies-measures-against-la-nia/1952724>

# Govt releases P9B in El Niño assistance

By Catherine S. Valente

June 23, 2024

THE government has disbursed over P9 billion worth of aid to farmers and fisherfolk affected by the El Niño phenomenon, the Department of Agriculture said on Saturday.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said in a forum in Quezon City that President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. himself visited El Niño-affected areas in Zamboanga Peninsula, Soccsksargen, Northern Mindanao, Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Davao, Bicol, Cagayan Valley and Caraga to distribute financial subsidies.

Some P700 million of the funds distributed came from the Presidential Assistance to Farmers and Fisherfolks.

Under the program, each El Niño-affected farmer can receive an aid amounting to P10,000.

The President, in an earlier speech, said that he wanted to deliver the assistance personally to affected areas so he can hear the people's grievances.

"We are going around the entire archipelago to deliver aid to those who have been affected by the extreme heat and drought due to El Niño, so my wife noticed that I got a sunburn from giving aid, but there is nothing we can do. This is the skin color of Ilocanos, we're used to being exposed to the sun, especially if it is to serve the people, for you," Marcos said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/23/news/national/govt-releases-p9b-in-el-nio-assistance/1952714>

**THE MANILA TIMES**

# Western Visayas' agriculture seen to remain strong

By Rjay Zuriaga Castor  
June 23, 2024

**ILOILO CITY** — The Department of Agriculture (DA) said Western Visayas stands to enjoy a boost in agricultural productivity despite the separation of Negros Occidental and the highly urbanized city of Bacolod.

Negros Occidental is one of the country's top agricultural provinces, but according to DA-6 Director Dennis Arpia, its exclusion from Western Visayas would not significantly impact the region's food security.

"That has no effect on food security. In fact, we believe it will help since there is a focus on our programs," explained Arpia.

Arpia noted that the creation of the Negros Island Region (NIR) reduces their area of responsibility, enabling a more focused approach to increasing agricultural productivity on Panay Island and Guimaras.

"The contribution of around 110 to 120 percent sufficiency in the whole Western Visayas, here in Panay Island and Guimaras, we can further increase productivity," he said.

"If before we harvested less than 4 tons per hectare, now, with more focused attention on one area, we can significantly increase it with the help of our offices and the commitment of our farmers to embrace technology and focus on the adaptation in the use of technology," Arpia added.

The NIR having its own DA regional office, Arpia said the government can further promote agricultural productivity.

Arpia also noted that the DA-6 budget remains unaffected as allocations are specific to attached agencies and each province.

"The political units have simply shifted. There will be no major adjustments on our end, except that one province will now be part of a different region," he said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/23/regions/wvisayas-agriculture-seen-to-remain-strong/1952767>

# **China's pork probe is yet another blow for struggling EU farmers**

**Bloomberg News**

**June 23, 2024**

**The threat of China slapping tariffs on the European Union's pork is the last thing the continent's beleaguered industry needs.**

**China, the world's biggest pork consumer, this week announced a probe on imports from the EU that could result in tariffs as part of a trade tit-for-tat. The bloc's top exporters of the meat—like Spain and Denmark—warn that any levies will further hit overseas sales that have been falling for several years, hurting the entire supply chain from farmers to processors.**

**The EU is already losing its crown as the No. 1 pork exporter. After benefiting from demand in China when African swine fever ravaged herds, European shipments have struggled as Chinese output rebounded and the bloc had its own outbreaks of the disease. Farmers' profits have also been squeezed by higher feed and energy costs and consumers eating less pork, prompting processors to cut jobs, close slaughterhouses and target more local markets.**

**The pork probe is the latest retaliation in a spat that has also included Chinese electric vehicles and European brandy. If tariffs do come in, EU hog suppliers may also find it hard to find new markets for niche products—such as pig ears—that China buys.**

**“We are becoming hostages in a trade war we aren't even really part of,” said Danish pig farmer Torben Farum, who counts China as a buyer of his products. “We actually have enough to contend with and then this just comes on top.”**

**China imported 930,000 tons of pork and pork offal products—worth \$1.86 billion—from around the world in the first five months of year, customs data show. Spain, Denmark and the Netherlands were among the biggest suppliers.**

**While overall European pork exports have dropped in recent years, China remains a crucial buyer for the EU as its single biggest overseas market for the meat. But China has needed to import less as its herd recovers, with sluggish consumption amid an economic downturn adding to an oversupply there.**

**For now, pork and offal products from Europe are clearing customs normally, according to industry sources who are closely watching the situation. Even so, some traders in China are now snatching up frozen pork product stocks at ports and in warehouses amid worries that any future trade measures against EU shipments could push up prices of those products, industry sources said.**

**If the year-long probe does lead to duties, that could benefit rival exporters like the United States and Brazil, whose supplies are already competitive in China. Total US shipments in 2024 are forecast to be on par with the EU.**

**It's unclear how quickly China's probe will progress. The investigation means companies have to register with Chinese authorities, and they may be questioned by Beijing before any decision is taken on potential tariffs, said Anne Richard, director at French industry association Inaporc.**

**"For now, we are in waiting mode," she said. "It will be complicated to replace China in the short term, as it's our No. 1 market."**

**A Ministry of Commerce spokesman on Thursday said China has the right to launch anti-dumping measures after the release of preliminary results, in accordance to related domestic and World Trade Organization rules.**

**China has targeted agricultural trade before. It lifted punitive tariffs on Australian wine exports this year, signaling an end to a three-year campaign of trade pressure on Canberra that also included barley. It also imposed lengthy restrictions on US poultry that affected companies such as Tyson Foods Inc. and Pilgrim's Pride Corp., before lifting a ban on shipments in 2019.**

### **Finding new buyers**

**A key concern for many European suppliers is finding alternative markets to send offcuts of carcasses such as trotters, snouts, ears and head meat, said Miguel Angel Higuera, director of Spanish pig-farmers group Anprogapor.**



**Last year, China accounted for 65 percent of the 3.2 billion kroner (\$460 million) worth of by-products Denmark exports, according to the Danish Agriculture and Food Council.**

**“When my pigs go to the slaughterhouse, they are being cut up and then—roughly speaking—the bacon goes to England, the ham goes to Italy, the snouts, ears and tails go to China, and the pork roast we’ll eat here in Denmark,” Farum said.**

**Selling those niche products to nations like China helps European processors keep costs down by spreading them out across the whole carcass. If those offcuts are instead sold at lower prices in smaller Asian markets or for pet food, then production costs will be passed onto premium cuts sold in Europe, said Rupert Claxton, meat and livestock director at consultancy Gira.**

**Any drop in demand is expected to drive carcass prices down. Danish farmer Farum isn’t seeing a decline yet, but he’s nervous about what the probe could mean for his industry.**

**“It sends a signal to the market and it may make some farmers reconsider if they want to continue or not,” he said.**

**<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/23/chinas-pork-probe-is-yet-another-blow-for-struggling-eu-farmers/>**

# 34 milyong Pinoy, magbebenepisyo sa P29 kilong bigas — NFA

[Angie dela Cruz](#)

June 23, 2024 | 12:00am



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

STAR/ Miguel De Guzman

**MANILA, Philippines —** Aabot sa 34 milyong Pilipino o nasa 6.9 pamilya ang makikinabang sa ‘Bigas 29’ program ng National Food Authority (NFA) na takdang ilunsad sa Metro Manila at piling mga lugar sa bansa.

Ang programa ay layong maibenta sa mga Kadiwa centers ang imbak na bigas sa halagang P29 kada kilo.

“Initially po ito ay gagawin lamang sa mga piling lugar at mga KADIWA Centers natin. Pero ang sa amin naman pong pagpupulong sa Department of Agriculture (DA), ang intensyon po nito ay talaga po namang maging nationwide pero kailangan pong i-pilot muna sa mga KADIWA Centers,” sabi ni NFA administrator Larry Lacson.

Ang programang “Bigas 29” ay limitado lamang sa vulnerable sector tulad ng mga benepisaryo ng conditional cash transfer program ng gobyerno, persons with disabilities, senior citizens at solo parents.

Tiniyak naman ng NFA na ang ibebentang lumang bigas ay maganda ang kalidad at dumaan sa mahusay na pagsusuri.

**Sinabi pa ni Lacson na may sinusunod silang standard na kapag naka-tatlong buwan ang bigas ay maaari itong mai-consider na aging stock pero ang tatlong buwang bigas anya ay hindi old stock dahil sa papel lamang ang pagsasabi na aging stock ang bigas.**

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2024/06/23/2364876/34-milyong-pinoy-magbebenepisyo-sa-p29-kilong-bigas-nfa>