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**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Pinoys' sugar rush driving confectionery, ice cream sales

[Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas](#) - The Philippine Star

June 24, 2024 | 12:00am



In between editing articles for a student publication and writing literary works, Air finds comfort in sugar.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — It is not just a sweet tooth for Air Aguinaldo, it is a whole lot of palate.

In between editing articles for a student publication and writing literary works, Air finds comfort in sugar.

Name it: cotton candies, gummy bears, chocolate bars, madeleines. Oh, not to mention, a plate of her aunt's baklava that has been crisped to perfection, oozing with... syrup.

She can even eat three packs of cotton candies in one sitting.

Air is wary that excessive sugar consumption could be bad. But for the 20-year-old creative writing student, eating sweets is part and parcel of her creative process.

“Aside from satisfying my cravings, eating sweets is also one way to relieve my stress,” she said.

“I am not picky with food, although I do have the visual appetite of a child, so I easily get attracted to vibrant looking desserts,” she added.

Air spends between P200 and P500 a week for sweets. She spends more during examination days.

Once, she went back-and-forth to a convenience store for a sugar rush. She bought a chocolate bar. Next, a pack of worm-shaped gummies. And then some mango cream-filled marshmallows.

Next thing she knew, it was a sugar crash instead of a sugar rush. “I just lost my energy after eating all the sweets,” she quipped.

But Air and other Filipinos’ liking for sweets – may it be chocolates, candies or even ice cream – is driving industry sales to grow by eight percent annually to \$1.8 billion by 2028, an international agency projects.

The United States Department of Agriculture-Foreign Agricultural Service in Manila (USDA-FAS Manila) estimates that the country’s confectionery and ice cream market would expand by half to \$1.8 billion by 2028 from \$1.2 billion last year.

The foreseen growth is fueled by Filipinos’ “fondness for food indulgences, rising disposable incomes and increasing urbanization,” according to the agency’s latest Global Agricultural Information Network (GAIN) report.

The report noted that the projected compound annual growth rate for the Philippine market would surpass Asia Pacific’s five percent growth during the five-year period.

“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 report read.

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

The report noted that chocolate confectionery dominated the local market with a share of 38 percent of the total sales followed by ice cream (34 percent), sugar confectionery (25 percent) and gum (three percent).

Local processors like Universal Robina Corp. have captured two-thirds of the market share for both the chocolate and sugar confectionery segments, according to the report.

Meanwhile, Mondelez and Delfi Foods are the leading competitors in the chocolate market while Columbia holds a “strong position” in the sugar confectionery segment.

Mars Wrigley and Columbia lead the gum market while Unilever-RFM, Froneri and San Miguel Foods are the leading players in the ice cream market, the USDA-FAS Manila said.

The report estimated that the country’s imported confectionery and ice cream market reached \$390 million last year, with sugar confectionery accounting for almost half of the value.

Ice cream accounted for 27 percent, chocolate confectionery (23 percent) and gum (one percent).

Some of the leading foreign brands in the Philippine market are Trolli, Kopiko, SKittles, Tootsie Roll and Wonka for sugar confectionery while Aice, Joyice, Binggrae, Baskin and Robbins and Keto for ice cream, according to the report.

The top imported brands for chocolate confectionery were Goya, Hershey’s, Daim, Ferrero, Reese’s and Ghirardelli, the report added.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/06/24/2365029/pinoys-sugar-rush-driving-confectionery-ice-cream-sales>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# State infrastructure spending jumps to P119 billion in April

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

June 24, 2024 | 12:00am



Laborers are seen working in a construction site along Road 10 in Navotas City on June 22, 2024.

Ryan Baldemor / The Philippine STAR

**MANILA, Philippines** — The government ramped up its infrastructure spending to P119 billion in April, mainly to finance road projects, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) said.

Based on the latest national government disbursement performance report of the DBM, state infrastructure expenditure and other capital outlays jumped by 36.2 percent to P118.9 billion in April from P87.3 billion in the same period last year.

The DBM said the substantial increase was due to the spending performance of the implementation of infrastructure projects of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

These include the construction, repair and rehabilitation of roads, bridges and flood control structures, as well as the construction of administrative, hospital and multi-purpose buildings.

Similarly, it was also attributed to the release of local counterpart funds for various foreign-assisted projects of the Department of Transportation and the implementation of projects under the Revised Armed Forces of the Philippines Modernization Program of the Department of National Defense (DND).

For the four-month period, infrastructure spending picked up by 18 percent to P335.7 billion from P284 billion.

The DBM said this was largely due to the implementation of various road infrastructure programs and defense modernization projects of the DPWH and the DND, respectively.

Meanwhile, overall government spending for April reached P494.5 billion, soaring by 32 percent from the P373.9 billion a year ago.

Apart from infrastructure, personnel services expenditures also inched up by five percent to P100.4 billion amid higher clothing allowance of government employees and bigger employer contribution to the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. and the Pag-IBIG Fund.

The government also recorded higher maintenance and other operating expenses to P92.4 billion due to assistance and subsidies for the agriculture, transport and social services sectors.

On the other hand, combined allotment and capital transfers to local government units picked up by 6.7 percent to P79.1 billion on higher tax allotments due to the Mandanas Ruling.

It should be noted that the tax revenue base, from which the tax allotment shares of LGUs this year is determined, was the actual tax collections in 2021 when the economy was starting to recover from the pandemic.

Interest payments also increased by 46 percent to P67.5 billion due to coupon payments for domestic and global bonds, variation in the timing of payments, as well as the impact of higher exchange rates.

An improvement in government spending was similarly noted in subsidy support to government corporations which tripled to P27.7 billion largely for the power sector, irrigation projects and resettlement and housing programs.

Meanwhile, net lending dropped by almost 70 percent to just P1.6 billion on lower government advances to the National Food Authority for the debt servicing of both its short-term and long-term loans.

As of end-April, the remaining program balance amounts to P809.2 billion or 14 percent of the record P5.768 trillion 2024 budget.

The DBM said the robust disbursement performance is expected to be sustained in the coming months as line agencies submit their special budget requests to implement their respective programs.

“These will consequently accelerate the pace of government spending for the rest of the year,” the DBM said.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/06/24/2365030/state-infrastructure-spending-jumps-p119-billion-april>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Farmers to seek Supreme Court relief vs reduced rice tariff

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

June 24, 2024 | 12:00am



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

STAR / Michael Varcas

MANILA, Philippines — Farmers' groups will ask the Supreme Court to stop the implementation of Executive Order 62 that allows a 15 percent tariff on imported rice, down from the current 35 percent, until 2028.

Graft charges will also be filed before the Office of the Ombudsman against National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Secretary Arsenio Balisacan and officials of the Tariff Commission, according to Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) legal counsel Virgie Suarez.

“Our priority now is the filing of a temporary restraining order (TRO) before the Supreme Court because what we want is to immediately stop the implementation of Executive Order 62 and then the graft charges against NEDA and members of the Tariff Commission will come after,” Suarez said at a press conference in Quezon City yesterday.



She added that the TRO petition would be filed before the effectivity of the EO on July 6.

“After the publication (of EO 62) on reduced tariff, it will be effective 15 days after or on July 6. We are planning to file on July 4 or July 5,” Suarez said.

EO 62, signed by Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin by authority of the President on June 20, modified the nomenclature and rates of import duty on various products, including rice, for the 2024-2028 period.

The levy on rice, which covers both in-quota and out-quota rates, is subject to review every four months based on the EO.

Under the same EO, Marcos extended the effectivity of the lower rates on pork, mechanically deboned meat (MDM) of poultry and corn.

Pork imports have an in-quota tariff of 15 percent and out-quota rate of 25 percent, while the tariff on poultry MDM would stay at five percent until 2028.

The tariff rates on corn would remain at five percent for in-quota shipments and 15 percent for out-quota volume.

Among the grounds to be raised before the SC is the lack of public consultation conducted by the Tariff Commission, according to the SINAG legal counsel.

“There is no public hearing by the Tariff Commission. We just learned about it when there was a recommendation made by the NEDA and then suddenly, EO 62 was issued. What was surprising was that it was signed on June 21, and it was immediately published on the Official Gazette,” she said.

Suarez also questioned the hasty implementation of EO 62.

“At stake here is the stomach and the livelihood of the farmers. Another ground is the unjustifiable reduction in the tariff because that will not resolve the inflation. That will not also decrease the price in the market of rice,” she said.

SINAG chairman Rosendo So said that at least 500,000 farmers would be displaced amid the flooding of imported rice in the country.

“We now import at least 28 percent of our rice supply. Farmers are affected. This early, because of the reduced tariff, rice millers are afraid to mill. They have a lot of stocks. Based on our report, the farmgate price of palay in Pampanga had already dropped to P18 per kilo for fresh harvest and P21 per kilo in Pangasinan,” So said.

He added that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) had projected that rice imports would reach 4.6 million metric tons or one million MT higher compared to the total rice imports last year.

“With more than one million additional rice imports this year, at least 400,000 hectares of palay plantations will not be planted, affecting at least 500,000 farmers. Our local production will decrease, which is contrary to the direction of President Marcos to boost local production,” So said.

Rice imports next year could even increase to 4.8 million MT, according to the SINAG chief.

“This means, the farmers will not only suffer this year but also next year with additional rice imports. Our farmers will surrender because of the lower tariff,” he said.

Former agriculture secretary Leonardo Montemayor projected at least P80-billion losses with the reduced tariff on imported rice.

“Our estimate on a per-kilo basis in the earnings of rice farmers is anywhere from P3 to P4 per kilo amid the drop in palay. If you multiply that by 12 million MT, that’s P36 billion to P48 billion. That’s only now and the end of the year, assuming that the total rice imports will be four million MT. The last projection was 4.6 million MT, the P3 to P4 drop could still increase to P5 (per kilo). Our preliminary estimate, based on the four million MT total rice imports, would be P80 billion. The impact (of the reduced tariff) not only to the farmers, but also in the overall rice economy is huge,” Montemayor said.

United Broiler Raisers Association (UBRA) president Elias Jose Inciong questioned the decision to implement the reduced tariff not only on rice, but also on pork, chicken and corn until 2028.

“This is an admission from the NEDA that the inflation will remain high until 2028. It is an act of surrender. What will be the effect on the confidence in the economy as the government cannot control inflation and we have to do this up to 2028?” Inciong said.

## **Goat meat**

Meanwhile, Montemayor yesterday asked Department of Agriculture (DA) and Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) officials to lead the goat meat tasting amid the Q fever scare after the first case of the disease was confirmed with infected goats from the United States.

In a chance interview with The STAR at the same press conference, the former DA chief noted that many Filipinos eat goat meat, particularly those who do not consume pork.

“Many eat (goat meat), like caldereta and papaitan. So hopefully, it will not affect the market for local goats,” he said.

The DA and BAI confirmed the first case of Q fever in the country after 19 samples of imported goats from the US tested positive for the disease.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/06/24/2365122/farmers-seek-supreme-court-relief-vs-reduced-rice-tariff>

## BUSINESS WORLD:

# Farmers back 4-6 months of tariff review

June 24, 2024 | 12:03 am



REUTERS

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

A FOUR-TO-SIX-MONTH review of tariffs imposed on agricultural goods would promise relief for domestic producers against tariffs lowered potentially until 2028, farmers said.

Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) National Manager Raul Q. Montemayor said the more frequent review proposal shortens the review period from the one year the FFF originally proposed for the 15% tariff on rice.

“A review could result in cutting short the implementation period and reverting to 35% or even 50% for shipments exceeding the Minimum Access Volume quota,” Mr. Montemayor said via Viber.

Executive Order (EO) No. 62, signed by President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. last week, formally approved the reduced tariff on rice imports to 15% from 35%, until 2028. It also covers lower tariffs on pork, corn, and mechanically deboned meat.

The EO also called for a review of the tariff schedule every four months to adjust to changes in global prices and supply.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said last week that he had proposed a shorter period for tariff reviews, following consultations.

In May, the Board of the National Economic and Development Authority approved a plan to lower tariffs on industrial and farm goods, including the further reduction of rice import tariffs.

Jayson H. Cainglet, executive director of the Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura said that there should be a mechanism for the retraction of the executive order.

“We propose benchmarks for revoking the EO if the price of rice does not fall, and when the farmgate price falls,” Mr. Cainglet said via Viber.

He added that about 500,000 farmers would be affected by the EO due to the decline in farmgate prices of palay, or unmilled rice.

“The executive order was not clear; it did not state what (actions) would be done after a review,” Danilo V. Fausto, president of the Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food, Inc. said by phone.

He added that rice farmers could face a potential P10 per kilogram decline in farmgate prices should import tariffs be lowered.

“The traders and rice millers will have to buy (palay or unmilled rice) at a lower price to compete with imported rice,” Mr. Fausto said.

The average farmgate price for palay rose 30.2% year on year to an average of P24.81 per kilo in May, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority.

Mr. Montemayor said issues raised in previous consultations with the Tariff Commission have remained unaddressed.

“In the past, we carried the burden of proving that the tariffs were not effective; I think, it should be the proponents of the tariff cut who should prove that their prescription was effective,” he added.

Roy S. Kempis, a retired professor at the Pampanga State Agricultural University, said the more frequent tariff reviews would make them more responsive to changes in global prices and supply.

“A periodic review and eventual adjustments of rates can adapt to these changes. This makes the tariff regime more realistically set based on how sensitive the changes are in world prices and supply,” Mr. Kempis said via Viber.

The Philippines is expected to import about 4.6 million metric tons (MMT) this year in the face of the lowered tariffs and increased consumption, the US Department of Agriculture reported.

The Philippines has imported 2.23 MMT of rice as of June 13, according to the Bureau of Plant Industry

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/06/24/603608/farmers-back-4-6-months-of-tariff-review/>

## **BUSINESS WORLD:**

# **PHL coffee imports seen falling 3.7% this year**

June 24, 2024 | 12:02 am



ALFRED KENNEALLY-UNSPLASH

PHILIPPINE coffee imports are expected to fall 3.7% this year, according to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

In a report, the USDA estimates that imports of soluble coffee to the Philippines would amount to 6.3 million 60-kilogram bags, against 6.5 million bags in 2023.

The Philippines imports most of its coffee requirement as domestic production cannot meet demand. Philippine-grown coffee can service about 38% of market requirements.

Most imports are soluble or instant coffee.

The Philippines is the fourth-largest coffee importer after Japan, the US, and the European Union.

The USDA reported that its global coffee export estimate in 2024 was downgraded to 119.5 million bags following lower output from major coffee producers.

“Central America and Mexico are reduced to 12.9 million on reduced exportable supplies. Indonesia is down 700,000 bags to 4.3 million on lower output,” it said.

On the other hand, the USDA raised its export forecast for Vietnam to 29.1 million bags as farmers reported improved yields through better irrigation, mitigating the effects of drought and high temperatures.

The Philippines imports most of its coffee requirement from Vietnam.

It added that domestic consumption is expected to drop 1.8% to 6.95 million bags this year.

The global coffee production forecast this year was downgraded to 169.2 million bags, likewise, due to lower production from Central America, Mexico, and Indonesia.

“Central America and Mexico are reduced... to 16.4 million bags due to higher-than-anticipated incidents of coffee cherry borer insect infestation as well as coffee rust. Indonesia is revised to 8.2 million as drought conditions in Southern Sumatra lowered Robusta yields,” it said.

Philippine coffee production was estimated at 450 thousand 60 kilo bags, against the 475 thousand bags in 2023. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/06/24/603607/phl-coffee-imports-seen-falling-3-7-this-year/>

# **Take a long view on rice**

By Lito Banayo

June 24, 2024, 12:10 am

**“There are many more solutions which could make palay farming more profitable for the country’s diminishing farmers”**

**(Part 3)**

**Rice consumption is a function of population. We consume more because we are more.**

**Many decry that Thai and Vietnamese farmers trained at UP Los Banos and IRRI in Laguna, yet we now import from them.**

**This is a silly observation, because it fails to account for the fact that in 1978, Thailand and the Philippines had about the same population, 43-44 million. Thailand is now 70; we are 115 million.**

**Yet Thailand is all of 51 million hectares in basically contiguous land, while all our islands put together comprise just 30 million hectares.**

**Which is why Thailand has more than 9 million hectares of palay fields, while ours is just 4 million.**

**Vietnam has 7 million hectares devoted to rice, and its water source, the mighty Mekong River, accounts for its higher per hectare productivity. (A kilo of rice requires 5,000 liters of water to thrive.)**

**Indonesia has 11 million hectares planted to rice, but it has 280 million people, which is why it still has to import rice.**

**Yet it imports less than we do, but maintains a huge buffer stock through Bulog, its equivalent of our then non-castrated NFA.**

**So there: we eat more but we produce less. What should be done?**

**First, we need to promote economies of scale in food production, even on rice.**



**The agrarian reform program has subdivided what used to be large farms into mini-farms, which, at next generation transfers, is only 1.5 to 2 hectare-sized farms.**

**We have to consolidate these into bigger plots, through cooperatives or even corporate-managed farms so that mechanization and management will produce more yield per hectare. Vietnam produces 6 tons per hectare while we produce only about 4.**

**While their farmers have small plots as well, the socialist government consolidates these into successful cooperatives, while our farmers, except for some in Central Luzon, are on their own with their tiny plots.**

**If huge conglomerates like San Miguel, the MVP and Aboitiz groups, etc., were to manage consolidated agrarian reform beneficiaries and produce optimally, there is little reason why we cannot produce even just 5 tons per hectare.**

**They can use this for their employee consumption, and sell the excess to government through NFA, or if Senator Cynthia Villar, the chair of agriculture in the Senate wishes, to whatever other agency.**

**Then again, NIA should review its current performance, especially since, even in Central Luzon, their end-line irrigation beneficiaries receive little if any water.**

**COA should be very vigilant about NIA performance, where irrigation canals built do not have enough sources of water, as even NEDA chief Arsi Balisacan discovered in PNoy's time.**

**There is a lot of harvested palay which are lost due to poor post-harvest facilities, with many subsistence farmers drying their palay in paved roads.**

**The total loss attributed to poor harvest facilities goes to some 7 percent, which translates to 1.4 million tons of palay, assuming DA's total figures of 20 million tons.**

**That 7 percent loss is equivalent to 840,000 tons of rice.**

**Supposing every congressman and senator's pork barrel is slashed in half, which is still hefty compared to what these legislators got in PNoy's time, that would amount to at least 400 billion pesos, more than enough to have mechanized dryers in every rice-producing province, whether solar-power driven or conventional, on top of increasing our irrigation facilities to produce at least 500,000 more tons of rice.**

**Philrice should be able to develop, along with IRRI, better inbred seeds, instead of importing highly-priced hybrid seeds that produce rice fit only for rich men's tables, and which require more fertilizers and other inputs.**

**Of course all these prescriptions would take some time to be fruitful, yet why are they not being started?**

**There are many more solutions which could make palay farming more profitable for the country's diminishing farmers, and if we start funding and implementing these seriously, we could produce at least 95 percent of our consumption needs by 2030.**

**We can then project rationally what we need to import to address the shortfall, given population increases (with government adopting more pro-active measures to taper our population growth).**

**Then we can program our import volumes over the next five to 10 years through long-term supply contracts, instead of our current practice of buying when the shortfall stares us in the face already. (Conclusion in next column)**

**<https://manilastandard.net/opinion/columns/so-i-see-by-lito-banayo/314463012/take-a-long-view-on-rice.html>**

# Region 2 farmers get P25M assistance

By Leander C. Domingo

June 24, 2024

**TUGUEGARAO CITY** — The Department of Agriculture's Regional Field Office 2 (DA-RFO2) has awarded more than P25 million worth of agricultural assistance to qualified farmer-beneficiaries.

DA-RFO2 Executive Director Rose Mary Aquino said the amount awarded through the National Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Program (Nupap) included funds to establish smart farming communities in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley).

Aquino said these farming communities include 11 farmers cooperatives and associations (FCAs), four local government units (LGUs), three DA Region 2 Experiment Stations, and SM City Tuguegarao.

Among the beneficiaries of the said Nupap project were Pamplona LGU in Cagayan; Quezon LGU in Isabela; Mallig LGU and Mallig Pro-Organic Farmers Association in Isabela; DA Isabela Experiment Station; DA Quirino Experiment Station; and DA-Nueva Vizcaya Experiment Station.

Aquino said each beneficiary received 17.5 kilograms of assorted vegetable seeds; 50 pieces plastic crates; 150 pieces seedling trays; 10 pcs plastic drums; two soil augers; two mini tilling machines; two wheelbarrows; 400 grams of potting media; 2,500 kilos organic fertilizer; 50 calamansi seedlings; a greenhouse with hydroponics; a poultry house; a nursery; and a mushroom house which amounts to more than P3.17 million.

SM City Tuguegarao also received 17.5 assorted vegetable seeds; 50 pieces calamansi seedlings; 2,500 kilograms organic fertilizer; 400 kilograms potting media; 150 pieces seedling tray; 50 pieces plastic crate; 10 pieces plastic drum; two wheelbarrows; a soil auger; a mini-tilling machine; a greenhouse with hydroponics; a nursery; a poultry house; and a mushroom house, with a total amount of P390,000 worth of agricultural inputs.

The nine selected Nupap project FCA beneficiaries are the Quirino Libertad Farmers Irrigators, Association in Quirino province; Banwar Irrigators Association in Tuao; Cagayan Association in Abulug, Cagayan; Damortis Women's Association in Solana, Cagayan; Northern Tumauni Cereal and Dairy Farmers Coop. in Tumauni, Isabela; Mengal Women Organization Inc. in Echague, Isabela; The Farmers of Luna Agriculture Coop. in Luna, Isabela; Farmers of Luna Agriculture Coop. in Luna, Isabela; Cutar Vegetable Growers in Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya; and Federation of Vista Hills, Kalongkong and Kakilingan Upland Farmers Inc. in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya.

Each of these received 4.5 kilos of assorted vegetable seeds and 100 kilograms of organic fertilizer worth P25,784.

Carol Albay, High-Value Crops Development Program and National Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture focal person, said they expect the beneficiaries to become role models in their respective communities and encourage young generations to venture into agriculture and be competitive agripreneurs.

**"This DA program under the projects of Nupap agricultural interventions is one way for us to achieve our goal of food security and affordable food for all Filipinos," Albay said.**

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/24/regions/region-2-farmers-get-p25m-assistance/1952899>

# PFDA logs record fish deliveries in May

By Janine Alexis Miguel

June 24, 2024

THE month of May saw fish delivery volume reach its highest level for the year despite the effects of El Niño and the onset of the rainy season, the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority (PFDA) said.

In its latest monthly report, the PFDA said that fish and fishery products delivered last month totaled 66,587 metric tons (MT), a 10.5-percent jump from April's 60,256 MT.

The agency said there was an increase in deliveries despite the dry weather phenomenon and the onset of the rainy season.

Among the regional fish ports in the country, the General Santos Fish Port Complex still recorded the highest volume unloaded with 34,747 MT, for a 23.98-percent increase from the previous month's 28,027.19 MT.

The Navotas Fish Port Complex, one of the largest fish ports in the country, saw volume delivered drop slightly to 23,312 MT from the previous month's 23,344 MT.

The Iloilo Fish Port Complex, meanwhile, sustained its five-month increase in fish and fishery products delivered, recording 3,172 MT delivered in May or 23.4 percent higher than the 2,570.82 MT logged a month earlier.

On the other hand, two Luzon ports registered lower fish unloading in May, with the Bulan Fish Port Complex posting 2,310.55 MT in May from April's 3,152.15 MT. Meanwhile, the Lucena Fish Port

Complex delivered 1,817.06 MT of fish last month, down from 2,030.36 MT in April.

The Zamboanga Fish Port and Sual Fish Port posted increases for three straight months in fish and fishery products delivered with 898.94 MT (19.47-percent increase) and 78.715 MT (12.56-percent increase), respectively.

Davao Fish Port Complex continued supplying its clients with sufficient fish volume at 222.389 MT, which is lower than the previous month's 307.03 MT.

**Despite the small volume delivered last month at 28.284 MT, the Camaligan Fish Port posted a 956.56-percent increase from the 2.68 MT supplied in April.**

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/24/business/corporate-news/pfda-logs-record-fish-deliveries-in-may/1952876>

# **BAI assures spread of Q fever under control**

**By Jed Macapagal**

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June 24, 2024

The Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) assures the public that measures are being done to contain the spread of Q fever which was detected from imported goats in a government breeding station in Marinduque.

Dr. Christian Daquigan, BAI national veterinary quarantine services division officer-in-charge chief, said Q fever is a widespread zoonotic disease caused by *Coxiella burnetii* that poses a public health concern as it can be transmitted to humans through contact with infected animals or their excretions and body fluid.

However, the US Center for Disease Control said while most people recover from Q Fever without antibiotics, those displaying symptoms require treatment, typically with doxycycline.

“BAI is conducting extensive surveillance in the affected areas to identify and manage any new cases promptly. Additionally, BAI is collaborating with the local government unit for further actions within Marinduque,” said Daquigan in a statement.

“To ensure accurate and timely testing of suspected cases, BAI has directed the procurement of additional PCR reagents for emerging and re-emerging animal diseases,” Daquigan added.

BAI said it depopulated more than five dozen goats imported from the US last Friday, following the detection of Q Fever among some of the animals at the facility. Other animals within the Marinduque breeding stations were also culled.

The agency said the disease was found to be present in Marinduque after conducting PCR tests on blood samples from suspected cases, with results of confirmatory tests released late Wednesday last week.

Apart from the culling and condemnation of infected and exposed goats, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. also ordered the immediate tracing of potentially infected animals and a temporary ban on the importation of goats from the US.

He also ordered the preventive suspension of certain BAI personnel pending investigation, a review of BAI’s quarantine and disease control protocols, and potential blacklisting of the importer of the infected goats.

“This is a very serious matter. We will leave no stone unturned to ensure that the health of Filipinos is not compromised. It is imperative that we act immediately and decisively to eradicate this disease that poses serious threats to both animals and humans,” Tiu Laurel said.

[https://malaya.com.ph/news\\_business/bai-assures-spread-of-q-fever-under-control/](https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/bai-assures-spread-of-q-fever-under-control/)



# **Farmers to ask high court to halt EO 62**

Ada Pelonia

June 24, 2024

**FARMERS' groups will file a petition for temporary restraining order (TRO) before the Supreme Court to prevent the implementation of Executive Order (EO) 62, which reduced tariffs on key agricultural commodities, including rice.**

**Virginia Lacsua Suarez, legal counsel of the broad agriculture sector coalition Sinag, cited the "unreasonable" reduction in tariffs and the absence of consultation and public hearing that should have been conducted by the Tariff Commission (TC) as grounds for filing the petition.**

**"We do not even know the recommendation made by the National Economic and Development Authority [Neda], then suddenly there is this EO 62," Suarez said in a mix of English and Filipino during a press briefing over the weekend.**

**"So this is surprising to us. Why the rush? What is at stake here is the livelihood of Filipino farmers," she added.**

**Suarez also noted that groups are under time constraint because EO 62 specifies that the tariff for rice will be slashed to 15 percent 15 days after the order is published in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.**

**"But we will do everything to prevent the implementation of EO 62," Suarez said.**

**The groups plan to file the petition from prohibition with prayer for a TRO or a writ of preliminary injunction before the High Court within the week.**

**She also said they would talk to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and urge the administration to rescind the EO.**

**"We should be helping Filipino farmers, but in reducing the rice tariff, we are bailing out the planters of other countries," she added.**

**The groups also said they plan to file a separate case to the Ombudsman against the Neda and the members of the Tariff Commission.**

**“They failed to do their duty and they even violated the law because they did not consult farmers and did not conduct public hearings,” Suarez said.**

**Republic Act (RA) 10863 or Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA) mandated the TC to conduct an investigation and hold public hearings wherein “interested parties shall be afforded reasonable opportunity to be present, to produce evidence and to be heard” before any recommendation is submitted to the President by the Neda.**

**Hog raisers anxious**

**Meanwhile, National Federation of Hog Farmers Inc. (NatFed) Vice Chairman Alfred Ng said a number of backyard raisers are already thinking of quitting hog raising.**

**“Many producers, especially backyard farmers, cannot continue if they do not have the support of government and if tariffs on pork imports would remain low,” Ng said.**

**“Only a few brave souls tried to venture into hog raising again but the backyard farmers have no capital. They are waiting for the government to come up with a solution to their predicament,” he added.**

**Ng also said pork imports for this year will likely surpass the previous year’s volume of nearly 600,000 metric tons (MT).**

**Data from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) showed that pork imports as of April 30 rose by 17.99 percent to 193,146 MT from the 163,690 MT recorded in the same period last year.**

**<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/24/farmers-to-ask-high-court-to-halt-eo-62/>**

# **‘First border inspection will protect PHL animals’**

Ada Pelonia

June 24, 2024



**Hog raisers belonging to the National Federation of Hog Farmers Inc. (NatFed) urged the Department of Agriculture (DA) to conduct first border inspection on all imported meat products to prevent the entry of animal diseases into the Philippines.**

**Alfred Ng, Vice Chairman of NatFed, made the pronouncement after the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) confirmed last Friday the country’s first case of Q fever in imported goats at a government-run farm in Marinduque.**

**“Dapat maging seryoso ang DA at ipursigi na nila yung first border inspection [DA should push for first border inspections of agricultural goods],” Ng told reporters during a press briefing over the weekend.**

**He attributed the entry of African swine fever into the country to the lack of first border inspection. “The government can easily address imported animal diseases if it conducts stringent first border inspection on imports.”**

**Last June 21, BAI announced that it culled over five dozen goats imported from the United States following the detection of Q fever at a government breeding station in Marinduque.**

**Agriculture Secretary Franciso Tiu Laurel Jr. said he ordered the immediate condemnation and tracing of all infected goats and animals exposed to the infected ruminants. He also instructed a temporary ban on importing goats from the United States.**

**“This is a very serious matter. We will leave no stone unturned to ensure that the health of Filipinos is not compromised. It is imperative that we act immediately and decisively to eradicate this disease that poses serious threats to both animals and humans,” Laurel said in a statement.**

**The BAI said two dozen imported goats left in the quarantine facility in Pampanga were also condemned even before tests were conducted on the ruminants to eliminate any possible source of Q fever infection. Other animals within the Marinduque breeding stations were also culled.**

**BAI National Veterinary Quarantine Services Division OIC Chief Christian Daquigan said Q fever can be transmitted to humans and other ruminants like sheep, goats, and cattle. It can be spread through urine, feces, and birthing fluids.**

**Daquigan said Q fever tends to manifest through abortion in pregnant goats and sheep while most often show no signs of the disease.**

**“BAI is conducting extensive surveillance in the affected areas to identify and manage any new cases promptly. Additionally, BAI is collaborating with the local government unit for further actions within Marinduque,” Daquigan said during a press briefing.**

**Agriculture Assistant Secretary and Spokesman Arnel de Mesa told reporters that the situation had been “controlled.”**

**“If there is going to be a declaration of an outbreak, it will be localized. It will be confined in areas where the goats were delivered,” De Mesa said in a mix of English and Filipino.**

**The DA assured the municipality of Sta. Cruz, Marinduque that all necessary assistance to contain and eliminate the infection will be provided by the agency.**

**Meanwhile, Laurel ordered the suspension of certain BAI personnel pending investigation, a review of BAI’s quarantine and disease control protocols, and potential blacklisting of the importer of the infected goats.**

**The agri chief recently issued Special Order (SO) 867 creating a special fact-finding committee to investigate and determine the facts and circumstances regarding the alleged violations and irregularities of the BAI officials in relation to the goats infected with Q Fever.**

**The committee would be headed by DA Assistant Secretary for Policy and Regulations Paz Benavidez II together with OIC Assistant Secretary for DA Inspectorate and Enforcement Carlos Carag, and DA Legal Services Director Willie Ann Angsiy.**

**Q fever is a zoonotic disease caused by *Coxiella burnetii*, as described by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. The US Center for Disease Control noted that while most people recover from the zoonotic disease without antibiotics, those displaying symptoms require treatment, typically with doxycycline.**

Image credits: [www.pcaarrd.dost.gov.ph](http://www.pcaarrd.dost.gov.ph)

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/24/first-border-inspection-will-protect-phl-animals/>

# **Ports post new fish unloading record in May**

Ada Pelonia

June 24, 2024

**The unloading volume in regional fish ports nationwide hit another record high in May despite the effects of El Niño and the onset of the rainy season.**

**The Philippine Fisheries Development Authority (PFDA) recorded its highest fish unloading in the agency’s history last month with 66,587.86 metric tons (MT) delivered in the country’s regional fish ports (RFP).**

**The volume last month was also higher compared to last year’s 42,814.9 MT.**

**The agency said May’s catch represented a 10.51-percent increase from the previous month’s unloading.**

**According to PFDA, the General Santos Fish Port Complex accounted for more than half of the total unloading record delivered to consumers for the month at 34,747.19 MT.**

**The Navotas Fish Port Complex trailed behind with 23,312.20 MT of fish products delivered to consumers in the capital region and nearby provinces, having “[taken] advantage of the peak season.”**

**The PFDA said that its Luzon ports, Lucena Fish Port Complex and Bulan Fish Port Complex, experienced a “minor setback” in May but managed to supply 1,817.06 MT and 2,310.55 MT of fish, respectively.**

**For the sole Visayas port, the Iloilo Fish Port Complex maintained a five-month positive unloading streak after transporting 3,172.54 MT of fish to its consumers.**

**The PFDA said the Zamboanga Fish Port Complex and the Sual Fish Port also saw a “successful streak” for three consecutive months with 898.94 MT and 78.715 MT, respectively.**

**It noted that the Davao Fish Port Complex continued to supply consumers with sufficient fish volume at 222.389 MT.**

**The agency said the Camaligan Fish Port had a “significant jump” in May at 28.284 MT, a 956.56-percent increase from the previous month’s 2.68 MT of fish delivered to consumers.**

**The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) reported that the damage to the fisheries sector caused by El Niño reached P61.64 million.**

**The production losses incurred in the Ilocos Region reached P32.65 million; Western Visayas, P26.56 million; and Cordillera Administrative Region, P1.2 million.**

**The report also revealed that the dry spell affected 3,086 fishers.**

**<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/24/ports-post-new-fish-unloading-record-in-may/>**

# **FIRB resolution boosts investments in agri, says BOI**

**Andrea E. San Juan**

**June 24, 2024**

**The Board of Investments (BOI) announced a “surge” in agricultural investments after the Fiscal Incentives Review Board (FIRB) issued a resolution allowing the agency to approve projects with an investment of up to P15 billion.**

**“From February 2 to June 11, the BOI has already approved six projects with investment capital between P1 billion and P15 billion,” the investment promotion agency said in a statement.**

**The BOI said these projects represent investments worth P13.38 billion, with the agriculture sector accounting for almost half at P6.05 billion.**

**Trade Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual, who co-chairs the BOI, said recent approvals with investments ranging from P1 billion to P15 billion highlight the benefits of increased investment thresholds for the agriculture sector.**

**“These projects, upon completion, will drive the adoption of new technologies and strengthen food security,” Pascual said, adding that this is “crucial” to meet the rising food demand, and sustain resilient agricultural systems despite climate change and other challenges.**

**According to BOI, investments in agriculture include the registration of a new producer of dressed whole, further processed, or cut-up chickens; a dairy farm and milk-processing facility; and a cold storage facility project.**

**The FIRB approved Resolution No. 003-24 last February 2, which increased the investment capital threshold for projects handled by Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) to P15 billion from P1 billion.**

**While IPAs now handle applications up to P15 billion, projects exceeding this amount remain under FIRB’s jurisdiction.**



**The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) said the FIRB move to hike the investment capital threshold for projects assigned to IPAs would “empower” these agencies to perform as this means giving them more authority to generate investments and grant tax incentives.**

**“The PCCI welcomed this recent issuance of FIRB. This would mean more projects will have to be decided quickly at the IPA level without going through the approval of FIRB, which became the bottleneck for incentives,” PCCI President Eunina V. Mangio said last February.**

**The PCCI said agribusiness, IT-BPM and creative industries, manufacturing, mining and mineral resources, and tourism are some of the major industries that are “ideal” for local and foreign investments.**

**According to the FIRB Resolution No. 003-24, the FIRB Board recognized the need to increase the investment capital threshold to promote the ease of doing business in response to the concerns raised by some IPAs, and to align with the policy proposals in Congress which seeks to give more authority to the IPAs in granting incentives. (Related story: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/02/20/firb-ups-investment-capital-threshold-for-ipa-projects/>)**

**Since the implementation of the CREATE Act in 2021, the FIRB has approved 28 projects valued at over P1 billion but below P15 billion, with a total investment of P126.61 billion.**

**“This increased project cost threshold for IPA approval affirms the government’s push to streamline business processes and manage incentives prudently. This sends a clear message to investors: The Philippines is actively fostering an environment conducive to sustainable business growth,” said Pascual.**

**<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/24/firb-resolution-boosts-investments-in-agri-says-boi/>**

# **Food sovereignty**

**Siegfred Bueno Mison, Esq.**

**June 24, 2024**

**Some professors of Ateneo Law School recently went to Hanoi, Vietnam for their annual Faculty Development Trip. Aside from the hot and humid weather, what I will remember the most about my first time in that part of Vietnam was how the people looked like, at least those who I saw in the capital city—tireless, slim, alert, as if always in a hurry. To put in bluntly, I hardly saw any Vietnamese who was plump, fat, or chubby. I think food is a major factor considering the typical Vietnamese meal is largely composed of fresh vegetables, fresh seafood, with a combination of herbs and spices. It appears that there is no threat to food security; after all, Vietnam is one of the biggest producer and exporter of rice and even coffee.**

**Ironically, the Philippines now imports rice from Vietnam, despite having learned rice cultivation techniques from Filipino agricultural experts just a few decades ago. Food security in the Philippines leaves much to be desired due to the prevailing lack of infrastructure, including farm-to-market roads, insufficient irrigation systems, and inadequate agricultural facilities. This issue has persistently plagued the nation, often serving as a recurring political promise during election campaigns**

**In a forum a few days ago, Congressman Argel Cabatbat posited the concept of food sovereignty, something far superior than just having sufficient food to eat. For Cong. Argel, the four pillars of food security—availability, access, utilization, and stability can be further enhanced by focusing not on the sheer quantity but the process behind the production. He said that people should be concerned not just about sufficiency but the assurance that the food they eat comes from sources that are fair and just to its farmers and environmentally friendly, among others. According to a US food organization, food security is more about “healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods.” Hence, abundance of food is essential, but the means of producing it is far more important. There is no food sovereignty when there is overexploitation of labor resulting to an imbalance of the burden of food production among farmers, traders, capitalists, and other stakeholders. Sound food sovereignty policies look at food more than just a commodity, but a gift of life, which should not be abused by technological**

**innovations that undermine food systems. Food sovereignty promotes the people's right to define their own food and "to determine the extent to which they want to be self reliant" (Nyeleni Declaration 2007). Some can be "food secure" by way of aid packages, but may not have "food sovereignty" because their access to their own food production is compromised, if not limited by forces beyond their control.**

**The Philippines being an inherent agricultural state, I think leaders of this country should embrace this identity and focus on food sovereignty and not just food security. We may out-talk India and beat them in the business process outsourcing but we can never out-manufacture Korea and other Asian neighbors. Our country was blessed with abundant natural resources, on land and in the sea. There were programs in the past focused on agriculture, specifically rice production, like Masagana 99, way back in 1973. Sadly, most agricultural experts consider it more as a failure. While the program briefly addressed the rice shortage, it could not sustain the farmer production due to the problematic credit system and the use of pesticides that were harmful to the environment. Former Agriculture Secretary Domingo Panganiban opined in one webinar that the program collapsed because it forgot about the small farmer and replaced the technicians with non-agriculturists. Compounded with the low loan repayment and rising farmer debt, Masagana 99 ended quietly 10 years after its creation. The government, at that time, could not simply wave a magic wand and instantly create self-reliant farmers.**

**In the Bible, believers agree that everyone has the right to produce their own food and be self-reliant, pursuant to God's instructions in Genesis 2:15. "In the beginning," God created food not only as a source of sustenance, but to serve as an integral connection between God and mankind. Man was created to be a major component in food production. Yet, when it comes to food, the Bible goes beyond bread alone. Physical food can be good and necessary but spiritual nourishment is the most essential just as how Jesus taught us in John 6:35, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." Applying what believers have read in the Bible or have been taught to them by genuine ministers is crucial to spiritual growth. Similar to physical food sovereignty, believers also need to scrutinize those who have been giving them spiritual food given the many fake preachers whose congregations are fixed on them and not to the Almighty God. I think churches whose leaders are twisting God's Word for their selfish desires need to be exposed for they are giving spiritual food that comes from corrupted versions. Believers need to be more circumspect in studying the Bible, as there can be "holy instructors" who can be the devil in disguise.**

**For each believer not to experience the same fate as Masagana 99, which had a great start but poor ending, issues on spiritual food sovereignty must be nipped in the bud as in the case of cult-like organizations like Socorro Bayanihan Services in Surigao del Norte. However which way their members refute it, SBSI remains as a cult to many believers. The leaders of the Catholic Church consider the belief of SBSI that its leader, Senior Agila, is the reincarnation of the Santo Niño, as an insult to Jesus Christ. Believers must have the courage to stay away from these false teachers and teachings. As in the case of healthy Vietnamese people who rely on fresh food for sustenance, believers should lean on “fresh,” unadulterated spiritual food that can only come from One Holy Book!**

**A former infantry and intelligence officer in the Army, Siegfred Mison showcased his servant leadership philosophy in organizations such as the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, Malcolm Law Offices, Infogix Inc., University of the East, Bureau of Immigration, and Philippine Airlines. He is a graduate of West Point in New York, Ateneo Law School, and University of Southern California. A corporate lawyer by profession, he is an inspirational teacher and a Spirit-filled writer with a mission.**

**For questions and comments, please e-mail me at [sbmison@gmail.com](mailto:sbmison@gmail.com).**

**<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/24/food-sovereignty/>**

# **Kinilaw na kambing iwasan muna dahil sa Q fever – Agri exec**

June 23, 2024

**Pinag-iingat ng Department of Agriculture (DA) ang mga mahilig sa kinilaw na kambing na iwasan muna ang pagkain nito dahil sa Q fever na natuklasan mula sa 94 na imported kambing galing sa Amerika.**

**Sa isang weekend forum sa Quezon City, sinabi ni DA Assistant Secretary at Spokesman Arnel de Mesa na hangga't maaari ay pigilan muna ang pagkain ng kinilaw na kambing upang makasigurong hindi mailipat sa tao ang Q fever.**

**Bagamat kinatay na lahat ng inangkat na kambing na nagpositibo sa Q fever, sinabi ni De Mesa na mas mainam pa rin na makasiguro upang hindi magkaroon ng problema sa kalusugan.**

**“Sa ngayon, hangga't maari umiwas muna sa kinilaw kasi hindi iyon dumaan sa heating process, hindi natin sigurado kung naluto iyon. Of course kailangan dumaan muna talaga sa pagluluto bago kainin,” ani de Mesa.**

**Bagamat hindi nakarating sa mga palengke ang mga kambing na nagpositibo sa Q fever, sinabi ni de Mesa na mas mainam na ang nag-iingat at kung may kaunting pag-aalala ay pinapayuhan ang publiko na lutuing mabuti ang karne ng kambing bago kainin.**

**Popular ang karne ng kambing sa Ilocos Norte, Central Luzon at sa Mindanao partikular ang kinilaw nito na paboritong pulutan ng mga mahilig sa alak sa mga umpukan o sa mga okasyon. (Aileen Taliping)**

**<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/06/23/kinilaw-na-kambing-iwasan-muna-dahil-sa-q-fever-agri-exec/>**