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MANILA BULLETIN:

DA-Bohol defends cloud-seeding amid rainy season

BY CALVIN CORDOVA

Jun 24, 2024 06:12 PM

CEBU CITY – No money will be wasted in the conduct of cloud-seeding operations in the province of Bohol.



BAGS of salt are loaded into a plane for cloud-seeding in Bohol on Monday, June 24. (Contributed photo)

The Department of Agriculture (DA)-Bohol gave this assurance as it defended the ongoing cloud-seeding in the province despite the announcement of the onset of the rainy season.

A P5-million budget for cloud-seeding in Bohol is funded by the DA-Bureau of Soil and Water Management from the General Appropriations Act 2024 under the National Rice Program Production Support Services.

A private supplier has been contracted for the 50-hour cloud seeding.

Engineer Cecile Opada, science research specialist of DA-Bohol, said eight clouding-seeding operations equivalent to 11 hours have already been conducted.

The ninth cloud-seeding operation was ongoing as of posting time.

Although the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration-Central Visayas (PAGASA-7) has declared the onset of the rainy season, Bohol still needs more water to enable farmers to start tilling their farms, Opada said.

Opada said the conduct of the cloud-seeding was actually based on the request of farmers' association in Bohol.

Although Bohol and other areas in the region are already experiencing rains, the province still has below-normal rainfall weather conditions.

“Bohol has a unique type of climate. In other regions, if it's the wet season, it's really wet in their areas. Bohol has Type 3 and Type 4 climate, it's really dry. In the 30-year average rainfall record of PAGASA, the highest rainfall recorded in Bohol was at 70.65 millimeters and it came in October when it is really the rainy season. So now, we are still in way below-normal rainfall conditions according to Pagasa,” said Opada.

Opada said should the amount of rainfall be enough for farmers to tilt their land and the 50-hour contract has yet to be consumed, the cloud-seeding operations can always be stopped.

“We can issue a stoppage order to the supplier. But we can issue another resumption order when the dry season arrives. We can use the remaining hours. We can always resume. There is nothing to worry because no money will be wasted,” Opada said.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/24/da-bohol-defends-cloud-seeding-amid-rainy-season>

DA expects high year-end rice inventory for 2024

BY AARON RECUENCO

Jun 24, 2024 02:29 PM

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is expecting around 3.64 million metric tons of rice inventory for this year, which it said, is equivalent to 93 days of national consumption.

The figure is almost 100 percent higher than the rice inventory recorded in December last year at only 1.9 million metric tons, according to DA Assistant Secretary for Operations U-Nichols Manalo.

The national rice inventory represents the total volume of rice available within the country at a given period after subtracting the demand from various sectors such as food consumption, waste, and other uses.

This inventory encompasses both locally-produced and imported rice. It serves as a critical indicator for assessing food security and planning for agricultural and trade policies related to rice.

“If the DA’s national rice inventory year-end projection is realized, the national inventory at the end of 2024 will be the highest in at least a quarter of a century, topping the 3.42 million MT in 2010,” said Manalo, citing data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

The DA attributed the good projection for the rice national inventory to what it described as less pronounced effects of El Niño phenomenon.

Meanwhile, Manalo said only four percent of the 4.5 million metric tons of corn target was affected. This translated to 188,861 metric tons at the end of the dry cropping season.

“This indicates that our rice and corn supplies were not severely impacted,” Manalo said. To mitigate the effects of the dry spell and assist affected farmers and fishers, Manalo said the DA has extended interventions across 170,469 hectares.

As of June 6, financial aid and farm inputs amounting to P9.23 billion have been distributed to 1,174,699 beneficiaries.

Manalo said the Office of the President also provided additional support that benefited farmers, fisherfolk, and their families across eight regions.

In preparation for the anticipated La Niña, the DA has initiated strategies focusing on water management.

“We are collaborating closely with relevant agencies to develop action plans that prioritize managing excess water resulting from anticipated heavy rainfall,” Manalo explained.

The DA will oversee initiatives like desilting irrigation canals, repairing and rehabilitating irrigation systems, inspecting and maintaining gates and hoists, and constructing small-scale irrigation projects and canals.

Additionally, Manalo said they will promote submergent-tolerant and early maturing crop varieties and establish seed reserves in key areas to ensure sustained food production nationwide despite irregular weather patterns.

Big-time rice price cut eyed before next month's SONA--Romualdez

BY ELLSON QUISMORIO

Jun 24, 2024 02:19 PM

AT A GLANCE

- House Speaker Martin Romualdez assured the public Monday, June 24 that the effects of the rice imports tariff slash would soon be felt, possibly before President Marcos' third State of the Nation Address (SONA) on July 22.



(MANILA BULLETIN)

House Speaker Martin Romualdez assured the public Monday, June 24 that the effects of the rice imports tariff slash would soon be felt, possibly before President Marcos' third State of the Nation Address (SONA) on July 22.

"We want this to happen as soon as possible. That's why we've been meeting and pushing for immediate action. Hindi pwede na aantok-antok tayo, patulog-tulog lang (We can't be sleepy and tardy), we have to be always on the ball," Romualdez said.

On Monday, Romualdez and fellow ranking House members met with Philippine Rice Industry Stakeholders Movement (PRISM) officials at the Manila Golf and Country Club in Makati City.

There, the rice traders committed to help the Marcos administration lower the price of rice--the country's staple

food--by as much as P9 per kilo by next month.

Specifically, they predict the following prices by July and August: P45 to P46 per kilo for well-milled rice, 25 percent broken, which is typically consumed by ordinary Filipinos; and P47 to P48 per kilo for premium rice, 5 percent broken, usually consumed by the middle class.

Currently, rice retails anywhere from P50 to P55.

President Marcos recently issued Executive Order (EO) No. 62, which reduced the tariff on imported rice from 35 percent to 15 percent.

PRISM is a group composed of various stakeholders across the rice value chain from seed growers, farmers, millers to traders, importers, and retailers.

The Speaker stressed the urgency of the situation as he noted the daily struggles of Filipino families. "Every day, as every Filipino family has to purchase, let's say, two kilos of rice, we know and we can feel the hardships of our fellow Filipinos," he said.

"That's why we've sprung into action. We want to meet this head-on. It would be highly desirable for this to happen even before the SONA, and I don't think it's impossible. We will all work together to make it happen as soon as possible," added the Leyte 1st district congressman.

Despite the significant tariff cut, the Speaker assured local farmers of continuing government support and to improve their productivity as there are sufficient revenues to implement these programs.

House Committee on Appropriations Chairman Ako-Bicol Party-list Rep. Zaldy Co, who was a part of the meeting, said that about P22 billion under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) was available for this purpose. The RCEF is sourced from the tariffs.

Romualdez--whose moniker is "Mr. Rice"--also mentioned long-term government programs to spur local rice production, such as solar irrigation, fertigation, and convergence of flood control funds for multi-use such as irrigation, hydro-power and bulk water, among others.

House Deputy Majority Leader for Communications ACT-CIS Party-list Rep. Erwin Tulfo and House Committee on Agriculture and Food Chairman Quezon 1st district Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga also attended Monday's meeting.

PRISM founders Rowena Sadicon, Orly Manuntag and National Food Authority (NFA) Officer-in-Charge (OIC)-Administrator Larry Lacson took part in the meeting.

"Maraming salamat po kay Speaker at sa lahat ng congressmen dito sa pagkakaroon po namin ng magandang pag-uusap tungkol po doon sa presyo ng bigas na mapaabot po natin sa market lalong-lalo na sa mga retailers po natin all over the Philippines," Manuntag said.

(Thank you to the Speaker and to all the congressmen present here for facilitating this discussion on rice prices, which we will relay to the market especially to our retailers all over the Philippines.)

Marcos will deliver his SONA at the House of Representatives.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/24/big-time-rice-price-cut-eyed-before-next-month-s-sona-romualdez>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA to lobby for higher 2025 budget

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

June 25, 2024 | 12:00am



Agriculture officials disclosed yesterday that the budget being sought by the department for 2025 was not approved by the DBM.

Philstar.com / Irish Lising

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is set to appeal the decision of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to reject the agency's proposed P513 billion for next year.

Agriculture officials disclosed yesterday that the budget being sought by the department for 2025 was not approved by the DBM.

The indicative budget of the DA for next year is roughly around the same level of its funding this year which is about P208 billion. If there would be an increase in the DA's budget next year then it would be less than P10 billion, the officials noted.

Agriculture Undersecretary Asis Perez said the DA is set to discuss the possibility of increasing its tentative 2025 budget with the DBM before President Marcos

submits the National Expenditure Program (NEP) to the House of Representatives next month.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said the department is already ready to appeal to lawmakers to increase its budget once the deliberations begin in August.

The higher funding being sought by the DA is imperative to play catch-up with what Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. pointed out as a 27-year investment backlog in the farm sector.

For one, the DA is trying to fast-track the construction of critical infrastructure in the sector such as farm-to-market roads (FMRs) and irrigation systems.

According to De Mesa, it would take “100 years” to complete all the irrigation and FMRs requirements of the country.

In irrigation alone, a P1.2-trillion investment requirement is needed to provide formal irrigation systems to some 1.2 million hectares of farms nationwide, according to the DA.

It added that there is a need for the government to construct some 64,000 kilometers of FMRs nationwide to complete the country’s 131,000 kilometers of FMR requirement.

At the end of 2023, the government completed 67,000 kilometers of FMR, based on the country’s FMR roadmap.

“The DA cannot do it alone in meeting that huge investment requirement. If the private sector will come in then definitely it will shorten the period to complete (the FMRs and irrigation systems),” De Mesa told reporters yesterday.

Perez said the public sector’s investment is less than five percent of the value of country’s total agriculture and fisheries output.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/06/25/2365281/da-lobby-higher-2025-budget>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA seeks €350 million ADB financing for solar-powered irrigation projects

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

June 25, 2024 | 12:00am



“We have a proposal with the ADB for the development of solar irrigation projects. This is a very inexpensive way of irrigating,” Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said in a food security forum in Makati City yesterday.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is seeking a €350 million (about P22 billion) loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to bankroll its flagship project of constructing solar-powered irrigation systems (SPIS) in key production areas nationwide.

“We have a proposal with the ADB for the development of solar irrigation projects. This is a very inexpensive way of irrigating,” Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said in a food security forum in Makati City yesterday.

De Mesa said the Philippine Solar Irrigation Project would diversify the irrigation systems in the country with the construction of smaller-scale units to complement the traditional large-scale systems.

The DA has devised a small SPIS, which can irrigate eight to 10 hectares of land, that can be developed and deployed between eight and 10 days, De Mesa said.

He added that a bigger unit of SPIS that is capable of irrigating 15 to 30 hectares would take a maximum of two months for deployment.

The agriculture official said the proposed borrowing has hurdled the inter-agency Investment Coordination Committee (ICC) technical board.

The DA is improving the proposal before submitting it to the ICC Cabinet Committee, which would evaluate the proposal and make the necessary recommendation for consideration of the National Economic and Development Authority Board chaired by President Marcos.

The DA is hopeful that the project will be approved this year.

De Mesa said the proposed loan would be spread across three years of the implementing period or from 2025 until 2027.

In a related development, the DA will request an additional P22 billion funding from the Department and Budget Management to finance its SPIS this year as well as its solar-powered cold storages. Each project would get an allocation of P11 billion, De Mesa said.

“Our initial design for the solar-powered cold storage is that it is good for five to 10 metric tons. It will be distributed to production areas of fruits, vegetables, fish and even to coastal communities,” he said.

The current DA leadership under Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. revived the SPIS as one of the department’s flagship programs to address the tremendous backlog in agricultural infrastructure, including irrigation systems.

The DA estimates that there are at least 1.2 million hectares that still do not have formal irrigation systems, which would require a P1.2 trillion investment at average cost of P1 million per hectare.

Agriculture officials earlier disclosed that the department plans to spend at least P5 billion annually from national coffers for the construction of SPI

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/06/25/2365287/da-seeks-350-million-ADB-financing-solar-powered-irrigation-projects>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Traders commit to lower rice prices starting July

[Delon Porcalla](#) - The Philippine Star

June 25, 2024 | 12:00am



Workers stack sacks of rice in a warehouse in San Ildefonso, Bulacan in this June 7 file photo.

Michael Varcas

MANILA, Philippines — Rice retailers have committed to selling rice at lower prices, or P45 per kilo, starting in July.

At a meeting yesterday with Speaker Martin Romualdez, rice traders predicted rice prices in July and August: well-milled rice, 25 percent broken, at P45 to P46 per kilo, and premium rice, five percent broken, at P47 to P48 per kilo.

“We are prepared to help the government soften the impact of inflation and help the people feel the immediate effect of lowering the tariff for rice,” said Grain Retailers Confederation of the Philippines spokesman Orly Manuntag.

“Let’s help each other so that we can ensure the reduction of rice tariffs and thus result in the reduction in the price of rice,” said Grecon lead convenor Rowena Sadicon.

The Philippine Rice Industry Stakeholders Movement, led by Manuntag and Sadicon, met with Romualdez to discuss ways to lower rice retail prices.

President Marcos issued Executive Order 62 on June 20, formalizing reduced tariffs to 15 percent from 35 percent until 2028. Economic managers believe it could bring down rice prices to P29 per kilo.

“Your commitment to making affordable rice accessible to our people is greatly appreciated,” Romualdez said after the meeting at the Manila Golf Club in Makati City.

He reiterated that the tariff cuts and the government’s direct sale of imported rice through Kadiwa centers should substantially lower the retail price of rice.

Romualdez earlier said the effects of the tariff cuts would be felt as soon as possible, ideally before the third State of the Nation Address on July 22.

Also present at the meeting were National Food Authority (NFA) officer-in-charge administrator Larry Lacson, House committee on appropriations chairman Rep. Zaldy Co, House committee on agriculture and food chairman Rep. Mark Enverga and House Deputy Majority Leader Erwin Tulfo.

Farmgate prices

EO 62 could result in depressed farmgate prices of palay, Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa told radio dzBB yesterday.

“It (tariff cuts) will really have an effect. As of now, the farmgate (price of palay) is high. If the retail price of imported rice will go down, that (drop in farmgate price) will be the effect and will have an impact on the level of our local farmers,” De Mesa said.

Before EO 62 takes effect on July 6, a temporary restraining order would be filed before the Supreme Court by farmers’ groups led by the Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura and the Federation of Free Farmers.

At least 500,000 farmers would be displaced amid the flooding of imported rice in the country, Sinag chairman Rosendo So earlier warned.

The Philippines is importing at least 28 percent of its rice supply, he noted.

Unless the high court issues a TRO, the Department of Agriculture will abide by EO 62, De Mesa said.

The NFA will continue procuring palay from farmers at higher farmgate prices, between P23 and P30, but De Mesa admitted it would not be enough to help affected farmers.

Based on the Philippine Statistics Authority's initial estimate, De Mesa said the retail price of imported rice will go down by P6 to P7 per kilo following EO 62's implementation.

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

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. yesterday said EO 62 is not "anti-farmer" since the government is "committed to filling any funding gap" in the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund.

Under the Rice Tariffication Law, revenues collected from rice tariffs should pay for RCEF's yearly P10-billion requirement, which would bankroll programs raising the competitiveness and output of palay farmers.

Meanwhile, graft charges will be filed before the ombudsman against National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio Balisacan and Tariff Commission officials, said Sinag legal counsel Virgie Suarez. — **Bella Cariaso**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/06/25/2365373/traders-commit-lower-rice-prices-starting-july>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Farmers told to wear protection when handling goats, cattle

[Rhodina Villanueva](#) - The Philippine Star

June 25, 2024 | 12:00am



A worker is seen busy attending to farm animals at a compound of the provincial agriculture and veterinary field office in San Quintin, Pangasinan on January 28, 2022.

STAR / Cesar Ramirez

MANILA, Philippines — Goat and cattle raisers should wear protective gear including face masks and gloves when tending to their animals to avoid contracting Q fever, an infectious diseases expert said yesterday.

Rontgene Solante, president of the Philippine College of Physicians, said people handling cattle and goats have higher chances of contracting the disease.

“They should protect themselves by wearing gloves, especially those taking care of a large number of animals or working in a goat farm,” Solante said in an interview yesterday.

Solante's advice came following the detection by the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture, of the first case of Q fever in dozens of goats imported from the United States.

Of the 94 imported goats, 19 tested positive for Q fever, the BAI said.

Solante said farmers should take extra care when slaughtering goats as they may come in contact with fluids coming out of the animals.

"They have to wear something that will serve as a shield from the splashing liquid when goats are being butchered," Solante said, noting that goats' wastes are also contaminated with organisms.

"Those doing the cleaning can be infected by touching and not wearing any protective gear like face masks since dried animal manure is aerosolized. The most common transmission is through the lungs," he said.

Eating goat meat is safe provided this is cooked thoroughly.

Fluids and wastes from goats are the most common cause of infection, Solante said.

Q fever is a mild zoonotic disease found in animals but can be transmitted to humans, especially among people frequently in contact with infected animals.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/06/25/2365400/farmers-told-wear-protection-when-handling-goats-cattle>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

P42/kilo rice possible as tariff cut takes effect

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

June 25, 2024 | 12:00am



Industry group expects rice prices to range from P42 to P46 per kilogram this July as a result of the reduced rice tariffs.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — Some retailers in the country vowed yesterday to sell rice for as low as P42 per kilogram beginning next month once the reduced tariff rates on imported staple takes effect.

The Philippine Rice Industry Stakeholders Movement (PRISM) said it expects rice prices in the market to range from P42-P46 per kilogram as a result of the reduced rice tariffs.

President Marcos recently formalized the reduction in rice tariffs to 15 percent from the present 35 percent through Executive Order (EO) 62. Under the EO, the tariff cut would take effect on July 5, 2024.

PRISM is a group composed of various players in the rice industry from seed growers, farmers, millers to traders, importers and retailers.

“This is one of the things that we would do so that the markets would feel the effect of EO 62. We expect rice prices to be between P42 and P46 per kilogram this July,” said Orly Manuntag, co-founder of PRISM and spokesman of the Grains Retailers Confederation of the Philippines.

Retail prices of rice currently range between P52 and P55 per kilogram.

PRISM co-founder and lead convenor Rowena Sadicon assured rice farmers that their interests would be advanced by the group amid the tariff reduction.

“We will push for cluster farming and ensure that they will get the necessary help so that our local production would not be neglected,” she said.

The leaders of PRISM met with House Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez and other leaders of the House of the Representatives yesterday to discuss the impact of the reduced rice tariffs on the domestic market.

Present during the meeting were House committee on appropriations chairman Zaldy Co, House committee on agriculture and food chairman Mark Enverga, Deputy Majority Leader Erwin Tulfo and National Food Authority OIC-Administrator Larry Lacson.

This developed as the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) said reduced rice tariffs may not necessarily remain in place until 2028 and may revert back to previous levels.

NEDA said a periodic review will be conducted and the government will be flexible in responding to changes in the market.

“If the situation changes, the government must have that flexibility to re-examine its tools. If the tools have become already quite dull for a particular event, then you have to change those tools,” NEDA Secretary Arsenio Balisacan told reporters yesterday when asked if it would be possible for the reduced rice tariffs to not remain in place until 2028.

He said tariffs need to be reviewed as situations change.

“If world prices go down, you have to do what you can to adjust the tariff. That’s what many countries do,” he said.

Similar to what is done when oil prices go up, he said there is a need to have a mechanism to reduce the domestic price to ensure developments outside, especially sharp price increases, are not transmitted completely to the local economy.

“That way, we stabilize our prices and we don’t suffer from high inflation and we don’t suffer from high interest rates,” he said.

He said a dynamic economy is about being flexible.

“If you cannot navigate major changes around us, because you are so constrained from all your policy tools, then you will not be able to survive a major shock,” the NEDA chief also said.

As part of EO 62, the tariff rate for rice will be subject to a review every four months from the order’s effectivity.

For the review, the NEDA will be submitting its findings and recommendations. —
Louella Desiderio

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/06/25/2365298/p42kilo-rice-possible-tariff-cut-takes-effect>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Five things BBM did in two years



VIRTUAL REALITY - Tony Lopez - The Philippine Star

June 25, 2024 | 12:00am

On June 30, 2024, Ferdinand “Bongbong” Romualdez Marcos Jr. finishes the first two years of his six-year presidency.

In two years, Marcos Jr. did five things:

One, he unified the country.

Two, BBM has focused on the economy and infrastructure, the “Build Better More” (BBM) program.

Three, BBM neutralized many of his political enemies.

Vice President Sara Duterte is out of the Cabinet, denied travel, intelligence and discretionary funds. She will be a non-starter in the 2028 elections which a broadcaster could probably win, unless a relative snags the presidency.

Four, BBM traveled a lot, making 24 trips to 17 countries. The trips generated \$72.2 billion in investment pledges (as of end-2023), which if they materialize would make every Filipino upper income overnight.

Five, BBM executed a pivot to America and made China Public Enemy No. 1 of the Filipino people.

He has offered Washington DC up to 12 military bases from which to deploy armor, missiles, ships, aircraft and troops, despite what the Philippine Constitution says to the contrary on foreign military bases and nukes.

Marcos Jr. is the first president elected by the majority of Filipinos, since the last majority presidential winner, Ferdinand Edralin Marcos Sr. in 1969.

With 31.629 million votes on May 9, 2022, Marcos Jr. garnered 59 percent of the votes cast for president. He won in 64 of the 80 big provinces and in 25 of the 27 largest cities, including all the 15 cities of Metro Manila and the southern cities of Cebu and Davao. BBM beat Isko Moreno in Manila.

The second presidential placer, Leni Robredo, won in just 14 provinces. Third placer Manny Pacquiao won in one province.

“In nearly four decades, we endured being mocked and oppressed,” recalled elder sister, Senator Imee Marcos Manotoc, who joined her only brother at the rostrum for his proclamation after the May 2022 election. “We are grateful for this second chance.” Ironically today, Ate Imee sounds more like a member of the disparate opposition parties than of the ruling Ang Bagong Pilipinas class.

On the economy, from a modest 5.5 percent growth this year, the administration targets minimum average economic growth of 6.5 percent per year til 2028, with eight percent the high target for the years 2026, 2027 and 2028, despite worsening geopolitical tensions and growing trade wars.

Whether by luck, by accident or by design, the Philippines is today ASEAN’s fastest growing economy, “a leading force among Asia’s emerging economies.”

“Our first quarter GDP growth rate is about the same as Vietnam’s, surpassing other major economies such as China at 5.3 percent, Indonesia at 5.1 percent and Malaysia at 3.9 percent, but slower than India’s projected growth rate of 6.2 percent,” says Economic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan. From double digits, poverty will be cut to nine percent, or 14 million Filipinos rescued from the misery of earning just \$2 every day.

“The Philippine economy’s dynamism is anchored on strong consumer demand supported by a vibrant labor market,” says Finance Secretary Ralph Recto. “With our arsenal of growth-enhancing strategies, this administration has the right policy tools and determination to take us to \$6,500 income by 2030,” vows Recto. In 2033, he predicts, “the Philippines will be a \$1-trillion economy.” Filipinos will be trillionaires, in dollar terms. “We have a bold and decisive leader,” Recto shrugs off cynics.

Under his BBM infra, Marcos Jr. has lined up 185 infrastructure flagship projects that would cost a whopping P9.54 trillion (\$164 billion) which, if carried out, will be the largest infrastructure rollout in the country’s history.

The 185 projects consist of 134 physical connectivity projects costing \$142.2 billion; 29 water projects, \$12.3 billion; nine agriculture, \$3.7 billion; five health, \$1.6 billion; three digital connectivity, \$2.8 billion; one power and energy, \$0.2 billion;

one education, \$0.5 billion and three other projects, \$0.5 billion. Only half of the 185 projects have a good chance of being started and/or completed.

Puzzling is the sparse allocation for energy projects – \$200 million, and education infra, \$500 million.

We have a severe energy crisis. Within five years, according to forecasts by SMC, additional power capacity needed is between 69,000 megawatts and 92,000 megawatts, an investment of \$184 billion. Who will provide that money?

Meanwhile, our 15-year-olds are rated among the most stupid teenagers on earth. They cannot read, they cannot count beyond 20 and they are not at all creative. Just like monkeys.

Where will BBM get most of the money, the P9.54 trillion? Well, from borrowings, and from our taxes. Since borrowings will be paid with taxes, Filipinos will shoulder the brunt of the cost. Only five of 82 identified projects have private sector participation. So expect tax measures to come our way.

To entice private companies to undertake the 185 projects, BBM has shortened the processing time for unsolicited projects under the new Public Private Partnership (PPP) Code, from 26.5 months to 16.9 months for local PPPs and 14.9 months for national PPPs.

Speaking of investments, the Manila Overseas Press Club (MOPC) holds its “Investment Night” tonight, Tuesday, June 25, at the Fairmont Makati ballroom. Senior journalists, diplomats and top businessmen will hear the economic czar Frederick Go report on investments and the economy.

Secretary Deck Go built from scratch Robinsons Land Corp., one of the largest and most innovative property conglomerates in revenues, number of projects and project size, with a record of solid growth and profitability, assets of P228 billion, equity of P130 billion and market value of P75 billion.

Deck brings his over three decades of entrepreneurial experience to public service as the economic czar to create a healthy business climate and bring about investments that are real, profitable and will touch the lives of ordinary Filipinos.

<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2024/06/25/2365316/five-things-bbm-did-two-years>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Stakeholders say rice down to P46/kilo in July due to tariff savings

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

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 06:02 PM June 24, 2024



Rice vendor Eddie Pascual, 58, waits for his usual clients at his rice stall in Marikina Public Market on Monday, June 10, 2024. The NEDA board has agreed to cut tariff on rice to 15 percent from 35 percent to help bring down the price of rice to P29 a kilo. Pascual expressed his reservation that the move will lower the price of rice per kilo. INQUIRER / GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

MANILA, Philippines — Rice stakeholders have given an assurance that market prices can go down to P45 to P46 per kilogram by July due to savings from lower tariff rates, House of Representatives Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez said on Monday.

In a briefing in Makati City, Romualdez said they were able to secure the commitment of Philippine Rice Industry Stakeholders Movement (Prism) officials to pass on the savings brought by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s Executive Order (EO) No. 62 to consumers.

EO No. 62 decreases the tariff on different basic commodities including rice, from 35 percent to 15 percent. Government agencies and officials predict the reduced levy would ease the upward pressure on rice prices.

“Yong hangarin ng ating Presidente na maibigay ng, ano, na quality rice, na magandang, mahusay na klase ng bigas sa kada Pilipino sa presyong abot kaya, nandito na po. ‘Yong target natin by itong buwan ng Hulyo, itong July, magkakaroon tayo ng bigas at P45 to P46 kada kilo,” Romualdez said.

(The goal of our President is to give quality rice, a good brand of rice with an affordable price is here. Our target is that by this month of July, we will have rice at P45 to P46 per kilogram.)

“And this is through concerted efforts and the direction of our President to the DA (Department of Agriculture), to the NFA (National Food Authority), to the NIA (National Irrigation Administration), and of course our stakeholders like PRISM,” he added.

Romualdez was also asked, in an ambush interview after the briefing, if it is not dangerous for rice price decreases to rely solely on lower tariffs. According to the Speaker, there are other government programs being initiated that would possibly bring rice prices down to P29 per kilogram by August.

“We are actually initiating everything right now, ongoing na lahat po [...] We are anticipating that NIA can bring to the table literally P29 pesos, P29 pesos, by August, no? So, this all within the near term, so to speak. We’re confident, that’s why there’s budget allocation, the agencies are committed, they are starting programs. These are not merely plans, so the effect will soon be felt,” he said.

Among the measures that are seen to bring rice prices down is the convergence program, where flood control programs will turn into rainwater collection mechanisms for irrigation, and eventually a source of energy through hydroelectric power plants.

“That’s not all, as I have said, we have this convergence plan, we are working with the [DA], with the NIA, the NFA , we are working also with the DPWH (Department of Public Works and Highways) here regarding the proper use of funds, let’s say we have flood control programs, we will now align that with our irrigations systems so that we can have flood control,” Romualdez said.

“But we will dam the waters so we can now deploy these water resource for free irrigation, I said free because we have launched the solar irrigation, on top of that, that can also be a source for bulk water, possible hydroelectric power, and many other uses that’s why President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is looking at all agencies as to how resources are being deployed, these are being converged,” he added.

This is not the first time that Romualdez promised lower rice prices for the public. Last April 30, Romualdez said that rice prices can drop by P10 to P15 if Republic Act No. 11203, or the Rice Tariffication Law is amended before session ends.

Romualdez said they are targeting to bring down rice prices close to the P30 per kilogram mark by restoring some of the NFA’s functions.

House Bill No. 10381 which seeks to change provisions in R.A. No. 11203 was approved on third reading last May 21, but no counterpart measure was filed in the Senate, therefore stalling the proposed amendments.

<https://business.inquirer.net/465116/stakeholders-say-rice-down-by-p46-kilo-in-july-due-to-tariff-savings>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Import not the answer to declining fish catch, high prices

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:00 AM June 25, 2024

The plan of the “PH to import 25,000 MT of fish to ensure fish supply (Inquirer.net, 4/26/24) was opposed by the fishers’ group since the “New import policies will only worsen the plight of fisherfolk” (4/30/24).

I would like to present the context of the case by analyzing the data culled from the Philippine Fisheries Profile and Situation reports and other sources.

In 2010, the country attained the highest marine fish catch at 2.426 million metric tons. Then it started to decline until it reached 1.815 million MT in 2022 and 1.7 million MT in 2023. On the other hand, the fish import amounted to 202,000 MT and 561,000 MT in 2010 and 2022, respectively. There is a strong relationship that as the catch decreased by 25 percent, the import increased by as high as 180 percent. This is an indication that the country is increasing its reliance on fish imports amid declining catch.

The extent of scarcity in fish supply is shown by the declining catch per capita from 26.4 kilograms in 2010 to 15.8 kg in 2022 which effected price increase. On the other hand, Vietnam and Indonesia which are among the top fish exporters to the country have higher catch per capita at 40 kg and 25 kg, respectively. Moreover, their fishing industry is well subsidized. Hence, the average price of imported fish in 2022 was as low as P89 per kg (FOB).

Through the Fisheries Administrative Order No. 195 series of 1999, the institutional buyers that cater to hotels and restaurants and companies that are engaged in canning and processing are allowed to import fish and fishery products. Recently, the Department of Agriculture (DA) through its Memorandum Order No. 17 series of 2024 issued a certificate of necessity to import (CNI) 25,000 MT of frozen small pelagic fish (round scad or *galunggong*, bonito or *tulingan*, and mackerel or *alumahan*) for wet markets on Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, 2024. Previously, the DA issued

the CNI for the import of 60,000 MT and 35,000 MT in 2022 and 2023, respectively. The purpose of import is to stabilize the supply and price of fish during the period of low fish supply that coincides with the closed fishing season from Nov. 15 to February. Historical data will show that the combined catch in the first and fourth quarters (October to March) has been observed to be more or less than 20 percent lower than the second and third quarters (April to September).

Before 2022, there has not been much clamor against imports. However, the persistent catch decline in 2022 onward inevitably led to the high level of import that benefits big importers. However it is detrimental to the fisherfolk because the dumping of cheap imported fish in the wet markets resulted in the decrease in farm gate price of their produce. In fact, it has been reported that 90,000 MT to 100,000 MT of imported fish for canning and processing are diverted to the wet markets every year. This is now under investigation.

Therefore, import is not the answer to declining catch and making the supply and price of fish stable. It is rather the implementation of smart fisheries management that entails a reduction in fishing effort with the provision of alternative livelihood and requires collective action by different stakeholders.

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Enderez,

<https://opinion.inquirer.net/174677/import-not-the-answer-to-declining-fish-catch-high-prices>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Small budget adjustment for 2025 to derail food security target — DA

By: [Jordeene B. Lagare](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 02:05 AM June 25, 2024



INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is negotiating for a higher budget for 2025 after learning that it could be given only P218 billion, an increase of less than P10 billion from this year's allocation.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel De Mesa, who is also spokesperson for the department, said a slightly adjusted allocation for next year would impact not only the quality of food items but also the delivery of food products from one area to another.

The DA is seeking to more than double its expenditure plan to P513.81 billion from its current budget of P208.58 billion, mainly to construct more irrigation and postharvest facilities. It added a bigger budget was needed to address the lack of investments in the farm sector in the last four decades, resulting in the sector's declining contribution to the economy.

The bulk of expenditures for 2025—or P287.98 billion—would go to attached corporations, including the National Irrigation Administration, National Food Authority, Philippine Coconut Authority, Philippine Fisheries Development Authority and the National Dairy Authority.

“But I was told that we’re not going to get it all so we’re still negotiating with DBM (Department of Budget and Management),” Agriculture Asis Perez said on the sidelines of a forum held Monday in Makati City.

“Of course, we want to lower the cost and improve the quality of our goods. Of course, if we have poor road conditions or limited road network, definitely it will have an impact on logistics, on movement, on the supply chain,” De Mesa said of the tight budget so far provided.

He said if that were to happen, they would “continue to lobby to Congress to receive additional funds” while exploring other options such as securing official development assistance funding.

Otherwise, “We will continue to pray for bigger budget for the department,” he said.
INQ

<https://business.inquirer.net/465123/small-budget-adjustment-for-2025-to-derail-food-security-target-says-da>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Low ‘bangus’ price alarms Pangasinan fish growers

Milkfish now sold below production cost, blamed mainly on oversupply, industry players say

By: [Yolanda Sotelo](#) - Correspondent / [@yzsoteloINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:40 AM June 25, 2024



Milkfish or bangus (foreground) has been experiencing seasonal decline in prices for the past four years. —INQUIRER.net photo

DAGUPAN CITY, PANGASINAN, Philippines — Reeling from the continuous tumbling prices of farmed “bangus,” fish cage operators in Pangasinan sought the intervention of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and other concerned agencies to prevent the province’s multimillion-peso aquaculture industry from crashing.

During a dialogue between bangus industry stakeholders and government agencies on June 21 at the National Fisheries Development Center here, growers of bangus (milkfish) said prices started to drop last February and is now at P90 to P110 per kilo.

Last May, bangus, considered the country's national fish, was still being sold in Pangasinan markets from P120 to P200 a kilo.

Christopher Aldo Sibayan, president of the Samahan ng Magbabangus sa Pangasinan, said the price was not even "balik-taya" (breakeven), as it was now below the production cost of P125 to P135 per kilo.

Sibayan added most of them were already feeling the effects of their declining profit but were not getting protection and aid from the government.

He said they have been experiencing seasonal decline in prices for the past four years.

"But why is this happening? What is lacking and what is not being done? What can the government do so that we won't experience this season?" he asked at the dialogue.

Pangasinan is famous for its meaty farmed milkfish and holds an annual Bangus Festival in the capital Dagupan City to showcase its top product.

As early as 2020, various milkfish hatcheries in Pangasinan already produced about 100 million fries annually, BFAR records showed.

The fish producers begged the different government agencies to do something about the pricing of the national fish, saying that while Pangasinan bangus is "world class," the "industry can die if the trend continues."

Ronald Eugenio, a fish cage operator at Sual Mariculture Park, said that if the price decline continues, it could kill the industry in six months.

Oversupply

One of the identified reasons for the dropping prices is "oversupply" of bangus from the different coastal towns of Pangasinan hosting aquaculture operations, further compounded by producers from other provinces who bring their bangus to Pangasinan to enjoy the "premium name" of the fish cultured in the province.

The bangus industry in Pangasinan involves around 9,000 fish producers, but there is no exact data on the total production.

The operators also asked concerned agencies to stop giving permits to more fish cage operations.

Florence Sarmiento, another aquaculture operator, said that in Anda town alone, there are already 4,000 to 5,000 cages.

“That’s only in Pangasinan and there are also fish cages in the southern [provinces of Luzon]. If we can control the number of growers, it would be much better so we can increase prices a little,” Sarmiento said.

Rosario Segundina Gaerlan, chief of BFAR in Ilocos region, said his agency could not control the number of cages because the local governments are responsible for giving permits to operators within their municipal waters.

Marvin Quilates of the Department of Agriculture suggested the creation of a fishery industry council that would involve all stakeholders, to monitor and resolve issues regarding the industry, including production calendar, consolidation of produce and pricing.

Gaerlan said the council should also include feeds providers. Fish producers have said that feeds accounted for the biggest expense in aquaculture, at about 70 to 80 percent.

The BFAR is currently establishing a community feedmill that would offer low-priced fish feeds formulated by the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center, but it can only cater to the needs of aquafarm operators in Bolinao town of Pangasinan where it is located.

Recommendations

Nestor Domenden, the former BFAR-Ilocos regional director who attended the June 21 dialogue, reiterated his call for fish growers to establish a production calendar, or

to schedule their stocking, so they would not harvest at the same time and flood the market, which would bring down prices.

“You determine the number of producers, and then talk among yourselves the schedule of stocking the cages. That way you won’t be racing against each other,” Domenden advised.

He also recommended the “branding” of Pangasinan bangus to ensure higher prices.

Another suggestion during the dialogue was the establishment of food terminals in other provinces where bangus is scarce, such as in Cagayan, where Pangasinan bangus could be sold.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1954482/low-bangus-price-alarms-pangasinan-fish-growers>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Traders see drop in rice prices next month

By: [Krixia Subingsubing](#) - Reporter / [@KrixiasINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:10 AM June 25, 2024



Inquirer file photo

MANILA, Philippines — Rice prices may drop by as much as P9 per kilo this July, a local rice traders group assured the House leadership on Monday.

During a meeting with Speaker Martin Romualdez, the leaders of the Philippine Rice Industry Stakeholders Movement (Prism)—composed of seed growers, farmers, millers, traders, importers and retailers—said they estimated that rice prices would significantly drop to as low as P42 per kilo by July after President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. issued an executive order (EO) reducing tariff rates on imported rice.

Prism founder Orly Manuntag said the group also pledged to negotiate with exporting countries and convince them not to take advantage of rice prices “so that this EO would not be put to waste.”

According to Manuntag, they expect the price of regular milled rice to go down to between P40 and P43 per kilo, well-milled rice to P45 to P46 per kilo, and premium rice to P47 to P50 per kilo.

The President's EO issued last month is part of the new Comprehensive Tariff Program for 2024-2028 approved by the National Economic and Development Authority Board, as the Marcos administration worked to reel in runaway rice prices and inflation. It reduces the tariff on imported rice from 35 percent to 15 percent in hopes of stabilizing rice prices.

After the EO was enacted, agricultural groups like the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) said the tariff cut was like a “stab in the back” and spelled the likely “death blow to the country's 3 million rice farmers and the rice industry as a whole.”

Shot in the dark

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

Manuntag admitted that the group initially thought the Marcos administration would release the EO in August, “but now we will simply have to adjust ..., so right now we're hoping that once the EO is reviewed, the administration can consider some of our recommendations.”

This includes, among others, ensuring that farmers get enough subsidy as well as pushing for cluster farming, which would allow consumers to buy directly from farmers.

At the same time, Romualdez sought to allay concerns that the measure did not meet earlier expectations to bring down rice prices to less than P30 by July—but admitted that it was possible that these could decrease further to P39 by next year.

“I assure you that that's the target, that's the aspiration. We will get there somehow and we hope it will be sooner than later,” he added.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1954521/traders-see-drop-in-rice-prices-next-month>

BUSINESS WORLD:

DA to press for budget of over P500B in 2025

June 24, 2024 | 8:32 pm



PHILSTAR

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it will seek to upgrade its funding allocation for 2025 to P513.81 billion, nearly double the initial amount approved by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

“For the entire department, it’s almost like (this year’s amount). They’re saying, *may increase lang yata kami ng* less than P10 billion from this year (we have an increase of less than P10 billion from this year’s budget),” Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and Regulations Asis G. Perez said on Monday at a food security forum.

He added the DA hoping to lobby for more funding before the DBM submits its proposed budget to Congress.

The DA had proposed a budget of P513.81 billion for 2025. If approved, this would be more than double the DA allocation of P208.58 billion in 2024.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. has said the extra funds will support the construction of irrigation and postharvest facilities.

Additionally, due to the lack of funding and private sector investment, the DA estimates that it would take about a century to complete major infrastructure items for agriculture like farm to market roads (FMR).

“For FMR alone it will take us practically, based on the initial estimates of the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Engineering, 100 years to complete all the necessary road systems,” Agriculture Assistant Secretary and Spokesman Arnel V. de Mesa said.

He added that aside from FMRs the country needs to increase investment in post-harvest facilities, logistics, and irrigation.

Improvements in logistics and supply chains “will help our smallhold farmers and fisherfolk,” Mr. De Mesa said.

The DA estimates that about P1.2 trillion is required to irrigate an additional 1.2 million hectares in order to boost rice production and reduce imports. It also projects a requirement of P93 billion for postharvest facilities to reduce rice and corn waste.

“There are limited resources available to finish these requirements for infrastructure,” he added.

The government constructed around 67,328.92 kilometers (km) of farm-to-market roads in 2023, more than half of its goal of building 131,410.66 km in six years, according to President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.
— **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/24/603911/da-to-press-for-budget-of-over-p500b-in-2025/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Solar irrigation project to be pitched to ADB for financing

June 24, 2024 | 8:31 pm



PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Monday that it will seek a 350-million-euro loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to support its solar-powered irrigation projects.

“We have a proposal with the ADB, that’s about 350 million euros to develop solar irrigation. This is a very inexpensive way of irrigating,” Agriculture Assistant Secretary and Spokesperson Arnel V. de Mesa said in a forum.

He added that the proposed loan, once approved, will be disbursed over three years.

The Philippine Solar Irrigation Project aims to add about 180,000 hectares of irrigable farmland.

The DA estimates that there are about 1.02 million hectares of land that can be irrigated but are still relying on rainwater.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. has said that he was seeking to set up 152 solar-powered irrigation pumps this year, through the National Irrigation Administration (NIA).

As of 2023, the NIA has completed 68% of its national irrigation development commitments, servicing an estimated 2.11 million hectares.

“Aside from being inexpensive, solar systems are very reliable,” he added.

He said that small-scale projects typically take eight to 10 days to construct, to irrigate about eight to 10 hectares, while large-scale projects typically take a few years.

He added that the loan proposal has been approved at the technical level by the Investment Coordination Committee. It requires approval by the ICC Cabinet Committee before being endorsed to the National Economic and Development Authority Board.

Mr. De Mesa said that the DA is seeking P22 billion from the Department of Budget and Management this year to fund the construction of solar infrastructure.

He added that the P11 billion will fund solar irrigation pumps, while the remainder will go to solar-powered cold storage facilities.

“It will be distributed to areas where we have production, especially for fruits, vegetables, the fishing sector and other coastal communities. It can also be used for livestock,” he said, referring to the cold storage facilities. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/24/603847/solar-irrigation-project-to-be-pitched-to-adb-for-financing/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

NEDA open to adjusting rice tariffs before 2028

June 25, 2024 | 12:33 am

Rice grains are displayed with a farmer miniature in this illustration picture taken on June 20, 2023. _

REUTERS/FLORENCE LO/ILLUSTRATION

By **Kenneth Christiane L. Basilio**

THE GOVERNMENT is open to adjusting tariff rates on rice imports if global prices show a steady decline, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan said on Monday.

“If world prices are going down, then you have to do what you can to adjust the tariff, that’s what many countries do,” he told reporters on the sidelines of a forum on Monday.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. last week issued Executive Order (EO) No. 62, cutting tariffs for different agricultural imports like rice, pork, poultry and corn to 15% from 35% until 2028.

“If the situation changes, the government must have that flexibility to re-examine its tools,” Mr. Balisacan said.

Under the order, the in-quota and out-quota tariff rates for rice will be reviewed every four months. The NEDA is tasked to submit its recommendations to the President through the Office of the Executive Secretary.

Meanwhile, retail prices of rice are expected to drop to as low as P40 per kilo as early as July once EO 62 takes effect, an industry executive said.

“We expect that the prices for well-milled rice... to drop to P45 to P46 [per kilo], for regular-milled rice, it will range between P40 and P42, and P43 [per kilo]. For premium rice, it would range around P47 to P48 [per kilo],” Orly Manuntag, spokesperson of the Grain Retailers Confederation of the Philippines, said in Filipino during a press conference with leaders of the House of Representatives.

EO 62 is set to take effect on July 6 or 15 days after it was published, Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary and Spokesperson Arnel V. de Mesa said on Saturday.

House Speaker and Leyte Rep. Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez said the lower tariffs will likely bring down average rice prices to P45 per kilo in Metro Manila.

The tariff cut on imported rice is expected to tame inflation as the staple product is a “significant contributor” to the consumer price index, Security Bank Corp. Chief Economist Robert Dan J. Roces told *BusinessWorld* in a Viber message.

“While estimates predict a reduction of 0.4 to 1.8 percentage points, the actual impact depends on how much domestic rice prices adjust and how fast it adapts,” he said. “The fast-tracked approval could lead to quicker relief, but long-term effects on farmers and the need for complementary measures require further National government action.”

Mr. Roces noted the implementation of EO 62 is “necessary and timely” amid the persistent rice inflation.

Inflation accelerated to a six-month high of 3.9% in May. In particular, rice inflation remained elevated although slightly easing to 23% in May from 23.9% in April.

The lower rice tariffs would benefit low-income households who bear the brunt of spiraling rice prices, Mr. Roces added.

However, lowering tariffs on imported rice could be detrimental to the domestic rice industry if left unchecked, Eleanor L. Roque, tax principal of P&A Grant Thornton, said.

“Lowering the cost of imported rice without looking at how the local farmers can compete may be detrimental in the long term,” she told *BusinessWorld* in a Viber message. “The government should evaluate both short-term and long-term solutions for food sufficiency without neglecting the needs of our local farmers.”

Enrico P. Villanueva, a senior lecturer at the University of the Philippines Los Baños Economics Department, said only 20% of the country’s rice supply is sourced from imports.

“The substantial tariff cut will help ease rice prices, but its impact will be muted by the fact that imports comprise just roughly about 20% of rice supply in the Philippines,” he told *BusinessWorld* in an X message.

Reducing the rice prices to as low as P40 is not realistic unless the government would only import low-quality rice, Raul Q. Montemayor, national manager of Federation of Free Farmers, told *BusinessWorld* in a Viber message.

“At current cost, insurance and freight rate of \$600 per ton... the exit pier costs would be at P40.71 per kilo,” he said. “Add in profit margins, freight, and handling costs, the retail price will be approximately P50 per kilo.”

“I don’t see how they can sell rice at only P40 per kilo. The only way this can happen is if the cost, insurance, and freight costs go down to \$500 or they bring in cheap and low-quality rice,” he added. — *with* **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2024/06/25/603926/neda-open-to-adjusting-rice-tariffs-before-2028/>

REMATE:

P42 kada kilong bigas sa Hulyo, tiniyak

June 24, 2024 19:43



MANILA, Philippines – Tiniyak ng mga rice industry players sa susunod na buwan ay bababa sa P42 kada kilo ang presyo ng bigas, ayon kay House Speaker Martin Romualdez.

Ang pagbaba ng presyo ng bigas ay binigyang kasiguruhan ni Romualdez matapos ang ginawang pulong kasama ang mga lider ng Philippine Rice Industry Stakeholders Movement (PRISM), ang nasabing grupo ay kinabibilangan ng mga stakeholders ng bogas simula sa seed growers, farmers, millers, traders, importers at retailers.

Sa isinagawang press conference sa Manila Golf and Country Club kung saan humarap sina Romualdez at PRISM founders Rowena Sadicon at Orly Manuntag sinabi nito na ang pagbaba ng presyo ay resulta ng ipinalabas na executive order ni Pangulong Ferdinand Bongbong Marcos Jr. na nagbabawas sa tariff rates sa imported rice.

Sa ipinalabas na Executive Order (EO) No. 62 ni Pangulong Marcos ay naging 15% na lamang tariff sa imported rice mula sa dating 35%.

“Ito po ang isa sa itutulong po namin na maramdaman sa bawat merkado ang papasok na EO 62 at ang sinasabi po nating 15-percent tariff na maramdaman ng namamayang Pilipino. So inaasahan po namin na sa mga P45-P46 o P44-P42 ang ating mga presyo na bigas sa market pagpasok nitong July, sa 15 percent na tariff po natin,” pahayag ni Manuntag na sya ding tagapagsalita ng Grain Retailers Confederation of the Philippines.

Sa panig ni Romualdez sinabi nito na ang pagbaba ng presyo ay mararamdaman na sa susunod na buwan at asahan pa ng publiko ang paggagawa ng paraan ng pamahalaan para lalong maging abot kaya ang presyo ng bigas.

Maliban kay Romualdez, dumalo rin sa nasabing pulong kasama ang mga rice industry players sina House Committee on Appropriations Chairman Zaldy Co, House Committee on Agriculture and Food Chairman Mark Enverga, Deputy Majority Leader Erwin Tulfo at National Food Authority OIC-Administrator Larry Lacson. *Gail Mendoza*

<https://remate.ph/p42-kada-kilong-bigas-sa-hulyo-tiniyak/>

REMATE:

Fisherfolk groups: Seguridad sa karagatan paigtingin vs Chinese ships

June 24, 2024 10:54



MANILA, Philippines- Hinikayat ng ilang grupo ng mga mangingisda ang pamahalaan na palakas in ang maritime security sa Western Mindanao sa gitna ng namataang Chinese Navy ships sa katubigan nito.

“They might not be that aggressive now here but we don’t know what will happen next given the tense situation in the WPS (West Philippine Sea),” pahayag ni Katipunan ng mga Kilusang Artisanong Mangingisda sa Pilipinas leader Roberto “Ka Dodoy” Ballon nitong Linggo. “That is why there must be an aggressive action from our government, especially that they are penetrating our territorial waters and would be disadvantageous as threats are imminent.”

Noong Hunyo 7, dalawang Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) vessels ang namataang dumaraan sa Basilan Strait malapit sa Zamboanga Peninsula.

Noong Mayo, kinumpirma ng Armed Forces of the Philippines' Western Mindanao Command ang "innocent passage" ng apat na PLAN vessels sa Sibutu Passage sa Tawi-Tawi.

"It's just so unfair that while Chinese warships freely navigate the waters in Mindanao, we are thrown out in our waters in West Philippines Sea," ani Ballon.

Samantala, inihayag ni Edicio "Ed" Dela Torre, presidente ng Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement, na ang palalayag ng China sa katubigan ng Pilipinas ay "double standard" dahil malaya silang nakadaraan sa nasabing katubigan sa ilalim ng United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea habang nagha-harass ng mga mangingisdang Pilipino sa West Philippine Sea.

"We are worried that our fishermen will be the next to suffer from crossing the sea or catching fish resources from our waters," giit ni Ballon.

Ang Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement ay isang non-government organization na nagsusulong ng rural development at local democracy sa bansa.

Nag-deploy ang Philippine Coast Guard ng maritime security groups sa "critical regions," kabilang ang Western Visayas, upang paigtingin ang maritime security drive sa Philippine domestic waters. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/fisherfolk-groups-seguridad-sa-karagatan-paigtingin-vs-chinese-ships/>

REMATE:

Coastal waters sa Samar, E. Samar sapul ng red tide

June 24, 2024 10:15



TACLOBAN CITY- Nagbabala ang Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) sa Eastern Visayas sa publiko na huwag kumain, mangolekta, at magbenta ng lahat ng uri ng shellfish sa dalawang bays at sa coastal waters sa Samar.

Bunsod ang anunsyo ng presensya ng toxic microorganism na nagdudulot ng red tide.

Sa June 19 advisory, inihayag ng BFAR na naitala nito ang presensya ng *Pyrodinium bahamense*, isang toxic microorganism na nagdudulot ng paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) sa coastal waters ng Eastern Samar.

Kabilang sa mga apektadong lugar ang Irong-Irong Bay sa Catbalogan City sa Samar at Matarinao Bay sa General MacArthur, Quinapondan, Hernani, at Salcedo sa Eastern Samar.

Nag-isyu ring ng local advisory ang Eastern Samar provincial fishery office sa bayan ng Guiuan, na nagbabala ukol sa presensya ng red tide toxin sa coastal waters ng Guiuan.

Pinayuhan ng BFAR ang publiko na huwag kumain at magbenta ng anumang uri ng shellfish at *Acetes* sp., kilala bilang “alamang” o “hipon,” mula sa mga apektadong bay at katubigan.

Ligtas namang kaininin ang isda, pusit, hipon, at alimasag basta’t sariwa at hinugasang mabuti at tinanggal ang mga lamang loob nito bago lutuin. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/coastal-waters-sa-samar-e-samar-sapul-ng-red-tide/>

REMATE:

Q fever may mild symptoms lang – eksperto

June 25, 2024 07:13



MANILA, Philippines – Sinabi ng isang infectious disease expert na nagtataglay lamang ng mild symptoms ang Query (Q) fever cross transmission.

Ang Q fever ay karaniwang nagmumula sa mga hayop tulad ng baka, kambing at tupa na dulot ng bacteria na *Coxiella burnetti*.

Sinabi ni infectious disease expert Rontgene Solante na ang human-to-human transmission ng Q fever ay bihira.

Ayon pa kay Solante na madalas na kapag mayroong cross-transmission mula sa hayop sa tao, bihira ding nagdudulot ng severe infection.

Idinagdag pa ng eksperto na kadalasan ay malamang 60 hanggang 70 porsiyento na self-limited disease na maari ding mawala kahit hindi mag-antibiotic.

Ang kadalasang sintomas ng naturang sakit ay lagnat, pananakit ng ulo, at pananakit ng katawan . Maari itong matukoy sa pamamagitan ng pagsusuri sa dugo na sensitibo sa Q fever.

Kadalasan ding vulnerable sa Q fever ang mga nagpapakain at nag-aalaga ng mga hayop dahil sila ay nalalantad na maaring magdulot ng malubhang problema sa kalusugan tulad ng endocarditis o pamamaga ng puso o pamamaga ng utak.

Pinayuhan din ng eksperto ang mga nag-aalaga ng mga baka at kambing sa buong bansa na magsuot ng guwantes at facemask dahil ang mga particle ng tuyong dumi ng hayop ay maaring makapasok sa baga.

Nito lamang nakaraang linggo nang iulat ng Bureau of Animal Industry ng Department of Agriculture ang unang kaso ng Q fever sa bansa.

Sinabi ni Solante na sa ngayon ay wala pang Q fever patients na dinadala sa san Lazaro Hospital at sa Research Institute for Tropical Medicine. (*Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden*)

<https://remate.ph/q-fever-may-mild-symptoms-lang-eksperto/>

MANILA STANDARD

DA anniversary



By Manila Standard

June 24, 2024, 8:20 pm

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. leads celebration of the Department of Agriculture's (DA) 126th founding anniversary on June 24, 2024.

<https://manilastandard.net/gallery/news-in-photos/314463531/da-anniversary.html>

Rice traders assure Congress of lower prices



LOWER RICE PRICES. House Speaker Martin Romualdez stresses a point during a meeting with rice traders at Manila Golf and Country Club in Makati City on Monday morning. Ver Noveno

By Maricel Cruz

June 25, 2024, 12:40 am

House Speaker Martin Romualdez was assured by leaders of the Philippine Rice Industry Stakeholders Movement (PRISM) on Monday that rice prices would significantly drop to as low as P42 per kilo next month.

PRISM founders Rowena Sadicon and Orly Manuntag met with Speaker Romualdez and other leaders of the House of Representatives at the Manila Golf and Country Club in Makati City.

PRISM is a group composed of various stakeholders across the rice value chain from seed growers, farmers, millers to traders, importers and retailers.

Manuntag expressed his gratitude to the Speaker and other lawmakers for their fruitful discussions on stabilizing rice prices in the market in line with President Marcos'

Executive Order (EO) 62, which reduces the tariff on imported rice from 35 percent to 15 percent.

Manuntag, who is also the spokesperson of the Grain Retailers Confederation of the Philippines, said the reduced tariff would be felt across the markets, especially by Filipino consumers.

Sadicon, who is also PRISM's lead convenor, addressed the concerns of local farmers, assuring them that their interests would not be overlooked despite the tariff reduction.

Also present during the meeting were House Committee on Appropriations Chairman Zaldy Co, House Committee on Agriculture and Food Chairman Mark Enverga, Deputy Majority Leader Erwin Tulfo, and National Food Authority OIC-Administrator Larry Lacson.

Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Raymund Villafuerte meanwhile expressed optimism that the Senate will pass the bill that amends the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) in the face of the rising cost of the staple.

During a farmers' event in Quezon the other weekend, Romualdez had told reporters: "It looks like the House and the Senate are coming to an agreement and it looks close."

Romualdez said that reforming RTL was a "focal point" in his first official meeting with Senate President Francis Escudero at Malacañan Palace.

He said the proposed amendments aim to ensure food security and economic stability for farmers by providing affordable quality rice to Filipinos and increasing farmers' incomes.

Villafuerte said that the likely congressional approval of the proposed amendatory law to RTL or Republic Act 11203 will further pull down market prices of this grain, as part of the government's aim to slash the per-kilo price of rice to below P30 for the benefit of consumers.

"With rice accounting for a sizeable share of the food expenses of Filipinos, most especially of poor or low-income families, amending 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 lawmakers to help take the edge off sticky inflation," the lawmaker said.

Villafuerte, a lead proponent of the House-passed amendatory measure (House Bill or HB 10381) to RA 11203, is more hopeful now that senators would pass their version of

the proposed amendments to the RTL when the 19th Congress reopens for its third and final session on July 22.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314463602/rice-traders-assure-congress-of-lower-prices.html>

MANILA STANDARD

Western Visayas on high alert vs. Q fever cases



By Caloy Lozada

June 24, 2024, 9:10 pm

Iloilo City — Western Visayas has so far reported zero cases of Q fever, a potentially dangerous disease, according to a recent official statement from the Department of Agriculture-Western Visayas (DA-Western Visayas).

To maintain this status, the DA-Western Visayas is intensifying its animal border protocols, working closely with local government units (LGUs) and personnel from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) to ensure that domestic ruminants are well-protected from the disease.

In a proactive move, the agency urges all stakeholders to stay vigilant and strictly adhere to biosecurity measures on their farms.

The DA advises immediate reporting of any sudden animal deaths to city or provincial veterinary offices or municipal agriculture offices. This allows for timely assessment, diagnosis, and control of potential outbreaks.

The Regional Animal Diseases Diagnostic Laboratory (RADDL) is fully equipped and ready to receive samples for diagnosing conditions such as haemonchosis, fascioliasis, caprine arthritis encephalitis (CAE), pneumonia due to weather changes, and diarrhea and bloat caused by dietary factors.

The DA-Western Visayas has declared a full-alert status to monitor and prevent the entry of Q fever into the region.

A variety of measures are in place to ensure that Western Visayas remains Q fever-free. According to the department's data, the region ranks fourth nationally in goat inventory, contributing 9.66% or 376,312 of the country's goats.

In the first quarter of 2024 alone, the region produced 1,483.2 metric tons of goat meat, accounting for 10.36% of the national production, as per data from the Philippine Statistics Authority.

The heightened vigilance follows an earlier report by the BAI of over 60 goats from the United States testing positive for Q fever at a government breeding station in Marinduque, Pampanga.

This led Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. to issue a temporary importation ban on goats from the US until the source of the virus could be traced.

Q fever, caused by the *Coxiella burnetii* bacteria, is a zoonotic disease that can be transmitted to humans through contact with infected animals, their excreta, or body and birthing fluids.

While no cases have been reported in Western Visayas, the region remains on guard to safeguard both animal and public health.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314463528/western-visayas-on-high-alert-vs-q-fever-cases.html>

Farmers get govt aid for egg production

By [Moises Cruz](#)

June 25, 2024

TACLOBAN CITY — Twenty-one farmer groups from Eastern Visayas received assistance for establishing an egg production project in order to elevate the most economically poor areas while ensuring food security in the communities under the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program Phase 2.

The Binalayan East Farmers and Fishermen Association of Maripipi, Biliran; the Balogo Small Farmers and Fisherfolk Association of San Sebastian, Samar; and the San Vicente Farmers Association of Tagapul-an, Samar, were among the farmer associations that received 480 ready-to-lay (RTL) chickens and 66 bags of layer feed under the program.

Four farmer organizations in Leyte benefitted, including the Lourdes Unified Farmers Association of Pastrana and the Bulod Farmers Association of Santa Fe; Hindang Farmers Agriculture Cooperative; and Farmers Agricultural Unity Manners of Tabontabon.

The production inputs were distributed to the Benit Farmers and Fisherfolk Association of San Ricardo; the Association of Fisherfolks and Farmers of Barangay Santa Sofia in Padre Burgos; the Triana Farmers and Fisherfolk Association of Limasawa; and the Bonggawisan Caritas Vendors Association of San Francisco in Southern Leyte.

Other recipients were the Dao Farmers Association of San Jose; the Magtaon Farmers Association of Mapanas; the Mongolbongol Farmers Association of San Vicente; the Pilar Farmers and Fisherfolks Livelihood Association of San Antonio; the Samahan ng

OFW para sa Agrikultura ng Allen of Allen; and the Rosal Integrated Farmers Association of Rosario, Northern Samar.

The Calanyugan Farmers Association of Pagsanghan; Lunang 2 Farmers and Fisherfolks Association of Almagro; and Kapit Bisig Tungo sa Pag-unlad ng Mamamayan Farmers and Fisherfolks Association of Talalora received 470 RTL chickens and 66 bags of layer feed as part of Samar Province's Support to Vegetable and Egg Production Project.

The Pili Farmers Association of Almeria, Biliran, which is the sole beneficiary of the 2024 Integrated Egg and Ginger Production Project, got 469 RTL chickens and 66 sacks of layer feed.

"SAAD will regularly monitor and strengthen each organization, leading them to social mobilization and sustainability," SAAD Operational Planning Budget, Monitoring and Evaluation Leader Dr. Gabriel Banga said in a statement on Monday.

"To our beneficiaries, strengthen your group, take proper care of the inputs given to you, and nurture them for the benefit of you and your families. SAAD will walk with you on your journey to prosperity," he added.

The supplies, totaling P12.046 million, marked the start of the farmers associations' enterprising journey because the program delivers full intervention packages.

The groups will also receive additional agricultural inputs such as egg trays, multivitamins and feed.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/25/regions/farmers-get-govt-aid-for-egg-production/1953053>

Lower rice prices predicted by July

By Ma. Reina Leanne Tolentino

June 25, 2024

THE Philippine Rice Industry Stakeholders Movement (Prism) predicted lower rice prices by July.

Orly Manuntag, Prism co-founder, said in a press briefing on Monday he expected the per-kilo price of rice to range between P42 and P46 once the tariff on imported rice is reduced.

Earlier Monday, House Speaker Martin Romualdez met with Prism officials led by Manuntag and its founder and lead convenor Rowena Sadicon.

National Food Authority (NFA) Officer in Charge Larry Lacson, House Committee on Appropriations Chairman Elizaldy Co, House Committee on Agriculture and Food Chairman Mark Enverga, and House Deputy Majority Leader Erwin Tulfo were also at the meeting.

Sadicon and Manuntag told Romualdez that their group was heeding the call of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and Romualdez for a whole-of-nation approach to reduce the price of rice and make quality rice affordable and available to all Filipinos.

"Handa po kaming tumulong sa gobyerno para maramdaman agad ng mga kababayan namin ang magandang epekto ng pagbaba ng tariff sa bigas (We are ready to help the government so that our countrymen can immediately feel the positive effect of the reduction of the tariff on rice)," Manuntag said.

On June 29, the President issued Executive Order (EO) 62, slashing the tariff on imported rice to 15 percent from 35 percent.

The EO will take effect on July 6.

Romualdez assured local farmers that the government will continue its support to improve their productivity.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/25/news/national/lower-rice-prices-predicted-by-july/1953035>

Year-end rice inventory seen rising to 3.64 MMT

By Janine Alexis Miguel

June 25, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) is optimistic that the country's rice inventory will reach 3.64 million metric tons (MT) by year-end, or 91 percent higher than last year's 1.9 million MT.

This, as the department sees an increase in palay (unmilled rice) production this year due to the "less pronounced" impact of El Niño on the country's farms.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary for Operations U-Nichols Manalo said in a statement on Monday that the projected volume is equivalent to approximately 93 days of national rice consumption.

If the year-end projection turns out to be accurate, the DA said this could be the highest almost 15 years, exceeding the 3.42 million MT logged in 2010.

"This indicates that our rice and corn supplies were not severely impacted," Manalo said.

The national rice inventory represents the total volume of rice available within the country at a given period after subtracting the demand from various sectors such as food consumption, waste, and other uses. This inventory encompasses both locally produced and imported rice.

The DA also reported that only 4 percent of the 4.5 million MT corn target production was affected by the dry weather phenomenon. This corresponds to 188,861 MT of stocks at the end of the dry cropping season.

As part of the government's efforts to assist affected farmers and fishers, the department has distributed interventions across 170,469 hectares of crop areas. As of June 6, financial aid and farm inputs amounting to P9.23 billion have been distributed to 1.17 million beneficiaries.

In preparation for the anticipated La Niña, the DA said that it has initiated strategies focusing on water management.

"We are collaborating closely with relevant agencies to develop action plans that prioritize managing excess water resulting from anticipated heavy rainfall," Manalo said.

Furthermore, the DA will manage initiatives such as desilting irrigation canals, repairing and rehabilitating irrigation systems, inspecting and maintaining gates and hoists, and building small-scale irrigation projects and canals.

The department is also encouraging the use of flood-resistant and early-maturing crop varieties and setting up seed reserves in crucial regions to maintain food production across the country despite unpredictable weather conditions.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/25/business/top-business/year-end-rice-inventory-seen-rising-to-364-mmt/1953059>

DA sees higher year-end rice inventory at 3.64MMT

By **Jed Macapagal**

June 25, 2024

The Department of Agriculture (DA) anticipates the year-end rice inventory at a significantly higher volume of 3.64 million metric tons (MT), with the impact of El Niño on palay production less pronounced than initially expected.

U-Nichols Manalo, DA assistant secretary for operations, said the projected volume is equivalent to approximately 93 days of national rice consumption, exceeding the 1.9 million MT recorded in December 2023.

Manalo, who is also director of DA's National Rice Program, said when the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration declared the end of El Niño on June 7, only 191,233 MT of rice, or about 2 percent of the 9.2 million MT target ending the dry cropping season were reported as damaged to date.

The national rice inventory represents the total volume of rice available within the country at a given period after subtracting demand from various sectors, such as food consumption, waste and other uses, the DA said.

The inventory also encompasses both locally produced and imported rice and serves as a critical indicator for assessing food security and planning for agricultural and trade policies related to rice.

DA said if its projected national rice inventory is realized by the end of 2024, that will be the highest in at least a quarter of a century, topping the 3.42 million MT in 2010 based on data from the Philippine Statistics Authority.

Manalo also said only 4 percent of the 4.5 million MT of corn was affected by the El Niño, totaling 188,861 MT at the end of the dry cropping season.

"This indicates that our rice and corn supplies were not severely impacted," Manalo said.

As of June 6, the DA has extended interventions across 170,469 hectares for financial aid and farm inputs amounting to P9.23 billion have been distributed to 1,174,699 beneficiaries for the effects of El Niño.

This early, the DA said preparations are also being put in place for the impact of the La Niña, such as desilting irrigation canals, repairing and rehabilitating irrigation systems,

inspecting and maintaining gates and hoists, and constructing small-scale irrigation projects and canals.

Additionally, the agency will promote submergent-tolerant and early maturing crop varieties and establish seed reserves in key areas to ensure sustained food production nationwide despite irregular weather patterns.

Meanwhile, in a separate statement, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. allayed concerns over the government's decision to lower tariffs on imported farm products, particularly rice, reassuring the public that the administration is prepared to allocate necessary funding to support the agricultural modernization and improve the lives of farmers.

Last week, President Marcos issued Executive Order (EO) 62 which adjusted the classification and rates of import duties on various goods, including the significant reduction on rice import duties and keeping lower rates on other agricultural products for a longer period to bring down prices for consumers.

Tariff on rice was reduced from 35 percent to 15 percent, effective starting July.

Farmers groups have criticized EO 62 as potentially detrimental to local farmers by reducing funds for the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), questioning the legality of the order.

"It is not really anti-farmers because the government is committed to filling any funding gap in RCEF to enhance farmers' competitiveness," Tiu Laurel said.

DA said it is also poised to increase support for farmers by providing additional farm equipment and fertilizers to boost output, as the National Food Authority will continue purchasing rice from local farmers at fair prices to ensure their income remains stable.

Tiu Laurel added the National Irrigation Administration is building more water impounding dams and implementing solar-powered irrigation and solar pump systems in anticipation of La Niña conditions.

DA said the measures are designed to manage excess water and redirect it to areas where it is needed most.

Based on DA's monitoring of public markets in the National Capital Region, the price as of yesterday of local well-milled rice is between P48 to P55 per kg and regular milled, P45 to P52 per kg.

The price of imported well milled rice is P52 to P55 per kg, while imported regular milled rice ranges from P48 to P51 per kg.

Imported rice ranges from P57 to P65 for the special variety and P50 to P62 for premium. For local rice, the special variety costs P56 to P65 per kg and premium, P52 to P58 per kg.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/da-sees-higher-year-end-rice-inventory-at-3-64mmt/

Expect lower rice prices before SONA – Romualdez

By **Wendell Vigilia**

-

June 25, 2024

SPEAKER Martin Romualdez yesterday assured the public that the price of rice is expected to go down in time for President Marcos Jr.'s third State of the Nation (SONA) on July 22 because of the Chief Executive's issuance of an executive order reducing tariff rates on imported rice.

"We want this to happen as soon as possible. That's why we've been meeting and pushing for immediate action. Hindi pwede na aantok-antok tayo, patulog-tulog lang (We can't be sleeping on the job), we have to be always on the ball," Romualdez told reporters after he and other House leaders met with leaders of the Philippine Rice Industry Stakeholders Movement (PRISM) at the Manila Golf and Country Club in Makati City.

Also present during the meeting were Reps. Zaldy Co (PL, Ako Bicol), chair of the House Committee on Appropriations; Mark Enverga fo Quezon, chair of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food; Rep. Erwin Tulfo (PL, ACT-CIS) and National Food Authority (NFA) OIC administrator Larry Lacson.

PRISM founders Rowena Sadicon and Orly Manuntag assured the public that rice prices would significantly drop to as low as P42 per kilo by July after discussions on stabilizing rice prices in the market in line with the President's Executive Order (EO) No. 62, which reduces the tariff on imported rice from 35 percent to 15 percent.

Manuntag, who is also the spokesperson of the Grain Retailers Confederation of the Philippines, said the reduced tariff would be felt across the markets, especially by Filipino consumers.

"Inaasahan po namin nasa mga P45-P46 o P44-P42 ang ating mga presyo ng bigas sa market pagpasok nitong July, sa 15 percent na tariff po natin (We expect market prices to go down to P45-46 or even P44-P42 by July because of the 15 percent tariff)," he said.

Sadicon, who is also PRISM's lead convenor, addressed the concerns of local farmers, assuring them that their interests would not be overlooked despite the tariff reduction.

"We'd like to assure din po ang ating mga farmers at ang ating mga local production na isusulong po natin ang ating cluster farming at matulungan po sila nang husto na hindi po mapabayaan 'yun pong ating local production (We'd also like to assure our farmers, our local production, that we'll push for our cluster farming and they'll be greatly assisted so that our local production will not be left behind)," she said.

Last May 21, the House approved on third and final reading the proposed amendments to the RTL under House Bill (HB) No. 10381, which seeks to lower the price of rice to less than P30 from the current retail prices of between P40 to as more than 50 per kilo.

The bill seeks to enhance the government's buffer stocking capabilities and authorize market interventions to stabilize rice prices during emergency situations, ultimately easing the burden on consumers.

Under the bill, the NFA is tasked with registering and monitoring all grain warehouses, ensuring compliance with rice quality and supply standards, and maintaining a national database.

Romualdez last week said the House and the Senate are close to reaching an agreement on the proposed amendments to the RTL following the first official meeting between him and Senate President Francis Escudero.

The Speaker has said he expects Sen. Cynthia Villar, who opposed the House's proposal to restore the power of the National Food Authority (NFA) to directly import and sell rice, to file her version of the bill seeking amendments to the RTL.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_news/expect-lower-rice-prices-before-sona-romualdez/

Neda hints at tweaks on rice tariff tools

Cai U. Ordinario

June 25, 2024

THE National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) said the administration is willing to adjust rice tariffs if global and local economic conditions drastically change.

On Monday, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan told BusinessMirror that the 15-percent tariff was already the optimal rate to provide protection for local farmers and reduce rice prices to benefit Filipino consumers.

However, Balisacan, later on told reporters that tariffs are policy tools that can be adjusted when they become “quite dull” and fail to effect the desired outcome or attain a specific goal.

“If [the] situation changes, the government must have that flexibility to re-examine its tools. If the tools have become already quite dull for a particular event, then you have to be able to change those tools. That’s what a dynamic economy is all about,” Balisacan told reporters.

“If you cannot adjust, if you cannot navigate major changes around us because you are so constrained [by] all your policy tools, then you will not be able to survive a major shock,” he also said.

Main reason: Blunt price shocks

Balisacan explained to BusinessMirror that the main reason for the reduction in rice tariffs was to mitigate the impact of rising world prices.

If tariffs were left at 35 percent, Balisacan said Filipino consumers would pay more given that rice prices have continued to increase.

On Monday, Bloomberg reported that China, the world's second biggest fertilizer exporter, has decided to impose curbs on the export of "urea, a nitrogen-based fertilizer, and phosphates."

Data earlier obtained by the BusinessMirror showed the average unit value of imported rice, based on freight on board (FOB) costs, has already increased this year.

In the past four months, FOB costs of rice imports averaged 0.52 US cents per kilo, 23.81 percent higher than the 2023 average of 0.42 US cents per kilo. (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/20/phl-paid-more-for-imported-rice-in-january-to-april/>).

"The rise of rice inflation in the previous months has contributed almost half of the headline inflation [rate]. And the world prices are still rising. What you want to do is really to moderate the impact of the world prices on the local economy," Balisacan told BusinessMirror in a mix of English and Filipino.

Lower prices, Baisacan said, will also help the country's medium term socioeconomic goals, one of which is to reduce poverty to single-digit level by the time the President steps down from office.

This goal may be threatened if Filipinos are unable to have access to food, specifically rice, at an affordable price. This would also have the potential to worsen the country's already high stunting rate of 27 percent.

High prices also pose a major threat on the economy as a whole since high inflation prompts Filipinos to reduce their consumption, which accounts for 70 percent of the Philippine economy.

This was observed in the first quarter of the year when household final consumption expenditure (HFCE) slowed to 4.6 percent, the slowest in 14 years, sans the pandemic years. Consumption spending accounted for 74.5 percent of the country's GDP in the January to March period this year. (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/10/spending-cutbacks-to-continue-say-experts/>).

"If you compare the price today versus last year, there's a big difference even with the 15 percent. But we don't want to reduce it further [because its a]

balancing [act]. We want to still continue protecting our farmers,” Balisacan told BusinessMirror.

“It hurts me so much that we have to do this. But among option natin [What are our options]? There’s no other option. We want to prevent poverty from increasing. We want to prevent hunger from deteriorating,” he added.

TRO plan

Over the weekend, farmers groups said they 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. (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/24/farmers-to-ask-high-court-to-halt-eo-62/>).

Balisacan said this plan to file a TRO may be something that can be responded to by the Office of the President, given that President Marcos signed the Executive Order.

Nonetheless, Balisacan said the administration is open to discussing with farmers groups as well as extending support given the reduction in rice tariffs.

Balisacan said Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto met with farmers prior to the issuance of the Executive Order. This, he said, is an indication that the economic team is always open to dialogue with farmers groups.

“I spent my career trying to get our agriculture sector, the rural sector [growing]. While it would seem that it’s anti-farmer, it’s not. Because if you manage [your tools well], everybody will benefit,” Balisacan said.

Earlier, 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.

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.

The groups plan to file the petition for 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.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/25/neda-hints-at-tweaks-on-rice-tariff-tools/>

Rice inventory to settle at 3.6 MMT, says DA

Ada Pelonia

June 25, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) expects the country's yearend rice inventory to settle at 3.64 million metric tons (MMT) despite the "moderate" damage caused by El Niño on palay production.

According to Assistant Secretary for Operations U-Nichols Manalo, the projected volume is equivalent to about 93 days of national rice consumption, surpassing the 1.9 MMT recorded in December 2023.

Manalo said the weather phenomenon damaged 191,233 MT of rice at the end of the dry cropping season. This was 2 percent of the department's 9.2 MMT expected damage due to El Niño.

The DA said that if its year-end projection is realized, the national inventory at the end of the year will be the "highest" in at least a quarter of a century, topping the 3.42 MMT recorded in 2010 as per the Philippine Statistics Authority's (PSA) data.

He added that only 4 percent of the 4.5 MMT corn target was affected, totaling 188,861 MT ending the dry cropping season.

"This indicates that our rice and corn supplies were not severely impacted," Manalo said.

The DA said the national rice inventory represents the total volume of rice available within the country at a given period after subtracting the demand from various sectors such as food consumption, waste, and other uses.

It added that this inventory encompasses both locally produced and imported rice. It serves as a critical indicator for assessing food security and planning for agricultural and trade policies related to rice.

To mitigate the effects of the dry spell and assist affected farmers and fishers, the DA said it has extended interventions across 170,469 hectares. As of June 6, it noted that financial aid and farm inputs amounting to P9.23 billion have been distributed to 1,174,699 beneficiaries.

Manalo said the Office of the President also provided additional support that benefitted farmers, fisherfolk, and their families across eight regions.

Meanwhile, the DA said it will focus on water management in preparation for La Niña.

“We are collaborating closely with relevant agencies to develop action plans that prioritize managing excess water resulting from anticipated heavy rainfall,” Manalo said.

The DA said it will oversee initiatives like desilting irrigation canals, repairing and rehabilitating irrigation systems, inspecting and maintaining gates and hoists, and constructing small-scale irrigation projects and canals.

It added promoting submergent-tolerant and early maturing crop varieties and establishing seed reserves in key areas to ensure sustained food production nationwide despite irregular weather patterns.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/25/rice-inventory-to-settle-at-3-6-mmt-says-da/>

Rice traders to reduce prices by ₱9 per kilo

Jovee Marie N. de la Cruz

June 25, 2024

A GROUP of rice traders has assured lawmakers they would reduce rice prices by as much as P9 per kilogram by July this year.

Following a meeting with House leaders, Speaker Martin Romualdez said that the traders estimate that rice prices will drop to between P42 and P49 per kilogram in the market next month, attributing the expected decrease to the savings from the tariff reduction being passed on to consumers.

Specifically, they predict that by July and August, the price of well-milled rice, which is 25 percent broken and typically consumed by ordinary Filipinos, will range from P45 to P46 per kilogram. Meanwhile, premium rice, which is 5 percent broken and usually consumed by the middle class, is expected to be priced between P47 and P48 per kilogram.

“Your commitment to making affordable rice accessible to our people is greatly appreciated,” Romualdez said, addressing rice traders and importers after their meeting.

“This collaborative effort showcases our shared dedication to the welfare of every Filipino. Your actions are a testament to what we can achieve when we work together for the common good,” he added.

The traders’ group, called the Philippine Rice Industry Stakeholders Movement (PRISM), was represented in the meeting by its founder and lead convenor, Rowena Sadicon, and co-founder, Orly Manuntag, who is also the spokesperson of the Grain Retailers Confederation of the Philippines (Grecon).

Also present at the meeting were National Food Authority (NFA) Officer-in-Charge Larry Lacson, Rep. Zaldy Co, House Committee on Appropriations

chairman; Rep. Mark Enverga, House Committee on Agriculture and Food chairman and Deputy Majority Leader Erwin Tulfo.

On the part of the NFA, Lacson said the NFA continues to purchase rice from local farmers at competitive prices, ranging from P29 to P31 per kilo, to cushion any possible adverse impact of cheaper imports.

Sadicon and Manuntag informed Romualdez that their group is responding to President Marcos's and the Speaker's call for a whole-of-nation approach to bring down rice prices and make quality rice affordable and available to all Filipinos.

Sadicon and Manuntag said their members were in agreement to help the Marcos administration lower the price of rice as soon as the reduction in tariffs on imported rice takes effect.

"We are ready to help the government so that our fellow citizens can immediately feel the positive effects of the tariff reduction on rice," Manuntag said.

"We are one with the government in this campaign. Let's all work together to ensure that the tariff reduction results in lower rice prices in the market," Sadicon added.

Marcos recently issued Executive Order 62, reducing the tariff on imported rice from 35 percent to 15 percent.

Romualdez reiterated that the reduction in the import levy and the government's direct sale of imported rice through Kadiwa centers should substantially lower the retail price of rice.

According to Romualdez, this effort aligns with the administration's goal of making staple foods accessible and affordable for all Filipinos.

"This is not just a whole-of-government approach, but a whole-of-nation approach," he emphasized.

Romualdez assured the public that the effects of the rice tariff reduction would be felt as soon as possible, ideally before the President's third State of the Nation Address (SONA) on July 22.

“We want this to happen as soon as possible. That’s why we’ve been meeting and pushing for immediate action. We cannot be complacent; we have to always be on the ball,” Romualdez said.

He stressed the urgency of the situation, noting the daily struggles of Filipino families. “Every day, as every Filipino family has to purchase, let’s say, two kilos of rice, we know and we can feel the hardships of our fellow Filipinos,” he said.

“That’s why we’ve sprung into action. We want to meet this head-on. It would be highly desirable for this to happen even before the SONA, and I don’t think it’s impossible. We will all work together to make it happen as soon as possible,” he added.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/25/rice-traders-to-reduce-prices-by-p9-per-kilo/>

DA keen on ADB loan for solar irrigation project

Ada Pelonia

June 25, 2024

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is planning to borrow 350 million euros from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for its solar irrigation project.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary and Spokesman Arnel De Mesa said solar irrigation is an “inexpensive” way of delivering water to farms.

“Small-scale irrigation projects enable planters to have the means to develop their farm and diversify their crops,” De Mesa said during a food security forum in Makati on Monday.

The forum, which was organized by Phinma Corp., ADR Stratbase Institute and the Makati Business Club, sought to encourage “insightful and collaborative discussions” to cultivate a resilient and sustainable food security environment within the country.

De Mesa added that farmers could diversify into vegetables, high-value commercial crops, and livestock.

“Water is basic for agriculture. If farmers have enough irrigation water, it would be easy for them to plant whatever they want,” he said.

He noted that the small-scale project could irrigate up to eight to 10 hectares (ha) and could be developed in eight to 10 days.

“We can focus on these small-scale irrigation projects that the farmers can easily manage,” De Mesa added.

He said the project has been approved by the Investment Coordination Committee (ICC) Technical Board, with the ICC Cabinet Committee as the

next step before it is elevated to the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) Board for confirmation.

“It will be implemented nationwide, hopefully starting next year,” he told reporters.

Meanwhile, De Mesa said the department has requested an additional P22 billion for this year from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). Of which, P11 billion would be used for solar-powered cold storage while the rest would be allotted to solar irrigation. “[The solar-powered cold storage] will be distributed in areas where there is food production, especially those cultivating fruits, vegetables, as well as fishing and other coastal communities,” the DA official said.

In April, the DA is proposing a bigger budget of P513.81 billion for next year from the current P208.58 billion.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. sought the private sector’s support for the budget which will be channeled to more farm infrastructure, such as irrigation and postharvest facilities.

Laurel estimated that P93 billion is needed for postharvest facilities over the next few years to reduce rice and corn wastage; while around P1.2 trillion would be required to irrigate an additional 1.2 million hectares to boost rice production and reduce importation.

Under the preliminary expenditure numbers for 2025, the bulk of the budget increase will go to DA-attached corporations including the National Irrigation Administration, National Food Authority, Philippine Coconut Authority, Philippine Fisheries Development Authority, and the National Dairy Authority, the DA noted.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/25/da-keen-on-adb-loan-for-solar-irrigation-project/>

ABANTE TONITE

House Speaker pumalag sa kumalat na ‘Romualdez Rice’

June 24, 2024

Hindi otorisado ang paglalagay ng marking na “Romualdez Rice” sa ipinamimigay na bigas sa mga nangangailangang Pilipino.

Inihayag ito ni Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez kaugnay ng kumalat sa social media na mayroong pangalan nito ang ipinamimigay na bigas.

“We haven’t sanctioned that,” sabi ni Romualdez sa isang ambush interview sa Manila Golf and Country Club sa Makati City nitong Lunes, Hunyo 24.

“So that will be rectified but the most important thing is that we bring rice to every Filipino table at affordable prices,” dagdag pa nito.

Hindi naging malinaw kung saan at kailan ginawa ang pamimigay ng mga bigas na may pangalan ni Romualdez.

Batay sa mga litrato sa mga nagdaang Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair events, limang kilo ang ipinamimigay na bigas at walang pangalan ni Romualdez ang sako kundi ang label ng rice miller ang makikita rito. (Billy Begas)

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/06/24/house-speaker-pumalag-sa-kumalat-na-romualdez-rice/>

Q Fever, under control na - DA

[Angie dela Cruz](#)

June 25, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Under control na ang Q fever na unang napaulat na dumapo sa mga alagang kambing sa lalawigan ng Marinduque.

Ito ang sinabi ni Department of Agriculture (DA) spoeksman Arnel de Mesa dulot nang naisagawang agarang depopulation at condemnation ng ahensiya sa lahat ng mga alagang baka at kambing sa lugar na naapektuhan ng naturang sakit sa Marinduque gayundin sa Pampanga.

Anyang makumpirma ng ahensiya sa serye ng laboratory tests ang Q fever sa 94 kambing na nakarating ng Marinduque ay agad na inutos ni DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel ang depopulation ng mga nagkasakit na kambing mula sa quarantine areas sa Pampanga.

Sa ngayon ay ban muna ang importasyon ng kambing mula sa Estados Unidos na sinasabing pinagmulan ng Q Fever.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2024/06/25/2365346/q-fever-under-control-na-da>