

CLIPPINGS FOR TODAY JUNE 26, 2024

A. MANILA BULLETIN:

Imported rice influx to limit Pinoy millers to buying palay at P17-P20 next harvest—farmers' group

DA's Nueva Ecija personnel missing; public's help sought

Environment and ICT months: Building a technology-driven and future-proof Bagong Pilipinas

B. THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA to streamline processes to bring down food costs

Holes in the ‘whole of government’

Smart agriculture

DA may raise tariffs if rice prices fall to P42-P45/kg

C. PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Neda chief says tariff rates subject to periodic review

D. BUSINESS WORLD:

NEDA open to adjusting rice tariffs before 2028

Aquaculture, livestock permits set for easing

DA to back tariff hike once rice prices fall to P42-45

Biodiesel demand may buoy coconut industry

Congress think tank calls for review of rice fund use

E. REMATE:

Q fever may mild symptoms lang – eksperto

House Speaker blangko sa kumakalat na ‘Romualdez Rice’

Kadiwa store mobile application ilulunsad ng DA

F. ABANTE:

P42 per kilong bigas namumuro sa Hulyo

G. MANILA STANDARD:

PHINMA: New cold storage plants to cut food waste

H. THE MANILA TIMES:

DA: Rice tariff cuts could be short term

I. MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT:

DA sees tariff review in Nov

J. BUSINESS MIRROR:

DA chief vows to lead push for rice tariffs hike by November if . .

PCA: Rising demand to boost coconut oil exports

K. PILIPINO STAR NGAYON:

Q fever hindi pa kumapit sa mga Pinoy

MANILA BULLETIN:

Imported rice influx to limit Pinoy millers to buying palay at P17-P20 next harvest—farmers' group

BY JEL SANTOS

Jun 25, 2024 02:52 PM



The anticipated influx of imported rice will restrict Filipino millers from buying palay (unmilled rice) from farmers for only P17 to P20 in the next harvest, farmers group Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) said on Tuesday, June 25.

Through Executive Order (EO) 62, President Marcos has officially lowered rice tariffs from 35 percent to 15 percent. This tariff reduction will commence on July 5, leading to an influx of rice imports into the markets.

“Local millers, sa next harvest, can only buy palay between P17 to P20 as they would be competing with a deluge of rice imports (Local millers can only buy palay between P17 to P20 in the next harvest as they will be competing with a deluge of rice imports),” Jayson Cainglet, the executive director of farmers’ group SINAG, said in an interview.

According to the groups of farmers, local producers might lose motivation to farm and raise animals if the farmgate prices for rice, hogs, corn, and chicken fall below their production costs.

“Sa perspective ng local producers, if babagsak ang farmgate ng palay (same sa hogs, corn, and chicken) to below cost of production; baka tamarin na ang ating local producers and raisers na magbukid at mag alaga ng hayop (From the perspective of local producers, if the farmgate price of rice (as well as hogs, corn, and chicken) falls below the cost of production, our local producers and raisers might lose the motivation to farm and raise animals),” he said.

Bid to block EO No. 62

During the weekend, 17 agriculture groups announced that they would file a petition seeking a temporary restraining order (TRO) before the Supreme Court (SC) to block the implementation of EO No. 62, which will reduce the tariff rate on rice from 35 percent to 15 percent.

The 17 agriculture groups are SINAG, FFF, KMP, PHILCONGRAINS, ABONO Party-list, UBRA, Phil Egg Board, NFHFI, AGAP Party-list, Phil Palay, PCAFI, PhilMaize, AA, RWAN, IRDF, Bantay Bigas, and P4MP.

Virgie Suarez, the lawyer of the farmers' group Samahang Industriya ang Agrikultura (SINAG), said they will file a petition before the EO No. 62 goes into effect, possibly on July 4 or July 5.

“Ang priority namin is the filing of the case before the Supreme Court because what we want is the immediate na pagpil sa implementation ng Executive Order 62, and then the graft charges or the cases against NEDA [officials] and members of the Tariff Commission will come after (Our priority is to file the case before the Supreme Court because we want to immediately prevent the implementation of Executive Order 62. After that, the graft charges or cases against NEDA officials and members of the Tariff Commission will follow),” she said during a press briefing in Quezon City on Sunday, June 23.

“At this point in time, I don’t want to give the details or to even discuss it. It is enough that we are saying that, that is our plan because our focus now is to prevent the implementation of the Executive Order 62,” she went on.

Suarez said their petition will cite several grounds: the lack of consultation, the absence of a public hearing conducted by the tariff commission, and the unknown recommendations made by the NEDA. Despite these issues, Executive Order 62 was suddenly issued.

“Another ground ‘yung talagang mali at hindi makatarungan—‘yung pagbaba ng taripa (Another ground is the actual mistake and injustice—the reduction of tariffs),” she said.

The lawyer of the agriculture group stated that EO No. 62 will not address inflation or lower the price of rice in markets.

Laurel allays farmers’ fears

Addressing farmers’ concerns on Monday, June 25, Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel reassured the public about the government’s tariff reduction on imported farm products, especially rice. He stated that President Marcos’ administration is prepared to allocate the necessary funding to modernize agriculture and improve the quality of life for farmers.

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

The move was necessary to address high global rice prices to benefit consumers by temporarily lowering rice prices, the DA chief said.

The agriculture department said it is poised to increase support for farmers by providing additional farm equipment and fertilizers to boost output.

On the other hand, the agency said the National Food Authority will continue purchasing rice from local farmers at fair prices to ensure their income remains stable.

Laurel noted that the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) is constructing additional water-impounding dams and deploying solar-powered irrigation and pump systems in preparation for La Niña conditions.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/25/imported-rice-influx-to-limit-pinoy-millers-to-buying-palay-at-p17-p20-next-harvest-farmers-group>

MANILA BULLETIN:

DA's Nueva Ecija personnel missing; public's help sought

BY JEL SANTOS

Jun 25, 2024 05:01 PM



June H. Lacasandile (Photo taken from Department of Agriculture Central Luzon's Facebook page)

The Department of Agriculture (DA) Central Luzon is appealing to the public for assistance in locating its missing personnel based in Nueva Ecija.

June H. Lacasandile, 47, who serves as an agricultural program coordinating officer for DA-Nueva Ecija, has reportedly gone missing.

According to a post shared on the Department of Agriculture Central Luzon's Facebook page, Lacasandile was last seen on June 23 around 11 a.m. in Barangay Abar 1st, Nueva Ecija.

He was reportedly wearing a dark-blue shirt and black shorts at the time.

Reports described him as 5'4" tall, with a small built, and black hair.

Anyone with information on Lacasandile's whereabouts is urged to contact his family at [0927-737-4416](tel:09277374416).

The family has reportedly already filed a missing person report with the local police.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/25/da-s-nueva-ecija-personnel-missing-public-s-help-sought>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Environment and ICT months: Building a technology-driven and future-proof Bagong Pilipinas

BY [AMENAH F. PANGANDAMAN, DBM SECRETARY](#)

Jun 26, 2024 00:07 AM

BEYOND BUDGET



Assalamu alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh.

June is almost over, but I cannot let this month pass without commemorating two important celebrations very close to my heart: Philippine Environment Month and National Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Month.

We only have one home, the Earth. Thus, we must protect and cherish it. It is in this spirit that Proclamation No. 237, s. 1988, declared the month of June as Environment Month to focus on protecting and developing the environment. I truly believe that this year's theme, "Our Environment, Our Future," is apt as it is a timely reminder of the critical link between our planet's health and future generations' welfare.

The country's recent experiences with the rising heat index as a result of El Niño and the occurrence of La Niña make it imperative for us to address the issue of climate change.

In this regard, under the 2024 Budget Priorities Framework, aligned with the government's 8-Point Socioeconomic Agenda and the Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028, our government is prioritizing adaptation measures in agriculture and climate-proofing of infrastructure; accelerating rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems and strengthening the management and sustainable use of natural resources; and using integrated and ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions for sustainable use of natural resources.

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Together with the Climate Change Commission, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) conducts Climate Change Expenditure Tagging (CCET) to track, monitor, and report government agencies' programs to help address and alleviate concerns posed by climate change.

The climate change budget has progressively increased in recent years, growing by an average of 22.5 percent from 2015 to 2024. This year, Climate Change Expenditures are at ₱457.414 billion, higher than 2022's ₱444.862 billion. The Department of Public Works and Highways received the highest CC expenditure among the departments/agencies, mainly for flood control works and structures, amounting to ₱375.011 billion, followed by the Department of Agriculture for food security programs with ₱29.271 billion, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for ecosystem and environmental stability programs at ₱10.628 billion.

The DBM has also allocated ₱20.5 billion to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund under the 2024 General Appropriations Act (GAA) for disaster risk reduction, mitigation, prevention, and preparedness activities, as well as for relief, recovery, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and other works or services in connection with natural or human-induced calamities. This allocation is on top of the ₱7.925 billion built-in Quick Response Fund (QRF), representing standby fund for relief and recovery programs to quickly normalize conditions in areas stricken by disasters, calamities, and other emergencies.

In addition, the government's Green Green Program aims to transform local government units by enhancing public open spaces and green infrastructure. Some ₱1.055 billion is allocated under the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 National Budget to support provinces, cities, and municipalities in promoting green open spaces and active mobility. The DBM has also released ₱999.985 million for the Support and Assistance Fund to Participatory Budgeting Program, which enables 75 municipalities nationwide, identified by civil society organizations, to access resilient and safely managed water supply and sanitation services.

While the sustainability of the environment is our vision, I believe that our digitalization initiatives are enablers. Thus, equally important is the celebration of National ICT Month. Themed "Bayang Digital ang Bagong Pilipinas," the occasion highlights the digital transformation initiatives of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. (PBBM) to make the government truly responsive to the needs of the people, accountable to its constituents, and able to fulfill its promise of prosperity to everyone.

And we begin by reforming and digitalizing our procurement system so that our kababayans will get the service they deserve. Under the New Government Procurement Act, the government will adopt green procurement practices to ensure that government purchases are economically sound, environmentally friendly, and socially responsible. Also notable among the proposed amendments is the eMarketplace, which digitalizes the procurement of common-use supplies and equipment by serving as the government e-commerce platform. I am happy to note that the House of Representatives and the Senate have ratified its bicameral committee report. Thus, I am positive that PBBM will soon sign the proposed measure into law.

Meanwhile, for FY 2024, our total digitalization budget more than doubled to ₱64.6 billion, higher by 159.1 percent compared with the ₱24.93 billion budget last year. Hence, we have

funded more digitalization projects, including the ₱2.5 billion Free Public Internet Access Program of the Department of Information and Communications Technology.

Further, the implementation of DBM's 2022–2026 Digital Transformation Roadmap is in full swing and is expected to foster long-term growth by promoting efficiency, transparency, and accountability throughout the bureaucracy. With PBBM signing Executive Order No. 29 in June 2023, the full adoption of the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) is underway to improve bureaucratic efficiency and deliver services efficiently.

Among DBM's major projects are the Project Technical Innovations in the NEP Application (TINA), which focuses on implementing automation and interoperability projects for the budget management process; Project Marissa, which uses blockchain technology to enhance public financial management; and the Project Digital Information for Monitoring and Evaluation (DIME), which uses modern technologies such as satellites, drones, and geotagging to monitor and evaluate the status of government projects.

Beyond budget, the PBBM administration is paving the way to a technology-driven and sustainable nation. On the part of the DBM, rest assured that we are ensuring harmony between our environment, systems, and processes. And with your support, I am confident that all these programs and projects will achieve promising results beneficial to the present and future generations. Hence, collectively and individually, let us build a green and future-proof Bagong Pilipinas, where caring for the environment and the nation is a shared responsibility.

(Amenah F. Pangandaman is the Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management.)

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/26/environment-and-ict-months-building-a-technology-driven-and-future-proof-bagong-pilipinas>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA to streamline processes to bring down food costs

Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas - The Philippine Star

June 26, 2024 | 12:00am



Shoppers buy different kinds of food at the Kadiwa Store inside the Bureau of Plant and Industry (BPI) in San Andres, Malate, Manila on June 20, 2024.

STAR / Edd Gumban

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is streamlining its regulatory processes as part of its efforts to reduce food costs and create a policy environment that would attract investors to the agriculture sector.

Agriculture Undersecretary Asis Perez said the department is on track to implement various changes in its regulations, policies and processes next year aimed at fast-tracking its procedures.

Perez noted that complicated regulatory processes and redundant requirements add to food costs since regulatory fees incurred by industry players are passed on to consumers.

“(We want to) take out the redundancies, the unnecessary requirements,” Perez said in a recent press briefing.

“We want to streamline our government processes (to reduce red tape),” he added.

The DA hopes to complete the review over the next eight months and implement changes to its regulations starting next year, Perez said.

The DA would have a department-wide review after the regulatory agencies are done with their respective internal reviews of their regulations and policies.

“The less you invest in unnecessary regulations, the more efficient you become. So you can utilize those resources for other uses,” Perez said.

One of the initial redundancies that the DA has identified is the need for cold chain players or cold storages to still submit their mayor’s permit and barangay clearance to the department for registration, the DA official said.

“The mere fact that you have a title of cold storage and mayor’s permit, that is enough for us. Why should we ask you to submit the same documents again and again?” Perez said.

Aside from the savings and reduction in food costs, the foreseen improvements in the regulations and policies of the DA would entice more investors to venture into agriculture, Perez added.

“What (investors) are afraid of is uncertainty and the consistent changes. As long as the policies are consistent, open and reasonable [they will invest],” he said.

In May, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. formed a technical working group (TWG) for the comprehensive review of regulations of the DA.

One of the primary roles of the TWG is to endorse a draft regulations that would repeal and amend “conflicting” and “obsolete” regulatory policies within the department.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/06/26/2365697/da-streamline-processes-bring-down-food-costs>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Holes in the ‘whole of government’



COMMONSENSE - Marichu A. Villanueva - The Philippine Star

June 26, 2024 | 12:00am

An official from the Department of Justice (DOJ) echoed a favorite catch-all phrase – “whole of government” approach. It was put forward as a way to check the Philippine offshore gaming operators (POGO) industry from becoming hubs for online scam and other crimes. These online hubs for scams and crimes were discovered in the raids of suspected illegal POGO establishments in Tarlac and Pampanga.

DOJ Undersecretary Raul Vasquez was quoted as saying a “whole of government” approach is the most effective way of handling the POGO industry. With such a hifalutin’ term, the DOJ undersecretary apparently oversimplified the crime problems and the socio-economic impact spawned by the illegal POGOs before they were disrupted in the raids done by our law enforcement authorities.

Using temporary license from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (PAGCOR), the criminal and other illegal activities were found being perpetrated right inside the POGO establishments in Bamban, Tarlac and in Porac, Pampanga. These were dismantled following the raids one after the other by law enforcement authorities led by the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission (PAOCC).

“A whole of government approach is the most effective way of handling the POGO industry,” Vasquez declared at a press conference last week. His remarks followed after proposals to ban POGOs were espoused by lawmakers in the 19th Congress. Certain Cabinet members of President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. expressed support for the proposed ban on POGOs for various grounds.

Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr. earlier even raised concern on the reported presence of international criminal syndicates posing as POGO hubs that pose a threat to the country’s national security. Much earlier, Finance Secretary Ralph Recto concurred that POGOs pose “reputational risks” for the Philippines in its campaign to woo foreign investments.

In February, the House committee on games and amusement approved a bill banning POGO because of crimes associated with them. The bill has yet to reach the plenary for debate and voting at the House of Representatives. Senators Sherwin Gatchalian and Risa Hontiveros have filed similar bills following the Senate public hearings that exposed the illegal and criminal activities at the raided POGO hubs in Tarlac and Pampanga.

So how come these illegal POGOs proliferated?

Let us examine how the whole of government, or should I say ‘holes of government’ enabled them to ply their nefarious trades.

At the Kapihan sa Manila Bay forum last June 12, PAOCC executive director retired Police Gen. Gilbert Cruz retraced for us the common origins of the two raided POGOs in Bamban and Porac. According to Cruz, both POGO establishments started from the acquisition of huge tracts of land for their areas of operations. The PAOCC探者 found out these lands were formerly classified as agriculture. But the two POGO establishments acquired them as “industrial” lands, Cruz noted. Obviously, at a much higher price per square meter, he added.

The land classification falls under the purview of at least three agencies of the government, namely, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR); the Land Management Bureau under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Land Registration Authority (LRA) under the DOJ. Located in sprawling, “self-contained” compounds, the PAOCC-led raids were able to rescue victims of illegal detention, human trafficking and abused POGO workers. However, many of the rescued POGO workers did not possess any valid working permits from the Bureau of Immigration (BI) nor from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). The PAOCC arrested mostly Chinese and Mandarin-speaking nationals from Malaysia and Vietnam, some of whom were later identified as fugitives of the law in their respective homelands.

Traced in these POGO hubs were cases of heinous crimes of kidnapping, illegal drugs and even money-laundering. The Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) though did not detect the entry and exit of monies from these two POGO hubs.

Aside from torture tools, Cruz noted with concern the PAOCC’s recovery of thousands of pre-registered SIM cards from these POGO raids. Paging the Department of Information and Communications technology (DICT).

In the aftermath of the POGO raid in Bamban, the Philippine National Police (PNP) relieved 49 policemen from their posts who are currently undergoing investigations by the National Police Commission. The head of the Pampanga Police Provincial Office (PPO) and the chief of Porac municipal police office were both relieved for

their respective failure or negligence to detect the presence of criminal activities inside Lucky South 99 POGO hub.

Just last Monday, the PNP Central Luzon Regional Director was placed under investigation for the POGO-related crimes under his area of command.

Elected officials from the two local government units (LGUs) of Tarlac and Pampanga are also in hot water for the POGOs in their respective jurisdictions. Bamban Mayor Alice Guo is now serving preventive suspension for six months by the Office of the Ombudsman based on the complaint filed against her by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). The PAOCC last week filed at the DOJ criminal cases of human trafficking against Mayor Guo and several other co-accused.

On the other hand, the PAOCC is still preparing the criminal case against Mayor Jaime Capil of Porac, whose signature was found in both the Letter of No Objection (LONO) and the Porac Sangguniang Council approval of the business permit for Lucky South 99.

In defense of Mayor Guo, her battery of lawyers argued it is PAGCOR's mandate, not the mayor's, to monitor 24/7 the POGOs that were issued licenses. However, at the Senate public hearing on POGOs, the senators believed Mayor Guo had been lying under oath on her true identity based on her submitted birth certificate from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

The senators suspect hanky-panky in the issuance of the birth certificates of Guo and her siblings because they contained questionable differences. But the Guo's were issued their individual Philippine passports by the Department of Foreign Affairs. To quote Vasquez, the POGO industry is "not only the sole concern of the LGU, the PSA or the DOJ or PAGCOR itself, everybody is on board currently." They need to plug the holes in this "whole of government" approach in the POGO industry.

<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2024/06/26/2365686/holes-whole-government>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Smart agriculture



SKETCHES - Ana Marie Pamintuan - The Philippine Star

June 26, 2024 | 12:00am

Agriculture in tiny Taiwan, with its land area of nearly 36,200 square kilometers just over a tenth that of the Philippines, will make the P20-a-kilo rice administration drool with envy.

Taiwan is 100 percent sufficient in rice, with a six-month buffer.

Because of its commitments with the World Trade Organization, however, Taiwan still imports rice, adding to its surplus, which it uses to produce processed items such as rice wine, rice cakes and crackers.

Their rice variety is premium and pricey. Taiwan doesn't export its rice, but it donates its surplus to friendly countries including the Philippines. Any rice stock that is not consumed within three years is used as animal feed.

Taiwanese agriculture defies the economies of scale. Visiting the Ministry of Agriculture in Taipei last week, I learned that the typical Taiwanese rice farmer has only about a hectare of land, while there are many small-scale producers of a wide variety of other agricultural items. But through innovative technology, smart agriculture practices and government support that goes beyond rhetoric, Taiwanese farm production is among the highest in the world.

Apart from having a rice surplus, Taiwan is 90 percent self-sufficient in fruits and vegetables, according to Lih-Fang Lin, director general of the ministry's Department of International Affairs. Overall national food security is at 31 percent, close to Japan's 38 percent.

Taiwan is a major producer of the moth orchid, and its tea is world-renowned. Alishan high mountain oolong is my favorite tea. Taiwanese garlic – large, with the taste inferior to our native Ilocos garlic, but at half the price – dominates Philippine markets. Many of those large, smooth, bright red and yellow onions you see in the market are also imported from Taiwan.

For Taiwan, which China has been moving to isolate from the world, food security is one of the top priorities, Lin told journalists who visited the ministry last week.

Under intense economic coercion tactics employed by China, Taiwan has been weaning itself away from the Chinese market, and strengthening partnerships with other countries. The Philippines should also brace for intensified economic coercion employed by Beijing.

Beyond disengaging economically from China and diversifying its markets and supply chains, Taiwan is boosting domestic farm and fisheries production, embracing technology including artificial intelligence and promoting climate resilience in agriculture.

* * *

With low population growth and fewer youths pursuing careers in agriculture, the Taiwanese government is incentivizing farming.

The government facilitates contract production to prevent crop wastage. Cold chain facilities have been in place for a long time, allowing farmers to grow crops such as the edamame legume and sell it frozen for both export and the domestic market.

Crop diversification is encouraged along with organic farming, which targets the high-end export market. Low-interest loans are provided to those engaged in agriculture. Elderly farmers are encouraged to re-lease their lands to younger ones.

Farmers of all ages are assisted in utilizing innovative technology, such as drones and smart net greenhouses. They are given assistance in understanding e-commerce to boost sales even as the government facilitates international marketing. For food safety, there is a system of tracing agricultural produce.

Under new President William Lai, Taiwan is pursuing a policy of “smart, resilient, sustainable and healthy” agriculture, according to a ministry official. You can be sure those words are not mere aspirations, like rice at P20 a kilo.

Other aspects of agriculture are also automated and climate-resilient. A fisheries monitoring center operates around the clock. Robotic devices are used for cattle feeding. Biogas – produced from cattle and hog manure – is harnessed for power generation, as part of carbon-neutral initiatives in agriculture.

There are demo farms that not only serve as models for farmers but are also tapped for agriculture tourism, revolving around the theme of sustainable harmony between humans and nature.

Taiwan calls it “agriculture for the future,” with food production seen as one of the island’s key links to the world.

* * *

I think of Taiwan’s agriculture following the launch this month of a project that aims to promote climate-resilient agriculture in the Philippines.

The “Adapting Philippine Agriculture to Climate Change” or APA Project is a joint undertaking of the Department of Agriculture, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Organization.

APA, with funding of \$39.2 million including \$26.3 million from the Green Climate Fund, aims to empower 1.25 million farmers in nine provinces identified as climate hotspots to develop sustainable agriculture practices using climate-resilient technologies.

The seven-year project, approved last year, is seen to indirectly benefit over five million Filipinos.

A statement from the FAO said APA will integrate training, market access, provision of production inputs and financing to boost food security, household incomes and resilience.

With the involvement of the FAO, perhaps the goals of this project will move beyond political rhetoric.

Jong-Jin Kim, the FAO regional representative for Asia and the Pacific, said in a video message: “With such huge targets and potential impact, I fervently hope that everyone maintains a good level of commitment and passion in implementing this project.”

This is a big question mark. Maybe if national food security in the Philippines’ faced the same threats as in Taiwan, the FAO can be assured of that “good level of commitment and passion.”

For Taiwan, smart agriculture goes beyond aspiration.

<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2024/06/26/2365690/smart-agriculture>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA may raise tariffs if rice prices fall to P42-P45/kg

Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas - The Philippine Star

June 26, 2024 | 12:00am



Photos show workers unloading sacks of rice from a truck along Dagupan St. in Manila on February 7, 2024.

STAR / Ernie Penaredondo

MANILA, Philippines — Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said he is open to filing a petition to raise rice tariffs later this year if the reduced rates would prove effective in pulling down the retail prices of the staple to as low as P42 per kilo.

Tiu Laurel said the mandated review on the reduced rice tariffs under Executive Order (EO) 62 would help the government in determining if it is about time to raise tariffs.

Rice tariffs were slashed to 15 percent – the lowest rate in the country’s history – by President Marcos through EO 62, which also mandates a review after four months of implementation.

The reduced rice tariffs, which were already lowered to 35 percent in previous EOs, will take effect on July 5, or 15 days after the publication of EO 62.

Without any tariff adjustments, the country imposes a 40 percent tariff on in-quota rice imports and 50 percent on out-quota imports.

“The review will suffice to make sure that in case rice prices have gone down and consumers are already happy, then maybe we can increase again the tariffs,” Tiu Laurel said in a forum organized by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry yesterday.

The mandatory review is set in November, coinciding with the peaking of the country’s main palay harvest season.

Tiu Laurel noted that officials project world rice prices to fall by that time as India is expected to lift its export ban on non-Basmati rice.

“If the rice prices drop significantly, then yes (we will petition for the increase of rice tariffs),” he said.

The agriculture chief is looking at a price range of P42 to P45 per kilogram as a trigger point for the DA to file the petition to raise the tariffs before the Tariff Commission.

At present, retail prices of well-milled rice range from P52 to P55 per kilogram while regular-milled rice is between P48 and P51 per kilogram.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/06/26/2365696/da-may-raise-tariffs-if-rice-prices-fall-p42-p45kg>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Neda chief says tariff rates subject to periodic review

By: [Mariedel Irish U. Catilogo](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 10:28 AM June 25, 2024



FILE PHOTO: National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) Secretary Arsenio Balisacan says President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s executive order indicated that there is a periodic review of tariff rates, hence, the recent imposition of lowered levy on certain products may not last until 2028 as originally planned. Senate PRIB file photo / Voltaire F. Domingo

National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said that lowered tariff rates may not reach until 2028 as originally planned in Executive Order No. 62 if there are “special changes” in the economic environment.

“Why not? It is already in the executive order signed by the President that there is a periodic review. If the situation changes, we must have [the government] that flexibility to re-examine its tools,” Balisacan said in an ambush interview Monday.

The Department of Agriculture last week said it is proposing a periodic review of tariffs on agricultural products instead of reduced rates until 2028, as well as recommending that the tariff cut should only last for about six months to one year only.

Balisacan stressed that tariffs need to be reviewed to make sure that tariff structures are still aligned with the government's priorities.

Under the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act, a comprehensive tariff review is conducted every five years.

"Our tariff structure should be consistent with the rest of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASENA) because we are a member of the economic community," he said.

When asked on what economic conditions could possibly adjust the government's implementation of tariff reduction, Balisacan said it will depend on the movement of the world prices.

"If the world prices are about to fall, then you have to do what.. [how] you can adjust the tariff, that's what many countries do just like what we do with oil prices too," Balisacan said.

"You have to have a mechanism to reduce the domestic price to ensure that developments outside, especially these sharp increases, are not transmitted completely to our 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 added.

Last week, the government officially released the EO No. 62 which orders the [tariff reduction on rice](#) and other agricultural and industrial products until 2028.

Under the program, import tariffs on rice are slashed to 15 percent from 35 percent.

<https://business.inquirer.net/465229/neda-chief-tariffs-are-need-to-be-reviewed>

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/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Aquaculture, livestock permits set for easing

June 25, 2024 | 9:00 pm



BRUCE WARRINGTON-UNSPLASH

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it is seeking to streamline the permit process for aquaculture and livestock projects as a means of attracting more private-sector investment.

Agriculture Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and Regulations Asis G. Perez told reporters that one of the possible outcomes of the streamlining could be lower food prices.

“The requirement is that the government should streamline everything because that adds up to the cost,” Mr. Perez said.

The streamlining exercise, which he estimated will take eight months, will also form part of the DA’s compliance with the Ease of Doing Business Law.

He said that aquaculture farms take years to obtain approval from government agencies and local government units.

Mr. Perez added that one of the other factors hindering livestock and poultry investment is the shortage of land. “We have to develop a policy that set aside lands that will be devoted to specific areas for development,” he said. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/25/604204/aquaculture-livestock-permits-set-for-easing/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

DA to back tariff hike once rice prices fall to P42-45

June 25, 2024 | 9:06 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/EDD GUMBAN

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it will propose to raise rice import tariffs once the price of the staple grain falls to about P42-45 per kilogram, according to the Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. on Tuesday.

“The review will suffice to make sure that in case na bumaba na ‘yan at masaya na ‘yung consumers ng konti then maybe pwede na natin itaas ultil ang tariff (if prices fall to the satisfaction of consumers, then maybe we can raise tariffs again),” Mr. Laurel said at a forum organized by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

According to DA's price monitors, imported well-milled rice in Metro Manila markets sold for between P42 and P55 per kilo, while regular milled rice was at P48 to P51.

Executive Order (EO) No. 62 formalized the reduction of rice tariffs to 15% from 35% until 2028. The EO is set to take effect on July 6, the 15th day after its publication.

The order calls for a review of the tariff every four months to adjust to changes in global prices and supply.

"By November, we hope, the price of rice on the world market will go down a bit. India is expected to increase its rice exports. So, there is a chance that the review will happen before the end of the year."

The Indian government last year banned non-basmati white rice exports, citing the need to safeguard domestic supply.

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

"We're not saying that we will just abandon the farmers, we have a program for providing more inputs to farmers," he said.

Farmers' groups have signaled their opposition to the reduced tariffs, citing the resulting pressure on farmgate prices as traders opt to deal in imports rather than domestic rice. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/25/604212/da-to-back-tariff-hike-once-rice-prices-fall-to-p42-45/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Biodiesel demand may buoy coconut industry

June 25, 2024 | 9:04 pm



CENTURYPACIFIC.COM.PH

THE Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) said it expects demand for coconut products to be stimulated by its use in biodiesel blends and as a possible component in aviation fuel.

“With our projections and when we also talked with market stakeholders, they’re positive there will be an increase,” PCA Administrator Dexter R. Buted told reporters on Tuesday.

“We committed to the Department of Energy (to raise the biofuel blend) from B1 to B3 this October. The contribution of the PCA is 1 billion coconuts for the increased use of Coconut Methyl Ester,” he added.

Biofuel blends are numbered by the share of the non-diesel material in the fuel, with the B3 blend indicating 3% coconut content.

The DoE has ordered oil companies to increase their coco biodiesel blend by October. The government plans to increase the biodiesel blend to B5 in the next three years.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported that El Niño could dampen coconut oil exports due to declining production.

Exports are projected to drop to 900,000 metric tons during the 2024 to 2025 market year, from 1.14 million MT the prior year.

However, Mr. Buted said that coconut production may increase 3% to 5% this year.

Last year coconut production fell to 14.89 million MT from 14.93 million MT in 2022, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority.

He added that the PCA's replanting project could revive production as old trees give way to new ones.

He said that the country's coconut trees are now 60 to 70 years old on average, "so we need to replace these trees."

The Palace has tasked the agency with planting 100 million coconut trees, with a target to plant about 8 million this year.

Mr. Buted said that the PCA is also seeking P2.4 billion to increase the productivity of coconut trees.

— **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/25/604208/biodiesel-demand-may-buoy-coconut-industry/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Congress think tank calls for review of rice fund use

June 25, 2024 | 9:01 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/EDD GUMBAN

LEGISLATORS need to review the use of government funds supporting the development of the rice industry in light of its weak productivity growth, a Congressional think tank said.

“The numbers suggest that the (Rice Tariffication Law) has, thus far, not shifted the growth trajectory of the Philippine rice industry upwards,” the Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department (CPBRD) said in a study.

Republic Act (RA) No. 11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law of 2019 created the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), which takes money generated from rice import tariffs to fund modernization projects such as mechanization, the supply of superior seed, and rice cultivation know-how to farmers.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) estimates that RCEF aid to farmers between 2020 and 2024 totaled P50 billion. Overall government support for the industry has amounted to P156.29 billion since 2019.

“The freer importation of rice, however, has kept rice prices relatively stable — to the benefit of consumers and to the detriment of producers,” CPBRD said.

The Philippines is expected to be the top importer of rice next year, the US Department of Agriculture said, with a projected 4.2 million metric tons worth of shipments.

The CPBRD also noted that the farmgate price of rice dipped shortly after the implementation of the Rice Tariffication Act but have remained elevated since 2020.

“This suggests that the conversion and transportation costs associated with palay processing have remained largely steady in the quarters after the enactment of the RTL; and the RTL and the RCEF have not induced a long-lasting effect on rice price dynamics,” it said.

Federation of Free Farmers National Manager Raul Q. Montemayor also cited the need to review RCEF utilization alongside extending its effectiveness. It had originally been intended to run for six years when the law was passed in 2019.

“One important lesson is that assistance to farmers must not be piecemeal and should instead be a coordinated package of support. Also, the array of services should be location specific to address the needs of farmers in a locality,” he said via Viber.

He said the government’s decision to lower rice tariffs to 15% from 35% could dry up the funds available for the RCEF, which by law receives P10 billion a year from tariffs.

On Monday, National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan said the new 15% tariff on rice imports is the optimal rate to ensure farmers are protected.

Mr. Montemayor said tariffs should be set with farmer incomes as a major consideration.

“For the optimal rate, we should base it on a target level of income for our rice farmers. Then we compute the market price for palay, given average yields/hectare, that will result in the desired income level,” he said.

“From there, we determine the tariff level at which imported rice will land at a price equivalent to the target palay price.” — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/25/604139/congress-think-tank-calls-for-review-of-rice-fund-use/>

REMARTE:

Q fever may mild symptoms lang – ekspertero

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 nagsisimula 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 kasu 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/>

REIMATE:

House Speaker blangko sa kumakalat na ‘Romualdez Rice’

June 25, 2024 09:36



MANILA, Philippines – Nilinaw ni House Speaker Martin Romualdez na hindi niya aprubado o awtorisado ang bigas na ipinamamahagi na nakitang may markang “Romualdez rice”.

Ayon kay Romualdez, kanyang aalamin kung saan galing ang mga bigay na may marka ng kanyang pangalan.

“We haven’t sanctioned that so that will be rectified,” pöhayag ni Romualdez. “But the most important thing is that we bring rice to every Filipino table at affordable prices,” dagdag pa niya.

Ang rice packs na may markang “Romualdez rice” ay unang kumalat sa social media.

Ang tawag kay Romualdez na “Mr. Ric”e ay ibinansag sa kanya ni Sultan Kudarat Governor Pax Mangudadatu dahil na rin sa pagtugon nito sa problema ng bigas at pagtiyak na mapababa ang presyo sa merkado.

Sa ilalim ng Cash and Rice Distribution Program (CARD) at Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair (BPSF) ay namamahagi ng bigas ang pamahalaan kungbsaan umiikot ang caravan sa ibat ibang bahagi ng bansa para magpaabot ng tulong. *Gail Mendoza*

<https://remate.ph/house-speaker-blangko-sa-kumakalat-na-romualdez-rice/>

REIMATE:

Kadiwa store mobile application ilulunsad ng DA

June 25, 2024 09:23



MANILA, Philippines – Target ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na i-pilot-test ang isang Kadiwa store mobile application para gawing mas madaling mapuntahan ng mga mamimili ang abot-kayang produktong agrikultura.

“Nagpaplano na magtayo ng isang Kadiwa app kung saan mas mapapadali ang pag-o-order at pagbibili ng ating mga mamimili sa Kadiwa,” ani DA Assistant Secretary for Consumer Affairs and Legislative Affairs Genevieve Velicaria Guevarra sa programang Usapang Agrikultura ng Radyo Pilipinas noong Lunes.

“Sana by the end of the year, magkaroon tayo ng pilot project kung saan ite-testing natin, siguro dito muna sa NCR (National Capital Region),” sabi pa niya.

Ayon sa opisyal ng DA, halos dalawang milyong kabahayan ang regular na bumibili sa 472 na tindahan ng Kadiwa sa buong bansa.

Kabilang dito ang 266 regular na Kadiwa store, 119 regular na Kadiwa pop-up store, 52 regular na Kadiwa ng Pangulo (KNP) sites, 32 Kadiwa-on-wheels, at tatlong Kadiwa centers.

Mayroon ding mahigit 1,400 na kooperatiba at organisasyon ng mga magsasaka na kasalukuyang naka-link sa mga tindahan ng Kadiwa.

Sinabi ni Guevarra na plano ng DA na magtataug ng hindi bababa sa isang Kadiwa Center bawat lalawigan sa pakikipagtulungan sa mga yunit at ahensya ng lokal na pamahalaan. *Santi Celario*

<https://remate.ph/kadiwa-store-mobile-application-ilulunsad-ng-da/>

ABANTE:

P42 per kilong bigas namumuro sa Hulyo

- Abante News
- June 24, 2024



Possible umanong bumaba sa hanggang P42 kada kilo ang presyo ng bigas dahil sa desisyon ni Pangulong Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. na tapyasin ang taripang ipinapataw sa imported na bigas.

Ginawa nina PRISM founder Rowena Sadicon at Orly Manuntag ang pahayag sa isang press conference matapos ang pakikipagpulong nito kay Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez at ilan pang lider ng Kamara de Representantes sa Manila Golf and Country Club sa Makati City nitong Lunes.

matapos ilabas ng Malacañang ang Executive Order 62 na nagbababa ng taripa sa imported na bigas sa 15% mula sa 35%.

Ayon kay Manuntag, na siya ring tagapagsalita ng Grain Retailers Confederation of the Philippines, mararamdam sa buong bansa ang epekto ng mas mababang taripa sa bigas.

“Ito po ang isa sa itutulong po namin na maramdam sa bawat merkado ang papasok na EO 62 at ang sinasabi po nating 15% tariff na maramdam ng mamamayang Pilipino,” sabi pa ni Manuntag.

“So inaabangan po namin na sa mga P45-P46 o P44-P42 ang ating mga presyo na bigas sa market pagpasok nitong July, sa 15% na tariff po natin,” dagdag pa nito.

Pinasalamatan naman ni Romualdez ang naging pangako ng grupo na ibaba ang presyo ng bigas.

“Your commitment to making affordable rice accessible to our people is greatly appreciated. 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,” ayon kay Romualdez. (Billy Begas/Eralyn Prado)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/06/24/p42-per-kilong-bigas-namumuro-sa-hulyo/>

MANILA STANDARD

PHINMA: New cold storage plants to cut food waste

By Manila Standard Business

June 25, 2024, 8:55 pm

Business leaders, government officials and experts agree on the need to expand the country's cold storage facilities to address the problem of food waste.

They made the statement in a forum on "Achieving Food Security: Advancing Investments for Agricultural Sustainability," co-organized by PHINMA Corp., Stratbase ADR Institute and Makati Business Club. The hybrid event took place in Makati on Monday.

PHINMA Construction Materials Group executive vice president and PHINMA Corp. director Eduardo Sahagun opened the discussion by highlighting the urgent need for food security in the Philippines amid climate change, rising food and nutrition demands and logistical challenges.

He recalled Agriculture Secretary Francisco Laurel Jr.'s earlier pronouncement that 30 percent of the country's agricultural produce is wasted due to a poor logistics system, while 51 million Filipinos face moderate or severe food insecurity, the highest in Southeast Asia, according to the United Nations.

"Our lofty dream is to allow farmers and fisherfolks to store their products for long periods, avoiding wastage and increasing the value of their goods," Sahagun said.

"Our hope is for all of us to support the cold chain industry in the proper transport and storage of meat and fish, contributing to food security and food safety," he said.

Danielle del Rosario, chief operating officer of the Union Insulated Panel Corporation, a unit of PHINMA, said improved agricultural infrastructure enhances food security by stabilizing and increasing the food supply.

"Investments in modern irrigation systems, cold storage facilities, and cold chain logistics networks reduce post-harvest losses, increase crop yields, and ensure that fresh produce reaches markets efficiently. This not only stabilizes food prices but also makes nutritious food more accessible to all Filipinos, combating hunger and malnutrition," Del Rosario said.

“The availability of cold storage facilities in strategic areas reduces food waste by preserving perishable goods at optimal temperatures, ensuring that food reaches our tables instead of landfills,” she said.

Del Rosario said the Philippines lags in per capita cold storage capacity, with only 0.04 cubic meters per person compared to the global average of 0.15 cubic meters.

Stratbase president Victor Manhit said President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. declared food security as a top priority on the Philippine agenda and emphasized the importance of investing in infrastructure and logistics to ensure nutritious food reaches people efficiently, similar to a large-scale farm-to-table approach.

“We need to ensure a food-secure Philippines,” Manhit said.

He emphasized the necessity of transitioning away from a services-dependent economy to prioritize agriculture, forestry, and industry. He advocated for increasing investments in the manufacturing sector, especially for the domestic market, within the agro-industrial sphere.

“This initiative will contribute to increasing the country’s productivity and provide the growing domestic market with more affordable goods and essential commodities like food. This also strengthens our position in the global supply chain,” Manhit said.

The Department of Agriculture, for its part, said developing the logistics system is one of the agency’s courses of action, on top of improving agri-fishery areas, modernizing and mechanizing the farming system, and enhancing the post-harvest system, and expanding the local and international market.

<https://manilastandard.net/business/314463975/phinma-new-cold-storage-plants-to-cut-food-waste.html>

DA: Rice tariff cuts could be short term

By Janine Alexis Miguel and Niña Myka Pauline Arceo

June 26, 2024

THE Agriculture Department will seek a review of a Palace directive that slashed rice tariffs should local market prices drop beyond P42 per kilo.

Executive Order (EO) 62, signed by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. just last week, cut the import duty on rice to 15 percent from an already-lowered 35 percent up to 2028 in a bid to keep inflation under control.

Instead of the usual 30-day effectivity period that will apply to other tariff program changes under EO 62, the rice tariff cuts will be fast-tracked to next week.

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan earlier this month said that the government was hopeful that the move would lead to rice prices dropping to P29 per kilo, at least for the poor, via the tariff cuts and subsidies.

Based on the Agriculture Department's latest monitoring report, retail prices of rice were ranging from P48 to as high as P60 per kilo in Metro Manila markets.

Bringing prices down to P42-P45/kilo will already be a big deal, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said on Tuesday at a forum hosted by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He added, however, that further declines would prompt the Agriculture Department to push for a review of EO 62.

"If it's (the price drop) just a little, maybe not yet. But then, of course, we're not saying that we will just neglect the farmers," Tiu Laurel said.

He noted that Marcos wants to protect farmers from the impact of the tariff cut while also providing benefits to consumers.

EO 62, he pointed out, calls for a review of the revised tariffs every four months, which means that an adjustment could be ordered in November.

Minimal impact

In a related development, the rice tariff cuts set to take effect next week will only have a minimal impact on inflation, a senior Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) official said.

"Our internal estimate is about 0.27 percentage point over a 12-month period," BSP Senior Assistant Governor Iluminada Sicat told reporters at the sidelines of a Manila Times economic forum last week.

However, with the tariff cuts to take effect next month, "you won't get the full impact of the 0.27 percentage points," she pointed out.

Inflation has been rising for the last four months, hitting 3.9 percent — near the upper end of the BSP's 2.0- to 4.0-percent target — in May. Rising food prices, particularly for rice, have been tagged as a primary factor.

The impact of the rice tariff cut is expected to be considered by the BSP's policymaking Monetary Board when it meets this Thursday.

When it last met in May, prior to the announcement of the lower rice tariffs, the Monetary Board lowered its risk-adjusted forecast for 2024 inflation to 3.8 percent from 4.0 percent.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. chief economist Michael Ricafort, meanwhile, said the 15-percent rice tariff would result in a 20-percent price reduction for imported rice, which accounts approximately 20 percent of the total rice supply in the country.

As rice makes up nearly 9.0 percent of the consumer price index basket, imported rice represents close to 1.8 percent, he added.

"Lower imported rice tariffs would help reduce headline inflation by about 0.36 ppt, on a standalone basis, but more if locally produced rice prices go down as a result of lower prices and tariffs on imported rice," Ricafort said.

"Thus, average inflation toward 3.0 percent is becoming more feasible, going forward."

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/26/business/top-business/da-rice-tariff-cuts-could-be-short-term/1953230>

DA sees tariff review in Nov

By Jed Macapagal

June 26, 2024

The Department of Agriculture (DA) said it may recommend an increase in rice tariff rates only if local rice prices would decline to around P42 to P45 per kilogram.

DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said during a forum hosted by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Taguig City yesterday that under Executive Order (EO) 62, a review must be done after four months of its effectivity to adjust tariff rates accordingly.

EO 62 lowers tariffs on agricultural commodities especially on rice which were reduced from 35 percent to 15 percent, effective starting July.

“The review will suffice to make sure that in case retail prices go down and consumers are satisfied, then maybe we can already increase tariff rates... So, it is very timely to review by November as world prices could be a little lower at that time as India is expected to lift the export ban on rice,” Tiu Laurel said.

However, DA pointed out that an increase in rice tariff would only be possible if retail prices of rice will drop.

“But then again, we’re not saying that we will just let the farmers alone. We have a program for giving more inputs to farmers to augment their costs,” Tiu Laurel added.

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

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

Imported rice ranges from P57 to P65 for the special variety and P52 to P62 for premium.

For local rice, the special variety costs P57 to P65 per kg and premium, P52 to P58 per kg.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/da-sees-tariff-review-in-nov/

DA chief vows to lead push for rice tariffs hike by November if ..

Ada Pelonia

June 26, 2024



AGRICULTURE Secretary Franciso Tiu Laurel Jr. is willing to file a petition to increase rice tariffs by November if rice prices plunge to as low as P42.

“To maintain a price of P42 to P45 would be the right range,” Laurel told reporters during a media forum organized by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) on Tuesday.

However, the agriculture chief said that if the decline in rice prices is not significant, the possibility of filing a petition with the Tariff Commission (TC) would not be realized yet.

Despite this, Laurel maintained that they would not neglect rice farmers.

“We have a program now of giving more inputs to farmers [...] ngayon nagbibigay tayo sa rice farmers ng dalawang sako ng fertilizer sa bawat ekarya [now we give rice farmers two sacks of fertilizers for every hectare],” he said.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. recently issued Executive Order (EO) 62, which reduced tariffs on rice to 15 percent.

“The implementation of an updated comprehensive tariff schedule aims to augment supply, manage prices, and temper inflationary pressure of various commodities consistent with the Philippine national interest: the objective of safeguarding the purchasing power of Filipinos,” Marcos said in the three-page issuance.

EO 62 noted that the comprehensive and/or specific MFN (Most Favored Nation) tariff rates listed under Annex A of EO 26 will be subjected to a National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) review every four months from the effectivity of the new order.

Under the new issuance, the tariff for local food staple will be reduced from 35 percent to 15 percent 15 days after EO 26 is published in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation. The EO is set to take effect on July 5.

Farmers to file for TRO

Over the weekend, farmers groups said they will file a petition for a temporary restraining order (TRO) before the Supreme Court to prevent the implementation of EO 62.

Earlier, Virginia Lacsa 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.

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.

According to the Department of Agriculture’s (DA) latest price watch report, the average weekly price of local commercial rice in the capital region is P48.88 per kilogram for regular and P51.46 per kg for well-milled while the imported commercial rice is P49.85/kg for regular and P53.50/kg for well-milled.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/26/da-chief-vows-to-lead-push-for-rice-tariffs-hike-by-november-if/>

PCA: Rising demand to boost coconut oil exports

BusinessMirror

June 25, 2024



THE Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) expects a slight increase in coconut oil exports this year due to an increase in demand despite the ill effects of El Niño on production.

“Yung ating oil ngayon ay nagagamit na sa biodiesel at yung aviation fuel malapit na [Our oil now is being used in biodiesel, and we’re close to doing the same for aviation fuel],” PCA Administrator Dexter Buted told reporters on Tuesday.

He noted that El Niño affected coconut production, particularly since the dry spell delayed and stunted the coconuts' growth.

Buted also pointed out the coconut's resilience from the possible effects of La Niña.

"Kahit bagyuhin iyan, bubunga pa rin iyan [Even if it's hit by storm, it will still bear fruit]...we're confident that with all regions where coconut trees are standing, we're confident that we can raise our yield even more," he said.

Despite the weather disturbances, Buted sees coconut production posting an uptick by 3 to 5 percent this year.

Figures from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed that receipts from coconut oil, the Philippines's top agriculture export, registered the biggest decline at 44.2 percent last year.

The value of coconut exports, including crude and refined, reached \$1.172 billion in 2023 compared with the previous year's \$2.1 billion.

Data from the World Bank showed that coconut oil from January to December last year averaged \$1,075 per metric ton (MT), lower than the \$1,635 per MT recorded in 2022.

In the fourth quarter of 2023 alone, coconut oil averaged \$1,090 per MT, down from the previous year's \$1,147 per MT.

Meanwhile, Buted said the agency asked the government for P2.4 billion for their fertilization budget.

"Kasi iyong ating fertilization ay 1 percent lang sa buong 340 million coconut trees ang naibibigay na budget [...] sa ganun ay aalis na tayo diyan sa one percent na fertilization budget, aakyat naman tayo sa 15 percent. [In our fertilization, only 1 percent of the budget for the entire 340 million coconut trees has been provided. We need to move beyond that 1-percent frtilization budget, we should go up to 15 percent]," he said. Ada Pelonia

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/25/pca-rising-demand-to-boost-coconut-oil-exports/>

ABANTE TONITE

Q fever hindi pa kumapit sa mga Pinoy

June 25, 2024

Wala pang taong nakontamina o nakapitan ng Q fever na nakita sa mga kambing.

Ito ang nilinaw ni Infectious Diseases Expert at Pangulo ng Philippine College of Physicians Dr. Rontgene Solante taliwas sa ulat na mayroong umanong dinalang pasyente sa San Lazaro Hospital noong Biyernes.

Sinabi ni Solante na may nag-abisong may dadalhing pasyenteng may Q fever sa San Lazaro subalit walang dumating—kaya hanggang ngayon ay walang ginagamot na pasyenteng may Q Fever.

Bukod sa San Lazaro hospital ay sa Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) dinadala ang mga pasyenteng may infectious disease subalit sinabi ni Solante na wala ring dinala sa nabanggit na hospital kaya zero Q fever pa rin ang Pilipinas sa nabanggit na sakit mula sa kambing.

“Last Friday we were informed na mayroon daw dadalhin na pasyente. We were ready for that pero hindi naman nakarating or walang dumating, so far wala, zero,” ani Solante.

Nakapasok ang Q fever sa bansa dahil sa in-import na 94 na kambing mula sa Estados Unidos subalit ayon sa Bureau of Animal Industry, nadepopulate na ang mga ito at wala ng peligrong ku—malat pa ang sakit na Q fever. (Aileen Taliping)

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/06/25/q-fever-hindi-pa-kumapit-sa-mga-pinoy/>

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON

Ayuda, suporta sa magsasaka ng palay tiniyak ng Kamara

Joy Cantos

June 26, 2024 | 12:00am



Farmers harvest rice using sickles in Bocaue, Bulacan on January 2, 2024.

STAR/ Jesse Bustos

MANILA, Philippines — Matapos itakda ang pagbaba ng presyo ng bigas simula sa Hulyo, tiniyak ng Kamara sa pangunguna ni Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez ang pagbibigay ng suporta ng gobyerno sa mga magsasaka ng palay sa bansa.

Ayon kay Romualdez, ito'y sa pamamagitan ng subsidiya upang maibsan naman aniya ang agam-agam ng mga magsasaka kaugnay ng pagbaba ng taripa sa imported na bigas.

Sinabi ni Romualdez na ang pamahalaan sa ilalim ng administrasyon ni Pangulong Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr., ay naninindigan sa pangangalaga at pagpapaunlad sa mga lokal na magsasaka, na mayroon umanong mahalagang papel na ginagampanan sa pagtiyak sa seguridad ng pagkain sa bansa.

Tiniyak din ng punong lider ng Kamara sa mga lokal na magsasaka na buo ang suporta sa mga ito ng Kongreso, ng pamahalaan at maging ng mamamayang Pilipino.

Sinabi naman nina House Deputy Majority Leader Erwin Tulfo, House Committee on Agriculture Chairman Mark Enverga at House Committee on Appropriations Chairman Elizaldy Co na ang pagbabawas ng taripa sa ilalim ng Executive Order (EO) No. 62, na nagbababa ng buwis sa inaangkat na bigas sa 15 porsiyento ay hindi makakapinsala sa kapakanan ng mga lokal na magsasaka.

Kaugnay nito, nagbigay rin ng update ang mga Kongresista kaugnay ng Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Program (RCEP), na nasa ilalim ng Rice Tariffication Law, at ginawa upang masiguro na mayroong pondong magagamit na pantulong sa mga magsasaka.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2024/06/26/2365598/ayuda-suporta-sa-magsasaka-ng-palay-tiniyak-ng-kamara>