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**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# DA releases P511 M assistance for agri-fishery sector in Mimaropa

BY JERRY ALCAYDE

Jun 26, 2024 06:41 PM

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro – The Department of Agriculture (DA) reported that P511 million have been allotted for different interventions for the agri-fishery sector in the Mimaropa or Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, and Palawan region.



**DEPARTMENT of Agriculture-Mimaropa Regional Technical Director for Research and Regulations Celso Olido, Regional Executive Director Christopher Bañas, and Regional Technical Director for Operations Vener Dilig grace a recent Kapihan sa Bagong Pilipinas press conference in Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro where they discussed the agency’s programs and services in the region. (Photo courtesy of Denice Benosa/DA-MIMAROPA)**

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Christopher Banas, regional executive director of DA-Mimaropa, said these interventions designed to provide comprehensive support were cash assistance, fuel assistance, buffer stocks of palay, corn, and vegetable seeds, production and post-harvest facilities, farm machinery, indemnification insurance, loan funds, irrigation support, composting facilities, coconut seedlings, and fishing equipment.

Banas said the assistance is intended for more than 100,000 small farmers under the Rice Farmers Financial Assistance program.

The program is specifically designed to provide immediate relief such as P5,000 cash assistance per farmer with a rice farm of two hectares and below.

In a recent Kapihan sa Bagong Pilipinas hosted by the Philippine Information Agency here, Bañas announced that aside from the P1.2 billion allocated to address the El Niño phenomenon in the region, P10.41 million worth of various assistance were distributed during the Serbisyo Fair in Calapan City in April for more than 7,000 farmers.

A DA statement said that during President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s visit to San Jose, Occidental Mindoro on April 23, P727 million worth of interventions were awarded.

“These consist of the assistance from our attached agencies, like the ACPC (Agriculture Credit Policy Council), PCA (Philippine Coconut Authority), PCIC (Philippine Crop Insurance Corp.), NIA (National Irrigation Administration), and PhilMech (Philippine Postharvest Development and Mechanization),” Banas told Mindoro-based media practitioners during the Kapihan.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/26/da-releases-p511-m-assistance-for-agri-fishery-sector-in-mimaropa>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **Landbank extends P120 million loan for LGU farm-to-market roads**

**BY LEE C. CHIPONGIAN**

Jun 26, 2024 02:06 PM

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Government-controlled Land Bank of the Philippines (Landbank) has released a P120-million loan to the Municipal Government of Tuburan in Basilan to construct and develop more farm-to-market roads for the 1,500 farmers and fishers in the town.

In a statement Wednesday, June 26, Landbank said the loan will be used to purchase various heavy equipment to accelerate the construction and maintenance of farm-to-market roads and related infrastructure projects in the area.

Landbank is hoping the loan will “enhance the municipality’s road network and provide over 1,500 local farmers and fishers with improved access to agricultural technology and farm material inputs, plus reduced transportation costs for their produce.” It is also expected to support the town’s economic growth and provide service to its underserved communities.

The bank said the local government unit (LGU) will purchase 10-wheeler dump trucks, 10-wheeler mixer trucks, wheel loaders, a hydraulic crawler excavator, and a 10-wheeler self-loading truck. This will help reduce operational costs associated with renting and subcontracting equipment for current and future construction projects across the town.

“The municipal government requires logistics to maintain existing road networks and other infrastructure projects,” said Landbank, adding that funding “will be crucial in addressing this need and advancing local growth, considering that Tuburan is an agricultural community with most of its land area dedicated to coconuts, rubber, and cassava.”

The loan agreement was signed by the LGU and Landbank last May 23, 2024.

Landbank President and CEO Lynette V. Ortiza said the bank is always ready to “serve the growth needs of partner local government units to bankroll initiatives that stimulate economic activities.”

“This complements our efforts in support of the agriculture sector and other key industries contributing to building inclusive and sustainable local communities,” she added.

Landbank has released about P113.6 billion of loans to LGUs as of April this year. These loans are used for the acquisition of heavy equipment, construction and maintenance of farm-to-market roads, railways and bridges, utility projects, school and hospital buildings, street lights, and computerization of LGU operations, among others.

Landbank is the country’s second largest universal and commercial bank. It reported a net income of P40.3 billion in 2023, up by 33.8 percent from P30.1 billion in 2022 amid an expansion in its loans and investments.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/6/26/article-2443>

**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

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## **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.

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 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:**

# P12 billion aid to rice farmers out by September

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

June 27, 2024 | 12:00am



The amount is part of the nearly P20-billion excess tariffs collected by the government last year from 3.6 million metric tons of rice imports.

Edd Gumban, file

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) has committed to complete the distribution of P12 billion in cash assistance to rice farmers by September.

The amount is part of the nearly P20-billion excess tariffs collected by the government last year from 3.6 million metric tons of rice imports.

Under existing laws, the government can use rice tariff collections in excess of P10 billion for cash assistance, crop diversification land titling and expanded insurance program for rice farmers.

Total rice tariff collections reached nearly P30 billion in 2023.

The DA is opting to use P12 billion of the total excess rice tariffs for cash assistance since it is sufficient to cover the 2.384 million rice farmer-beneficiaries of its rice farmers financial assistance program.

Rice farmers tilling two hectares and below will receive P5,000 each under the program.

“We are rushing it and hopefully... I am targeting (that by) September (we are done distributing the whole) P12 billion,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said at a recent forum organized by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Tiu Laurel said the DA is allocating P7 billion for crop diversification by rice farmers toward high-value crops and P1 billion for land tilling.

This is the first time the government will use excess rice tariffs for other programs allowed under the Rice Tariffication Law. Since 2020, the DA used all excess rice tariffs for its financial assistance program.

“It is about time (to allocate excess tariffs) for high-value crops, which is part of the law,” said Danilo Fausto, president of the Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc.

Fausto proposed that uncompetitive rice farmers shift to high-value crops suitable in their respective areas.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/06/27/2365859/p12-billion-aid-rice-farmers-out-september>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# DA bans importation of live goats from US

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

June 27, 2024 | 12:00am



Photo showing Q fever and a man holding a goat.

CDC via Unsplash; Department of Agriculture / Released

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) has banned the importation of live goats from the United States following the detection of Q fever cases in the country.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. yesterday issued the ban after 19 of 66 goats recently imported from the US tested positive for Q fever.

“Q fever is a notifiable zoonotic disease listed under Article 1.3.1 of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code of the World Organization for Animal Health. This is the first officially confirmed case of Q fever in imported goats,” Tiu Laurel said in a memorandum.

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He said there is no treatment or available local vaccine that could prevent the disease.

“There is a need to institute radical measures to contain the spread of the disease to protect the local ruminant industry and the health of the public,” Tiu Laurel said.

He ordered the immediate suspension of the processing, evaluation of application and issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary import clearance (SPSIC) for goats.

“All approved yet unused SPSIC for goats coming from the USA are deemed canceled upon the issuance of this memorandum. All goat shipments from the United States of America that are in transit before the official communication of this order to American authorities will be allowed, subject to quarantine rules and testing requirements,” he said.

The DA and the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) confirmed the first case of Q fever in the country after samples taken from imported goats tested positive for the disease.

DA spokesman Arnel de Mesa said the BAI imported at least 66 goats, which arrived on Jan 11.

The animals were subjected to a series of tests after they showed signs of sickness while undergoing quarantine in Pampanga.

Earlier, Tiu Laurel ordered an investigation into the importation of goats.

Some BAI personnel have been placed under preventive suspension pending results of the investigation.

Tiu Laurel directed concerned DA officials to review the BAI’s quarantine and disease control protocol.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Q fever is caused by the bacteria *Coxiella burnetii*, which affect animals such as goat, sheep and cattle.

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

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/06/27/2365903/da-bans-importation-live-goats-us>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Landbank OKs P120 million financing for Basilan LGU

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

June 27, 2024 | 12:00am



Tuburan Mayor Jhaber Kallahal (2nd from right) and Landbank senior vice president Charlotte Conde (center) lead the signing of a P120-million loan agreement to finance the municipal government of Tuburan's acquisition of various heavy equipment. Joining them are Tuburan treasurer Abubakar Mohammad (right), Landbank Zamboanga City Lending Center head Zenaida Valencia (4th from right) and account officer Jaydee Bongon (left)

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — State-run Land Bank of the Philippines (Landbank) has approved a P120-million financing for agriculture and infrastructure projects meant to develop the local government of Basilan.

Landbank said it granted the loan financing to the municipal government of Tuburan in Basilan to boost countryside development, particularly agriculture and infrastructure.

The financing will be used for the purchase of heavy equipment such as 10-wheeler dump truck, mixer and self-loading trucks, wheel loaders and hydraulic crawler excavator.

These are expected to expedite the construction and maintenance of farm-to-market roads and other crucial infrastructure projects across the town.

As such, it will enhance the municipality's road network and provide over 1,500 local farmers and fishers with improved access to agricultural technology and farm material inputs while cutting transportation costs.

The funding is also crucial in advancing local growth considering that the municipality is an agricultural community with most of its land area dedicated to coconuts, rubber and cassava.

Landbank president and CEO Lynette Ortiz said the loan would support the local government's strategic investments in promoting economic growth especially in underserved communities.

"This complements our efforts in support of the agriculture sector and other key industries, contributing to building inclusive and sustainable local communities," Ortiz said.

As of end-April, Landbank's outstanding loans to LGUs nationwide hit P113.6 billion in a bid to spur inclusive and sustainable economic development.

The loans support local development projects nationwide including the acquisition of heavy equipment, construction and maintenance of farm-to-market roads, railways and bridges, utility projects, school and hospital buildings, street lights and digitalization of LGU operations, among others.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/06/27/2365798/landbank-oks-p120-million-financing-basilan-lgu>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# DA to complete policy review by early 2025 to simplify rules for farmers

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

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 08:34 AM June 26, 2024



FILE PHOTO: Local farmers harvest organic rice in Barangay Pawa, Legazpi City, Albay province on November 24, 2019, Sunday. MARK ALVIC ESPLANA / INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) hopes to complete its ongoing policy review by early next year to streamline and simplify rules governing the Philippine farm sector, its official said.

Agriculture Undersecretary Asis Perez said the review proper will commence next week but certain regulatory agencies under the DA already started their respective internal assessments.

“Hopefully in eight months’ time, it (review of regulations) will be completed... within next year, it should be done. We should see results,” Perez said on the sidelines of an event in Makati City.

The DA promulgated Department Order No. 10 early in June to update existing regulatory policies within the agency.

Among others, all regulatory agencies are ordered to create a regulatory reform committee for “stocktaking” or compiling all regulatory policies relevant to and made by the agency, identify “cumbersome” regulations and prioritize policies for review and improvement.

The committee should also conduct studies or reviews to promote efficient government services and ease of doing business, assess the rules, and determine the effects and implications of adopting a policy option.

Perez said the latest undertaking is part of the agency’s plan to reduce the bureaucratic red tape and processing time and ensure both its developmental and regulatory functions are in place.

The agriculture official said although regulatory agencies under DA focused on enforcing the rules and ensuring the compliance of industry players, the agency itself needs “to be a facilitator of development of the sector.”

Perez said this is also in compliance with the Anti-Red Tape Authority’s (Arta) mandate to address excessive bureaucratic processes and regulatory uncertainties.

Furthermore, the Philippine Development Program (PDP) 2023- 2028 calls on government agencies and local government units to “expedite the elimination of redundant, duplicative, and overlapping regulations.”

According to Perez, concerned regulatory agencies are “in the process” of assessing [the existing rules and regulations].

“I would say everything is urgent,” he said. “It will be premature for me to say which one is most pressing at the moment but I think we look at everything as a priority.”

<https://business.inquirer.net/465602/da-to-complete-policy-review-by-early-2025-to-simplify-rules-for-farmers>

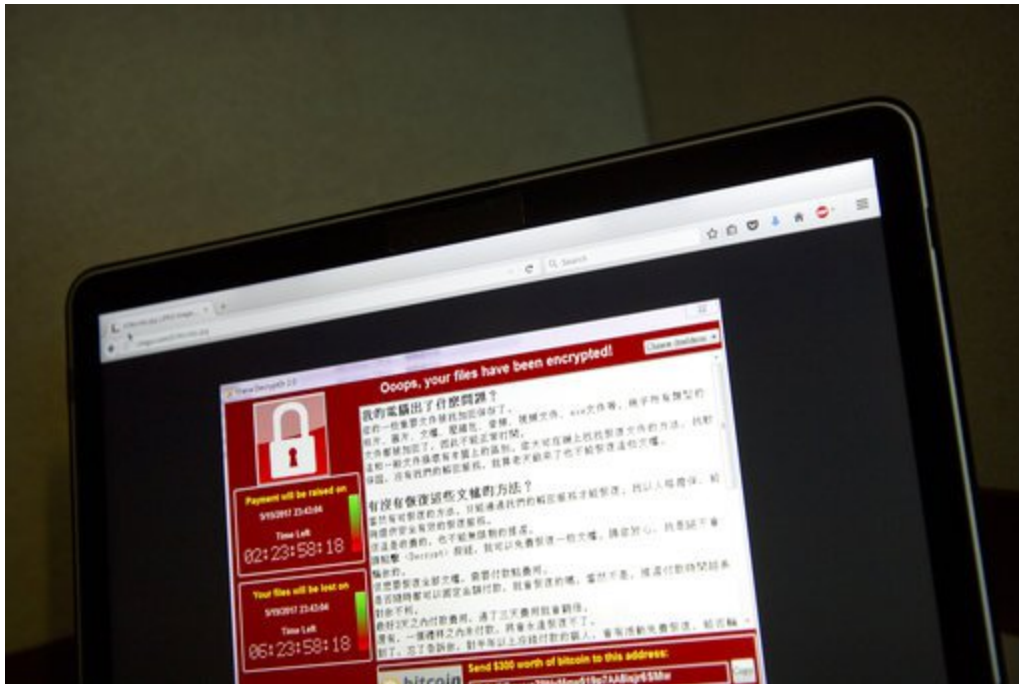


**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# **DICT airs need for more personnel, more laws to build PH cybersecurity**

By: [Zacarian Sarao](#) - Reporter / [@zacariansINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 03:44 PM June 26, 2024



In this file photo on taken May 13, 2017, a screenshot of the warning screen from a purported ransomware attack, as captured by a computer user in Taiwan, is seen on a laptop in Beijing. (Picture from MARK SCHIEFELBEIN / AP)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) on Wednesday said it needs additional personnel and legislative measures to enhance the country’s cybersecurity.

DICT Undersecretary Jeffry Dy made the statement after President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. approved the Philippine Digital Infrastructure Project (PDIP).

With the new project, 772 free Wi-Fi sites are set to be established in Mindanao — all of which are directly connected to DICT servers for better monitoring.

Dy pointed out that the DICT's mandate is not only limited to public or government-owned networks but even the entities that are connected to private internet service providers.

“For that reason, we still need additional professionals, not only in government but also in the private sector, to be able to sustain our drive to improve cybersecurity,” he said.

According to him, compared to countries with one certified professional for every 200 people, the Philippines has only one for every 2,000 or 3,000 — with the DICT only having 200 certified information systems security professionals.

“Are we at par with our regional counterparts? To give you an example, Singapore has only like 6 million people, but they are detecting approximately 18,000 attacks per year,” explained Dy.

“We are only detecting around 3,000 per year, but we are 118 million Filipinos,” he noted.

“So, I think we need to improve this by, for example, having a cybersecurity law that will mandate even the private sector to report to us, if there is a cybersecurity incident,” he said.

Nevertheless, Dy observed that relatively, the country's cybersecurity has grown.

“We are significantly better now. Our detection mechanisms are there. Our protective systems are there and you will notice that we are now sharing information also with our allies,” said Dy.

“Ibig sabihin, hindi na ito (this means, it's no longer just) one-way communication with our allies. We are also sharing with them certain tactics, techniques and procedures being employed by hackers of international origin,” he emphasized.

Dy added there have already been around 2,900 early detections of hacking attempts against government agencies, including the Department of Agriculture and the Philippine Coast Guard.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1955237/dict-airs-need-for-more-personnel-more-laws-to-build-ph-cybersecurity>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Much to do about food

By: [Peter Angelo V. Perfecto](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:10 AM June 27, 2024

Over 50 years ago, two programs were started in the Philippines by the administration of President Marcos' father. There was the Masagana 99 in 1973, an agricultural program aimed at solving the country's then-worsening rice shortage, and the Nutribun school feeding effort in 1971 to combat child malnutrition as part of the United States Agency for International Development Food for Peace Program.

Fast forward to today, we are now a top exporter of rice as we feed 119.1 million Filipinos compared to only 38.4 million in 1971 and we are faced with what economist Ciel Habito calls a ticking demographic timebomb due to a “stunting problem, wherein one in every three Filipino children 5 years old and below is stunted due to chronic malnutrition.”

For as long as I can remember in my 37 years work career that allowed me to join various fora on what ails the country and what can be done, rice sufficiency and hunger and malnutrition were always key priorities—problems that needed urgent, multisector and multiagency coordinated action now to prevent looming disaster. The scale of the problems and the need to bring together many different moving parts to address the problem brought about a now common call for an all-of-nation approach.

I heard this again at last Monday's 2024 Phinma policy forum on food security organized by Phinma and its construction materials group together with the Stratbase ADR Institute and Makati Business Club (MBC). As presentations were made on how to achieve food security and advance investments for agricultural sustainability, the need for collaboration and coordination across sectors and agencies was an oft-repeated call, and yes, an all-of-nation approach was brought up in the ensuing exchange of insights among invited experts. This approach is actually not a Philippine reality invention. When I first heard “all-of-nation,” I was executive director of MBC and best practices of neighbors in Asia were being cited like Taiwan and South Korea.

All-of-nation assumes that there will be dialogue that translates into concrete and collaborative action plans and strategies. It also requires monitoring of outputs and outcomes given clear timelines and it is founded on a shared belief that if we do not come together, the nation will remain gasping for breath in the last place in the global competitiveness race. Our people will remain poor, our children stunted and illiterate, and our demographic dividend, a demographic catastrophe.

What I do not and what I refuse to understand is why our leaders in both the public and private sectors do not see this as urgent enough to make the real dialogue happen. Once upon a time, we tried to bring just one part of the business sector together to agree to pool our resources on one key lever to address our education crisis. Then, it was concluded to be teacher quality. Were we able to bring all corporate social responsibility funds estimated at P2 billion of all companies doing education projects together? No. Everyone else thought that their education project was superior. Hard to blame them but tough on the continuing crisis.

This week's policy forum like many other continuing dialogues and initiatives tried to focus on a segment of the problem—addressing food waste and food costs through investments in agriculture. This aligns with the Department of Agriculture's thrust to develop and improve post-harvest systems and infrastructure. The need for solar-powered cold storage facilities across the country was highlighted as one key intervention. With this one very specific intervention arose considerations and concerns that will likely cut across all possible interventions: who finances, who identifies the need, who maintains, and how do small farmers use and get their produce to these facilities?

Habito has many times brought up the question of devolving agriculture to the local governments so that they can help answer most of these questions. When their capacity and capability are cited as the stumbling block, Habito often challenges national government agencies to take up their role of capacity building. I would hasten to add, and work with nongovernment and community organizations. Oxfam Pilipinas for example has always advocated for strategic partnership models that bring various stakeholders and their resources together to achieve better outcomes including scale.

And where is the private sector in all these? At the very minimum, it must be told what investments are needed and where and the private sector must, in turn, offer possible models for that investment to work that government on national and local levels, as well as people's organizations, can look into as viable options to address once and for all an ages-old gap.

<https://opinion.inquirer.net/174749/much-to-do-about-food>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

## **DA: 2.4M rice farmers to get P5,000 aid each in September**

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:32 AM June 27, 2024



ALL DRY A farmer in Pagadian City in Zamboanga del Sur province visits her rice farm, now all dried up due to the absence of rain amid the recent El Niño weather phenomenon. The Zamboanga Peninsula is among the 11 regions in the country worst hit by the dry spell and drought early this year. —photo courtesy of Pagadian City Agriculture Office

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) plans to distribute in September some P12 billion in cash aid to help rice farmers meet their daily subsistence and personal needs.

The DA is providing P5,000 to each of the 2.4 million rice farmers who are eligible beneficiaries under the Rice Farmers Financial Assistance (RFFA) program, which is funded from the excess tariff collections from the importation of the staple food.

Under the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), the government allots P10 billion a year from tariff revenues for the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund, which aims to finance the distribution of high-yielding seeds, empower farmers through various training sessions, give out farm machinery, and offer credit support.

Any amount exceeding this can then be used for the RFFA and other programs to help rice farmers.

“We are rushing [the distribution] and hopefully, I’m targeting to provide P12 billion [to our rice farmers] probably by September,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said at an event in Makati City late Tuesday, noting that the P12 billion was already released by the Department of Budget and Management last December.

The amount is almost the same as the P12 billion worth of cash grant released by the DA to farmer beneficiaries of the RFFA in 2023.

### **Compensation scheme**

The RFFA seeks to provide relief to eligible rice farmers throughout the implementation of the RTL, which was enacted in 2019 and will lapse in 2024.

Under this program, rice farmers who are tilling two hectares or less are compensated for their projected reduction or income loss as a result of the lifting of the quantitative restriction on rice imports.

The RTL liberalized the importation, export and trading of rice, and lifted the quantitative import restriction on the commodity for five years.

Sen. Cynthia Villar, chair of the Senate committee on agriculture, food and agrarian reform, filed Senate Bill No. 2601 in March this year to extend the RTL for another six years or until 2031, to sustain the gains made by the law, including stable rice prices and improvement in farmers’ livelihood.



The proposed measure also seeks to allocate P2 billion annually over the next six years to develop small water impounding projects to ensure adequate water supply in rice areas amid the recurring threats of the El Niño dry spell.

### **Crop diversification**

The Bureau of Customs has collected P16 billion in rice tariffs as of April this year, or more than half of the P29.93 billion earned for the whole of 2023.

Tiu Laurel said the DA was hoping to get a total of P20 billion in excess tariff collections from last year for rice farmers assistance, land titling and help farmers cultivate crops other than the staple Filipino food.

“We will allocate P12 billion for cash assistance, another P1 billion for land titling of farmers by the [Department of Agrarian Reform] and the remaining P7 billion for crop diversification to high-value crops,” he added.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1955402/da-2-4m-rice-farmers-to-get-p5000-aid-each-in-september>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# DBCC growth target cut should be in play, ex-Finance secretary says

June 26, 2024 | 8:54 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/

WALTER BOLLOZOS

THE Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) should consider cutting its growth targets as inflation and the weaker peso could curb the economy's expansion, a former Finance secretary said.

"There may be a need to revise the economic growth projection for 2024 downwards within 5.8% to 6.3% due to inflation and the depreciation of the peso," former Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves told *BusinessWorld* via Viber.

In April, economic managers lowered their gross domestic product (GDP) growth target for 2024 to 6-7% from 6.5-7.5% previously.

For 2025, the DBCC expects GDP growth to average 6.5-7.5%, with the range widening to 6.5-8% beyond that, until 2028.

The committee is due to update its fiscal targets on Thursday.

Inflation, which is near the top end of the central bank's 2-4% target for this year, is expected to curb spending and weaken growth in the coming months, Mr. Teves said.

"While average inflation for 2024 remains within the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) target range of 2-4%, it has been accelerating since the year started."

Year to date, the consumer price index was up 3.5%, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported.

Headline inflation accelerated to 3.9% in May led by transport and utility costs. It was the fourth straight month of stronger inflation readings.

“If this upward trend continues, we can expect consumption to further slowdown, which would dampen growth,” Mr. Teves said.

However, Bank of the Philippine Islands Lead Economist Emilio S. Neri, Jr. said the government should wait for second quarter GDP growth data before considering new targets.

“It’s too early to say we will miss the growth target with only one quarter of data. Many of our leading indicators point to more than 6% growth for the second quarter of 2024 so maybe economic managers can wait before they revise,” he said via Viber.

The economy fell short of the government’s growth target in the first quarter, expanding by only 5.7%.

Addressing supply side pressures to inflation though private sector investment in agricultural inputs, technology, warehouses, cold storage facilities, and processing plants will help make up for the limited fiscal space, Mr. Teves said.

“Lower inflation would boost consumption which would increase government revenue from consumption-based taxes such as VAT (value-added tax),” he noted. “Moreover, lower inflation would also reduce the risk of more interest rate increases which can dampen economic growth.”

The Monetary Board is expected to maintain its key policy rate at a 17-year high of 6.5% on Thursday amid sticky inflation.

Cooler inflation would boost consumer confidence, which has been dampened by two straight years of soaring prices, Mr. Neri said. Consumption accounts for a quarter of GDP growth.

The weaker peso may also dampen growth in the Philippines due to its heavy dependence on imports, Mr. Teves said.

“The weakening of the peso puts an upward pressure on prices, and thus also dampens growth,” Mr. Teves said.

On the other hand, Mr. Neri said the weaker peso would boost incomes of exporters, overseas Filipino worker families, and the business process outsourcing sector. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/26/604436/dbcc-growth-target-cut-should-be-in-play-ex-finance-secretary-says/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# **P12B in excess rice tariffs eyed for farmer financial assistance program**

June 26, 2024 | 8:53 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/KRIZ JOHN ROSALES

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it plans to tap P12 billion in excess rice import tariff collections to provide financial assistance to farmers.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said the funds he is considering are tariffs left over after the legally mandated P10 billion a year is set aside for the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF).

“This year we plan to give P12 billion; and then the balance we will be diverting to crop diversification,” Mr. Laurel told reporters.

Under the Rice Tariffication Law of 2019 (Republic Act 11203), the Rice Farmers Financial Assistance (RFFA) program is the designated recipient for tariffs that exceed the RCEF funding requirement.

The RFFA program pays out P5,000 per farmer.

Eligible farmers are those tilling two hectares or less. The payout is being billed as compensation for the projected reduction in income arising from the liberalization of rice imports.

Mr. Laurel added that he is looking at distributing the financial assistance to the 2.4 million rice farmers by September.

“Last year *kasi December na lumabas* (the funds were released in December) ... I’m targeting September for the P12 billion,” he said.

In 2023, rice tariff collections amounted to about P30 billion, according to the Bureau of Customs.

Legislators are seeking an extension to the RCEF’s term beyond the initial six years, while also expanding its allocation from tariffs.

Under the proposed amendments from the House of Representatives, 53% of the expanded, extended RCEF will go to mechanization, 28% to rice seed, and the rest to farm credit and extension services.

Mr. Laurel added that P7 billion of the P8 billion in tariffs left over after the RFFA allocation will go to the crop diversification effort, while P1 billion will support land titling by the Department of Agrarian Reform.

The US Department of Agriculture has estimated that rice imports this year of 4.6 million metric tons (MT) after the government approved the reduced tariff of 15% on imported rice, as authorized by Executive Order No. 62.

Mr. Laurel said the DA is only projecting rice imports of about 3.9 million MT. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/26/604435/p12b-in-excess-rice-tariffs-eyed-for-farmer-financial-assistance-program/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# PHL rubber producers pushed to raise raw material sales to Yokohama Tire

June 26, 2024 | 8:53 pm



YOKOHAMATIRE.PH

THE Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said it the rubber industry could end up generating P1 billion in revenue if it can supply 100% of Yokohama Tire Philippines, Inc.'s raw material requirements.

Trade Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual told reporters at a recent briefing that the Japanese parent company, Yokohama Rubber Co., is planning to expand its Philippine footprint with an additional investment in its Clark facility.

“When we talked to Yokohama Rubber, they said that they are planning to invest close to \$60 million to increase their capacity for tire production. They already have a big capacity, and they plan to increase it further,” Mr. Pascual said.

“The sad part is that the raw materials are not fully provided by local suppliers. That is why we committed to helping Yokohama source the rubber in Mindanao so they can add local content to the tires being produced in the Philippines,” he added.

According to Mr. Pascual, Yokohama plans to expand tire production by 5%, equivalent to an additional 500,000 units, to its current annual capacity of 10 million.

“We will help them source the rubber in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM),” he said.

“Of course, at a governmental level, we will talk to our colleagues in BARMM about how Yokohama could be supplied raw rubber sap,” he added.

He said that the Philippines is missing out on rubber supply contracts. Yokohama currently imports the rest of its rubber requirement from countries like Malaysia.

“The ideal target is to increase the share of local producers to 100%; we need to improve the share of local producers,” he said.

“Yokohama sources only 51% of its raw material, in the form of natural rubber, from domestic sources, which are mainly in Mindanao,” he said.

“They are the only tire manufacturer left in the Philippines; that is why we need to take care of them by doing our part,” he added.

He said the DTI could also help in addressing concerns about the availability of trained manpower.

“The value of sourcing is estimated at P1 billion, which will be additional revenue for the farmers in Mindanao. Right now, we only account for 12,000 metric tons, but our potential is 30,000 metric tons of raw rubber,” he added. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/26/604434/phl-rubber-producers-pushed-to-raise-raw-material-sales-to-yokohama-tire/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Agri-fishery investments seen as hedge against China disruption

June 26, 2024 | 8:50 pm



National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan — PHILSTAR

THE PHILIPPINES needs to ramp up investment in agriculture and fisheries to dampen the impact of heightened tensions with China, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) said.

“We are linked with China economically through our supply chain directly (and) indirectly through the effects of any tensions in our region,” NEDA Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan told reporters on the sidelines of a forum.

“One of the primary tasks of our government or administration is to improve our food security. And that’s not just fish, it’s also vegetables, fruit, rice, and all major commodities. That means that we really have to invest in the areas that will raise productivity,” he said.

When asked about the possibility of the Philippines reducing its import dependence on China for its supply of fish, Mr. Balisacan said: “it’s hard to say, because our population is also growing rapidly.”



Last week, a Navy sailor lost a thumb after his boat was rammed by Chinese personnel seeking to block Philippine access to an outpost in the West Philippine Sea, according to the military. The Chinese Coast Guard also disarmed and seized rifles from Philippine personnel.

During the forum, Mr. Balisacan said tensions with China are not the main factor behind weak foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, citing a decline in FDI globally.

“The share of FDI from China is quite small. The high was 4.4% in 2015 to 2019. It fell to 0.9% in the last three years, but... I don’t think that we can directly attribute to that, because overall, global FDI (and) Asia-Pacific FDI have been falling,” Mr. Balisacan said.

Loans from China also remain small, with the Philippines seeking to expand its sources of funding, he added.

“Official development assistance (ODA) from China is also very small... it’s about only 5% of the total ODA we receive from other countries,” he said.

Last year, the government withdrew from loan negotiations with China for three major railway projects valued at around P228 billion as tensions worsened over the dispute over territorial waters.

“The area where we are most exposed to China is in trade,” Mr. Balisacan said. “Whether (we) like it or not, we are all linked to the same global supply chain.”

He said an easing in global trade restrictions would help boost the Philippines’ growth prospects.

“Our economic performance in recent years and the economic outlook in the near and medium term are very robust, keeping us one of the fastest-growing economies in the region. Still, if the global economy is better, if trade restrictions are reduced, then economic growth will be even faster,” he told reporters.

The government is aiming for 6-7% gross domestic product growth this year. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/06/26/604433/agri-fishery-investments-seen-as-hedge-against-china-disruption/>

**REMATE:**

## **Sirit-presyo ng GG, iba pang isda kinuwestyon ng agri group**

June 26, 2024 07:39



MANILA, Philippines – Kinuwestiyon ng Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) nitong Martes ang pagtaas ng presyo ng galunggong at iba pang isda sa kabila ng sinasabi ng mga grupo na sapat ang suplay.

Ang pinakahuling datos ng Department of Agriculture (DA) ay nagpakita na ang presyo ng galunggong sa Metro Manila ay dumoble sa P180 hanggang P280 kada kilo mula P160 hanggang P260 noong nakaraang linggo.

“Dapat nasa P200 or P180 lang ang presyo dapat ng galunggong. Hindi na dapat tumaas pa doon,” ani SINAG Chairperson Rosendo So sa isang pahayag.

Sinabi ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) na tinitingnan pa nito ang karagdagang impormasyon para sa pagtaas ng presyo ngunit naapektuhan umano ng pag-ulan kamakailan ang suplay ng isda.

“Wala tayo nakataas na closed fishing season so tuluy-tuloy yung pangingsda ng ating mga mangingsda maliban lamang kung may sama ng panahon,” ayon kay BFAR Chief Information Officer Nazzer Briguera.

Sa bahagi nito, sinabi ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na pinalalakas nito ang industriya ng aquaculture sa bansa. Binigyang-diin din nito ang kahalagahan ng saradong panahon ng pangingsda. *Santi Celario*

<https://remate.ph/sirit-presyo-ng-gg-iba-pang-isda-kinuwestyon-ng-agri-group/>

**PEOPLE'S JOURNAL:**

# Groundbreaking project to strengthen climate resilience in Philippine agriculture

Tuesday, June 25, 2024 Journal Online



Quezon City, Philippines – The Department of Agriculture (DA), the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST-PAGASA), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) launched the “Adapting Philippine Agriculture to Climate Change” (APA) Project during a landmark inception workshop held from June 18 to 19 at Citadines Roces Quezon City. This pivotal initiative marks a significant stride in improving farmers’ resilience in the face of mounting climate challenges.

Anchored on the success of the DA’s Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) Project, the APA project focuses on advancing climate-resilient agriculture (CRA) technologies and empowering farmers to develop sustainable enterprises in nine provinces across the country identified as climate hotspots. With a target of reaching 1.25 million farmers, the project aims to raise awareness on climate risks, enhance capacity for resilient agricultural practices, and facilitate access to vital financial resources.

“The AMIA villages, which serve as community-based resiliency building models, will now be scaled up under this project. Through financially and economically viable CRA projects, we can help maximize farmers’ incomes and improve their adaptive capacities,” said DA Undersecretary and Chief of Staff Atty. Alvin John Balagbag.

DOST-PAGASA Administrator Nathaniel Servando highlighted the project’s significance, saying, “The DOST-PAGASA strongly supports this initiative, emphasizing new agriculture is Climate Resilient Agriculture under one DA framework that is economically viable and environmentally sustainable.”

With a total fund of USD 39.2 million, including a USD 26.3 million grant from the Green Climate Fund – the largest agricultural grant in the Philippines to date – and USD 12.9 million in cofinancing from the DA and DOST-PAGASA, the APA project is poised to transform the Philippine agricultural landscape. The project will integrate technical support services including training, provision of production inputs, market access, and financing to improve food security, increase household incomes, and enhance resilience.

“By supporting our farmers, we are strengthening our agrifood system to withstand the impacts of climate change. Let us work together to ensure the success of this project,” said FAO Representative to the Philippines Lionel Dabbadie.

In a video message, Jong-Jin Kim, FAO Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, remarked, “With such huge targets and potential impact, I fervently hope that everyone maintains a good level of commitment and passion in implementing this project.” Approved in March 2023, this seven-year project aims to indirectly benefit over five million Filipinos living in climate-vulnerable areas by enhancing institutional capacities and information systems, facilitating widespread adoption of climate resilient agriculture.

<https://journal.com.ph/groundbreaking-project-to-strengthen-climate-resilience-in-philippine-agriculture/>

# **A long view on rice**

By Lito Banayo

June 27, 2024, 12:00 am

**“It would be prudent to get our economic managers and the DA to forecast our import requirements till 2028”**

The reality is the long aspired for self-sufficiency in rice is hardly achievable in the next five years, with our population ever growing and our farmlands less productive and decreasing.

Unfortunately, neither is rice importation going to be easy.

More than 90 percent of the world’s rice is produced and consumed in the Asia-Pacific region, which means rice-producing nations are also the biggest rice-consumers.

Only 7 percent of the world’s rice production is exportable.

That means we have to compete with other countries, notably Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and China among others to get our share of that thin export volume to augment our local shortfall.

Then again, our country hosts on average of 20 typhoons each year, some quite destructive, especially if it hits Northern and Central Luzon, even the Mindoro provinces and Panay Island at or near harvest-time.

Thus the need for buffer stocking on the part of government.

But under our procurement laws, government can only import when the shortage is imminent. With the RTA, the NFA cannot import rice.

We thus compete with other countries for thin exportable volumes, as in the present situation.

Thus, it would be prudent to get our economic managers and the DA to forecast our import requirements till 2028, and negotiate supply contracts, preferably on a government-to-government basis.

**Vietnam has been our consistent supplier of rice, and, last January, we concluded a general supply agreement with it.**

**We probably could try Cambodia, if its milling facilities and port capabilities have improved.**

**While India is the biggest producer of rice, it also has 1.5 billion mouths to feed, and obviously needs to prioritize domestic needs.**

**The same is true of China, which has in fact been importing rice for their consumption requirements.**

**Thailand exports less, and prefers to sell its high-priced jasmine.**

**Depending on risk analysis, our big rice millers can set up and build modern rice mills such as we have in Isabela and Central Luzon in other countries, like Cambodia and Myanmar. We can even go into contract farming and milling in Papua New Guinea to ensure our supply.**

**Malaysia imports roughly 30-35 percent of its rice needs, devoting its land to higher value crops, but has gone into long-term supply contracts with Southeast Asian countries. It matters little which agency handles these importations.**

**So Congress can quibble less about agencies it does not trust, let the Office of the President handle the importations with complete transparency, and let our legislators amend our procurement laws to allow for a longer view on staples and other strategic commodities.**

**In summation, a long view on our perennial rice supply problem should:**

- 1. Gradually reduce per capita consumption through proper education on nutritional values of food, re-introducing white corn, kamote and saba bananas as staples;**
- 2. Make an honest to goodness assessment of lands best suited for rice, and shifting to crops which can give farmers better incomes;**
- 3. Increase the production of vegetables and legumes such that they become more affordable and thus reduce the over-consumption of rice, as has been done in other countries;**
- 4. Fix our needed infrastructure, from real and not legislator-initiated farm-to-market roads, to better port facilities and other logistical requirements. Given our**

high inter-island shipping costs, isn't it about time we do away with the Cabotage law?;

5. With IRRI and UPLB, not to mention a professional DOST, we should be able to produce high-yielding, flood resistant, less water-consuming varieties of palay that will give our farmers better yield and higher margins;

6. Invest in better storage and drying facilities and irrigation so as to cut down on waste and poor quality;

7. Program our medium and long-term import requirements to augment predictable production shortfalls, and allow government to buy on a long-term basis;

8. The RTA should be amended to allow government to import instead of relinquishing the entire rice importation to the private sector. It does not matter which agency, even the OP itself, be given such authority to import. The staple is so vital that it cannot be left entirely to the private sector.

9. But I do not agree with the return of commercial distribution by NFA, because it will just mean subsidizing politically motivated artificial pricing of the commodity. Let LGUs do their own versions of Kadiwa instead of the national government. Not only will the results be spotty as presently done; it will be more transparent.

10. Pass the National Land Use Law which has been languishing in Congress since 1990, and despite its mention as priority legislation in the president's first SONA, nothing has moved in our Congress. This should rationalize land conversion and allow government, both on the local and national levels, to properly classify agricultural lands.

11. DA, Landbank and DAR should partner with the private sector in managing small plots, consolidating these into enough economies of scale, where the private sector will lend financial and managerial support to small farmers so as to be able to avail of better technologies in palay production with the same model being used for other food crops;

12. Finally, increase coverage of crop insurance through Landbank and subsidiaries, so as to minimize losses due to calamities.

These are some of our suggestions, honed mostly from the time I was head of the NFA, along with private sector experience in cultivation and marketing of



**agricultural produce (fruits) as well as our family businesses in the past on various aspects of the food value chain, from production to wholesaling.**

**<https://manilastandard.net/opinion/columns/so-i-see-by-lito-banayo/314464219/a-long-view-on-rice.html>**

**MANILA STANDARD**

# DA to release P20b from RCEF for farmers subsidy in September



By Othel V. Campos

June 26, 2024, 8:15 pm

The Department of Agriculture (DA) said it will download P20 billion from the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) for distribution to farmers in September 2024.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel said the DA aimed to expedite the release of the funds, instead of the December 2024 schedule.

“Last year, P12 billion was released to farmers. This year, we intend to release the same amount,” he said during the pilot forum of the “Media Kapihan sa PCCI”.

Farmers will receive P12 billion in cash subsidies, while P7 billion was earmarked for crop diversification particularly supporting the pivot to cash crops. The remaining P1 billion would be allocated for land titling expenses of farmers.

The 2024 allocation came from the excess rice tariff collections in 2023 through the RCEF. Collection from rice tariffs reached P30 billion last year.

The RCEF, established under Republic Act 11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law, ushered in a shift from a quantitative restriction system on rice imports to a tariff-based system.

The law allocates P10 billion annually from rice import tariffs for farm mechanization and input support, with any excess going towards financial assistance for small rice farmers.

The DA earlier revealed plans to extend RCEF by another six years to spread the benefits of the program to other farmers across the country.

The program is expected to expire by 2024 covering only 20 percent of rice farms nationwide, with around 26,412 units of various farm equipment distributed from mid-2020 to March 3, 2024.

The DA said extending RCEF would expand the coverage to include more farmers.

<https://manilastandard.net/business/314464307/da-to-release-p20b-from-rcef-for-farmers-subsidy-in-september.html>

# Smuggled agri products seized

By William B. Depasupil

June 27, 2024

OPERATIVES of the Bureau of Customs (BoC) uncovered some P100 million worth of smuggled agricultural products inside an unregistered cold storage warehouse in Cavite province.

In a report submitted to Customs Commissioner Bienvenido Rubio, Director Verne Enciso of the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service disclosed on Wednesday that the operations were based on intelligence information that illegally imported agricultural products were being stored inside three warehouses in the municipality of Kawit in Cavite.

The customs operatives, supported by personnel of the Department of Agriculture and the Philippine Coast Guard, found inside the cold storage facilities five container loads of illegally imported frozen agricultural goods.

Initial investigation, according to Enciso, confirmed that the agricultural products were sneaked into the country.

Enciso added that they were still looking into the place of origin of the smuggled products and the identities of the importers and brokers.

Under Republic Act (RA) 10845, or the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016, agricultural smuggling, including rice worth P1 million and above, is punishable and a non-bailable offense of economic sabotage.

RA 10845 also penalizes agricultural smugglers and their cohorts with life imprisonment, and a fine of twice the fair value of the

smuggled agricultural products and the aggregate amount of the taxes/duties/charges avoided.

Under Republic Act (RA) 10845, or the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016, agricultural smuggling, including rice worth P1 million and above, is punishable and a non-bailable offense of economic sabotage.

RA 10845 also penalizes agricultural smugglers and their cohorts with life imprisonment, and a fine of twice the fair value of the smuggled agricultural products and the aggregate amount of the taxes/duties/charges avoided.

"It is economic sabotage," said Rubio, adding that the swift action taken by the BoC and its partner agencies has thwarted a significant attempt to flood the market with unauthorized imported goods that would potentially harm the local agriculture sector.

"This operation demonstrates our steadfast resolve to protect our local farmers and consumers from the adverse impacts of smuggling. We will continue to intensify our efforts to combat this illegal activity," said Rubio.

Customs Deputy Commissioner for Intelligence Juvymax Uy said the war against agricultural smugglers will continue without let up to protect local farmers and their produce from unfair competition.

"I believe I speak here for everyone when I say we are equally frustrated by reports from farmers and traders that they were severely impacted by smuggling. Anti-smuggling operations go through a long and rigorous process, but this process also ensures we will put these perpetrators in courts and behind bars," Uy added.

The owners of the cold storage facilities were given 15 days to present the proper documents to clear out allegations they were storing illegally imported agricultural products.

If found without proper documents, the corresponding seizure and forfeiture proceedings will be conducted against the subject shipments for violation of Section 1400 (misdeclaration in goods declaration) in relation to Section 1113 (property subject to seizure and forfeiture) of RA 10863, also known as the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/27/regions/smuggled-agri-products-seized/1953542>

# Hog production decline seen in Central Visayas

By Kaiser Jan Fuentes

June 27, 2024

**CEBU CITY** — An officer of the Department of Agriculture in Central Visayas (Central Visayas) said the region might face challenges in hog production, potentially affecting Cebu's lechon industry, once the enforcement of the Negros Island Region (NIR) is formalized.

Gerry Avila, chief of the Field Operations Division of DA-7, told The Manila Times that under NIR, hog production in the region is expected to decline.

The agriculture officer said that Central Visayas is among the top producers of hog and chickens in the country.

Last June 13, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. signed into law the NIR, which will place Negros Oriental and Siquijor in the same region as Negros Occidental from Western Visayas.

This development means that only Bohol and Cebu will remain as provinces in Central Visayas. It will also include the highly urbanized cities of Cebu City, Mandaue City and Lapu-Lapu City.

Avila added that most of the hog supplies used by butchers for meat trade and the pigs used in the lechon industry in Cebu come from Negros Oriental.

Avila said that businessmen prefer pigs from the neighboring island province because they are cheaper than locally raised pigs.

"Ang laki ng mga supply dito sa Cebu na for lechon are coming from Negros Oriental, so that could be a big reduction when it comes to production for Region 7 because they are now NIR (A large supply of lechon here in Cebu comes from Negros Oriental, so that could be a significant reduction in production for Region 7 because they are now part of NIR)," Avila said.

Last year, Negros Oriental Gov. Manuel "Chaco" Sagarbarria said in an interview during the Regional Association of Development Information Officers 7 that their hogs are at least P50 cheaper than those in Cebu.

He said that the price of live hog per kilo in Negros Oriental is down to P90, compared to P140 per kilo in Cebu.

However, Avila reassured that despite the separation of the two provinces from Central Visayas, their agency would continue to support NIR in various ways.

Avila emphasized that even though Central Visayas would shrink, it would remain the central hub for commerce and trade, adding that they intend to continue assisting NIR in terms of market support.

He also expressed his belief that NIR would devise ways to enhance its government services.

"But of course, we will miss them. They were our partners and most of the time, we would be there helping each other," Avila added.

Last year, Jessica Maribojoc, head of Cebu City's Department of Veterinary Medicine and Fisheries, said that the hog industry in the entire Cebu province is worth roughly P 10.9 billion.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/27/regions/hog-production-decline-seen-in-central-visayas/1953528>



# Rice tariff to fund crop diversification – DA chief

By Janine Alexis Miguel  
June 27, 2024

CROP diversification will get P7 billion of the P20 billion in excess rice tariffs collected that will enable farmers to venture into the production of high-value crops besides rice.

In a press briefing hosted by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Tuesday, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. detailed the allocation of the P20 billion in excess rice tariff collection, noting that last year's excess funds that were distributed had reached P12 billion.

"This year, we plan to allocate P12 billion again," Tiu Laurel said.



Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. Photo from Department of Agriculture

**The Department of Agriculture's (DA) initiatives for crop diversification will get P7 billion to assist farmers, including those cultivating rice, to venture into planting other crops that can give them higher income like coffee, cacao, cassava, among many others.**

**Another P1 billion will be earmarked for land titling through the Department of Agrarian Reform to secure farmers' land rights.**

**Tiu Laurel said that they were fast-tracking the distribution of the funds. "We are expediting the process and aiming for disbursement around September, as last year it was released in December."**

**In October last year, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ordered the DA to utilize the P12.7 billion of excess rice tariff collection after deducting the P10 billion allocated for the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF).**

**Based on Republic Act 11203, or the Rice Tariffication Law, at least P10 billion in rice tariff collections annually are automatically allocated to the RCEF with P5 billion for farm mechanization, P3 billion for distribution of inbred seeds, P1 billion for loan support and P1 billion for training initiatives.**

**Meanwhile, the excess funds were distributed as financial assistance to 2.3 million small rice farmers at P5,000 each under the Rice Farmers Financial Assistance program of the government.**

**Last year, the government's tariff collections from rice imports reached P30 billion.**

**Marcos last week signed Executive Order (EO) 62 reducing the import duty on rice from 35 percent to 15 percent until 2028, a move aimed at managing the country's inflation rate.**

**Farmer groups have expressed concerns over EO 62, fearing it could do more harm to farmers by potentially reducing funds allocated to RCEF.**

**<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/27/business/top-business/rice-tariff-to-fund-crop-diversification-da-chief/1953525>**

# PHilMech supports student innovations

[By Conrad M. Cariño](#)

June 27, 2024

**STUDENTS** from Top Link Global College Inc. in Cabanatuan sought the guidance of the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PHilMech) in developing the Solar-Powered Automatic Rice Transplanter and Alitangya Control (Spartac).

Spartac was developed by the students with the aim of revolutionizing rice farming by integrating robotics and solar energy, according to PHilMech.

"During their visit, the students presented their project and gained valuable insights from experts at the Agricultural Mechanization Division (AMD), including Raymund Joseph Macaranas, chief science research specialist of AMD, and Richard Avila, science research specialist II. They offered constructive feedback to help refine the Spartac prototype's design and improve its feasibility for practical use," PHilMech said in a Facebook post.



Scientists from the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization, and students from Top Link Global College Inc. in Cabanatuan discuss the merits of the Solar-Powered Automatic Rice Transplanter and Alitangya Control developed by the students. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**The students also toured the PHilMech Technology Management and Demonstration Center, allowing them to witness the latest advancements in agricultural machines that can inspire them to make further enhancements to their own project.**

**The meeting between the students and PHilMech representatives also sparked discussions about potential collaboration to conduct real-world testing of Spartac, which aligns with PHilMech's mission to promote sustainable and advanced agricultural practices while reinforcing its support for young innovators.**

**<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/27/business/agribusiness/philmech-supports-student-innovations/1953486>**

# Japan, IRRI launch Asean rice project

[By Leander C. Domingo](#)

June 27, 2024

**LOS BAÑOS, Laguna — The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of Japan, and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) have launched the rice carbon neutrality project that will cover Southeast Asia.**

**The project titled "Development of Rice Cropping Systems Toward Carbon Neutrality and Food Security in Asean Countries" is a key component of the Asean-CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) Innovate for Food Regional Program. Asean is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.**

**It is a five-year initiative to attain climate neutrality and circular agriculture by significantly reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in rice production.**

**"Rice provides more than 20 percent of global caloric intake [and] while the crop has been crucial for food security, it is also a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, with methane from rice fields accounting for about 11 percent of agricultural emissions globally," IRRI said in a statement.**

**Thus, the institute said the new and groundbreaking initiative "aims to set the stage for sustainable agricultural practices to achieve carbon neutrality and ensure food security across Asean countries."**

**Emphasizing the significance of the collaboration, Joanna Kane-Potaka, IRRI deputy director general for strategy, engagement and impact, said the project is a transformative milestone for agriculture in Southeast Asia.**

**"It signifies a concerted effort to integrate sustainability into rice farming, a critical step toward reducing the agricultural sector's environmental impact. We are excited to further strengthen our partnership with MAFF and pioneer solutions that benefit the agriculture sector," Kane-Potaka said.**

**Teruya Sakaida, MAFF deputy director general, said Japan is proud to be the first Asian country to contribute to the program, which aims to "enhance the resilience of Asean agri-food systems against climate change while achieving food security."**

**"I believe in IRRI's research, development and communication capabilities in delivering and scaling low-carbon rice cropping systems successfully," Sakaida said.**

**According to IRRI, the project will initially focus on the Philippines and Vietnam, with potential expansion to other Southeast Asian countries based on demand and partnership development.**

**The institute added that the initiative's overall objective is centered on developing low-carbon rice cropping systems that will result in producing scaling strategies in reducing GHG emissions. To achieve those, hot spots for innovation will be identified through life cycle assessment and validating rice innovations.**

**Other objectives include developing low-carbon practices, management and systems with stakeholders, and developing and proposing strategies for scaling the innovations across Southeast Asia.**

**"This includes characterizing rice-growing environments to identify key intervention areas for reducing GHG emissions, establishing partnerships with public and private sector stakeholders, and testing the performance of these practices through on-station and on-farm experiments," the institute said.**

**The scaling strategies will be developed with the private sector to ensure widespread adoption.**

**The project will also screen new component technologies for reducing GHG emissions and improving rice productivity.**

**Jongsoo Shin, IRRI regional director for Asia and the Asean-CGIAR Innovate for Food Program lead, said the project represents a pivot in their efforts to combat climate change while ensuring food security in Southeast Asia.**

**"By integrating innovative low-carbon practices into rice farming, we aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions significantly and enhance agricultural sustainability," he said.**

**Jongsoo said their partnership with MAFF and Asean member states will "drive impactful solutions that benefit both farmers and the environment, paving the way for a more resilient and sustainable future for rice production."**

**IRRI is a member of CGIAR, the world's largest agricultural research partnership dedicated to a food-secure future.**

**<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/27/business/agribusiness/japan-irri-launch-asean-rice-project/1953487>**



# Farmer in Bicol logs record palay yield

[By The Manila Times](#)

June 27, 2024

**A FARMER in the Bicol Region breached his production record for palay (unmilled rice) at 15.78 metric tons per hectare (MT/ha), reportedly the highest in the region.**

**Genaro Tamon from Bombon, Camarines Sur, attained the feat in April by using SeedWorks Philippines' US 88 Premium Long Grain hybrid rice variety.**

**Tamon exceeded his previous record yield's 15.73 MT/ha in May 2020 during the height of the pandemic. The current national average for palay production is 4.17 MT/ha based on the data from the Philippine Statistics Authority.**



**Genaro Tamon breaches his production record for palay (unmilled rice) at 15.78 metric tons per hectare. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**

**With 15.78 MT/ha, Tamon harvested 263 cavans or sacks of rice with an average weight of 60 kilograms (kg) per cavan. At the prevailing farmgate price of P21.50 per kg during the time of harvest, Tamon earned a gross revenue of P339,270 from one cropping season.**

"Mr. Tamon only used 15 kilograms of hybrid rice seeds in a hectare, which SeedWorks Philippines produced," said SeedWorks Philippines President Carlos Saplala. "His paddy yield is more than three times the national average rice yield. That is about 11.63 metric tons per hectare higher than the average yield per hectare in the Philippines."

Saplala further said that Tamon's record yield consistently demonstrates the potential of the US 88 hybrid rice variety in helping lessen the country's dependence on rice imports.

"At around 65 percent milling recovery, we are basically saving our country from importing more than 7,500 kilograms of milled rice per hectare. Instead, we just have to import 15 kilograms of the seed," he said.

SeedWorks' US 88 Premium Long Grain hybrid rice variety is among the flagship hybrid rice varieties of the plant science company in the country. It is ideal for the country's climate and is tolerant to typical crop diseases affecting rice plants.

"SeedWorks developed the US 88 hybrid rice variety here in the Philippines, but the seeds are produced in India, where there is a more pronounced dry season. Producing the hybrid seeds or F1 requires a diurnal or difference in day and night temperature of around 8 to 10 degrees Celsius, which as we have observed in the irrigated lowland rice areas in the Philippines, is inconsistent," Saplala explained.

"There should also be no rain during flowering to get a good seed setting. As we all know, the rainfall pattern in the Philippines has always been unpredictable," he added.

[www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/27/business/agribusiness/farmer-in-bicol-logs-record-palay-yield/1953484](http://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/27/business/agribusiness/farmer-in-bicol-logs-record-palay-yield/1953484)

## Drone use pushed in PH

**THE Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) is pushing drone technology to increase yields and lower production costs in rice farming.**

**PhilRice and the International Rice Research Institute launched last April the Drone4Rice project that aims, among others, to standardize protocols for drone applications of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides for rice production in the Philippines.**

**The project is funded by the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research, and aims to reduce production cost and need for manual labor, and, equally important, to attract the youth to farming.**



**Drones are gradually finding their way in the country's agricultural landscape. PIA PHOTO**

**Jasper Tallada, Drone4Rice PhilRice lead, said the utilization of drones in rice farming is rising and can revolutionize the production of the staple as drones can optimize the application of inputs like seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, which reduces costs. Drones can reduce the labor and time to apply inputs.**

"By utilizing drone technology to optimize inputs, such as seeding rates, farmers could save substantial amounts on production cost. This optimization would also expand the distribution of seeds by expanding areas of coverage, particularly through initiatives like the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund," Tallada explained.

"Just imagine, it takes you half a day or a day to seed a hectare, which can easily be done in just 20 minutes by using drones," he added.

Tallada emphasized that by showcasing the technological advancements in agriculture, the project could also help dispel misconceptions about farming being hard, which in turn, will make more young Filipinos get interested in farming.

More women will also gain interest in rice farming and can become drone operators and undertake light drone operations such as seeding and fertilizer application. This, Tallada said, will promote gender inclusivity in agricultural technology adoption.

**And to allow more farmers to use drones, the project also aims to establish drone service providers, who can rent out or lease their drones to other farmers.**

**"We all know that 50 percent of rice production costs is manpower, and if we have service providers that can efficiently and quickly deliver these operations, labor costs would diminish," Tallada said.**

The use of drones in rice production was also included in a DA directive on the use of the P22.903-billion financial assistance intended for hybrid seeds, inorganic fertilizers, biofertilizers and

ameliorants through discount vouchers and e-wallets, like the interventions monitoring card.

PhilRice has also seen an increase in the number of companies designing and manufacturing drones, with a big number of them also catering or becoming aware of the needs of farmers and food producers.

"We see this agricultural drone as a trailblazer for the digital transformation of rice production," Tallada said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/06/27/business/agribusiness/drone-use-pushed-in-ph/1953482>

# ‘Cold storage capacity will continue to grow’

Ada Pelonia

June 26, 2024

The Cold Chain Association of the Philippines (CCAP) is confident that the country’s cold storage capacity will continue to expand after the industry achieved its targets.

CCAP President Anthony Dizon said the industry attained the projections indicated in a roadmap it launched together with the Board of Investments in 2020.

“The roadmap has been in place for the past 4 years and the projections that we put in there in 2020 at 8 to 10 percent per annum have come to fruition,” Dizon told reporters on the sidelines of a food security forum in Makati last Monday.

He said they are looking at coming up with a second version of the industry roadmap since “the outlook still appears optimistic.”

“We see that growth will continue because the factors that promote growth could still be there,” Dizon said, noting that consumer awareness of food safety and the development of e-commerce platforms would contribute to capacity expansion.

“We will probably have more definitive numbers, more quantitative consultations as we come to the industry roadmap version two.”

The government said it aims to increase the country’s cold storage capacity by 30 percent to bolster farmers’ productivity. (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/30/govt-eyes-30-hike-in-cold-storage-capacity-to-help-farmers/>)

“We really have to increase the number of cold storages in the country to be able to encourage more farmers to plant and to be able to store our products better...my ratio for that is a 30-percent increase in storage capacity,” Agriculture Assistant Secretary Dannie Atayde told the BusinessMirror.

Atayde added that once this pans out, the government could move forward in having the DA's proposed food hub near the trackways, referring to the "farm-to-market digital logistics integrated backbone" (FMDLIB) system proposed by the Philippine Trackway Corp. (Philtrak) consortium.

The decommissioned Philippine National Railways (PNR) and Panay Railways Inc. (PRI) railways would be optimized to create the FMDLIB system that would serve as a freight and passenger transit line transporting agricultural commodities and people in Luzon and Panay Island.

Atayde expressed his support for the project, saying the FMDLIB system would fast-track the delivery of products, making it efficient for the supply chain.

"It will improve the income of the fisherfolk and farmers...in terms of logistics it will be faster and efficient," he said.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/26/cold-storage-capacity-will-continue-to-grow/>

# PHL will have first border inspection facilities–DA

Ada Pelonia

June 26, 2024

The Department of Agriculture (DA) made an assurance that the government is pursuing the construction of first border inspection facilities to prevent smuggling and the entry of animal diseases into the country.

Agriculture Secretary Franciso Tiu Laurel Jr. said the Cold Examination Facility in Agriculture (Cefa) is rising in four locations in Luzon and Mindanao.

Laurel said the DA is building the Cefa in Subic, Manila, Angat and General Santos.

“The one in Angat will be a laboratory and rendering or waste disposal where problematic meat and smuggled goods will be incinerated,” he told reporters during a media forum organized by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) last Tuesday.

“The government is pushing through with (Cefa). The money (for construction) is there.”

Laurel said the government is targeting to start the construction of the Cefa in September.

DA officials said the Cefa “signals to the world the Philippines’s commitment to implementing meaningful reforms in the agriculture sector.”

The Cefa, which will house “state-of-the-art testing laboratories,” aims to strengthen the country’s capability to conduct first border inspections and improve its examination of containerized agricultural commodities and prevent smuggling.

Hog raisers belonging to the National Federation of Hog Farmers Inc. (NatFed) urged the Department of Agriculture (DA) to conduct first border inspection on all



imported meat products to prevent the entry of animal diseases into the Philippines. (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/24/first-border-inspection-will-protect-phl-animals/>)

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

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

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

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/26/phl-will-have-first-border-inspection-facilities-da/>

# ‘Rice Tariffication Law, RCEF gave no great boost to rice productivity’

Ada Pelonia

June 26, 2024

THE Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) and the Rice Competitive Enhancement Fund (RCEF) did not significantly improve the country’s rice productivity, according to the Congressional Policy and Budget Research Development (CPBRD).

A report by the CPBRD stated that despite the allocation of funds through the RCEF, there was “little” indication of significant productivity improvements.

Citing figures from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), CPBRD noted that the compound annual growth rate (CAGR) during pre-RTL production data of irrigated palay stood at 2.37 percent, higher than the CAGR from 2019 to 2022 at 1.07 percent.

It added that while the post-RTL CAGR of 3.5 percent for rainfed farms is larger than its corresponding pre-RTL CAGR of 2.59 percent, this could be attributed to the “significant contraction and subsequent rebound in the productivity levels of rainfed farms in 2019 and 2020.”

“It is instructive to emphasize that while the period for evaluation appears to be short, it still

represents multiple harvest cycles. The magnitude of the RCEF suggests that its major impacts should be, at least, observable within the first cycle after its full implementation,” the report read.

The CPBRD report also indicated that rice prices remained stable possibly because of the greater inflow of imported rice, noting the tradeoff between producer and consumer interests.

It added that the value of rice imports increased from P58 billion in 2021 to P90 billion in 2023, while duties increased from P19 billion in 2021 to P30 billion in

2023. Throughout this period, the effective aggregate duty rate stayed constant at around 33 percent.

The report also highlighted that Filipino consumers are charged a hefty premium for imported rice wherein a P25 per kilogram could reach P45 after tariffs and importation costs.

This could imply that every benefit that redounds to farmers through the RTL and RCEF is paid for by consumers and a reduction in the tariff rate has the outsized potential to significantly decrease retail prices of rice products, the CPBRD explained.

“The subsidies to rice farmers [...] will be at the expense of consumer welfare. Any effort to limit rice imports or increase tariff rates will likely adversely affect Filipino consumers,” the report read.

The CPBRD called for policymakers to conduct a thorough assessment of the RCEF’s usage before pushing through with its extension or expansion, noting the importance of “careful evaluation of the reasons behind the observed volatility of utilization rates and disbursement strategies.”

It also urged lawmakers to be aware of the tradeoff between consumer and producer welfare in deliberations concerning the RTL and the RCEF.

“The desire to lend support to rice farms must be carefully balanced with the interests of the consumers.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/26/rtl-rcef-gave-no-great-boost-to-rice-productivity/>

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<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/26/phl-will-have-first-border-inspection-facilities-da/>

# Government set to inspect meat plants of 8 countries

Ada Pelonia

June 26, 2024

The government is inspecting meat plants in eight countries to ensure that their products meet Manila's standards, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Agriculture Undersecretary Deogracias Victor Savellano told the BusinessMirror in an interview on Wednesday that inspection teams are bound for eight meat-exporting countries.

"The teams have already been given travel orders to inspect (meat plants) and any time this year, they may travel to those countries," Savellano said in a mix of English and Filipino.

Agriculture Secretary Franciso Tiu Laurel Jr. had issued a special order which instructed eight inspection teams to travel to Argentina, Uruguay, India, Russia, Denmark, Spain,

Sweden and the United States for the accreditation of foreign meat establishments (FMEs).

According to the DA, the teams would consist of border control and animal health experts from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) to conduct on-site inspection and validation of documents of the foreign meat establishments (FMEs).

The DA said this would ensure that meat and meat products exported to the Philippines are safe for public consumption and do not pose a threat to the domestic livestock and poultry industry.

The department also implements a comprehensive set of rules, regulations, and procedures guided by appropriate issuances governing pre-border measures, particularly in the accreditation of FMEs that may be allowed to export meat and meat products into the country.

“The government has to check the quality, their facilities, and how they source their animals. There is a checklist to ensure that these establishments implement the food safety measures that the government requires,” Savellano said.

He said an inspection team tends to stay in a particular country for two to three weeks.

Upon returning to the Philippines, Savellano said the teams would craft reports and make recommendations. The DA would study these reports to determine if the exporting country should be given accreditation.

The country’s meat imports in January to April expanded by 11.34 percent to 396,385 metric tons (MT) from last year’s 356,019 MT driven by higher pork and chicken purchases from abroad.

Pork imports rose by 17.99 percent to 193,146 MT from 163,690 MT. Offals accounted for most of the pork shipments at 69,977 MT, but this is lower than the 79,269 MT recorded last year.

Figures from the Bureau of Animal Industry showed that Spain was the Philippines’s top supplier of pork in January to April. It supplied 50,935 metric tons (MT), followed by Brazil with 44,452 MT and Canada with 26,164 MT.

Brazil was also the country’s major supplier of chicken at 70,508 MT with the United States trailing behind at 46,636 MT.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/26/government-set-to-inspect-meat-plants-of-8-countries/>

# DA: Excess rice tariff take to fund crop tack, cash aid

Ada Pelonia

June 27, 2024



A worker at a rice warehouse on Dagupan Street in Manila carries sacks of rice to be loaded onto a truck. Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu-Laurel Jr. said that a tariff increase on imported rice might be recommended by November if the retail prices of rice “significantly” decrease. On Wednesday, he said DA plans to use the excess 2023 rice tariff collection for crop diversification, cash assistance, and land titling.

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) plans to use the excess 2023 rice tariff collection for crop diversification, cash assistance, and land titling.



Data from the Bureau of Customs (BOC) showed that tariff revenue collections from rice imports reached P30.02 billion in 2023.

In accordance with Republic Act No. 11203, or the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), “tariffs collected from rice imports go to the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund [RCEF]. Collections in excess of the P10-billion fund go to the Rice Farmer Financial Assistance or RFFA.”

The RCEF allocates P10 billion for farm mechanization, inbred seeds, rice credit assistance, and rice extension service. This gives a P20-billion excess from last year’s tariff collection.

“Last year P12 billion [was given under the RFFA Program], so this year we also plan to give P12 billion,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. told reporters during a media forum organized by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) on Tuesday.

Laurel said the balance would be diverted to crop diversification and land titling.

“The P1 billion for land titling will be given to the Department of Agrarian Reform [DAR] so farmers’ lands can be titled. The P7 billion is for crop diversification to high-value crops,” he said.

Laurel said he expects farmers to receive the P12-billion cash assistance by September.

Earlier, the state-run Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) said it had distributed P8.3 billion in cash assistance to rice farmers as of 2023 under the P12-billion RFFA program. (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/14/farmers-get-p8-3-billion-through-rffa/>)

At a Senate hearing on the Proposed Extension of and Amendments to the Rice Tariffication Law or Republic Act (RA) No. 11203, DBP Senior Vice President Rallen Verdadero reported that the bank has released 1,649,285 cards to rice farmers as of 2023.

Verdadero said that a total of 1.64 million cards and P8.6 billion in RFFA, with a 96.44-percent realization rate, has been distributed to rice farmers in 2022.

For 2021, Verdadero said the DBP released 1.06 million cards and P5.4 billion in cash aid, with a 98.76-percent realization rate.

The DBP, together with the Land Bank of the Philippines, was tapped by the Department of Agriculture (DA) to distribute the cash grants to the farmers.

The state-run bank has partnered with Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas-licensed cash outlets to expedite the release of funds to farmer beneficiaries.

The RFFA is an unconditional cash transfer program to provide compensation for the projected income loss of rice farmers due to the drop in palay farmgate prices caused by the RTL.

It also also aims to facilitate the access of rice farmers to timely funds for procurement of needed inputs and enhance farmers' opportunity to improve productivity and profitability.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/27/da-excess-rice-tariff-take-to-fund-crop-tack-cash-aid/>