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MANILA BULLETIN:

DA-11: No rice shortage in Davao City

BY

Jul 11, 2024 06:13 PM

By IVY TEJANO

DAVAO CITY – The Department of Agriculture-11 denied reports that there is a rice shortage in this city.



The DA-11 said that there is no rice shortage here based on their monitoring and data gathered from their partner-agencies.

DA-11 Regional Executive Director Macario Gonzaga directed their operations and marketing team, especially the Bantay Presyo Team, to investigate and shed light on the matter.

Gonzaga said the Facebook post alleging a rice supply shortage in some stores here has been removed.

The DA-National Plant Quarantine Services said that 3,465 metric tons (MT) or 69,300 50-kilo sack of rice recently arrived at the Port of Davao.

The DA-11 also said the National Food Authority-11 assured sufficient buffer stock.

“Our Bantay Presyo Team also reported that there is no significant price movement of rice in the past monitoring activities,” the DA-11 said.

The DA urged the public to be alert and report price manipulation, hoarding, profiteering, and cartel to authorities.

Hoarding, profiteering, and cartels violate Republic Act 7581 or Price Act, the DA said.

“Please contact us through (082) 226-3625 local 1125 or email us at darfoxi.ored@gmail.com (for those who witnessed violating the Price Act),” the agency said.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/11/da-11-no-rice-shortage-in-davao-city>

MANILA BULLETIN:

PBBM: Cavite, Rizal get P26-M aid for El Niño-hit farmers

BY

Jul 11, 2024 03:03 PM

President Marcos announced on Thursday, July 11, that the provinces of Cavite and Rizal will get a total of P26 million in aid for the farmers and fisherfolk hit by the El Niño phenomenon.



President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. with Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel during the Presidential Assistance to Farmers, Fisherfolk and Families (PAFFF) program in Dasmariñas, Cavite on Thursday, July 11, 2024. (PPA Pool/ Marianne Bermudez)

He made the announcement during the distribution of presidential assistance to farmers, fisherfolk, and families in Cavite at the City of Dasmariñas Arena.

Citing government data, the President said that more than 4,700 farmers and fishermen in the Calabarzon region were directly affected by El Niño.

“Kung [kaya’t] kami ay naririto upang magbigay ng tulong pinansyal at iba pang suporta sa mga naapektuhan [nating] mga magsasaka, na mga mangingisda, at kasama din po riyan ang kanilang mga pamilya (That’s why we are here to provide financial and other support for the affected farmers, fishermen, and their families),” he added.

Marcos, who called the farmers and fisherfolk the country’s modern-day heroes, shared that the Office of the President (OP) will be giving away P10,000 each to some farmers, fisherfolk, and their families from Cavite and Rizal.

“Ang kabuuang halaga ng tulong na ibabahagi namin ay mahigit labing dalawang milyong piso para sa mga benepisyaryo sa Cavite at lagpas naman sa labing apat na milyong piso para naman sa mga taga Rizal (The total amount of aid that we will be giving away is more than P12 million

for beneficiaries in Cavite and more than P14 million for Rizal),” he stated.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) will also provide seedlings, fertilizers, and machinery such as tractor, combine harvester, multi-tiller, rice thresher, hauling truck, and pump and engine set, while the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) will give away motorized boats to fishermen.

The Chief Executive furthered that the Department of Labor and Employment’s (DOLE) Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD) will provide more than P2 million for 400 beneficiaries and more than P1 million for the 50 beneficiaries of its Integrated Livelihood Program in Cavite.

Likewise, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) is also scheduled to provide more than P28 million worth of scholarships, P250,000 worth of starter kits, and P140,000 under its Training Support Fund.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) will also be providing help under its programs—One Town One Product Next Gen Program, Coconut Farmers Industry Development Fund, Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, and Kapatid Mentor Me Program, among others.

Some 12,000 beneficiaries will also receive P10,000 each from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

Marcos shared as well that House Speaker Martin Romualdez will distribute five kilos of rice to all event attendees.

The Chief Executive also said that recent infrastructure projects—LRT [Line] 1 Cavite Extension project, the Cavite-Laguna Expressway-Cavite Segment, and the South Luzon Expressway Toll Road 4, among others—will improve the economy of the region.

The President reminded the heroism that characterized Cavite province.

“Tandaan po natin na kung ang Cavite ay naging tahanan ng ating mga bayani at kalayaan noon, ito rin ang magiging duyan ng pag-asa at pag-unlad ng ating bansa sa hinaharap nating mga panahon (Let us remember that Cavite is the home of our heroes and independence, this is also the cradle of our hope and progress as a nation in the coming years),” Marcos said.

“Tinatawagan ko po [ang] lahat ng mga narito ngayon: Magtulungan po tayo. Sa sama-sama nating pagkilos para sa kaunlaran, isang Bagong Pilipinas ang ating makakamtan (I urged everyone here: let us help each other. In being united for our progress, we will reach the New Philippines),” he added.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/11/pbbm-cavite-rizal-get-p26-m-aid-for-el-nino-hit-farmers>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Speaker's office continues cash, rice aid distribution in Leyte

BY

Jul 11, 2024 11:53 PM

AT A GLANCE



The CARD

Program payout in Tigbao, Tacloban City in the province of Leyte (Speaker's office)

The office of House Speaker Martin Romualdez is continuing its advocacy of providing immediate relief to people in need.

This, as Romualdez's team carried out on Thursday, July 11 a Cash and Rice Distribution (CARD) held at Barangay 94, Tigbao, Tacloban City, Leyte. A total of 1,000 beneficiaries received P5,000 in cash aid and P1,000 worth of rice, in what was considered crucial support to families in the region.

Meanwhile, a payout for the Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD) Program was held in the municipality of Tolosa, also in Leyte. Another 1,000 individuals received P4,050 each for 10 days of work.

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Speaker Romualdez emphasized the importance of these initiatives in promoting community welfare and in supporting the economic recovery of Leyte.

“These aid distributions are a testament to our commitment to serve the people of Leyte. By providing both immediate relief and employment opportunities, we are taking significant steps towards rebuilding and strengthening our communities,” he stated.

“These efforts are part of a broader strategy of the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. to address the ongoing challenges faced by many Filipinos and to foster resilience and recovery across the nation,” added the Leyte 1st district congressman.

He noted that both of these targeted assistance programs were also being implemented in other areas of the country.

CARD is designed to alleviate the financial burden faced by many residents and ensure they have access to basic necessities while TUPAD provides emergency employment for displaced workers, underemployed, and seasonal workers, helping them sustain their livelihood.

In the Tolosa aid rollout, Romualdez was represented by his District Chief-of-staff, lawyer Mark Stephen Reyes.

Tolosa Mayor Erwin Ocaña and Engineer Emmanuel Dela Cruz, head of the Department of Labor (DOLE)-North Leyte Field Office assisted Reyes during the TUPAD payout.

The Tigbao payout was led by Speaker's Office District Coordinator Cyril Malinao, who represented Romualdez. It was held in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), which was represented by Social Welfare Officer II Rammilyn Majarilla.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/11/speaker-s-office-continues-cash-rice-aid-distribution-in-leyte>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Countries warned vs substandard ASF vaccines

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

July 12, 2024 | 12:00am



The WOAHA warning came following an announcement by the Department of Agriculture (DA) that it would conduct mass trial of an ASF vaccine this month.

BusinessWorld / File

MANILA, Philippines — The World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) has warned countries against using substandard vaccines to contain African swine fever (ASF).

The WOAHA warning came following an announcement by the Department of Agriculture (DA) that it would conduct mass trial of an ASF vaccine this month.

The DA said the mass trial would be conducted after the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves the use of the vaccine.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. earlier said the FDA was set to approve the country's first vaccine against ASF for commercial distribution.

“WOAH warns veterinary authorities and the hog industry of risks from the use of substandard vaccines. The continuing spread of ASF is a global concern for the industry as no region is left unaffected. For many years, the lack of vaccine or effective treatment has made it very difficult to control the disease,” the WOA said.

It said the research community has been working to develop an effective vaccine.

Recent announcements of modified live vaccines being approved or tested in some countries have raised hopes for the availability of effective tools to contain ASF.

The WOA said it is monitoring the progress of several ASF vaccine candidates at various stages of development.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/07/12/2369557/countries-warned-vs-substandard-asf-vaccines>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA: P29/kilo rice not political move

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

July 12, 2024 | 12:00am



Individuals flock to a Kadiwa Market at the Department of Agriculture office in Quezon City on July 1, 2024 to purchase rice at P29 per kilo.

The STAR / Michael Varcas

MANILA, Philippines — The sale of rice at P29 per kilo is not a political move ahead of President Marcos' third State of the Nation Address (SONA) on July 22, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

“This is not a political move. This has been planned a long time ago, since the appointment of (Agriculture) Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. through the instruction of the President to bring down the price of rice as it affects the inflation,” Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said yesterday.

The decreased rice prices for vulnerable sectors, including senior citizens, persons with disabilities, Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program beneficiaries and solo parents, will continue after the SONA, De Mesa said.

The DA is giving false hope to the poor by selling rice at P29 per kilo at Kadiwa outlets, according to Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. president Danilo Fausto.

It is not sustainable since the DA's subsidy is pegged at P20 per kilo or P220 million per day, he added.

De Mesa said the DA has identified the sources of the P29 per kilo of rice for the entire year.

“Aside from the National Food Authority rice, we have the contract farming of the National Irrigation Administration totaling 121,000 metric tons. During the dry season, the NFA procured 3.36 million bags. Later on, we will also look for other possible sources,” he noted.

The DA's subsidy for the P29 per kilo of rice is not P20 per kilo, he clarified.

“We have to correct the computation that we are subsidizing. As of now, our subsidy is more on logistics. Bringing the rice from the NFA warehouses, from Batangas and Quezon, bringing it to Food Terminal Inc. and then FTI bringing it to the Kadiwa centers,” De Mesa said.

Fausto said the DA needs at least 11,000 MT of rice daily to support lower prices.

Three Kadiwa outlets in Malabon, Navotas and Marikina will sell rice at lower prices today, De Mesa noted.

Meanwhile, De Mesa said the DA hopes to start selling rice between P45 and P48 per kilo at Kadiwa centers before the end of the week under the Rice-For-All program.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/07/12/2369608/da-p29kilo-rice-not-political-move>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Ex-CDO lawmaker gets 10 years over fertilizer scam

[Elizabeth Marcelo](#) - The Philippine Star

July 12, 2024 | 12:00am



In a 77-page decision promulgated on July 8, the court's Second Division has found Jaraula guilty of violation of Section 3 (e) of Republic Act 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, a provision that prohibits a public official from giving unwarranted benefits to a private party or from causing any party, including the government, undue injury.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The Sandiganbayan has sentenced former Cagayan de Oro City representative Constantino Jaraula to up to 10 years in prison for graft in connection with the 2004 fertilizer scam.

In a 77-page decision promulgated on July 8, the court's Second Division has found Jaraula guilty of violation of Section 3 (e) of Republic Act 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, a provision that prohibits a public official from giving unwarranted benefits to a private party or from causing any party, including the government, undue injury.

Aside from Jaraula, also found guilty of the same offense were three former officials of the Department of Agriculture (DA) Region 10 – budget officer Reina Lumantas, accountant Claudia Artazo and regional technical director Joel Rudinas.

Likewise, found guilty of the same offense was private respondent Evelyn de Leon, president of the non-government organization (NGO) Philippine Social Development Foundation Inc. (PSDFI).

They were sentenced to a minimum of six years and one month to a maximum of 10 years of imprisonment with the accessory penalties of perpetual disqualification from holding public office and forfeiture of all retirement and gratuity benefits.

Furthermore, the Second Division ordered Jaraula and the four other convicted accused to jointly pay the government a total of P3 million in civil liability, with an interest rate of six percent per year from the date of finality of the decision until fully paid.

Meanwhile, the same division has acquitted Jaraula and the four co-accused of malversation of public funds under Article 217 of the Revised Penal Code for the failure of the prosecution to present sufficient evidence to prove their guilt beyond reasonable doubt.

Filed by the Office of the Ombudsman in 2018, the cases stemmed from Jaraula's release of fund amounting to P3 million to PSDFI in 2004 for the supposed distribution of fertilizer to poor farmers in his district, in connection with the implementation of the DA's Ginintuang Masaganang Ani Farm Inputs and Farm Implements Program (GMA-FIFIP).

The ombudsman said Jaraula entered into a memorandum of agreement with PSDFI even when the NGO had no source of funds or income as it only existed through donations.

In convicting Jaraula and his four co-accused, the Second Division said the ombudsman's prosecution panel was able to sufficiently establish the conspiracy among them to favor PSDFI despite its questionable track record and qualifications.

As for then-DA regional officials, the court said that while they argued that they had no participation in the selection of PSDFI to be the project implementer, "it cannot be denied that they were the ones who facilitated the preparation of the requirements for the release of the funds and despite their knowledge of the insufficiency thereof."

"Through their acts, PSDFI was able to get hold of the amount of P3,000,000 to the damage and prejudice of the government," the Second Division said.

In 2004, several local government units purchased fertilizers as part of the implementation of the DA's GMA-FIFIP, later dubbed the "fertilizer fund scam" as the funds were allegedly allocated to the 2004 presidential bid of now-Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, in which she was later cleared by the ombudsman from any involvement in the scam.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/07/12/2369609/ex-cdo-lawmaker-gets-10-years-over-fertilizer-scam>

What's new with agri?



DEMAND AND SUPPLY - Boo Chanco - The Philippine Star

July 12, 2024 | 12:00am



Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

STAR / File

It has been seven months since Agriculture Secretary Francis Tiu Laurel was appointed with much expectations. Hopes were high that Tiu, a successful entrepreneur, will be able to inculcate a results-oriented business approach to fix the problems of our agriculture sector. Seven months is not a long time but should be enough for us to get a hint of where he is going and how he is approaching the problems, urgent and long term, that are now on his plate.

So far, his monumental accomplishment is the appointment of a platoon of undersecretaries, assistant secretaries and other high officials, 26 total. Sure, he needs help specially in sectors he is not that familiar with. But few expected a business entrepreneur to bloat the bureaucracy as his first act. What many were hoping for was a broad statement of what ails agriculture and how he plans to get the work done. Much of the problems are structural and are difficult to reform quickly but a recognition of these roadblocks is a first step toward the change that folks are waiting for.

Productivity is the agri sector's most urgent and basic problem. And farm consolidation that would enable modernization to take place appears like something Sec. Tiu Laurel should recognize right away if only to signal to BBM that anything

less than consolidating farms is like rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic. So far, this point has not been recognized enough, if at all.

Maybe Sec. Tiu Laurel has been sidetracked by the controversies on how to handle rice. The price of rice is sky high. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, a kilogram of regular milled rice at the national level had an average retail price of P 51.14 during the second phase of June 2024 (15 to 17 June 2024). The price may be lower in some regions but most likely still in the P40 and above level even after the harvest season.

The NFA is mandated to buy palay from farmers. The NFA procurement price ranges from P23 to P30 per kg for clean and dry palay while the buying price for fresh and wet palay increased from P17 per kg to P23 per kg. The NFA said it has a budget of P17 billion for buying locally produced palay this year. Palay, dry or wet, undergoes milling.

Google estimates that a good rice mill will produce 50-60 percent whole kernels with 5-10 percent large broken and 10-15 percent small broken. So, selling rice at P29 a kilo at Kadiwa Centers is a losing proposition for the taxpayers. The DA also wants to make well-milled rice available to the public through Kadiwa centers at prices lower than prevailing market rates.

OK. We understand this is a political program, worse than a band-aid solution, but necessary to keep the masa thinking the BBM administration is taking care of them. But the NFA stock is limited and Kadiwa Centers are not extensive enough to make most of the masa happy. Making pa-pogi is perhaps necessary but hopefully it did not distract Sec. Tiu Laurel from his real mission.

Theoretically, the reduction in the tariff for imported rice should result in lower retail prices. But the traders have control over rice stocks. They can decide that they will limit the reduction in retail prices to recover losses from importations made before the tariff reduction. The government does not have enough rice stocks to flood the market, and force prices to go down.

The closest I could get to a mission statement worthy of Sec. Tiu Laurel's credentials is what he said about technology revolutionizing Philippine agriculture, paving the way for increased productivity and profitability while attracting a younger generation of Filipinos to consider being farmers. But how can he modernize unless he consolidates farms first?

“The big challenge we face is making farming profitable,” the DA chief said. “The solution lies in embracing technology-based farming methods.”

Sec. Tiu Laurel dreamed a bit as he expressed interest in scaling up agricultural practices through large-scale greenhouse facilities, inspired by South Korea's

extensive use of such technology across 52,000 hectares. In contrast, only 500 hectares in the Philippines are currently dedicated to greenhouse farming.

The four-year plan crafted by the team of Sec. Tiu Laurel envisions increasing agri-fishery production by increased mechanization, improvement of post-harvest systems and infrastructures, development of efficient logistics systems for input and production output, expansion of market access, digitalization and strengthening partnership with farmers, fisherfolk and the private sector.

We have heard similar plans before. How will Sec. Tiu Laurel make all that happen?

It is interesting that former agriculture secretary Emmanuel Piñol is planning to lead a team of Filipinos to help the Papua New Guinea (PNG) government in its rice self-sufficiency program.

“As soon as the PNG achieves a level of rice sufficiency, excess production would be brought home to the Philippines.” Piñol said.

Former agri usec Fermin Adriano is not impressed with the PNG idea. “Wouldn’t it be better to just allow big conglomerates here to assemble 2,000 hectares of land for palay production? This will require lifting agrarian reform law’s land retention ceiling and over regulation of leasehold arrangements. Why do we have to go to PNG because we cannot change our land policy framework? That is a cop out.”

Apparently, Vietnam also offered thousands of hectares of land for rice cultivation by our private sector for export to the Philippines. The offer was made when former usec Leo Sebastian was responsible for the Rice Industry Development Program. As he spent almost a decade as an international rice expert in Vietnam, authorities there offered him this arrangement.

Do we really have to go abroad to achieve food security? Maybe because we have bad leadership we have to go abroad to get anything done?

Boo Chanco’s email address is bchanco@gmail.com. Follow him on X [@boochanco](https://x.com/boochanco).

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/07/12/2369477/whats-new-agri>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

ACEN, SariSuki partner to boost farmers' output

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

July 12, 2024 | 12:00am



SariSuki and ACEN launched the Agro-Circularity in Renewable Energy (ACRE) program that aims to capitalize on the two parties' strengths in improving farmers' yield.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — Online market platform SariSuki and ACEN Corp. of the Ayala Group have partnered to boost farmers' yields by 50 percent above the national average through a “strategic” farm-to-market approach.

The two entities signed an agreement that seeks to improve local food security and sustainability while providing livelihood opportunities to local communities.

SariSuki and ACEN launched the Agro-Circularity in Renewable Energy (ACRE) program that aims to capitalize on the two parties' strengths in improving farmers' yield.

For its part, SariSuki would implement vertically integrated supply chain process that allows it to collaborate with farmers in effectively managing multiple stages of the production process, from cultivation of crops to distribution and retail.

Meanwhile, ACEN would provide the land for the project, starting with its Ilocos Norte wind farms.

The initial crops that would be cultivated by the program would be chili, cucumber, lemongrass, ube, pineapple and cashews, among others. The farmers would be encouraged to plant the top-selling vegetables in SariSuki's platform suitable in the land provided.

“By combining agriculture and renewable energy this initiative promotes responsible land use, supports local farmers in enhancing their livelihoods by providing them access modern farming tools, training and infrastructure to reach broader markets and improve food security,” said Irene Maranan, senior vice president and head of ACEN's corporate communication and sustainability.

Brian Cu, co-founder and CEO of SariSuki, said the partnership aims to address some of the challenges faced by farmers that include proper farm management, capacity building and direct market access to consumers.

“This partnership showcases how strategic collaborations can contribute to nation-building. It is a testament to the growth of our portfolio and the pivotal role SariSuki plays in transforming agritech,” said Mike Matè, vice president of investments at Kickstart Ventures, which has a stake in SariSuki.

Furthermore, SariSuki would train at least 30 farmers from ACEN's host communities to become “agripreneurs.”

The training would focus on proper farming techniques including crop planning, uniform protocols and integrating technology into farming practices.

A farm relationship manager would be appointed to monitor the progress of the farms to ensure sustainability of production, SariSuki said.

SariSuki said it also plans to expand the project beyond the Ilocos Region toward other ACEN project sites in the country.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/07/12/2369478/acen-sarisuki-partner-boost-farmers-output>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

SC asks Marcos, other execs to comment on EO lowering rice tariffs

[Ian Laqui](#) - Philstar.com

July 11, 2024 | 9:25am



Individuals lined up for affordable rice sold at P29 per kilo at the Kadiwa store inside the National Irrigation Administration Office in Quezon City on July 5, 2024.

The STAR / Michael Varcas

MANILA, Philippines — The Supreme Court (SC) has called on President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin and other officials to respond to a petition challenging the constitutionality of Executive Order (EO) 62, which lowers rice tariffs.

SC spokesperson Camille Ting announced this in a press conference on Thursday.

An order to comment is part of the high court's procedures in handling cases or petitions.

Among those required to comment are Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan and Tariff Commission Chair Marilou Mendoza.

On July 4, several farmer groups, including the Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG), Federation of Free Farmers, United Broiler Raisers Association, and Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative, [filed a petition](#) against EO 62.

The petition claimed that the order was issued without proper consultation and argued that it would increase the country's reliance on foreign produce.

“The issuance of EO No. 62 does not make our farmers more competitive; rather it is a threat to our farmers and fishers and to the entire economy. Instead of protecting and supporting our farmers, EO 62 exposes our very own food producers to unfair foreign competition,” the petition read.

EO 62, signed by Bersamin on June 20, adjusted the classification and import duty rates for several products, including rice, for the years 2024 to 2028. The order reduced tariffs on imported rice from 35% to 15%.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has indicated that this reduction in tariffs could pose a downside risk to inflation.

However, the high court did not issue a temporary restraining order (TRO) or a writ of preliminary injunction to halt the implementation of the executive order.

Solicitor General Menardo Guevarra said that the EO would remain in effect unless a TRO is issued by the court.

“We do not know whether the SC will issue a TRO or not in the days to come. I suppose the SC justices are also presently evaluating whether any injunctive relief is necessary,” Guevarra said.

In a statement, SINAG said it welcomed the high court’s decision.

“Considering that the matter of the constitutionality/validity of EO 62 is now pending before the SC, the pendency of this legal action should be respected by the respondents; defer any action in relation to EO 62 and, give due respect to the SC,” the group's statement read.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/07/11/2369216/sc-asks-marcos-other-execs-comment-eo-lowering-rice-tariffs>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

From rain water, Bohol island residents finally taste potable water

By: [Leo Udtohan @leoudtohanINO](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

Inquirer Visayas / 12:31 PM July 11, 2024



INQUIRER FILES

TALIBON, Bohol — [Potable water](#) is not easy to come by on Guindacpan Island in Talibon, Bohol.

Residents had to wait for the rain to have something to drink, 22-year-old Cresyln Audrey Torreon.

“We rely so much on rain. We’ve been drinking rainwater for as long as I can remember,” she said in an interview on July 8.

Residents on the island, located in the middle of the Danajon Double Barrier Reef with a population of 2,520, have big barrels and giant tadjaws (clay pots) to store rainwater.

On July 7, the rain filled Torreon’s huge water container after months of drought on the island. She used a clean cloth to filter the rainwater.

That might be the last time she and residents of Guindacpan Island had to drink rain to survive.

On Monday, July 8, the island got solar-powered water desalination plants acquired through the World Bank, the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) of the Department of Agriculture, and the provincial government of Bohol

The facilities worth P13 million were turned over to the respective municipal and barangay units by PRDP representatives, Rep. Vanessa Cadorna-Aumentado of Bohol's second district, Board Member Jamie Villamor, Talibon Mayor Jannete Garcia, Bien Unido Mayor Rene Borenaga and village officials.

Other neighboring islands such as Calituban and Mahanay can now fetch water from Guindacpan Island. The minimal fee of P14 per gallon was waived by Garcia.

Aumentado appealed to the islanders to take good care of the facilities after some water desalination plants given to other islanders in 2016 were damaged.

A desalination system could transform saltwater into potable water for freshwater-starved island barangays.

Rosalina Cabanes, 53, a resident of Bilangbilangan Daku, Guindacpan Island, said they used to rely on rain to survive.

At times, she said they were forced to travel by boat to mainland Bohol to buy drinking water for P60 to P80.

Travel by an ordinary pump boat from mainland Bien Unido to Bilangbilangan Island takes 30 minutes to an hour

“Now, we're very happy that what we are hoping for has arrived,” she said.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1960060/from-rain-water-bohol-island-residents-finally-taste-potable-water>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

BOC and agri stakeholders finally unite

By: [Ernesto M. Ordoñez](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 02:14 AM July 12, 2024

The Bureau of Customs will contribute to agriculture development by providing the necessary support at our borders and through close collaboration with farmers, fisherfolk and agribusiness. This was the commitment made by Bureau of Customs (BOC) Commissioner Bienvenido Rubio last July 9 during a meeting with the public-private Philippine Council of Agriculture and Fisheries Anti-Smuggling Committee (PCAF-ASC).

This is no surprise. Rubio is known not only in the Philippines, but also throughout Southeast Asia, as a champion of private sector participation in customs administration. In a recent meeting among Asean heads of national customs bodies, Rubio highlighted his establishment of the Customs Industry and Advisory Council (CICAC), which institutionalizes private sector involvement. Several national heads thereafter expressed their desire to do something similar in their own countries.

Consistent with his approach, Rubio met with the PCAF-ASC. Here are three highlights during the meeting.

Undervaluation

A key smuggling indicator using United Nations Comtrade data showed that the difference between what exporting countries reported they gave us, compared to what we reported we received ballooned from P500 million in 2019 to P1.2 trillion in 2021. Much of this was due to undervaluation.

Rubio encouraged the PCA-ASC to report undervaluation cases and submit invoices with the correct value. Using these invoices would help BOC reject many undervalued “transaction values” that many importers submit.

Some importers claim that this is the only valuation basis allowed by the World Trade Organization (WTO). There are actually six other WTO methods, which the private sector with added expertise can help implement.

Registration

Rodolfo Tamayo, president of the Agriculture Machinery Manufacturers and Distributors Association, Inc. (AMMDA), reported the nonimplementation of this regulation has caused devastating damage to agriculture amid the proliferation of substandard and defective agriculture machineries. This is largely because the required importer accreditation by the Department Agriculture's Bureau of Agricultural and Fisheries Engineering has been grossly ignored when, in fact, this was given emphasis in Republic Act 10501, or "An Act Promoting Agriculture and Fisheries Mechanization Development in the Country."

Tamayo has been highlighting this critical issue for a long time, but no action was ever taken. Rubio committed there will be one very soon.

In addition, Tamayo offered the free services of PCAF mechanization committee members in conducting orientation sessions for BOC personnel to better evaluate agriculture machinery imports.

In the 1980s, former AMMDA president and now Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc. president Sergio Ortiz-Luis led this initiative with impressive results, but this was unfortunately terminated.

Agri technical experts

The BOC had previously recognized and accredited private sector industry technical experts (ITEs), but none for agriculture. These ITEs have access to BOC data and help review import documents. They then submit written recommendations to the BOC Commissioner, who responds to each one.

A similar arrangement for agriculture was recommended, which Rubio welcomed. During CICAC's fifth meeting last July 5, agriculture was represented by less than 5

percent of the participants. With Rubio's support, more agriculture representation is expected in the future.

The BOC and ASC have agreed to have bimonthly meetings for the key issues raised. For each issue, there will be one identified person each from the BOC and PCAF to facilitate accountability. With this continuing relationship, the BOC and agriculture stakeholders can now work synergistically together for progressive agriculture development.

The author is Agriwatch chair, former secretary of presidential flagship programs and projects, and former undersecretary of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Trade and Industry. Contact is agriwatch_phil@yahoo.com

<https://business.inquirer.net/468227/boc-and-agri-stakeholders-finally-unite>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

El Niño-hit Calabarzon folk receive aid

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:12 AM July 12, 2024



Photo shows a drought-hit farm in Imus, Cavite, taken on March 2, 2024. —
RICHARD A. REYES

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. distributed cash aid on Thursday to about 4,700 farmers and fisherfolk in Cavite, Laguna, Rizal, Batangas, and Quezon (Calabarzon) provinces who were affected by the El Niño phenomenon earlier this year.

In separate events in the City of Dasmariñas and San Jose town in Batangas, the President handed checks of up to P24 million to local officials and P10,000 each to individual farmers and fishermen.

Marcos also gave the provincial governments of Cavite and Rizal checks amounting to P12.36 million and P14.51 million, respectively, as well as P10,000 in cash assistance to 10 selected farmer-beneficiaries in each province.

The provincial governments of Laguna and Batangas, on the other hand, received aid of P24 million and P17.42 million, respectively.

The Department of Agriculture also distributed to selected beneficiaries farm machinery and equipment, including tractors, a combine harvester, multitillers, a rice thresher, hauling trucks, and pump and engine sets. —*MELVIN GASCON*

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1960276/el-nino-hit-calabarzon-folk-receive-aid>

BUSINESS WORLD:

10 Israeli firms looking into PHL agritech investments

July 11, 2024 | 8:47 pm



REUTERS

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

THE Israeli ambassador said 10 companies from his country are currently considering agriculture technology ventures in the Philippines, noting the opportunity to raise production in rice, which the Philippines currently needs to import, and in high-value crops, where export potential is limited due to inadequate volumes.

“The challenge here is more about identifying resources in order to have the joint ventures, or co-investments,” Ambassador Ilan Fluss said on the sidelines of an agriculture forum on Thursday.

He added that Israeli companies have taken note of the challenges the Philippines is experiencing in rice and various high-value crops, to the extent that farmers cannot meet domestic demand.

The Philippines imports 20% of its rice requirement. It also imports, among others dairy, meat, and corn, where domestic production falls short of demand.

“Through implementing innovative technologies, productivity can grow,” he said.

He described the potential investors as representing “a wide range,” though some of them “are really new to the market and looking for new opportunities as part of their global expansion.”

He said Israeli companies can supply agricultural technology or services with the help of local partners.

He noted that the rate of technological adoption by small-scale farmers has been slow.

“I do recognize that really small-scale farmers, especially in the rice sector, have difficulty engaging in modern or commercial farming,” he said, noting the broader difficulties in integrating such farmers into the mainstream economy.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/11/607663/10-israeli-firms-looking-into-phl-agritech-investments/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Raw sugar exports to US seen shipping out by Aug.

July 11, 2024 | 8:46 pm



VICTORIAS MILLING COMPANY, INC. FACEBOOK PAGE

THE Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) said it plans to allow exporters to start deliveries of raw sugar by August to meet the US quota.

SRA Administrator Pablo Luis S. Azcona quoted the sugar industry as saying that increased production will allow it to meet the US quota of 25,000 metric tons (MT).

According to the SRA, raw sugar production was 1.92 million metric tons (MMT) as of May 12, exceeding the 1.799 MMT brought in a year earlier.

“Sugar exports need to arrive (in the US) by September... they should start shipping out by August,” he said in a briefing on Thursday.

Mr. Azcona added that the SRA had sent out a draft sugar order (SO) to the industry for comment.

“After that, the board will deliberate on all the comments and suggestions, and we will come up with an SO for it,” he said.

The US grants the Philippines an export quota of 25,300 metric tons raw value of raw sugar at a favorable tariff. The Philippines has until Sept. 30 to fill the quota.

Exports of raw sugar to the US are optimized to stabilize prices during times of overproduction.

“This year, we didn’t do it in January-February because the US quota was issued in April. For now, so that we will not be a default of our commitment to them, we will export,” Mr. Azcona added.

During crop year 2023-2024, all raw sugar was classified “B” sugar or for domestic consumption, according to SO No. 1.

The Philippines last shipped raw sugar to the US during the 2020-2021 crop year, amounting to 112,008 MT of commercial weight raw sugar. The country has not exported sugar to the US since then due to domestic supply concerns.

The SRA has said that exporters have prequalified for the planned export program after participating in the voluntary purchase program authorized by SO No. 2.

The order called for the voluntary purchase of domestically produced sugar in order to stabilize farmgate prices. Participants were also eligible for an allocation in a future import program.

He said that about 20 exporters have volunteered to meet the US export quota, but cited the need for a replenishment program through imports.

The SRA’s replenishment program allows exporters of raw sugar to the US to import refined sugar in approved volumes.

Last month, the Department of Agriculture said it was planning to allow imports of about 200,000 MT of refined sugar to plug a possible supply gap before the start of the milling season on Sept. 15. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/11/607662/raw-sugar-exports-to-us-seen-shipping-out-by-aug/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

PHL likely to be ‘big winner’ once India eases rice export restrictions

July 12, 2024 | 12:34 am



A WOMAN cleans rice grains at a wholesale market in Navi Mumbai, India, Aug. 4, 2023. — REUTERS
THE PHILIPPINES is seen to benefit the most from an expected decline in global rice prices once India relaxes restrictions on rice exports, Nomura Global Markets Research said.

“We expect the Philippines to be the biggest winner in Asia, given the high share of rice in its consumer price index (CPI) basket, its dependence on rice imports and recent rice import tariff reductions,” it said in a report.

“The Philippines will likely benefit most from falling international rice prices, via positive terms-of-trade effects and easing domestic food price inflation.”

Market participants are expecting India, the world’s largest exporter of white rice, to relax restrictions on rice exports soon. Last year, India suspended exports of non-basmati white rice amid concerns over domestic supply.

“Since India accounted for 35% of global rice exports in 2022, making it the top rice exporter in the world, its export restrictions pushed up global rice prices and hurt rice importing nations globally,” Nomura said.

“In our view, India is likely to gradually remove the restrictions on its rice exports in coming months,” it added.

Nomura said it sees “brighter” prospects for the Philippines, which is highly dependent on imported rice.

“Net rice imports accounted for 0.4% of its gross domestic product (GDP) in 2023, the highest in Asia. As such, lower global rice prices should have the most beneficial impact on the Philippines, followed by Indonesia,” it said.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) expects Philippine rice imports to hit 4.6 million metric tons (MMT) this year, higher than the Agriculture department’s 3.9 MMT projection.

As of June 27, the Philippines had imported 2.31 MMT of rice, latest data from the Bureau of Plant Industry showed.

“Without price controls or subsidies, the pass-through to domestic rice prices is also significant and swift, contributing to more downward pressures on headline inflation, which is already set to be impacted by the government’s announcement of a substantial rice import tariff reduction,” Nomura said.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. last month signed Executive Order No. 62, which slashed tariffs on rice imports to 15% from 35%, until 2028.

The measure is expected to bring down retail rice prices by P6 to P7 per kilo, the Agriculture department said earlier.

Nomura noted the weight of rice in the Philippines’ CPI basket at 8.9%, which is “much higher” than its neighboring countries.

In June, rice inflation eased to 22.5% from 23% a month ago. This marked the third straight month of slower rice inflation.

Rice accounted for 45.2% of overall inflation, equivalent to 1.7 percentage points.

“Easing inflation would further support our view that BSP will start its easing cycle by October, although the risk of an earlier first rate cut (i.e., in August) is rising, given recent comments by Governor Remolona that BSP does not have to wait for the Fed,” Nomura added.

Roehlano M. Briones, a senior research fellow at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, said rice prices could further decline if India eases its restrictions.

“The rice tariff cut is expected to reduce the price by about P7. (Prices can go) lower if India lifts restrictions,” he said in a Viber message.

Latest data from the Agriculture department showed that the average price of well-milled rice ranged from P48-55 per kilogram as of July 10, while regular milled rice was P45-52.

“There could be a further decline in import prices, but exporters to the Philippines could also adjust their prices upwards knowing that we have reduced our tariffs,” Raul Q. Montemayor, national manager of the Federation of Free Farmers, said in a Viber message.

“It remains to be seen whether rice retail prices will go down and benefit consumers,” he added.

Mr. Montemayor said that based on his computations, the margin between import and retail prices shrink when import prices go up.

“Once import prices go down coupled with the lowered tariff rate, market intermediaries might just recoup the margins they lost and not pass on any benefit to consumers.” — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2024/07/12/607649/phl-likely-to-be-big-winner-once-india-eases-rice-export-restrictions/>

REMATE:

Pag-export ng Pinas ng ‘raw sugar’ sa US muling gugulong sa Agosto

July 11, 2024 18:36



MANILA, Philippines- Ipagpapatuloy ng Pilipinas ang pag-export ng raw sugar sa Estados Unidos sa susunod na buwan.

Tinatayang apat na taon na ang nakalilipas nang huling magsagawa ang Pilipinas ng shipment sa Amerika, kasunod ng naging kahilingan ng industry stakeholders.

Sinabi ni Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) administrator at CEO Pablo Luis Azcona na, “Exporters are requesting if they’ll be allowed to export.”

“Exporters are volunteering to export... they will serve the 25,000 [metric tons],” ayon kay Azcona.

Buwan ng Marso, inanunsyo ni US Trade Representative (USTR) na naglaan ito ng karagdagang 25,3000 metric tons raw value (MTRV) para sa Pilipinas para sa fiscal year 2024 (Oktubre 1, 2023 hanggang Setyembre 30, 2024).

Pinapayagan ng MTRV allocation scheme ng US government ang mga bansa na mag-export ng ‘specified quantities’ o tinukoy na dami ng produkto sa “relatively low tariff.”

“According to exporters, they [raw sugar] have to arrive in the US by September... So, if that happens, [the exportation] will happen in August,” ang sinabi ni Azcona.

Ang plano na mag-export ay ipatutupad sa pamamagitan ng isang sugar order, na nakatakdang desisyunan ngayong buwan.

Ang huling shipment ng Pilipinas sa Estados Unidos ay sa crop year na 2020–2021, kung saan nag-ship ito ng 112,008 MT ng commercial raw sugar.

Sa kabilang dako, plano ng Pilipinas na umangkat naman ng 200,000 MT refined sugar bago matapos ang taon upang punan ang inaasahang supply gap at tiyakin ang pagiging matatag ng presyo ng mga kalakal.

Tinuran ni Azcona na: “The Philippines would be exporting raw sugar while importing refined or processed sugar.”

Sinabi pa ni Azcona na ang “trigger point” para sa planong importasyon ay makikita sa Agosto, lalo pa’t ang kasalukuyang stocks ay inaasahang bababa sa tatlong buwan na halaga ng demand.

Samantala, sa isang kalatas, nag-alala naman ang Sugar Council— isang coalition ng sugarcane producers at itinanong “why there is a need to import even as an export sugar order is being prepared.”

“Farmers have reason to be puzzled. Why export and then import? Why export 24,700 MT of raw, which we are short of, and replace it with 61,750 MT of refined (at a 1:2.5 ratio), of which we have too much?” giit ng Sugar Council.

Sinabi ng sugarcane producers coalition na dapat ipaliwanag ng DA at SRA ang sitwasyon sa mga karaniwang magsasaka.

Winika ni Azcona na “we do not want to lose the US quota if we don’t serve it for a long period of time.”

“We really need it sometimes to stabilize our local prices,” patuloy ng opisyal.

Maliban sa karagdagang 25,300 MTRV, naglaan ang Estados Unidos ng 145,235 MTRV para sa Pilipinas ngayong taon.

Inulit ni Azcona na ang importasyon ay dapat na mangyari bago magsimula ang milling season sa Setyembre, “so it will not affect the prices of our locally produced sugar.” **Kris Jose**

<https://remate.ph/pag-export-ng-pinas-ng-raw-sugar-sa-us-muling-gugulong-sa-agosto/>

REMATE:

12K magsasaka, mangingisda sa CALABARZON naayudahan sa TUPAD

July 11, 2024 12:32



Mahigit sa 12,000 mangingisda at magsasaka mula sa lalawigan ng Cavite at Rizal ang nabigyan ng tulong at ayuda sa pamamagitan ng Presidential Assistance o Tupad program ng DSWD na ginanap sa Dasmarinas Arena sa Dasmarinas City, Cavite.

Tumanggap ng tig P10,000 ang bawat mangingisda at magsagaka kung saan dumating si Pangulong Ferdinand Bongbong Marcos Jr at Senador Francis Tolentino kasama ang ilang opisyal ng lalawigan ng Cavite at Rizal para saksihan ang pamamahagi na ito ng DSWD.

Kaugnay nito sinabi naman ni Senador Tolentino na kanyang papasyalan sa July 16 , 2024 araw ng Martes sa susunod na linggo ang mangingisdang nabangga ng dambuhalang Chinese vessel sa karagatan ng West Philippine Sea malapit sa Bajo de Masinloc noon July 7, 2024 .

Ayon kay Tolentino, nakausap na niya si Robert Mondeñedo at ang pamilya ng nawawalang mangingisda nasi Jose Mondeñedo kung saan nagpadala na ang Senador ng tulong pinansyal sa pamilya ng mga biktima.

Iginiit din ng Senador na sinulatan na niya ang ilang ahensya tulad ng Department of Justice upang tulungan ang mga mangingisda na makapagsampa ng kaso at makamit ang hustisya sa ginawang hit and run ng dambuhalang Chinese monster commercial vessel.

Umaasa naman si Tolentino na marerekober ng buhay ng Philippine Coast Guard ang nawawalang mangingisda at makamit ang hustisya para sa kanila.

Nanawagan naman si Tolentino sa mga kababayan na ipagdasal ang ating Philippine Coast Guard at Philippine Navy na nagbabantay sa ating karagatan sa West Philippine Sea. RNT

<https://remate.ph/12k-magsasaka-mangingisda-sa-calabarzon-naayudahan-sa-tupad/>

REMATE:

Taas-presyo ng ilang gulay mapipigilan na ngayong linggo – DA

July 11, 2024 10:30



(c) Remate News Central File Photo

MANILA, Philippines – Tiniyak ng Department of Agriculture (DA) nitong Miyerkules sa publiko na ang pagtaas ng presyo ng mga piling gulay ay ititigil na simula ngayong linggo.

“Ang good news dito as I mentioned, nag-start nang mag-harvest ngayon iyong Southern Tagalog Region. At ine-expect natin, unti-unti nang bababa ang iyong presyo sa mga darating na araw,” sinabi ni DA Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa sa isang panayam, na tumutukoy sa pag-aani ng mga kamatis.

Nabatid nitong Martes, Hulyo 9, ang presyo ng mga kamatis sa Metro Manila ay nasa P140 hanggang P220 kada kilo, mas mataas kaysa sa hanay ng presyo dalawang linggo na ang nakalipas na itinakda sa P90/kg. sa P160/kg.

Ang iba pang produktong pang-agrikultura na tumataas ang presyo ay mga carrots na mula PHP100/kg. hanggang PHP180/kg., talong mula PHP60/kg. sa PHP120/kg., at ang bell pepper ay nasa PHP200/kg. sa PHP350/kg., bukod sa iba pa.

Idinagdag ni De Mesa na ang pagtaas ng presyo ay agad na mababaligtad kung isasaalang-alang ang mas mabilis na cycle sa produksyon ng gulay.

“Iyong presyo ng gulay parating pabagu-bago iyan, iyong presyong nakataas temporary at kapag bumalik uli iyong malaking harvest, bababa uli iyan idinagdag pa nito.

Samantala iniugnay ni De Mesa ang pagtaas ng presyo sa pagkaantala ng ani dahil sa pabago-bagong panahon, bukod pa sa mga epekto ng El Niño phenomenon at Bagyong Aghon.

Ang pagtaas ng presyo ng petrolyo ay maaaring magkaroon din ng epekto sa gastos sa transportasyon ng mga magsasaka, lalo na sa mga produktong agrikultural na kinukuha mula sa malalayong lugar tulad ng Benguet, Baguio, at Southern Tagalog, dagdag pa niya.

“May additional na expenses kapag mahal ang gasolina. Of course, ang lalaki ng increases, PHP1 to PHP2 di ba So, that would also be the reason for the dagdagan,” ayon pa kay De Mesa.

Para sa mababang lupang gulay, ang mga produkto ay galing sa Southern Tagalog, Central Luzon, Cagayan Valley, at Ilocos Region; habang ang mga highland na gulay ay karaniwang nagmumula sa La Trinidad, Cordillera, at Southern Tagalog.

Nauna rito, sinabi ng DA na kabuuang PHP510.447 milyon na tulong ang ibibigay sa 160,000 crop, livestock, at poultry farmers na nagmamay-ari o umuupa ng makinarya, kabilang ang PHP3,000 na halaga ng fuel subsidies para sa bawat magsasaka.

Kaugnay nito tinitingnan ng DA ang pamamahagi nito sa Agosto kapag ang average na buwanang presyo ng Dubai crude oil ay umabot sa USD80 kada bariles, ayon sa kinakailangan na itinakda sa ilalim ng 2024 General Appropriations Act. (*Santi Celario*)

<https://remate.ph/taas-presyo-ng-ilang-gulay-mapipigilan-na-ngayong-linggo-da/>

On the job



President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. holds a bundle of farm produce from a stall before the start of the Presidential Assistance to Farmers, Fisherfolks and Families (PAFFF) program in Dasmaringas, Cavite on Thursday. Inset shows the President trying out a massage at the fair. Around 12,000 families benefited from the program which was also attended by Agriculture Secretary Francis Tiu Laurel and Cavite Governor Jonvic Remulla. PPA POOL

By Manila Standard

July 12, 2024, 1:15 am

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. holds a bundle of farm produce from a stall before the start of the Presidential Assistance to Farmers, Fisherfolks and Families (PAFFF) program in Dasmaringas, Cavite on Thursday. Inset shows the President trying out a massage at the fair. Around 12,000 families benefited from the program which was also attended by Agriculture Secretary Francis Tiu Laurel and Cavite Governor Jonvic Remulla. PPA POOL

<https://manilastandard.net/gallery/news-in-photos/314470563/on-the-job-3.html>

Rice for all

By Ernesto M. Hilario

July 12, 2024, 12:05 am

“Program 29 and Rice-for-All are timely and appropriate interventions by the national government to make affordable rice available to our people all-year round”

One of the campaign promises of then presidential candidate Ferdinand ‘Bongbong’ Marcos Jr. was, if elected, he would work towards bringing the price of rice, the staple food of Filipinos, to P20 per kilo.

After two years of his administration, many Filipinos, particularly those living in poverty, are still waiting for that campaign promise to become reality.

There’s hope on the horizon, however. No, not P20/kilo rice. But the next best thing, as of now, is P29/kilo rice in selected stores.

Last July 5, the Department of Agriculture headed by Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. launched a large-scale trial of “Program 29” aimed at providing high-quality rice at P29 per kilo to as many as 6.9 million vulnerable households, representing around 35 million Filipinos.

Ten KADIWA centers in Metro Manila and Bulacan are participating in the trial program, where rice will be sold at P29 per kilo every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday initially.

Rice priced at P29 per kilo had earlier been made available in three KADIWA centers.

The large-scale trial aims to gather comprehensive data on supply, demand, and logistics, essential for the smooth nationwide rollout of the program.

During this period, KADIWA will also prepare booklets to monitor rice purchases of P29 beneficiaries, which include senior citizens, single parents, persons with disabilities and beneficiaries of the government’s 4Ps program.

The identified KADIWA sites are in the offices of the Bureau of Animal Industry and National Irrigation Administration in Quezon City; Bureau of Plant Industry in Manila; Food Terminal Inc. in Taguig City; PhilFIDA in Las Piñas; Caloocan City; Valenzuela City; Brgy. Fortune and BF City in Marikina City; and San Jose del Monte City in Bulacan.

Secretary Laurel has emphasized the importance of preventing abuse of the program by beneficiaries reselling subsidized rice.

He has appealed to beneficiaries not to take advantage of this program by reselling the P29 rice from KADIWA centers as the DA wants to ensure the largest number of those in the vulnerable sectors will benefit from the program.

Genevieve Velicaria-Guevarra, Assistant Secretary for Consumer and Legislative Affairs of the Agriculture Department, urged consumers qualified to participate in the P29 rice program to bring identification cards and reusable containers or bags to minimize plastic usage.

ASec. Guevarra, who also oversees the KADIWA program, said in addition to lower-priced rice at designated centers, consumers can also buy more affordable essential items such as eggs, meat, and vegetables.

Nationwide, there are 265 established KADIWA centers along with 119 pop-up stores operating on scheduled rotations to cater to consumer needs.

The DA estimates full implementation of the P29 program will require approximately 69,000 metric tons of rice.

This will provide 10 kilos of rice per month at P29 per kilo to the targeted 6.9 million vulnerable households.

Rice supplies will come from various sources, including the National Food Authority, the National Irrigation Administration's rice contract growing project, and potential imports managed by DA-affiliated entities.

The DA plans to expand the program to major urban centers nationwide with the support of local government units.

By August, the number of participating KADIWA centers is expected to double, enhancing accessibility for economically disadvantaged groups in Metro Manila.

Apart from Program 29, there's also the Agriculture Department's "Rice-for-All" program that will sell rice at prices lower than current market rates.

According to Guevarra, the government's "Rice-for-All" program will be launched in the following weeks to make rice prices affordable by ordinary Filipinos.

Rice prices under the program will range from P45 to P48 per kilo. The DA plans to roll out the "Rice-for-All" program in KADIWA centers first before expanding it to other areas.

"This is for everyone, not necessarily the vulnerable sectors. So, anyone can buy and there is no limit. Although we are saying they can purchase one sack if there are 25-kilo sacks available," Guevarra pointed out.

Per the DA's price monitoring, local well-milled rice had an average price of P51.5, regular milled stood at P49.03 and special rice at P49.03 in the last week of June.

This price range is significantly higher than the prices offered in the agency's rice programs.

Program 29 and Rice-for-All are timely and appropriate interventions by the national government to make affordable rice available to our people all-year round.

P20/per kilo rice may not be a pipe dream after all. (Email: ernhil@yahoo.com)

<https://manilastandard.net/opinion/314470283/rice-for-all.html>

No rice shortage in Davao City — DA

By Ruth Palo
July 12, 2024

DAVAO CITY — The regional office of the Department of Agriculture (DA) said the city has enough supply of rice.

In a statement on Tuesday afternoon, the DA Regional Executive Director Macario Gonzaga assured Davaoeños that there is no shortage of rice supply in the city based on the ground monitoring and the data submitted to them from their partner agencies.

Gonzaga made the statement following misleading posts circulating on Facebook regarding the shortage of rice supply in some market outlets in Davao City.

He said there is no truth to the post which is no longer available as it was removed by the owner.

Gonzaga cites data from the National Plant Quarantine Services (NPQS) which showed that 3,465 metric tons or 69,300 bags at 50 kilos per bag of rice have just arrived at the Port of Davao.

The National Food Authority Region 11 also ensured that their agency has enough buffer stock.

"Our Bantay Presyo Team also reported that there is no significant price movement of rice in the past monitoring activities," Gonzaga said.

Gonzaga immediately convened its Operations and Marketing Teams, specifically personnel from Bantay Presyo, to investigate and provide clarification on the issue.

He urged the public to be alert and encouraged them to report to the authorities any illegal acts of price manipulation, as well as hoarding, profiteering, and cartel committed by unscrupulous rice traders.

These acts are in violation of Republic Act 7581 or The Price Act, which provides the penalty for acts of illegal price manipulation during emergency situations and similar occasions.

The law says any person who commits any act of illegal price manipulation of any basic necessity or prime commodity under Section 5 hereof shall suffer the penalty of imprisonment for a period of not less than five years nor more than fifteen years, and shall be imposed a fine of not less than P5,000 nor more than P2,000,000.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/12/regions/no-rice-shortage-in-davao-city-da/1956713>

Samal farmers get free fertilizers

By Ernie Esconde

July 12, 2024

SAMAL, Bataan — The Department of Agriculture has continued assisting farmers nationwide with free fertilizers.

Genezareth Macahilig of the Samal Municipal Agriculture Office said that 720 farmers tilling 836 hectares of rice lands received a total of 1,850 bags of commercial fertilizers on Thursday.

He said that the national government allocated P3,400 per hectare or a total of P2.8 million for the free fertilizer program in Samal.

Macahilig said they divided farmers in 14 barangay (villages) of Samal into clusters and they have four days to complete the fertilizer distribution.

Farmers are left to choose whether to receive urea, 14 – 14 – 14 or 16 – 20 types of fertilizers.

Urea is presently priced at P1,700 per bag while complete or 14 – 14 – 14 at P1,650 and 16 – 20 costs P1,450 per bag.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/12/regions/samal-farmers-get-free-fertilizers/1956707>

Raw sugar exports to US eyed by SRA

By Janine Alexis Miguel

July 12, 2024

THE Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) on Thursday announced plans to export 25,000 metric tons (MT) of raw sugar to the United States by August, adding that this would qualify traders to import refined sugar.

SRA Administrator Pablo Luis Azcona explained that the commodity have to arrive in the US by September, which is the reason for shipping out by August.

"The buying price of the US is high, so our exporters asked if they could export," he added,

Azcona said the Philippines had previously not exported to the US because the quota price there was lower than the domestic price.

Exporting to the US is usually done in order to stabilize local prices of sugar at a time when there is overproduction, which usually occurs in January, February and March, or during the peak of the milling season.

"The sugar production in those months is a lot more than what we consume. To prevent prices from dropping in the market, we export, and then after the milling season, we import the sugar we exported," Azcona explained.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. last month said that they were eyeing to import at least 200,000 MT of refined sugar in September to fill an anticipated supply gap and keep prices stable.

Azcona also said that the Philippines did not export in January-February this year because the US quota was issued in April, though it is still keen on fulfilling its trade obligation.

The SRA chief added that raw sugar deliveries to the US were entirely dependent on supply and demand.

"At the start of milling, we informed the US that, coming from last year, we could not fulfill their quota of 143,000 MT, so they reconsidered and lowered it to 25,000 MT," he said.

A sugar export order has been drafted and sent to the stakeholders for comments and should be finalized this month.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/12/business/top-business/raw-sugar-exports-to-us-eyed-by-sra/1956770>

Nomura: Falling global rice prices to benefit PH

By Niña Myka Pauline Arceo
July 12, 2024

DECLINING international rice prices are expected to particularly benefit the Philippines, Nomura Global Market Research said, contributing to a further decline in inflation.

"The Philippines will likely benefit most from falling international rice prices, via positive terms-of-trade effects and easing domestic food price inflation," it said in a report on Wednesday.

An easing of India's rice export restrictions, if implemented, will directly affect countries purchasing grain from India and also influence global rice prices.

"Asia is the largest producer and consumer of rice, which forms part of its staple diet, so a fall in rice prices would have a beneficial impact on consumers in Asia," Nomura noted.

Singapore and Hong Kong rely entirely on imports for their rice consumption, it pointed out, while Malaysia meets 41 percent, and the Philippines 28 percent of their rice needs through purchases abroad.

The significance of rice in Asia's consumer price index basket varies, Nomura continued, with the Philippines considered as the highest (8.9 percent of CPI), followed by India (4.7 percent), Indonesia (3.4 percent), and Thailand (3.0 percent).

"The Philippines was hit particularly hard during the period of high rice prices, given its high dependence on imported rice: net rice

imports accounted for 0.4 percent of its GDP in 2023, the highest in Asia," Nomura said.

"As such, lower global rice prices should have the most beneficial impact on the Philippines, followed by Indonesia," it added.

Nomura said that without price controls or subsidies, the impact on domestic rice prices would be "significant and swift" and add downward pressure on inflation. This will be in addition to the government's recent announcement of a substantial reduction in rice import tariffs.

Inflation eased to 3.7 percent in June, snapping four consecutive months of increases. Rice inflation declined further to 22.5 percent from 23.0 percent in May.

The reduction of tariffs on rice to 15 percent from an already-lowered 35 percent up to 2028, Nomura said, could lower inflation significantly and reinforced its view that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas would start easing in October.

The central bank has indicated that it could cut as early as August, given improvements in the inflation outlook.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/12/business/corporate-news/nomura-falling-global-rice-prices-to-benefit-ph/1956761>

PH to fulfill US quota for raw sugar exports

By **Jed Macapagal**

July 12, 2024

The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) is seeking comments on a sugar order that will to fulfill the Philippines' quota of raw sugar exports to the United States this year.

SRA Administrator Pablo Azcona told reporters in an interview yesterday there are at least 20 exporters which signified interest to fill the volume to be shipped out to the US under the tariff-rate quota (TRQ) scheme.

But Azcona said logistics is an issue because these entities have not exported for three years.

"Ports (previously) used for (loading exports) are no longer capable of doing it," Azcona said.

The Office of the US Trade Representative has increased the allocated quantity of raw cane sugar from the Philippines eligible to enter the US at a lower duty rate under the World Trade Organization's TRQ for fiscal year 2024.

The Philippines was given an additional 25,300 metric tons (MT) on top of the earlier allocation of 145,235 MT for a total of 170,535.

USTR's fiscal year 202 is from Oct. 1, 2023 through Sept. 30, 2024

The Philippines is one of the select countries given an annual allocation of sugar export to the US market at a premium.

"Our exporters do not want to lose our US quota if we do not serve that for a long time. Because we really need it sometimes to stabilize our local prices," Azcona said.

The Philippines last shipped raw sugar to the US market during crop year 2020 to 2021 totaling 112,008 MT of commercial weight.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/ph-to-fulfill-us-quota-for-raw-sugar-exports/

PHL corn production seen declining on fall armyworm damage—report

Ada Pelonia

July 12, 2024



A fall armyworm crawls along the corn stalk after the farmer opened the node where it was hiding

THE Philippines's corn production in the marketing year (MY) 2024-2025 may decline due to fall armyworms infesting local farms, according to an international report.

“FAS Manila forecasts lower MY 2024/25 corn production as multiple producers and industry contacts report reduced area planted and ongoing issues with Fall Army Worm,” the United States Department of Agriculture-Foreign Agricultural Service in Manila (USDA-FAS Manila) said in its latest report published recently.

The USDA-FAS Manila projected that local corn production in MY 2024-2025 would decrease by 2.38 percent to 8.2 million metric tons (MMT) from 8.4 MMT in the previous MY.

The report also said that with lower corn production because of the fall armyworm issues, imports of both corn and wheat are expected to rise to meet growing feed demand.

In June, BusinessMirror carried a special report on the fall armyworm devastation of corn fields in the Caraga region, which a regional crop protection specialist attributed to temperature changes.

Though they have monitored the FAW in the region in 2020, this cropping season's infestation is unprecedented compared to previous years, said the BusinessMirror report. (<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/06/09/a-war-on-worms-in-warm-weather/>)

"In 2020, during the height of the pandemic, we've started monitoring the presence of FAW in our corn crops in Caraga, from 2021 until 2023, the number of infected corn plants has been very minimal that it did not even show that much damage in our farmer's yield. But we're surprised it spiked beyond our expectation on this year's cropping," said Ana Marie Plaza, Officer-in-Charge of the Regional Crop Protection Center of the Department of Agriculture in Caraga.

Plaza pointed out that the sudden rise in the infestation of FAW in Agusan del Sur might have something to do with the abrupt change in the weather pattern with the onset of warmer temperatures which increased from March to May.

Figures from the USDA-FAS Manila showed that corn imports in MY 2024-2025 would hit 1 MMT, up 50,000 metric tons (MT) from the 950,000 MT in the previous year.

However, it said this was lower compared to USDA Official projection of 1.1 MMT as industry contacts reported "elevated global prices and tightening supply, despite growth in imports over the past year."

The USDA-FAS Manila said the Philippines's total corn consumption in the current MY would hit 9.3 MMT.

“FAS Manila forecasts slightly higher feed corn consumption in MY 2024/25, but slightly lower compared to USDA Official because of limited supply both from local production and imports, and some shift to feed wheat,” it said.

“FAS Manila forecasts FSI corn consumption in line with USDA Official for MY 2024/25, down from the previous marketing year because of shrinking supply.”

The report also estimates wheat imports for MY 2024-2025 to reach 5.95 MMT, higher than the USDA Official’s 5.9 MMT “as global wheat prices are trending downward.”

“Moreover, feed millers report lower corn production and limited global supply, so FAS Manila anticipates some shift from corn to feed wheat.”

The report said that feed wheat consumption of 2.75 MMT is forecast higher than USDA Official’s 2.7 MMT because “feed millers report ongoing domestic corn production issues and limited global supply, prompting some shift from corn to feed wheat.”

Image credits: [Erwin Mascariñas](#)

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/12/phl-corn-production-seen-declining-on-fall-armyworm-damage-report/>

PHL exporting raw sugar again to the US

Ada Pelonia

July 12, 2024



THE Philippines is exporting raw sugar to the United States again three years after it made its last shipment to its major buyer of the sweetener.

The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) said the country will export some 25,000 metric tons (MT) of raw sugar to the US in August, a move that is expected to help stabilize local prices.

SRA Administrator Pablo Luis Azcona said in an interview with reporters that local traders are interested in exporting sugar again because of the premium price offered by the US.

“The US market is a premium market for raw sugar. [Currently], their buying price is high so our exporters want to ship sugar to the US,” Azcona said in a mix of English and Filipino.

“They volunteered to export. What they want [in return] is import replenishment,” he added.

Azcona noted that exporting sugar to the US under the tariff-rate quota (TRQ) scheme keeps prices stable, particularly when there is a supply glut.

“Usually, we export to the US to stabilize our local prices at a time when there is overproduction. This usually happens in January, February, and March or the peak of milling,” he said.

“Sugar production in those months is a lot more than what we consumer. So to prevent farmgate prices from falling, we export raw sugar,” he added.

The SRA chief said the Philippines would have wanted to ship sugar in the early part of the year but the notification of additional sugar quota from Washington arrived only last April.

The United States Trade Representative (USTR) announced last July 2023 that it will allow the Philippines to export 145,235 metric tons raw value of sugar to the US under TRQ. The scheme enables the Philippines to export the sweetener to the US at a lower tariff.

Azcona said, however, that the Philippines could not fill the initial quota granted by Washington.

The last time the Philippines exported raw sugar to the United States was during crop year 2020-2021. The country exported 112,008 metric tons commercial weight (MTCW) of raw sugar out of its total quota of 138,154 MTCW.

Image credits: [Bloomberg News](#)

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/12/phl-exporting-raw-sugar-again-to-the-us/>

PHL to gain from India rice export ban lifting

Reine Juvierre S. Alberto

July 12, 2024

THE easing of India's rice export restrictions will benefit the Philippines, possibly allowing it to start cutting interest rates by October, according to financial services group Nomura.

In its report, Nomura said the Philippines, a major importer of rice, will be the "biggest winner in Asia" when India, the world's top rice exporter, begins to ease its restrictions on rice exports.

"Easing inflation would further support our view that [the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP)] will start its easing cycle by October, although the risk of an earlier rate cut in August is rising, given recent comments by Governor Remolona that BSP does not have to wait for the Fed," Nomura underscored.

BSP Governor Eli M. Remolona Jr. said the reduction in rice tariffs to 15 percent from 35 percent due to Executive Order (EO) No. 62 fuels the optimism of monetary officials for a possible rate cut as early as August.

Remolona said the Monetary Board is now "less hawkish" or "more dovish" than before, as inflation is expected to slow to the midpoint of the 2 to 4 percent target range.

"When the price of rice goes down, it can have a significant second-round effects, especially because the price of rice is a salient price—an important price in the formation of inflation expectations," Remolona added.

The Monetary Board maintained the BSP's Target Reverse Repurchase (RRP) rate at 6.5 percent while interest rates on the overnight deposit and lending facilities will remain at 6 percent and 7 percent, respectively, during the last policy meeting on June 27.

Nomura said India's easing on rice exports is likely to materialize as expectations of good harvest, ample rice buffer stocks and softening of rice price inflation is seen.

This would lower global rice prices as India accounts for the 35 percent of rice exported globally. Asia, where rice is a staple food, will also benefit from the fall in rice prices.

The outlook for Asia's rice-producing countries Thailand and Vietnam is tempered due to dry weather conditions.

"We expect the process of easing of India's rice export restrictions to be gradual, with better crop prospects likely to cool local rice prices, in turn leading authorities to further ease restrictions, which should have favorable spillovers on global rice prices over time," Nomura said.

The Indian government is looking into allowing white rice shipments with a fixed duty and may also remove the 20-percent tax on parboiled rice exports and impose a fixed levy instead, according to a Bloomberg story.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/12/phl-to-gain-from-india-rice-export-ban-lifting/>

Expensive cocoa is about to hit chocolate makers

Bloomberg News

July 11, 2024

Cocoa processing likely slowed a bit last quarter, but a steeper slump is looming as chocolatiers start to really feel the pinch of pricey beans.

Despite an historic shortage sending cocoa prices to a record this year, that has yet to fully filter through to chocolate makers. That's because many of the beans that they've been grinding into the butter and powder used in confectionery were secured before the worst of the crunch took hold.

But as those inventories run low, processors will have to replenish supplies at higher prices—something that's expected to weigh on grindings in the second half of this year. A Nestle SA executive last month warned that as manufacturers pay more for beans, they'll inevitably have to pass the cost onto consumers, prompting shoppers to cut back on chocolate.

Second-quarter grindings globally probably fell from a year earlier, according to six analysts and traders surveyed by Bloomberg. Processing in top consumer Europe likely slipped 2 percent, the average estimate showed, which would mark a four-year low. All six expect a larger global decline in the second half.

“The cheap stuff is beginning to drop off, and the expensive stuff is coming in,” said Jonathan Parkman, head of agricultural sales at broker Marex Group. “The worst of input inflation will affect the second half of this year.”

European grinding data are due Thursday, and Asia and North America will report next week. While the numbers have long been used as a consumption guide, it has become harder to gauge how much they reflect demand amid worries tight supplies are distorting the figures.

New York cocoa futures hit an all-time high of more than \$11,000 a ton in April as poor West African harvests curbed output. Even after easing since then, they're still more than double what they were this time last year.

Bloomberg Intelligence said in April that higher cocoa prices will keep grindings subdued into next year. The crunch has already forced some processors to shutter factories in West Africa and elsewhere.

“We are more likely to see a significant change in the grind number in the second half of the year,” said Darren Stetzel, vice president of soft commodities for Asia at broker StoneX. He also said the market has been forced to adapt to the scarcity of beans, which should ease some demand pressure, and pointed to chocolate makers using substitutes such as palm oil.

In addition to grind data, traders will also keep a close eye on earnings reports from chocolate companies—such as Barry Callebaut AG's release due Thursday—for clues on supply and demand.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/11/expensive-cocoa-is-about-to-hit-chocolate-makers/>

Presyo ng gulay, kamatis bababa ngayong linggo - DA

[Angie dela Cruz](#)

July 12, 2024 | 12:00am



Vendors display their products such as vegetables, fish, meat, and fruits up for sale at a public market in Lingayen, Pangasinan on December 23, 2023, two days before Christmas.

MANILA, Philippines — Tiniyak ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na bababa na rin sa linggong ito ang presyo ng ilang mga gulay pati na ang kamatis sa mga palengke at pamilihan.

Kasunod ito nang pagsipa ng presyo ng ilang gulay sa pamilihan pati na ang kamatis na naglalaro sa P140-P220 ang kada kilo.

Tumaas din ang presyo ng carrots na nasa P100-P180, talong na umaabot sa hanggang P120 ang kada kilo, at bell pepper na naglalaro sa P200-P350.

Ayon kay DA Spokesperson Arnel de Mesa, ang pagsipa ng presyo ng mga gulay ay bunsod ng na-delay na harvest sa ilang sakahan na bunsod naman ng El Niño at epekto ng Bagyong Aghon.

Nakadagdag pa rito ang tumataas na presyo ng produktong petrolyo na dumaragdag sa transportation cost ng mga magsasaka.

Sa kabila nito, sinabi ni De Mesa na magsisimula na rin ang harvest sa Southern Tagalog Region na inaasahang manghahatak na rin pababa ng presyo ng gulay sa mga susunod na araw.

Tiniyak din nito na hindi pangmatagalan ang taas presyo sa gulay dahil bumababa rin ito oras na dumami na muli ang suplay.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2024/07/12/2369592/presyo-ng-gulay-kamatis-bababa-ngayong-linggo-da>