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MANILA BULLETIN:

BFAR: No cat, pig died from eating fish contaminated with red tide

BY

Jul 15, 2024 01:01 PM

By MARIE TONETTE MARTICIO

TACLOBAN CITY – The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources said that no cat or pig died from eating allegedly contaminated sardines or tamban in Santa Rita, Samar and this city.



BFAR personnel in Samar collect seawater for red tide testing. (BFAR-8)

Several cats and pigs were found dead and reported to have died from eating contaminated fish in the two areas recently. Pictures of these dead animals have been posted on social media.

Christine Gresola, BFAR-8 information officer, said that there is a local red tide warning in Cambatutay and Irong-irong Bays in Samar but the alleged food poisoning incident cannot be attributed to eating the fish.

“Based on laboratory results, the meat is negative from red tide although there is a local red tide warning in the seawater sample,” she said.

The BFAR-8 has advised the public to be mindful of the quality of the fish they buy at the market and local fish peddlers.

“If the fish you bought exhibits any signs of characteristics of spoilage, you are advised not to consume it or feed it to anyone, including animals, to ensure safety.”

The BFAR-8 said it is closely coordinating with the concerned local government unit (LGUs) through their municipal agriculture offices (MAOs) for further investigation about the presence of red tide.

The agency is also tapping their assistance for the possible collection of samples contaminated fish for histamine analysis.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/15/bfar-no-cat-pig-died-from-eating-fish-contaminated-with-red-tide>

MANILA BULLETIN:

ASF vaccines may be rolled out in Philippines by September—Laurel

BY

Jul 15, 2024 07:59 PM

By JEL SANTOS



Agriculture Secretary Francisco 'Kiko' Tiu Laurel Jr. (JEL SANTOS/ MANILA BULLETIN PHOTO)

The African swine fever (ASF) vaccines may be rolled out in the country by September this year, Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco "Kiko" Tiu Laurel Jr. said on Monday, July 15.

"With the procurement procedure sa (in) DA, baka September siguro [ma-roll out] (it may be rolled out by September)," he said during an interview with state-controlled PTV-4.

According to the DA chief, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently granted approval for government use of the vaccine for a six-month period.

"But for government use pa lang ito. Kasi basically, mino-monitor ito for six months ng government use, then after that, hopefully, kung pumasa na lahat at okay lahat, for commercial use na (But this is only for government use for now. Basically, it's being monitored for six months by the government, and then after that, hopefully, if everything passes and is okay, it will be available for commercial use)," said Laurel.

The agriculture department is optimistic that the availability of the vaccines will halt the spread of ASF in the country.

Laurel had earlier stated that the vaccine is effective.

“The vaccine from Vietnam really works. So, that solves our problem,” he said.

In April, President Marcos said they are targeting to roll out the vaccines for ASF in June or July this year.

During a town hall meeting in Occidental Mindoro, Marcos stated that the vaccines would be obtained from Vietnam.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/15/asf-vaccines-may-be-rolled-out-in-ph-by-september-laurel>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA wants visitorial powers to monitor rice warehouses

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

July 16, 2024 | 12:00am



Workers unload sacks of rice from a delivery truck along Dagupan Street in Tondo, Manila on January 22, 2024.

STAR / Ernie Penaredondo

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is pushing for the restoration of its powers to register, monitor and visit rice warehouses and retailers to boost its surveillance capacity and curb smuggling of the staple.

The DA is seeking to be given registration and monitoring functions of the local rice industry as part of the proposed amendments to the rice tariffication law (RTL).

Agriculture officials noted that such powers were stripped away from the National Food Authority (NFA) with the enactment of RTL in 2019.

But this time, the department wants the said powers instead of being given to the NFA.

Prior to the passage of RTL, the NFA oversaw the entire rice trade regime of the country, from the registration of grain retailers, monitoring of rice warehouses to accreditation of traders and importers.

Under its proposal, the DA is seeking a mandatory registration of all rice mills, grain warehouses, drying facilities, retail outlets and all other related establishments.

More so, the DA wants to have visitorial powers to inspect the registered establishments if they are compliant with existing food safety standards and regulations.

The heightened surveillance of the rice-related entities will also allow the department to collect and analyze pertinent data to rice that are not limited to supply, inventory and trading activities for its policy-making decisions.

Agriculture Undersecretary Asis Perez said the DA is currently “blind” in terms of the magnitude of the current rice industry post-RTL.

“We do not know how many rice mills we have or even who the rice retailers are. There is no list,” Perez said in a recent roundtable discussion organized by the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines Inc.

Perez pointed out that the powers that the DA is seeking is not meant to “police” the rice trade industry but to allow the department to effectively perform its regulatory functions in relation to food safety.

If Congress and President Marcos approved the proposal as part of the amendments to RTL, then it would allow the DA to effectively fulfill its mandate under the proposed Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said.

The proposed legislative measure repeals Republic Act 10845 or the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act and introduces severe penalties for smuggling, hoarding, profiteering and forming cartels of agricultural and fishery products.

“If we have the visitorial powers we will be able to see the level of (rice) supplies. If they import rice we will know where it went and where is also the local production being stored,” De Mesa said.

“We lack the data that supposedly we should have,” De Mesa added.

Under the proposed Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act, large-scale agricultural smuggling will be considered economic sabotage, which carries severe sanctions.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/07/16/2370376/da-wants-visitorial-powers-monitor-rice-warehouses>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Agriculture-fishery contribution still flat

economic

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

July 16, 2024 | 12:00am



Fishermen arrange their boats and nets along the shores of a beach in Binmaley, Pangasinan after fishing on February 1, 2024.

STAR / Cesar Ramirez

MANILA, Philippines — The economic contribution of the agriculture and fisheries sector would remain relatively flat this year as the country reels from extreme weather conditions and persisting pests and diseases, a unit of the University of Asia and Pacific (UA&P) said.

UA&P Center for Food and Agri Business (UA&P-CFA) projected that full-year gross value added (GVA) of the agriculture and fisheries sector may contract by 0.5 percent or grow by as much as 0.5 percent.

“This is generally lower than what the DA expects of one to two percent growth over 2024,” said UA&P-CFA executive director Senen Reyes in their recent mid-year food and agribusiness conference.

The GVA of the agriculture and fisheries sector last year grew by 1.2 percent.

Reyes noted that the anticipated onset of La Niña in the second half would impact crop production while livestock output continues to suffer from diseases such as African swine fever.

He pointed out that only the poultry sector would be the driving the industry in the second semester of the year.

Based on UA&P-CFA forecasts, crops subsector's GVA would grow by 0.3 percent in the second half while its full-year performance would be a contraction anywhere between 0.5 and 1.5 percent.

The livestock sub sector would decline in the second half by 1.3 percent, bringing its full-year contraction between 0.5 and 1.5 percent also.

The poultry industry is projected to rise by 4.5 percent and post a 4.5 to 5.5 percent full-year growth this year, according to UA&P-CFA estimates.

Lastly, fishery sectors would fall by one percent in the second half, resulting in a full-year decline of 1.5 to 2.5 percent.

“Ten years or so ago the (National Economic and Development Authority) said that for us to be able to truly address poverty alleviation, (agriculture and fisheries) have to grow by three to four percent,” Reyes said.

“We are over the past 10 years and we are nowhere near that figure of three to four percent. There is still a lot of work to do in terms of agriculture and fisheries,” Reyes added.

Nonetheless, the UA&P-CFA cited some of the growth drivers of the agriculture and fisheries sector in the coming years including the Department of Agriculture's three-year development program aimed at making farmers more productive and profitable.

“They target that the earnings of the rural workforce will be at par or comparable to white collar jobs. It is really a tall order but there are drivers so to speak for this plan,” Reyes said.

Other growth drivers include population and income growth, implementation of commodity roadmaps, retail sector expansion, improved weather conditions, food service industry growth and recovery of travel and tourism, according to Reyes.

“We look forward to the DA to really be able to implement and craft proper policies and programs for the betterment of farmers and fisherfolk and the entire supply chain in the food and agribusiness sector,” he said.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/07/16/2370379/agriculture-fishery-economic-contribution-still-flat>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Fast-track facilities to lessen La Niña impact – agriculture chief

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

July 16, 2024 | 12:00am



Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has directed the fast-tracking of construction of facilities necessary to minimize the impact of La Niña after the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) warned that the phenomenon is expected from this October to January 2025.

Arnel de Mesa, agriculture assistant secretary and spokesman, said at a press conference yesterday that Laurel wants the impounding projects and drying facilities to be completed before the expected La Niña.

“The construction of these projects is being hastened so that hopefully before La Niña comes in, many (impounding facilities and dryers) are already completed,” De Mesa said.

PAGASA has said there is a 70 percent chance of La Niña forming between August and October. La Niña is likely to persist until the first quarter of 2025.

“The priority of the secretary is to complete the post-harvest facilities, which include dryers, rice mills, cold storage and warehouses,” De Mesa said, adding that the National Food Authority (NFA) has a P10-billion budget for the construction of drying facilities.

PAGASA deputy administrator Marcelino Villafuerte has said that above normal rains in the last quarter of 2024, when the main harvest is expected, could adversely affect the agriculture sector.

“The regular and consistent advisory of PAGASA is very important so that the department, together with local government units, regional field offices, National Irrigation Administration, Bureau of Soils and Water Management, is forewarned,” De Mesa said.

“Our (main) harvest will start in September. It is better to hasten the harvest or advance it so that before November, it is almost complete,” he added.

De Mesa said the Department of Agriculture (DA) has at least P1 billion in Quick Response Fund that can be tapped to help farmers who will be affected by La Niña.

“Once the P1-billion QRF is used, the DA can request the Department of Budget and Management to replenish it. There were times that the total QRF reached P3 billion,” he added.

Flood deaths

Meanwhile, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council reported yesterday that two persons have died due to the southwest monsoon.

In its latest situation report, the NDRRMC said one of the two fatalities – a 47-year-old woman – was confirmed to have died in Kabacan, North Cotabato. Her body was found floating in Pulangi River. The other fatality, said to be from Davao region, is still being confirmed.

But the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) reported having already retrieved four bodies of persons reported as missing in last week’s flooding in many areas in Mindanao.

In a statement, the PCG District in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao reported helping the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council of BARMM in locating the whereabouts of four children and one elderly person in Barangay Pinantao, Matanog, Maguindanao.

In Zamboanga City, the PCG also assisted in rescuing more than 750 individuals affected by flooding last Sunday.

Commodore Marco Antonio Gines, PCG commander in BARMM, said the flooding was caused by heavy rains due to the monsoon, which also resulted in the grounding of 16 vessels in the region.

PAGASA said yesterday that the cloud cluster 485 kilometers east of Davao City has developed into a low-pressure area (LPA) and may further evolve into a tropical cyclone.

“Starting Tuesday and Wednesday, rains will persist in the Visayas and Mindanao and Southern Luzon. We are advising our fellow citizens living in (these areas) to expect a rainy week because of the LPA that may develop into a typhoon,” said PAGASA weather specialist Obet Badrina.

Badrina added that the LPA outside the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) has developed into a typhoon and is already in Vietnam.

“It is already in Vietnam and it is expected to make landfall. It has no name since it is outside PAR, but it is expected to enhance the southwest monsoon,” he noted.

According to Badrina, rains due to thunderstorms were experienced in Bulacan, Tanay, Rizal, Laguna and Quezon provinces as well as in other eastern portions of Southern Luzon.

“Bataan, Pampanga, Metro Manila, Batangas and Zambales will also experience rains, especially in the afternoon, because of thunderstorms,” Badrina added. — **Pia Lee-Brago, Evelyn Macairan**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/07/16/2370478/fast-track-facilities-lessen-lania-impact-agriculture-chief>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA: Local rice remains cheaper despite EO 62

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

July 16, 2024 | 12:00am



A vendor arranges his rice products for sale at a public market along M. Dela Fuente Street in Sampaloc, Manila on July 14, 2024.

STAR / Edd Gumban

MANILA, Philippines — The retail price of local rice remains cheaper compared to those of imported grains despite the implementation of Executive Order 62 on lower tariff on imported rice after the EO took effect on July 7, according to a ranking official of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

At a press conference yesterday, DA Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said the retail price of local well-milled rice was pegged at P45 per kilo compared to imported well-milled rice at P51 per kilo.

“The retail price of local rice is still lower. Before (EO 62) takes effect, let us give it some time that the imported rice is released and distributed,” De Mesa added.

EO 62 reduced the tariff on imported rice to 15 percent from 35 percent.

Based on the monitoring of the DA in Metro Manila markets, the retail price of local regular milled rice ranged between P45 and P50 per kilo; local well-milled rice,

between P48 and 55 per kilo; local premium rice, between P50 and P58 per kilo and local special rice, between P57 and P65 per kilo.

Imported regular milled rice price ranged between P46 and P51 per kilo; imported well-milled rice, between P51 and P55 per kilo; imported premium rice, between P52 and P60 and imported special rice, between P55 and P65 per kilo.

Amid this development, the National Food Authority (NFA) will continue to procure palay after farmers complained of a P5-per-kilo drop in its farmgate price because of EO 62, according to De Mesa.

“On the part of the department, we continue to buy palay from the farmers. The NFA procures palay at high price and, according to the secretary, the Council will adjust accordingly and we are seeking additional budget for the NFA for this purpose,” he added, referring to Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

Former DA secretary Leonardo Montemayor has warned of a further slump in the buying price of palay during the main harvest season in the last quarter of the year.

With the P5-per-kilo drop in the farmgate price of palay, farmers are suffering losses, according to Montemayor.

Farmers’ groups have asked the Supreme Court to issue a temporary restraining order against EO 62 as they asked that the order be declared unconstitutional.

Onion import ban extended

In another development, the temporary import ban on onions would be extended until the end of next month as current stocks remain ample to meet domestic demand, Tiu Laurel said yesterday.

The agriculture chief added that the DA would extend the import ban on a monthly basis based on the movement of supplies and demand in the market.

This is now the second extension of the import ban on red onion, which started in January.

Initially, the ban would have been lifted by May, but it was extended until this month due to bumper harvest in the first half of the year, resulting in overflowing stocks in cold storages.

“We are monitoring everything closely, day-to-day. As of the moment, we really do not need to import,” Tiu Laurel said.

The agriculture chief is cautious that the pronouncements on extending the import ban could encourage unscrupulous traders to slow down the release of their stocks from cold storage, thus jacking up market prices.

Tiu Laurel, however, warned unscrupulous onion traders who attempt to tighten the release of their stocks to make a killing, that he would not hesitate to allow onion imports to stabilize market prices.

The country usually imports the deficit in its onion production to meet overall demand and keep prices stable.

Cold storages are brimming with red onion stocks, holding over 150,000 metric tons (MT) as of July 5, based on the latest government monitoring report.

The supplies, all locally produced, are projected to last for 261 days or until March 23 next year.

Meanwhile, yellow onion stocks of about 10,600 MT would last for 72 days or until Sept. 15, according to the government report.

Combined red and yellow onion supplies will last for 223 days or until the middle of February next year.

Retail prices of locally produced red and yellow onions in Metro Manila markets have been stable since the start of the year.

Red onion prices range from P80 per kilo to P150 per kilo, while yellow onions fetch P80 per kilo to P130 per kilo, based on the latest DA price monitoring report. —

Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/07/16/2370491/da-local-rice-remains-cheaper-despite-eo-62>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DOF defends utilization of PhilHealth P89.9 billion funds

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

July 16, 2024 | 12:00am



Health advocates and budget watchdogs are pushing for a probe of the DOF's directive to the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) to remit unused subsidies worth P89.9 billion to the Bureau of the Treasury.

Businessworld / File

MANILA, Philippines — Utilizing excess funds of state-run corporations is a more prudent fiscal option for the government than borrowing, the Department of Finance (DOF) said in defense of its move to ask agencies to remit unused subsidies.

Health advocates and budget watchdogs are pushing for a probe of the DOF's directive to the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) to remit unused subsidies worth P89.9 billion to the Bureau of the Treasury.

In a statement, Finance Secretary Ralph Recto said the government cannot afford to let government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs) have excess money and just keep it idle, as such funds could be used instead for public investment.

“Hibernating funds can help the nation without harming government corporations. This way, the government does not have to inflict additional taxes, increase our debt and put pressure on our deficit,” Recto said.

Recto argued that such a move will not affect the viability of PhilHealth or impair its delivery of services.

Even with the remittance contribution, Recto said PhilHealth is left with a P500-billion benefit chest, which can fund multiple-year claims.

“Remittances to fund urgent national projects do not come from their member contributions but from a fraction of billions in unutilized national government subsidies,” Recto said.

Based on the DOF circular, guidelines have been issued to implement the collection of unprogrammed appropriations which are sourced from balances of GOCCs.

Unprogrammed appropriations provide standby authority to incur additional agency obligations for priority programs or projects when revenue collection exceeds targets or when additional grants or foreign funds are generated.

The DOF maintained that the move complies with all laws, specifically the General Appropriations Act of 2024, which imposed appropriations in excess of what the executive branch had originally proposed.

In the case of PhilHealth, Recto said unused government subsidies are not part of its reserve funds, nor can be considered income that is being restricted by the Universal Health Care Act to be used by the national government as a general fund.

He noted that this was made in observance of legal measures spelled out by the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel.

The return of unused and excess funds was likewise approved by the PhilHealth’s board.

Latest data from the Department of Budget and Management showed that the government recorded P175.02 billion in other releases as of June, 79 percent or P138.55 billion of which went to unprogrammed appropriations.

Of the unprogrammed funds, P105.66 billion was earmarked to support the foreign-assisted projects of the departments of Agriculture, Finance, Health, Public Works and Highways, Social Welfare and Development, Labor and Employment and Transportation.

These include the Metro Manila Subway project, the North-South Commuter Railway System and the PNR South Long Haul Project, among other big-ticket infrastructure projects.

Also covered are the Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling project and the Philippine Fisheries and Coastal Resiliency project.

Other programs that the government has committed to meet are the Philippine Multi-Sectoral Nutrition project, Supporting Innovation in the Philippine Technical and Vocational Education and Training System, the Mindanao Inclusive Agriculture Development project and the Philippine Rural Development Project.

They will also be utilized to support the community-based monitoring system of the Philippine Statistics Authority and the Comprehensive Automotive Resurgence Strategy program of the Department of Trade and Industry.

Another P10.77 billion served as the government counterpart for foreign-assisted projects of the DPWH. There was also a P10.16-billion budgetary support for state-run firms, particularly the National Food Authority and the Light Rail Transit Authority.

Some P6 billion was released to DPWH for the maintenance, repair and rehabilitation of infrastructure facilities of national roads, P2.84 billion for its Panay-Guimaras-Negros Island Bridges project and P1.68 billion for its right-of-way payments.

The remaining P1.44 billion was for the National Economic and Development Authority's infrastructure assistance.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/07/16/2370499/dof-defends-utilization-philhealth-p899-billion-funds>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

One glass at a time: MVP contributes to milk sufficiency

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

July 16, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — One step toward food sufficiency. This is how Manuel V. Pangilinan describes his ventures and investments in the agriculture sector.

Two years ago, Pangilinan, popularly known as MVP, said the country must aim for “substantial” independence in food.

“We must feed our people first,” he said in 2022.

And true to his words, his investment arm - the Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC) - bought a 51 percent stake in The Laguna Creamery Inc. from the Carmen’s Best Group for nearly P200 million.

In that same year, the MVP group partnered with Israel’s LR Group Ltd. to put up the Metro Pacific Dairy Farms (MPDF) through a 60:40 sharing in favor of the Metro Pacific Group.

The joint venture worth P2 billion aims to put up an integrated dairy farm and processing facility in Bay, Laguna.

The partnership with the Israeli firm did not come as a surprise since Israel is considered to have one of the most advanced dairy productions in the world, producing around 1.6 billion liters of milk per year.

But the twin investments by MVP made shockwaves not just in the dairy industry but in the agriculture sector as a whole.

Why? Dairy is one of, if not the least produced agricultural commodity in the country.

The Philippines imports about 99 percent of its dairy requirements. The country consumes about three million metric tons of dairy products. And local production is only around 28,000 metric tons.

And this fact alone keeps Pangilinan optimistic in his dairy ventures.

“We import more than 90 percent of our dairy products. It is an import substitution and I hope we can get a substantial portion of this import situation,” he said in a recent interview.

“But it will take time because we are really way behind,” he added.

Metro Pacific Agro Ventures, a subsidiary of MPIC, hopes to grow the revenue of its dairy business to P500 million by 2025 and P1 billion by 2027.

Earlier this year, Pangilinan and Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. met to discuss the former’s investments in the agriculture sector that are aimed at contributing to the country’s food security.

And one of the highlights of the meeting was the investments being poured by the MVP group in the dairy industry.

No less than MVP revealed that his investments in the sector are continuing. First, he will buy out Bukidnon Milk Co. to raise the dairy supply for his ice cream venture.

“Sales of our ice cream products have been growing exponentially and we are slowly running out of milk supply from our dairy farm in Bay, Laguna,” Pangilinan said.

“We are buying another dairy farm in Bukidnon to supplement the supply. Maybe we could ship some of the milk to Manila because we want to expand our fresh milk supply and we want to get into yogurt and cheeses,” he added.

Sources privy to the buyout told The STAR that the transaction is estimated to cost at least P700 million. This would make it larger than Pangilinan’s P198 million acquisition of a majority stake in The Laguna Creamery in 2022.

MVP is also planning to buy another dairy farm in Luzon. The transaction is still under discussion.

Nonetheless, he hopes that both deals will be done within the year.

“So we can have a good supply and develop our distributors and supply chain.”

For Ceferino Rodolfo, the managing head of the Board of Investments (BOI), investments made by tycoons like Pangilinan boost the confidence of prospective investors that the country’s agriculture sector is a viable business venture.

Rodolfo noted the dairy venture of Pangilinan, saying that it has a positive ripple effect in the value chain. For example, he cited the need for more silage production to serve as feedstock of the dairy cows.

The BOI approved earlier the application for registration of MPDF, resulting in the project being entitled to various fiscal and non-fiscal incentives.

The national government aims to boost the country’s milk sufficiency to five percent by 2028.

And toward this goal, Pangilinan contributes one glass of milk or one scoop of ice cream at a time.

<https://www.philstar.com/lifestyle/2024/07/16/2370553/one-glass-time-mvp-contributes-milk-sufficiency>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

DA again extends ban on onion imports

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:10 AM July 16, 2024



Grig C. Montegrande

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) has again extended the temporary ban on onion imports, moving it to the end of August as the country has enough supply to meet demand.

“We’re monitoring everything closely [on a] day-to-day [basis]. As of the moment, it is not necessary to import onions,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said in an interview on Monday. “I guess we would be extending [the import ban] on a monthly basis.”

The DA first enforced a ban in January to prevent a further drop in retail prices due to a supply glut after shipments of imported onions arrived late, coinciding with harvest time.

Before Tiu Laurel announced the extension, the moratorium was initially set to end in May but it was extended to July.

He issued a warning to “unscrupulous” traders who might take advantage of the situation to withhold stocks to create an artificial shortage to jack up prices.

“Just a warning: we will import onions if they tighten the release of their supplies to stabilize retail prices,” he said.

Tiu Laurel had said the DA would activate any plans to import onions only when necessary.

Based on the Bureau of Plant Industry’s estimate, the domestic supply of white onions would be enough to cover demand through the early fourth quarter while the harvest of red onions would be good until the initial months of 2025.

Government data showed that the country has 163,503.67 metric tons of fresh red and yellow onions.

As of Friday, local red onions sold from P80 to P150 per kilogram, lower than the P150 to P180 per kg around the same period last year, based on the DA’s price monitoring of Metro Manila markets.

Local white onions ranged from P60 to P130 per kg, also lower than last year’s P120 to P170 per kg.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1961260/da-again-extends-ban-on-onion-imports>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

ASF vaccine ready for government use by September – DA

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

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 02:50 AM July 16, 2024



DA Sec. Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. —Niño Jesus Orbeta

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Monday announced that it would roll out African Swine Fever (ASF) vaccines by September—but it would only be for government use first.

DA Secretary Francisco Laurel made the pronouncement after the Food and Drug Administration has already approved the use of the ASF vaccine.

“The DA [now] has to bid it out. So, hopefully ... by September ay ma-rollout na iyon at ma-vaccinate na iyong growers ng ating mga backyard (it will be rolled out and those growers in our backyards will be vaccinated),” he said in a public briefing.

According to Laurel, however, the said process limiting it to government use would take at least six months before proceeding to commercial rollout.

“But this is only for government use. Because basically, it will first be monitored for six months by the government,” said Laurel.

“After that, hopefully, if everything passed and everything is okay, it will be for commercial use,” he added.

Laurel previously said that the availability of the vaccine will be able to address the spread of ASF in the country.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1961342/asf-vaccine-ready-for-government-use-by-september-da>

Red onion import ban extended to August

July 15, 2024 | 9:03 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/WALTER BOLLOZOS

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said that it will extend the ban on red onion imports following the buildup of ample supply in storage facilities.

“As of the moment we do not need to import onions yet... for now until August,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. told reporters on Monday.

Mr. Laurel added that the Agriculture department will review onion import policy monthly.

The national onion inventory was 163,503 metric tons (MT) as of July 5. Monthly consumption of red onion is 17,000 MT, while white onion consumption is estimated at 4,000 MT, according to the Bureau of Plant Industry.

The DA has said that the current volume of red onion is sufficient to meet demand for about eight months, or until February.

He said that an extended import ban may be exploited by traders to manipulate supply and cause prices to rise.

“*Ang nakakatakot dyan* (What I worry about) is that if we announce an extension, traders might restrict the release of stocks,” he said.

According to DA price monitors in the National Capital Region, a kilogram of red onions sold for between P80 and P150, as of July 12.

Mr. Laurel warned that if traders attempt to manipulate the onion supply, the DA will respond with onion imports to stabilize prices.

The DA initially banned onion imports until the end of July due to increased domestic production.

During the first quarter, onion production was 201.25 thousand MT, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority, up 36.8% from a year earlier.

The DA attributed the production gains during the period to a 40% increase in the land planted to onion. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/15/608225/red-onion-import-ban-extended-to-august/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Exporters see weak agriculture, tensions with China as drags to growth

July 15, 2024 | 9:02 pm



PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD PHOTO

EXPORTERS said a weak agriculture sector and tensions with China are serving as a drag on export performance, alongside high-power prices.

The Philippine Exporters Confederation, Inc. (Philexport) said the year began on a positive note, but a slowdown gradually set in.

“During the beginning of the year, (exporters) were very enthusiastic. They raised their targets, but towards the end of the year, they have had to catch up on orders and deliveries. When the first quarter came, things sort of tapered off,” Philexport President Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis, Jr. told reporters on the sidelines of an event.

Exports in March declined 7.3% to \$6.13 billion, from a year earlier the weakest reading since the 13% contraction in November.

In the first quarter, exports rose 4.8% to \$17.98 billion, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported.

“Slowly but surely, (exports) will increase, but not to the level that we would like to be,” Mr. Ortiz-Luis said, noting that investors are deterred by issues with agriculture as well as the South China Sea dispute.

When asked if the Philippines can still hit its P143.4-billion export target under the Philippine Export Development Plan (PEDP), he said: “Not in the original time frame. It will take quite a while.”

Mr. Ortiz-Luis has said the Philippines may hit its export target in three years.

Under the Philippine Development Plan, exports are expected to hit \$107 billion this year, with \$61.58 billion in merchandise exports and \$45.42 billion in services exports.

Last year, Philippine exports amounted to \$103.6 billion, below the \$126.8-billion goal set in the PEDP. It also failed to hit the 5% growth target set by the Department of Trade and Industry last year. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/15/608223/exporters-see-weak-agriculture-tensions-with-china-as-drags-to-growth/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

La Niña expected late in rice, corn harvest, minimizing crop damage

July 15, 2024 | 9:01 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/MIGUEL DE GUZMAN

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said most of the rice and corn crop will have been harvested by the time La Niña sets in by October.

“By that time, many parts of the country will have harvested their rice and corn,” Assistant Secretary and Spokesman Arnel V. de Mesa said in a briefing on Monday.

He added that the DA is advising rice and corn farmers to harvest early to minimize damage to their crops.

Last week, the government weather service, known as PAGASA (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration) said that there was a 70% chance La Niña will set in by October.

The Agriculture department is projecting palay (unmilled rice) production of 20.44 million MT this year.

“We are continually preparing (for La Niña) in our regional offices and here at the central office,” Mr. De Mesa said.

He added that the DA is fast-tracking the construction of drying, post-harvest, and water impounding facilities.

“We are also on standby with our Quick Response Fund, credit, and buffer stock of seed. These are the immediate measures that farmers can get from the DA,” he said.

Mr. De Mesa added that the department has also stocked fertilizer for handing out to calamity-hit farmers. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/15/608220/la-nina-expected-late-in-rice-corn-harvest-minimizing-crop-damage/>

REMATE:

Roll out sa ASF vax target ng DA sa Setyembre

July 15, 2024 17:07



MANILA, Philippines – Sinabi ng Department of Agriculture (DA) nitong Lunes, Hulyo 15 na target nitong iroll-out ang bakuna laban sa African swine fever (ASF) sa Setyembre ngunit lilimitahan lamang ng pamahalaan ang paggamit ito sa loob ng anim na buwan.

Kamakailan ay inaprubahan ng Food and Drug Administration ang paggamit ng ASF vaccine mula sa Vietnam.

“DA has to bid it out kasi yung bureaucracy ‘yung kalaban ko dito. Sana by September ma-roll out na at ma-vaccinate yung mga growers ng ating mga backyard,” pagbabahagi ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel.

“But for government use pa lang ito kasi basically mino-monitor for 6 months ng government use then after that hopefully kung pumasa na lahat at okay na lahat for commercial use na,” dagdag pa niya.

Nauna nang nagpahayag ng kumpiyansa ang DA chief tungkol sa efficacy ng ASF vaccines.

“The vaccine from Vietnam really works. So, that solves our problem,” ani Laurel.

Noong Marso, sinabi ng DA na ang hog mortality rate sa Pilipinas dahil sa ASF ay nasa halos 100%.

Dahil dito ay naapektuhan ang suplay ng karneng baboy sa Pilipinas. *RNT/JGC*

<https://remate.ph/roll-out-sa-asf-vax-target-ng-da-sa-setyembre/>

ABANTE:

Bakuna kontra ASF ilalarga ng agri

- Abante News
- July 15, 2024



Target ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na masimulan sa Setyembre ang paggamit ng bakuna laban sa African Swine Fever (ASF) subalit magiging limitado lamang ito sa loob ng anim na buwan.

Sa pre-SONA report ni Department of Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., sinabi nitong ang go-byerno lamang ang gagamit muna sa bakuna kontra ASF upang i-monitor kung papasa ito para sa commercial use.

Aminado si Tiu Laurel na hindi agad-agad mailalarga ang pagbabakuna dahil maraming pagdadaanang proseso sa bukrasya kaya umaasa siyang maipapatupad ito hanggang September.

“DA has to bid it out no, so hopefully, you know, bureaucracy ang kalaban ko dito eh. So sana by September ay ma-roll out na iyon at ma-vaccinate na iyong growers ng ating mga backyard,” ani Tiu Laurel.

Nagbigay na aniya ng go signal ang Food and Drug Administration para gamitin ng gobyerno ang ba-kuna sa mga baboy.

Ang bakuna ayon sa kalihim ay manggagaling sa Vietnam at umaasa siyang magiging mabisa ito upang malutas na ang problema sa ASF.

Batay sa record ng DA noong Marso, umakyat sa 100 percent ang mortality rate ng mga alagang baboy sa bansa dahil sa ASF. (Aileen Taliping)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/07/15/bakuna-kontra-asf-ilalarga-ng-agri/>

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL:

Mayor Honey leads 5,000 barangay tanods in thanking PBBM for his Kadiwa Project

Monday, July 15, 2024 Itchie G. Cabayan



Vice Mayor Yul Servo takes a selfie with (second from left) Mayor Honey Lacuna, (right) MDSW chief Re Fugoso and (third from left) Congressman Irwin Tieng, among others, at the distribution of the monetary assistance from the "Kadiwa ng Pangulong Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, Jr.," at the San Andres Sports Complex. (JERRY S. TAN)

“Maraming-maraming salamat Pangulong Bongbong Marcos, Jr.!!!”

Thus, Manila Mayor Honey Lacuna led city officials and the 5,000 barangay tanods from District 5 in thanking President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. altogether, for the consistent inclusion of Manila in its programs.

The said barangay tanods were named recipients in the distribution of monetary assistance from the “Kadiwa ng Pangulong Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos, Jr.,” which was carried out in coordination with the city government of Manila through the office of Mayor Lacuna.

The mayor was joined by Vice Mayor Yul Servo, Congressman Irwin Tieng (5th district), Manila department of social welfare chief Re Fugoso and city councilors in the distribution of the said cash aid to the barangay tanods which was held at the San Andres Sports Complex.

In her short message, Lacuna led all those present to express gratitude to President Marcos, Jr. for always keeping the city of Manila in mind, whenever there is an opportunity to hand out benefits. Each of the barangay tanods received P2,000 each.



Mayor Honey Lacuna with (right) Vice Mayor Yul Servo and (Lacuna's right) Congressman Irwin Tieng at the distribution of the monetary assistance from the "Kadiwa ng Pangulong Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, Jr.," done in coordination with the city government of Manila through the office of the mayor. (JERRY S. TAN)

Lacuna shared that when Fugoso brought the good news to her that the national government is planning to download some funds to the city of Manila, she immediately thought of the barangay tanods, whom she said need the aid the most.

"Ang sabi ko, bigyan naman natin ang mga tanod kasi parang kayo ang di masyadong napapansin, kaya naman talagang ginawan namin ng paraan sa tulong ng barangay bureau at MDSW. Sabi ko, pasayahin naman natin ang tanod ng buong Maynila," the mayor said.

She also broke the good news that the said aid from President Marcos, Jr. will not be the last.

Before the distribution of the said funds, Lacuna expressed her profound gratitude to the barangay tanods, thus: "salamat sa mga taong araw-araw natulong sa barangay."

Servo and Tieng echoed the mayor's pronouncements as they also praised President Marcos for the help to the city and the barangay tanods for their dedication to service.

According to Servo, Manila is grateful to President Marcos, Jr. for always including in Manila in its projects.

Tieng also vowed to do everything within his means as a member of Congress to help the city government get whatever possible aid it can from the national government.

<https://journal.com.ph/mayor-honey-leads-5000-barangay-tanods-in-thanking-pbbm-for-his-kadiwa-project/>

DA extends import ban on onions until August

By Othel V. Campos

July 15, 2024, 11:55 pm

The Department of Agriculture (DA) announced on Monday an extension of the ban on onion imports until August, with potential for further extensions depending on domestic supply.

DA Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. said that current domestic onion production is sufficient, eliminating the need for imports in the meantime. “There’s no need to import onions. For now, until August,” the DA chief said in an ambush interview.

“We’re monitoring everything closely. As of the moment, we don’t need to import onions. But we will extend the ban monthly, for now until August,” he said.

The agency will conduct a day-to-day monitoring, the official added.

Tiu Laurel warned traders not to engage in hoarding, emphasizing that imports will be allowed if artificial shortages are detected.

“There may be unscrupulous traders or businessmen out there who will tighten their release of stocks,” Tiu Laurel said.

The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) projects that domestic onion supply will meet demand through early 2025, ensuring market stability.

According to July 12 data of the DA’s Bantay Presyo, red onion sells for P80 to P150 a kilo while white onions are sold starting from P60 to P130 a kilo.

The year 2024 has seen a 40 percent increase in onion planting areas, with Central Luzon being a major contributor. Monthly consumption estimates are at 4,000 metric tons for white onions and 17,000 metric tons for red onions.

The DA remains committed to monitoring the onion market closely and implementing measures to maintain price stability and protect both consumers and farmers.

The existing import ban is set to expire by the end of July.

As of July 5, the country has 152,839.25 metric tons (MT) of red onions, 10,601.42 MT of yellow onions, and 63 MT of shallots, according to the DA. The country's onion inventory may last eight months or until February 2025.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314472018/da-extends-import-ban-on-onions-until-august.html>

Iloilo swine industry recovers from ASF

By Rjay Zuriaga Castor

July 16, 2024

ILOILO CITY — The Provincial Veterinary Office (PVO) said the swine industry of Iloilo has rebounded nearly two years since it recorded its first case of African swine fever (ASF).

"In terms of inventory, we are gradually recovering and increasing. We have also observed that the prices of swine or pork products in the market are slowly decreasing," said PVO head Daryl Tabuada.

Tabuada said that the province currently has over 100,000 pork heads and noted that commercial farms have resumed hog farming.

The PVO also reported that swine sufficiency level also climbed from 30 percent last year to 71 percent as of June 2024.

Tabuada is optimistic about further improvements once local government units (LGUs) implement the sentinel program, the government's science-based approach to increasing hog production and stabilizing pork supply and prices.

"We are confident that a large volume of the swine that our farmers will cultivate once we start the sentinel program will survive if the ASF will hit us again," he said.

The provincial government has allocated a P10.032 million budget for the sentinel program.

Of the province's 43 towns, 884 backyard hog raisers from 14 towns are eligible for the swine repopulation program, having been upgraded from red zone to pink zone status by the Department of Agriculture Bureau of Animal Industry for ASF.

The towns include San Miguel, Barotac Viejo, New Lucena, Santa Barbara, Mina, Dingle, Concepcion, Batad, Banate, Oton, Janiuay, Leganes, Zarraga and Lambunao.

Tabuada said the sentinelling program will start as soon as the LGUs have complied with the necessary requirements before the provincial government can download the funds to their accounts.

"We are targeting to transfer the funds to the LGUs as soon as possible, but we cannot control the documents in the accounting department. That is why our LGUs are encouraged to comply, especially with the checklist and list of beneficiaries," he said.

While the province is recovering, the PVO head stressed the importance of strengthening biosecurity measures among hog farmers.

"The virus of the ASF is resilient. It can stay in for 1,000 days in frozen meat. The only way to prevent it is to enhance farm biosecurity. We have to accept the fact that the ASF is just around," he added.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/16/regions/iloilo-swine-industry-recovers-from-asf/1957544>

Onion import ban extended to August

By Janine Alexis Miguel

July 16, 2024

AN onion import ban set to expire this month will be extended to August given more than adequate domestic supply, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Monday.

"As of the moment, we don't need to import onions," Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said, adding that "we will extend the ban on a monthly basis ... for now until August."

The ban, which Tiu Laurel announced in January to prevent a drop in prices due to a supply glut, was originally scheduled to end in May. Tiu Laurel, who had raised the likelihood of an extension to July, followed through and said imports would be done "only if necessary."

The DA chief said the situation would be monitored on a day-to-day basis and warned traders against taking advantage of the situation by delaying stock releases.

"If that happens, we will immediately allow importation to stabilize prices," the agriculture chief said.

As of July 5, the country had 152,839.25 metric tons (MT) of red onions, 10,601.42 MT of yellow onions, and 63 MT of shallots, according to the DA.

The country's onion inventory was said to be enough for eight months or until February 2025.

Price monitoring by the DA showed that as of July 12, red onions were being sold at P80 a kilo while white onions were priced at P60 a kilo.

Prices had risen to around P700 per kilo in late 2022 and early 2023 due to insufficient domestic supply and delayed imports.

This year, the area planted with onion was said to have increased around 40 percent, with the major producing region of Central Luzon accounting for 10,388 hectares.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/16/business/top-business/onion-import-ban-extended-to-august/1957607>

Palay output likely fell in Q2 – PSA

By Janine Alexis Miguel

July 16, 2024

THE country's palay (unmilled) output for the second quarter is projected to have declined by 8.6 percent compared to the same period last year, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said.

Latest data from the government estimated that palay production during the April-June period could have hit 3.88 million metric tons (MT), down from the 4.25 million MT harvested in the same period in 2023.

As of June 1, 2024, the revised estimate for palay production during the quarter indicated a 0.6-percent decrease from the initial estimate of 3.9 million MT on April 1, 2024.

The palay harvest area, meanwhile, was estimated to have gone down by 7.2 percent to 891,770 hectares (ha) in the second quarter from 960,870 ha of actual harvested area last year. There was also a decrease in yield per ha.

"Based on standing crop for the period April to June 2024, the yield per hectare of palay may decrease to 4.36 metric tons (MT) or by 1.4 percent from the previous year's same period yield per hectare of 4.42 MT," the PSA said.

As of the beginning of June, about 771,900 ha of rice land have been harvested that is equivalent to 86.6 percent of the total harvested area, translating to a palay output of 3.16 million MT.

Of the remaining 119,870 ha to be harvested, the statistics agency said that 98.6 percent were at the maturing stage and 1.4 percent at the reproductive stage.

The country's rice stocks, meanwhile, increased annually by 19.0 percent as of the beginning of June.

PSA data showed that local rice inventory during the month was estimated at 2.16 million MT, up from 1.82 million MT logged in the same period of 2023.

On a monthly basis, rice stocks also went up by 4.2 percent compared to the previous month's inventory of 2.08 million MT.

Rice stocks held by the National Food Authority (NFA) and the commercial sector both registered annual growths of 62.5 percent and 56.7 percent, respectively.

The inventory held by the NFA was higher at 138,270 MT compared to the 85,100 MT recorded in 2023. Stocks in the commercial sector also increased to 1.38 million MT, up from last year's 848,110 MT.

Household stocks registered an annual decrease of 21.3 percent compared to the volume logged in the same month last year. The sector recorded 696,550 MT of rice stocks during the period, a decrease from June 2023's 884,990 MT.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/16/business/top-business/palay-output-likely-fell-in-q2-psa/1957601>

Ban on onion imports extended

By **Jed Macapagal**

July 16, 2024

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has extended the ban on the importation of onions until August.

“We’re monitoring everything closely. As of the moment, we don’t need to import onions.

But we will extend the ban on a monthly basis... for now until August,” said DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

The ban initially took effect in May but was extended until July.

Tiu Laurel does not want a longer extension as unscrupulous traders might take advantage of the ban to withhold stocks and create artificial shortage that would send prices of onion soaring.

“If that happens, we will immediately allow importation to stabilize prices,” Tiu Laurel said.

The Bureau of Plant Industry said current domestic supply of white onions is sufficient until early fourth quarter while the harvest of red onions is expected to be enough through the initial months of 2025.

Monthly consumption of white onion is estimated at 4,000 metric tons (MT) while of red onion is at 17,000 MT.

The DA said area planted to onion increased to around 40 percent this year with major producing region Central Luzon accounting for 10,388 hectares.

Based on the DA’s monitoring of public markets in the National Capital Region as of Friday, the price of local red onions is at P80 to P150 per kg and local white onions at P60 to P130 per kg.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/ban-on-onion-imports-extended/

Nationwide price monitoring

Nonie Reyes

July 15, 2024



A vendor at Las Piñas Public Market arranges the rice display at his stall, with each type of rice tagged at a different price per kilo.

The government has launched a nationwide price monitoring program to assess the effects of the reduced tariff on rice. This program will cover retail markets, grocery stores, and wet markets.

Image credits: Nonie Reyes

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/15/nationwide-price-monitoring/>

DOJ opinion on tobacco industry donations to DSWD disappoints groups

Claudeth Mocon-Ciriaco
July 15, 2024

CIVIL society organizations and former senior government officials are disappointed by the Department of Justice's (DOJ) opinion that tobacco industry donations to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and other government agencies are "acceptable."

The groups raised concern after the DOJ, in an opinion dated June 6, 2024, said that the Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) issued by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the Department of Health (DOH), prohibiting unnecessary interactions with the tobacco industry, only applied to individual government officials and not government institutions.

A former Secretary of Health, Dr. Esperanza Cabral, said the opinion "detracts from the Philippines' national and international commitments."

"This is against civil service rules and Articles 5.3 and 13 of the WHO FCTC [World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control]," said Cabral.

"Based on our international commitments and our own JMC, we should ban all forms of tobacco sponsorships and protecting against tobacco industry interference," she added.

"The tobacco industry does its fake CSR [corporate social responsibility] to buy goodwill, so that government officials will favor them when crafting and implementing tobacco control policies. Who wins then: public health or the industry?" asked Dr. Ulysses Dorotheo, executive director of the Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance.

"We have to be careful not to open doors for the tobacco industry to corrupt our bureaucracy," Dorotheo added.

Former Health Undersecretary Madeleine Valera, meanwhile said, tobacco products are harmful, that's why "it's inappropriate for government agencies to receive donations from harmful industries when the donations may influence how such harmful industries are regulated."

They reiterated that DOJ's opinion is not only being incorrect and impractical, but in violation of the government's obligations under the WHO FCTC, which no less than the Supreme Court has recognized as part of the law of the land.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/15/doj-opinion-on-tobacco-industry-donations-to-dswd-disappoints-groups/>

Govt details strategy for boosting farmers' income, agri productivity

Jovee Marie N. de la Cruz
July 15, 2024

The administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. is steadfast in its commitment to enhancing farmers' income and bolstering agricultural productivity, the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) said.

In a Palace statement over the weekend, NIA Administrator Eduardo Guillen said these objectives can be achieved through a "holistic approach" across various government agencies.

"We are leveraging the transformation of irrigators' associations (IAs) into cooperatives to facilitate more efficient distribution of interventions to farmers nationwide," Guillen said.

"Now, we are organizing our IAs, our farmers, into cooperatives. This is in line with the directive of our President that our farmers should capture the whole value chain of rice production. Their earnings should not solely depend on the time they sell palay."

Guillen said NIA is collaborating closely with other agencies such as the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PHilMech), the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC), and the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) to improve service delivery and program implementation for farmers.

He said they are eyeing the provision of a new rice processing system to be operated by a farmers' cooperative formed from the irrigators' association.

He said this would address a long-standing issue in the agricultural sector where farmers' incomes are calculated based on the sale of unprocessed palay.

New dam

Meanwhile, Marcos is set to inaugurate a dam and a rice processing system in Ilocos Norte next week, according to the NIA official.

The Ilocos Norte rice processing system aims to lower the price of rice without sacrificing farmers' earnings, added Guillen in a separate Palace statement.

“On July 19, our president will inaugurate a dam in Ilocos Norte,” he said.

“This initiative is key to achieving the goal of reducing rice prices without sacrificing farmers' income. Lowering rice prices often means compromising farmers' earnings.”

The rice processing system, Guillen noted, is run by a farmers' cooperative composed of members of the irrigators' association.

Guillen said the traditional method of assessing farmers' earnings based solely on the sale of palay (unhusked rice) was flawed and needed revision.

He said an investment of P50,000 in hybrid rice typically yields around eight tons per hectare from irrigated fields, saying this efficient production process reduces the production cost of palay to approximately P10 per kilogram.

“For instance, with hybrid rice, we see an investment of P50,000 yielding eight tons on average from irrigated fields. This brings the production cost of palay to just P10 per kilo. Doubling that to give farmers a 100 percent income means the production cost of rice is around P20 per kilo.”

Guillen proposed a strategy to further enhance farmers' earnings: empowering them to process and sell rice directly.

“How do you increase their earnings? If farmers process and sell the rice themselves at P40 per kilo, they capture an additional P20 of value. This is the added value the President wants to capture.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/15/govt-details-strategy-for-boosting-farmers-income-agri-productivity/>

PHL rice imports seen touching new record despite high prices

Ada Pelonia
July 15, 2024

The country's rice imports will reach a new record this year despite the spike in international quotations, according to a report published by the United States Department of Agriculture (DA).

The USDA said in its latest report that the Philippines's imported rice purchases will hit 4.7 million metric tons (MMT) or 1 MMT higher than the 3.61 MMT it imported last year.

The agency had adjusted upwards its rice imports forecast for the Philippines this year from the initial 4.6 MMT.

"Total imports are estimated higher on increases for Malaysia, the Philippines, and Cameroon," the USDA report read.

It also noted that the Philippines imported some 2.3 MMT of rice in the first five months of the year.

"Vietnam, the largest supplier historically, has exported 1.8 million tons during this period. Due to rising global prices and tighter exportable supplies in Vietnam, the Philippines has shifted some purchases to other suppliers."

Meanwhile, the report said the country's increased level of imports resulted in "closer connectivity" between international and Philippine rice prices.

"Although the Philippines does not import from India, India's ban on regular milled rice exports last year had secondary impacts."

The USDA noted that as India's exports of this type of rice diminished, demand shifted to other suppliers, such as Vietnam and Thailand, pushing up their export prices.

“Buyers in the Philippines chose to pay these elevated prices from Southeast Asian suppliers, which resulted in higher retail prices in the Philippines.”

Data from the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) revealed that the country’s imported rice arrivals breached 2.3 MMT in the first semester, 24 percent higher than last year’s 1.86 MMT.

Lower output

Based on the Philippine Statistics Authority’s (PSA) survey of standing crops, the country’s paddy rice output likely dropped by 8.6 percent to 3.88 MMT in the second quarter from the previous year’s actual output of 4.25 MMT, as El Niño wreaked havoc on farmlands.

The latest figure is also 0.6 percent lower than the PSA’s initial estimate of 3.91 MMT.

As of June 1, the agency said the total palay harvest area during the period likely shrank by 7.2 percent to 891,770 hectares (ha) from the 960,870 ha recorded in the same period last year.

The PSA also said that palay yield may have fallen by 1.4 percent to 4.36 metric tons (MT) per hectare from the previous year’s 4.42 MT.

“As of 01 June 2024, about 771,900 hectares or 86.6 percent of the 891,770 hectares updated harvest area of standing crop have been harvested. This translates to palay output of 3.16 million metric tons,” the PSA said in the report published recently.

“Of the total area of 119,870 hectares of standing palay yet to be harvested as of 01 June 2024, 1.4 percent were at the reproductive stage and 98.6 percent were at the maturing stage.”

Meanwhile, the PSA said corn output in the second quarter likely fell by 19.3 percent to 1.19 MMT from last year’s 1.47 MMT. This showed a 0.8 percent decline from its earlier projection of 1.2 MMT.

The harvest area during the period was expected to contract by 15 percent to 347,470 ha from the 408,930 ha recorded in the previous year while yield per hectare may have declined by 5 percent to 3.42 MT from 3.60 MT.

The PSA said about 85.8 percent of the updated standing crop of 347,470 ha of corn during the quarter has been harvested, translating to 1.05 MMT of corn output.

“Of the total area of 49,280 hectares of standing corn yet to be harvested as of 01 June 2024, about 3.7 percent were at the reproductive stage, and 96.3 percent were at the maturing stage.”

The Department of Agriculture (DA) reported that the volume of production losses for agricultural and fishery areas reached 441,801 MT, with palay and corn bearing the brunt of the weather phenomenon.

The DA said the production losses are equivalent to P4.75 billion for rice and P3.37 billion for corn.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/15/phl-rice-imports-seen-touching-new-record-despite-high-prices/>

ABANTE TONITE

Palay sapol ng imported rice, bagsak-presyo sa P7 per kilo

July 15, 2024

Bumagsak sa P7 per kilo ang presyo ng palay ng mga magsasaka dahil sa pagdagsa ng imported na bigas sa bansa, ayon sa isang rice watch group.

Sa panayam ng programang “Bardagulan” sa DWAR Abante Radyo, ipinahayag ni Bantay Bigas spokesperson Cathy Estavillo ang naging epekto ng pagpapatupad ng mas mababang taripa sa imported na bigas.

Ayon kay Estavillo, bukod sa hindi napababa ng Rice Tariffication Law ang presyo ng bigas, nanguna pa ang bansa sa listahan ng mga rice importer sa buong mundo.

“Nu’ng first year of implementation nakita natin na bumagsak sa P7-P12 ‘yung presyo ng palay ng ating mga magsasaka dulot nung binaha tayo ng imported na bigas at nung taong ding ‘yan, naging number one rice importer ang Pilipinas sa buong mundo,” wika ni Estavillo.

Ani Estavillo, mas makabubuting palakasin na lamang ang lokal na produksyon at punan ang pangangailangan ng mga magsasaka kaysa babaan ang taripa sa imported rice.

Dagdag pa niya, walang kasiguruhan kung bababa ang presyo ng imported rice sa pamamagitan ng mas mababang taripa.

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/07/15/palay-sapol-ng-imported-rice-bagsak-presyo-sa-p7-per-kilo/>