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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>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Rice donation from TECO for Davao Oriental stalled?

BY

Jul 16, 2024 06:29 PM

By IVY TEJANO

DAVAO CITY – The Davao Oriental Provincial Council is reportedly delaying the approval of the resolution authorizing Gov. Niño Sotero Uy to accept a 160,000-kilogram rice donation from the Taiwan Economic and Cultural Office.



UY (Keith Bacongco)

According to Silvestre H. Bello III, head of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office, the Taiwan Economic and Cultural Office donated 500,000 kilograms of rice for residents in Davao Oriental, Davao del Norte, and Davao de Oro provinces.

The donation is on top of the previous donation of \$200,000 or P11.2 million for those impacted by the shear line surge and low-pressure area (LPA) that affected the Davao region last January and February.

Reports have emerged that the Davao Oriental Provincial Board is stalling the approval of the authorization for Uy to accept the donation.

Section 23 of the Article 2 of the Republic Act 7160 or the Local Government Code of 1991 said the governor must obtain approval from the provincial board of Davao Oriental before accepting any donations for the province.

On June 11, 2024, Uy asked the provincial council, led by Vice Gov. Nelson Dayanghirang Jr., to approve a resolution allowing him to sign an agreement to accept 160,000 kilos of rice as aid for disaster victims last January.

A month after the governor's letter, the provincial council has yet to pass a resolution, causing concerns about the delay. As a result, the Manila Economic and Cultural Office has retained the provincial government of Davao de Oro as the sole recipient of the donation.

Davao de Oro was said to have distributed the shares of Davao Oriental and Davao del Norte provincial governments (LGUs).

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is primarily responsible for distributing donated rice to its beneficiaries in the LGUs. The LGUs and the DSWD shall jointly identify the rightful beneficiaries of the rice.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/16/rice-donation-from-teco-for-davao-oriental-stalled>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Government crop insurance firm urged to modernize practices

BY

Jul 16, 2024 01:21 PM

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has called on the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. (PCIC) to modernize its operations and enhance the accessibility of its insurance products and services to better cater to farmers, fisherfolk, and livestock raisers.

In a statement, Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said it is important to digitalize PCIC's processes, upgrade its technologies, and innovate insurance products to offer enhanced protection for its clients.

PCIC, an agency recently brought back under the umbrella of the DA, plays a role in supporting food production by providing insurance coverage to farmers, fishermen, and livestock raisers against natural disasters, diseases, pests, and other risks.

With an annual budget of P4.5 billion allocated from the General Appropriations Act, PCIC primarily focuses on indemnifying insurance claims, having processed 744,000 farmer claims last year alone.

In 2024, PCIC aims to broaden coverage to reach 1.2 million farmers, 21,000 livestock raisers, and stakeholders in the fisheries sector.

Laurel said that PCIC needs to evolve from traditional practices, stressing the importance of adopting advanced crop insurance models similar to those in neighboring countries like Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam.

These improvements aim to enhance indemnification processes which currently rank among the most substantial in the region.

“We’re doing it the way we’ve been doing it for X number of years, it’s time for PCCI to level up,” Tiu Laurel said.

Beyond risk protection for farmers and fisherfolk, Tiu Laurel highlighted the potential for insurance to serve as collateral for accessing financial services from banks and other institutions.

He also suggested widening PCIC's reinsurance strategies to better manage the agency's risk profile effectively.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/16/government-crop-insurance-firm-urged-to-modernize-practices>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

PCIC told to modernize insurance operations

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

July 17, 2024 | 12:00am



Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has ordered the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. (PCIC) to modernize its operations and offer more affordable products to farmers and fisherfolk.

Tiu Laurel said state-run PCIC, which was recently returned to the Department of Agriculture portfolio, must digitalize its processes and upgrade its technologies to provide better protection to its clientele.

“We’re doing it the way we’ve been doing it for X number of years, it’s time for PCIC to level up,” the agriculture chief told PCIC executives in a recent meeting.

He noted that the state crop insurer plays a “crucial” role in boosting food production through providing insurance protection to farmers, fishermen and livestock raisers against natural calamities, diseases, pest infestations and other risks.

Tiu Laurel said the PCIC must “evolve” from its traditional practices and should adopt advanced crop insurance models similar to neighboring countries such as Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.

“These improvements aim to enhance indemnification processes which currently rank among the most substantial in the region,” he said.

The agriculture chief added that PCIC can also go beyond providing risk protection for farmers and fisherfolk.

Tiu Laurel pointed out that insurance protection could also serve as collaterals of farmers and fisherfolk in accessing financial services from banks and other financial institutions.

He recommended widening the reinsurance strategies of the attached agency of the DA “to better manage the agency’s risk profile effectively.”

The PCIC has an annual budget of P4.5 billion that is allocated for indemnification of insurance claims. Last year, the agency serviced 744,000 farmers. This year the state crop insurer eyes to cover 1.2 million farmers, 21,000 livestock raisers and fisherfolk. — **Romina Cabrera**

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/07/17/2370634/pcic-told-modernize-insurance-operations>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Chicken prices rise to P250 per kilo

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

July 17, 2024 | 12:00am



Whole chickens sold in Metro Manila ranged between P190 per kilo and P250 per kilo at the start of this week, based on the latest price monitoring report by the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Philstar.com / Irra Lising

MANILA, Philippines — Chicken prices in Metro Manila have reached a record high P250 per kilogram as local broiler output retreated and raisers sought to recover losses incurred in previous months.

Whole chickens sold in Metro Manila ranged between P190 per kilo and P250 per kilo at the start of this week, based on the latest price monitoring report by the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Compared to last month, whole chickens sold in Metro Manila ranged between P160 and P220 per kilo – a P30 increase.

Jose Gerardo Feliciano, president of the United Broiler Raisers Association (UBRA), said the P250 per kilo price is “too high,” noting that prevailing market prices should range between P210 and P230.

He also noted that a price of P250 per kilo could mean that somebody is “taking advantage” of limited supply in a given market or area.

Feliciano explained at a press briefing yesterday that chicken prices have been rising due to lower broiler stocks after raisers reduced their flock loading to recoup losses they incurred in recent months.

As an indication of the reduced broiler output, the farm gate price of day-old chicks has risen to P43 per chick, nearly double the usual average of P24 apiece.

“There is already some sort of panic. It means that there is no supply of day-old chicks,” Feliciano said.

Nonetheless, Feliciano assured the public that the country has sufficient stocks of broilers. “Supply is there but the problem is the sizes,” he said.

UBRA data showed that average farm gate prices of broilers fell below P100 per kilo last October and persisted until January of this year.

The average farm gate price of broiler between October 2023 and January ranged from P91.47 per kilo to P97.12 per kilo. The estimated break-even cost for a regular-sized broiler is between P100 and P110 per kilo.

This month, the average farm gate price of broiler is hovering around P137 per kilo, reflecting the reduced supply in the market. The average quotation is already nine percent higher than the P125.57 per kilo average price recorded last month, based on UBRA data.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/07/17/2370719/chicken-prices-rise-p250-kilo>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

NFA test-milling palay stock with private millers

[Ramon Efren Lazaro](#) - The Philippine Star

July 17, 2024 | 12:00am



Workers arrange sacks of National Food Authority (NFA) palay or unmilled rice inside their warehouse in Balagtas, Bulacan on May 22, 2024.

STAR / Miguel De Guzman

MALOLOS, Philippines — The office of the National Food Authority (NFA) in Bulacan is test-milling its palay stock with private rice millers.

Rhona Talens, NFA-Bulacan officer-in-charge, told The STAR yesterday that the test-milling is being conducted with private millers who expressed interest in milling palay procured during the main cropping season.

The NFA will use rice by-products to pay for the services rendered by private millers as provided under the “payment-in-kind scheme” agreed between the two parties.

Earlier, Talens confirmed the NFA has surpassed its palay procurement target of 103,000 bags for the months of January to June.

She said the agency is still procuring palay in Bulacan, provided the quality of the grains meets the standards set by the NFA.

Talens said the agency is also procuring palay that is not covered under the palay assistance to legislators and local government units (PALLGU) program.

The buying price is at P27 per kilo for clean and dry palay, and P21 for fresh or newly harvested.

Palay covered under the PALLGU program are bought at P28 per kilo for clean and dry and P22 for freshly harvested, Talens said.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/07/17/2370769/nfa-test-milling-palay-stock-private-millers>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Tiangco lauds ‘Program 29’: 1,500 Navotas residents bought cheaper rice

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

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 07:11 PM July 16, 2024

MANILA, Philippines — Navotas City Rep. Tobias Tiangco has lauded the efforts of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s administration in lowering rice prices, noting that residents in his city were able to buy cheaper rice under Program 29.

Tiangco in a statement on Tuesday said that 1,500 Navotas residents were able to purchase rice at P29 per kilogram under the Department of Agriculture (DA) Program 29 where rice would be made available in Kadiwa stores every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

“We are grateful to President Bongbong for his efforts to ensure Navoteños can have access to low-cost rice through the Kadiwa ng Pangulo program. The local government of Navotas hopes to continuously work with the national government in delivering basic services that are truly relevant to the needs of our constituents,” Tiangco said.

Tiangco also said that the expansion of Program 29 will also bode well for the country’s marginalized sector.

“The sustained efforts of this administration to lower the price of basic commodities, including Filipino staples like rice, shows its steadfast commitment to fulfill its promises,” he said.

“With this program, Filipinos from vulnerable households and sectors are given some economic relief as they gain access to low-cost goods for their families,” he added.

Under Program 29, rice would only be sold to “vulnerable” segments of society, which includes senior citizens, single parents, persons with disabilities, and beneficiaries of

the government's conditional cash transfer program or the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps).

Initially, the DA said Program 29 would only be available in select Kadiwa stores over Metro Manila and Bulacan, but Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said that there will be 23 stores in total, including three provincial areas, with one in Cebu and one in Maguindanao.

Tiangco also reiterated his support for the House leadership's goal of rice sufficiency by 2028, noting that a renewed focus on agriculture will ensure strong support for farmers and fisherfolk.

"I am one with the House leadership in pushing for efforts that will modernize and develop the country's agricultural sector. Not only will it improve the lives of farmers and fisherfolks, it will also significantly contribute to food security of Filipinos," Tiangco said.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1961602/tiangco-lauds-program-29-1500-navotas-residents-bought-cheaper-rice>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Price of chicken shoots up as poultry raisers lower production

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:10 AM July 17, 2024



Inquirer file photo

MANILA, Philippines — The price of chicken in public markets has gone up to “a record high,” selling for as much as P250 per kilogram, around P5 to P30 more compared to last week, as many poultry raisers have reduced production due to importation and after incurring losses last year.

However, an official of the United Broiler Raisers Association (Ubra), which is composed mostly of small and medium scale poultry producers, called the prevailing market prices “too high,” saying that chicken meat should be sold at just P230 per kg.

Based on the monitoring of the Department of Agriculture (DA), the retail price of a kilo of dressed whole chicken ranged from a low of P190 to a high of P250 in Metro Manila markets as of July 15.

This was higher than the P160 to P200 per kg recorded around the same period last year. Last week, the retail prices for chicken were between P185 and P220 per kg.

In the second week of June, the price range for chicken was between P160 and P220.

Ubra president Jose Gerardo Feliciano said at the sidelines of the Poultry Show Forum in Pasay City that the selling price for chicken shot up after many local raisers opted to mitigate their losses by reducing production amid the influx into the country of imported chicken.

Poultry raisers also decided to hike their prices in one go instead of doing it in tranches, according to him.

Normal decision

“What we noticed is it is an offshoot of what happened last year when many poultry raisers sustained losses. It’s a normal business decision to lower production volume, resulting in lower supply,” Feliciano said. “Of course, one big factor in the pricing of chicken is importation.”

He added, however, that some industry players might be taking advantage of the current situation, leading to a surge in prices.

Still, he said that the current prices were at a “record high” as the average farm-gate price (or the price between farmers and traders, which is largely influenced by the latter) was at P137 per kg earlier this month compared with P118.75 per kg during the same period last year.

“Let us assume the farm-gate price is P150 for computation purposes. We see that the retail price should be around P220 to P230 only,” Feliciano noted.

But he said that the retail price was expected to drop by late August as the rainy season bodes well for raising chickens.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1961700/price-of-chicken-shoots-up-as-poultry-raisers-lower-production>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Meat imports up 10% led by pork, chicken

July 16, 2024 | 8:16 pm



REUTERS

MEAT imports rose 10% in the five months to May with pork, chicken, and beef seen leading, according to the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI).

The BAI said imports amounted to 524.68 million kilograms during the five-month period.

In May, meat imports rose 4.9% to 128.29 million kilos.

Shipments of pork increased 10.6% to 253.55 million kilos during the five months, accounting for 48.32% of the total.

Spain supplied around 64.7 million kilos of pork, followed by Brazil (58.4 million), and Canada (36.5 million) during the period.

Imports of chicken meat totaled 181.23 million kilos in the five months. Shipments rose 4.98% and accounted for 34.5% of meat imports.

Brazil remained the top supplier of chicken with shipments of 98.3 million kilos, followed by the US (58.9 million kilos), and Australia (7.2 million kilos).

Shipments of beef accounted for 13.1% of total imports. Imports increased 28.8% to 68.53 million kilos during the five months.

Beef from Brazil amounted to 23.9 million kilos, followed by Australia (20.4 million kilos), and Ireland (6.3 million kilos).

Imports of turkey increased to 647,529 kilos from 89,889 kilos a year prior.

Meanwhile, imports of buffalo, duck, and lamb fell during the five-month period.

Buffalo imports, which accounted for 3.89% of the total, fell 9.87% during the five months to May to 20.4 million kilos.

Shipments of duck declined 39.7% to 84,254 kilos, while lamb imports fell 48.2% to 199,000 kilos.
— **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/16/608501/meat-imports-up-10-led-by-pork-chicken/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Crop insurance GOCC urged to modernize

July 16, 2024 | 8:15 pm



THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said that it is seeking to modernize the operations of the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. (PCIC) to better support local producers.

“PCIC should digitalize its processes, upgrade its technologies, and develop insurance products that will provide better protection for its clientele,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said in a statement on Tuesday.

In May, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. signed Executive Order No. 60, which transferred the control and supervision of the PCIC back to the DA from the Department of Finance.

Mr. Laurel added that modernizing will allow the PCIC to offer more affordable insurance products, and pointed to the crop insurance systems of Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam as possible models.

He said that the PCIC should also enhance its reinsurance practices to better manage its risk profile.

He urged the use of crop insurance to facilitate farmer access to financial services, by reassuring lending institutions that the collateral they hold will have the benefit of insurance cover.

The PCIC has an annual budget of P4.5 billion. It indemnifies farmers, fisherfolks, and livestock raisers who sustain losses from natural calamities, diseases, pest infestation, and other risks.

For 2024, the PCIC aims to increase its coverage to 1.2 million farmers, 21,000 livestock raisers, and fisheries stakeholders. It processed 744,000 claims in 2023. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/16/608499/crop-insurance-gocc-urged-to-modernize/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Palay farmgate prices up 27% in June

July 16, 2024 | 8:15 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/EDD GUMBAN

THE average farmgate price of palay, or unmilled rice, rose 27.9% year on year to P24.59 per kilogram in June, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

The PSA said that all regions reported year-on-year growth in the average farmgate price of palay during the month.

On a month-on-month basis, farmgate prices slipped 0.8% from the P24.8 per kilo reported in May.

The highest prices in June were posted in the Ilocos Region, where palay prices rose 40.2% year on year to P28.3 per kilo.

The lowest farmgate price was recorded in the Eastern Visayas at P19.97 per kilo, up 13.3% year on year.

The National Food Authority Council has raised its purchasing price for palay in order to build up government reserves in preparation for possible calamities.

The buying price for dry and clean palay was raised to P23 to P30 per kilo and that for fresh palay to P17 to P23 per kilo, depending on location and quality of the grain.

The NFA said that it has total reserves of 149,000 metric tons, equivalent to about four days' demand.

During the second quarter the PSA said that the average farmgate price rose 29.4% from a year earlier.

The Western Visayas reported the highest increase of 39%. The average farmgate prices in the region was P27.85 per kilo.

The Eastern Visayas had the lowest price average of P19.8 per kilo, up 15.8% from a year earlier. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/16/608498/palay-farmgate-prices-up-27-in-june/>

MANILA STANDARD

‘Jalaur dam to boost W. Visayas rice output’



MEGA DAM PROJECT. President Marcos leads the inauguration of the Jalaur River Multipurpose Project Stage II (JRMP II) — the largest water reservoir project to be built outside of Luzon in more than 40 years. About 25,000 farmers in Iloilo will benefit from the additional irrigation brought by the project, which is seen to increase rice production in Region 6 by 160,000 metric tons per year and provide 6.6 megawatts of hydroelectric power.

By Caloy Lozada & Charles Dantes

July 17, 2024, 12:35 am

ILOILO—President Marcos led the ceremonial opening of the floodgates for the Jalaur River Multi-purpose Project Stage II (JRMP II) in Calinog, Iloilo, marking a significant milestone for the region’s agriculture and infrastructure.

The P20 billion project is expected to increase Western Visayas’ rice production by 160,000 metric tons, or 20 percent of the region’s annual rice requirement.

The JRMP II includes three main components: irrigation development, environmental and watershed management, and institutional development.

“This dam is just the beginning of our efforts to develop the country’s water resources,” said President Marcos during the unveiling of the project marker.

The project will benefit 7,000 farmers across 17 municipalities in Iloilo’s first to fifth districts. It will also provide 86 million liters of water daily for commercial and industrial needs in Iloilo province and Iloilo City.

“On top of its use for irrigation, a portion of the water from the High Dam’s reservoir, or around 86 million liters per day, will be utilized to supply the commercial and industrial bulk water requirements of Iloilo City and its neighboring municipalities,” added Mr. Marcos.

The JRMP II is also set to generate 6.6 megawatts of hydroelectric power, contributing to Panay Island’s electricity supply. Future plans for the project include the development of inland fisheries, floating solar energy systems, and eco-cultural tourism.

Mr. Marcos named the project “Katuwang sa Kauswagan” or “Partner in Progress,” expressing hope that it will serve as a benchmark for similar large-scale projects.

“Let this project serve as a benchmark and an inspiration for all endeavors of this scale and of this magnitude,” he said.

The President expressed gratitude to Korean Ambassador Lee Sang-hwa for South Korea’s partnership in this and other significant projects in the Philippines.

The President committed to accelerating the completion of JRMP II.

“I think it is entirely too long that Phase I, completed in my father’s time, should now see Phase II completed in my time. We should not have waited that long. We need to accelerate the process a little bit,” he said.

The JRMP II is set to become the largest water reservoir project built by the National Irrigation Administration outside Luzon.

The project is targeted to be completed and operational by the end of 2025.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314472622/jalaur-dam-to-boost-w-visayas-rice-output.html>

PCIC aiming to serve 1.2M farmers this year

By Janine Alexis Miguel

July 17, 2024

THE Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. (PCIC) is targeting to serve over 1.2 million local farmers and fishers this year.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said that PCIC was aiming to exceed the number of farmers and fishers it served last year, which stood at 744,000.

"This year, the agency aims to expand coverage to 1.2 million farmers, 21,000 livestock raisers, and fisheries stakeholders," Tiu Laurel said on Tuesday.

The PCIC has a budget of P4.5 billion this year from the General Appropriations Act.

Tiu Laurel said that PCIC plays a crucial role in promoting food production by providing insurance protection to farmers, fishermen, and livestock raisers.

He suggested widening PCIC's reinsurance strategies to better manage the agency's risk profile effectively.

In line with their target, the agriculture chief also said there was a need to shift crop insurance policy from traditional practices to advanced models, such as those practiced in neighboring countries like Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.

"These improvements aim to enhance indemnification processes, which currently rank among the most substantial in the region," the agriculture chief said.

"We're doing it the way we've been doing it for X number of years; it's time for PCCI to level up," he added.

The PCIC was recently returned to under the wings of the Department of Agriculture from the Finance department.

Tiu Laurel added that the insurance corporation should digitalize its processes, upgrade its technologies and develop insurance products that would provide better protection for its clientele.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/17/business/top-business/pcic-aiming-to-serve-12m-farmers-this-year/1957894>

Marcos inaugurates largest Iloilo dam

By Catherine S. Valente

July 17, 2024

(UPDATES) President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday inaugurated the largest water reservoir project in Iloilo that is seen to further boost agricultural production and the economy of the entire region.

The inauguration of the Jalaur River Multipurpose Project Stage II (JRMP II), the largest dam outside Luzon, was made more than 40 years after the completion of its first stage in 1982 during the time of the President's father, the late president Ferdinand Marcos Sr.

Marcos said that it is by far the largest water reservoir project of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) outside of Luzon.



President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Tuesday inaugurated the largest water reservoir project in Iloilo. The inauguration of the water reservoir project, the largest outside Luzon, took place more than 40 years after the completion of its first stage in 1982, during the time of the President's father, the late President Ferdinand E. Marcos Sr

"Costing almost P20 billion, the JRMP II has three key components: the irrigation development, the environmental and watershed management, and institutional development," he said.

Marcos said with the further completion of three dams and line canals spanning more than 80 kilometers, more than 30,000 hectares of service area and around 25,000 farmers will benefit from the supply of irrigation water.

"This should boost further the development in the agricultural sector as well as the local economy of the entire region," he said.

"In fact, it is estimated to help increase annual rice production in Region 6 by 160,000 metric tons, which is almost 20 percent of the region's annual rice requirement," he added.

On top of its use for irrigation, a portion of the water from the High Dam's reservoir, or around 86 million liters per day, will be utilized to supply the commercial and industrial bulk water requirements of Iloilo City and its neighboring municipalities.

"We also look forward to the 6.6 megawatts of hydroelectric power that it will generate to supplement the power supply on Panay Island," Marcos said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/17/news/national/marcos-inaugurates-largest-iloilo-dam/1957654>

Villegas: Govt must defend small fishers

By Gabriel L. Cardinoza

July 17, 2024

INFANTA, Pangasinan — Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Socrates Villegas on Tuesday called on the government to stand firm in defending the rights of the country's small fishermen.

"Gobyerno ng Pilipinas, panindigan sana niyo ang pagtatanggol sa mga dukhang mangingisda (Government of the Philippines, stand firm in defending our small fishermen)," said Villegas in his homily during a concelebrated mass held at the coastal village of Cato here.

Villegas and Alaminos Bishop Napoleon Sipalay Jr. presided over the mass before the start of a fluvial procession to pray for peace in the West Philippine Sea (WPS). This is the first time in recent years that two of the three Catholic dioceses in Pangasinan had a joint activity to pray for peace at the WPS.

Villegas, former president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, is the archbishop of the Lingayen-Dagupan archdiocese covering central Pangasinan towns and cities. Sipalay, on the other hand, heads the Alaminos Diocese consisting of Alaminos City and western Pangasinan towns. The third diocese in Pangasinan is the Urdaneta Diocese based in Urdaneta City, which covers eastern Pangasinan towns.

"Mga pinuno ng pamahalaan, pigilan po ninyo ang pagkasira ng yamang dagat (Heads of government, stop the destruction of our sea resources), Villegas said.

"Hindi atin ang dagat, hindi atin ang kalikasan. Ang kalikasan ay kapatid na dapat alagaan, hindi ari-ariang pwedeng waldas ng mga mandarambong The sea is not ours (The natural resources are not

ours. Nature is our brother that we should take care of, not treasures that could be plundered by thieves)."

At least 1,000 Catholic residents here attended the Mass that started at 6 a.m. This was followed by a fluvial rosary procession of around 100 fishing boats, which circled on the waters off the village, the jump off point to the WPS.

Villegas also called on China not to be a bully, saying that Filipinos and Chinese people have many similarities.

For instance, he said, the patron of Pangasinan province and Shanghai, China's biggest city, is Mary Help of Christians.

"The conflicts of governments, the war of ideologies and the battle of politics can be won by the brotherhood of peoples. Before there was a government, there were only loving patriotic citizens. We are the peace that we dream for the world," said Villegas.

He also called on authorities to listen to ordinary people.

"Kabaliwan ang giyera. Huwag bully at huwag magpa-bully (War is madness. Don't bully and don't allow yourself to be bullied)," he said.

"Bago magkaroon ng China, bago magkaroon ng Pilipinas, bago magkaroon ng mapa ang mga bansa at paghiwa-hiwalayin tayo ng pagkakaiba-iba natin, ang lahat ay likha ng Diyos (Before there was China, before there was a Philippines, before there was a map that separated us due to our differences, we were all God's creations)."

He said that countries will not exist forever, adding that in the end, everyone will return to God, the true owner.

"Honorable leaders in government, you're in office by God's design and by people's will. Give us the competence of statesmen. Not a student council government that made vulgar men models, that glorified treason," Villegas said.

"Bring the groans and pains and anguish of our countrymen to the international institutions of justice and order. Give us a government with a sense of urgency in this time of emergency because we are standing by the precipice of continental Asian conflict," he added.

Villegas said that a dialogue between equals and a diplomacy that is respectful of laws and based on truth should be the path, not war.

"Our true ally is the truth. Our true defense is our dignity as God's children. The peace of the Philippines will not come from the hands of super powers, but from the heart of God and the hand of the Immaculate Mother," Villegas said.

"We pray for our country, but we also pray for brother China.

Yes, brother China, sister China. It has thousands of years of civilization in the vast continent of Asia. May it use its civilization to preserve peace and harmony among nations, according to the ancient teachings of Chinese wise men," he added.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/17/regions/villegas-govt-must-defend-small-fishers/1957848>

Biggest dam outside Luzon inaugurated

By Jocelyn Montemayor
July 17, 2024



President Marcos Jr. leads the inauguration of the P20-billion Jalaur River Multipurpose Project Stage II in Iloilo, which upon completion, will boost the agriculture industry in Western Visayas.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. yesterday inaugurated the Jalaur River Multipurpose Project Stage II (JRMP II) in Iloilo which is part of the largest water reservoir project in the country outside of Luzon.

The President said the P20- billion JRMP II project has three key components: irrigation development, environmental and watershed management, and institutional development.

As of June, the JRMP II has attained 75.51 percent completion rate with its three dams fully completed and 49.05 kilometers of line canal constructed. The project is targeted to be completed and operational by the end of 2025.

Marcos said once it is completed, the dam is expected to boost the agriculture industry and the economy in Western Visayas. It will help increase the region's rice production by 160,000 metric tons or about 20 percent of the region's rice requirements.

The water reservoir, which spans over 80 kilometers, will serve 31,840 hectares of land and benefit around 25,000 farmers.

The President said the high dam's reservoir will also be utilized to supply the commercial and industrial bulk water requirements of Iloilo City and nearby municipalities as well as generate 6.6 megawatts of hydroelectric power which will supplement the power supply of Panay Island.

"Additionally, it is also proposed to develop inland fishery, floating solar energy systems, and eco-cultural tourism, in the near future. With all of these, the JRMP II truly deserves its label: Katuwang sa Kauswagan or Partner in Progress," Marcos said.

In his speech, the President reiterated his call for all dam operators in the country to maximize their facilities not only to ensure and provide water supply for the public and irrigation to farmlands but also to use the captured water for other purposes such as generating electricity, development of tourism activities and help address flooding, among others.

"Our water development projects would not just bring irrigation or potable water to our people, but will also help address flooding, produce food, generate electricity, and develop tourism activities," he said.

The project was supported by South Korea through its Official Development Assistance-Economic Development Cooperation Fund.

The first phase of JRMP was completed in 1982 or 42 years ago, under the term of then President Ferdinand Marcos, while groundbreaking for phase II was held in 2013.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/biggest-dam-outside-luzon-inaugurated/

PCIC urged to level up crop insurance offerings

By Jed Macapagal
July 17, 2024

The Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. (PCIC) should adopt advanced crop insurance models to better serve its stakeholders, according to Francisco Tiu Laurel, secretary of the Department of Agriculture.

Tiu Laurel said PCIC must evolve from traditional practices and develop more affordable insurance products and services similar to those in neighboring countries like Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.

Beyond risk protection for farmers and fisherfolk, Tiu Laurel highlighted the potential for insurance to serve as collateral for accessing financial services from banks and other institutions.

He also suggested widening PCIC's reinsurance strategies to better manage the agency's risk profile effectively.

"We're doing (crop insurance) the way we've been doing it for X number of years, it's time for PCIC to level up," said Tiu Laurel in a statement.

DA said such improvements are needed to enhance indemnification processes for the benefit of local farmers, fisherfolk and livestock raisers.

Tiu Laurel also called on the need for PCIC to digitalize its processes and upgrade its technologies to develop improved insurance products that would provide better protection for its clientele.

PCIC has an annual budget of P4.5 billion sourced from the General Appropriations Act.

Last year, it serviced 744,000 farmer claims but aims to expand coverage to 1.2 million farmers, 21,000 livestock raisers and fisheries stakeholders this year.

PCIC provides insurance protection to farmers, fishermen and livestock raisers against natural calamities, diseases, pest infestations and other risks.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/pcic-urged-to-level-up-crop-insurance-offerings/

More foreign pork, chicken push meat imports up 9.68%

Ada Pelonia
July 16, 2024

THE country's meat imports grew by 9.68 percent year-on-year to over 520,000 metric tons (MT) as of May 31, on the back of higher pork and chicken purchases abroad.

Data from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) showed that meat imports reached 524,675 MT from January to May this year compared to the 478,327 MT recorded in the same period in 2023.

Pork imports jumped by 10.62 percent to 253,548 MT from 229,201 MT. Pork cuts accounted for most of the shipments at 91,468 MT followed by offals at 90,790 MT.

Based on BAI data, beef imports rose 28.78 percent to 68,527 MT from 53,211 MT last year. Beef cuts held the bulk of the imports at 45,047 MT.

Chicken meat imports also grew by 4.98 percent to 181,232 MT from 172,627 MT recorded in the same period last year.

The country's imports of mechanically deboned meat (MDM) accounted for the bulk of chicken imports at 99,122 MT. This was followed by the purchases of chicken leg quarters at 49,125 MT.

The United Broiler Raisers Association (Ubra) noted the challenge faced by local players due to the import ban on chicken in several areas due to bird flu.

"I heard that importing is a challenge these days because many countries have been banned [as source] owing to the spread of AI [Avian influenza] [" Ubra President Jose Gerardo Feliciano told reporters, speaking partly in Filipino, on the sidelines of a poultry forum in Pasay City.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) earlier ordered a series of temporary import bans on domestic and wild birds and their associated products such as poultry meat, day-old chicks, eggs, and semen originating from Michigan, United States and Australia due to reports of AI outbreak in the area.

Meanwhile, Brazil was the top supplier of chicken at 98,318 MT with the United States trailing behind at 58,389 MT, based on BAI data.

Spain was the Philippines's top supplier of pork from the January to April period at 64,719 MT, followed by Brazil at 58,354 MT and Canada at 36,514 MT.

In terms of beef imports, BAI data showed that Brazil was also the country's biggest supplier at 23,959 MT followed by Australia at 20,440 MT.

The DA earlier imposed a temporary ban on live cattle and meat imports from the United Kingdom after mad cow disease was detected in Scotland.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/16/more-foreign-pork-chicken-push-meat-imports-up-9-68/>

‘Jalaur dam ensures energy, food security in Western Visayas’

Samuel P. Medenilla

July 16, 2024

DUBBED as the largest water reservoir project of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) outside of Luzon, the Jalaur River Multipurpose Project Stage II (JRMP II) will help ensure the food and energy security in Western Visayas, according to President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.

During the inauguration of the JRMP II with its three dams in Iloilo on Tuesday, the chief executive said the water reservoirs, with a 30,000 hectares service area, will provide uninterrupted irrigation service to 25,000 farmers.

“It is estimated to help increase annual rice production in Region 6 by 160,000 metric tons, which is almost 20 percent of the region’s annual rice requirement.” Marcos said.

The Palace said the JRMP II will increase rice production in areas under NIA’s irrigation services in Iloilo by 71.54 percent from 197,545 metric tons annually to 338,874 metric tons per year.

Based on the latest data from the Philippine Rice Research Institute (Philrice), Region 6 produced over 2.26 million metric tons of unhusked rice in 2023.

The attached agency of the Department of Agriculture (DA) noted that of the 666,296 hectares of land in the region used for rice production, 365,552 were non-irrigated.

The JRMP II dams will also help spur local economic development in Western Visayas by providing 86 million liters of water per day to commercial and industrial establishments in Iloilo City and its neighboring municipalities.

The structures are also being eyed for power production and are expected to generate 6.6 megawatts of hydroelectric power in the Panay Islands.

They will also be tapped for the development of inland fishery, floating solar energy systems, and eco-cultural tourism.

“With all [of] these, the JRMP II truly deserves its label: Katuwang sa Kauswagan or Partner in Progress,” Marcos said.

Ongoing construction

He reiterated his appeal to dam operators to build more multipurpose dams similar to the Upper Wawa Dam and the JRMP II.

“Our water development projects would not just bring irrigation or potable water to our people, but will also help address flooding, produce food, generate electricity, and develop tourism activities,” the President said.

He thanked South Korea for helping finance the ongoing P19.70-billion JRMP II through its Official Development Assistance-Economic Development Cooperation Fund.

As of June 2024, the JRMP II is still 75.51 percent complete with three dams—High Dam, Afterbay Dam, and Alibunan Dam—finished, and only its canal components still under construction. The project is expected to be completed by 2025.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/16/jalaur-dam-ensures-energy-food-security-in-western-visayas/>

Let insurance be used as collateral, PCIC told

Ada Pelonia
July 17, 2024

AGRICULTURE Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. urged the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. (PCIC) to adopt advanced models that will enable the government to provide crop insurance coverage to more farmers.

Laurel stressed that through evolving from traditional practices, the PCIC's modernization could enhance indemnification processes which currently rank among the most substantial in the region.

“We’re doing it the way we’ve been doing it for X number of years, it’s time for PCCI to level up,” the Agriculture Secretary was quoted as saying in a statement the DA issued last Tuesday.

Laurel also urged the agency to digitalize its processes, upgrade its technologies, and develop insurance products that would provide better protection for its clientele.

The DA Chief said developing more affordable insurance products and services could better serve farmers, fishermen and livestock raisers.

Laurel also noted the potential for insurance to serve as collateral for accessing financial services from banks and other institutions, suggesting widening PCIC's reinsurance strategies to better manage the agency's risk profile effectively.

“This year, the agency aims to expand coverage to 1.2 million farmers, 21,000 livestock raisers, and fisheries stakeholders,” the DA's statement read.

With an annual budget of P4.5 billion sourced from the General Appropriations Act (Republic Act 11975), the DA said the PCIC primarily focuses on indemnifying insurance claims, having serviced 744,000 farmer claims last year alone.

The department said the directive underscores its commitment to modernizing agricultural practices and ensuring that PCIC plays a pivotal role in safeguarding the livelihood of rural communities across the Philippines.

It added that PCIC, an agency that was recently returned under the wings of the DA, plays a crucial role in promoting food production by providing insurance protection to farmers, fishermen, and livestock raisers against natural calamities, diseases, pest infestations, and other risks.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. earlier issued Executive Order 60 which reverted the PCIC to the DA, citing the need for “a strong organizational link between the PCIC and DA...with policies and programs aimed at ensuring food security and modernization of agriculture.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/17/let-insurance-be-used-as-collateral-pcic-told/>