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MANILA BULLETIN:

Possible P6-P7 rice price reduction by August due to EO 62—DA

BY JEL SANTOS

Jul 20, 2024 02:50 PM



(Arnold Quiroz/MB PHOTO)

Rice retail prices could fall by P6 to P7 by August due to the influx of rice imports entering the country after the national government cut rice tariffs from 35 percent to 15 percent, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said.

Through Executive Order (EO) 62, President Marcos facilitated the significant influx of rice imports into the market in order to lower the price of rice, the main staple food of Filipinos.

“[Sa] August ‘yan mararamdaman talaga, iyong pumasok na siya sa mga palengke. Possible P6 to P7 reduction [sa presyo ng bigas (August, it will be felt when it reaches the markets. A possible P6 to P7 reduction in the price of rice),” Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa, the spokesperson of the DA, told reporters on Friday, July 19.

“Within July, of course, may lumalabas na ‘yan (imported rice) pero hindi pa ganoon karami so unti-unti pa lang ‘yan dumarating sa mga palengke (Within July, of course, there are imported rice supplies coming in, but not in large quantities yet, so they are only gradually arriving in the markets),” he added.

According to De Mesa, 35,594 metric tons of rice imports had arrived in the country as of July 11.

“Iyong volume na dumating ay 35,594 metric tons as of July 11 pa lang ito, ‘yung first week ng implementation nitong effectivity ng EO 62 (The volume that arrived was 35,594 metric tons as of July 11, which was just the first week of the implementation of the effectivity of EO 62),” he noted.

Based on DA’s price monitoring on July 19, the cheapest rice retailed in Metro Manila is local regular milled which costs P45 to P50 a kilo.

Meanwhile, the lowest price for imported rice available in the metropolis is between P47 and P49 per kilo for regular milled rice.

Previously, farmers’ groups have voiced concerns about EO 62, fearing it will lead to a surge in imported rice entering the country. They worry that if the prices for rice, hogs, corn, and chicken drop below production costs, local producers may lose their incentive to continue farming and raising animals.

The groups also said that EO 62 will not address inflation or lower the price of rice in markets.

On the other hand, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has reassured the public about the government’s decision to reduce tariffs on imported farm products, particularly rice, emphasizing that President Marcos’ administration is committed to providing the necessary funding to modernize agriculture and enhance farmers’ quality of life.

Laurel explained that this tariff reduction was essential to counteract high global rice prices and offer consumers temporary relief through lower rice prices.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/20/possible-p6-p7-rice-price-reduction-by-august-due-to-eo-62-da>

MANILA BULLETIN:

African Swine Fever detected in Cebu City

BY CALVIN CORDOVA

Jul 19, 2024 06:31 PM

CEBU CITY – Confirmed cases of African Swine Fever (ASF) have been detected in a mountain barangay here.



Dr. Alice Utlang, head of the city’s Department of Veterinary Medicine and Fisheries (DVMF), reported that seven pigs died in Barangay Bonbon and tested positive for ASF.

The confirmation was based on the result of the test that the Department of Agriculture Regional Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory Central Visayas conducted on the blood samples of the hogs.

With the confirmed ASF cases, a strict border control will be enforced in the barangay.

Utlang urged farmers not to allow entry to their farms while stepping up their biosecurity measures.

She said thorough and regular disinfection must be conducted in the affected farms.

Utlang added that the DVMF and the Cebu City Agriculture Department have started distributing disinfectants in affected areas.

“Protect your own barangay and pig farm,” Utlang said.

Culling has yet to be enforced but DVMF will conduct random testing to prevent the spread of the highly contagious ASF.

On Friday, July 19, DVMF personnel confiscated more than 84 kilos of pig carcass without a meat inspection certificate.

Utlang said the meat came from Alcantara town, Cebu.

The confiscation is part of DVMF's efforts to ensure that meat products entering the city are safe, Utlang said.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/19/african-swine-fever-detected-in-cebu-city>

MANILA BULLETIN:

NFA vows to maintain competitive palay buying price to boost farmers' earnings

BY JEL SANTOS

Jul 19, 2024 05:32 PM



(File photo: MANILA BULLETIN)

The National Food Authority (NFA) on Friday, July 19, announced it will keep its palay (unmilled rice) buying price competitive to help farmers maximize their earnings from their hard work.

In a meeting with farmer cooperatives and irrigators' associations in Davao Oriental, NFA Administrator Larry Lacson said that the price ceiling for clean and dry palay will remain at P30 per kilo.

“Unless revised by the NFA Council, our ceiling price for clean and dry palay will stay at P30 a kilo,” he said in a statement.

In a bid to compete more effectively with private traders, the NFA Council adjusted the palay buying price in mid-April to a new range of P17 to P30 per kilo, up from P16 to P23 per kilo.

Lacson and several NFA Council members are visiting the southern Philippines to hold discussions with farmers and NFA employees.

They reportedly assessed the facilities and rice inventory managed by the Department of Agriculture (DA).

According to the agriculture department, the NFA is legally obligated to maintain a national buffer stock of rice to ensure availability in emergencies.

By the end of the first half, the NFA had achieved a record procurement of 3.5 million tons of palay.

The NFA administrator acknowledged the logistical issues encountered by farmers' cooperatives and announced plans to acquire vehicles for transporting stocks directly from farms to warehouses, a measure included in the proposed 2025 budget.

As such, he outlined NFA's modernization plan, which involves acquiring post-harvest facilities such as dryers and rice mills to boost rice processing capacity and efficiency.

Lacson said that the NFA will maintain close collaboration with farmers and industry stakeholders to address challenges and enhance agricultural practices and livelihoods nationwide.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/19/nfa-vows-to-maintain-competitive-palay-buying-price-to-boost-farmers-earnings>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Bird flu vaccines sold online could be poisonous to humans, animals — DA

BY JEL SANTOS

Jul 19, 2024 04:47 PM



(Photo courtesy of Pixabay)

Do not purchase avian influenza (AI) or bird flu vaccines online as they could be poisonous to both humans and animals, the Department of Agriculture (DA) warned the public on Friday, July 19.

“Hindi natin ni-re-recommend ‘yan at ‘yan ay bawal. Dapat kukuha lang bakuna doon sa reputable sources (We cannot recommend purchasing avian influenza vaccines online and that is prohibited. Vaccines should only be bought from reputable sources),” DA spokesperson Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said when asked about the rampancy of AI vaccines being sold through different online platforms.

“Kung hindi tama ‘yung bakuna, it could be a poison to both sa humans at sa animals (If the vaccine is not correct, it could be a poison to both humans and animals),” he went on.

De Mesa said the sale of bird flu vaccines online was already coordinated by the agriculture department to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to crack down on online sellers of vaccines.

Per the spokesperson, the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) has already coordinated with local government units (LGUs) to warn farms of the dangers of using AI vaccines sold online.

“Iyong mga malalaking farms, they will not use that. Ang problema ‘yung mga small-hold natin, mabentahan ng ganyan. Sila ang patuloy nating winawarningan (The large farms will not use that. The problem is our smallholders, who might buy it. They are the ones we keep warning),” he said.

AI or bird flu is a viral infection that mainly affects birds, especially wild ducks and geese, as well as domestic poultry like chickens and turkeys.

According to the website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) strains, such as H5N1 and H7N9, can cause severe disease and high mortality rates in infected poultry.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/19/bird-flu-vaccines-sold-online-could-be-poisonous-to-humans-animals-da-1>

MANILA BULLETIN:

ASF vaccines may be available for commercial use this year, says DA

BY JEL SANTOS

Jul 19, 2024 02:51 PM



(File photo: MANILA BULLETIN)

The African swine fever (ASF) vaccine, which is expected to halt the spread of the fatal ASF among pigs, may be available for commercial use this year.

This was disclosed by Department of Agriculture (DA) Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa during a press briefing in Quezon City on Friday, July 19.

“Kasi kailangan masigurado nang husto ng FDA at BAI (Bureau of Animal Industry) ‘yung efficacy at ‘yung lahat ng test na gagawin nila rito (Because the FDA and BAI need to thoroughly ensure the efficacy and all the tests they will conduct). Target is within the year,” he said.

“Kung maganda ‘yung resulta noon (trials), i-re-review iyan ng FDA at Bureau of Animal Industry, ang susunod na ‘yung commercial use ng vaccine (If the results of the trials are good, the FDA and the Bureau of Animal Industry will review that, the next step will be the commercial use of the vaccine),” the official added.

De Mesa noted that the BAI has an allocation of P350 million for the procurement of ASF vaccines.

Recently, DA Secretary Francisco “Kiko” Tiu Laurel Jr. announced that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted approval for government use of the vaccine for six months.

He said the controlled use of the ASF vaccine may be rolled out by September.

The DA chief had earlier stated that the vaccine is effective.

“The vaccine from Vietnam really works. So, that solves our problem,” Laurel stated. ^[1]_[SEP]In April, President Marcos said the government is 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.

ASF, a highly contagious and deadly swine disease, has been devastating swine industries around the world since its resurgence in 2018.

In 2019, ASF resurfaced in the Philippines and has since spread across more than 3,800 barangays in 53 provinces by July 2022.

Due to ASF, local pork production in the Philippines fell by almost a fourth from June to October 2021 against the comparative period in 2020.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/19/asf-vaccines-may-be-available-for-commercial-use-this-year-says-da>

MANILA BULLETIN:

[METRONEWS](#)

Bulacan gov't receives P10M worth of farm machinery from PAGCOR

BY FREDDIE VELEZ

Jul 19, 2024 07:15 PM

The Provincial government of Bulacan has received 10 million worth of farm machinery from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) on Thursday, July 18 at the Malolos Provincial Capitol Building.

They received two units of combined harvesters and five units of mini-4-wheel tractors.



PAGCOR Chairman and CEO Alejandro "Al" H. Tengco (left) and First Bulacan District Representative Danilo A. Domingo (2nd left) with Provincial Engineering Office head Engr. Glenn Reyes while talking during the turnover of the P10 million worth of farm machinery in Bulacan on Thursday, July 18, 2024. (Freddie Velez)

The machinery will be managed by the provincial government which Bulakenyo farmers will have easy access to if they need to use it.

In collaboration with Bulacan 1st District Representative Danilo A. Domingo and Gov. Daniel R. Fernando, PAGCOR released the said machinery for the utilization of farmers from the City of Malolos and the towns of Bulakan, Calumpit, Hagonoy, Paombong and Pulilan.

“Tisa lang po ang hinihiling kong kapalit ng biyayang ipinanaog naming tapusin sa hapon na ito. Sana po'y lalo kayong ganahan pang magsaka, ibahagi ninyo sa mga kabataan nang sa ganoon ay lalo pang umunlad ang sektor ng agrikultura dito. Hindi lamang sa unang distrito, hindi lamang sa lalawigan ng Bulacan, kundi sa buong bansang minamahal nating Pilipinas,” (There is only one thing I ask in exchange for the grace that we have sent down this afternoon. I hope you will love moe to farm, share it with the youth so that agriculture sector here will develop even more. Not only in the first district, not only in the province of Bulacan but in the entire country that we love, the Philippines)," Tengco said.

PAGCOR Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Alejandro H. Tengco attended the turnover ceremony.

Meanwhile, Fernando expressed his gratitude to Tengco for his big help in boosting the agricultural sector of the province.

“Chairman, thank you so much po sa pagmamahal na ibinibigay mo sa ating lalawigan at lalung lalo po sa District 1. Ito po ay malaking bagay para sa ating mga magsasaka sapagkat ito ay hinahanap nila. At talaga namang ito'y kailangang kailangan ngayon in advance technology of farming. Kailangang kailangan na po ito talaga at ‘yun iba kasi nahihirapang yumuko di ba para magtanim,” (for the love you five to our province especially to the First District. This is a big help for our farmers because they are what they looking for. And this is really necessary now in advance technology of farming. It must be really necessary and that's different because gets hard to bend down when planting)," the governor said.

The governor also highlighted the programs of the PGB including Bulacan Farmer's Productivity Center and training school, and the Provincial Government Multiplier and Breeding Center to achieve food security and sufficiency.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/19/bulacan-gov-t-receives-p10-m-worth-of-farm-machinery-from-pagcor>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Build hundreds of irrigation reservoirs around Philippines—Marcos

BY BETHEENA UNITE

Jul 19, 2024 03:27 PM

Hundreds of irrigation reservoirs should be built around the country, President Marcos said.



President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. shares a conversation with Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. at the inauguration of the Sulvec Small Reservoir Irrigation Project (Sulvec SRIP) in Ilocos Norte on July 19, 2024. (Noel Pabalate)

Marcos made the statement when he led the inauguration of the Sulvec Small Reservoir Irrigation Project (Sulvec SRIP) in Ilocos Norte on Friday, July 19.

"[W]hile we celebrate the realization of this undertaking, the challenge for us moving forward is to keep delivering [on] our promises and for the aspirations of our people," Marcos said in his speech.

"I was just having a quick discussion with Secretary Kiko (Laurel) and kailangan pa natin daan-daan na ganito (we need hundreds more of this). This is what --- we need hundreds of these around the country," Marcos stated.

Considered as the first impounding dam to be constructed in Ilocos Norte, the P940.46 million irrigation reservoir project is seen to address challenges faced by farmers in terms of water supply to sustain crop productivity and livelihood.

It boasts a capacity of over 1.063 million cubic meters of water which can irrigate more than 700 hectares of agricultural land in 10 barangays within the Municipality of Pasuquin.

Once operational, it will benefit at least 1,045 farmers in the area.

The Sulvec SRIP features various project components such as a 32-meter earthfill dam, construction of irrigation facilities —diversion dam, canals, road structures and access roads; provision of project facilities; organization of irrigators' association and management transfer support services; formulation of Integrated Watershed Management Plan and stock of freshwater fishes for aquaculture.

Aside from serving its purpose to elevate the state of agriculture in the province, Marcos said it would also be used to house facilities for recreation and tourism.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/19/build-hundreds-of-irrigation-reservoir-around-philippines-marcos>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

President Marcos inaugurates P940 million dam in Ilocos Norte

[Helen Flores](#) - The Philippine Star

July 20, 2024 | 12:00am



President Marcos leads the inauguration of the Sulvec small reservoir irrigation project in Pasuquin, Ilocos Norte yesterday. With him are Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., Gov. Matthew Marcos-Manotoc and National Irrigation Administration head Eduardo Eddie Guillen.

Krizjohn Rosales

Distributes P771 million to farmers, fisherfolk in CAR

MANILA, Philippines — President Marcos inaugurated a dam and a rice processing facility in Ilocos Norte and distributed assistance to farmers and fisherfolk affected by El Niño in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) yesterday.

The P940.46-million Sulvec small reservoir irrigation project (SRIP) in Pasuquin, Ilocos Norte is expected to benefit more than 1,000 farmers in the area, according to Marcos.

“That’s why our farmers can (hope) that they will have better and more harvest,” the President said in his speech.

Marcos said the Sulvec SRIP has a capacity of over one million cubic meters, which can irrigate more than 700 hectares of agricultural lands in the town’s 10 barangays.

Aside from storing water for irrigation, two hectares of the dam’s reservoir will be allocated for aquaculture.

The National Irrigation Administration is also planning to develop the Sulvec SRIP to accommodate a hydropower plant and facilities for recreation and tourism.

“The implementation of this may have been long and laborious, but knowing how many communities will benefit and how much impact it will make on their daily work, it is impossible not to be excited and happy,” Marcos said.

The President also led the inauguration and turnover of the second rice processing system in Piddig town, Ilocos Norte. The event, along with another one in Romblon, were canceled on Thursday due to bad weather.

“Now, since the (rice) processing has been turned over to a cooperative here, the value chain will no longer have to leave Piddig, Ilocos Norte – the processing – so the expenses of our farmers will be lessened,” Marcos said.

Marcos also extended P771.3 million in financial assistance to farmers, fisherfolk and their families during an event in Apayao earlier in the day.

The farmers in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) received tractors, mechanical transplanters, open source water pumps, recirculating dryers and facilities, planting materials, credit assistance and farming equipment from the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Based on government data, El Niño left P1.24 billion in agricultural damage in CAR, affecting about 30,000 farmers and inland fishermen.

DA Cordillera regional director Jenelyn Dawayan said each beneficiary received P10,000 in cash assistance.

Meanwhile, in preparation for La Niña, Marcos said P83.744 million in assistance has been readied for the region.

Of the amount, the government allocated P4,437,218 in standby fund, more than P25 million for 31,597 family food packs and P54 million for other food and non-food items.

The Chief Executive also handed over certificates of condonation to agrarian reform beneficiaries in Lingayen, Pangasinan.

“These certificates symbolize the fulfillment of our promise to wipe out the debts of agrarian reform beneficiaries here in Region 1,” Marcos said in his remarks, noting that more than P50 million in agrarian debts of over 3,500 farmers have been condoned in the region.

He added that more than 70,000 certificates of condonation would be distributed in CAR, Cagayan Valley and Central Luzon, amounting to over P3 billion in agrarian debts.

Marcos signed in July last year Republic Act 11953, or the New Agrarian Emancipation Act, which freed more than 600,000 farmers nationwide from P57.65 billion worth of arrears. — **Artemio Dumlao**

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/07/20/2371503/president-marcos-inaugurates-p940-million-dam-ilocos-norte>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

DA warns public vs. bird flu vaccines sold online

Philippine News Agency / 02:34 PM July 20, 2024



The Department of Agriculture is warning the public against avian influenza or bird flu vaccines being sold online. (Photo courtesy of DA)

MANILA, Philippines – The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Friday warned the public against [avian influenza](#) (AI) or bird flu vaccines being sold online.

“Again, hindi natin nire-recommend iyan at iyan ay bawal doon, kukuha lang ng bakuna doon sa mga reputable na institutions o source ng vaccines (we’re not recommending that and that’s prohibited, only get vaccines from reputable institutions or source of vaccines),” Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said in an interview.

The Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) earlier issued a similar warning against avian influenza vaccines now accessible on various online shopping platforms.

In an online platform, 100ml and 200ml of AI H5N1 vaccine doses were sold at P423 to P790.

De Mesa said there may be risks when using such unregulated products considering that bird flu is highly pathogenic.

“Kahit anong gamot na hindi dumaaan sa proseso, inirekomenda ng FDA [Food and Drug Administration] o ng BAI o hindi dumaaan sa kung ano man na regulation, bawal iyan (Any drug which did not undergo the process, nor recommended by the FDA or BAI or did not undergo any regulation, it’s prohibited),” he said, citing the probability of AI transmission to humans.

“Kung hindi tama iyong bakuna (If the vaccine is not right), it could be a poison both to the human and the animals,” de Mesa said.

The DA said it is now coordinating with the FDA to act on the matter.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1962919/da-warns-public-vs-bird-flu-vaccines-sold-online>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Iloilo tourism office pushes farm, cultural heritage as destinations

Philippine News Agency / 04:51 PM July 20, 2024



INQUIRER.net stock images

ILOILO CITY – The [Iloilo](#) Provincial Culture, Arts, History and Tourism Office (PCAHTO) is focused on promoting agri-farms, culture and heritage, and eco-tourism sites as tourist destinations.

“We saw the value of farms not only as a playground for tourists but also in the production of food supply, which can help the other programs of Governor Arthur Defensor Jr. Our farms have huge contributions to our agricultural produce, and some activities in the farm to our tourist arrivals,” PCAHTO head Gilbert Marin said in an interview on Thursday.

Marin said that during the pandemic, farm destinations were the first to open because they have a wide space and fresh air for visitors to enjoy.

Their efforts are also geared toward the preservation, conservation, maintenance, and promotion of cultural heritage areas.

“It’s very important because one of the things that we lobby is for local government units to have a local ordinance to protect their cultural properties before anything happens,” he said.

The towns are gradually conducting their cultural mapping, a requirement under Republic Act 166 or the Cultural Heritage Act of 2009, he said.

Currently, the Department of Tourism (DOT) has accredited the Bucari of Leon, Bulabug Putian National Park spanning Dingle and San Enrique, Tinagong Dagat in Miagao and Lambunao, Sicogon Island as eco-tourism sites, and 10 more are waiting for accreditation.

Tourism arrival in Iloilo in 2023 reached 318,535, an increase of about 10 percent from the previous year.

Marin said the fifth district, where Sicogon Island is situated, posted with the highest traffic –around 40 percent of the arrivals.

The heritage destination in the first district of Iloilo came second, while the fourth district ranked third due to the staging of the national jamboree of the Boy Scouts of the Philippines.

The third district, known for its agri-eco destinations, came in fourth, while the second district, with its eco-cultural destinations, ranked fifth in arrival.

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/243231/iloilo-tourism-office-pushes-farm-cultural-heritage-as-destinations>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

CLSU faculty member develops tool for pathogen detection in water samples

By: [Adrian Parungao](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 03:39 PM July 20, 2024



CLSU faculty member Rubigilda Paraguison-Alili ((Photo from Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Agricultural Research Facebook page)

MANILA, Philippines — A researcher from the Central Luzon State University (CLSU) together with the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Science and Technology Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (DOST – PCHRD) has developed a tool that can detect disease – causing organisms in bodies of water.

According to CLSU faculty member Rubigilda Paraguison-Alili, the said tool can check the presence of parasites and bacteria that can cause [schistosomiasis](#) and [leptospirosis](#).

“Ang biosensor ay parang test kit, siya na nagdedetect ng itong mga pathogens na ito, mga bacteria na ito, mga parasites na ito dito sa tubig,” Paraguison-Alili said in an interview with [Inquirer.net](#).

The tool can offer on-field testing, so researchers or users can check whether or not a body has pathogens even without going to a laboratory.

The user of the kit will collect a one to five liters of water sample, which will then be filtered for debris. The debris that will be collected through the filter can then be tested for possible presence of pathogens using a specific dye.

The detection time will also take around 30 minutes, she added.

Paraguison-Alili added that the tool kits are under the pilot testing phase.

“Currently they are under pilot-testing and pre-commercialization na siya,” she said.

She added that the DOH will also distribute the kits to barangays for disease monitoring and surveillance.

In June, Paraguison-Alili received a special citation from the National Academy of Science and Technology for the initiative.

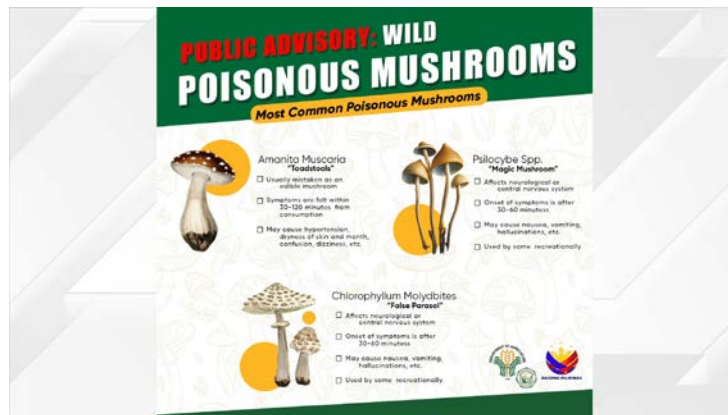
<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1962952/researcher-develops-tool-for-leptospirosis-and-schistosomiasis-detection>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

DOH-CAR cautions vs eating wild mushrooms after poisoning cases

By: [PNA](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine News Agency](#) / 10:35 AM July 19, 2024



DOH WARNING. The Department of Health in Cordillera reminded anew the public to continue to avoid eating wild mushrooms especially when unsure whether they are poisonous or not. The Department recorded 11 cases of poisoning, involving 34 people from four municipalities in Benguet and five in Mountain Province from May 21 to June 27, 2024. | PHOTO: DA-CAR

BAGUIO CITY — The Department of Health (DOH) on Thursday reiterated its call against eating wild mushrooms after 24 people in Mountain Province and Benguet were hospitalized for unknowingly consuming [poisonous mushrooms](#).

“It is better to avoid picking wild mushrooms especially if we are not sure if they are not poisonous,” Karen Lonogan, Development Management Officer IV and chief of the Regional Epidemiology and Services Unit of the Department of Health-Cordillera Administrative Region (DOH-CAR), told the Philippine News Agency.

Lonogan said 11 cases of poisoning involving 34 people from four municipalities in Benguet and five in Mountain Province were recorded from May 21 to June 27.

Of the 34 victims, 25 were admitted to different hospitals while others were sent home after receiving immediate treatment.

“Fortunately, there was no casualty because the victims were immediately brought to medical facilities where they received immediate treatment),” Lonogan said.

Earlier, the DOH and the Department of Agriculture (DA) Cordillera offices cautioned the public against harvesting wild mushrooms due to records of food poisoning.

Both agencies urged the public to buy directly from those who culture mushrooms or from shops selling cultured ones.

Mushrooms abound in fields and forests during the rainy season.

Symptoms

The DOH-CAR in its earlier public advisory said mushrooms that are not edible contain toxins that target the gastrointestinal system and nervous system with symptoms ranging from allergic reactions to abdominal pains, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, hallucinations, and behavioral changes.

The symptoms occur 30 to 60 minutes after eating the magic mushrooms, while the toadstool mushroom will have symptoms within 30 to 120 minutes.

The DOH said the severity of the symptoms may depend on the species, toxins, and the amount ingested, thus the treatment varies on the symptoms.

“Not all poisonous species are brightly colored. Most if not all parts of the poisonous mushrooms are toxic. Poisonous mushrooms may grow on land or wood, some poisonous mushrooms have toxins that can be tolerated by certain animals or insects. Boiling, drying, salting, or removing certain parts of a poisonous mushroom will not detoxify it and not all mushrooms smell or taste horrible,” the DOH advisory said. (PNA)

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1962505/doh-car-cautions-vs-eating-wild-mushrooms-after-poisoning-cases>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Data transparency, consolidation to help predict farm prices and promote smart farming

July 19, 2024 | 4:00 pm



Farmers pack newly harvested onions at a farm in Bongabon, Nueva Ecija province, Philippines, Jan. 27, 2023. — REUTERS

by **Patricia B. Mirasol**, Producer

The lack of data transparency and consolidation is hindering the price forecast of farm produce, which goes a long way into developing an efficient food system, according to Filipino scientists.

There needs to be a whole-of-government approach when it comes to food distribution and processing, said Agnes C. Rola, a National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) academician known for her work on the link between and among agriculture, the environment, and sustainable community development.

“The first step would be strengthening that platform, so consumers, farmers, middlemen, distributors will have the data they need to decide how much of a particular crop will be produced or consumed,” she said in a July 10 interview at the sidelines of a NAST event.

This data transparency, she said, allows consumers to know how much to pay – and enables farmers to know what price to accept – for a produce.

“We don’t have that kind of information because there’s no one monitoring it,” Ms. Rola told *BusinessWorld*. “There are a lot of considerations in terms of what kinds of indicators we need to have an efficient food system, but for me the price information is the more important part.”

Determining what the market wants helps farmers decide on what to plant, said Junel B. Soriano, the director of the Department of Agriculture (DA)-Bureau of Agricultural Research.

“I cannot see a big challenge in terms of supply, because – as a farmer – I can easily grow any crop in my field,” he said. “For as long as I know that I can earn a better or higher income [by growing a particular crop], then I have to grow it.”

Plotting data is useful in appreciating weather conditions, which in turn plays a role in crop diversity and agricultural production.

“There are areas where we cannot grow legumes or produce vegetables,” Mr. Soriano said. “The proper positioning of crops depends on the weather, the market, and the needs of other stakeholders.”

Data-driven agriculture is likewise a component of smart farming, a management concept that uses advanced technologies (including drones, Internet of Thing sensors, and management information systems) to improve agricultural production.

Farms where the environment is controlled – such as a vertical farm within a container van – are a classic example of a smart farm, according to Elmer P. Dadios, a NAST academician and a consultant for robotics and intelligent systems.

“I propose that the DA have technicians that are knowledgeable in sharing information and training farmers on [these technologies], like for example, how to use drones,” he said in the same July 10 event.

Other stakeholders who wish to help farmers with such technologies need to be mindful of which technology suits a farmer’s needs, he told *BusinessWorld*.

“My advice to farmers is to not stop learning how to use these things. These technologies are there to help us,” he added.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/07/19/609198/data-transparency-consolidation-to-help-predict-farm-prices-and-promote-smart-farming/>

REMATE:

Publiko pinag-iingat vs bird flu vax na ibinebenta online

July 20, 2024 16:00



MANILA, Philippines- Nagbabala ang Department of Agriculture (DA) nitong Biyernes laban sa avian influenza (AI) o bird flu vaccines na ibinebenta online.

“Again, hindi natin nire-recommend iyan at iyan ay bawal doon, kukuha lang ng bakuna doon sa mga reputable na institutions o source ng vaccines,” pahayag ni Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa sa isang panayam.

Nauna nang nagpalabas ang Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) ng parehong babala laban sa avian influenza vaccines na mabibili na sa iba’t ibang online shopping platforms.

Sa isang online platform, ibinebenta ang 100ml at 200ml ng AI H5N1 vaccine doses sa halagang P423 hanggang P790.

Sinabi ni De Mesa na maaaring magdulot ng panganib ang paggamit ng unregulated products gayung ang bird flu a highly pathogenic.

“Kahit anong gamot na hindi dumaan sa proseso, inirekomenda ng FDA [Food and Drug Administration] o ng BAI o hindi dumaan sa kung ano man na regulation, bawal iyan,” wika niya, na binanggit pa ang posibilidad ng AI transmission sa mga tao.

“Kung hindi tama iyong bakuna, it could be a poison both to the human and the animals,” giit ni de Mesa.

Nakikipag-ugnayan na ang DA sa FDA upang aksyunan ito. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/publiko-pinag-iingat-vs-bird-flu-vax-na-ibinebenta-online/>

REMATE:

NFA: P30/kilo buying price ng palay mananatili

July 20, 2024 14:38



MANILA, Philippines- Sinabi ng National Food Authority (NFA) nitong Sabado na ang buying price para sa palay ay mananatiling “competitive” upang matiyak na makukuha ng mga lokal na magsasaka ang pinakamalaking halaga na maaari nilang kitain.

“Unless revised by the NFA Council, our ceiling price for clean and dry palay will stay at P30 a kilo,” giit ni NFA administrator Larry Lacson.

Sa kalagitnaan ng Abril ngayong taon, itinaas ng NFA Council ang buying price ng palay sa P17-P30 kada kilo mula P16-P23 kada kilo upang tulungan ang ahensya na makipagkompetensya sa private traders.

Nasa Davao Oriental si Lacson at ilang miyembro ng NFA Council upang magsagawa ng dayalogo sa mga magsasaka at NFA employees.

Ininspeksyon din ng NFA officials ang mga pasilidad at rice inventory. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/nfa-p30-kilo-buying-price-ng-palay-mananatili/>

REMATE:

Mas mababang presyo ng bigas sa pagkaltas ng taripa mararamdaman sa Agosto – DA

July 20, 2024 13:14



MANILA, Philippines- Maaaring maramdaman ng publiko ang mas mababang rice retail prices sa susunod ng buwan.

Ito’y bunsod na rin ng pagpasok ng imported rice na may mas mababang taripa.

Sa ipinalabas na Executive Order (EO) 62, nakasaad dito na ang pinababang taripa sa imported rice mula 35% na naging 15% ay ipinatupad noong Hulyo 5.

”August iyan mararamdaman talaga iyong pumasok na siya sa palengke... Nasa P40s level of course, ang prevailing kasi ay P50, P51,” ani Department of Agriculture (DA) Assistant Secretary Arnel De Mesa.

Nauna rito, sinabi ng Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) na ang EO 62 ay maaaring makatulong para mabawasan ang rice retail prices ng P6 hanggang P7 kada kilo.

Nito lamang nakaraang Martes, Hulyo 16, ang presyo ng imported regular milled rice sa Kalakhang Maynila ay mula P47/kg hanggang P49/kg, at P51/kg hanggang P55/kg para sa imported well-milled rice.

Samantala, ipinaliwanag ni De Mesa na maaaring maghintay ang mga importers para sa mas mababang taripa bago pa sila mag-apply para sa ‘sanitary and phytosanitary import clearance’ (SPSIC), mayroong 302 na ang naaprubahang aplikasyon para buong buwan ng Hulyo.

Sa kabilang dako, tinatayang 35,594 metric tons (MT) ng imported rice ang dumating noong Hulyo 11, mas mababa kaysa sa 156,000 MT imported sa kaparehong panahon ng nakaraang taon.

”Iyong January, February, March, April, May of this year, ang average niyan is 400,000 metric tons, bumaba lang siya ng June kasi may mga ganitong usapin,” aniya pa rin.

Sa ngayon, nakapagtala ang DA ng kabuuang 2.37 million MT ng imported rice sa bansa. **Kris Jose**

<https://remate.ph/mas-mababang-presyo-ng-bigas-sa-pagkaltas-ng-taripa-mararamdaman-sa-agosto-da/>

REMATE:

P29 rice program pinalawig ng DA sa ‘vulnerable sectors’ sa S. Luzon

July 20, 2024 11:20



MANILA, Philippines- Pinalawig ng Department of Agriculture (DA) ang P29 Rice Program sa dalawang bagong Kadiwa sites sa Southern Luzon.

Ang P29 program ay nag-alok ng ‘aging but good quality rice’ sa halagang P29 kada kilo sa vulnerable sectors, kabilang na ang mga miyembro ng Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, senior citizens, solo parents at persons with disabilities.

“Ngayong araw, nagsimula na tayo sa Bacoor at San Pedro, sa Laguna at sa Cavite. So, dire-diretso ito at sa buwan ng Agosto, magsisimula na tayo sa Visayas at Mindanao,” ayon kay Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel De Mesa.

Ang ‘large-scale trial’ ng programa ay una nang inilunsad sa 10 sites sa Kalakhang Maynila at Bulacan noong Hulyo 5.

Ang first batch ay sa Bureau of Animal Industry Dome at National Irrigation Administration (NIA) sa Quezon City; Bureau of Plant Industry sa Malate, Manila; Food Terminal Inc. sa Taguig City;

Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority sa Las Piñas; Bayani Fernando Central Terminal and Barangay Fortune sa Marikina; sites sa Caloocan at Valenzuela; at City of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan.

Sinundan naman ito ng tatlo pang Kadiwa sites sa Malabon, Navotas at Marikina.

Layon ng DA na magsagawa ng large-scale trial nito sa buong taon para i-assess ang pangangailangan at hamon ng pagpapatupad sa buong bansa.

“We want to get iyong (the) critical information and challenges of course on demand, supply, logistics, and administrative concern,” ayon kay De Mesa.

Winika pa nito na pag-aaralan ng DA ang posibleng pagpapababa sa P29 selling price, kung isasaalang-alang ang pagbaba sa global market prices.

Sa kabuuan, layon ng P29 program na makinabang ang 6.9 milyong pamilya sa buong bansa na may kasamang suplay na manggagaling mula sa stocks ng National Food Authority at umani mula sa tinatawag na ‘contract growing programs’ ng NIA. **Kris Jose**

<https://remate.ph/p29-rice-program-pinalawig-ng-da-sa-vulnerable-sectors-sa-s-luzon/>

REMATE:

Irrigation project sa Ilocos Norte pinasinayaan; 1K magsasaka makikinabang

July 19, 2024 19:04



MANILA, Philippines – PINANGUNAHAN ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. ang inagurasyon ng Sulvec Small Reservoir Irrigation Project (SRIP) sa Pasuquin, Ilocos Norte.

Ang proyekto ay nakikitang mapakikinabangan ng mahigit sa 1,000 magsasaka sa lugar.

“It is indeed a momentous event, for me, as we celebrate [yet] another triumph in our efforts to elevate the state of agriculture in the country,” ayon kay Pangulong Marcos sa kanyang naging talumpati sa Pasuquin, Ilocos Norte.

Ang Sulvec SRIP ay isang medium-scale irrigation development project na nagkakahalaga ng P940.46 million.

“It is a more than 900-million-peso project that includes the Sulvec Earthfill Dam, which is the first impounding dam to be constructed here in our province,” ang winika ni Pangulong Marcos.

“It boasts a capacity of over one million cubic meters,” dagdag na pahayag ng Pangulo.

“Translated into practical terms, the capacity means a generous supply of water that can irrigate more than 700 hectares of agricultural land in 10 barangays of Pasuquin,” ang paliwanag ng Chief Executive.

“Ang proyekto pong ito ay makakapagbigay ng patubig sa [higit isang] libong magsasaka sa lugar na ito,” aniya pa rin sabay sabing “Kaya po ang mga magsasaka natin ay [makaaasa] na magiging mas maganda at marami pa ang kanilang aanihin.”

Pinangunahan naman ng Punong Ehekutibo ang ceremonial opening ng gate ng dam.

Ang pagbubukas ng gate ng dam ay “will allow water impounded from the earthfill dam to flow into the Siraong Diversion Dam, which will regulate water flow to irrigation canals leading to farmlands.”

Maliban sa pag-iimbak ng tubig para sa irigasyon, dalawang ektarya ng dam reservoir ang ilalaan para sa aquaculture.

Plano rin ng National Irrigation Administration (NIA) ang mag-develop ng Sulvec SRIP para i-accommodate ang hydropower plant at mga pasilidad para sa ‘recreation at tourism.’

“The implementation of this may have been long and laborious, but knowing how many communities will benefit and how much impact it will make on their daily work, it is impossible not to be excited and happy!” ang sinabi ni Pangulong Marcos.

Kinilala naman ni Pangulong Marcos ang mga inhinyero, arkitekto at construction workers “who have relentlessly worked to ensure the integrity of its structure, operation, and maintenance of this program.”

“And perhaps you might think that your tasks in doing this is just another job to meet the needs of your respective families, I have to tell you, it is much more than that,” ang tinuran ni Pangulong Marcos.

Kinilala rin ng Pangulo ang pagtityaga ng mga opisyal at staff ng NIA na nauwi sa tagumpay ng proyekto.

Inatasan naman ng Chief Executive ang NIA na tingnan kung ang operasyon ng Sulvec SRIP ay magiging “smooth and dependable so that we can keep our word to our citizens.”

“At bilang panghuli, sa ating mga minamahal na magsasaka: Kaagapay ninyo ako at ang buong pamahalaan ng Pilipinas sa pagkamit ng isang masagana at maginhawang bukas,” anito.

Sa oras na magsimula na ang operasyon, ang Sulvec SRIP ay magbibigay ng year-round irrigation water supply sa 705 ektarya ng agricultural lands sa 10 barangay sa Pasuquin sa Ilocos Norte.

“The irrigation project will further facilitate sustainable development in the area by improving agricultural productivity through the provision and improvement of irrigation and drainage infrastructures, potentially increasing the income and uplifting the standard of living of around 1,045 farmer beneficiaries,” ayon sa Pangulo.

Samantala, una ng nagpakalat ang Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) ng fingerlings ng tatlong species gaya ng Carp, Ayungin, at Freshwater Prawn sa itinalagang reservoir area. ***Kris Jose***

<https://remate.ph/irrigation-project-sa-ilocos-norte-pinasinayaan-1k-magsasaka-makikinabang/>

REMATE:

Trial period ng P29/ kilo rice program sinisilip palawigin

July 19, 2024 09:23



MANILA, Philippines- Plano ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. na palawigin ang trial period para sa P29 per kilo rice program ng pamahalaan sa vulnerable sectors ng isang taon.

Layon nitong magkaroon ng sapat na panahon na makakalap ng mga datos at kaalaman para gawing sustainable ang inisyatiba.

“This program is a targeted intervention. It’s a large-scale trial to determine if we can sell rice at these low levels for an extended period with government subsidy. We will assess the data comprehensively, backtrack to the farm level and determine what needs to be done to make this program sustainable,” ayon kay Tiu Laurel sa isang kalatas.

“This large-scale trial will gather data from farm to retail that’s why this cannot be done in a month, or two months. This will be a one year program so we can review the entire chain—from buying seeds, planting them, utilizing fertilizer, sourcing fertilizer, harvesting, warehousing, up to the retailing stage—and determine where we could save on costs to lower prices to consumers,” dagdag ng opisyal.

Matatandaang inilunsad ng Department of Agriculture (DA) ang “large-scale” trial ng pagbebenta ng nalulumang buffer rice stock ng National Food Authority (NFA) sa 10 Kadiwa sites sa unang bahagi ng buwan.

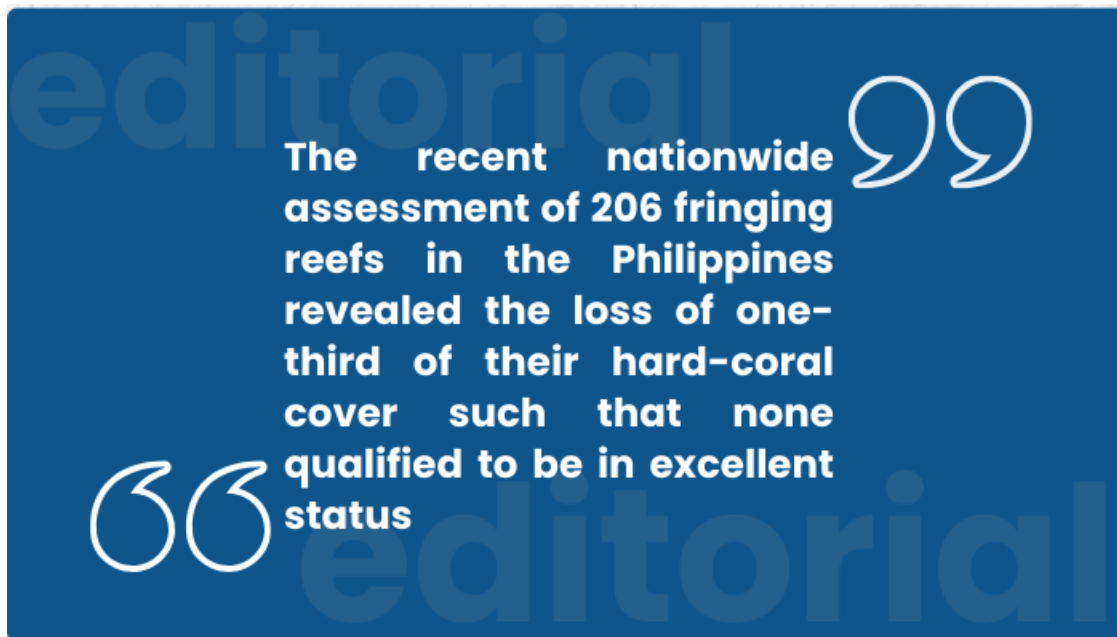
Sinasabing ang P29/kilong bigas ay para lamang sa mga benepisaryo ng 4Ps, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, solo parents, at indigenous people sa 10 Kadiwa sites sa Kalakhang Maynila at Bulacan tuwing Biyernes, Sabado at Linggo.

Maaaring bumili ang bawat benepisaryo ng hanggang 10 kilo ng bigas kada buwan mula sa Kadiwa centers.

Samantala, nakatakda ring palawigin ng DA ang P29 per kilo rice program sa mga lugar sa labas ng Luzon sa Agosto o Setyembre, at sa lahat ng 1,500 munisipalidad sa bansa. **Kris Jose**

<https://remate.ph/trial-period-ng-p29-kilo-rice-program-sinisilip-palawigin/>

Sad scenario: Reefs in decline



By Manila Standard
July 20, 2024, 12:15 am

OVER EXPLOITATION with dynamite fishing, climate change as well as sediment and nutrient pollution are contributing to the downswing of reefs in this archipelago of 115 million.

Marine ecologists and coral biologists say coral reefs, often called the “rainforests of the sea,” are among the most biologically diverse and economically valuable ecosystems on Earth.

Despite occupying less than one percent of the ocean, coral provides a habitat for approximately 25 percent of the world’s marine life, sustaining more than 4,000 fish species.

But coral reefs – some of the most biodiverse ecosystems in the world – face threats to their health and survival.

In the Philippines, for instance, the reefs are predominantly in decline, chiefly because of overexploitation – overfishing or overharvesting faster than they can be replaced – with regular dynamite fishing.

Ecologists and biologists say the degradation of Filipino coral reefs follows a similar pattern to that for tropical rainforests, where more than 6,074 of the original forest area has been cleared, and at least 80 percent and possibly 90 percent of the original mangrove forest area in 1920 has been lost.

This clearing, according to them, has resulted in extensive sediment deposition onto nearshore coral reefs, which predominate in the Philippines, resulting in loss of fisheries.

A recent study shows 90 percent of Philippine reefs are in poor to fair categories and none in excellent state, the dismal condition further exacerbated by destruction of marine habitats including dump-and-fill projects, destructive fishing practices, climate change, pollution and man-made pressures.

It is a despairing observation that the government currently has insufficient resources to manage effectively the reefs and protect them from over-exploitation.

With the population increasing, there are few prospects that significant national resources will be diverted towards reef management.

But there is an emboldening strategy that is proving effective for coastal resource management – with governments in the barangays adopting local area management plans.

These were successfully introduced years back and have spread to other regions, with ecologists saying if central governments assisted the decentralization of power, these local management activities may prove to be most effective at retaining coral reef resources against increasing anthropogenic or human-induced stress.

More than 500 species of coral are found in the Philippines – the apex of the Coral Triangle which has nearly 1,800 species of reef fish. Of these, less than 200 have been assessed as “effectively managed.”

The recent nationwide assessment of 206 fringing reefs in the Philippines revealed the loss of one-third of their hard-coral cover such that none qualified to be in excellent status.

<https://www.manilastandard.net/opinion/editorial/314473837/sad-scenario-reefs-in-decline.html>

Marcos' vision for affordable rice

By Louis 'Barok' Biraogo
July 20, 2024, 12:05 am

“The road to affordable rice has been long and arduous, but it stands as a testament to what can be achieved with vision, determination, and collaborative effort”

THE air was thick with anticipation as President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ascended the podium during his campaign, promising the Filipino people a future where rice would be affordable for every household.

The crowd's roar was deafening, a testament to the deep-seated longing for this staple to become within reach of even the poorest families.

Yet, behind the scenes, a labyrinth of challenges lay in wait, threatening to derail this ambitious pledge.

The journey to P29 per kilo rice, now set to become a reality at 23 Kadiwa outlets by August, was fraught with adversity.

The path was not just a political slogan but a gauntlet of economic, logistical, and bureaucratic obstacles that had to be navigated with deft precision.

The promise and the roadblocks

Marcos's pledge was more than just a populist promise; it was a response to the escalating prices of basic commodities that left millions struggling.

The early days of this initiative saw critics questioning its feasibility, especially given the country's dependence on rice imports and the volatile global market.

The rice subsidy scheme, pegged at P20 per kilo, required an eye-watering P220 million per day, a figure that seemed insurmountable.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., the man at the helm of this Herculean task, faced the brunt of these challenges.

Aging stocks from the National Food Authority were a critical concern.

The quality of these grains, some argued, would deteriorate, undermining the very purpose of the program.

Moreover, the logistics of distributing rice to 13 Kadiwa outlets, soon to be expanded to 23, involved a coordination nightmare across the archipelago's fragmented geography.

Bridging the gap

Yet, where there were challenges, there were also ingenious solutions.

The National Irrigation Administration's contract-growing arrangement with local rice farmers was a masterstroke, ensuring a steady supply to supplement NFA stocks.

This move not only supported the P29 rice program but also bolstered the local agricultural economy, creating a ripple effect of benefits.

The implementation strategy was meticulous. Vulnerable households, including members of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), solo parents, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities, were prioritized.

By targeting these groups, the program ensured that the aid reached those who needed it most, maximizing the impact of every grain distributed.

A Win-Win Scenario

From an economic perspective, the P29 per kilo rice initiative is a game-changer. It alleviates the financial burden on millions of households, allowing them to allocate their limited resources to other essential needs.

For the agricultural sector, it represents a symbiotic relationship between the government and local farmers, fostering a more self-reliant economy.

Socially, the program is a source of inspiration. It reinforces the government's commitment to the welfare of its citizens, strengthening the social fabric.

Politically, it is a testament to the administration's resolve to fulfill its promises, a rarity in the often cynical world of governance.

Applauding the contributors

Credit must be given where it is due. President Marcos, with his unwavering commitment, has delivered on a promise that many deemed impossible.

Secretary Laurel Jr. deserves accolades for his strategic acumen and tenacity in navigating the program through turbulent waters.

The Department of Agriculture's relentless efforts have been pivotal in making this dream a reality.

Moving forward, it is crucial to ensure the sustainability of the P29 rice program.

Expanding the contract-growing arrangements and investing in agricultural technology can further enhance productivity and reduce dependency on aging NFA stocks.

Additionally, transparent and efficient logistics management will be essential as the program scales to more areas.

Moreover, continuous monitoring and feedback mechanisms should be instituted to address any emerging issues promptly. Engaging with stakeholders, including farmers' groups and local communities, will ensure that the program remains responsive and adaptive to ground realities.

The road to affordable rice has been long and arduous, but it stands as a testament to what can be achieved with vision, determination, and collaborative effort.

As the first sacks of P29 per kilo rice are sold at Kadiwa outlets, a promise made becomes a promise kept, heralding a new chapter in the fight against poverty and food insecurity in the Philippines.

<https://www.manilastandard.net/opinion/314473820/marcos-vision-for-affordable-rice.html>

Marcos urged to focus on agriculture

By Francis Earl Cueto and Arlie O. Calalo

July 20, 2024

JARO, Leyte — Senate Majority Leader Francis Tolentino urged President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to accord priority to agriculture.

"The Philippine economy is doing well, but the President should prioritize agriculture. Our country was hit by the uncontrolled El Niño phenomenon, and that is understandable," Tolentino said in an ambush interview during the graduation rites of Eastern Visayas State University.

Marcos is yet to fulfill his campaign promise to bring the price of rice to P20 per kilo.



FREE FROM DEBT President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. shows the certificate of condonation he signed with Agrarian Reform Secretary Conrado Estrella in Pangasinan, on July 19, 2024. The certificate under the New Agrarian Emancipation Act (RA 11953) condones the debts incurred by agrarian reform beneficiaries and enables them to enjoy the fruits of their labor. At least 12 farmers from Region 1 received their certificates and mortgage releases. The President also distributed farm machinery, equipment and cash aid to farmer cooperatives and selected beneficiaries. Meanwhile, about 4,600 farmers, fisherfolk and their families received cash aid, livelihood assistance, and rice to address immediate food security needs. PPA POOL PHOTO

This year, the Philippines has once again emerged as the world's largest rice importer, projected to import 4.1 million metric tons (MMT), surpassing the 3.9 MMT import in 2023.

Marcos said that the government is bringing financial support to farmers and fishermen affected by El Niño after the weather phenomenon resulted in agricultural losses amounting to P367.54 million.



President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. shows the certificate of condonation he signed with Agrarian Reform Secretary Conrado Estrella in Pangasinan on July 19, 2024. The certificate under the New Agrarian Emancipation Act (RA 11953) condones the debts incurred by agrarian reform beneficiaries and enable them to enjoy the fruits of their labor. At least 12 farmers from Region 1 received their certificates and mortgage releases. The President also distributed farm machinery, equipment, and cash aid to farmer cooperatives and selected beneficiaries. Meanwhile, about 4,600 farmers, fisherfolk, and their families received cash aid, livelihood assistance, and rice to address immediate food security needs. PPA POOL PHOTOS

"I am also expecting President Marcos to address inflation and West Philippine Sea issues in the upcoming State of the Nation Address," Tolentino added.

Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority said certain roads will be closed in connection with Marcos' third State of the Nation Address (SONA) on Monday.

Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte said that traffic rerouting will be enforced by Task Force SONA 2024, led by the Philippine National Police and the Presidential Security Group.

A zipper lane or counter-flow will be implemented along Commonwealth Avenue (southbound portion) to make way for vehicles of government officials and visitors going to the National Legislative Complex.

Meanwhile, the Batasan-IBP Road will be closed to public vehicles starting at 8 a.m. on Monday.

Motorists were advised to take alternative routes to avoid heavy traffic along Commonwealth Avenue and around the Batasan complex.

The National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) said it will be on full alert status starting Sunday.

A full alert indicates the highest level of readiness for all units, and no personnel are allowed to go on leave.

"We are on heightened alert such that on Sunday we will be on full alert. As of now, the threat level in Metro Manila is lowest and almost nil around the House of Representatives, which is a no-fly zone," said NCRPO chief MGen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr.

Nartatez added that an additional 1,000 policemen from Regions 3 and 4A will be deployed, raising the total number of law enforcement officers securing the SONA to 23,000.

Nartatez said the huge deployment was not an "overkill" but merely ensuring safety during the SONA.

He urged groups holding protests during the event to act within the bounds of the law.

PNP chief Gen. Rommel Francisco Marbil assured the public that measures were in place to prevent an incident similar to the assassination attempt on former US president Donald Trump during the SONA.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/20/news/national/marcos-urged-to-focus-on-agriculture/1958581>

Marcos inaugurates P940-M reservoir in Ilocos Norte

By Catherine S. Valente

July 20, 2024

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday inaugurated the Sulvec Small Reservoir Irrigation Project (SRIP) in Pasuquin, Ilocos Norte, that is seen to benefit more than 1,000 farmers in the area.

In his speech, Marcos said the medium-scale irrigation development project worth P940.46 million would help "elevate the state of agriculture in the country."

"It is a more than 900-million-peso project that includes the Sulvec Earthfill Dam, which is the first impounding dam to be constructed here in our province," Marcos said.

"It boasts a capacity of over one million cubic meters, if translated into practical terms, that means a generous supply of water that can irrigate more than 700 hectares of agricultural land in 10 barangay (villages) here in Pasuquin," he added.

Aside from storing water for irrigation, the President said it would also be used to house facilities for recreation and tourism.

"The NIA (National Irrigation Administration) is also planning to develop the Sulvec SRIP to accommodate a hydropower plant [and] facilities for recreation and tourism," he said.

Marcos said that the lake within the reservoir project was a "potential tourist spot," saying that the government should also capitalize from it.

"In fact, I was looking around. One of the things we discover when we do these things. While we have a dam, when we put a dam and there's a lake, immediately it is a potential tourist spot, and that's something that we can think about," he said.

The President also said that two hectares of the dam's reservoir would be dedicated to aquaculture.

"And besides, what we can add to the hydroelectric power and the aquaculture that we are going to get from this dam is also the... we will install solar power facilities so that in case we develop this as a tourist destination, there will be a source of electricity," he said.

Meanwhile, Marcos acknowledged the engineers, architects, and construction workers "who have relentlessly worked to ensure the integrity of its structure, operation, and maintenance of this program."

"And perhaps you might think that your tasks in doing this is just another job to meet the needs of your respective families, I have to tell you, it is much more than that," he said.

The Chief Executive also recognized the perseverance of the officials and staff of NIA that led to the accomplishment of the project.

He directed the NIA to see to it that the operations of the Sulvec SRIP will be "smooth and dependable so that we can keep our word to our citizens."

"This project is a testament to [the] Filipino mark of excellence which has contributed significantly to our efforts in rebuilding our nation and providing a better environment for the next generations," Marcos said.

"And perhaps you might think that your tasks in doing this is just another job to meet the needs of your respective families, I have to tell you, it is much more than that," he said.

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"This project is a testament to [the] Filipino mark of excellence which has contributed significantly to our efforts in rebuilding our nation and providing a better environment for the next generations," Marcos said.

"To the officials and staff of NIA, your perseverance has led to the accomplishment of this project. And while we celebrate the realization of this undertaking, the challenge for us moving forward is to keep delivering [on] our promises and for the aspirations of our people," he added.

Once operational, the Sulvec SRIP will provide year-round irrigation water supply to about 705 hectares of agricultural lands in 10 villages of Pasuquin in Ilocos Norte.

The irrigation project will further facilitate sustainable development in the area by improving agricultural productivity through the provision and improvement of irrigation and drainage infrastructures, potentially increasing the income and uplifting the standard of living of around 1,045 farmer beneficiaries.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources initially dispersed on Friday fingerlings of three species — carp, ayungin and freshwater prawn — in the designated reservoir area.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/20/regions/marcos-inaugurates-p940-m-reservoir-in-ilocos-norte/1958596>

P29 rice program to expand to Region 6

By Rjay Zuriaga Castor

July 20, 2024

ILOILO CITY — Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the department was targeting to expand the coverage of the P29 rice program in Western Visayas Region 6) in November this year.

"Looking at the supply and timing of the harvest and milling, I think we can expand the program in Western Visayas latest in November," Laurel told The Manila Times.

"But of course, we will try our best to bring it here as soon as possible," he added.

The aim of the program is bring down the price of quality rice at P29 per kilo to disadvantaged groups, including indigents, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and solo parents.

A large-scale trial of the program began earlier this month. Initially, 10 Kadiwa centers in Metro Manila and Bulacan are selling the subsidized rice on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

When asked of the P20 per kilo of rice promise of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. during his campaign, Laurel said the idea was still in limbo considering the skyrocketing cost of goods and services in the country.

"We are studying how to achieve that. But of course, I cannot promise anything now. I cannot say that we can have it in the administration of Marcos Jr.," he said.

He pointed out the significant impact of high market prices, particularly for fuel and logistics.

"If everything will normalize, maybe that would be possible," he added.

Despite the challenges, Laurel emphasized that the Department of Agriculture (DA), alongside the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), was implementing measures to help reduce rice prices.

Aside from the P29 rice program, the DA is also pushing the Rice for All Program, which aims to offer rice at Kadiwa centers for prices ranging from P45 to P48 per kilo starting this July.

Meanwhile, NIA Administrator Eduardo Eddie Guillen stressed that the President's promise also involved increasing farmers' production.

"What we need to realize in that promise is that the President does not just want to lower the price of rice but also to help farmers increase their yield," he said.

Guillen noted that NIA and DA were currently analyzing the rice production value chain to ensure farmers remained profitable after selling their products.

"In the economies of scale production, what we are doing right now is we are turning our irrigator associations into cooperatives," he said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/20/regions/p29-rice-program-to-expand-to-region-6/1958589>

DA: Rice prices could fall below P50/kilo in August

By Janine Alexis Miguel

July 20, 2024

RICE prices could markedly fall next month as imports levied lower tariffs have started to arrive, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said on Friday that around 35,500 metric tons (MT) of the grain had already been shipped to the Philippines under the 15-percent tariff established via Executive Order 62.

The rice tariff cut, from an already lowered 35 percent, is part of a new comprehensive tariff program approved by the National Economic and Development Authority Board last month "to ensure access and affordability... while balancing the interests of consumers and local producers."

"Imported rice priced at P51 to P53 per kilo could drop to below P50 due to the significant tariff reduction," de Mesa said.

He also claimed that prevailing prices had already decreased since July 11 and would "go down further."

"There is a big difference when I looked at the rate and computation [of the possible drop]... it's quite a significant reduction, to the P40s level definitely," de Mesa said.

The DA official earlier said that retail prices of rice could go down by almost P7 a kilo in the next few months following the government's approval of lower import tariffs.



The Department of Agriculture (DA) starts selling rice for P29 per kilo at the Kadiwa center at the Bureau of Plant Industry on July 12, 2024 under the government's Program 29. Each beneficiary is allowed to buy 10 kilos of rice per month. Buyers only need to bring their ID and reusable containers or bags to put the purchased rice. PHOTO BY RENE H. DILAN

Price monitoring by the department showed that the prevailing prices of imported well-milled rice as of July 19 range between P51 and P55 per kilo, while regular milled rice is priced at P47 to P49 per kilo.

De Mesa explained that the gradual decline in the upper price limit also indicates that old stocks were being unloaded and new stocks were entering the market.

However, he acknowledged that around 35,000 MT that had arrived were "relatively small" and not substantial enough to impact rice prices immediately.

From January to May this year, average monthly imports were around 400,000 MT. Amid discussions surrounding a tariff cut, these fell to 181,530 MT in June.

De Mesa said that the DA was expecting an increase in rice imports with EO 62 having been issued and now in effect. As of July 11, year-to-date imports were already at 2.73 million MT, up by around 16 percent from 2.02 million MT a year earlier.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/20/business/top-business/da-rice-prices-could-fall-below-p50kilo-in-august/1958628>

EDITORIAL - Dagsa ang imported na bigas at manok

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Kahapon dumating ang 35,594 metric tons ng imported na bigas. Ayon sa Department of Agriculture (DA) ang dumating na imported rice ay nasa ilalim ng ipinatutupad na mababang taripa o buwis na nakapaloob sa Executive Order No. 62 na inisyu ni President Marcos Jr. noong Hunyo. Sa pagdating ng imported rice, mababawasan daw ng P6 hanggang P7 ang presyo ng local na bigas. Samantala, ang local commercial special rice ay nagkakahalaga naman ng P56 at P65. Sa kabuuan, ang rice imports ng Pilipinas mula Enero hanggang Mayo ay umabot na sa 400,000 metriko tonelada. Ayon pa sa DA, may posibilidad na umangkat pa ng bigas ang bansa sa mga susunod na buwan.

Ang Pilipinas ang number one importer ng bigas sa buong mundo. Ikalawa ang Indonesia, pangatlo ang China at pang-apat ang European Union. Umaangkat ang Pilipinas sa Vietnam, Thailand, Pakistan at India.

Dati, ang Pilipinas ay nag-export na ng bigas noong 1968 hanggang 1970 at naulit noong 1977 hanggang 1980. Hindi na ito naipagpatuloy mula noon. Nagkaroon ng mga problema at hindi na sinubukan pang tugunan ng mga naging Presidente ng bansa. Hanggang sa umasa na

lamang sa pag-import. Tinalo ng Vietnam ang Pilipinas sa rice production sa kabila na dinurog ng digmaan ang nasabing bansa noong dekada 60. Ang Vietnam ang number one supplier ng bigas sa Pilipinas. Mas malaki ang lupang sakahan ng Pilipinas kaysa Vietnam.

May malaking problema sa sector ng agrikultura kaya hindi makapag-produce nang sapat para sa pangangailangan ng mamamayan. Hindi na nangarap maparami ang ani at nagdepende na sa imported na bigas.

Sinabi minsan ni President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. na hindi niya matanggap na nag-aangkat ng bigas ang bansa lalo pa't isang agricultural na bansa. Sinabi niya ito noong 2022 nang maupong Presidente at nanungkulan ding Agriculture Secretary. Pinangako niya na magkakaroon ng pagbabago. Napabayaang niya ang sector ng agrikultura ng mga nakaraang pamunuan. Tutulungan ang mga magsasaka para dumami ang ani. Pati ang farm to market road ay nabanggit din niyang isasaayos. Pero magdaraos na siya ng ikatlong State of the Nation Address sa Lunes ay wala pa ring pag-unlad sa agrikultura at patuloy pa ang pag-aangkat ng bigas.

Hindi lamang bigas ang bumabaha sa bansa kundi pati imported frozen chicken, manok. Nangangamba ang mga lokal na poultry raisers na maapektuhan ang kanilang kinikita dahil sa imported na manok.

Mabanggit sana ito ni Marcos sa kanyang SONA para naman hindi aandap-andap ang kalooban ng mga magsasaka ng palay at magmamanok sa bansa.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/opinyon/2024/07/20/2371566/editorial-dagsa-ang-imported-na-bigas-manok>