

CLIPPINGS FOR TODAY JULY 22, 2024

A. THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Farmers to President Marcos: Declare agriculture production policy

Department of Agriculture eyes a Kadiwa store in every province

Storm Carina intensifies, enhances habagat

Rice, glorious rice

The state of the nation's MSMEs

Tighten biosecurity measures vs ASF, government urged

B. PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

What's the plan to tame price hikes, Mr. President?

Prioritize the majority's needs

C. BUSINESS WORLD:

Farmers call for tight biosecurity as trials for ASF vaccine continue

Brazil halts some poultry exports after Newcastle disease case

With cocoa butter at \$28,000, more companies go for 'chocolatey'

Chicken culling, disposal raise concern as bird flu spreads

D. MANILA STANDARD:

Umbrellas to the rescue

E. MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT:

NFA buying price cap on palay stays at P30/kg

F. BUSINESS MIRROR:

NFA to implement reforms in rice procurement scheme

PHL aims to sell more food products to China

Ifad calls for more funding to transform food systems

G. PILIPINO STAR NGAYON:

Usapin sa pagkain, trabaho inaasahan ng mga Pinoy sa SONA

Tulong ni Pangulong Marcos sa magsasaka, mangingisdang magpapababa ng presyo ng pagkain – Romualdez

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Farmers to President Marcos: Declare agriculture production policy

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

July 22, 2024 | 12:00am



Despite scorching heat, farmers are busy putting their harvested rice inside the sacks in Calatagan, Batangas on March 30, 2024.

STAR / Jesse Bustos

MANILA, Philippines — Farmers' groups yesterday asked President Marcos to declare in today's State of the Nation Address (SONA) a policy emphasizing local production amid the flooding of imported agriculture products.

United Broiler Raisers Association (UBRA) president Elias Jose Inciong said Marcos should order the strict implementation of laws promoting the country's agriculture sector, particularly Republic Act 8435 or the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA).

"He needs to reiterate his policy emphasis on local production and back it up with budgetary support, including the approval of the tier 2 requests of the Department of Agriculture (DA)," Inciong told The STAR.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. is pushing for a P513-billion budget for 2025.

Inciong also called on Marcos to declare as urgent bills on livestock development.

For his part, Philippine Egg Board Association chairman emeritus Gregorio San Diego hopes that the government will fulfill its promise of local food production.

Former agriculture secretary Leonardo Montemayor said Marcos should clarify during his third SONA whether local farm production is still his priority amid the approval of Executive Order 62 on reduced tariffs.

Montemayor said Marcos failed to fulfill his promise during his oath on June 30, 2022, that he would prioritize the country's food production.

EO 62 took effect on July 7.

"It is very painful for our sector as before the maximum tariff reduction on imported food was only one year but under EO 62, it extended it all the way to the end of December 2028," he said.

Farmers' groups have asked the Supreme Court to stop the implementation of EO 62 as they questioned its constitutionality.

At the same time, Montemayor said the agriculture growth failed to catch up with the country's increasing population.

He said the agriculture growth should double or increase by three percent to match the increasing population.

Growth in the agriculture sector would happen if more budget was allocated by the government, Montemayor said.

"For so many years, the local agriculture sector was neglected. While the budget (of the DA) has increased very significantly in the first year of President Marcos, that was in 2023, unfortunately since then it went down after that. We hope that by next year, 2025, it will increase," he said.

"We want to hear from the President during his SONA that he will ensure that there will be enough budget for the department so that the local food production will be able to catch up with our requirements," he added.

Montemayor said that the proposed P513-billion budget will be more than double the DA's present 2024 allocation.

"Based on the proposal of Secretary Tiu Laurel, the budget for irrigation is not enough so number one is irrigation. If we don't have enough irrigation, there is no way we can increase our food production so that is very critical and of course, there should be additional big dams. We should also focus on the so-called water

impounding projects amid the La Niña so that during summer, our farmers can have sources of water,” he noted.

Montemayor reiterated that the government should prioritize assistance to farmers instead of the P29 per kilo of rice currently being implemented by the DA.

“The assistance to affordable rice is just a band-aid solution. Once the funds are used, where will you get the funding for the P29 per kilo of rice? We need to strengthen our productive capacity,” he said.

According to Montemayor, the government should also address postharvest facilities amid high losses incurred by farmers due to lack of enough machinery.

Montemayor said the government should also address the logistics so that farmers can bring their produce directly to the distribution areas and lessen the intervention of middlemen.

Plastics

An environmental group yesterday asked Marcos to prioritize the alarming issue of harmful chemicals in plastics in today’s SONA amid health risks, especially for children.

BAN Toxics executive director Rey San Juan Jr. cited the proliferation of toxic-laden toys.

“We call on the Marcos administration to prioritize actions to curb the alarming entry and proliferation of plastic products made of chemicals of concern across a wide range of sectors and product value chains, including toys and other children’s products,” San Juan said.

San Juan said that based on the State of the Science on Plastic Chemicals Report released this year, more than 16,000 chemicals are potentially used or present in plastic materials and products, with a mere six percent currently subject to international regulations.

“More than 4,200 plastic chemicals are considered chemicals of concern because they are persistent (long-term presence), bioaccumulative (stay and accumulate in humans and wildlife), mobile (they spread in water systems) and toxic (cause harm to living organisms),” he added.

According to San Juan, phthalates, bisphenol A, and vinyl chloride used in plastic production are a few examples of these chemicals, which have been linked to a wide range of adverse human health effects, including cancer, reproductive harm, asthma, birth defects, neurotoxicity and early mortality.

BAN Toxics has raised serious concerns after discovering toxic chlorinated paraffin in toys during a 2023 study conducted in ten countries, including the Philippines.

“The levels of toxic chemicals in the toys were comparable to those found in hazardous wastes, such as incinerator ash,” San Juan noted.

Loss and damage

Environmental group Greenpeace Philippines and frontline communities in San Mateo, Rizal asked Marcos to make climate polluters accountable for loss and damage.

Greenpeace said San Mateo has been a site of multiple climate disasters and its flood-control structures, which have yet to be completed, are already falling apart.

“As climate impacts continue to escalate with ferocious intensity, oil and gas companies, whose historical and ongoing emissions have contributed significantly to climate change continue to operate while denying their major role in the crisis,” Greenpeace said.

Greenpeace called on Marcos to certify as urgent the proposed Climate Accountability (CLIMA) Act.

“President Marcos must champion policies to help facilitate access to justice for communities by advocating for strong climate finance mechanisms on the international stage to make companies and not just countries pay, certifying the CLIMA bill,” Greenpeace said.

The CLIMA Act would establish a legal framework for climate loss and damage accountability.

Greenpeace said that the CLIMA bill, once passed into law, is the first one globally that opens up the possibility for corporate climate accountability to be recognized by a state, providing measures for reparation mechanisms.

The group said the bill intends to institute policies and systems to address climate change, protect communities from climate change-induced losses, damage, and human rights harms and provide mechanisms for accountability and reparations from those responsible for worsening the climate crisis, including corporate interests such as the fossil fuel industry.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/07/22/2371897/farmers-president-marcos-declare-agriculture-production-policy>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Department of Agriculture eyes a Kadiwa store in every province

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

July 22, 2024 | 12:00am



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

MANILA, Philippines — Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. yesterday said that his administration targets to open Kadiwa outlets in all 82 provinces in the country before the end of the term of President Marcos in 2028.

“Well, (I plan to) expand Kadiwa. Hopefully, one Kadiwa for every province or municipality, if possible,” Tiu Laurel said ahead of the scheduled third State of the Nation Address of Marcos.

Tiu Laurel added that the Department of Agriculture (DA) wants Kadiwa stores to be available in the 1,500 municipalities.

“Then hopefully, if we have that set up, the farmers and fisherfolk can directly sell their produce to the consumers,” he added.

Tiu Laurel said that this will also cut the middlemen and will result in cheaper prices of farm products.

“More income for the farmers and cheaper retail prices for consumers. That’s what I am working on but of course, to be able to achieve that, we need investment on agricultural ports, postharvest facilities, dryers, silos, warehouses and cold storage for frozen (products) and ice plants,” Tiu Laurel noted.

He said that the DA aims to provide soft loans to farmers to support various postharvest facilities.

According to him, under the proposed 2025 budget, the DA is asking for a guarantee fund to finance the low interest loans for farmers organizations.

Meanwhile, Tiu Laurel said that the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) targets to plant 100 million coconut trees in the next four years as part of efforts to boost the local industry.

“So this year, we target to plant 8.5 million (coconut trees), then next year, 15 million and then the last two years, 25 million each,” he added.

According to Tiu Laurel, the current coconut trees only produce between 40 and 50 nuts per year.

“Majority (of the coconut trees to be planted) will be the hybrid dwarf. It (new variety) can produce up to 100 to 120 nuts per year,” Tiu Laurel said, adding the PCA will implement the fertilization project to increase production from 60 to 70 percent.

He said among the targeted areas for the fertilization project are coconut producing regions like Camarines Sur, Quezon and Mindanao.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/07/22/2371900/department-agriculture-eyes-kadiwa-store-every-province>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Storm Carina intensifies, enhances habagat

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

July 22, 2024 | 12:00am

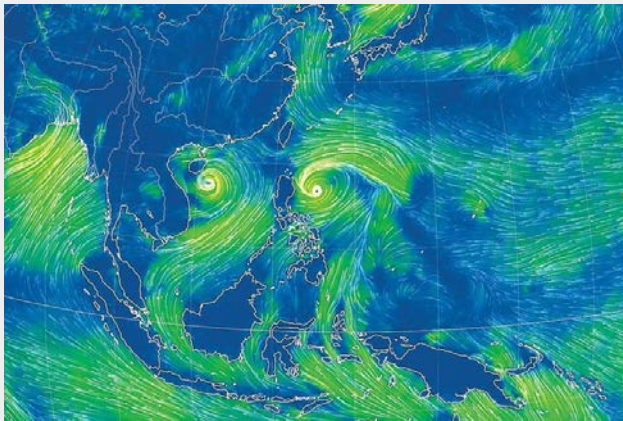


Image from Earth NullSchool shows a visualization of Tropical Storm Carina (right) as it moves east of the Philippines yesterday.

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) yesterday said that Tropical Storm Carina is expected to exit the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) by midweek, adding that it will enhance the southwest monsoon bringing rains to many areas in the country.

In a briefing, PAGASA weather specialist Veronica Torres said that Carina (international name Gaemi) may reach severe tropical storm category by Sunday night, and typhoon category by Monday evening.

Under PAGASA's tropical cyclone wind signal system, a typhoon is declared if it has sustained winds of 118 to 184 kilometers an hour; severe tropical storm, 89 to 117 km/h; tropical storm, 62 to 88 km/h, and tropical depression less than 61 km/h.

“Carina may leave the Philippine area of responsibility by Wednesday night or Thursday early morning, as we do not discount the possibility of its rapid intensification,” Torres added.

She said Carina is forecast to move generally north northwestward to northward.

Torres said that Carina slightly intensified over the Philippine Sea, as its center was located at 350 kilometers east of Casiguran, Aurora with maximum sustained winds

of 85 km/h near the center, gustiness of up to 115 km/h, as it moves westward at 20 km/h.

“After 24 hours, we expect Carina to be located 345 kilometers east of Tuguegarao City, Cagayan; and then after 48 hours, 295 kilometers east southeast of Basco, Batanes; and then by July 24, 345 kilometers east northeast of Itbayat, Batanes; and by July 25, it is already outside PAR at 565 kilometers north of Itbayat, Batanes,” Torres said.

She added that the enhanced southwest monsoon will bring strong rains in the western section of Luzon.

“Currently, Carina is affecting east and northern Luzon. No wind signal has been hoisted at this time, but we don’t rule out the possibility of raising signal number 1 in extreme Northern Luzon and the northeastern portion of mainland Cagayan,” Torres said.

According to Torres, the tropical depression outside PAR, or formerly “Butchoy” will also enhance the southwest monsoon, also known as habagat.

“The southwest monsoon being enhanced by Carina and Butchoy will bring strong winds today (Sunday) until tomorrow (Monday) noon in Mimaropa, Bicol region and Western Visayas; by Monday noon to Tuesday noon in Zambales, Bataan, Metro Manila, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol region and Visayas and then Tuesday noon until Wednesday noon in Ilocos region, Central Luzon, Metro Manila, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol region and Visayas,” she said.

Based on the latest bulletin of PAGASA, heavy rainfall of 50 to 100 millimeters is expected in mainland Cagayan and Babuyan Islands until Monday noon while accumulated rainfall of 100 to 200 mm is expected from Monday noon to Tuesday noon in Batanes; and 50 to 100 mm in Babuyan Islands.

“Forecast rainfall is generally higher in elevated or mountainous areas. Under these conditions, flooding and rain-induced landslides are possible especially in areas that are highly or very highly susceptible to these hazards as identified in official hazard maps and in localities that experienced considerable amounts of rainfall for the past several days,” Torres said.

Storm damage to agriculture reaches P10.33 million

The damage of southwest monsoon and Tropical Depressions Butchoy and Carina to the agriculture sector in Mimaropa, Western Visayas, Zamboanga peninsula and Caraga regions has reached P10.33 million, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Based on the report of DA's Operations Centers, the rains and flooding brought by the two cyclones and the habagat have resulted in the production loss of 189 metric tons covering 1,102 hectares of agricultural areas of corn, corn and high value crops, and affecting 873 farmers.

According to the DA, the bulk of the damage came from rice with P8.76 million or 87 percent, affecting 1,082 hectares and production loss of 117 metric tons.

It was followed by high value crops with P1.05 million damage or 10 percent affecting five hectares and production loss of 51 metric tons.

The damage to corn production totaled to P513,020 covering 16 hectares and volume loss of 21 metric tons.

"These values are subject to validation," the DA said, giving assurance that best possible efforts are being undertaken to carry out assistance and appropriate interventions to the affected farmers.

"The Department will promptly deploy the following forms of assistance... 72,174 bags of rice seeds, 39,546 bags of corn seeds, 59,600 pouches and 1,966 kilograms of vegetable seeds," the DA added.

The affected farmers can avail themselves of the Survival and Recovery Loan Program from the Agricultural Credit Policy Council with loanable amount of up to P25,000 payable in three years at zero interest, the DA said.

At least P1 billion from the Quick Response Fund will be tapped for the rehabilitation of affected areas, and will also have "available funds from the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. to indemnify affected farmers," the agency noted.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/07/22/2371922/storm-carina-intensifies-enhances-habagat>

Rice, glorious rice

[SINGKIT](#) - [Doreen G. Yu](#) - The Philippine Star

July 22, 2024 | 12:00am

The rice for my kiam pung (a rice dish I make with mustard greens, shrimps, sausage and mushrooms) was spread out on a tray, put under the sun. As I sifted through the grains to pick out the odd unhusked grain or wayward pebble (there were none), I remembered how we used to “clean” the rice after it was delivered by our suki – in a kalesa, no less – from Quiapo market, not far from where we lived in San Miguel district. The rice came in a coarse jute sack, and in the afternoon lull between siesta and dinner preparation, our helpers would take rice from the sack, spread the grains out on large bilaos and, over kape and kuwentuhan, pick out the impurities of pebbles, twigs and unhusked grains and drop them in a tin cup; in those days there was quite a lot, the cup ending up about half full by the end of the afternoon. Then with deft wrist motions they’d send the grains up in the air and the chaff ended up on the floor, to be swept away later. This method of manual winnowing was foolproof, but when I tried it with my aluminum tray it didn’t work as well as with a bilao. Rice has always been the center of our diet. I don’t remember what kind of rice we had – dinorado, sinandomeng or whatever – there was just rice for everyday meals, rice for lugaw (congee) and malagkit for special things like ba-chang (savory suman).

Rice has become such a controversial and convoluted issue, what with imports and high prices and low farm efficiency and high cost of inputs. The Philippine Statistics Authority says we are about 81.5 percent rice self-sufficient (August 2023). The US Department of Agriculture predicts our 2023-2024 imports to be 3.8 million metric tons, although our Department of Agriculture disputes that, claiming a bumper harvest last year. As of July 11, we have already imported 2.369 million MT, per the Bureau of Plant Industry.

Now the promise is P29 per kilo rice, but only in selected Kadiwa stores, 13 of them so far. With the tariff lowered this month to 15 percent (from 35 percent), prices all around are expected to go down, by P6 to P7 per kilo (to the P40 level daw) when the new imported stocks come in, according to the bright boys and girls in government. That’s good news – I think, but I’m not holding my breath.

<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2024/07/22/2371950/rice-glorious-rice>

OPINION

The state of the nation's MSMEs



[GO NEGOSYO PILIPINAS ANGAT LAHAT!](#) - [Joey Concepcion](#) - The Philippine

Star

July 22, 2024 | 12:00am

Today will be President Marcos Jr.'s third State of the Nation Address and I will be following the events from Bali, where I flew this weekend to attend the wedding of Patricia, the daughter of my close friend Butch Prieto.

I had several interesting conversations with the groom's father, Mark Cojuangco, about business, entrepreneurship and his advocacy, nuclear power. I will share more of that in my next column. But foremost on our minds is the present course of our country's economy, which no doubt will be discussed at length in today's SONA.

As a longtime champion of entrepreneurship in the Philippines, I follow closely every development in the MSME sector, especially the direction being set by the government. The policy-setting and support from the nation's leaders are crucial and affect the lives of millions of Filipinos. After all, more than half of them are employed by these enterprises; even the largest corporations are dependent on the sector's overall health.

Therefore I was thrilled to listen to DTI Sec. Pascual and Usec. Cris Roque's speeches during the National MSME Summit last week, where they unveiled the many programs that will help our MSMEs. One is the OTOP Retail and Learning Center, a dynamic hub offering mentoring and educational sessions alongside its retail offerings. OTOP stands for One Town, One Product, the highly successful program of DTI to promote unique local products based on their geographical origins and reflective of local culture and resources.

Usec. Roque introduced us to the DTI-Bagong Pilipinas Marketplace, the largest B2B e-commerce platform showcasing products and services from Filipino MSMEs. It further broadened the scope and concept of OTOP, and now encompasses all locally produced offerings across the country.

What surely piqued everyone's interest were the programs like the AI Strategy Roadmap 2.0 and the establishment of the Center for AI Research, which are to accelerate the digital transformation of MSMEs. These are in keeping with the President's direction to embed AI and digital technologies to increase MSME capabilities, not just to keep up with global trends and potential international marketplaces, but to break down barriers and propel Filipino entrepreneurs to even broader markets.

The latest MSME Development Plan echoes these priorities. The release of the blueprint for our country's MSME development is always a watershed moment for our nation's business landscape, as it paves the way for this major engine of our country's development.

I believe that the integration of cutting-edge digital technologies, including AI and data-driven solutions, is a true game-changer. By embedding these transformative tools into the very fabric of our MSME ecosystem, we are not merely modernizing our enterprises – we are laying the foundation for a resilient, globally competitive business environment.

Go Negosyo's programs support this vision, and we are committed and driven to create a thriving environment where every Filipino can succeed and contribute through entrepreneurship. We offer free mentoring during our 3MOW events at the big shopping malls across the country, we go to the public schools to introduce entrepreneurship to senior high school students and we organize public plenary sessions where women entrepreneurs, tourism MSMEs, online sellers and OFWs and their families can learn and interact with successful entrepreneurs as well as business and thought leaders. Since 2019, we have incorporated digital solutions in our mentoring sessions, with entrepreneurs-slash-content creators now a fixture as resource persons during our public events.

President Marcos Jr. and his team at the DTI have demonstrated a deep appreciation of the challenges facing our entrepreneurs in the 21st century, and a commitment to empower our MSME sector.

The key pillars of the MSME Development Plan – digitalization, innovation and sustainability – strike at the very heart of what it means to be a successful entrepreneur today. By equipping our MSMEs with the necessary tools and infrastructure to thrive in the digital economy, we are positioning them to capitalize on emerging market opportunities and stay ahead of the curve.

The introduction of AI-powered solutions will significantly streamline arduous processes like loan approvals, removing critical barriers to growth and allowing our entrepreneurs to focus on what they do best: driving innovation and creating value.

Equally impressive are the initiatives aimed at fostering a supportive ecosystem for new and aspiring business owners to help reduce operational costs and eliminate barriers to entry, nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit that has long been a trait of the Filipino people.

The next few years will be transformative for Filipino MSMEs. It is now critical that we cultivate collaboration across all levels of government and across all members of the private sector. I have had the pleasure of having worked with the many DTI secretaries over the years: Peter Favila, Jesli Lapus, Gregory Domingo, Adrian Cristobal Jr., Mon Lopez, and now Fred Pascual. Always, it is through partnerships with government that we empower MSMEs and leverage the strengths of the public and private sectors to create a more robust and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Philippines – one that encourages the adoption of digital technologies, spurs innovation and builds resilience to drive sustainable, inclusive growth.

The participation of key stakeholders involved in the MSME Development Plan – the Departments of Agriculture, Labor and Employment, the Interior and Local Government, Science and Technology, Budget and Management, Information and Communications Technology – underscores the whole-of-government approach being taken to ensure the seamless implementation of this plan. The increasing role of the Department of Tourism and the Department of Migrant Workers in tapping key sectors can only boost our efforts to harness that entrepreneurial spirit that lies in every Filipino.

By aligning our collective efforts and resources, we can empower our MSMEs to reach new heights, driving economic growth, creating jobs and solidifying the Philippines' standing as a regional hub for entrepreneurship and innovation.

The future of Philippine enterprise is here, and it is digital, innovative and primed for success. As an advocate of the Filipino MSME for nearly 19 years now, I am honored and excited to be part of this pivotal moment. I am confident that our nation's entrepreneurs will rise to the occasion and propel our country towards a prosperous and sustainable future.

<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2024/07/22/2371954/state-nations-msmes>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Tighten biosecurity measures vs ASF, government urged

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

July 22, 2024 | 12:00am



The group expressed alarm over the safety of ASF vaccines from Vietnam after the Department of Agriculture (DA) said it would conduct controlled vaccination trials.

AFP / File

MANILA, Philippines — Hog raisers' group National Federation of Hog Raisers Inc. (NatFed) yesterday urged the government to enforce "strictest biosecurity measures" against African swine fever following reported ASF outbreaks in Vietnam.

The group expressed alarm over the safety of ASF vaccines from Vietnam after the Department of Agriculture (DA) said it would conduct controlled vaccination trials.

NatFed vice chairman Alfred Ng said the government should hasten the establishment of first border inspection sites, which will inspect all refrigerated containers entering the country through various international ports.

"With the recent ASF outbreaks in Vietnam, many hog raisers today are afraid of using the vaccine from Vietnam," Ng said.

DA spokesman Arnel de Mesa said the procurement of P350 million worth of ASF vaccines would push despite reported outbreaks in the source-country.

Ng expressed support to a DA announcement that it would conduct controlled vaccination trials.

Earlier, the World Organization for Animal Health warned countries against using substandard vaccines to contain ASF.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/07/22/2371981/tighten-biosecurity-measures-vs-asf-government-urged>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

What's the plan to tame price hikes, Mr. President?

By: [Ian Nicolas P. Cigaral](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:55 AM July 22, 2024



President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

MANILA, Philippines — Making ends meet had not been easy in the past 12 months for Bianca Briones, a 23-year-old virtual assistant. She blames inflation.

“I’m lucky enough to have someone help me pay the bills because we all know how high the prices of necessities can be these days,” Briones said.

Briones is just one of the millions of Filipinos who will listen to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. deliver his third State of the Nation Address (Sona) today.

They’ll hear the President speak of his accomplishments for sure. But amid the rising cost of living, perhaps the public would be more interested to know how he will soothe the Filipinos’ economic pain.

Long hurting from the consequences of high food prices on their overall living conditions, many of them find the government measures to address the problem still sorely wanting.

According to the 2024 Pulse Asia survey conducted last June, 76 percent of Filipinos disapprove of how the administration is addressing inflation, while another poll conducted by the Social Weather Stations in the same month shows that 58 percent or nearly 16 million Filipino families rate themselves as poor.

Even the latest report from the National Nutrition Council says that one in three households still experience food insecurity, or the fear of having nothing to eat.

The economy in past year

In the past 12 months, Marcos had to tackle serious economic issues that damaged his popularity.

Inflation hovered above the government's 2- to 4-percent target band for most part of the second half of 2023, before finally easing back to that range by the end of last year. But a flare-up is seen again this year due to high energy prices and the El Niño onslaught, although price growth had remained within the state's target range. In the first six months of 2024, inflation averaged 3.5 percent.

To tame inflation, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas hiked interest rates to bring demand in line with limited supply.

However, high borrowing costs hit Filipino consumers and businesses. Consumption alone historically accounts for more than 70 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).



MARKET SENTIMENT The price of rice has become an unofficial barometer of the Marcos administration’s economic performance. —Grig C. Montegrando

The tight financial conditions, in turn, held back economic growth to 5.7 percent in the first quarter, below market expectations and falling short of the Marcos administration’s 6 to 7 percent growth target.

At the same time, the President will have to address the inflation woes while dealing with a tight fiscal space that’s forcing the government to control its spending on much-needed programs, and keep on borrowing from domestic and foreign creditors.

This year, economic managers are projecting a budget deficit that is equivalent to 5.6 percent of GDP, or still above the prepandemic level.

Critical issue

That said, Robert Dan Roces, chief economist at Security Bank, believes that tackling inflation should be Marcos’ top priority in the next 12 months.

“This is typically a critical issue for any administration as it directly affects citizens’ daily lives, especially those at the margins, and overall economic stability,” Roces points out.

For Leonardo Lanzona, economist at Ateneo de Manila University, the President’s plan to create quality jobs that pay enough amid hard times will be something that Filipinos would want to hear at his Sona.

“The government has been able to finally bounce back from the pandemic in terms of employment and economic growth. In fact, new jobs have been created recently. The problem, however, is the question of quality,” Lanzona notes.

“Most of the jobs created are mostly in the nature of self-employment and mostly short-term or contractual in nature,” he adds.

With legislators from both houses of Congress set to gather today, Anthony Lawrence Borja, political science professor at De La Salle University, says Mr. Marcos’ economic message must include a convincing call to lawmakers to pass his legislative wish list, including measures meant to boost growth and reduce poverty.

Such a call, Borja says, must be clear enough to reach aspiring lawmakers in the 2025 midterm elections.

“This is an opportunity for him to lay down a wish list that prospective members of his administration’s slate could appeal to in their respective campaigns,” he emphasizes. —with a report from *Czasshaine Mai T. Abella*

BY THE NUMBERS

58 – Percentage of Filipino families who rate themselves as poor, according to the Social Weather Stations survey conducted from June 23 to July 1, 2024, an increase from the recorded 46 percent in March 2024. It’s the highest self-poverty rate since the 59 percent recorded in June 2008.

1,174,699 – Number of beneficiaries who received financial aid and farm inputs amounting to P9.23 billion from the government to mitigate the effects of El Niño on the agriculture sector, as of June 2024

P9.8 billion – Estimated worth of the farm damage or losses from El Niño as of June 2024

434 – Number of cities and municipalities placed under a state of calamity due to El Niño

183,455 – Farmers and fisherfolk whose livelihood were affected by El Niño in 13 regions as of June 2024

P29 – Price per kilo of rice sold by the Department of Agriculture through certain Kadiwa centers in Metro Manila in May 2024

2 million – Estimated number of households in the country that still live without electricity as of March 2024

P72 billion – Estimated budget needed to energize these remaining households before the end of President Marcos' term in 2028

2.11 million – Jobless Filipinos as of May 2024, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)

4.1 percent – Unemployment rate in the Philippines as of May 2024, according to the PSA

190,000 – Shortage of health-care workers in the country, according to the Department of Health, as of May 2024

300,000 – Beneficiaries of the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Food Stamp Program once it goes into full implementation. Under the program, a beneficiary will receive an electronic benefit transfer card loaded

with P3,000 worth of food credits every month that can be used to purchase certain commodities from DSWD-accredited retailers.

200,000 – Jobs expected to be generated from the investments as a result of the President Marcos’ foreign trips, according to the Department of Labor and Employment in July 2024

1 million – Target number of housing units to be built by the government every year until Marcos ends his term in 2028. In June 2024, according to Speaker Martin Romualdez, the national government remained on track to meet the target closing a housing backlog of 6.5 million units.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1963316/whats-the-plan-to-tame-price-hikes-mr-president>

Prioritize the majority's needs

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 04:40 AM July 22, 2024

In the run-up to President Marcos' State of the Nation Address (Sona) today, several government agencies were busy uplifting the mood among the various audiences keenly awaiting his speech. Among others, minimum wage earners in Metro Manila were given a P35 daily increase, the Department of Agriculture launched the "Bigas 29" project to provide cheaper rice to the poor, and disgruntled health-care workers saw the settlement of their long overdue allowances for services at the height of the pandemic. The President himself traveled to the provinces to inaugurate power and irrigation facilities, distribute land to agrarian reform beneficiaries as well as low-cost housing to the homeless, and extend aid to farmers and fisherfolk affected by the El Niño dry spell.

While these actions may appease a few sectors, the majority of Filipino consumers continue to grapple with the high prices of food items, with very little relief in sight. The easing inflation is a favorite indicator used by economic managers to proclaim that price increases have been going down, but the situation in the real world—in public markets and groceries to be precise—is very much different. For instance, the price of chicken rose to a record high of P250 a kilo last week as many poultry raisers cut production due to losses caused by high input costs.

Lingering problem

The pessimism among consumers was evident in the latest June 2024 Pulse Asia survey released last week, showing that 76 percent of Filipinos disapproved of how the administration addressed inflation. The other areas with high disapproval ratings are interrelated as well, with the same survey noting that government attempts at reducing poverty had a disapproval rating of 51 percent, increasing workers' pay and fighting corruption (39 percent), addressing hunger (35 percent), and creating more jobs (30 percent). A recent report by the National Nutrition Council also showed widespread food insecurity—which simply means lack of food—with one out of three households experiencing it. Another survey from the Social Weather Stations (SWS) showed around 16 million Filipino

families see themselves as poor, with self-rated poverty among Filipino families reaching a high 58 percent as of June this year.

The government actually tried to fix this lingering problem of high consumer prices by easing import controls and lowering tariffs on essential products such as rice, sugar, meat, and poultry. Theoretically, cheap imports should bring down their prices, yet the country's experience has been to the contrary. The primary reason is the existence of suspected cartels in the different agricultural sectors. So no matter how many cheap imports come in, prices will remain elevated as long as these unscrupulous groups control domestic supply.

Inclusive growth

There are a lot of other expectations confronting the President as he delivers his third Sona. For a cross-section of society and even the business community, pressure is mounting on him to act on the myriad problems involving illegal Philippine offshore gaming operators. For the private sector, it is wishing that the President will certify as urgent 21 pending bills in the legislature it believes are necessary to achieve the “shared vision of inclusive growth through job generation, poverty reduction, and global competitiveness.” While the list is topped by the divisive plan to amend the economic provisions of the 1987 Constitution that seems to have little chance of passing, a number of them are less controversial and workable. The Konektadong Pinoy bill, for example, will eventually lower internet costs for the social-media-crazed Filipinos. The bill promoting digital payments can also curb corruption by mandating the use of digital modes of payment by all government agencies. People in rural islands will similarly benefit from the proposed Satellite-based Technologies Promotion Act since it will help connect communities. Meanwhile, the bill creating an airport authority will help promote travel and tourism.

Topmost priority

Given the long list of “wishes” from the different sectors of society and the economy, prioritization is the name of the game. The President and his administration officials need to look at which of these will have the biggest impact on as many Filipinos as possible. This is not to preclude them from addressing

issues such as the growing tension in the West Philippine Sea. But from all indications, bringing down the high prices of basic food items remains the topmost priority. A decisive campaign to stamp out hoarding and the cartels operating in the agriculture sector will be crucial in achieving this, along with programs to improve farm productivity, of course. For the medium to long term, prodding lawmakers to pass key economic bills will also have a profound impact on the overall living condition of Filipinos. Remember that investments create jobs, and jobs alleviate poverty.

<https://opinion.inquirer.net/175348/prioritize-the-majoritys-needs>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Farmers call for tight biosecurity as trials for ASF vaccine continue

July 22, 2024 | 12:04 am



PEXELS-BARBARA BARBOSA

HOG FARMERS are urging the government to implement tighter biosecurity measures to help curb the spread of the African Swine Fever (ASF) in the Philippines as they wait for the government's approval for the commercial use of a vaccine.

"For now, we push for the strictest biosecurity, based on their capacities, of all our hog raisers," Alfred Ng, vice-chairman of the National Federation of Hog Farmers, Inc. said in a Viber message.

"We support the announcement of the DA (Department of Agriculture) of controlled vaccination trials with strict monitoring as we do not want the indiscriminate use of vaccine as it is still being tested," Mr. Ng added. "We all want to have an ASF vaccine soon, but it should be one that has passed all guidelines set forth by experts."

The decision to use these vaccines should also be left to hog raisers based on their own appreciation of their safety and efficacy, he said.

There were 20 municipalities across nine provinces with active cases of ASF as of July 12, according to the Bureau of Animal Industry.

Last week, Agriculture Assistant Secretary and Spokesperson Arnel V. de Mesa said the government has allocated about P350 million for the procurement of ASF vaccines for a trial run.

He added that the vaccine for controlled vaccination is expected by September after getting approval from the Food and Drug Administration.

“If the results are favorable, then commercial vaccination will follow,” Mr. De Mesa said.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. earlier said the ASF vaccine to be tested by the government would be procured from Vietnam.

Leonardo Q. Montemayor, chairman of the Federation of Free Farmers, said the ASF vaccine from Vietnam is only being used by their local farmers.

“To my knowledge, no other country is vaccinating its hogs,” Mr. Montemayor said in a Facebook Messenger chat.

He added that the government should exercise due diligence and caution before approving an ASF vaccine for commercial use.

Meanwhile, the government should also fast-track the construction of First Border Inspection sites that will examine all refrigerated containers that will enter the country, Mr. Ng said.

The DA plans to put up these facilities, which are meant to ensure imported agricultural goods are disease-free and minimize smuggling risks, in Bulacan, Manila, Subic, and General Santos.

Imported agri-fishery products need to undergo examination by food regulators overseeing the animal, plant, meat, and fisheries industries.

Meanwhile, the DA’s Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion (INSPIRE) program aims to increase the population of hogs in ASF-hit areas.

Under the modified INSPIRE program, the repopulation program will now focus on the construction of multiplier facilities and production farms using artificial insemination.

Hog production declined 4.3% year on year to 419,370 metric tons in the first quarter, data from the Philippine Statistics Authority showed. — A.H. Halili

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/07/22/609363/farmers-call-for-tight-biosecurity-as-trials-for-asf-vaccine-continue/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Brazil halts some poultry exports after Newcastle disease case

July 22, 2024 | 12:03 am



REUTERS

SAO PAULO — The world's top chicken exporter Brazil has voluntarily halted poultry exports to some countries after a case of Newcastle disease was detected in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, its agriculture ministry said on Friday.

The move comes as local authorities try to contain the viral disease after around 7,000 birds died on a chicken farm in Brazil's southernmost state. The flock's remaining 7,000 birds were culled to comply with health protocols, according to meat lobby group ABPA.

From a sample of 12 birds from the flock, government investigators found at least one positive case of Newcastle, ABPA, which represents exporters such as JBS and BRF, said.

Newcastle causes respiratory problems in birds and sometimes leads to death.

The temporary export restrictions could affect 50,000 to 60,000 metric tons of Brazilian poultry exports "in the worst-case scenario," ABPA said. Brazil produces 1.2 million tons and exports 430,000 tons of poultry products, on average, per month.

The restrictions range, depending on the destination country, from all Brazilian poultry exports to products only from Rio Grande do Sul, the agriculture ministry said.

The restrictions affect sales to 44 nations including China, Argentina, the European Union, Japan and Saudi Arabia, the ministry said.

Rio Grande do Sul accounts for 15% of Brazilian poultry production and exports, according to ABPA.

The agriculture ministry declared an animal health emergency in Rio Grande do Sul due to the Newcastle case.

Notification by countries of Newcastle cases is mandatory under guidelines from the World Organisation for Animal Health.

The last previous confirmed cases of Newcastle in Brazil occurred in 2006 in subsistence birds in the states of Amazonas, Mato Grosso and Rio Grande do Sul, according to the ministry. Subsistence birds meet a family's need for food and are not kept for trade. — Reuters

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/07/22/609362/brazil-halts-some-poultry-exports-after-newcastle-disease-case/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

With cocoa butter at \$28,000, more companies go for ‘chocolatey’

July 22, 2024 | 12:02 am



TETIANA BYKOVETS-UNSPLASH

FOODMAKERS who've already shrunk packaging and raised chocolate prices to weather this year's run-up in cocoa costs are rapidly rewriting recipes to use none of the stuff at all.

That's according to the growing number of companies that supply cocoa-butter alternatives. They're rapidly launching new product lines and growing volumes as demand for their cocoa-free products soars alongside the price of cocoa beans.

Cocoa butter prices are near \$28,000 a ton, according to data from KnowledgeCharts — more than quadruple last year's costs and about the same price as a budget sedan. Alternatives are roughly 40% cheaper, said Aaron Buettner, president of food solutions at Bunge Global SA, meaning deploying them could help keep sweet treats affordable during a time of prolonged food inflation.

“Chocolate quite often is an impulse purchase,” Niall Sands, president of commercial development and innovation at alternatives maker AAK AB, said in an interview. “It's in everybody's interest in the industry to retain that,” rather than allow chocolate to become a high-priced luxury item.

Companies generally don't telegraph ingredient swaps that might not be unanimously popular, and suppliers are reticent to name names. In general, the swaps are easiest to pull off in treats where chocolate isn't the snack's star flavor, especially in secondary applications like coatings or drizzles. These reformulated treats might be branded "chocolatey" or boast a "chocolate-flavored coating."

AAK's chocolate and confectionery fats segment — the unit that makes ingredients designed to supplement or completely replace cocoa butter — saw volumes surge 14% in the latest quarter, the Swedish company said on Thursday. Others are expanding in the space, too. Crop trader Bunge has in the past year introduced two new cocoa-butter swaps — one shea butter-based equivalent and another that aims to match the texture and taste of 61% dark chocolate. Both were launched for the Asian and Middle Eastern markets, but may eventually be rolled out globally, Mr. Buettner said. Non-cocoa substitutes have long been more common in warmer climates, where cocoa butter's low melting point can pose a problem.

Chicago's Blommer Chocolate Co. last month launched a new product line of cocoa-butter equivalents that it says offers "a fabulous chocolate-like sensory experience." It uses sunflower and palm oils, which can give customers 20% or more in savings, said Jenna Derhammer, the cocoa processor's R&D corporate manager for innovation.

The increased interest in alternatives follows months of elevated prices for cocoa. The futures contract hit a record intraday high of \$11,722 a metric ton in New York in April following shortages in top West African producers. Cocoa bean prices have eased somewhat since then but are generally seen as unlikely to return soon to levels that until last year averaged well below \$3,500 a metric ton for decades. Cocoa production in West Africa is expected to rebound next season on better weather, though fears remain that structural issues like disease will continue to plague crops and keep cocoa prices higher for longer.

As cocoa stays high, so does cocoa butter, a product made by grinding beans that lends chocolate its signature texture. Foodmakers had hoped to wait out the high cocoa prices without reformulating their products — something they don't do lightly as it can risk losing shoppers if the product ends up tasting different. With the Halloween and Christmas candy seasons fast approaching, it's now or never for brands who need to finalize products to share with retailers preparing to stock their shelves for the holidays, said Billy Roberts, a senior economist for food and beverage at CoBank ACB.

Companies making cocoa swaps are saying "their product allows them to provide an economically viable alternative that doesn't compromise on quality. That's definitely the promise," Roberts said. "But that's also an ultimate decision that will be made by the consumer." — Bloomberg

<https://www.bworldonline.com/bloomberg/2024/07/22/609361/with-cocoa-butter-at-28000-more-companies-go-for-chocolatey/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Chicken culling, disposal raise concern as bird flu spreads

July 22, 2024 | 12:01 am



STOCK PHOTO | Image by [Ralph](#) from [Pixabay](#)

THE SPREAD of bird flu among poultry and dairy farms has heightened some health experts' concerns that the process of killing and disposing of poultry infected with the virus may pose a risk to humans and livestock.

Recent instances of farms dumping carcasses in landfills and using methods to kill chickens that put workers in close proximity to the virus show how the process of getting rid of infected birds could further spread the disease, according to data obtained by Reuters and interviews with officials and disease experts.

Extreme heat that made it difficult to keep protective equipment on during the asphyxiation by carbon dioxide of chickens on a Colorado egg farm likely contributed to five bird flu cases among workers, the largest cluster of human cases in the United States, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention said last week.

The situation highlights the need for systematic use of protective gear when killing the sick animals, said the CDC's Principal Deputy Director Nirav Shah on a Tuesday call with reporters about the outbreak.

Workers killing chickens risk inhaling the virus, said Dr. Michael Osterholm, an infectious disease expert at the University of Minnesota, of the process. The workers had mild symptoms including pink eye and respiratory issues.

"Depopulation activities need to clearly focus on protection for these individuals," he said.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture said in response to questions that the method of killing birds is decided jointly between the state, the farmer, and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

COLORADO'S

CASE

Bird flu has migrated to nearly every US state over the past 2.5 years. There have been nine cases among poultry and dairy workers since March, including the Colorado poultry workers.

Further bird flu spread among livestock could increase the likelihood of human infections, though the risk to the general public is still low, officials from the CDC have said.

About 95 million chickens, turkeys, and other poultry have been killed and disposed of since February 2022, according to USDA data obtained by Reuters showing culling and disposal methods through late June.

Bird flu is fatal in birds and the government requires entire flocks to be culled once the virus is on a farm. The deadliest year was 2022, but nearly as many chickens have been disposed of so far in 2024 as in all of 2023, the data shows.

The sick workers in Colorado, for instance, were killing the birds with mobile gas chamber carts, said Julie Gauthier, an official at USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, on the Tuesday call.

The carts can typically accommodate between a dozen and 50 birds and workers asphyxiate them batch by batch, Ms. Gauthier said. A USDA spokesperson said the agency had reviewed the farm's use of the method as part of its response to the outbreak.

More than 150 of the workers were exposed to infected poultry, 69 displayed symptoms and were tested, and five were positive, said AnneMarie Harper, communications director at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

Most chickens are killed by asphyxiation either with portable chambers like those used in Colorado, or by spraying a firefighting foam on the birds or shutting down ventilation to the chicken barns, the USDA data shows.

A small number are killed with firearms, by cervical dislocation, or other means.

DISPOSING

OF

THE

DEAD

Most of the culled birds are composted, either in chicken houses or on farms, or buried, according to the USDA data. To compost the birds, farmers cover them in material like wood shavings, maintain the compost piles at a high temperature, and stir them occasionally with farm equipment in a process that typically takes several weeks.

So far, there have been no human or livestock cases linked directly to disposal of dead animals with avian flu.

Federal and state officials work with farmers to determine the best disposal methods, said John Clifford, a former USDA chief veterinarian, now an advisor for the USA Poultry and Egg Export Council, an industry group.

It is safest to compost on site to avoid moving the carcasses and potentially spreading the virus, said Myah Walker, compliance unit supervisor at the Minnesota Board of Animal Health.

In rarer cases, carcasses are transported to landfills, a process that can meet some federal and state regulations.

Michigan egg producer Herbruck's Poultry Ranch disposed of nearly 2 million chickens between April 15 and June 8 in private landfills, according to USDA data and Michigan state records of the disposal process obtained by Reuters.

Herbruck's declined to comment.

Just 3% of all poultry have been disposed of in landfills since 2022, and the Herbruck's outbreak accounts for about two-thirds of them, the USDA data shows.

Soon after the Herbruck's disposal, a dairy farm near one of the landfills tested positive for bird flu, alarming area farmers. Even so, whole genome sequencing showed the disposed Herbruck's carcasses did not cause the infection, said Adeline Hambley, Ottawa County's health officer.

Wild birds have helped spread the virus between poultry farms and to other species.

Brian Hoefs, the state veterinarian for Minnesota, said he would not recommend disposing of dead poultry in landfills.

"That's the restaurant for scavengers. It would be a recipe for disaster," he said. — Reuters

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/07/22/609360/chicken-culling-disposal-raise-concern-as-bird-flu-spreads/>

MANILA STANDARD

Umbrellas to the rescue



By Jay Morales

July 22, 2024, 1:25 am

UMBRELLAS TO THE RESCUE. Farmers seek shade under their colorful umbrellas as they plant rice in a paddy field in Piddig, Ilocos Norte. Jay Morales

<https://manilastandard.net/gallery/314474551/umbrellas-to-the-rescue.html>

NFA buying price cap on palay stays at P30/kg

July 22, 2024



Higher buying price of palay would encourage farmers to continue planting in the face of lower tariffs on rice. (DA Photo)

THE National Food Authority's (NFA) ceiling buying price for clean and dry palay will stay at P30 per kilogram, according to Larry Lacson, NFA administrator.

The move will encourage farmers to continue planting in the face of lower tariffs on rice.

The NFA earlier said it will also continue its palay procurement program despite the inclement weather to sustain favorable prices enjoyed by farmers as it builds up buffer stocks to cover rice requirements in case of emergencies.

Last April, the NFA Council raised the buying price of palay to a range of P17 to P30 per kg from P16 to P23 per kg to help the agency compete with private traders.

NFA is required by law to maintain a national buffer stock for rice to cover requirements of the staple food in case of emergencies as the agency have procured a record 3.5 million tons of palay at the end of the first half of the year.

As of end-June, NFA has procured 3.5 million 50-kilo bags of palay, equivalent to 175,000 MT, exceeding the agency's first-half target of 3.36 million metric tons.

NFA procurement in the first half usually represents 30 percent of total purchases for national reserves to ensure the country has enough rice supply to sustain it for at least nine days in case of emergency based on daily consumption of 36,000 MT.

NFA said its buffer stock, including milled rice, is at 149,000 MT, enough to cover four days of national requirements.

Meanwhile, in a dialogue with members of the NFA Council in Davao Davao Oriental last week, farmers reported higher agricultural productivity and substantial income increases due to governmental support like subsidies for machinery and seeds as well as reduced labor costs due to mechanization.

Lacson announced plans to procure vehicles to transport stocks directly from farms to warehouses as logistical support.

In another development, the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech) inaugurated last week a P56.5 million rice mill designed to help close to 1,000 farmers to increase their income by as much as 30 percent in Ilocos Norte.

Dionisio Alwindia, PhilMech director, said the multi-stage rice mill is part of the P71 million worth of post-harvest facilities turned over to the Piddig Basi Multipurpose Cooperative for the benefit of its nearly 1,100 members who manage 1,400 hectares of rice lands.

PhilMech said the facility also include two recirculating dryers each with a capacity of 12 tons worth P8.1 million and other equipment worth P6.4 million.

Alwindia said the rice mill could process as much as three metric tons (MT) of palay per hour, producing 930 50-kilo bags of rice for an eight-hour run.

“This mill will increase the rice recovery from palay to 65 percent, higher by 7 percentage points compared to the national average of 58 percent. And that means a lot to increasing farmers’ incomes,” Alwindia said.

Every 100 sacks of palay processed by the rice mill will yield 65 bags of rice or seven sacks more compared to the national average.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said increasing machinery use and improving post-harvest facilities would greatly help in achieving government’s goal of increasing food production, ensuring food security and reducing rice importation.

“By deploying better post harvest facilities like dryers, silos and rice mills, we can significantly reduce wastage that would help achieve our trifecta goals of increasing farmers’ incomes, providing consumers with more affordable food choices and preserving foreign exchange by reducing food imports,” Tiu Laurel said.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/nfa-buying-price-cap-on-palay-stays-at-p30-kg/

NFA to implement reforms in rice procurement scheme

Ada Pelonia
July 22, 2024

The National Food Authority (NFA) assured farmers that the government would put in place reforms that would make it easier for them to sell their crop to the agency.

NFA Administrator Larry Lacson noted the agency's plan to procure vehicles to transport stocks directly from farms to warehouses as part of the proposed 2025 budget to ease the logistical challenges faced by farmers' cooperatives.

The NFA is also targeting to procure postharvest facilities, including dryers and rice mills, which will enhance rice processing capacity and efficiency.

Lacson said the NFA will continue its "close cooperation" with farmers and other industry stakeholders to effectively respond to challenges and improve agricultural practices and livelihoods across the country.

The NFA chief recently had a dialogue with some NFA Council members in southern Philippines where they also inspected the facilities and rice inventory under the purview of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

"During the dialogue, farmers reported higher agricultural productivity and substantial income increases due to governmental support like subsidies for machinery and seeds and reduced labor costs due to mechanization."

Vicencio Mahinay, president of the Provincial Farmers' Action Council in Banaybanay, Davao Oriental, said the pricing strategy was instrumental in bolstering farmers' incomes. This was echoed by representatives of various farmers cooperative and associations and Irrigators Associations.

Lacson reiterated that the NFA's palay buying price will remain "competitive."

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

As of end-June, the grains agency said it has procured 3.5 million metric tons (MMT) of palay.

In mid-April, the NFA Council raised the buying price of palay to a range of P17 to P30 a kilo from P16 to P23 per kilo to help the agency compete with private traders.

Under the law, the food agency is required to maintain a national buffer stock for rice to cover the requirements of the staple food in case of emergencies.

Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) indicated that local traders bought dry unhusked rice at a higher price in June.

A month before the start of the lean season for rice, PSA data showed that the average quotation for dry palay jumped by nearly 28 percent to P24.59 per kilo in June, from P19.23 per kilo a year ago. The lean season for rice is from July to September.

“Farmgate prices refer to the prices received by farmers for the sale of their produce at the first point of sale net of the total marketing cost paid by the farmers,” the PSA said.

“These prices are determined at the farmgate or first point of sale transactions and are also known as ‘producer prices.’”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/22/nfa-to-implement-reforms-in-rice-procurement-scheme/>

PHL aims to sell more food products to China

Andrea E. San Juan

July 22, 2024



China is still an important market for Philippine agri-based products, including coconut snacks and processed fruits, according to the Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc. (Philexport).

Philexport President Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis Jr. said 10 local exporters generated nearly \$1 million in sales from the recent business mission to Guangzhou, China.

“Congratulations to the exporters in this mission, who I understand generated close to \$1 million in sales under negotiation,” Ortiz-Luis said.

“Their success gives us further confidence that China remains to be an important market for our agri-based products. We are hopeful that the gains from this initial mission can be sustained, if not expanded, to other provinces in China.”

The Department of Trade and Industry’s Export Marketing Bureau (DTI-EMB), together with the Philippine Trade and Investment Center-Guangzhou and Philexport, organized an outbound business mission to Guangzhou, China held from June 19 to 23.

In a statement issued by the DTI over the weekend, the agency said this marks the first Guangzhou food mission with 10 Philippine exporters engaged with nearly 60 buyers, key retail accounts, food chamber members, and officials.

The delegation was composed of makers of processed fruits, coconut snacks, and herbal supplements. Joining the business mission were Profood International Corp., Tropicana Food Products Inc., Pasciolco Agri Ventures, Lionheart Farms, Soyuz Foods International Inc., Tropical Palm Herb Manufacturing, MFP Home of Quality Food Corporation, B&C Healthy Snack Foods Inc., Mira's Turmeric Products, and New Asia Oil Inc.

The DTI said the mission featured a business-to-business matching event, conducted in collaboration with Food2China, an online-to-offline service platform affiliated with the Guangdong China Imported Food Association.

“The platform has more than 400 registered members of influential and prestigious importers, distributors, e-commerce, and caterers throughout China.”

A networking session also took place with key accounts from the Guangzhou Chain Operations Association, which includes some of China's biggest food retailers such as Vanguard and 7-11, among others. Additionally, market visits to well-known food chains like Hema Fresh, SJ, Sam's Club, and Vanguard were conducted.

Meanwhile, the meeting with the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) offered “collaborative” opportunities for delegates with its food chambers and e-commerce members.

CCPIT Vice President Zhang Chaoping highlighted Guangdong's significant market potential, given its leading share of GDP and population size in China.

Latest data released by the Philippine Statistics Authority showed that the Philippines's exports to China reached \$3.73 billion in January to May.

Imports from China during the period reached nearly \$13 billion.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/22/phl-aims-to-sell-more-food-products-to-china/>

Ifad calls for more funding to transform food systems

BusinessMirror
July 22, 2024

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (Ifad) pushed for the development of “new and innovative” ways to mobilize funding to end hunger by 2030.

The United Nations agency said the funding gap to end hunger “is immense” and called for more funding to transform food systems and develop rural areas.

Ifad cited estimates which showed that every dollar spent on resilience now saves up to \$10 dollars in emergency aid in the future.

“Our best chance of delivering on our commitment to end hunger by 2030 lies in scaling up investments, and developing new and innovative ways to mobilize funding,” said Alvaro Lario, Ifad president, during a recent event in New York.

“We have to better direct the funding we have to where it is needed most, in particular rural areas of low-income countries where hunger is most prevalent. These are the same areas that should be producing enough food and are the areas that can benefit the most from investments.”

Ifad noted that small farms under 5 hectares produce almost half of the world’s food—on less than one fifth of the farmland. Yet, rural populations in developing countries are among the world’s poorest and hungriest.

“Small-scale farmers receive less than one percent of global climate finance. For the past two decades, Official Development Assistance (ODA) for agriculture has been stagnant at just 5-6 percent of total ODA, nearing \$10 billion in recent years, and falling short of the needs.

At the same time, investment in agriculture is estimated to be at least 2-3 times more effective in reducing poverty than investment in other sectors.

Lario also called for new and innovative ways to finance the fight against hunger and malnutrition.

“By crowding-in technical and financial investments from the private sector, we can scale up approaches that build rural economies without poverty and hunger.”

Thanks to its strong credit rating and experience in inclusive rural transformation, Ifad has been able to issue its sixth sustainable development bond through private placements and raise more than \$480 million from global pension funds or insurers interested in investing in a more equitable and sustainable world.

Ifad is the only UN fund and the only UN specialized agency other than the World Bank group to operate on capital markets.

Ifad also said the private sector is an integral part of closing the Sustainable Development Goal financing gap. For small-scale farmers, private sector investment is a lifeline, providing access to capital, employment opportunities, technology and markets.

“To that end, IFAD is investing in promising small and medium enterprises in rural areas and small agrifood businesses to strengthen their services to small-scale farmers and provide farmers access to technology and markets, ultimately attracting additional investments from the private sector,” it said.

By de-risking investments and creating an enabling environment, Ifad said it is able to foster more public-private partnerships with agrifood businesses and entrepreneurs.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/22/ifad-calls-for-more-funding-to-transform-food-systems/>

Usapin sa pagkain, trabaho inaasahan ng mga Pinoy sa SONA

[Malou Escudero](#)

July 22, 2024 | 12:00am



President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. holds rehearsal for his third State of the Nation Address (SONA) on Monday, July 22, 2024.

Photo by PCO

MANILA, Philippines — Inaasahan ng mga Pinoy na tatalakayin ni Pangulong Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. ang usapin tungkol sa pagkain at trabaho sa kanyang ikatlong State of the Nation Address (SONA) ngayon.

Kabilang dito ang pagpapababa sa presyo ng mga bilihin partikular ang bigas at taas sahod ng mga manggagawa.

Ayon naman kay Senate President Francis “Chiz” Escudero, dahil natapos na ang kalahati ng termino ng Pangulo, tiyak na ibabahagi nito ang mga nagawa tungkol sa problema ng bansa at ang mga gagawin sa mga susunod na taon.

“Hati ‘yan dahil kalahati ito ng termino, kalahati ano na nagawa kaugnay ng mga problema at ano pa ang gagawin sa susunod na mga taon,” ani Escudero.

First time na uupo ni Escudero kahanay ng Pangulo at ni Speaker Martin Romualdez sa gagawing SONA ngayon,

Sa nakalipas aniyang 23 taon bilang mambabatas, hindi niya hinulaan o pinangunahan ang mga inaasahang tatalakayin ng Pangulo.

Idinagdag ni Escudero na magbibigay na lamang siya ng komentaryo pagkatapos ng SONA ng Pangulo.

Sa tanong kung dapat ianunsiyo ng Pangulo sa SONA ang tuluyang pag ban sa Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGO), sinabi ni Escudero na walang maaaring magbawal sa Pangulo kung ano ang mga nais nitong ihayag sa kanyang SONA.

Para naman kay Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, ang magandang SONA ay babalangkas ng isang matatag na infrastructure plan na mag-iiwan ng pangmatagalang pamana para sa mga Pilipino.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2024/07/22/2371898/usapin-sa-pagkain-trabaho-inaasahan-ng-mga-pinoy-sa-sona>

Tulong ni Pangulong Marcos sa magsasaka, mangingisdang magpapababa ng presyo ng pagkain – Romualdez

[Joy Cantos](#)

July 22, 2024 | 12:00am



Sumama ang lider ng Kamara na mayroong mahigit 300 kinatawan, kay Pangulong Marcos sa pamimigay ng tulong pinansyal sa may 10,000 benepisyaryo sa ilalim ng kanyang Presidential Assistance to Farmers and Fisherfolk (PAFF) program.

Presidential Communications Office

MANILA, Philippines — Pinuri ni Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez ang programa ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. na nagbibigay ng direktang tulong pinansyal sa mga magsasaka at mangingisda sa buong bansa.

Sumama ang lider ng Kamara na mayroong mahigit 300 kinatawan, kay Pangulong Marcos sa pamimigay ng tulong pinansyal sa may 10,000 benepisyaryo sa ilalim ng kanyang Presidential Assistance to Farmers and Fisherfolk (PAFF) program.

Isinagawa ang pamamahagi ng tulong sa benepisyaryong residente ng Palawan at kalapit na lalawigan ng Marinduque sa Edward S. Hagedorn Coliseum sa Puerto Princesa City, Palawan.

“Kayo po ang ating mga magsasaka at mangingisda ang nagpapakain at bumubuhay sa buong bansa. Obligasyon ng ating gobyerno na tiyaking busog din lagi ang inyong mga pamilya at may maliwanag na kinabukasan para sa inyong mga anak,” pahayag ni Romualdez sa mga benepisyaryo.

“Sa pagbibigay ng suporta sa inyo, mapapalakas natin ang produksyon ng pagkain at masisiguro na abot-kaya ang presyo ng mga ito para sa ating mamamayan,” dagdag pa ng mambabatas.

Tiniyak ni Romualdez kay Pangulong Marcos ang patuloy na suporta ng Kamara sa kanyang mga makabagong programa upang magpatuloy ang pagtulong sa mga nangangailangang Pilipino.

Kumpiyansa rin si Romualdez na ang mga ipinatutupad na programa ay makatutulong sa pagtaas ng produksyon ng mga magsasaka at mangingisda na magdudulot din ng pagbaba sa mga produktong inaangkat ng bansa.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2024/07/22/2371891/tulong-ni-pangulong-marcos-sa-magsasaka-mangingisdang-magpapababa-ng-presyo-ng-pagkain-romualdez>