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MANILA BULLETIN:

Budget cut looms for state universities, colleges in 2025

BY XANDER DAVE CEBALLOS

Jul 29, 2024 06:08 PM

The national government intends to slash the budget for state universities and colleges (SUCs) next year by around P14 billion, based on the data from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

According to the National Expenditure Program (NEP) submitted by the DBM to the Congress on Monday, July 29, the budget for SUCs in 2025 is P113.75 billion, lower by 12 percent compared to the P128.23 billion in total appropriations for the SUCs this year.

Of this amount, the bulk will go to personnel services, with P65.17 billion, maintenance and other operating expenses will receive P39.04 billion, and capital outlays or infrastructures will receive P9.54 billion.

Aside from SUCs, agencies such as the Department of Public Works and Highways also get a decrease of P97 billion, the Department of Health by P23 billion, the Department of Labor and Employment by P15 billion, and Congress by P12 billion.

DBM Secretary Amenah F. Pangandaman said these decreases were due to the amendments made by the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Meanwhile, budget increases were noted in the Department of Transportation with P107 billion, the Department of Education with P31 billion, the Department of Interior and Local Government with P15.8 billion, and the Department of National Defense with P15.7 billion.

Department of Agriculture also had an increase of P14.7 billion, the Department of Finance with P5.6 billion, the Judiciary with P3.3 billion, and both Departments of Foreign Affairs and Agrarian Reform with P2.5 billion.

While the budget cuts and increases indicated in the NEP are still not final, they will assist Congress in the review and deliberation for the legislation of the annual appropriations measures for the next fiscal year.

Based on Article VI, Section 24, of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Congress has the authority for “all appropriation, revenue or tariff bills, bills authorizing increase of the public debt, bills of local application, and private bills.”

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/29/budget-cut-looms-for-state-universities-colleges-in-2025>

MANILA BULLETIN:

What are the priority sectors under the proposed P6.352-T budget for 2025?

BY DEXTER BARRO II

Jul 29, 2024 04:32 PM

AT A GLANCE

- The House of Representatives officially received on Monday, July 29, the P6.352-trillion National Expenditure Program (NEP) or the proposed national budget for 2025. Like past budget measures, next year's NEP has its own priority sectors for spending.



(MANILA BULLETIN)

The House of Representatives officially received on Monday, July 29, the P6.352-trillion National Expenditure Program (NEP) or the proposed national budget for 2025.

Like past budget measures, next year's NEP has its own priority sectors for spending.

In a statement, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Secretary Amenah Pangandaman bared that the proposed budget for next year was crafted with the “highest levels of care, diligence, and meticulous attention to detail”.

The P6.352-trillion outlay--which is equivalent to 22 percent of the Philippines’ gross domestic product (GDP)--is a 10.1 percent hike from the current P5.768-trillion budget for 2024.

Following the Constitutional mandate for education to have the biggest share in the government funding, the education sector will receive P977.6 billion or 15.4 percent of the proposed budget.

Covered by the allocation are the Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), state universities and colleges (SUCs), and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

The DBM said this would likewise be utilized for government assistance and subsidies, basic educational facilities, and the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education (UAQTE), among others.

In pursuit of the Marcos administration's "Build Better More" initiative, the public works sector will get the second highest allocation with P900 billion to finance various public infrastructure projects.

As a distant third, the health sector will get P297.6 billion. This will help fund priority health programs, such as the operations of public health facilities and the National Health Insurance Program.

Following this sector is the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) with its P278.4 billion funding.

The DILG's funding covers the operations of the Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), and other agencies that maintain peace and order nationwide.

The funding for the Department of National Defense (DND) has been increased from this year's P240.6 billion to P256.1 billion. This will be earmarked for priority programs and priorities, such as the Land Defense Program, Air Forces Defense Program, and Naval Forces Defense Program.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) follows after this with a P230.1 billion budget in 2025 that aims to cover various social protection programs, such as the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps).

The agriculture sector, which includes the Department of Agriculture (DA), its attached agencies, and the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), will be allocated P211.3 billion.

The Department of Transportation (DOTr), meanwhile, will be granted P180.9 billion. This sector recorded the highest funding increase among all key sectors, with a 144.8 percent increase from the P73.9 million budget in 2024.

To support the daily operations of the the Supreme Court (SC) and lower courts, the Judiciary will be given P63.6 billion in 2025.

Lastly, the Department of Justice (DOJ) will get P40.6 billion to fund its Law Enforcement Program, Corrections Program, and Legal Services Program.

With the transmittal of the 2025 NEP to Congress, the House Committee on Appropriations chaired by Ako Bicol Party-list Rep. Zaldy Co will soon start its deliberations on the proposed budget.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/29/what-are-the-priority-sectors-under-the-proposed-p6-352-t-budget-for-2025>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Agricultural damage from Typhoon Carina, habagat hits ₱696.87 million

BY JEL SANTOS

Jul 29, 2024 04:14 PM



The damage inflicted by Typhoon Carina and the southwest monsoon or habagat to the country's agriculture sector swelled to ₱696.87 million, the Department of Agriculture (DA) disclosed on Monday, July 29.

The DA said a total of 30,827 farmers were devastated by the weather disturbances.

According to the agency, the regions hit were Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Ilocos (Region 1), Central Luzon (Region 3), Calabarzon (Region 4A), Mimaropa (Region 4B), Bicol (Region 5), Western and Eastern Visayas (Regions 6 and 8), Zamboanga Peninsula (Region 9), Soccsksargen (Region 12) and Caraga (Region 13).

Typhoon Carina and the southwest monsoon have devastated a total of 35,146 hectares (ha) of agricultural land, it added.

Per the DA, 72.42 percent of the total affected areas, or 25,451 hectares, have a chance of recovery.

However, 9,695 hectares, or 17.58 percent, have no chance of recovery.

The agriculture department noted a production loss totaling 13,312 metric tons (MT).

DA's data showed that rice commodity incurred the biggest damage at 81.81 percent, followed by corn at 9.33 percent, and high-value crops (HVC) at 8.46 percent.

The DA said the rice commodity suffered a volume loss of 9,102 metric tons which was valued at ₱570.14 million.

Corn commodity, on the other hand, experienced a volume loss of 3,104 metric tons which was valued at ₱65.02 million.

High-value crops sustained losses amounting to ₱58.95 million and a volume loss of 1,105 metric tons.

The agency also reported that 5,593 livestock died due to the weather disturbances, with a total loss value of ₱1.17 million.

The DA reported that 72,174 bags of rice seeds, 39,546 bags of corn seeds, and 59,600 pouches plus 1,966 kilograms of vegetable seeds were distributed to farmers affected by the disaster.

Fisherfolk, meanwhile, received fingerlings, fishing equipment, and supplies from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

The DA also made the Survival and Recovery (SURE) Loan Program from the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) available, offering loans of up to ₱25,000, repayable over three years with no interest.

Likewise, the DA provided the Quick Response Fund (QRF) for rehabilitating affected areas and allocated funds through the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/29/agricultural-damage-from-typhoon-carina-hagat-hits-696-87-million>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Carina, monsoon death toll increases to 36

[Jose Rodel Clapano](#) - The Philippine Star

July 30, 2024 | 12:00am



A bus stalls in the middle of E. Rodriguez Avenue while rescue personnel from the QCDRRMO and Barangay Damayan Lagi in Quezon City ferry stranded commuters and residents across the heavy flood caused by torrential rains brought by Typhoon #CarinaPH and the southwest monsoon on July 24, 2024.

STAR / Miguel De Guzman

MANILA, Philippines — The number of people who died from the onslaught of Typhoon Carina and the southwest monsoon has increased to 36 as of yesterday, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

The NDRRMC said that of the 36 reported deaths, 14 have been verified while the rest are still being validated.

It said six people were reported injured and three others remain missing.

Most of the fatalities were recorded in the National Capital Region (NCR) with 15 followed by Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) with 10 and Zamboanga peninsula with four.

Two fatalities each were recorded in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and Central Luzon.

Ilocos and Davao regions as well as Northern Mindanao had one casualty each.

4.6 million displaced

The combined strength of Carina and the monsoon displaced up to 4.6 million people composed of 1.2 million families nationwide.

Of the displaced families, 38,292 composed of 152,800 people are staying in 848 evacuation centers.

The government has also assisted 641,944 more people or 134,235 families who are not in evacuation centers.

The NDRRMC said up to 4,163 people or 1,361 families were pre-emptively evacuated.

P1.6 billion infrastructure damage

The amount of damage caused by the bad weather to infrastructure has reached more than P1.6 billion, the NDRRMC said.

The damage was reported in Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan), Eastern Visayas, Northern Mindanao, Davao region, Soccsksargen (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos), BARMM and the Cordilleras.

Up to 356 road sections, two bridges and 1,598 houses were destroyed by floodwaters and landslides.

As of 8 a.m. yesterday, the Department of Agriculture has yet to report the amount of damage to farm produce, livestock and fishery.

P200 million aid released

Up to P200 million in “humanitarian aid” has been released to assist people affected by the calamities, according to the Department of Social Welfare and Development

DSWD spokesperson Irene Dumlao said the release of the funds reflected the agency’s commitment to help beneficiaries of government resources.

DSWD Secretary Rex Gatchalian earlier ordered the agency’s disaster response and management group as well as its national resource and logistics management bureau to continue helping the victims until they fully recover from the effects of the calamities.

The amount was used for the distribution of relief goods, including food and non-food items as well as financial assistance, to typhoon victims. — **Pia Lee-Brago, Delon Porcalla, Jun Elias, Romina Cabrera**

[https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/07/30/2373951/carina-monsoon-death-toll-](https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/07/30/2373951/carina-monsoon-death-toll-increases-36)

[increases-36](#)

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DBM submits proposed P6.3 trillion budget to House

[Delon Porcalla](#), [Alexis Romero](#) - The Philippine Star

July 30, 2024 | 12:00am



Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman leads the press briefing on the 2025 National Expenditure Program yesterday at the Department of Budget and Management office in Manila.

Ryan Baldemor

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Budget and Management formally turned over yesterday the proposed P6.352-trillion national budget for 2025 to the House of Representatives, with the P1.035-trillion allocation for local government units topping the spending priorities.

“As we receive this document, we recognize the collective responsibility bestowed upon us as legislators to scrutinize, deliberate and ensure that every peso is judiciously allocated and spent,” Speaker Martin Romualdez said during the ceremonial turnover of the proposed budget.

“I’m confident that with the collaborative efforts of the executive and legislative branches, we will achieve a budget that not only meets the immediate needs of our people but also sets the stage for a more prosperous and equitable Philippines,” he added.

Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman said the Internal Revenue Allotment – renamed National Tax Allotment – for 2025 is “18.7 percent higher” than this year’s allocation of P871 billion.

Ranking second in spending is Climate Change Expenditures (P1.020 trillion), followed by Water Resources Program (P309.7 billion), Flood Management Program (P254.3 billion) and Convergence and Special Support Program (P221.5 billion).

National defense program (land, air, sea) was next at P204.4 billion, Network Development Program (P140.9 billion) and Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) of the social welfare department at P114.2 billion.

With the proposed budget being readied for discussions, Rep. Zaldy Co, chairman of the House appropriations committee, called on his colleagues to “uphold principles of transparency, accountability and fiscal responsibility throughout the budget deliberation process.”

“We must ensure that every peso is directed towards initiatives that will uplift the lives of our fellow Filipinos, improve our infrastructure, strengthen our educational and health care systems and secure our nation’s future,” the Ako Bicol party-list congressman said.

With more than two months before the deadline for the filing of the certificates of candidacy in early October, the Commission on Elections was allotted P15 billion for the conduct of the May 2025 mid-term elections.

“Irrigation services” for the agriculture department was earmarked P24.6 billion, while Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Program got P10 billion. Agricultural “credit program” was allotted P2.8 billion while P1.8 billion was set aside for the housing program (Pambansang Pabahay Para sa Pilipino Program).

Implementation of the Salary Standardization Law 6 for the 1.6 million-strong government workforce was given a budget of P70 billion.

“It’s crucial that we examine each allocation meticulously to ensure the most effective use of our resources,” Co said. “The road ahead is full of challenges, but with this proposed budget, we have a robust framework to guide our efforts.”

Co, president of the 54-member Party-list Coalition Foundation Inc. in the House of Representatives, said the 2025 budget proposal is “not merely a financial plan but a strategic roadmap aligned with the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028.”

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/07/30/2374056/dbm-submits-proposed-p63-trillion-budget-house>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

World Bank-funded cold storage facility, the first in Ilocos Norte, opens

[Artemio Dumlao](#) - Philstar.com

July 29, 2024 | 4:55pm



Groundbreaking ceremony of the Tomato Cold Storage Facility in Sarrat, the first in Ilocos Norte on July 19, 2023.

Screenshot via DA - PRDP Ilocos Region / Facebook

BAGUIO CITY — The provincial government of Ilocos Norte, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and the San Joaquin Multi-Purpose Cooperative, on Monday morning opened the World Bank-funded Quality Tomato Production, Consolidation, Storage, and Marketing Enterprise Facility, the first in the province.

The establishment of the facility demonstrates the provincial government's commitment to enhancing agricultural infrastructure that will benefit local farmers by providing a modern storage solution that helps maintain the quality and extend the shelf life of their produce, thereby increasing their market value and reducing post-harvest losses, said Ilocos Norte Gov. Matthew Manotoc.

Manotoc, Department of Agriculture Regional Director Annie Barres, Provincial Agriculturist Maria Teresa Bacnat, Sarrat town Mayor Remigio Medrano and San Joaquin Multi-Purpose Cooperative Chairman Arsenio Valencia led the inauguration and turnover rites.

The Ilocos Norte governor emphasized the importance of such initiatives in boosting the agricultural sector and supporting the livelihood of farmers in the province.

"Let us ensure that this pioneering, first-of-its-kind cold storage facility in the province becomes a resounding success and something we can all be proud of. Ultimately, it will bring significant benefits to our farmers," he said.

The cold storage facility is equipped with advanced technology to ensure optimal storage conditions for tomatoes and other perishable goods. It also includes a consolidation area where farmers can bring their produce for sorting, grading and packaging, enhancing the overall quality and marketability of the products.

The P33,464,170.05 worth WB-funded facility was constructed under the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP). It is part of a broader initiative of the provincial government and its partners to strengthen the agricultural value chain, improve food security and promote sustainable farming practices not only in the province but across Region I.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/07/29/2373907/world-bank-funded-cold-storage-facility-first-ilocos-norte-opens>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

DBM: Confidential, intel funds for 2025 down 16%

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

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 02:03 PM July 29, 2024



The Department of Budget and Management turns over to the House of Representatives the proposed national budget for 2025.

MANILA, Philippines — Allocations for confidential and intelligence funds (CIFs) in the proposed 2025 national budget went down by 16 percent compared to the 2024 General Appropriations Act (GAA), Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman said on Monday.

In a media briefing after the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) turned over the National Expenditures Program (NEP) to the House of Representatives, Pangandaman said P10.29 billion of the P6.352- trillion budget for 2025 was allocated for CIFs.

She said it is lower than the P12.37 billion allocated for CIFs in the 2024 GAA.



“The DBM got a total proposed P11.39-billion CIF for 2025, of which confidential is P5.22 billion, intelligence is P6.17 billion. But we only approved a P10.29-billion CIF. The breakdown is P4.37 billion for confidential expenses and P5.92 billion for intelligence expenses,” she added.

Pangandaman also provided a breakdown of the CIF allocation per agency or sector, sans the P4.5-billion CIF set aside for the Office of the President.

- **Armed Forces of the Philippines – P1.70 billion**
- **National Intelligence Coordinating Agency – P991.2 million**
- **Philippine National Police – P806.03 million**
- **Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency – P500 million**
- **Department of Justice (Office of the Secretary, Bureau of Immigration, National Bureau of Investigation, and Office of the Solicitor General) – P579.4 million**
- **Department of National Defense (including Armed Forces of the Philippines General Headquarters, Philippine Army, Philippine Air Force, Philippine Navy, Office of the Secretary) – P1.8 billion**

- **Department of Finance (Bureau of Customs and Bureau of Internal Revenue) – P79.5 million**
- **Department of Transportation (Office of the Transportation Security and Philippine Coast Guard) – P405 million**
- **Anti-Money Laundering Council – P7.5 million**
- **Games and Amusement Board – P4 million**
- **National Security Council – P250 million**
- **Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity – P60 million**
- **Commission on Audit – P10 million**
- **Office of the Ombudsman – P51.4 million**
- **Commission on Human Rights – P1 million**

Pangandaman explained that the CIF allocation for the 2025 NEP is lower than in 2024 because the DBM adopted the practice initiated by the House, where CIFs of civilian agencies that do not have a surveillance function were removed.

“If you’ll notice, based on the breakdown that we gave, only the agencies mentioned can have confidential and intelligence funds, that’s why it decreased by 16 percent,” she added.

After the discussions on the 2024 national budget, the House removed confidential funds worth P1.23 billion from key agencies like the Office of the Vice President (OVP), Department of Education, Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), and Department of Agriculture (DA).

Most of the confidential funds were reallocated to agencies securing the West Philippine Sea.

The DBM handed to the House a copy of the NEP, which contains the budget allocations made by the executive branch. Under the 1987 Constitution, Congress can change allocations to items in the NEP, as long as it would not go above the ceiling set by the executive.

The submission of the proposed 2025 budget to Congress is the earliest under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s term, with the executive branch handing the NEP to the House only seven days after the State of the Nation Address (Sona).

Under the 1987 Constitution, the executive branch is given 30 days after the Sona to submit the NEP to Congress.

After the turnover, lawmakers usually spend days reviewing the NEP before the appropriations panel starts deliberations at the committee level.

For the 2024 budget, committee-level discussions started on August 10, or eight days after the DBM turned over the NEP.

After the committee approves its version of the NEP, it will be contained in the General Appropriations Bill (GAB), and the discussions will be held during plenary sessions.

Once the House approves the GAB, it will be forwarded to the Senate for another set of deliberations.

A bicameral conference committee is often convened to thresh out differences in the House and the Senate's versions of the GAB.

After differences are reconciled, the bill will be forwarded to the President for his signature or veto.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1967035/dbm-confidential-intel-funds-for-2025-down-16>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Agusan del Sur Governor urges youth to take up agriculture

By: [Chris Panganiban](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Inquirer Mindanao](#) / 08:46 PM July 29, 2024



Agusan Del Sur Governor Santiago Cane, Jr. | PHOTO: Official Facebook page of the Province of Agusan del Sur

PROSPERIDAD, Agusan Del Sur — Governor Santiago Cane, Jr. has urged the youth in his province to take up agriculture not only as an opportunity for a bright future but also to develop the agriculture sector in landlocked Agusan del Sur.

“I encourage our youth to take up agricultural courses,” said Cane during his 5th State of the Province address (Sopa) at the Datu Lipus Makapandong DO Plaza Sports Complex on July 19 here.

“This is not only an opportunity for your future but also for the development of the agricultural sector in our province through science, technology, and innovation,” he added.

Cane, who helped set up the state-of-the-art soils laboratory to modernize farming in the province, urged young farmers to use the latest available technologies to modernize agriculture and help drive the economic growth of the province in the coming years.

While Agusan del Sur has significant potential in agriculture, it is not enough to rely solely on traditional farming methods, the governor said.

“Modernizing local agricultural practices is essential to fully harness this potential,” he added.

At the forefront of the provincial government’s efforts to modernize farming is the state-of-the-art soils laboratory, a project undertaken in partnership with the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research.

Currently, in its first phase, the soils laboratory is already 75 percent complete and is expected to be fully operational in 2025.

Cane also highlighted the importance of the soil tests to boost farm productivity, reduce farm costs, and increase farmers’ income.

Despite the cost, these tests will determine the presence or absence of 16 essential microelements in the soil, the governor said.

These microelements are vital for achieving higher yields at lower costs, thereby making farm production more profitable while ensuring the long-term health of the province’s soils.

“To keep up with the demands of the times, we need to tailor-fit our agricultural system to the latest technologies and innovations,” Cane said.

The Governor also established the Sustainable Provincial Agro-Industry Resource Center (SPARC) in Mabuhay Village in Bayugan City to help modernize agriculture and boost farm productivity in the province.

“This SPARC facility will serve as an innovation hub, benefiting farmers, micro, small, and medium enterprises, consumers, tourists, and local industries,” he said.

On top of these initiatives, the provincial government has implemented a scholarship program for a Master’s Degree in Soil Science and Crop Protection through Sangguniang Panlalawigan Ordinance No. 730.

There are currently five scholars expected to complete their studies in 2026, and the provincial government continues to accept applications for these grants each year.

“This is a significant step in strengthening and expanding our knowledge of soil health development to help our farmers increase production at lower costs,” Cane said.

The governor also cited the initiatives of the province’s two congressional districts to secure a total of P2.6 billion for the rehabilitation of the Daang Maharlika National Highway. The 150-kilometer stretch from Trento town in the south to Sibagat town in the north had been criticized for its potholes and cracks.

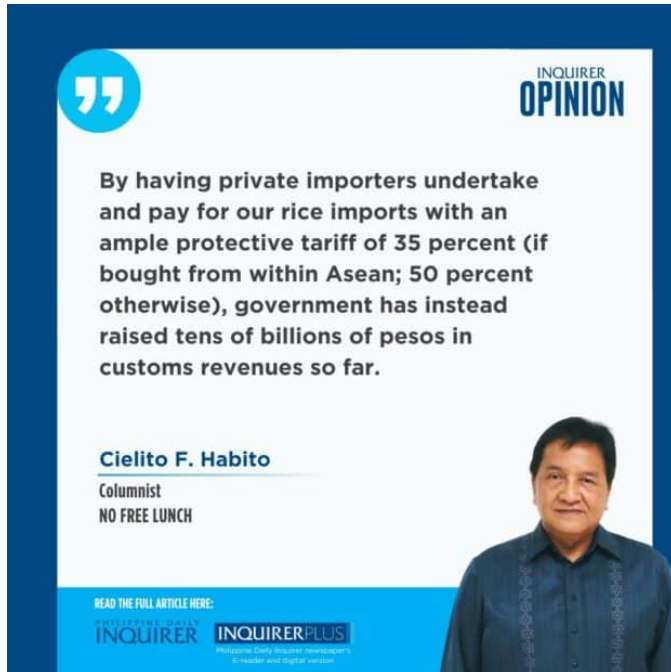
<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1967122/agusan-del-sur-governor-urges-youth-to-take-up-agriculture>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Best use of rice funds

By: [Cielito F. Habito](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:25 AM July 30, 2024



A key feature of Republic Act No. 11203 or the rice tariffication law (RTL) that Congress wisely and finally passed in 2019, more than two decades overdue, was how it raised substantial funds to help our rice farmers boost their productivity and competitiveness. It completely reversed the past setup wherein we taxpayers financed all our rice imports done exclusively by a government agency whose huge deficits perennially bled our national coffers since the 1980s. By having private importers undertake and pay for our rice imports with an ample protective tariff of 35 percent (if bought from within Asean; 50 percent otherwise), government has instead raised tens of billions of pesos in customs revenues so far.

Under RTL, these revenues support a Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) of P10 billion a year for six years, to be used to help our rice producers improve their productivity and ability to face up to competition from imports. Our lawmakers decided to earmark half of the fund for mechanization support, 30 percent for the development and promotion of inbred seeds, 10 percent for credit financing, and 10 percent for extension services to train farmers, mostly through

farm schools supervised by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

But many of us who had pushed for RTL saw this RCEF allocation to be problematic from the start. Having anticipated a drop in farmgate prices following implementation of the law, we argued that the most urgent use for much of the tariff proceeds should be for cash safety nets for small rice farmers hit hard by the resulting price fall. National Scientist Dr. Emil Q. Javier pushed for P20,000 per hectare, and as a close adviser to then Agriculture Secretary William Dar, suggested to him this amount. But Congress chose the above allocation, and allowed farmer cash support only when tariff revenues exceed the annual P10 billion target—thereby making it the last priority use of the funds, rather than the urgent first priority we argued it should have been.

That's now water under the bridge, and the best we can do is evaluate the actual utilization of the RCEF as allocated, then reallocate it as may be implied by results of the midterm evaluation, which the law itself provided for. The Asian Development Bank commissioned the International Rice Research Institute to do this evaluation for the Department of Agriculture, and findings were released late last year. Here are some of the key findings:

On mechanization, which econometric analysis showed to have high potential impact on production, the program was found hampered by low and slow budget utilization. The Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech), as main implementer, suffered “birthing pains” that slowed the procurement process. At the end of 2022, only 46 percent of that year's budget was obligated with zero disbursement, and only 58 percent of the previous year's budget had been disbursed. All told, the report notes that PhilMech expects to cover only 14 percent of total requirements for rice mechanization at the end of six years. Meanwhile, it also needs to address issues on non-utilization of machines found unsuitable to local conditions, a glaring waste of resources.

The seeds component, on the other hand, received high marks on overall efficiency in meeting its goals. There were issues with late delivery of certified seeds for up to 5 percent of farmer beneficiaries, and inability to reach many deserving farmers due

to non-listing in the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture. This farmer's registry has issues of its own that merit another discussion, but overall, the RCEF seeds program appeared to be working well. On credit, the report gives the program high marks for budget utilization and achieving targets on loan disbursement rates to farmers. Still, loan repayment rates have been low, and overall impact on yield is found low as well. Overall reach to rice farmers was found limited and skewed to certain regions, and the poorest of farmers are left out as the crop insurance system covers only farms larger than one-fourth hectare. Finally, on training and extension, the report observed frequent repetition in training to particular groups of farmers, rather than widening their reach to more farmers. Lack of an effective monitoring and evaluation system and framework also hampers assessment of the system's effectiveness in raising farmer capabilities and farm productivity.

Clearly, deeper thinking and focused efforts need to be put into allocating precious funds meant to support the game-changing reform of rice trade liberalization, which ultimately serves the greatest good for the greatest number of Filipinos. But there must be a sense of urgency in providing timely support in the right form to our farmers who need it most.

cielito.habito@gmail.com

<https://opinion.inquirer.net/175580/best-use-of-rice-funds>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

House receives P6.352-T budget for 2025

By: [Jeannette I. Andrade](#) - Reporter / [@jiandradeINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:35 AM July 30, 2024



SPENDING PLAN The House committee on appropriations will soon start the deliberations for the country's national spending plan as Speaker Martin Romualdez on Monday receives from Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman the proposed P6.352-trillion National Expenditure Program for 2025. —photo from the House of Representatives

MANILA, Philippines — More than half of the proposed P6.352-trillion national budget for 2025 will go to social and economic services, while the controversial confidential and intelligence funds (CIFs) have been limited to agencies with functions related to national security.

The House of Representatives on Monday formally received from Malacañang the budget proposal for next year, which is 10.1 percent more than the P5.768-trillion 2024 national budget.

Speaker Martin Romualdez said job creation, quality education, expanded health care and social protection would be given priority by the House in allocating funds for the 2025 national budget.

In his message, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. expressed optimism that the 2025 budget would sustain the country's momentum of "economic and social transformation" to make the Philippines a front-runner in the Asia-Pacific region.

Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman said the P10.29-billion allocation for CIFs in the 2025 National Expenditure Program (NEP) was lower by 16 percent from last year.

No more CIF was allocated to the Office of the Vice President and the Department of Education (DepEd), which was previously headed by Vice President Sara Duterte.

The CIF in the 2025 NEP is made up of P4.37 billion in confidential funds and P5.92 billion in intelligence funds.

The Office of the President was allocated P4.46 billion in CIF; the Department of National Defense, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and its major services, P1.8 billion; the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency, P991.2 million; the Philippine National Police, P806 million; the Department of Justice's Office of the Secretary, the Bureau of Immigration, National Bureau of Investigation, and the Office of the Solicitor General, P579.4 million; and the Department of Transportation (DOTr), particularly the Office of Transportation Security and the Philippine Coast Guard, P405 million.

Pangandaman said that P1.8 billion in CIF was allocated for executive offices, including the Anti-Money Laundering Council.

Cuts

Under the 2025 NEP, P2.12 trillion or 33.4 percent has been set aside for social services; P1.85 trillion (29.2 percent) for economic services; P1.08 trillion (17 percent) for general public services; P876.7 billion (13.7 percent) for debt service; and P419.3 billion (6.6 percent) for defense.

A P13-billion contingency fund was also allotted for 2025, which Pangandaman said could not be used for CIF requests of nonsecurity agencies unless the President declares it extremely necessary.

“There are safeguards to prevent abuse from the contingent fund. The fund can only be used for specific urgent needs such as legal obligations with final decisions (and to meet the requirements) of newly created agencies,” she said.

The DepEd, state universities and colleges, the Commission on Higher Education, and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority are getting a total of P977.6 billion next year.

The DOTr was allocated P180.9 billion for transport development and modernization.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development was given P230.1 billion, down from last year’s P248.1 billion, for various social protection programs.

The Department of Agriculture, its attached agencies and the Department of Agrarian Reform were allotted P211.3 billion to ensure food security, although this was lower than last year’s P221.7 billion.

The Department of Public Works and Highways’ proposed P900-billion budget is also lower than the P997.9 billion set aside in the 2024 budget.

The allocation of P297.6 billion for the Department of Health, including the Philippine Health Insurance Corp., similarly decreased from the 2024 national budget’s P308.3 billion. —*with reports from Melvin Gascon and Mariedel Irish U. Catilogo*

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1967205/house-receives-p6-352-t-budget-for-2025>

BUSINESS WORLD:

URC signs five-year deal to support potato farmers

July 29, 2024 | 8:24 pm



PHILSTAR FILE PHOTO

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it signed a five-year agreement with Universal Robina Corp. (URC) to support potato farmers.

In a statement on Monday, the DA said that the Sustainable Potato Program (SPP) will upgrade seed quality, train potato farmer organizations, and seek to boost the productivity of potato producing areas.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said that URC has committed to scale up the project and expand production areas in Bukidnon, Davao, and the Cordilleras.

According to the DA, seed varieties distributed by the project have yielded up to 45 metric tons (MT) per hectare of potatoes. The 14 farmer organizations participating in the program have produced 23,000 MT, generating about P920 million in income.

“This agreement solidifies our shared commitment to improve access to quality planting materials, enhance potato production practices and technology, boost local sufficiency, and ultimately uplift farmers en route to a sustainable future,” Mr. Laurel added.

DA regional offices and URC will collaborate in selecting farmers' groups that could benefit from the SPP.

Mr. Laurel said the DA will provide 2 million potato seeds to farmers, good for planting to about 44 hectares.

“After three generations (the initial seed investment) could cover at least 12,000 hectares” of commercial potato production, the DA added.

The Bureau of Plant Industry was tasked with processing the import permits for the seed, as well as pest and disease surveillance. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/29/610942/urc-signs-five-year-deal-to-support-potato-farmers/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

First Ilocos Norte cold storage facility opens

July 29, 2024 | 8:24 pm



PHILSTAR FILE PHOTO

BAGUIO CITY — The Ilocos Norte government and the Department of Agriculture (DA) said they opened the World Bank-funded Quality Tomato Production, Consolidation, Storage, and Marketing Enterprise Facility on Monday.

The facility, the first in the province, will be run by the San Joaquin Multi-Purpose Cooperative, based in Sarrat.

The facility will allow farmers to maintain the quality and extend the shelf life of their produce, allowing them to command better prices and reduce post-harvest losses, Governor Matthew M. Manotoc said.

Mr. Manotoc was accompanied at the facility's turnover ceremony by DA Regional Director Annie Q. Barres, Provincial Agriculturist Maria Teresa L. Bacnat, Sarrat Mayor Remigio B. Medrano, and San Joaquin Multi-Purpose Cooperative Chairman Arsenio Valencia.

“Let us ensure that this pioneering, first-of-its-kind cold storage facility in the province becomes a resounding success and something we can all be proud of. Ultimately, it will bring significant benefits to our farmers,” Mr. Manotoc said.

The facility is designed to maintain optimal storage conditions for tomatoes and other perishables. It includes a consolidation area where farmers can bring their produce for sorting, grading, and packaging, enhancing their overall quality and marketability.

The P33-million facility was built via the DA's Philippine Rural Development Project. — **Artemio A. Dumlao**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/29/610940/first-ilocos-norte-cold-storage-facility-opens/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Approved local projects to mitigate climate impact receives P1.3 billion

July 29, 2024 | 8:22 pm



THE GOVERNMENT has approved P1.3 billion worth of climate adaptation projects at the local level, the Department of Finance (DoF) said.

The DoF said the approvals cover 13 projects supported by the People's Survival Fund (PSF).

These include P117.96 million for the reinforcement of the Lo-om River Flood Protection System and support to affected communities and livelihoods in Borongan City, Eastern Samar.

It also approved P21.28 million for the construction of three solar-power irrigation systems in Cabagan, Isabela and P2.64 million for a Mangrove Rehabilitation Project in Catanauan, Quezon Province.

The Building Resilience with Ridge to Reef Adaptation to Climate Change project in Cortes, Surigao del Sur was allocated P126.69 million.

The Enhancing the Climate Adaptive Capacity of Communities through Establishing a Disaster Risk Reduction Management Approach in the River Ecosystem project in Maramag, Bukidnon was granted P126.4 million, the DoF said.

It also noted that P305.29 million was approved for the Climate-Resilient Intervention towards Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management project in Ilocos Norte.

The Establishing and Sustainable Management of River Ecosystem project in Kitcharao, Agusan del Norte was given P24.99 million, while the Building Resilience through Community-Based Ecological Farming Project in San Francisco, Camotes Island, Cebu received P33.89 million.

The Saub Watershed Ecosystem Rehabilitation and Flood Risk Reduction project in Sarangani province received P93.6 million, while the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Response as Coping Mechanism to Resiliency Project, in Lanuza, Surigao del Sur was granted P39.05 million.

The DoF said the Siargao Climate Field School for Farmers and Fisherfolk in Del Carmen, Siargao got P80.71 million under the PSF.

The Promoting Resilience and Climate-Informed project in Gerona, Tarlac got P38.1 million, while the Mountain Province Climate Field School for Farmers project received P271.15 million.

Republic Act No. 10174, the law that created the fund, tasked it with helping local government units and accredited community organizations in handling the impact of climate related disasters.

The PSF Board is chaired by Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/29/610937/approved-local-projects-to-mitigate-climate-impact-receives-p1-3-billion/>

REMATE:

Walang medical waste na itinapon sa dagat – BFAR

July 29, 2024 16:41



MARIING pinabulaanan ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) nitong Linggo ang mga pahayag sa social media na hindi dapat kumain ng isda ang mga tao dahil itinatapon umano sa dagat ang mga medikal na basura.

Ayon sa BFAR ang impormasyong kumakalat sa social media na nagsasabing ang mga medikal na basura, partikular na isang “tube mula sa isang ospital na may human immunodeficiency virus (HIV),” ay itinapon sa dagat ay “false information.”

“Ang Department of Agriculture–Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources ay mahigpit na tinututulan ang claim na ito, dahil ang impormasyon ay HINDI TOTOO,” sabi nito.

Kaugnay nito hinimok din ng bureau ang publiko na manatiling mapagbantay at i-verify ang impormasyon bago magbahagi ng anumang mga post sa social media. (Santi Celario)

<https://remate.ph/walang-medical-waste-na-itinapon-sa-dagat-bfar/>

MANILA STANDARD

‘Trust and respect’ feeds interfaith rice growing success in the Philippines



By UN News

July 29, 2024, 6:55 pm

First of two parts

By Daniel Dickinson

Trust built on decades of respect for religion has fertilized the seeds of success for two communities, one Muslim the other Christian, which have joined together to build a successful rice growing cooperative in the Philippines.

The cooperative Liton, Kibales, Magatos Irrigators Association (LKM-IA) has been supported by the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) with funding from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

The communities live just a few hundred meters apart close to Kabacan in Cotabato, central Mindanao island, an area which has seen separatist violence over many years and which is now moving towards a more significant level of self-rule by the Muslim majority.

Ahead of the International Day of Cooperatives marked annually on July 1, UN News’s Daniel Dickinson traveled to Kabacan and met two members of LKM-IA,

treasurer Marcializa Calud, who is Christian and Mona Usman, a Muslim and who works as the auditor.

Marcializa Calud: The association began in 2015 with just P250 (\$4) and last year our income was P1.65 million (\$28,000). Careful planning and management have helped us to grow and this has been reinforced with support from KOICA and FAO including seeds fertilizers as well as machines.

Mona Usman: The association received machines for each step of the rice growing and harvesting process; a rotavator to plough the field, a combine harvester to bring in the crop and a milling machine to process the rice.

(To be continued) **UN News**

<https://manilastandard.net/spotlight/environmental-and-sustainability/314478043/trust-and-respect-feeds-interfaith-rice-growing-success-in-the-philippines.html>

Pangasinan estimates damage at P250M

By Gabriel L. Cardinoza
July 30, 2024

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan — At least P250.1 million worth of infrastructure, agriculture, and livestock were destroyed in Pangasinan when Typhoon "Carina" and the southwest monsoon dumped rains all over the province last week.

The Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) said some P225.5 million worth of roads and bridges were destroyed by raging flood waters in the different towns and cities of the province.

Damage to agriculture was about P21.8 million and the livestock industry lost about P2.8 million.

"But this is just the initial assessment. We are still waiting for reports from other areas of the province," said Gov. Ramon Guico III on Monday.

"We are very fortunate that there is no casualty in the province in this typhoon. However, the rain was very heavy. It is good that we are proactive in coordinating with the different LGUs (local government units) in terms of evacuation," Guico added.

As of 6 a.m. on Monday, the PDRRMO said the water levels in most of the rivers crisscrossing the province have returned to their normal levels.

Guico said that hardest-hit villages were those abutting rivers and waterways.

"We have been monitoring some major rivers, including the one here in Tarlac," Guico said.

The Camiling River in neighboring Tarlac province, which cuts through Mangatarem town and submerged several villages when it overflowed.

The Ambuklao Dam in Bokod, Benguet still had two spillway gates open at 0.5 meter each while the Binga Dam in Itogon, Benguet only had a spillway gate open at 0.5 meter.

The two dams, which are in the upstream of the Agno River, are two of three dams built in the river.

The other one is the San Roque Dam, which is downstream of the river in San Manuel, Pangasinan.

As cascading dams, water released by the Ambuklao flows to Binga, while the water spilled from Binga is caught by the San Roque Dam downstream of the Agno River.

As of July 29, the water level at Ambuklao Dam was 751.38 meters above sea level (masl) which is about 0.62 meter below its normal high water level of 752 masl.

Binga dam has a water level of 574.45 masl, about 0.55 meter below its maximum level of 575 masl.

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The San Roque Dam had a water level of 246.99 masl, which is still 35.01 meters below its maximum water level of 280 masl.

The PDRRMO also said that some 176,915 individuals from 168 villages of the province were affected by the rains and flood waters.

"We have distributed relief packs in the evacuation centers as well as those outside the evacuation center," said Guico.

Of the 71 flooded villages in 11 towns and cities, only two remain flooded, the PDRRMO said.

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On the opening of classes in public schools on July 29, two schools in Binmaley town held blended classes while a school in Sual town conducted modular classes.

Fifty-four schools Mangatarem and one in Lingayen postponed the school opening to August 5.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/30/regions/pangasinan-estimates-damage-at-p250m/1960628>

DA, URC extend sustainable potato program

By **Jed Macapagal**
July 30, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) and Universal Robina Corp. (URC), signed a five-year agreement to jointly establish and continue implementing the Sustainable Potato Program (SPP).

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said URC committed to upscale the project and expand production areas in the Cordilleras, Bukidnon and Davao provinces in partnership with the DA and the United Potato Producers of Benguet and Mountain province and other farmers' associations in various provinces.

SPP is an ongoing program that started in 2019 whose objective is help establish reliable seeds systems, capacitate potato farmers organizations and boost farm productivity and farmers' income in top potato-producing regions.

URC, whose snack brands include potato chips that are marketed in the Philippines and abroad, previously distributed around 506 metric tons (MT) of high-quality potato seeds in the three regions which were planted in 202 hectares of land.

The DA said the distributed seeds yielded a maximum of 45 MT per hectare of potatoes with total estimated production of 23,000 MT that generated gross income of P920 million for 14 farmer organizations.

DA regional offices, together with URC, will identify and select additional farmers groups that will benefit from the program through capacity building, training in good agricultural practices, seed multiplication, pest and disease management, storage, handling and marketing.

The DA has committed additional funding for the production of quality planting materials targeting 2 million pieces of generation 1 seed to be used for seed production starting in 44 hectares which after three generations may cover at least 12,000 hectares of commercial potato production.

The agency will also provide farmers with nurseries, small machinery, storage and processing facilities.

Based on data from the Philippine Statistics Authority, the country was able to produce 100,054.60 MT of potato last year, 6.9 percent lower compared to 2022's 107,416.19 MT.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/da-urc-extend-sustainable-potato-program/

INCLUDES INDUSTRIAL, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS: Firms renew call to classify illicit trade as non-bailable offense

By **Irma Isip**

July 30, 2024



Onions are displayed at a stall at a public market in Manila. (Reuters Photo)

Domestic manufacturers have renewed their calls to classify smuggling of industrial products as economic sabotage, making this economic crime a non-bailable offense.

This is similar to a current proposal that seeks to qualify smuggling of agricultural products as economic sabotage, according to Jesus Arranza, chairman of the Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI).

Arranza bared this at the First National Anti-Illicit Trade Summit last July 25 at the Manila Hotel.

Jesus Montemayor said smuggling and illicit trade “are not just economic crimes but also social menaces” that need to be curbed immediately to protect legitimate businesses and the economy.

Smuggling, Arranza said, has displaced local manufacturers, workers, and farmers.

For instance, he said, the local automotive tire industry used to have six local manufacturers. Now, there is only one company that is producing tires locally. In the case of textiles, the country used to have 1.5 million spindles that can hire up to 35 people on a 24-hour shift.

Now, the number has dropped to a little over, due mainly to the flooding of cheap, smuggled, substandard, and used clothing or ukay-ukay in the market.

The FPI asked the regulators to update local manufacturers on their current initiatives against illicit trade and lay down how they plan to intensify their campaigns.

In response, undersecretary Charlito Martin Mendoza said the Department of Finance is committed to work closely with the local industries in launching more effective campaigns against smugglers and illicit traders via the Bureau of Customs and Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Phillip Sawali, director of the Fair trade Enforcement Bureau, informed the domestic industry leaders that the Department of Trade and Industry has created Task Force Kalasag, which is now actively pursuing violators of the Consumer Act and Standards Law, particularly traders of uncertified and substandards products, in partnership with the National Bureau of Investigation and Philippine National Police.

Despite the bad weather and widespread flooding, the Summit was attended by leaders of the industry and government regulators, including DTI-Fair trade Enforcement Bureau Director Atty. Phillip D. Sawali, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Carlos C. Carag, Bureau of Customs (BOC) Intellectual Property Rights Division (IPRD) Chief Paul Oliver Pacunayen, and National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Senior Agent John Bacho.

Representatives from the Environment Management Bureau, Food and Drug Administration, Intellectual Property Office have been invited but failed to attend.

The FPI asked the regulators to update local manufacturers on their current initiatives against illicit trade and lay down how they plan to intensify their campaigns in support of President Marcos's pronouncements during the Summit.

Arranza said a study they commissioned showed that the government is losing around P250 billion in value-added tax (VAT) due to smuggling. Since VAT is 12 percent of the value of imported goods, Arranza said around P2.3 trillion worth of smuggled products are unfairly competing against locally produced products in the domestic market annually.

This, he said, is why Mendoza, in his address, committed to work closely with the local industries in launching more effective campaigns against smugglers and illicit traders via the Bureau of Customs and Bureau of Internal Revenue.

The FPI is also asking the regulators to destroy all confiscated goods, whether they are substandard or conforming with Philippine standards. This will prevent the possibility of these confiscated products still landing in the domestic market and unfairly competing with locally manufactured goods. An exception is if the products confiscated fall under those that are not being produced locally in sufficient quantity.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/includes-industrial-agricultural-products-firms-renew-call-to-classify-illicit-trade-as-non-bailable-offense/

‘Carina,’ ‘habagat’ farm damage now at P697M

Ada Pelonia
July 30, 2024

THE damage sustained by the agriculture sector following heavy rainfall from typhoon Carina and the southwest monsoon has reached nearly P700 million, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

In its latest bulletin, the DA said the agricultural damage reached a total P696.87 million and affected 30,827 farmers.

The volume of production losses in Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Ilocos, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, Western and Eastern Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Soccsksargen and Caraga regions was pegged at 13,312 metric tons (MT).

Rice sustained the bulk of the damage at 9,102 MT. Corn and high-value crops also sustained damage at 3,104 MT and 1,105 MT, respectively.

“Damage and losses are also expected in fisheries [aquaculture, facilities, and equipment] in CAR, Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, and Bicol regions,” the DA said in a statement.

According to the report, the production losses are equivalent to P570.14 million for rice, P65.02 million for corn, P58.95 million for high-value crops, P1.17 million for livestock and poultry, and P1.6 million for infrastructure, machinery, and equipment.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary and Spokesman Arnel De Mesa said Central Luzon bore the brunt of typhoon Carina as it logged P400 million worth of losses.

“The total area affected is about 35,000 [hectares]. Of which 25,000 are partially damaged and with chance of recovery,” De Mesa told reporters in a briefing on Monday.

“These losses are still relatively smaller compared to year-on-year historical damage brought about by typhoons. Normally, for a year, about 500 to 600,000 metric tons are lost due to typhoons,” he said, speaking partly in Filipino.

The DA said it would distribute 72,174 bags of rice seeds, 39,546 bags of corn seeds, 59,600 pouches, and 1,966 kilograms of vegetable seeds.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) will also provide fingerlings, fishing gear, and paraphernalia.

The department also noted that available funds from the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC) would be disbursed to indemnify affected farmers.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/30/carina-habagat-farm-damage-now-at-p697m/>

URC, govt aim to hike potato output

Ada Pelonia
July 30, 2024

Universal Robina Corp. (URC) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) forged a 5-year agreement to implement a program that seeks to increase the income and productivity of potato farmers.

The DA said URC, the food manufacturing arm of the Gokongwei Group, joined the Sustainable Potato Program (SPP) before the outbreak of Covid-19 in the country.

“Since its inception in 2019, (SPP) exemplified the power of public-private partnerships in driving positive change,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said in a statement.

“This agreement solidifies our shared commitment to improve access to quality planting materials, enhance potato production practices and technology, boost local sufficiency, and ultimately uplift farmers en route to a sustainable future.”

Laurel said URC committed to upscale the project and expand production areas in the Cordilleras, Bukidnon, and Davao provinces.

The agri chief said that this is in partnership with the DA and the United Potato Producers of Benguet and Mountain Province and other farmers’ associations in various provinces.

The DA said URC, whose snack brands include potato chips that are marketed in the Philippines and abroad, previously distributed around 506 metric tons (MT) of high-quality potato seeds in three regions. These were planted in 202 hectares (ha) of land under the auspices of the SPP.

It added that the distributed seeds yielded a maximum of 45 MT per hectare of potatoes, with a total estimated production of 23,000 MT that generated a gross income of P920 million for 14 farmer organizations.

Meanwhile, Laurel committed additional funding for the production of quality planting materials targeting 2 million pieces of Generation 1 seed to be used for seed production starting in 44 hectares, and after 3 generations may cover at least 12,000 hectares of commercial potato production.

He also committed to providing farmers with nurseries, small machinery, storage, and processing facilities.

The DA said its regional offices and URC will identify and select farmers groups that will benefit from the program through capacity building, training in good agricultural practices, seed multiplication, pest and disease management, storage, handling, and marketing.

“The DA and URC continue to foster collaboration in grassroots-based mechanisms towards the attainment of the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals [SDG] particularly Responsible Production and Consumption (SDG 12) and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17).”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/30/urc-govt-aim-to-hike-potato-output/>

Rice imports this year total 2.4M tons so far

Ada Pelonia
July 29, 2024



File: The National Food Authority (NFA) stores its buffer rice stock consisting of imports and paddy it purchased from farmers in its warehouses.

RICE import arrivals as of July 20 reached nearly 2.4 million metric tons (MMT), according to the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI).

Figures from the attached agency of the Department of Agriculture (DA) showed that total rice imports from January 1 to July 20 hit 2.39 MMT.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary and Spokesman Arnel de Mesa said on Monday that shipments after July 6 were already levied with the 15 percent tariff rate. Rice imports from the first three weeks of July stood at 56,118 MT.

More than 1.78 MMT of rice imports from this period came from Vietnam, which remains the country's top source of imported rice. This was followed by Thailand at 358,727.74 MT.

BPI data showed that the country imported 154,523.82 MT of rice from Pakistan, higher than the 99,280.71 MT full-year import volume recorded last year.

The Philippines also bought rice from Myanmar at 66,640 MT and India at 21,875.14 MT.

Orison Free Enterprise Inc. led the 157 rice importers with a total volume of 152,009.35 MT. This was followed by BLY Agri Venture Trading and Macman Rice and Corn Trading at 147,928.99 MT and 115,410.80, respectively.

These were the only companies whose rice imports reached over 100,000 MT.

Data from the BPI also showed that it approved and issued 4,995 sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances (SPSICs) which covered the importation of 5.5 MMT of rice.

Under the rules, rice importers should secure an SPSIC from the BPI before bringing in foreign rice stocks.

An SPSIC would certify that an inbound shipment is safe for human and animal consumption and would not bring in any pests that could be detrimental to the local agriculture sector.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently said that the Philippines's imported rice purchases will hit 4.7 MMT this year or 1 MMT higher than the 3.61 MMT it imported last year.

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

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

Meanwhile, rice importers may go slow on importing rice while waiting for the ruling on the legality of Executive Order 62, according to Roehlano Briones, a senior research fellow at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS).

This, after agricultural groups earlier asked the Supreme Court to immediately issue a temporary restraining order (TRO) or a status quo ante order as provisional relief against the implementation of the order.

“[The impact if a TRO were issued against EO 62] depends on [how] quickly SC will rule to stay the EO. If quickly, then status quo,” Briones told the BusinessMirror via SMS.

“Bigger question is legality. Importers may slow down importing while waiting for ruling on legality of the EO,” he added.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/29/rice-imports-this-year-total-2-4m-tons-so-far/>

DTI sees Taiwan as potential big market for food exports

Andrea E. San Juan
July 29, 2024

PHILIPPINE exporters of sauces, condiments, snack foods, coconut-based products and ready-to-eat meals, among others, could tap Taiwan as a consumer base as it is another “potentially big market” and is one of the international food hubs in Asia, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc. said.

The Philippines’ Trade officials said this after 14 participating Philippine companies generated around \$7.3 million in sales (booked and under negotiation) with coconut flower syrup and sap drinks, organic and conventional coconut medium-chain triglyceride (MCT), coconut water, and coconut jams as the top-selling products at the Food Taipei 2024.

In a statement on Monday, DTI said the Food Philippines pavilion highlighted the country’s top export food products such as sauces, condiments, snack foods, coconut-based products, ready-to-eat meals, fresh seafood, juices, coffee and beverages.

But processed fruits and vegetables like water spinach chips, banana chips, taro chips, and camote chips, along with native delicacies such as fish crackers, crispy anchovy, squid, and shrimp were also well-received, DTI noted.

“This is a very relevant and encouraging result of the PHILEXPORT memorandum of understanding with the Importers and Exporters Association of Taipei [IEAT] in 2022,” said Philexport President Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis Jr.

“Now on its second year, we are pleased that the increased sales generated from this show and other related activities are helping establish a stronger foothold in Taiwan as another potentially big market for our products,” he added.

Trade and Industry Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual said the Philippine exporters participation in Food Taipei 2024 is a “testament to the quality and competitiveness of Philippine products.”

“It underscores our commitment to supporting our local exporters in reaching new heights in the international market,” Pascual also noted.

For his part, Anthony B. Rivera, Director for Commercial Affairs at the Philippine Trade and Investment Center (PTIC) in Taipei highlighted the potential of the said Philippine export food products as these could complement the food and food ingredients in Taiwan.

“These products can be easily paired with any food and food ingredients in Taiwan. They cater to the taste of different market segments, food choices that are fit for any time of the day and basically complement the wide selection and trends that you see in the estimated \$9.5 billion Taiwan food market,” Rivera said.

According to DTI, Taiwan is known as one of the international food hubs in Asia and offers a “wide and diverse” range of food selections.

Importers and Exporters Association of Taipei (IEAT) Secretary General Peter Huang said “Taiwan is an open market with a very good consumer base, and we welcome Philippine food products to come to Taiwan.”

The Philippine delegation included notable companies such as Bahaghari Global Food, Good Sense Food & Juices, La Carlota Food, P.Togo, Yan Yan International Philippines, KKK Food, Project Beans, Lionheart Farms Philippines, Tropicana Food, Chemrez Technologies, Gemfoods, Fruits of Life, Fenor Foods, Pasciolco Agriventures, and Jing’s Cuisine.

Meanwhile, PTIC Taipei assured the Taiwan market, “As caring as the Taiwan market, the raw materials of Philippine products are responsibly sourced from farmers and communities in the Philippines.”

“They pass the very strict food quality standards in Taiwan, offered at very competitive price ranges, and they can be mainstreamed in both modern trade and general trade channels in Taiwan,” added PTIC Taipei.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/29/dti-sees-taiwan-as-potential-big-market-for-food-exports/>

American farmers want to adapt to climate change, but crop insurance won't let them

Miranda Jeyaretnam
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Gail Fuller's farm uses a variety of regenerative farming techniques such as crop diversification and growing perennial plants.

In Kansas, where a prolonged drought has killed crops and eroded the soil, Gail Fuller's farm is like an oasis. Sheep, cows and chickens graze freely on crops and vegetation in a paradisiacal mess.

But if Fuller's farm were to be hit by a tornado or flood, or be seriously impacted by the drought, he would be alone in footing the bill. That's because his farming practices aren't protected by federal crop insurance, a nearly century-old safety net that hasn't adapted to the climate change era.

Fuller is one of a growing number of farmers who are uninsured or under-insured because the industry doesn't support switching from traditional to regenerative farming, an approach that has the potential to sequester enough carbon to halve agricultural emissions by 2030. That shift is becoming more urgent both to slow climate change and insulate farmers from its impacts, yet the insurance industry continues to stand in the way.

In the US, agriculture accounts for about 11% of all greenhouse gas emissions. A large portion of that is tied to tilling soil, which releases carbon dioxide, and applying excessive fertilizer, which emits nitrous oxide. The latter is a greenhouse gas that's more than 270 times more potent than CO₂. Regenerative farming reduces those emissions by soaking up carbon dioxide through photosynthesis, storing carbon in the soil and capturing nitrogen that would otherwise runoff into nearby streams.

Extreme weather also is becoming more frequent, threatening crop yields and supply chains. Twenty-four states, including Kansas, are experiencing severe to exceptional droughts, according to the US Drought Monitor. That poses a problem as does heavy rain that can waterlog crops and is falling with increasing intensity. Almost 20% of the \$140 billion in crop insurance payouts from 1991 to 2017 were due to rising temperatures, according to researchers at Stanford University. They estimate that percentage will continue to rise with the increasing frequency of extreme weather due to climate change.

Despite these risks—and the benefit regenerative agriculture can play in addressing climate change—stronger incentives have locked in the status quo, according to Anne Schechinger, Midwest director at the nonprofit Environmental Working Group (EWG).

Crop insurance policies mainly cover conventional commodity crops such as corn, soybeans, cotton and wheat. Farmers growing them typically enroll in multi-peril insurance, which insures individual crops against poor harvests caused by disease, flooding, droughts and other extreme weather.

Like health, car or property insurance, appraisals for losses or damages rely on standards—known as Good Farming Practices—that ensure low yields aren't caused by mismanagement. But these rules cannot include a practice that may lower a crop's yield and therefore tend to follow established industrial, monoculture practices: A farmer caught growing different crops between rows or terminating their cover crops too late, for example, is at risk of having their insurance claims denied.

Regenerative agriculture often involves interspersing different crops in the same field and growing lower-yielding perennial plants that can create issues for insurers. But crop insurance payouts largely don't depend on whether a farmer's practices increase or mitigate climate risks, according to University of Iowa professor Silvia Secchi.

Fuller, a third-generation farmer, started experimenting with regenerative farming practices in the mid-1990s, believing he'd see better yields and more resilient crops in the long term. He had grown cover crops in the off-season, one of the more commonly employed regenerative farming practices that involves planting non-market crops that improve soil health. At the time, Fuller was still covered by crop insurance and, per insurance rules, killed his cover crops with herbicide before growing his market crop.

But when his insurance company appraised the land in August 2012, during a severe drought, it determined that the remnant cover crops were weeds. The company denied all of Fuller's claims—which led to his lending institution dropping his operating line of credit.

Fuller sued his insurance company and won. Two years later, however, when he needed them to cover losses for two fields of soybeans, they denied his claims again. The financial turmoil across those two years forced him to downsize his farm to 400 acres from 1,800, and he finally decided to quit crop insurance entirely.

“Once you go broke as a farmer, it's pretty hard to claw your way back,” Fuller said. “I did not want to be a part of that system. We've got to find a better way to farm.”

The US Department of Agriculture has introduced reforms and alternatives to the crop insurance program to accommodate climate risks over the past decade, including adding coverage for new crops and a \$5-per-acre incentive to plant cover crops during the offseason.

The Risk Management Agency, which controls federal crop insurance, also has expanded its coverage of certain climate-smart practices, like lowering water use, cover cropping and injecting nitrogen into the soil, rather than layering it on the soil's surface. Farmers must still follow specific rules, such as terminating their cover crops early enough, which some scientists think limits how much these practices can reduce emissions.

The crop insurance system is already under stress from climate change. The program has to evolve to incentivize practices appropriate to different regions and cover a variety of risks, a USDA spokesperson said, all while being actuarially sound—meaning the program must charge high enough premiums to cover expected losses.

“Even at a micro-scale, a bad storm may be damaging to one type of crop, while providing much-needed rain for another crop,” the USDA spokesperson told Bloomberg Green.

“Crop insurance is voluntary,” said RJ Layher, the director of government affairs at the American Farm Bureau Federation. Farmers practicing regenerative techniques not covered by the Good Farming Practices can look for other options, he added, including showing the Risk Management Agency that their practices are actuarially sound.

Collecting sufficient data to prove that climate-friendly practices like crop diversification won’t impact yield is a big ask for any one farmer, however.

The USDA also initiated the Whole-Farm Revenue Protection Program in 2014, which insures a farm’s entire revenue rather than individual crops, providing a safety net for farmers who plant companion crops or raise animals in their fields.

But the number of farmers participating in the Whole-Farm Revenue Protection Program is small, according to EWG’s Schechinger. About 1,800 policies were sold in 2023, according to the USDA, which accounts for less than 1% of crop insurance. The program involves significantly more paperwork and an insured revenue cap that doesn’t always cover the entire farm’s revenue, which can be prohibitive to insurance agents in selling and farmers in buying the policy, Layher said.

According to Layher, the Farm Bureau supports improvements to the Whole-Farm Revenue Protection Program that would make it more accessible to farmers and easier for insurance agents to sell—both reforms are proposed in the Farm Bill that is stalled in the House until at least September.

The regenerative farming movement is relatively small, but it’s gained steam in recent years thanks to federal support and agribusinesses eager to align their supply chains and sustainability goals. Companies like CoverCress Inc., which is majority-owned by Bayer AG, are trying to get farmers to plant cover crops that can be used for sustainable aviation fuel. And General Mills Inc. implemented pilot

programs to help 24 wheat farmers in Wichita, Kansas, kickstart their regenerative practices.

But for now, the push for changing insurance rules still relies largely on farmers like Fuller and Rick Clark, a third-generation farmer from west central Indiana who has been uninsured for six years because he practices regenerative farming.

When he's not working his farm z— which utilizes cover crops across all 7,000 acres—Clark teaches other farmers how to eliminate chemical fertilizers and use cover crops on their farms.

“We have to make sure the path towards change is an easy path,” Clark said. One of the biggest challenges uninsured farmers face is from their lending institution, which often requires them to have an insurance policy to continue receiving loans.

Clark testified in front of Congress in late 2022 on behalf of Regenerate America, a coalition that lobbies for agricultural reform, asking for the legislative reforms Schechinger said are necessary. The day after Clark testified, Congress passed the Inflation Reduction Act, President Joe Biden's landmark climate law that includes a \$19.5 billion investment into USDA conservation programs. He felt like he had a small part to play in that.

“At some point when you're in there, you wonder if anybody's even paying attention to what you're saying,” Clark said. But then, “you feel like maybe your words don't fall on deaf ears and maybe there are people who are truly paying attention.” **With assistance from Sophie Butcher/Bloomberg**

Image credits: Chase Castor/Bloomberg

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Oil spill ng tanker sa Bataan, umabot na sa Cavite

[Cristina Timbang, Doris Franche-Borja](#)

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CAVITE, Philippines — Nababahala ngayon ang mga Caviteño lalo na ang mga residente at mga mangingisdang naapektuhan ng oil spill ng lumubog na oil tanker sa Bataan makaraang umabot na ito sa mga karagatang sakop ng Cavite.

Sa ulat, nakarating na sa bayan ng Tanza at Rosario, Cavite ang oil spill ng MT Terra Nova oil tanker na na may kargang 1.4 milyong litro ng industrial fuel nang lumubog sa Limay, Bataan noong Hulyo 25.

“OIL SPILL ALERT. Coastal barangays of Ternate, Maragondon, Naic, and parts of Tanza will be affected. Naramdaman na ng bahagya kaninang madaling araw. Papunta na po ang Team Cavite para sa assistance,” ayon sa post ni Cavite Governmer Jonvic Remulla.

Bukod sa pagkalat ng nasabing langis sa karagatan, may hindi magandang amoy na rin ito na nakakaperwisyo na at maaari na ring magdala ng sakit lalo na sa mga bata at matatanda, at sa pagkamatay ng mga isda. Ang grupo ng Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA) ay agad na umalma sa naganap na oil spill.

“Nangyari na ang aming kinatatakutan; ang kumalat ang langis sa kalakhan ng Manila Bay at maperwisyo ang kabuhayan ng maraming mangingisda. Dito lamang sa bayan ng Tanza, tinatayang mahigit 5,000 mangingisda ang maaapektuhan kung hindi agarang maaapula ang kumakalat na langis,” ayon sa PAMALAKAYA.

“Habang tila kubit-balikat ang Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) at mga awtoridad sa lawak ng pinsala ng oil spill, matinding pangamba na ang dinaranas ng mga mangingisda ng Manila Bay na hindi pa nga nakakabangon mula sa pananalasa ng bagyong Carina at Habagat,” dagdag pa ni Ronnel Arambulo, PAMALAKAYA vice chairperson. Maaari na rin itong magdulot sa pagkalason ng mga isda sa karagatan kung saan unang apektado ang mga hanapbuhay ng mga mangingisda.

Samantala, sinabi kahapon ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) na wala pa silang inirerekomandang “fishing ban” sa karagatang apektado ng oil spill ng MT Terra Nova sa karagatang bahagi ng Limay, Bataan. Ayon kay BFAR Spokesperson Nazario Briguera, maaari pa ring magpatuloy ang pangingsda sa Bataan. Wala rin aniyang dapat ikabahala dahil batay sa kanilang inisyal na mga pagsusuri ay negatibo pa sa traces ng langis ang mga isdang mula sa naturang karagatan kaya ligtas pa itong kainin.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/probinsiya/2024/07/30/2373985/oil-spill-ng-tanker-sa-bataan-umabot-na-sa-cavite>