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MANILA BULLETIN:

Agricultural damage from Typhoon Carina, habagat swells to ₱1.17 billion

BY JEL SANTOS

Jul 30, 2024 04:33 PM



(NOEL PABALATE/MB FILE PHOTO)

The damage caused by Typhoon Carina and the southwest monsoon or habagat to agriculture reached a staggering P1.17 billion, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Tuesday, July 30.

According to DA's Bulletin No. 13, a total of 40,904 farmers and fisherfolk were affected by the heavy rains.

The agency said the regions covered in its latest estimate were Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, Western and Eastern Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Soccsksargen and Caraga.

The weather disturbances have affected a total of 42,708 hectares (ha) of agricultural areas in the country.

Of the total affected areas, the DA said 73.74 percent, or 31,491 ha, have a chance of recovery.

However, 11,215 ha, representing 26.26 percent, are beyond recovery.

Per the DA, the country's total volume loss is 18,086 metric tons (MT).

The agriculture department said that Typhoon Carina and the habagat caused the most damage to rice, which was affected at a rate of 56.51 percent.

The fisheries sector was hit with 30.86 percent of the damage, while the remaining 12.63 percent affected high-value crops, corn, irrigation facilities, livestock, and poultry.

Per the DA, rice has experienced a volume loss of 10,272 MT, resulting in a total value of ₱600.60 million.

Corn has a volume loss of 3,104 MT with a total value of ₱65.40 million.

The total volume loss for HVC is 1,951 MT, corresponding to a value of ₱79.35 million.

In the fisheries sector, a total of 3,334 fishers were affected, with the total damage amounting to ₱360.80 million.

The DA stated that 5,593 livestock, which includes chickens, swine, cattle, goats, sheep, ducks, and buffalo, perished, totaling a value of ₱1.32 million.

Meanwhile, the DA also reported that greenhouses, pigpens, and irrigation canals were destroyed, with a total value of ₱1.6 million.

Aid to farmers, fishers

The agency reported distributing 72,174 bags of rice seeds, 39,546 bags of corn seeds, 59,600 pouches, and 1,966 kilograms of vegetable seeds to farmers impacted by the disaster.

Fisherfolk benefited from fingerlings, fishing equipment, and supplies provided by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

The DA also made available the Survival and Recovery (SURE) Loan Program through the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC), offering up to ₱25,000 in interest-free loans, repayable over three years.

As such, the Quick Response Fund (QRF) was utilized for rehabilitation efforts, with additional funds allocated via the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/30/agricultural-damage-from-typhoon-carina-habagat-swells-to-1-17-billion>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Livelihood of 29,000 Cavite fishers at risk due to oil spill—fishers' group

BY JEL SANTOS

Jul 30, 2024 02:32 PM



(PHOTOS COURTESY OF PAMALAKAYA)

The bread and butter of approximately 29,000 fishers are currently at risk as seven coastal towns in Cavite are expected to be affected by the oil spill if it continues to spread across the province, progressive fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) said.

Pamalalakaya reported that the oil spill from the sunken MT Terra Nova in Bataan has now spread to the shores of multiple towns in Cavite. These affected areas include Cavite City (5,500 fisherfolk), Noveleta (1,500 fisherfolk), Tanza (5,000 fisherfolk), Naic (7,000 fisherfolk), Rosario (6,000 fisherfolk), Ternate (3,000 fisherfolk), and Maragondon (700 fisherfolk).

In a statement on July 30, Pamalakaya Vice Chairperson Ronnel Arambulo said fishers are extremely concerned about their catch no longer being marketable because of oil contamination.

“Malaking perwisyo ito sa mga mangingisda ng lalawigan ng Cavite na lugmok pa rin ang kalagayan mula nang manalasa ang Bagyong Carina at Habagat nito lamang nakaraang linggo (This poses a significant problem for the fisherfolk in Cavite province, who are still in a dire situation following the onslaught of Typhoon Carina and the Southwest Monsoon last week),” he stated.

With this, the fishers group called on the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) to provide immediate and concrete interventions to help the Cavite fishers affected by the oil spill.

“Tiyak na signipikante ang pagbagsak ng produksyon ng isda dahil sa magkakasunod na kalamidad na tumama sa ating bansa. Dapat mayroon nang malinaw na hakbang ang pamahalaan para masuportahan ang mga bulnerableng sektor sa agrikultura tulad ng mga mangingisda (For sure, there is significant decrease in the fish production due to consecutive calamities that his our country. The government should have clear interventions to aid the vulnerable sectors such as fishers),” said Arambulo.

The fishers group said that oil spill-affected fishers in Cavite have not received any assistance from the government yet.

“Malaking kapabayaan ng pamahalaan kung bukod sa hindi maaagapan ang pagkalat ng langis, ay walang suportang matatanggap ang mga mangingisda (It would be a significant oversight by the government if, besides failing to prevent the spread of oil, the fishers will not receive any assistance),” he said.

On July 29, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said there is still no fishing ban in Bataan towns as all fish samples collected from around the oil spill site passed the “sensory analysis.”

Per BFAR’s Oil Spill Bulletin No. 1, fish samples from the waters of Bataan towns—Limay, Orion, Balanga City, and Samal—were subjected to “sensory analysis” by the bureau on July 29. The samples were tested for taste (cooked fish), raw odor, and cooked odor, and they all successfully passed the analysis.

Green groups Greenpeace and Oceana had earlier called on the government to ensure accountability for the "preventable" incident, demanding action from both the responsible government bodies and the private owners of the tanker.

On July 25, MT Terra Nova, carrying 1.4 million liters of oil, capsized and sank off the waters of Limay, Bataan.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/30/livelihood-of-29-000-cavite-fishers-at-risk-due-to-oil-spill-fishers-group>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Cavite fisherfolk struggling amid southwest monsoon, oil spill

BY CARLA BAUTO DEÑA

Jul 30, 2024 06:56 PM



Traces of oil spill are seen on the coast of Long Beach in Noveleta, Cavite, on July 30 (Noel B. Pabalate/MANILA BULLETIN)

CAVITE – Fishermen in the coastal areas of the province are struggling amid the effects of inclement weather brought by the southwest monsoon and the recent oil spill from the sunken tanker MT Terra Nova off Limay, Bataan.

Fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA) in Cavite told the Manila Bulletin that their daily catch has been dwindling for the past two months, since the onset of the wet season.

The recent oil spill is expected to further harm their already struggling livelihood.

“Lalong magiging delubyo ito dahil mismong 'yung huli mo, hindi makakain at may langis, at hindi mo maibebenta dahil sa mga tumapong kemikal sa dalampasigan (This will become an even greater disaster because the catch itself is contaminated with oil and cannot be eaten or sold due to the chemicals that have spilled onto the shore),” PAMALAKAYA-Cavite Secretary General Aries Soledad told the Manila Bulletin in a phone interview on Tuesday, July 30.



Traces of oil spill are seen on the coast of Long Beach in Noveleta, Cavite, on July 30 (Noel B. Pabalate/MANILA BULLETIN)

Many fishermen living along the coast of Cavite suffered damages from inclement weather during the onslaught of Typhoon Carina, some losing their homes.

Due to difficult times and the lack of a steady income from fishing, some fisherfolk have turned to alternative sources of income to provide for their families.

“Ang pinagkukunan ng hanapbuhay, kung hindi mamamasukan, mangangalakal, 'yung iba ay nagko-construction worker, 'yung iba nangangatulong para lang ma-survive 'yung kanilang pamumuhay (For their livelihood, some work as employees, traders, or construction workers, while others take on domestic jobs just to survive),” Soldedad said.



Traces of oil spill are seen on the coast of Long Beach in Noveleta, Cavite, on July 30 (Noel B. Pabalate/MANILA BULLETIN)

“Ang nais ipanawagan sa gobyerno ay kagyat na economic relief dahil sa bagyong Carina at sana ay magawan ng paraan paano maiaalis ang langis sa dalampasigan ng Cavite (The call to the government is for immediate economic relief due to Typhoon Carina and for finding a solution to remove the oil from the shores of Cavite).”

No fishing ban from BFAR

In a statement on Tuesday, July 30, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Region 4A said that sensory examinations revealed that fish from Noveleta and Rosario “showed signs of petrochemical tainting, even before visible oil slicks were detected.” On the other hand, fish from Cavite City, Naic, and Tanza were “deemed free of contamination at the time of sampling.”

Fish and shellfish samples are currently undergoing chemical analysis to detect Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs).

BFAR has delegated local government units (LGUs) to decide whether to impose a fishing ban or not.

“While no fishing bans or activity suspensions are currently being imposed in Tanza, Ternate, Naic, Cavite City, Rosario, and Noveleta based on current findings, we advise all residents to remain vigilant and cautious regarding the consumption of fish and seafood from this region,” the statement said.

Affected LGUs take action

Noveleta LGU said it is closely monitoring the oil spill and that Mayor Dino Reyes-Chua is coordinating to provide livelihood assistance to fishermen affected by the oil spill. The municipal government also warned residents to exercise caution when consuming seafood until the results of BFAR’s chemical analysis come out.

Tanza LGU also advised residents to practice caution when consuming seafood from affected areas through an informational video on its official online news Facebook page .

The Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO) of Ternate, meanwhile, built improvised oil spill booms made of plastic bottles and coconut husk, which were deployed at the Ternate Marine Park Core Zone.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/30/cavite-fisherfolk-struggling-amid-southwest-monsoon-oil-spill>

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<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/30/livelihood-of-29-000-cavite-fishers-at-risk-due-to-oil-spill-fishers-group>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Government to start controlled use of ASF vaccine in Q3

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

July 31, 2024 | 12:00am



The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a certificate of product registration (CPR) on June 11 for the AVAC ASF Live Vaccine from Vietnam, which underwent two years of local clinical trials.

BusinessWorld / PEXELS-BARBARA BARBOSA

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines will start its “controlled” vaccination of pigs against African swine fever (ASF) within the third quarter after government regulators approved the monitored release for restricted use of a vaccine from Vietnam.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a certificate of product registration (CPR) on June 11 for the AVAC ASF Live Vaccine from Vietnam, which underwent two years of local clinical trials.

The partial CPR is valid for two years with the vaccine undergoing evaluation every year, according to the FDA.

The rollout of the vaccine is slated in the third quarter and will be under the “strict” supervision of the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI).

The vaccination will be voluntary across grower pig farms from backyard, semi-commercial and commercial levels.

Government authorities emphasized that only growers or pigs for slaughter would be inoculated against ASF for the controlled use.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) targets to procure a total of 600,000 doses of the vaccine but it can only purchase 150,000 doses based on current stocks available.

The DA has earmarked P350 million for the monitored use of the vaccine with the first procurement to be completed as early as Aug. 15.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the government would focus first on farms in identified red and pink zones of ASF.

Red zones are areas with confirmed ASF cases while pink zones serve as buffer areas adjacent to infected areas, based on government zoning guidelines.

Tiu Laurel said the impact of the initial vaccination run would only be felt by first half of next year when the vaccinated pigs are already sold in the market for consumption.

The DA noted that the approved ASF vaccine has an efficacy rate of above 80 percent.

“The vaccines would have a huge effect on production because this is a confidence building measure. Once the [vaccinated] pigs are sold next year then it would inspire our stakeholders to reinvest (again),” Tiu Laurel said in a press briefing yesterday.

FDA director-general Samuel Zacate said the rollout of the vaccines increases the country’s “fighting chances” against the fatal ASF disease that has been ravaging the local swine industry since 2019.

“This (vaccine) underwent strict evaluation and process. And when the time comes that it properly and satisfactorily abide with the conditions set then we will give the full CPR (so that it can be commercially sold) in the market,” Zacate said.

As of July 26, about 150 barangays in 45 municipalities across 18 provinces in 11 regions have active ASF cases, based on BAI data.

The ASF, which is not harmful to humans, has infected 5,463 barangays across 74 provinces in 17 regions since it was first confirmed in the country in 2019.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/07/31/2374175/government-start-controlled-use-asf-vaccine-q3>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

BAI: No new bird flu outbreaks in Tarlac

Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas - The Philippine Star

July 31, 2024 | 12:00am



This photo shows a photo of chickens

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) yesterday clarified that there are no new bird flu outbreaks in Tarlac as it dismissed reports of new confirmed cases in the province.

The BAI, an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture, said there is currently no confirmed laboratory result showing an outbreak of bird flu or avian influenza in Tarlac.

It said the last official confirmed bird flu case in Tarlac was recorded in December 2023.

The bureau reminded the public that its Animal Diagnosis and Reference Laboratory has the sole authority to officially detect and confirm cases of bird flu through standardized testing protocols.

Under the government's bird flu protocol, only the BAI chief can officially declare an outbreak of the disease in a given area.

“The BAI takes the health and safety of our poultry industry very seriously. We urge the public and the media to rely on verified information and official statements from the BAI,” the bureau said.

There are only two ongoing bird flu cases in the country, which are both in Pampanga, based on BAI data as of July 19.

The data also showed that 129 barangays in 50 municipalities across eight provinces remain affected by bird flu.

To date, only 47 municipalities in 17 provinces have been declared free of the disease.

There is no area yet in Tarlac that has been declared free from the disease since the last case was put under control, according to BAI data.

Recent media reports quoted Philippine Egg Board Association president Francis Uyehara as saying that some commercial farms in Tarlac had tested positive for bird flu.

Uyehara, in a radio interview, said some farms do not report occurrences of high mortality that could be caused by bird flu

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/07/31/2374208/bai-no-new-bird-flu-outbreaks-tarlac>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

BAI: No confirmed bird flu outbreak in Tarlac

By: [Dianne Sampang](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 06:08 PM July 30, 2024

MANILA, Philippines — The Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) denied claims on Tuesday that a bird flu outbreak was recorded in Tarlac, saying it received no reports from local authorities in the province.

“The Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) is aware of recent reports circulating in the media regarding a supposed bird flu outbreak in Tarlac. We would like to clarify that the BAI has not received any official report of such an outbreak from the local authorities in Tarlac,” BAI said in a statement.

A report on Monday stated that the Philippine Egg Board Association said chickens at a farm in Tarlac tested positive for bird flu or avian influenza A virus H5N1. According to BAI, there are no reports of confirmed laboratory results in the area.

“The BAI Animal Diagnosis and Reference Laboratory (ADDRL) is the sole authority to officially detect and confirm positive cases of bird flu through standardized testing protocols,” BAI added.

According to the BAI, the last confirmed case of bird flu in the province was in December 2023. In February, Tarlac was among the nine provinces still affected by bird flu.

The Department of Agriculture imposed a temporary import ban last July 17 on poultry products of wild and domestic birds from Minnesota, United States due to a bird flu outbreak in the area.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1967602/bai-no-confirmed-bird-flu-outbreak-in-tarlac>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Drought in Sicily threatens grain fields, animal herds

Agence France-Presse / 02:55 PM July 30, 2024



FILE PHOTO: A picture shows the low level of water at Pergusa lake due to drought, near Enna, Sicily on February 26, 2024. Cereal fields scorched by the sun, livestock deprived of pasture, devastating fires: Sicily is facing an overwhelming drought whose damage is already estimated at 2.7 billion euros by 2024. (Photo by Alberto PIZZOLI / Agence France-Presse)

SAN CATALDO, Italy — A crushing drought in Sicily has withered fields of grain, deprived livestock of pasture land, and fanned a spate of wildfires, causing damage already estimated at 2.7 billion euros this year.

In an attempt to mitigate the effects of the water crisis, the Italian government in early May declared a state of emergency for the southern island, unblocking funds to purchase water tanker trucks, drill wells, and renovate pumping and desalination stations.

But ensuing months of continued high temperatures have done nothing to ameliorate the already dire conditions, with farmers giving up on their harvests and now wondering how they'll feed and water their animals.

“There’s no hope because it hasn’t rained since May of last year,” said Salvatore Michele Amico, a farmer near the town of San Cataldo in Sicily’s dry interior.

“All the planted fields have been lost: there is no wheat, no barley, no oats,” Amico told Agence France-Presse.

The land in these parts, deprived of vegetation, is bare and cracked. Rivers, ponds and watering holes are dried up and farming equipment sits idle on formerly productive land, as cows wander in search of a blade of grass.

Once the breadbasket of ancient Rome, Sicily is expected this year to see its wheat harvest collapse by more than 50 percent, according to agricultural lobby Coldiretti.

“It didn’t rain this year, so we haven’t harvested anything and we can’t feed or water the animals,” noted another nearby farmer, Beppe Palmieri, whose land formerly supported cattle and goats as well as fields of grain and feed.

Whereas efforts are being made to bring in feed from the outside, the water situation is “critical,” Palmieri said.

“There is no water for the animals to drink, we don’t know what to do. We have issues with accessibility, certain types of tankers can’t come up and provide water to the animals,” he said.

Sicily drought: 5,800 hectares burned

Farmer Fabio Scarantino stands in front of his herd of cattle. Their light brown hides match the dry, dusty landscape behind them.

“Climate change in Sicily is real. In the past we talked about it but we could never have imagined experiencing it first hand,” Scarantino said.

FILE PHOTO: A picture shows a dry water pipeline in Lentini, Sicily, on February 26, 2024. Cereal fields scorched by the sun, livestock deprived of pasture, devastating

fires: Sicily is facing an overwhelming drought whose damage is already estimated at 2.7 billion euros by 2024. (Photo by Alberto PIZZOLI / Agence France-Presse)

Unlike Sicily's coasts, which rely largely on tourism, "in the Sicilian hinterland, which depends on livestock and agriculture, climate change plays a considerable role," he said.

Families who have been farming for generations are left without prospects for the future, including cattle breeders who for decades have built up their animals' bloodlines, said Massimo Primavera, the Coldiretti director for the area around Caltanissetta, a town of 250,000 inhabitants in the centre of Sicily.

Besides the threat to livestock and fields of grain, the drought also impacts fruit trees, vineyards and olive groves to the total tune of more than 2.7 billion euros (\$2.9 billion), Coldiretti said.

Meanwhile, 5,800 hectares (14,000 acres) of agricultural land have gone up in flames since the beginning of July due to wildfires that erupt with the dry conditions, said the group.

Exacerbating the effects of the drought is a lack of investment in infrastructure "to prevent water from being wasted," Coldiretti said.

According to Italy's National Institute of Statistics (Istat), Sicily has one of the country's highest rates of wasted drinking water, with 51.6 percent of water lost from distribution circuits in 2022.

Istat, which says that every day in Italy 157 liters per person are lost, blames the waste on "the persistent state of inefficiency of many distribution networks".

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/244098/drought-in-sicily-threatens-grain-fields-animal-herds>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Carina leaves P247-M damage to Pangasinan agri, infra

Philippine News Agency / 02:57 PM July 30, 2024



FLOODING. A flooded road in Mangatarem, Pangasinan on July 26, 2024. The province recorded P247 million in initial damage to agriculture and infrastructure due to Super Typhoon Carina. | PHOTO: Official Facebook page of Pangasinan DRRMO

MALASIQUI, Pangasinan — The province of Pangasinan recorded an initial P222.5 million in [damage](#) to infrastructure and P24.5 million to agriculture due to the effects of the southwest monsoon (habagat) enhanced by [Super Typhoon Carina](#).

Citing reports gathered by the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office from local government units (LGUs) as of July 26, Emergency Operations Center assistant director Pia Flores said in a phone interview on Tuesday that District 6 registered the highest infrastructure damage at PHP67 million.

It was followed by District 5, P42 million; District 4, P38.5 million; District 3, P14.5 million; District 1, P20.5 million; District 2, P10 million.

Damage on other road dikes along Lingayen-San Carlos-Urbiztondo amounted to PHP30 million.

“They are mostly road dikes and dilapidated concrete and asphalt pavement,” Flores said.

Agriculture

The estimated partial damage to high-value crops reached P7.2 million, palay at P6 million, and corn at P3.5 million.

Partial damage to fisheries reached P5 million, while initial damage to livestock reached P2.8 million, the bulk of which (P2.4 million) is in the municipality of Sto. Tomas.

Flores said two houses were destroyed in Sison and Bani towns, while six houses in Binalonan, Bani, Dasol, and Infanta towns were partially wrecked due to strong winds.

She said no casualties were reported among the 44,747 families or 183,608 individuals affected by the weather disturbance.

The last evacuees from Bugallon town returned to their homes on Monday, while flooding in Mangatarem has receded.

The Pangasinan Provincial Health Office deployed medical teams to Mangatarem and Bautista upon the request of LGUs.

Medicines have been distributed to the affected families, while the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office provided relief packs. (PNA)

Support Typhoon Carina Victims

The Inquirer is extending its relief and fund drive to help families affected by Typhoon Carina. Donate to Inquirer Foundation Corp. at BDO Current Account No: 007960018860. For inquiries, email foundation@inquirer.com.ph.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1967495/carina-leaves-p247-m-damage-to-pangasinan-agri-infra>

BUSINESS WORLD:

NEDA developing new automatic adjustment system for rice tariffs

July 30, 2024 | 9:09 pm



BW

FILE PHOTO

THE National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) said it is working with the Department of Agriculture (DA) on a new tariff adjustment system for rice, following the reduction of rice import tariffs to 15% from 35% until 2028.

“We are actually establishing that threshold, together with DA. We are trying to come up with almost like an automatic adjustment so that we can make the proper representation to the Cabinet, to the President,” NEDA Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan said at a Senate economic affairs hearing on Tuesday.

On the sidelines of the hearing, he told *BusinessWorld* that NEDA is drafting the parameters for adjusting tariffs, adding that the process is still in the early stages at a technical team level.

Senator Cynthia A. Villar has called on the DA to more efficiently use the P30 billion in national rice development funds, and called for a halt to the procurement of hybrid seed, which she said is expensive and has failed to boost output.

She filed Senate Bill No. 2601, which seeks to extend the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund to support farm mechanization and the supply of seed, fertilizer and farming know-how.

“What we are trying to do is come up with a set of guidelines, a set of rules that will allow us to say that a threshold has been breached, and then say we need to do something about it... and undertake the proper representation to the Cabinet.”

The RCEF, a component of the Rice Tariffication Law passed in 2019, is set to expire by the end of this year. The law deregulated rice imports, allowing private parties to import rice, originally charging them a 35% tariff on grain brought in from Southeast Asia. The tariff has been lowered to 15% regardless of source country.

The Federation of Free Farmers and Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura have opposed the lowering of rice tariffs to 15%, saying that such a move threatens farmers' livelihoods. — **John Victor D. Ordoñez**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/30/611197/neda-developing-new-automatic-adjustment-system-for-rice-tariffs/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

BAI says presence of bird flu in Tarlac remains unconfirmed

July 30, 2024 | 9:06 pm



ARTEM BELIAIKIN-UNSPLASH

THE Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) said on Tuesday that it has received no official reports of a supposed Tarlac outbreak of type H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), or bird flu.

“We would like to clarify that the BAI has not received any official report of such an outbreak from the local authorities of Tarlac,” it said in a statement.

It added that there are currently no confirmed laboratory results indicating the presence of bird flu in the province.

The BAI said that its Animal Diagnosis and Reference Laboratory is the sole recognized authority that determines positive cases of bird flu.

According to the BAI, two municipalities in the neighboring province of Pampanga have active cases of avian influenza as of July 19.

Overall, some 50 municipalities in eight provinces remain affected by bird flu.

The last officially confirmed case in Tarlac province was recorded in December, according to the BAI.

“Should there be any confirmed case of bird flu, the BAI will promptly inform the public and take all necessary measures to contain and address the situation,” it added.

In March, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said three bird flu vaccines are currently undergoing field testing with the Food and Drug Administration.

Last year, the DA released guidelines on the commercial use of the avian flu vaccine once approval is granted.

Priority would be given to commercial farms growing layer chicken, layer chicken breeders, broiler chicken breeders, free-range breeders, grandparent broiler breeders, as well as smallhold layer/native chicken, duck, game fowl, turkey, and goose farms. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/30/611191/bai-says-presence-of-bird-flu-in-tarlac-remains-unconfirmed/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

ASF vaccine set for limited launch by Q3

July 30, 2024 | 9:05 pm



THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Tuesday that it will begin the controlled rollout of the African Swine Fever (ASF) vaccine by the third quarter.

“The controlled rollout... prioritizes eligible commercial farms, semi-commercial enterprises and clustered backyard farms,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said in a briefing.

He added that vaccine use will initially be concentrated in red zones or those areas with active ASF cases and pink zones, or areas adjacent to zones with infections.

The DA’s Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion program aims to increase the population of hogs in ASF-hit areas, with activities like the construction of multiplier facilities and the use of artificial insemination.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said it granted a Certificate of Product Registration for the AVAC ASF Live Vaccine from Vietnam after controlled trials.

“This is valid for two years, subject to strict monitoring and annual evaluations,” FDA Director General Samuel A. Zacate said.

Constance J. Palabrica, assistant secretary for Poultry and Swine, said that the efficacy rate of the AVAC vaccine was more than 80%, within parameters set by the FDA.

Mr. Palabrica added that the DA will continue to prioritize biosecurity measures to check the spread of ASF.

The controlled use of vaccines will be handled by the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) and will be made available on a voluntary basis to hog farmers.

Mr. Laurel added that “after this rollout, the BAI will evaluate the vaccine’s efficacy before endorsing it to the FDA for final approval and registration.”

He said that the DA needs about 600,000 doses of the vaccine for the hog farmers initially targeted.

“At the moment existing stock in the Philippines is only 150,000 doses,” Mr. Laurel added, with procurement of the initial batch of doses expected by August or September.

He said that the initial roll out of the vaccines will be financed by the DA, which has set aside P350 million for the exercise.

“If the vaccine is really effective, definitely it would have a big effect on our production, because people will invest again,” he added.

Hog production declined 4.3% year on year to 419,370 metric tons in the first quarter, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority.

As of July 26, 45 municipalities in 18 provinces have active cases of ASF, according to the BAI. ASF was first detected in the Philippines in 2019. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/30/611242/asf-vaccine-set-for-limited-launch-by-q3/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Farm damage hits P1.17B

July 30, 2024 | 7:53 pm



PAT WHELEN-UNSPLASH

THE DEPARTMENT of Agriculture on Tuesday said farm damage from the combined effects of the southwest monsoon and Super Typhoon Carina had hit P1.17 billion.

In a bulletin, the agency said volume loss was estimated at 18,086 metric tons (MT) covering 42,708 hectares of farmland. About 40,904 farmers and fishermen were affected.

It added that 73.7% or 31,491 hectares were deemed recoverable.

The agency said rice made up 56.5% of the damage worth P660.6 million. Total volume loss reached 10,272 MT.

Damage to the fishery sector reached P360.8 million, affecting about 3,334 fishermen.

Losses for corn were valued at P65.4 million covering 3,104 MT, while high-value crop damage was at 1,951 MT worth P98.4 million.

Damage to livestock reached 5,593 heads worth P1.32 million, while damage to farm infrastructure, machinery and equipment amounted to P1.6 million. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/the-nation/2024/07/30/611211/farm-damage-hits-p1-17b/>

REMATE:

Mga mangingisda nangangamba sa oil spill

July 30, 2024 14:05



MANILA, Philippines- Sinabi ng grupo ng mangingisda na Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA) na nasa 29,000 mangingisda sa pitong coastal towns ang maaapektuhan kung patuloy na kumalat ang oil spill sa lalawigan ito.

Sinabi ng PAMALAKAYA na ang langis mula sa lumubog na motor tanker (MT) Terra Nova sa Bataan, ay nakarating na sa baybayin ng ilang bayan sa Cavite, kabilang ang Cavite City (5, 500 mangingisda), Noveleta (1, 500 mangingisda), Tanza (5, 000 mangingisda), Naic (7, 000 mangingisda), Rosario (6, 000 mangingisda), Ternate (3, 000 mangingisda), at Maragondon (700 mangingisda).

Noong Hulyo 28, ang mga mangingisdang miyembro ng PAMALAKAYA sa Tanza ay nabulabog ng kakaibang amoy na nauugnay sa oil spill. May mga nahuling isda din na nabahiran na ng oil slick.

“Lubha nang ikinababahala ng mga mangingisda na hindi na mabili ang kanilang mga produkto dahil sa kontaminasyon ng langis. Malaking perwisyo ito sa mga mangingisda ng lalawigan ng Cavite na lugmok pa rin ang kalagayan mula nang manalasa ang Bagyong Carina at Habagat nitong nakaraang linggo,” ayon kay Ronnel Arambulo, PAMALAKAYA Vice Chairperson ng Pamalakaya.

Kaugnay nito, hinimok ng grupo ng mga mangingisda ang Department of Agriculture (DA) at Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) para sa agaran at konkretong interbensyon upang matulungan ang apektadong industriya ng pangangisda sa Cavite.

“Tiyak na signipikante ang pagbagsak ng produksyon ng isda dahil sa magkakasunod na kalamidad na tumama sa ating bansa. Dapat mayroon nang malinaw na hakbang ang pamahalaan para masuportahan ang mga bulnerableng sektor sa agrikultura tulad ng mga mangingisda.

Malaking kapabayaang ng pamahalaan kung bukod sa hindi maaagapan ang pagkalat ng langis, ay walang suportang matatanggap ang mga mangingisda,” giit ni Arambulo.

Nakatakdang magsagawa ng on-site inspection ang grupo ng mga mangingisda sa baybayin ng Cavite ngayong araw, para sa lawak ng oil spill.

Samantala, inihayag din ng ilang mga namimiwingwit ng isda sa Manila Bay na posibleng maapektuhan ang kanilang fishing activity sa baybayin dahil sa lumubog na motor tanker sa Limay, Bataan.

Ito ay kasunod ng naging pahayag ng mga eksperto ng UP na posibleng umabot na sa tabing-dagat ng Maynila ang oil spill mula sa MT Terra Nova.

Nababahala ang mga nangangawil na maaring maapektuhan ang mga lamang dagat lalo na ang mga isda kapag may langis na kakalat sa dagat.

Umaasa ang ilan na sapat ang pagtugon ngayon sa Bataan para maibsan ang epekto ng tumagas na langis sa kalikasan.

Sa ngayon wala pang langis na napansin ang mga nangangawil sa bahagi ng Manila Bay sa likod ng Quirino Grandstand at US Embassy gayundin sa likod ng Phil Navy HQ at bahagi ng CCP Complex na kapwa sakop pa ng lungsod ng Maynila. **Santi Celario/Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden**

<https://remate.ph/mga-mangingisda-nangangamba-sa-oil-spill/>

REMATE:

Fish samples mula Bataan, pumasa sa sensory analysis sa oil spill

July 30, 2024 09:10



MANILA, Philippines – Nakapasa sa sensory analysis ang mga fish sample mula sa Bataan, sa pag-aaral na isinagawa ng Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR).

Sa kabila nito, isinasagawa pa rin ang third-party tests para rito.

Ayon sa BFAR, nakapasa sa sensory analysis ang lahat ng sample ng isda mula Limay, Orion, Balanga City, at Samal para sa taste, raw at cooked odor.

“The DA-BFAR closely monitors catch landings to ensure that unloaded catch has no traces of oil, as well as conducts sensory analysis of fish samples from surrounding waters,” saad sa pahayag ng BFAR.

“Succeeding tests with third-party laboratories for the presence of oil and grease, and harmful contaminants called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) will also be carried out,” dagdag pa nito.

Nanawagan ang BFAR sa lahat ng mga mangingisda na iulat kung mayroong sightings ng oil slick, iwasan ang mga kontaminadong lugar, at gumamit ng personal protective equipment kung kinakailangan.

Agad din umanong hangin ang mga shellfish o isda upang maiwasan pa ang mas matinding kontaminasyon.

Matatandaan na lumubog ang MT Terranova noong Hulyo 25 sa 3.6 nautical miles silangan ng Lamao Point, Limay, Bataan. *RNT/JGC*

<https://remate.ph/fish-samples-mula-bataan-pumasa-sa-sensory-analysis-sa-oil-spill/>

BAI: No confirmation of bird flu in Tarlac

By Othel V. Campos
July 30, 2024, 11:30 pm

THE Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) on Tuesday clarified that there has been no official reports or confirmed laboratory results about bird flu in Tarlac as reported by the media.

The last officially confirmed case in the province was recorded in December 2023, the BPI said.

Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel said the Department of Agriculture was closely monitoring reports from the province, citing updates from the ground that certain areas have started restricting the transport of live and dressed chicken from Tarlac.

“We’re still waiting for the confirmatory results of the tests on alleged AI infection on Tarlac poultry,” he said.

The BAI, through its Animal Diagnosis and Reference Laboratory (ADDRL), is the sole authority responsible for detecting and confirming positive cases of bird flu using standard testing protocols.

Emphasizing its commitment to the health and safety of the poultry industry, the BAI urged the public and media to rely on verified information and official statements from the agency.

In the event of any confirmed bird flu cases, the BAI assured the public that it will promptly inform them and take necessary measures to contain and address the situation.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314478473/bai-no-confirmation-of-bird-flu-in-tarlac.html>

SC reaffirms FDA powers over tobacco industry

By Pot Chavez
July 30, 2024, 11:50 pm

THE Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday reaffirmed the powers of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate the tobacco industry.

“All products affecting health, including tobacco products, are covered by the FDA’s mandate to ensure the safety, efficacy, purity, and quality of health products,” the SC said in a news release.

The High Tribunal cited its 2021 decision penned by Senior Associate Justice Marvic Leonen denying the motions for reconsideration filed by Philippine Tobacco Institute, Inc. (PTI) and Albay Rep, Edcel Lagman.

In that ruling, the SC declared that “tobacco products are undoubtedly health products” within the definition provided under Republic Act No. 9711, or the Food and Drug Administration Act of 2009, due to their harmful effects on health.

It added that “as to their health aspect, tobacco products fall under the regulatory authority of the Food and Drug Administration.”

In its petition, the PTI argued that the Department of Health was responsible for regulating tobacco products through the FDA.

The PTI has also claimed that the Inter-Agency Committee Tobacco (IAC-Tobacco) has exclusive jurisdiction over tobacco products, including its health aspect.

In denying the motions for reconsideration, the SC ruled that the IAC-Tobacco does not have sole and exclusive jurisdiction over tobacco products and the tobacco industry.

Thus, the inclusion of tobacco products in the implementing rules of the FDA Act is in accordance with the law.

The SC decision also adverted to the country’s commitments under the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC).

Under the treaty, “the country shall prioritize the protection of public health, including implementing tobacco control measures to reduce the prevalence of tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314478477/sc-reaffirms-fda-powers-over-tobacco-industry.html>

Damage from Carina, rains to exceed P1B, DA estimates

AGRICULTURAL losses due to the combined effects of Typhoon Carina and the southwest monsoon have exceeded P1.17 billion, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Tuesday.

The calamity had affected 40,904 farmers and fisherfolk across several regions, it said in its latest bulletin.

The typhoon-enhanced southwest monsoon resulted in loss of around 18,086 metric tons (MT) of different crops from 42,708 hectares of agricultural land.



A handout photo made available by the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) shows flooded areas near Manila, Philippines, 26 July 2024, taken during a helicopter flight of Philippine President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Junior (unseen) on his way to visit flood affected communities in the country. EPA-EFE/PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

Major crops affected include rice whose losses were estimated at 10,272 MT valued at P660.6 million. For corn, the loss was estimated at 3,104 MT (P65.4 million) and 1,951 MT (P79.35 million) for high-value crops.

Damage to fisheries was reported to hit P360.8 million, with 3,334 fisherfolk affected. The livestock industry incurred losses amounting to P1.32 million for 5,593 heads of various farm animals.

Data were collected from affected regions, including the Cordillera Administrative Region, Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, Western and Eastern Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Soccsksargen, and Caraga.

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The DA said that it was actively working with its regional field offices and local government units to validate the impact of the calamity.

"Best possible efforts are being undertaken to carry out assistance and appropriate interventions to the affected farmers and fisherfolk," it said.

Around 72,174 bags of rice seeds, 39,546 bags of corn seeds, and 59,600 pouches or 1,966 kilograms of vegetable seeds were ready to be delivered to affected farmers, the DA added.

Loan programs under the Agricultural Credit Policy Council, Quick Response Fund and money from the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. are available to farmers affected by the calamity, it said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/31/news/national/damage-from-carina-rains-to-exceed-p1b-da-estimates/1960877>

BFAR says fish safe to eat despite oil spill

By Janine Alexis Miguel

July 31, 2024

FISH caught from areas affected by the oil spill from the sunken MT Terra Nova off the coast of Limay, Bataan, remain safe for consumption, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said.

"So as we speak right now, fish that were purchased are still safe to consume," said BFAR spokesman Nazario Briguera in a public briefing on Tuesday.

Fish samples from Limay, Orion, Balanga City and Samal tested on Monday for taste, raw odor and cooked odor all passed sensory analysis.



OIL SPILL Fishermen show traces of an oil spill along the coast of Long Beach in Noveleta, Cavite, on July 30, 2024. PHOTO BY RENE H. DILAN

Succeeding tests will be conducted by third-party laboratories for presence of oil and grease, as well as harmful contaminants called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

"We also deployed ground personnel on landing areas of fishes to check if it has traces of oil leak," Briguera added.

BFAR reminded the public to refrain from consuming fish showing obvious signs of oil slick contamination.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said that while a fishing ban was still not necessary, its declaration was now delegated to local government units.

"The mandate of the BFAR now is to ensure continuous assessment and evaluation regarding the safety of consuming fish in affected areas," said Briguera.

If the oil leak persists, the cost of damage in Central Luzon and Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan) could reach P351 million in a month while the number of fisherfolk affected could reach 46,000, BFAR said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/31/news/national/bfar-says-fish-safe-to-eat-despite-oil-spill/1960866>

Tubho tea processors get special training

By The Manila Times

July 31, 2024

THE Department of Science and Technology – Provincial Science and Technology Office (DoST-PSTO) Batanes, represented by science research specialist Joy Ann Mina-Horlina, conducted a specialized training session on Ready-To-Drink (RTD) Tubho Tea in Sabtang, Batanes.

The training was attended by members of the Tubho Processors Association, the Sabtang Food Processors Association, and other interested individuals. The main objective was to diversify the product offerings of tubho tea by introducing a convenient, ready-to-drink version, which could create greater appeal to a broader market.

The training covered the entire process of making RTD Tubho Tea, from selecting quality tubho leaves to brewing and bottling.

Participants learned the importance of maintaining cleanliness and hygiene throughout the production process to ensure the final product's safety and quality.

Horlina also discussed the application of citric acid as a natural preservative. This segment focused on its benefits in extending the shelf life of RTD Tubho Tea without compromising its taste and nutritional value.

The discussion included the appropriate quantities to use and the proper incorporation methods to ensure product safety.

The introduction of RTD Tubho Tea adds value to the current lineup of tubho products.

This variety can help local producers meet different consumer preferences and potentially expand their market reach. In addition, utilizing local resources such as tubho leaves supports sustainable agricultural practices.

Producing value-added products like RTD Tubho Tea can lead to better utilization of agricultural produce, reducing waste and increasing income for local farmers.

The training on Ready-To-Drink Tubho Tea is one of the initiatives of DoST-PSTO Batanes as part of the Nutrition Month celebration, which aligns with broader efforts to promote healthy living.

Tubho tea is known for its health benefits and offering it in a ready-to-drink format makes it more appealing to consumers who are seeking convenient yet nutritious beverage options.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/31/regions/tubho-tea-processors-get-special-training/1960875>

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.

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.

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>

ASF vaccine approved but rollout delay seen

By Janine Alexis Miguel

July 31, 2024

THE Food and Drug and Administration (FDA) has approved the regulated use of a vaccine against the African swine fever (ASF) by the Department of Agriculture (DA) through the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI).

The DA said on Tuesday it aims to roll out the AVAC ASF Live vaccine from Vietnam by August 15, but the bureaucratic process might delay this to September.

Tiu Laurel said that P350 million was allocated for procurement of the vaccines. Out of the 600,000 doses needed, the agriculture chief said that only 150,000 doses are currently available.

Hog raisers from Batangas, Mindoro and other areas classified under red zone will be prioritized in the vaccine's rollout.

"This roll out will prioritize eligible clustered backyard farms, semicommercial farms, and commercial enterprises, aiming to mitigate ASF's impact and stabilize the swine industry," he said.

Tiu Laurel said the DA will recommend the vaccine for commercial use if the initial rollout will be successful in containing the ASF.

Following a directive issued by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in April, the DA, BAI, FDA and Department of Health signed in early June an agreement to streamline the application process for manufacturers, importers and suppliers of ASF vaccines.

Tiu Laurel sees a positive impact on the local production of ASF vaccines once these are proven effective against the disease plaguing hogs.

"If the vaccine is really effective, it would definitely affect our production. Because people will now invest again. There's a good chance that pork prices will go down," he added.

The swine industry continues to face challenges in recovering from the ASF, which first emerged in 2019. Recent data show a steep decline in the country's hog population from 12.7 million in 2018 to 9.9 million as of last September.

As of July 26, BAI's ASF monitoring efforts identified active cases in 45 municipalities across 18 provinces nationwide.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/31/business/top-business/asf-vaccine-approved-but-rollout-delay-seen/1960895>

SC reaffirms: FDA has authority to regulate tobacco products

By **Ashzel Hachero**

July 31, 2024

THE Supreme Court has reaffirmed that the Food and Drugs Administration has the authority to regulate tobacco products.

The Court en banc, through Senior Associate Justice Marvic Leonen, affirmed its 2021 decision and denied the motions for reconsideration filed by the Philippine Tobacco Institute Inc (PTI) and Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman.

The ruling stemmed from a petition filed by PTI challenging a provision in the implementing rules of Republic Act 9711, or the Food and Drug Administration Act (FDA Act) giving FDA the regulatory authority over all health products.

The law's implementing rules also state that the Department of Health is responsible for regulating tobacco products through the FDA.

In its petition, PTI claimed that the Inter-Agency Committee Tobacco (IAC-Tobacco) has exclusive jurisdiction over tobacco products, including its health aspect, and not the FDA, as provided for in the 2003 Tobacco Regulations Act.

PTI filed the petition representing major transnational tobacco firms in the country.

The regional trial court ruled in PTI's favor and held that tobacco products are beyond the FDA's regulatory power.

But the High Court reversed the trial court's ruling in 2021, prompting PTI to challenge the ruling.

Lagman also filed a motion for reconsideration as respondent-intervenor.

In its latest ruling, the SC ruled that the IAC-Tobacco does not have sole and exclusive jurisdiction over tobacco products and the tobacco industry.

It added that products affecting health, including tobacco products, are covered by the FDA's mandate to ensure the safety, efficacy, purity, and quality of health products.

“Thus, the inclusion of tobacco products in the implementing rules of the FDA Act is in accordance with the law,” the SC held.

“It is also in accordance with the Philippines’ commitments under the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC),” it added.

Under the WHO-FCTC, the country shall prioritize the protection of public health, including implementing tobacco control measures to reduce the prevalence of tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke.

The SC has yet to release a full copy of its ruling.

A significant victory for public health.

This was how the DOH described the latest SC ruling, with Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa saying it better empowers the FDA in regulating tobacco products.

“We see this decision by the Supreme Court as a triumph of justice in favor of health for our people,” said Herbosa.

“The DOH recognizes this as a significant victory for public health,” he added. – **With Gerard Naval**

https://malaya.com.ph/news_news/sc-reaffirms-fda-has-authority-to-regulate-tobacco-products/

Farm damage to push up egg, veggie prices

Ada Pelonia
July 31, 2024



EGGS and vegetables will become more expensive following the agricultural damage brought by typhoon Carina and the southwest monsoon.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary and Spokesman Arnel De Mesa said it is possible to see a slight increase in egg prices since different stakeholders reported that some warehouses were affected by the typhoon.

“However, this would be a very slight increase because no layer farms have been affected,” De Mesa told reporters in Filipino.

The price of small white eggs in Metro Manila markets reached as high as P8.50 per piece as of July 29, according to the latest price monitoring report of the DA. This was higher than the P7.50 per piece recorded on July 16.

“Vegetable prices may increase slightly because vegetable-producing areas were also affected, particularly for high-value commercial crops,” he added.

Carrot prices registered an increase to P150-P230 per kilo on July 29 from P100-P170 per kilo on July 16. Scorpio cabbage prices jumped to as high as P100 per kilo yesterday from P90 per kilo two weeks ago.

The DA recently reported that damage sustained by the agriculture sector following heavy rainfall from typhoon Carina and the southwest monsoon has reached nearly P700 million.

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).

Meanwhile, De Mesa maintained that rice prices would not spike because none of the warehouses were flooded.

“Since nothing was flooded, there’s no reason for rice prices to increase,” he said in Filipino.

However, De Mesa noted some Kadiwa sites that were submerged due to flood, such as the Kadiwa center in BFCT Marikina.

“Up to now, it’s not yet operational,” he said, adding that some unaffected areas continued the Kadiwa operations, particularly the P29 and Rice-for-All programs.

The DA earlier said that the government could reduce the price of rice sold at Kadiwa stores if global market trends become favorable.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said he expects a potential adjustment based on market trends, including expectations of India lifting its non-basmati rice export ban and improved production in countries like Thailand and Vietnam following El Niño.

“We will extend [the P29/kilo rice] program for as long as possible and hopefully—supply and global developments permitting—we could even lower rice

prices for those who need this targeted government intervention the most,” he said in a statement.

The DA also made an assurance that vulnerable sectors in the country will have access to cheaper rice as it continues to expand the program’s footprint nationwide.

Image credits: [Nonie Reyes](#)

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/31/farm-damage-to-push-up-egg-veggie-prices/>

DA: Carina, habagat farm damage breaches ₱1B

BusinessMirror

July 31, 2024



Typhoon Carina, known internationally as Gaemi, unleashed severe monsoon rains on the Philippines, causing widespread devastation without making landfall. Over five days, the relentless rains triggered at least a dozen landslides and floods, leaving a trail of destruction.

THE agricultural damage caused by typhoon Carina and the southwest monsoon (habagat) has breached P1 billion, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

In its latest bulletin, the DA said the agricultural damage reached a total of P1.17 billion and affected 40,904 farmers and fisherfolk.

The volume of production losses in Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, Western and Eastern Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Soccsksargen and Caraga regions was pegged at 18,086 metric tons (MT).

The report showed rice sustained the majority of the damage at 10,272 MT where most of the damage and losses were in newly planted, vegetative, and reproductive stages.

Other agricultural commodities that suffered from the onslaught of typhoon Carina and the southwest monsoon were corn at 3,104 MT and high-value crops at 1,951 MT.

The report said the damage from high-value crops include upland and lowland vegetables, papaya, and banana.

According to DA, the total area affected is 42,708 hectares (ha), with 31,491 hectares having chance for recovery.

The report said the production losses are equivalent to P660.60 million for rice, P65.40 million for rice, P79.35 million for high-value crops, P360.80 million for fisheries, P1.32 million for livestock, and P1.6 million for infrastructure, machinery, and equipment.

The DA said it would provide 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 distribute fingerlings, fishing gear and paraphernalia.

Other forms of assistance from the department include the Survival and Recovery (SURE) Loan Program from the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) with a loanable amount of up to P25,000, payable in three years at zero interest.

The department also noted that available funds from the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC) would be disbursed to indemnify affected farmers while the Quick Response Fund (QRF) would be used for the rehabilitation of affected areas.

Image credits: [Nonie Reyes, Nonoy Lacza and Roy Domingo](#)

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/31/da-carina-habagat-farm-damage-breaches-p1b/>

Disaster-prone PHL: The urgent need for crop insurance to protect farmers

BusinessMirror Editorial
July 31, 2024

For two consecutive years, the Philippines was adjudged as having the highest disaster risk among 193 countries covered by the World Risk Index. The report, which was released in September 2023, again ranked the Philippines as the most vulnerable to extreme natural events, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, floods and droughts. The World Risk Index (WRI) was published by Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft, in partnership with the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict at the Ruhr University Bochum.

Joining the Philippines in the top 10 list of countries with the highest overall disaster risk in 2023 were Indonesia and Myanmar. Indonesia was ranked second, while Myanmar occupied the sixth spot. Of the 10 countries considered most vulnerable to natural disasters, WRI showed more than half or six of them came from Asia, including China.

The WRI was released a few months before El Niño proved the findings of the report. Drought in several regions in the country wrought havoc on farms planted with rice and corn—the country’s staple crops (See, **“Farm damage by El Niño climbs to P9.5 billion, says DA,” BusinessMirror, May 22, 2024**). The Department of Agriculture indicated that the weather phenomenon affected more than P7 billion worth of rice and corn.

Just recently, super typhoon Carina also affected farm areas in Luzon and damaged crops worth hundreds of millions. Floods caused by heavy rainfall brought many areas in the National Capital Region to a standstill and affected not only farmlands but also various businesses. Rice and corn again bore brunt of the habagat or southwest monsoon induced by Carina, based on data provided by the DA.

These weather events, which happened months after the 2023 edition of the WRI was released, have reduced the country’s food output and are threatening the farm output targets of government (See **“Extreme weather imperils farm goals, says DA,” BusinessMirror, July 24, 2024**). Policymakers are concerned that La Niña, which could start in the latter part of the year, would make it more difficult to

attain its modest farm growth goals. A strong storm could even result in a contraction in farm output, which means local planters have incurred huge losses.

Protecting these planters and safeguarding their livelihood would require mechanisms, such as an effective agricultural insurance scheme that would shield them from the adverse impact of extreme weather. Such a crop insurance program is crucial in a country where many planters remain poor and will not be able to immediately recover from the devastation caused by a dry spell or a strong typhoon. Indemnity or support from this insurance scheme should enable them to replant again or restock their animal farms to ease the strain on domestic food supply.

In his speech during an international conference on agricultural insurance, Asean Insurance Council Secretary-General Christian W. Wanandi said the private sector, international institutions, and the government should work together to come up with schemes that would allow farmers to receive the assistance they need. Wanandi cited the Thai Rice Insurance Top Up Scheme, which was a result of the collaboration between the private sector and the government. It would do well for the government to look into this and put in place the necessary reforms that will allow local planters to withstand shocks caused by natural disasters.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/31/disaster-prone-phl-the-urgent-need-for-crop-insurance-to-protect-farmers/>

Government races against time to contain oil spill

Jonathan L. Mayuga
July 29, 2024



At coastal communities in Limay, Bataan, close to where the oil tanker MT Terra Nova sank on Thursday, residents wait for updates from authorities working to prevent oil spillage. For days, fisherfolk could not sail because of Super Typhoon Carina and the enhanced southwestern monsoon, which swept away several boats and damaged others. Now, they are forbidden from going to sea because a ship carrying 1.4 million liters of oil went underwater a few kilometers from their homes. While worried about their livelihood and even sustenance, they're using the relative quiet after the storm to repair their boats. Greenpeace urged the government to hold the owners of the tanker and of the oil cargo accountable for any damage caused by the oil spill. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. directed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to lead the cleanup.

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CONCERNED national agencies and local governments in two regions are now racing against time to produce spill booms to contain the oil leaking from the sunken tanker MT Terra Nova.

One of 18 crew members of the ill-fated vessel died when the tanker capsized and subsequently sank off Limay, Bataan, on July 25. It was carrying 1.4 liters of fuel oil. Oil spills have been spotted near ground zero and are spreading fast owing to strong wind and ocean currents brought by the prevailing southwest monsoon or habagat.

At a joint Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council meeting of Central Luzon and Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) held in the City of San Fernando in Pampanga, Interior and Local Government Secretary Benjamin Abalos Jr. underscored the need to gather enough rice hull, grass, coconut husks and coconut leaves, including sacks and ropes to produce enough spill booms that will be deployed in affected areas, before they spread and reach the shores.

Big swaths of oil spotted in Hagonoy

AERIAL footage taken by a Greenpeace and Oceana documentation team revealed the extensive spread of the oil spill from the ill-fated tanker.

The team from Greenpeace Philippines and Oceana went to the Hagonoy area following reports of sightings of an oil slick in the area based on the satellite photos posted on the Karagatan Patrol FB page, and the projection of its spread in the area.

The oil spill spread was confirmed by barangay officials of Isla Tibaguin who saw oil when they went out to sea to catch fish the night before. They took videos of the oil slick.

“The Greenpeace and Oceana documentation team and campaigner left the jetty around 9:40 am, and saw the spill at 10:00 am, reaching the thickest part at 10:36 am [Coordinates: lat. 14.7206417, long. 120.75331166666666.],” Greenpeace Philippines said in its official FB Page.

Photos and videos were taken from 10:00 am to 10:36 am (and not 12:00nn as stated in an earlier Facebook post).

The photos and videos validated the information shared by barangay officials and the report in Karagatan Patrol.

The documentation team did not encounter any Coast Guard personnel in the morning when they went to the site.

DENR activates response team

DURING the meeting in San Fernando, which was attended by local chief executives and the government agencies representing Central Luzon and Calabarzon, Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga via Zoom said all the DENR regional offices have been activated to provide technical as well as other support to the ongoing effort to contain the oil spill.

The DENR has taken water samples in strategic areas in Limay, Bataan, to determine the water quality that may be affected by the oil spill.

Undersecretary Juan Miguel Cuna said the DENR is monitoring important bird areas, particularly in the coastal areas of Central Luzon as they also stand to be affected by the oil spill.

Bataan's marine resources threatened

THE DENR Central Luzon Office said, the coastlines of Morong, Limay and Mariveles are nesting sites of highly threatened marine turtles like the Olive ridley, Green sea turtle, and Hawksbill turtle.

Bataan coast also hosts important habitats such as mangroves, seagrasses, and coral reefs which are important to marine species. It harbors seven mangrove species in its 156-hectare mangrove areas. Due to its rich ecosystem, six marine protected areas (MPAs) have been established in Bataan namely the Abucay Fish Sanctuary, Bagac Marine Protected Area, Limay Fish Sanctuary, Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) Fishery Reserve Area, Marine Turtle Conservation Center and the Orion Kent Fish Sanctuary.

Oil spill boom, cash for work

The DENR will put up more air and water quality monitoring stations for wider coverage.

Environment Undersecretary Marilou Erni said coconut husks, rice straws, grass, banana trunks, coconut leaves, ropes, and nets, are needed to produce as many spill booms.

Ernie, who is in charge of the department's strategic communications, said four machines have arrived for the shredding of the oil spill boom materials and said the DENR will work with the Department of Labor and Employment and concerned local governments.

“For each machine, we need four people. We will enroll them to a DOLE program and will coordinate for cash-for-work. This is the scheme we did in Mindoro. The materials for oil spill boom are brought and processed,” says Erni.

The Coast Guard Marine Protection Team has been deployed in Limay since July 25 to assess the oil spill and determine the volume of oil leaking out of the sunken tanker.

The Coast Guard has confirmed that a second oil tanker but much smaller carrying some 5,500 liters of fuel sank off the waters of Mariveles, Bataan on July 25.

The PCG said it is fortunate that the vessel has unloaded fuel in Navotas before the incident and the leak in the sunken tanker has been sealed off, thereby preventing any further leak.

Meanwhile, Abalos said the Provincial Government of Bataan has started making spill booms and is ready to deploy these to protect its shores and expects others to do the same.

Areas abutting Manila Bay that stand to be affected include Cavite, Manila, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Malabon, and Navotas; the coastal towns of the provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga and Bataan.

Image credits: [Greenpeace](#)

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