

CLIPPINGS FOR TODAY JULY 09, 2024

A. MANILA BULLETIN:

OF forecasts P5 per kilo drop in rice prices by August

B. THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Palay farmgate price drops by P5/kilo

Farm hiring jumps while hospitality sector cuts staff in May

Chocoholics bite bitter truth as cocoa prices soar

Combating ASF through community engagement and strategic communication

C. PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Bane of wage distortion

Cheaper rice to be sold soon in VisMin, says DA

2 more Eastern Visayas towns to sell rice at P20 per kilo

D. BUSINESS WORLD:

Below-market KADIWA rice to be priced initially at P45-P48 per kilo

Vietnam fertilizer supply partnership eyed

Rice EO signals greater PHL openness to trade — BCCP

E. MANILA STANDARD:

DA revises hog recovery program amid ASF outbreak

F. THE MANILA TIMES:

Armyworms infest 923 hectares of farmland

PH wants to boost rice cooperation with Vietnam

G. MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT:

Lower-priced rice available this month

PH wants to boost rice cooperation with Vietnam

H. BUSINESS MIRROR:

Government to shoulder shortfall in tariff take, to sustain RCEF

Rice imports seen slowing as lawsuit vs. EO 62 pends

I. ABANTE TONITE:

Bigas mas mababa ng P50 sa Agosto – Recto

MANILA BULLETIN:

DOF forecasts P5 per kilo drop in rice prices by August

BY

Jul 8, 2024 09:55 AM

The Department of Finance (DOF) has forecasted a potential P5 per kilogram decrease in the average price of rice by August, attributing this drop to reduced import tariffs.

Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto said on Monday, July 8, that by lowering the tariff on imported rice from 35 percent to 15 percent, the DOF expects an average 10 percent reduction in retail prices for the remainder of the year.

“This could lower the price of rice by at least P5 per kilo. From an average of P54.40 per kilo last June, prices could go down to below P50 as early as August,” Recto said.

The finance chief said that rice has been the primary driver of inflation since September of last year, attributed to price increases in the global market.

“Rice accounted for over half of the overall inflation for average consumers last month. And for those in the bottom 30 percent of households, it had a bigger share at 80 percent,” he said.

“Thus, our mandate is clear: we must act swiftly to alleviate this burden that disproportionately affects the vulnerable population,” the finance chief said.

However, Recto noted the encouraging inflation rate for June, which dropped to 3.7 percent, stating, “We contained it within our target, and this is way below the median estimates of private analysts.”

“The lower rice tariff will help reduce the overall inflation rate for the year to an average of 18 percentage points, from 3.5 percent to 3.3 percent,” Recto said.

But Recto also admitted that the tariff cut could lead to government revenue losses totaling P9.2 billion for the remainder of 2024. Nevertheless, he said that this move improves the welfare of households, especially those in poverty.

“Had we not taken this step, rice prices would have remained above P50 pesos, causing significant pain for consumers,” he said.

“A sustained high price of rice could continue to drive inflation, delaying the reduction of policy interest rates by the BSP [Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas] and derailing the country’s economic growth trajectory,” Recto said.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/8/dof-forecasts-p5-per-kilo-drop-in-rice-prices-by-august>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Palay farmgate price drops by P5/kilo

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

July 9, 2024 | 12:00am



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

STAR / Miguel De Guzman

MANILA, Philippines — The farmgate price of palay has gone down by P5 per kilo amid the issuance of Executive Order 62, which lowers the tariff on imported rice, former agriculture secretary Leonardo Montemayor said yesterday, as he projected a further slump in the buying price of the staple during the main harvest season in the last quarter of the year.

“Unless the government suspends or repeals EO 62, it will be very difficult because right now, we have been receiving reports that the farmgate prices of palay have already dropped by at least P5 per kilo, and that will be expected to drop further, especially when we have the main harvest toward the last quarter of this year,” Montemayor said.

Farmers' groups have asked the Supreme Court to issue a temporary restraining order (TRO) against EO 62 allowing a reduced tariff of 15 percent on imported rice, as they asked that the order be declared null and void and unconstitutional.

“The farmgate price of palay has been going down and the collection of the Bureau of Customs (BOC) has been decreasing, brought by EO 62. In the end, aside from the difficulty of farmers to cope with lower prices of palay, the lower tariff rates will not be felt in terms of lower prices of rice for our consumers,” Montemayor said.

With the P5 drop in the farmgate price of palay, farmers are suffering losses, according to the former agriculture chief.

“The farmers are earning less than the minimum wage. If the minimum wage in Metro Manila is P650 per day, in rural areas, it's only half. It's hardly enough for most farmers to cope up with their daily subsistence requirement,” he said.

He added that aside from the impact of EO 62, farmers are also being threatened by the possible impact of La Niña.

“Right now, we have heard very little about what is being done to prepare our sector for the likely effect of La Niña phenomenon and then there is the man-made calamity. I am referring to the tariff cuts brought about by EO 62, so the farmers will be hit by double whammy, a man-made calamity in the form of tariff cut in imported rice and to be followed by natural calamity called La Niña,” Montemayor said.

The 26-page petition was filed by the Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura, Federation of Free Farmers, United Broiler Raisers Association, Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative and Magsasaka party-list president Argel Joseph Cabatbat.

Named respondents were President Marcos, Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, National Economic and Development Secretary Arsenio Balisacan and Tariff Commission Chairperson Marilou Mendoza.

The petitioners noted that farmers were “shocked” that Bersamin signed EO 62, also known as “Modifying the Nomenclature and Rates of Import Duty on Various Products,” last June 20.

The petitioners said they were never informed nor were they ever called for investigation about the reduction of rice tariff.

For the petitioners, EO 62 was hastily issued without consultation, investigation, hearings and reports, which are required by the Republic Act 10863 or the Flexible Clause of Customs Modernization and Tariff Act to be complied with before the President can validly make issuance of an executive order involving tariff reduction.

For his part, Finance Secretary Ralph Recto does not expect the SC to issue a TRO against EO 62, saying there is no reason for the high court to be involved in such matter.

“I do not think there is a reason for the courts to get involved in that,” Recto told reporters on the sidelines of the Economic Journalists Association of the Philippines-San Miguel Corp. economic forum yesterday.

Recto’s response came on the heels of the filing of the petition before the SC by various farmers’ groups to halt the implementation of the EO 62.

The finance chief said the tariff cut would pull down retail rice prices to between P44.17 and P49.56 per kilo by December.

The current average price for imported well-milled rice is P53.45 per kilo while its locally produced counterpart averages P51.25 per kilo.

Recto said the BOC would issue the corresponding memorandum circular of EO 62. The BOC usually issues a counterpart circular for any tariff adjustments or modifications in order for such measures to take effect.

He added that he would meet with the BOC today and would ask Customs officials about the status of the memorandum circular. — **Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/07/09/2368774/palay-farmgate-price-drops-p5kilo>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Farm hiring jumps while hospitality sector cuts staff in May

Philstar.com

July 8, 2024 | 4:55pm



Farmers harvest rice amid the hot weather in Apalit, Pampanga on April 13, 2024.

The STAR / Michael Varcas

MANILA, Philippines — The latest employment data per sector showed mixed results in May, with most jobs lost in the hospitality sector while agriculture saw the most gains in the number of employed Filipinos.

The accommodation and food services sector shed the most jobs, losing 322,000 positions in May compared with April, according to Philippine Statistics Authority data released Monday.

Fishing and aquaculture had the second-highest drop, cutting 241,000 jobs. Over the past year, the fishing industry has seen one of the sharpest employment declines among all sectors.

Administrative and support services eliminated 135,000 jobs in May, while professional, scientific and technical activities cut 101,000 positions. Other service activities lost 74,000 jobs.

Gains

Agriculture and forestry has recorded the biggest decrease in employment over the past 12 months, with payrolls falling by 1.02 million. However, the sector rebounded in May, adding about 610,000 jobs compared with April—the largest one-month gain among all industries.

The agricultural sector accounted for 20.8% of total employment in May, while services made up 60.1% and industry 19.1%.

Construction had the second-biggest employment gain in May, adding 391,000 jobs.

Public administration, defense and compulsory social security increased payrolls by 309,000.

The education sector added 116,000 jobs, while manufacturing gained 107,000 workers.

The mixed jobs report comes as the Philippines grapples with the economic impact of the El Niño weather phenomenon, which has hurt the fishing and agriculture industries. Lower crop yields and smaller fishing catches have led to job losses in those sectors earlier this year.

[The latest overall employment figures](#) showed positive growth in May, increasing by 605,000 year-over-year to 48.87 million. This pushed the employment rate up slightly to 95.9% from 95.7% in the previous year. — **Gabriell Christel Galan**

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/07/08/2368617/farm-hiring-jumps-while-hospitality-sector-cuts-staff-may>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Chocoholics bite bitter truth as cocoa prices soar

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

July 9, 2024 | 12:00am



A cacao picker harvests ripe cacao fruits, which will be made into chocolate, at a farm in Ilocos Norte.

STAR / Ryan Baldemor

SPECIAL REPORT

Conclusion

Cacao rush

The absence of the West African cacao supply in the world market has forced international buyers and traders to source supplies elsewhere in the world. And that includes the Philippines.

“We, therefore, have international traders here in the Philippines now that are affecting local prices since their prices are based on global cacao prices,” said Philo Chua, founder of Theo & Philo Artisan Chocolates.

Theo and Philo used to pay higher than the prevailing world commodity prices for their cacao needs. Now, they are catching up.

“We are paying about 50 percent to 100 percent higher right now compared to what we were paying before,” Chua said. “Unfortunately, with higher prices for the main raw material that we use, it leaves us no choice but to increase our prices also.”

Agriculture Undersecretary Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero confirmed that European chocolate manufacturers are looking for alternative cacao suppliers including the Philippines.

“If they do not have the raw materials, then how can you talk about Belgian chocolate?” Natividad-Caballero said.

Even the large chocolate players in the country who have been relying solely on imported cacao have all of a sudden become interested in local cacao since the price gap between imported and locally produced raw materials has shrunk to the point that the two are nearly matched.

“Even those that found the Philippines an expensive environment are now like, ‘wait a minute, it’s not as expensive as I thought,’ because now the gaps between the international prices and local prices are shrinking,” Kelly Go, co-founder and managing director of Auro Chocolate, said.

Exporters like Auro Chocolate are receiving more orders from their clients abroad. The artisan chocolatier ships its products, including cacao beans, to Europe, some Asian countries and the United States. But for its cacao beans, it is prioritizing Europe at the moment.

“We have gotten more inquiries than ever before,” Go said. “Globally, everybody is scrambling. Absolutely scrambling. Everyone is canvassing back to the drawing board.”

Cacao challenge

If you ask Go how she would describe the country’s current cacao situation, she would say it is challenging. In fact, it is the “most challenging” period.

“It is even more challenging than when we had first started,” she said.

The challenge comes in navigating the extreme volatility in cacao prices today. On one day it’s \$10 per kilogram. On another, it drops to \$7. And then it recovers to \$8.

Go and her colleagues are meeting more frequently than ever. What used to be a once in a season meeting to set buying prices for cacao became monthly and then weekly. On some days, it is even daily.

Auro also purchases cacao beans at a premium, about 10 percent to 15 percent higher than prevailing world prices. But that has been quite a struggle for the firm to keep it at present rates. The margin became absolute figures instead of a percentage.

“Our ability to pay farmers that premium is also dependent on our ability to sell at that premium,” she said.

“We are striving to give the best price quality ratio to our partners. And in this environment, I would say that that has been the most difficult,” she added.

Auro has increased its prices by at least 15 percent across its product line earlier this year. It is studying another round of increase this quarter as their cacao costs have at least tripled in the past six months.

“Even if we are a social enterprise, we need to protect our bottom line or else we cannot do what we do,” Go said.

Cacao quality

Domestic cacao production has been growing consistently in the past 13 years. In fact, output has more than doubled last year to 10,759 MT from 4,856.48 MT in 2011, thanks to expansion in area harvested.

During the same period, total harvest area for cacao has reached nearly 33,000 hectares, more than triple than the 9,581 hectares recorded back in 2011.

What is worrisome, however, is that the average cacao yield today plunged to 320 kilograms per hectare from 500 kilograms per hectare 13 years ago.

The government’s cacao industry roadmap attributed the low cacao productivity to “high mortality” of planting materials and the “lack of knowledge of cacao growers.”

“Growth has been relatively slow despite the many programs of the government to distribute and encourage cacao farming in the past years,” Chua said.

Quality issues persist too, says Josephine Ramos, a cacao farmer for over thirty years. Despite farmers having better knowledge of how the world cacao market works, particularly pricing, there is still work to be done in making them understand the importance of producing quality beans.

Industry sources note that quality issues in cacao production arise from various factors. One, farmers do not like fermenting their beans due to the added costs such as labor.

Second, the absence of sorting of cacao beans, which is tied to grading and pricing. Most farmers sell their cacao “all-in” resulting in substandard qualities.

High quality beans command better prices, Ramos says. “If you want a delicious chocolate, then you need a high quality bean,” she adds.

Since the global cacao crisis began, local cacao prices have gone up to as much as P350 per kilogram, nearly triple the P120 going rate last year, Ramos said.

Auro is now buying fermented beans as much as P390 per kilogram from P230 per kilogram last year. It buys wet cacao beans at P100 per kilogram versus a year ago’s P45 going rate.

The last time that this price level was seen was in the 1970s, during another global crisis but that time involved the decimation of cacao farms in Brazil because of pests and diseases, Ramos added.

“The price of cacao had to go up eventually, right? At the price it was before, the whole discussion was that it was so hard for farmers to make a living income,” Go said.

Industry players are worried that some farmers may continue to disregard the quality of their beans as long as they are able to take advantage of the soaring prices to earn a profit.

“The only fear that we have in selecting good quality cacao is that with high commodity cacao prices, the farmers may no longer concentrate on quality as commodity cacao and fine flavor cocoa would have close to or the same price point,” Chua said.

“What I tell my fellow farmers is to at least enjoy the prices today but it should motivate them to produce better quality beans. They can take advantage of the prices today if they produce quality beans. The prevailing prices today are not forever,” Ramos said.

Cacao funding

Natividad-Caballero said the government would take advantage of the rising commodity prices by encouraging local growers to not just produce more but better quality cacao beans.

One of the critical government programs aimed at boosting local cacao production is intercropping funded by the long-awaited coconut levy fund.

Under the fund, some P156 million has been allocated for the intercropping of cacao with coconut in selected areas in the country.

On top of this, the DA high value crops program is spending P67.2 million for the cacao industry.

Some of the imperative investments from the public sector involve the availability of quality planting materials, crop nutrient management, access to credit and construction of shared facilities, Natividad-Caballero said.

“You just invest a little from the public and then the private sector can co-invest. Because we both see it as an opportunity,” the DA Undersecretary added.

Ramos, the cacao farmer, emphasized that the good thing about the Philippines is that its cacao farmers are not just reliant on cacao for their income. Farmers intercrop. They earn too from coconut, banana, lanzones and even durian.

Filipinos’ appetite for cacao has also changed in recent years, far more sophisticated than neighboring countries like Vietnam and Malaysia, Ramos adds.

“Consumers are now aware of the health benefits of cacao, the sweetener used in the products, its impacts to the environment and so on,” she said.

Private chocolatiers have been partnering with farming communities for their cacao needs and pay the farmers a premium. This way, Theo & Philo’s Chua said, they eliminate the middlemen in the value chain and ensure that the farmers get the full value of the prices.

One of the other interventions they make is the provision of quality cacao seedlings and other nursery materials to ensure that the precious DNA of their cacao supply is preserved and its production expands.

But the current global cacao crisis has forced these local artisanal chocolatiers to go back to the drawing board and come up with more creative ways to support their farming communities.

Cocoa future

Government officials and industry players all agree on one thing: a new chapter for Philippine cacao is set to unfold after this crisis. The consumption of cocoa-based products – most especially chocolates — would just continue to grow in the coming years.

“What I’ve learned from years working in the chocolate business is that chocolate/cacao is a mainstay and will never go away. It is well loved globally and with the healthy effects of cacao being more well known, it only drives further the demand for cacao/chocolates,” Chua said.

“Because we are in the Philippines and in Asia in general, I found it so exciting because there’s still so much untapped potential in terms of the market,” Go said.

The agriculture department still sets its sight on raising farmers' gross income to at least P130,000 per hectare a year and boost the country's exports sales to at least \$75 million, all the while generating an additional 17,000 jobs in the industry.

Ramos said it is a matter of communicating and making both producers and consumers understand what is happening to the cacao industry today. If you have quality chocolate, you have to pay the price, she added.

“There are a lot of stories in chocolate. Every wrapped, packaged chocolate has a story on its own. It is a lot more than the packaging — it is seeing what is really in the product,” she said.

Go puts it aptly: chocolate has become an everyday luxury. “I believe we eat chocolate because it is pleasurable,” she said.

As for Carolyn, the home baker, the next chapter is already here. It began on a Friday.

“Dear valued clients, please note that there will be a slight adjustment in the price of our goods starting August 1, 2024,” an instagram post by Salted Caramel Manila last July 5 read.

“This is due to the increasing prices of cocoa and other raw materials. We are committed to offering you the quality and yummy treats that you expect and deserve,” it added.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/07/09/2368682/chocoholics-bite-bitter-truth-cocoa-prices-soar>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Combating ASF through community engagement and strategic communication

[Lionel Dabbadie](#), [Constante Palabrica](#) - The Philippine Star

July 9, 2024 | 12:00am

African Swine Fever (ASF) continues to ravage wild and farmed pig populations across Asia and the Pacific. In the ongoing battle against this disease, the focus has increasingly turned towards innovative strategies like risk communication and community engagement, or RCCE. This approach, spotlighted during the ninth meeting of the Standing Group of Experts on ASF in Asia and the Pacific recently organized in Manila by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Organization for Animal Health and the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Animal Industry, marks a significant shift from traditional technical strategies towards integrating social and behavioral factors in disease management.

ASF presents major challenges: it is a highly contagious viral disease, with a fatality rate close to 100 percent. There is no cure as of today, so that traditional control measures, such as culling infected and susceptible animals, enforcing stringent biosecurity protocols and restricting the movement of pigs and pork products, have been the main control methods used so far. Vaccines are promising, but they are not a panacea. Yet, the economic repercussions of ASF are severe, with livelihoods, trade and food supply chains deeply disrupted. The persistent nature of the virus in the environment and processed products also complicates eradication efforts. Thus, addressing ASF needs more than just technical solutions: it demands an integrated and holistic approach.

The emphasis on RCCE underscores how human behavior is key to controlling ASF spread. Indeed, disease transmission among domestic and wild pigs is significantly influenced by human activities such as farm visits, animal movements and trade. This highlights a critical gap in our current response strategies, which effective RCCE strategies can help in bridging. In the Philippines, the Community ASF Biosecurity Intervention pilot demonstrated how involving farmers in co-developing biosecurity measures can significantly enhance on-ground implementation and disease spread prevention. It highlighted how multilateral knowledge sharing and enhanced coordination among various stakeholders are key for developing comprehensive disease response frameworks that are both effective and adaptable to local contexts.

As we move forward, the call to action is clear: we must invest and strengthen evidence-based ASF management and RCCE policies. This involves developing robust communication frameworks that are informed by best practices and tailored to meet specific local needs. Furthermore, fostering global and regional cooperation remains crucial for improving disease surveillance and management strategies. Empowering communities must be at the core of these efforts. By providing them with the necessary resources, knowledge and support, we enable them to implement effective biosecurity measures that lead to sustainable control and prevention of ASF.

The progress highlighted during the Ninth SGE-ASF meeting lays a solid foundation for future efforts. The battle against ASF is far from over and we need to remain committed to a multidisciplinary approach that integrates scientific innovation with strategic communication and genuine community involvement. Together, we can combat ASF more effectively, ensuring better production, a better environment, better nutrition and a better life for all affected communities.

* * *

Dr. Lionel Dabbadie is the FAO Representative in the Philippines. Dr. Constante Palabrica is the chief veterinary officer of the Philippines.

<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2024/07/09/2368692/combating-asf-through-community-engagement-and-strategic-communication>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Bane of wage distortion

By: [Raul J. Palabrica](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 02:04 AM July 09, 2024

Effective July 17, the daily minimum wage of workers in Metro Manila shall increase by P35.

Based on that adjustment, wages of the affected sectors shall be: (a) nonagriculture, from P610 to P645; (b) agriculture, from P573 to P608; and (c) service and retail establishments employing 15 or less workers and manufacturing companies regularly employing less than 10 workers, from P573 to P608.

Some labor groups had expressed their disappointment with that increase and described it as a disgrace and laughable. On the other hand, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry said it was reasonable and gave the assurance that its members would comply with the wage order.

As in the past, whenever the government orders a wage increase, wage distortion inevitably happens in businesses with employees who receive the minimum wage or a bit higher than it.

Wage distortion happens when "... an increase in prescribed wage results in the elimination or severe contraction of intentional quantitative differences in wage or salary rates between and among employee groups in an establishment as to effectively obliterate the distinctions embodied in such wage structure based on skills, length of service, or other logical bases of differentiation."

(Note that wage distortion arises only when it is caused by a government wage order, not by management action.)

Businesses that can grant the increase and, at the same time, make adjustments in the pay scale of other employees to avoid wage distortion can look forward to continuing harmonious relations with their employees.

But what about businesses that can give the wage increase, but do not have the resources to forestall wage distortion?

According to Labor Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma, "... the employer has a responsibility to make adjustments and maintain a respectable gap between wages."

Benevolent that stance may sound, the Supreme Court had ruled that the existence of wage distortion does not by itself give rise to an obligation on the part of the employer to rectify it in the absence of a law that requires it, or is a matter of company practice, or is provided for in the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between the company and its employees.

In the latter case, the union could demand the avoidance of wage distortion pursuant to the CBA's grievance procedure; in case the issue is not resolved, the parties can resort to voluntary arbitration.

If the business does not have an organized union, the rule of thumb is for both sides to sit down and discuss a possible solution to the wage distortion. In the event of an impasse, the issue can be raised with the Department of Labor and Employment.

The procedures mentioned are aimed at giving employers who do not have the funds to rectify wage distortion the opportunity to explain its side in regard to its inability to correct it or to partly minimize its adverse effects on some or all the affected employees.

It is erroneous to claim that a mandated wage increase should have the effect of automatically increasing the wages of the rest of the employees by the same amount because that would be tantamount to an across-the-board increase which is not the intention of the wage order.

Thus, it would be up to the voluntary or compulsory arbitrator to determine whether or not the employer has justifiable grounds to refuse to correct the wage distortion. This would call for an objective review of the employer's true financial condition.

And most important, he or she has to make sure that in ruling in favor of making upward adjustments in the wages of the affected employees in whatever manner, that directive would not result in the impairment of business operations or in serious losses to the employer as to compel him or her to close the business.

When the employer opts to throw in the towel for financial reasons, the employees (and their families) would be the ultimate losers. *INQ*

<https://business.inquirer.net/467709/bane-of-wage-distortion-2>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Cheaper rice to be sold soon in VisMin, says DA

By: [Lisbet K. Esmael](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:25 AM July 09, 2024



Inquirer file/stock photos

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is targeting to expand the “P29” and “Rice-for-All” programs—two government initiatives meant to provide consumers with cheaper rice—to Visayas and Mindanao by August.

Arnel de Mesa, assistant secretary and spokesperson for the DA, said on Monday that both programs would be available at Kadiwa centers, state-subsidized stores aimed at cushioning surging prices of basic goods, including rice.

An initial 10 locations in Metro Manila and Bulacan were covered by the recently launched P29 program, but De Mesa said the agency eyes to ramp up its presence across the country.

“Hopefully, next week, more stores will be added. I can’t say the exact number but by August, we can be in Visayas and Mindanao already and other parts of Luzon ... for both P29 and Rice-for-All,” he told reporters.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1959172/cheaper-rice-to-be-sold-soon-in-vismin-says-da>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

2 more Eastern Visayas towns to sell rice at P20 per kilo

By: [Joey Gabieta](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:30 AM July 09, 2024



BENEFICIARIES Poor residents of Biliran town in Biliran province can now buy up to 5 kilos of rice at P20 per kilo. The sale of cheap rice, shown in this June 18 photo, is done once a week. —photo courtesy of Cristina Corpin

TACLOBAN CITY, LEYTE, Philippines — Two more towns in two provinces in Eastern Visayas will be selling rice at P20 per kilo in a bid to deliver the campaign promise made by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to sell the staple at that price when he was running for the country's top post two years ago.

The municipalities of Basey in Samar and San Juan in Southern Leyte have decided to follow the program initiated by Biliran town in Biliran province.

Lemuel Vance Antonio, municipal agriculture officer of Biliran, said they have received requests from Basey and San Juan to teach them how to sell rice at a cheaper price.

“They want to replicate our program, and we are very pleased because the program aims to assist the poor, particularly those in poverty,” he said.

Biliran town is a pioneer in Eastern Visayas in consistently offering rice at P20 per kilo.

Antonio explained that the program, which began last year, was launched in response to President Marcos’ directive to sell rice at P20 per kilo.

“The primary beneficiaries are the poor, including senior citizens without their own income, who struggle with rice prices exceeding P40 per kilogram in the market,” he said.

Under Biliran’s program, identified beneficiaries can purchase five kilos per week at P20 per kilo from their Kadiwa Center and identified outlets in barangays.

“Our program has been successful. We’re able to convince our farmers to participate. This is their contribution to our efforts in addressing hunger and malnutrition issues,” Antonio said.

According to records, 740 farmers in Biliran have enrolled in the program, cultivating a combined rice land area of 700 hectares.

These farmers receive free bags of fertilizers and seeds from the Department of Agriculture. In return, the farmers sell a portion of their rice harvest at P20 per kilo.

Each week, approximately 2,000 kg of rice are distributed through the Kadiwa Center and barangay outlets.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1959141/2-more-eastern-visayas-towns-to-sell-rice-at-p20-per-kilo>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Below-market KADIWA rice to be priced initially at P45-P48 per kilo

July 8, 2024 | 8:10 pm



DA PHOTO

THE Department of Agriculture said on Monday that it will launch the sale of subsidized rice to the broader public via KADIWA stores, with initial pricing set at P45-P48 per kilogram.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary and Spokesperson Arnel V. de Mesa said that the subsidized rice program will offer well-milled rice, and is separate from another program targeted at vulnerable segments of society for P29.

“Due to the developments which have caused rice prices to fall, most likely, the selling price will also go down,” Mr. De Mesa told reporters.

The price of well-milled rice in Metro Manila markets was between P48 and P55 per kilo as of July 5, according to DA price monitors.

“The program will run parallel with the P29 rice. The participating KADIWA centers will be doubled next week. By August, Visayas and Mindanao will also be included,” he added.

The P29 rice is meant to be sold to persons with disabilities, solo parents, and senior citizens, as well as those below the poverty line, at 10 kilos per month, subject to monitoring via booklets issued to beneficiaries.

Rice sold at P29 will be taken from ageing stocks held by the National Food Authority.

He said that the DA is also studying whether to limit the quantities of rice sold at P45-P48.

The national network of KADIWA stores is at about 300 outlets, along with 119 pop-up stores operating on rotation.

“We want this to be a sustainable and long gestating program. Our target is for it to be implementable until the end of our President’s term,” Mr. De Mesa said. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/08/606845/below-market-kadiwa-rice-to-be-priced-initially-at-p45-p48-per-kilo/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Vietnam fertilizer supply partnership eyed

July 8, 2024 | 8:08 pm



DA.GOV.PH

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it is studying a potential fertilizer supply deal with a company from Vietnam.

In a statement on Monday, the DA said that it was looking to tap Binh Dien Fertilizer Joint Stock Co. for NPK (nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium) fertilizer.

“We see great potential in partnering with Binh Dien. Our country stands to benefit significantly from their advanced technology and expertise in agriculture,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. was quoted as saying.

He added that the agreement, which is being structured as a distribution arrangement, could also lead to a potential investment in a manufacturing facility in the Philippines.

“They aim to contribute their specialized knowledge to enhance agricultural practices in the Philippines while fostering their own growth outside Vietnam,” the DA said.

The company was quoted as saying that the Philippines could be a “strategic opportunity” for its international expansion.

Binh Dien is one of Vietnam’s largest producers of NPK and has a combined capacity of 1 million metric tons (MMT). It supplies around 30% of Vietnam’s fertilizer requirements.

“Their management and technical team’s expertise is impressive and much needed in the Philippines,” he added.

In January, the Philippine and Vietnamese governments signed an agreement giving the Philippines a quota of 1.5 MMT to 2 MMT of rice annually for five years.

Imports from Vietnam amounted to 1.71 MMT as of June 27, according to the Bureau of Plant Industry. This accounted for 74% of the 2.31 MMT imported during the first half. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/08/606843/vietnam-fertilizer-supply-partnership-eyed/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Rice EO signals greater PHL openness to trade — BCCP

July 7, 2024 | 8:02 pm



REUTERS

By **Chloe Mari A. Hufana**

EXECUTIVE ORDER (EO) No. 62, which cut rice import tariffs to 15% from 35% signals that the Philippines is opening itself up to more trade, the British Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (BCCP) said.

“When you reduce tariffs... that helps because your signal is that the Philippines is more and more open to trade and investment,” BCCP Executive Director and Trustee Christopher James Nelson told *BusinessWorld* by phone.

“There’s a lot of interest (from foreign investors) and clearly the signal that the President sent by reducing (rice tariffs) is very good,” he added.

Mr. Nelson added that EO 62 benefits the Philippines because cheaper overseas products will be available in Philippine markets, keeping prices lower.

American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Inc. Agribusiness Chair Christopher A. Ilagan told *BusinessWorld* via Viber that the Philippines is an important partner for American agricultural business. It is the ninth-largest export market for US agricultural goods.

“EO 62 offers more predictability as it ensures a clear and transparent tariff regime over the next few years, unlike the previous practice of annually renewing the tariff rates, keeping on edge those who are reliant on these trade flows,” he added.

Mr. Ilagan added that improved predictability will keep prices and trade volumes steady instead of fluctuating, especially at the end of financial years.

“Better predictability and policy stability are basic characteristics foreign traders and investors rely on for longer-term commitments in the market,” he added.

Mr. Marcos last month issued EO 62 as an inflation-containment measure.

Rice inflation in June eased to 22.5% from 23% in May for a third straight month of declines.

The Philippine Statistics Authority last week said the price of a kilo of well-milled rice fell to P55.96 in June from P56.06 in May.

Regular-milled rice prices increased to P51.07 in June from P51.03 in May, and special rice prices rose to P64.56 in June from P64.41 in May.

“Tariff cuts will evidently lower the price of rice; the assumption is that the gain from the tariff reduction is fully passed on to the consumer. Another assumption is that market prices remain constant,” Action for Economic Reforms coordinator Filomeno S. Sta. Ana III told *BusinessWorld* in a Viber message.

“That said, we cannot simply rely on imports despite tariff cuts. The sustainable, longest-term solution is to increase our agricultural efficiency and farmers’ productivity,” he added.

Mr. Ilagan said that lower tariffs for commodities the Philippines is short on can help in managing affordability.

“EO 62 will help the majority of Filipinos in managing their food-related expenses while also supporting the food industry in general that is reliant on a number of imported ingredients to create value addition through food production and service,” Mr. Ilagan added.

On Thursday, farmer groups asked the Supreme Court for a temporary restraining order to block EO 62, saying they were not consulted on the tariff adjustments as required by law.

Mr. Ilagan said any tariffs that will be raised should still be reinvested in Filipino farmers.

“These funds can be used to support farmers affected by the increased competition from abroad, while also earmarking these revenues to invest in enhancing the competitiveness of the sector, especially those sub-sectors whose produce are heavily reliant on for our own food security, such as rice, corn, and meat products,” he said.

Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto in June said the government will forego up to P22 billion in revenue due to the tariff cut. He described the move as “short-term,” citing the need not to be too reliant on imported rice.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/07/606560/rice-eo-signals-greater-phl-openness-to-trade-bccp/>

MANILA STANDARD

DA revises hog recovery program amid ASF outbreak



By Othel V. Campos

July 8, 2024, 8:25 pm

The Department of Agriculture (DA) revised its hog recovery program to prioritize sow-weaner operations and artificial insemination, a strategic move aimed at combating the ongoing African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak and revitalizing the country's swine industry.

The revised program renamed Modified Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion, or Modified INSPIRE, aimed at reviving the swine industry and reducing pork imports following the devastating effects of African Swine Fever (ASF).

“In the absence of a vaccine, there is a clear need to refocus the strategy for hog industry repopulation and recovery to stabilize pork prices, reduce import dependence, and boost food security,” said DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel.

The new strategy requires beneficiaries to adopt modern climate-controlled or biosecurity level 1 compliant facilities. Multiplier farms will distribute breeding stocks, while production farms will supply piglets to members or registered buyers.

The DA allocated support packages ranging from P10 million to P16.2 million for various farm sizes and existing facilities, covering biosecure facilities, animal husbandry supplies, weaners and hauling trucks.

The program aims to replace 60,000 metric tons, about 10 percent of imported pork, by boosting domestic hog production. This is crucial as the swine industry continues to grapple with ASF, which has significantly reduced the hog population from 12.7 million in 2018 to 9.8 million in September 2023.

<https://manilastandard.net/business/314469310/da-revises-hog-recovery-program-amid-asf-outbreak.html>

Armyworms infest 923 hectares of farmland

By Eugene Adiong
July 9, 2024

BACOLOD CITY — Armyworms continue to ravage farmlands in Negros Occidental.

A report from the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPA) revealed that the invasive insects have infested a total of 923.5 hectares of farmlands in 16 of the 31 local government units in the province.

Dr. Dina Genzola, provincial agriculturist, said that 1,429 farmers in 75 barangay have been affected by the pests that damage a variety of crops.



INVASIVE PESTS A team of experts inspect the farmlands affected by armyworms in Negros Occidental during the weekend. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The hardest hit is Isabela town with a total of 245 hectares infested and 395 farmers and seven barangay affected.

The neighboring town of La Castellana had the most farmers affected with the infestation, the OPA report said.

Rep. Emilio Yulo, whose district covers Isabela and La Castellana, said that the experts from University of the Philippines Los Baños and National Crop Protection Center inspected the affected areas during the weekend.

Yulo said on Monday that he expects a full report with recommendations from the team later this week.

Yulo said he asked the inspection team to give a list of insecticides that they can use against the armyworms or caterpillar pests.

"A two-pronged approach is needed which will be a combination of spraying of insecticides and biological control of the armyworms by the use of its natural predators which are insects that feed on armyworms," the congressman said.

He clarified that the spraying will not follow the traditional way of spraying from above as the eggs of the armyworms are "embedded under the leaves of the plants."

"Spraying should be up and down and open the leaves," he added.

The armyworms have been detected in the fifth district and the northern part of Negros Occidental, the OPA report said.

Gov. Eugenio Jose Lacson on Monday said the provincial government of Negros Occidental has received 50 liters of insecticide from Regional Crop Protection Center which, he said, can cover 100 hectares of farmland.

"Spraying will continue next week," he said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/09/regions/armyworms-infest-923-hectares-of-farmland/1955892>

PH wants to boost rice cooperation with Vietnam

By Reuters

July 9, 2024

HANOI — The Philippines wants to boost cooperation on rice with Vietnam to ensure its food security, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel said during a visit to Vietnam over the weekend.

Tiu Laurel visited Vietnam's Mekong Delta province of An Giang, one of the key rice-producing areas of the Southeast Asian country, the province's People's Committee said in a statement on Monday.

Vietnam is the world's third-largest exporter of rice, and the Philippines has been its largest buyer in recent years.

Vietnam's exports to the Philippines accounted for 45.4 percent of its total rice shipments in the first five months of this year.

"The Philippines population grows 1.5 percent annually, driving up its demand for rice, while domestic supplies haven't been able to match, and therefore [it] has to increase imports," Laurel said at a meeting with Vietnamese authorities during the visit, according to the statement.

Tiu Laurel also said he wanted Vietnamese rice companies to consider investing in the Philippines, the statement said.

Vietnam and the Philippines sealed agreements covering rice trade and agriculture cooperation during a state visit to Hanoi by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in January.

To manage inflation pressures, the Philippines has recently lowered its tariff on rice to 15 percent from 35 percent.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/09/business/top-business/ph-wants-to-boost-rice-cooperation-with-vietnam/1955947>

Lower-priced rice available this month

By Jed Macapagal

July 9, 2024



Kadiwa rice. Customers buying rice priced at P29 per kg at the National Irrigation Administration in Quezon City on July 5 as part of an ongoing trial benefitting Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program beneficiaries, senior citizens, persons with disability and solo parents. The government will make available rice at P45 to P48 per kg under the Rice for All program starting this month. (PNA Photo)

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is eyeing to launch this month the Rice for All program where the grain will be sold at reduced prices in Kadiwa Centers, according to assistant secretary Arnel De Mesa.

Based on initial projections, rice to be sold under the program will be at P45 to P48 per kg.

“This Rice for All, this will not be sold in markets but in our over 300 Kadiwa Centers nationwide... Our intention for this program is for the public to have available options and have access to cheaper rice,” de Mesa said, adding this will be rolled out in partnership with local government units.

He added: “We want this to be a sustainable and long gestating program. Our target is make this implementable and have this until the end of the President’s term,” de Mesa said.

DA said that the Rice for All program is set to complement the agency’s other ongoing program which sells rice at P29 per kg for the marginalized sector, including senior citizens, single parents, persons with disabilities and beneficiaries of the government’s Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino program.

The P29 per kg rice is initially being rolled out in 10 sites and will be available in Kadiwa Centers in Visayas and Mindanao by next month.

Meanwhile, Finance Secretary Ralph Recto said

the average price of rice could fall to below P50 per kilo by as early as next month, following the government's decision to slash tariffs from 35 percent to 15 percent.

“We anticipate an average of 10 percent reduction in retail prices for the rest of the year,” Recto said in his keynote speech during the EJAP-SMC economic forum held in Manila yesterday.

“This could lower the price of rice by at least P5 per kilo. From an average of P54.40 per kilo last June, prices could go down to below P50 as early as August,” he added.

Recto said the lower rice tariff will help reduce the overall inflation rate for the year to an average of 18 percentage points, from 3.5 percent to 3.3 percent.

“While this could entail revenue losses for the government amounting to P9.2 billion for the rest of 2024, in the bigger picture, this improves the welfare of households especially the poor,” the finance chief said.

“Had we not taken this step, rice prices would have remained above 50 pesos, causing significant pain for consumers,” he added.

Executive order (EO) 62 signed on June 20 modifies the nomenclature and rates of import duty on various products, including rice. The EO lists the rates of duty until 2028.

Recto said he does not expect the temporary restraining order (TRO) requested by stakeholders, such as farmer groups, on EO 62 to push through.

Based on the DA's monitoring of public markets in the National Capital Region, the price as of Saturday of local well-milled rice is between P48 to P55 per kg and regular milled, P45 to P52 per kg.

The price of imported well-milled rice is at P54 to P55 per kg, while the price range of imported regular milled rice is at P47 to P51 per kg.

Imported rice ranges from P55 to P63 for the special variety and P52 to P62 for premium.

For local rice, the special variety costs P57 to P65 per kg and premium, P51 to P58 per kg.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/lower-priced-rice-available-this-month/

PH wants to boost rice cooperation with Vietnam

July 9, 2024

The Philippines wants to boost cooperation on rice with Vietnam to ensure its food security, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel said during a visit to Vietnam over the weekend.

Laurel visited Vietnam's Mekong Delta province of An Giang, one of the key rice-producing areas of the Southeast Asian country, the province's People's Committee said in a statement on Monday.

Vietnam is the world's third-largest exporter of rice, and the Philippines has been its largest buyer in recent years.

Vietnam's exports to the Philippines accounted for 45.4 percent of its total rice shipments in the first five months of this year.

"The Philippines population grows 1.5 percent annually, driving up its demand for rice, while domestic supplies haven't been able to match, and therefore (it) has to increase imports," Laurel said at a meeting with Vietnamese authorities during the visit, according to the statement.

Laurel also said he wanted Vietnamese rice companies to consider investing in the Philippines, the statement said.

Laurel and his delegation also met executives of Binh Dien Fertilizer Joint Stock Co. in Vietnam to explore the potential to supply or if viable, to manufacture, fertilizer in the Philippines.

Laurel said the presence of the Vietnamese fertilizer giant in the Philippines will help increase local farm production.

"We see great potential in partnering with Binh Dien... Our country stands to benefit significantly from their advanced technology and expertise in agriculture," said Tiu Laurel, in a statement.

DA said Binh Dien could initially agree to a distribution agreement that could eventually lead to transfer of technology and even potential investment in a manufacturing facility in the Philippines.

"We have high expectations following our visit to Binh Dien's factory... Their management and technical team's expertise is impressive and much needed in the Philippines," Tiu Laurel said.

Binh Dien is Vietnam's leading producer of NPK, a mixture of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium in fertilizers. It has several factories with a combined capacity of 1 million metric tons that supplies 30 percent of Vietnam's fertilizer requirements.

The DA said Binh Dien sees the Philippine market as a strategic opportunity to expand internationally, highlighting mutual benefits and the potential for significant advancements in agricultural technologies between the parties. – **Reuters and Jed Macapagal**

https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/ph-wants-to-boost-rice-cooperation-with-vietnam/

Government to shoulder shortfall in tariff take, to sustain RCEF

Reine Juvierre S. Alberto

July 9, 2024



FINANCE Secretary Ralph G. Recto

WITH the expected P9.2 billion in revenue losses from the reduction of rice tariffs, Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto assured the public that the government will shoulder the shortfall in tariff collections to sustain its assistance to rice farmers.

Recto told reporters on the sidelines of the Ejap-SMC Economic Forum that he had suggested that the government bear the burden of the revenue shortfall following the tariff cut on imported rice to 15 percent from 35 percent.

To ensure enough revenues can support the planned increase of the RCEF, the DOF said it is working with Congress to support the needs of farmers and improve local production and competitiveness.

The agriculture sector's budget for 2024 rose by 27.7 percent to P221.7 billion to install more irrigation systems, construct farm-to-market roads, procure agri machinery and equipment and prioritize research and development.

“All these will set the stage for a modernized agriculture sector, transforming it into a principal engine that drives national growth,” Recto added. Consumers can also expect rice prices to go down as early as August worth below 50 pesos, the Finance chief added.

“We anticipate an average of 10-percent reduction in retail prices for the rest of the year. This could lower the price of rice by at least 5 pesos per kilo,” Recto said.

“Had we not taken this step, rice prices would have remained above 50 pesos, causing significant pain for consumers,” Recto noted.

Executive Order (EO) No. 62 was issued by President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. in June to reduce tariffs on agricultural products.

Agricultural and farmers’ groups appealed to the Supreme Court last week to issue a temporary restraining order against EO 62.

“I don’t think there’s a reason for the courts to get involved in that,” Recto said, adding that he does not expect the SC to issue a TRO on the policy.

Moreover, Recto said the reduction of rice tariffs is only a short-term solution and is in tandem with the government’s long-term goal of enhancing agricultural productivity.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/09/government-to-shoulder-shortfall-in-tariff-take-to-sustain-rcef/>

Rice imports seen slowing as lawsuit vs. EO 62 pends

Ada Pelonia

July 9, 2024



A worker carries a sack of imported rice at a warehouse in Divisoria, Manila in this file photo.

RICE importers may go slow on importing rice while waiting for the ruling on the legality of Executive Order (EO) 62, which reduced tariffs on key agricultural commodities, according to an economist.

Roehlano Briones, a senior research fellow at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), issued the statement after agricultural groups 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. (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/04/farmer-groups-ask-sc-to-strike-down-EO-62-reducing-tariffs-on-rice-farm-products/>)

“[The impact if a TRO is 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.

For University of Asia and the Pacific Center for Food and Agribusiness (CFA) Executive Director Senen Reyes, “Since the EO has barely been implemented, a TRO if granted will put things in status quo.”

Agriculture Assistant Secretary and Spokesperson Arnel De Mesa said it would affect the country’s rice stocks and hinder the expected reduction of rice prices in the market if the Court issued a TRO.

“It will cause delay in the importation by our private importers [...] if there is a delay in importation, it will also...impact on our national stock inventory,” De Mesa told reporters in a press conference, speaking partly in Filipino.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) expects the country’s yearend rice inventory to settle at 3.64 million metric tons (MMT), equivalent to about 93 days of national rice consumption.

Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) the country’s total rice stock inventory registered a 10.3-percent increase to 2.08 MMT as of May 1.

Meanwhile, National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said they are aware of the decision by certain farmers’ groups to initiate legal proceedings against the implementation of EO 62.

“We are currently awaiting the receipt of the petition and wish to express our utmost respect for the legal process. Please be assured that Neda, through the Office of the Solicitor General, will respond appropriately in due course,” Balisacan said in a statement.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) projects the country’s rice imports to hit 4.6 MMT this year following the reduction of import tariffs to 15 percent until 2028.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/09/rice-imports-seen-slowng-as-lawsuit-vs-eo-62-pends/>

Bigas mas mababa ng P50 sa Agosto – Recto

July 8, 2024

Bababa ang presyo ng bigas ng P5 kada kilo sa pagbawas ng pamahalaan ng taripa sa imported rice sa 15% mula 35%, at magiging mas mura na ito sa P50 kada kilo pagpasok ng Agosto, sabi ni Finance Secretary Ralph Recto kahapon.

“We anticipate an average of 10% reduction in retail prices for the rest of the year. This would lower the price of rice by at least P5 per kilo,” sabi ni Recto. “From an average of P54.40 per kilo last June, prices could go down to below P50 as early as August.”

Sabi niya, ginagawa ng pamahalaan ang lahat para maiwasan ang pagsirit ng presyo ng mga pagkain na siyang pinakabanta sa food security at ang mahihirap ang pinakaapektado rito.

“We are sparing no effort to shield our people from high food prices which pose the most direct threat to food security,” anang kalihim.

Ang bigas ang pangunahing nagtutulak ng inflation o ng bilis ng pagtaas ng presyo ng mga bilingin simula pa noong Setyembre 2023 at mahigit kalahati pa ang ambag nito sa inflation para sa consumers noong nakaraang taon. Para sa mas mahihirap, mas mabigat ang epekto nito. Paliwanag ni Recto, 80% ang ambag ng bigas sa inflation ng vulnerable sectors kaya’t kailangang agad ibsan ang epekto nito.

“Our mandate is clear. We must act swiftly to alleviate this burden that disproportionately affects the vulnerable population,” sabi ni Recto. (Eileen Mencias)

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/07/08/bigas-mas-mababa-ng-p50-sa-agosto-recto/>