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MANILA BULLETIN:

Bill seeking the extension, amendments to Rice Tariffication Law advances in Senate

BY HANNAH L. TORREGOZA

Aug 15, 2024 06:01 PM

The measure seeking to amend and extend the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), or Republic Act No. 11203, has progressed in the Senate.

The bill is contained in Committee Report No. 282, entitled “An Act Amending Republic Act 8178 or the Agricultural Tariffication Act of 1996 as amended by RA 11203.

Republic Act No. 11203 created the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) from tariffs collected on imported rice.

Enacted in 2019, the RTL lifted quantitative restrictions on rice and introduced tariffs to guarantee the protection of Filipino rice producers. The Rice Tariffication Act amends the Agricultural Tariffication Act of 1996 (RA 8178).

Sen. Cynthia Villar, chairperson of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food, and sponsor of the measure said the bill seeks to reinforce the protection of local rice producers and to respond to the appeals of stakeholders in the rice industry.

Under the proposed new version of the RTL, the President can prohibit further importation or specify the volume to be imported during the excessive supply of both imported and locally produced rice in the market, for a specific period and volume.

Also, another salient feature of the new bill is that it ensures farmers will directly benefit from the liberalization of rice trading by providing P10 billion a year to the RCEF until 2024.

“The RCEF provided P5 billion for the free distribution of farm machinery and equipment, P3 billion for the free distribution of high-quality inbred certified seeds, P1 billion for credit support, and another P1 billion for the training of rice farmers,” said Villar.

Under the new bill agreed upon by stakeholders and fellow lawmakers, Villar said the RTL will be extended for another six years or until 2023.

The total amount covered would be P30 billion sourced from tariff on imported rice. Any deficiency shall be supplemented by the General Appropriations Act (GAA).

The new version also seeks to strengthen the Department of Agriculture (DA), Bureau of Plant Industry Regulatory Functions including registration and data basing of all grains warehouses.

It also allows the DA to import when there is no available locally produced rice; and disposal of aging stock with National Food Authority (NFA) shall be four weeks before expiration.

The measure is now up for Senate plenary debates.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/15/bill-seeking-the-extension-amendments-to-rice-tariffication-law-advances-in-senate>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Marcos laments lack of soil analysis in PH

BY BETHEENA UNITE

Aug 15, 2024 03:29 PM

President Marcos has lamented the lack of soil analysis in the country which, he said, is crucial in aiding farmers in knowing what crops are suitable on their lands.



President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. presides over the Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC) meeting on Agriculture Recommendations at Malacañan Palace on Aug. 13, 2024. (Noel B. Pabalate)

This prompted Marcos to task the Department of Agriculture (DA) to establish more soil testing around the country.

“Kulang na kulang tayo sa (We lack in) soil analysis. We cannot tell the farmers how much fertilizers to use. We cannot give them any advice because we don’t know ourselves what the condition of the soil is,” the President said during a meeting in Malacañan.

The DA recommended to conduct soil mapping and agricultural liming, initially in Luzon areas as part of the program to expand the sugar industry.

“That (soil mapping) actually applies to all crops,” Marcos pointed out.

He said there should be at least one soil testing center for every region, allowing agriculturists to respond promptly to farmers seeking guidance on crops suitable on their lands.

The DA revealed “restructuring” efforts are being undertaken to help increase the number of government soil testing centers. The agency is eyeing to have a total of 12 facilities by next year.

Farmers' training

In the same meeting, Marcos also ordered the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) to look into forging a partnership between agriculture cooperatives and the local government units (LGUs) to strengthen development and training of farmers.

“Maybe we have to come to some kind of partnership for LGUs that are in fact interested. Or the areas that we would like to organize better,” Marcos said.

“Puntahan ng CDA (must go to them) and tell them, you know, we could do much better here and this is how we can do it with the help of the LGU.”

The CDA is a government agency attached to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). It promotes the viability and growth of cooperatives as instruments of equity, social justice and economic development.

'Bayani ng Pilipinas'

The Chief Executive expressed his support for the “Bayani ng Pilipinas” campaign in championing farmers as heroes of the country, emphasizing the farmers’ sacrifice to provide food for Filipinos and sustain its supply.

“Yes, it’s hard (farming) but look what they, how, what they do. If, you know, if they didn’t farm, we wouldn’t have anything to eat,” Marcos said.

The Bayani ng Pilipinas Campaign is an initiative pushed by the Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC) to advocate farming as a “good way of life” and encourage the younger generation to pursue farming as a profession.

It is also one way to celebrate Filipino farmers and aspire them to continue and progress.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/15/marcos-laments-lack-of-soil-analysis-in-ph>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Mindanao Trade Expo Kadawayan exhibitors eye P12-M sales

BY ANTONIO COLINA IV

Aug 15, 2024 01:54 PM

DAVAO CITY – The 150 exhibitors of the seven-day Mindanao Trade Expo (MTE) 2024 Kadawayan Festival here hope to reach the target of P12 million in sales.



The MTE 2024 opened last August 11 at the Activity Center of the Abreeza Mall and will culminate on August 17.

Eunice Flores, trade and industry development specialist of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)-Davao, said expo with the theme “Empowering the future of MSMEs: Connecting, Cultivating, Commerce,” features various homegrown micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

She said that the expo attracted several tourists, helping promote the products of the MSMEs, including arts and crafts, home decors and housewares, furniture and furnishings, fashion accessories, and textiles, beauty, and wellness, fresh and processed food, and tourist destinations.

“The MTE 2024 Kadawayan aims to promote our local products, especially products produced by MSMEs that are not yet available in supermarkets. This will be their platform to showcase their products,” she said.

The Mindanao Trade Expo Foundation Inc. (MTEFI) organized the expo in partnership with the DTI, Department of Agriculture (DA), the Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc. (PhilExport), and Ayala Malls Abreeza.

The DTI-Davao said the event serves as a platform to showcase the ingenuity of local artisans and the potential of the local products of Mindanao.

It highlights the unique raw materials available in the Davao region and the diverse livelihood of various communities.

“MTE 2024 highlights the crucial significance of MSMEs by facilitating greater market accessibility. It encourages innovation and product development as essential elements for fostering sustainable competitiveness, with the ultimate aim of ensuring long-term success for these enterprises,” it added.

The expo also aims to empower MSMEs, improve their sales, and reinforce digital transformation of enterprises.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/15/mindanao-trade-expo-kadawayan-exhibitors-eye-p12-m-sales>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Danish Dairy Board unveils organic dairy campaign in Manila

BY JUNEP OCAMPO & MANILA BULLETIN AGRICULTURE

Aug 15, 2024 12:21 PM



With the growing global emphasis on health and sustainability, organic dairy products in Europe are setting a high standard, not only for nutritional excellence but also for their commitment to animal welfare and environmental stewardship. Reflecting this trend, the Danish Dairy Board marked the second year of its educational campaign in the Philippines with a grand event that highlighted the benefits of European organic dairy.

On August 13, 2024, the Danish Dairy Board kicked off its "From Pasture to Plate: Choose Organic European Dairy" campaign at the Grand Hyatt Garden Pavilion. The event, filled with tastings, discussions, and educational sessions, offered attendees an immersive experience into the world of organic dairy production in Europe. The focus was on sustainable nutrition and the positive impact that organic dairy has on both consumers and the environment.

"Organic dairy, with its numerous nutritional benefits, isn't merely a trend—it's a powerful step toward a healthier and more sustainable future for us and our planet," said Jo Sebastian, a

registered nutritionist-dietician, during the event. Her words underscored the event's theme of making mindful and nutritious choices in the pursuit of better health and sustainability.



(Left to Right): Panelists Dr. Noel Lumbo, Rae Cay, Dr. Joey Cuayo-Estanislao, Jo Sebastian, Kelly Misa, and Tom Alonzo shared their insights on the benefits of organic European Dairy

Guests were treated to an array of dishes made with European organic dairy products, showcasing the rich flavors and high quality of these offerings. The event also featured insights from experts such as Dr. Noel Lumbo of the National Organic Agriculture Board and pediatrician Dr. Joanna Cuayo-Estanislao. Additionally, mom influencer Kelly Misa shared her personal journey of integrating organic choices into her family's lifestyle, offering both inspiration and practical advice to those looking to make similar changes.

As Denmark leads the charge in the organic dairy industry, the DDB's campaign—supported by the European Union—continues to promote the benefits of organic dairy products from Europe to a wider audience in the Philippines. Over the next several months, the campaign will expand its reach across Metro Manila and nearby provinces through a series of product sampling activities in leading supermarkets and grocery stores. These events, running from August 16, 2024, to January 2025, will allow Filipino consumers to experience the superior quality and taste of Danish organic dairy products.

In September 2024, the campaign will feature VIP Consumer Classes, which will blend fun and education. These sessions will cater especially to kids and families, offering interactive workshops, games, and tasting sessions to deepen participants' understanding of the benefits of choosing organic dairy.

Lars Witt Jensen, Senior Marketing Manager at the Danish Dairy Board, expressed his excitement about the campaign's continued success in the Philippines. "We are thrilled to bring the message of organic European dairy to the Philippines, especially as more Filipinos seek the best options for their health and the planet," he said. "Our goal is to highlight not only the nutritional value of these products but also their role in promoting sustainable practices and animal welfare. By choosing organic dairy, consumers are making a positive impact on their health, the environment, and the future of food."

As the campaign progresses, it promises to elevate the profile of European organic dairy in the Philippines, helping consumers make informed, health-conscious choices that benefit both their families and the planet.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/15/danish-dairy-board-unveils-organic-dairy-campaign-in-manila>

Farmer produces honey and mushrooms on 200 sqm of borrowed land

BY YVETTE TAN

Aug 16, 2024 00:13 AM

AVANT GARDENER



Farmers are known to be set in their ways. Sometimes, the best way to get them to adopt something new is to show them that it can make them good money.

Purest Heart Honey is the brand of honey sold by Guadaleva Coteng, 30, of Purest Hearts Apiary Enterprise in Itogon, Benguet.

Before she began beekeeping, folks in the area she lived in primarily made a living through mining. Though there were some farmers, they weren't very productive and their land was prone to disasters such as landslides. Coteng, who was 21 at that time, wanted to help farmers raise the quality of their produce. She figured that she could do this by keeping bees.

"I really wanted to farm, but I have no land," she explained. "I told myself that even if I have no land, I know people who are willing to help me." She took beekeeping classes at Saint Louis University in Baguio and started with two colonies in a borrowed 200 sqm plot of land that she uses for beekeeping and mushroom farming.

She supplemented her initial knowledge by attending free trainings offered by various government offices, from their municipal agriculture office to ones given by the regional Department of Agriculture.

"My target was natural pollination for crops," Coteng said in Tagalong. "I [expanded to] IEC (information, education, and communication). I share knowledge with farmers on the benefits of natural or organic farming because the bees are here for pollination."

Her advocacy came in handy during the pandemic, when her neighbors started planting corn. Since these were naturally pollinated by the bees, other farmers slowly began switching to natural farming, relying on the bees for pollination. Of course, that they produce honey is a delicious, nutritious plus. "It's helped me a lot personally because I've come a long way in terms of livelihood," she said, explaining that her husband is a miner and before she started beekeeping, they only had his

salary to depend on. “But during the pandemic, beekeeping kept us alive. Selling honey is what supplied us with our daily needs.”

It took five years for Coteng to educate her co-farmers on the benefits of natural farming. When her neighbor started planting corn, they were annoyed with the bees and would complain about the noise of the bees buzzing in the morning. But when it came time to harvest, they saw the positive effect the bees had on their crops. “It took a lot of patience, but at least there are more beekeepers now who can help me educate our community.”

One of her biggest challenges as a beekeeper are farmers who use synthetic pesticides, as these can kill bees. She tells farmers who come to her with this complaint to ask their conventional farming neighbors to tell them when they’re going to spray pesticides so that they can at least keep the bees from leaving their hives. It’s a stopgap solution, but it’s a compromise for now.

Coteng currently has 10 European honeybee hives and 10 stingless beehives. They produce around 500 kilos during honeyflow season, which lasts from December to February. The off-season is spent on colony propagation. A 320g bottle costs ₱320. Customers contact her via the Purest Hearts Apiary and Mushroom Production Facebook Page.

“I enjoy beekeeping. Bees teach you a lot of things. Apitherapy has been a big help because I don’t need to go to the pharmacy to get antibiotics because bee venom is a natural antibiotic. I’ve also met a lot of people. Even if I haven’t met all my friends personally, I know that as long as there are beekeepers in an area, I won’t get lost.”

Her mushroom venture was born during the pandemic when a beekeeper bought 26 colonies from her. She used the money to start a mushroom farm. “It was another adventure because I don’t know anything about mushroom farming.” She made friends with a local group of mothers who ran a mushroom farm and, like before, attended free trainings offered by the DA and DTI (Department of Trade and Industry). She now grows white oyster mushrooms, which she’s also turned into products. Her mushroom alamang sells for ₱170 a bottle, mushroom chili paste for ₱130, and fresh mushrooms for ₱300 a kilo.

Coteng won the Young Farmers Challenge, provincial level in 2022 for Purest Heart Honey. She is currently president of their chapter of the Pambansang Manalon, Magbabaol, Mag-uuma, Magsasaka ng Pilipinas (P4MP) and is a member of YMC, Young Farmers Challenge, where winners help each other promote their products.

She hopes that more young people will consider agriculture as a career. “It’s not all about planting,” she said. “We have scientists, doctors, engineers in agriculture.”

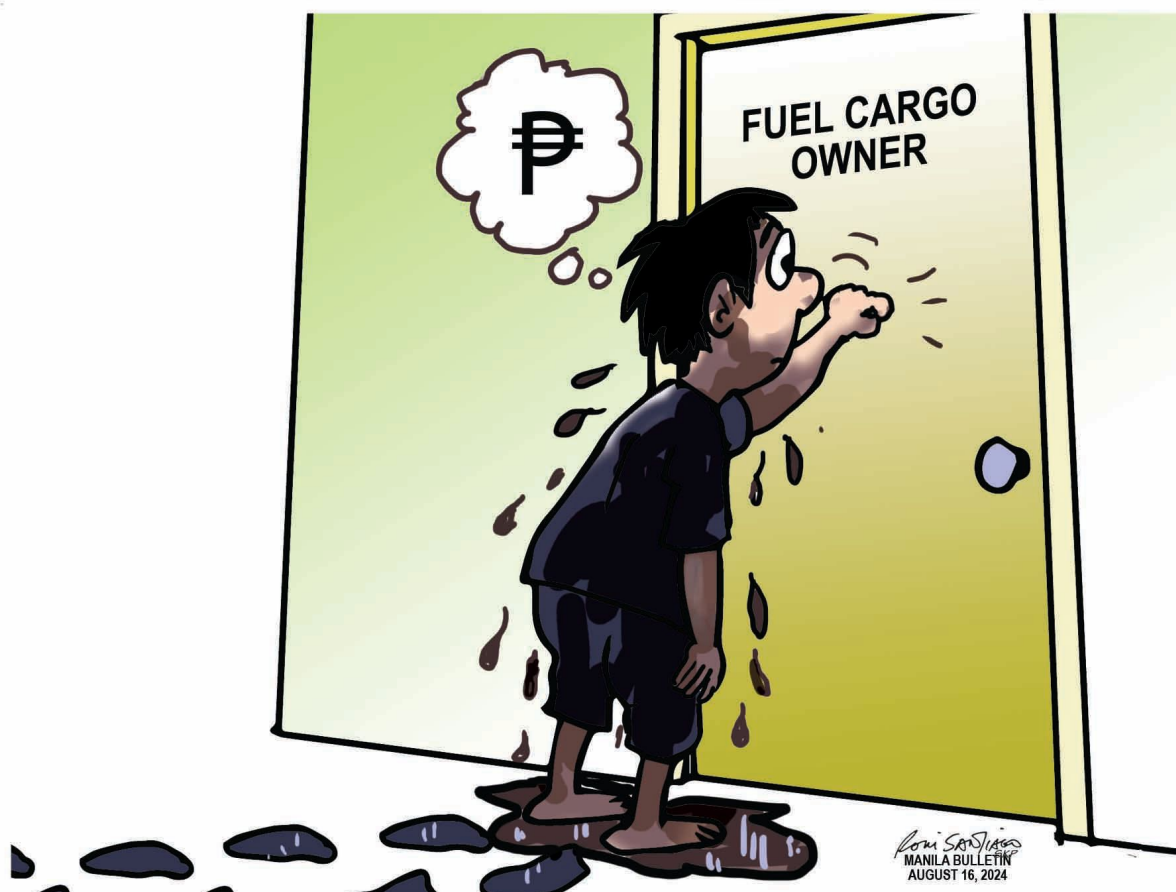
She instills her values in her nine-year-old daughter who also has an interest in farming. “I want her to understand that we don’t know what the future of agriculture will be.”

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/16/farmer-produces-honey-and-mushrooms-on-200-sqm-of-borrowed-land>

Bataan oil spill: Gov't should not be left alone to address the mess

BY MANILA BULLETIN

Aug 16, 2024 00:13 AM



The recent environmental disaster in Bataan caused by an oil spill has left the local fisherfolk community grappling with a huge income loss, already estimated by the Department of Agriculture at ₱78.69 million as of Aug. 7.

Responding to the crisis, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) initially allocated ₱45 million for temporary employment across three districts in Bataan, with an additional fund of ₱237,802,054.74 being prepared to support the severely impacted areas in Bataan, Bulacan, and Pampanga.

While these government efforts are commendable, the amount poured in is already substantial and is leaving a big dent in the state's limited budget. This is why the owners of the ill-fated MT Terra Nova and SL Harbor Bulk Terminal Corporation, the company identified by the Philippine Coast Guard as owner of the fuel cargo, should step up and extend immediate assistance to the affected stakeholders.

The financial burden on the government is substantial, and the funds being allocated for disaster

relief could have been directed toward other vital state programs such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure development. The involvement of SL Harbor Bulk Terminal Corporation in the recent environmental incident necessitates their active participation in the recovery efforts. As a key player in the maritime industry, the corporation has a moral and social responsibility to mitigate the adverse effects of the oil spill on the local communities.

Affected local governments and environmental groups are calling for compensation and support to the affected fisherfolk and coastal communities. The state cannot do this alone, considering its budget constraints. Any delay in assistance not only exacerbates the suffering of the local population but also places an undue financial strain on the government.

MT Terra Nova and SL Harbor Bulk Terminal Corporation should expedite their assistance to help alleviate the immediate needs of the affected communities. In doing so, it will ensure that the government can reallocate its resources to other critical areas. This proactive approach would not only demonstrate the two companies' corporate social responsibility but also foster goodwill and trust among the local population.

To its credit, MT Terra Nova has taken steps to clean the oil spill and siphoning out remaining fuel in its tanks.

Now, the onus is on MT Terra Nova and SL Harbor Bulk Terminal Corporation to take decisive action and provide the necessary support to the affected stakeholders in Bataan and the neighboring provinces of Bulacan, Cavite, and Pampanga.

The government's resources are finite, and the funds being used for disaster relief could be better spent on long-term developmental programs. It is time for the companies with stakes in the fuel cargo transport business to step up and fulfill their obligations to the communities that have been impacted by this oil spill. Government should not be left alone to address the mess brought about by the oil spill. Through the Philippine Coast Guard, it must also strengthen its capability to enforce safety measures that will prevent the recurrence of costly oil spills.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/16/bataan-oil-spill-gov-t-should-not-be-left-alone-to-address-the-mess>

‘No indemnification for ASF vaccine program violators’

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

August 16, 2024 | 12:00am



DA officials will go to Batangas today to discuss with local government units and industry stakeholders the protocols and guidelines of the vaccination program.

Cesar Ramirez

MANILA, Philippines — Hog raisers found violating the conditions provided under the government’s African swine fever (ASF) vaccination program will not receive any indemnification, according to the Department of Agriculture.

DA officials will go to Batangas today to discuss with local government units and industry stakeholders the protocols and guidelines of the vaccination program.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Constante Palabrica said the vaccination program has three conditions that volunteer hog raisers must agree to before they could be included in the program.

These conditions state that the vaccine will be administered to grower pigs and not breeders, that hogs to be immunized are free from ASF, and that vaccinated pigs will be subjected to regular monitoring and analysis such as blood sampling.

“If you will not follow the conditions, you will not receive any assistance or indemnification from the government. That will be your penalty in case your pigs die despite being vaccinated against ASF,” Palabrica said.

Under the updated indemnification policy, hog raisers will receive P4,000 per piglet, P8,000 for medium-sized and P12,000 for large hogs.

The DA is rushing the procurement of 10,000 doses of ASF vaccine to curb the spread of the disease in Batangas, one of the country's major pork producers.

Palabrica said the resurgence of ASF outbreaks in Calabarzon was caused by flooding, which exposed buried ASF-infected pigs.

Water contaminated with ASF could transmit the virus to healthy pigs, he said.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/08/16/2378148/no-indemnification-asf-vaccine-program-violators>

P15,000 monthly sought for fishers hit by oil spill

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

August 16, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Fishers' group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) yesterday pushed for P15,000 in monthly subsidy for each fisherman displaced by the sinking of oil tankers in Bataan.

Pamalakaya vice chairman Ronnel Arambulo made the call after the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) denied an appeal to lift the fishing ban imposed on eight municipalities in Cavite.

“The amount (P15,000) is based on the average income of a small fisherman every month,” Arambulo said.

However, Arnel de Mesa, spokesman for the Department of Agriculture, said the DA has no budget to fund the P15,000 monthly subsidy for fishermen, unless it is part of the General Appropriations Act.

Earlier, BFAR spokesman Nasser Briguera said the agency has no plan to recommend the lifting of the fishing ban, saying fish caught in coastal areas affected by the oil spill remain unsafe for human consumption.

Briguera cited laboratory examination results of fish samples taken from Cavite, which showed these did not pass the safety standard.

Arambulo urged the BFAR to conduct further studies, including chemical analysis, to prove that fish caught in Cavite are not fit for human consumption.

“Sensory analysis is not enough as it does not measure the chemical content of the fish. The result showing fish samples are contaminated with oil is not absolute,” Arambulo said.

The BFAR said that based on sensory evaluation, fish samples taken from Cavite show traces of oil and grease and presence of harmful contaminants called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH).

“More tests are needed like chemical analysis before BFAR can declare that the fish is not safe for human consumption,” Arambulo argued as he reiterated the need to immediately lift the fishing ban, which was imposed starting on July 30.

He said the ban is more detrimental to fishermen than the effects of the oil spill itself.

“The livelihoods of more than 30,000 fishermen in eight towns in Cavite were not considered before imposing the ban,” Arambulo said.

He criticized what he described as a measly assistance provided to affected fishermen.

“The relief assistance is not enough and it is not regular. If the fishing ban in the province will continue, the support to affected fishermen should be ensured as their source of income is only fishing,” Arambulo said.

The ban remains in place in Bacoor, Kawit, Maragondon, Naic, Noveleta, Rosario, Tanza and Ternate.

A no-catch zone has been implemented for all shellfish in the province.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/08/16/2378150/p15000-monthly-sought-fishers-hit-oil-spill>

60 hogs seized over fake permits

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

August 16, 2024 | 12:00am



Lechon or roast pigs are on display at a store in La Loma, Quezon City yesterday. Checkpoints have been set up in Metro Manila as part of the government's efforts to contain the spread of African swine fever.

Edd Gumban

MANILA, Philippines — Authorities confiscated at least 60 hogs at a checkpoint in Quezon City yesterday due to fake permits, as part of the government's campaign to prevent the spread of African swine fever (ASF), according to the Department of Agriculture.

DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said that livestock inspectors of the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) and the city veterinary department seized the pigs after the transporter allegedly from Sariaya, Quezon presented fraudulent documents.

Tiu Laurel said that the hogs were supposed to be delivered to a slaughterhouse in Caloocan City.

The traders presented spurious certificates of ASF-free status clearance, shipping permits issued by local government units and counterfeit veterinary health certificates, he added.

According to Tiu Laurel, the traders also failed to obtain a local shipping permit from the BAI.

“This seizure, which we hope will be the first and last, should be a clear warning to unscrupulous traders that we mean business. We cannot compromise public health, the viability of the local livestock industry, and the country’s food safety and security,” he said.

The seized hogs are being tested to determine if they are infected with ASF. The pigs would be condemned and taken to a central burial site if they test positive, Tiu Laurel said.

Checkpoints have been set up in Metro Manila as part of the government’s efforts to contain the spread of ASF.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/08/16/2378153/60-hogs-seized-over-fake-permits>

Lower rice prices to be felt in October – DA

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

August 16, 2024 | 12:00am



There was a slight decrease but we cannot expect (a drop in the retail price of imported rice) as the effectivity of the new tariff rate was only July 7,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel said.

Philstar.com / Jovannie Lambayan

MANILA, Philippines — The benefit of Executive Order No. 62 on lowering tariff on imported rice can only be felt in October as the retail price of local rice remains cheaper compared to those of imported grains more than a month after the EO took effect on July 7, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel said yesterday.

“There was a slight decrease but we cannot expect (a drop in the retail price of imported rice) as the effectivity of the new tariff rate was only July 7,” Tiu Laurel said.

“There are so many (rice) stocks bought by the importers from January to June of this year at a very high price at 35 percent (tariff) so we cannot really expect that the

retail price of imported rice will go down. By October, we can feel the decrease in the retail price of rice,” Tiu Laurel said.

Tiu Laurel said that the retail price of regular milled rice ranged between P46 and P48 per kilo, and well-milled rice between P51 and P53 per kilo.

“It is not immediate that after you decrease the tariff to 15 percent, tomorrow you can enjoy the cheap retail price of rice. That’s not the case. It is impossible as the importers still need to sell their old stocks,” he added.

EO 62 reduced the tariff on imported rice to 15 percent from 35 percent.

Based on monitoring of the DA in Metro Manila markets, the retail price of local regular milled rice ranged between P46 and P50 per kilo; local well-milled rice, between P48 and 54 per kilo; local premium rice, between P50 and P58 per kilo and local special rice, between P55 and P66 per kilo.

Imported regular milled rice price ranged between P46 and P50 per kilo; imported well-milled rice, between P51 and P55 per kilo; imported premium rice, between P53 and P60 and imported special rice, between P55 and P65 per kilo.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/08/16/2378181/lower-rice-prices-be-felt-october-da>

DA: Stringent measures needed to plug African swine fever in La Union

Philippine News Agency / 12:05 PM August 15, 2024



INQUIRER FILES

MALASIQUI, Pangasinan — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is urging strict compliance with bio-security measures after 17 of the 36 villages in Balaoan town in La Union province have confirmed cases of African swine fever (ASF).

Dr. Alfiero Banaag, DA-Ilocos regulatory division chief and ASF focal person, in a phone interview, said the virus has affected the livelihood of 132 hog raisers and 704 swine heads have been culled since Aug. 14.

“The affected areas have been locked down, where entry and exit of swine or pork products have been totally banned. But there is still the need to strictly implement the bio-security measures,” he said.

He admitted that some hog raisers did not want to voluntarily surrender their swine for culling claiming that these were healthy.

“I hope they would understand that despite them claiming that their pens are clean and their pigs are healthy, the virus has already spread, so we can never really be certain,” he said in Filipino.

He said strict monitoring in areas with backyard piggeries should be implemented to ensure no infected swine are moved to other areas.

An ASF Task Force has been formed, and with village officials, authorities have set up temporary animal quarantine checkpoints at every entry and exit point, under Executive Order No. 2024-08-067 issued on Aug. 1.

The first ASF-confirmed positive case in the town was recorded in Barangay Sablut on July 19.

Meanwhile, Banaag said the ASF-positive cases in two villages in San Fernando City, with two affected hog raisers and 41 culled swine, as well as those in five villages of Luna town, with 16 affected hog raisers and 164 culled pigs, are now under control.

The hog raisers will also be compensated depending on the pigs they voluntarily surrendered for culling.

Banaag also appealed to the residents to buy pork products only from legitimate and reliable sources such as the public market or groceries to be sure that these are not ASF-infected.

Banaag said there were no reported positive cases in the other provinces in Ilocos Region. (PNA)

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1973144/da-stringent-measures-needed-to-plug-african-swine-fever-in-la-union>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Shrunk output entangles drive for 100% fish self-sufficiency

Second-quarter fisheries production dipped by 6%, particularly the smaller-scale operations

By: [Jordeene B. Lagare](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 12:22 PM August 15, 2024



FILE PHOTO: In this public market in Dagupan City, the poor man's food – galunggong (round scad) – is abundant. (INQUIRER/Willie Lomibao)

Weaker output from aquaculture and municipal fisheries pulled down the country's fisheries production in the April to June quarter, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said.

The Philippines produced 1.02 million metric tons (MT) of fish in the second quarter of this year, down by 6.2 percent from the 1.07 million MT output recorded in the same period a year ago, a report by the PSA showed.

“Decrease in production was noted from marine municipal fisheries, inland municipal fisheries, and aquaculture, while commercial fisheries reported an increase in production,” the statistics agency said.

Aquaculture comprised 46.3 percent of the overall production, decreasing by 17.7 percent to 471,400.23 MT.

Municipal fisheries output stood at 259,465.6 MT, falling by 6.1 percent. It accounted for 25.5 percent of the total production.

Both marine municipal and inland fisheries registered declines during the comparative period.

Only commercial fisheries posted an increase of 21.9 percent to end at 286,602.75 MT. This is equivalent to a share of 28.2 percent.

By 2028

The PSA data also noted that reductions were logged in seaweed, round scad (*galunggong*), by-eyed scad (*matangbaka*), tilapia and milkfish (*bangus*).

Conversely, increases were observed in skipjack (*gulyasan*), yellowfin tuna (*tambakol/bariles*), frigate tuna (*tulingan*), P. Vannamei (*putian*), and bigeye tuna (*tambakol/bariles*).

The government aims to achieve 100-percent fish self-sufficiency by 2028 or the end of the Marcos administration’s term.

In line with this target, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) unveiled in February its strategic plan on covering the years 2023 to 2028 aimed at boosting local fish output.

The multiyear blueprint would focus on increasing productivity and reducing postharvest losses of fishery and aquatic resources.

Data from BFAR showed the country’s fish self-sufficiency reached 91.6 percent as of April.

Conservation

The Philippines is hosting the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Regular Session of the Scientific Committee scheduled for Aug. 14-21 which is expected to benefit the country's tuna industry.

“The tuna industry is a major catalyst of economic growth and food security in our nation. As such, we are deeply interested in ensuring fair and equitable access to tuna resources,” Agriculture Undersecretary Drusila Esther bayate said during the gathering on Wednesday.

Bayate also said the committee's recommendations for the conservation and management of tuna and other highly migratory fish stocks in the Western and Central Pacific regions “have resulted favorable” in conserving the country's fish resources, particularly, bigeye tuna. **INQ**

<https://business.inquirer.net/474942/shrunken-output-entangles-drive-for-100-fish-self-sufficiency>

7 towns in Quezon log ASF cases

By: [Delfin T. Mallari Jr.](#) - Correspondent / [@dtmallarijrINQ](#)

[Inquirer Southern Luzon](#) / 04:39 PM August 15, 2024



Pigs were locked in a cage in a slaughterhouse. INQUIRER FILES

LUCENA CITY — At least seven towns of Quezon province’s 41 municipalities have recorded cases of African swine fever (ASF) in local hogs.

The Office of the Provincial Veterinarian (OPV) in a report on its Facebook page on Thursday, Aug. 15, classified the towns of San Andres, Macalelon, Lopez, Mauban, Candelaria, and Tiaong as “red/infected zone.”

“Reminder to everyone to maintain the implementation of biosecurity (measures) in your pig farms,” the OPV said.

In an online interview, Flomella Alilio-Caguicla, provincial veterinarian, explained that there were confirmed ASF cases in a locality under “red/infected zone.”

She said a team of veterinarians was validating the number of infected ASF cases and the mortalities among pigs in the seven towns.

The World Organization for Animal Health described ASF as “a highly contagious viral disease of domestic and wild pigs” with no available vaccine, causing a 100-percent mortality rate.

Meat from infected pigs should not be consumed.

[https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1973231/7-towns-in-quezon-log-asf-cases?utm_source=\(direct\)&utm_medium=gallery](https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1973231/7-towns-in-quezon-log-asf-cases?utm_source=(direct)&utm_medium=gallery)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Locally produced sugar still insufficient to meet demand, says SRA

By: [Jordeene B. Lagare](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 11:11 PM August 15, 2024



A worker repacks sugar at a Visayas Avenue public market. The Philippines may allocate all its sugar for domestic consumption as local production remains insufficient to meet the demand.

—GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

MANILA, Philippines – The Philippines may allocate all its sugar for domestic consumption as local production remains insufficient to meet the demand for this sweetener, the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) said.

SRA Administrator Pablo Luis Azcona hinted that Sugar Order No. 1 for crop year 2024-2025 will classify all locally produced sugar as “B” sugar or domestic use.

SRA said domestic output is “never enough” as production in the previous crop year was 1.9 million metric tons (MT) yet demand is pegged at 2.3 million MT to 2.4 million MT.

Over the years, the SRA has set aside the entire sugar output for domestic use and relied on importation to plug any supply shortfall.

The last time the SRA made an allocation for the global market was for crop year 2020-2021 wherein 93 percent of sugar produced locally was set aside for the domestic market and the remaining 3 percent for the US market.

But recently, the SRA gave local producers the go-signal to export 25,300 MT of raw sugar to the United States in fulfillment of the country's export quota from Washington covering the fiscal year 2024.

Seeking to boost farmers' income and production, the SRA is mulling over delaying the opening of the milling season to Sept. 15 from the initial schedule of Sept. 1.

SRA administrator Pablo Luis Azcona said several farmers' groups approached him to adjust the beginning of the milling season by at least two weeks as some of the local producers are still recovering from the impact of the El Niño-induced dry spell which affected their harvests earlier.

In the Philippines, the crop year starts on Sept. 1 and ends on Aug. 31 of the following year.

The SRA said the plan is not yet final and is being discussed with industry stakeholders, adding it asked Philippine Sugar Millers Association Inc. to come up with a collective decision for the entire industry, especially farmers.

Speaking at the Philsutech Convention in Cebu City, Azcona said if the mills can get their acts together and agree to a two-week delay, it will be a win-win solution for the industry.

Azcona said while big planters can afford the delay, the small farmers might experience the difficulty of having their income delayed for even two weeks.

He said, "...and this is where the mills and the associations, including your SRA, can come into play by offering incentives, loans and more importantly, make them understand the higher yield which will translate to profit if everybody agrees to this."

The SRA said two of the biggest mill operators Victorias Milling Co. Inc. and Universal Robina Corp. have "no objection" to this proposal.

It quoted URC managing director Renato Cabati in saying they "strongly agree" for all mills to start their operations together, at least in Negros Occidental where mills start ahead of everybody else in the country.

Furthermore, mills in Luzon informed the SRA of its intention to delay the opening of their mills by a month.

"Moreover, if most farmers are not willing to cut their canes prematurely, it will be a problem for the mills as they might have intermittent operations which will be costly in the long run. We need our mills to run efficiently and in full capacity," he added.

[https://business.inquirer.net/475090/locally-produced-sugar-still-insufficient-to-meet-demand-says-sra?utm_source=\(direct\)&utm_medium=gallery](https://business.inquirer.net/475090/locally-produced-sugar-still-insufficient-to-meet-demand-says-sra?utm_source=(direct)&utm_medium=gallery)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Future of rice tariff law up for Senate plenary debate

By: [Tina G. Santos](#) - Reporter / [@santostinaINQ](#)

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:38 AM August 16, 2024



Sen. Cynthia A. Villar (Senate Public Relations and Information Bureau)

The bill seeking to extend and amend the rice tariffication law (RTL), which has allocated P10 billion yearly since 2019 to help farmers but is expiring this year, has reached the plenary in the Senate and is now up for debate.

Sen. Cynthia Villar, chair of the Senate committee on agriculture and food, sponsored during the plenary session on Tuesday the extension and amendments to the RTL, or Republic Act No. 11203, which created the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) from tariffs collected on imported rice.

Senate Bill No. 2779, or An Act Amending Republic Act No. 8178, or the Agricultural Tariffication Act of 1996, as amended by RA 11203, is contained in Committee Report No. 282.

The House of Representatives approved on final reading last month the changes to the RTL, including an increase in the RCEF to P15 billion from P10 billion.

Enacted in 2019, the RTL lifted quantitative restrictions on rice imports and introduced tariffs to protect local rice producers and to respond to the appeals of stakeholders in the rice industry due to rising prices of the staple food.

The RTL sought to directly benefit farmers from the liberalization of rice trading by providing at least P10 billion a year to the RCEF up to 2024.

Lifted restrictions

Of the P10-billion annual RCEF budget, P5 billion is allotted for the free distribution of farm machinery and equipment, P3 billion for free distribution of high quality inbred certified seeds, and P1 billion each for credit support and training of farmers and extension.

Collections in excess of P10 billion go to the Rice Farmer Financial Assistance (RFFA) under Republic Act No. 11598, which took effect on March 5, 2019, and will expire this year.

The RFFA is an unconditional financial assistance to farmers funded by excess tariff collection from rice imports which in 2022 reached P12 billion.

The 2023 RFFA beneficiaries included farmers who registered in the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture as of June 30, 2023, and tilling 2 hectares of land or less.

Increased funding

The bill increases to P30 billion the proposed new RCEF fund that will be sourced from tariff on imported rice, with any deficiency to be supplemented by the General Appropriations Act.

Of this amount, P9 billion will be allocated for rice farm machineries and equipment; P6 billion for high-quality inbred rice seeds, propagation, distribution and promotion; P8 billion for financial assistance to some 2.4 million rice farmers who are tilling 2

hectares and below; P2 billion for expanded rice credit assistance; P2.2 billion for training and extension; P1.4 billion for solar-powered water irrigation or water impounding irrigation project, and P1.4 billion for composting facilities for biodegradable wastes.

The P2.2 billion for training and extension services is divided into P1 billion for farm schools through the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, or Tesda; P500 million for the Agricultural Training Institute; P300 million for the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization; P200 million for the Philippine Rice Research Institute, and P200 million for the Bureau of Soils and Water Management.

Under the proposed bill, the President can prohibit further importation or specify the volume to be imported during periods of excess supply of both imported and locally produced rice in the market.

Key amendments

It also seeks to empower the agriculture secretary to respond to a declaration of rice food shortage and extraordinary increase and rice prices, where the agency can sell through government agencies, such as Kadiwa outlets, and replenish its stocks through the procurement of locally produced rice from farmers and farmers' cooperatives.

The new bill proposes to allow the DA to import when there is no available locally produced rice and to designate an importing authority, except the National Food Authority (NFA).

The measure likewise aims to strengthen the regulatory functions of the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Plant Industry, including registration and data basing of all grain warehouses for monitoring of the rice sector.

The disposal of aging stocks with the NFA will be set at four weeks before expiration, according to the bill.

Villar cites ‘request’

The creation of the Program Management Office that will monitor both the RCEF and the National Rice Program as well as the mid- and end-term evaluation of the RCEF are also among the salient features of the new bill.

“These are substantial as the sentiment of stakeholders with 181 farmers’ groups is a resounding request that the law be extended with amendments,” Villar noted.

In 2023, tariff collections from 3.6 million metric tons of rice imports reached P30 billion, or 30 percent more than the previous year’s P22.8 billion.

The increase was traced to the weaker peso value against the dollar and higher global rice prices.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1973343/future-of-rice-tariff-law-up-for-senate-plenary-debate>

DA sees hog shots vs ASF starting next week

By: [Jordeene B. Lagare](#), [Julie M. Aurelio](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:58 AM August 16, 2024



ENDANGERED Hogs in one of the piggeries in Mlang, Cotabato face the danger of getting contaminated after the African Swine Fever have spread to 10 villages of the town. WILLAMOR A. MAGBANUA

Faced with another crisis that may pressure food prices, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Thursday vowed to ensure the safety of the country's hog population as 10,000 vaccine doses against African swine fever (ASF) were expected to arrive on Friday.

"We are securing our hog industry with the upcoming rollout of an African swine fever vaccine for backyard and commercial farms, made possible through the generosity of our partners in the private sector, who have offered their cold storage facilities," the President said after meeting with his Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC).

"Our industry is at a critical juncture, and immediate action is required to safeguard our hog sector. The recommendations presented today reflect our collective commitment to not only addressing the immediate threats but also to ensuring long-term resilience," said PSAC lead convener and Aboitiz Group president Sabin Aboitiz.

The vaccines were acquired by the Department of Agriculture (DA) through emergency procurement.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the government is targeting to begin vaccination in several towns in Batangas province and prevent the further spread of African swine fever.

“Hopefully, our target is to begin the vaccination by Tuesday next week,” Laurel said in an episode of Malacañang Insider.

Aside from procuring vaccines, Laurel also said the DA is finalizing a policy to increase the compensation for hog raisers affected by ASF.

The indemnification for affected hog raisers will be raised to P4,000 for every culled piglet due to animal disease. For medium-sized pigs and big or breeder pigs, the payment is set at P8,000 and P12,000, respectively, for each condemned pig.

“We are finalizing the policy governing the indemnification program for pigs,” Laurel said.

At present, affected local raisers are paid P5,000 for every infected hog regardless of the pig’s size.

The policy, he explained, would encourage hog raisers to cull or surrender pigs infected by ASF and help them recover their losses because of this infection.

However, the agriculture chief recognized the challenge of raising more funds to indemnify as many hog raisers as possible since the budget allocation for this initiative is only P150 million.

“We are seeking additional budget so that hopefully, it will increase to P300 million, and help more affected livestock operators,” he said.

The DA is bolstering laboratories and research efforts to eventually manufacture vaccines in the country “in the near future,” the agriculture secretary said.

Livestock checkpoints

Amid the continued presence of ASF in some parts of the country, the DA chief said the situation is “not that alarming because the vaccine is on the way.”

“Hopefully, we can contain this. But, of course, it will not be easy, but we will do our best,” he said. Eight towns in Batangas have declared a state of emergency—Lobo, Lian, Calatagan, Rosario, Lipa, Talisay, San Juan and Tuy.

Meanwhile, the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) inspectors seized 60 hogs at a checkpoint in Tandang Sora, Quezon City, and are being tested to determine if they are infected with ASF.

If the disease is detected, they will be condemned and taken to a central burial site. According to the BAI, documents presented at the Tandang Sora checkpoint by the transporter, allegedly from Sariaya, Quezon, for slaughter in Caloocan City were found to be fraudulent.

The DA set up various livestock checkpoints across Luzon to prevent the spread of ASF and protect the local industry.

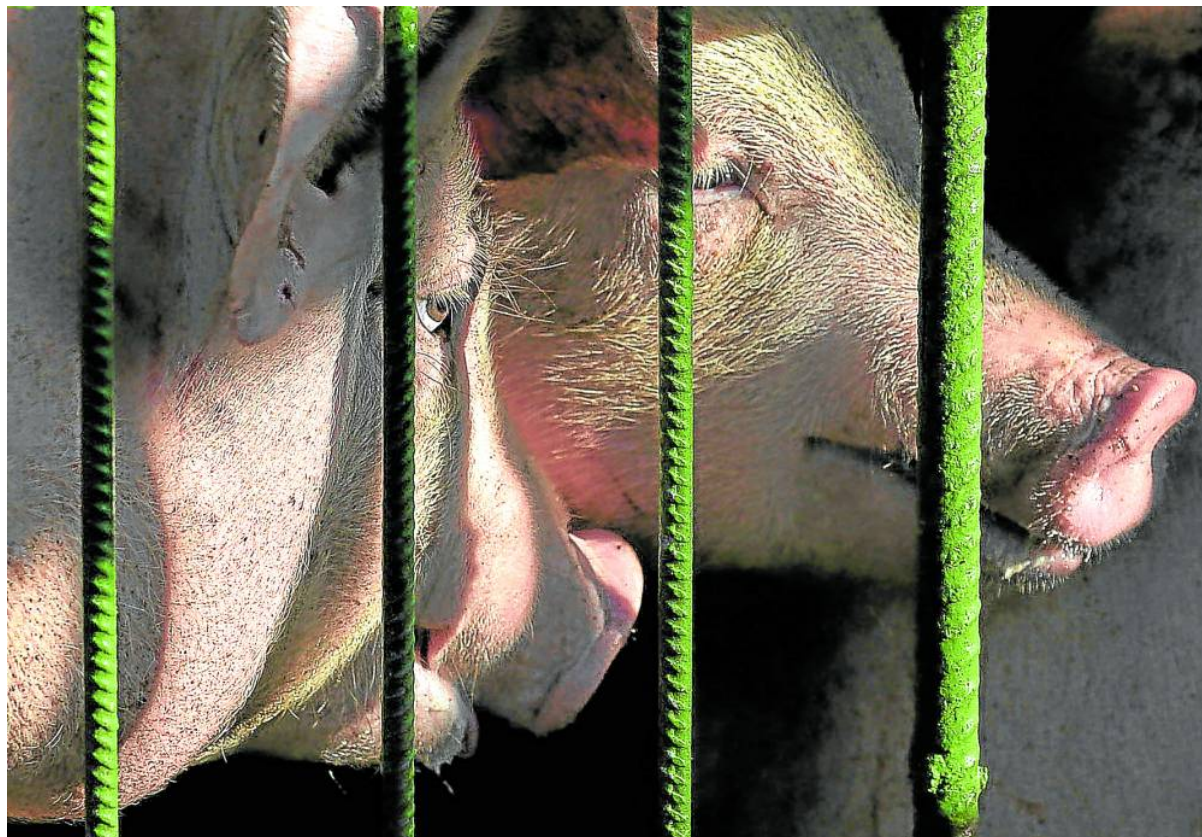
<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1973398/da-sees-hog-shots-starting-next-week>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

DA supplier donates vaccines to fight African Swine Fever

By: [Faith Argosino](#) - Reporter / [@FArgosinoINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 11:46 PM August 15, 2024



UNDER THREAT File photo shows hogs threatened by African swine fever. — INQUIRER PHOTO

MANILA, Philippines — Around 2,000 donated African Swine Fever (ASF) vaccines are set to arrive in the country on Friday and will be rolled out on August 20, according to Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel.

Laurel said the vaccine rollout aims to contain ASF cases in affected towns of Batangas, which was placed under a state of calamity due to the spread of the virus. This includes the province's eight municipalities — Lobo, Lian, Calatagan, Rosario, Lipa, Talisay, San Juan, and Tuy.

“Luckily iyong ating supplier nag-donate ng 2,000 doses at darating dito sa Biyernes at hopefully ang target namin is maumpisahan na iyong pagbakuna by Tuesday next week,” the Department of Agriculture (DA) chief disclosed during the Malacañang Insider.

(Luckily, our supplier donated 2,000 doses that will arrive this Friday. Hopefully, we can start the inoculation by Tuesday next week.

On August 12, Laurel revealed that an initial 10,000 doses of ASF vaccine will arrive by August 23. The government will distribute them to affected areas for free.

In the same briefing, the DA official said that the procurement of the vaccines could continue until next month.

He added that checkpoints or inspection stations will be installed in affected municipalities by Friday.

Aside from areas in Batangas, 41 municipalities or seven towns in Quezon province have recorded cases of ASF in local hogs.

Based on data by the Office of the Provincial Veterinarian classified the towns of San Andres, Macalelon, Lopez, Mauban, Candelaria, and Tiaong as “red or infected zone.”

Previous reports also revealed that 8,818 animal deaths were recorded in Lobo alone, resulting in a loss worth P103,338,000 as of July 31.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1973381/da-supplier-donates-vaccines-to-fight-african-swine-fever>

Why cut fuel subsidy for fishers, farmers? DA asked

By: [Kathleen de Villa](#) - Reporter / [@kdevillaINQ](#)

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:40 AM August 16, 2024



FILE PHOTO: Fishermen in Subic town, Zambales province receive their fuel subsidy cash cards during the launch on March 21 of the program at Bulungan fish port. | PHOTO: of BFAR Region 3

Farmers and fishers' groups have lambasted the lower funding in 2025 for the Department of Agriculture's (DA) fuel subsidy program, which provides a P3,000 one-time allowance to some 5 million eligible beneficiaries.

In a joint statement, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) and Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) questioned why only P50 million would be allocated for fuel assistance under the proposed DA budget for 2025.

This, they stressed, would be a 90-percent reduction from the P510 million set aside this year.

'Lack of sincerity'

"It really angers us why such a huge funding for social assistance was slashed when the agriculture sector deeply needs help because of calamities and worsening crisis in production," said KMP national chair Danilo Ramos.

The industry, he added, was still reeling from the effects of Supertyphoon “Carina” (international name: Gaemi) and the enhanced southwest monsoon that battered Luzon last month and caused agricultural damage worth P600 million.

“The meager budget of DA reflects the lack of sincerity in responding to the needs of farmers and fisherfolk,” Ramos noted.

With an “extremely small” funding, they said only around 33,000 farmers and fisherfolk out of a total 5.46 million eligible beneficiaries would be covered by the program next year.

Eligibility for subsidy

Agriculture officials started to defend their proposed budget this week, with Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. pushing to at least get a total of P250 billion for 2025.

The fuel subsidy began in March 2022 to cushion the impact on farmers and fisherfolks of rising oil prices amid the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Beneficiaries should be owners or renters of farm machinery and should be in the Registry System for Basic Sectors of Agriculture.

These conditions make them eligible for a 30-percent fuel discount, or a maximum of P3,000 per farmer or fisher, when buying gasoline or diesel from an accredited gas station.

The aid came in the form of fuel discount cards that are issued by the state-owned Development Bank of the Philippines and its financial technology partners.

Earlier releases

Meanwhile, Pamalakaya has also been pressing the government for a monthly P15,000 calamity aid, based on the average income per month of small-time fisherfolk.

Early last month, the DA approved the release of some P510 million in fuel subsidy to about 160,000 farmers owning or renting machinery used in crop, livestock and poultry production to help them cope with high fuel costs.

The project is being implemented by the DA through its Bureau of Agricultural and Fisheries Engineering and regional field offices.

However, the release of the fuel subsidy is contingent upon the Department of Energy’s certification that the average monthly price of Dubai crude oil has reached \$80 a barrel.

From June 3 to July 1, Dubai crude prices ranged from \$79 to \$86.50 a barrel, exceeding the \$80 trigger price for the fuel subsidy.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1973368/why-cut-fuel-subsidy-for-fishers-farmers-da-asked>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Rice tariff cuts to hurt collections, says Customs

August 15, 2024 | 12:31 am



Well-milled rice is being sold for P45 per kilo at a Kadiwa store in Manila, Aug. 1, 2024. — PHILIPPINE STAR/EDD GUMBAN

THE BUREAU of Customs (BoC) expects the implementation of rice tariff cuts to hurt its revenue collection this year, its chief said.

“Definitely, there’s an impact on our collection on revenue for rice importations because reducing the tariff rate from 35% to 15%, even if the same volume arrives, you’re basically reducing 20% of what we should have collected. So, there’s an impact,” Customs Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio told reporters on the sidelines of a Senate hearing late on Tuesday.

Since the start of the year, the BoC has collected P29 billion in tariffs from rice importations, he said.

In June, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. issued Executive Order No. 62, cutting tariffs on rice imports to 15% from the current 35% until 2028.

Mr. Rubio recognized the need to reduce tariffs to make rice prices more affordable to the public.

“If we lose revenues, at least the (tariff) reduction will cause the price of rice to be reduced,” he said.

In the first half of the year, Customs collected P456.04 billion, exceeding its P442.62-billion goal for the period by 3.03%.

The BoC expects to collect P939.69 billion in 2024 and P1.06 trillion in 2025.

“If the imports arrive, we will do a proper assessment duties and taxes so we can collect them,” Mr. Rubio said in mixed English and Filipino.

During the Senate hearing before the Development Budget Coordination Committee on Tuesday, Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto said that tariff cuts are temporarily implemented while the government works on scaling up productivity in the agriculture sector.

“Today, we’re importing roughly 20% of our demand, so if we’re importing that much, it would be appropriate to reduce our tariffs while we are increasing production,” he said.

Rice prices are expected to go down to below P50 per kilogram by end-August, the Finance chief said.
— **BMDC**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2024/08/15/614097/rice-tariff-cuts-to-hurt-collections-says-customs>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Palace advisers call for rapid ASF vaccine review

August 15, 2024 | 8:34 pm



FREEPIK

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.'s advisers from the private sector said on Thursday that the review and assessment of the MSD1 vaccine for African Swine Fever (ASF) needs to be expedited.

“This vaccine offers promising potential for providing additional immunity for breeder populations, thereby completing the immunity cycle and bolstering overall industry protection,” the Private Sector Advisory Council’s (PSAC) agriculture group said in a statement.

The Food and Drug Administration had granted a Certificate of Product Registration for the AVAC ASF Live Vaccine from Vietnam for controlled government trials.

Mr. Marcos said that the government will prioritize breeders in the vaccine distribution.

The PSAC also recommended that private sector cold storage facilities serve as preliminary distribution hubs for the vaccine to ensure improved access to hog farms.

“Our industry is at a critical juncture, and immediate action is required to safeguard our hog sector,” Sabin M. Aboitiz, PSAC lead convenor and Aboitiz Group president and chief executive officer, said.

“The recommendations presented today reflect our collective commitment to not only addressing the immediate threats but also to ensuring long-term resilience,” Mr. Aboitiz added.

The Department of Agriculture allocated P350 million to acquire 600,000 vials of the vaccine. Initial shipments for the broader vaccine trial are expected to arrive by the third quarter.

The PSAC said that the targeted approach aims to prevent cross-contamination and ensure the vaccine is reserved for the grower or finisher segment of the industry. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/08/15/614395/palace-advisers-call-for-rapid-asf-vaccine-review/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

DA technical panel to evaluate ASF vaccine field trial reports

August 15, 2024 | 8:34 pm



REUTERS

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said that it has created a technical advisory group for the initial phase of the African Swine Fever (ASF) vaccine trials.

“All of our reports will be given to them... If the result is not good, cancel everything. If the result is good, we will slowly increase the vaccinations,” Agriculture Assistant Secretary for Poultry and Swine Constance J. Palabrica told reporters on Thursday.

The DA said 10,000 doses of ASF vaccines are set to arrive by Aug. 16, purchased via emergency procurement after a surge in cases was reported in Batangas province.

“We got a controlled permit from the (Food and Drug Administration) and we have to follow the conditions given by the FDA regarding this vaccine,” Mr. Palabrica added.

The FDA granted a Certificate of Product Registration for the AVAC ASF Live Vaccine from Vietnam.

“This vaccine must be given to hogs that do not have ASF. For it to act fast... if this is given to those with the disease then this will invalidate our controlled vaccination,” he said.

The DA has allocated P350 million for the trial, sufficient to fund about 600,000 vials.

Vaccination will initially be concentrated in red zones, or those areas with active ASF cases, and pink zones, or those adjacent to zones with infections.

The DA has resorted to checkpoints to prevent the spread of ASF cases after the Batangas outbreak.

The checkpoints have been set up along Commonwealth and Mindanao Avenues in Quezon City; EDSA Balintawak; Marulas and Malanday, Valenzuela City; STAR Tollway in Sto. Tomas, Batangas; Calamba, Laguna; and Alfonso, Cavite.

Mr. Palabrica added that the DA is looking at more strategic locations to place its checkpoints.

“We are going to refine it, then we will add other areas. What we are trying to find are those areas where diseased pigs could be transported. We want to protect the north and south of Luzon,” he said.

As of Aug. 8, 62 municipalities across 22 provinces had active ASF cases, according to the Bureau of Animal Industry. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/08/15/614394/da-technical-panel-to-evaluate-asf-vaccine-field-trial-reports/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

British pork imports seen sustained as PHL continues to deal with ASF

August 15, 2024 | 8:34 pm



REUTERS

PORK SHIPMENTS from the UK are expected to be sustained for the rest of the year as the Philippines struggles to contain its outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF), the British Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (BCCP) said.

BCCP Executive Director and Trustee Chris Nelson said that pork shipments from the UK grew 16% in the first five months.

“We would like to sustain that and hopefully continue to grow it even more. Obviously, as the volume goes up, the base gets higher, but yes, we can see it being sustained,” Mr. Nelson told *BusinessWorld* by phone on Thursday.

“The pig herds in the Philippines have been significantly impacted by ASF, and that’s had a significant impact on supply, and UK pork obviously is of good quality and controlled,” he added.

“Second, I think that the work that we have done with the (UK) Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) has resulted in lasting business relations with importers,” he said.

As of Aug. 8, 62 municipalities across 22 provinces had active ASF cases, according to the Bureau of Animal Industry.

ASF was first detected in the Philippines in 2019.

Between July 31 and Aug. 3, the AHDB and six UK exporters operated the British Meat Pavilion at the World Food Expo in Manila.

The BCCP and the AHDB also hosted a business-to-business seminar attended by 50 importers and distributors.

Imports are “helping with food supply and inflation,” he said.

To further grow trade, Mr. Nelson said that the BCCP will continue to work with AHDB, particularly on the temporary ban on beef.

“We will also continue to strengthen long-term business relationships with Philippine companies, as this is mutually beneficial to both countries,” he added. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/08/15/614393/british-pork-imports-seen-sustained-as-phl-continues-to-deal-with-asf/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Local traders bought palay at higher price in July–PSA

- **Ada Pelonia**
- **August 16, 2024**



Farmers harvesting palay in Barangay Hubangon, Mahinog, Camuigin.

LOCAL traders bought palay at a higher price in July, latest data released by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) show.

The start of the lean season for rice saw the average quotation for dry unhusked rice jumped by 25.9 percent to P24.47 per kilo in July, from P19.44 per kilo last year, based on PSA data. The lean season for rice is from July to September.

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

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

On a monthly basis, the average farmgate of price in palay in July slid by 0.7 percent from P24.65 per kilo recorded in June.

PSA data showed that the highest increase was observed in Western Visayas, where the average prices registered a year-on-year growth of 40.1 percent.

The average palay farmgate price in Western Visayas reached P28.63 per kilo in July, higher than the previous year's P20.43 per kilo.

Meanwhile, the slowest year-on-year growth in farmgate prices was recorded in Calabarzon at 10.5 percent. The average palay prices went up to P20.29 per kilo in July from P18.36 per kilo in the same period last year.

Wholesale price

THE PSA said the average wholesale price of regular milled rice jumped by 22.6 percent to P46.44 per kilo in July, from P37.89 per kilo a year ago.

The fastest increase in regular milled rice was recorded in Cagayan Valley, where the price of the staple surged 39 percent to P44.37 per kilo, from P31.92 per kilo in the previous year.

This was followed by Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan), where the prices soared 37.5 percent in July to P47.27 per kilo from P34.39 per kilo in July 2023.

However, the average price in July was 0.6 percent lower than the P46.71 per kilo recorded in June.

“Wholesale price refers to the price of commodity transacted in bulk for further resale or processing. It is the actual ‘spot’ transaction price received usually by the wholesalers, distributors or marketing agents for large lots but net of discounts, allowances, and rebates,” the PSA explained.

The agency said the monthly data on the wholesale selling prices for agricultural commodities are obtained from the results of the Wholesale Selling Price Survey conducted every week of the reference month.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/16/local-traders-bought-palay-at-higher-price-in-july-psa/>

‘Tech-based farming to cut farm inputs’ cost’

- **Ada Pelonia**
- **August 15, 2024**

AGRICULTURE Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said technology-based farming will lower the cost of farm inputs and boost the earnings of farmers.

“Our big challenge is to make farming profitable, and the solution lies in embracing technology-based farming methods to optimize resource efficiency and lower costs of farm inputs,” Laurel said in his message for the Philippine Sugar Technologists Association’s (Philsutech) 70th Annual National Convention.

“We must now shift our focus on comprehensive training of farmers in modern farming techniques and new emerging technologies,” he added.

According to the agriculture chief, he ordered the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) to broaden the services and benefits from the Sugarcane Industry Development Act (SIDA) that would include fuel subsidy, liming and fertilization programs, irrigation, and more inclusive farm mechanization initiatives.

“I have also directed the SRA to establish a new breeding program and consider acquiring new sugarcane high-yielding varieties from other sugarcane-producing countries to refresh our old and deteriorating varieties and boost our productivity enhancement programs,” he added.

SRA Administrator Pablo Luis Azcona said he has discussed the fuel subsidy and expanding the benefits and services under SIDA with Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga, who chairs the House Committee on Agriculture and Food.

“We will be submitting a formal proposal soon for Congress to approve this under the SIDA budget,” Azcona said.

He talked with representatives from Japan and is pursuing discussions with Tokyo University, which proposed to introduce new technologies that will help make the mills more efficient and productive.

“Recently, we started growing higher-yielding sugarcane varieties also from Japan, and hopefully we will get good results to start a new breeding program for these varieties. We had to bring in seeds, not cuttings, due to restrictions and so it will take some time.”

Meanwhile, Laurel said that through active private support, the sugarcane industry has invested in its own automatic weather stations, drought indicator and monitoring system using soil moisture sensors, satellite imaging crop estimation system, solar irrigation, and mechanization of planting and harvesting processes.

“Like Philsutech, we firmly believe that technology and innovation will propel the agriculture sector toward enhanced productivity, profitability, and global competitiveness,” he said.

“We hope that Philsutech will continue to be a proactive partner in advancing the competitiveness of the sugar industry in the years to come.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/15/tech-based-farming-to-cut-farm-inputs-cost/>

DA to open more Kadiwa centers, vows better ops

- **Samuel P. Medenilla**
- **August 15, 2024**

DESPITE being one of the flagship initiatives of the Marcos administration to provide affordable agricultural products to consumers, over 90 percent of the Kadiwa stores of the Department of the Agriculture (DA) have “irregular operations.”

In a television interview aired last Thursday, DA Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said of the 247 Kadiwa centers nationwide, only 17 are open regularly.

“We will be standardizing their operating hours, operating days so the people would know about it. Of course, we will also have information dissemination,” Laurel said. Through the Kadiwa program, DA provides agricultural producers free venues and shoulders the transportation cost of their products so they can sell them at a cheaper price compared to other private retailers.

Marcos earlier said he wants the program to be institutionalized by having at least one Kadiwa center per province.

To help achieve this target, Laurel said they are planning to increase the number of Kadiwa centers in the next four years.

“Once we establish the smooth logistics flow of goods and the smooth transaction, we will expand [Kadiwa] in four years. Our target is 800 to 1,000 stores,” the DA chief added.

He said they will also implement the franchising of the Kadiwa brand to significantly increase the number of Kadiwa centers nationwide.

“We will allow private sector operators or cooperatives to use the Kadiwa name in selected sites as long as they abide by the rules and guidelines or policies of DA. What is important is that Kadiwa is there to sell [goods] at a reasonable price,” Laurel said.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/15/da-to-open-more-kadiwa-centers-vows-better-ops/>

Tobacco plantation expansion eyed

- Samuel P. Medenilla
- August 15, 2024



Department of Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) is now studying the proposal to use public funds to accelerate the expansion of tobacco plantations by 20,000 hectares in the next four years to boost the profits of farmers.

In an interview in the Palace-produced show, *Malacañang Insider*, on Thursday, DA Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. disclosed they plan to use 20 percent of tax collected from tobacco for the said expansion.

He said the proposal was discussed during President Ferdinand Marcos' meeting with the Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC) on Wednesday.

“The funds are supposed to, you know, [used] to buy [pieces of] machinery, seeds, fertilizers to grow tobacco,” Laurel said.

The initiative, he said, is expected to help expand the plantable area for tobaccos by 5,000 hectares annually for four years.

In its latest data, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that the area planted for all tobacco varieties from January to June last year rose to 27,000 hectares from 26,800 hectares in the same period in 2022.

“Because tobacco is clearly a money-making [crop]...farmers can earn from it,” Laurel said.

Last April, the National Tobacco Administration (NTA) reported that buying price for tobacco varieties exceeded the approved floor price indicating high market demand.

During the said period, the buying price for flue-cured Virginia tobacco reached P113 per kilogram (kg), while for air-cured Burley and Native tobacco, it was at P100 per kg.

Vaccine rollout

Aside from tobacco, Laurel said other matters discussed in the PSAC meeting included boosting the country’s sugar production through the Sugarcane Industry Development Act (SIDA) and the rollout of the African Swine Fever (ASF) vaccines next week in Batangas.

The provincial government of Batangas has declared a state of calamity in Calatagan, Lian, Lipa City, Lobo, Rosario, San Juan, Talisay and Tuy due to an ASF outbreak.

Laurel said they will be using the 2,000 doses, which were donated by the ASF vaccine manufacturer and are scheduled to arrive in the country on Friday, for the immunization drive.

“We are targeting to start the vaccination by Tuesday next week,” the DA chief said.

He said they will be using emergency procurement to get more ASF vaccines as part of their efforts to contain the spread of the disease in Batangas.

“It’s not that alarming because the vaccine is on the way. So, hopefully we can contain it. But, of course, it will not be easy but we will do our best,” Laurel added.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/15/tobacco-plantation-expansion-eyed/>

CCG should not be entrusted with fisheries protection duties

- **Rex Anthony Naval**
- **August 15, 2024**



File photo: Masinloc fishermen

A ranking Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) official on Thursday said the China Coast Guard (CCG) should not be entrusted for fisheries protection missions as its presence is aimed at encroaching on exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of other countries in Southeast Asia.

PCG spokesperson for the West Philippine Sea Commodore Jay Tarriela made this comment after noting that CCG vessel with bow number 5303, which recently arrived in Escoda Shoal, is registered at the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Register of Authorized Inspection Vessels.

“However, since its arrival at Escoda Shoal to replace the CCG-5901, its personnel, utilizing rigid hull inflatable boats, did not inspect the Chinese Maritime Militia (CMM) which is gathered within the shoal for compliance with fishery laws,” he added.

Instead of conducting inspections, the ship's personnel interacted with the crew of the CMM which included sharing meals as if they were acquaintances.

“It is evident that no formal boarding procedures were carried out by the CCG to question the CMM's intentions, despite their prolonged presence without any signs of fishing,” Tarriela said.

These actions, the PCG official said, indicates that the CMM is recognized by the CCG as an integral part of their maritime operations, aiding in encroaching upon the EEZ of other countries throughout the South China Sea.

He also added that state-subsidized maritime militia support the CCG and the People's Liberation Army Navy in intimidating neighboring maritime states such as Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

“Moreover, this situation highlights that the CCG should not be entrusted with the responsibilities of the WCPFC to board fishing vessels, as their true objective is not to combat illegal, unreported, or unregulated fishing (IUUF). The PRC's aim appears to be the innovative legitimization of its unlawful presence and activities in the WPS, disguised under the pretense of maritime law enforcement,” Tarriela said.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/15/ccg-should-not-be-entrusted-with-fisheries-protection-duties/>

Local traders bought palay at higher price in July–PSA

- **Ada Pelonia**
- **August 16, 2024**



Farmers harvesting palay in Barangay Hubangon, Mahinog, Camuigin.

LOCAL traders bought palay at a higher price in July, latest data released by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) show.

The start of the lean season for rice saw the average quotation for dry unhusked rice jumped by 25.9 percent to P24.47 per kilo in July, from P19.44 per kilo last year, based on PSA data. The lean season for rice is from July to September.

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

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

On a monthly basis, the average farmgate of price in palay in July slid by 0.7 percent from P24.65 per kilo recorded in June.

PSA data showed that the highest increase was observed in Western Visayas, where the average prices registered a year-on-year growth of 40.1 percent.

The average palay farmgate price in Western Visayas reached P28.63 per kilo in July, higher than the previous year's P20.43 per kilo.

Meanwhile, the slowest year-on-year growth in farmgate prices was recorded in Calabarzon at 10.5 percent. The average palay prices went up to P20.29 per kilo in July from P18.36 per kilo in the same period last year.

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This was followed by Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan), where the prices soared 37.5 percent in July to P47.27 per kilo from P34.39 per kilo in July 2023.

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The agency said the monthly data on the wholesale selling prices for agricultural commodities are obtained from the results of the Wholesale Selling Price Survey conducted every week of the reference month.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/16/local-traders-bought-palay-at-higher-price-in-july-psa/>

Agriculture is Achilles heel of the economy



[By Dr. Fermin D. Adriano, PhD](#)

August 16, 2024

AGRICULTURE remains an Achilles heel of the Philippine economy based on last week's report of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) on the July inflation rate in the country and the performance of the agricultural sector during the second quarter of the year.

The PSA said that the inflation rate rose from 3.7 percent in June to 4.4 percent in July, overshooting the government's target of an average inflation rate of between 2 and 4 percent for this year. As of the first half of this year, the average inflation rate remains within the government's target of 3.5 percent.

In addition, PSA also reported that while agricultural production fell by 2.3 percent during the second quarter, all other economic sectors grew. But the country still logged in a robust gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate at 6.3 percent for the second quarter, no thanks to agriculture.

The main contributor to the higher inflation rate last month was food inflation that was registered at 6.7 percent in July compared to 6.5 percent in June. Of the food items, cereals registered the highest inflation rate at 74.7 percent, meat and other parts of slaughtered animals at 12 percent, and vegetables and others at 6.6 percent.

Among the cereal items, rice significantly contributed to the higher food inflation at 20.9 percent. But this is actually lower than the June figure of 22.5 percent.

The adverse impact of higher food inflation is felt more by Filipinos who belong to the bottom 30 percent of the income quintile. While

the monthly average inflation for the country in July was pegged at 4.4 percent, the poorest of the poor experienced a higher inflation rate of 5.8 percent.

The simple explanation to this is that the poor spent most of their income purchasing food in order to survive. Studies show that they devote an average of 60 percent or higher of their total income to food items.

In other words, the poor can hardly afford to spend on other basic necessities of a decent living existence such as health, housing and education as their income is too small. They expectedly spend most of their income on food, which is indispensable for their biological survival.

Hunger stalks the poor's daily life. The Social Weather Stations (SWS) reported that the incidence of hunger is rising alarmingly in the country.

It observed that "Hunger rises to 17.6 percent in June 2024 from 14.2 percent in March 2024. Hunger rises to 14.2 percent in March 2024 from 12.6 percent in December 2023. (And) Hunger rises from 9.8 percent in September to 12.6 percent in December 2023."

Undeniably, rising food prices directly correlates with hunger. In turn, hunger is correlated to the problem of high malnutrition and stunting incidences among the Filipinos, particularly kids.

Furthermore, malnutrition and stunting among our kids contribute to their cognitive impairment considering that 90 percent of a person's brain is developed during the formative years of 0-5 years old. Given that more than half of the Filipinos considered themselves poor, as per SWS self-rated poverty survey reveals, this means that more than 50 percent of Filipino kids coming from the poor family are at risk of suffering from cognitive disability.

This is partly validated by the embarrassingly poor performance of Filipino students in internationally administered tests to measure

cognitive ability of children of school age. This has led to the World Bank to note that our country suffers from "learning poverty."

High food prices undoubtedly aggravate the poverty problem in the country. It can be alleviated if local food production is sufficient or more than able to meet local demand. Unfortunately, across the board, based on the PSA data on the sufficiency of local production of various agricultural commodities, we are in short supply in almost all of them at varying degrees.

Key commodities like corn for instance, critical as feed ingredients for livestock, poultry and aquaculture, local production can only meet 57 to 60 percent of total demand. For rice, local supply can meet around 80 percent of total demand. Same for pork, poultry, vegetables and fishery products where their supplies fall far short of their demand.

Ostensibly, the solution is either we ramp up local production or import these commodities. We are unfortunately not performing well on the former.

For instance, PSA reported last week that the value of crops and livestock production contracted by 3.3 percent in the second quarter of this year. The production of palay (unmilled rice) fell 9.5 percent year on year, while corn output declined by 20.3 percent during the same period.

The lackadaisical performance of the agricultural sector during the first half of this year is being attributed to the El Niño phenomenon that hit the country. But what is not mentioned is that the budget of the Department of Agriculture (DA) almost doubled this year compared to the previous year. One wonders therefore what measures had been adopted by the agency to mitigate the ill-effects of El Niño, which was already predicted to occur as early as late last year.

Similarly, the handling of our rice supply and demand situation leaves much room for improvement. Last year, the DA supported the

imposition of the price ceiling in order to tame rice inflation. The move did not yield positive results as rice prices continued to soar.

Rice traders were blamed for colluding to maintain high prices by not releasing their stocks. The DA predicted that rice prices would start to fall during the dry harvest months of February and March. Unfortunately, this did not happen as prices remain elevated.

There was massive arrival of rice imports during the first half of the year which totaled to a staggering amount of more than 2.1 million metric tons. Yet, rice prices remain high.

In response, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. issued Executive Order 62 reducing the tariff on rice from 35 to 15 percent in order to tame rice inflation. In recent months, world rice prices declined by around 3 to 7 percent from a high of almost \$600 per metric ton (MT) of 5-percent Vietnam broken rice to less than \$550 per MT.

The twin effects of reduced tariff and declining global rice prices should have benefited Filipino consumers with lower rice prices. But data shows that only 56,000 MT of rice imports arrived as of July 20, compared to the usual monthly average of 400,000 MT from January to June this year.

In the private sector, when a certain unit in the organization does not meet expected performance from the management, a reorganization usually occurs. The best people are appointed and adequate resources are provided based on a plan for recovery and sustained growth.

We have reached a crisis-like proportion in our agricultural sector because it is becoming a drag to our higher and rapid economic growth while at the same time exacerbating the problem of malnutrition and stunting among our people due to soaring food prices.

It is indeed tragic that the government has not properly and boldly responded to the challenges facing our backward agricultural sector despite the fact that its performance has been declining for more than two decades now.

It is about time government assembles the best minds in agriculture and related disciplines to point to us what should be done to reverse the fortune of Philippine agriculture.

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<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/16/business/top-business/agriculture-is-achilles-heel-of-the-economy/1964474>

DA wants to expand sugar law coverage

[By Janine Alexis Miguel](#)

August 16, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) plans to expand the benefits and services under the Sugarcane Industry Development Act (SIDA).

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. directed the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) to carry out the said expansion that will include fuel subsidies, liming and fertilization programs, irrigation support and other comprehensive farm mechanization initiatives.

"Our big challenge is to make farming profitable, and the solution lies in embracing technology-based farming methods to optimize resource efficiency and lower costs of farm inputs," Tiu Laurel said in a statement on Wednesday.

SRA Administrator Pablo Luis Azcona, meanwhile, said that discussions have already started on these new initiatives with the House Committee on Agriculture in Congress.

"[The expansion] was received well, [and] we will be submitting a formal proposal soon for Congress to approve this under the SIDA budget," Azcona said.

As part of the initiative to modernize the sugar industry, Azcona also revealed ongoing talks with representatives from Japan, including Tokyo University, to introduce new technologies aimed at improving local sugar production.

"We started growing higher-yielding sugarcane varieties also from Japan, and hopefully, we will get good results to start a new breeding program for these varieties," the SRA chief said.

"We had to bring in seeds, not cuttings, due to restrictions, and so it will take some time," he added.

In addition, the agriculture chief also directed the SRA to establish a new breeding program and explore the acquisition of high-yielding sugarcane varieties from other sugarcane-producing countries to revitalize the local industry.

Tiu Laurel also emphasized support from the private sector, noting that the sugarcane industry has invested in automatic weather stations, drought indicators, soil moisture sensors and mechanized planting and harvesting.

With these new strategies, the government expressed optimism to not only enhance production but also provide greater support to local farmers in the competitive global sugar market.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/16/business/top-business/da-wants-to-expand-sugar-law-coverage/1964480>

Undocumented hogs intercepted



[By Eugene Adiong](#)

August 16, 2024

BACOLOD CITY — Authorities have intercepted a delivery of 15 hogs into Negros Occidental at a coastal town north of the province. Provincial Veterinarian Dr. Placeda Lemana on Thursday said that a motor boat was caught carrying undocumented pigs for slaughter at a beach in Calatrava town on Tuesday.

The day before, a separate delivery of 12 hogs were also intercepted in Barangay Rizal in the neighboring city of Escalante.

Authorities believe that the pigs seized in Calatrava and Escalante came from the same source.

Lemana, however, said the PVO still cannot confirm if the pigs came from a place where there are positive cases of the African swine fever.

Arsolene Cordova, livestock section head of the Escalante City Agriculture Office, said the pigs were intercepted by barangay safety officers.

The persons transporting the pigs said they came from Molocaboc in Sagay and are bound to Bacolod City, but were unable to produce papers to back their claim, Cordova said.

Cordova questioned the traders why the pigs were unloaded in a secluded area in Escalante City when Sagay City had its own port. The traders said they were not allowed to enter the port in Sagay City because the shipment of hogs lack the necessary papers, Cordova said.

So they decided to unload the pigs in Calatrava where they were caught with 14 live hogs.

One pig was buried after it died, Lemana said.

The provincial government of Negros Occidental have tightened the monitoring of its borders to prevent pigs infected by the ASF from entering the province.

As of Tuesday, personnel of local ASF task forces are keeping a round-the-clock watch in ports of Bredco in this city as well as in other seaports in the province.

"The border control operation continues. Our quarantine inspectors have been instructed to heighten alert due to new ASF cases in Valencia, Negros Oriental," Lemana said.

She said quarantine checkpoints in the borders of Kabankalan City and Hinoba-an town are also operating 24/7.

Additional border checkpoints for spot inspection were also set up between La Castellana, Negros Occidental, and Canlaon City, Negros Oriental, as well as between Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental, and Tayasan, Negros Oriental.

Spot inspection also continues in checkpoints at the boundaries of Murcia, Talisay City, and Bago City with Bacolod City, which lifted the pork ban earlier this year.

The ban also covers Luzon, Mindanao, Eastern Visayas, Panay Island, Guimaras Island, Cebu province (including Camotes Island and Bantayan Island), and other countries affected by ASF as may be declared by the Department of Agriculture.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/16/regions/undocumented-hogs-intercepted/1964509>

DA planning more Kadiwa centers



[By Kristina Maralit](#)

August 16, 2024

(UPDATES) THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Thursday that it plans to start franchising Kadiwa Centers to the private sector and cooperatives for the remainder of the Marcos administration to give the public more access to affordable commodities.

To date, 230 Kadiwa sites have been put up nationwide. Of this number, 17 are under regular operation, and the DA hopes to increase the number every month with the agency also standardizing their operating hours.

"Once we establish the smooth logistics flow of the goods and the transactions, we will expand this in the next four years, and my target is 800 to 1,000 stores," DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said in an interview with "Malacañang Insider."



People flock to a Kadiwa Store booth at the Mall of Asia complex in Pasay City Sunday as they take advantage of prices that are lower than regular market rates. PHOTO BY J. GERARD SEGUIA

"We will also do Kadiwa franchising. We will allow private sector operators or cooperatives to use the Kadiwa name in selected sites as

long as they abide by the rules and guidelines or policies of DA. More importantly, for them to sell in Kadiwa at the right price," he added.

The move is a follow up to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s order in his last State of the Nation Address to make all Kadiwa stores permanent.

The Kadiwa concept is a farm-to-consumer market initiative that eliminates middlemen and intermediaries, which in turn helps local producers generate a higher income by selling their goods directly to consumers.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/16/news/national/da-planning-more-kadiwa-centers/1964395>

MANILA STANDARD:

DA to roll out ASF vaccines by next week

NewsNational



By Charles Dantes

August 16, 2024, 12:20 am

The Department of Agriculture (DA) will release vaccines for African Swine Fever (ASF) next Tuesday.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel announced that 2,000 doses, donated by a supplier, will arrive on Friday to combat the ASF outbreak in several Batangas towns.

“Our target is to start vaccination next Tuesday,” Laurel said during an interview in Malacañang.

He noted the DA has been procuring vaccines through the emergency procurement system, which may continue into next month.

Eight municipalities in Batangas, including Lobo, Lian, Calatagan, Rosario, Lipa, Talisay, San Juan, and Tuy, have declared a state of emergency. Laurel has since reassured the public the DA is working diligently to control the outbreak.

“Tomorrow (Friday), we will set up checkpoints in the affected areas to help control the spread,” Laurel said. According to him, the DA is enhancing the country’s laboratories and research to encourage local vaccine manufacturing in the future. An indemnification program for the affected livestock sector is also being finalized.

Last Tuesday, the Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC) Agriculture Sector met with the President and discussed essential recommendations aimed at enhancing the protection and sustainability of the Philippine hog industry.

During the meeting, the Council emphasized a strategic, phased approach to managing the African Swine Fever (ASF) threat, recommending a contained rollout of AVAC vaccines in isolated areas, focusing on backyard and select large commercial farms.

This targeted approach, according to PSAC, aims to prevent cross-contamination and ensure the vaccine is reserved for the grower/finisher population. In the meeting, the President said the government's objectives align with the private sector's recommendations and the Department of Agriculture's (DA) plans.

The Council emphasized the need to fast-track the review and assessment of the MSD1 vaccine. This vaccine offers promising potential for providing additional immunity for breeder populations, thereby completing the immunity cycle and bolstering overall industry protection.

The President emphasized that breeders will be prioritized in the vaccine distribution, underscoring the importance of safeguarding this critical segment to ensure the overall resilience and stability of the industry.

To enhance the ASF vaccination strategy, the Council recommended using private sector cold storage facilities as preliminary hubs for vaccine distribution, streamlining the process and improving access for hog farmers nationwide.

Sabin Aboitiz, PSAC Lead Convenor and Aboitiz Group president and CEO, emphasized the urgency of these recommendations, "Our industry is at a critical juncture, and immediate action is required to safeguard our hog sector. The recommendations presented today reflect our collective commitment to not only addressing the immediate threats but also to ensuring long-term resilience.

These recommendations highlight the Council's dedication to safeguarding the Philippine hog industry and supporting its long-term sustainability. The PSAC Agriculture Sector is committed to collaborating with government and industry partners to ensure the effective implementation of these measures.

Editor's Note: This is an updated article. Originally posted with the headline: "DA eyes ASF vaccine rollout next week"

https://manilastandard.net/news/national/314484494/da-eyes-asf-vaccine-rollout-next-week.html#google_vignette

REMATE:

1,000 permanenteng Kadiwa store itatayo ng DA

August 15, 2024 17:13



Sinabi ng Department of Agriculture (DA) nitong Huwebes na sinisikap nilang mabuksan ang humigit-kumulang 1,000 permanenteng tindahan ng Kadiwa sa buong bansa sa susunod na apat na taon.

Ito ang ibinunyag ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco “Kiko” Tiu Laurel Jr. sa programa ng Malacañang Insider.

“Kapag na-establish na naman ang iyong smooth logistics flow ng goods at saka iyong takbo ng transaksyon ay i-eexpand na natin iyan in the next four years up to ang target ko is 800 to 1,000 stores,” ani Laurel.

“Of course, hindi ganoon kadali iyon but we will also do Kadiwa franchising. Papayagan namin ang mga operator o kooperatiba ng pribadong sektor na gamitin ang pangalan ng Kadiwa sa mga piling site hangga’t sumusunod sila sa mga alituntunin at alituntunin o patakaran ng DA. At ang importante, nandiyan iyong mga Kadiwa at magbenta sa tamang halaga,” dagdag pa niya.

Sa kasalukuyan, humigit-kumulang 230 Kadiwa sites ang tumatakbo sa buong bansa, 17 sa mga ito ay nasa ilalim ng regular na operasyon.

Samantala, sinabi rin ni Tiu-Laurel na i-standardize din ng gobyerno ang oras at araw ng pagpapatakbo ng mga outlet.

Sa ikatlong State of the Nation Address (SONA) ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. noong nakaraang buwan, inutusan niya ang mga kinauukulang ahensya ng gobyerno na gawing permanente ang lahat ng tindahan ng Kadiwa.

Ito ay isang programa ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na naglalayong mabigyan ang publiko ng abot-kayang mga bilihin sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay-daan sa pamayanan ng pagsasaka na direktang magbenta ng mga kalakal sa mga mamimili nang walang tagapamagitan. **RNT**

<https://remate.ph/1000-permanenteng-kadiwa-store-itatayo-ng-da/>

REMATE:

2 siyudad, 1 bayan sa Laguna sapul ng ASF

August 15, 2024 16:21



DALAWANG lungsod at isang bayan sa lalawigan ng Laguna ang may naitalang kaso ng African Swine Fever (ASF), ayon sa pamahalaang panlalawigan.

Ayon sa Provincial Veterinary Office ng Laguna, kabilang sa mga apektadong lugar ang isang Barangay sa San Pablo City, at dalawang Barangay sa Calamba City at Nagcarlan.

Ang African Swine Fever (ASF) ay isang uri ng sakit ng mga baboy. Ito ay nakamamatay para sa mga alagang baboy at mabilis ito makahawa.

Kabilang sa mga sintomas ng ASF sa mga baboy ay pagkaroon ng lagnat, pagkawala ng ganang kumain, pagsusugat, pagdudumi, at iba pa.

Dahil dito ay nagpatupad na ng border control inspection ang Philippine National Police, Bureau of Quarantine, Public Order and Safety Office, at City Veterinary Office sa Brgy. Turbina Calamba City kontra ASF.

Hinaharang at pinapahinto ang mga malalaking sasakyan gaya ng closed van at truck sa mga checkpoint upang masuri ng mga awtoridad ang mga nasabing sasakyan.

Pinapababa ang mga nakasakay sa mga nasabing sasakyan upang makasiguro na walang karne ng baboy na karga sa loob nito.

Ayon sa Laguna Provincial Veterinary Office, kailangang magpakita ang mga biyahero ng veterinary health certificate, local shipping permit, livestock handlers license, at transport carrier accreditation./ *Ellen Apostol*

<https://remate.ph/2-sivudad-1-bayan-sa-laguna-sapul-ng-asf/>

REMATE:

Litson sa La Loma ligtas sa ASF

August 15, 2024 14:18



MANILA, Philippines – Siniguro ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Quezon City na ang “lechon” o inihaw na baboy na ibinebenta sa La Loma ay ligtas sa African Swine Fever (ASF).

Kinumpirma ng Veterinary Department inspector ng Lungsod na si Paul Patinio na noong Agosto 15, wala pang naiulat na kaso ng ASF o iba pang sakit sa mga baboy na dinala sa lungsod.



Sinabi rin ni Patinio na nagsagawa sila ng masusing 24/7 inspection at checking sa mga dokumento gayundin ang pagsusuri sa kalidad at amoy ng mga baboy upang matiyak na ligtas itong kainin.

“Binabasa po natin yung documento na dala nila, tinitignan din natin yung quality kung okay pa po ba or kung wala pong problema sa baboy. Dito naman po wala pa namang problema” aniya.

Sinabi ng mga nagtitinda ng lechon o inihaw na baboy na hindi sila apektado ng ASF at tiniyak na ligtas kainin ang kanilang mga produkto.



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Idinagdag nila na hindi sila pinapayagang magkatay ng baboy para sa lechon maliban kung ang mga baboy ay sumailalim sa inspeksyon sa umaga o sa gabi bago ang paghahanda.

Dagdag pa ng mga nagtitinda, nag-aangkat sila ng mga baboy para sa lechon mula sa iba't ibang lokasyon, kabilang ang Cebu, Marinduque, Masbate, Mindoro, Romblon, Quezon province, at Tuguegarao sa Cagayan.

Noong Agosto 13, inihayag ng lokal na pamahalaan ang pagtatatag ng mga livestock at poultry checkpoints sa loob ng lungsod bilang pag-iingat bilang tugon sa kamakailang pagsiklab ng ASF sa ibang bahagi ng bansa. ***Santi Celario***

<https://remate.ph/litson-sa-la-loma-ligtas-sa-asf/>

REMATE:

Senate probe vs expired ASF vax ikinasa ni Lapid: ‘DA official mananagot’

August 15, 2024 13:26



Tiniyak ni Senador Lito Lapid na mananagot ang sinumang opisyal ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na sangkot sa pagkasira ng biniling bakuna ng pamahalaan upang makontrol ang pagkakalat ng African Swine Fever (ASF) sa bansa.

Sa pahayag, sinabi ni Lapid na nakatakda itong maghain ng isang panukalang resolusyon upang atasan ang Senate committee on agriculture na iimbestigahan ang pagpapabaya sa kaya nasayang ang ASF vaccine.

“Dapat malaman mula sa Department of Agriculture kung bakit napabayaang lang na mag-expire ang ASF vaccines na dapat sana ay naipamahagi na at nakapigil sa pagkalat pa ng virus sa mga alagang baboy sa iba’t-ibang probinsya,” aniya.

Isinulong ni Lapid ang imbestigasyon matapos magkaroon ng epidemya ng ASF sa lalawigan ng Batangas at Occidental Mindoro na apektado ang hog raisers industry, suplay ng baboy at halaga nito sa merkado.

“Dapat matukoy kung sinong opisyal ng DA ang dapat mapanagot sa pagkasira ng bakuna na binili sa ibang bansa,” ani Lapid.

Bagama't sinabi ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel na walang pangangailangan na magdeklara ng state of national calamity dulot ng epidemya, iginiit naman ni Lapid na dapat matiyak pa rin ang suplay ng mga baboy sa merkado dahil sa papalapit na ang kapaskuhan kung saan mataas ang demand nito.

Hinimok ni Lapid ang pamahalaan na maglaan ng dagdag na pondo ang pambili ng ASF vaccines saka agad ipamahagi sa lugar na kailangan ng kagyat na tulong upang mapuksa ang epidemya sa bansa.

“Nangangamba po tayo na kung hindi agad maagapan ang ASF epidemic ay tiyak na kakalat pa ito sa ibang lugar at inaasahan na magkakaroon ng krisis sa suplay ng baboy sa bansa,” dagdag ni Lapid, miyembro ng Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food. *Ernie Reyes*

<https://remate.ph/senate-probe-vs-expired-asf-vax-ikinasa-ni-lapid-da-official-mananagot/>

REMATE:

ASF naitala sa ilang lugar sa Laguna

August 15, 2024 11:07



MANILA, Philippines- Kinumpirma ng provincial government ng Laguna ang mga kaso ng African Swine Fever (ASF) sa dalawang lungsod at isang bayan.

Base sa Provincial Veterinary Office sa Laguna, kabilang sa apektadong LGUs ang mga sumusunod:

- San Pablo City (1 barangay)
- Calamba City (2 barangay)
- Nagcarlan (2 barangay)

Bilang tugon, namamahagi na ang Provincial Government of Laguna ng disinfectants sa mga apektadong lugar.

“Yung population naman natin dito sa Laguna, hindi naman ganoon kadami compared to ‘yung ibang probinsiya dito sa CALABARZON,” pahayag ni Dr. Mary Grace Bustamante ng Provincial Veterinary Office-Laguna.

Rekisistos na sa mga naghahatid ng produkto sa Laguna na magpresenta ng ilang dokumento upang matiyak ang biosecurity.

Kabilang dito ang veterinary health certificate, local shipping permit, livestock handler’s license, at transport carrier accreditation. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/asf-naitala-sa-ilang-lugar-sa-laguna/>

REMATE:

Checkpoints ikakasa vs pagkalat ng ASF

August 15, 2024 09:49



Naglagay ng papasok at palabas na Live Stock Inspection/Check Point, ang Veterinary Office ng QC sa Boundary ng Maynila at Laloma bilang pag-iingat na makapasok ang livestock na sapul ng African Swine Fever. Crismon Heramis

MANILA, Philippines- Habang hinihintay ng pamahalaan ang pagdating ng mga bakuna, maglalalatag ng checkpoints sa iba't ibang parte ng Luzon upang mapigilan ang pagkalat ng African Swine Fever sa Batangas, base sa Department of Agriculture nitong Miyerkules.

Sinabi ni DA Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. na idinisenyo ang karagdagang border controls upang pigilan ang pagkalat ng mga maysakit na baboy, na may malaking bahagi sa mabilis na pagkalat ng ASF sa Batangas.



“The checkpoints are a temporary measure while the government awaits the arrival of ASF vaccines, a process that could take a few weeks,” ani Laurel.

“We have the funds to procure the vaccines and the emergency funds to indemnify hog raisers adversely affected by the resurgence of the ASF virus. The vaccine procurement is essential for controlling the outbreak but acknowledged the delay in securing those vaccines,” dagdag niya.

Hinihinalang ang mabilis na pagkalat ng ASF sa Batangas ay dulot ng “unscrupulous” hog traders na nagbebenta ng mga maysakit na baboy.



Ipinaliwanag ni DA Assistant Secretary for Swine and Poultry Constante Palabrica na makatutulong ang border controls sa pagpigil sa pagbiyahe ng mga maysakit na hayop, kabilang ang mga ibon.

“We have set up additional livestock quarantines and will keep it there at least until December 31. Policemen along with Bureau of Animal Industry and other DA personnel will man the checkpoints,” ani Palabrica.

Nagresulta ang bagong ASF outbreak sa pagdedeklara ng state of calamity ng ilang bayan sa Batangas upang magamit ang emergency funds.

Ani Palabrica, natukoy ng DA ang central burial sites para sa mga baboy na sapul ng ASF o mga nasawi mula sa virus.

Batay sa Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) monitoring, kumalat na ang ASF sa 17 rehiyon ng Pilipinas at nakaapekto sa 74 lalawigan. Hanggang noong Agosto 8, 64 munisipalidad sa 22 lalawigan ang nakapag-ulat ng ASF cases. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/checkpoints-ikakasa-vs-pagkalat-ng-asf/>

PSAC Agriculture Sector Urges Immediate Action to Fortify Philippine Hog Industry in Meeting with President Marcos

Thursday, August 15, 2024 Journal Online



The PSAC Agriculture Sector sits down with President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos to discuss strategies for safeguarding the Philippine hog industry. Key recommendations include a phased rollout of AVAC vaccines to manage the African Swine Fever (ASF) threat in targeted farm areas. (photo by Noel Pabalate)

The **Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC)** Agriculture Sector engaged today in a meeting with President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos and discussed essential recommendations aimed at enhancing the protection and sustainability of the Philippine hog industry.

During the meeting, the Council emphasized a strategic, phased approach to managing the African Swine Fever (ASF) threat, recommending a contained rollout of AVAC vaccines in isolated areas, focusing on backyard and select large commercial farms. This targeted approach aims to prevent cross-contamination and ensure the vaccine is reserved for the grower/finisher population. President Marcos highlighted that the government's objectives align with the private sector's recommendations and the Department of Agriculture's (DA) plans.

The Council emphasized the need to fast-track the review and assessment of the MSD1 vaccine. This vaccine offers promising potential for providing additional immunity for breeder populations, thereby completing the immunity cycle and bolstering overall industry protection. The President further emphasized that breeders will be prioritized in the vaccine distribution, underscoring the importance of safeguarding this critical segment to ensure the overall resilience and stability of the industry.

To enhance the **ASF vaccination** strategy, the Council recommends using private sector cold storage facilities as preliminary hubs for vaccine distribution, streamlining the process and improving access for hog farmers nationwide. The President welcomed this approach, recognizing its potential to support the government's broader vaccine distribution efforts. Sabin Aboitiz, PSAC Lead Convenor and Aboitiz Group president and CEO, emphasized the urgency of these recommendations, "Our industry is at a critical juncture, and immediate action is required to safeguard our hog sector. The recommendations presented today reflect our collective commitment to not only addressing the immediate threats but also to ensuring long-term resilience.

These recommendations highlight the Council's dedication to safeguarding the Philippine hog industry and supporting its long-term sustainability. The PSAC Agriculture Sector is committed to collaborating with government and industry partners to ensure the effective implementation of these measures.

About Private Sector Advisory Council

The Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC) has been established strategically by President Ferdinand Bongbong Marcos Jr to create and strengthen innovative new synergies between the private and public sectors. PSAC comprises business leaders and experts across six main sectoral groups — Agriculture, Digital Infrastructure, Jobs, Healthcare, Build-Build-Build, and Tourism.

The Council helps the government deliver on its commitment to transform the Philippine economy by implementing robust infrastructure programs, creating more jobs and attracting more investors, digitizing processes, and improving agricultural productivity through the recalibration of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), jumpstart Philippine Tourism and ensuring an equitable, sustainable, and inclusive business landscape for Filipinos.

PSAC will continuously recommend modern policy development to the government and report regularly to the President to provide feedback and adjust recommendations based on what is happening on the ground.

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