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**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **DTI: 43 stores violated price freeze**

**BY [MANILA BULLETIN](#)**

Aug 21, 2024 02:34 PM

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The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has issued 43 notices of violations (NOVs) to companies that did not comply with the mandated price freeze in the wake of Typhoon Carina and the southwest monsoon.

In a statement on Wednesday, Aug. 21, DTI Acting Secretary Ma. Cristina A. Roque said that affected stores have 48 hours from receiving the NOV to provide a written explanation for their non-compliance, in accordance with due process.

To recall, the National Capital Region was declared under state of calamity on July 24.

“The DTI is committed to safeguarding fair markets for both consumers and businesses. Our aim is not to impede business operations, but rather to support legitimate businesses and protect consumers from profiteering and hoarding in the market,” Roque said.

On Tuesday, Roque conducted a price monitoring operation, focusing on wet markets and supermarkets.

The DTI chief, along with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Makati City Local Government Unit (LGU), checked 12 wet market stalls and two grocery stores in Barangay Guadalupe Nuevo to verify adherence to the price freeze on key goods.

“We want to ensure fair pricing, especially during these challenging times,” she added.

All monitored supermarkets in the area were fully compliant with fair trade practices.

In addition, the monitoring teams verified that the public market’s “Timbangan ng Bayan” (public weighing scale) was properly calibrated and that an updated price board was clearly displayed.

Also, in attendance were officials from the DTI including Fair Trade Group Supervising Head and Assistant Secretary Agaton Teodoro Uvero, and Fair Trade Enforcement Bureau (FTEB) Director Phillip Sawali.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/21/dti-43-stores-violated-price-freeze-1>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **10,000 ASF vaccines arrive; Government sets P50-M fund to indemnify affected hog growers**

**BY [AARON RECUENCO](#)**

Aug 21, 2024 01:35 PM

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The Department of Agriculture (DA) is now preparing for vaccination of pigs following the arrival of 10,000 vaccines from Vietnam, the first batch of the order as part of the government's efforts to address the outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) in the country.

DA Secretary Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said preparations are now underway for the possible vaccination this week, and the priority is in Batangas which was severely affected by the virus.

The arrival of the 10,000 vaccines from Vietnam on Monday, Aug. 15, is part of the government's emergency response, according to DA Assistant Secretary for Poultry and Swine Dante Palabrica.

"The vaccination is part of a wider controlled testing of the ASF vaccine from Vietnam," said Palabrica.

Aside from Vietnam, Palabrica said other vaccine manufacturers from the U.S., South Korea and Vietnam are also applying with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to be part of the controlled testing to be conducted by the Bureau of Animal Industry.

"These applicants have vaccines that could be injected to breeders and growers," he said.

He said the FDA has set strict requirements for the controlled testing to ensure vaccine efficiency, including genome sequencing of the virus to ensure that inoculation won't result in mutation.

Meanwhile, Laurel also approved the allocation of an initial P50 million as indemnification fund for hog-raisers who would surrender their pigs that are infected by ASF.

Laurel explained that approval of the proposal to raise the indemnification fees as a part of the measure to stop the spread of the virus.

From the maximum indemnification is P5,000 per pig, DA Undersecretary for Livestock Deogracias Victor Savellano said it was already raised to P4,000 for piglets; P8,000 for medium-sized hogs; and P12,000 for sows and bigger hogs.

"The higher indemnification is meant to encourage pig farmers to surrender their animals instead of selling them to unscrupulous traders who eventually transport the infected swine to other areas for slaughter," said Savellano.

Earlier, the DA has ordered the conduct of checkpoints in key areas in Luzon, mostly in areas near Batangas, due to the ASF outbreak.

A series of consultations in Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon) was also held to refine protocols that will govern the movement of healthy hogs amid a resurgence of the ASF.

DA Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and Regulation Asis Perez said they met with local government officials, agriculturists from Calabarzon and industry groups to discuss ways to transport healthy pigs and slow down the spread of ASF in the region which has had devastating impact on swine production since 2019.

Perez said DA's proposed guidelines would allow movement of healthy pigs even from Red Zones—or areas with active cases—to other zones to ensure that pork supply isn't adversely affected and hog raisers could sustain their livelihood.

“The government will ease regulation but we have to make sure only live and healthy pigs are transported, not the infected ones, to avoid the spread of ASF. That's why it's important that we ensure infected animals stay in red zones” Perez said.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/21/10-000-asf-vaccines-arrive-government-sets-p50-m-fund-to-indemnify-affected-hog-growers>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# DA: No second wave of ASF outbreaks

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

August 22, 2024 | 8:00am



DA Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said the current ASF cases are still part of the outbreak since the virus was first detected in 2019.

STAR / Ryan Baldemor

MANILA, Philippines —The Department of Agriculture (DA) yesterday allayed fears of a second wave of African swine fever outbreaks amid the continued rise of ASF cases in many areas in the country.

DA Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said the current ASF cases are still part of the outbreak since the virus was first detected in 2019.

De Mesa said ASF has been in the country for almost five years.

“It did not totally disappear,” De Mesa said.

Earlier, hog raisers’ group National Federation of Hog Raisers Inc. expressed alarm that a second wave of ASF outbreaks could be currently affecting the country. NatFed noted that the swine industry incurred major losses amounting to billions of pesos during the 2019 ASF outbreak.

“I was the (DA) regional director in Calabarzon at the time. There were times that the virus resurfaced. This was also the case in other regions, but we cannot consider

this as a second round (of outbreak) as it has been five years. The virus is still here,” De Mesa said.

He said the current outbreaks are not alarming and the government is still on top of the situation.

“We were able to control it, although there were increases in the cases in some areas, but control measures are in place,” he added.

Aside from Batangas, the provinces of Isabela, Laguna and Quezon confirmed the spread of ASF in their areas.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/08/22/2379622/da-no-second-wave-asf-outbreaks>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Robust demand to push pork prices higher in 2025

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

August 22, 2024 | 12:00am



Pork products are on display for sale in Marikina Public Market on August 13, 2024.

Walter Bollozos / The Philippine STAR

**MANILA, Philippines** — Filipino consumers could face higher pork prices next year as stronger demand would continue to outpace total supply despite a slight rebound in domestic output and stronger imports, an international agency said.

The US Department of Agriculture – Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA-FAS) in Manila projected that local pork prices would continue to rise, driven by stronger demand on the back of population growth and economic expansion.

The USDA-FAS Manila said the double-digit rate increase in pork prices on an annual basis indicates that the country’s total supply falls short in meeting its overall demand.

“Recent pork kasim (shoulder) and liempo (belly) prices in the Metro Manila market are nearly 18 and 10 percent higher, respectively, than the same week in 2023, indicating that market is not oversupplied,” it said in its livestock report published recently.



The international agency added that local farmgate prices for live hogs have increased this year due to higher feed costs. Export prices of major pork exporters in the world have also grown this year, it noted.

“However, imported pork remains cheaper compared to domestically produced, despite higher export prices from major exporters,” the USDA-FAS Manila said.

Pork export prices from global players such as Europe, Canada and the United States ranged from \$2,600 per metric ton (MT) to \$3,400 per MT (\$2.6 per kilogram to \$3.4 per kilogram) in the second quarter.

Brazilian pork exports, meanwhile, averaged \$2,300 per MT (\$2.3 per kilogram) in the previous quarter, according to the report.

The country’s total pork consumption next year is projected to grow by two percent to 1.58 million MT from this year’s 1.55 million MT, the USDA-FAS Manila said.

To meet its consumption requirement, the country is projected to import a record volume of 510,000 MT next year, about 6.25 percent over this year’s estimated imports of 480,000 MT, the report added.

The international agency sees local pork production growing to 1.06 million MT, some 20,000 MT more than this year’s 1.04 million MT projected output. The increase in domestic output would be driven by declining feed costs.

The international agency cautioned that the recent resurgence of African swine fever (ASF) cases in some producing areas in the country would limit pork production next year. ASF is a fatal hog disease but does not affect humans.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/08/22/2379553/robust-demand-push-pork-prices-higher-2025>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Truck with 30 ASF-infected hogs intercepted in Quezon City

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

August 22, 2024 | 12:00am



The DA said personnel of the Bureau of Animal Industry manning a checkpoint along Mindanao Avenue stopped a truck carrying the hogs.

AFP / File

MANILA, Philippines — Authorities intercepted a truck loaded with 30 pigs infected with African swine fever (ASF) at a checkpoint in Quezon City on Tuesday, according to the Department of Agriculture.

The DA said personnel of the Bureau of Animal Industry manning a checkpoint along Mindanao Avenue stopped a truck carrying the hogs.

The BAI personnel immediately conducted blood tests on the pigs, which tested positive for ASF.

“After confirmation, the hogs were condemned and buried at the central burial site,” the DA said.

The department asked hog raisers and transporters to comply with all regulations and biosecurity protocols to prevent the further spread of ASF and protect the livelihoods of farmers nationwide.

Checkpoints have been set up in Metro Manila to stop the transport of sick animals.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has raised the indemnification for ASF-infected pigs to encourage hog growers to surrender their diseased animals for slaughter.

Farmers will be paid P4,000 for each infected piglet, P8,000 for growers and finishers that are below 75 kilos, and P12,000 for each sow and boar that will be surrendered for slaughter.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/08/22/2379674/truck-30-asf-infected-hogs-intercepted-quezon-city>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Zambales farmers, fishers get P10-M cash assistance for El Niño losses

[E.H. Edejer](#) - Philstar.com

August 21, 2024 | 2:55pm



In this undated photo, a farmer walks over cracked soil on a dried up Nueva Ecija.

The STAR / Krizjohn Rosales

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**IBA, Zambales** — Some 1,000 farming families and fisherfolk received on Monday a total of P10 million in cash assistance from the provincial government of Zambales for losses they incurred due to the effects of the El Niño phenomenon.

Gov. Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. said the assistance came from the office of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. who distributed last July 12 a total of P311.16 million in financial assistance for farmers and fishermen affected by El Niño in the provinces of Zambales, Pampanga, Bataan, Bulacan, Tarlac and Nueva Ecija.

"This fund came directly from the President and we have, in turn, allocated the money to local farmers and fishermen who were affected by El Niño the most," Ebdane said during the awarding at the Botolan People's Plaza in Botolan, Zambales.



Each of the beneficiaries, who were vetted by the Zambales Provincial Agriculture Office, received P10,000 from the provincial government.

Ebdane was assisted in the distribution by Regional Executive Director Eduardo Lapuzaf the Department of Agriculture's Regional Field Office III, Zambales Provincial Agriculturist Crisostomo Rabaca, Central Luzon Social Welfare and Development Regional Director Venus Rebuldela, Zambales Board Member Lugal Ragadio, who chairs the Provincial Boards Committee on Agriculture and Fishery, and Botolan Mayor Jun Omar Ebdane.

El Niño, which creates conditions like long dry spells and warmer sea surface temperature, results in agricultural damage and water shortages, and was felt throughout the country.

"We are thankful to the president for this assistance, and we hope that this would help ease the loss of income among farmers and fisherfolk because of this weather phenomenon," Ebdane added.

Meanwhile, Ebdane also gave away on Monday a tricycle unit to the Municipal Federation of Senior Citizens Association (FSCAP) of Castillejos, Zambales.

The "Sulong Senior Tricycle Service" will make it easier for FSCAP to deliver services to senior citizens in the municipality, said FSCAP president Leodegario Sagum.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/08/21/2379524/zambales-farmers-fishers-get-p10-m-cash-assistance-el-nio-losses>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

[FOOD AND LEISURE](#)

# Doctors share why organic European dairy good for brain, bone health

[Kristofer Purnell](#) - Philstar.com

August 21, 2024 | 12:11pm



Samples of organic European dairy

Philstar.com / Kristofer Purnell

MANILA, Philippines — A campaign promoting the consumption of organic European dairy is reaching its midpoint with further support by health professionals.

Organic dairy is dairy produced using only natural ingredients — no artificial flavorings, colorants, sweeteners, pesticides, irradiation, or genetically-modified organisms — as animals roam free and consume organic feed.

Organic European dairy by extension come from dairy farms that follow European Union (EU) standards and certification. Their products are made official when stamped with the green EU logo.

The EU Organic Dairy PH campaign, backed by the Danish Dairy Board and co-funded by the EU, is leading the charge in promoting organic European dairy in the Philippines.

Campaign project leader Rae Cay shared during a media event last August 13 in Grand Hyatt Manila that it is hard to label what is truly organic these days and if the campaign is driven for awareness.

Cay showed a video of the process in one Danish dairy farm, where cows graze over a sprawling field. It also showed how technology is being used to ease the cows' living conditions and how they are protected by animal welfare regulations.

"Organic is not chemical in nature," explained National Organic Agriculture Board Director Dr. Noel Lumbo. "Organic is a process, not a niche market."

Lumbo also explained that Filipino farmers cannot follow the rigorous and strict certification process the EU has. Organic dairy production is fairly young in the Philippines, and the country still exports its organic products mostly from Australia, New Zealand, and Europe, Lumbo added.

He noted that cancer patients and senior citizens are recommended to consume organic dairy because of its health benefits, which pediatrician Dr. Joanna Cuayo-Estanislao supported by saying dairy adds to diversity, particularly milk.

Cuayo-Estanislao pointed out milk has higher amounts of protein, calcium, and potassium per calorie than other common food, and it contains phosphorus, zinc and vitamin D.

Protein and zinc are key nutrients for brain development, as are iodine, choline, vitamins A and B12, and selenium, which are also found in milk.

She also explained that 40% of bone growth happens during pre-teen years, and lactose-free dairy products and lactate supplements exist for those who need them.

<https://www.philstar.com/lifestyle/food-and-leisure/2024/08/21/2378373/doctors-share-why-organic-european-dairy-good-brain-bone-health>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# DBM orders agencies to submit ‘catch-up’ spending plans

By: [Zacarian Gavin H. Sarao](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

05:39 AM August 22, 2024



HOR photo

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) on Wednesday ordered national government agencies with low budget obligation rates to submit “catch-up” spending plans.

Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman made the pronouncement after she noted that the DBM has amped up its efforts to ensure the proper and timely utilization of agencies’ budgets.

According to Pangandaman, DBM is in constant communication with each national agency.



“We just started providing letters to all agencies quarterly where we indicate their specific projects and programs that are underutilized, and then we remind them to already...start procurement,” said Pangandaman during a Kapihan sa Manila Bay briefing.

“We just gave it, and we are still expecting replies,” she added.

Based on data provided by Pangandaman, the agencies with the lowest obligation rates were the following: Congress of the Philippines – 8.8 percent

- Commission on Higher Education – 19.2 percent
- Department of Migrant Workers – 22.1 percent
- Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development – 24 percent
- Department of Energy – 33.8 percent
- Philippine Sports Commission – 35.2 percent
- Office of the President – 37.2 percent
- Department of Labor and Employment – 37.8 percent
- Office of the Vice President – 39.9 percent
- Department of Justice – 41.4 percent

On the other hand, below are the agencies with the highest (above 50 percent) obligation rates:

- Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity – 84.3 percent
- National Intelligence Coordinating Agency – 80.4 percent
- Department of Public Works and Highways – 70.5 percent
- Department of Finance – 69.9 percent
- Department of Foreign Affairs – 58.5 percent

- Department of the Interior and Local Government – 57.4 percent
- Commission on Elections – 55.7 percent
- Department of National Defense – 52.5 percent
- Department of Agriculture – 52.2 percent
- Commission on Audit – 51.3 percent

Pangandaman said the most common reason cited by agencies for their low budget utilization is the procurement process.

“They are having difficulty in the procurement process. Hopefully, with the new procurement act, the procurement will be even faster,” she said.

It was in July when President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. approved the New Government Procurement Act or Republic Act 12009.

The law aims to address loopholes in the current government procurement system for a more economical and responsive process.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1975539/dbm-orders-agencies-to-submit-catch-up-spending-plans>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Surge in pork, beef imports expected in 2025

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 02:26 AM August 22, 2024

The Philippines may increase its pork and beef imports next year to meet the rising demand of a growing population.

The country's pork imports are estimated to climb by 6 percent to 510,000 metric tons carcass weight equivalent (MT CWE) in 2025 from 480,000 MT CWE this year, the US Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Manila said.

FAS Manila attributed the upward projection to continued challenges from the African swine fever on supply, which is not enough to cover the needs of a growing economy and expanding population.

It said a wider access given to Brazilian exporters would also push pork imports upward.

This year's pork import estimate is down by 7 percent from 448,000 MT CWE, particularly in the second semester of 2024. It said extended pork tariff reductions until 2028 provided importers "more certainty" that they will no longer need to import more in the last quarter of each year as in previous years.

On the other hand, FAS Manila pegged next year's local pork production to reach 1.06 million MT CWE, up by nearly 2 percent from its forecast of 1.04 million MT CWE in 2024.

"FAS Manila forecasts swine production profitability to improve in 2025 with feed costs declining as the domestic corn harvest returns to normal," it said. Follow us: [@inquirerdotnet on Twitter](#) | [inquirerdotnet on Facebook](#) "While falling soybean meal prices provided some input cost relief, swine production costs have increased in 2024 due to rising domestic corn prices, attributed to the El Niño impact on the corn crop," it added.

### Driving factors

FAS Manila also said beef imports could climb by almost 3 percent to 226,000 MT CWE next year from 220,000 MT CWE.

Economic growth, an increase in population, strong consumer purchasing power and the recent downward trend in export prices of major export suppliers, specifically in Australia and Brazil, are among the driving factors for a bigger beef shipment.

For this year, the country's beef imports are anticipated to rise by 10 percent from 200,000 MT CWE because of stronger than expected imports in the first half of the year.

The report likewise expected beef and carabeef production to inch up by less than 1 percent to 184,000 MT CWE in 2025 from 183,000 MT CWE due to limited grazing land for raising cattle and high feed prices.

“Increased imports of cattle genetics and live animals have resulted in the sector keeping pace with current beef and carabeef production but is not resulting in a meaningful increase in herd numbers or overall meat production,” FAS Manila said.

<https://business.inquirer.net/476060/surge-in-pork-beef-imports-expected-in-2025>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# **BFAR cracks down on sale of sharks in Sorsogon town**

By: [Rey Anthony Ostria](#) - Correspondent / [@RAOstriaINQ](#)

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:04 AM August 22, 2024



**MARKET FIND** A market monitoring and validation conducted by a team from BFAR and the provincial law enforcement coordinating committee on Aug. 19 confirms that these coral catsharks and whitetip reef sharks are sold with other seafood at the public market of Matnog, Sorsogon. —Photo courtesy of BFAR

**LEGAZPI CITY, ALBAY, Philippines** — The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has started its inspection of the public market in Matnog town in Sorsogon after photos of sharks and rays being sold there for their meat went viral on social media last week.

In a statement on Tuesday, BFAR reminded the public that whitetip reef sharks and several other species of sharks are protected under an international convention and Philippine laws.

Several photos posted on social media by local news outlet Sorsogon News showed that five coral catsharks (*Atelomycterus marmoratus*) and two whitetip reef sharks (*Triaenodon obesus*) were being sold in the public market alongside sea rays.

The post has garnered over 11,000 reactions, 1,086 comments and over 3,800 shares on Facebook as of Wednesday.

The viral post prompted validation and coordination with the local government of Matnog and an information campaign on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (Cites).

“The coral catshark is not listed under the Cites but its capture and trade are covered by other applicable regulations,” according to the BFAR.

Meanwhile, the catching, possession, transport, sale and trade of whitetip reef sharks are prohibited under Appendix II of Cites and violations may incur P300,000 to P3 million in penalties, according to the agency.

#### Legislation

BFAR further reminded the public that several other shark species are protected under Cites “to [prevent] overexploitation and [ensure] the sustainability of marine ecosystems.”

Republic Act No. 10654, or the amendments to the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, also protects sharks and manta rays against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing of endangered, threatened or vulnerable species.

“This legislation underscores the government’s commitment to preserving marine biodiversity, especially species that play vital roles in maintaining ecological balance,” the BFAR said.

Ubaldo Ubaldo, the municipal administrator of Matnog, told the Inquirer in a telephone interview on Wednesday that they were awaiting the BFAR’s report with the recommendations after the completion of the inspection.

“The local government is strict about illegal fishing, and our mayor (Cattleya So) has issued a clear order to do everything to stop this alleged selling of sharks,” Ubaldo said.

Emmanuel de Guzman, the municipal agriculturist of Matnog, said they would follow any recommendations from the BFAR.

De Guzman said they would intensify market inspection and post information, education and communication materials at the market and in the coastal areas.

Ubaldo said that in Matnog, sharks become bycatch in longline fishing or longlining. Longline fishing is a commercial fishing technique that uses a long main line with baited hooks attached at intervals via short branch lines called “snoods” or gangions.

“Sometimes a shark gets caught. This is not something the fisherfolk do for a living and it is not rampant,” Ubaldo told the Inquirer.

A fisher, he said, usually does not know that the shark caught in the line is endangered.

“Maybe there is a need for massive information dissemination to the public so they can become familiar with the prohibited species,” Ubaldo said.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1975365/bfar-cracks-down-on-sale-of-sharks-in-sorsogon-town>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Hog farmers press for affordable ASF vaccines

August 21, 2024 | 9:25 pm



REUTERS

HOG FARMERS are calling for the African Swine Fever (ASF) vaccine to be affordably priced to minimize the impact on their cost of production.

“That’s what we’re asking the Department of Agriculture (DA). In case there is an approved vaccine, we hope the price is not too high,” National Federation of Hog Farmers, Inc. Chairman Chester Warren Y. Tan told reporters on Wednesday.

The DA will conduct a limited rollout of the ASF vaccine procured from Vietnam this quarter, mainly focusing on red zones, or areas with active infections, and pink zones, or those near active areas. A commercial rollout will follow, with official pricing yet to be announced.

It had also procured 10,000 doses of the vaccine for emergency inoculation of hogs after an outbreak in Batangas.

“We hope it will be affordable because it would not only be used by commercial farms but the medium scale, small scale, and even the backyard farmers,” Mr. Tan added.

He said the vaccine should be priced between P20 and P100, which are the vaccine costs hog farmers are accustomed to paying.



“Right now, we don’t have anything yet on how much the net price of this vaccine will be,” he added.

Mr. Tan said a vaccine of P400 per dose will have a major impact on growers’ costs.

“This will not be helpful to the consumer as well. As we have said, if the vaccine is cheaper at least the cost saved by producers will go to the consumers,” he added.

Last year, the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) said that the ASF vaccine could be priced at P400 to P600 per dose.

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

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

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/08/21/615573/hog-farmers-press-for-affordable-asf-vaccines/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Sugar millers see higher yields after delay to milling operations

August 21, 2024 | 9:24 pm



VICTORIAS MILLING COMPANY, INC. FACEBOOK PAGE

THE Philippine Sugar Millers Association (PSMA) said that a delay in the sugar milling season could allow the cane to mature further, possibly raising yields.

“While the association does not have the authority to change the start date (of milling), it will encourage mills to consider the delay,” the PSMA said in a statement.

The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) has ordered the two-week delay to offset the impact of El Niño on the cane crop, saying it was acting at the request of planters and millers.

Last year, the SRA said that the milling season for the 2024-2025 crop year would start on Sept. 15.

“PSMA acknowledges the potential benefits of delaying milling to allow for better cane maturity and possibly higher yields, particularly in light of El Niño,” it added.

SRA Administrator Pablo Luis S. Azcona has said that the peak of the cane harvest could be delayed after El Niño damage forced farmers to replant damaged crops.

The PSMA added that the domestic allocation of sugar for the upcoming season may be justified due to the impact of El Niño.

During the second quarter, cane production dropped 42.3% year on year to 1.63 million metric tons (MT), according to the Philippine Statistics Authority, making sugar the crop most affected by El Niño during the period.

“The full impact of this weather event on the next crop season is still being evaluated by the SRA, as it reviews its pre-milling estimates for Crop Year 2024-2025,” it added.

PAGASA (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration), the government weather service, declared the end of El Niño in early June, but dry conditions are expected to persist.

“If it is later determined that the crop yield is better than initially projected, PSMA will coordinate efforts to implement programs aimed at accessing the available US market,” it said.

The Philippines is set to export 25,300 MT of raw sugar to the US to fill its quota after three years of staying out of that market to divert more sugar to domestic use.

For the 2024-2025 season, the Office of the US Trade Representative gave the Philippines a quota of 145,235 MT in raw value equivalent. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/08/21/615496/sugar-millers-see-higher-yields-after-delay-to-milling-operations/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# PHL pork, beef imports expected to rise in 2025

August 21, 2024 | 9:24 pm



REUTERS

THE US Department of Agriculture (USDA) said Philippine pork and beef imports are likely to increase in 2025 in line with population growth and its attendant impact on consumption.

In a report, the USDA said that strong economic growth, moderating inflation, and forecast population increases support the case for higher meat imports in 2025.

It reported that pork imports may increase 6% to 510,000 metric tons (MT), with domestic supply continuing to be impacted by African Swine Fever (ASF) even with vaccination efforts starting to roll out.

“While ASF remains present in the Philippines, the animal disease situation should improve in 2025,” the USDA said.

The USDA is estimating Philippine pork production next year of 1.06 million MT (MMT), up 2%.

“While ASF cases decreased from January 2024 to March 2024, cases have spread recently (August 2024) and this will limit the forecast growth in pork production in 2025,” it added.

The USDA said the cost of animal feed next year would likely decline as corn supply normalizes, raising hog growers’ profits.

Pork consumption is forecast to rise 1.9% to 1.58 MMT from 2024 levels.

Additionally, the USDA reported that beef and carabeef imports are expected to rise 3% to 226,000 MT in 2025.

“Population growth and a positive economic outlook buoyed by falling international prices, especially for the Philippines’ main beef suppliers, will push beef imports higher in 2025,” it added.

The USDA said that production would be little changed to 184,000 MT in 2025 due to limited land suitable for raising cattle and high feed prices.

It added that improved cattle genetics and live animal imports have driven the livestock sector to maintain the pace of beef and carabeef production, “but is not resulting in a meaningful increase in herd numbers or overall meat production.”

Beef and carabeef consumption is expected to grow 1.7% to 184,000 MT next year. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/08/21/615495/phl-pork-beef-imports-expected-to-rise-in-2025/>



**REMATE:**

## Hog raisers nababahala, presyo ng baboy posibleng maapektuhan sa halaga ng ASF vax

August 22, 2024 07:26



MANILA, Philippines – Nag-aalala ang ilang hog raisers sa paggalaw ng presyo ng mga karneng baboy dahil sa price per dose ng bakuna laban sa African Swine Fever (ASF).

Ayon sa ulat, umaasa ang hog raisers ng abot-kayang presyo para sa mga bakuna lalo pa't nagsimula ang planong controlled vaccination.

“Ang existing vaccine right now na ginagamit namin lahat ng vaccine nagre-range ng from P20 to as high as P100, so ‘yun ‘yung range na afford ng mga end-users,” sinabi ni National Federation of Hog Farmers (NatFed) president Chester Warren Tan.

“Kung meron man bakuna at effective yung bakuna, eh dapat ibigay sa backyard ‘yan ng libre,” dagdag naman ni NatFed vice president Alfred Ng.

Mamamahagi ang Department of Agriculture ng nasa 10,000 doses ng bakuna sa halagang P400 hanggang P500 kada dose. Sa kabila nito, sinabi ng DA na hindi ito makakaapekto sa presyo ng baboy sa pamilyan.

“Napakaliit naman ng portion nung P400 to P500,” ayon kay Agriculture Assistant Secretary Dante Palabrica.

“That’s only five percent more or less ng production.”

Samantala, nanindigan naman ang ilang hog raisers sa Batangas na hindi lahat ng baboy sa kanilang lugar ay infected ng ASF.

“Isolated cases po siya,” ani Rosario Batangas Hog Raisers Association president Patrick Ong.

“Most of the barangays, predominantly of the barangays clear po at malinis po ang baboy.”

Sa kabila nito, nagpapatuloy ang pamahalaan sa pagpapatupad ng border controls sa banta ng ASF. *RNT/JGC*

<https://remate.ph/hog-raisers-nababahala-presyo-ng-baboy-posibleng-maapektuhan-sa-halaga-ng-asf-vax/>

**REMATE:**

## Mga isdang huli, shellfish sa Cavite ligtas nang kainin – BFAR

August 21, 2024 07:38



(c) Remate News Central File Photo

Sinabi ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) nitong Martes na ang mga isda at shellfish na nahuli sa Cavite ay ligtas na ngayong kainin ng tao kasunod ng mga alalahanin Sa gitna ng mga insidente ng oil spill sa bahagi ng Manila Bay ng Bataan.

Sinabi ni BFAR Assistant Director Angel Encarnacion na patuloy na binabantayan ng bureau ang sitwasyon sa lahat ng apektadong lalawigan.

“Batay sa aming pinakabagong sensory evaluation, isda at shellfish mula sa lahat ng mga rehiyon – na kinabibilangan ng Rehiyon 3, 4A, (National Capital Region) ay ligtas na para sa pagkonsumo ng tao,” sinabi niya sa House Committee on Ecology sa isang pagdinig.

“Patuloy naming binabantayan ang lahat ng mga site, partikular sa probinsya ng Cavite. Hinihintay na lang natin ang resulta ng PAH (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon),” dagdag ni Encarnacion.



Nauna nang sinabi ng BFAR na tanging ang mga isda lamang mula sa Bataan, Bulacan, Pampanga, Batangas, Navotas, Paranaque, at Las Pinas ang ligtas kainin noon matapos maalis sa bakas ng mantika at grasa at mga nakakapinsalang kontaminado tulad ng PAH.

Nauna nang humingi ng P10 milyong kompensasyon ang provincial government ng Cavite sa mga may-ari ng MTKR Terranova, ang una sa tatlong sasakyang-dagat na nagdulot ng oil spill, dahil sa epekto ng pagtagas sa kabuhayan ng mga residente nito. **RNT**

<https://remate.ph/mga-isdang-huli-shellfish-sa-cavite-ligtas-nang-kainin-bfar/>

**MANILA STANDARD**

# **DA seeks LGUs' assistance in combatting ASF**

By [Manila Standard](#)

August 21, 2024, 10:20 pm

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) in the Bicol Region seeks stronger support from the local government units (LGUs) amid an outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) with incidence of the viral disease reported from at least 12 municipalities in three provinces.

DA Region 5 head Lovella Guarin said seven towns in Camarines Sur—Baa, Pili, Nabua, Ocampo, Bula, Libmanan, Presentacion—have reported active ASF cases from July to August 2024.

Three towns—Caramoran, Virac, and Pandan—in the island province of Catanduanes have also logged ASF cases.

In Masbate, the affected towns were Claveria and San Pascual.

The DA, in collaboration with the concerned LGUs, has implemented immediate depopulation of hogs within 500-meter radius from the affected pig pens.

Guarin reported that a total of 209 heads of swine have been “depopulated” from July to August 2024.

Meanwhile, 11 Bicol municipalities, namely, Camaligan, Camarines Sur; Labo, Daet, Mercedes, San Vicente, and Talisay in Camarines Norte; San Jacinto, Milagros, Moba, and San Fernando in Masbate; and Donsol in Sorsogon were declared under red alert although it has been more than 90 days after the last positive ASF case.

The affected LGUs were required to submit documents before they could be upgraded to pink zone.

Guarin also said consumers have an important role to play in the prevention and control of ASF as some recurrence were traced to contaminated processed meat seized by the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS).

She warned that buying processed meat from ambulant vendors of unknown product sources could be risky.

Guarin stressed that safe meats are those butchered and sold by accredited slaughterhouses.

The DA said the hog raisers were to be the first line of defense in the battle against ASF.

The agency urged them to improve production and management practices by regularly cleaning and disinfecting pig pens.

Home-made disinfectants such as pure vinegar, soda ash (1 kilo soda ash mixed with 25 liters of water), and bleach (1 spoon bleach dissolved in 1 liter of water) were also proven effective, the DA said.

Limiting visitors to the hog production area might also be helpful.

Avoiding feeding the hogs with kitchen wastes may also prevent ASF as these kitchen wastes might be contaminated with ASF, the DA said.

Citing recent reports, Guarin said the ASF-infected hogs did not show the usual symptoms such as red, discolored skin or skin lesions, diarrhea, vomiting, high fever, difficulty breathing, heavy discharge from the eyes and nose.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314487202/da-seeks-lgus-assistance-in-combatting-asf.html>

# DA braces for spread of ASF in Bicol

By Rhaydz B. Barcia

August 22, 2024

**LEGAZPI CITY** — The Department of Agriculture (DA) in Bicol called on local government units to help stop the spread of the African swine fever (ASF) in the region, particularly in the provinces of Camarines Sur, Catanduanes and Masbate.

DA regional spokesman Lovella Guarin said that ASF cases were reported from 12 municipalities in the three provinces.

In Camarines Sur, seven towns were affected by ASF, including Baao, Pili, Nabua, Ocampo, Bula, Libmanan and Presentacion. The resurgence of ASF cases according to Guarin was detected from July to August 2024.

In Masbate, the towns of Claveria and San Pascual reported active cases that surfaced this August. The island province of Catanduanes, the three municipalities of Caramoran, Virac and Pandan also posted recurrence of ASF cases.

Guarin said that a total of 209 heads of swine have been depopulated from July to August 2024.

The DA is also closely monitoring the 11 municipalities in Bicol classified as red zones. These are Camaligan in Camarines Sur; Labo, Daet, Mercedes, San Vicente and Talisay in Camarines Norte; San Jacinto, Milagros, Mobo and San Fernando in Masbate; and Donsol in Sorsogon.

Guarin said that the 11 municipalities are still in the red zone category as it has been more than 90 days after the last positive ASF case was reported.

Guarin said these local government units (LGUs) need to submit the required documents before they can be upgraded to the pink zone. Zone progression from red to pink by the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) requires LGUs to submit a copy of municipal/city ordinance or executive order on the adoption of BaBay ASF Program; city/municipal farmers' registry including proof of the existence of farmers' coops or associations if there is any, and RSBSA registration; summary of ASF history in the municipality including outbreak, surveillance and disease control measures; and list of training on Swine Biosecurity attended by farmers and LGU staff.

To contain the spread of ASF, the DA Bicol urged the hog raisers and LGUs to implement the Bantay ASF sa Barangay or BaBay ASF program.

"The Department of Agriculture in Bicol calls for strong support and cooperation from the local government units in the implementation of the Bantay ASF sa Barangay or BaBay ASF program to prevent and control African swine fever as recurrences were reported in 12 municipalities of three provinces, Camarines Sur, Masbate and Catanduanes," the DA spokesman said.

To immediately control the recurrence of ASF in the identified towns, depopulation of hogs within 500-meter radius of the ground zero was carried out by the DA Bicol and LGUs.

"The Department of Agriculture in Bicol calls for strong support and cooperation from the local government units in the implementation of the Bantay ASF sa Barangay or BaBay ASF program to prevent and control African swine fever as recurrences were reported in 12 municipalities of three provinces, Camarines Sur, Masbate and Catanduanes," the DA spokesman said.

To immediately control the recurrence of ASF in the identified towns, depopulation of hogs within 500-meter radius of the ground zero was carried out by the DA Bicol and LGUs.

"Safe meats are those butchered at accredited slaughterhouses. For meat processors, do not buy meat from ASF-affected areas and do not process double-dead meat from a pig that has died of disease, particularly ASF. Maintain cleanliness in the working area by regular cleaning and disinfection," Guarin said.

She said hog raisers should be the first line of defense in the battle against ASF.

"The DA urges them to improve production and management practices. Practice daily or regular cleaning and disinfection of pig pens using disinfectants such as chlorine. Do-it-yourself disinfectants are also proven effective such as pure vinegar, soda ash (1 kilo soda ash mixed with 25 liters of water) and bleach (1 spoon bleach dissolved in 1 liter of water). Limit visitors to the hog production area. Do not feed hogs with kitchen wastes as these might be contaminated with ASF," she said.

In recent reports, the ASF-infected hogs did not show the usual symptoms such as red, discolored skin or skin lesions, diarrhea, vomiting, high fever, difficulty breathing, heavy discharge from the eyes and nose. Only loss of appetite was observed and immediate death after a day without food.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/22/regions/da-braces-for-spread-of-asf-in-bicol/1965864>

# SRA seeks delay in milling season

By Janine Alexis Miguel

August 22, 2024

THE Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) has advised the Philippine Sugar Millers Association Inc. (PSMA) to move back the milling season, citing the benefit of higher yields.

SRA chief Pablo Luis Azcona, in a speech at the Philippine Sugar Technologies Association Inc. Convention in Cebu on August 15, requested PSMA President Terence Uygongco to encourage sugar millers to collectively agree to start the milling season for crop year 2024-2025 on October 1. This means a two-week delay from September 15, the date originally set by some mills in Negros Island.

The PSMA is composed of 16 member-mills, producing 78 percent of the country's total sugar production.

Azcona said moving this year's sugar milling season to October will lead to better sugarcane maturity and possibly a higher volume of harvest, with the impact of El Niño factored in.

"In recent communications, the SRA reiterated this date and suggested a uniform start for all mills," the PSMA noted in a statement. "While the association does not have the authority to change the start [of the milling] date, it will encourage mills to consider the delay."

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/22/business/top-business/sra-seeks-delay-in-milling-season/1965799>

# PH meat imports to rise – USDA

By Janine Alexis Miguel

August 22, 2024

THE Philippines is expected to import more pork and beef in 2025 due to "strong economic growth, moderating inflation and forecast population increases," the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) said in its Foreign Agricultural Service report.

The report mentioned that the Philippines' projected pork imports may add up to 510,000 metric tons (MT) from 480,000; and beef to 226,000 MT from 220,000, or an increase of 6 percent and 3 percent, respectively.

Domestic pork and beef production, meanwhile, is predicted to remain flat at 1.06 million MT and 184,000 MT, respectively.

The USDA cited limited land area, cost of inputs and the resurgence of the African Swine Fever (ASF) as factors affecting local pork production.

Citing data from the Philippine Statistics Authority, hog production in the first six months of 2024 declined by 2.2 percent compared to the same period in 2023.

"While ASF cases decreased from January to March 2024, [these] have spread recently and will limit the forecast growth in pork production in 2025," the report said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/22/business/top-business/ph-meat-imports-to-rise-usda/1965797>



# NVizcaya gets P125.7M agri projects

By Leander C. Domingo

August 22, 2024

FARMER groups in Nueva Vizcaya have been qualified to receive smart farming projects and onion cold storage facilities worth P125.7 million after a validation and consultation meeting conducted by the Department of Agriculture Region Field Office (DA-RFO2) High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) team.

According to the DA-RFO2 headed by Executive Director Rosemary Aquino, the HVCDP team on August 13 conducted a validation and consultation meeting with the Alfonso Castañeda Vegetable Growers Associations (Alcavega), Abuyo Onion Farmers Association (AOFA) and the local government unit of Alfonso Castañeda who were identified as the beneficiaries for 2025.

The team was led by Roberto Busania, DA-RFO2 officer in charge regional technical director for operations and extension, along with Carol Albay, DA-HVCDP and National Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Program or Nupap regional coordinator; Timoteo Baysa, Alfonso Castañeda municipal agriculturist; Jonathan Argonia, agricultural program coordination officer; and other members and officials of the cooperative-beneficiaries in the said municipality.



Farmer groups in Alfonso Castañeda, Nueva Vizcaya, will get a total of P125.7 million worth of agricultural projects that will help them transition to more efficient production of crops, among others. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Busania said Alcavega will be receiving P64.5 million worth of agricultural projects for production support funded under HVCDP broken down as follows: P10.5 million for greenhouses; P50 million for solar drip fertigation; P4 million worth of packing/pre-cooling house; and seed support amounting to P1 million.

On the other hand, AOFA and the municipal government of Alfonso Castañeda will receive P61.2 million worth of onion seed assistance and a cold storage facility.

Busania said the meeting's agenda was to validate and capacitate the beneficiaries to manage and sustain the DA-RFO2 projects.

"As such, the activity aimed to refine the strategic framework, incorporate valuable insights and consider necessary recommendations," he added.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/22/business/agribusiness/nvizcaya-gets-p1257m-agri-projects/1965771>

# DoST sustains support for agriculture

By The Manila Times

August 22, 2024

THE Department of Science and Technology (DoST) continues to develop innovative solutions for problems and limitations in various sectors, specifically agriculture and aquaculture.

"To all potential technology adopters and investors, as you explore the wide array of sciences available, please consider where to direct your efforts and support. We hope you find the technology that will best match the needs of your businesses in your field," Science Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. said during the Agri-Aqua Innovation Pitch Fest 2024 on August 16 at the Royce Hotel, Clark Freeport Zone, Pampanga.

Led by the DoST-Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARD), in partnership with the Pampanga State Agricultural University and Association of PAQE Professionals, the festival showcased technological advancements and solutions pioneered by innovators in the agriculture, aquatic and natural resources sectors.

Meanwhile, PCAARRD Executive Director Reynaldo Eborra said the country's rich natural resources and the resilience of Filipinos have always been great assets.

"These challenges require bold and innovative solutions. The Agri-Aqua Innovation Pitch Fest is our collective commitment to addressing these challenges head-on. It is a platform where research meets real-world applications," Eborra said.

Solidum also called for support to initiatives of state colleges and universities, and all the involved consortia that challenge existing

norms, reject past limitations and driven by an unwavering passion to effect positive change in the world.

"The Agri-Aqua Innovation Pitch Fest is a powerful reminder that science is truly accessible to everyone, especially those who are driven to make a meaningful impact in the world. This event showcases the ability of science to spark curiosity and foster a hunger for knowledge and inspire people to achieve things without limits," Solidum said.

### **Problems and solutions**

The DoST secretary also advised researchers, who pitched their innovations, on how they can achieve success in entrepreneurship.

"Fall in love with the problems, not your solutions. What does this mean? If we are truly in love with the problem, we will do everything we can to solve it. But if we fall in love with our solutions, what happens is that we become reluctant to share them. This slows down the adoption of our technologies," he added.

Solidum said researchers and scientists need to keep pace with the fast-paced approach of entrepreneurs because, if they don't, it will be hard for them to succeed.

Robert Lo, one of the board of directors of the Pampanga Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc., supported the message of Solidum, saying that local inventors and innovators should know the characteristics of entrepreneurs.

"Entrepreneurs are always passionate and constantly in a hurry; time is very important to them. Once their passion kicks in and becomes ingrained, they want things to happen immediately. So, there is still a gap, and I think we need to find solutions to bridge the gap between research and entrepreneurship," Lo said.

He echoed the message of Solidum that local technologies need to be impactful and game changers.

"It might be good to ask our industry partners what research they need; it is beneficial to know what their needs are. Some research projects have not complied with the needs of the industries," he added.

Solidum also said that investing in technology is not merely about allocating capital. It is more about igniting the spark of creativity, fueling the flames of innovation and unlocking the full potential of human ingenuity.

"Let us sow the seeds of innovation, cultivate a future of abundance and reap the harvest of a world where agriculture thrives in harmony with nature. Let us unleash the full potential of technology to create a world that is not just smarter, but more equitable and effective," he noted.

Awards were given for the best poster exhibits and technology pitches, along with cash prizes:

**Best Technology Poster Exhibits Category:** First place – CoPELT Bioleather from Bohol Island State University (P5,000); Second place – Philippine Carabao Center-Buro Booster (P3,000); and Third place – Tibig Leaf Extract-based Meat Tenderizer of the Pampanga State Agricultural University (P2,000).

**Best Technology Pitching Category:**

First place — Sago Pith Extracting Device (SPED) of Caraga State University (P10,000) — A village-level (317 kilograms per hour capacity) SPED developed for grating the pith from the Sago trunk. It grates the sago pith using a rotating blade without debarking the log to minimize steps in the extraction process.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/22/business/agribusiness/dost-sustains-support-for-agriculture/1965770>



# **Searca collaborates for sustainable farming**

By [Leander C. Domingo](#)  
August 22, 2024

THE Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) has forged ties with the Provincial Agricultural and Fishery Council (PAFC) of Laguna and Straw Innovations Ltd. to advance sustainable agricultural practices.

With this, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed at the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist in Santa Cruz, Laguna, on August 9.

The MoU signatories were Associate Professor Joselito Florendo, Searca deputy director for administration; Roel Fabillan, PAFC Laguna chairman; Marlon Tobias, PAFC Laguna co-chairman; and Jay-Rness Ceria, Straw Innovations Ltd. business development manager.

Eric Reynoso, Searca Emerging Innovation for Growth Department program head, also took part in the event by providing all stakeholders with an outline of the MoU and how it could play a major role in sustainable agriculture.

Reynoso said that the new cooperation would allow the parties involved to "share knowledge and skills, as well as devise policies aimed at assisting farmers in dealing with the risks posed by climate change, which affects food production."

In his welcome remarks during the event, Florendo also said the collaboration demonstrates the commitment of each party to assisting the farming sector with the aim of uplifting agricultural communities.

"This MoU is a testament to our collective dedication to enhancing the livelihoods of our farming communities and ensuring food security through cutting-edge solutions," he said.

Fabillan also expressed his support for the partnership that will "benefit not only the agricultural sector but also the entire country."

"This partnership extends the promotion of pollution reduction, which is one of the leading drivers of climate change," he said.

With this institutionalized collaboration, Fabillan also promised that PAFC Laguna would "provide support in whatever endeavors and activities each party would launch in the future."

Meanwhile, Ceria underscored the need for collaboration and synergy among stakeholders to "successfully implement and sustain operations that benefit the farming sector, particularly rice farmers."

"Through this relationship, I believe that Straw Innovations could reach more farmers and further aid them using our technological innovations," he said.

The event was also attended by several Municipal Agricultural and Fishery Council or MAFC chairpersons who expressed their strong support for the collaboration and the future shared activities among the parties that would benefit their respective municipalities.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/22/business/agribusiness/searca-collaborates-for-sustainable-farming/1965769>

# Initiative launched to get youth to plant rice

By The Manila Times  
August 22, 2024

AMID a decline in the number of young Filipinos becoming rice farmers, the Department of Agriculture-Philippine Rice Research Institute (DA-PhilRice) has launched new initiatives to spark interest in agriculture among students.

By involving the youth ages 10 to 12 in planting the institute's rice paddy art this wet season and by establishing a new compact site called RiceSpark, Karen Eloisa Barroga, DA-PhilRice deputy executive director for development, emphasized the importance of engaging the younger generation in agriculture, noting that the average age of Filipino farmers is 56 years as shown by the institute's Ricelytics.

"Introducing children to the art and science of rice farming at an early age fosters appreciation and responsibility toward agriculture while ensuring the continuity of innovation and passion in the field," she said.

For the Institute's rice paddy art, Maligaya Elementary School students helped plant NSIC Rc 596 and traditional purple rice (IR1522) in a 1,500 square meters (sqm) plot at the FutureRice Farm in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija. The image, which will feature Filipino pride, can be viewed this month.





The Philippine Rice Research Institute has launched initiatives to get students to actually plant rice. PHILRICE PHOTO

"My father plants rice, too. Today, I realized that planting is not like playing — it requires serious effort and care to ensure a good harvest, so our family can eat every day," said 12-year-old John Carlo Biswal, one of the participants.

Eleven-year-old Glenn Adrian Corpuz echoed the sentiment, noting that videos of children farming on social media sparked his interest in rice planting.

Meanwhile, RICEsParK seeks to inspire young "RICEponsible" leaders who are aware of the challenges faced by Filipino farmers, and the importance of rice and rice science to the nation.

Supported by the Kiwanis International-Philippine Luzon District, the 1,000-sqm facility is situated within the 5-hectare FutureRice Farm that offers an alternative to typical recreational activities for children such as usual mall visits and frequent use of gadgets.

"At RICEsParK, we aim to develop leaders who are mindful of farmers' struggles, understand the significance of rice and are

equipped with leadership skills and values needed to impact the country's rice sector," said Glenda Hufano, governor of the Kiwanis International-Philippine Luzon District.

The Department of Education will be tapped in engaging the youth to join the campsite programs, which combine leadership development with hands-on learning in rice science and farming.

At the RICEsParK, participants will gain valuable lessons through farm adventure games like kayaking and obstacle races, while exploring rice technologies, including advanced farm machinery and digital applications.

The initiatives align with Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.'s vision of making agriculture "sustainable, profitable and attractive to the younger generation."

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/22/business/agribusiness/initiative-launched-to-get-youth-to-plant-rice/1965768>

# **PHL meat imports seen to grow in 2025**

Ada Pelonia  
August 22, 2024

THE Philippines's meat imports are expected to increase next year on the back of population growth and a positive economic outlook, according to an international report.

“FAS Manila forecasts 2025 beef imports to increase to 226,000 metric tons [MT] carcass weight equivalent [CWE],” the United States Department of Agriculture-Foreign Agricultural Service in Manila (USDA-FAS Manila) said in its latest report.

“Continued greater-than-six-percent economic growth and forecasted population increases support strong consumer purchasing power which will push beef imports higher in 2025,” it added.

The report noted that the increase in beef imports next year would be spurred by the recent downward trend in the export prices of the country's major export suppliers, specifically Australia and Brazil, and expanded market access provided to Brazil through Department Order (DO) 3.

The USDA-FAS Manila also projected pork imports next year to reach 510,000 MT CWE, up over 6 percent from last year.

“Continued animal disease challenges combined with strong economic growth and forecast population increases will push imports upward,” the report read.

It added that DO 3, which expanded the access of Brazilian exporters to ship pork to the Philippines, also supports the forecast increase in pork imports in 2025.

However, the report reduced the country's pork imports forecast this year to 480,000 MT CWE following the issuance of Executive Order (EO) 62 which extended the tariff reductions for pork until 2028.

“[The EO 62] provides meat importers more certainty and they will no longer need to bring in imports in quarter 4 of each year in anticipation of the tariffs not being extended,” it read, adding that it anticipates lower imports during the second half of 2024.

Meanwhile, the USDA-FAS Manila said that while domestic pork production is forecast to rebound to 1.06 million metric tons (MMT) CWE, production levels will remain below pre-African swine fever (ASF) levels through 2025.

“FAS Manila expects improving disease conditions in the second half of 2025, but the country continues to contend with ASF outbreaks in all three regions of the country,” it read.

The report noted that this was limiting herd rebuilding and future pork production in the remainder of 2024 and early 2025.

The USDA-FAS Manila forecasts 2025 beef and carabeef production at 184,000 MT CWE, up less than 1 percent compared to 2024.

“In recent years production has stagnated as inventories remain constrained due to limited land suitable for raising cattle and high feed prices,” the report read.

“Increased imports of cattle genetics and live animals have resulted in the sector keeping pace with current beef and carabeef production but is not resulting in a meaningful increase in herd numbers or overall meat production.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/22/phl-meat-imports-seen-to-grow-in-2025/>

# **PSMA urges sugar millers to delay start of milling season, cites El Niño**

Ada Pelonia  
August 22, 2024

THE Philippine Sugar Millers Association Inc. (PSMA) urged sugar mills to delay the start of the milling season to October 1 due to the impact of El Niño on sugarcane crops. This, after the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) Administrator Pablo Luis Azcona requested PSMA President Terence S. Uygongco to encourage sugar mills to collectively agree on starting the milling season for Crop Year 2024-2025 on October 1, 2024.

This represents a two-week delay from the planned start date of September 15, 2024, set by some mills in Negros.

The PSMA said it acknowledged the potential benefits of delaying milling to allow for better cane maturity and possibly higher yields, particularly in light of El Niño.

“While the association does not have the authority to change the start date, it will encourage mills to consider the delay,” the PSMA said in a statement. According to the group, SRA had previously advised mills to begin milling on September 15, 2024, for CY 2024-2025, and many mills have prepared accordingly. It added that in recent communications, the SRA reiterated this date and suggested a uniform start for all mills.

Earlier, Azcona said he expects a delay in the peak of harvest as farmers had to replant and replace the sugarcanes scorched by El Niño. (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/13/sra-expects-delay-in-sugarcane-harvest/>)

“We are expecting [an] almost two-month delay in peak of harvest kasi ang mga nasira ire-replant pa,” Azcona told reporters.

Meanwhile, the PSMA said the 100 percent quedan B domestic allocation for the upcoming season may be justified considering the prolonged effects of the El Niño phenomenon.

It noted that the entire impact of the weather phenomenon on the next crop season is still being evaluated by the SRA, “as it reviews its pre-milling estimates for Crop Year 2024-2025.”

“The PSMA will collaborate with the SRA. If it is later determined that the crop yield is better than initially projected, PSMA will coordinate efforts to implement programs aimed at accessing the available US market.”

### **‘Mindanao farmers federation’**

SIX major sugar groups led by former Bukidnon Rep. Manuel Antonio Zubiri reportedly formed a new sugar federation to have a “bigger voice” in the sugar industry. “We are the last frontier of the sugar industry and we will expand sugar farms in Mindanao until we can bridge the gap in local sugar demand needed for our country to stop importing and be self-sustainable,” Zubiri said in a statement.

According to Zubiri, Mindanao has a total of almost 79,000 hectares (ha) planted for sugar and 59,000 hectares of this is in Bukidnon alone.

He added that the sugar groups would be registered as the Mindanao Federation of Sugarcane Planters Inc. which would comprise over 50 percent of sugar producers in Mindanao, expecting more as “Lanao and Davao will also affiliate with us.”

Zubiri said Mindanao sugar farmers currently contribute about 17 percent of total sugar production but with the plan to expand, “we will be contributing more since Mindanao is the only area left where sugar plantation can still expand.” For his part, Azcona said the agency would improve its presence in Mindanao and look into establishing an SRA satellite office in Bukidnon to bring the agency’s services closer to the farmers.

“With this development, we will make sure that our Mindanao farmers are better equipped and services are delivered timely,” Azcona said, adding that he would personally look into the possibility of setting up a Mindanao Research Center to handle high-yielding variety programs.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/22/psma-urges-sugar-millers-to-delay-start-of-milling-season-cites-el-nino/>

# **PHL exports to 5 trading partners grow after RCEP**

Andrea E. San Juan  
August 22, 2024

A YEAR into the implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), Philippine exports to five trading partners within the regional trade deal, particularly in South Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam, among others, have improved, according to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). At the hearing of the Senate Special Oversight Committee on RCEP on Tuesday, Allan B. Gepty, DTI Undersecretary for International Trade Group, who's also the Philippine chief trade negotiator for RCEP, presented the status of Philippine trade environment a year after the 15-member bloc free trade deal took effect for the country. Citing data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), Gepty said Philippine exports to five RCEP-member countries improved in the January to June period of 2024 compared to the first half in 2023, with exports to Indonesia posting the largest growth.

“Our goods exports bear positive indicators—[for] Philippine exports to South Korea, we improved by 14.5 percent; Thailand, by 1.7 percent; Malaysia, 3.6 percent; Vietnam, 17.5 percent; Indonesia, 31.3 percent,” Gepty said.

In contrast, the Philippines's exports to China saw a dip by 20.2 percent, while imports from that country jumped by 10.6 percent in the six-month period in 2024 compared to the same period a year ago. “Those are the movements, but it's still too early to conclude as to the real effects, but at least we'll have an idea of what's happening as far as our trade is concerned,” said Gepty. RCEP is a free trade agreement (FTA) among 15 nations in the Asia-Pacific region, of which 10 are members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean): Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Five are their “significant” trading partners: Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea.

RCEP is touted as the world's largest free trade area as the Parties' combined gross domestic product (GDP) accounts for a third of the world's GDP.



According to the Asean's website, the mega trade deal entered into force for the Philippines on June 2, 2023. The Philippines was the last country to concur in its ratification in February 2023.

As to the Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), the Philippines' chief trade negotiator noted the increase in investments secured by the country with some of its trade partners within the mega trade deal. In the case of Japan, Gepty said, "If you look at the average FDI from Japan from 2018-2022, it was only hitting \$498-\$499 million, but last year it hit \$849 million."

"With Australia, our average FDI last year was negative, at \$6.7 million. For Indonesia, our average in 2018-2022 was \$5.2 million, now it just hit \$11.09 [million]," added Gepty.

Meanwhile, Senator Juan Miguel Zubiri, who was the Senate President at the time the mega trade deal was ratified in 2023, revealed on Tuesday that several defense manufacturers want to set up shop in the Philippines because of the country's inclusion in the RCEP.

"The reason they said was of course the English language, it's the second language of Filipinos, very easy to get workers here especially in shipbuilding when you talk about patrol boats and shipbuilding facilities," said Zubiri.

The lawmaker emphasized that these foreign defense manufacturers are not looking at the Philippines to only sell to the country's navy, the army and the air force, "They want to set up shop that's why we had to come up with the hearing yesterday on Spedeza." (See related story: [www.businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/20/special-defense-ecozone-bill-fast-tracked-in-senate/](http://www.businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/20/special-defense-ecozone-bill-fast-tracked-in-senate/))

"They want to set up shop in the Philippines for export to RCEP countries, that's specifically mentioned; because of our inclusion in the RCEP they want now to build defense materials in the Philippines and sell to the Asean countries and also to countries like Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and even China," the lawmaker said.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/22/phl-exports-to-5-trading-partners-grow-after-rcep/>

# Government project aims to boost local milkfish production

Ada Pelonia and Jonathan L. Mayuga  
August 22, 2024

The government is aiming to increase milkfish output and bolster aquaculture production through the adoption of a “cost-effective” technology.

The Department of Science and Technology-Metals Industry Research and Development Center (DOST-MIRDC), National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDI), and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) last Tuesday.

The three agencies will implement the “HATCH: Heat-Assisted Temperature Control and Monitoring System for Hatchery Management of Milkfish” project.

The NFRDI said the project is a “cost-effective and reliable” heating system that would maintain optimal water temperature in broodstock tanks during cold months.

“This project, if proven successful, would help increase the supply of milkfish fry in the industry,” NFRDI Executive Director Lilian Garcia told reporters in an interview. While milkfish or bangus is one of the country’s prime commodities, Garcia said local raisers continue to grapple with a number of production challenges.

“Weather conditions affect the production of milkfish. If it is cold, milkfish cannot breed,” she said in a mix of English and Filipino.

“Through this project, the technology will allow the stabilization of temperature. So the milkfish can breed even during cold weather.” The project will be implemented in 18 months—from January 1 to June 30, 2025. It will receive a funding support of P5 million from the DOST-Grants-In-Aid (DOST-GIA). It will be implemented in BFAR-NFDC in Dagupan City.

According to Garcia, the project would be situated in Dagupan since the city is one of the top producers of milkfish in the country. “The BFAR facility in Dagupan will test the technology.”

The NFRDI said the project is expected to benefit the aquaculture industry in the country, as well as consumers and other allied industries.

### **Funding for fisheries**

Meanwhile, the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) lambasted BFAR on Wednesday for giving the aquaculture program a bigger budget compared with the allocation for capture fisheries.

Out of the bureau's proposed P10.2 billion budget in 2025, P3.1 billion will be allotted to the Aquaculture Subprogram, while the Capture Fisheries Subprogram will only get P547.3 million, according to Pamalakaya. The group said the program to improve capture fisheries is crucial to food security and self-sufficiency. Ronnel Arambulo, Pamalakaya vice chairman, said in a statement that small fishermen need support more than those in the aquaculture subsector "who have the means and financial capacity to go into business."

Arambulo, a fisherman in Laguna de Bay, said he is a witness to how big fishing pens owned by fishing corporations "monopolize the communal fishing grounds", leaving almost nothing to small and municipal fishers. The group added that municipal fisheries production has been "declining consistently" because of the high cost of production due to inflation, and the destructive and profit-driven projects in coastal areas that exacerbate the impacts of natural calamities.

"The continuous decline in production of fisheries reflects on the hardship being experienced by fishermen, for us, who need concrete and regular support more from the government from the government," said Arambulo. "We remind BFAR to prioritize small fishermen."

The fishers' group earlier questioned BFAR's proposed funding for the fuel subsidy program, which will only cost P50 million in its 2025 budget. PAMALAKAYA said the proposed fund will only cover around 16,000 fishers, or 0.6 percent of the more than 2.7 million registered fishers nationwide.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/22/government-project-aims-to-boost-local-milkfish-production/>

# DA turns over crop protection center to BARMM

Manuel Cayon  
August 22, 2024

Davao City—The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) turned over its regional crop protection center to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Agrarian Reform (MAFAR) of the Bangsamoro government.

The facility of BPI, an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture (DA), is expected to bolster efforts of the region to fight pests and diseases.

The Crop Protection Center was recently turned over to the Integrated Agriculture Research Center (BARMMIARC) in Simuay, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao Del Norte and was received by MAFAR Chief of Staff Arphia Ebus who represented MAFAR Minister Mohammad Yacob.

“This facility represents not just a building but a symbol of our commitment to advancing agriculture in the Bangsamoro region,” she said. “This signifies a step forward in our ongoing efforts to ensure the prosperity and sustainability of the agricultural sector in the Bangsamoro.”

Ebus said the center would improve BARMM’s agricultural sector saying that the region “has been grappling with pest outbreaks caused by destructive insect pests and diseases, negatively impacting agricultural production and reducing farmers’ incomes.”

The DA said the newly established Crop Protection Center was funded by the BPI to enhance crop protection services within the region.

MAFAR Agrarian Services Director General Kikay Taugan encouraged farmers to fully utilize the facility and its comprehensive services.

Taugan said the agrarian reform beneficiaries, particularly the 65,000 farmers in the region, will benefit from using the facility.

“Both the Department of Agrarian Reform and the Department of Agriculture are mandated to continue supporting the farmers of the Bangsamoro region.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/22/da-turns-over-crop-protection-center-to-barmm/>

# BPI opens quarantine office in Subic Freeport

Ada Pelonia  
August 22, 2024

The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture (DA), opened a new quarantine office in Subic Freeport which will address potential risks posed by plant pests and diseases.

Agriculture Secretary Franciso Tiu Laurel Jr. recently inaugurated the new office of the BPI Industry National Plant Quarantine Services Division (NPQSD).

“The establishment of this new office holds significant importance due to its position as a prominent center for trade and logistics. The location will enhance the effectiveness of border control measures and improve the country’s capacity to manage agricultural risks.”

The agri chief said plant quarantine services play a critical role in maintaining food security and supporting farmers.

“We’re making substantial progress towards ensuring the well-being of our agriculture sector and the prosperity of our farmers,” Laurel said in a statement.

According to the DA, pests and diseases can have severe economic repercussions, and the new facility aims to address these challenges effectively.

Laurel said the establishment of the facility shows the government’s “robust commitment” to protecting the agriculture sector and the livelihood of millions of Filipinos while ensuring food safety and security.

Eduardo Jose Alino, chairman and administrator of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA), welcomed the new BPI quarantine office which he said would assure trading partners that go through the country’s sanitary and phytosanitary requirements.

“Rest assured that the SBMA will assist (the DA) in whatever possible way we can.”

For his part, BPI Director Gerard Glenn Panganiban said having a physical office in Subic Freeport facilitates the quarantine process and hastens trading activity while ensuring the biosecurity of incoming commodities through the freeport.

Panganiban noted that the BPI would collaborate with SBMA to pursue development plans that, among others, will help in the “food security in the locality.”

He said the P2-million project initially began in 2018 but was suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Its construction was resumed in 2022.

Meanwhile, Laurel outlined plans for expanding the facility’s capabilities to tackle future issues, including securing additional land for future needs.

He made an assurance that the BPI office in Subic Freeport will adhere to high standards of plant health and biosecurity, extending its impact to farms, fields, and communities nationwide.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/22/bpi-opens-quarantine-office-in-subic-freeport/>



# Norway's salmon farmers hit by muted US demand, fish sickness

August 22, 2024

Norwegian salmon farmers saw their second quarter results drop as consumers hit by the higher cost of living bought less pink fish and health issues hurt yields.

Mowi ASA, the world's biggest salmon grower, said earnings were held back by lower demand in the US and high raw material prices in Europe, posting a 24-percent decline on earnings before interest and taxes from a year earlier. Competitor Grieg Seafood ASA reported a loss, while Leroy Seafood Group ASA's operating Ebit fell more than estimated.

Grieg shares slid as much as 16 percent in Oslo, their biggest drop since 2022. Mowi gained about 1 percent and Leroy 3.4 percent after declines of more than 2 percent for both stocks on Tuesday following SalMar ASA's lack-luster report.

Salmon farmers are still struggling with the knock-on effects of winter sores and string jellyfish in Norway from earlier in the year. That's forced producers to export more fillets at a lower price than what they would get for their superior whole fish.

Grieg's operations in British Columbia, Canada, were severely impacted by low dissolved oxygen in the water, causing higher death rates, loss of feeding days and reduced growth. Earnings from its farms in Finnmark, Norway's northernmost region, were hit by low average harvest weight and high costs due to earlier problems with the Spiro parasite and string jellyfish.

Norway's seafood exports slumped by a record in June, falling by more than 2 billion kroner (\$190 million). The Nordic nation makes up more than half of global farmed supply, benefiting from favorable conditions along its fjords and coastline that are difficult to replicate elsewhere.

Industry heavyweight Mowi aims to expand its annual harvest to 500,000 metric tons this year, from 475,000 metric tons in 2023, and said on Wednesday that it wants to continue grow faster than the wider industry by reducing the amount of time smaller fish spend in the sea. The US market is expected to gradually improve as Western economies continue to recover, it said.

## Meat consumption

Meanwhile, eating meat increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, according to the findings of a new study.

Regular consumption of 50 grams of processed meat a day—equivalent to two slices of ham—is associated with a 15 percent higher risk of developing the disease, researchers from the University of Cambridge found. Eating 100 grams of unprocessed red meat, such as a small steak, raises the risk by 10 percent, they said.

There's currently no cure for diabetes, which affects the body's ability to control blood sugar levels, but it can be controlled. Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of the disease, affecting more than 500 million people worldwide. Research estimates that global aging and rising body weight will more than double that number by 2050.

More than 107,000 of the 1.97 million adults in the study went on to develop diabetes after 10 years. The research is broader than previous studies because it includes data from the Middle East, Latin America and South Asia, said Nick Wareham, director of the Medical Research Council Epidemiology Unit at Cambridge University. Previous studies have focused on the US and Europe, Wareham said.

Global meat production has grown rapidly in recent decades, with consumption exceeding dietary guidelines in many countries, the study said.

Type 2 diabetes is often linked to being overweight. Drugmakers such as Novo Nordisk A/S and Eli Lilly & Co. have invested heavily in their treatments, Ozempic and Mounjaro, respectively. Patients with type 2 diabetes can also get insulin injections and take drugs such as metformin.

While there's currently no cure, physical exercise and better nutritional habits are recommended by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Diabetes Prevention Program. **Bloomberg News**

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/22/norways-salmon-farmers-hit-by-muted-us-demand-fish-sickness/>

# China top buyer of PHL pineapples—report

Ada Pelonia  
August 22, 2024

China was the top buyer of pineapples from the Philippines last year, accounting for almost half of the volume it exported, according to a report by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

“Trade data by destination show a 3-percent increase in shipments to China in 2023, the leading recipient of pineapples from the Philippines at a share of some 43 percent,” the report read.

It noted that the Philippines benefited from China’s demand for premium quality pineapples.

FAO said the long shelf life, year-round production cycle, and attractive price-to-quality ratio of the MD2 pineapples—the main variety cultivated in the Philippines—proved to be a “particularly strong” selling point.

Other major buyers of Philippine pineapples last year were Japan and South Korea, according to FAO.

“Further key import markets for pineapples from the Philippines remained Japan and the Republic of Korea in 2023, at quantity shares of some 30 percent and 14 percent, respectively.”

FAO said that shipments of local pineapples to the two East Asian nations expanded by some 6 to 8 percent in 2023.

It also said the average export unit value of shipments from the Philippines to world markets rose by 3.8 percent year-on-year to \$593 per metric ton (MT) in 2023.

Pineapple shipments from the Philippines, the world’s second leading exporter of pineapples, expanded by 2.7 percent in 2023 to some 600,000 MT.

Preliminary data released by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed that the value of the country's pineapple exports in January to June rose by 5.1 percent to \$393.36 million, from last year's \$374.34 million.

Meanwhile, FAO said the global exports of pineapples grew by 3.9 percent in 2023 to 3.2 million metric tons (MMT).

This, the UN agency said, was driven largely by higher supplies from Costa Rica, the world's largest exporter which cornered a market share of some 65 percent.

"Shipments from Costa Rica accordingly increased by 5 percent in 2023, to 2.1 million tons, in strong contrast with the near 5-percent drop experienced in 2022," the report read.

Based on industry information, weather conditions in key Costa Rican growing areas "were favorable for the cultivation of pineapples throughout 2023, resulting in higher yields and thus higher supplies for export."

"However, industry sources reported that despite this positive performance, there was a noticeable reduction in planted area in Costa Rica."

FAO said small pineapple farmers were discouraged from continuing their operations because of low profit margins.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/22/china-top-buyer-of-phl-pineapples-report/>