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MANILA BULLETIN:

Metro Pacific targets P20 billion revenues from agribusiness

BY JAMES A. LOYOLA

Aug 26, 2024 07:54 AM

Metro Pacific Agro Ventures, a unit of Metro Pacific Investments Corporation, is aiming to generate annual revenues of P1 billion in two years with a medium term target of raising this to P20 billion as it continues to look for new products to add to its portfolio.

In an interview, MPAV President Juan Victor Hernandez said that they are now “doing well” from a revenue standpoint, with all metrics up.

“We’re now working on our EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization) and core income. If we look at the different components, we’re happy to announce on the ice cream side, we’re already positive EBITDA and making net income on ice cream,” he noted.

Hernandez added that, “We have to work on the dairy side because that’s also lower margin from a business perspective. If we’re able to grow the volumes there, we’re confident we’ll be able to have positive EBITDA by next year as a total dairy business.”

The company is looking at other ventures where it can add value to process. “As long as when we use technology, we can increase quality and yield, we’ll venture into it,” he said.

MPAV is considering the chicken egg and carabao milk businesses while continuing to ramp up its dairy and vegetable capacities.

Hernandez said their core strategy is to look at the Filipino plate and they have now added fresh dairy and greens, “but we want to enter the protein segment.”

“Protein could either be meat, eggs, or aquaculture. All of those are very interesting. (But) to be frank, with meat, we’re kind of cautious because of the ASF (African Swine Fever) in terms of pork. For chicken, there’s the Avian flu.

But for eggs, that’s a very interesting area. So we’re looking at that,” he noted. Hernandez said they also want to look into carabaos because it is being raised all over the Philippines.

“It is the quintessential symbol of agriculture but we only use it for tilling the land. In other countries, they actually milk the carabao, so if I can get, for example, two liters of milk from every farmer, that’s extra income for the farmer that I can process the cheese from,” he explained.

Meanwhile, Hernandez said MPAV is expecting to be self-sufficient in terms of milk supply by 2026 with their acquisition of Universal Harvester Dairy Farms Inc. or Bukidnon Milk Company.

MPAV is also beefing up the capacity of the dairy of Carmen's Best (Laguna Creamery) as well as preparing for the commercial operation of the country's largest integrated dairy facility in Bay, Laguna through a joint venture with the LR Group of Israel.

Since Universal Harvester is the largest dairy facility in Mindanao, Hernandez said "They are very complimentary to our existing dairy business in Laguna. They don't have an ice cream business. We do. So, that automatically gives us the opportunity to produce ice cream in Mindanao and distribute in Visayas and Mindanao, which is more efficient from a cost perspective."

Meanwhile, he said "We've reached 140 milking cows in Laguna. Before, it was, on average, about 95 or 97, We never broke the 100 mark. But, because of the investments that we've done in Laguna Creamery, by the end of July, we already have 140 and growing.

"In fact, our target for December is we will already achieve 200 milking cows in Laguna, which effectively we will be able to double production of ice cream by then.

"Now, with the acquisition of Bukidnon milk company in Maramag, they have a 1,000 herd, 200 of which is milking. So that will immediately add to the pool of milk supply that is required by the company to further grow. They have about close to 300 heifers, young cows that can enter the milking pool."

All these, combined with the Israeli joint venture, which will open by the first quarter of 2025, Hernandez said "we will be able to achieve already what we call our dairy self sufficiency by 2026. I think that's very critical for the dairy business to move forward."

Once their milk supply is sufficient, MPAV intends to work on expanding its dairy line for the production of fresh milk which, Hernandez said "will now start the growth path for the dairy line... we want that to be as big as the ice cream business."

For its greenhouse business in Bulacan, construction is still ongoing and the first 3.5 hectares, the largest green house in the country, will start commercial operation in January 2025 and will be producing 800 metric tons of vegetables annually.

https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/26/metro-pacific-targets-p20-billion-revenues-from-agribusiness#google_vignette

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

12 onion importers face raps

[Alexis Romero](#) - The Philippine Star

August 26, 2024 | 12:00am



Citing a PCC memorandum for President Marcos, the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) said the 12 companies and persons colluded to lessen competition in the market.

Philstar.com / Irra Lising

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) is filing a case against 12 onion importers and traders for engaging in anti-competitive practices, Malacañang announced yesterday.

Citing a PCC memorandum for President Marcos, the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) said the 12 companies and persons colluded to lessen competition in the market.

“Based on the investigation conducted by PCC’s enforcement office, the respondents agreed to allocate the supply of onions in the country,” the PCO said in a statement.

Evidence, according to the PCC, showed the traders and importers assigned among themselves sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances (SPICs) issued by the

Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Plant Industry and distributed the volume of onion allowed for importation.

“By agreeing to allocate SPSICs and divide among themselves the actual volume of imports, respondents effectively controlled more than 50 percent of the volume of onions imported into the Philippines during the relevant period. This is an anti-competitive agreement penalized under Section 14(b)(2) of the PCA (Philippine Competition Act),” the commission said in a memorandum dated Aug. 13 and coursed through Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin.

“Respondents also colluded to lessen competition in the market. Evidence showed that respondents, despite being competitors, shared, exchanged and discussed sensitive business information such as price, suppliers, customers, volume, shipping, distribution and storage,” it added.

The PCO statement did not identify the persons and companies to be charged for violating the Philippine Competition Act.

The PCC said the importers and traders avoided competing with each other, failed to independently decide on their policies and “substituted the risk of competition with cooperation.” The agreement has the object of “restriction or distortion of competition” and has inherent restrictive effects upon competition, which is penalized under Section 14 of the competition law, the commission added.

The PCC’s enforcement office recommended the imposition of a P2.4-billion fine against the traders and importers.

During his State of the Nation Address last year, Marcos warned hoarders and smugglers of farm goods that their days are numbered.

He gave an assurance that cases would be filed against smugglers, hoarders and those engaged in anti-competitive practices, saying their actions are affecting farmers and consumers.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/08/26/2380594/12-onion-importers-face-raps>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Hog raisers warned vs ASF vaccines sold online

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

August 26, 2024 | 12:00am



A piggery farm worker begins disinfecting an empty pig pen after more than 10 pigs were infected by African swine fever (ASF) on August 20, 2024.

STAR / Ryan Baldemor

MANILA, Philippines — Farmers' group Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (Sinag) yesterday warned hog raisers against buying African swine fever (ASF) vaccines online.

Sinag chairman Rosendo So said he has informed Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) about the illegal sale of ASF vaccines online.

“We saw (ASF vaccines being sold) online. This is illegal. The FDA and the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) have accredited only AVAC (vaccine) for testing,” So said.

He said no ASF vaccine has been approved for commercial distribution and it should not be sold commercially.

“Secretary Laurel knows this. The illegal sale of vaccines online has been reported to the FDA. Hog raisers will be informed that they cannot just buy online as these vaccines can have (adverse) effects and may result in further spread of ASF,” So said.

He said that Sinag and other hog raisers’ groups would act as observers in the government’s controlled vaccination in Batangas.

“The trial will be conducted by the BAI. Local government units will monitor the development to determine the efficacy of the vaccine,” he added.

Earlier, Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said the DA would start vaccinating hogs on Sept. 2 in Lobo, Batangas, the “ground zero” of ASF outbreaks.

At least 10,000 doses of ASF vaccine acquired through emergency procurement will be used for the initial vaccination.

So said Sinag officials would visit the manufacturing facility of AVAC in Vietnam next week “to determine the efficacy of the vaccine.”

Industry stakeholders will monitor the conduct of controlled vaccination to ensure that protocols will be followed properly.

“There will be clustering of areas as one bottle of the vaccine is equivalent to 50 doses. It is important to consider that the area where the vaccination will be conducted is not flooded and is suitable for trial. Hogs that will be vaccinated should test negative for ASF,” So said.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/08/26/2380602/hog-raisers-warned-vs-asf-vaccines-sold-online>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Palay output seen flat this year

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

August 26, 2024 | 12:00am



A rice farmer gathers his harvest.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The country's full-year palay production could match the record-high output of 20.06 million metric tons (MT) last year at best as the sector continues to reel from various weather disturbances, an agriculture official said.

The damage to the rice sector caused by prolonged hotter and drier weather conditions due to El Niño in the first half proved to be damaging in the overall outlook in the country's output.

The country's production from January to June fell by nearly 500,000 MT on an annual basis because of the extreme weather condition.

And since the country is projected to face La Niña in the second half, Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) deputy executive director Flordeliza Bordey said total palay harvest may contract on a year-on-year basis or remain flat at best.

“It is possible that we may face more calamities for the rest of the year so we may not be able to (match last year’s output)” Bordey said.

“We are still hoping to get as much as we did last year. That is the good scenario that we are looking at right now,” she added.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported earlier that palay output in the first half contracted by more than five percent to a four-year low due to lower farm yield as some farmers delayed planting amid threats brought about by the El Niño phenomenon.

Domestic palay or unhusked rice output in the January to June period declined by 5.5 percent to 8.53 million metric tons from 9.026 million MT, latest PSA data showed.

The latest output is the lowest first-half production recorded by the country since 2020 when production fell to 8.386 million MT, based on PSA data.

PSA data indicated that both production of irrigated and rainfed palay during the six-month period contracted on an annual basis.

Government officials and industry stakeholders attributed the reduction in palay output to the ill effects of hotter and drier weather conditions caused by the El Niño phenomenon in the first half.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/08/26/2380508/palay-output-seen-flat-year>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

El Niño-La Niña duo setting up PH for weak palay yield

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 02:06 AM August 26, 2024



The Philippines may produce less palay (unmilled rice) in 2024, with both the El Niño and La Niña phenomena spoiling the country's output one after the other.—
INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

The Philippines may produce less palay (unmilled rice) in 2024, with both the El Niño and La Niña phenomena spoiling the country's output one after the other.

Flordeliza Bordey, Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) deputy executive director for special concerns on the implementation of Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund, said this year's palay production may remain the same or even decline from last year.

“We are looking at that scenario but it’s also possible that if there are more calamities for the rest of the year, then we may not be able [to increase production],” Bordey said on the sidelines of SS Rice News Network 2024 held in Taguig City.

“With that, we are hoping that we will still be able to produce the majority of what we get here in the country,” she said during the event’s panel discussion.

Decrease in first half

In the first six months of 2024, the Philippines produced 8.53 million metric tons (MT) of palay, dropping by 5.5 percent from 9.03 million MT in the same period a year ago, data from the Philippine Statistics Authority showed.

The country achieved the highest palay output of 20.06 million MT in 2023, an increase of 1.5 percent from 19.76 million MT a year prior. It exceeded the previous record of 19.96 million attained in 2019.

With such performance in the first half, the Department of Agriculture had estimated this year’s production to reach just 20.44 million MT.

Developing new varieties

During the House of Representatives’ budget hearing early this month, however, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. recognized that this year’s volumes might be flat largely because of the El Niño-induced dry spell that largely affected farmers’ harvest in the first semester amid below-normal rainfall conditions.

“[Because] we were hit by El Niño for this year and in the second half, [we have the] La Niña [phenomenon], we’re hoping for parity versus last year,” Tiu Laurel had said. La Niña is the opposite as it tends to bring heavy rains and flooding.

Bordey said PhilRice would continue developing more varieties with better probability of surviving the El Niño phenomenon and natural calamities that might hit the archipelago.

“Weather permitting, the seeds that we are distributing are of high quality that can improve the yield of our farmers, but there are so many factors affecting our production,” she said.

“Even if we have better crop stands, if a calamity will hit the country, we cannot say if palay production can increase,” she added.

According to Bordey, PhilRice is currently hitting targets in the distribution of inbred rice seeds, whose yield improved by almost 4.4 tons per hectare in 2023 as opposed to 3.6 tons per hectare in 2019. INQ

<https://business.inquirer.net/476598/el-nino-la-nina-duo-setting-up-ph-for-weak-palay-yield>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Visayas, Mindanao KADIWA store network could launch next month

August 25, 2024 | 7:28 pm



DA.GOV.PH

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it hopes to expand its KADIWA network of direct-to-consumer food stores to the Visayas and Mindanao by September.

“We expect to have at least 60 KADIWA stores across the country next month to provide greater access to affordably priced agricultural products,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said in a statement on Sunday.

Mr. Laurel added that the government-subsidized stores in the new locations will feature the P29 per kilogram rice program, targeted at vulnerable segments of society.

He added that the agency had identified about 650 potential locations in the Visayas and Mindanao to set up KADIWA stores.

The ultimate goal is a store network of 1,500 outlets.

“For us to reach the 1,500 target we need to open at least one store a day, which is almost impossible. That’s why we need the private sector’s collaboration in this project,” he said.

KADIWA provides farm cooperatives and associations an opportunity to sell directly to consumers, maximizing their returns by cutting out middlemen.

It added that the DA is planning to invite food manufacturers to offer canned sardines, cooking oil, and condiments in KADIWA stores.

“We’re also talking to manufacturers of other basic goods like condiments, sugar and canned goods to help ease the financial challenges faced by consumers,” Mr. Laurel said. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/08/25/616025/visayas-mindanao-kadiwa-store-network-could-launch-next-month/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

PHL dairy imports up 12.9% in first half, but value falls 9.2%

August 25, 2024 | 7:27 pm



REUTERS

DAIRY IMPORTS rose 12.9% year on year to 1.65 million metric tons (MT) during the first half, according to the National Dairy Authority (NDA).

The NDA said by value, milk and dairy shipments declined 9.2% to \$37.11 million.

The report said skim milk powder accounted for 40% of all such imports followed by other milk powders and ready-to-drink milk at 17% and 4%, respectively.

“New Zealand was the largest source of these imports with 31% (by) value, followed by the US (23%) and Indonesia (5%),” it added.

Domestic milk production rose 15% year on year to 16,020 MT in the first half, the NDA said.

It added that domestic production accounted for 21% of the liquid milk supply in the Philippines.

“The domestic milk industry is supported by a dairy animal inventory of 151,059 head, which includes 34,754 dairy cattle, 80,805 carabao, and 35,500 goats,” it added.

The NDA said dairy exports for the six-month period rose 27.5% year on year to 21,030 MT.

Export products included cream (17%), cheese (16%), whole milk powder (7%), and skim milk powder (6%).

The NDA said that key export markets were Singapore and the United Arab Emirates with 19% and 13% of the total by value, followed by Canada (12%) and the US (11%). — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/08/25/616024/phl-dairy-imports-up-12-9-in-first-half-but-value-falls-9-2/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Court of Appeals narrows scope of GMO ruling after gov't motion

August 26, 2024 | 12:03 am



IRRI

THE Court of Appeals (CA) said an earlier ruling banning genetically modified organisms (GMO) applies only to golden rice and Bt eggplant, opening the door for applications to develop other crops.

The CA's Former Fourth Division, in a 33-page decision issued on Aug. 15, removed item eight from its April 17 decision, which had stopped the field testing and use, as well as imports of GMOs until all measures are taken to ensure they are safe.

In the new decision, the court held that only "the circumstances, facts, and issues covering Golden Rice and Bt Eggplant were considered" in the previous ruling.

"Other applicants for the contained use, field testing, direct use as food or feed, or processing, commercial propagation, and importation of other GMOs, if any, were not impleaded in the instant case and not given the opportunity to be heard, whether verbally or in writing," Associate Justice Jennifer Joy C. Ong, who wrote both decisions, said.

"Lest we be accused of violating (due process), the deletion of Item (8) of the dispositive portion of the assailed Decision is in order," she added.

The motion to reconsider the earlier ruling had been filed by the departments of Agriculture (DA), Environment and Natural Resources, Health, as well as by the Philippine Rice Research Institute, and the University of the Philippines at Los Baños (UPLB).

These parties, through the Solicitor-General, said the Court's directive under item eight hampers efforts to provide and discover new and valuable information through scientific research.

It added item eight negatively impacts the agriculture industry and biotechnology research.

However, apart from removing item eight, the Court said the other aspects of the decision still stand.

It reaffirmed its issuance of a Writ of Kalikasan to the petitioners, Magsasaka at Siyentipiko para sa Pag-unlad Agrikultura (MASIPAG), Greenpeace, and others.

“The paramount importance of this case is not difficult to discern, as it deals with the people’s constitutional right to a balanced and healthful ecology and perceived violations of the same,” the court ruled.

The decision to issue a cease-and-desist order halting the commercial propagation of Bt eggplant and golden rice remains in force, it said.

Teodoro C. Mendoza, a retired professor of agronomy from UPLB, told *BusinessWorld* via Facebook Messenger chat that the decision is a win for GMO advocates, and declared his support for the ruling, which has implications for crops beyond rice and eggplant.

“We don’t grow corn, the source of protein today that is cheap, because fish meal is expensive (as livestock feed),” he said. “We import a lot of corn because we cannot produce what the livestock industry needs. So if item eight is not suspended, the livestock industry will die.”

The motion for partial reconsideration cited a *BusinessWorld* article by columnist Ramon L. Clarete, explaining the Philippines’ need to import GMO yellow corn and soya meal for animal feeds.

Animal feed accounts for 60% to 70% of the cost of pork, poultry, and egg production.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/08/26/615950/court-of-appeals-narrows-scope-of-gmo-ruling-after-govt-motion/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Experts from Malaysia, Singapore to advise Cotabato durian industry

August 26, 2024 | 12:02 am



BW FILE PHOTO/ LSDAVALJR

DURIAN CONSULTANTS from Singapore and Malaysia recently met Cotabato Province Governor Emmylou Taliño-Mendoza to discuss ways to develop the durian industry in the province.

Ms. Mendoza said during the meeting that the two consultants, Kelvin Tay of Singapore and Lim Chin of Malaysia, explored ways to introduce new technology to increase output, yield, and quality of the province's durian crop.

Last week, Ms. Mendoza was in Malaysia to observe industry practices there, including the processors and trading side, with the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist and industry representatives.

In April 2023, Ms. Mendoza expressed her willingness to join the China durian export trade after producers in Davao City helped open up the market.

At around that time, the Department of Agriculture Davao regional office inaugurated the China trade with a shipment of 18 metric tons of durian.

In his January state visit to China, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. signed an agreement governing the protocols for shipping fresh durian to China.

The Davao regional office said developing Cotabato's durian industry is part of a five-year plan it is preparing.

The regional office received on April 3 China's notice of approval for the Protocol of Phytosanitary Requirements as agreed by Mr. Marcos and Chinese President Xi Jinping. — **Maya M. Padillo**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/08/26/615949/experts-from-malaysia-singapore-to-advise-cotabato-durian-industry/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Seafood from all regions safe to eat amid the Bataan oil spill – BFAR

August 22, 2024 | 11:43 am



Fish vendors at the Balanga Public Market in Bataan.

Fish and shellfish from all regions are now safe to eat, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said on Tuesday.

“Based on our latest sensory evaluation, fish and shellfish from all regions – that includes Region 3, 4A, (National Capital Region) are already safe for human consumption,” the BFAR Assistant Director Angel B. Encarnacion said during the [House committee hearing](#).

Currently, Bataan faces three oil spills in the province – MKTR Terranova, MTKR Jason Bradley, and MV Mirola 1.

Market-goers avoided buying fish because of the multiple oil vessel incidents, Enrique, a shrimp vendor at the Balanga Public Market, said.

“*Matumal kasi nag-aalala rin yung mga tao, [People refuse to buy because they are worried],*” he added.

The fish tasted different, and residents are struggling to identify if it’s still safe to eat, according to Jerald Lacson, a resident of Balanga, Bataan.

Mr. Lacson added that he once experienced cooking a fish that had an off taste.

“Nakabili po kami ng isda na nilalako, pagkaluto po may lasang langis na, [The fish that we bought from a local vendor tasted like oil],” he said.

According to Rafael Dominico, a board member of the Pinagkaisang Samahan ng Mangingisda sa Lamao (PINSAMALA), fish are scarce in the area because they avoid the oil-contaminated water.

“Yung isda ngayon talagang wala ng mahuli kaya minsan kami ay dumadayo pa para makahuli lamang nang maganda, [Fish became elusive in the area. We had to travel to other places to catch better fish],” Mr. Dominico said.

From P200 to P180, the fish prices decreased to P80 to P50, Mr. Dominico told BusinessWorld in an interview on Thursday.

“Despite lowering the prices to P80, we still can’t sell it sometimes,” he said in Filipino.

Corresponding to the BFAR’s announcement, fisherfolks from Limay, Bataan, attested that their fish are edible.

“Ligtas naman siya... Wala naman kaming ibang kakainin kung ‘di yung isdang nahuhuli namin, [It is safe to eat... We cannot afford to eat anything else aside from the fishes we caught],” PINSAMALA President Efren Dominico said. – **Almira Louise S. Martinez**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/08/22/615597/seafood-from-all-regions-safe-to-eat-amid-the-bataan-oil-spill-bfar/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Extreme weather takes bite out of China produce, sending prices soaring

August 26, 2024 | 12:01 am



REUTERS

BEIJING — Produce prices in China have risen sharply over the past two months, affected by extreme weather from deadly floods to scorching heat that has devastated millions of acres of farmland and is now hitting consumers in their pockets.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, an index of wholesale prices of agricultural products consistently rose every day from June 25 to Aug. 21 except for a slight dip on July 19.

Soaring food prices this summer present an additional headache for the world's second-largest economy, which is already wrestling with thorny problems from sluggish factory output and joblessness to deflationary pressures and uncertain external demand for Chinese goods.

Notably, the average wholesale price for 28 vegetables tracked by the ministry from June 17 to Aug. 15 jumped from 4.29 yuan (60 cents) to 6 yuan per kilogram, a 39.9% increase over the period, Chinese state media said.

“I don't know what's going on this year, but vegetarian food is very expensive and ordinary people can hardly afford it,” complained a user on Toutiao, a Chinese news and information content platform.

At Beijing's Xinfadi Market — China's largest wholesale market for agricultural products — the weighted average price of vegetables in August was 4 yuan/kg, up 25% compared with the same period last year, China Central Television reported.

Prices for cabbage, cauliflower, and broccoli rose, said other state media, and the government also noted higher prices for cucumbers, spinach, eggplant and zucchini as well as pears and watermelons, in its data.

China suffered through torrid rainfall that started in the spring and continued through July, along with weeks of record-breaking heat.

In Henan, one of the country's main commercial crop production areas, more than 1.13 million hectares were affected with some harvests lost from soaked fields.

Extreme weather led to a near doubling in economic losses from natural disasters in July from a year earlier.

China recently was also forced to provide an additional 100 billion yuan (\$14 billion) to banks to support rebuilding areas devastated by floods, which damaged around 6 million acres of crops.

But consumers will find some respite as experts expect vegetable prices to come down in the middle to late September as supply increases due to the current higher prices on offer. — **Reuters**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/08/26/615948/extreme-weather-takes-bite-out-of-china-produce-sending-prices-soaring/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

PCC: 12 onion importers, traders kakasuhan sa ‘anti-competitive practices’

August 26, 2024 09:23



MANILA, Philippines- Sasampahan ng kaso ang 12 onion importers at traders na sangkot sa anti-competitive practices, base sa Philippine Competition Commission (PCC).

Ito ang tugon sa direktiba ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr., base sa PCC, ayon sa press release na ipinalabas ng Presidential Communications Office nitong Linggo.

Sinabi ng PCC na nilabag ng 12 kompanya at indibidwal na sangkot sa onion importation at trading ang Philippine Competition Act (PCA).

Sumang-ayon ang mga kompanya at indibidwal na ito na maglaan ng suplay ng sibuyas sa bansa, ayon sa PCC.

Subalit, “the respondents assigned among themselves sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances (SPSIC) issued by the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Plant Industry (DA-BPI) and distributed the volume of onion allowed for importation,” anang PCO, batay sa PCC.

Dahil dito, mayorya ng ng sibuyas na naipasok sa Pilipinas ang epektibong nakokontrol ng respondents, dagdag ng PCC.

“By agreeing to allocate SPSICs and divide among themselves the actual volume of imports, respondents effectively controlled more than 50 percent of the volume of onions imported into the Philippines during the relevant period. This is an anti-competitive agreement penalized under Section 14(b)(2) of the PCA,” wika nito.

“Respondents also colluded to lessen competition in the market. Evidence showed that respondents, despite being competitors, shared, exchanged, and discussed sensitive business information such as price, suppliers, customers, volume, shipping, distribution, and storage,” dagdag pa.

Nagresulta ito sa hindi pakikipagkompetensya ng importers at traders sa sa’t isa at pagpalyang malayang makapagdesisyon sa kanilang mga polisiya.

“Such an agreement has the object of restriction or distortion of competition and has inherent restrictive effects upon competition,” giit ng PCC.

May kabuuang tig-P2.4 bilyon ang inirekomendang ipataw na multa sa respondents.

Nauna nang inatasan ni Marcos ang PCC at iba pang ahensya ng pamahalaan na tugisin ang smugglers, hoarders at mga sangkot sa anti-competitive practices. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/pcc-12-onion-importers-traders-kakasuhan-sa-anti-competitive-practices/>

ABANTE:

China binangga barko ng BFAR sa Escoda Shoal

- [Abante News](#)
- [August 25, 2024](#)



Binangga ng China Coast Guard (CCG) ang BRP Datu Sanday ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) malapit sa Escoda Shoal nitong Linggo.

Ayon sa inisyal na ulat, limang beses umanong binangga ng CCG ang barko ng BFAR habang nagsasaga-wa ng pagpatrolya sa West Philippine Sea (WPS).

Isang barko naman ng CCG ang nagpakawala ng water cannon sa BRP Datu Sanday at tinarget ang bubong kung saan matatagpuan ang navigational equipment.

Ayon sa National Task Force for the WPS, tinatayang walong barko ng CCG ang nang-harass sa barko ng BFAR nitong Linggo nang umaga. Ang barko ay magdadala sana ng suplay sa mga mangingisdang Pinoy sa nasabing lugar.

“These unprofessional, aggressive and illegal actions pose serious risks to the safety of the Filipino crew and fishermen they were meant to serve. Despite these provocative maneuvers, the crew aboard the BFAR vessel maintains morale and remains safe and unharmed,” ayon sa statement ng Task Force.

Depensa naman ng CCG, ilegal umanong pumasok ang BRP Datu Sanday sa kanilang teritoryo at nagsagawa ng “dangerous manner” sa kanilang barko.

“The China Coast Guard took control measures against the Philippines vessel involved in the incident in accordance with law and regulations,” ayon sa statement ng CGG.

Subalit sa mga lumabas na video sa social media, makikita sa likuran ang barko ng CCG at binangga ang BRP Datu Sanday.

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/08/25/china-binangga-barko-ng-bfar-sa-escoda-shoal/>

ABANTE:

P2.4B multa kinasa ng PCC: 12 importer yari sa sibuyas cartel

- Abante News
- August 25, 2024



Kakasuhan ng Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) ang 12 kompanya at mga indibidwal na importer ng sibuyas dahil sa paglabag sa Philippine Competition Act.

Ito ang ipinaabot ng PCC sa kanilang memorandum kay Pangulong Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. bilang tugon sa kanyang direktiba na habulin at kasuhan ang mga hindi sumusunod sa patakaran ng gobyerno.

Lumitaw sa imbestigasyon at nakalap na ebidensiya ng PCC na kinontrol ng 12 kompanya ang 50% ng volume ng imported na sibuyas sa mga panahong kailangang-kailangan ang sibuyas

na isang malinaw na paglabag sa anti-competitive agreement at may katapat na parusa sa Philippine Competition Act.

Nagsabwatan umano ang 12 kompanya upang mabawasan ang kompetisyon sa merkado na ang resulta ay mga consumer ang nagdusa dahil sa naging mataas na presyuhan ng sibuyas.

“Respondent also colluded to lessen competition in the market. Evidence showed that respondents despite being competitors, shared, exchanged and discussed sensitive business information such as price, suppliers, customers, volume, shipping, distribution and storage,” anang PCC.

Inirekomenda ng PCC Enforcement Office ang P2.4 billion na multa laban sa 12 kompanya at indibidwal.

Matatandaang iniutos ni Pangulong Marcos Jr. sa PCC sa kanyang state of the Nation Address noong 2023 na habulin at kasuhan ang mga smuggler at hoarder na sangkot at pagpupuslit ng mga kontrabando sa bansa at lumabag sa anti-competitive practices. (Aileen Taliping)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/08/25/p2-4b-multa-kinasa-ng-pcc-12-importer-yari-sa-sibuyas-cartel/>

ABANTE:

Turista tinangkang manggahasa ng baka, sinuwag sa ari

- [Abante News](#)
- [August 25, 2024](#)



VIRAL ang isang Russian tourist na namaga ang ari matapos siyang suwagin ng baka na tinangka niyang maka-sex sa isang bukid sa Surat Thani, Thailand kamakailan.

Ayon sa report ng Daily Mail, dinatnan ng mga pulis ang Russian na si Evgenii Kuvshinov, 26 anyos, na nakahubad at nakahiga habang sinusuwag ng baka.

nagalit ito at sinuwag siya, dahilan para kailangan siyang i-rescue ng mga awtoridad.

Sa ulat, nakita umano ni Kuvshinov ang baka na nakatali sa bakod sa isang bukid sa Surat Thani, southern Thailand noong Agosto 15.

Ilang residente sa lugar ang nagsuspetsa sa lalaki nang makita nila itong nakahubad kaya ini-report siya sa pulisya. Narinig din umano ng mga residente ang paghingi ng tulong ng lalaki matapos atakihin ng baka.

Ayon sa ilang paramedic mula sa Ban Na Doem Foundation na gumamot kay Kuvshinov, may hinala sila na tinangka nitong makipag-sex sa baka.

Nakakita rin umano ng marijuana o cannabis sa sasakyan ni Kuvshinov kaya posible umano itong 'high' o bangag sa ilegal na droga.

Nang dalhin sa pagamutan dahil sa tinamong pinsala sa kaniyang ari, nagwala umano ang dayuhan kaya binitbit ito ng mga pulis at ikinulong sa presinto.

Ayon sa ulat ng The Sun, bago ang insidente ay nakipag-break kay Kuvshinov ang girlfriend niyang flight attendant. (Issa Santiago)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/08/25/turista-tinangkang-manggahasa-ng-baka-sinuwag-sa-ari/>

Local milk production rises in H1

By Janine Alexis Miguel

August 26, 2024

THE National Dairy Authority (NDA) has reported that milk production from January to June rose 15 percent to 16,020 metric tons (MT) from 13,940 MT in the same period last year.

This comprises around 21 percent of total liquid milk supply, or one glass out of every five consumed in the country, the NDA said.

The local milk production sector is supported by a dairy animal inventory of 151,059 heads, which includes 34,754 dairy cattle, 80,805 dairy carabao, and 35,500 dairy goats.

Net supply of dairy, meanwhile, reached 1.64 million MT or 12.7-percent higher than the 1.46 million MT dairy output in 2023.

Milk and dairy product imports, meanwhile, grew by 12.9 percent to 1.65 million MT compared to the previous 1.46 million MT. The value of these imports, however, decreased by 9.2 percent from \$40,781.55 million to \$37,011.72 million.

Skim milk powder logged the highest import share at around 40 percent, followed by other milk powders and ready-to-drink milk at 17 and 4 percent, respectively.

The NDA said New Zealand led import sources with 31 percent of total dairy import value, followed by the United States, 23 percent, and Indonesia, 5 percent.

On the other hand, Philippine dairy exports jumped 27.5 percent to 26,500 MT from 21,030 MT the previous year.

Top export commodities included cream milk at 17 percent, cheese (16 percent), whole milk powder (7 percent), and skim milk powder (6 percent).

Singapore and the United Arab Emirates were the leading destinations for Philippine dairy exports, accounting for 19 percent and 13 percent of the total export value, respectively. Canada followed with 12 percent and the US, 11 percent.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/26/business/top-business/local-milk-production-rises-in-h1/1966736>

DA to expand Kadiwa to VisMin by Sept

By Jed Macapagal

August 26, 2024



Kadiwa stores sell affordably-priced agricultural products, including the P29 per kilo rice. (DA Photo)

The Department of Agriculture (DA) will expand its network of Kadiwa rolling stores in Visayas and Mindanao by next month to widen access to lower-priced farm goods including rice, outside of Metro Manila and Luzon.

“We expect to have at least 60 Kadiwa ng Pangulo stores across the country next month to provide more Filipinos with greater access to affordably-priced agricultural products, including the P29 per kilo rice intended for vulnerable sectors,” said Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., in a statement.

There are 17 Kadiwa stores where subsidized rice is being offered every Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

DA said the goal is to have at least one Kadiwa store in each of the country’s nearly 1,500 municipalities.

Tiu Laurel said the DA will collaborate with the private sector to reach the ultimate target within the term of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

“We have identified at least 650 sites for the Kadiwa ng Pangulo stores. But for us to reach the 1,500 target we need to open at least one store a day, which is almost impossible that’s why we need the private sector’s collaboration in this project,” Tiu Laurel said.

DA is in talks with food manufacturers to supply Kadiwa stores with basic goods like canned sardines, cooking oil, condiments as well as fresh fish and poultry.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/da-to-expand-kadiwa-to-vismin-by-sept

BFAR boat rammed by Chinese vessels near Escoda Shoal

By Victor Reyes

August 26, 2024

SEVERAL Chinese vessels yesterday harassed a ship of the Philippines' Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) which was on a "humanitarian mission" in the contested West Philippine Sea, according to the National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea.

The latest incident involved the BFAR vessel, BRP Datu Sanday, which was harassed by a Chinese Navy ship, several Chinese Coast Guard ships, and eight Chinese maritime militia vessels, the task force said.

The BFAR vessel was rammed and water cannoned several times about 10 nautical miles from Escoda Shoal, which is about 70 nautical miles from mainland Palawan and is well within the country's 200 nautical miles exclusive economic zone.

It is the fifth harassment case to be recorded against Philippine government vessels and aircraft this month.

On August, 8 two Chinese multi-role fighters launched flares on and subjected to dangerous maneuver a Philippine Air Force NC-212i plane conducting routine patrol over Scarborough Shoal, also known as Bajo de Masinloc and Panatag Shoal.

On August 19, Chinese Coast Guard vessels subjected two Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) vessels to dangerous maneuvers near Escoda Shoal, also known as Sabina Shoal. The PCG vessels, which were en route to resupply Filipino troops at two Philippine-held islands, sustained large holes during the incident.

Also on August 19, a Chinese fighter jet launched flares on a Cessna 208B Grand Caravan BFAR aircraft conducting patrol over Scarborough Shoal.

On August 22, the Chinese launched flares from the China-occupied Subi Reef while the same BFAR aircraft was also doing maritime patrol at the vicinity of the highly-militarized reef.

AGGRESSIVE MANEUVERS

The National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea (NTF-WPS), in a statement, said the BFAR vessel was headed from Hasa-Hasa Shoal to Escoda Shoal when it encountered "aggressive and dangerous maneuvers" from the eight militia vessels.

“The BRP Datu Sanday was targeted by the People’s Liberation Army Navy ship 626 and multiple China Coast Guard ships, which attempted to encircle and block the humanitarian mission,” the NTF-WPS also said.

“The CCG vessels made close perilous maneuvers that resulted in ramming, blasted horns, and deployed water cannons against the BFAR vessel, eventually leading to the latter’s engine failure and forcing an early termination of the humanitarian operation,” it added.

It said the “unprofessional, aggressive, and illegal actions” of the Chinese “posed serious risks to the safety of the Filipino crew and the fishermen they were meant to serve.”

CREW UNHARMED

The NTF-WPS said the crew members of the BFAR vessel were “safe and unharmed,” adding their morale remains high despite the “provocative maneuvers” of the Chinese.

It described as “completely unfounded” the claims of China that crewmembers of the BFAR vessel fell overboard and were subsequently rescued by Chinese Coast Guard personnel.

“This fake news and misinformation serves as a clear illustration of the PRC’s willingness to distort the truth and engage in disinformation to bolster its public image,” the task force said.

The NTF-WPS reiterated its call to China to stop provocative activities which it said undermine peace in the area.

“The Philippine government calls on the People’s Republic of China to halt these provocative actions that destabilize regional peace and security,” it said.

Nevertheless, it said the Philippines will remain steadfast in asserting its rights in the West Philippine Sea, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea that provides coastal states 200 nautical miles exclusive economic zone, and the 2016 Arbitral Award that invalidated China’s excessive claim in the South China Sea

‘CONTROL MEASURES’

China’s coast guard said it had taken “control measures” against a vessel that had “illegally” entered the waters and repeatedly approached Chinese ships in a dangerous manner.

It said the Philippine ship “ignored repeated serious warnings and deliberately approached and rammed” China’s law enforcement boat, resulting in a collision. It added that responsibility for the collision lies entirely on the Philippine side.

The latest incident overshadows efforts by both nations to rebuild trust and better manage disputes after months of confrontations, including a violent clash in June where a Filipino sailor lost a finger.

China asserts sovereignty over nearly all of the South China Sea, including areas claimed by the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Brunei. Beijing has deployed an armada of vessels to protect its claims.

An international arbitral tribunal in 2016 ruled Beijing's claim had no basis under international law, a landmark victory for the Philippines, which filed the case. Beijing rejects that decision.

The Philippines and China agreed to "restore trust" and "rebuild confidence" to manage maritime disputes in a high-level meeting last month. That was followed by a provisional arrangement about Manila's resupply missions to a beached Filipino naval ship in the South China Sea. – With Reuters

https://malaya.com.ph/news_news/bfar-boat-rammed-by-chinese-vessels-near-escoda-shoal

ANTI-TRUST BODY SAYS: 12 onion traders colluded; P2.4B fine recommended



From shortage to good harvest. Workers display red onions at the Divisoria Market in Manila on Nov. 3, 2023. (PNA photo by Yancy Lim)

THE Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) is set to file charges against 12 unscrupulous onion importers and traders who engaged in anti-competitive practices, the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) said yesterday.

The PCO, in a news release, said the PCC on August 13 submitted a memorandum for President Marcos, sent through Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, about the filing of a case against 12 companies and individuals engaged in onion importation and trading for violating the Philippine Competition Act.

The PCC's Enforcement Office, which conducted the investigation, has also recommended a total fine of P2.4 billion against the violators.

The 12 however, were not named.

The PCO said based on the PCC Enforcement Office's investigation, the 12 had agreed to allocate the supply of onions in the country including assigning among themselves the sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances (SPSIC) issued by the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Plant Industry (DA-BPI), and distribution of the volume of onion allowed for importation.

It added by agreeing to allocate SPSICs and divide among themselves the actual volume of imports, they effectively controlled more than 50 percent of the volume of onions imported into the Philippines during the relevant period which violates the anti-competitive agreement penalized under Section 14(b)(2) of the PCA.

The 12 also "colluded to lessen competition in the market" by – despite being competitors- sharing, exchanging, and discussing sensitive business information such as price, suppliers, customers, volume, shipping, distribution, and storage among themselves.

The PCC, in its report said with such a scheme, "the importers and traders avoided competing with each other and failed to independently decide on their policies and have substituted the risk of competition with cooperation."

It added that "such an agreement has the object of restriction or distortion of competition and has inherent restrictive effects upon competition."

The President earlier directed the PCC and other government agencies to pursue the filing of cases against smugglers, hoarders and those engaged in anti-competitive practices.

In 2023, PCC in coordination with the Department of Agriculture, had started investigations on suspected smuggling and cartel activity in the onion industry that resulted in high prices in the previous year.

The DA had also approved in January 2023 the importation of more than 20,000 metric.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/anti-trust-body-says-12-onion-traders-colluded-p2-4b-fine-recommended

Ad hoc body to help DA in policy implementation

[Ada Pelonia](#)
[August 26, 2024](#)

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) created an interim unit to assist in implementing regulatory policies and activities under the Agriculture and Fishery Regulatory Support Program (AFRSP).

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. issued Department Order 13 which states the need to establish an ad-hoc body in the department that would provide technical assistance in harmonizing the implementation of regulatory policies and activities under the program.

It is also set to rationalize the distribution of resources of operating units under the AFRSP and monitor and evaluate program performance.

“The unit shall provide technical support and assistance in the implementation of the regulatory policies, programs, and activities of the operating units under the AFRSP within the context of the priorities and policy direction of the department on agri-fishery regulations,” the DO read.

Aside from assisting in the development of the DA regulatory roadmap and translating policy directions and the agri chief’s directives into plans and budget proposals, the unit is also mandated to facilitate the concerns and issues of the various operating units covered by the AFRSP.

It is also tasked to review the submitted plans and budget proposals of all operating units covered by the AFRSP and monitor the physical and financial performance of all operating units under the program.

The interim unit should also conduct “all other activities that may be relevant in the efficient and effective administration of the Department’s regulatory program.”

However, the DO stated that it would be a separate operating unit under the administrative control and supervision of the Assistant Secretary for Policy and Regulations with the staff sourced from existing plantilla or Contract of Service (COS) positions of the DA.

“The Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and Regulations and the Assistant Secretary for Policy and Regulations shall exercise oversight over the operations of the interim Unit,” the DO read.

Under DO 13, the operating expenses of the interim unit, including the compensation of COS personnel, should be charged against available DA Office of the Secretary (Osec) or Central Office funds, subject to their availability.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/26/ad-hoc-body-to-help-da-in-policy-implementation/>

PCO: Onion traders, importers face ₱2.4-B fine for collusion

Samuel P. Medenilla
August 26, 2024

The government may slap a fine of P2.4 billion against 12 onion importers and traders for their supposed involvement in anti-competitive practice.

This after President Ferdinand Marcos ordered the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) to file cases against the said group in a memorandum he issued through Executive Secretary Lucas P. Bersamin last Tuesday.

“The Enforcement Office has recommended a total fine of P2.4 billion against the violators,” Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Secretary Cheloy V. Garafil said in a statement issued last Sunday.

As of press time, the Palace has not released the names of the importers and traders who will be charged and ordered to pay fines.

The penalty, Garafil said, is based on the recommendation of PCC after it concluded its investigation on how the said group decided to divide among themselves the sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances (SPSIC) for onions issued by the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Plant Industry (DA-BPI).

PCC claimed that the 12 onion importers and traders have decided to collude to maximize their profit.

“Respondents also colluded to lessen competition in the market. Evidence showed that respondents, despite being competitors, shared, exchanged, and discussed sensitive business information such as price, suppliers, customers, volume, shipping, distribution, and storage,” PCC said.

Through the said illegal cooperation, the group was able to effectively control 50 percent of the volume of imported onion and violated the Philippine Competition Act.

Last July, President Marcos ordered the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) to probe the traders and importers, which were linked to hoarding, smuggling and price fixing, which were blamed for the surge in onion prices in 2022 during a Congressional hearing.

In his State of the Nation Address (SONA) directive in 2023, Marcos directed PCC and other government agencies to go after smugglers, hoarders and those engaged in anti-competitive practice.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/26/pco-onion-traders-importers-face-%e2%82%b12-4-b-fine-for-collusion/>

ABANTE TONITE

PNP checkpoint ikinalat kontra ASF outbreak

August 25, 2024

Nagpakalat na rin ang Philippine National Police (PNP) ng mga checkpoint sa mga lugar na apektado ng African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak bilang bahagi ng kampanya ng pamahalaan para masugpo ang sakit sa mga alagang baboy.

Sa isang panayam, sinabi ni PNP spokesperson Colonel Jean Fajardo na ang mga checkpoint ay bahagi ng pagsisikap ng pulisya upang maiwasan ang pagkalat ng ASF.

“Kaugnay sa papel ng PNP sa kampanya kontra ASF, ang PNP ay nagprovide ng police assistance in terms of establishing checkpoints sa mga lugar na apektado ng ASF,” ani Fajardo.

Noong Sabado lang, isang truck driver na may dalang mga baboy mula Batangas patungong Caloocan City ang nagtangkang laktawan ang isang checkpoint ng ASF sa Mindanao Avenue, Quezon City.

Noong nakaraang linggo naman, naharang din ng mga awtoridad ang isang trak na may lulan na 38 baboy sa Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City habang pinahinto sa isa pang checkpoint ang isa pang trak na may kargang 11 baboy sa Mandalay, Valenzuela City. Sa pagsusuri, 11 baboy ang napagalamang positibo sa ASF. (Vincent Pagaduan)

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/08/25/pnp-checkpoint-ikinalat-kontra-asf-outbreak/>