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MANILA BULLETIN:

Hen Lin story: Damayan Spirit, quality consciousness drive business excellence and prosperity

BY [SONNY COLOMA](#)

Aug 29, 2024 00:18 AM

ENDEAVOR



Inside a three-story building on a side street of Don Arcadio Santos Avenue, more popularly known as Sucat Road in Parañaque, about half-a-kilometer from the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX), production workers clad in white smocks, white hair bonnets, gloves, and blue shoe sleeves, go about their work with quiet efficiency, in a controlled temperature environment.

M & H Food Corporation stands for Manas and Hernandez, the founder-owners of the enterprise. Mariano ‘Jun’ Manas and Cely Hernandez-Manas invited a small group of Rotarian friends and their spouses to a tour of the production facilities of Hen Lin, the well-known fast-food company with hundreds of stores throughout Luzon, found in most big malls and convenience outlets.

Hen Lin stands for Henry and Lyn, son and daughter of Jun and Cely. Founded 40 years ago as a home-based enterprise, it has grown in size and stature by dint of its quality food products. Hen Lin’s two leading products, siopao and siomai, are manufactured in accordance with Triple A quality standards – as certified by the Department of Agriculture’s National Meat Inspection Service that conducts Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) analysis covering the complete cycle from receiving of raw materials up to distribution in stores.

Framed on the wall are several testaments – “Our Corporate Vision: To be the leading producer of high-quality Asian food products.”

“Our Corporate Mission: To be able to serve God and our country through our corporate activities. To provide quality products, excellent service, and value for money to our customers. To inculcate the right work values to all employees. To earn reasonable profit for the company. To provide opportunities for growth and development for all employees.”

A further refinement of the vision-mission statement is expressed in “Our Business Philosophy: “We are in business...To serve God and serve him well through our corporate activities. To produce quality and tasty food products and to serve them efficiently at reasonable prices so that customers get value for their money. To be a large professional company that is fair, sincere in all its dealings with its customers, shareholders, and with all its publics. To earn a reasonable profit for the company and its shareholders.”

Another frame is entitled Damayan Spirit:

“Damayan Spirit is a way of life at M & H Food Corporation where every employee serves God by respecting one another...is a way of serving our people (with) resolution and healing...allows us to collectively strive to always improve ourselves, our service, our processes, and our product quality for the good of the whole company...is reaching out or being there unconditionally...helps our employees realize their dreams and aspirations...gives us encouragement, energy, and sustainability in everything that we do...In every given circumstance, Damayan Spirit keeps our hopes alive and bright. So let us keep Damayan Spirit always in our hearts and in our minds.”

“He who loves and respects his parents will do well in life.” This is the credo of Hen Lin co-founder Mariano ‘Jun’ Manas and his wife Cely, who embody humility and simplicity, that is better expressed in the Filipino equivalent, kababaang-loob. Thus, have they have earned the respect and admiration of business partners and friends.

Serving God and country is their over-arching business purpose. Producing quality products that satisfy customers is their chosen way of manifesting love of God and neighbor. The business exists in ways that are beneficial to the employees and their families, and, ultimately, to their communities. By generating jobs, and paying taxes on profits earned, Hen Lin contributes to the creation of social goods — such as infrastructure — that enhance the well-being of the citizenry. Aside from physical infrastructure such as roads, bridges, airports and seaports, there is social infrastructure, which includes education and nutrition. Finally, there is also technological or digital infrastructure that facilitates business transactions and delivery of goods and services.

The growth of Hen Lin into a “large professional community” contributes to the betterment of the locales where its stores operate, and to the nation-at-large.

I have known Jun and Cely Manas for more than 25 years, as fellow Rotarians. Shunning highly visible publicity and promotion, they go about their business by keeping a low profile and with minimal advertising. It was only a few months ago, when Hen Lin marked its 40th year last May, that they put out a huge billboard visible from the SLEX Skyway.

In my view, Jun and Cely Manas of Hen Lin are exemplary leaders of Spirit-Led Organizations that are animated by Diwa and Kapwa.

In 2017, the People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) published two books, namely, DIWA: Spirit Led Organizations in the Philippines; Charting Pathways to Excellence; and KAPWA: Filipino Workplace Ethos for Workplace Excellence and Competitiveness.

Today, we have an expanded core group of Diwa-Kapwa advocates including Jun Cabochan, a social entrepreneur who heads Pandayan Bookshop, a Luzon-based retail chain; Grace and Virgilio Zata, who are global talent specialists; Ramon Segismundo, an international management consultant; Bobby Galvez, an independent human resource management and talent development consultant; Edgardo Soriano and Rico de Guzman, both PMAP past presidents, who serve as senior advisers to leading companies; Lin Mukhi, also a PMAP past president, and like Faye Corcuera, advises leading corporates and social enterprises.

We have realized that, beyond the circle of companies and enterprises that we have been focusing on, there could be scores of other organizations that are, intentionally, Spirit-led (Diwa) and solidarity-focused (Kapwa) enterprises, seeking to promote the well-being of people, as the fulfillment of their faith-based mission. May their tribe increase!

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/29/hen-lin-story-damayan-spirit-quality-consciousness-drive-business-excellence-and-prosperity>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Marcos approves approach to avoid duplication of livelihood programs in gov't

BY [BETHEENA UNITE](#)

Aug 28, 2024 01:14 PM

President Marcos has approved the implementation of Program Convergence Budgeting (PCB) to ensure the effective execution of livelihood and employment initiatives across government agencies, and to avoid duplications.



President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. (Photo courtesy of Malacañang)

"I have approved the implementation of the Program Convergence Budgeting for livelihood and employment initiatives to ensure their effective execution," Marcos announced on Wednesday, Aug. 28.

The President has also tasked the secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to lead the inter-agency council to govern the adoption of PCB approach.

Marcos made the decisions during a sectoral meeting on Tuesday.

"What we are trying to do is to cut out the duplications," Marcos said. "I know there is a need for this. It's just a question of getting it right."

The PCB approach focuses on government resources on key programs and projects which shall be coordinated in a holistic approach across departments working towards the same goals.

According to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the PCB will look at the budget requirement for livelihood and employment of the beneficiaries, so that no duplication is made.

In June 2023, Marcos directed all departments and agencies to coordinate with the DBM for the rationalization of similar, overlapping, and redundant programs and projects.

The Chief Executive, however, said they are not removing the programs from the different departments.

The DBM conducted a rapid assessment of existing livelihood, employment, feeding PAPs and propriety of the rationalization and integration of the same.

It also assessed viability of programs being handled by a single focal agency, primarily focusing on the systems and productivity-related aspects and its implications relative to the rightsizing and devolution effort of the government.

Results of the rapid assessment showed there are notable benefits of rationalizing various government livelihood and employment programs.

They also indicated that assigning all programs to a single focal agency might overwhelm the department and may cause inefficient and ineffective delivery of its functions and services.

Based on the results, the DBM cited such issues which led for the adoption of the PCB. It also proposed the designation of an inter-agency council to govern the adoption of the PCB.

Aside from DOLE, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) or the Department of Agriculture (DA) may be asked to lead the PCB on livelihood and employment, the DBM said.

The three agencies have the largest budget allocation among all implementing agencies, it added.

The DBM however said there is no need for a PCB for feeding programs as the Inter-Agency Task Force on Zero Hunger serves as the convergence platform for various government feeding programs.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/28/marcos-approves-approach-to-avoid-duplication-of-livelihood-initiatives-in-gov-t>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Marcos assures oil-spill hit fisherfolk: You'll be compensated

BY [BETHEENA UNITE](#)

Aug 28, 2024 12:05 PM

Fisherfolk, who were affected by the massive oil spill from the sunken motor tanker Terra Nova in Bataan, were assured of just compensation after taking the hit from the oil spill that halted their livelihood.



Fisherfolk, affected communities, and environmental groups marched to the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Headquarters in Manila on Aug. 26, 2024 to demand accountability, justice, and just compensation for the fisherfolk and coastal communities affected by the oil spill from MT Terra Nova off the coast of Limay, Bataan. (Arnold Quizol | MB)

President Marcos made the assurance during the distribution of assistance to fisherfolk in Cavite on Wednesday, Aug. 28,

Marcos also told the fisherfolk that the government continues to investigate the incident and vowed that those people responsible for the incident will be held accountable.

"Sa ngayon iniimbestigahan na natin ang paglubog ng mga barko upang makakalap tayo ng sapat na impormasyon na mapanagot ang mga nagkasala ayon sa batas (Right now, we are investigating the sunken ship to gather enough information to hold those who violated the law accountable)," Marcos said.

"Titiyakin din natin na makakatanggap ng karampatang kompensasyon ang mga naapektuhang mamamayan (We will also assure that those affected will receive compensation)," Marcos added.

'You can now go back to fishing'

The Chief Executive also announced that fisherfolk in Cavite, who were also affected by the massive oil spill, can now go back to fishing as the coast of Cavite is now free from oil spill.

"Nasabihan lang ako ni Secretary Kiko ng DA na mula ngayon ay maaari nang mangisda. Wala nang oil spill, pwede nang ituloy ang inyong hanapbuhay (I was informed by Department of

Agriculture Francisco Laurel Jr. that you can now fish. There are no more oil spills, you can now continue with your livelihood)," Marcos told the fishermen whose livelihood was put on halt following the massive oil spill that reached the province last month.

The President informed Cavite fisherfolk that authorities successfully prevented the further oil spill from the sunken motor tanker, and siphoning operations are expected to be completed in 10 days.

"Masaya kong ibinabalita na matagumpay na nating napigilan ang pagtagas ng langis mula sa mga barkong ito, partikular yung Terra Nova, nang hindi na ito makapinsala sa ating kalikasan (I am happy to announce that we were able to successfully prevent further spill of oil from the ships, particularly the Terra Nova, so that it would no longer harm our nature)," Marcos said.

"Nasimulan na rin ang ating operasyon para sa tuluyang pag-recover ng langis sa nasabing barko at inaasahang matapos natin ito sa lalong madaling panahon (We have also started to completely recover oil from the ship and we expect to finish it as soon as possible)," Marcos assured the fishers.

According to the President, the siphoning operations are expected to be completed in 10 days before the sunken vessel can be salvaged and brought to another place in case there is more oil to extract from it.

He also explained that it took time before the siphoning operations started because authorities had to seal leaking valves in the ship.

"Yan ang una kaya't tumagal bago nasipsip, ngayon nagsisipsip na tayo. Umabot na rin tayo sa araw na masabi nating maaari na naman na ang ating mangigisda ay mangisda ulit (That's what we did first and that's why it took time before we can extract oil. We finally reached the day when we can say that fishermen can fish again)," Marcos said.

Marcos further told Cavite fishermen that P18 million worth of post-harvest equipment, training, and cash assistance for fishermen were already set aside.

Aside from the MT Terra Nova, another vessel—diesel cargo Jason Bradley—also sank in Mariveles, Bataan after the former capsized and submerged off Limay, Bataan in late July.

During the event, Marcos handed over a total of P363,050,000 in financial assistance and standby funds to over 33,000 fisherfolk and their families affected by the Bataan oil spill in Cavite.

Of the figure, P161,510,000 in financial assistance from the Office of the President was extended to Cavite Gov. Jonvic Remulla. From the amount, P5,000 will be distributed to each affected fisherfolk and their families in the province.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/28/marcos-assures-oil-spill-hit-fisherfolk-you-will-be-compensated>

MANILA BULLETIN:

5,000 farmers, fishermen in North Cotabato receive gov't cash aid

BY [IVY TEJANO](#)

Aug 28, 2024 07:05 PM

KIDAPAWAN CITY, North Cotabato – Five-thousand farmers, fishermen, and families from 15 municipalities and one city in this province received cash assistance from the Office of the President on Monday, August 26, at the Capitol Compound in Barangay Amas here.



FIVE-thousand farmers, fishermen, and families from 15 municipalities and one city in North Cotabato received cash assistance from the Office of the President through Interior and Local Government Secretary Benhur Abalos (center) on Monday, August 26, at the Capitol Compound in Amas in Kidapawan City. To his left is Gov. Emmylou Mendoza. (Photo via Ivy Tejano)

Each beneficiary from the towns of Pigcawayan, Libungan, Alamada, Aleosan, Kabacan, M'lang, Tulumunan, Carmen, Banisilan, Matalam, Magpet, President Roxas, Antipas, Arakan, and Makilala, and Kidapawan City received P10,000 cash assistance from the Office of the President.

The assistance distribution, aimed at addressing the impacts of the El Niño phenomenon, particularly on the agriculture and fisheries sectors, was the key highlight of the week-long Kalivungan Festival that started on Monday in celebration of the province's 110th anniversary.

Gov. Emmylou "Lala" Taliño-Mendoza said in a speech that the beneficiaries were individuals from various municipalities and in Kidapawan City who had never received the government assistance before. Pikit town will receive separate aid from the President.

Mendoza said that she requested local government units to identify farmers, fisherfolk, and families who had not previously benefited from any financial assistance, making them the first recipients of the P50-million presidential aid.

Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Benjamin Abalos Jr. cited the impressive progress the province has achieved over 110 years. He credited this advancement to strong leadership and the unity of its people, highlighting North Cotabato as one of the nation's top-performing provinces.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/28/5-000-farmers-fishermen-in-north-cotabato-receive-cash-aid>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Philippines to import 16,000 MT yellow onions

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

August 29, 2024 | 12:00am



Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. on Monday approved the importation of yellow onions to arrest price spikes in the market as supplies are running thin.

Pixabay

MANILA, Philippines — At least 16,000 metric tons of fresh yellow onions will be imported by the Philippines to plug the shortfall in domestic supply and avert another runaway spike in retail prices, which happened in 2022.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. on Monday approved the importation of yellow onions to arrest price spikes in the market as supplies are running thin.

“With the upcoming holiday season and harvest season commencing in January 2025, it is expected that demand for fresh yellow onions will increase,” Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) director Gerald Glenn Panganiban said in his memorandum to Tiu Laurel.

“Given that supplies for this commodity are very limited, it can result in an increase of price in the market,” he noted. Panganiban earlier proposed to Tiu Laurel the importation of fresh yellow onions to ensure supply and price stability until yearend.

“The BPI has already submitted its recommendation to the secretary to import yellow onions,” Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa yesterday told The STAR.

Based on BPI projections, supply of locally produced yellow onions was only sufficient until the end of the month.

The Philippines usually imports yellow onions to fill the gap in domestic stocks and prevent price spikes.

Tiu Laurel said yellow onion imports would start arriving by the end of this week or early next week.

“We will only import a limited quantity of yellow onions just to stabilize the prices,” Tiu Laurel told reporters yesterday.

Panganiban vowed that the BPI would ensure the last day of arrival of imported yellow onions would be on Dec. 31 to protect domestic producers once they start harvesting their crops, which is expected to begin in January 2025.

The stock of red onions is sufficient and expected to last until early 2025, agriculture officials said. As of Aug. 9, red onion stocks stood at 99,519 MT while yellow onions were at 1,642 MT, BPI data showed.

The Department of Agriculture has been holding off plans to import red onions as the local industry saw a bumper harvest this year, resulting in sufficient stocks. The retail price of red onions in Metro Manila markets has been stable, between P70 and P150 per kilo, while white onions retail at P80 to P150.

In 2022, the retail price of the bulbs reached as high as P720 per kilo amid the supply shortage and increase in demand during the holidays.

Farmers’ group Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. president Danilo Fausto supports the DA’s decision to import white onions. – **Bella Cariaso**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/08/29/2381316/philippines-import-16000-mt-yellow-onions>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA: Local rice still cheaper than imports

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

August 29, 2024 | 12:00am



According to the DA's price watch in Metro Manila markets, the retail price of local regular milled rice was between P43 and P50 per kilo compared to imported regular rice of between P46 and P50 per kilo.

Michael Varcas

MANILA, Philippines — The retail price of local rice remains cheaper compared to the imported grains nearly two months after Executive Order 62 took effect, according to latest monitoring of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

EO 62 lowers the tariff for imported rice from 35 percent to 15 percent. It took effect on July 7.

According to the DA's price watch in Metro Manila markets, the retail price of local regular milled rice was between P43 and P50 per kilo compared to imported regular rice of between P46 and P50 per kilo.

The retail price of local well-milled rice was also lower, between P47 and P55 per kilo compared to imported well-milled rice, between P48 and P55 per kilo.

Local premium rice ranged between P50 and P58 per kilo compared to imported premium rice, between P54 and P60 per kilo.

Meanwhile, the retail price of local special rice ranged between P59 and P62 per kilo compared to imported special rice, between P55 and P65 per kilo.

For his part, farmers' group Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura chairman Rosendo So said the high retail price of imported rice only proved the contention of various organizations that the lower tariff on imported grains will not bring down the cost of the staple.

“I talked to the farmers in Vietnam and they were happy that the tariff (in the Philippines) went down but the cost of rice in Vietnam increased. Because the tariff was slashed, they increased their prices. The (Philippine) government helped the Vietnamese farmers, not the Filipino farmers,” So said in an interview with The STAR.

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) has defended the cut in tariff, saying it will result in a P7 per kilo drop in the retail prices of imported rice.

“The promise that the imported rice will go down by P7 per kilo did not happen. The promise of (NEDA) Secretary (Arsenio) Balisacan that imported rice will go down to P29 to P30 per kilo did not happen. Where is the lower (price for) imported rice?” So added.

Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas chairman Danilo Ramos echoed So's sentiment, saying the retail price of well-milled rice of P48 to P55 per kilo is too much for ordinary wage earners.

“As what we have expected and have argued before, Malacañang's EO 62 will only benefit rice exporting countries and local rice importers,” Ramos said.

He added that genuinely bolstering the local rice industry and doing away with excessive importation is the only realistic way to lower rice prices.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/08/29/2381325/da-local-rice-still-cheaper-imports>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Hog farmgate prices drop due to ASF scare

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

August 29, 2024 | 12:00am



Sinag executive director Jayson Cainglet yesterday said that prices decreased by P30 to P40 per kilo this week, with the prevailing rate hovering between P160 and P180 from P240 a kilo last week.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — Farmgate prices of live hogs have dropped by as much as P40 per kilo as demand for pork and pork products decreased due to African swine fever (ASF), according to farmers' group Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura.

Sinag executive director Jayson Cainglet yesterday said that prices decreased by P30 to P40 per kilo this week, with the prevailing rate hovering between P160 and P180 from P240 a kilo last week.

Cainglet attributed the decline in the farmgate prices of live hogs to low demand for pork.

ADVERTISING

He said a majority of pork consumers shifted to chicken meat following reports of new ASF cases in the country.

“We hope the drop in farmgate prices is reflected in the (retail) price of pork. Based on our reports, a lot of consumers are no longer eating pork,” he said. “We have a lot of pork supply and people are not buying. We are hoping that Filipino consumers would continue to patronize local pork.”

Stakeholders in the hog industry as well as national and local government units have been conducting programs to raise awareness that locally produced pork is safe for consumption.

These programs are intended to encourage consumers not to stop patronizing pork and pork products.

Earlier, industry players and government officials gave assurance that while ASF may be fatal to hogs, it does not pose any harm to humans.

As of Tuesday, a kilo of pork shoulder in Metro Manila cost between P260 and P370, and pork belly between P305 to P400.

The prices were lower by P10 to P65 than the prevailing rates last month at P300 and P380 for pork shoulder, and between P370 and P400 for pork belly.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has inspected 1,963 shipments of live animals and meat products at various checkpoints in the National Capital Region.

Of the total shipments inspected, up to 113 were returned to their points of origin due to non-compliance with animal health regulations, the DA said.

Thirteen shipments were subjected to further testing and 10 others were condemned due to serious health concerns.

The rest, after meeting the necessary requirements, were cleared and released, the DA said.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/08/29/2381405/hog-farmgate-prices-drop-due-asf-scare>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

‘Philippines needs to balance economic growth, climate resilience’

[Louisse Maureen Simeon](#) - The Philippine Star

August 29, 2024 | 12:00am



Photos show the air quality in Quezon City and Pasig on August 19, 2024, as vog from Taal Volcano drifted across several areas.

STAR / Michael Varcas

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines needs to balance economic growth and climate resilience to address development and poverty reduction amid the country’s continued vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.

Speaking at the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action (CFMCA) Regional Meeting yesterday, Finance Secretary Ralph Recto said integrated solutions are needed to bring climate action and poverty eradication together.

Established in 2019, the CFMCA is a global alliance of finance ministers in 92 countries to foster knowledge exchange and support climate action initiatives.

Recto said the Philippines is doubling its efforts to master the complexities of economic development and climate action.

The finance chief noted that the government is prioritizing fiscal stability to provide long-term investments for a more meaningful climate action.

“We cannot achieve overall economic prosperity for Filipinos without boosting climate resilience,” Recto said.

“Because climate change is deeply unfair. It strikes the hardest at the poorest, makes poverty worse. It is the ultimate injustice,” he said.

As such, the Philippines is armed with the National Adaptation Plan and the Nationally Determined Contribution Implementation Plan as playbooks that outline strategies to fully achieve both climate and economic objectives.

The country is also banking on the People’s Survival Fund as one of the concrete and innovative climate solutions, which channels resources directly to locally tailored and community-led climate adaptation projects.

Further, Recto emphasized that the Department of Finance is utilizing fiscal policy as a tool to promote a regime that rewards green investments in the country.

For one, the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Maximize Opportunities for Reinvigorating the Economy bill aims to improve the country’s tax incentives policy and tailor-fit investors’ interests to attract more investments in clean and renewable energy, green infrastructure, sustainable agriculture and waste-to-energy technologies, among others.

The passage of the excise tax on single use plastics is also expected to address pollution and adopt more sustainable practices.

Likewise, the expanded electric vehicle incentive program is also seen enhancing the ease of doing business in the Philippines and advancing the country’s climate ambitions.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/08/29/2381229/philippines-needs-balance-economic-growth-climate-resilience>

Pork



FIRST PERSON - [Alex Magno](#) - The Philippine Star

August 29, 2024 | 12:00am

We could run into supply problems with pork a few months down the road.

The supply instability will be an outcrop of the African swine fever (ASF) now happening. It manifests initially as a reluctance among consumers to buy pork products. This produces an economic chain of events.

Many hog raisers fearing the plague, especially the culling that goes with fighting it, have disposed of their stocks at a loss. After this, they have avoided investing in hogs in the meantime.

Former finance secretary Gary Teves sent me helpful notes from an ongoing online conversation about our pork supply. Thus far, the participants in this conversation do not seem very hopeful about the way the Department of Agriculture (DA) is managing the problem.

So far, what we have seen in the news are staged events where local executives and celebrities make a show of consuming pork. The purpose of these events is to assure the public that pork is safe to consume. The events are spurred by declining consumer demand because of fears about ASF contamination. Low demand and the declining prices discourage investment in hog raising. By the time the public gets over its ASF fears, hog raisers may not have enough stocks ready to meet a spike in demand – likely to occur during the Christmas season.

By the time demand for pork rebounds, there might not be enough stocks to supply the market. This will lead to the opposite phenomenon of rising pork prices that further fuels domestic inflation.

Our currently elevated inflation rate is driven principally by food prices. This is particularly hurtful for lower income families who devote a larger portion of their household expenditure on food.

The current pork oversupply will soon turn into a shortage. When a shortage happens, we will be constrained to import more pork products to meet domestic demand. That will burden our foreign exchange and probably force the peso into a new downward spiral.

Several local governments are adding to the panic by banning transit of hogs through their jurisdictions. This adds to the logistics costs feeding into food inflation.

The abnormalities in the pork supply situation has been blamed on the failure of the DA to adequately distribute test kits at the checkpoints to facilitate transport of the products. One agricultural economist suggests that the DA quickly deploy mobile diagnostic test vans to check on hogs in the farms. Without these capabilities, local governments have used blockades as the means for checking the spread of the virus.

While all the food blockades are being set up, there seems to be no national government policies regarding them. It is urgent that the concerned government agencies articulate a clear policy regarding these blockades.

This is all very inefficient and feeds into the worsening problem. The DA has not been adequately communicating with the public about what the actual situation is and how effective its strategy to combat the infestation has been.

It is not too late for the DA to improve its communications strategy both to assure the public about the safety of consuming pork and the extent to which our authorities have been able to manage the problem. ASF will not disappear without effective state intervention. At the moment, the public is largely uninformed of the dimensions of this problem.

Decline

The problems hog raisers are currently experiencing with momentarily low demand will have implications on the general performance of our agriculture sector.

In the last quarter, our agricultural production declined by 1.6 percent. Agriculture is our weakest sector. For many years, agricultural growth lagged behind population growth. This set the stage for the greater dependence on imported food we see now. ASF threatens to overwhelm our hog industry. If our pork production is harmed by ASF, this will lead to further declines in our agriculture, eventually pulling down our overall economic expansion.

As consumers turn away from pork products, there will be a spike in demand for chicken. As it is, we do not have enough chicken to supply the market.

San Miguel is strategically investing billions in mega chicken farms to meet rising domestic demand. But the yields from this is further down the road. In the interim, what is more likely is that the country will increase its importation of chicken.

Even with increased chicken importation, however, prices for this other source of protein will likely rise. Our large fast food outlets are now feeling the crunch. There is simply no reliable source of chicken supply.

With our pork industry teetering on the brink, a large supply gap will become evident soon. The DA should swing into action. There are too many gaps in our food situation. Importation should be a short-term solution and not a permanent dependence. We wondered why President BBM held the agriculture portfolio for too long. No great improvement in the management of our food production happened during the time he held the agriculture portfolio. Today, more and more, we are seeing many of the vulnerabilities in our food production loom even larger.

We need to take a closer look at the efforts of the DA. It could be that too much focus has been put on false remedies such as the Kadiwa program rather than on truly effective programs that will make food production more efficient. It is not only our pork production facing decline.

<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2024/08/29/2381266/pork>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Marcos distributes P363 million aid to Cavite oil spill victims

[Helen Flores](#) - The Philippine Star

August 29, 2024 | 12:00am



President Marcos leads the distribution of financial assistance to fisherfolk affected by the oil spills in Bataan and Cavite yesterday.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The siphoning of industrial oil from sunken motor tanker Terra Nova is expected to be completed in two weeks, President Marcos said during the distribution of financial assistance to fisherfolk in Cavite yesterday.

Marcos provided P363 million in cash assistance to 33,000 fisherfolk affected by oil spills caused by the sinking of motor tankers Terra Nova and Jason Bradley as well as motor vessel Mirola 1 in the waters off Bataan last month.

“We have successfully contained the oil spills from these tankers, particularly the Terra Nova, without damaging our environment,” Marcos said during the aid distribution in General Trias.

“We have also started our operations to fully recover oil from the said tanker (Terra Nova) and we expect this to be completed as soon as possible,” he added.

Repair works on Jason Bradley as well as removal of seawater from Mirola 1 are ongoing, Marcos said.

Over 25,000 families and more than 33,000 fisherfolk in Cavite were affected by the oil spills.

Marcos said Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel informed him that the spills have been contained and people can now return to fishing.

He said the government is investigating the cause of the oil spills and vowed to hold accountable those responsible for the sea accidents.

Marcos gave assurance that affected residents would be compensated.

During the event, Marcos turned over P161.51 million from the Office of the President to Cavite Gov. Jonvic Remulla.

The fund will be used to assist affected fisherfolk, who will be given P5,000 each.

Marcos said the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources provided P18 million worth of post-harvest equipment, training and financial assistance to victims of oil spills.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/08/29/2381406/marcos-distributes-p363-million-aid-cavite-oil-spill-victims>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Vietnam to send its swine fever vaccine to Philippines

Philstar.com

August 28, 2024 | 2:37pm



A piggery farm worker begins disinfecting an empty pig pen after more than 10 pigs were infected by African swine fever (ASF) on Aug. 27, 2024 at Barangay Fabrica in Lobo, Batangas.

The STAR / Ryan Baldemor

HANOI, Vietnam — Vietnam will send 150,000 doses of its African swine fever vaccine to the Philippines on Thursday, state media said, although it has not yet been approved internationally.

The illness -- which does not affect humans -- is highly contagious and fatal for pigs, and an outbreak is potentially devastating for the pork industry, experts say.

The shipment of the vaccine, developed by AVAC Vietnam (AVAC), is part of 600,000 doses ordered by the Philippine government, Vietnam News Agency quoted the company's general director Nguyen Van Diep as saying.

Vietnam approved two African Swine Fever (ASF) vaccines for domestic use in July 2023, saying it was the first country do so.

But neither of the vaccines has been approved internationally.

In October 2023, the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) issued a statement warning veterinary authorities and the pig industry of the "risk from use of sub-standard vaccines".

It did not specifically mention Vietnam.

According to Vietnam News Agency, Diep said AVAC had already exported 300,000 doses to the Philippines in 2023. Other state media reports said this batch had been used for an "evaluation".

The company is seeking approval for its vaccine in India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Myanmar and Nigeria.

A team from the Philippines was in Vietnam earlier in the week to check on the production of the vaccines, he added, according to VNA.

Diep said 2.3 million doses have been used in Vietnam since July 2023.

According to media reports, authorities in Vietnam have been trying to encourage farmers to use the vaccine to prevent African swine fever from spreading among their herds.

The ministry of agriculture and rural development reported in mid July that Vietnam had recorded 34,000 infected cases since the beginning of the year.

AVAC did not immediately respond to a request for comment from AFP.

A 2018 outbreak of African swine fever in China -- the world's largest pork producer - - caused millions of pigs to be slaughtered to stop its spread.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/08/28/2381196/vietnam-send-its-swine-fever-vaccine-philippines>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

DA gives go-signal to import 16,000 MT of yellow onions

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

05:44 AM August 29, 2024



DA Sec. Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. —Niño Jesus Orbeta/Inquirer file photo

MANILA, Philippines — Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. on Wednesday said he approved the importation of 16,000 metric tons (MT) of yellow onions until the end of December as the country is running out of stocks in time for the holidays.

Tiu Laurel said he gave the go-signal on Monday to bring in imported yellow onions ahead of next year’s harvest season as local stocks were already “depleted.”

“We will import a limited quantity of white onions to stabilize prices of white onions,” he told reporters on the sidelines of an industry event held in Pasay City.

But he said all imported fresh yellow onions should arrive in the country by the end of December, ahead of the start of the local harvest in January next year.

“We still have ample stocks of red onion ... good until March next year,” Tiu Laurel added.

Two-week interval

According to him, the Department of Agriculture will issue sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances every two weeks to prevent a glut in the local market and avoid affecting existing stocks of red onions.

Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) director Gerald Glenn Panganiban earlier recommended the importation of fresh yellow onion to ensure a sufficient supply for the remainder of this year.

Import volume basis

The BPI placed the volume at 16,000 MT based on the country's monthly per capita consumption. Based on its monitoring of different cold storage warehouses in various regions, the available stock for fresh red onion is at 135,551.40 MT, which is expected to last until March next year.

As for fresh yellow onion, the available stock is at 3,296.50 MT, good only until Aug. 25.

Local red onion retailed from P70 to P150 per kilogram as of Tuesday, lower than P120 to P190 per kg in the same period a year ago, based on the DA's price monitoring.

Local white onion was selling from P80 to P150 per kg, as opposed to last year's P110 to P170 per kg.

Both imported red and white onions are not available in public markets as of this writing.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1977765/da-gives-go-signal-to-import-16000-mt-of-yellow-onions>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Figaro Coffee tree planting 2024: From crop to cup

INQUIRER.net BrandRoom / 12:08 PM August 28, 2024

In a significant stride towards reviving Batangas' rich coffee heritage, the Figaro Foundation, in collaboration with the local government and the Batangas Coffee Federation, hosted the “Figaro Coffee Tree Planting 2024: From Crop to Cup” event. Held in Barangay Malabanan, Balete, Batangas, the event focused on promoting the cultivation of Liberica Coffee—commonly known as Barako—and supporting the local coffee farming community. This initiative aims to rejuvenate Barako Coffee, a native Liberica variety celebrated for its bold flavor and deep cultural roots in the region.



L-R- Mr. Armando Maralit, Ms. Geneva Cruz, Mayor Wilson Maralit, Mr. Ace Azarraga, Ms. Maria Nina M. Maralit

The tree planting initiative aimed to bolster the cultivation of Liberica coffees and extend support to Batangas coffee farmers. Over 100 participants took part, planting more than

1,000 Liberica seedlings donated by the Figaro Coffee Foundation to the Batangas Coffee Federation.

The Figaro Foundation has pledged to conduct biannual maintenance and cleaning of the areas where the coffee seedlings were planted, ensuring their growth and sustainability over the next two years.

The event was graced by prominent figures, including Mr. Ace Azarraga, FCG Brand and Partnership Director; Hon. Wilson Maralit, Mayor of Balete, Batangas; Mr. Arnold Malabataan, Chairman of the Batangas Coffee Federation; Mr. Michael Roma, Representative from the Department of Agriculture; Ms. Meliza Altamirano, Principal of Emilia L. Malabanan Integrated School; Ms. Maria Nina Maralit, Director of Batangas Organic and Natural Farming Agriculture Cooperative (BONFAC); Mr. Armando Maralit, Barangay Captain of Malabanan; as well as celebrities such as Actress and Singer Ms. Geneva Cruz, and Viva Artists Ms. Zsara Llaxamana, Ms. Cristy Imperial, Ms. Sahara Bernales, and Ms. Lea Bernales.

LR- Viva Artist – Ms. Lea Bernales, Ms. Sahara Bernales, Ms. Zsara Llaxamana, Ms. Cristy Imperial

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Mr. Ace Azarraga emphasized the importance of the initiative, stating, “Barako, or Liberica Coffee, is a native coffee found only in the Philippines and is on the brink of

extinction. The Figaro Foundation's mission is to restore the glory of Barako coffee in the Philippines. We are committed to supporting Filipino coffee farmers by providing them with coffee seedlings, expert guidance, and the necessary facilities for sustainable coffee farming."

Mayor Wilson Maralit shared his vision for the province, saying, "We aim to restore Batangas' status as the coffee capital of the Philippines. Together with the Figaro Foundation, we will continue to support the coffee farmers of Batangas."

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by key stakeholders, including Mr. Ace Azarraga, Ms. Maria Nina M. Maralit, Mr. Arnold Malabataan, Mr. Armando Maralit, and celebrity guest Ms. Geneva Cruz. The signing was witnessed by Mayor Wilson Maralit, marking a commitment to the sustainable growth of the coffee sector. This event underscores a collective effort to strengthen the Batangas coffee industry, ensuring that the province remains a significant player in the Philippine coffee scene.

The Batangas Coffee Farmers Federation retains the right to choose the buyers for the coffee beans produced from these trees, with the option to sell to the Figaro Foundation or other interested parties. By empowering farmers with the tools and knowledge they need, this initiative seeks to maintain Batangas' reputation for producing exceptional coffee.

ADVT.

This article is brought to you by Figaro.

[READ NEXT](#)

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/246896/figaro-coffee-tree-planting-2024-from-crop-to-cup>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

DA: ASF vax rollout a go; local pork safe

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:06 AM August 29, 2024



TASTE TEST Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., former Senate President Vicente Sotto III, Agap Rep. Nicanor Briones (4th to 6th from left) grace the launch of “Pinoy Pork is Safe” campaign by the Pork Producers Federation of the Philippines on Wednesday. They led the tasting of “lechon” during an agriculture convention to ease consumers’ worries that local pork is unsafe for consumption amid cases of African swine fever. —Niño Jesus Orbeta

MANILA, Philippines —The Department of Agriculture (DA) is bent on starting the inoculation of hogs in Lobo, Batangas, against African swine fever (ASF) on Friday, with its top official saying that more doses are expected to arrive in the Philippines this weekend.

“We will try our best [to start the vaccination] this Friday. In case of a delay, the schedule might be pushed back by one or two days but the target is to begin it this Friday,”

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said on the sidelines of the Philippine Poultry Show and Idex Philippines 2024 held in Pasay City.

Some 10,000 doses of ASF live vaccines, manufactured by AVAC Vietnam, will be administered to hogs in Lobo, the “ground zero” of swine fever resurgence in the country, which will be provided by the government for free and voluntarily.

Tiu Laurel told reporters another 150,000 vaccine doses, also from Vietnam, are expected to be delivered by this weekend.

According to the World Organization for Animal Health, ASF is a severe viral disease affecting domestic and wild pigs. This highly contagious hemorrhagic viral disease is usually deadly but is not a risk to human health, although it has the capacity to destroy livestock production and lead to economic losses.

Symptoms include fever, loss of appetite, lack of energy, abortions, internal bleeding, with hemorrhages visible on the infected animal’s ears and flanks.

Tiu Laurel said the graft charges filed recently in the Office of the Ombudsman over alleged anomalies in the procurement of ASF vaccines could cause delays in implementing the government-controlled vaccine rollout in Batangas.

Charges were filed against Tiu Laurel and past and current officials of the DA, the Bureau of Animal Industry, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and executives of local vaccine distributor KPP Powers Commodities, claiming “they connived to illegally import, conduct tests and seek product registration of the ASF vaccine.”

ADVERTISEMENT

Based on the complaint, some of them “usurped or took upon themselves” the FDA’s power and authority, and “avoided to seek clearance” from the National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines to import, test and conduct research on the AVAC ASF live vaccine.

Tiu Laurel said he would need to replace several people named in the Ombudsman complaint and appoint who “are willing to do the job.”

“All this is delayed because of him or whoever filed the complaint ... more and more pigs will die or be affected (because of ASF),” he added.

Inspection

DA personnel have inspected a total of 1,963 shipments of live animals and meat products across Metro Manila as of Wednesday to control the spread of this animal disease.

Of these, 113 shipments were returned to their points of origin due to noncompliance with animal health regulations while 13 were subjected to further testing to ensure these were free from diseases.

Some 10 shipments were condemned due to “serious health concerns” while 1,827 shipments were cleared and released after meeting the requirements.

As a result of the ASF outbreak, Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura executive director Jayson Cainglet said the farmgate price of live pigs dropped by P30 to P40 a kilo, resulting in lower prices of related products, as many consumers are afraid of eating pork.

But in the Pasay event, Tiu Laurel expressed his support for the local hog industry, saying that locally produced pork is safe for human consumption.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1977711/da-asf-vax-rollout-a-go-local-pork-safe>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Marcos: Fishing in Cavite may resume, oil spill ops nearing completion

By: [Zacarian Sarao](#) - Reporter / [@zacariansINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 12:40 PM August 28, 2024



File photo shows fishermen processing dried fish at a fishing village in Rosario, Cavite. (INQUIRER / GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE)

MANILA, Philippines — Fishing in Cavite may resume with the extraction of oil from the sunken Motor Tanker (MT) Terranova nearing completion, President Ferdinand “Bongbong” R. Marcos Jr. said on Wednesday during the distribution of aid to those affected by the oil spill.

[Oil spills](#) from sunken or grounded vessels MT Terranova, MTKR Jason Bradley, and MV Mirola 1 recently affected parts of Manila Bay, and coastal areas of Cavite, Bataan, and Bulacan.

“I was just told by our Secretary Kiko [Francis Tiu] Laurel [of the Department of Agriculture] that you may already resume fishing. No more oil spills. They can get on with their livelihood,” Marcos said in Filipino during his speech.



According to Marcos, the government — through the Philippine Coast Guard and various agencies — has successfully contained the oil spill from MT Terranova.

“Our operation for the complete recovery of the oil from the said ship has also begun and we are expected to [finish] it as soon as possible,” said Marcos.

“The estimate of our Coast Guard, including the salvors, is in their view, in their calculation, it is two weeks, the time it will take for the oil to be absorbed from the ship,” he added.

Meanwhile, Marcos also reported that the government is already repairing and fixing the manhole and air vents of Jason Bradley as part of the preparation to make the ship float again for easier extraction.

On the other hand, seawater siphoning is also already being carried out for Mirola 1 while the holes in its hull were being covered.

Despite the welcome development, Marcos assured residents of Cavite that the government remains committed to finding a solution to the problems caused by the oil spill.

“We are also trying to give you renewed strength and hope to overcome this blow, meet [the needs of] more and more Filipinos, and boost the fishing industry of Cavite again,” Marcos said.

The government distributed P5,000 cash aid to selected beneficiaries from the cities of Bacoor and Cavite and the municipalities of Kawit, Noveleta, Rosario, Tanza, Naic, Maragondon, and Ternate.

Marcos also turned over a P161.5 million check to the provincial government of Cavite.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1977521/fwd-marcos-fishing-in-cavite-may-now-resume-oil-spill-extraction-nearing-completion>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Marcos OKs budget strategy to boost jobs, livelihood programs

By: [Zacarian Sarao](#) - Reporter / [@zacariansINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 11:44 AM August 28, 2024



President Ferdinand “Bongbong” R. Marcos, Jr. (Official Facebook page of PCO)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand “Bongbong” R. Marcos Jr. on Wednesday said he approved the implementation of the Program Convergence Budgeting (PCB) to “ensure the effective execution” of livelihood and employment programs.

“I have approved the implementation of the [PCB] for livelihood and employment initiatives to ensure their effective execution,” Marcos said in a Facebook post.

Marcos approved the PCB during a sectoral briefing on Tuesday, according to the Presidential Communications Office (PCO).

The PCO added that the PCB approach focuses on government resources on key programs and projects, which shall be coordinated in a holistic approach across departments or agencies working towards the same goals.

Marcos tasked the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to lead the inter-agency council that will govern the adoption of the PCB approach, including looking at

the budget requirement for livelihood and employment of the beneficiaries, so that no duplication is made.

“What we are trying to do is to cut out the duplications,” Marcos was quoted as saying. “I know there is a need for this. It’s just a question of getting it right,” he added.

The PCB approach was approved per the recommendation of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), which was in line with the results of the rapid assessment the agency conducted on existing livelihood, employment, and feeding programs.

Aside from DOLE, the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Department of Agriculture may also be asked to lead the PCB on livelihood and employment, the DBM said. *(with reports from Arianne Denise Cagsawa, INQUIRER.net intern)*

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1977480/fwd-marcos-approves-convergence-budgeting-for-livelihood-employment-initiatives>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

DepEd, DA chiefs now members of Neda Board

By: [Zacarian Sarao](#) - Reporter / [@zacariansINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 06:19 PM August 28, 2024



| PHOTO: Official website of NEDA / sdg.neda.gov.ph

MANILA, Philippines — The heads of the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) are now members of the National Economic Development Authority (Neda) Board, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said on Wednesday.

According to Balisacan, the inclusion of Education Secretary Sonny Angra and Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. in the Neda Board was decided during a board meeting in Malacñang.

He explained that their inclusion would ensure that the Marcos administration’s priorities in agriculture, food security, and education “are properly attended.”

“The board decided to include the DA and the DepEd secretaries in the Neda Board to ensure that the priorities of this administration with respect to agriculture and food security, as well as education, particularly in the development of skills for a competitive economy are properly attended,” said Balisacan in a chance interview with Palace reporters.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. chairs the Neda Board with Balisacan serving as the vice-chairperson.

Under Executive Order No. 230, the President may revise the membership of the Neda Board “for the effective performance of the Board’s functions through an administrative or memorandum order.”

<https://business.inquirer.net/477047/deped-da-chiefs-now-members-of-neda-board>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Marcos okays additional P3.5B for coconut propagation

By: [Julie M. Aurelio](#) - Reporter / [@JMAurelioINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:38 AM August 29, 2024



FOR REVIVAL The Philippines used to be the world's top producer of coconuts, but it now just ranks second, after Indonesia, as the sector fell into years of neglect. Photo taken at a Philippine Coconut Authority event in Lingayen, Pangasinan, on Thursday. — Pangasinan Provincial Government Facebook photo

MANILA, Philippines — President Marcos has approved an additional P3.5 billion for the coconut planting, replanting and fertilization program next year to support efforts to improve the sector and enable the country to reclaim its position as the world's top producer of the commodity.

In a meeting with officials of the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) in Malacañang on Tuesday, Marcos instructed them to do “whatever is necessary” to improve the production and export of coconuts.

“I have instructed the government agencies central to our coconut industry to do whatever is necessary to reclaim our position as the top producer of coconuts and maintain our status as the leading global exporter. This directive includes the development of the entire value chain and a clear timeline to achieve these objectives,” the President said on his social media accounts.

In a statement, the Presidential Communications Office said Marcos approved an additional P1 billion for the PCA’s massive planting and replanting of coconuts, and P 2.5 billion for its fertilization plan for 2025.

PCA Administrator Dexter Buted informed the Chief Executive that this additional funding would allow the government agency to plant 15.3 million coconut trees next year.

100M palm trees until 2028

The PCA, noting that the last time the Philippines implemented massive coconut planting program was 40 years ago, launched last year the 10-year Philippine Coconut Industry Development Plan (PCIDP) to address the myriad problems affecting the sector, particularly aging coconut palm trees, pests and diseases, poor farming methods and destruction caused by natural calamities.

Under the plan, the government set a goal of planting 100 million coconut palm trees until 2028, or by the end of the Marcos administration, and proposed a P102.02-billion budget for its 10-year implementation.

The 100 million coconut seedlings will be planted across 700,000 hectares of land in order to increase the Philippines’ coconut production by 4.7 billion coconuts, which will be worth P33.1 billion by 2034.

For this year, the PCA is targeting to plant 8.5 million coconut seedlings, followed by 15.3 million coconut seedlings in 2025 and 25.4 million coconut seedlings annually from 2026 to 2028.

The Philippines used to be the world's top producer of coconuts, but slid to second place following years of neglect of the sector.

From 15.86 million metric tons of coconut in 2012, coconut production in the country fell to 13.83 million MT in 2016 before rising to 14.73 million MT in 2018 and 14.93 million MT in 2022, according to the PCA.

While Indonesia is now the top producer of coconuts, producing an average of 17.06 million MT of coconuts from 2017 to 2022, the Philippines is still the world's top exporter of coconuts, and accounted for \$3.22 billion, or 43 percent, of the country's total agriculture exports in 2022.

The Philippines has a total area of 3.6 million hectares planted with coconut palm trees, or about 27 percent of total agricultural land. It has 340.6 million coconut-bearing palm trees capable of producing 14 billion to 15 billion nuts annually.

Big export market

During Tuesday's meeting, the President stressed the importance of increasing efforts in planting coconut seedlings given the coconut industry's potential.

“We still maintain our very high position in terms of coconut products exports, despite the fact that we have neglected the coconut industry for so many years. We're still number one despite the fact that we are really working with very limited raw materials because we haven't replanted. Our trees are old,” Marcos said.

He added: “That's why I'm focusing on the production side and that's what we have to increase. The critical part of that is the replanting.”

The Chief Executive said there is a big market for coconut products and that the industry has not yet reached the market's "large and growing" limit or demand for coconut products.

The President also ordered the PCA to work with the Cooperative Development Authority to consolidate farmers' groups and associations to enable them to implement the massive planting and replanting program.

The Department of Agriculture, for its part, vowed to implement intercropping of coffee, cacao and bananas while coconut farmers are waiting for their coconut seedlings to grow into trees and become productive.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1977767/marcos-okays-additional-p3-5b-for-coconut-propagation>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Vietnam to send its swine fever vaccine to Philippines

Agence France-Presse / 03:49 PM August 28, 2024



Vials of an African swine fever vaccine for pigs are displayed during a presentation of the vaccine in Hanoi on June 3, 2022. Vietnam will send 150,000 doses of its African swine fever vaccine to the Philippines on August 29, 2024, state media said, although it has not yet been approved internationally. FILE PHOTO/Agence France-Presse

HANOI — Vietnam will send 150,000 doses of its African swine fever vaccine to the Philippines on Thursday, state media said, although it has not yet been approved internationally.

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It did not specifically mention Vietnam.

According to Vietnam News Agency, Diep said AVAC had already exported 300,000 doses to the Philippines in 2023. Other state media reports said this batch had been used for an “evaluation”.

The company is seeking approval for its vaccine in India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Myanmar and Nigeria.

A team from the Philippines was in Vietnam earlier in the week to check on the production of the vaccines, he added, according to VNA.

Diep said 2.3 million doses have been used in Vietnam since July 2023.

According to media reports, authorities in Vietnam have been trying to encourage farmers to use the vaccine to prevent African swine fever from spreading among their herds.

The ministry of agriculture and rural development reported in mid July that Vietnam had recorded 34,000 infected cases since the beginning of the year.

AVAC did not immediately respond to a request for comment from AFP.

A 2018 outbreak of African swine fever in China — the world's largest pork producer — caused millions of pigs to be slaughtered to stop its spread.

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/246933/vietnam-to-send-its-swine-fever-vaccine-to-philippines>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Agriculture, Education secretaries appointed NEDA Board members

August 28, 2024 | 8:54 pm



THE secretaries of Agriculture and Education have been made members of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board, NEDA Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan said.

Their membership ensures that the administration’s priorities “with respect to agriculture and food security, as well as education and the development of skills for a competitive economy, are properly attended to,” Mr. Balisacan told reporters at the Palace on Wednesday.

He said the proposed Philippine Civil Service Modernization Project — an “important project for the development of human resource management processes in the public sector” — was also discussed during Wednesday’s NEDA Board meeting.

The Board also approved a request to increase the project cost of the Metro Manila Priority Bridges Seismic Improvement Project and also extend the corresponding implementation period and loan validity of the project.

It seeks to “strengthen the resilience of the transport network in Metro Manila by replacing two major bridges, Lambingan Bridge and Guadalupe Bridge, on the arterial roadways with the improved seismic bridge design specifications,” according to a website post by the Japan International Cooperation Agency, which funds the project.

The Department of Public Works and Highways in April said the seismic improvement project will ultimately help decongest Metro Manila roads.

The Board also tackled the proposed upgrade and expansion of both the Bohol International Airport and Northern Mindanao's Laguindingan International Airport, Mr. Balisacan said.

"We also reported on the progress in the implementation of the 186 infrastructure flagship projects," he said, citing an earlier NEDA statement that 45 projects funded through foreign loans or grants were classified as problematic.

Meanwhile, Mr. Balisacan said NEDA was determining the process for undertaking the review of rice tariffs every four months. Rice import tariffs were cut to 15% following the issuance of Executive Order No. 62, but are subject to periodic review.

"We are already preparing the methodologies on how to undertake that review, so we don't necessarily waste time," he said, adding that NEDA should be able to give the President timely updates. — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/08/28/616706/agriculture-education-secretaries-appointed-neda-board-members/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

PHL to allow yellow onion imports of up to 16,000 MT

August 28, 2024 | 8:53 pm



PIXABAY

THE Department of Agriculture said on Wednesday that it will allow yellow onions imports of up to 16,000 metric tons (MT) until the end of the year.

“We approved it on Monday because our stocks will be depleted, but we still have ample supply of red onions,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. told reporters on the sidelines of a poultry and livestock event.

“Our red onion is good until March. So only a limited quantity of yellow onion will be imported, to stabilize prices,” Mr. Laurel added.

In July, Mr. Laurel extended the import ban on red onion until the end of August, with supply deemed sufficient until February 2025.

He said however that the supply of domestic yellow onions is sufficient only until the end of August.

In a draft memorandum, the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) said it will be issuing sanitary and phytosanitary import certificates (SPSICs) for the 16,000 MT of yellow onion, which is deemed sufficient until the end of 2024.

“With the upcoming holiday season and harvest commencing in January 2025, it is expected that the demand for yellow onion will increase. Given that the supply is very limited, it can lead to an increase of price in the market,” it said.

Mr. Laurel said the import order is timed not to disrupt the market during the harvest early next year.

“By the end of this week or early next week, the imports will come in but in limited quantities. We are doing it in batches, so the market won’t be flooded,” he added.

Mr. Laurel said SPSICs will be issued every two weeks.

The national inventory of yellow onion amounted to 1,642.31 MT as of Aug. 9, according to the BPI. On the other hand, red onion volume was 99,512.1 MT.

The BPI added that the imports were calibrated with reference to monthly per capita consumption, and will serve as a buffer to stabilize market prices.

“Possible extension of the must-arrive date will still be subject to change depending on the availability of stocks and prices,” it added. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/08/28/616705/phl-to-allow-yellow-onion-imports-of-up-to-16000-mt/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

ASF fears scaring consumers away from pork, farmers say

August 28, 2024 | 8:49 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/WALTER BOLLOZOS

THE farmgate price of pork has declined because consumers have been deterred by the surge in African Swine Fever (ASF) cases, farmers said.

“The farmgate price for hogs, unfortunately, dropped by P30 to P40 per kilogram. I hope (this translates) to a drop in market prices,” Jayson H. Cainglet, executive director of the Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura, told reporters on the sidelines of a poultry and livestock event on Wednesday.

A kilo of pork *kasim* (shoulder) was selling for between P260 and P370, while pork *liempo* (belly) fetched P290 to P400 in Metro Manila markets, according to Department of Agriculture (DA) price monitors as of Aug. 28.

He added that hog prices dropped to about P160 to P180 per kilo.

“There are reports that many are avoiding (buying pork),” Mr. Cainglet said, noting that current supply remains ample.

According to the Bureau of Animal Industry, 15 municipalities had active ASF cases across 32 provinces as of Aug. 21. ASF was first detected in the Philippines in 2019.

“It has been with us for the past 3-4 years, *palipat-lipat ang* ASF (ASF is moving around). So, let’s not be afraid of the reports, that’s actually normal for the hog industry,” he added.

The DA has said it will kick off hog vaccinations by Friday, beginning in Batangas where ASF has spiked in recent weeks.

“If there are any delays it might just be for one or two days more, but the target is Friday,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. told reporters.

The department has procured 10,000 doses of the ASF vaccine for Batangas, with about 2,000 expected for deployment by Friday.

He said that the DA procured another 150,000 doses in the next batch of vaccines, arriving this weekend, Mr. Laurel added.

The DA has allocated P350 million to procure 600,000 vaccine doses from Vietnam. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/08/28/616697/asf-fears-scaring-consumers-away-from-pork-farmers-say/>

REMATE:

P20 kada kilo ng bigas posible

August 28, 2024 19:30



MANILA, Philippines – SA KABILA ng pagsusumikap ng administrasyon ni Pangulong Marcos Jr. na mapababa ang presyo ng bigas sa P20 kada kilo patuloy na bigo pa rin ang pamahalaan na maisakatuparan ito.

Patuloy ang pagtaas ng presyo ng bigas mula P35 hanggang P60 pesos kada kilo ito’y dahil na rin umano sa hindi pagiging stable ng sektor ng agrikultura at agricultural product sa bansa.

Ayon kay dating DAR Secretary Bernie Cruz na nakikita nito na makakamit ang pagsasakatuparan ng pagbaba ng presyo ng bigas sa P20 kada kilo sa pamamagitan ng pagpapatupad ng “mega farms project” sa ating mga sakahan.

Sa isang interbyu, sinabi ni Cruz na posibleng maipatupad ang P20 kada kilo ng bigas sa sandaling maisakatuparan ang pagtatayo ng mga “mega

farms” upang pagsama-samahin ang maliliit na lote ng sakahan upang maging “mega farms” para sa produksyon ng palay.

Sinabi pa ni Cruz na ang konsepto ng “Mega Farm” ay isang kumpol ng magkadikit na mga sakahan na pinagsama-sama upang bumuo ng isang malaking plantasyon na may kakayahang gumawa ng malaking bulto ng produktong sakahan upang matugunan ang mga pangangailangan ng mga mamimili.

Si Cruz na siyang proponent ng proyektong “mega farm” na siyang magbibigay sana na malaking hakbang para sa posibleng maibaba ang presyo ng bigas sa P20 kada kilo sa sandaling maipatupad ang mega farms project.

Subalit tila naging pangarap na lamang ang proyekto para sa “mega farm” at para na rin maisakatuparan ang P20 kada kilo ng bigas simula ng mawala si dating Sec. Bernie Cruz.

Nabatid sa pag-aaral na ginawa ng DAR, ang 150,000 ektarya ay maaaring makagawa ng 142 kaban ng palay kada ektarya kada taniman. Kikita ang mga magsasaka ng P76,501.00 taun-taon para sa mga ARB.

Sinabi pa ni Cruz na kung masisimulan ang mega farms project, hindi lamang nito ibababa ang presyo ng bigas sa P20, kundi palalayain din nito ang mga magsasaka mula sa kahirapan. *Santi Celario*

<https://remate.ph/p20-kada-kilo-ng-bigas-possible/>

REMATE:

‘Pinoy Pork is Safe to Eat’ campaign inilunsad

August 28, 2024 12:45



MANILA, Philippines- Ligtas ang pagkain ng karne ng produktong baboy ngayong ber months.

Ito ang inihayag ng sektor ng magbababoy sa gitna ng takot ng publiko sa muling pagtama ng African Swine Fever o ASF.

Kasabay nito ang paglulunsad ng ProPork o “Pinoy Pork is Safe to Eat” Campaign.

Sa nasabing paglulunsad, kumpiyansa si AGAP Partylist Rep. Nicanor Briones na muling tatangkilikin ng taumbayan ang produktong karne ng baboy lalo ngayong papalapit na ang Kapaskuhan.

Sa ginanap na convention, sinabi ni Briones na posibleng makatulong ang pagdating ng bakuna laban sa nasabing sakit.

Aniya, muli niyang iginiit na wala naman talagang epekto sa kalusugan ng tao ang nasabing sakit.

Dahil dito, tiwala ang mambabatas na babalik ang mataas na bentahan ng baboy sa merkado ngayong holiday season.

Giit pa ni Briones, sa kasalukuyan ay mababa ang presyuhan ng pork product sa merkado dahil nasa P150 lamang kada kilo ang farm gate price nito sa ngayon.

Ayon kay DA secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel, sisimulan ang pagbabakuna sa mga baboy sa Biyernes.

Aniya , 10,000 doses ng bakuna para sa ASF ang inangkat ng Pilipinas mula Vietnam para mabakunahan ang mga baboy laban sa virus.

Sinabi ni Tiu na pangunahing babakunahan ang baboy sa mga lugar na apektado ng ASF aprtikular sa Batangas. **Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden**

<https://remate.ph/pinoy-pork-is-safe-to-eat-campaign-inilunsad/>

REMATE:

Traders ng mga baboy na nabuking na positibo sa ASF kakasuhan

August 28, 2024 10:15

MANILA, Philippines- Magsasampa ng kaso ang Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) laban sa traders na sinusubukang ibenta ang African swine fever (ASF)-infected hogs, base sa Department of Agriculture (DA) nitong Martes.

Sa isang panayam, sinabi ni DA Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa na ikinakasa na ng BAI ang mahahalagang dokumento sa paghahain ng mga kaso laban sa sangkot na traders kasunod ng pagkakaharang sa checkpoints sa Metro Manila at mga karatig-lalawigan.

“Kapag pursigido ang gobyerno, mapuputol iyong kabuhayan nila. And eventually, kilala naman sila, iyong mga papel. Hindi sila tatantanan. Unang-una, magpa-file ng kaso,” wika ng opisyal.

Matatandaang naharang ang mga baboy matapos umanong magpresenta ng transporters ng hindi kompleto o mga pekeng dokumento.

Maaaring maharap ang nasabing traders sa kasong paglabag sa Republic Act 10611 o ang Food Safety Act of 2013, dagdag niya.

Sa BAI-led checkpoints sa Luzon, 18 shipments ang naharang at sinuri, nagresulta sa pagkakatukoy sa 430 ASF-infected hogs at sa emergency slaughter ng 46.

Mahigpit na ipinatutupad ng DA ang una at ikalawang border controls katuwang ang local government units (LGUs).

“Kung hindi natin ito na-anticipate, nahuli, may mga ilan dito na shipments talaga papunta ng Norte,” ani De Mesa.

“Ang maganda rito, kahit nakakalusot sila doon sa, kunwari, unang border, kahit papaano, nakalusot pero pagdating dito talaga sa Metro Manila, napipigilan natin yung mga gano’n,” dagdag niya. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/traders-ng-mga-baboy-na-nabuking-na-positibo-sa-asf-kakasuhan/>

REMATE:

Karagdagang budget para sa coconut industry oks kay PBBM

August 28, 2024 08:31



MANILA, Philippines- Inaprubahan ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ang karagdagang budget upang pondohan ang pagpapahusay sa coconut industry para sa susunod na mga taon.

Ayon sa press statement na ipinost ng Presidential Communications Office nitong Martes, gagamitin ang karagdagang budget na P1 bilyon para sa mass replanting at P2.5 bilyon para sa fertilization programs.

Nilalayon ng replanting program na makapagtanim ng halos 100 milyong coconut trees pagsapit ng 2028 sa mahigit 700,000 ektarya ng lupain. Samantala, gagamitin ng Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) ang kanilang budget upang bumili ng fertilizer para sa nasabing programa.

“I’m focusing on the production side [of the coconut industry] and that’s what we have to increase. The critical part of that is the replanting,” wika ni Marcos.

Sinabi ni PCA Administrator Dexter Buted na gagamitin ang karagdagang pondo upang makapagtanim ng kabuuang 15.3 milyong bagong puno ng niyog pagsapit ng 2025.

Target ng PCA na makapagtanim ng 8.5 milyong punla ngayong taon, 15.3 milyong punla sa 2025, at 25.4 milyon kada taon mula 2026 hanggang 2028.

“That’s why we still maintain our very high position in terms of coconut products exports because despite the fact that we have neglected the coconut industry over so many years, we still, I think we’re number one pa rin,” ani Pangulong Marcos.

“And despite the fact that we are really working with very limited raw material because nga hindi nag-replant puro matanda na ‘yung mga trees natin. That’s why this replanting is important,” dagdag niya.

Magsasagawa rin ang Department of Agriculture ng intercropping ng kape, cacao at saging, habang hinihintay na lumago ang mga puno. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/karagdagang-budget-para-sa-coconut-industry-oks-kay-pbbm/>

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL:

Smart Basco LOQALINK Launched to Boost Batanes Agriculture

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 Journal Online

On August 19, 2024, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) RO2 thru the PSTO Batanes, in partnership with Isabela State University, Batanes State College, and the Local Government Unit of Basco, launched the SMART BASCO LOQALINK project at the Basco Lighthouse. This groundbreaking initiative aims to transform Batanes particularly the municipality of Basco into a smart and sustainable community by providing data-driven solutions to boost the agriculture sector.

The Digital Business Locator (DBL) for Agriculture Supply and Demand Information System (LOQALINK) is a key component of the project. It will leverage technology to identify potential business opportunities, optimize agricultural production, and improve market access for local farmers.

The launch event was attended by key government officials, including DOST Secretary Renato U. Solidum Jr., PCIEERD Director Ernesto Paringit, Basco Mayor German A. Caccam, Dr. Betchie E. Aguinaldo, Project Leader, DISC-TBI & Director, BIRDC, DOST Region 02 Director Virginia G. Bilgera and other representatives from DOST, the provincial government, and Batanes State College.

“This project is a testament to our commitment to empowering rural communities through science and technology,” said DOST Secretary Renato U. Solidum, Jr. “By providing farmers with the necessary tools and information, we hope to enhance their livelihoods and contribute to the overall development of Batanes“, he added.

A pledge of commitment was signed by all partners to solidify their collaboration in achieving the project’s goals.

LOQALINK will undergo several phases, including goal setting, data analysis, action planning, data mapping, pilot implementation, and communication. The project is expected to result in integrated information systems, increased support programs, enhanced government capabilities, and improved access to government services.

<https://journal.com.ph/smart-basco-loqalink-launched-to-boost-batanes-agriculture/>

Coco tree planting budget approved

By Catherine S. Valente

August 29, 2024

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has approved an additional P1 billion budget for the project of the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) to plant 100 million coconut trees all over the country, Malacañang said Tuesday.

In the same meeting, Marcos also approved the P2.5 billion increase for PCA's fertilization program funding.

"So that's why I'm focusing on the production side and that's what we have to increase. The critical part of that is the replanting," the President said.

Marcos said the market for coconut products is large and growing and has yet to reach its limits.

PCA Administrator Dexter Buted said the additional funding would enable them to plant the 15.3 million trees in 2025.

Under the Philippine Coconut Industry Development Plan 2024-2034, the PCA was mandated to plant/replant a total of 100 million coconut seedlings on 700,000 hectares of land across the country.

The initiative was meant to increase coconut production by 4.7 billion, valued at P33.1 billion by 2034.

The project would be implemented in phases: 8.5 million seedlings in 2024, 15.3 million in 2025, and 25.4 million every year from 2026 to 2028.

The Department of Agriculture would implement intercropping while farmers wait for the trees to bear fruit. Among the crops to be planted include coffee, cacao and bananas.

The Philippine coconut industry has contributed \$3.22 billion to the country's export earnings in 2022 or 43 percent of the country's total agricultural exports.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/29/news/national/coco-tree-planting-budget-approved/1967440>

Vietnam to send its swine fever vaccine to PH

By Agence France-Presse

August 29, 2024

HANOI — Vietnam will send 150,000 doses of its African swine fever vaccine to the Philippines on Thursday, state media said, although it has not yet been approved internationally.

The illness — which does not affect humans — is highly contagious and fatal for pigs, and an outbreak is potentially devastating for the pork industry, experts say.

The shipment of the vaccine, developed by AVAC Vietnam (AVAC), is part of 600,000 doses ordered by the Philippine government, Vietnam News Agency quoted the company's general director Nguyen Van Diep as saying.

Vietnam approved two African swine fever vaccines for domestic use in July 2023, saying it was the first country to do so.

But neither of the vaccines has been approved internationally.

In October 2023, the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) issued a statement warning veterinary authorities and the pig industry of the "risk from use of substandard vaccines." It did not specifically mention Vietnam.

According to Vietnam News Agency, Diep said AVAC had already exported 300,000 doses to the Philippines in 2023. Other state media reports said this batch had been used for an "evaluation."

The company is seeking approval for its vaccine in India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Myanmar and Nigeria.

A team from the Philippines was in Vietnam earlier in the week to check on the production of the vaccines, he added, according to VNA.

Diep said 2.3 million doses have been used in Vietnam since July 2023.

According to media reports, authorities in Vietnam have been trying to encourage farmers to use the vaccine to prevent African swine fever from spreading among their herds.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development reported in mid-July that Vietnam recorded 34,000 infected cases since the beginning of the year.

AVAC did not immediately respond to a request for comment from AFP.

A 2018 outbreak of African swine fever in China — the world's largest pork producer — caused millions of pigs to be slaughtered to stop its spread.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/29/news/national/vietnam-to-send-its-swine-fever-vaccine-to-ph/1967438>

32 provinces affected by ASF

By Janine Alexis Miguel

August 29, 2024

THE number of provinces with active cases of African swine fever (ASF) increased to 32 while the affected barangay rose to 458, the Department of Agriculture (DA) reported.

Data from DA's Bureau of Animal Industry showed that the areas with active cases of the disease rose compared to June, which only had 12 affected provinces and 32 barangay (villages).

"The number [of affected areas] really increased. We can see on June 7 there were only 32 barangay with active cases [and] it gradually went up. By July, it was 150 and by early August, it had reached 251," Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said on Tuesday.

The most affected provinces are Batangas, Occidental Mindoro and North Cotabato.

As of August 21, the DA has identified 87 barangay in North Cotabato, 69 in Mindoro and 66 in Batangas with active ASF cases.

Other provinces with reported active cases of ASF are La Union, Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Bulacan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Cavite, Laguna, Quezon, Rizal, Marinduque, Oriental Mindoro, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Masbate, Aklan, Cebu, Negros Oriental, Leyte, Samar, Zamboanga del Sur, Misamis Oriental, Davao Occidental, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur and Basilan.

In response, de Mesa said that the department will start ASF vaccinations earlier than planned, starting August 30 in Batangas.

The first batch of vaccination aims to roll out around 2,000 doses of AVAC ASF Live vaccine, the first ASF vaccine in the Philippines from Vietnam and approved by the Food and Drug and Administration for regulated use by the government.

The rise in ASF has been attributed to several factors, including the start of the wet season which helps the virus spread through flooding in areas where infected pigs are buried and inadequate biosecurity measures.

Despite concerns on the hog population, the DA official assured the public that pork supply remains sufficient in the country.

Citing data from the National Meat Inspection Service, de Mesa said that the volume of frozen pork in cold storage facilities increased marginally from 55,911 metric tons to 56,000 MT. He noted that the majority of the volume was imported accounting 98.3 percent while the rest are local meat.

The department expressed optimism that the country's meat inventory will meet the demand, even during the holiday season.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/29/regions/32-provinces-affected-by-asf/1967485>

THE MANILA TIMES

16K MT of onion imports allowed

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) is set to import 16,000 metric tons of yellow onions to address the supply shortage that is anticipated for the rest of the year.

A memorandum from the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) said that the measure also aims to prevent significant increases in onion prices, especially during the upcoming peak demand period.

"I approved on Monday the importation of white or yellow onions because based on our estimate, stocks were depleted," Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said on Wednesday.



Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. Photo from Department of Agriculture

Assessment of onion stocks made by the BPI from July 9 to August 2 showed that the current supply of fresh yellow onions stood at 3,296.6 metric tons, which is expected to last until Aug. 25, 2024.

"With the upcoming holiday season and harvest season will commence on January 2025, it is expected that demand for fresh yellow onions will increase," the BPI said.

"Given that supplies for this commodity is very limited, it can result to increase of price in the market," it added.

The BPI will issue Sanitary and Phytosanitary Import Clearances for the importation of yellow onions to ensure sufficient supply until the new harvest season as a means to mitigate the problem.

In order to avoid overlapping with the domestic harvest, the BPI assured that the last shipment of the imported yellow onions is scheduled to arrive by Dec. 31, 2024.

Tiu Laurel said that the first batch of the imported onions will arrive by the end of this week or early next week.

He added that shipments will be made by batch to avoid flooding of supply in the market.

The DA said that it will review the import plan periodically, and adjustments will be made based on market conditions and stock availability.

Supply of red onions, meanwhile, remains stable at 135,551.4 MT, enough to last until March 2025.

In July, the DA announced the extension of onion import ban until this month given more than adequate domestic supply, and said imports would be done "only if necessary."

Price monitoring by the DA showed that as of August 27, red onions were being sold at P70 to P150 a kilo while white onions were priced at P80 to P150 a kilo.

Prices had risen to around P700 per kilo in late 2022 and early 2023 due to insufficient domestic supply and delayed imports.

This year, the area planted with onions was said to have increased by around 40 percent, with Central Luzon accounting for 10,388 hectares.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/29/business/top-business/16k-mt-of-onion-imports-allowed/1967490>

P3.5B approved for coconut industry

By Jocelyn Montemayor

August 29, 2024



Revitalization. The Marcos administration is focusing on the production side of the coconut industry, the critical part of which is replanting. (DA Photo)

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday approved a P3.5 billion budget for the ongoing program of the government to plant 100 million coconut trees by 2028 and reclaim the Philippines' position as the top producer of coconuts and leading global exporter.

Marcos gave his approval during the sectoral meeting in Malacañang following the presentation of a detailed plan to develop the coconut industry in all areas of the value chain, together with the necessary funding and the timeline to accomplish its targets.

Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) administrator Dexter Buted said P1 billion would go to the planting and replanting program of coconut trees, while P2.5 billion will be for the fertilization programs of the coconut industry in 2025.

The PCA aims to plant 15.3 million trees in 2025, out of the 100 million targeted for 2028.

Under the Philippine Coconut Industry Development Plan 2024-2034, the industry aims to plant 100 million coconut seedlings in 700,000 hectares of land by 2028 all over the country to increase coconut production by 4.7 billion, valued at P33.1 billion by 2034.

Marcos said his administration is focusing more on the production side and “the critical part of that is the replanting.”

“I have instructed the agencies central to our coconut industry to do whatever is necessary to reclaim our position as the top producer of coconuts and maintain our status as the leading global exporter. This directive includes the development of the entire value chain and a clear timeline to achieve these objectives,” he said in a social media post.

He added with a big market for coconut products, he expects the private sector to buy all the supply “because the market is so large and growing” and the industry has not reached the market’s limit on coconut demand.

The Philippine coconut industry has contributed \$3.22 billion to the country’s export earnings in 2022 which is 43 percent of the country’s total agricultural exports.

Program Convergence Budgeting

Marcos, on Tuesday, also approved the implementation of the Program Convergence Budgeting (PCB) for livelihood and employment initiatives in the country and the creation of an inter-agency council that would govern it.

The creation of the inter-agency council stemmed from the proposal of the Department of Budget and Management.

Marcos tapped the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) secretary to head the PCB, which shall focus on government resources on key programs and projects that shall be coordinated in a holistic approach across departments or agencies working towards the same goals.

It will also review the budget requirement for livelihood and employment of the beneficiaries to prevent duplication.

“What we are trying to do is to cut out the duplications. I know there is a need for this. It’s just a question of getting it right,” Marcos said.

Aside from DOLE, the Department of Social Welfare and Development or the Department of Agriculture may also be asked to lead the PCB.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/p3-5b-approved-for-coconut-industry/

Despite EO 62, rice price dip slow—Neda

Samuel P. Medenilla

August 29, 2024

DESPITE implementation of Executive Order (EO) 62 which reduced the tariff for rice to 15 percent, the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) said the pace of the decline in the prices of the staple is still “slow.”

Citing data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), Neda Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan said the reduction in the retail price of rice has been gradual.

“But hopefully as the world rice market situation improves, and also stakeholders are able to adjust...we will see improvements [in the price of rice],” Balisacan told Palace reporters in a chance interview last Wednesday.

In June, President Ferdinand Marcos issued EO 62, which reduced the tariff for rice to 15 percent from 35 percent to ease prices.

Rice and other cereals and cereal products are still among the main contributors to food inflation as of July, according to PSA.

Balisacan said it will take some time before the impact of EO 62 is felt.

However, he said the current tariff rate for rice will be reviewed by November.

“We are monitoring the situation and I think that our team, that committee, that inflation and market outlook committee looking into the market situation for the different agricultural products will come out with the report soon [for rice],” he said.

Price trends

IN its market price monitoring report in Metro Manila, the Department of Agriculture (DA) reported that the average weekly price of imported well-milled and regular milled rice in the third week of June reached P53.43 per kilogram (kg) and P49.78 per kg, respectively.

The said prices improved to P52.60 per kg (well-milled) and P49.09 per kg (regular milled) in July, before the price for well-milled rice slightly rose to P53.04 per kg. For regular milled rice, it continued to P47.08 per kg this month.

For local rice, the average weekly price for well-milled rice also consistently dropped from P53.43 per kg last June, to P52.60 per kg and P53.04 per kg this month.

The same trend was also observed for regular milled rice in the last two months.

It started at P49.24 per kg last June, and was reduced to P47.88 per kg in July. This month, it reached P47.58 per kg.

Balisacan said rice prices will continue to drop as long as the impact of La Niña, which is projected to start in the last quarter of the year, will be minimal.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/29/despite-eo-62-rice-price-dip-slow-neda/>

Liveweight pork price dips P40 a kilo on fears over ASF

Ada Pelonia
August 29, 2024

THE liveweight price of pork declined by as much as P40 per kilo due to the scare caused by the African swine fever, according to the broad agriculture sector coalition Sinag.

“Our liveweight, unfortunately, saw a drop in farmgate of P30 to P40 pesos [per kilo],” Sinag executive director Jayson Cainglet told reporters on the sidelines of a poultry and livestock event in Pasay City on Wednesday.

“The report we got showed many people are avoiding pork for now,” he added, partly in Filipino.

According to Cainglet, the current liveweight price of pork ranged from P160 to P180 per kilo.

However, he hoped that the public’s concerns would be allayed through the government and stakeholders’ campaigns that ensured the safety of consuming local pork.

“As has been said, with the activity we did today, we hope our countrymen won’t be scared, because Pinoy pork is safe to eat, and fresh and delicious,” Cainglet said.

He also noted that local pork will undergo a series of inspections and acquire a certificate that would ensure they are safe for public consumption.

Data from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) showed 458 barangays have active ASF cases as of August 21, thrice the number recorded on July 26 in 150 barangays.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) will begin the vaccination of hogs on Friday to protect them from the deadly swine disease. The government will begin the inoculation in Lobo, Batangas.

The DA said Batangas is currently ground zero in the latest resurgence of ASF, the virus that has devastated the local swine industry since its first outbreak in 2019.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. also announced that a second batch of about 150,000 doses ASF vaccines would arrive this weekend. The department initially procured 10,000 doses of the vaccine.

“We also have a procurement of up to 150,000 doses in the next batch... it might arrive this weekend,” Laurel told reporters.

Meanwhile, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Constante Palabrica recently said that the price of pork would not increase due to the public’s hesitance to eat it.

“Hindi naman aakyat ang presyo ng baboy dahil nga ang nangyayari ngayon ay may scare to eat pork kaya tumaas ang presyo ng manok,” Palabrica said.

In terms of pork supply, Palabrica said there were many areas that could still supply this in the market.

“The supply is not that acute as to affect our pork supply in the market,” he said, partly in Filipino.

“We have imported pork that can balance in case of a short supply in the local market.”

Based on DA’s latest price monitoring, the prevailing price of pork ham and pork belly in Metro Manila markets as of August 28 was P320 and P380, respectively.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/29/liveweight-pork-price-dips-p40-a-kilo-on-fears-over-asf/>

Study: Children at risk of exposure to harmful pesticides in rice

Bless Aubrey Ogerio
August 29, 2024

Filipinos, particularly children, are at risk of exposure to harmful pesticides in the rice they eat regularly, according to a study conducted by the Department of Science and Technology's Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI).

The study, titled "Dietary Exposure of Filipinos to Pesticide Residues in Rice (*Oryza sativa*) Using National Theoretical Maximum Daily Intake (NTMDI) Approach," examined the dietary exposure of Filipinos to 71 approved pesticide-active ingredients in well-milled rice.

The researchers found that exposure to three pesticides—thiram, isoprocarb and carbofuran—exceeded the acceptable daily intake for all Filipino population groups. Children (3–5 years old) and infants (0–35 months) were shown to be especially sensitive because of their lower body weights and higher rice consumption with their body sizes.

Thiram, a widely used fungicide in agriculture, was identified as the most dangerous due to its high exposure levels. The European Food Safety Authority has categorized it as a probable human carcinogen with neurotoxic effects; yet, still widely used globally.

Isoprocarb and carbofuran, both insecticides, showed potentially hazardous levels. Despite being outlawed or heavily restricted in many countries, including the United States and Europe, due to their potential to harm the nervous system, these are still used in the country.

Despite the study's analysis that most pesticides were mostly under safe levels, the results highlighted the need for more refined dietary exposure assessments and potential changes to present pesticide regulations in the Philippines.

The study's authors, however, said the NTMDI approach may overestimate actual exposure, and the use of outdated food consumption data from 2013 could limit the study's relevance to current conditions.

By using information from the 2013 National Nutrition Survey, which included almost 20,000 individuals and covered 17 regions, the researchers assessed the possible health hazards related to these pesticide residues.

Based on information on food consumption, maximum residue limits and body weight, the researchers computed the possible intake of pesticide residues using the NTDMI approach.

A 2015 FNRI survey found that the average Filipino consumes roughly 290 grams of rice daily. According to estimates from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, pests cause 20 to 40 percent of the world's annual crop production loss.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/29/study-children-at-risk-of-exposure-to-harmful-pesticides-in-rice/>

Government sets aside P3.5B for coconut replanting, fertilization

Samuel P. Medenilla
August 29, 2024

The government has allocated P3.5 billion for the replanting and fertilization program of the coconut industry for fiscal year 2025.

The additional funding was announced by President Ferdinand R. Marcos during a sectoral meeting in Malacañang last Tuesday.

The government will allot P1 billion for the planting of 100 million new coconut trees and P2.5 billion for fertilization initiatives.

Marcos said the country's coconut trees are aging and have become less productive.

“And despite the fact that we are really working with very limited raw material because we are not replanting so our trees are already old. That is why replanting is important.”

The Philippine coconut industry contributed \$3.22 billion to the country's export earnings in 2022. Coconut exports contributed an average of 35 percent to the country's total agricultural export earnings from 2013 to 2022.

PCA Administrator Dexter Buted said the agency will start planting 8.5 million coconut seedlings this year. With the P1-billion budget, the PCA will plant 15.3 million seedlings in 2025.

The agency will work with the Cooperative Development Authority to consolidate farmers' groups and associations to enable them to implement the government's planting/replanting program.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) will also implement intercropping while farmers wait for the trees to become productive. Among the crops that will be planted are coffee, cacao, and bananas.

Last June, PCA said it expects a slight increase in coconut oil exports this year on strong demand.

“Yung ating oil ngayon ay nagagamit na sa biodiesel at yung aviation fuel malapit na [Our oil now is being used in biodiesel, and we’re close to doing the same for aviation fuel],” PCA Administrator Dexter Buted told reporters in an interview.

Despite the adverse impact of El Niño, Buted said coconut production may rise by 3 to 5 percent this year.

Data from the World Bank showed that coconut oil from January to December last year averaged \$1,075 per metric ton (MT), lower than the \$1,635 per MT recorded in 2022.

In the fourth quarter of 2023 alone, coconut oil averaged \$1,090 per MT, down from the previous year’s \$1,147 per MT.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/29/government-sets-aside-p3-5b-for-coconut-replanting-fertilization/>

CA affirms ruling against Bt eggplant, Golden Rice

Joel R. San Juan

August 29, 2024

The Court of Appeals (CA) has upheld its April ruling which mandated the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) to cease and desist from the commercial propagation of Bt eggplant and Golden Rice.

The CA, however, granted the appeal of PhilRice through the Office of the Solicitor General to remove one item in the dispositive portion of its decision which enjoins any application for the contained use, field testing, direct use as food or feed, or processing, commercial propagation, and importation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

The appellate court said only the circumstances, facts, and issues covering Golden Rice and Bt eggplant were considered in rendering the April 17, 2024 decision. Other applicants for the contained use, field testing, direct use as food or feed, or processing, commercial propagation, and importation of other GMOs were not impleaded in the petition and were not given the chance to be heard.

“Lest we be accused of violating a fundamental right, the deletion of Item (8) of the dispositive portion of the assailed decision is in order. Concomitantly, the petitioners’ prayer to modify Item (8) cannot be countenanced, given that a decision or judgment rendered without due process is void for lack of jurisdiction,” the CA said in the 33-page amended decision issued by the its Former Fourth Division through Associate Justice Jennifer Joy Ong.

The CA, however, reiterated that it found no valid reason to reverse its April decision granting the privilege of the writs of kalikasan and continuing mandamus in favor of petitioners led by Greenpeace Southeast Asia and the Magsasaka At Siyentipiko para sa Pag-Unlad ng Agrikultura (Masipag) against UPLB and PhilRice.

In its April ruling, the CA specifically directed UPLB “to cease and desist from commercially propagating and conducting activities relating to Bt Eggplant under the Biosafety Permit issued for such.”

It also revoked the Biosafety Permit for Commercial Propagation of Golden Rice of respondent Philippine Rice Research Institute.

The CA ordered PhilRice “to cease and desist from commercially propagating and conducting activities relating to Golden Rice under the Biosafety Permit issued in its favor.”

It directed the Department of Agriculture, Department of Environment and Natural Resource, Department of Health and the Bureau of Plant Industry to strengthen risk assessment procedures and promulgate mechanisms for the monitoring of all activities conducted under the rules governing applications involving GMOs.

In upholding its April ruling, the CA insisted that the grant of the writs of kalikasan and continuing mandamus was proper.

“This Court stands by its earlier ruling that the precautionary principle applies to the instant case. We reiterate that the three (3) conditions for the precautionary principle to apply—uncertainty, the possibility of irreversible harm, and the possibility of serious harm—are present in this case,” the CA said. The appellate court also held that there is a lack of “full scientific certainty” on the effects—good or bad—of GMO products and that evidence presented before it necessitates the application of the “precautionary principle.”

“There is no evidence that would show that GMOs do not pose greater risks than their conventional counterparts, especially considering that the respondent regulators fell short of conducting the risk management and monitoring **mechanisms required under the JDCs [Joint Department Circulars].**”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/29/ca-affirms-ruling-against-bt-eggplant-golden-rice/>

PHL to import ‘limited quantity’ of yellow onions

Ada Pelonia
August 29, 2024



The Philippines will import 16,000 metric tons (MT) of yellow onions as domestic supply is depleted, according to Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

Laurel said he approved last Monday the purchase of imported yellow onions.

“I approved the importation because our stock of yellow onion is depleted. We will import a limited quantity which will stabilize prices. The volume will arrive in batches,” he told reporters on the sidelines of a poultry and livestock event held in Pasay City last Wednesday.

“The importation scheme is meant to ensure that the arrival of yellow onions from abroad will not affect (the prices) of the existing stocks of red onions.”

He said the Department of Agriculture (DA) wants all imported onions to arrive by December, before farmers start harvesting local onions.

Data from the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) showed that the country's yellow onion inventory as of August 9 was at 1,642 metric tons (MT). The inventory of red onion, however, was much higher at 99,512 MT.

Laurel said the stocks of red onion would last until the first quarter of next year. "Our inventory of red onion is good until March of next year."

The DA extended the import ban on red onions until August owing to ample supply.

With a monthly consumption of 17,000 MT, the country's red onion stocks could last for months.

"We have ample stocks. If cheap imported onions get into the country, it will further drive down prices. We also need to consider the hardship of our onion farmers," Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said in a mix of English and Filipino.

Based on the DA's latest price monitoring, the price of white onions in Metro Manila ranged from P80 to P150 per kilogram.

The Philippines has been consistently importing fresh onions since 1996 to be able to meet its annual demand for the commodity as local production remains insufficient, based on historical data from the Philippine Statistics Authority.

Last December 2023, the government authorized the importation of fresh onions to avert a repeat of the spike in prices seen in the latter part of 2022, when red onions skyrocketed to as much as P700 per kilogram due to a supply shortfall.

The Philippines suffered an onion "crisis" as the state limited the entry of imported stocks and prioritized domestic producers. Image credits: [PHOTO FROM WWW.DA.GOV.PH](http://WWW.DA.GOV.PH)

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/29/phl-to-import-limited-quantity-of-yellow-onions/>

Indonesian palm oil output set to fall on weather, old trees

BusinessMirror
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A WORKER of PT Gunung Sejahtera Ibu Pertiwi, an unit of Astra Agro Lestari, harvests oil palm tree fruits at the company plantation in West Kotawaringin regency, Kalimantan, Indonesia, on Tuesday, September 19, 2023.

The outlook for Indonesia's palm oil harvest has dimmed as dry weather and aging trees crimp production in the world's top grower, which will likely tighten global supply and keep prices elevated.

Output of the tropical oil this year is expected to be flat or as much as 5 percent lower than 2023, according to forecasts from the Indonesian Palm Oil Association and the Indonesian Palm Oil Board. The industry groups, which represent producers and refiners, had both predicted an increase earlier this year.

The United States estimates global palm oil reserves are heading for the lowest level in three years, with the world's second-largest grower—Malaysia—also facing supply issues due to old trees and a labor shortage. The tropical oil is used in a wide range of products from soap to ice cream and fuels.

Indonesia produced a record 54.84 million tons of palm oil in 2023, according to data from the country's palm oil association, following three years of declining output. The industry group, known as Gapki, estimated output this year of 52 million to 53 million tons.

About a third of Indonesia's key palm oil growing regions have seen lower than normal rainfall in July, including Sumatra and parts of Kalimantan, said M. Hadi Sugeng, the secretary general of Gapki. The trend is expected to continue this month, he added. The group forecast production will be steady to 5 percent lower this year, compared with a February projection for a 5-percent increase.

The US Foreign Agricultural Service forecast Indonesian palm oil output from January to June declined by 2 percent from the same period last year, according to a report earlier this month. Drought caused trees to develop more male flowers and decreased the volume of fresh fruit bunches, it said.

Benchmark palm oil futures were 1.1 percent higher at 3,966 ringgit at the midday break in Kuala Lumpur, extending gains for a fifth session—the longest rally since early July. Concerns about tight supply are supporting prices, said Paramalingam Supramaniam, a director at Selangor-based broker Pelindung Bestari.

Old plantations

Maturing trees continues to be a persistent problem for the industry. For many of the nation's smallholders, their plantations are older than 25 years and they desperately need to be replenished to help boost output, said Sahat Sinaga, the acting chairman of the Indonesian Palm Oil Board.

Fresh fruit production has slipped to as low as 700 kilograms a hectare at some plantations, from 830 kilograms, Sinaga said. The board estimated Indonesian output this year would drop by 3 percent, compared with a January forecast for a gain.

"I am deeply concerned, Indonesia's glory in palm oil could fade away if no one realizes this issue," Sinaga said, referring to aging plantations. Bloomberg News

Image credits: **MUHAMMAD FADLI/BLOOMBERG**

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/28/indonesian-palm-oil-output-set-to-fall-on-weather-old-trees/>

ABANTE TONITE

Agri chief inaprub import pa more ng sibuyas

August 28, 2024

Pinayagan ng Department of Agriculture (DA) ang pag-angkat ng dilaw na sibuyas para panatilihin matatag ang presyo nito sa mga palengke ngayong papalapit ang holiday season.

Kinumpirma ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. na binigyan ng pahintulot ang Bureau of Plant Industry para ituloy ang pag-angkat ng 16,000 tonelada ng mga dilaw na sibuyas.

Sa panayam ng media, sinabi ni Laurel na inaprubahan niya noong Lunes, Agosto 26, ang pag-angkat ng sibuyas dahil paubos na ang stock nito sa bansa.

Gayunman, nilinaw ni Laurel na limitado lang pinayagan na imported sibuyas.

Aniya pa, inaasahang darating ang mga imported na sibuyas bago ang peak season ng anihan sa bansa sa susunod na taon.

Tiniyak naman ni Laurel na mayroong sapat na stock ng pulang sibuyas ang bansa.

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/08/28/agri-chief-inaprub-import-pa-more-ng-sibuyas/>