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MANILA BULLETIN:

Agricultural damage from 'Carina', habagat hits P3.04 billion

BY JEL SANTOS

Aug 4, 2024 02:55 PM



(MB FILE PHOTO)

Weeks after Typhoon "Carina" and the southwest monsoon or habagat wreaked havoc all over the country, the damage of the weather disturbances to the Philippines' agricultural sector has reached a whopping P3.04 billion.

Based on the bulletin of the Department of Agriculture (DA), a total of 93,156 farmers and fisherfolk have been affected.

The regions covered in the damage estimate of the agency were Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, Western and Eastern Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Soccsksargen and Caraga.

Per the DA, the country's irrigation systems incurred the most damage from the agriculture sector, totaling ₱1.36 billion. This translates to 44.62 percent of the total damage estimate.

Second to it was rice, which experienced a volume loss of 16,710 metric tons (MT), amounting to ₱816.53 million.

It was followed by the fisheries sector which endured ₱577.53 million in damage, affecting the livelihood of 4,489 fishers. The agency noted that the estimate includes produce, fishing gears, fish ponds, "payao," motorized boats, dikes, and gates.

Meanwhile, corn suffered a volume loss of 7,635 MT, resulting in a total damage of ₱153.53 million.

High-value crops, which includes vegetables, spices, legumes, and fruits, recorded a volume loss of 2,486 MT with a total value of ₱117.99 million.

The agriculture department stated that a total of 15,245 livestock have died due to the weather disturbances, having damage of ₱17.09 million.

To cushion the damage of Carina and habagat, the DA has distributed 64,404 bags of rice and 45,307 bags of corn seeds worth ₱301.72 million.

It has also given vegetable seeds worth ₱17.63 million to devastated farmers

According to the DA, it has allocated ₱6.31 million worth of biocontrol measures.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has provided fingerlings, fishing gears and paraphernalia to fishers.

The agriculture department also made available the Survival and Recovery (SURE) Loan Program through the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC), offering up to ₱25,000 in interest-free loans, repayable over three years.

The Quick Response Fund (QRF) was also utilized for rehabilitation efforts, with additional funds allocated via the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/4/agricultural-damage-from-carina-habagat-hits-p3-04-billion>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Survey shows positive public sentiment for PBBM's 3rd SONA

BY ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

Aug 4, 2024 08:33 AM



President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. delivers his third State of the Nation Address (SONA) (Noel Pabalate)

President Marcos' third State of the Nation Address (SONA) has received favorable social media feedback, marking a significant turnaround from the overwhelmingly negative response his speech garnered last year, based on the EON Group and Tangere's 2024 wrap-up report.

From the monitoring and comparative analysis conducted within 24 hours of the President's speech, the report revealed that this year's SONA achieved a 64.3 percent positive sentiment, a significant improvement from the 84 percent negative sentiment observed last year.

Further analysis found that the significant improvement in the public perception of this year's SONA, marked by a rise in favorable views and a reduction in criticism, is partly attributed to the President's decisive action to ban Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGOs).

The report showed that the positive social media sentiment for President Marcos' third SONA is echoed in Tangere's Nationwide Online Survey conducted from July 22 to 24, 48 hours after the address.

The survey found that 58.5 percent of respondents were satisfied with the President's statements.

Likewise, six out of 10 respondents believed the programs cited would address national issues. The EON Group and Tangere's analysis also identified agriculture, education, and health as the top three themes of the SONA.

However, the analysis bared that despite extensive discussions on agriculture, education, and health, the topics that generated the most positive sentiment on social media were the rightful claim to the West Philippine Sea, the definitive ban on POGOs, and the emphasis on a bloodless drug war.

Released as a two-part series, the 2024 SONA Wrap-Up Report includes “Part 2: Deep Dive and Groundswell,” which offers an in-depth analysis of the administration's key achievements and future goals.

The earlier released “Part 1: Quick Wrap-Up” provides an overview of the major pronouncements, highlighting the President’s commitment to critical areas, such as agriculture and food security, healthcare reform, education, climate change adaptation, economic development, and infrastructure enhancement.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/4/survey-shows-positive-public-sentiment-for-pbbm-s-3rd-sona>

Paulit-ulit



[Best Practices - Brian Poe Llamanzares](#) - The Philippine Star

August 4, 2024 | 12:00am

Our flooding problem needs to be fixed. We just spent the last week-and-a-half going all over Metro Manila and nearby provinces distributing relief goods. I really want to thank all the volunteers, government workers, medical professionals and frontliners who came to help their fellow Filipinos in need, despite being victims themselves. This is truly the spirit of bayanihan, but this isn't sustainable. Our resilience is unparalleled but what we need are reforms.

Last year in August 2023, Super Typhoon Egay devastated the Philippines. Official government figures now indicate the damage to infrastructure, agriculture, fisheries, livestock, poultry and others at a staggering P15.318 billion, and 30 deaths. As if we completely forgot the lessons of barely a year ago, last month, right after the State of the Nation Address, Metro Manila was submerged and paralyzed. Super Typhoon Carina's damage to Philippine agriculture is currently approximately P1.21 billion, and P4.09 billion to infrastructure. Worst, we lost the lives of 40 Filipinos.

Senator Joel Villanueva delivered a rousing speech last July 29 on our perennial unsolved flashflooding problem, and I could not help but agree. Last year with Typhoon Egay, he astutely contextualized our situation as a four decades-old problem. "Paulit-ulit!"

Senator Grace Poe filed Senate Resolution No. 1080 on July 29 for a "thorough inquiry into the utilization of the DPWH's Flood Management Program" and for the DPWH to "explain the downward trend of its fund disbursement for flood control and management projects despite getting increases in budget in the last five years." Senator Poe also noted that with the 2024 budget for flood management in the amount of P556 billion, DPWH had at minimum P1 billion per day to fix the

problem. Yet just last week DPWH admitted that our “national flood control master plan” is barely 30 percent completed, 12 years since it was created in 2012.

Never mind the flood waters’ crippling effects on Metro Manila’s commercial and motorist traffic, because it also exacerbates indigent patients’ limited options in accessing affordable quality health care and exposes them to more expenses and even to painful yet completely preventable deaths. Members of my own team had difficulty getting medicine because the stocks were sold out in pharmacies across NCR.

Overwhelming flooding in Metro Manila and its neighboring areas isn’t novel. However, there are ways to stem the tide.

In the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 2023 publication entitled “Best practices on flood and drought risk management,” it determined four main best practices thereon, to wit: (1) hazard and risk maps; (2) early warning systems and real-time monitors; (3) payment schemes for disaster recovery and (4) bottom-up and participatory approaches.

To be fair, we are already doing some of the best practices available. It appears, however, that we are either not doing enough or there are missing key institutional mechanisms. Our foundations are not merely weak, but sorely lacking.

To mention some issues that must be addressed, we must consider that Metro Manila and similarly topographically vulnerable areas have no central flood control authority. A central flood control and management authority that systemically collaborates and coordinates with local units would mitigate time-consuming and trust-eroding jurisdictional disputes. Current intergovernmental collaboration efforts are reactive, ad hoc or temporary. Flood hazard maps are under-utilized. Sewerage systems, whether existing or under construction, are disjointed, inadequate, isolated and mismanaged. Ancient, protective and indispensable mangroves, with its rich flora and fauna, are destroyed. Sustainable river dredging and excavation projects are inconsistent.

In this regard, Senator Poe’s proposed “National Water Resource Management Act” or Senate Bill No. 102 filed last July 7, 2022 is a good starting point for lasting positively impactful reforms. Apart from creating a Department of Water Resources with sustainability in mind, it, inter alia, provides solutions for flood control and flood risk management. We remain hopeful since the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council (LEDAC) has tagged it as a top priority bill.

Our national land use law, also decades-in-the-making despite being critical foundational national legislation, remains an elusive enactment. The consequences of its delayed passage are immense and intergenerational. Without it, history has shown that there is simply, systemically, no incentive and no conducive common

ground for a unified, efficient, comprehensive and cohesive national program across local government units (LGUs) traversed by river systems. Instead, localities upstream are free to formulate, adopt, implement and revamp decisions that are detrimental to localities downstream, and vice-versa. It infringes on overarching national priorities, and forces our communities to flounder among floodwaters. In this regard, passage of a National Land Use Act is required.

We must likewise recognize that collaboration with international partners is crucial. A great example is our partnership with Japan through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The JICA-aided Pasig-Marikina River Channel Improvement Project, together with the similarly JICA-aided Manggahan Floodway, was credited for reducing economic losses by 80 percent in 2020 against Typhoon Ulysses. We have Japan to thank not only for our economic and military partnership, but also for flood control projects across the nation including Cavite, Cagayan de Oro and Davao.

Finally, solid waste management implementation problems became blockages in irrigation infrastructure and sewerage systems. President Marcos Jr. underscored in frustration that that trash had prevented irrigation pumps from working during the Super Typhoon Carina disaster.

The fact remains we have been needing a solution to our typhoon tragedies for close to half a century now. With climate change catastrophes and consequences closing in on us, our window for life-saving solutions is coming to a close. Always remember that “those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”

We need innovation in our public institutions and we need it now.

<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2024/08/04/2375323/paulit-ulit>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Pinoy nutrition: A nat'l budget priority

By: [Margaux Salcedo](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 02:12 AM August 04, 2024



FISCAL MANAGEMENT President Marcos receives a copy of the New Expenditure Policy 2025 from Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman at the Malacañang Palace on July 31. —PRESIDENTIAL PHOTO

Last July 29, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) led by Sec. Aameah Pangandaman submitted to Congress the proposed National Budget for fiscal year (FY) 2025. It amounts to P6.325 trillion—which was in fact trimmed down by the DBM from the total proposals from various national government agencies, which hit a whopping P9.2 trillion.

The budget focuses on the Social Services sector (education and health, among others), which will receive P2.12 trillion, and the Economic Services sector (the Build Better More infrastructure program, among others), which will receive P1.85 trillion. But let me zone in on two priorities relevant to food.

Agriculture

One of the key priorities is strengthening the agricultural sector with the aim of self-sufficiency in food security. That is, we will rely more on our own agricultural output rather than on imports to feed our people.

For this goal, the agriculture sector will receive P211.3 billion. The Department of Agriculture (DA) alone will receive P129 billion, a 13-percent increase from its P114.3 billion allocation in this year's approved national budget.

Specifically to improve rice production, according to the Budget Message of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. (a copy of which you can view at the DBM website, www.dbm.gov.ph), "the DA's National Rice Program will receive a budget of P31.4 billion to enhance the resiliency and competitiveness of Filipino rice farmers while ensuring the country's access to safe and nutritious rice." This will be achieved by expanding fertilizer support to farmers, which will be done through discount vouchers for which P9 billion has been allotted.

Aside from rice, the National Corn Program will receive P5.3 billion; the National Livestock Program will receive a 23 percent boost to receive P5.3 billion; and the National Fisheries Program of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources will receive a boost of 13.5 percent with its allotment of P8.4 billion.

The National Fisheries Program will increase the production of top fish commodities, such as bangus, tilapia, shrimp, shellfish, and even seaweed, through livelihood support and interventions for fisherfolk. The Seaweed Development Program, for instance, will receive an allocation of P1.1 billion.

Nutrition

Another focus is on improving nutrition, as specified in the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028, which stresses that we must "adopt a whole-of-society approach in promoting a healthy lifestyle and a culture of active health-seeking behavior among Filipinos across age groups and income classes; implement measures to prevent and address wasting, stunting, and obesity; strengthen nutrition-specific, nutrition-

sensitive, and enabling interventions, especially at the local level; and improve nutrition governance, especially in local government units”.

Towards these goals, the Family Health, Immunization, Nutrition, and Responsible Parenting program of the Department of Health has been allocated P1 billion. This is for the procurement of food, diet, and health packages targeted to children, as well as pregnant and lactating mothers.

To address undernourishment, the National Nutrition Council has been given an allocation of P319 million, of which P25 million is earmarked for the Tutok Kainan Dietary Supplementation Program.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Project — a key initiative of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), in collaboration with the DOH — has been allocated P2.4 billion. The project, which targets 275 municipalities, aims to deliver a package of nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions to improve key behaviors and practices that reduce stunting, addressing malnutrition at its root cause.

The Supplementary Feeding Program of the DSWD has been increased by 26.9 percent to P5.2 billion in order to provide hot meals to 1,583,316 children and milk feeding to 106,834 children enrolled in LGU-managed Child Development Centers and Supervised Neighborhood Play programs to ensure that proper nourishment that is essential for the growth and development of children is somehow provided.

Finally, the Food Stamp Program of the DSWD will receive P1.9 billion to provide cash assistance through electronic benefit transfer cards to 50,000 Filipino households in the lowest income bracket, giving them the capacity to pay merchants directly for food that they themselves can choose and ensuring access to more nutritious meals, instead of the usual instant noodles and sardines received as assistance.

Agenda for prosperity

These are just some of the specific items in the FY 2025 proposed National Budget — as highlighted in the President’s Budget Message — that will address agriculture

and nutrition. Certainly there is much work to be done. But hopefully, the budget provided will be approved — and more importantly, the approved allocations will be utilized well and fully — so that the goals set out in the Philippine Development Plan will be achieved and felt by the Filipino people, especially those who need assistance the most.

<https://business.inquirer.net/472928/pinoy-nutrition-a-natl-budget-priority>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Aid rolled out for 1,600 Cavite fishermen affected by oil spill

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:34 AM August 04, 2024



CONTAINING THE DAMAGE A tugboat hired by Shogun Ships Co., owner of the MT Terranova, on Saturday joins the Philippine Coast Guard in its efforts to contain the spread of the oil leak from the sunken tanker in the waters of Limay, Bataan. — Richard A. Reyes

LUCENA CITY, QUEZON, Philippines — The provincial government of Cavite and other agencies have begun providing assistance to fisherfolk affected by the oil spill from a tanker that sank on July 25 in the waters off Bataan.

On Saturday, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) of the Department of Agriculture distributed food packs to 1,612 fishermen in Noveleta town who had been registered for government assistance.

“Today’s distribution is just the beginning of our comprehensive relief and recovery plan for the affected fisherfolk of Cavite,” BFAR officer-in-charge Isidro Velayo Jr. was quoted as saying in a social media post by the agency’s Calabarzon office.

“We are committed to providing continuous support and working closely with local communities to restore their livelihoods and ensure sustainable recovery,” he added.

Velayo also said livelihood restoration initiatives and environmental rehabilitation efforts, were being planned and would be carried out in the coming weeks.

The Cavite government said it began providing food packages on Thursday, with 2,196 beneficiaries in Cavite City receiving the aid that day and another 2,867 on Friday.

Affected residents in the municipalities of Kawit and Rosario town also received food assistance.

MT Terranova, which was carrying 1.4 million liters of industrial fuel, sank off the waters of Limay town in Bataan on July 25, during the onslaught of Supertyphoon “Carina” (international name: Gaemi)

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) reported that the oil from the tanker spread across the waters of other provinces surrounding Manila Bay, including Cavite.

State of calamity

On Wednesday, the provincial government declared a state of calamity in two cities and nine towns—Cavite City and Bacoor City, and the municipalities of Noveleta, Rosario, Kawit, Tanza, Naic, Maragondon and Ternate.

A declaration of a state of calamity allows the concerned local governments to quickly access emergency funds and implement relief operations for affected residents.

To protect the health and safety of the public, Cavite Gov. Jonvic Remulla prohibited the catching and selling of all marine products to prevent oil contamination.

According to the Calabarzon Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (RDRRMC), an estimated 352,179 residents in the coastal barangays of Cavite were affected by the oil spill.

Some “25,145 fisherfolks were also affected with an estimated loss of income amounting to P17,952,775 per day and predictably in 22 days, a total of P394,961,064,” the RDRRMC said in a report.

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) on Saturday said it would pursue a full probe on the July 25 sinking of the Terranova and of the MT Jason Bradley two days later also in Bataan.

Containing the oil spill

“But for now, we are focused on our mission, which is to prevent [the further spread of the] oil spill,” Interior Secretary Benhur Abalos said at a press conference on Saturday.

He said the DILG is coordinating with the PCG in containing the oil spill, after it had confirmed that oil continues to leak from the Terranova at a rate of 1 liter per hour.

The PCG said it has placed a second layer of booms on the waters of Limay and also tapped private vessels to help stabilize the booms and monitor the spread of the oil spill. —*with a report from Krixia Subingsubing*

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1969152/aid-rolled-out-for-1600-cavite-fishermen-affected-by-oil-spill>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Final El Niño agri damage estimate at P15.3 billion

August 4, 2024 | 8:03 pm



REUTERS

FARM DAMAGE caused by El Niño was P15.3 billion, according to the final estimate issued by the Department of Agriculture (DA).

In its final farm damage bulletin, the DA said El Niño had affected 333,195 farmers and fisherfolk, resulting in crop losses amounting to 784,344 metric tons (MT).

The DA added that affected farmland spanned 270,855 hectares, with 68% or 184,182 hectares deemed recoverable.

Damage to the rice crop amounted to P5.93 billion, or 38.8% of the total. Lost volume was 330,717 MT, across 109,481 hectares of farmland.

The DA said that the most affected provinces were Palawan, Iloilo, Camarines Sur, and Occidental Mindoro.

Damage to corn totaled 327,310 MT, valued at P5.94 billion. This made up 38.84% of the overall damage caused by El Niño.

The DA said most of the damage and losses to corn and rice were to plants in the reproductive and mature stages.

It added that volume losses for high value crops amounted to 112,681 MT across 270,885 hectares of farmland. The losses were valued at P3.27 billion, or 21.35% of the total.

Damage to livestock and poultry was P37.97 million, affecting 25,547 animals including chicken, cattle, carabao, duck, goat, horse, sheep, and swine.

El Niño's impact on fisheries totaled P53.44 million, with lost volume at 11,217 MT, affecting 2,679 fisherfolk.

In June the government weather service, known as PAGASA (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration), announced the end of El Niño after conditions in the tropical Pacific returned to El Niño Southern Oscillation neutral levels, meaning neither El Niño nor La Niña was in effect.
— **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/08/04/612105/final-el-nino-agri-damage-estimate-at-p15-3-billion/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Agri budget cut explanation sought

August 4, 2024 | 6:59 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/ MICHAEL VARCAS

THE GOVERNMENT should explain budget cuts to the agriculture sector's proposed budget for 2025, a congressman said last week, adding that the House of Representatives should address potential spending issues by the Agriculture department.

The government is allotting P211.3 billion for agriculture next year, 4.7% less than this year's budget. The bulk of the budget will be used to fund agriculture modernization efforts and cash aid to farmers and fisherfolk, according to a summary from the Budget department.

"In the coming budget deliberations, we will clarify in Congress the deductions and additional funding under the Department of Agriculture's (DA) budget, and how we could use it to fund essential projects," Party-list Rep. Wilbert T. Lee told *BusinessWorld* in a Viber Message in Filipino.

"Among the topics that should be discussed during the budget deliberations is DA's underspending because an increase in funding is [pointless] if it's not being used properly," he added.

The government last week proposed a P6.352-trillion national budget for 2025, 10.1% higher than this year and equivalent to 22.1% of gross domestic product. — **Kenneth Christiane L. Basilio**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/the-nation/2024/08/04/612043/agri-budget-cut-explanation-sought/>

REMATE:

Pinsala ng oil spill sa Cavite, P1B na!

August 4, 2024 08:39



MANILA, Philippines – Umabot na sa P1 bilyon ang tinatayang halaga ng pinsala sa Bataan oil spill sa probinsya ng Cavite.

Ayon sa ulat, kinailangang magsara ng mga tindahan ng mga isda sa Noveleta, Cavite, dahil sa epekto ng oil spill.

Bumaba rin ang benta ng mga isda at shellfish dahil dito.

Matatandaan na idineklara ang Cavite bilang no-catch zone para sa mga isda at shellfish.

Naghihintay pa ang Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources ng resulta mula sa mga sample testing sa probinsya.

“There is something like a certain degree to which, if you ingest something, your body cannot take it. There is an issue of food safety; kapag may amoy, talagang may advisory tayo na wag muna siyang kainin,” ayon kay BFAR officer-in-charge Isidro Velayo Jr.

Nananawagan naman ng alternatibong hanapbuhay ng mga apektadong mangingisda.

Samantala, namamahagi ng relief goods ang BFAR sa mga apektadong mangingisda.

Iniulat ng Cavite provincial government na mayroong 25,000 mangingisda sa probinsya.

Matatandaan na lumubog ang MT Terranova noong Hulyo 25 sa dagat na sakop ng Limay, Bataan karga ang 1.4 milyong litro ng industrial fuel oil.

Ayon kay Cavite Governor Jonvic Remulla, ang oil slick mula sa lumubog na barko ay nakaabot na sa ilang coastal barangays ng kanilang probinsya. *RNT/JGC*

<https://remate.ph/pinsala-ng-oil-spill-sa-cavite-p1b-na/>

Cacao farmers told to embrace innovation

By Kaiser Jan Fuentes

August 4, 2024

CEBU CITY — Sen. Pia Cayetano has called on the Philippine Cacao Industry to embrace innovation and develop healthier chocolate products.

Cayetano made the call during a two-day National Cacao Congress in Cebu City on July 31, where different stakeholders from both public and private sectors gathered for the promotion of local chocolate products.

Addressing a thousand of attendees, Cayetano highlighted the potential for growth in sugar-free and health-conscious chocolate alternatives using local cacao beans.



ALL ABOUT LOCAL CHOCOLATE Different local chocolate farmers and manufacturers gather in Cebu City for the two-day National Cacao Congress that tackled ways on how to bolster the country's chocolate industry. Sen. Pia Cayetano, on screen, served as a keynote speaker during the opening day of the congress on July 31, 2024. PHOTO BY KAISER JAN FUENTES

"I am very happy to be here, and let me just thank the organizers and call out the people who made this happen," began Cayetano as she expressed her gratitude to the Philippine Cacao Industry Association and the various government agencies involved.

The senator shared her personal love for chocolate, reminiscing about her early experiences with the treat.

Cayetano recounted her journey from a skeptic of dark chocolate to an avid supporter after discovering high-quality, less commercialized dark chocolates during her visits to Switzerland for the Inter-Parliamentary Union meetings.

"Up to now, you won't find me buying commercial chocolate, especially the American brands. I find them so sweet. And if you really read the literature, it has contributed to the obesity problem in the US," she said, urging the local industry to consider the health implications of their products.

Highlighting the versatility of cacao, Cayetano mentioned innovative products she encountered at the congress, including chocolate-flavored lip balm.

She encouraged further exploration into nontraditional uses of cacao and the development of health-focused chocolate products.

"As was mentioned, and I'm sure all of you have been discussing it, all the other products that we can come up with, that its main ingredient is cacao. But I'd like to share an idea I have, which I feel has a lot of room for growth in the world," she said.

Her speech was well-received by the diverse group of stakeholders present, including representatives from the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Agrarian Reform, the Department of Science and Technology, the Department of Tourism, and the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

Meanwhile, one of the exhibitors, Marilyn Magnayon, owner of Don Ricardo's, a startup chocolate manufacturer in General Santos City, shared that they started the company during the pandemic.

She said that her goal is to introduce Sarangani chocolate to the public, acknowledging that it is a challenge, saying that neighboring Davao Region's chocolate is more known.

Magnayon told The Manila Times that they will continue to create products out of local cacao beans and market them to the world. Currently, her company is known for its 97 percent chocolate.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/04/regions/cacao-farmers-told-to-embrace-innovation/1961702>