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**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **Pullout or confiscation: PPA warns consignees of overstaying 530 containers of imported rice**

BY [AARON RECUENCO](#)

Sep 25, 2024 06:26 PM

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Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) General Manager Jay Daniel Santiago warned consignees of rice that their imports will be declared as abandoned if they fail to release them on October 1 this year. It was Santiago who exposed the presence of 888 container vans of imported rice last week as he expressed alarm that the failure to release of the rice would result in artificial rice shortage and would eventually result in increase in the price of the product in the market.

The 88 container vans are estimated to contain around 20 million kilos of rice.

While some of the consignees immediately pulled out their imports, Santiago disclosed that there are still 530 container vans loaded with rice at the Manila International Container Terminal (MICT).

“Since Friday, around 300 containers have already been pulled out. There are still 530 containers that ready for release,” said Santiago.

“What we would like to announce for these overstaying containers is that if they fail to pull them out on October 1, we would inform the Department of Agriculture and we will endorse these to the Bureau of Customs to declare these containers as abandoned and ready for disposal,” he added. The average dwell time for containers at PPA-managed ports stands at 5.4 days, which is the lowest in history and just 0.4 days beyond the free storage period of five days.

This suggests that most cargoes are processed and released within the free storage period but in the case of the containers loaded with imported rice, Santiago said they are taking longer time to be withdrawn by their consignees.

While other cargoes are generally released within the allotted free storage period, some rice container shipments from some consignees remain at the ports for over 20 days despite having been cleared for release by the Bureau of Customs (BOC).

Santiago said he already consulted with other industry players and he was informed that such strategy is being implemented by traders to earn more.

“Historically, the consignees appear to be waiting for the increase in the price in the market before they would release their imports,” said Santiago.

“And based on the trend in the past years, there were times that the pull out of rice imports from the port storage was slow. Then there would be rice price increase in the market and then there would be sudden big-time pull out of these containers,” he added.

The Department of Agriculture earlier lauded the PPA for its response and action in addressing the overstaying container vans loaded with rice at the MICT.

Lowering the price of the rice per kilo is one of the campaign promises of President Marcos.

[https://mb.com.ph/2024/9/25/ppa-warns-consignees-of-overstaying-rice-imports#google\\_vignette](https://mb.com.ph/2024/9/25/ppa-warns-consignees-of-overstaying-rice-imports#google_vignette)

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **ADB sees downward inflation as rice prices ease in Philippines**

**BY [BEN ARNOLD DE VERA](#)**

Sep 25, 2024 08:00 AM

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Inflation in the Philippines is expected by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to further ease as reduced import tariffs on staple rice and other food products spill over to domestic retail prices, boosting consumption and overall economic growth.

The Manila-based ADB's Asian Development Outlook (ADO) report for September 2024 showed lower headline inflation forecasts for the Philippines: for this year, an updated projection of 3.6 percent from 3.8 percent in the April report; for next year, down to 3.2 percent from 3.4 percent previously.

If realized, these annual inflation rates will be the lowest since the 2.4 percent posted in 2019 and 2020. As of end-August, the year-on-year rate of increase in prices of basic commodities averaged 3.6 percent, within the government's two- to four-percent target range of manageable price hikes conducive to economic growth.

Last year, inflation hit six percent, the highest since the 8.2 percent posted in 2008 at the height of the global financial crisis.

Here in the Philippines, "food price pressures are expected to continue to dissipate on the impact of reduced import duties on key staples," the ADB said in its latest ADO released on Wednesday, Sept. 25.

The ADB pointed to recent government orders slashing duties slapped on imported rice to 15 percent (from 35 percent previously) up to 2028, alongside the prolonged lower tariffs on corn, mechanically deboned meat, and pork.

Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. told a Palace press briefing on Tuesday, Sept. 24, that DA estimates had shown rice prices would start going down in mid-October before the tariff reduction's impact could be fully felt by January of next year.

Department of Finance (DOF) Secretary Ralph G. Recto told the same briefing that it would translate into a P6-per-kilo reduction in rice prices.

But the ADB's Philippine office cautioned in a statement that "risks remain from potential severe weather events which could drive inflation higher."

Moving forward, the ADB said "a sustained moderation in inflation could allow further monetary policy easing after a 25-basis point (bp) cut in the policy rate to 6.25 percent in mid-August."

The ADB did not forecast how much the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) would further bring down key interest rates. The multilateral lender noted that the pace of the ongoing easing cycle of the US Federal Reserve, whose movements influence central banks in the Asia-Pacific region, "remains uncertain and dependent on incoming data."

Recto, who represents President Marcos in the Monetary Board, told Tuesday's Palace briefing that the BSP's highest policy-making body may consider cutting rates at their next monetary policy stance meeting in October as aggressively as the US Fed's 50 bps last week.

Slowing domestic inflation and the ensuing lower borrowing rates would support Philippine economic growth, which the ADB kept at earlier projections of six percent for 2024 and 6.2 percent for 2025.

The ADB's gross domestic product (GDP) growth forecast for this year was at the lower end of the government's six- to seven-percent goal, while next year's will fall short of the targeted 6.5 to 7.5 percent. Both projections are nonetheless faster than last year's 5.5-percent economic expansion.

"Most of the ingredients for the Philippines' sustained economic growth are in place — rising government revenues are boosting public expenditures on infrastructure and social services, increasing employment is driving consumption, and reforms to open the economy to more investments are underway. With inflation slowing, the country is in a strong position to lead growth in Southeast Asia," ADB Philippines country director Pavit Ramachandran said.

The ADB noted that it is a financing partner of the Philippine government in rolling out big-ticket infrastructure projects, including the Bataan-Cavite Interlink Bridge, Malolos-Clark Railway, South Commuter Railway, and Integrated Flood Resilience and Adaptation Project covering three major river basins in Luzon and Mindanao.

It cited that the Marcos administration's "Build Better More" infrastructure program will not only enhance physical connectivity via airports, bridges and railways as well as strengthen water management through flood control, irrigation and water supply projects, but also prioritize agriculture development, climate change adaptation and mitigation, digital connectivity, and energy projects.

However, "external factors such as a sharper slowdown in major advanced economies and China, financial volatility due to US monetary policy decisions, geopolitical tensions, and rising global commodity prices also pose threats to growth," the ADB warned.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/9/25/adb-sees-downward-inflation>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **FAO expands livelihood program in IP communities in Maguindanao del Sur**

**BY [KEITH BACONGCO](#)**

Sep 25, 2024 04:25 PM

DAVAO CITY – The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is expanding its Resilient Livelihoods Development (RLD) project to the Indigenous Peoples (IP) communities in the mountainous town of South Upi in Maguindanao del Sur.

Lionel Dabbadie, FAO representative in the Philippines, said the project hopes to bring the lessons learned from the lowland to upland Maguindanao, where the Tedurays endure a similar struggle, worsened by the recurring climate-induced flooding and resource-based conflict.

“The Tedurays face a unique challenge as Indigenous Peoples, with rise in violence and land-grabbing that result to them being displaced,” Dabbadie said.



**RESIDENTS work in their community garden in Barangay Kuya, South Upi, Maguindanao del Sur. (Keith Bacongco)**

In recent months, South Upi, a town of about 42,000 people, was among the towns in Maguindanao del Sur that experienced rain-induced flooding and landslides that led to displacement of hundreds of residents, mostly IPs belonging to the Teduray tribe.

Several Teduray leaders in the municipality were also displaced in recent conflicts due to land dispute which was identified as the root of the recent killings of tribal leaders in the municipality.



Dabbadie added that under the project, which kicked off last August and will run until August 2025, partner-beneficiaries and their communities will be taught about food production.

He said that communities will also learn how to utilize raw materials that are locally available throughout the year, particularly those that can be stored for several months without losing its nutritional value as well as applying their local knowledge in food production.

During a recent gathering here with implementing partners from the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, FAO stated that the IP communities in South Upi face compounded challenges of displacement due to land disputes, poverty, high adolescent pregnancy rates, and gender-based violence (GBV).

It emphasized that the expansion of the project aims to empower IP communities in South Upi by enhancing livelihoods, health, and protection services, with a focus on Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI).

The project will focus on addressing these issues by empowering IP women and youth through agricultural-based livelihood interventions that are culturally sensitive and inclusive.

Prior to the expansion in South Upi, the project was implemented with community-based organizations (CBOs) in the towns of Datu Odin Sinsuat, Guindulungan, Shariff Saydona Mustapha, and Talitay, Maguindanao del Sur.

Under the first phase, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and FAO provided the internally displaced persons (IDPs) with agricultural inputs and technologies, as well as skills training to enable conflict-affected women and youth to establish and effectively run agriculture-based livelihoods or enterprises.

Established CBOs under the first phase of the project will serve mentors and coaches to guide the IPs in the expansion program.

FAO said that the expansion program in South Upi underwent consultations from the IPs.

CBOs will share lessons on organizational management, market linkages, and financial literacy, translating these concepts into simple and practical terms, FAO said.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/9/25/fao-expands-livelihood-program-in-ip-communities-in-maguindanao-del-sur>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# DepEd, DA welcome House approval of proposed 2025 budget

[Neil Jayson Servallos](#), [Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

September 26, 2024 | 12:00am



This file photo shows the Department of Education.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Education yesterday said the approval of its proposed P793.1-billion budget for 2025 would enable DepEd to address the learning crisis.

Education Secretary Sonny Angara said the funding would be used to build new classrooms, repair school facilities and implement DepEd’s flagship computerization program, which seeks to digitalize classroom instruction through internet connectivity.

“We thank Speaker (Martin) Romualdez, Rep. (Maria Carmen) Zamora and the entire House of Representatives for their dedication to uplifting our education system. This budget reflects our shared commitment to unlocking the full potential of every Filipino learner,” Angara said.



The funding will also be allocated to DepEd's attached agencies, including the National Book Development Board, National Council for Children's Television, National Museum, Philippine High School for the Arts, Early Childhood Care and Development Council as well as the National Academy of Sports.

Meanwhile, Department of Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. also welcomed the House approval of the DA's P200.19-billion funding for 2025, which is higher by 19.5 percent from this year's budget of P167.5 billion.

"Any additional budget that we can get from Congress will allow us to step up efforts to ensure food security, modernize agriculture and improve the lives of millions of farmers, fishermen and their families," Tiu Laurel said.

He said lawmakers vowed to increase further the funding allocations for the DA to boost farm production and enhance farmers' income.

In his sponsorship speech for the DA budget, Navotas City Rep. Toby Tiangco underscored the critical role agriculture plays in providing food for every Filipino and creating more jobs.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/09/26/2388000/deped-da-welcome-house-approval-proposed-2025-budget>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Increase in pork prices expected – hog raisers

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

September 26, 2024 | 12:00am



In a radio interview, PPFPP president Rolando Tambago said that even though the farmgate price of pork is low, once the product reaches the market through traders and retailers, it can be sold as high as P380 and P400, especially pork belly.

Manan Vatsyayana / AFP

MANILA, Philippines — An increase in the retail price of pork is expected with the anticipated hike in demand during the holiday season, the Pork Producers Federation of the Philippines (PPFP) said yesterday.

In a radio interview, PPFPP president Rolando Tambago said that even though the farmgate price of pork is low, once the product reaches the market through traders and retailers, it can be sold as high as P380 and P400, especially pork belly.

“The traders who buy from piggeries will sell the pigs to the viajeros until the pork reaches the retailers and the consumers. Usually, it passes at least five hands before it reaches the consumers,” Tambago noted.

“There is a big possibility that the retail price of pork will increase because of the demand during Christmas but we are hoping that it is not that big,” he added.

Based on monitoring of the Department of Agriculture (DA) in Metro Manila markets, the retail price of pork shoulder ranges between P260 and P370 per kilo and pork belly, between P310 and P400 per kilo.

However, Tambago said there is still enough supply of pork since the demand for pork in the past months was low because of the outbreak of African swine fever.

## **‘Overkill’**

Farmers’ group Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) yesterday described as “overkill” the flooding of imported rice, saying the palay harvest has already started.

“When the harvest of local farmers starts, the retail price of rice will naturally go down. There is no need for a lower tariff as there is oversupply,” FFF national manager Raul Montemayor said.

Montemayor said the local harvest will peak in October but the farmers are already affected by the decrease in the farmgate price of palay.

“From the previous farmgate price between P25 and P27 (per kilo), it is now down to P22 to P23 (per kilo) when the harvest has just started,” Montemayor said.

He added that despite the flooding of imported rice the retail price of rice remained high.

From July 7 to September with the implementation of Executive Order 62 lowering the tariff to 15 percent, at least 800,000 metric tons of imported rice have arrived in the country.

“The consumers did not benefit from the lower tariff while the farmers are suffering because of the depressed farmgate price of palay,” he said.

## **No sardine price hike**

Meanwhile, the Canned Sardines Association of the Philippines (CSAP) clarified that there will be no increase in the retail price of sardines.

“I was taken out of context when they said I was asking for P3 (increase in the sardines). The truth was in July the Department of Trade and Industry wrote us a letter, requesting

us to voluntarily implement a price freeze,” CSAP executive director Francisco Buencamino said yesterday over dzBB.

“We are in support of this government’s request. For now (there will be no increase). The public is suffering. We are holding prices. We are cooperating,” he said.

Manufacturers want to have a dialogue with acting Trade Secretary Cristina Roque to explain why they need to increase the retail price of sardines, Buencamino said.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/09/26/2388045/increase-pork-prices-expected-hog-raisers>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# NMC: Philippines to continue non-confrontational tack in West Philippine Sea

[Helen Flores](#) - The Philippine Star

September 26, 2024 | 12:00am



In an interview with dzBB, NMC spokesman Alexander Lopez said the government is monitoring the Chinese vessels and this would be included in the report being prepared by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) for another protest against Beijing.

AFP / Jam Sta Rosa

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines will continue its “non-confrontational” approach in the West Philippine Sea (WPS), the National Maritime Council (NMC) said on Wednesday as hundreds of Chinese vessels were spotted within the country’s waters.

In an interview with dzBB, NMC spokesman Alexander Lopez said the government is monitoring the Chinese vessels and this would be included in the report being prepared by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) for another protest against Beijing.

Asked whether the government has plans of driving away the Chinese vessels within the country’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ), Lopez said: “We don’t want (confrontations) because that will escalate (tensions).”

He said upholding the jurisdiction and sovereign rights of the Philippines in the WPS need not be physical. “As much as possible we maintain the status quo, meaning whatever the level of tension is, let it be that way, let’s not escalate it,” he said.

There are a lot of ways to assert the country’s rights over the area, including filing an environmental complaint against China before the United Nations, Lopez said. “We’re coming up with other approaches, not physical, not confrontational but rather more on environmental degradation and things like that,” he said.

“It’s not only our government, we are also working with some UN organizations. That (environmental degradation) will be a stronger (case against China),” he said, adding the Philippines’ allies are also backing this approach as they do not want any conflict in the region.

The number of Chinese vessels spotted in the WPS has reached a new record high of 251, of which 153 are concentrated within the vicinity of Ayungin and Escoda (Sabina) Shoals, the Philippine Navy said.

From only seven monitored from Sept. 10 to 16, the Navy said there were 16 People’s Liberation Army Navy warships spotted inside the country’s EEZ during the last week. Eleven military vessels were seen in the vicinity of Escoda Shoal, along with 16 China Coast Guard boats and 55 maritime militia vessels.

## **BFAR ships for West Philippine Sea**

The government would soon beef up its floating assets, particularly those used in patrolling the West Philippine Sea, as the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) is set to procure P1.5 billion worth of vessels.

The BFAR is set to open the bids today for its acquisition of two 50-meter steel hull multi-mission offshore vessel (MMOV) and one 80-meter steel hull multi-purpose refrigerated cargo vessel. The bureau allotted P1.5 billion for the contract – P800 million for the two MMOVs and P700 million for the multi-purpose refrigerated cargo vessel.

The new vessels would improve BFAR’s monitoring, control and surveillance of the country’s territorial waters including its EEZ, said BFAR spokesman Nazario Briguera.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has created a special bids and awards committee at BFAR to oversee the procurement of the new fishing vessels.



Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr., representing President Marcos, led yesterday the opening of a three-day international defense and security exhibit at the World Trade Center in Pasay.

Some 200 defense contractors and other exhibitors from all over the world are participating in the 5th Asian Defense, Security and Crisis Management Exhibition and Conference (ADAS 2024) showcasing the latest defense equipment and security systems available.

The event, which runs from Sept. 25 to 27, brings together key stakeholders in defense, security and crisis management to explore latest technologies and foster collaboration. It will also feature live demonstrations, product presentations and networking opportunities with global leaders in defense and security.

Teodoro delivered the message of Marcos, highlighting the pivotal role of ADAS in enhancing security not just in the Asia-Pacific but globally.

The President highlighted the importance of comprehensive, cooperative efforts to tackle emerging security challenges, including cyber threats, natural disasters and geopolitical tensions.

“Over the past decade, ADAS has evolved into a premier platform for dialogue and collaboration among governments, military institutions and defense contractors. This evolution underscores our shared understanding that the complexities of modern security threats cannot be effectively addressed in isolation,” Marcos said.

Teodoro likewise refused to reveal if the US-made Typhon missile system used during this year’s Balikatan exercises will stay in the Philippines, adding that China has no business meddling in the country’s efforts to establish a credible defense posture and protect itself as a nation.

“I will not confirm or deny anything about any capabilities that we have or are intending to acquire. But this I can say, it seems to me that before other countries interfere with the creation of our credible defense posture, they should first stop their illegal activities, get out of the WPS, take away their ballistic capabilities, destroy their nuclear arsenal, before they interfere with our creating a credible deterrent,” he explained.

“We will do whatever we need to do to create a credible deterrent,” Teodoro stressed, in response to China’s remarks that keeping a missile system in the Philippines that can reach mainland China would trigger an arms race.

AFP chief Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr., for his part, said he also doesn't know about any plans to keep the mid-range missile system in the country but he prefers it to stay.

"I also don't know what the plan is. But for me, if I were given the choice, I would like to have the Typhons here in the Philippines forever, because we need that for our defense," he said.

Brawner said he has already informally informed the Mutual Defense Board-Security Engagement Board of his preference that the missile system be allowed to stay in the country. The US has yet to respond.

The US Army said in April it had deployed the Typhon mid-range missile system in the northern Philippines for the annual joint military exercises, but did not pull it out after the war games. The two countries are bound by a mutual defense pact.

The presence of the US missile system on Philippine soil had angered Beijing, with Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun warning in June that the Typhon deployment was "severely damaging regional security and stability."

Meanwhile, the United States donated emergency relief supplies to Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija, an Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement site, strengthening emergency preparedness.

The US embassy in Manila said Wednesday US Ambassador MaryKay Carlson handed over the emergency relief supplies to Secretary Teodoro and Office of Civil Defense (OCD) administrator Ariel Nepomuceno on Monday as part of its efforts to boost the Philippines' disaster preparedness.

The supplies donated through the US Agency for International Development (USAID) included emergency shelter-grade tarpaulins; shelter repair tools such as handsaws, shovels, ropes, hammers and nails; kitchen sets, including pots, pans, bowls, plates and utensils.

The supplies, which can support at least 10,000 people, will be stored at the OCD warehouse in Fort Magsaysay to facilitate the Philippine government's rapid delivery of life-saving assistance.

The Philippines and Australia agreed to further deepen collaborative activities in maritime security and marine environment protection and collaboration in multilateral efforts in the maritime sphere.

Manila and Canberra held the 4th Maritime Dialogue in Canberra on Sept. 17-18. The meeting was co-chaired by Maritime and Oceans Affairs Office Assistant Secretary Louis Alferez of the DFA and Southeast Asia Strategy and Development Division Assistant Secretary Glenn Elson of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia.

The two countries reaffirmed the importance of upholding UNCLOS and the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award, and maintaining the rules-based international order in order to promote peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. – **Michael Punongbayan, Jasper Arcalas, Pia Lee-Brago, AFP**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/09/26/2388075/nmc-philippines-continue-non-confrontational-tack-west-philippine-sea>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Easing inflation proof of lower logistics costs – PPA

[Elijah Felice Rosales](#) - The Philippine Star

September 26, 2024 | 12:00am



Customers visit the Pasig Mega Market in Pasig City to check on the goods that are put up for sale on July 31, 2024.

Philstar.com / Irra Lising

MANILA, Philippines — Logistics costs in the country have gone down and is now being felt by consumers, and the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) is hoping to sustain this for the long term.

In a statement, the PPA said it plans to keep the downward trend in logistics costs to help reduce market prices of basic goods, hoping to emulate what happened in August.

Inflation, or the general increase in commodity prices, slowed to 3.3 percent in August, from 4.4 percent in July, which was the highest for the year.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) attributed the decline in inflation to the slower annual increase in food prices and reduction in transport rates.

The PSA said transport inflation was cut by 0.2 percent in August, from a spike of 3.6 percent in July.

The PPA said it has managed to slash logistics costs by avoiding port congestion and speeding up the flow of goods. This way, goods are delivered from ports to markets on time, leaving no room for price speculation and supply shortage.

“The reduction in congestion allowed for quicker delivery times and reduced fuel consumption, [and] steady port tariffs helped create a more predictable cost structure for businesses reliant on imports and exports,” the PPA said.

The PPA warned that external factors from geopolitical conflicts to supply issues might get in the way of efforts to mitigate cost spikes.

“Global uncertainties — such as supply chain disruptions, fluctuating fuel prices and geopolitical tensions — could potentially reverse this trend,” the PPA said.

The PPA also reported that importers withdrew around 300 containers of rice from the Port of Manila from Sept. 21 to 23. Prior to this, the agency refuted claims that the facility is suffering from congestion, preventing rice prices from going down at a quicker pace.

PPA general manager Jay Santiago went as far as exposing that about 900 containers of rice were stuck at the Manila International Container Terminal and the Manila South Harbor.

He noted that the shipments have been staying at the port for over 20 days now.

Santiago is worried that the rice imports are being held at the port to cause an artificial shortage, which would lead to higher prices of the staple.

Based on estimates from the Department of Agriculture, the rice shipments waiting to be picked up from the Port of Manila have reached 23,000 metric tons.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/09/26/2387959/easing-inflation-proof-lower-logistics-costs-ppa>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Agricultural Tariffication bill gets closer to becoming a law

By: [Charie Mae F. Abarca](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 05:32 AM September 26, 2024



Sen. Cynthia Villar —Senate Public Relations and Information Bureau

MANILA, Philippines — The proposed bill seeking to amend the Agricultural Tariffication Act got a step closer to becoming a law on Wednesday when both chambers of Congress ratified the bicameral conference committee report on the measure's corresponding Senate and House of Representatives' versions.

Sen. Cynthia Villar, at the Senate's plenary session, gave the highlights of the bicameral conference committee report on the disagreeing provisions of Senate Bill No. 2779 and



House Bill No. 10381 or the proposed act amending the Agricultural Tariffication Law and extending the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund.

“I am pleased to report on the successful outcome of the bicameral conference. The bicameral conference agreed to use the Senate version as the working draft of the discussion. The changes in the working draft which we stated in the joint explanatory statement reflected on the content of the bicameral consolidated bill,” said Villar.

She then moved for the approval and ratification of the report, which was immediately seconded by Senate Deputy Majority Leader JV Ejercito.

At the lower chamber, the bicam report was also approved and ratified, which means that it will soon be submitted to the Palace for the signature of President Marcos.

The measure specifically seeks to empower the agriculture chief to respond to a declaration of rice food shortage and extraordinary increases in rice prices, where the agency can sell through government agencies and replenish its stocks through the procurement of locally produced rice from farmers and farmers’ cooperatives.

The new bill proposes to allow the Department of Agriculture to import when there is no available locally produced rice and to designate an importing authority, except the National Food Authority.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1987155/agricultural-tariffication-bill-gets-closer-to-becoming-a-law>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Agri goods transport delayed by bad weather, says DA chief

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

Inquirer Business / 10:26 AM September 25, 2024



Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. —File photo by Marianne Bermudez | Philippine Daily Inquirer

MANILA, Philippines — Unfavorable weather has caused the delayed shipping and delivery of imported farm products in the Philippines, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said in a statement on Tuesday.

“The delay was caused by force majeure,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said, pointing out that several storms and weather disturbances, including recent typhoons, stalled the release of imported agricultural goods.

The DA is considering adding requirements before issuing import permits through its bureaus — including the Bureau of Animal Industry and the Bureau of Plant Industry — to ensure the immediate delivery and sale of imported food products.

Import permits are official documents the government gives eligible traders that allow them to source agricultural commodities from abroad for use in the country.

This ensures that these goods comply with safety, quality, and health standards and prevent the spread of pests or animal diseases.

Tiu Laurel also said it is closely coordinating with the Bureau of Customs (BOC) and the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) to ensure local food supply and food security.

“This would help up improve our supply and price forecasting and avoid artificial shortages caused by product hoarding. Data that we will gather will also help us determine which importers to blacklist, if needed,” he added.

Tiu Laurel made the pronouncement as the PPA earlier said that 888 container vans loaded with approximately 20 kilograms of rice had been sitting in Manila ports, with some of these stored for months, as consignees were deferring their withdrawal.

In a Palace briefing this week, PPA General Manager Jay Daniel Santiago said that there was no congestion at the ports although they suspected that some consignees were timing the release of their shipments to levy higher charges and save on storage costs.

Of the 888 “overstaying” container vans, some 300 container vans have been pulled out by their consignees. Santiago said more consignees were expected to pull out their container vans before the end of this month.

Santiago also said that by Oct. 1, the PPA would submit report to the DA on the overstaying imported agricultural food prices and ask the BOC to declare these shipments as abandoned for proper disposition.

He said the PPA and the DA would continuously monitor food shipments to better manage the movement of containers in various seaports nationwide.

<https://business.inquirer.net/482087/agri-goods-transport-delayed-by-bad-weather-says-da-chief>

## **BUSINESS WORLD:**

# **July NFA palay procurement hits 10,045 MT**

September 25, 2024 | 8:01 pm



THE National Food Authority (NFA) said on Wednesday that it procured 10,045 metric tons (MT) of palay, or unmilled rice, in July, equivalent to 224,252 bags of 50 kilograms each.

It said farmers were attracted to the high purchase price offered by the NFA, which buys from domestic farmers to maintain an emergency reserve of rice.

The NFA inventory of milled rice was 3,013,048 bags or 150,652 MT in the seven months to July.

“It should be noted that NFA’s inventory is 6.88% of the country’s national rice inventory,” it said.

The NFA Council increased the buying price for palay to P23 to P30 per kilogram (kg) for dry and clean palay and P17 to P23 per kg for fresh palay, depending on location and grade.

“This success is largely attributed to the ongoing PRICERS program, which has effectively encouraged more farmers to deliver and sell their palay harvests to the NFA, particularly in regions experiencing sporadic harvests,” the NFA said in its monthly procurement report.

In April, the NFA changed its procurement strategy to allow it to offer a range of prices depending on the prevailing market price in a given province. The new policy is intended to make the NFA more competitive with private traders in obtaining palay.

The NFA added that the year-earlier procurement for July was only 7,672 bags of palay or about 383 MT.

The July 2024 target had been 200,900 bags.

The NFA is targeting a rice reserve of 495,000 MT by the end of the year. It is required by law to maintain a buffer stock equivalent to about nine days' demand.

The NFA said it distributed 53,730 bags (2,686.5 MT) of milled rice in July, well below target.

“Sales were calibrated due to the low inventory level of rice,” it added. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/09/25/623940/july-nfa-palay-procurement-hits-10045-mt/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Xanadu Agri touts improved yields with its liquid fertilizer

September 25, 2024 | 7:54 pm



DA.GOV.PH

XANADU Agriproducts, Inc. said its liquid fertilizer promises improved yields for rice and corn farmers at reduced cost.

“(Our product is) cost efficient and produces healthier and more profitable harvests,” Xanadu Agriproducts Executive Director Hazel R. Loreto-Murphee told reporters on Wednesday.

Xanadu Agriproducts is the exclusive importer of the liquid fertilizer, which is made in Thailand. It has a partnership with UNAHCO, Inc., the animal nutrition and healthcare subsidiary of United Laboratories, Inc., as the national distributor.

“The past seven years were spent ensuring we can confidently introduce Xanadu Maxpower Liquid Fertilizers to the market, with data speaking for itself,” Xanadu Agriproducts Chairman and President Wellington C. Soong said.

According to the company’s field trials, farmers have reported higher average rice and corn yields per hectare. Maxpower also has applications for onion and sugarcane cultivation.



“We have seen this consistently in our data that Xanadu can lower farming costs... even if the cost of other fertilizers goes down, (Maxpower) is still more cost efficient,” Ms. Loreto-Murphee added.

According to the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority, the average price for granular Urea was P1,652.86 per 50-kilogram bag.

Xanadu said in its field trials, a rice farm in Oriental Mindoro achieved a yield of 7.75 metric tons (MT) per hectare, more than double the yield of the farm serving as the control, which did not use Maxpower.

Corn trials were also conducted at a farm in Sultan Kudarat which achieved a yield of 6.73 MT per hectare against the 2.35 MT for the control crop.

Palay or unmilled rice production is expected to drop 11.4% during the third quarter to 3.36 million MT, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority.

On the other hand, corn production was expected to increase 2.4% to 2.52 million MT during the three months to September. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/09/25/623933/xanadu-agri-touts-improved-yields-with-its-liquid-fertilizer/>

**PEOPLE'S JOURNAL:**

# Ingredients in chewing gum help tilapia survive cold climates

Wednesday, September 25, 2024 Journal Online



**Researchers inspect blue vats containing Nile tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*) fingerlings fed with varying levels of Arabic gum and lecithin to see what effect these have on the fishes' survivability in cold climates.** Photo credit: Benha University / National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries, Egypt

Two common ingredients in ordinary chewing gum – Arabic gum and lecithin – have been found to help improve the overall health of tilapia, helping these fish survive better even in cold climates. This discovery paves the way for raising tilapia for food outside of the tropical regions where they are commonly farmed.

Native to Africa, the Nile tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*) has been raised for food since ancient times due to its fast rate of reproduction. It is now a common sight in markets across tropical countries, including the Philippines and Indonesia. However, *O. niloticus* is sensitive to cold and only thrives in warm water within the range of 26°C to 30°C.

A recent study by an international team of researchers from Egypt and the Philippines, including Ateneo de Manila University Department of Biology's Dr. Janice Alano Ragaza, tracked the weight, growth, blood chemistry, and enzyme levels of Nile tilapia fingerlings fed on varying amounts of Arabic gum and lecithin. Arabic gum and lecithin are common ingredients found in

chewing gum and other foodstuffs. Arabic gum is made from sap, usually from the *Acacia senegal* or *Sengalia senegal* tree. Meanwhile, lecithin is a common emulsifier derived from a variety of sources, including eggs, soy beans, and sunflower seeds. Both have a wide variety of food uses, including in off-the-shelf chewing gum.



**Measured amounts of Arabic gum and lecithin are kneaded into fish food before being dropped into fish tanks containing Nile tilapia fingerlings.** Photo credit: Benha University / National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries, Egypt

The researchers found that Nile tilapia fingerlings fed on 4 grams of Arabic gum and 10 grams of lecithin per kilogram of fish food over the course of three months led to increased levels of minerals, enzymes, and antioxidants that help the fish overcome the stresses of living in winter. This change was more than just physiological, as it was found that the diet even activated specific genes associated with surviving cold temperatures.

The study, jointly undertaken by Benha University and the National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries in Egypt; and Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines; was published in *Aquaculture Reports* Vol. 38 in October 2024.

<https://journal.com.ph/ingredients-in-chewing-gum-help-tilapia-survive-cold-climates/>

# **Ilocos Sur farmers get P42-M agri machines, inputs**

**By Leander C. Domingo**  
September 26, 2024

AROUND P42.7 million worth of agricultural equipment and inputs were distributed to farmers in Ilocos Sur to boost the production of vegetables and other crops.

Distributed by the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office 1 (DA-RFO-1) that has jurisdiction over the Ilocos Region are hand tractors, harvesters, irrigation pumps, certified seeds and garden tools. These were distributed under the DA's Gulayan sa Paaralan Program.

DA-RFO1 Officer in Charge Executive Director John Pascual said the distribution of the farm equipment was held at the auction market in Candon, Ilocos Sur, on September 21, in partnership with key officials in Ilocos Sur. They were Ilocos Sur 2nd District Rep. Kristine Singson-Meehan, Candon Mayor Eric Singson and Puso ti Agtutubo district coordinator Zachary Singson.

"These interventions are expected to significantly contribute to the local farmers' productivity, allowing them to adopt modern farming practices, reduce labor costs and improve crop yields," Pascual said.

The agricultural equipment and inputs distributed were funded by DA banner programs such as the High Value Crops Development Program, National Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Program, Special Area for Agricultural Development Program, Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture, and the initiatives for rice and corn.

Singson-Meehan said that they are ready to cooperate with the DA in improving the agricultural output of Ilocos Sur.

"We are grateful because the distribution of aid for our farmers here in our province continues. We will continue to work together to develop agriculture in our province," she added.

Pascual also urged farmer-beneficiaries to maximize the benefits of the equipment and inputs given to them.

"I believe that the continued DA support to enhance agricultural productivity will also ensure the Philippines move closer to its goal of achieving food security," he added.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/09/26/business/agribusiness/ilocos-sur-farmers-get-p42-m-agri-machines-inputs/1974084>

# **PhilRice launches premium rice product**

**By Conrad M. Cariño**

**September 26, 2024**

THE Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) has launched a premium rice product cultivated by farming communities it has assisted.

Called GAPproved Rice, it was introduced during the Institute's Lakbay Palay in Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, on September 18 to 19 that gathered over a thousand farmers, extension workers and local government units.

GAPproved Rice also underwent assessment on good agricultural practices (GAP) led by the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI). PhilRice and BPI are agencies under the Department of Agriculture.





The Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) has been transferring various technologies to rice farmers so they can acquire certification for good agricultural practices, among others. Photo shows a techno demo conducted by PhilRice in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, on Sept. 20, 2024. PHILRICE PHOTO

**Karen Eloisa Barroga, PhilRice deputy executive director for development, said the launch of GAPproved Rice is a milestone.**

"GAPproved Rice is not only a step toward healthier food choices for consumers but also supports local farmers in meeting global standards," she said.

Violeta Rayos, manager of Manggalang Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Cooperative (Marbenco) — the first cooperative in the country to achieve PhilGAP certification — said that PhilRice assisted them in seeking the certification.

"PhilRice project called RiceBIS, or Rice Business Innovations System, provided essential training, seminars and evaluations, which helped us during the thorough inspection of our cooperative products and capabilities," she said.

With the certification, Rayos anticipates improved market positioning for their products.

Building on Marbenco's success, 289 farms covering 287.4 hectares have also earned certification, with 1,002 more farms currently undergoing assessment. The number of PhilGAP-certified farms has increased from 10 in 2022 to 23 this year.

PhilRice, through collaborations with government agencies and private partners, aims to further expand the availability of GAPproved Rice across the country. It will soon be available in select markets nationwide.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/09/26/business/agribusiness/philrice-launches-premium-rice-product/1974086>

# Searca, NZ exploring collaboration

By Leander C. Domingo

September 26, 2024

THE Laguna-based Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) and New Zealand are exploring potential collaboration on climate-smart agriculture.

New Zealand Ambassador to the Philippines Catherine McIntosh visited the Searca headquarters on September 12, with discussions focused on revisiting potential joint initiatives with the New Zealand Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research Center (NZAGRC) on climate-smart agriculture.

Searca Director Glenn Gregorio said this was previously discussed with officials of the New Zealand Embassy in Manila in Los Baños, Laguna, on August 27.

Known for its efficient production of dairy, beef and sheep, New Zealand's agriculture sector is a key driver of the country's economy. Also, according to Searca, New Zealand is committed to achieving net-zero carbon and is developing and promoting innovative farming practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"We acknowledge Searca's contribution to sustainable agriculture and rural development in the Southeast Asian region. It's great to see what you're doing," McIntosh said during the meeting.

Nur Azura Adam, Searca deputy director for programs, gave an overview of the potential joint capacity-building initiatives on climate-smart agriculture. She also mentioned the center's prospect of engaging

NZAGRC experts as speakers for the Searca Online Learning and Virtual Engagements webinar series.

On extending Searca's scholarship grants to New Zealanders, Adam explored the development of a training program on greenhouse gas emission measurement tools and facilities.

Maria Cristeta Cuaresma, senior program head of Searca's Education and Collective Learning Department, proposed engaging with the Global Research Alliance on agricultural greenhouse gases.

Highlighting the center's partnerships and linkages, Gregorio introduced the Consortium for Agricultural Development, Research and Extension or Cadre and the Southeast Asian University Consortium (UC) for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources.

He noted that UC, Searca and Kasetsart University in Thailand offer the Master of Science in Food Security and Climate Change, and develop a micro-credential program on food security and climate change.

Gregorio also underscored Searca's research focus on carbon neutrality and expressed interest in learning from New Zealand's pioneering net-zero carbon initiatives.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/09/26/business/agribusiness/searca-nz-exploring-collaboration/1974088>

## **BUSINESS MIRROR**

# **NFA: Rice inventory can feed entire country for 5 days**

Ada Pelonia  
September 26, 2024

THE government's rice inventory can feed the nation for five days, according to the National Food Authority (NFA).

NFA Acting Administrator Larry Lacson said the grains agency's stockpile reached 3.1 million 50-kilo bags or 157,000 metric tons (MT) of rice as of writing.

"The entire Philippines can be fed for up to...almost 5 days," Lacson said, partly in Filipino, in a radio interview on Wednesday.

In April, the NFA Council approved raising the buying price per kilo of palay through a PRICERS program where the agency can purchase as much as P30 per kilo for clean and dry palay; and as much as P23 per kilo for wet and fresh palay.

"In the previous harvest in summer, many benefited from PRICERS. Even if our purchasing got delayed, we were able to buy a lot and help many farmers because of that price," he said.

The NFA said its palay procurement reached nearly 3.37 million 50-kilo bags as of June 13, exceeding its target of 3.36 million bags. This translates to about 168,262 metric tons (MT) of palay.

"For the first time in nine years, NFA achieved its target for the first half of the year," Lacson said.

According to the NFA chief, they started to purchase palay in time with the wet season harvest.

“Here in Luzon, we have started buying from those who planted earlier. In most parts of Region 3, Region 2, the clean and dry is at P30 pesos this week.”

Despite the increase in buying prices, the agency earlier said it still has around P12 billion to procure unmilled rice in the second half.

The NFA has a budget of P17 billion for its procurement this year, including rollover funds from the previous year.

‘Restore some functions’

MEANWHILE, Lacson hoped that the amendment of the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), which is currently pending in Congress, would allow the agency to restore some of its functions.

“We hope that in the amendments to RTL...we hope the function of releasing affordable rice to the market will be given back to us.”

Under RTL, the NFA was stripped of its function of importing rice and selling it to the public, with its mandate reduced to keeping an emergency buffer stock of domestically produced rice.

The RTL also removed the NFA’s mandate to intervene in the market for price stabilization or import rice to increase the country’s buffer stock.

The grains agency said it procured 224,252 50-kg bags or 11,212.6 MT of unmilled rice in July, an 11.62-percent increase from its procurement target of 200,900 bags or 10,045 MT despite the onset of the lean season.

“This success is largely attributed to the ongoing PRICERS program, which has effectively encouraged more farmers to deliver and sell their palay harvests to the NFA, particularly in regions experiencing sporadic harvests,” the agency said in its latest accomplishment report.

The NFA also said that it distributed 53,730 bags or 2,686.5 MT of milled rice in the previous month.

“Sales were calibrated due to low inventory level of rice stocks, hence low distribution accomplishment.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/09/26/nfa-rice-inventory-can-feed-entire-country-for-5-days/>

# Lawmakers keen on hiking 2025 agri budget

Ada Pelonia  
September 26, 2024

The budgets of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and National Irrigation Administration (NIA) hurdled plenary deliberations at the House of Representatives.

For 2025, the DA is set to receive a budget of P200.19 billion, a 19.5 percent increase from this year's National Expenditure Program (NEP).

The NIA's proposed budget stands at P42.57 billion, slightly higher than last year's NEP of P41.7 billion.

The DA said several lawmakers pledged to further increase funding allocations to boost farm production and farm incomes.

Navotas City Rep. Toby Tiangco noted that agriculture plays a critical role in providing food for Filipinos and for creating more jobs.

“However, I am also acutely aware of the challenges that confront our farmers. From low farm productivity and competitiveness to high production cost, bad weather and onslaught of pest and diseases,” he said.

“What we envision today, therefore, is a modernized, sustainable and climate-resilient agricultural sector that prioritizes food security, access to safe and quality food for consumers, and economic prosperity for all Filipinos.”

Tiangco said farmers and fishermen have always fought against the weather, pests and diseases, and the hardship of poverty.



“As servants of the people, our message to them today and all days to follow is that: The government is willing and able to fight alongside them and will fully support them.”

Iloilo Rep. Janette Garin, who co-sponsored the budgets for both agencies, acknowledged that even with the increase in NEP allocation, the outlays are not enough to cover the needs of agriculture given the lack of significant investments over the last three decades and the growing food requirements of the country.

She said funds that would be allocated for agriculture are an “investment in the future of our country.”

Garin noted that additional funding could be secured during the bicameral conference committee discussions to finalize the General Appropriations Act (GAA).

“Agriculture is a priority of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.”

Camarines Sur Rep. Gabriel Bordado said modernizing the agriculture sector will require substantial resources.

“We really need to increase the budgetary allocation for the Department of Agriculture. How can you expect to modernize agriculture with this budget?”

Bordado said improving the lives of millions who depend on the farm sector and reducing dependence on food imports are crucial to achieve a food-secure nation.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. welcomed the pledges of support for additional funding.

“Any additional budget that we could get from Congress will allow DA to step up efforts to ensure food security, modernize agriculture, and improve the lives of millions of farmers, fishermen, and their families.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/09/26/lawmakers-keen-on-hiking-2025-agri-budget/>

# **Escudero: New anti-smuggling law to make food affordable**

Butch Fernandez  
September 26, 2024

The Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act, a priority measure of the administration, will be signed by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on September 26, boosting the government's capacity to run after smugglers whose illegal activities hurt local farmers and fisherfolk, as well as consumers.

According to Senate President Francis "Chiz" G. Escudero, the impending new measure meant to combat rampant smuggling, profiteering and hoarding of agricultural products will make food more affordable and accessible to many Filipinos and provide better income for local farmers.

"Isang malaking hakbang patungo sa pagpapatupad ng layunin ng pamahalaan na makapag-hatid ng murang pagkain sa bawat tahanan ang pagpasa ng [This passage is a big step toward fulfilling the goal of bringing cheaper food to every house with the] Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act," he said.

"Smugglers, hoarders and profiteers have long served as a monkey wrench to our efforts toward attaining food security. With this law, we are optimistic that more Filipinos will now have greater access to affordable and nutritious food."

Under the new law, agricultural smuggling, hoarding, profiteering, cartel and financing of these crimes are classified as acts of economic sabotage and thus carry a penalty of life imprisonment and a fine of three times the value of agricultural and fishery products subject of the crime.

Acts abetting the commission of agricultural economic sabotage such as the transport and storage of the smuggled goods, also face penalties—20 to 30 years' jail term and a fine of twice the value of the agricultural and fishery products subject of the crime.

“Farmers, fisherfolk, livestock and poultry raisers, and legitimate traders have long been suffering from the operations of smugglers and other individuals and groups engaged in the manipulation of the market. With the new law, we expect to see lower food prices and better incomes for our stakeholders in the agriculture sector,” Escudero said.

“The new law sends a strong message that the government will use all its resources to hold accountable individuals and groups who engage in smuggling, hoarding, profiteering and other uncompetitive and exploitative practices in the agriculture sector.”

With smugglers in check, Escudero said the public will be protected from the influx and proliferation of substandard goods or even goods not fit for human consumption.

Meanwhile, the Senate President said running after smugglers would also plug leakages in the revenue stream of government. “The law will also result in improved collections by our revenue collecting agencies, which will translate to the delivery of more services to our people.”

An Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Council would be created to oversee the implementation of the law.

The council will be chaired by the President or the designated permanent representative, with the following members: the heads of the Department of Agriculture, Department of Justice, Department of Finance, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Transportation, Department of Trade and Industry, the Anti-Money Laundering Council, and the Philippine Competition Commission.

One representative each from the sector of sugar, rice, corn, livestock and poultry, vegetables and fruits, fisheries and other aquatic products, and tobacco would also be part of the council.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/09/26/escudero-new-anti-smuggling-law-to-make-food-affordable/>