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DA ready to sell rice at P40 per kilo

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

September 3, 2024 | 12:00am



Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the price of rice being sold by the DA through its Rice-for-All program could decline by P5 per kilogram once prevailing market prices ease.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) said it may sell rice at P40 per kilogram if prevailing retail market prices soften as soon as more imported rice slapped with lower tariff rate arrives in the country in the coming months.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the price of rice being sold by the DA through its Rice-for-All program could decline by P5 per kilogram once prevailing market prices ease.

“If the (retail prices of rice) in the market reach P45 (per kilo), then our Rice-for-All program would be priced at P40 per kilo,” Tiu Laurel said in an online interview recently.

The Rice-for-All program, which started last Aug. 1, sells well-milled rice sourced from local importers and traders to the public at P45 per kilo, with a limit of 25 kilos per day, lower than prevailing prices of P47 to P55 per kilo.

The agriculture chief is maintaining his earlier forecast that local rice prices would fall only by October once a substantial amount of rice imports levied with lower tariffs of 15 percent enter the country.

The government earlier estimated that rice prices would decline by P5 to P7 per kilo because of the tariff reduction to 15 percent from 35 percent, which took effect last July 5.

Tiu Laurel has been emphasizing in the past weeks that the decrease in rice prices would not happen overnight as it would take time before the old stocks bought by traders at higher tariff rate would be replaced with cheaper ones.

Earlier, rice industry stakeholders disclosed that they are facing cancellation of contracts from Vietnam, the country's top supplier of rice, as exporters seek to renegotiate for higher prices to reflect present market conditions.

Agriculture officials have noted that rice import arrivals since the tariff reduction have slowed down as traders and importers are taking some time disposing of their old stocks.

Rice imports in the first half averaged around 400,000 metric tons before dropping to an average arrival of 200,000 MT in July and August.

Last week, Tiu Laurel extended the deadline for the arrival of rice shipments to allow local importers to negotiate better rates for their imports amid threats that their contracts are being canceled due to volatility in prices, resulting in lower landed costs and retail prices.

Industry sources told The STAR that rice traders and importers have appealed to the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), which issues the SPSIC, to extend the must ship-out deadline after they faced cancellation of contracts by Vietnamese exporters, who are seeking better prices for their stocks.

Vietnam accounts for at least three-fourths of the country's annual rice imports.

The extension of the must ship-out date would provide rice importers with the "flexibility" to look for other suppliers should their contracts be cancelled within the 60-day deadline, said Danilo Fausto, president of the Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc.

Fausto said some Vietnamese rice exporters are taking advantage of the government's decision to lower rice tariffs to 15 percent by hiking their export prices.

The Philippine Rice Industry Stakeholders Movement co-founder Orly Manuntag earlier said rice export prices in the neighboring Southeast Asian country have increased by \$60 to \$70 per metric ton, forcing Vietnamese suppliers to call off contracts with Philippine importers.

International reports indicate that Vietnamese rice export prices have steadily increased in recent months on the back of foreseen higher global demand for the grain, especially in neighboring countries like the Philippines and Indonesia.

The rise in export prices would reduce whatever savings would be generated and passed on to consumers due to the tariff reduction, they added.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/09/03/2382394/da-ready-sell-rice-p40-kilo>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Hograisers joining ASF vaccine trial assured of compensation

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

September 3, 2024 | 12:00am



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

STAR / Ryan Baldemor

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) has given assurance that hograisers who participate in the controlled vaccination against African swine fever would receive indemnification should their pigs die as a result of the ASF vaccine.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. issued Administrative Circular No. 5, which provides the guidelines on the controlled vaccine trial.

The DA and the Bureau of Animal Industry have started vaccinating hogs in Lobo, Batangas, the “ground zero” of ASF outbreaks.

“Pigs that die as a direct result of the ASF vaccine or its administration will be eligible for indemnification. If the deaths of the pigs were due to ASF infection, the existing indemnification guidelines for ASF outbreaks will be applied,” Tiu Laurel said in the circular.

Administrative Order No. 10, also issued by Tiu Laurel, set the amounts of indemnification at P4,000 for each piglet, P8,000 for a grower and P12,000 for each breeder.

Tiu Laurel said that transport of vaccinated pigs for slaughter would be permitted only after the animals have undergone a minimum of 30 days of post-vaccination monitoring and test negative for ASF.

“Clearance for the movement of vaccinated pigs must comply with current regulations, including securing a certificate of free-ASF status,” Tiu Laurel said.

He said pigs that test positive for ASF and show symptoms of the virus must be culled.

Animals that test positive, but do not show symptoms of ASF must be subjected to further monitoring and testing.

Tiu Laurel said that after a seven-day holding period, the pigs must be retested for virus clearance.

He said farms that do not comply with the provisions of the circular would be deemed ineligible for any form of indemnification or compensation.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/09/03/2382530/hograisers-joining-asf-vaccine-trial-assured-compensation>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Company's import permits revoked over illegal shipment

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:40 AM September 03, 2024

MANILA, Philippines — The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) has revoked the import license and clearances issued to a Manila-based company over an illegal shipment of agricultural food products from Vietnam.

In a statement on Monday, BPI said that all import clearances issued to LVM Grains Enterprises had been canceled after it noted that the company's response to a show cause order "wasn't credible."

The bureau, which is under the Department of Agriculture (DA) earlier asked LVM to explain why a shipment of milled rice, coffee and cashew nuts from Vietnam without an import clearance was consigned to it.

"Further, our records also showed that your company has previously committed multiple non-compliance," read a portion of BPI director Gerald Glenn Panganiban's order.

In 2022, BPI issued a license to operate to LVM that was valid until May 2025.

More orders issued

In a Viber message, Panganiban said that the bureau issued show cause orders to four entities in May but declined to disclose additional details.

"Regarding the show cause orders, we have definitely issued a lot because we have caught a lot [of unauthorized deliveries] recently," he added.

Before this, LVM imported 31,525 metric tons of rice this year, according to BPI's tally as of Aug. 24.

The bureau stressed that any importation of plants, planting materials and plant products requires an import clearance and phytosanitary certificate issued by the country of origin.

“This is to ensure that the shipment was able to comply with the phytosanitary requirements set by our office and ensure freedom of the commodities from quarantine or exotic plant pests,” Panganiban said.

Import clearances are issued by the concerned bureau or agency to ensure that agricultural products being delivered to the country follow existing standards to protect the health of humans, plants and animals, and prevent the spread of diseases or pests.

The DA is mandated by existing laws and regulations to plan, execute, regulate and monitor programs and activities related to agriculture, food production and supply.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1979307/companys-import-permits-revoked-over-illegal-shipment>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Coco farmers call for bigger role in replanting program

September 2, 2024 | 8:12 pm



PHILSTAR FILE PHOTO

THE Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) needs to rope in more coconut farmers' groups and cooperatives in carrying out its tree replanting effort, an industry group said.

"They want the participation of the farmers... they have not been using established farmers' organizations. I think they are dealing with localized groups as they see fit," Confederation of Coconut Farmers' Organizations of the Philippines, Executive Director Charles R. Avila told *BusinessWorld*.

Last year, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. ordered the PCA to draft a plan to rehabilitate the coconut industry, including the planting of 100 million coconut trees by 2028.

"(Farmers' groups) have been waiting for more than a year now since it was first announced that they would be willing to work with the farmers' organizations. Specifically at the national level," Mr. Avila added.

The rehabilitation plan aims to address the advanced age of the nut-bearing trees. The PCA is seeking to replant about 8.5 million trees this year.

He said that a majority of the Philippines' fruit-bearing coconuts are now senile and have become candidates for monetization into coco lumber.

“If they can, for example, plant or replant this year, more than 5 to 8 million, that would be quite an achievement. But how far is that from the 100 million coconut trees that we need?,” he said.

Last week, the President allocated an additional P1 billion to the PCA for the coconut replanting operation in 2025, while an additional P2.5 billion set aside for fertilization.

“It would be a big help if properly used... that is not a small amount. But at the same time, the objective need for replanting cannot be denied,” Mr. Avila added.

Under the Philippine Coconut Industry Development Plan 2024-2034 the replanting project is expected to increase coconut production by 4.7 billion nuts, valued at P33.1 billion, by 2034.

By 2025, the PCA aims to replant 15.3 million, followed by 25.4 million annually between 2026 and 2028.

Mr. Avila also said that the government should allocate more funding towards creating integrated coconut processing plants.

“In that way of thinking, we can have a national structure for industrialization, which we don't have,” he added.

As of the second quarter, the volume of coconut production rose 1.5% year on year to 3.41 million metric tons, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/09/02/617659/coco-farmers-call-for-bigger-role-in-replanting-program/>

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL:

Private Sector Advisory Council Recognized with Bayaniyugan Gabay Award at COINS Awards Night 2024

Monday, September 2, 2024 Journal Online



The Private Sector Advisory Council, represented by Noel Tempongko and Kartini Lim of Century Pacific Food Inc., has received the Bayaniyugan Gabay Award from the Philippine Coconut Authority at the COINS Awards Night 2024 for its contributions to sustainable practices and the empowerment of coconut farmers.

The **Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC)** was honored with the prestigious Bayaniyugan Gabay Award by the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) during the Coconut Industry Sustainability (COINS) Awards Night, the closing event of National Coconut Week 2024 last August 30. This award recognizes PSAC's unwavering support for sustainable practices, its efforts to empower coconut farmers, and its contributions to the growth of the coconut industry. As a key advisory body to the President of the Philippines, PSAC has provided expert guidance and advocated for sustainable practices that significantly contribute to the achievement of the nation's economic objectives, particularly in the coconut sector. Its collaborative efforts have empowered coconut farmers, strengthened the industry's resilience, and ensured its continued growth and global competitiveness.

PSAC has been at the forefront of driving transformational change within the coconut sector. Through its collaborative approach, the Council has supported innovative policies and

programs that promote sustainable farming practices, enhance the welfare of coconut farmers, and reinforce the sector's resilience in the face of global challenges.

Noel Tempongko, Vice President and General Manager of the Coconut Processing & Exports Division of Century Pacific Food, Inc., and a PSAC member representing the Agriculture Sector, accepted the award on behalf of PSAC and expressed his appreciation:

“I humbly accept the Bayaniyugan Gabay Award on behalf of the Private Sector Advisory Council – Agri Sector. This recognition from the Philippine Coconut Authority is a great honor, one that truly belongs to everyone who has dedicated their efforts to advancing our coconut industry.”

Tempongko emphasized the importance of partnership and collaboration. “This award highlights the strong partnership between the government and the private sector in creating sustainable solutions for the coconut industry and improving the lives of our coconut farmers.”

He also highlighted key initiatives supported by PSAC, such as a large-scale replanting program and fertilizer distribution, which are vital to revitalizing the coconut industry:

“The program to plant 100 million coconut trees over the next five years is not just about boosting farm productivity; it is about giving hope and a better future to our coconut farmers and their families. The widescale fertilization program for 55 million trees will also support the coconut sector and help revive our local salt industry.”

The COINS Awards Night celebrates individuals and organizations committed to advancing the coconut industry. This year's event underscored the importance of cooperation between the public and private sectors to secure a sustainable future for this vital industry.

About Private Sector Advisory Council

The **Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC)** has been established strategically by President Ferdinand Bongbong Marcos Jr to create and strengthen innovative new synergies between the private and public sectors. PSAC comprises business leaders and experts across six main sectoral groups — Agriculture, Digital Infrastructure, Jobs, Healthcare, Build-Build-Build, and Tourism.

The Council helps the government deliver on its commitment to transform the Philippine economy by implementing robust infrastructure programs, creating more jobs and attracting more investors, digitizing processes, and improving agricultural productivity through the recalibration of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), jumpstart Philippine Tourism and ensuring an equitable, sustainable, and inclusive business landscape for Filipinos.

PSAC will continuously recommend modern policy development to the government and report regularly to the President to provide feedback and adjust recommendations based on what is happening on the ground.

<https://journal.com.ph/private-sector-advisory-council-recognized-with-bayaniyugan-gabay-award-at-coins-awards-night-2024/>

Hog raisers back DA's program vs ASF

By William B. Depasupil

September 3, 2024

THE country's hog raising industry has given its full support for the anti-African Swine Fever (ASF) vaccination program of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

In a letter to Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel, the Agriculture Sector Alliance of the Philippines (AGAP) requested for a systematic vaccine roll-out using as many vaccinators as possible in coordination with the local government units (LGUs).

AGAP also expected the participation of cooperatives, private veterinarians, suppliers of veterinary products, and other volunteers to immediately administer the 10,000 doses to backyard raisers.

AGAP party-list Rep. Nicanor 'Nikki' Briones, said that since the detection of ASF in 2019, local pork production and supply have been badly affected, resulting in huge economic losses to hog raisers.

"The hog raisers are grateful that the Department of Agriculture has commenced its ASF vaccination program," he added.

The Pork Producers Federation of the Philippines (PPFP) also expressed its full support to the DA initiative.

"We are also humbly requesting the good agriculture secretary that the vaccination program be rolled out swiftly and without delay to provinces with known ASF outbreak," said PPFP president Rolando Tambago.

At the current rate of 46 heads vaccinated per day, it will take several months to fully administer the initial doses of the ASF vaccine.

PPFP said that the DA, through the Bureau of Animal Industry, can deputize private veterinarians to administer the vaccines, while DA-BAI accredited laboratories may be authorized to conduct the testing for hogs prior to vaccination.

"Through this, we can be assured of its effectiveness in safeguarding the hog industry against ASF," PFPF's letter to the DA states.

The group said that it will support the commercial use of the ASF vaccine after the trial.

In response, the DA assured hog raisers who participated in the controlled vaccination that they would be properly compensated should their pigs die after being vaccinated.

DA and the BAI have started vaccinating hogs in Lobo, Batangas, the "ground zero" of ASF outbreaks.

The DA chief said that the slaughter of vaccinated pigs would only be allowed after a minimum of 30-day post-vaccination monitoring and test negative for **ASF**.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/09/03/news/hog-raisers-back-das-program-vs-asf/1968715>

All set for importation of 30K MT of small pelagic fish

Ada Pelonia
September 3, 2024

IT'S all systems go for the importation of 30,000 metric tons (MT) of small pelagic fish during the closed fishing season, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. issued Special Order (SO) 1272 which assigned Isidro Velayo Jr., officer-in-charge of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), as the approving official for the issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances (SPSICs).

Under the order, the DA said this would “ensure the timely issuance” of the online SPSICs.

“[Velayo is] designated as the approving authority for the SPSICs that will be issued under the Certificate of Necessity to Import 30,000 MT of frozen pelagic fish for wet markets during the closed fishing season of October 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024,” the order read.

An SPSIC would certify that an inbound shipment is safe for human and animal consumption and would not bring in any pests that could harm the local agriculture sector.

Laurel said earlier that they sought the National Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council's (NFARMC) approval of 35,000 MT of fish imports that will arrive in the country. (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/14/30000-metric-tons-of-fish-imports-eyed/>)

“What we asked from NFARMC is actually 35,000 [MT]. But the national NFARMC recommended 25,000 [MT]. I just decided na to be on the safe side in the middle,” he said, partly in Filipino.

The agriculture chief noted the problem with “depleted fishing grounds” when asked about the need to import if the volume of local production reached millions in the previous year.

Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed the total volume of fisheries production reached 4.26 million metric tons (MMT) in 2023.

“Previous administrators have implemented a closed season for three months of every year when no commercial fishing is allowed,” Laurel said.

“If we banned the fishing, there will surely be a shortage; there’s a need to import,” he added.

He said the imports only need to fill the gap to be created from the ban, just so “our fishing grounds can recover.” Once the fishing grounds recover, he added, “maybe after a few more years, there would be no need to import or perhaps we can reduce importation.”

Lower fish unloading

Meanwhile, the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority (PFDA) reported that regional ports registered lower fish unloading volume in July owing to inclement weather and closed fishing season.

PFDA figures indicate that the fish unloading volume in July declined by 14.17 percent to 50,862.42 metric tons (MT) from the previous month’s 59,259.88 MT.

“PFDA RFPs continuously do what they can to supply their clients and stakeholders with enough and appropriately priced fishery products, despite occasional difficulties brought on by closed fishing seasons and inclement weather,” the agency said in a statement.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/09/03/all-set-for-importation-of-30k-mt-of-small-pelagic-fish/>

Dressed chicken inventory in cold storage dips

Ada Pelonia
September 3, 2024

THE country's dressed chicken inventory declined as traders made way for the "ber" months' shipments, according to the United Broiler Raisers Association (Ubra).

Data from the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) showed that dressed chicken inventory in cold storage facilities nationwide stood at 31,917 metric tons (MT) as of August 26. This was lower than the 32,413 MT recorded in the previous week.

"Importers are maybe creating more space for their September to December arrivals," Ubra Chairman Elias Jose Inciong told the BusinessMirror via Viber.

Figures from the NMIS, an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture (DA), revealed that a chunk of the inventory during the period consisted of imports at 21,601 MT while the local inventory held 10,315 MT.

For the dressed chicken inventory, the agency said its data excluded freshly chilled chicken and mechanically deboned meat (MDM), adding that the inventory for those already in distribution channels was not included.

NMIS data showed the frozen pork inventory registered an increase to 60,275 MT as of August 26 from 58,031 MT in the previous week.

Imports held the bulk of the inventory at 58,874 MT while pork from local raisers stood at 1,400 MT.

Cold storage facilities in Region 3 and Region 4-A held a chunk of the pork inventory during the period. Both regions also accounted for the bulk of the dressed chicken inventory, according to NMIS.

Meanwhile, the country's meat imports grew by nearly 10 percent in the first semester, driven by higher chicken and pork purchases abroad.

Data from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) showed meat imports increased by 9.64 percent to 647,745 metric tons (MT) from January to June this year, compared to the 590,766 MT recorded in the same period in 2023.

Chicken imports rose 4.13 percent to 221,598 MT from 212,811 MT. Mechanically deboned meat (MDM) accounted for the bulk of chicken imports at 124,837 MT.

Based on BAI data, pork imports grew by 10.73 percent to 316,995 MT from the 286,275 MT recorded in the same period last year. Pork cuts accounted for most of the shipments, followed by offals at 113,851 MT and 112,597 MT, respectively.

Image credits: [Michael Edwards via Dreamstime.com](#)

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/09/03/dressed-chicken-inventory-in-cold-storage-dips/>

Pest threatens to worsen corn crisis, food security

Bless Aubrey Ogerio
September 3, 2024

THE combined impact of Fall Armyworm (FAW) and locust infestations is expected to reduce corn yields and drive up food prices, an August 22 market advisory by the Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (DOST-PCAARRD) said.

FAW, known locally as “Harabas,” has severely affected corn fields in 12 regions of the country, with the Department of Agriculture (DA) reporting damage to 5,279 farmers and 3,237 hectares, and losses amounting to P57.03 million as of August 16.

Western Visayas, particularly Negros Occidental, has been identified as one of the hardest-hit areas.

Locusts have also been reported in Negros Oriental, specifically in Siaton and Pamplona. Although damage is currently minimal, the DA has deployed teams to apply insecticides and introduce biological control agents to prevent larger swarms.

On August 14, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported a 20.35 percent drop in corn production for the second quarter of 2024, reducing output to 1.17 million metric tons (MT) from 1.47 million MT during the same period last year due to El Niño, FAW and tropical cyclones.

This production decline has led to a 5.75 percent increase in corn product prices, with the average cost rising from P54.10 per kilogram (kg) in the second quarter of 2023 to P57.30 per kg in the same period this year.

The Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. warned that ongoing declines in corn production could result in higher prices for meat products like chicken, eggs and pork.

In response, the DA has implemented various interventions, including the distribution of biocontrol agents and insecticides, and providing pest management

training, while the Bureau of Plant Industry has introduced crop management strategies.

The DOST-PCAARRD is testing Carrageenan Plant Growth Promoter to boost crop resilience and reduce pesticide use.

Another DOST-PCAARRD-funded project has developed a nanobiopesticide with a 100 percent mortality rate against armyworm larvae in lab trials, offering a potentially sustainable solution for managing FAW and other pests in corn.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/09/03/pest-threatens-to-worsen-corn-crisis-food-security/>