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THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

P20 million reward up for info vs economic saboteurs

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

September 30, 2024 | 12:00am



A law enforcer examines smuggled onions confiscated during a raid on a warehouse in Navotas on August 15, 2024.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — Up to P20 million reward will be offered by the government in exchange for information that will lead to the arrest of smugglers and hoarders of agricultural products under the newly enacted Republic Act 12022 or the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act, the Department of Agriculture said yesterday.

Under RA 12022, smuggling or hoarding activities can be considered economic sabotage if the seized commodities reach more than P10 million, according to Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa.

“Those who will provide information can receive reward or incentive up to P20 million,” De Mesa said.

He added that the new law provides those who will be found guilty be meted a jail term of life imprisonment with no bail recommended, and a fine five times the value of confiscated farm products.

“If the value of smuggled goods is P100 million, the fine will be P500 million plus of course the reclusion perpetua imprisonment,” he said.

According to De Mesa, the law is necessary as smuggled products compete with locally produced products.

“It will help our farmers and fisherfolk if these illegal activities will be stopped as smuggled agricultural commodities are often sold at lower price because traders do not pay taxes,” he said.

De Mesa added that RA 12022 will also boost the government revenue collection as it will go after those who do not pay tariff with the illegal entry of smuggled farm commodities.

Under the law, a daily price index will monitor and publish prevailing retail prices of agricultural and fishery products in all regions to ensure transparency and accountability.

The Court of Tax Appeals shall have exclusive jurisdiction for cases related to agricultural economic sabotage and shall have the authority to handle and decide on criminal proceedings under the law.

The Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Council and Enforcement Group will be formed to ensure the proper implementation of the law, coordinate investigations and conduct visits and inspections to enforce compliance with the measure.

The Council will consist of the President or his designated permanent representative as chair and the chiefs of the Agriculture, Justice, Finance, Interior and Local Government, Transportation and Trade and Industry departments, the Anti-Money Laundering Council and Philippine Competition Commission as members.

The enforcement group, meanwhile, will be composed of the National Bureau of Investigation, Philippine National Police, Philippine Coast Guard and Department of Finance.

De Mesa added that Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. expressed confidence that the law will serve as a deterrent amid the continued illegal activities of traders and hoarders of agriculture and fishery products.

“We welcome the passage of a stronger law that will penalize violators with higher fines and longer jail terms,” he said.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/09/30/2389044/p20-million-reward-info-vs-economic-saboteurs>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Rice farmers can earn through carbon trading

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

September 30, 2024 | 12:00am



Farmers plant rice seedlings for the first cropping season in Mangatarem, Pangasinan on June 30, 2024.

Cesar Ramirez / The Philippine STAR

MANILA, Philippines — Rice farmers have the potential to reduce their carbon emissions and earn through carbon trading if certain policy changes are implemented by the government, according to the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice).

In a policy brief, PhilRice pointed out that the rice industry, which is the country's second largest greenhouse gas (GHG) emitter, can be reformed to allow local farmers earn and sell carbon credits to boost their profits.

The Department of Agriculture-attached agency noted that rice farming accounts for 52 percent of the total agriculture emissions.

“Hence, rectifying certain practices in rice cultivation can substantially help reduce GHG emissions,” PhilRice said.

Some of the policy reforms PhilRice is proposing is the adoption by farmers of alternate wetting and drying (AWD), direct-seeded rice and aerobic rice.

Under AWD, rice fields are alternately flooded and non-flooded, thus saving irrigation water without sacrificing yield, according to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization.

“Studies have also shown that improving crop residue management, like incorporating compost rather than fresh stubbles/straw, can reduce GHG emissions,” it said.

PhilRice explained that rice farms' methane emissions could be reduced by up to 50 percent through the effective management of water in the paddy by implementing AWD.

“With this, it is only sensible that farmers who employ AWD should be able to sell carbon credits, and thus, make money from it,” the agency said.

The policy brief also pointed out that there is a “gap” in the rice sector since there is currently no “actual” carbon credit trading or registered project despite the availability of several technologies that can reduce GHG emissions.

“Only recently has the AWD method gained traction as a potential technology for generating carbon credits,” PhilRice said.

“This development could mark the first instance of carbon credit trading in the agricultural sector,” PhilRice added.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/09/30/2388866/rice-farmers-can-earn-through-carbon-trading>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Department of Agriculture temporarily bans French poultry imports

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

September 30, 2024 | 12:00am



The measure is meant to protect the country's domestic poultry population from highly pathogenic avian influenza virus, said Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel in his Memorandum Order (MO) 40.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) has imposed a temporary import ban on poultry and poultry products from France after the European country reported a confirmed bird flu case.

The measure is meant to protect the country's domestic poultry population from highly pathogenic avian influenza virus, said Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel in his Memorandum Order (MO) 40.

Under the order, Tiu Laurel immediately banned the importation of domestic and wild birds including their products such as poultry meat, day-old chicks and eggs and semen from France.

The Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) has suspended the processing, evaluation of application and issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary import clearance for the importation of the above-mentioned products.

However, all poultry shipments from France that are already in transit to the Philippines before the official communication of the order to French authorities shall be allowed to enter the country as long as they were slaughtered or produced on or before July 25.

Nonetheless, all poultry shipments from France that were slaughtered or produced beyond July 25 that would arrive in the country will be stopped and confiscated by the government's veterinary quarantine officers and inspectors.

The DA noted that France, through its competent authorities, reported to the World Organisation for Animal Health last month that there was an outbreak of H5 HPAI in Saint-Malo, Ille-et-Vilaine, Bretagne, France on Aug. 7.

The concerned bird flu case affected domestic poultry birds as confirmed by a national laboratory in France, according to MO 40.

The country imported some 19,252 kilos of chicken meat products from France in the first half, based on latest BAI data.

France also exported about 3,900 kilos of duck meat, all of which being offals, to the Philippines during the six-month period, according to BAI.

The Philippines usually imposes a temporary import ban on trade partners that have confirmed bird flu cases to protect the domestic poultry population from transboundary animal diseases like HPAI.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/09/30/2388867/department-agriculture-temporarily-bans-french-poultry-imports>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Tackling food loss and waste: A critical path to food security and sustainability

[POINT OF VIEW](#) - [Gustavo Gonzalez](#), [Lionel Dabbadie](#), [Regis Chapman](#) - The

Philippine Star

September 30, 2024 | 12:00am

Have you ever heard about the Filipino mumo? Perhaps you have been acquainted with the term that refers to a scary creature, but in a country like the Philippines, it also refers to something just as scary: leftover grains of cooked rice. Growing up, some Filipinos are accustomed to hearing their parents admonish their children to make sure they finish their food, leaving no trace – not even mumo – on their plate. This is how much the typical Filipino family values the food being served on their plates, given the challenges in food security. Yet in many communities, leftovers and other food wastes remain a typical sight.

Food loss and waste (FLW) around the world is staggering. Globally, one-third of all food produced – approximately 1.3 billion tons – never reach consumers, equating to a loss of US\$ 400 billion annually. In the Asia Pacific Region, this translates to around 370 million people struggling with hunger. Key crops such as rice and corn in the Philippines alone face substantial postharvest losses, reaching up to 16.5 percent for rice and 7.2 percent for corn. High-value crops, including vegetables, suffer even higher losses – up to 42 percent – particularly during transportation and marketing?. The irony is, these are also among the most wasted food in Filipino households, with rice, vegetables, and meat topping the country's household plate waste survey. This is also next to the fact that 51 million Filipinos are food insecure, which is almost three times higher than the regional average.

The causes of FLW in Asia and the Pacific are diverse and interconnected. In the Philippines, the archipelagic geography complicates food distribution, while the tropical climate and natural disasters accelerate spoilage. Inadequate harvesting practices, and poor storage and handling techniques at the production level lead to significant losses. Bananas, for example, can suffer up to 35% loss due to premature ripening and mechanical damage during transport. Vegetables such as lettuce, broccoli, and cabbage are vulnerable to spoilage, with up to 50% being wasted before reaching consumers?.

Social and cultural dynamics, such as gender inequalities, often restrict women—who are key actors in post-harvest handling—from accessing the resources they need to reduce food loss?.

Poor infrastructure, particularly the lack of cold storage facilities, remains a significant bottleneck. While cold storage could drastically reduce vegetable or fish losses during harvest and marketing, access to such facilities is limited in rural or coastal areas. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated logistical disruptions, leading to massive food losses during lockdowns due to transportation and supply chain bottlenecks?.

FLW not only undermines efforts to alleviate hunger but also drives environmental degradation. Global FLW creates about 8 to 10 percent of greenhouse Gases (GHGs) and at least one-quarter of all agricultural water used to grow food is ultimately wasted.

The solutions to FLW are clear. First, we need stronger infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. Investments in post-harvest technologies can drastically reduce waste. Countries like the Philippines can also benefit from improved access to climate financing options to fund infrastructure projects that address FLW and mitigate the impact of GHGs. Investing in making cold storage facilities more accessible, for instance, could cut vegetable losses during harvest and marketing by up to 50%, preserving the quality and extending the shelf life of high value crops?.

Additionally, addressing systemic inequalities, such as the barriers that women face in accessing resources and technologies, is essential to ensure that all actors in the food supply chain can contribute to reducing losses?.

Governments can also incentivize businesses to adopt FLW-reducing technologies and practices, while also investing in research and innovation. In the Philippines, mechanization efforts such as improved rice milling technology, carrot washing machines, and cold storage systems are already reducing waste at key stages of the value chain??.

To make significant strides, FLW reduction must be integrated into broader efforts to transform agrifood systems. Moving towards circular food systems, where resources are reused and food waste streams are minimized, offers a path toward sustainability.

At the consumer level, reducing food waste requires both behavioral change and educational efforts. Advocating for FLW reduction means leaving no one behind – from production to consumption?.

As a leading voice in the fight against FLW, the United Nations has already launched numerous initiatives across the region. In the Philippines, the UN is already supporting the Government's efforts to reduce post-harvest losses in rice and corn by 2% and

fisheries losses by 10%, as well as transformation of the National agrifood systems towards more efficiency and sustainability.

Similarly, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the World Food Programme (WFP) are collaborating on campaigns like the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste, encouraging collective action to reduce FLW as part of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

FAO's initiative "Do Good: Save Food!" engages young students, teaching them about the environmental footprint of food waste, and empowering them to advocate for more sustainable consumption habits?.

WFP's support to link smallholder farmers to school meals and other institutional markets better matches supply with demand, reducing supply chain related post-harvest losses.

Every ton of food wasted is a missed opportunity to feed the hungry, preserve the environment, and enhance economic resilience. We must act now by investing in solutions that reduce FLW, from farm to table, and supporting the transformation of our agrifood systems into more sustainable and efficient networks. Governments, the private sector, and individuals must all work together to create meaningful change. A food-secure future is still possible.

May the next generation of Filipinos remain familiar with the mumo, and never let even a grain of rice go to waste.

Dr. Lionel Dabbadie is the FAO Representative in the Philippines.

Regis Chapman is the Representative and Country Director at World Food Program Philippines Country Office.

Gustavo Gonzalez the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of United Nations in the Philippines

<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2024/09/30/2388912/tackling-food-loss-and-waste-critical-path-food-security-and-sustainability>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Smugglers' days numbered?

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 04:40 AM September 30, 2024

During his third State of the Nation Address (Sona) last year, President Marcos identified smuggling, hoarding, and manipulation as a major cause of high agricultural commodity prices. Labeling them as “cheaters” who take advantage of farmers and consumers, he vowed that the government would chase after them and put them in jail.

Last week, he signed into law Republic Act No. 12022, or the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act, which now classify smuggling, hoarding, profiteering, and cartel operations involving agricultural and fishery products as economic sabotage—a nonbailable offense punishable by life imprisonment and fines of up to five times the value of the goods involved.

“Let me be clear: This law does not just target the masterminds; it holds all accomplices accountable—financiers, brokers, employees, even transporters,” the President warned during its signing in Malacañang.

As in any other law, however, there are crucial issues that need to be addressed to be able to fulfill the intent of RA 12022. The most crucial is enforcement. The country’s experience in this regard has been very poor, simply look at the environmental destruction taking place across the country despite the existence of several laws against them.

Gargantuan task

The scores of undisciplined motorists disregarding even the most basic traffic regulation is another proof (for example, jeepney drivers picking up and dropping off passengers in areas clearly marked “no loading/unloading zones”).

Perhaps what will differentiate RA 12022 is that the President looks intent on leading the task. The law calls for the establishment of the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Council, which he will head, alongside other key government officials, to harmonize and

coordinate efforts against smugglers and hoarders. An Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Enforcement Group will also be set up to focus on dismantling smuggling and cartel operations and apprehending offenders.

Another concern is prosecution. Once cases were filed in court, these remained in the dockets for ages, delaying the serving of justice. RA 12022 mandates the formation of a special team of prosecutors that will expedite cases related to agricultural sabotage. “No longer will these cases gather dust; they will be prioritized, and they will be resolved urgently,” the President noted.

The public also has a role and cannot rely solely on the government to do this gargantuan task of ending smuggling, hoarding, and price manipulation in the agricultural sector.

Onion saga

Given the country’s porous borders, ordinary citizens can help the government intensify its watch on ports of entry for contraband goods. “This law is not just another policy; it is your battle cry,” said the President.

The onion saga clearly demonstrates the harm caused by smuggling. Lawmakers previously blamed agricultural smuggling for the high prices during the latter part of 2022. At one point, onion prices skyrocketed to about P500 to P700 a kilo from the usual P80 to P200. According to Marikina Rep. Stella Quimbo, the hearings done by the House committee on agriculture and food showed that the onion cartel manipulated prices by creating a fake shortage of cold storage facilities needed to keep onions fresh.

In June 2023, the President himself noted that the sky-high prices of agricultural products were due to no other reason other than smuggling and hoarding. “The onions were sufficient; they were just hoarding and tightening prices. The cold storage (facilities) were not allowed to be used, so the syndicates controlled the onions that would reach the market,” he lamented.

Blatant collusion

The enforcement office of the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC), which filed early this month charges and penalties totaling P2.42 billion against 12 onion traders and importers for allegedly acting as a cartel since 2019, shows how they operate. They allocated the supply of imported onions by assigning among themselves the clearances issued by the Department of Agriculture. These importers and traders also divided among themselves the volume of onions allowed to be imported. “So, by agreeing to allocate ... among themselves the actual volume of imports, respondents effectively controlled more than 50 percent of the volume of onions imported into the Philippines,” said lawyer Christian Loren de los Santos, the director of the PCC’s enforcement office. “This agreement leads to lower supply, higher prices, poorer quality and less innovation, which harm consumers, businesses, and the economy in general.”

This blatant collusion of cartels and syndicates manipulating the onion trade is replicated in other agricultural products, including rice, sugar, and even vegetables.

It is hoped that RA 12022’s signing into law and the measures lined up to strictly enforce it will fulfill the President’s warning during his Sona that the days of agricultural smugglers are numbered. This is one promise worth keeping.

<https://opinion.inquirer.net/177166/smugglers-days-numbered>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Inflation may ease to near 4-year low

September 30, 2024 | 12:35 am



PHILIPPINE STAR/RYAN BALDEMOR

By **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**, *Reporter*

HEADLINE INFLATION likely slowed to a near four-year low in September amid falling prices of rice and fuel, giving the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) room to cut benchmark interest rates further, analysts said.

A *BusinessWorld* poll of 15 analysts conducted last week yielded a median estimate of 2.5% for the September consumer price index (CPI).

If realized, September inflation would be sharply slower than 3.3% in August and 6.1% in the same month a year ago.

This would also be the lowest monthly print in nearly four years or since the 2.3% clip in October 2020.

The Philippine Statistics Authority is scheduled to release September inflation data on Friday (Oct. 4). The BSP has yet to release its month-ahead inflation forecast.

Easing rice prices likely caused the CPI to go down this month, analysts said.

“Price pressures will ease on rice, which makes up a significant proportion in the heavily weighted food basket. Prices for the staple soared in 2023 when India banned the export of non-basmati white rice,” Sarah Tan, an economist from Moody’s Analytics, said in an e-mail.

Rice inflation eased to 14.7% in August from 20.9% in July. Rice typically accounts for nearly half of overall inflation.

The Agriculture department earlier this month said they are eyeing to bring down rice inflation to single-digit levels.

“The cut in the tariff on imported rice, which took effect at the end of June and will last until year’s end, will help bring down inflation for this staple,” Ms. Tan added.

In June, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. issued Executive Order No. 62, cutting tariffs on rice imports to 15% from 35% until 2028.

“Food price base effects will remain quite favorable, stemming from last year’s rice price surge. This should pull food inflation down quite sharply, even if there is no material change month to month,” Pantheon Macroeconomics Chief Emerging Asia Economist Miguel Chanco said.

Philippine National Bank economist Alvin Joseph A. Arogo said the steady food and non-alcoholic beverage index in August also “provides buffer against the potential adverse impact of the current and upcoming typhoons on overall food prices.”

Lower fuel prices may have led to slower September inflation, analysts added.

“Disinflation may come largely from broad food and transport CPI. Particularly, we expect declines from rice prices and lower gasoline/diesel prices from declining global prices,” Union Bank of the Philippines, Inc. Chief Economist Ruben Carlo O. Asuncion said in an e-mail.

In September, pump price adjustments stood at a net decrease of P0.95 a liter for gasoline, P2.10 for diesel and P2.35 for kerosene.

“Retail fuel prices fell by as much as 7% month on month on the back of lower oil prices globally and a stronger peso against the US dollar,” Aris D. Dacanay, economist for ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) at HSBC Global Research, said.

“Transport deflation should also deepen, further pulling down headline inflation, thanks to the rolling over in domestic pump prices, which reflect the weakness in global oil prices,” Mr. Chanco added.

“(Inflation) was likely within the target band as an effect of easing supply-chain constraints, slowdown in oil prices, and inflow of agricultural imports. However, it is still threatened by natural calamities that can disrupt food supplies,” Oikonomia Advisory & Research, Inc. said.

MORE ROOM FOR RATE CUTS
The expected downtrend in inflation in the coming months will give the BSP more space to continue its policy easing cycle, analysts said.

“For the coming months, it is possible for inflation to sustain at 3% levels for the rest of 2024, or well within the BSP inflation target range of 2-4%, that could justify further BSP rate cuts that would match any future Fed rate cuts from 2024-2026,” Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort said.

“With CPI inflation remaining on a downward path and the US Fed already starting its cutting cycle, BSP has plenty of scope to further remove the restrictiveness of its monetary stance,” Nomura Global Markets Research Chief ASEAN Economist Euben Paracuelles said. “We still forecast BSP to cut by 25 bps at each of the October and December meetings, and by 75 bps in the first three meetings in 2025, bringing the policy rate to 5%.”

BSP Governor Eli M. Remolona, Jr. last week signaled that the central bank could deliver a 25-bp rate cut each at its remaining two meetings.

The Monetary Board in August reduced borrowing costs by 25 bps, bringing the key rate to 6.25% from the over 17-year high of 6.5%.

It will have its next policy review on Oct. 17, while its last meeting for the year is scheduled for Dec. 19.

Meanwhile, the Fed this month kicked off its easing cycle with a supersized 50-bp cut, bringing its target rate to the 4.75-5% range.

Markets are fully pricing in a cut of at least 25 bps at the Fed’s November meeting according to CME’s FedWatch Tool, Reuters reported.

“A cooling inflation print for September will convince the BSP that inflation has returned to target for good after July’s spike. Coupled with the recent 50-bp cut by the US Federal Reserve, this increases the chances for an October rate cut in the Philippines,” Moody’s Analytics’ Ms. Tan said.

“Indeed, the start of the monetary policy easing cycle in the US gives the BSP room to further loosen its monetary policy. The BSP could move with two 25-bp cuts in the fourth quarter across their two meetings in October and December,” Ms. Tan added.

Pantheon Macroeconomics’ Mr. Chanco said that if there is no “major shock” until the next inflation release, then the Monetary Board could implement another 25-bp cut at its October meeting.

“However, potential risks from oil and typhoons may keep the BSP cautious about interest rate cuts. The central bank is likely to opt for a gradual approach, with 25-bp reductions in October and December,” Security Bank Corp. Chief Economist Robert Dan J. Roces added.

Zamros Bin Dzulkaflī, an economist at Maybank Investment Banking Group, likewise expects the BSP to reduce rates by a total of 75 bps this year, “supported by the recent ‘aggressive’ 50-bp rate cut by the US Fed.”

<https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2024/09/30/624582/inflation-may-ease-to-near-4-year-low/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

PHL losing share in key banana markets due to pests, diseases

September 30, 2024 | 12:03 am



[ANFLOCOR.COM/TADECO](https://anflocor.com/tadeco)

DAVAO CITY — Pilipino Banana Growers and Exporters Association (PBGEA) Executive Director Stephen Antig said the Philippines is losing key markets for bananas due to weak production as a result of pests and diseases, specifically fusarium wilt or Panama disease.

Mr. Antig said Philippine market share for fresh banana has fallen steadily since 2012. In Japan, the Philippines used to have a 94% share of the market share; in 2023, it was 79%.

The industry's main market, China, was at 40% market share last year, from 82% in 2012. South Korean market share was 69% in 2023 from 98% previously. Market share in the United Arab Emirates was down to 8% in 2023 from 83% in 2012.

“We simply don’t have the volume due to devastation brought about by pests and diseases,” he said during the Business Matters media briefing at Hukad, Ayala Malls Abreeza.

According to Mr. Antig, it’s not easy to replace areas with banana plantations affected by fusarium wilt or expand acreage because of the Agrarian Reform Law, which limits landowners to five hectares.

“It’s not a demand problem but a supply problem because we have been infested with fusarium diseases and climate change and the problem of getting additional hectareage for expansion purposes and to replace those areas affected by pests and diseases,” he said.

He said in Cambodia, a single banana plantation can be as large as 20,000 hectares.

He also said Mindanao land planted to banana is down to 51,000 hectares from 89,000 hectares before the disease hit.

Mr. Antig said PBGEA has been lobbying the Department of Agrarian Reform to amend the Agrarian Reform Law because the five hectare limits is not suitable for efficient growing.

“Unfortunately, we have not gotten any feedback as to whether the amendments are happening or not. We will continue to lobby otherwise there will come a time when Mindanao will no longer be known as the banana republic,” he said.

Mr. Antig said banana growers must content themselves with rehabilitating the areas affected by pests and diseases.

“But we cannot do that as fast as we want to because it will take from nine months to one year for bananas to bear fruit. The spread of fusarium wilt is faster,” he said.

He said the industry is trying to develop a new variety of banana that is resistant to most pests and diseases.

“We are racing against time because if we do not identify a new variety, it is possible that the remaining 51,000 hectares will also be affected, and what will happen to individuals dependent on this industry?... the banana industry contributed not only to the economic development of Mindanao, but to improving peace and order by providing employment,” he said.

Mr. Antig said PBGEA is drafting a bill on the revitalization of the banana industry, which it hopes to pass on to a legislator to sponsor in Congress.

“One of the stipulations of the bill is to establish a world-class research facility that will not only serve the Cavendish industry but the entire agriculture sector. We are not giving up hope as a lot of people are dependent on the industry,” he said. — **Maya M. Padillo**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/09/30/624562/phl-losing-share-in-key-banana-markets-due-to-pests-diseases/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Poultry imports from France banned after bird flu outbreak

September 30, 2024 | 12:02 am



REUTERS

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it banned imports of poultry and wild birds from France after an outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) or bird flu.

In Memorandum Order no. 40, the DA said shipments of domestic and wild birds, poultry meat, day-old chicks, eggs, and semen from France were suspended.

“There is a need to prevent the entry of the HPAI virus to protect the health of Philippine poultry,” it added.

According to the Bureau of Animal Industry, avian flu cases in the Philippines have been detected in 53 municipalities across nine provinces as of Sept. 20.

The French authorities had submitted a report to the World Organization for Animal Health regarding an outbreak of H5 (N untyped) HPAI cases there.

A case was reported in Saint-Malo in Brittany on Aug. 7, according to an official report submitted by the French authorities on Aug. 12.

It added that all shipments coming from France that are already in transit, loaded, or accepted into port would be allowed provided that the products were slaughtered or produced before July 25.

In April, the DA had lifted the import ban of domestic and wild birds from France after cases of HPAI were resolved. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/09/30/624560/poultry-imports-from-france-banned-after-bird-flu-outbreak/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Goat, sheep flocks targeted for expansion by DA

September 23, 2024 | 12:04 am



BAR.GOV.PH

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said is studying ways to expand the Philippines' goat and sheep flocks, primarily by opening new farms and supporting established ones.

“The Goat and Sheep Expansion Project (GSEP) is aimed at promoting the growth of the small ruminant sector by introducing good genetics, strengthening livelihood of livestock farmers, and providing support to new and established goat and sheep farms and enterprises,” the DA said in a Memorandum Circular (MC).

Under MC 39, the DA plans to develop nucleus and multiplier farms for breeding stock to be introduced to production centers and farmer growers.

The project also includes the development of feed and forage components, training and capacity building, and animal health support. It will likewise establish a small ruminants registry system.

Eligible beneficiaries are established goat or sheep breeder farms led by farmer cooperatives and associations, local government units (LGUs), or the private sector.

The DA added that accredited civil service organizations and LGUs may be eligible for a nucleus farm grant aimed at producing the parent stock for the multiplier farms.

New and established goat or sheep farms are also qualified to receive production support, which includes seed for forage and planting materials, ruminant feed, and machinery for processing forage.

It added that veterinary drugs and biologics, vitamins, dewormers, and disinfectants will also be distributed to goat or sheep farmers.

Farmer training and capacity building will be offered by the Agricultural Training Institute.

“The project components involving external stakeholders such as farmers, FCAs (Farmers’ Cooperatives and Associations), LGUs, and State Universities and Colleges as beneficiaries, shall undergo an application process for availment,” the DA said.

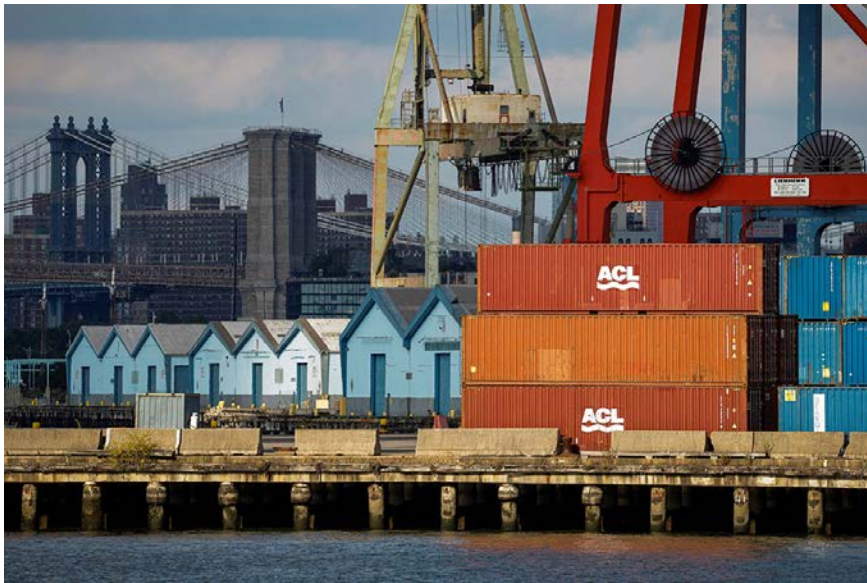
It added that the project will be headed by the Undersecretary for Livestock, along with DA livestock agencies.
— **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/09/23/623066/goat-sheep-flocks-targeted-for-expansion-by-da/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Agriculture groups urge White House action ahead of possible ports strike

September 30, 2024 | 12:01 am



REUTERS

CHICAGO/WASHINGTON — Nearly 200 agriculture organizations urged the White House to address key US agricultural supply chain issues in the face of a potential port strike on the East and Gulf Coasts that could begin Tuesday.

The groups said the industry is facing “imminent and severe shipping disruptions” from a potential work stoppage, snarled rail lines and historically low river levels backing up grain barge shipments and impacting trade with Mexico, according to a letter reviewed by Reuters.

The groups asked the federal government to direct the US Army Corps of Engineers to dredge the lower Mississippi River to maintain 12-foot-deep channels, and step in to reopen the movement of grain by rail from the US to Mexico.

They also asked the Transportation department to consider issuing an emergency hours of service waiver for truck drivers at East and Gulf Coast ports.

The letter, from a wide cross-section of the nation’s food and farm supply chain, said such disruptions are already happening ahead of a potential Oct. 1 strike at ports that handle roughly half of the country’s ocean trade, including consumer staples like coffee, meat and eggs.

On Thursday, employers negotiating a labor contract at East and Gulf Coast ports filed an unfair labor practice complaint against the union, saying those leaders refuse to resume talks ahead of the threatened strike.

The US Maritime Alliance (USMX) said it filed the complaint with the National Labor Relations Board, due to the repeated refusal of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) to return to the bargaining table.

The six-year master contract between USMX and the ILA expires Monday and the two sides appear to be deadlocked on wage issues.

Friday's missive underscores the growing worry among the nation's agricultural sector. US farmers are beginning to harvest what is expected to be a record soy and large corn crop, at a time when global supplies are already hefty and prices are hovering near four-year lows.

The letter also comes just two days after some of the same organizations asked the Biden Administration to take action to avert the potential labor strike, in order to prevent damage to US agriculture and the economy.

"These disruptions will have a ripple effect across the entire United States" unless the government takes action, the letter said.

The White House did not immediately comment.

Meanwhile, low water conditions on interior rivers have led to barges running aground along a key stretch of the lower Mississippi River and forcing barges to carry lighter loads, just as the busiest US grain export season gets underway. — **Reuters**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/09/30/624559/agriculture-groups-urge-white-house-action-ahead-of-possible-ports-strike/>

DA bans poultry from France due to bird flu

By Janine Alexis Miguel
September 30, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) announced a temporary ban on importing poultry meat and wild birds from France following cases of avian influenza or bird flu in that country.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. halted the importation of domestic and wild birds, including their byproducts, due to an outbreak of the high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 subtype or bird flu.

"There is a need to prevent the entry of HPAI virus to protect the health of the local poultry population," Tiu Laurel said in a memorandum order dated September 27.

The ban will cover domestic and wild birds and byproducts like poultry meat, eggs, day-old chicks and semen.

The ban was based on the official report from the Chief Veterinary Services of France to the World Organization for Animal Health on August 12 of an avian influenza outbreak in Saint-Malo, Ille-et-Vilaine, and Bretagne France last August 7.

HPAI could be passed on to humans.

Tiu Laurel said shipments that have not complied with the conditions should be dealt with accordingly, and their importer could face penalties.

Veterinary quarantine officers and inspectors are authorized to confiscate all shipments of poultry products except those that have been heat-treated.

The processing, evaluation of applications, and issuance of Sanitary and Phytosanitary import Clearances for those agricultural products have also been suspended.

Shipments from France that are already in transit or accepted into port before the imposition of the ban will be allowed to enter as long as the products were slaughtered or produced on or before July 25.

Data from DA's Bureau of Animal Industry showed that around 23,165 metric tons of poultry meat were shipped from France to the Philippines from January to June.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/09/30/news/national/da-bans-poultry-from-france-due-to-bird-flu/1975906>

Farms, fisheries bear **₱3.77B** in damage from ‘Enteng’–DA

Ada Pelonia
September 30, 2024

THE country’s agriculture and fisheries sector sustained P3.77 billion in damage from the onslaught brought by severe tropical storm “Enteng,” according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

In its final bulletin, the DA said the volume of production losses in Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol Region, Western and Eastern Visayas reached 111,838 metric tons (MT).

Rice suffered the brunt of the storm’s impact at 86,544 MT. This was followed by corn at 8,641 MT, high-value crops at 2,785 MT, cassava at 136 MT, and aquaculture at 13,732 MT.

The livestock sector also lost 2,429 heads, which include chicken, swine, cattle, carabao, goat, sheep, duck, horse, turkey, and guinea fowl.

The report also indicated that the production losses were equivalent to P1.93 billion for rice, P136.79 million for corn, P93.64 million for high-value crops (HVC), and P2.17 million for cassava.

For the livestock and fisheries sector, the DA said the value reached P14.59 million and P78.16 million, respectively. The agricultural infrastructure also sustained damage valued at P1.52 billion.

According to the department, tropical cyclone “Enteng” affected 88,963 farmers and fishers with 72,680 hectares of agricultural areas. Of this, the DA said 60,920 hectares had a chance of recovery.

“Best possible efforts are being undertaken to carry out assistance and appropriate interventions to the affected farmers,” it said.

The DA said it has allocated interventions such as P277.54 million worth of assistance (seeds, bio-control measures, and farm tools) from DA Regional Field Offices and fingerlings (tilapia, carp, and catfish) from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

The Survival and Recovery (SURE) Loan Program from the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC), with a loanable amount of up to P25,000 payable in three years at zero interest, was also included.

According to DA, the available funds from the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC) will be disbursed to indemnify affected farmers.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/09/30/farms-fisheries-bear-%e2%82%b13-77b-in-damage-from-enteng-da/>

PHL imposes ban on French poultry products

Ada Pelonia
September 30, 2024

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has slapped a temporary ban on poultry products from France due to a bird flu outbreak detected in one of its cities.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. issued Memorandum Order (MO) 40, which authorized the imposition of the ban. Laurel said the ban was put in place to prevent the entry of High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) virus in the country.

The DA banned domestic and wild birds from France after it reported to the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) an outbreak of H5 (N untyped) HPAI in Saint-Malo, Ille-et-Vilaine, Bretagne, France last August 7.

The ban also included the products of domestic and wild birds, such as poultry meat, day-old chicks, and eggs and semen.

Laurel also ordered the immediate suspension of the processing, evaluation of the application and issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances (SPSICs) to the said commodity.

“All shipments coming from France that are in transit/ loaded/ accepted unto port before the official communication of this Order to the French authorities shall be allowed provided that the products were slaughtered/ produced on or before 25 July 2024,” the order read.

Manila lifted the ban on French poultry products last April following the declaration of Paris that there were no additional bird flu outbreaks after February 29. The DA issued MO 16 in April which authorized the easing of the restrictions that the government imposed in January.

Meanwhile, data from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) showed that the country's meat imports grew by nearly 10 percent in the first semester, driven by higher chicken and pork purchases abroad.

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, based on BAI data.

Brazil was the top supplier of beef and chicken imports at 30,519 MT and 121,135 MT, respectively. France delivered 19 MT of chicken to the Philippines.

In terms of pork imports, BAI data showed that Spain was the country's biggest supplier, accounting for 80,737 MT.

The United States Department of Agriculture-Foreign Agricultural Service in Manila (USDA-FAS Manila) recently said in its latest report that the country's meat imports are expected to rise next year due to population growth and "a positive economic outlook."

"FAS Manila forecasts 2025 beef imports to increase to 226,000 metric tons [MT] carcass weight equivalent [CWE]," the report read. (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/22/phl-meat-imports-seen-to-grow-in-2025/>)

"Continued greater-than-six-percent economic growth and forecasted population increases support strong consumer purchasing power which will push beef imports higher in 2025."

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/09/30/phl-imposes-ban-on-french-poultry-products/>

ET technology seen improving local goat production

Ada Pelonia
September 30, 2024

The country's goat-raising industry will benefit from the embryo transfer (ET) technology which boosts the reproductive efficiency of goat farming, according to the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

According to the DOST, the process involves superovulation to maximize the oocyte reserves of a female goat, followed by the transfer of fertilized embryos to recipient females.

“The method increases both the number of offspring and the speed of genetic exchange between herds, thus accelerating the improvement of goat breeds,” it said in a statement.

The DOST Region 2, in collaboration with the Isabela State University (ISU) and DOST's Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (DOST-PCAARRD), reported the successful implementation of its technological innovation.

According to DOST-PCAARRD Executive Director Reynaldo V. Ebor, five kids were successfully produced using the ET technology, which is part of the Innovative Systems in Advancing Technology-Based Goat Production project funded by the agency.

ISU President Ricmar P. Aquino said technological innovations are essential to goat production. She said key technologies such as semen collection, semen processing, and artificial insemination for small ruminants would modernize goat production and enhance the efficiency and profitability of goat farming.

For his part, DOST Secretary Dr. Renato U. Solidum Jr. said the ET technology enables the production of multiple offspring from a single female goat, significantly enhancing

reproductive efficiency. According to the department, the country's total goat inventory has declined recently. It noted that the current inventory is estimated at 3.86 million heads, a decrease from previous counts, with over 99 percent of the country's goat population sourced from smallholder farms.

“The situation highlights the pressing need for improved goat meat production to meet rising demand. Goat meat, or chevon, has been gaining popularity due to its lower calorie, cholesterol, and saturated fat content compared to other meats such as beef, pork, and chicken,” it said.

“Additionally, the goat industry provides not only nutritious meat and milk but also supports agricultural diversification and offers a vital source of income for small-scale farmers.”

The department said Dr. Cristino Nayga delivered the first ET kid in June 2023, with four additional kids produced from three other dams in the following months. It added that the kids were derived from dams with a 75 percent Boer bloodline mated with purebred Boer bucks.

According to DOST, the experiment marked a significant milestone in ISU's breeding program, which has been looking at enhancing the population of high-quality, true-to-type goats in Region 2, now branded as the “Cagayan Valley Signature Goat.”

“DOST has acknowledged the potential of the ET technology to address the challenges faced by the goat industry and enhance productivity for small-hold farmers and has committed to provide essential solutions to strengthen the industry in the Philippines.”

It said the innovative approach would enhance livestock management and productivity while positioning the goat industry for a more competitive and sustainable future.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/09/30/et-technology-seen-improving-local-goat-production/>

More investments needed to cut food waste— FAO

BusinessMirror
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Reducing food loss and waste is crucial for improving food security and nutrition, promoting the efficient use of resources, protecting the environment, and fostering a more equitable distribution of food resources globally.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Director-General Qu Dongyu made the remarks in a video message to a global virtual event to mark the fifth International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste which falls on Sunday.

The event, which also included a message from Inger Andersen, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and was organized by FAO and UNEP, highlighted the critical need for financing to help reduce food loss and waste and thus contribute to achieving climate and Sustainable Development goals (SDGs).

Currently, over 13 percent of food is lost globally in the supply chain after harvest on farms and before the retail stages. Furthermore, food waste, occurring at retail, food service and household levels stands at 19 percent, according to UNEP statistics.

Additionally, food loss and waste account for an estimated 8 to 10 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. The methane gas produced by food loss also has far greater potential to trap heat than carbon dioxide, impacting the environment.

However, “by reducing food loss and waste, countries and communities can benefit from improved food security, access to healthy diets and reduced malnutrition while decreasing their greenhouse gas footprints,” Qu noted.

The OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook Report for the period 2024-2033 projects that by halving food loss and waste global agricultural greenhouse gas emissions could

decline by 4 percent, and the number of undernourished people by 153 million by the year 2030.

The world is not however, on track to achieve SDG 12 (including the target of halving food waste) – nor any of the other SDGs by 2030.

“To achieve this, an increase in climate investments, and the re-design and up-scale of storage systems to reduce food losses upstream in the supply chain, particularly in low-income economies, is much needed. Raising public awareness and consumer education is also critical at the household level, with the implementation at the global level.”

FAO said it is addressing the issue of food loss and waste from the ground level and up. Innovations such as the FAO Food Loss App (FLAPP) is designed to quantify food loss in crops at the micro level and facilitate efforts to achieve net zero. This technology is already helping rice producers in the Dominican Republic to access information in real-time and identify solutions to areas of food loss.

In other countries, FAO’s technical expertise is helping farmers to reduce food losses incurred during the harvesting and before retail stages. Training initiatives on better handling, sorting and packaging practices have already resulted in a 38 percent reduction in losses for tomato farmers in the Philippines, and less than 5 percent post-harvest loss for dasheen farmers in Trinidad.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/09/30/more-investments-needed-to-cut-food-waste-fao/>