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MANILA BULLETIN:

Serag extends environmental advocacy in Iloilo

BY [TARA YAP](#)

Oct 13, 2024 05:19 PM

ILOILO CITY – Iloilo Provincial Board Member Marcelo Valentine “Val” Serag of the first district is not merely a legislator but also an eco-warrior.



SERAG explains the vision and mission of Igbulawan Nature Farm in San Joaquin town, Iloilo province. (Tara Yap)

Serag’s long-time environmental advocacy is gaining fruition in his hometown of San Joaquin.

It started with the revival of the three-hectare family property in Sitio Igbulawan where Serag found solace as a young boy specially during the times his mother scolded him.

When Serag left Iloilo to study in Manila, his natural sanctuary slowly became denuded due to kaingin or the traditional slash-and-burn agricultural practice.

Serag returned and conducted a mission to reverse the deforestation by replanting. With seedlings from friends and the Department of Agriculture (DA), he was able to plant and grow trees such as narra, toog, and salong.

While Serag initially just planned to revive his own natural sanctuary, he later decided to open it to visitors when restrictions were slowly lifted during the pandemic.



THE Igbulawan Nature Farm in San Joaquin town, Iloilo province. (Tara Yap)

Serag opened Igbulawan Nature Farm to extend his environmental advocacy, especially on tree-planting and trash disposal.

One of the rules is that visitors should bring their own trash that did not come from Igbulawan Nature Farm.

With structures needed to serve the need of visitors, including the restaurant and rooms, Serag tried to maximize nipa and other wooden materials only. He also repurposed junk materials and used them as part of the structure.

For Serag, Igbulawan Nature Farm should serve as a model even on a smaller scale on environmental rules and regulations.

Having served as a legislator, Serag previously authored a resolution requiring planting of trees prior to obtaining barangay clearances in all 85 barangays.

Serag also had legislative measures for declaration of marine sanctuaries of San Joaquin.

While Serag admitted there may be a gap in implementation, he will not stop in pushing measures for the environment in the context of development.

“No matter how much we develop or have a thriving business, we will eventually suffer when we destroy the environment,” Serag said.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/10/13/serag-an-eco-warrior-in-southern-iloilo-s-governance>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Farm stakeholders laud law vs smuggling

[Ranier Allan Ronda](#) - The Philippine Star

October 13, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Stakeholders in the agriculture sector lauded the signing into law of Republic Act 12022, or the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act, by President Marcos, pointing out that this would give the government more muscle to stop the rampant agricultural smuggling hurting Filipino farmers.

“This law proves that President Marcos is indeed true to his promise to alleviate the dire condition of farmers who have been the collateral damage of the prevailing agricultural smuggling in the country. This is also an assurance that the food supply in the country would be adequate for Filipinos, as well as lower the price of food benefiting Filipino consumers,” said Agricultural Sector Alliance of the Philippines (AGAP) Partylist Rep. Nicanor ‘Nikki’ Briones, the law’s principal author.

“This is an early Christmas gift to farmers and the fisherfolks,” he said.

During the signing ceremony in Malacanang Palace last month, Marcos said: “We will enforce the law and ensure that swift and decisive action is taken against anyone who dares to sabotage our agricultural sector.”

ADVERTISING

Meanwhile, Acting Trade Secretary Cristina Roque said the RA 12022 marked a decisive victory against those who manipulate the country’s food supply for profit.

“This landmark legislation aligns perfectly with the DTI’s mission to safeguard consumers and businesses from illegal activities that distort the market and drive up prices. In these challenging times, this will ensure that every Filipino family’s basic necessities and prime commodities remain within reach. We are committed to fostering a level playing field where everyone, from farmers to consumers, can thrive,” she said.

Further, Roque said the DTI stands ready to enforce this law as part of the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Council chaired by President Marcos himself.

“Together with other key agencies, we will take decisive action against violators and offenders. This law is a powerful instrument for strengthening the country’s agricultural

sector, empowering local farmers and fisherfolk, and building a more just and prosperous Bagong Pilipinas,” she stressed.

Briones said a national council and enforcement group will be formed that will hand-and-hand assist in dismantling smuggling operations and pursue those involved in it.

Further, the law states that there will be a special team of prosecutors throughout the country for the quick resolution of a set of complaints related to agricultural sabotage.

Briones further said the law does not only target masterminds but all accomplices, including financiers, brokers, employees, and even those who transport illegal products.

He said the national council will consist of eight departments or agencies forming an advisory board consisting of the seven sectors of agriculture, namely rice, livestock, poultry, vegetables, fruits and corn, fisheries and aquatic commodities, tobacco and sugar.

On the other hand, the enforcement group to crack down on agricultural smugglers will be led by the National Bureau of Investigation, the Philippine National Police, the Philippine Coast Guard, and the Department of Finance, not including the Bureau of Customs.

Moreover, the task force will also include a team of prosecutors who will file cases against smugglers.

“A lifetime imprisonment awaits those smugglers and hoarders that will be proven guilty, as the new law makes agricultural smuggling an economic sabotage offense. Fines will be five times the worth of the smuggled items. Also, a P5 million reward system will be given to tipsters,” Briones said.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/10/13/2392042/farm-stakeholders-laud-law-vs-smuggling>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

FARMTRI: Cultivating AI for sustainable agriculture solutions

The Philippine Star

October 13, 2024 | 12:00am



Fernandez at the Farmtri booth in South Summit Korea

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — Just last June, this corner featured an European startup that uses a software-as-a-service application to minimize food waste – a data analytics platform that optimizes the supply chain as it matches fresh produce with traders in real time.

Consentio, a Barcelona-based company founded by French entrepreneurs in 2019, is relying on agri technology to address food wastage which, in Europe alone, costs a staggering \$1 trillion a year in misspending or about 88 million tons, mostly fruits and vegetables, lost or wasted.

In the Philippines, a startup based in Cebu took it to a higher level, not only employing digital technology for trading but zeroing in on its roots – crop production.

Farmtri was among the six Philippine startups that participated in the recent South Summit Korea – the first Asian edition of the global platform for entrepreneurs and startup businesses. It was only among a handful of agri-based companies in the tech-heavy event that featured deep tech and artificial intelligence (AI).

Marini Fernandez, co-founder and CEO of Farmtri, told The STAR that by harnessing the capabilities of big data, deep tech and IoT (internet of things), farmers are able to boost their crop production and employ more efficient farming techniques – bringing up their income in the process.

“Our sensors can detect soil degradation and help increase food production by 600 percent per year. By helping farmers improve soil quality and crop production, we can secure food for future generations,” she said.

Farmtri uses advanced technology not only to revolutionize sustainable food production but it also leverages predictive tools to automate the logistics process – merchants pick up the fresh produce from the farmers and deliver it straight to the customers, eliminating food waste.

The Farmtri app, which is provided to farmers for free, is being used by some 384,000 farmers nationwide, Fernandez said, and has helped them grow their earnings from less than P50 a day to about P2,000 daily.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/10/13/2392044/farmtri-cultivating-ai-sustainable-agriculture-solutions>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

PBBM, Concepcion talk food security at ASEAN Business Summit

10:43 PM October 13, 2024



Joey Concepcion, founder of Go Negosyo, talks with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. at the sidelines of the recently concluded ASEAN Business and Investment Summit in Laos PDR about the AFSA, a regional initiative for food security in the Philippines. Joining them (rightmost) is Christian Eyde Moeller, President of Lionheart Farms and a key private sector participant in the initiative.

Businessman philanthropist Joey Concepcion, who is eyeing the ASEAN Food Security Alliance (AFSA) as the Philippines' legacy project leading up to the country's ASEAN Business Advisory Council chairmanship in 2026, is working to attract targeted agriculture investments through the Alliance, where he says efforts will have impact at scale.

Concepcion, who is also founder of non-profit organization Go Negisyo, said that for AFSA to succeed, there needs to be strong public-private determination and strategic partnerships, tangible actions, and targeted investments so as to overcome structural

constraints, thus enhancing agricultural productivity and achieving economic growth in the ASEAN region.

This is related to a Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Agrarian Reform and Go Negosyo, wherein the MOA aims to form strategic partnerships with the private sector to provide agrarian reform beneficiaries with agribusiness opportunities, mentorship and sustainable farming models through cluster farming, corporative farming, and land lease agreements.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1992342/pbbm-concepcion-talk-food-security-at-asean-business-summit>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Manila, Wellington bare trade deals to boost ties

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

05:50 AM October 13, 2024



INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

The [Philippines](#) is in talks on the possibility of exporting durian and other produce to [New Zealand as part of efforts to bolster trade](#) in agricultural products between the two nations.

In his bilateral meeting with New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon in Laos, President Marcos on Friday expressed hope that the Philippines will be shipping Philippine durian to New Zealand.

“We are talking about this right now with our appropriate ministries. Ours is the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Ministry for Primary Industries in New Zealand. They are already in discussion on how to achieve this,” he said.

Marcos and Luxon met on the sidelines of the 44th and 45th Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summits and Related Summits in Vientiane, Laos, earlier last week.

During their bilateral meeting in Vientiane, Marcos presented Luxon with a small doll of Jollibee dressed in a Filipino barong.

The President posted a video of his banter with Luxon on his Instagram and Facebook accounts.

“This is special for the Prime Minister. This does not happen for everyone ... He is dressed up in a barong, it’s formal wear,” Mr. Marcos said.

In response, Luxon chuckled about his “great visit to Jollibee” during his trip to Manila in April this year.

The New Zealand Prime Minister also noted the “good progress” of the two countries’ ties in areas like security, trade and the economy.

“On the economic front, we’ve talked about onions and pineapples. Pineapples are coming to New Zealand, onions are going to the Philippines, I hope. I think we’ve made some good progress there,” Luxon said.

Earlier, New Zealand asked that its onions be given market access in the Philippines. The DA and New Zealand’s Ministry for Primary Industries are finalizing ongoing consultations on the matter.

Meanwhile, Marcos also expressed optimism that the Philippines and New Zealand will elevate diplomatic ties to a comprehensive partnership by 2026.

He said the Proposed Roadmap to Comprehensive Partnership 2024-2025 is now being finalized by the two nations’ respective government agencies.

“I think the road map is being finalized now. We should have it ready by the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries,” he said.

The President added: “I think that’s well on its way. Quite frankly, there are no real obstacles. It’s just a question of finalizing the language.”

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/252246/manila-wellington-bare-trade-deals-to-boost-ties>

BUSINESS WORLD:

PHL agri market access project rated ‘satisfactory’ by funder WB

October 13, 2024 | 8:49 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/ MICHAEL VARCAS

THE World Bank (WB) said it returned a “satisfactory” rating on progress made by the Department of Agriculture in enhancing farmer and fisherfolk market access.

The government borrowed \$600 million from the World Bank for the Rural Development Project Scale-Up Project last year. The ultimate goal in improving market access is to boost incomes across selected agri-fishery value chains.

“The overall project’s initial implementation performance is considered Satisfactory,” the bank said in an Oct. 9 implementation status and results report.

The scale-up project aims to support access for micro- to medium-scale agricultural and fishery enterprises to resources, knowledge, and income-generating activities. It also seeks to increase the participation of women in farming and fishery activities.

The bank also issued a “Moderate” overall risk rating for the project.

“Implementation and institutional arrangements are in place and working, including its systems and procedures which build on the experiences and lessons learned from another World Bank-assisted project.”

The bank was referring to the Philippine Rural Development Project, which was expanded by the scale up project.

“This initiative has been instrumental in strengthening the agriculture and fisheries sectors, bolstering rural infrastructure, and enhancing connectivity. The expansion aims to stimulate further growth in these critical sectors and strengthen the nation’s rural economy,” the World Bank said in a June 2023 statement.

To date, 45 infrastructure subprojects (SPs) have been approved with 35 have started procurement. Around 11 enterprise SPs are still undergoing validation.

The rural scale-up project consists of five components: national and local level planning; rural infrastructure and market linkages; enterprise development; project implementation and support; and contingent emergency response.

The World Bank said it has disbursed \$35.95 million or 5.9% of the total loan proceeds.

The closing date of the loan is June 30, 2029.

The Philippine Statistics Authority ranks fisherfolk and farmers among the country’s poorest in 2021, with poverty incidence rates of 30.6% and 30%, respectively. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/10/13/627489/phl-agri-market-access-project-rated-satisfactory-by-funder-wb/>

REMATE:

New Zealand nililigawan ng Pinas sa eksportasyon ng Durian

October 13, 2024 13:50



NAG-UUSAP na ngayon ang gobyerno ng Pilipinas at New Zealand para sa posibleng pagpasok ng durian exports sa merkado ng New Zealand.

Ito ang inanunsyo ni Pangulong Marcos sa kanyang isinagawang bilateral meeting kasama si New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon sa sidelines ng 44th at 45th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit and Related Meetings sa Laos, noong nakaraang Biyernes.

“We are talking right now (with) our appropriate ministries. Ours is the Department of Agriculture for the Philippines and the Ministry for Primary Industries in New Zealand. [They] are already in discussion on how to achieve this [durian export],” ang sinabi ni Pangulong Marcos.

Sinabi naman ni Prime Minister Christopher Luxon ang lumalagong kasunduan sa pagitan ng dalawang bansa sa larangan ng kalakalan at ekonomiya.

Nauna rito, nag-request naman ang Wellington para sa market access para sa kanilang sibuyas sa Pilipinas.

Sinabi ng Malakanyang na patuloy ang konsultasyon sa pagitan ng Department of Agriculture at Ministry for Primary Industries of New Zealand, at ang pag-uusap ay “expected to be completed soon.”

“I think on the economic front, we’ve talked about onions and pineapples. Pineapples are coming to New Zealand, onions [are] going to the Philippines, I hope. So, I think we’ve made some good progress there,” ang sinabi ni Luxon.

Bukod sa kalakalan, tinukoy ni Luxon ang positibong development sa engagement ng Wellington sa Maynila pagdating naman sa edukasyon, seguridad at larangan ng politikal. Sa ngayon nagtutulungan naman ang Pilipinas at New Zealand para itaas ang kanilang diplomatic ties at isinasapinal ang Proposed Roadmap to Comprehensive Partnership 2024-2025.

Sa kabilang dako, sinabi ni Pangulong Marcos na gumagawa ang dalawang bansa ng “some good progress” sa text ng roadmap.

“I think, the roadmap that’s being finalized now, we should have it ready by the 60th anniversary of [the] establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries,” ang tinuran ni Pangulong Marcos.

“So, I think that’s well on its way. Quite frankly, there are no real obstacles. It’s just a question of finalizing the language,” aniya pa rin.

Inihayag ito ni Pangulong Marcos nang tanungin si Luxon kung ano ang dapat na pag-usapan “to keep that moving forward and to get there.” *Kris Jose*

<https://remate.ph/new-zealand-nililigawan-ng-pinas-sa-eksportasyon-ng-durian/>

ABANTE:

Durian ng ‘Pinas irarampa sa New Zealand

Abante News

- October 13, 2024



BUTI pa ang durian, makakarating na sa New Zealand.

Ito ang nagkakatuwang biruan ng isang grupo ng mga fruit vendor sa Divisoria nang maiulat na dadalhin ang durian ng Pilipinas sa New Zealand.

Kaya naman umaasa si Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. na magiging available na rin ang durian ng Pilipinas sa mga pamilihan sa New Zealand.

Ayon kay Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, maganda na ang pag-unlad ng Pilipinas at New Zealand sa iba't ibang larangan tulad ng seguridad, kalakalan at ekonomiya.

Umaasa rin siya na malapit nang makapasok sa kanyang bansa ang mga pinya mula sa Pilipinas.

Nauna nang hiniling ng New Zealand na magkaroon ng market access ang mga sibuyas nito sa Pilipinas.

Samantala, ayon sa Presidential Communications Office, patuloy ang konsultasyon sa pagitan ng Department of Agriculture at Ministry for Primary Industries ng New Zealand na inaasahang matatapos sa lalong madaling panahon. (Carl Santiago)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/10/13/durian-ng-pinas-irarampa-sa-new-zealand/>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Baguio City eyes solar irrigation for farmers

October 13, 2024

BAGUIO CITY — The city government is tapping renewable energy to help local farmers pursue sustainable urban agriculture practices in line with the city's thrust to shift to smart agriculture.

The City Veterinary and Agriculture Office (CVAO), led by city veterinarian Silardo Bested, has proposed a solar-powered irrigation system (SPIS) project for the farmers in collaboration with the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM).

CVAO supervising agriculturist Marcelina Tabelin said irrigation has long been a problem for local farmers, especially during the dry season.

"During these times, water scarcity forces many to cease production," she said.

The department hopes that the SPIS project would be able to address this challenge.

Four sites — Bilis in Sto. Tomas Central, Irisan, Benin in Pinsao Proper, and Ditep in Loakan Liwanag — are being eyed for the project.

The CVAO and the BSWM recently conducted a validation of the sites to assess their feasibility and ensure the success of the project.

"Major considerations in order to pass the feasibility assessment are a stable water source, its proximity to service areas (farms) and at least 3-hectare service area," Tabelin said.

She said that a land survey was also done to "document the targeted farm beneficiaries, ensuring accurate records for effective implementation of the project. GABY B. KEITH

https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/10/13/regions/baguio-city-eyes-solar-irrigation-for-farmers/1983558?fbclid=IwY2xjawF5Ua9leHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHYEAX7gjWegP5x75hvkSIwP7wqoX0jkuL5xrlCvhRmTRMIefYthYBuzFug_aem_tw5482hWTmNvYrsbEB9xzA