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MANILA BULLETIN:

Frabelle invests P755 million in cold storage facility

BY MANILA BULLETIN
Oct 14, 2024 06:29 AM

A unit of the Frabelle Group of Companies has opened a new refrigerated warehouse in the Navotas Fishport complex amid growing demand for cold storage facilities in the food industry.

In a statement, FG Cold Storage Corp. announced that the P755-million facility has a capacity of 7,200 pallet positions, making it a addition to the fishport's infrastructure.

Fay Bernardo, Frabelle Cold Chain Group president said the company invested in the facility to address the strong demand from existing customers and other businesses operating in and around the fishport.

The new cold storage facility is equipped with a high-density storage racking system and is located for easy access to major transportation hubs, including the international port, highways, and skyways.

It also features 12 docking bays and ante rooms designed to accommodate large-scale operations while maintaining strict temperature controls.

To further enhance efficiency and product preservation, the warehouse includes eight cold storage rooms maintained at -25°C and advanced shuttle racking systems.

The facility's layout is specifically also designed to meet the needs of marine traders and manufacturers, providing flexibility for storing frozen meat, vegetables, and other perishable goods.

In addition to serving commercial enterprises, FG Cold Storage has announced that farmers' cooperatives can rent space in the facility while awaiting the completion of cold storage facilities being constructed by the Department of Agriculture.

The Cold Chain Association of the Philippines (CCAP) has projected an eight percent growth in total cold storage capacity this year to 750,000 metric tons. This growth is driven by a steady increase in agricultural production and the rising demand for cold chain solutions.

https://mb.com.ph/2024/10/14/navotas-gets-new-cold-storage#google_vignette

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Frabelle Group opens P755 million cold storage

Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas - The Philippine Star

October 14, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Frabelle Group of Companies through a subsidiary has opened a new P755-million cold storage at the Navotas Fish Port Complex (NFPC) to help in boosting the growing demand for cold storage space in the country amid rising food needs.

FG Cold Storage Corp. opened the cold storage with a capacity of 7,200 pallet positions and equipped with a high-density storage racking system.

The firm said its prime location allows it to access an international port, major highways and skyways, streamlining its logistics process.

The facility features 12 docking bays and ante rooms meticulously planned for large-scale operations, with temperature control to maintain the cold chain's integrity.

"We invested P755 million to build the facility in response to strong demand growth from our customers and other companies operating within and outside Navotas Fishport," said Fay Bernardo, president of Frabelle Cold Chain Group, the parent company of FG Cold Storage.

The cold storage also has eight rooms designed at -25°C to uphold the highest standards of product preservation, alongside advanced shuttle racking systems that maximize storage efficiency.

The facility's layout is tailored to meet the needs of marine traders and manufacturers, offering flexibility to store frozen meat and vegetables while ensuring efficient flow of transactions, according to the company.

The firm said farmers cooperatives may rent the cold storage while waiting for the completion of cold storage facilities being built by the Department of Agriculture (DA).

In a separate statement, the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority (PFDA) said the new cold storage facility at NFPC would cater to more food manufacturers, processors, traders and restaurants.

The PFDA, an attached agency of the DA, emphasized that it would ensure the safety and freshness of stakeholders' various goods from fruits, vegetables, seafood to meat and processed food products.

https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/10/14/2392247/frabelle-group-opens-p755-million-cold-storage

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Partnerships and the path to prosperity

GO NEGOSYO PILIPINAS ANGAT LAHAT! - Joey Concepcion - The Philippine Star

October 14, 2024 | 12:00am

After being away for about a month, I made it a point to mark my return trip with the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit (ABIS). This year, it was held in Lao PDR.

At this gathering, I had the pleasure of introducing President Marcos as he delivered his keynote speech before the ASEAN leaders and private sector. Not that he needed any introduction. The President himself has often said that he considers himself the Philippines's chief salesman, a role he has fully embraced.

In his address, President Marcos spoke at length about the current and future projects in the Philippines. His vision encompassed a wide array of sectors, including digital and physical infrastructure, disaster resilience, energy, industry, and of course, investments. The breadth and depth of his plans indicated that progress in one sector inevitably ripples out to benefit others.

The ABIS is where innovative collaborations between the private sector and policymakers are initiated. It's a unique space where business leaders and government officials can engage in frank discussions, share insights, and forge partnerships. Given the context of the event and the audience, it was no surprise that the President emphasized how the Philippines has enacted key reforms. Foremost among these is the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Code, which is designed to ease the way for transformative partnerships.

I can attest that this administration has indeed put the private sector as an equal partner in the transformation of our economy. There has been a tangible shift in approach that is already yielding results. In every key sector – be it jobs, technology, agriculture, education or others – this government has harnessed the expertise and sought the partnership of the private sector.

I have spent most of my career trying to build that synergy between big business, government, and the small entrepreneur. It's been a challenging but rewarding journey, and one that has brought me into contact with a diverse array of stakeholders. I've worked alongside other CEOs of the country's largest corporations, engaged with academics and think tanks, collaborated with local government leaders, coordinated with various business groups, and most frequently, interacted with the heads of the various government agencies that we work closely with. Among these government agencies, Go Negosyo works most closely with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

I mention this in the context of the recent meetings at the ABIS in Laos because it puts into perspective just how crucial the next few years are going to be. The President has laid out big plans for the Philippines, and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) will play a pivotal part in realizing these ambitions. The DTI is the lifeline that connects these MSMEs to policies that allow them to thrive. The success we've had in putting together programs like the Kapatid Mentor ME – also called the MBA for MSMEs – owes a great deal to how well we work with the DTI. This program, which aims to provide small business owners with the knowledge and skills they need to scale up their operations, is a prime example of what can be achieved when government and the private sector work hand in hand. Similarly, our free public mentoring sessions across the country succeed because of the cooperation of local governments and business groups. The DTI plays a crucial role in informing our programs and connecting us with MSMEs across the country, ensuring that our efforts reach those who need them most.

With the ASEAN chairmanship coming to the Philippines in 2026, there will be so many moving parts involved, so many organizations working together in sync and towards common objectives. This is not just an honor; it's an opportunity for the Philippines to showcase its progress and potential on the regional stage. It's a chance to demonstrate how far we've come in fostering an environment where businesses, big and small, can flourish.

Adding to the excitement is the fact that we are making significant headway in forging partnerships among Philippine agriculture companies and their counterparts in the region. Our recent trips to Laos and before that, to Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei, have yielded numerous fruitful ventures. We are looking to ride this rising wave of cooperation among the private sectors in ASEAN, recognizing that regional integration and collaboration are key to unlocking the full potential of our economies.

At this critical point, we need a steady hand alongside the President, one who understands and will carry out his vision, especially when it comes to empowering MSMEs to help them become the powerhouse that will propel our economy forward. We need leadership at the DTI that is not swayed by the changing winds of politics but is instead laser-focused on making meaningful changes in MSME development.

I believe Cris Roque embodies all these qualities. Her journey from being a small entrepreneur to leading the DTI is not just inspiring; it's emblematic of the transformative power of supportive policies and programs for MSMEs. We owe it to our hardworking small entrepreneurs to put someone at the helm of the DTI who knows what it's like to walk in their shoes, someone who understands their challenges, aspirations, and potential.

While we work toward improving the conditions for our MSMEs to thrive, it is worth rejoicing in how far we have come. Cris Roque's journey is itself solid proof that, yes, the MSME can. It can not only grow but also become an influential player, a master of its own fate. Her potential appointment would send a powerful message to every small business owner in the country: your dreams are valid, your potential is recognized, and your government believes in you. As we look to the future, I envision an economy so dynamic that we see a continuous stream of small businesses becoming medium enterprises, then growing into large corporations. This is an achievable goal if we continue to foster an environment that nurtures entrepreneurship, provides access to capital and markets, and offers the guidance and support that MSMEs need to scale up. The road ahead is not without its challenges. However, with the right leadership at the DTI, a supportive government policy framework, and the continued collaboration between the public and private sectors, I am confident that our MSMEs are well-positioned to not just weather these challenges but to thrive in the face of them.

https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2024/10/14/2392264/partnerships-and-path-prosperity

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA lifts temporary ban on US goats importation

Caecent No-ot Magsumbol - The Freeman

October 14, 2024 | 12:00am

CEBU, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) has lifted the temporary ban on the importation of live goats from the United States of America.

It came days after the temporary banning of the importation of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD)-susceptible animal and products from Turkey and domestic and wild birds from France, due to the outbreak of avian influenza.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. issued Memorandum Order (MO) 43 Tuesday, October 8, recalling the ban on the importation of live goats from the USA, but was publicly announced by DA's press office only last Friday.

The decision came after the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), through its Information System's verification system, said that there are no reported nor recorded cases of Q Fever in the USA.

Q fever is described as a "zoonotic disease caused by Coxiella burnetii, as described by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control".

Animal infected with Q fever often show no signs of the disease, which can be transmitted to humans through birth products, urine, feces, and milk.

The DA also said earlier that the U.S. Center for Disease Control notes that while most people recover from Q fever without antibiotics, those displaying symptoms require treatment, typically with doxycycline.

Las June 21, though, it announced that the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) depopulated more than five dozen goats imported from the USA, following the detection of Q fever among a few of the animals at a government breeding station in Marinduque.

The goats were supposedly bought for a dispersal program to farmers.

BAI confirmed the Q fever after conducting a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests on blood samples from suspected cases.

Upon receiving information of the PCR test results, Laurel immediate ordered the condemnation of all infected goats; the tracing of potentially infected animals; and a temporary ban on the importation of goats from the USA.

Laurel also ordered the preventive suspension of certain BAI personnel pending investigation, a review of BAI's quarantine and disease control protocols, and potential blacklisting of the importer of the infected goats.

Laurel said the assurance by health officials that Q fever is not a major public health threat was also a factor in the lifting of the import ban on live goats.

"The Department of Health has assured the public that animal-to-human transmission is rare and that the infection can be readily treated with antibiotics that are locally and widely available," he said.

Laurel also disclosed that the BAI has already implemented stringent measures to prevent the spread of the infectious disease to both animals and humans.

Prior to the lifting of the temporary ban on importation of live goats from the USA, the DA had issued M.O 42, for the temporary banning of importation of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD)- susceptible animals, as well as their products and by-products, from Turkey.

The import ban came after Turkey reported on Sept. 9 an FMD outbreak in Cugun, Merkez, and Kirsehir, affecting domestic cattle.

"We're imposing an import ban to mitigate the risk of FMD transmission to our local animal population," Laurel said.

The DA will maintain the import ban until the DA assesses that the local animal population is no longer at risk from FMD.

The DA also announced last Oct. 4 that Laurel also ordered the temporary ban on the importation of domestic and wild birds from France after the European country reported in early August the outbreak of avian influenza.

The ban covers shipments of live poultry, poultry products, and by-products, including day-old chicks and semen.

DA Memorandum Order 40 also suspended the issuance by the BAI of “sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances” for shipments coming from France.

Only birds slaughtered or products processed before July 25, will be allowed to enter the Philippines.

The veterinary quarantine offices of the country were ordered to stop and confiscate shipments of wild and domestic birds, eggs, semen, poultry products, and by-products, except those that are heat-treated**. /RHM (FREEMAN)**

https://www.philstar.com/the-freeman/cebu-news/2024/10/14/2392430/da-lifts-temporary-ban-us-goats-importation

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

‘Reduce middlemen in rice delivery to lower prices’

Bella Cariaso - The Philippine Star

October 14, 2024 | 12:00am

Individuals line up to purchase rice for P29 per kilo during the Kadiwa sa Lingayen on August 29, 2024 in Lingayen, Pangasinan.

Cesar Ramirez / The Philippine STAR

MANILA, Philippines — Retail prices of rice can go down to P43 per kilo if the government cuts the layers of middlemen before the commodity reaches the markets, farmers’ group Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) said over the weekend.

SINAG executive director Jayson Cainglet said that typically after being milled, the rice will be sold to at least six middlemen such as wholesalers and biyaheros, before it reaches consumers.

Each of these layers adds P2 per kilo in the retail price of rice before consumers can buy the staple, he said.

“What we are saying is that the rice can be sold at P43 (per kilo) to P45 (per kilo) without lowering the tariff, if we can cut the layers within the rice industry so that many will benefit from the affordable rice,” Cainglet said.

He said that the National Food Authority can sell P43 per kilo of rice in the Kadiwa centers as it mills the palay and sells directly to the government-run pop-up stores.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has said that the Kadiwa outlets started selling at a lower price of P43 per kilo in its various outlets as part of its Rice-for-All program.

Unlike the subsidized P29 program, which is aimed at vulnerable sectors like indigents and senior citizens, Rice-for-All is available to all consumers in larger volumes.

A total of 21 new Kadiwa stores opened this weekend across Metro Manila and in Laguna.

Based on monitoring of the DA in Manila markets, the local regular milled rice is sold as high as P50 per kilo; local well-milled rice, P55 per kilo; local premium rice, as high as P58 per kilo and local special rice, up to P65 per kilo.

Imported regular milled rice is sold as high as P48 per kilo; imported well-milled rice, as high as P55 per kilo; imported premium rice, P60 per kilo and imported special rice, up to P63 per kilo.

https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/10/14/2392280/reduce-middlemen-rice-delivery-lower-prices

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Poultry found resistant to antibiotics; study warns risks in consumption

By: Kathleen de Villa - Reporter / @kdevillaINQ

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:45 AM October 14, 2024

MANILA, Philippines — A study from Cavite State University warns about the misuse of antibiotics on poultry, after batches of farm chickens in the province became resistant to antimicrobial medication, which raises the risk of disease transmission to humans.

Bacterial diseases among the chickens were found prevalent in certain farms in Barangay Tambo Malaki, Indang town, and in Barangay Litlit, Silang town, according to the study by veterinarian and microbiologist Cynthia Rundina-Dela Cruz.

Titled "Antibiotic Sensitivity Profile and Dominant Antibiotic Resistance Genes in Selected Avian Bacterial Pathogens from Commercial Poultry Farms in Upland Cavite," the study was presented on Oct. 2 at a symposium by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) on agriculture and aquatic and natural resources research and development.

Indiscriminate use

The broiler chickens examined were found to have developed antimicrobial resistance (AMR) to at least eight antibiotics—one of them classified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a "last resort" medication.

AMR, considered one of the world's top public health concerns, occurs when bacteria, viruses and fungi are no longer sensitive to medication—leading to the spread of a disease and making treatment difficult, according to the WHO.

One primary driver of AMR is the indiscriminate use of antibiotics on humans and even animals and plants.

Dela Cruz noted in her study that “chicken farmers in the Southeast Asian region commonly misuse and overuse antibiotics.”

In upland Cavite, the study learned, the prevalence of avian pathogenic Escherichia coli (Apec) was at 25.6 percent in Tambo Malaki, while incidence of S. enterica, a species of Salmonella, was at 58.9 percent.

The infected chickens were found to be resistant to the following antibiotics: azithromycin (53.8 percent); cephalotin and trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole or TMPS (both at 40 percent); tetracycline (23 percent); amoxicillin-clavulanic acid (23 percent); and ciprofloxacin, doxycycline and kanamycin (each at 15.3 percent).

These findings meant that the farms haphazardly used Colistin—identified as the “last resort” medication—as well as TMPS, which is used to treat salmonellosis, said Dela Cruz, dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine at the university.

She also noted that “biosecurity protocols were not strictly employed” in the farms—such as the assistance of resident veterinarians who could provide guidance on antibiotic intake and the provision of shower facilities, vehicle baths and perimeter gates.

Other animals such as dogs, cats, birds and goats—all potential pathogen carriers—were also roaming around the farms, increasing the chances of a rapid spread of disease.

Food security

In a forum in November last year marking World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week, the Department of Health called on the agriculture sector to avoid using antibiotics as “growth promoters” among livestock, as this contributes to AMR, threatening not only public health but food security.

Pharmacist Johanna Mallari-Abella, who is also research head of the department’s pharmaceutical division, had cautioned that antimicrobial residues stay in meat, making it unfit for human consumption.

Even vegetables contaminated with drug-resistant bacteria pose a health risk, the Philippine College of Physicians warned last year, saying that consumption may also lead to the development of AMR.

In a recent online forum, infectious diseases specialist Maria Yvette Barez said “AMR superbugs” remain in infected animals and in the “organic fertilizer in our vegetables.”

She warned that these “resistant bugs” are projected to cause the deaths of more than 10 million people by 2050, and called for the observance of hygiene in the handling of meat and vegetables.

“When not properly cleaned or washed, it stays in the [food] we eat, and so we get the resistant bugs,” she said.

https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1992371/poultry-found-resistant-to-antibiotics-study-warns-risks-in-consumption

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

PH remains world's largest rice importer

By: Jordeene B. Lagare - @inquirerdotnet

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 02:07 AM October 14, 2024

File photo

The Philippines is expected to import more rice this year and next, remaining as the world's top importer of this staple food as the El Niño, La Niña and recent typhoons have curbed local production.

In its latest Grain: World Markets and Trade report, the US Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service estimated that the country's rice imports would reach 4.7 million metric tons (MT) this year, up by 2.2 percent from its previous estimate of 4.6 million MT, citing "strong buying of Vietnam rice."

Philippine rice imports are expected to further increase to 4.9 million MT in 2025 because of "smaller crop" delivered by local farms.

The latest USDA projection aligns with a higher forecast for global rice imports this year, attributed to increases in demand from Malaysia and Nepal, despite estimates of higher worldwide production.

Global output up

The report sees a surge in global imports next year, underpinned by higher demand from several African and Asian markets even as India's trade policy changes are expected to boost global supply and lower prices.

India recently lifted the export ban on non-basmati white rice that had been imposed 14 months ago.

"Global rice production is forecast up based on a substantial increase for India, more than offsetting a reduction for the Philippines," the report estimated for next year.

The USDA estimated that the country's milled rice production would amount to 12.7 million MT this 2024 and decline to 12.3 million MT next year.

A previous report by the foreign agency slashed its rice production forecast for the Philippines due to crop damage from successive typhoons and a reduction in area harvested due to land conversion.

The volume of rice imports entering the archipelago totaled 3.29 million MT as of Oct. 3, based on the data from the Bureau of Plant Industry.

Vietnam remains as the top rice supplier (2.61 million MT) during the reference period, followed by Thailand (416,185.19 MT) and Pakistan (157,564.48 MT). India shipped 76,971 MT of grains.

The latest figure on rice imports already amounted to 91.3 percent of the country's purchases last year.

Government data showed that rice import volume in the country had risen consistently from 2019 to 2022 before declining in 2023.

The country produced 8.53 MT of palay (unhusked rice) in the first half of this year, down 5.5 percent from last year, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority.

The Department of Agriculture previously said domestic palay output would be flat in 2024 due to the substantial impact of El Niño and La Niña phenomena on farmers' harvest.

https://business.inquirer.net/484774/ph-remains-worlds-largest-rice-importer

BUSINESS WORLD:

Tariff cuts result in nearly P9B in foregone revenues

October 14, 2024 | 12:31 am

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 62 reduced tariffs on imported rice to 15% until 2028. — PHILIPPINE STAR/RYAN BALDEMOR

TARIFF CUTS on imported rice and electric vehicles (EVs) resulted in nearly P9 billion in foregone revenues, the Bureau of Customs (BoC) said on Sunday.

“Recent policy changes, particularly the implementation of Executive Order (EO) No. 62, which reduced rice tariffs from 35% to 15%, resulted in a revenue loss of P6.09 billion from rice imports,” the BoC said in a statement.

EO 62, which took effect on July 5, cut import tariffs on rice to 15% until 2028 to tame inflation.

The same order also extended the zero-tariff policy on electric vehicles and parts through 2028. It also expanded the coverage of the zero-tariff policy to e-motorcycles, e-bicycles, nickel metal hydride accumulator batteries, e-tricycles and quadricycles, hybrid EVs and plug-in hybrid EV (PHEV) jeepneys or buses.

“EO 62 expanded the zero-import duties under EO 12 to include battery electric vehicles (BEVs), hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs), plug-in HEVs, and specific parts and components, leading to an additional revenue loss of P2.9 billion,” Customs said.

For the first nine months of the year, Customs collected P690.84 billion, missing its target for the period by 0.44%.

However, this was 4.61% higher than P660.39 billion collected in the same period last year.

The end-September collection also made up 72% of the bureau’s P959-billion collection goal for this year.

The BoC said it remains optimistic of hitting its revenue targets for this year as it boosts its collection of nontraditional revenues like post-entry audit and auction.

“Our commitment to transparency and efficiency in customs operations empowers us to build a stronger economy for all Filipinos,” Customs Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio was quoted as saying. — **B.M.D. Cruz**

https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2024/10/14/627479/tariff-cuts-result-in-nearly-p9b-in-foregone-revenues/

BUSINESS WORLD:

Meat imports up 11.06% by volume in August

October 14, 2024 | 12:02 am

REUTERS

MEAT IMPORTS increased by 11.06% year on year by volume in the eight months to August, driven by beef, pork, and chicken, the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) reported.

The BAI said meat shipments rose to 907.77 million kilograms from 817.35 million a year earlier. Meat imports in August grew 17.8% to 135.57 million kilos.

“The August data is showing arrivals catching up and ample supply is becoming available for the coming (holiday) season,” Meat Importers and Traders Association President Emeritus Jesus C. Cham said in a Viber message.

Shipments of pork rose 10.95% to 450.36 million kilos during the eight months, accounting for about 49.6% of all meat imports during the period.

Last week Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said pork imports may rise this year due to the continued threat of African Swine Fever (ASF) on the hog industry

“Because of the ASF, a lot of hogs are dying. It signals also to businessmen that there may be a shortage; Christmas is also nearing,” he told reporters on the sidelines of a Senate hearing last week.

Shipments of chicken totaled 302.03 million kilos in the eight months to August. Shipments rose 4.32% and accounted for 33.32% of meat imports.

Mr. Laurel said that chicken farmers have started importing more layers, a trend he described as “temporary.”

Imports of beef increased 36.41% during the period to 125.02 million kilos. Shipments made up 13.8% of all meat imports.

Beef from Brazil amounted to 48.57 million kilos, followed by Australia (34.26 million kilos), and Ireland (10.6 million kilos). — **Adrian H. Halili**

https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/10/14/627510/meat-imports-up-11-06-by-volume-in-august/

BUSINESS WORLD:

PHL rice import forecast raised to 4.9 MMT in 2025

October 14, 2024 | 12:01 am

REUTERS

THE US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has raised its Philippine rice import forecast to 4.9 million metric tons (MMT) for 2025.
In the Grain: World Markets and Trade Report issued Oct. 11, the USDA's new forecast represents a 300,000 MMT from the September estimate.

The projection for next year is also higher than the 4.7 MMT forecast for 2024.

The USDA said the new import estimate was spurred by the smaller harvests expected for next year.

The USDA downgraded its Philippine domestic rice production estimate to 12.3 MMT in milled rice equivalent for 2025. This was lower than the 12.7 MMT issued last September.

Last year palay or unmilled rice production was 20.06 MMT, equivalent to about 13 MMT in milled rice.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is projecting palay production at 20.1 MMT this year.

Palay production is estimated to have declined 11.4% year on year to 3.36 MMT during the third quarter, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Asked to comment, former Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar said rice imports will offset the negative effects on rice production by the effects El Niño and La Niña, and strong typhoons.

El Niño caused drought and dry spells throughout the first half of the year affecting local agricultural production. The government weather service, known as the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), declared El Niño to have ended in June.

PAGASA also estimates a 71% chance of La Niña forming between September and November, likely persisting until the first quarter.

La Niña weather event is expected to increase the likelihood of tropical cyclones and flooding.

"Both El Niño and La Niña including strong typhoons and the flooding have significant impact on rice production in 2024… you will have more rice imports to mitigate the potential shortfall," Mr. Dar said via Viber.

Rice imports amounted to 3.29 MMT as of Oct. 3, the Bureau of Plant Industry reported.

In June, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. signed Executive Order (EO) No. 62 which lowered the tariff on imported rice to 15% from 35% until 2028. This was meant to tame rice prices and plug gaps in domestic production.

Fermin D. Adriano, a former Agriculture undersecretary said via Viber that imports have been spurred by weather-related crop damage.

"DA has not revealed the harvest decline this year, but we expected it," he added.

Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura Executive Director Jayson H. Cainglet said the main driver for higher rice imports was the lower tariff regime imposed by EO 62.

"Three months since the effectiveness of EO 62; rice prices are still high, the profits of importers/traders increased even more due to the reduced tariff, so it will remain the biggest driver in the deluge of rice imports," Mr. Cainglet said via Viber.

The Philippines imports about 20% of its rice requirement due inadequate domestic production, but high rice prices have led the government to ease the way for imports.

The DA has said rice prices may decline staring mid-October, with the full impact of EO 62 expected to manifest by January.

According to DA Price monitors in Metro Manila, a kilogram of imported well-milled rice commanded prices of between P45 and P55 as of Oct. 10 dropping from P49 to P55 per kilo on Sept. 10.

Regular-milled rice fetched between P42 and P48 per kilo as of Oct. 10, falling from P49-P50 a month prior.

Meanwhile, the USDA said global rice imports are expected to increase next year due to India's lifting of its the ban on non-basmati white rice exports. India is the world's largest exporter of white rice.

"Global imports are forecast to rise with increases in several African and Asian markets following India's trade policy changes, likely creating more available global supplies and lower prices," the USDA said. — **Adrian H. Halili**

https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/10/14/627508/phl-rice-import-forecast-raised-to-4-9-mmt-in-2025/

THE MANILA TIMES:

Dolphin released off Cagayan waters

By Leander C. Domingo
October 14, 2024

A STRANDED Fraser's dolphin was released to the sea on Sunday in Claveria town in Cagayan province after it was confirmed that it was in good health.

The dolphin was found along the beach of Barangay Punta in Aparri town, also in Cagayan province, on Saturday.

Found to have been suffering a wound on its tail, the Provincial Veterinary Office and the local government of Aparri led a rescue operation together with Punta fishermen.

Wilfredo Iquin Jr., Provincial Veterinary Office supervising agriculturist, who gave assistance to the rescue group, said the dolphin was examined and immediately brought to the BFAR in Claveria town.

The dolphin was placed under intubation due to dehydration and blood was also taken for further analysis.

Cagayan fishermen noted that dolphins and other marine mammals are usually stranded on the beaches due to illness or disease.

The BFAR said coastal villagers and fishermen have been a great help in rescuing and saving stranded marine mammals on the beaches in Cagayan province.

https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/10/14/regions/dolphin-released-off-cagayan-waters/1983713

THE MANILA TIMES:

Meat imports up 11%; PH stocks seen stable

By Janine Alexis Miguel
October 14, 2024

THE Philippines' meat imports from January to August totaled 907.77 million kilograms, up 11.06 percent from 817.35 million kg in the same period last year, according to data from the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Animal Industry (DA-BAI).

Pork accounted for 450.36 million kg or 49.6 percent of total imports, higher by 10.9 percent from the 405.9 million kg a year earlier.

Next was chicken, which comprised 33.2 percent of total meat imports, tallied at 302.02 million kg, up by 4.3 percent from the previous 289.52 million kg.

Beef imports increased the largest at 36.4 percent, reaching 125.01 million kg compared to the year-earlier 91.6 million kg.

The Philippines also ordered 28.75 million kg of buffalo meat, though 1.89 percent lower than the 29.3 million kg the previous year.

Lamb imports at 540,534 kg were 4.04 percent lower than last year's 563,299 kg.

BAI data showed duck meat imports at 107,370 kg were almost 46.8 percent down from the previous 229,301 kg.

Brazil shipped the largest volume of meat at 313.53 million kg or 34.5 percent of the Philippines' total imports.

Next were the United States and Spain at 130.8 million kg and 113.12 million kg of meat imports, respectively.

Canada was fourth with 81.54 million kg, followed by Australia, 51.56 million kg; and the Netherlands, 45.6 million kg.

The Meat Importers and Traders Association (MITA) said import volume in August indicates supply will stabilize in the holiday season.

"However, while importers are squeezed, lower prices may not be passed on to the consumers. Other links in the value chain may keep the gains, especially since the market traditionally anticipates higher prices in the last quarter," MITA president Emeritus Jesus Cham said.

On the other hand, the Manila office of the United States Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Services (USDA-FAS) sees the Philippines producing more pork, chicken and beef this year as more investors come in.

The agency's latest report for 2024 said domestic pork production would spike to 970,000 metric tons (MT) compared to 2023's forecast of 950,000 MT due to repopulation efforts of the commercial hog sector.

The USDA-FAS also projects the Philippines' 2024 beef production increasing to 190,000 MT compared to the previous 185,000 MT.

The agency cited Executive Order 62, which lowers import tariffs on agricultural products and will help augment local supplies of chicken to meet strong market demand over the medium term.

In 2023, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported the country produced over 5 million MT of livestock, poultry, and other animal products. The DA said this is a sign of recovery from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the occurrence of animal diseases.

In the last few months, the DA has lifted most of the temporary bans imposed on domestic and wild birds and livestock from other countries due to bird flu and African swine fever.

The department also announced plans to boost domestic production of livestock and poultry by five times in five years to minimize imports.

https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/10/14/business/top-business/meat-imports-up-11-ph-stocks-seen-stable/1983754

THE MANILA TIMES:

Global rice imports seen rising by USDA

By Janine Alexis Miguel
October 14, 2024

GLOBAL rice imports are projected to increase following India's trade policy changes, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) said.

The Indian government has lifted a 14-month export ban on non-basmati white rice, removed the minimum export price on basmati rice and reduced tariffs to 10 percent on paddy, brown, and parboiled exports.

"Global trade is now set to rise in 2025 as top exporter India expands shipments and global rice prices are expected to fall," the USDA said in a report.

It said that the Philippines could import around 4.7 million metric tons (MT) of rice this year, up from a previous estimate of 4.6 million MT, due to the "strong buying of Vietnam rice."

Rice arrivals in the country next year, meanwhile, are projected to hit nearly 5.0 million MT due to smaller crops and India's return to the global market.

The USDA said the Philippines would be the world's top rice importer, followed by Vietnam and the European Union, respectively, with an estimated 2.9 million MT and 2.2 million MT.

As of end-September, rice deliveries to the Philippines totaled 3.28 million MT, up from 2.68 million MT a year earlier.

In 2023, inbound shipments of the staple totaled 3.6 million MT, down 5.9 percent from the record high of 3.82 million MT logged in 2022.

The DA has said that 2024 imports are unlikely to exceed last year's volume.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has also said that the removal of India's export curbs could help reduce domestic and global prices of the grain.

The USDA also expects global rice production to increase, driven by higher output from major rice-producing countries.

"Global rice production is forecast up based on a substantial increase for India more than offsetting a reduction for the Philippines," it said.

Domestic milled rice production is expected to decrease to 12.3 million MT, lower than the earlier projection of 12.7 million MT.

Philippine Statistics Authority data showed that production of palay or unmilled rice from January to June was 8.54 million MT, down 5.4 percent from the 9.03 million MT recorded a year earlier.

https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/10/14/business/top-business/global-rice-imports-seen-rising-by-usda/1983753

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Lower tariffs on rice, BEVs pull down BOC 9-month take

Reine Juvierre S. Alberto
October 13, 2024

THE reduced tariffs on rice and battery electric vehicles pulled down the Bureau of Customs' (BOC) revenue collections to P690.842 billion as of the end of September 2024.

In a statement on Sunday, the BOC recorded P6.089 billion in revenue losses from rice imports due to the reduction of rice tariffs.

To recall, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. issued Executive Order (EO) No. 62 on June 21, 2024, which reduced the tariff on rice to 15 percent from 35 percent in July and will take effect until 2028. The EO was issued to bring down rice prices to as low as P29 per kilo.

Since EO 62 also imposed zero-import duties for battery electric vehicles (BEVs), hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs), plug-in HEVs, and specific parts and components, this further resulted in P2.901 billion in foregone revenues.

Despite this, the BOC managed to raise P690.842 billion in revenues from January to September 2024, based on preliminary data.

The collection is higher by 4.61 percent or P30.454 billion than the P660.388 billion amassed during the same period in 2023.

However, the BOC posted a shortfall in tax revenues, lacking by P3.046 billion from the Cabinet-level Development Budget and Coordination Committee's (DBCC) target of P693.888 billion for the period.

For September 2024 alone, the BOC collected P76.061 billion, lower by 4.16 percent or P3.164 billion than the P79.225 billion recorded in the same month a year ago.

"Despite these challenges, the Bureau remains optimistic in achieving its revenue goal for the year," the BOC stated, banking on other strategic measures to boost revenue collections such as post-entry audit and auction as non-traditional revenue sources.

The BOC hopes these efforts will not only help recover lost revenues but also position the Bureau for "sustainable growth" in the future.

"Our commitment to transparency and efficiency in customs operations empowers us to build a stronger economy for all Filipinos. Together, we are not just collecting taxes; we are investing in the future of our nation," Customs Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio said.

Last month, the BOC also fell short of achieving its revenue targets, collecting P78.908 billion out of the P80.945-billion goal for the month of August 2024.

This year, the BOC targets to collect P939.7 billion in revenues based on the DBCC's fiscal program.

With EO 62 set to be reviewed this coming November, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the Department of Agriculture would recommend increasing the tariff rate on rice if retail prices settle between P42 and P45 per kilo.

https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/10/13/lower-tariffs-on-rice-bevs-pull-down-boc-9-month-take/

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Meat imports grow by 11 percent

Ada Pelonia
October 13, 2024

THE country's meat imports increased by 11.06 percent as of August 31.

Data culled by the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) showed that meat imports increased to 907,771 metric tons (MT) from January to August this year compared to the 817,353 MT recorded in the same period in 2023.

Chicken imports grew 4.32 percent to 302,028 MT from 289,520 MT. Mechanically deboned meat (MDM) accounted for a chunk of chicken imports at 175,062 MT. This was followed by chicken leg quarter at 71,738 MT.

Based on BAI data, pork imports rose by 10.95 percent to 450,361 MT from the 405,915 MT recorded in the same period last year. Pork cuts accounted for most of the shipments, with offals trailing behind at 164,452 MT and 158,425 MT, respectively.

Beef imports registered the biggest increase as these jumped by 36.41 percent to 125,016 MT from 91,647 MT. Beef cuts held the bulk of the shipments at 84,947 MT.

According to the Meat Importers and Traders Association (Mita), the August data showed arrivals catching up and ample supply is becoming available for the coming season.

"However while importers are squeezed, lower prices may not be passed on to the consumers," MITA president emeritus Jesus Cham said via Viber.

"Other links in the value chain may keep the gains, especially that the market traditionally is anticipating higher prices in the last quarter," he added.

Meanwhile, Brazil was the top supplier of beef and chicken imports at 48,572 MT and 160,963 MT, respectively.

Argentina emerged behind Brazil in terms of beef shipments at 34,259 MT, while United States took the second spot for chicken shipments at 89,496 MT.

In terms of pork imports, BAI data showed that Spain was the country's biggest supplier at 111,988 MT. This was followed by Brazil at 103,969 MT.

The United States Department of Agriculture-Foreign Agricultural Service in Manila (USDA-FAS Manila) earlier said that the country's meat imports are expected to increase next year on the back of 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.

"Continued greater-than-6-percent economic growth and forecast population increases support strong consumer purchasing power which will push beef imports higher in 2025," it added.

The report also projected pork imports next year to reach 510,000 MT CWE, up over 6 percent from 2024.

"Continued animal disease challenges combined with strong economic growth and forecast population increases will push imports upward."

https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/10/13/meat-imports-grow-by-11-percent/

BUSINESS MIRROR:

NFA accepts palay bagged in farmers' own sacks

Ada Pelonia
October 13, 2024

THE National Food Authority (NFA) said it will begin accepting clean and dry palay bagged by farmers using their own sacks to hasten the procurement process and reduce handling costs.

"Itong wet season harvest up to 20 percent of our procurement…or around 1.3 million bags, bibilhin natin na nasa sako na ng magsasaka, hindi na ililipat sa sako ng NFA," NFA Acting Administrator Larry Lacson said during a news conference late last week.

This move could save the grains agency around P215 million in 2025 and P27.4 million in the fourth quarter, which would be used to purchase more palay for buffer stocking, Lacson said.

"For next year, parang 7,700 metric tons of palay ang kaya ibili noon," he said.

Lacson noted that if the pilot testing succeeds, the agency will implement it next year with up to 90 percent of palay to be procured bagged in farmers' sacks.

The NFA said it reached the decision to accept palay in farmers' sacks during various consultations with farmers nationwide.

This was finalized at the agency's national planning conference held in Dumaguete City in September.

NFA goes green

LACSON, during the same news conference, said the grains agency signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) to implement a rooftop solar photovoltaic system at its headquarters in Quezon City.

"NFA is going green. We will not only save on our power cost from this solar rooftop project, we are also contributing to the reduction of carbon emission and in safeguarding the environment," Lacson said.

Under the agreement, NFA will lease a 100 kilowatt-peak solar PV system, which is projected to substantially lower its electricity expenses.

The grains agency said this "cost-saving measure" would provide NFA with significant financial relief, allowing it to allocate more resources toward its core mandate of maintaining sufficient rice buffer stocks.

It added that for the entire NFA network, the total solar capacity will be 5 MW.

In a statement, the agency said: "By leveraging solar power, NFA not only reduces its carbon footprint but also contributes to the national goal of increasing renewable energy utilization. This collaboration would represent a strategic investment in sustainability, which is crucial in the face of rising energy costs.

"With this solar project, NFA is poised to enhance its energy efficiency, reduce operational costs, and solidify its commitment to environmental responsibility, all while ensuring that the country's rice supply remains secure and accessible to the Filipino people."

https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/10/13/nfa-accepts-palay-bagged-in-farmers-own-sacks/

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Philippines, New Zealand in durian, onion export talks

Samuel P. Medenilla
October 13, 2024

PRESIDENT Marcos said the country is now eyeing to export durian to New Zealand.

Marcos announced that negotiations for the export of the tropical fruit was done during a bilateral meeting in Laos on the sidelines of the 44th and 45th Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summits.

“We are talking about 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],” Marcos told Prime Minister Christopher Luxon.

During the meeting, it was disclosed that the negotiations for the possible entry of New Zealand onions in Philippine market is “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,” Luxon said.

Both state leaders also discussed updates of the Proposed Roadmap to Comprehensive Partnership 2024-2025 between the Philippines and New Zealand.

“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,” Marcos said.

“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,” he added.

Before their meeting ended, Marcos gave Luxon a mini-figurine of a popular fastfood mascot wearing barong tagalog as a token of friendship.

The Philippines and New Zealand established diplomatic relations on July 6, 1966.

https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/10/13/philippines-new-zealand-in-durian-onion-export-talks/

BUSINESS MIRROR:

USDA hikes PHL rice import estimate

Ada Pelonia
October 13, 2024

THE United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) adjusted upward its estimate of the Philippines's rice imports in 2025 owing to a smaller crop.

In its latest report, the USDA said that the country's rice imports next year could reach 4.9 million metric tons (MMT), higher than its previous forecast of 4.6 MMT.

"Global imports are forecast higher with increases to several African and Asian markets following India's trade policy changes likely creating more available global supplies and lower prices," the USDA report read.

India recently lifted its export ban on non-basmati white rice, which is considered the most traded category of rice globally.

Meanwhile, USDA also increased the projection of the Philippines's rice imports this year to 4.7 MMT due to "strong buying of Vietnam rice."

The latest projection is higher than the actual purchases of 3.61 MMT made last year.

In terms of rice prices, the USDA said the Asian export quotes "declined significantly" in response to India lifting its export ban on non-basmati white rice.

India set a Minimum Export Price (MEP) at $490 per MT and the current export quote is $492 per MT, according to the international agency.

"Vietnam quotes decreased $28 to $534 per ton, while Thailand declined $60 to $517 per ton with increased pressure from India's return to the market," the USDA said.

Rice arrivals

IMPORTED rice that arrived in the Philippines hit nearly 3.3 million metric tons (MMT) as of October 3, according to data from the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI).

Figures from the attached agency of the Department of Agriculture (DA) showed that 3.29 MMT of imported rice reached Philippine ports.

Of the volume that arrived in the Philippines, over 2.61 MMT came from Vietnam, which maintained its status as the country's top source of imports. Thailand was the second-largest supplier as it accounted for 416,185.19 MT.

BPI data also showed that the Philippines imported rice from other countries like Pakistan (157,564.48 MT), Myanmar (76,971 MT), and India (22,039.04 MT).

Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa earlier said that following the trajectory of rice import arrivals, it would be possible to surpass the total imports recorded in the previous year.

"Most of the imports arrive during the last quarter so historically [and] statistically speaking, it might breach the 3.6 MMT last year," de Mesa told reporters.

https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/10/13/usda-hikes-phl-rice-import-estimate/

BUSINESS MIRROR:

‘Precision agriculture key to water shortages, resource depletion’

Kesha Shua V. Leosala | S&T Media Service
October 13, 2024

By the year 2050, it is expected that water shortages will be experienced all over the world due to the increasing population.

This poses a specific problem in agriculture sector, which uses 82 percent of freshwater for crops. Dr. Sylvester A. Badua, an associate professor at Central Luzon State University (CLSU), raised this concern during his lecture on automated fertigation systems during the green economy forum.

The event was part of the 2024 Regional Science, Technology, and Innovation Week (RSTW), held on September 25 in Tuguegarao, Cagayan.

With the theme “Providing Solutions and Opening Opportunities in the Green Economy,” the forum discussed sustainable agricultural practices and capacity building for innovation skills. It was organized by the Department of Science and Technology Regional Office II.

Badua reintroduced the concept of precision agriculture as a means of mitigating resource depletion. Precision agriculture is the use of resources or inputs in the right amount, place and time. A part of this agricultural technique is site-specific crop management (SSCM), which tailors farming practices to meet the unique needs of different areas within a single field.

One technology in precision agriculture is fertigation, a process that delivers fertilizers through irrigation systems.

In simpler terms, it involves simultaneously supplying plants with the water and nutrients they need for specific growth requirements.

Fertigation has proven to be 90 percent nutrient efficient and 90 percent efficient in water use, reducing waste, minimizing the use of fertilizers, and lowering nutrient loss.

Fertigation is considered a precision agriculture technology for three reasons: precise location, timing, and application rates.

Badua explained that the targeted application of water and fertilizers to the root system ensures nutrients are applied only when needed by the crops

He added that the application of fertilizers can be controlled to the right amount.

Badua pointed out that fertigation system can produce greater yields, eliminate pollution, and synchronize fertilization with crop needs, outlining the benefits of the technology.

However, challenges include cost, system maintenance, and setup quality.

He said that the setting up and implementing the system can be operated manually or automatically. He also presented a project involving the fertigation system that was implemented at CLSU.

He assured users that they can implement the fertigation system according to their preferences, including the use of power source.

Dr. Claire Marie Castillo, also from CLSU, discussed the topics of aquaponics, hydroponics technology, and tower or vertical gardening, presented by

Karl Satinitigan presented the building of a dynamic innovation ecosystem in Cagayan Valley.

https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/10/13/precision-agriculture-key-to-water-shortages-resource-depletion/