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**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Despite imports, rice retail price still high – group

Bella Cariaso - The Philippine Star

October 21, 2024 | 12:00am



Workers unload sacks of premium rice from a trailer truck in Caloocan City on October 3, 2024.

Miguel De Guzman / The Philippine STAR

**MANILA, Philippines** — Despite being the world’s biggest rice importer, with at least 3.29 million metric tons imported, retail prices of the staple in the country remain high, rice watchdog group Bantay Bigas has bewailed.

Bantay Bigas spokesperson Cathy Estavillo cited the administration’s dependence on rice imports from countries including Vietnam, Pakistan, Myanmar, India, China, Japan, Cambodia, Italy and Spain.

“The importation under the Rice Liberalization Law by President Marcos directly undermines the livelihoods of Filipino farmers and his issuance of Executive Order No. 62, which lowers rice import tariffs from 35 to 15 percent,” Estavillo said.

## ADVERTISING

Estavillo added that the importation is not a solution and did not benefit the consumers and also weakened the country’s self-sufficiency and food security.

She said that the farmers are also affected by a drop in the farmgate price of palay because the National Food Authority fails to buy directly from the farmers, empowering the traders to dictate the price of the grain.

Based on monitoring of the Department of Agriculture (DA) in Metro Manila markets, the retail price of 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, as high as P60 per kilo and imported special rice, as high as P65 per kilo.

Estavillo said that a nationally coordinated farmers' protest will be held today.

### **Tomato price hike**

The retail price of tomatoes in Metro Manila markets further increased to P200 per kilo because of the devastation brought by the recent Super Typhoon Enteng, according to the DA.

Three days ago, based on the DA's price watch, the retail price of tomatoes reached as high as P180 per kilo. Prior to the devastation of Enteng, the retail price of tomatoes only ranged between P55 and P90 per kilo.

Meanwhile, the retail price of chilis or siling labuyo has also increased to as high as P450 per kilo, ginger at P300 per kilo and bell pepper at P360 per kilo.

The retail price of round scad or galunggong, once considered the poor man's fish, reached as high as P340 per kilo.

On the other hand, the Philippine Egg Board Association (PEBA) yesterday gave assurance of enough supply of eggs amid the increase in the demand during the holidays.

In a radio interview, PEBA president Francis Uyehara said that the farmgate price of eggs remains stable between P7 and P7.50 per kilo.

"The retail price should only be P8 to P9 (per piece). Since last week of September, the farmgate price of eggs did not move but in retail, we observed continuous increase," he said.

Based on monitoring of the DA in Metro Manila markets, the retail price of medium-sized eggs ranged between P7.80 and P9 per piece.

"We assure that the production (of eggs) continues to increase. What we cannot answer is the retail price as we don't have the capacity to dictate the price. It is entirely dependent on the concept of supply and demand but we continue to increase our supply towards December," he added.

Meanwhile, the retail price of whole chicken ranged between P150 and P230 per kilo.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/10/21/2394037/despite-imports-rice-retail-price-still-high-group>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Farmers group slams Marcos admin for continued rice importation

By: [Jown Manalo](#) - Reporter / [@jownmanaloINQ](#)

INQUIRER.net / 07:00 PM October 20, 2024



PHILIPPINES PROJECTED TO BE WORLD'S TOP RICE IMPORTER. Workers load sacks of imported rice from Thailand and Vietnam on a truck in Dagupan, Manila for transport to various dealers and distributors. The Philippines is expected to remain the world's top importer of rice this year with the US Department of Agriculture predicting that the country would increase its procurement of the staple. INQUIRER PHOTO / RICHARD A. REYES

MANILA, Philippines — Farmers organization Amihan National Federation of Peasant Women and rice watch group Bantay Bigas on Sunday criticized the Marcos administration for another round of rice importation this October.

According to the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Philippines has imported a total of 3.29 million metric tons (MT) of rice as of October 3, solidifying its position as the world's largest rice importer.

Vietnam continues to be the Philippines' top rice supplier, exporting 2.61 million MT, based on DA's data with the same reference period. It is followed by Thailand with 416,185.19 MT and Pakistan, which supplied 157,564.48 MT. India shipped 76,971 MT of rice to the Philippines.

Amihan secretary-general and Bantay Bigas spokesperson Cathy Estavillo said the continued rice importation is neither a solution nor beneficial to farmers and poor consumers, as it only undermines Filipino farmers and the country's self-sufficiency and food security.

According to Estavilla, the revenue lost due to imports could have been additional income for Filipino rice farmers if the government only prioritized local production to achieve rice self-sufficiency.

“The farm gate price of rice remains very low because traders are underpricing it, and the NFA is not buying directly from farmers. Instead of providing compensation and aid to farmers affected by successive calamities like El Niño, La Niña, typhoons, and floods, Marcos's response has been importation. Importing rice is often done simultaneously with the harvest period, like in the recent case, which causes farmers to suffer losses,” she added in Filipino.

“We must oppose Marcos' efforts to beg for food from other countries and his promotion of land grabbing and land-use conversion, which reduces land for food production,” Amihan's statement read.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1994683/farmers-group-slams-marcos-admin-for-continued-rice-importation>

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**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# **BOC: Over P72B smuggled goods seized from Jan to Oct 2024**

By: [Jown Manalo](#) - Reporter / [@jownmanaloINQ](#)

INQUIRER.net / 07:46 PM October 20, 2024



Bureau of Customs Commissioner Bien Rubio delivers a speech during the BOC's Inter-Agency Intelligence Summit held on Friday, October 18, 2024 in Batangas. Photo courtesy of the Bureau of Customs

MANILA, Philippines — The Bureau of Customs (BOC) confiscated a total of P72.091 billion worth of smuggled goods from January to October 2024, surpassing its total haul of P43.29 billion in 2023.

This was announced during the BOC's Inter-Agency Intelligence Summit in Batangas on Friday, where P3.09 billion of the total collected value was recorded in October alone.

According to the BOC, counterfeit goods in October are trailed by commodities worth P2.3 billion, cigarettes worth P22.3 million, rice sacks worth P323 million, and a vessel carrying smuggled petroleum products.

Illegal drugs worth P42.16 million were also intercepted at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport this year, the BOC added.

In a statement, BOC Commissioner Bien Rubio noted that the bureau's accomplishments during the past 10 months are "a record-breaking feat."

“This proves that our combined efforts are not only effective, but essential in combating

During the summit, Finance Secretary Ralph Recto emphasized the importance of intelligence, calling it the “vanguard” of law enforcement.

“From a finance and budgetary point of view, it is an economical form of warfare because good intelligence saves lives, disarms threats, defuses tensions, and stops conflicts and crimes from happening,” he added.

He also stressed that the BOC must employ traditional and modern approaches to effectively combat smuggling in the country.

“In the case of smuggling of goods, it is a crime that victimizes millions – from farmers who drown from the flood of imported agricultural products, to entrepreneurs whose businesses are choked by unfair trade. Outwitting them requires agility in action, and openness to new ideas and techniques,” Recto added.

Rubio also acknowledged the “reinforced collaboration” between agencies that led to the BOC’s achievements in 2023 and 2024.

“In the face of increasingly complex threats, we must stand as a united front. With each of us having diverse expertise in the field of intelligence, we are afforded the opportunity to achieve far more collectively than any agency could accomplish alone,” he said.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1994693/p72-091-billion-of-smuggled-goods-seized-from-jan-to-oct-2024>



**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Dairy regulator considering stock farm site in Palawan

October 21, 2024 | 12:04 am



REUTERS

THE National Dairy Authority (NDA) said it is seeking to establish a stock farm in Palawan to further grow the dairy herd.

Administrator Marcus Antonius T. Andaya said Palawan is being considered, further expanding the network of stock farms from the five that are expected to be operational by next year.

“We are still targeting another stock farm undergoing study, in Palawan,” Mr. Andaya said in a briefing last week.

“This would balance the positioning of our stock farms,” he said, adding that the Palawan site is likely to serve Southern Luzon.

The NDA is planning to import dairy cattle breeding stock to allow the offspring to acclimate to the Philippines.

“When the cattle arrive, they won’t be accustomed to our climate, and we may not have good results. They need to be put in our stock farms first,” he said.

The current network of five stock farms are set to be completed by the end of the year, with operations set to launch by early 2025. They will be located in Nueva Ecija, Bohol, Bukidnon, Cotabato, and Agusan del Sur.

He added that the cattle that will be imported for stock farms are expected to arrive by July 2025.



The NDA aims to increase dairy production to 80 million liters per year by 2028, equivalent to about 5% of milk demand. It operates in 68 provinces, overseeing almost 2,500 farmers and 1,324 dairy organizations.

Mr. Andaya said the milk self-sufficiency rate was 1.54% as of June. The near-term target is 2.66% by 2025.

The Philippines must import the bulk of its dairy needs. Imports are forecast to increase 7.3% in 2024 to 2.49 million metric tons of milk equivalent, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/10/21/629301/dairy-regulator-considering-stock-farm-site-in-palawan/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Russia seeks more control over global food prices with BRICS grain exchange

October 21, 2024 | 12:03 am



REUTERS

MOSCOW — Russia is proposing BRICS countries set up a grain exchange that would give Moscow greater control over international prices for its agricultural exports, ahead of a group summit that will be attended by leaders of top global grain producers and buyers.

Frustrated by low global wheat prices, Russia, the world's largest wheat exporter, has attempted to limit exports at low prices through international intermediaries.

On Oct. 11, Moscow recommended that its leading exporters avoid selling wheat below \$250 at international tenders.

“In order to ensure efficient, uninterrupted, and transparent cross-border trading of commodities, the Russian BRICS Chairmanship proposes to establish a grain trading platform within the framework of the BRICS Grain Exchange,” said a document drafted by Russia's central bank and finance ministry ahead of the summit.

President Vladimir Putin wants to build up BRICS — which now includes Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates as well as Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa — as a counterweight to the West in global politics and trade.

Russia's proposal also recommends the creation of a BRICS pricing agency, tasked with providing pricing methodologies and market analytics to offer an alternative to the current international pricing through established Western exchanges.

The proposal envisages the extension of BRICS grain trading mechanisms to oil, natural gas, and gold in the future. “This measure will ensure independent pricing and strengthen the sovereignty of the BRICS economies,” the document said.

Oil-rich developing nations, including BRICS members Russia and Iran, have achieved substantial control over global oil prices through the OPEC+ (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies) agreement.

However, some experts are skeptical about BRICS' ability to influence other commodity prices. "Since there are other exchanges that are established and liquid, it may be difficult to have an OPEC+ style price control through the operation of such an exchange," said Yaroslav Lissovlik of BRICS+ Analytics consultancy.

BRICS original members China and India are the world's largest wheat producers, while new member Egypt is the world's biggest buyer. Other BRICS countries, such as Brazil and Iran, are also major grain importers.

Top importers of Russian wheat include BRICS members Egypt and Iran, Saudi Arabia — invited to join and represented by the foreign minister at the summit — as well as Algeria, which considered membership but then dropped the bid.

Russia is actively exploring other markets, such as Latin America, including BRICS member Brazil, as part of its strategy to boost agricultural exports by 50% by 2030 and become a global agriculture superpower.

The Oct. 22-24 BRICS summit will be held in the Russian city of Kazan. — **Reuters**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/10/21/629300/russia-seeks-more-control-over-global-food-prices-with-brics-grain-exchange/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Madrid cancels sheep herding spectacle to avoid spread of bluetongue disease

October 21, 2024 | 12:01 am



REUTERS

MADRID — The Madrid regional government on Thursday canceled the traditional annual herding of flocks of sheep through the center of the Spanish capital scheduled for Sunday as a preventative measure against a new variant of the bluetongue disease.

Bluetongue, spread by insects, can be deadly for domestic ruminants such as sheep, cattle and goats. The disease is present in various areas of Spain.

A new variant, BTV3 (bluetongue virus serotype 3), has been circulating in the Netherlands, northern Belgium and western Germany since last year, and has recently appeared in southwest Spain, Agriculture Ministry data show.

Although no cases of the new variant were spotted in the Madrid region, authorities canceled the crossing as a precaution.

“We are in an area where we have to limit the concentration and movement of livestock,” a spokesperson for the agriculture department of the Madrid regional government told Reuters.

Once a year, sheep take to the streets of Madrid as part of the annual “Fiesta de la Trashumancia” event, recognizing the traditional routes used to herd livestock.

The eight-century tradition disappeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but was revived three decades ago, delighting locals and tourists alike.

Shepherds are allowed to herd their livestock towards southerly pastures for the winter through some of the busiest areas of the city, such as the Puerta del Sol square.

Several countries including France and the Netherlands have implemented vaccinations campaigns against the new variant. — **Reuters**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/10/21/629298/madrid-cancels-sheep-herding-spectacle-to-avoid-spread-of-bluetongue-disease/>

## **Dairy agency needs P1B to hit target**

THE National Dairy Authority (NDA) wants more funds to achieve its target of 5 percent milk sufficiency by 2028.

At a media briefing late Friday, the agency's newly appointed administrator, Marcus Antonius Andaya, said: "Achieving our target will require approximately P1 billion annually, up from our current budget of P500 million. With this support, we believe we can double our production capabilities." The NDA currently manages a dairy cattle inventory of 79,000, though only 16,000 are actively in the milking line.

Andaya also urged for improved infrastructure and stock farms to support domestic production, highlighting the challenges of importing dairy cattle without enough facilities to house them. Its immediate goal for 2025 is to raise milk sufficiency by 2.66 percent, an increase from the present rate of 1.54 percent.

Andaya expressed optimism about these targets, noting that expanding production would also generate additional jobs in the agriculture sector. In addition, the dairy agency is also set to finish building five new stock farms by yearend, to be operational by early 2025 to increase the existing herd of nearly 80,000 dairy animals.

From January to June, milk production grew by 15 percent, reaching 16,020 metric tons (MT) or 21 percent of the country's total liquid milk supply. The country's milk consumption is expected to rise to 1.8 million tons by 2029 from 1 million tons in 2018. Andaya said the NDA's overall goals include importing dairy cattle, expanding herd sizes, increasing milk yields and providing training for farmers.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/10/21/business/top-business/dairy-agency-needs-p1b-to-hit-target/1987851>

# **NDA needs bigger budget to hike milk output**

Ada Pelonia  
October 21, 2024

The National Dairy Authority (NDA) is seeking more funds to increase the country's milk output and enable local producers to meet at least 5 percent of the Philippines's milk requirement.

NDA Administrator Marcus Antonius Andaya said improving the country's milk self-sufficiency rate will entail significant investments.

“The agency's current budget will not allow us to hit the target (of improving milk self-sufficiency). We really need a higher budget,” Andaya told reporters in a recent press briefing in Quezon City.

“Sans an increase in the budget of the NDA, it will be highly impossible to achieve the 5 percent milk sufficiency by 2028.”

According to Andaya, the agency stands to receive P537 million under the 2025 National Expenditure Program (NEP), slightly higher than its 2024 budget of P522 million.

“NDA's annual budget is currently at P500 million. If that will be doubled, then we will also be able to double milk production.”

The agency attached to the Department of Agriculture is targeting to raise annual domestic production to 80 million liters, equivalent to a 5 percent milk self-sufficiency, by 2028.

Figures from the NDA showed that the country's milk production in 2023 reached 28.86 million liters. In the first half, output amounted to 16.02 million liters, based on NDA data.

Andaya said the country's milk self-sufficiency stood at 1.54 percent as of June. Their target is to raise this to 2.66 percent by 2025 and eventually hike it to 5 percent by increasing herd size and yield.



Andaya said the agency would begin to import dairy cattle as soon as their 2025 budget gets approved. He noted that the imported dairy cattle would be placed in NDA's stock farms around the country. Their offspring would then be distributed to farmers.

The NDA said the stock farms set to be completed this year are in Tinio, Nueva Ecija; Ubay, Bohol; Malaybalay, Bukidnon; Carmen, Cotabato; and Agusan Del Sur. These will be operationalized next year.

He said the agency will keep breeding the dairy cattle to increase the volume of milk production.

Andaya also said the NDA is expecting the arrival of at least 600 imported dairy cattle from Australia in July 2025. "Within the same year, the dairy cattle will be able to produce milk."

Meanwhile, the NDA chief expressed the hope that the proposed livestock bill, which aims to make the livestock and poultry industries more competitive, will be passed into law.

Under the proposed bill, a livestock, poultry, and dairy competitiveness enhancement fund (LPD Fund) will be created. The LPD fund will receive an annual appropriation of P7.8 billion from the tariff collections on imported LPD commodities within 10 years following its effectivity.

"NDA is hopeful that the bill will be signed into law because it will boost our efforts to expand the local dairy cattle herd," said Andaya.

"Tariffs from imports may be used to import more dairy cows and will allow the government to help more farmers."

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/10/21/nda-needs-bigger-budget-to-hike-milk-output/>

# Nestle unveils regenerative agri projects for coffee planters

Ada Pelonia  
October 21, 2024

Nestlé Philippines recently launched initiatives aimed at increasing the adoption of regenerative farming among local smallholder robusta farmers to increase their production and income.

Through a partnership with the Department of Agriculture–Agricultural Training Institute (DA-ATI), and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), the company introduced an online certificate course and a crop calendar tailored for coffee farmers under its Project Coffee++ program.

The course covers topics like soil regeneration and climate-smart farming practices while the crop calendar would serve as a record-keeping tool that allows farmers to track their disbursements and incomes.

Jose Uy III, senior vice president and head of corporate affairs at Nestlé Philippines, said these initiatives mark the importance of making regenerative agriculture a crucial part of how farmers grow coffee and other produce.

According to Uy, the ultimate target is to match Vietnam’s output of 2 metric tons (MT) per hectare, which some farmers have already achieved through the practice of regenerative agriculture.

“We hope that by 2025, at least 20 percent of the farmers should already practice regenerative agriculture,” Uy told reporters during a press briefing in Makati last Friday.

“The ideal scenario is to hit the 2 metric ton per hectare. But for now, let’s commit first to the 1 metric ton per hectare and then let’s see how we can grow even more.”

Nestlé Philippines said its farmer training program aims to educate 1,500 more smallholder coffee farmers tilling an average of one to two hectares of farmland in Bukidnon and Sultan Kudarat.

It added that the program builds on its predecessor, the Project Coffee+, which helped 1,500 participating farmers from the same region to triple their yields and income since it began in 2018.

According to the company, from an average of 235 kilos of green coffee beans per hectare in 2018, Project Coffee+ participants achieved an average harvest of 886 kilos in 2023. Some of the farmers that the company trained were able to produce 1 MT per hectare.

Regenerative agriculture improves biodiversity and protects soil fertility by restoring the land's nutrients. Among these regenerative farming practices are composting, agroforestry, cover crops, and intercropping.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/10/21/nestle-unveils-regenerative-agri-projects-for-coffee-planters/>

# ‘Revenue loss means smaller excess funds for rice sector’

Ada Pelonia  
October 21, 2024

The Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) ensures government support for planters, but an economist said the decline in tariff collections would reduce excess funds that can be used by government to further bolster the rice sector’s competitiveness.

Roehlano Briones, a senior research fellow at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), said the revenue losses due to the reduction in rice tariffs will not have an impact on farmers.

Briones issued the statement after the Bureau of Customs (BOC) recently recorded P6.089 billion in revenue losses from rice imports (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/10/13/lower-tariffs-on-rice-bevs-pull-down-boc-9-month-take/>).

“[There will be] no impact. The new [Rice Tariffication Law] bill provides P30 billion [in Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund],” he told the BusinessMirror.

President Marcos issued Executive Order (EO) 62, which reduced the rice tariff to 15 percent from 35 percent, last July. EO 62, which will take effect until 2028, slashed tariffs to cut rice prices by P5 to P7 per kilo.

Data from the BOC showed that tariff revenue collections from rice imports reached P30.02 billion in 2023.

Congress recently ratified the bicameral conference committee report on the proposed RTL amendments, one of which aims to increase the RCEF allocation to P30 billion from P10 billion.

However, University of Asia and the Pacific's Center for Food and Agribusiness (CFA) Executive Director Marie Annette Galvez-Dacul said lower rice tariff collections will have an impact on the competitiveness of rice farmers.

“A revenue loss impacts farmers by allowing cheaper imports to compete with local rice, potentially lowering farmgate prices,” Dacul told the BusinessMirror.

“Any revenue above the P10 [billion] allocated to RCEF under the RTL funds the Rice Farmer Financial Assistance under RA [Republic Act] 11598, so a smaller excess means less support.”

With this, Dacul said reverting tariffs to pre-EO 62 rates could better shield farmers by narrowing the price gap between imported and local rice.

The National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) is set to review the comprehensive and/or specific MFN (Most Favored Nation) tariff rates listed under EO 62 by November.

EO 62 provides that the tariff structure would be subjected to a periodic review every four months from its effectivity.

“As NEDA reviews tariff rates, reverting to pre-EO 62 levels could better protect farmers by reducing the price gap between imported and local rice, though it may raise consumer prices,” Dacul said.

“A thorough review of the RTL is needed to assess the impact of interventions, including EO 62.”

Briones, however, said he would not recommend restoring the previous tariff.

Data from the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) showed that imported rice that arrived in the Philippines hit 3.43 million metric tons (MMT) as of October 10. The country's actual purchases of imported rice reached 3.61 MMT last year.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said that following the trajectory of rice import arrivals, rice imports this year may surpass last year's shipments.

“Most of the imports arrive during the last quarter so historically [and] statistically speaking, it might breach the 3.6 MMT last year.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/10/21/revenue-loss-means-smaller-excess-funds-for-rice-sector/>

# FAO forum trains spotlight on ‘inclusive innovation’

BusinessMirror  
October 21, 2024

The Science and Innovation Forum (SIF 2024) wrapped up three days of discussions on how to make cutting-edge technologies available to small-scale producers at the Rome headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) last Friday.

SIF is one of the three pillars of the World Food Forum 2024, together with the Global Youth Forum and the Investment Forum. The third edition of SIF was held under the theme “Inclusive Science and Innovation for Agrifood Systems Transformation, Leaving No One Behind.” It brought together recognised scientists, innovation experts, and policymakers, as well as small-scale producers, indigenous peoples, women, youth, and the private sector, in a bid to encourage a diversity of perspectives based on science.

“Science, technology, and innovation are key accelerators of agrifood systems transformation, but they must be inclusive to ensure that the transition is just and equitable,” FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu said in his opening address to the forum.

As the world’s agrifood systems face growing challenges—including the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, resource degradation, population growth, and changing diets—the potential of new technologies should be harnessed for developing solutions, according to FAO.

“However, what is needed is to make these innovations impactful on a broader scale, so that all share the benefits equally and sustainably.”

## Gene editing

Thursday’s SIF 2024 opened with a session that explored the benefits of the adoption and diffusion of gene editing technologies and examined their implications, including risks, for small-scale producers. It also provided a platform to discuss regulatory and policy considerations.

Research shows that this technology could enhance precision in breeding methods and contribute to the rapid development of improved plant varieties and animal breeds. Potential benefits include



crops and livestock that are more resistant to pests and diseases and improved resilience to climate change. Some of the gene-edited products being developed around the world include bananas biofortified with vitamin A, hypoallergenic milk, gluten-free wheat, disease-resistance salmon, drought-tolerant grapevines, and cacao protected against fungal disease.

However, there are also potential environmental, food safety, ethical, and regulatory concerns. In this regard, FAO published a report in 2022 that discusses these important aspects, followed by a 2023 report on food-safety-related issues in applying gene editing for food production, including the applicability of existing Codex Alimentarius principles and guidelines for relevant food safety assessments.

“Above all, there’s a need to ensure that such technologies are inclusive and benefit all food producers, including family farmers,” Qu said in his opening remarks to the session.

He also called for more science communication and education to better inform the public about the potential benefits of these new technologies.

## Artificial intelligence

The need for inclusivity was also at the heart of an afternoon session on artificial intelligence (AI), which brought together diverse perspectives and allowed participants to explore how this technology can shape the future of agrifood systems.

AI is already reshaping how we grow, harvest, and distribute food, fisheries, and forestry. However, AI must be inclusive and responsible for its true potential to be realised.

“This is why, in February 2020, FAO, along with Microsoft, IBM, and the Holy See, was among the first signatories of the Rome Call for AI Ethics.”

For AI to help reduce poverty and contribute to a world without hunger, it must bridge—rather than widen—what the Director-General calls the triple divide: digital, rural, and gender. This requires proper governance and collaboration between the public and private sectors, according to FAO.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/10/21/fao-forum-trains-spotlight-on-inclusive-innovation/>