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MANILA BULLETIN:

Marcos OKs program for home-grown agri machineries

BY BETHEENA UNITE

Nov 13, 2024 04:33 PM

President Marcos has approved a program that intends to shift from importation to local production of machineries in boosting the country's agriculture sector.



President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. presides over a sectoral meeting at the Malacañan Palace on Nov. 13, 2024. (Photo courtesy of Malacañang)

In a sectoral meeting at the Malacañan Palace on Wednesday, Nov. 13, Marcos approved the program under the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and expressed confidence that it would be supported by the Department of Agriculture (DA).

“For one thing, it’s (locally-produced machineries) cheaper. For sure, it’s always cheaper than the imported. We get to that point where it is always cheaper than the imported. We now have to scale it,” Marcos said during the meeting.

“Some of these things I see it already, yung pinamimigay natin (those that we are giving out). Yung mga iba (The others)— especially the towed machines that we use for harvesting, for tilling, nakikita na natin ang iba (we have seen the others),” he added, referring to previous distribution of government support and services.

The program is under the DOST’s Local Manufacturing Capabilities to Support Agri-Mechanization.

According to DOST Secretary Renato Solidum Jr., the government's shift from importation to local production of local machineries would not only benefit the agricultural sector but also strengthen the manufacturing industry.

“Mechanization is a key driver for improving efficiency and reducing cost in farming. The DA recognizes the need for mechanization. It has been providing farm implements to farmers and cooperatives, particularly through the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund,” Solidum said.

“With our limited resources and capabilities, we need to strengthen the agri-machineries sector. Supporting homegrown agri-machinery can lead to more efficient farming practices, increase productivity and, of course, have more employment for our people,” he added.

DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. supported DOST's program but emphasized the need to focus on which machinery to be prioritized and ensure the machines meet quality standards.

This prompted the Marcos to direct the DOST, DA, and other research institutes to ensure the research and development aspects of the agri-mechanization drive. The President also ordered the smooth implementation of the program.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/11/13/marcos-o-ks-program-for-home-grown-agri-machineries>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Siling labuyo soars to P600 per kilo

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

November 14, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The retail price of siling labuyo or wild chili has surged to P600 per kilo following the onslaught of tropical cyclones in the Philippines, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Six cyclones hit the country in just five weeks.

Based on the DA's monitoring, wild chilis' retail price increased by P50 per kilo, up from P550 per kilo a week ago.

Cyclones Kristine and Leon's damage to high-value crops amounted to P1.23 billion, covering 10,163 hectares and a volume of production loss of 46,016 metric tons, the DA said.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/11/14/2400083/siling-labuyo-soars-p600-kilo>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Rice imports hit new record high

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

November 14, 2024 | 12:00am



The country's rice imports as of Nov. 7 reached an all-time high of 3.89 million MT, eclipsing the previous record of 3.83 million MT in 2022.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines remains the world's largest rice importer as imports reached a new record high of nearly 3.9 million metric tons, latest Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) data showed.

The country's rice imports as of Nov. 7 reached an all-time high of 3.89 million MT, eclipsing the previous record of 3.83 million MT in 2022.

The latest import volume has also surpassed the 3.61 million MT full-year rice imports last year by at least eight percent, based on BPI data.

The bulk or about 78 percent of the total imported rice came from Vietnam, which has been the country's top supplier of the grain even before and especially after Republic Act 11203 deregulated the country's rice industry.

The country imported 3.04 million MT of rice from Vietnam – about two percent higher than the 2.99 million MT recorded import volume from that country for the entire 2023.

Vietnam was followed by Thailand, which exported 497,465 MT to the Philippines; Pakistan, 178,179 MT, and Myanmar, 143,364 MT. Completing the top five rice import sources was India, which provided 22,108 MT.

BLY Agri Venture Trading led the 154 eligible traders and importers that imported rice this year with 280,909 MT, followed by Atara Marketing Inc. with 204,530 MT and Orison Free Enterprise Inc. with 187,609 MT.

Experts have attributed the higher rice imports this year to the need to beef up domestic stocks amid earlier concerns over the ill effects of a prolonged dry spell caused by El Niño on local farms.

Beyond climatic concerns, government officials were worried about rising retail rice prices, prompting President Marcos to exercise his power to modify tariffs, reducing the rate on rice to a historic low of 15 percent from 35 percent.

Government officials and experts noted that the reduction of tariffs would encourage the entry of more affordable foreign rice stocks that would augment domestic supplies and prevent further spikes in retail prices.

However, retail prices of imported rice still remain more expensive than locally produced stocks. Imported commercial rice in Metro Manila ranges from P42 per kilo to P63 per kilo while local commercial rice fetches between P40 per kilo and P64 per kilo, according to the Department of Agriculture price monitoring report.

In a related development, Pakistan wants to increase its share in the Philippines' rice market by forging a bilateral memorandum of agreement with the government.

Pakistani Ambassador Imtiaz Ahmad Kazi said the South Asian country stands ready to expand its rice exports to the country to as much as one million MT.

“We want to increase that share, provided we can also provide a stable, good supply of rice. And that depends on mutual conditions for each other, which means that the Philippines should guarantee us that they want this much rice every year.

Under a MOA, Kazi said Pakistan would have a guarantee of the volume that would enter the country in a given year.

The idea of forging a MOA between Manila and Islamabad came up last year during initial talks between the foreign ministers of the two countries, Kazi explained.

Furthermore, the diplomat pointed out that their rice exporters also seek stability and predictability in the Philippines' rice tariff regime.

He noted that the country's rice tariff rate has been changing in the past years from a high of 50 percent to 35 percent and today at 15 percent.

“So our exporter wants to have stability and certainty about the quantity as well as tariff. Once it is done, we have the option to convert our sugarcane and cotton fields back to rice, just especially for the Philippines,” he said.

Kazi said that Pakistan is the world's largest rice exporter with more than two-thirds of its more than 10 million MT production being shipped to other countries.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/11/14/2399899/rice-imports-hit-new-record-high>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA elevates programs to boost banana output, recover market share

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

November 14, 2024 | 12:00am



Agriculture Undersecretary for high-value crops Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero told The STAR that the DA continues to support ongoing research endeavors to yield a Panama disease-resistant banana variety.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is stepping up its programs, from credit assistance to preferential tariff agreements, to help the banana industry get back on its feet amid persisting production woes and stiffer competition abroad with foreign producers.

Agriculture Undersecretary for high-value crops Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero told The STAR that the DA continues to support ongoing research endeavors to yield a Panama disease-resistant banana variety.

Natividad-Caballero said there are ongoing field trials for the Panama disease-resistant planting materials in various provinces nationwide including in North Cotabato, Lanao del Norte, Davao del Sur and Agusan del Norte in Mindanao.

There are also field trials in Samar and Leyte in the Visayas and in Apayao, Cagayan, Quezon and Oriental Mindoro in Luzon.

Panama disease or Fusarium wilt has been the main problem causing headaches and production woes to local banana growers.

Banana industry players estimate that Panama disease has affected at least 17,000 hectares so far.

“This disease has led to reduced yields and increased production costs, making it difficult for Philippine bananas to compete on price and quality with those from other countries,” Natividad-Caballero said.

The DA is providing credit assistance for farm rehabilitation and establishment of new farms to expand banana production, Natividad-Caballero said.

She added that the DA is targeting to meet the industry’s requirement of at least P450,000 per hectare of credit assistance.

The official said the agency is also encouraging more farms to engage in research innovation to enhance banana crop nutrition and integrated pest management.

The DA is also enhancing its support of small-scale banana farmers by providing them with biological controls to prevent infestation and assistance to help them secure Philippine Good Agricultural Practices certifications.

The DA said it would continue to increase its budget allocation for the high-value crops program where bananas are covered.

The higher funding would be used to bankroll tissue culture centers that would produce quality banana planting materials.

The DA also stands ready to allow Fusarium wilt-affected farmers to diversify to other crops such as Hass avocados and durian to provide livelihood and promote sustainability and economic resilience.

The government will also strengthen its efforts in pushing for beneficial free trade agreements that will slash tariffs levied by trading partners on the country’s banana exports, effectively leveling the playing field against foreign suppliers.

“The export status of Philippine bananas in key markets such as Japan, South Korea, and China highlights both opportunities and challenges for the industry, especially in light of increasing competition from neighboring Asian countries,” Natividad-Caballero said.

Experts have identified that some of the reasons behind the dwindling banana industry include increased foreign competition from neighboring countries, production challenges, quality concerns and tariff disadvantages.

International Trade Centre (ITC) data showed that the country has lost nearly 11 percentage points of market share in South Korea from January to August.

The Philippines also lost almost 13 percentage points of market share in China from January to July versus the same period last year.

With the latest figures, the country’s share in South Korea’s banana market is now down to 60 percent, while in China it currently accounts for 24.5 percent.

The Philippines lost its six-year status as the second biggest exporter of bananas despite reversing its sagging trend in shipments in 2023 after being overtaken by Guatemala, according to the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization.

The Philippines saw its banana exports recover last year to 2.35 million metric tons, up by 3.5 percent from 2.27 million MT in 2022.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/11/14/2399902/da-elevates-programs-boost-banana-output-recover-market-share>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Marcos OKs program to boost agriculture with local machinery

By: [Luisa Cabato](#) - Reporter / [@luisacabatoINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 04:32 PM November 13, 2024

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has approved a program to boost the country's agriculture sector through locally-produced machinery. It was approved during a sectoral meeting with Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. and Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. on Wednesday, the Presidential Communications Office said in a statement.

The DOST's Local Manufacturing Capabilities to Support Agri-Mechanization program will lead the government's shift from importation to local production of machines used in the agriculture sector.

Solidum said it will benefit the sector and strengthen the manufacturing industry.

“Mechanization is a key driver for improving efficiency and reducing cost in farming. The DA (Department of Agriculture) recognizes the need for mechanization. It has been providing farm implements to farmers and cooperatives, particularly through the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund,” Solidum said in the meeting, as quoted in the statement.

“With our limited resources and capabilities, we need to strengthen the agri-machineries sector. Supporting homegrown agri-machinery can lead to more efficient farming practices, increase productivity, and, of course, have more employment for our people,” he also said.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2004483/marcos-oks-program-to-boost-agriculture-with-local-machinery>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

PH rice imports hit record high

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 02:36 AM November 14, 2024

Philippine rice imports are inching closer to the 4-million metric ton (MT) mark, already surpassing a previous record achieved in 2022, as a confluence of typhoons and El Niño dry spell phenomenon slashed local production.

This year through Nov. 7, the country imported 3.896 million MT of rice, with nearly 80 percent coming from Vietnam, according to the Bureau of Plant Industry.

It already breached the record-high import volume of 3.83 million MT in 2022 and surpassed last year's figure of 3.6 million MT.

Likewise, the latest figure was just about a million metric ton away from the US Department of Agriculture's rice import projection of 5 million MT this year, but moving closer to the 4.2-million-MT overseas purchase requirement estimated by the Department of Agriculture (DA).

In October alone, traders bought 533,298.49 MT of rice from various overseas sources, surging by more than twofold from the 163,217.40 MT in the same period last year.

Vietnam delivered 3.04 million MT of rice, representing 78.1 percent of total, while Thailand shipped 497,465.78 MT.

Pakistan and Myanmar, meanwhile, provided 178,179.48 MT and 143,364.75 MT of rice, respectively. India, which had resumed rice exports recently, exported 22,108.08 MT.

Late surge

After a slowdown in overseas purchases early this year due to uncertainties over rice tariffs, the volume has risen between July and October.

The DA previously explained that traders were in a wait-and-see mode as they awaited the Supreme Court's decision on a petition to halt the imposition of reduced import duties on different food items.

However, the high court has not stopped the implementation of Executive Order (EO) 62, which lowered the tariff rates on some agricultural imports such as rice.

However, it asked the government, through the Office of the Solicitor General, to comment on the petition filed by several agricultural groups to nullify the EO.

The DA said last month that the adverse weather conditions had weighed down the production of palay, which accounts for more than half of the value of agriculture output.

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, palay output totaled 3.33 million MT in the July to September period, down by 12.3 percent from 3.8 million MT a year ago.

“The July to September 2024 palay production was the lowest production recorded for the quarter since 2019,” its report noted.

Break

Meanwhile, Pakistan expressed its willingness to export some of its surplus rice to the Philippines.

“We want to increase that share, provided we can also provide the stable good supply of rice and that depends on mutual concessions for each other, which means that the Philippines should guarantee us that they want this much rice every year,” Pakistani Ambassador to the Philippines Imtiaz Kazi said.

He said Pakistan currently accounted for about 6 percent of Philippine rice imports. He added that traders from Pakistan were seeking “stability and certainty” on the quantity of its exports, as well as the import duties, noting the fluctuating tariffs levied by the government and competitive global prices.

“Once it is done, we have the option to convert our sugarcane and cotton fields back to rice,” he told reporters.

<https://business.inquirer.net/489860/ph-rice-imports-hit-record-high>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

PH secures \$24.9-M grant to bolster pandemic response

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 10:17 AM November 13, 2024



INQUIRER FILES

The Philippines has received a \$24.9-million grant from the World Bank (WB) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to help the country fight off animal and human health threats.

The Philippines is one of 50 countries chosen to benefit from the two institutions' Pandemic Fund Grant worth \$547 million, intended for strengthening disease surveillance and upgrading laboratories, among others.

The Philippines' grant for the Resilient Philippines project forms part of the second funding round by the WB and FAO to beef up pandemic prevention, preparedness and response of many recipients worldwide.

The project calls for implementing the One Health approach, recognizing the interconnectedness of human, animal and environmental health.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Department of Agriculture said the grant would help the Philippines invest in early warning systems, laboratory infrastructure and the development of a skilled health workforce.

“This grant will not only enhance our pandemic preparedness but will also strengthen the nation’s agricultural sector, which is vulnerable during outbreaks,” Agriculture Assistant Secretary Constante Palabrica said.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the grant was a “game-changer” for the Philippines.

“It will not only reinforce our capacity to respond to future pandemics but also ensure the continuity of essential sectors, such as agriculture,” Tiu Laurel said.

“By investing in disease surveillance and health infrastructure, we safeguard food security, protect our farmers and secure the well-being of the entire Filipino community,” he added.

The FAO said last month said it was “timely” for the Philippines to secure the grant as it topped the World Risk Index for the third consecutive year.

“The rapid decline in biodiversity—driven by deforestation, ecosystem destruction and habitat loss—has triggered the emergence and re-emergence of transboundary animal diseases and zoonoses, or diseases transmitted between species, such as from animal to human,” FAO country representative Lionel Henri Valentin Dabbadie said.

The G20 launched the Pandemic Fund in 2022 as a direct response to the global vulnerabilities caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

It finances vital investments to beef up the pandemic preparedness and resilience of most at-risk countries. **INQ**

<https://business.inquirer.net/489771/ph-secures-24-9-m-grant-to-bolster-pandemic-response>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Pakistan seeks PHL guarantee to buy specific volumes of rice

November 13, 2024 | 9:01 pm



REUTERS

PAKISTAN is seeking to increase its exports of rice to the Philippines if the latter commits to take up a guaranteed volume, its ambassador to Manila said.

“We are the third-largest exporter of rice to Philippines next to Vietnam and Thailand...Our own share is less than 6%. We want to increase that share,” Ambassador Imtiaz Ahmad Kazi told reporters on the sidelines of a rice conference.

According to the Bureau of Plant Industry, Pakistan supplied 178,179 metric tons (MT) of rice to the Philippines as of Nov. 7. This is around 5.2% of the 3.9 million MT (MMT) in imports to date.

“That depends on a number of conditions... the Philippines should guarantee us that they want (a specific volume) of rice every year,” he said.

Mr. Kazi said the government of Pakistan has proposed a memorandum of understanding stipulating the volume of rice the Philippines proposes to buy.

“Our exporters are ready to convert their fields into rice fields... Based on your demand... We are ready to do it,” he added.

He said that the Philippines needs to impose a stable tariff regime on imported rice, noting that duties “have been fluctuating.”

“We don’t know what is going to come next because globally, prices are going to be competitive again, so our rice exporters want to have stability and certainty about the quantity,” he added.

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. EO 62 was meant to tame rice prices and plug gaps in domestic rice production.

Mr. Kazi said Pakistan exports about two-thirds of its 11 MMT rice surplus.

“We are increasing our productivity, and we are exporting most of it, two-thirds of it... We have other markets also, but Philippines is one of the important ones,” he added.

The Philippines is projected to remain the top rice importer in the world, according to the US Department of Agriculture. It is expected to import about 5.1 MMT of rice next year. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/11/13/634807/pakistan-seeks-phl-guarantee-to-buy-specific-volumes-of-rice/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Sugar growers call for probe of millers claiming low cane yields

November 13, 2024 | 8:57 pm



VICTORIAS MILLING COMPANY, INC. FACEBOOK PAGE

THE United Sugar Producers Federation of the Philippines (UNIFED) said on Wednesday that the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) needs to inspect sugar milling equipment after claims emerged that cane processed by the mills is yielding reduced sugar.

UNIFED President Manuel R. Lamata said mills have reported low sugar extraction from the crop, which he described as “strange.”

“We have had truckloads of cane which reportedly have zero LKGTC (50-kg bag raw sugar per ton of cane) as extracted by the mills, which makes us suspect that something strange is going on,” Mr. Lamata added.

The SRA had ordered the creation of teams to conduct random inspections to sample for the sucrose content of cane.

Sugar farmers have been claiming low to no LKGTC readings for their cane since the start of the milling season.

The higher-than-average dry conditions brought by El Niño has been blamed for a likely reduction of sugar output this year.

The SRA has estimated that sugar production during the 2024 to 2025 season will fall 7.2% to 1.78 million metric tons (MMT).

The regulator added that the prolonged dry spells has produced cane that is “physiologically immature,” resulting in a 16% reduction in sugar content per MT of cane.

According to UNIFED, sugarcane extraction of 1.44 LKGTC during the start of the current milling season, against an average of 1.7 LKGTC.

He said that the SRA should ensure milling equipment is calibrated to ensure that sugar growers are not shortchanged.

“Sugar groups were allowed before to have their own chemists in the mills to check the veracity of mills’ extractions, but this practice has been discontinued,” Mr. Lamata added. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/11/13/634804/sugar-growers-call-for-probe-of-millers-claiming-low-cane-yields/>

MANILA STANDARD:

DA chief announces price cut under Rice-for-All program



By Othel V. Campos

November 13, 2024, 10:55 pm

AGRICULTURE Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has announced a likely price reduction for rice sold under the Rice-for-All program.

Under the program, the price of the cereal is expected to drop by P1 per kilogram (kg) from P43 to P42 per kilo, in line with the recent tariff cut and global price trends.

“This price reduction for the Rice-for-All program is a result of the combined impact of lower tariffs and global rice prices. However, the depreciation of the peso to P58 per US dollar, from P48 at the beginning of the year, has partially offset these benefits,” Tiu-Laurel said.

He indicated that the price for the Rice-for-All program may decrease further in the future, depending on ongoing global price trends and exchange rate fluctuations.

The reduced price applies to the Rice-for-All program, which is available to all consumers without limitations.

A separate program offers P29 per kilo rice exclusively to vulnerable sectors such as senior citizens, persons with disabilities, solo parents, and indigents.

The P29 program allows individuals to purchase a maximum of 10 kilos per month.

President Marcos' decision to reduce the tariff on imported rice from 35 percent to 15 percent effective July was meant to lower the overall cost of rice, a staple food for Filipinos.

Rice is a significant portion of the average Filipino's food budget. Approximately P10 out of every P100 spent goes to rice. For the bottom 30 percent of income households, which includes farmers and fisherfolk, this figure rises to around P20 out of every P100.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314523092/da-chief-announces-price-cut-under-rice-for-all-program.html>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Agusan coop expand coffee production

By Conrad M. Cariño
November 14, 2024

THE Casiklan Wheels Farmers Association Inc. (Cawfai), a group of robusta coffee farmers in Las Nieves, Agusan del Norte, has made it big in coffee production and marketing.

Founded in 1998 as a cooperative, Cawfai made it big in coffee with the support of the Department of Agriculture (DA) through the Philippine Rural Development Program (PRDP). The cooperative has 736 members including from the Manobo and Higaonon Indigenous groups.

"We started as a bayanihan (cooperation) group, hoping to improve our farming practices and gain support from the government to elevate robusta coffee farming," Cawfai Chairman Felomino Ancog said in an interview.



The Casiklan Wheels Farmers Association Inc. (Cawfai) has adopted sustainable practices to produce quality coffee beans. CAWFAI PHOTO

It was in 1999 that Cawfai received its first financial boost of P20,000 from Leovigildo Banaag, former Agusan del Norte first district representative, allowing the group to acquire a 1-hectare coffee farm.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources also supported Cawfai's establishment of its coffee nursery under the National Greening Program.

However, coffee farmers in Casiklan and nearby villages still struggled with low buying prices from local traders, at times earning as little as P80 per kilo.

Cawfai then realized that they needed to shift from producing only raw coffee beans to processing and selling their own products.

"We understood that relying on traders would keep us from reaching our potential," Ancog said. "Expanding into value-added processing and marketing became our goal."

In collaboration with the provincial and municipal agricultural offices, Cawfai submitted a proposal for green coffee bean production and marketing under the DA-PRDP's Investments for Rural Enterprises and Agricultural and Fisheries Productivity program.

The proposal aimed to boost the farmers' income by at least 5 percent while enhancing product quality and distribution. And in 2021, the proposal secured P19.8 million in funding from the DA-PRDP.

The World Bank extended an P8.4-million loan and the Philippine government P2.8 million to the cooperative. And with support from the provincial government and the Las Nieves local government, Cawfai was able to acquire processing equipment and build a coffee processing center that was completed in July 2022.

Cawfai now manages over 400 hectares of coffee farms across seven villages, harvesting around 6 tons of beans twice a month.

Since scaling up operations in mid-2022, Cawfai is now able to purchase green coffee beans from members at P240 to P245 per kilo, significantly increasing farmers' income.

The cooperative now supplies markets as far as Mindanao and Metro Manila, producing 1 to 2 tons of coffee beans every week. Cawfai's roasted coffee products are also gaining a following, with weekly sales averaging over 100 packs.

"These exposures have been invaluable in connecting us with buyers nationwide," Cawfai manager Anthony Buntag said.

DA Region 13 (Caraga) Executive Director Arlan Mangelen assured Cawfai of continued support through skill-building and product enhancement initiatives.

"The PRDP will sustain monitoring and help Cawfai create more market linkages," Mangelen said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/11/14/business/agribusiness/agusan-coop-expand-coffee-production/2003576>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Abaca farmers get assistance

By Conrad M. Cariño

November 14, 2024

THE Department of Labor and Employment (DoLE) has provided assistance to abaca farmers in Catanduanes under its Integrated Livelihood Program, in partnership with the Philippine Fiber Development Authority (PhilFIDA) and the provincial government.

Catanduanes Gov. Joseph Cua said that delivered to abaca farmers were six portable spindle machines designed to strip abaca faster are essential for efficient fiber processing to address production gaps and improve farmers' income. The six portable spindle machines are worth P4.4 million.

Farmer Maria Theresa Molod, a resident of Barangay Santo Niño in the capital town of Virac, said the assistance will enable the Sto. Niño Farmers Association, where she is a member, to elevate abaca processing.



Photo shows one of the six portable spindle machines provided to abaca farmers in Catanduanes. PIA PHOTO

"This will be a great help to our abaca farmers because it will speed up the processing and improve the quality of the abaca fiber that we produce. With this, our abaca products will command good prices," she said in the vernacular.

Araceli Tesorero of Genetligan Abaca Farmers Association shared Molod's sentiment, saying the initiative would advance abaca fiber production practices and improve the quality and marketability of their abaca fiber.

"I thank the Department of Labor and Employment and the provincial government for the initiative to enhance the quality of our product using these modern machines," she said in the vernacular.

During the turnover of the stripping machines, Cua assured abaca farmers that additional funding will be allocated for abaca production and pest control, encouraging the island's 13,000 abaca farmers to increase their output.

Gerry Rubio, head of the Provincial Public Employment Office, had announced that the provincial government has provided a project counterpart funding of P1 million. In addition, the PhilFIDA will conduct training for cooperative members on the operation of the machines this month.

Abaca farmers' cooperatives in the following localities that have received the stripping machines include: Sto. Niño in Virac with 48 beneficiaries; Genitligan in Baras with 30 beneficiaries; Tubli in Caramoran with 33 members; San Miguel with 55 members; Salvacion in Bagamanoc with 75 members; and Salvacion (Tariwara) in Pandan with 87 members.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/11/14/business/agribusiness/abaca-farmers-get-assistance/2003647>

THE MANILA TIMES:

IRRI, Corra gather agri leaders for rice research

By Leander C. Domingo

November 14, 2024

TO advance rice research and innovation, the Council for Partnership on Rice Research in Asia (Corra) in its recently held 28th annual meeting gathered recently agricultural leaders from across the Asia in Seoul, South Korea.

Representatives from the International Rice Research Institute from 17 member countries convened the meeting on Oct. 28-31 "to align research strategies and highlight new innovations in sustainable production, low-carbon emissions and value addition for rice markets."

"Corra was established to strengthen partnerships between members and the institute, and to provide a platform for sharing research and development efforts that will shape the future of rice cultivation across Asia," IRRI said.

Hosted by South Korea's Rural Development Administration, the two-day event emphasized discussions on rice sector challenges, innovative solutions and regional policies designed to boost food security and climate resilience.

During the meeting, the discussion included strategies for low-carbon rice production, innovations in rice value addition and standardizing rice for global markets.

Sustainability was at the forefront of the discussion and presenters shared innovative approaches for mitigating emissions, including direct seeding, biochar application and other practical methodologies.

In his presentation, IRRI scientist Van Hung Nguyen said that incentives for carbon reductions vary from country to country, affecting the adoption of low-emission practices, while Ando Radanielson pointed out that "emissions stem more from field practices than the rice plant itself."

Also presenting their low-carbon initiatives were representatives from Bangladesh, Cambodia and Malaysia. Cambodia particularly emphasized biochar's benefits for organic soil quality.

From South Korea's Crop Breeding Division, Jung-Pil Suh introduced a flour-like rice variety called the "Suweon542."

"Suweon542 was developed to support the country's processing industry," Suh said adding that as direct rice consumption declines in South Korea, the floury rice aligns with shifting dietary patterns and the growing demand for processed rice items.

Representing CJ Cheiljedang, a South Korean food company, Yejin Oh insights on the company's popular Hetbahn line that uses aseptic technology to prevent bacterial contamination in room-temperature storage.

Highlighting the different ways to meet the market's needs and preferences, Oh also discussed innovations of low-calorie and low-protein rice products.

Indonesia and Pakistan representatives also discussed how breeding and processing technologies could respond to global demands for texture and quality.

Underscoring the need for global rice quality standards, IRRI scientist Mary Claire Custodio presented a case study from Bangladesh.

Custodio highlighted gaps in the value chain and advocated for better alignment between rice production and consumer preferences, and showed how universal processes for grading,

monitoring and traceability can help ensure quality along the rice value chain.

DNA testing as a potential method for quality control was also explored by Corra members "to help meet consumer preferences and prevent variety mixing in the global market."

The members also discussed the critical need for suitable rice varieties for dry milling, offering benefits such as lower production costs and improved product quality.

Underscoring the significant contributions of Corra and its members to advancing rice research across Asia, IRRI Director General Yvonne Pinto also said that the region "faces increasing challenges such as climate change, pest and disease threats, and evolving socioeconomic conditions, all of which demand a united response."

In her video message, Pinto also mentioned a new regional strategy of IRRI that "prioritizes identifying country-specific needs, integrating tailored rice technologies and strengthening value chains to ensure research benefits reach those in need."

Finally, she underscored Corra's evolving role in influencing policy, facilitating knowledge exchange and coordinating research initiatives.

During the meeting, IRRI said the approval of the Corra Declaration affirmed members' dedication to shared goals, such as germplasm exchange and continuous innovation in low-glycemic rice varieties.

Meanwhile, Uzbekistan proposed to host the 29th Annual Meeting in 2025. The country is the newest member of Corra and the first from Central Asia.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/11/14/business/agribusiness/irri-corra-gather-agri-leaders-for-rice-research/2003573>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Rice Relief

BusinessMirror
November 13, 2024



Rice deliveries in Divisoria, Manila, mark a step forward in the Department of Agriculture's ongoing efforts to provide accessible and affordable rice.

After recent consultations with rice retailers across Metro Manila, the DA has made rice available at lower prices, ranging from P42 to P45 per kilo, in Murphy Public Market, Mega Q-Mart, and Kamuning Public Market.

This initiative aims to ease consumers' financial burdens and ensure that staple grains remain within reach of more households in the Metro.

Image credits: [Nonie Reyes](#)

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/13/rice-relief/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Group to SRA: Hasten inspection of sugar mills

Ada Pelonia
November 13, 2024



The United Sugar Producers Federation of the Philippines (Unifed) is urging the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) to fast-track the inspection of mills after the group's members reported lower sugar yield.

Unifed President Manuel Lamata said he "questions the integrity of mills" due to the "doubtful results" related to the sugar yield of a 50-kilo bag per ton of cane (LKGTC) from the group's members.

"We have had truckloads of canes which reportedly have zero LKGTC as extracted by the mills which makes us suspect that something strange is going on," he said in a statement.

In the past, he said sugar groups were allowed to send their chemists to the mills to check the accuracy of their extractions. This practice, Lamata said, has been discontinued.

While the long drought would have a negative effect on LKGTC, Lamata said “the results so far have been suspect and we urge the SRA to ensure that mill equipment are calibrated so as not to shortchange our sugar farmers.”

Unifed said SRA Administrator Pablo Luis Azcona ordered the creation of inspection teams last November 4 to conduct “random inspections focusing on analyzing samples’ sucrose content, Brix and apparent purity” after receiving complaints from farmers of very low to zero LKGTC results since they started milling last month.

According to Unifed, the average sugar yield in the past stood at 1.7 LKGTC but this has gone down to 1.44 LKGTC since the start of the milling season.

The low sugar content of canes was cited by the DA as one of the reasons for its decision to delay the Philippines’s importation of sugar until May 2025. (*See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/11/phl-delays-sugar-imports-till-may-da-rules-out-need/>*)

Azcona said the current harvest season started slowly, with total cane volume reaching only a third of the amount harvested around the same period in the last crop year due to lower sugar content per MT of cane because of El Niño.

“Farmers had to delay their harvests to allow the cane to mature further and increase sugar content.”

According to the DA, the prolonged dry spells brought by El Niño resulted in the cane being physiologically immature. This caused the sugar content of a ton of cane to decline by 16 percent and constrained output despite the expansion in harvest areas.

Citing SRA data, the agency said the area planted for sugar cane this year rose slightly to 389,461 hectares from 388,378 hectares the previous crop year.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/13/group-to-sra-hasten-inspection-of-sugar-mills/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Marcos greenlights DOST farm mechanization program

Reine Juvierre S. Alberto
November 13, 2024



The Rice Combine Harvester is a four-in-one machine that combines reaping, threshing, cleaning, and bagging operations. The technology was developed to help farmers raise their competitiveness and enhance the rice productivity of the country.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. approved on Wednesday the Department of Science and Technology's (DOST) program which will prioritize the distribution of farm machines produced in the Philippines.

The Presidential Communications Office (PCO) said in a statement that Marcos convened with Science and Technology Secretary Renato U. Solidum Jr. in a sectoral meeting in Malacañan Palace last November 13.

Solidum sought approval for DOST's program dubbed "Local Manufacturing Capabilities to Support Agri-Mechanization." The president expressed confidence that the Department of Agriculture (DA) will support it.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has given his backing to the DOST program. He said, however, that there is a need to identify the machines that will be prioritized and to ensure that these will meet quality standards.

"For one thing, it's (locally-produced machineries) cheaper. For sure, it's always cheaper than the imported. We get to that point where it is always cheaper than the imported. We now have to scale it," Marcos Jr. said during the meeting.

"Some of these things I see it already, *'yung pinamimigay natin*. [The ones we distribute.] *'Yung mga iba* [The others]—especially the towed machines that we use for harvesting, for tilling, *nakikita na natin ang iba* [we can see the others already]."

For his part, Solidum said shifting to local production of machines from importation would benefit the farm sector and strengthen the manufacturing sector.

The Science chief noted the significant role of the agriculture sector in the country's economy and its direct impact on food security and livelihood.

"Mechanization is a key driver for improving efficiency and reducing cost in farming. The DA recognizes the need for mechanization. It has been providing farm implements to farmers and cooperatives, particularly through the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund," Solidum said.

"With our limited resources and capabilities, we need to strengthen the agri-machineries sector. Supporting homegrown agri-machinery can lead to more efficient farming practices, increase productivity and, of course, have more employment for our people."

Marcos directed the DOST, DA and other research institutes to ensure the research and development aspects of the mechanization drive and its smooth implementation.

Image credits: [Philippine Rice Research Institute](#)

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/13/marcos-greenlights-dost-farm-mechanization-program/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Pakistan targeting to export more rice to PHL—envoy

Ada Pelonia
November 13, 2024

Islamabad is pushing a deal that will allow Pakistan, one of the world's largest rice exporters, to increase its shipments of the staple to the Philippines.

Pakistani Ambassador to the Philippines Imtiaz Ahmad Kazi noted that Pakistan is the third largest exporter of rice to the country after Vietnam and Thailand.

Kazi said, however, that Pakistan accounts for only less than 6 percent of the Philippines's total imports. He said his country is capable of exporting as much as 1 million metric tons (MMT) of rice to the Philippines.

“We want to increase that share, provided we can also provide the stable, good supply of rice. And that depends on mutual conditions for each other, which means that the Philippines should guarantee us that they want this much rice every year.”

Kazi said Pakistan's Ministry of Commerce had floated the proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Manila last year, which would guarantee the volume of rice that would enter the Philippines.

The Pakistani envoy also expressed concern over the Philippines's rice tariff regime. He noted the changes in the country's rice tariff, which has been slashed to 15 percent.

“Our exporter wants to have stability and certainty about the quantity as well as tariff. Once it is done, we have the options to convert our sugarcane and cotton fields back to rice, just especially for Philippines.”

Kazi said Pakistan would have a bumper rice crop of 11 MMT by yearend of which two-thirds will be exported.

“We have other markets also, but the Philippines is one of the important markets. So if there is any chance, we would love to have more of our rice coming in.”

Data from the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) showed that imported rice arrivals have reached 3.89 MMT as of November 7.

Of the volume that arrived in the Philippines, BPI data showed that over 3 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 497,465.78 MT.

This was followed by Pakistan with 178,179.48 MT, which surpassed its total shipments of 99,280.71 MT to the Philippines last year.

The Philippines’s rice imports this year could reach 5 million metric tons (MMT), according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The report noted a surge in shipments from Vietnam as the country grappled with the impact of El Niño and storms.

According to the international agency, the Philippines is importing record amounts due to a combination of population growth and reduced import tariffs.

“Thus far in 2024, the Philippines relied on Vietnam for more than 80 percent of imports,” the USDA added.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/13/pakistan-targeting-to-export-more-rice-to-phl-envoy/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

DA evaluates rules on transporting chicken, hogs

Ada Pelonia
November 13, 2024

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is reviewing existing rules on the transport of chicken and hogs to ease supply challenges and prevent the spike of prices this holiday season.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the review of existing regulations would be carried out in consultation with industry groups, particularly the Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. (PCAFI).

“This extensive review of regulations, including DA Administrative Order (AO) No. 5, Series of 2019, aims to ease supply bottlenecks for chicken and pork without compromising food safety. It will also help manage expected demand spikes during the holiday season,” Laurel said in a statement.

AO 5 set, guidelines for the local transport of animals, animal products, and byproducts to protect public health and combat animal health threats. The regulations impose strict timelines for obtaining transport permits and set special requirements for specific animals and products.

The Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) is also reviewing DA Administrative Circular (AC) 2, Series of 2022, which modified the National Zoning and Movement Plan to control African Swine Fever (ASF). The deadly hog disease has devastated the swine industry since its outbreak in 2019.

The DA said it is collaborating with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to make ASF vaccines commercially available in the country. The agency earlier started the government-controlled vaccination of pigs to curb the spike in ASF cases.

“We aim to streamline these processes and update safety measures to ensure stable supply and reasonable prices for pork, poultry, and other products, while safeguarding both public health and the livestock industry,” Laurel said.

The DA said the review is part of its 10-point agenda to strike a balance between development and regulation.

It added that it is considering a multi-billion-peso investment to improve quarantine facilities, enhance monitoring and inspection capabilities, and establish regional laboratories.

The agency noted that the retail prices of chicken in Metro Manila markets stood at P140 to P220 per kilo while pork kasim and pork liempo ranged from P270 to P360 per kilo and P310 to P400 per kilo, respectively.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/13/da-evaluates-rules-on-transporting-chicken-hogs/>

REMATE:

9 solar irrigation project sa Cagayan sinalanta ng magkasunod na bagyo

November 13, 2024 17:54



CLAVERIA, Cagayan – Hindi pinaglapas ng magkakasunod na bagyo Marce at Nika ang mga proyekto ng National Irrigation Administration o NIA Cagayan ang siyam (9) na Solar Pump Irrigation Project sa ibat-ibang bayan dito sa nasabing probinsya.

Sa nakuhang datos mula kay Division Manager Engr. Geffrey Catulin ng NIA Cagayan Batanes Irrigation Management Office o IMO ay 9 na solar pump irrigation project ang nasira mga solar pump irrigation project na ginagamit na supply na tubig ng mga Bagong Bayaning Magsasaka o BBM.



Ang siyam na SPIP ay mula sa Dagueray sa Sancez Mira, Allasitan sa Pamplona, Sto. Tomas, Patta, Dibalió Centro VII, Alimoan, San Vicente at Taggat Sur naman sa Claveria ang mga nasabing proyekto.

Sa ngayon ay inaalam pa ang kabuan halaga ng mga milyu-milyon proyekto ng NIA Cagayan Batanes IMO.

Ang mga nasabing proyekto ay gamit ng mga magsasaka para sa pagpapatubig lalo sa panahon ng tag-tuyot o el-nino na libreng ibinabahagi ng ng nasabing ahensya. *Rey Velasco*

<https://remate.ph/9-solar-irrigation-project-sa-cagayan-sinalanta-ng-magkasunod-na-bagyo/>

REMATE:

P1.06B pondo inilaan ng DA sa pag-unlad ng seaweed industry

November 13, 2024 17:31



MANILA, Philippines – UPANG palakawakin ang sektor ng aquaculture naglaan ang Department of Agriculture ng P1.06 Bilyon sa pamamagitan ng Enhanced Philippine Seaweed Development Program, na binabanggit na ang seaweed ay isa sa mga pangunahing agricultural export ng bansa.

Nakikita ng BFAR ang isang malaking potensyal na paglago para sa pagsasaka ng damong-dagat, na tumutukoy sa karagdagang 64,000 ektarya ng potensyal na lugar para sa pagpapalawak na maaaring magpataas ng taunang output ng humigit-kumulang 50 porsyento.

“Ito ay kumakatawan sa isang mababang-hanging prutas na maaaring lumikha ng libu-libong mga trabaho at makabuluhang mapalakas ang

kita ng foreign exchange ng bansa,” sinabi ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. sa isang pahayag noong Lunes.

Kaugnay nito sinabi ni BFAR officer-in-charge Isidro Velayo Jr., kalahati ng budget ay gagamitin sa pamamahagi ng mga kagamitan sa pagsasaka ng seaweed, pagtatayo ng 109 na bagong nursery at pagpapanatili ng 24 na existing seaweed culture areas.

Kasama rin sa pipeline ang pagtatayo ng walong warehouses, 34 mechanical dryers at 80 seaweed food cart sa buong bansa.

Ang BFAR ay naglaan ng isa pang P10 milyon para makabili ng dalawang bioreactors na ginagamit sa aquaculture sa paggamot ng wastewater at pagpapanatili ng kalidad ng tubig. Ang mga ito ay inaasahang makakapagdulot ng 4,100 metric tons ng propagul, o seaweed planting materials, sa susunod na taon. (*Santi Celario*)

<https://remate.ph/p1-06b-pondo-inilaan-ng-da-sa-pag-unlad-ng-seaweed-industry/>

REMATE:

Binatilyo kritikal sa bird flu sa tao sa Canada

November 13, 2024 11:15



TORONTO — Nasa kritikal na kondisyon ang isang binatilyo sa isang ospital sa British Columbia bunsod ng unang kaso ng pinaghihinalaang avian influenza sa tao sa Canada.

“This was a healthy teenager prior to this, so no underlying conditions,” ayon kay provincial health officer Bonnie Henry sa isang press conference.

Sinabi ng mga opisyal ng kalusugan ng British Columbia noong Sabado na nakita ng probinsiya ang unang kaso ng H5 bird flu sa Canada sa isang tinedyer.

Sinabi ni Henry na tinutukoy pa rin ng lalawigan ang eksaktong strain, ngunit ipinapalagay na ang kaso ay H5N1.

Ayon sa World Health Organization na mababa ang panganib ng H5N1 sa mga tao dahil walang ebidensya ng hawaan sa tao, ngunit ang virus ay natagpuan sa dumaraming bilang ng mga hayop kabilang ang mga baka sa Estados Unidos.

Hindi ibinunyag ni Henry ang kasarian o edad ng tinedyer ngunit sinabing una silang nagkaroon ng mga sintomas noong Nob. 2 at nasuri noong Nob. 8, nang sila ay na-admit sa ospital. Kasama sa mga sintomas ang conjunctivitis, lagnat at pag-ubo.

Ang tinedyer ay walang pagkakalantad sa bukid ngunit nalantad sa mga aso, pusa at reptilya, sabi ni Henry. Walang natukoy na pinagmulan ng impeksiyon. **RNT**

<https://remate.ph/binatilyo-kritikal-sa-bird-flu-sa-tao-sa-canada/>

