

CLIPPINGS FOR TODAY NOVEMBER 21, 2024

A. MANILA BULLETIN:

Tap agri graduates to boost seed production—PBBM

Gov't shifts focus to rehabilitation as 'Pepito' death toll climbs to 9

B. THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

'Rice tariff may revert to 35% if peso strengthens vs dollar'

BAI officials suspended over 66 goats with Q fever

'No storm next week'

Is P42 per kilo of rice a fair price for farmers, consumers?

C. PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Typhoon-hit farmers demand compensation

SRA denies claims of sugar surplus in PH

Typhoon-hit Aurora under calamity state

D. BUSINESS WORLD:

Lowering rice tariffs called a temporary inflation fix

Inspection sites set up around NCR to contain animal disease

E. REMATE:

Shellfish ban itinaas sa 11 lugar sa E. Visayas

Suplay ng gulay sa VisMin kukunin ng DA pampahupa ng presyo sa Luzon

F. ABANTE:

Dagdag na importasyon ng gulay, isda tinabla

G. MANILA STANDARD:

Rising prices

H. THE MANILA TIMES:

Ensuring sustainable water for all

Machine distribution nears 30k target

La Union steps up food innovation

WAF, FAO to hold consultation meeting

Searca chief underscores rice supply chain sustainability

Kanlaon's agri damage in La Castellana P194M

I. BUSINESS MIRROR:

'Before importing veggies, fish, check disconnect in farmgate, retail prices'

Rice import arrivals surpass 2023 shipments

Groups, government at loggerheads over sugar supply situation

Bill creating fisheries department hurdles House panels

J. ABANTE TONITE:

Ilang lugar sa Eastern Visayas, may red tide

Bell pepper P450 per kilo, iba pang gulay sumirit presyo

MANILA BULLETIN:

Tap agri graduates to boost seed production— PBBM

BY [ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS](#)

Nov 21, 2024 06:38 AM

AT A GLANCE

- Marcos called on concerned government agencies to seek the help of SUCs in directing students toward seed production, saying that SUCs should focus on research and development instead of growing seeds.

President Marcos is looking into tapping State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) graduates to bolster local production of agricultural seeds, eventually improving agricultural productivity in the country.



President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. (Malacañang photo)

Marcos said this during the eighth meeting with the Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC) – Agriculture Sector in Malacañan on Wednesday, Nov. 20.

In his remarks, the President said that farmers can focus on growing the seedlings with the graduates of agricultural SUCs attending to seed production.

"The farmers can take care of the actual growing of seedlings. These new agronomists, agriculturists, can be [the] ones doing seed production," he said.

Marcos called on concerned government agencies to seek the help of SUCs in directing students toward seed production, saying that SUCs should focus on research and development instead of growing seeds.

"Let's not lead the growing anymore to the SUCs. They shouldn't be in crop production. They should be in research and development. I think that's the way that we can structure it," he added.

President Marcos made the remarks after PSAC member Aileen Uygongco-Ongkauko of the La Filipina Uy Gongco Group presented their recommendation for the government to enhance local seed production across all crops to strengthen the country's food security.

The Chief Executive said SUCs possess the technical expertise for seed production. He emphasized the need to scale up agricultural schools to transition seed production from the laboratory to commercial levels, ensuring its availability in the market.

"If we help them along, they'll do it. Kikita pa yung university (The university will earn)," he said, noting that the government can help SUCs through contract farming, assuring a ready market for their produce.

Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Chairperson Prospero de Vera said approximately 70 SUCs offer agriculture programs. Of the figure, 15 have facilities for coconut production, while others have unused lands that can be repurposed for seedling production through agreements with the Department of Agriculture (DA).

"They have existing facilities already and many of them have unused lots. Meaning, they're not using it which can be the one to [be] used for seedlings," he said.

"The only thing we need is a usufruct agreement between DA and the SUC for the use of the land for 25 years or enter into an agreement with private companies to do it," he added.

In her presentation, Uygongco-Ongkauko highlighted the government's success in increasing the use of hybrid seeds in rice production. The hybrid rice hectarage in the Philippines grew significantly from 17 percent to 32 percent, aligning with efforts to achieve higher yields.

"In a way, we can see that the government is successful in the push towards higher yield. But on the other side, all of it is imported, the rice seeds," she said.

In response, President Marcos stressed the importance of studying a timeline for reducing reliance on imported hybrid seeds, making local seed production through SUCs more viable.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/11/21/agri-graduates-boost-seed-production>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Gov't shifts focus to rehabilitation as 'Pepito' death toll climbs to 9

BY [MARTIN SADONGDONG](#)

Nov 20, 2024 01:05 PM



Aftermath of Super Typhoon "Pepito" in Barangay Cabugao, Bato, Catanduanes (Photo courtesy of Cabugao Bato LGU)

The national government is working double time to rehabilitate areas that were devastated by Super Typhoon "Pepito" as the death toll increased to nine, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said on Wednesday, Nov. 20.

Two deaths were being validated by the NDRRMC aside from the seven fatalities that were already confirmed following a deadly landslide in Ambaguio, Nueva Vizcaya.

"The nine fatalities were all due to Pepito. The situation could have been worse due to the series of typhoons but maybe we were able to avoid a higher death toll because we implemented forced evacuation," NDRRMC Executive Director Ariel Nepomuceno said.

Four persons remained missing including the parents of a young girl who survived the Ambaguio landslide.

"In Nueva [Vizcaya], a husband and wife along with their 10-year-old girl were buried by a landslide that also killed seven people. What's good here is that the girl was already found. The parents, however, are still missing," Nepomuceno said.

However, the NDRRMC executive noted that Catanduanes was the worst-hit province by Pepito.

A 15-man humanitarian contingent from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) was deployed to Catanduanes to provide clean water to residents affected by Pepito.

The team consists of personnel from the Public Safety Division and Road Emergency Group which will deliver essential aid to the typhoon victims.

The team carries with them 40 units of solar-powered water filtration system, each unit capable of filtering 180 gallons of water per hour.

The equipment is vital for addressing the immediate water needs of the affected communities.

Damage

Meanwhile, the combined effects of Pepito, and typhoons “Nika” and “Ofel” resulted to P1.56 billion worth of damage to agriculture and infrastructure.

The three cyclones affected three million individuals, of which, 442,857 persons were displaced and being sheltered in 2,693 evacuation centers.

The cost of damage to infrastructure was P1,549,792,274.36 while agricultural loss reached P 8,640,199.46.

The government has distributed P143 million worth of assistance to the typhoon victims.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/11/20/gov-t-shifts-focus-to-rehabilitation-as-pepito-death-toll-climbs-to-9>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

‘Rice tariff may revert to 35% if peso strengthens vs dollar’

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

November 21, 2024 | 12:00am



Tons of imported rice are hauled at a port in Manila.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The government may consider reverting rice tariffs to its previous rate of 35 percent if the peso strengthens below the 57 to \$1 level, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said.

Tiu Laurel said a favorable exchange rate is one of the factors to be considered in adjusting the present rice tariff rate of 15 percent.

“55 (to) 56,” he told The STAR when asked what would be the favorable exchange rate that would factor in the adjustment of the country’s prevailing rice tariff rate.

Foreign exchange concerns emerged recently after Sen. Cynthia Villar disclosed that the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) is in the view of maintaining the current lower rice tariff rate until the first review period next year to offset any detrimental effects of the weakening of the peso against the dollar.

Under President Marcos’ Executive Order 62, the reduced rice tariff rate of 15 percent must be subjected to regular review every four months to determine if there is any need to adjust the rate according to present market conditions.

“NEDA already conducted the review and they want to maintain (the lower tariff) until the next review, which is in February,” Villar said.

“NEDA’s reason was the exchange rate. Before, it was 55 (to a dollar), but today it is now 58 to 59, which could impact rice prices. That is why they want to continue with the lower tariff,” Villar added.

The average exchange rate applied on imported rice from January to October reached 56.95 to \$1, 2.4 percent weaker than the average of 55.62 to \$1 in the same period last year.

The peso closed at 58.81 to \$1 on Nov. 19.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas data showed that the average foreign exchange rate has been above 57 since May before averaging 56 to \$1 in September.

However, the peso weakened last month posting an average exchange rate of 57.30 to \$1.

Tiu Laurel earlier said he supports the position of the NEDA against modifying the tariff rates at this point, as more time is needed to realize the benefits of the economic measure.

“Yes, I share the same opinion since to see the real results, we need about six months since a lot bought palay at a high price of P35 (per kilo) from July to August of this year,” Tiu Laurel said.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/11/21/2401690/rice-tariff-may-revert-35-if-peso-strengthens-vs-dollar>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

BAI officials suspended over 66 goats with Q fever

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

November 21, 2024 | 12:00am



A worker is seen busy attending to farm animals at a compound of the provincial agriculture and veterinary field office in San Quintin, Pangasinan on January 28, 2022.

STAR / Cesar Ramirez

MANILA, Philippines — Some officials of the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) have been suspended over the importation of 66 goats infected with Q fever, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

“The officials already served the suspension, but I need to get a clearance to be able to release their names,” said Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa.

Sixty-six goats imported from the US tested positive for Q fever on June 20.

“There will be further investigation after those who were suspended requested the creation of a panel,” De Mesa noted.

“The message of (Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.) and the entire agency is that, corresponding action from the department will be done if there is negligence or (such action) will cause a problem,” he said.

Regulatory agencies, such as the BAI, Bureau of Plant Industry and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources are expected to implement adjustments to prevent similar incidents, De Mesa said.

The outbreak of Q fever in the Philippines was already controlled and there are no more active cases, he noted.

Authorities must report new cases amid delays in reporting the Q fever outbreak in Pampanga, De Mesa said.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/11/21/2401835/bai-officials-suspended-over-66-goats-q-fever>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

‘No storm next week’

Romina Cabrera - The Philippine Star

November 21, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — No cyclone is expected to enter or form within the Philippine area of responsibility next week after six consecutive cyclones battered parts of the country recently, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

PAGASA said it has not monitored any tropical cyclone-like vortex until Nov. 26, which means that a potential cyclone threat is unlikely by next week.

However, there is a low to moderate chance that a cyclone may form by the first week of December.

Meanwhile, Super Typhoon Pepito’s reported casualties rose to nine yesterday with at least 16 people injured and four still missing, according to the Office of Civil Defense.

The combined damage of Pepito, Nika and Ofel to the agriculture sector in five regions has reached P265.74 million, according to the Department of Agriculture.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said total rice imports as of Nov. 19 have surpassed the total rice imports of 3.6 million MT in 2023.

De Mesa noted the DA has requested the Department of Budget and Management to replenish the P1-billion Quick Response Fund.

Meanwhile, at least three Luzon dams continued to release water amid the rains brought by Pepito.

– **Michael Punongbayan, Bella Cariaso, Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/11/21/2401851/no-storm-next-week>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Is P42 per kilo of rice a fair price for farmers, consumers?

[Dominique Nicole Flores](#) - Philstar.com

November 20, 2024 | 11:18am



A vendor arranges his rice products for sale at a public market along M. Dela Fuente Street in Sampaloc, Manila on July 14, 2024.

STAR / Edd Gumban

MANILA, Philippines — How much should rice prices be to ensure affordability for Filipinos while remaining fair to producers? For the Department of Agriculture, the answer is P42 per kilo of rice.

But for peasant groups, there are nuances in pricing that need to be addressed.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said on Monday, November 18, that retail prices for well-milled rice should be P42 per kilo to strike a balance between consumer and farmer needs.

“I think well-milled rice around the P42 per kilo will provide a happy balance between our goal of ensuring our farmers get a decent return for their hard work and consumers have access to affordably-price food, especially rice,” he said in a statement.

The DA noted that rice prices in the Philippines are lower than those in Thailand and China, both of which are also major rice producers.

As of November 18, DA's monitoring reported that retail prices for well-milled rice in the Philippines range from P45 to P54 per kilo, cheaper than China's P43.88 to P87.75 and Thailand's P50.90 to P130.08 per kilo.

However, groups challenged this claim, arguing that the proposed P42 per kilo retail price neither guarantees affordability for consumers nor provides adequate support for farmers.

“P42 per kilo of rice is still unaffordable for ordinary Filipinos especially for low-income consumers, marginalized sectors and wage earners,” Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas Chairperson Danilo Ramos told **Philstar.com**.

Concerns over price peg

While P42 may seem high enough for farmers, Bantay Bigas and Amihan stressed that it also depends on farmgate prices, which may be manipulated by traders if not controlled by the government.

Bantay Bigas spokesperson Cathy Estavillo told **Philstar.com** that farmgate prices of palay should be at least P20 per kilogram.

She said that to prevent underpricing from being done by traders, the National Food Authority should directly purchase palay from farmers.

Citing current palay prices, Estavillo said farmers who harvested in September and October were often forced to sell their palay for as low as P14 to P18 per kilogram.

The Philippine Statistics Authority reported a decline in palay farmgate prices in 2024. The price of fancy, dry palay dropped from P28.66 per kilo in January to P20.71 in October, a decrease of around P8.

Other palay varieties also saw a reduction, with prices falling by about P4 from P24.92 per kilo in January to P20.51 in October.

However, prices vary by region, with some areas seeing even lower prices. For instance, in Calabarzon last month, a kilogram of palay was sold for P18.10. This is P5 less than the P23.55 per kilo in January.

On top of regulating prices, Estavillo said that the government should focus on strengthening the local rice industry instead of relying on importation.

The groups also urged the government to grant farmers P50,000 in financial compensation and subsidies to help them recover from production losses.

For consumers

Women peasants group Amihan, of which Estavillo is the secretary general, said that with the recent typhoons, the government should implement subsidized prices for rice and other basic food items.

She gave an example, saying that if the government can regulate rice prices by lowering them to P32 per kilogram, it will help bring down the high prices of commercial rice as well.

However, she explained that the issue lies in the fact that the NFA no longer has the authority to regulate rice prices, following the passage of Republic Act 11203, or the Rice Tariffication Law, which removed its power to control both rice imports and prices.

Instead, the NFA is now limited to purchasing locally grown rice and ensuring an adequate supply of domestically produced rice.

Ramos proposed how the country could achieve lower retail rice prices. He said the key is for the government to provide subsidies for palay farmers, the NFA and for rice prices itself.

The subsidy for farmers will cover the full production costs, while the subsidy for the NFA will be used to procure at least 20% of the total local farm production.

According to DA's monitoring, local well-milled rice costs around P42 to P53 in Metro Manila markets as of November 18. This is around P1 to P2 lower than last month's price.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/11/20/2401409/p42-kilo-rice-fair-price-farmers-consumers>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Typhoon-hit farmers demand compensation

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:10 AM November 21, 2024

MANILA, Philippines — A group of farmers went to the Department of Agriculture (DA) office in Quezon City on Wednesday to seek compensation from the government after typhoons devastated their crops.

“The consecutive climate disasters from El Niño to the series of typhoons until Pepito have repeatedly hampered agricultural production, livelihood and destroyed the homes of farmers and fishers,” said Cathy Estavillo, Amihan National Federation of Peasant Women secretary general.

The group urged the government to provide affected farmers with P25,000 in financial aid as “they need immediate help so that they can prepare for the next planting season,” Estavillo said.

Edina Miradora, a farmer from the municipality of Libmanan, said that after Tropical Storm Enteng and Severe Tropical Storm Kristine, only 20 percent of her rice crops were left. The DA had said it was ready to provide help to affected farmers but Miradora said she had to buy seeds with her own money since she did not receive any aid from the DA. —*Gillian Villanueva*

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2007486/typhoon-hit-farmers-demand-compensation>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

SRA denies claims of sugar surplus in PH

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

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 09:20 AM November 20, 2024



INQUIRER.net stock images

The (SRA) denies claims that the country has a surplus of sugar that some groups said has resulted in declining prices.

“Sugar stock levels have been constant in the past couple of months, and claims from certain groups that there is an oversupply of sugar that purportedly caused a drop in sugar prices is laced with malice, unless it is their goal to announce oversupply to purposely try and lower prices, for reasons they only know,” the SRA said in a statement.

SRA administrator Pablo Luis Azcona said that stocks of raw and refined sugar “are at the proper levels.”

Despite the 61-percent decline in production as of Nov. 10, the SRA chief said they

He added, “As to their claims of oversupply for both raw and refined sugar, we are currently 35-37 percent below the levels recorded last year.

The SRA issued this statement in response to a joint statement of the Sugar Council and National Congress of Unions in the Sugar Industry (Nacusip), which expressed their concern over the current oversupply of imported and locally produced sugar in the market despite dwindling demand.

In a statement over the weekend, both groups said the recent pronouncement of the Department of Agriculture and the SRA that no sugar importation would be authorized until the end of the harvest failed to arrest the decreasing mill gate prices or the price of sugar at the mill.

“An apparent decrease in demand has consequently caused the steady drop in prices,” the groups said, adding they failed to explain the steady drop in sugar prices over the last few weeks.

Both the Sugar Council and Nacusip noted that a considerable amount of locally produced raw sugar was withdrawn for refining.

“If there is more than enough supply of imported refined sugar, it makes no business sense for refineries to withdraw raw sugar,” it added. “It takes no stretch of the imagination to connect the drops in domestic demand and sugar prices to the entry of imported sugar, aside from sugar substitutes.”

Yet, the SRA decried the presumptions made by the Sugar Council and the Nacusip, saying the decision made by the DA and the SRA was meant to apprise industry stakeholders of the current situation.

“There was no other intention for that announcement other than [to] stand by our mandate to be transparent and keep the stakeholders informed,” Azcona said.

“The announcement of no importation until [the] end of harvest which is sometime May or June, depending on harvest circumstances was simply an announcement for our stakeholders, and nothing more,” he added.

Azcona pointed out that these groups should attend consultative meetings organized by the DA and the SRA to discuss plans for the industry “instead of propagating false claims.” Yet, “like in other instances, the Sugar Council snubbed this meeting.”

“However, they would rather bring their concerns before the media to further destabilize the industry [than] send a letter after the fact, and that does not sit well with me,” he added.

Per the SRA data, raw sugar stocks totaled 148,225 metric tons as of Oct. 20, a decline of 31.26 percent, but the demand was slightly higher at 144,787 MT.

On the other hand, refined sugar stocks reached 323,983.20 MT, also down by 37.23 percent. Yet, the demand totaled 121,682.85 MT.

The sugar price rose by 3.17 percent to P2,827.85 per 50-kilogram from P2,741.06 per LKg.

<https://business.inquirer.net/491050/sra-denies-claims-of-sugar-surplus-in-ph>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Typhoon-hit Aurora under calamity state

Provincial gov't says declaration prompted by P410-M damage from typhoons Nika, Ofel; losses from Pepito yet to be assessed

By: [Joanna Rose Aglibot](#), [Jun A. Malig](#), [Nestor Corrales](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:06 AM November 21, 2024



TEMPORARY DWELLING A resident of Dinalungan, Aurora, on Tuesday checks his makeshift shelter beside what was left of the family's house, which was destroyed by fierce winds and heavy rains brought by Super Typhoon Pepito (international name: Man-yi) as it battered northern Luzon last week. —Photo courtesy of Fr. Joefran Talaban

AURORA, Philippines — Aurora has been placed under a state of calamity due to the devastation from successive weather disturbances that hit the province last week.

The declaration made by the provincial board during its session on Tuesday cited the damage wrought by Severe Tropical Storm Nika (international name: Toraji) and Typhoon Ofel (Usagi), which pummeled the province before these battered northern Luzon.

In a statement on Wednesday, the provincial government said Nika and Ofel caused at least P410,137,000 worth of damage to infrastructure, agriculture and tourism-related facilities in Aurora.

This, it said, does not yet include the devastation caused by Supertyphoon “Pepito” (Man-yi), which made landfall in Dipaculao town on Sunday afternoon.

Aurora is the latest area to be placed under a state of calamity due to the successive typhoons.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), in a bulletin on Wednesday, said at least 22 local governments had made the calamity declaration, among them six towns in Quirino province, two cities and a town in Isabela, 10 towns in Mountain province, and a town each in Aurora and Ifugao.

The NDRRMC also said nine died while more than 800,000 people had been affected due to the combined wrath of Nika, Ofel and Pepito.

The fatalities, it said, include seven family members who were killed after a landslide buried their house in Ambaguio town in Nueva Vizcaya province as Pepito lashed northern Luzon. Two others were reported to have died in another landslide in Asipulo, Ifugao. The disaster response agency said four people were reported missing while 16 others were injured.

Combined reporting

The NDRRMC said its reporting of casualties for Nika, Ofel and Pepito had been “combined,” as agreed upon by the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), the Department of Health, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

Diego Mariano of the OCD Joint Information Center said that reporting of casualties for Nika, Ofel and Pepito had been “combined, as these tropical cyclones entered the PAR (Philippine area of responsibility) consecutively” or had “entered PAR while the other is still inside ... which may cause the effects of these [tropical cyclones to] overlap.”

The NDRRMC said at least 3.031 million people or 820,131 families were affected by the three storms across 34 provinces in the country.

There were 442,857 people displaced with 2,693 of them still staying in different evacuation centers.

According to NDRRMC, the three storms left P1.5-billion worth of damage to infrastructure and P8.6 million to agriculture.

Calamity fund use

The Aurora provincial government said around P335,469,000 in infrastructure, P51,896,000 in agriculture, and P2,772,000 in tourism-related facilities were destroyed in different parts of the province due to the Nika and Ofel that hit Aurora last week.

The declaration was proposed by Gov. Reynante Tolentino during the meeting of the Aurora Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council on Tuesday. All members of the provincial board voted in favor of placing Aurora under a state of calamity.

With such declaration, the provincial government can now use its calamity fund for relief operation, medical assistance, repair of damaged infrastructures and facilities, and for disaster mitigation measures.

Due to the combined effects of the typhoons, some areas in the province still have no electricity, and some major roads and bridges are still not passable due to landslides, overflowing creeks and rivers, fallen debris and toppled posts.

Six structures intended to protect the communities from flooding were also destroyed.

Health centers in two villages in Dinalungan town and the municipal gymnasium in San Luis town were damaged while at least 43 houses were destroyed and 867 damaged in Casiguran and Dilasag towns.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2007405/typhoon-hit-aurora-under-calamity-state>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Lowering rice tariffs called a temporary inflation fix

November 20, 2024 | 8:02 pm



BW FILE PHOTO

By **Adrian H. Halili**, *Reporter*

THE GOVERNMENT needs to improve the rice industry's productivity to effectively address the issue of volatile rice prices, analysts said, adding that reducing import tariffs is only a temporary solution.

"The longer-term solution would be to strengthen the rice industry to stabilize prices and contribute to food security," University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P) Center for Food and Agribusiness Executive Director Marie Annette Galvez-Dacul said via Viber.

Ms. Dacul added that lowering tariffs on imported rice will only drive rice prices down temporarily.

"There is a need to balance supporting consumers with lower prices and protecting farmers," she said.

As of Nov. 14, Philippine rice imports have amounted to 4.06 million metric tons (MMT), surpassing the 3.61 MMT reported for the full year of 2023, the Bureau of Plant Industry reported.

Rice imports are expected to top out at 4.5 MMT this year due to the lower tariffs, and with domestic production diminished by typhoons, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

In plenary debate late Monday, Senator Cynthia A. Villar said that the National Economic and Development Authority is proposing to retain the lowered tariffs on rice imports due to the depreciation of the peso.

In June, the government lowered rice import tariffs through Executive Order (EO) No. 62 to 15% from 35% until 2028, citing the need to tame rice prices. The EO is subject to review every four months.

“Many factors can influence rice prices — weather and climate, domestic rice production, consumer demand, government policies, input costs, global rice market, geopolitical factors and among others,” UA&P’s Ms. Dacul said.

Federation of Free Farmers National Manager Raul Q. Montemayor said via Viber that traders have started buying palay (unmilled rice) from farmers at “relatively low prices” of between P17 to P20 per kilogram for clean and dry grain. The National Food Authority’s buying range is P23-P25, depending on quality and location.

Mr. Montemayor added that the low prices paid by traders is to “hedge against the possibility that importers, traders, or retailers are eventually forced to lower their prices.”

He said that prices for imported rice have declined, noting that average cost of 5% broken variety from Vietnam fell to \$529 per MT, compared to \$637 per MT in January. Vietnamese rice accounts for about 76% of Philippine rice imports.

“This should be retailed for around P43-45 per kilo. But prices remain relatively high... so a lot will depend on how government controls profiteering,” Mr. Montemayor added.

According to DA price monitors, as of Nov. 19 one kilogram of well-milled rice fetched P42-P53 per kilo in Metro Manila markets, against P33 to P55 per kilo a year earlier.

Regular-milled rice sold for between P40 and P48 per kilo, compared to P33-P53 a year prior.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/11/20/636311/lowering-rice-tariffs-called-a-temporary-inflation-fix/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Inspection sites set up around NCR to contain animal disease

November 20, 2024 | 8:02 pm



CEBU-PIO

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Wednesday that it is setting up livestock, poultry, and meat quarantine facilities around Metro Manila and nearby area to curb the spread of animal diseases.

“These inspection sites should serve as a defensive wall against the spread of animal diseases that threaten not only the livestock and poultry industries but also public health and food security,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said in a statement.

The quarantine checkpoints are to monitor for avian influenza and African Swine Fever (ASF) in animal and meat transports. The checkpoints will be manned by personnel of the Bureau of Animal Industry’s (BAI) National Veterinary Quarantine Services Division, in coordination with various local government units.

“Given the severe economic impact on the livestock and poultry industries of bird, ASF and other diseases, it’s crucial to implement stringent disease management protocols and strategies to control their spread,” Mr. Laurel added.

The Philippines has recently logged a resurgence of ASF cases starting August, prompting the government to fast-track its limited vaccine rollout to commercial and small growers. A vaccine for avian influenza has yet to be approved, and poultry farms continue to report cases.

“Millions of pigs and chickens have been culled to control the spread of these diseases, resulting in billions of foregone revenue, income, investments and job losses,” the DA said. As of Nov. 8, 102 municipalities across 20 provinces had active ASF cases. Some 51 municipalities across seven provinces remain affected by avian influenza, the BAI reported. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/11/20/636310/inspection-sites-set-up-around-ncr-to-contain-animal-disease/>

REMATE:

Shellfish ban itinaas sa 11 lugar sa E. Visayas

November 20, 2024 18:37



TACLOBAN CITY – Ipinatupad ang shellfish ban sa 11 lugar sa Eastern Visayas ngayong linggo, sinabi ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) nitong Miyerkules.

Sa kanilang advisory, sinabi ng BFAR na nakita ang red tide sa mga sample ng tubig dagat na nakolekta sa Cancabato Bay sa Tacloban City; baybayin ng Guiuan, Eastern Samar; baybaying tubig ng Calbayog City, Samar; at Matarinao Bay sa mga bayan ng General MacArthur, Quinapondan, Hernani, at Salcedo sa Eastern Samar.

Nauna rito, sinabi ng bureau na pitong anyong tubig sa mga lalawigan ng Leyte, Samar, Eastern Samar, at Biliran ang kontaminado ng red tide toxins, batay sa shellfish meat sampling.

Kabilang dito ang Biliran Island sa Biliran province; baybaying tubig sa bayan ng Leyte; Carigara Bay sa Babatngon, San Miguel, Barugo, Carigara, at mga bayan ng Capoocan sa lalawigan ng Leyte; Cambatutay Bay sa bayan ng Tarangnan; Daram Island; Isla ng Zumarraga; at Irongirong Bay sa Catbalogan City sa lalawigan ng Samar.

Mahigpit na pinapayuhan ang publiko na huwag mangolekta, magbenta, o kumain ng anumang uri ng shellfish, kabilang ang maliliit na hipon, sa mga lugar na ito, sinabi ng advisory ng BFAR.

Ang mga isda, pusit, hipon, at alimango ay ligtas na kainin ng tao kung ang mga ito ay sariwa at hinugasan ng maigi, at ang kanilang mga laman-loob, tulad ng hasang at bituka, ay inaalís bago lutuin. *RNT*

<https://remate.ph/shellfish-ban-itinaas-sa-11-lugar-sa-e-visayas/>

REMATE:

Suplay ng gulay sa VisMin kukunin ng DA pampahupa ng presyo sa Luzon

November 20, 2024 11:00



(c) Remate News Central File Photo

MANILA, Philippines – Sinabi ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na sinisikap nilang kunin ang parehong highland at lowland na gulay mula sa mga lugar sa Visayas at Mindanao matapos ang malalakas na bagyo na humagupit sa mga rehiyon na nagpo-produce ng gulay sa Luzon.

Sa isang panayam, sinabi ni DA Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa na ang DA-High Value Crops Development Program at ang Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) ay magsasapinal ng mga rekomendasyon sa mga alternatibong pinagmumulan ng supply sa loob ng linggo upang mapaamo ang mataas na presyo ng tingi ng mga gulay.

Ayon pa kay De Mesa na walang magiging problema sa mga gastos sa logistik kung isasaalang-alang ang mas murang antas ng presyo ng gulay sa Visayas at Mindanao.

Aniya, may posibilidad din na mag-import ng gulay kapag nakita ng assessment na kailangan itong gawin.

Kaugnay nito nauna nang nagpahayag ang DA ng planong buksan ang mga Kadiwa sites sa mga lugar na tinamaan ng Super Typhoon Pepito (Man-yi) upang gawing mas mura ang pagkain sa mga apektadong Pilipino.

Ayon sa pinakahuling datos ng DA-Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Operations Center, ang Severe Tropical Storm Kristine (Trami) at Typhoon Leon (Kong-rey) ay nag-iwan ng humigit-kumulang PHP1.23 bilyon na halaga ng pinsala sa mga high-value crops na katumbas ng 46,016 metric tonelada (MT) dami ng pagkawala ng produksyon; habang ang Bagyong Nika (Toraji) at Super Typhoon Ofel (Usagi) ay nag-iwan ng 5,946 MT volume ng production loss na nagkakahalaga ng PHP97.72 milyon. *Santi Celario*

<https://remate.ph/suplay-ng-gulay-sa-vismin-kukunin-ng-da-pampahupa-ng-presyo-sa-luzon/>

ABANTE:

Dagdag na importasyon ng gulay, isda tinabla

Abante News

- **November 20, 2024**



Dismayado ang Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) sa hindi pagkonsulta ng pamahalaan sa mga agriculture stakeholder bago ito nagdesisyon na mag-angkat ng gulay at isda.

Bagama't sinabi na ng Department of Agriculture na malaki ang pinsalang iniwan ng sunod sunod na bagyo sa agrikultura ng bansa, dapat anila ay tinanong muna sila kung importasyon ang solusyon para rito.

Dagdag nila, wala naman problema sa pag-aangkat kung talagang kinakailangan ngunit dapat munang tingnan ang epekto nito sa retail prices ng mga nasabing produkto.

Binigay na halimbawa ng SINAG ang presyo ng galunggong na sa ngayon ay nasa P320 kada kilo kahit nasa P120 hanggang P180 lamang ang bagsakan nito sa merkado. Nagtataka rin ang SINAG kung bakit binuksan na agad sa importasyon ang gulay kahit anila'y "small scale" pa lamang ito.
(Migo Fajatin)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/11/20/dagdag-na-importasyon-ng-gulay-isda-tinabla/>

MANILA STANDARD:

Rising prices



By [Diana Noche](#)

November 20, 2024, 11:56 pm

Prices of fish and other marine products were a bit high the last few days because of the storms that prevented fishermen from going out to sea. Thursday, Nov, 21 is World Fisheries Day which aims to draw attention to overfishing, habitat destruction and also to highlight the importance of sustainable stocks of fish.

<https://manilastandard.net/gallery/314526141/rising-prices-4.html>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Ensuring sustainable water for all

By Eduardo V. Aboitiz

November 21, 2024

WATER is essential to our day-to-day lives and enables economic development, supporting our agriculture, industries and household needs. As our nation continues to progress, the opportunity to enhance water availability and reliability through infrastructure becomes increasingly important.

The National Economic Development Authority highlights that we have significant room to expand our Level III water supply — a gold standard of safe, piped-in water for individual households. Forty-five percent of the population still relies on Level I unsafe sources, and an additional 11 percent on Level II communal faucets unsuitable for rapidly urbanizing communities. Without intervention, the country is projected to face high water stress by 2040 as demand outpaces our finite water resources.

Our growing economy and population are driving demand for reliable water access. This presents an opportunity to combine public sector vision, private sector expertise, and community engagement to build water infrastructure that supports continued development.

Aboitiz InfraCapital (AIC), the infrastructure arm of the Aboitiz Group, began its journey a decade ago to address infrastructure gaps in the country, building infrastructure projects that enable business and uplift communities. With this in mind, our first investment was strategically made in the water sector.

Today, the AIC Water platform ensures sustainable water for all through innovative and reliable water infrastructure. We participate in select segments in the water value chain with presence in key markets. AIC Water operates the country's largest private bulk water supply facility through Apo Agua Infraestructura, Inc. in Davao City; provides end-to-end water and wastewater services across our economic estates; and holds a strategic stake in Balibago Waterworks Systems, Inc., the country's fourth-largest water distribution concessionaire. Our experience and expertise position us to support the development of high-growth urban centers across Visayas and Mindanao.

Looking ahead, AIC Water aims to double its current 320 megaliters per day (MLD) total billed volume by expanding its bulk water business, industrial and municipal distribution, and strategic mergers and acquisitions.

In 2015, the Davao City Water District (DCWD) demonstrated foresight in planning for the region's water security. It envisioned a bulk water project to augment its sources and enhance water availability, pressure and reliability. With over 70 years of proven track record in the city's power sector, the Aboitiz Group was honored with the opportunity to strengthen its commitment to the region's progress as the selected partner of DCWD.

Through the landmark public-private partnership (PPP) of Apo Agua and DCWD, the city's vision has become a reality. Since our 300-MLD facility began commercial operations this February 2024, 96 percent of DCWD's connections now enjoy uninterrupted water supply — up from 78 percent just a year ago — enabling service expansion into previously unserved and underserved areas. The project features sustainable innovations, with a 2-megawatt integrated hydroelectric plant that fully powers the water treatment process and a completely gravity-fed pipeline network.

AIC Water is also engaged in industrial operations, providing end-to-end water and wastewater services within the AIC economic estates. Our collective estate water businesses — LIMA Water, MEZ2 Water, West Cebu Water, and TARI Water — operate across a nearly 2,000-hectare footprint in Batangas, Cebu, and now Tarlac, supporting over 250 locators and 100,000 employees. We've implemented a SMART Water Network with a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition system that gathers comprehensive real-time data to better inform operational decisions, improve efficiencies and optimize resources.

AIC Water aims to enter the desalination space in the Philippines. Once prohibitively costly to develop and operate, technological advancements have made seawater desalination now globally accepted and adopted across the world, with a strong presence in the Middle East and emerging in Southeast Asia, particularly in Hong Kong and Singapore.

Continuous research and development are bringing down capital requirements and operational expenses. Based on the current cost of desalination water production today, experts have forecasted production costs to drop by over one-third within the next five years and by over half within the next 20.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/11/21/business/top-business/ensuring-sustainable-water-for-all/2008164>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Machine distribution nears 30k target

By Conrad M. Cariño
November 21, 2024

THE Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PHilMech) is nearing the distribution target for the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF)-Mechanization Program.

As of October this year, PHilMech has distributed under the RCEF-Mechanization Program 29,583 units of farm production machines and postharvest equipment, representing 95.15 percent of the targeted 30,100 units. The RCEF-Mechanization Program started in June 2019 and will end in June 2025, and will likely be extended for another six years.

With that development, PHilMech is confident that the extension of the RCEF-Mechanization Program will result in the attainment of 3 horsepower per hectare (hp/ha) for rice farms in the country.



Various farm equipment are distributed to qualified beneficiaries at no cost under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund-Mechanization Program. PHILMECH PHOTO

The mechanization level of rice farms in the country has increased to 2.77 hp/ha as of October this year from the 2.68 hp/ha as of 2022, according to PHilMech.

"With those latest figures, we at PHilMech are confident that the agency can attain the target of 30,100 units distributed before June next year. And that is a result of the hard work and dedication of the officers and personnel of the agency, as well as the support of local government units and farm machine suppliers," said PHilMech Executive Director Dionisio Alwindia.

"The RCEF-Mechanization Program contributed greatly to the attainment of the improved mechanization level of 2.77 hp/ha for rice farms across the country. With the completion of the first phase of the RCEF-Mechanization Program by June next year, and the proposed extension of the program, we are confident that the mechanization level 3 hp/ha will be attained for rice farms in the country," he added.

Among the machines provided by the program, rice combine harvesters accounted for 52 percent of the increase in power while four-wheel tractors chipped in 29 percent.

With the 30,100 units of machines targeted to be distributed under the RCEF-Mechanization Program, about 14 percent of rice farms can be covered by mechanization.

It is for that reason that PHilMech is backing the extension of the RCEF-Mechanization Program by another six years with a proposed funding of P9 billion annually.

Alvindia said with a six-year extension and P9 billion in annual funding, the proposed second phase of the RCEF-Mechanization Program can cover up to 30 percent more rice farms, which will result in around 44-percent mechanization coverage for rice farms nationwide by 2031.

He added that a 44-percent mechanization coverage for the country's rice farms will make the cultivation of the staple more competitive and lessen the need for imports.

Also, PHilMech will give equal focus to the establishment of more rice processing centers equipped with modern drying and milling machines, enabling more farmers cooperatives and associations (FCAs), and local government units (LGUs) to enter the rice value chain.

"By having modern drying and milling machines, FCAs and LGUs can directly market their milled rice at the retail level or to big institutions. This will help increase their earnings as they no longer have to rely on middle men and outside milling services," Alvindia said.

Furthermore, PHilMech is well-prepared for the extension of the RCEF-Mechanization Program as the agency has put in place the systems to bid out, acquire and distribute farm machines to qualified FCAs and LGUs. Training qualified FCAs and LGUs on the operation and maintenance of farm machines, ensuring their long-term utilization, is ongoing.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/11/21/business/agribusiness/machine-distribution-nears-30k-target/2008070>

THE MANILA TIMES:

La Union steps up food innovation

By **Leander C. Domingo**

November 21, 2024

To enhance its vibrant food industry, La Union took a big step in boosting food innovation and sustainability by holding the Siklab Innovation Summit 2024 on Nov. 11.

At the Speaker Pro Tempore Francisco I. Ortega Convention Center in San Fernando, the event gathered more than 200 participants from the agri-tourism industry, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), senior high school and college students, local government representatives and members of the Provincial Innovation Council.

Anchored on the theme "LUkal Food Solutions: Unveiling Innovation in Processing, Sustainability and Industry Breakthroughs," the summit served as a platform to showcase innovative technologies in food processing, sustainability and security and empower MSMEs by integrating them into the local food innovation system while supporting local farmers.

La Union Gov. Raphaelle Veronica "Rafy" Ortega-David underscored the vast potential of La Union to lead in food innovation as the local government is keen on pushing initiatives on **food security**.

Ortega-David said that this year, their focus is on "LUkal Food Solutions" to "capture the essence of who we are, a province rooted in agriculture, but with our eyes set on innovation, sustainability and progress."



La Union is stepping up its innovation on food products. Photo shows the product innovations of food producers in the province. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE PHOTO

"It is now about finding smarter and more sustainable ways to feed our communities, protect our environment and create opportunities for future generations," she added.

The summit featured topics highlighting various opportunities in food innovation and the broader food industry, providing the participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate and contribute to the evolving landscape.

In her topic "Rediscovering Indigenous Functional Foods: Fueling the Future of Innovation," food technologist Meryl Bernardino explained the cultural and nutritional value of traditional Filipino ingredients.

Bernadino highlighted how indigenous foods can inspire sustainable innovations and help in the development of local ingredients as a foundation for modern food solutions.

Fisheries Research Training Institute Director Andie John Tadeo of Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University tackled the market potential of seaweed, aquaculture and marine science to provide sustainable food sources and contribute to economic growth.

Focusing on empowering communities and practicing eco-friendly agriculture, Gawad Kalinga Enchanted Farm Movement head Jose Emilio Oquinena tackled sustainability in food production.

Lastly, entrepreneur Timoteo de Guzman shared his success story in food innovation with aspiring innovators and entrepreneurs.

De Guzman is known for his organic "sukang Iloko," made from pure sugarcane. He shared about how a local tradition has been transformed into a thriving food business.

The event also offered practical insights into the food industry's possibilities, from product development to logistics and supply chain management.

At least 61 exhibitors also showcased their local food products that reflect the rich food heritage and highlighted the agri-tourism of the province.

In support of the agri-tourism vision of the province, the governor said the La Union provincial government will continue to "promote innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainable growth in the agriculture and food sector of the province while sustaining the strong connection with the key industry players."

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/11/21/business/agribusiness/la-union-steps-up-food-innovation/2008066>

THE MANILA TIMES:

WAF, FAO to hold consultation meeting

By The Manila Times

November 21, 2024

THE World Agriculture Forum (WAF), in collaboration with Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), will hold a consultation meeting on advancing sustainable agriculture on Friday, Nov. 22, at the Bureau of Soils and Water Management headquarters in Quezon City.

The consultation meeting will bring together stakeholders from governments, farmers, agribusinesses, banks and development institutions, providing an essential platform for discussing collaborative strategies to advance sustainable agricultural practices that promote resilience and food security across the region.

"We are looking forward to an enriching discussion with leaders in agriculture and development," said William Dar, WAF board member and former agriculture secretary, and former director general, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics.

"This meeting is a unique opportunity to collaborate on creating sustainable pathways that will shape the future of agriculture, not only in the Philippines but across the globe," he added.

By pooling their expertise and insights, WAF and FAO Philippines aim to drive sustainable growth in agriculture, focusing on solutions that meet the region's particular needs and contribute to a resilient, food-secure future.

The WAF said that the Philippines plays a crucial role in global agriculture and stands at the forefront of sustainable agricultural development in the Asia-Pacific region. Known for its rich biodiversity and agricultural heritage, the Philippines enjoys a unique position to spearhead advancements in agricultural innovation, crop science, boosting trade, enhancing food security and promoting resilience in the face of climate change.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/11/21/business/agribusiness/waf-fao-to-hold-consultation-meeting/2008065>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Searca chief underscores rice supply chain sustainability

By **Leander C. Domingo**

November 21, 2024

IN strengthening the rice supply chain, Director Glenn Gregorio of the Philippine government-hosted Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) said the center "embraces sustainability and technology to transform the rice supply chain toward greater resilience and transparency."

Gregorio served as a panel discussant during the "Sustainability and Technology in the Rice Supply Chain" session of the 2024 International World Rice Conference (IWRC) Summit held on Nov. 5 to 7 at the Conrad Hotel Manila in Pasay City.

"By integrating sustainable practices and advanced technology, stakeholders can better navigate climate impacts, secure food supply and support sustainable livelihoods for rice producers worldwide," he said. Underscoring the role of sustainability, technology in the rice supply chain, Gregorio also emphasized the potential of the Philippines and Southeast Asia to become agribusiness hubs.

He rallied to upgrade traditional agriculture to a more progressive and globally competitive agribusiness industry. And to support this goal, Gregorio proposed strategies such as "addressing supply chain gaps, supporting smallholder farmers, mainstreaming climate-resilient agriculture, and investing in rural infrastructure and innovation."

He also gave insights into Southeast Asia's market overview post-pandemic, discussing the shift in consumer behavior from a just-in-time to a just-in-case model where people tend to stock food supplies and seek alternative food sources.

Gregorio also explained the inclination toward cooking at home healthier, higher-quality food and growing food for self-sufficiency. The 16th IWRC was hosted by The Rice Trader with Searca as one of its co-organizers. It was attended by over 600 industry leaders, exhibitors and sponsors.

Searca said that other key topics discussed were the impact of El Niño and other extreme weather changes in major rice-producing regions, the decline in rice markets and the unusually high global food stocks, particularly in rice, which are nearly at historical highs.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/11/21/business/agribusiness/searca-chief-underscores-rice-supply-chain-sustainability/2008064>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Kanlaon's agri damage in La Castellana P194M

By Eugene Y. Adiong
November 21, 2024

BACOLOD CITY — The continuous ash emissions of Kanlaon Volcano on Negros Island has already caused a total of P194 million in agriculture damage to La Castellana town, Mayor Rhummyla Nicor-Mangilimutan said on Tuesday.

Nicor-Mangilimutan said that based on their assessment, thousands of farmers have been suffering considerably, losing much of their agricultural investment since the eruption of Kanlaon on June 3.

She said that eight of the 13 barangay of La Castellana have been affected.

These are barangay Masulog, Cabagnaan, Biak-na-Bato, Mansalanao, Sag-ang and the northern parts of the barangay of Cabacungan, Manghanoy and Camandag.

Nicor-Mangilimutan said that ashfall from the Kanlaon eruption has wreaked havoc on La Castellana agricultural products, such as coffee, vegetables and other crops, livestock and even fishponds, which were preceded by the effects of the El Niño weather phenomenon for several months.

La Castellana is located in the central area of Negros Island and some of its barangay are on the foot of the volcano.

The Provincial Veterinary Office earlier reported that more than 3,400 livestock and chickens died within the 4-kilometer permanent danger zone during the phreatic explosion of Kanlaon Volcano.

Nicor-Mangilimutan added that the municipal government has set aside a 1.7-hectare lot, which it purchased in Barangay Manghanoy, La Castellana, to be used for the relocation site of 10 families and the construction of an evacuation center.

The Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development will help the 10 affected families in the construction of their homes in the relocation site, while the building of the evacuation center is expected to be financed by the national government, she added.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/11/21/regions/kanlaons-agri-damage-in-la-castellana-p194m/2008350>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

‘Before importing veggies, fish, check disconnect in farmgate, retail prices’

Ada Pelonia

November 21, 2024



Vegetable vendors at the Las Piñas Public Market report that prices of vegetables have surged by nearly 50 percent, particularly those sourced from areas hit by recent typhoons. Meanwhile, fish prices have also risen, albeit more modestly, thanks to the availability of buffer stocks of frozen fish. With six typhoons hitting the Philippines in November, the soaring cost of staples like veggies and fish is making dinner tables harder to fill.

THE broad agriculture sector coalition Sinag urged the Department of Agriculture (DA) to check the “disconnect” between farmgate and retail prices prior to issuing import plans.

Sinag executive director Jayson Cainglet issued the statement after the DA recently said it is mulling over the importation of vegetables and possibly expand fish imports to stabilize prices following the “historic” damage brought by major typhoons on local plantations.

Cainglet said they would prefer that DA first consult the sectors and industries to know the extent and actual damage per commodity, the inventory and situation across the value chain, and possible collaboration of the agency and the agricultural industry.

“There is no problem [with importing] if there is a need. Unfortunately, the issue of high retail prices is always equated [with] the need to import,” he said.

“If the point of view is retail prices, baka pwede muna tingnan ang [it might be good to check the] disconnect [between] farmgate and retail prices,” he added.

According to Cainglet, the farmgate price of galunggong at the consignment ranges between P120 and P180 per kilo, but the retail price stood at P320 per kilo.

Cainglet also noted that vegetable production was mostly small-scale and one of the few agricultural sectors that is yet to be penetrated by imports.

“Why open the floodgates for importation now? Let us instead help rebuild the livelihoods of our vegetable growers,” he added.

Veggies, fish imports

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. directed the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) and the High-Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) to check the volume and supply of highland and lowland vegetables in the country.

He added that the BPI and HVCDP were tasked to provide the agriculture chief recommendations for possible strategies to augment supply within the week.

“One [possible strategy] is to check [the] supplies from other regions and secondly, possible importation of key agricultural commodities,” De Mesa told reporters on Tuesday.

However, he maintained that the agency’s priority is still checking for other sources that could supply highland and lowland vegetables to Luzon from other regions, such as those in Visayas and Mindanao.

“The priority is to get the vegetables from other vegetable-producing areas and regions. If that will be enough to temper the prices, there is no need to import. But if there’s a necessity to import, we will do that,” De Mesa said. The DA official explained that agricultural areas hard hit by the onslaught of successive super typhoons would be hard-pressed to recover.

He described the typhoon damage as severe, adding, “What happened is historical ...extraordinary circumstances,” De Mesa said.

The DA is also eyeing the additional importation of 8,000 metric tons (MT) of small pelagic fishes as successive typhoons hit the country amid the closed fishing season. These would include galunggong, mackerel, moonfish and bonito. The agency earlier authorized the importation of 30,000 MT of pelagic fish to augment supply during the closed fishing season. Image credits: Nonie Reyes

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/21/before-importing-veggies-fish-check-disconnect-in-farmgate-retail-prices/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Rice import arrivals surpass 2023 shipments

Ada Pelonia
November 20, 2024



Workers carry sacks of rice inside a mill in Kalasin province, Thailand, on Monday, November 20, 2023.

Imported rice shipments that arrived in the Philippines reached a record 4 million metric tons (MMT) as of mid-November, according to the latest data from the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI).

Figures from the attached agency of the Department of Agriculture (DA) showed that 4.06 MMT of imported rice have been shipped to the Philippines from January 1 to November 14. This volume exceeded the 3.606 MM of rice the Philippines bought last year.

Of the volume that arrived in the Philippines, data from BPI indicated that over 3.16 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 514,586.42 metric tons (MT). This was followed by Pakistan with 184,079.48 MT, Myanmar with 163,845.75 MT, and India with 22,179.58 MT.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel V. de Mesa said the agency expects the country's rice shipments to hit 4.5 MMT before yearend.

“Our projection is that imports could reach 4.5 MMT before the year ends,” de Mesa told reporters in a briefing on Tuesday. “This also reflects our efforts to curb smuggling. The figure represents the real amount of rice that enters our country's borders.”

President Marcos Jr. earlier signed Republic Act (RA) 12022 or the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act, which he said would enable the government to apprehend the cartels behind the price and supply manipulation of agricultural products.

Meanwhile, former Agriculture Undersecretary Leocadio Sebastian had said that the Philippines would have to bring in more rice shipments as bad weather widened the projected shortfall in domestic production. (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/06/foreign-farms-will-plug-rice-supply-shortfall/>)

Citing data from the DA, Sebastian said rice planters lost about 900,000 MT due to El Nino and the recent storms. This figure excludes the impact of severe tropical storm Kristine on local plantations.

“Because of the projected shortfall this year, we may have to bring in more supply either in December or in January (2025),” he said.

He noted that a minimum of 400,000 MT could enter the country in the last two months of 2024. However, “it could be more depending again on how our traders will also be reacting to the global market.”

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently adjusted upward its initial estimate for the country's imported rice purchases this year to 5 MMT from 4.7 MMT, noting a surge in shipments from Vietnam as the country grappled with the impact of El Niño and storms.

The DA said the Philippines may end 2024 with a palay output of 19.41 MMT, 3.24 percent lower than the record 20.06 MMT it produced last year. The projected 2024 palay output is equivalent to 12.69 MMT in milled terms.

Image credits: [Luke Duggleby/Bloomberg](#)

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/20/rice-import-arrivals-surpass-2023-shipments/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Groups, government at loggerheads over sugar supply situation

Ada Pelonia
November 20, 2024

The Sugar Council and National Congress of Unions in the Sugar Industry (NACUSIP) expressed concern over the drop in sugar millgate prices, which they attributed to a supply glut.

However, Sugar Regulatory Authority (SRA) Administrator Pablo Luis Azcona said raw and refined sugar levels are 35 to 37 percent below the levels recorded last year.

“The SRA and the DA [Department of Agriculture] believe that these are the proper levels and claims of oversupply when our sugar stock levels have been constant the past 2 months are completely false,” Azcona told the BusinessMirror on Monday.

In a joint statement, the Sugar Council and NACUSIP claimed that the SRA and DA’s recent announcement of delaying the importation of sugar until May 2025 failed to explain the reason behind the drop in sugar prices over the past few weeks.

“An apparent decrease in demand has consequently caused the steady drop in prices,” the Sugar Council said.

The council stressed that the SRA should address this concern, reiterating its worry over “current oversupply of imported and locally produced sugar, relative to demand, in the market.”

They also noted the 98-percent decline in refined sugar production to 1,314 metric tons (MT) as of October 20 from 58,990 MT in the same period last year, based on SRA data.

“It should be noted that a considerable amount of locally produced raw sugar is withdrawn for refining, but if there is more than enough supply of imported refined sugar, it makes no business sense for refineries to withdraw raw sugar. Hence, demand for it goes down and mill gate prices drop.”

Figures from the SRA showed that 135,833.20 MT of the 240,000 MT imported refined sugar authorized under Sugar Order (SO) 5 have entered the country.

“If the ‘no further importation’ pronouncement aims to arrest the drop in mill gate sugar prices over the past weeks, the fundamentals to firm up prices are woefully absent,” the council said.

For his part, Azcona said the decision that there would be no sugar imports until the end of harvest next year was an “honest” announcement made by the agency and the DA to inform the stakeholders of the government’s plans.

“Their opinion that it was meant to curb prices is as it is, their own opinion based on their perception.”

Azcona also added that all of the agency’s plans are discussed in stakeholder meetings, the last of which was on August 6 attended by Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. The council, he said, did not attend the meeting.

“The SRA and the DA believe that the council should attend stakeholders’ consultative meetings so that they would be informed of the plans and policies of the sugar industry.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/20/groups-government-at-loggerheads-over-sugar-supply-situation/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Strengthen community engagement in agriculture development—experts

BusinessMirror
November 20, 2024

Experts underscored the critical role of community engagement and inter-sectoral collaboration in achieving food security and sustainable agricultural development during a recent conference hosted by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (Pids).

They also called for better alignment of budgets and greater access to financial and social services for farmers.

Held under the theme, “Agricultural Development for Food Security: Addressing Challenges to Technological Transformation, Sustainability, and Good Governance,” the conference gathered experts to explore strategies that can address pressing challenges in agriculture.

Pids organized the event in partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

In the first session, discussions centered on fiscal policies and schemes that drive competitive growth and food security.

Dr. Mario Lamberto, of the University of the Philippines-Public Administration Research and Extension Services Foundation Inc., started the discussion by emphasizing the need for improved access to formal credit for farmers. He stressed the importance of lending institutions like Land Bank to better serve rural areas.

“Land Bank should adapt to electronic banking, and it should be the leader in the countryside...They can go anywhere, and farmers can contact Land Bank easily.”

Building on this, Pids Senior Research Fellow Roehlano Briones, presented their observations on policy changes in agriculture since the 1960s. He noted positive developments, including increased subsidies, sustained provision of public goods like infrastructure and research, and tariff reductions that allow local production to remain competitive.

However, Briones called for stronger coalitions among farmers, consumers, and environmental groups to push for further tariff reforms and resist the restoration of detrimental non-tariff barriers.

“If we want to reduce these tariffs further, have a more even tariff reform program, and hold firm against restoration of these more egregious non-tariff barriers, then these coalitions need to form, be strengthened, and be sustained.”

Further emphasizing the importance of local engagement, Dr. Cielito Habito, Chairman and Founding Partner of BrainTrust Inc., suggested a strategy of “provincializing” agricultural development. Habito highlighted the agricultural sector’s significant contribution to the national GDP, and advocated for empowering local governments to more effectively support agricultural workers.

“Instead of leaving municipal agricultural workers to fend for themselves, we must deliberately capacitate local governments to do their job for them.”

The second parallel session shifted focus to the practical aspects of agricultural production, particularly the role of irrigation and governance in sustaining agricultural productivity.

Dr. Arlene Inocencio, Professor at the School of Economics in De La Salle University Manila discussed the significant impact of climate change on agriculture, alongside the rising costs of food, fertilizer, and fuel.

“Perhaps the goal, if there is only one thing we can focus on, is to increase water productivity and its sustainability. Ideally, this goes with climate change resilient infrastructure,” Inocencio said.

She also recommended equalized allocations for irrigation that enable the production of other high-value crops alongside rice, allowing wider coverage for food security.

On governance, Dr. Fermin Adriano, Advisory Council Member of the Asian Development Bank Institute, recommended looking into policies that foster long-term agricultural sustainability.

“We need to provide public goods instead of production inputs, which will only last you the cropping season, and will only benefit individual farmers, compared to public goods that will benefit the community, and will be useful for a longer period of time,” he said.

He also advocated for private sector investment in agricultural research, technology transfers, and the establishment of an agency to coordinate extension services with provincial governments, ensuring that regional agricultural needs are met.

Dr. Liborio Cabanilla, Professor at the College of Economic and Management in UP Los Baños, echoed recommendations for a specific and regionalized approach to agricultural development.

“The philosophy of the community-driven development is to involve the communities in local development decisions because it’s the right of the citizens,” he said. This approach, he said, yields higher productivity as farmers take ownership of the development of crop varieties, and higher engagement in environmental and community protection.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/20/strengthen-community-engagement-in-agriculture-development-experts/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Bill creating fisheries department hurdles House panels

Ada Pelonia
November 20, 2024

A proposed measure seeking to create a separate department that will manage the country's fisheries and aquatic resources secured the approval of two committees of the House of Representatives.

The measure, which will create the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR), hurdled the House Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources chaired by Bicol Saro Partylist Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan and the House Committee on Government Reorganization represented by its vice chairpersons Kabayan Partylist Rep. Ron Salo and General Santos City Rep. Loreto Acharon.

Both committees approved during the joint hearing the substitute bill consolidating 13 similar measures seeking to create the DFAR, subject to the amendments introduced by Albay Rep. Joey Salceda and Tingog Partylist Rep. Jude Acidre.

Yamsuan said establishing the DFAR would help fulfill the country's goal of attaining food security and safeguard the welfare of 2.5 million Filipinos dependent on the country's oceans and inland water bodies for their livelihood.

"This proposed measure is not merely about governance—it is about ensuring that our marine life and those who depend on them thrive in the face of modern challenges," he said.

"With the creation of DFAR, we are casting a wide net for sustainable development and economic prosperity. This is an opportunity to give our fisherfolk and marine ecosystems the future that they deserve while creating a legacy that will ripple across generations."

The lawmaker pushed for the passage of the DFAR bill amid concerns over the Philippines's declining fish catch.

Citing data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), he said the country produced 1.02 million metric tons (MMT) of fish in the second quarter, down by 6.2 percent from the 1.07 MMT recorded in the same period a year ago.

Aquaculture and municipal fisheries recorded significant decreases in production, which account for 46.3 percent and 25.5 percent, respectively, of overall production.

“Filipinos heavily depend on fisheries for economic growth, food security, and rural livelihoods. Yet, the sector grapples with multifaceted challenges, such as illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUUF), habitat degradation, aging fisherfolk population, and the many impacts of climate change,” said Yamsuan.

He said establishing a department focused on sustainable aquatic resource management would address these challenges.

“This independent agency, detached from the Department of Agriculture, will reduce bureaucratic hurdles, streamline decision-making processes, and give the much-needed specialized attention and technical expertise to meet the sector’s unique needs,” he said.

“With a robust institutional backing, I am certain that the DFAR will help unlock the full potential of this vital industry for generations to come.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/20/bill-creating-fisheries-department-hurdles-house-panels/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

At UN climate talks, farmers argue for a share of money dedicated to fighting climate change

BusinessMirror
November 20, 2024

Baku, Azerbaijan – Extreme heat ruined the pineapples on Esther Penunia’s small farm in the Philippines this year, more disappointment than catastrophe since Penunia doesn’t depend on the farm for a living. But Penunia worries about the millions of small farmers in her part of the world who do depend on rice paddies, coconut groves and vegetable patches that are all threatened by climate change.

That’s why she’s hoping that countries at this year’s United Nations climate summit will dedicate some of the money for fighting climate change to agriculture—and the family farmers who feed most of the people in many parts of the world.

“You don’t help small farmers, where will you get your food?” wondered Penunia, secretary general of the Asian Farmers Association. “Who will farm for you? Who will catch the fish, who will get the honey, who will plant your vegetables?”

Many countries, especially in the Global South, need money to help pay for the months of recovery when typhoons wreck fields, to insure farmers against more extreme droughts and to prepare for a hotter world with better seeds, better fertilizers and better water infrastructure. But there’s a massive gap between the \$1 trillion in climate finance that poorer countries need, according to experts from the World Resources Institute, and what richer countries are prepared to pay.

Whatever deal is reached, it’s certain that the money will have to be stretched. And there’s debate about exactly how much money should go toward agriculture and how much toward cutting fossil fuel emissions. Small farmers get less than 1 percent of climate finance, according to a report last year from the Climate Policy Initiative. At the same time, food systems—all the processes involved in making, shipping and disposing of food—account for about a third of planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions.

Farmers’ efforts to adapt to a warming climate get harder the hotter it gets, Ismahane Elouafi, executive managing director of CGIAR, a global partnership for agricultural research, said in a statement. At a COP29 panel on climate-smart solutions for smallholder farmers, she added: “If we want to solve the issue, how could we not invest in a sector that is having a third of the problem?”

Praveena Sridhar, chief science and technical officer of Save Soil, a movement aimed at raising awareness about soil health, offered a simpler reason for why countries should help fund agriculture's adaptation to climate change. As hard as it is to agree on cutting fossil fuel use, it should be easier to support farming solutions proven to work.

"We have not figured out the puzzle yet," she said. "Why not look at the puzzle pieces we have figured out and start moving?"

Yet others worry that doing so would distract from tackling the biggest problem—fossil fuels.

Zeke Hausfather, a research scientist with the nonprofit Berkeley Earth, said in an email that there is "real potential" in land management changes to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. But the most that could cut emissions globally is around a billion tons a year, he said—just a tiny fraction of the 40 billion tons of carbon dioxide the world emits every year.

Hausfather also noted that carbon stored in the ground by more climate-conscious agricultural practices isn't guaranteed to stay there permanently, he said, referencing a paper he published this month.

That hasn't stopped some countries, companies and private investors from putting big money toward agricultural technology, including the \$9 billion announced last year at COP28 for a joint United States and United Arab Emirates-backed project aimed at innovating in farming and food systems to adapt to climate change and cut emissions. Another \$12 billion was announced for the effort this week in Baku.

With the incoming Trump administration likely to reverse many US climate initiatives, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack said he hopes business, academic and farming interests keep climate-related agriculture projects going. "It's always important to remember that we have three levels of government in the US. And there's going to be a lot of activity in cities and states that's going to complement what was being done in these initiatives that I think will continue," Vilsack said. The stakes are high for advocates like Penunia, who was disappointed that farmers weren't mentioned in language at the last UN climate talks.

"We hope that really we can be heard," she said. AP

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/20/at-un-climate-talks-farmers-argue-for-a-share-of-money-dedicated-to-fighting-climate-change/>

ABANTE TONITE:

Ilang lugar sa Eastern Visayas, may red tide

November 20, 2024

Pinatupad ngayon ang shellfish ban sa ilang lugar sa Eastern Visayas, ayon sa Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) nitong Miyerkoles.

Sinabi ng BFAR na nadiskubre ang red tide sa mga sample ng tubig dagat na nakolekta sa Cancabato Bay sa Tacloban City; baybayin ng Guiuan, Eastern Samar; baybaying tubig ng Calbayog City, Samar at Matarinao Bay sa mga bayan ng General MacArthur, Quinapondan, Hernani at Salcedo sa Eastern Samar.

Sanhi nito'y mahigpit na pinapayuhan ang publiko na wag mangolekta, magbenta o kumain ng anumang uri ng shellfish kabilang na ang maliliit na hipon.

Maliban sa mga isda, pusit, hipon at alimango na ligtas kainin ng tao basta't sariwa ito at nahugasang mabuti.

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/11/20/ilang-lugar-sa-eastern-visayas-may-red-tide/>

ABANTE TONITE:

Bell pepper P450 per kilo, iba pang gulay sumirit presyo

Sobra-sobra ang paglobo ng presyo ng iba't ibang gulay sa mga palengke dahil sa mga nagdaang bagyo.

Tulad sa Nepa Q Mart sa Quezon City kung saan pinakamalaki ang itinaas ng bell pepper na ngayon ay P450 kada kilo na mula sa P300 noong nakaraang linggo.

Tumaas din ng P40 kada kilo ang presyo ng kamatis, talong, carrots, repolyo, sayote, at pepino.

Nasa P240 na mula sa P200 ang presyo ng kamatis, P200 mula sa P140 ang talong, P240 mula sa P180 ang carrots, P140 mula sa P100 ang repolyo, P100 mula sa P80 ang sayote, at P160 mula sa P140 ang pepino.

Wala naman pagbabago sa presyo ng manok na tumatalon sa pagitan ng P170 hanggang P190. Gayundin ang baboy na nananatili pa rin sa P300 kada kilo.

Samantala, binatangos ng Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) ang hindi umano pagkonsulta ng pamahalaan sa mga agriculture stakeholder bago nagdesisyon na mag-angkat ng gulay at isda.

Una nang ipinaliwanag ng Department of Agriculture na malaki ang pinsalang iniwan ng sunod-sunod na bagyo sa agrikultura ng bansa pero iginiit ng SINAG na dapat tinanong muna sila kung importasyon ang solusyon para rito.

Nagtataka rin ang grupo kung bakit binuksan na agad sa importasyon ang gulay kahit “small scale” pa lamang ito. (Migo Fajatin)

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/11/20/bell-pepper-p450-per-kilo-iba-pang-gulay-sumirit-presyo/>