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THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Landbank lending program gives boost to agriculture value chain

[Keisha Ta-Asan](#) - The Philippine Star

November 25, 2024 | 12:00am



Developed in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Department of Agrarian Reform, other government and private partners, the AGRISENSO Plus lending program was launched on Nov. 22 in Candaba, Pampanga.

Landbank / Released

MANILA, Philippines — State-run Land Bank of the Philippines, together with its partners, has launched a lending program to strengthen support for the agriculture sector,

Developed in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Department of Agrarian Reform, other government and private partners, the AGRISENSO Plus lending program was launched on Nov. 22 in Candaba, Pampanga.

The program is designed to provide support such as expanded eligibility, lower interest rates and a simplified loan process for small farmers, fishers, agribusinesses as well as other players in the agriculture value chain.

Agriculture graduates will also be eligible to access the program within three years after graduation. This is part of the bank's efforts to nurture the next generation of agri-entrepreneurs.

With the AGRISENSO Plus program, Landbank is targeting 10,000 small farmers, fishers and agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) to benefit from accessible credit assistance.

"AGRISENSO Plus reflects Landbank's commitment to providing holistic and meaningful support to the entire agriculture sector," Landbank president and CEO Lynette Ortiz said in a statement.

"Through strategic collaborations with public and private partners, we are complementing accessible credit with insurance benefits, capacity-building and other interventions to boost productivity, enhance income, drive sustainable growth, and contribute to national food security," she added.

The AGRISENSO Plus offers a fixed affordable interest rate of four percent per annum for small farmers, fishers and ARBs, while other borrowers benefit from a competitive rate of 6.5 to 7.5 percent per annum.

Beyond financing, AGRISENSO Plus provides eligible borrowers with free life insurance and credit life insurance. Program borrowers are also qualified for training and capacity-building programs to improve agricultural practices and business management skills.

Large enterprises and anchor firms who are lending to their partner in the agriculture value chain also gain a concessional interest rate with a 0.5 percent discount.

According to Landbank, the program has a total P11.47 billion fund allocation, of which P1.47 billion is sourced from the penalties due from banks under Republic Act 11901 or The Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development Financing Enhancement Act of 2022 Law.

Existing AGRISENSO borrowers with approved credit lines will automatically transition to AGRISENSO Plus upon their next loan availment, allowing them to benefit from the program's enhanced features.

"Through the AGRISENSO Plus Lending Program, Landbank remains a steadfast partner in agricultural and rural development, helping to drive economic growth and food security for the nation," the bank added.

As of September, Landbank has extended P731.76 billion in loans to agriculture, fisheries and rural development, making it the biggest lender to the agricultural sector.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/11/25/2402638/landbank-lending-program-gives-boost-agriculture-value-chain>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Meat imports nearing record high volume

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

November 25, 2024 | 12:00am



Pork products are on display for sale in Marikina Public Market on August 13, 2024.

STAR / Walter Bollozos

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MANILA, Philippines — The country's meat imports are on pace to reach a new record high as imports through September have breached one million metric tons (MT), driven by higher purchases of pork and chicken products.

Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) data showed that meat imports from January to September reached 1.039 million MT, about 12.64 percent higher than the 923,160.367 MT recorded in the same period last year.

The nine-month volume is just 165,000 MT away from matching the full-year meat import volume in 2023 of 1.204 million MT.

Meat imports have averaged about 115,545.032 MT from January to September, with shipments accelerating in the second half of the year.

In the third quarter alone, meat imports rose by nearly 18 percent to 392,160.271 MT, averaging at 130,720.09 MT, based on BAI data.

The country's meat imports through September are just 317,000 MT away from matching the record-high 1.356 million MT recorded volume in 2022.

Pork imports during the nine-month period rose by almost 13 percent to 517,860.193 MT from 458,703.533 MT as the country relied on foreign supplies to augment domestic stocks and stabilize prices of the meat item.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. earlier said pork prices would remain stable in the remaining months of the year because of the continuous entry of pork imports as reflected in the country's current frozen pork inventory figures.

Should pork prices increase, it would only be minimal, Tiu Laurel said, attributing it to the higher than usual demand driven by the holiday season.

The agriculture chief explained that the increase in imports somehow mitigates the possible rise in pork prices due to the decimation of domestic hog inventory from continued devastation and threats of African swine fever.

The country's imports of pork bellies (liempo) and pork cuts each grew by a double-digit rate. Purchases of pork bellies abroad rose by almost a quarter year-on-year to 62,796.518 MT while imports of pork cuts increased by 16 percent to 189,405.236 MT.

Chicken meat imports, meanwhile, grew by 6.43 percent year-on-year to 345,860.144 MT from 324,977.39 MT, lifted by higher purchases of mechanically deboned meat abroad, which is a critical raw material used to manufacture processed meat items like hotdogs and meat loaves.

Chicken MDM imports grew by 9.7 percent to 195,796.042 MT from 178,461.611 MT.

BAI data showed that imports of chicken cuts dropped by 8.4 percent to 42,518.49 MT from 46,400.6 MT. Meanwhile, imports of chicken leg quarters inched up to 87,000.504 MT from last year's 85,161.981 MT.

Furthermore, beef imports expanded by 35 percent during the nine-month period to 144,023.835 MT from 106,676.734 MT as consumers' demand for the meat product grew as the price difference with pork thinned this year.

Last month, meat importers cautioned that the rise in meat imports may not translate to lower meat prices as more shipments arrive in the country, especially delayed orders, squeezing the profit margins of traders and importers.

The Meat Importers and Traders Association explained that the sudden arrival of all the imported meat products is squeezing the liquidity of some industry players, forcing them to sell their items below landed costs.

However, the lower wholesale prices may not be passed on to consumers as other players in the value chain could keep the gains, especially since the market is anticipating higher prices in the current quarter, the group added.

At present, pork liempo in Metro Manila costs between P33 and P400 per kilo while pork kasim fetches from P280 to P360 per kilo, based on Department of Agriculture (DA) monitoring reports. DA reports also showed that the retail price of whole chicken ranges from P140 to P210 per kilo.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/11/25/2402648/meat-imports-nearing-record-high-volume>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

25,000 MT fish import approved

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

November 25, 2024 | 12:00am



Workers push a cart with buckets of fish at the Navotas Fish Port in Metro Manila on March 17, 2023.

AFP / Jam Sta. Rosa, File

MANILA, Philippines — Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has allowed the importation of 25,000 metric tons (MT) of frozen fish and aquatic products, saying it is necessary to curb inflation.

In Memorandum Order 51, Tiu Laurel said 24,000 MT of the total would be allocated to import salmon, squid, tuna, black-cod, gindara, halibut sardines and red snapper. The remaining 1,000 MT would be for small pelagic fishes to be sold under the Kadiwa ng Pangulo (KNP) program.

“In order to ensure the steady supply of affordable fish and fishery/aquatic products for a food-secure country, taking into consideration public welfare

and to support the implementation of KNP, a total volume of 1,000 MT shall be allocated for distribution to the Kadiwa Centers,” Tiu Laurel said.

He noted that the Fisheries and Aquaculture Board of the Philippines presented during the third quarter meeting of the National Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (NFARMC) on Sept. 2 a request for the issuance of a Certificate of Necessity to Import (CNI) to certain fish and aquatic products to curb inflation, ensure food security and diversify food choices.

“The NFARMC issued Resolution 35 approving and recommending the issuance of a special CNI 25,000 MT of salmon (whole), species of squid that will not compete with local production, tuna (by-products only), black-cod (whole), gindara (whole), and halibut (whole) for the months of September to December 2024,” Tiu Laurel said.

Individuals, corporations, partnerships, registered fisheries associations or cooperatives, with active accreditation as importers of food fish under Fisheries Administrative Order 195 or registered under FAO 259, are qualified to import.

Tiu Laurel said each qualified importer can import an initial volume of 28 MT.

“The remaining volume shall be allocated to the qualified importers on a first come, first serve basis,” he added.

Meanwhile, former agriculture secretary Leonardo Montemayor on Sunday said farmers’ groups should be consulted on the Department of Agriculture (DA)’s plan to import vegetables and fish.

Montemayor, chairman of the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF), said in a radio interview that the DA should prioritize ways to help peasants recover amid the impacts of successive typhoons on the local agriculture sector.

“The DA should focus on the assistance to farmers for them to recover. At the same time, if they think there is a need to import, what is important is to consult with the farmers, through their associations,” Montemayor said.

Montemayor added that the DA always resorts to importation instead of getting feedback from farmers.

“Whenever there is calamity, what we always hear is importation. The government should instead ensure intervention so that our farmers can recover if there is a temporary shortage in the supply, and importation can be considered after assisting the farmers,” he noted.

Montemayor said that at least one million metric tons in rice production was lost amid the impacts of successive typhoons, El Niño and other weather disturbances this year.

“The shortage can be supplied through importation (of rice) as traders are free to import rice from other countries,” he said.

According to Montemayor, the DA should consider alternative sources of vegetables before resorting to imports.

“We have alternative sources (of vegetables) in Visayas, like Negros Oriental and Cebu, which are vegetable bowls. The government should address the issue of logistics to ensure the delivery of vegetables and fish in Luzon. It is better to improve the system in the delivery of vegetables and fish to address the shortage here in Luzon, especially Metro Manila,” Montemayor said.

P11 billion for farmers, fishers

At least P11.47 billion was allocated for credit assistance to 10,000 small farmers, fishers and agrarian reform beneficiaries.

The government-run Landbank, DA and Department of Agrarian Reform launched the Agrisenso Plus Lending Program to provide more accessible and inclusive financing, complemented by other support interventions, for farmers and fishers.

“Agrisenso Plus reflects Landbank’s commitment to providing holistic and meaningful support to the entire agriculture sector. Through strategic collaborations with public and private partners, we are complementing accessible credit with insurance benefits, capacity-building and other interventions to boost productivity, enhance income, drive sustainable growth and contribute to national food security,” said Landbank president and chief executive officer (CEO) Lynette Ortiz.

Ortiz said funding for the Agrisenso Plus would be sourced from the P1.47-billion penalties due from banks under Republic Act 11901 or The Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development Financing Enhancement Act of 2022.

According to Ortiz, Landbank, as the biggest lender to the agriculture sector, has extended P731.76 billion in loans to agriculture, fisheries and rural development as of September 2024.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/11/25/2402716/25000-mt-fish-import-approved>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Isabela under state of calamity

[Jun Elias](#) - The Philippine Star

November 25, 2024 | 12:00am

CAUAYAN, Isabela – The province of Isabela has been placed under a state of calamity due to massive damage caused by recent typhoons.

Gov. Rodito Albano declared a state of calamity yesterday after an assessment conducted by the Department of Agriculture showed Isabela incurred P2 billion in crop damage from the six successive typhoons that entered the country from October to early this month.

Albano said the declaration would be formalized today through the passage of a resolution by the provincial board.

He said up to P20 million would be allocated to assist typhoon-affected farmers, who received financial assistance when President Marcos visited the province on Friday.

Albano said he would meet with local officials to discuss the distribution of financial and relief assistance to residents displaced by floods.

He said the Department of Public Works and Highways has yet to assess the damage to infrastructure.

Psychosocial assistance

Meanwhile, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) will send psychosocial responders to help typhoon victims in Cagayan Valley and Bicol rebuild their lives.

The first group of responders will help children and other vulnerable people cope with the trauma caused by the calamities.

“The effects of the recent tropical cyclones that hit our country have brought emotional stress to some of our kababayans,” Irene Dumlao, chief of the DSWD disaster response management group, said.

Dumlao said that through counseling, the trauma caused by disasters on affected people would be lessened.

In Albay, the responders conducted a psychosocial support activity for 30 children at the Agos Elementary School in Polangui.

A similar activity conducted in Barangay Borabod in Libon town was attended by 63 children.

Up to 21 families in Canaman and Camaligan towns in Camarines Sur, who lost relatives at the height of Severe Tropical Storm Kristine and Super Typhoon Leon, participated in the counseling.

In nearby Milaor town, the DSWD conducted art therapy with storytelling for nine children.

Seven children in Sta. Cruz, Canaman received psychological first aid, the DSWD said.

In Cagayan Valley, a psychosocial support team from the DSWD’s office in Nueva Vizcaya provided assistance to two people from Ambaguio town who lost their loved ones at the height of typhoons Nika, Ofel and Pepito.

During psychosocial counseling, responders allow clients to share their experiences and fears or worries, with the hope that doing so will lessen their pains.

Meanwhile, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) has deployed communication systems to typhoon-affected areas in Catanduanes.

Marcos ordered the deployment when he visited the province last week.

Marcos directed various government agencies to immediately distribute relief goods and provide shelter to victims of Pepito, as well as restore communication and power connections.

DICT Secretary Ivan Uy requested Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (CICC) executive director Alexander Ramos to provide emergency communication support to Catanduanes.

The CICC deployed a self-powered, all-weather, all-terrain communication system to provide people internet connection.

Two emergency communications boxes were sent to Virac on Friday, with the help of the Philippine Air Force and the Office of Civil Defense.

The emergency commsbox is capable of providing free WiFi connection to 100 users per day.

Eleven of 16 municipalities in Catanduanes were severely affected by Pepito.

Authorities said it would take two weeks to fully restore power in the province. — Sheila Crisostomo

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/11/25/2402740/isabela-under-state-calamity>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Release P178.5 million smuggled frozen mackerel, BOC asked

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

November 25, 2024 | 12:00am



This file photo shows galunggong (round scad)

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STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has asked the Bureau of Customs (BOC) to release the P178.5 million worth of seized smuggled frozen mackerel to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

Tiu Laurel made the appeal so that the 580 metric tons of fish can be used in the government's relief efforts.

In a letter to Customs Commissioner Bienvenido Rubio dated Nov. 18, Tiu Laurel cited the findings of the National Fisheries Laboratory Division of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), which showed that the frozen fish is fit for human consumption, with no signs of spoilage.

“The fish products are deemed fit for immediate release and can be utilized to address food security needs, especially in relief operations. This initiative would support the DSWD and the Department of Agriculture (DA)’s efforts to aid the victims of the recent typhoons,” Tiu Laurel said.

At least 21 shipping containers of frozen mackerel arrived at the Manila International Container Port in October.

The shipment lacked the required sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances.

A joint team from the DA’s Inspectorate and Enforcement Office and the BOC intercepted the shipment.

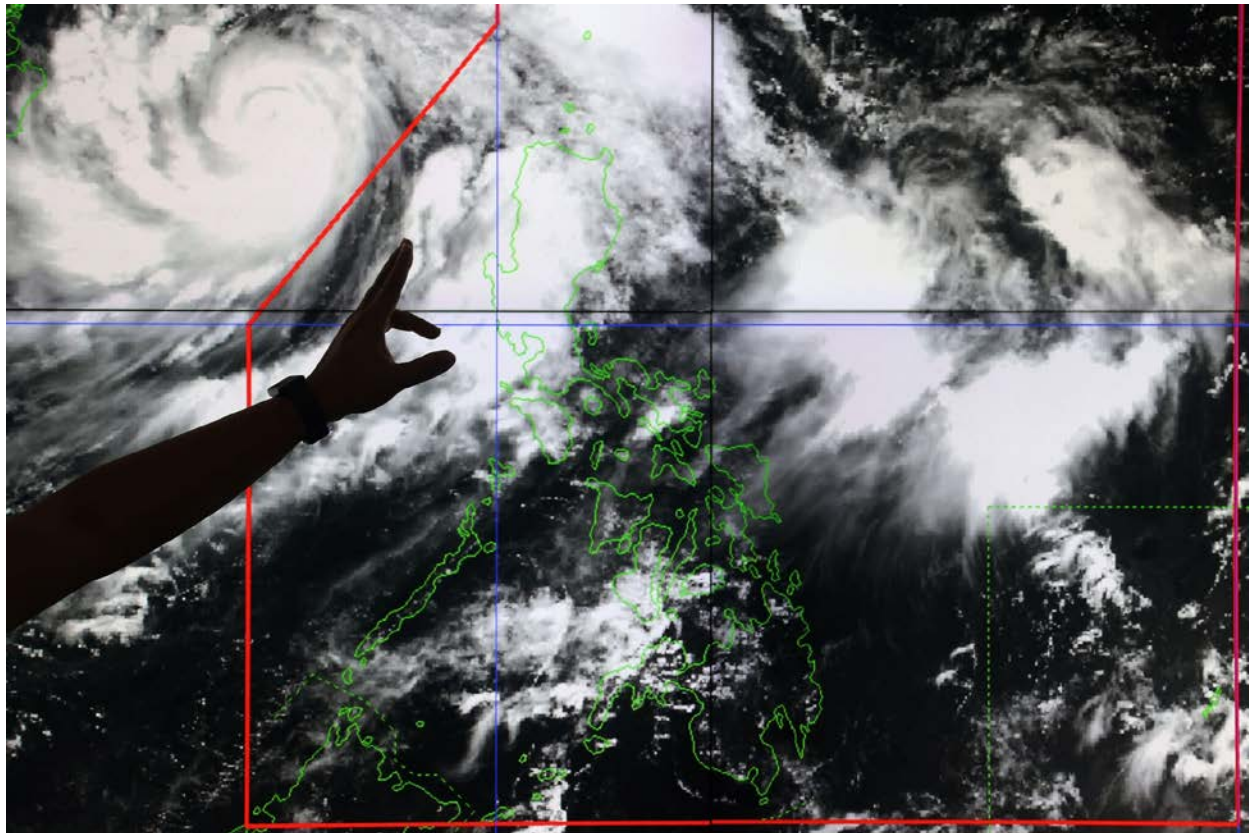
Tiu Laurel has directed BFAR to conduct laboratory tests to evaluate the suitability of the frozen mackerel for distribution to typhoon-affected communities.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/11/25/2402758/release-p1785-million-smuggled-frozen-mackerel-boc-asked>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Typhoons force rethink of planting strategies in storm-damaged areas

November 24, 2024 | 7:38 pm



By Adrian H. Halili, *Reporter*

THE recent spate of typhoons traversing the Philippines has forced farmers to re-evaluate their planting strategies, with quick-to-mature crops now in favor to increase the likelihood that harvests can be brought in once storm warnings are raised.

Nilor S. Go, a rice and yellow-corn farmer from Isabela province, said white corn, the variety used for human consumption, as opposed to the yellow type used in animal feed, is now looking more attractive because of the shorter time to harvest.

"Right now, we are trying to look at crops that can grow in the next 70 to 75 days. The alternative is sweet (white) corn," he said in a phone interview.

"Isabela is not known for producing white corn. Here we normally plant yellow corn for feed. So, we're trying to consider food-grade corn. It is also more of a high value crop," he added.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) said it is setting aside P5.32 billion for the National Corn Program next year, to fund new irrigation facilities, post-harvest facilities, planting material, and fertilizer.

Mr. Go said the weather disturbances in recent weeks wiped out much of his standing crop, mostly corn.

"One typhoon is more than enough to destroy our harvest, but six consecutive typhoons really battered us," he added.

He said that his farm entered the yellow corn growing season last month, and this was the crop that the typhoon hit.

"Yellow corn takes four months to grow. If we were to plant again in December, it will start flowering by February, which puts it in the dry season," he said.

The government weather service, known as PAGASA, logged six successive typhoons approaching or traversing the eastern and northern Philippines in November.

The DA estimated that damage to farms at about P10 billion, according to initial reports following Tropical Cyclone Ofel (International name: Usagi), the last of the storms for which estimates have been released. It has yet to report the damage caused by Pepito (Man-Yi).

The DA estimated that damage to farms at about P10 billion, according to initial reports following Tropical Cyclone Ofel (International name: Usagi), the last of the storms for which estimates have been released. It has yet to report the damage caused by Pepito (Man-Yi).

The DA has said that producers are having difficulty in recovering from the recent weather disturbances.

According to Mr. Go it would take him four to five crops to fully recover from damage inflicted by the storms.

The Philippines is set to face an increased likelihood of tropical cyclone activity in the coming month due to La Niña.

PAGASA has cited a 71% likelihood of La Niña setting in between November and January, lasting until early next year.

Mr. Go said that he was also looking to expand into value-added processing, rather than selling his crops to processors.

“We need to process our own produce. As farmers, we are always at the mercy of the middlemen or the processing industry,” he added.

He said his Isabela farm typically supplies yellow corn to feed manufacturers.

“Our plan for this coming season... is to really diversify our crops. We’re looking to expand to fruit bearing trees,” he added.

Before becoming a farmer, Mr. Go had worked for an information technology firm in Metro Manila. But the 2019 coronavirus pandemic had caused him to return to his home province and try his hand at farming.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/11/24/636853/typhoons-force-rethink-of-planting-strategies-in-storm-damaged-areas/>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Meat imports up 12.6% as of September

[By Janine Alexis Miguel](#)

November 25, 2024

THE Philippines' meat imports from January to September totaled 1.039 million metric tons (MT), 12.6 percent higher than the 923,160 MT in the same period last year, according to data from the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Animal Industry (DA-BAI).

Pork accounted for 517,86 MT or 49.7 percent of total meat imports during the period. The volume was also more than the 458,703 MT in 2023.

Imported chicken followed with 345,860 MT, up 6.4 percent from the comparable period's 324,977 MT. Chicken comprised 33.2 percent of total meat shipments.

Meanwhile, imported beef posted the largest increase during the period at 144,023 MT, up by 35 percent from 106,676 MT in the previous year.

The Philippines shipped 30,375 MT of buffalo meat during the same period, or.05 percent lower than the 31,660 MT a year earlier. Imported lamb shipments, likewise, were lower by 11.9 percent at 566.3 MT compared to 642.88 MT in 2023.

Also down by 40 percent were duck meat imports at 139.96 MT compared to 229.3 MT in the previous year.

Brazil supplied the most meat during the period at 355,955 MT, or 34.2 percent of the country's total meat imports.

Second was the United States at 154,965 MT, and third was Spain at 130,624 MT.

Fourth was Canada at 92,888 MT; fifth was Australia at 57,042 MT; and sixth was the Netherlands at 52,324 MT.

Even so, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Services (FAS) projected pork production in the Philippines would increase to 1.04 million MT in 2024 compared to 2023's forecast of 950,000 MT due to repopulation efforts of the pig commercial sector.

The agency also hiked the country's 2024 beef production forecast to 183,000 MT compared to 2023's 182,000 MT.

Executive Order 62 is likewise expected to augment the local supply of agricultural commodities such as chicken to help meet the strong market demand over the medium term, the FAS noted. In 2023, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported the country produced over 5 million MT of livestock, poultry and other animal products. The DA said this is a sign of recovery from the impact of Covid-19 and animal diseases.

Also cited was the lifting of temporary bans on imported domestic and wild birds, their by-products, and livestock from other countries due to bird flu and African swine fever.

The DA added it aims to boost domestic production of livestock and poultry by five times in five years to minimize imports.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/11/25/business/top-business/meat-imports-up-126-as-of-september/2010331>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

DA issues rules on 25K-MT fish, aquatic items imports

Ada Pelonia
November 25, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) released guidelines for the implementation of the 25,000 metric tons (MT) of certain imported frozen fish and aquatic products.

This, after Agriculture Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. signed the Certificate of Necessity to Import (CNI) 25,000 MT of approved importable species to curb inflation, ensure food security, and diversify food choices.

Under the Memorandum Order (MO) 51, the maximum importable volume (MIV) of 24,000 MT would be allocated for salmon (whole), species of squid that will not compete with the local production, tuna (byproducts only), black cod (whole), gindara (whole), sardines, red snapper, grouper, and halibut (whole).

The agency said the remaining 1,000 MT allocated to the Kadiwa ng Pangulo (KNP) Program would be limited to small pelagic fish species. This move aims to ensure the steady supply of affordable fish and aquatic products.

Under an earlier circular, the DA said the KNP Program primarily supports Filipino farmers and producers. However, it allows flexibility such as the sale of imported products to address potential product supply gaps, but only under certain conditions.

This would occur when locally produced are “evidently unavailable” due to factors such as seasonal limitations or insufficient supply to meet demand and when prior approval is secured from the National Program Management Team (NPMT) to ensure transparency and compliance with the “Filipino First Policy.”

Meanwhile, the order said individuals, corporations, partnerships, registered fisheries associations or cooperatives with active accreditation as importers of food fish under FAO 195, or registered under FAO 259, may import under the CNI.

“For this purpose, a written intent shall be submitted to the BFAR, addressed to the Director, through the Fisheries Inspection and Quarantine Division (FIQD), within seven working days from the issuance of this order,” it read.

The order also noted that importers who failed to comply with the following would be disqualified from applying SPSICs under the CNI.

This includes those with a pending case regarding any food safety or importation rules and regulations or those who failed to secure a Bureau of Customs (BOC) accreditation and/or clearance at the start of the importation period.

The disqualification would also cover those who could not submit updated requirements for accreditation before the issuance of the CNI and those who failed to submit complete and updated requirements within seven working days from the date of the CNI's issuance.

The DA said the order would take effect immediately and remain in force unless revoked in writing. It added that all previous issuances inconsistent with the provisions stipulated under this order are already revoked.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/25/da-issues-rules-on-25k-mt-fish-aquatic-items-imports/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

PHL meat imports seen surpassing '23 record

Ada Pelonia

November 25, 2024

The country's meat imports by yearend could exceed last year's record as animal diseases and bad weather crimped domestic output, according to the Meat Importers and Traders Association (Mita).

Mita made the pronouncement after the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) reported that the Philippines's meat imports as of September 30 rose by 12.65 percent to 1.04 million metric tons (MMT) from 923,160 metric tons (MT) a year ago.

“Meat importation breached 1 million metric tons in September, which indicates that the Philippines will break last year's record-high of 1.2 MMT,” Mita President Emeritus Jesus Cham said via Viber.

Data from BAI, an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture, indicated that the Philippines imported 1.2 billion kilograms of meat products last year. Nearly half of the volume consisted of pork products.

Cham, however, warned that the increase in shipments would not automatically mean relief to consumers, especially during the holidays due to the threat of port congestion and the impact of a weak peso on prices.

“The record-high importation is worrisome as signs of port congestion are appearing.”

Cham also said the depreciation of the peso could increase the landed cost of imported meat products.

“Meanwhile, the successive typhoons have hurt demand and consumption and importers may not be able to raise prices enough to cover the added costs.”

Based on BAI data, chicken imports as of September 30 grew 6.43 percent to 345,860 MT from 324,977 MT. Mechanically deboned meat (MDM) accounted for the bulk of chicken shipments at 195,796 MT.

“However, turkey MDM jumped tremendously, albeit from a small base. Perhaps some processors have now learned to use it as a raw material,” Cham said.

The imports of turkey MDM stood at 995 MT in the reference period, which showed a significant increase from the 52 MT recorded in 2023.

Pork shipments accounted for the largest share of the country’s meat imports in January to September as it rose by 12.90 percent to 517,860 MT from the 458,703 MT recorded in the same period last year.

Cham said the increase in pork imports indicates that the pork shortage will continue despite the arrival of vaccines and inoculation of pigs against African swine fever.

Beef imports registered the biggest jump during the period as shipments surged by 35.01 percent to 144,023 MT from 106,676 MT, the bulk of which consisted of beef cuts at 98,932 MT.

“Beef continued its strong consistent increase, with total imports as of September almost matching the full year of 2023,” Cham said.

“More consumers and users apparently now see beef as a viable alternative to high priced pork and chicken.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/25/phl-meat-imports-seen-surpassing-23-record/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

DSWD may use seized frozen mackerel for relief operations–DA

Ada Pelonia
November 25, 2024

The Department of Agriculture (DA) called on the Bureau of Customs (BOC) to release 580 metric tons (MT) of seized frozen mackerel to the government’s social welfare arm after tests confirmed that these are safe for human consumption.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. noted that the shipments, which were earlier confiscated due to the absence of an import permit, should be transferred to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to aid relief operations and boost food security efforts.

“Consequently, the fish products are deemed fit for immediate release and can be utilized to address food security needs, especially in relief operations,” he said.

“This initiative would support the DSWD and the DA’s ongoing efforts to provide essential aid to victims of the recent typhoon.”

In a letter addressed to Customs Commissioner Bienvenido Rubio, the agriculture chief noted that laboratory tests confirmed that the frozen fish is fit for human consumption with no signs of spoilage or contamination.

These findings came from the National Fisheries Laboratory Division of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

The confiscated shipment worth around P178.5 million consisting of 21 container vans loaded with frozen mackerel arrived at the Manila International Container Port in early October without the required sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances (SPSICs).

An SPSIC would certify that an inbound shipment is safe for human and animal consumption and would not bring in any pests that could jeopardize the local agriculture sector.

Upon the confiscation, Laurel directed the BFAR to conduct laboratory tests to evaluate the suitability of the frozen mackerel for distribution to typhoon-affected communities.

The country has been grappling with successive typhoons that devastated agricultural farmlands and the fisheries sector, with damage reaching over P10 billion so far from typhoon Kristine to typhoon Nika.

This recently prompted the DA to consider importing vegetables and possibly expanding fish imports to stabilize prices of some key agricultural commodities that spiked following the damage brought by the typhoons. (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/19/da-eyes-importing-veggies-possibly-fish-after-typhoons/>)

To prevent unscrupulous individuals from smuggling or hoarding farm products, President Marcos Jr. had signed Republic Act (RA) 12022 or the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act, which he said would aid in the government crackdown against the cartels behind price and supply manipulation for agricultural products.

“By eliminating smuggling, hoarding, profiteering, and other cartel activities, we are not only shielding our local producers but also providing consumers with affordable agricultural and fishery products,” Marcos said.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/25/dswd-may-use-seized-frozen-mackerel-for-relief-operations-da/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Group pushes hike in climate finance share for farmers

Ada Pelonia
November 25, 2024

The Conference of Parties (COP) presidency should tackle the “inequities” in the resource allocation of the current climate finance to help farmers cope with the aftermath of extreme weather conditions, according to a nongovernment organization.

“The fight against climate change cannot emphasize enough the importance of agrifood systems. Ironically, this sector receives a meager share of the pie and it continues to decline,” Rice Watch and Action Network (R1) said in a statement.

Citing an analysis by the Climate Policy Initiative, R1 said it showed a mere 0.8 percent share of small-scale agrifood systems or \$5.53 billion of the total climate finance across all sectors of \$660.2 billion in 2019 to 2020.

The group also noted that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) reported in 2021 that climate-related development finance contributions towards agrifood systems declined by \$19 billion or 12 percent compared to 2020. Asia posted the biggest decline, by 44 percent compared to 2020.

“The inequities in resource allocation and worse, its further decline has cost the most vulnerable small-scale farmers and agri-micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) their remaining hope for resolution to their sad state.”

R1 said the Philippines recently experienced four strong typhoons, leaving Filipino farmers barely able to recover from the devastation of one extreme weather event to another.

“We join the united efforts of smallholder farmers, civil society, Indigenous Peoples (IPs), youth and women in seeking equitable share in climate financing,” R1 said.

“Only then can we truly uphold climate change resilience among our sectors that are most vulnerable to the devastation of climate change impact.”

The country has been grappling with successive typhoons recently that devastated agricultural farmlands and the fisheries sector, with damage reaching over P10 billion so far from typhoon Kristine to typhoon Nika.

Bloomberg reported that nearly 200 countries agreed to triple the amount of money available to help developing countries confront rapidly warming temperatures.

Rich countries have pledged to provide at least \$300 billion annually by 2035, through a wide variety of sources, including public finance as well as bilateral and multilateral deals. The agreement also calls on parties to work toward unleashing a total of \$1.3 trillion a year, with most of it expected to come through private financing.

Developed and developing countries entered the negotiations far apart. At one point on Saturday, the talks appeared to be on the brink of collapse, before numerous closed-door meetings brought a deal closer.

Rich nations are grappling with a slew of fiscal and political constraints, including inflation, constrained budgets and rising populism. The election of Donald Trump and his threat to pull the US out of the landmark Paris climate agreement also cast a shadow on the summit.

Under a compromise, rich nations eventually agreed to commit \$50 billion more than called for in a draft agreement on Friday. They had also made any agreement contingent on reaffirming last year’s COP28 outcome in Dubai that included a vow to transition away from fossil fuels.

Meanwhile, the Department of Agriculture (DA) entered into a tripartite agreement for a \$39.2-million climate change project set to benefit 1.25 million farmers in the climate-vulnerable regions of the country.

The department signed the Operational Partners Agreement together with the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) and FAO.

The seven-year initiative aims to boost the resilience of rural communities reliant on agriculture. The project spans five regions, nine provinces, and 100 towns.

The DA said a key outcome of the project is the adoption of climate-resilient farming practices by farmers, empowering them to establish sustainable enterprises.

“The project also aims to strengthen regulatory frameworks, enhance market systems, and improve knowledge management to mainstream and scale up climate-resilient agriculture nationwide.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/25/group-pushes-hike-in-climate-finance-share-for-farmers/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

LandBank expands lending program to fishers, MSMEs

Reine Juvierre S. Alberto
November 25, 2024

THE Land Bank of the Philippines (LandBank) rebranded a lending program to expand credit access to small farmers, fishers, agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) and agricultural micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

LandBank's rebranded lending program called "Agrisenso Plus," widened its scope by covering small fishers and MSMEs.

The state-run lender targets to support 10,000 beneficiaries in accessing credit assistance with low interest rates and simplified loan process to improve their productivity and income.

The lending program has a fixed interest rate of 4 percent per annum for small farmers, fishers and ARBs, while a 6.5 percent to 7.5 percent per annum will apply to other borrowers.

Meanwhile, large enterprises and anchor firms lending to their partner small farmers and fishers and their cooperatives and associations, and ARBs and Agrarian Reform Beneficiary Organizations (ARBOs), also gain a concessional interest rate with a 0.5 percent discount.

Agriculture graduates are also now eligible to access the loan program within three years after graduation, the Landbank said.

Aside from financing, the loan program also provides free life insurance and credit life insurance to small farmers and fishers and ARB borrowers. Program borrowers can also access training and capacity-building programs to enhance agricultural practices and business management skills.

Moreover, LandBank reduced the documentary requirements by eliminating the need for Purchase Orders for individual farmers, and endorsements from Irrigators' Associations for farmers in irrigated areas.

ARBs who are also rice farmers now have the option to use endorsements from either the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) or the National Irrigation Administration.

LandBank President and CEO Lynette V. Ortiz said the lending program “reflects the bank’s commitment to providing holistic and meaningful support” to the agriculture sector.

“Through strategic collaborations with public and private partners, we are complementing accessible credit with insurance benefits, capacity-building and other interventions to boost productivity, enhance income, drive sustainable growth, and contribute to national food security,” Ortiz said.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/25/landbank-expands-lending-program-to-fishers-msmes/>

ABANTE TONITE:

Agri sector hindi kontrolado ng DA – Chiz Escudero

November 24, 2024

Muling isinulong ni Senate President Francis “Chiz” Escudero ang kanyang panukala na ayusin ang mga butas sa sistema ng agricultural services sa bansa upang buhayin at palakasin ang naturang sektor ng agrikultura.

Sa kanyang pulong kasama ang mga stakeholder sa nasabing sektor, ipinaliwanag ni Escudero na mahalagang ibalik sa kontrol at superbisyon ng Department of Agriculture (DA) at mga ahensiyang nasa ilalim nito ang agricultural support services at facilities.

Pinuna ng senador ang hindi pagkakapare-pareho sa pagpapatupad ng mga programa at polisiya na nakakaapekto sa agriculture sector sa iba’t ibang lugar.

Aniya, dahilan na rin ito paglilipat ng ilang kapangyarihan mula sa national tungo sa mga local government unit (LGU) sa ilalim ng Republic Act No. 7160 o Local Government Code of 1991. Kabilang dito ang agricultural at health services na hawak na ngayon ng mga LGU.

“Ang problema kasi sa agrikultura natin dinevolve ‘yan kasama ng health sa Local Government Code of 1991. Kaya nawalan ng kamay, braso at paa ang agriculture department at health kaugnay sa nagaganap sa mga LGU,” pahayag ni Escudero sa ika-25 anibersaryo ng Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. na ginaganap kamakailan lang.

Nais ng senador na plantsahin ito sa itinutulak niyang panukala.

“May problema sa iba’t ibang polisiya kaugnay ng iba’t ibang regulasyon at pagbabawal na konektado sa mga bagay tulad ng ASF (African Swine Fever), mga regulasyon galing sa mga LGU na walang kontrol ang DA,” sabi ni Escudero.

Mahalaga aniya na panghawakan muli ng kalihim ng DA ang administrative control at superbisyon sa mga personnel nito upang palakasin ang sektor ng agrikultura sa buong bansa.

“In contemplating whether or not to revive renationalization, sana maging solusyon ng administrasyon na timbangin nila ‘yung renationalization ng agriculture sector muli para hawak ng kalihim ang lahat ng programang agrikultura,” ayon pa kay Escudero.

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/11/24/agri-sector-hindi-kontrolado-ng-da-chiz-escudero/>

ABANTE:

Smuggled alumahan swak sa mga binagyo

November 24, 2024



Hiniling ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. sa Bureau of Customs (BOC) na ibigay sa Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) ang nasamsam nitong 580 toneladang smuggled na frozen mackerel o alumahan para sa relief operations at maipamahagi sa mga nasalanta ng mga bagyo at kalamidad at mga mahihirap.

Kinumpiska ang frozen mackerel dahil wala itong mga import permits o sanitary phytosanitary import clearance.

Wala man itong import permit, sinabi ng DA na ligtas namang kainin ang isda ayon sa mga laboratory tests na isinagawa ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

Sabi ni Tiu Laurel sa liham kay Customs Commissioner Bienvenido Rubio noong November 18, “laboratory tests confirmed that the frozen fish is fit for human consumption, with no signs of spoilage or contamination.”

Dagdag pa niya, “the fish products are deemed fit for immediate release and can be utilized to address food security needs, especially in relief operations.”

Sa pamamagitan ng pag-release ng BOC ng frozen fish, matutulungan pa nito ang mga hakbang ng DSWD at DA sa pagbibigay ng ayuda sa mga biktima.

Galing sa 21 container vans na kinumpiska sa Manila International Container Port noong Oktubre ang frozen mackerel ng joint team ng DA at BOC. (Eileen Mencias)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/11/24/smuggled-alumahan-swak-sa-mga-binagyo/>