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MANILA BULLETIN:

Marcos reorganizes Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions

BY [BETHEENA UNITE](#)

Nov 27, 2024 03:59 PM

President Marcos has ordered the reorganization of the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (Citem) to ensure an "integrated approach" in the country's export marketing.



Through Executive Order No. 75, the Citem shall now be governed by a Board composed of executives from various government agencies, with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) secretary as the chairperson.

Other members of the Board include the secretaries of Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Tourism (DOT); president and general manager of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS); representatives from the Office of the President (OP) and the private sector, who will be appointed by the President.

The Board shall have regular meetings once every quarter and such special meetings as may be called upon by the Chairperson when deemed necessary.

The Board's functions include planning and implementing trade fairs, missions, and other export promotional activities to showcase Philippine products and services, and promote the country's participation in overseas trade fairs. It will also implement industry development programs for export products and services, including merchandise and technical assistance programs.

Within six months from the effectivity of order, the Citem shall come up with a roadmap that will detail the strategic plans and programs to further strengthen its mandates.

Citem, formerly Philippine Trade Exhibition Center (PTEC), is under the DTI.

Its reorganization was ordered as the President deemed that "there is a need to revisit and strengthen the organizational structure of the Citem to ensure integrated approach in export marketing towards attaining the objective of reinforcing the country's posture as a leading producer of quality export products and services."

The EO was signed on Nov. 22.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/11/27/marcos-reorganizes-center-for-international-trade-expositions-and-missions>

MANILA BULLETIN:

October declared as National Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Services Month

BY **BETHEENA UNITE**

Nov 27, 2024 03:16 PM

President Marcos has declared October of every year as National Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Services Month.



(MB File Photo)

Marcos made the declaration through Proclamation No. 753 dated Nov. 22, 2024.

According to the President, the observance of National Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Services Month "seeks to accelerate the development and delivery of a unified and efficient AF Extension Services."

It also aims to promote nationwide awareness on the role of agriculture and fisheries extension services in the development of the agri-fisheries sector, and ensure the support of stakeholders in advancing the quality and standards of the sector in the country.

It likewise honors the contribution of agricultural extension workers as frontline actors in technology-transfer and facilitators in providing farmers and fisherfolk access to extension services.

Under the proclamation, the Department of Agriculture (DA), through the Agriculture Training Institute (ATI), was directed to lead, coordinate, and supervise the observance of the National Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Services Month.

All other agencies and instrumentalities of the national government, including government-owned or -controlled corporations and state universities and colleges, were enjoined to actively participate and render the necessary support to DA and ATI for the effective implementation of the proclamation.

Local government units (LGUs), non-government organizations, professional associations, and the private sector, on the other hand, were encouraged to do the same.

Agriculture fisheries extension services refers to the provision of training, information, and support services by the government and non-government organizations to the agriculture and fisheries sectors to improve the technical, business, and social capabilities of farmers and fisherfolk.

It aims to improve productivity and competitiveness, and increase income and sustainability in the sector, thereby supporting farmers, fisherfolk, and farm workers in areas of production, post-harvest processing, marketing, entrepreneurship, management, community organizing, and institutional development.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/11/27/october-declared-as-national-agriculture-and-fisheries-extension-services-month>

MANILA BULLETIN:

PBBM inks laws establishing marine hatcheries in Agusan del Sur, Zamboanga City

BY **BETHEENA UNITE**

Nov 27, 2024 12:36 PM

President Marcos has signed laws establishing a marine hatchery in Agusan del Sur and Zamboanga City.



Central Bangus Hatchery in Panganan, Calape, Bohol (File Photo from BFAR)

Marcos signed Republic Act (RA) No. 12074 to establish a freshwater fish hatchery in the Municipality of Talacogon, Agusan del Sur, and Republic Act (RA) No. 12075 to establish multi-species marine hatchery in Zamboanga City.

Talacogon's freshwater fish hatchery and Zamboanga City's multi-species marine hatchery will be both under the supervision of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

Under the newly-signed laws, BFAR shall conduct a full-scale feasibility study prior to the construction of the hatcheries to comply with the requirements of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

"Within two years after the construction of the freshwater fish hatchery, the DA (Department of Agriculture)-BFAR, through a memorandum of agreement, shall transfer its management to the local government of the Municipality of Talacogon. It shall implement a training and phasing-in program for local government personnel on the management and operation of the hatchery," RA 12074 ordered.

For the hatchery in Zamboanga City, RA 12075 stated that the DA-BFAR "shall transfer the management of the multi-species marine hatchery to the local government of Zamboanga City within two (2) years after its construction through a memorandum of agreement."

"The DA-BFAR shall conduct continuing research and experimentation on the breeding and production of marine species, especially as they apply to local conditions, to discover new methods and technology that shall benefit the fisheries industry," RA 12075 ordered.

The Agriculture secretary was directed to include in its programs the conduct of the feasibility study for both projects and the consequent establishment of the hatcheries, the funding of which shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

The local government units (LGUs) concerned, on the other hand, shall set aside funds from any available local revenue in an amount deemed appropriate for the operationalization of the hatchery.

Both laws were signed by the President on Nov. 12, 2024.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/11/27/pbbm-inks-laws-establishing-marine-hatcheries-in-agusan-del-sur-zamboanga-city>

MANILA BULLETIN:

‘Maagang pamasko’: House super-panel aims to bring rice prices near P20 per kilo, says Salceda

BY [DEXTER BARRO II](#)

Nov 27, 2024 03:37 PM

AT A GLANCE

- President Marcos’ campaign promise to bring rice prices down to P20 per kilo has been given new life thanks to the House Murang Pagkain Super-committee's plan to pursue it.



President Marcos’ campaign promise to bring rice prices down to P20 per kilo has been given new life thanks to the House Murang Pagkain Super-committee's plan to pursue it.

This was according to the super-panel’s overall chairman Albay 2nd district Rep. Joey Salceda who said that their objective was to bring rice prices “as close as possible to the President’s aspiration”.

“We will try to push the envelope as close to that as possible. What I can tell you is that it looks like there is a path to P30 per kilo,” he said.

Salceda, an economist, noted that rice accounts for as much as 22 percent of total expenditures by poor households.

Food, in general, combines to as much as 54 percent of total spending by low-income families.

“A big part of that is cutting down excessive middleman and cartel profits,” he stressed.

The veteran lawmaker explained that landed price of imports—which includes movements in prices globally and the Marcos-ordered tariff reduction—declined by around 24.9 percent year on year.

He said over the same period, consumer retail prices went up 9.0 percent.

“It’s puzzling and an unmistakable sign of shenanigans in the rice trade sector,” Salceda said.

“That’s why we are looking into rice price manipulation over the past ten or so years...to learn from what happened, and to see whether the same network of smugglers and cartels are still in the game,” he added.

Salceda said the Murang Pagkain Super-committee aims to identify all profiteers, hoarders, smugglers, cartelists, and regulatory patrons involved in the rice price spike from 2012 to 2013, the price manipulation between 2016 and 2018, and the 2024 stubborn high prices.

“We have enough laws already—the key is to enforce them—catch them, prosecute them and punish them,” he emphasized.

The Bicolano solon pointed out that President Marcos has laid out enough course of action to lower rice prices in the country. He identified the policy of cutting tariffs on imported rice as one of these price-cutting measures.

Salceda cited that the farmgate price in Central Luzon is now just P20.02. In this case, assuming that milling yields 65 percent of that, milled rice should come out to P30.08 per kilo.

“Even if you assume profits of 20 percent, prices should be at P37 per kilo. Something is really wrong,” he said.

With this, Salceda said the super-panel plans to submit initial recommendations based on its inquiry before President Marcos by Christmas.

“Not yet the committee report, but we hope something that PBBM can use to crack down on price abuse. Pamasko man lang sa taumbayan (A Christmas gift for our countrymen),” he added.

The Murang Pagkain Super-committee brings together the Committees on Ways and Means, Trade and Industry, Agriculture and Food, Social Services, and the Special Committee on Food Security.

The panel is the House’s latest attempt to address issues in the country’s food supply chain, including price manipulation, smuggling, and hunger.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/11/27/house-super-panel-aims-to-bring-rice-prices-near-p20>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Sugar alternatives to be slapped with import clearance fees

Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas - The Philippine Star
November 28, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) is inching closer to imposing import clearance fees on sweeteners like glucose and fructose as it seeks to monitor the entry of the raw sugar alternatives amid concerns over unabated imports to the detriment of local farmers.

SRA administrator and CEO Pablo Luis Azcona said the SRA board is set to sign next month an order that would require importers of sweeteners under Tariff Line 1702 to pay an import clearance fee to the agency before allowing their shipments to be released at the port.

Azcona explained that the SRA board, the agency's highest policy-making decision body, has discussed the matter and all members are in agreement with the proposed regulatory measure.

The SRA board is chaired by Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., with members composed of Azcona and two board representatives each hailing from the sugar milling and the sugarcane planters sectors.

The proposed import clearance fee would be pegged at P10 per 50-kilogram bag equivalent of raw sugar, Azcona explained.

The regulatory measure, Azcona said, would allow the SRA to closely monitor the entry of imported sweeteners in the country, which has been blamed by certain quarters in the sugar industry as the reason for the lower than usual demand for local raw sugar.

“Our effort is not to regulate at the moment. Our effort is to gather accurate data to determine how huge is the volume of imports that enter the country. Besides, the charge for the import clearance fee is very minimal,” Azcona said.

Commodities under Tariff Line 1702 include glucose, fructose, artificial honey, palm sugar and maltose, among others. Imports under the tariff line are roughly estimated to be around 300,000 metric tons (in raw sugar equivalent), Azcona said.

The SRA board is also considering slapping the same regulatory measure on artificial sweeteners like sucralose and aspartame, Azcona said. He added that it would be a different sugar order should the board decide to push through with this.

“We would want to also monitor the volumes (of artificial sweeteners) coming in. Based on informal information, it is around 200,000 metric tons to 300,000 metric tons,” he said.

The SRA board also wants to check the health issues concerning artificial sweeteners by coordinating with the Department of Health to see the health effects of these sugar alternatives.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/11/28/2403397/sugar-alternatives-be-slapped-import-clearance-fees>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA bans importation of California poultry

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

November 27, 2024 | 9:30pm



Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) has banned the importation of domestic and wild birds, poultry products and by-products from California due to bird flu.

As this developed, the DA lifted the import ban it imposed on pork and pork products from Sweden as the outbreak of African swine fever (ASF) has been contained.

Meanwhile, a farmers' group asked the DA to suspend the importation of carabao meat or carabeef from areas in India affected by foot-and-mouth disease (FMD).

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. issued Memorandum Order (MO) 54 prohibiting the importation of domestic and wild birds and their products, including poultry meat, day-old chicks, eggs and semen from California.

He said a report submitted by the deputy administrator and chief veterinary officer of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service on Oct. 25 showed additional outbreaks of H5 subtype highly pathogenic avian influenza in California affecting domestic birds.

Tiu Laurel said processing, evaluation of application and issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary import clearance for affected commodities are suspended.

“All shipments coming from California that are in transit, loaded, accepted at the port before the official communication of this order to US authorities will be allowed, provided the products were produced on or before Oct. 11,” he said.

Swedish pork ban lifted

Meanwhile, Tiu Laurel also issued MO 53 allowing the resumption of the importation of domestic and wild pigs, their products and by-products, including pork, pig skin and semen from Sweden.

“Based on the official self-declaration report of the Swedish veterinary authorities to the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), all ASF reported cases have been resolved and no new outbreaks were logged after Sept. 30,” Tiu Laurel said.

He said the WOAH has declared Sweden free from ASF.

Based on the evaluation of the DA, the risk of contamination from domestic and wild pigs and their products and by-products from Sweden is negligible.

Indian carabeef ban sought

The Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) asked the DA to immediately suspend the importation of buffalo meat or carabeef from areas in India affected by FMD.

FFF board chairman Leonardo Montemayor cited a recent report of the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI)’s inspection team sent to India from July to August to look into the animal disease, food safety and bio-control situation.

“The BAI team found that FMD is prevalent in Maharashtra and Telangana, where several carabeef exporters to the Philippines are operating processing plants,” Montemayor said.

He said the BAI report showed the Indian government did not inform the WOAHA about the outbreaks.

Montemayor said the Philippines imports from 32 million to 48 million kilos of carabeef from India yearly.

Magsasaka party-list president Argel Joseph Cabatbat said banning carabeef from Maharashtra and Telangana would significantly cut the supply of raw materials for the local production of corned beef, hotdogs and other products.

“Our meat processors can still source their carabeef from FMD-free areas in India,” Cabatbat said.

ASF cases logged in Bohol

Meanwhile, ASF cases have been recorded in backyard farms in San Miguel town in Bohol, according to the provincial veterinary office.

Romulo Garcia of the Bohol veterinary office said three hogs in Barangay San Vicente tested positive for ASF.

Garcia said villagers immediately reported the cases to authorities, which ordered the culling of 22 hogs within the 100-meter radius from ground zero on Sunday.

The following day, another 33 hogs were slaughtered even as the animals were not tested for the virus.

Arnel Pocpoc, chief of Barangay San Vicente, said backyard hog raisers voluntarily gave up their hogs, including pregnant ones, for culling.

Garcia said the provincial government would indemnify affected hog raisers from P1,000 to P5,000 per pig.

Affected hog raisers will also receive P10,000 each in livelihood assistance from the provincial government. – Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas, Ric Obedencio

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/11/27/2403523/da-bans-importation-california-poultry>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

25 areas in Ilocos Region still under ASF red zone

By: [Hilda Austria](#) -

[Philippine News Agency](#) / 05:42 PM November 27, 2024

MALASIQUI, Pangasinan – Movement of live pigs, pork, pork products, and swine genetic materials in and out of Ilocos Region’s 25 towns and cities under red zone are still prohibited due to the presence of [African swine fever \(ASF\)](#) as of Wednesday.

According to the Department of Agriculture Ilocos regional office (DA-1), 15 of the ASF-affected localities are in Ilocos Sur, eight in La Union, and two in Ilocos Norte, the most recent addition of infected areas.

In a phone interview on Wednesday, Dr. Allen Mae Doctolero, DA-1 regulatory assistant division chief, said they continue to encourage the hog raisers in the region to implement biosecurity protocols to prevent further spread of the virus.

“We also asked them to not patronize swine from red zones and other illegal products that being brought into the region,” she said.

The concerned local government units (LGUs) have been strictly implementing quarantine, restriction of movement of pork and pork products, and culling if needed, she said.

Doctolero said they abide by the new guidelines on depopulation or culling set by the DA.

In the past, the policy is to cull all pigs within the 1-km. radius of the area where the infected animal is located.

This, however, was revised last September, with the covered area cut to a radius of 500 meters.

Hogs that tested positive for the virus will be culled but those that turn out negative need to be immediately brought to the area’s slaughterhouse and sold to consumers, with the latter still depending on the decision of the concerned LGU.

From July to September this year, there are 2,470 culled pigs in La Union, 900 heads in Ilocos Sur, and 80 in Ilocos Norte.

There are 353 hog raisers affected in la Union, 111 in Ilocos Sur, and 19 in Ilocos Norte.

Doctolero said affected hog raisers will receive indemnification from the DA for their culled hogs amounting to PHP4,000 per head for piglets, PHP8,000 per head for growers and fatteners, and PHP12,000 per head for breeders.

Each hog grower can claim up to 20 heads.

The 19 hog raisers in Rosario town, La Union, where the first cases of ASF this year was recorded, received a total indemnification of PHP595,000 in September, Doctolero said.

Vaccines

DA has already purchased ASF vaccines, and these were distributed in Batangas for initial testing.

Doctolero said they are still waiting for the downloading of vaccines in the region from the central office.

She said the flooding may have contributed to the spread of ASF virus in some areas.

“Since the rainy season is almost over, we hope that the virus will stop spreading,” she said.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2009860/25-areas-in-ilocos-region-still-under-asf-red-zone>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Meat importers support use of seized frozen meat, seafood for calamities

November 27, 2024 | 9:34 pm

THE Meat Importers and Traders Association (MITA) said seized frozen meat and seafood need to go into a reserve stockpile for use in emergencies, if the shipments are proven safe for human consumption.

"Since meat and seafood that are properly frozen and stored do not pose any health concerns, such products can constitute a reserve stock of protein to be tapped and utilized in emergency situations," MITA President Emeritus Jesus C. Cham said in a joint statement with the Fisheries and Aquaculture Board.

Earlier, the Department of Agriculture (DA) urged the Bureau of Customs (BoC) to release 580 metric tons of seized frozen mackerel for use in relief operations for typhoon victims.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. ordered the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources to conduct tests on the seized frozen fish.

"The seized mackerel underwent laboratory testing and were found to be fit for human consumption. We urge the competent authority to declare and certify the same as wholesome," Mr. Cham added.

He said that the DA should attempt to put to use all frozen meat and seafood seized by the BoC or abandoned by importers.

He added that both agencies should enter into a memorandum of understanding to formalize procedures.

"They should likewise be declared wholesome if tested and found to be fit for human consumption," he said.

Mr. Cham added that such a move could boost the government's food security efforts and decrease food waste.

He said that products should be tested and taken out of port within two months of seizure or abandonment.

"In this manner, port congestion can be avoided, and costs of electricity, storage and demurrage can be lessened," he added.

Republic Act 12022 or the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act, seeks to deter the smuggling or hoarding of farm products. The law classifies agricultural smuggling, hoarding, profiteering, and engaging in a cartel as economic sabotage. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/11/27/637861/meat-importers-support-use-of-seized-frozen-meat-seafood-for-calamities/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

SRA considering import clearance fee hike for alternative sweeteners

November 27, 2024 | 9:34 pm

THE SUGAR Regulatory Administration (SRA) said that it is studying an increase in import clearance fees for alternative sweeteners.

"Our (intent) is to gather accurate data on how much are entering and then what is entering. The charges for import clearances are very minimal," SRA Administrator Pablo Luis S. Azcona told reporters.

He said the planned fee hike for high fructose corn syrup is P30 per equivalent bag of sugar and P10 per equivalent bag for all other sweeteners.

Tariff Code 17.02 of the ASEAN Harmonized Tariff Nomenclature sets tariffs only for high fructose corn syrup.

Mr. Azcona added that a Sugar Order (SO) has been drafted and is up for review by the SRA board.

Mr. Azcona said the SRA is looking to approve the SO by next month with a potential effectivity date of January.

He added that industrial users of alternate sweeteners have also been consulted on the increase in import clearance fees.

"We explained to them that we are first data gathering, and then in the future we will (discuss other policies)," he said.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. has ordered an investigation into the entry of other sweeteners after meeting with the sugar industry. Producers have said such imports compete with cane sugar.

The regulator was tasked to look into the actual volumes of other sweeteners and, if warranted, require them to acquire clearances as well.

Additionally, Mr. Azcona said that the SRA is also seeking to address imports of artificial sweeteners.

"We would want to also monitor the volumes coming in. Based on our information it is quite large, between 200,000 to 300,000 tons," he added.

He said that the regulator will also study the health issues related to artificial sweeteners in potential collaboration with the Department of Health. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/11/27/637860/sra-considering-import-clearance-fee-hike-for-alternative-sweeteners/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Agricultural trade deficit tops \$3 billion in Q3

November 27, 2024 | 9:34 pm

THE agricultural goods trade was in deficit by \$3.01 billion in the third quarter, widening by 1.5% year-on-year, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

In a report, the PSA said agricultural trade — the sum of exports and imports — rose 12.1% to \$6.69 billion, reversing an 11.8% year-earlier decline.

Agricultural exports rose 21.8% to \$1.97 billion for the three months to September, accounting for 10.3% of total exports.

Animal or vegetable fats and oils and their cleavage products, prepared edible fats and animal or vegetable waxes were the top agricultural exports, accounting for 29.5% of the total with a value of \$583.43 million.

Farm products shipped to Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries accounted for 8.7% of total exports and were valued at \$239.85 million.

Malaysia was the Philippines' top export market for farm goods, accounting for \$121.13 million or 50.5% of the Philippines' farm exports to ASEAN.

Animal or vegetable fats and oils, followed by tobacco, and edible fruits and nuts were the top farm export to ASEAN.

Shipments to the European Union (EU) made up 19.4% of all agricultural exports, and were valued at \$410.78 million.

The top destination for Philippine farm products was the Netherlands which took in \$185.71 million, or 45.2% of all farm exports to the EU.

Animal or vegetable fats and oils and their cleavage products, prepared edible fats and animal or vegetable waxes were the top agricultural exports to the region.

The PSA reported that imports of agricultural goods rose 8.7% year on year to \$4.99 billion in the three months to September.

Cereals remained the top agricultural import in the third quarter at 21% of the total, valued at \$1.05 billion.

Imports from the EU amounted to \$450.29 million or 24.6% of farm imports by value.

Spain was the top EU supplier of farm goods, accounting for \$112.93 million or 24.3% of overall farm imports.

Meat and edible meat offal were the top imports from the EU, followed by dairy, eggs, honey, and prepared animal fodder. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/11/27/637862/agricultural-trade-deficit-tops-3-billion-in-q3/>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Farmers seek carabeef ban from India

By Janine Alexis Miguel

November 28, 2024

THE Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) and the Magsasaka Party-list (MPL) on Wednesday called for the immediate suspension of carabao meat imports from foot-and-mouth disease (FMD)-hit areas in India, saying the local livestock industry could not afford another breakout from infected meat stocks.

FFF Board Chairman Leonardo Montemayor and MPL President Argel Joseph Cabatbat enjoined the government to look into India's animal disease, food safety and bio-control situation, citing a report from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), which found FMD is prevalent in Maharashtra and Telangana, two Indian states where several carabeef exporters to the Philippines operate processing plants.

"Despite the BAI's findings and recommendations, the Department of Agriculture's (DA) National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) [still] included foreign meat establishments (FMEs) in Maharashtra and Telangana in their site inspections last October," Montemayor and Cabatbat said in a statement.

The NMIS report will be the basis of a DA review of currently accredited FMEs supplying carabeef to the Philippines.

"The local livestock sector, especially swine, cannot withstand another catastrophe on the heels of the still rampant African swine fever (ASF)," the farmers' groups said. Since the Philippines imports 32 to 48 million kilos of carabeef from India annually, the groups assured that banning carabeef from certain states would not affect

supply. "Our meat processors can still source their carabeef from FMD-free FMEs in India," the groups explained.

FMD spreads quickly and weakens cloven-hoofed animals such as hogs, cattle, carabaos, goats and sheep, lessening their meat and milk output.

The World Organization for Animal Health declared the Philippines FMD-free in 2011, allowing the country to export livestock. Meanwhile, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has lifted the temporary import ban on domestic and wild pigs, as well as their products, originating from Sweden.

Memorandum Order 53, issued on Nov. 26, authorizes the entry of domestic and wild pigs, pork meat, pig skin and semen from Sweden to the Philippines, saying that upon evaluation, the DA found the risk of contamination from these meat products was "negligible."

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/11/28/business/top-business/farmers-seek-carabeef-ban-from-india/2012396>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Seized frozen products to relief ops

By Janine Alexis Miguel

November 28, 2024

SAFELY frozen meat and seafood seized by the Bureau of Customs (BOC) or abandoned by importers may still be put to good use by distributing them during relief operations, said the Meat Importers and Traders Association (MITA).

The initiative aims to enhance food security and ensure efficient use of resources, benefiting both the relief operations and the overall food supply chain.

MITA President Emeritus Jess Cham and Fisheries and Aquaculture Board Chairman Chingling Tanco pointed out the potential benefits of salvaging confiscated frozen meat and seafood, provided these are tested and certified fit for human consumption.

"Since meat and seafood that are properly frozen and stored do not pose health concerns, such products can be a reserve stock of protein to be utilized in emergency situations," the two groups said.

MITA recommended that seized or abandoned products be removed from ports within two months to avoid congestion and reduce electricity, storage and penalty costs.

To streamline the process, the groups suggested the Department of Agriculture and BOC draft a memorandum of understanding to formalize the procedures for retrieving and distributing the products.

In a related development, MITA lauded Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. for his recommendation to release confiscated mackerel to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to aid in relief operations.

Tiu Laurel on Monday said he had formally requested the BOC to release 580 metric tons of seized frozen mackerel after confiscation for lack of an import permit. He said laboratory tests confirmed the frozen fish is fit for human consumption, with no signs of spoilage or contamination.

The shipment, which arrived at the Manila International Container Port in early October, consisted of 21 container vans with frozen mackerel valued at P178.5 million.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/11/28/business/top-business/seized-frozen-products-to-relief-ops/2012392>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Rice smuggling scam under Duterte remains unresolved - Salceda

By Red Mendoza
November 27, 2024

The House super committee that investigated the price manipulation of rice has ordered its secretariat to determine if the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Office of the Ombudsman filed charges against government officials implicated in the scandal.

In a hearing on Tuesday, Quinta supercommittee chairman Joey Salceda stressed the need for accountability as he lamented that the controversy remains unresolved.

The committee, formed under House Resolution 254 introduced by Speaker Martin Romualdez, brought together five panels - committees on Ways and Means, Trade and Industry, Agriculture and Food, Social Services, and the Special Committee on Food Security. It aims to identify gaps in government programs and hold those responsible for market abuses accountable.

The panel investigated the alleged rice anomalies during the administration of former president Rodrigo Duterte, especially the grant of import permits from 2016-2018.

"The biggest case of price manipulation in the agricultural sector remains to be the cornering of import permits from 2016 to 2018," Salceda said.

"No one has been held accountable for the bribery allegations surrounding import permits, or for the NFA's failure to address cartel activities. What happened to the charges that then Presidential

Spokesperson Harry Roque said would be filed in September 2018?" he added.

He said that the private sector control of rice importation and the manipulation of import permits led to a significant price surge in 2018, with rice costing consumers up to ₱8 more per kilo. The total economic loss, according to Salceda, was ₱88.6 billion.

The issue, he said, began to subside after the enactment of the Rice Tariffication Law, which abolished the permit system administered by the National Food Authority.

Salceda expressed concern that it remains unclear who in the private sector benefited from the rice importation permits of the NFA, highlighting how cartels exploited the NFA's diversion of funds meant for palay procurement.

To address these lingering questions, the committee ordered its secretariat to inquire with the DOJ if former NFA Administrator Jason Aquino was ever formally investigated, ask the NFA to provide a list of individuals and corporations granted rice import permits from 2016 to 2018, and request the Bureau of Customs for detailed records of all rice import arrivals during the same period.

Salceda said Romualdez has mandated the inquiry to "address smuggling and price manipulation of basic goods and essential commodities with the end of achieving zero hunger and promoting food security, along with social protection."

"Laws are in place to guarantee that every Filipino family has food on their tables, yet this is still a dream for many. We want to uncover the gaps that we need to plug to achieve this goal, and if needed, the personalities that should be made accountable for making this goal difficult to achieve," he added.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/11/27/news/rice-smuggling-scam-under-duterte-remains-unresolved-salceda/2012046>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Bird flu virus was found in raw milk. What to know about the risks

BusinessMirror
November 27, 2024

President-elect Donald Trump's nominee for the nation's top health job, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., has vowed to allow wider distribution of raw milk across America. But the detection of bird flu virus in unpasteurized milk sold in California stores underscores what health experts say are the known and potential risks.

“You have to assume that raw milk, unpasteurized milk, has potential infectious agents that can cause serious illness in the people who drink it,” said Michael Osterholm, a University of Minnesota infectious disease researcher who has investigated foodborne illness outbreaks.

Raw Farm LLC, of Fresno, California, voluntarily recalled one lot of “cream top” whole raw milk after Santa Clara County health officials found the bird flu virus in a sample last week. State health officials said the county has been testing raw milk sold in stores as “a second line of consumer protection.”

No illnesses have been traced to Raw Farm products, which have a lot code of 20241109 and a best-by date of Nov. 27. But officials with California's health department warned consumers not to drink the milk and said retailers should remove it from their shelves. On Tuesday, Los Angeles County health officials warned that “many retailers” there may have sold recalled raw milk contaminated with the virus.

Here's what else you need to know about raw milk and bird flu:

What do we know about bird flu virus and milk?

It's not a surprise that the virus was found in raw milk sold in stores, Osterholm said.

Bird flu, also known as Type A H5N1 influenza, was first confirmed in US dairy cattle in March and has been spreading widely. In California, more than 435 dairy herds have seen infections—more than all other US states combined. And high levels of the virus have been found in the milk of infected cows.

About 20 percent of samples of pasteurized milk sold in stores were found to contain viral remnants of the virus, according to tests conducted earlier this year by government scientists. Pasteurization, or heat treatment, kills the bird flu virus and also bacteria such as E. coli, listeria and salmonella, which are known to make people sick.

Officials with California's Department of Food and Agriculture have been conducting weekly tests of raw milk in bulk tanks from the state's dairies. Additional tests conducted at Raw Farm sites in California were negative for the virus, but officials said they would begin testing for bird flu twice a week.

Few tests of unpasteurized milk products from stores have been conducted, so it's possible that other raw dairy products may contain the virus, Osterholm said.

"It is still really unclear how much testing is going on," said Osterholm. "We're flying blind."

Can bird flu in raw milk make people sick?

To date, there's no evidence that people have been infected with the bird flu virus by drinking raw milk. At least 55 people in the US are known to have been infected by the virus this year, but nearly all were dairy or poultry workers who developed mild illness after close contact with infected animals.

Tests have shown that mice fed raw milk contaminated with bird flu became very sick and barn cats on farms that drank milk from infected cows suffered brain damage and died, noted Nicole Martin, a microbiologist and associate director of the Milk Quality Improvement Program at Cornell University.

"I don't think we know yet whether people can contract H5N1 from consumption of raw milk, but we have enough evidence that would suggest that folks need to be a little more cautious right now," Martin said.

Who drinks raw milk and why?

Nearly 4.4 percent of US adults, or about 11 million people, report that they drink raw milk at least once each year. About 1 percent of adults say they consume raw milk each week, according to a 2022 FDA study.

Proponents of raw milk cite perceived health benefits and better taste as key reasons for consumption. Raw Farm advertises its products as “unprocessed and complete” with vitamins, minerals, enzymes and beneficial bacteria.

Fans include Kennedy, who has said he only drinks raw milk. Kennedy has criticized agriculture departments for cracking down on raw milk and promised that the Food and Drug Administration’s “aggressive suppression” of unpasteurized milk would end under Trump.

Mark McAfee, owner of Raw Farm, has appeared several times on podcasts hosted by Nicole Shanahan, Kennedy’s former running mate. Both Kennedy and Shanahan are customers, McAfee told the Associated Press.

“They want that same level of differentiating, wonderful, tested, gorgeous, safe, delicious raw milk for everybody,” McAfee said.

What do health experts say about raw milk?

Health officials have warned for years that raw milk can cause illnesses that range from mild to life-threatening. Between 1998 and 2018, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention documented more than 200 illness outbreaks traced to raw milk, which sickened more than 2,600 people and hospitalized more than 225.

Before the US adopted safety standards in 1924 under what was called the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance, about 25 percent of foodborne illnesses were related to dairy consumption, according to the Center for Dairy Research. Now, dairy products account for about 1 percent of such illnesses. **AP**

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/27/bird-flu-virus-was-found-in-raw-milk-what-to-know-about-the-risks/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Local food group to source only 100 percent cage-free eggs in support of sustainable food practices

Rory Visco
November 28, 2024

WHO would have thought that a chicken egg would have a significant contribution to help reduce poverty and combat malnutrition?

Nowadays, however, the talk is not just about ordinary chicken eggs but “cage-free” eggs, which is currently experiencing a robust demand for consumption in many countries in the world today.

Why cage-free eggs?

FROM a layman’s point of view, cage-free eggs are those harvested in chicken farms that are far less stressful for the chickens that lay them. These chickens are called “layer hens.” For egg farms to produce eggs that are cage-free, the farm environment requires that layer hens live in open indoor spaces and is assured of increased quality of life compared to their counterparts that live in tight spaces called cages.

And cage-free eggs are supposedly healthier compared to those from hens from cages. In an article that appeared in the knowledge sharing platform for the global poultry industry, <https://www.thepoultrysite.com>, the European Food Safety Authority analyzed data coming from more than 3,000 farms in European Union-member states, where it revealed that Salmonella Enteritidis, the bacterial disease found in eggs, egg products, and poultry, is “five times more likely to be found in cage systems compared to free-range systems.”

“The decreased risk of disease in cage-free environments is likely due to a combination of cage-free systems being cleaner; having fewer rodent and insect disease vectors; being easier to clean and disinfect; and hens on bedding acquiring more natural, healthy gut flora, being less stressed and therefore less susceptible to disease,” the article continued.

Furthermore, the article continued by showing that eggs from free-range or cage-free farms “also have lower levels of chemical residue from insecticides, lower levels of insect infestation, and a lower concentration of dioxin-like contaminants.”

It was also revealed that various studies found that cage-free eggs “have a healthier overall nutritional profile.” Among the benefits include “less saturated fat and cholesterol, and higher levels of protein. Free-range or cage-free eggs have also been found to have significantly more Vitamin A and Vitamin E; more omega 3s; higher levels of alpha tocopherol and alpha-linolenic acid; higher carotenoid levels; more lutein; a healthier ratio of omega 6 to omega 3 fatty acids; higher bone mineral density; and more beta carotene.”

Growing demand for cage-free eggs

THE demand for cage-free eggs is flourishing not just globally but in the Philippines as well, mainly because many consumers are now aware of its numerous health benefits, plus the growing concern for animal welfare. There have been many names in the restaurant, hospitality, retail and packaged foods brands that have expressed long-term commitment to use only cage-free eggs in their operations as they are less cruel to animals and safer for consumers.

In a recent nationwide survey, it was revealed that 83 percent of consumers believe eggs sourced by restaurants, supermarkets, packaged foods companies and the like should come only from hens living in cage-free environments, while 80 percent said they were more inclined to patronize a food brand that sourced only cage-free eggs. They are even willing to pay more, whether purchasing cage-free eggs in supermarkets, dining at restaurants or buying packaged food that offer or use cage-free eggs, since many believe safety and quality are worth spending a little bit more.

Just recently food and beverage company The Figaro Coffee Group was recognized by international nongovernmental organization (NGO) Lever Foundation because of its decision to source 100-percent cage-free eggs in its global operations by 2035.

This means that the company commits to implement this policy across all its brands. The Figaro Coffee Group operates 203 stores worldwide, with 64 Figaro Coffee outlets, 124 Angel’s Pizza branches, 10 Tien Ma’s Taiwanese cuisine restaurants, and one Koobideh Kebabs location. The company said this announcement “reflects its commitment to ethical sourcing on a global scale.

Home-grown brand

ANOTHER home-grown brand, Andok's, which has over 70 dine-in locations nationwide, has also recently pledged to use 100-percent cage-free eggs across all its outlets, also by 2035.

“We are proud to support animal welfare and sustainable food practices with our new policy of sourcing only cage-free eggs and egg ingredients across The Figaro Coffee Group supply chain by 2035,” said Ace Azarraga, Marketing Director of The Figaro Coffee Group. “Our dedication to ethical sourcing reflects our broader mission to nourish our community, provide fair employment, and uphold responsible business practices.”

For its part, Lever Foundation's Robyn Charisse del Rosario, Sustainability Program Manager in the Philippines, applauds the two company's “dedication to promoting animal welfare and sustainability.”

“Their leadership highlights the growing importance of ethical sourcing in the food industry and sets a positive example for other regional companies to follow.”

Lever Foundation is a global NGO based in the United States and operates across southeast Asia. It works with leading food companies in the Philippines and across the region to help them upgrade their protein sourcing for a more humane, safe and sustainable supply chain, with a focus on cage-free eggs and alternative protein.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/28/local-food-group-to-source-only-100-percent-cage-free-eggs-in-support-of-sustainable-food-practices/>

REMATE:

Dagdag-Kadiwa stores makatutulong sa mga magsasaka – solon

November 27, 2024 14:05



NAG-IKOT si Navotas Mayor John Rey Tiangco sa Kadiwa ng Pangulo upang tignan ang ibat-ibang murang paninda gaya ng murang bigas, gulay, prutas, at iba pang local products sa lungsod. JOJO RABULAN

Sinabi ni Navotas Congressman Toby Tiangco na ang pagdadag ng mas maraming tindahan ng Kadiwa sa buong bansa ay makakatulong para lumaki ang kita ng mga magsasaka at magbibigay sa mga mamimili ng murang pagkain.

Ayon kay Tiangco, layunin ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na magtayo ng 71 pang Kadiwa sites sa pagtatapos ng taon, na nakatuon sa mga pangunahing lungsod sa labas ng National Capital Region (NCR).



“Napatunayan po ng administrasyong Marcos na kaya nating ibaba ang presyo ng prutas, gulay at iba pang pagkain. Napakalaking tulong ng Kadiwa stores sa ating mga kababayan at dapat lang maiparating pa natin ang programang ito sa iba’t ibang bahagi ng bansa,” pahayag ni Cong. Tiangco.

“Bukod dito, malaking tulong din ito sa ating mga magsasaka dahil nabibigyan sila ng pagkakataon na direktang ibenta ang kanilang ani.

Dahil walang middleman, lumalaki ang kanilang kinikita habang nagiging mas mura naman ang presyo ng pagkain,” dagdag niya.

Sinabi pa ni Tiangco na ang pagpapalawak ng Kadiwa sa iba’t ibang bahagi ng bansa ay naaayon sa layunin ni Pangulong Marcos na gawing mas madaling mapuntahan ang mga tindahang ito at magdala ng mga produktong pang-agrikultura na may diskwento sa mas maraming Pilipino.

Sa kasalukuyan, mayroong 41 operational Kadiwa centers sa buong bansa, kasama ang 67 iba pa na pinamamahalaan ng National Irrigation Administration habang ang karamihan ay matatagpuan sa NCR, mayroon ding mga site sa Rizal, Laguna, Cavite, Bulacan, at Cebu.

Ani Tiangco, plano ng administrasyong Marcos na magbukas ng 1,500 Kadiwa sites sa buong bansa sa 2028. Jojo Rabulan

<https://remate.ph/dagdag-kadiwa-stores-makatutulong-sa-mga-magsasaka-solon/>

REMATE:

Ugat ng sirit-presyo ng pagkain tutukuyin ng Kamara

November 27, 2024 15:19



MANILA, Philippines – Sinimulan na ng binuong Quinta committee ng Kamara ang kanilang imbestigasyon hinggil sa pagtaas ng presyo ng pagkain gayundin ang talamak na smuggling.

Ang Murang Pagkain Supercommittee—na itinatag sa ilalim ng House Resolution (HR) No. 254 ay binubuo ng House Ways and Means Committee, Trade and Industry, Agriculture and Food, Social Services, at ng Special Committee on Food Security.

Sa pagbubukas ng pagdinig binigyan diin ni Albay Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda, chairman ng House Ways and Means Committee at lead chair ng supercommittee ang mahalagang papel ng gagawing imbestigasyon.

“The House of Representatives under the leadership of House Speaker Martin Romualdez has mandated to address smuggling and price manipulation of basic goods and essential commodities with the end of achieving zero hunger and promoting food security, along with social protection,” ayon kay Salceda.

Ipinunto ni Quezon Rep. Mark Enverga, pinuno ng Committee on Agriculture and Food, ang kahalagahan ng mga bagong lehislatibong hakbang upang labanan ang mga pang-aabuso sa sektor ng agrikultura.

“Just last September 26 of this year, the President signed Republic Act No. 12022 or the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act, which seeks to eliminate rampant agricultural smuggling, hoarding, profiteering, cartelizing, and other acts of market abuse,” saad ni Enverga.

Ani Vergara, dapat amyendahan ang Rice Tariffication Law upang palakasin ang kakayahan ng Department of Agriculture na ayusin ang presyo ng bigas at kontrolin ang suplay nito.

“Addressing these unfair business practices would lead us to a food- and nutrition-secure nation and, eventually, help mitigate hunger, which is the ultimate goal of the Honorable Speaker Martin Romualdez,” paliwanag ni Enverga.

Ipinahayag naman ni Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma, lider ng Special Committee on Food Security, na ang seguridad sa pagkain ay isang pangunahing karapatang pantao.

Ipinakita rin ng supercommittee ang mga datos na naglalarawan ng mga hamon na kinakaharap ng mga Pilipino sa pagkakaroon ng abot-kayang pagkain.

Ayon sa Philippine Statistics Authority, ang pagkain ang pinakamalaking bahagi ng gastusin ng bawat pamilya, at ang bigas ang pangunahing dahilan sa pagtaas ng mga gastusin.

Binigyang-diin ni Salceda ang matinding epekto ng mataas na presyo ng pagkain sa mga pinaka-mahihirap na sektor ng populasyon.

Bibigyang-tuon sa imbestigasyon ang paglikha ng mga polisiya upang mapanatili ang presyo ng pagkain, masawata ang smuggling, at maitaas ang kabuhayan lalo na sa agricultural sector. *Gail Mendoza*

<https://remate.ph/ugat-ng-sirit-presyo-ng-pagkain-tutukuyin-ng-kamara/>

REMATE:

Pag-angkat ng 8,280 MT na isda dinepansahan ng DA

November 27, 2024 10:4

MANILA, Philippines – Sinabi ni Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu-Laurel nitong Martes na ang desisyon na mag-angkat ng karagdagang 8,280 metric tons (MT) ng maliliit na pelagic fish ay ginawa upang patatagin ang domestic supply sa panahon ng closed fishing season mula Nobyembre hanggang Marso.

Ayon kay Tui-Laurel ang supplementary volume ng pag-import ng isda, na higit pa sa 30,000 MT na inangkat mula sa Vietnam at China, ay tutugon din sa epekto ng kamakailang serye ng mga bagyo sa supply ng isda sa merkado.

“May end date din yun na must arrive date, latest January 30. Kasi ang close season natin ay January 30 sa Palawan pero ang close season sa Zamboanga hanggang end of February sabi ni Tui-Laurel sa interbyu ng media sa Kadiwa ng Pangulo Expo sa Philippine International Convention Center sa Pasay City.

Sinabi ni Laurel na ang pag-import ng karagdagang maliliit na pelagic fish ay ginawa kasunod ng pagpupulong kasama ang National Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (NFARMC) at ang DA.

Kaugnay nito sinabi ni Laurel na ang bansa ay may matatag na suplay ng bigas, na inaasahang aabot sa 4.5 milyong tonelada ang importasyon ngayong taon.

“As far as bigas is concerned, and then kakaharvest lang, although medyo may tama talaga tayo sa maraming bagyong dumaan. Ang estimates namin ngayon, last year 20.04 million tons yata, ang latest estimate namin ngayon is 19.3 million na lang, and baka bumaba pa dahil sa mga bagyo,” ayon kay Tui Laurel. (Santi Celario)

<https://remate.ph/pag-angkat-ng-8280-mt-na-isda-dinepansahan-ng-da/>

REMATE:

Oktubre idineklarang National Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Services Month

November 27, 2024 10:09

MANILA, Philippines – Idineklara ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ang buwan ng Oktubre bilang “National Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Services Month” na naglalayong isulong ang pambansang kamalayan sa papel ng Extension Services sa pagpapaunlad ng sektor ng agrikultura at pangisdaan.

Nilagdaan ni Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, ang Proclamation No. 753 ay naglalayon na mapabilis ang pagbuo at paghahatid ng AF Extension Services at tiyakin ang suporta ng mga stakeholder sa pagpapabuti ng mga serbisyo.

Pinararangalan din nito ang kontribusyon ng mga agricultural extension workers sa paglipat ng teknolohiya at mga facilitator sa pagbibigay ng access sa mga magsasaka at mangingisda sa Extension Services.

Sa ilalim ng Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act, ang pamahalaan ay may tungkuling isulong ang agham at teknolohiya bilang mahalaga para sa pambansang pag-unlad at pag-unlad.

Sa ilalim ng panukala, susuportahan din ng gobyerno ang pagbuo ng National Extension Services System na tutulong sa pagpapabilis ng pagbabago ng agrikultura at pangisdaan ng Pilipinas tungo sa teknolohiyang nakabatay sa industriya.

Ang Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Services ay ang mga serbisyo sa pagsasanay, impormasyon, at mga serbisyo ng suporta sa sektor ng agrikultura at pangisdaan upang tulungan silang mapabuti ang kanilang mga teknikal, negosyo, at panlipunang kakayahan.

Ang Department of Agriculture Training Institute ay mamumuno, mag-uugnay, at mangangasiwa sa pagdiriwang ng National Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Services Month. **RNT**

<https://remate.ph/oktubre-idineklarang-national-agriculture-and-fisheries-extension-services-month/>