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**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Vegetable prices spike by 10-15% due to supply drop from typhoon-hit areas—DA

BY [JEL SANTOS](#)

Nov 4, 2024 05:43 PM



DA spokesperson Assistant Secretary Arnel De Mesa (MB FILE PHOTO)

The Department of Agriculture (DA) reported a 10 to 15 percent increase in prices for major highland and lowland vegetables, following a significant drop in supply from key production areas due to Typhoon "Kristine".

“Dahil dito sa mga pagbaba noong supply galing sa ating mga production areas, nakakakita tayo ng 10 to 15 percent increase ng presyuhan ng mga highland at lowland vegetables (Because of the reduced supply from our production areas, we’re seeing a 10 to 15 percent increase in vegetable prices),” Assistant Secretary Arnel De Mesa, the spokesperson of the DA, said during a media briefing at state-controlled PTV-4 on Monday, Nov. 4.

He said the typhoon damaged key production areas in regions such as the Cordilleras, Region II, CALABARZON, and Central Luzon, reducing the vegetable supply by over 28,000 metric tons.

“Ang pangunahing dahilan nito ay bumaba ng more than 28,000 metric tons iyong gulay na ibinababa mula sa mga production areas especially sa Cordilleras, Region II, CALABARZON, at Central Luzon (The main reason for this is that the vegetable supply dropped by more than 28,000 metric tons from production areas, especially in the Cordilleras, Region II, CALABARZON, and Central Luzon),” he said.

De Mesa stated that the country has alternative sources of vegetables from the Visayas, Mindanao, and parts of Luzon that were not significantly affected by the typhoon.

The spokesperson said that the DA's Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS) has been coordinating with regional field offices for market matching to redirect unaffected produce to affected regions.

He assured that prices would likely stabilize in one to two weeks as vegetable supplies recover.

The DA said it has deployed Kadiwa Centers in impacted areas to offer affordable produce, seeking to mitigate the effects of the price surge on communities.

“Patuloy ang pag-deploy ng Kadiwa Centers sa mga apektadong lugar para makatulong na magkaroon ng murang bilihin (The deployment of Kadiwa Centers continues in affected areas to help provide affordable agricultural products),” said De Mesa.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/11/4/vegetable-prices-spike-by-10-15>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Yamsuan says this soon-to-be enacted bill will help farmers recover from 'Kristine'

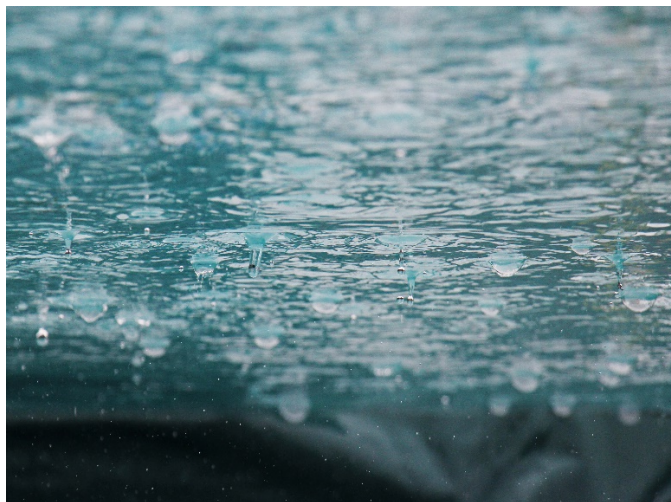
BY [ELLSON QUISMORIO](#)

Nov 4, 2024 04:20 PM

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## AT A GLANCE

- The soon-to-be enacted measure amending Republic Act (RA) No. 8178 or the Agricultural Tariffication Act is seen to help small farmers recover from the devastating effects of typhoon "Kristine", icol Saro Party-list Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan said.



(Unsplash)

The soon-to-be enacted measure amending Republic Act (RA) No. 8178 or the Agricultural Tariffication Act is seen to help small farmers recover from the devastating effects of typhoon "Kristine".

Thus, said Bicol Saro Party-list Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan, who on Monday, Nov. 4 highlighted the measure's key provision on increasing the annual allocation of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) from P10 billion to P30 billion.

Yamsuan said that the legislation also extends the life of the RCEF up to the year 2031 under RA No.8178.

The House and Senate--ratified measure stands to directly benefit 2.4 million small farmers with a provision authorizing the distribution of financial aid to those tilling two hectares and below, Yamsuan said.

On top of this, the amendments bill also increases the allocation for the provision of farm machineries and equipment, quality inbred rice seeds, rice credit assistance, training and extension, solar powered irrigation projects, and composting facilities for biodegradable wastes.

“Recovery from the effects of tropical storm ‘Kristine’ will not be overnight. This is a continuing process that requires sustained funding and assistance to our farmers and fisherfolk,” said Yamsuan.

“We are hopeful that the President would sign the ratified bill soon so that the RCEF could become a more potent tool to help small farmers, especially those in Bicol which was the worst hit by ‘Kristine,” added the former Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) assistant secretary.

Yamsuan is among the principal authors of the House of Representatives' version of the measure, which also aims to protect consumers by giving the Department of Agriculture (DA) the authority to sell rice reserves of the National Food Authority (NFA) to government outlets and agencies in times of shortages and high rice prices.

As of Nov. 2, the damage to the agriculture sector wrought by Kristine had already reached P5.75 billion and displaced 131,661 farmers and fisherfolk, according to the DA.

Among crops, rice incurred the biggest losses totaling P4.25 billion so far. Losses to the fisheries sector were estimated at P446.22 million.

As chairperson of the House Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources, Yamsuan also prodded Congress to act fast in passing the proposed Pantawid Pambangka Program outlined under House Bill (HB) 1803 to provide direct aid to small fisherfolk through the grant of fuel vouchers equivalent to at least P1,000 per month.

HB No.1803, which benefits fisherfolk using motorized fishing vessels of three gross tons or less, provides for a yearly review of the monthly subsidy to determine if the amount is still sufficient when taking into account the effects of inflation.

Beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pambangka Program shall also be automatically enrolled and covered under the National Health Insurance Program of Philhealth.

The Social Security System (SSS) shall also provide micro-insurance mechanisms for the beneficiaries under the bill.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/11/4/yamsuan-says-this-soon-to-be-enacted-bill-will-help-farmers>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Hotel in Iloilo City backs sustainable seafood sourcing

BY [TARA YAP](#)

Nov 4, 2024 03:51 PM

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ILOILO CITY – The Courtyard by Marriott Iloilo in this city has renewed its commitment to sustainable seafood sourcing.

The hotel was recently cited by several international bodies for their role in the Responsible Seafood Sourcing Program funded by the United States Agency for International Development.



**COURTYARD by Marriott Iloilo sources its blue crabs from Igbon Island in Concepcion town, Iloilo province. (Tara Yap)**

Courtyard by Marriott Iloilo has been awarded by Marriott International, Serve 360, and Marriott APEC World Ocean for being a sustainable partner in the Salbaron ang Industriya sang Kasag (Save the Crab Industry).

The hotel sources its blue crabs from Igbon Island in Concepcion, a town in northern Iloilo province.

With its blue crab suppliers from Igbon, Courtyard by Marriott Iloilo is playing a role in reducing illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing while being a sustainable market partner.

The Responsible Seafood Sourcing Program is part of the Fish Right Program supported by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of the Department of Agriculture, the Iloilo provincial government, and the crab fishers of Igbon.

Concepcion Mayor Milliard Villanueva lauded the partnership of Courtyard by Marriott Iloilo in the bigger goal of the local government unit to export blue crabs again.

The LGU and partners are seeking to upgrade the blue crab as a yellow-rate product and eventually a green-rate product, the highest rating for export.

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[https://mb.com.ph/2024/11/4/hotel-in-iloilo-city-backs-sustainable-seafood-sourcing#google\\_vignette](https://mb.com.ph/2024/11/4/hotel-in-iloilo-city-backs-sustainable-seafood-sourcing#google_vignette)



**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# From Ad Campaigns to Integrated Farming

An unlikely farmer's journey to success in Nueva Vizcaya

BY [JUNEP OCAMPO](#)

Nov 4, 2024 09:53 AM

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## AT A GLANCE

- From advertising to agriculture, Roderick Capalongan transformed his two-hectare farm in Nueva Vizcaya into "Mushroom Man," a thriving business that champions sustainable practices and inspires future agripreneurs.

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SOLANO, Nueva Vizcaya – For Roderick Capalongan, the leap from a career in advertising to the fields of agriculture was more than a change of profession; it was a calling. Once deeply involved in project management, below-the-line communications, and campaign logistics, Roderick discovered his passion for farming through a side venture that quickly grew into his full-time pursuit—mushroom farming.

What started as a way to earn extra income for his family soon evolved into a thriving business. Inspired by a friend with a similar interest in agriculture, Roderick initially grew oyster mushrooms on a modest scale. In 2014, he decided to leave his advertising career behind and focus entirely on farming, setting up “Mushroom Man” on a two-hectare property inherited from his grandfather. Using recycled agricultural waste like rice straw as the growing medium, Roderick found a sustainable way to cultivate mushrooms.

As demand for his products increased, so did his vision to expand. By 2016, Roderick partnered with Land Bank of the Philippines (LANDBANK), securing an initial loan of P300,000 that provided the capital needed to grow his operations. "Salamat sa LANDBANK dahil palagi silang handang sumuporta sa akin at sa projects ko. Sa tulong nila, nakapagpatayo ako ng facilities at nakapag-expand ng farm ko," he said.

Over time, LANDBANK extended a total of P6.25 million in support, enabling Roderick to purchase advanced equipment, expand mushroom housing facilities, and even diversify into tilapia and catfish farming. Today, “Mushroom Man” supplies fresh produce not only to Nueva Vizcaya but also to outlets in Metro Manila and several provinces, including Isabela, Tarlac, Pampanga, Cavite, and Cagayan Valley.

## INNOVATION MEETS SUSTAINABILITY

Roderick’s approach to farming is marked by both ingenuity and sustainability. Integrating mushroom production with tilapia farming, he implemented a zero-waste model that maximizes efficiency and reduces costs. His farm recycles spent mushroom substrate—a byproduct of

mushroom production—to cultivate duckweeds as a natural alternative to commercial fish feeds. This innovative practice has cut his tilapia production costs by 50%, enhancing his profitability.

“Sa panahon ngayon, tumataas na ang presyo ng farm inputs, tulad ng tilapia feeds. Kaya kailangan maging resourceful para gumanda ang kita,” Roderick explained.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Roderick also launched a line of processed mushroom products, including siomai, crispy mushroom snacks, spreads, chili paste, and organic fertilizers—adding resilience to his business model by diversifying his product offerings.

### **LEADER IN INTEGRATED FARMING**

Roderick’s contributions to sustainable agriculture earned him the “Ulirang Magsasaka – Special Award for Integrated Farming” from LANDBANK at its Models of Excellence Recognition Initiative for Top Bank Clients (MERIT) Awards. He and his wife, Sheila Capalongan, proudly received the citation at the ceremony in Malate, Manila.

His farm has become a benchmark in mushroom and integrated farming in Nueva Vizcaya, drawing visitors from all over—including students, cooperatives, and foreign guests—to learn from his expertise. Government agencies like the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Agriculture (DA), and Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) have also partnered with his farm to promote sustainable practices and advance agricultural education.

Looking to the future, Roderick plans to open a farm school to train aspiring agripreneurs in mushroom cultivation, aiming to position Nueva Vizcaya as a key hub for oyster mushroom production. Additionally, he hopes to travel abroad to further refine his skills and bring back advanced techniques. “We are planning to train sa ibang bansa para mag-uwi ng advanced technology at matuto ng modern practices for mushroom production. Naniniwala ako na kaya natin magkaroon ng globally competitive mushroom industry,” he shared.

### **ROOTED IN PASSION AND INNOVATION**

Roderick’s transition from the fast-paced world of advertising to the rewarding challenges of agriculture underscores his adaptability and dedication. Supported by LANDBANK, he has built a business that exemplifies how passion, resilience, and innovation can drive success in farming.

Through partnerships like this, LANDBANK continues to support Filipino farmers, empowering them to achieve sustainable growth and a better future.

### **About LANDBANK**

As the Philippines’ largest development financial institution, LANDBANK supports agriculture, fisheries, and rural development across the country. Committed to financial inclusion and sustainable progress, the Bank provides accessible financial solutions to empower Filipinos nationwide.

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[https://mb.com.ph/2024/11/4/from-ad-campaigns-to-mushroom-cultivation#google\\_vignette](https://mb.com.ph/2024/11/4/from-ad-campaigns-to-mushroom-cultivation#google_vignette)

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# RCEF eyed to assist farmers, fishers hit by Kristine

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

November 5, 2024 | 12:00am



In this photo taken July 19, 2023 a worker prepares varieties of rice being developed by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) to be planted at one of its fields in Los Banos town, Laguna province.

AFP / Ted Aljibe

MANILA, Philippines — A measure approved by the bicameral conference committee, expanding the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) from P10 billion to P30 billion yearly, will be substantial in providing help to farmers and fisherfolk displaced by Severe Tropical Storm Kristine.

Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan of Bicol Saro party-list said the RCEF bill, which has been passed and ratified by the Senate and the House of Representatives, is awaiting the signature of President Marcos.

Yamsuan said the measure would directly benefit about 2.4 million small farmers, with a provision authorizing the distribution of financial assistance to those tilling two hectares and below.

Aside from aiding farmers, the measure also increases funding for the procurement of farm machinery and equipment, solar-powered irrigation facilities, composting facilities for biodegradable wastes and quality inbred rice seeds. It also provides rice credit assistance and training.

“Recovery from the effects of Kristine will not be overnight. This is a continuing process that requires sustained funding and assistance to our farmers and fisherfolk,” Yamsuan said. “We are hopeful the President will sign the bill into law soon so that the RCEF can become a more potent tool to help small farmers.”

The measure also intends to protect consumers as it authorizes the Department of Agriculture (DA) to sell rice reserves of the National Food Authority to government outlets and agencies in times of shortage and high rice prices.

## **1 million tons of palay lost**

The country has lost at least one million tons of palay this year due to the El Niño phenomenon and the series of typhoons, with Kristine being the most devastating to date.

Since January, the local rice industry has lost about 1.02 million tons of palay based on the damage report of the DA.

Kristine alone accounted for half or about 516,438 tons in production losses in the rice industry, the DA said.

Before Kristine battered the country, the DA recorded 507,564.39 tons in palay losses due to El Niño and the series of weather disturbances.

The recorded palay production losses have breached the average annual losses of 500,000 to 600,000 tons, according to DA spokesman Arnel de Mesa.

“We can expect our palay output this year to fall compared to last year because of the extent of damage caused by El Niño and the typhoons,” De Mesa said.

The 1.02 million tons in palay losses translate to around 670,000 tons of milled rice, based on the average billing rate of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

## **Leviste provides relief packs**

Meanwhile, in response to the damage caused by Kristine, Leandro Legarda Leviste provided over 150,000 relief packs to typhoon victims in the western part of Batangas.

Leviste, one of the country's youngest billionaire entrepreneurs, has been mobilizing relief efforts since Oct. 23.

Kristine submerged the towns of Balayan, Calatagan, Lemery, Lian, Nasugbu, Taal and Tuy as well as the city of Calaca.

The relief packs, coordinated through Leviste's Lingkod Legarda Leviste Foundation, were distributed in 284 barangays in Kristine-affected areas.

Leviste has been supporting long-term recovery efforts and distributed construction materials to families whose houses were destroyed by the typhoon.

His personal funding of the relief operations highlights an urgent response to the needs of his home province.

Leviste's contribution exceeded the total number of relief packs previously distributed by government agencies across the province.

According to the PSA, there are 155,978 households in western Batangas.

Nasugbu Mayor Antonio Barcelon and other local leaders thanked Leviste for assisting their constituents.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/11/05/2397707/rcef-eyed-assist-farmers-fishers-hit-kristine>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# No sugar MAV next year as stocks remain ample

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

November 5, 2024 | 12:00am



For the second straight year, the Department of Agriculture (DA) will not open a sugar MAV as authorities deem the current supply sufficient, especially with the ongoing importation program.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The government will not open the minimum access volume (MAV) for sugar next year, as the country has ample stocks and retail prices of the commodity remain stable, contrasting with the dire supply situation two years ago.

For the second straight year, the Department of Agriculture (DA) will not open a sugar MAV as authorities deem the current supply sufficient, especially with the ongoing importation program.

The DA has already begun accepting applications for the 2025 MAV, with sugar excluded from the list. For next year, only pork, chicken meat, potatoes, chipping potatoes, coffee beans, coffee extracts and corn will have their respective MAVs open.



Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) administrator and CEO Pablo Azcona said the country's current sugar stock position is in stark contrast to the situation in 2022, when the government last opened the MAV to augment the domestic supply.

“At the moment, we have ample sugar stocks, and we are already milling. Retail prices have also been stable since November 2023,” Azcona told The STAR.

The last time the sugar MAV was opened was last year, after the retail price of refined sugar surged past P100 per kilo in late 2022 due to depleting stocks. Before that, the last time sugar importation was made available through the MAV system was in 2002.

Imports made within the MAV, or in-quota imports, are levied with a lower tariff rate compared to imports outside the mechanism. Imported sugar within MAV is levied with a 50-percent tariff, compared to a 65-percent tariff rate for imports outside it.

However, unlike other commodities, sugar does not have its MAV mechanism open regularly each year because of the power vested in the SRA to oversee the industry, including importation programs.

As of Oct. 13, about 126,408 metric tons (MT) out of the 240,000 MT approved import volume under Sugar Order 5 for the crop year 2023-2024 have arrived in the country, based on the latest SRA data.

The latest SRA reports also show that the average price of refined sugar in Metro Manila remains stable at P84.62 per kilo while raw sugar fetches P76.15 per kilo.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/11/05/2397619/no-sugar-mav-next-year-stocks-remain-ample>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Over 1 million MT palay lost due to El Niño, typhoons

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

November 5, 2024 | 12:00am



The Guinobatan-Jovellar Road in Barangay Quitago Section, Albay is currently unpassable due to a landslide amid the continuous rain showers brought by #KristinePH on October 23, 2024.

Rep. Fernando "Didi" Cabredo via Facebook

MANILA, Philippines — The country has lost over one million metric tons (MT) of palay supply so far this year after farms were devastated by extreme weather conditions that included the El Niño phenomenon and the series of typhoons, with Kristine being the most devastating to date.

Since January, the local rice industry has lost about 1.024 million MT of palay or unmilled rice as of Nov. 4, based on the damage reports of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Severe Tropical Storm Kristine alone accounted for half or about 516,438 MT of the recorded production losses in the rice industry, according to the DA.

Before Kristine, the DA had already recorded 507,564.39 MT in palay losses because of El Niño and the series of weather disturbances.

The recorded palay production losses so far have breached the average annual losses of 500,000 MT to 600,000 MT, according to agriculture officials.

“It is already more than our regular losses,” DA Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said yesterday.

“We can expect that our (palay) output this year would fall compared to last year because of the huge damage caused by El Niño and the series of typhoons,” De Mesa added.

The 1.02 million MT recorded palay production losses could translate to around 670,000 MT of milled rice, based on the Philippine Statistics Authority’s average billing rate of 65.4 percent.

Despite the production losses, De Mesa assured the public that the country would have sufficient rice stocks while prices would remain stable in the market thanks to continued arrival of imports.

The country’s rice imports as of Oct. 30 have reached 3.79 million MT, surpassing last year’s 3.606 million MT, based on latest Bureau of Plant Industry data.

Retail prices of imported rice in Metro Manila ranged from a low of P42 per kilo to a high of P55 per kilo, according to the DA. Meanwhile, locally produced commercial rice ranged between P40 and P54 per kilo.

The DA earlier estimated that palay production could fall to a four-year low of 19.41 million MT as a result of the impact of the extreme weather conditions. The estimated output is nearly a million MT lower than its previous estimate of 20.4 million MT.

The latest production forecast is even 6.68 percent lower than the department’s initial projection for the year of 20.8 million MT.

On an annual basis, the full-year projected palay output is 3.24 percent lower than last year’s record-high harvest of 20.06 million MT.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/11/05/2397636/over-1-million-mt-palay-lost-due-el-nio-typhoons>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Chicken farmgate prices plunge to P80 per kilo, industry group reports

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

November 4, 2024 | 1:59pm



A stock photo of chickens.

Unsplash / William Moreland

MANILA, Philippines — Farmgate prices for broilers, or chickens raised for meat production, have dropped to P80 per kilogram, the United Broiler Raisers Association said on Monday, November 4.

UBRA Chairman Emeritus Gregorio San Diego said farmgate prices for whole chickens are below the estimated production costs of P105 to P110 per kilogram, leaving broiler producers with losses of around P25 to P30 per kilogram of chicken.

“Bagsak na ang presyo sa farmgate ang broiler. P80 per kilo. Luging lugi na kami,” San Diego said in an interview with Super Radyo DZBB 594.

(The farmgate price for broilers has dropped. It's down to 80 per kilo. We're incurring heavy losses.)

**Farmgate prices** refer to the prices of agricultural products sold directly by farmers or producers to buyers, excluding any transportation costs or retail markups.

The Philippine Statistics Authority reported that the farmgate price of broiler chicken in June was P158.94. A decrease to P80 indicates nearly a 50% drop.

The association's chairman attributed the low farmgate prices to a surge in broiler chicken imports despite recent declines in consumption.

“Andaming imported na dumadating eh mahina consumption. Sabi ko nga, andaming supply kokonti naman ang pera ng tao,” San Diego added.

(So many imports are coming in, but consumption is low. Like I said, there's a lot of supply, but people don't have much money)

**Who benefits?** With whole chickens priced between P150 and P220 per kilogram in Metro Manila markets, San Diego said consumers are also not benefiting from the lower farmgate prices.

Instead, he said, it is the importers who benefit, as they can slightly reduce their prices to encourage consumers to purchase imported broilers over locally produced ones.

“Kaya ‘yun nga sinasabi na hindi nagrereflect sa retail (ang farmgate). Meron talagang disconnect. Makikinabang din syempre ang mga importer... Syempre ‘yung bibilhin ay imported,” San Diego said.

(That's why people say that farmgate prices don't reflect retail. There's really a disconnect. Importers will also benefit... Of course, people will buy imported products.)

**Questions on government response.** UBRA is also concerned about whether the government recognizes the challenges producers face in earning a profit when farmgate prices are low and broiler chickens can weigh up to two kilograms.

“So sa bawat manok nalulugi ka ng kulang-kulang singkwenta pesos. Eh bente per kilo. ... Hindi namin alam kung hindi naintindihan ng gobyerno ang sitwasyon,” San Diego said.

(So for each chicken, you're losing nearly fifty pesos. It's only twenty per kilo. We don't know if the government understands the situation.)

The chairman added that although their association submits prices to the Department of Agriculture (DA) daily, the government's efforts to ease the burden of low farmgate prices appear insufficient.

San Diego, who is also chairman of the Philippine Egg Board Association (PEBA), said that egg prices have been low, with reductions of P0.50 per piece in some regions. However, prices are expected to rise as the Christmas season approaches.

**Other trends.** As of October 31, the retail price of eggs in Metro Manila markets ranged from P7 to P14 per piece, depending on the size and type.

Following Severe Tropical Storm Kristine, some egg prices dropped while others rose by a few centavos.

Meanwhile, retail prices of whole chickens remained stable between October 21 and October 31. However, current prices are already P10 lower than those recorded on October 19.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/11/04/2397588/chicken-farmgate-prices-plunge-p80-kilo-industry-group-reports>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# DA to consumers: Brace for higher veggie prices

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:36 AM November 05, 2024



INQUIRER file photo

MANILA, Philippines — Consumers should brace for higher retail prices of vegetables following the severe impact of the recent weather disturbances on the agriculture sector.

“When typhoons hit the country, normally there is an expected 10 to 15 percent increase in vegetable prices. It depends on what areas are affected,” Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said in a telephone interview on Monday.

According to De Mesa, concurrently spokesperson for the Department of Agriculture (DA), Metro Manila may experience vegetable supply and price disruptions, although

this will be temporary since there are alternative sources and areas planted to vegetables tend to recover quickly.

“We can expect prices to shoot up for a maximum of one to two weeks but it will normalize immediately,” he noted.

Based on the DA’s price monitoring, a kilo of pechay Baguio ranged from P90 to P170 as of Oct. 31, or an increase of 50 percent to 78.9 percent from the P60-P95 range recorded by the agency on Oct. 1, before the onslaught of Severe Tropical Storm “Kristine” (international name: Trami).

Carrots ranged from P120 to P200 a kilo, rising by as much as 50 percent from P80-P160 at the start of October.

Prices of bitter melon (ampalaya) decreased to P80-180 a kilo from P120-P190.

Meanwhile, pechay Tagalog retailed between P70 and P150 a kilo compared to P110 to P140 on Oct. 1, while eggplant was sold from P110 to P130 a kilo from P100-P180.

### **Prepare for new storm**

Kristine was the last typhoon that made landfall in the country, causing P5.75 billion in losses to the farm sector and affecting 131,661 farmers and fisherfolk, based on the DA’s latest tally.

Rice was mostly hit by the storm, incurring P4.25 billion in losses, followed by high-value crops worth P847.48 million and fisheries amounting to P446.22 million.

The DA estimated the area of standing crops that may be affected by incoming Tropical Storm Marce (international name: Yinxing) at 1.08 million hectares, primarily areas for rice cultivation.



The agency has advised farmers to harvest mature crops, mobilize postharvest equipment and facilities, and keep seed reserves, planting materials and other farm inputs in proper storage areas.

They were also told to relocate farm machines and other farm tools, secure enough feeds and water for relocated animals and clear drainage in irrigation and rice paddies from obstructions.

Fishers were advised to perform early harvest and mobilize postharvest facilities, secure fishing vessels in higher ground and avoid sea travel.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2001212/da-to-consumers-brace-for-higher-veggie-prices>

## BUSINESS WORLD:

# Rice inflation seen to further ease

November 5, 2024 | 12:32 am



Workers unload sacks of rice in this file photo. — PHILIPPINE STAR/RYAN BALDEMOR  
By **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**, *Reporter*

THE CONTINUED DECLINE in rice prices, which typically accounts for nearly half of overall inflation, is set to pave the way for further monetary easing, analysts said.

## ADVERTISING

“With the price of the biggest staple in the Filipino consumer basket set to ease further, we think the door for the central bank to continue its measured easing cycle remains wide open,” Aris D. Dacanay, economist for ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) at HSBC Global Research said.

“With low tariffs and the harvest season, rice prices in Metro Manila appear to be on a downtrend,” Metrobank Research said in a report.

The executive order slashing tariffs on rice imports, which took effect in July, has led to a decline in rice prices on a monthly basis.

## ADVERTISING

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. ordered rice tariffs to be cut to 15% from 35% previously, until 2028.

At end-October, the average price of well-milled rice ranged from P43 to P54 per kilogram, lower than the P47-to-P55 range at end-September, data from the Agriculture department showed.

Meanwhile, regular milled rice cost P40-P50 per kilogram from P45-P50 per kilogram a month ago.

“Still, costs of the grain remain above their October 2023 levels. We expect annual rice inflation to be positive in October, though it should remain in the single digits due to a high base from a year ago,” Metrobank Research said.

Rice inflation sharply slowed to 5.7% in September from 14.7% in August and 17.9% a year ago. This also marked the lowest rice inflation since the 4.2% print in July 2023.

Headline inflation likely quickened to 2.4% in October from 1.9% in September, according to a *BusinessWorld* poll of 11 analysts conducted last week.

“We believe inflation quickened to 2.3% in October from 1.9% in September. We expect that the recent typhoons resulted in higher prices for key food items such as vegetables, fruits, and fish,” Philippine National Bank economist Alvin Joseph A. Arogo said in an e-mail.

Mr. Dacanay said that while base effects caused inflation to reaccelerate in October, overall, the headline print is seen to “have remained benign.”

“The biggest deflationary pressure was rice as global rice prices finally eased,” he added.

Chinabank Research said that inflation will likely continue to stay below 3% amid the lower rice tariffs and base effects.

“Looking ahead, we expect inflation to remain within target, barring any unexpected shocks... This favorable inflation outlook, combined with anticipated further rate cuts from the Fed, boosts the case for another rate cut by the BSP at its next policy meeting in December,” it added.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Eli M. Remolona, Jr. has said that the Monetary Board could possibly cut rates by another 25 basis points (bps) at its last meeting this year on Dec. 19.

The central bank has so far cut borrowing costs by a total of 50 bps since it began its easing cycle in August.

Mr. Remolona has also signaled further rate cuts next year, possibly by a total of 100 bps.

Metrobank Research also expects inflation to continue to settle within the 2-4% target band.

“Should price risks — from oil and other commodities amid geopolitical tensions and extreme weather disturbances — not materialize, Metrobank Research maintains that full-year headline inflation should remain within the BSP’s target,” it added.

On the other hand, Federation of Free Farmers National Manager Raul Q. Montemayor said that rice prices have not fallen fast enough even with the tariff cut.

“The reduction in prices for both regular and well-milled rice are far off initial expectations of a P6-7 fall in prices per kilo arising from the tariff cut,” he said in a Viber message.

“Clearly, the tariff reduction has not worked in reducing retail prices. In the meantime, tariff revenues have fallen together with palay prices.”

Mr. Montemayor said that retail prices normally fall during harvest months due to the added supply.

“But the recent typhoons could temper the reduction in retail prices because of their impact on supply,” he said.

“Imports continue to come in, but it seems that the importers and traders are keeping most of the tariff savings for themselves instead of passing it on to consumers,” he added.

The Department of Agriculture earlier said that palay (unmilled rice) production will likely decline by 3.24% this year amid crop losses due to adverse weather conditions.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2024/11/05/632741/rice-inflation-seen-to-further-ease/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# DA expects lower palay output this year due to bad weather

November 5, 2024 | 12:33 am



AN AERIAL VIEW of the floods in Calumpit, Bulacan on Aug. 1, 2023. — REUTERS  
By **Justine Irish D. Tabile**, Reporter

THE DEPARTMENT of Agriculture (DA) on Monday said palay (unmilled rice) production likely declined this year due to the damage caused by El Niño-induced droughts and several strong typhoons.

“We can expect that the output will be lower compared to last year because of the huge damage due to El Niño and the series of typhoons even before Kristine,” DA Assistant Secretary and Spokesperson Arnel V. de Mesa told reporters at a briefing.

The department previously estimated palay production to drop to 19.41 million metric tons (MT) in 2024, 3.24% lower than the 20.06 million MT in 2023.

Mr. De Mesa said the country’s major rice-producing regions and areas were affected by Severe Tropical Storm Kristine.

“With Kristine, even though we put out an advisory to do an early harvest, there are still areas that cannot be harvested and were left behind. So, we are really seeing huge agricultural damage nationwide,” he said.

“We will know how big the damage is later. But there will be a decrease in output, especially in rice produce.”

A report by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) on Monday showed Severe Tropical Storm Kristine and Typhoon Leon caused P5.9 billion worth of damage to agriculture.

Mr. De Mesa said the damage from tropical cyclones this year is already higher than the annual average of 500,000 MT to 600,000 MT.

“The damage is a bit bigger this year, more than the regular losses that we expect,” he added.

Citing the assessments of DA Regional Field Offices as of Nov. 2, Mr. De Mesa said that damage to agriculture and crop losses due to Kristine have so far amounted to P5.75 billion.

“The biggest damage is recorded in the rice subsector at P4.25 billion, followed by high-value (crops) at P847 million, while fisheries recorded a P403 million loss in production,” he said.

“The biggest damage was recorded in the Bicol Region at almost P3 billion, followed by Mimaropa at P746 million, and third is in Cagayan Valley at P621 million,” he added.

The DA said Kristine has affected 131,661 farmers and fisherfolk covering 109,871 hectares of crops, which resulted in 557,851 MT in production loss.

Earlier this year, El Niño caused droughts and dry spells that affected crops in parts of the country. In its final bulletin on the effects of El Niño, the DA said that agricultural damage and losses in 15 regions were estimated at P15.3 billion.

Agricultural output declined by 3.3% to P413.91 billion in the second quarter, worsening from the 1.2% contraction a year earlier, reflecting the impact of El Niño.

For the first half, the value of production in agriculture and fisheries slipped by 1.5%, a reversal of the 0.4% growth a year ago.

Third-quarter agricultural output data will be released on Wednesday.

Sought for comment, Federation of Free Farmers National Manager Raul Q. Montemayor said that he expects a single-digit decline in production this year after the dismal output in the first half.

“I think it will still be single digit because harvests seem to be alright in areas not severely affected by the typhoons,” said Mr. Montemayor in a Viber message.

“But our supply deficit will continue to increase due to the drop in production coupled with the increase in demand or population,” he added.

Mr. Montemayor said output in the second half will most probably decline because of the effect of the typhoons.

“So, overall, we are looking at a drop in annual production,” he added.

Despite the projected decline, Mr. De Mesa said rice supply will be sufficient with the increased imports.

“Even if there is a decline, what is good here is that this will be supplemented by our import arrivals. As of mid-October, it is already at 3.6 million MT, which almost surpassed the total importation last year,” he added.

He said that they expect rice imports to be cheaper due to the lowered tariffs on rice and India’s lifting of its ban on the exports of white rice.

“Hopefully, the peso exchange rate will improve so that the price of imported rice will also further decline. Because this will help ensure that we will have enough supply and that prices will not be affected,” he added.

The US Department of Agriculture projects Philippine rice imports to hit 4.7 million MT this year.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2024/11/05/632742/da-expects-lower-palay-output-this-year-due-to-bad-weather/>

**REMATE:**

## **₱666.7M nakalaan sa mga magsasaka na tinamaan ng bagyong Kristine—DA**

November 4, 2024 14:31



MANILA, Philippines – MAGLALAN ang Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. (PCIC) ng ₱666.7 million para sa mga magsasaka na naapektuhan ng Severe Tropical Storm Kristine.

Sinabi ni Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. na ang bagyo na tumama sa pagitan ng Oktubre 22 at 25, naapektuhan ang 86,066 magsasaka sa iba't ibang bahagi ng 10 rehiyon, ang Central Luzon, Bicol Region, at Mimaropa (Region 4B) labis ang nakapagtala ng pinakamatinding pinsala.

Ayon kay PCIC President JB Jovy Bernabe, ang bigas, high-value crops, at palaisdaan ay nakakuha ng 'most damage', ₱413.6 million para sa bigas, ₱167.9 million para sa high-value crops, at ₱27.7 million para sa palaisdaan.

“We have set aside an initial amount of P667 million for insurance payments to around 86,066 farmers,” ang sinabi ni Bernabe.



Ipinag-utos naman ni Laurel sa PCIC na madaliin ang claims processing, binigyang-diin ang pangangailangan para sa ‘rapid assistance’ para matulungan na makabangon ang mga magsasaka.

“The pace of recovery for agriculture after a disaster like this will be determined by how quickly the government can provide inputs and financial assistance to farmers and fisherfolk,” ang tinuran ni Bernabe.

Sa kabilang dako, ipinag-utos na aniya nya sa DA agencies na maghanda para sa damage assessments at tiyakin ang agarang tulong kung kinakailangan.

“That is why I have ordered all agencies of the Department of Agriculture, including attached corporations such as the NFA (National Food Authority) and PCIC, to conduct quick needs assessments so that help can be provided immediately,” aniya pa rin.

Winika pa ng ahensiya na, tanggap na rin nito ang potensiyal na epekto ng Super Typhoon Leon, sa kabila ng pagtataya upang maiiwasan ang landfall, makapagdulot ng panganib dahil sa gale-force winds at paglakas ng bagyo ng hanggang 12 meters high. *Kris Jose*

<https://remate.ph/%e2%82%b1666-7m-nakalaan-sa-mga-magsasaka-na-tinamaan-ng-bagyong-kristine-da/>

**MANILA STANDARD:**

# Enactment of bill hiking RCEF to P30b/year seen

By Maricel Cruz

November 4, 2024, 10:40 pm

A PARTY-list lawmaker is optimistic that a soon-to-be enacted bill increasing the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) from P10 billion to P30 billion a year would help small farmers recover huge losses caused by severe tropical storm “Kristine.”

At the same time, Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan of Bicol Saro party-list group urged fellow lawmakers to act swiftly on a measure he co-authored that aims to establish a Pantawid Pambangka Program which institutionalizes the grant of a P1,000-monthly fuel subsidy to municipal fisherfolk, including those reeling from the devastating effects of ‘Kristine’s’ onslaught.

Yamsuan said the measure that aims to hike the annual RCEF share to P30 billion until 2031 has already been ratified by both chambers of the Congress and is set to be enacted soon by President Marcos.

The ratified measure stands to directly benefit 2.4 million small farmers with a provision authorizing the distribution of financial aid to those tilling two hectares and below, Yamsuan said.

On top of providing aid to farmers, the measure also increases the allocation for the provision of farm machineries and equipment, quality inbred rice seeds, rice credit assistance, training and extension, solar powered irrigation projects, and composting facilities for biodegradable wastes.

“Recovery from the effects of tropical storm ‘Kristine’ will not be overnight. This is a continuing process that requires sustained funding and assistance to our farmers and fisherfolk,” said Yamsuan.

“We are hopeful that the President would sign the ratified bill soon so that the RCEF could become a more potent tool to help small farmers, especially those in Bicol which was the worst hit by ‘Kristine.’”

“We are confident that when this bill has become a law and tripled the RCEF to P30 billion, it would be an effective instrument to enable our farmers to rise from Kristine’s devastation,” said Yamsuan, chairman of the Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources.

The measure also seeks to protect consumers as it mandates the Department of Agriculture to sell rice reserves of the National Food Authority to government outlets and agencies in times of shortages and high rice prices.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314519304/enactment-of-bill-hiking-rcef-to-p30b-year-seen.html>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# Support for farmers hurt by storm sought

By [Bernadette E. Tamayo](#)

November 5, 2024

SEN. Bong Go sought comprehensive support for farmers affected by typhoons Kristine and Leon, which ravaged crops in Bicol and Luzon regions.

In a statement on Monday, the senator said the devastation wrought by the recent typhoons left many farmers struggling to recover from their lost livelihood.

Go said there is an urgent need for "comprehensive government support to aid their recovery and ensure their long-term resilience."

He cited the plight of farmers in Baggao, Cagayan, whose corn harvests were destroyed by "Leon." This incident "underscored the recurring vulnerabilities faced by the agricultural sector in calamity-prone areas," the senator said.

"We should protect them — not only through emergency relief but through long-term solutions such as crop insurance, capacity enhancement, and additional investment," Go said in Filipino and English.

He said the government should protect the farmers against "unforeseen disasters." Go said farmers "play a crucial role in maintaining the country's food supply yet remain highly vulnerable during times of crisis."

The lawmaker has asked the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. to include in its coverage non-crop agricultural assets such as livestock and fisheries.

He raised the importance of more accessible and simplified credit facilities for farmers to protect them from predatory lending practices.

Go also underscored the value of education and training programs for farmers, believing that modern knowledge and techniques are vital for fostering a resilient agricultural community.

He filed Senate Bill (SB) 2117 that aims to ensure thorough crop insurance protection for agrarian reform beneficiaries. Go also filed SB 2118 to improve insurance coverage and services for farmers and address the agricultural sector's susceptibility to natural disasters.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/11/05/news/national/support-for-farmers-hurt-by-storm-sought/1997205>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

**SERVED TO RESIDENTS ON ALL SOULS' DAY**

## **79 seized hogs turned into lechon**

**By Kaiser Jan Fuentes**

November 5, 2024

**CARCAR CITY** — Seventy-nine undocumented hogs seized last month in Dumanjug town, southwest Cebu, found their way onto residents' plates as roasted pork or lechon during All Souls' Day celebrations on Saturday, Nov. 2.

Local authorities served the lechon to residents visiting public cemeteries as an unexpected treat that Dumanjug Mayor Efren Guntrano Gica described as "a way to minimize potential health risks while promoting transparency in handling seized livestock."

On Oct. 26, police and local officials intercepted the undocumented livestock abandoned on a pump boat from Negros Island. Authorities found the hogs left along the shoreline of Barangay Kanyuko, where they were confiscated under Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia's Executive Order (EO) 16.

EO 16 mandates the seizure of undocumented livestock and other goods entering Cebu's coastal areas to control illegal transport and protect public health.

Gica announced the lechon feast on his Facebook page, inviting residents to enjoy the meal at the cemetery as part of the All Souls' Day festivities.

He explained that this initiative served a dual purpose. One is the proper disposal of the hogs and the other is a treat for the community. His post attracted substantial engagement from the public.

"Para nako fit ra nga ako gipa lechon ug panghatag sa mga tao, kaysa akong ipang labay. Dili mansad maayo nga akong [ipang] baligya. Sigurado ko nagsunod ko sa protocol and dili na supak sa balaod ang ako pag panghatag sa dinakpan nga mga baboy (For me, it made more sense to roast the pigs and share them with the people, rather than just throwing them away. It wouldn't be right to sell them either. I'm sure I followed the proper protocol, and giving away the confiscated pigs isn't against the law)," he said.

According to Dumanjug's municipal agriculture and veterinary offices, the hogs showed no signs of African swine fever or other diseases. However, Gica maintained a cautious approach, acknowledging the potential health risks associated with undocumented animals.

Gica said that distributing the lechon was not politically motivated but focused on ensuring public health and transparency. He covered the roasting cost of P1,000 per hog, and directed that the lechon be shared with anyone in the community who asked for a portion.

This operation came on the heels of Governor Garcia's issuance of EO 16 on Oct. 25, which established the "Anti-Smuggling Inter-Agency Task Force" to combat undocumented livestock shipments.

The order includes strict measures to intercept livestock entering Cebu without proper documentation and provides local officials with authority to confiscate and determine disposal methods for smuggled goods.

In line with the EO, Gica issued a local directive to enforce these new measures. He noted that previous protocols required only the return of undocumented livestock through proper channels. Now, the new policy

enforces confiscation without restriction on the timing or manner of disposal.

The Municipal Council of Dumanjug is drafting an ordinance to impose fines on those transporting undocumented hogs to deter illegal livestock transport.

Gica said complying with entry requirements costs minimal fees ranging from P50 to P100, making it a more affordable and straightforward option than smuggling, which reportedly incurs around P20,000 per pump boat landing.

While supporting the livelihood of residents from Negros who rely on livestock trading, Gica urged them to adhere to legal channels for entry to ensure safety and compliance. Gica is running for reelection in 2025.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/11/05/regions/79-seized-hogs-turned-into-lechon/1997109>



**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# Rice output likely lower in Q3, says DA

By Janine Alexis Miguel

November 5, 2024

RICE production likely fell in the third quarter due to a series of storms that hit the country over the July-September period, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Monday.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa told reporters that output remained constrained by the impact of the El Niño weather pattern earlier this year and the typhoons that followed the end of a dry spell.

"We can expect [lower production] compared to last year because of the damage [from typhoons], El Niño and then the series of typhoons before [Severe Tropical Storm] Kristine [that battered Luzon last month]," de Mesa said.

He did not specify how much the decline would be but gave assurances that rice supplies would remain sufficient.

De Mesa added that prices of imported rice were declining, which could further boost supplies of the staple.

Among the storms that hit the country in the third quarter were Super Typhoon Carina (international name: Gaemi), which hit in late July and caused over P4 billion in agriculture damage, and Severe Tropical Storm Enteng (Yagi) that caused more than P2 billion in farm damage in September.

Rice production for the last three months of the year will also be affected after Kristine (Trami) battered Luzon late in October.

As of Nov. 2, the damage to rice farms from Kristine was said to have topped P4 billion, with the production loss of some 516,438 metric tons (MT) of palay, or unhusked rice, said to be equivalent to 2.5 percent of the production target for this year.

The DA earlier said that palay output could reach 20.44 million MT this year, slightly higher than 2023's record 20.06 million MT.

Palay production from April to June came in at 3.85 million MT, down 9.5 percent compared to 4.25 million MT a year earlier. Results for the third quarter are scheduled to be released this week.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has said that the DA is recalibrating the country's rice program to deliver higher yields. The initiative includes identifying target areas, distribution of improved seeds, expansion of irrigation systems, and adjustments to rice cropping schedules.

The current yield of approximately 84 sacks per hectare is said to highlight the need for substantial production improvements.

The United States Department of Agriculture expects the Philippines to produce around 12.3 million MT of milled rice this year, down from an earlier forecast of 12.7 million MT.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/11/05/business/top-business/rice-output-likely-lower-in-q3-says-da/1997141>

## **BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# **Palay output seen plunging on El Niño, storms' impact**

Ada Pelonia  
November 5, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said the country's palay production could plunge by the end of the year due to the gravity of damage inflicted on plantations by El Niño and typhoons.

“We can really expect palay output to be lower compared to last year because of the huge damage this year,” Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa told reporters on Monday.

De Mesa listed the impacts of El Niño and the series of typhoons that struck the country as reasons behind the projected decline in unmilled rice output.

“We are really seeing a massive extent of damage, because typhoon Kristine hit hard our major rice-producing regions and areas,” he added, partly in Filipino.

According to the DA's latest bulletin, severe tropical storm Kristine destroyed agricultural commodities and infrastructure worth P5.75 billion.

Broken down, De Mesa explained that the Bicol Region sustained the most losses valued at P2.9 billion followed by Mimaropa at P746 million and Cagayan Valley at P621 million.

The DA noted that rice suffered most of the typhoon's impact at 516,438 metric tons (MT); followed by damage of 35,616 MT for high-value crops; 3,334 MT for corn; 2,047 MT for cassava; and 416 MT for fisheries.

“We will eventually determine the extent of the decline, but there will be a [decline in] output, especially for rice this year,” De Mesa said.

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

Despite the projected decline in palay output, De Mesa assured the public that the local production would be supplemented by the arrival of imported rice.

Government data showed that rice import arrivals as of October 24 have surpassed actual shipments for the whole of 2023.

Figures from the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) showed that rice arrivals from January 1 to October 24 reached 3.676 MMT. The country imported 3.606 MMT of rice in 2023.

De Mesa also explained that the reduction in tariffs from 35 percent to 15 percent and India's recent lifting of its ban on non-basmati white rice shipments would help augment rice supply.

Because tariffs went down, and India lifted its ban on rice exports, the rice imported by the Philippines would not cost so much, he explained.

Government official and industry sources earlier said India easing its export restrictions could affect world and domestic rice prices.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) also said in its recent report that Asian export quotes "declined significantly" in response to India lifting its export ban on non-basmati white rice.

"Vietnam quotes decreased by \$28 to \$534 per ton, while Thailand declined by \$60 to \$517 per ton with increased pressure from India's return to the market," the international agency said.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/05/palay-output-seen-plunging-on-el-nino-storms-impact/>

## **BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# **Tripling of Rcef to P30 billion expected to hasten small farmers' recovery**

Jovee Marie N. de la Cruz  
November 4, 2024

WITH extensive agricultural losses owing to Severe Tropical Storm Kristine, the chairman of the House of Representatives' Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources is optimistic that a soon-to-be enacted measure increasing the size of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (Rcef) from P10 billion to P30 billion per year would help small farmers recover mounting losses.

Bicol Saro Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan said the proposed increase in Rcef, which has been approved by Congress and awaits the President's signature, would directly aid 2.4 million small farmers cultivating two hectares or less.

Yamsuan said the expanded fund would also support the provision of farm machinery, quality seeds, credit assistance, training, solar-powered irrigation, and composting facilities.

On top of providing aid to farmers, the measure also increases the allocation for the provision of farm machinery and equipment, quality inbred rice seeds, rice credit assistance, training and extension, solar powered irrigation projects, and composting facilities for biodegradable waste.

"Recovery from the effects of Tropical Storm Kristine will not be overnight. This is a continuing process that requires sustained funding and assistance to our farmers and fishermen," said Yamsuan.

"I am optimistic that the President will sign the ratified bill soon so that the Rcef could become a more potent tool to help small farmers, especially those in Bicol, which was the worst hit by Kristine," Yamsuan added.

The ratified measure, of which Yamsuan is among the principal authors in the House of Representatives, also aims to protect consumers as it gives the Department of Agriculture (DA) the authority to sell rice reserves of the National Food Authority (NFA) to government outlets and agencies in times of shortages and high rice prices.

### Pantawid Pambangka Program

AS chairman of the House Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources, Yamsuan also prodded Congress to act fast in passing the proposed Pantawid Pambangka Program outlined under House Bill 1803 to provide direct aid to small fishermen through the grant of fuel vouchers equivalent to at least P1,000 per month.

HB 1803, which benefits fishermen using motorized fishing vessels of three gross tons or less, provides for a yearly review of the monthly subsidy to determine if the amount is still sufficient when taking into account the effects of inflation.

Beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pambangka Program shall also be automatically enrolled and covered under the National Health Insurance Program of PhilHealth.

The Social Security System (SSS) shall also provide microinsurance mechanisms for the beneficiaries under the bill.

As of November 2, the damage to the agriculture sector wrought by Kristine has already reached P5.75 billion and has displaced 131,661 farmers and fishermen, according to the DA.

Among crops, rice incurred the biggest losses, totaling P4.25 billion so far.

Losses to the fisheries sector were estimated at P446.22 million.

The DA Regional Office in Bicol initially placed losses to the agriculture sector at more than P2.1 billion in the region. Camarines Sur was the hardest hit, suffering an estimated P1.03 billion in losses, followed by Albay with P403 million as of the latest tally.

The ratified bill extending the life of Rcef reconciled the provisions under House Bill (HB) 10381 and Senate Bill 2779.

It amends Republic Act 11203, or the Rice Tariffication Act of 2019, which allowed private traders to import rice. Under this law, at least P10 billion of the tariffs collected from rice imports should go to the Rcef.

Amendments under the ratified bill increase this amount to P30 billion, of which the deficiency would be supplemented by allocations from the national budget.

It also gives the Agriculture Secretary the authority to designate importing entities during times of “extraordinarily” high prices.

The importing entity is required to ship rice at least cost following the conclusion of government-to-government supply agreements.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/04/tripling-of-rcef-to-p30-billion-expected-to-hasten-small-farmers-recovery/>

**ABANTE TONITE:**

## **BAI pinitik sa diskarte kontra bird flu**

Hiniling ng United Broilers' Association (UBRA) sa pamahalaan na ayusin ang ipinapatupad na regulasyon ng Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) sa halip na mag-require ng veterinary health certificate sa isang lugar kahit hindi naman apektado ng bird flu.

Ginawa ni UBRA president Atty. Bong Inciong ang pahayag matapos itakda ng BAI ang pagkakaroon ng shipping permit at veterinary health certificate mula sa munisipyo.

Iginiit ni Inciong sa programang “Walang Atrasan” sa DWAR Abante Radyo na ayusin dapat ang regulasyon upang hindi na madagdagan pa ang gastusin ng lahat ng nasa value chain dahil kalabisan na ito sa itinatakda ng regulasyon.

“Ang posisyon namin ay lampas na iyon doon sa itinakdang regulasyon, doon sa layunin. Wala namang bird flu sa Palawan, wala naman sa Ilocos. Why would you require the broilers there?” ayon kay Inciong.

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/11/04/bai-pinitik-sa-diskarte-kontra-bird-flu/>