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MANILA BULLETIN:

Villafuerte gives fearless forecast on rice prices as PBBM signs Agricultural Tariffication Act

BY [ELLSON QUISMORIO](#)

Dec 9, 2024 05:59 PM

AT A GLANCE

- Camarines Sur 2nd district Rep. Lray Villafuerte says Filipinos should expect local rice prices will drop in 2025 thanks to President Marcos' signing of Republic Act (RA) No. 12078 or the "Agricultural Tariffication Act (ATA)".



(Ellson Quismorio/ MANILA BULLETIN)

Expect prices of rice to drop this coming 2025.

Camarines Sur 2nd district Rep. Lray Villafuerte gave this fearless forecast as he hailed President Marcos for signing into law Republic Act (RA) No. 12078 or the “Agricultural Tariffication Act (ATA)”.

“Restoring the government’s authority under the newly-signed RA 12078 to acquire more stocks and then sell them cheaper through Kadiwa stores and other government outlets is likely to put pressure on importers and/or grains traders to slash their retail prices,” Villafuerte said in a statement on Monday, Dec. 9

He said this action would lead to "more affordable rice in the local market for the benefit especially of poor and low-income consumers”.

Villafuerte said the new law “tweaked the RTL (Rice Tariffication Law) of 2019 by putting back the government’s authority in emergency situations to purchase more rice stocks and sell them directly to consumers”.

The Bicolano is an author of both the 2019 RTL and ATA.

Villafuerte said he hopes ATA would "reverse the current market trend of elevated prices of the staple food despite softening global prices coupled with the huge influx of stocks that importers had acquired at drastically reduced tariff rates”.

RA No.12078 amended the RTL or RA 11203, which lifted in 2019 the authority of the National Food Authority (NFA) to import rice in favor of allowing private traders to purchase an unlimited volume of the staple overseas so long as they pay an import tariff of 35 percent.

In the event that the Department of Agriculture (DA) declares, upon the recommendation of the National Price Coordinating Council (NPCC), a food supply emergency because of a rice shortage or “extraordinary” price spikes, Villafuerte said the DA secretary is empowered to designate an entity in the department—except for the NFA—to import the grain and sell such stocks through Kadiwa outlets, government agencies like the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Office of Civil Defense-National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (OCD-NDRRMC) or local government units (LGUs).

Villafuerte said that allowing the NFA to buy more stocks from local farmers will ensure the sustainability of the DA’s P29 and Rice-for-All (RFA) programs, which require a fairly big inventory for the government to sell continuously cheaper rice to a huge number of poor and low-income families all over the country.

Under the DA’s P29 program, the NFA sells rice at P29 a kilo to vulnerable sectors such as senior citizens, persons with disabilities (PWDs) and Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) beneficiary-families; while its RFA program involves the sale of higher-quality rice to other consumers at the current P40 a kilo (previously at P45, and then lowered to P42).

Villafuerte said that President Marcos’ enactment of RA No.12078 “restores certain trading functions of the NFA to sell more rice directly to consumers so it can hopefully stave off undue price spirals in the grain during emergency situations such as when prices are aberrantly high in the local market despite ample domestic supply cornered by private businessmen”.

“With rice accounting for a hefty share of the food expenses most especially of poor or low-income families, empowering the NFA to once again actively intervene in the market during emergency situations under RA No.12078 would make cheaper rice more accessible to our ordinary consumers and thus help take the edge off sticky inflation,” he explained.

To reduce rice prices for consumers, President Marcos issued Executive Order (EO) No. 62 that cut the import tariff rate on the staple from 35 percent to just 15 percent effective last July.

Villafuerte recalled that following the issuance of EO 62, agriculture and finance officials said that the lower import cost for traders was expected to cut rice prices by an initial P6 to P7 per kilo in the latter part of 2024 or at the onset of 2025.

But these price cuts have yet to occur, and per-kilo rates remained at the P50 to P60 even as Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) data showed that traders had acquired a record volume of imports this 2024, part of which they had imported at the lower 15 percent tariff rate.

https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/9/villafuerte-gives-fearless-forecast-on-rice-prices#google_vignette

MANILA BULLETIN:

VAT refunds for tourists to spur economic growth—DOF

BY [DERCO ROSAL](#)

Dec 9, 2024 03:26 PM

Department of Finance (DOF) Secretary Ralph G. Recto is confident about the country's economic outlook for 2025, driven by the recent passage of two major laws to boost tourism, local spending, and food security.

Both Republic Act (RA) No. 12079, or the Value-Added Tax (VAT) Refund Mechanism for Non-Resident Tourists Act, and RA No. 12078, or the Amendments to the Agricultural Tariffication Act, were signed into law on Monday, Dec. 9.

According to the VAT refund law, which is also a priority reform, "tourists shall be eligible for VAT refunds on locally purchased goods."

According to DOF, this positions the Philippines alongside other countries with a standard VAT system, which is intended to encourage foreign tourists to spend more.

"It is high time that the Philippines catches up with countries around the world that have long implemented a standard VAT refund system. This strategic initiative aims to encourage foreign tourists to spend more in our country, stimulating our domestic economy," Recto said.

"With increased tourism spending, we will have higher revenues to collect and we can create more jobs, raise incomes, and accelerate economic growth," he added.

Under RA 12079, foreign tourists must personally purchase goods from accredited stores and take them out of the country within 60 days of purchase.

Goods purchased per transaction must be worth at least P3,000, with the threshold adjustable based on the consumer price index.

Refunds can be issued electronically or in cash and will be sourced from the Special Account in the General Fund under Section 106 of the Code.

The law also requires the DOF to partner with reputable international VAT refund operators to establish and manage a VAT refund system aligned with global best practices.

Recto, as the finance chief, shall issue the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) within 90 days, following consultations with key government agencies.

Easy recovery from losses

The DOF noted that the potential revenue losses from the law are expected to be easily recovered through the increased tourism spending it encourages, which will benefit the economy.

According to DOF data, savings from the refund redirected to tourism spending could increase economic output by P2.8 billion to P4.0 billion annually.

Meanwhile, the amended law on tariffication could strengthen government measures “to stabilize rice prices during periods of volatility and to prevent manipulative pricing and hoarding.”

As per Recto, the Rice Tariffication Law refinements are crucial for ensuring affordable rice supply and strengthening the agriculture sector.

Additionally, the law enhances the Department of Agriculture’s (DA) regulatory role, enabling it to track rice storage facilities and monitor rice trade activities with other agencies.

It allows the DA to declare a rice food security emergency during supply shortages or price surges and allocates P30 billion annually to the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) until 2031 to boost rice farmers' competitiveness and income.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/9/vat-refunds-for-tourists-to-spur-economic-growth-dof>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Philippines eyes biggest-ever World Bank loan to make rice farming climate-resilient

BY [BEN ARNOLD DE VERA](#)

Dec 9, 2024 02:04 PM

Next year, the World Bank will extend to the Philippines its largest-ever loan aimed at promoting climate-resilient agri-food systems, especially of the Filipino staple food rice.

Now with a total of eight pending loans up for approval by the Washington-based multilateral lender, the Philippines' borrowing pipeline rose to over \$4.169 billion—equivalent to more than P242 billion—for the current as well as the next World Bank fiscal years.

The World Bank disclosed on Dec. 6 that its board is scheduled to approve on June 5, 2025, the \$1-billion (over P58-billion) program-for-results financing (PforR) for the Philippines Sustainable Agriculture Transformation project.

The Department of Finance (DOF) shall borrow on behalf of the Department of Agriculture (DA), the project's implementing agency.

The World Bank document indicated that this DA-led project would entail a total cost of \$20 billion (more than P1.16 trillion), of which the government shall shoulder \$11.895 billion (almost P691 billion) out of the \$12.897.5-billion (over P749-billion) operation cost.

The World Bank loan will augment the financing requirement for program operation, even as there remains a \$2.5-million financing gap.

This forthcoming loan's objective of fostering food and nutrition security plus climate change-resiliency will target efficient government resource use, enhanced diversification, as well as increased productivity in the agriculture sector.

This financing shall be a PforR instrument, "a natural progression to elevate [the World Bank's] support to the next level of sectoral transformation in the Philippines by strengthening the government's own programs and institutional delivery mechanisms," the document read.

"The PforR would particularly focus on the country's rice-based cropping systems. This encompasses 1.9 million hectares (ha) and some three million farmers, which represent 37 percent of the country's farmers and fisherfolk," the World Bank said.

As a PforR, this upcoming loan sets itself apart from the usual development policy financing (DPF) and investment project financing (IPF) schemes that the Philippines avails from the World Bank.

In particular, this program aims to achieve the following specific goals: diversify crops; hike the number of farmers who use climate-smart practices and technologies; increase productivity; and jack up volumes of agricultural products sold at farmgate (as a proxy for farmers' incomes) as well as of select perishable goods that benefit from improved post-harvest handling and storage, the World Bank document said.

"The agricultural sector in the Philippines has high potential for contributing to the country's socioeconomic development agenda... However, the country has not been able to develop its full agricultural potential," the World Bank lamented, citing that "ineffective and inefficient sector policies and spending decisions have hindered agricultural growth."

Also, "a complex, fragmented institutional and regulatory system has further stymied sector development and disincentivized private-sector investments in the country's agri-food systems," the World Bank said, such that "the sector suffers high levels of farm and post-harvest losses that have significant implications for food and nutrition security and incomes."

It did not help that "climate change poses considerable challenges to the development" of the domestic agriculture sector, while the local agri-food industry itself is "also a potential contributor to the effects" of climate risks.

As such, the upcoming World Bank loan shall be aligned with the Philippines' commitments under the Paris Agreement of 2015 as well as its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in 2021, alongside the DA's own centerpiece four-year agriculture-sector transformation plan under the "Para sa Masaganang Bagong Pilipinas" 2024-2027.

Based on the latest updated documents reviewed by Manila Bulletin, the World Bank is expected to approve five other Philippine loans during the current 2025 fiscal year, which began last July 1, 2024, and will end on June 30, 2025.

The World Bank would green-light in February of next year the \$496-million Health System Resilience Project, \$456-million Mindanao Transport Connectivity Improvement Project, as well as \$67.34-million Civil Service Modernization Project.

In March 2025, the World Bank will approve the \$600-million First Energy Transition and Climate Resilience Development Policy Loan (DPL).

The Philippines shall also borrow \$250 million for the Water Supply and Sanitation Project in June next year.

At the onset of the World Bank's fiscal year 2026 that starts on July 1, 2025, the Philippines is set to borrow \$600 million for its Project for Learning Upgrade Support and Decentralization, on top of \$700 million for the Community Resilience Project.

As Manila Bulletin earlier reported, the Philippines was the fifth-biggest borrower among the World Bank's International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) developing country-clients in fiscal year 2024, during which the country secured a total of \$2.35 billion in concessional loans.

If poorer country-borrowers part of the International Development Association (IDA) are included, the Philippines ranked as the seventh-largest overall World Bank borrower of the previous fiscal year, just behind war-torn Ukraine, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Türkiye, Indonesia and India.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/9/philippines-seeks-record-world-bank-loan>

MANILA BULLETIN:

New law amending Agricultural Tariffication Act a win for Pinoys, says Romualdez

BY [ELLSON QUISMORIO](#)

Dec 9, 2024 11:39 AM

AT A GLANCE

- House Speaker Martin Romualdez says the newly-signed law amending the Agricultural Tariffication Act (ATA) represents a victory for every Filipino household, where rice is the staple food.



House Speaker Martin Romualdez (Speaker's Office)

House Speaker Martin Romualdez says the newly-signed law amending the Agricultural Tariffication Act (ATA) represents a victory for every Filipino household, where rice is the staple food.

“This is a landmark legislation that directly addresses the most pressing concerns of ordinary Filipinos: rising rice prices, food security, and the welfare of our farmers. It underscores our collective commitment to building a stronger, more resilient Philippines,” Romualdez, a principal author of the law, said in a statement Monday, Dec. 9 following a ceremonial signing in Malacañang.

The Speaker credited President Marcos for his decisive leadership and genuine concern for the Filipino people, which he said were the driving forces behind the swift passage of this measure.

“This is a victory for every Filipino household. It ensures that rice remains affordable and accessible while empowering our farmers to be more competitive and productive,” Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats (Lakas-CMD) president Romualdez said.

The law strengthens the regulatory powers of the Department of Agriculture (DA) to combat hoarding, price manipulation, and other market abuses that lead to price spikes.

It also provides the DA with a P5-billion buffer fund for food security emergencies. It extends the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) until 2031, with an annual allocation of P30 billion to support farmers through mechanization, seed propagation, and other agricultural programs.

The law also mandates the National Food Authority (NFA) to maintain rice buffer stocks sourced exclusively from local farmers, ensuring both food security and livelihood support for the agricultural sector.

“This measure shows that we can fight inflation and support our farmers at the same time. It reflects our commitment to making sure that no Filipino is left behind as we build a stronger, more equitable nation,” Romualdez added.

Romualdez further commended President Marcos for his relentless focus on addressing the most critical issues facing Filipino families.

The Leyte 1st district congressman also highlighted Marcos' leadership in prioritizing food security as a cornerstone of his administration's agenda.

“This law exemplifies the vision of President Marcos for a Bagong Pilipinas. It aligns with his goal of protecting the welfare of ordinary Filipinos while empowering key sectors like agriculture. His leadership inspires all of us in the House of Representatives to work even harder for meaningful reforms,” Romualdez said.

He went on to thank his colleagues in Congress as well as stakeholders for their hard work in crafting and passing the law.

“This is a shining example of what we can achieve when the Executive and Legislative branches work together for the welfare of the Filipino people. It proves that by prioritizing the needs of our countrymen, we can make a lasting impact,” said the Speaker.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/9/new-law-amending-agricultural-tariffication-act-a-win>

MANILA BULLETIN:

PBBM inks law to address rice supply shortage

BY [BETHEENA UNITE](#)

Dec 9, 2024 11:09 AM

President Marcos signed into law on Monday, Dec. 9, the law amending the Agricultural Tariffication Act (ATA) to make the country's rice industry more competitive.



President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. speaks during the signing of the Agricultural Tariffication Act (ATA) in Malacañan Palace on Dec. 9, 2024. (RTVM Screenshot)

In signing the Republic Act No. 12078, Marcos said it is an urgent response to episodes of rice supply shortage in the country, and aims to ensure that farmers gain steady access to resources they need to succeed.

He said the law amending Republic Act 11203, or the Rice Tariffication Law, seeks to extend the implementation of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) until 2031 and increase its funding from P10 billion to P30 billion annually.

"With the expiration of the original six-year plan for RCEF fast approaching, it became clear that we needed to extend and strengthen the program. And this is where this law comes in, extending

the program to 2031, and significantly increasing its funding from the original P10 billion to P30 billion annually," Marcos said in his speech.

"This will enable us to do much more for our farmers, ensuring that they have the resources that they need to succeed and to make the rice industry even more competitive," he added.

The President also highlighted that the law will help ensure that the price of rice remains affordable and accessible to every Filipino as the Department of Agriculture (DA) will now be empowered to take the necessary actions to stabilize the market in cases of sudden rice shortages or price hikes.

"Furthermore, this law also empowers the DA to maintain stricter oversight of the rice industry. This ensures that the rice reaching our markets have complied with quality standards and regulations," the President said.

The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) will also be able to inspect rice warehouses and manage a national database to track grain storage, safeguarding the country's food supply and ensuring its safety for the public, he added.

Under the law, the Seed Program and the Mechanization Program will also receive enhanced support to provide more farmers with access to high-quality seeds to boost their yields.

The law also places significant emphasis on reducing post-harvest losses, Marcos said.

"By preventing up to 375,000 tons of milled rice from being wasted annually, we can help feed an additional 3.4 million Filipinos each year for the next six years—improving food security and making rice more accessible to everyone," he said.

The Agricultural Tariffication Act was among the [three measures signed by the President](#) on Monday.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/9/pbbm-inks-law-to-address-rice-supply-shortage>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

NFA palay procurement hits three-year high in October

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

December 10, 2024 | 12:00am



National Food Authority (NFA)

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The National Food Authority (NFA) procured over 2.4 million 50-kilogram bags of palay in October, the highest level in three years, as its buying price remained competitive against private traders.

The grains agency bought 2.471 million bags of palay or about 123,561 metric tons from local farmers in October, based on its latest accomplishment report.

The volume was the highest in three years or since the 3.339 million bags it bought in October 2021.

The NFA attributed the rise in its palay procurement to the implementation of its higher buying price through the Price Range Scheme and the good harvest during the reference month.

“This scheme provides the buying price of palay per province set at a competitive price level, which is at par or above the prevailing ex-farm price and to be adjusted on a weekly basis,” the agency said.

However, the NFA only achieved nearly 80 percent of its target palay procurement for October of 3.089 million bags or about 154,497.5 MT.

Furthermore, the NFA distributed 71,669 bags (3,583.45 MT) of rice in October, about 16.45 percent of its 435,700 bags (21,785 MT) distribution level.

“Sales to other government agencies for non-calamity purposes were calibrated due to low inventory level of rice stocks, hence low distribution accomplishment,” the NFA said.

The grains agency distributed 47,875.5 bags to various government units for relief operations and calamity response and 23,793.5 bags for rice allowance of state employees.

At the end of October, the NFA had a total rice inventory of 4.894 million bags, equivalent to 244,724.78 MT, representing 9.1 percent of the country’s national rice inventory during the reference period.

In October, the NFA lowered its palay buying price to a range of P23 to P25 per kilo as part of the government’s bid of reducing retail prices of rice while ensuring farmers get substantial profit.

In the same month, the Department of Budget and Management released P9 billion for the palay procurement of the NFA to ensure that it would have enough funding to buy from farmers during the wet season harvest.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the budget would boost the government support for farmers during the wet season when palay prices typically decline due to increased harvests and limited drying facilities.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/12/10/2406190/nfa-palay-procurement-hits-three-year-high-october>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA hikes Iloilo's rice budget

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

December 10, 2024 | 12:00am



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

STAR / Edd Gumban

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is allocating an additional P82.5 million to further boost rice production in Iloilo, the country's fifth biggest rice producer, by expanding planted hybrid rice in the province.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said he has approved the additional funding to help farmers in Iloilo increase their income and contribute further in ensuring the country's food security.

"The Marcos administration is fully committed to helping millions of Filipinos who depend on agriculture reap the benefits of their hard work," Tiu Laurel said yesterday.

The additional budget, the DA said, would allow its Regional Field Office VI to cover 16,500 hectares more for hybrid rice production, increasing the area planted in the province by more than 50 percent from the earlier recorded hectareage of 30,000 hectares in the dry season.

Region VI, which encompasses the provinces of Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Iloilo, Guimaras and Negros Occidental, has 322,000 hectares of rice fields and contributes 14 percent to national production, according to the DA.

Iloilo province alone accounted for at least five percent of the country's record-high palay production last year of 20.059 million metric tons, based on Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data.

However, the region suffers from a low average yield estimated at 3.4 metric tons per hectare, way below the national average of 4.2 metric tons per hectare, the DA noted.

The DA pointed out that the region's yield could still be "significantly" improved through the use of higher-yield potential varieties, guaranteed irrigation, proper nutrition and recommended cultural management practices and other agricultural interventions.

"Weather permitting, the additional hectares that will be planted with hybrid varieties should increase our rice harvest during this dry season," said DA-RFO VI executive director Dennis Arpia.

He noted that while hybrid seeds can yield up to 10 metric tons per hectare under ideal conditions, the regional office would be satisfied with five metric tons per hectare, given unpredictable weather in Western Visayas.

"If rains come during the flowering stage, they could significantly impact yields," he added.

Some areas in Western Visayas have already started planting for the dry season, while others are still completing their harvest, delayed by the El Niño weather phenomenon, according to the DA.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/12/10/2406192/da-hikes-iloilos-rice-budget>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

RCEF extended to 2031 in amended law

[Alexis Romero](#), [Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

December 10, 2024 | 12:00am



Under Republic Act 12078, also known as the Agricultural Tariffication Act, the President may allow the importation of rice at a lower tariff rate for a limited period or a specified volume in the event of any imminent or forecast shortage “or any other situation requiring government intervention.” Such an order shall take effect immediately and can only be issued when Congress is not in session.

STAR / KJ Rosales

MANILA, Philippines — President Marcos yesterday signed into law a measure that grants him and the Department of Agriculture (DA) powers to stabilize rice prices and regulate importation to address price and supply shocks as well as extends the implementation of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) until 2031 to boost farmers’ productivity.

Under Republic Act 12078, also known as the Agricultural Tariffication Act, the President may allow the importation of rice at a lower tariff rate for a limited period or a specified volume in the event of any imminent or forecast shortage “or any other situation requiring government intervention.” Such an order shall take effect immediately and can only be issued when Congress is not in session.

The President may also suspend or prohibit further importation for a limited period or a specified volume when there is an excessive supply of imported or locally produced rice that results in an extraordinary decrease in local prices.

The DA, meanwhile, can declare a food security emergency on rice because of supply shortage or extraordinary price increases upon the recommendation of the National Price Coordinating Council.

The NPCC shall come up with a formula for determining the existence of a rice supply shortage or an extraordinary increase in prices. If such conditions happen, the DA may sell existing rice buffer stock under the National Food Authority (NFA) to government agencies and the public through the Kadiwa outlets in areas with supply shortages or an extraordinary price increase.

The DA may also replenish the used NFA rice buffer stock with locally produced rice or imported rice when the available supply of locally produced rice is inadequate. The agriculture secretary may designate the importing entity within the DA, with the exception of the NFA.

The newly signed law amends RA 11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL). The amendments seek to strengthen the regulatory functions of the DA by creating and maintaining a database for all grain warehouses and storage facilities for the monitoring of rice reserves.

“In cases of sudden rice shortages or price hikes, the DA will now be empowered to take the necessary actions to stabilize the market. This will help ensure that the price of rice remains affordable and accessible to every Filipino,” Marcos said during the signing ceremony at Malacañang.

The new law also extended the implementation of the RCEF and tripled its annual funding allocation from P10 billion to P30 billion to bankroll newly proposed initiatives on soil health improvement, pest and disease management, solar-powered irrigation projects, small water-impounding projects and the distribution of composting facilities for biodegradable waste. —
Cecille Suerte Felipe, Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/12/10/2406271/rcef-extended-2031-amended-law>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Marcos OKs RCEF extension to 2031, boosts annual funding

[Jean Mangaluz](#) - Philstar.com

December 9, 2024 | 1:04pm



President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Dec. 9, 2024 signed three measures into law, namely the “Basic Education Mental Health and Well-Being Promotion Act”, a law amending the "Agricultural Tariffication Act", and the a law creating a VAT refund program for non-resident tourists.

Presidential Communications Office via Facebook

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday, December 9, signed a measure extending the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) and increasing the annual budget allotted for it.

The RCEF is a result of Republic Act 11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law of 2018, which lifted restrictions from the import of foreign rice. The resulting tariffs were used to fund the RCEF, with the goal of bolstering local farming so it can compete with foreign rice.

Under the law, the RCEF was meant to be enacted for six years, receiving P10 billion per year.

"With the expiration of the original six-year plan for RCEF fast approaching, it became clear that we needed to extend and strengthen the program. And this is where this law comes in, extending the program to 2031, and significantly increasing its funding from the original P10 billion to P30 billion annually," Marcos said in his speech during the ceremonial signing of the bill.

In the amendments that Marcos signed in Republic Act 12078, the P30 billion will be divided as follows:

- **High-quality seeds: P6 billion**
- **Farm mechanization: P9 billion**
- **Extension and training programs, rice farmers' financial assistance, credit, soil improvement, solar-powered irrigations systems, water impounding: P15 billion**

"This will enable us to do much more for our farmers, ensuring that they have the resources that they need to succeed and to make the rice industry even more competitive," Marcos said. Under the new law, the Department of Agriculture (DA) is granted greater authority in cases of price hikes.

Under the new law, the Department of Agriculture (DA) is granted greater authority in cases of price hikes.

In an ambush interview on the sidelines of the ceremonial signing, DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said that the measure should, in the long run, pave the way for lower rice prices.

"We'll be more efficient, we'll be producing more per hectare," Laurel said.

The expanded law also addresses soil rehabilitation, as well as irrigation issues.

"In cases of sudden rice shortages or price hikes, the DA will now be empowered to take the necessary actions to stabilize the market. This will help ensure that the price of rice remains affordable and accessible to every Filipino," Marcos said.

The DA will have to create a database of all grain warehouses and storage facilities across the country for a more comprehensive monitoring of the country's rice reserves. The law also allows the DA's Bureau of Plant Industry to inspect warehouses.

Asked how this new regulatory power would help the DA, Laurel said it would be beneficial. However, he noted that smuggling has already been curbed due to the DA's recent efforts.

Laurel said that apart from regulatory functions, the DA can now take inventory of rice stocks so that they could have accurate data.

The Philippines has consistently been dubbed as the top rice importer of the world. The latest report from the Bureau of Plant Industry showed that in 2024, the Philippines will have already imported 3.9 million metric tons of rice.

The Palace also recently issued an executive order mandating lower rice import tariffs.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/12/09/2406154/marcos-oks-rcef-extension-2031-boosts-annual-funding>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Revised rice tariff law triples farmers' support fund to P30B

By: [Melvin Gascon](#) - Reporter / [@melvingasconINO](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:15 AM December 10, 2024



BUSY DAY President Marcos signs three legislative measures into law on Monday, including the Amendments to the Agricultural Tariffication Act or Republic Act No. 12078 at Malacañang. — Marianne bermudez

MANILA, Philippines — President Marcos signed on Monday Republic Act No. 12078 that seeks to prolong the lifespan of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) for another six years, or until 2031, and increase its allotment to P30 billion annually.

The law amends RA 11203, or the Agricultural Tariffication Law (ATL) of 2019, which liberalized rice trade in the Philippines by removing volume restrictions on rice imports that were subjected instead to lower tariffs.

Marcos said an amendment to the ATL was needed to strengthen the program and address the impending lapse of the six-year lifespan of the RCEF, which was originally given P10 billion a year from the tariff collected on rice imports to help local farmers.

“This will enable us to do much more for our farmers, ensuring that they have the resources that they need to succeed and to make the rice industry even more competitive,” he said.

While intended to stabilize rice prices, improve farmer competitiveness, and ensure food security, the ATL was met with criticism from local farmers as the influx of cheap imported rice led to lower farmgate prices for their production.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., who was interviewed after the signing, said the amended Rice Tariffication Law would lower retail rice prices in the country (See related story on page B2).

Salient provisions

RA 12078 also emphasizes reducing postharvest losses, according to the President.

“By preventing up to 375,000 tons of milled rice from being wasted annually, we can help feed an additional 3.4 million Filipinos each year for the next six years—improving food security and making rice more accessible to everyone,” he noted.

The new law empowers the DA to maintain stricter oversight on the rice industry, the President said, to ensure that “the rice reaching our markets have complied with quality standards and regulations.”

RA 12078 also mandates the Bureau of Plant Industry to inspect rice warehouses and manage a national database to track grain storage, safeguard food supply and ensure its safety for the public.

Vetoed provisions

The President, however, vetoed two provisions of the enrolled bill before signing RA 12078.

In his Dec. 6 letter to Speaker Martin Romualdez, the President objected to a provision allowing the Department of Agriculture (DA) to retain P5 billion from its unused annual funding and use it as its “buffer fund.”

“I am constrained to veto a provision in Section 2 of the measure and a portion in Section 5 of the same bill ... as these may be inconsistent with the principles of sound public fiscal management,” he said.

According to the President, the provision in the bill that sets aside P5 billion from the unused portion of the DA budget and treats it as a rice buffer fund “runs against the directive of Section 44 of Executive Order 292,” which mandates that “all accruing income of agencies shall be deposited in the National Treasury and shall be part of the unappropriated surplus of the general fund of the government.”

The President also vetoed a provision mandating the Bureau of Customs to remit its RCEF collection directly to the DA.

According to the President, the line veto of the two provisions is aimed at adhering to the “one fund” policy of the government, which discourages the creation of special funds.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2013990/revised-rice-tariff-law-triples-farmers-support-fund-to-p30b>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Rice Tariffication Law amendment to temper rice prices

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

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 02:12 AM December 10, 2024

The Department of Agriculture (DA) and industry stakeholders lauded the signing of Republic Act No. 12078, which amended the law lifting import restrictions and increasing the allocation of the rice fund to P30 billion.

On the sidelines of the ceremonial signing of the law on Monday, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the amended Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) would lower retail rice prices in the country.

Tiu Laurel said (translated from Filipino), “In the long run, it should be possible to bring down the price of rice because with the increased funding and longer validity of the law, it would be more efficient and we will be producing more.”

He also said this would greatly help curtail smuggling as the DA’s regulatory power would be strengthened since they are allowed to inspect warehouses to get accurate data on local inventory.

It would be a big help in curbing smuggling activities, he added, noting that the government has already curtailed some of those activities by reforming policies importation and declaration of imported goods.

The Anti-Agricultural Sabotage Act signed by President Marcos last September considers smuggling and hoarding of agricultural products as economic sabotage when the value of goods exceeds P10 million.

The law classifies smuggling, hoarding and cartel operations involving agricultural products as economic sabotage.

Tiu Laurel said aside from the inclusion of soil rehabilitation and the increased budget for irrigation, the additional investments provided under the amended RTL would be felt in one or two years.

The Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. (Pcafi) welcomed the higher DA budget allocation but urged government agencies to ensure the effective implementation.

“It is always welcome. The problem is the devil is in the implementation, and that’s what we should look at because of the experiences in the past; you will see COA (Commission on Audit) audit reports on how they performed in terms of the utilization of the funds that was given to the different agencies,” Pcafi president Danilo Fausto said in an informal gathering with the media on Monday.

<https://business.inquirer.net/495574/rice-tariffication-law-amendment-to-temper-rice-prices>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Marcos OKs RCEF extension, VAT refund for foreign tourists

By: [Zacarian Sarao](#) - Reporter / [@zacariansINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 10:29 AM December 09, 2024



FILE PHOTO: President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., September 12, 2024. – President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. extended the life of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) and introduced the Value-Added Tax (VAT) refund scheme for non-residents, enacting the new laws in a ceremony at the Malacañan Palace on Monday, December 9, 2024. Photo from PCO

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. extended the life of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) and introduced the Value-Added Tax (VAT) refund scheme for non-residents.

In a ceremony at the Malacañan Palace on Monday, Marcos enacted Republic Act No. 12078, or the amendment to the Agricultural Tariffication Act, to extend the RCEF for six years and increase its annual allocated budget from P10 billion to P30 billion.

The president also signed Republic Act No. 12079, or the “VAT Refund for Non-Resident Tourists,” which allows foreign visitors of the country to claim rebates for purchases exceeding P3,000 from accredited stores.

“The act amending the Agricultural Tariffication Act and the VAT Refund for Non-Resident Tourists Act are designed to unlock the full potential of our agricultural and tourism sectors,” Marcos said in his speech during the event.

The amendment to the Agricultural Tariffication Act also seeks to strengthen the Philippine rice industry by enhancing the Department of Agriculture’s regulatory functions and price stabilization powers, according to Malacañang. The new law likewise supports initiatives such as seed development, modern farming equipment, low-interest credit, farmer training, composting facilities, pest management, solar irrigation systems, and soil health improvement, it added.

On the other hand, the VAT Refund for Non-Resident Tourists Act is projected to increase tourism spending by 29.8 percent, which benefits micro, small, and medium enterprises.

The VAT Refund for Non-Resident Tourists Act also requires the Department of Finance, in consultation with other concerned agencies, to draft the new law’s implementing rules and regulations within 90 days.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2013715/marcos-oks-rcef-extension-vat-refund-for-foreign-tourists>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Government urged to fund crops other than rice

December 9, 2024 | 8:18 pm



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THE Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food, Inc. (PCAFI) said that the government needs to fund more crops beyond rice, citing food sufficiency concerns.

In a briefing on Monday, PCAFI President Danilo V. Fausto said the Department of Agriculture's (DA) budget has had too much of a focus on rice production.

"High-value crops have contributed 33% of the agricultural output in crops and rice is only 23%. Yet (we are) still pouring everything into rice," He added.

For the DA budget of P200.19 billion, about P31.4 billion was allocated to the National Rice Program.

Funding to support rice farmers mainly comes from the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), which is financed by tariffs collected on imported rice, as authorized by the Rice Tariffication Law of 2019 or Republic Act No. 11203.

“Pouring in money is welcome. But as we go and plant rice, and we always say we are rice-centric, we need to plant new food. We have to have new ways of planting our food and modernize,” he said.

He added that the tariffication law includes a provision that allows excess rice tariff collections to help rice farmers diversify into other crops.

“There’s so much (demand) for rice, and we cannot produce (all of it); therefore we will always be importing. We can produce high-value crops, but we have not given the budget to develop high-value crops,” Mr. Fausto said.

On Monday, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. signed Republic Act 12078 or the measure amending the Agricultural Tariffication Act, which tripled the annual allocation of RCEF to P30 billion and extended it until 2031.

Mr. Fausto said despite billions being earmarked to support rice production through RCEF, disbursement for mechanization remains slow.

“Anything additional to the budget of the DA is always welcome... The problem is in the implementation, and we need to look into that,” he added.

Meanwhile, Mr. Fausto said that irrigating rice planting areas remains a challenge due to the country’s geography.

“We are an archipelago. We cannot produce rice like India or Vietnam or Thailand. We are composed of islands and it’s difficult to irrigate,” he added.

He said that the average yield per hectare for rice remains below the yield targeted under RCEF.

Palay or unmilled rice production is expected to fall to 19.3 million MT this year due to the combined effects of the dry conditions brought by El Niño and the increased rainfall due to La Niña, according to the DA. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/12/09/640318/government-urged-to-fund-crops-other-than-rice/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

NFA Oct. palay procurement hits 123,561 MT

December 9, 2024 | 8:18 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/MIGUEL DE GUZMAN

THE National Food Authority (NFA) said on Monday that it procured 123,561 metric tons (MT) of palay, or unmilled rice, in October, equivalent to 2.47 million sacks of 50 kilograms each.

In a report, the NFA said the October procurement was 79.98% of its target of 154,497 MT.

“Increase in the procurement as compared to the preceding months can be attributed to the good harvest of the main cropping season and the implementation of the Council-approved Price Range Scheme (PRICERS) for palay procurement activity,” the NFA said.

The PRICERS program sets a buying range of palay per province at prices designed to be competitive against prices offered by traders.

The NFA had approved a price range of P23 to P25 pesos per kilogram of dry palay.

The NFA is targeting a palay inventory of 435,000 MT before the end of the year. It is required to maintain a rice reserve equivalent to about nine days’ demand.

As of Oct. 31, the NFA’s inventory of milled rice was 244,724.78 MT or 4.89 million sacks.

“It should be noted that NFA’s inventory is 9.10% of the national rice inventory,” it added.

The national rice inventory rose to 2.46 million MT in November, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/12/09/640317/nfa-oct-palay-procurement-hits-123561-mt/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Marcos signs law on RCEF extension

December 10, 2024 | 12:33 am



President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. signed three laws, including Republic Act No. 12078 which extends the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund for six years, at a ceremony in Malacañang, Dec. 9. — YUMMIE DINGDING / PPA POOL

By **John Victor D. Ordoñez**, *Reporter*

PHILIPPINE President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. on Monday signed into law a bill that will triple the state budget for rice competitiveness to P30 billion over six years, as his government tries to boost food security amid soaring prices.

He also enacted a measure that allows foreign tourists to claim refunds for purchases worth at least P3,000 (around \$52) from state-accredited stores, as the Southeast Asian nation hopes to boost a tourism sector that was one of the slowest to recover from a coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Republic Act (RA) No. 12078, or the measure amending the Agricultural Tariffication Act, will increase the yearly funding for the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) to P30 billion from P10 billion and extend its life until 2031.

“This will enable us to do much more for our farmers, ensuring that they have the resources that they need to succeed and to make the rice industry even more competitive,” Mr. Marcos said at the signing ceremony at Malacañang on Monday.

The P30-billion RCEF will be used to develop high-quality inbred rice seeds, distribute cash aid for farmers, and build solar-powered irrigation systems and composting facilities.

The measure also amends RA 11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) of 2019 that opened up to private entities the rice import trade, which had previously been dominated by the National Food Authority (NFA), which imported the grain via government-to-government deals.

The private traders instead had to pay a tariff of 35% on rice imports. The government has since reduced tariffs to 15% and it applies to rice from all sources.

The amended law still bars the NFA from importing rice.

On the sidelines of the ceremony, Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. told reporters the impact of the investments on the agriculture sector will be seen in one to two years.

“In the long run, it should lower the price of rice because if we can produce more through the increased budgets and extend the duration, it would be more efficient, and we will be producing more per hectare,” he said in mixed English and Filipino.

“The expanded RTL will include soil rehabilitation and additional yearly irrigation budget, since our main issues now are irrigation and mechanization.”

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Under the law, the Department of Agriculture (DA) will oversee a database of grain warehouses and storage facilities and monitor the country's rice reserves.

The DA will also be required to maintain a rice buffer fund of P5 billion during food security emergencies.

The NFA will also be allowed to sell rice buffer stocks through Kadiwa ng Pangulo rice centers in areas with rice shortages or extraordinary rice price increases.

The Federation of Free Farmers National Manager Raul Q. Montemayor said the government solely focusing on lowering rice prices could come at the expense of farmers.

“RCEF will become just another ‘*pampalubag-loob* (consolation)’ so that farmers will not complain if the government decides to lower tariffs or flood markets with cheap rice,” he said in a Viber message.

“It was intended for farmers to compensate them for loss of income arising from the lifting of quantitative restrictions on imports, and to help them lower their costs of production to make them more competitive and profitable.”

Rice tariff collections amounted to about P30 billion last year, according to the Bureau of Customs.

“It is very good that the President continues with the tariffication policy despite strong opposition, because it benefits the consumer,” Roehlano M. Briones, a senior research fellow at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, said in a Viber message.

But he also cited the need for the government to review how extending and increasing the yearly funding for RCEF would affect spending on its national rice program.

“We need to boost and strengthen our support to local rice farmers to remove all the false narratives of our economic managers on the need to import and reduce tariffs meant to be provided to our rice farmers under this new law,” Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura Executive Director Jayson H. Cainglet said in a Viber message.

VAT REFUND FOR TOURISTS

Also on Monday, Mr. Marcos signed RA No. 12079 or the Value-Added Tax (VAT) Refund Mechanism for Non-Resident Tourists Act, a priority measure aimed at incentivizing foreign tourists to spend more in the country.

Mr. Marcos said the measure is expected to boost tourist spending by 30%, which could benefit mostly the micro, small, and medium enterprises that sell Filipino products.

“These products tell our story, and now, with the VAT refund, they will be able to be more accessible to global consumers, elevating once again our statue in the global market,” the President said.

Under the new law, goods should be purchased by foreign visitors in person at accredited stores and should be taken out of the country within 60 days from the date of purchase.

The value of goods purchased per transaction was set at P3,000, but this can be adjusted by the Finance Secretary in consideration of the consumer price index.

“It is high time that the Philippines catches up with countries around the world that have long implemented a standard VAT refund system. This strategic initiative aims to encourage foreign tourists to spend more in our country, stimulating our domestic economy. With increased tourism spending, we will have higher revenues to collect, and we can create more jobs, raise incomes, and accelerate economic growth,” Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto said.

In a statement, the Department of Finance (DoF) said foregone revenues from the law can be offset by higher tourism spending.

“Data from the DoF show savings from the refund fully channeled into additional tourism spending may boost economic output by P2.8 billion to P4 billion annually,” it said.

The World Travel and Tourism Council earlier projected that in the next decade the Philippine travel and tourism sector will raise its contribution to gross domestic product to P9.5 trillion a year or 22% of economic output.

In his speech, Mr. Marcos ordered the DoF and the Bureau of Internal Revenue to craft “simple, accessible, and culturally inclusive” implementing rules and regulations for the VAT refund system.

The new law will allow the refund process to be made electronically or in cash through operators that will be tapped by the DoF.

Senate President Francis Joseph “Chiz” G. Escudero said these incentives will entice more visitors to the Philippines.

“The tourism sector is a consistent contributor to our economy so an uptick in arrivals would provide a boost to our GDP and generate more jobs for our people,” he said in separate statement.

Based on data from the Labor department, the tourism sector employed 6.21 million Filipinos last year, which was 13% of the workforce.

Meanwhile, the President also signed into law RA No. 12080, or the Basic Mental Health and Well-Being Promotion Act, which will create new school counselor positions and task the departments of Budget and Management and Education to come up with comprehensive mental health programs.

“When our learners and school personnel are mentally healthy, academic performance improves, absenteeism decreases and a culture of compassion and understanding flourishes,” Mr. Marcos said.

Under the new law, Care Centers headed by school counselors will be established in every public basic education school to help students deal with stress management and other mental health concerns.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2024/12/10/640297/marcos-signs-law-on-rcef-extension/>

REMATE:

Villar nagpasalamat kay PBBM sa pagpirma ng RCEF Law extension

December 9, 2024 18:25



Pinuri ni Senator Cynthia Villar si Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. sa pagpirma ng Republic Act No. 12079, isang makasaysayang batas na nag-aamyenda sa Rice Tariffication Law at nagpapalawig sa Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) ng anim pang taon. Itinatakda ng batas na ito ang PhP30 bilyon alokasyon upang suportahan ang mga magsasaka ng bansa sa pamamagitan ng makabagong pamamaraan ng pagsasaka. CESAR MORALES



<https://remate.ph/villar-nagpasalamat-kay-pbbm-sa-pagpirma-ng-rcef-law-extension/>

REMATE:

Pagpapalawig sa RCEP, VAT refund sa non-resident tourist nilagdaan ni PBBM

December 9, 2024 17:33



MANILA, Philippines – TININTAHAN ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr., araw ng Lunes, Disyembre 9 ang batas na magpapalawig sa buhay ng Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF).

Sa isinagawang ceremonial signing, pinirmahan din ni Pangulong Marcos ang VAT refund para sa mga non-resident tourists.

Sinabi ni Senate President Francis “Chiz” Escudero na sa pamamagitan ng paglagda sa Republic Act No. 120278 o Amendments to Agricultural Tariffication Act, makatatanggap ang mga local rice farmers ng higit na suporta mula sa pamahalaan dahil sa probisyon ng ‘farm machinery and equipment, libreng distribusyon ng high quality inbred certified seeds, at iba pang interbensyon.’

Pinalalawak din ng bagong batas ang buhay ng RCEF, na ang pagkukuhanan ay mula sa taripa na kinolekta mula sa rice importation, hanggang 2031.

Idagdag pa rito, ang pagtaas ng annual allocation sa RCEF ay itatatag, mula sa kasalukuyang P10 billion hanggang sa P30 billion hanggang 2031.

Sa kabilang dako, sa naging talumpati ni Pangulong Marcos, sinabi nito na sa pamamagitan ng RCEF, nagawa ng bansa na makapag-invest sa ‘high-quality seeds, mechanization, at pagsasanay ng mga lokal na magsasaka, isang hakbang na magga-garantiya na ‘they are equipped with the right skills and tools to increase productivity.’

”With the expiration of the original six-year plan for RCEF fast approaching, it became clear that we needed to extend and strengthen the program. And this is where this law comes in, extending the program to 2031, and significantly increasing its funding from the original P10 billion to P30 billion annually,” ang winika ni Pangulong Marcos.

”This will enable us to do much more for our farmers, ensuring that they have the resources that they need to succeed and to make the rice industry even more competitive,” aniya pa rin.

Tinuran pa ng Chief Executive na ang bagong batas ay maglalagay ng makabuluhang diin sa pagbabawas sa post-harvest losses.

”By preventing up to 375,000 tons of milled rice from being wasted annually, we can help feed an additional 3.4 million Filipinos each year for the next six years—improving food security and making rice more accessible to everyone,” ang sinabi ni Pangulong Marcos.

Ang pagpapalawak ng annual allocation ay magbibigay-daan para sa mga bagong inisyatiba gaya ng ‘soil health improvement, pest and disease management, pagtatatag ng solar-powered irrigation systems at maliit na water-impounding projects’ at maging ang pamamahagi ng composting facilities para sa biodegradable wastes.

Samantala, mapalalakas din ng bagong batas ang regulatory functions ng Department of Agriculture (DA) sa pamamagitan ng paglikha at pagpapanatili ng database para i-monitor ang rice reserves ng bansa.

Sinabi pa ni Pangulong Marcos na bibigyan ng kapangyarihan ang DA na gumawa ng kinakailangang aksyon para patatagin ang merkado, tiyakin na ang presyo ng bigas ay nananatiling 'affordable at accessible' sa bawat Filipino.

"Above all, this law empowers our farmers to thrive and to help our country secure a stable food supply. By increasing investments in agriculture, providing more resources, and creating a more competitive rice industry, we are laying the groundwork for a stronger, more self-sufficient Philippines," ang tinuran ng Punong Ehekutibo.

Sa kabilang dako, sinabi ni Pangulong Marcos na ang VAT refund program para sa non-resident tourists ay dinisenyo hindi lamang para pasiglahin ang mas maraming gastos kundi para i-promote ang Pilipinas bilang isang 'premier global shopping destination.'

Sa ilalim ng bagong batas, ang mga turista ay maaaring mag-refund ng VAT para sa mga goods o kalakal na personal na binili sa accredited retail outlets, iyon nga lamang dapat ayon sa batas ay 'provided that these goods are taken out of the country within 60 days and meet a minimum transaction requirement of P3,000.'

"This initiative opens a new chapter in our tourism landscape, allowing the country to compete with other tourism markets that attract tourists who are eager to take home authentic, high-quality Filipino products," ayon kay Pangulong Marcos.

Kumpiyansang ipinahayag ng Pangulo na ang positibong economic impact ng nasabing batas ay mahigit sa 30% increase sa tourist spending.

”This surge will benefit both large-scale industries and micro, small, and medium enterprises—an important pillar of our local economy,” ayon sa Pangulo.

Samantala, hinikayat naman ng Punong Ehekutibo ang Department of Finance (DoF) at Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) na gumawa ng implementing rules and regulations (IRR) para maging simple, accessible, at culturally inclusive ang proseso ng VAT refund.

Para naman kay Tourism Secretary Christina Frasco, ang bagong batas ay makapagbibigay ng mas maraming kita para sa Pilipinas, makatutulong ito sa mga maliliit na negosyo.

”Mas lalaki pa ‘yung income ng ating small and medium enterprises at mas dadami pa ‘yung trabaho para sa ating mga kababayan,” ang sinabi ni Frasco. *Kris Jose*

<https://remate.ph/pagpapalawig-sa-rcep-vat-refund-sa-non-resident-tourist-nilagdaan-ni-pbbm/>

REMATE:

Disenteng kita sa mga magsasaka, tiniyak ng DA

December 9, 2024 13:26



MANILA, Philippines – PINAG-IISIPAN ng Department of Agriculture (DA) ang pagbebenta ng P40 kada kilo ng bigas sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa sa pamamagitan ng “Rice-for-All” program sa kabila ng pagtiyak ng affordable price ng kalakal, at makapagbibigay din ng disenteng kita para sa mga magsasaka.

Sinabi ni DA Assistant Secretary Genevieve Guevarra na mas maraming “Kadiwa ng Pangulo” trade centers ang inaasahan na itatatag ng pamahalaan para bigyan ang mga Filipino para makapag- access sa P40 kada kilo ng bigas.

“Ang plano po ay palawigin pa at ilagay ang mga Kadiwa ng Pangulo kiosks sa lahat po ng major na palengke nationwide ”aniya pa rin sa isang news forum sa Quezon City, araw ng Sabado Disyembre 7.

Nagsimula ang DA na magbenta ng bigas sa halagang P40 kada kilo sa Kadiwa stores sa mga pangunahing public markets sa Kalakhang Maynila, at maging ang MRT at LRT stations noong nakaraang Huwebes, Disyembre 5. Ang bigas ay available tuwing Martes hanggang Sabado, mula alas-8 ng umaga hanggang alas- 5 ng hapon.

“DA is hoping to open five more kiosks in other public markets next week,” ayon kay Guevarra.

Ang similar arrangements ay gagawin sa LRT at MRT stations sa pakikipagtulungan sa Department of Transportation, at ang inisyal na lugar ay sa Monumento at LRT North EDSA.

Kung matatandaan, inilatag ni Pangulong Marcos sa kanyang campaign promise na ibaba ang presyo ng bigas sa P20 kada kilo.

“Kami ngayon ay nakikipag-ugnayan sa aming mga regional counterparts. Ina-identify na po natin iyong ating mga sites na puwede doon sa Kadiwa,” ayon kay Guevarra.

“At the same time, nakipag-usap tayo sa mga retailer association at sa mga importers. They’re very much willing to help,” ang sinabi pa rin niya.

Tinuran din ng DA na maraming tao ang naga-avail ng serbisyo ng Rice-for-All program, na may 30 bags ng 25-kilo ng bigas na nabebenta sa kada oras.

Samantala, sinabi pa ng agriculture department na ang ‘balancing efforts’ ay para tiyakin ang affordable rice sa local market at disenteng income o kita para sa mga magsasaka.

“Binabalanse po natin ang kagustuhan ng ating mga magsasaka at kagustuhan ng ating mga mamimili,” ang sinabi ni Guevarra.

Ayon pa rin kay Guevarra, patuloy na kinilala ng DA ang sentimyento ng mga magsasaka kapag ang presyo ng bigas sa merkado ay mababa.

“May ripple effect kapag masyadong binabaan ang presyo ng bigas. Kung nagtanim ako ng bigas, baka madismaya ako na magtanim pa dahil nga wala naman kikitain kung ganiyan na kababa ang presyo,” ang winika ni Guevarra.

Nananatili namang tinutulungan ng DA ang mga magsasaka sa pamamagitan ng ‘banner programs’ ng departamento para tulungan ang rice producing areas na madalas na apektado ng mga baha at bagyo. *Kris*

Jose

<https://remate.ph/disenteng-kita-sa-mga-magsasaka-tiniyak-ng-da/>

REMATE:

BFAR ships tinutukan ng laser ng Chinese vessel – ulat

December 9, 2024 07:52



MANILA, Philippines- Nanutok ng laser ang isang barko ng China laban sa dalawang sibilyang sasakyang pandagat sa ilalim ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) sa West Philippine Sea.

Nangyari umano ang laser harassment sa BFAR noong Disyembre 2 bandang alas-8 ng gabi na umano'y tumagal nang humigit-kumulang limang minuto, ayon sa ibinahaging impormasyon ng BFAR.

Walang nasaktang tripulante sa insidente ngunit may ilang nagsabing sanhi ng pananakit ng mata ang liwanag ng laser.

Nasa Hasa-Hasa Shoal ang BRP Datu Matanam Taradapit at BRP Datu Tamblot para magbigay ng suplay sa mga mangingisda doon at patungo sila sa Pag-asa Island para sa siyentipikong pananaliksik.

Pinuna ng BFAR ang China sa pinakahuling insidente ng maritime aggression.

Samantala, inilarawan ni Chester Cabalza, presidente ng Manila-based think tank International Development and Security Cooperation, ang insidente bilang isang probokasyon at isang uri ng pananakot.

Sinabi ni Cabalza na ang pinakabagong insidente ng laser-pointing ay maaaring “teknikal” na ituring na isang armadong pag-atake.

Dagdag pa ni Cabalza, ang patuloy na panggigipit ng China sa mga barko ng Pilipinas sa West Philippine Sea, na itinuturing ng China na sarili nitong karagatan, ay humantong sa suporta mula sa ibang mga bansa na nagsasabing kinakailangang ipaglaban ang soberanya ng Pilipinas. **Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden**

<https://remate.ph/bfar-ships-tinutukan-ng-laser-ng-chinese-vessel-ulat/>

THE MANILA TIMES:

VAT refunds, RCEF extension welcomed

By Niña Myka Pauline Arceo and Giselle P. Jordan

December 10, 2024

New laws signed by President Ferdinand Marcos will help boost the economy and benefit Filipino consumers, Cabinet officials said on Monday.

In particular, Marcos approved Republic Act (RA) 12079, which provided value-added tax (VAT) refunds for non-resident tourists and RA12078 that amended the existing Agriculture Tariffication law by extending the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) and raising its budget.

RA 12079, Finance Secretary Ralph Recto said, is a "strategic initiative" aimed at encouraging visitors to spend more in the country.

"With increased tourism spending, we will have higher revenues to collect and we can create more jobs, raise incomes, and accelerate economic growth," he added.

The Finance chief said that savings from VAT refunds could generate an additional P2.8-4.0 billion in annual economic output through increased tourism spending.

Under the new law, foreign tourists must purchase goods in person at accredited stores and take them out of the Philippines within 60 days.

The minimum transaction amount for eligibility was set at P3,000, with provisions for future adjustments based on inflation. Refunds can be issued in cash or electronically and will be financed through a special account in the general fund.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr meanwhile, said that RA 12078 would also boost the economy and help the country achieve food security.

The RCEF, which is funded by rice tariffs under RA 11203, has been extended to 2031. The new law also raised the fund's annual allocation to P30 billion from P10 billion.

"The increased funding to enhance the rice industry's competitiveness will boost both rice yields and farm output, benefiting millions of farmers and their families, as well as millions of poor Filipino consumers who need more affordable rice," Tiu Laurel said.

He expressed hope that higher farmer incomes would also encourage the younger generation to take up farming.

Bureau of Internal Revenue Commissioner Romeo Lumagui Jr., meanwhile, expressed optimism that the VAT refunds would attract more international tourists and travelers to the country.

"This landmark law brings with it significant growth in tourism spending in the country, creating more economic growth in the sector, which in turn increases tax collections in the long-run," Lumagui said.

In another statement, the agricultural group Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (Sinag) said it welcomed the changes to the Rice Tariffication law.

Sinag noted the need to support rice farmers, so that they are able to reduce their costs and increase yields, reducing the country's need to import the staple.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/10/business/top-business/vat-refunds-rcef-extension-welcomed/2018668>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Youth enticed to engage in agriculture

By Frederick Silverio

December 10, 2024

DOZENS of youth beneficiaries from the provinces of Tarlac, Laguna, and Oriental Mindoro gathered at Swiss Bel Hotel Blue Lane in Manila for the 5th National Summit and Year-End Assessment organized by the Binhi ng Pag-Asa (seed of hope) Program or BPP.

The three-day summit, which culminated on Nov. 29, 2024, was graced by Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Training Institute director Remelyn Recoter, ATI deputy director Antonieta Arceo and FPJ Panday Bayanihan Party-list first nominee Brian Poe as guest speaker.

Poe also stood as a representative of Sen. Grace Poe in the event.



THE FUTURE Dozens of young people from Tarlac, Laguna, and Oriental Mindoro pose with FPJ Panday Bayanihan Party-list first nominee Brian Poe during the Binhi ng Pag-Asa Program (BPP) 5th National Summit and Year-End Assessment at Swiss Bel Hotel Blue Lane in Manila on Nov. 29, 2024. BPP PHOTO

In his speech, Poe encouraged the Filipino youth to invest in farming and agriculture as a viable business opportunity.

"With a growing youth population in the country, the agriculture sector offers a great potential for generating youth employment and business opportunities," Poe said.

He also lauded the farmers and fishers who continue to contribute to the country's food security and vowed to protect them under the BPP and the FPJ Panday Bayanihan Party-list.

The BPP seeks to empower the youth by enhancing and strengthening their leadership and values toward their agripreneurship journey.

Beneficiaries of the program are provided with agricultural starter kits, modules and capacity-building activities.

During the summit participants shared their journey to success, pitched agricultural projects and showcased their respective produce through the trade fair.

They also bared their gains from the program and plans for the future.

"The BPP aims to cultivate competent agripreneurs through localized training and leadership development," Poe said.

"Bilang kabataan, ang pangarap ko hindi lamang para sa akin kundi sa kapwa ko. Sana maisulong pa ang agrikultura para kumita. Pino-promote ko rin ang paggamit ng organic para maprotektahan ang environment natin (As a young person, my dream is not only for myself but also for others. I hope agriculture can be further developed for me to earn an income. I also promote the use of organic products to protect our environment)," Nahum Cupiado from Oriental Mindoro said. Carl Glen Caballero, a resident from Tarlac, said the possibilities are endless for the being an agripreneur.

"Gusto kong maipakita sa kanila na may financial security at future ang agriculture, hindi lamang para sa retirement at sa mga matatatanda, kundi ito na po ang kinabukasan ng mamamayang Pilipino na mas lumago ang kabuhayan sa pamamagitan ng agrikultura (I want to show them that there is financial security and a future in agriculture — not just for retirement or for the elderly, but that it is the future of the Filipino people, where livelihoods can flourish through agriculture)," he said.

On the contribution of the BPP program in their lives, Ana Velasco said, "Malaki ang naitulong sa akin ng Binhi ng Pag-asa Program. Natulungan po ako nitong mapalawak ang kaalaman ko sa agrikultura, mas ma-involve pa sa mga gawaing pang-agrikultura, at makatulong maging isang kabataang lider (The Binhi ng Pag-asa Program has greatly helped me. It has broadened my knowledge of agriculture, encouraged me to become more involved in agricultural activities, and enabled me to contribute as a youth leader)."

Last month, BPP also conducted provincial summits in Tarlac, Oriental Mindoro and Laguna implemented by DA-ATI in partnership with the Office of Senator Grace Poe.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/10/regions/youth-enticed-to-engage-in-agriculture/2018419>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

D.A. wants to keep 15% rice tariff till early next year

[Samuel P. Medenilla](#)
[December 10, 2024](#)



Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

DESPITE the slowdown in price inflation of rice in November, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said it will push to maintain the 15-percent tariff for the country's food staple until next year.

“Our recommendation is not to hike just yet, since we are still trying to push it [rice price] down,” DA Secretary Francisco Tiu-Laurel Jr. told reporters at the sidelines of the signing ceremony of Republic Act 12078 and two other laws in Malacañang on Monday.

Last June, President Ferdinand Marcos issued Executive Order (EO) No. 62, slashing the tariff rate for rice from 35 percent to 15 percent to help bring down the high retail price of rice.

The 15-percent rice tariff is scheduled to undergo another review from the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) next February, according to Laurel. He said they will decide on whether to adjust or not the rice tariff, depending on the strength of the Philippine peso.

Local rice supply usually increases by May due to the dry season harvest.

Food inflation

Cereals and cereal products, including rice and corn, are usually the main contributors of high food inflation. However, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that in the previous month, rice inflation slowed down to 5.1 percent from 9.6 percent in last October.

In its latest price monitoring, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said that as of December 6, 2024 the price of local well-milled rice was P40 to P52 per kilogram (kg) in major markets in Metro Manila. For regular milled, it was at P40 to P48 per kg.

Laurel said they hope to further reduce the market price of rice with the implementation of RA 12078, which provides the President and the National Food Authority (NFA) market intervention powers related to importation of rice.

He clarified EO 62 will remain in effect even with the implementation of RA 12078.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/10/d-a-wants-to-keep-15-rice-tariff-till-early-next-year/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

More of cheap Kadiwa rice to be sold with bigger RCEF

Samuel P. Medenilla
December 10, 2024



File photo shows a Kadiwa market, a marketing initiative by the Department of Agriculture. It was set up in front of Pasay City Hall, offering rice at a price of P25 pesos kilo.

WITH the extended duration and increased budget for the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) as well as the new regulatory power and importation authority of the government from the newly signed Republic Act 12078, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said cheaper Kadiwa rice will be available by next year.

In an interview with Palace reporters on Monday, DA Secretary Francisco Tiu-Laurel Jr. said the new piece of legislation is expected to help reduce by 10 percent the price of rice, which are sold in Kadiwa outlets—retail sites which are subsidized by the government—through the Rice For All (RFA) program.

When launched in August, RFA sites sold rice at P45 per kilo. This was reduced to P40 per kilo last week, but only in select public markets.

“The Kadiwa ng Pangulo program started selling P40 [per kilo]. So next year, our target is to break the P40 [per kilo mark]. Hopefully by the end of January, P39 or P38,” Laurel said.

Ferdinand Marcos signed RA 12078 in Malacañang to amend the Agricultural Tariffication Act as amended by RA 11203 to boost the competitiveness of the local agriculture industry and make the country more self-sufficient in terms of its rice supply.

Enhanced RCEF

RA 12078 extended the duration of RCEF, which was supposed to end this year, by six years or up to 2031. Its amount was also increased from P10 billion to P30 billion.

It also expanded the possible uses of RCEF, which was previously used to boost the productivity of farmers by providing them access to high-quality seeds, mechanization, credit and training.

Once RA 12078 takes effect, the RCEF can also be used for composting facilities for biodegradable waste to support organic farming; pest and disease management; solar-powered irrigation and water-impounding irrigation; and soil health improvement.

“This will enable us to do much more for our farmers, ensuring that they have the resources that they need to succeed and to make the rice industry even more competitive,” Marcos said in his speech at the signing ceremony of RA 12078 and two other laws.

He expects the improved RCEF will prevent the annual wastage of up to 375,000 tons of milled rice for the next six years.

To meet the higher funding requirements of the enhanced RCEF, Tiu said the government will now not only rely on tariffs from imported rice, but also through augmentation from the General Appropriation Act.

Anti-smuggling measure

Another salient provision of RA 12078 is it provided the DA’s Bureau of Plant Industry the power to not only inspect warehouses, but also “maintain a database for storage facilities for the comprehensive monitoring of the country’s rice serves.”

“This is a big help against smuggling....It’s a big deal for us, if we can now enter the warehouse to do inventory so we can have accurate data to see what the real situation is [in terms of rice supply]. With accurate data, we can manage prices better,” Tiu explained.

He said DA has an ongoing digitalization plan to establish the database.

“By next year, we’ll have a command center in the DA. We’ll be tracking and monitoring everything. So next year, we can hopefully see the prices of rice will be more stable, and if possible, lowered,” Tiu said.

The measure will augment DA’s initiatives to combat smuggling after the passage of RA 12022 or the Anti-Agriculture Economic Sabotage Act in September.

Supply control

RA 12078 also provides the power to stabilize the local market price of rice by providing the President the authority to order the importation at a lower tariff of the local food staple and suspend the import of rice for a limited period.

It also allowed the National Food Authority (NFA) to sell its buffer stocks to government agencies and the public in areas where there are rice supply shortages or an extraordinary rise in rice prices.

NFA can then replenish its rice buffer stock not only by buying locally produced rice, but also through importation.

“In cases of sudden rice shortages or price hikes, the DA will now be empowered to take the necessary actions to stabilize the market. This will help ensure that the price of rice remains affordable and accessible to every Filipino,” Marcos said.

Image credits: [Nonie Reyes](#)

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/10/more-of-cheap-kadiwa-rice-to-be-sold-with-bigger-rcef/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

80% of PHL land degraded; DA pushes organic fertilizer

Ada Pelonia
December 6, 2024

WITH 80 percent of the country's land degraded, the Department of Agriculture (DA) is pushing the use of organic fertilizer to improve soil health.

Agriculture Undersecretary for Operations Roger Navarro stressed the need to foster awareness that soil degradation comes from the abused use of inorganic fertilizer.

“Our estimate [for soil degradation] is we're at least already there about 80 percent nationwide. That's alarming,” Navarro told reporters in Filipino on the sidelines of World Soil Day 2024 on Thursday.

He explained that deteriorated soil would not absorb inorganic fertilizer. Instead, it would either evaporate, thus contributing to greenhouse gases; or would leach out and contaminate waterways.

“Even if you're going to put more bags [of inorganic fertilizer] in your soil, you won't get any yield because it has already deteriorated,” Navarro said.

The DA official emphasized that soil rehabilitation would entail augmenting organic fertilizer, soil ameliorants and biofertilizers.

“We need to inform them that these are the protocols that we need to adopt in order for us to rebuild our soil and increase the yield of the land,” he said.

Navarro noted that the agency has started experimenting with a regenerative soil program for palay planting in 16 regions, including Cagayan Valley, Northern Mindanao, Soccsksargen and Bicol.

He said the program began with a maximum of 1 hectare, which they plan to increase to 100 hectares to see if the interventions are effective.

“If it’s a controlled environment in a small area, the results can really be good. But if you’re going to multiply it in a bigger area, there might be some kind of adjustment and calibration,” Navarro said.

In a speech, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) noted the importance of soil for the agriculture sector.

“Around 95 percent of our food comes from the soil, yet, alarmingly, 33 percent of soils worldwide are already degraded due to various threats and poor agricultural practices [. . .] This stark reality highlights how fragile and irreplaceable our soils are,” it said.

Earlier, the DA released guidelines on the establishment of a composting facility for biodegradable waste (CFBW) to improve soil health by using organic fertilizers.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. issued Memorandum Circular (MC) 31, which states that using compost could reduce farms’ and households’ dependence on chemical fertilizers and pesticides, which would cut production costs and increase returns on investment.

“This is one method to minimize groundwater pollution and restore soil fertility, thereby reducing the vulnerability of marginal farmers to the high cost of chemical fertilizers,” the MC read.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/06/80-of-phl-land-degraded-da-pushes-organic-fertilizer/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

DA chief upbeat, Pcafi wary, on amended Rice Tariffs law

Ada Pelonia
December 9, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said the amendment of the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) will attract a new generation of farmers.

However, the Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. (Pcafi) noted the need to zero in on the new law's implementation, particularly in terms of fund utilization.

"We need to look [at the implementation]. Now that we have a bigger amount, we need more action," PCAFI President Danilo Fausto told reporters in Filipino on Monday.

President Marcos Jr. signed a new law early Monday amending the RTL, which extended the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) to 2031 and increased its annual allocation to P30 billion in a bid to prop up initiatives such as high-quality seed production, farm mechanization, and water management.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the new law is an investment for the country's agriculture sector and economic future.

"The increased funding to enhance the rice industry's competitiveness will boost both rice yields and farm output, benefiting millions of farmers and their families, as well as millions of poor Filipino consumers who need more affordable rice," Laurel said.

"Improving incomes from rice farming will attract a new generation of farmers to replace our aging workforce, helping to fulfill President Marcos' vision of a food-secure Philippines, where no Filipino goes hungry," he added.

Fausto: How about other crops?

Meanwhile, Fausto expressed concern over the new law's focus on rice.

“My fear is that we are trying to fight a war we cannot win [...] We are composed of islands and it's difficult to irrigate,” he said.

“Pouring in money is welcome. But as we go and plant rice [...] we need to plant new food. We have to have new ways of planting our food and modernize.”

Fausto cited crop diversification, such as gravitating toward high-value crops.

“The high-value crops have contributed 33 percent of the agricultural output in crops and rice is only 23 percent, and yet you're pouring everything [into] rice,” he said.

Under the new law, the National Food Authority (NFA) is allowed to sell rice buffer stocks to government agencies and the public, through Kadiwa ng Pangulo centers, in areas with rice supply shortages or extreme price hikes.

It also permits the NFA to replenish its buffer stocks with imported rice in case of insufficient supply of the locally produced staple.

The president can also authorize rice imports at a lower tariff rate for a limited period and/or specific volume.

However, in cases of extreme decline in local rice prices, the President may suspend rice imports for a limited time and/or volume until rice supply and prices stabilize.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/09/da-chief-upbeat-pcafi-wary-on-amended-rice-tariffs-law/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Solon sees lower rice prices in 2025 after signing of Agricultural Tariffication Act

Jovee Marie N. de la Cruz
December 9, 2024

A senior lawmaker of the House of Representatives on Monday expressed optimism that rice prices will drop further next year following President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s enactment of Republic Act (RA) No. 12078, or Agricultural Tariffication Act.

Camarines Sur Rep. LRay Villafuerte said that in signing RA 12078, or the Agricultural Tariffication Act, President Marcos “tweaked the RTL of 2019 by putting back the government’s authority in emergency situations to purchase more rice stocks and sell them directly to consumers, which will hopefully reverse the current market trend of elevated prices of the staple despite softening global prices coupled with the huge influx of stocks that importers had acquired at drastically reduced tariff rates.”

RA 12078 amended RA 11203, which lifted in 2019 the authority of the National Food Authority (NFA) to import rice in favor of allowing private traders to purchase an unlimited volume of the staple overseas so long as they pay an import tariff of 35 percent.

According to Villafuerte, RA 12078 empowers the Department of Agriculture (DA) to purchase additional rice stocks and sell them directly to consumers through Kadiwa outlets and other government channels. This move is expected to exert downward pressure on retail prices, making rice more affordable, especially for low-income households.

In the event that the DA declares, upon the recommendation of the National Price Coordinating Council (NPCC), a food supply emergency because of a rice shortage or “extraordinary” price spikes, Villafuerte said the DA Secretary is empowered to designate an entity in the Department—except for the NFA—to import the grain and sell such stocks through Kadiwa outlets, government agencies like the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Office of Civil Defense-National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (OCD-NDRRMC), or local government units (LGUs).

Villafuerte said that allowing the NFA to buy more stocks from local farmers will ensure the sustainability of the DA’s P29 and Rice-for-All (RFA) programs, which require a fairly big

inventory for the government to sell continuously cheaper rice to a huge number of poor and low-income families all over the country.

Under the DA's P29 program, the NFA sells rice at P29 a kilo to vulnerable sectors such as senior citizens, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) beneficiary families, while its RFA program involves the sale of higher-quality rice to other consumers at the current P40 a kilo (previously at P45 and then lowered to P42).

Villafuerte said that President Marcos' enactment of RA 12078 "restores certain trading functions of the NFA to sell more rice directly to consumers so it can hopefully stave off undue price spirals in the grain during emergency situations, such as when prices are aberrantly high in the local market despite ample domestic supply cornered by private businessmen."

"With rice accounting for a hefty share of the food expenses, most especially of poor or low-income families, empowering the NFA to once again actively intervene in the market during emergency situations under RA 12078 would make cheaper rice more accessible to our ordinary consumers and thus help take the edge off sticky inflation," Villafuerte said.

He noted that as the 2019 RTL stripped the NFA of its original authority to acquire a critical volume of rice, this food agency has lost its capability to directly and actively intervene in the local market whenever retail costs are high because it does not have enough stocks in its warehouses at any given time to be able to influence, much less dictate, prices in the domestic market when private businessmen keep market rates high.

To reduce rice prices for consumers, President Marcos issued Executive Order (EO) No. 62 that cut the import tariff rate on the staple from 35% to just 15 percent effective last July.

Villafuerte recalled that following the issuance of EO 62, agriculture and finance officials said that the lower import cost for traders was expected to cut rice prices by an initial P6 to P7 per kilo in the latter part of 2024 or at the onset of 2025.

However, he said, such hoped-for drastic price cuts never happened, and per-kilo rates remained at the P50 to P60 even as Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) data showed that traders had acquired a record volume of imports this 2024, part of which they had imported at the lower 15 percent tariff rate.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/09/solon-sees-lower-rice-prices-in-2025-after-signing-of-agricultural-tariffication-act/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

DOLE and DA ink partnership to boost livelihood, agri programs

Justine Xyrah Garcia
December 9, 2024

The Department of Labor and Employment and the Department of Agriculture have signed a partnership to integrate their programs aimed at supporting marginalized sectors.

The memorandum of understanding (MOU), December 6, seeks to align the DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program and the DA's KADIWA ng Pangulo (KNP) initiative to promote sustainable livelihoods and affordable agricultural products.

The MOU details the roles of each agency in addressing unemployment and underemployment in rural areas, while tackling challenges in agriculture and food supply.

DOLE will focus on identifying beneficiaries among vulnerable groups, such as farmers, fisherfolk, informal workers, and labor unions. These groups will receive livelihood assistance in the form of in-kind grants to support their ventures.

The labor department will also coordinate with DA to connect these beneficiaries to KNP stores, which aim to provide affordable and fresh agricultural products to consumers.

By cutting out middlemen, these stores will also ensure better earnings for small-scale farmers and fisherfolk.

“Sa pinaigting na partnership ng DA at DOLE, mas maisusulong sa pamamagitan ng [KNP] stores na mabigyan ng oportunidad ang mga benepisyaryo ng DILP at upang higit na mapaunlad ang kanilang kabuhayan,” DOLE Secretary Bienvenido E. Laguesma said.

(Through the strengthened partnership between DA and DOLE, the beneficiaries of the DILP will be given more opportunities to improve their livelihoods, particularly through the KNP stores.)

The partnership will also provide technical assistance, capacity-building activities, and logistical support to streamline operations. Both agencies aim to strengthen the resilience of their programs, particularly as food prices and supply chain disruptions continue to challenge the agricultural sector.

For DA Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel., the initiative reflects the government's commitment to fostering inclusive economic growth.

“Through this partnership, we aim to create more sustainable livelihoods and improve access to affordable agricultural products. These efforts will uplift not just the lives of farmers and workers, but also the Filipino consumer,” he said.

Aside from DOLE and DA, the KNP program is also supported by the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Social Welfare and Development, as well as the Presidential Communications Office and the Presidential Management Staff.

The Marcos administration seeks to expand the number of KNP stores from 21 to 300 by the second quarter of 2025.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/09/dole-and-da-ink-partnership-to-boost-livelihood-agri-programs/>

ABANTE TONITE:

Laurel target ibagsak pa presyo ng bigas

December 9, 2024



Plano ng Department of Department of Agriculture (DA) na ibaba pa ng hanggang P38-P39 ang presyo kada kilo ng bigas sa mga Kadiwa ng Pangulo outlet sa susunod na taon.

Ito ang inihayag ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. sa ambush interview sa Malacañang matapos lagdaan ni Pangulong Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. ang bagong batas na nag-amiyenda sa Agricultural Tariffication Act nitong Lunes ng umaga, Disyembre 9.

Ayon kay Laurel, nagsimula silang magbenta ng bigas sa mga Kadiwa ng Pangulo outlet sa halagang P40 kada kilo at kung mananatiling maganda ang pandaigdigang presyo nito ay sisikapin nilang maibaba pa ang presyo nito sa mga pamilihan.

“The Kadiwa ng Pangulo program natin started selling P40 na. So hopefully by the end of January, mayroon na tayong P39, P38 per kilo,” ani Laurel.

Samantala, bukod sa target na ibaba ang presyo ng bigas sa mga Kadiwa outlet, nais din ng kalihim na ibalik ang extension workers ng DA na natanggal dahil sa devolution sa mga local government unit (LGU) upang mabilis na maipatupad ang mga programang pang-agrikultura.

Inihalintulad ni Laurel ang DA sa isang ahensiya na kulang sa mga sundalo kaya isa ito sa nais niyang ibalik upang mas epektibong maisakatuparan ang mga programang pang-agraryo.

“Ang DA is like an agency with so many generals pero walang foot soldiers. So in order for us to implement iyong program policies moving forward, we need boots on the ground para ma-implement ito as soon as possible,” dagdag ng kalihim. (Aileen Taliping)

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/12/09/laurel-target-ibagsak-pa-presyo-ng-bigas/>

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON:

Tulfo sa DA: Paghuli sa mga abusadong rice importers, traders umpisahan na

Joy Cantos

December 9, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Hinihikayat ni House Deputy Majority Leader Rep. Erwin Tulfo ang Department of Agriculture (DA), sa pangunguna ni Sec. Francisco Tiu Laurel, na umpisahan ng hulihin ang mga mapagsamantalang mga rice importers at traders sa bansa dahil sa patuloy na mataas na presyo ng bigas sa merkado.

Ani Cong. Tulfo, “P35 per kilo ang imported rice paglabas sa ating pier, e bakit wala pa rin tayong nakikitang bigas na less than P50 ang kilo sa palengke?”

“Ang ibig lang sabihin nito sa bulsa lang ng mga importers at traders napupunta lahat ng profit o kita at hindi man lang nila patikmin ang taumbayan.”

Dagdag pa ng ACT-CIS partylist Representative, bumaba ang presyo ng bigas sa abroad kung saan galing ang ating mga imported rice.

Bumaba na rin daw ang taripa sa imported na bigas kaya’t dapat lang daw bumaba na rin presyo ng bigas sa palengke.

“Panahon na mag-sampol si Sec. Laurel ng tusong importer na makasuhan at kumpiskahin mga bigas nito dahil sa overpricing”, anang mambabatas.

Aniya, “pero ang problema, mukhang nakatunganga lang ang DA natin at nag-aantay ng biyaya mula sa langit”.

“Unless kumilos si Sec. Laurel, hindi bababa amg presyo ng bigas sa palengke,” pahabol pa ni Tulfo.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2024/12/09/2406034/tulfo-sa-da-paghuli-sa-mga-abusadong-rice-importers-traders-umpisahan-na>