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**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# 'Ang laki ng tubo': Salceda gives fair warning to big rice retailers

BY [ELLSON QUISMORIO](#)

Dec 17, 2024 04:49 PM

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## AT A GLANCE

- Local supermarkets and big retailers have been given fair warning by the House quinta-committee (quinta-comm) in its investigation on the prevailing high prices of rice--the country's staple food.



Albay 2nd district Rep. Joey Salceda (Facebook)

Local supermarkets and big retailers have been given fair warning by the House quinta-committee (quinta-comm) in its investigation on the prevailing high prices of rice--the country's staple food.

The quinta-comm, also known as the Murang Pagkain Super-committee, is led by its overall chairman Albay 2nd district Rep. Joey Salceda.

"I am warning supermarkets and big groceries. We have received reports that imported well milled rice is being labelled as premium rice and sold at P70 per kilo in supermarkets. That means they earn as much as P30 pesos per kilo," Salceda said in a statement Tuesday, Dec. 17.

This early, Salceda said the quinta-comm will invite representatives from this sector once it reconvenes.

"We disaggregated market returns and as much as 48 percent of excess returns are at the wholesale to retail level," said the economist-solon.

"I also do not believe in the excuse given by both the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) and the Grains Retailers Confederation of the Philippines that the reason for stubborn price increases is consumer preferences for premium rice," he said.

The BPI is under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

"We checked the latest reference values, and even the highest quality rice from Vietnam is just P41 per kilo after duties. That doesn't explain why prices are stubborn at P56," Salceda noted.

He added: "And that does not match actual average import prices of P31 per kilo after duties — that is not premium price.

"So, next time I get a reason like that, the committee will be forced to remind people that there are consequences to lying under oath," said Salceda.

### **DA's 'powerless' excuse rejected**

Earlier, the quinta-comm prodded the DA to step up and put an end to the "death spiral" when it comes to rice prices.

Salceda said DA's perennial retort that they are powerless to stop abuse in the rice market will no longer do. It gives license to price manipulators to run amok and prey on the Filipino family, he said.

"Rice prices have become something of a death spiral. And with the DA publicly saying they are powerless under the law, price manipulators are even more emboldened to do as they please," he said.

"We have reviewed the statute books for what tools the DA can use to end rice price abuse. We found several laws that have not been fully repealed, including RA 509, which would allow the DA a wide range of powers as soon as the President declares a 'rice emergency'," the veteran solon said.

President Quirino did this in 1948, in response to widespread hoarding in the rice market. "I urge the DA to scour the substantial body of laws enacted over the decades and mobilize these laws to end the climate of economic impunity in the rice market."

"We must also use all the organs and powers of the state, from post-clearance inspections of import warehouses, to random inspections in markets, to remove the sense that there is no sheriff in town," said the Bicolano.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/17/salceda-gives-fair-warning-to-big-rice-retailers>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Money poured in education still higher than DPWH, says House leader

BY [DEXTER BARRO II](#)

Dec 17, 2024 03:02 PM

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## AT A GLANCE

- Zambales 1st district Rep. Jay Khonghun emphasized on Tuesday, Dec. 17, that the education sector still has the largest share in the proposed 2025 national budget, contrary to claims that the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has taken this spot.



Zambales 1st district Rep. Jay Khonghun (Dexter Barro II/MANILA BULLETIN)

Zambales 1st district Rep. Jay Khonghun emphasized on Tuesday, Dec. 17, that the education sector still has the largest share in the proposed 2025 national budget, contrary to claims that the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has taken this spot.

Khonghun, an assistant majority leader, says the entire education sector is set to receive an allocation of P1.05 trillion in the Congress-ratified version of the proposed budget next year.

This is higher than the budget of the DPWH, which is earmarked at P1.03 trillion.

“Sinasabi lang naman natin is pag-in-add mo rin talaga ‘yung budget ng the entire education sector ay mas malaki pa rin ‘yung budget ng entire education sector kaysa sa DPWH,” said Khonghun in a press briefing.

(We are just saying that if you add the budget of the entire education sector, the sum is still bigger than that of the DPWH.)

“Importante sa Marcos administration ang edukasyon at binibigyan natin ng importansya ng edukasyon. Number one priority pa rin ng ating presidente ang education,” he added.

(Education is important in the Marcos administration and we give importance to education. Our president's number one priority is still education.)

In a document obtained by Manila Bulletin, government agencies under the education sector have been earmarked with a budget of P980.5 billion.

Prominent agencies include the DepEd which has been allocated with P782.1 billion, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) with P34.8 billion, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) with P20.9 billion, and State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) with P127.2 billion.

The budget for the sector includes education-related infrastructure and salary differential, which carries a budget of P14.7 billion and P60.5 billion, respectively.

As indicated in the Constitution, the government is mandated to assign the highest budgetary priority to education.

In the same document, it was stated that the budget of the DPWH was only P1.03 trillion, instead of the initial amount of P1.14 trillion.

It pointed out that P82.08 billion--or the amount meant for convergence projects--had been cut from the agency's findings.

According to the DPWH, infrastructure projects done in conjunction with other government agencies are considered part of convergence projects. These include farm-to-market roads under the Department of Agriculture (DA), as well as education-related infrastructure which has since been added to DepEd's budget.

The cut from the agency's budget was enforced during the recent Bicameral Conference Committee, the resulting report of which had already been ratified by the Senate and the House of Representatives.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/17/money-poured-in-education-still-higher-than-dpwh-says-house-leader>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

## **2 DA ranking officials ‘not performing as expected’; given 6 months ultimatum**

BY [JEL SANTOS](#)

Dec 17, 2024 02:39 PM



DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. (JEL SANTOS/MB PHOTO)

Two ranking officials of the Department of Agriculture (DA) were given an ultimatum to shape up in the next six months of 2025 as they are “not performing as expected”, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said.

During an interview with reporters in Makati on Monday, Dec. 16, Laurel revealed that they have the first six months of next year to be at the top of their game and show the secretary they are worthy of their posts, saying his “expectation is quite high.”

“Ang ayaw ko lang sa [sa kanilang dalawa] ay ako pang kailangang tumutok para matapos (What I don’t like with the two of them is that I need to focus on their tasks to make sure it is executed),” he said.

“Despite my busy schedule, kailangan kong tumigil para maayos at mapapirmahan ang dapat pirmahan (Despite my busy schedule, I had to stop to make sure that necessary documents have been signed).”

The DA chief said the two ranking officials of the agriculture department failed in their “obligation” to the agency.

“Hindi ko naman sinasabi na hindi ako natutuwa [sa performance nila] (I am not saying that I am not happy with their performance),” he said.

Laurel said the two officials are aware that they are not reaching the high expectations of the DA secretary.

According to him, the performance of the two officials is not so “grabe (severe).”

“We have to give them a chance. Hindi naman grabe (Their performance is not that severe). First six months of next year we’ll tell me,” said Laurel.

Laurel and his “dream team” of appointed officials have been serving at the DA for over a year now.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/17/2-da-ranking-officials-not-performing>



**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Romualdez tells profiteers amid costly rice: 'House will go after you'

BY [ELLSON QUISMORIO](#)

Dec 17, 2024 10:25 AM

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## AT A GLANCE

- Alarmed by the prevailing high price of rice, Speaker Martin Romualdez has told profiteers and price manipulators to clean up their act, or else face the wrath of the House of Representatives.



House Speaker Martin Romualdez (PPAB)

Alarmed by the prevailing high price of rice, Speaker Martin Romualdez has told profiteers and price manipulators to clean up their act, or else face the wrath of the House of Representatives.

“Sa mga profiteers dyan, ‘yung mga unscrupulous traders and wholesalers (To the profiteers out there, to the unscrupulous traders and wholesalers), we are going after you. The House will go after you,” Romualdez said Monday, Dec. 16 during the Office of the Speaker's Christmas party for reporters.

“We will not allow this abuse to happen, lalo na itong panahon ng Pasko (especially this Christmas ),” he declared.

The leader of the 307-strong chamber emphasized the government’s efforts to address high food prices. He cited recent tariff cuts on imported rice and the need to investigate why costs remain elevated despite sufficient supply.

“The government is doing everything. Alam mo naman kaka-cut lang natin ng taripa para sa mga imported rice, from 35 to 15 percent. Ang dami-daming supply na naiimbak dyan pero bakit mataas pa rin ‘yung presyo?” Romualdez pointed out.

(We all know that tariff on imported rice had just been reduced from 35 to 15 percent. We keep adding to our supply, but why do prices remain high?)

“That is what we are trying to ferret out. Bakit nga ba hanggang ngayon hindi pa bumababa ang presyo ng bigas? (Why haven't rice prices gone down?)” he added.

### **Quinta-comm hailed**

Romualdez highlighted the House quinta-committee (quinta-comm), also known as the Murang Pagkain Super Committee, as a key force in the fight against smuggling, price manipulation, and rising hunger.

This “super committee” brings together five committees—Ways and Means, Trade and Industry, Agriculture and Food, Social Services, and Food Security—to address weaknesses in government programs and ensure accountability for market abuses.

“Our aim is to bring food prices to reasonable levels. This is about ensuring affordable rice and quality food for every Filipino,” Romualdez said.

He said the quinta-comm is now working closely with the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Bureau of Customs (BOC), and Department of Agriculture (DA) to conduct inspections of warehouses suspected of hoarding rice and other staples.

### **House to look into utilities next?**

While food security remains the House’s top priority, Romualdez, Leyte's 1st district congressman, revealed plans to expand the chamber’s focus to other critical concerns such as energy costs and water supply.

“We will not stop there. Mind you, once we solve that, or at least we get the process going in bringing down the price of basic food commodities, we will even look at other basic needs of the people like power or energy cost. We will look at water. We will look at the very basic needs of the people because we are the House of the People,” he said.

The Speaker assured the public that the House’s mission is aligned with President Marcos' goal of improving lives.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/17/romualdez-tells-profiteers-amid-costly-rice-house-will-go-after-you>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# DA seeks exemption of all programs, projects from election ban

BY [BEN ARNOLD DE VERA](#)

Dec 17, 2024 10:20 AM

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With a flurry of initiatives lined up for next year, the Department of Agriculture (DA) shall seek exemptions from the forthcoming election ban on public spending to ensure that projects won't stop nor delay implementation.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. told Manila Bulletin on Monday night, Dec. 16, that the DA is now preparing to apply for "all" of its programs and projects to be exempted from the ban to be imposed by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) ahead of the May 12, 2025 midterm polls.

In its recently published 2025 Fiscal Risks Statement, the Cabinet-level Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) grouping the Marcos Jr. administration's economic team flagged that next year's midterm elections could temper expenditures on public goods and services as well as slow down projects' execution.

As for foreign-assisted projects, or those funded by loans and grants from multilateral lenders as well as bilateral development partners, DA Assistant Secretary and spokesperson Arnel V. De Mesa noted that these are "normally" exempted from the election ban, which will start by March of next year.

De Mesa added that new projects must be awarded before this ban.

In particular, Tiu Laurel cited that they want to distribute inputs like seeds and fertilizers before the election-related public expenditures ban takes effect.

The DA chief told reporters that for next year, the agency's top priorities include rolling ou

He also reiterated their commitment to make available so-called "nutri" and "sulit" rice varieties at P36-37 and P35-36 per kilo, respectively, by the second quarter of 2025.

The DA's plan to change the planting calendar, with the support of government financial institutions (GFIs) Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) and Land Bank of the Philippines (LandBank), will also push through next year, Tiu Laurel said.

This is despite reports of the DA's proposed 2025 budget to have been cut by at least P9 billion or up to P20 billion.

Tiu-Laurel expressed confidence that the DA is expected to perform better in terms of spending next year's budget as it was crafted under his watch this year.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., who had also served as Agriculture chief when he assumed office in July 2022, appointed Tiu Laurel as the full-time DA Secretary just last November 2023.

Also, Tiu-Laurel pointed out that any DA-related budget item not lodged in the general appropriations act's (GAA) regular items would be eventually disbursed to the agency, citing that up to 75 percent of its unprogrammed appropriations were released to the DA this year.

Since unprogrammed appropriations aren't covered by regular budget financing, these could only be funded by excess or new tax and non-tax revenues, as well as foreign loans for specific projects and programs.

In the proposed record P6.352-trillion 2025 national budget, unprogrammed appropriations are expected to drop to P158.7 billion next year from P731.4 billion this year, documents had shown.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/17/da-seeks-exemption-of-all-programs-projects-from-election-ban>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Ensuring ample, affordable rice supply for all Filipinos

BY [MANILA BULLETIN](#)

Dec 17, 2024 05:34 AM



Determined to ensure the stability of the price of rice at the retail level, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel has been doing the rounds of Kadiwa ng Pangulo kiosks where the staple is selling at ₱40 per kilo.

This comes on the heels of latest projections made by the US Department of Agriculture. The USDA eyes a looming increase in rice imports, spurred by production declines caused by La Niña and a series of natural disasters that have hit the country's rice-producing areas, drastically reducing yields at a time when demand is on the rise. This confluence of factors presents not only economic but also social ramifications, particularly for the lowest income classes, who are most vulnerable to price hikes and food insecurity.

According to the USDA, the Philippines is set to become the world's largest rice importer for three consecutive marketing years. This marks a troubling shift, as the country moves from a self-sufficient producer to a net importer, relying increasingly on foreign rice to meet domestic demand. While rice imports have historically played a role in balancing supply shortages, the sheer scale of expected imports — projected at around 5.4 million metric tons in 2024-2025 — highlights the growing gap between production and consumption. This gap is widening due to a surge in rice consumption. Rice is a staple in the Filipino diet, and for many, it is the primary source of sustenance. From 14.8 million metric tons (MT) in 2020-2021, rice consumption in the Philippines is expected to rise to 17.4 million MT in the 2024-2025 marketing year. This increase is driven by several factors, including population growth, changing dietary habits, and the socio-economic realities faced by millions of Filipinos. As consumption continues to climb, the supply side struggles to keep pace, further exacerbating the need for imports.

Rice is not just a food item. It's a cornerstone of economic stability for many Filipino families. The lowest-income classes, particularly those living in rural areas where rice is grown, are most exposed to the fluctuating prices and availability of the commodity. Typhoons and extreme weather events have already driven up production costs, and now the anticipated increase in imports will likely push domestic rice prices higher due to a combination of market dynamics and logistical challenges.

The impact on low-income families could be devastating. With rising rice prices, these households will spend an even larger proportion of their income on food. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, food accounts for more than 40 percent of household expenditure among the lowest 30 percent of income earners. A rise in rice prices would, therefore, have an outsized effect on their purchasing power, further entrenching poverty and inequality. With cheaper imports flooding the market, many small-scale rice farmers are likely to be pushed into even deeper poverty.

To mitigate the impact of these changes, the government must adopt more comprehensive measures. First, improving domestic rice production through investments in irrigation, farming technology, and disaster-resilient crops could help reduce the need for imports in the future. Second, addressing the rising cost of rice through targeted subsidies or price controls can help protect the most vulnerable populations from the worst effects of inflation. Lastly, creating more robust social safety nets for farmers, including income support and disaster relief, would provide a cushion against market volatility.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/17/ensuring-ample-affordable-rice-supply-for-all-filipinos>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Palay harvest seen reaching over 7.4 million MT this quarter

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

December 18, 2024 | 12:00am



Farmers thresh their newly-harvested palay on October 6, 2024.

STAR / Cesar Ramirez

MANILA, Philippines — The country’s palay output this quarter may grow by 2.8 percent year-on-year to over 7.4 million metric tons (MT) on the back of higher planted area, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said.

In its latest production estimate as of Nov. 1, the PSA projected that palay output from October to December would reach 7.44 million MT from 7.24 million MT in the same period last year.

“On the other hand, the updated estimate of palay production for the period October to December as of Nov. 1 reflected a decrease of 2.3 percent from its estimate of 7.61 million MT as of Oct. 1,” the PSA said.

The PSA said the estimated harvest area based on standing crop for the fourth quarter would expand by 2.8 percent to 1.8 million hectares from 1.75 million hectares in the same period last year.

At least 988,950 hectares or more than half of the total standing crop have been harvested as of Nov. 1, according to the PSA.

“This translates to palay output of 4.18 million metric tons,” the PSA said.

“Of the total area of 811,300 hectares of standing palay yet to be harvested as of Nov. 1, 3.5 percent were at the vegetative stage, 30.4 percent at the reproductive stage and 66.1 percent at the maturing stage,” the PSA added.

The PSA estimated that the average palay yield in the fourth quarter would remain at 4.13 MT per hectare, the same level recorded in the same period last year.

In the third quarter, the country’s palay output continued to contract for the third straight quarter, falling by 12 percent on an annual basis as planted area shrank, worsened by ill effects of weather disturbances.

The PSA earlier reported that palay production in the third quarter settled at 3.33 million MT, about 470,000 MT lower than the 3.8 million MT in the same period last year.

Historical PSA data showed the third quarter palay output was the lowest production in five years for the July-to-September period or since the 3.05 million MT recorded volume in 2020.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has already revised downward its full-year palay production forecast multiple times as a result of the damage caused by the prolonged dry spell and typhoons.

The DA is now expecting palay production this year to settle at 19.3 million MT, about 3.8 percent lower than last year’s record harvest of 20.06 million MT.

The DA’s latest palay or unmilled rice production forecast could be the lowest output level since 2020 when the country harvested 19.29 million MT.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/12/18/2408091/palay-harvest-seen-reaching-over-74-million-mt-quarter>



**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# DA, DTI forge partnership to boost agricultural food exports

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

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 11:54 AM December 17, 2024



The Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) formalized a partnership to remove roadblocks to shipping agricultural commodities to the global market.

The memorandum of agreement signed by the two agencies includes trade promotion, strategic investments, empowering small and medium enterprises and resolving issues such as market access and tariffs.

It covers key commodities including bananas, mangoes and seaweed while promoting high-value crops like coffee and cacao.

The DA will create an Agri-Export Help Desk to manage export-related concerns and form commodity councils beginning January next year aimed at enhancing the coordination between government and private businesses.

Various groups including the Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc., and the Philippine Food Processors and Exporters Organization Inc. will be involved in this joint undertaking.

“Combining the resources and expertise of both agencies will unlock the full potential of Philippine agriculture,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said in a statement on Monday.

“This partnership is a step toward a prosperous and sustainable agricultural sector,” he added.

The DA said its Export Development Office has unveiled programs to boost the global trade of bananas, mangoes, seaweed, coconuts, and durian. In implementing this initiative, it also prioritizes coffee, cacao and other emerging crops.

But with this collaboration with the DTI, the DA is expecting to unlock new opportunities and drive growth in the farm sector.

“By improving market access and fostering innovation, the DA and DTI aim to position the Philippines as a global leader in food exports, benefiting farmers, fisherfolk, and other stakeholders across the value chain,” it added.

The latest government data showed that exports of agro-based products totaled \$591.98 million as of October this year, up by 41.3 percent from \$418.9 million in the same month the year prior.

The amount is equivalent to 9.6 percent of overall exports for the reference period.

<https://business.inquirer.net/496942/da-dti-forge-partnership-to-boost-agricultural-food-exports>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# **SRA mulls over gov't purchase of local sweetener**

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

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 09:21 PM December 17, 2024



STOCK PHOTO

The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) will carefully study the proposals from various stakeholders for the government to purchase locally produced sugar to address the supply-demand imbalance resulting in lower prices for the sweetener.

“We will talk to the DA (Department of Agriculture) about what is possible and probably, the voluntary purchase and putting it in reserve is, of course, one of the things that we are thinking about,” SRA Administrator Pablo Luis Azcona said.

“We just have to find a way to ensure a stable supply to maintain a reasonable farm-gate price for farmers,” he told reporters.

Three groups already wrote a letter to the SRA seeking an immediate government intervention to arrest declining sugar prices—the United Sugar Producers Federation of the Philippines, the Luzon Federation of Sugarcane Growers Association and sugar farmers from Mindanao who are organizing their federation.

## **Voluntary**

Azcona said the SRA would assess the voluntary purchase program that was implemented in the last sugar crop year—September 2023 to August 2024—and enhance it as necessary to push up sugar prices for local farmers while leveling the playing field.

In crop year 2023-2024, the SRA introduced the first voluntary limited volume purchase of local raw sugar to encourage industry players to purchase sugar from local farmers in exchange for a guaranteed spot in the government's importation programs.

“What we're doing is we're studying what we did last year and we're finding ways to improve it more, make it a lot fairer for all the people who participate,” he said.

“[We will] make sure that the programs can be participated by anybody, as in technically anybody, just as long as they possess a domestic trading license. So be it a farmer, be it a farmer group, association, beverage maker, miller, any player as long as they are involved in the industry,” he added.

The SRA, via Sugar Order No. 2, allowed qualified traders to buy 300,000 metric tons of local raw sugar in a bid to stabilize farm-gate prices while “ensuring fair and reasonable retail prices.”

Azcona lamented the huge difference between the supply and demand, adding the price offered by farmers for their local harvests should be higher as both wholesale and retail prices have been stable.

As of Dec. 1, the mill-site price of sugar reached P2,498.55 per 50-kilogram bag (LKg), slightly up from last year's P2,486.28 per 50-LKg bag. **INQ**

<https://business.inquirer.net/497128/sra-mulls-over-govt-purchase-of-local-sweetener>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Government sticks to yearly three-month fishing ban

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 09:40 PM December 17, 2024



## INQUIRER FILES

The government is sticking to the yearly implementation of the temporary fishing ban in major fishing grounds in the Philippines amid calls to lift the “closed fishing season.”

In a statement over the weekend, the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said this policy aims to replenish fish stocks while securing the country’s food security in the long run.

The three-month fishing ban is implemented yearly in key fishing areas to protect target fish species during their peak spawning period and address other concerns such as overfishing and climate change.

Earlier, fishers’ group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas urged the BFAR to “refrain from placing” the country’s major fishing grounds under this measure as it creates an “artificial shortage” of fish resulting in importation.

## **Excuse to import**

“The closed fishing season creates an artificial shortage that justifies the importation of tons of fish. Ultimately, fishers are incurring losses because the value of their catch declines as the market is flooded with imported fish,” the group said.

However, BFAR Executive Director Isidro Velayo Jr. defended this policy, saying that it is backed by scientific studies and local consultations.

“Fish species like sardines, mackerel, and round scad spawn heavily during these months. For instance, [fishing for] sardines in Zamboanga Peninsula peaks from November to February. Protecting spawning areas during this period allows stocks to recover,” Velayo said.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said this critical conservation measure supports both fisherfolk and consumers by ensuring a sustainable fish production nationwide and any importation during the fishing moratorium is not a replacement for the local industry.

“Importation addresses temporary supply gaps caused by the closed-fishing season or events like typhoons. It complements, not replaces, local fish production to keep prices stable,” Tiu Laurel said.

The DA had authorized the importation of 30,000 metric tons (MT) of frozen small pelagic fish in the fourth quarter of 2024 to plug the projected supply gap during the fishing ban.

Last month, it allowed the importation of an additional 8,280 MT of frozen small pelagic fish for wet markets to alleviate the impact of recent typhoons on domestic supply.

The agency said the government provides fuel subsidies, livelihood programs and aquaculture assistance to support fisherfolk affected by typhoons. **INQ**

<https://business.inquirer.net/497182/government-sticks-to-yearly-three-month-fishing-ban>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Meat import volume rises amid lower tariffs

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

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 08:02 PM December 17, 2024



FILE PHOTO: Staff from the City Veterinary Office (CVO) of Marikina City Meat Inspection Unit inspect freshly slaughtered carcass inside a delivery van that just arrived at their Single Port Entry site on August 15, 2024. All meat products must pass through checking here before delivery in public markets, supermarkets, restaurants, other sellers in the city. The CVO requires the meat delivery trucks to also be registered with them and in good working condition. Carcass hung from the hooks must also have plastic wrapping at the end to prevent blood from dripping to the floors and to minimize contamination as these are loaded and taken from the vehicles, especially with the problem of African swine fever (ASF). Marikina has no slaughterhouses and gets supplies from Antipolo City, Quezon City, Rizal, Bulacan, and Tarlac provinces. INQUIRER /LYN RILLON

The volume of shipments of meat products bound for the Philippines in the 10 months up to October was already near the total for 2023 amid the retention of lowered import duties and the prevalence of animal diseases that threaten local output.

Data from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) logged meat imports at 1.19 billion kilograms (kg) in the January-October period, equivalent to 98.9 percent of the 2023 import volume of 1.2 billion kg.

The 10-month volume was 16.8 percent higher than the 1.02 billion kg recorded in the same period a year ago.

The Meat Importers and Traders Association (Mita) said meat imports are poised to hit last year's volume despite the volatility of the exchange rate.

“With imports still arriving as seen from the utilization rate of the container yards and the slow rate of return of empties, the importers will take stock of the remaining inventory after the Christmas sales and hope the market will remain exuberant,” Mita president emeritus Jesus Cham said over the weekend.

### **Pork is king**

Among the varieties of meat, pork accounted for half, or 50.2 percent, of overall imports. Chicken came second with a share of 32.7 percent, while beef was a distant third with 14.1 percent.

The country's pork imports stood at 598.28 million kg, rising by 18.6 percent from 504.31 million kg. Traders purchased primarily pork cuts and offals.

“Ostensibly, ASF (African swine fever) continues to impact local pork production while the lower duty on pork meat is making offal less attractive relative to meat,” Cham said.

Imported chicken inched up by 8.6 percent to 389.95 million kg from 359.23 million kg. Those mechanically separated, used in manufacturing hotdogs, patties and sausages, were the most widely purchased type of chicken.

Beef imports surged the most among the three major meat varieties, climbing by 38.9 percent to 167.55 million kg from 120.64 million kg, mainly beef cuts.



Cham said the markets are more appreciative of the value of this red meat; hence, the double-digit growth.

Nearly half of shipments came from Brazil, the leading source of imported meat products, with 420.36 million kg, mainly pork and chicken. The United States followed with 179.56 million kg and Spain with 146.31 million kg.

The latest BAI data is somewhat aligned with the recent estimate of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which pegged this country's meat import volume at 1.17 million metric tons this year.

“Similarly, in the Philippines, the extension of lower tariff rates on key meat products, aiming to mitigate rising meat prices, which will be applied until 2028, is likely to induce more purchases,” the FAO's Meat Market Review said.

“In the Philippines, continued challenges related to animal diseases are expected to constrain domestic supplies, resulting in higher import demand,” it added.

ASF and avian influenza are still prevalent in the archipelago. The BAI recorded active ASF cases in 18 provinces in seven regions as of Nov. 22, while two provinces in two regions have active bird flu cases as of Dec. 6. **INQ**

<https://business.inquirer.net/497123/meat-import-volume-rises-amid-lower-tariffs>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Processors appeal to halt buffalo meat importation ban from India

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 10:35 AM December 17, 2024



INQUIRER STOCK PHOTO

The Philippine Association of Meat Processors Inc. (Pampi) seeks the reversal of an order issued by the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) that prohibits the importation of buffalo meat from three states in India as it could affect the production of canned goods by early next year.

“The [sanitary and phytosanitary import clearance] ban will leave us with virtually no raw material inventory to process into canned goods by then,” Pampi president Felix Tiukinhoy Jr. and Pampi vice president Jerome Ong said in a letter to Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

“We have IBM (Indian buffalo meat) raw materials that have been contracted and are ready for shipment from those states to meet our production requirements in January and February next year,” the group said.

The Pampi, an organization comprised mainly of manufacturers of processed meats and suppliers from allied industries, requested the agriculture chief to conduct “a circumspect and more thorough review” to avoid compromising the interests of the industry and ensure food security.

“Pending the outcome of such review, we respectfully suggest that the status quo ante be maintained,” it added.

The group wrote a letter to Tiu Laurel after the BAI prohibited the issuance of SPSIC to meat processors to import Indian buffalo meat from Bihar, Maharashtra and Telangana in India.

The issuance stemmed from the findings of a recent DA inspection mission of foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreaks in three Indian states last year.

The Pampi said the import ban on three Indian areas “cannot be rationally sustained” without barring the entry of Indian buffalo meat originating from Uttar Pradesh, another Indian state that has been on the DA ban list since 2020 because of FMD.

“This is because the state of Uttar Pradesh, where additional plants are being recommended for accreditation, had a major FMD outbreak in cattle in March this year,” they said.

Likewise, they argued the importation ban on Bihar, Maharashtra and Telangana “will set a disastrous precedent as it will result in our industry losing India as the only source of buffalo meat raw material.”

The Pampi said they have been sourcing Indian buffalo meat, a raw material for meat processing such as corned beef, hotdogs and sausages, from the above-mentioned states, notably Maharashtra and Telangana since 1994 and it never caused any FMD issue for the local livestock population.

Furthermore, it said there has not been any reported case of transmission of this virus from Indian buffalo meat as both DA-accredited suppliers and meat processors have been following local and global standards for importing fresh meat of bovines from countries or zones infected with foot-and-mouth disease virus.

<https://business.inquirer.net/496936/processors-appeal-to-halt-buffalo-meat-importation-ban-from-india>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Over 800 Zambales farmers get financial aid, fertilizer subsidy

By: [Joanna Rose Aglibot](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

Inquirer Central Luzon / 07:41 PM December 17, 2024



Over 800 rice farmers in San Marcelino, Zambales received financial aid and fertilizer subsidy under the Zambales Fertilizer Subsidy Program. The initiative aims to boost agricultural productivity, income, and development in the province. (Photo courtesy of San Marcelino Public Information Office)

SAN MARCELINO, Zambales — Over 800 rice farmers in this town received financial assistance and fertilizer subsidy on Tuesday, December 17, under the Provincial Government of Zambales' (PGZ) Fertilizer Subsidy Program.

The distribution of financial aid was held at the Municipal Evacuation Center in Sitio San Carias, Barangay Laoag, and was spearheaded by Gov. Hermogenes Ebdane Jr.

He said the program aims to help farmers purchase fertilizers to improve productivity, increase income, and promote agricultural development in the province.

The initiative is also part of ongoing efforts to support local farmers and enhance the agricultural industry, which remains a cornerstone of San Marcelino's economy and livelihood.

Present during the event were San Marcelino Mayor Elmer Soria, municipal councilor Nestor Ignacio, municipal agriculturist Remin Sardo, senior agriculturist Arnel Abayan from the Provincial Agriculture Office, and Barangay Laoag Chair Jerry Mariano.

Soria lauded the dedication, patience, and perseverance of the town's farmers, highlighting their essential role in society.

He also expressed gratitude to Ebdane for implementing agriculture-focused programs that benefit San Marcelino.

Soria also promised to continue the collaboration with the PGZ and other agencies to boost the agricultural sector in the municipality.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2016258/over-800-zambales-farmers-get-financial-aid-fertilizer-subsidy>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# PH dairy imports seen rising 14% in 2024

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

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 09:49 AM December 17, 2024



STOCK / FILE

The volume of the country’s dairy imports is expected to climb by around 14 percent this year, driven by higher consumer spending and demand for food services.

In a report, the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said the Philippines was expected to purchase 2.65 million tons (in milk equivalent) in 2024, up from the 2023 estimate of 2.32 million tons.

This contributed to the slight increase in global trade of the product, which was pegged at 84.93 million tons in 2024, a slight uptick of 0.4 percent from last year’s 84.62 million tons.

The FAO attributed its “relatively stable” global dairy trade outlook to the “improved consumer demand and increased food service sales in some countries induced by the post-COVID-19 recovery of tourism.”

Based on the report, “the increasing spending on food consumed out of home and the overall increased demand from the hotel, restaurant, and institutional (HRI) sector, notably in the

Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Algeria, Mexico, and the United States of America,” boosted global sales.

The FAO also said that the global trade of skim milk powder is seen to dip by 1.8 percent to nearly 2.6 million tons this year.

“Despite imports likely growing in several countries, including the Philippines, Indonesia, Algeria, Egypt, Malaysia, and Vietnam, their aggregate increase is unlikely to fully compensate for the declines expected in China, Mexico, and the Russian Federation, which in total account for about one-quarter of global trade,” the FAO said. **INQ**

<https://business.inquirer.net/496920/ph-dairy-imports-seen-rising-14-in-2024>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Bill restoring NFA market powers being readied

December 17, 2024 | 9:35 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/MIGUEL DE GUZMAN

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

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it has initiated the process of drafting legislation proposing to restore the National Food Authority's (NFA) power to intervene in rice markets and regulate prices.

"We plan to submit our wish list to the Office of the President by Friday... I'm already asking our legal to draft the bill," Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. told reporters late Monday.

He added that the DA will also urge President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. to certify the impending bill as urgent.

At a House committee hearing on Tuesday last week, Mr. Laurel said that reinstating the NFA's regulatory powers could help control rice prices.



Republic Act No. 11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law of 2019 stripped the power of the NFA to import and directly sell rice. The law instead implemented tariffs on imported rice at 35% initially, and 15% currently. The collected proceeds fund the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund to modernize rice farming.

“The NFA used to have the power to tell all the retailers that you must sell NFA rice at this price... we don’t plan to control (the market), we just want to provide an option to buy rice at (the government) price,” he added.

The law had also limited the NFA’s functions to procuring domestically produced rice to hold in reserve for calamities. It is required to maintain a rice inventory equivalent to about nine days’ demand.

“With just the right budget and the right policy that allows the NFA to sell its rice to intervene, that will be enough (to tame prices),” Mr. Laurel said.

According to DA price monitors, as of Dec. 14, a kilo of well-milled rice sold for between P40 to P52 in Metro Manila public markets, while regular-milled rice fetched between P40 and P48.

Asked to comment, Federation of Free Farmers National Manager Raul Q. Montemayor said granting the DA or the NFA the authority to intervene by releasing cheap rice stocks could lead to a decline in farmgate prices.

“NFA intervention must be limited to situations where prices go beyond established thresholds or triggers, limited to areas where these price spikes occur, and targeted towards poor consumers only,” Mr. Montemayor said via Viber.

“Under normal circumstances, there should be no need for the NFA to intervene,” he added.

He cited the cost of intervention and the possibility of leakage, or the improper release of rice into the wrong hands, but also the risk of depressing palay prices due to the presence of cheap NFA rice on the open market.

Former Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar said that the NFA must be given the responsibility to maintain a one-month rice reserve instead of nine days demand, through a higher budget.

“With that level it can sell its aging stock to its network of retailers at about P35 per kilo. Another option is to sell to KADIWAs at P35. NFA intervention can provide relief to consumers in a big way,” Mr. Dar said via text.

The DA’s current program for distributing subsidized well-milled rice to the general public is known as Rice for All in KADIWA ng Pangulo outlets, since expanded to selected public markets and train stations.

The Rice for All program currently sells well-milled rice priced for P40 per kilo, with Mr. Laurel saying the DA is seeking to lower the price by January.

“I think we can make it P38-P39 by January. But we need (more) outlets,” he added.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/12/17/642246/bill-restoring-nfa-market-powers-being-readied/>

## **BUSINESS WORLD:**

# **China food expo yields P1.6B for PHL delegation**

December 17, 2024 | 9:32 pm



## **BW FILE PHOTO**

THE PHILIPPINES obtained about P1.6 billion worth of food sales and firm purchase agreements during the China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai, the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (CITEM) said.

“The amount was a combination of reported sales, purchase agreements or memoranda of understanding, and business matching results following the six-day import-oriented trade show,” CITEM said in a statement on Tuesday.

It added that the Philippine delegation included 16 food exhibitors during the China based expo, this was also in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture.

It said that small and medium enterprises in the delegation highlighted products featuring the Philippine durian variety known as Puyat.

“Together with our valued partners from various government agencies and the private sector, CITEM is thrilled with the success of our seventh participation in CIIE. The country’s participation is expected to create jobs, providing bigger opportunities for local agricultural communities across the Philippines,” CITEM Executive Director Leah Pulido Ocampo said.

CITEM said that a memorandum of understanding was signed by Lionheart Farms Corp. and a Jiangsu-based company valued at \$415,000, while Treelife Coco Sugar obtained more than \$400,000 from a Shanghai e-commerce firm.

Dole Philippines, Inc. and Good Farmer acquired purchase agreements for fresh fruit, while SQ Fresh Fruits signed an agreement with Shishi Songhe International Trade Co. Ltd. to export durian.

“Durian is our next high-potential export revenue fruit. It was very evident from the expo goers’ overwhelming reception of our Puyat durian during our taste testing sessions that generated a lot of interest and inquiries,” Agriculture Assistant Secretary Philip C. Young said.

A coconut oil trading agreement was also reached by New Asia Oil, Inc. and Namchow Food Group during the event, though no details were provided.

CITEM said Liwayway International Co. Ltd. is also set to explore potential collaboration with Chinese firms on supply wchain optimization and channel expansion. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/12/17/642240/china-food-expo-yields-p1-6b-for-phl-delegation/>

## BUSINESS WORLD:

# Halal trade office established

December 17, 2024 | 9:31 pm



## FREEPIK

THE Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said it established the National Halal Industry and Development Office (NHIDO) to oversee the industry's development.

“The NHIDO will act as the central coordinating body for all Halal development efforts to streamline initiatives and foster collaboration,” the DTI said in a statement on Tuesday.

“The establishment of NHIDO marks a turning point for the Philippine Halal industry. It will serve as a unifying force to transform our goals into reality, unlocking opportunities for businesses, creating jobs, and elevating the Philippines as a Halal-friendly destination globally,” Halal Industry and Trade Office Program Manager Dimnatang M. Radia said.

The Trade department said that among the office's key priorities is to simplify Halal certification and standards, ensuring easier access for medium, small, and micro enterprises (MSMEs).

“This initiative will be supported by expanded capacity-building programs that offer specialized training, equipping MSMEs and other stakeholders with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in the Halal sector,” it added.

The agency said the NHIDO will collaborate with local government units and other agencies to put up Halal-compliant infrastructure, including slaughterhouses and cold storage facilities.

“This initiative will also involve regional integration efforts to enhance supply chains across Luzon, the Visayas, and Mindanao, creating the foundation for efficient Halal trade hubs,” it added. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/12/17/642237/halal-trade-office-established/>

**REMATE:**

# **P500M ismagel na bigas buking sa bodega sa Bulacan**

December 17, 2024 16:49



**CHRISTINEJD**

MANILA, Philippines – TINATAYANG nasa mahigit P500 milyong halaga ng mga ismagel na bigas mula Myanmar, Pakistan, at Thailand ang kinumpiska ng mga tauhan ng Bureau of Customs (BOC) sa isinagawang pagsalakay sa isang bodega sa Bocaue, Bulacan nitong Disyembre 16, 2024.

Ayon sa BOC, libo-libong sako ng mga bigas ang nadiskubre ng mga tauhan ng Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service (CIIS) na pinamumunuan ni Director Alvin Enciso na pawang mga walang kaukulang dokumento na nagresulta sa pagkakakumpiska ng mga ito.



**CHRISTINEJD**

Sinabi ng BOC na matagal nang minamanmanan ang lugar dahil sa mga ulat na iligal umano itong nag-iimbak ng mga bultong smuggled na bigas.

Matapos ang ilang araw ng surveillance at sa ilalim ng BOC Letter of Authority (LOA), ni-raid ng Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service (CIIS) sa pangunguna ni CIIS Director Enciso ang bodega.

Agad na isinara ng CIIS ang bodega at nagsagawa ng imbentaryo habang patuloy ang imbestigasyon ng BOC.

Inihahanda na ang mga kasong paglabag sa customs law para sa pagsasampa sa Department of Justice (DOJ) laban sa mga consignee ng mga smuggled rice at warehouse operators/owners.

Ang naturang operasyon ay alinsunod sa direktiba ni Pangulong Ferdinand Bong-bong Marcos Jr. na higpitan ang mga hangganan laban sa agricultural smuggling partikular ang bigas kung saan magsasagawa ng pagbisita ang mgabtauhan ng BOC CIIS ng Manila International Container Port sa ilang bodega sa Bocaue. **JR Reyes**

<https://remate.ph/p500m-ismagel-na-bigas-buking-sa-bodega-sa-bulacan/>

**REMATE:**

# All-out war laban sa mga profiteer, smuggler, at hoarder ikinasa ng Kamara

December 17, 2024 16:15



MANILA, Philippines – Nagdeklara si House Speaker Martin Romualdez ng all-out war laban sa mga profiteer, smuggler, at hoarder at nangakong gagawa ng mga agresibong hakbang upang mapababa ang presyo ng pagkain.

“The government is doing everything. Gagawa ang Kamara ng matinding hakbang upang labanan ang mga mapagsamantala” pahayag ni Romualdez.

“Sa mga profiteers dyan, ‘yung mga unscrupulous traders and wholesalers, we are going after you. The House will go after you. We will not allow this abuse to happen, lalo na itong panahon ng Pasko,” dagdag pa nito.

Isa sa naging hakbang ng Kamara ang pagbuo ng House Quinta Comm na kilala rin bilang Murang Pagkain Super Committee na nag-iimbestiga kung bakit nanatiling mataas ang presyo ng bigas kahit na mayroong sapat na suplay at ibinaba na ang taripa na ipinapataw sa imported na bigas.

Ang super committee ay binubuo ng House Committees on Ways and Means, Trade and Industry, Agriculture and Food, Social Services, and Special Committee on Food Security.

Ang Quinta Comm ay nakikipagtulungan sa National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Bureau of Customs (BOC), at Department of Agriculture (DA) para sa pagsasagawa ng inspeksyon sa mga warehouse na pinahihinalaang umiipit sa suplay ng bigas.

Pinuri rin ni Romualdez ang Quad Comm, na nagsisilbing “truth commission” na ang trabaho ay malantad ang korupsiyon at sistematikong iregularidad.

“Parang nagiging truth commission na ngayon ‘yung Quad eh. Nagiging truth commission na ngayon ‘yung mga efforts natin dito sa Congress. Because this is the place, itong venue natin, ‘yung forum where we can come out and ferret out the truth,” dagdag pa ni Romualdez.

Iginiit rin ng lider ng Kamara ang kahalagahan ng imbestigasyong isinasagawa ng Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability sa iregularidad sa paggamit umano ng confidential fund ni Vice President Sara Duterte.

Bukod sa pagkain, sinabi ni Speaker Romualdez na tututukan din ng Kamara ang isyu ng mahal na kuryente at ang suplay ng tubig.

“We will not stop there. Mind you, once we solve that, or at least we get the process going in bringing down the price of basic food commodities, we will even look at other basic needs of the people like power or energy cost. We will look at water. We will look at the very basic needs of the people because we are the House of the People,” pagtatapos pa ni Romualdez. *Gail Mendoza*

<https://remate.ph/all-out-war-laban-sa-mga-profiteer-smuggler-at-hoarder-ikinasa-ng-kamara/>



**REMATE:**

# Exemption sa election spending ban ihihirit ng DA

December 17, 2024 16:02



MANILA, Philippines – Plano ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na mag-aplay ng mga exemption mula sa 2025 election-related public spending ban upang maiwasan ang pagkaantala sa pagpapatupad ng mga pangunahing hakbangin, inihayag ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. noong Disyembre 16.

Ipapataw ng Commission on Elections (Comelec) ang pagbabawal sa paggastos sa ilalim ng election spending ban bago ang May 2025 midterm elections, na posibleng magpapabagal sa pagpapatupad ng proyekto, gaya ng ibinandera ng Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC).

Gayunpaman, sinabi ni DA Assistant Secretary Arnel V. De Mesa na ang mga proyektong tinulungan ng ibang bansa ay karaniwang hindi kasama at binigyang diin ang pangangailangang magbigay ng mga bagong proyekto bago magsimula ang pagbabawal sa Marso 2025.

Kabilang sa mga priyoridad na hakbangin para sa 2025 ang pagpapalawak ng cold-storage at post-harvest facility, pamamahagi ng mga buto at pataba, paglulunsad ng solar-powered irrigation, at pag-aalok ng abot-kayang uri ng palay na “nutri” at “sulit” na nagkakahalaga ng ₱36-37 at ₱35-36 bawat kilo, ayon sa pagkakabanggit, sa kalagitnaan ng taon.

Sa kabila ng pagharap sa pagbawas sa badyet na hanggang ₱20 bilyon para sa 2025, nananatiling tiwala si Tiu Laurel sa kakayahan ng ahensya na epektibong magamit ang mga pondo nito, na

itinuturo na ang mga hindi nakaprogramang paglalaan ay sumuporta sa 75% ng paggasta ng DA ngayong taon.

Plano rin ng DA na ayusin ang planting calendar na may suporta mula sa Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) at Land Bank of the Philippines (LandBank). **RNT**

<https://remate.ph/exemption-sa-election-spending-ban-ihihirit-ng-da/>

**ABANTE:**

## 2 tamad na agri exec binigyan ng ultimatum

Abante News

December 17, 2024



Dalawang mataas na opisyal ng Department of Agriculture ang namumurong matanggal sa trabaho kung hindi magbabago.

Isiniwalat ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu-Laurel Jr. na hindi siya kuntento trabaho ng dalawang matataas na opisyal na hindi niya muna pinangalanan. Hindi umano nagagampanan ng dalawang opisyal ang kanilang tungkulin.

Sa lahat aniya ng mga opisyal sa DA, ang dalawang ito ang bigong naabot ang kanyang “expectation”.

Sinabi ni Tiu-Laurel na nakausap na niya ang dalawang opisyal at binigyan na ng ultimatum para ayusin ang trabaho.

Giit ng kalihim, dapat mabilis ang bawat opisyal sa kanilang aksiyon at tugon, at hindi na dapat inaasa pa ang trabaho sa iba.

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/12/17/2-tamad-na-agri-exec-binigyan-ng-ultimatum/>

**ABANTE:**

# Romualdez nagdeklara ng giyera vs smuggler, hoarder

Abante News

- December 17, 2024



Nagdeklara si Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez ng all-out war laban sa mga profiteer, smuggler at hoarder na ang prayoridad ay kumita ng malaki kahit pa magresulta ito sa paghihirap ng mga Pilipino.

Kasabay nito, sinabi ni Romualdez na ang Kamara de Representantes ay gagawa ng mga agresibong hakbang upang mapababa ang presyo ng mga bilihan.

Ayon kay Romualdez ibinaba na ang taripa sa imported na bigas sa 15% mula sa 35% at mayroong suplay ng presyo ng pagkain “pero bakit mataas pa rin ‘yung presyo?’”

“That is what we are trying to ferret out. Bakit nga ba hanggang ngayon hindi pa bumababa ang presyo ng bigas?” sabi ni Romualdez.

“Sa mga profiteer diyan, ‘yung mga unscrupulous trader and wholesaler, we are going after you. The House will go after you. We will not allow this abuse to happen, lalo na itong panahon ng Pasko,” dagdag pa nito.

Kinilala rin ni Romualdez ang kahalagahan ng imbestigasyon na isinasagawa ng Quinta Committee o ang Murang Pagkain super committee sa paglaban sa smuggling at price manipulation.

“Our aim is to bring food prices to reasonable levels. This is about ensuring affordable rice and quality food for every Filipino,” sabi pa ni Romualdez. (Billy Begas)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/12/17/romualdez-nagdeklara-ng-giyera-vs-smuggler-hoarder/>

**MANILA STANDARD:**

## **481 farmers complete field school education**



By Jessica M. Bacud

December 17, 2024, 10:20 pm

A TOTAL of 481 corn farmers from four northern Luzon provinces have received their diplomas after completing practical farming education at the Agricultural Training Institute – Regional Training Center 02 (ATI-RTC 02) spearheaded by the government.

The commencement exercise for the Farmers Field School (FFS) was held recently at the Faustino Dy Gymnasium in Echague, Isabela.

The graduates came from Baggao and Tuao towns in Cagayan, Aglipay in Quirino, Bagabag in Nueva Vizcaya, and Tumauni, Delfin Albano, Ilagan City, and Echague in Isabela.

The training was meant to boost crop yields, decrease dependency on pesticides, and promote sustainable farming techniques, as well as to provide local farmers with the knowledge and abilities necessary to make sound decisions.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314537314/481-farmers-complete-field-school-education.html>

**MANILA STANDARD:**

# **DA aims to further reduce rice prices to P38 per kilogram in 2025**

By Othel V. Campos

December 17, 2024, 8:50 pm

The Department of Agriculture (DA) aims to further reduce the prices of affordable rice in 2025, leveraging fresh budget allocations and additional funding from the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF).

DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel announced plans to reduce rice prices by P1 to P2 per kilogram, setting a target price range of P38 to P39 per kg. for well-milled rice.

“I think we can make it P38, P39 by next year. What’s important, right now, is to have P40 rice in every retail outlet and make it widely available to the public,” he said.

The DA also plans to expand the Kadiwa ng Pangulo program, which offers affordable agricultural products to consumers.

Tiu Laurel said some markets resisted the program on concerns over its impact on their operations.

He said despite this challenge, the DA aims to establish another 1,300 fixed Kadiwa stores and 1,500 market kiosks by January 2025, or at least one outlet in every municipality or local government unit (LGU).

Reflecting on 2024’s challenges, including production declines and the removal of price control mandates for rice and corn, Tiu Laurel expressed optimism for the coming year.

“For 2025, we look forward to overcoming challenges. El Niño and La Niña have ended, although regular storms will return. Still, we’re ready for next year and aim to exceed the 20.06 million metric tons production milestone,” he said.

He said the sector is poised to grow by at least 2 percent, coming from an expected low base of negative 2 percent in 2024.

The DA also highlighted significant achievements in 2024, such as stabilizing the prices of onions and sugar and launching the Agri-Puhunan Program.

The initiative provides low-cost credit, financial assistance, and guaranteed markets to farmers, boosting their productivity and income.

It publicly advocates for reinstating the NFA's mandate, emphasizing its critical role in ensuring food security. The department said the NFA's efforts significantly bolstered rice stocks.

The NFA achieved its highest buffer stock levels in nearly a decade, maintaining six million bags of rice, despite the limitations imposed by the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL).

The DA, in collaboration with the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), also enhanced mechanization and processing capabilities. Eight to ten rice processing systems were inaugurated in 2024, with ten more expected in 2025.

"The DA has performed well despite its limited budget. We're optimistic that these efforts will ensure rice stability and availability while strengthening the agricultural sector," Tiu Laurel said.

<https://manilastandard.net/business/314537301/da-aims-to-further-reduce-rice-prices-to-p38-per-kilogram-in-2025.html>



**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# **PSA: Rice prices down but other goods higher**

**By Giselle P. Jordan**

**December 18, 2024**

THE selling price of rice varieties in the first phase of this month (Dec. 1 to 5) dropped, while those of other commodities rose, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported.

Data showed a kilogram (kg) of well-milled rice sold at a nationwide average retail price of P54.66 during the period, lower than the P55.06 in the second phase of the previous month (Nov. 15 to 17). It was also cheaper than the P55.11 on Nov. 1 to 5.

Regular-milled rice also went down to P49.10/kg from P49.43 and P49.42 in November's first and second phases, respectively. Special rice slightly dipped to P63.44 from P63.75 in the second phase of November.

On the other hand, the prices of most meat products increased last month.

The average retail price of dressed chicken was P204.69/kg, up from P202.71 and P202.60 in the first and second phases of November, respectively.

Pork and beef prices also spiked compared to their average retail cost last month, while chicken egg maintained its average P9.23 per piece in the second phase of November.

Tilapia sold for P173.56/kg in the first phase of December, higher than the P172.65 and P172.88 in the first and second phases of November, respectively.

Likewise, the retail prices of bangus (milkfish) and galunggong (round scad) were higher last month.

This was also the case with vegetables. The average price of Baguio beans surged by almost P18 to P169.51/kg from P151.93 in the second phase of November. This was also higher than the P158.52 in the first phase of November.

The prices of ampalaya, cabbage, carrot, string beans, tomato and potato rose as well. However, eggplant and pechay were cheaper this month than November.

Hawaiian ginger sold for P178.71/kg, down from P185.24 and P182.77 in the first and second phases of November, respectively. Imported garlic also sold for less compared to its price last month.

But red onion and native garlic were more expensive across the country.

Meanwhile, papaya sold for P55.01/kg this month, lower than the P55.04 in the first phase of November, but higher than the P54.13 in the second phase.

The prices of bananas were also up this month, while calamansi and carabao mango were cheaper in the same period.

A liter of cooking oil sold for P163.54, higher than the P161.53 and P162.29 in the first and second phases of November, respectively.

The average retail price of refined sugar increased to P85.05/kg, while brown sugar decreased to

P74.55 this month.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/18/business/top-business/psa-rice-prices-down-but-other-goods-higher/2023410>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# DA grants P10-M project to Benguet hog raisers

By **Giselle P. Jordan**  
December 18, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture-Cordillera Administrative Region (DA-CAR) has granted a P10-million project to the Balili Backyard Hog Fattening Association in Benguet.

The undertaking, part of the Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion (Inspire) project, consists of a biosecure swine facility, fencing, swine drugs and biologics, feeds and initial piglet stocks.

Benguet Agricultural Program coordinating officer Lito Mocati said the Inspire project aims to institutionalize the biosecurity and repopulation of swine in light of African swine fever (ASF).

Benguet provincial veterinarian Dr. Purita Lesing encouraged Farmers and Cooperatives Association (FCA) members and Mankayan residents to help prevent the spread of animal diseases in the municipality. "You must do your part and observe biosecurity in order to protect your area with ASF and, if possible, buy the product of local swine raisers because at least you know the source and there is a health assurance," she said.

Regional Livestock coordinator Dr. Kevin Jim Luna commended the association members for their dedication to the project. "Benguet and other provinces of the region are known for high-value [crop] production, but we are also looking for the future of the livestock sector," he said.

He mentioned that Benguet's budget in 2025 for the Livestock Program is P48 million, intended for multiplier farms.

The DA-CAR is always willing to help FCAs, Luna added.

The Balili Backyard Hog Fattening Association thanked DA-CAR, the provincial government of Benguet and the municipal government of Mankayan for their support in the project, saying it will do everything to ensure its success.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/18/business/top-business/da-grants-p10-m-project-to-benguet-hog-raisers/2023437>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# **AVO says no bird flu reported in Albay**

**By Philippine News Agency**  
**December 18, 2024**

**LEGAZPI CITY** — The Albay Veterinary Office (AVO) said the province remains free from avian influenza, despite a reported case earlier this month in neighboring Camarines Norte province.

In an interview on Monday, Dec. 16, Dr. Pancho Mella, chief of the Veterinary Office, said there are currently no cases of bird flu across the 15 towns and three cities in Albay province.

"The office is closely monitoring the situation to prevent the disease from entering the province," he said.

"Our main sources of poultry and birds are from within Albay, particularly due to our poultry farms, as well as from Camarines Sur, so we are confident that all our bird products are safe," he added.

Camarines Norte recently reported its first case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), a severe strain of bird flu. In response to this situation, Mella said the province has temporarily banned the importation of live birds and poultry products from Camarines Norte.

"Through Executive Order No. 60, issued on Dec. 12 and signed by Albay Acting Governor Baby Glenda Ong-Bongao, all live birds and poultry products from Camarines Norte are temporarily prohibited," said Mella, adding the ban includes fresh, chilled, or frozen meat, eggs (both in shell and processed), day-old chicks, processed poultry products (such as sausages and nuggets) and manure.

Mella said the personnel at the Animal Quarantine Checkpoints oversee operations at strategic entry points to monitor and prevent the illegal entry of restricted items.

"We have established checkpoints at our borders. Local government units (LGUs) are also responsible for reporting any suspicious diseases or deaths among animals," he said.

The AVO urged residents, particularly those who import or raise chickens, to cooperate and comply with the health and safety standards in place to prevent the entry of bird flu into the province.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/18/regions/avo-says-no-bird-flu-reported-in-albay/2023167>

## **BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# **PHL rice import arrivals may hit record 4.7MMT in 2024**

Ada Pelonia

December 18, 2024



**A worker at a rice warehouse in Divisoria, Manila, takes a break from loading rice sacks onto a truck. The Philippines is expected to import a higher amount of rice than initially estimated this year, solidifying its position as the world's leading importer of this staple grain.**

THE country's rice import arrivals could reach a record-high 4.7 million metric tons (MMT) by yearend, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Data from the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) showed that rice shipments from January 1 to December 12 have reached 4.48 MMT.

Citing the National Rice Program's projection, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said rice imports could hit 4.7 MMT based on historical trend. This was higher than the DA's initial forecast of 4.5 MMT.

“If you look at the estimates, the imports could hit as much as 4.7 MMT [...] That's a record-high if one considers the trend of import arrivals, statistically speaking,” De Mesa told reporters on Tuesday, speaking partly in Filipino.

Based on BPI data, 158,988 metric tons (MT) of rice imports entered the country in mid-December. The average rice shipment from July to November is around 396,583 MT.

Executive Order (EO) 62, which lowered the rice tariffs to 15 percent, took effect in July.

Of the volume that arrived in the country, BPI data indicated that over 3.43 MMT came from Vietnam. Thailand was the second-largest supplier, accounting for 567,913.22 MT.

The Philippines also imported from other countries, such as Pakistan (244,859.48 MT), Myanmar (199,512.75 MT), and India (22,572.82 MT).

Meanwhile, BPI data noted that the agency approved and issued 9,540 sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances (SPSICs) for the purchase of 9.15 MMT of imported rice.

Rice importers are required to secure an SPSIC from the BPI before bringing in foreign rice stocks to ensure that an inbound shipment is safe for human and animal consumption.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently said that the Philippines's rice imports could breach the 5 MMT mark by yearend.

The international agency adjusted upward its estimate for the country's imported rice purchases this year to a record-high 5.3 MMT from the previous 5 MMT due to a smaller crop for marketing year (MY) 2024/25.

“Global imports are forecast up with growth for the Philippines, Vietnam, and Nigeria,” the USDA said in its latest report.

The international agency also raised its rice imports forecast for the Philippines in 2025 to 5.4 MMT from its earlier forecast of 5.1 MMT also owing to a smaller crop.

Image credits: [Nonie Reyes](#)

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/18/phl-rice-import-arrivals-may-hit-record-4-7mmt-in-2024/>

**BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# **Sinag backs ban on buffalo meat from 3 India states**

Ada Pelonia  
December 18, 2024

THE broad agriculture sector coalition Sinag expressed support for an order issued by the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) halting the issuance of import clearances for buffalo meat from three states in India.

The agency recently suspended the issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances (SPSICs) due to confirmed outbreaks of foot and mouth disease (FMD) in the states of Bihar, Maharashtra, and Telangana.

“We thank [Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.] for his quick intervention in preventing another major catastrophe that would threaten the whole livestock industry while criticizing meat processors’ blackmail of production shortage,” Sinag Chair Rosendo So said in a statement.

“These are confirmed outbreaks of foot and mouth disease in the states of Bihar, Maharashtra, and Telangana; so why risk the destruction of the livestock sector that are still grappling with the onslaught of the African swine fever,” So added. According to Sinag, the country achieved FMD-free status without vaccination in 2007 and was re-confirmed in 2018.

To maintain this status, the group said the Philippines strictly follows World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) guidelines and protocols in preventing the disease’s re-emergence.

“The regions of Bihar, Maharashtra, and Telangana in India must first achieve FMD-free status, recognized by the World Organisation for Animal Health for it to obtain clearance for export sales,” So said.

According to WOA, FMD is a highly contagious disease that affects cattle, swine, sheep, goats, and other cloven-hoofed ruminants which could affect livestock production and disrupt regional and international trade.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/18/sinag-backs-ban-on-buffalo-meat-from-3-india-states/>

**BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# Agriculture chief confident of P38 per kilo rice price by January

Ada Pelonia  
December 18, 2024



**Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.**

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) has expressed confidence that it could bring down rice prices sold at Kadiwa ng Pangulo stores to P38 per kilo by January.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the Office of the President has allowed the agency to use the additional P5-billion budget in its cheaper rice programs Rice-for-All and P29.

“I think we can make it P38 to P39 by at least January next year,” Laurel told reporters in an interview on Monday.

“Starting in January, we will be buying rice from traders, farmers, farmer co-ops, importers, and sell it through the Kadiwa ng Pangulo,” he said.



The agriculture chief also disclosed that plans are under way for another set of programs that aim to provide even cheaper rice to consumers ranging from P35 to P37 per kilo, albeit for a “limited quantity” only.

“We will come out with Nutri-Rice [and] Sulit Rice. The sulit rice is 100 percent broken, but it comes from a good variety of rice,” he said.

Laurel explained that Sulit Rice would be sold at P35 to P36 per kilo while Nutri-Rice at P36 to P37.

He noted that the Nutri-Rice would focus on the nutrients of the food staple.

“The regular rice we’re buying now is three-pass already. All the minerals, nutrients, plus fiber [...] are lost. In one-pass, all the nutrients and fiber are still there,” he said.

“The recovery with three-pass is 63 percent. The recovery with one-pass is 78 percent. You produce more rice with the same amount of palay, so it’s cheaper.”

The industry employs rice milling systems either through a single-pass or a multi-stage process to produce white rice by removing the husk and bran from the paddy. Unlike a single-pass, removing husk and bran is done separately in a multi-stage process.

Laurel explained that through the procured stocks from the National Food Authority (NFA), the agency could ask millers to process the palay through a single pass.

He said the DA will come out with an information campaign regarding the Nutri-Rice to be released by the second quarter of next year.

Earlier, the agency rolled out the Rice-for-All program in KNP kiosks at P40 per kilo across key public markets in Metro Manila as part of the efforts to shield consumers from inflationary pressures.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/18/agriculture-chief-confident-of-p38-per-kilo-rice-price-by-january/>

**BUSINESS MIRROR:**

## **Brewing success: Agusan Norte coffee farmers thrive with govt aid**

Alexander Lopez | PNA  
December 18, 2024



**Members of the Casiklan Wheels Farmers Association, Inc. in Las Nieves, Agusan del Norte, display their coffee beans at their headquarters on Thursday (Nov. 7, 2024). The group has successfully ventured into coffee processing and marketing with government support from the Department of Agriculture.**

BUTUAN CITY—What started as a small, community-driven effort has blossomed into a successful venture for the Casiklan Wheels Farmers Association Inc. (CAWFAI), a group of robusta coffee farmers from Las Nieves, Agusan del Norte.

Thanks to the support of the Department of Agriculture (DA) through the Philippine Rural Development Program (PRDP), CAWFAI has transformed from a producer of raw coffee beans to a full-fledged processor and marketer, reaping significant economic benefits.

Formed in 1998, CAWFAI initially organized as a cooperative in Barangay Casiklan with a vision of enhancing the lives of local farmers.

“We started as a bayanihan [cooperation] group, hoping to improve our farming practices and gain support from the government to elevate robusta coffee farming,” CAWFAI chair Felomino Ancog said in an interview.

In 1999, CAWFAI received its first financial boost of P20,000 from former Agusan del Norte 1st District representative Leovigildo Banaag, allowing the group to acquire a one-hectare coffee farm.

The small beginning was bolstered by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which supported CAWFAI’s coffee nursery initiative under the National Greening Program.

#### Challenges, motivation to expand

Amid the initial gains, coffee farmers in Casiklan and nearby villages struggled with low buying prices from local traders, at times earning as little as P80 per kilo.

Faced with these constraints, CAWFAI realized that they needed to shift from merely producing raw coffee beans to processing and selling their own products.

“We understood that relying on traders would keep us from reaching our potential,” Ancog said. “Expanding into value-added processing and marketing became our goal.”

#### DA-PRDP partnership

IN collaboration with the provincial and municipal agricultural offices, CAWFAI submitted a proposal for a green coffee bean production and marketing project under the DA-PRDP’s I-REAP (Investments for Rural Enterprises and Agricultural and Fisheries Productivity) program.

The proposal aimed to boost the farmers’ income by at least five percent while enhancing product quality and distribution.

Approved in 2021, the project secured P19.8 million in funding from the DA-PRDP.

The financing was sourced from the World Bank loan (P8.4 million), Philippine government (P2.8 million), and additional support from the provincial government, Las Nieves local government and CAWFAI.

The funding covered both enterprise and infrastructure costs, enabling CAWFAI to acquire processing equipment and build a coffee processing center, which was completed in July 2022.

### Expanding market reach

CAWFAI now manages over 400 hectares of coffee farms across seven villages, harvesting around six tons of beans per bi-monthly harvest.

The organization's 736 members, including indigenous Manobo and Higaonon people, benefit directly from the cooperative's success.

Women represent 37 percent of CAWFAI's members, and the project aims to further increase their participation.

Since scaling up operations in mid-2022, CAWFAI has been able to purchase green coffee beans from members at PHP240 to PHP245 per kilo, significantly increasing farmers' income.

The cooperative now supplies one to two tons of coffee beans weekly to markets across Mindanao, the Visayas, and Luzon, including Metro Manila.

The roasted coffee products are also gaining traction, with weekly sales averaging over 100 packs.

Anthony Buntag, CAWFAI's manager, attributed the market expansion to trade fairs facilitated by the DA-PRDP, including the Philippine Coffee Expo and events in major cities.

"These exposures have been invaluable in connecting us with buyers nationwide," Buntag said.

The organization's efforts were recognized in December 2023 when CAWFAI won in the Caraga Coffee Festival's Coffee Quality Competition.

### Sustaining success

DA-13 Regional Executive Director Arlan Mangelen assured CAWFAI of continued support through skill-building and product enhancement initiatives.

“The PRDP will sustain monitoring and help CAWFAI create more market linkages,” Mangelen said, adding that training programs will ensure that members continue to produce top-quality coffee.

Lucita, a CAWFAI member, said her family’s income has doubled since the cooperative expanded into processing.

“With DA support, we’re now selling our coffee at P240 per kilo. This progress truly matters to us farmers,” she said.

With its sights set on further growth, CAWFAI’s journey from small-scale coffee farmers to industry players illustrates the transformative impact of strategic government support on rural communities. *PNA*

**Image credits: [Alexander Lopez/PNA](#)**

**<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/18/brewing-success-agusan-norte-coffee-farmers-thrive-with-govt-aid/>**

## **BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# **House supercommittee on food warns against price manipulation, profiteering**

Jovee Marie N. de la Cruz  
December 17, 2024

THE House of Representatives Murang Pagkain Supercommittee on Tuesday issued a stern warning to supermarkets and major rice retailers, indicating that the five-committee panel will soon investigate possible price manipulation and profiteering at the retail level.

Albay Rep. Jose Clemente “Joey” Sarte Salceda, the lead chairman of the supercommittee, underscored concerns that certain supermarkets are mislabeling imported rice as premium varieties, drastically inflating prices.

“I am warning supermarkets and big groceries. We have received reports that imported well-milled rice is being labeled as premium rice and sold at P70 per kilo in supermarkets. That means they earn as much as P30 per kilo,” Salceda said, as he announced that supermarket and grocery representatives will be summoned once the QuintaComm reconvenes for further investigation into these irregularities.

### **Aggressive actions**

AT the same time, the leadership of the House of Representatives has launched a firm stand against profiteers, hoarders, and smugglers, promising aggressive actions from Congress to stabilize food prices and guarantee affordable goods.

Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez vowed that Congress would take aggressive steps to stabilize food prices and ensure affordable basic goods for Filipinos.

“The government has done its part. we recently cut tariffs for imported rice from 35 to 15 percent. There is an abundance of supply, yet the prices remain high. Why?” Romualdez asked. “We need to find answers and hold those responsible accountable.” In a stern warning, Romualdez pledged decisive action against unscrupulous traders and profiteers.

“To those manipulating prices—especially this Christmas season—Congress will go after you. We will not tolerate these abuses,” the Speaker said. He highlighted the role of the Murang Pagkain

Super Committee in the fight against price manipulation, smuggling, and rising hunger. The committee, composed of five powerful panels—Ways and Means, Trade and Industry, Agriculture and Food, Social Services, and Food Security—serves as a united force to expose irregularities and strengthen government programs.

“Our aim is to bring food prices to reasonable levels. This is about ensuring affordable rice and quality food for every Filipino,” Romualdez said. He said the super committee is now working closely with the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Bureau of Customs (BOC), and Department of Agriculture (DA) to conduct inspections of warehouses suspected of hoarding rice and other staples.

### **Discrepancies**

SALCEDA also pointed out discrepancies in market pricing, citing data that highlights excessive price markups occurring between the wholesale and retail stages of rice distribution.

“We are inviting them next when the QuintaComm reconvenes,” he said.

“We disaggregated market returns, and as much as 48 percent of excess returns are at the wholesale to retail level,” the lawmaker said.

Rejecting explanations offered by the Bureau of Plant Industry and the Grains Retailers Confederation of the Philippines (Grecon), Salceda challenged claims that price hikes are driven by consumer demand for premium rice.

“I do not believe in the excuse given by both the Bureau of Plant Industry and Grecon that the reason for stubborn price increases is consumer preferences for premium rice. We checked the latest reference values, and even the highest quality rice from Vietnam is just P41 per kilo after duties. That doesn’t explain why prices are stubborn at P56,” Salceda explained. He added that the average import price of rice remains around P31 per kilo after duties—far from the threshold of what could justifiably be considered “premium price.”

“So, next time I get a reason like that, the committee will be forced to remind people that there are consequences to lying under oath,” Salceda added.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/17/house-supercommittee-on-food-warns-against-price-manipulation-profiteering/>

**ABANTE TONITE:**

# Imported rice bumabaha, papalo sa 4.7 milyong tonelada ngayong taon

December 17, 2024

Inaasahang papalo sa 4.7 milyong metriko tonelada ang rice import ng Pilipinas ngayong taon upang tugunan ang epekto ng mga kalamidad sa produksyon ng palay, ayon sa pahayag ng Department of Agriculture (DA) nitong Martes, Disyembre 17.

Ginamit na basehan ng DA ang datos ng Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) kung saan umabot na umano sa 4.48 milyong metriko tonelada ang kabuuang naipasok na imported rice hanggang noong Disyembre 12.

Ayon sa pahayag ni DA Spokesperson at Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa, tama lang ito dahil nakaranas ang bansa ng maraming kalamidad tulad ng El Niño, La Niña, at sunod-sunod na bagyo kaya kailangang mag-adjust ng merkado upang mapunan ang kakulangan sa produksyon ng palay sa bansa.

“Alam nila (merkado) kung kailan kailangang magdagdag. The market will adjust dahil mababa iyong production, they will get those deficiency sa importation,” paliwanag ng opisyal.

Sinabi ni De Mesa na makapagbibigay ng sapat na suplay ng bigas hanggang sa susunod na anihan ang inaasahang dami ng imported rice.

“Yung imports, good for us to have three-months supply ng bigas until next year, which will be enough to carry us out until (the) next harvest season,” ani De Mesa.

Una nang kinontra ng Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) ang pag-aangkat ng mga produktong agrikultural.

Sabi ni SINAG Executive Director Jayson Cainglet, kinonsulta muna dapat ng DA ang sektor ng agrikultura bago ito humirit agad ng pag-aangkat.

Sa simpleng pakikipag-usap sa sektor, mas malalaman aniya ng DA kung gaano kalaki at kalawak ang pinsala ng nagdaang bagyo sa iba't ibang mga pananim, ang imbentaryo at sitwasyon ng bawat commodity, ang kailangang gawing intervention ng DA at iba pang mga sangay ng pamahalaan, at mas makikipagtulungan pa ito sa sektor.

“Sinabi ng DA spokesperson na historic `yung damage and yet ang sinabi niya kaagad ay `yung need to import. There is no problem to import if there is a need,” sabi ni Cainglet.



Sa kasamaang palad, parating inuugnay aniya ang mataas na presyo ng mga biling sa pangangailangang mag-angkat.

Kung ang titingnan ay ang presyo sa retail, mas kailangang intindihin muna ng DA ang disconnect ng farmgate price at ng retail price, sabi ni Cainglet.

Aniya, ang kailangang gawin ay tulungang makaahon ang kabuhayan ng sektor. (PNA/Eileen Mencias)

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/12/17/imported-rice-bumabaha-papalo-sa-4-7-milyong-tonelada-ngayong-taon/>

**ABANTE TONITE:**

# Quinta Committee hahalukayin bigas scam sa mga supermarket

December 17, 2024

Sisilipin ng Quinta Committee ng Kamara de Representantes ang mga supermarket at malalaking retailer ng bigas upang matukoy kung sangkot ang mga ito sa manipulasyon ng presyo ng bigas.

Ayon sa overall chairperson ng komite na si Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, mayroon silang natanggap na impormasyon na ang mga imported na well milled rice ay ibinebenta bilang premium rice na mas mataas ang presyo.

“I am warning supermarkets and big groceries. We have received reports that imported well milled rice is being labelled as premium rice and sold at P70 per kilo in supermarkets. That means they earn as much as P30 pesos per kilo,” sabi ni Salceda.

Sinabi ni Salceda na iimbitahan ang mga kinatawan ng supermarket at malalaking rice retailer sa susunod na pagdinig ng komite.

Iginiit ni Salceda na ang tinutubo ng mga wholesaler ng bigas ay umaabot ng hanggang 48% na sobra-sobra umano.

“I also do not believe in the excuse given by both the Bureau of Plant Industry and the Grains Retailers Confederation of the Philippines that the reason for stubborn price increases is consumer preferences for premium rice,” sabi ng solon.

“We checked the latest reference values, and even the highest quality rice from Vietnam is just P41 per kilo after duties. That doesn’t explain why prices are stubborn at P56. And that does not match actual average import prices of P31 per kilo after duties — that is not premium price,” dagdag pa nito.

Nagbabala rin si Salceda na mayroong pananagutan ang pagsisinungaling sa pagdinig kaya pinaalalahanan niya ang mga iniimbitahan ng Quinta Committee. (Billy Begas)

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/12/17/quinta-committee-hahalukayin-bigas-scam-sa-mga-supermarket/>