

## CLIPPINGS FOR TODAY DECEMBER 20, 2024

### **A. MANILA BULLETIN:**

Philippine food service sector sales to revert to pre-pandemic levels in 2025—  
USDA

### **B. THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

DA orders import ban on live cattle from Japan

DA bans live cattle, buffalo imports from Japan due to lumpy skin disease outbreak

### **C. PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

DA temporarily bans import of live cattle, buffalo from Japan

34 accredited Indian companies to export carabeef to PH

DTI, DA expect no more hike in agri prices, Noche Buena items

### **D. BUSINESS WORLD:**

South Korea FTA seen boosting banana exports

Farm industry group calls for speedy deployment of hog, poultry vaccines

### **E. MANILA STANDARD:**

DA chief backs declaration of rice emergency

### **F. THE MANILA TIMES:**

Crackdown vs profiteers eyed by Agriculture chief

Will the new RCEF improve agricultural productivity?

### **G. BUSINESS MIRROR:**

PHL banana boost seen in S. Korea with tariff cuts

### **H. ABANTE TONITE:**

Agri chief nabulaga sa P12 tongpats ng bigas

## **I. REMATE:**

**Pag-aangkat ng baka, kalabaw galing Japan ipinagbawal ng Pinas**

**PH balak mag-angkat ng 2 million MT na bigas mula sa Pakistan, India**

**34 Indian firms pinayagang makapag-export ng carabeef sa Pinas**

**'Sulit, Nutri' rice ibebenta ng DA sa 2025**

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **Philippine food service sector sales to revert to pre-pandemic levels in 2025—USDA**

**BY BEN ARNOLD DE VERA**

Dec 19, 2024 01:06 PM

---

The Philippines' food service industry is expected to revert to pre-pandemic sales levels next year, after an anticipated 12-percent growth this year on the back of strong demand among Filipino diners, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

In a Dec. 17 report, USDA-Foreign Agricultural Service's (FAS) Manila office pointed to local food service players' store expansion as well as restaurants' high customer traffic, auguring well for US agricultural exports.

"As more consumers dine out, restaurant chains open new restaurants, cafes, kiosks, and bars, as well as franchise international restaurants in the Philippines," the report noted.

It also helps that a "strengthened tourism industry with more than five million international visitors in 2023 boosts sales as events resume in hotels and event venues," the report added.

FAS Manila sees the food service sector expanding faster than domestic food manufacturing as well as retail food sales, which are both estimated to grow by a "moderate" five percent this year.

In the food processing sector, FAS Manila noted that "local companies continue to face increasing input costs like higher costs of raw materials," such that "some manufacturers have increased prices due to higher production costs."

The retail food sector is also expected to post slower growth "due to thriftier spending and less home cooking," FAS Manila said.

Meanwhile, FAS Manila expects hotels and restaurants to further expand the food services sector "amid back-to-normal consumer spending and lower inflation."

"Due to their affordability and convenience, most of the population regularly eats at quick service restaurants (QSRs), providing opportunities for direct shipment of US food ingredients, including chicken, beef, potato fries, and cheeses," FAS Manila pointed out.

"With most consumers dining out, event bookings resuming, and the influx of tourists in hotels, FAS Manila estimates the food service industry will reach pre-pandemic levels by 2025," it added.

"Restaurant chains expand to new locations in rural areas, while many hotels and restaurants feature imported and premium ingredients. Key stores open new branches, franchise international restaurants, and offer promotions to generate higher sales than last year," the report said.

Already, FAS Manila noted that "customer queues in some restaurants during peak hours are reaching pre-pandemic level seating capacity."

Besides robust Philippine economic growth, FAS Manila said food service industry sales growth drivers include the boost coming from the resumption of face-to-face classes and work; traffic congestion forcing more mobile Filipinos to eat out or buy "drive-through" food; availability of online food delivery apps and websites; as well as a rising middle- and upper-class clientele who "dine out for the experience and explore new dishes or restaurants."

The Philippine food service sector is also experiencing growth due to food retailers' diversified menu; the entry of non-traditional players, like clothing stores, that open cafes within store premises; and social media influence, as the country's status as the world's vlogging capital is driving restaurants and hotels to actively promote their ingredients and menus online.

As full-service restaurants, limited-service or more popularly known as "fast-food" chains and convenience stores, bars and cafes, as well as food kiosks and street stalls all continue to grow across the board, FAS Manila sees opportunities for American food products despite challenges caused by high shipping costs and tariffs plus market access issues compared to the Philippines' neighboring exporters.

Still, "Philippine culinary professionals and food and beverage hotel managers rely on US ingredients for quality, consistency, reliability, and availability in the market," according to FAS Manila.

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# DA orders import ban on live cattle from Japan

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

December 20, 2024 | 12:00am



File photo of a farmer with a Carabao

Walter Bollozos / File

MANILA, Philippines — Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has banned the importation of live cattle and buffalo from Japan amid the outbreak of lumpy skin disease (LSD).

Tiu Laurel issued Department of Agriculture Memorandum Order No. 57 imposing a temporary prohibition on the importation of live cattle and buffalo, their products and by-products including milk and milk products, embryos, skin and semen from Japan.

“Based on the official report submitted by the Director of Animal Health Division, Food Safety and Consumer Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan to the World Organization for Animal Health on Nov. 15, there was an outbreak of Lumpy Skin Disease in Maebaru, Fukuoka, Japan affecting domestic cattle as confirmed by National Institute of Animal Health, National Agriculture and Food Research Organization,” Tiu Laurel said.

He added that there is a need to prevent the entry of LSD, also known as Neethling virus, to protect the health of the local cattle and water buffalo population.

According to Tiu Laurel, skeletal muscle meat, casings, gelatin and collagen, tallow, hooves and horns are allowed as these are considered safe commodities and are not included in the temporary restriction, subject to the Philippines’ import terms and conditions.

He said live bovines and water buffaloes, including semen and embryos are covered by the ban.

LSD is a viral disease that primarily affects cattle, often leading to severe complications or death. Symptoms include fever, nodules on the skin and internal organs, significant weight loss, swollen lymph nodes, and fluid accumulation under the skin.

### **India carabeef ban**

Former agriculture secretary Leonardo Montemayor said that the carabeef ban should be expanded to one more state of India amid the outbreaks of foot and mouth disease (FMD) in Uttar Pradesh.

“Given this news report on FMD outbreak in Pilibhit district (Uttar Pradesh) and following the regulations of our Department of Agriculture, disallowing carabeef imports from FMD-hit states in India, shouldn’t carabeef imports from Uttar Pradesh be stopped now?” Montemayor said.

The FMD has affected around 60 percent milch cattle in Pilibhit district. Stray cattle are also at risk of being infected with the highly contagious disease.

Tiu Laurel has issued MO No. 59 banning the importation of Indian buffalo meat from Indian states of Bihar, Maharashtra, Telangana.

Tiu Laurel said that there is a need to prevent the entry of FMD-susceptible animals, their products and by-products originating from Bihar, Maharashtra and Telangana to protect the health of the local livestock population.

According to veterinary scientists, the infection can be transmitted to humans by consuming raw or pasteurized milk of the infected cattle.

Bureau of Animal Industry Director Diosamia Sevilla told the Philippine Association of Meat Processors Inc. (PAMPI) that the agency would “investigate” and “validate” news reports about the FMD outbreak in Pilibhit, Uttar Pradesh earlier this year.

PAMPI argued that a temporary import ban on three other Indian states of Bihar, Maharashtra and Telangana cannot be sustained without implementing the same measure on Uttar Pradesh since it has reported FMD outbreaks. — **Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/12/20/2408636/da-orders-import-ban-live-cattle-japan>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# DA bans live cattle, buffalo imports from Japan due to lumpy skin disease outbreak

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

December 19, 2024 | 4:59pm



File photo of a farmer with a carabao

Walter Bollozos / File

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines won't be importing live cattle, buffalo, and some byproducts from Japan in the meantime due to a lumpy skin disease outbreak, the Department of Agriculture said.

The DA announced the temporary ban on Thursday, December 19, through [Memorandum Order 57](#) which was issued on Tuesday, December 17.

According to the memorandum, the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) received a report from Japan's food safety and regulatory agencies about a lumpy skin disease outbreak in Maebaru, Fukuoka, affecting domestic cattle on November 15.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu-Laurel Jr. has prohibited the importation of live bovines and water buffaloes, including their semen and embryos.

However, other byproducts such as pasteurized milk, skeletal muscle meat, gelatin, collagen, are still allowed, provided they meet additional safety criteria and documentation requirements.

"Certain products are exempted from the ban, provided they meet Philippine import and health standards," the statement read.

**What is lumpy skin disease virus?** The WOAHA and European Food Safety Authority said that lumpy skin disease primarily affects cattle and is spread by blood-feeding insects like mosquitoes and ticks.

Symptoms in animals include a week-long fever, enlarged lymph nodes, reduced milk production, fluid accumulation under the skin, and lesions both externally and internally.

The disease can cause significant weight loss in cattle due to difficulty absorbing nutrients, and in severe cases, it may lead to death.

Humans cannot be infected by the lumpy skin disease virus.

“This precautionary measure is intended to safeguard the country’s livestock industry from potential risks posed by the spread of lumpy skin disease,” the statement read.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/12/19/2408540/da-bans-live-cattle-buffalo-imports-japan-due-lumpy-skin-disease-outbreak>



**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# DA temporarily bans import of live cattle, buffalo from Japan

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

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 08:17 AM December 19, 2024



The Department of Agriculture (DA) temporarily banned the entry of imported live cattle and buffalo originating from Japan to protect the local industry from Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD).

“There is a need to prevent the entry of [the] LSD virus to protect the health of the local cattle and water buffalo population,” the DA said in Memorandum Order No. 57.

According to the World Organization for Animal Health, LSD is a viral disease affecting cattle and water buffalo, characterized by skin nodules, fever, and other symptoms.

This animal disease can lower milk production temporarily and cause temporary or permanent sterility in bulls, damage to hides, and death on some occasions.

With the import ban in place, the DA prohibited the importation of live bovines and water buffaloes, including semen and embryos.

However, importers can bring in other commodities as long as they meet the respective requirements and the country’s import terms and conditions.

Certain products and by-products, however, are excluded from the import restriction.

For instance, skeletal muscle meat, casings, gelatine and collagen, tallow, hooves, and horns can be imported since these are considered “safe commodities.”

Milk and milk products can also be sourced from abroad, provided that the international veterinary certificate includes an additional attestation stating that these commodities underwent pasteurization or any combination of control measures.

The ban also excludes meal and flour from blood, meat other than skeletal muscle or bones from bovines, and water buffaloes.

Importers only need to present a certification attesting that the products were processed using the heat treatment and that necessary precautions were taken.

Hides of bovines and water buffaloes can be purchased overseas if the animals have undergone ante- and post-mortem inspections as well as dry- or wet-salted for a period of at least 14 days before dispatch.

Furthermore, they were treated for at least seven days in salt and 2 percent sodium carbonate was added. They were dried for at least 42 days, and necessary precautions were implemented.

Meanwhile, other products of bovines and water buffaloes can be procured as long as they are processed to kill the virus and precautions are conducted to avoid contact with any potential source of LSD.

The DA imposed the temporary import ban after Japanese authorities informed the WOAHA of an LSD outbreak in Maebaru, Fukuoka affecting domestic cattle.

<https://business.inquirer.net/497437/da-temporarily-bans-import-of-live-cattle-buffalo-from-japan>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

## **34 accredited Indian companies to export carabeef to PH**

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

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 02:29 PM December 19, 2024



INQUIRER STOCK PHOTO

More companies from India can export buffalo meat, known locally as carabeef, to the Philippines after securing accreditation from the government.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is set to accredit 34 Indian companies to provide frozen buffalo meat to the archipelago in a move to expand sources for Philippine food processors and potentially lower the price of corned beef.

About 13 of them, however, will not be able to export carabeef immediately since they are based in Bihar, Maharashtra and Telangana in India where foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreaks have been reported.

The DA issued Memorandum Order No. 59 imposing an import restriction on Indian buffalo meat from the three Indian states to prevent the entry of FMD-susceptible animals and protect the local livestock population.

The agency promulgated the order as Indian authorities reported an FMD outbreak in Bihar and Telangana while its inspection mission audit findings confirmed similar cases in Maharashtra affecting cattle and buffaloes.

Despite the import ban, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the agency is accrediting other suppliers from South America to supply pork, chicken and beef to the archipelago.

“It doesn’t mean that we will import more, but we need to open up supply sources so that paglabanan tayo (we can spur competition),” Tiu Laurel told reporters.

The DA said the list of accredited Indian meat exporters included six companies that were initially approved in 2019 and have sought to renew their accreditation recently.

It said the new accreditation is valid for three years and will expire on Dec. 12, 2027.

The agency clarified that it won’t grant exemptions for heat-treated products since the accreditation is specifically for trading frozen carabeef.

Tiu Laurel said if India can provide a method of boiling carabeef to address FMD concerns, similar to the process employed by Pakistan for buffalo meat being exported to China, he would consider it.

In accrediting exporters, the DA carries out a thorough verification process, including an inspection mission by the Bureau of Animal Industry and the National Meat Inspection Service.

Such protocols are employed to determine their compliance with the country’s animal health and food safety standards.

The inspection team reviewed animal health protocols in seven Indian states, namely Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Telangana and Bihar.

During the inspection mission, the Philippine authorities found active FMD cases in the last three states.

Separately, the NMIS team confirmed that all 34 companies seeking accreditation met international food safety standards, including Good Manufacturing Practices and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points.

At present, the country imports approximately 40 percent of its carabeef requirements as domestic production cannot fully meet the local demand.

The Philippine Association of Meat Processors Inc. (Pampi) had appealed for the reversal of an order that prohibits the importation of buffalo meat from three states in India.

Pampi president Felix Tiukinhoy Jr. and Pampi vice president Jerome Ong appealed in a letter to Tiu Laurel as such a ban could affect the production of canned goods by early next year.

The Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (Sinag) lauded the DA's "quick intervention" in preventing another major catastrophe.

"Time and again, with profits as motivation, these groups have been threatening us with pork shortage or price increases," Sinag chair Rosendo So said in a statement.

<https://business.inquirer.net/497551/34-accredited-indian-companies-to-export-carabeef-to-ph>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# DTI, DA expect no more hike in agri prices, Noche Buena items

By: [Stephanie Sevillano](#) -

[Philippine News Agency](#) / 10:19 PM December 19, 2024



The Department of Trade and Industry are monitoring prices of commodities in groceries to make sure prices remain reasonable and affordable for Filipinos. —INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

MANILA, Philippines – There will be no further spikes in the prices of Noche Buena items before the end of the year, and prices of agricultural items remain within the expected range as the country approaches the Christmas holidays, the Department of Trade Industry (DTI) and Department of Agriculture (DA) assured Thursday.

This came as the DA and DTI conducted a joint inspection at Guadalupe Public Market and two grocery stores in Makati City to ensure reasonable prices of Noche Buena items, rice, meat, fish, vegetables, and other agricultural commodities.

“There’s no price increase until the end of the year. Because iyan iyong pinag-usapan (that’s what has been agreed upon) with the manufacturers and also the brand owners. For now, no price increase until the end of the year, rest assured,” DTI Secretary Cristina Roque said in an ambush interview.

She said the majority of the stores they have inspected have complied with the set prices for Noche Buena items.

“More than 50 percent ng Noche Buena items, hindi nag-taas ng presyo. Tapos iyong (didn’t increase prices. And then those) less than 50 percent, merong taas pero (there’s a hike but) less than 5 percent,” Roque added.

Based on the DTI’s 2024 Noche Buena price guide, most brands of ham, cheese, queso de bola, mayonnaise, all-purpose cream, sandwich spread, pasta spaghetti, and elbow macaroni have either maintained similar or lower price levels compared to 2023.

The DTI Chief, however, urged the public to take advantage of “sulit packs” being offered since some brands and items increased prices.

“Kontrolado namin yung (We have control over the) prices but not for all the products. Siyempre, kinausap rin namin yung mga manufacturers and iyong mga (Of course, we talked with the manufacturers and) brand owners if they can actually just leave the prices the same as last year. Pero yung mga iba, because of the high cost din, tinaas rin, tapos mataas din yung (But for others, they increased it due to high cost of production, and then there’s also a stronger) dollar,” she said.

The Noche Buena items that incurred less than P1 to P18-hike include fruit cocktails, salad macaroni, tomato sauce, and spaghetti sauce.

“Of course, they also need to put up their price, pero nag-agree kami na less than 5 percent ang increase nila (but we agreed that their increase should only be less than 5 percent).”

Sabrina Cortez, 46, a single mom, meanwhile, opted to buy Noche Buena items “in bundle” to make the most out of her P1,500 worth of budget for both Christmas and New Year celebrations.

“Mas malaki ang less e. Kasi kapag bibilhin mo siya ng per separate, talagang mapapamahal ka. Kapag ganitong bundle, mas malaki iyong matitipid mo. Tapos iyong matitipid mo, ipangbibili mo ng (The price is much less if you buy in bundle. Because if you will buy the

items separately, you will surely spend more. But if it's a bundle, you can save more. And then you can use your savings to buy other) ingredients," she said.

### **Agri commodities**

For agricultural commodities, DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the price adjustments are within the expected range during the holiday season.

For pork prices, the DA chief said the price elevation is still due to the increasing holiday demand and the effects of African swine fever (ASF).

As of Wednesday, the prevailing price of pork kasim in Metro Manila ranges from P300 per kilogram to P370/kg; P340/kg to P410/kg for pork liempo, according to the DA-Bantay presyo.

"Sa manok naman, sabi kanina nung tindera, umangat din ng PHP20 pesos mula sa normal. So, 10 percent lang ang pagdagdag (For chicken, the vendor said the price increases by PHP20 from the normal. So, that's an additional 10 percent), which is normal for Kapaskuhan (Christmas season)," Tiu Laurel said after their joint-market inspection.

The prices of whole chicken ranges from P180/kg to P230/kg.

Some level of price increase in fish, likewise, is expected amid the closed fishing season, he added.

"Wala talagang commercial fishing na lumalayag at humuhuli (There's no commercial fishing and operating) until the end of January of next year," Tiu Laurel said.

To date, prices of milkfish range from PHP135/kg to P250/kg; P140/kg to P170/kg for tilapia; P240/kg to P360/kg for local round scad (galunggong), and P260/kg to P280/kg for imported round scad; and P260/kg to P380/kg for Indian mackerel.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2017113/dti-da-expect-no-more-hike-in-agri-prices-noche-buena-items>



**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# South Korea FTA seen boosting banana exports

December 19, 2024 | 8:04 pm



DA

THE Department of Trade and Industry said banana exports are set to improve due to the free-trade agreement (FTA) with South Korea.

Trade Secretary Ma. Cristina A. Roque made the remarks during a market visit.

“Jan. 1 is the start of the Korean FTA, which we have signed, so the banana tariffs will go down,” Ms. Roque added.

According to Food and Agriculture Organization, the Philippines has lost its place as the second-largest banana exporter even after shipments rose 3% to 2.3 million metric tons (MT) in 2023.

On Tuesday, National Economic and Development Authority Board approved the release of an executive order that will implement the tariff commitments under the Philippines-South Korea FTA.

“When other countries had the same tariffs as ours, our exports of bananas were like \$300 million, now, *bumaba na siya ng* (they fell by) \$160 million because other countries no longer have tariffs on bananas, as we still do with South Korea,” she said.

She added that as the FTA comes into force, export price for Philippine bananas will fall gradually.

South Korea currently levies a 30% import tariff on bananas from the Philippines, according to the DTI.

Under the agreement, tariffs will be reduced annually in equal increments until they fall to zero on the fifth year of effectivity.

Bananas are the Philippines' top agricultural export, followed by pineapples, avocados, and coconuts. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/12/19/642735/south-korea-fta-seen-boosting-banana-exports/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Farm industry group calls for speedy deployment of hog, poultry vaccines

December 19, 2024 | 8:04 pm



FREEPIK

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

THE Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) said the government needs to expedite the approval of the African Swine Fever (ASF) vaccine for commercial use, citing the need to effect a recovery in hog farming.

“We hope that the (Food and Drug Administration) approves the vaccine,” SINAG Chairman Rosendo O. So said at a briefing on Thursday.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) said the approval for commercial use of the ASF vaccine could be issued by February or March. The DA allocated P350 million to procure 600,000 doses for the hog farmers initially targeted. The rollout started on Aug. 30 in Lobo, Batangas.

Only the AVAC ASF Live vaccine from Vietnam has been approved by the FDA for a limited government-controlled rollout. It has issued a Certificate of Product Registration for AVAC, valid for two years and subject to annual review.

“If the results of are good, at least hog raisers can start raising pigs again,” Mr. So added.

Some 88 municipalities across 19 provinces have active ASF cases, according to the Bureau of Animal Industry.

He said pork prices may remain elevated next year as the hog industry will take time to recover.

“Vaccination will just have started, and we know that it will take six months for farmers to sell their pig,” he said.

Additionally, Mr. So said that the government should conduct proper testing of the bird flu vaccine.

“We don’t want to just have a vaccination without a final trial of the bird flu vaccine,” he said, adding that the egg farmers are having the most problems with bird flu,” he added.

The DA has said that large-scale trial of the Avian Flu vaccine could begin by March.

The DA is looking to procure 30 million doses of the vaccine for about P300 million.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/12/19/642734/farm-industry-group-calls-for-speedy-deployment-of-hog-poultry-vaccines/>

**MANILA STANDARD:**

# DA chief backs declaration of rice emergency



*Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.*

By Othel V. Campos

**December 20, 2024, 12:30 am**

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. expressed support for a proposed rice emergency declaration, which would address persistently high rice prices.

He pointed out that such a declaration would empower the National Food Authority (NFA) to release its buffer stock at affordable prices.

**- Advertisement -**

“If declaring a rice emergency allows us to sell NFA’s nearly 6 million bags of rice at flexible prices to the public, then that’s definitely a good move,” Tiu Laurel said on Thursday.

The DA is also intensifying efforts to combat rice profiteering by introducing competition through the Rice-for-All program.

The agriculture secretary said his agency aims to make affordable rice more accessible to Filipino consumers by expanding the program’s reach and in doing so, removing profiteers’ free rein on the market.

“If we really want to tackle those exploiting certain rice brands, this is the best way to hit them where it hurts—their pockets,” Tiu Laurel emphasized.

The Rice-for-All program, which offers rice at P40 per kilo through KADIWA ng Pangulo kiosks, is expanding to include more public markets and grocery outlets, he added.

Ten additional locations have been added this week, bringing them to 24 in total.

Walmart branches in Metro Manila will also join the program next week.

Newly added locations include Langaray Market, Kaunlaran Market, and Phase 9 Bagong Silang Market in Caloocan City; Agora Market in San Juan City; Kalentong Market and Addition Hills Market in Mandaluyong City; Muños Market; Marikina Public Market; Navotas Agora Market; and New Marulas Public Market.

The DA plans to further expand the Rice-for-All program to other regions in the country by early 2025.

Last week, Tiu Laurel called on lawmakers to restore the powers of the NFA to intervene in the rice market and stabilize prices.

During a House Quinta Committee hearing, he explained that re-empowering the NFA to sell rice directly to the public would strengthen the government’s ability to influence rice prices and protect consumers.

He lamented that the NFA’s role has been significantly curtailed since the passage of the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) in 2019.

The law removed its authority to import rice and sell it directly to the public, restricting the agency to procuring palay from local farmers and solely for buffer stocking.

“I believe if we want to control the situation, it is better to restore all the powers of the NFA. It just has to be managed by honest people. This will provide a long-term solution to the [surging rice prices] problem,” he told the consolidated panel tasked to address food issues.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/national/314538105/da-chief-backs-declaration-of-rice-emergency.html>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# **Crackdown vs profiteers eyed by Agriculture chief**

**[By Giselle P. Jordan](#)**

**December 20, 2024**

AGRICULTURE Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. on Thursday warned that he would go after people engaged in rice profiteering, following the discovery of disparities in reported market costs, landed prices, retail prices and profit margins between importers and retailers.

During a visit to the Guadalupe Public Market in Makati with officials of the Department of Trade Industry (DTI), Tiu Laurel talked to rice retailers after seeing that while some of the rice was being sold at P40-P45 per kilogram (kg), others were selling at P50/kg and higher, with one brand priced at P62/kg.

The agriculture chief said that the P62 rice had a landed cost of only P42. With a suggested margin of P5-P7, he said the price should only be P47-P49/kg.



Department of Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. PHOTO FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

"I asked [retailers], 'how much is your margin?' They said it was P6. That's quite high. It's supposed to be just P3. The retailers said they got it for P56 [per kilogram]. But there are brands being sold at P50..." Tiu Laurel said.

He said that profiteering was being committed by importers and owners of branded rice, and asked Department of Agriculture (DA) staff to list down all brands with high prices. He vowed to summon those suspected of overcharging consumers and seek police assistance to apprehend the guilty.

Tiu Laurel has said that the authority to intervene in problems in the rice market should be restored to the National Food Authority (NFA).

"With sugar, it's simple, right? The Sugar Regulatory Authority has the power to control and release sugar at will, depending on [market conditions]. NFA no longer has that [kind of power], so that's the problem," he said.

Cheaper 'Rice-for-All'



In the meantime, Tiu Laurel said the DA would expand its Rice-for-All program with the launch of Nutri Rice, a variant taht will sell for P37-P38/kg or cheaper than the P40/kg in Kadiwa stalls.

"We are organizing an information campaign for Nutri Rice. We're also thinking of calling it 'Malusog Rice' or 'Susta Rice,' no final name yet. But definitely our target is to release it before the end of January [2025]," he said.

The DA has likewise started rolling out Project 29 or P29 — rice at P29/kg — through an initial 10 Kadiwa outlets.

"We are adding P29 in the booths for [4Ps beneficiaries], senior citizens, single parents and PWDs," Tiu Laurel said, adding that the DA will further expand the Rice-for-All program to more locations.

He said he had discussed this with Local Governments Secretary Jonvic Remulla, who in turn said he would coordinate with the mayors of local government units in Metro Manila and nearby provinces, including Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, Pampanga and Rizal, to put up Kadiwa ng Pangulo Rice-for-All booths in local markets.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/20/business/top-business/crackdown-vs-profiteers-eyed-by-agriculture-chief/2025294>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# **Will the new RCEF improve agricultural productivity?**

**By Fermin D. Adriano**

December 20, 2024

IMMEDIATELY after President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. last week signed legislation amending the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) and extended the implementation of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) to another six years, numerous media outlets asked for my reaction.

Will the amended law raise the productivity of our rice farmers? Will it lead to an increase in their incomes and, hopefully, uplift their economic well-being? These are valid questions because the law's objectives unequivocally state that the end-result is to improve their productivity and incomes.

Although I welcome the extension of the RCEF under the new RTL, it does not necessarily follow that the results will lead to the outcomes stated. There are so many "in-betweens" that need to be addressed before the country can really raise overall agricultural productivity and increase farmer incomes.

The new RCEF provides an increase in the amount of support to rice farmers from the original P10 billion to P30 billion annually for six years — a three-fold rise. This is on top of the more than P30 billion allotted for the Department of Agriculture's (DA) National Rice Program (NRP). In other words, the rice program dwarfs the budgets allocated to some government agencies.

The P30 billion will be distributed as follows: P6 billion annually for in-bred seeds, upped by P3 billion from the original budget; P9 billion for farm mechanization, from P5 billion; and P15 billion for

other support activities to help rice farmers and raise their farm productivity via the provision of credit, training, cash assistance to tillers owning land less than two hectares, composting facilities, solar-powered irrigation, etc.

For the in-bred seed component, implementation was assigned to the original institution that administered it in the past, the Philippine Rice Research Institute. Similarly, the farm mechanization component will be implemented by the same DA unit, the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization. As for the rest of the fund, and this is a new arrangement, it will be the Office of the President that will determine how it will be distributed.

While I welcome the extension of RCEF for another six years, I see a number of flaws that will prevent it from fully attaining its objectives.

First and foremost, it seems that the new law did not learn any lessons from the RCEF's previous six years of implementation. Which RCEF component really contributed to raising rice farm productivity? Which fared badly because of delayed implementation? Are the implementation bottlenecks experienced in the past addressed by the new law?

Second, given the huge sum devoted to the new RCEF and its significant overlap with the DA's NRP, has there been an attempt to streamline or better coordinate the activities of the two?

Three, given that the RCEF promotes the use of in-bred seeds by farmers while the NRP distributes hybrid seeds for free, what is the actual field experience in the yield of these two varieties? Do in-bred seeds yield the same harvests as hybrid seeds?

If the answer is yes, then why not just promote in-bred seeds given the considerable cost difference between the two? If negative, on the other hand, then there should be an attempt to systematically

introduce the use of hybrid seeds in various rice-growing areas of the country to achieve significant productivity gains.

Four, there is no systematic monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system built into the old and new RCEF. This partly explains the reason why difficulties were encountered by the team (from the International Rice Research Institute) that evaluated the previous RCEF. It had to rely on data provided by the implementing institutions, which naturally will be deficient given a "conflict of interest" situation.

The new RCEF stipulates that the Philippine Institute for Development Studies lead the M&E effort by establishing a baseline survey, monitoring activities, and submitting mid-term and final evaluation reports.

To build a rigorous M&E system, a quasi-experimental approach should be utilized. The baseline survey should have control and treatment areas in various parts of the country. These should have practically the same characteristics to be able to gauge progress made.

Control areas are communities wherein RCEF assistance will not be provided. Treatment areas, meanwhile, will receive RCEF support after the baseline survey has been conducted. At an interval of two years, the same sample areas will be surveyed.

Given that control areas did not receive any assistance while treatment areas received these during the previous two years of implementation, one can properly measure whether RCEF assistance did really make a difference in terms of farm productivity and income of the cultivators.

In the private sector, the ultimate measure of success is the profit generated by the company. In the public sector, it is the quality of service delivered to the taxpaying public. But one cannot adequately determine whether the quality of service delivered is

good or not if a robust M&E system is not immediately installed at the outset of project implementation.

It is for this reason why robust M&E is a critical instrument of a functioning democracy. It serves as a healthy feedback loop and guides implementors on the direction to be taken and what the public can expect. It measures whether government projects are successful or not based on solid empirical evidence and not by the number of media releases or media people paid by the government agency to boost its image. It is a vital instrument in improving government services and minimizing rent-seeking activities from corrupt public officials.

In the absence of a robust M&E system in most government projects, it is no wonder why the true essence of democracy in this country, wherein leaders are supposed to be accountable to the people, is slowly unraveling.

*fdadriano88@gmail.com*

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/20/business/top-business/will-the-new-rcef-improve-agricultural-productivity/2025281>

**BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# PHL banana boost seen in S. Korea with tariff cuts

Ada Pelonia  
December 20, 2024

THE Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) expressed confidence that the Philippine banana will soon become more competitive in South Korea with the reduction of tariffs starting January 1.

DTI Secretary Cristina Roque said that through the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Korea, the 30-percent tariffs levied on banana exports would be reduced by 6 percentage points annually until it gets zero-rated in the fifth year.

“Malakas naman ang export talaga ng bananas. It’s just that because of the tariff, mas mataas yung presyo natin,” Roque told reporters on Thursday.

“When other countries had the same tariffs as ours, our exports of bananas were like \$300 million. Now, bumaba na siya ng \$160 [million] because yung ibang countries wala na silang tariff for bananas and us we still have,” she said.

Roque said that with the Philippine-Korean FTA, prices would drop “drastically” because the tariffs would also decrease, expecting robust exports of Philippine bananas by 2025.

“The banana industry is very happy with this update,” she said.

Meanwhile, the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) Board recently approved the issuance of an executive order to implement the country’s newly ratified FTA with Korea. (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/18/neda-board-clears-eo-for-enforcing-fta-with-korea/>)

Upon implementation, the Korea FTA will grant preferential duty-free entry on 11,164 Philippine products accounting for \$3.18 billion or 87.4 percent of total Korean imports from the Philippines.

“The agreement will support government efforts to manage competitive exclusion vis-à-vis ASEAN neighbors, encourage more foreign direct investments, and secure more preferential concessions than those currently available under the ASEAN–Korea FTA and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement,” the Neda said.

The EO was approved during the Neda Board’s 23rd meeting and the last for 2024 on Tuesday. The Neda said the EO will cover the country’s tariff commitments under the Philippines-Korea Free Trade Agreement (PH-KR FTA).

Signed on September 7, 2023 during the 43rd ASEAN Summit in Jakarta, Indonesia, the PH-KR FTA aims to strengthen economic relations between the two countries by facilitating trade and investment flows, removing barriers to market access, and creating new business and investment opportunities.

In July, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) said the spread of Fusarium Wilt Tropical Race 4 disease across local plantations and logistics challenges limited the country’s banana shipments in 2023.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/20/phl-banana-boost-seen-in-s-korea-with-tariff-cuts/>

**ABANTE TONITE:**

# **Agri chief nabulaga sa P12 tongpats ng bigas**

December 19, 2024



Nag-utos ng agarang imbestigasyon si Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. sa presyo ng bigas sa mga palengke matapos madiskubre ang overpricing nito sa Guadalupe Market sa Makati City.

Sa isinagawang special monitoring ng Department of Agriculture (DA) at Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) sa nabanggit na palengke nasilip ang isang brand ng bigas na mas mataas ng P12 kumpara sa inaasahang presyo nito.

Sinabi ni Laurel na ipasisilip niya agad ang presyuhan ng bigas sa iba pang mga palengke gayundin sa mga supermarket kung saan mataas din ang presyo ng bigas.

Agad din umano niyang ipagbibigay-alam kay Pangulong Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. ang sitwasyon lalo pa’t ito ang isa sa plataporma ng administrasyon na pababain ang presyo ng bigas.



Nagbabala si Laurel na magpapatawag siya ng pagpupulong sa mga rice retailer at kanilang tutukuyin ang mga brand owner o importer na nadiskubreng mataas ang presyo ng bigas sa mga palengke.

Ayon kay Laurel, dapat nasa P5 hanggang P7 lang kada kilo ng bigas ang profit margin ng mga negosyante.

Samantala, hirit naman ng Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) na dapat magpatupad ng price ceiling ang DA sa mga retailer ng bigas.

Sa pananaw ni SINAG president Rosendo So, kung magpatupad ang DA ng price cap para sa mga bigas, mapipilitan din ang mga negosyante na ibaba ang presyo nito.

Dagdag niya, walang nilabag na batas ang mga negosyante kaya't hindi sila mapaparusahan sa pagpapataas ng presyo.

Kung magkakaroon umano ng price cap, maaaring mabili ang regular milled rice sa P41 at ang well milled rice sa P45.(Don King Zarate/Migo Fajatin)

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/12/19/agri-chief-nabulaga-sa-p12-tongpats-ng-bigas/>

**REMATE:**

# Pag-aangkat ng baka, kalabaw galing Japan ipinagbawal ng Pinas

December 19, 2024 14:57



MANILA, Philippines- Nagpatupad ang Pilipinas, sa pamamagitan ng Department of Agriculture (DA), ng temporary ban sa pag-aangkat ng buhay na baka at kalabaw, maging mga produkto ng mga ito galing Japan kasunod ng outbreak ng lumpy skin disease (LSD).

Binigyang-diin ng DA ang kahalagahan ng import ban upang protektahan ang local livestock industry mula sa potensyal na panganib ng LSD—isang viral disease na nakaaapekto sa mga kalabaw at nagreresulta sa severe complications o pagkasawi.

Ayon sa World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), ang LSD ay isang sakit ng mga baka na may sintomas na lagnat, “nodules” sa balat, mucous membranes at internal organs, emaciation, enlarged lymph nodes, oedema ng balat, at pagkamatay.

“The disease is of economic importance as it can cause a temporary reduction in milk production, temporary or permanent sterility in bulls, damage to hides and, occasionally, death,” anang WOA.

Saklaw ng import ban ang live animals at mga produkto at by-products, kabilang ang unpasteurized milk at milk products, embryos, skin, at semen ng baka at water buffalos na ginagamit sa artificial insemination.

Hindi naman kasama sa ban ang mga produktong nakatalima sa Philippine import at health standards. Kabilang dito ang skeletal muscle meat, casings, gelatin at collagen, tallow,

hooves at horns, blood meal at flour, bovine at water buffalo bones at hides, at pasteurized milk.

Base sa DA, iniulat ng Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries ang LSD outbreak sa World Organization for Animal Health noong Nobyembre 15, 2024. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/pag-aangkat-ng-baka-kalabaw-galing-japan-ipinagbawal-ng-pinas/>

**REMATE:**

# PH balak mag-angkat ng 2 million MT na bigas mula sa Pakistan, India

December 19, 2024 15:36



MANILA, Philippines- Sinabi ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na nagpapatuloy ang pakikipag-usap ng Pilipinas sa mga envoy mula Pakistan at India upang matiyak ang pangako na mag-suplay sa Pilipinas ng dalawang milyong metric tons (MT) ng bigas.

Sinabi ni Agriculture Secretary Tiu Laurel na nakipagpulong siya kay Pakistani Ambassador Imtiaz Ahmad Kazi para isapinal ang kasunduan kung saan maglalaan ang Pakistan sa Pilipinas ng hanggang isang milyong MT ng bigas taon-taon.

Kaparehong kasunduan din ang tinalakay ni Laurel kay Indian Ambassador Shri Harsh Kumar Jain.

“The intention is to create a level playing field among our rice supplying nations,” ayon kay Laurel sa isang kalatas sabay sabing, “We want them to compete for our market.”

Ang Vietnam, kasalukuyang ‘top rice supplier’ ng bansa, naunang lumagda ng Memorandum of Understanding sa Pilipinas para sa five-year trade commitment para mag-suplay ng puting bigas sa pribadong sektor na aabot sa 1.5 million hanggang 2 million MT kada taon sa isang ‘competitive at affordable price.’

“Secretary Tiu Laurel said intercity rice traders have pledged to begin selling rice at P40 per kilo through the ‘KADIWA ng Pangulo’ program, helping the DA achieve its target of

expanding KADIWA kiosks selling affordable rice in public markets and public transport stations to 300 locations by mid-January,” ayon sa DA.

Matatandaang Disyembre ng nakaraang taon nagpalabas si Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos jr., ng Executive Order No 50, nagpapalawig sa temporary modification ng rates ng import duty sa bigas, mais at mga produktong karne hanggang Disyembre 2024 upang masiguro ang abot-kayang presyo ng mga pangunahing bilihin. **Kris Jose**

<https://remate.ph/ph-balak-mag-angkat-ng-2-million-mt-na-bigas-mula-sa-pakistan-india/>

**REMATE:**

# 34 Indian firms pinayagang makapag-export ng carabeef sa Pinas

December 19, 2024 12:45



MANILA, Philippines- Binigyan ng ‘go signal’ ng Department of Agriculture (DA) ang 34 Indian companies para mag-suplay ng frozen buffalo meat (carabeef) sa Pilipinas.

Anim sa accredited Indian meat exporters ang naunang naaprubahan noong 2019 at ni-renew na lamang ang kanilang accreditation status. Ang bagong akreditasyon ay magiging balido sa loob ng tatlong taon hanggang Disyembre 12, 2027.

Sa isang kalatas, sinabi ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., layon ng hakbang na palawakin ang ‘sourcing options’ para sa Philippine food processors at potensyal na bawasan ang halaga ng produkto gaya ng corned beef.

“We do not intend to increase imports. What we want is to encourage more foreign companies to compete for our market, which will ultimately drive down the cost of imported agricultural products, benefiting consumers,” ang sinabi ni Laurel.

Sa kabilang dako, kinumpirma naman ng DA – National Meat Inspection Service na lahat ng 34 kompanya ay naghahangad ng accreditation na pasok sa international food safety standards, kabilang na ang “good manufacturing practices at hazard analysis, at critical control points.”

Gayunman, ang 13 iba pang kompanya ay pinagbawalan na kaagad na mag-export ng carabeef sa Pilipinas dahil ang kanilang operasyon ay base sa Maharashtra, Telangana, at Bihar, kung saan napaulat na aktibo ang foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) at may outbreaks.

Natuklasan naman ng DA-Bureau of Animal Industry na tatlo sa pitong Indian states ang mayroong FMD cases matapos rebyuhin ang animal health protocols nito.

Sa ulat, nagpatupad ang Agriculture Department ng import ban sa mga naturang rehiyon. Ang Carabeef imports mula sa mga nasabing lugar ay ipinagbawal hanggang sa magdeklara ang India National Competent Authority na “free from FMD” ang mga nasabing rehiyon.

Samantala, hindi rin pagkakalooban ng DA ng exemption ang mga heat-treated products, dahil ang akreditasyon ay tumutukoy na makipagkalakalan sa frozen carabeef.

Winika ni Laurel na maaari niyang ikonsidera na payagan ang importasyon ng heat-treated products kung ang India ay mayroong “method of boiling carabeef” upang tugunan ang FMD concerns, kahalintulad sa proseso na ginagamit ng Pakistan para sa buffalo meat na ini-export nito sa Tsina. **Kris Jose**

<https://remate.ph/34-indian-firms-pinayagang-makapag-export-ng-carabeef-sa-pinas/>

**REMATE:**

## **‘Sulit, Nutri’ rice ibebenta ng DA sa 2025**

December 19, 2024 11:02



MANILA, Philippines- Nakatakdang magbenta ang Department of Agriculture (DA) ng mas masustansya at mas murang bigas na tinatawag na “Sulit” at “Nutri” rice sa 2025.

Sa panayam kamakailan, sinabi ni DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. na pareho itong ibebenta sa Kadiwa ng Pangulo (KNP) stores para mabenipisyuhan ang mas maraming Pilipino.

Ang “sulit” rice, 100 porsyentong durog subalit puti, ay ibebenta sa halagang P35 per kg. Hanggang P36/kg. habang ang “nutri” rice, na hindi puti at hindi rin “brownish” na local rice, ay mabibili sa halagang P36/kg hanggang P37/kg.

“Pero yung 100 percent broken comes from the good variety of rice, imported rice yan. Pero siyempre, kung may local sources, we may buy local,” wika ni Tiu Laurel.

“Available na siya dito sa importer and kinakain namin sa DA ngayon iyan, masarap siya, puting-puti.”

Samantala, sinabi ng DA chief na ang kinakain niya ay ang nutri-type na bigas, dahil umano sa health benefits nito.



“To be honest with you, sa bahay ko, yan ang kinakain namin kasi mas okay. Ako, diabetic ako. When I eat it, hindi nagsa-spike ang sugar ko. Then, it’s more filling,” ani Tiu Laurel.

“Iyong pag three pass na yan, nawawala lahat ng minerals, nutrients, plus fiber, nawawala iyan. Sa one pass, lahat ng nutrients and fiber nandyan pa rin,” paliwanag ng opisyal.

Nakatakdang ilunsad ng DA ang pagbebenta ng “sulit rice” sa Enero at ang “nutri rice” sa kalagitnaan ng 2025. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/sulit-nutri-rice-ibebenta-ng-da-sa-2025/>