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**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# ‘Half-cup rice’ key to curb rice wastage in PH—DA chief

BY [JEL SANTOS](#)

Dec 3, 2024 05:54 PM



(JEL SANTOS/MB PHOTO)

The current rice wastage in the country could feed up to 2.8 million Filipinos every year, Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said on Tuesday, Dec. 3, as he pushed for the implementation of a “half-cup rice” policy in restaurants, canteens and even eateries.

Citing data from the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), Laurel also said that household rice wastage decreased to 255,000 metric tons in 2019, down from 340,000 metric tons in 2009.

Despite such improvement, Laurel said the matter is still very concerning.

“This progress is encouraging, but the numbers remain alarming,” he said.

The Philippines, according to him, needs to revisit the “‘half-cup rice’ proposal to encourage more responsible consumption.”

Based on the survey conducted by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute from 2018-2019, the average Filipino household wastes 53 grams of cooked rice every day, equivalent to 6.4 grams of uncooked rice per person.

The survey data exclude wastage from restaurants and other establishments, making the total potentially higher.

In 2013, President Marcos, who was then senator, introduced the “half-cup rice” initiative by filing a bill that seeks to promote serving smaller portions to reduce waste and diversify meals.

PhilRice Executive Director Dr. John de Leon supported the push for smaller portions, saying it could also address health concerns.

“Serving half a cup of rice reduces waste and promotes healthier, more balanced diets,” he said.

Rice overconsumption has been linked to the rising prevalence of diabetes in the Philippines.

In 2021, one in 14 Filipinos had diabetes, according to the International Diabetes Federation.

Laurel said the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals aim to halve global food waste by 2030. Cutting rice wastage aligns with these objectives while easing the financial strain on rice imports and healthcare costs.

“This isn’t just about food security—it’s about sustainability and public health,” he went on.



(JEL SANTOS/MB PHOTO)

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<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/3/half-cup-rice-to-curb-rice-wastage>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# 6 PhilRice board members acquitted of graft charges on car loans to employees

BY [JEFFREY DAMICOG](#)

Dec 3, 2024 04:05 PM

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Six members of the board of trustees (BOT) of the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) have been acquitted by the Sandiganbayan of graft charges over the alleged anomalous 2009 car plan loans worth about P15 million granted to employees.

In a 45-page decision penned by Associate Justice Karl B. Miranda and promulgated last Dec. 2, acquitted were PhilRice BOT members Johnifer Galamay Batara, Fe Divinagracia Laysa, William Gonzales Padolina, Senen Carlos Bacani, Rodolfo Corpuz Undan, and Fe Negosa Lumawag of violations of Sections 3(e) and (g) of Republic Act 3019, the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

“The prosecution failed to prove beyond reasonable doubt that accused violated Sections 3(e) and (g) of R.A. No. 3019. The demand for accountability should not be at the expense of well-meaning public officials who may have erred while performing their duties but have done so without a criminal mind. Our penal laws against corruption in the government are meant to enhance, rather than stifle, public service. If every mistake, error, or oversight is met with criminal punishment, then qualified individuals would be hindered in serving the government,” the anti-graft court pointed out.

On the other hand, the Sandiganbayan ordered the issuance of an alias arrest warrant against PhilRice BOT member Winston C. Corvera.

“The cases against accused Winston C. Corvera who has since remained at large, are ordered archived until he is brought within the jurisdiction of the court,” it said.

Their co-accused, former Department of Agriculture (DA) secretary and former PhilRice BOT chairman Arthur C. Yap, was acquitted by the Supreme Court due to inordinate delay in the filing of the case before the Sandiganbayan.

The case stemmed from the car loan plan in 2009 that was implemented by PhilRice as an incentive to retain its employees.

PhilRice entered into a hold out agreement (HOA) with the Philippine National Bank (PNB) and, because of this, PhilRice could not withdraw its deposits with the bank until the total loans of P15,780,000 that were made by the employees were fully paid.

Though the beneficiary employees were already receiving transportation allowance, PhilRice also allegedly leased the vehicles for the use of the beneficiary employees without undergoing public bidding.

“In this case, while the BOT approved in principle the piloting of a car plan for PhilRice employees, there was never a discussion during the BOT meetings on the execution of the HOAs to secure the vehicles that will be acquired,” the court said.

“In fact, the BOT resolved that the car plan was still subject to certain conditions before it can be fully implemented to ensure that its terms will be most advantageous to the government,” it added.

It pointed out that then PhilRice executive director Ronilo A. Beronio “did not follow the directive of the BOT. “He singlehandedly, implemented the car plan and bypassed the BOT in violation of Sections 5(c), 6, and 7 of Executive Order No. 1061,” it said.

Beronio had been convicted by the Sandiganbayan in 2020 for three counts of violating Section 7(a) of Republic Act 6713, also known as Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees, after reaching a plea bargain deal with the prosecution and pleaded guilty to a lesser offense.

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<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/3/6-phil-rice-board-members-acquitted-of-graft-charges-on-car-loans-to-employees>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Government seizes P2 billion smuggled agriculture-fishery goods

[Brix Lelis](#) - The Philippine Star

December 4, 2024 | 12:00am



Fishermen arrange their boats and nets along the shores of a beach in Binmaley, Pangasinan after fishing on February 1, 2024.

MANILA, Philippines — Combined operatives from several regulatory agencies have seized over P2 billion worth of smuggled agricultural and fishery products since January, according to the Department of Agriculture.

Felicisimo Madayag, special assistant to the DA Assistant Secretary for Inspectorate and Enforcement, told reporters yesterday that rice has been the most smuggled agricultural product this year.

Other illegally imported goods into the country include meat, fish, vegetables and fruits, although he did not provide the volume of these items.

The DA, Madayag said, has intensified efforts to crack down on smuggling and hoarding in order to protect stakeholders while ensuring food safety and security in the country.

“When we talk about food safety, we don’t know if the goods coming in are fit for human consumption, so the DA must monitor that,” he said.

On the supply side, Madayag said the continuous influx of smuggled goods is severely undermining the livelihoods of farmers and fisherfolk.



“It’s important that we keep an eye on this. Our focus here is on the farmers and fisherfolk. We call them the stakeholders of the DA. We must protect them,” he said.

In September, President Marcos signed into law the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act, which sets proactive measures to prevent the entry of smuggled products while imposing higher penalties on violators.

Under this law, smuggling, hoarding, profiteering and cartel operations involving agricultural and fishery products will be classified as economic sabotage, a non-bailable offense punishable by life imprisonment and fines up to five times the value of the goods involved.

To hold both the masterminds and their accomplices accountable, Marcos formed the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Council and the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Enforcement Group.

According to Madayag, the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Council, chaired by the President, is expected to convene within the year.

In line with the implementation of the law, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. issued a special order on Nov. 26 creating a technical working group (TWG) that will lead the establishment of the daily price index (DPI).

The TWG consists of officials and personnel from DA-attached agencies, bureaus and operating units.

The DPI will “serve as a critical tool for determining the value of commodities under investigation for alleged smuggling and hoarding, which will determine if the illegal act warrants economic sabotage,” the order stated.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/12/04/2404787/government-seizes-p2-billion-smuggled-agriculture-fishery-goods>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Urban farming takes root as a strategy for food security

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

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 07:18 AM December 04, 2024



Opened in 2021, the garden at the San Miguel Head Office Complex is the pilot site of our Backyard Bukid initiative. It has expanded over the years and now has 80 garden plots and a plant nursery. (Photo courtesy of San Miguel Corp.)

The government and the private sector as well have been looking at urban farming as one of the key solutions to achieving food security, a view that was further cemented at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Listed conglomerate San Miguel Corp. (SMC) is actively championing this movement, having launched in 2021 its Backyard Bukid initiative in order to augment food supplies and income of its service personnel during such a difficult time.

SMC piloted its backyard farm nestled at the company's head office complex in Mandaluyong City. Situated behind its iconic Francisco Manosa-designed building, the urban farm has more than 30 varieties of vegetables and flowering plants. "Most of the crops from the 'Bahay Kubo' song can be found in our urban farms, SMC tells the Inquirer.

These include ampalaya, eggplant, string beans, patola, upo, mustasa, tomatoes, and ginger; plant herbs such as sweet basil, rosemary and tarragon; and leafy greens like lettuce, arugula, kale and bokchoy. An undertaking of the San Miguel Foundation, the project has since been grown to include a plant nursery and about 80 garden plots that serve as a center for employee wellness, volunteerism and training.

The initiative has also expanded in terms of locations, such that SMC now has five Backyard Bukid sites. Aside from the company's headquarters, there are also on-premises farms at the San Miguel Yamamura Packaging Corp. facilities in General Trias, Cavite and Pandacan, Manila; SMC Better World Smokey Mountain Community Center in Tondo; and Bulacan Bulk Water facility in Bulacan. Also, there are two community-based Backyard Bukid sites in Camarines Sur and Hagonoy, Davao Del Sur. A third one is set for launch in Bukidnon, meant for the residents of communities near SMC facilities.

For its part, the government recognized the crucial role of urban agriculture, or the practice of cultivating crops in limited spaces in the metropolis, by creating a dedicated banner program.



In 2022, the Department of Agriculture (DA) introduced the National Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Program (Nupap) to develop farming in urban and peri-urban areas or locations between the city and the countryside.

The DA says urban gardening “is seen as an intervention in achieving food security and providing alternative sources of livelihood,” a thrust that is spelled out in Administrative Order No. 3 signed in 2022 and which created the Nupap.

“The country is faced with rising pressures due to unstable food supplies, climate change, and growing unemployment as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic,” the DA says.

This initiative seeks to increase food production and reduce costs to cushion the impact of global concerns such as food security, climate change and rising costs of fuel and other farm inputs.

Meanwhile, the San Miguel group is keen on replicating the Backyard Bukid in other areas where the conglomerate has offices nationwide.

“Given its success, we’ve been working to expand the program and bring it to our other facilities and partner communities. We are also looking at bringing more learning

sessions about urban farming to encourage more employees to take part in this initiative,” SMC says.

Last January, the project was expanded through a partnership with nonprofit organization Urban Farmers PH, to enhance the farms’ diversity and variety of produce. Urban Farmers PH provides weekly plant care sessions for the support staff, lasting for an hour every morning and afternoon.

Back then, SMC president and CEO Ramon Ang said that apart from promoting urban agriculture, Backyard Bukid has also become a space for SMC support staff to collaborate and learn life-long skills that will help them become more resilient and self-sufficient.

“Our goal is to extend this initiative to even more facilities, involve more employees, and encourage other companies to do the same,” Ang added.

The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), which the DA supervises, has been implementing the Nupap since last year sans any budget allocation from the government. This year, the government earmarked P406.13 million to implement this project, higher than P376 million in 2023. The BPI is seeking a budget of P439 million in 2025, an increase of 8 percent from this year if approved.

In a briefer provided to the Inquirer, the Nupap Secretariat says that one of the major projects for the coming year is the provision of agricultural machinery, equipment and facility support services with an indicative funding of P143.16 million.

In light of this, the establishment of production facilities — particularly protected agriculture systems and controlled environment agriculture— were prioritized in order to achieve an optimal growing environment for crops even with harsh weather conditions.



Thus, interventions under the Nupap include greenhouses (in various iterations like rainshelters, rainshelters with drip irrigation, screenhouses, nethouses, grow-out nurseries, greenhouses with hydroponics, and solar-powered greenhouses with hydroponics) as well as indoor cultivation systems or containerized vertical farms, and mushroom houses.

The proposed budget for Nupap initiatives also covers infrastructure projects such as poultry houses, vermicomposting facilities, edible landscaping and packaging houses.

Aside from support services and training programs, the Nupap implementers will distribute seeds and planting materials, primarily highland and lowland vegetables and herbs and spices given their relatively shorter growing period and are easily cultivated in limited spaces.

During ceremonies held in September to give recognition to outstanding urban and peri-urban gardens, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. cited the crucial role of urban agriculture in addressing global challenges including food security.

“From mitigating climate change to enhancing food resilience and improving mental well-being, your gardens serve purposes beyond mere aesthetics,” Tiu Laurel says.

The World Bank estimates that by 2050, about 102 million Filipinos will be living in cities, equivalent to more than 65 percent of the country's total population. In a report, the World Bank says the country's urban population has grown by over 50 million people in the past five decades.

On a global scale, the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization says 55 percent of the world's population resides in urban areas while 79 percent of all food produced is allotted for consumption in cities.

On its website, the FAO says urban and peri-urban agriculture "offers a fundamental strategy for building the resilience of a city's food supply."

"It involves urban and peri-urban actors, communities, methods, places, policies, institutions, systems, ecologies and economies, largely using and regenerating local resources to meet changing needs of local populations while serving multiple goals and functions," the FAO says.

<https://business.inquirer.net/493532/urban-farming-takes-root-as-a-strategy-for-food-security>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Milled rice imports set for new record high this year

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

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 02:05 AM December 04, 2024

The volume of imported rice that entered the Philippines within a year reached a new record high at a total of 4.25 million metric tons (MT) as of Nov. 28, according to the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI).

The latest data from the BPI show the rice importation volume for the 11-month period was already higher than the 3.6 million MT for full-year 2023 and already surpassed the previous record high of 3.83 million MT set in 2022.

On Nov. 1 to 23 this year, traders brought in 378,725.508 MT of imported rice, approaching the October data of 572,073.96 MT.

As in the previous years, Vietnam remains the leading source of rice imports as deliveries from across the South China Sea and West Philippine Sea reached 3.27 million MT. This volume represents 77 percent of the total inbound milled rice.

Thailand was still a distant second with 544,724.15 MT while Pakistan was third with 215,049.48 MT.

Myanmar, India, China, Japan, Cambodia, Italy and Spain also shipped rice to the archipelago during the reference period.

Also, the year-to-date volume as of Nov. 28 was 300,000 MT short of hitting the Department of Agriculture's (DA) estimate of 4.5 million MT of rice imports coming in for this entire year.



Likewise, this was 800,000 MT away from hitting the estimate of the US Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA-FAS), pegged at 5 million MT this year, because of high import volumes from Vietnam.

The American agency said in a report the Philippines was importing "record amounts" as demand picked up alongside lower import duties.

A previous report from the USDA-FAS in Manila said the 15-percent import duty on rice provided "an attractive incentive" for traders to purchase imported rice, per industry contacts.

Through Executive Order No. 62 signed last June, the government slashed the tariff on imported rice to 15 percent until 2028 from 35 percent previously in an effort to augment local supply, manage prices and ease the inflationary pressure of commodities.

Earlier, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said overseas rice purchases could reach 4.5 million MT before the year ends.

"This can also reflect the smuggling activities that local authorities are able to apprehend. This could be the actual figure of the imports coming in," de Mesa, who is also the DA's spokesperson, said in an interview earlier this month.

The DA previously said that importation could offset the substantial losses incurred by the rice sector this year due to consecutive typhoons. **INQ**

<https://business.inquirer.net/493962/milled-rice-imports-set-for-new-record-high-this-year>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Farmers in the face of climate crisis

By: [John Patrick P. Habacon](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 04:50 AM December 04, 2024

Much have been said about the Philippines being a high-risk country for disasters. In fact, according to the latest World Risk Report, the Philippines scored highest on the disaster risk index. While this vulnerability is often attributed to the country's geographic location, social scientists argue that disasters are also shaped by social, economic, and political factors.

The recent consecutive catastrophic typhoons have once again highlighted the country's long-standing vulnerability to climate change, with the agriculture sector consistently bearing the biggest brunt. Despite an average of 20 typhoons a year, we seem to be regressing in mitigating their adverse effects. With economic losses already reaching record highs and affecting hundreds of thousands of hectares of farmland, our farmers find themselves once again at the receiving end of devastation.

It would be easy for some to put the blame on the farmers themselves. Some might say they should have heeded calls from the local government and weather bureau to prepare for the typhoons' onslaught much earlier. They could have moved their equipment and materials to safer ground, or harvested their mature crops before the typhoons come. It is tempting to view their predicament as a result of poor preparation, complacency, or both. However, sociologist C. Wright Mills cautions that what we often perceive as personal troubles are, in fact, rooted in broader social structures and processes, and should not be seen merely as individual issues.

In my conversations with smallholder rice farmers in Laguna, I realized that what they are facing is far more complex than it appears. Due to their repeated exposure to typhoons, they have actually come to accept and normalize their situation. As one farmer expressed, "Wala namang magagawa, kumbaga panahon na 'yun eh. Wala namang may

gusto nun (There's nothing we can do; it's the weather, after all. Nobody wants this to happen).”

## **ADVERTISING**

For them, it is a force of nature beyond their control. However, they spoke about problems that they directly attribute to systemic failures. How could they possibly harvest their crops, even mature ones, ahead of time when they lack basic equipment like drying machines? Even if they manage to salvage some crops, opportunistic middlemen often exploit the situation, buying at prices below market rates.

These farmers also have limited resources, often relying on loans to raise capital. When their farmlands are washed out or submerged, they are left empty-handed and further trapped in debt. Furthermore, how can they quickly transport equipment when accessible roads are limited, or leave their animals behind, knowing these are their only valuable assets? Indeed, it is not a lack of foresight on their part; rather, it is due to structural barriers that continue to hold them back and weigh them down.

In the face of the climate crisis, we must rethink and reevaluate the ways we treat our agricultural sector. Let us ask: what can be done for our farming communities to become more resilient to the impacts of climate change?

First, we have to listen to them. Our farmers have long called for institutional reforms, such as support for modernization. They appeal for assistance to acquire equipment such as harvesting machines that will make emergency harvest easier, drying machines so they can dry their palay indoors, and post-harvest storage facilities to ensure them an ample supply for a long period of time.

Moreover, they urge a more direct connection with consumers and the elimination of usurious intermediaries who exploit their vulnerable situations. The state should also provide them with a safety net—make crop insurance policies more accessible to as many farmers as possible. This can act as a fallback during crises to help them recover quickly and avoid falling into the vicious cycle of debt. Time and again, the one-size-fits-all, top-

down approach has proven ineffective. A bottom-up approach, therefore, may be the way forward.

Finally, we must demand accountability. Our farmers have been made resilient by necessity, not by choice. Instead of shifting the risks onto the already burdened shoulders of our farmers, the state should be more proactive in supporting our agriculture sector. Many wonder why farmers are gradually abandoning their fields and why the youth in farming communities are no longer interested in agriculture. The answer is blatantly clear: farming in this country is full of risks, a gamble with no guaranteed returns.

Farmers do not need our pity—they need empowerment. And as long as those in positions of power deny them the means to uplift themselves, they will continue to be victims.

John Patrick P. Habacon is a graduate student of sociology and a social science professor at the Lyceum of the Philippines University-Laguna.

<https://opinion.inquirer.net/178850/farmers-in-the-face-of-climate-crisis>

## BUSINESS WORLD:

# Council to enforce economic sabotage law could convene before end of year

December 3, 2024 | 8:57 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/MIGUEL DE GUZMAN

A DEPARTMENT of Agriculture (DA) official said the council that will enforce Republic Act (RA) No. 12022, or the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act, could hold its first meeting before year's end.

Felicisimo F. Madayag, special assistant to the DA assistant secretary for Inspectorate and Enforcement said at a forum that the first meeting will focus on appointing technical experts, organizing the executive committee, and other staffing matters. The law created the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Council to oversee the implementation of RA 12022.

The council is composed of representatives from the DA, the departments of Justice, Finance, Interior and Local Government, Transportation, and Trade and Industry, the Anti-Money Laundering Council, and the Philippine Competition Commission. It is chaired by the President.

RA 12022 classifies agricultural smuggling, hoarding, profiteering, and its financing as economic sabotage. It levies fines equivalent to five times the value of any smuggled or hoarded agricultural products, with violators also facing the prospect of life imprisonment.

Mr. Madayag said seized agricultural and fisheries products have been valued at "more than P2 billion" in the year to date. He did not give a more detailed estimate. The law also requires the establishment of a daily price index (DPI) to help determine the value of commodities where smuggling and hoarding is alleged.

The DA has released Special Order No. 1804, which created a technical working group to establish guidelines on the compilation of the DPI. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/12/03/639167/council-to-enforce-economic-sabotage-law-could-convene-before-end-of-year/>

**REMATE:**

# Half-cup rice serving isinusulong ng DA vs pag-aaksaya ng bigas

December 3, 2024 17:18



MANILA, Philippines – Nanawagan ang Department of Agriculture (DA) nitong Lunes sa mga mambabatas na muling magtrabaho sa pag-institutionalize ng pagkakaroon ng half-cup rice options sa mga food establishments upang matugunan ang pag-aaksaya.

Ayon sa Department of Agriculture (DA) ito ay matapos ang 340,000 metric tons (MT) ng milled rice waste na naiulat mula 2018 hanggang 2019, bumaba sa 255,000 MT noong Nobyembre, ayon sa datos ng Department of Science and Technology-Food and Nutrition Research Institute (DOST-FNRI) at ang Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice).

“Gustong i-revive ni Secretary (Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.) iyong bill na ma-offer ‘yung half rice. Matandaan natin ang mga nakaraang may-akda nito sa Congress, sa 16th Congress, si President (Ferdinand R.) Marcos Jr., noong senator siya. .

Nabatid na ang naiulat na data sa pag-aaksaya ng bigas ay maaaring matugunan ang pangangailangan ng 2.79 milyong Pilipino sa isang taon, kung isasaalang-alang ang humigit-kumulang 37,000 MT ng daily milled rice requirement, ayon sa PhilRice.

Kaugnay nito sinabi ni De Mesa na ang mga Pilipinong gustong mag-half-cup rice “for whatever reason” ay hindi dapat obligadong kumain ng isang buong tasa ng bigas sa mga food establishments.

Sa ngayon, tatlong mambabatas ang nag-lobby para sa muling pagbuhay sa half-cup rice bill — Quezon 4th District Rep. Keith Micah Tan, AGAP Party-list Rep. Nicanor Briones at Iloilo 1st District Rep. Janette Garin.

Bukod sa pagpursige para sa half-cup rice option, sinabi ni De Mesa na ang mga Pilipino ay makaka-access ng mga alternatibong carbohydrates tulad ng kamote at mais.

Samantala habang naghihintay na maipasa ang panukalang batas, sinabi ni PhilRice Development and Communication Division head Hazel Beltran na hiniling nila kay Pangulong Marcos ang pagpapalabas ng executive order (EO) para gawing available ang half-cup rice option sa lahat ng ahensya ng gobyerno sa buong bansa. (*Santi Celario*)

<https://remate.ph/half-cup-rice-serving-isinusulong-ng-da-vs-pag-aaksaya-ng-bigas/>

**ABANTE:**

# Isda, baboy, manok sumirit presyo

Abante News

- **December 3, 2024**



Tumaas ang presyo ng mga karne sa Nepa Q-Mart bunsod ng pagtaas din na demand para rito.

Nakapagtala ng pagtaas ang presyo ng isda, manok at baboy nitong Martes, Disyembre 3 kumpara noong nakaraang linggo.

Ang presyo ng manok ay tumaas sa P200 kada kilo mula sa nakaraang P170 nito bawat kilo habang ang baboy naman ay tumaas sa P320 kada kilo mula sa dating P310.

Tumaas naman ang presyo ng mga isda tulad ng tilapia at galunggong ng P20 hanggang P40 kada kilo.

Inaasahan ng mga tindera na patuloy na tataas ang presyo ng mga karne ngayong Disyembre dahil sa peak season.

Nauna nang sinabi ng Department of Agriculture at Department of Trade and Industry na hindi magkakaroon ng pagtaas sa presyo ng pangunahing bilihin sa Kapaskuhan. (Migo Fajatin)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/12/03/isda-baboy-manok-sumirit-presyo/>



**MANILA STANDARD:**

# Rice wastage could feed 2.8m Filipinos annually—Tiu-Laurel



Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr.

By Othel V. Campos

December 3, 2024, 8:40 pm

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. on Tuesday reiterated calls to reduce rice wastage in the country, stressing that the current levels could feed 2.8 million Filipinos annually.

This prompted Tiu-Laurel to call on legislators to institutionalize half cup rice options in restaurants to avoid wastage.

According to the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), household rice wastage decreased to 255,000 metric tons in 2019, down from 340,000 metric tons in 2009.

Tiu Laurel said that while this showed progress, the figures remain troubling.

“This progress is encouraging, but the numbers are still alarming. The rice we waste yearly could sustain millions of families. It’s time to revisit initiatives like the ‘half-cup rice’ proposal to promote more responsible consumption,” Tiu Laurel said.

The “half-cup rice” initiative, first introduced by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in 2013, advocates serving smaller rice portions to reduce waste and encourage meal diversity.

Data from a 2018 to 2019 Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) survey revealed that Filipino households waste an average of 53 grams of cooked rice daily—equal to 6.4 grams of uncooked rice per person.

These figures exclude waste from restaurants and food establishments, suggesting the actual amount is even higher.

PhilRice executive director John de Leon endorsed the push for smaller portions, citing both environmental and health benefits.

“Serving half a cup of rice not only cuts down on waste but also promotes healthier and more balanced diets,” he said.

The Philippines’ high rice consumption has also been linked to rising diabetes cases.

In 2021, one in 14 Filipinos had diabetes, according to the International Diabetes Federation, with the country’s white rice-heavy diet identified as a key contributor.

Tiu-Laurel said reducing rice waste aligns with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal to halve global food waste by 2030.

He said tackling rice wastage could ease financial strain on rice imports and reduce healthcare costs.

Othel V. Campos

“This isn’t just about ensuring food security—it’s about sustainability, public health, and the future of our nation,” he said.

<https://manilastandard.net/business/314531724/rice-wastage-could-feed-2-8m-filipinos-annually-tiu-laurel.html>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# Rice imports hit record 4.25 million metric tons

**By Janine Alexis Miguel**

**December 4, 2024**

RICE imports have surpassed last year's level, data from the Department of Agriculture (DA) showed, reaching a new record high of 4.25 million metric tons (MT) just before the end of November.

The latest report from the DA's Bureau of Plant Industry said that rice shipments as of Nov. 28 had surpassed the 2023 total of 3.61 million MT and the previous peak of 3.83 million MT that was hit in 2022.

From Nov. 1 to 28, rice shipments reached 378,725 MT, slowing from October's 572,073 MT.

Vietnam remained the top rice exporter to the Philippines, accounting for over 3.26 million MT, or 76.9 percent of total imports. Next was Thailand (544,724 MT), Pakistan (15,049 MT) and Myanmar (184,815 MT). The remaining shipments came from India, China, Japan, Cambodia, Italy and Spain. Shipments markedly rose in August after the government slashed import tariffs on the commodity in a bid to keep inflation under control.

Prices, however, remain high and Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has warned that the government could be forced to act if retailers were found to be profiteering.

The DA last week said that it would start selling lower-priced rice under the Kadiwa program in major public markets to give consumers a cheaper choice.

Tiu Laurel has noted that wholesale imported rice is priced at only P37 to P38 per kilo, but imported well-milled rice is being sold in local markets at nearly P48 per kilo.

Prices of local rice, meanwhile, range from P43.50 to P48 per kilo.

The United States Department of Agriculture has projected that Philippine rice imports could hit 4.7 million MT this year, with the country remaining the world's top importer of the grain.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., meanwhile, said the volume could be close to 4.5 million MT due to impacts of successive typhoons that damaged rice fields and other planting areas.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/04/business/top-business/rice-imports-hit-record-425-million-metric-tons/2015196>

## **BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# **Farm smuggling scourge: P15 billion in tax leakage—DOF**

Reine Juvierre S. Alberto and Ada Pelonia  
December 3, 2024

THE government seized more than P2 billion worth of agricultural products since January, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA), but the Department of Finance (DOF) pegs at P15 billion the tax leakage from the rampant smuggling of agricultural products, depriving the government of much-needed revenues.

In a forum organized by Stratbase ADR Institute on Tuesday, Revenue Office Project Manager IV Emee Macabales said the government lost an estimated P15 billion in foregone revenues due to the smuggling of agricultural products into the country in the last nine years.

“This is an area of concern because there’s revenue leakage in the government. These revenues could have been better spent on infrastructure and social services,” Macabales said.

To plug this leak, the DOF is pinning its hopes on the recently enacted Republic Act No. 12022 or the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act (AGES), which aims to end the smuggling, cartels, profiteering and hoarding of agricultural products.

“We want the law to be properly implemented and close that revenue leakage,” Macabales said.

Perpetrators face lifetime imprisonment and a fine of five times the value of agricultural and fishery products subject to the crime.

The DOF is a member of the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Council, which oversees the proper implementation of the law. It has the power to deputize law enforcement and issue a letter of authority (LOA) to take action against corporations or entities involved in economic sabotage.

The DOF is also a member of the enforcement group, which allows them to inspect vessels and warehouses upon the issuance of the LOA.

Moreover, Macabales said the DOF seeks to have the new National Single Window (NSW) operational in the last quarter of 2025. This is later than the planned rollout of the system in May 2025. (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/14/recto-court-order-slowed-down-move-vs-smuggling/>)

Nevertheless, Macabales said negotiations with proponents have already concluded and they are now in the approval process.

The new NSW will streamline trade processes by allowing importers and exporters to manage permits, licenses, clearances, documents submission, payments and cargo tracking through a single platform.

This integration, in collaboration with DICT, will enable real-time verification of import clearances from various regulatory agencies, combating fraudulent activities and improving information sharing with the council.

Macabales said agencies regulating agricultural and fisheries products will be prioritized during the system's onboarding phase.

The government seized more than P2 billion worth of agricultural products since January, the DA said on Tuesday at the sidelines of a forum in Makati.

Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for DA Inspectorate and Enforcement (DAIE) Felicisimo Madayag Jr. told reporters these apprehended commodities include meat, fish, vegetables, and fruits. He added that rice accounted for the bulk of the goods.

Figures from the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) showed that rice shipments from January 1 to November 28 have reached an all-time high of 4.2 million metric tons (MMT).

In September, President Marcos Jr. signed into law RA 12022 or the AGES law.

He said the law will aid in the government crackdown on cartels behind price and supply manipulation for agricultural products.

Marcos earlier noted that the government lost over P3 billion to agricultural smuggling in 2023.

Meanwhile, Madayag said the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Council as stipulated under the law will begin to convene before yearend.

RA 12022 provides that the council should ensure the proper and effective implementation of the AGES law.

The member agencies are DA, Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Transportation

(DOTr), and Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), among others.

“The council will first talk about [the advisory committee],” Madayag said, partly in Filipino.

Under the law, an advisory board consisting of representatives from respective agricultural sectors will provide the council with “expert assistance and advice.”

These sector representatives will come from the sugar, rice, corn, livestock and poultry, vegetables and fruits, fisheries, and tobacco industries.

Meanwhile, Laurel recently signed Special Order (SO) 1804, creating a technical working group to prepare guidelines for the daily price index (DPI) in compliance with the AGES law.

The order mandates the DA to establish a DPI that will help assess the value of farm goods under investigation for alleged smuggling and hoarding, and determine if the illegal act warrants economic sabotage.

Madayag said farmers and consumers stand to gain from this “innovative aspect” of the law.

“Farmers will gain transparency, ensuring there is a fair price for their produce. Consumers will also benefit as fair price indicators protect them from exploitative practices,” he said.

“This initiative will build trust in our agricultural markets and serve as early warning device for economic sabotage.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/03/farm-smuggling-scourge-p15-billion-in-tax-leakage-dof/>

## **BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# **11-month rice import arrivals hit 4.2 MMT, an all-time high**

Ada Pelonia  
December 3, 2024

THE country's rice import arrivals through November have reached an all-time high, based on latest government data.

Figures from the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) showed that rice shipments from January 1 to November 28 hit 4.2 million metric tons (MMT). This was higher than the 3.606 MM of rice the Philippines bought in 2023.

Of the volume that arrived in the country, BPI data indicated that over 3.26 MMT came from Vietnam. Thailand was the second-largest supplier, accounting for 544,724.15 metric tons (MT).

The Philippines also imported from other countries, such as Pakistan (215,049.48 MT), Myanmar (184,815.75 MT), and India (22,260.82 MT).

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. recently said the country's rice imports will reach 4.5 MMT by yearend.

"My estimate is we will hit 4.5 million tons this year for rice," Laurel said, speaking partly in Filipino.

Meanwhile, data from the BPI showed that the agency approved and issued 9,273 sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances (SPSICs) for the purchase of 8.97 MMT of imported rice.

Rice importers are required to secure an SPSIC from the BPI before bringing in foreign rice stocks.

The import clearance would certify that an inbound shipment is safe for human and animal consumption, and would not bring in any pests that could be detrimental to the local agriculture sector.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently adjusted upward its estimate for the country's imported rice purchases this year to 5.0 MMT from its earlier forecast of 4.7 MMT.

Its report noted a surge in shipments from Vietnam as the country grappled with the impact of El Niño and storms. This will be driven by population growth and reduced import tariffs.

The international agency also raised its rice imports forecast for the Philippines in 2025 to 5.1 MMT on higher consumption of the staple.

Former Agriculture Undersecretary Leocadio Sebastian earlier said that the Philippines will “continue to be a good market for exporters” from Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, India, and Pakistan next year.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/03/11-month-rice-import-arrivals-hit-4-2-mmt-an-all-time-high/>



**ABANTE TONITE:**

# DA binuhay kampanya sa half cup rice

December 3, 2024

Muling tinulak ng Department of Agriculture (DA) ang panukalang mag-half cup rice na lamang dapat sa isang serving ng kanin.

Sabi ni DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., si Pangulong Ferdinand ‘Bongbong’ Marcos Jr. ang unang nagsulong ng half-cup rice initiative noon pang 2013 para hindi nagsasayang ng bigas.

Sabi ni Tiu Laurel, 2.8 milyong Pilipino ang mapapakain kung mababawasan ang nasasayang na bigas.

Noong 2019, nasa 255,000 toneladang bigas na lamang ang nasayang mula sa 340,000 tonelada noong 2009. Sapat ito para sa halos pitong araw na pangangailangan ng bansa.

“Serving half a cup of rice reduces waste and promotes healthier, more balanced diets,” sabi ni Tiu Laurel.

Dagdag ng DA, ang sobrang pagkain ng kanin ay nakakapagdulot ng diabetes. Ayon sa DA, isa sa bawat 14 na Pinoy ang may diabetes noong 2021 at ang pagiging malakas sa kanin ang isa sa mga sanhi nito. (Eileen Mencias)

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/12/03/da-binuhay-kampanya-sa-half-cup-rice/>

**PILIPINO STAR NGAYON:**

# **EDITORIAL — Rice smuggling patuloy pa rin**

120424



NOONG nakaraang Setyembre 26, 2024, nilagdaan ni President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ang Republic Act 12022 (Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act). Layunin sa paglagda sa batas na habulin ang smugglers ng agricultural products partikular ang bigas. Nakadidismaya na sa kabila na may batas laban sa agri smugglers, patuloy pa rin ang pagpupuslit ng bigas at lalong naging kawawa ang mga lokal na magsasaka. Inagawan ng ikinabubuhay ang mga magsasaka dahil sa talamak na smuggling ng bigas. Bukod sa smuggling, talamak din ang hoarding ng bigas.

Bago ang paglagda sa RA 12022, iniisyu ni Marcos ang Executive Order (EO) No. 62 na nagbababa sa taripa ng bigas mula 35 percent sa 15 percent. Layunin sa pag-iisyu ng EO 62 na mapababa ang presyo ng bigas sa pamilihan at upang matigil na rin ang talamak na smuggling. Hindi bumaba ang bigas at hindi rin napigilan ang rice smugglers sa kanilang pananabotahe sa pamahalaan. Dahil sa rice smuggling, bilyong piso ang nawawala sa pamahalaan.

Hindi naging kapaki-pakinabang ang pagpapababa sa taripa ng bigas at ang nakinabang lamang dito ay ang mga ganid na rice importers at traders. Sa halip na ang maprotektahan ay ang mga lokal na magsasaka at mamimili, ang importers at traders ang nag-umapaw ang bulsa sa kita. Kung magpapatuloy ang rice smuggling, bigo ang pamahalaan sa pinangakong hahabulin at sasampahan

ng kaso ang mga smugglers. Ang banta sa agri smugglers ay ilang beses nang binanggit ni Marcos Jr. sa kanyang State of the Nation Address (SONA).

Ang malawakang smuggling ng bigas at iba pang agri products, kabilang ang isda ay ibinunyag ni AGAP pary-list Nicanor Briones. Ayon kay Briones, nasamsam kamakailan ng Bureau of Customs (BOC) ang 21 containers ng smuggled frozen mackerel na galing China na nagkakahalaga ng P178.5 milyon. Wala umanong Sanitary and Phytosanitary Import Clearance (SPIC) ang importer nito. Mananagot aniya ang importer na Pacific Sealand Foods Corporation dahil dito at kapag napatunayan, mahaharap ang may-ari sa parusang life imprisonment at pagmumultahin nang limang beses sa kabuuang halaga ng pinuslit na produkto.

Patuloy ang smuggling ng agri products at tiyak na titindi ngayong Christmas season. Hindi lamang bigas ang ipinapasok kundi sibuyas, carrots, frozen na karne ng baboy, isda at iba pa.

Patuloy namang umaasa ang mga lokal na magsasaka na hahabulin at pagbabayaran ang smugglers ng agri products. Hindi pa rin nawawala ang kanilang paniniwala na ang mga sumasabotahe sa ekonomiya at nagpapahirap sa kanila ay madadakma at maitatapon sa madilim na kulungan.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/opinyon/2024/12/04/2404838/editorial-rice-smuggling-patuloy-pa-rin>