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MANILA BULLETIN:

‘Alarming’: 80% of soil in PH deteriorated; low agri yield to persist if soil not rejuvenated

BY [JEL SANTOS](#)

Dec 5, 2024 03:45 PM



DA Undersecretary Roger Navarro (JEL SANTOS/MANILA BULLETIN)

Eighty percent of the soil in the Philippines is deteriorated and will continue to constitute a low yield of agricultural products if the country’s soil is not rejuvenated, an official of the Department of Agriculture (DA) said.

DA Undersecretary Roger Navarro said the abused use of inorganic or chemical fertilizers is the main culprit in the degradation of soil in the Philippines, saying such a situation is “alarming.”

“Sa estimate namin, about 80 percent na ang deteriorated na soil nationwide (Based on our estimate, about 80 percent of soil nationwide is deteriorated),” said Navarro.

Deteriorated soil, according to the undersecretary, cannot absorb inorganic fertilizer and would only damage the environment.

“We need to let them understand that the degradation of soil is through the abused use of inorganic fertilizer. Maski gagamit ka pa ng (Even if they use) 20 bags [of inorganic fertilizer], for example, in your one hectare, if ang soil mo (if your soil) is not healthy, it cannot absorb any more,” he said.

Greenhouse gases

Since the deteriorated soil cannot absorb the chemical fertilizers, Navarro explained that it will just evaporate and contribute to greenhouse gases.

Should it not evaporate, he said the inorganic fertilizer will be washed away and contaminate the water system which will lead to the destruction of the environment.

Commercial planting in the country, he said, utilizes massive inorganic fertilizers that cause soil erosion and siltation, among others.

Remedy

To remedy the situation, Navarro said that commercial and small farmers should instead use organic fertilizers.

He added that the agriculture department is ramping up its information drive to push for the use of organic fertilizers at farms.

However, organic fertilizers are bulkier, leading to higher transportation and application costs, particularly in the rural and mountainous regions of the Philippines. If not properly processed, they can also carry pests, pathogens, or weed seeds, posing risks to crop health and overall farm productivity.

It can be recalled that the DA implemented several programs to promote organic fertilizers and sustainable farming practices. One significant initiative is the National Organic Agriculture Program (NOAP).

The said program encourages organic farming through education, financial support, and certifications like the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS), which provides a cost-effective alternative to traditional organic certification processes.

The agency supports organic farming through composting facilities for biodegradable waste, aiming to reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers and improve soil health.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) said nearly 95 percent of food production relies on soil.

However, an estimated 33 percent of soils globally are reported to be degraded, attributed to various threats and unsustainable agricultural practices.

For context, it is said that nature requires approximately 1,000 years to form just 2-3 centimeters of soil—a process comparable to baking an extremely thin slice of bread over a millennium, only for it to disintegrate in moments.

This perspective underscores the delicate and irreplaceable nature of soils. It is often emphasized as a key reason for initiatives aimed at protecting and sustainably managing this essential resource.



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<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/5/80-of-soil-in-ph-deteriorated>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Strengthening the fight vs malnutrition: A unified call for healthier options

BY [MANILA BULLETIN](#)

Dec 5, 2024 10:23 AM



The urgency of tackling malnutrition and stunting among Filipino children has been emphasized by President Marcos on Dec. 3 with instructions to the Department of Health (DOH) to intensify campaigns promoting healthier food options. This directive aligns with the ongoing implementation of the First 1,000 Days Program, which underscores the critical window of opportunity from conception to a child's second birthday to lay the foundation for lifelong health and well-being.

The President made the directive during his meeting with officials of DOH and other concerned agencies to discuss the strategies, initiatives, challenges, and ways forward on the implementation of DOH's First 1,000 Day Program.

The First 1,000 Days Program is anchored in the Kalusugan at Nutrisyon ng Mag-Nanay Act (Republic Act 11148), enacted in 2018, which institutionalized nutritional interventions for pregnant and lactating mothers and children up to two years old.

President Marcos' renewed focus highlights the persistent malnutrition crisis that afflicts one in three Filipino children under five years old, according to the latest data. Stunting, a condition of chronic malnutrition, not only limits physical growth but also impairs cognitive development, or the process of brain changes that enable people to think, learn, and reason. Such a factor continues the cycle of poverty.

The success of the First 1,000 Days Program hinges on a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach. In addition to the DOH, key government agencies supporting the program include the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Education (DepEd), and the National Nutrition Council (NNC). These agencies play vital roles in delivering complementary programs such as conditional cash transfers, school-based feeding, and community-driven agricultural initiatives.

President Marcos' directive calls for scaling up education and advocacy on healthy eating habits. The DOH should expand its campaigns on balanced diets, integrating practical information about affordable and accessible local food sources. Public health professionals and community health workers could disseminate this knowledge through barangay-based seminars and social media platforms to reach a broader audience.

The President also said the government must focus on more initiatives to help local government units (LGUs) prioritize spending on nutrition and health issues to promote better health and good well-being.

Additionally, the DOH must strengthen the implementation of existing programs, such as the Micronutrient Supplementation Program and nutrition-sensitive programs, which provide iron, vitamin A, and other critical nutrients to mothers and children. Partnering with LGUs to improve the distribution of fortified foods and supplements will also be crucial in addressing regional disparities.

The private sector has emerged as a key ally in the fight against malnutrition. Many companies are now investing in sustainable food production, developing fortified products, and supporting feeding programs. There are many organizations that support initiatives that align corporate social responsibility efforts with the goals of the First 1,000 Days Program. Partnerships with food manufacturers can also promote the reformulation of processed foods to reduce unhealthy ingredients and add nutritional value.

Educating the public about healthier eating options requires more than campaigns; it demands systemic changes to make nutritious food accessible and affordable. Subsidies for locally grown vegetables, improved market access for farmers, and stricter regulations on junk food advertising are essential measures. Schools, too, must become nutrition hubs by incorporating gardening programs and nutrition education into their curricula.

The First 1,000 Days Program, launched nationally in 2016 under the DOH, represents a comprehensive strategy to address malnutrition at its roots. President Marcos' call to action is a reminder that the success of this program depends on shared responsibility. By empowering communities, strengthening partnerships, and prioritizing the well-being of mothers and children, the Philippines can build a healthier, more resilient future for its people.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/5/strengthening-the-fight-vs-malnutrition-a-unified-call-for-healthier-options>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Inflation rate climbs to 2.5% in November amid holiday demand

BY [DERCO ROSAL](#)

Dec 5, 2024 09:10 AM

Rising prices of pork and chicken during the holiday season, coupled with the continued impact of African Swine Fever (ASF), drove up the Philippines' inflation rate in November, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported.

National Statistician and PSA Undersecretary Claire Dennis S. Mapa reported that the country's headline inflation accelerated to 2.5 percent in November from 2.3 percent in October due to the rising food and non-alcoholic beverage costs, slower transport deflation, and higher prices in housing and restaurant services.

Mapa said that higher prices of pork (4.2 percent from 3.5 percent) and chicken (5.4 percent from 4.9 percent), driven by holiday demand and the effects of ASF in some provinces, pushed up inflation in the meat commodity group.

Food inflation accounted for nearly half, or 48.4 percent, of November's overall inflation. The increase was mainly driven by faster price hikes in food and non-alcoholic beverages.

Transport costs also contributed to the inflation uptrend, with a smaller year-on-year decline of 1.2 percent in October compared to a 2.1 percent drop in the previous month.

On the other hand, the PSA reported a notable decline in rice inflation, which dropped to 5.1 percent in November from 9.6 percent in October. Likewise, corn fell to 8.2 percent from 9.7 percent.

Rice inflation curbed?

Meanwhile, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) stated, Thursday, Dec. 5, that government measures, including productivity-enhancing and strategic trade policies, "helped ease" rice inflation.

NEDA added that although overall inflation rose slightly in November, the country's average inflation for the first eleven months remains at 3.2 percent, within the government's target range of two to four percent.

"Despite the strong typhoons our country faced in recent months, consumer prices have remained relatively stable. This demonstrates the resilience of our economy and the effectiveness of our policies," NEDA Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan said.

Balisacan, however, noted that the government is closely tracking commodity prices, particularly food, following the series of typhoons in October and November.

NEDA stressed that “these typhoons adversely affected food supply and logistics, resulting in a rise in food inflation” with a notable acceleration in vegetable prices from its -9.2 percent deflation in October.

“We are committed to maintaining price stability by ensuring inflation remains low and manageable,” Balisacan assured the public.

“This will be supported by prudent monetary policies and strategic trade measures in the near term, as well as improved access to quality job opportunities and productivity-enhancing reforms in the medium term,” he said.

Meanwhile, the Department of Agriculture (DA) will launch the Kadiwa Rice-for-All program in major public markets to provide consumers with more affordable rice amid ongoing high prices.

To further address food inflation, the DA has authorized the Bureau of Animal Industry (BIA) to set up livestock, poultry, and meat industry inspection sites and amended ASF vaccine guidelines to combat the spread of ASF and Avian Influenza (AI).

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/5/philippines-inflation-rate-climbs-to-2-5-in-november>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Biofertilizer industry in crisis

[Leonardo Montemayor](#) - The Philippine Star

December 6, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Last March 2024, University of the Philippines at Los Baños (UPLB) chancellor Jose Camacho Jr. granted an exclusive license to agribusiness company Agri-Specialist Inc. (ASI) to use, produce and sell the biofertilizer trademarked as “Bio-N” nationwide.

In turn, ASI – a newcomer in the biofertilizer industry – has allegedly been telling existing and potential Bio-N clients, including farmers’ cooperatives, private enterprises and national and local government agencies, to stop making, marketing or using Bio-N without ASI’s permission. To date, however, ASI has not secured a certificate of product registration for Bio-N from the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority under the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Currently, the production and supply of Bio-N in various areas has reportedly dwindled or stopped. This is harming thousands of rice, corn and vegetable producers, who have been enjoying higher yields and substantial savings in urea fertilizer costs with this technology.

Under President Marcos’ direction, Bio-N and other biofertilizers received increased public funding in a bid to reduce the country’s dependence on imported and increasingly expensive inorganic farm inputs. For 2024, the DA has a P1.9-billion budget for the procurement of biofertilizers.

Bio-N was discovered in 1985 by Dr. Mercedes Garcia of the National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology (BIOTECH) in UPLB. Dr. Garcia came up with an inoculant – derived from bacteria found in talahib grass roots – that enables rice and other crops to use nitrogen from the air. Bio-N technology was developed at BIOTECH with financial support from the DA and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

In 2002, DA started the commercialization of Bio-N. DA and its regional offices and attached agencies/units (National Food Authority and Bureaus of Agricultural Research, Plant Industry, and Soils and Water Management) worked closely with BIOTECH, local governments, state universities and colleges, farmers’ cooperatives and private companies in establishing 83 mixing plants to produce and/or distribute Bio-N fertilizer to farmers under joint venture, third party and similar agreements.

In 2009, the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) sought BIOTECH’s authorization to mass produce another BIOTECH biofertilizer product – Mykovam – for coconut farmers. Prior to this, the FFF did field trials – under BIOTECH scientists’ supervision – in several sites across the country. Test results showed that Mykovam had significantly improved the growth and yields of coconuts at

significantly reduced costs. However, BIOTECH inexplicably sat on the FFF's partnership proposal.

We were therefore greatly surprised when – in the case of ASI – the UPLB chancellor quickly issued an exclusive, long-term license to an industry newcomer for the acquisition, manufacture and marketing of Bio-N.

Considering that Bio-N was developed with the use of public funds, how can it become the sole property of UPLB or ASI? Shouldn't the national and local governments that contributed resources be entitled to royalties, unhampered access to the technology, and a say in its disposition.

*Board chairman, Federation of Free Farmers and former Secretary of Agriculture (2001-2002).

UPLB chancellor Jose Camacho Jr. responds:

The agreement granting ASI exclusive rights to produce, market and distribute Bio-N, a biofertilizer developed at UPLB-BIOTECH, is the culmination of a careful and transparent decision-making process.

It addresses critical shortcomings in the biofertilizer market, specifically in the availability of Bio-N, which UPLB had hoped to address through the establishment of Bio-N mixing plants all over the country in partnership with the Department of Agriculture (DA) from 2004 to 2022.

However, as of 2022, only 20 percent of the DA's 83 Bio-N mixing plants has remained operational. This limited production capacity has hindered farmers' access to Bio-N.

Through the exclusive agreement, ASI is now positioned to produce Bio-N at scale, ensuring its availability across the country. This empowers farmers to adopt sustainable farming practices while reducing reliance on expensive chemical inputs.

By facilitating broader access to this innovative technology, the agreement helps address the challenges of inadequate biofertilizer supply and dependence on costly synthetic fertilizers like urea.

The licensing arrangement underwent rigorous scrutiny by the Fairness Opinion Board (FOB), convened by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). This review ensured compliance with Republic Act 10055, the Philippine Technology Transfer Act of 2009. The FOB concluded that the terms of the agreement are fair, equitable, and beneficial to the public. The Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHIL) further reviewed the agreement to confirm adherence to national intellectual property laws, underscoring the integrity of the process.

The licensing agreement includes provisions for UPLB to conduct regular inspection of ASI's facilities to ensure compliance with strict quality standards set by UPLB-BIOTECH. These measures protect farmers from substandard products and preserve the integrity of this publicly funded technology. Additionally, royalties and upfront payments from the agreement will be

reinvested in research and development, advancing UPLB's mission to support the agricultural sector.

Despite the exclusivity of the agreement, ASI has expressed a commitment to collaborate with existing mixing plants and stakeholders, ensuring inclusivity while maintaining product quality. This collaborative approach balances innovation with inclusiveness, allowing the benefits of the agreement to extend to various sectors of the agriculture industry.

We encourage concerned organizations to engage with UPLB for an open and constructive dialogue to better understand the rationale behind this arrangement. Such discussions will highlight its alignment with the shared goal of supporting Filipino farmers and enhancing the nation's food security.

UPLB remains committed to innovation and public service. We will continue conducting relevant research and strengthen our technology transfer capacity that will advance Philippine agriculture.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/12/06/2405246/biofertilizer-industry-crisis>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Smart government



DEMAND AND SUPPLY - Boo Chanco - The Philippine Star

December 6, 2024 | 12:00am

It sounds like an oxymoron to describe our government as smart. Smart is being used here to dream about a government almost totally managed by artificial intelligence programmed to wipe out corruption and vastly improve how the government provides services to the people.

With all the news of how AI will render a lot of people jobless, we can dream of having AI make the corrupt people in our government jobless instead.

We should watch closely how Elon Musk manages his Department of Government Efficiency because he is going to use a lot of technology and common sense. A lot of the reforms they are planning to implement may be useful for us. The American bureaucracy obviously has a lot of fat and ours is patterned after theirs.

I asked ChatGPT if AI can be used to run a country more efficiently and without corruption. ChatGPT's response:

Yes, AI has the potential to help run a country more efficiently and reduce corruption. Here's how AI can reduce corruption:

Transparency and accountability: AI systems could monitor public spending and government activities in real-time, flagging any anomalies or patterns that suggest corruption. For instance, AI can help track financial transactions, procurement processes and public contracts, ensuring that there is no embezzlement or favoritism involved.

Predictive analytics: AI could be used to predict potential corruption risks by analyzing historical patterns, relationships and social dynamics. Governments could proactively intervene before corruption scandals unfold.

Actually, even without AI, we can realize savings of one to two trillion pesos by just abolishing Congress or making membership become a serious financial sacrifice.

Let's require personal financial transparency including a waiver of bank secrecy rights and just a token salary in line with the public service nature of being in Congress. Today, Congress is the biggest corruption source in our government. And then go after confidential funds, including those allocated to the President.

AI aside, if we want to fight corruption, everything starts with the Ombudsman. But whoever holds that office must be determined to clean up our government. Otherwise, the Ombudsman becomes the biggest obstacle to good governance. The term of the current Ombudsman is ending next year. Hopefully, the replacement has the reputation and the determination to fight corruption.

BBM should be thinking legacy as he approaches the midterm of his presidency. Successfully dealing with corruption has to be the one thing that will forever assure his place in history regardless of whatever happened in the past. That means having the courage to appoint an Ombudsman who is not part of his party or not one of his friends. Appointing Tony Carpio or Leila de Lima will make people take notice that BBM must mean business. These two people are not likely to have sacred cows to protect, something that unfortunately happened with a number of past appointees to the position.

The Ombudsman should work very closely with the Commission on Audit. Indeed, these offices should develop an AI system that will bring the anti-corruption drive into the digital age. They should widen the scope of their responsibilities to cover not just what happened in the case of the Pharmally scandal but also horrible examples of bureaucratic negligence that resulted in massive losses like the recent COA report of how the Department of Health wasted P11 billion of our taxes on expired medicines and vaccines.

I had to pay for my bivalent vaccine in Singapore because DOH refused to administer what they had in stock, only to have those expire. A good part of the wasted DOH supplies are 7,035,161 vials of COVID-19 vaccines. The bulk of these were procured by the DOH Central Office while 1.5 million were donations.

Also wasted were 24,538 bags of donated dialysis solution worth P37,561,409.33 which expired in 2023. These are obviously because of inadequate procurement planning and poor distribution and monitoring systems that resulted in such a sorry waste of government funds and resources, as COA observed. Donor governments and organizations will hesitate to donate because we just waste the donations paid for by their taxpayers.

Maybe the next secretary of health shouldn't be a doctor of medicine but a management expert with the ability to run that bureaucracy. The solutions to our health concerns, like PhilHealth, require financial and management expertise. Dr Alran Bengzon, a former SOH, had something good in mind when he incorporated an MBA in the MD degree offered by the Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health. Alran was himself a good manager-physician as well as a visionary. How he turned the small ABM Sison Hospital into Medical City is his legacy.

The best way to fight corruption with or without AI is to reduce the role of government. In agriculture, we can apply the rice tariffication model to pork, beef and chicken. Follow the example of India. They transferred the agriculture budget from paying bureaucrats and funding complicated programs to a simple direct cash transfer to farmers.

Or we can study how Javier Milei, who has been president of Argentina for a year, is doing it.

The Economist reports that “Milei campaigned wielding a chainsaw and he has cut public spending by almost a third in real terms, halved the number of ministries and engineered a budget surplus. There has been a bonfire of red tape, liberating markets from housing rentals to airlines. The results are encouraging. Inflation has fallen from 13 percent month on month to three percent. Investors’ assessment of the risk of default has halved. A battered economy is showing signs of recovery.”

In the end, AI is still managed by humans. We still have to vote for the right people. We need our own Milei.

Boo Chanco’s email address is bchanco@gmail.com. Follow him on X [@boochanco](https://twitter.com/boochanco)

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/12/06/2405247/smart-government>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Rollout of P40/kilo rice at MRT, LRT reset

Bella Cariaso - The Philippine Star

December 6, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Amid traffic and security concerns, the Department of Agriculture (DA) has decided to defer the rollout of rice at P40 per kilo in two stations of the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) and Light Rail Transit Line (LRT-1).

The DA granted the request of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to reschedule the event for next week.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary for agribusiness, marketing and consumer affairs Genevieve Velicaria-Guevarra apologized for the delay in the availability of cheaper rice at the MRT North Avenue and LRT Monumento stations.

“The MMDA expects that many people will flock (to the MRT and LRT). They want more preparations,” Guevarra said.

The availability of Kadiwa ng Pangulo kiosks selling rice at P40 per kilo will start on Tuesday.

“Based on our discussion (with the MMDA), they proposed that the selling of rice be done outside the MRT and LRT stations. Originally, we wanted the kiosks to be placed in the stations to cater to the passengers,” Guevarra said.

“We want to apologize to the public. The rollout will proceed next week,” she added.

The launching of the government’s Rice-for-All program at five markets in Metro Manila yesterday was successful, according to Guevarra.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/12/06/2405306/rollout-p40kilo-rice-mrt-lrt-reset>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Demand for ham, lechon up – DA

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

December 6, 2024 | 12:00am



“The holiday season has started. Since the start of 'Ber season, the orders for lechon and ham have picked up. The demand has increased,” Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said yesterday in an interview.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The demand for lechon and ham has increased amid preparations for the holidays, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

“The holiday season has started. Since the start of 'Ber season, the orders for lechon and ham have picked up. The demand has increased,” Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said yesterday in an interview.

De Mesa assured consumers of enough supply of pork despite the impact brought by the outbreaks of African swine fever.

“We want to assure that the supply of pork, including chicken is good after the stakeholders guarantee enough stocks of livestock,” De Mesa said.

Based on monitoring of the DA, the retail price of pork shoulder ranged between P280 and P360 per kilo; pork belly, between P330 and P400 per kilo; whole chicken, between P160 and P220 per

kilo; beef rump, between P410 and P490 per kilo; beef brisket, between P320 and P460 per kilo and medium-sized eggs, between P6 and P8 per piece.

On the other hand, De Mesa said that the retail price of vegetables has started to go down following the successive typhoons in the country.

“For highland vegetables, we have no problem in the supply. We have a little problem with the lowland vegetables but we are already recovering,” he said.

Tropical cyclones Kristine, Leon, Marce, Nika, Ofel and Pepito devastated the country during the last week of October to November.

“Starting last week until this week, we observed a decrease in the retail price of vegetables, so hopefully (it) will continue to go down this December,” De Mesa said.

He also assured the public of enough supply of rice during the holidays.

“Despite the expected decline in local production, imported rice is expected to reach as high as 4.5 million metric tons. Again, in terms of volume, we can expect more than 100 days of national stock inventory by the end of year which is enough to last until the next harvest and we expect the arrival of more imports,” De Mesa said.

Meanwhile, the House of Representatives vowed to help bring down further the prices of basic commodities despite reports of a slight increase in inflation.

“I have already directed the committees on ways and means, food and agriculture, trade and industry, food security and social services to find out what commodities have spiked in prices borne out of either monopoly in the industry or smuggling,” Speaker Martin Romualdez said yesterday.

The House chief cited as instance the price of rice, whose tariff on imported rice has already been reduced by the President, and this has also been reflected in the world market.

“The question still remains on why the price of rice still remains high in the market,” he said.

He said that this would be the purpose of the quinta committee to determine the cause or identify those who are benefitting from the tariff reduction and lower price of rice in the world market and farmgate prices.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/12/06/2405349/demand-ham-lechon-da>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Binhi is no ‘islang pantropiko,’ but still that important

EDC bringing back forests to life as the country’s defense vs raging storms

[INQUIRER.net BrandRoom](#) / 09:00 AM December 05, 2024

As the Philippines braces for more and stronger typhoons, an initiative that started in 2008 has renewed its vow to revive forests across the country, fortifying Filipinos’ first line of defense against natural disasters.

Dubbed the “largest” private sector-led forest restoration initiative in the Philippines, Energy Development Corp.’s (EDC) Binhi Program was initially meant to manage geothermal reservations, covering about 1 percent of the country’s total land area.

BEYOND TREES EDC’s goal is “to build a forest and not just a three-year-old plantation.”

“These reservations need a good forest cover as it needs to continuously balance water recharge to sustain business operations,” Ronino Gibe, corporate relations head and Binhi Program head, tells Inquirer.

EDC, a subsidiary of Lopez-led First Gen, is considered the world’s largest vertically integrated geothermal firm. It operates facilities in Leyte, Bicol, southern Negros and North Cotabato, with 1,185 megawatts of installed capacity.

Beyond business

Binhi has so far helped revive about 10,240 hectares of denuded forest lands across PH.

Realizing that the effort should not end in bringing back forests to life, the program has been planting—not just seedlings—but also hope in several communities nationwide.

Three years into the project, EDC has expanded reforestation efforts outside project sites. To make this happen, it teamed up with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) under the National Greening Program.

Binhi has so far helped revive about 10,240 hectares of “denuded” forest lands across the Philippines, planting nearly 7 million seedlings.

Forest denudation refers to a forest that has been stripped of some or most of the trees it needed to continue existing.

Excessive logging is one of the main causes of denudation, which can increase the occurrence of landslides, affecting nearby communities.

Not a universal approach

Every goal comes with difficulties. And Gibe shares that saving forests does not only revolve around just planting trees.

The official stressed that careful planning is a must in ensuring its long-term success, especially in choosing the right species for specific areas.

Selecting the wrong ones could exhaust nutrients, degrade soil quality and fail to cater to the needs of local organisms. Instead of increasing biodiversity, poor choices may even lead to futile restoration efforts.

“We emphasize the employment of customized strategies and not one-size-fits-all strategies. We craft our plans, strategies, and approaches differently to suit the local conditions. That includes the choice of species and planting strategies,” he says.

Gibe says EDC's target through the Binhi program is "to build a forest and not just a three-year-old plantation."

"We aim to improve the ecosystem services in the area, and increase biodiversity and we can achieve these when we have restored the degraded forests," he says.

One crucial step to sustaining the project's momentum is to secure communities' backing.

Community involvement



COMMUNITY SUPPORT To ensure the survival of the Binhi program, EDC has forged partnerships with local communities and farmers' groups. —Contributed Photos

Lack of ownership and support of Filipinos residing near the forests could also be the culprit why reforestation works often go to waste.

But Gibe acknowledges that land availability is an issue, especially if communities solely rely on agriculture to earn and get by.

While sometimes insufficient, farming can provide food on the table. Reforestation, on the other hand, takes years to realize its economic benefits.

“Learning from previous reforestation efforts in the country, after the many reforestation projects ended, these areas returned to their degraded state because the farmers have no other alternatives but to use these areas for short-term crops,” Gibe says.

“That’s why our Binhi goes beyond these learning and we create livelihood and transform them into social enterprises so these farmers will not harm the restored areas but rather nurture them because they are now providing their natural capital to run their livelihoods,” he adds.

EDC’s Binhi Program helps save native tree species from extinction. —Contributed Photos

Harvests of opportunities

Gibe boasts that some members of organized farmer groups who were previously “kaingineros” are now “protectors of the forest.” Kaingineros are individuals who do “kaingin,” a traditional form of creating fields for crops by cutting down and burning trees.

He says these community members now serve as partners for forest patrol or forest protection.

The Binhi program has also enticed farmers to be involved in seedling production and forest restoration activities to maintain trees planted for three to five years.

“[We] also created social enterprise projects, like coffee products, across all sites benefiting the protection of existing forest while generating income to sustain their livelihood,” Gibe says.

The EDC official says the firm maintains its commitment to actively explore ways to cushion the impact of climate change on Filipino communities.

“It will be scaled up in terms of targets in restoration areas and biodiversity conservation benefiting both humans and the environment,” Gibe adds.

ADVT.

This article is brought to you by Energy Development Corp.

<https://business.inquirer.net/494111/binhi-is-no-islang-pantropiko-but-still-that-important>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Gov't measures keep inflation to within target in November — Neda

Philippine News Agency / 01:38 PM December 05, 2024



Inflation. INQUIRER STOCK IMAGE

MANILA, Philippines – Government measures to ease inflationary measures helped keep inflation within target in November, the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) said on Thursday.

The NEDA made the statement after the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that headline inflation settled at 2.5 percent in November, slightly higher than the 2.3 percent seen in October.

In a briefing, PSA Undersecretary and National Statistician Dennis Mapa said inflation in November last year was higher at 4.1 percent.

The latest data brought the year-to-date average inflation to 3.2 percent which is within the government's 2 to 4 percent target range.

“Despite the strong typhoons our country faced in recent months, consumer prices have remained relatively stable. This demonstrates the resilience of our economy and the effectiveness of our policies,” said NEDA Secretary Arsenio Balisacan.

Balisacan, however, said the government is closely monitoring prices of commodities, especially food, following the successive typhoons in October and November.

These typhoons adversely affected food supply and logistics, resulting in a rise in food inflation to 3.5 percent from 3.0 percent, with vegetable inflation accelerating to 5.9 percent from -9.2 percent deflation in October.

A notable decline, however, was recorded in rice inflation, which dropped to 5.1 percent in November from 9.6 percent in October.

Data provided by the PSA showed that the average price of regular milled rice went down to P49.24 per kg. in November from P50.22 per kg. in October.

The average price of well-milled rice, likewise, decreased to P54.64 per kg from P55.22 per kg, while special rice also declined to P63.72 from P63.97 per kg in October.

The PSA expects rice inflation to further decline in the coming months.

“We are committed to maintaining price stability by ensuring inflation remains low and manageable. This will be supported by prudent monetary policies and strategic trade measures in the near term, as well as improved access to quality job opportunities and productivity-enhancing reforms in the medium term” said Balisacan.

To further address food prices, the Department of Agriculture will launch the Kadiwa Rice-for-All program across major public markets to offer more affordable options for consumers amid the persistently elevated rice prices.

The NEDA said the DA is also conducting an extensive review of existing livestock transport regulations to ease the transport of chickens and hogs without compromising food safety.

To address the impact of the African swine fever (ASF) and the Avian Influenza (AI), the DA issued Administrative Circular 10 authorizing the Bureau of Animal Industry to set up livestock, poultry, and meat industry inspection sites in Metro Manila and nearby regions to prevent the spread of animal diseases.

It also amended the ASF vaccine guidelines under Administrative Circular 13, s. 2024, easing participation requirements to broaden coverage and accelerate the vaccination program.

Balisacan said the government is optimistic that the December inflation figures will sustain the trend of price stability and that inflation will remain within the government's target range.

For this year, the full-year inflation is projected to average between 3.1 and 3.3 percent, significantly lower than last year's average inflation rate of 6.0 percent.

“Through the timely and strategic use of our various policy levers, a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach is vital to sustain our momentum in effectively managing inflation. Achieving this objective will be key to making economic growth more inclusive and accelerating our poverty reduction efforts,” Balisacan said.

Risks to inflation

In a separate statement, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said the latest inflation data is consistent with its assessment that inflation will continue to trend closer to the low end of the target range in the near term.

“This reflects easing supply pressures for key food items, particularly rice,” said the BSP.

The BSP said the balance of risks to the inflation outlook for 2025 and 2026 has shifted toward the upside.

It said upside risks could emanate from the potential adjustments in electricity rates and higher minimum wages in areas outside Metro Manila, while, downside factors include the impact of lower import tariffs on rice.

“The Monetary Board will consider the latest inflation outturn in its upcoming monetary policy meeting on 19 December 2024,” said the BSP.

“The BSP will continue to maintain a measured approach in its easing cycle to ensure price stability conducive to sustainable economic growth and employment,” it added. (PNA)

<https://business.inquirer.net/494276/govt-measures-keep-inflation-to-within-target-in-november-neda>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Tobacco growers get P6,000 aid

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

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 10:33 AM December 05, 2024



The National Tobacco Administration (NTA) is preparing for the nationwide distribution of P100 million worth of crop production grants for qualified tobacco farmers for the cropping season that started last September.

The NTA, which is under the supervision of the Department of Agriculture, said 16,666 tobacco farmers will receive cash assistance of P6,000 each, which they shall receive on or before Dec. 15.

Of the identified beneficiaries, 9,055 are farmers listed under the NTA's Tobacco Contract Growing System (TCGS) program, which supports production, technical and marketing assistance to tobacco producers.

The number of farmer-beneficiaries in Abra totaled 992; Batac in Ilocos Norte, 2,778; Cagayan, 700; and Candon in Ilocos Sur, 2,573 farmers.

Also included are 2,925 tobacco farmers in Isabela; 1,667 in La Union; 1,666 in Mindanao; 1,765 in Pangasinan and 1,600 in Vigan in Ilocos Sur.

“The recipients were identified by the NTA branch offices based on the guidelines set and approved by the NTA Governing Board,” the NTA said in a statement on Wednesday.

The NTA added that its branch offices will ensure that intended beneficiaries will meet the requirements and plant tobacco this coming planting season before distributing the financial grant.

In the Philippines, cropping season 2024-2025 started last September and will end in June next year. This is the period from the sowing of tobacco seeds to the trading of tobacco leaves.

The provision of production assistance is meant “to enhance the production of quality tobacco considering that the tobacco industry remains one of the strongest pillars of the country’s economy contributing one percent of the gross domestic product and 6 percent of the overall annual tax revenue collections,” said Agriculture Undersecretary Deogracias Victor Savellano,

<https://business.inquirer.net/494204/tobacco-growers-get-p6000-aid>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Local rice stockpile up 24% but corn supply down 21%

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 02:18 AM December 06, 2024

Local rice inventory has climbed by nearly a quarter this year, bolstered by higher stocks of the commercial sector and the National Food Authority (NFA), while corn stocks declined.

Local rice stockpile rose by 24.4 percent to 2.46 million metric tons (MT) as of Nov. 1, from 1.98 million MT in the same period a year ago, based on a report from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Compared with October, rice inventory increased by 7.9 percent from 2.28 million MT.

The commercial sector and NFA depositories grew by 57.4 percent and 135.2 percent, respectively. However, the household sector reduced stocks by 11.4 percent.

The commercial sector accounted for 57.6 percent of the total stockpile (1.4 million MT), followed by households with a 36.6-percent share (901,210 MT).

The remaining 5.8 percent came from NFA as it maintained 141,680 MT of rice.

Lower corn supply

The PSA also reported that the country's corn inventory had totaled 619,160 MT as of Nov. 1, a decrease of 20.6 percent from 779,460 MT.

On a monthly basis, corn stocks dropped by 14.9 percent from 727,840 MT.

The commercial sector held 540,650 MT of corn supply, down 21.3 percent, while household stocks fell by 14.7 percent to 78,510 MT.

About 87.3 percent of last month's corn inventory came from the commercial sector and 12.7 percent from households.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa assured the public of sufficient supply of rice, pork and chicken this month.

De Mesa, also the DA's spokesperson, said on Thursday (translated from Filipino), "This December, we have good rice supply, although we expect local production to decrease. Regarding imports, we can expect the volume to reach as high as 4.5 million metric tons."

The DA expects to maintain more than 100 days of national rice inventory by the end of the year. De Mesa said this would last until the next harvest as there are still additional imports coming.

Recently, the DA revised downward its palay output projection this year to 19.3 million MT—a number seen to decline further due to the severe impact of typhoons and other weather disruptions.

De Mesa also said the country had enough supply of chicken and pork, while stocks of lowland vegetables were recovering after sustaining damage from recent storms.

<https://business.inquirer.net/494351/local-rice-stockpile-up-24-but-corn-supply-down-21>

BUSINESS WORLD:

More funding sought for farm soil rehab

December 5, 2024 | 8:59 pm



PHILSTAR FILE PHOTO

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it is seeking more funding to support the rehabilitation of farm soil.

“We really need to step up our organic fertilizer, soil ameliorants, and bio-fertilizer (treatments) in order for us to rehabilitate and rejuvenate our soil,” Agriculture Undersecretary Roger V. Navarro told reporters on Thursday.

He added that the DA’s programs include expanding soil ameliorant tests in crop production areas.

Mr. Navarro said that the DA is looking to test soil additives across 100 hectares of farmland to evaluate their effectiveness in boosting production and rejuvenating deteriorated soil.

He added that the continued use of inorganic fertilizer has degraded soil quality in farmed areas.

“We need to let (farmers) understand that the degradation of soil is through abuse of inorganic fertilizer... if the soil is no longer healthy it cannot absorb any more. (Fertilizer) will just evaporate and leach in the streams and waterways,” he said.

He added that the DA is now pushing for the adoption of organic fertilizer to reduce soil deterioration.

“The problem is our interventions are only good for a number of hectares,” he said.

In a speech delivered by Mr. Navarro, Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said that the DA is raising funds for loans and subsidies to support “the adoption of sustainable practices for both smallholder and commercial farmers.”

The DA has said that it is planning to establish composting facilities to reduce the dependence of farmers on inorganic fertilizers.

It said this would also reduce the vulnerability of marginal farmers to the high cost of chemical fertilizers.
— **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/12/05/639727/more-funding-sought-for-farm-soil-rehab/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Rice inventory up 24% in November

December 5, 2024 | 8:56 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/KRIZ JOHN ROSALES

THE national rice inventory rose to 2.46 million metric tons (MMT) in November, up 24.4% year on year, according to preliminary data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Rice stocks consisted of 57.6% held by commercial traders, 36.6% by households, and 5.8% by the National Food Authority (NFA).

NFA and commercial warehouses grew their holdings, while household rice stocks fell during the month.

Rice held by commercial establishments in November amounted to 1.42 MMT, up 57.4%.

NFA reserves more than doubled to 141,680 MT from 60,230 MT a year earlier.

Rice held by households declined 11.4% year on year to 901,210 MT.

Month on month, rice stocks rose 7.9% from October.

“Increments were noted from the commercial sector by 17.2% and in the households by 0.3%. Meanwhile, rice stocks held by NFA depositories decreased 17.9%,” it added.

The Department of Agriculture has said it is targeting a year-end national rice inventory of 3.83 MMT, despite the projected drop in rice production. This is equivalent to about 100 days’ demand.

The PSA reported that corn stocks fell 20.6% year on year to 619,160 MT.

Corn held by commercial establishments accounted for 87.3% of the total, while households held the rest.

“Corn stocks recorded annual decreases of 21.3% in the commercial sector and 14.7% in households. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/12/05/639782/rice-inventory-up-24-in-november/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Inflation quickens to 2.5% in November

December 6, 2024 | 12:34 am



VENDORS attend to customers at a market in Quezon City, Nov. 22. Inflation picked up to 2.5% in November, the statistics agency said. — PHILIPPINE STAR/MIGUEL DE GUZMAN

By **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**, *Reporter*

HEADLINE INFLATION quickened in November, as prices of vegetables, meat and fish rose due to a series of typhoons, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said on Thursday.

The consumer price index (CPI) picked up to 2.5% year on year in November from 2.3% in October but was slower than 4.1% in the same month a year ago.

Inflation settled within the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) 2.2%-3% forecast for the month.

The November print also matched the median estimate yielded in a *BusinessWorld* poll of 15 analysts conducted last week.

Headline inflation averaged 3.2% in the 11-month period, a tad higher than BSP's 3.1% full-year baseline forecast.

"The latest inflation outturn is consistent with the BSP's assessment that inflation will continue to trend closer to the low end of the target range in the near term," the central bank said in a statement.

Core inflation, which excludes volatile prices of food and fuel, inched up to 2.5% in November from 2.4% a month ago. Core inflation averaged 3% in the January-November period.

The main source of acceleration of the CPI for the month was the food and nonalcoholic beverages index, National Statistician Claire Dennis S. Mapa said. The heavily weighted index quickened to 3.4% in November from 2.9% in October.

Food inflation at the national level accelerated to 3.5% in November from 3% a month earlier. This was largely due to vegetables, tubers, plantains, cooking bananas and pulses, which jumped to 5.9% in November, a turnaround from the 9.2% contraction in October and 2% decline a year ago.

Mr. Mapa said this was largely due to the string of typhoons that hit the country during the month.

“Almost all except for a few items under the vegetable group saw a spike in prices,” he said in mixed English and Filipino.

For example, he cited prices of tomatoes, which soared to 37.2% in November from -47.9% a month ago.

In November, the country saw six typhoons entering its Area of Responsibility, according to the state weather bureau.

Agricultural damage due to tropical cyclones Nika, Ofel and Pepito reached P785.68 million, according to the latest bulletin by the Department of Agriculture (DA).

An uptick in annual inflation was also seen for fish and other seafood (0.4% from -0.4% a month earlier) and meat and other parts of slaughtered land animals (3.9% from 3.6%).

RICE

PRICES

“Of course, the good news is the inflation rate of rice is declining,” Mr. Mapa said.

Rice inflation slowed to 5.1% in November from 9.6% a month ago. However, the staple grain was still the top contributor to inflation during the month, accounting for 17.7% or 0.4 percentage point of overall inflation.

“The trend from January to November, it’s been declining. There are factors here, like base effects, but the retail prices per kilogram for regular milled, well-milled and special rice are also declining,” Mr. Mapa said.

PSA data showed that the average price of regular milled rice dropped to P49.24 per kilo in November from P50.22 in October; well-milled rice fell to P54.64 from P55.22; and special rice declined to P63.72 from P63.97.

“Our expectation for December is for rice inflation to slow further, which is good news for our households. The inflation for the bottom 30% also slowed because the weight of rice is significant for them,” he added.

Rice prices have been on the decline after the executive order which slashed tariffs on rice imports to 15% took effect in July.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said they are working to further bring down rice prices, especially with the recently launched Rice-for-All program, which was rolled out to local markets on Thursday.

The program aims to provide rice at P40 per kilogram.

“If international rice prices continue to ease, the peso remains stable, and tariffs stay low, we would most likely see the price of well-milled rice decline further in the coming months,” the DA chief said in a statement.

Meanwhile, transport inflation posted a slower decline to -1.2% from -2.1% in October but picked up from -0.8% a year ago.

In November, pump price adjustments stood at a net increase of P1.70 a liter for gasoline, P3.20 a liter for diesel and P1.60 a liter for kerosene.

Mr. Mapa also noted the impact of the peso depreciation on imported goods such as fuel.

“That’s a risk because that factors in our commodity items, particularly fuel... that’s the impact, because we buy it in terms of US dollars,” he said.

The peso fell to the P59-per-dollar level twice during the month, hitting the record low on Nov. 21 and 26.

Data from the PSA showed the inflation for the bottom 30% of income households eased to 2.9% in November from 3.4% in the previous month and 4.9% a year ago.

In the 11 months to November, inflation for the bottom 30% averaged 4.3%.

In the National Capital Region (NCR), inflation quickened to 2.2% from 1.4% a month prior while inflation in areas outside NCR was steady at 2.6%.

National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan said that consumer prices have still remained “relatively stable” despite the shock from inclement weather.

“We are committed to maintaining price stability by ensuring inflation remains low and manageable. This will be supported by prudent monetary policies and strategic trade measures in the near term, as well as improved access to quality job opportunities and productivity-enhancing reforms in the medium term,” he said.

December inflation will also likely remain within target, Mr. Balisacan added.

“We are very much on track to keep our inflation within our target band for the entire year despite some challenges, such as strong successive typhoons that affected the agriculture sector,” Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto added.

RISKS

TO

UPSIDE

However, the BSP reiterated that the balance of risks to the outlook for 2025 and 2026 have shifted to the upside.

“Upside risks to the inflation outlook could emanate from the potential adjustments in electricity rates and higher minimum wages in areas outside Metro Manila, while downside factors continue to be linked to the impact of lower import tariffs on rice,” it said.

With the latest inflation print, the BSP said it will “continue to maintain a measured approach in its easing cycle to ensure price stability conducive to sustainable economic growth and employment.”

Analysts likewise said that inflation should be well-anchored in the months to come.

“Looking ahead, inflation will likely remain firmly within the BSP’s 2-4% target. Key upside risks persist, however, including adverse weather, geopolitical tensions, higher-than-expected wage hikes, and upward adjustments in electricity rates,” Chinabank Research said in a note.

Pantheon Macroeconomics Chief Emerging Asia Economist Miguel Chanco said headline inflation will likely average 3.2% this year and 2.4% in 2025.

The inflation outlook will help the BSP further ease policy rates, analysts said.

“Moreover, we expect the BSP to ease policy by a further 25 basis points (bps) later this month, with inflation still comfortably within its 2-to-4% target range.” Mr. Chanco said.

The Monetary Board is set to have its final policy-setting meeting for the year on Dec. 19.

BSP Governor Eli M. Remolona, Jr. said that the Monetary Board could opt to pause its easing cycle or deliver another 25-bp rate cut later this month.

Inflationary pressures would prompt them to keep rates steady but weak economic growth could cause them to cut, he said.

This year, the BSP has delivered a total of 50 bps worth of rate cuts in increments of 25-bp reductions at its August and October policy reviews.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2024/12/06/639718/inflation-quickens-to-2-5-in-november/>

REMATE:

Mahalagang papel ng mga magsasaka sa Sarangani, kinilala ni PBBM

December 5, 2024 18:12



MANILA, Philippines – SINABI ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr., na ang mga magsasaka ang pundasyon ng agrikultura sa bansa.

Sa naging talumpati ng Pangulo sa isinagawang distribusyon ng Certificates of Land Ownership Awards (CLOAs) at Certificates of Condonation with Release of Mortgages (CoCROMs) sa Sarangani, tinukoy ni Pangulong Marcos ang sipag at dedikasyon ng mga magsasaka sa pagproduce ng high value crops.

“Kayo pong ating mga magsasaka ang haligi ng sektor ng agrikultura. Kung hindi dahil sa inyong sipag at dedikasyon sa inyong trabaho, hindi po magkakaroon ng sapat at masustansyang pagkain ang mga kababayan natin. Kaya napakahalaga po ng sektor ng agrikultura at ang tungkulin ng mga magsasaka,” ang sinabi ni Pangulong Marcos.

“Ang inyong probinsya ay kilala sa iba’t ibang high value crop tulad ng mais, ng niyog, palay, saging, at iba pa. Dahil dito, tayo ay nagsisikap pa na mapalago ang sektor ng agrikultura, hindi lamang dito sa inyong rehiyon kung hindi pati na sa buong bansa,” aniya pa rin.

Muli namang inulit ng Chief Executive ang whole-of-nation approach para gawing modernisado at makapagbigay ng non-stop support sa agriculture sector.

“Gaya po ng sabi ko kanina, patuloy po ang national government, kasama ang lokal na pamahalaan, sa pag-iisip ng mga bagong paraan kung papaano pa kayo na masuportahan,” ang sinabi ni Pangulong Marcos.

“Pinag-aaralan po namin ang mga hakbang upang makasabay ang sektor ng agrikultura sa modernong pamamaraan [ng] pag-aanii,” aniya pa rin. *Kris Jose*

<https://remate.ph/mahalagang-papel-ng-mga-magsasaka-sa-sarangani-kinilala-ni-pbbm/>

REMATE:

Rice inflation humupa sa 5.1%

December 5, 2024 14:31



MANILA, Philippines – Humupa at nagpatuloy sa pagbaba ang inflation print para sa bigas sa bansa noong Nobyembre.

Ito ay sa kabila ng pinagsanib na base effects at epekto ng reduced tariff rates para sa imported na bigas, iniulat ng Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) nitong Huwebes, Disyembre 5.

Sa pulong balitaan, sinabi ni National Statistician and PSA chief Claire Dennis Mapa na bumaba ang inflation sa bigas sa 5.1% noong nakaraang buwan mula sa 9.6% noong Oktubre.

Ito ang pinakamababang inflation print para sa bigas mula Hulyo 2023 na 4.2%.

Ang paggaan ng inflation sa bigas ay nakita mula pa noong Agosto at pasok sa inaasahan ng PSA.

Iginiit ni Mapa na inaasahan ng PSA na patuloy pang babagal ang inflation sa bigas.

Samantala, inihayag ni National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio Balisacan na, “to further address food prices, the Department of Agriculture is set to launch the

Kadiwa Rice-for-All program across major public markets to offer more affordable options for consumers amid the persistently elevated rice prices.”

Dahil dito ay nagpapadala ang DA ng Kadiwa ng Pangulo kiosks sa mga pamilihan at nag-aalok ng “Rice-for-All” sa presyong P40 kada kilo.

Layon ng Rice-for-All program na magbigay ng abot-kayang bigas sa mga consumer.

Nakikipag-ugnayan na ang DA sa mga pamilihan sa Metro Manila para sa rollout nito, particular ang Kamuning Market, Malabon Central Market, New Las Piñas City Public Market, Pasay City Public Market, Balintawak Market, Cartimar Market, Pateros Grace Marketplace, Maypajo Public Market, at Paco Market. *RNT/JGC*

<https://remate.ph/rice-inflation-humupa-sa-5-1/>

ABANTE:

Presyo ng pagkain sumirit sa bagyo

Abante News

- December 5, 2024



Pumitik pataas sa 2.5% ang inflation nitong Nobyembre mula sa 2.3% noong Oktubre sa kabila ng pagkalma ng presyo ng bigas.

Ayon kay Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) Undersecretary Dennis Mapa, nagmahal kasi ang presyo ng iba pang mga pagkain tulad ng karne at gulay. Apektado ang suplay ng mga ito nang dumaang magkakasunod na bagyo.

Ang inflation ay ang bilis ng pagtaas ng presyo ng mga bilingin at mapapansing humuhupa na ang inflation sa bigas.

Ani Mapa, lampas kalahati ng inflation ay galing sa pagkain tulad ng gulay, baboy at manok at mga inumin na nasa 51%. Nasa 16.2% naman ang iniambag ng upa, tubig, kuryente, gas at iba pang paggatong sa inflation.

Ang pangatlong malaki ang ambag sa kabuuang inflation ay ang mga restawran at accommodation na nagtala ng 3.9% na inflation. Halos 15% ang ambag nito sa kabuuang inflation. Paliwanag ni Mapa, apektado ang mga restawran sa pagmahal ng mga gulay at mga karne kaya umakyat din ito.

Sabi ni Mapa, 4 sa 13 kategorya ang tumaas ang inflation: ang pagkain at mga inumin, alak at sigarilyo, pagkukumpuni ng bahay at personal care tulad ng shampoo at sabon.

Sa Cagayan Valley pinakamataas ang inflation na nasa 3.4% samantalang sa Caraga, Soccksargen at BARMM ito pinakamababa sa 1.7%. (Eileen Mencias)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/12/05/presyo-ng-pagkain-sumirit-sa-bagyo/>

MANILA STANDARD:

Gov't vows to further cut rice prices to tame inflation

By Othel V. Campos

December 5, 2024, 9:00 pm

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. on Thursday committed to further reducing rice prices following the release of inflation data showing the benefits of lower rice costs for impoverished Filipinos.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) launched on Thursday the Rice-for-All program across Metro Manila, offering rice at P40 per kilogram under the KADIWA ng Pangulo initiative.

“If international rice prices keep falling, the peso remains stable, and tariffs stay low, well-milled rice prices could drop further,” Laurel said.

He said the P5 billion in additional funding from the President would bolster interventions like Rice-for-All and the P29-per-kilo rice program.

The program aims to make rice affordable and address persistently high retail prices despite declining global costs and reduced tariffs.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. earlier slashed rice import duties from 35 percent to 15 percent to alleviate consumer burdens and curb inflation, paving the way for lower interest rates to stimulate investments and job creation.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that rice inflation eased to 5.1 percent in November from 9.6 percent in October, contributing to a slowdown in overall inflation for low-income households.

National statistician Claire Dennis Mapa noted that declining rice prices boosted purchasing power for families spending a significant portion of their income on food.

These gains were offset by rising vegetable and pork prices due to typhoons and African Swine Fever (ASF).

Mapa said lower rice prices remained crucial for reducing inflation's impact on vulnerable sectors.

Finance Secretary Ralph Recto said the 2.5 percent inflation in November stays firmly within the target range, reflecting the government's effective interventions to ease supply pressures for key food items, especially rice.

“We are very much on track in keeping our inflation within our target band for the entire year despite some challenges, such as strong successive typhoons that affected the agriculture sector,” he said.

Inflation averaged 3.2 percent in the first 11 months of 2024, within the government's target band of 2 percent to 4 percent for the year.

Rice inflation continued its downtrend from 9.6 percent in October 2024 to 5.1 percent in November this year as a result of the implementation of Executive Order (EO) No. 62 in July 2024, which lowered import tariffs on rice.

The average retail price of imported rice for the second half of November 2024 went down by P3.65 per kilogram (kg) from the second half of June 2024, prior to the implementation of the EO.

<https://manilastandard.net/business/314532578/govt-vows-to-further-cut-rice-prices-to-tame-inflation.html>

MANILA STANDARD:

Low price rice



By Manny Palmero

December 5, 2024, 10:58 pm

The Department of Agriculture says its P40-per kilo “Rice for All” program is a hit at the Kamuning Market in Quezon City, and is eyeing to expand its distribution centers in other areas of Metro Manila, and eventually, the entire country in the coming months.

<https://manilastandard.net/gallery/news-in-photos/314532608/low-price-rice.html>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Rice stocks up but corn declines in November

By **Giselle P. Jordan**

December 6, 2024

THE country's total rice stocks in November totaled 2.46 million metric tons (MT), a 24.4-percent increase from the 1.98 million MT in the same period last year, according to data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

The agency said rice stocks also rose by 7.9 percent from October's inventory of 2.28 million MT.

Annual rice stock inventory gains were noted from National Food Authority (NFA) depositories and the commercial sector, recording 135.2-percent and 54.7-percent growth, respectively.

In contrast, rice stocks from the household sector dropped by 11.4 percent.

Compared to October's rice stocks, the PSA logged increments of 17.2 percent from the commercial sector and 0.3 percent from the household sector. Rice stocks from NFA depositories lessened by 17.9 percent. Among the month's total rice stocks, the commercial sector accounted for 57.6 percent; households, 36.6 percent; and NFA depositories, 5.8 percent.

The country's corn stocks, meanwhile, added up to 619.16 thousand MT, a 20.6-percent decline from the previous year's 779.46 thousand MT.

The November inventory also showed a 14.9-percent decrease from October's 727.84 thousand MT. Compared to 2023, corn stocks this month also posted annual decreases in the commercial and household sectors, with a decline of 21.3 percent and 14.7 percent, respectively.

Month-on-month decreases were also observed as corn stock inventory levels were reduced by 44.9 percent from households and 7.6 percent from the commercial sector.

The commercial sector contributed 87.3 percent to this month's total corn stocks, with the remaining 12.7 percent coming from households.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/06/business/top-business/rice-stocks-up-but-corn-declines-in-november/2016921>

THE MANILA TIMES:

House to investigate high food prices

By **Red Mendoza**
December 6, 2024

FIVE committees of the House of Representatives will hold an inquiry to find out why the cost of food items, particularly rice, remains high even though farmgate prices and prices in the world market remained low.

Speaker Martin Romualdez said that he has ordered the Committee on Ways and Means, Food and Agriculture, Trade and Industry, Food Security, and Social Services to determine whether the high prices of food items were caused by monopoly or smuggling.

"The price of rice has already been decreased by the President, and the price of rice is now low in the world market. Why is it that the price of rice remains high here in the country?" Romualdez said.

He said that the savings of businessmen should be passed on to consumers instead of pricing rice at P50 or 60 per kilo.

Romualdez said that the purpose of the investigation is to identify those who are benefiting from the tariff reduction and lower rice prices in the world market as well as farmgate prices.

"We will not favor whoever is controlling the prices of food; we will file cases of price manipulation or smuggling. Let this be an advance warning to shady businessmen who are duping consumers," Romualdez said.

The committee began its investigation on November 26. It prodded the Department of Justice and the Office of the Ombudsman to find out if cases had been filed against government officials who were involved in the price manipulation of rice.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/06/news/national/house-to-investigate-high-food-prices/2016670>

THE MANILA TIMES:

P193-M road project boosts citrus industry

By Leander C. Domingo
December 6, 2024

KASIBU, Nueva Vizcaya — The citrus industry in this town is expected to get a big boost following the completion of the P193- million Malabing Farm-to-Market Road (FMR) project.

The project was turned over by the Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) Regional Project Coordination Office 2 (RPCO2) to the local government unit here.

DA Assistant Secretary for Operations and PRDP Deputy Project Director U-Nichols Manalo said "the FMR will enhance accessibility and foster economic growth, open up new markets to increase the livelihood and income of our beneficiaries — the citrus farmers."

Manalo said the completion of the road symbolizes the DA's continued action for the benefits that can be claimed here.

"Let's work together to take care of this project so that the livelihood of the farmers can continue to improve," said Manalo.

Manalo also gave assurance that the agency will continue to provide opportunities to farmers and fisherfolk and will remain focused on addressing the current challenges in the agriculture sector.

Manalo and DA Region 2 Executive Director and Project Director Rose Mary Aquino lauded and congratulated the local government of Kasibu, the provincial government and the RPCO2 for exemplifying good governance in the completion of the project.

Challenging the officials to take advantage of the project by emphasizing the enterprise aspect, which is a necessary partner of the infrastructure component, Aquino also encourages them to develop byproducts such as Vitamin C and others.

"PRDP is not only about roads but also agribusiness, hence, there should be related enterprises to be put up that will contribute to the economic development of people's lives," she said.

Meanwhile, Kasibu Mayor Romeo Tayaban thanked the DA-PRDP for allocating funds for the project while assuring the municipality's support in the operation and maintenance of the project in cooperation with the involved barangay.

Tayaban also challenged the officials of the town to unify and cooperate "so that we can achieve the development provided by this good project."

Of the total cost, P20 million came from the municipal government as a counterpart, P18.1 million from the national government, and P181.5 million from the World Bank as loan proceeds.

The project will benefit four villages with a total population of 737 consisting of 165 households.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/06/regions/p193-m-road-project-boosts-citrus-industry/2016711>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

DA will intervene if rice prices are ‘unrealistically high’

Ada Pelonia

December 5, 2024



The Department of Agriculture (DA) launched its “Rice for All” kiosk, offering rice at P40 per kilo, at Kamuning Market in Quezon City on Thursday, December 5, 2024. In a press briefing, the DA announced plans to expand these kiosks across Metro Manila and eventually nationwide to make affordable rice accessible to more Filipinos. This initiative aligns with the government’s goal to address rising food prices and improve food security.

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it is ready to intervene if rice prices become “unrealistically high.”

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. issued the statement after the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) announced that rice inflation slowed to 5.1 percent last month from the 9.6 percent in October.

“If international rice prices continue to ease, the peso remains stable, and tariffs stay low, we would most likely see the price of well-milled rice decline further in the coming months,” Laurel said.

President Marcos Jr. had earlier slashed rice tariffs to 15 percent from 35 percent until 2028 as part of efforts to curb high retail rice prices.

“The DA [Department of Agriculture] stands ready to intervene in the market if rice prices remain unrealistically high, especially with the additional P5 billion provided by President Marcos to support the Rice-for-All and the P29 [per kilo of rice] program,” he added.

The agency recently rolled out the Rice-for-All program offering the food staple at P40 per kilo in several public markets across Metro Manila to provide cheaper rice options.

Initially priced at P45 per kilo, the rice under the program was recently reduced to P43 and was dropped further to P40 per kilo, with the goal of lowering retail prices that remain high despite easing global rice quotations and substantial tariff reductions.

The prevailing retail prices of imported well-milled and regular rice in selected Metro Manila markets is P45 per kilo, respectively, based on the DA's latest price monitoring report. The local retail prices is P45 per kilo for well-milled rice and P42 per kilo for regular.

Veggies, meat costly

Meanwhile, figures from the PSA showed that vegetable and meat inflation accelerated to 5.9 percent and 3.9 percent, respectively.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said the string of storms that battered the country's vegetable-producing areas and the persistent threat of African swine fever (ASF) pushed retail prices of the commodities. Despite this, the DA official allayed concerns for the upcoming holidays, noting sufficient supply of key farm commodities like rice, vegetables, and meat.

"Our supply for rice this December is in good volume. Although we expect local production to decrease, we can expect our imports to reach as high as 4.5 million metric tons [MMT]," De Mesa told reporters in Filipino during a briefing on Thursday. He added that the Philippines could expect over 100 days of national stock inventory by yearend, which would be enough to sustain the country until the next harvest considering the additional rice shipments coming in.

"We were assured of good supply of pork and chicken from our livestock stakeholders. There are no problems in the highland [vegetables], and while there was a slight shortage in the lowland [vegetables], it is now recovering, so we have no issues," De Mesa said.

Image credits: [Nonoy Lacza](#)

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/05/da-will-intervene-if-rice-prices-are-unrealistically-high/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Five House panels set to probe high food cost

Jovee Marie N. dela Cruz
December 5, 2024

THE House of Representatives leadership on Thursday vowed to take decisive action to lower the prices of essential commodities, especially food items, amid growing concerns over their high costs despite declining farmgate and global market prices, as it also warned that anyone found responsible for manipulating commodity prices will face price manipulation or smuggling charges.

Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez said five key congressional committees have merged to lead a comprehensive investigation into the persistently high prices of food, especially rice.

“I have directed the Committees on Ways and Means, on Food and Agriculture, on Trade and Industry, on Food Security, and on Social Services [or the Murang Pagkain Supercommittee] to determine if the current high prices are due to monopolies or smuggling,” Romualdez said.

Romualdez highlighted the incongruity between global trends and local prices. “For instance, with rice—President Marcos has already reduced tariffs on imported rice, and global prices are also low. So why aren’t prices dropping here?” he said. Romualdez emphasized that rice prices remain between P50 and P60 per kilo, far from the levels consumers should be paying. “The savings from reduced tariffs and lower farmgate prices should be passed on to consumers, shouldn’t they?” he added.

Romualdez also said that this would be the purpose of the “Quinta Committee” to determine the cause or identify those who are benefiting from the tariff reduction and lower price of rice in the world market and farmgate prices.

“No one will be spared—whoever is behind the manipulation of commodity prices will be charged with price manipulation or smuggling,” warned Romualdez, who also represents the 1st District of Leyte.

“Let this serve as an advance warning to unscrupulous traders who are making life harder for ordinary consumers,” the Speaker added.

The House Committee on Ways and Means chairman, Albay Rep. Jose Clemente “Joey” Salceda highlighted the positive trajectory of the country’s economic outlook but stressed the need for continued efforts by the House Murang Pagkain Supercommittee to address persistent food price issues.

Salceda noted that the year-end inflation rate for 2024 is poised to fall within the government’s target range of 2-4 percent, a promising development for economic stability and growth. “This bodes well for both growth and for efforts to further reduce food prices next year,” he said. Month-on-month data revealed a decline in the prices of rice and corn, attributed to the easing of pressures in the global grain market. However, Salceda expressed concern that the reduction in global prices is not being fully reflected in local markets. He emphasized the need for closer scrutiny of the domestic rice trade, pointing out that retail prices remain higher than expected despite global trends and government measures such as President Marcos’s reduction of rice tariffs.

“Rice retail prices should be closer to P40 per kilo, not P50, given the decline in world prices and the reduced tariff rate,” Salceda said. He made comparisons to Indonesia, which faces similar challenges in logistics and border security yet has managed to lower retail prices to around P44 per kilo.

In response to these price discrepancies, the Murang Pagkain Supercommittee will summon top rice importers next week to address the issue.

“The landed price of imported rice has declined to about P36, all tariffs and fees included. Considering current farmgate prices, domestically milled rice should also be at around P35-36 per kilo. So, players in the domestic rice trade sector are making as much as P14 per kilo in margins. There must be a way to bring this down,” he added.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/05/five-house-panels-set-to-probe-high-food-cost/>

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON:

Kongreso tutulong sa pagpapababa ng presyo ng bilihin – Romualdez

[Joy Cantos](#)

December 6, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Tutulong na ang Kongreso para mapababa ang presyo ng mga bilihin lalo na sa mga pagkain.

Ayon kay House Speaker Martin Romualdez, ang pagbuo at pagsama-sama ng limang komite ng Kongreso na mag-iimbestiga kung bakit mataas pa rin ang presyo ng mga pagkain gayong mababa naman ang presyo nito sa farmgate at presyo sa pandaigdigang kalakalan lalo na ang bigas.

“Inatasan ko ang Committee on Ways and Means, Food and Agriculture, Trade and Industry, Food Security, at Social Services na alamin kung ang mataas na presyo ng bilihin ngayon ay dikta ng monopolya o smuggling”, ayon kay Speaker Romualdez.

Ayon pa sa lider ng mga kongresista, “halimbawa itong bigas, binawasan na nga ang taripa ng mga imported rice ng pangulo, at mababa din ang presyo sa world market, e bakit hindi bumababa ang presyo dito sa atin”.

Aniya “nasa 50 to 60 pesos pa rin ang kilo ng bigas. Dapat ‘yung savings ng mga negosyante naipapasa sa mga mamimili di ba?”

Dagdag pa ni Romualdez, ito raw ang pakay ng “Quinta Committee” para alamin saan o sino ang nakikinabang sa tariff reduction at pagbaba ng presyo ng bigas sa world market, at mababang presyo sa farmgate.

“Wala tayong sasantuhin kung sino man ‘yan ang nasa likod ng pagkontrol ng presyo ng bilihin...ating sasampahan ng price manipulation or smuggling”, dagdag pa ng Leyte Representative.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2024/12/06/2405339/kongreso-tutulong-sa-pagpapababa-ng-presyo-ng-bilihin-romualdez>