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MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

No. 47
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SUBJECT: GUIDELINES FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE SEARCH FOR LARGEST NATIVE ANIMAL

RATIONALE:

The carabao is widely recognized as the national animal of the Philippines and symbolizes hard work and perseverance within Filipino culture. Carabaos were first introduced to the Philippines approximately around 500 BCE, originating from domesticated swamp buffalo populations from Taiwan as part of the Austronesian expansion.

Philippine native cattle are indigenous to the Philippines and play a vital role in the country's agricultural industry. They are small in size, with mature bulls weighing about 400 kg and mature females around 300 kg. The breed exhibits a range of colors, including gray, brown, and fawn, often with white spotting.

Philippine native goats are small, stocky animals primarily raised for meat production, particularly chevon. They typically weigh between 15-30 kg and can exhibit a variety of colors, including red, white, black, or a combination thereof. These goats are known for their early sexual maturity, contributing significantly to their utility in farming practices.

The Philippine native sheep, like their goat counterparts, are small-bodied animals weighing between 15-30 kg. Originally brought in by the Spaniards, they exhibit good adaptability to the tropical climate of the Philippines and are raised primarily for meat production. The native sheep industry has seen growth recently, focusing on enhancing local production capabilities and meeting the demand for meat, particularly mutton, in various culinary traditions.

The **SEARCH FOR THE LARGEST NATIVE ANIMALS** intends to promote and support efforts to develop and improve the Philippine native breed through targeted breeding program initiatives aimed at increasing milk and meat production.

SCOPE:

The **SEARCH FOR THE LARGEST NATIVE ANIMALS** shall include all native carabao, cattle, goat and sheep from all regions, on the regional level.

OBJECTIVES:

- To promote breeding and raising of native animals for meat and dairy.
- To learn best practices from farmers [*how they raised large native animals*].
- To source/search for large natives as possible breeders or semen donors.
- To save native animals with good breeding characteristics from being sent to slaughterhouses for meat.
- To provide recognition and incentives to large native raisers.

GUIDELINES, MECHANICS AND SELECTION CRITERIA:

- The **SEARCH FOR THE LARGEST NATIVE ANIMALS** will be conducted by RFOs and will be on a per-region basis.
 - A search committee composed of the Provincial Veterinarian from the Local Government Unit, the Regional Technical Director for Operations and the Regional Livestock Coordinator from the Regional Field Office will certify that all entries meet the criteria.
- The search timelines will be from July 1 until September 30 of every year. The declared winners will be announced during the October Livestock Month celebration.
- The search committee shall assign judges per animal category: (1) from commercial raisers; (2) from the Academe; and (3) the Regional Executive Director who will also sit as Chair of the judging panel in all animal categories.
- Search criteria will include:

GENERAL PRODUCTION CHARACTERISTICS

Parameters	Criteria
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Preferably early breeding age > Age must be confirmed using farm records. In case of absence of records, verify age using the dentition method
Weight / Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Highest possible weight / size

Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male, as future source of semen
Stage of production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferably breeder

ANIMAL SPECIFIC PHENOTYPE OR MORPHOLOGY

Parameters	Criteria
PHILIPPINE CARABAO phenotype and morphology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide, deep frame and heavy body • Long-sickle shaped horn • Straight strong limbs with black/gray hooves and white/gray fur color on the legs • Long tail which may or may not have white switch • One or two white markings or stripe on the neck (chevron) • Body coat/fur color may range from black, gray, slate grey, brown, red
NATIVE CATTLE phenotypic characterization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Color are mostly black, white, grey, roan, red, brown • Color are plain or patchy (having more than one color such as white or grey shadings in thigh, head and humps) • Horn shape and orientation: straight-upward and curved-upward • Horn color is black or grey • Hair are straight, short to medium • Ears are rounded and lateral • Hump are small and erect and are found above the thoracic region • Sloping rump • Medium size tail with black color tip
PHILIPPINE NATIVE GOAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coat color and markings: red, white, or black or combination of these colors • Majority are horned • Erect ears

PHILIPPINE SHEEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male is generally horned and roman-nosed • Generally pooled and thin-tailed • Ears are mostly erect • White is the predominant color, although brown and brown-white combination are also common • Wool covers the majority of the animals
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HEALTH STATUS

Parameters	Criteria
Health test result	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goat and sheep: with recent negative laboratory result from Caprine arthritis encephalitis virus (CAE), Surra, and Blue tongue • Carabao: with recent negative laboratory result from Tuberculosis (TB), Surra, and Brucella • Cattle: with recent negative laboratory result from Surra, Blue tongue, and Brucella

OTHER CRITERIA

Parameters	Criteria
Identification system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal must have an ear tag or any identification system that should match with the relevant health records • Preferably known sire and dam
Physical characteristics indicating good health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be free from abnormalities or defects • Showing alertness and vigor • Clean, well groomed and shiny hair coat free from highly visible dirt, mud, parasites, discharges • Ideal body condition score for the breed and age

Behavior and temperament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Calm, docile and manageable behavior ● Responsiveness to the handler ● Minimal signs of stress or agitation
Other supporting documents or records that will support the superiority of the animal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Very good to exceptional records of production and reproduction performance

JUDGING, AWARDING CEREMONIES, PRIZES:

- Judging shall be completed within the first week of October and will be based on the following percentage points breakdown:
 - 25% - confirmation of breed as native animals
 - 10% - registry requirements [*RSBSA, cooperative, farmers association or organization*]
 - 15% - location/ownership [*current owner should have title to and actual possession of the animal at the location for at least one year*]
 - 20% - metrics [*weight, height, length, other relevant metrics*]
 - 15% - physical appearance, grooming, and presentation
 - 15% - overall health condition
- Judging will be witnessed by the Regional Executive Director or authorized representative and the Regional Livestock Coordinator.
- The awarding ceremonies must coincide with the RFO's celebration of Livestock Month in October.
- Prizes will be awarded by the RFO as follows:
 - For CY2025, PhP25,000 total cash prize shall be divided equally between each winner for carabao, cattle, goat, and sheep categories.
 - Should there be no entries for a category then the cash prize shall

be divided equally between the winners of those with entries. (For example: If an RFO has no goat and sheep the prize will be divided between winners of cattle and carabao categories.)

- For CY2026, onwards, the cash prize for each category shall be PhP25,000.
- Plaques or certificates will also be given to the winners and all participants [*if feasible*].
- In coordination with the DA Central Office Programs Committee on the annual celebration of National Livestock Month in October, winners from all regions will be given recognition as part of the program [*in person or via photo-video documentary*].

WAIVER, AGREEMENT AND FIRST OPTION RIGHTS:

All owners of winners from all categories will be required to sign an agreement or waiver with the RFO to allow further testing and observation of their largest native animal and for collection of genetic samples [*DNA, semen*] for additional laboratory testing and study by an aligned Department of Agriculture agency for at least six (6) months from awarding.

The Department of Agriculture, through its RFO, shall also be given the first option to purchase should the owners decide to sell their winning animals.

FUNDING SOURCE:


- Prizes will be awarded by the RFO, sourced from each region's incentive program for AI Technicians, for the largest native animals as follows:
 - For CY2025, PhP25,000 total cash prize shall be divided equally between each winner for carabao, cattle, goat, and sheep categories.
 - Should there be no entries for a category then the cash prize shall be divided equally between the winners of those with entries. (For example: If an RFO has no goat and sheep the prize will be divided between winners of cattle and carabao categories.)
 - For CY2026, onwards, the cash prize for each category shall be PhP25,000 each and shall be included in the RFOs budget proposals as a separate incentive program.
- All expenses incurred for the conduct of the **SEARCH FOR THE LARGEST**

NATIVE ANIMALS and any follow-up efforts including transportation, supplies and materials, venue rental, meals, vehicle rental, fuel, and other incidentals are chargeable to each individual Regional Field Office's budget under the Extension Support, Education and Training Services funds, subject to proper accounting and auditing procedures.

EFFECTIVITY:

This Memorandum Circular shall take effect immediately upon publication in the Department of Agriculture Website and dissemination to the DA Regional Field Offices. All other issuances inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

Done this 3rd day of December 2024.


FRANCISCO P. TIULA LAUREL JR.
Secretary

