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MANILA BULLETIN:

PBBM's agricultural reforms bearing fruit- -Tiangco

BY ELLSON QUISMORIO

Jan 1, 2025 01:39 PM

AT A GLANCE

- Navotas 1st district Rep. Toby Tiangco says the Marcos administration's intensified efforts in agricultural development and reform have begun to bear fruit.



President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. (MANILA BULLETIN | Mark Balmores)

Navotas 1st district Rep. Toby Tiangco says the Marcos administration's intensified efforts in agricultural development and reform have begun to bear fruit.

Tiangco highlighted the National Food Authority's (NFA) success in achieving 95 percent of its inventory goal this year, as it accumulated over five million 50-kilogram bags of milled rice sourced exclusively from local farmers.

"Patuloy po nating nararamdaman ang bunga ng mga programang pang-agrikultura ni Pangulong Bongbong Marcos. Sa tulong ng mga batas at repormang isinulong ng Pangulo, masisiguro natin na maganda ang takbo ng sektor ng agrikultura at higit sa lahat, ang pag-unlad ng buhay ng ating mga magsasaka," he said.

(We continue to enjoy the fruits of President Marcos' agriculture programs. Thanks to the laws and reforms being pushed by the President, we can ensure that the agriculture sector is properly run and most of all, that our farmers enjoy progress.)

Tiangco says that the NFA's ample buffer stocks also means the agency is ready to release supplies to help in relief efforts during emergencies and calamities.

"Napapanahon po ito dahil patuloy din ang paghahanda ng pamahalaan sa nagbabadyang pagputok ng Mt. Kanlaon," noted the administration solon.

(This is timely since the government continues to prepare for the possible eruption of Mt. Kanlaon.)

Tiangco notes that based on the amended Rice Tariffication Law, NFA is mandated to maintain a 15-day buffer stock to sustain disaster relief programs and address food security challenges.

This stock is equivalent to 300,000 metric tons of milled rice, the agency's target inventory for 2024 and 2025.

In addition, Tiangco expressed confidence that the Bureau of Customs (BOC) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) will heed President Marcos' directive for the strict enforcement of Republic Act No. 12022, also known as the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act.

"The President's marching orders are clear—strengthen action against smugglers who disrupt the supply chain and cause spikes in the prices of agricultural products in the local market," Tiangco said.

"We prioritized passing this law to make sure that concerned agencies will be empowered to safeguard the livelihood of Filipino farmers and fisherfolk while ensuring affordable food for every Filipino," he added.

<https://mb.com.ph/2025/1/1/pbbm-s-agricultural-reforms-bearing-fruit-tiangco>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

BFAR to contest SC ruling on municipal waters delimitation

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

January 1, 2025 | 12:00am



The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) is now coordinating with the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) on the possibility of reviewing the ruling made by the SC's first division.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The government is planning to contest a Supreme Court ruling declaring the 15-kilometer municipal water boundary unconstitutional as calls to protect the preferential rights of artisanal fishermen from various sectors continue to mount.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) is now coordinating with the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) on the possibility of reviewing the ruling made by the SC's first division.

The BFAR, an agency attached to the Department of Agriculture, said the decision of the High Court's first division "is not yet final."

“The agency is dedicated to ensuring a fair and just resolution. This highlights the importance of the case in shaping policies and programs that impact the fisheries sector, particularly about environmental protection, resource management, and the rights of affected stakeholders,” BFAR said.

The Supreme Court’s first division issued a ruling upholding the Malabon Regional Trial Court’s decision on the petition of Mercidar Fishing Corp. to declare the preferential access of municipal fisherfolk to 15-km municipal water unconstitutional, among others.

Nonetheless, BFAR vowed to continue upholding its mandate of protecting and conserving the country’s aquatic resources while safeguarding the welfare of small-scale fishermen and coastal communities.

“The agency remains committed to the rule of law and the protection of national interests and sustainable fisheries management,” it said.

BFAR issued the statement amid mounting calls from more civil service organizations, non-government organizations, and other quarters for the government to intervene in the High Court’s first division ruling that they deemed detrimental to the livelihoods of artisanal fisherfolk and the country’s marine resources.

International marine protection group Oceana argued that the High Court’s first division ruling did not follow multiple legal processes both substantive and procedural.

Oceana vice president Gloria Estenzo Ramos said the case filed by Mercidar was an environmental case, but the rules of procedures for environmental cases were not followed.

First, Ramos said the case should have been publicly announced to allow all concerned stakeholders to participate in the legal proceeding. Second, the indispensable parties, in this case, stakeholders like artisanal fisherfolk and even local government units, were not parties to the case, Ramos added.

Ramos described the ruling as “sweeping” since it impacted even the rights of the LGUs, which, under existing laws and regulations, have jurisdiction over municipal waters.

Furthermore, there is also a legal lapse in the ruling of the High Court’s first division since it was not the Supreme Court en banc that decided on the “constitutionality” of the 15-km municipal water provision of existing laws and regulations, Ramos said.

Oceana said the executive branch should file a motion for reconsideration to reverse the possible detrimental effects of the ruling, which may worsen food insecurity in the country.

Meanwhile, the National Anti-Poverty Commission Artisanal Fisherfolk Sectoral Council (NAPC-AFSC) said BFAR should continue fulfilling its mandate of protecting the rights of municipal fisherfolk as stipulated under existing fisheries rules and laws.

“This is an issue of life and livelihood of artisanal fishermen and fisheries. It is not just to decide on the matter based on technicalities and not on the real state of the fishing industry,” NAPC-AFSC said in a statement written in Filipino.

“The Office of the President should intervene in this issue. President Marcos has a directive to find and address the needs of the most vulnerable sectors of the society,” NAPC-AFSC added, noting that artisanal fishermen are one of, if not the poorest sector in the country.

Surigao Del Norte Mayor Alfredo Coro II also called on President Marcos to intervene to preserve the preferential rights of the artisanal fishermen over the 15-kilometer municipal waters and the continued regulation of commercial fishing within the established boundary.

“The local government of Del Carmen, together with the Sangguniang Bayan of Del Carmen, expresses the sentiments of the local fishers not only of Del Carmen but of all the two million small fishers in the Philippines in appealing for consideration the Supreme Court decision removing the 15-km municipal waters preferential rights to municipal fisherfolks and regulations of commercial fishing operations within the municipal waters,” Coro said in a statement.

University of the Philippines Visayas retired professor Wilfredo Campos said the entry of commercial fishers into the municipal waters would accelerate the depletion of fishing resources to the detriment of the country’s food security.

“It will make things worse and only speed up the potential collapse of stocks, resulting in irreversible loss of the resource base and loss of livelihoods for both commercial and municipal sectors,” Campos said.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/01/01/2411021/bfar-contest-sc-ruling-municipal-waters-delimitation>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Broiler raisers lament freefall in chicken prices

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

January 1, 2025 | 12:00am



Customers visit the Pasig Mega Market in Pasig City to check on the goods that are put up for sale on July 31, 2024.

Philstar.com / Irra Lising

MANILA, Philippines — Broiler raisers may begin the new year with an awful start as liveweight prices of chickens have fallen by more than P20 per kilo after Christmas, the steepest decline ever, an industry group said.

United Broiler Raisers Association (Ubra) chairman Elias Jose Inciong said liveweight prices of broilers have been dropping since Dec. 26 as demand has been anemic, resulting in a supply glut.

“Traditionally after Christmas there is a drop in demand and then supplies are high. But what makes this year different is that this is a record drop (in prices),” Inciong told The STAR.

“This decline reflects that demand is a huge factor. The inventory is equal with last year but demand is poorer,” Inciong added.

Inciong said Filipinos’ demand for chicken meat could have been more tepid this time because of the slowdown in the country’s economic growth coupled with sticky high prices of goods and commodities.

“The purchasing power is not there,” he said.

The average liveweight price of regular-sized broiler (1.5 to 1.69 kilos) as of Dec. 27 collapsed to P110 per kilo from P131.5 per kilo recorded on Dec. 20, based on Ubra weekly price monitoring report.

Inciong said prices continued to decline even after Dec. 27 to as low as P90 per kilo in Central Luzon, which is already below the P110-per-kilo breakeven cost for most broiler raisers.

The drop in liveweight prices comes at a time when broiler raisers reel from higher production costs, particularly elevated day-old-chick prices that have remained above P40 per head throughout last year.

“It is really bloody. The drop is very precipitous. Usually the drop in prices after Christmas is around P5 to P10 per kilo,” Inciong said.

“We will see by end toward of January if it is in accordance with patterns - if there is some recovery,” Inciong said.

Despite the drop in liveweight prices of broilers, the retail price of dressed chicken remain stable at P180 to P250 per kilo in key Metro Manila markets, based on Department of Agriculture reports.

Latest National Meat Inspection Service data showed that the nationwide dressed chicken inventory remained above 55 million kilos with at least 40 million of which being imported stocks. Inventory of locally produced dressed chicken stood at about 15 million kilos.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/01/01/2411033/broiler-raisers-lament-freefall-chicken-prices>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

PCC, ACPC form TWG for financing to carabao enterprises

Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas - The Philippine Star

January 1, 2025 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Two agencies attached to the Department of Agriculture formed a technical working group (TWG) to oversee the creation of financing program that would support carabao and carabao-based enterprises (CBEs) nationwide.

The Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) and Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) established a TWG for its prospective agri-value chain financing (AVCF) program for the carabao industry. The program will facilitate the verification, assessment and approval of loans aimed at fostering sustainable growth in the carabao farming sector, according to the PCC, which oversees the development of the country's carabao industry.

“The TWG will ensure that the program’s objectives are met through clear, consistent and equitable guidelines for loan distribution,” the PCC said.

“It will be responsible for verifying eligibility, assessing loan applications, and monitoring the sustainability and performance of loan recipients to drive long-term success in carabao farming businesses,” it added.

The creation of the TWG shows the commitment of the government in enhancing the economic viability of carabao businesses in the country, promoting innovation in carabao production and supporting the growth of the agriculture sector, the PCC said. Under the partnership, CBEs would have more efficient access to ACPC’s Agri-Negosyo Loan program, helping them to “unlock their full potential,” the PCC added.

“Both agencies plan to prioritize cooperatives within the agriculture value chain. This strategic focus aims to foster growth and sustainability in the agricultural sector, enhancing the overall efficiency of the value chain,” it said.

Under the agri-negosyo loan program, eligible beneficiaries may borrow up to P15 million depending on their assets. The loan features a two percent interest rate with a service fee of up to 3.5 percent and is payable based on the proposed project’s cash flow, but may not exceed five years.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/01/01/2411023/pcc-acpc-form-twg-financing-carabao-enterprises>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Department of Agriculture suspends grant aid due to bad loans

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 02:04 AM January 01, 2025



FILE PHOTO

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is suspending grant assistance given to beneficiaries of its various programs who are delinquent on their loans.

The DA issued Memorandum Order No. 60 as concerned offices under the agency sought procedures to implement the directive that defers the provision of grant assistance to eligible beneficiaries.

This stemmed from a proposal from the Land Bank of the Philippines to put on hold the grant provided to beneficiaries “who are willfully not paying their loans under the said credit program until such time that said beneficiaries would have settled their loan obligations.”

The memo refers to borrowers who failed to communicate with Landbank on their plan to settle the loan in default.

According to the state-run bank, which implements the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF) Credit Program for seven years, said this is one of the measures it proposed to address the increasing number of delinquent loans under this initiative.

The ACEF Credit Program offers credit to farmers, fishers and their cooperatives and associations, and micro and small-scale enterprises to boost productivity as well as establish postharvest facilities and processing equipment.

Farmer and fisherfolk cooperatives, associations and micro and small enterprises can secure up to P5 million in loans while individual farmers or fishers can tap P1 million each.

The guidelines cover the DA banner programs on rice, corn, high-value crops, livestock, fisheries, organic agriculture and halal, intended for ensuring food security, addressing poverty alleviation and attaining sustainable growth through higher productivity and efficiency.

The DA said grant assistance that has been previously deferred will be given to beneficiaries once the latter managed to settle their loans in default under the program, as confirmed by Landbank.

<https://business.inquirer.net/499381/department-of-agriculture-suspends-grant-aid-due-to-bad-loans>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Modest crop and livestock growth expected in 2025

January 1, 2025 | 7:00 pm



PHILSTAR FILE PHOTO

THE gross value added (GVA) of crops and livestock is expected to post modest growth this year with the La Niña producing above-normal rainfall, the University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P) Center for Food and Agribusiness (CFA) said.

In a report, the CFA estimated that crop and livestock GVA will grow by up to 1% in 2025, with poultry posting 5-6% growth. However, fisheries growth is expected to slow to 0.5%.

The CFA said that it expects increased food demand and higher spending this year due to the elections, especially during the campaign period.

“The election also presents an opportunity to push for needed reforms in the agriculture sector. Good governance is crucial to effectively implement agriculture programs,” it said.

“A downside is that La Niña conditions, accompanied by above-normal rainfall, are seen to last until early 2025 and may affect agricultural activities,” it added.



“Overall, the UA&P-CFA projects a 2024 decline of 1-2% in agriculture as against the 1.2% growth last year (2023),” it added.

In the first nine months of 2023, crops, livestock, and fisheries declined 4.2%, 3.3%, and 1% respectively. Meanwhile, poultry and agri-activities and services posted 6.6% and 2.9% growth, respectively.

Through the nine months, GVA in agriculture and fisheries declined by 1.5%.

Meanwhile, the CFA estimates crops to end 2024 with a 3.5% to 4.5% decline in GVA, while livestock and fisheries are projected to post 2.5-3.5% and 1.5-2.5% declines, respectively.

The working range for GVA in agriculture and fisheries is a decline of between 1% and 2%.

The CFA said the bright prospects in agriculture include high-value crops, seaweed farming, free-range poultry, precision farming, root crops, organic certification, food processing, solar-powered irrigation, indigenous products, and agritourism.

“These growth areas have the potential to thrive and become significant contributors to the agricultural economy given strategic investments, market linkages, and strong government support coupled with private sector collaboration,” it said.

“Addressing supply chain gaps, market access, and climate challenges can also further enhance the sector’s contribution to food security and economic growth,” it added.

However, it noted that the Philippines should embrace innovation to address outdated practices, limited infrastructure, climate vulnerabilities, and resource constraints.

“Agriculture is no longer just about growing crops or raising livestock; it is about cultivating innovation, nurturing sustainability, and harvesting opportunities for global progress,” the CFA said.

“By embracing innovation, investing in education and infrastructure, supporting farmers, and promoting sustainable practices, the agriculture sector can be transformed into a robust foundation for food security, economic growth, and rural development,” it added. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/01/01/644307/modest-crop-and-livestock-growth-expected-in-2025/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Copra meal project set for W. Visayas expansion

January 1, 2025 | 6:56 pm



PHILSTAR FILE PHOTO

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it will expand its Protein-Enriched Copra Meal (PECM) commercialization project to the Western Visayas to boost livestock production there.

The PECM, initially rolled out in Regions IV A and 9, is aimed at mitigating the rising costs of animal feed by using copra meal, a by-product of coconut farming, as a substitute for imported soybean meal.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said that the expansion of the project will help farmers and feed producers in the region who are facing rising prices of traditional feed ingredients.

“The program not only helps reduce feed costs but also supports the local economy by creating new markets for coconut by-products, which are often underutilized,” he said in a statement on Wednesday.

Developed by the University of the Philippines-Los Baños Biotech Center employing a solid-state fermentation process, the PECM enhances copra meal’s protein content to 45%, bring it up to par with soybean meal.

According to the DA, feeding trials of the enriched copra meal, which include 200 kilos of PECM per ton of finfish feed and 100 kilos per ton of shrimp feed, returned a 3.9% and 0.4% reduction in feed costs compared to conventional commercial feed.

PECM was launched in 2022 to address supply disruptions caused by the pandemic and the Russian-Ukraine war.

“While COVID-19 has passed, the Russia-Ukraine conflict continues to disrupt global feed ingredient supply chains, keeping prices for essential commodities like soybean meal, feed wheat, and corn elevated,” DA said.

“Russia and Ukraine together account for about 30% of global feed grain supply, further exacerbating the pressure on feed prices,” it added.

The Philippine Statistics Authority reported that hog production in the Western Visayas dropped 23% to 158,471 metric tons (MT) in 2023.

Meanwhile, carabao production in the region increased 3.9% to 17,159 MT, cattle production flat at 19,007 MT, and goat production rose 11% to 7,105 MT.

In 2023, duck production in the region decreased 1.9% to 2,722 MT, and duck egg production fell 5.4% to 4,306 MT.

Chicken production in the Western Visayas last year increased 4.8% to 131,926 MT, while chicken egg output rose by 7.9% to 40,015 MT.

“By expanding the copra meal initiative, the DA aims to strengthen food security, improve local feed production, and promote more efficient use of agricultural by-products in livestock farming,” it said. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/01/01/644304/copra-meal-project-set-for-w-visayas-expansion/#google_vignette

THE MANILA TIMES:

FMR projects turned over to 7 villages

By [Leander C. Domingo](#)

January 1, 2025

OCEANAGOLD Philippines Inc. has turned over farm-to market (FMR) road projects to seven barangay (villages) in the provinces of Quirino and Nueva Vizcaya, which OGP said is a "significant Christmas gift" to community farmers and residents.

Joan Adaci-Cattiling, OGP president and general manager for external affairs and social performance, said P21 million worth of FMR projects were turned over to beneficiary communities in four villages in Nueva Vizcaya and three villages in Quirino province.

"Funded by OGP's Community Development Fund (CDF), these projects are expected to provide ease of access and facilitate the smooth transport of goods and products to and from the beneficiary communities," she said.

In Nueva Vizcaya, the beneficiaries are four villages in the towns of Dupax del Norte, Bagabag, Diadi, and Bambang.

These projects were the 288 meters of concrete pavement with an aggregate shoulder on both sides in Barangay Mabasa in Dupax del Norte; the double barrel box culvert with stone masonry wing wall, 122 meters of concrete pavement and 117.5 meters of stone masonry retaining wall in Barangay Tuao North in Bagabag; the 180 meters of concrete pavement with an aggregate shoulder on both sides and a multi-crop drying pavement in Barangay Ampakleng in Diadi; and the 323 meters of concrete pavement in Barangay Abinganan in Bambang.

Cattiling also said that the three barangay in the municipalities of Aglipay and Cabarroguis in Quirino received FMR projects.

These were the 262 meters of portland cement concrete pavement with an aggregate shoulder on both sides, replacement of one-line reinforced concrete pipe culvert, stone masonry, and grouted riprap in Barangay Pinaripad Sur in Aglipay; the 249 meters concrete pavement with a reinforced concrete pipe culvert (RCPC) in Barangay San Marcos in Cabarroguis; and the 190.50 meters of concrete pavement with 101.50 meters of stone masonry slope protection and two RCPC in Barangay del Pilar in Cabarroguis.

Cattiling said these infrastructure projects aim to "boost the local economy by improving accessibility for farmers and residents in these communities."

With families and students standing to gain from improved mobility through the FMR project, respective barangay officials expressed their gratitude to OGP.

Desiree Domingo-Baldevino, OGP acting manager for external affairs and communications, said that the company's CDF program is committed to expanding its initiatives and contributions to community development under its financial and technical assistance agreement or FTAA renewal and addendum agreement.

"The company's CDF program is a new pillar of the mine's social development program providing at least P3 million each barangay (village) in both the provinces of Quirino and Nueva Vizcaya," she said.

The province of Nueva Vizcaya has 275 barangay while Quirino province has 132, more than 99 percent of which are recipients of at least P3 million each under the CDF program.

Baldevino said these CDF projects are implemented only outside OGP's immediate host which is the Didipio village in Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya, and 10 other surrounding barangay.

https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/01/01/regions/fmr-projects-turned-over-to-7-villages/2028802?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAR3FTide8UCr5bHxJKPRIf5qrqJeQR59UO5vQB1FILNccyLrs9MPVYAtR_E_aem_prOPSUZtCfPXXM_Sxl5ICA

BUSINESS MIRROR:

PHL farms increasing, but farm size shrinking—PSA

Ada Pelonia
January 1, 2025

THE country's average farm size is shrinking, but the number of farms is increasing, based on the census of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

In its latest report, the PSA said the average farm size in the Philippines shrank by 77 percent to 0.83 hectares in 2022, from 3.61 hectares in 1970.

“Comparing 2022 to previous years underscores the extent of this decline,” the agency said.

Despite the increase in the number of farms, the PSA said the total area of farms has steadily declined since 1991.

Figures from the agency showed that the total farm areas in 2022 plunged by 38.2 percent to 6.16 million hectares from 9.97 million hectares in 1991.

It added that farm area in 2022 “remains substantially smaller” even when compared to earlier years, such as the 9.73 million hectares recorded in 1980 and 8.49 million hectares in 1970.

The number of farms, however, grew as of 2022, according to the PSA. The agency said 7.43 million farms with a crop farm and/or a livestock and poultry operation were recorded from January 1 to December 31, 2022. This was higher than the 5.56 million farms in 2012.

Among regions, the PSA said Western Visayas reported the highest number of farms in 2022, with 779,000 farms covering a total area of 454,000 hectares. Central Visayas trailed behind as it had 722,000 farms spanning 305,000 hectares.

The National Capital Region (NCR) recorded the least number of farms, with only 34,000 farms and an area of 15,000 hectares.

The PSA noted that the top three regions with the highest farm area were Soccsksargen with 600,000 hectares, Bicol Region with 519,000 hectares, and Cagayan Valley with 514,000 hectares.

Across regions, the agency said Soccsksargen reported the largest average area of farm at 1.26 hectares per farm in 2022. It added that five more regions reported an average farm area of over one hectare.

This includes Cagayan Valley (1.16 hectares per farm), Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) (1.10 hectares per farm), Central Luzon (1.05 hectares per farm), Caraga, (1.04 hectares per farm), and Davao Region (1.03 hectares per farm).

The PSA said these results are based on the 2022 Census of Agriculture and Fisheries (CAF) conducted among households and non-household entities that operated agriculture activities from January 1 to December 31, 2022.

It added that household interviews for the 2022 CAF were conducted in September to November 2023, while non-household interviews were conducted in May to July 2023.

[https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/01/01/phl-farms-increasing-but-farm-size-shrinking-
psa/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAR0Y1n69ZVw8Mlbpp0YfEx0s67w8wa8SSgT
gCuVT_CBpOncKnPgO0RIcDg_aem_0yENFcNKWvm5zD8pLbKTGQ](https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/01/01/phl-farms-increasing-but-farm-size-shrinking-
psa/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAR0Y1n69ZVw8Mlbpp0YfEx0s67w8wa8SSgT
gCuVT_CBpOncKnPgO0RIcDg_aem_0yENFcNKWvm5zD8pLbKTGQ)

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Vegetable prices continue to climb in Manila, as farm prices lag behind

BusinessMirror Editorial
January 1, 2025

A few days before the world bid goodbye to 2023, consumers in Metro Manila saw the prices of some popular leafy vegetables breach the P100-per-kilo mark. Data from the Department of Agriculture (DA) showed that the average weekly price of ampalaya sold in Metro Manila markets reached P104.86 per kilo as of December 29, 2023. A kilo of string beans or sitaw and eggplant were sold for an average of P118.96 and P102.83, respectively.

While the high demand could account for the steeper price tag, the disparity between farm and retail prices is mind-boggling. Figures from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed that the farm price of ampalaya in 2023 averaged P44.40 per kilo; in December, it was at P41.06. The average farm prices of string beans and eggplant in 2023 were even lower at P41.06 per kilo and P38.02 per kilo, respectively.

What these figures show is that retail prices in Metro Manila are double or even triple the quotations at the farm level in 2023. Typhoons may raise the prices of these vegetables during certain periods, but markups especially at the retail level were consistent—100 percent or even 200 percent of farm prices. And this practice persisted despite the government's acknowledgment that it has been detrimental to farmers and consumers.

Policymakers and bureaucrats had blamed middlemen for the spikes in retail prices of agricultural commodities. Lawmakers even threatened to put in jail these middlemen who had profited immensely from the current system. It was incredibly lucrative, leading to their descendants inheriting the family business that had supported them for decades.

Meanwhile, even if the government had declared that these traders are preying on planters, farmers continue to sell their produce to middlemen and other entities that buy their crops at low prices. Despite their complaints that they quote prices that are sometimes lower than production cost, planters still turn to these middlemen who are ready to purchase their vegetables or livestock. And even if they fail to

make a decent profit from their land or backyard farm, farmers will find a way to raise the capital they need to sustain their operations, even if it means borrowing money from loan sharks.

Despite being the “bad guys” in the eyes of the government and lawmakers, these greedy traders and middlemen continue to exist. They have not been shunned because farmers need them, whether policymakers would care to admit this or not. They continue to thrive because they are familiar with the loopholes in the supply chain that remain unplugged to this day—loopholes that make it difficult for farmers to really profit from their produce.

And these loopholes are what agricultural groups like Sinag want the government to investigate and eventually address (*See “’Before importing veggies, fish, check disconnect in farmgate, retail prices’,” BusinessMirror, November 21, 2024*). The current administration has promised to lower food prices, but without an exhaustive assessment of what really ails the agricultural supply chain and a serious commitment to instituting the necessary reforms, its goal of “murang pagkain” by 2028 will not be attained.

https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/01/01/vegetable-prices-continue-to-climb-in-manila-as-farm-prices-lag-behind/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAAR0Y1n69ZVw8Mlpp0YfEx0s67w8wa8SSgTgCuVT_CBpOncKnPgO0RiCdg_aem_0vENFcNKWvm5zD8pLbKTGQ

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Supreme Court reso allowing big fishers in municipal waters scored

Jonathan L. Mayuga
January 1, 2025



Fishermen in Bani, Pangasinan, haul in their catch as the DA-BFAR and OSG challenge a Supreme Court ruling that opens municipal waters to commercial fishing. Small fishers, supported by groups like Oceana and Pamalakaya, argue that this could threaten their livelihoods and the marine ecosystem.

THE Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) in coordination with the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) is determined to appeal a Supreme Court resolution removing the exclusivity of municipal fishing grounds to small fishers.

In a statement, the DA-BFAR maintained that the SC's First Division resolution, which will eventually pave the way for commercial fishing vessels to fish within the 15-kilometer municipal waters, is not yet final.

“The agency is dedicated to ensuring a fair and just resolution. This highlights the importance of the case in shaping policies and programs that impact the fisheries sector, particularly about environmental protection, resource management, and the rights of affected stakeholders,” it said in a recent statement.

The DA-BFAR said it shall continue to uphold its mandate to protect and conserve the country’s aquatic resources while safeguarding the welfare of small-scale fishermen and coastal communities. The agency remains committed to the rule of law, protecting national interests, and managing sustainable fisheries.

Environmental groups led by ocean conservation advocacy nongovernment organization Oceana are also eyeing to fight the resolution.

Oceana Philippines vice president Gloria Estenzo-Ramos, an environmental lawyer, told the BusinessMirror that Oceana is already working on pleadings, taking up the cudgels for the millions of small fishermen whose livelihood is at risk of overfishing and destructive fishing methods by large fishing vessels that will enter the municipal fishing grounds to catch fish once the ruling becomes final and executory.

The Supreme Court ruling, declaring as unconstitutional the Fisheries Code provision declaring municipal waters as reserved for artisanal fisherfolk, is alarming, she admitted.

The First Division is headed by the Chief Justice as chairman, but she noted that the “ruling is not en banc, which is required by the Constitution when constitutionality of the law is assailed.”

Last week, the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) slammed the Supreme Court’s ruling, saying this would “adversely affect over two million” registered small fisherfolk nationwide.

Pamalakaya Vice Chairperson Ronnel Arambulo explained that the commercial fishing subsector outcompetes the traditional and backward method of fishing of small and subsistence fisherfolk. Equipped with advanced, if not destructive fishing technology, big fishing vessels can exhaust the fishery and marine resources in just a couple of days of fishing operations.

Arambulo also said that even without the latest court ruling, commercial fishing vessels are already rampant within the municipal waters.

“Wala pa man ang desisyon ng Korte, laganap na ang operasyon ng mga commercial fishing vessels sa mga munisipal na pangisdaan, na isa sa mga dahilan ng pagkalugi ng mga maliliit na mangingisda.

Dahil sa abanteng kagamitan, mabilis na nasasaid ng mga malalaking barkong pangisda ang lahat ng klase ng yamang-dagat kumpara sa mga maliliit na mangingisda na relatibong atrasado ang kagamitan.

Nakakagalit na nanaig ang boses ng malalaking negosyo sa usapin ng paggamit sa tradisyunal na pangisdaan ng mga maliliit na mangingisda.

Tiyak na aani ng protesta mula sa mga maliliit na mangingisda ang desisyong ito, at igigiit namin ang pagkilala sa aming eksklusibong karapatan sa munisipal na pangisdaan,” Arambulo ended.

[Even without the SC ruling, the commercial fishing vessels have operated with impunity in municipal waters, and this is one reason for the big losses to small fishers. With their modern gear, the big vessels can rake in most fishing varieties, unlike the small fishermen who use relatively backward tools. It’s disgusting that the voices of commercial fishers have prevailed over those of small fishermen. This will surely draw protests from many sectors; and we are determined to fight to keep our exclusive rights over municipal waters].

Pamalakaya said that it will hold consultations with the municipal fishers nationwide for a plan of action against the ruling.

The Supreme Court recently upheld a Malabon Regional Trial Court’s decision on the petition of Mercidar Fishing Corp. to declare unconstitutional the preferential access of municipal fisherfolk to the 15-kilometer municipal waters.

Image credits: [Bernard Testa](#)

https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/01/01/sc-reso-allowing-big-fishers-in-municipal-waters-scored/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAAR0DvIVXCusQH9Ly3lrbbZb3DPTY6OE1eDkxVONzM3UN82pYH9Di9KRJc5c_aem_ZlOIK_q2S-m29I67XKLOfQ

ABANTE:

Magsasaka, mangingisda nabaon sa pautang ng DA

Abante News

• January 1, 2025



Ititigil na ng Department of Agriculture (DA) ang pagbibigay ng ayuda sa mga benepisyaryo ng mga programa nitong delinkuwente sa pagbabayad ng utang sa ilalim ng Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF) Credit Program.

Ang ACEF credit program ay pautang na dinadaan sa Land Bank of the Philippines para sa mga magsasaka't mangingisda na magagamit sa pagbili ng mga binhi o makinang kailangan nila para matulungan silang mapadami ang ani o huli.

Ayon sa pinirmahang DA Memorandum Order No. 60 ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., dumadami na ang mga hindi nagbabayad ng utang sa ACEF at iminungkahi na ng Landbank sa DA na isuspinde ang pagbibigay ng ayuda sa mga benepisyaryo ng mga banner program nitong delinkwente hanggang hindi pa nila nababayaran ang mga utang.

Sabi ni Tiu Laurel, sang-ayon naman ang ACEF Executive Committee sa mungkahi ng Landbank.

Aniya, kahit mayroon nang patakaran tungkol dito noon pang Nobyembre 2023, hindi pa malinaw sa iba't ibang mga tanggapan ng DA kung paano ito ipapatupad kaya't inisyu na niya ang DA MO No. 60 noong Disyembre 20, 2024.

Sa ilalim nito, ituturing na delinkuwenteng ang nangutang na benepisyaryo kung hindi pa rin ito nagbabayad ng utang matapos padalhan ng dalawang collection letters at kung hindi pa rin ito nagbabayad matapos ang dalawang loan restructuring. (Eileen Mencias)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2025/01/01/magsasaka-mangingisda-nabaon-sa-pautang-ng-da/>