

CLIPPINGS FOR TODAY JANUARY 13, 2025

A. THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Record P34 billion rice tariff collected in 2024

Suggested imported rice profit cap sought

DA won't declare food security emergency

B. PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Target root cause of high rice prices

C. BUSINESS WORLD:

Agnep pushes sustainability through its shade-grown coffee

PCA to partner with Monde Nissin to support Filipino coconut farmers

D. MANILA STANDARD:

Solon: Congress super committee ready to tackle food, power prices

E. THE MANILA TIMES:

DA, DTI working to make rice affordable

F. BUSINESS MIRROR:

Murang Pagkain panel set to ramp up efforts against increase in food prices

Interventions to counter high rice prices—DA

G. ABANTE TONITE:

P58 per kilong bigas namumurong price ceiling

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Record P34 billion rice tariff collected in 2024

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

January 13, 2025 | 12:00am



Workers store sacks of local premium rice at a rice mill warehouse in Bocaue, Bulacan.

Michae Varcas, File

MANILA, Philippines — The government collected a record P34 billion in rice tariff last year, driven by bigger import volume coupled with higher shipment valuation and a weaker peso. Preliminary Bureau of Customs (BOC) data showed that total rice tariff collections in 2024 rose by 13.11 percent year-on-year to P34 billion from nearly P30 billion in 2023.

The increase in rice tariff collections was driven by the higher volume of imports, a weaker peso and better shipment valuation by the customs bureau despite the lowering of the tariff rate to 15 percent in July.

Rice import volume last year reached 4.74 million metric tons, about a third higher than the 3.561 million MT volume recorded in 2023.

The average rice import valuation on a metric ton basis, meanwhile, rose by 18 percent year-on-year to \$511.83 from \$433.49 in 2023, based on BOC figures.

BOC data also showed that the average exchange rate on rice imports last year stood at P57.22:\$1, nearly three percent weaker than the P55.65:\$1 recorded average rate in 2023.

Rice tariffs collected by the BOC all dropped on an annual basis beginning July, when the lower tariff rate took effect, except in October when import volume nearly quadrupled, offsetting the lower tariff rate.

Experts earlier pointed out that the country had to import more rice last year to plug the shortfall in its domestic output caused by extreme and unfavorable weather conditions.

Likewise, the rice tariff cut was seen to incentivize importers to bring in more foreign supplies in the market, which was the goal of the government to temper and avert a spike in retail prices of the staple.

The Department of Agriculture also noted that the rice tariff reduction disincentivized smuggling of the grain, forcing unscrupulous traders and importers to file their shipments legally, thus reflecting a “more accurate” volume of rice imports in the country.

Rice tariff collections have been a vital component of the state’s program for rice farmers since these are earmarked for the rice competitiveness enhancement fund.

The RCEF is an annual program created under Republic Act 11203 or the rice tariffication law that seeks to improve the competitiveness of the domestic rice industry.

With the enactment of RA 12078, which amended RA 11203 to extend RCEF, the guaranteed amount of the earmarked program has been increased to P30 billion from P10 billion until 2031.

The P30-billion RCEF is supposed to begin this year, but the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) earlier disclosed that only P10 billion has been allocated by Congress for the RCEF in the 2025 General Appropriations Act (GAA).

The additional P20 billion budget needed to complete the guaranteed fund of RCEF this year would be sourced from excess revenues, unused funds and contingent funds of the government, according to the DBM.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/01/13/2413728/record-p34-billion-rice-tariff-collected-2024>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Suggested imported rice profit cap sought

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

January 13, 2025 | 12:00am



“Why not a maximum suggested imported rice profit? In trying to bring down rice prices, why is the government apparently focusing on the retailers’ end of the marketing chain – instead of the importers-wholesalers component?” Former agriculture secretary Leonardo Montemayor asked.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — Former agriculture secretary Leonardo Montemayor yesterday said that the government should impose a maximum suggested imported rice profit instead of maximum suggested retail price, amid the impending implementation of a P58 per kilo maximum SRP on outsourced grains beginning Jan. 20.

“Why not a maximum suggested imported rice profit? In trying to bring down rice prices, why is the government apparently focusing on the retailers’ end of the marketing chain – instead of the importers-wholesalers component?” Montemayor asked.

On Friday, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. announced that the maximum SRP of P58 per kilo on imported rice will take effect on Jan. 20, after Executive Order 62 – which allowed a 15 percent tariff on the outsourced staple – failed to bring down the cost of rice.

Montemayor said that the reduction of tariff from 35 to 15 percent last June 20 was to encourage importers to import more rice and pass on the P5 to P7 per kilo in lower duties to local consumers.

“Both the Philippine Statistics Authority and the National Economic and Development Authority have determined that EO 62 has not met its objectives. Meanwhile, the government has allowed the less than 20 big players, reportedly cornering the bulk of imports, to pocket around P13.5 billion in tariff savings, which are tantamount to windfall profits,” the ex-Department of Agriculture chief said.

According to Montemayor, while the maximum SRP of P58 per kilo aims to protect consumers, it only targets retailers.

Imported rice has been flooding the country, as importations reached an “all-time high” of 4.684 million metric tons in 2024.

The retail price of imported rice remained high despite at least six months implementation of EO 62.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/01/13/2413795/suggested-imported-rice-profit-cap-sought>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA won't declare food security emergency

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

January 13, 2025 | 12:00am



Vendors arrange and water the vegetables they sell while waiting for customers at their stalls at the corner of Luzon and Commonwealth Avenues in Quezon City on July 14, 2024.

Miguel De Guzman
ADVERTISEMENT

MANILA, Philippines — The declaration of a food security emergency is no longer an option for the government, since there is no rice shortage and no extraordinary spike in retail prices that would warrant its implementation, a ranking official of the Department of Agriculture (DA) said over the weekend.

In a radio interview, Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said the DA can invoke Section Six of Republic Act 12078 or the Agricultural Tariffication Act only if the two conditions are met.

“Our basis for the declaration of food security emergency, based on section six of the amendments of the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL); there are two possible reasons why you may invoke a (declaration of food security) emergency. First, there is shortage (in rice supply) and second, there is an extraordinary increase in prices,” De Mesa said.

The newly signed law amends RA 11203 also known as the RTL.

“There was a drop in the retail price of rice as evident by the latest release of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) on inflation. Rice was no longer a big factor in the inflation, unlike in the previous month where the staple was a major factor,” De Mesa said.

He added that the retail price of rice is expected to further go down as its cost in the international market is also on the downtrend.

“We also expect that the local production will recover this year, barring any major calamity issue, but looking at all possibilities, we could have a good harvest for the year,” De Mesa said.

He said that in 2024, the country's total palay output reached 19.3 million metric tons while imported rice reached almost 4.7 MMT.

“We have enough (rice) supply until the next harvest. So, we don't have a supply shortage in terms of rice. The two possible scenarios will not be present in the declaration of food security emergency,” De Mesa said.

He said various efforts are being made to bring down the retail price of rice.

“It (declaration of food security emergency) is not part of the agenda during our discussions (with various stakeholders),” De Mesa said.

Meanwhile, he said that the DA is currently reviewing the possible lifting of Executive Order 62, which lowered the tariff on imported rice to 15 percent.

“On the possible return of (original) tariff (on imported rice), we are looking into this. There is a possibility that once the price in the international market continues to go down, the DA can recommend to return the tariff (on imported rice) to a certain level, not necessarily 35 (percent tariff),” De Mesa added.

De Mesa said that under the amended RTL law, at least P30 billion from tariff revenues will be tapped to provide assistance to local farmers.

“This will still depend on the tariff collections. It is important that we will be able to collect taxes to meet the P30 billion (tariff collections),” he added.

Farmers' groups who have been opposing the implementation of EO 62, said that the government already lost at least P13 billion in revenues because of the 15 percent tariff on imported grains.

“The review is ongoing. In fact, it was (Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.) who recommended a periodic review, every four months, on the implementation of EO 62,” De Mesa said.

He said a review was done in November 2024, and the next review is scheduled for March 2025.

On the other hand, De Mesa said that the maximum suggested retail price (SRP) of P58 per kilo effective on Jan. 20 only covers five percent broken imported rice.

“We only started the maximum SRP on five percent broken (imported rice). We will also issue maximum SRP on 25 percent broken,” he said.

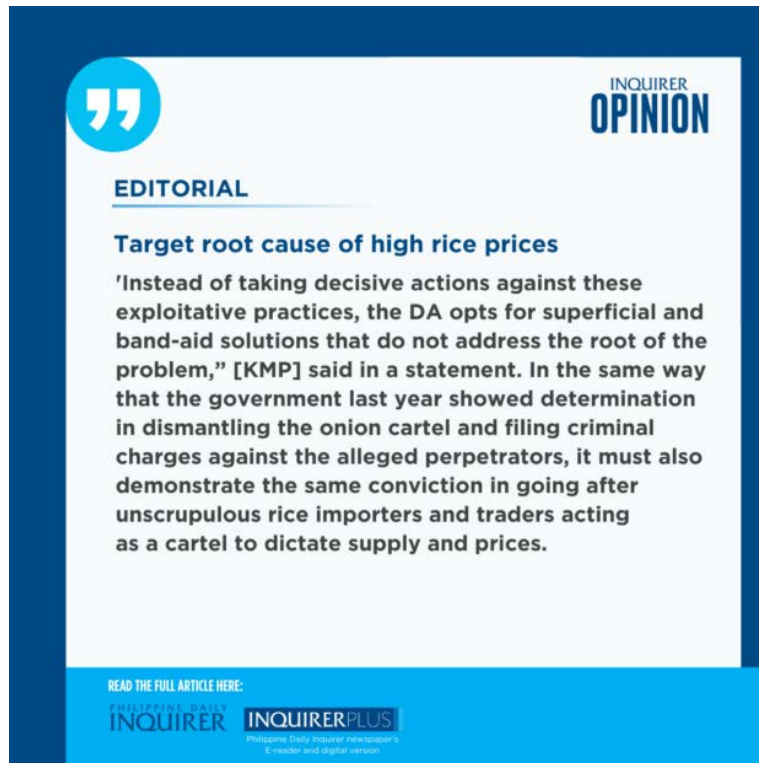
Tiu Laurel has announced the implementation of a maximum SRP on rice after EO 62 failed to bring down the cost of rice despite the flooding of imported grains.

“Our efforts to remove the branding and implement maximum SRP on imported rice are aimed to tame the abuses in all the levels of the value chain,” De Mesa said.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/01/13/2413821/da-wont-declare-food-security-emergency>

Target root cause of high rice prices

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 04:35 AM January 13, 2025



Since December last year, the Department of Agriculture (DA) has been announcing measures to address the stubbornly high prices of rice. As 2024 was about to end, it decided to order the removal of brand labels and “premium” and “special” markings on imported rice, suspecting that some industry players were using these to justify their high prices. A few days later, it announced that it is considering declaring a “food security emergency” in early 2025. Last week, the agency decided to impose a P58-a-kilo maximum suggested retail price for imported rice initially in Metro Manila beginning Jan. 20.

While these measures will help lower prices by a few pesos, such actions are at most palliative and will not bring the country any closer to President Marcos’ campaign promise of P20-a-kilo rice. The only way to permanently reduce the cost of the staple food is to address the root causes of the problem—hoarding and profiteering by colluding importers and traders acting like a cartel to constrict supply and dictate prices in the local market.

At a House hearing in November last year, Agriculture Undersecretary Asis Perez lamented that the average price of rice should have been about P30 a kilo due to the huge tariff cut on imports and lower international prices. In June last year, the President signed Executive Order No. 62 cutting the rice tariff to 15 percent from 35 percent starting July.

Desperate measure

However, Marikina Rep. Stella Quimbo noted that local rice prices went down to only P50.68 a kilo from P51.12 in the quarter after the EO took effect. Perez agreed with the committee's conclusion: The lower price in the international market and reduced tariff did not reflect the current price of rice in the local market. Last month, imported well-milled rice cost anywhere from P40 to P56 a kilo, down from P58 in 2023.

But according to Quimbo, domestic retail prices "should have stabilized" around P35 a kilo considering that the landed price of imported rice had already gone down by P11 a kilo year-on-year. The fact that domestic retail prices have remained high, according to Quimbo, is a clear sign of "abuse."

What then should the government do to truly bring down the price of rice? We agree with the sentiment of the farmers' group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), which felt that removing labels on rice imports will not address price manipulation as it fails to solve the long-standing issues affecting the industry. Calling it a desperate measure that does nothing to address hoarding and profiteering, KMP said the DA has failed to effectively regulate and monitor the rice supply chain in the country with its inability to crack down on rice cartels.

Remedial legislation

"Instead of taking decisive actions against these exploitative practices, the DA opts for superficial and band-aid solutions that do not address the root of the problem," the group said in a statement.

In the same way that the government last year showed determination in dismantling the onion cartel and filing criminal charges against the alleged perpetrators, it must also demonstrate the same conviction in going after unscrupulous rice importers and traders acting as a cartel to dictate supply and prices.

The House has formed a five-panel committee to go after agricultural smugglers and price manipulators. It is also expected to come up with a comprehensive report on possible remedial legislation to address smuggling and price manipulation of basic goods. In previous hearings, lawmakers have castigated rice importers and traders for allegedly conniving to manipulate rice prices and cited some indications of possible collusion among rice traders and importers, specifically their cross ownership.

Harsh penalties

The government has the tool to go after them. Stressing the need to shield both consumers and the agriculture sector from smuggling, hoarding, profiteering, and cartel activities, Mr. Marcos signed in September last year Republic Act No. 12022, or the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act, which penalizes such offenses as nonbailable crimes. The law imposes harsh penalties of life imprisonment for those convicted, plus a fine five times the value of the involved agricultural products.

The other measures planned by the DA can be implemented to complement an earnest drive against hoarding and profiteering. These include allowing other government entities such as the Food Terminal Inc. to import significant quantities of rice to directly compete with private importers, directing the Bureau of Internal Revenue to audit the financial records of rice traders to ensure compliance with fair pricing practices, and mandating the DA to look into warehouses and work with the Bureau of Customs to do post-clearance inspections of imported stocks.

Addressing the root causes of the problem is the only lasting solution to the persistently high rice prices. The government needs only to now enforce and apply the law without fear or favor.

<https://opinion.inquirer.net/179949/target-root-cause-of-high-rice-prices>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Agnep pushes sustainability through its shade-grown coffee

January 13, 2025 | 12:02 am



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

NESTLED in the high mountains of Benguet province is Agnep Heritage Farms, which seeks to elevate Arabica bean production in the Philippines through its shade-grown coffee.

“The high elevation could be a good place for [growing] arabica,” Noemi L. Dado, farm manager at Agnep Heritage Farms and chief executive officer at Agnep Agri-products Corp., told *BusinessWorld* in an online interview.

She and her family started the coffee farm in 2018 and started producing small batches of coffee beans three years later. “A discussion ensued with my husband and my other daughter and we decided it to be a family venture.”

The farm sits on a five-hectare property owned by her husband. “It is mostly forest land and it’s vacant. Nobody ever planted there, it’s just pine trees.”

Benguet is a key source of the country’s coffee supply, thanks to its high altitude, which is ideal for coffee bean cultivation.

ADVERTISING

“Our farm is at least 1,620 meters above sea level. High-elevation coffee benefits from cooler temperature and it has a slower maturation process. It allows the beans to develop more complex sugars and acids,” Ms. Dado said.

“The slower growth allows the plant to focus more energy on the bean production, enhancing the development of desirable flavors,” she added.

She said the farm, where the harvest occurs from December to April, initially produced 300 kilos of coffee cherries in the first year, steadily increasing to 500 kilos in the second year. Coffee cherry production had doubled to a ton by 2024.

Ms. Dado said the canopy of trees on the farm provide shade to the coffee trees. “Our coffee is grown under shade conditions. Environmentally, it promotes biodiversity by providing habitats to various species, improves soil health by retaining moisture and enriching nutrients, and protects the water supply from contamination,” she added.

The farm provides habitat to birds that act as a natural control against pests.

“The canopy of the shade-grown coffee in our farm is at least 40% foliage,” Ms. Dado said. “There are a lot of birds in our coffee farm that help control pests. We have a very wonderful diversity of bees and birds that eat the bad insects.”

She said they don’t use any pest control measures, which boosts biodiversity and environmental protection.

“A lot of our customers are also environmentally conscious, and they love the idea that we are using sustainable practices and we also don’t use chemical fertilizer,” she added.

Arabica coffee beans grown in Agnep Farm is sold online through its website, social media page or e-commerce platforms like Shopee.

“After the first year, it became harder because not many home brewers like to buy expensive coffee,” Ms. Dado said. “We sold our coffee at premium prices in the first two years. We sold mainly to home brewers in Manila.”

She said they started selling green coffee beans in the past year to two coffee shops in Manila — Angkan Coffee Company and The Giving Café. The shops bought 60% of their harvest in 2024.

She said it is easier to sell green or unroasted coffee beans than roasted coffee. “Although we could earn more from roasted whole beans, I found it a lot easier to deal with green coffee beans.”

She added that they are looking at expanding the cultivation of coffee trees in the property alongside other varieties.

They are also looking at providing community support in partnership with the Kabatangan Coffee Growers.

“These are farmers in our community. We don’t want just our farm to benefit given our emphasis on shade-grown and sustainable agriculture,” Ms. Dado said.

Coffee farmers in the Philippines operate mostly small-scale farms, limiting their ability to keep up with market demand.

Smallholder farmers — those with one to two hectares of land — account for about 80% of Philippine coffee production.

Despite various local sources of coffee beans, the Philippines typically imports most of its coffee. Philippine-grown coffee can only meet about 38% of market requirements.

The Philippines is expected to import 5.8 million 60-kilo bags of coffee in 2025, according to a report by the US Department of Agriculture.

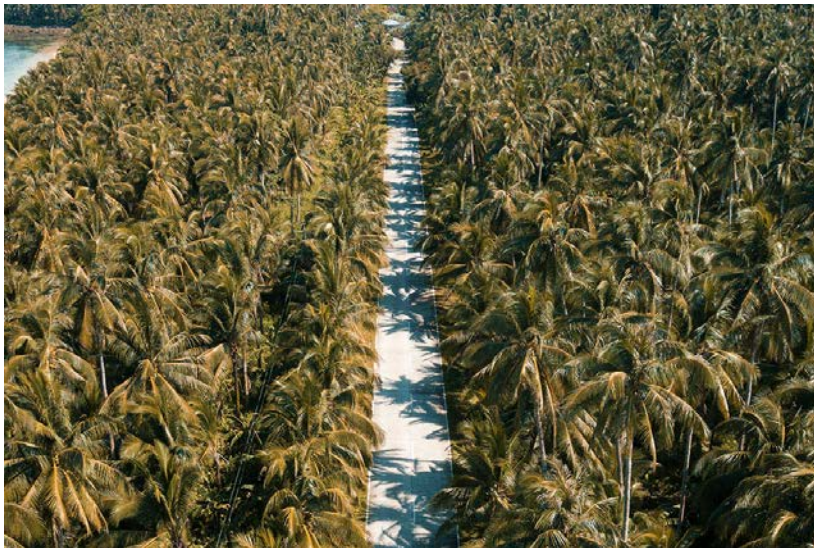
The Philippines is the fourth-largest coffee importer after the European Union, which imports 45 million 60-kilo bags, the US (23.9 million bags) and Japan (7.25 million bags), the agency said.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2025/01/13/646030/agnep-pushes-sustainability-through-its-shade-grown-coffee/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

PCA to partner with Monde Nissin to support Filipino coconut farmers

January 13, 2025 | 12:01 am



MICHAEL LOUIE-UNSPLASH

THE Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) said it is looking to partner with food and beverage manufacturer Monde Nissin Corp. to support local coconut farmers.

In a statement, the agency said its banner campaign seeks to bolster the coconut industry through multi-stakeholder participation, encouraging synergy across the public and private sectors.

“The role of private partners like Monde Nissin is crucial in realizing transformative goals, such as increased production, innovation and sustainable practices,” it added.

PCA Administrator Dexter R. Buted said the initiative also involves other implementing agencies of the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan (CFIDP) to broaden the scope and impact of the program.

These are the Department of Agriculture and Department of Trade and Industry, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Commission on Higher Education and Cooperative Development Authority.

It added that Monde Nissin is looking for local partners to support the production of its new coconut-based product. “This is the start of our partnership,” Mr. Buted said.

The PCA said they seek to boost coconut supply in the next five years through their replanting program.

Last year, the PCA launched its coconut rehabilitation program, which involves planting 100 million coconut trees to replace aging ones.

This year, the agency aims to plant 15.3 million trees and 25.4 million trees yearly from 2026 to 2028.

The replanting project is expected to increase coconut output by 4.7 billion nuts annually, valued at P33.1 billion, by 2034.

Mr. Buted has also pushed the use of coconut by-products such as coconut oil, coco sugar and coco flour in Monde Nissin's products.

“Both parties committed to a follow-up meeting involving Monde Nissin's Research and Development and procurement teams to deepen the collaboration,” the PCA said. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2025/01/13/646029/pca-to-partner-with-monde-nissin-to-support-filipino-coconut-farmers/>

MANILA STANDARD:

Solon: Congress super committee ready to tackle food, power prices

By Rio N. Araia

January 12, 2025, 11:30 pm

The House of Representatives led by Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez will continue to exercise its oversight functions to address the causes of soaring food and electricity costs, and even ensure accountability in the use of public funds, Pampanga Rep. Aurelio Gonzales Jr. said Sunday.

“ We will continue to strengthen the power of Congress to go after irregularities that make things difficult for our people. We will not let this ill practice go on just like this to affect prices of food and electricity go up,” he said.

The Quinta Comm, also known as the Murang Pagkain Super Committee, is actively investigating agricultural smuggling, hoarding, and price manipulation, which have been identified as key factors driving food inflation.

“We are uncovering the mechanisms that allow cartels to thrive, and this House is determined to dismantle these networks of greed,” Gonzales said.

The House committees on ways and means and legislative franchises have been scrutinizing the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines to ensure it meets its obligations, pays the proper taxes and refrains from passing undue charges to consumers.

The Quad Comm, for its part, has been taking up critical issues, including illegal Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators, their links to money laundering, and extrajudicial killings during the Duterte administration.

“This probe is not just about accountability: It is about upholding human rights and protecting our national interests,” Gonzales said.

Another key investigation led by the Blue Ribbon Committee has zeroed in on the alleged misuse of P612.5 million in confidential funds by the Office of the Vice President and Department of Education.

The Pampanga lawmaker raised concern about the alarming proliferation of vloggers and internet trolls maligning innocent people through fake news.

“Social media must not be used to malign and disinform against those advancing the truth and accountability,” he said.

On the legislative front, he lauded the House of Representatives’ achievements under Romualdez’s leadership.

“With 166 laws enacted, including 27 out of 28 LEDAC priority measures and 61 out of 64 priority measures under the CLA for the 19th Congress, the House has proven its ability to deliver results that directly benefit Filipinos,” he said.

Pending measures are also geared toward strengthening the economy and public welfare, among these is House Bill 9729, which aims to enhance MSME productivity through shared-use equipment and resources.

In health, an amendment to the Universal Health Care Act is in the works to improve benefit packages and adjust premium contribution schemes.

Congress is also deliberating on a National Flood Control Plan to address recurring flooding in disaster-prone areas, Gonzales said, adding “we need a comprehensive approach to mitigate flooding and help communities recover more quickly.”

He said education remains a top priority, and that as the 19th Congress enters its final stretch, the House reaffirms its commitment to serving the Filipino people.

“Oversight and legislation are two sides of the same coin. Both are essential in ensuring that our people live better lives,” he emphasized.

“Under Speaker Romualdez’s leadership, the House will continue to uphold accountability, pass impactful laws and deliver results for the nation,” he said.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/national/314546137/solon-congress-super-committee-ready-to-tackle-food-power-prices.html>

THE MANILA TIMES:

DA, DTI working to make rice affordable

By Giselle P. Jordan and Janine Alexis Miguel

January 13, 2025

EXPANDED distribution of lower-priced rice and changes to labeling rules, among other measures, will be implemented by the government as part of efforts to improve the availability and affordability of the staple.

More Kadiwa kiosks will be set up in public markets and train stations in Metro Manila and the Agriculture department is also partnering with local government units to ensure the distribution of cheaper rice.

"We are ensuring that rice reaches every Filipino household at fair and affordable prices, starting with key markets in Metro Manila and, eventually, other regions," Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said.

The Kadiwa Rice-for-All program allows the public to purchase rice at P45 per kilo for 5 percent broken rice, P40 for 25 percent broken rice, and P36 for 100 percent broken rice otherwise known as Sulit Rice.

A P29/kilo rice program is also available for indigents, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, solo parents, and indigenous peoples with a 10-kilo monthly limit for each beneficiary.

Under a partnership with the Metro Manila Development Council, meanwhile, local governments in the National Capital Region will sell rice stocks of the National Food Authority (NFA) at P38 per kilo.

"We are committed to bringing down prices to benefit all Filipinos," Tiu Laurel said.

Trade Secretary Ma. Cristina Roque, meanwhile, said that the Trade and Agriculture departments were finalizing a joint order that would standardize the labeling and price tag requirements for milled rice.

Rice labeling will be aligned with standards applied to manufactured goods, including the mandatory display of essential details such as grade, variety, weight, and retail price, she noted.

Roque and Tiu Laurel met last Thursday to discuss the rice situation and the Trade department said that they explored solutions to make rice more affordable in line with the government's push for food security and economic stability.

Both departments have also agreed to set a maximum suggested retail price (MSRP) of P58/kilo for imported rice, to be implemented starting Jan. 20.

The MSRP will be implemented initially in Metro Manila, and will be reviewed every month to take into account factors including global prices of the grain.

Agriculture groups, however, said the price remained in favor of traders, who have been accused by Tiu Laurel of profiteering.

Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas President Danilo Ramos said that P58/kilo was still too high for ordinary consumers and claimed that the government did not have strong mechanisms to ensure compliance by traders and retailers.

The Agriculture department, he added, should instead focus on supporting local rice farmers by lowering the cost of farm inputs, the provision of subsidies and raising farmgate prices.

Federation of Free Farmers Chairman Leonardo Montemayor, meanwhile, said the government seemed focused on lowering rice prices at the retail end.

The lowering of rice import tariffs to 15 percent from 35 percent only encouraged traders to import more rice, he claimed, adding that it would be easier to prosecute them for profiteering instead of forcing retailers to lower the selling price to consumers.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/01/13/business/top-business/da-dti-working-to-make-rice-affordable/2037385>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Murang Pagkain panel set to ramp up efforts against increase in food prices

Jovee Marie N. dela Cruz
January 13, 2025

AS the House of Representatives resumes session from the holiday break, the lead chairman of the House Murang Pagkain Supercommittee announced that the chamber will intensify efforts to address skyrocketing food prices, starting with rice, then focusing on chicken, pork, and vegetable cartels.

The House Committee on Ways and Means chairman, Albay Rep. Jose Clemente “Joey Sarte” Salceda said that the super panel will intensify its campaign to bring rice prices down, citing global rice prices reported by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) at around US\$427 to 500 per metric ton.

“We will intensify our fight to lower rice prices. As of the latest data from the Food and Agriculture Organization, global rice prices are at around US\$427 to 500 per metric ton, which means the landed price should be at around P34 to 36 per kilo,” he added.

“One of the main drivers of the uptrend, we suspect, is overpricing by supermarkets, which sell on a per kilo basis at as much as P70 per kilo. This is unacceptable. The highest quality Thai indica rice is just at P41 per kilo once landed and imposed all applicable duties and taxes,” Salceda said.

He dismissed claims by supermarket representatives and the Bureau of Plant Industry that consumer preferences are driving high prices.

He emphasized that, based on import prices, current market rates for even the best-quality rice are unjustifiable.

“Clearly, based on import prices, even the best quality rice should not be at these levels. I remind our resource persons that while I hesitated to cite invitees in contempt during the Christmas season, we are past that now,” he warned.

He also questioned the Department of Agriculture’s proposed price cap of P58 per kilo, pointing out that sellers could still enjoy P17 to P23 profit per kilo

He said the supercommittee will examine the potential for setting a more appropriate price cap.

The lawmaker said the supercommittee is also set to scrutinize efforts to stabilize meat and vegetable prices.

Salceda flagged corn as a key issue, noting that its prices surged past general inflation by 2.1 percentage points last December, which directly affects meat prices.

“We will also aim for long-term efforts to keep vegetable prices affordable and stable—so that surpluses are not harmful to farmers, while deficits are addressed,” he added.

Salceda said Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez has directed the committee to take all necessary measures to reduce food prices for Filipino families.

Salceda affirmed this, setting a goal to maintain food inflation within the government’s 2 percent to 4 percent target for the year.

“My commitment is to ensure affordable and stable food prices for every Filipino family,” he said.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/01/13/murang-pagkain-panel-set-to-ramp-up-efforts-against-increase-in-food-prices/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Interventions to counter high rice prices–DA

Ada Pelonia
January 13, 2025



A sari-sari store owner in Caloocan City measures retailed rice to sell to her customers. The Department of Agriculture has announced that the maximum suggested retail price (MSRP) for imported rice would be set at P58 per kilo beginning January 20. The DA also expanded the distribution network of its cheaper rice programs as part of efforts to counter “unreasonably high” retail prices of the staple. Under the Rice-for-All program, consumers can purchase rice at P45 per kilo for 5 percent broken grains, P40 for 25 percent broken, and P36 for 100 percent broken, or “Sulit Rice.”

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has expanded the distribution network of its cheaper rice programs as part of efforts to counter “unreasonably high” retail prices of the food staple.

The DA said it has expanded the Rice-for-All program by opening additional Kadiwa ng Pangulo kiosks in public markets and train stations.



It added collaborating with local government units (LGUs) nationwide to distribute rice at “fair prices,” including its P29 rice program for vulnerable sectors.

Agriculture Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said these initiatives also aim to ensure equitable access, particularly for economically disadvantaged households

“We are ensuring that rice reaches every Filipino household at fair and affordable prices, starting with key markets in Metro Manila and, eventually, other regions,” he said in a statement.

Under the Rice-for-All program, Filipino consumers can purchase rice at P45 per kilo for 5 percent broken grains, P40 for 25 percent broken, and P36 for 100 percent broken also known as “Sulit Rice.”

The P29 rice program serves indigents, senior citizens, solo parents, persons with disabilities, and indigenous communities, with a 10-kilo monthly limit per beneficiary.

The DA has also partnered with the Metro Manila Development Council in engaging LGUs across the National Capital Region (NCR) to sell National Food Authority (NFA) rice stocks at P38 per kilo.

It added that this would offer consumers additional affordable option while helping decongest NFA warehouses ahead of the palay harvest.

MSRP for imports

The agency recently said that beginning January 20, it will impose a maximum suggested retail price (MSRP) of P58 per kilo for premium imported rice with no more than 5 percent broken grains.

The MSRP, which will initially be implemented in Metro Manila, will be reviewed monthly. It added that this would cap the profit margins of importers, traders, and retailers at P10 per kilo. Laurel also noted that global trends could lower the MSRP by February.

The DA warned that retailers exceeding the MSRP must justify their prices to authorities.

It added that the agency and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) will recommend to the president imposing a price ceiling if rice prices remain excessively high, with strict penalties for violators.

“We are committed to bringing down prices to benefit all Filipinos,” Laurel said.

He also announced that rice that has been stored by the NFA for at least two months will be available for resale to local government units in Metro Manila at P38 per kilo.

“This initiative will help the NFA clear its warehouses in preparation for the upcoming harvest season,” he said.

“Our warehouses are filled to capacity, and I have directed NFA administrator Larry Lacson to have the rice milled immediately so we can saturate the market with fairer-priced rice as we make space for the palay we plan to procure at a minimum of P23 per kilo for clean and dry this season.”

Image credits: [Nonie Reyes](#)

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/01/13/interventions-to-counter-high-rice-prices-da/>

ABANTE TONITE:

P58 per kilong bigas namumurong price ceiling

January 12, 2025

Nagbabala ang Department of Agriculture (DA) na posibleng magtakda na lang ng price ceiling sa bigas kapag nanatiling mataas pa rin ang presyo nito.

Una nang inihayag ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. na ipatutupad nila simula sa Enero 20, 2025 ang maximum SRP na P58 per kilo sa imported rice. Layunin nito na maawat ang pagtaas ng presyo ng bigas sa mga palengke.

Ngunit kung mananatiling mataas pa rin umano ang presyo ng bigas, irerekomenda ng DA, kasama ang Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), kay Pangulong Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. na gawing price ceiling na ang maximum SRP na P58 per kilo para mapatawan ng parusa ang lalabag dito.

Sabi ng DA, rerepasuhin nila kada buwan ang maximum SRP.

Puna ng DA, nananatiling mataas pa rin ang presyo ng bigas sa kabila ng pagbawas ng taripa ng imported rice sa 15% mula sa 35%.

Ayon sa kagawaran, sisimula nito ang pagpapatupad ng P58 per kilo na maximum SRP ng bigas sa Metro Manila na magsisilbing price ceiling nito para masigurong hindi lalampas sa P10 per kilo ang kabuuang tubo ng mga importer, trader, at retailer.

Pero, sinabi rin ni Laurel na maaaring bumaba ang maximum SRP sa Pebrero dahil pababa na ang presyo ng bigas sa pandaigdigang pamilihan.

Babala ng DA, kailangang ipaliwanag ng retailers ang kanilang presyo kung lalampas sila sa maximum SRP. (Eileen Mencias)

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2025/01/12/p58-per-kilong-bigas-namumurong-price-ceiling/>