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MANILA BULLETIN:

'Diyos ko ang taas': P58 maximum suggested retail price for rice drives solons nuts

BY [ELLSON QUISMORIO](#)

Jan 15, 2025 05:06 PM

AT A GLANCE

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“Diyos ko ang taas nun (My God that's so high),” overall chairman Albay 2nd district Rep. Joey Salceda said of the MSRP on the Filipino staple food. He said he "found it hard to accept" such number.

The Murang Pagkain Super-committee is also known as the quinta-committee (quinta-comm).

Expressing similar sentiments was Deputy Majority Leader Iloilo 1st district Rep. Janette Garin, who accused the DA of failing to address key issues in the rice supply chain. This has reportedly led to the current elevated prices of rice.

“Bakit naman si DA may MSRP na ₱58, saang planeta ito nanggaling, Mr. Chair?” Garin said during her interpellation, wherein stressed that the MSRP should have been lower following the drop in the price of regular milled rice.

(Why does the DA have an MSRP of P58 [for rice], from what planet did this come from, Mr. Chair?)

Salceda grilled DA Undersecretary Asis Perez on the basis of the P58 per kilo MSRP for rice. This, as the Bicolano noted that the cost of imported rice had gone down to between P44 and P47, while the buying price for palay (unmilled rice) had fallen as well.

Garin described the P58 per kilo MSRP as “unrealistic” and “a disservice to consumers”. It is nearly three times the Marcos administration's ideal or target retail price for the grain of P20 per kilo.

The quinta-comm will invite DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. to shed light on the MSRP during the next hearing.

Garin cited reports showing that the landed cost of imported rice ranged from P35 to P39 per kilo—significantly lower than the DA’s MSRP. She argued that even with logistics and mark-ups, rice should not exceed P45 to P49 per kilo at retail.

“Kung ang landed cost ay P35, maibebenta mo siya ng P42 to P43. ‘Yung iba namang landed cost ay P39, maibebenta mo siya ng P47 to P48. Pero siyempre, ‘pag may damage, logistics, aakyat siya, pinakamataas P49,” she explained.

'Reasonable mark-up'

Perez defended the P58 MSRP as part of a pilot program for Metro Manila. He said that it was designed to address higher rice prices in the area, which reportedly range from P62 to P64 per kilo.

Perez said the P58 price “was based on the landed cost of imported rice, plus a reasonable mark-up for all those involved in the distribution chain”.

"Mahaba po ‘yang chain na yan (It's a long chain),” he noted.

However, Garin dismissed his explanation and called the DA's action the “wrong solution” to tackling the lofty prices of rice.

“No, I’m sorry, Mr. Chair. I’m sorry, Usec Asis, but that is a wrong solution...How do we resolve the problem of mahal na bigas (expensive rice)? Magkano ang landed cost? Magkano ang kapital ng local farmer? Magkano ang pwedeng ipatong ng mga dadaanan?” she asked.

(How much is the landed cost? How much is the capital of a local farmer? How much can the players added along the way?)

The quinta-comm is tasked with addressing the systemic challenges of soaring food prices, smuggling, price manipulation, and hunger—issues that have left millions of Filipinos struggling to access affordable and secure food.

Formed under House Resolution (HR) No. 254, that was introduced by Speaker Martin Romualdez, this super-committee brings together five key House panels to identify gaps in government programs and hold accountable those responsible for market abuses.

The joint panel is composed of the Committees on Ways and Means, Trade and Industry, Agriculture and Food, Social Services, and the Special Committee on Food Security.



(File photo)

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<https://mb.com.ph/2025/1/15/p58-maximum-suggested-retail-price-for-rice-drives-solons-nuts>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Marcos vows ample funding for big dams

BY [BETHEENA UNITE](#)

Jan 15, 2025 05:58 PM

President Marcos has committed to provide adequate funds for the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) as he said he is bent on building large dams in the country.



President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. talks with Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel during a meeting with some Cabinet members at the Malacañan Palace on Jan. 15, 2025. (Presidential Photo)

In a meeting with NIA officials at Malacañan Palace on Wednesday, Jan. 15, Marcos emphasized the importance of constructing large dams not only for irrigation but also for other purposes.

"The big dams, we need to have that," Marcos said, referring to NIA funding under the 2025 General Appropriations Act (GAA).

"The P22 billion, that's in the GAA, P22.882 [billion], that's in the GAA. Palagay ko mayroon pa tayong savings diyan (I think we still have savings there)," Marcos added.

Under NIA's 2025 programs, activities and projects, the agency allocated P20.84 billion for the Pump Irrigation Sub-Program and P7.88 billion for Stage 2 of the Ilocos Norte-Ilocos Sub-Abra Irrigation Project.

Earmarked for the Balog-Balog Multipurpose Project Phase II in Tarlac was P2.49 billion while P99.5 million was set aside for the Special Irrigation Sub-Program.

According to NIA Administrator Eduardo Eddie Guillen, the agency's objectives include enhancing irrigation efficiency, ensuring continuous operation of existing irrigation service areas and maintaining current irrigated lands.

Guillen also highlighted plans to improve service roads along irrigation canals.

The programs and projects under NIA will incorporate technological interventions and modernization of irrigation systems to mitigate the effects of climate change, he said.

<https://mb.com.ph/2025/1/15/marcos-vows-ample-funding-for-big-dams>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Pork price spike blamed on supply shortage

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

January 16, 2025 | 12:00am



File photo ng mga manok sa isang poultry farm.

AFP, File

MANILA, Philippines — No active bird flu case logged – BAI For the first time in almost a year, the country does not have any ongoing case or outbreak of avian influenza, according to the Bureau of Animal Industry.

The BAI, an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture (DA), said no positive highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) case was reported from Jan. 4 to 10.

The bureau said there has been no ongoing bird flu case since the completion of culling, depopulation and surveillance activities within a one-kilometer radius of previously affected areas.

This is the first time since February 2024 that the country has not recorded any active bird flu case, the BAI said.

On an annual basis, the number of remaining areas affected by bird flu but do not have active outbreaks has declined. These areas are waiting to be declared bird flu-free.

As of Jan. 10, only 136 barangays in 53 cities and municipalities across nine provinces in five regions were identified as bird flu-affected areas.

Of the cities and municipalities, 51 have no reported cases for more than 90 days while the rest did not have any outbreak for 31 to 60 days.

In the same period last year, 154 barangays in 66 cities and municipalities across 10 provinces in six regions were affected by bird flu, the BAI said.

Bataan, Benguet, Bulacan, Camarines Norte, Kalinga, Laguna, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga and Tarlac as well as Manila are among the remaining bird flu-affected areas.

As of Jan. 10, 17 provinces have been declared bird flu-free by the DA. These are Aurora, Batangas, Cagayan, Camarines Sur, Capiz, Cotabato, Davao del Sur, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Isabela, Leyte, Maguindanao del Sur, Pangasinan, Quezon, Rizal, South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat.

During the same period last year, only 14 provinces were declared free from avian influenza.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2025/01/16/2414505/pork-price-spike-blamed-supply-shortage>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

‘Sale of NFA rice to LGUs illegal’

Bella Cariaso - The Philippine Star

January 16, 2025 | 12:00am



The National Food Authority-Negros Occidental

pna.gov.ph / PNA Bacolod file photo

MANILA, Philippines — The National Food Authority (NFA)’s plan to sell rice stocks to local government units (LGUs) is illegal, a farmer’s group said yesterday.

Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) national manager Raul Montemayor said the government needs to declare a food emergency to warrant the sale of NFA rice at negotiated prices.

Montemayor noted that there is a provision under Section 4 of Republic Act (RA) 12708, the Agricultural Tariffication Act, which explicitly states that the disposal of aging NFA stocks can be done through public auction.

“The option to sell to LGUs at negotiated prices is allowed under Section 2 of the law only when there is a food security emergency on rice due to supply shortage or an extraordinary increase in rice prices, based on a formula to be devised by the National Price Coordinating Council (NPCC),” Montemayor told The STAR.

The newly signed RA 12708 amends RA 11203, the Rice Tariffication Law.

“I don’t think the DA (Department of Agriculture) has declared a food security emergency. So the sale of NFA buffer stocks to LGUs at negotiated prices is questionable,” Montemayor said.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa has confirmed the plan of the NFA to sell rice stocks to Metro Manila mayors and allow the local executives to resell the NFA rice.

“Instead of using NFA stocks to lower rice prices, which is not the primary purpose of these stocks, the DA should run after profiteering importers, wholesalers and retailers,” Montemayor said.

De Mesa said allowing mayors to procure NFA rice and resell the staple to their constituents would address the possible rotting of at least six million bags of NFA rice.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2025/01/16/2414512/sale-nfa-rice-lgus-illegal>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Rice price ceiling eyed

Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas - The Philippine Star

January 16, 2025 | 12:00am



Rice dealers display rice and their prices at New York Street, Cubao, Quezon City on April 16, 2023.

STAR / Michael Varcas

MANILA, Philippines — A rice price cap could be imposed if prevailing market prices do not go down, according to the Department of Agriculture.

The DA said it is studying the possibility of a rice price ceiling amid next week’s implementation of the maximum suggested retail price (MSRP) on the staple.

Prevailing rice market prices seem to be “unreasonable” as they remain at the same level despite the landed cost of imported rice declining by as much as P8 per kilo, Agriculture Undersecretary Asis Perez said yesterday at the House quinta committee hearing.

Perez attributed the lower landed cost of rice to easing of world market prices and the tariff cut.

Under the Price Act, the DA may recommend a price ceiling if prevailing market prices have become “excessive” or “unreasonable.”

The DA will implement an MSRP of P58 per kilo on imported five-percent broken rice starting Jan. 20.

If the price of imported broken rice – considered premium grade – goes down, other quality rice prices would follow suit, Perez said.

“Imported five-percent broken rice should not exceed P58 per kilo. For rice with a higher percentage of broken grains, the price should be much lower,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said earlier.

The MSRP would be effective in bringing down rice prices due to competition, Philippine Amalgamated Supermarkets Association executive director Steven Cua said.

‘Unrealistic MSRP’

Setting an MSRP of P58 per kilo for imported broken rice is “unrealistic” and a “disservice to consumers,” according to House Deputy Majority Leader and Iloilo 1st District Rep. Janette Garin.

“Why is it that the DA has an MSRP of P58? From what planet does it come from?” she asked yesterday.

The MSRP is too high, Albay 2nd District Rep. Joey Salceda said.

Garin recalled that in Bulacan, Laurel announced that rice prices will be brought down to between P45 and P49.

Sultan Kudarat 2nd District Rep. Horacio Suansing agreed with Garin, saying that rice millers, importers and traders had agreed to lower rice prices. – **Jose Rodel Clapano**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/01/16/2414550/rice-price-ceiling-eyed>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Shear line, ITCZ and amihan have minimal impact on agriculture – DA

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

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 08:37 AM January 15, 2025



Boys play as big waves hit a park in Navotas, north of Manila, Philippines on Sunday, Aug. 18, 2013. (File photo from AP/AARON FAVILA)

The Department of Agriculture (DA) sees minimal impact from recent weather disturbances even as the country's sector incurred millions of losses as of writing.

Based on the DA's latest bulletin, agricultural damage amounted to P67.6 million as of Monday due to the combined effects of the shear line, the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), and the northeast monsoon (amihan).

It said the livelihood of some 1,887 farmers in Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan), Western Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Davao, and Soccsksargen were affected.

The DA pegged the volume of production loss at 472 metric tons, spanning 3,692 hectares (ha) of agricultural land.

Rice comprised over 86 percent of the total with P58.4 million, followed by livestock with P4.1 million and high-value crops with P2.8 million.

Despite this, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said on Monday they don't expect the weather disturbances to have major effects on retail prices of agricultural goods.

“This is very, very small volume,” said de Mesa, also the DA's spokesperson.

The DA said the assessment of the damage brought by the weather systems is ongoing. It is also monitoring the actual weather situation and field conditions in affected areas.

At the same time, the agency said it is coordinating with national and local government offices concerned to provide available resources for interventions and assistance.

It has set aside agricultural inputs such as rice, corn, and vegetable seeds for distribution through DA regional offices.

Affected farmers can secure funding from the quick response fund for the rehabilitation and recovery of affected areas.

The Agricultural Credit Policy Council's Survival and Recovery (SURE) Loan Program is offering up to P25,000 in loans that are payable in three years at zero interest.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. is indemnifying insured affected farmers.

In Metro Manila, a kilo of tomato retailed from P150 to P310 as of Jan. 10, higher than only P40 to P90 in the same period a year ago, according to the DA's price monitoring.

Cabbage (repolyo) ranged between P50 and P250 per kilogram as opposed to P40 to P80 per kg.

Carrots were sold from P120-P220 per kg, also higher than P60-P130 per kg, while white potatoes were priced from P110-P220 per kg compared with P100-P160 per kg.

<https://business.inquirer.net/501375/shear-line-itcz-and-amihan-have-minimal-impact-on-agriculture-da>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

DA aims lower rice prices by setting maximum SRP for premium grains

By: [Gabriel Pabico Lalu](#) - Reporter / [@GabrielLaluINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 02:58 PM January 15, 2025



INQUIRER FILES

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is pinning its hopes for lower rice prices on a maximum suggested retail price (MSRP) for premium grains, believing that making high-class varieties cheaper would also impact regular-milled rice.

During the hearing of the House of Representatives Quinta committee on Wednesday, Agriculture Undersecretary Asis Perez was quizzed by ACT Teachers party-list Rep. France Castro regarding the P58 per kilogram MSRP on premium rice, as the latter believes it has not helped the situation.

According to Castro, rice prices have already decreased, with premium varieties sold at around P55 per kilogram — lower than the MSRP. With the MSRP, Castro claimed that the government only allows traders and retailers to sell rice at a higher price, when they would already have profit at P55 per kilogram.

“We have a well-milled rice that is branded, and then there are different brands, other brands in the markets. They are priced at P60 to P62 per kilogram. So what we did is to find how much their capital is, then we add P8 to P12 markup based on the imported landed cost, and that’s the maximum price that we saw,” Perez said. “That was our basis for identifying the P58 price.”

“I think it only created a bigger confusion and some took advantage of it because the prices of rice have decreased, right? If we peg prices at a maximum suggested retail price of P58 per kilogram, so even if you sourced that cheaper price, you can sell that for P58 right?” Castro asked.

“I am familiar with the rice you said because we use that sometimes. But the maximum retail price for that is P55 per kilogram. That’s why the P58 per kilogram that you set, this only means that a retailer can sell rice for P58 when they can already lower it down to P55,” she added.

When Castro stressed that the concern of the hearing is regular-milled rice as the masses cannot afford premium rice, Perez explained that the goal of this MSRP is to lower the price of other regular varieties.

According to Perez, the idea is that if the price difference between premium rice and regular-milled rice is not that big, consumers will pick the better varieties — forcing regular-milled rice traders to lower their prices too.

“Well Mr. Chair we are talking about the common, the regular milled rice. You are talking about premium rice, the poor people cannot reach that variety. Premium rice is the one priced at P62 to P64 per kilogram. That’s why Mr. Chair, if you have a higher target, what we think is you should average that depending on what you saw as a maximum price,” Castro said.

“If you will allow me to explain, the basis of the MSRP is what you find now in the market as there are rice priced at P60, P62, and P64 per kilogram. So if you peg a price that would not be above P64 per kilogram, whether that is the highest-priced rice — as you mentioned, the premium grains — then the price of all varieties will go down,” Perez said.

“Because for example, premium rice is already priced at P58, that’s the most expensive, of course the lower-quality rice’s price would also go down naturally. Otherwise I would buy a P58 per kilogram premium rice, that’s how the market will play,” he added.

Perez also bared that they are considering setting a price ceiling, which will be in tune with provisions of Republic Act No. 7581 or the Price Act.

“And so at this time because we have no other options, the other options that we considered under the Price Act is to set up probably an [...] that’s an MSRP, that’s what we did, but what we did now is a price ceiling, based on unreasonable prices,” Perez said.

“So you’re considering a price ceiling?” quinta committee presiding officer and Albay 2nd District Rep. Joey Salceda asked.

“That is within the provisions of the Price Act,” Perez replied.

Last January 11, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the government will impose this MSRP P58 per kilo for imported rice. The MSRP will start on January 20, initially covering Metro Manila.

Laurel said the decision came after “extensive consultations” with industry players as the government attempts to tame increasing rice prices — which have not gone down despite tariff cuts and a drop in global prices.

The MSRP would then be reviewed monthly to consider factors affecting prices.

During the campaign season for the 2022 national elections, part of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s promise was to bring down rice prices down to the P20 to P30 per kilogram range.

Despite rice prices skyrocketing in the middle of 2023 — which forced the President to impose a price cap on regular and well-milled rice — administration allies and Marcos himself maintains that attaining this goal is still possible.

Last September 2024, House Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez said rice prices had dropped to P42 per kilogram, which he attributed to the interventions made by Marcos, like the reduction in imported rice tariffs to 15 percent.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2024943/da-aims-lower-rice-prices-by-setting-maximum-srp-for-premium-grains>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

NPCC evaluates steps for DA to declare food security emergency

By: [Gabriel Pabico Lulu](#) - Reporter / [@GabrielLuluINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 04:21 PM January 15, 2025



RICE / JANUARY 7, 2024

Rice retailers attend their stores, selling various local and imported rice varieties that retail for P40 to P64 per kilo at the Marikina Public Market on Tuesday, January 7, 2024. The Department of Agriculture will be implementing a maximum suggested retail price (MSRP) for imported rice at the end of this month, stressing that there should be no imported rice priced at P60 per kilogram in the market.

INQUIRER PHOTO / NINO JESUS ORBETA

MANILA, Philippines — The National Price Coordinating Council (NPCC) is looking at possible measures that would allow the Department of Agriculture (DA) to declare a food security emergency and eventually mitigate rising prices of basic commodities.

At the House of Representatives Quinta committee hearing on Wednesday, Department of Trade and Industry Director Cherryll Carbonell said that the NPCC met on Tuesday, and they are looking at crafting a resolution declaring an extraordinary increase in prices of goods.

“And Mr. Chair I’d just like to give an update din po that the National Price Coordinating Council met yesterday, and we are looking at ‘yong possibility po of declaring that there is an extraordinary

increase in price, to allow the DA Secretary to declare a food security emergency,” Carbonell told the committee members.

“But we’re still working on the resolution,” she added.

Committee on Agriculture and Food chairperson and Quezon 1st District Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga said he hopes this can be acted upon immediately.

“And DA is part of NPCC right? So I hope there’s immediate action for this,” he noted.

Last December 2024, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said that they are considering the declaration of a “food security emergency” by January as it scrambles to rein in rice prices.

Laurel told the Inquirer in a text message that he was scheduled to meet with key agencies under the DA, including the Bureau of Plant Industry and the National Food Authority (NFA), to assess the national rice situation.

The assurance from Carbonell came after Enverga asked Agriculture Undersecretary Asis Perez if there are efforts to amend Republic Act No. 7581 or the Price Act, since it appears the said law hinders DA from implementing more stringent measures against rising prices of goods.

After this, Enverga discussed the DA’s maximum suggested retail price (MSRP) for premium grains, noting that it appears that there is a 10 to 12 percent profit margin per kilogram — which the lawmaker said is quite high.

“Don’t you think that’s too big? It seems that the markup is so high?” Enverga asked.

“Mr. Chair, if I may explain, based on what you mentioned earlier, there are importers, right? So let us say that is the landed price. And then there is a wholesaler, right? Then the wholesaler passes it to a dealer, then there’s the retailer. So when we looked at the system — of course the retailer you can categorize it into small retailers who consume 15 sacks in a day,” Perez said.

“So it means that if you have a profit of P5 per kilogram, then you sell 25 kilograms, 200 kilograms, then you will pay for market posts, the profit of P5 per kilogram is reasonable. So now that we computed it, when we looked at the (supply) chain, they would earn P2 each and then P5 for the retailer,” he added.

Enverga believes shortening the supply chain can make rice prices go down.

“Anyway I think for now that is the norm eh, right? But I think this is something — I hope you agree with me USec Asis — we need to address this, we need to shorten the supply chain, limit the added cost. I mean we do not think ill of people who want to earn money out of business, but for me that profit margin is too big,” he said.

“If I may just follow up with DTI, is this practice right for the consumers?” he asked.

“Yes, Mr. Chair (but) Mr. Chair is shortening the value chain; yes po, we agree that it will redound to the benefit of the consumers,” Carbonell responded. The Quinta committee is still discussing issues involving rising prices of goods, particularly rice. Earlier, the DA said it will implement MSRP for premium grains, believing that making high-class varieties cheaper would also impact regular-milled rice.

The MSRP would then be reviewed monthly to consider factors affecting prices.

During the campaign season for the 2022 national elections, part of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s promise was to bring down rice prices down to the P20 to P30 per kilogram range.

Despite rice prices skyrocketing in the middle of 2023 — which forced the President to impose a price cap on regular and well-milled rice — administration allies and Marcos himself maintains that attaining this goal is still possible.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2024968/npcc-evaluates-actions-for-da-to-declare-food-security-emergency>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Oversight team organized for swine recovery project

January 15, 2025 | 8:18 pm



REUTERS

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it is organizing the oversight mechanisms for the Swine Industry Recovery Project (SIRP), which will help pig farms rebuild following the African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak.

In a Special Order, the DA ordered the creation of a project steering committee, technical working group, and a project management office to oversee the SIRP.

“The project seeks to strengthen the industry by enhancing biosecurity measures, modernizing farm infrastructure, improving genetic quality, and expanding market access,” the DA said.

ADVERTISING

It added that SIRP will support smallholder farmers, cooperatives, commercial breeders, and at-risk agricultural communities. It will provide tailored assistance to restore, modernize, and sustain swine production.

“The allocated funds will be distributed to various livestock agencies and operational units under the guidance of the Undersecretary for Livestock,” the DA added.

The Philippines saw a resurgence of ASF cases in August, prompting the government to fast-track its limited vaccine rollout to commercial and small growers.

Recent outbreaks were blamed on the spread of contaminated water due to heavy rains and tropical cyclones during the second half of 2024.

As of Dec. 27, 67 municipalities across 11 provinces had active ASF cases, according to the Bureau of Animal Industry. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/01/15/646989/oversight-team-organized-for-swine-recovery-project/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Dairy farmers seek more funding for school milk feeding program

January 15, 2025 | 8:17 pm



REUTERS

DAIRY FARMERS are calling on the Department of Education (DepEd) to raise its budget for the school milk feeding program, which it said would assure producers of guaranteed volume sales.

“The extension of the milk feeding program duration would provide dairy farmers with a guaranteed market that would lead to higher incomes while addressing the nutritional needs of schoolchildren,” according to Danilo V. Fausto, president of the National Federation of Dairy Farmers and Stakeholders’ Association (Dairy NatFed).

Republic Act 11037, or the Masustansyang Pagkain Para sa Batang Pilipino Act, requires the incorporation of fresh milk and dairy products in school meals for a limited period of the year.

Dairy NatFed is calling for the extension of the milk feeding program to at least 120 days, from the current 55 days.

DepEd has allocated P11.78 billion for its school-based feeding program this year, which also involves the distribution of milk.

DepEd currently runs a 120-day feeding program involving hot meals. The milk feeding component of the program is 55 days.

“It is imperative that milk is provided consistently throughout the 120-day period. Milk should not be left behind in the program,” Mr. Fausto said in a statement.

He added that extending the milk feeding program would also help address the concerns about malnutrition in schoolchildren.

According to the Philippine Dairy Industry Roadmap 2020-2025, the expansion and extension of DepEd’s milk feeding program was among the measures intended to boost dairy-farmer incomes. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/01/15/646988/dairy-farmers-seek-more-funding-for-school-milk-feeding-program/>

REMATE:

Taas-presyo ng kamatis pinatatalupan sa Kamara

January 15, 2025 15:49



MANILA, Philippines- Ipinanawagan ng isang mambabatas ang isang congressional inquiry sa “sudden and drastic” na pagtaas ng presyo ng kamatis, na iniulat na umabot na sa P360 kada kilo sa Metro Manila.

Inihain ni Agri Rep. Wilbert Lee ang House Resolution No. 2158, na nagtutulak sa House committee na tukuyin ang posibleng papel ng price manipulators, hoarders, at cartels sa “artificial tomato crisis.”

“There is a need to take decisive action and measures from the government to protect our consumers as well as the livelihood of Filipino farmers through stricter and serious enforcement of laws, which the inquiry must ascertain and realize,” giit ni Lee.

Nauna nang sinabi ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na ibinebenta ang kamatis mula P200 kada kilo hanggang P360 kada kilo sa mga pamilihan sa Metro Manila. Iniugnay nito ang taas-presyo sa kakulangan ng local supply dahil sa serye ng mga bagyo na tumama sa bansa noong nakaraang taon. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/taas-presyo-ng-kamatis-pinatatalupan-sa-kamara/>

MANILA STANDARD:

Lawmakers furious over P58-MSRP for rice

By Maricel Cruz

January 15, 2025, 11:30 pm

A HOUSE leader on Wednesday slammed the Department of Agriculture (DA) under Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. for setting the maximum suggested retail price (MSRP) for rice at ₱58 per kilo, calling the figure “unrealistic” and “a disservice to consumers.”

Deputy Majority Leader and Iloilo Rep. Janette Garin expressed frustrations during the hearing of the Quinta Comm, also known as the Murang Pagkain Supercommittee, chaired by Albay Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda.

Garin accused the DA of failing to address key issues in the rice supply chain that have driven up prices. The panel decided to invite Laurel to the next hearing.

“Why does the DA have an MSRP of ₱58? What planet did it come from? Garin asked during her interpellation, stressing that the MSRP should have been lower after the price of regular milled rice dropped.

Salceda questioned DA Undersecretary Asis Perez on the basis of the P58 per kilo MSRP.

“My God, that is too high!” Salceda said, noting that the cost of imported rice has gone down to between P44 and P47, while the buying price for palay (unmilled rice) has fallen as well.

Garin cited an inspection and consultation with the wholesalers in Bulacan where Laurel announced in the that they will bring down the price of rice to P45 or P49.

Garin stressed that this did not happen.

Sultan Kudarat Rep. Honacio Suansing Jr. agreed with Garin. “We all agree, the rice miller there, importers, traders that we will lower the price of rice to P40 and the supply is unlimited. We are done with that. In the NCR (National Capital Region) area, there should be plenty of P40-rice being sold at Kadiwa stores and other DA outlets. That was the agreement last December,” Suansing recalled.

The price of regular rice is being sold at P37 to P38 in the market.

“How can we control the price of rice when the agency that is supposed to guide us is pegging it at a high price?” Garin asked.

Garin cited reports showing that the landed cost of imported rice ranged from P35 to P39 per kilo, significantly lower than the DA's MSRP.

Perez defended the P58-MSRP as part of a pilot program for Metro Manila, stating that it was designed to address higher rice prices in the area, reportedly ranging from P62 to P64 per kilo.

Perez said the P58-price "is based on the landed cost of imported rice, plus a reasonable mark-up for all those involved in the distribution chain."

"Let me clarify, Mr. Chair, that the MSRP is a pilot program that will implement only in Metro Manila where we see prices of P62, P64, P60," Perez said.

However, Garin dismissed this explanation, calling it a "wrong solution" that fails to tackle the root causes of high rice prices.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314547320/lawmakers-furious-over-p58-msrp-for-rice.html>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Land ownership in agri population low, unequal

By Giselle P. Jordan

January 16, 2025

JUST over 20 percent of the country's agricultural population owned or had rights to their land as of three years ago, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said in a report released earlier this month.

The agency's latest Census of Agriculture and Fisheries found that 4.3 million people, or 21.8 percent of the country's total agricultural population of 19.68 million, had legally recognized documents of ownership or the right to sell or bequeath land.

Ownership was skewed in favor of males, who numbered 3.01 million — 70.1 percent — while females accounted for 29.9 percent, or 1.28 million, despite the agriculture population being just about equal in terms of gender: 10.13 million or 51.5 percent were males and 9.55 million or 48.5 percent were females.

Among males, 29.8 percent had secure rights to the land while just 1.28 percent of the female agricultural population held ownership, which the PSA said "highlights a significant gender disparity, with women being 16.4 percentage points less likely than men to own or have secure rights to agricultural land." The agricultural population comprises "individuals aged 18 and above who were members of households with at least one agricultural operator."

The Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), whose culture was said to place an emphasis on land ownership, had the highest proportion of ownership/rights over land at 28.6 percent of its agricultural population.

On the other hand, the Bicol, Eastern Visayas and Western Visayas regions had the lowest ratios of 16.8 percent, 17.6 percent and 18.2 percent, respectively. Males also significantly outnumbered females in terms of secure ownership across all regions, the PSA reported. V The CAR had the highest proportion of female agricultural landowners/right bearers at 18.9 percent, followed by the Central Visayas (18.2 percent) and the National Capital Region (17.1 percent). The lowest female land ownership ratios were in the Eastern Visayas (10.8 percent), Bicol (11.1 percent), and Ilocos (11.5 percent), the census found.

The PSA conducts the Census of Agriculture and Fisheries every 10 years. Data for the latest round was collected over 2022 and in September-November 2023.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/01/16/business/top-business/land-ownership-in-agri-population-low-unequal/2039507>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Four picked for Searca Grains program

By **Leander C. Domingo**

January 16, 2025

THE Philippine government-hosted Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) has picked four projects for the 2024–2025 Grants for Research toward Agricultural Innovative Solutions (Grains).



Viengvilaiphone Botthoulath, a microbiology expert, will teach farmers how to extract probiotic microorganisms from agricultural waste to provide affordable nutrients for their hydroponic farms. SEARCA PHOTO

Searca Center Director Glenn Gregorio said the grants, ranging from \$10,000 to \$15,000 each, will support projects to transform food production in the Philippines, Laos, Timor-Leste and Vietnam.

Gregorio said the Grains project proponents plan to introduce new processes and technologies in farming communities.

He added that in the Philippines, Emma Sabado, an entomologist and research consultant at Mindanao State University, will craft and market new protein-rich food products out of super worms.

In Laos, Viengvilaiphone Botthoulath, a microbiology expert, will teach farmers how to extract probiotic microorganisms from agricultural waste to provide affordable nutrients for their hydroponic farms.

In Timor-Leste, Agostinho da Costa Ximenes, an agronomist and manager of Ze Ximenes Farm, will engage youth in fruit tree grafting and creating livestock feed through waste conversion by the black soldier fly.

Gregorio said Ximenes aims to provide young farmers opportunities for organic waste recycling business and sustainable agriculture.

Lastly, in Vietnam, Yin Yin Phyu, co-founder of Greenovator, will enhance farmer livelihoods in Cao Bang province with the Mekong Farm App for better income, agro-ecological practices and market linkages.

Lawyer Eric Reynoso, Searca program head of Emerging Innovation for Growth Department, said seeking alternative sources of food, nutrition and livelihood is an ongoing challenge in Southeast Asia.

"Searca Grains provides opportunities for researchers, startups and entrepreneurs to bring solutions to real-world challenges in agriculture," Reynoso said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/01/16/business/agribusiness/four-picked-for-searca-grains-program/2039308>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Camiguin inspires youth to venture into farming

By The Manila Times

January 16, 2025

CAMIGUIN is actively inspiring young people to embrace agriculture through rural farm schools and the Young Farmers Challenge Program.

Last year, 13 young agri-entrepreneurs received livelihood grants, and the province is launching its own version of the program to further support innovative agricultural ventures.

Notably, Camiguin's agricultural growth contributed to a decline in poverty incidence in the province, dropping to 9.4 percent in 2024, down from 17.9 percent six years ago. Subsistence incidence reached an all-time low of 1.6 percent.

"With our growth momentum and the initiatives we are implementing, we are confident that we can expand the sector within the next three years. By harnessing innovation and inspiring and empowering younger generations to take the lead, we can create a future where agriculture not only grows but flourishes as a source of prosperity and pride for Camiguin," Gov. Xavier Jesus Romualdo said in his 2025 State of the Province Address on Jan. 6.

The governor called for continued collaboration, ensuring that Camiguin's agricultural momentum paves the way for sustainable growth and prosperity for all its residents.

The agricultural growth in the province contributed to a decline in poverty incidence, which dropped to 9.4 percent in 2024, down from 17.9 percent six years ago. Subsistence incidence reached an all-time low of 1.6 percent.

One of the province's significant achievements was its battle against African swine fever (ASF). All five municipalities declared themselves ASF-free by October 2024, awaiting national confirmation. Initiated in 2023, the sentinel pig program proved instrumental, distributing over 900 pigs to 150 beneficiaries. This initiative not only prevented ASF outbreaks but also jumpstarted swine repopulation, yielding 537 piglets by year's end.

Efforts to lower pork prices have also borne fruit. From a high of P300 per kilo in 2023, liveweight prices dropped to as low as P180 per kilo, providing relief to consumers and farmers alike.

"For fisheries, the Provincial Agriculture Department continues to support the inland fishery extension programs of our municipal governments by conducting training sessions on good aquaculture practices, assessing the condition of backyard fishponds and providing fingerlings to stock these fishponds. In April last year, we distributed 52,000 tilapia fingerlings to 40 beneficiaries from Catarman, Guinsiliban, Mahinog and Mambajao," Romualdo said.

Moving forward, he directed local departments to collaborate on marine fisheries and mariculture initiatives. These efforts aim to maximize the potential of Camiguin's marine resources, including the cultivation of high-value aquaculture products like seaweed and shellfish.

To boost organic farming, the Provincial Agriculture Department provided seeds, organic fertilizers and technical training to farmers with promising results. For instance, organic fertilizers produced in the rehabilitated provincial facility significantly boosted vegetable yields in demo farms.

Lanzones farming also thrived, despite El Niño's challenges. The total area planted with lanzones expanded from 844 hectares in 2023 to over 1,041 hectares in 2024, nearly doubling production to 4,820 metric tons.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/01/16/business/agribusiness/camiguin-inspires-youth-to-venture-into-farming/2039305>

THE MANILA TIMES:

BSU eyes 100-hectare bamboo forest

January 16, 2025

BAGUIO CITY — The Benguet State University (BSU) is eyeing to establish about 100 hectares of bamboo forest to support reforestation efforts, the bamboo textile project and engineered bamboo production.

Roscinto Ian Lumbres, BSU vice president for research and extension, recently said the project began in 2024 with the production of propagules that were planted starting this year.

He said they used the P5-million bamboo development project fund from Sen. Loren Legarda for the propagation of planting materials in San Pascual, Tuba, Benguet.

Initial reforestation sites include a 2-hectare area at the Benguet Corp. in Itoyon and the BSU compound in the municipality of Mankayan, he said.

Lumbres said the goal is to plant "bayog" and the "giant" bamboo species in at least 20 hectares this year.

He added that they are producing the bayog and the giant bamboo, which are indigenous to the region and the country.

Lumbres said they have teamed up with cooperatives to be more productive, noting that they have inked a memorandum of agreement with the manufacturer of the engineered bamboo in support of the wood industry.

"The BSU project is also part of the regional bamboo initiative that is in support [of] the bamboo production of the Cordillera," he said.

Lumbres said they are also developing products, such as soap, using bamboo as raw materials. Other products to be produced from bamboo are baskets, bags, chairs, tables, and others.

Furthermore, the Philippine Textile Research Institute, an agency under the Department of Science and Technology, has established the Bamboo Textile Fiber Innovation Hub at the Abra State University campus in the municipality of Lagangilang to help boost the country's bamboo fiber production.

He said the Japanese government has found interest in the university's revival of its bamboo forest area during their visit to the school last December. **ADVERTISEMENT**

"They are coming back next week to finalize the partnership for the bamboo area project," he said.

BSU President Kenneth Laruan, during the same event, said the project is timely as the university celebrates its 39th charter anniversary this month with the theme "Advancing knowledge, research, technology and environmental stewardship for a sustainable tomorrow."

"What happens in the Cordillera ecological system may affect other regions. That is why there is a need to make some refocus and come up with programs for the environment," he said. PNA

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/01/16/business/agribusiness/bsu-eyes-100-hectare-bamboo-forest/2039304>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Rice MSRP of P58 draws solons' ire vs DA

[Jovee Marie N. de la Cruz](#)

[January 15, 2025](#)

A LEADER of the House of Representatives on Wednesday criticized the Department of Agriculture (DA) for setting the maximum suggested retail price (MSRP) for rice at P58 per kilo, calling the figure “unrealistic” and “a disservice to consumers.”

During the Murang Pagkain Supercommittee hearing, Deputy Majority Leader Janette Garin of Iloilo accused the DA of failing to address key issues in the rice supply chain that have driven up prices.

With this, the panel, headed by Albay Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda, decided to invite Secretary Francisco “Kiko” P. Tiu Laurel Jr. to the next hearing.

“Why does DA have an MSRP of P58? Which planet does it come from, Mr. Chair?” Garin said during her interpellation. MSRP should have been lower after the price of regular milled rice dropped, she said. The DA will impose a maximum suggested retail price of P58 per kilo for imported rice starting January 20. Laurel said the MSRP aims to have a balance between business sustainability and the welfare of consumers and farmers.

Moreover, Salceda questioned DA Undersecretary Asis Perez, who attended the hearing, on the basis of the P58 per kilo MSRP.

“*Diyos ko, ang taas nun* [My God, that’s too high],” said Salceda, noting that the cost of imported rice has gone down to between P44 and P47, while the buying price for palay (unmilled rice) has fallen, as well.

Perez, for his part, justified the P58 MSRP as part of a pilot program in Metro Manila, where rice prices reportedly hover between P62 and P64 per kilo.

Perez explained that the figure considered the landed cost of imported rice plus distribution chain markups.

Perez said the P58 price “is based on the landed cost of imported rice, plus a reasonable markup for all those involved in the distribution chain; that chain is long.”

Garin rejected this defense, saying rice prices in Mindanao ranged from P37 to P45 per kilo, with premium varieties capped at P50.

Garin said that in an inspection and consultation with the wholesalers in Bulacan, “it was announced in the media by no other than Sec. Kiko Tiu Laurel, together with the DA family, that they will bring down the price of rice to P45 to P49.”

But, Garin stressed, such did not happen.

“How can we control the price of rice when the agency that is supposed to guide us is pegging it at a high price?” Garin asked.

Garin cited reports showing that the landed cost of imported rice ranged from P35 to P39 per kilo, significantly lower than the DA’s MSRP. Even with logistics and markups, she argued, rice should not exceed P45 to P49 per kilo at retail.

The Iloilo lawmaker criticized DA’s method for setting the MSRP, arguing that it was based on inflated market prices rather than actual production costs and reasonable margins.

Garin also accused the DA of neglecting its responsibility to monitor and regulate the supply chain, alleging that collusion among traders and monopolistic practices among retailers were inflating prices.

She reiterated her call for the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to probe the matter.

Formed under House Resolution 254, introduced by Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, this Murang Pagkain Supercommittee brings together five key committees to identify gaps in government programs and hold accountable those responsible for market abuses.

The joint panel is composed of the Committees on Ways and Means, Trade and Industry, Agriculture and Food, Social Services, and the Special Committee on Food Security.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/01/15/rice-msrp-of-p58-draws-solons-ire-vs-da/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

DA: Pork supply may fall short as ASF crimps hog output

Ada Pelonia
January 15, 2025

The Department of Agriculture (DA) said the Philippines could face a shortfall in pork supply until the end of March this year.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa issued the statement after the DA's latest monitoring report showed that the retail prices of pork sold in Metro Manila registered increases.

“It is possible that we will have a deficit in pork supply until the first quarter,” De Mesa told reporters in an interview in Quezon City on Wednesday.

The DA noted that prices of pork kasim and pork liempo in Metro Manila markets ranged from P320 to P390 per kilo and P360 to P450 per kilo, respectively. These figures are higher than the P310 to P370 per kilo of pork kasim and P350 to P420 per kilo of pork liempo recorded two weeks ago. Frozen kasim was priced at P230 to P280 per kilo, bigger than the previous range of P230 to P260 per kilo.

Based on the livestock department's report, the spike in prices could be attributed to lower supply from production areas struck by African swine fever (ASF), costly imports, and preference for local pork, especially during the holiday season.

“The outbreak of ASF in Southern Luzon in the third quarter and fourth quarter of last year led to lower supply, but the sector will eventually recover.”

He also noted Filipinos gravitated toward local pork, particularly during the holiday season and that imports were “quite expensive.”

“The retail price of imported pork is higher by P10 to P20 a kilo.”

Revitalization

Meanwhile, the DA will try to revitalize the hog sector through its P1.25 billion swine industry recovery project (SIRP).

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. signed Special Order (59) which created a project steering committee, project management office, and technical working group for the recovery project that aims to restore and strengthen the country's swine industry that has grappled with ASF.

“This project involves a broad range of stakeholders, including smallholder farmers, cooperatives, commercial breeders, and at-risk agricultural communities, providing tailored assistance to restore, modernize, and sustain swine production across the country,” the order read.

It added that the allocated funds would be distributed to various livestock agencies and operational units under the guidance of the agency's livestock undersecretary.

The steering committee will be led by DA Undersecretary-Designate for Livestock Constante Palabrica with DA Assistant Secretary for Ruminant Livestock Benjamin Albarece as the vice-chairperson.

The committee's tasks include conducting the monitoring of the project's implementation and coordinating with relevant offices for the dissemination of information about the SIRP, among others.

It stated that the project management office would be chaired by National Livestock Program (NLP) Director Jonathan Sabiniano with NLP Deputy Director Alvin Paul Dirain and Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) OIC Assistant Director Oscar Jhan Cabayanan as the vice chairpersons.

The management office is tasked with overseeing the entire implementation process of the project.

Among the technical working group's responsibilities are facilitating the delivery of interventions to the beneficiaries, communicating with applicants regarding the project processes, and undertaking administrative management of the project.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/01/15/da-pork-supply-may-fall-short-as-asf-crimps-hog-output/>

ABANTE TONITE:

Rep Garin: P58 MSRP sa bigas, saang planeta galing?

January 15, 2025

Kinuwestiyon ni House Deputy Majority Leader at Iloilo Rep. Janette Garin ang pinagbasehan ng Department of Agriculture (DA) sa pagtatakda ng P58 kada kilong maximum suggested retail price (MSRP) ng bigas.

Sa pagdinig ng Murang Pagkain super committee nitong Miyerkoles, inakusahan ni Garin ang DA na nabigong tugunan ang mga isyu sa rice supply chain na nagtutulak sa pagtaas ng presyo ng bigas.

“Bakit naman si DA may MSRP na P58, saang planeta ito nanggaling, Mr. Chair?” tanong ni Garin.

Sinabi ni Garin na masyadong mataas ang P58 na MSRP dahil ang landed cost ng imported na bigas ay nasa P35 hanggang P39 kada kilo.

Kung isasama umano ang gastos sa logistics at kita ng mga negosyante, sinabi ni Garin na ang presyo ay maglalaro lamang ng P45 hanggang P49 kada kilo.

“Kung ang landed cost ay P35, maibebenta mo siya ng P42 to P43. ‘Yung iba namang landed cost ay P39, maibebenta mo siya ng P47 to P48. Pero siyempre, ‘pag may damage, logistics, aakyat siya, pinakamataas P49,” paliwanag ng lady solon.

“How can we control the price of rice when the agency that is supposed to guide us is pegging it at a high price?” tanong ni Garin.

Ipinaliwanag naman ni Agriculture Undersecretary Atty. Asis Perez na ibinase ang P58 MSRP sa presyong P62 hanggang P64 kada kilo ng bigas noong Disyembre.

“(The MSRP) is based on the landed cost of imported rice, plus a reasonable mark-up for all those involved in the distribution chain, mahaba po ‘yang chain na ‘yan,” sabi ni Perez.

“Linawin ko lang, Mr. Chair, na ‘yung MSRP is a pilot program that will be implemented only in Metro Manila kung saan may nakikita kami mga presyo na P62, P64, P60,” dagdag pa nito.

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2025/01/15/rep-garin-p58-msrp-sa-bigas-saang-planeta-galing/>