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MANILA BULLETIN:

DA aims for record rice harvest despite rising production costs

BY [DEXTER BARRO II](#)

Jan 21, 2025 04:24 PM

Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has called on the agency's officials and staff to strive for "greater achievements" this year despite the challenges facing the country's agriculture sector.

"We achieved significant progress in 2024, but 2025 demands bigger goals and stronger resolve," Laurel said during the DA's first Management Committee meeting of the year.

"By increasing food production, modernizing agricultural infrastructure, and prioritizing farmer welfare, the agency seeks to foster sustainable growth in the agricultural sector," he explained.

Laurel, in particular, wants the agency to focus on improving the country's food security.

He noted that while the DA's recent efforts helped stabilize food prices and address disruptions, the rising input costs, climate variability, and smuggling are still hurdles to food security.

The agriculture secretary said this goal is achievable if the agency achieves a record-high rice harvest and further development of agricultural systems in 2025.

The DA on Monday said it is eyeing to hit 20.46 million metric tons (MT) of rice harvest

Laurel said the agency will also pursue enhanced logistics for perishable goods such as vegetables and fruits.

He emphasized that building infrastructures, including cold chain systems and regional production hubs, will be crucial in reducing postharvest losses and strengthening food availability in local markets.

"The path to achieving these objectives, however, is fraught with challenges," he admitted.

Laurel cited rising fuel and fertilizer costs as the main threats to farmers' resources, whereas global economic factors continue to push production expenses higher.

He, however, mentioned that the unpredictable weather patterns last year which were linked to the El Niño and La Niña phenomenon are "not expected to immediately impact agriculture this year".

The DA chief expressed optimism that the agency, through focus and government support, would achieve its goals for 2025.

"We have the tools and resources to succeed, but our success depends on your leadership, collaboration, and commitment," Laurel told DA personnel.

"With clear priorities and a unified approach, the DA is set to tackle obstacles head-on, aiming to transform challenges into opportunities," he continued.

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The DA on Monday said it is eyeing to hit 20.46 million metric tons (MT) of rice harvest in 2025, which is an increase from last year's estimates of 19.3 million MT.

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<https://mb.com.ph/2025/1/21/da-eyes-greater-achievements-in-2025-1>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Sales of private label food, beverages to hit \$900 million

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

January 22, 2025 | 12:00am

“While price remains a key consideration, grocery operators are increasingly gravitating toward niche product opportunities, such as ultra-premium quality, health and wellness, free-from products and products popularized by food influencers on platforms like YouTube.”

MANILA, Philippines — The country’s sales of private label products in the food and beverage sector are expected to hit to nearly \$900 million this year, driven by Filipinos’ growing demand for such brands, according to an international agency.

The United States Department of Agriculture–Foreign Agricultural Service in Manila (USDA-FAS Manila) projected that sales of private label products would reach \$896 million.

“In the past five years, private label products have made up an average of seven to 10 percent of grocery food and beverage sales in the Philippines, higher than the Asia-Pacific average of six percent,” the USDA-FAS Manila said in a report.

Private label food and beverage products are items that carry the so-called house brands of various supermarkets, hypermarkets, membership clubs, convenience stores and even small grocers.

Examples of which are the SM Bonus brand of the SM Markets and the Pure Basics brand of Puregold Price Club, according to the USDA-FAS Manila.

This year, sales of private label products are expected to account for seven percent of the projected \$12.8 billion total sales of food and beverage grocery sector, according to the report.

Based on industry interviews, the private label products can be categorized into three distinct models: primary essentials such as fresh and frozen foods (Model A), mix of essentials and premium quality items like breads and ready-to-eat meals (Model B) and select or niche products such as wellness items (Model C).

The USDA-FAS Manila said grocery brands that follow Model A target to increase the share of their private label sales from seven to 10 percent over the next five years.

Meanwhile, brands following Model B aim to double the share of their private label items to 15 percent within the next five years with a focus on offering more premium-quality products, the USDA-FAS Manila added.

Lastly, grocery brands following Model C want to maintain the share of their private label products at seven to 10 percent, the report added.

The report also pointed out that some high-end grocery stores such as The Marketplace, S&R and Landers have been continuously increasing their stocks of foreign private label brands because of growing demand locally.

These stores undertake the direct importation of the foreign products to take advantage of “better prices and exclusivity,” the USDA-FAS Manila said.

The international agency noted that consumers buy foreign private labels as they perceive them as a “balance of quality and affordability,” it added.

“They (high-end grocery stores) meticulously curate their selection, prioritizing those with a diverse product range and proven track record in other markets,” the report said.

“The top sources of foreign private labels are the United States (30 percent), followed by the ASEAN region (14 percent) and Australia (12 percent),” it added.

The USDA-FAS Manila said some grocery operators are aiming to double their private label portfolios within the next five years. This, the international agency pointed out, would provide “significant” opportunities for US exporters to supply American food and beverage products to the Philippines.

The USDA-FAS Manila said some of the growth opportunities in terms of private label products are in baby food, baked goods, cereals, ice cream, cocktails mixes, specialty coffee, snack foods, salad dressings, among others.

“While price remains a key consideration, grocery operators are increasingly gravitating toward niche product opportunities, such as ultra-premium quality, health and wellness, free-from products and products popularized by food influencers on platforms like YouTube,” the USDA-FAS Manila said.

The international agency earlier projected that the country’s food and beverage grocery sales this year could grow by five percent year-on-year to over almost \$13 billion.

“This growth is expected to continue at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of five percent over the next five years, outpacing the broader Asia Pacific market’s projected CAGR of four percent,” the USDA-FAS Manila said.

The international agency noted that three major conglomerates – SM Markets, Puregold Price Club and Robinsons Retail – account for half of the domestic food and beverage grocery sector.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/01/22/2415890/sales-private-label-food-beverages-hit-900-million>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Meat imports likely to hit fresh record-high

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

January 22, 2025 | 12:00am



The country imported a total of 1.33 million MT during the 11-month period, about 19 percent higher than the 1.12 million MT recorded volume during the same period of 2023, based on Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) data.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The country's meat imports from January to November last year reached over 1.3 million metric tons (MT), surpassing the full-year volume recorded in 2023 and is even on track to hit a new record high.

The country imported a total of 1.33 million MT during the 11-month period, about 19 percent higher than the 1.12 million MT recorded volume during the same period of 2023, based on Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) data.

The volume already surpassed the 1.2 million MT imported meat products for the entire 2023 by 10.8 percent, BAI data showed.

At its current pace of increase, the total volume of meat imports last year is on pace to reach a new record high as it is just 30,000 MT away from eclipsing the record-high 1.36 million MT recorded in 2022.

Meat imports from January to November last year have been averaging about 121,000 MT a month, based on the BAI data.

Industry players have attributed the increase in meat imports last year to the need to augment domestic stocks to prevent a spike in retail prices of certain meat items, particularly pork.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said that pork imports mitigated the possible rise in retail prices due to the decimation of domestic hog inventory from continued devastation and threats of African swine fever.

The top five sources of meat imports during the 11-month period were Brazil (482,457 MT), the United States (204,204 MT), Spain (160,219 MT), Canada (111,721 MT) and Australia (70,400 MT).

Pork accounted for half or about 671,561 MT of the total meat import volume from January to November last year. It was followed by chicken meat at 435,501 MT, beef (187,711 MT), buffalo meat (35,219 MT), turkey (1,272 MT), lamb (613 MT) and duck (208 MT), based on BAI data.

Of the seven meat items, four products (pork, chicken meat, beef and turkey) posted an increase on annual basis while the other three items (duck, lamb and buffalo meat) declined on a year-on-year basis.

Pork imports rose by a 22 percent on annual basis while chicken meat imports posted grew by 10 percent year-on-year, BAI data showed. Beef imports, meanwhile, expanded by 40 percent while turkey meat purchases abroad doubled versus their volumes in 2023.

BAI data also showed that buffalo meat imports dipped by 1.25 percent on annual basis while duck and lamb imports declined by 26 percent and 13 percent, respectively.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/01/22/2415879/meat-imports-likely-hit-fresh-record-high>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

US FDA removes coconut from allergen listing

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 02:08 AM January 22, 2025

The US Food and Drug Administration has excluded coconut from its list of tree nuts that are considered major food allergens, which pose a risk to human health.

This exclusion from the US FDA's food allergen guidance is deemed a victory for Philippine coconut, as this milestone is expected to boost the demand for and innovation in coconut-derived goods.

In a statement, the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) said the latest development would not only ease trade challenges for coconut-based products in the US market but also significantly boost the coconut sector.

“For the industry, this marks the lifting of a ‘labeling stigma’ that has long hindered the market potential of coconut-based products,” the PCA said.

“Brands and manufacturers can now market coconut items without the burden of misclassification that has long stifled consumer confidence and international trade, potentially leading to increased demand and innovation in coconut-derived goods,” it added.

The US federal agency's guidance, titled “Questions and Answers Regarding Food Allergens, Including the Food Allergen Labeling Requirements of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (Edition 5),” states that coconut is excluded from the list of tree nuts considered major food allergens, the presence of which must be indicated in food labels.

Per the US FDA, those on the list are almond, black walnut, Brazil nut, California walnut, cashew, filbert/hazelnut, heartnut/Japanese walnut, macadamia nut/bush nut, pecan, pine nut/pinon nut, pistachio and walnut (English and Persian).

“Because other tree nuts ... do not have a robust body of evidence to support inclusion as a major food allergen, they should not be included in the ‘Contains’ statement even if they are used as ingredients because the ‘Contains’ statement is reserved for major food allergens,” the document read.

The PCA signified its commitment to harnessing this momentum, ensuring that every Filipino coconut farmer, processor and entrepreneur would benefit from this milestone. **INQ**

[https://business.inquirer.net/502444/us-fda-removes-coconut-from-allergen-listing?utm_source=\(direct\)&utm_medium=gallery](https://business.inquirer.net/502444/us-fda-removes-coconut-from-allergen-listing?utm_source=(direct)&utm_medium=gallery)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

NSA chief supports declaration of food emergency

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 04:45 AM January 22, 2025

MANILA, Philippines — National Security Adviser (NSA) Eduardo Año said on Tuesday that he backed the declaration of a food emergency since food security was “a national security interest” and the move would address high prices of commodities, particularly rice.

“While there is sufficient supply of rice in the country, the price of rice, however, remains artificially high despite declining global rice costs and tariff reductions ordered by the President.

Since rice is the country’s staple food, artificially high prices directly impact the lives of all Filipinos,” he said in a statement. The Department of Agriculture, according to him, is well within its authority “to effectively regulate and reduce the price to protect the interests of the public.”

“Profiteering from the food security emergency, politicizing this issue for partisan political interest, and other malicious activities will cause more harm to the Filipino people,” Año said. —*Nestor Corrales*

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2026908/nsa-chief-supports-declaration-of-food-emergency>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

DA sets aside P85M for small-scale egg production

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 09:57 AM January 21, 2025



A vendor arranges eggs to be sold for 250-275 per tray at Marikina City Public Market on Thursday, February 16, 2023. —File photo by Grig C. Montegrando | Philippines Daily Inquirer

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is implementing a P85.19-million project aimed at providing an immediate source of food for the country and the livelihood of farmers and various groups.

The DA issued Memorandum Order No. 2 governing the implementation of the Livelihood Opportunities and Viable Enterprise (LOVE) for Agricultural Farming Communities: Chicken Layer Project.

This undertaking involves the establishment of small-scale egg production in select provinces nationwide.

“This project will provide an immediate source of food and livelihood and [an] immediate return on investment, which will redound to food security,” the memo said.

The DA is implementing this project as egg dishes are among the most common foods served on a Filipino plate, being the most affordable and accessible source of protein. It also highlighted the egg industry's significant contribution to the economy.

“It is also a source of vitamins and essential minerals helping to combat malnutrition and essential for a healthy diet. Beyond this, table eggs are a source of livelihood and income [for] Filipino rural communities as well as agripreneurs,” it said.

Of the P85.19 million earmarked for this project, the biggest chunk is for the procurement of modules amounting to P79,500 each. It will be bankrolled using the DA Office of the Secretary's trust fund.

Based on the memo, the module refers to three-tier battery layer cages consisting of feeder and nipple drinkers, vitamins, medications, disinfectant, 48 heads of ready-to-lay pullets, feeds (two bags of pre-lay and six bags of layer feeds), veterinary supplies, and a shed.

Intended beneficiaries are farmers, community groups, and farmer cooperatives and associations as determined by the respective DA regional field offices and local government units.

About 11 beneficiaries will be selected per province for the LOVE Project, with Central Luzon getting the biggest share of the budget.

They will be chosen based on their community's food security needs, capacity to sustain the project, and commitment to participating in the training and other activities.

Egg production in the country totaled 197,406.4 metric tons (MT) in the third quarter of 2024, up by 6.6 percent from 185,255.4 MT in the same period a year earlier, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

<https://business.inquirer.net/502310/da-sets-aside-p85m-for-small-scale-egg-production>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Agri services: Renationalization or devolution?

BY **REX L. NAVARRO**

JANUARY 22, 2025



Talk of the Town: Buckle up. Trump is back

Currently, a debate over the renationalization of agriculture and fisheries extension services is ongoing, with calls to transfer these responsibilities from local government units (LGUs) back to the Department of Agriculture (DA). This is being done amidst the calls for the government to impose a food emergency.

This discussion is not new—it harks back to the Local Government Code of 1991 and Executive Order No. 138 in 2021, which mandated the devolution of extension services to LGUs. The intent was to empower LGUs to tailor agri-fishery extension services to their unique local needs while the national government, through the DA, assumed a “steering” and policymaking role.

Currently, the DA administers well-established national programs such as rice, corn, high-value crops, fisheries, and livestock, complete with dedicated budget allocations implemented through its regional field offices (RFOs). With devolution, the primary responsibility for delivering these crucial services—often referred to as “last mile” services—rests with the extension workers of LGUs.

To address the notable challenges of devolution and in line with EO 138, the DA in 2020 initiated the Province-led Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Systems (Pafes) to bolster its field operations. The RFOs were directed to pilot this initiative in the provinces starting in 2021.

Pafes offers a framework to fortify the DA’s last mile linkages by positioning the province as the operational unit for agri-fishery extension (AFE). This model encourages the implementation of province-led collaborative AFE programs through a pluralistic system co-managed by the governor, regional directors of the DA and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, municipal LGUs, other national agencies at the provincial level, the private sector, and civil society organizations. Financial support is provided through a combination of national (DA) and local co-financing arrangements.

To operationalize Pafes, the following steps are essential: (1) signing a memorandum of agreement (MOA) for its formal establishment; (2) issuance of an executive order by the governor to set up the Provincial Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Center (Pafec); (3) mapping out a Collaborative Provincial Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Program (CPAFEP); and (4) signing co-investment agreements.

As of Nov. 15, 2024, beyond the pilot phase, 74 provinces (97 percent) have signed MOAs with the DA, 73 (96 percent) have established Pafecs, 54 (71 percent) have mapped out CPAFEPs, and 35 (46 percent) have signed co-investment agreements for Pafes (DA Operations).

The pioneering volunteer efforts of the Coalition for Agriculture Modernization in the Philippines (CAMP), a group of agri-fishery scientists, development specialists, and agri-business practitioners, led to the early piloting of Pafes in Ilocos Norte, setting a template for other provinces. This initiative aimed to make extension services more accessible to farmers and fisherfolk by decentralizing decision-making and service delivery. The close proximity of LGUs to local communities enables a faster response, particularly during calamities, and allows for more customized services tailored to the specific needs of farming and fishing communities. Furthermore, provinces benefit from economies of scale in budgeting, providing sustainable financial support alongside the DA.

Internationally, the most successful agricultural extension models, as seen in Japan, China, and India, feature strong partnerships between national and provincial governments with sustainable, equitable co-financing from the national government.

To further strengthen the DA's last mile operations, the following measures are recommended: (a) appoint a top-level overseer (undersecretary for operations) to supervise, monitor, and accelerate the mainstreaming of Pafes in regions and provinces, with the support of the assistant secretary for operations, Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), and RFOs; (b) allocate substantial dedicated counterpart funding for Pafes; and (c) mobilize the League of Provinces to support Pafes and become co-owners of the DA's food security programs.

With the momentum behind Pafes, reverting to the renationalization of agri-fishery extension services would be counterproductive. The current path, rooted in local empowerment and collaborative governance, promises a more responsive and effective agri-fishery extension service for the nation. This could greatly help in ensuring sustainable food security instead of food emergency.

Dr. Rex L. Navarro is vice president of CAMP and former director of the DA-ATI.

<https://plus.inquirer.net/opinion/agri-services-renationalization-or-devolution/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

High rice prices may affect BSP's easing cycle

January 22, 2025 | 12:31 am



Government officials inspect prices and supply of rice at a market in Quezon City, Jan. 10, 2025. — PHILIPPINE STAR /MIGUEL DE GUZMAN

STILL-ELEVATED rice prices could stoke inflation and threaten the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) pace of monetary easing, GlobalSource Partners said.

“Such a precarious rice situation does not promise bright prospects for domestic inflation,” GlobalSource Partners Country Analyst Diwa C. Guinigundo said in a report.

“Given the inflationary impact of an expected weakening of the peso-dollar exchange rate, the uptrend in rice prices coupled with creeping fuel price increases and the reported price hikes of 63 goods in February could generate more price pressures.”

Headline inflation averaged 3.2% last year, the first time that full-year inflation fell within the central bank's 2-4% target since 2021. It was also the slowest since 2.4% in 2020.

“The BSP would have to be careful in issuing forward guidance that commits itself to more rate reductions in the next meetings of the Monetary Board,” Mr. Guinigundo said.

“The supply side does not appear to be supportive of its 2-4% target,” he said, noting that inflation risk-adjusted forecasts for 2025 and 2026 stand at 3.4% and 3.7%, respectively.

For this year, the BSP expects inflation to average 3.3%. Accounting for risks, inflation could average 3.4%.

The Monetary Board delivered a total of 75 basis points of rate cuts last year, bringing the benchmark to 5.75%.

“Since the weight of rice at 8.9% dominates the weight of food in the consumer price index and food weighs heaviest among all the other components, economists and inflation forecasters fear of another surge in inflation this year and the next,” Mr. Guinigundo said.

The Agriculture department has announced plans to declare a food security emergency for rice. This would allow the release of buffer stocks of local rice from the National Food Authority to be sold at subsidized prices.

Mr. Guinigundo said this activity could be a “potential source of corruption.”

“Many buffer stocks could be declared aging and discounted only to be resold with minimal polishing. Given the forthcoming election, local government units could also use them to win votes,” he said adding that the impact of this move would be “minimal.”

Rice prices were supposed to start declining after the government slashed tariffs on rice imports, Mr. Guinigundo said.

“This did not happen because one, domestic rice production remained weak; and two, profiteering from reduced tariffs did not cease but only benefited importers, wholesalers and retailers who were reported to have engineered the artificial shortage of the food staple.”

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. issued an executive order that reduced tariffs on rice imports to 15% from 35% until 2028. This took effect in July.

“The problem remains because agricultural policy to stabilize prices of key commodities continues to focus on market dynamics rather than on production and agricultural productivity,” Mr. Guinigundo said.

RESCHEDULED

MEETING

Meanwhile, the Monetary Board’s first policy meeting this year was rescheduled to Feb. 13 from Feb. 20, the central bank said on Tuesday.

This as BSP Governor Eli M. Remolona, Jr. is set to attend the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) plenary and meetings in France from Feb. 17-20.

The Philippines has been on the FATF’s gray list since June 2021. Government officials are hopeful that the country can exit the gray list this year. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2025/01/22/648113/high-rice-prices-may-affect-bsps-easing-cycle/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

2024 palay output hits four-year low of 19.09 million MT

January 21, 2025 | 8:33 pm



A farmer threshes newly harvested palay grains at a ricefield in Mogpog, Marinduque in central Philippines, March 22, 2016. — REUTERS

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

OUTPUT of palay, or unmilled rice, declined to a four-year low of 19.09 million metric tons (MMT) in 2024, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported, citing preliminary data.

The PSA said that palay output dropped 4.84% from 2023, the weakest production since the 19.29 MMT reported in 2020.

Full-year rice output came in under the Department of Agriculture's (DA) 19.3 MMT revised estimate for 2024.

The PSA added that the harvest from irrigated areas was 14.56 MMT, down 4.71%, while palay production in rainfed areas fell 5.23% to 4.53 MMT.

The region with the top palay production was Central Luzon with 3.48 MMT, followed by the Cagayan Valley with 2.92 MMT and the Ilocos Region with 1.97 MMT.

Rounding out the top five rice producers were the Western Visayas with 1.89 MMT and Soccsksargen with 1.21 MMT.

Agriculture was negatively impacted by dry spells and droughts caused by El Niño in the first half, and heavy rains and typhoons in the latter part of 2024, analysts said.

"I expected it to be a bit lower given the series of typhoons in the fourth quarter," Federation of Free Farmers National Manager Raul Q. Montemayor said via Viber.

“In any case, output already dropped by 5.5% in the first semester mainly due to El Niño and was projected also to drop in the second semester due to La Niña,” he added.

Agricultural damage caused by El Niño was estimated at P15.3 billion on lost volume of 330,717 MT, across 109,481 hectares of farmland, according to the DA’s final estimate. Damage to the rice crop was 38.8% of the total, or P5.93 billion.

Mr. Montemayor said that the 970,000 MT drop in rice production is equivalent to about 15 days’ national consumption.

He added that the lost rice output for the year was offset by a big bump in imports.

The Philippines imported a record 4.78 MMT of rice in 2024, according to the Bureau of Plant Industry.

“Production in 2025 will simply have to try to recover but potentially large imports at low tariffs may dampen farmgate prices and incentives for farmers to intensify production,” he said.

Earlier, the Agriculture department said that it is targeting palay output of 20.46 MMT this year, which could be fulfilled with P10 billion in additional funding for its National Rice Program.

Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura Executive Director Jayson H. Cainglet said that better farmgate prices for palay could also encourage more rice farmers to continue planting.

“We are hoping for a good harvest starting at end of February or March, so that our rice farmers can earn money ... The dark side of an unlimited import policy, via Executive Order (EO) 62, is the tendency to depress farmgate prices across commodities,” Mr. Cainglet said via Viber.

Tariffs on imported rice were slashed to 15% from 35% previously until 2028, through EO 62 which was signed by President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. in June.

He added that the DA and the National Food Authority should increase palay procurement funds to influence the prices paid by millers and traders.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/01/21/648098/2024-palay-output-hits-four-year-low-of-19-09-million-mt/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

PHL's 11-month meat imports up 19%

January 21, 2025 | 8:32 pm



REUTERS

MEAT IMPORTS rose 19.4% by volume in the 11 months to November, led by pork and beef, according to the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI).

The BAI reported meat shipments of 1.33 billion kilograms in the first 11 months. Meat imports in November grew 46.7% to 141.34 million kilos.

Accounting for about 50.4% of all imports, pork shipments rose 21.9% to 671.56 million kilos for the period.

Brazil supplied around 184.81 million kilos of pork, followed by Spain (158.14 million kilos) and Canada (92.94 million kilos).

Beef imports increased 39.7% to 187.71 million kilos during the 11 months accounting for 14.1% of meat imports.

Imports of beef from Brazil amounted to 80.68 million kilos, followed by Australia (49.59 million kilos) and Ireland (15.54 million kilos).

Shipments of chicken totaled 435.5 million kilos in the 11 months, up 10.7% and accounting for 32.7% of meat imports.

Brazil remained the top supplier of chicken with 216.9 million kilos, followed by the US (145.73 million kilos) and Australia (9.32 million kilos).

Imports of turkey meat more than doubled to 1.27 million kilos. Shipments accounted for 0.1% of total meat imports.

On the other hand, shipments of duck, lamb, and buffalo meat declined during the 11-month period.

Buffalo imports, which accounted for 2.6% of total volume, slipped 9.65% during the period to 35.2 million kilos.

Shipments of duck declined 25.8% to 208,792 kilos, while lamb imports fell 13.4% to 613,448 kilos. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/01/21/648097/phls-11-month-meat-imports-up-19/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Ban on Russian meat imports lifted following FMD-free declaration

January 21, 2025 | 8:29 pm



REUTERS

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said that it lifted a ban on meat imports from Russia after veterinary officials declared that country free of foot and mouth disease (FMD).

In Memorandum Order No. 3, the DA said that it would now allow shipments animals susceptible to foot and mouth disease, their products and byproducts, from Russia.

“All import transactions of the above commodities shall be in accordance with existing rules and regulations of the (DA),” it added.

Citing reports from the Trade Representation of the Russian Federation in the Republic of the Philippines and the World Organisation of Animal Health (WOAH), the DA said that Russia was FMD-free without vaccination.

According to the WOAH Terrestrial Animal Health Code, a country may be considered FMD-free without vaccination when no other infection has been reported and there is proper surveillance from veterinary authorities.

The DA ban was first imposed in 2013 when the outbreak was first detected.

FMD is highly transmissible, causing lesions and lameness in cattle, sheep, goats and other cloven-hoofed animals. The disease does not affect humans.

The DA had earlier, banned imports of buffalo meat from India following an outbreak of FMD on the states of Bihar, Maharashtra, and Telangana.

The issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary clearances for buffalo meat was subsequently halted for products from the three states. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/01/21/648091/ban-on-russian-meat-imports-lifted-following-fmd-free-declaration/>

REMATE:

Deklarasyon ng food security emergency suportado ni Año

January 21, 2025 11:59



MANILA, Philippines – Nagpahayag ng suporta si National Security Adviser Eduardo Año nitong Martes, Enero 21 sa nalalapit na deklarasyon ng food security emergency sa bigas para tugunan ang tumataas na presyo nito.

Sa pahayag, iginiit ni Año na ang food security ng bansa ay ”national security interest,” at isa ito sa major component ng 15-point National Security Agenda ng administrasyong Marcos batay sa 2023 National Security Policy.

”While there is sufficient supply of rice in the country, the price of rice, however, remains artificially high despite declining global rice costs and tariff reductions ordered by the President. Since rice is the country’s staple food, artificially high prices directly impact the lives of all Filipinos,” sinabi ni Año.

”The Department of Agriculture therefore is well within its authority to effectively regulate and reduce the price to protect the interests of the public. We therefore support this measure by the DA to address high rice prices,” dagdag pa niya, na tinukoy ang Republic Act No. 12708.

Sinabi ng NSA na ang profiteering mula sa food security emergency, pagpolitika sa mga isyu paara sa partisan political interest, at iba pang malicious activities ay magdudulot ng hindi maganda sa publiko.

”Now is not the time for more profits. Now is the time to put the country first. Let us all remain committed to this effort with the same spirit and dedication we have always shown to bolster our collective security as a nation,” ani Año.

Inaasahang idedeklara ng DA ang food security emergency sa bigas bukas, Enero 22.

Ito ay kasunod ng pag-apruba ng National Price Coordinating Council sa resolusyon na humihimok sa DA na ideklara ang food security emergency. *RNT/JGC*

<https://remate.ph/deklarasyon-ng-food-security-emergency-suportado-ni-ano/>

REMATE:

TINGNAN: Ilang tindero nasita ng DTI, DA sa mataas na presyo ng bigas

January 21, 2025 11:46



Nasita ng Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) at Department of Agriculture ang ilang mga nagtitinda ng bigas sa Trabajo Public Market sa Sampaloc, Maynila. Ito'y dahil sa mataas pa rin ang presyo ng kada kilo ng imported premium well milled rice. CRISMON HERAMIS



<https://remate.ph/tingnan-ilang-tindero-nasita-ng-dti-da-sa-mataas-na-presyo-ng-bigas/>

REMATE:

Mga tanim sa Benguet binalot ng andap

January 21, 2025 09:23



MANILA, Philippines – Binalot ng frost o andap ang ilang mga tanim na gulay sa Atok, Benguet kasabay ng malamig na panahon dahil sa Northeast Monsoon o Amihan.

Ayon sa ulat, pinaghahandaan ng mga magsasaka ang andap tuwing Amihan na maaaring makapinsala sa mga tanim na gulay.

Samantala, naitala ang mababang temperatura sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa ngayong araw.

Kabilang dito ang Itbayat, Batanes sa 19.3°C, Baguio City sa 15 °C, Abucay, Bataan sa 20.3°C, Tanay, Rizal sa 20.3°C, habang bumaba rin ng 12.9 degrees Celsius ang temperatura sa La Trinidad, Benguet.

Sa ngayon ay ito ang pinakamalamig na temperaturang naitala ngayong Amihan season.

Posibleng mas maramdaman pa ang malamig na panahon sa mga susunod na linggo. *RNT/JGC*

<https://remate.ph/mga-tanim-sa-benguet-binalot-ng-andap/>

MANILA STANDARD:

NSA backs food security emergency

By Rex Espiritu

January 22, 2025, 12:30 am

National Security Adviser Eduardo Año backed the looming declaration of a food security emergency to address the rising costs of rice in the country, acknowledging its importance to national security.

Año said food security is a major component of the 15-point National Security Agenda as outlined in the 2024 National Security Strategy (NSS) of the Marcos administration.

“As such, we support the declaration of a food security emergency by the Department of Agriculture (DA) to reduce the price of rice in the country,” he said.

Under Republic Act 12708 or the Agricultural Tariffication Law, the Secretary of Agriculture can declare a food security emergency if there is an extraordinary increase in the price of rice or if there is a rice shortage in the country.

While there is a sufficient supply of rice in the country, its price remains artificially high despite declining global rice costs and tariff reductions ordered by the President.

Año said the National Security Council will support the DA’s mandate to address high rice prices and called on the involved sectors to cooperate with the said endeavor.

Makati Mayor and senatorial aspirant Abby Binay, for her part, said the government should take more aggressive steps to catch and prosecute those involved in rice cartels and smuggling.

In a radio interview, Binay said the full force of the law should be imposed and perpetrators put behind bars to show the government’s determination to stop price manipulation.

The mayor also welcomed the declaration of a national food security emergency to help address the surge in retail prices of rice, but said it would offer only temporary relief if middlemen were not eliminated altogether.

The proposed declaration of a national food security emergency would enable the National Food Authority to buy rice stocks from local farmers and sell them at a lower price.

The DA also said it continues its strict monitoring of compliance with the P58 maximum suggested retail price (MSRP) for imported rice.

Reports indicate strong adherence in markets such as Las Piñas, Marulas, Mandaluyong, Marikina, Pasig, Malabon, and others. However, non-compliance was noted at the Guadalupe Commercial Complex and Pasay Public Market, where prices of P59 and P60 were observed, respectively.

The DA has observed market prices as low as P51, with most falling between P51 and P57. As of present, imported premium rice is at P55/kg, P48/kg for imported well-milled rice, and P40 for imported regular-milled rice.

Discussions are also underway with supermarkets, where rice prices are typically higher due to added convenience for shoppers.

Editor's Note: This is an updated article. Originally posted with the headline "NSA favors imminent food security emergency."

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314549077/nsa-backs-food-security-emergency.html>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Food emergency could lead to higher inflation

By Niña Myka Pauline Arceo and Giselle P. Jordan

January 22, 2025

A "precarious rice situation" could stoke inflation and the declaration of a food security emergency will not be enough to lower prices of the staple, a former Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) official said on Tuesday.

Writing for New York-based consultancy GlobalSource Partners, economist and former BSP deputy governor Diwa Guinigundo said the plan to declare a food emergency, which will allow the release of rice stocks held by the National Food Authority (NFA), was not sustainable and could even force the government to subsidize prices.

High rice prices — blamed for keeping inflation elevated last year — prompted the government to slash the tariff on imports of the grain to 15 percent from 35 percent last July. Prices remain elevated, however, and the Department of Agriculture (DA) has accused traders and retailers of engaging in profiteering.

It started selling lower-priced NFA rice in public markets and other outlets late last year in a bid to bring down prices and then pushed the declaration of a food emergency — approved by the National Price Coordinating Council last week and expected to be announced by the DA today — as a means of further putting pressure on profiteers.

Guinigundo, however, said the NFA's stocks were too little to have a significant impact, noting that the planned release of 500,000 bags "represent only 25,000 tons or about 66 percent of the country's rice consumption in one day."

"Lower selling price means the government would have to subsidize in order to keep rice prices lower and closer to the campaign promise to bring it down to P28 per kilo," he added. "But broken rice, the cheapest variety, retails at P58 per kilo based on [the] suggested retail price."

"Such a precarious rice situation does not promise bright prospects for domestic inflation," Guinigundo continued.

"Given the inflationary impact of an expected weakening of the peso-dollar exchange rate, the uptrend in rice prices coupled with creeping fuel price increases and the reported price hikes of 63 goods in February could generate more price pressures."

The BSP will have to be careful about committing to more interest rate cuts, Guinigundo said, as the "supply side does not appear to be supportive of its 2-4 percent [inflation] target."

Farmers groups have said that the declaration of a food emergency for rice was not needed as there was enough supply and harvest season was just around the corner. The government, they also said, should have gone after profiteers instead.

The Kilusang Mambubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) on Tuesday called a food emergency declaration a "shallow attempt" to distract the public from the Marcos administration's failure to address high rice prices.

The DA, it added, is only providing short-term solutions instead of supporting local farmers.

Former agrarian reform secretary and KMP Chairman Emeritus Rafael Mariano said the government should instead tap increased funding under the amended Agricultural Tariffication Act to purchase rice, to be sold at P25 per kilo, to stabilize prices.

"This food security emergency declaration is a smokescreen, a way to avoid taking real action. It is not about solving the rice crisis — it is about avoiding the real solutions that involve supporting local rice production, providing just farm gate prices for our farmers, and strengthening the country's agricultural sector and rice production," the KMP said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/01/22/business/top-business/food-emergency-could-lead-to-higher-inflation/2042346>

THE MANILA TIMES:

DA targets higher rice output, better logistics

By Giselle P. Jordan

January 22, 2025

AGRICULTURE Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. exhorted the agency's officials and staff to aim higher despite challenges, and that courageous steps are necessary to protect farmers, fisherfolk and consumers.

"We achieved significant progress in 2024, but 2025 demands bigger goals and stronger resolve," he said at the Department of Agriculture's (DA) first management committee meeting recently.

He noted the agency has been pursuing initiatives to address disruptions in the sector and stabilize food prices. However, he added, rising input costs, climate variability and smuggling pose challenges to food security.

In a previous statement, the DA said it is targeting a rice harvest of 20.46 million metric tons this year, as well as improving logistics for perishable goods like fruits and vegetables.

To achieve this, Tiu Laurel said it is necessary to establish cold-chain systems and regional production hubs to minimize postharvest losses and ensure the availability of produce in local markets.

Other challenges in the agricultural sector are rising fertilizer and fuel costs, with global economic factors contributing to the increasing production expenses.

On a positive note, the DA said uncontrollable weather patterns such as El Niño and La Niña are not expected to affect the agriculture sector immediately this year.

Likewise, Tiu Laurel said he is positive about the Agriculture Department's target outputs this year, given stronger government support and the agency's commitment to its mandate. "We have the tools and resources to succeed, but our success depends on your leadership, collaboration and commitment," he told DA officials.

The DA, for its part, said it has set priorities and plans in a unified approach to modernize agriculture, increase production and prioritize farmer welfare to achieve sustainable growth in the sector. Giselle Jordan

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/01/22/business/top-business/da-targets-higher-rice-output-better-logistics/2042328>

THE MANILA TIMES:

NSA backs move to declare food security emergency

By Philippine News Agency
January 21, 2025

MANILA, Philippines — National Security Adviser (NSA) Eduardo Año on Tuesday expressed support for the Department of Agriculture's (DA) initiatives calling for the declaration of a "food security emergency" to help bring down rice prices in the country.

In a statement, Año said food security was a national security interest and a major component of the Marcos administration's 15-point National Security Agenda as outlined in the 2023 National Security Policy (NSP).

"This is further articulated in the 2024 National Security Strategy (NSS) which mandates the government's role in ensuring food availability, accessibility, affordability, and safety. As such, we support the declaration of a food security emergency by the DA to reduce the price of rice in the country," he added.

Under Republic Act 17708, the DA chief is empowered to declare a food security emergency if there is an extraordinary increase in the price of rice or if there is a rice shortage in the country.

"While there is sufficient supply of rice in the country, the price of rice, however, remains artificially high despite declining global rice costs and tariff reductions ordered by the President. Since rice is the country's staple food, artificially high prices directly impact the lives of all Filipinos," the NSA added.

Año said the DA was within its authority to effectively regulate and reduce the price to protect the interests of the public.

"We therefore support this measure by the DA to address high rice prices. Nonetheless, we call on market actors to be one with the government in this endeavor," he added.

Año said profiteering from the food security emergency, politicizing this issue for partisan political interest, and other malicious activities will cause more harm to the Filipino people.

"Let us all remain committed to this effort with the same spirit and dedication we have always shown to bolster our collective security as a nation," he said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/01/21/news/nsa-backs-move-to-declare-food-security-emergency/2041840>

THE MANILA TIMES:

OCD allows Kanlaon farmers to harvest crops

By Eugene Y. Adiong

January 22, 2025

BACOLOD CITY — The Office of Civil Defense (OCD) has allowed farmers to harvest their crops even as Kanlaon Volcano remains restless, Donato Sermeno III, regional director for Negros Island Region, said Monday.

Sermeno said the local government of La Castellana requested the OCD to allow farmers to enter the volcano's 6-kilometer danger zone radius and harvest their sugarcane.

Sermeno said the farmers were given a "window time" to harvest their crops from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. under the supervision of the Regional Incident Management Team.



N TOP OF SITUATION OCD Administrator Ariel Nepomuceno (left) meets with Negros Occidental Gov. Eugenio Lacson during his visit to assess the situation of the evacuees displaced by the recent eruption of Kanlaon Volcano. OCD PHOTO

The OCD said the supervised farming activities in the danger zone aimed "to balance the safety of evacuees with the need to sustain their livelihood, particularly during the harvest season."

Sermeno also said they allowed farmers to enter the no-man's land after the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology gave an advisory that the carbon emissions from the volcano had reduced in the past few days.

He said other localities affected by the danger zone, like La Carlota City and Bago City, could also request the Task Force to suspend the ban on human activities within the volcano's danger zone.

Sermeno, however, said he had no figures on how many farmers would enter the danger zone.

"We are now trying to improve the system. We are focusing now on ensuring that the farmers are safe in case Kanlaon erupts again," he said.

Hermeno added that not all who wanted to harvest their crops were inside the 6-kilometer danger zone of Kanlaon Volcano."

Strict monitoring and coordination are in place to ensure the safety of farmers while they conduct their activities," Sermeno said.

An official from the Department of Agriculture (DA), meanwhile, said on Monday that the ongoing unrest of Mount Kanlaon threatens to impact at least 16,000 farmers from five localities across Negros Island.

DA Regional Executive Director Albert Barogo said the eruption of Kanlaon on Dec. 9, 2024, has affected 7,171 farmers from Canlaon City in Negros Oriental and 8,841 from La Carlota City, La Castellana, Bago City, and Murcia in Negros Occidental.

"The data is validated by the different local government units," Barogo said.

24-hour communication

Meanwhile, OCD administrator Undersecretary Ariel Nepomuceno called for effective regular 24-hour communication measures with all the local leaders around Mount Kanlaon, which is presently under Alert Level 3.

Accompanied by key officials, Nepomuceno met with local leaders, including Canlaon City Mayor Jose Chubasco Cardenas and Negros Occidental Gov. Eugenio Jose Lacson, last week to discuss the safety measures and the heightened risks associated with the volcano's activity.

"The OCD has been in touch with our local leaders since last December's eruption, and we are monitoring the situation daily. We always make sure that proper communication is being implemented from the situation of evacuees to the affected areas," Nepomuceno said.

"The threat is still there in many areas. That's why we encourage everyone to be proactive and maintain a high level of focus on their safety and well-being. We must absolutely ensure the safety of everyone by providing the people's needs. We also assessed the situation of the evacuees," he added.

During his visit, Nepomuceno acknowledged the emotional and practical challenges faced by displaced families and reaffirmed the national government's commitment under the leadership of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to providing necessary support and resources.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/01/22/regions/ocd-allows-kanlaon-farmers-to-harvest-crops/2042211>

THE MANILA TIMES:

DA to provide rice seeds to farmers

By Leander C. Domingo

January 21, 2025

THE Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 2 (DA-RFO2) has issued a memorandum to ensure the immediate delivery of rice seeds to farmers affected by the shear line in Cagayan province.

DA regional executive director Rose Mary Aquino said the memorandum outlined the allocation of hybrid and inbred rice seeds for delivery "to support farmers in the province of Cagayan affected by the recent shear line-induced calamity."

Aquino also emphasized the urgency of the initiative in a memorandum dated Jan. 15, 2025, adding that the rice seeds, sourced from different sites across the region are scheduled for delivery to the DA-Southern Cagayan Research Center (SCRC) in Minanga Norte in Iguig town no later than Jan. 22, 2025.

"The timely delivery and distribution of these seeds are critical to replanting efforts and restoring agricultural productivity in the affected areas," she said.

Barby Lagajet-Balcita of the DA Region 2 Agriculture and Fisheries Information Section, said that the allocated rice seeds include 891 bags of hybrid varieties such as SL8, US 88, TH82, Biorice, LP, Jackpot, Bigante, Rc 222, and Rc 508 from Isabela.

Balcita said 481 bags of Jackpot and LP 534 seeds were sourced from the municipalities of Saguday and Diffun in Quirino province while the province of Nueva Vizcaya contributed 1,227 bags of hybrid seeds, including SL-19, SL8, LP937, US 88, TH82, and Jackpot, sourced from areas like Bagabag, Bambang, Aritao, and other municipalities.

She said that 2,599 bags of hybrid and inbred rice seeds will be distributed, ensuring the affected farmers can begin replanting their fields.

Meanwhile, Balcita said that the report from the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist of Cagayan showed that the recent shear line has severely impacted 16,156.95 hectares of farmland across the province.

This includes 7,144.76 hectares of totally damaged areas and 9,012.19 hectares of partially damaged areas.

Balcita said Cagayan's District 1 recorded the highest level of damage, affecting 8,853.30 hectares.

Aparri town had some 2,890 hectares affected followed by Camalaniugan with 2,015 hectares and Buguey with 1,115.10 hectares while other municipalities such as Lal-lo, Alcala and Baggao also suffered significant losses.

Balcita also noted that to prioritize recovery in the hardest-hit areas, partial deliveries of rice seeds were made to the Municipality of Aparri to facilitate quicker replanting and minimize further losses.

According to the report, District 2 has a total of 4,581.81 hectares affected, with Ballesteros recording 2,693 hectares, Allacapan 1,097 hectares, and Lasam 540.95 hectares.

District 3 reported 2,721.84 hectares of damage. Solana accounted for the majority, with 1,907.76 hectares affected, while Amulung and Peñablanca experienced losses of 799.08 hectares and smaller portions, respectively.

Aquino, meanwhile, thanked the Field Operations Division and Rice Program, the Research Center and Experiment Station Managers, Agricultural Program coordinating officers and local government units for facilitating the rapid mobilization of resources.

She said that through timely interventions, the agency aims to "mitigate the impact of natural disasters and help rebuild the region's agricultural sector."

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/01/21/regions/da-to-provide-rice-seeds-to-farmers/2041482>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Rice inflation risks high, BSP cautioned

Cai U. Ordinario
January 22, 2025



Newly delivered rice from Regions 2 and 3 is stored at a National Food Authority (NFA) warehouse in Valenzuela on Monday, January 20, 2025. The Department of Agriculture is poised to declare a food security emergency to address persistently high rice prices. The declaration would allow NFA to release 300,000 metric tons of rice from buffer stocks to stabilize prices while replenishing these reserves with locally produced rice to support Filipino farmers. However, the emergency declaration could fan rice inflation, a former central bank deputy governor has warned.

A FORMER Deputy Governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) has offered a word of caution on the central bank's plans to further ease monetary policy, saying that the "precarious rice situation" will not lead to slower inflation this year.

In his latest economic brief, Diwa Guinigundo, currently the Country Analyst for Global Source Partners, said rice prices, which carry an 8.9 percent weight in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), have the ability to cause inflation to spike again.

Given that the country is one of, if not the world's largest rice importer, the weak peso and "creeping fuel price increases" could lead to more expensive rice in the country. These, Guinigundo said, may lead to faster inflation this year.

"Such a precarious rice situation does not promise bright prospects for domestic inflation," Guinigundo said. "The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas would have to be careful in issuing forward guidance that commits itself to more rate reductions in the next meetings of the Monetary Board."

Guinigundo said the "precarious rice situation" stemmed from the Department of Agriculture's declaration that it will declare a food security emergency for rice.

This will lead to the release of 300,000 metric tons of rice stocks from warehouses of the National Food Authority (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/01/17/food-security-emergency-to-let-nfa-sell-rice-buffer-stock/>).

The reason for this is despite the reduction in rice tariffs, prices of the country's food staple may remain elevated because of unresolved supply side issues.

Inflation projection

Guinigundo said given these challenges, it is unlikely that inflation will be kept within the 2 to 4 percent inflation target. The BSP's risk-adjusted inflation rate now stands at 3.4 percent in 2025 and 3.7 percent in 2026.

"The problem remains because agricultural policy to stabilize prices of key commodities continue to focus on market dynamics rather than on production and agricultural productivity," Guinigundo said.

In his view, allowing the NFA to sell rice through government-run Kadiwa centers which retail rice directly to consumers is not sustainable.

This is because the rice to be sold is only a fraction of the rice available in the market. The 300,000 metric tons of rice from NFA warehouses will have a "minimal impact, if at all."

He also noted that NFA's planned 500,000 bags represent only 25,000 tons or about 66 percent of the country's rice consumption in one day.

“Lower selling price means the government would have to subsidize in order to keep rice prices lower and closer to the campaign promise to bring it down to P28 per kilo. But broken rice, the cheapest variety, retails at P58 per kilo based on suggested retail price [SRP],” Guinigundo said.

DA’s dilemma

Earlier, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. issued the statement about the food security emergency after the National Price Coordinating Council (NPCC) approved a resolution urging the DA to declare one, as retail rice prices remained high despite declining global rice costs and tariff reductions.

Laurel noted that the grains agency is in a pickle, with 300,000 metric tons (MT) of rice stored in its warehouses.

He added that if stocks were released from the grains agency, these would be sold to local government units (LGUs), the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the Philippine National Police (PNP), and other government agencies.

By February, Laurel noted that they aim to offer the rice stocks to LGUs and other agencies at P36 per kilo, which the latter could sell to the public at P38 per kilo. By March, however, he said they intend to sell it at P33 per kilo, which the agencies could sell at P35 per kilo.

Image credits: [Nonoy Lacza](#)

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/01/22/rice-inflation-risks-high-bsp-cautioned/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

PSA reports low palay output in 2024

Ada Pelonia
January 21, 2025

PADDY rice output fell by almost one million metric tons (MMT) last year compared to the 2023 level, dimming hopes that the local farm sector did not end 2024 in negative territory.

Data from from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed that palay output in 2024 shrank by 4.85 percent to 19.09 MMT from 20.06 MMT in the previous year.

Palay output alone accounted for 22.2 percent of the crops subsector production in July to September, based on PSA data.

The country's agriculture and fisheries output decreased by 2.2 percent from January to September as El Niño and successive typhoons ravaged local plantations.

PSA data also indicated that palay output in irrigated and rainfed farms also declined last year.

The production of irrigated farms dipped by 4.72 percent, reaching 14.56 MMT from the previous year's 15.28 MMT. Rainfed farms produced 4.53 MMT, 5.26 percent lower than the 4.78 MMT recorded in 2023.

The palay output of Central Luzon, the country's rice granary, slid by 4.29 percent to 3.48 MMT from the previous year's 3.64 MMT. Central Luzon remained as the country's top rice-producing region in 2024.

Cagayan Valley, another big rice producer, had 2.92 MMT or 3.42 percent lower than the 3.03 MMT recorded in 2023.

The PSA's palay output figure was lower than the Department of Agriculture's (DA) forecast that palay production would settle at 19.3 MMT in 2024.

Despite this, the agency said it aims to set a new record palay output of 20.46 MMT this year.

Yellow, white corn

PSA figures also showed that corn output dropped by 3.18 percent to 8.14 MMT in 2024 from 8.41 MMT recorded in the previous year.

Yellow corn, which is used for making animal feeds, fell by 2.22 percent to 6.23 MMT last year from 6.37 MMT in 2023.

White corn decreased by 6.17 percent to 1.91 MMT in 2024 from 2.04 MMT recorded in the previous year.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/01/21/psa-reports-low-palay-output-in-2024/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

PHL's banana export sector faces declining rankings amid disease and increasing costs

BusinessMirror Editorial
January 22, 2025

Despite the numerous difficulties faced by the local banana sector, the Philippines was able to maintain its status as the world's second-largest exporter of the tropical fruit for the fourth consecutive year in 2021 (See, "PHL still second-largest banana exporter-FAO," in the BusinessMirror, May 30, 2022). In 2022, its ranking slipped to third, a position which it held until 2023. A year after, the Philippines was overtaken by Colombia, a country once known for its notorious drug cartels (See, "Colombia, not PHL, now 3rd-largest banana exporter," in the BusinessMirror, January 15, 2025).

A report published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) showed that the Philippines exported 2.28 million metric tons (MMT) of bananas last year, slightly lower than Colombia's 2.31 MMT. Compared to the 2023 level of 2.35 MMT, the Philippines' shipments of the tropical fruit were lower last year. FAO attributed this to the difficulties of banana growers in raising output due largely to the spread of Banana Fusarium Wilt Tropical Race 4 (TR4) in local plantations.

What's alarming, according to the FAO report, is that banana growers "bore the brunt of substantial costs" to prevent the disease. This is on top of the rising cost of inputs, such as fertilizer, and logistics. The spread of TR4, FAO noted, made it difficult for the Philippines to supply the volume requirements of its top customers such as China and Japan.

The silver lining for the Philippines is that preliminary data from FAO indicated that its major customers did not turn to other suppliers of the tropical fruit. The UN agency said the decline in shipments from the Philippines were not offset by Ecuador and Vietnam – two of the countries that can capture our market share. The Philippines can heave a sigh of relief for now, but it does not mean that it should become complacent.

Local plantations have been plagued by TR4 for years, which is largely responsible for the reduction in the volume of bananas exported by the Philippines in the last three years. FAO itself acknowledged that the Cavendish variety, which the Philippines exports, is vulnerable to the disease. While it pushed for variety diversification, the chief UN agency said during the 4th Global Conference of The World Banana Forum (WBF) last year that acceptance by retailers and consumers of different varieties "remains a challenge."

While efforts to lower or even eliminate tariffs on bananas in key markets are welcome, these would mean nothing if the Philippines could not deliver the volume requirements of foreign buyers. Policymakers should now work with the banana sector and find out what they could do together to stop Fusarium wilt from further harming the international reputation of Philippine bananas. Without the necessary interventions to eliminate the disease and manage high costs, the country will have to relinquish its market share to more efficient producers of the tropical fruit.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/01/22/phls-banana-export-sector-faces-declining-rankings-amid-disease-and-increasing-costs/>

ABANTE TONITE:

NFA lugi sa binebentang bigas na pang-ayuda

January 21, 2025

Nawawalan ng P10 ang National Food Authority (NFA) sa kada kilo ng bigas kapag binibili ito ng ibang ahensiya ng gobyerno upang gamiting pang-ayuda.

Ito ang pahayag ni dating Department of Agriculture secretary at Federation of Free Farmers Chair Leonardo Montemayor sa programang 'Bardagulan sa Radyo'.

Ayon kay Montemayor, pangunahing mandato ng NFA ang mag-imbak ng bigas na magagamit ng bansa sa panahon ng kalamidad na siyang binibili ng lokal na gobyerno o ng Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) upang gawing ayuda.

Paliwanag pa niya, binibili ang bigas kahit pa ahensiya rin ng gobyerno ang gagamit nito dahil ang pinagbentahan nito ang panggastos ng NFA sa bills, pampasuweldo sa empleyado o pambili ng palay.

Matatandaang planong ipatupad ang Food Security Emergency upang mapababa ang presyo ng bigas.

Dahil dito, kinuwestiyon ang plano sa nasabing deklarasyon nang aminin ng NFA na may 300,000 tons ng lumang bigas na nakatengga sa kanilang bodega at kailangan nang ilabas.

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2025/01/21/nfa-lugi-sa-binebentang-bigas-na-pang-ayuda/>

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON:

Rice cartels, smugglers sampulan - Mayor Binay

[Ludy Bermudo](#)

January 22, 2025 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Sinabi ni Makati Mayor Abby Binay na dapat sampulan ng gobyerno ang rice cartels at smugglers bilang bahagi ng mga hakbang para pigilan ang manipulasyon ng presyo ng bigas.

Ayon kay Mayor Abby, sa rami ng mga batas laban sa cartel at profiteering, dapat may naipakulong nang rice smuggler at price manipulator. Kapag may nahuhuling smugglers naman, hindi sila inilalantad sa publiko at sinasabi lang na iba-blacklist sila.

Dagdag pa nya, hangga't wala pang nasasampulan nang matindi, paulit-ulit lamang na gagawin ng mga cartel o sindikato ang pagmanipula ng presyo ng bigas at iba pang mga bilihan.

Aniya pa, makakatulong ang deklarasyon ng isang national food security emergency sa pagpigil sa pagtaas ng retail prices ng bigas, pero pansamantalang solusyon lamang ito. Diin niya, hangga't hindi tuluyang nawawala ang middlemen, hindi mapapababa ang presyo ng bigas.

Sinabi ni Mayor Abby na dapat bilhin ng gobyerno ang ani ng mga magsasaka para hindi na ito dumaan pa sa mga middleman. Sinabi niyang ang yumayaman lang dito ay ang middlemen.

Nitong nakaraang taon, nilagdaan ni President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. ang Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act o AGES na nagpapataw ng mas matinding kaparusahan sa mga smuggler at hoarder ng mga produktong pang-agrikultura, kasama ang mga cartel.

Bukod sa multang katumbas ng limang beses ng halaga ng smuggled o hoarded na agricultural o fishery products, nahaharap din sa habambuhay na pagkabilanggo ang mga mapapatunayang lumabag sa naturang batas.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2025/01/22/2415928/rice-cartels-smugglers-sampulan-mayor-binay>