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**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Philippines inks deal with Cambodia to strengthen agricultural investments

BY [DEXTER BARRO II](#)

Feb 13, 2025 04:08 PM



Cambodia's Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries Dith Tina signed the MOU at Malacañan Palace (leftmost) and Department of Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel (rightmost) posing with the memorandum of understanding (PCO)

The Philippines and Cambodia have entered into an agreement that would help drive more investments into Cambodia's agriculture, particularly in rice production and trade.

The memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the two nations on agricultural and agribusiness cooperation was signed on Tuesday, Feb. 11, during the official visit of Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei Hun Manet to the Philippines.

Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel and Cambodia's Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries Dith Tina signed the MOU at Malacañan Palace.

During Monday's bilateral meeting, Tina invited his Philippine counterpart to invest in Cambodia's growing rice production sector.

The minister, in particular, saw opportunities for the Philippines to invest in rice milling facilities in the Southeast Asian country.

Laurel, in response, expressed enthusiasm for this investment prospect given its benefit for both countries' agricultural growth and food security.

"Cambodia will gradually be an important agricultural trading partner as the country diversifies its markets, particularly for rice," the agriculture secretary said.

The DA noted the Philippines has a trade deficit with Cambodia, which suggests the need for stronger bilateral ties.

Trade between the two countries totaled \$80.50 million, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). Of this amount, \$20.40 million was attributed to agricultural products.

The MOU envisions stronger collaboration in the agriculture sector, such as animal feed development, animal health protection, agricultural planning, irrigation management, and agricultural marketing systems.

Cambodia and the Philippines also agreed to explore a potential rice trade cooperation, as well as trade in vegetables and meat.

According to the DA, both countries will also explore the exchange of non-geographical indication-protected plant commodities to promote agricultural diversity and innovation.

<https://mb.com.ph/2025/2/13/philippines-inks-deal-with-cambodia-to-strengthen-agricultural-investments>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Marcos admin releases over ₱500 billion beyond 2024 budget—DBM

BY [DERCO ROSAL](#)

Feb 13, 2025 03:09 PM

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The Marcos administration exceeded its programmed allocations by over half a trillion pesos in 2024, according to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

Preliminary data from the DBM showed that releases from last year's budget breached the ₱6-trillion mark as it hit ₱6.37 trillion, surpassing the ₱5.76-trillion programmed allocation. Posted on Wednesday, Feb. 12, the report on the status of allotment releases said the government exceeded ₱610.9 billion—an increase of 10.59 percent. In 2023, the budget overshoot stood at ₱374.38 billion or higher by 7.11 percent.

Last year's budget overshoot started in September 2024 when it went beyond the budget by over ₱65 billion, and continued increasing until December of 2024.

Government departments received a total of ₱3.97 trillion as of end-December 2024, while ₱490 billion was released for Special Purpose Funds.

Automatic appropriations released a total of ₱1.75 trillion, including ₱71.57 billion for government agencies' retirement and life insurance premiums, ₱871.38 billion for the National Tax Allotment (NTA), and ₱70.51 billion for the Block Grant.

Unprogrammed appropriations, or budget allocations that are not initially included in the government's programmed budget, nearly leveled the budget overshoot as it also reached over half a trillion (₱531.37 billion.)

According to the bulk of share, the unprogrammed appropriations include the Department of Public Works and Highways' (DPWH) ₱244.74 billion, the Department of Transportation's (DOTr) ₱70.50 billion, the Department of Health's (DOH) ₱52.89 billion, the Department of Education's (DepEd) ₱33.1 billion, and the Department of Agriculture's (DA) ₱30.74 billion.

Meanwhile, more than half of the ₱6.32 trillion national budget this year (2025) has already been released. Latest DBM data showed that 64.9 percent or ₱4.1 trillion of the budget has been released, with ₱2.22 trillion still pending.

Of the released budget, government departments have so far received a total of ₱2.8 trillion, while a total of ₱1.03 trillion NTAs have already been disbursed.

<https://mb.com.ph/2025/2/13/gov-t-releases-over-500-billion-beyond-2024-budget>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Notes on the beat: Bittersweet Valentine's: Chocolate price rise to persist

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

February 14, 2025 | 12:00am



MANILA, Philippines — Chocolates and roses. It has always been chocolates and roses on Valentine's Day. But unlike the song of The Green, Filipino lovers may have to resist a sweet bite of chocolate as the price of the beloved sweet continues to turn bitter.

The world was in for a roller-coaster ride last year after cacao prices skyrocketed to unprecedented levels following a steep decline in West African supplies that caused a global supply crunch for the commodity. Extreme weather conditions like El Niño caused erratic rainfall patterns and higher and dry temperatures, making it conducive for pests and diseases to proliferate. This significantly slashed cacao yields in West Africa, which accounts for 70 percent of the world's supply.

Global cocoa prices peaked at a record high of \$12,646 per metric ton in the middle of December last year. That translates to roughly about P750 a kilo, almost equivalent to two kilos of pork belly.

In its November update, the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO) revised upward its global production estimate to 4.382 million metric tons from its previous projection of 4.332 million MT.

However, the increase remained insufficient to meet the projected global demand of 4.816 million MT, resulting in an estimated shortage of almost 480,000 MT.

On an annual basis, production in cocoa year 2023-2024, which ran from October 2023 to September 2024, was down by 13.1 percent, according to ICCO.

On average, cocoa prices in 2024 settled at \$7.33 per kilo, more than double the \$3.28 per kilo average quotation in 2023, according to the World Bank.

Last month, world cocoa prices averaged a record level of \$10.75 per kilo, based on World Bank data.

For a country like the Philippines, which imports over \$200 million worth of cocoa and cocoa-based products including chocolates annually, the global situation means one thing: everyone has to pay more.

Last year, the country had to pay \$0.4 or about P35 more on average for every cocoa and cocoa-based product it imported.

The average unit price of cocoa and cocoa-based products last year stood at \$4 per kilo compared to some \$3.6 per kilo in 2023, based on preliminary Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) trade figures.

Lucrezia Cogliati, a commodities analyst at BMI, a unit of Fitch Group, pointed out that chocolate prices are expected to continue rising this year, although to a lesser extent than cocoa futures.

To cope with the situation, chocolate manufacturers are expected to reduce the proportion of cocoa in their products and even decrease the sizes to mitigate the possible price spikes, Cogliati emphasized, while noting that cocoa is only one of the many ingredients in producing chocolate products.

Discussions in online fora like Reddit have been buzzing, with Filipino bakers helping each other in figuring out how to cope with the rising cocoa prices to keep their businesses afloat while maintaining a viable product line.

One thread in the subreddit BakingPhilippines discussed pastry products that can be baked without using cocoa powder or chocolate just to avoid the costly ingredient.

The import unit cost of cocoa powder last year surged by half to an average of \$4.54 per kilo from \$3 per kilo in 2023, based on PSA data.

Multiple small and medium-scale online Filipino bakeries and pastry shops on Facebook have announced a price increase of around P10 to P15 on their products beginning this month to reflect the rising costs of cocoa powder.

Some cafes in Metro Manila have also been forced to increase the prices of their drinks and pastry items that use cocoa by at least P5 to maintain profitability.

Meanwhile, some shelves of convenience stores have also been grappling with chocolate stock issues, with new supplies coming in later than expected.

However, Cogliati noted that the current elevated global cocoa prices would bring motivate Filipino farmers and private sector to boost their investments in the industry to hike domestic output.

“But we note that these trees take around five years to produce beans from when they are planted so this development would only have effect in the medium to long term,” Cogliati told The STAR via email.

Local cacao harvest last year rose slightly to 10,840 metric tons from 10,760 metric tons in 2023 but average farmgate price received by farmers expanded by almost 50 percent, based on Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data.

The average farmgate price of cacao last year stood at a record-level of P164.11 per kilo versus the P111.10 per kilo in 2023. In the fourth quarter of 2024 alone, the average farmgate price of cacao doubled to P241.28 per kilo from P117.45 per kilo in the same quarter of 2023, PSA data showed.

Agriculture Undersecretary for high value crops Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero said the government is implementing several interventions to help Filipino cacao farmers to take advantage of the rising cacao prices.

Some of the interventions involve expansion and rehabilitation of cocoa farms nationwide through provision of quality cacao seedlings and promotion of pruning and rehabilitation techniques to hike yields of existing farms, Caballero said.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is also providing training and technical support including Good Agricultural Practices to improve productivity and quality of cacao beans produced locally, she added.

Caballero also noted that the government is keen on linking farmers with state financing programs to have better credit access as well as connecting cooperatives with local and international buyers to ensure better prices for their beans.

The DA is also encouraging domestic bean-to-bar processing to maximize profits from finished cacao products.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/02/14/2421317/notes-beat-bittersweet-valentines-chocolate-price-rise-persist>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Onion prices reach P250/kilo

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

February 14, 2025 | 12:00am



MANILA, Philippines — Red onions' retail price has reached P250 per kilo, with farmers' groups criticizing the Department of Agriculture (DA) for importing bulbs when the onion harvest season has already started.

Imported onions are expected to arrive by Feb. 20. Onion harvest has begun and is expected to peak in March and April.

Based on the DA's latest monitoring of Metro Manila markets, the retail price of red onions ranged between P120 and P250 per kilo, while white onions were valued between P120 and P140 per kilo.

Imported white onions ranged between P90 and P160 per kilo.

Last week, red onions were sold at about P200 per kilo.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. earlier approved the importation of 3,000 metric tons of red onions and 1,000 MT of white onions to prevent the continued spike in retail prices.

The DA's decision to import onions was ill-timed amid the ongoing harvest, former agriculture secretary Leonardo Montemayor said.

Compared to the monthly onion consumption of 17,000 MT, the DA said the approved onion imports were minimal.

In 2022, the retail price of onions reached as high as P720 per kilo amid supply shortage and hoarding.

Harvest has begun in major onion-producing municipalities, such as Bayambang in Pangasinan, San Jose in Occidental Mindoro and Bongabon and Laur in Nueva Ecija, Montemayor noted.

Onion farmers have described the decision to import onions as a "double whammy" as plantations in Nueva Ecija – the country's onion capital – are attacked by armyworms.

Victor Danipog, an onion farmer from Nueva Ecija, said farmers have yet to recover from losses incurred during tropical cyclones in November last year and the recent armyworm attack.



### **Pork max SRP**

Meanwhile, the maximum suggested retail price (SRP) for pork should only be P380 per kilo, according to farmers' group Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (Sinag).

"The farmgate price of pork only ranged between P240 and P250 per kilo. The P380 per kilo maximum SRP should be implemented. If the retail price reaches P400, that's too high," Sinag executive director Jayson Cainglet yesterday told dzBB.

Tiu Laurel is planning on imposing a pork max SRP amid rising prices.

Under the Price Act, Cainglet said a probe is mandated if retail prices increase by over 10 percent compared to the previous month.

"The secretary is set to meet with stakeholders next week to discuss the pork max SRP," Cainglet said.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/02/14/2421413/onion-prices-reach-p250kilo>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Government hiking purchase of raw sugar to 500K MT

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

February 14, 2025 | 12:00am



The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) issued Sugar Order 2 that outlined the guidelines for the country's voluntary purchase program at a premium in the current crop year 2024-2025.

STAR / File

## To keep prices stable

MANILA, Philippines — The government will siphon off as much as a quarter of the country's projected raw sugar supply as it seeks to propel farmgate prices of the commodity to a level favorable to planters while keeping retail prices affordable to consumers.

The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) issued Sugar Order 2 that outlined the guidelines for the country's voluntary purchase program at a premium in the current crop year 2024-2025.

This is the second time the government opted to implement the measure to keep farmgate prices of sugar profitable to planters without causing a spike in retail prices of the commodity.

Under the sugar order, the SRA board chaired by Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. approved the siphoning off of as much as 500,000 metric tons (MT) of raw sugar bought by eligible entities at a premium.

The purchased raw sugar would be held off from market circulation for a maximum of three months unless approved for release by the SRA board. The cap for the voluntary purchase program is 28 percent of the country's projected 1.78 million MT raw sugar output in the current crop year.

Tiu Laurel said the higher purchase volume was meant to create a more predictable market and prevent price speculations while the program is ongoing.

SRA administrator and CEO Pablo Luis Azcona said the cap on the voluntary purchase program was also raised to prevent erratic fluctuations in the farmgate prices as eligible participants would have to compete with each other if the volume was retained at 300,000 MT like last year.

Farmgate price of raw sugar spiked to P2,900 per 50-kilogram bag at the end of January as traders have speculated ahead of the issuance of SO 2. The price was P500 higher than the P2,400 per 50-kilogram bag average quotation recorded at the end of December last year.

Azcona noted that sugarcane planters are hoping for a stable price of raw sugar around P2,800 per 50-kilogram bag, which is considered by industry players as fair to both farmers and consumers. The monthly

average price of sugar has been below P2,800 per 50-kilogram bag in the past three months beginning November.

If the limit of the voluntary purchase is hit, then participants of the program would be eligible to import as much as 250,000 MT of raw sugar based on the approved 2:1 purchase-import ratio.

The purchase-import ratio was also revised from last year's 1.5:1 to stretch the duration of the voluntary purchase program while ensuring that the domestic market would not be flooded with prospective imported supplies to the detriment of the sugarcane planters, according to sources.

Furthermore, SO 2 stipulated that only raw sugar enrolled in the voluntary purchase program would be allowed to be shipped to the US in fulfillment of the country's tariff-rate quota allocation should the SRA board open an export program in the current crop year.

"In the event that an export program in fulfillment of the 2025 US quota allocation is undertaken, only sugar enrolled under Section 3.4 (i) of this Sugar Order shall be eligible to be exported to the United States of America under the 2025 US Quota Allocation," the document read.

Under the SO, a maximum of 120,000 MT of sugar covered by quedans issued on or after the week ending Dec. 22, 2024 but not later than the week ending Feb. 23 would be enrolled in the program. Meanwhile, a minimum volume of 380,000 MT of raw sugar covered by quedans issued on or before June 8 can be part of the voluntary purchase program.

Azcona explained that the SRA board decided to include a tie-in provision on voluntary purchase program with the export program to prevent double dipping in the possible import allocation that an eligible entity could get in future import programs.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/02/14/2421308/government-hiking-purchase-raw-sugar-500k-mt>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Cordillera sees a spike in inflation

By: [Vincent Cabreza](#) - Reporter / [@Inquirer\\_Baguio](#)  
Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:06 AM February 14, 2025



**NOT CHEAP** Most of Manila’s vegetables are sourced from Benguet’s mountainside farms, but inflation has kept crop prices high even in the market of Baguio City in the first weeks of January. -VINCENT CABREZA

**BAGUIO CITY**—Inflation continues to strain household budgets across the Cordillera, rising from 3.3 percent in December last year to 4.1 percent at the start of 2025—driven by high food prices, fuel and transport costs, local authorities said.

Food prices rose even as the mountainside farms in Benguet province produce 80 percent of the region’s salad vegetables, including cabbages, green beans, lettuce, cauliflower, and broccoli, which are shipped daily to Manila consumers.

From Jan. 2 to Jan. 8, upland farmers supplied P493.9 million worth of vegetables to various markets, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

“Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages [index] was the primary contributor to inflation in the region. This commodity group accounted for 50 percent of overall inflation, contributing 2.1 percentage points to the total inflation rate of 4.1 percent,” according to a report posted by Villafe Alibuyog, Cordillera director of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), on the agency’s website.

The report added: “This was followed by Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels, which accounted for a 30.1 percent share of last month’s inflation surge, and Personal Care and Miscellaneous Goods and Services, representing a 4.4-percent share of the January inflation rate.”

## **Fluctuations**

Alibuyog attributed food inflation to a sharp increase in the Vegetables, Tubers, Plantains, Cooking Bananas and Pulses index, which rose to 21.9 percent in January from 10.7 percent in December. However, a decline in rice prices slowed inflation in the cereals category, dropping from 6.8 percent in December to 2.8 percent in January.

Like the rest of the country, Cordillera saw a slowdown in inflation last year, hitting a low of 1.2 percent in September after peaking at 4.8 percent in July. However, inflation surged again to 1.4 percent in October, 2.4 percent in November and 3.3 percent in December.

All Cordillera provinces—except Ifugao (which saw inflation dip to 2.9 percent from 3.1 percent in December) and Apayao (which dropped to -0.6 percent from 0.6 percent in December)—experienced another inflationary spike at the start of 2025. In Baguio City, inflation rose to 4.4 percent in January from 3.9 percent in December.

Abra recorded the highest inflation rate in the region last month at 6.9 percent, up from 5.1 percent in December.

## **Rising veggie prices**

The DA reported that reduced farm production in early 2025 may explain the surge in wholesale prices for upland crops during the Christmas season (Dec. 23 to Dec. 27) and after New Year’s Day (Jan. 2 to Jan. 3).

At the Baguio City Public Market, the price of carrots jumped from P120 per kilo during the Christmas week to P160 per kilo after New Year’s Day. Benguet-grown pechay (Chinese cabbage) sold for P60 per kilo on Jan. 2 to Jan. 3, up from P40 per kilo in late December.

In Benguet’s La Trinidad, a major vegetable trading hub, tomato prices increased from P135 per kilo in December to P157 after New Year. Meanwhile, in Lagawe, Ifugao, tomato prices surged from P150 per kilo in December to P200 after New Year, though pechay prices dropped from P80 per kilo in December to P60 per kilo in January.

Similarly, in Bangued, Abra, tomato prices rose to P180 per kilo after New Year from P160 in December, while carrots climbed to P150 per kilo, up from P120 in December.

## **Rate adjustments**

Despite rising food prices, 2025 began with a slight drop in power rates for Baguio and Benguet residents. The Benguet Electric Cooperative (Beneco) announced that January electricity bills reflected a 20-centavo decrease, largely due to lower prices at the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market.

Although the peso weakened against the US dollar toward the end of 2024, inexpensive coal helped cushion power generation costs at Limay Power Inc., Beneco's main supplier, said general manager Melchor Licoben.

However, Baguio will soon face a 30-percent increase in water rates for residential, commercial, and government consumers in 2025. This will be followed by a 10-percent hike in 2026 and another 10-percent increase in 2027. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2034500/cordillera-sees-a-spike-in-inflation>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# DA reviewing good practices certification system

By: [Jordeene B. Lagare](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)  
[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 11:24 AM February 13, 2025



MANILA, Philippines—The Department of Agriculture (DA) is conducting a comprehensive review to address challenges in certifying individuals and entities for good agricultural practices.

The DA issued Special Order No. 207 to create a technical working group to strengthen the Philippine Good Agricultural Practices (PhilGAP) Certification in the country.

This aims to ensure food safety and quality of agricultural products while protecting the environment through sustainable farming. It is designed to ensure that food and non-food agricultural products are produced safely and sustainably.

The TWG formed by the agency will thoroughly review existing guidelines, requirements, and procedures for issuing the PhilGAP certification.

It will fortify the certification scheme; resolve existing challenges, including the delineation of certification coverage among certifying bodies; and supersede existing guidelines as necessary.

The panel will also draft harmonized, re-engineered, and strengthened PhilGAP certification guidelines as well as consult key stakeholders such as farmers, the academe, agribusinesses, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations in updating this policy.

It is also tasked with expanding the scope of this certification program to cover additional facets, including the marketing of PhilGAP-certified farms, PhilGAP extension and communication initiatives, support mechanisms to farmers, and monitoring and evaluation framework of the certification scheme.

“Further, the concerned DA agencies shall publish their respective guidelines on the streamlined procedure, requirements, and policies in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation,” the special order read.

The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), an attached agency of the DA, is implementing the certification scheme to facilitate the adoption of good agricultural practices with high regard for environmental protection and workers' health, safety, and welfare.

It also seeks to produce quality and safe crops for consumers and facilitate access to Philippine agricultural products to neighboring Asean and other foreign markets.

The certification is given to the following: individual farmers, partnerships or joint ventures, cooperatives, corporations, associations or organizations, and demonstration farms.

They can use the PhilGAP Certification on their products as proof of quality and safety.

<https://business.inquirer.net/506373/da-reviewing-good-practices-certification-system>



**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# **BSWM deploys mobile soil laboratories to 3 municipalities in Tarlac**

By: [Jordeene B. Lagare @jordeenelagare](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)  
[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 11:01 AM February 13, 2025

MANILA, Philippines — The Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) has deployed mobile soil laboratories to three municipalities in Tarlac to improve soil health for crop cultivation.

An attached bureau of the Department of Agriculture, the BSWM said mobile soil laboratory (MSL) operations continue in San Manuel, Moncada, and Anao towns as part of an initiative to enhance productivity.

The MSL seeks to make soil testing accessible to all, bringing science-based soil solutions directly to the farmers and other stakeholders.

“By making these services readily available, DA-BSWM empowers communities with the knowledge and tools needed for sustainable soil management and improved agricultural productivity,” the BWSM said in a statement.

The deployment of MSL in various parts of the Philippines is part of the National Soil Health Program and Presidential Decree No. 1435, which promotes science-based and

“This week, the MSL operation received 45 soil samples and conducted 228 [analyses] for soil chemical, physical, microbiological, and STK analysis,” the BSWM said in a statement.

“Additionally, 116 participants were trained through the activity, and 22 STKs were distributed to the Municipal Agriculture Offices,” it added.

The BSWM unveiled the first MSL, a state-of-the-art 10-wheeler truck, at Malacañang Palace in December last year. It is designed to analyze 42 chemical, physical, and microbiological parameters.

“Farmers will benefit from precise soil data to optimize fertilizer use, improve crop yields, and enhance productivity,” the DA previously said in a statement.

The mobile soil laboratory initially operated in San Ildefonso town in Bulacan province at the National Soil and Water Resources Research Development Lowland Pedo-Ecological Zone, serving rice farmers in Central Luzon.

According to the DA, the MSL is part of the government’s broader push for agricultural modernization, precision farming, and sustainable practices.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. had disclosed plans to procure Bottom of Form

“This will align with President Marcos’ vision of boosting farm yields and increasing farmers’ incomes,” said Tiu Laurel.

<https://business.inquirer.net/506359/bswm-deploys-mobile-soil-laboratories-to-3-municipalities-in-tarlac>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# US eggs prices hit a record high of \$4.95 per dozen

10:43 AM February 13, 2025

A sign is mounted on a shelf of eggs at a grocery store in Chicago, Saturday, Feb. 8, 2025. (AP Photo/Nam Y. Huh)

OMAHA, Nebraska — Egg prices hit a record high as the U.S. contends with an ongoing bird flu outbreak, but consumers didn't need government figures released Wednesday to tell them eggs are terribly expensive and hard to find at times because of an ongoing.

The latest monthly consumer price index showed that the average price of a dozen Grade A eggs in U.S. cities reached \$4.95 in January, eclipsing the previous record of \$4.82 set two years earlier and more than double the low of \$2.04 that was recorded in August 2023.

The spike in egg prices was the biggest since the nation's last bird flu outbreak in 2015 and accounted for roughly two-thirds of the total increase in food costs last month, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Of course, that is only the nationwide average. A carton of eggs can cost \$10 or more in some places. And specialized varieties, such as organic and cage-free eggs, are even more expensive.

"We do use eggs a little less often now. You know, because of the price," said Jon Florey as he surveyed his options in the egg case at Encinal Market in Alameda, California. "I was going to make a quiche that I like to make and it's about six eggs, so I figured I'd do something else."

## **When are egg prices expected to go down?**

Relief is not expected any time soon. Egg prices typically spike around Easter due to high holiday demand. And the U.S. Department of Agriculture predicted last month that egg prices were likely to go up 20% this year.

Even if shoppers can afford eggs, they may have difficulty finding them at times. Some grocers are having trouble keeping their shelves stocked, and customers are encountering surcharges and limits on how many cartons they can buy at a time.

Encinal Market owner Joe Trimble said he has a hard time getting all the eggs he orders from his suppliers, so most of the time his shelves are only about 25% full.

“It’s something you don’t think about until you look at the shelf and it’s nearly empty,” Trimble said. Eggs are “just expected to be there in the same way you expect there to be milk. It’s a key item to have in a grocery store because people don’t go out looking for something else to eat on a Saturday morning. They want it. They want to have some scrambled eggs or over-easy eggs on a Saturday morning.”

### **How bad is the bird flu outbreak?**

The main reason that eggs are more expensive is the bird flu outbreak. When the virus is found on a farm, the entire flock is killed to limit the spread of disease. Because massive egg farms may have millions of birds, just one outbreak may put a dent in the egg supply. Nearly 158 million birds have been slaughtered overall since the outbreak began.

The Agriculture Department says more than 23 million birds were slaughtered last month and more than 18 million were killed in December to limit the spread of the bird flu virus. Those numbers include turkeys and chickens raised for meat, but the vast majority of them were egg-laying chickens.

And when there is an outbreak on a farm, it often takes several months to dispose of the carcasses, sanitize the barns and raise new birds until they are old enough to start producing eggs, so the effects linger.

Bird flu cases often spike in the spring and fall when wild birds are migrating because they are the main source of the virus, but cases can pop up any time of year. The virus has also spread to cattle and other species, and dozens of people — mostly farmworkers taking care of ill animals — have been sickened.

But health officials say the threat to human health remains low and eggs and poultry are safe to eat because sick animals aren’t allowed into the food supply. Plus, properly cooking meat and eggs to at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit kills any virus, and pasteurization neutralizes bird flu in milk.

### **What else is driving egg prices up?**

Egg farmers also face higher feed, fuel and labor costs these days because of inflation. Plus, farmers are investing more in biosecurity measures to try to protect their birds.

Ten states have passed laws allowing the sale of eggs only from cage-free environments. The supply of those eggs is tighter and focused in certain regions, so the effect on prices can be magnified when outbreaks hit cage-free egg farms.

Many of the egg farms with recent outbreaks were cage-free farms in California. Cage-free egg laws have already gone into effect in California, Massachusetts, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, Colorado and Michigan. Total demand for eggs is also up significantly in recent years. Consumers are buying more eggs, and the growth of all-day breakfast restaurants is adding to demand.

CoBank analyst Brian Earnest said the current cost of eggs could discourage some buying, which would ease the demand pressure but might not have a noticeable effect. It will likely take months for egg producers to fill the gaps in supply.

“As consumers continue to stock up on eggs, supplies at the store level will remain tight, and with Easter right around the corner, that could prolong the tighter supplies,” Earnest said.

While prices remain elevated, producers of baked goods and other food items that rely on eggs as a main ingredient will have to decide how much to increase prices or reduce production, he said.

<https://business.inquirer.net/506352/us-eggs-prices-hit-a-record-high-of-4-95-per-dozen>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Palay farmgate prices fall 17% in Jan.

February 13, 2025 | 8:44 pm



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

THE FARMGATE PRICE of unmilled rice (palay) fell 17% year on year in January to an average of P20.69 per kilogram, after rice imports hit record levels last year.

Month on month, the palay farmgate price fell 0.05% to an average of P20.70, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said in a report.

The PSA said all regions except the Eastern Visayas reported falling prices on average in the 12 months to January 2025.

Month on month, only seven of the 16 regions posted growth in average farmgate prices — Cagayan Valley, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, Central Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Soccsksargen, and Caraga.

The highest palay prices in January were posted by the Eastern Visayas, where palay prices rose 28.4% year on year and 7.0% month on month to P24.79 per kilo.

The lowest farmgate price was recorded in Calabarzon at P17.41 per kilo from P23.55 per kilo, down 26.1% year on year.

The biggest decline was logged by Cagayan Valley at 26.8%, with its average farmgate price falling to P20.37 from P27.84 per kilo.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has said that it can “purchase more from farmers as palay prices this year averaged P21 to P23 per kilo compared with P27 per kilo in 2024.

The DA lowered the price of National Food Authority (NFA) rice to P35 per kilo, days after declaring a food security emergency due to an “extraordinary” spike in the price of the grain, despite lower tariffs for imports.

“That is expected given the huge inflow of imports in 2024 coupled with the reduction in tariffs and the softening of international prices,” Raul Q. Montemayor, national manager of the Federation of Free Farmers Cooperatives, Inc., said via Viber.

“We hope that the DA will be as concerned about this as they are with rice retail prices.”

The DA last month said it was expecting the palay harvest to exceed 20 million MT this year.

In 2024, rice imports hit a record 4.68 million metric tons (MMT), against 3.6 MMT a year earlier.

Mr. Montemayor said palay production in 2024 declined by 972,427 MT, equivalent to 612,628 MT of rice.

“But the country imported about 1.2 million MT more than what it bought abroad in 2023.

So, the decline in local production was more than offset by imports by around 600,000 tons.”

The national rice inventory rose to 2.16 MMT in January, up 6.4% year-on-year.

Month on month, the rice inventory declined 15.7% from 2.56 MMT in December.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. last year issued an executive order lowering the tariff on imported rice to 15% from 35%.

“One of our arguments in rejecting the order is its direct impact of reduced palay prices as traders and millers will have to contend with rice imports flooding the market,” Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura executive director Jayson H. Cainglet said via Viber.

“We hope that under the food security emergency declaration, the DA through the NFA can procure more than the 15-day mandate to about 30 days buffer stock at the guaranteed price of P23 per kilo,” he said.

“A 30-day buffer stock would also be equivalent to 7-8% of rice consumption, and enhanced ability on the government’s part to intervene in the market to reduce rice prices,” he added.

The DA said Tuesday that economic managers will soon review the tariff order to “assess whether it needs to be adjusted.”

It said Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel, Jr. is “only inclined to recommend a revision of the current tariff level if retail prices of imported rice ease to the P42-P45 per kilo range.” — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/02/13/653271/palay-farmgate-prices-fall-17-in-jan/>

## BUSINESS WORLD:

# Bakeries cite need to raise prices if wages hiked

February 13, 2025 | 8:42 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/ MICHAEL VARCAS

THE BAKING INDUSTRY said it wants the government to allow bread prices to rise if a proposed P200 blanket wage hike goes ahead.

Filipino-Chinese Bakery Association, Inc. (FCBAI) President Christopher C. Ah said at a briefing: “As long as the government helps us in gradually increasing our prices so that our consumer will not get hurt.”

The briefing was called to discuss the industry’s outlook. Mr. Ah said he is confident about growth this year due to growing demand and the government’s support.

“We are okay as long as the government supports us,” he said Thursday.

“Bread stays a staple for us (Filipinos). And what is good about the industry is that our bakers are becoming more innovative,” he added, citing moves to sell bread online.

“It started during the pandemic when (online selling) boomed,” he added.

He said the industry is in continuous dialogue with the government for support measures like tax breaks and the promotion of healthy breads.

“Our suppliers are being supported by the government; that is why instead of continuously increasing prices, they also control their prices,” Mr. Ah added.

He said price pressures are being dealt with via innovation.

“We have strong partners who teach us how to use new technology, remedies, and solutions,” he said.

He cited the example of alternatives to sugar, which is becoming expensive

“Actually, we are lucky because the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) came up with Pinoy Tasty,” he added, referring to the standard loaf of sliced sandwich bread, which is price-controlled.

Pinoy Tasty, along with Pinoy Pandesal — the traditional Filipino bread roll — emerged from a joint project between the government and baking industry to formulate affordable bakery products.

The DTI in its suggested retail price (SRP) bulletin on Feb. 1 approved a P2.25 and P4 increase for Pinoy Pandesal and Pinoy Tasty, respectively. This was the first price increase for these products since 2022.

The FCBAI is hoping to address the issues faced by the industry at this year’s Bakery Fair, due to take place on March 6-8 at the World Trade Center.

“We are expecting 30,000 to 35,000 participants for the three days,” Mr. Ah said. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/02/13/653269/bakeries-cite-need-to-raise-prices-if-wages-hiked/>

## BUSINESS MIRROR:

# China seen hiking rice imports as prices fall

- Ada Pelonia
- February 13, 2025



(Photo by Nonie Reyes)

**China will secure larger rice shipments this year following the decline in quotations from Thailand and Vietnam—the Philippines’s top sources of the food staple.**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) revised upward its projection for China’s rice imports this year to 2.2 million metric tons (MMT) as exporter quotes tumbled below domestic prices.

This was higher than its previous forecast of 2 MMT, owing to expected bolstered demand spurred by lower global rice prices, the agency said.

The USDA noted that India’s return to the export market continued to put downward pressure on world prices, prompting an acceleration of China’s total rice imports in the final quarter of 2024.

The East Asian nation imported around 1.6 MMT of rice last year, the lowest since 2011.

China saw a sharp decline in foreign rice demand after India placed trade restrictions on milled rice exports last 2023, the agency said.

“As global prices shot sharply higher, imported prices became uncompetitive relative to domestic rice, and Chinese buyers were noticeably absent from the market,” the USDA said.

India, however, eased restrictions after lifting its ban on non-basmati rice shipments last year. The South Asian nation is the world’s largest rice exporter.

“After India lifted its restrictions in September 2024, all major Asian exporter prices declined, and China’s imports grew exponentially,” the USDA said in its latest report.

“Major suppliers Thailand and Vietnam are expected to have increased sales to China [in 2024],” it added.

The USDA said that last month, global export quotations registered declines, with Vietnamese prices decreasing by \$55 to \$394 per metric ton (MT) while Thai prices dropped by \$57 to \$437 per MT with fewer sales to Indonesia.

“Pakistani quotes decreased \$52 to \$400 per MT and Indian quotes fell \$34 to \$410 per MT as India’s return to the export market continues to create downward pressure on global prices.”

It added that United States prices dropped \$30 to \$697 per MT due to weaker sales to Latin America while Uruguayan prices fell \$32 to \$668 per MT as buyers wait for the harvest of the new crop.

Meanwhile, the international agency said global rice production remained high despite a reduction this month for Sri Lanka while global consumption was raised following upward revisions for China and Indonesia.

“Imports are forecast up based on increases for China. Exports are also forecast higher driven by India,” the USDA said.

Image credits: [Nonie Reyes](#)

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/02/13/china-seen-hiking-rice-imports-as-prices-fall/>



## **BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# **Lacson proposes legislation to institutionalize Kadiwa program, aiming to lower food prices**

- **Jovee Marie N. de la Cruz**
- **February 13, 2025**

Iloilo City—Alyansa Para sa Bagong Pilipinas senatorial candidate Panfilo “Ping” Lacson is proposing legislation to make the Kadiwa program a permanent fixture that connects farmers directly with consumers, aiming to lower food prices and combat inflation.

In a press conference in Iloilo City, the second leg of Alyansa’s regional kickoff series, Lacson said he believes institutionalizing Kadiwa stores through legislation will eliminate middlemen, a significant contributor to high agricultural costs. This would empower local government units (LGUs) to directly manage the supply chain.

He highlighted that some LGUs have already successfully implemented Kadiwa, demonstrating the effectiveness of government-backed farm-to-market initiatives in reducing prices.

Alyansa is a 12-member Senate slate backed by the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., running under the banner “Bagong Pilipinas.”

Aside from Lacson, Alyansa is composed of former Interior Secretary Benhur Abalos, Makati City Mayor Abigail Binay, Senator Pia Cayetano, Senator Lito Lapid, Senator Imee Marcos, former Senator Manny Pacquiao, Senator Ramon “Bong” Revilla Jr., former Senate President Vicente “Tito” Sotto III, Senator Francis “Tol” Tolentino, ACT-CIS Representative Erwin Tulfo, and Deputy Speaker Camille Villar.

The Kadiwa program, originally introduced during the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos Sr., was designed to stabilize food prices by directly linking farmers and fisherfolk to consumers, bypassing traders who manipulate prices.

The initiative faded over the years but was revived and expanded under President Marcos Jr. as part of his administration’s efforts to combat inflation and support the agricultural sector.

Lacson pointed out that some LGUs have already adopted the Kadiwa program, proving that government-backed farm-to-market interventions can be both feasible and effective in reducing costs.

“This has been practiced in other provinces where the [LGUs] are already intervening, intervening, that the farmers’ produce is also the one who buys and distributes to the Kadiwa stores, so that when the middlemen disappear, the price drops significantly,” he explained.

Although Kadiwa stores have largely been temporary measures, Lacson underscored the need for a national law that would make them a permanent fixture in the country’s economic framework.

Lacson’s push for a permanent Kadiwa system aligns with Alyansa’s broader mission to reduce the cost of living and strengthen food security, ensuring that both consumers and farmers benefit from direct market access without price manipulation.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/02/13/lacson-proposes-legislation-to-institutionalize-kadiwa-program-aiming-to-lower-food-prices/>

# Anti-developmental

## *FINER POINTS*



**By Fermin D. Adriano**

**February 14, 2025**

OUR political institution is anti-developmental.

We impose a lot of qualifications for ordinary employees, such as bookkeepers, security guards, military personnel, accountants, teachers, etc., to ensure that they are capable of performing their assigned duties. But no such stringent qualifications are imposed on our politicians, who are supposed to lead us and govern the nation, except that a candidate should be a Filipino citizen and be able to read and write.

As such, how do we expect a former entertainer, comedian, broadcaster or a contractor to properly govern the country when they do not fully understand the principles of good economics, dynamics of market operations (locally and internationally), and the rules of sound public finance? How can they legislate good laws sans knowledge of the cardinal principles of public sector management and even the simple task of crafting good laws?

Our political institution is anti-developmental because we choose leaders who are popular rather than those who know how to govern. It caters to populist ideas without comprehending the serious limitations and negative impact on the country's development trajectory.

For instance, we continue pursuing agrarian reform with no end in sight because it caters to the leftist populist notion that it guarantees social justice for tillers. Unfortunately, the protracted implementation for more than three decades only resulted in the fragmentation of farms into miniscule sizes unable to attain economies of scale. The land sizes cannot even provide a decent income for their owner-cultivators.

We passed a law stipulating free higher education. The University of the Philippines had a decent socialized tuition fee (STF) scheme wherein well-off students paid in full while those from low-income families enjoyed free tuition and were provided a monthly stipend, the amount of which was based on the income group where the student belonged.

But the Universal Access to Quality Higher Education Act abolished the UP STF scheme as it guaranteed free higher education to all students enrolling in state colleges and universities (SCUs). The ironic result is that UP's well-off students, whose main problem was finding a parking space for their cars on campus, were extended the privilege while poor UP students were deprived of their monthly stipends.

### ADVERTISEMENT

Of course, one can argue that most students enrolled in SCUs are not well-off and hence should be subsidized. Indeed, they are not, but the vast majority belong to the middle class. Consequently, significant government resources were diverted to funding tertiary education, ignoring the blatant reality that the weakest and most important link that is basic education, which should have received priority education expenditures.

Then there is this "Free Irrigation Service Act" that stipulates that farms eight hectares and below get free irrigation water from national and communal irrigation systems — at the same time that the government is promoting conservation of fresh water because of its growing scarcity.

Doesn't the provision of free irrigation promote the wasteful use of fresh water because there is no cost to the user? We had a system under the communal irrigation scheme wherein irrigation fees collected from farmer-users were used to properly maintain and operate communal facilities and canals.

Isn't this an excellent arrangement wherein the funds collected are plowed back to them as users of the facilities? Unfortunately, our politicians did not see it this way because giving water for free wins votes. In a political system wherein numbers matter more than the quality of governance, the result is the inevitable march of the country to economic mediocrity and backwardness.

An anti-developmental malaise pervades the manner by which agricultural programs and projects are determined — these cater to the populist biases of the politicians and voters despite the absence of any economic logic.

Take, for instance, the manner by which legislators butcher the budget of the Department of Agriculture (DA). They allocate agricultural development projects per congressional district instead of concentrating these in areas where the biggest productivity gains can be achieved. A classic, but verging on the ridiculous, case was where expenses for irrigation facilities were allocated to congressmen representing highly urbanized districts. They justified it as a means to mitigate flooding.

A comprehensive study by the World Bank during the administration of Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III on the provision of farm-to-market roads (FMRs) also revealed three shocking findings. One, there was hardly any objective criteria used (i.e., such as poverty situation, potentials for economic growth, jobs generation, etc.) to determine where the FMRs should be constructed. Most were dependent on the results of consultations with the legislator of a district.

Second was that the provision of FMRs was mostly decided at the DA central office (after consultation with the congressmen) when it should have been done at the local level because the community knows where to best locate them for their maximum use and benefit.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

And third, upon ocular inspection, the WB team found out that many of the FMRs were not connected to each other. This defeated the objective of promoting better interconnection to facilitate movements of products and people and lower transport costs.

Our irrigation system also experiences the same heavy interventionist hands of legislators in determining their location and coverage areas. No wonder we cannot develop our irrigation system in a manner that will enlarge areas for cultivation and increase farm productivity significantly.

Daron Acemoglu, MIT economist and main author (Harvard political scientist James Robinson is the co-author) of the much-acclaimed book, "Why Nations Fail," observed that Philippine agriculture was a classic case for their work, which theorizes that the role of institutions (governance) is critical to whether the country develops or not.

Acemoglu noted that the Philippines had world-class agricultural experts in the International Rice Research Institute and the UP College of Agriculture, whose faculty members studied agriculture in the US in the 1960s and the 1970s. The country sent experts to neighboring Asian countries like Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam, which amply demonstrates the existence of high-quality human resources in the Philippines.

"But why is Philippine agriculture now a laggard in the region?" he asked. The answer is obvious: Our political institution is anti-developmental as it primarily caters to the interests of political dynasties and economic oligarchs rather than the vast majority of the people.

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<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/02/14/business/top-business/anti-developmental/2055498>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# **PH, Cambodia forge agriculture trade ties**

**By Giselle P. Jordan**

**February 14, 2025**

THE Philippines and Cambodia on Feb. 11 signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on agricultural and agribusiness cooperation following Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei Hun Manet's state visit to Manila.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. and Cambodia's Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries Dith Tina signed the agreement in Malacañang.

In a bilateral meeting on Feb. 10, Tina made a pitch for investments in Cambodia's expanding rice production sector, citing opportunities for the Philippines to build rice-milling facilities. Tiu Laurel showed interest, saying the Department of Agriculture (DA)-linked Food Terminal Inc. would play an important role in such ventures.

The two countries also agreed to explore trading in rice, vegetables and meat.

"Cambodia will be an important agricultural trading partner as it diversifies its markets, particularly for rice," said Tiu Laurel.

In 2023, trade between the two countries amounted to \$80.5 million, with agricultural accounting for \$20.4 million.

The MOU signals enhanced collaborations on agricultural planning, animal feed development, animal health protection, irrigation management, and agricultural marketing systems. There are plans as well for exchanging non-geographical indication-protected plant commodities for diversity and innovation.

**<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/02/14/business/top-business/ph-cambodia-forge-agriculture-trade-ties/2055499>**

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# DA launches PH's first mobile soil lab in Tarlac

**By Jerry M. Hernandez**

**February 14, 2025**

THE Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Soils and Water Management has launched the country's first Mobile Soil Laboratory (MSL) in Tarlac to enhance farming in the province.

The MSL will offer not only soil analysis but also free training to farmers and students to determine the right type, right quantity, right time, and right fertilizer area.



**MOBILE SOIL LAB** The Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Soils and Water Management has launched the country's first Mobile Soil Laboratory in Tarlac to help the farmers determine the type of soil they are tilling and learn the right fertilizer, right quantity, and right time, for a particular farmland to ensure better yields. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tarlac Gov. Susan Yap hailed the launching of the MSL in the province, saying that Tarlac farmers are now equipped with more farming strategies to help them increase and improve produce.

"First launched in our province nationwide, the Mobile Soil Laboratory is now here to support our Tarlaqueño farmers," she said.

"With the right knowledge and technology, the soil will be fatter, and the harvest will be more plentiful," added Yap. Farmers and parents with their children who study farming also expressed appreciation to the provincial government for bringing the MSL first in the province, as agricultural students will be able to easily access a facility that will assist them in their projects.

A mother whose son even goes to as far as Pampanga to find a soil laboratory for their research, has expressed appreciation of the mobile soil laboratory.

"Actually, that's the big problem of my son as he and his classmates even went to Pampanga in search of a laboratory for their research in soil test," said a mother named Jennifer Jimenez.

Cooperatives in the province have also showed interest in undergoing seminars provided by the MSL and committed to help the provincial government achieve greater harvest of agricultural products.

"We, farmers group of Maliwalo, Tarlac City, urgently need this. It's a big help to us so as to know the quality of our soil and what kind of fertilizers needed to avoid additional expenses," said a certain Ernie Galang.

Another farmer, Verwin Pulonan, cited that the arrival of MSL has been a long-sought dream of local farmers.

"We really need to undergo the process of soil test to determine what fertilizer to use by most of our farmers who use fertilizers just the same," said Pulonan.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/02/14/regions/da-launches-phs-first-mobile-soil-lab-in-tarlac/2055422>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# Imee urges review of fisheries code

[By Rjay Zuriaga Castor](#)

February 14, 2025

**ILOILO CITY** — Sen. Imee Marcos has called for a review of the country's fisheries laws to better protect small-scale fishers, particularly in light of environmental changes and a recent Supreme Court ruling that allows commercial fishing vessels to operate within municipal waters.



**FOR THE FISHERS** Sen. Imee Marcos (center) holds a press conference to the local media ahead of the Alyansa sa Bagong Pilipinas proclamation rally in Iloilo City on Feb. 13, 2025. PHOTO BY RJAY ZURIAGA CASTOR

**Marcos said the Philippine Fisheries Code or Republic Act (RA) 8550 should be revisited, citing the fears of municipal fishermen from commercial vessels encroaching on their territories.**

"I contend that we should revisit my father's (former president Ferdinand Marcos Sr.) formulation for the Philippine Fisheries Code. In my father's version, our old fisheries code clearly had two criteria," she said in a press conference in this city on Wednesday.

Marcos was referring to the Presidential Decree (PD) 704 issued by the late president in 1975.

"It wasn't just about distance, like municipal waters being measured from the high water mark. More importantly, it also considered depth — accounting for both the distance and the depth, the high water mark, and the number of fathoms deep," she said.

However, a review of PD 704 shows that while it established distance as a defining factor for municipal waters, it does not explicitly mention depth as a criterion.

The decree later served as the foundation for RA 8550, which was enacted in 1998 during the administration of then-president Fidel Ramos to strengthen fishery management and conservation.

The senator also stressed that climate change is affecting ocean levels, which could impact the extent of municipal waters under the existing law.

"The review is important because, with climate change, we know that ocean levels fluctuate, causing municipal waters to shrink. Therefore, I believe we should revisit this policy and use two qualifiers rather than just one," she said.

Marcos underscored the need to clarify the term "access" in fisheries legislation to prevent conflicts between small-scale fishers and commercial fishing operators.

"To prevent this and clarify the concept of 'access,' I believe we should revisit the old fisheries code and incorporate depth alongside

On Dec. 20, 2024, the Court's First Division upheld a lower court decision that allowed Mercidar Fishing Corp. to operate within the 15-kilometer municipal waters, traditionally reserved for small-scale fishers.

Fishers group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas said the decision is expected to significantly affect over two million registered small-scale fishers nationwide, as it opens up nearly 90 percent of coastal waters to commercial vessels.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/02/14/regions/imee-urges-review-of-fisheries-code/2055427>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# Vegetable bouquet for Valentine's Day

By VINCE JACOB VISAYA

February 14, 2025

**SOLANA, Cagayan** — To make Valentine's Day more memorable and special for her loved ones this year, Maricris Maravilla will send bouquets of vegetables, instead of the traditional flowers and chocolates.



**HEALTHY GIFT** Bouquets made out of vegetables as an alternative to flowers and chocolates for Valentine's Day are becoming a trend in Cagayan province. PHOTO BY VINCE JACOB VISAYA

"This is something new and I love exploring other alternatives rather than the usual ones," the 25-year-old Maravilla told The Manila Times on Thursday.

The veggie bouquet was first introduced by the Department of Agriculture – Cagayan Valley regional office in Tuguegarao City a couple of years ago and is now gaining traction and public attention in the province. The bouquet can contain various combinations of vegetables such as eggplant, bell pepper, onion, ginger, lettuce and ampalaya, among others.

Other variations also include fruits.

"Vegetable bouquet flowers would also be a promotion to healthy living. We can buy the vegetables from our Kadiwa stores and send them as gifts on February 14, day of hearts," said Rose Marie Aquino, Cagayan Valley regional executive director.

The price of the bouquets range from P400 to P800, depending on the content.

The Department of Agriculture in Region 2 has been buying vegetables and fruits from local farmers that are sold in Kadiwa-accredited stores.

Farmers also expressed delight with the influx of buyers of vegetables for Valentine's Day.

"This will help us turn the tide of the past typhoons. Although the income is not that much, it will buy rice and other food," farmer-housekeeper Ade-laida Almazan said in local tongue.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/02/14/regions/vegetable-bouquet-for-valentines-day/2055104>



**REMATE:**

# Commonwealth Market ininspeksyon ng DTI at DA

February 13, 2025 11:07



MANILA, Philippines – Sina Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte, kasama si Department of Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel at Department of Trade and Industry Secretary Ma. Cristina Roque, ay nagsagawa ng inspeksyon sa Commonwealth Market sa Quezon City bilang bahagi ng DTI-DA Joint Market Monitoring ngayong Miyerkules, Pebrero 12, 2025.





Layunin ng pagbisita na tiyakin ang patas na presyo ng bigas, gulay, at produktong manok, habang pinangangalagaan ang kapakanan ng mga mamimili.

Sinubukan rin nila ang “Timbangan ng Bayan” upang masiguro ang tamang bigat ng mga produkto at maiwasan ang pandaraya sa timbangan. *Danny Querubin*

<https://remate.ph/commonwealth-market-ininspeksyon-ng-dti-at-da/>