

## CLIPPINGS FOR TODAY FEBRUARY 08, 2025

### **A. MANILA BULLETIN:**

**DA: Tamban's Codex inclusion to boost sardine industry, open EU market**

**'Act with urgency, compassion': Poe pushes for approval of animal welfare bill**

**'Ill-timed': Farmers decry DA's onion importation amid harvest season**

**37 stranded fishermen rescued in Palawan**

**PH, South Korea discuss food safety compliance to ensure uninterrupted trade**

### **B. THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

**ASF outbreaks down, but pork prices still up**

**Ex-DA chief criticizes decision to import onions**

### **C. PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

**Marcos lauds BOC for collecting P931 billion**

**Food security emergency for rice: The real issues**

### **D. BUSINESS WORLD:**

**Philippine rice buyers delay 350,000 tons of Vietnamese cargoes-sources**

### **E. REMATE:**

**Pangalan ng DA chief ginagamit sa panloloko; ahensya nagbabala sa publiko**

**4 lugar positibo sa toxic red tide**

**Pag-angkat ng DA ng sibuyas sa gitna ng harvest season kinuweatyon ng mga magsasaka**

### **F. ABANTE:**

**Sey ng mga Pinoy sa survey: Agri diskarte sa bigas, iba pang bilihin `di sapat**

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **DA: Tamban's Codex inclusion to boost sardine industry, open EU market**

**BY DEXTER BARRO II**

Feb 7, 2025 06:01 PM

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The Department of Agriculture (DA) said the Codex Alimentarius Commission's (CAC) official recognition of *Sardinella lemuru*, locally known as tamban, will open up new export opportunities for local sardine products.

In a statement, the DA said tamban was included in the CAC's Codex Standard for Canned Sardines and Sardine-Type Products (CXS 94-1981), which sets guidelines for the preparation, packaging, and labelling of canned sardines.

This recognition is anticipated to resolve challenges that have long plagued exportation to major markets such as Europe.

"This eliminates trade barriers, enhances global market access, and elevates the country's position in the sardine industry," the agency said.

The Codex Standard was amended to include tamban, which is often used in canned sardines, in November 2024 during the 47th CAC Session in Geneva, Switzerland.

In a statement on its X (formerly Twitter) account, the CAC said this was a result of "a comprehensive process of sensory testing, and comparison with established sardine species."

Tamban's road to recognition started way back in 2013, when researchers found that it had often been misidentified as another sardine species.

This became apparent around 2016 and 2017 when the European Union (EU) rejected shipments of Philippine canned sardines since tamban was not listed in their product standards.

"The EU's strict requirements for sardine species led to missed export opportunities, costing the Philippine sardine industry valuable market access," the DA said.

The National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDI) implemented a series of projects aimed at including tamban in the list of authorized species for export.

In 2020, the Philippines submitted a proposal to the Codex Secretariat for the inclusion of tamban in the Codex Standard, which then underwent technical and sensory evaluation.

The amendment was only adopted in November of last year, finally aligning Philippine sardine products with global standards.

This ensures compliance with EU regulations, opening new export possibilities.

To say this was a long time coming would be an understatement, as the DA recognized tamban's recognition as a "milestone" for the fisheries sector.

"The addition of *Sardinella lemuru* in the Codex Standard highlights the Philippines' commitment to innovation, quality, and global competitiveness," the DA stated.

"This significant move strengthens the country's reputation as a trusted supplier of premium sardine products, solidifying its role as a key player in the international seafood market," it added.

<https://mb.com.ph/2025/2/7/tamban-recognition-opens-new-export-markets-1>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# 'Act with urgency, compassion': Poe pushes for approval of animal welfare bill

**BY DHEL NAZARIO**

Feb 7, 2025 12:59 PM

Sen. Grace Poe urged her colleagues in Congress to pass the revised Animal Welfare Act in the 19th Congress to put a halt to the grim reality of violence against animals unfolding every day.



(Senate PRIB photo)

Poe delivered her sponsorship speech on the measure late Tuesday signaling the start of plenary discussions.

"I now call on this chamber: Let us act with compassion and urgency. By passing the Revised Animal Welfare Act, we take a firm stand against cruelty and ensure that every animal in our country is treated with the care and respect it deserves," she said.

"They say a dog is a human's best friend. Well, before this Congress adjourns, let's make it clear—humans are a dog's best friend, too. And not just dogs but all other animals," said Poe, who takes care of seven dogs in her home.

The proposed law will amend the Animal Welfare Act of 1998, a crucial legislation as it helped raise awareness and established legal safeguards to prevent animal abuse.

However, Poe pointed out the law must evolve to address the emerging challenges of animal welfare.

"Violence against animals is not an abstract concern. It is a grim reality unfolding in our country every single day," she said.

"We need a revised law, with stronger fangs if we may say," the chairperson of the Senate Committee on Finance added.

Poe narrated several cases of cruelty against animals such as the golden retriever Killua that was clubbed to death by a barangay official and the dog being dragged to what appears as the butchering area of a dog meat trader.

"Hindi lang ito simpleng mga kwento. Patunay ito ng mga kakulangan sa ating batas at sistema (These are not just simple stories. They are evidence of the shortcomings in our laws and system)," she said.

Poe's Senate Bill No. 2458, which is now incorporated in the committee report she sponsored, seeks to strengthen animal welfare standards, policies, rules and regulations, implementation and enforcement as well as provide tougher penalties to violators.

At the core of the measure is the creation of an Animal Welfare Bureau under the Department of Agriculture, which will serve as the primary guardian of animal welfare across the country, equipped with resources to bring about real change.

Poe said the measure will have the following salient provisions:

- Ensures animals will have clean water, adequate food, and shelter. No more dogs chained and left to starve under the sun. No more animals left in the cold and rain without refuge.
- Establishes animal care as a right, not a privilege. All domesticated animals will be entitled to annual checkups, and those in distress must receive prompt medical attention.
- Sets up humane transport standards. It sets strict guidelines for the humane transport of all animals, from household pets to livestock.
- Bans dog meat trade, ear cropping, tail docking, cruel confinement, de-vocalization, and other inhumane practices on animals, except when needed for medical purposes.
- Dictates stronger penalties for animal cruelty and ensures swift and severe consequences for individuals who engage in acts of cruelty, neglect, or exploitation of animals.
- Promotes spaying, neutering and vaccination of stray animals to curb their population and prevent the spread of rabies in our country.
- Puts an end to animal blood sports. Dogfighting and other forms of animal combat will be strictly regulated, with unauthorized fights outlawed entirely.

"This bill is our chance to make a lasting difference, not just by strengthening our laws but sending a clear message to the world: Hindi lang animal lover ang mga Pilipino, kundi animal defenders din (Filipinos are not just animal lovers, but also animal defenders)," Poe said.

<https://mb.com.ph/2025/2/7/act-with-urgency-compassion-poe-pushes-for-approval-of-animal-welfare-bill>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# ‘Ill-timed’: Farmers decry DA’s onion importation amid harvest season

**BY JEL SANTOS**

Feb 7, 2025 09:03 AM

Farmers and agricultural groups slammed the Department of Agriculture (DA) over its decision to import onions, warning that the move would severely impact local producers amid the ongoing harvest season.



(MB file

photo)

On Thursday, Feb. 6, DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. confirmed that he had approved the importation of 3,000 metric tons of red onions and 1,000 metric tons of white onions, with shipments expected to arrive within the next two weeks.

Former Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Q. Montemayor called the timing of the DA’s importation “ill-advised” as onion harvests have already begun in key production areas such as Bayambang in Pangasinan, San Jose in Occidental Mindoro, and Bongabon and Laur in Nueva Ecija.

“The DA’s decision is ill-timed. Onion harvests have begun in major producing municipalities like Bayambang in Pangasinan, San Jose in Occidental Mindoro, and Bongabon and Laur in Nueva Ecija,” Montemayor said in statement.

He cautioned that the influx of imported onions would drive down farmgate prices, worsening the plight of local farmers already struggling with rising costs of agricultural inputs and an infestation of harabas or army worms.

While he acknowledged the DA’s intent to prevent a repeat of the exorbitant onion prices seen in 2022, Montemayor stressed the need for stricter oversight of market players.

“However, the DA—together with the Department of Trade and Industry and other law enforcement agencies—must also monitor cold storage operators and traders and counter any profiteering or cartelistic behavior,” he stated.

As such, Montemayor noted that there was little to no consultation with farmers and their organizations before the DA decided to import onions.

**Farmers’ group questions importation**

The Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) also condemned the move, questioning why the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) rushed to approve onion imports despite the ongoing harvest.

“Bakit laging kati ang kamay ng ilang kawani ng Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) na mag-import ng sibuyas gayong paani na ang ating mga onion farmers (Why are some BPI officials always eager to import onions when our local farmers are already harvesting)?,” SINAG Executive Director Jayson Cainglet said.

He argued that there was no basis for declaring a shortage, especially since the late planting of onions—caused by Typhoon Pepito in November—only pushed the peak harvest from January-March to February-April.

“Why the rush? Why the declaration of shortage? May hinahabol ba silang import quota (Are they trying to meet an import quota)?” he said.

He pointed out that traders and retailers still had existing onion stocks and questioned the logic behind allowing imports to arrive within 20 to 25 days—right in the middle of harvest season.

“Ilang araw at linggo na lang ang aantayin, bakit kailangan ang pag-aangkat ng sibuyas, na darating mismo sa panahon ng anihan (Why can’t they wait just a few more weeks? Why import onions that will arrive exactly during the harvest season)?”

The mere announcement of importation, according to Cainglet, had already caused panic among farmers, forcing them to harvest early for fear of plummeting prices. He also noted that traders had temporarily halted purchases while waiting for the official importation announcement, further putting farmers at a disadvantage.

“Sa takot ng pagpasok ng import, maraming onion farmers na ang nag-aani ng sibuyas kahit hindi pa panahon dahil sa takot ng pagbagsak ng presyo ng ani pag pumasok na ang onion imports (Due to fears of importation, many onion farmers are already harvesting prematurely, afraid that prices will drop once imported onions arrive),” he said.

SINAG also warned that any declaration of shortage by the DA, even if well-intentioned, often serves as a signal for traders to hike retail prices—harming both farmers and consumers.

“Talo at lugi na naman ang mga magsasaka. Talo rin ang mga mamimili (Farmers lose again. Consumers lose too),” he said.

[https://mb.com.ph/2025/2/7/ill-timed-farmers-decry-da-s-onion-importation-amid-harvest-season#google\\_vignette](https://mb.com.ph/2025/2/7/ill-timed-farmers-decry-da-s-onion-importation-amid-harvest-season#google_vignette)

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# 37 stranded fishermen rescued in Palawan

BY TRISTAN LOZANO

Feb 8, 2025 01:02 PM

Authorities recently rescued 37 fishermen stranded in Balabac, Palawan while on their way to the West Philippine Sea.

The fishermen onboard F/V Andrei Sarah left San Jose, Occidental Mindoro on Jan. 18.



## **BRP Datu Pagbuaya of the BFAR.**

They encountered rough seas and engine failure and the boat proceeded to a calmer area between Balabac and Tawi-Tawi to reach Liminangcong, Taytay, Palawan for repairs.

However, the vessel struck a reef and broke into half near Onok Island in Balabac at 4 a.m. on Jan. 29 and capsized.

The incident was reported to a Coast Guard detachment in Onok Island and the Coast Guard Station in Balabac sent immediate assistance.

A Coast Guard vessel arrived and rescued the 37 crew. The fishers and their equipment were taken to the Coast Guard Station in Balabac.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources-Department of Agriculture, in coordination with the Coast Guard, deployed two multi-mission offshore vessels on Friday, Jan. 31, to ferry them.

BFAR vessels Datu Pagbuaya (MMOV 3003) and BRP Datu Bankaw (MMOV 3004), fresh from a resupply mission for fishermen in the vicinity of Guntao Island in El Nido, Palawan and Bancalan Island in Balabac, ferried 32 of the 37 stranded crew back to their homeport.

The remaining five, including the master fisherman and boat mechanic, stayed behind in Balabac to check salvaged fishing gears.

The 32 fishers received provisions and medical assistance upon their arrival at Port of Caminawit in Occidental Mindoro.

<https://mb.com.ph/2025/2/8/37-stranded-fishermen-rescued-in-palawan>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **PH, South Korea discuss food safety compliance to ensure uninterrupted trade**

**BY JEL SANTOS**

Feb 8, 2025 01:56 PM

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The Philippine Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has met with officials from South Korea's Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS) to evaluate the country's adherence to new Korean regulations on processed meat-containing products.

The meeting, held at the FDA South Luzon Cluster Office in Muntinlupa City on Feb. 3, aimed to assess compliance with South Korea's revised Special Act on Imported Food Safety Control and its Enforcement Decree, both issued in December 2023.

The FDA said that these amendments, set to take effect in June 2024, mandate that specific agricultural products—including processed meat and egg-containing items—must undergo Import Sanitation Assessment (ISA) procedures before export.

Under the revised regulations, the agency said processed products containing at least 40 percent beef or pork must comply with ISA requirements.

Such change affects Philippine exporters aiming to maintain market access to South Korea.

The FDA said that regulatory officials, including representatives from the Department of Agriculture's National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) and the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), joined the discussions.

These agencies, according to the FDA, "work hand in hand in recognizing the importance of inter-agency collaboration to ensure compliance."

The agency said the meeting covered an evaluation of the ISA questionnaire, an assessment of the impact of the new rules on Philippine exporters, and discussions on providing guidance to affected businesses.

Per the FDA, the Philippine government sees compliance with these new regulations as critical to preserving trade ties with South Korea and enhancing the competitiveness of local food exporters in the global market.



“These efforts are designed to uphold food safety standards while enhancing the competitiveness of Philippine-registered exporters in the global market,” the FDA stated.

[https://mb.com.ph/2025/2/8/ph-south-korea-discuss-food-safety-compliance-to-ensure-uninterrupted-trade#google\\_vignette](https://mb.com.ph/2025/2/8/ph-south-korea-discuss-food-safety-compliance-to-ensure-uninterrupted-trade#google_vignette)

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# ASF outbreaks down, but pork prices still up

**Bella Cariaso** - The Philippine Star

February 8, 2025 | 12:00am



Pork products are on display for sale in Marikina Public Market on August 13, 2024.

Walter Bollozos / The Philippine STAR

MANILA, Philippines — Outbreaks of African swine fever have continued to go down with only 130 barangays now reporting ASF infections from 133 in January, according to the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI).

Despite the downtrend in ASF outbreaks, the retail price of pork remains high at P480 per kilo, according to the BAI.

As of Jan. 31, only nine regions, 15 provinces and 40 cities and municipalities recorded ASF cases.

Provinces that recorded a high number of ASF-affected barangays are Ilocos Sur with 58 followed by Catanduanes with 20 and North Cotabato with 16 barangays.

Bohol and La Union have nine and six ASF-affected barangays, respectively, while Batangas has four. The town of Lobo in Batangas was considered as “ground zero” of ASF outbreaks in August last year. Other provinces with ASF-affected barangays are Abra, Aurora, Cagayan, Cavite, Northern Samar, Quezon, Sultan Kudarat, Tarlac and Zambales.

Arnel de Mesa, spokesman for the Department of Agriculture, said the DA would implement a maximum suggested retail price on pork to temper the increase.

Based on the monitoring of the DA in Metro Manila markets, the retail price of pork shoulder ranged between P340 and P420 per kilo and pork belly between P380 and P480 per kilo.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2025/02/08/2419968/asf-outbreaks-down-pork-prices-still-up>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Ex-DA chief criticizes decision to import onions

**Bella Cariaso** - The Philippine Star

February 8, 2025 | 12:00am



“The DA’s decision is ill-timed. Onion harvests have begun in major producing municipalities like Bayambang in Pangasinan, San Jose in Occidental Mindoro and Bongabon and Laur in Nueva Ecija,” Montemayor said.

Philstar.com / Irra Lising

MANILA, Philippines — Former agriculture secretary Leonardo Montemayor on Friday criticized the Department of Agriculture’s decision to import 3,000 metric tons of red onions and 1,000 metric tons of white onions, calling it ill-timed amid the ongoing harvest.

“The DA’s decision is ill-timed. Onion harvests have begun in major producing municipalities like Bayambang in Pangasinan, San Jose in Occidental Mindoro and Bongabon and Laur in Nueva Ecija,” Montemayor said.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. defended the move, saying it is necessary to ensure enough supply and prevent a spike in the retail prices amid the projected 7,000 metric tons deficit of onions this month.

Montemayor, however, warned that the importation could negatively impact local farmers.

“Importation will depress farmgate prices and will aggravate the current plight of onion producers, who have been facing more expensive farm inputs and infestation by harabas or army worms,” he said.

Montemayor acknowledged the DA’s intention to prevent a repeat of the extremely high onion prices in 2022, when retail prices soared to as high as P720 per kilo due to shortages and hoarding.

“However, the DA – together with the Department of Trade and Industry and other law enforcement agencies – must also monitor cold storage operators and traders and counter any profiteering or cartelistic behavior,” he said.

Montemayor also pointed out that there was no apparent consultation with farmers and their organizations regarding the DA’s decision.

Tiu Laurel justified his decision to allow the importation, saying the country’s monthly consumption for red onions is at 17,000 metric tons and 4,000 metric tons for white onions.

As of mid-January, the Bureau of Plant Industry reported that red onion stocks in storage stood at 8,500 metric tons while white onion stocks were at 1,628 metric tons.

Meanwhile, An official of the Nueva Vizcaya Agricultural Terminal (NVAT) said on Friday the limited stocks of white and red onions are already being felt at the trading center amid the DA's decision to import due to the expected supply deficit this month.

In a radio interview, NVAT director general Aivan Kurt Alfaro said the wholesale price of onions decreased in February compared to last month.

“For red onions, there is a tight supply here in Nueva Vizcaya but for white onions, we need to boost the supply as the stocks are few for white onions,” Alfaro said.

“The harvest has started but it is still limited. For white onions, we really need the stocks as the supplies are already limited,” he added.

According to Alfaro, the demand for onions remains low but is expected to increase in March, adding that imported onions should be stored to allow farmers to sell their produce to traders.

“It is better not to release (the imported onions) as the harvest has already started,” Alfaro said.

He also emphasized that the timing of the release of imported bulbs is crucial to ensuring that local onion farmers are not affected.

According to Tiu Laurel, the imported onions are expected to begin arriving on Feb. 20.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/02/08/2420041/ex-da-chief-criticizes-decision-import-onions>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Marcos lauds BOC for collecting P931 billion

By: [Julie M. Aurelio](#) - Reporter / [@JMAurelioINQ](#)  
Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:42 AM February 08, 2025



123 YEARS President Marcos arrives at the 123rd anniversary of the Bureau of Customs at the Philippine International Convention Center. —PNA

President Marcos on Friday lauded the [Bureau of Customs \(BOC\)](#) for collecting P931.046 billion (\$17 billion) in 2024, the highest in the agency's history.

Last year's revenue collection was higher by P40 billion from the P890.446 billion collected in 2023.

"The 2024 collections can fund more than 7,500 train cars, more than 18,600,000 laptops, around 62,000,000 tablets for our schoolchildren, or roughly 7,750,000 scholarships for our university students," the President said during the BOC's 123rd anniversary held at the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City.

Mr. Marcos went on: "This means that with the right collection of tariffs at our ports, our countrymen can enjoy faster travel, our children can have enough supplies and material for their education, and many more of our youth can finish college."

The Chief Executive also praised the agency's work in safeguarding the country's borders against exploitation by smugglers.

He cited the BOC's seizure of more than P85 billion in smuggled goods in 2024, or higher than the P43 billion seizure of smuggled goods in the previous year.

The smuggled goods included illegal vape products, counterfeit items and illegal fuel shipments.

### **Anti-smuggling drive**

Marcos said the intensified fight against smuggling will “allow our businesses to compete more fairly in the market, and our consumers to enjoy more competitive prices, and our people will save money in the long run.”

He also pointed to the BOC’s involvement against agricultural smuggling to protect farmers from illegal agricultural products that swamp the market.

He cited the seizure of 21 containers of frozen mackerel worth more than P178 million, which was turned over to the Department of Agriculture and later distributed to 150,000 families in various communities and care facilities.

In 2023, recovered smuggled rice was distributed to Filipinos in Capiz and Zamboanga, Marcos added. “This proves how the BOC’s efforts form an integral part of our development as we help those in the marginalized sectors of our society,” the President said.

As to its campaign against illegal and questionable activities of importers and customs brokers, the Chief Executive noted that the BOC de-accredited 56 importers and customs brokers for these reasons.

He added that 45 criminal complaints were filed against offenders, of which 18 were convicted and three BOC employees were dismissed due to misconduct or inefficiency. Five other BOC employees were suspended, he said.

“For the law to be fair, it must apply to all, especially to us who are in public service. The people have placed their trust in us, and they deserve nothing less than our utmost diligence, our integrity and our total accountability,” the President added.

He then called on BOC officials and personnel to prioritize the public’s interest by working honestly, adding that building the public’s confidence in the BOC is necessary to increase tax compliance.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2032804/marcos-lauds-boc-for-collecting-p-931b>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Food security emergency for rice: The real issues

By: [Kurt Dela Peña](#) - Content Researcher Writer / [@inquirerdotnet](#)  
INQUIRER.net / 11:05 AM February 07, 2025



RICE composite image from Inquirer files

MANILA, Philippines—With over 17 million poor households in the Philippines, an economist pointed out that the price of rice has to be brought down after increasing from P38 per kilo in the first months of 2022.

Based on data from the Department of Agriculture (DA), the price of a kilo of local regular milled rice spiked to as high as P55 a day before the ceiling imposed by Malacañang took effect, but over a year later, the price of rice is still high at P46.

So to stabilize prices and ensure that rice remains accessible, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. declared on Monday, Feb. 3, a food security emergency, heeding the recommendation of the National Price Coordinating Council (NPCC).

*As of Feb. 1, while a kilo of rice is sold for P38 pesos at Kadiwa Outlets, the cost of imported and local rice have risen to as high as P61 to P63 (special) and P46 to P48 (regular milled).*



TYPE	LOCAL RICE	IMPORTED RICE
SPECIAL	<b>P52 - P61</b>	<b>P55 - P63</b>
PREMIUM	<b>P51 - P58</b>	<b>P50 - P57</b>
WELL-MILLED	<b>P40 - P52</b>	<b>P40 - P55</b>
REGULAR MILLED	<b>P38 - P48</b>	<b>P37 - P46</b>

Graphics by Ed Lustan/INQUIRER.net

However, Sonny Africa, executive director of the think tank Ibon Foundation, told [INQUIRER.net](http://INQUIRER.net) that the declaration was made just “to give the appearance of action on a problem that is the government’s own doing.”

This, as he stressed that the high price of rice, with local well-milled going as high as P55 last weekend, is because domestic rice production and local farmers have been “neglected for so long.”





Graphics by Ed Lustan/INQUIRER.net

Even the DA admitted in Department Circular No. 3 that there has been an “extraordinary” rise in local prices, which has persisted despite lower global market costs and a cut in tariff rates in the past few months from 35 percent to 15 percent.

### NFA to sell rice

With the declaration, the DA stated that the National Food Authority (NFA), which is legally restricted from selling rice directly to the public, can now release its buffer stock to government offices, local government units, and Kadiwa ng Pangulo outlets for P33 a kilo.

The supply will then be sold to consumers for P35.

The problem, however, is that the NFA has only 300,000 metric tons of rice, which is “not enough to influence rice prices” because it is way lower than the 16 million metric tons of rice consumed by Filipinos in a year.

“This is not even a week’s worth of rice at the consumption levels of the average Filipino family,” he pointed out. The DA said only half of the 300,000 metric tons could be released over the next six months to ensure enough buffer stock for emergencies and disaster response.

It was stated by NFA Administrator Larry Lacson that the office is expected to release 150,000 metric tons—or 3 million 50-kilo bags—of rice over six months, especially in areas with elevated rice prices.

This means that 30,000 metric tons of rice will be released each month.

But as Africa stressed, “if it even materializes, the supposed P3 to P5 cut in rice prices will likely just be felt in the few hundred Kadiwa ng Pangulo outlets that are able to serve just a few thousand families nationwide.”

### **Where to get rice?**

The DA said the rice harvest season, which is set to begin mid-February, will see the NFA procuring palay at P23 a kilo to increase buffer stock in compliance with Republic Act (RA) No. 12078, or the amended Rice Tariffication Act.

The law, signed by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. last year, requires the NFA to maintain a 15-day rice buffer stock, which is equivalent to 555,000 metric tons, “to meet national consumption needs.”

But would this be possible?

The NFA has P9 billion for rice buffer stock this year, based on the initial nine-day requirement, but the agency has requested P9 million more to cover the additional six days required by the amended law.

Tiu Laurel explained that with palay prices this year—averaging P21 to P23 a kilo compared to P27 a kilo in 2024, “the NFA can buy more from local farmers, ensuring both supply and farmer welfare.”

Africa, however, pointed out that if government funds would be mobilized so near the elections, “it would be good to have clear and functioning mechanisms for public transparency and accountability to make sure this isn’t misused.”

### **No importation, please?**

But what if the government argues that local production is not enough, triggering the provision in RA No. 12078 that increases rice imports, which already reached an all-time high of 4.7 million metric tons last year?

Teodoro Mendoza, a retired professor of crop science at the University of the Philippines Los Baños pointed out that the estimated value of jobs lost in importing the record high volume of rice is P145.27 billion.

→ Last year, the government imported a new all-time high of almost 4.7 million metric tons of rice.



Graphics by Ed Lustan/INQUIRER.net

He explained that 4.7 million metric tons is already equivalent to 229.27 million days of work in growing and harvesting rice in the farm, affecting about 1.43 million farm workers, or about 7.16 million people.

The estimated value of work lost at P500 a day is about P114.63 billion, he said.

Rice milling accounted for P18.92 million days affecting 118,250 mill workers or about 591,000 people.

The lost income for milling, including the lost income for drivers, and the milling fees of the mill owner totaled P30.64 billion.

As Africa stressed, “there is reason to doubt the government’s sincerity to address insufficient and expensive local price production.”

“For instance, RA No. 12078 included an explicit provision allotting P30 billion annually for the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF). However, the 2025 General Appropriations Act (GAA) signed into law on December 31, 2024 still gives just Php10 billion for RCEF,” he said.

Africa said “improving palay productivity is also critically dependent on the availability of irrigation.”

“However, the 2025 GAA even cut the National Irrigation Administrations’s budget to P69.3 billion from P70.2 billion in 2024.”

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2032518/food-security-emergency-for-rice-the-real-issues>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Philippine rice buyers delay 350,000 tons of Vietnamese cargoes-sources

February 7, 2025 | 1:03 pm



SINGAPORE – Rice importers in the Philippines have delayed purchases of around 350,000 metric tons of Vietnamese rice and are in the process of renegotiating deals, after a steep decline in prices, two trade sources with direct knowledge of the deals said.

“There has been a big drop in Vietnamese rice prices in the last few weeks,” said one Singapore-based senior executive at an international grain trading company. “Now buyers are not willing to take the expensive rice.” Rice importers had signed deals at around \$620 per metric ton, free on board, for Vietnamese fragrant rice late last year but now the price has dropped to around \$500 per ton, the two trade sources said.

“This is happening just before the new harvest starts in Vietnam,” said the second trading source at an international rice trading firm in Bangkok. “It is big jolt to Vietnamese exporters as some of these deals could turn into defaults.”

Earlier this week, the Philippines, among the world’s largest rice importers, declared a food security emergency to bring down the cost of rice, which it said has stayed elevated despite lower global prices and a reduction in rice tariffs last year.

Global rice prices have dropped since India eased restrictions on rice exports in September and October. Indian prices this week hit their lowest since June 2023 while Vietnamese prices have slid to the weakest since September 2022.

The rice market had rallied in 2023 after India, by far the world’s biggest exporter, curbed overseas sales following poor monsoon rains.

But rice inventories in India surged to a record high at the start of December, reaching more than five times the government’s target and potentially boosting exports. — **Reuters**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/02/07/651892/philippine-rice-buyers-delay-350000-tons-of-vietnamese-cargoes-sources/>

**REMATE:**

# Pangalan ng DA chief ginagamit sa panloloko; ahensya nagbabala sa publiko

February 8, 2025 15:20



MANILA, Philippines- Nagbabala ang Department of Agriculture (DA) nitong Biyernes sa publiko laban sa mga indibdiwal na gumagamit sa pangalan ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. sa solicitation at iba pang ilegal na aktibidad.

“It has come to our attention that some individuals are impersonating the Secretary on various social media platforms and messaging apps, soliciting financial assistance and engaging in other unlawful activities,” anang DA.

Hinikayat ng ahensya ang publiko na balewalain ang parehong hirit at direktang iulat ito sa Office of the Secretary (OSEC).

Sa hiwalay na memorandum, sinabi rin ni Undersecretary and Chief-of-Staff Alvin John Balagbaga ibang opisyal at empleyado na walang koneksyon at awtorisasyon si Tiu Laurel na mangalap ng financial aid.

“All instructions from the Secretary shall be through written communication with his signature and sent through the official email account of the Office of the Secretary,” wika niya.

Samantala, maaaring magreklamo ang publiko sa OSEC via telephone sa (02) 8273-2474 local 2282. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/pangalan-ng-da-chief-ginagamit-sa-panloloko-ahensya-nagbabala-sa-publiko/>

**REMATE:**

## 4 lugar positibo sa toxic red tide

February 8, 2025 12:00



MANILA, Philippines- Positibo pa rin ang shellfish sa apat na lalawigan sa paralytic shellfish poison o toxic red tide na lampas sa regulatory limit, base sa Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) nitong Biyernes.

Sinabi ng BFAR sa abiso na hindi ligtas kainin ang mga shellfish na nakolekta mula sa sumusunod na katubigan:

- Dumanquillas Bay sa Zamboanga del Sur
- coastal waters ng Leyte sa Leyte
- Matarinao Bay sa Eastern Samar
- coastal waters ng Tungawan sa Zamboanga Sibugay Province

Subalit, sinabi ng bureau na ligtas kainin ang ibang uri ng seafood kabilang ang isda, pusit, alimango, at hipon na matatagpuan sa nasabing mga katubigan, hangga't sariwa ang mga ito, nahugasang mabuti, at natanggalan ng mga lamang-loob.

Gayundin, inihayag ng BFAR na ligtas na ang coastal waters ng Daram Island sa Samar mula sa toxic red tide. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/4-lugar-positibo-sa-toxic-red-tide/>

**REMATE:**

# **Pag-angkat ng DA ng sibuyas sa gitna ng harvest season kinuwatiyon ng mga magsasaka**

February 7, 2025 16:00



MANILA, Philippines- Binatikos ng mga magsasaka at agricultural groups ang Department of Agriculture (DA) sa desisyon nitong mag-angkat ng sibuyas, nagbabalang makaaapekto ito sa local producers sa gitna ng umiiral na harvest season.

Kinumpirma ni DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. nitong Huwebes na inaprubahan niya ang importasyon ng 3,000 metric tons ng pulang sibuyas at 1,000 metric tons ng puting sibuyas, na inaasahang darating sa susunod na dalawang linggo.

Tinawag ni dating Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Q. Montemayor ang timing ng pag-aangkat ng DA na “ill-advised” dahil nagsimula na ang pag-ani sa mga sibuyas sa key production areas tulad ng Bayambang sa Pangasinan, San Jose sa Occidental Mindoro, at Bongabon at Laur sa Nueva Ecija. “The DA’s decision is ill-timed. Onion harvests have begun in major producing municipalities like Bayambang in Pangasinan, San Jose in Occidental Mindoro, and Bongabon and Laur in Nueva Ecija,” pahayag ni Montemayor.

Nagbabala siya na mapabababa ng pagdating ng imported onions ang farmgate prices, na magpapalala sa kalagayan ng mga lokal na magsasaka na nahaharap na sa tumataas na halaga ng agricultural inputs at pamemeste ng harabas o army worms.

Bagama’t kinilala niya ang layunin ng DA na maiwasang maulit ang pagsirit ng presyo ng sibuyas tulad noong 2022, binigyang-diin ni Montemayor na kailangan ng mas mahigpit na “oversight” ng market players.

“However, the DA—together with the Department of Trade and Industry and other law enforcement agencies—must also monitor cold storage operators and traders and counter any profiteering or cartelistic behavior,” giit niya.

Kinondena rin ng Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) ang aksyon ng ahenya, kinuwestiyon kung bakit nagmadali umano ang Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) na aprubahan ang pag-angkat ng sibuyas sa kabila ng umiiral na anihan.

“Bakit laging kati ang kamay ng ilang kawani ng Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) na mag-import ng sibuyas gayong paani na ang ating mga onion farmers?” wika ni SINAG Executive Director Jayson Cainglet.

“Why the rush? Why the declaration of shortage? May hinahabol ba silang import quota?” dagdag niya.

“Ilang araw at linggo na lang ang aantayin, bakit kailangan ang pag-aangkat ng sibuyas, na darating mismo sa panahon ng anihan?”

“Sa takot ng pagpasok ng import, maraming onion farmers na ang nag-aani ng sibuyas kahit hindi pa panahon dahil sa takot ng pagbagsak ng presyo ng ani pag pumasok na ang onion imports,” paglalahad ni Cainglet.

“Talo at lugi na naman ang mga magsasaka. Talo rin ang mga mamimili,” patuloy niya. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/pag-angkat-ng-da-ng-sibuyas-sa-gitna-ng-harvest-season-kinuweatiyon-ng-mga-magsasaka/>



**ABANTE:**

## Sey ng mga Pinoy sa survey: Agri diskarte sa bigas, iba pang bilihin `di sapat

Abante News

• February 7, 2025



Maraming Pilipino o nasa 58% ng mga respondent ang nakukulangan sa mga solusyong ginawa ng gobyerno para makontrol ang presyo ng mga bilihin gaya ng bigas.

Ito ang lumabas sa pre-election survey ng Social Weather Stations na kinomisyon ng Stratbase Group. Ginawa ang survey mula Enero 17-20, 2025 sa 1,800 na botante sa buong bansa sa pamamagitan ng face-to-face interview.

Sa Mindanao may pinakamaraming nagsabing kulang ang ginagawa ng pamahalaan sa pagtugon sa pagtaas ng presyo ng mga bilihin na nasa 65%, sumunod naman ang South Luzon na nasa 61%, at pangatlo ang National Capital Region (NCR) sa 60%.

Sa balwarte ni Pangulong Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. sa Northern Luzon pinakakaunti ang nagsabing kulang ang ginagawa ng pamahalaan na nasa 47%. Mahigit kalahati o 54% naman ang nagsabing kulang ang ginagawa sa problemang ito sa Visayas at sa Central Luzon.

Sa Northern Luzon, 35% ang nagsabing sapat naman ang ginagawa ng administrasyong Marcos na mga solusyon sa pagtugon sa pagmahal ng presyo ng mga bilihin.

Para sa 59% ng mga respondent, sa bigas nila pinakaramdam ang pagtaas ng presyo. Ang bigas ang pinakamatimbang sa taas-presyo ng mga bilihin na 8.8% ang ambag sa kabuuang inflation.

Nasa 25% naman ng mga respondent ang nagsabing dama nila ito sa karne tulad ng baboy at manok.

Sabi ng SWS, 78% ng mga respondent sa Mindanao ang nagsabing sa bigas nila pinakaramdam ang inflation.

Sa Visayas, 63% ang nagsabing sa bigas nila pinaka naramdaman ang taas ng presyo habang 53% naman sa South Luzon, 49% sa Northern at Central Luzon, at 45% sa NCR. (Eileen Mencias)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2025/02/07/sev-ng-mga-pinoy-sa-survey-agri-diskarte-sa-bigas-iba-pang-bilihin-di-sapat/>