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THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA to inspect markets' compliance with pork max SRP

[Mark Ernest Villeza](#), [Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

March 10, 2025 | 12:00am



A vendor sells pork products at a market in Pasay City.

MANILA, Philippines — Starting today, the Department of Agriculture (DA) will inspect Metro Manila markets to monitor compliance with the maximum suggested retail price (SRP) for pork products.

In an interview over dzBB, agriculture spokesman Arnel de Mesa said the DA would be accompanied by officials of the Department of Trade and Industry, local government units and Philippine National Police (PNP) in the inspection.

De Mesa said Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. approved the max SRP of P350 per kilo for pork shoulder, P380 per kilo for pork belly and P300 per kilo for “sabit ulo.”

He added that the max SRP for pork items would initially cover Metro Manila.

Laurel has ordered the review on the cost structure in the different regions to determine if there is a need for max SRP outside Metro Manila, De Mesa said.

He said the max SRP for pork products underwent a series of consultations with the stakeholders.

My TopicsFollow topics to stay updated with your favorite contentMark Ernest Villeza, Bella Cariaso
department of agriculture

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/03/10/2427234/da-inspect-markets-compliance-pork-max-srp>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Comelec hopes for BSP help vs vote buying

[Rhodina Villanueva](#) - The Philippine Star

March 10, 2025 | 12:00am



“Change of paper money into smaller bills such as P100 or P200 should be prohibited a week or two weeks before election day,” Comelec Chairman George Garcia said in an interview with The STAR’s online show “Truth on the Line.”

File

MANILA, Philippines — To discourage vote buying by candidates in the May 12 elections, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) is urging the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) to deny client requests to “break the bill” a week before election day.

“Change of paper money into smaller bills such as P100 or P200 should be prohibited a week or two weeks before election day,” Comelec Chairman George Garcia said in an interview with The STAR’s online show “Truth on the Line.”

Garcia noted that a candidate or his/her team normally won’t give away a P1,000 bill to every voter. What they will do is have that large amount of bill changed to smaller amounts so that it will look like they have a thick pile of money with them, and the act will look impressive for a candidate,” he explained. Through the proposed measure, the Comelec is hoping for a reduction of 20 to 25 percent in vote-buying incidents.

The Comelec chief also pointed out that vote buying will not take place a month before elections.

“Vote buying will happen two to three days before elections. That is a crucial time for us. We have to be vigilant of the use of e-wallets and similar platform. We should be on the lookout for that,” Garcia said.

According to the Comelec chair, vote buying will likely revert back to cash distribution since the use of e-wallets has already been exposed.

In February, the Comelec signed a memorandum of agreement with officials from various government agencies, the police, military, election watchdogs and mobile wallet companies that will be deputized to help its Kontra Bigay Committee deter and prosecute vote buyers and sellers.

Apart from cash distribution, Garcia also criticized politicians’ abuse of state resources during election season.

“Maybe there are some who don’t buy votes, but what they do is they use the people’s money like they treat it as their own. That is for the people, but they use it like it belongs to them,” Garcia lamented.

LGUs must seek exemption

On another note, the poll body has denied the application of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the National Food Authority (NFA) to sell rice stocks to local government units (LGUs) as it is covered by the election spending ban.

“The NFA and LGUs must be made aware of the prohibition under Section 261 (w) which, among others, prohibits the issuance, use, or availment of treasury warrants and similar devices,” Comelec law department director Sittie Tawagon said.

“Being absolutely prohibited from 28 March 2025 to 11 May 2025, no exemption may be given by the Commission to any request covering the issuance, use, or availment of treasury warrants or any device undertaking future delivery of money, goods, or other things of value chargeable against public funds,” Tawagon added.

However, Garcia clarified that the non-issuance of exemption to the DA and NFA does not mean LGUs can no longer distribute or sell rice.

“The LGUs (just) need to seek exemption themselves. We can grant them exemptions depending on the reasons cited,” he explained.

Meanwhile, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) welcomed the Comelec’s decision to postpone the start of the pre-enrollment period for the Online Voting and Counting System (OVCS) to March 20, noting the latter’s commitment to safeguard the integrity of elections overseas.

“The Department hopes Comelec’s decision for postponement shall enable it to ensure that the OVCS passes all the testing and certification required by Republic Act 9369, the Election Automation Law of 2007, prior to its launch,” the DFA said in a statement. — **Mayen Jaymalin, Pia Lee-Brago**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/03/10/2427246/comelec-hopes-bsp-help-vs-vote-buying>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Lower milling rate to hike rice imports

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

March 10, 2025 | 12:00am



Rice retailers manage their stalls at Marikina Public Market on January 7, 2025.

STAR / Michael Varcas

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines' rice import requirement may increase after the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) revised a key parameter used by the government in estimating the country's domestic production and supply of the staple.

After three decades, the PSA revised downward its benchmark conversion ratio of palay to milled rice to reflect current industry realities and ensure more accurate policymaking in the rice sector.

The PSA board chaired by National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio Balisacan issued a resolution that formalized the adoption of a lower milling recovery rate (MRR) of palay at 63 percent.

Previously, the PSA used a palay MRR of 65.4 percent, which has been the established rate of the statistical agency since 1995.

The new MRR would impact how the PSA estimates the country's milled rice production, inventory and overall supply.

Based on the 63-percent MRR, the country, on average, produces 630 grams of rice out of one kilo of palay. Using the previous MRR, the PSA estimates 654 grams of rice is produced for every kilo of palay milled nationwide.

"It is noted that the conversion ratios and parameters adopted for most, if not all the commodities, have been held constant over a relatively long period of time," Balisacan said.

Industry sources said the change in the MRR is substantial since a percentage difference in the conversion rate would affect the extent of the volume that the country needs to import to plug domestic supply shortfall and meet overall demand for the staple.

This, they emphasized, is critical in the government's policymaking, particularly in ensuring that the country has sufficient rice supply to prevent any price spikes in the market.

"The PSA's adoption of a 63-percent milling recovery rate lowers official milled rice output, reducing supply, increasing import needs and affecting stock inventory planning," said Marie Annette Dacul, executive director of University of Asia and the Pacific's Center for Food and Agri Business.

Dacul pointed out that some rice mills in the country may even have an actual recovery rate of as low as 60 percent due to old age while modern ones are capable of hitting above 65 percent.

Raul Montemayor of the Federation of Free Farmers said the 63 percent rice MRR adopted by the PSA is “more accurate” since local mills have “relatively poor milling recovery rates.”

“In fact, some would suggest even going down to 60 percent to be conservative,” Montemayor added.

In revising the palay MRR, the PSA undertook a comprehensive review and study of the parameter last year that involved informant interviews, actual visits to rice mills, focus group discussions with key government officials and desk research.

The PSA also presented its updated palay MRR to concerned units of the Department of Agriculture (DA) to solicit their comments about the matter.

The PSA noted that the DA did not oppose the lower palay MRR and even “acknowledged” that a “more precise” parameter was needed to “support better data collection, analysis and policymaking” in the rice sector.

The country imported a record-high of 4.8 million metric tons last year, Bureau of Plant Industry data showed.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/03/10/2427111/lower-milling-rate-hike-rice-imports>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Fighting lobbyists



[COMMONSENSE](#) - [Marichu A. Villanueva](#) - The Philippine Star

March 10, 2025 | 12:00am

As a veteran lawmaker, Sen. Cynthia Villar could say “been there, done that.” Being among the “richest” members of Congress, plus her reputation for being feisty and bullheaded, makes big-time lobbyists stay out of her sight. Thus, it is easy for Senator Villar to point to “lobbying” in Congress as the biggest factor in the passage of bills to either get clogged up or fast-tracked in the legislative mills.

Now on her second and last term as senator, she is one of the “graduating” members of the 24-man Senate. She bows out also as the chairperson of the Senate committee on agriculture, food and agrarian reform and the Senate committee on environment and climate change. She is swapping places with her daughter, Rep. Camille, currently House deputy speaker, representing the lone congressional district of Las Piñas City. Camille, on the other hand, is running for the Senate under the administration-backed Alyansa ng Bagong Pilipinas.

Senator Villar admitted her biggest frustration is seeing well-crafted laws and their desired beneficial effects diluted by the implementing rules and regulations (IRR). Thus, Senator Villar vows to pursue possible amendments of these laws in her comeback bid in the 20th Congress.

“As I seek to once again represent my hometown, Las Piñas, in the House of Representatives, I intend to build on my work in the Senate, focusing on the achievement of goals for agricultural competitiveness and environmental protection,” Villar promised. To date, she is credited for enactment of landmark statutes, including 114 laws establishing multi-species marine hatcheries in different parts of the country.

During our Kapihan sa Maynila Bay news forum last week, Villar deplored how the IRR drafted and carried out by the Executive branch undermined the spirit and intent of the laws approved by Congress. She bewailed several laws where the IRR blatantly changed the law and undermined its original purpose.

“The IRR of laws are typically prepared by the government agency or agencies tasked with implementing the law,” the senator explained. “The essence of many laws has been compromised because of the IRR. The law has been overshadowed and replaced by the IRR.”

“That’s the problem. We passed the legislation, but the implementation is very bad,” she rued.

As a classic example, Villar cited Republic Act (RA) 10845 or “An Act Declaring Large-Scale Agricultural Smuggling Act as Economic Sabotage, Prescribing Penalties...” approved in 2016. She noted with dismay not one single big smuggler of rice, onions and other crops illegally brought into our country in large volumes has gotten convicted up to now.

Obviously, it has not been implemented in accordance with the law as evidenced by the continuing entry of smuggled agricultural products and the struggles of Filipino farmers, livestock raisers and fisherfolk.

Upon consulting with her own legal and legislative staff, she disclosed they re-crafted this law and approved RA 12022, or the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act. President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. (PBBM) signed it in October last year that specified smuggling, hoarding, profiteering and engaging in a cartel as economic sabotage.

“That’s why I made it clear in the law that there is no need for an IRR. The law itself serves as the IRR,” she cited. Also as added safeguard, she plans to institute congressional oversight body in every law that will regularly check their implementation and enforcement by the Executive branch. Villar emphasized the need for stricter oversight by them in Congress to ensure that laws are implemented as written, without unnecessary alterations that ease or make regulations inutile.

The 74-year-old lawmaker has authored, co-authored and sponsored the enactment of laws during her total of 12 years in office in the Upper Chamber. She topped the 12-man Senate elections in 2019. Before she first got elected to the Senate in 2013, Villar was Las Piñas City congresswoman for three consecutive terms, from 2001 to 2010.

She could have been the first female Senate chief in the 19th Congress. With her usual candor she riposted: “Matigas daw ulo ko.”

When the current Congress resumes sessions this June 2, Villar identified as her top priority to ensure the passage into law of a bill she authored creating a livestock, poultry and dairy industry development and competitiveness fund.

As proposed in this bill, the fund will be pooled from tariff collections on imported livestock, poultry and dairy, and can be used to help farmers recover from the effects of African swine flu (ASF) and bird or avian flu that devastated our local hogs and poultry industries.

“There is a need to rehabilitate the livestock industry. That’s why I wrote this bill. The idea is to stop the coming in of animal diseases,” she stressed.

The bill was patterned after RA 11203, or the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) that imposed 35 percent tariff on all imported rice. Like the RCEF, she explained, the tariff collections were supposed to be plowed back by the Department of Agriculture (DA) to benefit the rice farmers with machinery, seeds and other basic farming assistance. In this way, the funding won’t be dependent on the General Appropriations Act (GAA), she stressed.

The new bill was unanimously approved by the Senate 23-0 before Congress adjourned for recess last Feb.5. But the counterpart measure remained stuck in the Lower House. She urged House lawmakers to just adopt in toto her bill to finally get it passed since it has been languishing in Congresses past.

Pending enactment of this bill, Villar pushed for the construction of a first border inspection facility which will have a laboratory and examiners to inspect all imported livestock, poultry and dairy animals coming in the country.

Villar admitted she lobbied to allot P2 billion in the meantime under the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) under the DA’s budget two years ago. “Until now, we don’t have such a facility, so how can we stop diseases going into the livestock?”she said in exasperation. She conceded there might be pressure from those “lobbying” against it.

She is not daunted though in fighting lobbyists – in or outside of Congress.

Senator Villar is set to make a comeback at the House of Representatives in the 20th Congress.

<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2025/03/10/2427132/fighting-lobbyists>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Getting ready for Asean 2026



[GO NEGOSYO PILIPINAS ANGAT LAHAT!](#) - [Joey Concepcion](#) - The Philippine

Star

March 10, 2025 | 12:00am

There is an African proverb that goes, “When elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.” This implies the vulnerability of innocent bystanders to become collateral damage, even pawns, in a tussle between or among powerful forces.

While this is so true, I’d like to think that when elephants fight, the ants should just instead hurry up and go about their business. One can’t help but be a big fan of ants. They’re industrious, they work as a team, and if we’re to recall that fable about ants, they save up for the rainy days (or winter, as per Aesop’s fables).

Now before someone takes me to task for mixing up my literary references, I’d like to remind everybody that I never claimed to be an outstanding student, much less an authority on literature. I am only reminded of it because of recent events rocking the global scene.

Unless you’ve been living under the proverbial rock, you will have heard about the seismic shifts now happening on the other side of the world. We are now living out the years when there are very real tariff wars, when decades-old bonds between countries are being broken, massive budget cuts here and there and the overhaul of systems that govern the dominant military and economic force of the last century. It remains to be seen what the world will look like after everything is said and done, but I don’t think we should just wait around and see.

I say this as I am about to enter the whirlwind that will be the Philippines’ hosting of the ASEAN in 2026. The last time we hosted was in 2017, during former president Rodrigo Duterte’s time and when the ASEAN celebrated its 50th year. May I say that that particular ASEAN event went beautifully. It was such an accomplishment for the Philippines to have successfully staged the event. I daresay it even set the bar higher for the ASEAN countries that hosted the event afterwards.

And now with the excellent work by Indonesia last year, and no doubt by Malaysia this year, we have our work cut out for us in 2026. There is so much at stake here. ASEAN 2026 will be the biggest international event to be hosted by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. It will communicate to the world how ready the Philippines is to be one of the rising economies of Southeast Asia, which itself is a region to watch on the global stage.

As chairman of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (BAC) Philippines, I initiated, as early as last year, our planned legacy projects for the Philippine chairmanship in 2026. When a country is chair of the ASEAN BAC, it initiates projects which are to be sustained even after the end of that country’s chairmanship. In the 2017 chairmanship, for example, we had the ASEAN Mentorship for Entrepreneurs Network (AMEN), which is based on Go Negosyo’s Kapatid Mentor ME (KMME) program, implemented alongside the Department of Trade and Industry. To expand and scale it to a regional level, we translated the modules we use for KMME and built an ASEAN-wide network of mentors. The Japan ASEAN Integration Fund generously funded AMEN, and we have completed its second phase and are moving on to the third phase. For the 2026 chairmanship, we are focusing on two very important issues: food security and women’s economic empowerment. At Go Negosyo, we have long made these two areas a priority. We expanded

KMME to agriculture through the Kapatid Agri Mentor ME Program and successfully parlayed that into Kapatid Angat Lahat sa Agri Program, which we scaled regionally to ASEAN Food Security Alliance.

For our Filipinas, it's been 17 years since we started focusing on women entrepreneurs through the Go Negosyo Filipina Entrepreneurs Summit, now known as the Women Summit. For the coming ASEAN 2026, we plan to push women entrepreneurship higher on the regional agenda. We have made so much progress on women's rights, so now we will work on women's economic empowerment through entrepreneurship. I am sure we will have plenty of help identifying the issues that need to be addressed, thanks to the very active women's business community here in the Philippines.

Signs seem to be pointing to our readiness to tackle these two issues. In the latest Labor Force Survey, it was shown that the labor force participation of women has seen a significant increase, rising year-on-year from 49.3 percent in 2024 to 52.9 percent in 2025. Not only is this a step in the right direction, it also validates what we've already known: women are an economic force to reckon with. That they're now finding more employment means we're breaking down more barriers in gender equality and women empowerment.

According to the same Labor Force Survey, we're also seeing that one of the sectors experiencing more employment is agriculture. Climate change is making the issue of food security even more urgent, so I am heartened to see that the sector has enough capacity to generate increased employment. My hope is that agriculture is becoming more attractive to young people and defying beliefs that the younger generation of farmers are opting for office jobs. Maybe there is a new generation that is attracted to farming because of its bucolic appeal? Or that one can be a tech-savvy farmer and make a decent profit from agriculture?

Whatever the reason, we should ride this wave and scale it so that the Philippines can become an agricultural powerhouse in the region. Same with women's economic empowerment; women are an untapped force, especially when they become entrepreneurs.

Let's stay focused, be like ants and get to work.

<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2025/03/10/2427134/getting-ready-asean-2026>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Farmers' group wants 35 percent rice tariff reinstated

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

March 10, 2025 | 12:00am



Farmers plant rice seedlings for the first cropping season in Mangatarem, Pangasinan on June 30, 2024.

The Philippine STAR / Cesar Ramirez

MANILA, Philippines — Farmers' group Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) has filed a petition before the Tariff Commission asking that the 35 percent tariff on imported rice be restored, arguing that Executive Order 62, which lowered the tariff on outsourced staple to 15 percent, did not result in lower retail prices.

In a petition addressed to Tariff Commission Chairperson Marilou Mendoza, SINAG chairman Rosendo So noted that the decision of Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. to declare a food security emergency was an admission “of the Office of the President on the failure of EO 62 in reducing rice prices.” “This is to formalize our petition for the reinstatement of the tariffs on rice to its original rate of 35 percent to ASEAN countries and 50 percent to non-ASEAN countries by repealing EO 62,” So said.

He noted that the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) also acknowledged that EO 62 has not resulted in a reduction in rice prices.

“The House of Representatives’ quinta committee, citing the Philippine Statistics Authority data, said that domestic rice prices have risen from P51 per kilo in July 2024 to P55.30 per kilo in December 2024, even as the landed price of imported rice dropped by P11 per kilo,” So said, adding that the gap between landed and domestic prices widened drastically, from P3 per kilo in 2023 to P20 per kilo in 2024.

“The quinta committee also reported that importers and traders collectively profited a staggering P13 billion after rice import tariffs were slashed from 35 percent to 15 percent under EO 62. All these are more than enough reasons for the repeal of EO 62,” he added.

The Office of the President has tasked the NEDA Secretary Arsenio Balisacan and Trade Secretary Ma. Cristina Roque to make a recommendation after SINAG wrote a letter to President Marcos asking him to repeal EO 62.

In a letter addressed to both Balisacan and Roque, Deputy Executive Secretary for General Administration Naealla Bainto Aguinaldo cited the letter of So requesting for the issuance of an executive order repealing EO 62.

Roque and Balisacan are the chairperson and co-chairperson of the Committee on Tariff and Related Matters, respectively.

In response to the Office of the Deputy Secretary's directive, Balisacan referred the issue to Tariff Commission chair Mendoza.

"We would like to refer to your office the Jan. 23, 2025 letter from the Office of the Deputy Executive Secretary for General Administration, transmitting the request of SINAG. Particularly, SINAG is requesting the reinstatement of the tariffs on rice to its original rate of 35 percent to ASEAN countries and 50 percent to non-ASEAN countries by repealing EO No. 62," Balisacan said in his letter to Mendoza.

Farmers' groups led by SINAG had opposed the implementation of EO 62 after Marcos signed it in June 2024 in an effort to bring down the cost of the staple.

Tiu Laurel was forced to implement a maximum suggested retail price on rice in an effort to lower the cost of the grains.

On Feb. 4, he also declared a food security emergency in an effort to authorize the release of the rice stocks of the National Food Authority to help tame the prices of the grains.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/03/10/2427263/farmers-group-wants-35-percent-rice-tariff-reinstated>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

No Comelec ruling on sale of gov't rice

By: [Dexter Cabalza](#) - Reporter / [@dexcabalzaINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:45 AM March 10, 2025

MANILA, Philippines — The Commission on Elections (Comelec) has yet to decide if it will grant the request of the Department of Agriculture (DA) to exempt the sale of rice stocks from the National Food Authority (NFA) to local governments from the election spending ban.

In a memorandum released on Sunday, the Comelec law department said that while the NFA's selling of rice to local governments is allowed, it said that the purchase of the local governments and its eventual distribution to its constituents from March 28 (the start of the campaign period for local candidates) to May 11 (the eve of election day) are covered by the prohibition.

The law department also told the DA that the NFA and the local governments that no exemption may be given by the Comelec to any request covering the issuance, use or availment of “treasury warrants or any device undertaking future delivery of money or goods using public funds” during the period.

Under the Omnibus Election Code as implemented under Comelec Resolution No. 11060 for the 2025 midterm elections, public officials and employees are prohibited to release, disburse or expend any public funds for social services and housing-related projects 45 days before the election day—or from March 28 to May 11—unless exempted by the Comelec.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. last month requested for the Comelec for the exemption, amid his declaration of a food security emergency for rice.

<https://www.inquirer.net/431904/no-comelec-ruling-on-sale-of-govt-rice/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Agriculture industry group seeks restoration of 35% rice import tariff

March 9, 2025 | 8:30 pm



PHILSTAR FILE PHOTO

AN AGRICULTURE industry association asked the Tariff Commission to restore rice import tariffs to 35% for Southeast Asian grain, while imposing a 50% rate for all other countries of origin.

Executive Order No. 62, which reduced the tariffs to 15%, has failed to reduce rice prices, as it had been designed to do, Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) Chairman Rosendo O. So said in a petition filed with the Commission.

SINAG said between July and December the tariff reduction resulted in P15 billion worth of foregone government revenue.

The Rice Tariffication Law liberalized rice imports while requiring shippers to pay tariffs, which the government then used to fund rice industry modernization.

SINAG said allocating the P15 billion to 1.5 million hectares of rice land could reduce cost of palay production by P2.9 per kilo, which is equivalent of a reduction of P5 per kilo of domestically grown rice.

It estimated revenue foregone due to EO No. 62 at P27 billion this year.

Global rice prices have fallen by \$146 to \$422 per metric ton, according to the group.

“This translates to a decrease of P8.54 per kilo in the global rice market, which exceeds our target reduction of P6-7/kilo through EO 62.”

SINAG spokesman Jayson H. Cainglet said via Viber that the Tariff Commission has yet to set a hearing on the petition.

Mr. Cainglet has said that the farmgate price of palay remains low at P15-16 per kilo for freshly harvested grain, which could be subject to minimal changes during the peak of the harvest.

He said traders are only willing to pay between P16 to P18 per kilo given the competition from imported rice, whose landed cost is now about P35 per kilo.

Inflation eased to 2.1% in February from 2.9% in January as rice inflation dropped to 4.9%, the sharpest decline since April 2020.

To bring down rice prices, the government has lowered tariffs and declared a food security emergency to facilitate the release of government rice stocks.

Rice imports hit a record of nearly 4.7 million MT in 2024 due to a shortfall in domestic supply.

In mid-January, Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said the government does not plan to resort to imports to bring down rice prices, which he said are also caused by profiteering. — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/03/09/658204/agriculture-industry-group-seeks-restoration-of-35-rice-import-tariff/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

BFAR to set up P1-million fish hatchery in Ifugao

March 10, 2025 | 12:03 am



BRUCE WARRINGTON-UNSPLASH

THE Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said it will establish a P1-million fish hatchery in Ifugao province by June 2025.

The hatchery, which will rise at a site in Barangay Cawayan, Asipulo, will assist the Cawayan Fisherfolk Association (CFA) with pond-based fingerling production, the BFAR said in a statement.

CFA is beneficiary of BFAR's National Program Management Support Office, and takes breeders sourced from the BFAR National Freshwater Fisheries Technology Center.

ADVERTISING

The hatchery will provide rearing ponds and tanks for fry-to-fingerling growth and holding tanks before dispersal.

“This initiative will enable CFA members to supply quality tilapia fingerlings within their community, reducing dependency on external sources and improving income generation,” the BFAR said.

CFA's income-sharing scheme allocates 50% of individual tilapia gross sales from the 46 beneficiaries for group use.

“This ensures continuous income and capital build-up, which will be reinvested into community-based enterprises such as the hatchery, guaranteeing its sustainability beyond initial funding,” the BFAR said.

The program and the association will draft the hatchery's structural plans, BFAR said.

The project will proceed to infrastructure development and construction once the plans are finalized.

The procurement of equipment, supplies, and materials is scheduled to begin this month.

“To ensure proper hatchery management, CFA members shall undergo training as part of the livelihood package,” the BFAR said. — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2025/03/10/658082/bfar-to-set-up-p1-million-fish-hatchery-in-ifugao/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Global coffee trade hit hard by brutal price hikes

March 10, 2025 | 12:02 am



REUTERS

HOUSTON — Global coffee traders and roasters say they have slashed their purchases to minimal levels, as the industry reels from a steep surge in prices that suppliers have yet to convince retail stores to accept.

At the US National Coffee Association annual convention in Houston this week, attendees said they have been in shock at a 70% increase since November for Arabica coffee futures on the ICE exchange, the benchmark for coffee deals around the world.

Renan Chueiri, director general at ELCAFE C.A. in Ecuador, said this year is the first time the instant coffee maker hasn't sold all of its expected annual production by March.

"We would usually be sold out by now, but so far we sold less than 30% of production," he said. "The big price increase eats clients' cash flow, they don't have all the money to buy what they need."

The coffee price hikes have stemmed from lower production in important coffee growing regions, particularly in top grower Brazil, reducing the availability of beans.

"Nobody wants to be exposed, nobody is buying for future delivery, it is all hand to mouth," said one coffee broker, asking not to be identified due to the sensitivity of the issue.

By "hand to mouth", he was referring to the practice of buying only what is necessary for the moment and eschewing stockpiling.

Many recent deals in Brazil, he said, have been conducted in a very conservative manner.

"You close a deal, and then you have seven days to go to the farm or warehouse and get your coffee. You check the quality, and if it is ok, you make the payment on the site and drive away with the coffee."

A recent Reuters poll predicted that Arabica coffee prices could fall 30% by the end of the year, as high prices curb demand and early signs point to a bumper Brazilian crop next year.

But until prices drop significantly, much of the coffee industry could be in for a world of pain.

A chief executive of a major roaster in the US — the world's largest market for coffee consumption, said some of his clients are not sure they can continue to be in business.

“They don’t know if they will be able to sell their product at the new prices,” he said, also asking not to be identified. “Some people are going down.”

The CEO said supermarkets and grocery stores had been pushing back against the higher prices asked by roasters. Negotiations were taking a long time and some retail outlets were starting to be short of coffee on the shelves.

“It has been a nightmare,” he added.

Coffee warehouses close to ports in the US, which receive beans coming from Central and South America, currently have half their normal volumes, said an executive for one of the largest companies in the storage sector.

“Some storing companies are returning silos to the owners, canceling leasing contracts early,” he said.

Michael Von Luehrte, owner of broker MVLcoffee, said the coffee market, particularly on the trading side, could see consolidation.

Companies with more capital will be able to increase trading volumes, while others will suffer with reduced financing, he added.

Commodities trader Louis Dreyfus said in a presentation during the conference that the coffee planted area has been expanding in reaction to the higher prices.

Expansion has happened in countries such as India, Uganda, Ethiopia and Brazil. The company believes that if Brazil manages to have one big crop, then that in combination with the new planted areas could lead to a collapse in prices. — **Reuters**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2025/03/10/658081/global-coffee-trade-hit-hard-by-brutal-price-hikes/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

India allows exports of broken rice to cut stockpiles

March 10, 2025 | 12:01 am



REUTERS

MUMBAI — India allowed the export of 100% broken rice, the government said in a notification late on Friday, after inventories reached a record high at the start of February, nearly nine times the government’s target. Exports of 100% broken rice could help reduce stocks in the world’s biggest exporter and enable poor African countries to secure the grain at lower prices, as well as support Asian animal feed and ethanol producers that rely on the grade.

India had banned exports of 100% broken rice in September 2022 and then imposed curbs on exports of all other rice grades in 2023 after poor rainfall raised concerns over production.

However, as the supply situation improved after the country harvested a record crop, New Delhi removed curbs on exports of all grades except 100% broken rice.

“Now that broken rice exports are allowed, we anticipate exporting around 2 million tons of this grade in 2025,” said B.V. Krishna Rao, president of the Rice Exporters’ Association.

India exported 3.9 million metric tons of broken rice in 2022, mainly to China for animal feed and to African countries such as Senegal and Djibouti for human consumption.

Broken rice is a byproduct of milling, and African countries prefer this grade because it is cheaper than other grades.

Indian broken rice is currently offered at \$330 per metric ton, compared to approximately \$300 from rival suppliers like Vietnam, Myanmar, and Pakistan, said Himanshu Agrawal, executive director at Satyam Balajee, a leading rice exporter.

“However, these competing countries have limited stocks. As their stocks deplete, buyers will switch to India, and exports will pick up in coming months.”

State granary reserves of rice, including unmilled paddy, totalled 67.6 million tons as of Feb. 1, compared to the government’s target of 7.6 million tons, data compiled by the Food Corp. of India showed. — **Reuters**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2025/03/10/658080/india-allows-exports-of-broken-rice-to-cut-stockpiles/>

MANILA STANDARD:

DA seeks stronger ties with Thailand



DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

By Othel V. Campos

March 9, 2025, 8:40 pm

The Department of Agriculture (DA) seeks stronger trade ties with Thailand to attract investments while gaining insights into best farming practices, product development and supply chain management.

DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. learned of the Philippines' potential as a food hub during a meeting with executives of Charoen Pokphand Foods PLC (CPF).

CPF announced plans to establish a food processing facility and distribution network in the country within three years.

The DA delegation visited CPF's Nong Chok factory, which processes 70,000 metric tons of food products for export, and toured CPF's Makro, a major wholesale retailer.

Tiu Laurel told his Thai counterpart that the Philippines is open to sourcing more rice, vegetables, poultry and pork from Thailand.

Agriculture and Cooperatives Minister Narumon Pinyosinwat expressed interest in exporting longan and poultry meat to the Philippines, while Tiu Laurel pushed for the export of Hass avocados and processed meat to Thailand.

<https://manilastandard.net/business/314566693/da-seeks-stronger-ties-with-thailand.html>

THE MANILA TIMES:

DA looking to learn from Thai farm sector

By Giselle P. Jordan

March 10, 2025

A DELEGATION from the Department of Agriculture (DA) led by Sec. Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. visited Thailand to observe best practices, methods, and systems in farming, product development, and supply chain management, as well as to discuss bilateral trade opportunities and investments in the Philippines' agriculture sector.

Executives from Thai food and agri-industrial conglomerate Charoen Pokphand Foods (CPF) Public Company told Tiu Laurel about plans to establish a food and processing plant and distribution system in the Philippines in the next three years.

The CPF officials toured the DA delegation around the Nong Chok factory, which processes food products such as ready-to-eat meals, hams, sausages, and fillets, mostly for export to Europe.

The Filipino group also went to CPF's Makro, a popular wholesale retailer in Thailand.

Tiu Laurel likewise paid a visit to Thailand Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives Narumon Pinyosinwat, saying the Philippines is willing to source more rice, pork, poultry, and vegetables from Thailand.

Thailand is interested in exporting longan and poultry meat to the Philippines, said Pinyosinwat.

Tiu Laurel, on the other hand, said the Philippines wants to export Hass avocados and processed meats to Thailand.

"We hope this recent visit will lead to greater trade between Manila and Bangkok, as well as more Thai investments in the Philippine agricultural sector," Tiu Laurel said.

"Thailand, a major rice exporter, offers many lessons in agricultural efficiency and food product exports to Europe," he noted.

At the Cassava Collaborative Farm in Wang Muang, Saraburi, the DA team learned about the Bio-Circular-Green Economy model — which focuses on resource maximization, technological innovation, and sustainable practices.

The farm has a collaborative committee which follows strict management procedures for product quality.

The DA team also went to Nakhon Pathom, an asparagus farm employing efficient irrigation systems, contact farming practices, and product standards which increase yield and income. The farm exports large volumes of asparagus to Taiwan.

At the Sanamchan Community Enterprise and the Asian Institute of Technology's Smart Greenhouse, the Philippine group witnessed the application of local wisdom, community resources, and technology in optimizing crop yield.

There were likewise talks on possible collaborations on climate-resilient structures, crop varietal development, and sustainable agricultural and fisheries research.

The DA team also visited major food and agricultural markets — such as Or Tor Kor, Simummuang and Talaad Thai — which distribute fresh produce domestically and internationally, both playing major roles in Thailand's agricultural supply chain.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/03/10/business/top-business/da-looking-to-learn-from-thai-farm-sector/2069833>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Sinag seeks update on probe of NFA execs

By Reina C. Tolentino

March 10, 2025

THE Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (Sinag) has sought an update on the Office of the Ombudsman's probe involving former National Food Authority (NFA) administrator Roderico Bioco and other individuals linked to the alleged irregular sale of rice.

"We are asking the Ombudsman to inform us about the progress of the case against the former NFA administrator and other officials," Sinag president Rosendo So said.

So was referring to the investigation involving 139 people accused of graft over the "alleged irregular sale of 75,000 bags of rice stored in agency warehouses to private traders."

Bioco had denied any irregularity, claiming that the sale was aboveboard.

So appealed to the Ombudsman to expedite its probe.

"We strongly urge Ombudsman Samuel Martires to unveil the identities of the Department of Agriculture officials, including those at the NFA, past and present, who have been involved in graft and corruption in the interest of public transparency," he said in a statement.

The Ombudsman has lifted the preventive suspension order issued against over 100 NFA officials and employees, although they remain as respondents in the case.

NFA Assistant Administrator for Operations Lemuel Pagayunan had alleged in a complaint letter submitted to the Office of the President in February 2024 that Bioco and other individuals had sold 75,000 bags of rice valued at P93.7 million without the NFA council's approval. He also claimed that Bioco and other NFA officials engaged with commercial rice traders without allowing other bidders to participate.

"The Ombudsman must prosecute these cases with delay. If no one is prosecuted, then those involved in such anomalies will not be deterred," So said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/03/10/news/national/sinag-seeks-update-on-probe-of-nfa-execs/2069854>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Camarines Sur farmers get P122M aid from DA

By Rhaydz B. Barcia
March 10, 2025

PILI, Camarines Sur — The Department of Agriculture (DA) in Bicol provided P122 million aid to farmers' cooperatives and organizations in an effort to alleviate and boost the agricultural production in Bicol Region in line with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s desire to improve food stability in the country.

Lovella Guarin, DA Bicol regional spokesman, said that the funds covered farm machineries, farm inputs, hauling trucks and motorized boats that were turned over by Director Rodel Tornilla to some 76 farmers cooperatives and associations (FCAs) from Camarines Sur province.

The turnover of a program dubbed "Trabaho at Serbisyong Pangkalusugan ng Bagong Pilipinas" was held at Camarines Sur Capitol Complex, in Pili town on Friday, March 7.

The president visited Pili, Camarines Sur to lead the proclamation rally of Alyansa para sa Bagong Pilipinas senatorial candidates. The president graced first the event, a collaborative engagement of four national government agencies such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Health (DOH) and the DA.

The president was joined by DSWD Secretary Rex Gatchalian, Labor Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma and Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa, while Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. was represented by DA Bicol regional executive director Rodel Tornilla.

Guarin said that the DA, under its rice program, turned over P14,606,200 worth of interventions consisting of three units of rice transplanter, two grain collectors, two floating tillers, 10 walking type tractors, three rice transplanters, six threshers, two reapers, one mobile rice mill, two 4WD tractors, 1,000 bags of certified palay seeds and 225 packs bio fertilizer.

The corn program has given away P26,555,000 worth of interventions consisting of four units of 4-wheel drive (4WD) tractor, two combine harvesters, two hauling trucks, 60 bags of yellow corn seeds and 19,500 cassava stalks.

For the livestock and poultry program, DA also turned over P66,874,500 worth projects which include P50 million for establishment of a slaughterhouse, four units of animal hauling truck, and 11 modules of chicken layer project under Establishment of Livelihood Opportunities and Viable Enterprise (LOVE) for Agricultural Farming Communities.

Under the High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) quick response fund, 84 sets under tools, assorted vegetable seeds and farm equipment worth P2,307,186 were turned over to seven FCAs.

The Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech) turned over three units of 4WD tractors worth a total of P6,899,949 and funded under the Rice Competitive Enhancement Fund to three FCAs.

The Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) distributed 400 seedlings of hybrid coconut, while the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) turned over one hauling truck worth P3.9 million.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) distributed six motorized fiberglass boats with complete accessories, and seaweed farm implements and tilapia farm inputs, with a total worth of P730,500.

One of the highlights of the event was the Kadiwa ng Pangulo where DA - Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division invited 30 exhibitors who displayed various agricultural products at the venue. Present during the Kadiwa ng Pangulo event were Engr. Joel Dator, deputy director of PhilMech in Nueva Ecija, and heads of DA attached agencies and corporations in the region such as Gaudencio De Vera, regional manager of NIA; Ariel Pioquinto, regional director of Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources; and Marlon Terado, regional manager of the Philippine Coconut Authority.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/03/10/regions/camarines-sur-farmers-get-p122m-aid-from-da/2069820>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

PHL aims to fortify agri trade ties with Thailand-DA

Ada Pelonia

March 10, 2025

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it is keen on forging bilateral trade and investment agreements with Thailand to increase the country's food output.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. recently led a DA delegation to Thailand, where they discussed bilateral trade opportunities and potential Thai investments in the Philippine agriculture sector with Thai counterparts and the private sector.

The agency said executives from Charoen Pokphand Foods PLC (CPF) told Laurel of the Philippines' potential as a food hub.

He said the Thai food and agri-industrial giant revealed plans to establish a food processing facility and distribution network in the Philippines within the next three years.

The DA delegation toured CPF's Nong Chok factory, which processes 70,000 metric tons (MT) of food products, including fillets, ready meals, hams, and sausages, largely for export to Europe. Delegates also visited CPF's Makro, a well-known wholesale retailer in Thailand.

Meanwhile, the DA chief communicated to his Thai counterpart, Minister Narumon Pinyosinwat, the Philippines' openness to sourcing more farm products like rice, vegetables, poultry, and pork from Thailand in his visit to the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives.

For her part, Pinyosinwat expressed Thailand's interest in exporting longan and poultry meat to the Philippines. The agriculture chief then highlighted the Philippines' aim to export Hass avocados and processed meats to the Southeast Asian nation.

"We hope this recent visit will lead to greater trade between Manila and Bangkok, as well as more Thai investments in the Philippine agricultural sector," Laurel said in a statement.

"Thailand, a major rice exporter, offers many lessons in agricultural efficiency and food product exports to Europe."

Agri projects

The DA team also visited various Thai agricultural projects to observe sustainable farming practices and strengthen knowledge exchange.

For one, the delegation examined the Bio-Circular-Green Economy model at the Cassava Collaborative Farm in Wang Muang, Saraburi. This model emphasized resource maximization, sustainable practices, and technological innovation, wherein a collaborative committee at the farm ensures product quality through strict management practices.

The team also visited an asparagus farm in Nakhon Pathom, where efficient irrigation systems, contract farming practices, and effective implementation of farming and product standards resulted in increased yields and higher income. This farm exports asparagus to Taiwan.

At the Asian Institute of Technology's Smart Greenhouse, the delegation observed advanced climate control systems designed to optimize crop yield.

"Potential collaborations were discussed regarding climate-resilient structures, crop varietal development, and sustainable agricultural and fisheries research," the DA said.

The delegation also looked into major food and agricultural wholesale and retail markets, including Or Tor Kor, Simummuang, and Talaad Thai, which serve as crucial hubs in the Southeast Asian nation's agricultural supply chain, distributing fresh produce domestically and internationally.

"The visit to these markets provided the delegation with ideas to incorporate in the improvement plans for food terminals in the Philippines."

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/03/10/phl-aims-to-fortify-agri-trade-ties-with-thailand-da/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Panay, Guimaras fishers launch signature campaign against SC ruling

Jonathan L. Mayuga

March 10, 2025

Fishermen based in Panay Island launched a signature campaign calling for the reversal of the a recent Supreme Court ruling that will allow commercial fishing vessels to operate within the 15-kilometer municipal waters.

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya)-Panay said more than 180 small fisherfolk from the 52 coastal towns in Panay and Guimaras Islands stand to be affected once commercial fishing vessels are allowed to operate in municipal fishing grounds.

Even without the said ruling, coastal municipalities along the Guimaras Strait, Panay Gulf, and Visayan Sea are already “frequented” by commercial fishing vessels.

These commercial vessels, the group said, are often engaged in illegal methods of fishing, such as trawl and purse seine (locally known as kubkub).

The group is worried that if the Court ruling takes effect, it will legalize and exacerbate the commercial fishing intrusion in the municipal waters at the expense of the livelihood of small fishers.

On March 3, Pamalakaya-Panay led the launching of the “Aton ang Kinse Kilometro,” a coalition aimed at protecting the municipal waters against commercial fishing encroachment.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/03/10/panay-guimaras-fishers-launch-signature-campaign-against-sc-ruling/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Ex-lawmaker pushes for support for tomato farmers

Butch Fernandez
March 10, 2025

Former Senator Francis “Kiko” Pangilinan is calling on local government units (LGUs), businesses, and ordinary Filipinos to take immediate action and support tomato farmers who are struggling with falling farmgate prices and oversupply, leading to food wastage and financial losses.

Last March 7, Pangilinan launched Operation Sagip-Kamatis-an initiative aimed at preventing food wastage and providing urgent relief to struggling farmers, leading efforts to rescue 11 to 12 tons of tomatoes in Rizal, Nueva Ecija

This comes amid a worsening crisis for tomato farmers in Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija, and Nueva Vizcaya, where farmgate prices have dropped to as low as P4 to P5 per kilo. With buyers scarce, many are left with no choice but to discard their harvest, leading to massive losses.

“Hindi natin pwedeng hayaan na masayang ang ani ng ating mga magsasaka habang marami pa rin ang nagugutom. Walang kulay ang gutom, walang kulay ang solusyon. Kailangang magtulongan ang LGUs, private sector, at mamamayan upang mailigtas ang mga produktong ito at mapanatili ang kabuhayan ng ating mga magsasaka,” Pangilinan said.

Immediate action

To address the crisis, Pangilinan is urging the following interventions:

- LGUs must implement emergency procurement programs to buy excess tomatoes directly from farmers, using the provisions of the Sagip Saka Act to bypass public bidding. These tomatoes can be distributed to feeding programs, hospitals, and local markets;
- Businesses should establish direct partnerships with farmers to purchase fresh produce at fair prices, preventing wastage while ensuring a steady supply for food production and processing industries; and
- Ordinary citizens should support local farmers by choosing to buy directly from them through online platforms, farmers’ markets, and community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs.

Long-term solutions

Beyond immediate relief, Pangilinan reiterated the need for structural reforms to ensure sustainable solutions for farmers:

- Market expansion: Strengthen linkages between farmers and institutional buyers such as supermarkets, restaurants, and food manufacturers to ensure stable demand.
- Cold storage and processing facilities: Establish post-harvest facilities in tomato-producing regions to extend shelf life and develop value-added products such as tomato paste and sauce.
- Stronger government support: Increase funding for transport subsidies and price stabilization programs to protect farmers from drastic price drops.

“If we help each other—government private sector, citizens—we can ensure that our farmers’ harvest will not be wasted and each Filipino family will have enough food on the tables.”

As the author of the Sagip Saka Act, Pangilinan has long championed policies that empower farmers. His call for action is a continuation of his advocacy for food security and farmer welfare, ensuring that agricultural produce is valued and utilized efficiently.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/03/10/ex-lawmaker-pushes-for-support-for-tomato-farmers/>

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT:

Agri groups seek reinstatement of higher rice tariffs

By *Jed Macapagal* March 10, 2025

The Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (Sinag) said it has submitted a formal request to the Tariff Commission (TC) for the reinstatement of the tariff rates on rice to 35 percent from Asean and to 50 percent from non-Asean sources,

Jayson Cainglet, Sinag executive director, said in a message to reporters over the weekend the group, together with Abono Party-list, in the request dated March 3 argued that rice tariffs at current levels negatively affected both consumers and producers, while causing revenue losses to the government.

Last year, the government reduced rice tariffs to 15 percent with the issuance of Executive Order (EO) No. 62 to lower the retail price of rice.

“The need to declare food security emergency and the imposition of MSRP (maximum suggested retail price) on imported rice are admissions of the failure of EO 62 in reducing rice prices,” Sinag said in justifying the request.

At the start of this month, the Department of Agriculture (DA) lowered the MSRP of imported rice to P49 per kg from the previous P52 per kg and from the original price of P58 per kg. The MSRP is currently imposed selectively in Metro Manila, key cities and other urban centers.

It said the government lost P15 billion in revenues from July 2024 to December 2024 alone due to the rice tariff reduction.

Other agricultural groups back Sinag’s request.

Raul Montemayor, Federation of Free Farmers national manager, said in a separate message the price of rice from Vietnam could now be below P50 even if the tariff rates are adjusted upward.

“Our computations show that at current import prices, Vietnam rice with 5 percent broken can be sold at P48 to P50 per kg retail even if the tariff is reset to 35 percent,” Montemayor said.

According to latest data from the Bureau of Plant Industry, 504,726.708 metric tons (MT) of imported rice arrived in the country as of February 27 this year.

Bulk of the imported rice supply arrivals were from Vietnam at 370,908.42 MT, equivalent to 73.5 percent of all shipments for the period.

Meanwhile, Danilo Fausto, Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. president, said he supports the call to increase rice tariffs just to assure the funding of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF).

<https://malaya.com.ph/business/corporate/agri-groups-seek-reinstatement-of-higher-rice-tariffs/>

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT:

Thai food giant eyes processing facility in PH

By *Jed Macapagal* March 10, 2025

The Department of Agriculture (DA) said Thai food and agri-industrial giant Charoen Pokphand Foods PLC (CPF) expressed plans to establish a food processing facility and distribution network in the Philippines within the next three years, DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel in a statement on Sunday said this was disclosed by CPF officials during a visit of CPF's Nong Chok factory as part of the activities of a delegation of DA officials to Thailand from the last week of February to March 2.

CPF is a company under Thai conglomerate Charoen Pokphand Group Co. Ltd..

On Feb. 11, 2025, Malaya Business Insight reported the Charoen group signed a partnership with the Maharlika Investment Corp. to establish a private equity fund and raise up to \$1 billion to accelerate investments in agriculture and food production, digital innovation and sustainable energy in the Philippines. The DA statement did not provide details of CPF's plans in the Philippines but the company's website showed it is engaged in the processing of meat products including fillets, ready meals, hams, and sausages for export.

Tiu Laurel said the delegation also met with Narumon Pinyosinwat, Thailand's Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives, to express the Philippines' openness to sourcing more rice, vegetables, poultry and pork. He said Thailand is interested to export longan and poultry meat to the Philippines, while the DA opened the possibility of exporting Hass avocados and processed meats to Thailand.

"We hope this recent visit will lead to greater trade between Manila and Bangkok as well as more Thai investments in the Philippine agricultural sector... Thailand, a major rice exporter, offers many lessons in agricultural efficiency and food product exports to Europe," Tiu Laurel said.

The DA said the delegation also observed sustainable farming practices, particularly the bio-circular-green economy model in a cassava collaborative farm, as well as an asparagus farm utilizing efficient irrigation systems, contract farming practices and effective implementation of farming and product standards that resulted in increased yields and higher income.

The DA said its team also discussed with officials of Asian Institute of Technology on how to replicate the use of advanced climate control systems to optimize crop yield using climate-resilient structures, crop varietal development and sustainable agricultural and fisheries research.

The team also visited Thailand's major food and agricultural wholesale and retail markets to gather ideas that may be incorporated to improve the operations of food terminals in the Philippines, it added.

<https://malaya.com.ph/business/corporate/thai-food-giant-eyes-processing-facility-in-ph/>

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON:

EDITORIAL - Ipakita ng DA ang ngipin laban sa agri smugglers

March 10, 2025 | 12:00am



MAY panibagong pagbabanta na naman ang Department of Agriculture (DA) laban sa agricultural smugglers, hoarders, profiteers at may cartel operations. Ang bagong pagbabanta ay kasabay sa pagpapatupad ng Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act (RA 12022). Mas pinaigting umano ng DA ang kampanya laban sa ilegal na kalakalan sa agrikultura na labis na sumisira sa kabuhayan ng mga lokal na magsasaka at mangingisda. Layunin ng kampanya na mapanatili ang matatag na sektor ng agrikultura sa bansa. Ang RA 12022 ay nilagdaan ni President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. noong Setyembre 26, 2024.

Ayon sa DA, para maipatupad ang batas, nagtatag din sila ng enforcement group na kinabibilangan ng mga miyembro ng Philippine National Police, National Bureau of Investigation, Philippine Coast Guard at Department of Finance. Sinabi pa ng DA na sa pamamagitan ng enforcement group, maayos at epektibong maipatutupad ang batas at ganap na malilipol ang agri smugglers, hoarders at iba pang itinuturing na salot sa ekonomiya.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/opinyon/2025/03/10/2427215/editorial-ipakita-ng-da-ang-ngipin-laban-sa-agri-smugglers>