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MANILA BULLETIN:

DA seeks up to \$500 million from JICA to boost rice production, cut losses

BY [DEXTER BARRO II](#)

Mar 12, 2025 02:52 PM



The Department of Agriculture (DA) is seeking up to \$500 million from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to facilitate its project to reduce post-harvest losses and bolster rice production.

DA Assistant Secretary and Spokesperson Arnel de Mesa said details on the proposed funding were finalized during Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel's meeting with JICA officials in Japan on Tuesday, March 11.

This discussion followed the conclusion of the study conducted by Sanyu Consultants Inc., the firm JICA tapped to review the project's feasibility.

“Kahapon diniscuss ‘yung detalye noong project, ano ‘yung best way forward for this. At nakapag-sunduan naman ano ‘yung mga dapat na hakbangin para magtuloy-tuloy ‘yung proyektong ito,” said De Mesa.

(Yesterday, the details of the project were discussed, including the best way forward for this. An agreement was also reached on the necessary steps to ensure the project's continuity.)

De Mesa said the DA is looking into a \$200 million to \$500 million loan agreement with JICA, with a potential project launch in 2026 or 2027.

The post-harvest facilities project covers rice mills, warehouses, rice dryers, and other related agricultural infrastructure.

This will primarily benefit the National Food Authority (NFA), which oversees the stability of rice supply, as well as local rice cooperatives and associations.

“Ang mga ganitong project will help reduce post-harvest losses and will eventually mapataas ‘yung ating production and, of course, mapataas din ‘yung income ng ating mga farmers,” said De Mesa.

(These kinds of projects will help reduce post-harvest losses and will eventually increase our production and, of course, also raise the income of our farmers.)

Based on data from the Philippine Center for Post-Harvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech), the country sustains losses of 15 to 17 percent due to post-harvest issues.

The NFA earlier announced that half of its ₱10-billion modernization fund will be allocated for the construction and expansion of post-harvest facilities.

New drying facilities, for instance, are expected to help stabilize rice prices since they would maintain a consistent quality in rice that keeps prices in check.

While the DA's proposed project would be implemented across the country, a special emphasis will be placed on rice-producing areas to help support the NFA.

To recall, the NFA is intensifying its procurement of rice stocks from local farmers to fulfill its required rice buffer stock of 880,000 metric tons (MT) of palay or unmilled rice this year as mandated by the Amended Rice Tariffication Law.

The agency has a buying price of ₱18 per kilo for wet palay and ₱24 per kilo for dry palay.

<https://mb.com.ph/2025/3/12/da-eyes-up-to-500-m-jica-loan-for-post-harvest-project>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Tomato farmgate price drops to P6 per kilo

Bella Cariaso - The Philippine Star

March 13, 2025 | 12:00am



Jayson Cainglet, executive secretary of the Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura, blamed the decline in the farmgate price of tomatoes on the peak harvest season.

Philstar.com / Irra Lising

MANILA, Philippines — A farmers' group has reiterated its call for the Department of Agriculture (DA) to implement a floor price for tomatoes after the farmgate price of the produce again plummeted to P6 per kilo.

Jayson Cainglet, executive secretary of the Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura, blamed the decline in the farmgate price of tomatoes on the peak harvest season.

Cainglet said the farmgate price of tomatoes in the past few days increased to P12 per kilo, but it went down again to P6 yesterday.

He said farmers in Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija and Nueva Vizcaya have been complaining about the low price of their produce.

“There was a delay in the harvest last year (because of the typhoons). Now, farmers have been harvesting (simultaneously) since February,” Cainglet said.

Despite the drop in the farmgate price of tomatoes, the retail price of the produce in Metro Manila still ranges from P25 to P60 per kilo.

Cainglet said the plan of the DA to construct more storage facilities to address oversupply of farm produce would not benefit tomatoes.

He said the proposed processing of tomatoes should be planned ahead as farmers need to undergo training. Cainglet recommended that the government buys tomatoes from farmers and sell the commodity at Kadiwa centers.

He said a floor price for tomatoes is necessary to prevent farmers from incurring further losses.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2025/03/13/2427975/tomato-farmgate-price-drops-p6-kilo>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA seeks \$500 million loan for rice post-harvest

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

March 13, 2025 | 12:00am



Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said the DA is now negotiating with JICA for the details of the prospective funding that would bankroll the construction of various rice post-harvest facilities in the country.

STAR / Cesar Ramirez

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is planning to secure as much as \$500 million in loan from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to finance a project that would reduce post-harvest losses in the rice sector and improve farmers' income.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said the DA is now negotiating with JICA for the details of the prospective funding that would bankroll the construction of various rice post-harvest facilities in the country.

The project involves the construction of rice dryers, mills, warehouses and even silos that would support the operations of the National Food Authority and farmers cooperatives and associations, De Mesa said.

The DA is looking at securing between \$200 million and \$500 million from JICA for the project. The project is planned to start next year or in 2027.

“The project would help in reducing our post-harvest losses in rice that is estimated to be around 15 to 17 percent. It will also help in increasing our rice production and income of our farmers,” he said.

The DA spokesperson pointed out that the project is critical in expanding the operations of the NFA in light of its bigger buffer stocking mandate under the amended rice tariffication law.

The NFA is now required to keep a 15-day rice buffer stock at any given time.

Earlier this week, the NFA announced that it is investing P10 billion this year to modernize its rice warehouses and post-harvest facilities to enhance its efficiency and fulfill its buffer stocking mandate.

The program involves the construction of new rice mills, upgrading of drying facilities and expansion of warehouses, the NFA added.

The grains agency explained P1.5 billion would be dedicated to repairing its existing warehouses while P3.5 billion would be used to add 800,000 metric tons (MT) of storage capacity by next year.

At present the NFA's current storage capacity stands at one million MT, according to the NFA. The agency is unable to maximize the full capacity because of varying rice stock quality and age, it added.

The NFA will use the remaining P5 billion of the modernization program to construct and improve rice mills, dryers and silos aimed at boosting its processing efficiency and increasing rice recovery rates.

The measures would eliminate inefficiencies in post-harvest processing and allow farmers to sell palay even at higher moisture content, removing the burden of drying it themselves, according to the NFA.

Furthermore, the upgrades would help in stabilizing prices of the staple for both farmers and consumers while ensuring consistent rice quality, the NFA added.

The NFA added that the construction of silos in major rice-producing areas such as Regions 2 and 3 would allow it to rice up to two years, far longer than its current six months to one year of storage.

The modernization projects are expected to be operational by the end of next year, in time for the dry season harvest of 2027, the NFA said.

For this year, the NFA needs to purchase 545,000 MT of palay to maintain a nine-day supply and a total of 880,000 MT to meet its 15-day buffer stocking mandate.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/03/13/2427877/da-seeks-500-million-loan-rice-post-harvest>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

AgriConnect uses AI to uplift Filipino farmers

By: [Dale Arasa](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 02:20 PM March 12, 2025

MANILA, PHILIPPINES — Pinoy-made AI program AgriConnect is set to help farmers monitor their crops with the power of artificial intelligence.

AgriConnect is the brainchild of Soj Gamayon, a 22-year-old BS Communications Technology Management student from the Ateneo De Manila University.

Preliminary interviews with 80 farmers and agribusinesses showed 78 with strong interest in using AgriConnect.

AgriConnect empowers Filipino agriculture

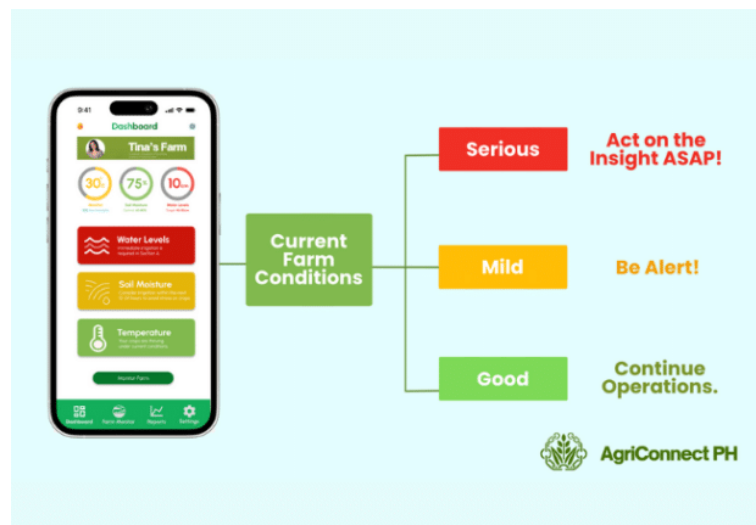


Photo Credit: Microsoft

Growing up in San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte, Gamayon understood the hardships farmers faced, especially natural disasters.

Around 20 typhoons hit the Philippines annually, with about eight or nine making landfall. They bring severe winds, torrential rains, and widespread flooding.

As a result, these storms damage, erode soil, and disrupt planting and harvesting schedules, causing farmers to suffer economic losses.

“I wanted to create a tool that empowers our farmers, giving them a fighting chance against the challenges they face daily,” Gamayon said.”

“AgriConnect is my way of giving back to the community that shaped who I am.”

With the support of Microsoft’s AI and cloud solutions, he launched this AI tool that translates complex agricultural data into an intuitive warning system.

Multi-spectral IoT (Internet of Things) sensors collect data, such as soil moisture, water levels, and pests.

Then, the sensors send the data to the AgriConnect mobile app, which compiles and simplifies them into three colored risk categories:

- Green: **Safe**
- Yellow: **Caution (pests/weather could affect crops soon)**
- Red: **Act now (immediate action needed to prevent damage)**

Farmers can follow these color codes to improve crop resilience accordingly. Consequently, it boosts their profitability and contributes to the overall economic growth of Filipino farming.

Agriculture is a vital sector as it contributed roughly 8.9% to the Philippines’ GDP in 2024. It represents approximately ₱1.78 trillion worth of crops like corn, rice, sugarcane, coconut, and other produce.

Also, farmers make up 25% of the Philippines’ employed population, which numbers around 10.7 million people.

“We envision a future where agriculture is resilient and sustainable, where farmers are empowered and hopeful,” Gamayon said.

“By embracing innovation, we nurture both the land and the spirit of our nation.”

<https://technology.inquirer.net/141294/agricconnect-uses-ai-to-uplift-filipino-farmers>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Philippines exploring satellite, agricultural technology tie-ups with Slovenia

March 12, 2025 | 9:25 pm



REUTERS

THE PHILIPPINES is exploring possible collaboration in satellites and agricultural technology with Slovenia, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said.

Speaking on the sidelines of a forum organized for the visit of a Slovenian business delegation, Trade Secretary Cristina A. Roque said: “We really try to foresee how both countries can benefit from trade missions such as this... We discussed satellites, and they also have agri-tech, which is something that we are very interested in.” She added at the Philippines-Slovenia Business Forum that the Philippines needs to develop technology in agriculture to achieve food security.

“We have a fast-growing population. It’s really important for us, so we don’t have to import so much because it’s expensive,” she added.

On Monday, the Philippines welcomed the delegation representing of 42 companies from the Slovenian mobility, manufacturing, food and beverage, information and communications technology, science, technology and education, business consultancy industries. Some of the companies also expressed interest in employing overseas Filipino workers.

“We are doing yearly investigations within our member companies, and the Philippines is seen as a really important hub for Slovenia because more than 80% of the Slovenian companies are exporters” according to Marjana Majerič, executive director of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (CCIS).

She sees the most promising areas for cooperation are technology, pharmaceuticals and medical devices, agri-food, sustainability, logistics, infrastructure, and energy.

“These are the areas that we can see as a really possible match between the Philippines and Slovenia,” according to Ms. Majerič, the head of the delegation.

At the forum, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) and CCIS signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen business and economic cooperation between the two countries.

Under the agreement, PCCI and CCIS committed to organizing outbound or hosting inbound trade and investment missions and participating in exhibitions, trade fairs, symposiums, seminars, conferences, study tours, business matching, training, and other trade and investment promotion activities.

The two parties also agreed to organize a Philippines-Slovenia business council which will implement their joint initiatives.

“Twenty years ago, we signed a contract with PCCI, and we now extended this MoU with an action plan. The previous MoU was a little bit general, but now we stick to more precise activities,” Ms. Majerič said.

“I think through that, we will have this possibility to make even further activities because we are already organizing online meetings with the companies,” she added.

PCCI Chairman George T. Barcelon said that the new MoU strengthens the two parties’ institutional cooperation.

“This agreement will provide a robust framework for regular business exchanges, trade and investment missions, and information sharing between our business communities,” he said.

“To our Slovenian friends, let me assure you that Philippine businesses are eager to explore partnerships with you. I understand that there are a few Slovenian companies currently operating in the Philippines, and I hope today will further balloon your presence in the country,” he added.

PCCI President Enunina V. Mangio said that the Philippines and Slovenia offer natural synergies in many high-value sectors.

“In manufacturing, for example, we see opportunities for technology transfer and supply chain integration. In information and digital technology, possibilities for joint ventures in software development, digital services, artificial intelligence, and other emerging technologies abound,” she said.

“Tourism presents untapped potential for cross-promotion and sustainable development models. And in human resource development, we can share best practices that enhance our competitiveness globally,” she added.

According to Ms. Majerič, Slovenian companies see the Philippines as a possible gateway to Asia.

“Your big advantage is your English-speaking people, and the second advantage that we see is your people are really eager to grow and learn,” she said.

“But besides that, your openness and your politics in terms of free zones and industrial parks give us possibilities in terms of approaching other markets,” she added.

She said that the Philippines is a possible springboard for US trade.

“In terms of the new American politics, the Philippines still has positive ties, so we see the possibility to step into the US market as well,” she added.

She said that the trade volume between the Philippines and Slovenia was 16 million euros in 2024. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/03/12/659092/philippines-exploring-satellite-agricultural-technology-tie-ups-with-slovenia/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Sugar order calls for export of 66,000 metric tons to US

March 12, 2025 | 9:25 pm



THE sugar regulator issued an order calling for voluntary exports of 66,000 metric tons (MT) of raw sugar to the United States.

Sugar Order No. 5, issued on Wednesday, allows the Philippines to fulfill its obligations under the US Raw Sugar Tariff-Rate Quota World Trade Allocation, the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) said.

Participants in the export program will enjoy priority in future import programs.

Participants complying with the order will be allowed to import 2.5 kilograms of refined sugar for every kilogram of raw sugar exported to the US.

The Office of the US Trade Representative gave the Philippines a quota of 145,235 MT raw value of raw cane sugar to the Philippines for the year to September.

Potential participants have until March 30 to submit to the SRA a written and notarized undertaking stating the amount of sugar they plan to ship to the US.

SRA Administrator Pablo Luis S. Azcona has said that the industry lobbied to export 66,000 MT of sugar instead of the initial 60,000 MT, to maximize the use of the cargo ship.

Segments of the local industry, including farmers, oppose sugar exports to the US because the US buys the commodity at a lower price.

“Sugar is bought by traders at US prices, which is about P1,000 less than domestic prices. That’s why farmers complained,” Mr. Azcona said last month, noting that the then-draft order incorporated the industry’s concerns.

— **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/03/12/659093/sugar-order-calls-for-export-of-66000-metric-tons-to-us/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

PHL still importing bulk of dairy needs despite improving self-sufficiency rate

March 12, 2025 | 9:20 pm



REUTERS

THE milk self-sufficiency rate rose to 1.66% in 2024 from 0.8% a year earlier, according to the National Dairy Authority (NDA).

Dairy production increased 11.31% to 32.39 million liters last year, Administrator Marcus Antonius T. Andaya said at the NDA's 30th anniversary event on Wednesday.

"That translates to 1.66% milk sufficiency," he said. "It may not be spectacular increase, but an increase is an increase."

Mr. Andaya said the dairy herd rose 56% to 156,000 dairy animals in 2024.

These animals include cattle, carabaos, and goats.

Mr. Andaya told reporters that the NDA expects to hit its 2.5% self-sufficiency target this year. The target is 5% in 2028.

The NDA reported that dairy imports rose 19.99% 3,495.88 million liters last year. — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/03/12/659088/phl-still-importing-bulk-of-dairy-needs-despite-improving-self-sufficiency-rate/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Potatoes are filled with nutrients, says trade group

March 13, 2025 | 12:06 am



POTATOES USA, the marketing arm of the American potato growers, hosted a talk about the health benefits of potatoes on March 6 in Makati City. Aside from presenting fun facts about the vegetable, the organization invited a speaker to give more details.

Jo Sebastian, a registered nutritionist and dietitian, showcased the versatility of potatoes in a diet, whether baked, roasted, or fried. “They’re an excellent source of vitamin C and potassium, and fuel for your brain and body because of complex carbohydrates. For example, you can try adding some mini potatoes into your first meal — see how that helps you sustain energy for the rest of the day,” she said.

However, with these benefits come a lot of misconceptions regarding the nutrient content.

Ms. Sebastian noted that Filipinos seeking weight loss tend to be “scared off” by the mention of carbs, taking after Western trends in dieting, even though they are an important fuel for people’s bodies.

“Potatoes are actually considered a lower-calorie carb source, meaning it will help you feel energized but can fit in a well-balanced diet,” she explained. “Carbs often get a bad reputation, but they’re important because they’re the preferred energy source of your brain and blood cells.”

Complex carbohydrates in particular, which potatoes contain, take more time to break apart, which is ideal for those who need sustained energy throughout the day.

Meanwhile, potatoes’ vitamin C content strengthens immunity and maintains skin health while potassium (surprisingly contain more than banana) helps with fluid balance, muscle contractions, and healthy blood pressure.

For Ms. Sebastian, that potatoes fit in well with Filipino dishes like *afritada*, *kaldereta*, *menudo*, *giniling*, *adobo*, and even *torta* makes it a great choice for regular consumption.

US VS PHILIPPINE POTATOES

Though the Philippines grows its own potatoes, it is the largest importer of US frozen potatoes in Southeast Asia. The leading markets in all of Asia are Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines.

“Generally, the content of US potatoes and Philippine potatoes should be the same. They’re all healthy,” said Reji Retugal, Potatoes USA country representative to the Philippines.

The main difference would be the varieties available — one of which is hard to grow here. “Unfortunately, we do not grow russet potatoes here, which are the ones primarily used for fries, because they’re big and require a different kind of soil that’s looser and less rocky,” explained Ms. Retugal.

The Philippines also has different farming practices that may create differences in quality.

“In the US, potatoes are stored in climate-controlled facilities to slow aging and preserve freshness,” she said. “The Philippines lacks this technology, so local potatoes often degrade faster due to heat and improper storage.” The country receives fresh imports usually between November and March. US potatoes are available in fresh, frozen, and dehydrated forms.

Ms. Retugal recommended that potato buyers ensure proper storage, keeping the root vegetable in a cool pantry or refrigerator, to keep them fresh. “Just don’t place them next to other vegetables like onions or garlic. Potatoes are porous and can easily absorb other smells and flavors,” she said.

In terms of diet, Ms. Sebastian shared that having more than one carb source is alright, as long as they are in rotation.

“As an Asian, I still love my rice. Instead of replacing it, consider adding potatoes into your rotation of carbohydrate sources for variety and better nutrition,” she explained.

Frying potatoes may be delicious, but the process adds extra fat and calories. The recommendation is to eat potato this way at most two or three times a week.

Ms. Sebastian concluded: “Whether you bake, roast, or steam your potatoes, you’ll be able to get all the nutrients in there.”

US-grown potatoes can be found fresh, frozen, or instant (dehydrated) in most Philippine supermarkets.

— **Brontë H. Lacsamana**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/arts-and-leisure/2025/03/13/658948/potatoes-are-filled-with-nutrients-says-trade-group/>

REMATE:

PBBM admin nangako, presyo ng bilihan patatatagin

March 12, 2025 16:15



MANILA, Philippines – Muling pinagtibay ni Navotas Representative Toby Tiangco ang pangako ng administrasyong Marcos na patatatagin ang presyo ng mga bilihan, kasunod ng paghina ng inflation rate ng bansa sa 2.1% noong Pebrero.

“The President’s marching orders are clear: ensure that Filipino families have access to affordable goods,” sabi ni Tiangco.

“Walang magugutom at walang maiiwan. Makakaasa po ang ating mga kababayan na patuloy ang pamahalaan sa pagpapatupad ng mga programang magpapababa sa presyo ng mga bilihan,” dagdag niya. Binanggit ni Tiangco kung paano humantong sa pagbaba ng inflation ang mga proactive intervention ng gobyerno, tulad ng pagbabawas ng maximum suggested retail price (MSRP) para sa imported na bigas at ang pagsasabatas ng Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act.

“Government interventions are working, but we must not be complacent. Moving forward, we urge our partners in various government agencies to sustain this momentum and continue implementing strategies that will maintain stable prices of food and other commodities,” aniya.

Ayon sa Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), ang downtrend sa pangkalahatang inflation ay pangunahing naiimpluwensyahan ng mas mababang year-on-year growth rate ng heavily-weighted food at non-alcoholic beverages.

“Lower food prices will help households allocate more for their other essential needs,” dagdag ni Tiangco. **JOJO RABULAN**

<https://remate.ph/pbbm-admin-nangako-presyo-ng-bilihan-patatatagin/>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Milk sufficiency target to be hit this year – NDA

By Giselle P. Jordan
March 13, 2025

NATIONAL Dairy Authority (NDA) is upbeat on hitting its 2.5-percent milk self-sufficiency target this year, said its administrator Marcus Antonius Andaya at the agency's 30th anniversary celebration. The target rate is equivalent to 40 million liters of milk.

"Very, very positive kami diyan. Optimistic kami na maaabot 'yan because of the stock farms (We are very, very positive about it. We are optimistic we will achieve it because of the stock farms)," Andaya stressed, noting the country's 32.39 million liters in dairy production in 2024, an 11.31-percent increase from 29.1 million liters in 2023.

He explained this translates to a 1.66-percent rate of milk self-sufficiency, an increase from the 1 percent that the country had "for the longest time."

The country's dairy inventory (cattle, carabao, goats) has also expanded by 59 percent last year.

In 2024, the NDA built stock farms in General Tinio, Nueva Ecija; Ubay, Bohol; Malaybalay, Bukidnon; Carmen, Cotabato; and Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur. These will all be operational this year, Andaya assured.

The NDA had likewise started the procurement of additional dairy cattle, with at least 600 expected to arrive from Australia by July.

Andaya said there have been adjustments in the schedule, but added the NDC has animals ready to be put in the stock farms, initially with 50 cattle in each farm.

The NDA hopes to have a major growth rate from 1- to 5-percent milk self-sufficiency rate by 2028.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/03/13/business/top-business/milk-sufficiency-target-to-be-hit-this-year-nda/2072157>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Caraga to get two FMRs

By Philippine News Agency

March 13, 2025

BUTUAN CITY — The provincial government of Dinagat Islands and the local government of Tagbina, Surigao del Sur, have welcomed the endorsement of two farm-to-market road (FMR) projects by the Regional Project Advisory Board (RPAB) of the Department of Agriculture–Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP).

During a meeting on Tuesday in Butuan City, the RPAB endorsed P504 million worth of rural infrastructure projects to the DA-PRDP National Project Coordinating Office (NPCO). The projects include the concreting of a 4.12-kilometer FMR in Sitio Patag, Barangay Garcia, Libjo, Dinagat Islands, costing P152 million, and a 15.4-kilometer FMR in Sitio Pamintigan, Barangay Hinagdanan, Tagbina, Surigao del Sur, worth P353 million.

"This will further increase agricultural production in Libjo as the concreted FMR will boost market access for our farmers," Jorge Daligdig, chief of the Provincial Planning and Development Office in Dinagat Islands, said in an interview Wednesday.

Once completed, the projects will directly benefit over 300 farmers producing watermelon, vegetables, sweet potatoes and cassava, while also improving access for fishing communities. Libjo is also known for its cacao, corn, dragon fruit and lemon production, Daligdig added.

The FMR in Libjo is the second DA-PRDP project in Dinagat Islands under Gov. Nilo Demerey Jr.'s administration. In November 2023, the DA-PRDP approved the P341 million concreting of the Siring-Plaridel FMR in Basilisa town, which is currently under construction.

In Tagbina, the FMR is expected to serve around 1,469 farmers and 2,613 Indigenous peoples engaged in coconut and coffee farming, according to the DA-Caraga (Region 13).

DA-Caraga Regional Director Arlan Mangelen, who heads the RPAB, led the review, deliberations and endorsement of the two projects to the NPCO.

"Our projects under DA-PRDP, which are geared toward food sufficiency and support for the local economy, will propel the province to become more progressive," DA-13 said in a statement.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/03/13/business/agribusiness/caraga-to-get-two-fmrs/2072120>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Facility to boost mungbean industry

By Leander C. Domingo

March 13, 2025

A NEW packaging facility is expected to boost the mungbean (munggo) industry in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley).

Worth P3 million, the Mungbean Packaging House in Barangay Saranay in Cabatuan, Isabela was funded under the 2024 General Appropriations Act, underscoring the government's commitment to enhancing agricultural productivity, and sustainability.

It was on Mar. 4, 2024, that the facility's inauguration and blessing was led by the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office 2 (DA-RFO2) in partnership with farmer cooperatives and associations (FCAs), the local government of Isabela, and other stakeholders.



The Mungbean Packaging House in Barangay Saranay in Cabatuan, Isabela, is expected to boost the farmers cultivating the commodity in Region 2. DA PHOTO

Paul Buenavista of the DA-RFO2 said the event included the distribution of agricultural inputs under the High-Value Crop Development (HVCD) program with major project beneficiaries, particularly the Flow of Pariir Agriculture Coop.

He said the Mungbean Packaging House in Cabatuan is more than just a new facility because it represents progress and hope for mungbean farmers in Region 2.

"With this program, local farmers will have more options to increase their output, add value to their harvests, and reach new markets," Buenavista said.

He said a total of 180 farmers will benefit from the mungbean packaging facility with the cooperative playing a significant role in sustaining the project, ensuring continued support for farmers in the region.

Buenavista said that the DA-RFO2 also distributed essential farming inputs to key FCAs as part of the intervention to further uplift the mungbean industry.

"These interventions align with DA's goal of strengthening high-value crop production and ensuring food security across the Cagayan Valley region," Buenavista said.

The Flow of Pariir Agriculture Cooperative also received 3,200 kilograms (kg) of mungbean seeds and 320 liters of carrageenan plant growth promoter (PGP) worth P736,000 while the Tumauni Federation of National and Communal Irrigators Association received 2,000 kgs of mungbean seeds and 200 liters of carrageenan PGP worth P460,000.

Another FCA, the Farmers of Luna Agriculture Cooperative, also received 1,500 kg of mungbean seeds and 150 liters of carrageenan PGP worth P345,000.

In his message during the event, engineer Rolando Pedro representing DA-RFO2 Executive Director Rose Mary Aquino emphasized the importance of agriculture as a viable business.

"Agriculture is a good business. Let us take care of it, let's embrace it for our children and future generations. Let us show that agriculture is also profitable so that others can see that it is a good livelihood. The progress of agriculture is the progress of all Filipino families," Pedro said.

Carol Albay, DA-RFO2 HVCDP and National Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Program focal person, presented the rationale behind the initiative and emphasized the importance of collaboration, saying that "we must work hand in hand [and] if we do not work together, we would not reach our export goal."

Addressing a common misconception about export, Albay explained that it does not only mean that the product is exported outside the country.

"When your product is moved from Isabela or the Cagayan Valley region to other regions, you have already exported," she said.

Albay also shared the DA's vision for the Flow of Pariir Cooperative in the remaining three years of the current administration under DA Undersecretary Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero.

"One of our aspirations is to be recognized at the national level as one of the main bean producers. Our Secretary and Deputy Secretary for the HVCDP have pledged a fund worth P6 million for the purchase of a seed sorter. In addition, we are also committed to the construction of a solar modular cold storage, a dream then that we are now gradually realizing," she said.

Marvin Luis, supervising agriculturist and officer-in-charge field operations division chief, and lawyer Pamela Kate Vallangca, accounting section chief, also extended their congratulations and expressed pride in the collective effort that made the project possible.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/03/13/business/agribusiness/facility-to-boost-mungbean-industry/2072125>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Isabela town passes ordinance on GAPproved rice

By The Manila Times
March 13, 2025

CONSUMERS in San Mateo, Isabela, can soon enjoy safer and higher-quality rice options as the municipality has pioneered an ordinance promoting Philippine Good Agricultural Practices (PhilGAP)-certified rice, known as GAPproved rice.

Ordinance 2025-917, introduced through the Rice Business Innovations System (RiceBIS) program of the Department of Agriculture-Philippine Rice Research Institute (DA-PhilRice), is the first of its kind in the country. It establishes a model for ensuring that locally produced rice meets stringent safety and quality standards.



GAPproved rice is known for its high quality. PHILRICE PHOTO

Ofelia Malonzo, RiceBIS Isabela project lead, said GAPproved rice adheres to best practices that reduce chemical use and uphold environmental standards.

"The ordinance further encourages government offices and local businesses to prioritize purchasing PhilGAP-certified products," PhilRice said in a statement.

Sponsored by Sangguniang Bayan members Jonabel Collado, Jennifer Ramones and Lailo Paulo Palomares, the policy also promotes agroentrepreneurship by supporting farmer cooperatives and associations engaged in PhilGAP-certified rice production.

This initiative is expected to help farmers secure better pricing and long-term contracts, increasing their income. Also, consumers are expected to benefit from the increased supply of GAPproved rice.

"In 2023, the Bureau of Plant Industry certified 512 farms through the RiceBIS program. This year, the program aims to train more farmers and promote group certifications among cooperatives to expand production and meet the growing demand for healthier rice options," PhilRice said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/03/13/business/agribusiness/isabela-town-passes-ordinance-on-gaproved-rice/2072119>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Searca, Villgro PH launch sustainability project

By Leander C. Domingo
March 13, 2025

WITH agriculture serving as the livelihood backbone for millions in Southeast Asia, the sector faces escalating threats from climate change, extreme weather events, unsustainable farming practices and food waste. Thus, Villgro Philippines, a gender-smart incubator supporting impact-driven enterprises, has partnered with the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) to jointly run the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security Enhancement (SAFE) Accelerator.

According to Searca, this virtual accelerator program was designed to support high-potential enterprises developing regenerative, climate-resilient solutions to address food security and sustainable agriculture challenges in Southeast Asia.

It added that the SAFE Accelerator aims to "cultivate market-driven, climate-resilient solutions that protect biodiversity, sustain farming communities and improve food security."

"Searca, with its deep expertise in advancing climate-smart agriculture and agritech innovations, sees the SAFE Accelerator as a key initiative in fostering sustainable development across the region," Searca Center Director Glenn Gregorio said.

He added that the program will support four enterprises in Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Vietnam that integrate regenerative, nature-based solutions in their business models.

Priya Thachadi, Villgro Philippines co-founder and CEO, said the need of the hour is an urgent transformative change to ensure food security — regenerative agriculture is at the heart of restoring ecosystems and ensuring our food systems are sustainable.

"The SAFE Accelerator will equip enterprises driving climate-friendly agribusinesses with coaching, tools and networks to scale regenerative solutions that sustain both people and the planet," Thachadi said.

Villgro Philippines is a gender-smart incubator that funds, mentors and nurtures enterprises addressing the most pressing social and climate issues.

Searca said the four-month virtual accelerator program offers tailored capacity building, mentorship from industry experts, hands-on workshops, gender-smart training and self-paced investment training.

It added that the program will conclude with an Impact Showcase where selected enterprises connect with potential investors and partners, and that "eligible enterprises may receive further funding opportunities through Villgro Philippines' investor network."

"The SAFE Accelerator is an important step for empowering enterprises at the forefront of climate-smart agriculture, enabling them to scale solutions and the kind of innovations needed to reshape agriculture in Southeast Asia — driving both ecological restoration and long-term food security," Eric Reynoso, Searca program head for emerging innovation for growth, said.

Applications will open soon for screening and joint evaluation by Villgro Philippines and Searca. Interested enterprises or partner organizations in Laos, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Vietnam were invited to reach out to the team at climate@villgrophilippines.org.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/03/13/business/agribusiness/searca-villgro-ph-launch-sustainability-project/2072121>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

PHL to export more sugar to US under TRQ

Ada Pelonia

March 12, 2025

The Philippines will export 66,000 metric tons (MT) of raw sugar to fulfill the allocation it received from the United States under the tariff rate quota (TRQ) scheme.

The volume for shipment is higher than the 24,179 MT exported by Philippine producers to the US last year.

Under Sugar Order (SO) 5, a copy of which was obtained by reporters, the board of the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) has approved the outbound shipment of the sweetener, which is tied to the agency's voluntary purchase program.

The voluntary purchase program stipulates that a portion of the 120,000 MT raw sugar purchased at a premium would be exported to the US as part of the TRQ allocation.

“Eligible participants of [SO 2] having already voluntarily purchased at a premium locally produced farmers' share sugar, have again expressed their willingness to help the government fulfill its allocation under the 2025 US sugar quota despite the lower return therefore and the additional cost and uncertainty inherent to the exportation of sugar,” the latest SO read.

The export program would be open to qualified participants that availed of the 120,000 MT under the agency's voluntary purchase program.

Last year, the US Trade Representative (USTR) announced that the Philippines was given an allocation of 145,235 metric tons raw value (MTRV) of raw cane sugar under the TRQ system for fiscal year 2025, which started on October 1, 2024.

The Philippines got the third largest TRQ allocation after the Dominican Republic at 189,343 MTRV and Brazil at 155,993 MTRV. The TRQ scheme allows countries to ship certain products to the US at a relatively low tariff.

The SO indicated that the raw sugar should be shipped out of the Philippines not later than August 15, 2025. SRA Administrator Pablo Luis Azcona said the government at exporting sugar as soon as possible to ensure that the shipment would arrive in condition before the September 30 deadline.

Under the order, eligible participants would be given priority in future import programs at a ratio of 1 (raw sugar exported):2.5 (imported refined sugar).

Azcona said the glut in sugar supply in the first quarter pulled down farmgate prices.

“So, to create a need and a demand and to stabilize the price, we export and then once we have a [supply gap], we import when harvest is done to replenish the export,” he said in a previous interview.

“We are thinking of a total import [volume] for the export replenishment of about 165,000 MT of refined sugar. So, [the exporters] can make up for the difference in cost.”

Last month, the SRA said it is hopeful that the country will be able to produce 1.78 million metric tons (MMT) of raw sugar in the current crop year despite the decline in sugar content.

Data from the SRA showed that as of February 16, sugarcane production reached 13.07 MMT, 18.16 percent lower than the 15.98 MMT recorded in the previous year.

Despite this, the decline in sugarcane milled was smaller compared to the 27.75-percent drop last January 12.

However, yield for sugarcane shrank by 11 percent to an average of 1.58 LKGTC (50-kilo bag per ton of cane) from 1.78 LKGTC a year earlier, based on SRA data.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/03/12/phl-to-export-more-sugar-to-us-under-trq/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

‘Rice production growth will continue to outpace demand’

Ada Pelonia
March 12, 2025

The country’s paddy rice output will recover this year on the back of improved weather conditions and the extended rice competitiveness program, according to a research firm.

BMI, a unit of Fitch Solutions, projects that the Philippines’s rice production will pick up in the 2025/26 season due to “better weather conditions” and the extended Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) until 2031.

The international research firm noted that the mild La Niña weather pattern would dissipate between March and May 2025.

“This is usually associated with above-average rainfall in the Philippines and is therefore an upside risk for production in the country,” BMI said in its latest report.

Furthermore, it noted the amended Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), which increased the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) to P30 billion, would be an “upside risk” for production.

The increased funding would be earmarked for bolstering access to rice farm machinery and equipment, seed propagation, training of farmers, expanding credit assistance, and improving pest and disease management.

“We believe this is an upside risk for production in the upcoming season and in the medium term, but we flag that the previous 6 years of RCEF were unable to significantly increase domestic rice harvests.”

‘Structural challenges’

Meanwhile, BMI said structural challenges, such as limited availability of arable land, exposure to typhoons, and a growing population, would continue to weigh on the country’s rice self-sufficiency.

The research firm said self-sufficiency for rice has declined over the past decade to 69.7 percent in 2024/25 from 91.6 percent in 2014/15 “due to limited growth in production combined with strong growth in consumption.”

Furthermore, the BMI said its forecast for the five-year average annual growth rate for rice consumption up to 2024/25 is 3.6 percent, which pales in comparison to the 0.2 percent it projected for production.

“Through our forecast period between 2025/26 and 2028/29, we expect the average annual growth rate for production to be 2.0 percent, while for consumption we expect this to be 2.5 percent.”

“The challenges faced by the sector are also reflected in a growing production deficit, which was 1.4 MMT in 2014/15 and we forecast this to increase to 3.5 MMT in 2024/25 and expand to 6.1 MMT in 2028/29.”

The country’s palay output stood at 19.09 million metric tons (MMT) in 2024, which fell short of the government’s 19.3 MMT target and was 4.85 percent lower than the record harvest of 20.06 MMT in 2023. Despite this, the Department of Agriculture is expecting palay harvest to breach the 20 MMT-mark again this year at 20.46 MMT.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/03/12/rice-production-growth-will-continue-to-outpace-demand/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Government keen on JICA loan to support NFA operations

Ada Pelonia
March 12, 2025

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has set its sights on securing a loan from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to build more postharvest facilities.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said the DA is in talks with the Japanese agency, with funding for the project ranging from \$200 to \$500 million “depending on the negotiations.”

“We’re discussing the details of the project,” De Mesa told reporters in Filipino on Wednesday.

The project will cover postharvest facilities like dryers and rice mills to support the National Food Authority’s (NFA) procurement operations and the farmer cooperatives and associations (FCAs).

The DA official noted that the project would help the grains agency given its new buffer stock requirement of 15 days as stipulated under the amended Rice Tariffication Law (RTL).

“Aside from NFA, we also want to support our rice cooperatives and associations partners in boosting their output.”

He noted that the project, which could start as early as 2026, would be placed throughout the country, particularly in rice-producing regions.

Modernization

Meanwhile, the NFA is ramping up its efforts to expand the agency’s storage and processing capacity.

The grains agency said it would allot P10 billion for the program, half of which would be earmarked for the repair existing warehouses to preserve the quality of palay and rice as well as add 800,000 metric tons (MT) of storage capacity by next year.

“This expanded capacity will help us address the current issue where our warehouse space is almost full,” NFA Administrator Larry Lacson said in a statement.

The NFA said while its current storage capacity stands at 1 million metric tons (MMT), varying rice stock quality and age often hinder full utilization.

Furthermore, the remaining P5 billion for rice mills, dryers, and silos would focus on improving processing efficiency, increasing rice recovery rates, and enhancing farmers’ livelihoods.

With the new drying facilities, the NFA said farmers could sell palay with a higher moisture content, removing the burden of drying it themselves. This would help stabilize prices for producers and consumers by ensuring consistent rice quality.

“These facilities will be a game changer for the NFA, enabling us to purchase rice with moisture content above the current 14 percent requirement.”

This would prevent traders from potentially manipulating moisture levels in palay to drive down prices, Lacson added.

This year, the NFA is targeting to procure as much as 880,000 MT of palay to meet its new buffer stock requirement.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/03/12/govt-keen-on-jica-loan-to-support-nfa-operations/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

Navigating agricultural trade: Can PHL become an export powerhouse?

BusinessMirror Editorial
March 12, 2025

Being a net food importer, the Philippines has always recorded an agricultural trade deficit. The preliminary data released by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) recently proves this as it showed that the country's import payments for agricultural products continued to outpace exports in January. In the first month of the year, import payments, according to the national statistics agency, have already breached \$1 billion (*See, "PSA: Agri trade gap narrows in January," in the BusinessMirror, March 10, 2025*).

A silver lining in the preliminary PSA data on agricultural trade is the increase in farm exports during the first month of 2025. The Philippines kicked off the calendar year with a 32.8-percent year-on-year surge in export receipts, which reached \$715.25 million. Topping the list of the agricultural products exported by the Philippines were animal, vegetable, or microbial fats and oils and their cleavage products; prepared edible fats; animal or vegetable waxes. According to the World Customs Organization, lard and coconut are part of this classification.

Other products that beefed the country's farm export receipts are edible fruit and nuts; preparation of vegetables, fruits, nuts or other parts of plants; tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes; and preparations of meat, of fish, of crustaceans, mollusks or other aquatic invertebrates or of insects. The top buyers of Philippine farm products in January were the United States and Japan. Among its major trading partners, the Philippines enjoys a trade surplus with only Japan and the European Union.

The latest PSA data shows that the Philippines is capable of expanding its agricultural exports and increasing its contribution to the country's overall export performance. Because of the increase in export earnings in January, the agricultural trade deficit shrank by 2.8 percent to \$1.001 billion. While import payments amounted to \$1.716 billion during the period, the increment in export receipts, pegged at nearly \$200 million enabled the country to trim its the farm trade gap.

Wiping out billions of dollars in the country's trade gap or reducing it significantly would take some time and ingenuity on the part of the country's policymakers. The Philippines must go beyond its traditional export earners like coconut oil, fresh bananas and pineapples if it intends to raise the receipts from food exports. It may be in need of huge volumes of some staples, like rice and wheat, but the Philippines also has a number of farm products that the world may find interesting.

The Marcos administration must lean on its agricultural resources to achieve its goal of turning the Philippines into an "export powerhouse" by 2028. We could only hope that the state has already crafted or implemented the policies that will turn this into a reality as soon as it announced its export goals. Without the right policy mix and the political will to transform certain sectors like agriculture into a significant contributor to the country's dollar earnings, the Philippines will continue to lag behind its neighbors in Southeast Asia, like Malaysia and Thailand.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/03/12/navigating-agricultural-trade-can-phl-become-an-export-powerhouse/>

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT:

SRA allows up to 66,000 MT raw sugar voluntary shipment to US

By Jed Macapagal
March 13, 2025

The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) has issued an order allowing the voluntary exportation of 66,000 metric tons (MT) of raw sugar to the United States.

SRA said in its Sugar Order number 5, released on Wednesday, the move is part of the country's fulfillment of the US sugar export quota.

The last time the Philippines exported raw sugar to the US was in September 2024, when it shipped 25,300 metric tons to California, also in an effort to fulfill the country's sugar export quota to the US at the time. Prior to that shipment, the Philippines exported 112,008 metric tons in commercial weight of raw sugar to the US during cropyear 2020-2021.

The US Trade Representative sugar exports quota for the Philippines for fiscal year 2025, or from Oct 1, 2024 to Sept 30, 2025 stands at 145,235 MT.

In Sugar Order 5 on March 12, the agency said raw sugar exports allowed to be shipped to the US are those that are part of locally produced supply covered by a previous SRA order. The latter allowed traders to secure prioritized sugar import allocations in the future in exchange for voluntary purchase from local producers at a premium.

However, the SRA said that participants must remain licensed international sugar traders in good standing, to qualify for this voluntary raw sugar shipments to the US.

The agency said the program is voluntary as it will have lower returns for the participants apart from the additional cost "and uncertainty inherent to the exportation of sugar."

The US sugar export quota is still deemed important as the Philippines is only among selected countries given annual allocations of sugar exports to the US market.

Based on DA's monitoring of public markets in the National Capital Region, prevailing retail prices as of Tuesday ranged from P74 to P90 per kg for refined sugar, P68 to P85 per kg for washed sugar and P60 to P85 per kg for brown sugar.

SRA millsite monitoring also showed the composite price of raw sugar as of February 23 was at P2,828.72 per 50 kg bag, down by 3 percent from the previous week's P2,917.11.

<https://malaya.com.ph/business/business-news/sra-allows-up-to-66000-mt-raw-sugar-voluntary-shipment-to-us/>

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT:

DA seeking up to \$500M loan from JICA to build rice-related facilities

March 13, 2025

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is negotiating with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for a loan of up to \$500 million for a project to build post-harvest facilities for rice, as well as dryers and mills to support the operations of the National Food Authority.

DA Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa, in a virtual briefing yesterday, said the project also aims to cover rice cooperatives and associations starting next year or by 2027, depending on results of studies being conducted by Sanyo, JICA's hired consultant.

"Yesterday, we also discussed details of the projects and the best way forward. We have agreed to some steps needed to pursue this project. This could be about P11 billion to \$200 to \$500 million, depending on what we can negotiate," de Mesa said, adding that funding will be through a loan.

Nationwide project

This project is eyed "all throughout the country, this is nationwide, mostly in rice producing areas to support NFA's operations. Especially now that they will expand procurement," de Mesa said.

The projects, he added, will particularly help the NFA comply with the amended Rice Tariffication Law, which mandates the agency to procure a total of 880,000 metric tons of palay (unhusked rice) to meet the new buffer stock requirement of 15 days.

De Mesa is part of a DA delegation currently in Japan to pursue possible agricultural partnerships with the Japanese government.

Earlier this year, Malaya Business Insight reported NFA's plan to pursue a P10 billion modernization program to enhance rice storage capacities, build new rice mills to upgrade drying facilities, improve rice recovery and increase farmers' profitability.

The agency said the initiative is funded through government allocations, with half of the budget granted late last year and the remaining P5 billion included in this year's national budget.

NFA recently said that while its current storage capacity stands at 1 million MT, varying rice stock quality and age often hinder full utilization.

However, NFA Administrator Larry Lacson said even with increased storage capacity, there is still need for regulatory reforms to improve the management of rice buffer stocks and regularly free up storage space for the procurement of palay.

"Ideally, one-twelfth of our buffer stocks should be disposed of each month to facilitate better reserve management," he said.

<https://malaya.com.ph/business/business-news/da-seeking-up-to-500m-loan-from-jica-to-build-rice-related-facilities/>

ABANTE TONITE:

Presyuhan ng palay sumadsad sa P20.29 per kilo – PSA

March 12, 2025

Bumagsak na ng 19% ang farmgate price ng tuyo at malinis na palay nitong Pebrero sa P20.29 per kilo mula sa P25.03 noong nakaraang taon, ayon sa Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Higit na mababa ito sa buying price ng National Food Authority (NFA) na itinaas ng ahensiya sa P24 per kilo mula sa P23 noong nakaraang taon.

Pinakamalaki ang pagbagsak ng presyo ng palay sa Calabarzon kung saan bumulusok ito ng 31% sa P17.34 per kilo mula sa P25.13 per kilo noong 2024.

Sa Calabarzon naitala ang pinakamababang presyo ng palay sa bansa noong Pebrero at sumunod naman ang SOCCSKSARGEN kung saan P17.53 per kilo ang farmgate price ng malinis at tuyong palay.

Sa Ilocos, 30% ang binagsak ng presyo ng palay na nasa P19.79 per kilo na lamang mula sa P28.41 noong nakaraang taon. Sa Cagayan Valley at Central Luzon, 27% at 25% ang binagsak ng presyo ng palay.

Sa Eastern Visayas lamang nakapagtala ng pagtaas ng presyo ng palay ng 5% sa P24.18 per kilo mula sa P23.10 per kilo noong Pebrero 2024.

Ayon sa PSA, sa Eastern Visayas din pinakamahal ang palay, sumunod naman ang Cordillera Administrative Region kung saan P21.99 per kilo ang palay.

Noong Enero, nag-utos ng price cap o maximum suggested retail price sa bigas ang Department of Agriculture para bumaba ang presyo nito. Kinailangang mag-MSRP ang DA sa bigas at magdeklara ng food security emergency dahil hindi bumaba sa P6-P7 per kilo ang presyo ng bigas nang tapyasin ng pamahalaan ang taripa sa imported rice na ginawang 15% mula 35%. (Eileen Mencias)

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2025/03/12/presyuhan-ng-palay-sumadsad-sa-p20-29-per-kilo-psa/>

ABANTE TONITE:

Comelec: Bigas ng NFA bawal pang-ayuda

March 12, 2025

Pinayagan ng Commission on Elections (Comelec) ang pagbebenta ng bigas ng National Food Authority (NFA) sa mga local government unit (LGU) sa ilalim ng idineklarang food security emergency, ayon sa pahayag ng Department of Agriculture (DA) nitong Miyerkoles, Marso 12.

Gayunpaman, nagbigay ng ilang kondisyon ang komisyon matapos nitong bigyan ng exemption sa spending ban ngayong eleksiyon ang pagbebenta ng bigas ng NFA sa mga lokal na pamahalaan.

“So dapat hindi bababa sa P33 iyong sale sa kanila mga mamamayan natin. At hindi rin puwedeng ipamigay ng libre. So `yun ang condition lang ng Comelec,” ayon kay DA spokesperson Assistant Secretary Arnel de Meza.

Nagpatupad ng public spending ban sa mga social welfare project at services ng gobyerno mula Marso 28 hanggang Mayo 11 sa ilalim ng Comelec Resolution No. 11-60.

Pero inihayag ng Comelec na hindi na kailangang humiling pa ng spending ban exemption ang DA at NFA para sa pagbebenta ng bigas ng ahensiya sa mga lokal na pamahalaan para ibebenta naman sa mga tao dahil hindi umano ito kinokonsidera bilang “social services”.

Dagdag pa ng Comelec na ang mga LGU na gagamitin ang bigas ng NFA para sa ayuda ay kailangang humingi ng spending ban exemption. (PNA)

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2025/03/12/comelec-bigas-ng-nfa-bawal-pang-ayuda/>