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MANILA BULLETIN:

Vaccinating poultry could help cut soaring egg prices but US remains hesitant

BY [ASSOCIATED PRESS](#)

Mar 13, 2025 11:22 PM



FILE - A Red Star hen, a hybrid breed that lays large brown eggs, stands on eggs inside her coop at Historic Wagner Farm, Friday, Feb. 7, 2025, in Glenview, Ill. (AP Photo/Erin Hooley, File)

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Vaccines could be a key means of [suppressing bird flu](#) and avoiding the slaughter of millions of chickens, which is blamed for egg prices averaging [nearly \\$6 a dozen](#). But the move has been delayed in part because of concerns it could jeopardize chicken exports worth billions of dollars a year.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has [announced plans](#) to spend \$100 million to study bird flu vaccines to fight the disease in concert with meat chicken, egg and turkey groups. That's part of a larger \$1 billion effort to invest in more protections to keep the virus off farms that President Donald Trump believes will help lower egg prices.

Chicken meat producers remain the most resistant to vaccines because of concerns they could harm meat exports, which totaled nearly \$4.7 billion last year. Egg and turkey producers sell most of their products in the U.S. and have been hit hardest by the virus.

Why is a vaccine needed?

Without a new policy including vaccines, the government will continue to [slaughter every flock](#) with a bird flu infection to limit the spread of the disease. Those deaths have totaled [over 166 million birds](#) in the U.S. since 2022.

Most birds killed are egg-laying chickens, and the death of so many hens is the main reason egg prices keep rising. The average price per dozen has hit \$5.90, and in some part of the country, it is far higher.

Poultry veterinarian Simon Shane, who runs www.Egg-News.com, said the government is hesitant to use vaccines and change its policy of killing birds largely because of the meat chicken industry's opposition.

“Basically this is a [political issue](#), and this only came to a head because eggs are at \$8 to \$9 a dozen, and it's embarrassing the government — embarrassing the present administration,” Shane said.

Why doesn't the US use a bird flu vaccine?

Before using vaccinations, the government must decide how to devise an effective system and monitor for outbreaks within vaccinated flocks that might not show any symptoms, said John Clifford, the USDA's former longtime chief veterinary officer, who now works with a poultry industry export group. Once that is figured out, the industry can negotiate with countries to minimize trade problems.

“What the industry wants is the ability to develop the strategic plan to share that with the trading partners and then find out what kind of impact that that will have on trade,” Clifford said.

There are fears that vaccinating could allow the virus to linger undetected in flocks and mutate in ways that could make it more of a threat to humans and allow sick birds to get into the food supply. Like with other diseases, properly cooking chicken to 165 degrees Fahrenheit (74 degrees Celsius) will kill bird flu, but the industry and chicken buyers don't want it there at all.

For meat chicken, known as broilers, the virus isn't as significant because those birds are slaughtered at 6 to 8 weeks old and thus have less chance of being infected compared with egg-laying hens, which live to 2 years or older. Also most broilers are raised in the Southeast, which hasn't had as many outbreaks as the Midwest and West.

Another delay to vaccinating concerns distribution. Egg farmers want to administer it through chicken feed or water, saying it's not practical to give shots to millions of birds in a single barn.

It can also be difficult to tell the difference between a vaccinated bird and one that has been sick with the virus. That would make other countries nervous about importing meat.

“People have talked about how expensive it would be to monitor vaccinated populations. And it would be. But where do we want to spend our money?” said Dr. Carol Cardona, a bird flu expert at the University of Minnesota. “We're spending our money hand over fist right now in depopulation and to buy eggs for breakfast.”

What does the experience in other countries show?

China and Mexico have been vaccinating their poultry for years, but they take different approaches.

In Mexico chicken are vaccinated, but Clifford said the country doesn't slaughter flocks when infections are found. That basically ensures the virus is present in poultry.

China still slaughters vaccinated flocks when infections are found, which has proven more effective at limiting the spread of the virus and reigning in outbreaks.

Clifford said the U.S. would need to continue culling flocks with outbreaks even after vaccinating, and it might make sense to give shots only to egg layers and turkeys, not broilers.

Will it help egg prices?

Don't expect big relief anytime soon.

The USDA, which did not respond to a request for comment for this article sent last week, clearly isn't moving to vaccinate immediately. And, regardless, it will take time to raise new hens.

“We're going to have to wait to replace those with new hatched chicks, and it takes 20 weeks before they even start laying,” Shane said. “So I don't know where they're going to get the eggs from.”

Prices may ease somewhat later this year after peak demand, which happens around Easter, if massive egg farms in Iowa, Ohio, California and elsewhere can avoid more outbreaks.

The USDA has predicted that average egg prices will be 41% higher than the 2024 average of \$3.17 per dozen. That would mean \$4.47 per dozen, slightly below the current average.

<https://mb.com.ph/2025/3/13/vaccinating-poultry-could-help-cut-soaring-egg-prices-but-us-remains-hesitant>

MANILA BULLETIN:

New 12,000-MT corn terminal opens in Batangas to boost food supply in Southern Luzon

BY [DEXTER BARRO II](#)

Mar 13, 2025 03:21 PM



The newly inaugurated grains terminal and trading station in Batangas City, which will serve as a primary hub for yellow corn, is expected to lower the prices of poultry and livestock products in Southern Luzon, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

In a statement, the DA said this new facility will consolidate the supply of corn, the commodity used predominantly in the production of animal feeds.

In turn, this reduces the cost of feeds crucial to sustain livestock and poultry production.

With its potential to scale up corn production on a national level, the grains terminal is poised to alleviate input costs. This would remove a significant concern bearing down on farmers and raisers.

Notably, the DA estimates that nearly 600 yellow corn farmers, hog raisers, and poultry farmers will directly benefit from the facility.

“This new grains terminal and trading hub will not only put more money in our farmers’ pockets but will lower the cost of producing poultry and hogs, helping ensure a stable supply and affordable food prices for many Filipino consumers,” said Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel.

Laurel said this marks an important step toward the DA’s commitment to improve food security and agricultural sustainability in the country.

The ₱278.3-million grains terminal and trading station was inaugurated on Thursday, March 13, attended by Laurel himself and President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr.

It was funded by a loan from the World Bank, with counterpart funding from the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) and the Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative (SIDC).

The DA chief said the facility is proof to the significance of public-private partnerships in driving growth within the agricultural sector.

“This project, backed by the World Bank and initiated by SIDC, is a testament to what we can achieve for our farmers and fishers when we collaborate and cooperate,” Laurel said.

The facility has two silos with a total capacity of 12,000 metric tons (MT) of corn and is expected to produce around 480,000 sacks of animal feeds. It complements the existing feed mill inaugurated by SIDC in 2021. According to the DA, this will further strengthen the role of Batangas in the country’s agricultural economy.

<https://mb.com.ph/2025/3/13/new-grains-terminal-to-lower-food-prices-in-southern-luzon>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Marcos: New P270-M feed mill to boost food security

BY [ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS](#)

Mar 13, 2025 10:32 AM

AT A GLANCE

- Marcos said the facility has two silos with a total capacity of 12,000 metric tons of corn, equivalent to 480,000 sacks of feed for over 100,000 pigs or nearly 600,000 chickens.

President Marcos said that the government is allocating funds for agricultural infrastructure to strengthen the country's food security and agricultural productivity.



President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. (RTVM screenshot)

Marcos said this as he led the inauguration of the Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative (SIDC) Grains Terminal and Trading Project, a P270-million feed mill facility, at Barangay Simlong in Batangas City on Thursday, March 13.

In his speech, the President said the government is investing in infrastructure to reduce post-harvest losses, stabilize prices, and increase farmers' productivity.

"Plano rin ng pamahalaan na maglaan ng pondo para sa mga dryers, mga silos, warehouses, rice at corn mills, at iba pang mga kagamitang agrikultura (The government also plans to allocate funds for dryers, silos, warehouses, rice and corn mills, and other agricultural equipment)," he said.

"Dahil dito, mababawasan ang nasasayang na bigas at mais, mapapababa natin ang presyo ng pagkain, at mas magiging produktibo ang ating mga magsasaka (Because of this, we will reduce wasted rice and corn, lower food prices, and make our farmers more productive)," he added.

According to Malacañang, the newly inaugurated grains terminal and trading project strengthens the SIDC's role in the agricultural supply chain. This development follows the cooperative's investment in a state-of-the-art rice mill, inaugurated in 2021, with a five-ton-per-hour capacity to process rice for its farming members.

In his speech, Marcos said the facility has two silos with a total capacity of 12,000 metric tons of corn, equivalent to 480,000 sacks of feed for over 100,000 pigs or nearly 600,000 chickens.

He added that the project seeks to address the shortage of animal food supply, ensuring stable production for the livestock and poultry industries.

"Sa pamamagitan nito, mas magiging maayos ang pag-iimbak ng ating mais. Mas magiging matibay ang ating suporta sa industriya ng poultry at saka livestock (With this, the storage of our corn will be improved. Our support for the poultry and livestock industry will be stronger)," Marcos said.

"At higit sa lahat, magkakaroon ng katiyakan ng kita ang ating mga magsasaka at ang ating mga negosyante—hindi lamang dito sa Batangas, kundi sa buong Calabarzon (And most importantly, our farmers and entrepreneurs will have a more secure income—not just here in Batangas, but throughout Calabarzon)," he added.

Strengthening cooperatives

In his speech, President Marcos highlighted the role of cooperatives in improving the livelihoods of farmers. He said that agricultural cooperatives like SIDC can compete with large businesses and provide farmers with greater bargaining power.

"One of our first – the first elements of everything that we do is to consolidate and organize all our farmers into cooperatives, farmers groups, all kinds of organizations," Marcos said.

The President then called on more farmers to unite under well-managed cooperatives to amplify their voices and gain more government support.

"If you are only one person, you have only one voice," he pointed out.

"You build a cooperative... and you will find na palaki nang palaki ang boses ng ating mga magsasaka, ng ating mga mangingisda kapag ang kooperatiba natin ay matibay at buo ang suporta na natatanggap nila galing sa pamahalaan (that the voice of our farmers and fisherfolk will grow louder and stronger when our cooperatives are strong and receive full support from the government)," he added.

The SIDC, one of the largest agri-based cooperatives in the Philippines, has been empowering farmers and cooperative members for over five decades. Founded in 1969, it continues to expand its initiatives to improve market access, enhance production quality, and ensure sustainable livelihood for its members.

Public-private partnership for agri

Marcos likewise underscored the importance of collaboration between the government and the private sector to uplift the agriculture industry.

He also called for stronger ties between farmers, private entities, and the government to create more opportunities for rural communities.

"Nananawagan po ako: Mas patatagin pa natin ang ugnayan sa pagitan ng pamahalaan at sa pribadong sektor kasama ang ating mga magsasaka (I call on everyone: Let's strengthen the partnership between the government, private sector, and our farmers)," the President said.

<https://mb.com.ph/2025/3/13/feed-mill-boost-food-security>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Pork retail price down by P10/kilo

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

March 14, 2025 | 12:00am



A vendor arranges meat up for sale at Paco Public Market in Manila on February 1, 2024.

STAR / Edd Gumban

MANILA, Philippines — The retail price of pork dropped by P10 per kilo amid the implementation of the maximum suggested retail price (SRP) for pork products.

However, the price is still above the P350 and P380 per kilo set by the Department of Agriculture (DA) for pork shoulder and pork belly, respectively, as the retail price remains high at P470 per kilo.

Based on the monitoring of the DA in Metro Manila markets, pork shoulder is sold between P340 and P410 per kilo and pork belly, between P390 and P470.

The maximum SRP for pork products took effect on March 10 after the farm commodity reached P480 per kilo.

Aside from the maximum SRP for pork shoulder and pork belly, the price of “sabit ulo” was capped at P300 per kilo.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa has said that the DA would seek police help to ensure compliance by retailers with the price cap.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2025/03/14/2428261/pork-retail-price-down-p10kilo>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Marcos opens grain terminal in Batangas

Bella Cariaso - The Philippine Star

March 14, 2025 | 12:00am



President Bongbong Marcos Jr.

Presidential Communications Office / Released

MANILA, Philippines — President Marcos yesterday led the inauguration of a P278.3-million grain terminal in Batangas City, which will consolidate the supply of corn and lower the prices of poultry and livestock products in the Southern Tagalog Region.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the grain terminal is funded by a P100-million loan from the World Bank with cash and in-kind counterpart funding of P178.3 million from the Department of Agriculture’s Philippine Rural Development Project and the Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative (SIDC).

He added that the grain terminal enhances the existing feed mill of SIDC by integrating a silo operation with a capacity of 12,000 metric tons.

“This new grain terminal is set to become a central hub for the yellow corn used predominantly in the production of animal feed. With the ability to scale up national corn production, the project is poised to temper rising input costs, benefiting hog and poultry farmers as well as corn producers. In total, it is estimated that 567 yellow corn farmers, hog raisers and poultry farmers will directly benefit from the project,” Tiu Laurel said.

“This new grain terminal and trading hub will not only put more money in our farmers’ pockets but will lower the cost of producing poultry and hogs, helping ensure a stable supply and affordable food prices for many Filipino consumers,” he added.

SIDC anticipates that the facility will meet the growing demand for yellow corn in animal feed production. Batangas is a major producer of swine, poultry and eggs and stands to benefit greatly from the terminal’s capacity to streamline corn distribution, further strengthening its role in the nation’s agricultural economy.

“This project marks a significant step toward improving food security and agricultural sustainability in the country, demonstrating the importance of public-private partnerships in driving growth within the agricultural sector,” Tiu Laurel said.

Tobacco trade starts

The National Tobacco Administration (NTA) announced the start of trading operations of Virginia tobacco for the cropping season 2024-2025, following the opening of buying stations in the Ilocos Region and Abra. Administrator Belinda Sanchez said NTA already checked the trading equipment and facilities of tobacco trading outlets in the Ilocos region before the end of February.

NTA field workers sealed all the weighing scales of buying stations and accredited field canvassers upon calibration, using the weighing test certified by the Department of Science and Technology.

The trading warehouses of the Universal Leaf Philippines Inc. in Agoo, La Union; Candon City and Cabugao, both in Ilocos Sur; Currimao, Ilocos Norte; and Bangued, Abra and the warehouse of Trans Manila Incorporated in San Juan, Ilocos Sur are now open to accommodate all the flue-cured Virginia tobacco leaves produced by the farmers, NTA said.

At the start of the 2025 tobacco trading operations, trading centers purchased a kilo of prime class flue-cured tobacco at P107 while field canvassers in the first district of Ilocos Sur bought the same class of cured tobacco for as high as P125 per kilo.

Sanchez is expecting another golden season for tobacco farmers this year, as the current tobacco buying prices are much higher than the approved tobacco floor prices during the tripartite conference in October 2023.

The approved tobacco floor prices for flue-cured Virginia tobacco are P97 for class AA, P96 for class A, P95 for class B, P93 for class C, P85 for class D, P84 for class E, P75 for class F1, P72 for class F2 and P61 for class R.

For Burley tobacco, the prices are P81 for class A, P78 for class B, P69 for class C, P58 for class D, P57 for class E, P49 for class F and P39 for class R.

Lastly, for native tobacco the prices are P81 for High Grade, P70 for Medium 1, P60 for Medium 2, P50 for Low 1 and P38 for Low 2.

NTA said that tobacco farmers, who planted as early as the last week of November 2024, have started delivering their flue-cured Virginia tobacco to the trading centers. – **Artemio Dumlao**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/03/14/2428293/marcos-opens-grain-terminal-batangas>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

P11-B Jica funding sought to boost palay production

By: [Jordeene B. Lagare](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)
Philippine Daily Inquirer / 09:00 AM March 13, 2025



MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is seeking P11 billion in funding from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) to increase local palay production and reduce post-harvest losses.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said the loan from Jica, ranging from \$200 million to \$500 million, would support the National Food Authority (NFA), as well as rice cooperatives and associations nationwide, through infrastructure projects.

De Mesa, also the DA's spokesperson, said the agency may get the funding from Jica between 2026 and 2027, depending on subsequent discussions.

"These projects will help reduce post-harvest losses and will eventually increase production and income of our farmers," he said in a Zoom interview on Wednesday.

Citing a study from the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization, losses in rice production range from 15 to 17 percent.

NFA expansion

Projects in the pipeline include a post-harvest facility for rice, dryers, mills, storage and silos at rice-producing areas that support the NFA's operations nationwide.

"Especially now, they (the NFA) are expanding their procurement," he said. "This is also part of the support for them. At the same time, this will help the NFA's expansion plans in the future."

Under the amended Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), the NFA is mandated to maintain 15 days worth of rice supply to sustain the government's disaster relief programs during natural or man-made calamities, and to address food security emergency situations. Rice should be sourced solely from farmers.

The NFA earlier said it had lined up a P10 billion modernization program to boost the national rice inventory and storage capacity, with focus on improving rice storage, building new rice mills and upgrading drying facilities.

These projects are expected to be operational by the end of next year, in time for the summer harvest of 2027. It will be funded by government budget allocations for 2024 and 2025.

The NFA is targeting to purchase 545,000 metric tons of palay to maintain a nine-day supply, and 880,000 MT to meet the new buffer stock requirement under the expanded RTL.

De Mesa also said the Jica funding would support partner cooperatives and associations to improve the overall rice value chain.

Jica hired Sanyu Consultants to determine the viability of conducting such projects. De Mesa said the DA delegation in Japan had met with the consultants to flesh out the details and find the best way forward.

<https://business.inquirer.net/512209/p11-b-jica-funding-sought-to-boost-palay-production>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Japan eyes boosting rice exports eightfold by 2030

Agence France-Presse / 11:23 AM March 13, 2025



(FILES) This file photo taken on November 22, 2024 shows bags of rice stacked in a supermarket in central Tokyo. The Japanese government said on February 14, 2025 it will release its stockpile of rice — the nation’s cherished staple food — reserved for emergency use in response to soaring prices. (Photo by Richard A. Brooks / AFP)

Tokyo, Japan — Japan wants to boost its rice exports almost eightfold by 2030, a ministry official said Thursday, despite currently suffering a domestic shortage of the grain.

The country’s rice consumption has more than halved over the past 60 years as diets have expanded to include more bread, noodles and other energy sources.

The new target is part of a long-term national policy to boost overseas shipments of the staple, and make farming it more efficient, especially as the ageing population shrinks.

“We plan to set a goal of 350,000 tonnes in 2030,” an objective likely to be approved by the cabinet this month, Masakazu Kawaguchi, an agriculture ministry official in charge of the rice trade, told AFP.

by Taboola

The target is 7.8 times the 2024 volume — around 45,000 tonnes — which was sold for 12 billion yen (\$81 million).

However, rice is in short supply at the moment.

This week the government began a rare auction of its emergency rice stockpiles in a bid to help drive down prices, which have nearly doubled over the past year.

The shortages have been driven by various factors, including poor harvests caused by hot weather and panic-buying prompted by a “megaquake” warning last summer.

Exacerbating the problem, some businesses are also thought to be keeping their inventories and waiting for the most opportune time to sell.

<https://business.inquirer.net/512346/japan-eyes-boosting-rice-exports-eightfold-by-2030>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Marcos to farmers: Build coops to raise agri practices, get full gov't aid

By: [Luisa Cabato](#) - Reporter / [@luisacabatoINQ](#)

INQUIRER.net / 11:31 AM March 13, 2025



A farmer is tilling a rice field in Santa Rosa, Nueva Ecija (File photo)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has urged a stronger partnership between the government and farmers' cooperatives to improve agricultural practices and to ensure they receive the support they need.

Speaking at the inauguration of the Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative (SIDC) Grains Terminal and Trading Project in Batangas on Thursday, the president emphasized the importance of forming cooperatives to ensure that concerns and sentiments are heard.

“If you are only one person, you have only one voice,” Marcos began his speech.

(If you are just one person, you have only one voice.)

“You build a cooperative – a cooperative that is working well together, that is managed well such as SIDC, and you will find na palaki nang palaki ang boses ng ating mga magsasaka, ng ating mga mangingisda,” he told the farmers.

(You build a cooperative – a cooperative that is working well together, that is managed well such as SIDC, and you will see that the voices of our farmers and fishermen grow louder.)

“Kapag ang kooperatiba natin ay matibay at [ay] buo ang suporta na natatanggap nila galing sa pamahalaan,” he explained.

(If our cooperatives are resilient, they receive full support from the government.)

“Kaya nananawagan po ako: Mas patatagin pa natin ang ugnayan sa pagitan ng pamahalaan at sa pribadong sektor kasama ang ating mga magsasaka,” Marcos said.

(That’s why I am calling for a stronger partnership between the government, the private sector and our farmers.)

“Dahil sa ating pagsasanib pwersa, nakita natin na posible palang na [marating ang] hangarin natin [na] mas matulungan pa ang ating mga kababayan,” he added.

(Through our combined efforts, we have seen that it is, indeed, possible to achieve our goal of providing greater support to our fellow citizens.)

Marcos also said the government plans to allocate funds for the farmers’ dryers, silos, warehouses, rice and corn mills, and other equipment the farmers will need and cooperatives.

“Paiigtingin din po natin ang mga proyektong magpapabuti sa irigasyon at patubig na gagamitin sa mga pump stations para sa mas matipid at epektibong daloy ng tubig sa mga bukirin,” he asked the audience.

(Let us strengthen projects aimed at improving irrigation and water systems that will be used in pump stations to bring thriftier and effective water supply for the farmlands.)

The SIDC Grains Terminal and Trading Project, founded in 1969, is one of the largest agri-based cooperatives in the Philippines.

It aims to improve market access, enhance production quality and ensure sustainable livelihoods for its members.

<https://business.inquirer.net/512345/marcos-to-farmers-build-coops-to-raise-agri-practices-get-full-govt-aid>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Dairy regulator to open 5 stock farms by April

March 13, 2025 | 9:23 pm



REUTERS

THE National Dairy Administration (NDA) said it plans to open five stock farms by April to help expand the dairy cattle herd.

Each of the stock farms will initially hold 50 head of dairy cattle, NDA administrator Marcos Antonius T. Andaya told reporters.

He said the NDA is awaiting the arrival of 600 head of cattle from Australia.

“The structures are nearing completion,” he said.

The five stock farm locations are General Tinio, Nueva Ecija; Ubay, Bohol; Malaybalay, Bukidnon; Carmen, Cotabato; and Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur.

Mr. Andaya said the NDA is also studying sites in Isabela and Palawan.

The dairy herd rose 56% to 156,000 animals in 2024, including cattle, carabaos, and goats.

Mr. Andaya said the NDA will partner with the private sector to put up nucleus farms to develop dairy animals that can deal with the Philippine climate.

Dairy production increased 11.31% to 32.39 million liters last year, bringing the milk self-sufficiency ratio to 1.66% from 0.8% a year earlier.

Philippine dairy imports rose 19.99% to 3,495.88 million liters.

The NDA has a self-sufficiency target of 2.5% this year, rising to 5% by 2028. — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/03/13/659279/dairy-regulator-to-open-5-stock-farms-by-april/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Palay farmgate price falls 18.9% in Feb.

March 13, 2025 | 9:23 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/KRIZ JOHN ROSALES

THE farmgate price of palay (unmilled rice) fell 18.9% year on year in February to an average of P20.29 per kilogram, after rice imports hit record levels last year.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said all regions except the Eastern Visayas reported falling prices on average in the 12 months to February.

Month on month, the palay farmgate price fell 1.9%, the PSA said in a report.

Only five of the 16 regions posted growth in average farmgate prices from a month earlier — the Ilocos Region, the Central Visayas, Soccsksargen, Caraga, and Bangsamoro.

The highest palay prices in February were posted in the Eastern Visayas, where they rose 4.7% year on year and 2.5% month on month to P24.18 per kilo.

The lowest palay prices were logged in Calabarzon at P17.34, with the farmgate price in the region falling 31.0% year on year and 0.4% month on month.

The Department of Agriculture in January said it was expecting the palay harvest to exceed 20 million metric tons (MT) this year.

In 2024, rice imports hit a record 4.68 million MT, against 3.6 million MT a year earlier. — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/03/13/659286/palay-farmgate-price-falls-18-9-in-feb/>

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.

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/>

THE MANILA TIMES:

An incubus to economic development

FINER POINTS



[By Fermin D. Adriano](#)

March 14, 2025

ITOTALLY agree that there is a need to form a congressional agricultural committee (AgriCom) that will conduct a high-level study on how to promote the development of the Philippine agricultural sector, as suggested by former socioeconomic planning secretary Cielito Habito, a good friend of mine who also hails from Los Baños.

This is similar to the congressional education committee, which conducted a thorough analysis of the many challenges that confront our educational sector and came out with solid prescriptions on how to address them.

Just like our educational sector, which is in crisis, Philippine agriculture is in a deep rut. The unequivocal proof of this is that the country imports practically all key agricultural commodities that are indispensable in attaining food security. Worse, commodities where the Philippines was formerly an export leader have become part of the growing list of our imports. Among these are sugar, coconut and even fish, despite the country having a coastal area longer than the United States.

Also making for a rude awakening is that our banana exports have been overtaken by Vietnam based on reports last week. Inter-viewed by some reporters, I told them that we anticipated this even before Covid-19 outbreak in 2020 and cited three main reasons.

One, during the pre-Covid years, China was busy constructing a rail system that would pass through Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Thai-land and end in Vietnam. China's goal was to buy agricultural products from these Mekong River-traversed countries so as to ensure its food security. We knew then that the completion of the railway would reduce transport and logistics costs of bringing agricultural products from those countries to mainland China.

Two, our local banana industry was already suffering from the outbreak of Panama disease or fusarium wilt. Just like the African swine fever that hit our hog industry hard, we also knew that it was just a matter of time before the banana disease spread. And it did quite rapidly, particularly in small banana farms. The simple reason is that smallholder banana growers have difficulties in adopting biosecurity measures against fusarium wilt because the cost can prove exorbitant.

At the same time, the Department of Agriculture (DA) has a very limited budget for banana research as over half of its funds is de-voted to rice. The agency and our policymakers are so obsessed with attaining rice self-sufficiency that they forgot that there are other agricultural commodities that can give farmers higher incomes. Also, their thinking was that since the banana industry was mostly in the hands of the private sector, it would be capable of funding the needed research.

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I agree with Habito that the disappointing performance of our agricultural sector for almost half a century now serves as an incubus to attaining higher economic growth. Data shows that for over 20 years, the average yearly contribution to overall inflation of food and nonalcoholic beverages is more than 42 percent. (There are 11 items considered when calculating the consumer price index.) Simply put, if our agricultural policymakers are able to manage our food inflation better, overall inflation will be halved annually.

High food prices have pernicious impacts on the welfare of our people. It has resulted in widespread malnutrition and a scandal-ously high incidence of stunting among children 0–5 years old. Almost 29 percent of Filipino kids in this age group are considered stunted. In turn, malnutrition and the high incidence

of stunting have had a lasting impact on learning capabilities, because 90 percent of an individual's brain is developed during the formative years of 0–5 years old. It is no wonder that Filipino kids suffer from serious learning poverty.

In one of his speeches, current Socioeconomic Secretary Arsenio Balisacan — another previous colleague at Los Baños — declared that the way to develop the agricultural sector was to promote the growth of agri-processing. Firms engaged in agri-processing will generate greater value for our agricultural products, generate more jobs and provide greater income to rural folks. Developing the downstream industries in the agricultural sector is the way to go and indeed, Balisacan is correct on this matter. However, there is a major bottleneck that impedes the further growth and development of our agri-processing industry.

Being an adjunct professor at UP Los Baños, I am still active in conducting studies on agricultural economics and agribusiness projects. I am currently engaged in one that attempts to promote the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) involved in agri-processing. The firms we are examining are engaged in the processing of high-value crops like cacao, coffee, durian, pili, etc.

Across these high-value commodities, the SMEs' common complaint is that further expansion is seriously impeded by the lack of adequate supply and quality raw materials. In turn, this problem can be attributed to low farm productivity, which is beyond their scope to address.

The immediate conclusion one can make is that throughout the years, our agricultural sector has been badly mismanaged as shown by the low productivity across agricultural commodities. Outside of the much-discussed and praised "green revolution" in rice in the late 1960s and early 1970s, there has never been any successful productivity-enhancement programs conducted for non-rice commodities.

Which leads one to ask: What has DA done through all these years to raise farm productivity after all the billions, even trillions, of funds devoted to the agency? Is it about time that we form, just like in the US under President Trump, a DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency)-like office to radically streamline the operations of the DA toward attaining better results and efficiency and greater accountability?

This is an area that the proposed AgriCom should be tackling.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/03/14/business/top-business/an-incubus-to-economic-development/2072940>

MANILA STANDARD:

Marcos opens P270-m grain terminal in Batangas to support local farmers

NewsNational



President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. delivers a speech at the inauguration of the Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative (SIDC) Grains Terminal & Trading Project in Batangas City on March 13, 2025. (Courtesy: RTVM/Screenshot)



By [Charles Dantes](#)

March 13, 2025, 1:30 pm

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Thursday inaugurated the Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative (SIDC) Grains Terminal and Trading Project, a facility aimed at strengthening the country's feed supply and supporting local farmers.

Speaking at the event in Batangas City, Mr. Marcos praised the collaboration between SIDC, the Batangas City government, the Department of Agriculture (DA), and the World Bank, which funded the P270-million project.

The terminal features two silos capable of storing 12,000 metric tons of corn, ensuring a steady supply of feed for livestock and poultry farmers.

“Through this, the storage of our corn will be more organized. Our support for the poultry and livestock industries will be stronger. And above all, our farmers and entrepreneurs will have guaranteed income—not only here in Batangas, but throughout Calabarzon,” Mr. Marcos said.

The president highlighted the importance of cooperatives in agricultural development, calling SIDC a model for other farmer groups. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to organizing and supporting cooperatives to give farmers a stronger voice in the industry.

“If you are alone, you have only one voice. But a cooperative that is well-managed and supported, like SIDC, amplifies the voices of farmers and fishers,” he said.

President Marcos also outlined plans to provide more post-harvest facilities, irrigation projects, and modern equipment, such as dryers and warehouses, to enhance productivity and reduce food waste.

He directed the DA to work closely with the Cooperative Development Authority to strengthen farmer cooperatives nationwide.

“Our goal is to increase production by introducing modern technology and ensuring that farmers have the support they need to bring their products to market efficiently,” he said.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314568166/marcos-opens-p270-m-grain-terminal-in-batangas-to-support-local-farmers.html>

REMATE:

P600M bulok na karne nasabat sa Bulacan warehouse

March 13, 2025 09:55



MANILA, Philippines – Nasamsam ng mga awtoridad ang humigit-kumulang P600 milyon na halaga ng expired na frozen meat mula sa isang cold storage warehouse sa Meycauayan, Bulacan.

Sa pagsalakay ng National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), nadiskubre ang mga nabubulok at inaamag na imported meat na hindi na ligtas kainin.

Ayon sa isang impormante, nire-reprocess ng kompanya ang expired na karne—ang ilan ay mula pa noong 2020—sa pamamagitan ng pagpapalit ng expiration dates at paggawa ng siomai at hotdog gamit ang mga panis na produkto.

Kinumpirma ng NBI na ang ilan sa karne ay may amag, itim na batik, at inu-uod na.

Itinanggi ng legal representative ng kompanya ang mga paratang, ngunit inutos na ng NBI ang agarang pagtatapon ng mga nakumpiskang karne. Nahaharap ang kompanya sa posibleng kaso sa ilalim ng

Consumer Act at Food Security Act. *RNT*

<https://remate.ph/p600m-bulok-na-karne-nasabat-sa-bulacan-warehouse/>