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**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Inflation dip affirms DA's efforts to stabilize food prices, says Laurel

BY [DEXTER BARRO II](#)

Mar 5, 2025 03:23 PM

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## AT A GLANCE

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Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel said the slower inflation in February is a clear affirmation that the agency's strategy to stabilize the supply and prices of agricultural products is working as intended.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that the inflation rate last month dropped to 2.1 percent, a significant decrease from January's 2.9 percent.

Slower price increases in food and beverage were credited for the sharp decline.

In a statement on Wednesday, March 5, Laurel said the DA's efforts to lower food prices to reasonable levels, while ensuring minimal industry disruptions, played a crucial role in inflation easing down.

"We will continue to engage with the various stakeholders in the agriculture sector as we refine our approach to ensuring food security in the country," he added.

During Wednesday's press briefing, Deputy National Statistician Divina Gracia del Prado cited the implementation of the maximum suggested retail price (MSRP) on imported rice for the decline in rice prices.

The MSRP, introduced to Metro Manila and other urban centers in January, was launched by the DA to ensure that rice remains affordable for consumers while maintaining the profitability of the rice industry.

Originally set at ₱58 per kilo, the MSRP was lowered to ₱49 last week as world market prices remain stable. Del Prado also pointed to the DA's declaration of a food security emergency on rice for the stable prices of the commodity.

Under the declaration, the National Food Authority (NFA) is authorized to release buffer stocks to local government units (LGUs) and other government agencies which would then sell rice for as low as ₱33 per kilo.

Additionally, the Rice-for-All (RFA) program under the Kadiwa ng Pangulo (KNP) was deemed instrumental in softening rice prices.

Last month, the DA lowered the prices of rice sold through KNP stores by as much as ₱3 per kilo.

Initially, RFA5 or the rice with no more than five percent broken grain was priced at ₱45 per kilo; RFA25 or the 25 percent broken at ₱38; and RFA100 or the 100 percent broken at ₱36.

RFA5 rice was then lowered to ₱43 per kilo, RFA25 at ₱35, and RFA100 at ₱33.

The KNP program simultaneously offer rice available at ₱29 per kilo, which is available for the country's vulnerable sectors.

Setting sights on another price-easing policy, Del Prado suggested that a similar MSRP scheme on pork could have the same effect on meat prices.

"We expect that if an MSRP is implemented—and given all other things constant—it could slow down inflation on pork, even resulting in negative inflation," she said.

The Agriculture Secretary is scheduled to meet with pork industry players this Thursday to discuss the potential implementation of an MSRP on pork.

This is a fresh development as Laurel told reporters last month that pork producers, traders, and retailers expressed opposition to a proposed price cap.

He earlier said that he would abide by this request once the pork industry, as a whole, agrees to offer “better prices” for consumers.

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<https://mb.com.ph/2025/3/5/inflation-dip-affirms-da-s-efforts-to-stabilize-food-prices-says-laurel>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Farmers urged to dry their harvests to boost earnings

BY [DEXTER BARRO II](#)

Mar 5, 2025 02:20 PM

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The National Food Authority (NFA) is urging farmers to spend more time and effort into drying their harvests, as it emphasized how this could significantly increase their earnings.

As the Philippines is transitioning into dry season, farmers are told to take advantage of the blistering weather to thoroughly dry their *palay* or unmilled rice.

While drying *palay* may take a couple more days and an extra cost of roughly ₱1 per kilo, the NFA said the rewards are “substantial” for farmers.

In a statement on Wednesday, March 5, NFA Administrator Larry Lacson said farmers can expect an additional net income of ₱4 per kilo.

For instance, a farmer harvesting five tons per hectare could net an extra ₱20,000, he said.

Lacson’s appeal comes as the NFA raised the buying price for wet *palay* to ₱18 per kilo and dry *palay* to ₱24 per kilo.

Local rice millers are reported to pay as little as ₱15 per kilo for wet *palay*, and ₱20 to ₱22 per kilo for dry *palay*.

Aside from potentially boosting their earnings, Lacson said once farmers invest more time into drying their harvests, they could help aid the country in meeting its growing rice supply demands.

The NFA aims to purchase 880,000 metric tons (MT) of *palay* this year to meet the rice buffer stock requirement that is equivalent to 15 days of national consumption, as prescribed under the amended Rice Tariffication Law (RTL).

The agency has a procurement budget of about ₱14 billion this year, including ₱5 billion carried over from last year’s budget.

As it prepares to keep up with the stock requirement, the NFA has been ramping up its rice milling operations, expanding warehouse capacity, and investing in new trucks to improve procurement efforts.

Lacson earlier urged participating local government units (LGUs) to expedite their procurement of rice stocks as part of the mandate under the food security emergency on rice.

The NFA is accelerating the decongestion of its warehouses as the harvest season nears.

Last month, the Department of Agriculture (DA) declared a food security emergency on rice as prices of the staple food remain high. Under this, the NFA is authorized to release rice buffer stocks to help stabilize prices.

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<https://mb.com.ph/2025/3/5/farmers-urged-to-dry-their-harvests-to-boost-earnings>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Philippines set to secure record \$1-billion World Bank loan for agriculture

BY [DEXTER BARRO II](#)

Mar 5, 2025 02:17 PM

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The Philippines is expected to sign in July a record-high \$1-billion loan agreement (over ₱57 billion) from the World Bank to fund its sustainable agricultural transformation program, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

In a statement, the DA said Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel held a dialogue with World Bank Country Director Zafer Mustafaoğlu last month to review the deal's progress.

Mustafaoğlu, according to the agency, reaffirmed the bank's commitment to provide funding for the Philippine Sustainable Agricultural Transformation (PSAT) loan program.

A document published on the World Bank's website indicated that PSAT is projected to cost \$20 billion (over ₱1.1 trillion), of which the Philippine government would shoulder the \$11.895 billion (over ₱683 billion) out of the \$12.8975 billion (over ₱741 billion) operation cost.

With the World Bank's \$1-billion funding, this means that there would be a financing gap of \$2.5 million. The Washington-based multilateral lender disclosed last year that its board is scheduled to approve the loan on June 5 of this year.

The signing between both parties is planned for July. While the DA did not provide a specific date, it noted that it should coincide with the fourth State of the Nation Address (SONA) of President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr.

Once signed, PSAT would mark the Philippines' first project under the World Bank's Program-for-Results (PforR) financing framework.

The Department of Finance (DOF), the agency responsible for the financial resources of the government, shall borrow on behalf of the DA—the project's implementing agency.

PSAT, which will span five years of operations, is set to launch in August.

The DA-led program aims to significantly boost the country's agri-fishery sector through "targeted support" to agri-food systems, including climate-responsive strategies, policy reforms, diversification, and enhanced fiscal management.

"PSAT aims to improve the efficiency of government spending while ensuring sustainable outcomes by building institutional capacity and strengthening governance," the agency said.

During Laurel's meeting with Mustafaoğlu, they also discussed the \$15-million grant funded by the United Kingdom (UK) under the Technical Assistance for Sustainable Agricultural Transformation (TASAT).

TASAT will support the DA's implementation of PSAT by enhancing internal audits, evaluating resource use alternatives, assessing sectoral transformation, and expanding the availability of improved planting materials for high-value crops.

The supplementary funding will be endorsed by the DOF and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) through the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC).

The DA chief assured that the agency will continue to collaborate with the World Bank to ensure the timely execution of PSAT.

"This multiyear loan from the World Bank will provide us with the critical resources needed to advance the government's food security agenda and promote sustainable agriculture," said Laurel.

He added that PSAT shall bring forward key development in areas that will help uplift the lives of millions of Filipinos who depend on farming and fishery.

During the project's concept stage review in December of last year, it received an overall rating of "substantial" under the World Bank's systematic operations risk rating tool system (SORT).

The rating was based on certain risks the bank is concerned about, particularly with the program's technical design, sector strategies and policies, fiduciary, and environment and social issues.

The World Bank has vowed to work closely with the Philippine government to mitigate these risks throughout the program's implementation, alongside guiding and advising as necessary.

The Philippines was once again ranked as the World Bank's fifth biggest borrower last year, receiving a total of \$2.35 billion across four loans from the period of July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024.

<https://mb.com.ph/2025/3/5/ph-set-to-sign-record-1-b-world-bank-loan-in-july>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Rice, pork prices to drop this month—Palace

BY [ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS](#)

Mar 5, 2025 12:49 PM

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## AT A GLANCE

- The price of DT8 rice is expected to drop from P49 to P45 by March 31.
- The price of pork kasim and pigue will drop to between P350 and P360 per kilo by March 10 .
- Liempo, on the other hand, will be reduced to P380 per kilo.

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Filipinos will be able to save a few pesos as Malacañang announced the expected drop in the prices of rice and pork in the market this month.



*Photos by Santi San Juan/Manila Bulletin*

Citing a meeting with Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel, Palace Press Officer and Communications Undersecretary Claire Castro said the price of Dai Thom 8 (DT8) rice is expected to drop from P49 to P45 by March 31.

Meanwhile, the price of pork kasim and pigue will drop by March 10 to between P350 and P360 per kilo. Liempo, on the other hand, will be reduced to P380 per kilo.

In a press briefing on Wednesday, March 5, Castro said the decrease in the price of rice is due to the drop in the world price.

"Kung noon po ay may halaga po na pumapalo sa \$700 to \$740 per ton. Ngayon po ay bumaba, kung hindi po tayo nagkakamali, ay parang bumaba po sa \$400 or lesser, \$380 per ton (If before the price was hitting \$700 to \$740 per ton, now it has gone down—if we're not mistaken—it seems to have dropped to \$400 or less, \$380 per ton)," she said.

"Isa lamang po 'yan sa nakikita po nating dahilan para bumaba ang presyo ng bigas (That is just one of the reasons behind the drop in the price of rice)," she added.

Castro explained that the price drop applies to DT8 rice, a high-quality, fragrant variety developed and cultivated in Vietnam. She, however, said that the 504 rice—which is also from Vietnam but is said to cook dry, fluffy, spongy, less fragrant, and can harden when it cools down—is cheaper at \$400 per ton.

"Kaya lang po ang karamihan daw sa mga Pilipino ay mas gusto nila yung mas mahal na uri, yung DT8 (However, the said Filipinos prefer the more expensive variety, the DT8)," she said.

"Yun daw po talaga ang mas hinihingi ng consumers natin (That is what they said our consumers wanted more)," she added.

Meanwhile, Castro said she would consult again with Secretary Laurel as to the reason behind the drop in the price of pork.

<https://mb.com.ph/2025/3/5/rice-pork-prices-to-drop>



**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# DA declares Camarines Norte free of bird flu

[Dominique Nicole Flores](#) - Philstar.com

March 5, 2025 | 5:55pm



**Avian influenza tumama sa Camarines Norte** This photograph shows ducks in the force-feeding room at a duck fattening workshop in Pouillon, southwestern France, on September 6, 2022.

AFP / Gaizka Iroz

MANILA, Philippines — Camarines Norte is now free of bird flu, the Department of Agriculture (DA) announced on Wednesday, March 5, after efforts to contain the highly infectious disease.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the province regained its avian influenza-free status following control measures implemented by local authorities.

A case of bird flu, subtype H5N2, was detected in a backyard duck farm in Talisay in December 2024. In January, the World Organization for Animal Health said the virus was detected in 15 out of 428 backyard ducks in the province.

In response, the provincial government culled affected poultry, disinfected the area, imposed movement restrictions, and enhanced surveillance, in line with the Avian Influenza Protection Program.

The DA said laboratory testing with RT-PCR was conducted within a one- and seven-kilometer radius of the affected farm and returned negative results for bird flu.

After 28 days with no new cases — following culling and disinfection — the province met the World Organization for Animal Health’s criteria for avian influenza-free status.

“Camarines Norte’s swift and effective disease management has not only prevented further spread but also restored confidence in the province’s poultry industry and reinforced public trust in local food security,” the DA said in a statement.

Avian flu has been detected worldwide, prompting the DA to temporarily ban bird imports from affected countries, such as [New Zealand](#) in early January.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/03/05/2426140/da-declares-camarines-norte-free-bird-flu>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# ‘Vietnam overtaking Philippines as China’s top banana supplier long expected’

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

March 6, 2025 | 12:00am



**Exactly how long? About eight years, says a former ranking official of the Department of Agriculture.**

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines losing its crown as the top banana supplier to China was a long time coming.

Exactly how long? About eight years, says a former ranking official of the Department of Agriculture.

Former agriculture undersecretary Fermin Adriano said the DA had expected that Vietnam would dislodge the Philippines as the top banana supplier to China as early as 2017.

“We knew that it was just a matter of time that the so-called former Indochina countries would overtake us in banana production,” Adriano said in a recent interview on One News’ “The Big Story.”

Adriano, who served as the DA’s undersecretary for policy and planning during the tail end of the Duterte administration, pointed out two main factors that contributed to the fall of the Philippines’ share in the China banana market.

First, he cited the construction of a rail project that connected China and Vietnam, resulting in faster transportation and reduction of the cost of goods. Because of this, Adriano pointed out, bananas from Vietnam exported to China became cheaper than those coming from the Philippines.

Second, Adriano pointed out the impact of the Panama disease on the Philippine banana industry, noting that production, particularly those of small growers, has been “hit hard.”

The STAR broke the story earlier this week that Vietnam has upended the Philippines’ 20-year rule as the top supplier of bananas to China.

International Trade Centre (ITC) data showed that Vietnam – for the first time – overtook the Philippines as China’s top supplier of bananas last year.

China imported a record-high 625,166 metric tons of bananas from Vietnam while its purchase from the Philippines stood at 463,306 MT, the lowest volume in over a decade.

Adriano said losing the top supplier spot in China banana market could have been prevented if the country had poured in “heavy” investments in research that would help the local industry fight the Panama disease outbreak.

Consolidating small banana farms to achieve economies of scale and be able to apply biosafety measures to prevent the incursion of Panama disease should have also been done in the country, Adriano added.

“The government needs to encourage farm clustering. It does not necessarily mean consolidation of land ownership but it is just consolidation for the purposes of production instead of individual farmers doing their own thing,” he said.

Vietnam has been eroding the Philippines’ share in China’s robust banana market, which imports about 1.8 million MT of bananas annually.

From a peak of 70 percent share in 2017, the Philippines now accounts for only 27.47 percent of China’s banana imports, based on ITC data.

Vietnam now accounts for 37.06 percent of China’s banana imports – a surge from a share of just one percent 10 years ago.

China is one of the Philippines’ top three markets for bananas. It used to be the Philippines’ top market for bananas in 2018 and 2019, thanks to warmer relations between the two countries during the Duterte administration.

However, China has been relegated to the second largest banana market for the Philippines since 2020 due to the economic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and persisting domestic production challenges.

In recent years, the rising geopolitical tensions in the West Philippines Sea have also impacted Filipino banana growers, with China further cutting back on its purchases of the country’s prized commodity, industry players confirmed.

The Pilipino Banana Growers and Exporters Association (PBGEA) earlier emphasized that the geopolitical issues compound the persisting and worsening production woes that the local banana industry is facing, particularly with the continued spread of Fusarium Wilt, commonly known as Panama disease.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/03/06/2426160/vietnam-overtaking-philippines-chinas-top-banana-supplier-long-expected>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Inflation sharply eases to lowest in 5 months

**Louella Desiderio** - The Philippine Star

March 6, 2025 | 12:00am



Deputy National Statistician Divina Gracia del Prado said in a press conference yesterday that headline inflation – the rate of increase in average prices of goods and services typically purchased by Filipino consumers – slowed to 2.1 percent in February from January’s 2.9 percent and the 3.4 percent in the same month last year.

STAR / Michael Varcas

MANILA, Philippines — Inflation in February eased to its lowest level in five months due mainly to the slower increases in food prices, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Deputy National Statistician Divina Gracia del Prado said in a press conference yesterday that headline inflation – the rate of increase in average prices of goods and services typically purchased by Filipino consumers – slowed to 2.1 percent in February from January’s 2.9 percent and the 3.4 percent in the same month last year.

The February inflation is the lowest since the 1.9 percent print in September last year.

It is also below the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas’ 2.2 to three percent forecast for February.

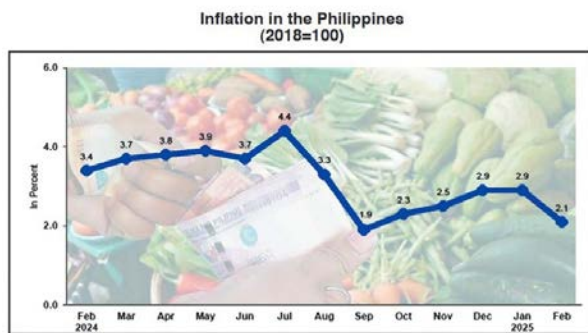
Del Prado cited food and non-alcoholic beverages as the main driver of the downward trend in inflation as it posted a slower annual increment at 2.6 percent in February from 3.8 percent in the previous month.

Inflation for food alone eased to 2.6 percent in February from the previous month’s four percent.

This was primarily due to vegetables, tubers, plantains, cooking bananas and pulses, which had a slower inflation of 7.1 percent in February from the previous month’s 21.1 percent.

Rice also contributed to the slower food inflation as it registered a sharper deflation of 4.9 percent in February from 2.3 percent in January.

Since July 2024, rice prices have been decreasing on a month-on-month basis amid easing international prices and reduced tariffs.



Also contributing to the downtrend in inflation was the housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels commodity group, which had a slower increase of 1.6 percent in February from a 2.2-percent uptick in January.

Another driver of the lower inflation was the transport commodity group, which posted a 0.2-percent decline in February from a 1.1-percent increase in the previous month.

Average inflation for the January to February period was at 2.5 percent, within the government’s two to four percent target.

While inflation continued to slow down in February, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) said the government would continue to ensure sufficient supply of commodities, while steadily increasing agricultural productivity.

“The government will sustain its efforts to keep inflation low and manageable to protect the purchasing power of Filipinos. As we expect six to 13 typhoons to develop from March to August 2025, the Department of Agriculture will implement the La Niña action plan to restore agricultural productive capacity in areas likely to be affected by continuous rainfall, flooding and landslides,” NEDA Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said.

“The action plan includes water management, financial assistance and credit support and a massive information campaign on La Niña,” he said further.

To mitigate the effect of rising fuel prices on farmers, the Agriculture department implemented the Fuel Assistance to Farmers Project.

As of Jan. 28, 74.3 percent of the targeted beneficiaries for 2023 have received fuel assistance cards.

The NEDA said 54.1 percent of the targeted beneficiaries have been processed for funding last year.

Last month, President Marcos signed Executive Order (EO) 83, which grants real property tax relief to independent power producers operating under Build-Operate-Transfer contracts with government-owned or -controlled corporations.

The EO is seen to help ensure stable electricity supply.

In the livestock industry, measures to address the African Swine Fever are being accelerated with the DA-Bureau of Animal Industry advised to speed up the collection of post-vaccination results from 28 hog farms and quickly submit the analysis to the Food and Drug Administration to hasten the product registration for the commercial use of the vaccine.

The NEDA also cited the Department of Science and Technology’s Brisk Response through In-location Diagnostics and Genomic Sequencing System for Animal Disease Testing and Vaccine Research Project to be completed in August 2026.

“The downward trend in headline inflation indicates that our efforts to combat inflationary pressures are working. However, we will not be complacent in addressing causes of commodity price increases, particularly for food, to help uplift the lives of poor and vulnerable Filipino families, especially,” Balisacan said.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/03/06/2426162/inflation-sharply-eases-lowest-5-months>



**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# DA chief says no rice cartel, blames past administrations

**Bella Cariaso** - The Philippine Star

March 6, 2025 | 12:00am



At the same time, Tiu Laurel said there is no rice cartel amid the high retail price of the staple, despite the implementation of Executive Order No. 62, which lowered the tariff on imported grains to 15 percent from the previous 35 percent.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. yesterday blamed past administrations for current woes in the agriculture sector, saying no major investment was made in the past 40 years.

“The main fault of previous administrations was they failed to invest in irrigation and post-harvest for rice and corn with scale to solve the problem,” he said.

Tiu Laurel stressed that it was only during the administration of President Marcos when the government started to invest in the farm sector.

At the same time, Tiu Laurel said there is no rice cartel amid the high retail price of the staple, despite the implementation of Executive Order No. 62, which lowered the tariff on imported grains to 15 percent from the previous 35 percent.

“The industry is quite fragmented to have a cartel, only profiteering of some importers and retailers,” Tiu Laurel noted.

“Cartel means many (traders) are conniving to set prices. But even in the market level, we monitored different prices in a market so there was no standard pricing. In the intercity, each importer sells at different prices,” he added.

The agriculture secretary was forced to implement a maximum suggested retail price (SRP) on rice and declare a food security emergency to bring down the retail price of the staple.

Initially set at P58 per kilo on Jan. 20, the rice max SRP decreased to P55 per kilo on Feb. 5, P52 per kilo on Feb. 15, up to the current P49 per kilo.

According to Tiu Laurel, the target of P45 per kilo max SRP is still achievable by end-March.

“The price of rice in the world market is going down and the peso is going strong so our plan is, if this trend continues, by March 31, we can bring down the max SRP on imported rice for five percent broken to P45,” he said.

Commenting on the matter, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas chairman Danilo Ramos said that Tiu Laurel's statement on the absence of a cartel emboldens traders involved in profiteering.

"The soaring prices of rice, onions and other basic goods despite ample supply are undeniable proof of market manipulation by powerful syndicates," Ramos said.

Ramos added that market manipulation harms both producers and consumers, leading to artificial shortages and inflated prices.

"The quinta committee focused on top importers because there were clear signs of speculation in the rice import market, such as swelling commercial inventories, delays in withdrawals by importers and imports surpassing United States Department of Agriculture projections," he said.

### **'Sell palay to NFA'**

To avoid being shortchanged by unscrupulous traders, National Food Authority Administrator Larry Lacson on Wednesday asked farmers to dry their palay and sell them to the NFA instead.

Lacson said farmers should take advantage of the dry, hot weather to thoroughly dry their palay.

He said that while drying the harvest may take a few additional days and an extra cost of P1 per kilo, the rewards are substantial.

"That's a net additional income of P4 per kilo. For example, a farmer harvesting five tons per hectare could net an extra P20,000," Lacson said.

According to the NFA chief, farmers should invest a little more time and effort into drying their harvests, stressing that this simple step could significantly boost their earnings and help meet the country's growing rice demands.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/03/06/2426227/da-chief-says-no-rice-cartel-blames-past-administrations>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Government vows sustained efforts to tame inflation

[Alexis Romero](#) - The Philippine Star

March 6, 2025 | 12:00am



Retail prices of pork have reached as high as P460 per kilo.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang yesterday assured the public that the government would sustain efforts to keep inflation manageable.

“According to the National Economic and Development Authority, the lower inflation rate is an indication that the measures of the government against inflationary pressures are effective. The agency will work to keep the inflation rate low and to respond to the possible increase in the prices of commodities,” Presidential Communications Undersecretary Claire Castro said at a press briefing.

The Philippine Statistics Authority reported that inflation slowed further to 2.1 percent in February, down from 2.9 percent in January, marking a continued downward trend that signals improved economic conditions.

Speaker Martin Romualdez lauded the continued drop in inflation, saying it reflects the success of President Marcos’ economic team in stabilizing prices and protecting the purchasing power of Filipinos.

“We know how tough the past few years have been, but the numbers don’t lie – inflation is going down and our economy is getting stronger,” Romualdez said.

The Speaker gave assurance that the government remains committed to sustaining this momentum and ensuring that inflation continues to decline, translating to more financial relief for households.

He encouraged all sectors to continue supporting government initiatives aimed at enhancing food security, maintaining energy stability and generating jobs.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, chairman of the House committee on ways and means, personally believes this is a “sign that we can continue with our rate cuts and we can pursue a more aggressive expansionary stance on the fiscal side.”

He noted that aside from low inflation, the “better news is that rice prices declined by almost five percent year-on-year.”



However, he underscored the need for more ports and cheaper inter-island trade.

“We should look at repealing the provisions of the Cabotage Law which prohibits foreign shipping companies from serving Philippine inter-island trade,” he said.

“We should also look at our rapidly deteriorating fish capture sector and see how we can make this more sustainable through aquaculture,” Salceda said.

“Before the administration ends, we must meaningfully start the High Standard Highway Network program to create a road transport backbone for the country. Bicol rail must also be financed,” he proposed.

### **Lower pork prices seen**

A drop of P20 per kilo in the retail price of pork is expected ahead of the implementation of the maximum suggested retail price (SRP) on the farm commodity, the Department of Agriculture said yesterday.

At a press conference, DA spokesman Arnel de Mesa said that lower retail price of pork is expected as hog raisers agreed to bring down the farmgate price.

“The farmgate price already decreased, from as high as P250 to P260 (per kilo), now we are seeing P220, P230 maximum farmgate price. That alone will contribute to the P10 to P20 per kilo drop in the production level,” De Mesa said.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said he is eyeing the implementation of P360 and P380 per kilo max SRP on pork shoulder and pork belly, respectively, after a meeting with retailers today.

De Mesa said the max SRP on pork will be implemented gradually, just like the max SRP on rice.

He added that local pork production also improved amid the drop in the cases of African swine fever.

Based on monitoring of the DA in Metro Manila markets, the retail price of pork shoulder ranged between P350 and P420 per kilo and pork belly, P375 to P480 per kilo. – **Jose Rodel Clapano, Delon**

**Porcalla, Bella Cariaso**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/03/06/2426231/government-vows-sustained-efforts-tame-inflation>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Schools advised to adjust class schedules amid intense heat

[Neil Jayson Servallos](#) - The Philippine Star

March 6, 2025 | 12:00am



Photo shows a student at a Quezon City school using a handkerchief to shield himself from the sun.

Michael Varcas

MANILA, Philippines — Public schools affected by intense heat should adjust class schedules or adopt remote learning measures, the Department of Education said yesterday.

The DepEd rejected proposals for automatic class suspensions when the state weather bureau projects dangerous heat levels as this was beyond existing policies. Instead, schools will follow the mandate of local chief executives to suspend classes in such scenarios.

If suspensions occur, Education Secretary Sonny Angara said schools would shift to alternative learning performance-based tasks or make-up classes to ensure that learning competencies are still met.

“In case there is no automatic suspension of classes and in the absence of a declaration from the LGU, DepEd’s policy also allows school heads and ALS coordinators to suspend in-person classes if excessive heat poses health risks to students and teachers,” Angara said.

Offices and schools are instructed to prepare and use self-learning modules and Dynamic Learning Program tools in case of shift to alternative delivery mode or ADM.

Angara said schools have been advised to conduct morning sessions from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and allow asynchronous sessions from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Afternoon classes may be held from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

He added that additional rest and hydration breaks should be implemented, especially in non air-conditioned classrooms.

“We are deeply concerned about our learners’ and teachers’ safety. We are closely coordinating with our field offices to assess the situation in schools and determine the best course of action given the extreme heat,” Angara said.

DepEd also stressed the importance of keeping classrooms well-ventilated by opening windows, removing obstructions that restrict airflow and installing additional fans and cooling devices.

Apart from these, schools were reminded that students should not be doing outdoor activities during the peak of heat, ensure access to potable water and provide first aid kits and cooling packs.

## **Easterlies to bring rain**

Easterlies are forecast to bring heavy rains and thunderstorms to parts of Mindanao, including the Davao region, Soccsargen and the provinces of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, while Metro Manila and most of

the country can expect generally fair weather with possible localized thunderstorms, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

The state weather bureau reported that there are currently no low-pressure areas or storms within or near the Philippine area of responsibility.

However, the northern parts of Northern Luzon, including Batanes and the Babuyan Islands, are expected to experience heavy rains and thunderstorms due to the effects of the shear line.

Provinces like Cagayan, Isabela and Aurora should also brace for possible heavy downpours and isolated thunderstorms.

Meanwhile, Ilocos Norte and Apayao will likely have improved weather with only light rainshowers.

Metro Manila and other parts of the country will continue to experience warm temperatures with occasional localized thunderstorms. Temperature forecasts for key areas remain varied: Metro Manila will range from 24 to 34 degrees Celsius, Baguio from 17 to 27 degrees Celsius, Legazpi from 25 to 30 degrees Celsius, Puerto Princesa 26 to 32 degrees Celsius and 24 to 31 degrees Celsius in Davao.

For the next three days, Metro Manila and Baguio are expected to experience partly cloudy to cloudy skies with localized thunderstorms.

Due to the influence of the approaching storm system, light rains are possible on Sunday. Eastern Luzon, including Legazpi, should prepare for heavy rains and possible flooding through the weekend.

In the Visayas, fair weather conditions are forecast for Metro Cebu and Iloilo City until Sunday, with localized thunderstorms expected. Tacloban City will see fair weather until Friday before rains pick up over the weekend.

Mindanao's weather remains unstable, with the Davao region seeing continuous heavy rains and thunderstorms from Friday to Sunday.

Cagayan de Oro and Zamboanga City can expect relatively fair weather before the weekend brings increased chances of rain and storms.

### **Health-related illness**

Amid the scorching temperature, Filipinos can immediately seek treatment for heat-related illnesses without worrying about medical costs, Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) president Edwin Mercado said yesterday.

He gave assurance that they are extending coverage for heat-related diseases like heat stroke or heat exhaustion. "If the patient fainted and lost consciousness because of heat fatigue, we have coverage worth P12,675," Mercado said.

He said PhilHealth also has existing health packages for dengue, emergency services and congenital heart disease, among others.

### **DA interventions**

The Department of Agriculture has put in place the necessary interventions amid the expected impact of the dry season on the agriculture sector, according to DA spokesman Arnel de Mesa.

"We have prepared (necessary measures) on how to deal with extreme heat and we have already submitted it to the Presidential Communications Office," De Mesa said at a press conference.

De Mesa added that the impact of the dry season this year is expected to be less compared to damage in 2024. "Last year, the impact (on the agriculture sector) was big because of the El Niño as there was no rain. Unlike now, despite the extreme heat, we still expect rainfall," he said. – **Christine Boton, Bella Cariaso, Mayen Jaymalin, Emmanuel Tupas**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/03/06/2426239/schools-advised-adjust-class-schedules-amid-intense-heat>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Villar bats for first border facility vs swine fever

**Marc Jayson Cayabyab, Bella Cariaso** - The Philippine Star

March 6, 2025 | 12:00am



Sen. Cynthia Villar proposed that the fund be sourced from tariff collections on imported livestock, poultry and dairy to help farmers recover from the effects of ASF and bird flu.

AFP, File

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Cynthia Villar has called for the construction of a first border facility to control the spread of African swine fever (ASF).

Villar – chair of the Senate agriculture, food and agrarian reform committee – said the Senate has passed her proposal to establish a livestock, poultry and dairy industry development and competitiveness fund.

She proposed that the fund be sourced from tariff collections on imported livestock, poultry and dairy to help farmers recover from the effects of ASF and bird flu.

“There is a need to rehabilitate the livestock industry. That’s why I authored this bill. The idea is to stop animal diseases from entering the country,” Villar said at the Kapihan sa Manila Bay yesterday.

Meanwhile, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel declared Camarines Norte free from avian influenza.

Tiu Laurel issued Memorandum Circular No. 6 certifying that Camarines Norte was able to contain the virus after detecting the first case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) subtype H5N2 at a backyard duck farm in Talisay town in December.

He said the provincial government, in coordination with the municipal government of Talisay, DA field office and Bureau of Animal Industry implemented a comprehensive control strategy, including immediate depopulation at the affected farm, thorough cleaning and disinfection, movement restrictions and enhanced surveillance.

“Following these actions, surveillance within a one-kilometer and seven-kilometer radius around the affected area yielded no new bird flu infections, with all tests negative for the virus,” Tiu Laurel said.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2025/03/06/2426187/villar-bats-first-border-facility-vs-swine-fever>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Palace says rice and pork prices expected to drop in March

By: [Luisa Cabato](#) - Reporter / [@luisacabatoINQ](#)  
INQUIRER.net / 01:21 PM March 05, 2025



INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

MANILA, Philippines — Good news awaits consumers as the prices of rice and pork are expected to drop this month, Presidential Communications Office Undersecretary Claire Castro said on Wednesday.

At a Palace briefing, Castro said that rice currently priced at P49 per kilo will drop to P45 per kilo by March 31.

“Pati na po ang presyo po ng baboy ay maaari po itong maibaba din po by March 10 sa halaga po... ito po ay sinabi in particular ni Secretary [Francies] Laurel—ang parte po ng kasim at pige ay bababa po between P350 to P360 per kilo at ang liempo naman po ay maibababa po ng P380 per kilo,” she said.

(Also, the price of pork can also be reduced by March 10 in the amount [of]... this was said in particular by Secretary Laurel—pork shoulder and pork leg will drop between P350 to P360 per kilo, and the liempo will be reduced by P380 per kilo.)

Asked why there will be a drop in the price of rice, Castro said it is because the world prices have also reduced. Meanwhile, House Speaker Martin Romualdez called on lawmakers and poll candidates to visit their districts to check if rice grains are available and affordable.

In a statement last Friday, Romualdez said, “We know that each grain of rice is important to the Filipino family. We saw the positive steps taken by the government, but we should not be complacent. We have to do more to ensure that the price of rice is affordable for all.”

“Numbers and reports are not enough. We need to go down to our districts, talk to farmers, retailers, and consumers. We have to ask: do our people have the rice to cook? How can we lower rice prices without affecting the income of our farmers?” he asked.

<https://business.inquirer.net/510275/da-on-rice-pork-prices>



**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Pork prices seen falling in next few weeks

March 5, 2025 | 9:02 pm



**A MEAT VENDOR at the Marikina Public Market. — PHILIPPINE STAR/ WALTER BOLLOZOS**

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Wednesday that pork prices are expected to fall in the next few weeks, citing improving production and an industry commitment to reducing market prices.

In a briefing, Undersecretary Arnel V. de Mesa said pork producers, traders, and retailers have agreed to review their cost structures ahead of the imposition of a maximum suggested retail price (MSRP) for the commodity.

“Within March, there will be decreases in pork prices. There have been agreements among stakeholders in the hog industry that there should be a reduction in prices,” Mr. De Mesa said at a briefing.

He said farmgate prices of pork have fallen to as little as P214 per kilo from P250-260 last month.

“Now we’re seeing P220-230,” he said.

Malacañang has said certain cuts such as kasim (shoulder) and pigue (leg) could fall to between P350 to P360 per kilo by March 10, citing an update from Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr.

The prices of liempo (belly) could fall to P380 per kilo, it said.

Meanwhile, Mr. De Mesa said the pork MSRP will be implemented gradually.

Mr. Laurel has said the scheme will likely be implemented by March 10. — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/03/05/657461/pork-prices-seen-falling-in-next-few-weeks/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Inflation eases sharply in February

March 6, 2025 | 12:40 am



Inflation sharply eased to 2.1% in February from 2.9% in January and 3.4% a year ago, amid lower prices of rice and utilities. -- Photo by Noel Pabalate, The Philippine Star

By **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**, *Reporter*

HEADLINE INFLATION sharply decelerated in February to its slowest print in five months, preliminary data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed.

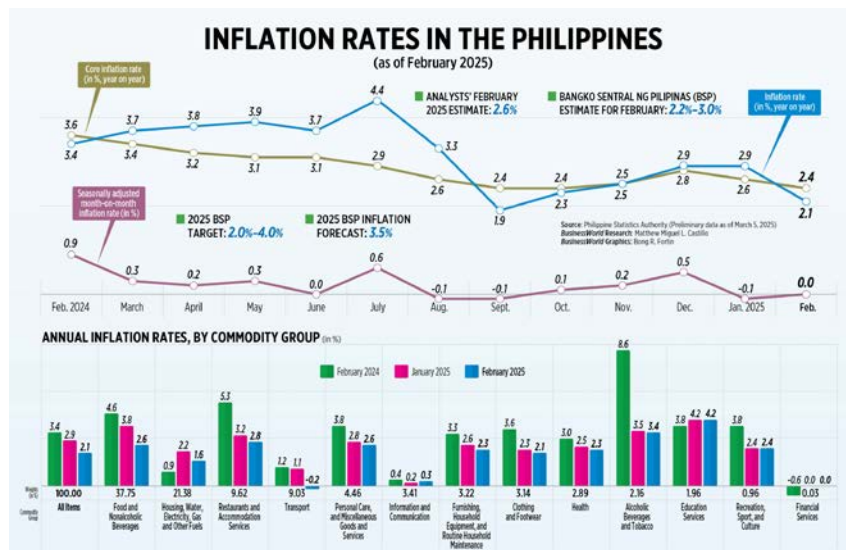
The consumer price index (CPI) eased to 2.1% in February from 2.9% in January and 3.4% a year ago. It was below the 2.2%-3% forecast from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

This was the slowest inflation print in five months or since the 1.9% clip in September 2024.

The February print was also well below the 2.6% median estimate in a *BusinessWorld* poll of 18 analysts conducted last week.

Inflation averaged 2.5% in the first two months, well within the central bank's 2-4% target.





Core inflation eased to 2.4% in February from 2.6% in the previous month and 3.6% a year prior. Core inflation discounts volatile prices of food and fuel.

PSA Assistant Secretary Divina Gracia L. Del Prado said the main source of deceleration during the month was the heavily weighted food and nonalcoholic beverage index, accounting for a 58.8% share to the downtrend in inflation.

The index slowed to 2.6% in February from 3.8% in January and 4.6% in the same month in 2024.

Food inflation eased to 2.6% in February from 4% a month ago and 4.8% the year prior.

Cereals and cereal products, which include rice, fell to 3% in February from the 1.1% drop in January.

Rice inflation decreased to 4.9% in February from the 2.3% drop in January. This was the lowest rice inflation print since the 5.7% contraction in April 2020.

In February, the average price of regular milled rice fell to P47.23 per kilo from P50.44 a year earlier. Well-milled rice prices slipped to P53.46 a kilo from P55.93 a year ago, while special rice dropped to P62.65 a kilo from P64.42 a year ago.

“We are seeing the effect of the food security emergency, because we were able to release buffer stocks from the National Food Authority (NFA),” Ms. Del Prado said.

The Agriculture department last month declared a food security emergency on rice, which authorized the NFA to release buffer stocks at subsidized prices. Local government units can buy NFA rice at P33 per kilo and sell it to the public at P35 per kilo.

In mid-February, the department also lowered the maximum suggested retail price (MSRP) of 5% broken imported rice to P52 per kilo from P55 previously. This was further slashed to P49 per kilo, starting March 1.

Ms. Del Prado said rice inflation could remain in the negative for the rest of the year amid continued interventions by the government.

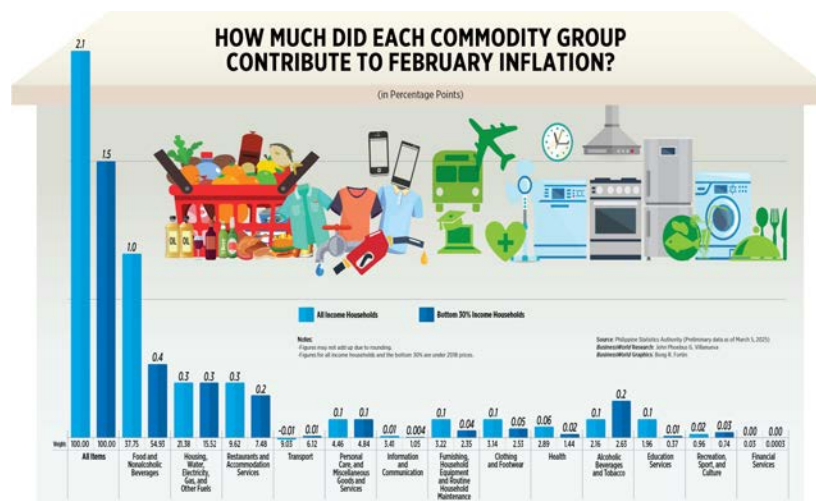
Meanwhile, the inflation of vegetables, tubers, plantains, cooking bananas and pulses decelerated to 7.1% in February from 21.1% a month prior.

Though still elevated, several vegetables posted a slower annual increase in prices. In particular, cabbage slowed to 33.4% in February from 39% in January; okra to 5.5% from 15.3%; and squash to 8.6% from 16.4%.

On the other hand, meat of pigs was the top contributor to February inflation, accounting for 16.2% or 0.3 percentage point to inflation. The inflation of pig meats rose to 12.1% in February from 8.4% in January.

This could be attributed to the rise in African Swine Fever cases, PSA’s Ms. Del Prado said.

For example, the average retail price of fresh pork kasim rose to P352.89 per kilo in February from P337.38 per kilo in the prior month.



The government’s plan to impose an MSRP on pork would help slow down inflation. “Once there is a maximum suggested retail price for pork, it might lead to a deceleration or even a negative inflation for pork,” Ms. Del Prado said.

PSA data showed the housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels index slowed to 1.6% in February from 2.2% in January.

Electricity inflation dropped to 1% from the 0.2% acceleration a month ago.

This even as Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) raised the overall rate by P0.2834 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to P12.0262 per kWh in February from P11.7428 per kWh in January.

Inflation of rentals also eased to 1.6% from 2% while liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) prices slowed to 3.7% from 4.7%.

Transport inflation was also a source of slower inflation in February, as it edged lower to 0.2% from the 1.1% rise in January.

In February, pump price adjustments stood at a net decrease of P0.05 a liter for diesel and P0.90 a liter for kerosene. However, gasoline had a net increase of P2.1 a liter.

Meanwhile, inflation for the bottom 30% of income households decelerated to 1.5% in February from 2.4% in January and 4.2% a year ago.

Consumer prices in the National Capital Region (NCR) eased to 2.3% in February from 2.8% in January. Outside NCR, inflation slowed to 2% from 2.9%.

### EFFORTS TO TAME PRICES

“This sustained downward trend confirms that our proactive measures to curb inflation are delivering results, especially on helping alleviate the burden on vulnerable sectors,” Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto said.

National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan likewise said the downtrend in inflation shows the government’s efforts are working to tame prices.

“However, we will not be complacent in addressing causes of commodity price increases, particularly for food, to help uplift the lives of poor and vulnerable Filipino families, especially,” he added.

Mr. Balisacan said the government will continue to sustain its efforts to keep inflation manageable.

However, he warned the country may be hit by six to 13 typhoons from March to August.

“The Department of Agriculture (DA) will implement the La Niña action plan to restore agricultural productive capacity in areas likely to be affected by continuous rainfall, flooding, and landslides. The action plan includes water management, financial assistance and credit support, and a massive information campaign on La Niña,” Mr. Balisacan said.

Analysts said inflation is expected to remain within the 2-4% target band for the coming months.

“Barring any unexpected shocks, we project that inflation will remain within the BSP’s 2-4% target, though we remain cognizant of upside risks such as higher electricity prices, transport fare hikes, and potential increases in global commodity prices due to higher tariffs,” Chinabank Research said in a report.

Standard Chartered Bank economist and FX (foreign exchange) analyst Jonathan Koh Tien Wei said lower prices of rice and rent, as well as contained core inflation are helping offset upside risks from higher electricity prices.

“We do not think that today’s lower inflation print necessarily bolsters the case for the BSP to cut earlier in April — the key reason for the pause in February was external uncertainty. Growth and inflation fundamentals already pointed to-wards further easing,” Mr. Koh Tien Wei said.

“If USD-PHP does break below P57 or if the Fed does turn dovish because of weak jobs data, then that may give BSP a window to cut rates in April to provide much needed support to the economy.”

The peso closed at P57.345 per dollar on Wednesday, strengthening by 40.8 centavos from its P57.753 finish on Tuesday. This was the peso’s best finish since its P57.205-per-dollar close on Oct. 11, 2024.

Dino Angelo C. Aquino, vice-president and head of fixed income at Security Bank Corp., said that 75 bps worth of cuts for the year is a “conservative” estimate.

“If you look at pre-pandemic, the spread between the inflation rate and the policy rates is around 150 bps,” Mr. Aquino said in an interview on Money Talks with Cathy Yang on One News on Wednesday.

“So, right now, it’s huge. Say if we average 3% (inflation) conservatively, and your policy rate is at 5.75%. Technically, they have 125 bps room to cut rates. So, 75 for me is a little bit conservative if you ask me.”

The BSP unexpectedly kept rates steady last month after cutting rates for three straight meetings last year. However, Mr. Remolona has said the central bank is still in easing mode, signaling the possibility of up to 50 bps worth of cuts this year.

The Monetary Board’s next rate-setting meeting is on April 3.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2025/03/06/657543/inflation-eases-sharply-in-february/>

**REMATE:**

# PH inflation rate bumagal sa 2.1% sa Pebrero 2025

March 5, 2025 11:55



MANILA, Philippines — Bumagal sa 2.1% ang inflation rate ng bansa noong Pebrero 2025 mula sa 2.9% noong Enero, ayon sa Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). Ito ang pinakamababang inflation rate mula noong Setyembre 2024 na nasa 1.9%.

Ayon kay Deputy National Statistician Divina Gracia del Prado, ang pangunahing dahilan ng pagbagal ay ang mas mabagal na pagtaas ng presyo ng pagkain at non-alcoholic beverages, na bumaba sa 2.6% mula 3.8%, na nag-ambag ng 58.8% sa kabuuang pagbaba. Bumagal din ang pagtaas ng presyo ng gulay sa 7.1% mula 21.1%, habang ang bigas ay nagkaroon ng deflation rate na -3% mula -1.1%.

Bumagal din ang Housing, Water, Electricity, and Other Fuels index sa 1.6% mula 2.2%, kung saan bumaba ang presyo ng kuryente ng 1% at ang presyo ng LPG ay bumagal sa 3.7% mula 4.7%. Ang inflation sa transportasyon ay bumaba rin sa -0.2% mula 1.1% dahil sa mas mababang presyo ng gasolina at diesel.

Sinabi ni National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Secretary Arsenio Balisacan na patuloy ang pagsisikap ng gobyerno na panatilihin mababa at kontrolado ang inflation, habang inihahanda ng Department of Agriculture ang La Niña action plan upang suportahan ang produktibidad ng agrikultura sa harap ng inaasahang mga bagyo.

Bumagal din ang food inflation sa 2.6% noong Pebrero mula 4% noong Enero, dulot ng mas mabagal na pagtaas ng presyo ng gulay at bigas. Binigyang-diin ni Balisacan ang pangangailangang tugunan ang pagtaas ng presyo ng pagkain upang suportahan ang mga mahihinang pamilyang Pilipino. *RNT*

<https://remate.ph/ph-inflation-rate-bumagal-sa-2-1-sa-pebrero-2025/>

**REMATE:**

# Camaringes Norte malaya na sa bird-flu – DA

March 5, 2025 19:06



MANILA, Philippines – Idineklara ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na “bird flu-free” na ang Camarines Norte, halos tatlong buwan matapos matukoy ang kaso ng avian influenza sa probinsya.

Opisyal na inanunsyo ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. ang deklarasyong ito matapos ang matagumpay na pagpuksa sa highly infectious na H5N2 strain na unang nakita sa isang backyard duck farm sa bayan ng Talisay noong Disyembre.

Ayon sa DA, naging posible ang tagumpay na ito dahil sa mabilis at koordinadong aksyon ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Camarines Norte, municipal government, DA Regional Field Office V, at Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI).

Kabilang sa kanilang isinagawang hakbang ang agarang pagpatay sa mga apektadong hayop, malawakang paglilinis at disinfection, paglimita sa galaw ng mga hayop, at pinalakas na surveillance, alinsunod sa guidelines ng Avian Influenza Protection Program (AIPP).

Matapos ang masusing pagbabantay sa loob ng isang kilometro at pitong kilometrong radius mula sa apektadong lugar, wala nang naitalang panibagong kaso ng bird flu at negatibo ang lahat ng resulta ng pagsusuri.

Dahil sa 28 araw na walang naitalang bagong kaso at matapos sundin ang “stamping-out” policy at disinfection measures, muling naabot ng Camarines Norte ang mga pamantayang itinakda ng World Organization for Animal Health para maibalik ang kanilang status bilang “bird flu-free” na probinsya. *Santi*

*Celario*

<https://remate.ph/camarines-norte-malaya-na-sa-bird-flu-da/>



**REMATE:**

# Presyo ng bigas, baboy bababa ngayong Marso – Malakanyang

March 5, 2025 16:55



MANILA, Philippines – INAASAHAN na bababa ang presyo ng bigas at baboy ngayong buwan.

Sinabi ni Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Undersecretary at Palace Press Officer Claire Castro na iniulat kasi Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. ang inaasam na price cut sa bigas at baboy sa isinagawang pagpupulong sa Palasyo ng Malakanyang.

Pinagbatayan ang report ni Tiu Laurel, sinabi ni Castro na ang presyo ng bigas ay bababa sa P45 per kg. ngayong Marso 31, bababa mula sa kasalukuyang P49/kg. average.

Samantala, ang presyo naman ng baboy ay nakikitang bababa rin, may ilang pagtapyas sa presyo ng kasim at pigue, potensyal na pagbaba sa pagitan ng P350 hanggang P360/kg. sa Marso 10.

Ang presyo ng liempo o pork belly ay inaasahan naman na bababa sa P380/kg.

Ipinagpapalagay ng Palasyo ang pagbaba ng presyo ng bigas sa pagbabago ng presyo sa mundo.

“Sa ngayon po, ang sabi po ni Secretary Laurel ay bumaba po ang world price. Kung nagkakaroon po kasi ng pagtaas talaga ng bigas, ito po ay... ang nagiging basehan, ang one of the factors dito ay iyong world price,” ayon kay Castro. *Kris Jose*

<https://remate.ph/presyo-ng-bigas-baboy-bababa-ngayong-marso-malakanyang/>

**ABANTE:**

# Presyo ng bigas, baboy bababa ngayong Marso – Palasyo

Abante News

• March 5, 2025



Asahan ang pagbaba sa presyo ng bigas sa katapusan ng buwan habang bababa rin ang presyo ng karne ng baboy sa Marso 10.

Ito ang ibinalita ni Palace Press Officer Atty. Claire Castro sa press briefing sa Malacañang matapos makausap si Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

Ayon kay Castro, mula sa pres-yong P49 kada kilo ng bigas, bababa ito ng P45 kada kilo sa Marso 31, habang ang presyo ng baboy ay maaa-ring maibaba sa Marso 10 ang kasim at pigi ng baboy mula P350-P360 per kilo, habang ang liempo ay ibababa sa P380 per kilo.

“Nagkaroon po kanina ng meeting with Secretary Laurel dahil aasahan po natin ang pagbaba ng presyo ng bigas at karne ng baboy,” ani Castro.

Sinabi aniya ni Laurel na bumaba ang pandaigdigang presyo ng bigas at ito ang nagiging basehan sa pagtatakda ng presyo ng imported na bigas na ibinebenta sa bansa.

Dati aniya ay pumapalo sa \$700-\$740 ang presyo kada tonelada ng bigas sa world market, at ngayon ay bumaba sa \$400- \$380 o mas mababa pa kada tonelada. (Aileen Taliping)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2025/03/05/presyo-ng-bigas-baboy-bababa-ngayong-marso-palasyo/>

**PEOPLE'S JOURNAL:**

# **San Luis Farmers Association partners with DOST to implement solar-powered irrigation for sustainable vegetable farming**

Thursday, March 6, 2025 Journal Online

The San Luis Farmers Association (SLFA) officially signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) to adopt solar-powered irrigation technology for vegetable farming in Brgy. Bonliw, San Luis, Batangas, Feb. 18.

The project is designed to bolster the productivity and resilience of the SLFA by leveraging solar-powered irrigation systems to ensure consistent farm water supply. This will be advantageous for enhancing crop yields, optimizing available farmlands, and promoting sustainable farming practices in the region.

The introduction of reliable irrigation through solar-powered pumps is expected to boost crop yields by at least 20%, significantly improving the output of the farmer beneficiaries. Additionally, the project will be advantageous for optimizing available farmlands and promoting sustainable farming practices in the region.

Under the project, DOST will provide funding for the installation of 3 HP solar-powered submersible water pumps, seven 450W monocrystalline solar panels, and a hybrid pump controller with a flow capacity of 10.5 m<sup>3</sup>/hour. The system will also include cables, breakers, protection devices, and mounting structures for the solar panels.

With this partnership between the SLFA and DOST, the future of farming in San Luis is expected to thrive through increased agricultural productivity, environmental sustainability, and innovation.

*By **John Maico M. Hernandez***

[https://journal.com.ph/san-luis-farmers-association-partners-with-dost-to-implement-solar-powered-irrigation-for-sustainable-vegetable-farming/#goog\\_rewarded](https://journal.com.ph/san-luis-farmers-association-partners-with-dost-to-implement-solar-powered-irrigation-for-sustainable-vegetable-farming/#goog_rewarded)



**MANILA STANDARD:**

# February inflation falls to 2.1% amid easing in rice prices

By Darwin G. Amojelar

March 6, 2025, 12:40 am

Headline inflation sharply fell to 2.1 percent in February 2025, down from 2.9 percent in the previous month and 3.4 percent in February last year, driven by the easing of rice prices among other heavily weighted items, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported yesterday.

PSA attributed the lower inflation in February to the slowdown in both food (2.6 percent from 4 percent) and non-food inflation (1.7 percent from 2.2 percent).

The year-to-date inflation average is 2.5 percent, well within the government's 2 to 4 percent target.

In terms of consumer goods, rice prices declined for the second straight month amid the continuous effects of declining global prices, a reduction in rice import tariffs last year, and the impact of the food emergency declaration on taming the staple grain's retail prices.

Deputy National Statistician and PSA Assistant Secretary Divina Gracia del Prado reported a year-on-year contraction in rice inflation of -4.9% last month, a steeper decline than the -2.3% deflation in January 2025. Last month's rice deflation of -4.9% was also the lowest for the grain staple since April 2020's -5.7% print, she said.

"The government will sustain its efforts to keep inflation low and manageable to protect the purchasing power of Filipinos. As we expect six to 13 typhoons to develop from March to August 2025, the Department of Agriculture (DA) will implement the La Niña action plan to restore agricultural productive capacity in areas likely to be affected by continuous rainfall, flooding, and landslides," NEDA Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said.

"The action plan includes water management, financial assistance and credit support, and a massive information campaign on La Niña," he added.

Meanwhile, Finance Secretary Ralph Recto welcomed the sharp drop in inflation to 2.1% in February 2025, calling it a major win for lower-income households as it provides much-needed relief, especially on food items.

"This sustained downward trend confirms that our proactive measures to curb inflation are delivering results, especially on helping alleviate the burden on vulnerable sectors. But we will not allow ourselves to be complacent—we will continue to monitor whatever may bring about price increases, especially on food," he said in a mixture of Filipino and English.

For his part, House Speaker Martin Romualdez lauded the continued drop in inflation, saying it reflects the success of President Marcos' economic team in stabilizing prices and protecting the purchasing power of Filipinos.

"This is great news for every Filipino family. The continued drop in inflation – from 2.9 percent in January to 2.1 percent in February – proves that President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s economic team is getting the job done," he said.

Romualdez emphasized that the administration has remained focused on ensuring food security and economic stability, with the House of Representatives actively supporting these efforts through legislative measures aimed at easing the cost of living.

February's inflation rate is the lowest recorded since October 2024.

Notably, inflation for the bottom 30% income group further dropped to 1.5 percent for the month, well below the headline rate and down from 2.4 percent in January 2025.

Core inflation, which excludes volatile food and energy prices, also eased to 2.4 percent in February, creating room for potential monetary policy rate easing that would lower interest rates and provide cheaper borrowing costs for consumers and businesses. **With Maricel V. Cruz**

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314565214/february-inflation-falls-to-2-1-amid-easing-in-rice-prices.html>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# Coop pioneers in RiceBIS certification

**By Leander C. Domingo**

**March 6, 2025**

THE Marasat-Dagupan Rice Business Innovations System (MarDag RiceBIS) Agriculture Coop. was the first farmers' group in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) to undergo the Philippine Good Agricultural Practices-Internal Control System (PhilGAP-ICS) Group Certification.



Photo shows representatives of the Marasat-Dagupan Rice Business Innovations System Agriculture Cooperative. DA PHOTO

Ferdinand Cortez of the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 2 (DA RFO-2) Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Information Section said the milestone is a triumph for the cooperative, comprising 48 farmers cultivating 53,536.1 hectares of rice fields.

Cortez said there were 10 representatives from the cooperative who successfully navigated the rigorous inspection phase, demonstrating their unwavering commitment to upholding the highest standards of quality, safety and sustainability.

"This achievement will not only bolster the cooperative's credibility but also enhance its market appeal, attracting discerning consumers who prioritize quality, safety and sustainability," he said.

The DA RFO-2, through its Regulatory Division-GAP Unit, led by Division Chief Remedios dela Rosa and Regional GAP Focal Person Editha Cortina, conducted the inspection on Feb. 11-13, 2025.

This was in collaboration with the Bureau of Plant Industry-Plant Product Safety Services Division in Baguio City, DA-Philippine Rice Research Institute in Isabela and the local government of San Mateo, Isabela.

Cortez said that with this phase concluded, the PhilGAP Certification Committee will review the findings before final approval is granted by the BPI director.

As a participant in the RiceBIS community, supported by DA-PhilRice Isabela under the Rice Business Innovations System (RiceBIS) 2.0 and DA RFO 2 Rice Program, the MarDag RiceBIS Coop. has demonstrated its dedication to excellence.

Cortez pointed out that once certified, MarDag RiceBIS Coop. will set the standard for agricultural innovation and sustainability in Region 2.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/03/06/business/agribusiness/coop-pioneers-in-ricebis-certification/2067883>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# **PHilMech pushing improvements in hand tractors**

**By The Manila Times**

**March 6, 2025**

THE Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PHilMech) is pushing to improve the design of walk-behind tractors or hand tractors manufactured locally, with the aim of assisting manufacturers to level up their one-hand tractors, which will ultimately benefit Filipino farmers.



Hand tractors are one of the most popular farm machines in the country as these are affordable, can be manufactured locally and are compact in size. PHILMECH PHOTO

Also, PHilMech is envisioning the manufacturing of hand tractor gearboxes in the Philippines and the modernization of the manufacture of hand tractors in the country.

This, as PHilMech and Wecan Global — a South Korean farm machinery manufacturer — have forged a partnership to advance agricultural mechanization in the country by standardizing the gear-type gearbox for hand tractors and training Filipino engineers in modern farm equipment.

PHilMech also convened a meeting with local farm machine manufacturers ACT Manufacturing Inc., Triple J Hand Tractor, and Val Agri-machineries and Machine Shop on Feb. 26 at the PHilMech Central Office to discuss the use of the more durable gear-type gearbox for hand tractors developed by Wecan Global to replace the traditional chain and sprocket system.

PHilMech Executive Director Dionisio Alvindia said this development is a big step in providing farmers with hand tractors that can be locally manufactured and be more durable, powerful and cost-efficient.

Hand tractors are one of the most popular farm machines in the country as these are affordable, can be manufactured locally and are compact in size.

Director Alvindia said among the long-term objectives is to have the gearboxes for hand tractors manufactured locally.

"A gearbox system has increased working power and durability that would reduce the frequency of repairs or replacement. The new transmission system will not only ensure higher quality and sustainability of hand tractor quality, but also create a foundation for long-term improvement in local manufacturing and agricultural machinery production," he said.

"A phased approach for implementing the new technology was outlined during the meeting [with local manufacturers]. The first phase will involve a semi-knockdown model over the next three years, where the gearbox will be manufactured in South Korea and assembled in the Philippines," Alvindia added.

As part of the agreement with Wecan Global, PHilMech engineers will be trained in the operation, assembly, maintenance and after-sales service of rotavators and plows for rice farmers. The training will be conducted both at PHilMech and Wecan Global's facility in South Korea.

Alvindia stressed the need to sustain technical and knowledge transfer to strengthen the country's agricultural mechanization efforts. He added that many Filipinos have already been trained in Wecan Global's factories, making it crucial to focus on retaining and applying that expertise.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

"This partnership goes beyond farm machines, as it lays the foundation for long-term collaboration and progress in agricultural technology," he said.

Training PHilMech engineers

For his part, Wecan Global President Jun-Hwan Kim emphasized the importance of knowledge transfer in advancing agricultural mechanization and reaffirmed their commitment to training PHilMech engineers.

"When you come to Korea, we will teach and give you all the knowledge that you need," Kim said, expressing their readiness to equip Filipino engineers with essential skills in machinery operation, assembly and maintenance.

In the following phases of the cooperation with Wecan, the production of certain components of the gearbox will be localized, enabling Filipino manufacturers to enhance their capabilities.

By the final phase, the goal is to reach a completely knockdown model, with all production steps taking place in the Philippines.

Said technological advancement will help reduce reliance on imports, lower costs of hand tractors and promote self-sufficiency in the agricultural machinery industry, benefiting both local manufacturers and the broader agricultural sector.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/03/06/business/agribusiness/philmec-pushing-improvements-in-hand-tractors/2067874>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# Searca highlights postharvest issues

**By Leander C. Domingo**

**March 6, 2025**

HIGHLIGHTING agrifood postharvest innovations, the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) hosted its Special Graduate Seminar on Postharvest Management for a Sustainable Agrifood Supply Chain at the Drilon Hall and online via the Searca Online Learning and Virtual Engagements or Solve Platform on Feb. 20, 2025.

Searca Director Glenn Gregorio said the center continues to provide a platform for scholars to present their research through a special graduate seminar, reinforcing its commitment to advancing impactful research and advancing agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia.

He said the event was organized in partnership with the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics-College of Economics and Management, University of the Philippines Los Baños (DAAE-CEM UPLB) to present the highlights of the research publications of two Searca alumni.

They were Reymond Denver Buenaseda and Arjay Gerance, both 2024 graduates and recipients of the DAAD-Searca Scholarship for Master of Science in Applied Economics for Agriculture and Environment Program at Kasetsart University, Thailand. DAAD is the German Academic Exchange Service.

They discussed their research published in the International Society for Southeast Asian Agricultural Sciences Journal and Searca's Asian Journal of Agriculture and Development, respectively, exploring innovative postharvest management strategies for onion and pineapple production.

Highlighting the important role of cold storage in reducing postharvest losses and increasing farmers' profits, Buenaseda, an assistant professor at DAAE-CEM, UPLB, presented his research on cold storage adoption among onion farmers in Nueva Ecija.

Buenaseda said cooperative membership and participation in trading enhance farmers' ability to store their harvests, while policy initiatives supporting farmer-operated cold storage facilities offer additional opportunities for smallholders.

To further promote storage adoption, Buenaseda recommended exploring a one-time subsidy for cold storage fees to encourage long-term participation.

A senior economic development specialist at the National Economic and Development Authority in Mimaropa, Gerance focused on postharvest management and losses in the Queen pineapple value chain.

Mimaropa comprises the provinces of Mindoro (divided into Occidental Mindoro and Oriental Mindoro), Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan.

Gerance emphasized that the challenges faced by small-scale farmers, particularly limited access to resources and inefficient handling practices, contributed to higher losses.

His research highlighted clustering programs, improved harvesting techniques and optimized transport conditions as key interventions to minimize losses.

Gerance also recommended government-led initiatives to standardize handling practices, enforce quality standards, and invest in low-cost cold storage and packinghouses to strengthen the supply chain.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/03/06/business/agribusiness/searca-highlights-postharvest-issues/2067848>



**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# **Camarines Norte avian influenza-free**

**By Giselle P. Jordan**

**March 6, 2025**

CAMARINES Norte has been officially declared avian influenza-free after the case of the highly infectious disease was successfully contained by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the province's local government units (LGUs).

Last December, a single case of the highly pathogenic avian influenza — or bird flu — subtype H5N2 was found in a backyard duck farm in the town of Talisay.

The Provincial Government of Camarines Norte immediately responded through a comprehensive control strategy in coordination with the municipal government of Talisay, DA Regional Field Office V (RFO V), and the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI).

The control strategy included depopulation of the affected farm, cleaning disinfection, movement restriction, and surveillance. These measures align with the Avian Influenza Protection Program (AIPP) guidelines.

Following this surveillance within a 1-kilometer and 7-kilometer radius around the affected area showed no new cases, with tests for the virus all returning with negative results.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said since there were no new cases 28 days after the stamping-out policy and disinfection, Camarines Norte has earned an avian influenza-free status based on the criteria of the World Organization for Animal Health.

Before the case, the province had a "clean record" on avian influenza. The DA said the provincial government's immediate and effective disease management prevented the spread of the disease.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/03/06/regions/camarines-norte-avian-influenza-free/2067703>



## **BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# **‘Costly meat, veggies dent government anti-hunger efforts’**

Bless Aubrey Ogerio

March 5, 2025

MALNUTRITION is likely to occur when households struggle to meet their dietary needs, according to a former socioeconomic planning chief.

Despite inflation easing to 2.1 percent in February, meat and vegetables remained the top drivers of food inflation, which accounted for 43.4 percent of the overall rate, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). (See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/03/05/inflation-drops-to-2-1-in-feb-lowest-in-5-months-psa/>)

Dante Canlas, former National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) secretary, told BusinessMirror in a message that rising meat prices force households to cut back on protein consumption, increasing the risk of nutritional deficiency.

“Reducing the ability of households to meet their protein and other dietary requirements, malnutrition is bound to occur, especially among children below 5 years of age,” Canlas said. “Incidence of malnutrition is already high for the latter age group.”

The PSA on Wednesday reported that in February, the average price of pork kasim rose to P352.89 per kilogram (kg) from P337.38 in January, while liempo climbed to P367.63 per (kg) from P352.31.

The National Capital Region recorded the highest pork prices nationwide, with liempo reaching P428.61 per (kg), while Central Luzon posted the highest price outside Metro Manila at P403.01 per (kg).

“We know how it is with ASF [African Swine Fever] these days. I think the supply is the cause because the ASF is causing a high price for meat, particularly pork,” deputy national statistician Divina Gracia del Prado said, speaking partly in Filipino, at the press briefing.

Per Canlas, household food purchasing power depends largely on wages and earnings. “The government must support households’ ability to increase their bargaining power and ensure that workers get a fair share of the national income,” he said.

However, former University of Asia and the Pacific School of Economics dean Peter Lee U said in an exclusive interview that he expects households to adjust by opting for more non-meat options, noting that “nutrition may not immediately suffer as households will first reallocate what foods they will buy before they actually reduce food consumption.”

Moreover, former Philippine Tariff commissioner George Manzano said that nutrition will be affected depending on the extent and duration of such high prices.

“Governments can do a number of steps to address food inflation. One is to reduce the cost of importing, such as tariffs, and another is to improve the food supply chain to reduce waste, mainly infrastructure,” Manzano told the BusinessMirror.

For Ateneo de Manila University economist Leonardo Lanzona, Jr., the inflation slowdown owes to a broader economic deceleration, both locally and globally.

“While there were better harvests for rice and stable currency, welfare is not generally improved since real incomes remained the same, thus keeping household food consumption generally intact, although with more rice this time but less viands,” Lanzona told this newspaper.

Meanwhile, De La Salle University economist Ella Oplas noted that food inflation eased partly due to the rice harvest season and increased demand for meat as agricultural incomes rose. “I expect demand to grow higher. We are entering the fiesta time,” she told the BusinessMirror.

To support the livestock sector, NEDA secretary Arsenio Balisacan said efforts to address ASF are being accelerated, with agencies urging the Bureau of Animal Industry to expedite post-vaccination data collection and Food and Drug Administration submission for vaccine approval.

On the other hand, the Department of Science and Technology is funding a genomic sequencing project for animal disease research, set for completion by August 2026. Moreover, the Department of Agriculture has also distributed fuel aid to 74.3 percent of 2023 beneficiaries, with 54.1 percent of 2024 recipients in the funding process.

#### Weighing SRP's impact

When asked about setting a maximum suggested retail price (SRP), Canlas said, "It's better for the government to launch a food-assistance program that targets the poor."

Lanzona, on the other hand, warned that price volatility persists amid global uncertainties, particularly under US President Donald Trump. "The country needs to strengthen domestic production, which is threatened by disincentives, such as increased imports and maximum SRPs. Farmers are less encouraged to produce if government continues to hold down prices."

Oplas, meanwhile, noted that while SRPs benefit consumers, producers must also be considered. "I would encourage the government to invest heavily in improving the agrolistics in the Philippines," she said. "We should also encourage large-scale investment in livestock so that we don't have to be dependent on import."

For Manzano, SRP can be a short-term fix, but with limitations, saying "SRP may discourage investments in the food industry which may affect future quantity of food production and prices."

The inflation rate for the country's bottom 30 percent income households dropped to 1.5 percent in February, down from 2.4 percent in January and 4.2 percent the same month a year ago—the lowest since March 2020, when it stood at 1.9 percent.

#### Fiscal measures

For HSBC Asean economist Aris Dacanay, February's inflation data supports not only a continuation of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) easing cycle next quarter but also a policy rate cut regardless of the US Federal Reserve.

"With inflation finding itself within the lower-end range of the BSP's target band, there is room for the economy to absorb any FX-induced inflation if the policy rate differential between the BSP and the Fed were to narrow," he said.

Citi's Philippine economist Nalin Chutchotitham revised their inflation forecasts for 2025 and 2026 to 2.6 percent (previously 3.2 percent) and 3.2 percent (previously 3.3 percent), respectively.

She said they expect headline inflation to rise to 2.2 percent in March, 2.6 percent in the Q2 and Q3 this year, and 2.7 percent in the fourth quarter of 2025.

"The modest upward trajectory that we forecast for the rest of 2025 largely reflects base effects from sequential softening in rice and energy prices between April to Dec 2024, even as we expect inflation momentum to remain subdued, largely on expected decline in crude oil prices," Chutchotitham said.

Bank of the Philippine Islands senior vice president and lead economist Emilio Neri Jr. noted that slower inflation will benefit consumers by freeing up funds for both essentials and discretionary spending.

"Spending on other items usually deteriorates when rice prices are high. With rice prices now falling, consumer spending may see a notable recovery this year," he said.

While easing inflation keeps the door open for BSP rate cuts, Neri cautioned that global uncertainties and the country's current account deficit make the peso vulnerable. "Maintaining interest rates at appropriate levels may offset the impact of these uncertainties," he added.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/03/05/costly-meat-veggies-dent-government-anti-hunger-efforts/>

**BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# **NFA to planters: Earn more by selling dry palay to government**

Ada Pelonia  
March 5, 2025

The National Food Authority (NFA) urged farmers to invest more time in drying their palay or unmilled rice harvest to increase their income.

NFA Administrator Larry Lacson said rice planters should take advantage of the hot dry season.

The agency noted that while drying their harvest might take additional days and an extra cost of P1 per kilo, the rewards are “substantial.”

“That’s a net additional income of P4 per kilo. For example, a farmer harvesting 5 tons per hectare could net an extra P20,000,” Lacson said in a statement.

He also noted that the grains agency increased its buying price for palay, which was within the range of P23 to P30 per kilo under its Price Range Scheme.

“This week, we’ve raised our buying price to P18 per kilo for fresh palay and P24 per kilo for clean and dry palay.”

The NFA chief said rice millers are currently buying clean and dry palay for P20 to P22 per kilo, while the average quotation for fresh or wet unmilled rice is P5 lower.

According to the DA, the grains agency’s appeal comes amid a challenging global rice market. It said rice prices are the lowest in over two years, adversely affecting the price of locally produced palay.

Moreover, the anticipated better harvest this year due to improved weather conditions has also put pressure on palay prices.

The NFA said it is targeting to purchase 880,000 metric tons (MT) of palay this year to meet the new rice buffer stock requirement equivalent to 15 days of national consumption, as stipulated under the amended Rice Tariffication Law (RTL).

To achieve this, the grains agency said it is ramping up its rice milling operations, expanding its warehouse capacity, and investing in new trucks to improve procurement efforts.

With a procurement budget of around P14 billion this year, including the P5 billion carried over from last year, NFA said it is determined to maintain sufficient stocks for food security and boost farmers’ profits.

Retail prices of imported rice range from P44 to P47 per kilo for well-milled and P36 to P46 per kilo for regular milled, based on the latest government price monitoring report.

Local rice prices range between P42 and P52 per kilo for well-milled and P38 and P45 per kilo for regular milled, government data showed.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/03/05/nfa-to-planters-earn-more-by-selling-dry-palay-to-government/>

## **BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# **Group: Salt prices fall on influx of imports**

Ada Pelonia  
March 5, 2025

The Philippine Association of Salt Industry Networks (PhilASIN) expressed concern over the decline in salt prices, which it attributed to the “unabated” entry of imports. During a public consultation on salt importation led by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) in Quezon City, PhilASIN said the local salt sector is currently grappling with depressed prices. The group noted that in Mindoro, salt prices fell to as low as P1.80 per kilo. “The importers can import as much as they want. There is no limit to that importation,” Gerard Khonghun, president of PhilASIN, told reporters on the sidelines of the consultation last Tuesday. With this, the group urged the government to certify salt imports as necessary prior to importation by determining the gap in local supply and consumption to prevent oversupply. PhilASIN said the provision of a certificate of necessity to import (CNI) would manage inbound shipments of salt and enable farmers to compete with imports. “We need to manage the importation to prevent oversupply,” Khonghun said. “Every time a law [on farm products] was passed, the intention is to control importation to give local producers a chance.” Under the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, fishery products may only be imported when the importation has been certified as necessary by the Department of Agriculture (DA), in consultation with the National Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (NFARMC). The group said salt is included in the definition of aquatic resources as stipulated under the fisheries code and should therefore be used as legal basis for the issuance of a CNI. “If there’s an El Niño and you still allow a lot of importation, how will the salt farmers be encouraged to make more salt?” “When they produce salt, they are rewarded with low prices because of oversupply of imports,” Khonghun said. When the drought hit many parts of the country last year, he said local salt production grew by over 30 percent to 110,000 metric tons (MT). Following the salt group’s suggestion, the BFAR said its technical working group (TWG) would try to incorporate the provision of CNI under the fisheries code in the salt importation guidelines. Last year, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. signed Republic Act (RA) 11985 or the Philippine Salt Development Act to boost the competitiveness of the local salt industry. The Philippines imported 659,443 MT of salt in 2024, 3.6 percent lower than the 684,040 MT recorded in the previous year, based on data from the Philippine Statistics Authority.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/03/05/group-salt-prices-fall-on-influx-of-imports/>