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MANILA BULLETIN:

Marcos: Gov't studying solutions to address recent global changes

BY ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS

Mar 7, 2025 05:55 PM

AT A GLANCE

- In his speech, President Marcos referred to the government's job fair initiative as one of the services that aims to improve the lives of people by matching applicants to companies where they can utilize the skills they have.

President Marcos assured Filipinos that the government was looking for solutions to address the "changes" caused by recent global events.



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

Marcos said this as he led the 'Trabaho at Serbisyong Pangkalusugan sa Bagong Pilipinas' in Pili, Camarines Sur, on Friday, March 7.

"Medyo magulo ang mundo ngayon. Maraming nagbabago na kailangan natin pag-aralan at kailangan natin bigyan ng solusyon (The world is a bit chaotic now. There are many changes happening that we need to study and give solutions to)," he said.

"Kaya naman po ay una naming tinitingnan kung ano ang pinakamagandang serbisyo na maibigay namin sa tao (That's why the first thing we're considering is what is the best service we could provide to the people)," he added.

It was earlier reported that President Marcos expressed his willingness to meet immediately with US President Donald Trump amid the policy changes he has been implementing since he assumed office early this year.

In his speech, President Marcos referred to the government's job fair initiative as one of the services that aims to improve the lives of people by matching applicants to companies where they can utilize the skills they have.

Approximately 3,000 job seekers who are graduating beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) participated in Friday's job fair, which featured 2,365 job vacancies from 23 participating employers.

The ones who were employed were given T-shirts with the letters "HOTS" printed on them, signifying that the people wearing them were "hired on the spot."

"Ayan, mga hired on the spot natin. Kaya malaking pagkakakataon po ito na dinadala namin sa taong bayan para naman magkaroon ng magandang trabaho (We have our hired on the spot here. This is a big opportunity for our people so they could land a good job)," Marcos said.

"Sana kayong lahat ay makahanap ng magandang trabaho at maipagpatuloy ninyo ang inyong pagpaganda ng buhay ng inyong mga pamilya at ng inyong komunidad (I hope you can find good jobs and continue improving the lives of your family and your community)," he added.

The event also included a one-stop shop for pre-employment screening and advisory services from various agencies, including the Social Security System (SSS), Pag-IBIG Fund, PhilHealth, Bureau of

Internal Revenue (BIR), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

Meanwhile, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) distributed P3,950 each to 788 beneficiaries under its 'Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers' (TUPAD) Program.

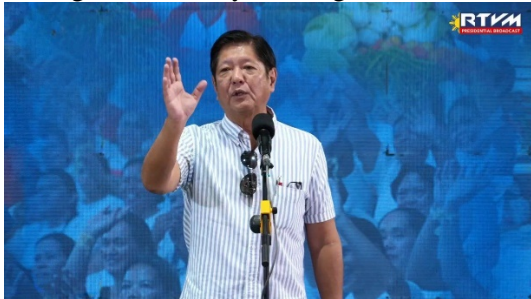
Another highlight of the event was the medical mission conducted by the Department of Health (DOH), which offered dental care, medical check-ups, ophthalmology services, dermatology services, ENT check-ups, and immunization services, including routine and pneumonia vaccinations.

The DOH also provided nutrition programs featuring commodities and counseling, along with distributing various medicines and medical supplies worth P2.49 million to the six provinces of Region V.

"Alam naman po natin na napakahalaga para sa atin na ang ating kalusugan ay ligtas sa kahit na anong sakit at ligtas sa kung ano-ano mang karamdaman (We know that the most important thing is our health and that we are safe from any diseases)," the President said.

In addition to these activities, the event showcased the Kadiwa stalls of the Department of Agriculture (DA), which offered basic goods for consumers at affordable prices.

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<https://mb.com.ph/2025/3/7/marcos-studying-solutions-global-changes>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Philippines bans poultry from three more US states amid bird flu fears

BY DEXTER BARRO II

Mar 7, 2025 02:13 PM



Philippines expands poultry import ban amid rising bird flu cases in US states.

The Philippines, through the Department of Agriculture (DA), has expanded its temporary ban on the importation of poultry products to three more American states to prevent the spread of bird flu in the country.

Under Memorandum Order (MO) No. 14, the DA orders the ban of domestic and wild birds and their products, including poultry meat, day-old chicks, eggs, and semen from Indiana, New York, and Pennsylvania.

Since January of this year, the agency has banned 10 states as the United States' (US) poultry industry faces a worsening outbreak of the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI).

Similar to previous orders, Indiana, New York, and Pennsylvania were included in the ban after several reports of bird flu affecting domestic birds.

The DA said the "rapid spread" of bird flu in a short period since the first laboratory detection necessitates a wider coverage of trade restrictions.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel, via MO 14, said such a ban is crucial to curb the potential spread of the virus and protect the health of the local poultry population.

With this, Laurel has authorized the swift suspension of the processing and issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) import clearances for poultry products.

The import ban does not apply to shipments that were already in transit, loaded, and accepted at local ports, provided that they were slaughtered or produced 14 days before the first outbreak in the affected area.

Jay County in Indiana recorded its first outbreak on Jan. 3, followed by Suffolk County in New York on Jan. 17, and Dauphin County in Pennsylvania on Feb. 4.

If such products are not covered by this provision, veterinary quarantine officers and inspectors will stop and confiscate them across all major ports of entry.

Given the geographical land mass of the US, veterinary authorities of the Philippines and the US had a mutual agreement in 2016 that a state-wide ban shall only be imposed if there are three or more counties affected by HPAI in one state.

The three aforementioned states each had three or more counties affected by bird flu, as reflected in their official reports to the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH).

The DA has previously banned poultry imports from Illinois, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Maryland, and Missouri.

Bird-flu free

In a separate development, the DA has lifted the temporary ban on the importation of poultry products from France after all reported cases of bird flu have ended with resolved status and no additional outbreaks after Feb. 4.

Based on its evaluation, the risk of contamination from importing live poultry, poultry meat, day-old chicks, eggs, and semen is found to be “negligible.”

Additionally, the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) has assessed that the bird flu’s containment in France “appears to have been successful.”

“The lifting of the ban is expected to ease trade tensions and support the poultry industry, which has been adversely impacted by the restrictions,” the DA said.

In local affairs, it was announced on Wednesday, March 5, that Camarines Norte is free from bird flu following a successful containment campaign.

The DA said a single case of HPAI subtype H5N2 was reported last December at a backyard duck farm in the municipality of Talisay.

The local government swiftly implemented a control strategy that covered immediate depopulation of the affected farm, thorough cleaning and disinfection, movement restrictions, and enhanced surveillance.

After 28 days without new cases, the province has met the WOA’s criteria to regain its bird flu-free status.

According to the WOA, the HPAI virus can spread through direct contact with secretions from infected birds through feces, as well as contaminated feed and water.

Due to its resilient nature—especially the ability to survive for long periods in low temperatures—the virus can be carried on farm equipment, allowing it to spread easily from farm to farm.

https://mb.com.ph/2025/3/7/ph-expands-import-ban-of-poultry-products-to-three-us-states#google_vignette

MANILA BULLETIN:

Marcos ensures urgent, decisive action vs malnutrition

BY ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS

Mar 7, 2025 11:43 AM

AT A GLANCE

- In his speech, the President stressed how malnutrition and stunting have long-term and almost irreversible effects on children. He particularly cited a recent study by the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM-2), which found that most Filipino students are already two to three years behind curriculum expectations by Grade 3.

President Marcos has assured the public that the government is taking urgent, decisive, and multisectoral action to combat child malnutrition and stunting among Filipino children, as he sounded their alarming effects on children's cognitive development and academic performance.



President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. (Mark Balmores)

Marcos said this as he led the 2024 National Nutrition Awarding Ceremony in Quezon City on Friday, March 7.

In his speech, the President stressed how malnutrition and stunting have long-term and almost irreversible effects on children. He particularly cited a recent study by the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM-2), which found that most Filipino students are already two to three years behind curriculum expectations by Grade 3.

"Malnutrition exists at alarming levels across different stages of life throughout our country, and this has multifarious effects. It has wrought deleterious effects on the cognitive development and the future of our children. It has contributed to our children falling behind in their education," he said.

"We are taking urgent, decisive, and multisectoral action to address the problem," he added.

With this, Marcos said he has ordered a whole-of-nation approach that aligns multiple agencies' efforts toward nutrition-focused policies.

"Investing in human capital is the key to securing our nation's future," he said.

"Let us intensify our commitment to breaking the cycle of intergenerational malnutrition," he added.

According to the President, the Department of Health (DOH) has been directed to strengthen its preventive healthcare programs, shifting its focus beyond curative care to early nutrition interventions.

"We are trying to improve our services in terms of the preventive phase of healthcare—and that includes nutrition," he said.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is also adjusting its approach, stressing that ensuring food supply is no longer enough.

"Even in the Department of Agriculture, we have stopped talking about food supply. We have now started talking about nutrition," Marcos said.

"It is not sufficient that we have everything to eat if the family, especially the child, are not still eating the right things," he added.

President Marcos said the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has likewise expanded key programs, including structured feeding initiatives and the First 1,000 Days program, which supports pregnant mothers and young children.

Feeding programs in schools, according to the President, now also ensure that children receive a balanced diet by guiding them on the required intake of carbohydrates, vegetables, and other essential nutrients each week.

Another initiative is the Food Stamp Program, which provides poor families P3,000 in monthly food credits that they can use to buy nutritious foods from Kadiwa stalls and other authorized sellers.

"Kapalit ng tulong na ito ang pagdalo nila sa mga sesyon pagtungkol sa nutrition at mga aktibidad sa pagsulong ng trabaho (In exchange for this aid, they must attend nutrition education sessions and employment programs)," the President said.

The government has also expanded the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) that distributes P350,000 monthly to over 68,000 4Ps households with pregnant mothers and kids aged zero to two years old.

"These efforts align with the goals of the Philippine Development Plan, which sets a target of achieving zero hunger by 2028 as part of our commitment to sustainable and inclusive growth," Marcos said.

President Marcos then rallied the support of local government units (LGUs) so the government could achieve more and cover more ground in the fight against malnutrition and stunting.

To motivate LGUs, Marcos said he has directed the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to make nutrition a key criterion when awarding the Seal of Good Local Governance.

The annual National Nutrition Awarding Ceremony recognizes high-performing LGUs and local nutrition focal points (LNFPs) with outstanding nutrition program management practices. According to Malacañang, the LGU awardees were assessed based on how they enact policies, allocate budgets, and implement and sustain effective nutrition programs.

The LNFP awardees, composed of LGU workers who oversee the coordination and management of nutrition programs, were evaluated based on their capability to coordinate, manage, and advocate nutrition initiatives.

The LNFP became part of the National Nutrition Awarding Ceremony in 2021 due to their key role in improving nutrition in their respective areas.

<https://mb.com.ph/2025/3/7/marcos-ensures-urgent-action-malnutrition>

MANILA BULLETIN:

'Dapat may masampolan': Lee says agri smugglers should be charged and jailed

BY ELLSON QUISMORIO

Mar 7, 2025 10:20 AM

AT A GLANCE

- AGRI Party-list Rep. Wilbert T. Lee is prodding the government to "make an example" out of smugglers of agricultural products in order to discourage acts from such criminals.



AGRI Party-list Rep.

Wilbert T. Lee (Facebook)

AGRI Party-list Rep. Wilbert T. Lee is prodding the government to "make an example" out of smugglers of agricultural products in order to discourage acts from such criminals.

Lee issued the call following reports that P202 million worth of frozen mackerel--allegedly smuggled from China--was confiscated by the Bureau of Customs (BOC) and Department of Agriculture (DA) at the Port of Manila.

"Natutuwa tayo sa mga balitang may nasasabat na mga smuggled agri products, at na kakasuhan ang mga nasa likod nito (We're delighted to hear news about smuggled agri products getting intercepted and charges being filed against the smugglers behind it)," he said.

"Pero nababahala tayo na kahit may naipasa na tayong batas kung saan pinabigat na ang parusa sa mga agri smugglers, hoarders, price manipulators at kartel, ay marami pa rin ang naghahasik ng lagim sa kabuhayan ng ating mga kababayan," noted Lee.

(But we're concerned to hear about the continued activities of these evil doers despite our enactment of a law that stiffens the punishment against agri smugglers, hoarders, price manipulators and cartel operators.)

"Kailangan dito ng mas mahigpit at epektibong implementasyon ng batas. Dapat iparamdam sa mga demonyong ito ang ngipin ng ating batas at may maipakulong na, dahil hindi titigil ang mga kriminal na ito sa pag-abuso hangga't walang nasasampolan sa kanila," he added.

(We need a stricter and more effective implementation of the law. We need to make these demons feel the fangs of our law by jailing someone because these criminals stop until we make an sexample out of one of them.)

AGRI Party-list, which is running for reelection in the 2025 mid-term polls, is the principal author of Republic Act (RA) No. 10845 or the “Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016” and its amended version, RA No. 12022 or the “Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act”.

AGRI then urged both chambers of Congress to immediately convene the bicameral conference committee and finalize the provisions of the House and Senate versions of the Blue Economy Act.

"Blue economy" refers to a practical ocean-based economic model using green infrastructure and technologies and innovative financing mechanisms to achieve the twin goals of protecting our oceans and exclusive economic zones such as the West Philippine Sea (WPS) and enhancing its contribution to sustainable livelihood and development of fishing communities.

“As an archipelagic country, this measure would greatly contribute to increasing fish production and income of fisherfolk, expanding livelihood opportunities and achieving cheaper food prices and food security goals,” said the party-list.

<https://mb.com.ph/2025/3/7/lee-says-agri-smugglers-should-be-charged-and-jailed>

MANILA BULLETIN:

DA Sec. Tiu-Laurel meets with agri youth

BY YVETTE TAN

Mar 7, 2025 09:56 AM

AVANT GARDENER



Department of Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu-Laurel Jr., through the efforts of the Agribusiness and Countryside Development Foundation (ABCDF), recently met with some members of the youth to discuss the state of Philippine agriculture.

ABCDF is a non-profit organization that aims to bring people together for job generation, particularly in rural areas.

In attendance were ABCDF chair Julius Barcelona, ABCDF president Ernesto Ordonez, ABCDF vice president Vicky Winicke, ABCDF trustee yours truly, and select invitees from the agriculture youth sector including Dennis Hung of Mapalad Integrated Farms, Armand Siazon of fishing social enterprise Tindagat, Raf Dionisio and Jess Infante of sustainable travel agency MAD Travel, and Raffy Tesoro of agricultural logistics company Heneral Merchandise.

The meeting went over an hour, with Sec Tiu-Laurel extending the initial 45-minute window so that he could get a better grasp of the concerns of young agribusiness owners. Here's a part of what was discussed:

Barcelona, who is also COO of Harbest Agribusiness Corporation, acknowledged that “the attrition is very high... Before the pandemic, we would meet fairly regularly among many young professionals [in the agriculture industry], but after the pandemic, I think more than half of them have essentially ceased operations since then.”

Hung spoke a bit about how he started his farm, saying that while they started from scratch and had to go through a lot of trial and error, he had a bit of leeway because farming wasn't their main source of income. He cited knowledge transfer as a challenge that new farmers face. “It would have been easier if someone [was] at least guiding us throughout the production stage of our products.”

Barcelona concurred. “Extension services really are fairly lacking... I know the Mandanas [ruling] means that a lot of these extension services are supposed to be the responsibility of the LGUs now, but that seems to be fairly lacking.”

Dionisio, who works with Aetas in Zambales, recounted the impact of environmental calamities on the communities he works with. “We've been planting since 2016 we lost 22,000 trees from the wildfire this year, which is why we moved hard into making biochar. But we could turn the flammable grass into carbon powder that we can sell. But across all the communities—we work with water—it's their

first time to really lack water... But that said, it looks like if they have enough irrigation funds, they can weather through [lack of rain]...” Barcelona correlated the hesitation of young people to enter agriculture with not just the inadequate income associated with the industry but also a lack of a safety net, especially given how unpredictable nature can be. “some sort of safety net... or same kind of network for... crop insurance, or improvement on irrigation” [would help encourage young people to stay in the industry].

Secretary Tiu-Laurel said that, “...each plant, each product, is an industry, separate industry.... I don't want to dictate to the industry, because the DA is not a company. You tell us what you need, and we should just meet on a regular basis, and we should give you what you really need.”

He added in Taglish that what the DA is looking for are projects that it can support. “What I want from you are projects. What are your projects? Ones where you and the farmers make money. Let us know what you need. I think the best thing that the DA can do is create success stories.”

Sec Tiu-Laurel is confident that there are a lot of opportunities for growth in the industry. “There’s only one way but up... There are so many problems and issues but they’re fixable, as long as we have a plan,” he said. “The beauty is so many people are willing to help, so there’s hope. As long as the government listens to you guys, [and] you listen to us, I think we will be okay.”

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<https://mb.com.ph/2025/3/7/da-sec-tiu-laurel-meets-with-agri-youth>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Bringing affordable rice to every home: San Juan's commitment to food security

BY MANILA BULLETIN

Mar 7, 2025 09:55 AM

METRO MATTERS



By **MAYOR FRANCIS ZAMORA**

For months, the weight of rising prices of rice has been a heavy burden on Filipino families, with prices hitting an all-time high of up to ₱60 per kilogram. Since rice is a staple in every household, this sharp increase has put a significant strain on families, squeezing pressure on households across the country.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, the national government has launched the “Rice For All” program. This initiative is designed to make rice more affordable and accessible, reinforcing our government's commitment to food security, restoring price stability, and ensuring the well-being of our citizens.

On Feb. 3, 2025, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. declared a food security emergency due to the drastic rise in the price of rice. This declaration empowered the National Food Authority (NFA) to release at least 25,000 metric tons of rice per month, amounting to 300,000 metric tons in total. The goal was to bring rice prices back to pre-July 2023 levels and alleviate the financial burden on consumers.

To be able to begin selling buffer stocks of rice, I signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the National Food Authority on Feb. 19, 2025 during the ceremonial turnover at the NFA Warehouse in Valenzuela City. This launch, which served as a template for other LGUs who wish to sell at a low price as well, paved the way for our initial rice selling with the end goal of stabilizing market prices and ensuring that affordable rice reaches communities most affected by the price surge.

The role of local government units

LGUs play a critical role in implementing the "Rice For All" program. Through this initiative, LGUs can procure rice from the NFA at ₱33 per kilogram and sell it to their constituents for a maximum of ₱35 per kilogram—significantly lower than prevailing market rates.

Here in San Juan, we've taken this program to heart, understanding that rice is a necessity. That's why we've committed to providing NFA rice at cost, at ₱33 per kilogram or ₱1,650 per sack. Although LGUs are allowed to mark up up to P2 per kilo effectively increasing the price to ₱35 per kilo, we chose to sell the rice to our constituents at ₱33 per kilo with the city government absorbing all logistical expenses such as trucking, hauling, and transport. We did this to ensure that no additional financial burden is placed on our people.

On March 24, a week after the MOA signing, San Juan became the first city in the Philippines to roll-out the selling of rice at ₱33 per kilo. To facilitate for an organized and well-accounted for distribution and to ensure that the sacks of rice will not be sold at a higher price by unscrupulous traders, our city government implemented a pre-registration system, to be able to account for the correct number of orders and payment remittance as well since payments collected by the City Government of San Juan will have to be remitted to the National Food Authority.

The people have truly patronized this rice selling initiative, and their support has inspired us to find more ways to help. That is why we created an option for families who cannot afford a full sack of rice which costs ₱1,650.00. We repacked it into five-kilogram bags, still at the same price of ₱33.00 per kilo, or just ₱165.00 for a five-kilogram pack, so that no one is left behind.

The registration process continues, and the sale of affordable rice is no longer limited to San Juan City Hall but is also being made available through the Makabagong San Juan Barangay Caravans. The Makabagong San Juan Barangay Caravan is an LGU initiative wherein services from the City Hall are brought directly to the barangays, offered for free, and made accessible to all San Juaneños. As part of this initiative, the Barangay Caravans now also facilitate the sale of affordable rice, ensuring greater access to the murang bigas for more families.

The success of “Rice For All” hinges on widespread participation. We are very happy to note that there is an increasing number of local government units that have already joined the initiative. To my fellow local chief executives, let us support the Rice for All Program of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. and the Department of Agriculture. The objective of which is to bring affordable rice to every Filipino household in the Philippines.

<https://mb.com.ph/2025/3/7/bringing-affordable-rice-to-every-home-san-juan-s-commitment-to-food-security>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Improved weather forecasting seen as a big boon for farmers, agri workers--Abby Binay

BY ELLSON QUISMORIO

Mar 8, 2025 10:58 AM

AT A GLANCE

- PILI, Camarines Sur--Senatorial candidate Makati City Mayor Abby Binay has raised the need to increase funding for the state weather bureau, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).



(MANILA BULLETIN)

PILI, Camarines Sur--Senatorial candidate Makati City Mayor Abby Binay has raised the need to increase funding for the state weather bureau, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

Binay, who was in town here Friday, March 7 for the administration-backed Alyansa para sa Bagong Pilipinas' campaign sortie, said the additional money will help the agency improve its forecasting capabilities.

This would in turn be a big boon for farmers and other workers in the agriculture sector, who get severely affected by weather conditions, the mayor said.

Binay expressed concerns over the reduced funding for Project NOAH (Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazard)--the Philippines' primary disaster risk reduction and management program.

Because of this, Binay is worried that the country might not be prepared to face a calamity.

She says the additional funds for improved forecasting will help give early warning to farmers and communities so they can prepare for any eventuality.

According to the Senate hopeful, addressing the issue of climate change requires proper data and forecasting.

That way, damages to property and agriculture as a result of typhoons would could be averted.

According to the Department of Agriculture (DA), a whopping 98 percent of agricultural production losses between 2013 and 2022 have been due to climate-related hazards. The total damage to property has reached P229.8 billion.

Of the damaged crops, 36 percent of this or equivalent to P108 billion was rice crops or palay.

https://mb.com.ph/2025/3/8/improved-weather-forecasting-seen-as-a-big-boon-for-farmers-agri-workers-abby-binay#google_vignette

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

‘Price tag for FTI land undervalued’

Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas - The Philippine Star

March 8, 2025 | 12:00am



Stock photo of a peso money bill.

Philstar.com / Jovannie Lambayan

MANILA, Philippines — The P58 billion estimated proceeds from the potential sale of 24 hectares of land owned by the Food Terminal Inc. are deemed below the asset’s value, according to FTI president and CEO Joseph Rudolph Lo.

Lo told The STAR that the P58-billion valuation for a portion of the agency’s land is underestimated. He noted that the 74-hectare ARCA South property of property giant Ayala Land Inc., which was previously part of FTI, is selling at P600,000 per square meter.

“Even at half that price, this (remaining 40 hectares of FTI) is already P120 billion,” Lo said, noting that the FTI has a remaining land of about 40 hectares.

“The smaller the property, the higher the price,” he pointed out.

Lo said they do not expect the FTI’s remaining land to be valued the same as ARCA South, but he is hoping that the valuation would be fair and would not shortchange the government.

The STAR broke the story earlier this week that the Government Service Insurance System and Ayala Land are interested in acquiring a portion of FTI in Taguig for P58 billion as the Department of Finance (DOF) ramps up asset disposal to generate revenue.

The FTI is on the list of potential assets for sale even amid complications and resistance to the disposal of the property.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Ayala Land confirmed that it has inquired with the DOF about the government’s future plans regarding the remaining 24-hectare FTI property in Taguig.

“However, we wish to clarify that this was an exploratory discussion with no firm agreements or commitments,” ALI senior vice president and chief financial officer Augusto Bengzon said.

In 2012, the government sold a huge chunk of FTI to Ayala Land for P24.3 billion. The property giant then transformed the 74-hectare FTI into an integrated mixed-use development now known as ARCA South.

Lo earlier said the FTI supports the overall development of the country, but maintained that they must retain a portion of the food terminal so they can fulfill their mandate.

He said proceeds of the sale should be allocated to the Department of Agriculture as its annual budget remains insufficient to fulfill the vision of President Marcos. Lo said the FTI could still generate proceeds that the DA needs to support local farmers if it fulfills its mandate.

“If it comes to sacrificing FTI for the DA, then I fully support the direction,” Lo said.

FTI has no more food terminals in the area, with its only source of income coming from its leasing activity, which the DOF said is not part of FTI’s mandate.

The DA is pushing for the revival of FTI, specifically for cold storage and food hubs to address overproduction and minimize post-harvest losses of various farm products.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/03/08/2426626/price-tag-fti-land-undervalued>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Hog producers back max SRP for pork

Bella Cariaso - The Philippine Star

March 8, 2025 | 12:00am



In a radio interview yesterday, Pork Producers Federation of the Philippines president Rolando Tambago said that the maximum SRP of P350 for pork shoulder and P380 for pork belly is necessary, as the retail price of P480 per kilo is too high.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — A hog raisers' group backed the decision of the Department of Agriculture (DA) to implement a maximum suggested retail price (SRP) for pork products starting Monday to address the high retail price of the commodity.

In a radio interview yesterday, Pork Producers Federation of the Philippines president Rolando Tambago said that the maximum SRP of P350 for pork shoulder and P380 for pork belly is necessary, as the retail price of P480 per kilo is too high.

“We are supporting the maximum suggested retail price, as in the past the retail price of pork belly reached as high as P480 per kilo,” Tambago said.

He acknowledged that the pork industry is affected by pork consumption, because of the high prices on meat products.

Tambago noted that the farmgate price of pork is only P230 per kilo.

“The biyaheros – transporters of agricultural products – put additional cost ranged between P70 and P80 (per kilo) and the retailers will add P50 (per kilo) that will cover their profit and their operation,” he said.

Tambago added that while the production of pork was affected by African swine fever (ASF), P480 per kilo is not reasonable.

“We cannot determine who benefits from the P480, but definitely somebody is earning from the supply chain. Our members were affected by ASF but the P480 is too much,” he noted.

At the same time, Tambago said the consumption of pork will go down further with the observance of the Lenten season.

“Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said that we will meet again to discuss the max SRP,” he added.

Tambago encouraged consumers to buy from retailers who will follow the maximum SRP.

He said the maximum SRP will not cover supermarkets and meat shops amid the high cost of operation. DA spokesman Arnel de Mesa said aside from the maximum SRP on pork shoulder and pork belly, the price of “sabit ulo” – the price at which traders pass pork to retailers – would be capped at P300 per kilo.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/03/08/2426735/hog-producers-back-max-srp-pork>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Comelec welcomes complaints vs dynasties

[Rhodina Villanueva](#) - The Philippine Star

March 8, 2025 | 12:00am



Commission on Elections (Comelec) Chairman George Garcia on July 17, 2024.

STAR / Ryan Baldemor

MANILA, Philippines — The Commission on Elections (Comelec) welcomed yesterday complaints regarding political dynasties, emphasizing that such filings would provide an opportunity to address ongoing concerns about political families dominating the electoral landscape.

In an interview with The STAR's online show "Truth on the Line," Comelec Chairman George Garcia said these complaints would help clarify the legal "gray areas" surrounding political dynasties, which continue to arise in election cycles.

Garcia also noted that a rival candidate may file a complaint against an opponent's political dynasty. "A disqualification case or cancellation of candidacy can be filed by any registered voter or a rival candidate," the Comelec chief said.

He gave assurance that the commission would act swiftly on any petition.

"We hope that we can later on act on (cases) on the issue of merit, which can later on be brought to the Supreme Court (SC)," Garcia said.

Regarding the Tulfo case, Garcia mentioned that it could still be refiled if the petitioner submits the necessary documents.

If a ruling is made and it is later determined that there was grave abuse of discretion, the case will be elevated to the SC, which can then address the political dynasty issue.

"We are not afraid of being tagged as committing grave abuse of discretion because there is a need to settle gray areas. There is a need that before the 2028 presidential elections, that issue (of political dynasty) should be settled," Garcia noted.

He added: "If there is no legislation, Comelec will do something that will be the basis therefore of the Supreme Court to interpret if the Comelec is at fault so that it will serve as our guide in other cases similarly situated to the case that will be brought to the SC."

Lawyer Virgilio Garcia had previously filed a formal petition seeking to disqualify ACT-CIS Rep. Erwin Tulfo from his Senate run, reelectionist Quezon City and ACT-CIS Reps. Ralph Wendel Tulfo and Jocelyn Tulfo, Turismo party-list first nominee Wanda Tulfo-Teo and senatorial candidate Ben Tulfo.

He argued that their candidacies constitute a political dynasty, which is prohibited under the Constitution.?

This petition was dismissed by the Comelec on a technicality, as the petitioner failed to submit the necessary attachment required for the commission to assume jurisdiction and proceed with evaluating the merits of the case.

The full interview of Truth on the Line with Garcia will be out tomorrow.

Rice exemption

Meanwhile, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. submitted a letter to the Comelec, requesting an exemption from the election-related ban on the sale of National Food Authority (NFA) rice to local government units.

The letter, submitted on Feb. 24, follows Garcia's statement that no official request had been received from the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Tiu Laurel emphasized that the DA, under a food security emergency, is authorized to sell NFA rice buffer stocks in areas facing supply shortages or price hikes.

The request seeks Comelec approval to allow DA-Food Terminal Inc. (FTI) to sell NFA rice to LGUs at P33 per kilo, enabling them to resell it at P35 per kilo.

Tiu Laurel noted that LGUs could purchase rice through credit arrangements with FTI.

NFA administrator Larry Lacson urged LGUs to hasten rice withdrawals, while DA Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa clarified that the credit scheme was an efficiency measure, not desperation. — **Bella Cariaso**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/03/08/2426750/comelec-welcomes-complaints-vs-dynasties>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

DA bans poultry importation from 3 US states due to bird flu

By: [Jordeene B. Lagare @jordeenelagare](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)
Philippine Daily Inquirer / 10:18 AM March 07, 2025



INQUIRER FILES

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) has temporarily banned importing poultry from Indiana, New York, and Pennsylvania in the United States to prevent the spread of bird flu into the country.

The DA imposed the import restriction effective immediately, even if the Philippines has not recorded new active cases of avian influenza since early January.

The ban covers domestic and wild birds and their products, including poultry meat, day-old chicks, eggs, and semen originating from three American states.

It noted that the “rapid spread” of bird flu in the US in a short period since the first laboratory detection necessitates a wider coverage of trade restrictions to prevent the entry of this virus and protect the health of the local poultry population, the DA said in Memorandum Order No. 14.

The agency ordered the ban after US authorities reported several outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza in Indiana, New York and Pennsylvania affecting domestic birds.

“The abovementioned state has three or more counties affected with HPAI as reflected in their official reports in the WOA (World Organization for Animal Health),” the memo said.

With the import ban in place, the DA immediately suspended the processing, evaluation of the application, and issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances to these commodities.

The memo excludes shipments that are in transit, loaded or accepted upon port before transmitting the DA order to American authorities, provided that the products were slaughtered or produced 14 days before

the three US states recorded the first outbreak: Jay County in Indiana on Jan. 3; Suffolk County in New York on Jan. 17; and Dauphin County in Pennsylvania on Feb. 4.

All veterinary quarantine officers or inspectors will stop and seize poultry shipments from Indiana, New York, and Pennsylvania at all major ports of entry.

Given America's geographical land, Philippine and US authorities forged an accord in 2016 stipulating that a state-wide ban would only be enforced if at least three counties within a state have HPAI cases.

Ban lifted

In a separate issuance, the DA lifted the import ban on poultry originating from France after informing the WOAAH that all bird flu cases have ended with resolved status and no additional outbreaks were recorded after Feb. 4.

Citing its assessment, the DA said, "The risk of contamination from importing live poultry, poultry meat, day-old chicks, eggs and semen is negligible," based on Memorandum Order No. 13.

"The lifting of the ban is expected to ease trade tensions and support the poultry industry, which has been adversely impacted by the restrictions," the DA said in a statement on Thursday.

The DA made this decision after the Bureau of Animal Industry's assessment that stated that the disease's containment "appears to have been successful," it added.

It can be recalled that the agency temporarily barred the entry of poultry from France in September last year following an avian influenza outbreak in Saint-Malo, located in Ille-et-Vilaine, Bretagne, infecting domestic birds.

The Philippines itself is not yet free of bird flu, although no positive cases have been reported since Jan. 4, according to the BAI's update as of Feb. 28.

Likewise, there are no ongoing, or depopulation and surveillance activities within the 1-kilometer radius in previously reported cases.

To date, 17 provinces have declared bird flu-free: Camarines Sur, Davao del Sur, Rizal, South Cotabato, Ilocos Sur, Batangas, Capiz, Quezon, Aurora, Ilocos Norte, Pangasinan, Cotabato, Isabela, Maguindanao del Sur, Sultan Kudarat, Leyte, and Cagayan.

<https://business.inquirer.net/510806/da-bans-poultry-importation-from-3-us-states-due-to-bird-flu>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Abby Binay eyes more funding for Pagasa to improve forecasting

By: [Jan Escosio](#) - Reporter / [@JEPOI04](#)
INQUIRER.net / 03:04 PM March 08, 2025



Senatorial candidate and Makati City Mayor Abby Binay in one of her recent campaign sorties.

PILI, CAMARINES SUR – Makati City Mayor and senatorial candidate Abby Binay has proposed increasing funds for Department of Science and Technology – Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (DOST-PAGASA) to further improve climate forecasting.

Binay said this would greatly help farmers and the agriculture sector which has been severely affected by extreme weather conditions.

“Climate change is already here. We’ve been talking about rising temperatures for years, but funding for important programs like Project NOAH has been cut, leaving us unprepared when disasters strike,” she said.

Binay pointed out the importance of accurate and timely forecasting.

“More funding for climate forecasting could help us give early warnings to farmers and communities about extreme weather, so they can take necessary precautions.” she said.

Binay said tackling climate change requires resilience, which is built on data and forecasting.

“Without proper data, we’re flying blind,” she said.

She emphasized that increased funding to support DOST-PAGASA’s climate data collection and forecasting services would be beneficial in the long term.

“Let’s invest in data, forecasting, and resilience to protect our future,” Binay said.

According to the Department of Agriculture, 98% of agricultural production losses from 2013 to 2022 are due to climate-related hazards.

Total agricultural production loss due to climate-related events has been pegged at P229,848,889,131.

The DA also said rice is the most climate-damaged crop with an accounted loss of 36% or some P108 billion.

Typhoons are also responsible for 88% of total damages and are regarded as the most destructive climate-related hazard to agriculture, the DA said.

<https://www.inquirer.net/431762/abby-binay-eyes-more-funding-for-pagasa-to-improve-forecasting/>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Abby Binay bats for enhanced weather forecasting amid climate woes

By: [Charie Abarca](#) - Reporter / [@charieabarcaINQ](#)
[INQUIRER.net](#) / 08:31 PM March 07, 2025



Makati City Mayor Abby Binay

PILI, Camarines Sur — Makati City Mayor and senatorial candidate [Abby Binay](#) wants an increased funding for the state weather bureau, seeking to improve climate forecasting in response to climate change.

Binay made the call on Friday at the Alyansa Para sa Bagong Pilipinas' press conference in Camarines Sur.

Binay said an improved climate forecasting would greatly help farmers and the agriculture sector which has been severely affected by extreme weather conditions.

“Climate change is already here. We’ve been talking about rising temperatures for years, but funding for important programs like Project NOAH has been cut, leaving us unprepared when disasters strike,” she said.

“More funding for climate forecasting could help us give early warnings to farmers and communities about extreme weather, so they can take necessary precautions,” she added.

Data from the Department of Agriculture showed that 98 percent of agricultural production losses from 2013 to 2022 are due to climate-related hazards.

<https://www.inquirer.net/431708/abby-binay-bats-for-enhanced-weather-forecasting-amid-climate-woes/>

REMATE:

Poultry ban sa 3 US states ipinataw ng Pinas vs bird flu

March 7, 2025 16:19



MANILA, Philippines – Ipinagbawal ng Department of Agriculture (DA) ang pag-angkat ng mga manok mula sa Indiana, New York, at Pennsylvania sa Estados Unidos upang maiwasan ang pagkalat ng bird flu sa bansa.

Kaugnay nito ipinatupad agad ng DA ang paghihigpit sa pag-import, kahit na ang Pilipinas ay hindi nakapagtala ng mga bagong aktibong kaso ng avian influenza mula noong unang bahagi ng Enero.

Saklaw ng pagbabawal ang mga domestic at wild na ibon at ang kanilang mga produkto, kabilang ang karne ng manok, mga sisiw, itlog, at semilya na nagmula sa tatlong estado ng Amerika.

Nabanggit nito na ang “mabilis na pagkalat” ng bird flu sa US sa maikling panahon mula noong unang laboratory detection ay nangangailangan ng mas malawak na saklaw ng mga paghihigpit sa kalakalan upang maiwasan ang pagpasok ng virus na ito at protektahan ang kalusugan ng lokal na populasyon ng manok, sinabi ng DA sa Memorandum Order No. 14.

Samantala iniutos ng ahensya ang pagbabawal matapos mag-ulat ang mga awtoridad ng US ng ilang paglaganap ng highly pathogenic avian influenza sa Indiana, New York at Pennsylvania na nakakaapekto sa mga domestic bird.

“Ang nabanggit na estado ay may tatlo o higit pang mga county na apektado ng HPAI gaya ng makikita sa kanilang mga opisyal na ulat sa WOA (World Organization for Animal Health),” sabi ng memo.

Nabatid sa pagkakaroon ng import ban, agad na sinuspinde ng DA ang pagproseso, pagsusuri ng aplikasyon, at pag-iisyu ng sanitary at phytosanitary import clearance sa mga kalakal na ito.

Sinabi pa ng DA na ang memo ay hindi kasama ang mga padala na nasa transit, ni-load o tinatanggap sa port bago ipadala ang order ng DA sa mga awtoridad ng Amerika, sa kondisyon na ang mga produkto ay kinatay o ginawa 14 na araw bago naitala ng tatlong estado ng US ang unang outbreak: Jay County sa Indiana noong Ene. 3; Suffolk County sa New York noong Enero 17; at Dauphin County sa Pennsylvania noong Peb. 4.

Ang lahat ng mga opisyal ng beterinaryo na quarantine o inspektor ay titigil at kukuha ng mga padala ng manok mula sa Indiana, New York, at Pennsylvania sa lahat ng mga pangunahing daungan ng pagpasok.

Dahil sa heograpikal na lupain ng America, ang mga awtoridad ng Pilipinas at US ay nagpanday ng isang kasunduan noong 2016 na nagsasaad na ang isang state-wide ban ay ipapatupad lamang kung hindi bababa sa tatlong county sa loob ng isang estado ang may mga kaso ng HPAI.

Sa isang hiwalay na pagpapalabas, inalis ng DA ang pagbabawal sa pag-import ng mga manok na nagmula sa France matapos ipaalam sa WOAHA na ang lahat ng kaso ng bird flu ay natapos nang may naresolbang status at walang karagdagang outbreak ang naitala pagkatapos ng Peb. 4.

Sa pagbanggit sa pagtatasa nito, sinabi ng DA, “Ang panganib ng kontaminasyon mula sa pag-aangkat ng buhay na manok, karne ng manok, mga sisiw na nasa araw, itlog at semilya ay bale-wala,” batay sa Memorandum Order No. 13. (*Santi Celario*)

<https://remate.ph/poultry-ban-sa-3-us-states-ipinataw-ng-pinas-vs-bird-flu/>

MANILA STANDARD:

DA bans poultry imports from 3 American states



Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu-Laurel Jr.

By Othel V. Campos

March 7, 2025, 8:30 pm

Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. issued a temporary ban on importing domestic and wild birds as well as poultry products from Indiana, New York and Pennsylvania in the United States due to outbreaks of the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 strain.

The ban, implemented through Memorandum Order 14 signed on March 4, 2025, aims to protect the local poultry industry, which supports jobs, attracts investment, and ensures food security.

The memorandum cited multiple H5N1 outbreaks confirmed by US veterinary authorities as of Feb. 20, 2025.

Tiu Laurel said the virus' rapid spread warranted stricter trade restrictions to prevent its entry into the Philippines.

The ban covers poultry meat, eggs, day-old chicks, semen, and related products from the affected states. The order also suspended the processing, evaluation, and issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances for these commodities.

Shipments already in transit, loaded, or accepted before the ban's official communication may be allowed if the products were slaughtered or produced at least 14 days before the first outbreak in each state.

The first outbreaks were reported on Jan. 3 in Indiana's Jay County, Jan. 17 in Suffolk County in New York and Feb. 4 in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania.

Shipments that fail to meet the conditions will be confiscated by veterinary quarantine officers at major ports of entry.

The ban takes effect immediately and will remain in place until officially lifted, the DA said.

<https://manilastandard.net/business/314566100/da-bans-poultry-imports-from-3-american-states.html>