CLIPPINGS FOR FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2017

A. SEC. EFP QUOTED

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Piñol urges Rice-Corn diet for Pinoys; 'It's healthier'

PILIPINO MIRROR
P700-M pinsala ni 'Urduja' sa agri sector

B. DA FAMILY

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
Agri damage from Urduja hits P702 M
BFAR warns of fish kill in Taal Lake
Sugar output up, prices down in Dec

MANILA BULLETIN
PH needs P400 M for rabies elimination
Ample 2017 agri budget assured

BUSINESS WORLD
Crop damage from 'Urduja' estimated at P700M

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Thousands face hunger
Budget to sustain agri-growth – Loren

BUSINESS MIRROR
Urduja damage to crops, fishery climbs to P706.61 million – DA

THE MANILA TIMES
BFAR warns of fish kill in Taal Lake
Tool to detect NDV developed
Quality seeds and hybrid corn

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL TONIGHT
BFAR to use 2 gov't vessels

PILIPINO MIRROR
China nag-donate ng fingerlings

C. AGRI-RELATED STORY

MANILA BULLETIN
'Urduja' damage to agri, infra over P1B – NDRRMC
NFA not yet ready to let go of functions

BUSINESS MIRROR
NFA will still import rice, Aquino says

THE MANILA TIMES
P446M up for poverty cut in Quirino

Cocoa industry can spur farm tourism
SEARCA promotes school gardens

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT
NFA calls for safety nets post-QR

TEMPO
P1B in agriculture, infra lost to 'Urduja'

PILIPINO MIRROR
NFA tuloy sa pag-import ng bigas
TRAIN ipinaliwanag: Paano makaaapekto ang sugar tax sa mga konsumer

D. FOREIGN STORY

BUSINESS WORLD
Raw sugar extends gains; coffee, cocoa also rise

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT
China tightens import, specifications on soybeans

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: A4

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE

PIÑOL URGES RICE-CORN DIET FOR PINOYS; 'IT'S HEALTHIER'

DAVAO CITY—It's like hitting several birds with one stone.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said the blended rice and corn that his department officially launched here on Thursday would not only counter the increasing incidence of diabetes among Filipinos, but would also help corn farmers improve their living conditions.

It would help the country solve its problem on rice sufficiency as well, said Piñol of the Bigas-Mais (rice-corn) blend that would be made available in the market starting January in three mixes: 70-30, or 70 percent rice and 30 percent corn, 50-50 and 30-70.

While the idea of making corn part of the Filipino staple was nothing new, Piñol said, there was a problem on the supply side. "People did not know where to get it, unlike now when they can buy it from Rustans, SM, Shopwise and the (public markets) soon."

Emmanuel Piñol

Piñol said the rice-corn blend used the open pollinated variety of white corn and not GMO.

He added that the Department of Agriculture was not worried about the blend's acceptability since corn was already a staple among the people of the Visayas and Mindanao. It was, however, a different story in Luzon and the National Capital Region, the official admitted.

"In other areas, (corn) has been stereotyped as food for the poor but we want to change that because there are so many good attributes of corn that have been overlooked," Piñol said, citing that the blend was a healthier option than rice because it "(has a) low glycemic (index) and takes longer to digest. In fact, Manny Pacquiao eats corn."

The rice-corn blend would also help us achieve food sufficiency, the official said, adding that the country's rice production of 19.4 million metric tons last year, the highest in years, still lacked more that 200,000 metric tons to achieve rice sufficiency.

Piñol said consuming more white corn would also help corn farmers widen their market and improve their economic standing.

Maguindanao Gov. Esmael Mangudadatu said his province, which has more than 164,000 hectares of land planted to corn, would benefit a lot from the government's push for Bigas-Mais. —ALLAN NAWAL INQ

PILIPINO MIRROR
FILIPINO MIRROR MEDIA GROUP CORPORATION
- SALAMIN NG KATOTOHANAN -

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: 8

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

P700-M PINSALA NI 'URDUJA' SA AGRI SECTOR

UMABOT na sa P701.61 milyon ang inisyal na pinsala ng bagyong Urduja sa sektor ng agrikultura sa may apat na rehiyon.

Batay sa report ng Action Center ng Department of Agriculture (DA) kay Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol, aabot sa 36, 896 ektaryang sakahan ang napinsala ni Urduja sa Region 5, 7, 8 at Region 13.

"AS of 9 pm today, Dec. 20, 2017, the damages and losses to the agriculture sector caused by Tropical Depression Urduja have reached P701.61 , affecting a total of 36,896 hectares of agricultural areas in Region 5, 7, 8 and 13 witn an estimated volume of production loss at 17,334 metric tons," nakasaad sa report ni DA Usec. Ariel Cayanan kay Piñol.

Kabilang sa mga apektado sa sektor ay ang produksiyon ng palay na nagkakahalaga ng P408,300,096, sumusunod ang mais na nasa P7,818,74; high value crops, P280,005,020; cassava na nasa P2,026,956; at livestock at poultry na nasa P3,307,220.

Ang pinsala sa pasilidad ng BFAR ay nasa P157,000.

Sinabi ni Cayanan na patuloy pa rin ang pag-iikot ng kanilang mga tauhan sa mga apektadong lalawigan para mabatid ang lawak pa ng pinsala ng bagyong Urduja.

Tiniyak ni Secretary Piñol na nakahandang tumulong ang kagawaran sa mga naapektuhang magsasaka, kabilang na ang pagpapautang ng P20,000 at P5,000 sa mga magsasakang nakarehistro sa Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) **MONCHET LARAÑO**

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: B4

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Agri damage from Urduja hits P702 M

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

The cost of damage to agriculture in areas affected by tropical depression Urduja has reached P700 million with the crops sector sustaining the most damage, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said.

An updated report from the DA showed that agricultural damages have amounted to P701.61 million covering 36,896 hectares of agricultural areas in the Bicol Region, Eastern and Central Visayas, and Caraga with estimated volume of production loss at 17,334 metric tons (MT).

"Significant increase in damages and losses have been reported in rice and high value crops. Most affected rice plantings are in sowing, seedling, newly transplanted and vegetative stages," said Christopher Morales, DA-Field Programs Operational Planning Division chief.

Rice contributed the largest share of losses at 58 percent or P408 million covering 33,294 hectares equivalent to 11.4 percent of the total standing crop of 291,746 hectares.

There were also significant losses in the high value crops particularly vegetables in Eastern Visayas. Current damage is about P280 million or 40 percent of the total production losses.

"Most of these are on their fruit-bearing to harvestable stage. The affected 1,560 mango trees are in their flowering stage while most bananas and sweet potatoes are on their reproductive to maturity stage," Morales said.

Corn also accounted for 1.4 percent of losses at P7.82 million affecting 2,110 hectares, majority of which are in its seedling to vegetative stage. As for cassava, 17 hectares were affected amounting to about P2.03 million.

In terms of livestock, damages are estimated at P3.3 million which includes 2,534 poultry heads, 307 goats, 350 swines and some carabaos and cattle.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: 21

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BFAR warns of fish kill in Taal Lake

BATANGAS – The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has warned fish pen operators around Taal Lake of a possible fish kill, saying the drop in the temperature could lead to an increase of sulfur in the water.

In an advisory dated Dec. 12, the BFAR-Calabarzon cited cold winds spawned by the northeast monsoon, which is common from December to February.

Fish cage operators are advised to immediately harvest their fully grown stocks.

The BFAR said local government units should also prepare oxygen tanks, pumps and engine sets should the temperature of the water continues to decline.

There are around 6,000 fish pens in Taal Lake.

– Arnell Ozaeta

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: B15

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Sugar output up, prices down in Dec

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

After almost three months, local raw sugar production has picked up as it reached 382,538 metric tons (MT) as of early-December, the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) said.

The current production is 5.3 percent better than the 363,030 MT recorded in the same period last year. Sugar crop year starts every September and ends in August.

Based on data on sugar production for crop year 2017-2018, output in terms of 50-kilogram bags totalled to 7.7 million from 7.3 million in the comparative period.

The country's raw-sugar demand was also 29 percent higher at 552,570 MT from the 2016 level of 427,487 MT.

The total sugarcanes milled during the period also inched up seven percent to 4.5 million MT.

More mills have also started milling as of Dec. 3 reaching 20 across Negros, Panay, Eastern Visayas and Mindanao, where more than 85 percent came from Negros region particularly Victorias.

In terms of refined sugar, production surged 43 percent to 120,305 MT, from 84,225 MT recorded in the same period last year.

However, sugar prices in the mill gate level remain in a downward trend as it declined 26 percent to P1,190 per 50-kg bag from P1,602 per 50-kg bag in 2016.

Likewise, wholesale and retail prices for raw, washed, and refined sugar also saw lower prices.

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: B-3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PH needs ₱400 M for rabies elimination

The government is short of its target to vaccinate even just for the 70 percent of the country's dog population as its budget for the program is only ₱30 million instead of the required ₱400 million.

Joy Lagayan of Bureau of Animal Industry's (BAI) animal disease control division said that more than ₱400 million is needed until 2020 for the "full-blown" implementation of the government's rabies elimination project.

This, accoding to her, should fund vaccine procurement and additional vaccinators.

With roughly 250 Filipinos dying of rabies yearly, rabies continues to be a serious public health concern in the Philippines with animal vaccination considered as the most effective way of eliminating the disease.

As of now, BAI is only using the balance of nearly ₱70 million worth of support it received from the Department of Health (DOH) last year.

Next year, the agency is expecting a budget of only ₱20 to ₱30 million for this agenda alone.

And as per Lagayan, "that's not even sufficient to buy the vaccines."

"We're still working on increasing the budget for the next years," she further said.

The number of dogs in the Philippines right now is estimated to be around 10 percent of the human population, which means there could be more than 10 million dogs here right now.

In its overall target, the government wants the Philippines to be free from rabbies cases by 2020, as ambitious as it may sound.

After all, such goal is patterned from the ASEAN target of rabies freedom by 2020.

BAI launched this week the "Rabies Free 2020" app, a Pinoy android phone application developed through the collaborative efforts of BAI and the Technological Institute of the Philippines (TIP), in line with the bureau's commitment to safeguard public health through the control and elimination of animal rabies in the country.

This application aimed to strengthen the rabies awareness campaign through useful information on the facts about rabies, location of animal bite treatment centers, location of animal rabies diagnostic laboratories, and contact information needed by the public.

To date, provinces with the highest reported animal rabies cases from 2016 and 2017 include Pampanga, Pangasinan, Cebu, Iloilo, South Cotabato, Misamis Oriental, Zamboanga City, Bataan, Bulacan, Davao del Sur and Metro Manila. (MBM)

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER
Date: December 22, 2017 Page: 4

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

• Ample 2017 agri budget assured

Senator Loren Legarda on Thursday assured that the ₱3.767-trillion national budget for 2018 has enough allocation to further boost the country's agriculture sector. "The Philippines is an agricultural country. It is imperative for us to sustain progress in the agriculture sector and ensure that there is enough support to address the needs and concerns of our farmers and fisherfolks," said Legarda, who chairs the Senate committee on finance. The senator said it has been the Senate's goal to ensure that next year's budget would give progress for the more than 11 million farmers and fisherfolks in the country. Under the 2018 budget, Legarda said the approved budget of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and attached agencies for next year is ₱110.075 billion. (Hannah L. Torregoza)

BusinessWorld
INCREASE YOUR BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: 4/S1

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

AFP PHOTO / PPD

A BRIDGE damaged after a flash flood brought about by heavy rains, triggered by tropical storm Urduja, is seen from the presidential helicopter in Catmon town, Biliran.

Crop damage from 'Urduja' estimated at P700M

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said tropical storm Urduja (international name: Kai-tak) caused P701.76 million worth of crop damage in the Bicol provinces, Central and Eastern Visayas, and the Caraga region of northeastern Mindanao.

The DA said in a report that as of late Wednesday, lost agricultural production was 17,334 metric tons (MT), with damage to 36,896 hectares (has.), affecting 33,922 farmers.

Lost rice production was estimated at 5,395 MT worth P408.30 million, affecting 33,294 has. and 29,706 farmers.

The damage is equivalent to 11.4% of the standing crop in the regions which is estimated to yield 291,746 MT.

"The volume loss incurred has increased from yesterday's 4,892 to 5,395 metric tons today. Most affected rice crops are at sowing, seedling, newly transplanted and vegetative stages, which majority were reported as totally damaged," it said.

High-value crop damage in the regions was reckoned at 11,725 MT worth P280.01 million or 39.9% of the total, much of it vegetables in the harvestable stage in Eastern Visayas such as squash, okra, and eggplant. The damage was inflicted over 1,475 has.

Damage to corn, currently at the seedling to vegetative stages, was unchanged from the last report at 182 MT worth P7.92 million, affecting 2,110 has. and 1,578 farmers.

Damage to cassava, also in the seedling to vegetative stages, was 30 MT worth P2.203 million, affecting 17 has. and 25 farmers.

Livestock damage was concentrated in the Bicol provinces of Albay and Camarines Sur, estimated at P3.31 million or 2,489 animals.

— **Anna Gabriela A. Mogato**

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: A19

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Thousands face hunger

Destroyed roads, bridges cut off interior villages of Biliran capital town from aid

By Joey A. Gabieta and Karl R. Ocampo
@Team_Inquirer

TACLOBAN CITY—Several interior villages of the storm-hit capital town of Naval, Biliran, remained cut off from aid after roads and bridges connecting them to the rest of the town and province had been destroyed at the height of Tropical Storm "Urduja" (international name: Kai-tak) on Dec. 16, a group of calamity survivors said.

"This means thousands of people from these villages could now be suffering from hunger," said Pablito Kuizon, provincial chair of the group People's Surge.

This could be the rationale for an order given by President Duterte for food depots to be put in place in areas highly vulnerable to storms and other natural calamities.

The President gave the order after an aerial survey of Biliran and other areas devastated by Urduja.

"Roads were closed because of the landslides and that's the first problem that relief efforts encounter—how to transport the commodities right away," said Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol, who was with Mr. Duterte during the aerial inspection.

List of villages

The villages that had been isolated were Imelda, Villa Caneja, Villa Consuelo, Capinahan, Cabungaan and Libtong, according to Kuizon.

"They have yet to be given help by our government," he said. The villages, he said, were accessible only by foot as even four-wheel drive vehicles, normally designed for rough terrain, could not reach the areas because of landslides.

Kuizon also claimed that at least 5,117 families in Naval, who belonged to People's Surge, were denied aid by the local government.

Quoting the municipal social development office, Kuizon said the families were not given aid because they had just recently received P5,000 in aid for survivors of Supertyphoon "Yolanda."

Don't discriminate

The P5,000 in Yolanda aid was given to people who were not given financial assistance to build or repair their homes.

"I hope this policy changes," Kuizon said. "The President told our officials to provide assistance to all typhoon victims," he said.

Food packs being distributed to survivors of Urduja consisted of three kilograms of rice, two cans of sardines and two packs of instant noodles.

The Department of Agriculture estimated that at least P701 million of crops, half of them rice, had been destroyed by Urduja.

At least 33,922 farmers in the Visayas were hit hard.

Piñol said the farmers could avail themselves of P5,000 in so-called survival and recovery loans and P20,000 in capital. INQ

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: A4

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BUDGET TO SUSTAIN AGRI GROWTH–LOREN

By Christine O. Avendaño
@10avendanoINQ

Sen. Loren Legarda said on Thursday that the 2018 budget law would sustain the 4.6-percent growth the agriculture sector posted in the first nine months of the year.

Legarda said the Department of Agriculture would have a budget of P110.75 billion—the seventh biggest allocation in the P3.7-trillion 2018 national budget—for the benefit of 11 million farmers and fisherfolk.

"The Philippines is an agriculture country. It is imperative for us to sustain progress in the agriculture sector and to ensure there is enough support to address the needs and concerns of our farmers and fisherfolk," Legarda said in a statement.

According to the Philipine Statistics Authority, the agriculture sector grew by 4.64 percent in the first nine months of this year due to the high production in the crops, livestock and poultry sector.

Gross value of production in agriculture was at P382.5 billion, a 6.27-percent increase from the previous year at current prices.

In next year's budget, the government made the following allocations:

- P20.2 billion for the national programs for rice, corn, high value crops development, organic agriculture and livestock;
- P2.669 billion for the construction, restoration or improvement of small-scale irrigation projects and P4.281 billion for construction of facilities and procurement of machinery and equipment;
- P9.958 billion for the construction, rehabilitation and repair of farm to market roads;
- P395 million for the implementation of extension support education and training services of the national corn program; and
- P1.05 billion under the Agro-Industry Modernization Credit and Financing Program Administration will be used for the establishment of a flexible credit facility for small farmers and fisherfolk. INQ

BusinessMirror

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: A3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Urduja damage to crops, fishery climbs to ₱701.61 million—DA

By Jasper Emmanuel Y. Arcalas
@jearcalas

DAMAGE wrought by Typhoon Urduja to crops and fishery in six regions of the country has reached P701.61 million, according to the latest assessment of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Field Programs Operational Planning Division Engr. Christopher V. Morales said that as of December 20, 9 a.m., about 17,334 metric tons (MT) of crops planted in 36,896 hectares in Regions 5, 6, 7 and 13 were affected by the typhoon.

Morales said the rice sector bore the brunt of the damage of Urduja, accounting for about 58.19 percent of the production losses. Damages to the rice sector was pegged at P408.30 million, based on the assessment of the DA regional field offices (RFOs).

"The affected [rice] area is 33,294 hectares, equivalent to 11.4 percent of the total standing crop of 291,746 hectares," Morales said in a memorandum addressed to Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel F. Piñol, a copy of which was given to reporters on Thursday.

"The volume loss incurred has increased from yesterday's [Wednesday] 4,892 [MT] to 5,395 MT today [Thursday]. Most affected rice crops are at sowing, seeding, newly transplanted and vegetative stages, a majority of which were reported as totally damaged," Morales added.

Latest assessment by the DA showed that losses in high-value crops sector has reached P280 million, or 39.9 percent, of the total estimated production losses, according to Morales.

"Meanwhile, the increase on the value of losses in high-value crops is mainly attributed to assorted vegetables [pole *sitao*, squash, okra, upland *kangkong*, bottle gourd, bitter gourd, string beans eggplant and *pechay*] in Region 8," he said.

"Most of these are on their fruit-bearing to harvestable stage. The total affected area for high-value crops is 1,475 hectares, equivalent to 11,726 MT volume loss," he added.

Meanwhile, losses in corn and cassava reached P7.82 million and P2.03 million, respectively, according to Morales.

Damages to the corn sector accounted for 1.4 percent of the total losses, with some 2,110 hectares being affected by the typhoon.

Morales said production losses of the livestock sector already reached P3.307 million. "Losses in livestock now include 2,489 animal heads [2,534 in poultry, 350 in swine, 307 in goats, 10 in carabao, five in cattle, three sheep and two in horse]," he added.

Meanwhile, the value of damages to agri-fisheries facilities of the DA reached P157,000, according to Morales. He added that the latest damage report is still for validation.

"The DA-DRRM Operations Center shall continuously monitor and provide further updates to the honorable secretary on the matter, once succeeding reports have been submitted by the concerned RFOs," he added.

The Manila Times

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: A7

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BFAR warns of fish kill in Taal Lake

THE Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Region 4A has advised local government units in Batangas to warn fish cage operators against the current quality of water in Taal lake that may lead to fish kill.

BFAR 4A Advisory No. 12, Series of 2017, dated December 12 states that strong and cold winds brought about by the northeast monsoon cause a decline in the water temperature.

The agency says this is a common experience during the cold months of December to February.

Fish cage operators are advised to closely monitor the situation and to start harvesting fully-grown produce.

Local agencies are also asked to prepare oxygen tanks, pumps and engine sets to try and prevent a fish kill should water temperature continue to decline in the coming days.

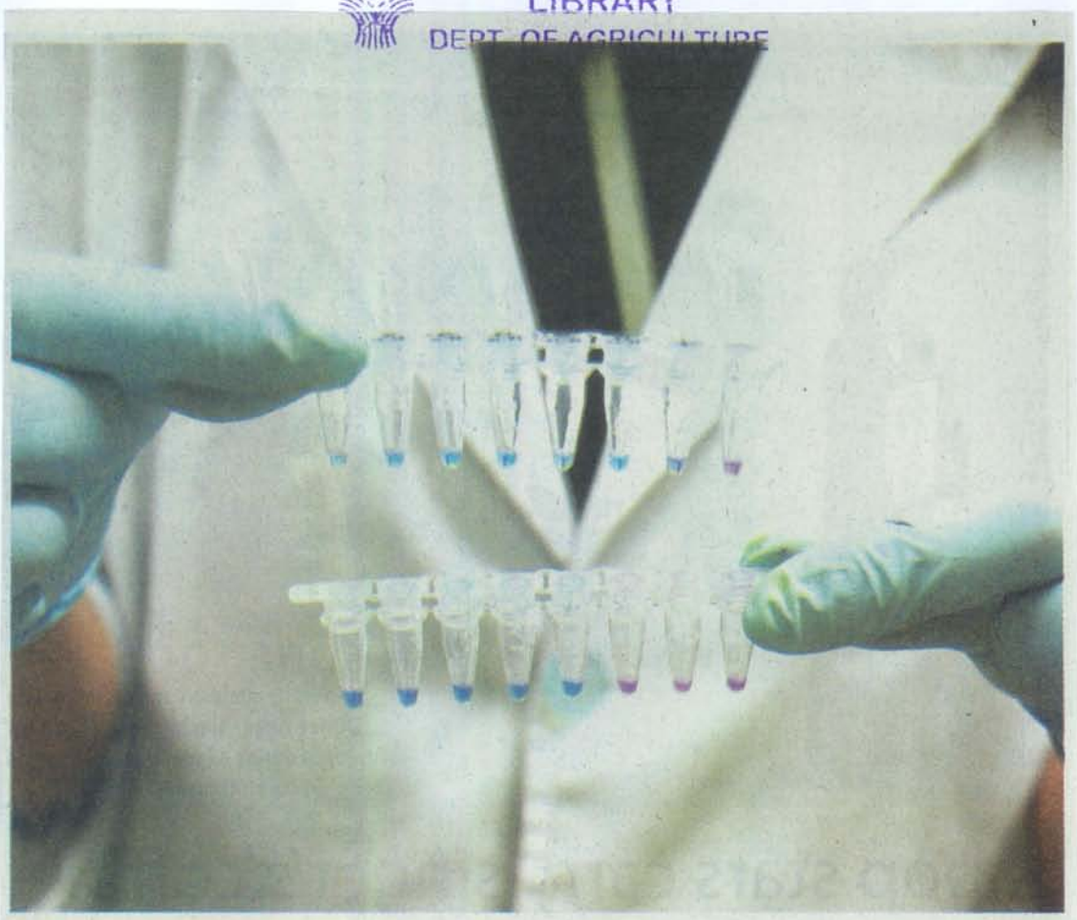
According to the BFAR, there are almost 6,000 fish cages located in different municipalities surrounding the lake.

TINA GANZON-OZAETA

The Manila Times

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: B8

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE



LOCAL TECHNOLOGY **The tool to detect Newcastle Disease Virus (NDV) is composed of premixes or ready-mixed substance that are dried and stabilized in a single tube using a cryprotectant to prolong the shelf life at ambient temperature.** BAR PHOTO

Tool to detect NDV developed

RESEARCHERS from the College of Veterinary Science and Medicine (CVSM) of the Central Luzon State University (CLSU) have developed a technology that can provide an alternative method for detecting the Newcastle Disease Virus (NDV).

The method is more affordable, simple yet sensitive and more robust for surveillance and control of NDV.

The technology was generated through the project, "Phylogenetic Characterization and Detection Using Dry Format RT-LAMP of Emergent Newcastle Disease Virus [NDV] in the Philippines," which is funded by the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR).

According to Clarissa Yvonne Domingo, project leader, NDV is a serious, contagious and fatal viral disease that affects species of birds. Currently, it's a major concern in poultry production since it can kill thousands of chickens. The symptoms in chicken generally include gastrointestinal, respiratory and neurological signs, and may vary from subclinical to sudden death with 100-percent mortality. While mortality is very high among unvaccinated poultry flocks, it can still infect and cause deaths among vaccinated poultry.

"The key to control and successfully eradicate the NDV disease is to detect it as early as possible and prevent it to spread," said Domingo, who with her team formulated a dry format RT-LAMP or the reverse transcription-loop-mediated isothermal amplification that is an alternative nucleic acid amplification based (NAB) assay for detecting NDV.

This test assay is rapid, simple, sensitive and very convenient to use by any adapting veterinary poultry practitioner or an animal diagnostician working in a laboratory with simple resources. It can be used for early NDV detection.

The RT-LAMP tool is composed of premixes or ready-mixed substance that are dried and stabilized in a single tube using a cryprotectant to prolong the shelf life at ambient temperature.

Domingo explained that the dry format of the RT-LAMP removes the need for storing the tubes at freezing temperature, so they can now be kept at room temperature. This feature also removes the fear of reagent degradation and assures that the diagnosis of newcastle disease in local poultry farms in endemic areas would be faster.

However, because of its very high sensitivity, the assay must be handled carefully free from contamination in order to get full efficiency of the dry RT-LAMP amplification.

CONRAD CARIÑO

The Manila Times

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: B8

Quality seeds and hybrid corn

WAYS OF THE OASIS
DR. WILLIAM DAR

WHILE I am strongly advocating for the planting of more high-value crops in the Philippines like cacao, coffee, cassava and rubber, among others, I still believe in the future of corn provided quality seeds are used.

And when I am speaking about quality seeds, nothing beats hybrids not only for their higher yields but also for their vigor, resistance to diseases, and uniform growth.

For starters, let us differentiate hybrids from the open pollinated variety (OPV) type of seeds, which are still used by many farmers in the Philippines because of lack of access to hybrid materials.

Simply put, hybrid seed is a cross between two or more unrelated inbred plants, to produce a variety that has certain desired qualities like, as I have mentioned earlier, higher yields, vigor, resistance to diseases, and uniform growth.

OPVs, on the other hand, are a product of decades or even centuries of natural evolution of a certain plant variety. And over decades or centuries, OPVs have also evolved to adapt to their environment.

But hybrids have already proven to outyield OPVs and heirlooms by up to 500 percent, and given that smallholder farmers have to deal with problems caused by climate change, the logical move is to start using hybrids.

OPVs and heirlooms are still used by farmers who cater to the high-end market, like those willing to pay for certified organic food products.

But for feeding the world, nothing beats hybrids and genetically modified crops or GMOs.

In the Philippines, the use of hybrids is growing fast for rice and corn farming, which remain the two of the most popular crops in the country.

The use of high quality seeds, particularly hybrids and GMOs, has led the country to 100-percent self-sufficiency in corn.

From my being the strategic adviser of Prasad Seeds Philippines Inc. (PSPI), I can say from experience that hybrid corn seeds provide the best yields from healthy plants.

The prasad experience

The contract-growing arrangements PSPI has forged with smallholder farmers in Central Luzon is a good example of an inclusive business model, and the use of hybrid seeds help assure that both parties gain from the partnership.

Since PSPI places a very strict standard on the type of seeds it will buy from its farmer-partners in exchange for a better buying price, the company sees to it that it assists adequately and properly its farmer-partners, who are mostly smallholders.

So as part of its agreement with its farmer-partners, PSPI provides growers with farm inputs like fertilizers, pesticides, and labor budget as loan necessary for proper crop maintenance. Also, the company provides guidance in the form of Package of Technology (POT) and recommendations through its field agronomists on how to properly manage crops.

PSPI then buys the harvested seeds in cobs at a jointly agreed upon competitive buy back price per kilo.

Growers are also given an incentive for chopping the male plants after pollination but not later than 75 days after planting, and for proper detasseling following the PSPI standards.

After harvesting, the advances to the farmer-partners shall be deducted by PSPI from the gross income. The remaining will serve as the grower's net income to be release not more than 15 days after harvest.

The responsibilities of PSPI's farmer-partners are provide land suitable for hybrid corn seed production, and have access to necessary farm facilities and equipment including source of irrigation.

The farmer-partners also provide labor (planting, fertilization, pesticide application and irrigation) that shall serve as their equity equivalent to approximately 18 percent of the total cost of production. Also, they should maintain and manage the crop in accordance to the POT and recommendations from PSPI's field agronomists.

Of course, the farmer-partners must sell the harvested seeds solely to PSPI at a jointly agreed upon competitive buy back price per kilo.

From what I have seen so far in my field visits to the plots of the farmer-partners of PSPI, hybrids really exhibit vigor and resistance to diseases, and have even withstood some of the usual downpour during the last months of the year.

Most of PSPI's farmer-partners are also optimistic of better yields from their hybrid corn plants, or higher than the national average of 3.3 metric tons per hectare (based on figures from the Department of Agriculture). Hybrid corn can yield up to twice per hectare compared to the national average.

Use of quality seeds

Besides providing hybrid seeds for its farmer-partners, PSPI also makes sure its seeds are of high quality or free from impurities. This means that upon harvest, the inferior seeds are removed so as not to "contaminate" or degrade the stock of the high-quality seeds.

High-quality seeds can only assure higher percentages of vigor and germination, so they should be free from seed-borne diseases, impurities like sand and stones, and injuries caused by the mechanical separation of the kernel from the cob.

Low-quality seeds have low vigor and may not even produce at all. Worse, low-quality seeds produce sickly plants that can become a host for diseases that can infect healthy plants on the field, which is a nightmare for any smallholder farmer.

So the right postharvest technologies for corn should be adopted by farmers' cooperatives, and it is worth noting that the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (an agency under the Department of Agriculture) has developed a corn sheller that has a capacity of 2 to 2.5 tons per hour, shelling recovery of 99.86 percent and purity of 99.73 percent, while keeping the level of damaged kernels to only 2 percent.

PhilMech has also developed a pneumatic corn planter that can sow seeds at a rate of 2.5 hectares in eight hours. The wonder of using mechanical or pneumatic corn planters is uniform spacing and depth are achieved, assuring higher survivability of the seeds planted or up to 99 percent. On the other hand, planting seeds manually can assure a survival rate of 85 to 90 percent.

The use of hybrid seeds of high quality, and mechanization for postharvest and planting, or even tilling and applying of fertilizers, are definitely keys to increasing the yield of corn farms. But it all starts with using quality hybrid seeds.

So I will keep you readers updated on the yields PSPI's farmer-partners will achieve come harvest time. But I can tell now that many of them are excited, like me.

PEOPLES JOURNAL Tonight
http://www.journal.com.ph

Date: DECEMBER 22, 2017 Page: 6

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BFAR to use 2 gov't vessels

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte commissioned yesterday two government vessels for the use of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) against illegal poaching and other unlawful activities against the country's marine resources.

The vessels, BRP Lapu-Lapu and BRP Francisco Dagohoy, were commissioned at the Sasa Wharf in Davao City.

Agriculture chief Emmanuel Piñol said the vessels had cost the government P250 million each.

He said foreign-produced vessels of such type would have cost the government about P750 million each.

The sea vessels, which were 50.5 meters long each, were produced by the Navotas-based Josefa Slipways using welded high tensile AH36 steel.

"It can withstand 24 hours of continuous multi-purpose operations," Piñol said.

Efren Montano

PILIPINO MIRROR
FILIPINO MIRROR MEDIA GROUP CORPORATION
• SALAMIN NG KATOTOHANAN •

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: 4

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Sa Palawan at Davao

CHINA NAG-DONATE NG FINGERLINGS

AABOT sa 50,000 ng 100,000 leopard trout (suno) fingerlings ang ayuda ng China para sa Pilipinas.

Ito ay paghahatian ng Palawan at Davao na napapanahon naman dahil bagsak ang marine agriculture sa Palawan kasunod ng pagkakatala ng red tide doon.

Sa ulat, itina-transport na ng MV Good View 18 ang fingerlings para sa Palawan kung saan daraong ang nasabing barko sa port of Sta. Cruz.

"Davao's share, which is also 50,000 red grouper fingerlings, will also be transported there. I am just not aware when this will be," ayon kay Glenda Cadigal ng Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff (PCSDS).

Ibabahagi ang share ng Palawan sa bayan ng Taytay at aabot sa 30,000 fingerlings ang matatanggap nito habang 20,000 sa San Vicente.

Upang maging legal ang donasyon, nagkaroon ng lagdaan ng memorandum of agreements sa pagitan ng Palawan at Davao sa pangunguna ni Governor Jose Alvarez, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Coron PH-CH Aquaculture Corporation at iba pang pribado at sektor ng mga kinatawan.

"This is also an offshoot of President Rodrigo Duterte's China visit, where various forms of bilateral agreements such as fisheries and marine resources cooperation were forged through a memorandum of understanding," ayon pa kay Cadigal.

EUNICE C.

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER
Date: December 22, 2017 Page: 3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

'Urduja' damage to agri, infra over ₱1 B – NDRRMC

By **FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD**

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said that more than ₱1 billion worth of infrastructure and agriculture products were destroyed by tropical storm "Urduja," which battered Eastern Visayas and parts of Central Visayas, Bicol and Davao regions last week.

Undersecretary Ricardo B. Jalad, NDRRMC Executive Director and Office of Civil Defense (OCD) Administrator, said that ₱1,018,523,982 worth of infrastructure and agricultural products were destroyed by the storm in four regions.

Jalad said that the agriculture sector in Eastern Visayas and the Bicol and Davao regions lost ₱475,303,982.02 worth if corn, rice, livestock and crops.

Damage to infrastructure in Eastern Visayas and the Bicol and Davao regions reached ₱543,220,000.

Meanwhile, the NDRRMC convened for an Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) meeting in preparation for tropical depression "Vinta."

As of 5 p.m. Thursday, Vinta was spotted 735 kilometers east of Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur with a maximum sustained wind speed of 45 kilometers per hour (kph) near the center and gustiness of up to 60kph and moving west at 20 kph.

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER
Date: December 22, 2017 Page: B-3

LIBRARY
DEPT OF AGRICULTURE

NFA not yet ready to let go of functions

By **MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR**

The National Food Authority (NFA) is not yet ready to let go of its functions despite the lifting of the quantitative restrictions on rice. If anything, NFA wanted to be left alone.

In a statement on Thursday, NFA said it will continue to build up its food security buffer stocks from domestic palay procurement and rice importation, if necessary, even under a regime where there's no QR.

The agency made its position clear against speculations that with the lifting of QR in favor of higher tariffs on rice imports, NFA may have to be reorganized to limit its functions to proprietary activities such as buffer stocking and local procurement.

QR is the limit to the volume of goods traded by a country. World Trade Organization's (WTO) QR on rice, which has lapsed in June, protected local farmers from foreign rice imports by imposing a high 35 percent tariff rate on them after hitting certain shipment limit.

The Philippines QR for rice imports that was granted by the WTO expired on June 30 this year.

Moving forward, the NFA management said it believes that it will take a while before the domestic rice market would be able to adjust to the non-QR regime, but the government should continue to provide safety nets for the farmers who will be most affected by the freer entry of imported rice into the country.

"We cannot speculate on how much lower rice prices could go under a non-QR but higher tariff situation. Our role in NFA is to ensure that there will always be enough affordable rice for everyone, including the small farmer-producers who are also end-consumers of their own produce," NFA administrator Jason Aquino said.

While performing buffer stock functions, Aquino said the NFA shall continue to issue import licenses and provide the necessary guidelines to ensure food safety and quality standards.

To compensate for the expiration of QR, the Philippine government unilaterally extended the Minimum Access Volume (MAV) commitments of 805,200 metric tons (MT) and corresponding tariff concessions to maintain special treatment through Executive Order No. 23 (EO 23).

The MAV and tariff concessions will remain in place until December 31, 2020 or until an amendment to the Agricultural Tariffication Act (which exempts rice from tariffication) is passed, US Department of Agriculture mentioned on its latest Global Agricultural Information Network (GAIN) report.

The legislative amendment, which requires moving into tariff-based system and ending the QR, has not been passed. A bill to this effect is being developed by Congress, the timeline of which is unknown, GAIN further said.

Although delayed, imports under the rice MAV are expected to come in through the latter part of this year and early 2018.

In the GAIN report, USDA estimated rice production in the country during the market year 2017 to 2018 to rise from 770,000 tons to 11.97 million tons as area harvested increased consistent with Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data.

"Increased output is expected as a result of favorable weather conditions and increased use of high-yielding varieties. There were noticeably fewer intense typhoons that passed through major rice production areas compared to previous years," GAIN said.

It also said that a substantial shift away from rice to corn is not expected due to delays in the tariffication of rice, which requires a legislative amendment to the Agriculture Tariffication Act.

Imports were also pared down 400,000 tons to 1.3 million tons in Market Year 17/18 as a result, and ending stocks were raised.

BusinessMirror

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Date: December 28, 2017 Page: A5

NFA will still import rice, Aquino says

By Jasper Emmanuel Y. Arcalas @jearcalas

THE National Food Authority (NFA) will continue to purchase paddy from farmers and import rice, if necessary, to beef up its buffer stock even after the quantitative restriction (QR) on the staple has been lifted.

The NFA made the statement in reaction to speculations that with the lifting of the rice QR in favor of higher tariffs on imports, the food agency may have to be reorganized to limit its functions to proprietary activities, such as buffer stocking and local procurement.

"If the past few years are any indication, we have seen a trend where palay farm-gate prices have been on the uptrend, higher than the NFA's support price of P17 per kilogram [kg]," NFA Administrator Jason Laureano Y. Aquino said in a statement.

"This is the reason the NFA has not been able to meet procurement targets, resorting to importation to fill in the buffer stock requirement for food security," he added.

The NFA said it will take a while before the domestic rice market would be able to adjust to the non-QR regime. Under a non-QR regime, Aquino said the government should continue to provide safety nets for the farmers who may be most affected by the freer entry of imported rice into the Philippines.

"We cannot speculate on how much lower rice prices could go under a non-QR but higher tariff situation. Our role in the NFA is to ensure that there will always be enough affordable rice for everyone, including the small farmer-producers who are also end-consumers of their own produce," Aquino added.

Aquino said small farmers eventually sell their own harvests, sometimes in advance, thus they end up buying from the market for their family's daily consumption.

The NFA will also continue to perform its regulatory function by issuing import licenses to traders and importers, and provide the necessary guidelines to ensure food safety and quality standards of rice imports, according to Aquino.

Aquino's statement came days after the Department of Finance (DOF) said the commercial price of rice could go down by as much as P7 once the QR on the staple is lifted and that the food agency could just focus on local palay procurement.

In an economic bulletin on the rice-sector reform, Finance Undersecretary Gil S. Beltran said a 35-percent import tariff on rice in lieu of restricting rice-import volumes would encourage private traders to bring in the staple into the country, which would allow the influx of cheaper rice in the domestic market.

Instead of subsidizing imports, the national government could reallocate its funds to invest in public goods and services that directly benefit the farmers, including farm-to-market roads, irrigation and storage, which reduce production and marketing costs, according to Beltran.

The NFA is mandated to import and regulate rice imports, and has so far received a total of P187 billion in tax subsidies for its purchases of imported grain from 2005 to 2015, or an average of P19 billion a year, according to the DOF.

"Note that in its present state, the NFA loses about P11 billion annually, [that], even after operating subsidy of P5 billion average per year from 2005 to 2015...[still] has an accumulated debt of P155.84 billion as of the end of September 2016," Beltran said.

The Philippines is under pressure to convert its QR on rice into ordinary customs duties after its waiver on the special treatment on rice expired on June 30. The World Trade Organization (WTO) General Council approved the waiver, which allowed Manila to keep its rice QR until June 30, on the condition that the Philippines will subject its rice imports to ordinary custom duties by July 1.

The conversion of QR into tariffs requires the amendment of Republic Act (RA) 8178, which allowed the government to continue implementing the caps on rice imports even after the WTO waiver has expired. But Congress was forced to delay discussions on amending RA 8178 as lawmakers were focused on passing the 2018 national budget and the first package of the tax-reform program before their Christmas break on December 13.

The Manila Times

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: A7

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

P446M up for poverty cut in Quirino

CABARROGUIS, Quirino: The Korea International Cooperation Agency (Koica) has allotted P446.5million ($9.5 million) grant for the five-year implementation of a project to reduce rural poverty in Quirino province.

The project will start in 2018.

Myung Seop Shin, Koica country director, and Gov. Junie Cua signed on December 7 the project's Record of Discussion (RoD) entitled Quirino Integrated Rural Development (QIRD) Project.

Shin said the project, which will directly benefit some 650 households in the province, aims to reduce poverty by increasing farmers' income and improve their quality of life.

Koica said this will be done through development of agroforestry and cattle production capacity with the establishment of a cattle breeding center and through the establishment of the Quirino Livelihood for Everyone (Q-Life) center.

Cua said successful implementation of QIRD project by the provincial government will strengthen the relationship and cooperation between the Republic of the Philippines and the Republic of Korea.

He added that the project is focused on expanding and strengthening of the Quirino Integrated Agricultural Development Project (QIADP), also funded by Koica and implemented by the provincial government from 2013 to 2016.

Project QIRD is Phase II of the QIADP, which developed four programs for agro-forestry, livestock, vegetable cultivation and fruit tree and forest tree planting.

The QIADP also involved the construction of farm-to-market roads, establishment of a feed mill and mushroom-production facilities, training of farmers through demonstration of improved farming technologies for agro-forestry and boosting of agriculture credit through the extension of micro finance to farmers.

Koica said because of the visible success of the QIADP exceeding its goals and targets of reducing rural poverty, expanding agricultural production and restoring local watershed, Quirino has submitted to Koica through QIRD's project management unit an action plan for the project with the goal of sustaining and expanding the positive impacts brought about by the QIADP to a wider population of the province.

As counterpart in the project, Quirino has also appropriated funds for the implementation of the project that included costs for securing land, right-of-way for farm-to-market and access roads, compensation and resettlement of affected residents, institutional development and project administration.

A joint team appointed by Koica and Quirino will undertake midterm and final evaluations of the project to ensure that the work scope and the undertakings of the respective governments provided in the RoD are properly being implemented.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO

The Manila Times

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: B8

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Cocoa industry can spur farm tourism

DAVAO CITY: The country's cacao and chocolate industry will have a positive impact on farm tourism, which is getting noticed by both domestic and foreign visitors.

THE CITY OF CHOCOLATES **Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio of Davao City (seventh from left) led the launching of the "Chocolate Tour Overload" that featured Davao City as the "Cacao Capital of the Philippines."** CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"Farm tourism in the country has thrived on the best practices and growth of cocoa industry," said Senator Cynthia Villar in her keynote address to over 2,000 cacao growers and entrepreneurs from all over the country, who gathered for the conference and exposition dubbed "Kakao Konek 2017" staged last week at the SMX Lanang, Davao City.

Villar authored Republic Act 10816, or the "Farm Tourism Development Act," which mandates the promotion of tourism at agricultural destinations through partnerships with the private stakeholders.

Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio of Davao City welcomed the participants to the two-day event sponsored by 26 agro-industrial firms and 10 government agencies, including the Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Trade and Industry.

"I am full of optimism that our micro and macro farmers and entrepreneurs will gain more insights in optimizing their productivity and in giving them an upper hand in the market," Duterte-Carpio said.

Davao City and its environs boast of vast greenery, including nature park and farm resorts, like the Malagos Resort, Eden's Nature Park, Hijo Banana Resort, Gumamela Caverock Farm Resort, Pearl Farm, among others.

During the two-day conference and exhibit, Duterte-Carpio and officials of the DOT led the launching of the "Chocolate Tour Overload" that featured Davao City as the "Cacao Capital of the Philippines."

"Accounting for 90 percent of the local cacao production, the spotlight is now on Mindanao with Davao as the country's chocolate capital, even as the farmers face the challenge to meet the growing demand for Philippine cacao, indicating international recognition of its quality," Duterte-Carpio said.

"We believe in the perfect marriage of farm and tourism as showcased by the sweet success our cocoa growers and chocolate producers, like the Malagos chocolate," said DOT Assistant Secretary Eden Josephine David, in behalf of Tourism Secretary Wanda Tulfo-Teo.

David noted that the Malagos Puentespina Chocolates, produced in a self-sustained 12-hectare cocoa farm resort in Davao City, was among the top 50 awardees of the Salon de Chocolat held in Paris recently.

"The challenge of achieving 100,000 metric tons of cacao by 2020 stays, and this can only be achieved with both private and government sectors working together," said Dante Muyco, president of the Cacao Industry Development Association of Mindanao, the event's main sponsor.

Also present at the conference was Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol who lauded the best practices of Davao's successful cacao growers and chocolate producers. **THE TIMES**

The Manila Times

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: B8

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

SEARCA promotes school gardens

PILOT-TESTED home and school gardens established by the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) throughout Southeast Asia have been upscaled by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) to make the younger generation increase their appreciation for agriculture.

SEAMEO high officials has approved for endorsement to the SEAMEO Council the upscaling of the home and school gardens, and commended the SEARCA leadership for their establishment. SEARCA is hosted by the Philippines in Los Banos, Laguna, and the education ministers of Southeast Asian countries constitute the SEAMEO Council.

Ministries of Education of SEAMEO's 11-member countries commended SEARCA Director Gil Saguiguit Jr. for the center's efforts to develop the gardens where the school gardens were established.

The six pilot schools include Labuin Elementary School that recently won an international award (2017 SEAMEO-Japan Education and Sustainable Development Award) for its school garden project.

It was supported by SEARCA in partnership with the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and Department of Education-Laguna.

Saguiguit said the pilot schools will be the epicenter of trainings and capacity building activities to transfer the concept to schools in neighboring Southeast Asian countries.

SEAMEO said SEARCA has successfully demonstrated how the school gardens can address the health and nutritional status of school-aged children, provide experiential learning and even improve the economic well-being of families and communities.

More importantly, SEARCA said the school garden introduces to children an early appreciation for agriculture.

"Agriculture, which is key to food security and poverty alleviation, could be greatly affected with diminishing interest in it, especially among the youth," Saguiguit said.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO

Malaya
Business Insight

Date: DECEMBER 22, 2017 Page: A2

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

NFA calls for safety nets post-QR

THE National Food Authority (NFA) said it will continue to build up the country's food security buffer stocks from domestic palay procurement and rice importation if necessary under a regime where quantitative restriction (QR) on rice is no longer imposed.

NFA was reacting to reports that with the lifting of rice QR in favor of higher tariffs on imports, it wimay have to be reorganized to limit its functions to proprietary activities such as buffer stocking and local procurement.

"If the past few years are any indication, we have seen a trend where palay farmgate prices have been on the uptrend, higher than NFA's support price of P17 per kilogram. This is the reason we have not been able to meet procurement targets, resorting to importation to fill in the buffer stock requirement for food security," NFA administrator Jason Aquino said in a statement.

The agency also believes it will take a while before the domestic rice market would be able to adjust to the non-QR regime but noted government should continue to provide safety nets for farmers who may be most affected by the liberal entry of imported rice into the country.

"We cannot speculate on how much lower rice prices could go under a non-QR but higher tariff situation. Our role in NFA is to ensure that there will always be enough affordable rice for everyone, including the small farmer-producers who are also end-consumers of their own produce," Aquino said.

He said at present, small farmers sell their own harvests and sometimes end up buying from the market for their own consumption.

NFA also claimed that while performing buffer stock functions, it shall continue to issue import licenses and provide necessary guidelines to ensure food safety and quality standards.

Earlier, the Department of Finance said lifting of QR on rice imports in favor of tariffs will bring several benefits to the economy, with the retail price of the food staple expected to be slashed by as much as P7 per kilo.

QR allows the country to limit the volume of rice imports entering the Philippines with a tariff of 35 percent. Importing outside the volume restrictions will entail a higher import tariff.

The economic managers of the Duterte administration earlier decided to allow the expiration of the QR without applying for another extension before the World Trade Organization.

The WTO granted the Philippines an extension of its QR on rice importation until June 30, 2017 to give local farmers more time to prepare for free trade.

It first allowed the Philippines to impose a 10-year QR on rice imports in 1995. It was extended in 2004 until 2012, and then was renewed again in 2014.

Buffer stock. NFA says it would ensure there is enough rice that is affordable for everyone.

Tempo

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: 12

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

₱1B in agriculture, infra lost to 'Urduja'

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council has said that more than ₱1 billion worth of infrastructure and agricultural products were destroyed while 45 people were killed, 64 were injured, and 46 are missing due to tropical storm "Urduja" (international name "Kai-Tak").

Undersecretary Ricardo B. Jalad, NDRRMC executive director and Office of Civil Defense administrator, said ₱1,018,523,982 in infrastructure and agricultural products were destroyed in Region 5, 7, 8, and 11.

Jalad said ₱543,220,000 worth of infrastructure was damaged in Regions 5, 8, and 11 while ₱475,303,982.02 damage to agriculture was recorded in Regions 5, 7, and 8.

Jalad said among the agricultural products destroyed were corn, rice, crops, and livestock.

He said 171 houses were destroyed in Regions 5, 8, and Caraga. Eleven road sections and seven bridges in Region 4-B, 5, and 8 are impassable.

The NDRRMC said Giporlos and Balangiga in Eastern Samar and Lope de Vega in Northern Samar, all in Region 8, were affected by water shortage caused by Urduja.

Jalad said 368 areas in Regions 4-B, 6, and 8 were flooded by Urduja.

The NDRRMC said 298,396 families or 1,150,486 persons were affected in 1,766 barangays in Regions 4-B, 5, 6, 7, 8, and Caraga.

More than 11,700 families or 53,600 persons remain in 236 evacuation centers in Regions 4-B, Regions 5, and 8.

Additional family food packs and non-food items from the Department of Social Welfare and Development and OCD have been transported to affected areas via the Philippine Navy.

Meanwhile, the NDRRMC has convened an emergency response preparedness meeting in preparation for tropical depression "Vinta." **(Francis T. Wakefield)**

PILIPINO MIRROR
FILIPINO MIRROR MEDIA GROUP CORPORATION
- SALAMIN NG KATOTOHANAN -

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: 9

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

NFA TULOY SA PAG-IMPORT NG BIGAS

IPAGPAPATULOY ng National Food Authority (NFA) ang pagbili ng palay at pag-import ng bigas upang matiyak ang food security ng bansa kahit matanggal ang quantitative restriction (QR) sa bigas.

Ayon sa NFA, tuloy ang pagdaragdag nila sa food security buffer stocks sa pamamagitan ng domestic palay procurement at importation, kung kinakailangan, matapos aliisin ang rice QR.

Ginawa ng food agency ang pahayag bilang reaksiyon sa mga ispekulasyon na sa pagalis ng rice imports quota, ang NFA ay maaaring i-reorganize upang limitahan ang gawain nito sa propriety activities tulad ng buffer stocking at local procurement.

"If the past few years are any indication, we have seen a trend where palay farmgate prices have been on the uptrend, higher than NFA's support price of P17/kilogram. This is the reason we have not been able to meet procurement targets, resorting to importation to fill in the buffer stock requirement for food security," wika ni NFA Administrator Jason L.Y. Aquino.

Naniniwala ang NFA na matatagalan bago makapag-adjust ang domestic rice market sa non-QR regime.

Dagdag pa nito, kailangang ipagpatuloy ng pamahalaan ang pagkakaloob ng safety nets para sa mga magsasaka na labis na maaapektuhan ng malayang pagpasok ng imported na bigas sa bansa.

"We cannot speculate on how much lower rice prices could go under a non-QR but higher tariff situation. Our role in NFA is to ensure that there will always be enough affordable rice for everyone, including the small farmer-producers who are also end-consumers of their own produce," sabi pa ni Aquino.

"Small farmers eventually sell their own harvests, sometimes in advance, thus they end up buying from the market for their family's own daily consumption," dagdag pa niya.

Bukod dito, ipagpapatuloy ng NFA ang pagtupad sa regulatory function nito sa pag-iisyu ng import licenses sa mga trader at importer, at pagpapalabas ng kinakailangang alituntunin upang masiguro ang food safety at quality standards ng rice imports.

Nauna rito ay inihayag ng Department of Finance (DOF) na ang commercial price ng bigas ay maaaring bumaba ng hanggang P7 sa sandaling maalis ang QR sa butil at maaaring magpokus na lamang ang food agency sa local palay procurement.

Sa isang economic bulletin sa rice sector reform, sinabi ni Finance Undersecretary Gil S. Beltran na ang 35-percent import tariff sa bigas kapalit ng paghihigpit sa rice import volumes ay hihikayat ng maraming private traders na magpasok ng bigas sa bansa, na magbibigay-daan sa mas murang bigas sa domestic market.

Jason L.Y. Aquino

JASPER ARCALAS

PILIPINO MIRROR
FILIPINO MIRROR MEDIA GROUP CORPORATION
• SALAMIN NG KATOTOHANAN •

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: 2

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

TRAIN IPINALIWANAG: PAANO MAKAAAPEKTO ANG SUGAR TAX SA MGA KONSUMER

SISIMULAN nang buwisan ng gobyerno ang sugar-sweetened drinks simula sa susunod na taon, sa pakay nitong maitaas ang kita at malabanan ang katabaan.

Lahat ng mga inumin na caloric at non-caloric sweeteners ay bubuwisan ng P6 bawat litro habang ang mga gumagamit ng high-fructose corn syrup, ang pinakamurang sugar substitute, ay sisingilin ng P12 per liter. Ang presyo ay binago mula sa orihinal na proposal na P10 per liter.

Ang buwis sa mga matatamis na inumin ay isa sa mga tungkulin para mabalanse ang bawas sa personal income tax rates, na magiging epektibo sa susunod na taon sa ilalim ng unang package of reforms na pinirmahan para isabatas ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte noong Disyembre 19.

Lahat ng gatas, kahit pulbos o ready-to-drink, flavored or fermented, ay hindi kasali sa bubuwisan, ganundin ang 3-in-1 coffee at 100-percent-natural fruit at vegetable juices, meal replacements at medically indicated drinks, and beverages sweetened with stevia or coco sugar.

Sinabi ng World Health Organization na ang mga polisiya na taasan ang matatamis na inumin ng 20 percent ay makaka-discourage ng pag-inom, makatutulong sa pagpapababa ng katabaan, type 2 diabetes, at pagkasira ng ngipin.

BusinessWorld
INCREASE YOUR BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

Date: December 22, 2017 Page: 6/S2

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Raw sugar extends gains; coffee, cocoa also rise

NEW YORK/LONDON — Raw sugar futures on ICE rose for the third straight session on Wednesday, reaching a two-week high on follow-through buying and support from higher commodity markets.

Arabica coffee and cocoa prices also climbed as the 19-market Thomson Reuters CoreCommodity Index rose for the fifth straight session.

March raw sugar settled up 0.16 cent, or 1.10%, at 14.57 cents per pound (lb), a two-week high. The spot contract was on track to close 2017 down 25%, its weakest annual performance since 2011.

March stalled around its 50-day moving average after Tuesday's 4.70% rally, which traders said was short-covering spurred by speculators' dramatic increase in short positions.

DEMAND SUPPORT

The March/May spread, which is often viewed as an indicator of physical demand, was at a 0.17-cent premium, near last week's seven-month high, after holding a discount two weeks prior.

"We believe that there has been some preemptive buying in the spread as a means of positioning in front of the anticipated index buying," said James Cassidy, global head of Sugar Derivatives for Societe Generale, in a note late Tuesday.

"Talk of a large re-weighting program to come by the index funds, where they are scheduled to buy some 60K lots to make up for the [year's] drop in prices, has stopped the market from falling further and encouraged short covering," Nick Penney, senior trader at Sucden Financial, said in a note.

Indian sugar mills are set to more than double the supply of ethanol to fuel retailers for blending with gasoline in 2017/18, an industry body said.

March white sugar settled up $4.10, or 1.10%, at $381.30 per ton.

March arabica coffee settled up 1.40 cent, or 1.20%, at $1.2315 per lb.

Dealers said a bout of early buying lifted the market above Tuesday's highs and attracted chart-based buying, though volume was modest ahead of the Christmas holiday.

March robusta coffee settled flat at $1,713 a ton.

March London cocoa settled up 10 pounds, or 0.70%, at 1,420 pounds per ton.

March New York cocoa settled up $19, or 1%, at $1,931 per ton.

Prices remained within sight of multi-year lows as traders eyed ample global supplies. — ***Reuters***

Malaya
Business Insight

Date: DECEMBER 22, 2017 Page: A9

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

China tightens import specifications on soybeans

CHICAGO- China, the world's top soybean buyer, will reduce the amount of foreign material allowed in shipments of US soybeans as of Jan. 1, the US Department of Agriculture said on Wednesday, a move that may curb imports.

US soybean shipments arriving at Chinese ports containing up to 1 percent of foreign material would be expedited while shipments with more than 1 percent could be held back for testing, according to Will Wepsala, a spokesman at USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Quality specifications for No. 2 yellow soybeans - the variety most common in US export contracts - allow for up to 2 percent foreign material.

The more stringent standards will be another headache for US grain handlers already facing dwindling profit margins due to record global soybean supplies.

China requested the change in specifications due mostly to concerns over weed seeds in US cargos, Wepsala said. - ***Reuters***