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MARAWI GETS P3.7M IN AGRI ASSISTANCE

The Department of Agriculture (DA) turned over P3.7-million worth of farm machinery and equipment to the local government unit to help in the rehabilitation of war-torn Marawi City and boost food production in Lanao del Sur.

The agriculture assistance consisted of 46 tractors, 15 of which will be assigned to Marawi City. The tractors will be offered for free to farmers along with free seeds and fertilizer for their farms, Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said.

"The program, which DA Region X and the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) group will supervise, aims to help farmers recover following months of inactivity and lack of productivity because of the war," he added.

Piñol said, the DA's assistance to Marawi is part of its commitment to the government's continuing rehabilitation efforts in the war-torn city.

Under the grant, the DA will provide rice harvesters and solar-powered irrigation systems as well as establish Barangay Food Terminals (BFTs), which will be operated by the women of Marawi.

"Other basic food commodities like Halal-certified chicken, fish, and other food items will also be available in the said BFTs," Piñol said.

The agriculture chief noted that private companies like Pilimico, which manufactures animal feeds, have also committed to support the program by ensuring a market for the corn produce of Marawi and Lanao del Sur farmers.

He said additional farm equipment and machinery, including corn and rice harvesters, will also be delivered before the start of the harvest season early in November.

"Since the DA is directly supervising the program, I expect it to succeed, much unlike other programs in the past which failed because these were just handed down to the local government units and dubious groups," Piñol said.

During the turnover ceremony, Marawi City Mayor Majul Usman Gandamra said that moving forward after the siege has been a great challenge for the people of Marawi but with the interventions delivered by the DA, they were able to overcome the challenges.

"I express my gratitude to the Department of Agriculture. As of now, we are highly dependent on different groups but we don't want to be like this for long. With joint efforts from various agencies and organizations, Marawi will rise once again," Gandamra said.

Marawi city bore the brunt of the five-month long takeover of terrorists from May to October in 2017, resulting in the displacement of 350,000 residents and damages to the city amounting to some P11.5 billion.

EIREENE JAIREE GOMEZ
Piñol to BFAR: ‘Flood’ Bohol with fish from Zambo

By CORY MARTINEZ

AGRICULTURE Secretary Emmanuel Piñol has ordered the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) to “flood” the province of Bohol with fish sourced from nearby provinces, including the fish-rich Zamboanga del Norte, which is located south of the island, to provide residents with more affordable fish products.

Piñol issued the order during his recent visit to Bohol wherein he found out that the price of fish in the island is very high.

“For an island province surrounded by traditional fishing grounds in the Visayas, Bohol stands out as one of the areas in the country with the most expensive fish sold in the markets,” Piñol said in his official Facebook account.

He stressed that the lowly galunggong priced in Metro Manila markets at an average of P140 per kilo is sold in Bohol for P200 per kilo.

Piñol publicly questioned the very high price of fish in the island in the presence of Gov. Edgar Chatto, Cong. Rene Kianpang, and other local officials during the opening of the Sandugo Festival in Tagbilaran City.

Also during the visit, the BFAR turned over 55 units of fiberglass boats to local fishermen in Leon town.

At the same time, Piñol asked BFAR to support fishermen’s groups in developing fish farming using fish cages to be established in the many coves of the island.

BFAR’s Bohol Bangus Hatchery is the top producer of fry, supply fishponds all over the country with about eight million fry every month.

Piñol also announced that he will ask the board of the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) to open a loaning program for fish cage farming and fishpond development.

Cold storage and ice-making facilities will also be established in the different fishing grounds of the province to provide post-harvest facilities.

Piñol likewise directed the BFAR to launch the Bohol Fish Market in Tagbilaran City within 30 days to make it easier for fish products to reach the local market.
CHEAP RICE.
Baguio folks form long lines to avail of National Food Authority's cheaper rice of around P27 per kilo way, which is cheaper than other commercial rice sold in the market which fetches around P40 above to around P80 per kilo. Each individual is allowed a maximum of five kilos of NFA rice. Dave Leprozo Jr.
DTI-EMB, DAWR
Australia hold seminar on food export compliance

By GOLDA KRISTY T. GROSPE
Market Innovation Division
DTI-Export Marketing Bureau

The Export Marketing Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) recently collaborated with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) Australia in conducting a seminar to educate Filipino exporters on the rudiments of exporting food products to Australia.

The seminar opened with the introduction of the incoming Commercial Consul to be assigned to the Philippine Trade and Investment Center in Sydney, Alma F. Argayoso. DTI-EMB Director Senen M. Perlada took the floor to give an overview of the Philippines-Australia trade relations and the opportunities that await Filipino exporters in the Australian food sector.

Mark Phythian, director of the Imported Food Section of DAWR Australia, served as the main speaker for the event. His discussion covered topics on Australian food regulatory system, border requirements and food standards. “Food products imported to Australia must comply with the general standards for food, such as food labeling; the food compositional requirements for permitted ingredients and additives; the maximum residue limits for agricultural and veterinary chemicals; the maximum limits for metals and contaminants; the microbiological limits; commodity standards; and the standards for hygienic food production and processing as prescribed by the Food Standards Code,” Phythian said.

The visiting expert also explained that when a food product is found to be noncompliant with a standard or poses a risk to human health, certain measures can be taken by the Australian importer. The product may be treated to bring into compliance, exported back to country of origin, destroyed or if permitted, downgraded to animal feed.

An orientation on the existing regulations on food exports and imports, as well as the food quality and safety services in the Philippines, were ensued from Phythian’s presentation.

Mr. Joselito L. Antioquia of the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), Dr. Adela Contreras of the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), Dr. Cheryl Rose B. Cayad-an of the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS), Ms. Mary Joy Paulin of the Food and Drug Administration Philippines and Ms. Carmelita Alkuino of the Food Development Center fostered a holistic learning experience for the exporters in attendance. Australia is a market with strict import requirements and over the years, a number of food exporters from the Philippines have been found noncompliant with its import conditions. The seminar was part of the efforts of the DTI-EMB to address the challenge and facilitate successful business deals with Australian buyers.
US to buy 142,160 MT of sugar from Manila

By MADELAINE B. MIRAFLO

Washington is set to buy 142,160 metric tons (MT) of raw sugar from Manila for the next crop year, which would be done under a preferential trade scheme.

On Wednesday, the Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) announced the country-specific in-quota allocations under the tariff-rate quota (TRQ) on imported raw cane sugar for fiscal year 2019.

TRQs allow countries to export specified quantities of a product to the United States at a relatively low tariff, but subject all imports of the product above a pre-determined threshold to a higher tariff.

On June 29, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the establishment of the in-quota quantity for raw cane sugar for FY 2019.

The in-quota quantity for the TRQ on raw cane sugar for FY 2019 is 1.12 million metric tons raw value (MTRV), which is the minimum amount to which the United States is committed under the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement.

Of this amount, the Philippines was given an allocation of 142,160 MT of raw sugar.

"These allocations are based on each country’s historical shipments to the United States. The allocations of the raw cane sugar TRQ to countries that are net importers of sugar are conditioned on receipt of the appropriate verifications of origin, and certificates for quota eligibility must accompany imports from any country to which an allocation is provided," USTR said.

Raw cane sugar for the FY 2019 TRQ may enter the United States starting October 1, 2018 until September 30, 2019.

Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) Board Member Roland Beltran said for this allocation, the country "shall endeavor to fulfill our commitment" despite decline in output as well as rising cost of local sugar for the current crop year.

A crop year begins on September 1 and ends August 31 of the following year.

For this crop year, Philippines must ship "more or less" 136,000 MT of raw sugar to the US as part of an earlier commitment.

Beltran said the government on track to fulfill this quota.
Rice prices continue to rise

Prices expected to stabilize with the arrival of 250,000 MT of rice from Vietnam, Thailand

By MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR

Prices of rice being sold in the country have been rising non-stop for the past six months despite the entry of supply imported from Thailand and Vietnam. The latest report of Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed that price of palay moved up at a faster rate compared to the first week of July.

To be specific, the average farm-gate price of palay at P21.48 per kilogram posted an increment of 0.42 percent from previous week’s level of P21.39 per kg.

Similarly, it picked up by 10.61 percent from a year ago level of P19.42 per kg.

The price of rice has been on an uptrend since the start of the year but it further escalated in April when the National Food Authority (NFA) ran out of stock.

Rice prices continue...

Since then, the absence of affordable, government-subsidized NFA rice has been pushing the price of commercial rice higher.

In the same PSA data, it showed that wholesale and retail price of well-milled rice also continues to move up, this time at slower rates.

During the week, the average wholesale price of well-milled rice at P41.87 per kg picked up at a slower rate of 0.22 percent from a week ago level. It moved upward by 7.52 percent from previous year’s price of P38.94 per kg.

Similarly, the average retail price of well-milled rice at P44.69 per kg posted a slower increment of 0.16 percent compared to its previous week’s level. Relative to a year ago level of P41.83 per kg, it climbed by 6.84 percent.

As for regular milled rice, the average wholesale price stood at P38.69 per kg during the week, which is 9.98 percent higher than the price of P35.18 per kg recorded in the same period last year.

At the retail trade, the average price of regular milled rice at P41.07 per kg inched up by 0.17 percent from a week ago level. Relative to the previous year’s price level of P37.76 per kg, it rose by 8.77 percent.

As of July 16, a total of 197,400 metric tons (MT) or 3.9 million bags of rice have already been delivered out of the NFA’s 250,000 MT government-to-government rice importation with Vietnam and Thailand.

The balance of 52,600 MT is expected to arrive before end of this month.

In an earlier interview, NFA spokesman Rex Estoperez said prices of rice in the country may finally go down this month as the agency goes “full blast” in the distribution of imported rice in the market.

“As long as visible, the imported supply is visible, we will see a decline in the prices. We might go full blast in the distribution this week,” he further said.

NFA then assured the public that its field personnel are working “double time” to immediately deliver its P27 per kg and P32 per kg good quality rice in markets across the country.

Meanwhile, a portion of the stocks to be imported through the government-to-private bidding is also expected to arrive this month.

Earlier, five suppliers from Thailand and Singapore were awarded with the contract to supply another 250,000 MT of 25 percent broken, well-milled long grain white rice for the NFA.
SUGAR IMPORT 'WAG LIMITAHAN SA ILANG TRADERS, MILLERS – LOPEZ

Department of Agriculture (DA) na mag-aangkat ng asukal ang parating na supply ay imahala lamang sa ilang millers at traders. “The good thing is that the DA has actually allowed already the importation of sugar. That’s the good news. The bad news, of course, is it has been limited to a sector — the millers, the traders,” sabi niya.

"Why should it be limited to this sector? Why don’t we allow the sugar-using industry to import their requirements so they benefit from the lower cost input, so the industry will be more competitive? That’s an issue,” aniya.

Ang bansa natin ay nag-aangkat ng higit pa sa 200,000 metric tons (MT) ng asukal para matutumanaan ang tumatang na presyo ng bilihin. Pero, may ilang 100,000 MT na mga inaangkat na bottlers’ grade refined sugar ay napupunta diretso sa bottling firms, tulad ng Coca-Cola FEMSA Philippines at Pepsi-Cola Products Philippines, Inc.

Ang iba ay nakatalaga na agad sa mga karaput-dapat na traders, na ibebenta nila ang supply para sa mga direktang pangkonsusmo.

“At the end of the day, if you add all these costs, additional fees on any sugar importation, when it gets to retail, even to the supermarkets and the wet market, prices of sugar are still high. You get sugar for what used to be PHP50 (per kg.) to close to PHP60 even more PHP65 per kilo,” sabi pa ng hepe ng ahensya.

“That’s also the reason why some of basic commodities, as sugar, prices have been really going up. It’s not good for the consumers, it’s not good for the manufacturing industry,” dagdag pa ni Lopez.
Villar says: Invest in agri devt

By Macon Ramos-Araneta

SENIOR OF THE SENATE, Cynthia Villar has underscored the need to invest in research and development to hasten the growth and development of the country's agriculture sector.

Villar, chairman of the Senate agriculture and food committee, stressed that agri growth was very important to Filipinos because majority or two-thirds of the population were directly and indirectly involved in agriculture.

Villar said she had always been a firm believer in the importance of R&D.

She advocates the incorporation of R&D in the agriculture sector, which also helps improve agricultural mechanization efforts.

The senator was the guest speaker during the Turnover Ceremony of Decorticating Machine.

The machine will help increase the productivity and income of the farmer-beneficiaries especially the 3.5-million coconut farmers.

"If we address the poverty among the coconut farmers and the rice farmers, I believe it will have a huge impact in improving our country's poverty level since they compose 90 percent of all our farmers," said Villar.

In the Senate, Villar said they had passed the Coconut Farmers and Industry Trust Fund bill to safeguard the P100-billion coconut levy funds.

She also guaranteed the coconut farmers and their families would be the direct beneficiaries of the coco levy funds after resolving this decades-old issue.

"Of course, that is just one aspect. My actions and support are not only through legislation. I also make sure that I have practical approaches that will benefit the poor like these decorticating machine and coco coir processing machine or facility," said Villar.

Being a social entrepreneur, Villar said she was a proponent of a similar technology which they have been using in Las Piñas City to provide livelihood and augment income of farmers.
How to end PH hunger? It's all about rice, says NAPC

The government can address the problem of hunger in the country by ensuring rice sufficiency for every Filipino family, but it must also break free from the bondage of rice importation, National Anti-Poverty Commission chair Liza Maza said on Thursday. She said rice self-sufficiency was pivotal in ensuring food security since 85 percent of the country’s population depended on rice as staple food. “In order to achieve true rice self-sufficiency and food security, breaking away from import-dependency must be coupled with the initiative to boost our agricultural output and to support our local farmers," Maza said ahead of Friday's interagency dialogue on rice sufficiency and food security. —MELVIN GASCON
A model of a compact farm that is viable and sustainable is featured in the August issue of Agriculture Magazine that will be off the press in a few days. The article, written by Julius P Yap, Jr., features the model compact farm developed by Neil T. Pedralexz and his wife Cheryll in Brgy. Maligaya, Dinalupihan, Bataan.

To be economically viable, the compact farm should be at least 500 to 2,000 square meters which is bigger than the typical backyard garden. According to the article, the concept of a sustainable compact farm revolves around the three-crop rule which includes the cash crop, the insurance crop and the main crop.

The cash crop could consist of short term varieties like lettuce that are planted on a weekly basis, providing a continuous cash flow. Pedralexz explains that the insurance crops are vegetables in season that are resilient to calamities like pest infestation.

On the other hand, the main crops are those that are considered off-season which could fetch higher prices when sold. One example is tomato that can be grown during the wet season. Another is a sweet corn variety that is resistant to diseases during the rainy months.

Pedralexz, by the way, is a chief agrarian reform project officer at the Region 3 office of the Department of Agrarian Reform.

ORGANIC GARDEN PEA – The August Agriculture Magazine also features a detailed article on Organic Production of Garden Pea in the Highlands, courtesy of the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD).

The guide includes uses and nutritional value of garden pea, recommended varieties, soil and climate requirements, land preparation, planting, steps in compost production, production of organic plant supple-

CORN HYBRID OF THE FUTURE - Adrian Manza, Corteva's corn expert, and Asham Zahid of Malaysia, take a good look at the big ears of P3S30YHR, the corn hybrid of the future from Corteva. The new hybrid has a potential yield of 14 tons per hectare. The big ears have high shelling recovery of 86 percent. The grains are of high quality, too. It is early-medium maturing at 108 to 115 days after planting. It is also tolerant to lodging and suitable for high density planting.
One example is the right variety of hot pepper that has long life and also commands a good price, especially when harvest is in short supply. The right variety of radish which does not require a big investment but which commands a good price is another example of an insurance crop.

ON THE COVER – Adrian Manza, corn expert of Cortava, poses with the big ears of the company’s new variety which is dubbed the Corn Hybrid of the Future because of its many desirable traits. It is high-yielding, resistant to lodging and suitable for high density planting.

GOURD FOR CASH – The gourd or “upo” can be a money maker in the compact farm because it starts fruiting in just over a month from planting and harvesting can be done daily. Although the fruits usually don’t command a high price, they are bestsellers.

PARASITISM IN GOATS – Parasitism in goats can be a cause of losses if the problem is not addressed on time and properly. The article in the August issue of Agriculture Magazine gives practical pointers on how to avoid the problem. Make sure to get a copy of the August issue which will be off the press soon.
The company is the distributor of biostimulants that can boost crop production without the use of toxic chemicals.

**FOR RUMINANT RAISERS**

Growers of ruminants like goats will be happy to know that there is an article which shows how to Minimize Parasitic Infestation in Ruminants During the Wet Season. Parasitism, according to the article, brings enormous losses to the farm and causes anemia, decreased resistance to infection, poor breeding efficiency, reduced production of meat and milk, and weight loss, all of which can lead to death when left untreated.

Here's an important point in the article. "To alleviate the ill effects of parasitism, farmers need to institute an integrated farm management approach. However, they need to understand first the cycle of infection, which begins when parasite-infested animals excrete manure with worm eggs. These eggs mature into effective larvae in the pasture. The larvae travel to the blades of grass and shrubs, usually early in the morning when blades are moist. Then these mature into full-grown worms in the stomach of the grazing animals that ingested them."

**MEMOIRS**

Other interesting features include short memoirs of this agri-journalist. These items include the most profitable farm animal raised by the late Don Enrique Zobel; Jose Abellar who introduced wire cages in poultry farms; elite pigs in air-conditioned quarters; a most successful resettlement project in Thailand, and other features.

Agriculture Magazine is the most widely circulated agricultural magazine in the Philippines today. It is distributed nationwide through bookstores and outlets of Manila Bulletin.
PROFITABLE DEER RAISING - Raising deer was one of the profitable projects of the late Don Enrique Zobel who developed his 400-hectare farm in Calatagan, Batangas soon after finishing his course in Agriculture at the University of California Davis in the early 1960s. Deer don't require special care. They just lived together with his cattle in the pasture. The animals were simply provided with salt lick improved with dewormer. Zobel raised the native breed and three New Zealand, Australian and Malaysian.

WIRE CAGES FOR LAYERS - Jose Abellar is credited for popularizing the use of wire cages in commercial poultry farms in the Philippines in 1968. The wire cages replaced the cages that were made of wood and bamboo materials. The use of wire cages has many advantages over the wooden cages which were hard to clean because feed particles and manure would stick to them. With wire cages, sanitation problems are minimized. The eggs of intestinal worms don't stick to the wire so that the chickens don't get the parasite. There's better ventilation with wire cages, thus preventing heat stroke. Moreover, with wire cages the eggs are cleaner and there is less breakage.
Villar cites R&D role in agri growth

Sen. Cynthia A. Villar has underscored the need to invest in research and development (R&D) to hasten the growth and development of the agriculture sector.

Villar, chairperson of the Senate Agriculture and Food Committee, stressed that agriculture growth is very important because majority or two-thirds of the population are directly and indirectly involved in agriculture.

She advocated for the incorporation of R&D in the agriculture sector, which also helps improve agricultural mechanization efforts.

The senator was the guest speaker during the turnover ceremony of deccorticating machines recently. The machines will help increase the productivity and income of the farmer-beneficiaries, especially the 3.5-million coconut farmers.

"If we address the poverty among the coconut farmers and the rice farmers, I believe it will have a huge impact in improving our country's poverty level since they compose 90 percent of all our farmers," said Villar.

In the Senate, Villar said they have passed the Coconut Farmers and Industry Trust Fund bill to safeguard the ₱100-billion coconut levy fund.
'HALAL' CERTIFICATION SA ISLAMIC COUNTRIES

ma ng memorandum of understanding (MOU) para sa "halal" certification ng Philippine exporters sa UAE. Sa ilalim ng memorandum of understanding (MOU), ang "halal" certification bod- tes na binigyan ng akmadi- tasyon ng PAB ay agad kilalainin ng UAE.

Napansin din ni UAE-ESMA Director General Abdulla Abdelqader Al Maceeni na ang MOU sa PAB ay nakabawas din ng technical barriers para sa Filipino exporters na na- katutok sa UAE market. "It will be free of any significant barriers. It will not be retested and will have no additional certification," sabi niya.

Sinabi niya na ang "halal" certification scheme in UAE "ay nag- giging international," na manganahulugan na ang cer- tifikasyon galing sa UAE-ESMA ay kikilala- rin ng ibang bansa, na ang "halal"-certified products ay pwedeng makapakoe sa ibang bansa sa loob ng rehiyon. Dahil dito, mag- kakaroon ng bawas sa gastos sa pagpapangkati ng Islamic countries.

Dati, nagbabayad sila sa ilang certificates, ngay- on ang bayad ay para sa isaang certificate na lang, sabi ng opisyal ng UAE-ESMA. Sinabi ni Perlada na ang pakikipag-partner sa UAE-ESMA, nakikita niya ang Filipinas ay nag- giging distribution hub para sa "halal"-certified export products and ser- vices sa mga kalapit na bana sa Middle East.