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PART 1 of 2

PHL wants Germany to probe meat trader's quarantine breach

By Jasper Emmanuel Y. Arcalas @jearcalas

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) will ask Germany—the second top source of Philippine meat imports—to investigate the recent quarantine breach that allowed pork from Poland to be shipped by a German firm to the Philippines.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel F. Piñol told the BusinessMirror that he would formally write to the German embassy in the Philippines and request for an investigation. Piñol will also ask Germany to fix the loopholes in its quarantine system.

88 million kilograms

The volume of meat products imported by the Philippines from Germany in 2018

Following the recent discovery of Germany's shipment of 260 kilograms of Polish pork to the Philippines, the National Meat Inspection (NMIS) said it will intensify its monitoring and inspection of meat shipments from the European Union.

Local meat importers, traders and processors told the BusinessMirror that the lapses in Germany's quarantine system is a "huge concern" at a time when the Philippines is on high alert for shipments that could introduce the dreaded African swine fever (ASF) virus into the country.

"The German co-mingling case causes great concern for Philippine quarantine authorities. Somehow it strengthens our earlier reservation on allowing shipment of pork from ASF high-risk countries," Piñol said in an interview on Thursday.

The DA chief also disclosed that he would permanently ban German firm Pro Food GMBH (ProFood) from exporting meat products to the Philippines even if blanket ban on Germany is lifted.

He said ProFood's act was a

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Germany. . .

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"serious" quarantine violation and showed that it has a "lousy" system.

If Germany wants to regain its export accreditation and resume trade with Manila, Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) OIC-Director Ronnie Domingo said it has to prove that it has improved its quarantine system.

"German authorities should be able to convince the Philippine authorities that they have effective measures in place to avoid repeating the same problem," he told the BUSINESSMIRROR via SMS.

Piñol on Wednesday ordered the suspension of the system accreditation of all German foreign meat establishment to export meat to the Philippines following the breach of quarantine protocols.

Expansion of ban

PIÑOL said he would sit down soon with the country's top quarantine officials to determine the need to expand the ban and cover other European countries contiguous to Poland.

The trade of goods in the EU is borderless, which allows freer and faster exchange of products among member-states, according to government sources.

Meat Importers and Traders Association (Mita) President Jesus C. Cham said the import ban on Germany serves a "strong wake-up call" for the Netherlands, Austria and France to strengthen their quarantine system, particularly their documentation processes.

Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Austria have been deemed by the DA as high-risk countries as they share common borders with EU states that are already infected with ASF.

"The bigger concern is how did the Polish pork pass through Germany's quarantine system? The veterinary certificate is like a check, it cannot bounce. This is an issue of documentation," Cham told the BUSINESSMIRROR.

Apology

IN a letter addressed to NMIS Region 7 Regional Technical Director Josefina Rico, ProFood admitted that it was their "unintentional" mistake to include Polish pork with the German meat shipment ordered by JudPhilan.

ProFood Export Manager Silvana Maria Pinter-Konemann apologized for it and explained that the mistake was caused by "numerous movements" of meat products in their warehouses in Germany.

"The unintentional mistake is the fact there were 26 boxes of frozen pork flat bones [that] were mixed instead of purely from pork cutting fat," the letter read, a copy of which was obtained by the BUSINESSMIRROR.

"I am writing to apologize for our intentional mistake that might cause damages to our client JudPhilan Foods Corp. and for whatever purposes this may serve," the letter added, which was dated June 28.

Philippine Association of Meat Processors Inc. (Pampi) Spokesman Rex Agarrado said his group has not conducted its own investigation. Agarrado said Pampi concluded that JudPhilan did not order Polish pork and only purchased raw materials from Germany.

The Pampi official said JudPhilan will not be removed from his group since the inclusion of Polish pork in the shipment was the exporter's fault.

"In fact, the importer should file a case against the exporter after what happened and to recover the value of the goods," Agarrado told the BUSINESSMIRROR. "And as an association, we might ban the exporter indefinitely."

Mita, Pampi and local hog raisers lauded the government's move to immediately suspend meat imports from Germany after the incident.

The Philippines purchased over 88 million kilograms of meat products from Germany last year, making it the second-biggest source of imported meat, BAI data showed.

Manila Standard

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German pork products banned amid ASF threat

By Othel V. Campos

THE Agriculture department on Wednesday ordered the banning of pork and pork products from Germany after the Philippines was almost exposed to African Swine Fever through a pork shipment from that country.

A recent investigation by the Bureau of Animal Industry showed that a shipment of pork from Germany was combined with about 250 kilos of pork from Poland, prompting the confiscation of the German meat shipment.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol warned importers not to mix meat products, especially during times when the Philippines faces affliction threats from outside markets.

The National Meat Inspection Service and the Bureau of Animal Industry conducted the joint investigation after Cebu City's Department of Veterinary Medicine and Fisheries tipped off national agencies on the incident.

Based on the report, the shipment was intercepted at 3 a.m. on June 27, and was subsequently disposed of by burning.

Poland is one of 18 countries with a reported outbreak of the African Swine Fever, a deadly hog disease that has no vaccine or cure.

Germany, though not included in the list, is still near Poland. The shipment from Germany also contained 25 boxes of suspect meat from Poland.

Animal Industry director Ronnie Domingo said the incident was a serious violation that warranted the banning of all pork shipments from Germany.

The ban brought to 19 the total number of countries that are not allowed to ship pork and pork products to the Philippines.

The Manila Times

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PH bans entry of meat products from Germany

THE Philippines has ordered a temporary ban on the entry of all meat products from Germany after the Department of Agriculture (DA) discovered it was exporting meat sourced from a country affected by African swine fever (ASF).

Through a memorandum order dated July 3, Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol formalized the temporary suspension of system accreditation for all german foreign establishments to export meat to the Philippines.

Based on a joint investigation conducted by the Bureau of Animal Industry and the National Meat Inspection Services, there was a "co-mingling" of pork flat bones from ASF-hit Poland with the legitimate importation from Germany.

Authorities also found that there had been lapses in the inspection system of Germany to ensure export sale to the Philippine market.

"The investigation showed that a shipment of pork from Germany was intercepted by Cebu Quarantine Officers on June 27 after it was discovered that the shipment included 25 boxes of pork from Poland," Piñol said.

"The German company, Pro-Food, admitted that it imported pork from Poland and part of the importation was shipped to the Philippines," he added.

The Agriculture chief clarified that while Germany was not included in the list of countries with reported outbreak of ASF, it is contiguous with Poland.

This brings to 19 the total number of countries that are not allowed to ship pork and pork products to the Philippines.

Edwin Chen, president of the Pork Producers Federation of the Philippines Inc. lauded the DA's move to include Germany in the list.

"It's just right... Because they're reckless and did not follow our laws, they should really be banned in respect to our food safety and security," he told *The Manila Times.*

"In this way, we will be able to protect our hog industry and continue to meet our requirements for pork meat," Chen said, noting a sufficient supply of pork.

Currently, the Philippines is producing 96 percent of its pork, with a surplus of over four months of supply, according to Jayson Cainglet, spokesman for the Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura.

Despite Germany being the country's top source of meat imports, Cainglet said, "We can still source from Canada, the US and other pork-exporting countries."

"We do not see the ban to have any impact on pork prices, farmgate prices remain the same for the past six weeks," he added.

ASF is a highly contagious hemorrhagic disease of domestic and wild pigs of all ages.

There are no effective preventive vaccines or cures, and the mortality rate is as high as 100 percent, according to the World Organization for Animal Health.

Among Asian nations, multiple outbreaks and rapid spread of ASF began in China and later spread to Hong Kong, North Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia and Mongolia.

Other countries affected by the ASF are Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, South Africa, Ukraine and Zambia.

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PH bans pork from Germany

By **MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR**

The Department of Agriculture (DA) will close its doors on imported pork products from Germany — one of the Philippines' top suppliers of affordable raw pork material — as part of the country's anti-African Swine Fever (ASF) measures.

This makes the Western European country the first country banned from exporting pork to the Philippines. Germany still remains free from the deadly hog disease, but is close to countries under ASF list.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) on late Wednesday has issued a memorandum order temporarily suspending the importation of pork and other pork products coming from Germany.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said the move was a result of an investigation conducted by the Bureau Animal Industry (BAI) following the confiscation of a shipment of pork supposedly coming from Germany which included 250 kilos of pork from Poland.

Poland is one of the 18 countries with reported outbreak of ASF, a deadly hog disease which has no vaccine or cure. But while Germany is not included on the ASF list, it is contiguous with Poland and is therefore considered a "high risk" area.

Last week, more than 600 kilos of pork products from Belgium and Poland — two countries infected by ASF since last year — have entered the country legally with just enough permits to pass through the Cebu port.

To be specific, 26 boxes of frozen pork have entered Cebu port, 260 kilos of which came from Poland and 370 kilos came from Belgium.

Based on its investigation, BAI found out that the ones that came from Poland was actually part of a shipment that came from Pro Food GmbH, a company based in Germany.

Pro Food, an international trading company that import and export meat and meat products, seafood and vegetables, eventually admitted that it imported pork from Poland and part of this was shipped to the Philippines.

The company has an office here and in other countries, namely China, Netherlands, France, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brazil and South Africa.

BAI Director Ronnie Domingo said Pro Food has committed a serious violation, which warranted the suspension of entry of all pork shipments from Germany.

This brings to 19 the total number of countries which are not allowed to ship pork and pork products to the Philippines.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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Meat imports from Germany banned on ASF concerns

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

The Philippines continues to secure its borders against the dreaded African swine fever after it decided to ban meat imports from Germany.

In a recent memorandum order, Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol issued a temporary suspension of system accreditation for all German foreign meat establishments to export meat into the Philippines.

"This action was a result of an investigation conducted by the Bureau Animal Industry following the confiscation of a shipment of pork supposedly coming from Germany which included 250 kilograms of pork from Poland," Piñol said.

Poland is one of the 18 countries with reported outbreak of the ASF. Germany is not included in the list, but it is contiguous with Poland.

DA-attached agencies BAI and the National Meat Inspection Service conducted a joint investigation after the Cebu City Department of Veterinary Medicine and Fisheries reported the incident to the DA.

The shipment was intercepted last week and was disposed through incineration.

"The investigation showed that a shipment of pork from Germany was intercepted by Cebu Quarantine officers after it was discovered that the shipment included 25 boxes of pork from Poland," Piñol said.

"The German company, Pro-Food, admitted that it imported pork from Poland and part of the importation was shipped to the Philippines," he said.

BAI director Ronnie Domingo said the incident of comingling was a serious violation which warranted the banning of all pork shipments from Germany.

The DA noted that there has been lapses in the inspection system of Germany to ensure export of safe food for the Philippine market.

Based on the memorandum order, there will be a temporary suspension of system accreditation for all German foreign meat establishments to export meat into the Philippines pending the results of the investigation of the DA.

Shipments of meat in transit upon the issuance of the memorandum order will be allowed to enter the country subject to 100 percent physical inspection.

There is also an immediate suspension of the processing, evaluation of the application and issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) import clearance for meat from Germany.

The memorandum order was issued to prevent the entry of the virus and to protect the health of the public and the local swine population. It is set to take effect immediately.

The Philippines has imposed a ban on imports coming from China, Mongolia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Hong Kong, North Korea, Laos, Russia, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Moldova, South Africa, Zambia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Belgium, Latvia, Poland and Romania.

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Nueva Ecija farmers to grow special rice

FARMERS in Zaragoza, Nueva Ecija, will plant special rice to supply the demand of rice cake vendors in the province and in Tarlac, according to the Philippine Rice Research Institute.

PhilRice, an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture, said farmer-members of its Rice Business Innovations System (RiceBIS) Community Program recently planted special rice in a demo farm managed by the Ugat-Uhay Farmers Association (UUFA).

Joel Pascual, PhilRice community development facilitator, said the association selected special rice because special rice cake vendors place a premium on the variety.

With 40 farmer-participants, the program involves seasonlong capacity enhancement on agripreneurship and Farmer Business School to help them increase their income from rice farming.

Pascual also said farmers can benefit from economies of scale that lowers the cost per unit when palay is sold in bulk, which makes palay selling more attractive to bigger buyers, such as consolidators and millers.

"When realized, This model will pull the farmers out of being trapped in the non-lucrative small-scale palay production. Aside from palay trading, organized farmers can also try other enterprises, such as labor and machine contracting, input selling, seed production, rice milling, wholesaling and retailing," he said in a statement.

Since wet season last year, UUFA had established demo farms in partnership with PhilRice to test and exhibit technologies, including rice varieties and machines, such as mechanical transplanter and drum seeder.

UUFA's neighboring RiceBIS partner-cooperative, Pinagbuklod na Adhika Agricultural Cooperative, already handles multiple enterprises including inputs selling, custom service facilities provision and processed-rice products selling, such as rice and mung bean brew, brown rice and milled rice.

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Traders offer lower prices for Luzon corn

By Jasper Emmanuel Y. Arcalas @jearcalas

THE Philippine Maize Federation Inc. (PhilMaize) said corn growers in Northern Luzon are now complaining of falling farm-gate prices, as traders have slashed their buying prices following the government's proposal to import corn.

PhilMaize President Roger V. Navarro said unscrupulous traders took advantage of the government's plan to import 300,000 metric tons (MT) of corn in reducing their quotation for the local grain.

Citing reports he received from PhilMaize members in Tarlac and Pangasinan, Navarro said, the average farm-gate price of corn has fallen below P13 per kilogram, from P15 per kg in previous weeks.

"The importation is not yet approved and yet some unscrupulous traders are already manipulating the prices. In Tarlac and Pangasinan, where farmers have started harvesting, the price is below P13 per kg," he told the BusinessMirror. "And that is due to the traders."

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is asking the Tariff Commission (TC) to allow the importation of 300,000 MT of yellow corn at zero tariffs to plug the shortfall in local supply and pull down the costs of animal feeds.

However, PhilMaize has thumbed down the duty-free importation of yellow corn—one of the main ingredients used in manufacturing animal feeds.

PhilMaize said it supports the purchase of imported yellow corn due to the shortfall in domestic supply, but at a lower tariff rate.

The drop in the farm-gate prices of corn was one of the concerns aired by PhilMaize during the last TC hearing on the proposed duty-free importation.

During the hearing, Navarro said mere pronouncements that the Philippines will import corn could adversely affect the farm-gate price of yellow corn, especially during harvest.

"Our only appeal to both traders and even to feed millers is to have unity. We hope that there is no manipulation of prices because we will not move forward if that would be the case," he said.

"Corn farmers would be discouraged to plant due to low prices and that would be a bigger problem for all of us. We appeal to traders to not take advantage of the proposed importation," he added.

Navarro also said traders should not manipulate prices at the proposal to import corn as the shipments will not go to members of PhilMaize but to the members of the Philippine Association of Feed Millers Inc.

"And even if the importation would be approved, I think the shipments will arrive only by the first quarter of next year," he said. "So there's no reason to manipulate the prices now."

Livestock and poultry raisers and feed millers have been complaining of the high retail prices of yellow corn. Prices rose as typhoons and El Niño destroyed standing crops in major corn-growing areas.

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Neda: Rice trade liberalization law to boost GDP

By Cai U. Ordinario
@caiordinario

THE law that sought to further open up the Philippines's rice sector is also expected to boost the country's GDP, according to the latest estimates of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (Ifpri).

In a statement, Neda said preliminary estimates showed that the rice trade liberalization law will add 0.44 percentage points to the country's economic growth. This is based on a 35-percent tariff rate.

This means that if the country's economic growth is at 6 percent, adding the impact of the rice trade liberalization law will mean GDP will reach 6.44 percent.

"The agriculture sector would expand as there would be more crop diversification—as uncompetitive rice areas shift to other high-value crops with relatively higher net returns," the Neda said.

Neda Undersecretary for Policy and Planning Rosemarie G. Edillon said the reform, which was advocated by the oversight agency, will also boost investments in agriculture.

Edillon said prior to the passage of Republic Act (RA) 11203, the government monopolized rice trade nationwide. Only the National Food Authority (NFA) was authorized to import rice, the country's food staple.

However, with the new law, Edillon said more investments can come in given that the NFA's powers to import rice have already been amended under RA 11203.

"Before the rice tariffication law was passed, the government had been monopolizing the rice trade. This setup had been restricting the flow of private funds going to the sector," Edillon said.

"We have conducted similar studies on this. But we want a model that integrates climate change into farmers' decisions," she added.

The Neda also said the world rice market is capable of supplying the additional import demand of the Philippines in the long run with minimal increases in prices.

The accessibility of affordable rice will contribute to lowering domestic rice prices that will benefit everyone especially the poor, it added.

The study also emphasized the need to support local rice farmers by assisting them to improve productivity, providing cash transfers in the short run, and helping them in the adoption of climate-resilient technologies.

"The agriculture sector, particularly the rice sector, is vulnerable to climate shocks, which have been increasing in frequency and intensity. So we want to be prepared and provide interventions ahead of time," Edillon said.

Neda and Ifpri conducted an assessment on the projected impact of the removal of the quantitative restriction on rice and climate change on the agriculture sector.

Initial results were presented in a recent policy forum attended by representatives of concerned government agencies and nongovernment organizations in Pasig City.

RA 11203 liberalized the country's rice trade by removing the quantitative restriction on imports, and transformed the NFA into a buffer-stocking agency.

Officials of the agriculture department sounded the alarm last week that the government could face lawsuits if it implements the rice trade liberalization law on March 5 even without the IRR.

Some groups are looking into the possibility of securing a temporary restraining order against RA 11203 from the Supreme Court.

The Manila Times

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Customs collects P5.9-B tariffs from rice imports

BY ANNA LEAH E. GONZALES

THE Bureau of Customs (BOC) has collected P5.9 billion in tariffs from 1.43 million metric tons of rice imported by private traders, the Department of Finance (DoF) said on Thursday, almost five months after Republic Act 11203 or the Rice Liberalization Act was signed into law.

In a statement, the DoF cited Customs Commissioner Rey Leonardo Guerrero's report to Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez 3rd that said the bureau collected the highest amount among these tariffs — P1.37 billion — from the Subic Bay port.

The Port of Manila followed with P978.51 million; the Manila International Container Port, P942.76 million; the Port of Cagayan de Oro, P754.13 million; and the Port of Davao, P703.93 million.

According to Dominguez, RA 11203 will not only make high-quality rice more affordable and accessible to Filipino families, but also lower the country's inflation rate, revolutionize the agriculture sector, and help farmers become more productive and competitive in the global economy.

The law, which also created the P10-billion Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), will help *palay* (unmilled rice) growers

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Customs

and farmers' cooperatives transition to a new rice regime.

The fund would be used to provide farmers equipment; assist them in the production, promotion and distribution of certified rice seeds; upgrade of postharvest storage facilities; and credit assistance, irrigation support, and research and development support.

Section 13 of RA 11203 states that 10 percent of the RCEF will be used as a credit facility with minimal interest rates and minimum collateral requirements to rice farmers and cooperatives.

The rest of the fund will be used for rice farm machinery and equipment; rice-seed development, propagation and promotion; and rice extension services.

Under the law, rice importers will also be required to secure sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances from the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Plant Industry, which took on the food safety regulation function of the National Food Authority under that law.

This requirement will ensure that rice imports are free from pests and diseases that could affect public health and local farm production, the Finance department said.

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CHANGING WORLD

Dairy farming for poverty alleviation

By **DR. BERNARDO VILLEGAS**

Part 3)

MUCH can also be done by cooperatives to get the benefits of dairy farming of small farmers to trickle down to the poorest of the rural dwellers. The cooperatives are formed to represent dairy farmers in dealings with the government as well as negotiate better prices and other interests with the private sector. They also provide technical and other support services to the member farmers. As reported in the Dairy Industry Road Map prepared by the Center for Food and Agribusiness of the University of Asia and the Pacific, cooperatives are categorized into three types -- primary cooperatives, secondary cooperatives (federation of primary cooperatives), and tertiary cooperatives (the confederation of secondary cooperatives. As of 2015, there were 166 NDA-assisted primary cooperatives, 10 secondary cooperatives, and one tertiary cooperative.

The primary cooperatives act as collection centers for raw milk to be processed. The cooperative federations, which operate the processing facility, usually buy the milk from primary cooperatives, then process and market the collected milk. The tertiary cooperative, the Dairy Confederation of the Philippines (Dairycon) established in 1993, is the major organization of all dairy cooperatives, associations, and processors in the Philippines. It serves as an avenue for dairy farmers in the discussion of common interests affecting the dairy farming sector in particular and the dairy industry in general. Meanwhile, the carabao dairy farming sector is also composed of farmers and cooperatives and is part of the tertiary cooperative, Dairycon. As of 2012, the Philippine Cooperative Center has assisted 36 cooperatives from the National Impact Zone and 45 cooperatives in the Regional Impact Zone.

Cooperatives have helped small holder dairy farmers attain the necessary economies of scale, especially in transfer of technology and marketing, to attain financial viability. A more sanguine assessment of dairy farming as a means of poverty alleviation can be found in a paper written by Ms. Sally Bulatao, former administrator of the National Dairy Authority. In "Philippines: Promoting Dairy Entrepreneurship through Enterprise Zones," Ms. Bulatao enumerates three opportunities that can facilitate small holder dairy farmers in accessing the expanding local dairy markets:

1. Dairying for agrarian reform communities and families of overseas contract workers. She cites some existing dairy zones located in agrarian reform communities, including those in Bulacan, Quezon, Negros Occidental, Iloilo, and Zamboanga del Norte. Authorities have seen the benefits of dairying to families of agrarian reform beneficiaries. They have considered introducing dairying in suitable areas among the 1,500 agrarian reform communities throughout the country. This initiative could potentially accelerate the participation of more smallholders. Likewise, OFWs interested in investing part of their savings have considered dairying as a possible investment for their families in their respective home villages.

2. Mainstreaming of widely consumed dairy products, such as evaporated and condensed milk, and other products. There are already facilities available that can produce popular dairy products, such as evaporated and condensed milk. Some help can come from the large milk companies as part of their CSR programs as well as government agencies that have the technical competence in processing raw milk, not only evaporated and condensed milk but also other processed products such as yogurt and cheese which are already in demand even outside the urban centers.

3. Institutionalized local government-sponsored milk feeding for day care centers and schools. Smallholder dairy producers should be given priority in supplying the milk needed for milk-feeding programs in day care centers and schools in their respective localities. There should be stricter compliance with the provisions of the National Dairy Development Act which stipulates that government-sponsored nutrition programs shall be supplied by local producers. This policy addresses poverty alleviation in two ways: it makes milk available to the children of the rural poor who are in most need of the protein found in milk to help develop their brains in early childhood. At the same time, it helps supplement the income of the small farmers who are involved in milk production.

The paper of former NDA administrator Sally Bulatao concludes with the contrary opinion that smallholder dairying, with the proper support from business, government, and civil society, can help alleviate poverty in the rural areas. She cites enough successful enterprises run by individual smallholder dairy farmers, primary cooperatives, and cooperative federations to prove that the broad-based model of cluster producers can take advantage of distinct economies of scale using farm labor and marginal lands. There is especially the opportunity of clustering big and small farm enterprises which can lead to bigger-scale operation over time. She also celebrates the entry of NGOs and foundations because of the greater attention to the social preparation of smallholders given by these institutions, which preparation is often overlooked by government-initiated projects that tend to focus on the technical aspects.

For comments, my email address is bernardo.villegas@uap.asia.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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BFAR going after China vessel for poaching; fine up to $1M

By Karl R. Ocampo
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The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) on Thursday said it would fine the Chinese trawler that hit and sank a Philippine fishing boat at Recto Bank in the West Philippine Sea on June 9 for poaching and other violations of the country's fishery laws.

Demosthenes Escoto, BFAR legal division chief, told the Inquirer by phone that under the Fisheries Code, the agency could impose fines of $600,000 to $1 million on foreigners caught operating in Philippine waters.

POACHERS' VICTIM The Gem-Ver 1 beached at Barangay San Roque in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, before a Chinese trawler struck and sank it in the West Philippine Sea on the night of June 9. The Chinese vessel was operating illegally in Philippine waters. —RICHARD A. REYES

Poaching case

The Chinese trawler Yuemaobinyu 42212 hit the anchored Philippine fishing boat Gem-Ver 1 at Recto Bank, in the West Philippine Sea, waters within the Philippines' 370-kilometer exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the heavily disputed South China Sea.

Escoto said the BFAR was preparing a poaching case against the trawler from China's Guangdong province, as it was clearly operating in the Philippines' EEZ when it hit the Gem-Ver 1.

The BFAR has sought help from the Department of Foreign Affairs to obtain information about the Chinese vessel, including the names of its owner and three highest officers and their addresses.

The information will enable the agency to bring a case against the Chinese trawler.

Escoto said poachers caught in the act were often towed and fined immediately by the BFAR.

The Yuemaobinyu case is different, however, because the trawler fled after hitting the Gem-Ver 1, leaving the Philippine boat's crew to drown in the sea.

Ship registry

The Filipino fishermen were rescued by a Vietnamese fishing boat.

Under international maritime laws, Escoto said, only the flag state—in this case, China—has authority over an offending vessel that is in its registry.

The government has no plan to take action against the Vietnamese boat that rescued the Gem-Ver 1's crew.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol earlier said a Cabinet group had agreed not to go after the Vietnamese vessel for poaching because of the goodwill shown by its crew in rescuing the Filipino fishermen.

The Philippine Coast Guard investigated the sinking of the Gem-Ver 1 and found that the Chinese trawler was not solely to blame for the incident.

Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. discussed the Coast Guard report in a television interview on Wednesday.

The investigation, Locsin said, found that there was no lookout on the Gem-Ver 1 and that there was only a small light on the boat when it was struck by the large Chinese vessel.

Without a lookout, there was no one to call the oncoming Chinese vessel's attention to the presence of a smaller boat on the water.

The small light must have been inadequate for the Chinese vessel to see the Philippine boat early and avoid hitting it.

Chinese crew still liable

Malacañang, however, said on Thursday that those circumstances did not reduce the liability of the crew of the Chinese trawler.

Presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo said the Chinese crew were still liable for abandoning the Filipino fishermen in the open sea.

"They have to justify their action. The only justification would be their lives would be endangered. But I don't think so," Panelo said. —WITH A REPORT FROM JULIE M. AURELIO INQ

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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PART 1 of 4

FOREIGN FISHING VESSELS CROWD PH WATERS

STORY BY JHESSET O. ENANO

Thousands of foreign fishing vessels encroach on Philippine waters and their activities, if left unchecked, could result in a devastating depletion of the country's marine resources. A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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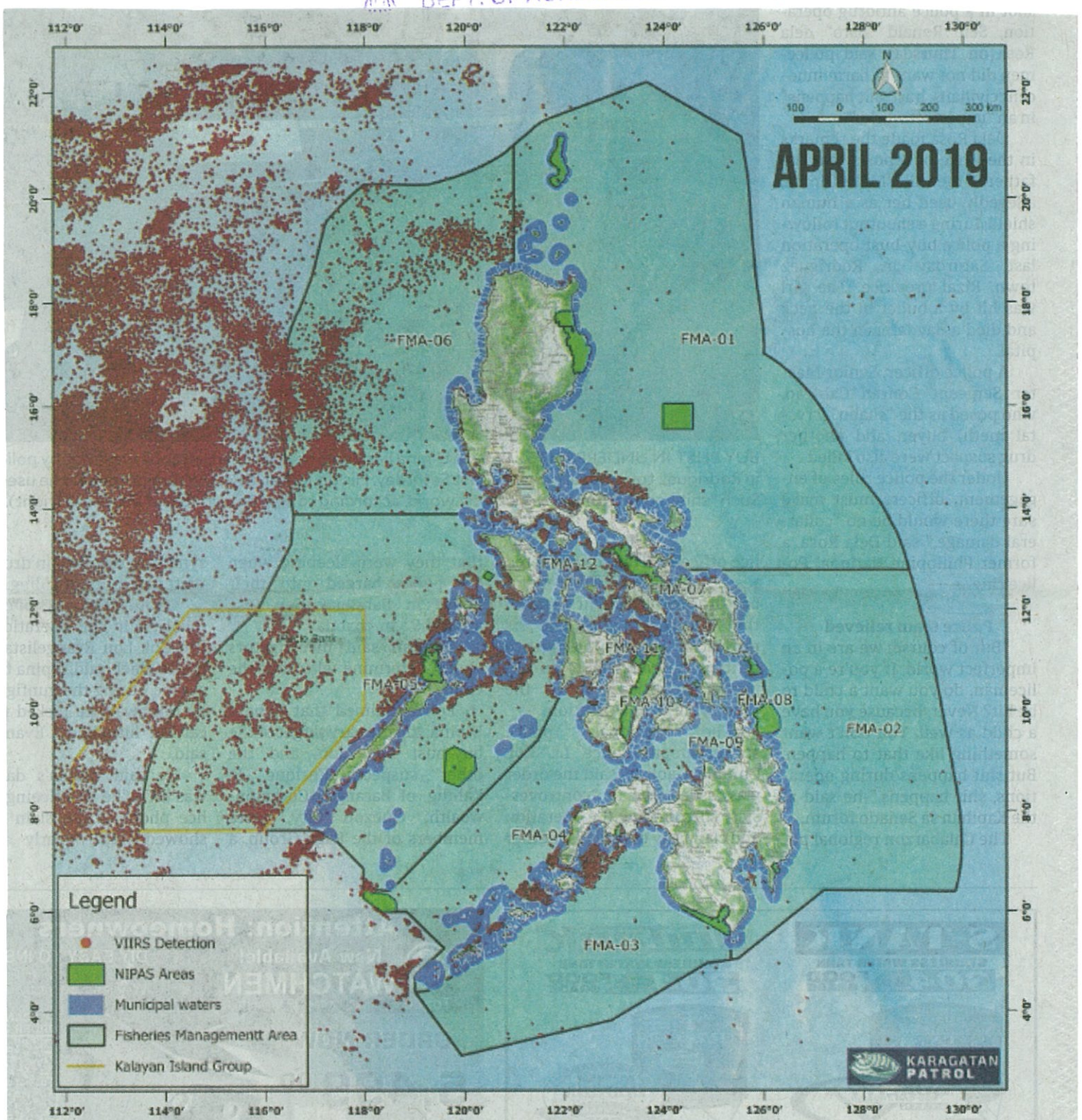
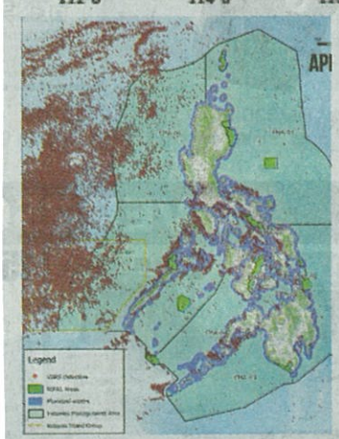
PART 2 of 4





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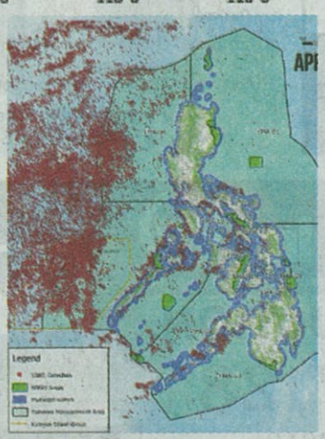

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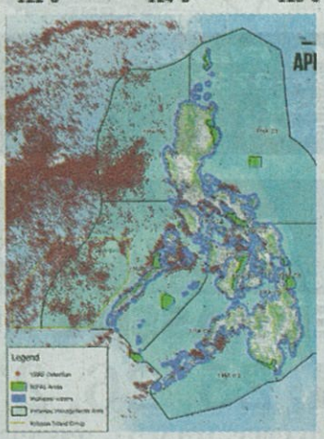

April 2018

APRIL COUNT Karagatan Patrol has been watching the increase in number of foreign vessels in the West Philippine Sea every April since 2012, counting an average of 11,261 vessels in the two fisheries management areas in those waters—Recto Bank in the Kalayaan Group and Panatag Shoal, both rich in high-value fish and other marine resources.

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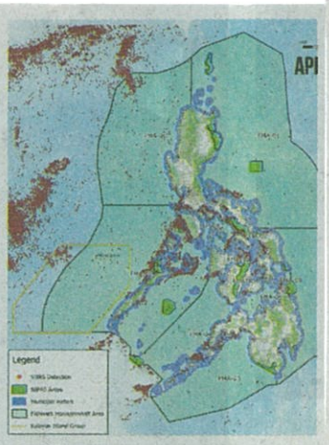
PART 3 of 4



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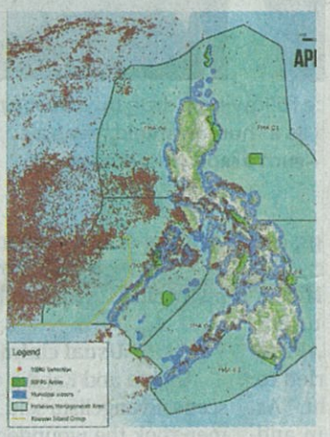

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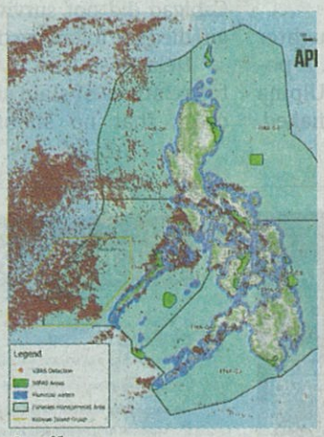

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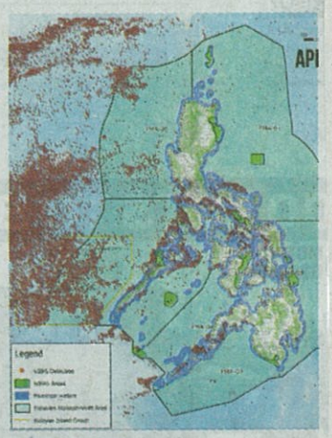

April 2015

By Jhesset O. Enano
@JhessetEnanoINQ

More and more foreign commercial fishing vessels have entered the Philippines' fishing grounds, including its municipal waters, in the past few years, threatening depletion of the country's marine resources if their activities remain destructive and unchecked, maritime experts warn.

Data gathered through the Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS) and analyzed by the fisheries monitoring group Karagatan Patrol showed a dramatic increase since 2012 in the number of industrial-scale vessels in the West Philippine Sea, waters within the country's 370-kilometer exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the South China Sea.

More ships are seen inching toward the country's coastline, with many already encroaching on municipal waters off the provinces of Palawan, Zambales and Mindoro.

China, Vietnam, Taiwan

While the identity of the vessels cannot yet be ascertained, experts agree that the majority could be coming from China and other countries like Vietnam and Taiwan, where maritime enforcers have previously arrested crews for poaching and other illegal activites in Philippine waters.

The weakness of the government's vessel monitoring capability and the lax enforcement of laws on the country's own waters are to blame for the presence of these foreign vessels in the Philippine EEZ, also the designated fisheries management areas, the experts said.

With massive encroachment on Philippine waters, local fishermen and coastal villages suffer the most, according to Jessie Floren, Karagatan Patrol geographic information expert.

"The municipal waters are for marginalized fisherfolk who cannot afford to go to deeper seas," Floren said in an interview on Thursday. "With the entry of these foreign commercial vessels in these areas, the impact would not only be certain individuals, but on entire communities dependent on marine resources."

Under the Fisheries Code, municipal waters are areas within 15 km from the coastline, including offshore islands.

Only fishing boats weighing less than 3.1 gross tons and using passive gears, such as hook and line, are allowed in these waters.

Rampant commercial fishing

But data analyzed by Karagatan Patrol showed rampant commercial fishing in these areas, including waters off northern and western Palawan and the Zamboanga Peninsula.

Beyond its primary use for weather monitoring, VIIRS—a sensor aboard a weather satellite—detects night lights both on land and on water.

Using an algorithm developed by the Earth Observation Group of the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, it can also detect "lure lights" or "superlights" that huge vessels use to attract fish.

Karagatan Patrol collated the data every April, from 2012 to 2019, choosing the specific month when cloudless skies offer sharper images.

The maps clearly show that foreign vessels have grossly overpopulated the biodiversity-rich West Philippine Sea since 2012, with high concentrations around the Kalayaan Island Group and off the coastlines of provinces facing the western seaboard.

"Small-scale fishing boats cannot be detected because their lights are very small," Floren said. "These are really commercial, if not industrial scale, fishing activities."

11,000 vessels monthly

Data provided by Karagatan Patrol to the Inquirer showed that an average of 11,261 commercial fishing vessels had been detected every April from 2012 to 2019 in the two fisheries management areas in the West Philippine Sea.

These areas include Recto (Reed) Bank in the Kalayaan Island Group and Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal, both rich in high-value fish and other marine resources.

A monthly count in April 2017 alone showed as many as 14,852 fishing vessels in these areas, with more than 10,600 commercial ships in waters off Palawan and around the Kalayaan Islands.

On a daily basis, more than 350 vessels are detected by the sensor in these waters.

These are conservative figures, Floren said, as each dot plotted on the maps can represent more than a single vessel in a 25-hectare area.

The dizzyingly high volume of commercial vessels in the West Philippine Sea, including those in the country's fishing grounds, can lead to the collapse of fish species due to overfishing and destructive fishing methods, such as bottom trawling and the outright destruction of coral reef ecosystems.

Automatic identification

While all big boats should have automatic identification systems (AIS), Floren said the majority of those spotted in the West Philippine Sea did not have these.

Some have been stationary for a long time, he said.

But maritime law expert Jay Batongbacal said on Thursday that even without the particular identification, there was high likelihood that many of these were Chinese vessels, which had been repeatedly spotted by local fishermen.

The big foreign commercial vessels boast of better technologies than those used by Filipino fishermen—traditional fishing methods and bright lights that can be detected by VIIRS.

Floren noted that similar strong lights were also seen in the sketch by the Filipino fishermen of the Chinese vessel that hit and sank their boat at

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PART 4 of 4

The municipal waters are for marginalized fisherfolk who cannot afford to go to deeper seas . . . With the entry of these foreign commercial vessels in these areas, the impact would not only be certain individuals, but on entire communities dependent on marine resources

Jessie Floren
Karagatan Patrol geographic information expert

Recto Bank on June 9.

"We also have a moratorium on the issuance of commercial fishing vessel licenses since 2014, so technically our number of fishing vessels had not increased since then," said Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines' Institute of Maritime Affairs and the Law of the Sea.

"That's precisely because we have a policy to either maintain or reduce our catch capacity. So we are not the ones who are increasing in number in the West Philippines Sea," he said. "Our commercial fishing has been relatively stagnant since 2014, compared to the Chinese's production that has been going up."

Gov't action

Floren said the current situation in the West Philippine Sea should push the government to beef up its monitoring, control and surveillance of vessels entering Philippine waters.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has a vessel monitoring measure, but Floren said this was not enough to cover all areas.

He also said the bureau should exercise transparency in its monitoring.

"They should be transparent with their work to the public, because right now, only the BFAR can access those information," Floren said.

Left unchecked and unregulated, massive-scale fishing can ultimately imperil the lives of communities reliant on the resource-rich West Philippine Sea.

Illegal fishing and reclamation at Panatag Shoal and the Spratly Islands alone cost the Philippines some P33.1 billion annually, according to marine scientists.

Impact on entire region

Destruction of coral reefs, which are important nesting areas and habitats for fish, can adversely impact fish supply from the West Philippine Sea, which is part of the Coral Triangle region, the center of the world's marine biodiversity.

But the destructive and excessive exploitation of resources in these waters would impact not only the Philippines, but also the entire Southeast Asian region, Floren said.

"If we continue to degrade the quality of our resources there, especially the coral reefs, it will aggravate the condition of marine-based production in the Asean region," he said. INQ

OLD TECHNOLOGY The big foreign vessels boast better technologies than those used by Filipino fishermen—traditional fishing methods and bright lights that can be detected by a sensor aboard a weather satellite. —WILLIE LOMIBAO

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL
Date: JULY 5, 2019 Page: B3

Rice tariffication yields P5.9 B since law's effectivity

By MARY GRACE PADIN

The government has collected P5.9 billion in rice tariffs since the liberalization of rice imports in March, according to the Department of Finance.

Citing preliminary data from the Bureau of Customs (BOC), the DOF said the private sector has imported 1.43 million metric tons (MMT) of rice since the implementation of the Rice Tariffication Act on March 5, translating to additional government revenues amounting to P5.9 billion from higher rice tariffs.

Broken down, Customs Commissioner Rey Leonardo Guerrero said the Subic Bay port collected the highest amount of rice tariffs with P1.37 billion during the period.

The Port of Manila collected P978.51 million, followed by the Manila International Container Port with P942.76 million, Guerrero said.

About P754.13 million was also raised by the Port of Cagayan De Oro, while another P703.93 million was collected by the Port of Davao.

Republic Act 11203 or the Rice Liberalization Act was signed and approved by President Duterte on Feb. 14, and became effective on March 5.

The law seeks to liberalize the importation of rice imports in the country by imposing tariffs in lieu of quantitative restrictions.

Under the law, a 35-percent tariff will be imposed on rice imported from member-countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

For non-ASEAN countries, a 40-percent tariff will be imposed if the volume of rice imports is within the 2012 minimum access volume (MAV) level of 350,000 metric tons, and 180 percent if the volume is above MAV.

On top of paying tariffs, rice importers are also required to secure sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances from the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) to ensure that imports are free from pests and diseases that could affect public health and local farm production.

The law also provides the creation of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), which is set at P10 billion annually for six years, for programs to boost the productivity and global competitiveness of Filipino rice farmers.

Of the total P10 billion amount, P5 billion or 50 percent will go to the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech) for the provision of post-harvest equipment to farmers, P3 billion or 30 percent to the Philippine Rice Research Institute for the development and distribution of seeds, P1 billion for the provision of credit and another P1 billion for the training of farmers.

Dominguez has described the Rice Tariffication Law as a "proud" accomplishment of the Duterte Administration, given that it took more than 30 years under various administrations to get the Congress to approve this reform.

Liberalizing rice imports, he said, would not only make quality rice more affordable and accessible to Filipino families, but will also lower the country's inflation rate, revolutionize the agriculture sector and help farmers become more productive and competitive in the global economy.

He said this measure has made the staple food more affordable to Filipinos, cutting retail prices this summer by P10 per kilo.

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL
Everybody's Newspaper

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Unrestrained sugar imports worry millers

THE country's sugar millers on Wednesday expressed apprehension over the planned liberalization of sugar importation to lower the price of the commodity.

"The sugar milling sector has been apprehensive for the past months because of the issue on import liberalization," Philippine Sugar Millers Association Executive Director Jesus Barrera said in a statement.

Barrera noted that PSMA has invested billions of pesos over the years in improving their production systems and have supported the communities and people where their mills are located. The industry has also been encouraged by government through legislation like the Biofuels, Renewable Energy and the Sugar Industry Development Acts.

"And now, government wants to allow the unrestricted entry of imported sugar into our market," he said.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III, in a press briefing during the 2019 Pre-Sona Economic and Infrastructure Forum on Monday, said that opening up the local market to more imported sugar would "probably benefit the country as a whole." He noted the local price of sugar was double the world market price.

"Maybe we should really take a close look at who's benefiting from the [current] restrictions here and probably the conclusion would be some kind of liberalization will actually benefit the country as a whole," Dominguez said.

"Just compare it to Thailand where they have a healthy food processing industry. There, the price of sugar is [at the level of the] world market price even though they are also producers of sugar," he added.

However, the sugar millers said imported sugar from the world market is priced below production cost as this was highly subsidized. "Import liberalization means that subsidized sugar produced by Indian or Thai farmer is preferred over sugar produced by Filipino farmers," they said.

The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) earlier said sugar production at the second week of June rose 0.63 percent year-on-year. SRA reported that sugar production was 2.068 million metric tons (MMT), up from 2.055 MMT the previous year.

Demand for raw sugar, however, declined 17.77 percent to 1.65 MMT. Total sugarcane milled also decreased 7.65 percent year-on-year to 21.7 MMT. Refined sugar output also fell 7.73 percent year-on-year to 784,606.8 MT.

The crop year for sugar starts in September and ends in August.

BusinessMirror
A broader look at today's business

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Rice tariffs collection at ₱5.9B

THE Bureau of Customs (BOC) collected P5.9 billion in tariffs from some 1.43 million metric tons (MMT) of rice imported by traders following the implementation of the rice trade liberalization law in March, according to the Department of Finance (DOF).

In a report to Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III, Customs Commissioner Rey Leonardo B. Guerrero said preliminary data indicated that the Subic Bay port recorded the highest collection of rice tariffs at P1.37 billion.

During a recent DOF Executive Committee meeting, Guerrero also reported that the Port of Manila collected P978.51 million in tariffs, followed by the Manila

SEE "RICE TARIFFS," A2

Rice tariffs. . . CONTINUED FROM A1

International Container Port (MICP) with P942.76 million.

The Port of Cagayan de Oro collected P754.13 million in tariffs from rice imports, while the Port of Davao recorded P703.93 million.

Republic Act (RA) 11203 was signed and approved by President Duterte last February 14 and took effect on March 5. It converted the quantitative restriction on rice into tariffs.

Dominguez said RA 11203 is a "proud accomplishment" of the Duterte administration as it took more than 30 years to get Congress to pass a "game-changing" reform.

He said liberalizing rice imports will not only make quality rice more affordable and accessible to Filipinos, but will also lower the country's inflation rate and help farmers become more productive and competitive.

According to the DOF, liberalizing rice imports has made the staple food more affordable to Filipinos, as retail prices fell by P10 per kilogram.

RA 11203 also mandated the creation of the P10-billion Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) to help palay growers and their farmers' cooperatives transition to a new trade regime.

RCEF aims to provide farmers tools and equipment, assistance in the production, promotion, and distribution of certified rice seeds, upgrading of post-harvest storage facilities, credit assistance, irrigation support, and research and development (R&D) support.

The BOC-MICP said the DOF will publish a guide for businesses on the rice import process to enable them to take advantage of the liberalized rice importation policy in the country.

The MICP said the guide is a product of the focused group discussion (FGD) spearheaded by Finance Assistant Secretary Antonio Joselito G. Lambino II last June 27.

The FGD included representatives from randomly selected businesses that are into rice trading even before the passage of RA 11203.

"The discussion centered on extracting feedback from the private sector on the proposed information materials on rice importation. The DOF is compiling a resource material that can be used by businesses as a guide into the rice import process if they wish to take advantage of the liberalized rice importation policy in the country," the MICP statement read.

Based on proposals during the FGD, the resource material will be used as an official guide on the rice importation process which will include flowcharts on the methods of importation, the documentary requirements from each agency, an estimated timeframe for every step, and the contact information of the involved offices. ***Rea Cu***

BusinessWorld
INCREASE YOUR BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

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BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO: COTABATO CITY

NAPC, BARMM gov't tackle anti-poverty strategy with 5 provinces in the Bangsamoro region still the poorest

THE NATIONAL Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) government met this week to discuss strategies towards bringing down the poverty rate in the region, which stood at 63% as of the first semester 2018. "Among the 40 poorest provinces in the country, the five provinces of BARMM compose the top five," NAPC Secretary Noel K. Felongco said at a press conference in Cotabato City on July 30. Citing a data from the Philippine Statistics Authority, Mr. Felongco said Sulu had the highest poverty rate at 74.3%, followed by Lanao del Sur at 73.7%, and Basilan, Maguindanao and Tawi-Tawi with 72.1%, 55.1%, and 23.4%, respectively. BARMM Assistant Executive Secretary Abdullah Cosain said the new regional government "is very much aware of the poverty incidence" and they are optimistic that the provisions of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), particularly on their expanded resource management authority, would benefit the poor.

BW/TSBASMAN

NAPC Secretary Noel K. Felongco (left) meets with BARMM Chief Minister Murad Ebrahim in Cotabato City on July 3.

NATURAL RESOURCES

"According to the socio-demographics, 64% of our population is still in the sector of agriculture and fisheries, which means that majority of our three million population depend on agriculture and fisheries," Mr. Cosain said, "This is the area where we believe that the intervention from the Bangsamoro government would be very critical. If we can improve farming and fisheries then it is one way of hopefully reducing poverty incidence here." He also said that the BARMM government aims to tap the region's other abundant natural resources. "As we can see, one of the reasons why economic activity remains vibrant in Tawi-Tawi is because of the mining activity there. Looking at the other natural resources of the BARMM provinces, we do believe that once these are tapped, *magkakaroon ito ng magandang* effects *sa mga tao* (It will have a significant impact on the people)." He also assured that the "Bangsamoro government will proceed with the cautious path since we want the utilization of these (natural resources) to ultimately benefit the people." The NAPC, meanwhile, reintroduced its Sambayanihan Serbisyong Sambayanan (SSS) program, the five-year development plan intended to reduce poverty nationwide, which stood at 21.6% in the first half of 2018. — **Tajallih S. Basman**

***BUSINESSWORLD* GRAPHICS:** TONE DAÑAS

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BoC rice import tariff collections at P5.9 billion

A RICE STORE in the Kamuning Market, Quezon City.

PHILIPPINE STAR/MICHAEL VARCAS

THE BUREAU of Customs (BoC) has collected a total of P5.9 billion in tariffs from 1.43 million metric tons (MT) of rice imported by private traders following the implementation of the Rice Tariffication Law in March, the Department of Finance (DoF) said Thursday.

According to the DoF, the Port of Manila generated the highest tariff collections from the rice shipments at P978.51 million, followed by the Manila International Container Port at P942.76 million, then the Port of Cagayan de Oro at P754.13 million.

The Port of Davao, meanwhile, collected P703.93 million, based on preliminary data from the BoC.

The Rice Tariffication Law removed quantitative restrictions on rice imports while imposing tariffs to fund the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), which will aid rice farmers in the form of mechanization, credit, education and seed.

The RCEF allocation for farmers is P10 billion annually.

The DoF said that liberalizing rice imports has made the food more affordable, with a drop of P10 per kilo at retail during the dry-season months.

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) has said that it expects revenue collected from rice imports to exceed P10 billion.

The law provides that the excess is to be used to help farmers diversify into other crops.

"The law stipulates that the excess of P10 billion will go back to assist farmers diversifying into other crops. Assistance for diversification is not in the RCEF. Funds for this will come from the excess revenue," NEDA Undersecretary Rosemarie G. Edillon has said. — **Reicelene Joy N. Ignacio**

THE DAILY tribune
Without fear or favor

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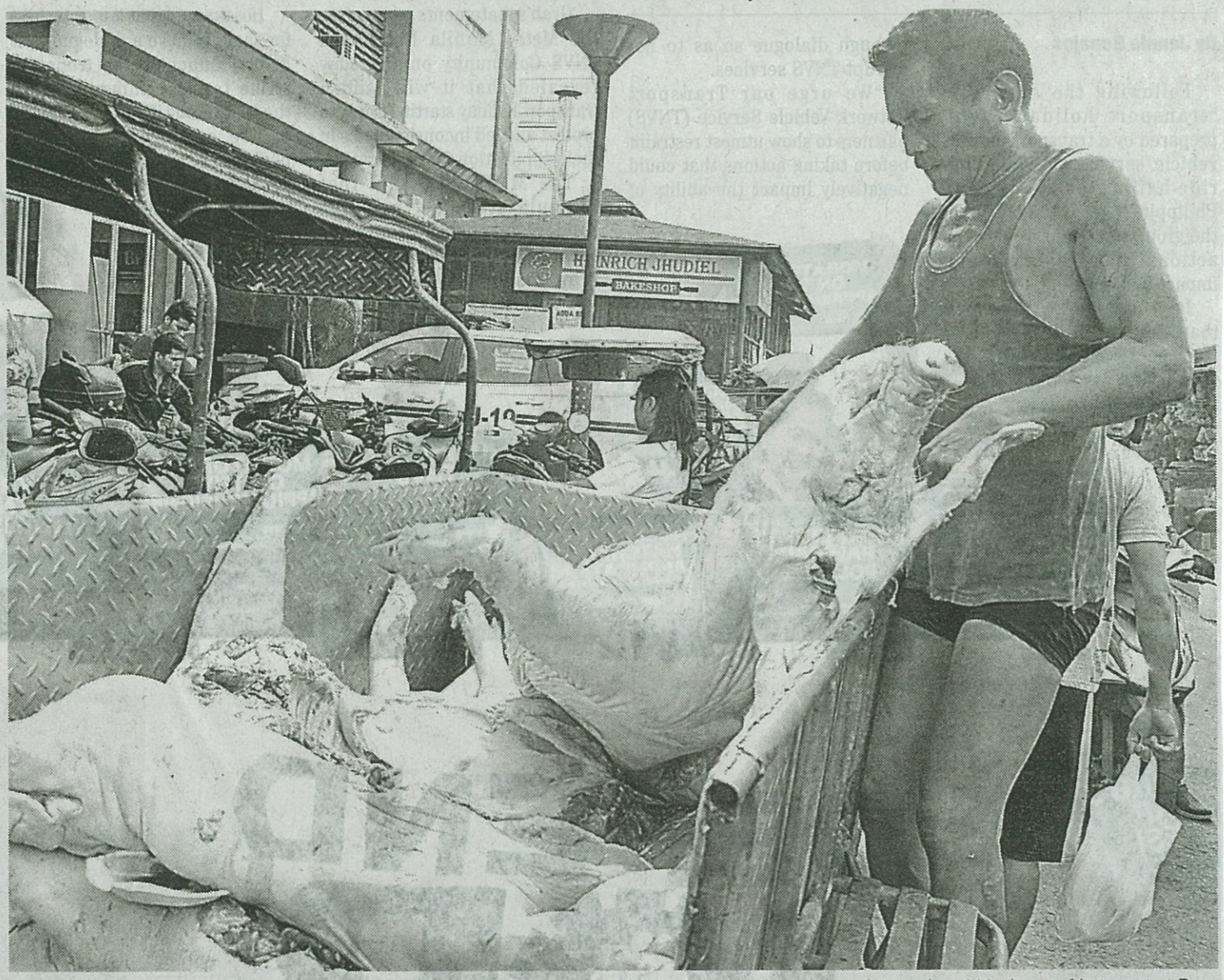

Beware the double-dead Consumers in Manila are warned against buying *botcha* following the seizure of more than 200 pieces of hot meat at Paco Market. YUMMIE DINGDING

Paco Market 'botcha' seized

Moreno intensifies battle against proliferation of double-dead meats in Manila markets

By Pat Santos

The Manila Veterinary Inspection Board (MVIB) on Thursday reported that its personnel had seized more than 200 pieces of meat believed to be double-dead from Paco Market as newly-elected Manila mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso launched his anti-*botcha* campaign.

The alleged *botcha* was said to have been transported from Las Piñas City and was processed by unaccredited meat establishments, according to VIB food hygiene and regulatory division chief Dr. Nick Santos.

Santos noted that no appropriate permit was issued in slaughtering and transporting the seized meat, which was being unloaded at the Paco Market on Thursday night.

Meantime, Domagoso assured the public that the new local government will not tolerate these illegal acts.

"We are doing this because we want to ensure the safety of the consumers of Manila," said Domagoso.

The Manila mayor also warned vendors who are selling double-dead meat.

THE DAILY tribune
Without fear or favor

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DTI tags Las Piñas market of overpricing

Some vendors are taking advantage of their consumers

By Miguel Togonon

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) on Thursday said that some vendors at the Las Piñas City public market are selling products above the suggested retail price.

According to the DTI's Consumer Protection Group (CPG) personnel, a vendor at Zapote, Las Piñas Public Market was caught selling chicken at P170 per kilo, and choice cuts at P185/kg despite farm-gate prices of chicken range from P95 to P115/kg while the suggested price range for traders and retailers should be between P145 to P165/kg.

"Vendors should never take advantage of the consumers," said DTI-CPG head Ruth Castelo.

But vendor Rosemarie Dalisay complained the DTI should reprimand the dealers instead of vendors, while a consumer at the market told DTI that with the high prices, she does not buy whole chicken anymore and just add extenders to have enough to go around for the family.

Meanwhile, the SRP for garlic is at P80 per kilo, but it was sold at P140/kg, while white refined sugar was also sold at a price exceeding the SRP of P50 per kilo to P55/kg.

THE DAILY tribune
Without fear or favor

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Taxes from rice imports reach P5.9-B

Liberalizing rice imports, he said, will not only make quality rice more affordable and accessible to Filipino families

The government has so far collected P5.9 billion in tariffs from some 1.43 million metric tons (MT) of rice stocks imported by private traders.

This follows the enactment of a law in March that liberalized the importation of the grain, preliminary data from the Bureau of Customs (BoC) showed.

A report to Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III by Customs Commissioner Rey Leonardo Guerrero revealed that the BoC collected the highest amount of rice import tariffs from the Subic Bay port at P1.37 billion.

Dominguez said rice tariffication has proved to be challenging because it was a politically difficult reform to pass.

The Port of Manila collected P978.51 million in tariffs, followed by the Manila International Container Port with P942.76 million, said Guerrero during a recent Department of Finance (DoF) Executive Committee meeting.

The Port of Cagayan de Oro collected P754.13 million in tariffs from rice imports, while the Port of Davao collected P703.93 million, preliminary BOC data show.

Republic Act (RA) 11203 or the Rice Liberalization Act was signed and approved by President Duterte last 14 February.

Dominguez has described the rice liberalization law on the shift from quantitative restrictions to tariffs on rice imports as a "proud" accomplishment of the Duterte presidency and the DoF, given that it took more than 30 years under various administrations to get the Congress to approve this game-changing reform.

Liberalizing rice imports, he said, will not only make quality rice more affordable and accessible to Filipino families,. but will also lower the country's inflation rate, revolutionize the agriculture sector and help farmers become more productive and competitive in the global economy.

Dominguez said rice tariffication has proved to be challenging because it was "a politically difficult reform to pass."

Liberalizing rice imports has made the staple food more affordable to Filipinos, making retail prices this summer cheaper by P10 per kilo.

The Manila Times

Date: JULY 5, 2019 Page: B1 & B2

Rice liberalization to help GDP rise

THE liberalization of rice imports would have a positive impact on the Philippine economy, the preliminary results of a study by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (Ifpri) showed.

In a statement on Thursday, NEDA said that "under [the] 35-percent tariff rate, [the country's] GDP (gross domestic product) would improve by 0.44 percentage points," adding that "[t]he agriculture sector would expand as there would be more crop diversification — as uncompetitive rice areas shift to other high-value crops with relatively higher net returns."

The study results came almost five months after the signing into law of Republic Act 11203 or the Rice Liberation Act. This law replaced the system of quantitative restrictions on rice imports with a purely tariff-based one as part of

➤Rise B2

the government's efforts to ensure that the country has sufficient rice supply at relatively lower prices.

RA 11203 also mandates the creation of a Rice Comprehensive Enhancement Fund that provides P10 billion annually for six years to ensure that duties collected from rice imports would help local farmers.

"Before the rice tariffication law was passed, the government had been monopolizing the rice trade. This setup had been restricting the flow of private funds going to the sector," NEDA Undersecretary for Policy and Planning Rosemarie G. Edillon said.

According to her, rice liberalization would positively impact the agriculture sector and the country's economy in the coming years.

"We have conducted similar studies on this. But we want a model that integrates climate change into farmers' decisions," she said.

NEDA said that, with rice tariffication in place, increasing investments in research and development in agriculture and investing in irrigation, among others, can increase rice yields and farm productivity in the long run.

The study also cited the need to support local rice farmers by helping them improve productivity, providing cash transfers in the short run, and assisting them in the adoption of climate-resilient technologies.

"The agriculture sector, particularly the rice sector, is vulnerable to climate shocks, which have been increasing in frequency and intensity. So we want to be prepared and provide interventions ahead of time," Edillon said.

NEDA and Ifpri will consolidate inputs and recommendations from agriculture stakeholders before releasing a policy note containing the official results and recommendations.

ANNA LEAH E. GONZALES

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER
Date: JULY 5, 2019 Page: B1

Rice tariff law yields ₱6-B new revenues — DOF

By **CHINO S. LEYCO**

The Bureau of Customs has collected ₱6 billion in additional government revenues from rice tariffs since the enactment of the rice tariffication law in February this year, the Department of Finance (DOF) said yesterday.

In a statement, the DOF said the private sector has already imported 1.43 million metric tons of rice stocks since the Rice Liberalization Act was signed into law by President Duterte on February 14 this year to ease supply and reign in inflation.

The Customs bureau reported to the DOF that the volume of privately-shipped rice stocks is worth ₱5.9 billion in tariffs.

Customs Commissioner Rey Leonardo Guerrero revealed that the Subic Bay port raised the highest rice tariff collection with ₱1.37 billion, followed by the Port of Manila at ₱978.51 million and the Manila International Container Port with ₱942.76 million.

The Port of Cagayan de Oro, meanwhile, collected ₱754.13 million in tariffs from rice imports, while the Port of Davao collected ₱703.93 million.

Dominguez has described the rice liberalization law, which shifted from quantitative restrictions (QRs) to tariffs on rice imports, as a "proud" accomplishment of the Duterte presidency and the DOF, given that it took more than 30 years under various administrations to get the Congress to approve this game-changing reform.

Liberalizing rice imports, he said, will not only make quality rice more affordable and accessible to Filipino families, but will also lower the country's inflation rate, revolutionize the agriculture sector and help farmers become more productive and competitive in the global economy.

Dominguez said rice tariffication has proved to be challenging because it was "a politically difficult reform to pass."

Liberalizing rice imports has made the staple food more affordable to Filipinos, making retail prices this summer cheaper by ₱10 per kilo.

The law also created the ₱10-billion Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) to help palay growers and farmers' cooperatives transition to a new rice regime.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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TRADE LIBERALIZATION

RICE TARIFFICATION RAISES ₱5.9B FOR STATE COFFERS

The imposition of tariff on rice imports under the liberalized trade scheme has so far generated P5.9 billion in additional revenue for the government to date, the Department of Finance said.

Citing a recent report of Customs Commissioner Rey Leonardo B. Guerrero to Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III, the DOF said that since Republic Act (RA) No. 11203 or the Rice Liberalization Act was implemented in March, the Port of Subic already collected P1.37 billion in rice import duties so far.

Rice tariffs collected by the Port of Manila hit P978.51 million.

The Manila International Container Port collected P942.76 million while the Port of Cagayan de Oro and Port of Davao raised P754.13 million and P703.93 million, respectively.

Under RA 11203, the following tariff rates apply: 35 percent if rice was imported from Asean; 40 percent if within the minimum access volume (MAV) of 350,000 metric tons, from countries outside Asean, and 180 percent if above the MAV and coming from a non-Asean country.

In the 2019 Pre-State of the Nation Address Economic and Infrastructure Forum, Dominguez described RA 11203 that instituted rice tariffication as "among the monumental legislative achievements of this administration."

"The liberalization of rice trading was achieved after more than 30 years of failed attempts under various administrations. This law made quality rice more affordable and accessible to Filipino consumers, thereby bringing down inflation," Dominguez said. —BEN O. DE VERA INQ

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

Date: JULY 5, 2019 Page: B7/B8

Rice liberalization to boost GDP – NEDA

By CZERIZA VALENCIA

The ongoing liberalization of rice trade in the country can potentially boost gross domestic product (GDP) growth by 0.44 percentage point as the agriculture sector would be diversified," the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) said.

Results of a joint assessment conducted with the Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) showed free importation of rice at 35 percent tariff would spur investments in high-value crops and move uncompetitive rice cultivation areas into productivity.

Turn to B8

Rice... From B7

"Before the rice tariffication law was passed, the government had been monopolizing the rice trade. This set-up had been restricting the flow of private funds going to the sector," said NEDA Undersecretary Rosemarie Edillon said.

"The preliminary results of the policy simulations done by NEDA and IFPRI show that, at the macro level, rice liberalization generates positive impacts on GDP across all sectors. Under 35 percent tariff rate, GDP would improve by 0.44 percentage point. The agriculture sector would expand as there would be more crop diversification – as uncompetitive rice areas shift to other high-value crops with relatively higher net returns," she added.

The rice tariffication law was passed with the intention of lowering domestic rice prices by increasing supply.

This as the world market is seen capable of supplying the additional import demand from the Philippines in the long term.

This was met by strong opposition from farmer groups saying this effectively weakens the domestic rice sector.

The law does provide for production assistance through the P10-billion Rice Competitive Enhancement Fund (RCEF), half of which would be used for improving the level of farm mechanization.

The remainder of the fund would be used to support the propagation and promotion of inbred rice seeds for use by local farmers as well the creation of credit facilities for rice farmers.

Edillon said increasing government investment in research and development as well as irrigation will increase farm yields in competitive rice production areas.

She also stressed the need to support local farmers through cash transfers in the short term and help them in the adoption of climate-resilient technologies.

"The agriculture sector, particularly the rice sector, is vulnerable to climate shocks, which have been increasing in frequency and intensity. So we want to be prepared and provide interventions ahead of time," Edillon said.

Malaya Business Insight
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Rice tarrification to lift growth

P5.9B tariff collected

BY ANGELA CELIS

RICE tariffication would boost GDP but nearly half a percentage point, a simulation conducted by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) showed.

In a separate statement, the Department of Finance (DOF) said the government has so far collected P5.9 billion in tariffs from some 1.43 million metric tons of rice stocks imported by private traders, following the enactment of the law in March that liberalized the importation of the grain.

NEDA said with rice tariffication in place, increasing investments in research and development in agriculture and investing in irrigation, among others, can markedly increase rice yields and farm productivity over the long run.

The assessment conducted by NEDA and IFPRI on the projected impact of the removal of the quantitative restriction on rice and climate change on the agriculture sector show that, at the macro level, rice liberalization generates positive impacts on GDP across all sectors.

Under 35 percent tariff rate, GDP would improve by 0.44 percentage points. The agriculture sector would expand as there would be more crop diversification, as uncompetitive rice areas shift to other high-value crops with relatively higher net returns.

"Before the rice tariffication law was passed, the government had been monopolizing the rice trade. This set-up had been restricting the flow of private funds going to the sector," Rosemarie Edillon, NEDA undersecretary, said.

Edillon said the much-awaited reform in the rice sector would positively impact the agriculture sector and the whole economy in the succeeding years.

"We have conducted similar studies on this. But we want a model that integrates climate change into farmers' decisions," she said.

Meanwhile, NEDA said the world rice market is capable of supplying the additional import demand of the Philippines in the long run with minimal increases in world prices. The accessibility of affordable rice will contribute to lowering domestic rice prices that will benefit everyone especially the poor.

The study also emphasized the need to support local rice farmers by assisting them to improve productivity, providing cash transfers in the short run, and helping them in the adoption of climate-resilient

See RICE ➤ Page A2

Positive impact. At 35 percent tariff rate on rice imports, GDP would improve by 0.44 percentage points.

technologies.

"The agriculture sector, particularly the rice sector, is vulnerable to climate shocks, which have been increasing in frequency and intensity. So we want to be prepared and provide interventions ahead of time," Edillon said.

Meanwhile, Customs Commissioner Rey Leonardo Guerrero in a report to Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez said the Bureau of Customs (BOC) collected the highest amount of rice import tariffs from the Subic Bay port at P1.37 billion.

The Port of Manila collected P978.51 million in tariffs, followed by the Manila International Container Port with P942.76 million.

The Port of Cagayan de Oro collected P754.13 million in tariffs from rice imports, while the Port of Davao collected P703.93 million, preliminary BOC data showed.

Republic Act No. 11203 or the Rice Liberalization Act was signed and approved by President Duterte last February 14.

Balita

Date: JULY 5, 2019 Page: 4

Botcha, bawal sa Maynila

Binalaan kahapon ni Manila Mayor Isko Moreno ang mga tindero ng karne sa lungsod na iwasan na ang pagbebenta ng mga double-dead na karne o botcha, dahil maaari itong magkaroon ng masamang epekto sa kalusugan ng mga kakain nito.

Ayon kay Mayor Isko, naglunsad na ang pamahalaang lungsod ng anti-botcha campaign, kasabay ng pagtiyak na hindi nito kukunsintihin ang pagbebenta ng mga kontaminadong karne sa siyudad.

"Itong mga botcha, mga walang permit na pagtitinda ng karne ay walang puwang sa Maynila, dahil gusto natin mapangalagaan ang ating mga mamimili na taga-lungsod ng Maynila. Gusto natin ang mga karne na itinitinda sa Maynila ay ligtas," anang alkalde.

"Sa mga magkakarne o magtitinda, huwag n'yo po subukan na gawin itong mga ilegal na bagay na ito. Sayang naman puhunan, pero mali po ito," aniya pa.

Kaugnay nito, pinuri ng alkalde ang mga tauhan ng Manila Veterinary Inspection Board (VIB) sa pagkakakumpiska ng mga ito sa 235 piraso ng hot meat mula sa Paco Market nitong Miyerkules ng gabi.

Ayon naman kay Dr. Nick Santos, hepe ng VIB Food Hygiene and Regulatory Division, ang mga naturang karne ay ibiniyahe mula sa Las Piñas City at kinatay sa isang hindi accredited na establisimyento, kaya walang kaukulang permit.

Nakumpiska ang mga karne habang ibinabagsak sa pamilihan sa Maynila, ayon kay Santos.

Mary Ann Santiago

BOTCHA NAMAN, OH! Personal na inihatid ni Manila Mayor Isko Moreno sa Manila Zoo ang ipakakain sa mga tigre na mga karneng botcha na nakumpiska sa Paco, Manila nitong Miyerkules ng gabi.

RIO DELUVIO

Tempo
NEWS IN A FLASH
THE NATION'S FASTEST GROWING NEWSPAPER

Date: JULY 5, 2019 Page: 3

'Hot meat' seized in Paco market

The Manila Veterinary Inspection Board (VIB) seized "hot meat" in Paco market on Wednesday.

Dr. Nick Santos, chief of the VIB food hygiene and regulatory division, said the confiscated "hot meat" that was transported from Las Pinas City was slaughtered by unaccredited meat establishments, which means no appropriate permit was issued.

The 235 pieces of "hot meat" were seized as they were being unloaded at the Paco Market.

Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso assured the public that the local government will not tolerate these illegal acts.

"(Gusto natin na) ang karne na tinitinda sa Maynila ay ligtas... safe at inspected. Maraming salamat sa VIB sa operation nila. Kahapon lang ako nag-order, ngayon meron na tayo," he said. **(Erma Edera)**

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400 KILOS NG BOCHA NASAMSAM

MAYNILA – NASABAT ng Manila City Veterinary Inspection Board ang 400 na kilos ng 'botcha' o double-dead na karne ng manok sa Paco Market.

Ayon kay Dr. Nick Santos, hepe ng food hygiene and regulatory division ng VIB, nagmula ang mga manok sa hindi lisensiyadong katayan ng karne sa Las Piñas City at dinala sa Paco noong Miyerkoles ng gabi.

Nagkakahalaga ang mga karne ng P36,000 habang nagbabala na ang lungsod sa mga tindero na huwag magbenta ng mga ilegal na karne.

PMRT

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

Date: JULY 5, 2019 Page: 8

Nakolekta ng Customs

P5.9-B RICE IMPORT TARIFFS

NAKAKOLEKTA ang pamahalaan ng halos P6 billion na taripa sa nakalipas na apat na buwan na ipinatupad ang Rice Tariffication Law, ayon sa Department of Finance (DOF).

Sa kasalukuyan ay umabot na sa P5.9 billion ang nakolekta ng Bureau of Customs (BOC), ang attached agency ng DOF, mula sa may 1.43 million metric tons (MT) na bigas na inangkat ng private traders.

Sa report kay Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III ni Customs Commissioner Rey Leonardo Guerrero, ang ahensiya ay nakakolekta ng pinakamalaking halaga ng rice import tariffs mula sa Subic Bay port sa P1.37 billion.

Nakakolekta naman ang Port of Manila ng P978.51 million na tariffs, habang ang Manila International Container Port ay may P942.76 million.

Samantala, ang Port of Cagayan de Oro ay nakakolekta ng P754.13 million na taripa mula sa rice imports, at ang Port of Davao ay P703.93 million.

Ang Rice Tariffication Act ay nilagdaan bilang batas noong nakaraang Pebrero, kung saan inalis ang quantitative restrictions sa bigas at nagpataw ng 35% tariff sa imports mula sa Southeast Asia.

Ang batas ay opisyal na naging epektibo noong Marso 5 makaraang malathala ito sa national publication noong Pebrero.

Nauna rito ay sinabi ng National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) na ang gross domestic product ng bansa ay inaasahang makakakuha ng karagdagang 0.44 percentage point mula sa Rice Tariffication Law.

Malaya
Business Insight

Date: JULY 5, 2019 Page: A6

Corn climbs; soy, wheat also rise

CHICAGO- Chicago corn, soybean and wheat futures all settled higher on Wednesday on technical buying and as traders adjusted positions ahead of the Independence Day holiday.

The September corn contract on the Chicago Board of Trade settled up 17-3/4 cents at $4.36-3/4 a bushel.

The August contract for soybeans settled up 10 cents to $8.89-3/4 a bushel, regaining some ground after falling 1.1 percent on Tuesday.

September wheat future prices settled up 10-3/4 cents at $5.14 a bushel.

"The past few days have been bearish for wheat and traders are going short with the holiday approaching," said Brian Basting of Advance Trading.

CBOT grain markets will be closed on Thursday for Independence Day.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) on Monday pegged the condition of the corn crop at 56 percent good to excellent, unchanged from the previous week. Analysts polled by Reuters had expected a slight improvement.

A year ago, 76 percent of the corn crop was rated good to excellent.

On Friday, the USDA surprised traders by estimating US 2019 corn plantings at 91.7 million acres, higher than expected, causing prices to tumble. Analysts had been expecting the acreage report to show farmers had planted 86.6 million acres of corn. - ***Reuters***