CLIPPINGS FOR THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2020

A. SEC. WDD QUOTED

BUSINESS WORLD
Food Supply
Regional Updates: Farms Sector damage from typhoons hits P12.8B

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT
Rice imports hit 1.9M metric tons in Nov.

ABANTE TONITE
Reklamo sa DA: Gulay triple sinirit ng presyo

B. DA FAMILY

MANILA BULLETIN
Rice importations hit 1.9882 MT in 2020
More funds to boost PH rice production

BUSINESS WORLD
Gov't plans to build 6 dams along Cagayan river to control flood
Bohol expanding meat-dairy project to another town

THE MANILA TIMES
Climate change, disasters and cooperatives
Heat-tolerant rice shows promise

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
PH aims for sustainable fishing with 220-M loan from World Bank

TEMPO
Editorial: More funds to boost PH rice production

ABANTE
BFAR atat mag-import ng Bangus, Tilapia

C. AGRI-RELATED STORY

THE MANILA TIMES
SEARCA sets Nov. 30 deadline for photo contest

D. FOREIGN STORY

No stories

BusinessWorld

Date: 26 NOV 2020 Page: 10/S1

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DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

FOOD SUPPLY

Meanwhile, Mr. Dar said the DA is mobilizing food supply from areas that were less affected by the typhoon for delivery to the capital Metro Manila to address the rising retail prices of certain agricultural commodities. He added that they will talk to traders to not take advantage of the supply disruption brought about by the calamity. Based on the latest monitoring report from the DA, the prices of basic commodities in major markets in Metro Manila such as *bangus* (milkfish) ranges from P130 to P220 per kilogram, which has a government suggested retail price of P130, while whole chicken was lower than the suggested price of P169/kilo. On November 17, the government imposed a price freeze on basic farm and fishery products following President Rodrigo R. Duterte's declaration of a state of calamity in the entire Luzon islands. Among the two strongest in the series of typhoons were Ulysses (international name: Vamco), and Rolly (Goni) which is considered the world's strongest tropical cyclone so far this year. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

BusinessWorld

Date: 26 NOV 2020 Page: 10/S1

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Regional Updates

Farm sector damage from typhoons hits P12.8B

DAMAGE brought by recent typhoons to the farm sector has reached P12.8 billion, Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar reported on Wednesday. At the same time, Mr. Dar said around P32 billion worth of agricultural products were saved as the Department of Agriculture (DA) gave early warning advisories to farmers before the storms swept mainly through the northern portion of the country in October and early November. "That is a big help to our agriculture sector," he said during the Palace's daily briefing. He also said that the department has a P6.5 billion budget that will be used for recovery and rehabilitation.

Malaya
Business Insight

Date: NOV 26, 2020 Page: A5

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DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BIGGER THAN LAST YEAR'S TOTAL

Rice imports hit 1.9M metric tons in Nov

BY JED MACAPAGAL

DATA from the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) showed that as of November 13, a total of 1,923,328.545 metric tons (MT) of imported rice already entered the country.

This is 3.5 percent higher compared to full year 2019's 1,857,341.871 MT.

From January to November, data showed bulk of rice imports came from Vietnam at 1,669,573.868 MT or almost 87 percent of the total volume.

261,091.500 MT were imported in March.

The Philippine Rice Industry Stakeholders' Movement (PRISM) earlier urged government to draw up an accessible updated data on rice stock to help the entire value chain in assessing the supply situation especially following the string of destructive typhoons.

The group said the lack of real-time and updated rice stock inventory by the Philippine Statistics Authority and the Department of Agriculture (DA) leaves the rice industry "at a loss" on how to make projections and plans for recovery such as project planting intention, sales and purchases.

PRISM also said the DA should allow BPI to resume the issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary import clearance for rice imports to ensure timely arrivals in case of shortfall in local supply.

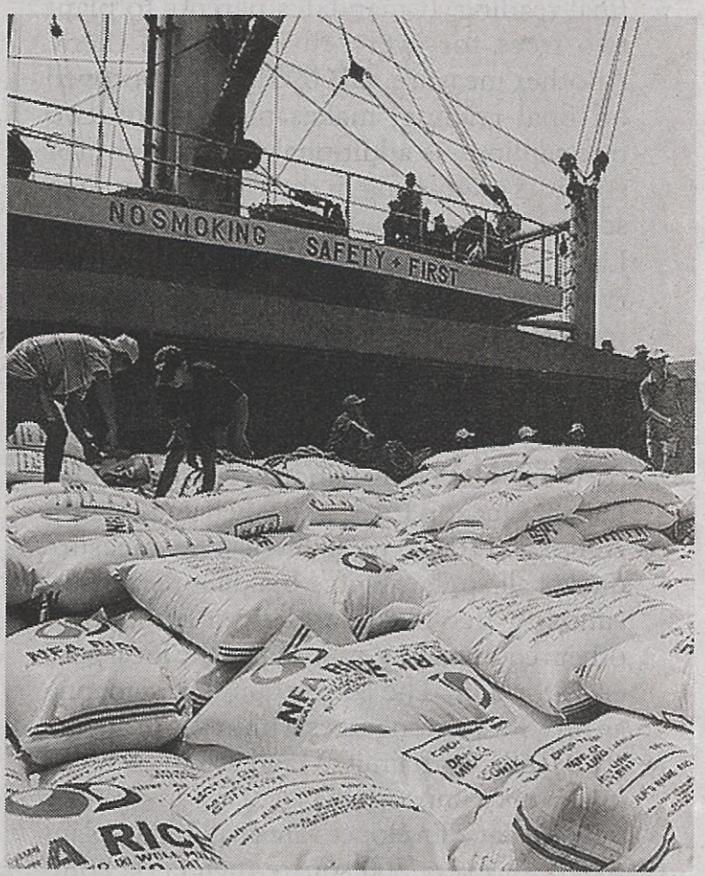
However, Agriculture Secretary William Dar said that they are not keen on approving rice import permits until the year-end as local stocks are still more than enough even with the impact of recent typhoons.

The agency projects that at present, rice supply will still be good for 88 days by year-end.

Last September, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) also adjusted its projection of the country' rice imports for next year to 2.6 million MT from an earlier forecast of 3 million MT due to the effects of increased domestic production and higher prices from Vietnam.

The country has been the world's top importer of rice since 2019 with rice imports at 2.9 million MT to this year's expected 2.6 million MT.

The USDA also said that expected milled production of rice in the Philippines for next year is at 11.7 million MT from this year's 11.9 million MT.



The country is the world's top importer of rice since 2019.

ABANTE TONITE
MABILIS SA BALITA

Date: 26 NOV 2020 Page: 3

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DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Reklamo sa DA: Gulay triple sinirit ng presyo

Makikiusap umano ang Department of Agriculture (DA) sa mga negosyanteng supplier ng karne at gulay sa Metro Manila para bawasan ang pinapatong na presyo sa mga produktong binabagsak sa mga wet market.

Kasunod ito ng reklamo ng mga market vendor na halos wala na silang kita at tubo dahil sa napakataas na presyong ibinibigay sa kanila ng mga trader.

Sa Laging Handa press briefing, sinabi ni Agriculture Secretary William Dar na tinututukan nila ngayon ang mga nagdadala ng supply ng pagkain sa Metro Manila at ilang pangunahing siyudad dahil sila ang nagdidikta ng presyo.

"Kakausapin natin itong traders na huwag masyado naman iyong pagsasamantala, huwag naman dapat magsasamantala ngayon na naapektuhan tayo ng bagyo saka iyong supplies," ani Dar.

Kinakausap na aniya ng DA ang mga market superintendent dahil sila ang nakakakilala sa mga trader na nagdadala ng supply sa iba't ibang wet market.

Dumadaing ang mga tindera sa palengke dahil sila umano ang naiipit sa mataas na presyo lalo na ang mga gulay na sumirit ng triple ang halaga at hindi nila maibenta sa mababang presyo.

Ang siling pangsahog sa nilaga ay P5 kada piraso, P20 sa limang piraso ng okra, habang ang talbos ng kamote ay P20 ang limang tangkay. **(Aileen Taliping)**

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER
Date: 26 NOV 2020 Page: B-2

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Rice importations hit 1.92 MT in 2020

By MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR

With less than two months left for the year, the Philippines' 2020 total rice imports so far stood at nearly 2 million metric tons (MT), coming from the usual countries like Vietnam and some unusual ones like China.

As of November 13, 2020, 1.92 million MT of rice already entered the country, compared to the ₱1.85-million MT that the country imported during the same period last year, data from the Department of Agriculture's (DA) Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI).

The country's biggest supplier of imported rice remains to be Vietnam, which exported 1.66 million MT of the staple during the period.

Next to Vietnam are Myanmar (137,314 MT), Thailand (67,824 MT), China (26,130 MT), and India (10,278 MT).

Since China is also a largely rice importing country, Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) National Manager Raul Montemayor thinks that the rice imported from China could be a donation.

"China is too big. Sometimes, it is cheaper for one region to import than to get stocks from a distant surplus region. The region with surplus [of rice] can then export," Montemayor said.

In 2019, China was next to the Philippines as the second largest rice importer in the world, while also having 1.4 billion population.

But in May, a Global Agricultural Information Network (GAIN) report of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) showed that for the market year 2020 to 2021, global rice production will rise amid larger crops in China, Southeast Asia, and the United States.

Global trade, too, is forecast up at the third largest volume, with Philippines still maintaining its status as the world's largest rice importer.

"Global rice area is forecast to rise in 2020 to 2021. Area expansion is primarily based on resumption of planting in previously dry areas of Southeast Asia, more early-crop planting in China, and a substantial rebound in the United States. Yield is forecast to rise marginally. Production is up by more than 8 million tons to a new record," USDA said.

Last year, the Philippines only imported rice from Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, India, Pakistan, Spain, and Italy.

At the time, the Philippines imported 2.9 million MT, making it the world's biggest rice importer in 2019.

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER
Date: 26 NOV 2020 Page: 4

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DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

More funds to boost PH rice production

When William Dar took over as secretary of the Department of Agriculture in August, 2019, he proposed a new strategy for agriculture built around eight programs – modernization of agriculture, industrialization of agriculture, promotion of exports, farm consolidation, roadmap development, infrastructure development, higher budget and investments in agriculture, and legislative support.

The first two were the key parts of the program — modernization and industrialization — to be attained through increased infrastructure, increased exports, and farm consolidation. But after all the planning, the ultimate need was funding. And this, over the years, has been the biggest problem of the Department of Agriculture.

In the National Budget for 2020, education, as mandated by the Constitution, was given the biggest amount – ₱692.6 billion for the Department of Education, state universities and colleges, the Commission on Higher Education, and the Technical Skills and Development Authority.

The next highest amounts were ₱581,7 billion for the Department of Public Works and Highways, ₱241.6 billion for the Department of the Interior and Local Government, ₱200.5 billion for the Department of Social Welfare and Development, ₱192.1 billion for the Department of National Defense, ₱175.9 billion for the Department of Health, and ₱100.6. billion for the Department of Health.

The Department of Agriculture had ₱64.7 billion, later raised to ₱79.9 billion.

For next year, 2021, the Department of Agriculture asked for a budget of ₱284.4 billion, but the DA budget proposed in Malacañang's National Expenditure Program is only ₱66.4 billion. It doesn't look like Secretary Dar's hopes and ambitions for agriculture in the country are going to be realized in 2021.

Last Friday, Sen. Cynthia Villar, chairperson of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, said her committee is pushing for a budget of ₱15.5 billion for a National Rice Program, and ₱10 billion for a Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund. Specific amounts will be used for the distribution of hybrid seeds, inbred seeds, fertilizers, training, research and development, equipment, irrigation, and other programs specifically for rice production.

This special allocation for the RCEF, she said, is mandated by the Rice Tariffication Act which replaced the rice quota system of rice importation with tariffs in January, 2019. This law, we might recall, helped stop the zooming inflation that hit 6.7 percent in September, 2018.

We welcome these funds for agriculture, on top of the regular budget for the department. One day, we hope, we will be able — with these special funds — to produce more rice with better certified seeds, more and better irrigation, modern farm methods and equipment, better trained farm workers, and an organized system of production and exports – in general, the modernization of Philippine agriculture.

BusinessWorld

Date: 26 NOV 2020 Page: 10/2

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Gov't plans to build 6 dams along Cagayan river to control flood

THE PUBLIC Works department plans to build six dams along the Cagayan river in northern Philippines to improve flood control, officials on Wednesday told a Senate committee investigating heavy floods that submerged many parts of Luzon island after it was hit by a typhoon this month.

"Out of these six dams, two are planned to be a flood control dam, so that not all the water will go straight to the Cagayan river," Jerry A. Fano, an agency engineer, told senators in mixed English and Filipino.

This was part of the 2002 master plan for the Cagayan river, which recommended dams in Cagayan, Magat, Ilagan, Alimit, Siffu, and Mallig towns, he said. The river only has one flood control dam, which is Magat dam.

The recommendations also included a 450-kilometer dike system, three cut-off channels in Gabut, San Isidro and Tuguegarao and riverbank protection in 73 locations.

The construction of a 150-km dike system, three cutoff channels and river bank protection in 21 locations were among the priority projects this year, Mr. Fano said.

Public Works Undersecretary Emil K. Sadain said they would review and update the 2002 master plan after recent floods.

National Irrigation Administration Administrator Ricardo R. Visaya on Tuesday blamed illegal logging for the floods that submerged many parts of Luzon.

He said water from Magat Dam was not the major cause of flooding in Cagayan Valley and Isabela provinces at the height of Typhoon Vamco, locally named Ulysses.

The agency had also followed protocols and gave enough information to local governments before water from the dam was released, he told a House of Representatives hearing.

Think-tank Infrawatch PH earlier said Magat dam had failed to make the sufficient water drawdown two to three days before the typhoon hit.

Senator Risa N. Hontiveros-Baraquel said idle and unoccupied units in resettlement sites should be used to house residents in hazard-prone areas.

"There are at least 13,000 housing units in government resettlement sites that are idle," she said. "We can use these units to help the residents in vulnerable and hazard-prone areas to start anew."

— **Charmaine A. Tadalan** *and* **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

FULL STORY

Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link
< bit.ly/floodcontrol1126 >

BusinessWorld

Date: 26 NOV 2020 Page: 10/S1

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

MUNICIPALITY OF UBAY

Bohol expanding meat-dairy project to another town

BOHOL is looking to boost its dairy production with the expansion of its program to another town. In a statement on Tuesday, the local government said the Office of the Provincial Veterinarian is planning to develop a new dairy production cluster in Tubigon through the La Libertad Farmers Cooperative. "We will also ask the nearby municipalities with a considerable number of cows and carabaos to join like San Isidro, Catigbi-an, Sagbayan, Danao, Clarin, Antiquera, and Balilihan," said provincial Veterinarian Stella Marie Lapiz. Bohol's Active Rural Transformation Thru Integrated Community Dairy Farming program, currently centered in the town of Ubay, aims to make the province self-sufficient in fresh milk, increase meat production, and provide added livelihood to farmers. The Bohol Dairy Cooperative is already producing various milk-based food and non-food products. The expansion is funded by a P10 million allocation from the Philippine Coconut Authority through the Philippine Carabao Center in partnership with the provincial government.

The Manila Times

Date: NOV. 26, 2020 Page: B3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Climate change, disasters and cooperatives

FINER POINTS

FERMIN D. ADRIANO

EVERY time a destructive typhoon wreaks havoc in the country, our policymakers and media practitioners are quick to issue a litany of observations, pointing out the destruction of our forest covers and watersheds, siltation of our rivers and other water bodies due to severe soil erosion, and illegal settlers' occupation of hazardous areas as the main culprits behind the enormous damage, both in terms of lives and properties that we suffer. That was the case in the aftermath of the flashflood and landslide that occurred in Ormoc, Leyte, killing thousands of victims in 1991, when Typhoon "Ondoy" hit Metro Manila in 2009, when "Pablo" struck Mindanao in 2012, "Yolanda" destroyed Western Visayas in 2013, and now "Ulysses" in 2020.

After a few months, this blame game will surely be forgotten and as a nation, we will move forward by reverting to our "business as usual" ways. At least this time, our level of analytical sophistication has risen a little bit because besides those cliché observations regarding the causes of flooding and landslides, we added the concern of "climate change" as another reason for our woes. We have at least become global in our perspective since climate change is now a fashionable concern in global development thinking.

It is obvious that we know what the problems are and the exorbitant costs they exact in terms of lives and properties lost. Where we always fall short is in the implementation of the measures that will solve the problems we observe and analyze. For instance, it was noted that if we add all the budget allocated for reforestation and greening projects undertaken by successive governments, we could have planted even the spaces between the open seas that separate the various islands in the country. If we account for all the money spent for farm-to-market roads, we could have paved all the roads in the country and connected them. If we sum up all the money devoted to irrigation, we could have irrigated all of the potentially irrigable lands in the Philippines. And if we put together the sums allocated for farm mechanization, we would have easily robotized farm production.

What happened then? The obvious answer is that we are not spending our budget properly. There is really no honest-to-goodness master plan that will respond to our problems and serve as the basis on how budgets are spent and not what our legislators dictate to our executing agencies. There are no robust monitoring and evaluation systems installed that will truly track progress and whether the goals set in the master plan are really achieved. It is symptomatic of this malaise that when one listens to government reports of accomplishments, they consist mostly of figures on the amount of assistance given and presumed number of beneficiaries without informing the taxpayers whether those interventions really made a difference on the lives or welfare of the recipients.

In the private sector, the ultimate measure of success of a manager is the amount of profit that he or she can bring in to the company regardless of his/her personality or management style. In the public sector, it should be the ability to deliver services in the most efficient and effective manner. Generating savings is a secondary concern given that public funds unused is tantamount to depriving the public of the services it needs. It is the manner by which those funds are used that determines whether government spending is productive or wasteful, and not the amount of savings the agency makes.

Undeniably, the only way that one can determine whether those funds were utilized efficiently and effectively is through the installation and implementation of a robust monitoring and evaluation system. Unfortunately, most government operations, outside of counting numbers of facilities or goods provided, do not tell us whether those interventions really uplifted the welfare of their poor beneficiaries.

Banning coops from the rice importation business

The Cooperatives Development Authority (CDA), egged on by a number of farmers' cooperatives (co-ops) engaged in rice importation, objected to the issuance of the Department of Agriculture's Administrative Order (AO) 34 banning farmers' coops from importing rice. It argued the AO is discriminatory because not all of the co-ops engaged in the rice importation business do not have the financial capability to import and hence, are only used by unscrupulous traders as fronts. It stresses that it is the government's policy to promote the development of cooperatives and, in fact, gives preferential treatment to co-ops in supplying the food requirements of government agencies and institutions as a way of fostering the growth of cooperatives.

However, CDA fails to mention whether those food and agricultural supplies intended for the government agencies and consumers at-large should be imported by the co-ops. Although the law was silent on this, I believe its assumption is that these supplies must come from the local produce of co-ops, thereby providing their members greater incentive to produce more, and in the process, raising their productivity and incomes with the guaranteed market for their products. In turn, this hews closely to the primary goal of establishing and developing co-ops, which is to strengthen local production so that it can benefit local producers, particularly members of farmers' co-ops.

It is simply beyond comprehension how importing the commodities that the co-op members cultivate themselves will encourage them to produce more given that rice imports directly compete with the crops that they harvest. A clear manifestation of this contradiction is that co-ops are among the first and noisiest groups to object when *palay* (unmilled rice) prices fall due to the entry of rice imports. Thus, we have a situation here wherein CDA wants co-ops "to keep their cake and eat it too"!

Finally, CDA does not present any evidence that without co-ops importing and selling rice, rice traders will monopolize the activity and jack up prices. Current experience shows that despite co-ops able to import rice, the difference between import/wholesale prices and retail prices are high. Meaning that despite participation in retail trade by coops importing rice, this has not brought down rice retail prices.

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The Manila Times

Date: NOV. 26, 2020 Page: B3

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DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Heat-tolerant rice shows promise

BY EIREENE JAIREE GOMEZ

PHILIPPINE research on heat-tolerant rice varieties is ongoing, the government said, with the adoption of high temperature-tolerant cultivars showing promise as an effective measure the rice sector can adopt as global temperatures continue to rise.

The Department of Science and Technology (DoST) has said that breeding for heat-tolerant varieties should be one of the government's priorities. While commonly grown rice varieties in the Philippines have high yields, good grain quality, and resistance to pests and diseases, they lack high temperature tolerance.

"Without rice improvement, old and current rice varieties with no tolerance to heat stress will suffer yield decline," the DoST said in a statement.

Heat tolerant rice is one of options rice breeders are developing to cope with global warming, Leocadio Sebastian, Department of Agriculture chief of staff, told *The Manila Times* in an interview.

"In the Philippines, unusually high temperatures have been recorded during the months of April and May. Studies have shown that rice crops that are at the reproductive stage are adversely affected by high temperatures causing a reduction of yield by about 1,000 kilo per hectare for every 1 degree Celsius temperature increase," Sebastian, a former executive director of the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), explained.

Historical data from PhilRice from 1998 to 2019 and from the DoST-Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) from 1971 to 2000, show temperature in local fields already reached a critical level at 35 degree Celsius or more, which can affect rice. If this continues without mitigation or other measures to at least reduce it, in the year 2065, as projected by DoST-Pagasa and other agrometeorological government agencies, there will be a 2.5 to 3.0 degree Celsius increase in temperature.

According to the DoST, high temperature can induce high spikelet sterility in rice plants at the flowering stage. This can result to having more unfilled grains due to heat stress, and in the process, lower rice yields.

Furthermore, high temperature during reproductive stage of the rice crop can also cause chalkiness in the grains. When grains are chalky, there will be more grains that are broken during milling and this leads to low milling recovery, low quality of the grains, and lower price, the DoST stressed.

"This the opportune time to develop prototypes of heat tolerant rice varieties because breeding usually take some time before we get a commercially viable variety (i.e. heat-tolerant, good eating quality, high yield, pest- and disease-resistant, drought-tolerant, etc.)," Sebastian said.

The early prototypes of heat tolerant rice are currently being evaluated, he noted. "We are also in the process of improving the other characteristics of these heat tolerant lines."

Once heat tolerant rice is approved, there is a plan to deploy the said variety initially to high temperature areas in farmers' fields in Tuguegarao, Cagayan and Pili, Camarines Sur for the 2021 dry season cropping.

While these plans are on the way, Sebastian said "we don't expect large scale planting of these lines in response to high temperature in the Philippines" but "we still have other options to cope with high temperatures like adjusting the planting time and crop management."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Date: NOV 26, 2020 Page: B1

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DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PROJECT TO SUPPORT POOR WHO RELY ON SUBSISTENCE FISHING

PH AIMS FOR SUSTAINABLE FISHING WITH $220-M LOAN FROM WORLD BANK

The World Bank will extend a $220-million loan to the Philippines next year to enhance the country's marine resource management by controlling the harvest in some of its fishing grounds while also supporting livelihoods.

Documents showed the World Bank's Washington-based board was expected to approve on July 30, 2021, the Fisheries and Coastal Resiliency Project aimed at "improving the management of coastal fishery resources, enhancing the value of fisheries production and increasing fisheries-derived incomes within coastal communities, in selected fishery management areas."

The Department of Finance was borrowing from the World Bank on behalf of the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), which would be implementing the project over a seven-year period.

"Improved management of the fishery resources provides the basis for a sustainable fisheries industry, in the absence of which, investment in productive capacity typically threatens, rather than enhances the long-term value of fisheries output. [The] enhancement of the value generated from fisheries helps to both justify the expenses of tighter harvesting controls as well as mitigate their short-term impact through the provision of alternative livelihoods and sustainable enterprises," the World Bank said.

The Philippines' fishing grounds are currently divided into 12 management areas and delineated based on administrative divisions, fish stocks range and distribution, and structure of fisheries, according to the World Bank.

BFAR's Fisheries and Coastal Resiliency Project would be implemented in two to four of these fishery management areas, which have "a diverse type of coastal and marine ecosystems including coral reef, seagrass and mangroves."

Also, the World Bank said the government would likely choose fishery management areas populated with "indigenous peoples, vulnerable and marginalized coastal communities, who are commonly among the poorest population group" for the project.

These groups usually rely on subsistence fishing and lack financial support and technical know-how, according to the World Bank.

"Science-based policies based on reference points and harvest control rules will be implemented in the fishery management areas, which will serve as the standards to impose adjustments in the harvest and use of the stocks, and to determine how much, what size and where fish should be caught, or fishing gears that should be allowed or regulated, respectively," the World Bank said.

The World Bank said the harvest control measures would be jointly implemented by the BFAR and local government units. —**BEN O. DE VERA** INQ

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

Date: NOV 26, 2020 Page: 4

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DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

EDITORIAL

More funds to boost PH rice production

WHEN William Dar took over as secretary of the Department of Agriculture in August, 2019, he proposed a new strategy for agriculture built around eight programs—modernization of agriculture, industrialization of agriculture, promotion of exports, farm consolidation, roadmap development, infrastructure development, higher budget and investments in agriculture, and legislative support.

The first two were the key parts of the program—modernization and industrialization—to be attained through increased infrastructure, increased exports, and farm consolidation. But after all the planning, the ultimate need was funding. And this, over the years, has been the biggest problem of the Department of Agriculture.

In the National Budget for 2020, education, as mandated by the Constitution, was given the biggest amount – ₱692.6 billion for the Department of Education, state universities and colleges, the Commission on Higher Education, and the Technical Skills and Development Authority.

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2 CORINTHIANS 4:6
Abante
UNA SA BALITA

Date: NOV. 26, 2020 Page: 2

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BFAR ATAT MAG-IMPORT NG BANGUS, TILAPIA

KAILANGAN ang pag-aangkat ng isdang tilapia at bangus para mapunan ang lahat ng pangangailangan para rito sa bansa, ayon sa Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

Magugunitang noong Oktubre ay umalma ang mga tilapia grower sa balitang mag-aangkat ng naturang mga isda ang gobyerno gayong hindi naman anila nawawalan ng suplay noon ang bansa.

Pero paliwanag ni BFAR Dir. Eduardo Gongona, isang 'conservation measure' ang pag-aangkat dahil sa tatlong buwang hindi maaaring mangisda.

"Yung pag-i-import natin because of conservation measures kasi meron tayong 3 months of fishing season 'di ba? Walang mangingisda muna para naman lumaki, maging adult at mag-spawn ang mga isda," ani Gongona sa panayam sa radyo nitong Miyerkoles.

Dagdag niya, pinag-aralang mabuti ng National Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council kung ilan ang aangkating tilapia at bangus at nagrekomenda ng 30,000 metriko tonelada.

"Maliit lang po yan pero makakatulong na kasi meron naman tayong pinagkukunan na iba sa aquaculture," sambit ni Gongona. **(IS)**

The Manila Times®

Date: NOV. 26, 2020 Page: A9

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SEARCA SETS NOV. 30 DEADLINE FOR PHOTO CONTEST

PHOTO enthusiasts have until November 30 to submit their entries for the 2020 edition of the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) photo competition showcasing agricultural innovation. Held annually since 2006 by the University of the Philippines Los Baños-based Searca, this year's photo contest theme is "Faces of Accelerating Transformation through Agricultural Innovation." The competition is open to Filipinos, as well as nationals of other Asean countries plus Timor-Leste. "We are looking for striking images of agricultural innovation," Searca Director Glenn Gregorio said. He noted that images must show people taking part in activities that contribute to food and nutrition security, sustainable farming systems and natural resource management, agribusiness for increased productivity and income, enhanced agricultural and rural development (ARD) toward climate resilience, gender and youth engagement in ARD, EcoHealth/One Health applications to ARD and transformational leadership in ARD. He added that winners would receive $1,000, $800 and $500 as the top three prizes, while a