



Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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MEMORANDUM ORDER

No. 71
Series of 2021

SUBJECT: ESTABLISHING A SECURE TRACK AND TRACE SYSTEM FOR THE IMPORTATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE

WHEREAS, according to Paragraph 2, Section 7, Chapter 2, Book IV, of Executive Order No. 292, s. 1987, the Secretary shall “establish the policies and standards for the operation of the Department pursuant to the approved programs of government.”

WHEREAS, according to Paragraph 3, Section 7, Chapter 2, Book IV, of Executive Order No. 292, s. 1987, the Secretary shall “promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry out department objectives, policies, functions, plans, programs and projects.”

WHEREAS, according to Section 2, Chapter 1, Title IV, Book IV of the E. O. No. 292, s. 1987, the Department of Agriculture (DA) is the government agency responsible for the promotion of agricultural development by providing the policy framework, public investments, and support services needed for domestic and export-oriented business enterprise.

WHEREAS, Section 4 of the Republic Act No. 11203 provides for the issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary import clearance for the rice for the sole purpose of ensuring food safety.

WHEREAS, Section 3 of the Republic Act No. 10611, also known as the Food Safety Act of 2013, provides:

“Objectives – To strengthen the food safety regulatory system in the country, the State shall adopt the following specific objectives:

- (a) Protect the public from food-borne and water-borne illnesses and unsanitary, unwholesome, misbranded or adulterated foods;
- (b) Enhance industry and consumer confidence in the food regulatory, system; and
- (c) Achieve economic growth and development by promoting fair trade practices and sound regulatory foundation for domestic and international trade.

Towards the attainment of these objectives, the following measures shall be implemented:

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- (1) Delineate and link the mandates and responsibilities of the government agencies involved;
- (2) Provide a mechanism for coordination and accountability in the implementation of regulatory functions;
- (3) Establish policies and programs for addressing food safety hazards and developing appropriate standards and control measures;

xxx”

WHEREAS, due to the recent Covid-19 Pandemic, the spread of African Swine Fever, and other emerging zoonotic diseases, there is a need to improve our food safety measures by ensuring the traceability of the origin of imported agricultural products.

NOW THEREFORE, in view of the foregoing and by virtue of the powers vested in me by the laws as the Secretary of Agriculture do hereby order the following:

SECTION 1. The Adoption of Track and Trace System in the Importation of Agricultural Produce. All regulatory agencies of the Department of Agriculture with regulatory functions regarding the importation of agricultural produce shall adopt or use a track and trace system technology using Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags or similar system.

SECTION 2. Objectives. The objective of adopting a track and trace system is to ensure food safety of imported agricultural produce by ensuring the traceability of their origin. It also aims at the mitigation of smuggling of agricultural produce the real-time monitoring system of goods.

SECTION 3. Coordination with other Agencies. The regulatory agencies involve in the importation of agricultural products of the Department of Agriculture shall coordinate with other government agencies that have a secure track and trace system using RFID or similar system, such as the Bureau of Customs. The DA regulatory agencies may enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with other government agencies to this effect.

SECTION 4. Rice as initial agricultural produce for the track and trace system. For purposes of the application or adaptation of the track and trace system using RFID and similar system, the importation of Rice shall be considered as initial agricultural produce for its application.

SECTION 5. Repealing Clause. All Orders, Circulars, or portion thereof, inconsistent with this Order are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.



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SECTION 6. Separability Clause. In the event that any provision of this Order or any part hereof is declared invalid, illegal, or unconstitutional, the provisions not thereby affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 7. Effectivity. This Order shall take effect immediately.

Done this 25th day of November 2021.


WILLIAM D. DAR, Ph.D.
Secretary



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