CLIPPINGS FOR FRIDAY, APRIL 08, 2022

A. SEC. WDD QUOTED

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
DA redoubles efforts vs agri goods smuggling

BUSINESS MIRROR
PHL eyeing importation of 350K MT of sugar
Solons laud move on PUV drivers' 'Ayuda' distribution, but how about the farmers?

B. DA FAMILY

THE DAILY TRIBUNE
Customs raid nets paltry boxes of smuggled veggies
Fpur Central Luzon fish process plants seen
Agriculturist's quest

MANILA BULLETIN
Large-scale agricultural smuggling as economic sabotage

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
Large-scale agricultural smuggling as economic sabotage
Local dairy losses seen in DepEd multinational feeding program

MANILA STANDARD
Zubiri urges sugar regulatory body to halt new importation program

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Golden rice rolling out in seven provinces

BUSINESS WORLD
SRP for imported galunggong set at P180 in NCR
Farmers press for stop in new sugar importation plan, citing court orders
Vitarich ramps up safety measures versus bird flu
Golden rice registered with seed industry council

BUSINESS MIRROR
Golden rice hurdles NSIC varietal registration
Dairy farmers appeal DepEd order on school-based feeding program

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL
Police power needed vs agri smugglers – DA exec

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL TONIGHT
Zubiri to SRA: Reconsider sugar imporation

REMATE
Ayuda sa magsasaka, tsuper at mahihirap

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON
Eleazar magsusulong ng free meals sa public schools bilang tulong sa estudyante, magsasaka

ABANTE TONITE
7 Bayan, 4 probinsya sapol ng ASF

C. AGRI-RELATED STORY

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
BOC: P91 B smuggled goods seized under Rody's term

D. FOREIGN STORY

No stories

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS

Date: APR. 08, 2022 Page: B1 & B3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

TWIN EFFORTS

DA REDOUBLES EFFORTS VS AGRI GOODS SMUGGLING

By Jordeene B. Lagare
@jordeenelagare

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is pitching a two-pronged approach to stymie the illegal entry of agricultural goods into the country while beefing up local production.

At the same time, Agriculture Secretary William Dar issued a "stern" warning against DA officials and staff who are in cahoots with illegal importers and smugglers resulting in the proliferation of smuggled food products.

First, the DA will continue to intensify border protection and coordination efforts with the Bureau of Customs (BOC) and other agencies. That way, all misdeclared food items will be held immediately.

Second, the agency will continuously provide farmers with the much-needed logistics and infrastructure support that would enable them to produce more food and sell their products with reasonable profit, especially during peak season when prices are low.

By providing the necessary support and assistance, traders will not be able to take advantage of agricultural producers.

"Our unified efforts must not be negated by smuggling. Let it be clear that our goal is to help our farmers and fisherfolk boost their productivity, income, and livelihood," Dar told key agriculture officials in a meeting.

He also said DA officials and staff who will be found guilty of engaging in the illicit activity will be charged with appropriate administrative case and suspended.

At present, only the

B3

DA REDOUBLES EFFORTS VS AGRI GOODS SMUGGLING

FROM B1

BOC has the police power to apprehend and go after suspected smugglers under the law, but Dar said the agency can inspect and recommend to the BOC the confiscation of smuggled goods.

"Smugglers usually get away with their crime by passing through legal channels, using technical smuggling schemes, like misdeclaration, undervaluation or misclassification. Let us strengthen the law by looking at the lapses where we can further improve the system," he added.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Federico Laciste Jr. reported that between 2019 and 2022, the technically-smuggled agri-fishery commodities totaled P667.5 million, of which P10 million was apprehended from 2019 to 2020.

Laciste said 153 container vans and 5,000 boxes of fishery products with an estimated value of P548.5 million were seized last year, and another P109 million worth of misdeclared vegetables, meat and fishery products this year.

Earlier, the Sub-Task Group on Economic Intelligence (STG-EI)—an integrated regulatory enforcement composed of the DA, BOC, Department of Trade and Industry, National Intelligence Coordinating Agency and Philippine National Police-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group—confiscated 46 boxes of smuggled carrots and broccoli being sold in Divisoria Market for the infringement of the Food Safety Act of 2013.

Laciste said the BOC is conducting further investigation for case buildup against the identified owners for violating the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016.

"The STG-EI and BOC have been conducting surprise inspection operations to prevent the proliferation of smuggled vegetables that pose serious public health hazards due to noncompliance with sanitary and phytosanitary measures," added Laciste. INQ

BusinessMirror
A broader look at today's business

Date: APR. 08, 2022 Page: A1 & A2

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PHL eyeing importation of 350K MT of sugar

By Jasper Emmanuel Y. Arcalas
@jearcalas

THE Philippines is mulling over importing 350,000 metric tons (MT) of sugar to plug the shortfall in domestic supply and arrest skyrocketing prices of the sweetener.

A draft Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) Sugar Order (SO) obtained by the BusinessMirror showed that the agency plans to open an importation program of 250,000 MT refined sugar and 100,000 MT raw sugar.

The 350,000-MT sugar import proposal was based on concerns that the country will have tight supply toward the end of the current crop year 2021-2022—which in turn could worsen the unabated increase in prices of the sweetener that have already reached new record-highs.

The draft SO also cited the manifestation made by industrial sugar users during a March 1 House Committee on Agriculture and Food hearing, that their sugar stocks would already be depleted by May 27.

Based on the SRA's projections, the country would have a raw sugar balance of a measly 27,337.97 MT and refined sugar stocks of only 36,576.05 MT by August 31, the end of the current crop year. The country 's average ending raw and refined sugar balance in the past decade is at least 150,000 MT, respectively.

The projected lower ending stock balance is caused by a reduced estimated raw sugar output in the current crop year which is only at 1.982 MMT, the lowest in more than a decade. Total raw sugar supply for crop year 2021-2022 is estimated at 2.212 MMT while total demand is pegged at 2.185 MMT. ***(Related story: https://businessmirror.com.ph/2022/03/10/phl-may-see-lowest-sugar-output-in-a-decade/)***

Based on the draft document, the SRA reported that sugar milling has been "slowly winding down," with some mills having problems sourcing sugarcane while some plantations have already finished harvesting for the season.

"There is a lull/gap in the production of sugar between the end of the milling/refining season and the start of the next season wherein a comfortable volume of stock balance is needed to cover demand until production for the next season," read the draft document, which is now being deliberated by the SRA board.

See "PHL," A2

BusinessMirror
A broader look at today's business

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Date: APR. 08 2022 Page: A1 & A2

PHL...

CONTINUED FROM A1

Latest SRA data showed the average wholesale price of 50-kilogram bag raw sugar as of April 1 is now at P2,266.15 while wholesale price of refined sugar has reached an unprecedented P3,084.23 per 50-kilogram bag. SRA data also showed that the average retail price of raw sugar is now at P51.43 per kilogram while refined sugar is at P68.14 per kilogram.

Import provisions

THE SRA consulted industry stakeholders, including both sugar planters and millers, last March 8 about the country's current and projected sugar supply situation.

Under the draft SO, the 100,000 MT raw sugar import allocation could be sold directly for consumption or for tolling to refined sugar. Eligible participants for the raw sugar import program include industrial consumers and registered traders.

The draft SO said 100,000 MT of the 250,000 MT proposed refined sugar importation shall be standard grade refined sugar while the remaining 150,000 MT refined sugar shall be premium grade or bottlers' grade refined sugar.

The eligible participants for the proposed refined sugar import program are industrial users—confectionaries, biscuits, bread, candies, milk, juice, and food and beverage manufacturers, and registered traders.

"All raw sugar and refined sugar imported under this order must arrive in the Philippines no later than August 31," the draft document read.

Under the draft, half of the raw sugar import allocation must arrive no sooner than May 15 with the remaining half arriving no sooner than July 1 and no later than August 31.

For the imported refined sugar, 50 percent of the importers' approved allocation shall arrive no sooner than April 29 with the remaining half arriving no sooner than June and no later than August 31.

Stakeholder reactions

SEN. Imee R. Marcos slammed the proposed 350,000-MT sugar importation and urged Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar not to sign the SO formalizing the importation.

Marcos said in a Facebook post: "We are calling on Agriculture Secretary William Dar not to sign the latest sugar import proposal of 350,000 metric tons which was approved by SRA chief Hermenegildo Serafica."

United Sugar Producers Federation (Unifed) Manuel Lamata said the sugar planters are aware of the proposed 350,000-MT import program.

Lamata said Unifed is preparing legal options, including another temporary restraining order should the SRA board clear the import program.

"If this will be signed by Sec. Dar, our sugar federation is consulting with our lawyers on bringing the Secretary and SRA chief Serafica to court. If our lawyers say [file a case in the Ombudsman], then so be it," he told the BUSINESSMIRROR.

The BUSINESSMIRROR sought SRA Administrator Hermenegildo R. Serafica's comments, but he has not responded as of press time.

In an interview, SRA board member Roland Beltran said the SO is still being deliberated by the board. However, Beltran, who represents the milling sector, said he has already manifested his concerns with the proposed import program.

BusinessMirror
APR. 08, 2022
PAGE: A5
LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Solons laud move on PUV drivers' 'ayuda' distribution, but how about the farmers?

By Jovee Marie N. Dela Cruz
@joveemarie

LAWMAKERS on Thursday said the financial assistance to public utility vehicle (PUV) drivers and the fuel subsidy for the agriculture sector should not be considered as election campaign spending.

House Deputy Speaker Rufus Rodriguez welcomed the decision of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to allow the distribution of P6,500 financial assistance to PUV drivers.

But Rodriguez said the poll body should also exempt from the public spending ban the fuel subsidy for farmers to aid them from skyrocketing prices of farm inputs.

"I believe that the fuel *ayuda* for the agriculture sector [should likewise be] exempted from the Comelec. It is in the same situation as the PUV drivers sector," the House leader said.

Comelec Commissioner George M. Garcia said the Comelec en banc has yet to approve the request of DA to have its P500-million fuel voucher program. Garcia said the Comelec en banc is expected to tackle DA's petition during its meeting next week.

Also, House Deputy Minority Leader and Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate asked the election body to also fast-track the go signal for aid distribution to the agricultural and other sectors hit by the rampant increases in oil prices.

"This *ayuda* is long overdue and people expect the poll body to act with dispatch and not to repeat the callous dilly-dallying of the DBM [Department of Budget and Management], DOTr [Department of Transportation] and DILG [Department of the Interior and Local Government]," he said.

"For as long as the Duterte administration has not called for a special session of Congress to suspend the excise tax on oil, Comelec should exempt from the election ban aid to be given to the agricultural and transport sector as well as the poorest Filipinos. These should not be considered as election campaign spending but these should still be monitored strictly as these may be used for partisan purposes," added Zarate.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has already appealed to the Comelec to exempt its fertilizer and fuel subsidy programs from the election-spending ban.

Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar said the DA's programs affected by the public spending ban include the fuel subsidy for corn farmers and fishermen; fertilizer subsidy for rice, corn, and cassava farmers; cash assistance to rice farmers and even the procurement of farm machinery by the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization.

Dar said that they received a notice from the Comelec to stop the distribution of their fuel subsidy program, which has been in implementation for two weeks. He added that they have not distributed a substantial amount of the P500-million subsidy since the Comelec has stopped its operations.

Moreover, Rodriguez, who represents Cagayan de Oro's second district, said the release of these funds should be devoid of politics.

"It is a government agency that is giving the money to PUV drivers. The LTFRB should not allow any politician to meddle or be associated with the distribution. The process should be devoid of politics," he said.

According to LTFRB data, as of April 5 when the distribution was stopped, only 110,200 out of the over 377,000 intended beneficiaries have received their *ayuda*.

Rodriguez said many drivers in Cagayan de Oro City and Northern Mindanao still have to be given their financial assistance.

"The Comelec should not wait for more increases in the pump prices of diesel, gasoline and other oil products before approving LTFRB's application for an exemption from the spending ban," he said.

He said the funds are intended to help those in the public transportation sector cope with difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

These difficulties have been aggravated by soaring fuel prices brought about Russia's invasion of Ukraine, he added.

He said such spikes would effectively decrease the value of the financial assistance that PUV drivers would receive.

For his part, House Transportation Committee Chairman Edgar Mary Sarmiento said the Comelec's decision provides great relief for the tens of thousands of PUV drivers and operators nationwide who bore the brunt of the series of fuel price increases.

He added that this would also ensure the full utilization of the P2.5-billion fuel subsidy which was allotted by Congress through the General Appropriations Act (GAA 2022) and another P2.5 billion sourced from the excise tax for petroleum products.

The government has partially distributed the subsidy targeting 377,000 drivers and operators at P6,500 each.

The distribution however was halted on March 25 pending Comelec's position on LTFRB's request for exemption from the prevailing ban on cash disbursement during the election period.

ge _____ of _____

Daily Tribune
WITHOUT FEAR • WITHOUT FAVOR

Date: 08 APR 2022 Page: A8

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Customs raid nets paltry boxes of smuggled veggies

Local farmers have long been complaining against smuggled vegetables that flood the local market, leaving little room for profit among them

BY ANTHONY CHING
@tribunephl_ton

In a rather late move, the Bureau of Customs (BoC) on Thursday reported the seizure of smuggled agricultural products in Divisoria and its fringes in Manila.

The BoC raided stalls with operatives from the Manila International Container Port-Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service (MICP-CIIS), Enforcement and Security Service (ESS), Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry, Department of Trade and Industry, Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, National Intelligence and Coordinating Agency, and the Economic Intelligence Sub Task Group on Food Security on Tuesday.

It did not report having discovered the contraband's source, however.

The agency claimed the operation stemmed from an MICP-CIIS Field Station report gained from intelligence information about the smuggled imported agricultural products being sold in Divisoria.

The raiding team found several boxes of imported carrots and broccoli openly displayed and being sold in stalls and on sidewalks. Vendors denied the ownership of the vegetables. The seized items were estimated to be worth P300,000.

Local farmers have long been complaining against smuggled vegetables that flood the local market, leaving little room for profit among them.

Daily Tribune
WITHOUT FEAR • WITHOUT FAVOR

Date: 0 8 APR 2022 Page: B16

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Four Central Luzon fish process plants seen

BY JONAS REYES

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga – The Department of Agriculture (DA) announced that it has inaugurated four fish processing facilities under the Technology Based Incubation program.

The program aims to provide new technology and business ideas for fishfarmers in Central Luzon.

National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDI) executive director Lilian Garcia said that after their science-based training in fish processing and business, the agency has delivered on their fish processing facility.

She added that the agency has left the facility in their care for the development of the industry.

Fisheries Post-Harvest Research and Development Division Chief Dr. Ulysses Montojo of the NFRDI lauded the turn-over of the facilities, citing the cooperation between the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources-Central Luzon (BFAR3) and the Bureau of Agriculture Research.

BFAR3 Fisheries Post-harvest and Marketing Division Chief Stephen Arlo Lapid will be coordinating with the fisherfolk of the region to ensure high moral in establishing negotiations in the fishfarming sector.

These facilities that were opened include the Orion Fish Processing Facility in Bataan under the Samahan at Ugnayan ng Pangisdaan sa Orion fisherfolk, Sto. Tomas Fish Processing Facility under the Damayan fisherfolk group in Pampanga.

The Obando Fish Processing Facility under the Obando Fishermen Association and the Nagkakaisang Samahan ng Mangingisda sa Paoombong Fish Processing Plant, both in Bulacan.

DAILY TRIBUNE
08 APR 2022 PAGE: A5
LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Agriculturist's quest

SOUTHERN OPTICS
JUN LEDESMA

> ***Irrigation fee is earmarked for the rehabilitation of the irrigation system every now and then.***

Lawyers, according to Pres. Rodrigo Duterte, make for good presidents because they can decide on the spot. I agree with him to a certain degree because lawyers, by education and practice, are trained in logic and are aware of the legal parameters.

But there are other vital concerns that are on top of the government's agenda that a lawyer, economist, a military top gun, an actor, or a pugilist president may be strangers to.

In all the presidential and senatorial debates, for example, food security is top on the agenda and every so often we hear the motherhood statement "agriculture is the backbone of the Philippine economy."

Rightly so because 40 percent of the Filipino workers are in this sector. But sadly, based on government statistics, agriculture contributes only 20 percent to the gross domestic products of the country. These workforces are those in rice and cornfields, sugarcane haciendas, fisherfolk, hog and poultry farms, coconut, banana, cacao, coffee and pineapple plantations, vegetable and other cash crops. But the biggest percentage of these are in rice and corn.

In the Commission on Elections and SMNI-sponsored debates, I could only name former Agriculture Secretary and senatorial aspirant Manny Piñol as one with the most cogent and doable programs in the area of food security or agriculture.

It made me recall that one of the bad decisions made by the Duterte administration early in his presidency was to remove the National Food Authority (NFA) from the aegis of the Department of Agriculture (DA) where Piñol was secretary and placed this under the office of then-Cabinet Secretary Jun Evasco. I have nothing against Evasco for he is truly a hardworking man but NFA is such a complex component under the DA where supply and demand, transport, cold storage, distribution, and pricing among others can make or break the food security. Secretary Jun was a square peg in a round hole.

The other "honest" mistake was to make irrigation water free to farmers. The new guys around Duterte must have thought the free irrigation water will be a big help to rice farmers. Here is where lawyers and the other bright boys could go wrong. Irrigation fee is earmarked for the rehabilitation of the irrigation system every now and then. Canals and the farm-to-market roads that run alongside the irrigation canals have to be maintained. Remove the maintenance fund and you have a situation where because of debris, growth of aquatic grass in the banks of irrigation canals, and damaged banks the flow of water is hampered and worse water is wasted.

> ***What the farmers need is a reasonable price for their palay which NFA could have addressed. But NFA was caponized.***

What the farmers need is a reasonable price for their *palay* which NFA could have addressed. But NFA was caponized.

Piñol senate agenda is to revive NFA. In fact, there is already a template. NFA was originally National Grains Authority (NGA). NGA was set up by then Pres. Ferdinand E. Marcos initially to compete against unscrupulous rice and corn traders who bought farmers' harvests at extremely low-price during harvest. NGA had buying stations in strategic places.

In time these stations were equipped with modern rice mills and silos. Farmers then never had it so good. With the incentivized prices for their harvests, they produced more. Piñol, whose family were farmers knew this first hand.

The function of NGA was later expanded and was renamed into NFA to include all food items including meat, fish, vegetable, and fruits. Cold storage was set up in the main complex of which was in Taguig popularly known as Food Terminal Incorporated.

Sadly, the entire operation was good until it lasted. When the Cory government took over, NFA operations were stopped, leaving the valuable assets to rot and get cannibalized.

In Taguig, the real estate asset was sold for a song to Makati businessmen who propped the fledgling revolutionary government of Cory. What is left today is the cold storage facilities and some stalls which are being leased out by the past present dispensation.

Piñol is on the right track as he knows exactly the matrix of the NFA.

He can expand on it and institutionalized this by legislation. If he wins, however, he has to deal with the carcass of corruption in the NFA that was dismantled by the cruel centurions of the Aquino administration. But he has to win this election first and to achieve that he needs the 40 percent workforce in the agricultural sector that is still begging for justice and fairness.

MANILA BULLETIN

Date: APR. 08, 2022 Page: 3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

LARGE-SCALE AGRICULTURAL SMUGGLING AS ECONOMIC SABOTAGE

THE call of our farmers is for violators to be held liable for their acts under Republic Act No. 10845 or the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016. The law authored by Senators Cynthia Villar and JV Ejercito aims to protect and promote the productivity of the agriculture sector and the farmers from unscrupulous traders and importers, who by their illegal importation of agricultural products, affect the production, availability of supply and stability of prices, and thereby threatens the food security of the State.

Smuggling is the movement of goods across national borders to avoid customs duties, or import or export restrictions, in violation of applicable laws or other regulations.

ECONOMIC SABOTAGE when agricultural products are brought in the country to the detriment of farmers and consumers. They are able to manipulate the supply and demand, and are able to increase prices while at the same time, providing the justifications to import. They suppress the supply of pork, fish products, garlic, onions, carrots, among others to create an artificial shortage which leaves consumers with no choice but to buy the food items at a much higher price. It is outright inimical to the national interest, economic growth and development.

It is good to note that the policy of the State is to advance and safeguard the agriculture sector from unscrupulous individuals or dummy corporations, who by the sheer volume of their illegal importation of agricultural products, significantly affect the production, availability of supply and stability of prices. The proliferation of smuggled products effectively manipulates the prices by lowering it down, therefore discouraging food producers from continuing their production due to lack of satisfactory return on investment. This will eventually lead to the demise of our local agricultural industries, and hence, sabotage our economy.

As a prerequisite to importation, all agricultural and food products entering the Philippines must be accompanied by a phytosanitary or health certificate issued by the regulatory body of the exporting country. This is presented along with the import permit to facilitate physical inspection of the goods and customs clearance at the port of entry. The general rule is that all necessary phytosanitary or health certificates should be secured prior to importation and for each shipment.

For fresh fruits and vegetables, the **BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY** (BPI) regulates the importation by requiring phytosanitary clearances, which also serve as import licenses. These permits are applied for by the Philippine importer for each shipment.

With respect to fresh, chilled, or frozen fish and fishery/aquatic products, it is only allowed when certified as necessary by the **SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE** in order to achieve food security, taking into consideration public welfare and safety, subject to exception of institutional buyers and for canning or processing purposes.

Import regulations for meat and meat products, implemented by the **BUREAU OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY** under the Department of Agriculture (DA), requires a Veterinary Quarantine Clearance (VQC) certificate. A VQC is valid for 60 days from the date of issuance, within which the meat or meat products are to be shipped from the country of origin, and may no longer be extended beyond that. It is non-transferable and can only be used by the consignee to whom it was issued. Thereafter, the **NATIONAL MEAT INSPECTION SERVICE** (NMIS) shall conduct examination of imported meat after the commodity is approved for release by the Bureau of Animal Industry - National Veterinary Quarantine Service (BAI-NVQS) at the ports of entry.

Despite the strict regulation on importation, the legal process is somehow used as a channel for smuggling. As opposed to outright smuggling, "technical smuggling" is the manipulation of technical processes, which is also in violation of the law, regulations and orders. The government through the **BUREAU OF CUSTOMS** is unable to collect the full taxes on imports which is a great loss for our country to be able to better our economic, social and health services. Smuggling is an enemy of national development it keeps millions of our people in poor.

PHOTO: Courtesy of BENGUET FARMERS TRADERS

One such method involves the **MISDECLARATION** of the imported items. Such as shipment from China which was declared to contain "cream cheese" and "frozen puff pastries" but was discovered to be imported onions. Another is when an importer, through the broker and consignee declared the imported goods as ceramic tiles with a declared value of the shipment, plus duties and taxes amounting only to P3.6M but actually contained rice valued at P28.1DM.

MISCLASSIFICATION is another form of evasion. This is erroneously classifying the imported article under a tariff heading which carries a lower rate than the correct tariff heading, by submitting a fraudulent customs declaration in order to pass the imported goods off as something else. Although the smuggler would have to pay some duty, they still gain by the discrepancy of the amount of duty declared. One example is that of husked rice which is usually only 5-25% broken, but is declared to be broken rice. On the other hand, same thing happens to good meat that are misclassified as offal.

The tariff barrier could be contravened by **UNDERVALUING** the shipment such as declaring a lesser quantity. By this, the shipment is described correctly but the value declared is lower than the actual value of the importation. Although the correct tariff rate is applied, the trader manages to pay a lower duty. Undervaluation happens when an importer claims a cost for the product that is significantly below the reference value provided by the DA. It also happens with insurance and freight charges which are not declared or of lower value. Both the tariff and and value-added tax are based on a product's CIF (cost, insurance, freight). Undervaluation deprives the government of the revenue from both tariffs and taxes.

Republic Act 10845 or the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016 provides that Large-Scale Agricultural Smuggling as Economic Sabotage, is a crime when it involves SUGAR, CORN, PORK, POULTRY, GARLIC, ONIONS, CARROTS, FISH, and CRUFEROUS VEGETABLES, in its raw state, or which have undergone the simple processes of preperation or preservation for the market, with a minimum amount of **ONE MILLION PESOS (P1,000,000.00)**, or **RICE**, with a minimum amount of **TEN MILLION PESOS (P10,000,000.00)**, as valued by the **BUREAU OF CUSTOMS (BOC)**, is committed through any of the following acts:

(a) Importing or bringing into the Philippines without the required import permit from the regulatory agencies;
(b) Using import permits of persons, natural or juridical, other than those specifically named in the permit;
(c) Using fake, fictitious or fraudulent import permits or shipping documents;
(d) Selling, lending, leasing, assigning, consenting or allowing the use of import permits of corporations, nongovernment organizations, associations, cooperatives, or single proprietorships by other persons;
(e) Misclassification, undervaluation or misdeclaration upon the filing of import entry and revenue declaration with the BOC in order to evade the payment of rightful taxes and duties due to the government;
(f) Organizing or using dummy corporations, nongovernment organizations, associations, cooperatives, or single proprietorships for the purpose of acquiring import permits;
(g) Transporting or storing the agricultural product subject to economic sabotage regardless of quantity; or
(h) Acting as broker of the violating importer.

The law also provides for stringent penalties as follows:

(a) The penalty of **LIFE IMPRISONMENT** and a fine of twice the fair value of the smuggled agricultural product and the aggregate amount of the taxes, duties and other charges avoided shall be imposed on any person who commits any of the acts enumerated under Section 3 of this Act.

(b) **FOR NOT LESS THAN SEVENTEEN (17) YEARS BUT NOT MORE THAN TWENTY (20) YEARS** and a fine of twice the fair value of the smuggled agricultural product and the aggregate amount of the taxes, duties and other charges avoided shall be imposed on the officers of dummy corporations, nongovernment organizations, associations, cooperatives, or single proprietorships who knowingly sell, lend, lease, assign, consent or allow the unauthorized use of their import permits for purposes of smuggling;

(c) And **imprisonment of not less than fourteen (14) years but not more than seventeen (17) years** and a fine equal to the fair value of the smuggled agricultural product and the aggregate amount of the taxes, duties and other charges avoided shall be imposed on the following:

(1) The registered owner and its lessee or charterin case of lease, of a chartered boat, motorized commercial vessel of more than three (3) grosstonnage, who knowingly transports the agricultural product subject to economic sabotage, regardless of quantity;
(2) The registered owner and its lessee, in case of lease of six (6) or more wheeler trucks, vans and other means of transportation, who knowingly transports the agricultural product subject to economic sabotage, regardless of quantity;
(3) The registered owner and lessee of a warehouse, or any property, who knowingly stores the smuggled agricultural product subject to economic sabotage; or
(4) The registered owner, lessee, president or chief executive officer of the private port, fish port, fish landing sites, resorts, and airports who knowingly allows the agricultural product to be smuggled into the country.

(d) **The penalty of imprisonment of not less than twelve (12) years but not more than fourteen (14) years** and a fine equal to the fair value of the smuggled agricultural product subject to economic sabotage and the aggregate amount of the taxes, duties and other charges avoided shall be imposed on the following:

(1) The registered owner and its lessee or charterer, in case of lease, of a chartered boat, motorized commercial vessel of three (3) gross tonnage or less, who knowingly transports the agricultural product subject to economic sabotage, regardless of quantity; or
(2) The registered owner and its lessee, in case of lease, of less than six (6) wheeler trucks, vans and other means of transportation, who knowingly transports the agricultural product subject to economic sabotage, regardless of quantity.

In all cases, the smuggled agricultural products shall be confiscated and the property used in agricultural smuggling, consistent with Section 2530 of the Tariff and Customs Code and without prejudice to Section 2531 of the same Code, shall be forfeited in favor of the government.

The law also provides for the presumption of agricultural smuggling, whereby the mere possession of rice or any agricultural product entered into the Philippines other than the BOC controlled ports or without the necessary permits shall be prima facie evidence of smuggling.

Smuggling is a crime that not only affects the consumers, it also threatens the livelihood of farmers and fisher folks. Six years have passed since the law was implemented, yet despite the countless apprehensions, and that the prohibited acts constitute non-bailable offenses, not even one has been put to jail for violating it.

Sadly, the lack of a harmonized electronic data system by the implementing agencies is being cited as the culprit. The need for a computerized system between the Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Customs, will facilitate not only the process of curbing large-scale smuggling in the country but will also form part of data on imported goods leaving the port of origin relayed to the country of destination in real time. This would lessen or eliminate human intervention.

There is a Filipino saying that goes, "*Kung gusto, may paraan. Kapag ayaw, maraming dahilan*", which may be the reason why despite technological advancements we have not been able to eliminate smuggling.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL
Date: APR. 08, 2022 Page: 3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

LARGE-SCALE AGRICULTURAL SMUGGLING AS ECONOMIC SABOTAGE

THE call of our farmers is for violators to be held liable for their acts under Republic Act No. 10845 or the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016. The law authored by Senators Cynthia Villar and JV Ejercito aims to protect and promote the productivity of the agriculture sector and the farmers from unscrupulous traders and importers, who by their illegal importation of agricultural products, affect the production, availability of supply and stability of prices, and thereby threatens the food security of the State.

Smuggling is the movement of goods across national borders to avoid customs duties, or import or export restrictions, in violation of applicable laws or other regulations.

ECONOMIC SABOTAGE when agricultural products are brought in the country to the detriment of farmers and consumers. They are able to manipulate the supply and demand, and are able to increase prices while at the same time, providing the justifications to import. They suppress the supply of pork, fish products, garlic, onions, carrots, among others to create an artificial shortage which leaves consumers with no choice but to buy the food items at a much higher price. It is outright inimical to the national interest, economic growth and development.

It is good to note that the policy of the State is to advance and safeguard the agriculture sector from unscrupulous individuals or dummy corporations, who by the sheer volume of their illegal importation of agricultural products, significantly affect the production, availability of supply and stability of prices. The proliferation of smuggled products effectively manipulates the prices by lowering it down, therefore discouraging food producers from continuing their production, due to lack of satisfactory return on investment. This will eventually lead to the demise of our local agricultural industries, and hence, sabotage our economy.

As a prerequisite to importation, all agricultural and food products entering the Philippines must be accompanied by a phytosanitary or health certificate issued by the regulatory body of the exporting country. This is presented along with the import permit to facilitate physical inspection of the goods and customs clearance at the port of entry. The general rule is that all necessary phytosanitary or health certificates should be secured prior to importation and for each shipment."

For fresh fruits and vegetables, the **BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY** (BPI) regulates the importation by requiring phytosanitary clearances, which also serve as import licenses. These permits are applied for by the Philippine importer for each shipment.

With respect to fresh, chilled, or frozen fish and fishery/aquatic products, it is only allowed when certified as necessary by the **SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE** in order to achieve food security, taking into consideration public welfare and safety, subject to exception of institutional buyers and for canning or processing purposes.

Import regulations for meat and meat products, implemented by the **BUREAU OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY** under the Department of Agriculture (DA), requires a Veterinary Quarantine Clearance (VQC) certificate. A VQC is valid for 60 days from the date of issuance, within which the meat or meat products are to be shipped from the country of origin, and may no longer be extended beyond that. It is non-transferable and can only be used by the consignee to whom it was issued. Thereafter, the **NATIONAL MEAT INSPECTION SERVICE** (NMIS) shall conduct examination of imported meat after the commodity is approved for release by the Bureau of Animal Industry - National Veterinary Quarantine Service (BAI-NVQS) at the ports of entry.

Despite the strict regulation on importation, the legal process is somehow used as a channel for smuggling. As opposed to outright smuggling, "*technical smuggling*" is the manipulation of technical processes, which is also in violation of the law, regulations and orders. The government through the **BUREAU OF CUSTOMS** is unable to collect the full taxes on imports which is a great loss for our country to be able to better our economic, social and health services. Smuggling is an enemy of national development it keeps millions of our people in poor.

One such method involves the **MISDECLARATION** of the imported items. Such as shipment from China which was declared to contain "cream cheese" and "frozen puff pastries" but was discovered to be imported onions. Another is when an importer, through the broker and consignee declared the imported goods as ceramic tiles with a declared value of the shipment, plus duties and taxes amounting only to P3.6M but actually contained rice valued at P28.1DM.

PHOTO: Courtesy of BENGUET FARMERS TRADERS

MISCLASSIFICATION is another form of evasion. This is erroneously classifying the imported article under a tariff heading which carries a lower rate than the correct tariff heading, by submitting a fraudulent customs declaration in order to pass the imported goods off as something else. Although the smuggler would have to pay some duty, they still gain by the discrepancy of the amount of duty declared. One example is that of husked rice which is usually only 5-25% broken, but is declared to be broken rice. On the other hand, same thing happens to good meat that are misclassified as offal.

The tariff barrier could be contravened by **UNDERVALUING** the shipment such as declaring a lesser quantity. By this, the shipment is described correctly but the value declared is lower than the actual value of the importation. Although the correct tariff rate is applied, the trader manages to pay a lower duty. Undervaluation happens when an importer claims a cost for the product that is significantly below the reference value provided by the DA. It also happens with insurance and freight charges which are not declared or of lower value. Both the tariff andand value-added tax are based on a product's CIF (cost, insurance, freight). Undervaluation deprives the government of the revenue from both tariffs and taxes.

Republic Act 10845 or the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016 provides that Large-Scale Agricultural Smuggling as Economic Sabotage, is a crime when it involves SUGAR, CORN, PORK, POULTRY, GARLIC, ONIONS, CARROTS, FISH, and CRUFEROUS VEGETABLES, in its raw state, or which have undergone the simple processes of preperation or preservation for the market, with a minimum amount of **ONE MILLION PESOS (P1,000,000.00)**, or **RICE**, with a minimum amount of **TEN MILLION PESOS (P10,000,000.00)**, as valued by the **BUREAU OF CUSTOMS (BOC)**, is committed through any of the following acts:

(a) Importing or bringing into the Philippines without the required import permit from the regulatory agencies;
(b) Using import permits of persons, natural or juridical, other than those specifically named in the permit;
(c) Using fake, fictitious or fraudulent import permits or shipping documents;
(d) Selling, landing, leasing, assigning, consenting or allowing the use of import permits of corporations, nongovernment organizations, associations, cooperatives, or single proprietorships by other persons;
(e) Misclassification, undervaluation or misdeclaration upon the filing of import entry and revenue declaration with the BOC in order to evade the payment of rightful taxes and duties due to the government;
(f) Organizing or using dummy corporations, nongovernment organizations, associations, cooperatives, or single proprietorships for the purpose of acquiring import permits;
(g) Transporting or storing the agricultural product subject to economic sabotage regardless of quantity; or
(h) Acting as broker of the violating importer.

The law also provides for stringent penalties as follows:

(a) The penalty of **LIFE IMPRISONMENT** and a fine of twice the fair value of the smuggled agricultural product and the aggregate amount of the taxes, duties and other charges avoided shall be imposed on any person who commits any of the acts enumerated under Section 3 of this Act.
(b) **FOR NOT LESS THAN SEVENTEEN (17) YEARS BUT NOT MORE THAN TWENTY (20) YEARS** and a fine of twice the fair value of the smuggled agricultural product and the aggregate amount of the taxes, duties and other charges avoided shall be imposed on the officers of dummy corporations, nongovernment organizations, associations, cooperatives, or single proprietorships who knowingly sell, lend, lease, assign, consent or allow the unauthorized use of their import permits for purposes of smuggling;

(c) And **imprisonment of not less than fourteen (14) years but not more than seventeen (17) years** and a fine equal to the fair value of the smuggled agricultural product and the aggregate amount of the taxes, duties and other charges avoided shall be imposed on the following:

(1) The registered owner and its lessee or charterin case of lease, of a chartered boat, motorized commercial vessel of more than three (3) grosstonnage, who knowingly transports the agricultural product subject to economic sabotage, regardless of quantity;
(2) The registered owner and its lessee, in case of lease of six (6) or more wheeler trucks, vans and other means of transportation, who knowingly transports the agricultural product subject to economic sabotage, regardless of quantity;
(3) The registered owner and lessee of a warehouse, or any property, who knowingly stores the smuggled agricultural product subject to economic sabotage; or
(4) The registered owner, lessee, president or chief executive officer of the private port, fish port, fish landing sites, resorts, and airports who knowingly allows the agricultural product to be smuggled into the country.

(d) **The penalty of imprisonment of not less than twelve (12) years but not more than fourteen (14) years** and a fine equal to the fair value of the smuggled agricultural product subject to economic sabotage and the aggregate amount of the taxes, duties and other charges avoided shall be imposed on the following:

(1) The registered owner and its lessee or charterer, in case of lease, of a chartered boat, motorized commercial vessel of three (3) gross tonnage or less, who knowingly transports the agricultural product subject to economic sabotage, regardless of quantity; or
(2) The registered owner and its lessee, in case of lease, of less than six (6) wheeler trucks, vans and other means of transportation, who knowingly transports the agricultural product subject to economic sabotage, regardless of quantity.

In all cases, the smuggled agricultural products shall be confiscated and the property used in agricultural smuggling, consistent with Section 2530 of the Tariff and Customs Code and without prejudice to Section 2531 of the same Code, shall be forfeited in favor of the government.

The law also provides for the presumption of agricultural smuggling, whereby the mere possession of rice or any agricultural product entered into the Philippines other than the BOC controlled ports or without the necessary permits shall be prima facie evidence of smuggling.

Smuggling is a crime that not only affects the consumers, it also threatens the livelihood of farmers and fisher folks. Six years have passed since the law was implemented, yet despite the countless apprehensions, and that the prohibited acts constitute non-bailable offenses, not even one has been put to jail for violating it.

Sadly, the lack of a harmonized electronic data system by the implementing agencies is being cited as the culprit. The need for a computerized system between the Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Customs, will facilitate not only the process of curbing large-scale smuggling in the country but will also form part of data on imported goods leaving the port of origin relayed to the country of destination in real time. This would lessen or eliminate human intervention.

There is a Filipino saying that goes, "*Kung gusto, may paraan. Kapag ayaw, maraming dahilan*", which may be the reason why despite technological advancements we have not been able to eliminate smuggling.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL
Date: 08 APR 2022 Page: 3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Local dairy losses seen in DepEd multinational feeding program

By CATHERINE TALAVERA

Local milk farmers stand to lose potential income as the Department of Education (DepEd) is eyeing multinational corporations instead of Filipino farmers as source of milk for its school based feeding program (SBFP), an industry group said.

In a letter to Education Secretary Leonor Briones, Dairy Confederation of the Philippines (DCP) director Danilo Fausto said Filipino milk farmers may lose P240 million if more milk for the program would come from commercial sources.

Fausto explained that in last year's milk feeding program, cooperatives assisted by the National Dairy Authority (NDA) supplied 50.02 percent of the milk requirement.

For this year's program – scheduled for implementation from April to June – NDA-assisted cooperatives are supplying only 27.27 percent as against commercial sources' share of 41.89 percent from only 19.07 percent last year.

Fausto said local dairy farmers, processors and cooperatives started serving the SBFP during the period covered by the General Appropriations Act 2019 in the last quarter of 2020 and continued on to GAA 2020. He added that GAA 2021 is currently ongoing because of the pandemic and will finish by June 2022.

"They cannot possibly be expected to supply the GAA 2022 milk in the sudden and unilateral imposition of an April 2022 to June 2022 period within which to supply milk because the 2021 GAA is still ongoing and the milk is still being produced and delivered by them," Fausto said.

"This will in effect allow foreign multinationals to come in since we will have to finish first the 2021 up to June, thus, local dairy farmers cannot supply the April to June request of DepEd," he added.

The DCP said DepEd is now asking NDA and Philippine Carabao Center to sign a certification that local dairy farmers cannot supply the milk required for SBFP, to allow the entry of foreign multinational dairy companies. In effect, this would remove local dairy farmers from the 2022 GAA budget.

It added that the DepEd wants to implement the milk-feeding program only for 16 days, while the recommendation of the National Food and Nutrition Council is 90-120 days in order for it to have a real and meaningful impact on the health of school children.

"We strongly deplore and object to this sudden and unilateral program implementation schedule for the 2022 GAA. The schedule will unfairly prevent the local farmers, cooperatives and local milk processing plants from supplying the milk requirements of the SBFP under the 2022 GAA," Fausto said.

He stressed that a majority of the local dairy farmers and cooperatives have reinvested their earnings in expanding their capacities, in anticipation to serve the requirements of the DepEd program.

"And now they will be shut out and excluded under the program, consequently resulting in losing millions of pesos for these dairy cooperatives, turning their expansion to white elephants," Fausto said.

"If they allow multinationals to enter, the rest of 2022 beginning July to December, the local dairy farmers and cooperatives will be shut out and excluded, with the multinational taking advantage of the milk feeding program funded by taxpayers money," he added.

The DCP requested that local dairy farmers, cooperatives and processing plants be given sufficient time to complete their ongoing deliveries under the 2021 GAA.

"With this, we humbly appeal to your kind office to reconsider the GAA 2022 SBFP plan and schedule and allow our local dairy farmers to serve and participate in the 16 days DepEd milk feeding program under the 2022 GAA for this year," Fausto said. He emphasized that the decision to source more milk from multinational corporations is in violation of the intent and objective of Republic Act 11037.

Manila Standard

Date: APR. 08, 2022 Page: A4

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Zubiri urges sugar regulatory body to halt new importation program

SENATE Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri is calling on the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) not to push through with a new importation program supposedly proposed by the administration, after already receiving two injunctions for Sugar Order No. 3 in February.

"Our local sugar farmers are again approaching our office, deeply concerned over talks of a new SRA proposal that would green-light the importation of 350,000 metric tons of sugar into the country," he said.

He related that our courts have already landed on the side of our sugar farmers last February.

"So it's disheartening that we are having the same conversation about importation again," said the reelectionist senator.

"Lest the SRA will be accused of this being a midnight deal bereft of propriety and due process," he added.

"They should not allow this while our farmers are harvesting their crops during the harvest season."

In February, the Sagay City and Himamaylan City Regional Trial Courts issued separate preliminary injunctions against the importation of 200,000 metric tons of sugar under Sugar Order No. 3.

Sagay RTC Branch 73 Judge Reginald Fuentebella went so far as to say that the court recognizes "the grave and irreparable injury [that] will result from the implementation of SRA Sugar No. 3."

Macon Ramos-Araneta

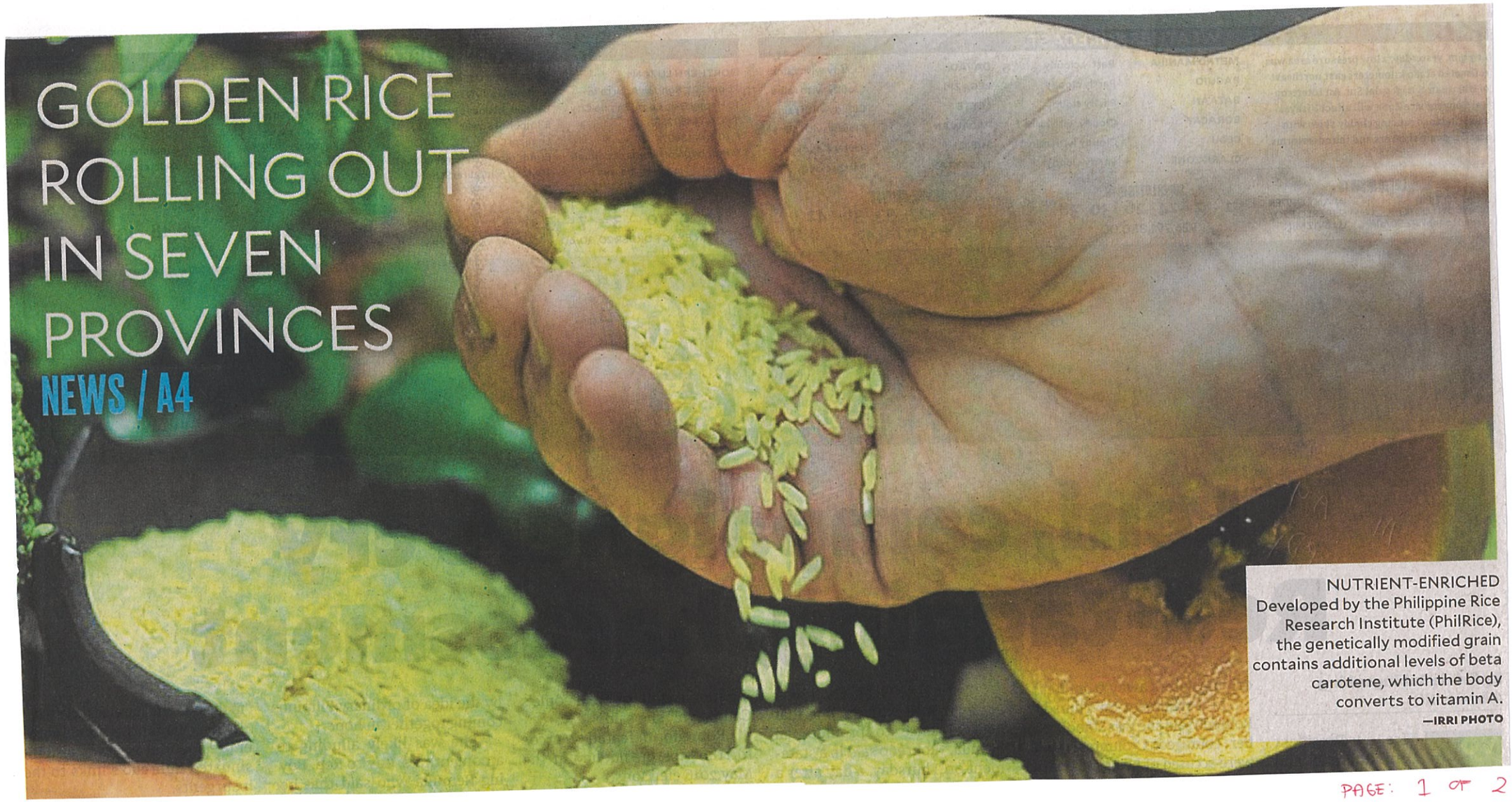
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS

Date: APR. 08, 2022 Page: A1 & A4

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

GOLDEN RICE ROLLING OUT IN SEVEN PROVINCES

NEWS / A4



NUTRIENT-ENRICHED
Developed by the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), the genetically modified grain contains additional levels of beta carotene, which the body converts to vitamin A.
—IRRI PHOTO

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS

Date: APR. 08, 2022 Page: A1 & A4

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PART 2 OF 2

Golden Rice rolling out in 7 provinces

By Jordeene B. Lagare
@jordeenelagare

The genetically mnodified Golden Rice, a variety enriched with nutrients, is finally ready for planting in farms in seven provinces with a high incidence of malnutrition and stunting.

Reynante Ordonio, senior science research specialist at the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), said on Thursday that seeds of Golden Rice would be distributed in Quirino and Catanduanes in Luzon, Samar and Antique in the Visayas and Lanao del Norte, Agusan del Sur and Maguindanao in Mindanao.

PhilRice, a corporate entity attached to the Department of Agriculture (DA), has also committed to give the first seeds to Batac in Ilocos Norte and Nueva Ecija for helping facilitate the testing of Golden Rice.

Golden Rice was developed by PhilRice in partnership with the International Rice Research Institute (Irri) to contain additional levels of beta carotene, which the body converts into vitamin A.

Around one in five children from the poorest communities in the country suffer from vitamin A deficiency (VAD), a most common cause of childhood blindness and contributes to a weakened immune system.

Since it weakens the body's resistance to diseases and infections, it may even result in death if left untreated.

Seed certification

In the Philippines, 2 million Filipino children under the age of 5 have VAD, based on the 2018 Expanded National Nutrition Survey of the Department of Science and Technology-Food and Nutrition Research Institute.

Golden Rice is expected to provide up to 50 percent of the estimated average requirement for vitamin A of young children, the age group most susceptible to VAD in the Philippines.

Ordonio said Golden Rice has been successfully registered with the National Seed Industry Council (NSIC), considered a key step as this allows the deployment of Golden Rice not only to farmers but more importantly to seed producers and seed growers.

YEARS IN THE MAKING The International Rice Research Institute (Irri) spent two decades with PhilRice to develop Golden Rice, which is touted to be helpful in preventing childhood blindness and malnutrition. Environmental groups, however, have strongly opposed the effort. —ISAGANI SERRANO/IRRI

PhilRice is hoping to start planting Golden Rice at the start of the wet season in an initial 9 hectares.

"Next will be the pilot deployment of Golden Rice which is now being planned and being done also because we have already reached out to the target provinces and to the (local government units) and it's much easier now that it is already registered," said Ordonio in a virtual media tour organized by the US Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service in Manila and the US Embassy in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in collaboration with Farming Future Bangladesh.

"Before we go to the actual deployment (for commercial production), there is still the next phase which is seed certification. That's under the purview of NSQCS (National Seed Quality Control Services) and we're still coordinating with them exactly when will be the planting for commercial purposes be done or would be possible," he added.

Long process

Ordonio said commercial sale of Golden Rice would not start yet since PhilRice would need first to produce the basic seeds.

"We're still at that phase when we are increasing the seeds and we're ensuring the quality and the purity," he said.

The permit for the commercial production of Golden Rice was given in July last year by the Bureau of Plant Industry, another agency attached to the DA, making it the first genetically modified rice approved for commercial propagation in South and Southeast Asia.

Irri spent two decades with PhilRice to develop Golden Rice, an enhanced version of ordinary rice that is touted to be helpful in preventing childhood blindness and malnutrition.

Environmental groups have strongly opposed the development of Golden Rice. Activists previously attacked at least one test field for genetically modified rice.

Golden Rice was first developed in 1999 by Ingo Potrykus, a professor of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, and Peter Beyer of University of Freiburg, Germany, who began their research on Golden Rice in 1982.

In 2004, the Golden Rice technology was donated to the Golden Rice Humanitarian Board, which transferred it to developing countries where vitamin A deficiency is prevalent, including the Philippines. —WITH A REPORT FROM INQUIRER RESEARCH INQ

BusinessWorld

Date: APR. 08, 2022 Page: 8/S1

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PHILIPPINE STAR/MICHAEL VARCAS

SRP for imported *galunggong* set at P180 in NCR

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) has set the suggested retail price (SRP) for imported medium-sized *galunggong* (round scad) in wet markets in the National Capital Region (NCR) at P180 per kilogram.

"Considering the effects of rising fuel prices due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict (and) aggravated by the pandemic, (which raised the) prices of agricultural commodities... there is a need to manage the prices of basic necessities," the DA said in an administrative circular issued on Thursday.

The circular estimated that one kilogram of medium-sized, female *galunggong* will consist of 11 to 20 pieces.

"The state shall ensure the availability of basic necessities and prime commodities at reasonable prices at all time, without denying legitimate business a fair return on investment," the circular read.

The DA has the authority to regulate prices, particularly for agricultural goods.

The administrative circular will take effect immediately after its publication on the DA website and will remain in effect for 60 days from its approval. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**

BusinessWorld

Date: APR. 08, 2022 Page: 12/S1

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Farmers press for stop in new sugar importation plan, citing court orders

THE SUGAR Regulatory Administration (SRA) should stop its plan for a new round of importation after two regional courts ruled against a similar program, said a senator whose help has been sought by growers.

"Our local sugar farmers are again approaching our office, deeply concerned over talks of a new SRA proposal that would green-light the importation of 350,000 metric tons of sugar into the country," Majority Leader Juan Miguel F. Zubiri said in a statement on Thursday.

This comes after two regional courts issued separate rulings against Sugar Order No. 3 in February, which sought to import 200,000 metric tons of sugar, noting that it will cause "grave and irreparable injury" to local producers.

"Our courts have already landed on the side of our sugar farmers last February, so it's disheartening that we are having the same conversation about importation again," the senator said.

"Lest the SRA will be accused of this being a midnight deal bereft of propriety and due process. They should not allow this while our farmers are harvesting their crops," he added.

Mr. Zubiri noted that the proposed importation deal will put local farmers at a gross disadvantage, particularly at a time when they are still dealing with setbacks caused by the coronavirus pandemic and spiraling fertilizer prices.

"Instead of this importation program, let us focus on delivering much-needed assistance to our farmers, and let us find ways to boost local production not just of crops, but of fertilizers as well," he said. — **Alyssa Nicole O. Tan**

BusinessWorld

Date: APR. 08, 2022 Page: 4|S1

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Vitarich ramps up safety measures versus bird flu

FARM products manufacturer Vitarich Corp. said that it is implementing programs to ensure that its facilities will not be affected by avian influenza or bird flu amid the recent outbreak of the virus.

"At Vitarich, we are committed to making sure our farms and facilities remain avian influenza-free. We recognize there are fears that the disease might extend to chickens and potentially disrupt our local food supply," Senior Vice-President Reynaldo D. Ortega said in a statement on Thursday.

"As such, Vitarich has further heightened the implementation of our standards and is coordinating closely with appropriate authorities and experts," added Mr. Ortega, who is the general manager of the poultry, food and feed sales division.

In March, the Department of Agriculture suspended the movement of domestic and captured wild birds and poultry products as a precaution against the virus.

Vitarich said its farms are undergoing monitoring, testing, and enforcement of biosecurity standards regularly.

"These procedures guarantee well-sanitized and enclosed surroundings that prevent contamination and ensure a well-stocked inventory and continuous supply of fresh chickens for our country," the company said.

"We take pride in the implementation of these regular stringent measures to ensure the highest freshness, cleanliness, safety, and quality of our products at all times," it indeed.

Vitarich operates in three primary industry segments: feeds, foods, and farms.

The company sells its feed products to various distributors, dealers and end users nationwide. Its farm products are day-old chicks and pullets while its food products composed of chicken and dory fish are sold to hotels, restaurants, institutional clients, and supermarkets as well as to wet markets.

At the stock exchange, Vitarich shares remained unchanged at P0.63 apiece on Thursday. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**

BusinessWorld™

Date: APR. 08, 2022 Page: 8/S1

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Golden rice registered with seed industry council

GOLDEN RICE was recently approved for registration with the National Seed Industry Council, according to the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice).

"This (means) it is now fully recognized by the Bureau of Plant Industry. If ever farmers plant this, they can now apply for crop insurance, they are now at the same level as other varieties. It's much easier now that it's registered," PhilRice Research Specialist Reynante L. Ordonio said in a virtual briefing.

"Golden Rice is a complementary solution to existing vitamin A deficiency preventions. Rice is life for Filipinos and an integral part of our diet," he added.

Golden rice is a genetically modified, biofortified crop engineered to produce beta-carotene, which is not normally present in rice. Beta-carotene is converted into vitamin A when metabolized by the body.

The taste of golden rice is the same as white rice, Mr. Ordonio said.

The variety was designed to lower malnutrition and growth stunting in poor countries.

"There are successful complementary solutions, like biofortification. However, vulnerable groups are being missed and this is where golden rice can help as a tool in the basket of interventions," he said.

WWW.IRRI.ORG/GOLDEN-RICE

"Especially during the pandemic, we find it all the more difficult to consume a diversified diet," he added.

Biofortification is the process of breeding crops to increase their nutritional value. This can be done through conventional selective breeding or genetic manipulation.

"Because rice is widely grown and eaten, even a small increase in the micronutrient content in the grain could have a significant impact on human health," Mr. Ordonio said.

"In other countries, they already have orange sweet potato, yellow cassava, and sweet rice as a product of biofortification," he added.

Golden rice is targeted for distribution to provinces with high malnutrition levels, like Quirino, Catanduanes, Samar, Antique, Lanao del Norte, Agusan del Sur, and Maguindanao.

Mr. Ordonio said the next step in seed certification lies with the National Seed Quality Control Services (NSQCS).

"We want to make everything formal to facilitate deployment to farmers, most importantly to seed producers, because they need the seed class," he said.

"It would depend on the NSQCS on when they will allow us to have the certification so the planting can be done by wet season. Hopefully, by the wet season we can proceed with planting. The seeds will be produced by PhilRice," he added.

High iron and zinc rice (HIZR) is another genetically modified rice that was developed to improve the uptake of the two nutrients.

"Previously, as proof-of-concept, iron concentrations in a well-polished rice grain were achieved with no yield penalty, and the dietary target of the iron and zinc in the polished grain has been achieved under field conditions," Mr. Ordonio said.

This year, HIZR is being prepared for a field trial in Batac, Ilocos Norte and Muñoz, Nueva Ecija.

There are also plans to stack HIZR with Golden Rice in a project led by the International Rice Research Institute.

— **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**

BusinessMirror
A broader look at today's business
Date: APR. 08, 2022 Page: A4

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Golden Rice hurdles NSIC varietal registration

By Jasper Emmanuel Y. Arcalas
@jearcalas

GOLDEN Rice has moved a step forward toward full commercialization in the country after it successfully hurdled varietal registration with the National Seed Industry Council (NSIC).

Philippine Rice Research Institute Healthier Rice project leader Dr. Reynante Ordonio said Golden Rice has been successfully registered with the NSIC on Thursday, April 7.

"Meaning, this [variety] is now fully recognized by the Bureau of Plant Industry. If ever farmers plant this variety, they can now apply for crop insurance. They are now of the same level as other [rice] varieties," Ordonio said in a virtual roundtable discussion organized by the United States Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service in Manila, US Embassy Dhaka and Farming Future Bangladesh.

Ordonio said the Golden Rice would now have to pass the seed certification by the National Seed Quality Control Services (NSQCS) to be able to kick-start the pilot deployment of the genetically modified crop in seven provinces nationwide.

Ordonio explained they are targeting the pilot deployment of the Golden Rice in provinces with "high incidence of malnutrition and stunting," which includes Quirino and Catanduanes in Luzon, Samar and Antique in Visayas, Lanao del Norte, Agusan del Sur and Maguindanao in Mindanao. He added that a total of 9 hectares would be covered by the pilot deployment.

However, Ordonio said there would be no pilot deployment sans the seed certification by the NSQCS.

"Before we go to the actual deployment, the next phase is seed certification, which is under the purview of the NSQCS. There would be no commercial selling yet [of Golden Rice]. It would be the PhilRice that will produce the nucleus seeds," he said.

"[The timetable] would depend on the NSQCS if it will allow us to have the certification so that the planting can be done by the wet season. Hopefully, by the wet season we can proceed with the planting," he added.

The final varietal name approved by NSIC for Golden Rice is NSIC 2022 Rc G70GR2E with a nickname of Malusog 1.

In July of last year, Golden Rice was approved for commercial planting after the government issued the biosafety permit for commercial propagation for the crop.

The biosafety permit said the Golden Rice has undergone "satisfactory biosafety assessment" pursuant to the Joint Department Circular (JDC) 1, Series of 2016 issued by the Departments of Science, Agriculture, Environment, Health, and the Interior and Local Government.

The Philippines became the first country to issue a commercialization permit for Golden Rice. PhilRice has earlier explained that the Golden Rice followed the standard process of rice breeding that usually takes 10 to 12 years before a new variety reaches the consumers. Proponents of the Golden Rice emphasize that the genetically modified crop is one of the measures to combat vitamin A deficiency in the country.

The approval for commercialization of Golden Rice last year met numerous opposition from various industry groups, such as Greenpeace Philippines and Rice Watch Action Network Inc. The groups argued that there was a lack of transparency regarding risk assessment results of golden rice. ***(Related story: https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/07/26/group-urges-da-to-stop-commercial-propagation-of-vitamin-a-rich-rice/ and https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/07/29/groups-sustain-opposition-to-local-propagation-of-golden-rice-variety/)***

BusinessMirror
A broader look at today's business

Date: APR. 08, 2022 Page: A5

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

DAIRY FARMERS APPEAL DEPED ORDER ON SCHOOL-BASED FEEDING PROGRAM

By Jasper Emmanuel Y. Arcalas
@jearcalas

FILIPINO dairy farmers stand to lose P240 million in income opportunities since they could be eased out in the government's milk feeding program this year due to Department of Education's (DepEd) recent policy shifts, an industry group said.

The Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. (PCAFI) wrote to Education Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones seeking "reconsideration" of the department's policy concerning the 2022 School-based Feeding Program (SBFP).

PCAFI President Danilo V. Fausto said the latest policy of DepEd of implementing the SBFP from April to June will "diminish and minimize the participation of the local dairy farmers" in the feeding program.

"We also learned that the DepEd had asked the National Dairy Authority [NDA] and the Philippine Carabao Center [PCC] for a certification allowing the sourcing of milk from commercial processors for the SBFP under 2022 GAA. We strongly deplore and object to this sudden and unilateral program implementation schedule for the 2022 GAA [General Appropriations Act]," he said.

"The schedule will effectively and unfairly prevent the local farmers, cooperatives and local milk processing plants from supplying the milk requirements of the SBFP under the 2022 GAA. This is totally unacceptable considering that RA 11037 states unequivocally that as far as practicable, milk for the SBFP shall be sourced from local farmers and processors," he added.

Fausto, who is also a director of the Dairy Confederation of the Philippines, explained that local dairy farmers, processors and cooperatives have been part of the SBFP since 2019.

"They cannot possibly be expected to supply the GAA 2022 milk in the sudden and unilateral imposition of an April 2022 to June 2022 period within which to supply milk because the 2021 GAA is still ongoing and the milk is still being produced and delivered by them," he said.

Due to the policy shifts, Fausto explained that the local dairy industry stands to lose around P240 million in lost income opportunities and sales, with multinational commercial milk processors benefiting the most.

"We reiterate that local dairy farmers, cooperatives, and local milk processing plants are capable of supplying the SBFP's milk needs. With regards to supply, the whole local dairy industry is ready to commit or even exceed its 2021 deliveries," he said.

"We have supplied 20 days of milk feeding for GAA 2019, 50 days for GAA 2020 and currently GAA 2021 for 33 days. More so, for the program under the GAA 2022, which has a feeding program of only 16 days," he added.

Fausto said they are appealing to DepEd to reconsider its 2022 SBFP plan and allow local dairy farmers to serve and participate in the 16-day program.

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL
Everybody's Newspaper

Date: 08 APR 2022 Page: 5

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Police power needed vs agri smugglers -- DA exec

THE Department of Agriculture has stressed the need for the agency to be given police power to apprehend and file charges against smugglers in the country, whether technical or outright.

Agriculture Undersecretary Fermin Dantes Adriano insisted their authority is limited under the law to mere collaboration with the Bureau of Customs, rather than apprehension of smugglers.

"If we want the department to have power against smuggling, give it power, mandate, to) file, apprehend, and file cases against smugglers. but as of now, the DA has no option but to rely on BoC, they have the power under law," he said.

Earlier, the DA cited several schemes used by smugglers, including misdeclaration, undervaluation, and outright smuggling.

The deputy DA chief explained that smuggled products are being offered at a much more affordable price due to their lower production and delivery cost.

"If they are arrested once, yet succeed on the) second, or third attempt nila na mag-smuggle, they will still profit due to the significant price difference," he said.

Meanwhile, Adriano noted that the DA is conducting an investigation to trace the alleged cohorts of technical smugglers within their department.

He also mentioned the agency's intensified collaboration with the BoC, which is also currently conducting its own administrative investigation.

PEOPLES JOURNAL Tonight

Date: 08 APR 2022 Page: 7

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Zubiri to SRA: Reconsider sugar importation

By CARMELITA P. BALAGTAS-SARMIENTO

SENATE Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri is calling on the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) not to push through with a new importation program supposedly proposed by the Duterte administration after already receiving two injunctions for Sugar Order No. 3 in February.

"Our local sugar farmers are again approaching our office, deeply concerned over talks of a new SRA proposal that would greenlight the importation of 350,000 metric tons (MT) of sugar into the country," he said.

"Our courts have already landed on the side of our sugar farmers last February, so it's disheartening that we are having the same conversation about importation again," Zubiri said.

"Lest the SRA will be accused of this being a midnight deal bereft of propriety and due process. They should not allow this while our farmers are harvesting their crops during the harvest season," the senator pointed out.

In February, the Sagay City and Himamaylan City Regional Trial Courts (RTCs) issued separate preliminary injunctions against the importation of 200,000 metric tons of sugar under "Sugar Order No. 3."

Sagay RTC Branch 73 Judge Reginald Fuentebella went so far as to say that the court recognizes "the grave and irreparable injury [that] will result from the implementation of SRA Sugar No. 3."

"I would hope that these injunctions have prompted the SRA to reconsider the harm that their importation programs would inflict on our local sugar farmers.

REMATE
ANG DIARYO NG MASA

Date: 08 APR 2022 Page: 5

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

EDITORYAL

AYUDA SA MAGSASAKA, TSUPER AT MAHIHIRAP

MABUTI at napagpasyahang aprubahan ng Commission on Elections ang pamimigay ng ayuda sa mga nangangailangan ngayon sa gitna ng maraming pagbabawal na gawin ang gobyerno kaugnay ng halalang 2022.

Matatandaang, ipinagbabawal ng Comelec ang anomang proyektong imprastraktura at iba pa upang hindi magamit ang mga ito na pambili o pang-akit ng boto ng mga kandidato sa iba't ibang paraan.

Kinilala ng Comelec ang katotohanang labis na naghihirap ang milyon-milyong tsuper, magsasaka, mangingisda, naghahayupan, mahihirap at iba pa.

Kabilang sa mga dahilan ng paghihirap ang krisis sa langis, tama ng mga bagyo at kalamidad at talagang kawalan talaga ng pagkakataon na makapaghanapbuhay.

Ang mga ahensya ng pamahalaan gaya ng Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, Department of Agriculture at Department of Social Welfare and Development ang nilibre sa pagbabawal ng Comelec.

Hinihiling lang ng Comelec sa mga ahensyang ito ang istrikto at tamang paraan ng pamimigay ng ayuda at totoong mga benepisyaryo para maiwasan na magagamit sa pulitika ang programa.

Dapat na kumilos kaagad ang mga nasabing ahensya upang maibsan sa pinakamadaling panahon ang paghihirap na may kasamang gutom ng milyon-milyong benepisyaryong Pilipino.

Pilipino Star
NGAYON
Diyaryong disente ng masang intelihente

Date: 08 APR 2022 Page: 3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Eleazar magsusulong ng free meals sa public schools bilang tulong sa estudyante, magsasaka

Balak ni senatorial candidate Gen. Guillermo Lorenzo Eleazar na magsulong ng programang magbibigay ng libreng pagkain sa mga pampublikong paaralan di lang para matugunan ang problema sa nutrisyon ng mga estudyante, kundi pati makatulong sa sektor ng agrikultura.

Target ni Eleazar na ituon ang programa sa mga estudyanteng nasa pre-school at elementary level, lalo na yaong mga nasa pinakamahihirap na lalawigan.

Sa kanyang plano, balak ni Eleazar na palakasin ang ugnayan at bigyan ng karagdagang pondo ang Department of Education at Department of Agriculture para makabili ng mga produkto ng mga lokal na magsasaka na siya namang gagamitin sa paggawa ng pagkaing ipamimigay sa mga estudyante.

Bilang probinsyano at pulis na nadestino sa ibaibang lalawigan, personal na nasaksihan ni Eleazar ang di pagpasok sa paaralan ng ilang estudyante dahil sa kahirapan. Mayroon din aniyang napipilitan pang magtrabaho na lamang para makatulong sa magulang imbes na mag-aral.

Kahirapan aniya ang pangunahing dahilan ng mababang performance ng mga estudyante sa malalayong lugar, at nakadadagdag pa dito ang di sapat na nutrisyon.

Ito rin ang dahilan ng malaking "learning gap" sa pagitan ng mga estudyanteng nasa mahihirap na lalawigan at mga estudyanteng nasa Metro Manila at iba pang urban area, lalo na yaong mga pumapasok sa private schools, aniya pa.

Kaakibat ng free meal program na isusulong ni Eleazar ang pagsusulong din ng regular na dental, eye, at medical check-ups sa mga pampublikong paaralan.

Abante TONITE
MABILIS SA BALITA

Date: 08 APR 2022 Page: 3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

7 bayan, 4 probinsya sapol ng ASF

Nasa pitong bayan at apat na probinsya pa mula sa dalawang rehiyon ng bansa ang may aktibong kaso ng African Swine Fever (ASF), ayon sa Department of Agriculture (DA).

Mas mababa na umano ito kumpara sa dating naitala na 688 bayan, 51 lalawigan at 13 rehiyon o kabuuang 3,720 barangay na sapol ng ASF outbreak.

"Medyo maganda po 'yong ating pagtanaw pagdating dito sa ASF. Actually po 'yong na-recover natin na area ay nasa 64 na, pero mahigit 500 cities and municipalities na po 'yan na wala na pong reported na case ng ASF," ayon kay Dr. Reildrin Morales ng Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) sa press briefing kahapon.

Isang ahensiya ang BAI sa ilalim ng Department of Agriculture.

Subalit may kinukumpirma rin aniya ang BAI na insidente ng ASF outbreak sa Davao region.

Sa ngayon aniya, tiwala sila sa isinasagawang pagbakuna kontra ASF gamit ang vaccine mula sa Kuala Lumpur University sa Thailand.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

Date: 08 APR 2022 Page: 8

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BOC: P91 B smuggled goods seized under Rody's term

By ELIJAH FELICE ROSALES

Smuggled goods including illegal drugs valued at more than P91 billion were confiscated by government agents as the smuggling of various products intensified during the implementation of pandemic lockdowns, the Bureau of Customs (BOC) reported yesterday.

Data obtained by **The STAR** showed that the BOC seized a total of P91.15 billion worth of smuggled imports from July 2016 to March this year, with only one quarter left in President Duterte's term.

Nearly 43 percent of the smuggled products amounting to P39.06 billion were confiscated during the pandemic: P10.63 billion in 2020 and P28.43 billion in 2021.

According to the BOC, illegal drugs accounted for 19 percent of the volume at P16.91 billion, with the bulk of the haul at P6.63 billion confiscated in 2017.

In the first quarter of 2022, Customs agents prevented the entry of P3.89 billion worth of smuggled goods. Of the figure, 39 percent or P1.53 billion consisted of illegal drugs. The BOC also confiscated shipping containers of counterfeit products at different ports.

On agricultural smuggling, the Customs committed last week to strengthen border protection to stop the entry of illegal produce causing losses for local farmers.

Since 2019, the BOC has carried out a total of 542 raids, which yielded nearly P2 billion in agricultural products that smugglers tried to sneak in.

The Customs has filed 103 cases against traders and importers allegedly involved in the smuggling of farm imports since 2016.

BOC Assistant Commissioner Vincent Philip Maronilla said authorities needs to recalibrate measures against cigarette smugglers who now conduct their illegal trade through open shorelines.

Based on intelligence, traders of illegal cigarettes ship their products through large vessels. Upon entering Philippine waters, they switch off their radar and linger within nearby communities, where small ships approach them at nighttime to collect the packages.

As the economy recovers from the pandemic, Customs officials say they expect smuggling to pick up with border restrictions being lifted and import volumes increasing.

Imports jumped by more than 31 percent to $117.88 billion last year, from $89.81 billion in 2020. Exports rose by over 14 percent to $74.65 billion, from $65.21 billion.