CLIPPINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2022

A. SEC. PBBM QUOTED

THE DAILY TRIBUNE
Marcos sources low-cost fertilizers

MANILA BULLETIN
Marcos eyes gov't-to-gov't fertilizer supply deals

MANILA STANDARD
BBM eyes cheaper fertilizer

BUSINESS WORLD
Marcos urged to attend to higher input costs ahead of farm roads
Marcos eyes fertilizer deals with China, Russia
Business chamber eager to hear food security, inflation plans in SONA

BUSINESS MIRROR
PBBM eyeing fertilizer purchase deals with foreign governments

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Marcos bares plan to reduce fertilizer cost

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
Gov't eyes G2G fertilizer purchase
Economic prospects for the next six years

THE MANILA TIMES
DA not exempt rightsizing – Marcos
Marcos mulls gov't-to-gov't deals to lower fertilizer cost

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT
BBM eyes fertilizer deals, farm-to-market masterplan

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON
Editoriyal: Farm-to-market road, isakatuparan
G2G fertilizer deal, balak ituloy ni Marcos

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL TONIGHT
Marcos prioritizes farm-to-market roads
Editorial: Irrigation program

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL
Marcos pushes local food output hike

B. DA FAMILY

BUSINESS WORLD
Calling all plantitos and palntitas: The details of KSK

BUSINESS MIRROR
Govt eyes ways to temper rising sugar prices

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Short supply of food items to aggravate inflation

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
NFA execs told: Return P1.37-M transport allowance

THE MANILA TIMES
Newcastle disease hits poultry industry

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT
Pigeon racing still banned

C. **AGRI-RELATED STORY**

MANILA STANDARD
Photo: **Rice protest**

BUSINESS MIRROR
Desiccated coconut exporter to get fiscal perks from govt

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Salceda: Problem the quality of chicken, not the supply

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
BOI approves P924 M coconut project

THE MANILA TIMES
Food shocks could fuel unrest, moody's warns

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL
Rice farmers continue to receive training from TESDA

D. **FOREIGN STORY**

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT
Corn drops as supply concerns ease; wheat down

Daily Tribune
WITHOUT FEAR or WITHOUT FAVOR

Date: 20 JUL 2022 Page: A6

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Marcos sources low-cost fertilizers

BY MICHELLE R. GUILLANG
@tribunephl_mish

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. is open to government-to-government (G2G) talks to address the rising prices of fertilizers, Malacañang said on Tuesday.

Marcos, who concurrently leads the Department of Agriculture (DA), said the government could avail of cheaper fertilizers through the G2G deals.

"They want to help us, they want to approach us, then let's take advantage of that. Give us fertilizers at an affordable price. That's the whole point of G2G," he told agriculture officials during a meeting on Monday.

Marcos met key officials of the DA at the Bureau of Soils and Water Management Convention Hall in Quezon City to primarily discuss ways to increase local food production

The Chief Executive is looking into communicating with China, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and Russia for the country's procurement of fertilizers.

"I'm thinking would it be useful for us if I write them all a letter and I'll say that we are in the market to buy this volume of fertilizer," he said.

MANILA BULLETIN

Date: 20 JUL 2022 Page: 1 & 6

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Marcos eyes gov't-to-gov't fertilizer supply deals

By JEL E. SANTOS

Seeking to address the increasing prices of fertilizers, President Marcos said he is willing to pursue government-to-government (G2G) deals.

The government could avail itself of cheaper fertilizers through the G2G deals, said Marcos, the country's agriculture secretary in concurrent capacity.

"Gusto tayong tulungan, gusto tayong lapitan, eh 'di take advantage naman tayo, 'di ba? Sige bigyan niyo kami ng fertilizer na medyo maganda-ganda ang presyo (They want to help us, they want to approach us, so let's take advantage of it. Okay, give us fertilizer with a good price). That's the whole point of G2G," the President told agriculture officials in a meeting on Monday, July 18. ▶6

Marcos eyes gov't-to-gov't fertilizer supply deals 1◀

According to Marcos, he is looking at China, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, and Russia for the procurement of fertilizers.

"I'm thinking, would it be useful for us if sulatan ko silang lahat (I'll write to all of them) and I'll say that we are in the market to buy this volume of fertilizer," he said.

Marcos asked agriculture officials to provide data on the source and price of fertilizers, as well as the department's distribution plan during the planting season.

He also ordered the Department of Agriculture (DA) to come up with a farm-to-market road (FMR) master plan that will serve as a guide for the government.

The master plan, he said, must be thoroughly studied by the DA and must be presented to the country's economic managers.

The most pressing issues that need to be addressed in the agricultural sector include increasing rice production and reorganizing the DA and its attached agencies, the Chief Executive said.

Manila Standard

Date: 20 JUL 2022 Page: A1 & A2

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BBM eyes cheaper fertilizer

Sets G2G deals with foreign sources to avail of better prices

By Othel V. Campos and Maricel V. Cruz

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday said he was keen on pursuing government-to-government (G2G) deals to address the rising costs of fertilizers.

Marcos, who concurrently heads the Department of Agriculture (DA), said the government could avail of cheaper fertilizers through G2G deals.

"They want to help us, so why don't we take advantage of that," Marcos said in Filipino during a meeting at the Bureau of Soils and Water Management Convention Hall in Quezon City. "Give us fertilizer at a better price. That's the whole point of G2G."

The President said he is looking at deals with China, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, and Russia for the procurement of fertilizers.

The President asked agriculture officials to provide data on the source of and price of fertilizers, as well as on the department's distribution plan during the planting season.

Marcos said the most pressing issues that need to be addressed in the agricultural sector include increasing rice production and reorganizing the DA

Next page

BBM...

From A1

and its attached agencies.

"We need an immediate plan to ensure that our food supply and the food prices are within reach of ordinary Filipinos from now until the end of the year," the President and current DA Secretary said.

Undersecretary for Operations and Chief-of-Staff Leocadio Sebastian presented the agency's catch-up plan, which will prioritize the production of rice, corn, livestock, poultry, vegetables, and fisheries.

Strategies for other programs such as a fertilizer subsidy were also presented.

The President also said the country's system of importation should be reformed in coordination with the Bureau of Customs, the House of Representatives, and the Senate to address rampant vegetable smuggling.

The meeting also tackled the country's farm-to-market (FMR) network plan.

"FMR is the first step to solve some of the supply chain problems," the President said.

He said the construction of farm-to-market roads and infrastructure support should be prioritized in major food production areas, and that all these be aligned with the overall plan.

Marcos also instructed the concerned officials to identify priority areas, create the necessary maps, and provide copies of the master plan to the country's economic managers and local government units.

Meanwhile, Albay Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda proposed a stronger and more aggressive national corn program to address the lack of supply of chicken in restaurants and supermarkets.

He said Congress needed to pass "a livestock, poultry, and dairy development act" to address the structural constraints that are holding back the industry.

"I have had conversations with chicken suppliers, and the problem does not appear to be a shortage of headcount, but the quality of chickens being produced. Broiler raisers have brought to my attention the fact that they are not meeting the standards set by their buyers," he said.

"That, I attribute the nearly 50 percent increase in the prices of corn feed, year-on-year. And as much as 60 percent of costs to broiler raising costs are attributable to corn. So, you would expect some broiler raisers to cut back on corn feed, leading to weight issues in produce."

"The result is chickens are basically malnourished... Essentially, they are chicken-joyless. So, supermarkets and restaurants don't want to serve them," Salceda said.

Salceda said the short-term solution is to boost local production of corn during the upcoming corn season,

Manila Standard

Date: 20 JUL 2022 Page: A1 & A2

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

which begins in July and will be harvested in September.

"We should ensure delivery of services under the National Corn Program within the peak crop season this July to September. That will be extremely essential to solving the poultry supply quality problem."

"Fertilizer will be the most crucial assistance, I believe. So, any pending fertilizer assistance programs will also have to be released in strategic corn-producing locations within this peak season. The fastest way to do that is through Fertilizer Discount Coupons, which was a successful program we amplified in Albay when I was governor. The effect will be immediate on yield."

In the long run, Salceda said the passage of the livestock, poultry, and dairy development act, which he filed as House Bill 440, will also help address the structural constraints to the livestock and poultry sectors.

The proposal will earmark tariff revenues from corn imports for domestic corn productivity improvement under a Corn Competitiveness Enhancement Fund, which will be at around P2 billion annually.

"Unlike in rice, we can be globally competitive in corn, based on [what] many agricultural experts [say]," Salceda said. "The problem with livestock and poultry boils down to feeds, feeds, feeds. And corn is the single most essential feed source."

BusinessWorld

Date: 20 JUL 2022 Page: 4/S1

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Marcos urged to attend to higher input costs ahead of farm roads

THE government's farm-to-market road (FMR) masterplan is less of a priority at the moment than ensuring that farmers gain access to affordable inputs and are insulated from excessive competition from imports, agriculture industry representatives said.

"Right now, the high cost of inputs, and to a lesser extent, fuel, are the most pressing problems. Then we have to find a way to manage imports and assure farmers of reasonable prices for their products and incentives for them to continue producing," Federation of Free Farmers National Manager Raul Q. Montemayor said in a Viber message.

Nevertheless, he said, "There is a huge backlog in the farm-to-market and rural infrastructure programs, especially since priority funding has often gone to urban roads and infrastructure.

DPWH

Poor rural infrastructure results in high transport and marketing costs that translate into lower prices for farmers' products and high prices for their farm inputs and needs, and at the other end, high prices for consumers."

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., who is also the Agriculture Secretary, said in a briefing on Monday that he is tasking Department of Agriculture officials to come up with an FMR masterplan to address food security concerns.

An association of fisherfolk, Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA) said the FMR masterplan is not as large a concern as securing domestic production.

"What is the purpose of farm-to-market roads if there are no products to deliver since production is down? Costs are high. Roads and infrastructure are not the solution to ensure food security. We need to support actual producers of food," the group said in a statement.

PAMALAKAYA spokesman Ronnel S. Arambulo said that a significant number of the rural population employed in the fishery and agriculture have left their farms and fishing grounds due to the high cost of production, chief among them fuel.

"In the fishing sector, for instance, fuel takes up almost 80% of the production cost in a small-scale fishing operation. Mr. Marcos should first address low productivity among our rural sectors before anything else," he said.

"If Mr. Marcos wants a comprehensive plan on food security, he should certify this production subsidy bill as urgent to ensure that aside from mobility, there would be enough agriculture and fisheries products to (send to market)," he added. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**

BusinessWorld™

Date: JULY 20, 2022 Page: S1/1 & S1/8

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Marcos eyes fertilizer deals with China, Russia

By Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza
Reporter

PHILIPPINE President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. is looking to pursue government-to-government deals with some of the world's top suppliers of fertilizer such as Russia and China, as he aims to boost the country's agriculture production.

However, experts said Mr. Marcos should thoroughly study the move as it may force him to offer concessions that will not be beneficial to the country.

Mr. Marcos is considering communicating with the governments of China, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, and Russia to purchase cheaper fertilizer through bilateral deals, the Palace said in a press release.

"They want to help and approach us, so let's take advantage of that. Give us fertilizers that are affordable. That's the whole point of government-to-government deals," Mr. Marcos told Agriculture officials at a meeting on Monday, according to a media release.

Mr. Marcos, who heads the Agriculture department, said they could send letters to those governments and "say that we are in the market to buy this volume of fertilizer."

The President also asked Agriculture officials to provide data on the sources and prices of fertilizer.

The Philippines imports much of its fertilizer supply, which has been disrupted by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. Higher fertilizer prices are expected to drive up costs of agricultural commodities in the next few months.

It is already expected that Mr. Marcos would gravitate to Russia and China, among others, "since other countries probably have major issues either supporting him or being seen trading with his government," said Hansley A. Juliano, a political economy researcher studying at Nagoya University's Graduate School of International Development in Japan.

Mr. Juliano said the move signals that the Philippine leader does not care about how his foreign policy is perceived, "considering that just a few days ago, reportage on infrastructure projects under his predecessor were left hanging due to Chinese funding not forthcoming or properly allocated for."

Fertilizer, S1/8

Fertilizer,
from S1/1

"China hasn't exactly proven itself reliable in one economic engagement and now you're relying on it again?" he said. "It's like going back to a bad electronics store that gave you a bad warranty policy."

Arjan P. Aguirre, who teaches political science at the Ateneo de Manila University, urged the administration to consult with the Philippines' fertilizer industry and other concerned sectors before making any policy decision.

"I hope they could also reveal alternative options so that stakeholders can weigh on them," Mr. Aguirre said in a Messenger chat. "I hope this was not done unilaterally on the part of the government without consultation and due diligence."

He also urged the government to be careful in dealing with countries that have been "neglectful of their obligations."

Mr. Marcos told the Transportation department to renegotiate loan agreements with China for railway projects worth $4.90 billion. Transportation officials last week said the loan applications were considered "withdrawn" after the Chinese government "failed to act on the funding requests" made by the Duterte administration.

BusinessWorld

Date: 20 JUL 2022 Page: S1/3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Business chamber eager to hear food security, inflation plans in SONA

PLANS dealing with food security and inflation will be among the most eagerly expected portions of the State of the Nation Address (SONA) to be delivered by President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. on July 25, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) said on Tuesday.

PCCI President George T. Barcelon told the BusinessWorld Live program on One News channel: "We know that the President is in charge of the agricultural portfolio. So, we'd like to see what's the roadmap for this in view of our issues with food supply. We know very well that food prices have been going up primarily because of external factors, and also because of supply chain (issues). So that is top of mind on the agriculture side," Mr. Barcelon said.

Mr. Barcelon said the SONA, which will open the next session of Congress, should also include plans for addressing inflation.

The Philippine Statistics Authority reported that headline inflation surged to 6.1% in June on the back of higher food and transport prices.

"The other thing that is of concern is the inflation that we're facing. Again, this is (due to) international cost-push impact. I think this has to be addressed (because) the salary of the working people may not cover it," Mr. Barcelon said.

Mr. Barcelon expressed the hope that Mr. Marcos will address helping the tourism industry recover and discuss energy security.

"We're seeing that our tourism business has picked up... I hope (travel and leisure) is considered low-hanging fruit... The government should (pay attention) to this. This not only creates jobs, but it's a foreign currency earner," Mr. Barcelon said.

Mr. Barcelon added that he is hoping for an expansion of the power grid's connectivity "so that areas with an oversupply can redirect (electricity) to areas that need power."

Separately, Tourism Congress of the Philippines President Jose C. Clemente III told the Agenda program on One News channel that the tourism industry is worried about the rising prices of goods.

"I'm fearful of the tourists' threshold (for continuing to travel) since the prices of goods are increasing," Mr. Clemente said.

While travelers remain willing to absorb high fuel costs and airfares, "maybe we are already nearing the threshold past which they'll just say never mind, I'll just do it next time when prices are lower," he added. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

BusinessMirror
A broader look at today's business
Date: 20 JUL 2022 Page: A3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PBBM eyeing fertilizer purchase deals with foreign governments

By Samuel P. Medenilla @sam_medenilla

PRESIDENT Ferdinand "Bongbong" R. Marcos Jr. is eyeing to personally pursue bilateral talks with China, Russia and three other countries for the procurement of affordable fertilizers.

Marcos bared the plan to address the rising cost of fertilizers during his meeting with officials of the Department of Agriculture (DA) last Monday.

"They want to help us so they are approaching us. Then let us take advantage of that by asking them to give us fertilizers with a good price. That is the whole point of the G2G [government to government]," Marcos said in Filipino during his meeting with agriculture officials.

Marcos, the concurrent agriculture secretary said that among the countries he is considering for fertilizer procurement are China, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, and Russia.

He already asked DA to provide him data on the source of and price of fertilizers, as well as the department's distribution plan during the planting season, which he will use during his talks with the said countries.

"I'm thinking it would be useful for us if I will write to all of them...and I'll say that we are in the market to buy this volume of fertilizer," Marcos said.

Last year, DA already announced its plan to import fertilizers, which it will sell at a subsidized price to local farmers who are struggling to cope with the rising cost of farm inputs.

Among the countries it approached was China, where it negotiated to buy urea at a price of $500 per metric ton.

It also proposed an additional P15-billion budget for the expansion of its fertilizer subsidy program for rice farmers as well as the implementation of maximum retail price on fertilizer products to make the farm input more accessible to its users.

Providing sufficient fertilizers to farmers, DA said, will be crucial for local farmers to boost farm productivity.

It noted some rice farmers have already resorted to reducing fertilizer application as it became too costly, which may result to lower palay production.

The government is targeting a 20.4 million metric tons palay production this year.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS

Date: JULY 20 2022 Page: A3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

NEWS

How to bring down cost of fertilizers

President Marcos wants to explore government-to-government negotiations to give the country access to cheaper fertilizers and address skyrocketing farm input prices. Mr. Marcos, who also heads the Department of Agriculture, says the government plans to work out fertilizer supply contracts with China, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and Russia. —STORY BY NESTOR CORRALES AND DELFIN T. MALLARI JR.

A3

Marcos bares plan to reduce fertilizer cost

By Nestor Corrales and Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
@Team_Inquirer

President Marcos wants to personally pursue government-to-government (G2G) talks to buy cheaper fertilizers from other countries in a bid to address surging prices of the farm input and mitigate its impact on the country's food security.

The President, who also heads the Department of Agriculture (DA), said the government was considering to negotiate with China, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and Russia for the procurement of cheaper fertilizers.

This developed after Mr. Marcos met with DA officials in Quezon City on Monday, the second time since he assumed

FOOD SECURITY President Marcos and officials of the Department of Agriculture continue discussions on government plans to enhance food production. Their meeting on July 18, 2022, focused on the DA's operation plan for priority commodities and touched on the need to build more farm-to-market roads. —DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FACEBOOK PAGE

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS

Date: JULY 20, 2022 Page: A3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

"They want to help, they want to approach us, then let's take advantage of that. Give us fertilizers at a very good price. That's the whole point of G2G," the President was quoted by Malacañang as saying.

"I'm thinking would it be useful for us if I wrote a letter to all of them and I'll say that we are in the market to buy this volume of fertilizer," he added.

He asked DA officials to provide him data on the sources and prices of fertilizers, as well as the department's distribution plan during the planting season.

Several farmer groups have been pressing the government since last year for a fertilizer subsidy following the sharp increase in fertilizer prices, which was exacerbated this year by the Russia-Ukraine war.

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, Russia was the world's top exporter of nitrogen fertilizers such as urea, the second leading supplier of potassium fertilizers and the third largest exporter of phosphorus fertilizers in 2021.

Subsidies

Agriculture stakeholders have said that it was imperative for the government to immediately give fertilizer and fuel subsidies to farmers to prevent a decline in farm output, particularly that of rice.

The DA earlier estimated palay output to decline by about 1.1 million metric tons (MT) this year if the government would not be able to provide more fertilizer subsidies. This is equivalent to 600,000 MT of rice, or good for 10 days.

It said some farmers were forced to reduce their use of fertilizers as the cost of the farm input has nearly tripled from two years ago, resulting in lower yields.

Latest figures from the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority showed the average price of urea, the most commonly used fertilizer, has shot up to P2,781 per 50-kilo bag for the period July 4-8 this year, significantly higher than the P1,321 a year ago and P1,050 in 2020. The cost of complete fertilizers has also doubled to P2,369 per 50-kilo bag from P1,187 in July 2021.

The DA said the government has two options to overcome the expected decline in palay production: increase output by giving fertilizer and fuel subsidies and bring in cheaper rice from abroad.

Land ownership

On Monday, the President said he also wanted the DA to come up with a farm-to-market road master plan that would be the government's guide to promote food security and empower rural communities.

"Farm-to-market road is the first step to solve some of the supply chain problems," he said.

He added that he wanted official development assistance-funded projects to be built in priority areas identified by the government.

However, an agrarian reform advocacy group said farm-to-market roads would be beneficial to farmers only when these agricultural workers have land security.

The Kilusan Para sa Tunay na Repormang Agraryo at Kataungang Panlipunan (Katarungan) praised the current administration's plan to help ensure food stability in the country.

"It is a good step, especially in isolated rural areas. The access roads serve as the bridge of farmers to the highways going to market centers," Katarungan secretary general Danny Carranza said in a phone interview on Tuesday.

However, he argued that the farm-to-market roads "will be useless" if the farmers' ownership of the agricultural lands would not be secured.

Carranza cited the case of agrarian reform beneficiaries in Sariaya town in Quezon province where P187 million worth of farm-to-market roads were constructed using government loans.

Presidential review

"The farmers in the area may be rendered totally landless as their certificate of land ownership awards (Cloa) are being canceled and their right to the land being seriously undermined by the decision of the courts to exempt the land from the agrarian reform program," Carranza explained.

Citing information from the government, Carranza said farm-to-market road projects worth P300 million were again being planned in Sariaya.

"The farmers are now asking: Who will benefit from such projects?" he said.

He appealed to Mr. Marcos to review the situation and see what could be done to ensure that farmers, considered some of the most progressive in the province, would not be deprived of their land and continue to produce food.

Sariaya farmers produce about 600,000 tons of assorted vegetables a year, according to the group. These are distributed to nearby provinces in Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) region, Metro Manila and parts of Bicol region. INQ

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

Date: JULY 20, 2022 Page: 3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Gov't eyes G2G fertilizer purchase

By HELEN FLORES

The Marcos administration is looking at entering into government-to-government (G2G) deals to address the surging cost of fertilizers that is driving up the prices of food and agricultural products.

President Marcos, who concurrently heads the Department of Agriculture (DA), said the government could make use of cheaper fertilizers through the G2G agreements.

Marcos said the government is planning to communicate with China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Russia and the United Arab Emirates for the country's procurement of fertilizers.

"They want to help, they want to approach us. We should take advantage of that. OK, give us fertilizer at a good price. That's the whole point of G2G," the President told agriculture officials during a meeting on Monday.

"I'm thinking would it be useful for us if I write to all of them. I'll say that we are in the market to buy this volume of fertilizer," Marcos said, noting that the scheme would decrease expenditures in subsidizing raw products and maximize public funds in addressing other concerns of farmers.

He asked agriculture officials to provide data on the source and price of fertilizers.

During the meeting, the President also highlighted the need to increase rice production and reorganize the DA and its attached agencies as part of the government's plan to rightsize the bureaucracy.

Marcos likewise instructed DA officials to come up with a farm-to-market road (FMR) masterplan, which he said is the first step to solve supply chain issues.

Agricultural groups are urging President Marcos to prioritize food production subsidies over FMR projects to mitigate the impact of rising costs affecting productivity in the sector.

In a statement, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) leader and former agrarian reform secretary Rafael Mariano said cash aid and production subsidies are what farmers need.

"Granting farmers with much needed cash aid and P15,000 production subsidy are more imperative, especially with the high cost of production and of living," he said.

The group asked the President to certify as urgent the legislation of House Bills 406 and 2024.

House Bill 406 aims to provide P15,000 subsidy to farmers and fisherfolk affected by the surging cost of farm inputs, fuel, economic downturn and calamities amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

House Bill 2024 intends to grant P15,000 to 1.1 million fisherfolk to boost production and cover livelihood expenses.

The group likened Marcos' FMR master plan to the World Bank-funded Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) under the administration of former president Rodrigo Duterte.

Mariano said bulk of the P27-billion loan projects comprise FMR projects in Mindanao.

"The PRDP is both an unlimited wellspring of corruption and a counterinsurgency component under the government's whole-of-the nation approach," he said.

The Commission on Audit previously called out the DA over its failure to build 796 FMR projects amounting to P2.7 billion, which should have been completed by the end of 2016.

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas said the FMR masterplan is not the solution to food insufficiency.

Trade mission

Meanwhile, Foreign Agricultural Service Administrator Daniel Whitley arrived in Manila on Monday to lead a US Department of Agriculture trade mission from July 18 to 21.

Whitley was joined by representatives from 29 US agribusinesses and farm organizations and 10 state departments of agriculture who are interested in exploring export opportunities in the Philippines.

He said the trade mission would offer opportunities for both the United States and the Philippines.

"I'm confident it would produce mutually beneficial results to help expand trade, increase collaboration on key issues impacting agriculture in both our countries and ultimately strengthen Philippine food security," Whitley said.

He said the group of US agribusinesses and industry officials could provide reliable, high quality and sustainably produced US food and farm products to local buyers.

The Philippines ranks as the eighth largest export market for US food and agricultural products, averaging $3.1 billion during the past five years.

– **With Danessa Rivera, Pia Lee-Brago**

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

Date: JULY 20, 2022 Page: B4

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Economic prospects for the next six years

CROSSROADS
Toward Philippine Economic and Social Progress

GERARDO P. SICAT

The most immediate concern facing the nation today is economic recovery from the pandemic. This means we need to sustain a high level of growth so that the country overcomes the recent decline in the economy.

The challenge of economic recovery happens at a time of rising prices, the falling value of the peso, and the fiscal debt that has risen to a level because of measures taken to contain the pandemic.

External and political events in other countries, including the issues of public health posed by the pandemic, are dictating the problems that we face.

The new administration's economic challenge. With big challenges come also huge opportunities to rethink the future. The huge electoral mandate of the new Marcos administration gives it the opportunity to move the country in bold, but sustainable economic directions.

President Marcos made a good start by appointing an experienced and respected economic team to manage the economy. This has been reassuring to the private sector and to the wider economic community with which the country interacts.

Another reassuring immediate development is that the new administration represents a continuity of the economic programs started by the previous administration. There is no-rocking-the boat effect as a consequence of the change in the administration.

Discontinuities arising from the political transfer of administrations in the past have been wasteful and have led to major setbacks. No such thing will happen this time around.

The enthusiastic embrace of the Build Build Build (BBB) program assures that more infrastructure investments will continue with a sense of urgency. The pipeline of such projects has enlarged and more public-private partnerships will accompany current modalities for speeding infrastructure investments.

To get the BBB program to expand significantly requires the mobilization of the nation's resources to finance the bill. The country's expanded and more flexible revenue raising capacity is threatened by rising demand for various forms of consumer subsidies. For mega public infrastructures, there is need to rely on long-term development loans for many of the projects.

New economic challenges have arisen from the impact of the Ukraine War, pushing up inflation, especially undue increase in food prices, and volatility and instability in energy prices. To undertake proper response to these challenges, the government needs to employ smart targeting of consumer subsidies to those badly affected.

The President's decision to pay direct attention (by initially heading the Department of Agriculture) should boost the resurgence of agriculture in the nation's development.

The new administration also inherits legislation that further liberalizes the entry of foreign direct investments in the country. The passage of a trio of such laws in the last months of the Duterte administration are very good achievements. This will encourage new FDIs in important sectors.

The economic macro-framework. The macro framework surrounding the current plan for the economy under the Marcos presidency is spelled out in the DBCC (Development Budget Coordination Committee) document recently released on the website of the Department of Finance.

The economic plan that underpins this framework will likely be spelled out in the President's SONA (State of the Nation) address to be delivered this week.

Under certain assumptions about the prices of major imports like crude oil, the peso exchange rate, the inflation rate, and the evolution of exports and imports, the economic managers proposed the fiscal spending plan that provides the basic framework for the investments and growth targets in the economy.

The economy is targeted to grow initially (in 2022-23) in the range of 6.5 to 7.5 percent in the first year. The fiscal plan is designed to guide the spending and resource-raising objectives of the government during the period of the presidency. The spending program sets the pace and nature of the economic aspirations and projects.

The government also intends to achieve significant reduction of poverty as target. And within that framework, the other target is to move toward a middle-income developing country status during the period.

The assumptions of the plan are within the realm of the possible, and they are not extreme. Some plans will require the support and active push of our political leaders to make them possible.

In general, the government proposes to raise revenue resources that amount from 15 percent of the GDP in the earlier years of the planning period, rising to around 17 percent of GDP toward the end years.

Government spending is to be held around the 20 percent of GDP level across the years, rising only minimally toward 22 percent of GDP, premised also on an increase in government revenues so as the reduce the fiscal deficit.

The fiscal plan targets the budget deficit to be narrowed down to three percent of GDP by 2028. In 2022 the deficit is high at 7.2 percent of GDP, a result of the height of government measures during the pandemic.

Economic plans are drawn on year-to-year basis. But actual economic developments do not happen exactly as planned. Considerable uncertainties surround the evolution of future developments. The best of plans essentially also include speculations about the future. But they must be anchored on realistic assessments.

The developmental success of countries in the East Asia and ASEAN regions has been built on sound economic policies. A major pillar of such policies was to have an open economy. In practical terms, this meant an aggressive effort to invite foreign direct investments. Also, it meant promoting foreign trade, including active participation in international and regional trading blocs.

These policies enabled them to build large surpluses in their trade and balance of payments. In turn such policies strengthened their economic resource mobilization, building up domestic savings and making possible the achievements of the domestic investments needed to modernize the economy.

Although the Duterte government has passed laws to liberalize the entry of foreign investments, I have argued that more reassuring signaling of the importance of FDI investments to accompany the country's directions needs to be undertaken by the government.

For archives of previous Crossroads essays, go to: https://www.philstar.com/authors/1336383/gerardo-p-sicat. Visit this site for more information, feedback and commentary: http://econ.upd.edu.ph/gpsicat/

The Manila Times®

Date: JULY 20, 2022 Page: A2

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

DA not exempt from rightsizing – Marcos

PRESIDENT Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. expressed support for the proposed rightsizing of all agencies, departments, and government-owned or -controlled corporations (GOCCs), with no exemptions, including the Department of Agriculture (DA) where he concurrently serves as secretary.

The directive, he maintained, is for the government to perform its mandate effectively and efficiently to the people by collectively having a more streamlined and organized operation.

"*Siguro naman* (I'm guessing) you have been hearing the new term now is 'rightsize'. So, that's also something that we are going to have to discuss. That we have to rightsize the DA," the Chief Executive said during his close-in meeting with DA officials last Monday.

"I have asked all of the department secretaries to do the same thing for their departments. So, seeing as I am now holding the portfolio of Secretary of Agriculture, we also have to do it in our department," he added.

The administration is pushing for the rightsizing of the bureaucracy to make it more "lean, efficient and responsive" to the needs of the people by weeding out redundant and inefficient government bodies and positions.

More or less 2 million posts will be affected by the initiative which aims to rationalize the functions of government offices and pinpoint which among the 187 government agencies and GOCCs may be streamlined through merging, restructuring or abolition.

The downsizing, however, will not affect jobs related to teaching, the medical and allied medical positions in the health care sector, and the military and police and other uniformed ranks.

The Civil Service Commission earlier this week assured workers, especially those from the rank-and-file, will be involved in the series of multisectoral consultations and that their rights and welfare will be upheld.

It will also help retrenched employees through retooling their qualifications, competencies and skills to help in their redeployment to other government departments and agencies.

Those who will opt for early retirement, meanwhile, will be accorded their due benefits.

KRISTINA MARALIT

The Manila Times®

Date: JULY 20, 2022 Page: A1 & A2

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Marcos mulls govt-to-govt deals to lower fertilizer cost

PRESIDENT Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. is considering pursuing government-to-government (G2G) deals to help cushion the impact of the high cost of fertilizers on local farmers.

The Chief Executive, who concurrently serves as temporary secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA), said that cheaper fertilizers could be procured through G2G agreements.

"Gusto tayong tulungan, gusto tayong lapitan, eh 'di take advantage naman *tayo, 'di ba? Sige, bigyan niyo kami ng* fertilizer

➤FertilizerA2

■ FERTILIZER FROM A1

Marcos

na medyo maganda-ganda ang presyo (They want to help, they want to approach us, we should take advantage, right? OK, give us fertilizer at a reasonable price). That's the whole point of G2G," Marcos said during his meeting with DA officials the other day.

China, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and Russia are being looked at as potential partners for the initiative, the President added.

"[But] I'm thinking it would be useful for us if sulatan ko silang lahat (I write to all of them), and I'll say that we are in the market to buy this volume of fertilizers," he said.

The President asked DA executives to provide data on the source and price of fertilizers, as well as the agency's distribution strategy during the planting season.

Procuring fertilizer at a cheaper price is among the priorities of the department under Marcos' watch along with helping local food producers have more yield, particularly rice, corn and even sugar.

The President has tasked the DA to come up with a farm-to-market road (FMR) masterplan that will serve as a guide for the government in its bid to promote food security and empower rural communities.

The FMR masterplan must be studied thoroughly by the department and later on presented to the country's economic managers.

"Titiyakin natin na may sapat at abot-kayang pagkain para sa lahat (We will ensure there will be enough and affordable food for everyone)," the President said.

KRISTINA MARALIT

Malaya
Business Insight

Date: JULY 20, 2022 Page: A1&A2

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BBM eyes fertilizer deals, farm-to-market masterplan

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

THE Philippines is looking to strike import deals with some of the world's biggest fertilizer suppliers, including China and Russia, to help lower costs and increase food production amid high inflation, the government said on Tuesday.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., concurrently secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA), also plans to reach out to China, Russia, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates and Malaysia to secure fertilizer supplies at favorable prices, according to a statement issued by his office.

In a meeting at the Bureau of Soils and Water Management Convention Hall in Quezon City on Monday, Marcos directed DA officials to pursue more government-to-government (G2G) talks with these countries and to submit a report on the current sources and prices of fertilizers along with the department's distribution plan during the planting season.

Part of the discussions during the meeting was the intent to cut government expenditures in subsidizing raw products such as fertilizers, and maximizing the government fund while addressing other concerns of local farmers.

The President has also asked for a farm-to-market road masterplan to identify key areas that need to speed up food mobilization.

Also discussed were finding ways to capacitate the cooperatives and bringing products in the Food Terminal Incorporated (FTI) more efficiently to support the distribution of agricultural products especially to the vulnerable sectors of the community, and to increase rice, corn, fisheries, vegetable, livestock and poultry production.

See BBM ➤ Page A2

Experts are recommending the use of organic fertilizer in combination with inorganic fertilizer in rice production. The government plans to import from major fertilizer-producing countries for its fertilizer requirement amid rising prices. *(Photo by PhilRice)*

BBM

But farm groups said Marcos should focus on food production subsidies instead FMRs, saying keeping food prices down is more urgent at the moment.

Rafael Mariano, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas' (KMP) leader, in a statement, said a more viable solution instead of the FMR masterplan is the grant of cash aid and P15,000 production subsidies to farmers and fishermen as contained in House Bill 406 and House Bill 2024.

Mariano also said the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) last year had 3,440 unrealized projects that include FMRs.

Mariano also cited a Commission on Audit report that called out the DA over its failure to build 796 FMRs as far back as 2016.

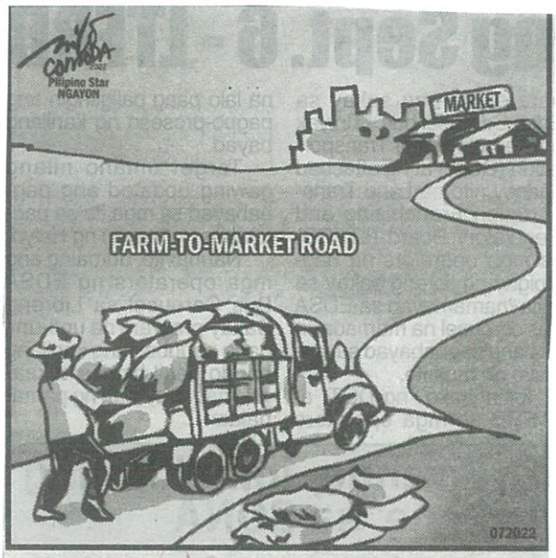
Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), echoed KMP's sentiments on the DA's pronouncements towards FMRs.

"A significant number of the rural population employed in the fishery and agriculture have left their farmlands and fishing grounds due to high cost of production prompted by expensive fuel. In the fishing sector, for instance, fuel takes up almost 80 percent of the production cost in a small-scale fishing operation. Marcos should first address this low productivity among our rural sectors before anything else," said Ronnel Arambulo, Pamalakaya spokesperson, in a statement. - ***With Reuters and Jed Macapagal***

Pilipino Star
NGAYON
Diyaryong disente ng masang intelihente

Date: 20 JUL 2022 Page: 4

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE



Editoryal

Farm-to-market road, isakatuparan

NOON pa pinlano ang paggawa ng mga kalsada sa mga kanayunan para mabilis na nadadala ng magsasaka ang kanilang ani sa bayan. Ilang presidente na ng Pilipinas ang nagsabi na dapat ay makagawa ng kalsada sa mga liblib na lugar para sa kapakinabangan ng mga magsasaka. Hindi matitengga ang anumang produkto o ani sa bukid kung may kalsada.

Subalit ang plano ng mga nakaraang presidente sa farm-to-market road (FMR) ay pawang kathang isip lamang. Walang naisakatuparan. Mayroong mga sinimulang kalsada, pero hindi itinuloy ng mga kontraktor kaya nakatiwangwang at nagsilbing daan ng mga kalabaw, baka at iba pang hayop sa halip na mga sasakyan na maghahakot ng mga produkto patungong bayan. Hanggang sa kasalukuyan, walang mga kalsada na masasabing napapakinabangan ng mga magsasaka. Naghintay ang mga magsasaka sa wala.

Ang farm-to-market road ay muling binubuhay ng kasalukuyang administrasyon. Ipinag-utos kamakalawa ni President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. sa mga opisyal ng Department of Agriculture na maglatag ng plano para sa pagpapagawa ng farm-to-market na makatutulong nang malaki sa pagpaparami ng pagkain at para mapalakas ang rural communities.

Sinabi ng presidente na umaakto ring agriculture secretary na ipaprayoridad ang pagsasagawa ng FMR ang unang hakbang para malutas ang problema sa pagkain. Kapag naisagawa ang FMR magtutuluy-tuloy aniya ang daloy ng pagkain at hindi na kakapusin. Sinabi pa ng presidente na kailangang pag-aralan at pag-isipang mabuti ng DA executives ang paglalatag ng plano sa pagsasakatuparan ng FMR. Kapag natapos ang master plan, dapat itong isumite sa economic managers.

Sana, maisakatuparan ang FMR at hindi imahinasyon lamang. Tutukan din ang problema sa irrigation system na mahalaga sa mga magsasaka. Magkaroon din ng mga seminar sa kanayunan para maturuan ang mga magsasaka ng tamang pagtatanim ng palay na madaling bumunga at maraming naaani. Ganito rin ang gawin sa mga magsasaka ng gulay at mga prutas, mga naghahayupan at mga nag-aalaga ng isda.

Pilipino Star
NGAYON
Diyaryong disente ng masang intelihente

Date: 20 JUL 2022 Page: 2

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

G2G fertilizer deal, balak ituloy ni Marcos

Balak ni Pangulong Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. na ituloy ang government-to-government (G2G) deals para tugunan ang patuloy na pagtaas ng presyo ng abono.

Sinabi ni Marcos na siya ring namumuno sa Department of Agriculture (DA), na maaaring maka-avail ang gobyerno ng mas murang fertilizers sa pamamagitan ng G2G deals.

Balak ni Marcos na makipag-ugnayan sa China, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, at Russia para sa pagbili ng bansa ng mga pataba.

Idinagdag ni Marcos na iniisip niyang sulatan ang gobyerno ng mga nabanggit na bansa upang ipabatid ang dami ng fertilizer na kailangan ng Pilipinas.

Hiniling din ng Pangulo sa mga opisyal ng agrikultura na magbigay ng datos sa pinagmulan at presyo ng mga pataba, gayundin ang plano sa pamamahagi sa panahon ng pagtatanim.

Nagpasya ang punong ehekutibo na pansamantalang pamunuan ang DA, dahil kailangang tugunan agad ang napipintong krisis sa pagkain.

Sinabi ni Marcos na ang pinakamabigat na isyu na kailangang tugunan sa sektor ng agrikultura ay ang pagtaas ng produksyon ng bigas at muling pag-aayos sa DA at mga kaakibat na ahensya nito. *(Malou Escudero)*

PEOPLES JOURNAL
Tonight

Date: 20 JUL 2022 Page: 1 and 7

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr.: FMR is the first step to solve some of the supply chain problems.

MARCOS PRIORITIZES FARM-TO-MARKET ROADS

By CORY MARTINEZ

Mulls G2G fertilizer procurement deals

PRESIDENT and concurrent Agriculture Secretary Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. ordered key agriculture officials to prioritize the construction of farm-to-market roads (FMR) and infrastructure support projects to address the supply chain problem. /Page 7

PEOPLES JOURNAL Tonight

Date: 20 JUL 2022 Page: 1 & 7

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

MARCOS PRIORITIZES

FROM PAGE 1

Marcos issued the order during his meeting with key officials of the agriculture department wherein they discussed strategies on how to ensure sufficient food supply while the country faces the looming food crisis, and boost production of the country's essential food items for the long-term.

"FMR is the first step to solve some of the supply chain problems," the President said.

Marcos stressed that the construction of FMRs and infrastructure support projects should be prioritized in major food production areas and that all FMRs should be aligned with the overall plan.

"We are in the process of maximizing those areas that are already producing para dumami ang production," the President added.

The Chief Executive also instructed the concerned officials to identify priority areas, create the necessary maps, and provide copies of the master plan to economic managers and local government units.

"We need an immediate plan to ensure that our food supply and the food prices are within reach of ordinary Filipinos from now until the end of the year," Marcos stressed.

During the meeting, Undersecretary for Operations and Chief-of-Staff Leocadio Sebastian presented the agency's catch-up operational plan, which will prioritize the production of rice, corn, livestock, poultry, vegetables, and fisheries.

Strategies for other programs such as fertilizer subsidy, urban and peri-urban agriculture, and Kadiwa that will boost food production and improve the mobilization of affordable agri-fishery commodities were also presented.

To address the high price of fertilizers, President Marcos explained that government-to-government procurement needs to be pursued to avail of cheaper fertilizers that can be provided to local farmers.

On the issue of vegetable smuggling and illegal importation of other agriculture products, the President also ordered that the country's system of importation should be fixed in coordination with the Bureau of Customs, the House of Representatives, and the Senate.

"Prayoridad sa ating plano para sa agrikultura ay ang pagpapatibay ng programang 'farm-to-market road' at pagsusulong ng mga proyektong makakatulong sa ating mga kababayan sa sektor ng agrikultura. Titiyakin natin na may sapat at abot-kayang pagkain para sa lahat," President Marcos stated in official social media posts.

PEOPLES JOURNAL
Tonight

Date: 20 JUL 2022 Page: 4

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

EDITORIAL

Irrigation program

A MOVE to increase agricultural production brings to mind President Marcos' efforts to help the country's farmers when he was still a member of the Philippine Senate.

Even at that time, Marcos knew that there was a need to conduct a massive irrigation of agricultural lands to protect farmlands against the effects of climate change.

That's why in 2013, then Senator Marcos filed a bill in the Senate mandating the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) to formulate a national irrigation program.

At that time, the only son and namesake of the late President Ferdinand E. Marcos wanted NIA to provide water to 95 percent of irrigable lands throughout the country.

In filing Senate Bill 14, Marcos said NIA should provide technical and financial assistance to local government units, coops and farmers groups with respect to irrigation systems.

Actually, irrigation raises land productivity by providing sufficient water to crops to increase yield and ensure the stability of production even under extreme weather conditions.

In fact, irrigation development has the potential to be an effective investment strategy for countries with limited land areas, like impoverished Philippines.

And we are heartened to know that the former senator from Ilocos Norte has not shown any sign of backing off from his commitment to improve the country's farming sector.

In the view of his millions of admirers and supporters, "lalo pang tumindi ang pagnanais ni BBM na i-develop ang agrikultura nang maupo siyang Pangulo ng Pilipinas."

Indeed, there's a need to modernize Philippine agriculture if we are to attain food self-sufficiency.

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL
Everybody's Newspaper

Date: 20 JUL 2022 Page: 4

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Marcos pushes local food output hike

PRESIDENT Marcos discussed ways to increase local food production in the country in a closed-door meeting with the executives of the Department of Agriculture at the Bureau of Soils and Water Management Convention Hall in Quezon City.

Agriculture Undersecretary Kristine Evangelista said the executive meeting with Marcos, who concurrently heads the DA, includes "broad strokes" on programs that will benefit farmers' yield and price affordability for consumers.

"Right now, there's a very thorough assessment of the programs DA already have because we have to see which one of them actually worked, which one has to be tweaked, and which one needs further consultation with the stakeholders. So, that's the directive of our beloved President, so he could come up with programs again based on the thrust of increasing production and making agricultural commodities affordable," Evangelista said.

She said the agency has not gone to budget specifics yet, although the Department of Budget and Management was present to take note of their significant considerations.

"The nitty gritty and the details of the budget were not discussed... It was basically broad strokes of the program and the direction on how many consumers or farmers we intend to help with this kind of program," she said.

She also said it has been made clear that rice importation will only be supplementary, as Marcos intends to boost local rice production.

"Based on our outlook, this is even submitted before, our local production is higher, our importation will always be for augmentation and for buffer stock in the commissary. If we will increase our yield in the North, then even the buffer stock will come from local production," the lady deputy DA chief added.

The DA assessment, she said, is not only limited to rice production but to all other agricultural commodities, which are now on a market price hike.

"We are not concentrating on a single commodity because if we're talking about food security, that does not involve only rice. It will involve even the livestock, the chicken, pork, eggs, and also vegetables, so we have a lot to look into... It's really a matter of what is acceptable to our stakeholders to ensure that whether this is aimed at increasing their production or putting down their cost of production," she said.

BusinessWorld

Date: JULY 20, 2022 Page: C6/S1

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Calling all *plantitos* and *plantitas*: The details of KSK

(Part 2)

There is a providential feature of the Kabalikat Sa Kabuhayan (KSK) program of the SM Foundation, done in partnership with Harbest Agribusiness Corp., that fits perfectly into the proposal of Secretary of Finance Benjamin Diokno for LGU heads to use part of the additional funding they will receive under the Mandanas-Garcia ruling to improve food supply at their respective levels.

WWW.SM-FOUNDATION.ORG

The late Henry Sy, Sr. (and later his daughter, Tessie Sy Coson) had the very practical foresight to, from the very beginning, involve the Local Government Units (LGUs) in the implementation of the KSK. With the LGUs providing the leadership in the respective locations where the projects are located, other major stakeholders in improving agricultural productivity — NGOs, state universities and colleges (SUCs), cooperatives and other farmers' associations — have been mobilized. The SM Food Group (SM Supermarket, SAVEMORE, SM Hypermart, and the SM Mall Management) provides guidance, encouragement and marketing support to the participants.

To inspire as many LGUs and other support groups to follow the lead of the SM Foundation, Inc. (SMFI) in collaboration with Harbest, let me describe in detail what this program is all about.

This skills training program is made up of 12 weekly training modules. The training day is fixed by Harbest in consultation with the LGUs and the participants. The training usually lasts for the whole day, i.e., 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The famous German dualvoc (dual training) concept is employed. This means combining theoretical instruction with hands-on field practice. There are technical briefings with power point presentations meant to explain the agricultural technology being taught. Each session will have specific topics and procedures. The briefing is then followed by

BusinessWorld™

Date: JULY 2022 Page: 6/S1

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

HUMAN SIDE OF ECONOMICS

BERNARDO M. VILLEGAS

an actual field practice in which everyone is expected to participate actively.

The topics include project orientation, land preparation, seedling propagation, transplanting, fertilization, irrigation, plant pests and diseases-identification and control, crop management, harvesting and marketing. The training usually culminates with a harvest festival and graduation.

It is obvious from this detailed description of the curriculum that KSK programs closely resemble the master gardening programs described earlier as offered by some academic institutions in the US. At some point during the Marcos Jr. presidential term, the initiative spreading this movement should shift to the SUCs in tandem with the respective LGUs. It is only logical to expect that the SUCs in the Ilocos region — the bailiwick of the President — should be the most active in implementing these training programs. Beyond training actual small farmers to improve their capability of producing high-value crops, these programs should produce many master gardeners who will be the trainors themselves of farmers and would-be farmers. I would like to see numerous children of middle-class households being attracted to the occupation of master gardener.

To literally whet the appetite of our government leaders in the incoming Administration, let me enumerate in detail the types of food crops that can be significantly increased in a short period of time if the KSK program is spread widely all over the country. Under the KSK, open field planting of more than 10 crops of different varieties will be done. These are *ampalaya*, *patola*, *upo*, *talong*, *kamatis*, *sitao*, okra, *kalabasa*, lettuce, *petchay*, *mustasa*, *kangkong*, *labanos*, *sili*, melon, *pakwan* and honeydew melon (bitter melon, Luffa acutangula or silk gourd, bottle gourd, eggplant, tomato, string beans, okra, pumpkin, lettuce, Chinese cabbage, mustard, swamp cabbage, white raddish, chili, melon, watermelon, and honeydew melon) for the lowland. For projects in upland areas (like Tagaytay, Mountain Provinces and Bukidnon), broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and bell pepper can be included. The final list of crops under the KSK was usually decided among Harbest, SMFI, and the beneficiary.

The participants were strictly limited to 100 small vegetable farmers and 10 agriculturists (who would be trained to become future trainors or master gardeners) from the participating LGUs. A few established and big commercial growers may participate with prior approval. The trainees are selected by the partner LGUs, the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and other entities designated by SMFI as project partners. The final list of participants is decided by DA, DSWD and Harbest for submission to SMFI and final decision.

To instill from the beginning the value of discipline and perseverance, all participants should be committed to attending all the training sessions. Two absences shall be cause for the dropping of the participant from the list.

To serve as a model for other partnerships that may be crafted by similarly motivated private foundations, or NGOs who may want to replicate the KSK program of the SM Foundation, Inc., it would be useful to describe here the roles played by the different partners in the original KSK.

SM Foundation, Inc. is the propriety owner of the SMFI KSK farmers training program that is being implemented by Harbest with the participation of the DA, DSWD, LGUs, farmers and other entities. SMFI prepares the schedule of launching and graduation of each KSK training batch. It also provides the funds per project to cover the training fee for the Harbest training module, farm inputs from Harbest and expenses for the launching and graduation ceremonies. Disbursements are under the control of SMFI, which also shall have the sole prerogative on the determination of the project sites. The final location of the venue is decided upon evaluation of prospective partners provided by Harbest.

On its part, Harbest makes the final selection of the venue based on the project sites recommended by SMFI. It will then inform and orient all prospective beneficiaries on the KSK program to be implemented in each site. Harbest will then review the list of participants provided by the participating LGUs, DSWD and other beneficiaries.

It will be Harbest who will assign the trainors for each program. Harbest trainors are experienced in practical farming technologies and have handled several season-long programs using the dual-tech method. The trainor in charge of each project will implement the weekly training sessions with briefings and hands-on field practice of the participants. He shall make sure that the attendance of the participants is documented properly. He shall organize the participants into groups, with a group leader each. Each group is given very specific assignments for every session. The trainor also assures that the standing crops are properly maintained and that all the necessary procedures are followed in the course of the training program to optimize the results of the program.

All direct inputs, such as seeds, fertilizers, pest and disease controls, mulching film, seedling tray, medium, bamboo trellis, trellis nets and other direct supplies for each project shall be supplied by Harbest.

The beneficiary or host LGU shall provide the 5,000 square meters of land to be used free of charge in the KSK project. This should be flat or slightly rolling, with sufficient water supply for irrigation, cleared and ready for cultivation and planting, accessible, not flood prone and with proper drainage canals, secured from stray animals and vandals. A project manager shall be appointed by the host LGU who will coordinate the listing of participants, preparation of the project venue, coordinate the attendance of the participants, and coordinate with other participating LGUs and beneficiaries, if any. He/she shall be responsible for the accounting of the inputs and produce harvested from the field. He/she shall also coordinate with the Harbest trainors on each training session. The LGU should provide two full-time farm laborers who will do the daily watering and maintenance of the standing crops.

A training hall or tent should be made available on the training site for the briefings with power point presentations. A sound system should be provided. Electricity should be available. Chairs for the participants should be provided for free on site, and made available also for the culminating festival activities. Needless to say, restrooms should be available within the project site. Living quarters near the training site should be provided for the trainors in case there will be

BusinessMirror
A broader look at today's business

Date: 20 JUL 2022 Page: A1 & A2

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

GOVT EYES WAYS TO TEMPER RISING SUGAR PRICES

THE government is currently exploring a number of options, including the importation of more sugar, to temper the rise in sugar prices, a senior Department of Agriculture (DA) official said Monday.

Agriculture Undersecretary-designate Kristine Y. Evangelista said the government wants to ensure that households will have access to cheaper sugar.

"The importation of sugar is something the SRA [Sugar Regulatory Administration] is looking into, but we [may] have to come up with a new order to ensure our consumers will have access to cheaper sugar," Evangelista told reporters in an interview in Quezon City.

She also said the government is currently looking into the cost structure of producing sugar and is evaluating the necessity of adjusting the suggested retail price (SRP) for the sweetener.

Based on the list issued by the DA last February 20, the agency recommended an SRP of P50 per kilogram for refined sugar and P45 per kg for raw sugar.

The figures are much lower than the average retail prices of raw and refined sugar as of July 8. Data from the SRA indicated that supermarkets and wet markets in Metro Manila sold refined sugar for P81.90 per kg and P87.50 per kg, respectively. SRA also said the price of raw sugar sold by supermarkets and wet markets averaged P63.55 per kg and P66.86 per kg, respectively.

SEE "GOVT," A2

Govt...

CONTINUED FROM A1

The BUSINESSMIRROR reported last month that the country's sugar stocks will be depleted by August as demand for the sweetener has outpaced supply due to lower cane production and the delay in import arrivals.

Calculations made by the DA and the SRA showed that the country will run out of refined sugar as early as the last week of July. ***(Related story: https://businessmirror.com.ph/2022/06/29/phl-may-run-out-of-sugar-by-august-sra/).***

Agriculture Undersecretary Fermin D. Adriano said the computation made by the DA's economic team showed a sugar supply deficit of 203,000 MT and a refined sugar shortfall of about 332,000 MT.

SRA Administrator Hermenegildo R. Serafica said the country is already "eating up" its sugar buffer stock.

Because of this, Serafica said the country will not have any carryover stocks of sugar at the start of the next crop year on September 1.

"That is why there should be carryover sugar stocks at the end of each milling period. But this time, as it is, we won't have any carryover stocks," he said in a statement.

Historically and ideally, Serafica said the country must have carryover stocks of 250,000 MT raw sugar and 200,000 MT to 250,000-MT refined sugar at the end of any given crop year.

"Unfortunately, what is happening is even our carryover stocks from last year are [running out]. So we are now already consuming what would have been our buffer stock because our imports were delayed," he said.

Serafica said one of the options of the government to plug the shortfall in domestic sugar supply is to import since it will take time to build up stocks from local sources. He noted that the milling of raw sugar starts in December and peaks in the first quarter of the succeeding year, while refined sugar production begins once there is an ample supply of raw sugar.

"If we rely on our local production alone and not allow importation, by August we won't have enough sugar and we won't have any carryover stocks for our needs in the coming months until production builds up," he said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS

Date: JULY 20, 2022 Page: A10

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Short supply of food items to aggravate inflation

Neda expects production deficits for corn, fish, vegetables, pork

By Ben O. de Vera
@bendeveraINQ

The National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) expects the short supply of some food items to aggravate already high consumer prices.

In a report on Tuesday, the state planning agency said supply of chicken, highland vegetables, as well as rice will be "sufficient" for the rest of 2022.

However, Neda said corn, fish, lowland vegetables and pork would experience supply deficits this year.

For corn, Neda estimated a three-million metric ton deficit; for fish, 267,200 MT; and for pork, 102,300 MT.

Lowland vegetable production, meanwhile, would reach only 1.6 million MT this year, equivalent to 88 percent of domestic demand.

"The volcanic eruption in Sorsogon is not expected to have a significant impact on the national supply of highland and lowland vegetables, as the Bicol region does not account for a significant share of the total vegetable production. As of June 28, the Department of Agriculture (DA) has recorded a total of P12.7 million in damages and losses, 94.4 percent of which are high-value crops," the agency said.

The Neda noted that former President Duterte issued Executive Order No. 171 on May to import more corn, pork, rice, as well as coal at lower tariffs.

"The tariff adjustments will facilitate the diversification of import sources for these products," it said.

Logistics issues

As for pork, "timely unloading of pork stocks from cold storage is also necessary," Neda said, as domestic distribution of imports, especially to wet markets in the regions, lagged behind despite the entry of more shipments to augment supply.

The same was true for fish, where distribution in local markets lagged despite an additional maximum importable volume of 38,695 MT covered by the DA's new certificate of necessity to import (CNI) issued in May.

"The DA may continue pursuing the removal of the CNI requirement for the importation of fish for wet markets," Neda said.

To address elevated inflation, President Marcos' economic team had said they would sustain food importation while building up domestic production capacity and efficiency.

Due to the effects of expensive oil spilling over to food and transport costs, headline inflation averaged 4.4 percent during the first half of 2022, above the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' 2 to 4 percent target range of manageable price hikes conducive to economic growth. INQ

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

Date: JULY 20, 2022 Page: 3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

NFA execs told: Return P1.37-M transport allowance

By JANVIC MATEO

The Commission on Audit (COA) has recommended the refund of transportation allowances provided to some officials of the National Food Authority (NFA), whose offices were assigned government vehicles last year.

In an annual audit report of the agency, state auditors said that executive and managerial employees of the NFA central office and regional office in Metro Manila claimed a total of P1.373 million in transportation allowances despite the motor vehicles assigned to their offices.

The COA cited a 1998 ruling of the Supreme Court (SC) stating that government officials with assigned vehicles for their official use are not entitled to collect transportation allowance, whether or not they actually used the vehicle.

It recommended to the NFA management to require the concerned officials to immediately refund the transportation allowances claimed in 2021 as well as discontinue the practice in compliance with existing policies.

In a response, the NFA said the subject motor vehicles were assigned to the agency's departments and not for the exclusive use of the officials.

It said the vehicles were used by employees in the performance of the official functions of their departments.

The NFA cited previous COA circulars that clarified the 1998 SC ruling.

In a rejoinder, state auditors noted that the cited COA circulars were superseded by Republic Act 11518 or the General Appropriations Act of 2021, which stated that transportation allowance, whether in full or partial amounts, should not be granted to officials who are assigned or actually using government motor transportation.

Vehicle procurement

The same audit report found that the NFA was not able to obtain the most advantageous price in the procurement of 15 pick-up trucks with automatic transmission worth P1.4 million each.

It said the prevailing market price for the vehicle was P1.33 million per unit, lower by P72,400 or a total of P1.08 million for the entire contract.

State auditors said the higher contract cost was due to the failure of the bids and awards committee to consider various factors in preparing the approved budget of contract, particularly when it used the average of quotations obtained from five dealers.

It said the quotations obtained by the bids and awards committee were higher than the suggested retail prices published in the official websites of the car manufacturers.

The NFA, in response, said the higher budget was due to the failure of bidding for the procurement of nine pick-up trucks with manual transmission in 2020 due to very low budget, significant adjustment in prices and management's decision to upgrade the engine from manual to automatic.

But in response, the audit team maintained its view that the higher cost was the consequence of having a higher approved budget of contract, which it said should not be based merely on quotations submitted by prospective bidders.

"This is to ensure that the most advantageous price for the government would be reflected in the computation of the approved budget of contract as basis for the awarding of contract to the lowest complying bidder," the COA said.

The Manila Times®

Date: JULY 20 2022 Page: A7

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Newcastle disease hits poultry industry

AMULUNG, Cagayan: Agriculture officials have confirmed that the Newcastle disease, not the avian influenza, has killed thousands of chickens and ducks here.

Dr. Bryan Sibayan, Department of Agriculture-Cagayan Valley regional livestock focal person, said in the agriculture agency's online radio program on Tuesday that the Integrated Laboratory Division has confirmed that chickens and ducks died because of Newcastle disease.

"Newcastle disease is a contagious and often fatal disease that affects bird species and is caused by infection with virulent strains of avian paramyxovirus-1 of the family avulavirus," Sibayan said.

Due to the situation, DA-Cagayan Valley Regional Director Narciso Edillo urged local government officials in cities and towns "to be proactive against bird flu and should be in close contact" with their agency.

"We are here to help our local government units through our Regulatory and Integrated Laboratory Division. Together, we can contain the strains through our high-end laboratory facilities. The earlier these cases are reported, the better," he said.

Two areas — Marabulig village in Cauayan City and Alicia town — were earlier reported to have been afflicted with bird flu in Isabela last month, but these were already declared "safe zones" now, he added.

He clarified that those afflicted with bird flu earlier are already safe zones.

He encouraged everyone to report the presence of any virus strain that poses danger to poultry.

Meanwhile, the agency has distributed 160 goats and 550 ducks to farmers in Alcala, Buguey, Penablanca, and Gattaran who were affected by Typhoon "Maring" last year. The typhoon destroyed P46 million in agriculture and infrastructure in Cagayan.

VINCE JACOB VISAYA

Malaya
Business Insight

Date: JULY 20, 2022 Page: A3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Pigeon racing still banned

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) through the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) said pigeon racing, a common hobby, is still banned due to the continued threat of the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in the Philippines.

BAI said HPAI is highly contagious to birds and may cause mortalities, especially on chickens.

In an advisory yesterday, BAI said the ban is imposed due to the challenge in monitoring pigeons which may get into contact with wild birds that can be carriers of the AI virus.

"Based on Memorandum Circular 27 series of 2022, the transport of up to 10 pigeons is allowed by adhering to certain conditions including negative AI testing, veterinary health certificate and Newcastle disease vaccination. This is to ensure the needs of breeding and transfer of pigeons," BAI said.

As of June 24, the country has resolved 132 out of 142 AI cases in 95 affected barangays in 14 provinces including Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Bataan, Laguna, Camarines Sur, Sultan Kudarat, Benguet, North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Davao del Sur, Maguindanao and Isabela.

Apart from migratory wild birds, BAI said among the possible sources of AI infection also include the late or non-reporting of suspect cases as well as the illegal movement of infected birds.

For the period, the government recorded a total of 133,160 mortalities and 286,934 culling which involved ducks, quails, native chickens, chicken layers and broiler breeders, among others.

Manila Standard

Date: 20 JUL 2022 Page: A1

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

VOL. XXXVI • NO. 155 • 3 SECTIONS 12 PAGES • P18 • WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2022 • www.manilastandard.net • mst.daydesk@gmail.com

RICE PROTEST. Members of the Amihan National Federation of Peasant Women and the group Bantay Bigas gather signatures at the Kamuning Market in Quezon City on Tuesday to raise public support in demanding the repeal of Republic Act 11203 or the Rice Liberalization Law and the enactment of House Bill 405 or the Rice Development Act. **Manny Palmero**

BusinessMirror
A broader look at today's business
Date: 20 JUL 2022 Page: B1
LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Desiccated coconut exporter to get fiscal perks from govt

By Andrea E. San Juan @andreasanjuan

THE Board of Investments (BOI) has approved the application for registration of Consolidated Coconut Corp.'s P924-million desiccated coconut project in Plaridel, Misamis Occidental.

The firm's project, which will start commercial operations in September, has an annual capacity of 93,750 metric tons (MT) of desiccated coconut.

"We are making headways in sustaining Philippine exports, particularly desiccated coconut with the approval of the project by Consolidated Coconut Corp.," Trade Undersecretary and BOI Managing Head Ceferino Rodolfo said in a statement on Tuesday.

The BOI noted that the company will produce and export high-quality food-grade desiccated coconut. Its target markets are North and South America, Europe, China, Asia, Australia, and the Middle East.

The company, an existing enterprise engaged in selling coconut by-products, has decided to venture into manufacturing.

"To produce desiccated coconut, the firm will use an array of equipment such as a biomass boiler, shelling machine, paring dryer, generator set, and steam system control, among others, which will all be sourced locally," the BOI said.

The attached agency of the Department of Trade and Industry said the firm had also acquired brand new equipment worth a total of P430 million ($7.78 million) from India, Sri Lanka, and Singapore.

The project is expected to create 475 jobs within the first five years of its commercial operations.

It will make use of raw materials, particularly de-husked coconuts from farmers in Misamis Occidental and nearby provinces.

The BOI said the project utilizes the country's competitive advantage in manufacturing and exporting desiccated coconut. Based on the Philippine Coconut Farmers and Industry Roadmap (2021-2040), the Philippines is the world's largest exporter of desiccated coconut and has the greatest ability to compete in the global market.

The agency added that the project will contribute to the attainment of the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan's goal of promoting integrated processing systems to optimize the utilization of coconut.

Of the 438,052-MT desiccated coconut traded globally in 2020, the Philippines accounted for more than a third. The country exported 147,000 MT of desiccated coconut exported, or 33.56 percent of world exports. Top buyers of local desiccated coconut were the United States, Netherlands, Australia, United Kingdom, and Russia.

The Philippines has the largest land area devoted to coconut farms and the second-largest coconut production in the world, representing a 23.4 percent share of global production.

Coconut is the second largest crop sector in the country in terms of area planted with 3.6 million hectares in 2020, or approximately 26 percent of the country's total agricultural lands.

The Philippines accounts for 26.8 percent of global coconut exports which are valued at $229.79 million yearly.

of _____

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS

Date: JULY 20, 2022 Page: A4

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

SCRIMPING ON CORN FEEDS

SALCEDA: PROBLEM IS THE QUALITY OF CHICKEN, NOT THE SUPPLY

By Julie M. Aurelio
@JMAurelioINQ

Amid reports that chicken dishes are unavailable in restaurants, a lawmaker wants to "bring back the Joy in Chickenjoy" by boosting the production of corn as an essential feed source for poultry.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda said the woes of fast-food chains over chicken seem to be a problem with the "quality" of chicken being produced.

The lawmaker said he has sat down with chicken suppliers and broiler raisers, who said the problem is "not a shortage of headcount, but quality of chickens being produced."

"Broiler raisers have brought to my attention the fact that they are not meeting the standards set by their buyers. That, I attribute the nearly 50 percent increase in the prices of corn feed, year-on-year. As much as 60 percent of costs to broiler raising costs are attributable to corn. "So you would expect some broiler raisers to cut back on corn feed, leading to weight issues in produce," Salceda said.

He added, referring to Jollibee's famous "Chickenjoy" fried chicken: "The result is chickens are basically malnourished—ChickenSad. Essentially, they are ChickenJoyless. So supermarkets and restaurants don't want to serve them."

Salceda suggested a "stronger and more aggressive national corn program" since corn is an essential feed source for poultry.

For starters, local production of corn should be beefed up during the corn season that began this month and will end with a harvest in September.

"We should ensure delivery of services under the National Corn Program within the peak crop season this July to September. That will be extremely essential to solving the poultry supply quality problem," Salceda said.

"Fertilizer will be the most crucial assistance. Any pending fertilizer assistance programs will also have to be released in strategic corn-producing locations within this peak season. The fastest way to do that is through fertilizer discount coupons. The effect will be immediate on yield," he said.

Recently, chicken meals of some major fast-food chains were unavailable through a delivery app or in some branches of the fast-food chains.

Salceda said the enactment of a livestock, poultry and dairy development law will help address the structural constraints to the livestock and poultry sectors. INQ

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

Date: JULY 20, 2022 Page: B6

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BOI approves P924 M coconut project

By CATHERINE TALAVERA

The Board of Investments (BOI) has approved the application for registration of Consolidated Coconut Corp.'s P924 million coconut project, which is seen to boost the country's desiccated coconut exports.

In a statement yesterday, the BOI said the project is expected to shore up the country's export of desiccated coconut, with target markets in various countries.

The project located in Plaridel, Misamis Occidental will have an annual capacity of 93,750 metric tons (MT) of desiccated coconut, and it targets to commence operations in September.

"We're making head way in sustaining Philippine exports, particularly desiccated coconut, with the approval of the project by Consolidated Coconut Corp. We are truly seizing the opportunity as the Philippines is the top producer of such product globally," Trade Undersecretary and BOI managing head Ceferino Rodolfo said.

The project exploits the country's competitive advantage in manufacturing and exporting desiccated coconut.

Based on the Philippine Coconut Farmers and Industry Roadmap (2021-2040), the Philippines is the world's largest exporter of desiccated coconut and has the greatest ability to compete in the global market.

Consolidated Coconut will engage in the production and export of high-quality food-grade desiccated coconut to target markets North and South America, Europe, China, Asia, Australia and the Middle East.

The company has now entered the manufacturing industry by producing coconut products such as desiccated coconut. It acquired brand new equipment imported from India, Sri Lanka, and Singapore amounting to P430 million or $7.78 million.

To produce desiccated coconut, the firm will use an array of equipment such as a biomass boiler, shelling machine, paring dryer, generator set, and steam system control, among others, which will all be sourced locally.

In addition, the paring machine, desiccated coconut dryer, and laboratory equipment will be imported from Sri Lanka, India and Singapore, respectively.

The coconut project is expected to generate 475 jobs during the first five years of its commercial operations and construction.

The project will utilize raw materials, specifically the dehusked coconuts from coconut farmers in Misamis Occidental and nearby provinces.

In 2020, the total volume of global desiccated coconut exports reached 438,052 MT.

The Philippines sits at the top with 147,000 MT of desiccated coconut exported, representing 33.56 percent share of the world exports, and the country's top export destinations of desiccated coconut are the US, Netherlands, Australia, UK and Russia.

The country has the largest land area devoted to coconut farms and the second-largest coconut production in the world, representing a 23.4 percent share of global production.

The coconut project will contribute to the attainment of the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan's (CFIDP) goal of promoting integrated processing systems to optimize the utilization of coconut.

The Manila Times®

Date: JULY 20, 2022 Page: B1 & B2

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Food shocks could fuel unrest, Moody's warns

BY MAYVELIN U. CARABALLO

THE Philippines and other economies in the Asia-Pacific were warned by credit rating firm Moody's Investors Service that food shocks brought on by the ongoing military conflict between Russia and Ukraine could escalate social unrest and trade protectionism.

Food security has become a major concern for governments in the Asia-Pacific, it underscored in a report released on Tuesday, saying the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine continues to disrupt supply and drive up the price of agricultural products, particularly cereals and vegetable oils, as well as fertilizers and other agricultural inputs.

"Countries with high energy and food weights within their consumer price index baskets, such as the Philippines, India, Thailand and Vietnam, are particularly vulnerable to food and energy inflation . . . ," Moody's stressed.

It said the Philippines has a high level of net food import dependence on important Asian grains like rice and wheat, as seen by its trade gap.

In May of this year, the Philippines' trade shortfall increased to a record high of $5.67 billion, according to preliminary data from the Philippine Statistics Authority. The $19.24-billion deficit from January to May 2021 has soared by 70.4 percent to a year-to-date 2022 shortfall of $24.92 billion.

Cereals and cereal preparations came in as the second most imported commodity during the month, with an annual pickup of 65.7 percent, bringing imports to $11.98 billion.

"Although APAC (Asia-Pacific) economies have less exposure to these commodities than regions such as the Middle East and Africa, food shocks still have the potential to increase social discontent and trade protectionism," Moody's added.

It said governments or state-owned commodity companies will incur financial costs to offset domestic food price hikes. As long as expenditure pressures exist, the rate of fiscal consolidation in some of these economies is likely to stall.

The international community's ability to coordinate policies is also deteriorating as the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine continues. The debt watchdog said as some producers in Asia-Pacific impose export limits, societal concerns will likely intensify and demands to take a more protectionist attitude will likely rise.

Additionally, it said export limits would worsen current issues with food security and would be credit negative for both impacted food exporters and food importers in the nations implementing the restrictions.

"There will be negative effects

➤Fuel B2

FUEL FROM B1

Food shocks

for logistics and port facilities if throughput at ports declines because of export restrictions. Supply shortages will negatively affect food packaging companies and distributors," Moody's emphasized.

It also cautioned that if the status quo persists, higher import costs and domestic inflation, lower current account balances and fiscal strength would ensue, and that trade cooperation cannot be guaranteed in the future.

The credit rater further said that in view of waning international cooperation, agricultural subsidies to farmers will probably play an even bigger role in ensuring domestic food security and stability in the agriculture sector.

Governments in the Asia-Pacific region may be prompted by rising commodity prices to invest in agricultural supply chains and crop yields to increase domestic production, especially in more vulnerable economies, it was noted.

"More targeted support to smaller farmers through agricultural reforms, such as access to rural financing and value-chain infrastructure, would be positive for agricultural employment, especially in economies with a large agrarian sector and in enhancing overall food security," Moody's explained.

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL
Everybody's Newspaper

Date: 20 JUL 2022 Page: 3

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Rice farmers continue to receive training from TESDA

THE Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) has continued to provide various skills training programs for Filipino rice farmers under its Rice Extension Services Program (RESP).

TESDA officer-in-charge Deputy Director General Rosanna Urdaneta said TESDA has been prioritizing its agriculture courses as the Agency believes that upskilling the country's farmworkers will certainly help the country achieve food security and sufficiency.

"We've always made the agriculture sector a priority in our scholarship programs. We'll continue to work with government agencies and the private sector for the provision of skills training and livelihood opportunities for our rice farmers," she said.

The agriculture sector is one of the top priorities of the new Marcos administration and trains its sight on boosting local production of farm products and limit importation of goods.

In the first half of this year, a total of 25,494 rice farmers have already enrolled in various TESDA courses under RESP. Most of them are still undergoing training in their respective courses.

TESDA trains rice farmers in line with the implementation of Republic Act 11203, or the Rice Liberalization Act. The implementing guidelines were issued in September 2019 on RESP activities to be carried out by the Agency through its regional and provincial offices.

Deputy Director General for TESD Operations Aniceto "John" Bertiz III said the Agency has allotted over 50,000 scholarship slots under RESP for 2022.

"I encourage rice farmers and their dependents to avail programs under RESP as it will help the country to achieve food security," he said.

In 2020 and 2021, TESDA trained a total of 64,421 rice farmers nationwide, of whom 25,904 and 38,517 finished their respective trainings in 2020 and 2021, respectively.

Under the RESP, TESDA offers agriculture-related courses such as Farm Field School on Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice and Seed Certification and Farm Mechanization, Rice Machinery Operations, Drying and Milling Plant Servicing NC III, Agro-entrepreneurship NC II, Pest and Nutrients Management, and Digital Agriculture Course in the Farm Field School (FFS) nationwide.

To date, there are 399 public and private FFS which provide applicable agricultural technologies and thereby help improve the farming capabilities of farmers from traditional to modernized farming.*RPP*

Malaya
Business Insight

Date: JULY 20, 2022 Page: A6

LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Corn drops as supply concerns ease; wheat down

SINGAPORE- Chicago corn futures lost ground on Tuesday with prices under pressure after a weekly report showed the condition of the US crop is stabilizing in its key phase of development, easing concerns over global supplies.

Wheat lost ground after a strong rally, although concerns about Black Sea supplies provided a floor under the market.

The most-active corn contract on the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) lost 1.2 percent to $6.03-1/4 a bushel, and soybeans gave up 0.7 percent to $13.70-1/4 a bushel.

Wheat fell 0.5 percent to $8.09 a bushel.

"Progress on exports of Ukrainian grain stored at Black Sea ports is not an indication of normalization in export flows, and we still see profound dislocations in global agricultural trade flows," J.P.Morgan analysts said in a note.

After the CBOT closed on Monday, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) rated 64 percent of the US corn crop in good-to-excellent condition, unchanged from the previous week. Analysts surveyed by Reuters on average had expected a decline of 1 percentage point.

For soybeans, the USDA rated 61 percent of the crop as good-to-excellent, down from 62 percent the previous week, while analysts on average had expected no change.

A wheat field is seen at Langley farm, during a good harvest season due to a cool spring, in Shelbyville, Kentucky. *(Reuters Photo)*

Weather is in the spotlight as the US corn crop continued to pollinate, a key phase for determining yields. Weekend rains boosted crops in the eastern Midwest, but dryness persists in western areas as forecasts called for rising temperatures.

The wheat market is expecting higher exports from the Black Sea region.

Officials from Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and the United Nations will most likely meet this week to discuss resuming Ukraine's Black Sea grain exports, Ankara said on Monday, while a Turkish official said lingering "small problems" should be overcome. - ***Reuters***