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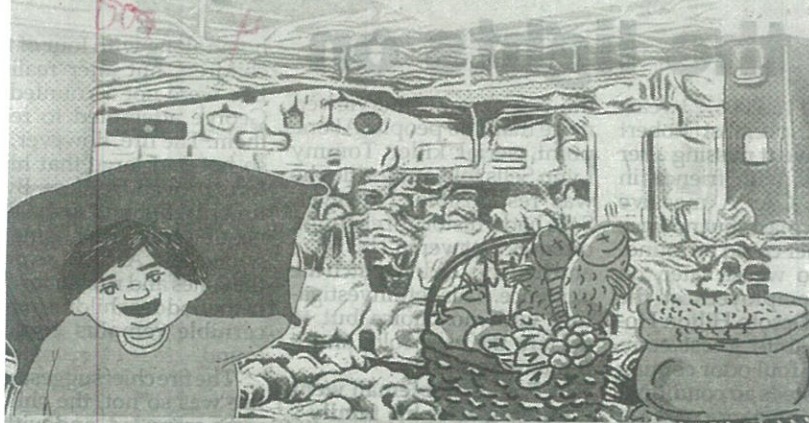
Baboy bawal ipasok sa Guimaras

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*No stories*



## REVIVE KADIWA STORES



### EDITORIAL

## 'Kadiwa' stores

THE establishment of "Kadiwa" stores in various parts of the country should be welcomed and supported by all sectors of society, particularly farmers and consumers.

Note that during the administration of the late President Ferdinand E. Marcos, the "Kadiwa" program played a stellar role in addressing hunger in impoverished Philippines.

Even the poorest of the poor managed to eat three times a day because Filipinos were able to purchase basic necessities, like rice, meat, fish and sugar, at affordable prices.

"Noon, pati nga mayayaman ay namimili sa mga "Kadiwa Center" dahil napakamura ang presyo ng mga tinda dito, kabilang na ang gulay at prutas," a consumer recalled.

That's why it's not surprising why more and more quarters now want the government to revive the "Kadiwa" program, a brainchild of the then First Lady Imelda Romualdez Marcos.

In fact, no less than Senator Imee Marcos expects more of our beleaguered farmers to plant as the return of "Kadiwa" stores would ensure a wider market for their produce.

Speaking at a forum in Quezon City last Friday, the articulate senator, a sister of President Marcos, stressed that it is cheaper to buy agricultural products directly from the farmers.

In his first state-of-the-nation address (SONA) last July, President Marcos said his administration would prioritize the building of a national network of farm-to-market roads.

President Marcos said the farm-to-market road network would facilitate the transport of the farmers produce, including vegetables, like eggplant, and tomato, to the markets.

In the view of many, the government is capable of coming up with highly-effective measures to help our farmers and consumers amid the rising prices of basic commodities.

One of them is the revival of the "Kadiwa" program.



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## ***Meat imports in 9 months rise to 1 B kilos***

By **DANESSA RIVERA**

The country's meat imports breached the one billion-kilo mark as of the end of September, still driven by pork and chicken shipments.

Latest data from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) showed the country imported 1.01 billion kilos of meat and meat products from January to September, up 11.9 percent from the 902.3 million kilos shipped in the same period last year.

Pork imports accounted for more than half of the total meat, or 54 percent at 554.7 million kilos, 78.5 percent higher than the previous year.

This is way past the estimates of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), which projected pork imports to reach 550,000 metric tons (MT) or 550 million kilos this year, driven by the extended reduced tariffs on pork imports under executive order (EO) 171.

Under EO 171, the 15 percent in-quota and 25 percent out quota tariff rates for pork will be extended until Dec. 31 to bring down prices and stabilize the supply of pork in the country.

Pork cuts accounted for highest imports with 243.87 million kilos while offals – or internal organs – were next at 164.82 million kilos.

The top sources of pork are Spain at 178.67 million kilos, Canada 101.53 million kilos, and Brazil 58.97 million kilos.

Chicken was the second major imported meat for the period, accounting for 29.1 percent of the total.

Data from the BAI showed chicken imports reached 293.86 million kilos, down 2.6 percent from 301.65 million kilos shipped in the same period last year.

For this year, the USDA has forecasted chicken imports to reach 435,000 MT or 435 million kilos.

Deboned chicken meat was the top imported product at 177.11 million kilos, followed by chicken leg quarters at 74.36 million kilos.

The top three sources of chicken meat were Brazil at 135.8 million kilos, US 73.3 million kilos and Canada 10.22 million kilos.

Figures from the BAI also showed beef imports accounted for 13.3 percent of the total.

The volume of beef shipped increased by 7.9 percent to 134.69 million kilos.



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## Gov't says food security a priority as supply shortage stokes inflation

By **LOUELLA DESIDERIO**

The government is focusing on food security as the projected short supply of lowland vegetables, pork, and fish could stoke further inflation, according to the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA).

While it expects sufficient supply of rice, chicken, highland vegetables, yellow corn and white corn throughout the year, the agency said deficits are expected in the supply of lowland vegetables as well as pork and fish.

In particular, NEDA said that the local production of lowland vegetables is estimated at 1.6 million metric tons (MT) for this year or 92 percent of local demand.

According to NEDA, pork supply deficit is estimated at 96,800 MT, while the shortage for fish is seen at 319,800 MT.

"To prevent further increases in inflation and protect the purchasing power of consumers, the government is prioritizing food security," NEDA said.

Headline inflation accelerated to 6.9 percent in September, the highest pace in four years, driven by faster increases in food prices. It averaged 5.1 percent in the first nine months of the year, exceeding the two to four percent target set by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

NEDA said Executive Order 171 issued by the previous administration last May has extended and lowered the tariffs on rice, pork, corn and coal until December of this year.

"The timely unloading of pork stocks from cold storages will complement this measure," it added.

To augment local supply, it said

the government would be providing support to the agriculture sector through lower input costs, development of new farming technologies, financial assistance to farmers, and strengthening the value chain.

Likewise, the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Animal Industry (DA-BAI) is stepping up efforts to contain and monitor emerging animal diseases.

This includes the timely updating of African Swine Fever (ASF) zoning and fast-tracking hog repopulation, subsidy, and credit programs.

The government is currently undertaking ASF vaccine research and trials.

In addition, DA-BAI is working with stakeholders to address the imbalance in poultry supply and demand.

Turn to B2

### Gov't From B1

"Private-public partnerships will be undertaken to uplift the backyard poultry sector affected by AI (avian influenza)," NEDA said.

The agency is also pushing for the Livestock Development and Competitiveness

Bill aimed at modernizing the livestock, poultry, and corn sectors in the country.

Among the bill's provisions is to update the corn industry roadmap and establish competitiveness enhancement funds for the livestock value chain.





# Negros bans pork from Panay

BY EUGENE Y. ADIONG

**B**ACOLOD CITY: Amid reports of suspected African swine fever (ASF) cases in the province of Iloilo, the provincial government of Negros Occidental has banned the entry of live pigs and pork products from the neighboring islands of Panay and Guimaras.

The ban was ordered by Negros Occidental Gov. Eugenio Jose Laason through a memorandum to the Provincial ASF Task Force released on Friday.

"You are hereby directed to im-

pose the banning of all pigs, pork, pork products and other related items coming from Islands of Panay and Guimaras, which includes the provinces of Iloilo, Antique, Capiz, Aklan and Guimaras," the

memorandum said.

Laason also ordered the task force to implement various preventive measures to ensure that the ban is strictly enforced.

"These include the conduct of rigid and stringent screening and inspection of incoming shipments of live animals and pork products from Panay and Guimaras; holding of checkpoints to intercept and control the movement of live animals, pork, pork products and other related items entering the province; and confiscation and condemnation of undocumented shipment of live animals and animal products into the province,"

the governor said.

Also to be implemented are the conduct of mandatory and regular disinfection of transport carriers upon arrival at ports of entry and ensuring proper disposal of food wastes from sea vessels, and the reporting of any cases of unusual mortalities among pigs to ensure a prompt and immediate response.

Hog raising is a P6-billion industry in Negros Occidental. It is currently under the "green zone" status and has been tagged an ASF-free province by the Department of Agriculture.

Since Provincial Ordinance 2019-024 or the "ASF Prevention

Ordinance of Negros Occidental" was approved three years ago, the province has prohibited the entry of live pigs, pork and pork products coming from Luzon, Mindanao and Eastern Visayas, which all have confirmed cases of the swine disease.

As a result of the ban, several millions of assorted pork products have already been confiscated, sent back or destroyed in various ports of entry, and also seized in establishments around the province.

Dr. Placeda Lemana, acting provincial veterinarian, said they are strengthening the province's biosecurity measures.

Lemana said the reported ASF case in Oton, Iloilo has not been confirmed yet by the Bureau of Animal Industry.

"We assure [the public] that, here in Negros Occidental, our swine industry is still ASF-free," she said.

Lemana said that they have been observing strict monitoring in various sea ports and at the airport.

"In case there is already confirmation that there's a positive case of ASF in Iloilo, we will put up additional measures and security to make sure that such a dangerous disease on swine would not enter the province," Lemana said.





## Coffee center develops robusta varieties

BY BELLA CARIASO

DID you know that a Robusta tree can live up to 50 years while it takes only one year and six months before it can produce cherries for your favorite instant coffee drink?

Nestlé, the maker of Nescafé coffee, has developed the 3-hectare Lipa Integrated Coffee Center (LICC) in Lipa where seedlings are developed before being distributed to coffee farmers nationwide.

Nestlé Government and Industry Affairs head Maria Olivia Misa said the Nescafé products are produced in the country.

"Coffee beans used in the production of Nescafé are sourced in the Philippines. All the others are imported from Vietnam and Indonesia, including the local brands," Misa said.

LICC Government and Industry Affairs executive Donnel Jun Tiedra said the coffee center conducts coffee propagation to help farmers increase their yield.

"We have distributed 14 million plantlets to coffee farmers. When we say propagation, it means developing planting material. We have two types, sexual and asexual. When you say sexual, these are through seeds, the common way, but it will take five years before one can harvest cherries from the farm," Tiedra said.

Tiedra added that Nestlé has developed a technology using asexual propagation that can boost the coffee production of farmers.

"It took almost 10 years for the research center of Nestlé to develop technology using a combination of varieties to provide farmers higher yield and, of course, be resilient to climate change, drought, insects, pests, and other diseases," Tiedra explained.

For her part, LICC farm technician Kimberly Colobong said she uses four different cuttings in the plant propagation.

"We have butterfly cut, diamond cut, straight cut and slanting cuts. We have four selections to ensure high yield," Colobong said.

Tiedra said Nestlé registered the four plant varieties with the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI).

"When you say registered, it has already passed the standard of the BPI before a variety in the Philippines is allowed to register. The seedling should pass the requirements set by the BPI such as high yielding and resistance to diseases or pests," Tiedra added.

Tiedra said a coffee tree follows a cycle of nine-nine-nine.

"This means that a seedling is allowed to develop in a nursery for nine months. When a farmer plants a seed-



**COFFEE NURSERY** Lipa Integrated Coffee Center supervisor Richard Silva shows the nursery for various varieties of robusta coffee. Each chamber houses at least 6,000 seedlings. PHOTO BY BELLA CARIASO

ling, it will take another nine months to produce flowers, and then from flowering to the harvesting of fruit or cherry, it will take another nine months, until it is ready to harvest, or a total of one year and six months," Tiedra said.

LICC supervisor Richard Silva said the rooted chamber of the nursery is composed of four varieties, the F47, 11, 23 and 65.

"Approximately, a rooted chamber houses at least 6,000 seedlings," Silva said.

Tiedra said that Nestlé teaches coffee farmers good agricultural practices to ensure higher coffee yield.

"Our production area mirrors good agricultural practices. It's called Nescafé better farming practices. The planting distance of coffee trees should be two meters by three meters," Tiedra said.

According to Tiedra, Nestlé also promotes inter-cropping to promote biodiversity.

"A farmer only harvests coffee once a year. While waiting for the next harvest, we encourage them to plant cash crops like vegetables. They will have extra income. That's why the distance is 2 meters by 3 meters so that they can plant other crops," he said.

Tiedra said one of the good practices is to cut the stems of the coffee tree to allow new verticals to develop.

"The productive years of coffee is almost 50 years, so it is important to follow good agricultural practices," he added.

For her part, Corporate Affairs executive Ruh Novales said that Nestlé is a member of a technical working group for agricultural practices for coffee.

farmers can avail of our technology. It is now part of the curriculum at Tesda, it's called coffee production level 2.

Tesda is supporting us by giving scholarships, especially to the Indigenous peoples in Mindanao. They are among the scholars of Tesda where we teach," Novales said.

Tiedra said that Nestlé has an agronomy team where members conduct training to farmers and communities at coffee-producing areas like Sultan Kudarat and Bukidnon.

"We provide continuous training to those who avail of our seedlings through the government through our Nestlé agronomies. We guide the farmers from the beginning, from the plantlets to the harvesting," Novales added.

Tiedra said fruits of the robusta trees are harvested manually to ensure that only pink red cherries are picked.

"Farmers usually harvest for six months as they wait for the fruits to ripen," he explained. Novales said Nestlé also monitors the income of farmers to ensure that their income is higher than the poverty level in the province.

Tiedra said a kilo of coffee beans is pegged between P100 and P108 per kilo.

"If a farmer practices good farming, he can harvest at least 1 metric ton per hectare or 1,000 kilos per hectare and at P100 per kilo, that is P100,000 per hectare income for a farmer," he noted.

Novales said that without the intervention of Nestlé, the average coffee yield in the country is only from 230 to 300 kilos per hectare.

"We were able to achieve over the years,

good news is that this year, it's already 900 kilos per hectare," Novales noted.

The coffee center in Lipa uses stingless bees to help in the pollination of robusta coffee trees.

"The coffee tree needs pollinators, so we use agents like bees and the wind. Here, we use stingless bees to aid in the pollination. We prefer stingless bees as they are small in size, and we chose them as backyard pets as they are advisable in shaded areas and they are not harmful," Silva noted.

Novales added that the LICC also features urban gardening.

"Our facility operates in partnership with the government and other private sectors to support the country's food security efforts through urban gardening. Through our partnership with Maggi, we plant various vegetables," she noted.

"With our partnership with Maggi, we plant vegetables used in Filipino dishes. We have the sinigang lane, pinakbet lane at the sinabawang gulay. So, we have different crops [in our] urban garden," Colobong said.

Tiedra said that the facility also features fruit-bearing trees and agroforestry.

"We teach farmers to plant agroforestry. It provides shade and the trees like ipil-ipil provide nitrogen," he said.

Tiedra added that the coffee center also promotes composting.

"We teach farmers composting by recycling organic materials in the farm.

We convert organic materials into organic fertilizer through the help of African night crawlers. African night crawlers eat farm wastes, and the wastes produced by night crawlers serve





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## World Food Day 2022: Leave no one behind

**T**oday is World Food Day.

More than 150 countries around the world are celebrating World Food Day (WFD) in more than 50 languages and through hundreds of activities and programs, making it the most celebrated United Nations (UN) day of the year.

Food is a basic need. It gathers government and private sector to discuss – and implement – policies and processes that will ensure food security. It gathers families, friends and strangers to talk and build relationships that strengthen communities. It also creates heroes who work hard to produce, plant, harvest or transport food to sustain our world.

The significance of World Food Day, established by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), is highlighted by the involvement of key people in launching this year's celebration.

In Rome, headquarters of the FAO, Director-General QU Dongyu, officially launched this year's celebrations on Oct. 14. Attending the meeting were the mayor of Rome, the heads of the other UN Rome-based agencies, and the executive director of the World Food Programme (WFP). Giving special messages were Pope Francis, the president of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella, and UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

In the Philippines, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., who is also the Agriculture Secretary, will lead the celebration and the start of week-long activities tomorrow. Giving special messages will be Senator Cynthia Villar, chairman of the Senate committee on agriculture, food and agrarian reform, and country officials of the FAO and WFP.

Around the world hundreds of private sector groups and non-government organizations are also celebrating the day with various activities like feeding programs.

The activities support World Food Day 2022's theme – "Leave no one behind, through better production, better nutrition, a better environment

and a better life."

For as we are aware, food also defines what separates people – the bountiful presence of food on the table states privilege; its absence describes the poor.

As FAO defines the challenge: Our globalized world is one where our economies, cultures, and populations are becoming increasingly interconnected. Some of us are vulnerable because of who we are or where we live, but the reality is that we are all fragile. When someone is left behind a chain is broken. That impacts not only the life of that person, but also ours."

It focuses on the reality that millions of people live with hunger and malnutrition. Around the world, as many as 828 million people suffer from hunger and 3.1 billion people – almost 40 percent of the world's population – cannot afford a healthy diet, a FAO statement said.

In the Philippines, the proportion of poor Filipinos in 2021 was recorded by the Philippine Statistics Authority at 18.1 percent, or 19.99 million Filipinos who live below the poverty threshold.

The call to "Leave no one behind" is a big challenge. Food scarcity has been pushed by many factors—conflicts, climate change, rising prices, and recently, the Covid pandemic.

Today, a "global solidarity" is needed to transform agrifood systems to foster inclusive economic growth, and achieve sustainable development," a FAO statement said.

World Food Day helps raise awareness of the crucial need for successful agriculture policies to ensure that there is ample food for everyone.

Meanwhile, what can one person reading this editorial do to celebrate World Food Day? Donate cash or food to an organization that works to fight hunger in the Philippines. Volunteer to teach livelihood skills to people in poor communities. Get involved in agriculture.

"A sustainable world is one where everyone counts."



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## BOI okays perks for ₱91-M hog project

By BERNIE CAHILES-MAGKILAT

The Board of Investments (BOI) has approved the application of Sunjin Farm Solutions Corporation as new producer of live hogs in Bugallon, Pangasinan.

With a project cost of ₱91.49 million, Sunjin will engage in the breeding, gestation, farrowing, lactation, weaning, and grow hogs.

The project is seen to revitalize the country's pork supply which suffered a deficit due to the disruption caused by the African Swine Fever (ASF).

The project, endorsed by the Department of Agriculture (DA) for BOI tax incentives, has a capacity to produce 1,775 metric tons (MT) of live hogs (equivalent to 1,508 MT of pork) annually to account for 1.25 percent of the DA's pork supply deficit of 120,889 MT for this year.

The project is estimated to increase domestic output by ₱563.15

million. In 2020, the Philippines ranked as the 14th largest pork producer in the world and the second largest producer in Southeast Asia, next to Vietnam.

To ensure biosecurity measures support, Sunjin will operate using a semi-conventional type of housing wherein some houses are installed with curtain winches, cool pads, blower fans, and an automated feeder line.

According to the firm, they will grow their hogs free from antibiotics and hormonal drugs, which is aligned with the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendation to reduce the use of these drugs in food-producing animals. On the economic side, the project is estimated to increase domestic output by ₱563.15 million. Sunjin will also conduct awareness seminars to farmers on disease prevention every quarter. In addition, the company will also donate organic fertilizer to rice and palay farmers in the area.

This will help farmers save around ₱100 per kilogram of organic fertilizer. "This project is significant in making up for the losses in pork production because of the ASF. The Sunjin Farm Solution Corporation's project will ultimately contribute to the recovery of the country's local hog industry in the coming years," Trade Undersecretary and BOI Managing Head Ceferino Rodolfo said.



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# LET CROPS GROW ON OUR LAND

Fertilizer shortage, surging demand, prices remain biggest threat to PHL food security



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By RORY VISCO

**A** MARKED shortage in fertilizer supply, both on a global and local scale, remains a big threat to food security. Dwindling fertilizer stock can also undermine the robustness of the productivity level of Philippine agriculture as soil nutrients are necessary for our crops to grow.

The Russia-Ukraine war is not helping in the global fertilizer issue either. As the world's top fertilizer exporter, fertilizer shipments were also affected by the conflict. Couple this with bad weather and the lingering Covid-19 pandemic. It is a scary recipe for food shortage in the country and the rest of the world.

#### Pillars

FORTUNATELY, the Department of Agriculture (DA) came up with its "OneDA Reform Agenda" initiative, which focuses on four major pillars: farm consolidation, modernization, industrialization and professionalization to help alleviate the burden of fertilizer shortage on farmers.

One interesting project under the initiative that promises hope with regard to farmers' fertilizer woes is the Balanced Fertilization Strategy, BFS.

#### What is balanced fertilization?

BALANCED fertilization is a method of fertilization that prioritizes the proper or optimum supply and the right balance of macro and micronutrients for both crops and soil.

Balanced fertilization is seen as a method that will help lessen local farmers' dependency on imported inorganic fertilizer as the "4Rs" principle in fertilization is applied—"Right Source," "Right Placement," "Right Amount" and "Right Rate" to help enhance soil health and productivity, prevent

soil fertility decline and improve fertilizer availability and costs.

The program is seen to help reduce fertilizer shortage because untapped alternative technologies like biofertilizers will be an option so farmers no longer have to depend 100 percent on inorganic fertilizers.

"Traditional fertilization heavily reliant on synthetic chemicals strips our soil of its essential nutrients, resulting in less yield and quality of harvest, and pushes farmers to use more and more chemical inputs every crop season," according to Raymond Magdato, National Sales and Marketing Manager of Enviro Scope Synergy Inc.

The company is an active stakeholder and research partner for the nationwide implementation of the BFS to cater to specific fertilizer type and the right amount for particular crops.

This vicious cycle of chemical-reliant fertilization, he explained, is what makes soil rejuvenation—the process of improving the structure, microbial life, and nutrient density of the soil that has deteriorated from traditional fertilization—necessary.

Balanced fertilization, therefore, is a sustainable method of rejuvenating the soil to its healthiest state, Magdato added.

He says that balanced fertilization can be applied to any type of soil to cultivate rice, vegetables and fruits. However, he noted



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**FARMERS** who have adopted the balanced fertilization strategy strike a pose with their farm crop yield. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

there are different types of fertilizers, and the specific mix and application of fertilizers may differ depending on the crop, which is why Enviro works closely with globally accredited research facilities that specialize in crop nutrition, as well as various Philippine government agencies for continuous research, development and innovation.

### Making a difference

Magdato said that when using bal-

anced fertilization, soil testing prior to planting is required. When farmers determine the right amount of nutrients needed, they will surely buy enough, therefore, lesser waste of money. "The application of the right amount of nutrient needed by the plant is very vital in the crop growth stages, while over or lack of application will also affect the total performance of the crops, particularly on its yield and overall quality," Magdato emphasized.



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The right amount of nitrogen promotes growth. It is a building block for growing new stems and leaves, aside from being a necessary part of chlorophyll, which makes the leaves green and helps plants photosynthesize. On the other hand, the right amount of phosphorus aids in the development of flowers, fruits and root systems, while the right amount of potassium keeps roots healthy, and also aids in the growth of flowers and fruits, and helps plants tolerate forms of stress such as drought.

As soon as the program was introduced, Filipino farmers were quick to adopt it as long as the costs necessary to apply them made sense. The biofertilizers used in Enviro's balanced fertilization method cut their costs by 30-50 percent, and increased their yields by 30-40 percent, making it a highly sustainable, cost-efficient way of farming.

Not only does balanced fertilization make sense in terms of costs, it also takes care of farmers' well-being. "Traditional chemical fertilizers negatively affect our farmers' health so much that farmers need to wear face masks, gloves, and other protective gear just to stay safe."

Farmers will not encounter any difficulty regarding its use, Magdato assures. "We've already developed the protocols to make it simple for any farmer to apply;

it just requires us to use products that are better for the earth—organic fertilizers instead of chemical ones. Organic products, however, are generally expensive, a hindrance that was solved through our biofertilizers at Enviro."

At Enviro, Magdato said they aim to change the notion of how food is produced by offering their biofertilizer under the Balanced Fertilization program and address the country's food production concerns, while veering away from the use of destructive chemicals and unnatural methodologies, which regular fertilizer does.

### Agri-preneurship

At present, the Department of Agrarian Reform is pushing for more Filipinos to go in what it calls "agri-preneurship" or putting up businesses focused on agriculture, as a key to economic development.

Magdato said majority of businessmen are inclined to go into the retail and technology business at present simply because they don't see the beauty of agri-preneurship in the long run. "As an advocate of the program, Enviro will have a massive information dissemination campaign by conducting trainings and partnership programs that will help encourage the young generation to venture into agri-preneurship. Enviro will strive to make it happen," he said.





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## DA, Nestlé join hands to boost PH coffee industry

By CORY MARTINEZ

THE production of local coffee will soon be boosted with the continued collaboration of the Department of Agriculture (DA) with private sectors.

The DA and Nestlé Philippines recently discussed collaborations that intend to uplift the Philippine coffee industry, starting with the full support of the latter in implementing the coffee industry roadmap for 2021-2025.

The partnership also aims to enable the country

to surpass the 15% sufficiency level.

According to Nestlé, realizing the programs and initiatives highlighted in the roadmap will play a crucial role in attaining an advanced and progressive sector.

The 5-year plan provides a clear direction to enhance farmers' technical capability and skills, toward increased yields and better incomes.

Under the strategy, the government will increase the

local supply from farmers to boost production for use in manufacturing and "Out-of-Home" consumption.

It will also establish a database containing vital information such as production volume and current buying price that stakeholders may access.

As joint actions between the government and the private sector firm up, a one thousand kilogram per hectare coffee yield is forecasted, especially with the

interventions provided by DA and Nestlé, such as training and distribution of quality planting materials.

During the meeting, Nestlé urged the DA to include sustainability in coffee production while working closely with farmers to ensure high-quality coffee beans.

Nestlé added that greater public investment is also crucial to revive and sustain the sector that has declined by 3.5% every year for the past ten years.





## Mga magsasaka kinatok DA sa ₱15K ayuda

Nag-rally nitong Sabado ang ilang grupo ng magsasaka sa harapan ng Department of Agriculture (DA) kung saan iginiit na bigyan sila ng cash subsidy na aabot sa P15,000 dahil na rin sa hirap na patuloy nilang nararanasan.

Bitbit ng mga magsasaka ang isang malaking whiteboard kung saan nakalista ang mga gastusin diumano na kinakaharap nila pagdating sa bukid at sa bahay.

"Iyong listahan na iyon ay pagpapakita na iyong bawat isang magsasaka ay kailangan niya ng P53,500 para makapagtanim sa isang ektaryang palayan, at iyong halaga na iyon, kalakhan doon ay inutang ng mga magsasaka dahil sa kawalan ng support subsidy ng gobyerno, at kapag nabenta ang kanilang palay sa P12 o P14 kada kilo, ay talaga naman sila ay lugin-lugin na," ayon kay Cathy Estavillo ng

Amihan National Federation of Peasant Women.

Hinikayat ng grupo ang gobyerno na bigyan sila ng P15,000 cash subsidy.

Giit pa nila na bilhin ng pamahalaan kahit ang 20% hanggang 25% ng kanilang mga ani sa halagang hindi naman bababa sa P20 kada kilo para may magamit din silang panggastos sa pagtatanim at hindi na mangungutang pa. (Carl Santiago)



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## News Bits

### Hog raisers call for intensified border control in Antique

SANJOSE DE BUENAVISTA, Antique— Alarmed with the first reported suspected African swine fever case in Western Visayas, hog raisers here in Antique are urging the provincial government to intensify its border control with neighboring provinces to prevent the spread of the virus.

"We are apprehensive that the ASF would enter our province for it could destroy our hog industry," said Elma Peña, president of the Sibalom Livestock and Poultry-Raisers Association.

Antique is bordered by the provinces of Aklan and Iloilo. On Thursday, Iloilo reported suspected ASF cases but is still waiting for the confirmatory result from the Bureau of Animal Industry Disease Diagnostic Laboratory in Manila.

Peña added that without the confirmation, hog raisers in Antique would like the provincial government to immediately come up with preventive measures.

Provincial Ordinance 2020-242 on Dec. 22, 2020 banning pork and other pork-related products from Luzon and other areas affected by the ASF is still in effect until now, said Dr. Marco Rafael Ardamil, Antique ProVet Public Health Division chief.

"Once the suspected ASF case in Iloilo province would be confirmed, the Provincial Ordinance 2020-242 will already include the ban on swine and pork products from our neighboring province," Ardamil said.

He added that there was even a proposal that the implementation of the border control should be 24/7.





## PCAF launches partnership with CSOs

**By Lester Manalastas**

THE Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF), an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture, continues to implement measures to ensure that agriculture programs are effectively carried out.

The PCAF urged interested civil society organi-

zations (CSOs) to register themselves and get accredited as partners of the DA in the co-implementation of programs, projects and activities.

Accredited CSOs become either implementing partners or beneficiaries of the DA's programs and projects.

By tapping citizen's engagement through the accredited CSOs, the DA hopes to improve the agen-

cy's absorptive capacity, promote transparency and accountability, and enhance good governance in the agriculture sector.

As the attached agency committed to promote citizen engagement in DA programs and projects, PCAF facilitates these broad-based participatory development mechanisms and processes by conducting stakeholders' consultations, dialogues, and

participatory monitoring of DA programs and projects.

"PCAF recognizes the role of CSOs in community development. Through this, organizations will be able to participate in government decision-making and implementation of agriculture and fisheries programs and projects," PCAF Executive Director Nestor Domenden said.

Eligible CSOs for accreditation include civic organizations, cooperatives, non-governmental organizations, people's organizations, indigenous people's organizations, and non-profit organizations that are engaged or have

expertise in agriculture and fisheries.

CSOs seeking to be accredited as implementing partners must have a proven track record and good standing in undertaking civil society works. CSOs applying for accreditation as beneficiaries must have the appropriate social preparation from the government agency providing the grant of financial assistance.

The National Technical Committee chaired by PCAF facilitates accreditation of eligible CSOs whose major areas of operations span more than one region or are national in scope.



**EDITORIAL**

OCT. 16, 2022  
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## World Food Day 2022: Leave no one behind

Today is World Food Day.

More than 150 countries around the world are celebrating World Food Day (WFD) in more than 50 languages and through hundreds of activities and programs, making it the most celebrated United Nations (UN) day of the year.

Food is a basic need. It gathers government and private sector to discuss – and implement – policies and processes that will ensure food security. It gathers families, friends and strangers to talk and build relationships that strengthen communities. It also creates heroes who work hard to produce, plant, harvest or transport food to sustain our world.

The significance of World Food Day, established by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 1945, is highlighted by the involvement of key people in launching this year's celebration.

In Rome, headquarters of the FAO, Director-General QU Dongyu, officially launched this year's celebrations on Oct. 14. Attending the meeting were the mayor of Rome, the heads of the other UN Rome-based agencies, and the executive director of the World Food Programme (WFP). Giving special messages were Pope Francis, the president of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella, and UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

In the Philippines, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., who is also the Agriculture Secretary, will lead the celebration and the start of week-long activities tomorrow. Giving special messages will be Senator Cynthia Villar, chairman of the Senate committee on agriculture, food and agrarian reform, and country officials of the FAO and WFP.

Around the world hundreds of private sector groups and non-government organizations are also celebrating the day with various activities like feeding programs.

The activities support World Food Day 2022's theme – "Leave no one behind, through better

a better environment, and a better life."

For as we are aware, food also defines what separates people – the bountiful presence of food on the table states privilege; its absence describes the poor.

As FAO defines the challenge: Our globalized world is one where our economies, cultures, and populations are becoming increasingly interconnected. Some of us are vulnerable because of who we are or where we live, but the reality is that we are all fragile. When someone is left behind a chain is broken. That impacts not only the life of that person, but also ours."

It focuses on the reality that millions of people live with hunger and malnutrition. Around the world, as many as 828 million people suffer from hunger and 3.1 billion people – almost 40 percent of the world's population – cannot afford a healthy diet, Dr. QU Dongyu said at the opening ceremony.

In the Philippines, the proportion of poor Filipinos in 2021 was recorded by the Philippine Statistics Authority at 18.1 percent, or 19.99 million Filipinos who live below the poverty threshold.

The call to "Leave no one behind" is a big challenge. Food scarcity has been pushed by many factors – conflicts, climate change, rising prices, and recently, the Covid pandemic.

Today, a "global solidarity" is needed to transform agrifood systems to foster inclusive economic growth, and achieve sustainable development," a FAO statement said.

World Food Day helps raise awareness of the crucial need for successful agriculture policies to ensure that there is ample food for everyone.

Meanwhile, what can one person reading this editorial do to celebrate World Food Day? Donate cash or food to an organization that works to fight hunger in the Philippines. Volunteer to teach livelihood skills to people in poor communities. Get involved in agriculture.

"A sustainable world is one



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## Farmer held for selling P30-M 'taklobo' in Cebu

By CALVIN  
CORDOVA

CEBU CITY  
- Authorities arrested a 46-year-old farmer for selling endangered giant clams locally known as "taklobo" worth P30 million in Barangay Bongoyan, Borbon, Cebu last Wednesday.

The suspect was identified as Anecito Pogado of Barangay Bongoyan.



A LIVE giant clam or 'taklobo'

(Turn to Page 2)

## Farmer ...

(From Page 1)

Pogado was nabbed in a buy-bust operation in Barangay Bongoyan by the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-Lapu-Lapu City Field Unit (CIDG-LCFU), 300th Air Intelligence Security Wing of the Philippine Air Force, Naval Forces

Central, and personnel of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

Seized from Pogado were at least 120 giant clams weighing around two tons with an estimated value of P30 million.

According to the CIDG-LCFU, headed by Capt. Nigel Sanoy, the giant clams were being sold abroad for at least P15,000 each.

Sanoy said harvesting, possessing, and selling of giant clams is punishable under

Republic Act (RA) 8550 or the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 as amended by RA10654.

Giant clams are considered endangered species.

Sanoy said Pogado was placed under surveillance by the CIDG intelligence group due to reports that he was selling giant clams in Barangay Bongoyan.

Pogado was confirmed to be selling giant clams and a case build-up was conducted until the suspect was arrested.





# Filipinos fishing on frontline of China's battle for disputed sea

Filipino fisherman Mariel Villamonte had spent years plying the turquoise waters of Scarborough Shoal, locally known as Panatag Shoal or Bajo de Masinloc, in the South China Sea for snapper and grouper – until a Chinese coast guard vessel water cannoned his boat.

That was in 2012, around the time China snatched control of the small ring of reefs from the Philippines, and he has not dared go back.

"Their ships are made of steel, ours are made of wood," said Villamonte, now 31, recalling how two Chinese vessels chased his outrigger before blasting it with high-pressure water.

The fishing ground, tapped by generations of Filipinos, is one of many potential flash-points for military conflict over the South China Sea.

China and Taiwan both claim sovereignty over almost the entire sea, while the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei have competing claims to parts of it.

Trillions of dollars worth of ship-borne trade passes through the waterway annually and naval vessels from the United States and Western allies sail through it regularly.

Of all the claimants, China has in recent years forced its stance most aggressively. Hundreds of Chinese coast guard and maritime militia vessels prowl the waters, swarming reefs, harassing and attacking fishing and other boats and interfering in oil and gas exploration, and scientific

research.

Analysts say Beijing's aim is regional supremacy and control over all activity in the waters and it is using its might to bully smaller rivals into submission.

"They really envision themselves to be the center of this region, economically, politically and militarily," said Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines' Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea. "What they want is that eventually the weaker nations simply give up and leave them there just to avoid a problem."

## 'Chinese Dream'

China often invokes the so-called nine-dash line, a vague delineation based on maps from the 1940s, to justify its claims over the South China Sea.

The Philippines brought a case before an international court disputing China's stance. The tribunal ruled in 2016 that Beijing's claims have no legal basis.

China has since ignored the ruling, and tensions with the Philippines eased after former president Rodrigo Duterte set aside his country's legal victory and courted Chinese businesses instead.

Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who took over from Duterte in June this year, has pledged to uphold the court decision and insisted he would not let China trample on Manila's maritime rights.

But in the decade under President Xi Jinping, who is expected to secure a record third consecutive term in of-

fice this month, China has dramatically expanded its presence in the sea.

Xi's desire for control of the waters is not about fish or fossil fuels, said Greg Poling, director of the US-based Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI).

His main objectives are realizing the "Chinese Dream" of national rejuvenation – Xi's vision of restoring the country to perceived past glory – and securing his political legitimacy.

Poling said generations of Chinese leaders had made increasingly "absurd" claims to the sea, leaving Xi with no choice but to "assert claims to everything."

Satellite images published by AMTI show China's land-reclamation efforts in the waters have vastly outstripped those of all other claimants combined.

Since 2013, it has ripped up roughly 6,000 hectares of reef to create about 1,300 hectares of new land for artificial islands in the Spratly archipelago, said Poling.

The militarized islands – complete with runways, ports and radar systems – enable Chinese vessels to patrol as far south as Indonesia and Malaysia.

Apart from destroying fish breeding grounds and smothering marine life with sediment, experts say Beijing's actions contravene international law.

Under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which China helped negotiate, countries

have exclusive rights to natural resources within about 200 nautical miles of their shore.

China's claims extend as far as a thousand nautical miles, which Poling said was "wildly inconsistent" with the law.

"The rules that protected China as a developing coastal state now seem like an unfair constraint on a China that believes that it should be able to impose its will on its neighbors," he said.

## 'Thief in own backyard'

China's seizure of Scarborough Shoal has robbed Villamonte and other fishermen in Barangay Cato in Infanta, Pangasinan of a key source of income.

Their families began fishing there in the 1980s when bigger boats enabled them to make the 500-kilometer round trip. It was full of fish and offered life-saving shelter during storms.

Now, the fishermen say they mainly rely on *payaw*, referring to the floating device that attract yellowfin tuna, anchored away from the shoal and left alone by Chinese boats.

After decades of overfishing by countries surrounding the waters, the men have to spend longer at sea and resort to catching smaller fish. Even then, they sometimes struggle to break even.

Despite the risks, Filipino fishermen still try to enter the shoal to top up their catch.

Christopher de Vera, 53, said members of his crew have

gone inside under the cover of darkness, leaving them feeling like "a thief in your own backyard."

But he said the shallow waters no longer teem with fish after the coral was "decimated" by Chinese giant clam harvesters.

## 'Worst nightmare'

China's growing assertiveness has not been seriously challenged by Southeast Asian countries due to deep divisions over how to respond and fear of retaliation if they do, according to analysts.

The 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is split between those with close ties to China, such as Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos, and others that are wrier of Beijing.

Their differences have hampered negotiations between China and ASEAN for a "code of conduct" that would govern behavior in the sea.

Talks have dragged on for 20 years as Beijing, which prefers to deal directly with its smaller neighbors, went on an island-building spree.

The US is widely seen as the only nation powerful enough to push back, but there are concerns about its reliability.

US President Joe Biden hosted ASEAN leaders in May to signal Washington's long-term commitment to the region in the face of China's growing clout.

But decades of inconsistent policies and perceived neglect of the region have damaged Washington's image.

"Southeast Asian coun-

tries are simply not willing to place their bets on the United States," said Shahrman Lockman of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies in Malaysia.

China has previously used deadly force to back its claims and its recent war games around Taiwan, which it considers part of its own territory, rang alarm bells across the region.

Chinese and Vietnamese forces engaged in clashes in 1974 and 1988 in which dozens of troops died.

For now, Beijing appears keen to avoid war while pursuing its expansionist drive.

"They are masterful at avoiding crossing that threshold by being shrill about their protestations, this wolf warrior diplomacy, that is designed to intimidate and get you to give in without fighting," said John Blaxland, an international security and intelligence expert at the Australian National University.

And its tactics are working.

Poling said the sea could become a "Chinese lake" as the growing risk and cost of operating there forces out Southeast Asian fishermen, oil and gas companies and coast guard.

Villamonte used to regularly make P6,000 per trip when he could fish at Scarborough Shoal. Now it can be as little as P2,000, or nothing at all.

Fishing is all he knows – his father and grandfather were fishermen – and his "worst nightmare" is losing access to the rest of Philippine waters.

"My family will go hungry," he said. –AFP





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## How to reduce the impact of food inflation on your budget

If you've been to the wet market and grocery store recently, you may have noticed that the prices of some of your favorite items have gone up. This is due to a phenomenon known as food inflation, and it's a problem that's affecting countries all over the world — including the Philippines.

Food inflation is defined as a sustained increase in the prices of food items. It can be caused by a number of factors, including the rise in fuel prices, the weakening of local currencies, and bad weather conditions that disrupt the supply of food.

The effects of food inflation are far-reaching, and can be felt by virtually everyone in a society. For example, consider a family of four who spends P10,000 on groceries per month. If food prices rise by 10 percent, that same basket of groceries will now cost the family P11,000 per month — an extra P1,000 that they have to find a way to pay for.

Families are struggling to keep up with the rising cost of living, and many are cutting back on spending in other areas in order to afford basic necessities. The situation is worsened by the fact that wages have not kept pace with inflation, leaving many workers feeling increasingly insecure about their finances.

While the government has taken steps to address food inflation, such as providing subsidies for certain staples, more needs to be done to protect Filipino families from the effects of this ongoing crisis.

Of course, it's not just families who are affected by food inflation; businesses are impacted as well. Restaurants and other food-service establishments typically have to raise their prices when ingredients become more expensive. This often leads to a situation where people cut back on eating out, as they can get more bang for their buck by cooking at home.

With prices expected to continue rising in the coming months, it's important to be aware of the ways you can save money on food and groceries. Here are a few tips:

1. **Plan your meals.** Planning your meals in advance can help you save money on groceries. When you know what you're going to eat for the week, you can buy only the ingredients you need and avoid wasting food.

2. **Make a list.** Making a list before you go grocery shopping can also help you stick to your budget. Once you're at the store, resist the temptation to buy things that are not on your list.

3. **Compare prices.** When buying food items, take the time to compare prices and choose the



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**JANICE  
SABITSANA**

cheaper option. Buy generic or store brands instead of name brands.

4. **Shop at cheaper stores.** Not all supermarkets are created equal — some offer lower prices than others. If you're on a tight budget, consider doing your grocery shopping at a cheaper store.

5. **Buy in bulk.** If you have the storage space, buying in bulk can help you save money in the long run. This is especially true for items that are non-perishable and have a long shelf life. When items are on sale, stock up so that you don't have to pay full price later on.

6. **Take advantage of discounts.** Keep an eye out for discounts and promotions at your favorite stores. If you know a sale is coming up, stock up on items that you use regularly.

7. **Pay in cash.** If you're trying to stick to a budget, it's best to pay for your groceries in cash. This way, you won't be tempted to overspend beyond your means.

8. **Cook at home.** Eating out can be expensive, so cooking at home can help you save money. With a little planning, you can make delicious meals that are just as good as, if not better than what you would get in a restaurant.

9. **Grow your own food.** If you have some space in your backyard or balcony, consider growing your own food. This can be a great way to get fresh produce at a fraction of the cost.

10. **Avoid wasting food.** Wasting food is not only bad for your wallet — it's also bad for the environment. When you are meal planning, make sure to take into account the amount of food you actually need so that nothing goes to waste.

No one likes paying more for their groceries but unfortunately, with food inflation on the rise, it's something that we may all have to get used to for now. However, by making small changes to the way you shop for food and groceries and taking steps like planning your meals in advance and cooking at home more often, you can make sure that your family has enough to eat — no matter what the cost of food may be.

Janice Sabitsana is a graduate of the Registered Financial Planner program and is the host of [www.thepinayinvestor.com](http://www.thepinayinvestor.com) blog. To learn more about personal-financial planning, attend the 98th RFP program in October 2022. To inquire, email [info@rfp.ph](mailto:info@rfp.ph) or text at 0917-6248110.





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## Only 2% of PH coral reefs remain healthy – watchdog

AN environmental group said that only 2 percent of the country's coral reef remains healthy.

In a webinar titled "Today is the seas the moment: A deeper connection with the ocean," Haribon Foundation Chief Operating Officer Anna Varona added that there are 5 trillion plastics in the world's surface water.

"There are more plastics than there are people on the planet Earth. Imagine what plastics do for us, what plastics do for ecosystems — nothing. [They] suffocate the marine environment, [they] suffocate the forest, and the land and the mountains. The land where [they] dumped, dies," Varona said, referring to the estimated 7.7

billion world population.

Varona also cited a study released by the Department of Science and Technology (DoST) on the dwindling coral reefs.

"This is the sad part. In 2017, the DoST said initial findings of coral reefs nationwide showed 90 percent of the 166 reefs that were sampled were classified as either poor or fair. The latest [study] was that we only have 2 percent healthy coral reefs in the Philippines, and that is a shame. We are an archipelago surrounded by the oceans, and we are made up of islands. We are the center of biodiversity on the planet. If coral reefs

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## Only 2% of PH country's coral reef

are not healthy, the animals, the turtles, the octopus and fish are also affected," Varona said.

Varona added that it is vital for the ecosystem to run in an efficient manner.

"Because there are so many plastic particles in the marine environment, they have already entered our food chain. When you are a lover of seafood, most likely you have 70,000 particles of microplastics ... in your system, every year on an average," she added.

Varona noted that of the 90 species of whales, it is estimated that 18 percent are considered endangered species.

"Five of them have an alarming rate of death. Many die because of climate change and other reasons," Varona said.

Varona said the dugong also has a very high mortality rate.

"The situation of dugong right now is bleak. It's because of chemical pollution, plastic pollution, climate change and invasion of

habitats," she said.

Varona said dynamite fishing persists despite its harmful effects to the marine environment.

"Dynamite fishing is still being done. There is still dynamite fishing despite the fact there is much knowledge in dynamite fishing, and its effect in the marine environment because people need money, they get hungry," she noted.

At the same time, Varona lauded the passage of Republic Act 11898 or "Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act of 2022" making firms responsible for plastic packaging.

"The people who create or manufacture plastic products should be accountable to the wastes that come out from the products that they bring out," she said.

Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said that the country generates at least 2.7 million metric tons of plastic wastes, adding that 20 percent of plastic wastes end up in the oceans.

BELLA CARIASO



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## Alaska Milk vows to continue providing nutrition to Filipinos

By BERNIE CAHILES-MAGKILAT

Alaska Milk Corporation (AMC) has committed to continue with its mission of providing nutrition to all Filipinos as it celebrates its golden jubilee year.

AMC's Managing Director Tarang Gupta renewed the company's mission to strive and continue providing nutrition to all Filipinos during the company's 50th anniversary last month at its manufacturing plant in Laguna.

Attended by over 600 employees, workers, and former executives, this commemoration marked another milestone for the company.

Gupta explained that its slogan "Wala pa rin tatalo sa Alaska" does not refer to the cans of milk they have sold, "but the effect we have engraved on the lives of every Filipino."

"As we have reached our 50th year, we still continue to further our purpose of providing affordable and accessible nutrition to every Filipino family. As we achieved brand leadership in 1972, we have been unstoppable since then," said Gupta.

Founded by Wilfred Uytengsu, Sr., in 1972, AMC started from its humble beginnings as a budding dairy company to the market leader it is today.

Alaska Milk has truly branded its name to the heart of every Filipino. With its history of 50 progressive years, Alaska Milk has no shortage of memorable feats. "Wala pa rin tatalo sa Alaska" has become and cemented itself as one of the most memorable taglines in advertising history.

The celebration concluded with a nationwide contest that aims to up-cycle single-use plastics, especially Alaska Milk packaging and wrappers, into reusable and sustainable day-to-day products.

On March 9, 2012, Alaska Milk became a part and subsidiary of Royal Friesland Campina after establishing itself as the leading milk company in the Philippines. Royal Friesland Campina, or RFC, is a Dutch multinational dairy cooperative based in Amersfoort, Netherlands. It is considered one of the world's largest dairy cooperatives, with over 18,000 member dairy farmers in 34 countries.



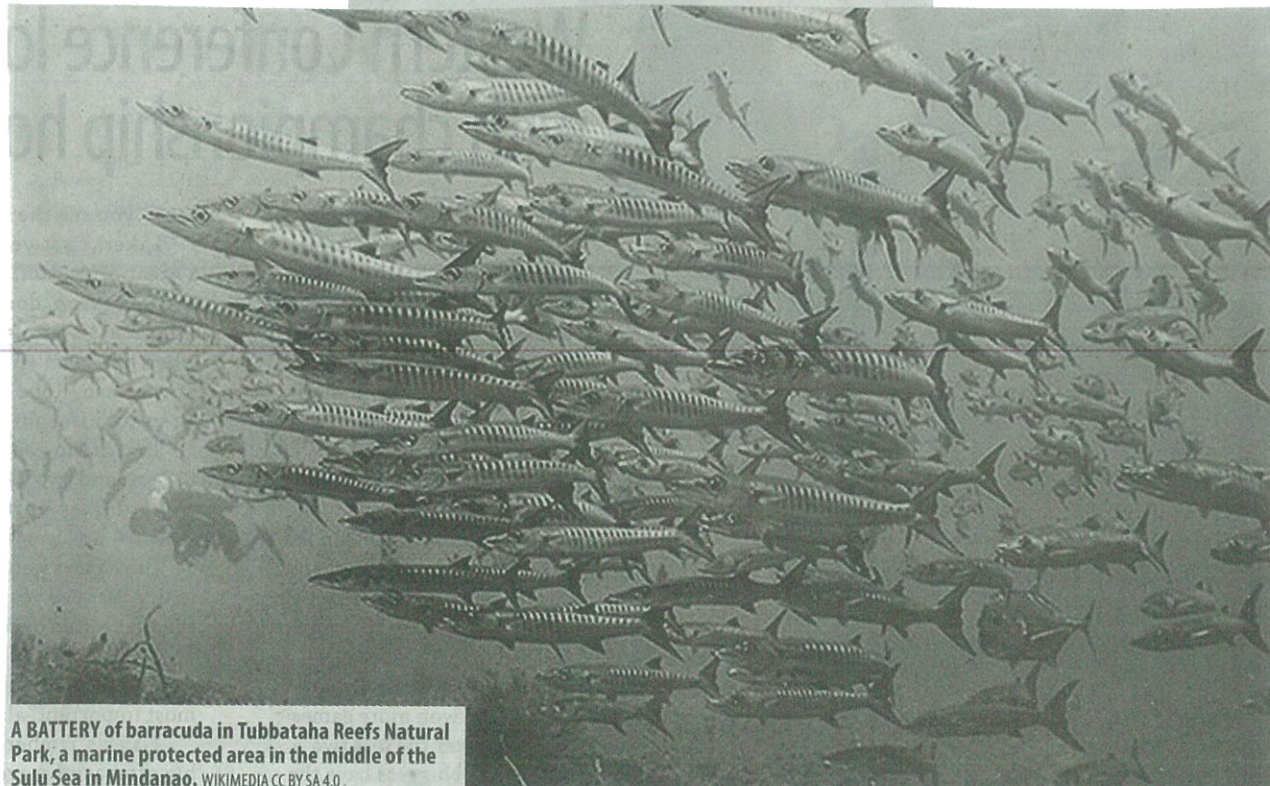


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# Increased collaboration, awareness crucial to tackling biodiversity, climate concerns



A BATTERY of barracuda in Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park, a marine protected area in the middle of the Sulu Sea in Mindanao. WIKIMEDIA CC BY SA 4.0.





By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

**T**HE Philippines is one of the most biologically diverse countries in the world. However, it has also been identified as one of the world's biodiversity hotspots due to biodiversity loss.

Aggravating the challenges posed on the country's biological ecosystem are population growth, rapid urbanization, global warming and the global pandemic caused by Covid-19.

Biodiversity experts believe that maintaining a healthy ecology or strong biodiversity, is essential to human survival. Eventually, they believe it will lead to the path of sustainable growth and development

## Ecosystem services

ECOSYSTEM services are the direct and indirect benefits humans obtain from nature, Executive Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim of the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) told the BUSINESSMIRROR in an e-mail interview on October 1.

Citing various studies, Lim, an international biodiversity expert, said different ecosystems provide different types of services.

More importantly, she cited the provisioning services that include the supply of food, water, fiber, wood and fuels.

"Different ecosystems provide different types of services. Forests and trees aid in healing damaged ecosystems and in providing livable conditions," Lim said.

## Importance of forests

IN addition to producing tangible goods, Lim, a former director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, said forests reduce the effects of noise, floods and droughts.

"They purify water, bind harmful substances; they maintain soil fertility and water quality; they aid in controlling erosion; they protect drinking water resources; and they can help with wastewater processing," she said.

Besides reducing climate change,

forests help in controlling infectious diseases.

At the same time, Lim said oceans and seas provide a different set of ecosystem services.

There is also an increasing body of research in the indirect impact of biodiversity on human health, proving that exposure to nature, including urban green space, parks and woods, have measurable good effects on mental and physiological health, she pointed out.

## Threats to ecological services

THE ecological services provided by forests, however, are threatened by deforestation, pollution and biodiversity loss.

Food production, Lim noted, impacts all ecosystems. Agriculture, the main economic driver, along with habitat loss, are recurring threats to biodiversity and remain the primary concern.

Population growth also places added pressure on natural resources.

"Some countries are experiencing a rapid increase in population, while some experience close to negative growth," she said.

Many parts of the world are experiencing increased pressure in the consumption of food and resources due to the increasing population.

## Climate change and biodiversity loss

SCIENTISTS and experts have time and again identified climate change as a major driver of biodiversity loss.

According to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), climate change has already adversely affected biodiversity at the species and ecosystem levels.

"Some species and ecosystems are demonstrating the capacity to adapt naturally. However, others show negative impacts under current levels of climate change," Lim noted.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Environment Programme said biodiversity-rich forests are likely to be less vulnerable to climate risks and impacts than degraded and/or fragmented forests and plantations dominated by a single or a few species.

However, the current regulating service of forests as carbon sinks may be lost entirely and turn land ecosystems into a net source of carbon dioxide.

Meanwhile, in marine and coastal ecosystems, warmer temperatures lead to increased rates of coral bleaching or a decline in coral health, Lim noted, citing a 2010 Asian Development Bank study.

## Climate change's impact on agriculture

A STUDY by the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) states that changes in climatic patterns consequently alter the spatial distribution of agro-ecological zones, habitats, distribution patterns of plant diseases and pests, fish populations, and ocean circulation patterns that can significantly affect agriculture and food production.

The manifestation of identified climate change-induced hazards and risks to agriculture will vary due to differences in geographical and



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socioeconomic conditions across the region, according to the Searca study in 2013.

Lim noted that agrobiodiversity remains the main raw material for agroecosystems to cope with climate change as it contains the reservoir of traits for plant and animal breeders and farmers to select resilient, climate-ready germplasm, and produce new breeds, citing a study by Marambe and Silva.

## Protected areas' limited defense

CLIMATE change is likely to result in biodiversity loss, forest degradation, and reduction, migration and extinction of species.

Citing a World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) report, Lim said protected areas indeed have a limited defense against climate change and they should be improved to withstand climate impacts.

"Climate change also adds to pressures of already vulnerable biodiversity hotspots. If there is a significant rise in sea level, all wetland and

marine and coastal Asean Heritage Parks (AHPs) will be affected," she explained.

According to WWF, Lim noted, species existing in about 60 percent of AHPs are vulnerable to climate change due to decreasing niche space, considering these AHPs are 1,000 meters above sea level.

AHPs in Cambodia, the Philippines and Vietnam have been previously affected by past cyclones.

Lim pointed out that endangered plants and animals are the most common components in almost all AHPs that are sensitive to climate change.

## Zoonotic disease

BIODIVERSITY loss and climate change aggravate the threat of zoonotic diseases, Lim said.

"The exposure to vectors is increased or altered by activities connected to deforestation, such as mining, hydroelectric projects, road construction, mineral exploitation and agriculture. [They] have a profound impact, not only on the biology of vectors or potential vector populations,

but also on the exposure of both native populations in the area and migrant populations," she explained.

Lim pointed out that land-use changes are also associated with the creation of road networks, further enhancing pressures on wildlife populations.

"A series of emerging infectious diseases, for example, severe acute respiratory syndrome, Ebola and Middle East respiratory syndrome, have been linked to wildlife use, trade and consumption," she said.

## Mainstreaming biodiversity

HOW can mainstreaming biodiversity conservation help mitigate the impact of climate change and reduce, if not totally avoid yet another global pandemic?

Lim said that in many cases, different national government agencies work on climate change and biodiversity separately.

She pointed out that "convergence" among relevant stakeholders on both issues is necessary to comply with commitments to both the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the CBD.

"Regionally, there is a recognition of the vulnerability of Asean to the impacts of climate change. But an understanding of biodiversity conservation as an effective mitigating measure against climate change impacts needs to be emphasized," Lim said.

"Increased collaboration, sharing of expertise and public awareness on the interrelationship between climate change and biodiversity are crucial to addressing these twin issues," she added.

According to Lim, there is already an increasing recognition that protected areas may buffer against the emergence of novel infectious diseases by avoiding drastic changes in host/reservoir abundance and distribution and reducing contact rates between humans, livestock and wildlife.

The current Covid-19 pandemic further emphasizes the fact that protected areas are at the forefront of preventing future disease outbreaks by maintaining ecosystem integrity, she said.





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**Baboy bawal ipasok sa Guimaras**

Mahigpit nang ipinagbabawal sa probinsya ng Guimaras ang pagpasok ng buhay na baboy at anumang pork products, kasunod ng pag-iingat sa suspetsang may kaso na ng African Swine Fever (ASF) sa Iloilo province.

Kasunod ito ng ipinalabas na Executive Order No. 2022-082 ni Gov. JC Rahman Nava na nagsasaad ng "Imposing the prohibition on the entry of live pigs, pork, pork products, and by-products whether fresh, frozen,

cooked or processed into the island.

Ang inilabas na EO ay mahigpit na ipinatutupad sa veterinary quarantine procedures hinggil sa pagpasok ng swine, pork, pork products, and by-products sa loob ng limang bayan na sakop ng isla ng Guimaras.

Kasabay din nito ang bawal na pagpasok ng livestock poultry carriers at hog vans para matiyak na ligtas ang seguridad ng mga residente sa Guimaras.

(Vick Aquino)