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Marcos signs deal on Kadiwa in LGUs

By HELEN FLORES

Kadiwa ng Pangulo (KNP) centers will be set up in local government units nationwide as part of President Marcos' long-term plan to bring local agricultural products closer to consumers.

"The national government cannot bring affordable food to all if we will not partner with the local government," Marcos said on July 17.

Marcos signed a memorandum of agreement with other government agencies to establish KNP centers nationwide.

The Kadiwa program is a farm-to-consumer market chain that eliminates intermediaries, allowing local producers to generate higher income by selling their produce directly to consumers.

Agricultural commodities such as rice, sugar and onions are being sold at Kadiwa centers at lower prices.

The ceremonial signing in Pampanga was followed by the distribution of family food packs and P3,000 financial assistance to 490 Pampanga residents.

Livelihood grants were also

awarded to 13 Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) beneficiaries.

Signatories to the agreement include the Department of Agriculture, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of the Interior and Local Government, Presidential Communications Office and the Presidential Management Staff.

Meanwhile, Bataan Rep. Geraldine Roman filed the Magna Carta for Agricultural Workers, which will register farmers and fisherfolk under

the Kadiwa program to help them sell their produce.

A pricing scheme shall also be in place for registered agricultural workers to prevent losses incurred by the low prices set on their goods.

Based on the Philippine Statistics Authority's 2021 poverty statistics, fisherfolk have the highest poverty rate at 30.6 percent, followed by farmers at 30 percent.

SLP products

As more KNP centers will be set up nationwide, SLP associations are

expected to offer various products such as bags, belts, wallets and various food delicacies at Kadiwa Centers, according to the DSWD.

The Tarlac Home for Women and the Regional Home for Girls will also sell delicacies, such as peanut nougat, cashew nougat, coated sugar peanut, mixed nuts, peanut, *bagnet*, *bagoong*, *kakanin ube*, cassava, *kalamay*, *buko* juice, guapple, *chicharon* and doormat products.

A total of 81 provinces participated in the simultaneous launch of the KNP. – With Delon Porcalla, Sheila Crisostomo

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PBBM to highlight gains of his first year in SONA

BY ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS
and RAYMUND ANTONIO

President Marcos is hopeful that Filipinos will realize that the country has already made "significant progress" as they listen

to his second State of the Nation Address (SONA) next week.

Marcos said this a week ahead of his second SONA on July 24.

In an interview with reporters in Pampanga, the President said people can now see the

difference in how the government works compared to before his landslide victory in the 2022 elections.

"That's what I want to explain to people that we have made significant progress," he said on Mon- ► **4**

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PBBM to highlight gains of his first year in SONA 1◀

day, July 17.

"We can see the difference now, not only in terms of how the systems work, how the government works, it is also how we are seen or judged in the international community. That's equally important," he added.

According to the President, his upcoming SONA will entail the plans and programs he discussed last year, their progress, what else the government will do, and his plans moving forward.

"It's just a performance report for Filipinos to see na sa dami ng mga pronouncements, sa dami ng mga salita, kung ito ba ay talagang may kabuluhan [o] salita lamang (that among the many pronouncements, the many words spoken, if they bore fruit or were just words)," he said.

Meanwhile, Marcos said that he has yet to decide what to wear during the highly anticipated event as he was "worried about writing the speech."

Last month, President Marcos expressed confidence that he will have something to present to the public in his second SONA, saying they had already started preparations for the annual event.

"Sa palagay ko naman, mayroon naman tayo ipapakita (I believe we have something to show the people), and that's what the content of the SONA, I think, will probably be," he said.

The President said they started collecting materials needed for his speech but did not disclose further details.

While he failed to mention the country's illegal drug situation in his first SONA, Marcos discussed his administration's plans to address the country's post-pandemic economic recovery.

The President also mentioned the food crisis, healthcare, bridging the country's digital divide, and continuing the previous administration's

infrastructure program.

Marcos also bared his foreign policy, saying the Philippines would remain friendly to all countries, but he would not cede an inch of its territory to foreign powers.

He capped his first SONA by enumerating his 19 priority bills.

Healthcare facilities, specialty centers nationwide

Healthcare is a right, not a privilege.

Marcos said this as he assured the public of his administration's determination to make healthcare more accessible by establishing more rural healthcare units and pharmacies across the country.

He led the briefing and site inspection of the first-ever Clark Multi-Specialty Medical Center (CMSMC) in Clark Freeport Zone, Pampanga, on Monday, July 17.

In his speech, the President said that not only was the project a fulfillment of one of his commitments during his first State of the Nation Address (SONA), but it was also the product of his administration's push for universal healthcare.

"Rest assured, this administration is determined to bring quality healthcare services closer to the Filipino people," he said.

"We will establish primary healthcare facilities and specialty centers nationwide," he added.

The government, he said, will not stop until every Filipino can say they have good access to quality healthcare.

"It is not a privilege to have healthcare— it is a right," Marcos said.

"That is how we will approach this problem, and that is how we will continue to make our healthcare system better for all Filipinos in whatever capacity we are able to do," he added.

The Chief executive said that the government will establish rural healthcare units and barangay healthcare centers and revisit the idea of establishing the Botica de Barangay.

"All of these things we are putting together so that, at least, when it comes to the fundamental healthcare for our countrymen, we can say [it] is readily available to them," he said.

According to Malacañang, the construction of the CMSMC, the first regional specialty medical center, backs the administration's efforts to establish more hospitals in different provinces and cities nationwide.

The facility would cater to the medical needs of every Filipino, particularly those living in Regions 1, 2, 3, and the National Capital Region (NCR).

Once finished, the CMSMC will consist of various specialization centers and healthcare services such as heart, lung, and cancer centers, and children's hospital.

Marcos said healthcare is an important part of his administration as he cannot fathom the idea that Filipinos would not get treatment because of the lack of facilities.

"I cannot endure the sight of seeing a fellow Filipino suffer only because of the lack of facilities in our health system," he said.

"That is why it is a fundamental part of the services that this government will bring to our people," he added.

He urged the public to be "part of the solution" and put forward innovative alternatives that they believe can help uplift the lives of their fellowmen as nobody can truly be successful without good health.

"Any person, no matter how successful they are in whatever field they have been, cannot enjoy that success if they do not also enjoy good health," he added.

Kadiwa centers nationwide

The dream of a P20-per-kilo rice gained ground on Monday, July 17, as President Marcos witnessed the sign-

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ing of a memorandum of agreement (MOA) that will establish Kadiwa ng Pangulo (KNP) centers across the Philippines.

The signing between key government agencies and local government units (LGU) happened in San Fernando, Pampanga, where the Chief Executive also led the distribution of various government assistance and the rendering of various other government social services.

In his speech, Marcos lauded the cooperation among the national government, LGUs, government agencies, and the private sector.

"We gather here to mark a significant event. It is the signing of the memo of agreement for the Kadiwa ng Pangulo with all LGUs. We institutionalized the establishment of Kadiwa ng Pangulo now in the local level," he said.

The President underscored how it eliminates the need for the "middle man" by bridging the farmers directly to the market.

"Para sa ganyang paraan ay maipagbili natin ng presyo na mababa. Kaya't sa labas nakita ko sitenta na lang ang asukal. Yun pa rin ang ating hangarin na P20 na bigas. Wala pa tayo run, pero ginagawa natin ang lahat (In that way, we can sell products at lower prices. Outside, I saw that sugar is only P70. That remains our goal—P20 rice. We are not there yet, but we are doing all we can)," he added.

But to do this, he pointed at the need for everyone to work together.

"Kailangan natin ang tulong ng lahat ng ating mga kababayan dahil hindi kaya ng government lamang, ng national government, local government lamang. Kailangan kasama din natin dyan mga negosyante (We need help from all our countrymen because the government, the national government, the local government cannot do this alone. We also need the businessmen)," Marcos said.

"Kasama din natin bawat isang Pilipino na pare-pareho ang sinusundan ang plano upang maramdaman naman natin ang sumusulong at gumaganda ang ating ekonomiya

(We are also with each Filipino who follows the plan for us to realize the progressing economy)," he added.

The signing of the MOA is an example of his administration's "whole-of-government approach" as the President took pride in the presence of several cabinet secretaries to lead the event.

Marcos added that in a "complicated economic system," there is a need for everyone to be on board in addressing the problems of high prices of commodities and the secretaries there vowed to cooperate in making sure Kadiwa would be a success nationwide.

Among the MOA signatories were the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Presidential Communications Office (PCO), and Presidential Management Staff (PMS).

He discussed further what is being done under the program, which includes increasing the production of agri-commodities, such as rice, corn, and fish, as well as solving the problems with Avian Flu and African Swine Fever.

The DA had also put up cold storages near fishing grounds because, as the President shared, up to 30 percent of catch ends up rotting because of the lack of proper storage units.

He also aims to make fish exports more competitive through packaging and marketing, as well as negotiating with buyers and suppliers.

"Yan po ang prinsipyo sa likod ng Kadiwa program. Ang prinsipyo na ang lahat ng produkto na galing dito sa Pilipinas ay tutulungan natin, susuportahan natin (That's the principle behind the Kadiwa program. The principle that we will help all products from the Philippines, we will support)," Marcos said.

As of June 16, 2023, there are 342 Kadiwa outlets nationwide.

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FIGHTING INFLATION

**Marcos rolls out his Kadiwa
program to help ease Filipinos'
cost of living burden** Story on p.2

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FIGHTING INFLATION

By Jester
Manalastas

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. yesterday led the nationwide roll-out of the Kadiwa ng Pangulo (KNP) at the Pampanga provincial capitol grounds, with Social Welfare and Development Secretary Rex Gatchalian yesterday showed his full support for the Kadiwa ng Pangulo (KNP) program as he, together with other government pledging full support for the project.

In his message, President Marcos emphasized the importance of collaboration among government offices to respond to the needs of every Filipino citizen amid the high inflation and global economic instability.

"Hindi kayang gawin ng national government na maikalat lahat ng ating gustong ipadala na mga murang pagkain kung hindi ating kasama at ka-partner ang local government," the President said.

Applying the whole-of-nation approach, Gatchalian, together with the heads of other participating agencies, signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) expanding the KNP program in all local government units (LGUs) across the country.

Under the agreement, the establishment of Kadiwa centers nationwide was institutionalized while the participating



KADIWANG PANGULO. President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. awards a beneficiary of the DSWD's Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) during the nationwide roll-out of the Kadiwa ng Pangulo (KNP) at the Pampanga provincial capitol grounds. Also in photo are Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez and Social Welfare and Development Secretary Rex Gatchalian. Photo by JOEY RAZON/NIB-PNA

government agencies committed to sustain the program.

Gatchalian, in his earlier statements, has expressed support for the Kadiwa centers, which according to him, directly help the beneficiaries of the Department.

In the Kadiwa center roll-out in Pampanga, beneficiaries of the DSWD's Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) and Regional Residential Care Facilities also put up stalls/booths to sell their goods, products, and delicacies directly to the consumers.

Some 42 sellers put up Kadi-

wa stalls to offer locally produced agri-fishery products and basic necessities.

A job fair was also held where in 20 companies opened employment opportunities for walk-in applicants.

Apart from the agreement signing and setting up of Kadiwa booths, different national government agencies, including the DSWD, provided various government services and programs to beneficiaries.

For its part, the DSWD distributed family food packs (FFPs) and Php 3,000 worth of financial assistance under its

Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS).

Some 493 beneficiaries, composed of solo parents, informal settlers, labor workers, and those from vulnerable sectors received the assistance.

Livelihood grants were also awarded by the DSWD to 13 SLP beneficiaries.

During the ceremonial signing, the Kadiwa centers were simultaneously rolled-out in 82 provinces and 16 highly urbanized cities nationwide.

Among the signatories were the DSWD, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Presidential Communications Office (PCO), and the Presidential Management Staff (PMS).

Present during the event were DTI Secretary Alfredo Pascual, DILG Secretary Benjamin Abalos Jr., and DOLE Secretary Bienvenido Lagunesma.

As one of the priority projects of the Marcos administration, the DSWD will continue to support Kadiwa centers to provide accessible and affordable food and other commodities for Filipinos to cushion and counter the effects of global inflation, while also helping local producers earn more through a direct farm-to-market consumer trade.

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'Kadiwa ng Pangulo'

By Steve
Gosuico

CABANATUAN CITY -- The Nueva Ecija Department of Trade and Industry and the Provincial Agriculturist Office, in coordination with other government agencies, launched yesterday the

"Kadiwa ng Pangulo" program at the old provincial capitol compound in this city.

The launching of the KNP program in the province coincided with the activity held in San Fernando City, Pampanga where President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. witnessed the signing of a memorandum of

agreement of the DTI, the Department of Agriculture, and other concerned agencies in its simultaneous launching in all local government units nationwide.

Dr. Richard V. Simangan, DTI provincial director, said more than 62 micro, small, and medi-

opens in Ecija capitol

um enterprises (20 invited by the DTI-NE and more than 42 by the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist) participated in the KNP program, where several stalls were put up at the back of the old provincial capitol building.

Among the basic commodities being sold in-

cluded rice from the National Food Authority pegged at P25 per kilo.

Also being sold were eggs, vegetables, meat, processed food, clothes, bags or bayongs, mushroom chip, chili garlic, and non-food items such as slipper, bedsheets and pillow covers.

Simangan urged Novo

Ecijanos to patronize Filipino-made local products, most especially those being sold in Kadiwa ng Pangulo outlets.

He said the participating MSMEs were assisted by the DTI-NE, OPA, Department of Social Welfare and Development and other local government units concerned.



EDITORIAL

Modernizing agriculture

PRESIDENT Marcos has declared that investing in the modernization of the agriculture sector is a potent factor seen to speed up the country's socio-economic development.

And the Filipino people, particularly the farmers and fishermen, are hopeful that the government of President Marcos succeeds in developing the nation's agricultural lands.

Developing the farm lands will provide not only crops to the farmers but will also create multiple effects on the entire country, said Marcos in a speech in Luna, Apayao last Saturday.

In his speech, the Chief Executive emphasized the importance of investing in the development, productivity and modernization of agriculture.

The speech was delivered by Presidential Assistant Secretary for Northern Luzon Ana Carmela Remigio during the 36th Cordillera Day Commemoration.

President Marcos, who was supposed to be the guest of honor and speaker, was not able to attend the day-long gathering due to inclement weather.

He added: "By building infrastructure and improving market linkages, our farmers, our farmlands will yield not only crops, but also opportunities that create ripples of positive effects throughout our nation."

We share the view of the President that the people ought to continue supporting the government's pursuit of providing a better, brighter and more productive life for everybody.

Truth is, the one-year old Marcos administration is determined to find ways and means to provide the Filipino people "quality life."

This, the government will do by modernizing agriculture since the Philippines, a nation of more than 110 million people, is an agricultural country.



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DA hopes to stir more int'l support for agri sector

By DANESSA RIVERA

The Department of Agriculture (DA) hopes to stir more international support for the advancement of the local agriculture sector.

In hosting the Development Partners' Forum (DPF) for the Agriculture and Fisheries Sector last week, DA Senior Undersecretary Domingo Panganiban hopes that it will open up new opportunities for future collaboration and lead to useful areas of understanding in handling challenges and emerging issues affecting Philippine agriculture.

The forum, which was initiated by DA's Project Development Service (PDS) in collaboration with the International Affairs Division (IAD), seeks to inform development partners and other institutions that provide Official Development Assistance (ODA) in line with the DA's

current thrusts, priorities, projects and programs.

It also aims to further expand partnerships with development partners, explore investment opportunities, and enlist the help of ODA partners.

"In what President Marcos has said is our most important task of all – the strengthening of our nation's food security – these investments lay firmer foundations for economic growth than any other in our country," Panganiban said.

The DA official expressed his gratitude towards international partners' for investing and helping the country's achieved progress in agriculture sector.

He said their assistance enabled the agri-fisheries sector to contribute to economic growth and reduce poverty levels.

"The vitality of international sup-

port for the nation's food security has never been more needed than now. We are in a period of great flux in international affairs. There are signs that the world may be entering a new phase in international relationships after the pandemic," Panganiban said.

The forum was attended by around 170 representatives composed of international organizations, bilateral and multilateral development partners, ODA's oversight agencies such as the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the Department of Finance (DOF), the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), as well as DA executive officials, regional field offices, bureaus, and attached agencies.

Fish kill hits Taal; losses at P45M

More than 150 fish cage operators in Batangas province lost at least P45 million worth of tilapia and "bangus" (milkfish), after a fish kill hit Taal Lake, authorities said on Monday. Fisheries officials said low levels of dissolved oxygen in the lake caused the fish to turn belly up starting last week. Cage operators in Talisay town lost at least 300 tons of freshwater fish while those in Agoncillo and Laurel lost a combined 43 tons. —STORY BY DELFIN T. MALLARI JR.

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UNDER WATCH Policemen in Talisay, Batangas, monitor the Taal Lake shoreline in Barangay Poblacion 6 in this photo taken on Monday. At least 300 tons of freshwater fish in this town have been lost to fish kill since last week due to low levels of dissolved oxygen. —TALISAY POLICE FACEBOOK PAGE

FISH KILL HITS TAAL LAKE ANEW; 343 TONS OF TILAPIA, 'BANGUS' TURN BELLY UP

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
@dtmallarijrINQ

LUCENA CITY—At least 343 tons of tilapia (black carp) and "bangus" (milkfish), including fingerlings, died in another fish kill phenomenon in Taal Lake in Batangas province, authorities said on Monday.

The fish kill that started last week already destroyed 300 tons of freshwater fish in the town of Talisay, 32 tons in Agoncillo and 11 tons in Laurel, according to Sammy Malvas, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources director in Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon).

The three towns are among the localities in Batangas that surround the lake, along with the municipalities of Sta. Teresita, San Nicolas, Alitagtag, Cuenca, Balete and Mataasnakahoy, and the cities of Tanauan and Lipa.

Malvas placed the estimated value of dead fish to around P45 million, affecting 156 fish cage operators.

"Based on our water samplings, the dissolved oxygen level is low in the affected area," Malvas said.

He explained that the dissolved oxygen level drops every time there is a sudden change in the water temperature, usually from hot to cold and vice versa.

Fish kill is a natural phenomenon in Taal Lake that occurs when the weather triggers a drop in dissolved oxygen in the water.

Tilapia and bangus cage farming is a multimillion-peso industry in Taal Lake, the country's third-largest freshwater body.

Low oxygen level

Fish cage owners were advised to monitor their cages and take measures by installing oxygen tanks and pumps to augment the declining oxygen level.

The water's dissolved oxygen level serves as a parameter used to check whether the water remains favorable to aquaculture. The oxygen level is considered normal at 6 parts per million at the lake's surface level.

In August last year, at least 31 tons of cultured tilapia also died in fish cages in Taal Lake in Agoncillo town due to low levels of dissolved oxygen in the water.

Malvas said they had advised the affected cage operators to immediately harvest the remaining marketable fish to recover part of their investments.

Since last week, fish cage operators have begun harvesting in areas that remained unaffected.

Taal Lake has more than 7,000 cage structures for milkfish and tilapia production.

"We also advised fish cage operators to lessen their fish feed during this time," Malvas added.

Last February, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) had ordered fish cage operators to stop scattering sinking fish feed in Taal Lake.

According to the DENR, the commercial fish in the lake do not consume all the sinking feed, and the excess settles at the bottom of the lake and rots. The rotten feed affects the water quality of the lake, the DENR noted.

Cheaper sinking feed is made up of sticky pellets, which break up into fine powder when they hit the water.

No volcano link

But Malvas maintained that the fish kill was not connected to the restiveness of Taal Volcano, which sits in the middle of the lake.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) which has been recording continuous activity at Taal Volcano, warned in an advisory on July 13 that "should current low-level activity worsen or pronounced changes in monitored parameters forewarn of increasing unrest, the alert level may be raised to alert level 2."

In its 5 a.m. bulletin on Monday, the Phivolcs reported that the volcano emitted 5,887 tons of sulfur dioxide over the past 24 hours that rose to 900 meters above Taal Volcano Island. It also reported that four tremors were recorded by the seismic stations of the Taal Volcano Network.

The Phivolcs reminded the public that alert level 1 prevails over Taal Volcano, "which means that it is still in an abnormal condition and should not be interpreted to have ceased unrest or ceased the threat of eruptive activity."

Taal Volcano has been on alert level 1 since July 11, 2022.



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BRIEFS

Smuggled meat seized in Bulacan

THE DEPARTMENT of Agriculture (DA) on Monday said it had confiscated frozen meat worth P2.8 million in cold storages in Meycauayan, Bulacan.

Inspectors seized frozen farm products from two makeshift cold storage containers and two vehicles with expired meat products in a joint operation with the Bureau of Customs (BoC).

Police arrested eight people who face charges of violating the Food Safety Act. The warehouse was operating without a business permit, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said.

The agency's National Meat Inspection Service and local government of Meycauayan would dispose of the smuggled goods.

Last week, the DA and BoC also confiscated 175,000 kilos of spoiled frozen meat products worth P35 million in the same town.

— **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**



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SM Group officials with representatives of the different partner gov't agencies launch urban farming initiative.

Empowering urban farmers

BY ANTONIO DELOS REYES

FARMING in the Philippines has always been a thankless endeavor, with many livelihood farmers rarely getting the chance to claw their way out of poverty. This is doubly so for urban farming. The lack of arable land and the less-than-ideal environmental conditions make it difficult to earn a profit.

The SM Group aims to provide a helping hand in uplifting communities and promoting environmental consciousness with its Urban Farming initiative led by the SM Foundation's Kabalik sa Kabuhayan on Sustainable Agriculture Program (KSK-SAP).

The urban farming initiative will focus on high-value crop production as this is the most efficient way of generating revenue from limited farming space. The produce can either be sold to SM Markets or directly to end-users in the community. This is in line with the vision of SM's founder, the late Henry Sy Sr. of empowering individuals to cultivate their own produce to foster potential income sources while contributing to the

country's overall environmental sustainability.

For the new urban farming initiative, SM Group has partnered with the **Department of Agriculture**, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Department of Science and Technology, the Department of Tourism, the Department of Trade and Industry, and local government units.

"The joining of expertise and resources of the different agencies will help make farming sustainable. In this journey, we have to work together in learning new farming technologies, discover talent, and plan for a better future. Let us take advantage of this opportunity and share our learnings to others. We warmly welcome all of our partners and beneficiaries into our family and know that we stand beside you in your journey of learning," SM assistant vice president for Operations Jocelyn Clariño.

"We are very happy to be part of this initiative. If we can provide equal chances to our producers, lower the logistics costs in the urban areas and give farmers direct access to

the market, they would fully realize the fruits of their labors. On behalf of the President and Secretary of Agriculture Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the department is united with SM Group in their goal for food security and to help give our farmers a sustainable way of living," Department of Agriculture Bureau of Plant Industry director Gerald Glenn Panganiban said.

Beneficiaries of the program will be provided comprehensive training on urban farming techniques with the aim of transforming underutilized urban spaces into productive gardens. This will be complemented with hands-on lectures on product development, marketing, and basic accounting – tools that would help the beneficiaries create and run a small business for their produce.

The KSK-SAP is one of the SM Foundation's pillars and since its inception in 2007, the program has worked numerous times with government agencies and partner farm schools. It has successfully trained over 28,550 beneficiaries in both rural and urban farming methods and techniques.

BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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KADIWA TREATS The Kadiwa Market at Pasay City Hall offers a range of fresh vegetables, fruits, and rice priced at just P25 per kilo, delighting buyers with its affordable offerings. Kadiwa, a marketing initiative by the Department of Agriculture through Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance, aims to empower farmers by establishing a direct and efficient farm-to-consumer food supply chain. By cutting out intermediaries, this model allows producers to earn more from selling their produce directly to consumers, benefiting both farmers and buyers alike. NONIEREYES

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REMATE OPINION

ANG INYONG LINGKOD

NI DR. HILDA C. ONG

MAGBIBIGAY babala lamang tayo sa mga ginang ng tahanan, sa mga kasambahay, at maging sa may negosyong kainan, pakasuriing mabuti ang binibili nating frozen meat sa merkado.

Dahil kamakailan lamang ay may ni-raid ang Bureau of Customs na warehouse sa loob ng Meycauayan Industrial Subdivision sa Barangay Pantoc, Meycauayan City, Bulacan na naglalaman ng tinatayang nasa Php 35 million halaga ng smuggled frozen meat.

Ang mas nakababahalang ay ang nakitang nakatambak na mga spoiled frozen meat kabilang ang mga paa ng baboy, tupa, at chicken skin na mga nakabalot pa at nakalagay sa mga kahon. Mayroon ding mga banned frozen meat mula sa Germany at India.

Hinihinala ng mga tauhan ng BOC at ng Department of Agriculture na nagsasagawa ng re-boxing sa mga sirang karne para mapagtakpan ang expiration date ng mga ito dahil sa nadiskubrang bagong mga kahon na sana ay paglalagyan sa mga ito para maibenta sa mga pamilihan.

Ayon sa National Meat Inspection Service, sira na ang mga karne at hindi na maaari pang kainin ng tao at maging ng mga hayop.

Nagpapatuloy ang imbestigasyon at nakatakdang kasuhan ng DA ng paglabag sa mga probisyon ng Republic Act No. 10611 o ang

MAG-INGAT SA PAGBILI NG MGA FROZEN MEAT

"Food Safety Act of 2003", at sa R.A. No. 10845 o ang "Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016".

Kaya mag-iingat tayo sa pagbili ng mga karne lalong-lalo na sa online services dahil sa paghahangad natin ng katipiran ay kalusugan natin ang malagay sa panganib.

Ayon sa NMIS, madali namang malaman kung hot meat o unsafe meat ang itinitinda sa palengke. Una na riyan ay sa presyo, kapag masyadong mababa o bagsak presyo ang halaga ng bawat kilo ng karne, ito ay kahina-hinala.

Sa pisikal na pagsusuri ay makikita kung ang karne ay bago at sariwa, dapat ito ay mamula-mula pa, hindi nangingitim at wala dapat mabahong amoy na lumalabas mula rito.

Ang mga safe na karne ay dumadaan sa pagsusuri ng NMIS kaya dapat na naka-paskel ang meat inspection certificate para sa mga lokal na karne at certificate of meat inspection kapag imported meat. Maaari itong hanapin sa mga nagtitinda.

Lubhang mapanganib ang makakain ng sirang karne dahil maaari itong magdulot ng pananakit ng tiyan o kaya naman ay food poisoning na maaaring ikamatay.

Maging mapanuring mamimili. Karapatan natin ang magtanong at maghanap ng mga kaukulang dokumento.

Kung nais ninyong malaman ang TAMANG IMPORMASYON, TAMANG SERBISYO ni AGARANG SERBISYO LADY, i-search sa YOUTUBE CHANNEL, "HILDA ONG" at sa Facebook Fanpage "TV RADIO HILDA ONG", Huwag kalimutan i-click ang salitang "SUBSCRIBE", "LIKE" at "SHARE".

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Soils and land

My mother loved to garden and was always buying flowering and fruiting plants, only to get frustrated because the profuse blooms (and sometimes, fruits) that attracted her to buy would wilt ... and then it would be a long wait for them to see flowers or fruits again, if ever at all.

She would buy all kinds of fertilizers, often pushed by the plant vendors with all kinds of claims to produce super vegetables, fruits, orchids. In the last few years, the sellers have pushed products they claim are "natural" and "organic."

I learned the truth about flowers and fruits after I began working in social action programs, which brought me into contact with people in agriculture. Many of the flowering plants we were buying were imported species better adapted to cooler climates, which even Tagaytay or Baguio cannot provide.

Then why were they blooming when displayed in the commercial gardens?

That was because the plants were being sprayed with high nitrogen mixes as well as plant hormones and growth stimulants, which could induce flowering. (For the fruiting trees, sellers simply chose the ones that were already fruiting to display.)

In graduate school in the United States, after taking up courses in agriculture, I learned to be more discerning about the books and lectures on flowering and fruiting, reminding myself all the time that I was in Texas, whose plants were more subtropical than tropical.

I did learn a lot about ecosystem management in general, starting with the soil, and how important it is to know the different kinds of soil. You just can't expect flowers and fruits when you're planting on rocks or adobe. You also need to know if your plant is acidic or alkaline, and study the slope of the land: Is the soil all eroded because rains keep washing off the topsoil?



GRAY MATTERS

MICHAEL L. TAN

Those were just some of the issues around the soil. You then have to deal with the climate—temperature and rainfall being the most important. The climate emergency has been so problematic giving us the hottest weather in recorded human history with "plantitos" and "plantitas" so desperate they'd be watering their gardens two or three times a day, sometimes drowning the plants!

My mother's garden has improved, massively, as I asked for the help of agriculturists and landscapers. A warning about the latter, too. A good landscaper must understand botany and agronomy and stuff like plant sociology—if plants can be choosy, too, as to "who" they grow best with then we should be even choosier about who handles the plants' homes.

More and more, people will be looking for agriculturists and landscapers who are into organic and sustainable gardening. For example, if you have a landscaper who boasts about, and pushes, imported plants, rather than being impressed, you better think twice. At best, their plants will survive but not thrive.

I now work in a college in Tagaytay where we have an agroecology garden that has been furiously producing vegetables, thanks to a director with lots of experience in sustainable agriculture. This exposure has made me realize there's more to all this than gardening for leisure. Our crisis in food and nutrition goes back to our lack of a big-picture perspective in agriculture and horticulture.

For example, the college got a request to visit from a network of urban poor women who started using idle lands, often tiny patches, to start planting vegetables. Specifically, they wanted to learn more about making organic fertilizers.

Our agroecology director and I were amused and had to explain it takes more to coax the land and the plants to produce. We've agreed that for the visit, we'll have to discuss soil and water management before even choosing what to plant.

I thought about this larger perspective at the just concluded annual meeting of the National Academy of Science and Technology, which fellow columnist Mahar Mangahas also described a few days ago. One plenary session was about agrarian reform and one of the panel reactors was Dr. Ben Maglayang, an environmental scientist and former president of Silliman University who referred to the importance of understanding soil management.

Producing flowers, fruits, food requires soil. But to feed people's bodies and minds, we need land.

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The power of a data-driven agriculture sector

Agriculture is usually looked upon as a sector where techniques and wisdom are passed down from one generation to another. But issues related to global problems today such as climate change, rising population, depletion of farm acreage, and the need for self-sufficiency are driving countries to look for better ways to increase productivity. This gap is now being addressed effectively by technology and it has emerged as a game-changer.

By harnessing the power of big data and analytics techniques, remote sensors, cloud technology, drones, GPS, satellite mapping, precision machinery, and even the use of artificial intelligence, the agriculture sector of many countries is able to achieve significant improvements in productivity and sustainability despite limited viable farmlands and resource constraints.

The global population is expected to reach 9.8 billion by 2050 according to United Nations estimates. To address the food requirements of the ever-growing population, we need to step up our crop production significantly. Unfortunately, rapid urbanization and climate change have claimed much of what used to be farmlands in most countries including the Philippines. Antiquated farming techniques have also affected farm production.

Policymakers and industry leaders are turning to agricultural technology for solutions. Let us take a closer look at how technologies such as IoT, analytics, and cloud computing can help tackle this challenge.

Data collection is seen as the initial step needed to effectively implement innovative technologies in the sector. Without data, it would be like working in the dark and not knowing where to start. IoT devices such as sensors plugged into farming equipment and drones as well as on the fields and plants aid in the collection of important data from the ground.

The use of analytics and cloud technology would then come to play once we have large amounts of vital data made available. Analysts would now be able to integrate the collected data with other available information such as weather data to generate patterns and insights. With this in-

formation, issues such as operational inefficiencies and problems related to soil quality are easily predicted even before they occur. Big data will help ensure that farmers will have the necessary insights to make good operational decisions and do not have to depend anymore on favorable natural forces.

The value of data analytics is very much underrated in the agriculture sector today. By collecting and analyzing data from a variety of sources, farmers can make better decisions about crop selection, planting, irrigation, storage, and pest management. This can lead to increased yields, reduced costs, minimum wastage, and improved sustainability.

Analytics can be used to analyze historical data on crop yields, weather

By collecting and analyzing data from a variety of sources, farmers can make better decisions about crop selection, planting, irrigation, storage, and pest management. This can lead to increased yields, reduced costs, minimum wastage, and improved sustainability.

patterns, and soil conditions to help farmers select the best crops to grow in a given area. It can help determine the optimal time to plant crops, based on factors such as weather conditions, soil moisture, and pest infestations thus ensuring that crops are planted at the right time and in the right conditions, which can lead to increased yields.

In places where water is a major constraint, analytics can be used to monitor soil moisture levels and weather patterns to help farmers determine the optimal irrigation schedule. This can improve water utilization and improve crop yields. Similarly, predictive analytics can identify early

signs of plant diseases, enabling farmers to apply timely treatments and prevent significant crop losses.

To help ensure sustainability, analytics can be used to track the environmental impact of agricultural practices. This information can be used to identify areas where practices can be improved to reduce environmental impact.

Analytics can transform the entire agricultural supply chain, a critical issue in countries like the Philippines. This can be achieved by improving logistics, distribution, and quality control. Farmers can gain insights into transportation routes, storage conditions, and product shelf life by analyzing data from farm to fork. Real-time monitoring of storage conditions ensures that perishable products are maintained at optimal temperatures, reducing spoilage and increasing marketability.

The use of analytics in the agricultural sector is not without challenges as far as the use of big data and analytics is concerned. Agriculture players need to understand the power of analytics to help increase productivity and profitability. The availability of usable data is also often a challenge in agriculture because data collection can be expensive and time-consuming. The lack of skills among farmers and agricultural professionals can also be a challenge to the adoption of analytics.

Market reports say that the adoption of analytics in agriculture has been increasing consistently and is expected to reach US\$ 1.236 billion by this year. As seen in other countries, analytics have the potential to play a major role in improving agriculture productivity in the Philippines. This could be a critical prescription for ensuring food security in the country. (mon.ibrahim@aap.ph)

(The author is an executive member of the National Innovation Council, lead convenor of the Alliance for Technology Innovators for the Nation (ATIN), vice president of the Analytics and AI Association of the Philippines, and vice president, UP System Information Technology Foundation.)



TECH4GOOD
MON B. IBRAHIM
FORMER DICT
UNDERSECRETARY



COMMENTARY

Some favorite Filipino foods may disappear because of climate change

BY JOHN LEO ALGO

WITH the Philippines in the early stages of both an El Niño episode and the typhoon season, Filipinos are faced with multiple threats due to the climate crisis for the remainder of 2023. These events, which usually do not occur at the same time, could cause compounding losses and damage that would make it difficult for communities and ecosystems to recover.

This situation puts into focus the impacts of the climate crisis on food security. Without proper adaptation and mitigation solutions consistently implemented, we might start seeing some of our favorite foods and drinks disappear from markets, restaurants and our dining tables at home.

Chocolate

We Filipinos are long known for our fondness for sweets. Chocolate, in particular, is a consistent part of many social events, from Valentine's Day and Halloween celebrations to simple break times at work or school. The indulgence and comfort it provided were highlighted during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the country's interest in it increased and many of us sought it to escape the realities of the lockdowns.

However, the local industry remains too small to meet domestic demand. Being situated within the so-called Cocoa Belt, the Philippines has the proper soil and climate conditions to grow cocoa beans, which are

used to make chocolate. Yet it would be difficult to significantly increase its production under the threat of the climate crisis.

Increasing temperatures would cause disruptions in the water cycle, which, in turn, would make it difficult to maintain the level of humidity that allows cacao trees to grow. As a result, the "Cocoa Belt" could shrink to a smaller area around the equator.

There is already a global cocoa shortage, which would lead to higher prices for chocolate in the next few decades. Some scientists have even forecast that cacao trees could become extinct as early as 2050, largely due to the climate crisis. While experts and producers figure out ways to avoid this scenario, the future of chocolate remains unclear.

Coffee

Coffee has long been a part of the Filipino diet and culture, in both consumption and production. The Philippines ranks as the second-largest consumer of coffee in Asia, with percent of its citizens drinking an average of 2.5 cups every day. It is also one of the few countries with the capacity to grow all four types of coffee beans: Arabica, Excelsa, Liberica and Robusta.

Higher temperatures would alter many stages of the coffee life cycle, which would cause it to ripen more quickly and result in lower product quality. It would also likely lead to lower yields, affecting the global and local markets. The decline in productivity may also

be worsened by other factors that are also triggered by a warmer climate, such as more unpredictable rainfall and pest infestations.

These scenarios have been recognized in the most recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Continued global warming and the resulting changes in the climate would result in a decrease in both global coffee yields and land suitable for farming it.

Other issues associated with the industry may further worsen these trends. Decision-makers must ensure that solutions to be implemented will not only directly address climate change impacts on coffee production but also socioeconomic problems such as poverty levels among Filipino farmers and their access to climate-smart technologies.

Corn

Compared to coffee and chocolate, corn is a more important part of the Filipino food culture. It is the second-most important crop in the nation, with 600,000 farming families dependent on it for their livelihood. Around 14 million Filipinos regard it as their primary staple food, while yellow corn constitutes half of all livestock mixed feeds.

Corn ideally grows in a climate like the Philippines, with notable dry and wet seasons. This is because the different stages of its life cycle need to occur under different conditions. For example, while moderate rainfall for more than three months is suitable for better harvesting, high temperatures are more preferable during

the vegetative and flowering stages.

This is why disruptions in the occurrence of dry and wet seasons would adversely affect corn growth and production in the Philippines. A local study has shown that while the extent of the impact would differ across numerous areas in the country, there would be a decline in corn yields during the wet season from 2020 to 2080 due to the climate crisis.

While its survival for the next few decades is not as perilous as coffee or chocolate, it is still vital to ensure the sustainability of corn production and consumption, especially in the Philippine context. Proper policymaking at the national and local levels, with solutions such as adjusting the calendar for planting crops, improving irrigation systems, and improving early warning systems, would help mitigate adverse effects while also improving the overall agricultural sector.

We should not wait until we can no longer enjoy the foods and drinks we love the most before we truly understand the dangers of the climate crisis. We need to demand action from those responsible for this issue, and we also need to take action in our own sustainable ways.

John Leo is the deputy executive director for programs and campaigns of Living Laudato Si' Philippines, a member of Aksyon Klima Pilipinas, and the Youth Advisory Group for Environmental and Climate Justice under the UNDP in Asia and the Pacific. He has been a climate and environment journalist since 2016.

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Government urged to tap UP scientists to develop flood, drought-resistant crops

WITH the country's farmers facing the threats of the El Niño phenomenon, a lawmaker on Monday urged the government to tap educational institutions like the University of the Philippines (UP) to produce crops that can survive extreme weather conditions that lead to extended droughts and damaging floods.

Historically, AGRI Party-list Rep. Wilbert T. Lee said the El Niño has caused severe droughts that lead to water supply issues and subsequently, crop failure.

"We should all be deeply concerned about the looming threats of El Niño and its potential negative impact on our agricultural productivity, particularly rice production," said the lawmaker from Bicol in a statement.

"In addition to this, extreme weather events such as floods further exacerbate the challenges faced by our farmers. To address these challenges, we must utilize cutting-edge scientific approaches and maximize the wealth of knowledge in our state educational institutions

and science centers," he added.

In its first El Niño advisory, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) on July 4 announced that "recent Pagasa climate monitoring and analyses indicate that the unusual warming of sea surface temperatures along the equatorial Pacific that was established in March 2023 has further developed into a weak El Niño, which show signs of strengthening in the coming months."

To address this urgent issue, the lawmakers said the government should consider harnessing the expertise and resources of state educational institutions and science centers in a concerted effort to advance agricultural genomics research.

"By doing so, we can work towards developing drought and flood-resilient strains of rice that will safeguard our food security and mitigate the adverse effects of climatic uncertainties," said Lee.

The lawmaker said that recent

UP initiatives should be maximized by government to benefit Filipino farmers constantly threatened by droughts and typhoons.

Lee said one of these is a recent \$14.95 million agricultural genomics agreement between the UP and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to conduct the project, "Capacity-Building for Higher Education and the Establishment of Agricultural Genomics Research Center at the University of the Philippines Los Baños." *Jovee Marie N. Dela Cruz*



Countries urged to accept WTO fisheries agreement

By CATHERINE TALAVERA

SAN FRANCISCO – More countries, especially those with extensive coastal communities like the Philippines, are being urged to accept the World Trade Organization (WTO)'s agreement on fisheries subsidies to send a clear signal of zero tolerance on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUUF).

In a briefing with journalists under the Foreign Press Center's international reporting tour, Monterey Bay Aquarium vice president for global ocean initiatives Jennifer Dianto Kemmerly stressed the importance of having more countries accept the agreement.

"It is very important for countries to sign on to send a very clear signal of zero tolerance for subsidizing fleets and economies' efforts that are having some sort of egregious harm," Kemmerly said.

This is a call to action from over 200 scientists globally, pleading with countries to accept the agreement to end harmful fishing subsidies.

"I would add that the NGO (non-government organization) community would like to see that broaden," she said.

The agreement on fisheries subsidies, which was adopted by consensus at the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) held in Geneva from June 12 to 17, 2022, sets new and binding multilateral rules to curb harmful subsidies, which are a key factor in the widespread depletion of the world's fish stocks.

According to the WTO, the agreement recognizes the needs of developing and least-developed countries (LDCs), and establishes a fund to provide technical assistance and capacity building to help them implement the agreement.

It prohibits subsidies to IUUF and bans subsidies for fishing overfished stocks and for fishing in the unregulated high seas.

The WTO said members also agreed at MC12 to continue negotiations on outstanding issues, with a view to making recommendations by MC13, set in February 2024, for additional provisions that would further enhance the disciplines of the agreement.

WTO members recently demonstrated an increased sense of urgency in their discussions at the fourth of a series of "Fish Weeks" held from July 10 to 14 regarding the second wave of fisheries subsidies negotiations.

"Members came to this week with deepened reflections on various ideas on the proposals and texts on the table. It was clear that members have devoted considerable attention to all the elements before them. This effort remains a real indication of the sense of urgency and seriousness with which we are approaching this process," said Iceland Ambassador Einar Gunnarsson, who chairs the negotiations.

He also reiterated plans to hold four Fish Weeks in the fall, during the weeks starting Sept. 18, Oct. 9, Nov. 6 and Dec. 4.

Members will also meet on July 19 to discuss technical work related to the operation of the future committee on fisheries subsidies.

Among the countries that have submitted their acceptance of the agreement are Belize, Canada, China, Gabon, Iceland, Japan, Nigeria, Seychelles, Singapore, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, the United States and members of the European Union.

Kemmerly said the agreement only covers subsidies that support IUUF.

"So we're not subsidizing fleets that are part of the problem. You can have fishery subsidies to help drive environmental improvements or build more sustainable communities and contribute to economies. So positive subsidies are not what we're looking at here," Kemmerly said, referring to the agreement.

"We're looking at the harmful fishing subsidies," she said, adding that these are fishing vessels that have a history of illegality or environmental and social impacts that are egregious.

Last January, Trade Secretary Alfredo Pascual said the country was in the process of ratifying the agreement.

Pascual also affirmed the country's commitment to contribute to the second wave of the fisheries negotiations.

"I would like to emphasize that one of the top priorities of the Philippines is to advance agriculture negotiations. There is also an urgent need to restore the two-tier dispute settlement system and unblock the impasse in the selection process of the appellate body," he said.

The WTO earlier said that acceptances from two-thirds of its members are needed for the agreement to come into effect.

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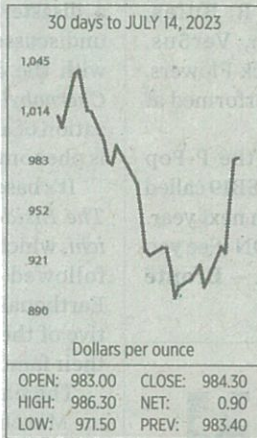
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US COMMODITY FUTURES

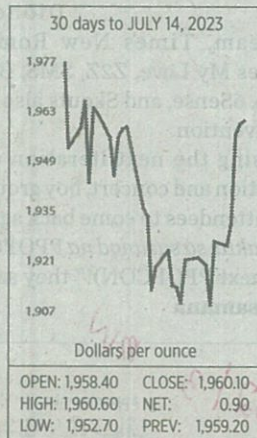
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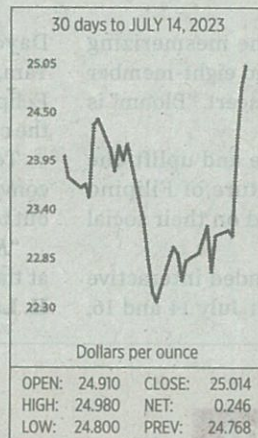
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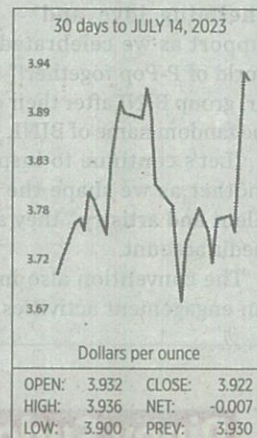
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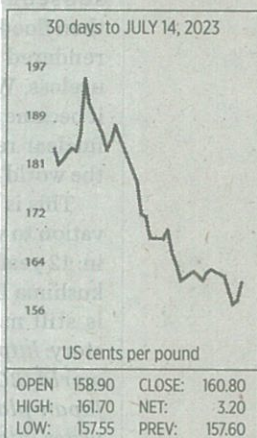
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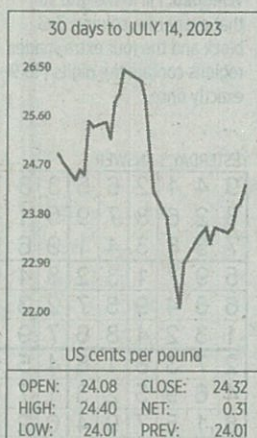
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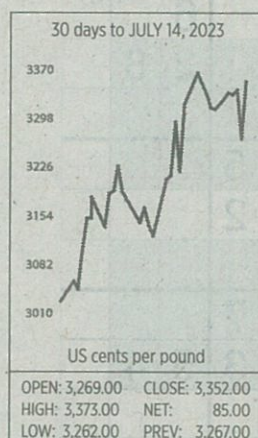
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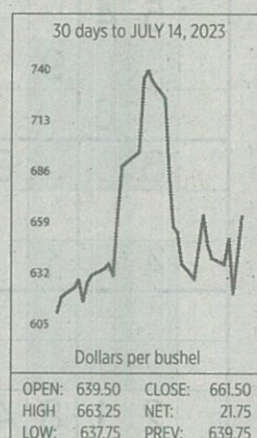
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COCOA (SEPTEMBER CONTRACT)



WHEAT (SEPTEMBER CONTRACT)



Corn jumps to two-week high; wheat rises on US Midwest dry weather

SINGAPORE — Chicago corn and soybean futures gained more ground on Monday, building on last week's rise as concerns over dry weather in the US Midwest drove prices higher.

Wheat climbed nearly 1% as slowing exports from the Black Sea region and lower output in China supported prices.

"I think corn and soybean markets are gathering weather concerns at present," said Phin Ziebell, an agribusiness economist at National Australia Bank.

The most-active corn contract on the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) was up 0.7% at \$5.17-3/4 a bushel, as of 0231 GMT, after touching its highest since June 30 at \$5.23 earlier in the day.

Soybeans Sv1 climbed 0.8% to \$13.81 a bushel, while wheat gained 0.9% to \$6.67-1/4 a bushel, have risen earlier in the session to \$6.71, the highest since July 6.

Concerns over dryness in the US Midwest also supported corn and soybean futures. The US corn crop is going through its key pollination phase and a lack of moisture could curb yields.

A United Nations (UN)-brokered deal that allows the safe Black Sea export of Ukrainian grain has not been extended as of Sunday, but "everything is possible," the Russian TASS state news agency reported, citing two unnamed United Nations sources.

The last ship to travel under the UN-brokered deal left the port of

Odesa early on Sunday ahead of a deadline to extend the agreement, according to a Reuters witness and MarineTraffic.com.

China's summer wheat output fell 0.9% this year, official data showed on Saturday, the first decline in seven years after heavy rain hit key growing areas just ahead of the harvest.

Output in the grain's top grower in the world fell to 134.53 million metric tons, the National Bureau of Statistics said, although it added that this year still brought a bumper harvest.

Large speculators increased their net short position in CBOT corn futures in the week to July 11, regulatory data released on Friday showed. — Reuters



Corn, soybeans jump

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