

CLIPPINGS FOR MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2023

A. SEC. PBBM QUOTED

MANILA BULLETIN

Private sector to play a role in Livestock Animal Registry

THE MANILA TIMES

BBM has to change his decision-making process

B. DA FAMILY

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BOC find overpriced, imported rice in 2 warehouses

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

P40-M rice seized in warehouse raids

Sticky food price inflation

DA begins holiday monitoring of agri prices

MANILA BULLETIN

BOC raids warehouses for allegedly smuggled rice

DILG, NCR coastal LGUs tackle issues on PH fisheries regulations

BUSINESS WORLD

Rice imports likely to exceed projections due to El Niño

BUSINESS MIRROR

Photo: An elderly woman...

SN aboitz power, NIA seal deal for Alimit dam project

'Expiry of anti-dumping duties on Turkish flour to hurt local industry'

Bill allots financial and technical support for revival of local salt-making industry

THE MANILA TIMES

P40M imported rice sold at higher prices

Agribusiness key to sustainable rice production

New hope for 'Makapuno' growers in Calabarzon

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

Study on Alimit hydro project set

Improved fish catch expected in Zamboanga

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL

PhilMech urged to use budget wisely, buy more farm equipment

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON

SINGA: Price cap sa bigas, pwede nang alisin sa sunod na mga lingo

C. AGRI-RELATED STORY

BUSINESS MIRROR

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Escudero: File charges vs rice smuggler, hoarders

MANILA BULLETIN

Northern Mindanao eastern visayas rice retailers get cash

Caraga rice retailers receive cash assistance

BUSINESS WORLD

Trade deficit in agri goods widens to \$2.71B in Q2

BUSINESS MIRROR

Editorial: The rice cartel makes the whole nation suffer

PSA sees slight decline in Q3 palay output

THE MANILA TIMES

Escudero prods Customs charge rice smugglers

Agri trade contracts 14.9% in Q2

ABANTE

Mga smuggler, hoarder ng bigas kasuhan na!

REMATE

Tamban fish hatchery para sa seguridad sa pagkain

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON

Tamban fish hatchery para sa food security – Sen. Tolentino

D. FOREIGN STORY

BUSINESS WORLD

Raw sugar futures jump to 12-year high

Indonesia reports massive rise in rice imports to refresh stockpiles

Global hunger worse today than in 2015, FAO says

BUSINESS MIRROR

Flood of Russian wheat halves world prices from wartime high

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

Soybeans, corn down



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Private sector to play a role in Livestock Animal Registry

The private sector will be tapped by the Department of Agriculture (DA) in the implementation of a Livestock Animal Registry (LAR), which seeks to ensure that legitimate livestock farmers benefit from government programs for the sector.

DA Undersecretary Deogracias Victor B. Savellano told the general assembly of the National Federation of Hog Farmers, Inc. (NATFED) that DA will partner with the private sector in establishing the LAR.

"This will identify how many and where are the different farm animals and to whom should the government give any form of subsidy from funds earmarked by the government."

Aside from ensuring that benefits go to the right beneficiaries, the LAR will also help implement repopulation of livestock amid diseases like the African swine fever (ASF) that brought farmers huge losses.

DA's partnership with the private sector will also ensure accurate industry data. This will ensure industry leaders will be able to

come up with best business decisions.

"Philippine Statistics Authority reports there are 10.2 million pigs," but he said that it could just be around 7.5 to 8 million if industry stakeholders because the industry claimed that they lost around 40 percent from African Swine Fever since 2019.

DA will also study ways to help livestock farmers cut costs of farm inputs – feed ingredients and livestock genetics (superior breed of piglets, calves, chicks). The aim is to ease farmers' burden on these costs that represent the sizable 70% of producing meat, milk, and egg.

Indemnification system will further be improved to aid livestock owners who lost from ASF and other diseases.

Savellano said DA will also be transferring to farmers the technology that have long been developed in the country's state universities and colleges (SUC). This may include vaccines and other modern farming systems and technologies that will be adopted in partnership with the Department

of Science & Technology.

"The concern of neglect in our agriculture for decades as aptly described by our DA Secretary President BongBong Marcos should be resolved. One of the solutions is to closely study particular farm inputs in livestock production," said Savellano.

Tax reductions suited to the livestock sector will also be considered.

A statement released by the Department of Budget and Management indicated that out of the proposed ₱197.84 billion budget of DA, the National Livestock Program will get a share of ₱4.3 billion. Also, based on the proposed budget, ₱2.22 billion will be allotted for the Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion program (INSPIRE).

DA's thrust is to repopulate hogs amidst the continuing threat of ASF. DA will ensure that the vaccine under trial will be proven safe and effective. The vaccine should follow all universally acceptable protocols. (Bernie Cahiles-Magkilat)

11 8 SEP 2023

Date: _____

Page: A1 2 A11



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BBM has to change his decision-making process

FINANCE
Secretary
Benjamin
Diokno's
admission that



**RIGOBERTO
D. TIGLAO**

neither he nor other economic managers were consulted by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on the rice price cap decision bolsters accounts that I have been receiving over the President's decision-making process. Unfortunately, they claim his decisions have been made haphazardly, and without consultation with his officials or other private advisers knowledgeable about the issue.

➤ **TiglaoA11**



Unlike most effective presidents of corporations, and even a few presidents of the Republic, Marcos reportedly hardly consults with advisers on a decision to be made, nor does he have a group that he asks to debate the pros and cons of a controversy. In the case of the rice price cap, I was told that the Agriculture department's senior undersecretary Domingo Panganiban called him up to recommend it, and he immediately agreed to the proposal.

I couldn't find anybody to tell me who or what group Marcos consults with. I had thought chief presidential legal counsel Juan Ponce Enrile and Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, a former Supreme Court chief justice, would be the heavyweights he would ask for advice. "Have you ever seen a photo of him talking to them?" a Malacañang insider said with a wide grin. Marcos Cabinet meetings are a formality in which reports are presented to a bored audience with no discussion of important issues facing the country. The Cabinet meetings, two members told me, are practically a ritual, dominated by boring PowerPoint events.

Marcos set up a Private Sector Advisory Council a week after he assumed office, headed by his reportedly biggest financial supporter, Sabin Aboitiz, the head of that rapidly expanding conglomerate of the same name. While having an unwieldy 33 members, it is divided into four sectors, with Aboitiz heading the infrastructure and tourism sector; La Filipina Uy Gongco Corp. President Aileen Uygongco-Ongkauko for agriculture; RFM conglomerate head Joey Concepcion; and Henry Agudo, CEO of another Aboitiz firm, Union Bank, for digital infrastructure.

However, the council has met only four times since July 2022. "It's more of a thank you, in recognition of those who financed his bid for the presidency, and for a member of the council, a message to everyone that he's close to Marcos," said one insider.

Read Marcos Sr.'s diaries, and it becomes obvious he had a penchant for consulting many officials, such as Alejandro Melchor, Rafael Salas, Juan Ponce Enrile, Roberto Ongpin and Cesar Virata. Even the final decision to declare martial law was discussed by a group that would be dubbed, to denigrate it as a cabal of plotters, the "Rolex 12." What really happened is that entry-level Rado watches were given by Marcos in a

celebratory event there years later, when martial law appeared to have been a success. The "cabal" consisted of the defense secretary, the police chief (Ramos), the armed forces chief of staff, the service commanders, the heads of the intelligence agencies, and his main adviser on politics, Eduardo Cojuangco — in short, the military establishment with a civilian contingent.

Ironically, or problematically, for an organization that has the most impact on Filipinos' lives, there's been no accepted playbook, no management theories for running the Philippine presidency. Corazon Aquino is said to have relied on the tandem of her executive secretary throughout her presidency, Joker Arroyo, and her spokesman and current ambassador to the United Kingdom, Teodoro Locsin Jr., and what was dubbed the "Council of Trent," the Jesuit-trained market-oriented businessmen and technocrats led by her first finance secretary, Jaime Ongpin, until his suicide in December 1987.

President Fidel Ramos, of course, was known to consult his national security adviser, Jose Almonte, and Speaker Jose de Venecia on almost any issue. Ramos also had a shadow group of advisers, consisting of PR and media practitioners, who gave him feedback on public opinion on the results of his actions.

Arroyo

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, during her first years in office, had regular breakfast meetings with a group of her top officials. Arroyo, in fact, had a penchant for conducting long meetings with a cluster of her Cabinet members to discuss in detail a specific issue. At least President Estrada discussed things with his "midnight Cabinet," even consuming several bottles of his fabled Petrus wine to analyze fine points. "The problem was he followed whatever the last tro whispered to him," a former Cabinet member claimed.

I hadn't heard of President Benigno Aquino 3rd having such a "collective" that he consulted for his decisions, except for the decision to file the arbitration case against China, which was dominated, however, by his foreign secretary, with the rest of those attending clueless about the issue.

That non-consultative penchant proved to be his undoing, politically. He didn't even discuss with Mar Roxas, who had control of the Philippine National Police, and with the military brass the Special Action

Forces' ill-fated operation against a terrorist group in Mamasapano. That resulted in the massacre of 44 of the SAF troops, with the police and military leadership unable to respond because they had not been informed at all of the operation.

The practice of having committees or councils — which I term a "collective" — has been a must in a nation's governance, given the complexity of issues that have to be understood, the factors affecting a decision, and the nearly infinite permutations of outcomes. After all, intelligence, educational level, and certainly wisdom are not qualifications for one to be president in any democratic system.

In the US, however, this practice of consultations has been institutionalized, with presidential advisers for this or that having offices near the Oval Office. The US president is nearly mandated to consult with such institutions as his Council of Economic Advisers, National Security Council, President's Intelligence Advisory Board and Homeland Security Council.

Communist

Even a form of government totally different from that of the US, the People's Republic of China, has structures and processes requiring consultation by its leaders. This is in fact intrinsic to the Communist Party's structures since Mao's time, who made it a communist dogma (although he seemed to have not followed it all) the management style or practice of "democratic centralism," in which actual leadership over a certain function is bestowed on a committee, which is required to vet a decision first (democratic), agree on it, and after that, it is implemented to its end by everyone without question.

Even Chinese President Xi Jinping answers to the "executive committee" of the Political Bureau, the highest leadership organ of the party.

Not only that, the Chinese government has utilized that Western invention, the think tank, to guide its decisions and actions. In fact, China has the second-biggest number of think tanks, 429, in the world after the US' 1,830. Unlike many of the American think tanks that are nearly academic or venues for propaganda, Chinese think tanks are tasked with studying thoroughly a particular issue, which the ministry involved then evaluates, submits its recommendation to a party cell in charge of that aspect of government, to be discussed again, approved

and implemented. China didn't become the world's leader in the production of electric cars by accident. Way back in 2010, alerted by the rise of Elon Musk's Tesla, several Chinese think tanks were mobilized to research and propose plans on how China could massively go into e-car production. Obviously, these think tanks' recommendations succeeded.

That's why I'm worried about our disputes with China in the South China Sea. We don't have an independent think tank evaluating our responses to this issue, only a "National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea," consisting mostly of military men really ignorant of the South China Sea disputes, and a foreign affairs department brainwashed by US thinking, whose sole approach is to provoke China to get the US to defend us. In contrast, China in 2004 set up a think tank, the National Institute for South China Sea Studies, which has over 100 resident academics and visiting researchers studying the gamut of disputes in that sea, from historical studies to diplomatic solutions.

We can be sure that China has several other think tanks working on the South China Sea issue, and whatever they do would be well-thought-out and well-planned, just as they built structures on Mischief Reef in 1994 right under our noses. And while our officials and the US were congratulating themselves for the clever "lawfare" that the 2012 arbitration suit was, just a small cabal that proposed, undertook and "proved" that China's claims in the Spratlys were without legal basis, the Chinese turned the seven reefs they occupied into artificial islands with all the facilities that a military base required, changing the geopolitical landscape of the South China Sea to their advantage.

Each president creates the kind of presidency he wants. That's really an amateurish approach.

I'm afraid Marcos is leading the country solely by gut feel, or by something else, or maybe somebody else's advice. Just a year or so into the presidency, however, he can change his decision-making process. Tapping other minds for this is the proven way to arrive at decisions, so long as — as Arroyo often reminded her officials — "analysis doesn't become paralysis."

Facebook: Rigoberto Tiglaio

Twitter: @bobitiglaio

Archives: www.rigobertotiglaio.com

Book orders: www.rigobertotiglaio.com/shop



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

SMUGGLED, HOARDED

BOC FINDS OVERPRICED, IMPORTED RICE IN 2 WAREHOUSES

By Tina G. Santos
and Marlon Ramos
@Team_Inquirer

Authorities inspected warehouses in Las Piñas City and Cavite suspected of storing smuggled rice and selling them above the prescribed price range.

According to the Bureau of Customs (BOC), rice products from Vietnam, Thailand and China, with an estimated value of P40 million, were found inside two warehouses located in Las Piñas and Bacoor, Cavite, during inspection.

The BOC said it carried extensive investigation, surveillance and test purchases prior to the inspection.

During the investigation, it was discovered that the trader was selling a 25-kilogram sack of Vietnamese Rice for P1,320 in the market, equivalent to P52.8 per kg.

"This price significantly ex-

ceeded the Department of Agriculture's prescribed range of P41-45 per kilo for well-milled and regular-milled rice," the BOC said in a statement.

But the warehouse owner claimed that they were just traders and not importers, so Customs agents told the owner to provide proof of payment of correct duties and taxes from their supplier or importer.

15 days to validate

Authorities granted the owner a 15-day period to submit documentation to validate the legality of the importation of the subject sacks of rice, and payment of correct duties and taxes.

But Sen. Francis Escudero said law enforcers should not stop at seizing rice found to be imported and sold illegally.

"We should not be content with just doing raids ... We should bring them to the court of justice to prove that this ad-

ministration is resolute in its campaign against rice cartel," Escudero said in a statement.

File cases

He said the BOC must file appropriate cases against individuals allegedly facilitating the unlawful entry of rice and hoarding the food staple, which results in an increase in its retail price.

"Why haven't I heard anyone [being] sued for economic sabotage?" Escudero pointed out. "Who owns these warehouses? Who are the people involved?"

Under Republic Act No. 10845, or the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016, he noted that individuals suspected of involvement in large-scale smuggling of agricultural products may be held liable for economic sabotage.

The senator issued the statement after the BOC announced a separate operation

where it confiscated 42,180 sacks of rice, worth some P42 million, in Zamboanga City.

Led by Speaker Martin Romualdez, the BOC also inspected last month several warehouses in Bulacan province that were believed to be hoarding smuggled rice.

According to Escudero, the BOC should make public the names and identities of the traders who own and operate the warehouses.

After filing the appropriate charges, the government must provide updates on the status of the cases "in the spirit of transparency," he added.

In addition, he said, the BOC and other state agencies involved in confiscating smuggled rice should explain how the seized items were being kept.

"Who oversees [its] disposition and how will it be disposed? What will they do with the confiscated rice?" he asked. **INQ**



P40-M rice seized in warehouse raids

By EVELYN MACAIRAN

The Bureau of Customs (BOC), along with other government agencies, seized an estimated P40 million worth of suspected smuggled rice from Cavite and Las Piñas.

This happened shortly after the BOC confiscated some 42,180 sacks of rice worth P42 million following a raid on a warehouse in Zamboanga City late last week. The agency inspection revealed tens of thousands of sacks of Alas Jasmine fragrant rice.

For the Cavite and Las Piñas raids, the BOC learned that a 25-kilo sack of rice was reportedly being sold at P1,320 in the market or P52.8 per kilo.

The BOC said the price was beyond the ceilings set by the Department of Agriculture (DA), which are P41 a kilo for regular milled rice and P45 per kilo for well-milled.

It was unclear if the rice seized falls under the two categories. Special rice varieties are not covered by the price caps. The warehouse owners also reportedly said they were not importers but rice traders.

The BOC's Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service, Enforcement and Security Service, Port of Manila, and Legal Service and the Philippine Coast Guard and barangay

Turn to Page 6

Date: SEPT. 18, 2023 Page: 126



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

P40-M From Page 1

officials conducted the raid on Sept. 14.

They reportedly conducted an inspection, extensive investigation, surveillance and test purchases before raiding a warehouse in Pulang Lupa, Las Piñas, and in Bacoor, Cavite.

The BOC noted that the warehouses, owned by a single trader, were found to be storing rice products from Vietnam, Thailand and China, with an aggregate value of P40 million.

The BOC requested the warehouse owner to provide proof of payment of correct duties and taxes from their supplier or importer.

The owner was given a 15-day period to submit the necessary documents to validate the legality of the importation of the subject sacks of rice, and check if correct duties and taxes were paid.

The BOC conducted the operation in line with President Marcos' directive to intensify efforts against rice smuggling, hoarding and illicit trading in the country, aimed at ensuring affordable staple food for people amidst rising rice prices.

Rice micro retailers receive cash aid

Meanwhile, a total of 37 micro rice retailers in Tarlac and 25 in Pampanga received cash aid amounting to P15,000 each from the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

DSWD Regional Office III program coordinator Wilma Gutierrez said that the listed beneficiaries were monitored and certified by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) as compliant to EO 39.

"While it is challenging to comply with the EO, we still thank you for following the imposed prices on regular milled and well-milled rice," she told the recipients.

Gutierrez explained that beneficiaries need to present a government-issued identification card and a copy of their business permit for verification.

A total of 25 micro rice retailers in Pampanga also received their P15,000 each from the DSWD.

According to DTI officer-in-charge and regional director Brigida Pili, she asked micro rice retailers to be patient, as the price cap is just a temporary response to the increasing prices of rice in the country.

"We know that you are losing profit because you bought rice at P48 per kilo, and now that you were asked to sell them at P41 or 45 per kilo, you are losing about P7 per kilo. We hope that this (cash assistance) serves as a form of economic relief for you," she said.

The agency provided the list of qualified micro rice retailers after conducting price monitoring activities in public markets.

—With Louise Maureen Simeon,
Ric Sapnu



Sticky food price inflation

A price cap on rice notwithstanding, consumers will experience rising food price inflation in the coming months. We are not producing much of the food we need. Importing all those will require more pesos as the exchange rate with the US dollar continues to deteriorate to the P56 to 57 range.

Blame the strong dollar, but also blame the failure of our agricultural sector to produce more of the food we need. Food prices in the Philippines increased by 8.1 percent year-on-year in August, the fastest rise since March, after a 6.3 percent gain a month earlier.

DEMAND AND SUPPLY



BOO CHANCO

Upward price pressures came from most components, namely rice (8.7 percent vs 4.2 percent in July), flour, bread, pasta, and other cereals (nine percent vs 10.1 percent), fish and other seafood (6.9 percent vs 4.5 percent), milk, dairy products and eggs (7.8 percent vs 9.7 percent), fruits and nuts (9.6 percent vs 8.4 percent), vegetables (31.9 percent vs 21.8 percent), sugar, confectionery and desserts (13.2 percent vs 21.4 percent), and ready-made food and other food products (7.3 percent vs 7.8 percent).

The CPI of 118.6 percent in July indicated that consumer prices, on average, had increased by 18.6 percent from the base year 2018. This means a basket of commodities that could be purchased at P100 by an average Filipino household in NCR in 2018 could be bought at P118.6 in July this year.

While most of our foodstuffs are still locally produced, supply has fallen. Double digit reductions were seen in the available food supply for vegetables, fish, and seafood. Increased food importation has seen an annual per capita increase in the supply of cereals, meat, and sources of fat and protein.

Now, the falling peso will increase our food import bill. We are importing more than a fourth of the food we eat. In 2022, agricultural imports into the Philippines amounted to

approximately \$19.3 billion, indicating an increase from the previous year. In that year, cereals (rice and corn) accounted for the highest share of the total agricultural imports to the country.

The Philippines has long been facing challenges on food security despite having vast agricultural land ready for cultivation. To ensure food sufficiency, we have depended on imports, such that our import dependency ratio in 2021 was at 25.1 percent, according to data from the Philippine Statistics Authority.

The President said during the 2023 Asia Summit in Singapore last week that "we cannot now continue to depend on importation... it became the easy way out. Just import more, import more rice, import more corn, import more everything." But there is no easy way to recover from past neglect of the agriculture sector. To feed everyone, we must import.

This is why the President and his agri team must be skillful in managing our situation. In 2008, former president Gloria Arroyo realized we would have a rice shortage, which led her to stock up by importing quietly. When the international market realized what she was doing, rice market prices started to go up, but our supply was already secured.

This time, an Agri usec told a House committee we have insufficient buffer stock at 39 days in August and 44 days in September compared to the usual 60 to 90 days. That information plus the Indian export ban were enough to make our usual sources for exported rice to raise their prices.

That made our traders hesitate to buy and some even cancelled orders. To make matters worse, the President instituted a price cap, which means the local traders couldn't have recovered their import cost if they didn't cancel their orders. That made our supply situation even more precarious.

Lesson learned: We shouldn't be noisy about our predicaments and like former president GMA quietly move to remedy the situation before the whole world realizes the problem.

An article in the website of Carnegie Endowment for International Peace noted that the President will have very limited policy choices in the short term to enhance food security.

"The Philippines is the most food-insecure country in emerging Asia due to its reliance on imported food to feed its expanding population, and Marcos' self-appointment (as agriculture secretary) is a worrisome sign for his country's

food self-sufficiency amid a looming crisis," the article noted.

Food is about 40 percent of our consumer price index and we have the largest food trade deficit in the region, at about negative two percent of GDP in the past three years, the Carnegie article reports. "The Philippines does not have tools, such as good protectionism, to help it through this crisis. Instead, it falls victim to other countries' food nationalism, as the squeeze on global supply impacts it most severely through shortages and higher prices..."

"And with a population expected to grow to from 110 million today to 145 million by 2050, the Philippines' food insecurity will remain an issue in the decades ahead... improving food production to reduce exposure to volatile global prices will be key to feeding the country's rapidly growing population."

Our big problem is the low productivity of our agricultural sector. Farming methods are antiquated, the economics of agriculture impoverish the farmers and the government is focused mostly on rice. Arsenio Balisacan, the country's chief economist said the more robust solution to food security challenges is boosting domestic agricultural production.

"We will do this through more investments in the food value chain and research and development to enhance farm productivity and improve the efficiency of postharvest processes. Getting (the) government to facilitate private investments in marketing infrastructure, including storage, transport, and logistics, is crucial to achieving durable food security," he added.

All of Balisacan's prescriptions are easier said than done. The President has not started to implement any of those things yet.

I asked an agricultural economist how much of the basic foodstuff we locally produce and this was his reply off the top of his head: "rice, between 84 to 90 percent depending on typhoon visits. For yellow corn only 60 percent. For chicken, almost 95 percent pero pork, less than 70 percent. For tilapia, almost 100 percent, bangus, less than 80 percent and all fish, below 70 percent. For garlic only 10 percent, milk one percent, and vegetables are very seasonal."

In other words, we are food import dependent because of rapid population growth and low farm productivity. Those are the challenges we have to meet.

Boo Chanco's email address is bchanco@gmail.com. Follow him on X (Twitter) @boochanco



SEPT. 18, 2023

PAGE 1 & 10

DA begins holiday monitoring of agri prices

The Department of Agriculture and other concerned government agencies are closely monitoring the price movements of agricultural products in markets amid the expected upward trend in the cost of food products during the Christmas season, a DA official

said yesterday.

Glenn Panganiban, Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) director, said in a radio interview that the DA's agribusiness and marketing assistance service or AMAS is coordinating with the Department of Trade and Industry and

Department of the Interior and Local Government to ensure that unnecessary spikes in retail prices of basic commodities during the so-called "Ber" months are checked.

"We are closely monitoring the markets," Panganiban said. "We are aware

that during the Christmas season, there is a tendency for the prices (to go up)."

Aside from the expected high demand for various farm products during the holiday season, he said typhoons might also affect the prices.

Turn to Page 10

DA begins From Page 1

"During the last quarter of the year, we are still being hit by typhoons. As of now, we are still in the letter I. We are frequented by 20 typhoons a year, so we expect more climate disturbances," Panganiban pointed out.

He assured the public that efforts are being made to up-scale food production not only for palay, but also for other high value crops.

No need to import siling labuyo

As for local chili or *siling labuyo*, the DA official said there is "no need to import" despite a spike in retail prices amid a shortage in supply after more than 100 hectares of plantations were damaged by recent typhoons and as cost already reached as high as P800 per kilo.

"The consumption of local chili is not that big as it is only used for sauces, for other

spices and condiments but we support our value industry like local chili," Panganiban said.

According to Panganiban, the BPI is closely monitoring the production of local chili with the expected demand this Christmas.

"We are providing seeds and encouraging our farmers to expand production. We also promote backyard farming in the households," he added.

Based on monitoring of the DA, local chili is sold between P500 and P800 per kilo in Metro Manila markets.

Panganiban expressed confidence that retail prices of local chili will go down before Christmas.

"It is difficult to say exactly how much the decrease or increase (will be). If we will not be hit by another typhoon, we expect the prices to stabilize in anticipation of the season," he said.

— Bella Cariaso



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BOC raids warehouses for allegedly smuggled rice

The Bureau of Customs raided two warehouses in Las Piñas and Cavite that were suspected of containing smuggled rice.

Customs reported that the warehouses, located in Pulang Lupa, Las Piñas, and Bacoor, Cavite, contained rice products from Vietnam, Thailand, and China, with an estimated value of ₱40 million.

"Prior to this inspection, an extensive investigation, surveillance, and test purchases were carried out," the bureau said in a statement on Sunday, Sept. 17.

During the investigation, Customs said it also discovered that the trader was selling a 25-kilo sack of Vietnamese rice for ₱1,320 in the market, which is equivalent to ₱52.8 per kilo.

"This price significantly exceeded the Department of Agriculture's prescribed range of ₱41-45 per kilo for well-milled and regular-milled rice," the agency noted.

But Customs cited that the warehouse owner claimed to be rice traders rather than importers.

In response, Customs operatives requested the owner to provide proof of payment of the correct duties and taxes from their supplier or importer.

"Authorities granted the owner a 15-day period to submit the necessary documentation to validate the legality of the importation of the subject sacks of rice and payment of correct duties and taxes due thereon," the bureau said.

The inspection, which took place last Sept. 14, was conducted by the

Customs bureau in collaboration with its Intelligence and Investigation Service, Enforcement and Security Service, Port of Manila, Legal Service, and the Philippine Coast Guard.

This developed as Senator Francis "Chiz" Escudero urged the BOC to stop conducting raids and start filing charges against rice smugglers and hoarders.

"Ang dami nang raids na ginawa nitong mga nakaraang linggo, bakit hanggang ngayon, wala pang kasong isinasampa sa mga taong sangkot (We have conducted so many raids in the past weeks, but until now, why are there no charges still being filed against those people involved?)" Escudero pointed out.

"Hindi tayo dapat nagtatapos sa mga raids lamang. Naghihintay at nagmamatayag ang taumbayan sa sunod na hakbangin ng pamahalaan (We shouldn't stop at doing raids. The people are waiting to see what the government will do next)," he pointed out.

"Sampahan na agad ng kaso ang mga dapat sampahan (Charges should be filed against them immediately). We should bring them to the court of justice to prove that this administration is resolute in its campaign against rice cartel," Escudero said.

The senator also said the BOC should publicly disclose the names of traders and operators whose warehouses were raided by the government for tons of suspected smuggled rice. (Gabriell Christel Galang/Hannah Torregoza)

Date: SEPT. 18, 2023 Page: 4



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

DILG, NCR coastal LGUs tackle issues on PH fisheries regulations

By CHITO CHAVEZ

The Department of the Interior and Local Government-National Capital Region (DILG-NCR) met with officials of coastal communities in Metro Manila and discussed the issues affecting the local fishing regulations.

The local coastal communities included those in Las Piñas City, Manila, Navotas City, Parañaque City, and Pasay City.

Through the Manila Bay Clean-up Rehabilitation and Preservation Program – Regional Program Management Team (MBCRP-PMT), the DILG and select fisherfolks from the concerned local government units (LGUs) had a dialogue on the intricacies of the Republic Act (RA) 8550, or the “The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998.”

“The fisherfolks were joined by representatives from the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR), Department of the Environment and Natural Resources – NCR (DENR – NCR), Philippine National Police (PNP) – Maritime Group, and the Philippine Coast Guard-Maritime Industry Authority (PCG-MARINA),” the DILG-NCR noted.

Jason Boholano of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR)-NCR presented an overview of RA 8550 as amended by RA 10654, followed by a forum on the Fisheries Code.

In the meeting, the multi-sectoral

group also tackled issues pertaining to DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2023-012 or the “Guidelines in the Enactment and/or Updating of the Municipal/City Fisheries Ordinance of Coastal Local Government Units.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-NCR’s representative Justin de Ramos provided updates on the National Guidelines for the Coastal Resource Management Plan (CRMP) and the integration of CRMP in the Comprehensive Development Plan and Comprehensive Land Use Plan of local jurisdictions.

Lt. Lorna L. Sison of the Philippine National Police (PNP) Maritime Group discussed the roles and responsibilities of Fishery Law Enforcement Officers and the requirements and processes imposed by law enforcement agencies.

A dialogue between the fisherfolks and the government fisheries bodies also discussed issues relevant to fisheries management, such as the integration of the Coastal Resource Management Plan in the Comprehensive Development Plan and coastal laws implemented by enforcement agencies.

“The Philippine Coast Guard MARINA also shared relevant information concerning their operations with LGUs and the fisherfolk. The activity served as a platform to explore viable solutions to the many challenges facing fisherfolks in the coastal areas of NCR,” the DILG added.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Rice imports likely to exceed projections due to El Niño

By **Adrian H. Halili**
Reporter

RICE IMPORTS are expected to surpass projections issued by both the US and Philippine Agriculture departments due to the El Niño-induced dry conditions, analysts said.

Calixto V. Chikiamco, Foundation for Economic Freedom president, said that due to El Niño and the possibility of more typhoons this year, "it's highly likely that our imports will be higher than the DA (Department of Agriculture) forecast."

The government weather service, known as PAGASA (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration), has said that El Niño is likely to peak in late 2023 and early 2024.

"Importing is more logistically simple and efficient and therefore traders can fulfill the

forecasted deficit with more imports," Mr. Chikiamco said in a Viber message.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) said in its latest Grain: World Markets and Trade report, that the Philippines is projected to import 3.8 million metric tons (MT) during the marketing year 2023-2024.

The Philippine DA, however, said imports will be "much less" than the USDA's forecast.

"We expect to import much less than USDA's 3.8 million MT projected rice imports in 2023. This indicates that the volume we imported in 2022 was much more than the deficit," Leocadio S. Sebastian, DA undersecretary for rice development, said in a statement.

Mr. Sebastian added that domestic rice production must step up to curb the need for imports.

"The uncertainty of depending on external sources for our staple and the high price of imported rice makes it imperative

for us to produce more locally," he said.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort said that the proposed reduction of rice import tariffs, which are designed to somewhat temper imports, may also cause imports to surge.

"The proposed temporary reduction in rice import tariffs would reduce the price of imported rice, which could further boost demand for imported cheaper rice varieties," Mr. Ricafort said in a Viber message.

The Department of Finance (DoF) is proposing to cut tariffs for rice amid a surge in the domestic retail price.

Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno said that the DoF proposed a reduction of the "35% rice import tariff rates, to both ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and MFN (Most Favored Nation) rates, temporarily to zero percent or a maximum of 10% to arrest the surge in rice prices."

The government imposed a temporary price ceiling on regular-milled rice and well-milled rice of P41 per kilogram and P45 per kilo, respectively.

Federation of Free Farmers National Manager Raul Q. Montemayor said farmers may lose billions because traders will offer lower farmgate prices for their harvest in response to competition from cheaper imports.

Mr. Montemayor said during a Tariff Commission hearing that rice retail prices may fall by P7 per kilo if tariff rates are slashed.

"If rice prices go down by P7 per kilo, the effect of that in palay (unmilled rice) prices would be about (a drop of) P4.44 per kilo," he said.

"If there is a direct transmission in tariff reduction into a reduction in palay prices, multiply that by palay production in 2022, the farmer's losses will be about P88 billion in terms of reduced income," he added.

In 2022 palay production was 19.75 million MT.



AN elderly woman carefully selects tomatoes at Paco Market in Manila, where tomato prices have soared to as high as P300 per kilo due to a shortage in supply, as reported by the Department of Agriculture. ROY DOMINGO

Date: 18 SEP 2023

Page: B2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

SN Aboitiz Power, NIA seal deal for Alimit dam project

By LENIE LECTURA @llectura

SN Aboitiz Power (SNAP) and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) will jointly undertake a feasibility study for the Alimit multipurpose dam project.

Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by NIA Acting Administrator Eddie G. Guilen and SNAP President Joseph S. Yu, both firms will jointly cooperate to pursue the conduct of a study on the

feasibility of establishing the project to be used for irrigation, flood reduction in the Province of Cagayan, and additional hydropower generation for the Luzon grid. The cooperation is expected to provide additional

benefits for agriculture, aquaculture, tourism and general industry development.

SNAP, a joint venture of SN Power of Norway and Aboitiz Power Corp., has long been reassessing its hydro project following challenges encountered in permitting process and grid interconnection.

"Actually, we've held back on Alimit given issues with the permitting," Aboitiz Power President Emmanuel V. Rubio earlier said.

Rubio has said that the 390-megawatt (MW) Alimit Hydropower Complex has not been cancelled but there had been technical issues that affected the proj-

ect's viability. Once these issues are resolved, he said the Alimit project would help alleviate flooding in Northern Luzon because it can trap certain amounts of water.

"It will not prevent flooding, but at least it would help alleviate flooding; and that's the new track we're evaluating with the government."

The NIA and SNAP have long been partners in the operation of the largest multipurpose dam in the country, the Magat dam. This venture is considered vital in the agricultural productivity of Region II and the country and in the generation of electricity for the Luzon grid.



'Expiry of anti-dumping duties on Turkish flour to hurt local industry'

BY ANDREA E. SAN JUAN

[@andreasanjuan](#)

FLOUR millers are pushing for the extension of the anti-dumping duties on Turkish wheat flour, which "poses a threat" to the domestic industry.

The Philippine Association of Flour Millers Inc. (Pafmil) said Manila should not allow the anti-dumping duties on wheat flour from Turkey to expire.

"The expiration of the anti-dumping duties would enable Turkish firms which had exited the market due to an inability to compete at their normal prices to regain their foothold in the Philippines and regain market share to the detriment of fairly priced exporters and local producers," according to the staff report of Pafmil presented at the hearing organized by the Tariff Commission last Friday.

"While the Philippines's significance as an export market for Turkish wheat flour has lessened through the years due to the anti-dumping duties that are imposed, the Philippines will remain a highly attractive market," it added.

Local flour millers claimed that there is a "well-established" trading relationship between the Philippines and Turkey. Moreover, they said there is increasing domestic demand for wheat flour end-products, such as bread and pastries, which means that competitively priced wheat flour from Turkey will remain "a strong option."

During the hearing, Rodolfo Britanico, counsel for petitioner Pafmil, cross-examined the oppositor, the Southeast Anatolian Exporters' Association, which was represented by Gulden Bozdeniz.

Britanico questioned Bozdeniz's presentation, saying there is "no evidence on continuation/recurrence of injury." To support this claim, Bozdeniz displayed

a graph that showed the Philippines's wheat flour imports from Turkey declined to 3,697 metric tons (MT) in 2022 from 116,592 MT in 2015.

Further, Bozdeniz said that from 2015 to 2020, four Turkish exporters were excluded from the order. After 2020, she said that out of 17 companies, one exporter had been excluded and 8 exporters have dumping margins below 6 percent.

In response, Britanico pointed out that the Philippines imposed the anti-dumping duty on Turkish wheat flour from 2015 to 2020, the same period shown on the graph displayed on the presentation of Bozdeniz.

The imposition of the anti-dumping duty on Turkish wheat flour was extended for another three years or until later this year. It is set to expire on October 27, nearly eight years since the Philippine government had determined the necessity of implementing the trade remedy to protect the local flour milling industry.

The counsel for the local flour millers said, "I just want to put it to you that the decrease or decline of Turkish exports to the Philippines is a result of the anti-dumping duties."

Britanico cited Section 19 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 8752 or the Anti-Dumping Act of 1999 which states: "An expiry review shall be initiated when there is sufficient evidence that the expiry of the definitive anti-dumping duty would likely result in a continuation or recurrence of dumping and injury."

"Such a likelihood may be indicated, for example, by evidence of continued dumping and injury or evidence that the removal of injury is partly or solely due to the existence of the duty or evidence that the circumstances of the foreign exporters, or market condi-

tions, are such that these would indicate the likelihood of further injurious dumping," the provision further noted.

Britanico asked Bozdeniz why she did not show the chart of the situation before the imposition of anti-dumping in 2014.

"For your information, Ms. Bozdeniz, this was the situation before any anti-dumping measures were imposed by the Tariff Commission and the Department of Agriculture of the Philippines. As it shows, the dumping of Turkey rose from 2011 up to 2014," he said.

Britanico presented a graph which he obtained from the Bureau of Customs (BOC), showing the surge in Turkish flour exports to the Philippines to 143,160 MT in 2014, from 16,721 MT in 2008.

"It was only in 2015 which was actually reflected in your graph that it went down. And I appreciate your discussion about how this dumping went down from 2015. However I would like to repeat...that the decline was due to the imposition of the anti-dumping," Britanico said.

Anti-dumping is a trade remedy allowed under World Trade Organization agreements. It permits a state to impose additional duties on products that are being exported at a price that is lower than the prevailing market price in the country of origin. The anti-dumping duties allow the price of exported product to be at parity with its home market price level.

Under the extended measure, the Philippines imposed anti-dumping duties on Turkish wheat flour of up to 29.57 percent, depending on the exporter. (Related story: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2023/09/14/flour-millers-buck-lifting-of-anti-dumping-duties/?fbclid=IwAR2oAn3YUXk1M7QCy8XCW11NQNoQORuqqOZfNwsyxHtY-DON-3PZfBXPkQd8>)



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Bill allots financial and technical support for revival of local salt-making industry

By JOVEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ

[@joveemarie](#)

FARMERS and producers who depend on the moribund local salt-making industry may soon have access to necessary funding and technical support, according to a lawmaker.

Camarines Sur Rep. LRay Villafuerte made the assurance as the Senate recently followed the House of Representatives in passing its version of a congressional measure establishing the Philippine Salt Industry Development Council (PSIDC), which shall craft and implement a roadmap to speed up the modernization and industrialization of the Philippine salt industry.

The Senate approved on third and final reading by a 22-0 vote Senate Bill (SB) 2243, which aims to make this industry competitive again in the local and international markets and help create more jobs in the agriculture and agribusiness sectors.

Villafuerte said the lower chamber had earlier passed House Bill (HB) 8278, which also seeks to establish the PSIDC "to craft and implement a roadmap

to speed up the modernization and industrialization of the Philippine salt industry."

Following the measure's approval in both chambers, he said the next step for lawmakers is to hammer out at the bicameral conference committee level a consolidated bill, which, upon ratification by both the Senate and the House, shall be submitted to the Palace for President Marcos' approval and enactment into law.

"Under the proposed Roadmap, the would-be PSIDC shall, among others, identify sources of financing and facilitate credit windows from state-run banks and the ACPC [Agricultural Credit Policy Council] for them to accelerate the development of the moribund salt industry," Villafuerte, a lead author of HB 8278, said.

"With an archipelagic nation like the Philippines ironically importing over 90 percent of its annual salt requirement, the main task of the PSIDC is to draw up a short-, medium-, and long-term roadmap to expand land area devoted to the production of this agricultural product, boost farm productivity, promote investments in this sector, institutionalize

capacity-building programs for salt farmers and producers through the ATI [Agricultural Training Institute], and market overseas our Philippine products made from this nutrient."

HB8278—the substitute bill on the proposed "Philippine Salt Industry Development Act"—was unanimously passed by the House on third and final reading by a 287-0 vote before the 19th Congress adjourned sine die last June.

Last February Albay Rep. and House Committee on Agriculture and Food Vice Chairman Joey Salceda said the country's salt industry, which has declined significantly from its peak in the 1970s, "is the easiest agricultural industry to revive."

Salceda said he believes that the salt industry is not dead.

"But it's a bonsai industry. We try to cut it with so many self-imposed regulations. As an extremely low-margin business, the salt sector has been stunted by regulation," he said.

"We now import 93 percent of our salt. That is in a country with one of the longest coastlines in the world. Shameful is one way to describe it. Stupid is another way."



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

P40M imported rice sold at higher prices

AN ESTIMATED P40 million worth of imported rice that is being sold at higher than regulated prices were discovered in two warehouses in Pulang Lupa, Las Piñas, and Bacoor, Cavite, last Thursday.

A team from the Bureau of Customs' Intelligence and Investigation Service, Enforcement and Security Service, and Legal Service, the Philippine Coast Guard, and barangay officials made the inspection.

The rice came from Vietnam, Thailand and China.

During the investigation, it was discovered that the trader was selling a 25-kilo sack of Vietnamese rice for P1,320 in the market, equivalent to P52.8 per kilo. The price is higher than the

Department of Agriculture's (DA) prescribed range of P41 for well-milled and P45 for regular-milled rice.

The warehouse owner said they were not importers but rice traders. In response, customs operatives requested the owner provide proof of payment of correct duties and taxes from their supplier or importer.

Authorities gave the owner 15 days to submit the necessary documents to validate the legality of the importation and payment of the correct duties and taxes.

The inspection was in line with the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to intensify efforts against rice smuggling, hoarding and illicit trading. **TMT**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

AGRIBUSINESS KEY TO SUSTAINABLE RICE PRODUCTION

INVESTING in agriculture and focusing on agribusiness could lead to sustainable rice production in the country, a former Agriculture chief said.

Guesting at the Business and Politics show hosted by *The Manila Times* CEO Dante "Klink" Ang 2nd, former Agriculture secretary William Dar said it was time to treat farming and fishing as an agribusiness venture.

"We need to elevate our mindset in

treating agriculture [as] an agribusiness venture. Otherwise, as we said before, subsistence farming [with] 1 hectare average... will lead to backyard agriculture," said Dar.

He also considered agribusiness as a way to boost the farming industry.

Dar cited the importance of farm clustering. "Production can be handled much better in terms of increasing productivity per unit area by the farmers. Then the co-operatives will handle the market, and we'll

handle the agribusiness opportunities for the group," he said.

The farmers will be much more productive and earn a higher income "because they are now looking at the whole value chain much more," Dar said.

He said investing, particularly in irrigation infrastructure, could improve the long-term sustainability of rice production.

"Rice production is dependent on water ... we still need to develop irrigation

systems good for 1 million hectares," he said.

The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) could only irrigate around 35,000 hectares of farmlands every year, way below the 1 million hectare target.

The government can reach the target within the next five years through private-public partnerships, he said.

Dar also noted that building more

► **RiceA2**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

■ RICE FROM A1

Agribusiness

farm-to-market roads could boost agricultural productivity.

"With more farm-to-market roads, you can encourage more production not only in rice but for other crops, high-value crops, fruit trees, plantation crops," he said.

Dar said there are other crops with market potential, such as cacao, coffee and coconut.

Among the factors affecting the local rice situation are India's export ban on white rice and Vietnam's plans to tighten rice exports, Dar said.

"There has been panic, and so there is now the existing price cap implemented by the government, but everyone is also aware that there are consequences of this price gap," he said.

Farmers get P20 per kilo of palay, and with the current rice price cap, the per-kilo price of palay is down to P14 to P16.

"The global rice market is a very thin market, about 5 to 6 percent of global production," he said.

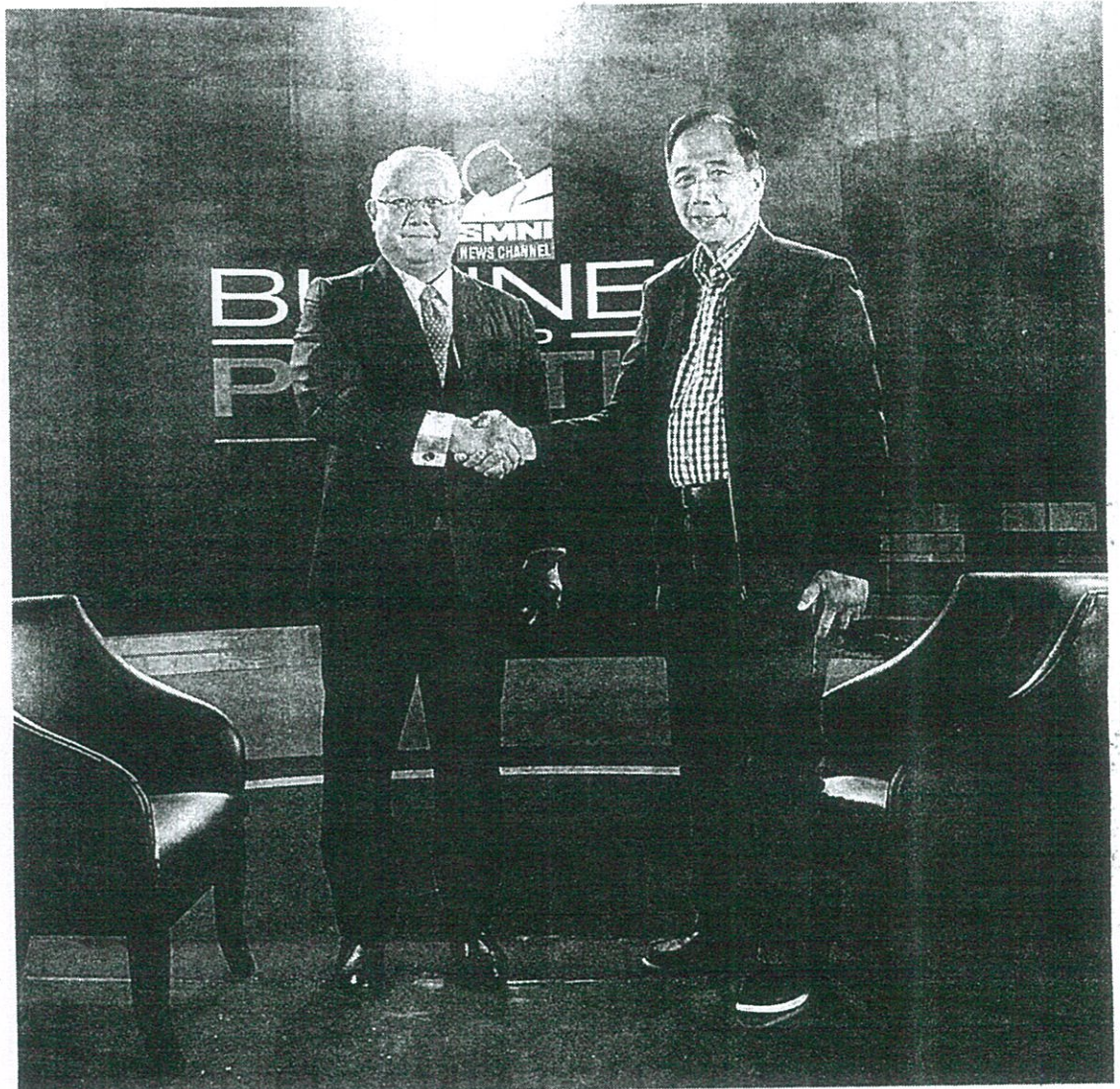
"So if China is affected and other countries are affected, really we will also be greatly affected as an importing country," Dar said.

He said he is for lowering tariffs to manage the price of rice.

Through the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), imported rice from Asean countries bears a 35 percent tariff.

"Now, I wouldn't believe that because the very objective of the tariff is to really collect for the rice farmers," Dar said.

About P17 billion was collected



■ Former Agriculture secretary William Dar with 'Business and Politics' host Dante 'Klink' Ang 2nd. PHOTO BY J. GERARD SEGUIA

out of the tariff, and P10 billion is being allocated annually for the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF).

Dar said the remaining P7 billion can be given as assistance to the rice farmers tilling less than two hectares.

He said the farming industry needs

to be more robust if it is to benefit from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

"I think again, the name of the game for RCEP is competitiveness... in terms of leveling up your productivity and being globally competitive," he said.

The country must also bring

down production costs, he said.

"We need to up our game in terms of our export orientation," Dar said. "That's where most of the Asean countries now are ahead of us, because they have eyes on the export potential for their respective countries."

JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL



New hope for 'makapuno' growers in Calabarzon

BY RENATO U. SOLIDUM JR.
SECRETARY OF
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY

"KAHIT ano namang sinisimulan, mahirap eh; 'yung passion ng bawat namumuno ng ahensya, ay maging passion din ng lahat — kasama kaming mga farmers."

These are the words of Joel Arandela, awarded as the Best Makapuno Island Farmer in Alabat during the 2nd National Makapuno Summit in 2020, when he gave his testimony and showcased his farm interventions during the Makapuno Farmers Training on Proper Embryo-Cultured Makapuno (ECM) Farm Management and Makapuno Food Processing on April 12–13, 2023.

Arandela shared his journey of growing and cultivating his farm ever since the project began in 2017.

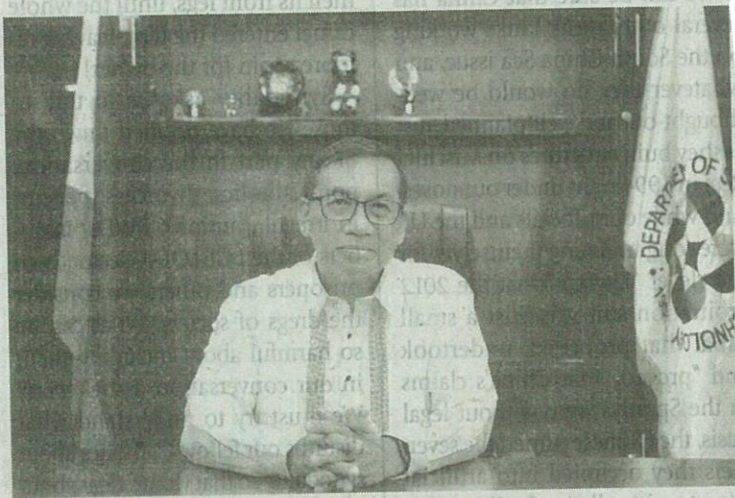
How it began

In 2009, the Southern Tagalog Consortium for Industry and Energy Research and Development (STCierd) joined hands with the Department of Science and Technology (DoST)-Calabarzon to enhance the makapuno value chain and revitalize its industry in the region.

In the process of establishing the Makapuno Production and Processing Roadmaps, it has been found that this high-value commodity holds potential not just in the food industry but also in the cosmetics and pharmaceutical industries. Because of its growing demand in the market, the mass propagation of makapuno through embryo-culture technology has been strengthened.

In 2017, the project titled "Establishment of Embryo-Cultured Makapuno (ECM) Island in the Municipalities of Alabat, Quezon and Perez in Quezon Province" was proposed, aiming to establish a Makapuno Island that would showcase it as a high-value crop and significantly contribute to the island's economy, and eventually to the country.

In fact, the Calabarzon Region (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) is blessed with the AlQueRez Island (Alabat,



■ Science and Technology Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. DOST PHOTO

province because it has the conditions and resources for growing ECM. This is seen as the first-ever "Makapuno Island" in the country that will be the prime producer of makapuno and can significantly address the increasing demands for this commodity.

DoST-Calabarzon, together with the **Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA)**, **Philippine Coconut Research and Development Foundation Inc. (PCRDF)**, **Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 4A (Darfo 4A)**, **Department of Trade and Industry 4A (DTI 4A)**, **Department of Labor and Employment 4A (DoLE 4A)**, **National Irrigation Administration 4A (NIA 4A)**, **Philippine**

Chamber of Commerce (PCC), **Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPA) Quezon**, **Southern Luzon State University (SLSU)**, and **Office of Rep. Angelina Tan of the House of Representatives**, continues to collaborate with the local government units (LGUs) of Alabat, Quezon and Perez, Quezon to further this cause.

The interagency efforts and initiatives to strengthen the makapuno industry are paramount to capacitating its stakeholders and revitalizing the makapuno industry in the whole region.

Emerging high-value crop

Mylene Culing, the OIC-municipal agriculture officer of LGU-Alabat, mentioned the difference in value between makapuno and a normal coconut. She said, "Malaki ang economic value ng makapuno, may potential talaga ang beneficiary kumita, unlike coconut

na kapag dumami ang supply — for example, 'yung copra — ay babagsak ang presyo. Ang market natin for makapuno ay available naman, ang kailangan lang talaga ay ma-sustain natin 'yun."

Do you know that the value of makapuno lies not only in its potential for the food industry but also in its capability to be utilized in non-food products? The project, "Technology Commercialization of Makapuno Products (Galactomannan and Powder) as Immediate Raw Materials," implemented the pilot testing and commercialization of makapuno products, including Makapuno Liquid Endosperm (MLE), Makapuno Galactomannan and Makapuno Powder for R&D. In fact, under the project, the PCRDF, under its project leader, Vermelyn Evangelista, has developed various cosmetic products from makapuno galactomannan, such as lotion, cream and exfoliating soap. PCRDF has also established processing protocols for these products and is currently working on protecting the intellectual property (IP) of these technologies. In addition, tests were done for the dietary fiber content of makapuno galactomannan and the hypoallergenicity of the developed makapuno lotion, which both garnered positive results with promising potential for these products.

In 2018, QTR Pharma Sciences Inc., led by its president, Ma. Teresa Vergara, signified its intent to adopt the estab-



Embryo-Cultured Makapuno (ECM)" and "Operationalization of Makapuno Research and Development, Resource and Innovation Center (MRDRIC)" were virtually launched during the 2nd National Makapuno Summit. The MRDRIC aims to strengthen the regional makapuno research, development and extension (RDE) network in the region and formulate an updated makapuno RDE agenda.

Current developments and plans

As a component of the project, the training conducted on April 12-13, 2023, brought together about a total of 60 participants, comprising ECM farmers from Alabat Island, representatives from government agencies, NGOs, MSMEs and the academe.

Technical experts from the PCA, the SLSU and the PCRDF and Sunlight Food Corp., a private company, share various lectures to engage farmer-learners in municipalities within Quezon province on matters of ECM planting, intercropping, environmental protection, integrated farming, pest and disease management, developed products from the Makapuno Galactomannan, and makapuno processing.

Through farmers' training and development, makapuno growers on the island are empowered to realize their critical role in boosting the makapuno industry in the country. At the same time, they are also encouraged to begin and continue their commitment to nurturing their own seedlings.

A farmer-beneficiary by the name of Nelson Omila from Quezon, Quezon, reminded his fellow makapuno growers, "Kapag nagtanim ka ng mga ganitong product, dapat isa-puso natin bilang farmer para quality ang kalalabasan. Ipagpatuloy natin ang pagtanim para sa kinabukasan ng mga anak natin."

Moving forward, to support the current initiatives for ECM, the interagency collaborators plan to establish a centralized processing facility on Alabat Island, which will act as the main distributor of harvested ECM nuts from the island to target markets and processors in other parts of the country.

lished technologies of PCRDF through the conduct of commitment signing with DoST Calabarzon and PCRDF. The company launched Maka-Pnoy Inc., a cosmetic trader that will produce the cosmetic products. As of now, the galactomannan exfoliating soap is the only product with a prototype and an established packaging material.

Productive, cooperative network

A study published by the Philippine Journal of Science said, "Only people with higher levels of income can afford to plant makapuno coconut" since an embryo-cultured makapuno (in vitro-cultured) seedling is expensive.

Culing also shared, "May kamahalan talaga ang isang seedling at mag-i-i-start ka mag-aral sa lahat ng aspeto. Kaya mahalaga na makita namin ang commitment ng farmers sa pagtanim ng mga binibigay nating seedlings sa kanila."

Aside from forging partnerships with agencies and establishing support from the industry, coordinating with those at different levels of the value chain is equally important. The government, together with a strategic and synergistic network of makapuno growers, processors, distributors and retailers, is keen on strengthening cooperation among stakeholders to achieve this endeavor.

Ever since Makapuno Island launched in 2018, DoST-Calabarzon, in close coordination with project partners, has been conducting a series of initiatives, including the delivery of ECM seedlings, monitoring of ECM planting sites, holding consultative meetings with focal officials, training makapuno growers on the island, reviewing and updating the roadmaps, and continuously developing and promoting both innovative makapuno food and non-food products.

When the pandemic hit, these efforts were ensured to be implemented — even strengthened — to adapt to the "new normal" modes of interaction. In 2020, a virtual launching of the DoST-funded projects "Technology Piloting of a Tissue Culture Growth Chamber of Mass Propagation of Coffee and

Furthermore, a tissue culture laboratory is also planned to be established on the island for the propagation of ECM plantlets for planting and will also cater to clients that wish to venture into makapuno planting.

DoST-Calabarzon is one of the regional offices of the Department of Science and Technology and is located at Jamboree Road, Barangay Timugan, Los Baños, Laguna. For more information, you may visit it on Facebook at facebook.com/dostcalabarzon or on the website www.region4a.dost.gov.ph.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Study on Alimit hydro project set

THE National Irrigation Administration (NIA) signed a memorandum of understanding on the conduct of feasibility study for the Alimit multipurpose dam project in Ifugao Province with SN Aboitiz Power (SNAP).

The agreement signed last week calls for the determination of the feasibility of the project that is expected to be used for irrigation, flood reduction in the province of Cagayan and additional hydropower generation for the Luzon Grid.

NIA said the Alimit project will benefit agriculture, aquaculture,

tourism and industry.

SNAP which is a joint venture between AboitizPower and Norwegian renewable power producer, SCATEC ASA, originally planned the Alimit hydropower complex. The first phase involves the construction of a 120 megawatts (MW) Alimit plant and a 20 MW Olilicon plant at a cost of \$450 to \$550 million.

The second phase is a 250 MW Alimit pump storage hydro facility.

The Alimit hydro project was earlier put on hold due to issues related to permitting and power lines.



Improved fish catch expected in Zamboanga

ADVANCING the closed fishing season for sardines in the waters off the Zamboanga peninsula is expected to further improve local fish stocks, according to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

Starting this year, waters of East-Sulu Sea, Basilan Strait and Sibuguey Bay will be closed to sardine fishing from November 15 to February 15 simultaneous to the implementation of closed fishing season for small pelagics including sardines in the Visayan sea.

Previously, closed fishing sea-

son in the Zamboanga peninsula was from December to March 1.

Nazario Briguera, BFAR spokesperson, told reporters last week moving up the schedule will create "a positive impact in terms of the repopulation scheme of sardines."

The agency could not say the additional volume this would generate.

BFAR said a research conducted under the National Stock Assessment Program and the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute in Zamboanga Peninsula showed the spawning period of mature sardines peaks

from October to January.

The agency added BFAR Administrative Circular number 225 series of 2014 allows for a regular review on the implementation of the closed season to determine the best management strategy that would ensure the sustainability and conservation of sardines.

Based on latest data from the Philippine Statistics Authority, agriculture production value in the country dropped 1.3 percent in the second quarter of the year pulled down by fisheries which declined 14.2 percent during the period.

The fisheries subsector was the only variable that recorded a drop in the second quarter, down 14.2 percent in value of production at constant 2018 prices for the period. It contributed P58.81 billion or 13.8 percent of the total agricultural output.

Production declines were observed for bigeye tuna, skipjack, fimbriated sardines, grouper, yellowfin tuna, sapsap, milkfish, blue crab, squid, mud crab, frigate tuna, bisugo, alumahan, tilapia, talakitok, tamban, matangbaka and seaweed.

-Jed Macapagal



PhilMech urged to use budget wisely, buy more farm equipment

A neophyte solon is urging the **Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech)** to efficiently use their budget for the procurement of more farm equipment.

AGRI Party-list Rep. Wilbert T. Lee said the lack of farm equipment and post-harvest facilities affect the agricultural workers' production and a factor in the soaring food prices.

"Sa pag-iikot ko sa ating bansa, isa po sa laging pinoprotektahan ng ating cooperatives and farmers ang farm equipment and mechanization. Bukod sa on time na pagdating ng ayuda para

sa farm inputs, ito ang pinakahinihintay nila para pataasin ang kanilang produksyon at kita," Lee said in a statement.

According to Lee, for 2022 the agency still has a P8 billion budget and P5 billion from the RCEF.

This 19th Congress, Lee filed House Bill No. 3958 or the "Post-Harvest Facilities Support Act" compelling the government to construct and provide post-harvest facilities across the country, especially in agricultural areas, to lower post-harvest production losses and increase the income of agriculture workers.

Jester Manalastas

Date: 1 8 SEP 2023 Page: 2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

SINAG: Price cap sa bigas, pwede nang alisin sa sunod na mga linggo

Kumpiyansa ang grupong Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) na maaari nang alisin ng pamahalaan ang ipinatutupad na price cap sa bigas sa susunod na ilang linggo.

Ayon kay SINAG Chairman Rosendo So, nagsisimula na ang anihan ng palay kaya't inaasahan na nila ang unti-unting pagbaba at pagbalik sa normal ng presyo ng bigas.

Ani So, ngayong anihan hanggang sa Disyembre ay maaari na ring maibalik ang presyo ng bigas sa P43 hanggang P44 kada kilo kahit pa hindi na mag-angkat ng bigas o babaan ang taripa.

Samantala, ayon naman sa Department of Agriculture (DA), isa talaga ang pagdami ng suplay dahil sa panahon ng anihan sa ikukonsidera nila sa pag-aalis na ng rice price cap.

Anang DA, magandang indicator na may mga retailers na sa ngayon ang nagbebenta ng bigas na mas mababa sa price cap na P41 para sa regular-milled rice at P45 para sa well-milled rice.

Tiniyak din ng DA na mahigpit nilang minomonitor ang mga indicators upang makapagbigay ng informed recommendation kay Pang. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. kung kailan talaga maaaring tanggalin ang price cap sa bigas. (Mer Layson)

Escudero: File charges vs rice smugglers, hoarders

By CECILLE SUERTE FELIPE

Two weeks after the confiscation of suspected smuggled imported rice worth P505 million in Bulacan, the Bureau of Customs (BOC) failed to file charges against those involved, Sen. Francis Escudero said.

Escudero challenged the BOC to immediately file charges against traders suspected of smuggling and hoarding rice, which led to the artificial shortage of the food staple and price spikes in recent months.

"The number of raids that have been done in recent weeks, why until now, no charges have been filed against the people involved?" he said.

Escudero also criticized the BOC leadership for their failure to disclose to the public the names of traders and operators whose warehouses were raided by government authorities for tons of suspected smuggled rice.

He stressed the need to file cases and bring these economic saboteurs to court to serve as a warning that the government is indeed serious in its campaign against smugglers and hoarders.

"We should not end with raids alone. The people are waiting and watching for the next initiative of the government. Charges will be filed immediately against those who should be charged. We should bring them to the court of justice to prove that this administration is resolute in its campaign against the rice cartel," Escudero said.

He noted that Republic Act 10845 or the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016 considers large-scale smuggling of agricultural products as economic sabotage, and involves "at least P1 million worth of sugar, corn, pork, poultry, garlic, onion, carrots, fish, and cruciferous vegetables, in their raw state, or which have undergone the simple processes of preparation and preservation for the market, or a minimum of P10 million worth of rice, as valued by BOC."

"How come up to now there have been no cases filed? Why haven't I heard anyone sued for economic sabotage or something? Who owns these warehouses? Who are the people involved?" the senator asked.

On Aug. 24, the customs bureau inspected three warehouses in Bulacan and found these stocked with suspected smuggled imported rice worth P505 million. The warehouses, located inside the Intercity Industrial Complex in Balagtas, Bulacan, were

sealed and guarded.

On Sept. 15, the BOC-Port of Zamboanga seized some 42,180 sacks of rice worth P42 million in Barangay San Jose Gusu, after authorities discovered that the goods were not covered by the requisite sanitary and phytosanitary import clearance from the Bureau of Plant Industry.

Aside from calling on the immediate filing of cases against the hoarders, Escudero said the government should also update the public on the development of these cases in the spirit of transparency.

"These are the questions they should be able to answer now: Who oversees the disposition and how will it be disposed? What will they do with the confiscated rice?" he said.

Congress intervention sought

Farmers' group Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) executive director Jayson Cainglet yesterday called on Congress to intervene in the impending tariff cut on rice imports, saying while the Tariff Commission conducted a consultation with stakeholders, the reduction to 10 percent from the current 35 percent is already a "done deal."

In an interview with **The STAR**, Cainglet added that various groups will hold a caravan on Monday to continue to demand the removal of Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno and Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan from their respective posts, who are the main proponents of the reduction of tariffs on imported rice.

"Just like confidential funds, the Tariff Commission never released its findings (on tariff cut petition). It was zero-eight in the last five years," Cainglet said, referring to the favorable decision of the Tariff Commission on the tariff cuts on imported products.

On Friday, the Tariff Commission held a hearing on the petition to temporarily cut rice import tariffs, as various peasant groups expressed their unilateral position on the move.

"We are not expecting much," Cainglet added.

He noted that during the hearing, the Foundation for Economic Freedom (FEF), the proponent of tariff cut, failed to justify the petition.

"The FEF did not present data to justify their petition. Their data was only until 2022. There are no actual figures on imports, production and projected harvest. They cannot even

answer (if) the rice being imported are mainly high-grade rice. They cannot rebut that there is no rice shortage. They only replied, 'what will happen if there is a typhoon,'" Cainglet said.

Diokno has backed the need to temporarily cut rice import tariffs as early as October in a bid to arrest the continued surge in prices of the commodity.

"I asked them if the Executive Order number 30 is wrong, as its basis is hoarding and price manipulation while the basis of their petition is the global market," Cainglet noted.

Cainglet said that the Senate and the House of Representatives should stop the approval of the tariff cut.

"It is the work of Congress. We are also asking Congress to intervene as the tariff modification is the function of the legislature," he added.

According to Cainglet, Diokno and Balisacan should be stopped from favoring the importers over the farmers.

"It is an insult that every year, an executive order is issued while Congress is in recess," he noted.

At the same time, Cainglet expressed hope that President Marcos will listen to the calls of various farmers after they urged the Chief Executive to replace Diokno and Balisacan.

"We hope the President will listen to us," he said.

A joint statement signed by members of SINAG, Federation of Free Farmers, Philippine Confederation of Grains Associations, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Pambansang Mannedal, Mag-uuma, Magbabaul, Magsasaka ng Pilipinas and National Movement for Food Sovereignty backed the removal of both Diokno and Balisacan.

Cainglet said that a protest caravan will be held to express the united opposition against the proposed tariff cut on imported rice and to call for the removal of Diokno and Balisacan. Various groups will conduct protest actions in front of the FEF at the Philippine Social Science Center in Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City before they proceed to the Office of the Philippine Tariff Commission in West Insula Condominium, 135 West Avenue, near EDSA intersection; Office of the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers Of Commerce and Industry at Federation Center, Muelle de Binondo, Manila; and Office of the Department of Finance at the BSP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Manila.

—With Bella Cariaso



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

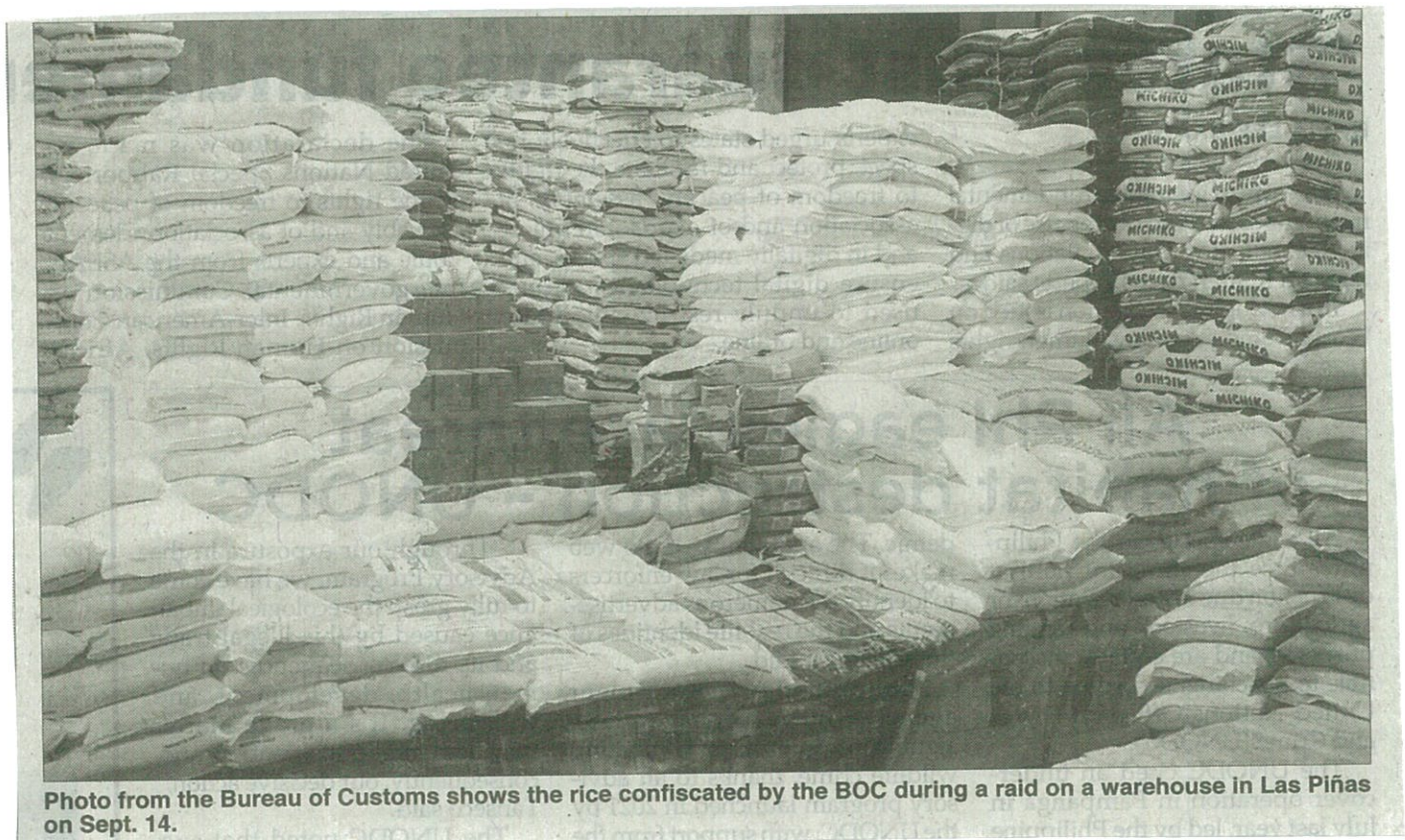


Photo from the Bureau of Customs shows the rice confiscated by the BOC during a raid on a warehouse in Las Piñas on Sept. 14.

Date: SEPT. 18, 2023 Page: B-1



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

■ Northern Mindanao, Eastern Visayas rice retailers get cash aid

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), distributed ₱15,000 cash assistance to the first batch of micro rice retailers in Northern Mindanao on Sept. 13 to 14. About 92 percent or 36 out of 39 qualified micro rice retailers in Northern Mindanao received cash assistance during the two-day payouts. Meanwhile, the remaining three rice retailers are set to receive the cash assistance in their respective DSWD provincial offices within the week. The cash assistance, facilitated through DSWD's Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP), cash assistance for micro rice retailers, reflects the government's initiative to extend financial support and provide economic relief for micro rice retailers who were affected by the price cap. DTI Region 10 commits to the fast tracking of the profiling of more qualified beneficiaries in the region in preparation for the next round of financial assistance distribution while also conducting day-to-day monitoring of prices and supply of rice in the market. For Eastern Visayas, DTI reported that through the SLP, a total of 67 qualified micro rice retailers received ₱15,000 pesos each. The DTI confirmed that these beneficiaries are also compliant with the guidelines established in identifying the recipients of cash assistance from the DSWD. (Ma. Joselle C. Garcia)

Date: SEPT. 18, 2023 Page: B-4



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Caraga rice retailers receive cash assistance

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said all 100-percent verified micro rice retailers in the Caraga region has already received P15,000 cash assistance.

The DTI and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) continue to conduct subsidy payouts as of Thursday, Sept. 14.

A total of 38 eligible beneficiaries from Butuan City, Surigao City, Tandag City, and San Francisco in Agusan del Sur received P15,000 each through the DSWD's Sustainable Livelihood Program (cash assistance for micro rice retailers), as assisted by the DTI.

The beneficiaries expressed gratitude to the government as the subsidy provides them financial aid while working with the government in the implementation of Executive Order No. 39.

Marivic Araa, one of the benefi-

ciaries from Agusan del Sur said, "the subsidy is already a great help as this will help us purchase more sacks of rice, retaining the compliance to the imposed price ceiling. The money will be used to add to the capital of our retail store."

Meanwhile, Mercedita Sanora of Butuan City encouraged fellow retailers to comply with the price ceiling. "I am very thankful for the cash assistance that we received because it will greatly help us recover from our losses. This is a huge help to us. Since this is an order that has been implemented, even though we are just small retailers, we will follow what the EO requires," she said.

DTI Caraga continues to conduct price monitoring and validation of eligible beneficiaries for the succeeding payout schedules. (Ma. Joselie C. Garcia)



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Trade deficit in agri goods widens to \$2.71B in Q2

THE trade in Philippine agricultural goods posted a deficit of \$2.71 billion in the second quarter, widening by 0.2%, with the decline in exports outweighing falling imports, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

In a report, the PSA said that overall agricultural trade — the sum of exports and imports — dropped 14.9% to \$5.93 billion, which reversed a 22.1% year-earlier gain.

Agricultural exports declined 24.4% to \$1.61 billion for the three-month period, accounting for 8.9% of total exports.

Comprising the largest share of exports were edible fruit and nuts as well as peel of citrus fruit melons, valued at \$521.86 million or 32.3% of the total.

Agricultural products shipped to ASEAN countries accounted for 6.8% of total exports at \$175.26 million, with tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes the top exports.

Malaysia was the Philippines' top export market accounting for \$53.01 million or 31.8% of exports to the region.

"Exports of agricultural goods to (the European Union) member countries in the second quarter of 2023 reached \$55.15 million, which accounted for 11.8% of exports to EU member countries," the PSA said.

The Netherlands was the top buyer of agricultural goods within the EU, purchasing \$125.48 million or 49.2% of farm exports to the region.

Animal or vegetable fats and oils and their cleavage products, prepared edible fats and animal or vegetable waxes were the top agricultural exports to the region.

Imports of agricultural goods fell 10.7% to \$4.32 billion representing 13.8% of total imports.

Cereals remained the top agricultural imports for the period at 20.6% of the total, or \$888.23 million.

During the second quarter, imports of agricultural goods to ASEAN countries were valued at \$1.55 billion or 16.4% of total imports. Vietnam was the top source of imports, accounting for \$509.14 million or 32.8%.

"Agricultural imports from EU member countries amounted to \$405.83 million or 19.0% of farm imports by value in the second quarter," it said.

Among EU members, Spain was the top supplier of farm goods, accounting for \$94.31 million or 23.2% of overall farm imports.

Meat and edible meat offal were the top imports from the EU. — **Adrian H. Halili**

The rice cartel makes the whole nation suffer

THE Rice Tariffication Law (RTL)—Republic Act 11203—was signed in 2019 to bring down the price of rice and help farmers who would be hurt by the removal of quantitative restrictions on imported rice. Under the RTL, our rice farmers were assured they will remain protected by a relatively high tariff wall of 35 percent to 40 percent.

The NEDA said the Rice Tariffication Law is the best model that we have to help both farmers and consumers. By removing quantitative restrictions, NEDA said RTL will be able to address both the needs of consumers for a lower retail price of rice and use the tariff revenues to fund the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) that will provide assistance to farmers.

Farmers were vigorously against the rice tariffication measure when it was being debated in Congress. However, President Duterte's economic team was united in its vision to reform the rice sector. Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol was the lone voice opposing the measure. But his fellow Cabinet members and finally the President were persuasive in convincing Piñol about the economic benefits of their proposal.

Farmer groups said the RTL made their situation worse. Long on promises, the RTL miserably failed to bring down the price of rice. "Analysis of data from the Philippine Statistics Authority revealed that consumers saved a measly P52 per year during the first three years of the Rice Tariffication Law, which opened up the domestic market to unlimited volumes of cheap imports," the Federation of Free Farmers said.

When the rice cartel started hoarding after India announced a rice export ban, rice prices skyrocketed. In response to surging rice prices, President Marcos imposed a price ceiling of P41 per kilo for regular milled rice and P45 per kilo for well-milled rice.

The Tariff Commission on Friday held a public hearing on the proposed reduction of rice import tariff rates. The Department of Finance wants to cut the 35 percent rice import tariff rates "temporarily to 0 percent or maximum of 10 percent to arrest the surge in rice prices."

Various groups called the hearing a farce. In a statement, the Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura, Federation of Free Farmers (FFF), Philippine Confederation of Grains Associations, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Pambansang Mannalon, Mag-uuma, Magbabaul, Magsasaka ng Pilipinas, and National Movement for Food Sovereignty, called the hearing "a sham public consultation."

Raul Montemayor, FFF national manager, said "the exercise is designed to make it appear that stakeholders are being consulted on the proposal." But the timing stinks because farmers are about to harvest the main season crop, and rice prices will naturally go down.

"Encouraging additional imports through tariff reduction will further depress palay prices and discourage farmers from expanding their future production, thereby making the country even more dependent on imports," Montemayor said.

At an average landed cost of P27.34 per kilo of imported rice, he said the tariff at 35 percent is P9.57 per kilo, while at 10 percent rate the tariff will go down to P2.73 per kilo. Should the rate be slashed to 10 percent, the tariff reduction would be about P6.83 per kilo. "So, the potential reduction in the price of rice is about P7 per kilo. If we assume that rice prices go down by P7 per kilo, the effect of that in palay price would be about P4.44 per kilo reduction," he said.

"If there is a direct transmission in tariff reduction into a reduction in palay prices, multiply that by palay production in 2022 [at 19.75 million metric tons], the farmers' losses will be about P88 billion in terms of reduced income," Montemayor said.

The farmers said even the US, the richest country in the world, maintains a strong safety net for America's farmers, which includes disaster assistance, crop insurance, technical assistance, and access to credit.

The Rice Tariffication Law's 35 percent tariff wall is there to protect the farmers. Now they want to remove the only safety net for millions of Filipino farmers. "Why don't they just make a Rice Zero Tariff Law to avoid giving us false hopes," an irritated farmer said. "They should know that the whole nation suffers because of the rice cartel. This is the solution where they should focus on."

Date: SEPT. 18, 2023 Page: A9



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PSA sees slight decline in Q3 palay output

By JASPER EMMANUEL Y. ARCALAS
@jearcalas

THE country's rice output in the third quarter may settle at 3.788 million metric tons (MMT), slightly lower than the 3.79 MMT recorded a year ago, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

The PSA had adjusted downwards its palay production estimate based on standing crop as of August 1. The July estimate was higher at 3.876 MMT.

"The updated estimate of palay production for the period of July to September 2023 as of 01 August 2023 reflected a decrease of -2.3 percent from its estimate of 3.876 million metric tons as of 01 July

2023," the PSA said in its latest forecast report published recently.

The PSA said the cause for the downward revision in its forecast is the expected smaller harvest area for the third quarter. Based on its estimate, palay harvest area in July to September would reach 926,950 hectares smaller than last year's 931,750 hectares.

The projected contraction in harvest areas would offset the expected improvement in yield during the third quarter.

"Based on standing crop for the period of July to September 2023, the yield per hectare of palay may improve to 4.09 metric tons [MT] or by 0.5 percent compared with the previous year's same period yield of 4.07 metric tons."



A FARMER in Pangasinan displays threshed rice in this BUSINESSMIRROR file photo



hectares of harvest area of standing crop have been harvested. Palay collected from these areas reached 693,510 MT.

"Of the total area of 758.88 thousand hectares of standing palay yet to be harvested as of 01 August 2023, 14.7 percent were at the vegetative stage, 55.5 percent at the reproductive stage, and 29.8 percent at the maturing stage."

The PSA also said the country's corn output in the third quarter could go up by 5.4 percent to 2.48 MMT from last year's 2.35 MMT. However, the PSA revised downward its corn output forecast from its July estimate of 2.56 MMT.

The PSA noted that the year-on-year increase in output is driven by the expansion in harvest area and better yield.

"Harvest area based on standing corn for the period of July to

September 2023 may increase to 820.73 thousand hectares or by 1.8 percent from 806.42 thousand hectares actual estimate of harvest area in the same period of the previous year," its report read.

"Correspondingly, the yield per hectare of corn may increase to 3.02 metric tons or by 3.8 percent from its previous year's same quarter record of 2.91 metric tons."

The PSA said about 25.3 percent or 207,590 hectares of the 820,730 hectares of standing crop have been harvested already and yielded 580,420 MT of corn.

"Of the 613.14 thousand hectares of standing corn yet to be harvested as of 01 August 2023, about 7.2 percent were at the vegetative stage, 49.0 percent at the reproductive stage, and 43.8 percent at the maturing stage."

As of August 1, the PSA said about 168,070 hectares or 18.1 percent of the estimated 926,950



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Escudero prods Customs: Charge rice smugglers

BY BERNADETTE E. TAMAYO

SEN. Francis Joseph "Chiz" Escudero has challenged the Bureau of Customs (BoC) to charge traders suspected of smuggling and hoarding rice.

Escudero said smuggling and hoarding are being blamed for the artificial shortage of rice and the price spikes of the staple in recent months.

He chided the BoC for failing to disclose the names of traders and operators whose warehouses were raided on suspicion of storing smuggled rice.

"Why haven't I heard anyone sued for economic sabotage or something? Who owns these warehouses? Who are the people involved?" Escudero said. "We

should bring them to the court of justice to prove that this [Marcos Jr.] administration is resolute in its campaign against rice cartel."

Escudero noted that several raids had been made in the past few weeks, but no one among the suspected rice smugglers has been charged.

"The public is waiting on the next action of the government. File charges immediately against those concerned," he said.

"This is what they should answer now: who oversees the disposition

and how will it be disposed? What will they do with the confiscated rice?" Escudero said.

He said the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016 (Republic Act 10845) considers large-scale smuggling of agricultural products as economic sabotage and involves "at least P1 million worth of sugar, corn, pork, poultry, garlic, onion, carrots, fish, and cruciferous vegetables, in their raw state, or which have undergone the simple processes of preparation and preservation for the market, or a minimum of P10 million worth of rice, as valued by the Bureau of Customs."

On September 15, the BoC-Port of Zamboanga seized

42,180 sacks of rice worth P42 million in Barangay San Jose Gusu after authorities discovered that the goods were not covered by a sanitary and phytosanitary import clearance from the Bureau of Plant Industry.

Two weeks earlier, the BoC inspected three warehouses in Bulacan and found stocks of suspected smuggled imported rice worth P505 million.

The warehouses, which were inside the Intercity Industrial Complex in Balagtas, Bulacan, were sealed.

Aside from calling for the filing of charges against rice hoarders, Escudero said the government should also update the public on the development of these cases in the spirit of transparency.



Agri trade contracts 14.9% in Q2

BY JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL

THE Philippines' agricultural trade contracted by 14.9 percent to \$5.93 billion in the second quarter of this year compared to the same period last year, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported on Friday.

The country's total agricultural exports during the second quarter, which accounted for 27.2 percent of the country's total trade, fell to \$1.61 billion or a 24.4 percent drop from \$2.13 billion a year earlier.

Imports of farm goods also dropped by 10.7 percent to \$4.32 billion from \$4.84 billion year-on-year.

The agriculture trade balance during the second quarter was at a deficit of P2.703 billion, or a

0.02-percent dip from the \$2.708 billion of the same period in 2022.

Edible fruits and nuts and peels of citrus fruit melons accounted for the largest share of agriculture exports during the second quarter of this year at \$521.86 million, down by 1.28 percent from the previous year's \$528.63 million.

Animal or vegetable fats and oils, and their cleavage products; prepared edible fats; and animal or vegetable waxes — the previous year's top export at \$703.2

million — fell by 58.06 percent to \$294.89 million in the second quarter of this year.

Preparations of vegetables, fruit, nuts or other parts of plants reached \$193.79 million, a decrease of 18.44 percent from the \$237.61 recorded a year earlier.

Shipments of tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes reached \$126.92 million, and preparations of meat, fish and crustaceans, molluscs and other aquatic invertebrates totaled \$116.26 million to round up the country's top five agricultural exports for the second quarter of this year.

The top 10 commodity groups in terms of value of agricultural exports contributed \$1.56 billion or 96.9 percent of the country's total agricultural export revenue in

the second quarter of 2023.

As for agricultural imports, cereals accounted for the biggest share, worth \$888.23 million or 20.6 percent of the total.

Residues and waste from food industries and prepared animal fodder followed with \$518.04 million; meat and edible meat offal at \$459.84 million; miscellaneous edible preparations at \$452.35 million; and dairy produce, birds' eggs, natural honey, and edible products of animal origin at \$303.88 million.

Malaysia was the top buyer of the Philippines' agricultural exports at \$53.01 million among Association of Southeast Asian Nations member countries.

Meanwhile, among the European Union member countries, the Netherlands was the top des-

tination for Philippine agricultural commodities at \$125.48 million.

Sought for comments, chief economist at Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Michael Ricafort attributed the decline in agricultural exports to slower global economic growth and trade amid the risk of an economic slowdown in the United States, the world's largest economy.

Ricafort also cited the "softer" economic data in China, the world's second-largest economy, the biggest importer of some major global commodities, and also among the biggest trading partners and export markets of the Philippines.

"Still relatively lower global commodity/agricultural prices in recent months as of second quarter 2023 could have also led to the

year-on-year decline in both agricultural exports and agricultural imports," he said.

Ricafort also cited the storm damage from the previous months as one of the causes for the country's lower agricultural exports and warned of the possible effects of the El Niño from the last three months of 2023 to the first quarter of 2024 in reducing rainfall and local agricultural output and exports.

"Thereby, it (El Niño) would lead to more agricultural imports and would also lead to a wider agricultural trade deficit," he said.

"Higher local and world prices of rice and other agricultural commodities since 2022 could somewhat reduce demand for both agricultural exports and imports, as seen in recent months," Ricafort added.



MGA SMUGGLER, HOARDER NG BIGAS KASUHAN NA!

HINAMON ni Senador Francis "Chiz" Escudero ang Bureau of Customs (BOC) na sampahan agad ng kaso ang mga negosyanteng sangkot sa smuggling at hoarding ng bigas na siyang siyang dahilan ng artificial shortage at pagtaas ng presyo nito.

Kasabay nito, nanawagan din ang senador sa BOC na ibunyag ang mga pangalan ng mga negosyante at operators na nagmamay-ari ng mga warehouse na sinalakay ng mga awtoridad kung saan natagpuan ang mga pinaghinaalang ipinuslit na bigas.

"Ang dami nang raids na ginawa nitong mga nakaraang linggo, bakit hanggang ngayon, wala pang kasong isinasampa sa mga taong sangkot?" giit ni Escudero.

Binigyang-diin ng senador

na kailangang sampahan ng kaso ang mga "economic saboteur" na ito para magsilbing babala na seryoso ang gobyerno sa kanilang kampanya laban sa mga smuggler at hoarder.

"Hindi tayo dapat nagtatapos sa mga raid lamang. Naghihinatay at nagmamatiyag ang taumbayan sa susunod na hakbangin ng pamahalaan. Sampahan na agad ng kaso ang mga dapat sampahan," ani Escudero.

"We should bring them to the court of justice to prove that this administration is resolute in its campaign against rice cartel," dugtong pa niya.

Sa ilalim ng Republic Act 10845 o Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016, kinukonsidera ang large-scale smuggling ng mga produktong agrikultura

bilang economic sabotage.

Noong Setyembre 15, nakumpiska ng BOC-Port of Zamboanga ang 42,180 sako ng bigas na nagkakahalaga ng P42 milyon sa Barangay San Hose Guzu matapos madiskubre ng mga awtoridad na ang mga kalakal ay hindi sakop ng requisite sanitary at phytosanitary import clearance mula sa Bureau of Plant Industry.

Dalawang linggo bago ito, nagsagawa ng inspeksiyon ang BOC sa tatlong warehouse sa Bulacan at nadiskubre ang mga nakatagong imported rice na nagkakahalaga ng P505 milyon.

Maliban sa paghahain ng kaso laban sa mga hoarder, sinabi ni Escudero na dapat i-update ng gobyerno sa pagsulong ng kaso. (Dindo Matining)



TAMBAN FISH HATCHERY PARA SA SEGURIDAD SA PAGKAIN



REMATE OPINION

PAKUROT

NI LEA BOTONES

HINIHIMOK ni Senator Francis "Tol" Tolentino ang Department of Science and Technology na palakasin ang produksyon ng Tamban, isang uri ng isda na ginagamit sa de-latang sardinas na karaniwang iniuulam ng mahihirap na Pilipino.

Sa naganap na budget briefing ng DOST sa Senado noong nakaraang linggo, iginiit ng mambabatas na dapat mas madagdagan pa ang produksyon ng isdang Tamban para na rin sa food security program ng pamahalaan.

Anang senador, ang DOST ay mayroong kasalukuyang 438 na proyekto kaugnay ng food security kaya naman inaasahan niya na palalakasin ng nasabing ahensya ang produksyon ng isda nang sa gayon ay maging matatag ang seguridad sa paggawa ng sardinas.

Ipinagdiin ni Tolentino sa mga opisyal ng DOST na malaking tulong ang nagagawa ng produksyon ng de-latang sardinas sa mga Pilipino dahil ito ang madalas na ginagawang pang-ulam lalo na kapag tag-ulan.

Madalas din, aniya, na ang de-latang sardinas kasabay ng noodles ang ginagamit na relief goods kapag may mga relief operation sa mga sinalanta ng bagyo o ka-

hit mga nasunugan.

Kung masisimulan kaagad, inihalimbawa ng mambabatas sa DOST ang pagpaparami ng isdang Bangus sa Dagupan at Pangasinan na ang 'fingerlings' ay mula sa Iloilo. Pwede nga namang sa ibang lugar kumuha ng mga itlog ng isdang Tamban na aalagaan at palalakihin o palalakasin ang produksyon.

Dagdag ni Tolentino, dapat palawigin ng DOST ang "Balik Scientist Program" para sa mga pananaliksik tungkol sa agrikultura at seguridad sa pagkain. Diin pa niya, ang mga Pilipinong siyentipiko ay makatutulong para sa pagbuo ng Tamban Fish Hatchery, paggawa ng bakuna laban sa African Swine Fever o ASF at pagpaparami ng ani ng bigas at asukal.

Ayon sa DOST, sa pamamagitan ng Balik Scientist Program, mayroong 625 na mga Pilipinong siyentipiko na bumalik para magsilbi sa Pilipinas nang pansamantala at pangmatagalan. May 29 naporsiyento sa kanila ang tumutulong para sa pag-aaral sa agrikultura at seguridad sa pagkain.

Naniniwala si Tolentino na mabibigyang lakas ang food security kung pagtutuhan ng pansin ng mga nasa pamahalaan kahit pa ang problemang ito ay halos mahigit 30 taon na.

Noong panahon nang panunungkulan ni Strongman Ferdinand Marcos, sapat at maganda ang produksyon at seguridad ng pagkain sa bansa. Maganda ang ani ng mga magsasaka at sagana sa huling laman-dagat ang mga mangingisda.

Date: 18 SEP 2023 Page: 5



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

ORA MISMO

NI BUTCH M. QUEJADA



Tamban fish hatchery para sa food security — Sen. Tolentino

HINIMOK ni Sen. Francis Tolentino ang Department of Science and Technology (DOST) na palakasin ang produksiyon ng tamban, isang uri ng isda na karaniwang pagkaing Pinoy. Gusto ni Tolentino na maidagdag ang produksiyon ng tamban sa food security programs ng gobyerno.

"May 438 ongoing projects para sa food security. Siguro maniniwala kayo na tamban upgrading of production ay parte rin ng food security," tirada ni Tolentino sa opisyal ng DOST. Ika nga delata ang mura at paborito ng madlang Pinoy na tsibugin.

Birada ni Tolentino na maaaring maging halimbawa ng DOST ang pagkultura ng Dagupan at Pangasinan sa bangus fingerlings na mula sa Iloilo. Dapat palawigin ng DOST ang Balik Scientist Program para sa mga pananaliksik tungkol sa agrikultura at seguridad sa pagkain.

Ani Tolentino, ang mga Pinoy scientist ay makatutulong para sa pagbuo ng tamban fish hatchery, paggawa ng bakuna laban sa African Swine Fever (ASF) at pagpaparami ng ani ng palay at tubo.

Ayon sa DOST, sa pamamagitan ng Balik Scientist Program, mayroong 625 na mga Pilipinong siyentipiko na bumalik para magsilbi sa Pilipinas nang pansamantala at pangmatagalan. May 29 percent sa kanila ang tumutulong para sa pag-aaral sa agrikultura at seguridad sa pagkain.

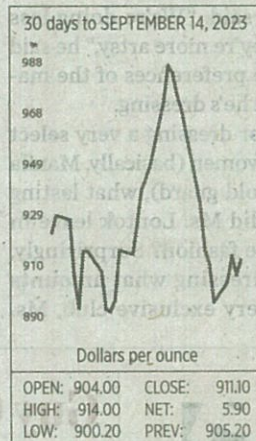
Sabi ni Tolentino, kailangan mabigyan ng muscle ang food security dahil problema ito for 30 years. Kapag natutukan nang husto ang tamban fish hatchery magmumura tiyak ang presyo ng mga sardinas sa merkado. Abangan.



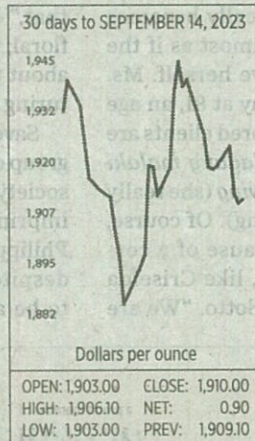
US COMMODITY FUTURES

Source: REUTERS
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2023

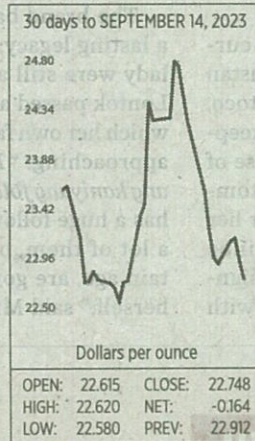
PLATINUM (OCTOBER CONTRACT)



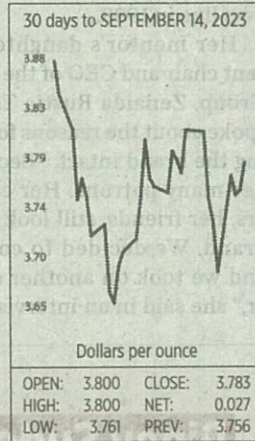
GOLD (SEPTEMBER CONTRACT)



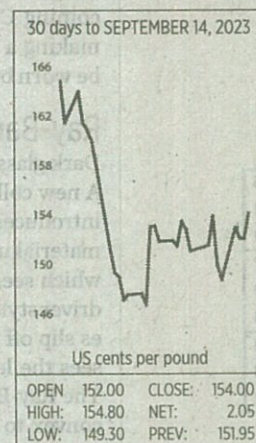
SILVER (SEPTEMBER CONTRACT)



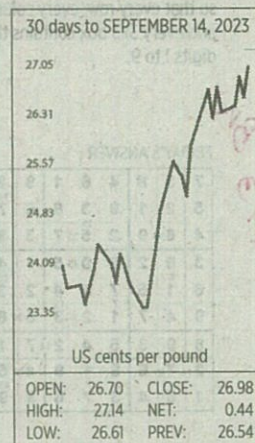
COPPER (SEPTEMBER CONTRACT)



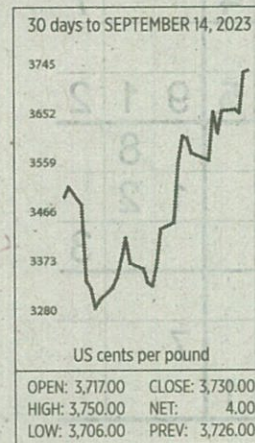
COFFEE (DECEMBER CONTRACT)



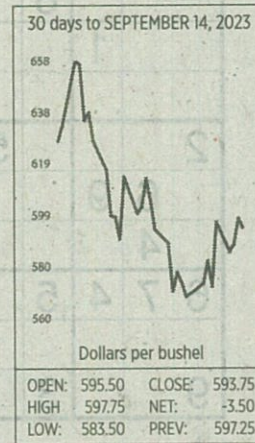
SUGAR (OCTOBER CONTRACT)



COCOA (DECEMBER CONTRACT)



WHEAT (DECEMBER CONTRACT)



Raw sugar futures jump to 12-year high

NEW YORK — Raw sugar futures on ICE rose to a 12-year high on Friday before closing slightly down, as dry weather linked to El Niño looked set to lead to a global deficit in the 2023/24 season. Arabica coffee rose 3.4%.

SUGAR: October raw sugar settled down 0.07 cent or 0.3% at 26.91 cents per pound (lb), after setting a 12-year high of 27.59 cents. The contract gained 2.3% in the week.

Concern that drier than normal weather linked to El Niño is likely to curb output in India and Thailand remained a key supportive factor.

There is a more than 95% chance that El Niño conditions will continue through the Northern Hemisphere winter.

Dry conditions are expected for the next 10 days in center-south Brazil, boosting harvest operations.

October white sugar fell \$9.10 or 1.2 at \$748.30 a metric ton.

COCOA: December London cocoa settled up £14 or 0.5% to £3,121 per ton after setting a contract high of £3,125. It gained 3% in the week.

The market continued to derive support from supply tightness, with a global deficit forecast for both the current 2022/23 season and the 2023/24 season that begins on Oct. 1.

Supply woes have mainly centered on West Africa, the top growing region for cocoa, although news that an invasive virus had been found in Brazil added to concerns.

"Cocoa prices found further momentum over the past week as supply prospects continued to deteriorate, with Brazil's announcement that cases of the mo-

saic virus have been found set to increase concerns further," BMI, a unit of Fitch Solutions, said.

Dealers said 123,260 tons of cocoa were tendered against the September contract that expired on Thursday. The volume represented 75% of exchange stocks that stood at 163,820 tons on Sept. 13.

December New York cocoa rose \$27 or 0.7% to \$3,757 a ton.

COFFEE: December arabica coffee rose 5.15 cents or 3.3% at \$1.5915 per lb and gained 7% in the week.

Dealers noted some short coverings when the contract broke above the \$1.58 level. Speculators are carrying a large short position in arabica.

November robusta coffee rose \$61 or 2.4% at \$2,556 a ton. —

Reuters



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Indonesia reports massive rise in rice imports to refresh stockpiles

JAKARTA — Indonesia had a large rise in rice imports for the first eight months of the year compared to the same period in 2022, the country's statistics agency reported, as the government aims to replenish stockpiles.

Indonesia, Southeast Asia's most populous country with 270 million people, imported 1.59 million metric tons of rice in the January-August period, up from 237,146 tons imported during the same period a year ago, said Amalia Adininggar Widyasanti, the acting chief of Statistics Indonesia, during a briefing on the country's trade data.

More than a half of the shipments originated from Thailand at 802,000 tons, she said, followed by shipments from Vietnam at 674,000 tons, 66,000 tons from India and 45,000 tons from Pakistan.

The government assigned state procurement food company Bulog to import 2.3 million tons of rice this year to blunt the impact of the El Niño weather pattern, which causes dry weather in Southeast Asia.

However 453,000 tons is yet to be contracted, a Bulog official said earlier.

"Global rice price is rising. We want to increase our strategic rice reserve, but even to import it is difficult to get," Indonesian President Joko Widodo said at a separate event on Friday, adding that the difficulties of securing rice from overseas are driven by export restrictions by some countries.

Hot weather in key growing regions across Asia threatens harvests, driving up rice prices by as much as 20%, with countries led by top exporter India limiting shipments to rein in inflation and ensure food security for their people.

Indonesia's total rice imports for 2023, including for hotels and restaurants, are estimated at 2.9 million tons, the National Food Agency said earlier this week.

— Reuters



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Global hunger worse today than in 2015, FAO says

WASHINGTON — There are 745 million more moderately to severely hungry people in the world today than in 2015, and the world is far off track in its efforts to meet an ambitious United Nations (UN) goal to end hunger by 2030, the UN said in a report.

At the halfway point to the deadline set for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the world is seeing little to no improvement in most of the food and agriculture-related goals, said the report by the Food

and Agriculture Organization (FAO), released ahead of a UN sustainable development summit next week in New York.

"The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with other crises such as climate change and armed conflicts, are having widespread impacts," the report said.

"Progress made in the past two decades has stagnated, and in some cases even reversed." Global food insecurity spiked sharply in 2020 as the pandemic disrupted

food markets and drove up unemployment, but hunger has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

About 29.6% of the global population — 2.4 billion people — was moderately or severely food insecure in 2022, up from 1.75 billion in 2015, the report said.

Undernourishment is worst in the global south, with hunger rising most in Sub-Saharan Africa. The world has also seen no improvement towards a goal to halve food waste, which has remained at about 13% since 2016.

Countries should craft policy to reduce food loss, the report said.

Reuters reported in November that the lack of global progress on food waste is due to low public investment and clear policy, and wasteful consumer habits.

The world is also far from achieving goals to protect fish stocks, conserve forests, and reverse land degradation. Some progress has been made on water use efficiency and curbing illegal fishing. — **Reuters**

Date: SEPT. 18, 2023 Page: A9



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Flood of Russian wheat halves world prices from wartime high

RUSSIA'S second consecutive bumper wheat harvest is reinforcing its position as the No. 1 exporter, but it's also easing price pressures stemming from Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

The Kremlin's war—including blockading and bombarding ports—has hobbled Ukraine's food exports, helping cement Russia's domination of the global wheat market. That's reflected in record Russian shipments, as the nation's traders overcome the financing and logistical challenges some faced in the aftermath of the invasion.

However, Russia's overflowing grain ports have also yielded a silver lining for wheat consumers buffeted by a cost-of-living crisis: the lowest prices in almost three years. Despite the Kremlin's efforts to exploit the situation—by shoring up wheat prices to replenish its own coffers—the Chicago market is trading at less than half the peak reached after Moscow first invaded.

"There are not a lot of competitors for Russian wheat," said Hélène Duflo, a grain-market analyst at Strategie Grains. "Russia is the price maker at the moment."

With the supply glut depressing prices,

Russia is trying to use its dominant position to put a floor under the market. Not only would that placate its own farmers, upset by dwindling incomes, but would also boost the Kremlin's war-strained coffers by generating additional tax revenues.

Russian officials have been trying to enforce an informal price floor for exports, according to people familiar with the matter. That's forcing some traders to renegotiate or even cancel deals, the people said, asking not be identified as the matter is private.

The government can enforce the price floor by refusing to grant export documents to lower-cost shipments, the people said. Still, the application of the floor has been inconsistent.

This month Egypt booked a massive quantity of Russian wheat in a private deal at a price below the unofficial floor in public tenders. Several days later, Egypt said that the trader would be allowed to supply grain from origins other than Russia. That allows the Russian agriculture ministry to "save face" on deals that fall below its price floor, according to Andrey Sizov, managing director at research firm SovEcon.

"If they don't necessarily sell Russian wheat, it implies they haven't violated the

Russian price floor," Sizov said.

Russia's agriculture ministry didn't respond to questions on whether it enforces an official price floor. "We stand by our prices, which are dictated by increased production costs," said Eduard Zernin, head of the Russian Union of Grain Exporters.

Nevertheless, the price floor is yet another sign of the Kremlin seeking to tighten control over Russian grain exports, and thereby the global market.

International trading houses fled Russia earlier this year as official criticism of foreign companies was ramped up. Moscow also continues to woo buyers in Africa and the Middle East, while assaulting Ukraine's farm-export infrastructure and mixing grain from occupied regions with its own output.

Underlining Moscow's wheat market dominance, the US Department of Agriculture earlier this week increased its forecast for Russian exports, while lowering its projection for global shipments.

The upshot is that despite lingering uncertainty about Ukrainian shipments, those concerns are more than offset by Russia's own bountiful wheat fields, according to Alexander Karavaytsev, senior economist at the International Grains Council.

"Russia's continued bumper and competitively priced exports have been a major factor weighing on exporter sentiment at other key origins in recent months," he said. **Bloomberg News**



Soybeans, corn down

CHICAGO- US soybean futures fell on Friday on technical selling and profit taking after two sessions of gains, and as a monthly crush report showed US processors handled far fewer beans than expected in August.

Corn futures followed soybeans lower, with both markets also pressured by improving crop conditions in Europe and rising supplies from the accelerating US harvest.

Wheat rebounded from losses in the prior session on worries about shipments from the Black Sea breadbasket region and reduced harvest potential in Australia and Argentina due to recent dry weather.

Grain traders are monitoring early harvest reports from the US Midwest in anticipation of further adjustments to supply outlooks issued by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) earlier this week.

"We're seeing some position squaring after yesterday's price action," said Terry Reilly, senior agricultural strategist with Marex.

"The trade is starting to get comfortable with the 220 (million bushel soybean) carry-out, and I don't think they want to carry a position going home into the weekend," he said, referring to USDA's forecast for the tightest US soy stocks in eight years. - Reuters