

A. SEC. PBBM QUOTED

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Marcos junks proposal to reduce rice tariffs

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

BBM rejects tariff reduction on rice

MANILA BULLETIN

Rice tariff reduction rejected

Marcos tags smugglers, hoarders as 'bukbok'

THE MANILA TIMES

Marcos rejects rice tariff reduction

Marcos vows full force of law vs smugglers, hoarders

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

PBBM rejects rice tariff cuts

BUSINESS WORLD

Marcos calls rice supply adequate in warning to hoarders, smugglers

BUSINESS MIRROR

Marcos rejects rice tariff cut proposal

PBBM: Distribution of seized rice underwent 'right process'

REMATE

Buong pwersa ng gobyerno gagamitin vs rice smuggling

PBBM tunay na may malasakit sa masa

ABANTE

Legal pamudmod ko ng smuggled rice – PBBM

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL

NFA buying price for palay serves as benchmark for traders

B. DA FAMILY

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Landbank loans to farmers hit P2.2B

THE MANILA TIMES

NIA gets P40B additional budget

DA starts installing fixed Kadiwa centers

DBM issues SARO for DA program

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

Budget dept okays P50M for farmers, fisherfolk program

BUSINESS WORLD

NFA announces new price-setting mechanism for purchases of palay

USDA downgrades PHL rice production forecast

NIA to direct expanded funding to solar-powered irrigation systems

BUSINESS MIRROR

DA aid enables 32 Siargao land tillers to start pineapple farm

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON

P50-M pondo sa magsasaka, mangingisda aprub na ng DBM
‘Ghost project’ ng NIA itinanggi ng construction firm

ABANTE TONITE

P50M sa mga magsasaka, mangingisda nilabas ng DBM

C. AGRI-RELATED STORY

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Gov’t review extension of lower agri tariffs

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

USDA cuts Phl rice import forecast

THE MANILA TIMES

USDA expects PH to import less rice

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

USDA cuts rice, corn output projection for PH

BUSINESS MIRROR

Rice price cap, pricier global grain seen to cut imports

D. FOREIGN STORY

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

Corn, soybeans firm

India to cut floor price for basmati rice

BUSINESS WORLD

Sugar, cocoa prices fall after recent multi-year highs

BUSINESS MIRROR

High rice prices bring risk of social unrest, US says



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Marcos junks proposal to reduce rice tariffs

By Nestor Corrales
@NCorralesINQ

President Marcos rejected on Tuesday the proposal to temporarily implement rice tariff reduction to temper the surging rice prices in the country.

"We decided with the agriculture and economic managers that ... it was not the right time to lower the tariff rates because the projection of world rice prices is that it will go down," the President said.

"So, this is not the right time to lower tariffs. Tariffs are generally lowered when the price is going up," he added.

Mr. Marcos issued the statement following the sectoral meeting in Malacañang on Tuesday where the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) presented updates on the proposed rice tariff reduction.

Present during the meeting

were officials of the Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Budget and Management.

Farmers' concern

In a press statement, Presidential Communications Secretary Cheloy Velicaria-Garafil noted that some farmer groups have raised concern over some negative effects should rice tariff reduction be adopted, citing that importers mostly stand to gain from the proposal "because they are already undervaluing rice" and would only "further depress" palay prices and discourage farmers from expanding their future production.

The DOF and Neda have proposed a temporary reduction of import tariffs on rice to ease the rice prices in the country.

But Garafil said that during

Tuesday's meeting in Malacañang, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan and Agriculture Undersecretaries Leocadio Sebastian and Mercedita Sombilla "agreed that it was not the right time to lower tariff rates because of the downtrend of rice prices in the world market."

Won't lift cap yet

The President also said he would not yet lift Executive Order No. 39, which imposed price caps on rice prices in the country.

"We will study it carefully," Mr. Marcos said

The President issued Executive Order No. 39 signed on Aug. 31, imposing price ceilings on rice in the whole country following the "alarming" increase in its retail prices in local markets.

The mandated price ceiling for regular milled rice is P41 per

kilogram while that for well-milled rice is P45 per kilogram.

On Tuesday, Mr. Marcos said that the government would use the "full force" of the law against smugglers and hoarders.

During a rice distribution to poor families in Manila, he said that smugglers and hoarders were to blame for the spike in rice prices in the country.

"I know this fight will be difficult because they have been doing their schemes for a long time, but I am determined to use the full force of the government to end these illegal operations," he added.

The rice given to poor families was among 42,180 smuggled sacks of rice worth P42 million seized by the Bureau of Customs-Port of Zamboanga during a raid on a warehouse in Barangay San Jose Gusu, Zamboanga City on Sept. 15. INQ

Date: SEPT. 27, 2023 Page: 1 of 2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BBM rejects tariff reduction on rice

Sen. Imee Marcos fist-bumps a member of a farmers' group as she joined a rally yesterday at the Department of Finance main office calling for the removal of DOF Secretary Benjamin Diokno and NEDA Director General Arsenio Balisacan for seeking a temporary reduction of tariffs on imported rice.

EDD GUMBAN

President Marcos rejected yesterday a proposal to temporarily cut the tariff on imported rice to lower the prices of the food staple, citing projections that global prices would decrease.

Marcos, also the agriculture secretary, made the remark after a sectoral meeting at Malacañang that tackled the proposed rice tariff reduction.

"We decided with the agriculture and economic managers that ... it was not the right time to lower the

tariff rates because the projection of world rice prices is that it will go down," a Palace statement quoted the President as saying.

"So this is not the right time to lower tariffs. Tariffs are generally lowered when the price is going up," he added.

Presidential Communications Secretary Cheloy Garafil said the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) had recommended a reduction in the tariff

Turn to Page 2

BBM rejects From Page 1

on imported rice to help decrease local rice prices.

The tariff cut would eventually lead to the simultaneous lifting of Executive Order No. 39, which set price caps on regular and well-milled rice in the market, she added.

Under the order, the price cap on regular rice is at P41 per kilogram while the mandated price ceiling on well-milled rice is at P45 per kilogram.

During the sectorial meeting, NEDA Secretary Arsenio Balisacan and Agriculture Undersecretaries Leocadio Sebastian and Mercedita Sombilla agreed that it was not the right time to reduce tariff rates because of the downtrend of rice prices in the global market.

Marcos said the price cap would continue to be in effect since it has to be studied carefully.

Imee joins rally

Sen. Imee Marcos on Tues-

day joined protest actions in front of the Department of Finance (DOF) building calling for the resignation of President Marcos' economic managers amid plans to reduce or remove tariff on imported rice that would affect local farmers.

"All my friends are here. All our friends who are farmers, fishermen—everyone from Northern Luzon to Central Luzon as well as friends from Southern Luzon are here. I'm just supporting," said Marcos when asked about her presence at the rally.

The rallyists demanded the resignation of Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno and Balisacan.

Marcos, the eldest sister of President Marcos, brought food and water as a show of support for those opposing DOF's proposed tariff reduction on imported rice. — With Alexis Romero, Cecille Suerte Felipe

Date: SEPT. 27, 2020 Page: 1 of 10



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Rice tariff reduction rejected

By RAYMUND ANTONIO

President Marcos on Tuesday, Sept. 26, scrapped the proposed temporary implementation of rice tariff reduction which would've aimed to address the surge of rice prices in the market.

A statement from the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) gave details on why the chief executive decided against the proposal. ► 10

Rice tariff reduction rejected 1◀

"We decided with the agriculture and economic managers that ... it was not the right time to lower the tariff rates because the projection of world rice prices is that it will go down," Marcos said, as quoted by the PCO. "So, this is not the right time to lower tariffs. Tariffs are generally lowered when the price is going up."

In the PCO statement, it said that National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Secretary Arsenio Balisacan and Department of Agriculture (DA) Undersecretaries Leocadio Sebastian and Mercedita Sombilla agreed not to go through with the proposal because of the downtrend in rice prices in the world market.

These remarks from the President were made after his sectoral meeting on Tuesday, when NEDA presented updates on the proposed rice tariff reduction with inputs from the Department of Finance (DOF), Depart-

ment of Trade and Industry (DTI), and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

Farmer groups, along with presidential sister Senator Imee Marcos, also expressed concern over the proposed rice tariff reduction and even called for the resignation of Balisacan and Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno.

According to the groups, importers would mostly benefit from the proposal "because they are already undervaluing rice." They added that the proposal would also "further depress" palay prices and discourage farmers from expanding their future production.

Earlier, NEDA recommended the reduction of rice tariff to help lower the prices of rice in the market.

This was intended to lead to the lifting of Executive Order (EO) No. 39, which imposed price ceilings on

regular and well-milled rice in the market.

Under EO 39, which took effect on Sept. 5, the mandated price ceiling on regular milled rice is at ₱41 per kilo, while the mandated price cap on well-milled rice is at ₱45 per kilo.

Marcos hinted that there are no current plans to lift the implementation of EO 39 as this would still need to be studied.

"Pag-aralan natin mabuti (We need to study it well)," the President said.

But in order to soften the impact of the price cap on rice retailers, the chief executive ordered the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to provide ₱15,000 cash assistance.

He also distributed sacks of rice to beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) to ensure the supply of this staple grain.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Marcos tags smugglers, hoarders as 'bukbok'

By BETHEENA UNITE

President Marcos likened smugglers and hoarders to weevils—locally called “bukbok” that usually infest old and poorly stored stock of rice and other agricultural goods

such as corn and flour—as they disrupt supply and prices of rice in the country.

He said they are the ones ruining the balance between rice prices and supply in the country which prompted the government to implement rice policies, including the temporary

price cap and new price range for buying palay.

“Ang bukbo na lubos na sumisira sa balanse ng suplay at presyo ng bigas sa merkado [ay] ang hoarding at saka ang smuggling, at price manipulation na ginagawa ng mapagsamantalang mga negosyante

(The weevils that totally ruin the balance between supply and price of rice in the market is hoarding, smuggling, and price manipulation done by erring businessmen),” Marcos said as he led the distribution of seized smuggled rice to beneficiaries in Manila on ► **9**

Date: SEPT. 27, 1973 Page: 1 of 2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Marcos tags smugglers, hoarders as 'bukbok' 1◀

Tuesday, Sept. 26.

Marcos vows to end smuggling

Marcos said he is determined to end smuggling and hoarding of rice in the country, asking government officials and Filipinos to help him in the fight.

Addressing rice beneficiaries, Marcos aired once again his warning to smugglers and hoarders and ordered government officials and authorities to intensify policies on rice.

He reiterated that the distribution of seized smuggled rice to poor families in the country serves as a warning to smugglers to stop their illegal acts.

"Magsisilbing babala rin po ito sa lahat ng mga smuggler at mga hoarder na ang bigas sa bansa ay ating babantayan (This will serve as a warning to all smugglers and hoarders that rice will be under close watch)," Marcos said. "Sa bagong Pilipinas, bawal ang smuggler, bawal ang hoarder at bawal din ang mapang-abuso na mapagsamantala sa ating bayan (Under the new Philippines, smugglers, hoarders, and abusers are not allowed)."

The President said the fight to end smuggling in the country "will not be easy" but he is "determined" to do so.

"Alam ko pong magiging mahirap ang labang ito dahil matagal na silang namamayapag sa kalakaran. Ngunit desidido ako na ang buong

pwera ng pamahalaan na matigil na ang mga ilegal na operasyong ito (I know that this fight will not be easy because they have been there for so long. But I am determined that the full force of the government could stop their illegal operations)," Marcos said.

Smugglers' scheme

He told rice donation beneficiaries about the scheme smugglers and hoarders do which cause high prices that eventually adds suffering to the ordinary Filipinos while smugglers and hoarders earn large sums.

"When the prices are high, they will release their rice stocks to earn big. That is not right because it brings suffering to the people while they earn more money," Marcos lamented.

'There is enough supply'

Amid several policies being implemented to address rice issues, the President reiterated that the country has ample supply of rice.

"Like what I said when we distributed rice in Camarines Sur the other day: There is enough supply of rice in the Philippines," Marcos said.

"We only need efficient management of the production and sale of rice," Marcos added.

The chief executive said the country was able to post higher harvest in the second quarter of this year compared to the same period last year.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Marcos rejects rice tariff reduction

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday thumbed down the proposal to temporarily reduce rice tariffs in a bid to address the price surges in the market.

Marcos, serving concurrently as Agriculture chief, made known his stand after the sectoral meeting on Tuesday in Malacañang, where the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) presented updates on the proposed rice tariff reduction.

"We decided with the agriculture and economic managers that ... it was not the right time to lower the tariff rates because the projection of world rice prices is that it will go down," the President said.

Some farmers' groups earlier raised concerns over the proposal. They claimed that importers would mostly gain "because they are already undervaluing rice."

The NEDA earlier

recommended a reduction in the tariff imposed on imported rice in a bid to help lower local rice prices, which will eventually lead to the simultaneous lifting of Executive Order (EO) 39 that imposed rice price ceilings on regular and well-milled rice in the market.

Under EO 39, which took effect on September 5, the price cap for regular rice is P41 per kilogram, while that for well-milled rice is P45 per kilogram.

Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno had also proposed to temporarily reduce the tariff rates on imported rice to between 0 percent and 10 percent.

However, at Tuesday's meeting, NEDA Secretary Arsenio Balisacan and Agriculture Undersecretaries Leocadio Sebastian and Mercedita Sombilla agreed that it was not the right time to lower tariff rates because of the downtrend of rice prices in the world market.

CATHERINE S. VALENTE

The Manila Times®

Date: SEPT. 27, 2023 Page: A1 & A5



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Marcos vows full force of law vs smugglers, hoarders

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday warned that the government will use the full force of the law against smugglers and hoarders whom he described as "weevils" that destroy the balance of rice supply and demand in the country.

In his speech during the distribution of rice at the San Andres Sports Complex in Manila, the President ordered government officials to strictly implement policies and laws to address rice issues in the country.

"The weevils that totally destroy the balance between supply and price of rice in the market is hoarding and smuggling, and price manipulation done by erring businessmen," Marcos said.

"I have instructed all concerned officials, authorities, and agencies to strictly enforce policies and laws that are related to rice issues," he added.

➤ **HoardersA5**

■ **HOARDERS FROM A1**

Marcos vows full force

Marcos, also the concurrent secretary of the Department of Agriculture, admitted that stopping smugglers, hoarders, and price manipulators will not be easy as they have been operating for so long, but the government is determined to end their illegal

operation.

He stressed that smugglers, hoarders and price manipulators have no space in the "Bagong Pilipinas (New Philippines)" campaign of the administration.

"I know that this fight will not be easy because they have

been there for so long. But I am determined that the entire government could stop their illegal operations," Marcos said. "This will serve as a warning to all smugglers and hoarders that rice will be guarded."

The President urged the public to help the government fight against smuggling and hoarding of the staple.

Marcos led the distribution of

rice to 1,000 beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), with each beneficiary receiving 25 kilograms of rice.

He earlier also distributed rice to 4Ps beneficiaries in Tungawan, Zamboanga Sibugay; Iriga City, Camarines Sur; and General Trias, Cavite.

CATHERINE S. VALENTE



PBBM rejects rice tariff cuts

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

PRESIDENT Marcos Jr. yesterday rejected a proposal to temporarily reduce rice tariffs to address the high prices of the staple grain.

The President said tariffs are usually reduced when prices continue to go up, but it has been projected that prices of rice will drop in the world market soon.

"We decided with the agriculture and economic managers that... it was not the right time to lower the tariff rates because the projection of world rice prices is that it will go down. So, this is not the right time to lower tariffs. Tariffs

are generally lowered when the price is going up," Marcos said following a sectoral meeting in Malacañang yesterday.

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) has earlier said that a reduction in the tariff imposed on imported rice is one of the options that the administration can consider to bring down local rice prices.

During Tuesday's meeting, the NEDA presented updates on the proposed rice tariff reduction with inputs from the Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Trade and

See PBBM > Page B2

PBBM

Industry (DTI) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

NEDA Secretary Arsenio Balisacan and Agriculture officials, namely Undersecretaries Leocadio Sebastian and Mercedita Sombilla said now was not the right time to lower tariff rates because of the downtrend in rice prices in the world market.

Asked if the government will soon lift the implementation of Executive Order 39, which imposed a price ceiling of P41 per kilo for regular milled rice and P45 per kilo for well-milled rice, the President said it will remain in effect as they still have to study the matter carefully.

"Pag-aralan natin mabuti (we will study it thoroughly)," Marcos said.

'BUKBOK'

Earlier on Tuesday during the distribution of government confiscated smuggled rice to Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) beneficiaries in Manila, the President said that while the government's campaign against agriculture saboteurs is challenging and difficult, his administration is determined to put an end to the illegal activities of smugglers, hoarders, and price manipulators whom he compared to "bukbok" or rice bugs which disrupt the supply and price of rice in the country.

He said that while the campaign against smugglers, hoarders, and price manipulators has been difficult since they have been operating illegally for years already, his administration is determined and will relentlessly run after them not just to end their illicit activities but also to ensure access to affordable staple food for all Filipinos.

"Kaya inaatasan ko ang lahat ng mga opisyal, otoridad, at mga ahensya na higpitan nang husto ang pagpapatupad ng mga polisiya at batas hinggil sa isyu ng bigas (That's why I ordered all officials, authorities and agencies to strictly implement policies and laws related to rice)," he said.

He said there is no place for smugglers, hoarders, and price manipulators in his government.

"Ang bukbok na lubos na sumisira sa balanse ng suplay at presyo ng bigas sa merkado [ay] ang hoarding atsaka ang smuggling at price manipulation na ginagawa ng mapagsamantalang mga negosyante.

Sa Bagong Pilipinas, hindi na po ito puwede (The weevils or rice bugs that destroy the balance of supply and price of rice in the market is hoarding and smuggling and the price manipulation done by unscrupulous traders. This is not allowed in the new Philippines)," he said.

The President also asked the public to support and join the government in its campaign to strengthen the agriculture sector and realize a new Philippines where Filipinos live a stable, comfortable, and secure life.

"Sa ating pagkakaisa, tiyak na anumang hamon ay kakayanin at anumang pangarap ay matutupad, basta't para sa sambayanang Pilipino at para sa Pilipino (In being united, we can overcome any challenges and realize our dreams, as long as it's for the Filipino people)," he said.

The President also reiterated that there is enough rice supply in the country, especially with the harvest season coming, and the government just needs to ensure the sound management of production and trade.

Marcos on Tuesday led the distribution of 25-kilos sacks of rice each to 1,000 4Ps beneficiaries at the San Andres Sports Complex in Malate, Manila.

The rice is part of the 42,180 sacks of rice seized by the Bureau of Customs (BOC) in an operation in Zamboanga City. The confiscated sacks of imported rice have been donated to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) after the importers failed to prove the legality of their importation.

The President again assured that due process was observed before the confiscation and distribution of the rice.

Parts of the seized grain had already been distributed last week to 4Ps beneficiaries in Tungawan, Zamboanga Sibugay; Iriga City, Camarines Sur; and General Trias, Cavite.

ANTI-AGRICULTURAL SMUGGLING ACT

The House of Representatives on Tuesday approved on second reading the Palace-backed bill seeking to strengthen the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016 by imposing life imprisonment to those who will be found guilty of committing economic sabotage.

Through voice voting, lawmakers approved House Bill No. 9284, which classifies smuggling of rice and other agricultural products such as onion as "economic sabotage" following the sudden increases in prices recently.

The President has already certified as urgent a counterpart bill in the Senate.

Malaya Business Insight

Date: SEPT. 27, 2023 Page: B1 & B2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Speaker Martin Romualdez said the bill, once enacted, is meant to act as a “permanent deterrent” to hoarders and price manipulators of basic commodities by imposing life sentence as maximum penalty for offenders.

“This is because we want to send a chilling effect on these cartels that have been operating for decades now. We really mean business this time. And our primary task here is to protect the welfare of the masses – provide them with the most affordable goods in the market,” he said. “President Marcos – as Chief Executive and secretary of agriculture – fully appreciates the adverse impact of the smuggling of rice and other staples on farmers, fisherfolk and on consumers. We share his concern for the affected sectors,” he also said.

The House approved the measure after a series of hearings by the Committee on Agriculture and Food chaired by Quezon Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga, who has endorsed the measure for plenary approval.

The bill, which is part of the 20 bills listed as priorities by the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council (LEDAC) for passage this December, will be approved on third and final reading before Congress goes on recess on September 30.

Romualdez said once the measure becomes a law, would also benefit the public by ensuring stable prices as it would discourage hoarding and price manipulation.

He said the measure would protect farmers and fishermen from smugglers, especially in times when prices are manipulated and agricultural products are hoarded.

“We have to shield them from these atrocious activities to encourage them to produce more rice and other staples so the country can attain food sufficiency,” Romualdez said.

NFA ANNIVERSARY

During the 51st anniversary of the National Food Authority (NFA) yesterday, the President highlighted some of the ongoing programs of the agency as he committed his administration’s continued support, along with efforts that would promote food security, ensure public access to affordable food, boost the agricultural sector in the Philippines, and increase the local production and supply of the staple food in the country.

Marcos, in his speech read by Agriculture Senior Undersecretary Domingo Panganiban, said the recent months have been challenging, but

the NFA continues to find the best solutions to the numerous issues it has faced without compromising the needs of farmers and retailers.

“We continue to relentlessly strive to bolster the agriculture sector to increase our local food production and supply. We also conducted outreach activities and extended food relief assistance to the underprivileged members of our society. We have likewise undertaken measures to support our retailers in light of the price cap that we imposed to stabilize rice prices in the market,” he said.

He said the government is also undertaking aggressive steps to ensure price stability of basic commodities, especially rice, by strengthening law-enforcement activities against smugglers, hoarders, and those who undermine government efforts to ensure food security.

The President also expressed high hopes in the success of the Smarter Approaches to Reinvigorate Agriculture (SARAI) which seeks to intensify ongoing efforts to provide smart and sustainable solutions for a more productive and proactive farming.

Project SARAI aims to develop a national crop forecasting and monitoring system for nine priority crops, which are rice, corn, banana, coconut, coffee, cacao, sugarcane, tomato, and soybean. It will also serve as a source for the measurable, verifiable, and connected gathering of procurement data to improve NFA warehouse management and accounting.

Marcos also expressed optimism about the results of the NFA Modernization Program and its signing of a credit line with the Landbank and the Development Bank of the Philippines.

Under the NFA Modernization Program, the agency plans to build facilities and pursue developments, including post-harvest storage and processing facilities towards a 100-day buffer stock target, rice fortification, and non-grains supply chain support facilities. The NFA also intends to transition to renewable energy sources, such as biomass and solar batteries, for enhanced power generation.

“May this 51st anniversary celebration reinvigorate the drive to continue fulfilling the NFA’s mandate of maintaining sufficient rice buffer stock sourced from our local farmers. Even in the midst of challenges that grapple our agriculture sector, you have remained steadfast in maintaining a buffer stock of rice and palay, especially during times of emergencies and calamities,” he said. – *With Wendell Vigilia*



Marcos calls rice supply adequate in warning to hoarders, smugglers

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. on Tuesday called the rice supply adequate as he distributed seized grain to cash transfer beneficiaries, issuing a warning to smugglers and hoarders of his intent to give away confiscated rice.

"Instead of letting the rice go to waste, it's better to distribute it to our citizens," he said. "This will also serve as a warning to smugglers and hoarders that we will keep an eye on rice."

Mr. Marcos continued to blame hoarders for the high rice prices.

"Sapat ang supply ng bigas dito sa Pilipinas. Ang kailangan lamang po ay maayos na pamamahala ng produksyon at bentahan nito (The rice supply is sufficient in the Philippines. What is needed is proper oversight over the market for rice)," he said at the rice distribution exercise in Manila.

He was distributing some of the 42,180 sacks of smuggled rice valued at P42 million seized by the Bureau of Customs during a warehouse raid in Zamboanga City on Sept. 15.

Palay output hit 4.25 million metric tons (MT) in the second quarter, slightly higher than the 4.2 million MT recorded a year earlier.

Mr. Marcos' economic team has been proposing to cut the tariff on rice imports to as low as 0% from 35%, prompting questions from the farm industry.

"There is no rice shortage, therefore there is no basis for reducing tariffs," Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura Chairman Rosendo So said in a statement signed by 26 agricultural groups.

"It is very clear to us that Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno and National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Secretary Arsenio A. Balisacan are publicly

contradicting the President with their continued insistence on reducing tariffs and encouraging more imports," he said. "They are not serving at the pleasure of the President, but of the importers."

He said any tariff reduction will have a negative impact on farmgate prices "as imports will again flood the market."

Mr. So urged legislators to compel the Finance and NEDA Secretaries to explain why executive orders on tariff reduction are being issued over the heads of Congress.

"Bakit hindi sila sa Congress makipag-usap? (Why is Congress not being consulted)" Mr. So said. *"Ang tariff modification ay trabaho ng Congress (Modifying tariffs is a job for Congress)."*

Action for Economic Reforms coordinator Filomeno S. Sta. Ana III has said that the government should lift the price caps on rice instead of imposing a zero-tariff policy.

"The proposed zero tariff of course will bring down the price of rice, but shortages, especially in the aftermath of

Indian rice export ban, and increasing demand will still exert upward pressure on prices," he told *BusinessWorld* earlier this month.

"But if the market price still exceeds the price ceiling, despite the zero tariff, don't expect the exports to come in," he added. "So, remove the price ceiling. The price ceiling is not working, based on the stories of rice sellers. It will only exacerbate the shortage. The sooner it is removed, the better." — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**



MARCOS REJECTS RICE TARIFF CUT PROPOSAL

By SAMUEL P. MEDENILLA [@sam_medenilla](#)
& JASPER EMMANUEL Y. ARCALAS [@jearcalas](#)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. rejected the proposal of his economic managers to temporarily reduce rice tariffs due to the projected downward trend in the international prices of the staple.

The chief executive made the decision following a meeting with the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

"Tariffs are generally lowered when the price is going up," said Marcos, who is also the concurrent secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

"It was not the right time to lower the tariff rates because the projection of world rice prices is that it will go down," he added.

Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno and Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan had proposed the reduction of the 35-percent rice tariff following the surge in domestic rice prices.

Farmer groups had opposed the proposal as the entry of more rice imports could depress farmgate prices at a time when planters are already harvesting their crop.

During the sectoral meeting, Balisacan and other agriculture officials agreed with the President's decision to not lower tariff rates at this time.

In a separate interview, Senior Agriculture Undersecretary Domingo F. Panganiban said he "personally opposes" the reduction of rice tariffs, as only the traders would benefit from it.

The DA earlier noted the spike in rice prices despite the sufficient supply of the staple. The chief executive attributed to smugglers and hoarders who manipulated prices.

SEE "RICE TARIFF," A2

Date: SEPT. 27, 2013 Page: A1 & A2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Rice tariff...

CONTINUED FROM A1

To help stabilize the price of the food staple, Marcos issued last September 5 Executive Order (EO) No. 39, which imposed a price cap of P41 per kilogram (kg) for regular milled rice (RMR) and P45 per kg for well-milled rice (WMR) nationwide.

The economic managers said, however, that they were not consulted by the President prior to the issuance of the EO.

Marcos said he and other government officials will have to study the lifting of EO 39 carefully.

Sought for his comment about the price ceiling on rice, Pangiban said the measure can be lifted within a week's time since the impact of the price cap has only been felt in the past two or three days.

Rally vs rice tariff cut

ON Tuesday, various agricultural groups held their second rally in

front of the Department of Finance (DOF) to denounce its proposal to reduce rice tariffs to as low as zero percent.

The groups reiterated their opposition to the tariff reduction proposal as well as their calls for Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno and Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan to resign for supporting the tariff reduction measure.

"There is no rice shortage, therefore there is no basis to reduce tariff or flood the market with imported rice," the groups, led by Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura, said in a statement on Tuesday.

"The President's message is clear: there is no rice shortage and there is enough rice but gaps in distribution disrupt market availability," they added.

The Tariff Commission has already held its public hearing regarding the proposal of the Foundation for Economic Freedom to reduce rice tariffs to 10 percent from the current 35 percent.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PBBM: Distribution of seized rice underwent 'right process'

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Tuesday assured the confiscated smuggled rice, which is now being distributed to Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) beneficiaries, is safe for consumption.

"This went through the right process of investigation, confiscation and inspection to ensure it is safe for distribution to the needy," the Chief Executive said in Filipino during the rice distribution in San Andres Sports Complex in Manila.

At least 1,000 sacks of rice were distributed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to 4Ps beneficiaries during the event.

The distributed rice were part 42,180 sacks of rice seized by the Bureau of Customs (BOC) in Zamboanga earlier this month.

Last week, the government started distributing parts of the confiscated rice to 4Ps beneficiaries in Zamboanga City and Cavite.

Smuggled agriculture products do not go through the needed sanitary and phytosanitary import clearance (SPSIC) to

ensure they are free from potential disease, pests or harmful substances.

Marcos said he ordered the distribution of the smuggled rice after it went through the necessary inspection to help the needy following the recent spike in rice prices.

"Instead of these [sacks of] rice to be wasted, we opted to distribute it to citizens," the President said.

The distribution, he added, was also part of the government's intensified campaign against smugglers and hoarders, which he called "bukbok" (weevil)—a beetle harmful to crops—for destroying the local rice market through price manipulation.

"That is why I ordered all officials, authorities, and agencies to intensify the implementation of policies and laws on the issue related to rice," Marcos said.

"I know this will be an uphill battle since they [smugglers and hoarders] have long dominated the market, but I am determined to use the full force of the government to stop these illegal operations," he added.

Samuel P. Medenilla

Date: SEPT. 27, 2023 Page: 2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Buong pwersa ng gobyerno gagamitin vs rice smuggling

GAGAMITAN na ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. ng buong puwersa ng pamahalaan ang iligal na operation ng rice smugglers sa bansa.

Sa naging talumpati ni Pangulong Marcos sa ginawang pamamahagi ng bigas sa Sta. Ana, Lungsod ng Maynila, sinabi nito na handa niyang pakilusin ang buong pwersa ng

pamahalaan para tapusin ang iligal na operasyon ng pagpupuslit ng bigas.

Makaaasa aniya ang taumbayan na hindi titigil ang gobyerno na lansagin ang mga smuggler at hoarder na nagpapahirap sa mamamayang Filipino.

Ipinag-utos naman ng Punong Ehekutibo sa mga kinauukulan na tiyaking naipatutupad

nang buong higpit ang batas at polisiya na may kinalaman sa usapin ng bigas.

Para sa Pangulo, ang smuggling at hoarding ay "bukbok" na lubos na sumisira sa balanse ng suplay at presyo ng bigas sa merkado.

Ang nasa likod aniya nito ay ang mga mapagsamantalang negosyante na responsable rin

sa price manipulation.

Samantala, muli namang siniguro ng Pangulo na hindi problema ang suplay ng bigas sa bansa.

Sa ginawang pamamahagi naman ng bigas ng Pangulo sa Iriga, Camarines Sur, sinabi ng Pangulo na maraming suplay ng bigas. Iyon nga lang hindi ito maipalabas nang tama.

KRIS JOSE

REMATE

ANG DIARYO NG MASA

Date: SEPT. 27, 2023 Page: 5



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PBBM TUNAY NA MAY MALASAKIT SA MASA

RAMDAM ng sambayanan na may gobyernong tumutugon sa pangangailangan nila sa gitna nang nararanasang krisis ng bansa kabilang ang walang puknat na pagtaas ng presyo ng mga bilingin dulot naman nang walang humpay na pagsipa ng produktong petrolyo sa pandaigdigang merkado.

Isa sa makatotohanang hakbang na inilunsad ng kasalukuyang administrasyon upang labanan ang kahirapan sa bansa ay sa pamamagitan ng pagsasagawa ng "Serbisyo Fair" sa mga rehiyon sa ilalim ng 'Bagong Pilipinas' kung saan direktang inilapit sa taumbayan ang iba't-ibang programa ng bawat ahensya kabilang ang pagbibigay ng ayuda ng Department of Social Welfare and Development o DSWD sa mga estudyante, mangingisda, magsasaka at iba pang indibidwal na nasa laylayan ng lipunan.

Mismong si **Pangulong Bongbong Marcos** ang nanguna sa pamamahagi ng tulong sa mga itinuturing na mahihirap na kababayan sa Nabua, Camarines Sur noong Setyembre 23 kung saan kabilang dito ang pagbibigay ng bangkang de motor at lambat para sa mangingisda, traktora sa magsasaka

at iba pang farm equipment sa sektor ng agrikultura.

Layunin ng Serbisyo Fair na matulungan ang maliliit na magsasaka para palakasin ang produksyon ng palay at iba pang ani sa bukid nang sa ganoon ay hindi na umasa ang bansa sa inaangkat na bigas at iba pang pagkain sa ibang bansa na pinaniniwalaang pumapatay naman sa hanay ng sektor na ito.

Target din ng Pangulo na maging 'self-sufficient' ang itinuturing na 'food producer' ng bansa kaya naman namigay din ng malalaking puhunan ang **Department of Agriculture** sa mga kooperatiba upang tuluyan nang umangat ang mga kasapi nito at matustusan ang pangangailangan ng pamilya nila.

Kaakibat din nang inilunsad na Bagong



REMATE OPINION

PUNTO DE VISTA

NI NORMAN LAURIO

Pilipinas ang "Kadiwa ng Pangulo" kung saan naglalayong may mabibiling murang pagkain ang mamamayan mula sa iba't ibang small and medium enterprises na una nang binigyan ng puhunan ng DSWD, at ibang ahensya sa ilalim ng 'Sustainable Livelihood Program' nito.

Matatandaang ipinatupad ng gobyerno ang rice price cap upang protektahan ang taumbayan kaugnay sa nagtataasang presyo ng bigas kasabay din nang pamimigay ng ayuda sa rice retailers upang maibsan ang epekto nito hinggil sa inilabas na panuntunan.

Sa madali't sabi, kinakalinga ni PBBM ang mahihirap na kababayan sa pamamagitan nang pagsasagawa ng mga makatotohanang programang sadyang umaalalay sa kanila sa gitna ng krisis na ito.



Legal pamudmod ko ng smuggled rice - PBBM

NANINDIGAN si Pangulong Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. na legal ang pamamahagi niya ng smuggled rice sa mahihirap na pamilya dahil dumaan ito sa tamang proseso.

Ginawa ng pangulo ang pahayag matapos punahin ni Senador Francis "Chiz" Escudero ang legalidad ng pamamahagi ng mga nakumpiskang bigas.

"Bilang patunay na ang pamahalaan ay seryoso sa pagsukbo ng smuggling ang mga bitbit naming mga bigas ngayon ay mula sa nakumpiskang suplay sa Zamboanga Port na napatunayan hindi dumaan sa legal na proseso ng importasyon. Kaysa naman masayang ang mga bigas na ito ay minabuti na nating ibigay sa mga mamamayan," paliwanag ni Marcos matapos pangunahan ang pamamahagi ng bigas sa Maynila.

"Dumaan po ito sa tamang proseso

ng imbestigasyon, pagkumpiska at inspeksiyon upang matiyak na ito ay ligtas na ipamahagi sa mga nangangailangan. Magsisilbing babala rin po ito sa lahat ng mga smuggler at mga hoarder na ang bigas sa bansa ay ating babantayan. Sa Bagong Pilipinas, bawal ang smuggler, bawal ang hoarder at bawal din ang mapang-abuso na mapagsamantala sa ating bayan," diin pa niya.

Kinastigo rin ni Pangulong Marcos ang mga hoarder at smuggler na siyang sumisira sa katatagan ng supply at presyo ng bigas sa bansa.

"Ang bukbok na lubos na sumisira sa balanse ng suplay at presyo ng bigas sa merkado [ay] ang hoarding at saka ang smuggling at price manipulation na ginagawa ng mapagsamantalang mga negosyante," anang pangulo. (Prince Golez/Aileen Taliping)



NFA BUYING PRICE FOR PALAY SERVES AS BENCHMARK FOR TRADERS

SAN JOSE DE BUENAVISTA, Antique – The higher buying price for palay offered by the National Food Authority (NFA) serves as a benchmark for commercial rice traders, making it advantageous to farmers.

Epifanio Cosca, NFA Iloilo-Antique branch manager, said during a virtual press conference on Monday that commercial rice traders have to scale up their prices because they need to procure their stocks.

The NFA procures a kilogram of wet palay at PHP16 to PHP19, and PHP19 to PHP23 for clean and dry.

"The NFA new pricing as announced by President Ferdinand E. Marcos Jr. is really advantageous to the farmers," he said.

President Marcos announced the new buying price after meeting with the NFA Council on Sept. 18, 2023 in support of Executive Order (EO) 39 setting the price cap for regular milled rice (RMR) at PHP41 per kilogram and for well-milled rice (WMR) at PHP45 per kilo.

The Office of the Provincial Agriculture (OPA) said commercial traders procure wet palay at PHP14 to PHP15 per kilogram and PHP22 for dry.

Cosca said the NFA targets to buy



an initial 93,000 bags of palay in Antique, which is now in its peak harvest season.

From Jan. 1 until Sept. 25 this year, the NFA has already procured 23,000 bags of palay, but it is optimistic it could buy more this peak season from September until November.

"We encourage farmers to sell their palay to the NFA buying stations in

Antique," Cosca said.

The NFA has buying stations in its warehouses in San Jose de Buenavista and Culasi towns.

He added that in addition to the higher buying price, farmers help ensure enough buffer stock for use during calamities when they choose to sell their produce to the NFA. PNA



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Landbank loans to farmers hit P2.2 B

By **DANESSA RIVERA**

State-run Land Bank of the Philippines (Landbank) said its loans to rice farmers amounted to P2.2 billion as of end-July.

The loans covered 13,701 rice farmers and cooperatives through the Expanded Rice Credit Assistance under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ERCA-RCEF), the bank said in a statement.

Of the total, P1.1 billion of the bank's loan releases under ERCA-RCEF directly financed palay (unhusked rice) production of individual rice farmers listed under the **Department of Agriculture (DA)'s Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA)**.

Meanwhile, the bank earmarked P507.5 million for relending of cooperatives to its rice farmer-members, P394.1 million for rice trading and milling, and P222 million for the purchase of farm machinery and equipment.

"Landbank is doing its share to strengthen local rice production by providing acces-

sible and responsive financial assistance to rice farmers. In partnership with the DA, the ERCA-RCEF program forms part of our commitment to advance the agriculture sector and empower Filipino farmers," Landbank president and CEO Lynette Ortiz said.

Of the 13,701 beneficiaries, 4,783 were from Region 2, particularly the rice-producing provinces of Cagayan, Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino.

Landbank also assisted 1,858 beneficiaries from Region 3; 1,463 from Region 6; 1,334 from Region 13; 1,323 from Region 4-B; and the rest from Regions 1, 4-A, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR).

Noemi Negrillo, a 68-year-old rice farmer from Quirino province, was able to purchase farm inputs and sustain her rice production through a loan under the ERCA-RCEF.

"ERCA-RCEF has helped our farming a lot because it has low interest compared to other loans. I hope this Program continues so that many more farmers like me can be helped," she said.

Implemented in partnership with the DA, the ERCA-RCEF is a credit facility which aims to boost the productivity and income of small rice farmers and their cooperatives, and cushion the initial impact of Republic Act 11203, also known as the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL).

Landbank said it has fully disbursed the allocated fund for ERCA-RCEF from 2019 to 2022 and shall continue to make available P500 million in loans annually until 2024 to cooperatives and rice farmers registered under the RSBSA in the country's 38 rice-producing provinces.

The ERCA-RCEF Program allows individual rice farmers to borrow up to 90 percent of their total project cost at a low fixed interest rate of two percent per year.

The loan may be used to purchase farm inputs for rice and rice seed production, farm machineries and equipment for production and post-production, working capital for rice and seed trading, as well as relending and rediscounting existing loans of small rice farmers listed under the DA's RSBSA.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

NIA GETS P40B ADDITIONAL BUDGET

THE National Irrigation Administration (NIA) on Tuesday said the additional P40-billion allocation given by lawmakers in its 2024 proposed budget would help boost the government's food security programs.

"Of course, the number one in the 8-point socioeconomic agenda of our President is food security. We know that the number one thing that is needed for food security is irrigation infrastructure. When you have irrigation infrastructure, that means... you can lower your inflation because our production will increase, your poverty incidence will decrease... And most of all, we will help mitigate the effect

of the upcoming El Niño," NIA Administrator Eduardo Guillen said.

Guillen thanked House Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez and House Committee on Appropriations Chairman Elizaldy Co for the additional funding.

He said this increased the agency's proposed budget to P80 billion from only P40 billion, which was approved from the agency's P132 billion initial proposed budget for next year.

He added they plan to utilize the additional budget to implement solar pump irrigation projects.

"First of all [is] infrastructure; we will concentrate this additional budget on the solar pump irriga-

tion project. So there is fertigation so that you can install it easily ... within a month to two months, to three months, that one system will be finished," Guillen said.

"And of course, we have systems in NIA like our alternate wetting and drying system, and we can meet around 30 percent of the irrigation here. And, we have many more projects at NIA that we are doing right now to teach our farmers how to save money and how to use the right rice variety for El Niño," he said.

Guillen underscored the importance of the convergence effort being pushed by the President for other agencies to help NIA irrigate lands, such as the Department

of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the Department of Agriculture (DA).

"Well, first of all, is our convergence project with DPWH, our irrigation infrastructure. But our convergence project/effort with the Department of Agriculture is also important because our President instructed us to deliver the right input to our farmers. So this will help to lower their input; they won't buy all their inputs anymore," he said.

"I said to the DA, give us your high-yielding varieties first, especially here in the dry season, so that we can immediately double your yield or your output of rice production," he added. **PNA**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

DA starts installing fixed Kadiwa centers

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) has started to roll out permanent Kadiwa stores into its various Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) research centers across the country.

In a statement on Tuesday, the DA said that the decision to put up Kadiwa stores is in line with the assessment of the market value of agribusiness hubs in government premises with direct access to the public.

"This project aims to support the Marcos administration's thrust to develop the agriculture sector by supporting local agricultural production, augmenting the income of local farmers," the DA said.

DA's first permanent Kadiwa store was launched in DA-BPI Guimaras National Crop Research Development and Production Support Center (NCRDPSC) on September 4 and 5.

The second store was launched in DA-BPI-NCRDPSC in Los Baños, Laguna, on Sept. 15, 2023, and in Davao on September 18.

More permanent Kadiwa stores will be set up this year in La Granja in Negros Occidental and Baguio City on September 22 and 28, respectively.

"If we look at the whole agri-value chain, this has credit, inputs — where BPI enters for quality seeds, our

production management are also there, and the marketing to help farmers market their products at lower price," said DA-BPI Assistant Director for Research, Development, and Production Support Services Dr. Hermenegilda Gabertan.

Meanwhile, DA-BPI Los Baños NCRDPSC OIC-Center chief Flora Jarilla said that the Kadiwa activity will serve as an avenue for affordable and accessible agricultural products.

She added that she expects that the BPI Kadiwa will contribute to the June 2023 data of 926 identified farmer associations and organizations supporting almost 500 Kadiwa centers

The BPI Los Baños Kadiwa is expected to cater fresh produce to consumers every second Friday of the month.

Kadiwa stores are a flagship project of the DA through its Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service, in partnership with DA bureaus and attached agencies, and local farmers.

This seeks to empower the farming community by providing a direct and effective farm-to-consumer food supply chain and reduces marketing expenses, thus making the fresh and quality products more affordable for consumers.

JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

DBM issues SARO for DA program

BY NIÑA MYKA PAULINE ARCEO

THE Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has approved the release of P50 million to support a business development program for farmers and fisherfolk.

In a statement on Tuesday, Secretary Amenah Pangandaman said the DBM granted approval for the issuance of a Special Allotment

Release Order and a Notice of Cash Allocation to the Department of Agriculture (DA) for the Farmers and Fisherfolk Enterprise Development Program.

The program is mandated by Republic Act (RA) 11321, the "Sagip Saka Act," and the P50 million was sourced from the 2023 General Appropriations Act (GAA).

"Food security will remain a government priority. Increased funding will be provided for the Department of Agriculture's major programs," Pangandaman said.

"Alongside the development of land-based agri-industries, the government shall also spur the growth of aquaculture," she

added.

RA 11321 requires the DA to adopt a holistic approach to promote entrepreneurship among farmers and fisherfolk, instilling a strong entrepreneurial culture within their community.

The Farmers and Fisherfolk Enterprise Development Program focuses on three key areas

and their corresponding desired outcomes.

These areas encompass efforts to transform farmers and fisherfolk into viable business partners, enhance their access to capacity-building support services, and strengthen the agri-fishery enterprise development services provided by the DA.



Budget dept okays P50M for farmers, fisherfolk program

THE Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has approved the release of P50 million for a business development program for farmers and fisherfolk.

In a statement yesterday, the agency said Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman has approved the release of a special allotment release order and the notice of cash allocation to the Department of Agriculture (DA) for the implementation of the Farmers and Fisherfolk En-

terprise Development Program under Republic Act 11321 or the Sagip Saka Act.

This is funded under the 2023 General Appropriations Act.

“Food security will remain a government priority. Increased funding will be provided for the Department of Agriculture’s major programs... alongside the development of land-based agri-industries, the government shall also spur the growth of aquaculture,” the budget chief said.

The Sagip Saka law directed the DA to pursue a complete approach in enterprise development initiatives to further strengthen an entrepreneurship culture among farmers and fisherfolk.

The initiatives led to the formation of the Farmers and Fisherfolk Enterprise Development Program, which has three focus areas with corresponding desired outcomes.

This includes Inclusive Agri-

See BUDGET > Page A2

BUDGET

business Development to help farmers and fisherfolk become viable business partners with agro-industry players; Agripreneurship Capability Enhancement which aims to improve access to capacity-enhancing support services in, for instance, finance, training, technology; and Enterprise Development Services to strengthen the agri-fishery enterprise development services of the DA. - *Angela Celis*



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

NFA announces new price-setting mechanism for purchases of palay

THE National Food Authority (NFA) has implemented a new system for setting its purchasing price for palay or unmilled rice, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said.

In a statement issued by the DA, the NFA released a new Equitable Net Weight Factor table, which measures the grain's moisture levels, damage, and coloration to determine a buying price.

"(This) corresponds to the reference for the pricing scheme

based on the moisture content (MC), purity, and damaged and discolored grains parameters in the classification of palay," it said.

The NFA council last week set new purchase price ranges for dry and wet palay of P19-P23 and P16-P19 per kilogram, respectively.

The previous buying price for domestic rice was P16 per kilo for wet and P19 per kilo for dry palay.

NFA Administrator Roderico R. Bioco told reporters on Tuesday that the agency has sufficient

funding to purchase domestically grown palay in fulfillment of its mission to maintain a buffer stock of rice.

"We have enough (funds) for this season; if need be, we also have a large credit line from (Land Bank of the Philippines and Development Bank of the Philippines)," Mr. Bioco said.

"That credit line is more than enough for our requirements, because the President's target is (to build a reserve of) at least 10 to 15

days' demand and even more, up to 30 days. We have the resources to do that," he added.

He said that the NFA is currently disbursing funding to its buying stations for them to start procuring palay.

The NFA maintains a network of 267 palay buying stations.

"At this time of the year, inventory is expected to drop... including (stocks held by) NFA. That is why we replenish it," he said.

— **Adrian H. Halili**



USDA downgrades PHL rice production forecast

THE US Department of Agriculture (USDA) said it downgraded its forecast for Philippine rice production due to damage to the crop from multiple typhoons.

In a report prepared by the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), the Grain and Feed Update, the FAS said that milled rice production is estimated to drop to 12.55 million metric tons (MT) for the market year 2023-2024. This was a 0.4% downgrade from its previous forecast of 12.6 million MT.

The typhoons that damaged rice-growing areas were Dodong (international name: Talim), Egay (Doksuri), and Falcon (Khanun).

"Industry contacts' expectations for the 2023 El Niño are mixed but balanced across the country, so overall effects on production are likely minimal," FAS said.

The government weather service, known as PAGASA

(Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration), estimates the El Niño to peak in late 2023 or early 2024.

The FAS also projected a decline in rice imports due to high international prices and the uncertainty introduced by the price controls for rice at the retail level.

It expects rice imports to decrease to 3.5 million MT, downgrading the previous estimate of 3.8 million MT.

"Rice importers are adopting a wait-and-see attitude, with some importers canceling their purchases in the days after the price ceiling was announced, according to industry contacts," it added.

The government imposed a temporary price ceiling on regular-milled rice of P41 per kilogram and on well-milled rice of P45 per kilo, via Executive Order 39.

The USDA made the 3.8 million MT projection in an earlier report, Grain: World Markets and Trade, covering the marketing year 2023-2024.

The **Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA)**, however, said imports will be "much less" than the USDA is forecasting.

Meanwhile, the FAS also projected a decline in corn production to 8.2 million MT, likewise due the recent typhoons and "the continued presence of the fall armyworm."

"The situation is particularly severe in Ilagan, Isabela, the corn capital of the Philippines, and surrounding areas," it said.

Imports of corn are expected to increase to 1 million MT during the market year.

"FAS estimates corn imports to increase for MY 2023/24 because of the domestic production shortfall," it said. — **Adrian H. Halili**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

NIA to direct expanded funding to solar-powered irrigation systems

THE National Irrigation Administration (NIA) said it is set to direct a major portion of its expanded budget for next year to solar-powered irrigation projects.

"This additional budget will be concentrated in our solar pump irrigation project, NIA Administrator Eduardo G. Guillen said in an interview with PTV.

Mr. Guillen added solar irrigation systems promise rapid installation of between one and three months.

The agency has about 183 solar powered irrigation sites in the pipeline for 2024. It is budgeting about P1.72 billion to irrigate 2,168 hectares.

The NIA is also proposing an additional 791 potential sites across 39,694 hectares, requiring an outlay of P30 billion, for solar-powered irrigation projects.

"We all know that irrigation infrastructure is one of the keys to food security... *higit sa lahat matutugunan natin ang El Niño*," (most of all we could address the impact of El Niño) he added. — **Adrian H. Halili**



DA aid enables 32 Siargao land tillers to start pineapple farm

BUTUAN CITY—At least 32 farmers in the Siargao Island town of Santa Monica embarked on pineapple production earlier this week after receiving aid from the Department of Agriculture in the Caraga Region (DA-13).

The farmers, who formed themselves into the Abad Santos Farmers Association (ASFA), received 15,000 pineapple-planting materials under the DA's Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) program.

Johnny Arlan, the ASFA president, said aside from the planting materials, DA also provided 100 sacks of fertilizers and farm tools to support their project.

The group also expects the delivery of a multi-cultivator machine to boost production.

"This is the first time that we ventured into pineapple production. The DA also prepared us before the start of the project by providing us with training and education on pineapple production last June," Arlan said in a phone interview Friday.

Leveraging tourism sector

HE said the group expects to make their first harvest a year after planting, adding that they also seek to leverage the booming tourism sector on Siargao Island to expand their market.

Ariel Obillos, SAAD community development officer in Siargao Island, noted that pineapple is suited in Santa Monica based on preliminary studies.

"The number of hotels, resorts, and restaurants in Siargao Island, especially in General Luna town are our target markets. With the return of the tourism industry on the island after the pandemic and the typhoon in 2021, we are seeing big opportunities for the ASFA project to succeed," Obillos said in a separate interview Friday.

The current buying price of pineapple on the island, he added, ranges from P70 to P80 per kilo.

The support for the Santa Monica farmers is provided under the SAAD Phase 2 implementation this year with some P1.59 million worth of assistance. **PNA**

Date: SEPT. 27, 2023 Page: 3



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

P50-M pondo sa magsasaka, mangingingisda aprub na ng DBM

Aprubado na ni Budget Secretary Am-nah Pangandaman ang P50 milyon pondo ng Department of Agriculture (DA) para sa pag-papatupad ng programa sa mga magsasaka at mangingingisda.

Sinabi ni Panganda-man na gagamitin ang nasabing halaga para

sa implementasyon ng Farmers and Fisherfolk Enterprise Development Program ng Republic Act 11321 (Sagip Saka Act), na pinondohan sa ilalim ng 2023 General Appropriations Act (GAA).

Sa ilalim ng Sagip Saka Act, inaatasan nito ang DA na magsulong ng mga hakbang at

inisyatibo kaugnay ng enterprise development para palakasin pa ang entrepreneurship culture ng mga magsasaka at mangingingisda.

Ang mga inisyati-bong ito ay humantong sa pagbuo ng Farmers and Fisherfolk Enterprise Development Program.

Dahil sa naturang pro-

grama ay matutulungan din ang mga magsasaka at mangingingisda na ma-ging business partners ng mga agro industry players.

Bukod pa dito, tutulu-ngan din ang mga bene-pisyaryo ng programa sa pamamagitan ng finan-cing, training at teknolo-hiya. (Gemma Garcia)

Date: SEPT. 27, 2023 Page: 2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

'Ghost project' ng NIA itinanggi ng construction firm

Itinanggi ng isang malaking construction firm ang akusasyon na sangkot sila anumang ghost project ng National Irrigation Authority (NIA).

Ayon kay Mary Mae Sebastian, isa sa may-ari ng P.L. Sebastian Construction ng Inayawan, Sta. Cruz Davao del Sur, legal ang kanilang transaksyon sa pamahalaan at dumaraan sila sa tamang proseso kabilang na ang bidding.

Sinabi ni Sebastian na kabilang sa siyam na proyekto na kanilang nakuha simula ng sila ay lumahok sa mga bidding ay ang Construction / Improvement ng Maguindanao-Sultan Kudarat Bdry. Lebak-Kalamansi Road ng DPWH noong May 2009-Disyembre 2011; Construction/Improvement ng Malabang-Sultan Gumander Road ng DPWH Setyembre 2003-Disyembre 2007; Contract Package 3 Compostela-New Bataan-Liboton Road, Compostela Valley Disyembre 2000- Nobyembre 2003; Construction ng River Protection/Flood Control Project ng DENR Disyembre 2005 - Disyembre 2006; Parang-Barira Road, Upgrading Project Municipality of Parang and Barira, Maguindanao ng GEM2/USAID Pebrero 2006-Marso 2007; Construction ng Baobo Diversion Dam, Right and Left Main Canals and Appurtenant Structures for Southern Philippines Irrigation Sector Project ng National Irrigation Authority (NIA) Marso 2007 hanggang Agosto 2008; Construction/Improvement ng Kapalong- Talaingod -Valencia Bukidnon Road ng DPWH Hunyo 2008- Pebrero 2011; Concreting ng Matanao-Kiblawan-Padala Road Package kabilang ang RROW, Davao del Sur sa ilalim ng DPWH noong Marso 2018- Enero 2019 at Widening ng Maniki Bridge patungong Tagum-Panabo Circumferential Road Davao del Norte ng DPWH noong Hulyo 2018 -Nobyembre 2021.

Binigyan-diin ni Sebastian na lahat ng kanilang proyekto sa pamahalaan ay kanilang natapos sa takdang panahon at maging ang mga materyales na ginamit ay akma sa bawat proyektong kanilang pinapasok.

Ani Sebastian, ang P.L. Construction, Inc., na itinayo noon 1981 ni Petronilo L. Sebastian Sr. o "Sir Nilo" at pinamamahalaan ngayon ni Engr. Petronilo Sebastian, Jr.



NEWS BRIEF

₱50M sa mga magsasaka, mangingisda nilabas ng DBM

Mayroon nang go signal ang Department of Budget and Management (DBM) para ipalabas ang ₱50 milyong pondo sa Department of Agriculture para sa implementasyon ng Farmers and Fisherfolk Enterprise Development Program.

Ayon kay DBM Secretary Amenah Pangandaman, sa pamamagitan

ng pondo ay mapapalakas ang mga pangunahing programa sa agrikultura hindi lamang sa mga produktong pansakahan kundi pati na rin sa aquaculture.

Binigyang-diin ng kalihim na isa ang food security sa mga pangunahing prayoridad ng Marcos administration kaya pinapalakas ang agriculture sector sa

pamamagitan ng pagpopondo sa mga programang magpapangat at magpapalakas sa produksiyon ng mga magsasaka.

"Food security will remain a government priority. Increased funding will be provided for the Department of Agriculture's major programs... Alongside the development of land-based agri-industries, the government shall also spur the growth of aquaculture," ani Pangandaman. (Aileen Taliping)

Date: SEPT. 27, 2023 Page: A12



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Gov't reviews extension of lower agri tariffs

Marcos administration evaluating measures to combat high prices

By Ronnel W. Domingo
@RonWDomingoINQ

The Cabinet-level Inter-Agency Committee on Inflation and Market Outlook (IAC-IMO) has put on the table the possible further extension of temporarily lowered tariffs on agricultural products as part of efforts to push down inflation toward acceptable levels.

Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno said in a briefing that the IAC-IMO is considering whether to recommend to President Marcos the extension beyond Dec. 31, 2023 of the provisions of Executive Order No. 10.

Signed on Dec. 29, 2022, EO 10 extends by one year the temporary lower tariffs on agricultural products to the end of 2023. Meanwhile, the lower tariff on coal is extended beyond 2023, subject to a review every six months.

"The IAC-IMO, which has

committees that are respectively focused on food inflation and non-food inflation, is discussing this," Diokno said, referring in particular to tariffs on pork, corn and rice.

The IAC-IMO comprises the secretary of the National Economic and Development Authority as chair; finance secretary as cochair; budget secretary as vice chair; and the secretaries of agriculture, energy, science and technology, trade, and interior as members.

So far this year, from January to August, overall inflation in the Philippines averaged at 6.6 percent. This is far above the range of 2 percent to 4 percent, which is the full-year target average of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

EO 10 itself extends the effective period for the provisions of EO No. 171 that was signed on May 21, 2022. In turn, EO 171 extended the effectiveness of EOs No. 134 and 135—both signed on May 15, 2021—which respective-

ly lowered temporarily the tariffs on imported pork and rice.

Based on EO 171, tariffs on pork were brought down to 15 percent to 25 percent instead of 30 percent to 40 percent.

Pending petition

Also, tariffs on corn were slashed to 5 percent from 35 percent. Tariffs on rice were brought down to 35 percent from 40 percent to 50 percent.

While the temporarily lowered tariffs on rice are in effect until Dec. 31, there is a pending petition with the Tariff Commission for a further decrease—albeit also temporary—to zero or no more than 10 percent.

Regarding tariffs on agricultural products, allied agri-business groups on Tuesday appealed to Mr. Marcos to reject a new executive order, which they said was "being hatched by Secretaries Diokno and Bal-

isacan that will lower tariffs on rice, pork, corn and chicken." "It is very clear to us that Secretaries Diokno and Balisacan are publicly contradicting the President with their continued insistence of reducing tariffs and encouraging more imports," said Rosendo So, chair of the Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (Sinag).

"They are not serving under the pleasure of the President, but of the importers and smugglers," So said in a statement. "Eliminating tariffs is simply legalizing smuggling."

In the fight against low tariffs on imported agricultural products, Sinag is joined by groups such as Federation of Free Farmers; Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas; Agricultural Sector Alliance of the Philippines; Aniban ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura and United Broiler Raisers Association. INQ



USDA cuts Phl rice import forecast

By **DANESSA RIVERA**

The United States Department of Agriculture (DA) has slashed its forecast on Philippine rice imports due to the locally mandated price cap and elevated prices globally.

According to its latest forecast, the USDA-Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) has projected rice imports to decline to 3.5 million metric tons for marketing year 2023-2024 from its previous forecast of 3.8 million MT.

This places the Philippines on the same level with China, which the USDA projects will import 3.5 million MT.

The Philippines had overtaken China as the world's top rice importer after the USDA estimated that the Southeast Asian country shipped 3.9 million MT in marketing year 2022-2023 while the Asian giant imported 3.5 million MT in the same period.

The lower forecast was attributed to high prices in the international market and price ceilings ordered by President Marcos, which disincentivized imports, the US agency said.

So far, the Philippines has imported 2.41 million MT of rice this year, based on data from the Bureau of Plant Industry as of Sept. 14.

The country's rice production is also expected to decline to 19.92 million MT from 20 million MT for palay production, and to 12.55 million MT from 12.63 million MT for milled rice because of the combined effects of Typhoons Dodong, Egay and Falcon.

"Rice importers are adopting a wait-and-see attitude, with some importers canceling their purchases in the days after the ceiling was announced, according to industry contacts," the USDA-FAS said.

President Marcos issued Executive Order 39 mandating a price

ceiling of P41 for regular milled rice and P45 for well-milled rice, which took effect on Sept. 5.

The USDA-FAS said the two categories account for approximately 90 percent of the rice market.

"Following the imposition of the price ceilings, industry contacts reported diminished interest among rice importers to import," it said.

Sought for comment, the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) concurred with the projections of the US agency.

"These are all very possible. International prices will most probably remain high due to El Niño, and this will be a disincentive to import even without the price caps. 3.5 million tons will also be over and above our annual deficit, so a decline in imports will not have a significant impact on local supply," FFF national manager Raul Montemayor said.

The Samahang Industriya ng

Agrikultura (SINAG) did not agree with the USDA forecast, saying this is way above its own projection.

In a phone interview, SINAG president Rosendo So said the country's rice import would only reach three to 3.2 million MT this year due to better production.

"We think the USDA's projection is too high. We are seeing lower imports this year coming from an election year last year, and secondly, our production increased this year due to better weather," he said.

Meanwhile, the USDA-FAS said it projects corn imports to increase to one million MT from its previous forecast of 800,000 MT due to lower production and in anticipation of the expiration of lower tariffs ending this year.

The decline in production is due to the effects of Typhoons Dodong, Egay and Falcon and the continued presence of fall armyworm.

Turn to B3

USDA From B1

"The situation is particularly severe in Ilagan, Isabela, the corn capital of the Philippines, and surrounding areas," it said.

Citing data from the BPI, the US agency said there was an increase of 698 percent for the imported corn volume applied in July to 284,393 MT from 35,626 MT while the number of Sanitary and Phytosanitary

Import Clearance (SPSICs) applied for also increased by 171 percent to 84 from 31.

"Corn for feed importers will try to import ahead of this year's expiration of lower corn tariff rates," the USDA-FAS said.



USDA
expects PH
to import
less rice

THE Philippines will likely import less rice due to high global prices and price ceilings ordered by the government, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) said.

In a report, the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) revised its rice import forecast for the Philippines to 3.5 million metric tons (MMT) for July 2023 to June 2024 from 3.8 MMT previously.

Domestic rice production is also expected to decline to 12.55 million MT from 12.6 MMT "because of the combined effects of Typhoons 'Dodong,' 'Egay,' and 'Falcon.'"

"FAS (Food and Agriculture Service) Manila expects market year 2023 to 2024 rice imports to decrease because of high international prices and uncertainty over the imposition of the retail price ceiling," the USDA said.

Executive Order 39, issued last month by Malacañang, capped prices of regular milled and well-milled rice at P1 and P45, respectively, following a surge in

market prices. The two categories account for approximately 90 percent of the local rice market.

"Rice importers are adopting a wait-and-see attitude, with some importers canceling their purchases in the days after the ceiling was announced, according to industry contacts," the USDA said.

It maintained the rice consumption forecast at 16.4 MMT while the estimated ending stocks volume was lowered to 3.1 MMT from 3.4 MMT.

The agency also cited fertilizer price data from the Fertilizer and Pesticides Authority showing a price uptick, which it said "puts some downward pressure on production."

In the same report, the USDA said that corn imports were seen to increase to 1.0 MMT for the 2023-2024 market year from its previous forecast of 750,000 MT.

"FAS Manila increases the forecast for MY 2023/24 corn imports in anticipation of the shortfall in local production," it said.

Corn production is expected to decline to 8.2 MMT from 8.4 MMT "because of recent typhoons and the continued presence of fall armyworm."

The USDA said that situation was particularly severe in Ilagan, Isabela, the corn capital of the Philippines, and surrounding areas. **JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL**



USDA cuts rice, corn output projection for PH

BY JED MACAPAGAL

THE United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) reduced its projections for the Philippines' milled rice and corn production for the year due to the effects of recent typhoons as well as of El Niño and the continued presence of fall armyworm.

The USDA in a report released on September 25 revised its forecast for the Philippines' rice production for market year 2023-2024 or from July 2023 until July 2024, to 12.55 million metric tons (MT), down by 0.4 percent from the original 12.6 million MT forecast.

The agency also said the Philippines is now expected to import as much as 3.5 million MT rice, down by 7.9 percent from the previous forecast of 3.8 million MT due to the high international prices as well as the uncertainty over the imposition of the retail price ceiling which forces traders to adopt a "wait-and-see attitude."

The USDA, however, said the country's demand and required reserves for the period remain at 16.4 million MT.

The USDA also revised its forecast for the Philippines' corn production for market year 2022-2023 to 8.2 million MT, down by 2.4 percent from the original 8.4 million MT forecast.

Because of lower production, Philippine corn imports for the period is now expected to reach 1 million MT, 25 percent higher than the original forecast of 800,000 MT.

The report said the higher corn imports is due to the anticipated shortfall in local production and feed importers' efforts to try to import ahead of this year's expiration of lower tariff rates on the commodity.

The USDA retained its projected total demand for corn at 9.3 million MT.

Damage to the agriculture sector

See USDA > Page A2



Rice farmers harvest their palay in in Bago City, Negros Occidental, the province's top rice-producing local government unit. (PNA file photo)

USDA

of tropical cyclones Egay and Falcon amounted to P12 billion, according to data from the Philippine Department of Agriculture's Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Operations Center as of September 15.

The DA attached agency said total cost of damage is equivalent to 279,289 MT of goods tended

by 437,032 farmers and fisherfolk in 250,174 hectares (ha) of affected areas.

The monitoring captured data from the Cordillera Administrative Region, Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Western Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Soccsksargen and Caraga.

Bulk of the recorded damage is

from rice at P3.08 billion which affected 132,785 ha of areas equivalent to 69,748 MT of volume loss, followed by corn at P2.37 billion equivalent to 90,115 ha of areas and volume loss of 126,757 MT.

Raul Montemayor, Federation of Free Farmers national manager, said in a statement the USDA's projections are "very possible" as

international prices will likely remain high due to the global effects of the ongoing El Niño.

Montemayor said the projected volume of 3.5 million MT rice imports is still "over and above" the country's annual rice supply deficit, noting the expected decline in imports "will not have a significant impact on local supply."



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

RICE PRICE CAP, PRICIER GLOBAL
GRAIN SEEN TO CUT IMPORTS



SENATOR Imee Marcos joins demonstrators outside the Department of Finance (DOF) building on Tuesday, September 26, 2023, opposing the proposed reduction or removal of tariffs on imported rice. The protesters have been calling for the resignation of Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno and Neda Secretary Arsenio Balisacan. PHOTO COURTESY OF SINAG

THE state's rice price ceiling and elevated world grain prices will curb the Philippines's rice imports next year to 3.5 million metric tons (MMT),

according to an international report.

The United States Department of Agriculture-Foreign

SEE "RICE," A2

Date: SEPT. 27, 2023 Page: A1 & A2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Rice...

CONTINUED FROM A1

Agricultural Service (USDA-FAS) in Manila projected that the Philippines's rice imports next year would be 400,000 MT lower than its estimated 3.9 MMT full-year import volume this year.

The USDA-FAS in Manila attributed the decline to the "high international prices and uncertainty over the imposition of the retail price ceiling."

The USDA-FAS in Manila's rice import projection for the Philippines next year is 300,000 MT lower than the USDA's (Washington office) official estimate of 3.8 MMT.

"Rice importers are adopting a wait-and-see attitude, with some importers canceling their purchases in the days after the ceiling was announced, according to industry contacts," the USDA-FAS Manila said in its latest Global Agricultural Information Network (Gain) report published recently.

"Following the imposition of the price ceilings, industry contacts reported diminished interest among rice importers to import," it added.

The Gain report indicated that the USDA-FAS Manila projected that the coun-

try's milled rice output next year would be at 12.55 MMT from this year's 12.6 MMT due to typhoon damages.

"Industry contacts' expectations for the 2023 El Niño are mixed but balanced across the country, so overall effects on production are likely minimal," it said.

The USDA-FAS Manila projected that the Philippines's total rice consumption next year would be at 16.4 MMT, flat with this year's estimates.

Meanwhile, the USDA-FAS Manila projected that the Philippines's corn production in the current market year 2023-2024 would decline to 8.2 MMT from the previous market year's 8.322 MMT because of typhoons and pest damage.

The country's corn market year starts from July of the present year and ends in June of the next year.

"FAS Manila decreases forecasts of local corn production for MY 2023/24 because of the effects of typhoons Dodong, Egay, and Falcon and the continued presence of fall armyworm," the Gain report read.

"The situation is particularly severe in Ilagan, Isabela, the corn capital of the Philippines, and surrounding areas," it added.

Because of the foreseen reduction in corn production, the USDA-FAS in Manila expects the country's corn imports to reach 1 MMT in the current market year from previous market year's 950,000 MT. **Jasper Emmanuel Y. Arcalas**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Corn, soybeans firm

SINGAPORE- Chicago corn rose for a third consecutive session on Tuesday, hitting its highest level in more than a week, while soybeans gained ground as a slower-than-expected pace of US harvest supported prices.

Wheat rose to its highest level in almost one week.

"There is support for corn and soybean prices because of some issues with the US harvest," said one Singapore-based trader. "But it is still early to be too much worried about the harvest. There is no immediate concern over grain supplies."

The most-active corn contract on the Chicago Board of Trade

(CBOT) added 0.2 percent to \$4.82-1/4 a bushel, after hitting its highest level since Sept. 15 at \$4.83-1/2 earlier in the session.

Soybeans gained 0.7 percent at \$13.06-1/4 a bushel and wheat rose 0.7 percent to \$5.93 a bushel.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported that soybean and corn harvests advanced more slowly last week than analysts had expected.

The soybean crop was 12 percent harvested, compared to estimates for 14 percent, and the corn harvest was 15 percent complete, compared to estimates for 17 percent. - *Reuters*



India to cut floor price for basmati rice

NEW DELHI- India will cut the floor price for basmati rice exports in the coming days, sources familiar with the matter said, after millers and traders complained about a sharp drop in overseas sales of the premium aromatic grain.

India will lower the basmati floor price to \$850 a metric ton, down from \$1,200 a ton, to help millers and traders ship out the rice grade, said the sources, who didn't wish to be identified as they are not authorized to talk to media.

Last month, India fixed the floor price, or the minimum export price (MEP), for basmati rice shipments at \$1,200 a metric ton.

Authorities said the MEP was imposed to help New Delhi ensure that non-basmati rice was not exported as basmati rice.

In July, India surprised buyers by imposing a ban on the export of widely consumed non-basmati white rice, following a ban on broken rice exports last year.

"The decision to lower the basmati MEP would help farmers who were losing money on account of falling exports," said Prem Garg, president of the Indian Rice Exporters Federation.



A farmer and his grandson plough a rice field in Gopalsarai village, 25 kilometers from the northern Indian city of Allahabad. (Reuters Photo)

"The move will also help India retain its pre-eminent position in the global basmati rice market."

Since basmati rice is not widely consumed in India, and the new season crop will start arriving in the market from next month, In-

dia would have faced a glut of the superior grade, Garg said.

"A large stockpile would have hammered prices and hurt farmers and India's rice sector, so the move to lower the MEP will be quite helpful," he said.

India and Pakistan exclusively grow premium, aromatic basmati rice. India ships out around 4 million tons of basmati rice to countries such as Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the United States. - Reuters



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Sugar, cocoa prices fall after recent multi-year highs

NEW YORK — London cocoa and raw sugar futures on ICE closed lower on Monday after recently touching multi-year highs, in consolidation trade amid a stronger dollar, though dealers expect supply issues to keep the uptrend intact.

COCOA: March London cocoa settled down £33 or 1.1% at £2,929 (\$3,575) a metric ton, having posted a loss of 3% last week.

London cocoa speculators cut their net long position by 1,138 lots to 64,842 lots as of Sept. 19, data showed.

Top producer Ivory Coast's cocoa grind was up 9% year on

year in August, while its main crop cocoa bean arrivals at ports since the season started last Oct. 1 were down an annual 5.3% as of Sept. 24 this year.

Cocoa has been consolidating since hitting a series of 46-year highs as a result of supply issues, including crop disease in West Africa, following heavy rains.

December New York cocoa fell \$86 or 2.4% to \$3,496 a ton.

SUGAR: October raw sugar settled down 0.66 cent or 2.4% at 26.31 cents per pound (lb), having set a 12-year high last week.

Dealers said prices are expected to remain elevated as concerns over falling output in producers India and Thailand dominate.

Europe's sugar beet growers are turning away from the crop as the European Union's environmental rules clash with efforts to stem food inflation and secure supplies.

Funds added 9,161 contracts to their net long position in raw sugar, taking it to 147,377 lots in the week to Sept. 19.

December white sugar fell \$12.70 or 1.7% to \$718.10 a ton. The contract lost 2.3% last week.

COFFEE: December arabica coffee settled down 2.35 cents or 1.6% at \$1.488 per lb.

Dealers said rain is expected to hit top producer Brazil, alleviating concerns that next year's crop might be negatively impacted by the heat wave that had been moving across the country.

Speculators' short position in arabica coffee was reduced by 9,408 lots to 15,625 in the week to Sept. 19.

November robusta coffee fell \$18 or 0.7% to \$2,443 a ton, having lost 7% last week. — **Reuters**

Date: SEPT. 27, 2023 Page: A15



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

High rice prices bring risk of social unrest, UN says

By ILENA PENG

HIGH rice prices, which have been fueled recently by India's export ban, bring the risk of political instability in Asia and Africa, according to the head of a United Nations agency.

Prices for the crop, a staple for half the world, surged to the highest in almost 15 years after the top shipper began curbing exports. India accounted for nearly 40% of the global rice trade in the past three

years. Soaring prices are fueling concerns about food insecurity for billions of people in Asia and Africa who depend on the grain.

"Rice, especially in Africa, can certainly bring potential conflict or social unrest, which at this moment in time would be quite dangerous," Alvaro Lario, who leads the International Fund for Agricultural Development, said in a Thursday interview in New York.

The export ban is bringing back memories of 2008, when a global rice crisis put 100 million people at

risk, many in sub-Saharan Africa. Back then, both Vietnam and India restricted exports. Food shortages have also contributed to unrest in the past, with surging wheat prices helping spark the Arab Spring that toppled governments just over a decade ago.

The impacts of bans "go beyond the borders of the countries" implementing such measures, Lario said. Rice is the "main concern" for food security—even more so than wheat, he said.

"Export bans have a lot of impact,

especially on the most vulnerable, by raising prices and having a shock on prices," he said. "Generally they are not positive, neither for the local populations in the medium term, nor for the other countries."

Some regions in Africa that are more reliant on rice imports are already seeing impacts from higher prices, Lario said.

"We have to understand that many of these people who consume this type of crop are sometimes on the brink of poverty," he said.

Bloomberg News