

CLIPPINGS FOR FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 08, 2023

A. SEC. PBBM QUOTED

BUSINESS MIRROR

PBBM looks to Asean allies for rice imports

BUSINESS WORLD

Vietnam proposes 5-year rice supply deal to PHL

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

Vietnam offers PH 5-year rice supply deal

MANILA BULLETIN

PH, Vietnam eye 5-year rice deal

THE MANILA TIMES

Marcos welcomes rice deal with Vietnam

Rice crisi screams: Marcos resign!

Price caps do not work

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Vietnam pushes five-year rice supply deal with Phl

DTI exec: Only Marcos can lift price ceiling

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

PH eyes 5-yr rice trade accord with Vietnam

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON

Editorial: Anyare sa ni-raid na mga bodega ng bigas

Presyo ng bigas sa world market apektado sa price cap ni PBBM

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL

Food on the table

Reduced rice prices necessary to achieve inflation target

World rice prices plummet

Cops help enforce rice price ceiling

ABANTE TONITE

Sirit bilingin uli

ABANTE

PH, Vietnam kinasa 5 kasunduan sa rice supply

REIMATE

Editorial: Emergency Powers ang sagot, 'di nga?

Paano naman ang mga magsasaka?

B. DA FAMILY

BUSINESS MIRROR

BPI approves propagation of Bt cotton for commercial production

BUSINESS WORLD

Sugar regulator sees rise in production assuming mild El Niño

Compliance with price controls on rice estimated at 95% - DA

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

DA lift poultry ban on US state

Tieups to boost veggies, rubber production

Compliance with cap high but stock concerns raised

Sugar production higher this year

THE MANILA TIMES

Rice price ceiling 95% successful – DA

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Phl urged to rediscover coconut's export potential

Korean agency helps put agri villages

Tomato price hits as high as P300 per kilo

Rice traders bemoan daily losses from price cap

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON

Presyo ng kamatis, umabot sa P300/kilo

C. AGRI-RELATED STORY

BUSINESS WORLD

Output of major PHL fruits rises in second quarter

THE MANILA TIMES

Major fruit crops output higher in Q2

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Typhoons, monsoon losses approach P2 B

'Cut back' ot 'Magtiis'?

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Tariffs must help, not harm

ABANTE

Presyo ng bigas sisipa sa P90 kada kilo

D. FOREIGN STORY

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

Corn, wheat slip

Date: 08 SEP 2023

Page: A1, 2, A2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PBBM looks to Asean allies for rice imports

By SAMUEL P. MEDENILLA

✉ @sam_medenilla

DESPITE the country's recently reported sufficient rice supplies, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. is now eyeing more imports of the food staple from Vietnam and Cambodia to ensure the country's long-term food security.

At the sidelines of the 43rd Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit in Indonesia, Marcos met with Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh to discuss a possible five-year rice supply agreement.

Vietnam and Thailand are the country's traditional sources of rice imports.

During the first five months of the year, the country imported 1.5 million tons of rice from Vietnam, worth US\$772.4 million.

Marcos, who is also the Agriculture secretary, said the proposed supply agreement aims to address future volatility in the rice market.

"The suggestion of a longer-term arrangement is an important one because just having that as an assurance will stabilize the situation, not only for the Philippines, but for all of us in the region," Marcos told Pham.

They also talked about fishery and maritime cooperation as well as security and defense matters.

In 2008, Vietnam agreed to sign a Memorandum of Agreement, wherein it agreed to sell 1,500,000 metric tons of rice to the government until 2010.

The same arrangement will no longer be possible following the enactment of Republic Act (RA) No. 110203 or the Rice Tariffication

SEE "PBBM," A2

PBBM...

CONTINUED FROM A1

Act, which replaced the country's quantitative restrictions with a general tariff.

The law also liberalized commercial rice importation and barred the government from importing rice through the National Food Authority (NFA).

Relaxed terms and conditions

ASIDE from Vietnam, the President also talked with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet about the possible easing of terms and conditions for Philippine firms to import rice from Khemer suppliers.

Last May, Cambodian suppliers exported 2,500 tons of rice to the country. It was the first time Cambodia exported a "significant" amount of the food staple to the Philippines since the passage of RA 110203 in 2019.

Cambodia is aiming to get a 1-percent share of the country's market of imported rice by 2024.

Marcos and Hun Manet also discussed expanding the Philippine-Cambodia direct flights and enhanced cultural, educational, and people-to-people exchanges.

The country's planned additional rice importations come on the heels of the government's imposition of price caps due to the alleged rampant practice of hoarding by opportunistic traders and rice cartels: P41.00 per kilogram (kg) for regular milled rice and P45 per kg for well-milled rice.

Marcos said the illegal practice has led to soaring rice prices despite the Department of Agriculture (DA), projecting that the country will have a 10.15 million metric tons (MMT) rice supply during the second half of the year.

DA said the rice supply will be sufficient to cover the current rice demand of 7.76 MMT.



Vietnam proposes 5-year rice supply deal to PHL

VIETNAMESE Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh proposed a five-year rice supply deal to President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., subject to negotiation at minister level, the Office of the President said on Thursday.

The proposal could "stabilize rice supply and pricing" in the Philippines "amid the current volatility in supply," the Palace said in a statement, citing Mr. Marcos.

"I would suggest that the Ministries of Trade and Agriculture of the two countries will work together so that we can come up with a five-year agreement on supply of rice," Mr. Pham told Mr. Marcos in a bilateral meeting with Mr. Pham on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit in Jakarta on Thursday.

Mr. Marcos welcomed a long-term supply agreement as an opportunity to dampen volatility in domestic rice prices.

"The suggestion of a longer-term arrangement is an important one because just having that as an assurance will stabilize the situation, not only for the Philippines, but for all of us in the region," he said.

"We will work continuously (to arrive at an agreement)... I am very confident that we will once again come to a consensus and agree," he added.

The Philippines signed a rice supply deal with Vietnam in May 2008, with Vietnam selling the Philippines up to 1,500,000 metric tons of rice between 2008 and 2010 in a government-to-government transaction.

A 2019 law liberalized the rice import market, allowing private importers to ship in rice in exchange for the payment of a 35% tariff on grain from Southeast Asia. The law had removed the National Food Authority's (NFA) role as monopoly rice importer, which it carried out through government-to-government deals.

"While this is a welcome agreement, this does not solve our problems," Ateneo de Manila economist Leonardo A. Lanzona said, noting that long-term trade agreements "can vary in stability depending on various factors."

The stability of such a deal would depend on "the parties involved, the nature of the agreement, and external economic or geopolitical conditions," he said via Facebook Messenger.

"Generally, agreements between stable, economically sound countries are more likely to be honored over the long term," he said, noting that for middle-income countries like the Philip-

pines and Vietnam, "a significant amount of risk exists."

"Unforeseen events like economic crises, changes in political leadership, or shifts in international relations can potentially affect the stability of long-term trade agreements," he said.

He said parties involved in such agreements must have mechanisms for dispute resolution and the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances.

Vietnam supplies about 90% of the Philippines' rice imports, with Manila receiving 1.5 million metric tons of rice from its neighbor in the first five months of the year.

The Philippines does not have a rice shortage at the moment, Jayson H. Cainglet of the Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) said in a Viber message.

"Imports to be secured are only meant to be for buffer stock," he said, noting that unlimited imports have not reduced the commodity's retail price. "Only bountiful local harvests have resulted in lower rice prices."

Agriculture officials, including Mr. Marcos, who serves as the Secretary of Agriculture, said last month that the country's rice inventory is sufficient for the duration of the El Niño weather pattern, which is expected to persist until next year.



LIBRARY DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

The Department of Agriculture (DA) also reported that an estimated 900,000 MT of rice was harvested in Isabela, Nueva Ecija and North Cotabato.

Agriculture Undersecretary for Rice Industry Development Leocadio S. Sebastian has said that improved yields for palay, or unmilled rice, in late September to October will provide a boost to second-half production, estimated at more than 11 million MT.

Before making a decision on the Vietnam supply deal, the Marcos government needs to disclose to the public the terms of the proposed arrangement, Jayson H. Cainglet of the SINAG said in a Viber message.

"At what price and terms? At what volume? At what tariff rates? What is the mode of importation — government-to-government or private initiative?" he said.

"We hope that discussions with any country for rice imports would NOT be at the expense of local producers and our hapless consumers," he said.

The government last week imposed a price ceiling on the staple, blaming rising prices on hoarders and smugglers.

Economists have warned that imposing price caps on rice could limit supply and force traders to go underground.

They also said traders might exhibit a reluctance to buy rice from farmers, who will be left with no choice but to lower farm-gate prices.

Palay prices fell by P3 per kilo in some areas after the order was announced, according to farmers' groups.

Following the price cap order, Finance Undersecretary Cielo D. Magno left the administration, telling *BusinessWorld* on Thursday that her resignation will take effect on Sept. 16.

In a social media post on Thursday, Ms. Magno said, "A wise man told me, if you do your

job with integrity, you will be back in UPSE." She was referring to the University of the Philippines School of Economics.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.'s economic managers have backed the price ceiling on rice, including NEDA Secretary Arsenio S. Balisacan, who said the measure would "immediately reduce" the price of rice.

Ms. Magno championed the Philippine Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative in the Finance department under the Marcos administration.

"I am not sure what will happen to PH-EITI," she told *BusinessWorld* when asked whether the program will be continued after her departure from government.

Ms. Magno also chairs the DoF's Fiscal Policy Monitoring Group and the Revenue and Operations Group, and Policy Development and Management Services Group.

She had been leading the government's push to reform the pension system for retired military and uniformed personnel.

FISHING

Meanwhile, the Palace said Mr. Marcos and his Vietnamese counterpart also discussed the possibility of a fisheries and maritime cooperation agreement to protect the livelihoods of fisherfolk.

"(The) agreement that we are proposing is very important because it (does) not limit itself only to security and defense issues," Mr. Marcos said.

In 2014, Philippine authorities arrested 11 Vietnamese fishermen found poaching in Philippine waters close to disputed parts of the South China Sea.

"So again, we have an understanding between the two countries so that we will not have any problems between your fishermen and ours," the Philippine leader told Mr. Pham. — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**



Vietnam offers PH 5-year rice supply deal

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

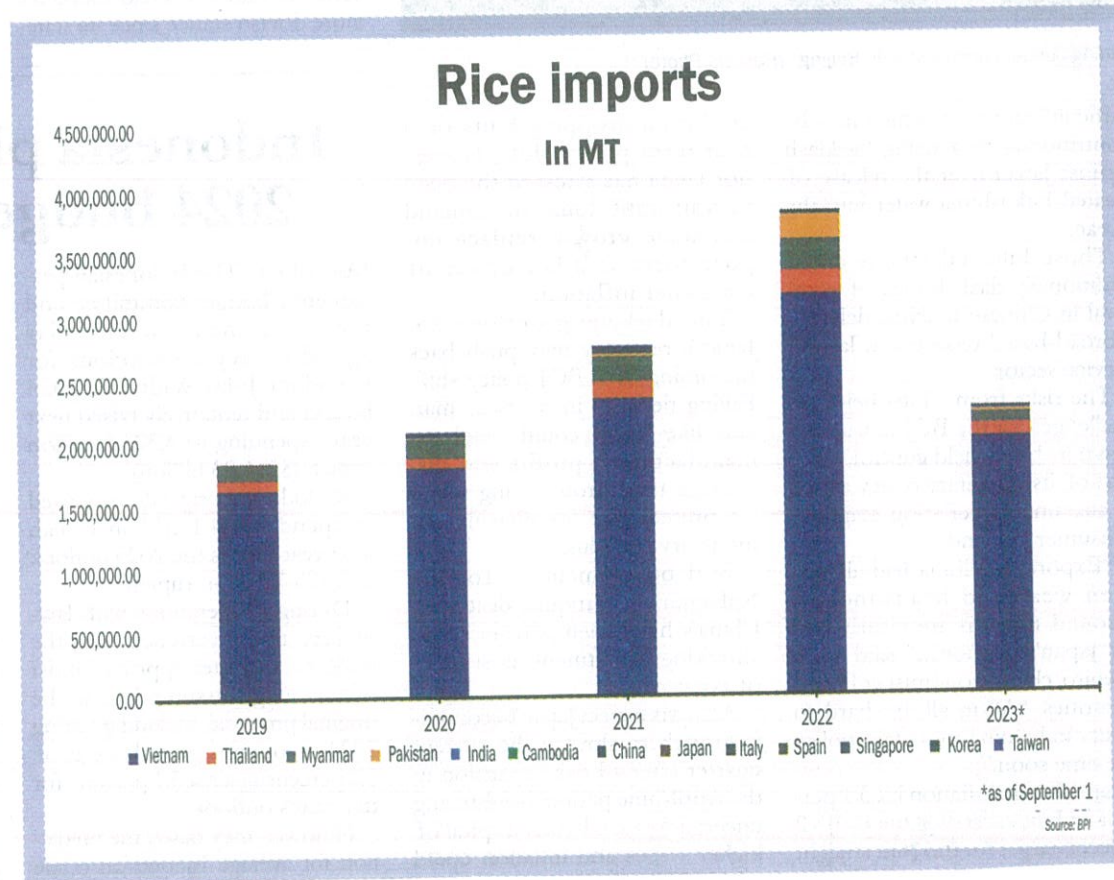
IF plans push through, the Philippines has secured its source of imported rice.

The Presidential Communication Office (PCO) in a statement said that in separate bilateral meetings yesterday, Vietnam has offered a five-year rice importation arrangement with the Philippines while Cambodia targets to capture 1 percent of the rice imports of the country by 2024.

PCO said President Marcos Jr. met with Vietnamese Prime Minister Minister Pham Minh Chinh and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet at the sidelines of the 43rd Association of Southeast Asian Nation (Asean) Summit and related Summits in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The President welcomed the proposals amid the current volatility in rice supply. A price ceiling on rice is in effect to address rising cost of the grain.

The PCO said the Vietnamese Prime Minister recommended that the "Ministries of Trade and



Malaya Business Insight

Date: 08 SEP 2023

Page: A1 and A2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Agriculture of the two countries will work together so that we can come up with a five-year agreement on supply of rice and actually... the rice will be determined by the market."

Marcos, who welcomed the idea, saying "the suggestion of a longer term arrangement is an important one because just having that as an assurance will stabilize the situation, not only for the Philippines, but for all of us in the region."

He recalled that the Philippines and Vietnam previously had a long term rice supply agreement and expressed confidence "that we will once again come to a consensus and agree."

The President was referring to the Memorandum of Agreement on the Supply of Vietnamese Rice to the Philippines where Vietnam sold up to 1.5 million metric tons of Vietnamese rice to the Philippines from 2008 to 2010.

PCO said despite the enactment of the Rice Tariffication Law or Republic Act 11203 that liberalized commercial rice importation by the Philippines, Vietnam continues to supply about 90 percent of the Philippines' rice imports.

In the first five months of this year, the Philippines imported 1.5 million tons of rice from Vietnam, worth \$772.4 million.

Apart from rice importation, the President and the Prime Minister also discussed possible fishery

and maritime cooperation to protect the livelihood of the ordinary fisherfolk.

The President, in a meeting with Manet raised the possibility of sourcing rice from Cambodia, boosting commercial aviation between the two countries through the establishment of direct flights as well as strengthened partnership in food security, trade and commerce, and people-to-people exchanges.

PCO said Marcos asked the Cambodian government to ease the terms and conditions for rice

importers in the Philippines to ensure a steady supply of the staple coming into the country.

In May this year, Cambodia exported 2,500 tons of rice to the Philippines.

PCO said "Cambodian officials said their country is targeting to get a one percent share of the market of imported rice in the Philippines by 2024 and encouraged stakeholders to sustain and make more efforts to increase rice exports to the Philippines".

Marcos and Manet also discussed a possible civil aviation

cooperation, as both countries agreed to expand the direct flights between the Philippines and Cambodia given the improvements in the COVID-19 situation and easing of restrictions.

The President said he will discuss with concerned officials and airline firms about the possibility of increasing the number of flights to other destinations in Cambodia.

He said the Philippines and Cambodia can also enhance cooperation in cultural, educational, and people-to-people exchanges.

See VIETNAM > Page A2



PH, Vietnam eye 5-year rice deal

DSWD, DTI finalizing cash aid protocols for small retailers

By ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS
and ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Vietnam is looking forward to establishing a five-year rice trade cooperation with the Philippine government to ensure food security.

Vietnam Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh said this in his

bilateral meeting with President Marcos on the sidelines of the 43rd Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit and Related Summits here on Thursday morning, Sept. 7.

Chinh said the two countries are close to finalizing a rice trade cooperation framework that would ensure rice imports from Vietnam.

"Our two countries will

conclude an inter-government agreement on rice trade so that our rice export will ensure food security in the Philippines," he said. "We look forward to having a stable framework of cooperation on rice trade for a long period of at least five years."

In response, President Marcos said he was hoping that negotiations on the proposed rice trade

would prove fruitful.

"You have identified the main issue for our countries which is food supply. In Asia, food supply is very much determined by rice, and the prices," he said.

"We are anxious and we hope to continue very fruitful arrangements," he added.

The President also said he recognized the market's ►7

Date: 08 SEP 2023

Page: 127



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PH, Vietnam eye 5-year rice deal 1◀

current volatility and the need for every country to make adjustment.

"However, the suggestion of a longer-term arrangement is an important one because just having that as an assurance will stabilize the situation, not only for the Philippines but for all of us in the region," Marcos told Chinh. "But we will work continuously. I am very confident that we will once again come to a consensus and agree."

The Philippines signed the MOA on the Supply of Vietnamese Rice to the Philippines in May 2008, with Vietnam selling to the Philippines up to 1.5 million metric tons of Vietnamese rice from 2008 to 2010. However, the passage of the Rice Tariffication Act (RA 110203) in March 2019 liberalized commercial rice importation by the Philippines by replacing quantitative restrictions with a general tariff.

The law also effectively barred government-to-government import arrangements under the National Food Authority (NFA).

Despite those developments, the Philippines' bilateral rice trade with Vietnam has remained healthy and unimpeded, with the latter supplying around 90 percent of the country's rice imports.

Vietnam exported 4.84 million metric tons of rice worth \$2.58 billion from January to July 2023.

For the first five months of this year, the Philippines imported 1.5 million tons of rice from Vietnam, worth \$772.4 million, which is equivalent to 42.3 percent of Vietnam's total rice exports for the said period.

Boosted ties

The Vietnam prime minister highlighted how important it was for both countries to continue the exchange of high-level visits.

Chinh said he was hoping that Vietnam and the Philippines would increase cooperation in agriculture and aquaculture, as well as in the digital and green economy.

President Marcos agreed, saying the relationships between ASEAN member states have "grown importance."

"It is to our advantage that we have taken not just one but more steps in strengthening the partnership, the alliance, the relationship not only in the bilateral context of ASEAN but also arrangement between our two countries," he said.

Cash aid for small rice retailers

While the government is finding ways to stabilize rice supply, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) on Wednesday, Sept. 6 went over the specifics of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) for small retailers affected by the current price cap on rice.

DSWD Secretary Rex Gatchalian and DTI Undersecretary Carol P. Sanchez convened a meeting at the DSWD Central Office to discuss how to smoothly implement the DSWD's SLP cash payout in accordance with Executive Order No. 39, which established a price cap on regular milled and well-milled rice that went into effect on Sept. 5.

"We are going to use the SLP to make sure that our retailers of rice are taken care of during this unforeseen time," Gatchalian said. "In this case, the DTI was tasked to work with the rice retailers' association to identify who the small rice retailers are. They'll pass on the list to us and on-the-ground we do payouts," he said.

DSWD Assistant Secretary for Strategic Communications and spokesperson Romel Lopez said the meeting was intended to expedite the completion of the list of qualified small rice retailers around the country who will be the recipients of the cash assistance of up to ₱15,000 per eligible retailer under the SLP.

"The completion of the master list of the intended beneficiaries is the meeting's top agenda in order to carry out the actual payouts as soon as possible," Lopez said.

He added that while the DSWD is responsible for the distribution of the cash assistance, the DTI will be in charge of the program's grievance and complaint component.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Marcos welcomes rice deal with Vietnam

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. welcomed the five-year rice importation deal proposed by Vietnam, saying it would help stabilize the supply of the staple grain in the country.

The Presidential Communications Office said the issue of rice importation was raised during Marcos' bilateral meeting with Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh at the sidelines of the 43rd Asean Summit in Jakarta, Indonesia on Thursday.

The Vietnamese leader was quoted to have suggested a five-year agreement on rice importation, which Marcos immediately agreed on, saying the scheme would result in rice supply stabilization not only for the Philippines, but for the entire region.

"We will work continuously. We have managed what we have before [inaudible] to an agreement in terms

► Vietnam A2

■ VIETNAM FROM A1

Marcos

of the rice importation by the Philippines and I am very confident that we will once again come to a consensus and agree," the President, who also concurrently seats as head of the Department of Agriculture (DA), said.

Chinh vowed that they would work with their counterparts in the Philippines in forging the agreement.

The President said he looks forward to the deal being finalized, considering the volatile prices of rice in the local market and the threats posed by the El Niño phenomenon.

"We hope that we can find an agreement so that there will be an exchange," he said.

Vietnam has exported 4.84 million metric tons of rice worth \$2.58 billion to the Philippines from January to July 2023.

In August, Marcos ordered the

DA to negotiate with Vietnam and India regarding rice imports.

Vietnamese traders have reportedly given price quotations that are \$30-40 lower than what was previously estimated in their meeting with DA officials in the Palace in August.

This is seen to pave the way for the importation of 300,000 to 500,000 metric tons (MT) of rice, beefing up the national inventory to last for 52 to 57 days by the end of 2023.

Marcos also discussed with Chinh the possibility of a fishery and maritime cooperation with Vietnam.

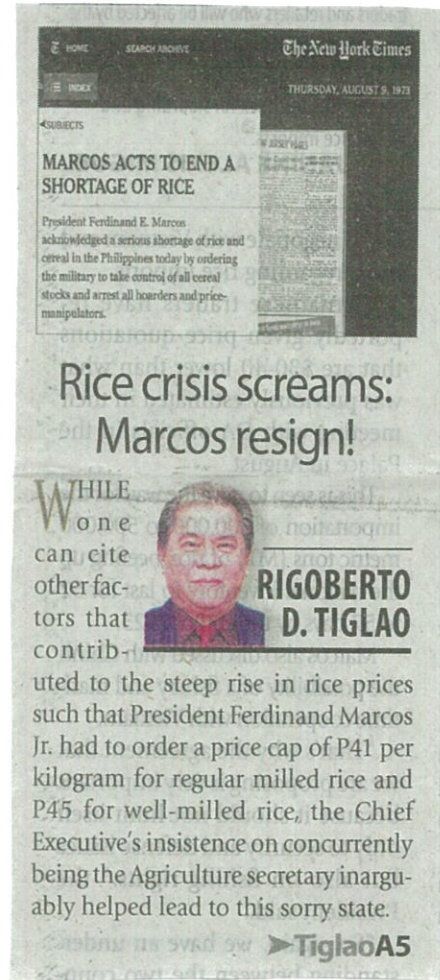
"That's why the agreement that we are proposing is very important because it should not limit itself only to security and defense issues but also on fishing rights," the President said.

"So, again, we have an understanding between the two countries so that we will not have any problems between your fishermen and ours," Marcos told Chinh.

KRISTINA MARALIT



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE





■ TIGLAO FROM A1

Rice crisis screams: Marcos resign!

Never before has a president held such a crucial position — and really on an absentee basis — 14 months into his presidency. It's just common sense in managing a large organization: You can't have the captain concurrently as chief engineer looking after the engines at the lowest deck.

One result is that we have even been getting conflicting reports from the Agriculture department on such crucial data as rice stocks.

"Our rice stocks are enough for the next few months, we're also in the middle of planting season, and we're expecting harvest by August and September," said Agriculture undersecretary Leocadio Sebastian in a public briefing last August 3. A few weeks later the Agriculture undersecretary for policy, planning and regulations, Mercedita Sombilla, told a House committee that the country was experiencing a rice shortage amid an insufficient buffer stock, as the total stock is pegged at 39 days in August and 44 days in September compared to the 60- to 90-day buffer stock needed."

If you were a rice trader, how would you see these conflicting reports? Most likely there is a rice shortage looming, and the Agriculture department is concealing this development, which prods him to wait before he releases his stocks.

In June, days before he assumed office, Marcos said: "It's important that the president take that portfolio not only to make it clear to everyone what high priority we put to the agricultural sector, but also as a practical matter, so that things move quickly."

Lowest

It turns out that the Agriculture department in practice has become his administration's lowest priority, with the President, sources in that department say, having visited its headquarters only twice. The first was on July 4, his first and only meeting with the department's executive committee. And the second, a week later, but to meet only with his representative

Leocadio Sebastian (who was fired a month later) and a few directors.

Contrast his two visits to the Agriculture department to the 24 "social and leisure" activities he has attended in and outside the Palace. In effect, rather than things "moving quickly" for the Agriculture department, these have all stopped, leaderless.

Nobody in the department is really taking seriously its 83-year-old "senior undersecretary" Domingo Panganiban. (While the "senior" designation was intended to put him on a higher rank than the three other undersecretaries, the joke in the department is that it is the only department headed by a "senior," with the more cruel joke alluding to that feared malady of that age.)

Panganiban was dragged from retirement to replace Leocadio Sebastian who was removed as Marcos' de facto representative in the department after he signed a sugar import order "for the President" — which he did not have the authority to do so. Agri officials applauded his removal though, as he couldn't get along with his subordinates, which was expected, they said, as he was a scientist, and not a bureaucrat.

Mismanaging

Failure to lead the department would be close to mismanaging the presidency, since the Agriculture department is now practically the most critical government institution as its area of responsibility, the food sector, is far from being sound. Rising prices of sugar and other food items already have had a severe impact on the economy, as these have been the biggest factor for our still high inflation rates. The annual inflation rate rose to 5.3 percent from last July's 16-month low of 4.7 percent, mainly because of the 8.1 percent rise in food prices.

Our agriculture sector has gone from bad to worse, not just because of its structural weaknesses, but because of the worldwide rise in oil prices resulting from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Petroleum products account for 20 percent of

crops' production cost, while for livestock, it is 50 percent. A huge chunk of retail food prices is also due to transport costs. Fishermen's biggest cost is fuel for their boats.

The past Rodrigo Duterte government undertook a P3 billion fuel subsidy program for farmers to mitigate rising fuel costs. Has the current administration ordered studies to find out the bottlenecks in the distribution of such subsidies, and how much more is needed? Prices of that sector's main output — rice and sugar — and even vegetables have risen to historic highs.

And other than massive importations, the department appears to have no idea how to stop the rise of what is really the most important concern of ordinary people — food prices.

The point is that events outside the country, mainly Russia's screwing the world, unsettling economies, and climate change's effects on food supplies — because of the unusual severity and frequency of storms and drought — should have put the Agriculture department on crisis mode. Having a part-time Agriculture department head is like having a part-time warship commander as it approaches hostile forces.

Concurrent

I can't understand why Marcos took the job of concurrent Agriculture secretary (which no other president has done) when he really hasn't any experience in managing a huge bureaucracy nor does he have any expertise in agricultural production. Hubris, that only he alone could do the job?

Marcos probably had no idea what the presidency requires, and again, it was probably also pride that prevented him from consulting with his predecessor Rodrigo Duterte who, at least going by people's satisfaction polls, has been the most successful president so far.

Indeed no one who hasn't been president or worked in the Palace would know that more than 70 percent of presidential time is eaten up

by ceremonial and social functions, such as foreign dignitaries as well as of athletes winning international competitions; speaking during anniversaries of organizations, in oath-taking and meetings of the Cabinet and other officials and meetings with businessmen.

Not only that; Marcos seems to relish foreign trips, that he has had 14 so far. Taking an average of 4 days' travel time, he has spent more than a month airborne and in foreign capitals. How could he have thought he had time to be Agriculture secretary?

If the Agriculture department fails to control the rise in prices of rice, sugar and even vegetable crops, it will be Marcos of course who will be blamed. The department's failure will pull down the economy, because food prices are a major component of inflation. Not only that. Marcos' legitimacy as a good government head will be very seriously eroded. What was he thinking?

It is uncanny that it is after a year in office that Marcos Jr. faces a rice crisis, and orders a clampdown on alleged hoarders, which he thinks have pushed up artificially the price of rice. It was also after martial law, when his father faced a similar crisis, and also ordered a crackdown on hoarders. The strongman Marcos survived that crisis to rule 12 more years. But then it was the military that ran after the hoarders. Now, it is one of the weakest departments, the Trade and Industry, which Marcos ordered to implement his directives.

"Marcos, resign?" Again? I'm too old for that 1970s slogan. Just resign as Agriculture secretary. It can't be a night job for the President. And given the morass that department — as well as the entire agricultural sector is in — it is political suicide for Marcos to be heading it.

Facebook: Rigoberto Tiglaog

Twitter: @bobitiglaog

Archives: www.rigobertotiglaog.com

Book orders: www.rigobertotiglaog.com/shop



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Price caps do not work



FINER
POINTS

**FERMIN
ADRIANO**

LAST August 31, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. issued Executive Order (EO) 39 that imposed price ceilings for regular milled rice at P41 per kilo and P45 per kilo for well-milled rice. This is lower than the Department of Agriculture's (DA) reported price for regular milled rice of between P42 and P55 per kilo, and P48 and P56 per kilo for well milled. Prevailing market prices, meanwhile, are even higher than the DA's reported prices.

The imposition of the price ceilings was triggered by the belief that while we have ample rice supply (as reported by the DA), unscrupulous traders are hoarding to artificially push prices upwards. As proof of this, joint raids by the Bureau of Customs (BoC) and other government agencies on major rice warehouses in Bulacan have been cited as finding ceiling-high stocks allegedly enough to meet consumer rice requirements for three months.

It puzzles me how they arrived at such a conclusion if they really understood rice supply and demand. The average daily consumption of rice in the country is around 35,000 metric tons (MT). Let us assume that Metro Manila residents consume half of this or 17,500 MT. If one multiplies this figure for 90 days, the rice stocks in those warehouses should be around 1.575 million MT in total. For 60 days, 1.05 million MT and for 30 days, 525,000 MT.

The question now is whether the stocks discovered come near to any of the above figures. If they are only enough for a few days,

how can one accuse those rice traders of hoarding? I expect that nothing will happen after those raids — the same as when raids were conducted against so-called sugar hoarders last year when sugar supply was tight.

Going back to EO 39, my bold prediction is that it will further worsen our rice supply shortage. No traders in their right minds will sell at a loss. If they bought their supplies at a much higher price, they will sell those at the black market at a price to recover costs plus a small profit margin. They will then refuse to buy more imported rice or locally produced palay (unmilled rice) if the current palay selling price of P21 per kilo upwards persists during the incoming harvest season.

The confluence of these events will surely result in the gradual disappearance of rice in the market, developing eventually into a full-blown supply crisis. Rice "pila" (queues) will become an ubiquitous phenomenon in wet markets. The government cannot effectively intervene because the National Food Authority's (NFA) rice inventory is only good for less than two days. As a result, there will be a push again to restore the authority of NFA to directly import rice, blaming in the process the "Rice Tariffication Law" (RTL) as the culprit for the shortage.

Unfortunately, restoring the power of NFA to import and revising the RTL will take time. Meanwhile, there will be public outrage over the vanishing supply of rice and rising prices. In turn, this will surely undermine the President's credibility which could have been preserved if the right advice was provided.

Solving a market imperfection by issuing fiat attain nothing beyond the media projection and political impression that officials are acting on the problem. The better tack is to use market instruments as these are more effective and sustainable. My proposal is for the government to temporarily lift or lower the tariff on rice imports, pegged at 35 percent if sourced from Asean (Association of South-east Asian Nations), during this period of tight supply.

Note that the 35-percent tariff was imposed in order to protect our farmers and fund the development of the domestic rice industry. Annually, P10 billion is set aside from the rice tariff proceeds to fund the Rice Competitive Enhancement Fund (RCEF). The RCEF has four subsidy components: farm machineries (P5 billion), in-bred seeds (P3 billion), agricultural credit (P1 billion) and training or capability building (P1 billion).

Near the end of August this year, the BoC reported that the tariff collection had totaled almost P17 billion, meaning that we have generated more than the funds required by RCEF and thus can afford not to impose more tariffs on imported rice.

Without the 35-percent rice tariff, our traders will find it attractive to import more despite rising prices of imported rice. Well-milled rice from Vietnam and Thailand hovers around \$650 to over \$700 per MT. With a 35-percent tariff, this means that the traders' cost will be more than \$1,000 per MT. Without the tariff, rice will come in cheap and hence, traders will be encouraged to import more during the critical September-December period.

I foresee that with just a mere pronouncement from the President that he is contemplating removing or lowering rice tariffs, traders will start unloading stocks for fear that they might lose money when the cheaper imports arrive. When this happens, we will see rice prices quickly declining.

The market is ruled by only two things: greed and uncertainty. Traders and investors want to gain more profit at the end of the day. However, their investment decisions are tempered by uncertainty because they are unsure whether these will earn them more money or make them lose in the process. The role of the government is to create and ensure an environment of certainty as this will lessen speculation. Sadly, this fact is not fully appreciated by politicians and lawyers who think that they can solve economic problems through fiat.

In other words, one cannot simply repeal supply and demand by enacting a law.

fdadriano88@gmail.com

Vietnam pushes five-year rice supply deal with Phl

JAKARTA – Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh is pushing for a rice supply deal that will allow his country to export rice to the Philippines for five years as the Marcos administration deals with price spikes of the food staple.

The supply agreement was proposed during Pham's bilateral meeting with President Marcos on the sidelines of the 43rd Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summit and related summits in Jakarta, yesterday.

"I would suggest that the Ministries of Trade and Agriculture of the two countries will work together so that we can come up with a five-year agreement on supply of rice and actually... the price will be determined by the market," Pham said.

Marcos welcomed Pham's suggestion, saying he recognized the market's current volatility and the need for countries to make adjustments.

"However, the suggestion of a longer term arrangement is an

important one because just having that as an assurance will stabilize the situation, not only for the Philippines, but for all of us in the region," the President said.

"But we will work continuously. We have managed what we have before (inaudible) to an agreement in terms of the rice importation by the Philippines and I am very confident that we will once again come to a consensus and agree," he added.

The Philippine government

Turn to Page 5



US Vice President Kamala Harris and President Marcos share a light moment with Philippine Ambassador to the US Jose Manuel Romualdez, Speaker Martin Romualdez and US Assistant to the President Philip Gordon after their bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the 43rd Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summit in Jakarta, Indonesia last Wednesday.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Vietnam From Page 1

has undertaken measures to address the escalating prices of rice, including imposing price caps on the food commodity. The mandated ceiling for regular milled rice is P41.00 per kilogram while the price cap for well-milled rice is P45.00 per kilogram.

The price ceilings were computed based on the average rice prices from May to July.

The price ceilings, which will not cover special and premium rice, took effect last Tuesday. The trade department has also mobilized price monitors and has coordinated with local governments to curb hoarding and price manipulation.

Cambodia as rice source

During his bilateral meeting with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet, Marcos raised the possibility of sourcing rice from Cambodia.

In a statement, Presidential Communications Secretary Cheloy Garafil said the Philippines intends to request the Cambodian government to ease the terms and conditions for Filipino rice importers to ensure a steady supply of the staple.

Initially, business-to-business sales deals between Khmer Foods Co. and rice importers in the Philippines resulted in the export to Manila of about 2,500 tons of rice in May this year. It was the first time the Philippines is importing a significant tonnage of rice from Cambodia after the passage of the Rice Tariffication Law in 2019.

"Cambodian officials said their country is targeting to get a one percent share of the market of imported rice in the Philippines by 2024 and encouraged stakeholders to sustain and make more

efforts to increase rice exports to the Philippines," Garafil said.

In 2008, the Philippines signed a memorandum of agreement on the supply of Vietnamese rice to the Philippines, allowing Hanoi to sell up to 1,500,000 metric tons of the food staple to Manila from 2008 to 2010.

Vietnam supplies around 90 percent of the Philippines' rice imports. It exported 4.84 million metric tons of rice worth \$2.58 billion from January to July this year.

The Philippines imported 1.5 million tons of rice from Vietnam worth \$772.4 million in the first five months of 2023, equivalent to 42.3 percent of Vietnam's total rice exports for the period.

Direct flights

The Philippines is also eyeing a stronger partnership with Cambodia on commercial aviation as both countries agreed to expand the direct flights between them because of improvements in the COVID-19 situation and relaxing of mobility restrictions.

"I shall, as my homework when I get back, look into the possibility of our airline increasing the number of flights to other destinations in Cambodia that we would like to go to. This is something that goes both ways," Marcos said.

Marcos and Hun also tackled partnerships in the areas of food security, trade and commerce, and people-to-people exchanges.

"I am a great believer of multilateral discussions but I also give equal importance to bilateral arrangements that we might do. Once again, I'm very happy to have had this exchange and I think, as I said, we've already identified so many areas that we can start off with," Marcos said. "I see that there's so much room for growth, so much room for partnership."

— Alexis Romero



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

DTI exec: Only Marcos can lift price ceiling

Only President Marcos can lift Executive Order No. 39 mandating the price ceiling of rice at P41 and P45 per kilo, an official of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said on Thursday amid calls to withdraw the price cap within two to three weeks.

At a press conference, DTI Assistant Secretary Agaton Uvero said the DTI and Department of Agriculture (DA) need to consider various factors before recommending to the President the lifting of EO 39.

"It is only the President who can lift (the EO)," Uvero said, noting that the DTI and DA can recommend the withdrawal of the price cap once retail prices of rice stabilize.

"That will be based on the actual monitoring on the ground. There are provinces which were able to comply as affordable rice is already available. It is usually problematic in big cities like Metro Manila," he added.

According to Uvero, the DTI does not arrest violators of the price cap and only issues warnings against those who fail to comply. "It is for this reason that we are talking with the (rice) associations, retailers to have cooperation instead of using force," he said.

On the other hand, Uvero said the government can start distribution of the P15,000 assistance to retailers within the week. "We have a target date

to start the distribution ... We only have issues on logistics, verification and distribution. As soon as we finalize this, we will inform the public ... Like for the National Capital Region, there are more than 10,000 (rice) retailers," he said.

Uvero said based on records of the DTI, there are at least 50,000 retailers nationwide. He met with members of the rice retailers' group Grains Retailers Confederation of the Philippines (GRECON) at the National Food Authority as they discussed the implementation of EO 39.

GRECON national president James Magbanua vowed that his members will comply with the price cap.

"We are willing to comply. That is the reason why we are here, because we want to help the government. They (retailers) are committed to help, compliant despite their losses," Magbanua said.

He said that farmgate price of palay already went down to P15 to P16 per kilo in Panay Island a week after the announcement of the price ceiling.

"Since last week, the farmgate price of fresh palay went down from P21, P20, it decreased to P15, P16 per kilo. The farmers will suffer here so we need a long term solution to address this issue on agricultural production," Magbanua said.

— **Bella Cariaso, Ramon Efren Lazaro, Ric Sapnu**



ASEAN MEETING

PH EYES 5-YR RICE TRADE ACCORD WITH VIETNAM

By Jean Mangaluz
@JMangaluzINQ

The Philippines is working on a five-year rice trade agreement with Vietnam, the world's third biggest exporter of the commodity after India and Thailand, to help ensure enough supply of the Filipino staple food in the local market.

This was discussed during a bilateral meeting at the 43rd Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit between President Ferdinand Marcos and Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh.

"Our two countries will conclude an intergovernment agreement on rice trade so that our rice export to the Philippines will ensure food security in the Philippines. We look forward to having a stable framework of cooperation on rice trade for a long period of at least five years. With that we can ensure our production and you can also ensure imports from Vietnam," Chinh told Mr. Marcos.

The President, who is also concurrent agriculture secretary, said that the country was looking forward to this deal in light of concerns with food security in the country amid the El Niño dry spell.

"We hope that we can find an agreement so that there will be an exchange," said Mr. Marcos.

Talks of a rice deal with Vietnam have been ongoing since August, when Senior Undersecretary Domingo Panganiban of the Department of Agriculture (DA) said that 300,000 to 500,000 metric tons (MT) of additional rice might be imported from Vietnam at discounted prices.

Not the first

This will not be the first supply agreement between the two countries. The Philippines earlier had a supply agreement with Vietnam signed in 2008, wherein Manila was able to buy 1.5 million MT of rice from Vietnam from 2008 to 2010.

Vietnam, which attained rice self-sufficiency in the late 1980s, has remained the country's biggest source of rice imports, supplying about 90 percent of the country's requirements from abroad.

From January to May this year, the Philippines imported 1.5 million MT of rice from Vietnam worth \$772.4 million, or equivalent to 42.3 percent of Vietnam's total rice exports for the period.

Data from the Global Agricultural Information Network of the United States Department of Agriculture showed that in July 2023, Vietnam's rice exports reached 656,869 MT, with its primary export

A3



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PH EYES 5-YR RICE TRADE ACCORD WITH VIETNAM

FROM A2

markets being the Philippines, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Ghana and China. Shipments to the Philippines that month surged by 45 percent to 239,400 MT and accounted for 36 percent of Vietnam's total exports.

Cap compliance

The Philippines has been relying on imports following the steady decline in areas planted to the commodity and overall farm productivity.

This has resulted in volatility in local prices that prompted President Marcos to issue Executive Order No. 39 last week to set a price ceiling of P41 a kilo for regular-milled rice and P45 for the well-milled variety starting Sept. 5.

The DA reported on Thursday that about 95 percent of rice retailers have complied with the price ceiling.

"So far as of yesterday, we have recorded a success rate of 95 percent, which means our retailers have complied," DA spokesperson Willie Ann Angsiy said in an interview.

Proper labeling

The DA recognized that some retailers found it challenging to follow the price cap, but assured the affected merchants that the government was prepared to assist them as long as they comply with EO 39.

The agency added that it



FOOD SECURITY Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh and President Marcos hold bilateral talks on Thursday at the sidelines of the 43rd Asean Summit at the Jakarta Convention Center in Indonesia, to discuss, among others, a rice trade deal aimed at ensuring enough supply of the staple food in the Philippines. —PPA POOL

would also deputize the National Food Authority (NFA) as it has the technical expertise to determine whether rice being sold in the market is properly classified as well-milled and regular-milled.

"Even if some of them are complaining, we will continue to disseminate information to explain the importance of complying with the price cap," said Angsiy, DA legal services director. "While we acknowledge that some purchased their stocks at higher prices but we will solve the problem by providing various assistance such as financial, logistics and market linkages."

The DA and the Department of Trade and Industry have started compiling a list of rice traders and retailers affected by the price ceiling.

Without giving a timetable for the price cap, Angsiy reiterated Mr. Marcos' statement that it would be temporary. "Our goal is to stabilize prices," she stressed.

The DA is anticipating retail prices to dip by the end of October as most of the estimated 2.92 MT of palay harvest from 15 provinces would come in, along with rice imports which "we assume will be enough," she added. —WITH

REPORTS FROM JORDEENE B. LAGARE
AND INQUIRER RESEARCH INQ

Date: 08 SEP 2023

Page: 4

LIBRARY
 DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE



Editorial

Anyare sa ni-raid na mga bodega ng bigas?

HANGGANG ngayon, wala pang balita o inpormasyon sa ni-raid na tatlong malalaking bodega ng bigas sa Bulacan noong Agosto 30. Hindi pa malaman kung may kaukulang papeles ang 202,000 sako ng bigas na nasa Great Harvest Rice Mill Warehouse, San Pedro Warehouse at FS Rice Mill Warehouse sa Balagtas, Bulacan. Pinangunahan ng Bureau of Customs (BOC), Department of Agriculture, House Speaker Martin Romualdez at ilang mambabatas ang pag-raid sa mga bodega. Naabutan na inire-repack o isinasalin sa mga local na sako ang mga bigas na hinihinalang smuggled mula sa Thailand at Vietnam. Hindi inabutan ang may-ari ng bodega at pawang mga trabahador lamang ang naroon.

Ang pagsalakay sa mga bodega ng bigas ay kasunod naman nang pagtaas ng presyo ng bigas sa pamilihan na umabot sa P60. Maraming mahihirap ang apektado sa pagtaas kaya isang Executive Order ang inisyu ni President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. na naglalagay sa P40 hanggang P45 ang price cap ng bawat kilo ng bigas. Ipinatupad ang kautusan noong Martes.

Umaray naman ang rice retailers sapagkat wala silang kikitain sa halagang itinakda. Binili umano nila nang mahal ang bigas kaya paano sila kikita kung ibebenta ito ng mura. Maraming retailers ang pikitmatang sumunod pero ang iba, itinigil na muna ang pagbebenta ng bigas. Nangako naman ang pamahalaan ng ayuda sa rice retailers. Kung kailan yun, walang nakaaalam.

Hanggang ngayon, hindi naman malaman kung ano ang tunay na dahilan nang pagmahal ng bigas. Hindi naman daw dapat magmahal dahil sapat ang suplay. Malapit na rin umano ang panahon ng anihan. Sabi naman ng ilang opisyal ng DA, isang paraan daw para magmura ang bigas ay ang pag-import. Wala nang bukambibig ang DA kundi umangkat nang umangkat. Salungat ito sa sinabi noong nakaraang taon ni President Marcos Jr. na masakit sa kalooban niya ang pag-angkat ng bigas.

Habang hindi nasosolusyunan ang pagtaas ng presyo ng bigas, ipagpatuloy naman ng BOC at DA ang pagsalakay sa mga bodega ng bigas na hinihinalang smuggled. Madali namang malalaman kung legal o illegal ang mga bigas na nakaimbak. Kapag walang naipakitang papeles ang may-ari ng bodega, malaki ang posibilidad na smuggled ang mga bigas.

Napakasimpleng paraan pero hanggang ngayon ang mga ni-raid na bodega sa Bulacan ay hindi pa malaman kung ano na ang nangyari. Nag-iisip ang taumbayan na baka may hokus-pokus na nangyayari kaya wala pang balita sa sandamukal na bigas. Kapag napatunayang smuggled, ang mga bigas na ito ang ibenta ng P20 bawat kilo para naman matupad ang pangako ng Presidente.

Date: 08 SEP 2023 Page: 2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

***Presyo ng bigas sa world market
apektado sa price cap ni PBBM***

Tahasang sinabi ni House Speaker Ferdinand Romualdez na bahagyang naapektuhan ang presyo ng bigas sa world market matapos pirmahan noong biyernes ni pangulong Marcos ang Executive Order 39 na nagtatakda sa presyo ng bigas sa bansa.

Batay sa US-based company na Markets Insider, bumaba ng 21% ang presyo ng bigas sa pandaigdigang kalakalan mula \$384 per metric ton noong Hulyo at ngayon ay nasa \$332.4 sa bawat metrikong tonelada na lang.

Ayon kay Romualdez, "timing at effective" ang EO ni Pangulong Marcos dahil nakaapekto ito sa mataas na presyo ng bigas ngayon sa world market.

Ani Romualdez, posibleng kinansela ng mga Filipino importers at traders ang pag-angkat ng bigas mula sa ibang bansa dahil nagmura na ang presyo nito sa lokal na merkado.

"Siguro nung kinansel na nila (mga importers at traders) ang mga orders, biglang dumami tuloy ang stock sa abroad ng bigas", ani Romualdez.

Sinabi pa ni Romualdez na halata na artificial ang pagsirit ng presyo ng bigas sa mga palengke dahil sa pagtatago ng mga bigas sa bodega nang isagawa ang inspeksiyon.

Dagdag pa ng mambabatas mula Leyte na ang rice price cap ang tanging susi pala para pigilan ang price manipulation at hoarding ng bigas sa bansa na naging senyales naman sa world market. (Joy Cantos)



FOOD ON THE TABLE

**By Jester
Manalastas**

THE Marcos administration is also focusing on revitalizing the country's poultry industry and ensuring affordable food on every Filipino family's table.

This is according to Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez as he lauded the initiative of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to hasten the acquisition of avian flu vaccines that would help boost the industry.

Marcos, who concurrently heads the Department of Agriculture, met Tuesday night with leading Indonesian animal health firm PT Vaksindo Satwa Nusantara.

Vaksindo intends to cooperate with its local partner, Unahco Inc. (Univet Nutrition and Animal Healthcare Company) Philippines on veterinary vaccines and plans to invest around US\$2 million this year. Likewise, it would soon provide the Philippines with avian flu vaccine.

"The early delivery of Vaksindo vaccines could spur the revitalization of our country's poultry industry which has faced serious challenges due to

the continuing threat of the avian flu," Romualdez said.

Among others, he noted that egg producers recently confirmed a 20 percent drop in their production due to the culling of at least 10 million chicken layers due to the effects of the avian flu, first reported in the country in 2017.

As a result, prices of eggs spiked early this year with the average cost of a medium-sized egg in Metro Manila markets rising from P6.90 to P8.70. In some markets, prices even reach P10 just for a regular-sized egg.

On the other hand, the price of whole chicken in Metro Manila ranged from P150 to P200 as of June this year, would could be partly attributed to the threat of the avian flu.

"The President is keenly aware of the plight of the poultry industry sector and the engagement with Vaksindo is a positive step towards addressing the problem of avian flu that continues to beset this sector," Romualdez said.

"Making avian flu vaccines available to our poultry sector, along with the adoption of best practices, would help ensure we could sustain the encouraging signs of recovery of the

industry," he added.

He said this is the reason why the meeting with Vaksindo officials is among the President's top priorities as part of his trip to Indonesia to participate in the 43rd ASEAN Summit and Related Summits in Jakarta," he added.

The Speaker expressed hopes for the enactment of a law that would establish the Virology and Vaccine Institute of the Philippines, envisioned to focus on applied research and studies to develop diagnostic kits and vaccines not only for humans but also for animal and plant diseases.

In December 2022, the House of Representatives approved on third and final reading its version of the measure, or House Bill No. 6452. The Senate has yet to pass the counterpart bill.

Meanwhile, Romualdez said the Marcos administration is likewise attending to similar challenges facing the livestock industry, noting that President Marcos earlier stressed the "urgent need" to revitalize the livestock and poultry industries in pursuit of food security and global competitiveness.



Reduced rice prices necessary to achieve inflation target

DESPITE its uptick in August, headline inflation can still fall within the government's 2 to 4 percent target by the end of the year if rice prices decline, an economist said on Wednesday.

"If the rice price ceiling is effective in curbing rice prices and overall inflation, the headline inflation could still ease year-on-year for the coming months due to higher base effects," Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC) chief economist Michael Ricafort said in an interview.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported on Tuesday that headline inflation accelerated to 5.3 percent in August from 4.7 percent in July.

The uptrend was mainly attributed to the higher inflation in food prices, particularly rice and vegetables.

Rice inflation alone increased to 8.7 percent in August from 4.2 percent in

July 2023.

Last week, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. issued Executive Order No. 39, imposing mandated price ceilings on rice in the whole country.

Under EO 39, mandated price ceiling for regular milled rice is PHP41 per kilogram, while the mandated price cap for well-milled rice is PHP45 per kg.

Ricafort said the inflation target of below 4 percent could still be achieved as early as November and December despite the challenges brought about by higher prices of rice and oil, as well as the effects of higher minimum wages in Metro Manila.

"Thus, it is important that rice prices do not go up further in view of the temporary rice price ceilings since September 5, 2023, to prevent headline inflation from rising further since rice prices accounted for nearly 10 percent of the inflation basket," he said.



WORLD RICE PRICES PLUMMET

By 21% following
price ceiling

SPEAKER Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez announced today that the global rice market has experienced a substantial 21 percent decrease in prices, attributed to the recent implementation of Executive Order 39 of the Palace imposing price ceiling on rice nationwide.

According to the United States (US) based company, the Markets Insider, the price of rice in the world market decreased by 21 percent from \$384 per metric ton last July to \$332.4 per metric ton this month.

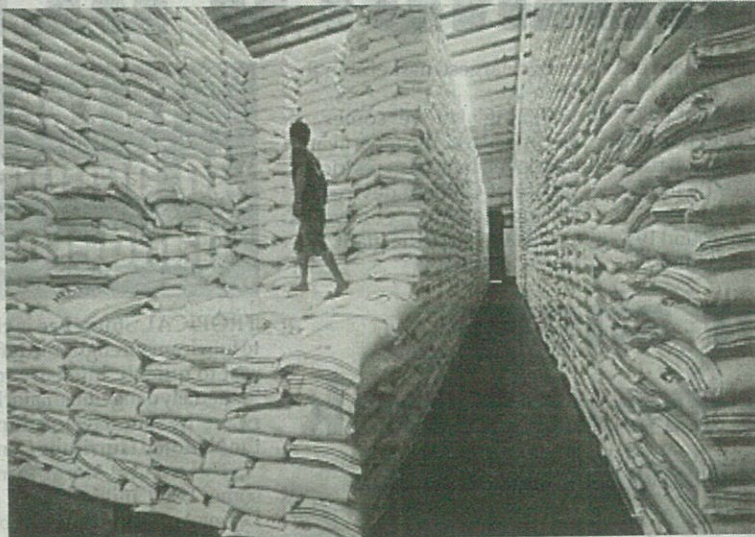
"It is proven that the EO 39 of President (Ferdinand) BongBong Marcos Jr., sets commendable results not only in our country. We are hoping na magtuloy-tuloy na ang pagbaba ng presyo ng bigas," said the Speaker in a statement.

The House leader believed that Filipino rice traders and importers cancelled the importation of rice after the price drop in the country due to the price ceiling.

"Siguro nung kinansel na nila (importers and traders) ang mga orders, biglang dumami tuloy ang stock sa abroad ng bigas," Romualdez noted.

"It is obvious na artificial ang pag-sirit ng presyo ng bigas sa mga palengke natin dahil tinatago yung mga bigas sa bodega as, we have seen during our inspection," the lawmaker added.

Romualdez insisted that the palace



was correct in imposing a price cap as it is the only way to stop price manipulations and hoarding of rice.

Meanwhile, House Ways and Means Committee Chair, Rep. Joey Salceda, echoed Romualdez, saying that the price increase of rice in the world market was artificial due to high volume of demand from the Philippines.

"We have seen this crisis before and we know how to deal with it," Salceda earlier said.

"Pero we should not over-import para hindi i-anticipateng mga kapitba-

hay nating bansa at tumaas ng presyo ng bigas," Salceda added. Ang paglalagay ng price cap ng Malacanang sa bigas ay nagpapakita na hindi katanggap-tanggap sa atin ang mga artificial na pagtaas ng presyo ng bigas sa world market.

Earlier, Pres. Marcos issued EO 39 ordering prices at P41.00 per kilo for regular milled rice and P45.00 for well-milled rice after the government received information that some unscrupulous traders were planning to raise rice prices to as high as P70.00 per kilo.



Cops help enforce rice price ceiling

By Alfred Dalizon

PHILIPPINE National Police agents nationwide have been ordered by General Benjamin C. Acorda Jr. to assist the Department of Trade and Industry and Department of Agriculture in implementing the presidential order imposing a mandate price ceiling on rice.

The order to help the DTI and the DA implement President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' R. Marcos Jr.'s Executive Order No. 39 which imposes a price ceiling on rice has been given to all 17 Police Regional Offices.

EO No. 39 calls for the 'imposition of mandated price ceilings on rice.'

The PNP has been assigned to provide the necessary support and assistance to DTI and the DA in enforcing this order, ensuring compliance with the mandated ceiling price on rice as a solution to address the increase in retail prices.

In Metro Manila, National Capital Region Police Office director, Brigadier Gen. Jose Melencio C.

Nartatez Jr. said he has instructed all his five district directors to assist the DTI and the DA in inspecting market activities in their area and see to it that EO No. 39 will be fully implemented.

In Mimaropa region, Police Regional Office 4-B director, Brigadier Gen. Joel B. Doria said he has directed all his units to help intensify the awareness campaign regarding the mandated price ceiling.

The official said they are fully supporting the presidential directive.

"PRO MIMAROPA, under the guidance of DILG Secretary Atty. Benjamin C. Abalos Jr. and the leadership of PNP Chief, PGen Benjamin C. Acorda Jr., is dedicated to President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s vision of a fair and inclusive rice market," the MIMAROPA top fop stressed.

"Our aim is to ensure a consistent supply of affordable rice in MIMAROPA," he added.

Violators of the rice price cap, set at P41 per

kilo for regular-milled and P45 per kilo for well-milled rice, will face penalties as stated in Section 15 and 16 of Republic Act No. 7581.

The penalties include imprisonment for a period of 1 to 10 years and substantial fines ranging from P5,000 to P1,000,000.

Brig. Gen. Doria has encouraged the public to support and cooperate with the implementation of this order.

"We urge the public's cooperation and support in fostering a transparent and inclusive rice market that benefits all stakeholders in the region," he said.

In Caraga region, PRO13 director, Brig. Gen. Kirby John B. Kraft said

they are fully working with the lead agencies to ensure the effective and efficient enforcement of the presidential order.

"We will render necessary assistance to DTI and DA in the enforcement of price ceilings on rice in the region. Together with other law enforcement agencies, we will perform our task in the implementation of EO No. 39," Brig. Gen. Kraft said.



Nangyari na nga mga tropapips ang inasahan nating pagsirit na naman ang presyo ng mga bilihin gaya ng resulta ng inflation rate nitong Agosto na tumaas uli. Mabuti na lang at may inilabas na Executive Order (EO) 39 ang Palasyo para talian ang presyo ng bigas.

Sayang at nawala ang momentum ng Palasyo para maibida ang anim na magkakasonod na buwan na naibaba ang inflation mula sa 8.7 % ng Enero na naging 4.7% na lang noong July.

Kaya lang nitong Agosto, umangat na naman sa 5.3%, na halos kapareho ng 5.4% noong June. Pero hindi pa naman daw dapat ikabahala 'yan ng mga utaw dahil pasok pa sa pagtaya ng Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) na 4.8%-5.6%. Bukod doon, mas mababa rin ito kumpara sa 6.3% rate noong Agosto 2022.

Ang sinasabing nakahatak ng mas mataas na inflation noong Agosto eh ang pagtaas ng halaga ng mga tsibog at non-alcoholic beverage, gaya ng bigas, gulay at mga pagkaing galing sa dagat o tabang. Siyempre, damay na rin diyan 'yong pagtaas ng mga produktong petrolyo.

Sirit bilihin uli

Maliban nga sa dagdag gastusin sa pagbiyahe ng mga produkto dahil mahal ang gas, sakit din ng ulo siyempre ang mga bagyo at habagat na nakakapinsala sa mga taniman, nagpapaapaw sa mga palaisdaan, at hindi makapamalaot ang mga mangingisda.

Kung kakaba-kaba ang mga nanay na nagba-badyet sa gastos ng pamilya na baka magtuloy-tuloy ang pagmahal ng mga bilihin, ang kagandahan sa BSP aba'y think positive sila na bababa na ito sa huling bahagi ng taon.

Ewan lang natin kung magdidilang-anghel ang BSP dahil "ber" month na. Kadalasan kasi kapag paparating ang Disyembre na gastusan dahil Pasko, mas tumataas ang demand kaya mas nagmamahal ang mga bilihin.

Kung magmahal pa rin ang mga bilihin, umaasa naman ang Palasyo na kahit papaano eh makahinga-hinga ng kaunti ang mga nanay sa pagbabadyet nila sa bigas dahil sa pinirmahang EO 39 ni PBBM.

Sa nasabing EO, hindi dapat hihigit sa P41.00 ang presyo ng kada kilo ng regular milled rice, at hindi naman dapat hihigit sa P45.00 ang kada kilo ng well-milled rice. Ibig sabihin, may mabibiling matinong bigas ang mga nanay na hindi umaabot sa P50, P60 o P70 ang kilo.

Nagtataka kasi ang Palasyo kung bakit ang mahal pa rin ng bigas na halos nawala ang P40 ang kilo gayung sapat naman ang suplay ng bigas sa bansa. Ang nakikitang dahilan, ang mga buraot na negosyanteng nag-iipit

ng suplay para palabasin na may shortage at nang maidikta nila ang mataas na presyo.

Pero dahil sa EO, kahit papaano, may pang-bad trip na sa mga nagmamanipla ng bigas dahil nga may itinakdang presyo. At kapag dumating na ang araw ng surplus o sobrang ani ng mga lokal na magsasaka at samahan pa ng rice importation, inaasahan na magiging normal na ang presyuhang sa merkado at maiiwang nakanganga ang mga buraot na negosyanteng nagtatago ng mga bigas nila.

Dapat galingan ng mga kulokoy na negosyante ang pagtatago ng mga bigas nila kung ayaw nilang ibenta sa tamang presyo. Bukod kasi sa price ceiling, may hiwalay na operasyon din na ginagawa ang gobyerno laban sa cartel para hanapin ang mga bodega kung saan itinatago ang mga bigas.

Ang sabi ng iba, panlaban ni PBBM sa rice cartel at hoarders ang EO 39. Patunay na seryoso siya na banggain ang mga kulokoy. Pero siyempre, makikita natin kung talagang tatalab ang bisa nito sa mga susunod na linggo o baka buwan.

Pero magiging magandang photo op kay PBBM kung makikita siya na iniinspeksiyon ang libo-libong sako ng bigas na nakumpiska sa bodega ng cartel. At pagkatapos eh ibenta ang mga bigas sa mga Kadiwa kahit sa presyong P30 per kilo o malay natin P20? Abangan. Tandaan: "Bata mo ko at Ako ang Spy n'yo."



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

NEWS BRIEF

PH, Vietnam kinasa 5 kasunduan sa rice supply

NAGKASUNDO ang Pilipinas at Vietnam para sa limang taong importasyon ng supply ng bigas upang mapanatili ang supply at presyo nito sa bansa.

Sa harap na rin ito ng problemang kinakaharap ng Pilipinas sa supply ng bigas dahil sa pagkontrol ng mga hoarder at tusong negosyante upang tumaas ang presyo nito sa pamilihan.

Ayon sa Presidential Communications Office (PCO), ang 5-year rice supply agreement ay natalakay nina Pangulong Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. at Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh sa kanilang bilateral meeting nitong Huwebes sa Jakarta, Indonesia sa

sidelines ng ginaganap na 43rd ASEAN Summit.

Iminungkahi ni Prime Minister Pham sa Pangulo na mag-usap ang mga opisyal ng Department of Agriculture at Ministry of Trade and Agriculture upang bumalangkas ng kasunduan para sa limang taong importasyon ng bigas sa bansa, at ibabase ang presyo nito kung ano ang nasa merkado.

Ikinagalak naman ni Pangulong Marcos ang naging mungkahi ni Prime Minister Pham na aniya ay magiging susi upang umayos ang sitwasyon sa problema sa bigas hindi lamang sa Pilipinas kundi sa buong rehiyon. (Aileen Taliping)

REMATE

ANG DIARYO NG MASA

Date: 08 SEP 2023 Page: 5



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE



EDITORIAL

EMERGENCY POWERS ANG SAGOT, 'DI NGA?

ANG pagbibigay ng emergency powers kay Pangulong Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. ang lulutas umano sa problema sa napakataas na presyo ng bigas bunga ng sinasabing hoarding na ginagawa ng mga tiwaling negosyante.

Ayon sa mga mambabatas, handa silang ibigay sa Pangulo ang kapangyarihan upang mahabol, makilala at makasuhan ang mga rice hoarder kaya naman iminungkahi ni Marikina 2nd District Representative Stella Quimbo ang Rice Emergency Response Act.

Ang panukala ay naglalayon upang makamit ang sapat na suplay ng bigas, nagdaragdag ng subsidyo para sa mga magsasaka ng bigas at mahihirap na sambahayan at nagpapataw ng mas mahigpit na parusa sa mga hoarders na dahilan kung kaya matindi ang pagliit ng suplay ng bigas at napakataas ng presyo nito.

Sabi nga ni Quimbo, may bigas pero hindi matagpuan dahil nga itinatago ng mga negosyante sa iba't ibang mga bodega nila.

Ayon pa kay Quimbo, mahirap laban ang mga rice hoarder dahil napakarami nilang mga bodega.

Ang totoo, malaking hamon ang kinakaharap ng Pilipinas kaugnay sa isyu ng bigas kabilang ang export ban sa India, mga bagyo, tag-tuyot at hoarding. Hindi pa kasama rito ang walang humpay na pagtaas ng presyo ng gasolina at ang pinakamatindi sa lahat ay ang korapsyon.

Upang matugunan ang napakataas na presyo ng bigas, ang kapangyarihan ni Pangulong Marcos ay limitado pa rin sa mga hakbangin:

- pagbabawas o pagsususpende ng mga taripa ng bigas sa ilalim ng mga partikular na kondisyon
- awtorisasyon para sa National Food Authority na mag-angkat ng bigas para sa buffer stocking, at
- ang paglalaan ng mga hindi nagamit na pondo mula sa iba't ibang programa ng pamahalaan upang magbigay ng subsidyo para sa mga magsasaka, mamimili at retailer.

At kasama pa rin sa HB 9030 inihain ni Quimbo ang pagbibigay parusa sa hoarders ng hindi bababa sa 10 taon hanggang sa maximum na 30 taon na pagkakakulong at hindi bababa sa P1 milyon hanggang P100,000 milyon na multa. Naniniwala ba ang mamamayan na emergency powers para sa Pangulo ang sagot sa problema sa bigas.

Napapailing na lang ang marami sapagkat batid naman na hanggang hindi napapalitan ang karamihan sa mga opisyal ng pamahalaan na kasabwat ng hoarders at iba pang may kinalaman sa pagtaas ng presyo hindi lamang ng bigas subalit maging ng iba pang bilinghin lalo na ang mga inaangkat sa labas ng bansa, hindi maisasaayos ang tamang presyo ng mga produkto lalo na ang mga pangunahing pangangailangan ng mamamayan.

REMATE

ANG DIARYO NG MASA

Date: 08 SEP 2023 Page: 5



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PAANO NAMAN ANG MGA MAGSASAKA?

PAGKAKALOOBAN ng Department of Social Welfare and Development ng one time maximum P15,000 cash aid ang small rice retailers na maaapektuhan ng price cap na itinakda ng Malakanyang.

Iniutos ni Pangulong Fredinand Marcos Jr. na gamitin ang Sustainable Livelihood Program ng ahensiya upang tulungan ang small rice retailers mula sa inaasahang pagkalugi dahil sa temporary price cap sa bigas.

Ngayong may price ceiling na sa bigas, hindi puwedeng magbenta ang retailers sa merkado ng hihigit sa P41 bawat kilo sa regular milled at P45 well milled.

Hindi masamang tulungan ang rice retailers sa pagkalugi sa price cap sa bigas. E paano naman ang mga magsasaka na mas matagal nang nalulubog sa pagkalugi sanhi ng climate change at mataas na halaga ng produksyon sa pagtatanim?

Kung may dapat ayudahan ang pamahalaan ay silang mga magbubukid. Mas malaking halaga at pagod ang nasasayang sa mga magsasaka kapag tinatamaan ng kalamidad ang kanilang mga pananim. Sapul din sila ng napakataas na presyo ng fertilizer at iba pang cost of production.

Pansamantala lang naman ang price

cap na ipinatutupad upang kontrahin ang mga mapagsamantalang malalaking negosyante na nagkukubli ng bigas para maibenta nila ng mahal sa merkado.

Subalit ang paghihirap ng mga magsasaka ay malaon na nilang dinaras dahil din sa mga abusadong rice traders at natural na kalamidad.

Binabarat ng rice dealers ang kanilang ani kaya lalong nagkakandahirap ang mga magbubukid na Juan dela Cruz.

Nagmamalaki ang mga dambuhalang rice traders na baratin o huwag bumili ng bigas sa mga magsasaka dahil madali sa kanila ang makakuha ng mga imported. Kasabwat nila ang mga ismagler na tinutulungan pa ng mga tiwali sa gobyerno para makapagpuslit.

Ngayon hirap nang mag-import sapagkat ibinawal ng gobyerno ng mga bansang pinagkukunan ng mga bigas na mag-export muna dahil sila rin ay kinakapos sa produksyon, hinihinalang nagtatago ng bigas ang malalaking traders sa bansa na dulot naman ng



pagtaas ng presyo sa mga palengke.

Usapin sa bigas ang problema subalit wala yata tayong nababalitaang ayuda para suportahan ang mga magsasaka. Kung walang magsasaka, walang gagawa sa bukid at kung walang magtatanim, walang mabibilang bigas. Ang ating mga magsasaka ang nagtatanim ng mahalagang butil na bumubuhay sa bawat Pilipino?

Ano kayang dahilan at kinakaligtaang tulungan ang mga magsasaka? Dahil ba may inaasahang makukuhanang bigas sa ibang bansa para maibenta nang mahal sa Pilipinas?

Dapat ay suportahan ang mga magsasakang Pilipino upang mapalakas ang sariling produksyon sa bansa. Huwag umaasa mula sa importasyon. Ang resolusyong ito ang magpapatibay sa ating adhikain na bigyang importansya ang sektor ng agrikultura.

Date: 08 SEP 2023 Page: A4



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BPI approves propagation of Bt cotton for commercial production

By MANUEL T. CAYON

[@awimailbox](#)

DAVAO CITY—The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) flashed the green light for the planting for commercial production in the country of a genetically modified cotton variety, the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (Isaaa) said.

In the September 6 issue of its online weekly publication, Biotech Update, Isaaa said the BPI issued a biosafety permit for the commercial propagation of Bt cotton (GFM cry1A), which was developed by the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA).

"The permit was granted to PhilFIDA after completion of the biosafety evaluation and the requirements for commercial propagation based on the Joint Department Circular [JDC] No. 1, Series of 2021 issued by the Department of Science and Technology, Department of Agriculture, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Health and Department of the Interior and Local Government."

The BPI issued the permit on August 24 and announced the approval on its website, the Isaaa said.

The Isaaa said Bt (Biotechnology) cotton

contains the Bt fusion gene, GFM cry1A, "produced based on the protein template of Cry1Ab and Cry1Ac proteins from *Bacillus thuringiensis*." The Bt fusion gene confers resistance to bollworm infestation.

The Alliance for Science, an organization of scientists, said Bt cotton has been genetically engineered to resist the dreaded bollworm (*Heliothis armigera*), "a destructive pest that is partly responsible for the decline of the country's cotton industry." Bt cotton includes a gene derived from the soil bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), which produces a protein that is toxic only to the newly hatched bollworm larvae that attack cotton.

"That means the Bt protein would not affect non-target organisms because its toxic effect is specific only to the bollworm pest," the alliance said, adding that the crop technology largely replaces the need to control the bollworm through applications of synthetic chemical pesticides, which may cause harm to human health and the environment.

The Bt variety was being cultivated in experimental areas to secure approval for commercial release of the seeds. Technology demonstrations were done with cotton producers in the provinces of Ilocos, Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija, Sarangani and South Cotabato involving 40 one-hectare farms.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE



PHILIPPINE STAR/EDD GUMBAN

A VENDOR repacks sugar at Quinta market in Quiapo, Manila.

Sugar regulator sees rise in production assuming mild El Niño

SUGAR production in 2023 is expected to rise slightly, on the assumption that the impact of El Niño isn't too severe, the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) said.

At an agriculture forum organized by the European Chamber of Commerce on Thursday, SRA Administrator Pablo Luis S. Azcona said sugar production could increase by 50 thousand metric tons (MT).

Mr. Azcona added that the total area planted to sugarcane is estimated to rise by at least 3,000 hectares.

"We have a slight increase in area despite the fact that (output fell) in Batangas because of the closure of the mill," he said.

In the last crop year, sugar production declined to about 1.8 million MT from the 2.1 million MT previously, due to a number of typhoons affecting cane production, he said.

"For the initial balance of inventory for this crop year, locally produced sugar posted a 450%

increase (from a year earlier), he added.

To date, the stock of domestic sugar is at 150 thousand MT, against 27 thousand MT a year earlier.

"With the harvest season having begun, we will see an increase in raw sugar stock," he said.

The sugar crop season typically begins in September.

A severe El Niño, however, could result in a 10% to 15% decline in output.

"(It) all depends on the El Niño's severity," Mr. Azcona said, with the worst of the weather phenomenon, which can cause dry spells, expected to manifest starting around November.

The government weather service expects El Niño to strengthen towards late 2021, persisting until the first quarter of 2024.

"If it's not so severe, we might even see an increase (because of the timing of) harvest season. Drier weather results in more bags of sugar per ton of sugarcane," he added. — **Adrian H. Halili**



Compliance with price controls on rice estimated at 95% — DA

SOME 95% of retailers are complying with the price controls on rice, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Thursday.

"As of (Sept. 6) *nare-report nating nagkaron tayo ng 95% success rate, which mean na nag-comply ang ating mga retailers* (It has been reported that the price controls have had a 95% success rate, indicating that retailers have been compliant)," DA Director for Legal Services Willie Ann M. Angsiy said at a briefing.

Executive Order No. 39, which took effect on Tuesday, imposed a temporary price ceiling of P41 per kilogram for regular-milled rice and P45 per kilogram for well-milled rice as the government scrambled to contain rice prices.

Ms. Angsiy added the DA is continuing to "disseminate information" to non-compliant

retailers on proposed subsidies to compensate dealers who will be selling their rice at a loss due to the price controls.

"*Mabibigyan din natin sila ng ayuda basta sumunod la-mang sila*" (We will give them aid if they follow the price cap)," she said.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has said that rice retailers will get up to P15,000 in subsidy to cover potential losses resulting from the price ceiling.

Ms. Angsiy said that the DSWD is currently working on the rules governing eligibility for the subsidy.

"But on the part of other government agencies, we are working closely with the local government units. *Kinakausap natin ang mga mayor kung maari silang maka-provide ng*

assistance, (We are speaking with mayors about providing assistance)," she said.

She added that the DA is set to provide logistics services to directly deliver rice from farmers to retailers.

"*Meron din tayong market linkages, kung sakaling ma-short ng stock ang ating retailers. Siguradong may dadating na stock*," she said. (There will surely be stock because we are connecting producers to retailers).

She added that the DA is working with the private sector to ensure supply until the start of the harvest in October.

"By the end of October 2023, most of the estimated 2.92 million metric tons of palay will come from 15 provinces," she said. "We assume that will be enough" to address high prices.

— Adrian H. Halili



DA lifts poultry ban on US state

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) has lifted the ban on poultry products from the state of South Dakota in the United States.

DA Memorandum Order 61 series of 2023 was issued by senior undersecretary Domingo Panganiban on Wednesday after the state provided evidence it has contained its bird flu incidence.

The issuance allows the im-

portation of domestic and wild birds and their products including poultry meat, day old chicks, eggs and semen originating from South Dakota subject to compliance with existing importation rules of the DA.

Data from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) showed the Philippines imported 249.37 million kg of chicken meat from January to July.

BAI's data also showed that

for the period, the Philippines purchased a total of 86.14 million kg of chicken from the US or 34.5 percent of the country's total chicken imports.

No data is available on the volume that came from the state of South Dakota.

DA's monitoring of public markets as of yesterday showed the prevailing retail price of whole dressed chicken ranges between P150 to P200 per kg. *-Jed Macapagal*



PANGANIBAN



Tieups to boost veggie, rubber production

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) expects improved production of vegetables and rubber with recent partnerships.

DA said the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) and the Korea Partnership for Innovation of Agriculture Philippines Center (KOPIA) formally opened its pilot village project on protective cultivation and post-harvest management of vegetables in Siniloan, Laguna last Tuesday.

The agency said the infrastructure development is a component of the pilot village project funded by KOPIA and implemented by the DA-BPI Los Baños National Crop Research, Development

and Production Support Center aimed at improving the technical proficiencies of extension workers and farmers in partner communities.

The project will increase the volume of vegetable production by 200 percent in the pilot communities and increase the income of participating farmers by 20 percent.

DA said the project will benefit at least 100 farmers in Siniloan who will provided greenhouses with drip irrigation systems, postharvest technologies, farm cultivators and good agricultural practices.

DA said the program will also be

implemented in Lucban, Quezon and Zaragosa, Nueva Ecija to help raise the production and income levels of local farmers.

A project proposal for funding by the South Korean government to scale up the project to 10 pilot villages in the areas covered by the five national centers of the DA-BPI is also underway.

KOPIA is an official development assistance program of the Rural Development Administration which is South Korea's largest agricultural research and development organization.

Meanwhile, representatives from Head Sport Philippines and

the Philippine Rubber Research Institute met DA senior undersecretary Domingo Panganiban on Monday to discuss ways to improve the local rubber industry and help farmers boost their income.

Head Sport Philippines proposed the installation of a modern rubber processing plant that will source raw rubber from local farmers and improve the quality of local produce.

Head said it is set to relocate and expand its tennis ball production hub by moving operations from China to Panabo City, Davao del Norte by the second quarter of next year.



Compliance with cap high but stock concerns raised

BY JED MACAPAGAL

COMPLIANCE rate of retailers to the mandated rice price caps under Executive Order (EO) 39 is high at 95 percent, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Willie Ann Angsiy, DA spokesperson, told reporters in an interview in Quezon City yesterday the price caps continue to face resistance from retailers.

Angsiy said retailers have warned of the limited supply of regular milled and well milled rice, which are capped at P41 per kg and P45 per kg, respectively.

"We will continue to disseminate information to explain to retailers the importance of following the price cap. They will also be provided with financial assistance if they follow," Angsiy said.

To address supply concerns, Angsiy said the DA will link retailers to farmers and millers and will be given logistical support.

Rice retailers affected by the caps will be given P15,000 assistance by the Department of Social Welfare and Development while local government units will provide their own financial aid like waiver of rental payments in public markets.

The DA has not put any timeline on the price caps and said it could only be lifted once prices stabilize with the start of the harvest season of palay next month.

Based on monitoring by the DA on public markets in the National Capital Region as of Wednesday, the price of local well-milled rice ranged from P45 to P55 per kg; and regular milled at P40 to P52 per kg.

The price of imported well milled rice ranged from P45 to 55 per kg and regular milled, P41 to P45 per kg.

Imported rice ranged from P53 to P65 for special variety and P52 to P56 for premium.

For local rice, special variety was at P54 to P62 per kg and premium at P42 to P60 per kg.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Sugar production higher this year

SUGAR production is expected to increase by at least 50,000 metric tons (MT) in crop year 2023-2024 with additional hectares of land planted with sugarcane, according to the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA).

Raw sugar production in 2022-2023 was down 1.6 percent to 1.79 million MT from 1.82 million MT the previous crop year.

Pablo Azcona, SRA acting administrator, said at the Sustainable Agriculture Forum hosted by the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines in Makati City yesterday farmers were encouraged by the recent farm gate price

of sugar.

But Azcona also cautioned sugar production could fall 10 to 15 percent if the effects of El Niño will be extreme.

"We're coming from a good and stable price last year so we have seen an increase despite the loss of area in Batangas because of the closure of a sugar mill. We are facing a net increase of 3,000 hectares in area, we are expecting a 50,000 MT increase minimum, all depends on the forecasted El Niño severity which will come around November to January," Azcona said.

"If it's not so severe, we might

even see an increase as this is in time with the harvest season as the drier weather brings out more bags of sugar per ton of sugarcane," Azcona added.

The SRA said there are no plans to import more sugar.

SRA said out of the 440,000 MT allowed under Sugar Order (SO) 6, as much as 420,000 MT have arrived while for the 150,000 MT allowed for SO 7, only 30,000 MT have reached the Philippines.

"At this moment, which is the start of milling, we have very ample, two-month buffer stock that is

See SUGAR ► Page A2

SUGAR

surely there. Once we start milling, a month after, refineries will start running well, so we will have refined sugar supplies," Azcona said.

Based on Department of Agriculture's latest monitoring of

public markets in the National Capital Region as of Wednesday, prevailing retail price of sugar ranges from P84 to P110 per kg for refined sugar, P80 to P95 per kg for washed sugar and P77 to

P95 for brown sugar.

SRA millsite monitoring showed composite price of raw sugar as of July 2 before milling operations were terminated was at P3,000 per 50 kg bag. -Jed Macapagal



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Rice price ceiling 95% successful – DA

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said the rice price ceiling was 95 percent successful two days after it started on Tuesday. DA spokesperson and Legal Service Director Willie Ann Angsiy said on Thursday that the remaining percentage represents retailers who resist the price cap.

"Even if there are resisting retailers, we continuously disseminate information to explain to them the importance of following the price cap," Angsiy said.

Asked how long the price cap will last, she said there is no definite time frame set by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. "But he has made it clear that this is merely temporary and it's just a transitory measure," said Angsiy.

"So while we cannot provide the exact period of effectivity for this EO (executive order), we can only say that the goal (of the price cap) is to stabilize the prices . . . we cannot say if this will take a month," she added.

Angsiy said there is enough rice stocks, especially with the arrival of an estimated

2.92 million metric tons (MT) of palay or unmilled rice by the end of October.

"We are hoping that this could help stabilize the prices and this could also be a factor to lift this price ceiling," she said.

Under EO 39, the price cap for regular milled rice (RMR) is P41 per kilogram and P45 per kilogram for well-milled rice (WMR).

Based on the DA's price monitoring, prices of RMR in markets range between P40 and P52, while WMR was selling between P45 and P55 as of September 6.

The DA said it is already preparing the assistance for affected retailers such as market linkage and trucks for logistics.

Along with the Department of Trade and Industry, the DA is compiling a list of rice traders and retailers who will be affected by the implementation of the price ceilings.

The DA will also continue to inspect warehouses to check for hoarding and illegal rice imports.

JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL



Phl urged to rediscover coconut's export potential

By DANESSA RIVERA

The Philippines needs to rediscover the potential of coconut, its top agricultural export item, by creating new markets, developing more value-added products as the country pushes to raise nut production, according to the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines (UCAP).

The agency said there is a need to develop more avenues for coconut to realize its full potential.

UCAP vice chairman Marco Reyes said any part of the coconut—from the trunk to the fiber, from the shell to the water—can be used to develop high-value products.

"We need to rediscover our coconut. We cannot just be importers of crude oil," he said.

"With coconut, we are sitting on a very valuable resource. It is 100 percent local content...100 percent goes back to economy. We are having a multiplier effect in our economy," Reyes said.

To realize coconut's potential, the Philippines must tap on the trend of natural and sustainable consumption.

"We need to develop a market overseas. We need to capture the trend. There's a consumer trend that prefers natural and sustainable, and coconut answers both. Our coconut forests have been there for 500 to 600 years," UCAP chairman Dean Lao said.

As a confederation of associations involved in the various activities of the coconut industry, part of UCAP's initiatives is to develop markets specifically for export.

"There's a lot of coconut products that can generate a lot of interesting higher value consumer items. The private sector, the industry, we are the ones who develop markets, develop brands, go export and do a lot of this value adding as a national part of our business models," Lao said.

The Philippines is the top exporter of coconut in the world, despite the country being only the third biggest coconut producer, next to India and Indonesia.

Coconut is still the country's biggest agricultural export through coconut oil, generating about \$2 billion to \$3 billion

worth of annual revenues.

But apart from exports, the Philippines needs to boost the local use of coconuts to further support the livelihood of coconut farmers.

"We're experiencing the end of globalization age. Countries are starting to move inwards. What happens if our export markets drop all of a sudden? Where will we send our coconut oils? We need as soon as possible to find domestic use for our coconuts so that we can give our farmers fair value prices for their nuts," Reyes said.

According to the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), coconut supports over 60 consumer products.

"There are more than 60 products now derived from coconut. That's why it's a tree of life. It supports a lot of Filipinos that's why we have to reinvigorate the industry," PCA administrator Bernie Cruz said.

For this year, the agency expects coconut production to remain flat at 14 million metric tons (MT)—which has been the output in the past three years. Typically, a coconut trees have an average yield of 44 per tree, much lower compared with their hybrid counterparts which have yields of 80 to 100 nuts.

"Based on our studies we are lagging. The processors need between 18 billion to 20 billion MT, (so we are lagging) by five to six billion. We need to produce more coconut each year. The demand is increasing for the processors," Cruz said.

To address this problem, the PCA recently launched a massive coconut planting program with a target of 100 million trees in open areas in Mindanao and where indigenous peoples live.

"We are mandated by the president to help reinvigorate the industry by using new technologies and massive replanting. Our coconut trees are already aged just like our farmers. We have 3.16 million hectares of coconut planted. We are still number one in terms of being an exporter, but we are lagging number two. We have been overtaken by Indonesia already and about to be overtaken by India," Cruz said.



Korean agency helps put up agri villages

By DANESSA RIVERA

The Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Korea Partnership for Innovation of Agriculture (KOPIA) are eyeing to establish 10 pilot village projects aimed at raising vegetable output and farmers' income after successfully completing the first one in Laguna.

The DA, through the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), and the KOPIA formally opened its Pilot Village Project on Protective Cultivation and Postharvest Manage-

ment of Vegetables in Siniloan, Laguna on Sept. 5.

The project will benefit at least 100 farmers in Siniloan through the provision and promotion of greenhouses with drip irrigation systems, postharvest technologies, farm cultivators, and good agricultural practices.

The infrastructure development is a component of the Pilot Village Project funded by KOPIA and implemented by the BPI Los Baños National Crop Research, Development and

Production Support Center (LBNCRDPSC).

As the project proponent and implementor, the LBNCRDPSC spearheaded the capacity building of farmers and extension workers and promoted the concepts of *bayanihan* (Filipino concept of community cooperation) and *Saemul Undong* (Korean for self-help and community development).

Following the initial success of the ongoing project as a model farm for Filipino rural communities, the KOPIA and BPI have agreed to develop a project proposal for funding by the South Korean government to scale up the project to 10 pilot villages in the areas covered by the five

national centers of the BPI.

"KOPIA plays an important role as it works side by side with the local community. Its pilot villages are designed to improve the production through modern farming technology as well as knowledge transfer and cooperation on agricultural innovation and food security. Therefore, this success story in Siniloan can serve as a model for replication," Republic of Korea Ambassador to the Philippines Sang-hwa Lee said.

KOPIA is an innovative Official Development Assistance (ODA) program of the Rural Development Administration (RDA), which is Korea's largest agricultural research and development

organization.

After Siniloan, the pilot village project will also be implemented in Lucban, Quezon and Zaragosa, Nueva Ecija to help raise the production and income levels of Filipino farmers.

It also provided vegetable production technology packages and technical assistance to empower the farmers in the pilot villages.

These projects are expected to improve the technical proficiencies of extension workers and farmers in the partner communities, increase the volume of vegetable production by 200 percent in the pilot communities, and increase in the income of participating

farmers by 20 percent.

DA Senior Undersecretary Domingo Panganiban said the technologies promoted by BPI and KOPIA through the project "promise outcomes that are both technically useful and economically rewarding."

"By extension, what we learn from this endeavor establishes a mechanism whereby other local governments and farmer organizations can utilize the same technologies based on their terms. It is thus highly gratifying that so many – including national and local government executives and farmer leaders – are now ready to join with us in expanding these benefits nationwide," he said.

Date: 08 SEP 2023

Page: 125



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Tomato price hits as high as P300 per kilo

By **BELLA CARIASO**

The retail prices of tomatoes reached as high as P300 per kilo in Marikina City amid shortage in supply.

The current price of tomato in Marikina City is higher by P70 compared to its previous price of P230, according

to monitoring of the Department of Agriculture.

Meanwhile, the retail prices of tomatoes at New Las Piñas City Public Market ranged between P200 and P210 per kilo; Guadalupe Public Market in Makati City, between P180 and P200 per kilo; San

Turn to Page 5

Tomato From Page 1

Andres Market in Manila, between P200 and P220 per kilo; Quinta Market in Manila, between P180 and P200 per kilo; Pritil Market in Manila, between P180 and P220 per kilo; Pasay City Market, between P170 and P180 per kilo; Pasig City Mega Market, between P170 and P180 per kilo; Commonwealth Market in Quezon City, P180 per kilo; Muñoz Market in Quezon City, between P150 and P160 per kilo; Mega Q-mart in Quezon City, between, P180 to P200 per kilo, and Malabon Central Market, between P160 and P180 per kilo.

The wholesale price of the vegetable also remains high at P120 to P130 per kilo, Nueva Vizcaya Agricultural Terminal (NVAT) general manager Gilbert Cumila said in a radio interview.



Rice traders bemoan daily losses from price cap

By **BELLA CARIASO**

Rice retailers are losing P7,000 a day because of the implementation of Executive Order 39 putting price caps of P41 and P45 per kilo of the staple, a retailers group said on Thursday.

At a press conference, Philippine Rice Industry Stakeholders Movement co-founder and Grains Retailers Confederation of the Philippines (GRECON) national spokesperson Orly Manuntag said a retailer will lose at least P49,000 in just one week of the price ceiling.

"A retailer sells at least 20 bags of rice, so if they acquired the rice at P50 per kilo and they will sell at P45 per kilo, the difference is P5 per kilo. If you multiply P5 to 50 kilos, that is P250 per cavan and multiply it by 20 cavans, that is P5,000. You also need to consider the rent, labor and food, so the average is P7,000 in a day," Manuntag said.

EO 39, which puts a price cap on regular milled rice at P41 and well-milled rice at P45, took effect on Sept. 5.

"So for one week, that is P49,000. The P15,000 (assistance) is not enough. It is only good for two to three days," Manuntag said, referring to the one-time P15,000 assistance from the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

"We still don't know what we will do since we cannot afford to sell at P45 per kilo. Maybe we can ask our suppliers to

help us but if we cannot afford to sell, we will just sell premium rice," he added.

Hundreds of GRECON members held a special meeting at the National Food Authority office in Visayas Ave. Quezon City to discuss EO 39.

No consultation

The government failed to consult farmers and retailers before the implementation of EO 39, former agriculture secretary Leonardo Montemayor said.

"The problem is it lacks consultation. Based on my knowledge, different farmers organizations were not consulted. I am sure that the retailers groups were not also consulted, otherwise they will ask if the cheap rice is already available and if the assistance is also ready," Montemayor said, noting that it is only now that concerned government agencies prepare for the guidelines on the assistance for affected retailers.

At same time, he said farmers are already affected by EO 39, as the farmgate price of palay has dropped by 20 percent.

"Traders will say that they can afford to buy palay at P25, P28 per kilo as they need to sell the rice at P41 per kilo. As a result, the farmgate price of palay already went down by 20 percent," Montemayor said.

"Many retailers were complaining (of) suffering big losses as they bought

rice at a higher price. They cannot afford to sell at P41 and P45 per kilo. They will be forced to stop their business," he stated.

"Traders buy palay and milled to make it rice and will be stored in the warehouses before being supplied to retailers. If the hoarding and manipulation come from there, the government should focus on them but so far, nobody was charged," he added.

Report violators

Days after the implementation of the price ceiling on rice, the Davao City Police urged the public to report vendors who violate the mandated price caps.

"We urge our Dabawenyo brothers and sisters that if they have seen rice retailers that did not follow or oppose the order of our President by not following the price of P41 to P45 – we urge them to go to nearest police station so that we can put them into record and help our Department of Agriculture and Department of Trade and Industry to implement this for our fellow Dabawenyos who are really affected by the surging price of rice," it said.

"The PNP and other law enforcement agencies are mandated to assist DTI and the DA in ensuring that the order is implemented by the rice retailers."

– With Diana Lhyd Suelto, Marc Jayson Cayabyab

Date: 08 SEP 2023 Page: 6



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Presyo ng kamatis, umabot sa P300/kilo

Umabot na sa P300 sa kada kilo ang presyuhang kamatis sa palengke sa Marikina City dahil na rin umano sa kakulangan sa suplay nito.

Nabatid na ang P300 sa kada kilong bentahan sa kamatis sa lungsod Marikina City ay P70 mas mataas kumpara sa naging previous monitoring ng Department of Agriculture (DA) kung saan ang presyo ay umakyat sa P230 per kilo.

Base sa monitoring ng DA sa 13 pamilihan sa Metro Manila, ang retail price ng kamatis sa New Las Piñas City Public Market ay nasa P200-P210 per kilo; Guadalupe Public Market sa Makati City, ay nasa pagitan ng P180 at P200 per kilo; San Andres Market sa Manila, nasa P200-P220 per kilo; Quinta Market sa Maynila pa rin sa pagitan ng P180 hanggang P200 per kilo; Pritil Market sa Manila, P180-P220 per kilo; Pamilihang Lungsod ng Muntinlupa in Muntinlupa City; Pasay City Market sa Pasay City, between P170 hanggang P180 per kilo; Pasig City Mega Market sa Pasig City, P170-P180 per kilo; Commonwealth Market sa Quezon City, P180 per

kilo; Muñoz Market sa QC nasa P150-P160 per kilo; Mega Q-mart, P180 - P200 per kilo at Malabon Central Market P160 hanggang P180 per kilo.

Sa isang radio interview, sinabi naman ni Nueva Vizcaya Agricultural Terminal (NVAT) General Manager Gilbert Cumila na ang wholesale price ng mga gulay (kamatis) ay nananatiling mataas sa P120 to P130 per kilo dahil nga sa kakulangan ng supply.

"The price is really high as the wholesale price here in NVAT in Nueva Vizcaya ranged between P120 and P130 per kilo. There is really a shortage in the supply (of tomatoes) Luzon-wide," Cumila said.

Idinagdag pa nito na base sa monitoring sa Tanauan, Batangas, ang wholesale price ng kamatis ay pumalo na sa P130 hanggang P150 per kilo.

Maging ang wholesale prize ng lahat ng gulay sa NVAT ay nagtaasan din.

Bagamat araw-araw umanong naide-deliber sa NVAT ang mga gulay, hindi umano kinakaya ng supply ang demand dito. (Bella Cariaso)



Output of major PHL fruits rises in second quarter

THE production of major Philippine fruits like banana, calamansi, mango, and pineapple, rose during the second quarter, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

In its major fruit crops quarterly bulletin, the PSA said banana production rose 0.1% year on year to 2.27 million metric tons (MT) during the period.

Davao region accounted for 38.3% of banana production or 868.19 thousand MT, followed by Northern Mindanao with 19% or

431.86 thousand MT and Soccsargen (South Cotabato, Cotabato City, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, and General Santos City) with 12.3% or 279.2 thousand MT.

The Cavendish banana was the leading variety at 1.17 million MT, accounting for 51.5% of total banana production during the period.

Output of calamansi, a native citrus, rose 4% to 14.24 thousand MT during the quarter.

Zamboanga Peninsula was the top producer accounting for 21%

of total production at three thousand MT, followed by Mimaropa with 18.3% or 2.6 thousand MT and Central Luzon with 12.2% or 1.74 thousand MT.

Output of mango rose 11.4% year on year to 596.34 thousand MT.

Carabao mangoes accounted for 83% of the national total or 495.06 thousand MT.

In the second quarter, Ilocos Region was the top mango producer with 20.5% of total output or 122.30 thousand MT; while

Central and Western Visayas produced 89.76 thousand MT and 55.10 thousand MT, respectively.

Pineapple production rose 3.8% to 762.55 thousand MT during the quarter.

Northern Mindanao was the top producer of pineapple with 51.3% of the total or 391.16 thousand MT, while Soccsargen produced 189.29 thousand MT (24.8%) and Bicol Region 62.13 thousand MT (8.1%). — **Adrian H. Halili**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

MAJOR FRUIT CROPS OUTPUT HIGHER IN Q2

PRODUCTION of major fruits in the country posted an increase from April to June this year, data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed.

Favorable weather conditions helped increase the output of commodities such as mango, pineapple, calamansi and banana.

In its quarterly bulletin released on Wednesday, the PSA said that mango production logged the highest increase during the period by 11.4 percent to 596,337 metric tons (MT) from 525,426 MT last year.

The Ilocos Region (Region 1) was the largest producer of mango with 122,303 MT or 20.5 percent. Central Visayas (Region 7) followed with 89,762 MT and Western Visayas (Region 6) with a production output of 55,096 MT.

Calamansi production was estimated at 14,244 MT, an increase of 4.0 percent from the 13,693 MT recorded in the same period a year earlier.

The Zamboanga Peninsula (Region 9) was the top producer with 21.1-percent share to the total calamansi production or 3,001 MT.

Pineapple production also went up by 3.8 percent to 762,548 MT from 734,308 MT in the same period of 2022.

Northern Mindanao produced about half of the total output with 391,164 MT or 51.3-percent share this quarter.

Completing the top three producing regions were Soccsksargen (Region 12) and Bicol Region (Region 5) with 189,291 MT and 62,132 MT, respectively.

Banana production, while registering a minimal increase, still posted the highest volume of 2.268 million MT. This was slightly higher by 0.4 percent from 2.267 million MT produced a year earlier.

The top three producing regions were Davao Region (Region 11) with 868,189 MT; Northern Mindanao (Region 10) with 431,863 MT; and Soccsksargen with 279,203 MT.

Michael Ricafort, chief economist at Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., attributed the increase in production to favorable weather conditions earlier this year during the summer season.

"Also at the early part of the rainy season in June 2023 with some healthy amount of rainfall after the dry season that also helped boost agricultural production," he added.

Ricafort noted that some offsetting factors included storm damage in some parts of the country from the latter part of July 2023 up to early September 2023, which may cause reduced agricultural production on some vegetables and fruits.

"Other offsetting factors include higher input costs due to higher prices and inflation since 2022, such as fertilizers, pesticides, fuel, transportation, among others, that reduced the profit of farmers and producers," he said.

Ricafort also said that the upcoming risks of El Niño could also bring reduced rainfall in the last quarter of 2023 and, in turn, could reduce agricultural production.

JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL



Typhoons, monsoon losses approach P2 B

Rains, massive flooding and other incidents due to the southwest monsoon or *habagat* enhanced by three recent typhoons in the past two weeks have left nearly P2 billion in damage to agriculture and infrastructure.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said damage to agriculture has reached P992.4 million in Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Mimaropa, Western Visayas and the Cordillera Administrative Region.

Damage to infrastructure was placed at P905.6 million. The affected areas

are Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Western Visayas and the Cordilleras.

The southwest monsoon, enhanced by Typhoons Goring, Hanna and Ineng brought heavy rainfall in Luzon and the Visayas.

Even as the weather continues to improve, the NDRRMC said 722 families or 2,603 people are still taking shelter in 43 evacuation centers.

As of yesterday, two persons have been reported dead, three injured and two others missing.

Up to 7,813 houses were reported damaged.

— Michael Punongbayan

Date: 08 SEP 2023

Page: 6



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

CTALK CITO BELTRAN

'Cut back' or 'Magtiis'?

The writing on the wall is "Cut Back!"

For several months now, I have been reading up or following respected individuals in the field of personal finance, economics and faith, to feed my renewed interest in financial literacy, money management and income growth. If we consider ourselves to be "stewards" or caretakers of God's resources, then at the very least we should be equipped with the necessary knowledge and up to date information concerning global trends as well as concerns.



Every time the pump prices for diesel and gasoline shoot up, I get flashbacks of the Oil Crisis in the 70's when they rationed gasoline. What all that did to the Philippine economy was beyond my comprehension, but it certainly left us out of gas, economically speaking. When gas prices or inflation goes up, I instinctively invite economists, bankers or financial analysts to our show AGENDA on Cignal TV in order to get an idea of the potential economic impact these things will have on our daily lives.

To be brutal about it, the last three to four weeks have been nothing short of an economic hurricane and analysts have run out of "nice ways" of putting it. Even the formerly optimistic analysts have become blunt and disturbing in their assessments.

We've had at least two price increases for fuels in the last three weeks. The price of rice went up by as much as P10 per kilo and placing a price cap on it is no guarantee against future inflation. No one expected to see tomatoes hit over P200 a kilo, and to add to our long-term misery, we have been benched by three typhoons that directly and indirectly caused even more damage to agriculture and infrastructure – and all that will have a negative impact towards the end of the year. Even former president Rodrigo Duterte is speculating rice could even hit P90 a kilo.

As the saying goes, "It will be darkest before the light" and the writing on the wall as far as experts are concerned is "Cut Back." Cut back on your personal expenses, Cut Back on the optional lifestyle spending, Cut Back on speculative investments, some even say "Cut Back" on operations, production or anything that is not backed by actual demand or hard currency. As another saying goes: "Don't throw good money after bad."

Whether you are managing a household or a money manager in government, the natural tendency is to solve a shortage or a lack by finding more, earning more or borrowing more. That is why the term "side hustle" has become part of our daily language. Given the credit card debts of most individuals and families, borrowing ahead of earnings has become normal.

This mentality is also why the Philippine government owes something like P14 or P15 trillion. Because bankers are only too willing to loan money, and because those government officials borrowing the money don't have to pay the bill themselves; they just keep on borrowing until someone shuts them out.

"Cut Back" is considered politically incorrect by presidents and economists because today's measure of political success is measured first by the number of projects you built during your term, which in turn goes to the second measure of political success: Being re-elected. Saving money, reducing debt, balancing "the budget" are not considered real life political achievements. Besides, how are politicians supposed to earn back the billions of pesos invested in vote buying just to get into office?

If government and politicians refuse to "Cut Back," what about you? Let's apply the same conditions and solutions to your household or family. The head of the household is the sole income earner. Inflation has risen considerably but your salary has not and will not increase for a year or two. You have fixed expenditures for utilities, rent, food, taxes, transport cost as well as education, all of which rise every year.

American families have addressed the problem first via the two-income solution, while others went for the one and a half job or two jobs for one person solution. We have done similarly in the Philippines but to the shock of many, it does not result in transformational quality of life improvements.

What most experts are saying is that "adding jobs equals added income" does not work in most cases because you end up simply spending more. But unlike the Philippine government, your cute loving little family does not have the assets to sell, natural resources to bid out or financial guarantees to acquire huge loans.

Your only option is to do what the government and politicians refuse to do: Cut Back on the lifestyle expenses, create and follow a budget (not an unrealistic form of penance and denial), reduce credit card debt, automate savings and become creative in your spending habits.

You have heard and read all of these, time and time again, you've wanted to but short of financial disaster, there is little to motivate you to action. The sad part is Filipinos often get enough warnings and advance information, but we persist doing what we have always done since time immemorial. Then one day, we end up telling our children, spouse or ourselves, "Magtiis na lang tayo."

"Magtiis" in this modern world is such a big lie because it is often the excuse and the statement of surrender we all make for our failure to be proactive, pre-emptive and preventive when we still had the time and the choice. Telling your family, children, spouse, employees to "magtiis" is equal to making them take the punishment for your failure to act.

E-mail: utalk2ctalk@gmail.com



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Tariffs must help, not harm

COMMENTARY

ERNESTO M. ORDOÑEZ

Tariff is a double-edged sword. It can either help or harm. This must be kept in mind as the Tariff Commission (TC) undertakes the review and reform of our tariff structure.

Very often, the TC recommends changes upon the request of specific sectors. It is fitting that the TC is currently taking a holistic view of the entire structure. With a systems approach and its linkages, a strategic and rationalized approach can hopefully be implemented.

Today, some input tariffs are even higher than the product output. This prevents production, resulting in foregone jobs and foreign exchange. On a single product basis, some have had very high tariffs for too long a time. They protect "sacred cows" at the expense of consumers.

Because of these and other problems, a recent published proposal is that tariffs should be "uniform across the goods ... [for] a maximum [10 percent to 15 percent]."

United position

Last Sept. 26, the international trade committee of the public-private Philippine Council of Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF) discussed this and agreed with the overall direction of reducing tariffs, except for the uniform rates proposed.

Arsenio Tanchuling, president of Alyansa Agrikultura (AA), said: "Rushing with a formula without knowing the situation on the ground with its inadequate support services would be irresponsible and unfair. It is essential that this time, the farmers and fisherfolk should be meaningfully consulted."

Danilo Fausto, president of Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food, Inc. (PCAFI) said, "One size does not fit all. For the 42 agriculture subsectors in PCAFI, we must ensure that their situations are well-understood so that the tariff changes consider their needs."

Emil Javier, chair of the Coalition for Agriculture Modernization in the Philippines, added: "The TC is tasked to study each sector carefully, then recommend appropriate tariff changes based on its findings. We should let them do their job, but perhaps set deadlines before the year ends for products whose [tariffs] are too high."

On Jan. 21, 2002, I also wrote an opposition to a proposed Senate bill provision reducing tariffs with

no prior review by the TC: "An ideal tariff makes imports equal or less costly to a comparable local product to motivate improvement from our producers. This decreases with a specific timetable and support measures. Tariff determination is a complex process that requires solid research and stakeholder consultation."

Lessons learned

In the case of rice, we were required to follow an international 35-percent tariff commitment. This approach was far superior to the very dysfunctional quantitative restriction method.

However, according to the Philippine Rice Research Institute, the tariff that would allow our products to be on competitive levels with imported rice was at 70 percent. This means that, as a safeguard measure, tariff should be lower than 70 percent to motivate better performance, but higher than 35 percent to enable farmers to earn a decent living and encourage further production.

Safeguard measures submitted by AA and Federation of Free Farmers were, however, unanswered. In the end, retail prices decreased by only 2 percent while farmer incomes went down by 23 percent. Had the correct tariff been implemented, farmer incomes would

not have dipped that much and they would have benefited from the added tax revenues.

A similar thing happened in pork. The executive branch proposed to Congress that the 30-percent tariff for the minimum access volume of pork would be reduced to 5 percent. They were following the textbook linear solution of lower cost, higher supply, and lower prices.

Though this is generally correct, an AA research convinced the Senate to make the rate 15 percent, not 5 percent. The result was a savings of 10 percent, or about P3 billion that would have gone—unnecessarily—to importers.

We should not hastily implement a uniform tariff because this would only cause harm. The proposal should be interpreted as a long-term direction, complete with the necessary research, stakeholder consultation and support measures. If we are to go with the latter interpretation, tariffs would truly help agriculture stakeholders, consumers and the nation as a whole. *INO*

The author is Agriwatch chair, former secretary of presidential flagship programs and projects, and former undersecretary of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Trade and Industry. Contact is agriwatch_phil@yahoo.com



Presyo ng bigas sisipa sa ₱90 kada kilo

NAGBABALA si dating Pangulong Rodrigo "Digong" Duterte na posibleng umabot sa ₱90 ang bawat kilo ng bigas imbes na bumaba ito sa ₱20 kada kilo.

Ayon sa dating pangulo, masyadong mababa ang ₱20 kada kilo ng bigas at hindi ito reyalistiko kung ibabatay sa law of supply and demand.

"Dreaming ka diyan, masyadong mababa rin 'yan. By our standard, masyadong mababa 'yan. It's not a realistic value vis a vis sa law of supply and demand market," anang dating pangulo sa programang Gikan sa Masa sa SMNI.

Ang ₱20 kada kilo ng bigas ay campaign promise ni Pangulong Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. noong panahong

nangangampanya ito para sa pagkapresidente.

Sinabi ni Duterte na dahil sa patuloy na pagtaas ng inflation, hindi malayong aabot hangang ₱90 kada kilo ang bigas dahil sa inflation.

"In the fullness of God's time aabot talaga ito ng mga nubenta, walang bumaba, ang inflation will always go up as the years would come. Wala ng bumaba 'yan," dagdag ni Duterte.

"The supply is... naubusan na nga tayo ng rice producing countries eh. It's getting smaller sa market. Wala na masyadong land to till, pataas talaga nang pataas pati inflation," wika ni Duterte.

(Aileen Taliping)



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Corn, wheat slip

SINGAPORE- Chicago corn futures eased on Thursday, trading close to three-year lows as all-time high production in top exporter Brazil and supplies from an early US harvest weighed on the market.

Soybean and wheat prices also fell, giving back some gains made on Wednesday.

"Large immediate supply of corn is likely to weigh on the market," said Ole Houe, director of advisory services at Austral-

ian agricultural brokerage IKON Commodities.

"There excess supply of feed wheat in the market.

The most-active corn contract on the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) lost 0.1 percent at \$4.85-1/4 a bushel, not far from \$4.73-1/2 a bushel, the lowest since Dec. 2020, reached last month.

Prices have dropped nearly 30 percent so far this year. -
Reuters