

A. SEC. PBBM QUOTED

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

DA, DTI propose lifting of price ceiling on rice

MANILA BULLETIN

Bumper harvest to boost rice supply

Rice situation: an expert's view

THE MANILA TIMES

'Govt ready to lift rice price cap'

BUSINESS MIRROR

Despite better supply, price dips, EO 39 stays

PHL's durian export deal with China nets P500M

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Marcos admin gets lower approval on key issues – Pulse

For all the right reasons? Maybe

'Significant erosions'

BUSINESS WORLD

Cabinet advises Marcos to lift price cap on rice

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL

Rice abundant, prices decreasing

REMATE

Magsasaka't mangingisda prayoridad ni PBBM

ABANTE

PBBM inurot sa pagbaklas ng bigas price cap

ABANTE TONITE

Bigas bumaha, presyo bumaba

B. DA FAMILY

THE MANILA TIMES

Ombudsman finds cause to charge ex-SRA Chief

DA declares Pangasinan free of avian influenza

'Realigned funds to boost sea surveillance'

BUSINESS MIRROR

BFAR: Realigned CIF will boost fishing sites' tracking

Editorial: Bitter truth about calamansi juice

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

ASF hits 11 Isabela towns

Gov't ready to lift rice price caps

Ombudsman orders raps vs EX-SRA administrator

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

BFAR: Fund increase to boost monitoring of fishing grounds

Rice supply stable

BUSINESS WORLD

BFAR makes play for confidential funds, cites need to upgrade fishery...

REMATE

Dating SRA chief kinasuhan sa natenggang traktora

C. AGRI-RELATED STORY

MANILA BULLETIN

10 US agritech firms seek PH partners

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL

1st PH Durian Summit to bring experts on good agri products

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON

Editorial: Pangalanan ang rice smugglers

D. FOREIGN STORY

BUSINESS MIRROR

Malaysians urged not to panic-buy local rice after import prices rise...

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

Malaysia PM threatens action vs rice hoarders

Wheat, soybeans slip

NEWS

Lifting of price cap on rice proposed

The Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Trade and Industry have recommended to President Marcos, the concurrent agriculture secretary, the lifting of the price ceiling on rice that was imposed last month. DA officials cited favorable indicators, such as the decreasing rice prices in the domestic market, increasing supply and the drop in global prices of the staple.

—STORY BY NESTOR CORRALES AND JEROME ANING



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

DA, DTI propose lifting of price ceiling on rice

By Nestor Corrales
and Jerome Aning
@Team_Inquirer

The lifting of the price ceiling on rice, which was imposed last month, is now in the hands of President Marcos, an official of the Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Tuesday.

Gerald Glenn Panganiban, director of the Bureau of Plant Industry, said the DA and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) have recommended to the President, the concurrent agriculture secretary, the lifting of the price cap, citing favorable indicators that include the drop in global prices of rice.

Sectoral meet

He said the recommendation was made during a sectoral meeting with Mr. Marcos in Malacañang on Tuesday.

"That's why we met [on Tuesday]—the DA and the DTI—so we can recommend and the President will be the one who will be deciding on it," Panganiban said at a Palace briefing.

DA officials, in their presentation during the meeting, identified indicators on lifting the price cap, such as the

decreasing rice prices in the domestic market, increasing supply of rice and the drop in global prices, among others, according to Presidential Communications Secretary Cheloy Velicaria Garafil.

Panganiban, citing their evaluation, said the parameters had all been met.

"It looks like we are ready," he added.

Panganiban earlier pointed out that the price cap on rice would only be temporary.

On Aug. 31, Mr. Marcos issued Executive Order No. 39, imposing price ceilings on rice in the country following the "alarming" increase in its retail prices in local markets.

The mandated price ceiling for regular milled rice is P41 per kilo while the mandated price cap for well-milled rice is P45 per kilo.

No new DA chief yet

According to Garafil, government records show that the supply of rice in the market is enough for 52 days by the end of September.

By the end of October and with the harvest in full swing, the supply would be equivalent to 74 days, she added.

Panganiban, also on Tuesday, said he could not confirm reports on whether the President would appoint a new agriculture secretary amid the clamor of some sectors.

"I can't confirm [that] to you. Hopefully not, because our President, I think, is doing a great job [at] the helm of the department," Panganiban said, citing the export of three new agricultural products (durian, mangoes and avocado) as one of the major achievements of the department under Mr. Marcos' leadership.

Survey

When asked if he thought the President's lower performance ratings in the September survey of the polling firm Pulse Asia had something to do with the steady increase in the prices of rice, Panganiban said: "What can I say [is that] the President is really committed to serving all. I think he is the President for all—not only for the farmers, but also for the consumers."

The survey was conducted from Sept. 10 to Sept. 14. The price cap on rice that the President approved was implemented starting Sept. 6. **INQ**



Bumper harvest to boost rice supply

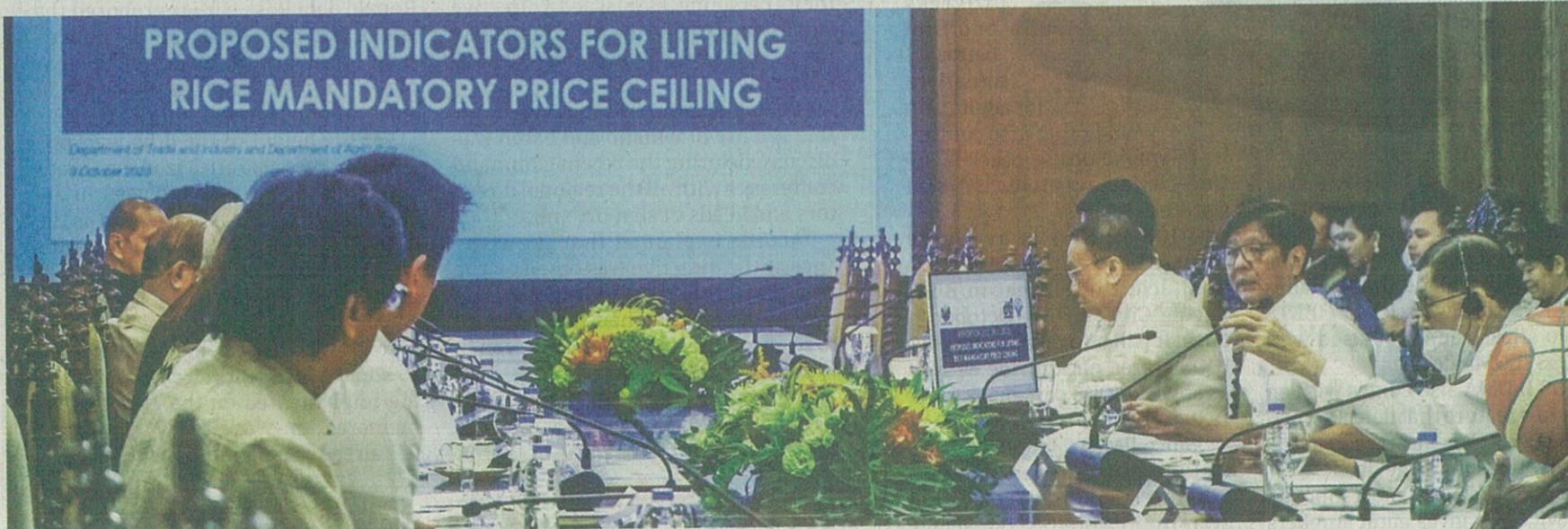
PH expected
to produce
1.9 MMT
this October

By JEL SANTOS

The Philippines is expected to produce 1.9 million metric tons (MMT) of rice this October, which will increase the country's supply of the primary staple, an official of the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), an agency under the Department of Agriculture (DA), said.

In a briefing in Malacañan on Tuesday, Oct. 3, BPI Director Gerald Glenn Panganiban assured the public that the country has ample supply of the staple food as the rice harvest season has already begun.

"For October, we are expecting almost 1.9 million metric tons of rice so that will jump our days to last or our supply of rice to 74 days," he said. "It increased from 52 [days] last September because we are expecting more bumper harvest for the coming October and November, the public can expect that we ► 4



DEALING WITH RICE PRICE CAP — President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. (second from right) presides over a meeting with officials of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and other agricultural and economic agencies on Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2023, at Malacañan Palace. (Photo from PPA)

Date: OCT. 04, 2023 Page: 124



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Bumper harvest to boost rice supply 1

will have a stable supply of our main staple."

The BPI director said they have monitored a decrease in the prices of rice in the market. Just few days ago, Agriculture Senior Undersecretary Domingo F. Panganiban said they have observed a ₱5 per kilo decrease in the price of rice.

Price cap lifting looms

Meanwhile, Panganiban said the government's ₱41 to ₱45 rice price cap has yet to be lifted as the decision is up to President Marcos, who concurrently heads the agriculture department.

"From our parameters naman ay mukhang ready na (From our parameters, it looks ready). But of course, it's all upon the President to decide on it," he said.

Panganiban, in the same briefing, said there are now "positive indicators" for the possible lifting of the rice price ceiling. He said they were now just awaiting the chief executive's decision on the rice price cap.

"The indicators point that there are decreasing prices observed in market from our implementation starting last month until today; and then we are expecting an increased supply of our local harvest coming this last quarter – for October, November and then the rest of the

year," he explained. "And the favorable factors externally has been reported, a drop in the export prices of rice in the global market has also been reported."

While the bureau has already recommended the lifting of the rice price cap, which took effect in early September and was supposed to be lifted by the end of the month, Panganiban maintained that the next move would still be up to the President, and that he wouldn't want to preempt his decision.

Monitoring continues

While waiting for Marcos' directive, both the DA and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) will be monitoring and surveying prices "so that it will not... again, increase drastically."

"So, that's what we are doing and we are working with all agencies of the government—not only the DA but also the DTI and DILG (Department of the Interior and Local Government) to implement whatever measures and guidelines we can do so that the consumers and of course our stakeholders/the farmers who also benefitted," he said.

Aside from being the harvest season, he said there was also an increase in production "because of the interventions that our President mandated to our agency."



Rice situation: an expert's view

According to a respected agricultural economist from Harvard, the good news is: "The world rice market has, so far, survived these severe shocks with heartening resilience and little panic. The major exception, the decision by **President Marcos** in the Philippines to place a mandatory and highly restrictive price ceiling on rice throughout the country...

"If the price ceiling is administered flexibly and with regional nuance, it will not threaten the credibility of the government or cause severe disruption to the Philippine rice economy. If the edict stands as issued, it will still be

DEMAND AND SUPPLY



BOO CHANCO

unenforceable. Either way, this is a remarkable opportunity to 'learn from experience.'"

C. Peter Timmer, an agricultural economist and a professor emeritus at Harvard University, shares the view of the USDA that Indonesia and the Philippines will come through the global rice shortages in good shape.

In a recent article at the Asian Journal of Agriculture and Development, the professor analyzed our recent moves and why the President probably erred in his handling of the rice issue, particularly the rice price cap.

"If consumers and traders have well-founded expectations that the price of rice is going to increase sharply, hoarding is rational economic behavior. In order to prevent hoarding by all participants in the rice marketing system, and the sharp spike in rice prices that it causes, governments must manage, that is stabilize, those expectations.

"Such management requires careful planning, especially about the level of public rice reserve stocks, and clear communications to all interested participants in the rice economy."

We did exactly the opposite. ADA used fanned the flames of panic by announcing we hardly have any buffer stocks in the NFA warehouses. That was the signal for traders to

hoard and for prices to rise, specially in the public markets. The better response came from Usec Leo Sebastian, who pointed out the harvest season in the next few weeks which they expect to produce enough for the coming months.

The professor rightly highlighted the importance of "current credibility".

"A government caught deceiving the public about the reality of rice supplies, and its ability to ensure those supplies are delivered to urban markets, faces an extremely difficult path to recovering public trust..."

Of course, there is no escaping the realities of the rice market today.

"Rice is a scarcer and more valuable commodity than before El Niño returned and Russia escalated its attacks on Ukraine's wheat and corn exports. Accordingly, rice prices are likely to go higher over the next six to 12 months."

"How much higher? Perhaps another \$100/mt for Thai or Viet 25 percent broken is likely. The big question is whether the price rise will be gradual, giving consumers time to adjust without panic, or whether there will be a rapid spike to \$1,000/mt or higher. The fact that there has been little panic in local markets since the Indian announcement in late July gives hope that the increase in rice prices will be gradual and contained."

This is why reducing the tariff on imported rice was critical to making sure we are able to continue importing enough higher priced rice to increase our buffer stock. The tariff reduction should help cover the higher price of rice imported from Vietnam and Thailand. Without it, our traders have been cancelling their orders from Vietnamese suppliers. The President apparently didn't understand this.

The upward price trajectory is a given. But the professor thinks the concern should be over the impact of higher rice prices on food security of the poor, not aggregate inflation.

"The great paradox of food security is that only governments can ensure it, but markets must 'do the heavy lifting'. Learning to manage this symbiotic relationship, on both sides, has been difficult for most countries. East Asia has leaders and laggards in this historical process.

"Much of the agricultural economics profession's understanding of the negative effects stemming from chaotic and badly administered interventions into private rice marketing activities was documented early in the Philippines. The country has been badly conflicted for

decades on how to manage this critical public-private interface."

The professor is hopeful things won't get worse because in India "contracts already being fulfilled in terms of physical loadings are being honored. As chair of the G20 this year, India seems to be trying to balance its domestic needs with maintenance of its reliability as a rice exporter (farmers' will matter in the election)."

What happens next? Here is how the professor sees it.

"Going forward, three countries need to be watched quite closely. First, will Indonesia receive the full one million tons of rice it contracted from India? If it does, which now seems likely, that will calm the whole world rice market (and India knows this).

"Second, is the Philippines in good shape in terms of stocks? The experienced economic technocrats in the Cabinet seem to have planned ahead for this contingency, and the price ceiling announced by the President caught them by surprise. The Philippines might yet be a wild card in a scramble for additional rice imports.

"Third, will Vietnam continue to export normally? So far, the country has remained an active exporter, but there is always the danger of a domestic hoarding run that will force the government to restrict exports. Managing price expectations in Vietnam is now critical."

The President is set to appoint an agriculture secretary whose background is in the fisheries business. But maybe, because he is a prominent Chinoy businessman, he has enough connections and persuasive powers to make the Divisoria rice traders manage their greed.

The professor doesn't see serious rice shortages, but there will be somewhat higher prices. He cites the August release of World Agriculture Supply and Demand Estimates, WASDE showing world rice production for the 2023/24 marketing year is forecast to be 8.1 million tons larger than in 2022/23.

"World use is forecast down one million tons to 523 million, as fewer imports by many countries in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa reduce consumption (USDA 2023)."

Without panic, we should be okay. Our leaders should learn from the past, as former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo said in a speech in Indonesia. We are our own worst enemy.

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



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

'Govt ready to lift rice price cap'

BY CATHERINE S. VALENTE

THE government is ready to lift the price ceiling on rice, an official of the Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Tuesday, citing a decrease in the prices of the staple in the market and the expected increase in supply during the harvest this month.

This came after the DA and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) recommended lifting the mandatory rice price ceiling during a sectoral meeting with **President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.** in Malacañang on Tuesday morning.

At a Palace press briefing, DA-Bureau of Plant Industry Director Gerald Glenn Panganiban said there were several indicators for lifting the price cap, including

the decreasing rice prices in local markets during the implementation of the price ceiling in the country.

"That's the indication. From our parameter naman, mukhang ready na (it seems we are ready). But of course, it's all upon the President to decide on it," Panganiban told reporters.

"We mentioned that the price cap is just

➤ **RiceA2**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

■ RICE FROM A1

'Govt ready to lift rice

temporary. It was done to really arrest the increasing prices that time that it defied the logic we have the supply," he said.

Panganiban noted "favorable" external factors that have been reported in the export prices of rice in the global market.

"Since we already have those indicators ready, I cannot say the duration, but the indications point to that. We will just keep you updated as soon as there will be a decision," he said.

Marcos, who currently serves as the country's Agriculture chief, signed Executive Order (EO) 39 on September 5, setting price caps on regular and well-milled rice in the whole country.

Under the EO, the mandated price cap for regular milled rice is P41 per kilogram, while the mandated price ceiling for well-milled rice is P45.00 per kilogram.

Panganiban said around "80 to 90 percent" of rice retailers have complied with the implementation of the mandated price ceilings.

He also said the government is expecting almost 1.9 million metric tons of rice for October, which will last up to 74 days.

"The public can expect that we will have a stable supply of our main staple," the DA official said.

Records would show that the

supply of rice in the market is equivalent to 52 days by end of September. By end of October, with the harvest in full swing, the supply will be equivalent to 74 days.

When asked if there were other conditions the government needed to achieve before Marcos could lift the mandatory price ceilings on rice, Panganiban said, "There are other indicators that may be considered. So, let us just wait for this decision."

He added that the DA is also open to the alternative measures the economic managers would propose and that the department was focused on increasing the rice supply to stabilize the prices of the staple.

"So that's about it, and we are expected that the DA and the DTI to have collaborations in order to further monitor and survey the prices so that [they] will not again increase drastically," he said.

"So, that's what we are doing, and we are working with all agencies of the government — not only the DA but also the DTI and DILG (Department of the Interior and Local Government) to implement whatever measures and guidelines we can do so that the consumers and, of course, our stakeholders, the farmers, who also benefited [from this]," he added.



Date: 09. 04. 2023 Page: A1 & A2

DESPITE BETTER SUPPLY, PRICE DIPS, EO 39 STAYS

BY SAMUEL P. MEDENILLA

@sam_medenilla

DESPITE sufficient local supply and declining international export price of rice, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has decided to retain—for now—Executive Order (EO) No. 39, which imposed a price cap for the food staple.

The chief executive made the decision even after the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) had reported to him “favorable conditions” which will justify lifting of the price cap.

Officials from both agencies reported that local rice production this month is expected to reach 1.9 million metric tons (MMT), which will bring the country's total rice supply to 4.22 MMT.

“That will jump our days to the last of our supply of rice to 74 days...because we are expecting a

bumper harvest in October and November. The public can expect a stable supply of our main staple,” DA-Bureau of Plant Industry Director Gerald Glenn F. Pangani-ban said during a press briefing on Tuesday.

Last month, the total rice supply reached 3.28 MMT, sufficient only for 52 days.

Additional interventions

PANGANIBAN said they also monitored a lower local market price as well as an easing in the export price for rice in the international market.

“That is why we met with DTI as well as the sector council so we can recommend [the possible lifting of the EO]. The President

will be the one deciding on it,” the BPI official said.

Neda also backed the lifting, but it proposed other measures to cushion the impact of “uncapped” rice prices for rice traders, farmers and consumers.

Among its proposed measures are logistics support for rice traders, financial aid for Filipino farmers, and unconditional rice price subsidies for the poor.

Other indicators

ASKED why Marcos has yet to lift EO 39 even after their data

SEE “EO,” A2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

EO...

CONTINUED FROM A1

presentation, Panganiban said they will still be doing additional staff work to further verify the data they presented to the President.

Panganiban said the President may also be considering "other indicators" before he acts on their proposal for the lifting.

EO 39 imposed a P41 per kilogram (kg) price cap for regular milled rice (RMR) and P45 per kg for well-milled rice (WMR) nationwide.

Marcos issued EO 39 in response to the unusual surge in the price of rice last month despite the country's sufficient supply of the food staple. He attributed it to the price manipulation by hoarders and smugglers.

Stable price

BPI reported that compliance rates of retailers on the price cap range from 80 to 90 percent, which helped stabilize the price for RMR and WMR nationwide.

The remaining 10 to 20 percent of the retailers were unable to comply with EO 39 since they were not selling RMR and WMR, according to Panganiban.

But even without the price cap, Panganiban said they are confident existing "market forces" due to sufficient supply will help regulate the price of rice.

He said DA and DTI are also currently working on a mechanism to prevent overpricing and hoarding of rice.

"We are just finalizing and, of course, the enforcement [against smuggling and hoarding] will also be intensified," Panganiban said.



PHL's durian export deal with China nets P500M

By SAMUEL P. MEDENILLA

[@sam_medenilla](#)

THE Philippines had already earned almost P500 million from the export of fresh durian to China since early this year, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

"For durian, we already earned

half a billion [pesos], for this export deal with Beijing.

endeavor. This is only for one market," DA-Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) Director Gerald

Glenn F. Panganiban disclosed at a news briefing in Malacañang on Tuesday.

The country started exporting durian to China last April as part of the country's \$2-billion fruit

export deal with Beijing. Local durian growers are expected to earn \$260 million or P14.3 billion from the said deal. Panganiban said the country is expected to earn additional revenues from the export of high-value crops from the new deals, which were signed by administration of President

and concurrent DA Secretary Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

Among the said new deals were for the resumption of export of fresh mangoes to Australia last month.

The country temporarily stopped shipping mangoes to Australia in 2013.

Another new fruit-related deal,

Panganiban said, was for the export of fresh avocado to South Korea, which started last Saturday.

"That was negotiated for 14 years, and it took really, the President, the push of the President, of course, the efforts of our department," the BPI head said.

Panganiban added they are targeting to develop new markets

for the country's other high-value crops such as bananas, pineapples, and coconuts.

"Hopefully, this budget season, we will get additional [funding] for our programs for high-value crops so we can support [their export] once new markets open overseas," Panganiban said partly in Filipino.



Marcos admin gets lower approval on key issues – Pulse

By JANVIC MATEO

Fewer Filipinos approved of the Marcos administration's performance in key national issues, with a majority disapproving of its performance in controlling inflation, a recent Pulse Asia survey showed.

Results of the Sept. 10 to 14 survey released on Tuesday, Oct. 3, found that only 16 percent of the respondents approved of the government's efforts to address the rising cost of basic commodities.

It went down from 31 percent in a similar survey conducted in June.

In contrast, those who disapproved of the government's performance in managing inflation increased from 37 percent to 56 percent.

The Marcos administration also obtained an approval rating of less than majority in five other issues.

These include reducing poverty at 29 percent (from 43 percent), increasing the pay of workers at 41 percent (from 52 percent), creating more jobs at 43 percent (from 53 percent) and fighting graft and corruption at 45 percent (from 44 percent).

Disapproval on these issues also increased, with poverty reduction at 31 percent (from 23 percent), increasing workers' pay at 24 percent (from 21 percent), fighting graft and

corruption at 23 percent (from 17 percent) and creating more jobs at 23 percent (from 17 percent).

Some 46 percent approved and 16 percent disapproved of the Marcos administration's performance in terms of addressing involuntary hunger, an issue not included in the June survey.

The national government also obtained lower approval ratings, although still a majority, in eight other issues.

Approval was still the highest in terms of protecting overseas Filipino workers at 74 percent (from 76 percent), followed by responding to the needs of areas affected by calamities at 72 percent (from 73 percent) and promoting peace in the country at 63 percent (from 67 percent).

These were followed by defending the integrity of Philippine territory at 59 percent (from 63 percent), fighting criminality at 57 percent (from 54 percent), equal enforcement of the law at 55 percent (from 56 percent), providing assistance to farmers at 55 percent (from 59 percent) and stopping the destruction of the environment at 54 percent (from 61 percent).

Disapproval of the government's performance on the said issues ranged from three percent to 12 per-

cent. The rest were undecided.

Inflation most urgent

The survey also asked respondents about three issues they believe the national government should urgently address.

Controlling inflation topped the list at 74 percent, with almost half – 48 percent – ranking it first among the issues.

Across areas, it topped the list of issues that the respondents want the government to immediately address.

It was highest among those in the Visayas at 80 percent, closely followed by those in Mindanao at 79 percent, Balance Luzon at 72 percent and Metro Manila at 66 percent.

Compared to similar surveys conducted during the second Marcos administration, the September survey showed more respondents identifying inflation as among the most urgent national concerns.

It was 63 percent in March and June 2023, 59 percent in November 2022 and 66 percent in September 2022.

Following inflation in the latest survey were increasing the pay of workers at 49 percent, creating more jobs at 27 percent, reducing poverty at 25 percent, fighting graft and corruption at 22 percent, fighting

criminality at 18 percent, addressing involuntary hunger at 14 percent, providing assistance to farmers at 13 percent and equal enforcement of the law at 11 percent.

Obtaining less than 10 percent were proving support to small entrepreneurs at nine percent, promoting peace at nine percent, stopping the destruction of the environment at eight percent, defending Philippine territory at seven percent, reducing taxes at seven percent, protecting OFWs at four percent and preparing to face any kind of terrorism at three percent.

The total exceeded 100 percent because the respondents were allowed to select up to three issues.

The survey had 1,200 adult respondents and a margin of error of plus/minus 2.8 percent.

Meanwhile, according to an official of the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), President Marcos must continue to head the Department of Agriculture (DA), citing major improvement in the sector under his helm.

At a press briefing at Malacañang on Tuesday, BPI director Gerald Glenn Panganiban noted the Philippines was able to export three major commodities early this year.

He said Marcos is also hands on

in addressing problems facing the sector, a major source of employment in the country.

"He (Marcos) is really addressing the problems confronting the DA. I think that's his difference from the predecessors," Panganiban said.

"And him being at the helm, he was able to integrate all efforts," Panganiban said. "With the President there, and with the support we're receiving from the DA, I think he is doing a great job."

Malacañang was mum on a *Bilyonaryo.com* report that Marcos is eyeing fishing tycoon Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. – who, according to the website, was one of Marcos' top donors in the 2022 elections – as the next DA chief.

Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin earlier said he believes Marcos was "on the way" to making a decision with regard to choosing the new agriculture secretary.

In an interview in June, Marcos said he would stay as agriculture secretary until efficient systems are in place to ensure food security and better living conditions for the country's farmers.

Several senators and other sectors have urged Marcos to appoint a full-time head of the DA.

– With Helen Flores

Date: OCT. 04, 2013 Page: 4



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

CTALK CITO BELTRAN

For all the right reasons? Maybe

October might just turn out to be an auspicious month for the agriculture industry. To begin with, October is the month when the industry's trade show AGRILINK is held annually, and it happens this weekend starting Thursday, Oct. 5 up to Saturday, Oct. 7.



Aside from the trade show, rumors and speculative news reports have started to circulate that PBBM has trimmed down his choice for a permanent secretary of agriculture. More recent reports claim that the frontrunner is a Filipino-Chinese businessman whose family is an industry leader in deep-sea fishing and was a serious campaign contributor to PBBM's presidency.

Unfortunately, Malacañang has the historical bad habit of not informing the public of potential candidates for Cabinet positions, so everything is always "Maritess alerts" or gossip. In the US and other countries, the practice is to float the name, send the candidate out to talk to potential constituents or appear in media programs in order to gauge his or her abilities as well as acceptability to stakeholders.

Whoever gets appointed and is insane enough to accept the DA leadership will be going to hell and back. Mountains we can climb, but Philippine agriculture has become a hell hole with many demons who won't be willing to let go of their foothold on agricultural smuggling, hoarding, price manipulations, etc. That does not even include the systemic corruption and broken culture in the various agencies of the department.

Someone asked what I thought of the possible candidates for the DA. My answer is what I used as today's column title. If the future DA secretary is doing it for all the right reasons, maybe! The WHY, as they say, determines the how and the outcomes. If the candidate thinks he can solve the problems of Philippine agriculture, he is doomed. The man who has all the answers or believes in his inherent skills in the private sector finds out soon enough that government and vested interests are as unwieldy as a dozen venomous snakes.

The candidate should get the President's unequivocal support and trust put in writing, cast in stone and share it on the "cloud" because without that level of trust and support, the President's friends, relatives and political allies will surely walk all over the next DA secretary, regardless of how rich and connected he is.

The next step would be to duplicate the management strategy that Ramon Ang did when he "fixed" the problems of Philippine Airlines when PAL was under San Miguel Corporation. RSA did not make bold statements or embark on cash heavy or depen-

dent programs. He had studied the business for many years, had an established network of people in the industry to provide him accurate information. He worked with a small team and addressed the heart issues first. He picked his battles and adjusted as he went along. More importantly, he was on the ground, on the floor, present!

Unfortunately, the frontrunner or future secretary with a K may not have the same interest in agriculture as RSA has in aviation, so it would be too late to cram. Therefore the anointed DA secretary should avoid being a "TH" or trying hard or thinking that the answer to agricultural woes can only be found in the industry and so-called experts.

Many businessmen and corporations that earned billions of pesos in profit did not start out as experts. They simply saw a need, saw potential, saw untapped assets and put together teams, hired specialists and gave them goals and bottom lines. The key word is TAP into the resource, set bottom lines and kick out the "naysayers."

As a businessman, the frontrunner would know the importance of conducting market studies, customer consultation and engagement. With so many vested interests and groups on your case, the best strategy is to ask them their WHAT/WHY and require a doable how **with their buy in**. This seemingly simple approach has been tested by many business leaders as well as management gurus. The best use of a critic or complainer is to reposition him/her as the solutions provider or problem solver.

Whoever becomes DA secretary must choose his battles and know how to determine what is important over what is urgent, over what can be pushed back or delegated. Don't try to solve as many problems as possible as soon as possible. Many have tried, just as many failed. One significant win at a time, a malingering problem solved, an obstacle overcome, a cooperation fostered and make an example of a few corrupt DA officials.

Play it just like American football, yard by yard, get the ball down until it's a touchdown. In fishing, not even the fish finder guarantees the size of the catch. You take what you get.

The incoming DA secretary can also challenge or require agencies and offices of the DA to "stand and deliver" and establish themselves as "centers of excellence" in their area of specialization or expertise. Require these offices to set up and demonstrate and share their concepts and technology at the applied level and on the ground in barangays, towns or provinces. The DA and agencies have no shortage of tried and tested concepts, solutions, even programs that should have worked, could have worked, but ended up being passed on to private companies who raked in the profits.

As a management consultant, I always tell bosses to make sure you have a fixed schedule or set times in the week to get your head out of the sand or listen to the many chorus groups in agriculture singing the same songs. Step outside the zone and check with people who don't need anything or want anything from you except for the industry to get better.

Last but not the least...Pray! You're going to need it.

* * *

E-mail: utalk2ctalk@gmail.com





SKETCHES

ANA MARIE PAMI NTUAN

'Significant erosions'

Uh-oh, that's not a slip, that's a plunge.

Into their second year, Bongbong Marcos and Sara Duterte are seeing their approval and trust ratings plummeting by double digits from June to September, across all regions and classes.



This is according to a survey conducted from Sept. 10 to 14 by reputable pollster Pulse Asia, which described the latest ratings as "significant erosions."

Marcos' approval rating fell from 80 to 65 percent; Duterte's from 84 to 73. BBM saw the biggest fall among the poorest, Class E, by a hefty 29 points from 82 to 53 percent, followed by the affluent Classes ABC, by 22 points, and Class D by 12 points.

Duterte, meanwhile, saw the biggest drop of 18 points among Class ABC, from 72 to 52 percent, followed by Class D at 11 percent and Class E, at eight percent.

Public trust was also down by 14 points for Marcos, at 71 percent, and by 12 points for Duterte, at 75 percent. The biggest drop for BBM was in both Class E and Class ABC, at a hefty 21 points. Duterte saw a smaller though still double-digit fall of 11 to 13 percent across all socioeconomic classes.

Both the President and VP saw the biggest fall in trust ratings in Luzon, at 20 and 18 points, respectively.

Leaders of the super majority in Congress – Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri and Speaker Martin Romualdez – also saw their approval and trust ratings falling during the period.

It must be emphasized that the ratings of BBM and Duterte remain comfortably high for the second year of their term, with the VP continuing to enjoy higher numbers than the President.

They still enjoy majority approval and trust ratings. Also, the downtrend is not unusual; there's typically no other way to go but down for survey ratings of presidents in this country.

And yet a double-digit drop in both approval and trust within just three months cannot be easily brushed aside. Surely even the Marcos and Duterte camps are trying to pinpoint the possible reasons for the public dissatisfaction.

The usual practice is to identify the raging issues during the period when a survey is taken. Because BBM and Inday Sara suffered significant drops, speculation revolves around the issues that might have negatively affected them.

In this case, the controversial issues in September were the spike in rice prices, with price caps on two varieties as the band-aid solution, and the juggling of confidential funds from the Office of the President to the OVP.

BBM is particularly vulnerable to rice issues. Not only because he is the concurrent secretary of agriculture, but because his impressive approval rating upon assuming office was partly anchored on his campaign promise (dialed down to an "aspiration") of rice at P20 a kilo. This OPM (oh promise me) remains fresh in people's minds.

Today, even the palay farmgate price is at P22 (farmers want P23), making P20 a kilo at retail look like a hallucination.

Sugar prices, meanwhile, refuse to come down from the stratosphere. It doesn't help that industry players (and even certain members of the .001 percent) are pointing to persons close to BBM as the ones reaping billions in unconscionable windfall at consumers' expense.

Another event in September was BBM's sneaking off (again! – with only a last-minute notice to Palace reporters, who might have bothered him by tagging along, and to his bosses the taxpayers) that he was off to Singapore for the Formula One Grand Prix. Why the initial secrecy about the trip? Forthrightness has never been a strong suit of Marcos Junior.

The five-day birthday junket, with his usual coterie, was justified through his attendance at the Milken Institute's Asia Summit. Really, officials can always find a speaking engagement abroad to justify jet-setting at taxpayers' expense.

As for Class E, the rice price caps merely prompted dealers to reclassify all their rice varieties as special or premium, priced from P50 to P60 a kilo, so they wouldn't have to sell at a loss.

That P15,000 subsidy, to be distributed to sari-sari store owners (like other forms of *ayuda*) even during the campaign period for the barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections, will barely cover the losses of small retailers who complied with the price caps.

Yesterday, a Department of Agriculture official said the government is set to lift the price caps, so retail prices will soon reflect normal market forces.

Meanwhile, minimum jeepney fares are provisionally going up by P1. All economic analysts see inflation rising further in this fourth quarter.

A related survey conducted by Pulse Asia during the same period showed an 11-point jump to 74 percent in the number of people dissatisfied with the administration's performance in addressing what remains as the most urgent public concern, inflation.

Blaming Vladimir Putin and other external forces won't wash, when people are aware that hefty fuel excise taxes are also a major factor in high domestic pump prices.

Survey ratings can of course change, but the administration will have to implement something more convincing than price caps to arrest the erosion of its ratings in managing inflation. Public dissatisfaction in this area has been consistent in all surveys taken since the start of Marcos 2.0.

★



Cabinet advises Marcos to lift price cap on rice

By Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza
Reporter

AGRICULTURE and Trade officials have recommended the lifting of the price cap on rice as prices have dropped and local supply has improved, according to Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) Director Gerald Glenn F. Panganiban.

"Indicators point that there are decreasing prices of rice observed in the market since our implementation [of the price cap order] last month," Mr. Panganiban said after the Trade and Agriculture departments' meeting with President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. on Tuesday.

The price ceiling, which took effect on Sept. 5, limits the price

to P41 a kilo for regular milled rice and P45 for well-milled rice.

"From our parameters, it looks ready (to be lifted)," he said in mixed English and Filipino, citing the drop in global rice prices and improving supply. "But of course, it's all upon the President to decide on it."

Mr. Panganiban noted there would be stable rice supply in the fourth quarter, as the country harvests 1.9 million metric tons of rice within the month. He estimated that rice supply by end-October would be equivalent to 74 days from 52 days as of end-September.

"We are expecting more bumper harvest for the coming October and November. The public can expect that we will have a stable supply of our main staple," he said.

When asked what was preventing the administration from immediately lifting the price cap on rice, Mr. Panganiban said: "All of the decisions that should be made should be with the complete staff work. We are just verifying so that we can make sure that when a decision arrives, everyone will benefit from it."

Economists have been urging the President to lower rice tariffs or consider other strategies instead of imposing price controls, which they said would limit the supply of the food staple and lead to black market trading.

Price caps may also discourage traders from buying rice from local farmers, who will be forced to lower farmgate prices.

Mr. Marcos has been saying that the country has enough rice supply, blaming economic saboteurs — hoarders and smugglers alike — for the commodity's spiraling prices.

Late last month, he rejected his economic managers' proposal to lower tariffs for rice to as low as 0% from 35%.

"Hoarders and smugglers will not be able to manipulate the prices if the supply is adequate," said Leonardo A. Lanzona, who teaches economics at the Ateneo de Manila University.

"Once farmers are able to deliver their goods directly to the market without going through these hoarders and smugglers, then the latter would have lost their market power," he said in a Facebook Messenger chat.

Rice, 51/8

During the 2022 presidential campaign, Mr. Marcos vowed to bring the price of rice to P20 a kilo.

But more than a year later, prices of the national staple have surged due to various factors, including India's ban on exports of non-basmati white rice. In August alone, rice inflation quickened to 8.7% from 4.2% a month earlier.

"The timing of today's conference is a knee-jerk reaction in response to the low survey received by President Marcos," Gary Ador Dionisio, dean of the De La Salle - College of Saint Benilde School of Diplomacy and Governance, said via Messenger chat.

Mr. Marcos' approval ratings fell by double digits across all areas and socioeconomic classes, according to a Pulse Asia Research, Inc. survey conducted from Sept. 10 to 14, with economists attributing the decline to the rising prices of basic commodities like rice.

The remarks of BPI's Mr. Panganiban caused more confusion than clarification, Mr. Dionisio said, noting that there is "no harmony of interest and message" between the Agriculture department and the Palace.

"This is not a clear policy but a political firefighting."

The price cap order has prompted the departure of a Finance official who has warned that the move would only empower hoarders.

"It's about time [to lift the price cap]," former Finance Undersecretary Cielo D. Magno said via Messenger chat, reacting to Mr. Panganiban's remarks. "The price cap does not address hoarding and smuggling. It actually encourages hoarding and smuggling. The price cap makes matters worse."

The President and his economic managers have said the price cap order is just temporary.

04 OCT 2023

Date: _____ Page: 2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

RICE ABUNDANT, PRICES DECREASING

DEPARTMENT of Agriculture (DA) officials on Tuesday said that the rice production has increased with the country obtaining 52 days-worth of rice supply by the end of September.

This was presented by DA Undersecretary Mercedita Sombilla to President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. during a sectoral meeting in Malacañang to discuss the indicators which will be the basis for lifting the price ceiling on rice imposed under Executive Order (EO) No. 39.

In their presentation, the DA identified said indicators that would signal the lifting of the price cap, namely, decreasing rice prices in the domestic market, increasing supply of rice and favorable external factors such as decreasing global rice prices, among others.

In a Palace press briefing, DA-Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) Director Gerald Glenn Panganiban said that the parameters have all been met in-

cluding the abundant supply and the decreasing prices as well the lowering of world rice prices.

Records would show that the supply of rice in the market is equivalent to 52 days by end of September. By end of October, with the harvest in full swing, the supply will be equivalent to 74 days.

The rice prices have also gone down close to the price ceiling with the average price of regular milled rice at around P41.91 per kilo and for well-milled rice at P45.95.

He said that the expected increase in supply of the local harvest in the last quarter and the rest of the year, and the reported favorable factors such as the drop in the export prices of rice in the global market have also further contributed to the stability in the supply and price of the commodity.

"So that's about it and we are expected that DA and DTI (Department of Trade and Industry) to have

collaborations in order to further monitor and survey the prices so that it will not... again, increase drastically," Panganiban said, telling the media that they would be updated as soon as there will be a decision.

"So, that's what we are doing and we are working with all agencies of the government—not only the DA but also the DTI and DILG (Department of Interior and Local Government) to implement whatever measures and guidelines we can do so that the consumers and, of course, our stakeholders, the farmers, who also benefited (from this)," he said.

President Marcos signed EO No. 39 last September 5, setting price caps on regular and well-milled rice in the whole country.

Under the EO, the mandated price cap for regular milled rice is P41 per kilogram while the mandated price ceiling for well-milled rice is P45 per kilogram.



MAGSASAKA'T MANGINGISDA PRAYORIDAD NI PBBM

NAKATUON ngayon ang mga programa ni **Pangulong Bongbong Marcos** sa pagpapalakas ng Agrikultura sa bansa bilang tugon sa kakulangan ng pagkain na nagdudulot naman nang malawakang pagsipa ng presyo nitong dagdag pasakit sa nakararami nating mga kababayan.

Ito rin ang umano'y dahilan sa pagtaas ng imports natin ng mga pangunahing pagkain upang sagutin ang pangangailangan ng sambayanan kagaya ng bigas, karne, gulay, isda at iba pang produktong inihahain ng bawat pamilya sa hapag kainan.

Subalit kung titingnan, ang labis na importasyon ang ugat nang paglipana ng mga sindikatong nasa likod ng hoarding at pagtatago sa mga bodega ng imported na mga pagkaing pinatunayan naman ng tone-toneladang nasabat ng awtoridad.

Kaya naman iba't ibang tulong ang ibinibigay ngayon ng kasalukuyang administrasyon kabilang ang pagbibigay ng kapital sa libo-libong magsasaka't mangingisda, pagbubukas ng Kadiwa store, pamamahagi ng farm implements, bangka, lambat at iba pang pangangailangan ng sektor na ito upang mas lalo pang lumakas ang kanilang

produksyon at ani.

Kaakibat din sa mga programa ang pagtatayo ng cold storage facilities sa mga fishport at bagsakan para walang masayang na isda't gulay at direktang maibebenta pa rin sa mga negosyanteng hindi na dadaan sa kamay ng mga middle man na pinaniniwalaang malaki ang kinikita kaysa sa mga mangingisda't magsasaka.

Unawa natin na hindi pa rin binibitanan ni PBBM ang pagiging Kalihim ng Kagawaran ng Agrikultura bunsod nang hangarin niyang maisakatuparan ang lahat na planong buhay na testigo siyang isinagawa noon ng ama nitong si Apo Ferdinand Marcos kung saan naging numero unong exporter ng bigas sa Asya ang bansa noong dekada 70 hanggang 80.

May bali-balita subalit hindi pa kumpirmado na napipisil ni PBBM na pumalit sa kan-



ya sa pwesto bilang kalihim ng Department of Agriculture ang fishing tycoon na si Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., may-ari ng Frabelle Group of Companies. Ang nasabing negosyante, anang source, ay nagtataglay ng mga katangiang hinahanap ng Pangulo sa papalit sa kanya.

Sa madali't sabi, hindi kailanman puwedeng isantabi na ang pagbibigay prayoridad sa Agrikultura ang sagot sa kakulangan ng pagkain at tuluyan nang magtutuldok nito sa madalas na pag-aangkat ng pangunahing pangangailangan ng taumbayan.

Hindi ba't ang mga bansang Vietnam at Thailand noon ay nag-iimport lang sa atin ng bigas at gulay samantalang dito na tayo ngayon madalas umangkat ng mga pagkain mula nang etsapwera na ang agrikultura sa prayoridad ng gobyerno?



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PBBM inurot sa pagbaklas ng bigas price cap

BASBAS na lamang ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ang hinihin-tay ng Department of Agriculture (DA) at Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) para alisin ang price cap sa bigas.

Sa press briefing sa Malacañang, sinabi ni Bureau of Plant Industry Director Gerald Glenn Panganiban na inilatag na nila sa Pangulo sa ginanap na sectoral meeting nitong Martes nang umaga ang mga indicators na mayroon nang pagbaba sa presyo ng bigas sa pamilihan.

Bukod pa aniya rito ang inaasahang pagtaas ng supply ng produksiyon sa huling quarter ng taon dahil panahon ng anihan at ang pagbaba ng presyo ng bigas sa pandaigdigang pamilihan.

"From our parameters naman ay mukhang ready na. But of course, it's all upon the Pres-

ident to decide on in. I'm mentioning, tumaas ang ating production and that's because of the interventions that our President mandated to our agency. So lahat iyon, not only for rice but other staples and high value crops natin," ani Panganiban.

Sinabi ng opisyal na ngayong Oktubre ay inaasahan ang 1.9 milyong tonelada ng bigas kanyat aasahang aabot ng 74 na araw ang supply ng bigas sa bansa. Tininyak din nito sa publiko na mayroong sapat ng supply ng bigas sa bansa kaya't hindi malayong alisin na sa mga susunod na araw ang price cap sa bigas.

Gayunman, hindi masabi ng opisyal kung bababa na ng tuluyan ang presyo ng bigas kapag inalilis na ang itinakdang P41 at P45 na presyo sa regular at well-milled rice sa mga pamilihan. (Aileen Taliping)



BIGAS BUMAHA, PRESYO BUMABA

Inihayag ng mga opisyal ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na tumaas ang produksiyon ng bigas kung saan nakakuha ang bansa ng 52 araw na halaga ng suplay ng bigas sa pagtatapos ng Setyembre.

Ito ang iniharap ni DA Undersecretary Mercedita Sombilla kay Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. sa isang sectoral meeting sa Malacñang para talakayin ang mga indicators na magiging batayan sa pagtataas ng price ceiling sa bigas na ipinataw sa ilalim ng Executive Order (EO) No. 39.

Sakanilang presentasyon, tinukoy ng DA ang mga indicator na maghuhudyat ng pagtaas ng price cap, katulad ng pagbaba ng presyo ng bigas sa domestic market, pagtaas ng supply ng bigas at mga paborableng panlabas na salik tulad ng pagbaba ng presyo ng bigas sa buong mundo, at iba pa.

Sa isang press briefing ng Palasyo, sinabi ni DA-Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) Director Gerald Glenn Panganiiban na natugunan na ang lahat ng mga parameter kabilang na ang masaganang suplay at ang pagbaba ng presyo gayundin ang pagbaba ng presyo ng bigas sa mundo.

Ang mga rekord ay magpapakita na ang supply ng bigas sa merkado ay katumbas ng 52 araw sa pagtatapos ng Setyembre. Sa pagtatapos ng Oktubre, sa puspusang pag-aani, ang supply ay katumbas ng 74 na araw.

Bumaba na rin ang presyo ng bigas malapit sa price ceiling na may average na presyo ng regular milled rice na humigit-kumulang P41.91 kada kilo at para sa well-milled na bigas ay P45.95. Aniya, ang inaasahang pagtaas ng suplay ng lokal na ani sa huling quarter at sa nalalabing bahagi ng taon,

at ang mga naiulat na paborableng salik tulad ng pagbaba ng presyo ng eksport ng bigas sa pandaigdigang merkado ay higit na nakakatulong sa katatagan ng suplay at presyo ng bilihin.

"Kaya 'yon at inaasahan na magkaroon ng collaborations ang DA at DTI (Department of Trade and Industry) para mas ma-monitor at ma-survey ang mga presyo para hindi... muli, tumaas nang husto," ani Panganiiban kasabay ng pagsasabing maa-update sila sa sandaling magkaroon ng desisyon.

"So, iyon ang ginagawa namin at nakikipagtulungan kami sa lahat ng ahensiya ng gobyerno - hindi lang ang DA kundi pati na rin ang DTI at DILG (Department of Interior and Local Government) para ipatupad ang anumang hakbang at guidelines na magagawa namin para ang mga mamimili

at, siyempre, ang ating mga stakeholder, ang mga magsasaka, na nakinabang din (ito)," pahayag nito.

Nilagdaan ni Pangulong Marcos ang EO No. 39 noong Setyembre 5, na nagtatakda ng mga limitasyon ng presyo sa regular at well-milled na bigas sa buong bansa. Sa ilalim ng EO, ang mandated price cap para sa regular milled rice ay P41.00 kada kilo habang ang mandated price ceiling para sa well-milled rice ay P45.00 kada kilo



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Ombudsman finds cause to charge ex-SRA chief

BY REINA C. TOLENTINO

THE Office of the Ombudsman has found basis to file a case against former **Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA)** administrator Hermenegildo Serafica for violation of Republic Act (RA) 9184 or the "Government Procurement Reform Act" for delaying the purchase of farm equipment.

Ombudsman Samuel Martires, through a resolution dated Aug. 7, 2023, said there was probable cause to indict Serafica "for delaying the award and implementation of the contract beyond the prescribed periods of action."

A review of procurement documents showed that the opening of bids was on Sept. 13, 2017, and the bids and awards committee issued the resolution recommending the contract award as early as Nov. 6, 2017.

The award was approved on

March 8, 2018, and the notice of award "signed by Serafica" was issued on March 19, 2018.

The Ombudsman said, "It took a handful of days short of three years from the opening of the bids to the issuance of the notice to proceed."

"In this particular case, this Office cannot turn a blind eye to the three-year period it took to issue a Notice to Proceed. The delayed award, by itself, could have only amounted to Simple Neglect of Duty and Misconduct, but the protracted period to notify the supplier to proceed with the delivery of the harrows is a badge of (1) want of even the slightest care, or conscious indifference to consequences, and (2) flagrant

disregard of an established rule," the resolution said.

Serafica, who resigned last year, had denied intentionally delaying the notice to proceed.

In the same resolution, the anti-graft body found Serafica guilty of gross neglect of duty and grave misconduct "for his failure to timely award the contract, issue the notice to proceed, and comply with the procurement periods both under RA 9184 and its [implementing rules and regulations]."

"If the penalty of dismissal can no longer be implemented by reason of separation from the service, the alternative penalty of fine equivalent to their individual salary for one (1) year shall be imposed," it added.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

DA declares Pangasinan free of avian influenza

BY GABRIEL CARDINOZA

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan: The Department of Agriculture (DA) has cleared the province of Pangasinan from avian influenza or bird flu.

In a memorandum circular issued on September 28, DA Senior Undersecretary Domingo Panganiban said that it has been more than 90 days since cleaning and disinfection operations were conducted in the province, and testing activities yielded negative results.

The first and only bird flu case in the province was detected in San Carlos City on July 26, 2022.

Panganiban said that upon detection of the disease, the provincial government, DA regional field office and Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) conducted immediate depopulation, cleaning and disinfection in the affected premises.

Their "coordinated effort" stopped the disease from spreading to other areas.

According to the BAI website, the bird flu outbreak in the country began in January 2022.

Since then, 198 cases have been recorded nationwide, resulting in the death of about 182,968 and the culling of 1,267,055 chickens. The BAI has distributed more than P122 million to affected farmers as indemnification, as of July 29, 2023.

As this developed, Gov. Ramon Guico 3rd has again extended the temporary ban on the entry to Pangasinan of livestock coming from towns and cities with con-

firmed cases of the bird flu and the African swine fever (ASF).

In two separate executive orders, Guico has imposed the temporary ban extension starting Oct. 1, 2023 until further notice.

According to the BAI website, nine regions, 17 provinces, 45 municipalities and 117 barangay (villages) still have active ASF cases across the country as of Sept. 20, 2023.

Pangasinan has ASF cases in the towns of Sual and Mangatarem.

"There must be a continuous effort to address and contain the spread of ASF for the welfare of the residents so that responses and measures done will not be put to naught," Guico said in his order.

The executive order further stated that fowls and birds from the provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Laguna, Sultan Kudarat, Benguet, North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Maguindanao, Isabela, Quezon, Kalinga, Aurora, Ilocos Norte, Capiz

and Batangas are not allowed to enter the borders of Pangasinan.

In his orders, Guico also directed the personnel manning the animal quarantine checkpoints in the different entry points to the province to look for documentary requirements from the traders and transporters before allowing them to enter the border.

The documentary requirements include veterinary health certificate, Bureau of Animal Industry shipping permit, animal welfare registration certificate, certificate of disease-free status, handler's license certificate of registration, transport carrier registration certificate, and certificate of acceptance, among others.

Guico also ordered that all deliveries going to the provinces of Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Norte, La Union, Abra and Benguet should pass through the exit of the Tarlac-Pangasinan-La Union Expressway in Urdaneta City.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

'Realigned funds to boost sea surveillance'

BY JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL

THE Department of Agriculture's (DA) Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said that reallocating confidential funds to the agency would significantly enhance its surveillance operations in the West Philippine Sea.

"This initiative would empower our agency to strengthen and enhance our monitoring, control, and surveillance activities in the WPS and other fishing grounds to ensure the sustainable use of our marine resources and safeguard the livelihoods of our fisherfolk," BFAR National Director Demosthenes Escoto

said in a statement on Tuesday.

He was reacting to the proposal of the House of Representatives to realign the confidential funds of some civilian government agencies to those whose mandate is to counter threats in the WPS, such as the BFAR, National Intelligence Coordinating Agency, National Security Council

and Philippine Coast Guard.

Escoto said more funds would enable BFAR to improve its monitoring of other fishing grounds.

"The DA-BFAR respects the wisdom of our lawmakers in determining the need for budget augmentation," he said.

BFAR, he said, continues to combat illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing.

"We want to ensure they can fish peacefully, productively, and sustainably in our waters, especially in the WPS, which rightfully belongs to Filipinos," Escoto said.

The agency employs floating assets to monitor unlawful fish-

ing activities and conduct resupply missions in collaboration with government agencies such as the Philippine Coast Guard.

This year, it launched the Livelihood Activities to Enhance Fisheries Yields and Economic Gains from WPS, a livelihood project worth nearly P80 million which seeks to equip local

fisherfolk to help them fish effectively and minimize post-harvest losses.

Last June, the BFAR delivered almost P5 million worth of livelihood inputs and capacity-building programs to residents of Pag-asa Island in Kalayaan, Palawan, under the Layag-WPS project.



BFAR: Realigned CIF will boost fishing sites' tracking

By JASPER EMMANUEL Y. ARCALAS [@jearcalas](#)

THE Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said the reallocated confidential funds that it would receive will boost its efforts in monitoring not just the West Philippine Sea (WPS), but also other fishing grounds nationwide.

In a statement on Tuesday, BFAR, an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture, said the proposed additional budget expected from the realignment of confidential funds by lawmakers is a welcome development.

"This initiative would empower our agency to strengthen and enhance our existing monitoring, control, and surveillance activities in the WPS and other fishing grounds to ensure the sustainable

use of our marine resources and safeguard the livelihoods of our fisherfolk," BFAR National Director Demosthenes R. Estoco was quoted as saying in a press statement on Tuesday.

BFAR explained that the additional budget would go to beefing up its current assets and resources in combating illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing in Philippine waters.

"The Agency employs float-

ing assets to monitor unlawful fishing activities and conducts resupply missions in collaboration with government agencies, particularly the Philippine Coast Guard," it said.

"These missions provide essentials such as engine oil, drinking water, and ready-to-eat snacks to Filipino fisherfolk engaged in fishing activities in the WPS," it added.

The additional budget, the BFAR said, would complement its existing livelihood project for local fishermen who are catching fish in WPS.

For one, it disclosed that it started this year the P80-million Livelihood Activities to Enhance Fisheries Yields and Economic Gains from WPS (LAYAG-WPS) that seeks to provide fishermen with necessary gears and training to improve their catch in the WPS.

"The program seeks to provide local fisherfolk with essential tools, knowledge, fishing gears and paraphernalia, and post-harvest training to help them fish more effectively in the WPS and reduce their post-harvest losses," it said.

BFAR said it delivered almost P5 million worth of livelihood inputs

and capacity-building programs to residents of Pag-asa Island in Kalayaan, Palawan, under the LAYAG-WPS project. The assistance included Fiber Reinforced Plastic (FRP) boats, fish aggregating devices, and rain catchers, among others, according to BFAR.

"The DA-BFAR respects the wisdom of our lawmakers in determining the need for budget augmentation," Escoto said. "Nevertheless, the DA-BFAR remains committed to combating IUU fishing and empowering Filipino fisherfolk with our existing assets and resources. We want to ensure they can fish peacefully, productively, and sustainably in our waters, especially in the WPS, which rightfully belongs to Filipinos," he added.

Last week, the House of Representatives leadership decided to reallocate confidential and intelligence funds (CIF) to agencies tasked to protect the country's sovereignty in the WPS, which included BFAR. **(Related story: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2023/09/28/lawmakers-commit-to-reallocate-cif-to-agencies-protecting-wps/>)**



editorial

Bitter truth about calamansi juice

CALAMANSI or calamondin is a popular citrus fruit in the Philippines. According to the Department of Agriculture (DA), it can grow in backyards and can thrive in a wide variety of environmental conditions. It is a small tree with a height ranging from 2 meters to 7.5 meters at maturity.

Like its relatives, such as the mandarin, pomelo, and sweet orange, the calamansi is rich in phosphorous, calcium, iron, and Vitamin C. It can be used as flavoring ingredient in desserts or as an additive in various food preparations, such as fish steak. Pinoys who love to eat inihaw would almost always dip barbecued meats in soy sauce with calamansi and chili.

It is a versatile fruit, just like the coconut, as it is used in making beverages, syrups, concentrates and purees. The peel, according to the DA, is made into jams, candies and marmalade. Because of its unique flavor and health benefits, it probably did not come as a surprise for Filipinos who participated in a recent food fair in China that calamansi juice became an immediate hit among the Chinese.

An official of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) disclosed that Chinese consumers who flocked to the recent China-Asean Expo (Caexpo) had fallen in love with the citrus fruit. The Chinese became big fans of calamansi juice and were also partial to other food items sold by exhibitors like banana chips and soft candies made of durian. The calamansi juice was so popular among the visitors that one buyer ordered 32 container vans of the healthy drink. (See, **"Supply woes prevent PHL from hiking fruit exports to China," in the BUSINESSMIRROR, September 21, 2023**).

Unfortunately, the Filipino exhibitor could not commit to delivering the 32 container vans because of supply issues. DTI officials said capacity constraints are making it more difficult not only for calamansi juice sellers, but also for other makers of fruit-based food items to deliver the requirements of the Chinese who have developed a taste for these products.

Trade exhibits like Caexpo give local suppliers, particularly small and medium enterprises, a chance to offer their products to an international audience. However, the opportunities that they gain from their exposure to such events become missed chances if Philippine exporters and suppliers could not provide the requirements of prospective buyers. At a time when Filipino businessmen need other sources of revenue, it is disheartening to hear that they cannot fill the orders of potential customers just because they could not source enough calamansi, bananas or durian in their own country.

The calamansi, for one, can be grown all-year round, which means local producers should be able supply the volume requirements of exporters. Dollar earnings from products such as the calamansi juice would translate into more jobs for a country that is aspiring to achieve upper middle-income status in two years. It would do well for concerned agencies to work together with producers to determine the next steps that would enable our local businessmen to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by international trade exhibits such as Caexpo.

Date: Oct. 04, 2023 Page: 7



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

ASF hits 11 Isabela towns

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya – Eleven towns in Isabela have recorded cases of African swine fever (ASF), the Department of Agriculture (DA)-Cagayan Valley office reported yesterday.

The affected hog raisers are in Angadanan, Aurora, Alicia, Echague, Luna, Mallig, Quirino, San Isidro, Gamu, Ramon and Roxas, according to DA regional office ASF spokesman Manny Galang.

He said DA representatives were dispatched to concerned local government units to assist in implementing measures to prevent the spread of the swine disease.

Isabela provincial veterinarian officer Belina Barbosa blamed the spread of ASF to backyard slaughtering locally known as *pauraga*.

Meanwhile, most of the towns in Nueva Vizcaya that were affected by ASF in the past few months have recovered.

Cagayan and Quirino reported isolated ASF cases while Batanes remains ASF-free.

– Victor Martin

Date: 04 OCT 2023 Page: 123

Gov't ready to lift rice price caps

By ALEXIS ROMERO

The government is ready to lift the price ceilings it imposed on rice due to decreasing prices in the global and domestic markets and the expected increase in the supply of the food commodity, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said yesterday. Speaking to report-

ers at Malacañang, DA – Bureau of Plant Industry Director Gerald Glenn Panganiban said it would be up to President Marcos to decide whether to lift the price caps, which took effect last Sept. 5.

"The recommendation, of course, was, because of these indicators, I think it is positive,

Turn to Page 3

it can be done," Panganiban said. "From our parameters, it seems that we are ready (to lift the price ceilings). But of course, it's all upon the President to decide on it."

Panganiban said agencies had presented the status of their compliance with Executive Order (EO) 39 during a sectoral meeting yesterday in Malacañang.

The EO set the price cap on regular milled rice at P41 per kilogram and that of the well-milled rice at P45 per kilogram.

"And then we are expecting an increased supply of our local harvest coming this last quarter – for October, November and then the rest of the year. And the favorable factors externally (have) been reported, a drop in the export prices of rice in the global market has also been reported," he added.

According to Panganiban, the government is expecting almost 1.9 million metric tons of rice this month, which will be enough for 74 days. In September, the supply

of rice was only good for 52 days.

Asked when the price ceiling on rice would be lifted, the agriculture official replied: "I cannot say the duration but the indications point to that, so we will just keep you updated as soon as there will be a decision."

Panganiban said the lifting of the rice price caps was a joint recommendation of the agriculture and trade departments.

In a Facebook post, Radio Television Malacañang said the National Economic and Development Authority supports the proposed lifting of the price cap, but is recommending several interventions to complement the move.

These include providing logistics support to rice traders, financial assistance to Filipino farmers and unconditional rice price subsidies to poor consumers.

In a statement, the Presidential Communications Office said rice prices have also gone down close to the price ceiling, with the average price of regular milled rice at about P41.91 per kilo and for well-milled rice at P45.95.

Panganiban reported that 80 to 90 percent of rice retailers complied with the price ceiling.

With regard to the remaining 10 to 20 percent of the retailers, he explained that most of them are focused on special rice, which is not covered by the EO, while others opted not to sell the food commodity.

He also gave assurance that the agencies are working together to prevent the drastic increase in the prices of rice.

Quick response

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is asking the Senate for a P300-million fund to create a quick response task force that would go after hoarders and profiteers, especially in the regions, DTI secretary Alfredo Pascual told the Senate yesterday during the public hearing on the DTI's proposed budget for 2024.

Pascual articulated their requests after Sen. Loren Legarda pointed out the zero budget on their program on consumer protection.

"We want to reorganize our consumer protection activities by

centralizing. You cannot expect a junior person to run after hoarders and profiteers in areas where people of influence are operating in the regions...Our plan is to centralize consumer protection activity in the head office and have like a quick response task force," Pascual said.

"We will submit a program that will require funding of P300 million to strengthen our consumer protection activities," he said.

DTI Assistant Secretary Mary Jean Pacheco further explained to the committee that the P300 million will fund an inter-DTI strike team to go around the country to augment or increase enforcement activities nationwide.

She added that the P300 million would also be used for the enforcement of the Republic Act 11900 or the Vaporized Nicotine and Non-Nicotine Products Regulation Act that regulates the importation, manufacture, sale, packaging, distribution, use and communication of vaping products such as e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products.

– With Cecille Suerte Felipe

Date: OCT 04, 2023 Page: 2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Ombudsman orders raps vs ex-SRA administrator

By **ELIZABETH MARCELO**

The Office of the Ombudsman has ordered the filing of criminal charges against former **Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA)** administrator Hermenegildo Serafica over the alleged three-year delay in the procurement of farm equipment worth P5.722 million.

In a 21-page joint resolution approved by Ombudsman Samuel Martires on Aug. 7 and released to the media only yesterday, Serafica was ordered charged with violation of Republic Act (RA) 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Act.

Section 65(a)(2) of RA 9184 imposes a penalty of six to 15 years in prison against a public official for "delaying, without justifiable cause, the screening for eligibility, opening of bids, evaluation and post evaluation of bids, and awarding of contracts beyond the prescribed periods of bids or other documents."

In the same resolution, the ombudsman found Serafica guilty of administrative offenses of gross neglect of duty and grave misconduct.

Aside from dismissal from the service, the ombudsman imposed the accessory penalties of cancellation of civil eligibility and forfeiture of retirement benefits against Serafica.

It also barred him from taking civil service examinations as well as disqualified him from holding public office.

Since Serafica is no longer in government service, the ombudsman said the dismissal would be converted to a fine equivalent to his one-year salary, which may be deducted from his accrued leave credits or any receivables from his office.

The accessory penalties attached to Serafica's dismissal will still be imposed against him.

The ombudsman dismissed the charges of violation of RA 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act against Serafica for lack of evidence.



BFAR: Fund increase to boost monitoring of fishing grounds

BY JED MACAPAGAL

THE Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) yesterday the augmentation of its confidential funds would significantly enhance its monitoring, control, and surveillance efforts in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) and other fishing grounds across the country.

BFAR national director Demosthenes Escoto made the statement even as the small committee created by the House of Representatives to decide the realignment of secret funds of government civilian offices has yet to come up with the final amounts that would be transferred to agencies in the forefront of protecting the country's sovereignty, particularly in the WPS.

"We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the members of Congress advocating additional funds to BFAR and other security agencies. This initiative would empower our agency to strengthen and enhance our existing monitoring, control and surveillance activities in the WPS and other fishing grounds to ensure the sustainable use of our marine resources and safeguard the livelihoods of our fisherfolk," Escoto said in a statement.

He said BFAR has been actively combating illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing activities, which he said have been persistent threats in Philippine waters.

He said the BFAR employs floating assets to monitor unlawful fishing activities and conduct resupply missions in collaboration with government agencies, particularly the Philippine Coast Guard, to provide essentials such as engine oil, drinking water and ready-to-eat snacks.

Escoto also said that they want to assure that Filipino fisher folks "can fish peacefully, productively and sustainably in our waters, especially in the WPS."

Earlier this year, the BFAR launched the Livelihood Activities to Enhance Fisheries Yields and Economic Gains from WPS, a livelihood project worth nearly P80 million that seeks to provide local fisherfolk with essential tools, knowledge, fishing gears, paraphernalia and post-harvest

training to help them fish more effectively in the WPS and reduce post-harvest losses.

Last June, BFAR also delivered almost P5 million worth of livelihood inputs and capacity-building programs to residents of Pag-asa Island in Kalayaan, Palawan, which included assistance for the purchase of fiber reinforced plastic boats, fish aggregating devices and rain catchers, among others.

Meanwhile, PCG spokesman for the West Philippine Sea Commodore Jay Tarriela yesterday encouraged Filipino fishermen to continue fishing at the Scarborough Shoal, also known as Bajo de Masinloc, even as it remains under the control of China.

Tarriela made the remarks a week after PCG personnel cut a floating barrier installed by the Chinese Coast Guard at the entrance of the shoal.

Earlier reports stated that many Filipino fishing boats are no longer going to the shoal, which is about 124 nautical miles from Zambales, due to Chinese harassment.

"Maybe there are some Filipino fishermen who are discouraged to go on fishing in Bajo de Masinloc," Tarriela said during a television interview.

He, however, said when PCG made a patrol at the shoal about two weeks ago, they were able to monitor 54 Filipino fishing boats conducting fishing at the vicinity of the shoal.

"The estimated total catch (of the Filipino fishermen) during that time is 168 tons. With the number of Filipino fishermen that we witnessed during that time, sometimes it's very difficult for us to really understand the sentiments of some fishing associations saying that they are no longer capable to fish in Bajo de Masinloc," said Tarriela.

"We have been doing this (patrol) every time for almost a month, many (Filipino fishermen) are fishing there. It's very difficult for us to really figure it out the statements that fishermen are not going there, that they are being discouraged (to go there), they are having difficulty fishing there," he also said.

While acknowledging that

Filipino fishermen cannot go inside the shoal to fish, Tarriela said Filipinos are still able to fish outside or within the vicinity of the shoal.

"They are not able to enter the lagoon but within the vicinity of Bajo de Masinloc, they can still fish (there). The only time that they are being pursued or apprehended by rubber boats

deployed by China Coast Guard is whenever they will attempt to go inside the lagoon," said Tarriela.

"Of course, I am not saying that China is right to chase them (Filipino fishermen). But what I just want to reemphasize that Filipino fishermen have the reasons to fish in Bajo de Masinloc," said Tarriela.

"If you are going to ask the Coast Guard and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), we are actually encouraging Filipino fishermen to go in Bajo de Masinloc and fish there," said Tarriela, adding: "And that's the reason why we are providing fuel subsidy and grocery items."

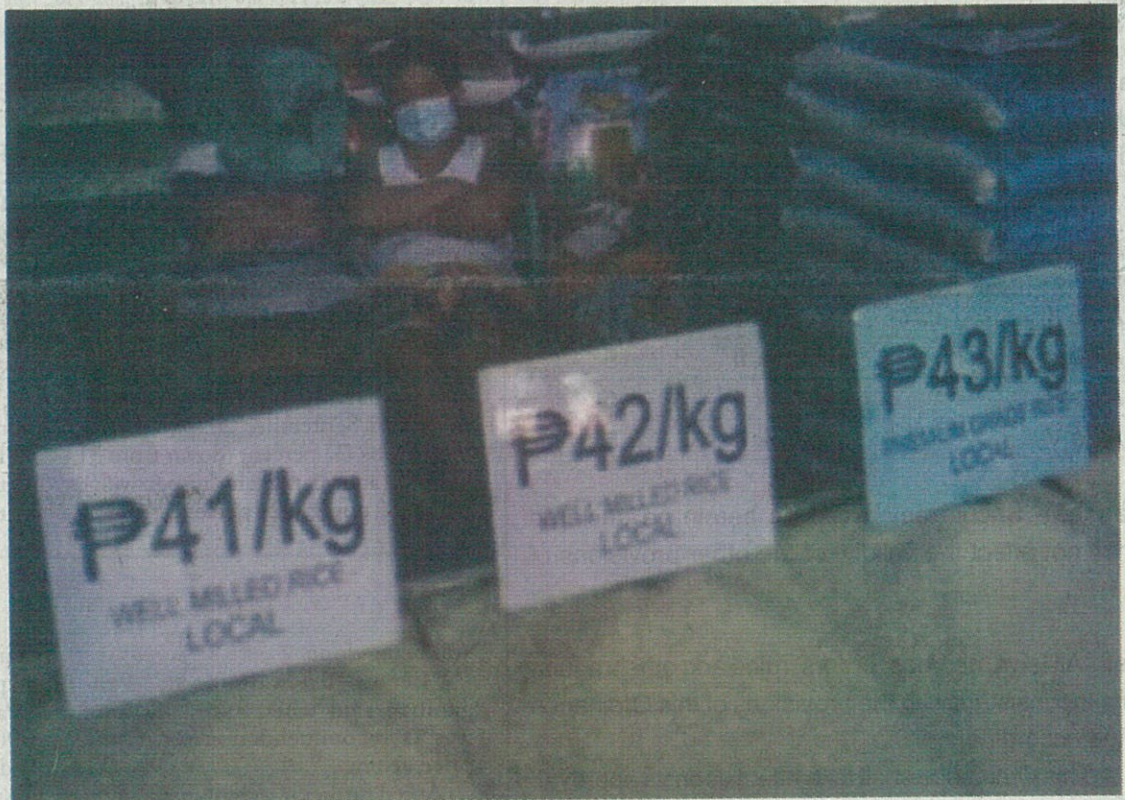
Tarriela was referring to the

continuing PCG-BFAR program to provide assistance to Filipino fishermen who are fishing at Scarborough Shoal.

The Chinese have prevented Filipino fishermen from going inside the shoal since gaining control of the feature after a standoff with Philippine government vessels in 2012. — *With Victor Reyes*

TILL YEAREND

Rice supply stable



A file photo shows a vendor in a stall selling rice at a public market in Quezon City on Jan. 5, 2021. More than two years later, the government slapped price caps on regular-milled and well-milled rice at P41 and P45, respectively.

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) yesterday said rice production has increased, resulting in a 52-day buffer stock as of the end of September.

But the DA said no decision has been made on whether or not to lift the price ceilings on regular and well-milled rice.

Gerald Glenn Panganiban, director of the Bureau of Plant

and Industry, in a briefing in Malacanang yesterday said the Philippines will have a stable supply of rice in the last quarter of the year.

Panganiban said the country is expected to harvest 1.9 million metric tons of rice this month which will boost national buffer stocks of the staple to 74 days from 52 days at present.

Panganiban said it is up to President Marcos Jr., who is the concurrent DA secretary, to decide

whether to lift or retain the price cap as mandated under Executive Order (EO) 39.

Panganiban said indicators that would signal the lifting of the price cap— declining rice prices in the domestic market, the increasing supply of rice and favorable external factors such as decreasing global rice prices — are now all present but further verification is

See RICE > Page A2

still being done.

“Let us just wait for it,” Panganiban said when asked if there was a recommendation to lift the price ceiling.

Asked further if a recommendation has been submitted, presidential briefer Daphne Oseña-Paez said: “No, there was a report that showed favorable factors. So, we should wait.”

Price caps of P41 per kilo on regular milled rice and P45 per kilo on well-milled rice have been in place since September 5 in a bid to arrest the rising prices of rice in the market. The rise in prices was at-

tributed to the smuggling, hoarding and price manipulation by profiteers.

Panganiban said about 80 percent to 90 percent of the retailers complied with the price cap.

Agriculture Undersecretary Mercedita Sombilla, during the sectoral meeting, said the department monitored the supply of rice in the market has risen to 52 days as of the end of September.

The DA expects that by the end of October, with the harvest in full swing, the supply will be equivalent to 74 days.

Panganiban said since the implementation of EO 39, the price of

rice has gone down to an average of P41.91 per kilo of regular milled rice at P45.95 per kilo of well-milled rice.

He said the expected increase in supply of the local harvest in the last quarter and the rest of the year, and the reported favorable factors such as the drop in the export prices of rice in the global market have also further contributed to the stability in the supply and price of the commodity.

He said the DA and the Department of Trade and Industry would continue to monitor the prices to ensure that “it will not, again, increase drastically.”



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BFAR makes play for confidential funds, cites need to upgrade fishery surveillance

THE Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) urged Congress to reallocate confidential funds towards fisheries surveillance projects.

"This initiative would empower our agency to strengthen and enhance our existing monitoring, control, and surveillance activities

in the WPS (West Philippine Sea) and other fishing grounds to ensure the sustainable use of our marine resources and safeguard the livelihoods of our fisherfolk," BFAR National Director Demosthenes R. Escoto said in a statement.

The BFAR is one of the 10 agencies affected by budget re-

alignment after the House of Representatives stripped the confidential and intelligence funds of the Office of the Vice-President and the Department of Education amounting to P650 million.

The House said that funds will be given to agencies tasked in protecting national security.

Legislators last week approved the National Government's P5.786-trillion budget for 2024, which is 9.5% larger than this year's budget.

"The BFAR respects the wisdom of our lawmakers in determining the need for budget augmentation," Mr. Escoto added.

BFAR is seeking to eradicate illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing, a condition for the Philippines to access various trade agreements.

It added that it conducts re-supply missions in collaboration with other government agencies, particularly the Philippine Coast

Guard, to Philippine outposts in disputed waters.

The BFAR launched an P80-million livelihood project aimed at providing essential equipment, gear, and post-harvest training for efficient fishing in the WPS and reduce post-harvest losses. —

Adrian H. Halili

REMATE

ANG DIARYO NG MASA

Date: 04 OCT 2023

Page: 3



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Dating SRA chief kinasuhan sa natenggang traktora

Iniutos ng Office of the Ombudsman ang pagsasampa ng kasong kriminal laban kay dating Sugar Regulatory Administrator Hermenegildo Serafica dahil sa paglabag sa Government Procurement Reform Act.

Sa resolusyon na ipinalabas ni Ombudsman Samuel Martires sinabi nito na dapat panagutan ni Serafica ang 3 taong delay sa pagbili ng farming equipment.

Nag-ugat ang kaso noong 2017 para sa pagbili ng 25 units

ng Ripper Harrower, isang farming equipment na ginagamit sa lupa upang ihanda ito sa pagtatanim.

Ayon kay Martires, inabot ng 3 taon ang invitation to bid at paged-deliver ng equipment ng SRA sa ilalim ng pamumuno ni Serafica na dapat sana ay nasa 130 hanggang 136 araw alinsunod sa Procurement law.

Sinita rin ng Ombudsman ang mabagal na pagbili ng farm tractors ng SRA na naisagawa lamang

noong 2020 na dapat sana ay noon pang 2017.

Sinabi ng Ombudsman na malinaw na guilty si Serafica ng gross neglect of duty at grave misconduct na may karampatang parusa na pagkakakulong na 6 hanggang 15 taon.

Samantala, pinawalang sala naman ng Ombudsman si Serafica sa kasong graft sa dahilang ang alegasyon ng katiwalian ay hindi umano napatunayan. (Tina Mendoza)



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

10 US agritech firms seek PH partners

By MA. JOSELIE C. GARCIA

The Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU), an agricultural supply chain group, embarks on its seven-day agricultural technology trade mission in the Philippines with ten US companies are looking for partnership with local opportunities from technological farming solutions, agricultural supplies, and agricultural education.

At the reception on Monday, Oct. 2 at the US Ambassador's residence in Makati, BCIU Senior Program Officer of Agriculture Joseph Walters said that the BCIU's agri-tech mission to the country is to improve food security by fostering capacity and identifying innovative solutions through continuous communication between the public and private sectors.

The ten companies include John Deere's Philippine partner Abomar Equipment Sales Corp.; Archer Daniels Midland (ADM); Aviagen; Cargill; Northwest Missouri State University; Pepsico; Sukup Manufacturing; Valmont Industries; Veeva Inc.; and Viasat.

In a speech at the same event, US Ambassador MaryKay Carlson said that food and nutrition security is crucial for national security, adding that agriculture cooperation is a key economic partnership between the US and the Philippines.

Bilateral trade in agriculture products exceeded \$4 billion last year, with the Philippines being a top market for US exports.

The agriculture trade mission also attended the 25th Davao Agri-Trade Expo (DATE) last Sept. 28-30

where the group had "an opportunity to connect with senior decision-makers in the regional private agriculture office in Davao."

"We met officials from BARMM (Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao) which is a very high priority for this mission to reach out to BARMM and identify opportunities for the US to bring technology that can improve agriculture outcomes in BARMM," said Paul Taylor, Senior Commercial Officer at the US Embassy in the Philippines.

In particular, Abomar Equipment Sales Corp. Vice President Rafael Majam said that the group got the chance to meet some potential clients, such as the Maharlika Agro-group which aims to engage in corporate farming in terms of growing corn.



1st PH Durian Summit to bring experts on good agri practices

SEVEN international resource speakers from different parts of the world will impart their knowledge on effective cultural management and farm techniques during the first-ever Philippine Asia Durian Summit at SMX Convention Center here from Oct. 25 to 27.

In an interview on Monday, Durian Industry Association of Davao City president Emmanuel Belviz said James Wong from Thailand and Lim Chin Khee from Malaysia will be discussing their countries' best practices on duri-

an cultivation.

Anna Teo from Malaysia will talk about the highlights of the Regulation of Agricultural Imports in China and Durian Frozen and Packaging Technology, while Dr. Tan Sue Sian of Malaysia will delve on Precision Farming: Internet of Things in Durian.

The "Potential and Emergence of Durian Agro-tourism" in Malaysia will be discussed by Johnny Ting, while Exploring Culture Through Durian Tourism will be tackled by Lindsay Gasik from the United States. PNA



Date: 04 OCT 2023 Page: 4



LIBRARY
 DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE



Editorial

Pangalanan ang rice smugglers

ISANG buwan ang nakalipas bago nasampahan ng kaso ng Bureau of Customs (BOC) ang tatlong rice smugglers sa Balagtas, Bulacan. Sinalakay ng BOC, kasama si House Speaker Martin Romualdez at iba pa ang tatlong malalaking bodega at natambad sa loob ang sangkatutak na bigas na may kabuuang 202,000 sako. Wala ang may-ari ng mga bodega at mga trabahador lamang ang naroon at naaktuhang sinasalin sa mga ordinaryong sako ang mga bigas upang mag-mukhang local produce. Walang maipakitang dokumento sa mga awtoridad ang mga trabahador. Ang mga bodega ay ang Great Harvest Rice Mill Warehouse, San Pedro Warehouse at FS Rice Mill Warehouse sa Bgy. San Juan. Ayon sa BOC, smuggled ang mga bigas na nagmula sa Vietnam, Cambodia at Thailand na nagkakahalaga ng P505 million.

Ang nakapagtataka ay kung bakit napakatagal bago pa nasampahan ng kaso ang mga may-ari ng bodega at isa pa, bakit hindi sila pangalanan. Ano ang espesyal sa mga smuggler na ito at hindi sila mapangalanan ng BOC? Mahigit isang buwan din bago nalaman ng BOC na smuggled ang bigas. May itinatago ba ang BOC kung bakit napakatagal bago nila nadiskubreng mga smuggled ang bigas?

Kung tutuusin, madali namang malalaman kung smuggled ang kargamento kung walang maipakitang papeles. Hindi ba ito alam ng BOC? Ang mga legal na kargamento ay kumpleto sa papeles at anumang oras ay nakahanda itong ipakita sa mga awtoridad nang walang ligoy.

Sa pagkakasampa ng kaso sa mga may-ari ng bodega, hindi pa rin tiyak kung mapaparusanang nang mabigat ang mga ito. Hangga't hindi nadidinig ang paghatol sa kanila ng husgado, walang katiyakan kung sa kulungan ang bagsak nila o patuloy na makalalaya at ipagpapatuloy ang pag-smuggle ng agri products.

Noong nakaraang linggo, may nahatulan namang agri smuggler—kauna-unahang smuggler na nahatulan sa ilalim ng Anti-Agri Smuggling Act. Ang smuggler ay si Divina Bisco Aguilar na napatunayang nagpuslit ng carrots mula sa Singapore noong 2020. Hinatulan si Aguilar ng tatlong taon at isang araw hanggang apat na taon. Ayon sa korte naipasok ni Aguilar ang mga carrot makaraang ideklara ang mga ito na frozen pastry buns.

Hindi masasabing tagumpay ang pagkakahatol kay Aguilar sapagkat siya ay "sisiw" lamang kung ikukumpara sa mga malalaking "buwitre" na nagpapasok ng smuggled agri products. Matutuwa ang taumbayan kung ang mapaparusanang ay mga dambuhalang smuggler na nagpapalumpo sa ekonomiya. Kung ang mapaparusanang ay maliliit lang, balewala ang batas. Magpapatuloy ang pananabotahe sa ekonomiya at sasadsad ang bansa sa kumunoy ng kahirapan.

Date: OCT 04, 2023 Page: A11



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Malaysians urged not to panic-buy local rice after import prices rise substantially

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia—Malaysia's government has reassured the country that enough rice is available and urged people not to hoard locally produced rice after recent panic-buying led to empty shelves in supermarkets and grocery stores nationwide.

Agriculture and Food Security Minister Mohamad Sabu said Monday the government will increase distribution to rural areas to address a supply issue sparked by a hike in the price of imported rice. Malaysia and many countries are grappling with rising rice prices and low supplies after India's curb on rice sales cut global supplies by a fifth.

Mohamad said locally produced rice is capped at 2.60 ringgit (\$0.55) per kilogram (2.2 pounds), the cheapest in the region. So when sole importer Padiberas Nasional Berhad raised the price of imported white rice by 36 percent on Sept. 1, it prompted many Malaysians to switch from imported rice to cheaper local rice.



A MALAYSIAN Muslim woman checks on rice grain in a mall outside Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on August 18, 2015. Malaysia's government said Monday, October 2, 2023, the country has enough rice available and urged people not to hoard locally produced rice after recent panic-buying led to empty shelves in supermarkets and grocery stores nationwide. AP/JOSHUA PAUL

He said the higher price of imported rice cannot be helped after India and 18 other countries restricted rice exports to cater to domestic needs. Malaysia imports

about a third of its rice supply.

"Actually, we don't have a shortage of rice in the country. It's just that the price of imported rice has risen sharply," he said, adding that

the government is taking steps to address this issue.

"I want to remind the people again to keep calm and just buy what you need. Don't panic-buy."

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said later Monday that it will take time to resolve the issue. He was quoted by the national Bernama news agency as saying the government will provide 400 million ringgit (\$85 million) in subsidies to government facilities such as army and police camps and schools to use imported rice so there will be more local rice for the market.

He warned that anyone found hoarding rice would be arrested. "Anyone who dares to carry out this dastardly act to capitalize on the people's misery will face the full brunt of the law," he said.

Mohamad said the government will increase distribution of local rice to rural areas. He said it will

also subsidize the price of imported rice for two poorer states on Borneo island to ensure an adequate supply. From Tuesday, he said, authorities will step up surveillance of rice wholesalers and shops to ensure there is no hoarding of local rice.

He said samples will also be taken to ensure that sellers are not repackaging local rice as imported rice or mixing the grains for higher profits, warning that stern action will be taken against anyone found to be doing so.

Mohamad made the comments at a news conference ahead of a meeting of Southeast Asian agriculture and forestry ministers that begins Wednesday. He said the rice crisis and food security will be discussed at the meeting. Ministers from the 10-member bloc, known as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, will also meet their counterparts from China, Japan and South Korea. AP



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Malaysia PM threatens action vs rice hoarders

KUALA LUMPUR- Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has threatened legal action against anyone found hoarding rice, as concern over rising prices and supply shortages have led to consumers stockpiling local grains.

Malaysia, which imports about 38 percent of its rice needs, is among countries feeling the impact of export restrictions imposed by top rice producers like India, lead-

ing to panic-buying by consumers and higher prices.

"If anyone dares to take advantage when people are struggling to find rice... you hoard, we will find you, sue you, and take you to court," Anwar said at a rally late on Monday.

The agricultural and food security ministry has been instructed to step up enforcement and monitoring to curb hoarding, he said.

The price of imported white

rice in Malaysia has increased by over 30 percent in the past month, prompting higher demand for local rice, prices of which are capped by the government.

Malaysia on Monday announced measures to try to cool rice prices, including a subsidy of 950 ringgit (\$201.10) per ton for imported white rice in Sabah and Sarawak states from Oct. 5.

All government contracts for rice procurement will also involve

purchasing imported white rice instead of the local variety, as a means of ensuring sufficient supply of the local grain in the market.

Anwar said nearly 400 million ringgit in subsidies would be channeled for government facilities, such as military camps, police and school dormitories, for buying imported rice, which could allow local rice supply to increase by about 5 percent. - Reuters



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Wheat, soybeans slip

CANBERRA- Chicago wheat futures drifted back towards three-year lows on Tuesday amid strong supply of cheap Russian grain and an upward revision to US production forecasts, but anticipation of weaker harvests in Argentina and Australia limited losses.

Corn and soybean prices fell.

Buyers expect wheat prices to fall further and are therefore purchasing only what they need, reducing demand, said Ole Houe, director of advisory services at Australian agricultural brokerage IKON Commodities.

"Prices will be higher in 6 months but the bottom is not here yet," he said.

Most-active Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) wheat futures were down 0.3 percent at \$5.63 a bushel.

Wheat on Friday plunged to \$5.40, its lowest level since September 2020, after the US government unexpectedly raised its estimate for US production to 1.812 billion bushels from 1.734 billion bushels.

Prices recovered somewhat on Monday, but pressure from Russian supply remains, with the European Union's crop monitoring service MARS raising its estimate for Russia's 2023 harvest to 89.7 million metric tons from 86.7 million tons forecast in June.

Flush with grain, Russian exporters are offering 12.5 percent-protein wheat for free-on-board (FOB) delivery in late October-early November for \$235 per ton, according to the IKAR agriculture consultancy. - *Reuters*