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PBBM: Modernization must for agriculture sector

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. highlighted on Thursday the need for the country's agricultural sector to step up and be at par with international standards, saying agricultural modernization is the way forward for the sector.

In his speech during the inauguration of San Miguel Corp.'s World-Class Con-

trolled-Climate Magnolia Poultry Farm in Hagonoy, Davao del Sur, President Marcos said the people should understand that the future of the agricultural sector lies in its modernization.

"We have to also explain to our people. We also have to show them that this is the way forward. This is the way of the future," President Marcos said.

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Nat'l Halal strategy eyes P230-B invest

THE Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) on Thursday said the Philippines will be launching a national Halal strategy which aims to generate PHP230 billion in investments, create 120,000 jobs in five years, and support micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in becoming part of a global halal ecosystem before the end of this year.

The Halal strategic planning follows President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s message to international investors at the World Economic Forum

in Davos, Switzerland positioning the Philippines as a gateway to the Asia-Pacific region.

The plan will also address the growing demand for Halal products and services from both the Philippines' domestic market and from the 57 countries that are members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)—spanning Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and the Americas.

"Halal as a way of life is not only for the Muslims. It is increasingly being recognized

by many non-Muslim consumers worldwide because of ethical considerations, hygiene, fair trade, and just financing," DTI Secretary Alfredo Pascual said.

"Over the next five years, we plan to achieve P230 billion Halal trade and investments and generate 120,000 jobs," he added. "By maximizing our potential in the Halal industry, together we will help realize the vision of President Marcos Jr. in gaining more investments, which will mean higher economic activity and more quality jobs,

and then a better life for all Filipinos."

Considering the growing Muslim population of at least 1.9 billion people, the global Halal market is estimated to reach USD7.7 trillion in market value by 2025, up from USD3.2 trillion in 2015.

The DTI will be leading the nine-government inter-agency taskforce that will create a roadmap which will position the Philippines as the most Halal-friendly trade and investment hub in Asia Pacific. PNA

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PBBM-initiated modern chicken farm ensures PH's sufficient food supply

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has inaugurated San Miguel Corp.'s World-Class Controlled-Climate Magnolia Poultry Farm in Davao del Sur, which is seen to help ensure food security in the country.

"Of the sectors I have mentioned, we put a high premium on investments in agriculture, as it is the key to combating hunger and poverty, and achieving our goal of food sufficiency and security across the country," President Marcos said during the inauguration ceremony in Hagonoy, Davao del Sur.

The President noted the poultry farm is just the first of the 11 planned provincial locations nationwide under SMC's Poultry Megafarm Projects.

"Once realized, these will ensure a more stable, sufficient, and cost-competitive supply of chicken as well as bolster the food and nutritional needs of our people. And that is the very reason why I came all the way here just to come here to Hagonoy to see the facility that San Miguel Foods has put up," he said.

San Miguel President and CEO Ramon Ang said he built the modern

chicken in response to the call of the President for him and the private sector to help the government ensure food security in the country.

"Noong tinawagan ng Presidente ang taong-bayan, pati ako pinagsabi-han niya personally na magtulung-tulong tayo to produce locally produced food, to make sure na walang magutom na Pilipino, walang magugutom na kababayan natin at murang pagkain, high quality pang pagkain," Ang said during the event.

In response to the call, Ang said the SMC immediately coordinated with the President through the assistance of Agriculture Undersecretary Domingo Panganiban and Trade Secretary Alfredo Pascual.

President Marcos said he came to Davao del Sur to highlight to both local and foreign investors that agricultural modernization is the way to ensure food security and technologies abroad can be adopted in the Philippines.

He said the most important part is for the people to realize that the country can no longer depend on the informal food production techniques that it has depended on for a longer time.

"Because the population density, the geopolitical situation right now, which just became a great deal worse. All of these factors come together and that is why we have pushed very, very hard to make sure that in the Philippines, by itself, we are able to feed our people," Marcos explained.

"And we are showing — this facility such as this are showing the way how to do it. We must industrialize our agriculture. Of course, we do not prevent the backyard growing and 'yung pag-aalagang baboy, ng manok sa bawat bahay.'"

The PhP3.34-billion Magnolia Poultry Farm (MPF) is situated in a 921.91-hectare property in Hagonoy, Davao del Sur. The project envisions to house 28 world-class climate-controlled farmhouses that will produce 80 million birds annually.

The facility targets to produce dressed whole chickens, processed chickens (marinated and deboned), and other chicken parts (liver, intestines, etc.). It has an estimated total annual capacity of 66.81 million kilograms. PCO



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Halal roadmap seen to generate P230 B investments

By CATHERINE TALAVERA

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is set to launch a National Halal strategy, which aims to generate P230 billion worth of investments in five years.

"Halal as a way of life is not only for the Muslims. It is increasingly being recognized by many non-Muslim consumers worldwide because of ethical considerations, hygiene, fair trade, and just financing," Trade Secretary Alfredo Pascual said in a statement.

"Over the next five years, we plan to achieve P230 billion halal trade and investments and generate 120,000 jobs. By maximizing our potential in the halal industry, together we will help realize the vision of President Marcos Jr. in gaining more investments, which will mean higher economic activity and more quality jobs, and then a better life for all Filipinos," he added.

According to the DTI, the plan will address the growing demand for halal products and services from both the Philippines' domestic market and from the 57 countries that are members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation—spanning Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and the Americas.

"The Philippines plans to expand its participation in the halal economy by being more active in this multitrillion US-dollar industry that is growing at a rapid pace," Pascual said.

"Considering the growing Muslim population of 1.9 billion people, the global halal market is estimated to reach \$7.7 trillion in market value by 2025, up from \$3.2 trillion in 2015," he said.

As part of efforts to develop the halal industry, the DTI said it would lead the nine-government inter-agency task force that will create a roadmap, which will position the Philippines as the most halal-friendly trade and investment

hub in Asia-Pacific.

The said task force will be composed of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos, Department of Agriculture, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Department of Tourism, Department of Health, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Foreign Affairs and Mindanao Development Authority.

Pascual said the halal industry forms part of the DTI's four priorities particularly promoting regional development; attaining food security; upgrading, upskilling and upsizing micro, small and medium enterprises; and enabling job skills matching and skills upgrading.

"The halal plan is not only confined to food and food-related products, but also includes Islamic finance, halal-friendly travel and tourism, modest fashion, halal pharmaceuticals and halal cosmetics sectors," the DTI said.

Meanwhile, the trade department stressed that micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are set to benefit from the DTI's halal initiatives.

The initiatives that have been signed and are scheduled include a P66-million partnership deal with the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao's Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism to promote halal local goods and services provided by MSMEs.

"This partnership will create jobs through social entrepreneurship and local tourism, train entrepreneurs, and revive the country's creative sector," the DTI said.

Other initiatives include the Halal Convention Expo, scheduled on Nov. 21 at the SMX Convention Center; the conduct of a halal preparedness and certification training program, scheduled for the second week of November, and the provision of more halal training.

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FIRST PERSON

ALEX MAGNO

Chicken

From being an importer of poultry, the country is now bound to becoming an exporter of chicken products.

Last Thursday, San Miguel Foods inaugurated the first of 12 large-scale poultry farms in Davao del Sur. The sheer size of this farm is staggering. San Miguel outdid itself by building this facility in only four months.



The Davao del Sur farm is projected to produce 80 million birds per year. It is composed of 28 modules with five farmhouses, each spread over 66 hectares. It will produce the equivalent of Mindanao's annual chicken consumption.

The scientifically designed farm maintains stress-free conditions for chickens to optimize their health and growth. The highest standards of biosecurity will be observed. The entire farm will be climate-controlled – an important factor given the realities of climate change.

The hotter temperatures we have been experiencing stress the chickens and stunts their growth. Hotter days ahead make them vulnerable to epidemics.

The Magnolia farm also features rainwater harvesting, discounting droughts as a factor that could threaten our production. The manure produced is used as fertilizer for farming cassava and corn, important raw materials for chicken feed. In all, San Miguel estimates that the Davao del Sur plant will generate 1,000 well-paying jobs for the host community.

Magnolia developed linkages with farmers in the surrounding areas, helping them plant corn and cassava. The backward linkage creates jobs and increases farmer incomes. The forward linkages to the processing technologies of San Miguel Foods enables added value to be retained in the local economy.

President BBM understood that this development is of such importance to building the nation's food security that he graced the mega farm's inauguration. Over the next couple of years, as the 11 other mega farms are built, we will have a chicken surplus.

The chicken harvested using the most advanced technology will be price competitive. This is how smuggling could be defeated: by quality local production at lower prices.

This is what the revolution in our agriculture looks like. It involves large capitalization, advanced technology, scientific methods and the extensive processing and distribution capacities of our corporations.

The revolution in our food production will have to be corporate-led. There is no other way.

Recall that only months before, Manuel Pangilinan-led Metro Pacific invested P1 billion in a vertical vegetable farm in Bulacan. Like the humongous San Miguel poultry farm, this vegetable farm uses the best

technology that insulates the crop from the vagaries of the weather. It could supply quality vegetables cheaply – especially to the Mega Manila area where urban diets are oily and vegetable-free.

In addition to the high-tech vegetable farm, Metro Pacific also invested in dairy production. Pretty soon, we will not need to import all our dairy needs.

If we are to produce enough food for our people, we must corporatize food production. The large corporations have the financial clout to modernize our agriculture. They have the capital to bring in advanced technology. The more the conglomerates become involved in farms, the healthier our people will be.

As far as food production is concerned, big is beautiful.

For too long, we romanticized small farms. Against all logic, we held on to the hope that subsistence production will suffice to feed our population.

That romantic delusion about small farms brought us the food crisis we now confront. We import pretty much of what we eat. So inefficient has our agriculture become that smuggling food has become a lucrative racket.

Everything we eat costs more than most anywhere else. This diminishes people's access to food and brought about widespread malnutrition. Our students endure not only a learning deficit but stunting as well.

Because we romanticized small farms, government invested a lot of money in breeding more carabaos. What our agriculture needed was rapid mechanization and investments in food processing. What we needed was better-managed farms and more efficient logistical systems. Investing in carabaos was not the way to food sufficiency.

The political Left, in particular, glorified the "peasantry" – the mass of inefficient producers making poor use of land which was our scarcest resource. That glorification of an imagined class was instrumental: the Left recruited from the rural poor to provide cannon fodder for their "people's war" that might have installed an ignorant megalomaniac in power.

The "peasantry" was a fairy tale conjured by radical urban intellectuals to be the base of their millenarian insurrection. They pushed for subdividing the farms into small plots that produced only poverty and high levels of rural-to-urban migration.

Now, with large conglomerates such as San Miguel and Metro Pacific moving to rescue our agriculture from dysfunctional ideologies, the age-worn narrative of the political Left is in peril. We can no longer rely on small farms and subsistence methods to feed the nation. Our agriculture needs to be capitalized and acquire the best technology to finally flourish.

The Department of Agriculture wasted decades merely subsidizing traditional methods of farming. That reduced the nation to dependence on imported food. It condemned our people to what is among the most expensive food price regimes in the world.

Government has been, for too long, unable to think beyond a patronage mindset. That was another curse on our agriculture.

Now the corporations have taken up the cudgels for the nation. And they are doing so with conscious patriotism.

San Miguel, for instance, has put nation-building at the core of its corporate mission.

★

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Graft raps vs 3 DA execs go to Ombudsman

JUSTICE Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla revealed that the graft and administrative charges filed by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) against three high-ranking Department of Agriculture (DA) officials regarding the significant increase in onion prices last year will now be forwarded to the Office of the Ombudsman.

Remulla revealed this

during a press briefing, although he didn't provide a timeframe for the referral, which is in the "form of a complaint."

Remulla named them as Agriculture Assistant Secretary Kristine Evangelista, Junibert de Sagun, the Officer-In-Charge of the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS) at the Department of Agriculture, and Gerald

Glenn Panganiban, who held the role of Officer-In-Charge at the Bureau of Plant and Industry (BPI).

They are facing charges for violating Section 3(e) of Republic Act No. 3019, commonly referred to as The Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

Simultaneously, they are facing an administrative case for perceived inadequacy and incompe-

tence in performing their official duties, as outlined in the Revised Administrative Code of 1987.

The NBI's complaint stemmed from the significant increase in onion prices observed in the market in December, with rates soaring as high as P537 per kilogram despite a producer price ranging from only P8 to P15 per kilo.



DA team to help mitigate El Niño impact

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) on Thursday said it has formed a National El Niño Team that will help mitigate the effects of the phenomenon to the country's agriculture and fisheries sectors.

In a statement, DA National Corn Program director U-Nichols Manalo said the team was formed to handle the Mitigation and Adaptation Plan for crops, fisheries and livestock subsectors.

The team would also provide information, education and communication materials that would be disseminated through print materials, text blasts and radio broadcasts.

The measure was included in the agenda of the third quarter meeting of the National Sectoral Committee on Corn and



Other Feed Crops the El Niño Outlook for 2024 held on Wednesday.

"For the past 25 years, we had seven El Niño episodes re-

corded. Three of those were categorized as strong El Niño with the majority of the damage affecting rice and corn. And if we're looking at the historical

data, it is likely that it will affect those areas that are previously affected," he added.

Manalo said the El Niño outlook only serves as a guide and that ground assessment is more important to ensure that the interventions to be developed and implemented are appropriate.

"Usually, we asked the concerned agencies to validate whether the areas affected by El Niño can be planted with the original crops that are planted there or if other crops are possible. If we can no longer plant, we will enroll it in DOLE (Department of Labor and Employment) for cluster work or in DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development) for cash-for-work assistance," he added. PNA



Budget amendment para sa pagkain, kalusugan, seguridad ng bansa

Magandang araw muli, mga kababayan kong Bicolano! Noong Martes, ika-10 ng Oktubre, inilabas ng small committee sa Kamara ang mahahalagang amendments sa 2024 General Appropriations Bill.

Kung inyong maaalala, naatasan ang inyong lingkod at tatlo pang opisyal ng Kamara na susugan ang panukalang 2024 budget. Layunin nitong tiyakin na ang P5.7 trilyong budget ay magiging kasangkapan sa paglaban sa inflation, tumataas na presyo ng pagkain, at pagtugon sa kahirapan, pangangailangang pangkalusugan at seguridad ng bansa.

Sa P194 bilyong amendments na aming isinagawa, tiniyak ng aming maliit na komite na may sapat na pondo para sa price subsidy ng bigas; irigasyon; coconut seedlings; medical assistance sa mahihirap na pasyente; ayuda sa mga nangangailangan; tulong pangkabuhayan; at scholarships at training para sa mga mag-aaral.

Lahat ng ito'y naayon sa tatlong mahahalagang 'legacy' o pamanang gusto ni Pangulong Ferdinand

Marcos, Jr. na maisaayos bago matapos ang kanyang termino sa 2028. Kabilang dito ang legacy special hospitals; legacy housing for the poor; at legacy food sufficiency.

Sa mga susunod na araw, ating idedetalye ang mga naturang budget amendments upang maipakita sa taumbayan na seryoso at determinado ang administrasyong ito na wakasan ang kahirapan at makapagbigay ng tamang serbisyo sa taumbayan.

Sa kabilang dako, sinamahan ko po kamakailan sina Speaker Martin Romualdez at Majority Leader Manix Dalipe sa pakikipagpulong sa mga rice stakeholders at kay Governor Aurelio Umali ng Nueva Ecija.

Napakahalaga ng pulong na ito dahil gusto nating mapababa ang presyo ng bigas sa bansa. Nagpalitan kami ng kuro-kuro at estratehiya kung paano makakamit ang mithiing sustainable agri infrastructure, pagbawas ng importasyon at hauling costs, at marami pang iba.

Binanggit ni Gov. Umali ang karanasan ng kanyang lalawigan bilang 'Rice Granary of the Philippines'. Isiniwalat niya ang mga paraan upang mapababa ang presyo ng bigas, kabilang ang pagtatayo ng rice silos sa kanilang lalawigan.

Ang kagandahan daw kasi sa silos, 'yung mga inaning palay ay 'di na kailangang ibilad sa lansangan para matuyo. Kung iniimbak naman ang

palay at hindi pa ipagigiling, hindi na kailangang imantine ang moisture kaya makatitipid sa gastos ang mga magsasaka.

Mahalaga ang kagamitang ito para mabawasan ang pagkalugi ng mga magsasaka sa post-harvest. Sa ganitong paraan, mapapanatili ang maayos na supply ng bigas sa merkado at hindi magdudulot ng pagtaas sa presyo ng bigas.

Sa naturang pulong, aking pinanukala na ang national government na ang sumagot sa hauling o paghahakot ng ani ng mga magsasaka patungo sa silos upang maalís ang mga traders at middlemen na siyang nagpapataas sa presyo ng bigas. Maaari ring makatulong ang pamahalaan sa pag-deliver ng bigas sa pamilihan para maiwasan ang kotong sa kalsada.

Inirekomenda ko rin na ang malilikom na pondo mula sa Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) ay gamitin sa pagpapatayo ng mga mahahalagang infrastructures gaya ng silos, milling stations at cold storage facilities.

Ibinahagi ko rin ang paggamit ng solar fertigation o 'yung makabagong proseso sa irigasyon upang madoble ang cropping cycle. Sa ganitong paraan, makatitipid sa paggamit ng kuryente at may kasama nang fertilizer ang patubig.

Hanggang sa muli, mga kababayan kong Bicolano,

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Ngayong araw na ito ay is-share ko sa inyo ang CRP Hydroponics Rooftop Garden sa Caloocan City.

Ang CRP Hydroponics ay hinango sa pangalan ni Agricultural Engr. Cristina Ramirez Padua na nakatira sa 47 Pag-Asa St., Brgy. 130 San Jose sa nasabing lungsod.

Sinabi ni Cristina, bata pa lamang siya ay hilig na niya ang pagtatanim dahil pag-sasaka ang pangaunahing pinagkukunan ng kabuhayan ng kanilang pamilya sa probinsiya ng Bolinao, Pangasinan.

Hanggang lumuwas si Cristina at ang na-

wan ni Cristina ang pagtatanim sa lupa, dahil may mga tanim din siyang luya sa sako, malunggay sa pasong, pandan sa bote ng mineral water, blue tamate at marami pang iba.

Katuwang ni Cristina ang kanyang mister at nag-iisa nilang anak sa pagtatanim at pag-aalaga ng mga halaman.

Maganda at organisado ang rooftop garden ni Cristina, kaya minsan na rin ginamit na venue ng isang series sa telebisyon.

Na-feature na rin sa ibang TV program si Cristina, gayundin sa Agriculture Magazine.

Ayon kay Cristina,

pagkain.

Sa mga gusto pang matuto ng urban farming at nais mapalawak ang kaalaman sa pagtatanim ng iba't ibang uri ng halaman sa pamamagitan ng hydroponics na pamamaraan, i-text lamang ninyo si Cristina sa 0908-653-97-21.

Sabihin lang po ninyo na nabasa ninyo sa **Pilipino Star Ngayon (PSN)** at napanood sa Masaganang Buhay TV

ng halaman ay maaari po kayong manood at makinig ng aking TV at Radio program na Masaganang Buhay tuwing Linggo, alas-7:00 hanggang alas-8:00 ng umaga sa OnePH Signal TV, Channel 1 ng TV-5. Mapapakinggan din po sa Radyo Singko 92.3 News FM.

Maaari rin kayong manood at mag-subscribe sa aking Youtube Channel na ANG MAG-



Caloocan rooftop garden

CRP HYDROPONICS



Ang ready to harvest at mga bagong transplant na lettuce sa CRP Hydroponics garden.



kasanayang pagsasaka sa probinsiya ay kanyang dinala sa Metro Manila.

Ayon kay Cristina, noong una ay conventional farming ang kanyang pagtatanim, hanggang maisipan niyang pag-aralan hydroponics method na estilo ng pagtatanim.

"Para sa akin ay mas madali ang hydroponics method o pagtatanim sa tubig ng mga green leafy vegetables," ani Cristina.

Hanggang maperfect ni Cristina ang hydroponics method, ang kaalaman na batid niyang pahiram lang ng Panginoon kaya kanyang ibinabahagi sa iba.

"Nagko-conduct ako ng seminar sa iba't ibang grupo at organisasyon, at maging sa mga estudyante na gustong matututo ng pagtatanim ng mga gulay sa tubig," aniya.

Noong bisitahin ng Magsasakang Reporter ang rooftop garden ni Cristina kasama ang crew ng Masaganang Buhay, dinatnan namin ang iba't ibang magagandang variety ng lettuce, petsay, mustasa, kale, mint, basil, kangkong at iba pa.

Hindi rin totally ini-

maraming benepisyo ang nakukuha niya sa pagtatanim. Una na rito ang pagkawala ng kanyang pagod o stress reliever, nakakatipid siya, healthy pa ang kinakain niya at kanyang pamilya, at kumikita pa.

Ayon kay Cristina, itinatanim pa lamang niya ang kanyang mga gulay ay may buyer na siya.

"Marami nga po ang nag-a-advance ng ba-yad sa akin kahit itinatanim pa lamang namin ang mga green leafy vegetables," sabi pa ni Cristina.

Tips ni Cristina sa mga baguhan pa lang na nagtatanim na i-apply ang TLC o Tender Love and Care sa pagtatanim.

Gumagamit din siya ng Fermented Plant Juice (FPJ), Fermented Fruit Juice (FFJ), Oriental Herbal Nutrient at marami pang iba, pawang natural na pamamaraan.

"Kahit sa mga patapon na bagay tulad ng mga bote ng softdrinks, sirang gulong ng sasakyan, sirang hallow blocks, pasong, timba at styrobox at iba pa ay maaari tayong magtatanim," ani Cristina.

Paliwanag pa niya, hindi magugutom ang sino man na marunong magtatanim ng sariling



Ang Magsasakang Reporter at ang pamilya ni Engr. Cristina Ramirez Padua.

at radio show ng Magsasakang Reporter ang kanilang kuwento.

Samantala, sa mga nagnanais naman po na mapalalim pa ang kaalaman kaugnay ng natural at organic farming, panoorin po ninyo ang mga video tutorial ko sa aking Youtube Channel na ANG MAGSASAKANG REPORTER tungkol sa step by step na pagtatanim, pag-aalaga at sikreto ng pagkakaroon ng magandang tanim na halaman.

Para sa iba pang tips at sikreto sa pagtatanim ng iba't ibang uri

SASAKANG REPORTER para sa iba pang kaalaman at impormasyon sa pagtatanim ng iba't ibang uri ng halaman sa pamamagitan ng organikong pamamaraan.

Regular ninyong mababasa ang aking kolum dito sa **Pilipino Star Ngayon (PSN)** ng Star Group of Publications.

Sa mga tanong at komento ay maaari ninyo akong i-text, huwag po tawag, sa 09178675197. STAY SAFE, HAPPY FARMING, GOD BLESS US ALL.



CLIMATE CHANGE MEASURE

PLANNED 'BURP TAX' ON FARMERS RAISES PREPOLL STINK IN NZ

WELLINGTON—New Zealand has a plan to tax farmers for their livestock's burps and farts—and it's causing a stink ahead of Saturday's general elections.

The economy is driven by agriculture with around 10 million cattle and 25 million sheep roaming the nation's pastures.

So in the fight against climate change, New Zealand's government has targeted livestock as it drives toward a target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Just under half of New Zealand's emissions come from agriculture, and cattle are the main culprits.

Their belches and farts contain methane, which is far less abundant in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide, but is responsible for around 30 percent of the global rise in temperatures to date.

To help combat global warming, New Zealand was one of the first countries to announce it will start pricing agricultural emissions—in effect taxing burps and farts from livestock.

Farmers will be taxed according to farm area, livestock numbers, production and their use of nitrogen fertilizer, in an effort to cut agricultural emissions by between 24 and 47 percent by 2050.

Amid fears the pricing will hurt profits and threaten livelihoods, farmers held nationwide protests last October in New Zealand's main cities.

Impact on rural vote

A year later and with general elections looming on Saturday, emissions pricing is still weighing on the minds of New Zealand's farmers.

"I think it will impact on how agricultural rural communities vote this election," Kate Wyeth, a sheep and beef farmer near the capital Wellington on the North Island, told Agence France-Presse (AFP).

"Particularly whichever party—or group of parties—is looking at giving the agricultural industry time to adapt new technologies that aren't even available to us yet."

To give farmers more time to get ready, the Labor government, which lags nationwide in



PRICE OF EMISSIONS Kate Wyeth, a sheep and beef farmer in Wellington, New Zealand, is among those to be affected by a government tax plan that can also influence the rural community vote in Saturday's general elections. —AFP

Farmers will be taxed according to farm area, livestock numbers, production and their use of nitrogen fertilizer, in an effort to cut agricultural emissions by between 24 and 47 percent by 2050

opinion polls, has pushed the start of the emissions pricing back from the first to the fourth quarter of 2025.

Opposition center-right party National has said it will push it back further to 2030 if elected.

Viable business?

Wyeth said that until technologies are developed—for example, feeds given to livestock that reduce methane emissions—farmers feel their only choice is to reduce livestock numbers.

"The technologies aren't quite here yet to help us," said Wyeth, vice president of the local farming federation.

"Some of the only ways we are looking at reducing our emissions is by destocking and not running these animals on our farms."

As a result, Wyeth said, many farmers feel uncertain about the future.

"There's a massive question at the moment of what does the future hold," she added. "Is there a viable business, a viable family environment for our kids coming through?"

With livelihoods at stake and uncertainty over how the government will price emissions, opposition parties seem to have firm support in the countryside.

Farmers' role

In the latest opinion polls by Taxpayers' Union-Curia last week, around two thirds of rural voters said they intended to opt for either National or classic liberal party ACT.

The government has said emissions pricing is necessary to help fight climate change.

"It is important for New Zealand to lead the way on this because we are one of the world's leading agricultural countries and agricultural emissions make up half of the total pollution that we put into the atmosphere every year," James Shaw, the country's minister for climate change, told AFP.

"Farmers have a really important role to play in the fight against climate change... That's in large part because farmers are on the front line, their business depends entirely on the climate," he said. —AFP