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PH to get highest rice allocation from India

The Indian government has awarded to the Philippines its "highest allocation of rice export," its embassy in Manila said on Wednesday, Oct. 18.

In an email to the Manila Bulletin, Indian Embassy's Press, Information and Culture (PIC) Section shared a soon-to-be-published notification in the Gazette of India about the country's rice exports.

"It is with immense pleasure to inform you that the highest allocation of rice export was made to the Philippines," the embassy

said. "The request made at the leadership level and the positive decision reflects the growing confidence in the bilateral relationship," it added.

The notification showed that the Philippines has been allocated 295,000 metric tons (MTs) of non-Basmati white rice from India. The country topped other export destinations, such as Nepal (95,000 MTs), Cameroon (190,000 MTs), Cote d'Ivoire (142,000 MTs), Republic of Guinea (142,000 MTs), Malaysia (170,000 MTs), ► 8

PH to get highest rice allocation from India 1◀

and Seychelles (800 MTs). Manila Bulletin tried to clarify the figures but the Embassy of India has not responded as of press time.

The Philippines, primarily an agricultural country, has suffered tremendously from the rising cost of its staple grain.

This led President Marcos to issue Executive Order (EO) No. 39 on Sept. 5, imposing a nationwide price ceiling of ₱41 per kilogram for regular milled rice and ₱45 per kilogram for well-milled, in response to its rising cost in the market. This has since been lifted.

In July, Marcos revealed plans

to ask India for help in the rice supply.

Then, India had just put a ban on exporting non-basmati white rice because retail prices climbed by three percent recently due to damage to crops brought by monsoon rains.

But by the end of August, India allowed traders to ship out their non-basmati white rice cargoes sitting at ports because of the surprise ban.

India is the world's largest exporter of rice, accounting for more than 40 percent of world rice exports. (Raymund Antonio)



DTI counting on Gulf investment in Islamic banking, halal industries

THE GOVERNMENT delegation to the summit with Gulf leaders will pursue investment in the Philippine halal and Islamic banking industries, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Secretary Alfredo A. Pascual said.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. is visiting Riyadh this week to participate in the summit between Southeast Asian and Gulf leaders.

The Philippine delegation is also sounding out possible Gulf investment in medical tourism, energy, and petrochemicals, Mr. Pascual said in a phone interview, adding that invitations to invest will be extended in roundtable meetings.

Mr. Marcos flies to Saudi Arabia today (Oct. 19) for the first-ever summit between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

on Oct. 20, over a decade after the first ministerial meetings between the two organizations in Bahrain in 2009.

Mr. Marcos is expected to hold a bilateral meeting with the Saudi government and businesses, Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary Daniel R. Espiritu has said.

He noted the Saudi government's "assistance" in developing the Bangsamoro region in the southern Philippines.

Mr. Marcos' visit to Saudi Arabia will be his ninth foreign trip this year, and the 15th since he assumed office in June 2022.

He is set to fly to the US in November for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting, and to the United Arab Emirates in December for the United Nations Climate Change Conference. — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**



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PHL gets imported rice allocation from India

By JASPER EMMANUEL Y. ARCALAS

@jearcalas

NEW Delhi approved the export of 295,000 metric tons (MT) of non-Basmati white rice to the Philippines, according to a notification published by India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Wednesday.

The notification approved the export allocation for non-Basmati white rice for seven countries, including the Philippines. The Philippines got the highest allocation among the seven countries.

Other countries that received allocations were Cameroon (190,000 MT), Malaysia (170,000 MT), Côte d'Ivoire (142,000 MT),

Republic of Guinea (142,000 MT), Nepal (95,000 MT) and Seychelles (800 MT).

The notification was signed by Santosh Kumar Sarangi, the Director General of Foreign Trade of the Department of Commerce under India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Based on the notification, the



WORKERS load bags of paddy rice at the grain market in Ambala, India. T. NARAYAN/BLOOMBERG

National Cooperative Exports Ltd. will ship the non-Basmati white rice to the seven states.

In July, India imposed an export ban on its non-Basmati white rice supplies to arrest rising domestic prices. However, in recent months, India has allowed the export of

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quantities of non-Basmati white rice to selected countries.

Also in July, President Marcos Jr., who is the concurrent agriculture chief of the Philippines, said the government is looking at forging a rice supply deal with India.

In August, the Department of

Agriculture (DA) began talks with India and Vietnam for possible rice supply deals to ensure the Philippines's rice stocks and keep domestic grain prices at affordable levels.

The DA said it was working with the government of India to allow the Philippines to import rice from them "on humanitarian grounds." At the time, the DA had targeted to secure 300,000 MT to 500,000 MT of rice stocks from India and Vietnam.

Latest Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) data showed that the Philippines, as of October 5, imported 13,579.39 MT of rice from India. Rice imports from India are slapped with a 35-percent tariff under Marcos's Executive Order 10.

Agriculture Undersecretary for Rice Industry Development Leocadio S. Sebastian said recently that the Philippines's rice imports this year may decline by 18.42 percent year-on-year to

3.1 million metric tons (MMT), as higher world grain prices dampened traders' appetite.

Sebastian said the country's rice imports for 2023 could be 700,000 MT lower than the 3.826 MMT recorded last year as higher world rice prices discouraged importers from bringing in foreign stocks.

"Rice abroad is expensive. [The importers] are looking at local production and they can buy local, that is okay with me," Sebastian told reporters on the sidelines of the 6th International Rice Congress in Pasay last Monday.

The country's rice imports from January to September declined by almost 12 percent to 2.672 MMT from 3.035 MMT recorded in the same nine-month period last year, Bureau of Plant Industry data showed.

The United States Department of Agriculture earlier projected that the Philippines could become the world's top rice importer this year with a total estimated volume of 3.9 MMT.



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DA defends proposed P10 B for inorganic fertilizer

By **BELLA CARIASO**

The **Department of Agriculture (DA)** yesterday defended its proposed P10-billion budget for inorganic fertilizer after Sen. Cynthia Villa criticized the agency over its dependence on imported fertilizer.

In an interview with **The STAR**, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said the Philippines will not attain food security if the government will only use organic fertilizer amid its low yield.

"You need inorganic (fertilizer) as the nutrient requirement of palay is big, like nitrogen, potassium

and phosphorus, so this cannot be sourced from purely organic. If your yield is only three metric tons per hectare, we will have problems with food security," De Mesa added, as he explained that at least 100 bags of organic fertilizer are needed for every hectare to ensure enough nitrogen content in the soil.

De Mesa cited a study by the Philippine Rice Research Institute, which showed that farmers can only harvest around three metric tons per hectare if they only use organic fertilizer, compared to harvesting more than 10 MT per hectare if using inorganic fertilizer.

"We have a budget for biofertilizer, organic and inorganic fertilizer. It is a mixture as it is not possible to purely use organic fertilizer... In Nueva Ecija, farmers' yield reaches more than 10 metric tons per hectare," he said.

On Tuesday, Villar criticized the DA for allotting P10 billion for the procurement of imported fertilizers, but De Mesa clarified that the DA does not import fertilizers.

"What we do is provide fertilizer discount vouchers to the farmers. The voucher has a specific amount and then the farmer will decide whether he will buy inorganic or

organic fertilizer," he noted.

Meanwhile, De Mesa said the P38 per kilo retail price of rice can be achieved during the peak harvest season.

"We are hopeful that the P38 (per kilo) will be again available in the market as a rule of thumb, the farmgate price will be times two to get the retail price and based on the order of President Marcos during the National Food Authority Council meeting, he wants the NFA buying price to range between P19 and P23, so that's about P38 (per kilo) and P46 (per kilo)," he said.

De Mesa added that the buffer

stock could reach 77 days by end of October and 94 days by end of November.

Based on the DA's monitoring, the retail price of local regular milled ranged between P41 and P45 per kilo; local well-milled rice, between P45 and P48 per kilo; local premium rice, between P47 and P60 per kilo and local special rice, between P54 and P62 per kilo.

Imported regular rice was pegged at P43 per kilo; imported well-milled rice, between P45 and P48 per kilo; imported premium rice, between P52 and P58 per kilo and imported special rice, between P53 and P60 per kilo.



Chicken farmgate price declines amid oversupply

The farmgate price of chicken dropped to as low as P82 per kilo amid oversupply, according to chairman Gregorio San Diego of the United Broiler Raisers Association and Philippine Egg Board yesterday.

There was a P38 decrease in the farmgate price compared to P120 per kilo in September, San Diego told **The STAR**.

"We are suffering losses as the cost of production ranges between P95 and P100. We need to sell at P100 (per kilo) for us to have revenues," he said.

San Diego said despite the decline in the farmgate price of chicken, the retail price remained high at P200 per kilo in some Metro Manila markets.

Based on monitoring of the Department of Agriculture (DA), the retail price of whole chicken ranged between P150 and P200 per kilo.

"The rule of thumb, from the dressing plant, the recovery should be 69 percent, so if the farmgate price is only P82 (per kilo), when it reaches the markets, it is

P122, so it is the retailers and traders who dictate the retail prices," San Diego added.

According to San Diego, based on data from the Bureau of Animal Industry, as of Oct. 2 the stocks of chicken in cold storage facilities totaled to 54,992 metric tons, compared to 48,395 MT on Sept. 25.

He said total local chicken stocks reached 15,680 MT, while imported chicken is at 39,313 MT.

"We have an oversupply. What we are asking is to limit the importation or totally stop it as the local industry can produce the country's requirement for chicken," San Diego added.

He said the flooding of imported frozen meats did not benefit consumers.

"Officials say that the purpose of imports is to bring down the retail price but it does not happen as importers want to rake in revenues," he said.

Meanwhile, San Diego said that egg producers do not control the retail price of eggs amid the spike in cost.

— Bella Cariaso

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Shellfish Bulletin No. 24
Series of 2023
17 October 2023

Shellfishes collected and tested from Sapijan Bay (Ivisan and Sapijan in Capiz; Mambuquiao and Camanci, Batan In Aklan); coastal waters of Pilar; President Roxas; Roxas City in Capiz; coastal waters of Gigantes Islands, Carles in Iloilo; coastal waters of Dausa and Tagbilaran City in Bohol; and Dumanquilas Bay in Zamboanga del Sur are still positive for Paralytic Shellfish Poison (PSP) or toxic red tide that is beyond the regulatory limit.

Do not harvest
Do not sell
Do not buy
Do not eat

All types of shellfish and *Acetes sp.* or alamang gathered from the areas shown above are **NOT SAFE** for human consumption. Fish, squids, shrimps, and crabs are safe for human consumption provided that they are fresh and washed thoroughly, and internal organs such as gills and intestines are removed before cooking.

The following areas continue to be **FREE from toxic red tide**: coastal waters of Cavite, Las Piñas, Parañaque, Navotas, Bulacan, and Bataan (Mariveles, Umay, Orion, Pilar, Balanga, Hermosa, Orani, Abucay, and Samal) in Manila Bay; mariculture areas in Infanta, coastal waters of Bolinao, Anda, Alaminos, Sual, and Wawa, Bani in Pangasinan; mariculture areas in Rosario, and Sto. Tomas in La Union; coastal waters of Pampanga; Masinloc Bay in Zambales; Pagbilao Bay, Pagbilao, and coastal waters of Walay, Padre Burgos in Quezon; Honda, and Puerto Princesa Bays, Puerto Princesa City, and coastal waters of Inner Malampaya Sound, Taytay in Palawan; coastal waters of Milagros, and Mahdaon in Masbate; Sorsogon Bay, and Juag Lagoon, Matnog in Sorsogon; coastal waters of Borongan, San Dionisio in Iloilo; coastal waters of Altavas, Batan, and New Washington in Batan Bay, Aklan; coastal waters of E.B. Magalona, Talisay City, Silay City, Bacolod City, Hinigaran, and Victorias City in Negros Occidental; Tambobo, and Silt Bays, Siaton; and Balis Bay, Balis City in Negros Oriental; coastal waters of Daran, and Zumarraga, Cambatutay, Maqueda, and Villareal Bays in Samar; coastal waters of Guluan in Eastern Samar; coastal waters of Leyte, Calubian, Ormoc, Sogod, Carigara Bay, and Cancabato Bay, Tacloban City in Leyte; coastal waters of Billiran Island; Tentanang Bay in Zamboanga Sibugay; Murcielagos Bay in Zamboanga del Norte and (Sapang Dalaga, and Balliangao) in Misamis Occidental; Pangui Bay, Tanguib City, and coastal waters of Ozamiz City in Misamis Occidental; coastal waters of Baroy in Lanao del Norte; Taguines Lagoon, Benoni, Mahinog in Camiguin; Balite, and Pujada Bays, Mati City in Davao Oriental; Malalag Bay in Davao Occidental and Davao del Sur; coastal waters of Nasipit in Agusan del Norte; Litalit Bay in Surigao del Norte; and coastal waters of Hinatuan, Cortes, and Bislig Bay in Surigao del Sur. **Moreover, coastal waters of Panay in Capiz is now free of the toxic red tide.**

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Director

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DOWN 8.6% IN FIRST NINE MONTHS

MEAT IMPORTS DIP ON LOWER CONSUMPTION OF PORK

By **Jordeene B. Lagare**
@jordeenelagare

The country's meat imports exceeded the 900-million kilogram mark in the nine months to September even as Filipinos consumed less pork during that period.

The volume of imported meat stood at 923.16 million kg from January to September this year, down by 8.6 percent from 1.01 billion kg in the same period a year ago, based on the latest data from the **Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI)**.

It was also lower than last month's figure of 115.11 million kg. Between May and July, meat imports were on the downtrend.

In September alone, the country procured 105.81 million kg of meat imports, a decline of 33.1 percent from 158.2 million kg previously.

"I believe it's more on the

uptrend on local production output and pork depressed consumption," Pork Producers Federation of the Philippines Inc. president Rolando Tambago said.

Pork still takes the lion's share with a share of almost 50 percent or 458.7 million kg, the majority of which are pork offal. This, however, reflects a downturn of 15.9 percent from 545.21 million kg year-on-year.

Chicken remained second with 324.98 million kg, an increment of 10.6 percent from 293.86 million kg previously.

More than half were mechanically deboned or mechanically separated chicken—a key ingredient in processed meat products often used as filling or extenders.

Some 106.68 million kg of imported beef entered the country, reflecting a reduction of 20.8 percent from 134.69 million kg. INQ

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Tagapagtaguyod ng Malinis at
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Shellfish Bulletin No. 24
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Shellfishes collected and tested from **Sapian Bay (Ivisan and Sapian in Capiz; Mambuquio and Camanci, Batan in Aklan); coastal waters of Pilar; President Roxas; Roxas City in Capiz; coastal waters of Gigantes Islands, Carles in Iloilo; coastal waters of Dauis and Tagbilaran City in Bohol; and Dumanquillas Bay in Zamboanga del Sur** are still **positive** for Paralytic Shellfish Poison (PSP) or toxic red tide that is beyond the regulatory limit.

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The following areas continue to be **FREE from toxic red tide**: coastal waters of Cavite, Las Piñas, Parañaque, Navotas, Bulacan, and Bataan (Mariveles, Limay, Orion, Pilar, Balanga, Hermosa, Orani, Abucay, and Samal) in Manila Bay; mariculture areas in Infanta, coastal waters of Bolinao, Anda, Alaminos, Sual, and Wawa, Bani in Pangasinan; mariculture areas in Rosario, and Sto. Tomas in La Union; coastal waters of Pampanga; Masinloc Bay in Zambales; Pagbilao Bay, Pagbilao, and coastal waters of Walay, Padre Burgos in Quezon; Honda, and Puerto Princesa Bays, Puerto Princesa City, and coastal waters of Inner Malampaya Sound, Taytay in Palawan; coastal waters of Milagros, and Mandaon in Masbate; Sorsogon Bay, and Juag Lagoon, Matnog in Sorsogon; coastal waters of Borongan, San Dionisio in Iloilo; coastal waters of Altavas, Batan, and New Washington in Batan Bay, Aklan; coastal waters of E.B. Magalona, Talisay City, Silay City, Bacolod City, Hinigaran, and Victorias City in Negros Occidental; Tambobo, and Silt Bays, Siaton; and Bais Bay, Bais City in Negros Oriental; coastal waters of Daram, and Zumarraga, Cambatutay, Maqueda, and Villareal Bays in Samar; coastal waters of Guiuan in Eastern Samar; coastal waters of Leyte, Calubian, Ormoc, Sogod, Carigara Bay, and Cancabato Bay, Tacloban City in Leyte; coastal waters of Biliran Island; Tantanang Bay in Zamboanga Sibugay; Murcielagos Bay in Zamboanga del Norte and (Sapang Dalaga, and Baliangao) in Misamis Occidental; Panguil Bay, Tangub City, and coastal waters of Ozamiz City in Misamis Occidental; coastal waters of Baroy in Lanao del Norte; Taguines Lagoon, Benoni, Mahinog in Camiguin; Balite, and Pujada Bays, Mati City in Davao Oriental; Malalag Bay in Davao Occidental and Davao del Sur; coastal waters of Nasipit in Agusan del Norte; Litalit Bay in Surigao del Norte; and coastal waters of Hinatuan, Cortes, and Bislig Bay in Surigao del Sur. **Moreover, coastal waters of Panay in Capiz is now free of the toxic red tide.**

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BFAR: Red tide alert still up in 7 PH coastal areas

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) on Wednesday, October 18, cautioned residents against consuming shellfish and other seafood from seven coastal areas in the country which remain positive for red tide.

In Shellfish Bulletin No. 24, the BFAR

said these include four coastal waters in Capiz and one each in the provinces of Iloilo, Bohol, and Zamboanga del Sur.

"Shellfishes collected and tested from Sapián Bay (Ivisan and Sapián in Capiz, Mambuquiao and Camanci, Batán in Aklan), coastal waters of Pilar, President Roxas, and Roxas City in Capiz; coastal waters of Gigantes Islands, Carles in Iloilo; coastal waters of Dauis and Tagbilaran City in Bohol, and Dumanquillas Bay in Zamboanga del Sur are still positive for Paralytic Shellfish Poison (PSP) or toxic red tide that is

beyond the regulatory limit," it said.

Meanwhile, it said the coastal waters of Panay in Capiz are now free of red tide.

It advised the public that all types of shellfish and *Acetes* sp. or alamang gathered from these areas are not safe for human consumption.

"Fish, squids, shrimps, and crabs are safe for human consumption provided that they are fresh and washed thoroughly, and internal organs such as gills and intestines are removed before cooking," the BFAR added. (PNA)



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India allots 295K MT of white rice exports to PH

INDIA has allocated as much as 295,000 metric tons (MT) of non-basmati white rice for the Philippines, according to a notification from its Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Based on the notification dated October 18, the allocation for the Philippines is the biggest among six countries, with the shipment to be handled by India's National Cooperative Exports Ltd.

Apart from the Philippines, India also decided to supply

non-basmati white rice to Nepal, Cameroon, Cote d' Ivore, Republic of Guinea, Malaysia and Seychelles for a total volume of 1.03 million MT.

Last July, the government of India stopped exporting non-basmati white rice amid its rising food inflation.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) initiated talks with Vietnam and India last August to come up with an agreement for rice imports to augment its

supply and lower prices in the local market.

Earlier this month, Gerald Glenn Panganiban, director of the Bureau of Plant and Industry (BPI), said the Philippines will have stable supply of rice in the last quarter of the year.

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

Based on DA's monitoring of public markets in the National Capital Region, the price as of yesterday of local well-milled rice is between P45 to P48 per kg and regular milled, P41 to P45 per kg.

The price of imported well milled rice is at P45 to P48 per kg, while imported regular milled rice is at P43 per kg.

Imported rice ranges from P53 to P60 for the special variety and P52 to P58 for premium.

For local rice, the special vari-

ety costs P54 to P62 per kg and premium, P47 to P60 per kg.

According to data from BPI's National Plant Quarantine Services Division, as much as 2.68 million MT of imported rice arrived in the country as of October 5.

The bulk, or 2.4 million MT that is equivalent to 89 percent of the total shipments, was from Vietnam while 13,579.39 MT or 0.5 percent came from India.

Raul Montemayor, Federation

of Free Farmers national manager, said this is not yet a guarantee that the Philippines will actually import from India.

"First, it depends on the price. Second and most important, the quality. In the past, our local importers have not secured rice from India despite significantly lower prices, most probably due to concerns about quality and reliability of supply," Montemayor said in a statement. - **Jed Macapagal**



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Meat imports down 8.6%

BY JED MACAPAGAL

THE country imported 923.16 million kg of imported meat in the first nine months of the year, 8.6 percent lower from the 1.01 billion kg in the same period in 2022, data from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) showed.

Pork comprised bulk of the meat imports at 458.7 million kg or 49.7 percent of the total and down 15.9 percent than the 545.2 million kg. in 2022.

Chicken followed with 324.98 million kg or 35 percent of all imports and 10.6 percent higher from 293.86 million kg last year.

Beef imports at 106.68 million kg accounted for 11.6 percent but were down 20.8 percent from 134.69 million kg a year ago.

The Philippines imported 31.7 million kg of buffalo, lower by 10 percent from 2022's

PH meat imports			
Jan. - Sept. 2023 vs Jan. - Sept. 2022			
MEAT TYPE	2023 (KG)	2022 (KG)	PERCENT CHANGE
BEEF	106,676,733	134,689,740	-20.8
BUFFALO	31,660,067	35,279,414	-10.3
CHICKEN	324,977,391	293,863,218	+10.59
DUCK	229,302	58,782	+290
LAMB	642,883	543,806	+18.2
PORK	458,703,535	545,213,681	-15.87
TURKEY	270,456	392,151	-31.03
TOTAL	923,160,367	1,010,040,791	-8.6

Source: Bureau of Animal Industry

35.28 million kg. Turkey imports fell 31 percent to 270,456 kg from 392,151 kg.

Lamb imports rose 18 percent to 642,883 kg from 543,806 kg while duck meat im-

ports jumped by 290 percent to 229,302 kg this year from 58,782 kg.



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India eases ban on white rice exports, gives PHL top quota

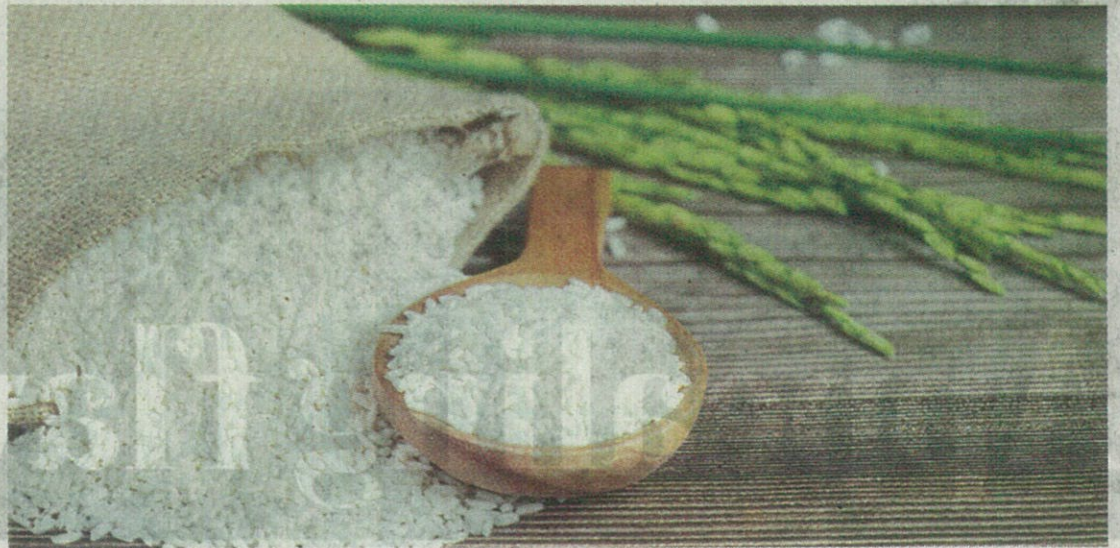
THE INDIAN government said on Wednesday that it eased its ban on exporting non-basmati white rice, and gave the Philippines a quota of 295,000 metric tons (MT), the largest share among selected destination countries.

India also cleared exports of the commodity to Nepal, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Malaysia, and the Seychelles, India's director of Foreign Trade said in a statement.

India, the world's largest exporter of white rice, had suspended exports of non-basmati white rice earlier this year amid concerns over domestic supply, putting upward pressure on international prices. White rice is the variety most commonly traded internationally, while basmati is the preferred domestic Indian variety.

The Philippines typically imports rice from Southeast Asia because regional trade agreements grant ASEAN grain a tariff advantage. The food inflation crisis of early 2023 forced the Philippines to admit non-ASEAN rice on more favorable terms.

Raul Q. Montemayor, national manager of the Federation of



FREEPIK

Free Farmers, said that the Indian concession does not a guarantee access to Indian rice.

"(Import decisions) depend on the price (and) quality," Mr. Montemayor said in a Viber message.

"In the past, our importers had not purchased rice from India despite significantly lower prices, most probably due to concerns about quality and reliability of supply," he added.

Agriculture Senior Undersecretary Domingo F. Panganiban said in a statement in August that the Philippines had appealed to the Indian government to continue allowing rice shipments to the Philippines on humanitarian grounds.

Agriculture Undersecretary Leocadio S. Sebastian told reporters on Monday that Philippine rice imports could drop to 3.1 million MT amid higher global rice prices.

The US Department of Agriculture expects the Philippines to be the world's top rice importer this year, with shipments of about 3.8 million MT.

Mr. Montemayor said Philippine demand for imported rice is between 2.5 million and 3 million MT, describing any volumes from India as "not that significant, even assuming we import (the entire quota)," he added. — **Adrian H. Halili**



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PHILIPPINE STAR/WALTER BOLLOZOS

Meat imports decline over 9% in nine months to Sept.

MEAT IMPORTS fell 9.37% year on year in the nine months to September, with shipments of beef, pork, buffalo, and turkey all declining, the **Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI)** reported.

The BAI said imports amounted to 923.16 million kilograms (kg) during the period. In September the total was 105.81 million kg, down from 115.11 million in August and 166.69 million a year earlier.

Imports of beef fell 21.1% to 106.68 million kg for the period. This accounted for 11.56% of meat shipments.

The top beef supplier to the Philippines was Brazil with 40.64 million kg, followed by Australia with 30.88 million and Ireland 11.51 million.

Pork shipments dropped 12.68% from a year earlier to 458.7 million kg.

The top supplier of pork for the period was Spain, with 112.35 million kg, followed by Canada with 85.93 million and Brazil 78.24 million.

The Philippines also imported about 101,759 thousand kg of turkey meat and 2.35 million kg of buffalo meat; shipments decreased by 44.57% and 6.29%, respectively.

Chicken imports rose 18.27% to 324.98 million kg for the nine months. This accounted for 35.21% of meat shipments during the period.

Brazil supplied about 186.13 million kg, followed by the US with 116.98 million and Canada 10.91 million. — **Adrian H. Halili**



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Rice inventory declines in early Aug.; corn stocks rise

THE national rice inventory fell 0.1% year on year in early August, while corn stocks rose 14.5%, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said.

In a report, the PSA said the rice inventory was 1.80 million metric tons (MT), featuring declines in rice held by the **National Food Authority (NFA)** and households.

"Of this month's total rice stocks, 57.9% were held by the commercial sector, 39.0% by households, and 3.1% by NFA depositories," the PSA said.

Rice held by commercial warehouses increased 33.6% from a year earlier to 945.1 thousand MT.

NFA rice fell sharply by 62.2% year on year to 50.95 thousand MT, while household rice fell 19.6% to 636.41 thousand MT.

On a month-on-month basis, rice inventory fell 9.5%.

"Month-on-month decreases were noted in rice stocks in NFA depositories

(16.3%), in households (16.1%), and in the commercial sector (4%)," it said.

The PSA reported that the corn inventory rose to 806.68 thousand MT in early August from 706.46 thousand MT a year earlier.

"About 92.4% of the corn inventory was held by the commercial sector, while the remaining 7.6% were with households," it added.

Commercial corn volumes rose 20.4% year on year to 745.28 thousand MT. Corn held by households, on the other hand, dropped 28.1% to 61.4 thousand MT.

On a month-on-month comparison, the national corn inventory declined 2.1%.

"The volume of corn stocks in the commercial sector registered a month-on-month decrement of 2.6%... a monthly increase of 4.8% was noted in the household sector," the PSA said. —

Adrian H. Halili



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India allows rice exports to PH, six other countries

BY JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL

AFTER imposing an export ban in July, India has allowed exports of non-basmati white rice to seven countries including the Philippines, which has been given the largest allocation of 295,000 metric tons (MT).

In an October 18 notice, India's Directorate General of Foreign Trade announced that exports would be allowed for Nepal (95,000 MT), Cameroon (190,000 MT), the Ivory Coast (142,000 MT), Guinea (142,000 MT), Malaysia (170,000 MT), the Philippines and Seychelles (800 MT).

The shipments will be coursed

through India's National Cooperative Exports Ltd.

No other details, particularly the timing of the exports, were provided, but the development is expected to help bring down rice inflation, which was primarily behind a surge in overall inflation last month.

Exports of non-basmati white

rice were banned by India on July 20 in an effort to bolster domestic supply. Exports have been allowed to some countries if permitted by the Indian government.

India's export ban triggered high rice export prices to a more than 10-year peak, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has noted.

The USDA, which expects India to account for almost 41 percent of global rice exports by weight in 2023 to 2024, said the ban could remove around 8 percent of expected rice volumes from the global market.

In 2022, India accounted for roughly 40 percent of global rice trade.

The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization, for its part, also said that global rice prices reached a 15-year high in August after the export ban.

While global food prices eased in August, those for rice rose by 9.8 percent compared to the previous month, "reflecting trade disruptions in the aftermath of a ban on Indica white rice exports by India."

Asked to comment on the allocation, Federation of Free Farmers national manager Raul Montemayor said the shipments were not a given.

"In the past, our local importers have not secured rice from India despite significantly lower prices,

➤ **Rice B3**

■ RICE FROM B1

India allows

most probably due to concerns about quality and reliability of supply," he explained.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. chief economist Michael Ricafort, meanwhile, said the resumption of non-basmati rice exports was welcome.

"This is good news for the Philippines in terms of more local rice supply on top of the palay (unmilled

rice) harvest season since last month," he added.

This could also lead to downward corrections in world rice prices and, in turn, help ease domestic inflation.

Consumer price growth rose to 6.1 percent in September from 5.3 percent a month earlier following a sharp increase in prices of key food items and transport costs.

Rice inflation, in particular, surged to a 14-year high of 17.9 percent from August's 8.7 percent despite an order from President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to cap market prices.



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Editorial

Canadian agreement will boost sea monitoring and security

AN agreement signed last week with Canada will substantially improve the Philippines' ability to monitor activities in the West Philippine Sea, including illegal fishing and unwelcome incursions by Chinese and other ships, by giving the National Coast Watch Center of the Philippines access to data from Canada's satellite-based "Dark Vessel Detection System."

The technology is primarily aimed at detecting poaching and other forms of illegal fishing, a rampant problem worldwide, especially in the disputed areas of the West Philippine Sea.

Most countries require commercial fishing vessels of any size to use the vessel monitoring system (VMS), which allows a ship to be tracked by its GPS signal. However, one of the biggest exceptions to this global standard is China, which does not formally refuse to require the use of VMS but does not enforce it. Consequently, virtually all Chinese vessels, whether they are fishing vessels or not, operate "in the dark"; not surprisingly, Chinese ships have been identified as the world's biggest violators when it comes to illegal or overfishing. In the West Philippine Sea, other Chinese vessels, such as encroaching coast guard ships or dredg-

Canada is giving the Philippines access to its satellite-based monitoring technology aimed at detecting poaching and other forms of illegal fishing, a rampant problem worldwide and especially in the West Philippine Sea.

ing vessels, also operate without VMS to avoid detection and surveillance.

Although few details about the agreement have been provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), it is understood that the Canadian system relies on visual satellite imagery rather than GPS to detect and track vessels. The system was first developed to help secure Canada's own vast fishing grounds off both its east and west coasts, where illegal fishing has long been a headache for the country.

Of course, monitoring foreign vessels is only one use of the Canadian technology. It must be noted that the Philippines' own fishing sector is a major source of illegal fishing activity and, most alarmingly, has so far successfully thwarted the government's best efforts to stop it.

In 2020, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) issued Fisheries Administrative Order (FAO) 266, which required all Philippine commercial fishing vessels operating within territorial waters or the country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) to install GPS devices to allow tracking and to report their catches to the BFAR via an electronic system. However, a number of fishing businesses that were suddenly faced with the prospect of having their abilities to overfish, fish in restricted waters, and smuggle their catches curtailed by the country's regulator filed a petition against FAO 266 at the Supreme Court, forcing the Office of the President to issue a memorandum suspending enforcement of the order in March of this year.

Canada's gracious offer to allow the Philippines access to its satellite-based monitoring technology is an effective counter to that attempt to obstruct enforcement and may help the Philippines avoid a potential trade issue. As another measure to help curb global illegal fishing, the EU enacted a law banning imports of fish and seafood from countries that refuse to require the use of VMS or a comparable system by their commercial fishing vessels. The suspension of FAO 266, according to industry sources, resulted in a warning from the European Union that the Philippines was at risk of being subject to that ban. Now, with the availability of an alternative monitoring system, thanks to Canada's help, that risk may be avoided.

It would, of course, be better for the Philippines to fully implement FAO 266 and adhere to a responsible global standard, but the country's ability to do so now lies with the judgment of the Supreme Court. Oral arguments on the case — which specifically deals with the question of whether or not a lower court ruling in favor of the erring fishing firms against FAO 266 should be overturned — were scheduled to be heard by the Supreme Court last October 10, so a decision may be expected soon. The agreement with Canada, therefore, serves as some reassurance against the potential harm that might result from the tribunal siding with the petitioners.



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BFAR boosts Cagayan 'bangus' industry

MORE fisherfolk in the coastal town of Gonzaga in Cagayan province are now in the business of collecting bangus (milkfish) fry along estuarine areas with the use of fry collection gear from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley).

Through the National Bangus Development Program, BFAR said the use of fry collection gear will aid fishermen in collecting bangus fry, thereby boosting the aquaculture industry in this town.

BFAR said the fisherfolk in this town will no longer worry

about the off-fishing season on the high seas with the gear they received from the fisheries bureau.

It said collecting bangus fry can have several economic benefits, especially in areas where farming the fish is a significant industry.

Also in Barangay Caroan in Cagayan, the BFAR, in collaboration with the municipal government, also facilitated the distribution of fry collection gears to 44 bangus fry gatherers.

Distributed fry collection materials include 11 units of scoop net, 40 pieces of white basins, five plastic dippers and

10 pieces of pails with a lid.

BFAR said the provision of fry collection paraphernalia is expected to motivate more fisherfolk to utilize the abundance of the natural fry resource.

"The government's support of the aquaculture industry will contribute to the milkfish fry supply of the region and minimize the need for fry importation," it said.

The BFAR also added that the collected bangus fry are essential inputs for the milkfish aquaculture industry in the province.

It said fish farmers rely on

these fry to stock their ponds or cages, contributing to the growth and sustainability of the aquaculture sector.

"Fry collection can create job opportunities in coastal communities, particularly in areas where milkfish farming is prevalent," BFAR said, adding that it often involves multiple stages — from fry collection to distribution — which can employ local labor.

According to BFAR, this first-class municipality of Gonzaga has an estimated average annual milkfish fry production of 2 million gathered from the wild.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO

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■ Photo shows the more than 500 vegetable farmers in Cagayan province who graduated from the School on the Air program under the High Value Crops Development Program of the Department of Agriculture-Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) office. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



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Over 500 farmers finish radio-based training

BY LEANDER C. DOMINGO

MORE than 500 vegetable farmers in Cagayan province have graduated from the School on the Air (SoA) program under the High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) of the Department of Agriculture (DA)-Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) office.

It was on October 10 that the graduation rites for the SoA participants was held at Robinsons Place-Tuguegarao in Cagayan after almost two months of studying and training through radio broadcast.

Ferdinand Cortez of the DA-Region 2's Agriculture and Fisheries Information Section said this

year's SoA participants in Cagayan province were selected from towns such as Alcala, Piat, Peñaflanca, Solana and Santo Niño.

He said the SoA program for lowland vegetable farmers aims to further expand their knowledge, skills and expertise in modern technologies in farming, as well as the DA's programs for them.

During the event, DA-Region 2 Officer in Charge Regional Technical Director (RTD) for Research and Regulations Kay Olivas told the graduating farmers that "what you have learned from the SoA will be your weapon to achieve food security."

DA-Region 2 RTD for Operations Roberto Busania also thanked the graduates for their interest and support in the DA program saying "the farmers can be considered the heroes of the country."

In his message, Enrique de la Cruz, HVCDP Region 2 focal person and coordinator, said "knowledge is gold which is the key to human development."

De la Cruz also encouraged

the graduates to share with others what they learned from the SoA and conveyed a congratulatory message from Director Gerald Glenn Panganiban of the Bureau of Plant Industry and concurrent national director of HVCDP and National Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Program.

Among those who attended and were also recognized were SoA resource persons, representatives from the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp., DA-Agricultural Credit Policy Council, DA-Agribusiness, and Marketing Assistance Division and partner seed companies, as well as the partner radio station, the DWPE Radyo Pilipinas Tuguegarao.



When small is not beautiful

I KNOW that the title of this column will get disagreements. But in today's globalized environment where food producers face daunting challenges from climate change, geopolitical tensions and increased competition, staying small is no longer an option.

I can even state that small entrepreneurs or businesses must find ways to expand their market reach and innovate continuously, which goes against the "small is beautiful" adage.

In Philippine agriculture, we have witnessed how many small food producers remain poor or impoverished because they only have one or less than a hectare of land to cultivate. It also hurts me that millions of farmers still form part of the country's "poorest of the poor." The worse thing is that poverty among small food producers has become perpetual or passed to the next generation. But since many or even millions of aging farmers fail to become prosperous, their sons and daughters in most cases seek professions or vocations outside of agriculture.

And with the current challenging times marked by the rapid advancement of technology, food production can no longer rely on land and labor alone like it was 50 years ago. In short, research, technology and innovation are what propels higher productivity today.

However, small farmers cannot afford the cost of technology and modern farm machines, and they must be upskilled so they can adapt to digitalization and AI.

Hence, the fragmentation of farms into minuscule sizes can have a negative impact on productivity because this results in the inadequate application of modern farm machinery and technologies, especially in the Philippine setting.



MOVING FORWARD

WILLIAM D. DAR

A study titled "Private Investment in Agri-Food Sector: Constraints and Challenges" by Ramon Yedra undertaken for the Department of Agriculture-Agribusiness and Market Service in 2021 identified small land holdings as the "most commonly cited limitation" to scale up agriculture and agribusiness.

"It is difficult to scale up an existing agribusiness due to this limitation. Hence, companies resorted to lease parcels of land to meet their scale requirements," he said.

He added that companies also find it hard to lease lands from farmers as small landholdings are fragmented or scattered, with some located kilometers away from each other and owned by a number of agrarian reform beneficiaries.

"The more scattered the areas are, the more taxing it is to deal with different landowners, and at times, including their family members. This was attested by industry players from banana, coconut, purple yam and dragon fruit commodity-industries and from large agribusiness investors," Yedra added.

Clustering as the solution

It was during my watch at the Department of Agriculture that the clustering of farmers and the consolidation of their lands were initiated to attain economies of scale in food production. This initiative also resulted in more and more private companies partnering with clustered farmers for their raw materials needs

under the "big brother-small brother" partnership that is mutually beneficial.

Organizing clustered farmers into cooperatives is the next logical step to attain economies of scale, and this should be streamlined further or "ease of doing business" reforms be put in place to facilitate the creation of more farmer and fisherfolk cooperatives.

Currently spearheading the effort to forge partnerships between major agribusiness companies and clustered farmers is the Kapatid Angat Lahat Agri Program (Kalap) under Go Negosyo of Jose Maria "Joey" Concepcion 3rd. The private-sector led initiative aims to attain the following:

- Catalyze partnerships between private and public sectors.
- Foster inclusive business models in the transformation of priority commodity industries.
- Create more job opportunities in the agriculture.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. fully backs Kalap, believing this will enable farmers and micro, small and medium enterprises to become "more productive, profitable, sustainable and globally competitive."

The big brother-small brother partnerships have also enabled the private sector to impart their advanced know-how and systems, and innovations on agriculture, allowing their small partners to increase their output.

As of August this year, this initiative by Kalap has already covered 18 commodity industries such as aquaculture products, bamboo, banana, cacao, coffee, coconut, corn, dairy, essential oils, fruits, livestock, poultry, rice, sardines/tuna, seaweeds, sugar cane, tobacco and vegetables.

As of September this year, Kalap's "big brothers" numbered 45 and counts Agbem Platform, Bounty Fresh, Car-

gill, Central Azucarera De Tarlac, CPF, Dizon Farms, Harbest, Hi-Las Philippines, Kennemer, Lionheart Farms, LT Group, Metro Pacific Agro Ventures, MV AgriVentures, Nature Tech, Nestlé Philippines, Philippine Association of Feed Millers Inc., Philippine Rice Industry Stakeholder Movement, Purefoods, SL Agritech, Universal Leaf Philippines, Vitarich, W Group and Yowei East Agriventures.

What is very clear here are the companies who have become big brothers to small-holder food producers are big players in the agro-processing sector. And they have the capability to assist small-holder farmers and fishers to level up their productivity because these companies are not small.

Hence, what the successful big brother-small brother partnerships have also demonstrated is that small food producers can become a big force once they are clustered and their lands are consolidated. On the other hand, the food or agribusiness companies they have partnered with also demonstrate that big can be magnificent, as these business entities have the financial, logistical, managerial and technological muscle to help level up the country's agriculture sector.



Fair trains spotlight on women's role in food sufficiency

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

@jonlmayuga

A FOUR-DAY trade fair is showcasing the various products of agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) from different parts of the country.

The Agraryo Trade Fair organized by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) which will run until October 20 at the DAR Central Office Grounds is part of the celebration of International Rural

Women's Day and Rural Women's Month.

The fair showcases fresh and processed food and non-food products including food additives, furniture, handicrafts, natural and organic products, as well as services of ARBs and ARBOs from all regions, and serves as a platform for wider exposure of these products to potential customers and buyers.

It also provides opportunities for ARBs and ARBOs to establish

networks for entrepreneurial partnerships with other ARBs, ARBOs, and private-sector enterprises.

Ronald M. Gareza, director of the Bureau of Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Development (BARBD), said the products on display include food and non-food products of ARBOs produced by women officers and members who were given livelihood training by the DAR in cooperation with the Departments of Trade and Industry (DTI), Agriculture

(DA) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

He said the fair aims to enable them to engage in profitable livelihood activities as well as increase their farm incomes.

"The said efforts of women leaders and members in their respective agrarian communities concretize the DAR's commitment to the GAD [gender and development] goals of generating public awareness of gender-related issues, particularly

the importance of women empowerment towards more inclusive local and national development," he said.

"We are hoping that the Agraryo Trade Fair will strengthen the entrepreneurial spirit among ARBs especially the women, as well as generate a positive public perception of ARB products."

DAR said it actively supports GAD goals and ensures that gender-related initiatives are mainstreamed in the plans and programs of the Department for all ARBs and ARB organizations nationwide.

The opening ceremonies of the Agraryo Trade Fair were held last October 17, at the DAR Central Office in Quezon City. In attendance were Margie Santos, who represented Mayor Joy Belmonte of Quezon City; Joy Barcoma, Miss World Philippines 2021 and May Angelica Saludez from the Philippines Commission on Women as special guests.

Also in attendance were Undersecretary Amihilda Sangcopan of the Office of Muslim Affairs, and Undersecretary Rowena Nina Taduran of the Support Services Office.

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ORGANIC FERTILIZER PRODUCTION Sen. Cynthia A. Villar reiterates her advocacy for the use of organic fertilizer during the continuation of the Finance Subcommittee B hearing on the proposed P167.458-billion budget of the Department of Agriculture and its attached agencies. Villar, chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture, Food, and Agrarian Reform, opposed the P10-billion allocation for the importation of chemical fertilizer, citing its harmful effects to the soil which is already 38 percent degraded. "Importation is only temporary. We use that to cover our shortage, but the permanent solution is to produce our own," Villar said Tuesday, October 17, 2023. She related that in her hometown of Las Piñas, she established 89 composting facilities converting kitchen and garden wastes into organic fertilizer. The monthly production of 89 tons of organic fertilizer were distributed for free to farmers and urban gardeners. JOSEPH B. VIDAL / SENATE PRIB

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Maayos na gamit sa pangisda, giit isama sa ayuda

Hinimok ni Senador Francis "Tol" Tolentino ang Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) na isama ang fishing equipment sa assistance program ng ahensya para sa mga mangingisda bukod sa kasalukuyang cash at food packs na ipinamamahagi.

Sa budget briefing ng Department of Agriculture (DA) at attached agencies nito sa Senado, binanggit ni Sen. Tol ang kanyang kamakailang konsultasyon sa mga mangingisdang nakaligtas sa banggaan sa dagat noong Oktubre 2 na ikinamatay ng tatlong mangingisdang Pilipino.

"Kasi bukod doon ang hinihingi nila, lalo na 'yong nagpapalaot sa malayo, kasi compass lang ginagamit nila e— kapag nakatali na sa payao, lalarga na 'yong mga maliliit na bangka, hindi na sila nagkikita-kita," sabi ni Sen. Tol.

Idinagdag niya na kung maaari ay isama sa programa ng BFAR ang pamimigay ng mas maayos na gamit o paraan ng komunikasyon sa mga mangingisda para madali sila masubaybayan habang nasa karagatan.

"Maaari bang maging bahagi iyon ng programa? Sa pamamagitan ng

pagbibigay sa kanila ng paraan ng komunikasyon kung saan madali silang masusubaybayan?" ang tanong ni Tolentino sa BFAR.

Nangako naman si BFAR Director Atty. Demosthenes R. Escoto na isasama ng ahensya ang mungkahi ni Tolentino.

Noong Oktubre 12, pinangunahan ni Sen. Tol ang motu proprio inquiry ng Senate special committee on maritime and admiralty zones sa insidente ng banggaan malapit sa Bajo de Masinloc na dinaluhan ng mga naulilang pamilya at survivors. (Gemma Garcia)



Red tide ibinabala ng BFAR

ILANG lugar sa bansa ang nagpositibo sa paralytic shellfish poison o toxic red tide.

Ayon sa Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, positibo sa red tide ang Sapiian Bay (Ivisan at Sapiian sa Capiz, Mambuciao at Camanci, sa Batan sa Aklan); coastal waters

ng Pilar; President Roxas; Roxas City sa Capiz; coastal waters ng Gigantes Islands, Carles sa Iloilo; coastal waters ng Dauis at Tagbilaran City sa Bohol; at Dumanquilas Bay sa Zamboanga del Sur.

Dahil na rin sa insidente ay ipinagbabawal ng BFAR ang pagkain sa

lahat ng uri ng shelfish at Acetes o alamang na nakukuha sa mga nabanggit na lugar.

Sa kabila nito, ayon sa BFAR ay ligtas namang kainin ang isda, pusit, hipon, alimango tiyakin lang na nahugasan itong mabuti at maayos ang pagkakaluto.

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Tolentino sa BFAR: Maayos na gamit sa pangisda, isama sa ayuda

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RNT



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Tolentino: Give equip't aid to fishers

SENATOR Francis "Tol" Tolentino urged the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) on Tuesday to include fishing equipment boost in the agency's assistance program for fisherfolks apart from the current cash and food packs being distributed.

During the budget briefing of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and attached agencies at the Senate, Sen. Tol cited his recent consultation with the fishermen who survived the October 2 maritime collision that killed three Filipino fisherfolks.

"Kasi bukod doon ang hinihingi nila, lalo na 'yong nagpapalaot sa malayo, kasi compass lang ginagamit nila e— kapag nakatali na sa payao, lalarga rin 'yong mga maliliit na bangka,

hindinasi na gagkita-kita," Sen. Tol said.

He added: "Can that be part of the program? By providing them with a mode of communication wherein they can easily be tracked?"

BFAR Director Atty. Demosthenes R. Escoto expressed the agency's commitment to include

Tolentino's suggestion.

Last October 12, Sen. Tol led the motu proprio inquiry of the Senate Special Committee on Mari-

time and Admiralty Zones on the ramming incident near Bajo de Masinloc attended by the bereaved families and survivors.





ASF state of calamity declared in N. Vizcaya

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya – A state of calamity has been declared in this province due to the outbreak of African swine fever (ASF) in nine towns.

The Sangguniang Panlalawigan approved on Monday a resolution of the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council led by Gov. Jose Gambito, which recommended the declaration.

Gambito said the provincial government can now utilize its calamity fund to assist farmers whose hogs were affected by the swine disease.

The Nueva Vizcaya provincial veterinary office said ASF cases were recorded in 42 barangays in Quezon, Bambang, Dupax del Norte, Bayombong, Bagabag, Kaya-pa, Kasibu, Diadi and Solano towns.

Provincial veterinarian Christopher Seraspi said 1,290 pigs in 133 farms were found positive for ASF.

At least 1,010 pigs were culled while 280 deaths were reported. An undetermined number of hogs have not been tested.

Seraspi said losses incurred by the hog industry in the province due to ASF were

estimated at P20 million.

Gambito recommended that affected hog raisers receive P5,000 per head of culled hog.

"The provincial government remains committed to protecting the livelihood of hog raisers and ensuring the safety and stability of the agricultural sector," he said.

In Isabela, the provincial veterinary office said new ASF cases were recorded in Angadanan, Aurora, Alicia, Echague, Luna, Mallig, Quirino, San Isidro, Gamu, Ramon, Roxas, Burgos and Cabagan.

The setting up of checkpoints in each town has been ordered to monitor the entry and exit of hogs and pork products.

New ASF cases were also detected in several barangays in Cagayan.

Hog deaths were recorded in Barangay Malalinta in Tuao town, Barangay Nangalisan in Solana and Barangay Roma in Enrile.

Members of the surveillance team of the Cagayan provincial veterinary office were dispatched to assist in implementing biosecurity and control measures to prevent the spread of swine diseases. – **Victor Martin**

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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ADDRESSING SUPPLY WOES

PH GETS 295,000 MT OF RICE IN BEST 'SPECIAL' DEAL WITH INDIA

By **Jordeene B. Lagare**
@jordeenelagare

The Indian government has given the green light to supply more than 1 million metric tons of nonbasmati white rice to seven countries—with the Philippines receiving the highest allocation—amid its export ban.

Based on the Oct. 18 notification issued by India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry, a total of 1.03 million MT of rice will be exported to Nepal, Cam-

eroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Republic of Guinea, Malaysia, the Philippines and Seychelles.

All shipments will be facilitated via a government-to-government (G2G) scheme by India's National Cooperative Exports Ltd.

Federation of Free Farmers national manager Raul Montemayor said this latest development does not guarantee that the Philippines will be able to secure rice from India.

"First, it depends on the

price. Second, and most important, the quality. In the past, our local importers have not secured rice from India despite significantly lower prices, most probably due to concerns about quality and reliability of supply," Montemayor said.

He also said the volume provided by India is "not that significant, assuming it is fully utilized" since the total rice import requirement is about 2.5 to 3 million MT annually.

Among the seven nations,

the bulk of rice exports went to the Philippines with 295,000 MT, equivalent to a share of 28.5 percent, followed by Cameroon with 190,000 MT.

Ban exemption

This transpired after India imposed a moratorium on exporting nonbasmati white rice in July this year—a move questioned by the World Trade Organization due to its impact on the global food market—to stabilize its supply and temper

rising prices.

Yet in the Philippines, Vietnam remains the top supplier of rice according to the latest government data.

The country imported 2.68 million MT of rice as of Sept. 6, based on the Bureau of Plant Industry's (BPI's) latest tally. Vietnam delivered 89.75 percent or 2.4 million MT of the total. India shipped 13,579.39 MT of imported rice, reflecting a meager share of 0.5 percent.

Agriculture Undersecretary

Leocadio Sebastian said earlier that the country's rice imports may reach 3.1 million MT this year against the US Department of Agriculture's estimate of 3.5 million MT.

Separately, BPI director Gerald Glenn Panganiban had assured the country of a stable supply of rice in the last three months of the year as it is expected to harvest 1.9 million MT of rice within the month, tantamount to a buffer stock of 74 days. [INQ](#)



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Meat imports down as of end-Sept

BY JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL

THE country's overall meat imports from January to September went down due to lower shipments of pork and beef, the Department of Agriculture (DA) reported on Wednesday.

Data from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) showed that meat imports in the first nine months of the year were recorded at 923.16 million kilograms (kg), 8.6 per-

cent lower from the 1.01 billion kg posted in the same period last year. BAI is an agency under the DA.

On a monthly basis, September's meat import also declined by

8.08 percent and was estimated at 105.8 million kg. This was lower from the 115.1 million kg logged in August.

BAI said the lower level of imports was caused by the decline in pork shipments, accounting for 49.68 percent of total imports.

It fell 15.86 percent to 458.70 million kg from 545.21 million kg a year earlier.

Meanwhile, beef imports, which accounted for 11.55 percent of the total, dipped by 20.79 percent to

106.67 million kg from 134.68 million kg.

The country also imported about 324.97 million kg of chicken in the same period, 10.58 percent higher than the 293.86 million kg posted last year. Chicken is the second-highest imported meat product, accounting 35.2 percent of the country's total meat imports.

Importation of buffalo meat, meanwhile, decreased by 10.25 percent during the period. It was estimated at 31.66 million kg,

lower from the previous year's 35.27 million kg.

Figures from the BAI also showed that imports of lamb meat went up by 18.21 percent to 642,884 kg from 543,808 kg posted the previous year.

Turkey shipments logged the highest decline during the period by 31.03 percent and was registered at 270,456 kg, lower from last year's import level of 392,151 kg.

The largest increase, meanwhile, was posted in the volume of im-

ported duck meat. It increased by 290.08 percent to 229,301 kg from 58,782 kg posted a year earlier.

According to BAI, Brazil was the biggest supplier of meat imports from January to September, contributing 305.03 million kg that accounted for 33.04 percent of the country's total imported meat.

The United States and Spain followed, supplying the country with about 162.11 million kg and 113.69 million kg of meat imports, respectively.



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Batac gears up for smart agriculture

BATAC CITY: This city in Ilocos Norte is gearing up to become the region's next model of a smart and sustainable community through innovative solutions for a better and easier life.

Backed by the Department of Science and Technology (DoST) along with other government agencies, the Batac city government is in the process of upgrading its digital highway to speed up government transactions as well as improving the food chain supply through smart agriculture.

DoST-Region 1 (Ilocos Region) Director Teresita Tabag, in a press conference

on Tuesday, said Batac has been selected as one of the pilot areas in the region for the department's smart and sustainable communities program.

She explained that under the program, assessments of the needs of a locality will be done to determine the appropriate technology to be implemented.

"Beyond the government, we are also looking for a collaborative effort from different players [to] expose our partners outside of government to see what works best for them," she said.

Other cities from the region that are part of the program are Candon in

Ilocos Sur, San Fernando in La Union and Alaminos in Pangasinan.

State-run Mariano Marcos State University here has, likewise, committed to work with the local government and other partner government agencies like the Department of Information and Communications Technology, the Department of the Interior and Local Government and the National Economic and Development Authority toward making Batac a smart and sustainable community.

In time for the 2023 Regional Science and Technology Week celebration in this region from Oct. 16 to 18,

2023, the DoST, along with partner agencies, signed a memorandum of agreement on Tuesday at the Laoag Centennial Arena for the launch of the smart and sustainable communities in the region.

As part of the agreement, each party shall allot funds as needed, and the DoST will provide cutting-edge technologies and best practices to make life smarter for the people.

The Smart and Sustainable Communities Program is in line with the Philippine Development Plan, which aims to deepen economic and social transformation in the country.

PNA

Food insecurity/inflation



John Mangun

OUTSIDE THE BOX

THE Sun.com is a US online edition of The Sun, Britain's largest newspaper. Its headline on October 13 read: "US warns Starlink satellites will start killing people and chance of hitting a human will soon be 61 percent each year."

Damn that Elon Musk. First, he will not ban from "X" the "posts" from individuals that all good people who know exactly should be banned. Now his Starlink satellites—the service from which should really be free since he is so rich—will start dropping out of the sky killing people. In fact, as the headline says, you have a 61 percent chance of being killed by Musk and what did you ever do to the richest man on earth?

Also "in fact," you are not too terrified to read the actual article, "By 2035, this means that one person

[out of 7 billion] would be expected to be injured or killed every two years." Well, there goes my brilliant idea for an "Anti-Musk Concrete and Steel Umbrella."

One economic commentator wrote that in 1906, Alfred Henry Lewis stated, "There are only nine meals between mankind and anarchy" to illustrate the problem of national food insecurity. That is the quote that has been repeated several million times. But it is completely inaccurate.

What Lewis wrote in the New York Morning Journal (briefly re-

named The Journal in 1895) was this: "Those of us who are well fed, well garmented and well ordered, ought not to forget that necessity makes frequently the root of crime. It is well for us to recollect that even in our own law-abiding, not to say virtuous cases, the only barrier between us and anarchy is the last nine meals we've had. It may be taken as axiomatic that a starving man is never a good citizen."

Lewis was not speaking of the problem of "food insecurity" but the problem of "haves versus the have-nots."

Nonetheless there are many nations where food security is a critical problem as the 2010-2012 Arab Spring revolts and riots came on the heels of food price and accessibility troubles.

A local newspaper publishes a story from Agence France-Presse with the headline "FAO [UN Food and Agriculture Organization]: Disasters cause \$3.8 trillion in crop losses over 30 years." Crop losses due to weather disasters is a huge problem particularly in the Philippines. But again, context.

Thirty years of \$3.6 trillion weather losses equals losing about 2.5 percent of total crop and livestock production of \$5 trillion each year. More context. Each Filipino eats about 118,810 grams of rice per year. Each Filipino wastes about 14 grams of rice every day, or about 4.3 percent of the total rice eaten.

Maybe humans waste more crop and livestock production than weather destroys. However, as before the Arab Spring, food inflation is crushing millions.

Food inflation in Philippines averaged 4.85 percent from 1995 until 2023, reaching an all-time high of 17 percent in July of 2008 and a record low of -0.90 in 2019. Last month it jumped to 9.7 percent. Food security and food inflation go hand in hand. 'Outsourcing' your food is more expensive. Further, insecurity and inflation grow worse if there is a lack of availability: the physical availability of food and if there is a problem with accessibility: affected by factors like transportation infrastructure and market access.

It is not enough to say, "grow
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Mangun...

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more, waste less, grow more" rinse and repeat. The Philippines has the least amount of arable land (5.6 million hectares) compared to our major neighbors. Indonesia: 26.3 million, Thailand: 16.8 million, and Vietnam: 6.8 million hectares.

We must get serious about substitution of high-value crops for export. We have not improved rice yields

like our neighbors have. Despite its importance, the agricultural sector faces challenges such as outdated farming practices and lack of modern technology.

We need a Department of Agriculture that understands the 'farm-to-market' concept and can get that implemented.

E-mail me at mangun@gmail.com. Follow me on Twitter @mangunonmarkets. PSE stock-market information and technical analysis provided by AAA Southeast Equities Inc.

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FAO: Ceremony highlights water's role against troubled backdrop

THE global ceremony marking this year's World Food Day took place in Rome last October 16, against a backdrop of increasing world hunger and conflicts.

In particular, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) said participants stressed water's critical role in underpinning our food security and how we can better manage and not take for granted this precious and finite resource.

In opening remarks, FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu said this year's World Food Day theme "makes the vital connection between water and food—without water there is no food and there is no food security without water security."

However, rapid population growth, urbanization, industrialization, economic development and the climate crisis have all taken a toll on our water resources the world over, while increasing floods and

droughts are further impacting agri-food systems—jeopardizing the livelihoods of millions of farmers, Qu noted.

Producing more with less

"BUT the good news is that we can produce more and better, with less," said Qu.

"We can reduce water use, by using water wisely, and by recycling. And we can reduce agriculture's water footprint by adopting a holistic and integrated approach to water management."

Italy's President Sergio Mattarella in his address noted that: "Scarcity of water is at the root of poverty, of conflict" and therefore the resource has to be managed "with determination and ingenuity as it can lead to peace and well-being."

Irish President Michael D. Higgins, said: "We are at a perilous tipping point in terms of this precious resource." He added: "It is important

that we not encourage young people to repeat or extend our mistakes, you will have to do everything differently!"

And Pope Francis, in a message read on his behalf said: "World Food Day is being celebrated at a time when misery and despair give no respite to many of our brothers and sisters," and highlighted the "irreplaceable value" of water as a resource for all living beings on the planet.

In his video message, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres underlined water's role as a necessity for nutritious and healthy food, adding: "The sustainable management of water for agriculture and food production is essential to end hunger, achieve the SDGs, and preserve water for future generations."

Mariam Almheiri, United Arab Emirates Minister for Climate Change and Environment, said:

"There are so many fundamental things we need to change about how water is managed and it's so important that we do this because water has not been given the attention it deserves."

The World Food Day celebration also featured the presentation of the second-ever FAO Achievement Award, which recognizes professional achievements, dedication and innovation in the field of agriculture and food security.

This year's award has been jointly conferred on the Sara Bangla Krishak Society, a national farmers' organization from Bangladesh and Farmer Lifeline Technologies from Kenya, which has pioneered technologies to detect crop pests and diseases. In addition, the FAO Director-General congratulated the FAO country office in Nepal for its Emergency Center for Transboundary Animal Diseases.

Malaya Business Insight

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Soybeans climb to 3-week high

SINGAPORE- Chicago soybean futures gained more ground on Wednesday, climbing to a three-week high, as strong demand in the US domestic market underpinned prices.

Wheat rose for the first time in three sessions on bargain buying, although ample supplies from the Black Sea region limited the gains.

"There is some buying opportunity in wheat, given the decline in prices," said one Singapore-based trader. "China has been actively taking cargoes from Australia and other origins."

The most-active soybean contract on the Chicago Board of

Trade (CBOT) was up 0.9 percent at \$13.08-3/4 a bushel, as of 0344 GMT, after rising earlier in the session to \$13.09-3/4 a bushel, the highest since Sept. 27.

Wheat gained 1.4 percent at \$5.78-1/4 a bushel and corn rose 0.8 percent to \$4.93 a bushel.

Industry data released on Monday showed monthly US soybean crush at its highest-ever level for September, and end-of-month soyoil stocks at their lowest in nearly nine years.

For wheat, rising exports from Russia, the world's biggest shipper, continue to weigh on prices.

- Reuters

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India extends sugar export curbs in risk to global supply

INDIA, the world's second-biggest sugar producer, extended its export restrictions in a renewed bid to protect domestic supplies, a move that's likely to tighten the global market and raise costs for the food industry.

The government will continue its curbs on overseas shipments of the sweetener beyond October 31, according to a notice from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade on Wednesday, confirming a Bloomberg News report last week.

India introduced a quota system in 2022-23 and limited sugar exports to about 6 million tons after late rains cut production, compared with an unrestricted 11 million tons a year earlier. It's unclear at this stage the size of the quota, if any, for overseas shipments that will be allocated to

millers for 2023-24.

Raw sugar futures are hovering near their highest level since 2011 on concerns about faltering supplies from India and Thailand. While the ban may cool India's domestic prices, it's a blow to global manufacturers of everything from fizzy drinks to chocolate and baked products.

The Indian government is taking no chances with inflation, with several states heading for polls in the coming month ahead of the national election in 2024, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi will seek a third term. The nation recorded its weakest monsoon in five years and any drop in agricultural output will heap pressure on authorities to control food prices.

The restriction doesn't apply to sugar being exported to the European

Union and the United States under some quota systems, according to the notice.

Domestic sugar prices have gained about 3 percent so far this year, according to data compiled by the food ministry. The government indirectly controls costs as it regulates the volume millers can sell each month.

According to a Bloomberg survey of 14 analysts, traders and millers last month, most said India may not export any sugar this season due to lower output. Two respondents said shipments could total at least 2 million tons.

India also restricted shipments of organic sugar, according to the notification.

China's GM crops

CHINA has approved dozens of

genetically modified corn and soybean seed varieties for planting, in a breakthrough move that could eventually boost production and reduce dependence on foreign supplies.

The country is the world's top importer of soybeans and corn. Large-scale marketing of GM crops would support the government's drive for food self-sufficiency and security, a top priority for President Xi Jinping.

A national committee set up by the agriculture ministry has approved 37 GM corn seed and 14 soybean seed varieties, after a preliminary review, the ministry said on Tuesday.

The approved list, including four corn varieties developed by China National Seed Group, a unit of

Syngenta Group, and five soybean varieties from Beijing Dabeinong Technology Group, is available for public review until November 15.

Actual planted areas for these seed varieties, after final approval, should be in accordance with relevant government arrangements, according to the notice on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

China started a pilot program for commercial planting of GM corn and soybean crops in 2021 and has expanded the trial to 20 counties in five provinces including major grain producers Hebei and Jilin this year, state media reported, citing an official from the agriculture ministry.

The acreage designated for planting the GM crops is still very small, however, reaching just 4 million mu

(267,000 hectares) this year, state media reported.

Corn area alone in China is about 44 million hectares, with output of over 288 million tons likely in the 2023-24 year, according to the agriculture ministry. While productivity lags far behind the US, where GM varieties are widely grown, such seeds can increase yields in China by as much as 12 percent, the ministry said.

Chinese seed company shares were among the country's best performing stocks. Dabeinong surged 10 percent to the limit, while Yuan Longping High-tech Agriculture Co. was up more than 8 percent. The national market for GM corn seed may be worth as much as 60 billion yuan (\$8.2 billion), according to some industry estimates. *Bloomberg News*