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## DA pushes for more PPPs in agriculture

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has highlighted the need for more public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the agriculture and fisheries sector to help boost the country's agricultural production.

"PPP is really the way we need to go," Agriculture Undersecretary for Policy, Planning, and Regulations Mercedita Sombilla said during the recent PPP forum organized by the DA-Project Development Service (DA-PDS).

While acknowledging that the private sector may not be enticed in agriculture because of its vulnerabilities especially with climate change, she challenged the forum participants to think of out of the box strategies and projects that are beneficial for both parties.

"I hope that as we continue to have fora like this in the future, we can develop more and more PPP projects that will really push the agricultural sector further than what we really target," Sombilla said.

"We have a PPP Unit in the DA and I hope that all our regional offices will also have a conscious effort to really look for projects that we can implement through PPP," Sombilla said.

She also stressed the need for more PPP projects to help the government and for the local agriculture and fisheries sectors to move towards industrialization.

During the forum, PPP Center Capacity Building and Knowledge Management Service director Feroisa Francisca Concordia discussed the Philippine PPP Program, concepts, processes, legal frameworks, capacity building frameworks, and updates on the PPP Code of the Philippines.

Meanwhile, DA-Investment Programming Division chief Joseph Manicad discussed the National Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization

and Industrialization Plan (NAFMIP) 2021-2030.

He also identified major challenges and opportunities for growth and other appropriate and relevant strategies for the sector.

Moreover, DA-PDS Project Identification and Evaluation Division Chief Rowel Del Rosario presented PPP opportunities in the sector such as terms of establishing production and postharvest facilities, agri-fishery industrial business corridors, and agriculture and fisheries laboratories and testing centers, among others.

DA Undersecretary for Finance Agnes Catherine Miranda, DA Undersecretary for Livestock Deogracias Victor Savellano, DA-Legal Service Director Willie Ann Angsiy, DA-PDS Director Fernando Flores, DA-Regional executive directors, and officials and representatives of DA bureaus and banner programs also participated in the forum.

The DA-PDS organized the forum to discuss PPP projects that will help boost the country's agricultural production.

In the third quarter of the year, the country's agricultural output declined by 0.3 percent as the crops and fisheries sectors recorded lower outputs, according to latest data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). This marks the second consecutive quarter that farm production declined.

The value of agriculture and fisheries production amounted to P412.41 billion from July to September. This was lower than the 1.2 percent decline in the second quarter, but marked a reversal from the 1.6 percent growth registered in the same quarter last year.

However, from January to September, the country's farm output inched up by 0.2 percent.

— Catherine Talavera





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## *Pinoys' vegetable consumption half the world average*

A Filipino family only consumes 60 kilos of vegetables annually, compared to the average 120 kilos in other countries, former agriculture secretary William Dar said yesterday as he pushed for urban farming in Metro Manila.

During the Pandesal Forum in Quezon City, Dar added that the Department of Agriculture (DA) should allocate more budget for urban farming.

"All these years, the Filipino diet became westernized, there is what we call westernization of the Filipino diet. Few young Filipinos eat vegetables. The need to eat more vegetables should be included in the curriculum, from primary, elementary, senior high school. The attitude has to be changed, that it is much healthier to eat vegetables and fruits, rather than western food," Dar said.

While urban farming was introduced during his stint as secretary of the DA in 2000, the budget allocated for the program should be increased, he added.

According to Dar, urban farming is necessary as an alternative food source as the country is hit by at least 20 typhoons annually. Benguet, being the vegetable capital of the country, could not keep up with the demand

for vegetables once typhoons hit the Philippines.

"The DA and the BPI (Bureau of Plant Industry) are still continuing this program but the only problem is the very limited budget given to the program as we are still rice-centric. About 60 to 65 percent of the budget of the DA is devoted to rice. While I agree that must be the level, there are opportunities for significantly increasing the budget of agriculture, you have to really invest largely and significantly in high value agriculture and that should be a big direction the government must undertake," Dar said.

For his part, BPI director Gerald Glenn Panganiban admitted that the budget for urban farming is only P430 million.

"It was our first time last year (to allocate a budget for urban farming), around P400 million and we were able to sustain it. For this year, about P430 million. It increased a little," Panganiban said.

According to Panganiban, urban farming can help amid the possible impact of the El Niño phenomenon.

"Urban farming minimizes use of water and because the environment is controlled, it is not affected by drought or typhoon," Panganiban said.

— Bella Cariaso





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# DA eyes more PPPs for farms, fisheries

BY JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL

**T**HE Department of Agriculture is eyeing more public-private partnership (PPP) projects to help boost the local agriculture and fisheries sector and move it toward industrialization.

During the PPP forum conducted by the DA's Project Development Service (PDS) last November 24, Agriculture Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and Regulations Mercedita Sombilla said that "PPP is the way we need to go" to help boost the country's agricultural production.

"I hope that as we continue to

have fora like this in the future, we can develop more and more PPP projects that would really push the agricultural sector further than what we really target," said Sombilla.

Citing the vulnerabilities of the sector that may hinder the private sector from investing in areas such as climate change, Sombilla

challenged forum participants to "think of out-of-the-box strategies and projects that are beneficial for both parties."

"We have a PPP Unit in the DA, and I hope that all our regional offices will also make a conscious effort to really look for projects that we can implement through PPP," she added.

PPP opportunities in the sector were also presented by PDS, such as establishing production and postharvest facilities, agri-fishery industrial business corridors, and agriculture and fisheries laboratories and testing centers, among others.

During the forum, PPP Center

Capacity Building and Knowledge Management Service Director Feroisa Francisca Concordia also discussed the Philippine PPP Program, concepts, processes, legal frameworks, capacity building frameworks and updates on the PPP Code of the Philippines.

Meanwhile, the National Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization and Industrialization Plan 2021-2030 was explained by DA-Investment Programming Division Chief Joseph Manicad, wherein major challenges and opportunities for growth and other appropriate and relevant strategies for the sector were identified.



## Urban farming pushed

INDUSTRY and government leaders yesterday said innovative strategies geared toward achieving sustainable agricultural practices can be adopted within the urban setting.

"Urban and peri-urban agriculture do not replace rural production, but rather complements it. It is a way of sustainable living because we produce food in our cities and in our own communities," said Gerald Glenn Panganiban, director of the Bureau of Plant Industry, at the Pandesal Forum in Quezon City.

Panganiban highlighted the need for adopting and supporting urban farming as part of a holistic approach to securing food sustainability, mitigating environmental impact, and promoting inclusive community development.

Cecilio Pedro, president of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc., said private sector can be a partner in this endeavor. "We, the people involved in business, are willing to invest as long as we're going to see that it's going to be profitable in the future so that we can sustain the operation. It is a very tough job, and we need everyone's help. We need to put our acts together with the government, academe, and private sector," Pedro said.

William Dar, senior adviser of GoNegosyo's Kapatid Angat Lahat Agriculture Program, concurred with Pedro, stressing that agriculture is a business proposition.

"Let's not plant without using technologies or innovations and cluster ourselves into cooperatives so that we can partner with private sectors and be part of the value chain system," Dar said.





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## DA expects harvest from Iwahig farms in Dec

THE pilot technology demonstration farms developed by inmates at the Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm (IPPF) in Palawan will be ready for harvest next month, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said.

The DA said since July, at least 70 persons deprived of liberty were trained in the production of high-value crops and rice under the Reformation Initiative for Sustainable Environment for Food Security project with the Department of Justice.

The DA said the 4.5-hectare demo farm in Iwahig is expected to yield 96.8 metric tons of rice, watermelon, melon, eggplant, tomatoes, red chili pepper, pole sitao, cucumber, okra, squash, patola, ampalaya and sweet corn with an estimated gross income of P7.3 million.

DA said proceeds will be used by the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) to expand its agricultural development activities by using idle lands



**Penal farm.** A corrections officer on Saturday stands guard as persons deprived of liberty start soil preparation for rice planting at Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan on Sept. 3, 2023. (Photo courtesy of IPPF Information Office)

to support government's food security campaign.

The Philippine Economic Zone Authority earlier said it is eyeing the conversion of IPPF into its first vertically-integrated mega ecozone that would accom-

modate big-ticket projects. The is in talks with the BuCor for the use of the 26,000-hectare property housing the prison facility as a public ecozone that would be self-sustaining in terms of power, water and ports. - **Jed Macapagal**



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## Agri dep't to seek out more PPPs to boost farm, fisheries productivity

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it will seek out more public-private partnerships (PPPs) to boost the productivity of farms and fisheries.

In a statement, Undersecretary Mercedita A. Sombilla said PPP projects will help the government and agriculturists to move towards industrializing their operations.

She said private partners might be deterred from investing by risks to agriculture like climate change.

"We can develop more and more PPP projects that would really push the agricultural sector further than what we really target," Ms. Sombilla said at a forum last week.

She also urged the DA's regional offices to "make a conscious effort to really look for projects that we can implement through PPP."

The DA issued a special order (SO) last month directing its staff to organize events

to solicit more private-sector investment in agriculture.

The SO said such events aim to promote PPP and forge partnerships with private entities that can bankroll critical projects that will deliver much-needed services to farmers and fisherfolk or bring them in as technical partners.

"*Talagang importante ang mga PPP Forums like this (PPP forums like these are important) because I think this is the way to go to help the government,*" Ms. Sombilla said.

Also pitched to potential investors were PPP opportunities to set up post-harvest facilities, agri-fishery industrial business corridors, and laboratories and testing centers.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. has cited the need for government and private sector collaboration to promote agribusinesses and make it more efficient and raise the value of crops. — **Adrian H. Halili**





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## PhilMech distributes machinery worth P181M to co-ops

THE Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech) said that it has distributed P181 million worth of farm equipment to co-operatives in four provinces.

PhilMech distributed equipment to farmers cooperative and associations (FCAs) in Sultan Kudarat, La Union, Pangasinan, and Occidental Mindoro.

PhilMech handed out four single pass rice mills and six-ton dryers to four FCAs in Sultan Kudarat valued at P16.9 million. — **Adrian H. Halili**

### FULL STORY



Read the full story by  
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<[tinyurl.com/yux2mg9z](http://tinyurl.com/yux2mg9z)>



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# Manila bans poultry imports from 2 US states

By JASPER EMMANUEL Y. ARCALAS

[@jearcalas](#)

**T**HE Philippines has slapped a temporary ban on poultry products from two states in the United States of America due to bird flu outbreaks.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. issued Memorandum Order (MO) 69 that authorized the temporary ban on the importation of domestic and wild birds and their products from the States of Minnesota and South Dakota, USA.

The import ban covers all products and by-products which include

poultry meat, day-old chicks, eggs and semen, according to the agriculture department.

Laurel issued the import ban following the confirmed outbreaks of H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in the two US states recently. The outbreaks were reported by the US Department of Agriculture to the World Organisation for Animal Health following the confirmation by National Veterinary Services Laboratories, United States's national laboratory.

"The rapid spread of H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in the United States of America in a short

period of time since its first laboratory detection necessitates a wider coverage of trade restrictions to prevent the entry of HPAI virus and protect the health of the local poultry population," Laurel said.

With the import ban in place, the **Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI)** has already suspended the processing, evaluation and issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances for the importation of the various poultry products and by-products from the two US states.

In recent years, the Philippines saw the resurgence of bird flu domestically at a wider magnitude and scale.

Latest BAI report indicated that there are only two remaining active bird flu cases in the Philippines—one in a barangay in Tarlac City and another in a barangay in Candaba, Pampanga.

Earlier this month, the national government allowed the commercial use of bird flu vaccines in domestic poultry to help in curbing the spread of bird flu nationwide and minimize economic losses incurred by raisers. **(Related story: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2023/11/08/phl-allows-commercial-use-of-ai-vaccine-for-domestic-poultry-industry/>)**

The landmark policy decision by the DA was hailed by industry players and experts, noting that the use of bird flu vaccines in domestic poultry would help ensure the country's food security, particularly for proteins, and deter the use of illegal vaccines. **(Related story: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2023/11/09/government-avian-flu-vaccine-approval-to-help-boost-phl-food-security-poultry-industry-players/>)**

The country's chicken meat imports last year rose by 1.57 percent to 411.069 million kilograms from 404.711 million kilograms in 2021,

BAI data showed.

Figures from the attached agency of the DA indicated that the Philippines imported 102.686 million kg of chicken leg quarters last year and 51.717 million kg of chicken cuts.

BAI data showed that Brazil was the country's top meat supplier as it accounted for 28 percent of the total meat import volume last year.

Brazil exported 384.095 million kg of meat products to the Philippines, bulk of which were chicken meat. Brazil was the country's top supplier of chicken meat products at 235.256 million kilograms followed by the US at 122.931 million kg.





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## Programang agrikultura para sa mga PDL



**S**a loob ng mga piitan sa ating bansa, alam n'yo bang bukod sa pagsisiksikan, isa pang malaking problema ay ang kakarampot na P70 kada araw lamang ang nakalaan na badyet para sa almusal, tanghalian at hapunan ng mga nakakulong o ang mga tinatawag na person deprived of liberty (PDL)?

Nagpanukala noon ang Department of Justice (DOJ) sa hearing ng kanilang kagawaran para sa taong 2024 na itaas kahit man lang sa P100 kada araw ang food allowance ng bawat PDL.

Kulang na kulang ang P70 lalo na't patuloy na nagtataasan ang mga bilingin. Pero hindi napaunlakan ang hiling ng DOJ dahil sa laki ng halagang kakailanganin na aabutin sa bilyon-bilyong piso.

May panukalang batas ang inyong Kuya Pulong para makatulong sa kakulangan ng pagkain sa mga kulungan. Ang House Bill

(HB) 3541 na inihain namin nina Benguet Congressman Eric Yap at ACT-CIS Party-list Congressman Edvic Yap ay may layuning magkaroon ng programang agrikultural livelihood program sa mga kulungan na may mga malalawak na lugar na puwedeng pagtataniman.

Sa ilalim ng bill, boluntaryo ang pagsali sa programa ng mga PDL. Bibigyan din sila ng karampatang training para sa pagtatanim.

Ang Department of Agriculture (DA) ang magsusuplay ng mga binhi, pataba, kagamitan at teknolohiya para maipatupad ang agrikultural livelihood program. Ang DA rin ang gagabay sa mga opisyal ng mga kulungan para mapamahalaan nang maaayos ang programa at mabigyan ng training ang mga PDL.

Bukod sa magkakaroon ang mga PDL ng pagkukunan ng masustanyang pagkain, ang isa pang kagandahan ng programang ito ay ang mga sasali ay kikita pa. Babayaran sila ng minimum wage sa kanilang pagtatrabaho sa taniman.

Nakasaad din sa bill na kapag may sobrang ani ay maari itong ibenta at ang kikitain ay ilalagay

sa itatatag na Prison Agricultural Revolving Fund (PARF) ng bawat jail facility na may agrikultural livelihood program.

Kalahati ng malilikom ng PARF ay ibibigay sa mga PDL na kalahok sa programa bilang mga dividend. Ang matitira sa PARF ay gagamitin para mapaganda ang pasilidad ng kulungan at magkaroon muli ng panimulang pondo para sa susunod na taon.

May kahalintulad ng ganitong programa ang isinasagawa ngayon ang Bureau of Corrections (BuCor), DA at mga pribadong kumpanya sa Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm sa Palawan.

May halos 500 PDL ang makikinabang sa programa ng Iwahig.

Kung maipapatupad ito sa lahat ng jail facility na may taniman sa pamamagitan ng pagsasabatas ng ating bill, bubuti ang mga kalagayan ng mga PDL.

Gaganda hindi lamang ang kanilang pisikal na kalusugan kundi maging ang kanilang mental health dahil ang pagkakaroon ng pagkakaabalahan at pagiging produktibo habang nasa loob ng kulungan ay makakagaan sa kanilang dinadalang mga problema.





Speaker Martin Romualdez checks the prices of vegetables during a visit to the Farmers Market in Cubao, Quezon City yesterday.

MICHAEL VARCAS

## House to closely monitor prices of basic commodities

By SHEILA CRISOSTOMO

To guard against unscrupulous traders, the House of Representatives would closely monitor the prices of basic commodities this Christmas season, Speaker Martin Romualdez said

yesterday.

According to Romualdez, the chamber will make sure the costs of basic commodities, such as food, would remain within the bounds of their suggested retail price (SRP) this holiday.

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"We want to make sure that traders do not take advantage of the holiday season to jack up prices of basic commodities. The Christmas season is meant to be a time of giving and compassion, and we want to make sure that prices of goods are affordable to a great majority of our people," he noted.

Romualdez said the House wants to ensure the prices of *Noche Buena* items will not be unnecessarily jacked up.

"Vegetables, such as onions, garlic, tomatoes and cabbage, should be within the reach of the Filipino. We appeal to retailers to follow the SRP," he added.

Romualdez and House deputy majority leader for communications and ACT-CIS party-list Rep. Erwin Tulfo made a surprise visit to Farmers Market in Cubao to check on the supply and prices of food items.

Finding that the price of rice is slowly increasing in the market, the two committed to check the situation with "sources," such as traders and importers.

"Although there are rice here that are priced at P55 and P50 a kilo, there are others that are really expensive," Romualdez said.

Tulfo also promised that the House would do price checks in markets on a regular basis. "We will continue the all-out war against profiteers preying on hapless consumers," he said.

Meanwhile, groups have confirmed that wholesale prices of locally produced rice have slowly risen as the palay harvest season nears its end.

Bulacan rice trader Malou Tolentino said in a text message to **The STAR** that clean and dry palay are now priced at an average of P32 to P33 per kilo, which translates to a wholesale commercial rice price of P2,500 per 50-kilo sack.

Rosendo So, Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura president, said their monitoring showed the average farmgate prices for fresh palay in Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija and Isabela provinces are at P26 per kilo, while that of dried palay with 14 percent moisture content is P28 to P28.50 per kilo.

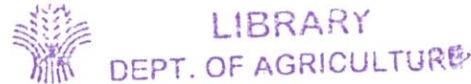
He added that P2 per kilo is added to those amounts when palay is picked up from the farm and delivered to rice millers.

Roderico Sulit, vice president of the Intercity Ricemill Owners Association in Bulacan, noted that a 25-kilogram sack of good quality rice now sells at P1,200 to P1,270.

Wholesale rice traders said that, at the peak of the harvest season in October, the prices of palay averaged between P25 and P26 per kilo, which should translate to the prices of rice ranging from P42 to P44 per kilo. — With Bella Cariaso, Ramon Efren Lazaro



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AFFORDABLE PRICES

## ROMUALDEZ WARNS TRADERS VS PRICE MANIPULATION, PROFITEERING

By Julie M. Aurelio  
@JMAurelioINQ

Traders should think twice before jacking up the prices of goods with the Yuletide season fast approaching as Congress is ready to exercise its oversight function and ensure that prices remain affordable to consumers.

Speaker Martin Romualdez issued the warning to traders as he also urged suppliers to double the delivery of in-demand items to retailers and

stall owners in markets until the end of the holidays.

"We want to make sure that traders do not take advantage of the holiday season to jack up prices of basic commodities. The Christmas season is meant to be a time of giving and compassion, and we want to make sure that prices of goods are affordable to a great majority of our people," Romualdez said on Monday.

He stressed that basic goods and ingredients often used in family celebrations should re-

main affordable especially as demand spikes due to the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

"Prices of rice and other *noche buena* items should be affordable. Vegetables like onions, garlic, tomatoes, cabbage etc. should be within the reach of our people. We appeal to retailers to follow the suggested retail price," the Speaker said.

He reminded traders and suppliers that the House of Representatives also has the oversight function to fight inflation

and ensure that prices of basic commodities remain low.

The Leyte lawmaker recalled the hoarding and price manipulation of onions, which sent prices of onions to as high as P700 a kilo late last year and that the House succeeded in revealing the culprits.

"Remember, the House, through the committee on agriculture and food successfully unmasked the personalities involved in the hoarding and price manipulation of onions

after concluding a four-month investigation," Romualdez said.

He added: "Our primary task here is to protect people's welfare by providing them with the most affordable goods in the market. It is a reaffirmation of our commitment to ensuring fair pricing and protecting consumers' interests by fighting hoarding and exorbitant prices."

The Speaker made the remarks after visiting stalls at the Farmers' Market in Cubao, Quezon City, on Monday morning to

check the prices of basic goods like rice, meat and vegetables.

Romualdez said prices of vegetables and meat were stable at the said market, although prices of rice were higher at P50 to P55 a kilo.

"We will check Bulacan's warehouses again and find out why there's a slight uptick in prices of rice. We want to find out if supply is enough or if there's hoarding again, and we will monitor the level of importation and local production," he told reporters. **INQ**



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## Romualdez says rice, 'noche buena' items should remain affordable during Yuletide season

By ELLSON QUISMORIO

Noche buena items and rice must remain affordable to consumers.

House Speaker Martin Romualdez sent this message to the country's retailers on Monday, Nov. 27 after leading a market inspection at Farmers Plaza in Quezon City.

"Unang-una, dapat abot-kaya ang bigas at iba pang noche buena items. Dapat ang gulay tulad ng sibuyas, bawang, kamatis, repolyo at iba pa ay maaabot ng ating mga kababayan. We appeal to retailers to follow the SRP (suggested retail price)," Romualdez said.

(First of all, rice and other noche buena must be affordable for our countrymen. So too should vegetables like onions, garlic, tomatoes, and cabbages.

An SRP is essentially a suggested price level for the various goods as determined by the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI).

Accompanying Romualdez during the price inspection was House Deputy Majority Leader ACT-CIS Party-list Rep. Erwin Tulfo.

"We want to make sure that traders do not take advantage of the holiday

season to jack up prices of basic commodities," the Speaker said.

"The Christmas season is meant to be a time of giving and compassion, and we want to make sure that prices of goods are affordable to a great majority of our people," added the leader of the 300-plus-strong House of Representatives.

Romualdez said part of the oversight functions of the House of Representatives is to fight inflation and make sure that the prices of commodities are low.

"Our primary task here is to protect people's welfare by providing them with the most affordable goods in the market," he stressed. He added that the people should be protected from hoarding, price manipulation, and unreasonable price increases.

"It is a reaffirmation of our commitment to ensuring fair pricing and protecting consumers' interests by fighting hoarding and exorbitant prices," underscored the Leyte 1st district congressman.

He also encouraged suppliers to double the delivery of necessary items to retailers, small traders, and market stallholders until the end of the holiday season.



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MARKET INSPECTION — House Speaker Martin Romualdez and ACT-CIS Rep. Erwin Tulfo inspect prices of basic commodities at Farmers Market in Cubao, Quezon City on Monday, Nov. 27, 2023. (Noel B. Pabalate)

## Romualdez, Tulfo issue warning to greedy retailers as Xmas approaches

By ELLSON QUISMORIO

The House of Representatives won't be sparing unscrupulous, greedy retailers who will take advantage of consumers this Christmas season.

Thus, said House Speaker Martin Romualdez and Deputy Majority Leader ACT-CIS Party-list Rep. Erwin Tulfo on Monday, Nov. 27, after conducting an inspection at Farmers Market in Cubao, Quezon City.

The price inspection was carried out less than a month before Christmas. Tulfo said the House, under Romualdez, will continue to carry out such inspections.

"We will continue the all-out war

against profiteers preying on hapless consumers," said the party-list solon, who is the House deputy leader for communications.

Romualdez warned against the greed of traders exploiting supply and prices, as he referenced the House's success in revealing those behind onion price manipulations.

"Remember, the House, through the Committee on Agriculture and Food led by our dedicated and focused Chairman Mark Enverga, successfully unmasked the personalities involved in the hoarding and price manipulation of onions after concluding a four-month investigation," he noted.

He said these public congressional inquiries resulted in the drastic

drop in onion prices from ₱700 to ₱160 per kilo.

Last September, the House also approved on the third and final reading a bill amending and expanding the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act by providing life imprisonment to those who will be found guilty of violating the economic sabotage law.

The new bill classifies the smuggling of rice and other agricultural products as "economic sabotage."

"The House will continue to pass similar legislative measures to help the agricultural sector and support the prosperity agenda of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.," vowed Romualdez, who represents Leyte's 1st District in Congress.



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## Romualdez tells retailers to follow suggested retail prices

By JOVEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ

[@joveemarie](#)

**T**HE leader of the House of Representatives warned traders on Monday against exploiting the Christmas season to inflate prices. This, after Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, along with Deputy Majority Leader for Communications and ACT-CIS Partylist Rep. Erwin Tulfo, visited Farmers Plaza to ensure that the prices of essential goods, particularly during the Christmas season, adhere to the suggested retail prices (SRP).

To ensure ample stocks of Christmas food products, Romualdez urged suppliers to increase the delivery of essential items to retailers, small traders, and market stallholders throughout the holiday season.

"We want to make sure that traders do not take advantage of the holiday season to jack up prices of basic commodities. The Christmas season is meant to be a time of giving and compassion, and we want to make sure that prices of goods are affordable to a great majority of our people," Romualdez said.

"First and foremost, rice and other Noche Buena items should be accessible. Vegetables such as onions, garlic, tomatoes, cabbage, and others should



**HOUSE Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez and ACT-CIS Rep. Erwin Tulfo visited the Farmers Market in Araneta City, Quezon City, on Monday, November 27, 2023, to monitor the prices and supplies of essential food items and commodities. This initiative comes as a response to the positive shift reflected in the "Tugon ng Masa" survey results by OCTA, revealing a decrease in the number of Filipino families identifying as impoverished during the third quarter of 2023.**

NONOV LACZA

be within reach of our fellow countrymen. We urge retailers to adhere to the SRP," he added.

The speaker assured the public that the House of Representatives will use its oversight functions, emphasizing its role in combating inflation and safeguarding low commodity prices, to protect consumers from hoarding, price manipulation, and unjustified price hikes.

"Our primary task here is to protect people's welfare by providing them

with the most affordable goods in the market," he said, adding that people should be protected from hoarding, price manipulation, and unreasonable price increases.

"It is a reaffirmation of our commitment to ensuring fair pricing and protecting consumers' interests by fighting hoarding and exorbitant prices," Romualdez said.

Tulfo echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the need to secure sufficient Christmas food product stocks for the

benefit of the Filipino people.

"We will continue the all-out war against profiteers preying on hapless consumers," Tulfo said.

Moreover, Romualdez warned against the greed of traders exploiting supply and prices, referencing the House's success in revealing those behind onion price manipulations.

"Remember, the House, through the Committee on Agriculture and Food led by our dedicated and focused Chairman Mark Enverga, successfully unmasked the personalities involved in the hoarding and price manipulation of onions after concluding a four-month investigation," he added.

He said these congressional hearings resulted in a drastic drop in onion prices from P700 to P160 per kilo.

The Speaker also highlighted the House's recent approval of a bill amending and expanding the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act, aiming to classify the smuggling of rice and other agricultural products as "economic sabotage" and provide life imprisonment for violators.

"The House will continue to pass similar legislative measures to help the agricultural sector and support the prosperity agenda of President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Romualdez Marcos Jr.," said Romualdez.





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# PRICE WATCH

By Jester  
Manalastas

**SPEAKER** Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez has visited the Farmers Plaza to make sure that the costs of basic commodities such as food remains within the bounds of suggested retail prices (SRP).

Speaker Romualdez was accompanied by Deputy Majority Leader for Communications and ACT-CIS Party-list Rep. Erwin Tulfo in making the rounds of the stalls in Farmers Plaza market.

"We want to make sure that traders do not take advantage of the holiday season to jack up prices of basic commodities. The Christmas season is meant to be a time of giving and compassion, and we want to make sure that prices of goods are affordable to a great majority of our people," Romualdez said.

"Unang-una, dapat abot-kaya ang bigas at iba pang noche-buena items. Dapat ang gulay tulad ng sibuyas, bawang, kamatis, repolyo at iba pa ay maaabot ng ating mga kababayan. We appeal to retailers to follow the SRP," he added.

According to the Speaker part of the oversight functions of the House of Representatives is to fight inflation and make sure that the prices



**SPEAKER** Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez visits the Farmers Market in Cubao, Quezon City to monitor if the costs of basic commodities remain within the bounds of suggested retail prices. Photo by VER NOVENO

of commodities are low.

"Our primary task here is to protect people's welfare by providing them with the most affordable goods in the market," he stressed, adding the people should be protected from hoarding, price manipulation, and unreasonable price increases.

"It is a reaffirmation of our commitment to ensuring fair pricing and protecting consumers' interests by fighting hoarding and exorbitant prices," Speaker Ro-

mualdez said.

He then encouraged suppliers to double the delivery of necessary items to retailers, small traders, and market stallholders until the end of the holiday season.

For his part, Tulfo said it is for the best interests of the Filipino people to ensure enough stocks of Christmas food products.

Under the leadership of Romualdez, Tulfo said the House of Representatives will do these price checks in

markets on a regular basis.

Meanwhile, Romualdez warned against the greed of traders exploiting supply and prices, referencing the House's success in revealing those behind onion price manipulations.

"Remember, the House, through the Committee on Agriculture and Food led by our dedicated and focused Chairman Mark Enverga, successfully unmasked the personalities involved in the hoarding and price manipulation of onions after concluding a four-month investigation," he added.

He said these congressional hearings resulted in the drastic drop in onion prices from P700 to P160 per kilo.

Last September, the House also approved on the third and final reading a bill amending and expanding the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act by providing life imprisonment to those who will be found guilty of violating the economic sabotage law. The new bill classifies the smuggling of rice and other agricultural products as "economic sabotage."

"The House will continue to pass similar legislative measures to help the agricultural sector and support the prosperity agenda of President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Romualdez Marcos Jr.," said Speaker Romualdez.



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## Batangas boosts sales of farmers, fishers with bazaar

**BATANGAS CITY** – The provincial government here is capitalizing on the Christmas season demand to promote local agricultural products and boost the livelihood of Batangueño farmers and fisherfolk.

The Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPAg) is holding the "Barakahan sa Kapitolyo" (Camaraderie at the Capitol), a holiday bazaar where locally grown goods are sold fresh and at farmgate prices.

The bazaar opened on Friday and will run until Dec. 24.

OPAg head Rod Bautista told the Philippine News Agency on Sunday that the project allows local producers to sell their products directly to the consumer, eliminating the need for intermediaries.

"The OPAg tracked more than

PHP3 million gross sales earned by our farmers, fishermen and other local producers in the province," he said. Bautista said scores of food producers from the towns of Bauan, Cuenca, Ibaan, Laurel, San Jose, San Juan, San Pascual, Rosario and the City of Lipa, among others, are participating in the event.

He said the highly sought-after maliputo fish (giant trevally) will be available at reasonable prices at the bazaar.

Maliputo is an indigenous fish found in Taal Lake.

"We are opening this project to the public so tourists can see what Batangas has to offer. This will strengthen the (provincial) economy, innovate local products and give the province its identity," Bautista said. **PNA**



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## Romualdez, Tulfo sinuyod mga pasaway sa SRP

NAGTUNGO sa Farmers Market sa Cubao, Quezon City sina Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez at House Deputy Majority Leader for Communications Erwin Tulfo upang silipin ang presyo ng mga pangunahing bilihin at matignan kung sumusunod ang mga nagtitinda sa suggested retail prices (SRP).

"We want to make sure that traders do not take advantage of the holiday season to jack up prices of basic commodities. The Christmas season is meant to be a time of giving and compassion, and we want to make sure that prices of goods are affordable to a great majority of our people," sabi ni Romualdez.

"Unang-una, dapat abot-kaya ang bigas at iba pang noche-buena items. Dapat ang (presyo ng) gulay tulad ng sibuyas, bawang, kamatis, repolyo at iba pa ay maaabot ng ating mga kababayan. We appeal to retailers to follow the SRP," dagdag pa ni Romualdez.

Sinabi ni Romualdez na ang Kamara de Representantes ay mayroong oversight function at ginagamit nila ito upang matiyak na makatwiran ang presyo ng mga bilihin.

"Our primary task here is to protect people's welfare by providing them with the most affordable goods in the market," sabi pa ni Romualdez. "It is a reaffirmation of our commitment to ensuring fair pricing and protecting consumers' interests by fighting hoarding and exorbitant prices."

Hinimok naman ni Tulfo ang mga nagtitinda na tiyakin na sila ay mayroong sapat na stock ng mga Christmas food product at ibenta ito sa tamang presyo. (Bily Begas/Eralyn Prado)





Sino ang mag-aakala na sa lungsod ng Quezon City ay may 27-ektaryang palayan na nagsisilbing Jewel sa mga magsasaka na residente ng Barangay Krus na Ligas.

Sa mga hindi nakakabatid ang Brgy. Krus na Ligas ay kalapit lang ng University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman Campus.

Ang malawak na bukirin na taniman ng gulay kapag tag-araw at taniman ng palay kapag tag-ulan ay nililinan ng pitong magsasakang sa pangunguna ng pamilyang Bernardino.

Ayon sa mag-

na ang kanilang nagsisilbing tanging yaman ay ang ginagawang nilang pagbubungkal at paglinang ng lupang sakahan.

"Dasal namin ay tuluyan ng mai-award sa amin ng gobyerno ang lupang sakahan na ito at huwag kunin o agawin ng iilang may interes ditto," pahayag pa ni Mary Ann.

Pahayag pa ni Mary Ann, nitong nakalipas na pandemya ay maraming residente sa kanilang barangay ang kanilang natulungan sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay ng kanilang ani na mga tanim na gulay.

"Libre namin ipina-



Nakigapas din ng palay ang Magsasakang Reporter.



ni MER LAYSON

## Jewel sa lungsod... 27-ektaryang palayan sa QC

amang Jose at Mary Ann Bernardino, 4th generation na sila sa kanilang pamilya sa paglilinan ng lupa at pagtatanim sa nasabing bukirin.

"Dati ay mahigit sa 40-ektarya ang lawak ng lupa na aming sinasaka rito sa Brgy. Krus na Ligas, pero ngayon ay 27-ektarya na lamang," ani Mang Jose.

Sinabi ni Mang Jose, unti-unti nang tinatayuan ng gusali ang kanilang lupang sinasaka, kaya sila ay nangangamba na baka balang araw ay wala na silang pagtataniman ng mga gulay at palay na siyang kanilang ikinabubuhay.

Sa kanilang pagtatanim ng palay, umaasa sila sa sahod ulan o kapag panahon ng tag-ulan. Tuwing summer naman ay iba't ibang uri ng gulay ang kanilang tinatanim.

Sinabi naman ni Mary Ann Bernardino,

mimigay ang aming mga harvest na gulay at palay noong kasagsagan ng Covid-19 pandemic sa aming mga kabarangay at maging sa ibang lugar sa Quezon City na

Bukod sa palay ay ekta-ektarya rin ang mga tanim na gabi o taro na siyang ginagawang masarap at masustansiyang laing.

Panawagan ng mag-amang Bernardi-

sakang Reporter.

Samantala, para sa iba pang tips at sikreto sa pagtatanim ng iba't ibang uri ng halaman sa pamamagitan ng organikong pamamaraan 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 ito sa Radyo Singko 92.3 News FM.

Maaari rin kayong manood at mag-subscribe at mag-follow sa aking Youtube Channel na ANG MAGSASAKANG REPORTER at Facebook na Mer Layson at Facebook page na Ang Magsasakang Reporter, TV host Vlogger para sa iba pang kaalaman at impormasyon sa pagtatanim ng iba't ibang uri ng halaman sa pamamagitan ng organikong pamamaraan.

Tuwing araw ng Martes ay 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.



Ang Magsasakang Reporter, kasama ang mag-amang Jose at Mary Ann Bernardino.

nagagawi sa aming lugar," sabi pa ni Mary Ann.

Marami ring estudyante mula sa iba't ibang unibersidad ang kanilang tinuturuan ng pagtatanim ng palay at gulay.

Sa pagbisita ng Masaganang Buhay Team sa lugar ay saktong magha-harvest na ng mga tanim na palay, kaya pati ang Magsasakang Reporter ay naki-harvest na rin.



Ang mga estudyante mula sa iba't ibang unibersidad na nagesasagay ng pagtatanim ng palay at gulay sa Brgy. Krus na Ligas.





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## Soybeans futures drop

SINGAPORE- Chicago soybeans fell to more than three-week lows on Monday as rain in parts of Brazil's oilseed producing areas eased crop concerns, even as leading consultants reduced their output forecasts.

Wheat firmed, recouping some of last session's losses, while corn was largely unchanged.

"There have been some rains in Brazil and forecasters are looking at more wet weather," said one Singapore-based trader at an international trading company. "And Argentina's output is going to rebound, so overall we expect ample supplies from South America in 2024."

The most-active soybean con-

tract on the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) lost 0.4 percent to \$13.26 a bushel, after sliding to its lowest since Nov. 2 at \$13.24 a bushel earlier in the session.

Wheat rose 0.5 percent to \$5.80 a bushel, while corn gained 0.1 percent to \$4.63-1/2 a bushel.

Rains in Brazil's key soybean growing areas have reduced early crop damage risks.

However, agribusiness consultancies Safras & Mercado and hEDGEpoint on Friday reduced their estimates for Brazil's 2023/24 soybean crop, as consensus grew that bad weather will hamper output in the world's largest producer and exporter. - *Reuters*