

CLIPPINGS FOR TODAY, APRIL 10, 2024

A. SEC. FTL Jr. QUOTED

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
Sticky food inflation

B. DA FAMILY

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
31 Provinces now affected by drought

THE MANILA TIMES
Rice inventory down in March

BUSINESS WORLD
Agribusiness executives should be upskilled
PhilRice seeks increased seed budget from RCEF
Review El Niño inf. Drive – Senator

BUSINESS MIRROR
Editorial: Revitalizing rainwater harvesting in PHL for sustainable water...
Fisheries Devt. Authority vows to hike remittance
DTI Occ. Mindoro facilities consultations on export readiness of local tuna traders

ABANTE TONITE
NFA tagilid suplay ng bigas

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL
Nationwide El Niño state of calamity declaration nixed

C. AGRI-RELATED STORY

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
El Niño to slash coconut oil exports
DBM releases P4.5B for crop insurance
More Phl mangoes off to Australia

THE MANILA TIMES
Editorial: El Niño a calamity by any other definition

BUSINESS WORLD
Farm subsidy reform seen potentially raising agri production by 17%
Soy imports expected to increase on growing PHL demand for animal feed
Support onion farmers- lawmaker

BUSINESS MIRROR
IFAD: Small sum from ODA billion in agri goes to health

PILIPINI STAR NGAYON
Presyo ng manok at baboy, sumirit

D. FOREIGN STORY

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT
Wheat drops 1%
Russian wheat prices up



Sticky food inflation

Decades of incompetence and corruption at the Department of Agriculture have made food inflation rather sticky for us these days. Not even a competent Secretary of Agriculture who is determined to reverse the DA's incompetence and corruption can do much within the short period of time since he took over. In a sense, BBM made the problem worse by taking on the agriculture portfolio on paper but actually left the management of DA to old hands who contributed to the decades-long problems.

At least BBM realized his mistake and made corrections. He

DEMAND AND SUPPLY



BOO CHANCO

can be rest assured now that DA is in good hands. A crisis would have happened by now otherwise because we have the El Niño drought that is compounding our usual problems in growing and distributing our food supplies. We just need to see more decisive actions like how the new DA secretary cleaned up NFA, the root of our problems with rice availability and price.

Our headline inflation, because of sticky food inflation, quickened for the second straight month to 3.7 percent YoY in March (Feb 2024: 3.4 percent YoY, March 2023: 7.6 percent YoY) slightly below the 3.8 percent YoY consensus estimate and at the midpoint of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) range estimate of 3.4 percent and 4.2 percent.

According to the Monetary Board: "The risks to the inflation outlook continue to lean toward the upside. Possible further price pressures are linked mainly to higher transport charges, elevated food prices, higher electricity rates and global oil prices. Potential minimum wage adjustments could also give

rise to second-round effects."

How bad is our food inflation problem now?

In a sense, our sticky food inflation problem is all about rice. Food inflation accounts for some 57 percent of the total inflation this March. It doesn't help that the price of rice in the global market has also been high.

The really bad news is that for the bottom 30 percent of our population, rice contributed 84.3 percent to the food inflation rate they are feeling. According to the PSA, inflation for the poorest 30 percent is at 4.6 percent, higher than the 3.7 percent national rate. This means there will be more hunger and malnutrition among our poor. And there will be increased clamor for wage increases to cover the high cost of rice, the basic staple food. That means the cost of our products and services will become even more uncompetitive compared to our peer countries in the ASEAN region.

Congressman Joey Salceda observed that prices of other food items have gone down. Corn prices are declining. Fish prices are down. Vegetables are cheaper this year than last year. And even sugar prices are slightly down. Bread prices are mildly up, but that is attributable partly due to the correlated prices of wheat and rice, especially in India where they are substitutes.

This is why Cong. Joey is saying the administration's gameplan must be focused on rice. But it isn't as if this isn't the focus of **DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel** and Cong. Joey recognized that.

"Secretary Tiu Laurel has been more aggressive with distributing rice production support this quarter. He has brought machinery distribution, for example, to about 92 percent of target. The P12 billion rice farmer financial assistance is also set to be completed this June – again, just in time for planting.

"The DA has also been more active with delivering programs from the Survival and Recovery Loan program of the Agricultural Credit Policy Council. The Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. has also begun to issue indemnity insurance

payments to farmers affected by drought.

"There is significant progress being made in the DA, and his governance cleanup of the NFA will also help make cheap rice available to the poor, as well as provide a better market for rice farmers."

So, Cong. Joey sees rice, because it requires the most irrigation among our food crops, will provide the greatest upside risk to inflation moving forward because of El Niño.

"PAGASA's forecasts indicate that this April, rainfall shouldn't actually be catastrophically below normal. We will still see some rain – so we should impound that. The worst droughts will be in May, with the hardest-hit regions being Central Luzon and Bicol. But models suggest that El Niño will taper off in June."

Cong. Joey is right. Over the long term, we must address the fragility of the country's food systems, neglected by past administrations or handled incompetently.

"President Marcos has been clocking in very strong rice harvest figures – and recorded the biggest harvest in history in 2023. The path forward with rice is to address pre-harvest costs and post-harvest losses, while making the system more resilient from trade shocks and adverse climate conditions."

And Sec. Tiu Laurel must deal with local food trading cartels once and for all. These are the people who benefit in times of scarcity, which they sometimes cause. The program to put more cold storage facilities in strategic locations will be a big boost for farmers' incomes provided such facilities are not taken over by the local food trading cartel as they always do in connivance with officials of NFA and other government agencies.

The important thing is that there is no rice scarcity in the market. The price is unaffordable for the poor, who must now be helped by DSWD. Scarcity in supply will just make things intolerable. We are not there now.

Boo Chanco's email address is bchanco@gmail.com. Follow him on X or Twitter [@boochanco](https://twitter.com/boochanco)



31 provinces now affected by drought

By **ROMINA CABRERA**

The number of provinces affected by drought has risen to 31, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

Nineteen of the drought-hit provinces are in Luzon.

These are Abra, Apayao, Benguet, Cagayan, Cavite, Ifugao, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Isabela, Kalinga, La Union, Mountain Province, Nueva Ecija, Nueva Vizcaya, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Palawan and Rizal. Metro Manila was included in the list.

In the Visayas, Antique, Biliran, Bohol, Cebu, Eastern Samar, Guimaras, Iloilo, Leyte, Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental and Samar were affected by drought.

Lanao del Norte is the only province in Mindanao experiencing drought.

Drought conditions are characterized by below normal rainfall or a 21 to 60 percent reduction from the average for five consecutive months, or way below normal

rainfall for three consecutive months.

PAGASA said Batangas, Laguna and Masbate were affected by the dry spell.

Capiz, Siquijor and Southern Leyte in the Visayas and Camiguin, Misamis Occidental, Misamis Oriental, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga Sibugay in Mindanao also experienced dry spell.

Fifteen provinces nationwide – nine in Luzon, two in the Visayas and four in Mindanao – experienced dry conditions.

Dry spell means below normal rainfall for three consecutive months, while dry conditions are characterized by below normal rainfall for two months.

PAGASA said El Niño may persist until May.

In Cagayan Valley, damage to agriculture due to El Niño has reached more than P560 million, **Monico Castro Jr., Department of Agriculture (DA) field operations division chief**, reported during a management committee meeting last week.

Cornfields incurred the biggest damage with losses of 32,166.95 metric tons followed by rice, 3,657.95 MT, and high-

value crops, 80.33 MT.

The DA has coordinated with affected local government units and endorsed the list of farmers to concerned agencies for financial assistance, according to Rose Mary Aquino, acting DA regional executive director.

Cagayan Valley is the top corn producer in the country.

State of calamity in Negros town

Meanwhile, in Negros Occidental, the Sangguniang Bayan of San Enrique approved during a special session on Monday the recommendation of the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council to declare a state of calamity in the town due to the damage caused by El Niño.

Mayor Jilson Tubillara said damage to crops and fisheries was estimated at P9.9 million, with 600 farmers and 6,000 households affected.

San Enrique is among the rice producing towns in Negros Occidental.

– **With Gilbert Bayoran, Victor Martin**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Rice inventory down in March

BY JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL

THE country's rice stocks were down 3.0 percent at the start of March from a year earlier, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said on Tuesday.

Domestic inventory as of March 1, 2024 was said to be at 1.37 million metric tons (MT), lower than the 1.41 million MT recorded in the same day last year.

On a monthly basis, rice stocks

were 9.6 percent lower compared to the previous month's 1.51 million MT.

Rice stocks held by the National Food Authority (NFA) and households both registered drops

59.9 percent and 14.4 percent, respectively.

The volume of rice held by the NFA fell to 41,290 MT from the 103,070 MT recorded in 2023. The monthly decrease was 12.0 percent in comparison to February's 46,890 MT.

Household inventory also dropped, to 694,620 MT from 811,520 MT. It was, however, higher by 1.4 percent from the month-earlier 685,200 MT.

Commercial stocks, meanwhile,

increased by 27.5 percent relative to the volume logged a year earlier.

This category recorded 630,290 MT of rice stocks in March, higher than last year's 494,250 MT.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has assured that the country has enough rice stocks amid an ongoing El Niño and despite the temporary closure of several NFA warehouses.

Tiu Laurel also said that rice imports for this year were unlikely to reach the four million MT forecast

of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Local production for the first quarter of 2024 was projected at 4.78 million MT, in the range of last year's production.

The USDA's forecast, Tiu Laurel said, is the "worst-case scenario" and the country will not reach that point.

Bureau of Plant Industry data showed that the country's rice imports rose to 995,841.6 MT in the first quarter, higher by 24.2

percent compared to last year's 801,732 MT.

As for global rice prices, Tiu Laurel said that these remained stable at \$700 per ton. But with El Niño having affected output, prices will not decline "as of the moment."

The Agriculture department's price monitoring report as of April 5, 2024 showed that prices of imported well-milled rice ranged from P50 to P55 per kilo, while local milled rice was being sold at P48-P58 per kilo.



Agribusiness executives should be upskilled

(Part 1)

A positive sign that the administration of President Bongbong Marcos is on the way to improving the productivity of the agribusiness sector is the increasing number of Philippine conglomerates diversifying into agriculture and investing substantial amounts of long-term capital in the sector.

There is the First Pacific group led by Manny Pangilinan, who is diversifying from their major investments in infrastructures and energy into sugar and dairy production. Benguet Corp. — the gold and nickel mining company — is planning to invest in a big way in large-scale coconut farming in Samar and Leyte.

The DMC Consunji group has already expanded its long-term investments in agriculture in Mindanao by leasing hundreds of hectares of deforested lands in the south of Negros Occidental to plant palm oil. Luis Lorenzo, Jr., a former Agriculture secretary and part of the family that pioneered in pineapple plantations in the last century, is now diversifying in a big way into bamboo plantations that will be the source of raw materials for manufacturing construction materials that can equal the strength of steel.

The Aboitizes are expanding their investments in food and



beverage manufacturing. This trend is a far cry from the former practice of the biggest Philippine banks who preferred to pay hundreds of millions of pesos in penalty to the BSP so as not to be obliged to lend to agribusiness projects under the Agri-Agra law.

Because agriculture was always what I called the “Cinderella” of the Philippine economy — neglected and unwanted — even the best minds who took up agricultural sciences in UP Los Baños and other universities (like the Araneta University and Silliman University in Dumaguete) ended up working in many fields that had nothing to do with food security. As one of the graduates of the “school of marketing” of Procter & Gamble (I had a short stint as a brand manager at P&G in the late 1950s), I met a good number of graduates of agricultural courses (especially from UP Los Baños) who ended up selling soap and toothpaste for P&G or Unilever.

BusinessWorld™

Date: APR 10, 2024 Page: 6/51



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

HUMAN SIDE OF ECONOMICS BERNARDO M. VILLEGAS

A good number of them became bank executives, etc. That is why, as an avid proponent today of agribusiness development, I was happy to learn that a friend of mind, Jovy Hernandez, who studied agricultural sciences in Los Baños but who spent most of his professional life in other fields (including a long stint at PLDT) has been designated as the CEO of the First Pacific Agribusiness Venture and is now busy leading his company in importing hundreds of dairy cattle to produce some of the milk requirements of Carmen's Best, an ice cream company that they bought from another friend of mine, Ramon (Jun) Magsaysay, Jr.

If I were working for an executive search company like Ward

Howell or John Clements, I would be busy contacting executives in their 40s and 50s who are graduates of agricultural courses but have been working in other fields. They would be in great demand.

But even more urgent is the upskilling, reskilling and retooling of those managers who are already working for agribusiness enterprises, especially on the island of Mindanao. I am referring to such famous agribusiness companies as Anflo Group of Companies (foremost of which is Tagum Agricultural Development Co.), Lapanday, South Davao Development Co., Inc. of the Consunji group, Alsons Aquaculture Corp., NutriAsia, Del Monte, INFARMCO, Kenram Palmoil Industries, La Frutera, San Miguel Corp., SanteH Feeds, Sarangani Agricultural Co., Sumifru Philippines, Tateh Feeds, Unifrutti Philippines and Vitarich Corp. These have been among the

forward-looking business groups that defied all the adverse circumstances surrounding the agricultural sector during the decades of neglect and failed attempts at an enlightened approach to agrarian reform, as what happened in our most successful neighbors like Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. These exceptional companies proved that money could be made in agribusiness despite all the odds that they faced in a hostile environment.

Thanks to the leadership of the late Rolando Dy who for more than 30 years headed the Center for Food and Agribusiness (CFA) of the University of Asia and the Pacific and the generous financial support of Walter Brown, founder of A. Brown Energy Resources, already as early as 2015, UA&P started to address the need to up-skill and reskill top and middle managers of the leading agribusiness corporations.

With close cooperation from government agencies and the academe, the CFA of UA&P launched in 2015 the six-month, part-time agribusiness executives program that has turned out about 280 graduates, especially coming from the corporations mentioned above. Over the past 10 years, the program has been held in Davao, where most of the agribusiness enterprises are located. In 2017 and 2018, there were parallel runs in Baguio — also a hub for high-value food production — to cater to the Luzon market today.

The agribusiness executives program is a six-month certificate program. Today, the name of the game is no longer a college or masteral degree, but a certification of skills acquired in a work-study program aimed at developing the managerial, analytical and strategic thinking skills of executives and managers working in the agribusiness industry.

Here, it is important to point out that agribusiness goes much beyond farming. It encompasses the whole supply chain involved in the production of food or agricultural raw materials, such as post-harvest, cold storage, logistics, processing, wholesale, retail up to the final consumer. The design of the program was based on a comprehensive need analysis of key agribusiness companies and developed in collaboration with agribusiness practitioners and experts. It adopts an action-learning approach that emphasizes skill development and the application of theoretical learning to specific agribusiness projects and related industries.

The agribusiness executives program targets middle and senior level managers and executives in the food and agribusiness sector who are directly or indirectly involved in planning, program/project implementation or are expected to be engaged in such activities in the future. Among the 280 certificate holders are managers from both the

private and public sectors such as BFAR, DA, DTL, DepEd ARRRM, Mindanao Development Authority and DENR-MGB.

Participants go through six modules offered via a blended learning approach, using a combination of online and face-to-face sessions. For those interested in participating in the next run of the program, they may contact aep@uap.asia. The next module will run from September 2024 to March 2025 — one module per month, excluding December — with a total of 2.5 days per month, usually Thursday to Saturday afternoon. The program includes field visits to agribusiness projects during the fifth module. The last module will be held at the UA&P campus in Ortigas, Pasig City, culminating in graduation. ■

(To be continued.)

BERNARDO M. VILLEGAS has a Ph.D. in Economics from Harvard, is professor emeritus at the University of Asia and the Pacific, and a visiting professor at the IESE Business School in Barcelona, Spain. He was a member of the 1986 Constitutional Commission.



bernardo.villegas
[@uap.asia](https://www.instagram.com/bernardo.villegas)



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PhilRice seeks increased seed budget from RCEF

By **Adrian H. Halili**
Reporter

THE PHILIPPINE Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) said it is seeking more funding from the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) for seed to be distributed to farmers.

"We are also proposing to increase the seed volume so that more farmers can be served. We hope there will also be an increase (in funding)," PhilRice Director for RCEF Program Management Office Flordeliza H. Bordey, told *BusinessWorld*.

The RCEF is intended to modernize the rice industry and is funded by import tariffs generated as a result of Republic Act 11203, or the Rice Tariffication Law.

A Senator has proposed another six year extension to RCEF with an increased budget of P20 billion a year.

"We welcome that development, because we are (an) implementer of the program... what we have done through the program

has really helped our farmers," Ms. Bordey said.

The fund supports the supply of machinery, seed, and fertilizer, among others, to farmers. The rice tariffs support RCEF with P10 billion annually. The tariff allocations are set to expire in June.

The law, which took effect in 2019, allowed private traders to bring in rice shipments without restriction. At the time, they had to pay a 35% tariff on Southeast Asian grain.

PhilRice handles the distribution of certified inbred seed to farmers.

She added that the agency's seed distribution will be little changed this year with RCEF funding of P3 billion.

She added that the Department of Agriculture's National Rice Program has also allotted P700 million for seed distribution.

PhilRice's inbred seed yielded an average of 4.36 metric tons (MT) per hectare last year, against 3.63 MT per hectare in 2022.

RCEF has set an aspirational target of five MT per hectare by 2025.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Review El Niño info drive — senator

A PHILIPPINE senator has filed a resolution to review the government's public information campaign on countermeasures for the El Niño weather phenomenon, which adversely affects lives and livelihood.

Through Senate Resolution No. 987, filed by Senator Ferdinand "Robin" C. Padilla filed on Monday, the government is urged to enhance its information drive on how El Niño affects agriculture, energy, and education, among others.

"Filipinos must be informed of up-to-date and necessary preparations and responses of the national and local government, as the country has been taking the brunt of dangerous levels of heat index, mainly attributed to the El Niño phenomenon," he said in a statement on Tuesday.

So far, agricultural damage blamed on El Niño has risen to P2.63 billion. The government has distributed assistance worth P1.1 billion to those affected, the Department of Agriculture said. — **John Victor D. Ordoñez**



editorial

APR 10, 2024
PAGE: A14

Revitalizing rainwater harvesting in PHL for sustainable water management

THE Christmas tree is one of the most ubiquitous holiday symbols that is seen everywhere in the Philippines during the so-called “ber” months. Some households put it up as early as September, to mark the beginning of the world’s longest Christmas celebration. Unlike in temperate countries where households use pine trees, Christmas trees in the Philippines are usually made of plastic and are stored in cabinets after the end of the holidays.

Just like the proverbial Christmas tree, certain ideas are dusted off whenever El Nino strikes the Philippines. One of these ideas is the construction of more rainwater harvesting facilities to reduce the demand for groundwater. These facilities, according to the United States Department of Energy, allow the capture, diversion and storage of rainwater from rooftops for later use.

Harvested rainwater could be used for landscape irrigation, wash applications, toilet and urinal flushing. The availability of water for these activities will help ease the pressure on freshwater supply, which continues to shrink due to rising demand and climate change. Conserving water resources will also be beneficial to the agricultural sector, which uses huge quantities of water to produce food.

Despite its benefits, rainwater harvesting is not widely practiced in the Philippines. According to the Department of Agriculture, the Philippines receives some 2,400 millimeters (mm) of rainfall, one of the world’s highest. Unfortunately, the country manages to store only about 6 percent of that rainfall, unlike India that manages to harvest 60 percent of the 700 mm of rain it receives annually.

And this seeming apathy towards rainwater collection persists despite the presence of a 35-year-old law mandating local governments to establish a rainwater harvesting system in all barangays nationwide. Republic Act (RA) 6716, or the Rainwater Collector and Springs Development Act of 1989, requires the construction of rainwater collectors in every barangay to prevent flooding and ensure the continuous provision of clean water during dry seasons. RA 6716 provides for the construction by the Department of Public Works and Highways of water wells, rainwater collectors, development of springs and rehabilitation of existing water wells in all barangays in the Philippines.

In a statement he released in 2019, Senator Sonny Angara said that law also calls for the creation of a waterworks and sanitation association in every barangay to operate and maintain a rainwater collection facility, which components include catchment, treatment and distribution. Rainwater is collected from rooftops, then purified in a central treatment system to be pumped to various water lines. Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore augment their water supply by harvesting rainfall.

Sensible ideas like the construction of harvesting rainwater facilities should not be placed in the backburner again once a crisis has passed. Policymakers need to immediately put in place the necessary measures to help the country cope with the climate crisis. In the case of improving water availability, the national and local governments need not reinvent the wheel; they just need to fully implement a 35-year-old law.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Fisheries Devt Authority vows to hike remittance

THE Philippine Fisheries Development Authority (PFDA) said it will increase the amount of dividends it will remit to the National Treasury this year following the Department of Finance's (DOF) appeal to raise their shares.

The state-run corporation has increased its dividend payout rate to 75 percent from 50 percent and will remit a total of P128.4 million to the Treasury to help finance the government's spending plans.

A statement issued by the PFDA last Monday read the state-run firm will "heed the call" of the DOF to increase its dividends to 75 percent from 50 percent.

In a meeting with the PFDA board members led by Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. in Iloilo City on April 5, the PFDA said it adhered to Recto's request to remit higher dividends to support the country's projects and programs.

The PFDA's remittance to the National Treasury this year of P128.4 million is higher by 72.81 percent, or P54.1 million as a result of the board approval.

The PFDA remitted a total of P74.3 million in dividends last year, equivalent to 50 percent of its net profit in 2022.

The government corporation

booked a P171.2 million in net profit last year.

"We have to support the government in what it needs as long as it will not affect your own operations," Tiu Laurel, who chairs the PFDA, told fellow board members.

The PFDA is a government-owned and -controlled corporation (GOCC) attached to the Department of Agriculture (DA). It was created to promote the development of the fishing industry through the provision of post-harvest infrastructure facilities and essential services that improve efficiency in the handling and distribution of fish and fishery products.

Despite the increase in dividends remittance, PFDA's management assured board members that operations of the government corporation would not be affected given the "strong performance" of its various units, whose collection rate exceeds 90 percent, it added.

Under the Republic Act 7656 (Dividends Law of 1994), all GOCCs are mandated to remit at least 50 percent of their annual net earnings to the national government.

In 2023, the Privatization and Corporate Affairs Group under the DOF collected a total of P99.98 billion in dividends from 51 GOCCs.

Reine Juvierre Alberto



DTI Occ. Mindoro facilitates consultations on export readiness of local tuna traders



As a follow-up to the 2023 gap analysis for tuna industry, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Occidental Mindoro facilitated the Consultative Session with Export Marketing Bureau recently at the Governor's Office, Provincial Capital, Mamburao.

Six tuna traders participated, namely, NM Seafoods Trading, Ricky Fish Casa, Million Crystal Fish Buying Station, Gerabuenas Trading, B. Andaya Fish Buying Station, and Samale Marine Products Trading.

Representatives from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Department of Agriculture-Farm and Fisheries Clustering and Consolidation Program, Provincial Government, Philippine Tuna Handline Partnership (PTHP), World Wildlife Fund and Tambuyog Development Center also participated in the activity.

Carl Nichole Garing and Albin Gancho from the DTI Export Marketing Bureau discussed the overview of the Philippine Tuna Industry, global market trends and opportunities, services and programs of EMB, and export procedure flowchart. According to them, the Philippines is one of the major global exporters of tuna, particularly Yellowfin which is an abundant species in Mindoro Strait.

It was noted that the "Philippines Small Scale Yellowfin Tuna Hand-

line Fishery" of Occidental Mindoro secured the first Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) certification, which means that these small-scale fisheries in the province are recognized for sustainable fishing that protects marine ecosystems and communities (Marine Stewardship Council, 2024).

The activity highlights the actions necessary to further support the industry:

1. Aspiring exporters shall study the actual market demand of Asian and European countries and establish a database on production capacity that matches this demand.

2. Tuna traders need to comply with Fisheries Administrative Order 210, particularly on compliance with Sanitation Standard Operating Procedure (SSOP) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP).

3. Industry players shall invest in Post-Harvest Facilities, including cold storage logistics.

4. DTI Occidental Mindoro shall assist aspiring tuna exporters in the province by setting up factual database on production capacity and preparation for HACCP and FDA-LTO certification.

The government, along with other key industry players, are looking forward to the envisioned impact of these initiatives, particularly on establishing a reasonable buying price for local fishermen.

Abante TONITE

◀ MABILIS SA BALITA ▶

Date: APR 10, 2024 Page: 6



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

NFA TAGILID SUPLAY NG BIGAS

Katumbas na lamang ng isang araw ang buffer stock ng National Food Authority (NFA).

Sa inilabas na imbentaryo ng NFA para sa buwan ng Pebrero, aabot lamang sa 41,285 tonelada ng bigas ang nakaimbak sa mga warehouse. Ang konsumo ng mga Pinoy bawat araw ay pumapalo sa higit 30,000 tonelada.

Bawat taon, dapat

ay nag-iimbak ng higit 300,000 tonelada ng bigas ang NFA, katumbas ng consumption sa loob ng 9 na araw.

Aminado si NFA officer-in-charge Administrator Larry Lacson na hirap silang bumili ng palay sa mga magsasaka dahil mas mataas ang presyo ng mga trader.

Binibili umano ng mga trader ang palay sa P25

hanggang P27 per kilo habang ang NFA ay hanggang sa P23 per kilo lang ang kayang ialok sa magsasaka.

Dahil dito, 12,378 bag ng palay lamang ang nabili noong Pebrero, katumbas ng 618.9 metric tons (MT) ng bigas. Ito ay katumbas lamang ng 2.28% na target ng NFA na 542,800 bag o 27,140 MT ng palay sa nasabing buwan.

"Decrease in procure-

ment is due to lesser palay harvest, since February is not a harvest season hence the procured palay is just a spill over of the last cropping season," ayon sa NFA.

"Nevertheless, the National Food Authority shall continue to provide the best service to farmers and farmers organizations, to entice them to sell their produce to NFA," dagdag ng ahensiya.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

NATIONWIDE EL NIÑO STATE OF CALAMITY DECLARATION NIXED

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Monday said he does not see the need to place the entire country under a state of calamity due to El Niño.

In an interview in Bacolod City, Marcos said the government is addressing the effects of the phenomenon at the local level, stressing that affected provinces are being impacted

to varying degrees.

"Iba-iba ang problema sa bawat lugar eh. Hindi naman pwedeng shotgun lang, one size fits all 'no. (The problem is different in every area. It can't be just a shotgun approach, there's one size fits all measure). We look at each area and see what it is that they need," Marcos said.

"That's what we are, that's

the way we are handling the local state of calamity that the local governments are declaring," he added.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council said at least 18 cities and municipalities have declared a state of calamity due to the phenomenon.

Meanwhile, latest data by the

Department of Agriculture showed that agricultural damage caused by El Niño has surged to PHP2.63 billion, while the government assistance has reached PHP1.1 billion.

The weather bureau said the number of El Niño-affected provinces may reach 80 by the end of April, while its effects may linger until June. PNA



El Niño to slash coconut oil exports

By **JASPER EMMANUEL ARCALAS**

The El Niño phenomenon is seen pulling down the country's coconut oil exports by a fifth in market year 2024-2025 to 900,000 metric tons (MT), according to an international agency.

The United States Department of Agriculture-Foreign Agricultural Service in Manila (USDA-FAS Manila) said drier weather conditions would affect coconut flower growth, resulting in reduced coconut output.

The lower coconut output would mean decreased supply of copra used in coconut oil production, thereby affecting the country's exports of the prized commodity.

The USDA-FAS Manila said the impact of El Niño would be felt in the market year 2024-2025, which begins in October, since coconut production takes about a year.

Based on its estimates, the Philippines' coconut oil exports in market year 2024-2025 would decline by 21 percent to 900,000 MT from the 1.14 million MT projected volume in the current market year 2023-2024.

Citing the Philippine Coconut Authority, the international agency said the effect of El Niño would be seen "13 months after the conclusion of the drought."

The USDA-FAS Manila said there are about 46 coconut-producing provinces affected by El Niño as of end-February, based on government and in-

dustrial data.

According to the USDA-FAS Manila, a total of 62 oil mills with a total milling capacity of 3.685 million MT in 10 regions nationwide are affected by the weather disturbance.

"Coconut areas affected by dry conditions, dry spell and drought will result in low coconut production, which will affect coconut supply to oil mills located in these areas," it said in a report published yesterday.

Industry stakeholders estimate that about 80 percent of copra produced in the country is crushed for coconut oil production, the USDA-FAS Manila said.

The USDA-FAS Manila projected that the country's coconut oil production would decline by 15 percent year-on-year to 1.57 million MT from 1.85 million MT.

Copra production is pegged at 2.5 million MT, down by 15 percent from 2.94 million MT, according to the USDA-FAS Manila.

Aside from El Niño, the USDA-FAS Manila emphasized that "stringent" European Union (EU) rules would also contribute to the decrease in the country's coconut oil exports.

Local oil millers would "initially struggle" in complying with the EU's requirement of having lower mineral oil saturated hydrocarbons (MOSH) and mineral aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH) for coconut oil being exported to Europe, the international agency said.

The USDA-FAS Manila explained that the current practice of drying copra still involves smoking that increases the MOSH

and MOAH contamination in coconut oil. The Philippines is the world's top producer and exporter of coconut oil.



DBM releases P4.5 B for crop insurance

By **LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON**

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has released P4.5 billion to cover the crop insurance premium of some 2.3 million farmers in the country.

Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman has approved the release of P4.5 billion to the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. (PCIC) as mandated under the 2024 national budget.

Of the amount, P900 million in notice of cash allocation for the first quarter has also been freed up.

The funding will finance crop insur-

ance premiums of around 2.3 million subsistence farmers and fisherfolk nationwide.

Pangandaman said the financing aims to safeguard the means of living of farmers and fishers and ensure that they can continue their activities despite untoward incidents such as calamities.

"In light of the escalating challenges posed by climate change, which heightens the risks to both our economy and food security, it becomes imperative to prioritize the provision of financial security and insurance to empower our

farmers and fishermen," Pangandaman said.

Every year, PCIC covers farmers of various commodities including rice, corn, high value crops, livestock, fisheries and non-crop agricultural assets.

A huge chunk of PCIC's yearly revenues go to insurance claims of insured farmers affected by typhoons, flooding, pests, diseases and all other natural calamities.

However, data showed that there are about eight million farmers in the country but PCIC's penetration rate is only about 30 percent.



More Phl mangoes off to Australia

By **LOUELLA DESIDERIO**

The Philippines is set to ship a new batch of mangoes to Australia this month, a move that is expected to help strengthen trade ties between the two countries.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said logistics firm FastboxPh would dispatch the second batch of the country's renowned mangoes to Australia within the month, less than a year after the first batch was shipped in September last year.

The present batch covers 3,000 kilograms of mangoes from Zambales for Perth and Sydney, the DTI said in a statement issued over the weekend.

"The Philippines and Australia share a strong commitment to fostering trade ties, and the arrival of our mangoes signifies a delightful milestone in our partnership, especially as we celebrate Filipino Food Month in April," Philippine Ambassador to Australia Ma. Hellen De La Vega said.

FastboxPh, which has been entrusted with the mango shipment, reported an increase in demand within the Australian

market, citing the unparalleled taste and quality of Philippine mangoes.

With Philippine mango exports to Australia adhering to stringent biosecurity regulations and inspection procedures, FastboxPh is aiming to form partnerships with more retailers and distributors to make Philippine mangoes more accessible to Australian consumers.

"The overwhelmingly positive response to our initial shipment last year has paved the way for a triumphant return of Philippine mangoes to Australian tables this April. We are steadfast in our commitment to making Philippine mangoes a household staple in Australia," said FastboxPh managing director Miguel Ripoll.

The DTI said an additional shipment would follow after two to three weeks and possibly another batch in June.

It said the last batch for the year is expected to be shipped in August or September before the mango season in Australia starts.

With the market access, Trade Secretary Alfredo Pascual said the DTI expects

an increase in trade between the two countries.

"The continued growth in our bilateral trade underscores the vast potential for our products in the Australian market. The successful export of our mangoes exemplifies the significant strides we're making in facilitating agricultural trade, which is pivotal for our economic agenda," he said.

Last year, trade between the Philippines and Australia rose by 20 percent to \$4.1 billion from the previous year's \$3.4 billion.

Pascual said the challenge, however, would be on the production side.

"We will check the status of our mango industry. For DTI, we would like to provide enhanced market access for our stakeholders or exporters to as many countries as possible, even the non-traditional partners," he said.

For this year, the DTI is working on a free trade agreement (FTA) with the European Union, the United Arab Emirates and Canada under the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-Canada FTA negotiation.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Editorial

El Niño a calamity by any other definition

ON Monday, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said there was no need to declare a national state of calamity due to the effects of the El Niño-induced drought and that the government would instead continue with its regional approach to dealing with its consequences. While we understand his reasoning for this choice, we believe he should reconsider it.

El Niño is a cyclical climate phenomenon occurring every two to seven years and is characterized by an increase in sea surface temperatures in the eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. This causes a change in normal weather patterns in different parts of the world, manifesting as a period of below-normal rainfall and elevated temperatures here in the Philippines and throughout East and Southeast Asia. The current El Niño began in June last year and peaked in intensity in December; it is forecast that between now and June 2024, climactic conditions will transition to a "neutral" state, after which they will begin shifting toward a "La Niña," which is essentially the opposite phenomenon from El Niño.

However, even though the current El Niño peaked a couple of months ago, its weather effects will continue to be felt for the next several months, likely well into the third quarter of the year, according to the latest forecasts from the World Meteorological Office and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Thus, while we can take heart that conditions will begin to improve gradually in the near future, it is a virtual certainty that the El Niño effects will still inflict some damage on the country.

That damage has already been considerable. According to the latest government figures, almost 54,000 hectares of farmland in Regions 1, 2, 3, 4A, 4B, 5, 6, 9, 12, and the Cordillera Administrative Region have been impacted by drought, resulting in at least P2.63 billion in agricultural losses and affecting more than a half-million people. In addition, at least 12 cities and

municipalities have experienced water shortages. Comparisons with other calamities are invidious, especially to those affected by the current crisis; not all regions are impacted equally, but it is clear that the impacts are spread out across the entire country.

In the absence of a general nationwide declaration of a state of calamity, about 20 local government units have declared a state of calamity in their areas. These include the entire province of Oriental Mindoro, Zamboanga City, and several municipalities in Occidental Mindoro, Palawan, Romblon, Ifugao and Antique.

Declaring a state of calamity

In determining that a broader declaration of calamity is unnecessary, President Marcos explained that because of the regional variation in impacts, it may be better to handle the disaster response on a case-by-case basis. In addition, there is a specific legal definition of a state of calamity; to wit, 15 percent of the population and 30 percent of livelihoods must be affected, along with some damage to structures.

Although it is understandable that there must be some clear guidelines for a declaration, we believe that definition may be too narrow and that the government's focus on agriculture alone likewise overlooks a significant amount of harm that the ongoing hot, dry conditions are inflicting on the country. For example, have the economic impacts of water restrictions, multiple days of suspended school classes, or work slowdowns on construction projects due to excessive heat been considered? It does not appear that they have, and while we do not have specific data, the anecdotal evidence suggests those impacts must be significant.

Another point to consider is that a declaration of a state of calamity is always retroactive, and that is not always the best way to prevent and respond to the negative impacts. Declaring a state of calamity for the entire country, even for areas where the effects of El Niño are "not serious," helps to marshal resources and response plans to lessen the severity of impacts, much like preemptive evacuations ahead of an approaching storm helps to prevent casualties from flooding or landslides. A declaration of calamity is a step that should have already been taken; taking that step now will go a long way toward preventing additional serious harm and helping the country recover quickly from the damage that has already been done.



Farm subsidy reform seen potentially raising agri production by 17%

REPURPOSING agricultural subsidies to infrastructure could help countries like the Philippines boost agricultural output and exports while ensuring food security, participants said at a forum organized by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

"This repurposing benefits not just those countries, but the entire ADB region, increasing agricultural output by 17%, reducing hunger by 51 million people, or 30% in 2025," Mark Rosegrant, research fellow emeritus at the International Food Policy Research Institute, told the ADB Food Security Forum.

Countries urged to repurpose their agricultural subsidies were the Philippines, China, India, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Thailand, Bangladesh, and Vietnam.

"Investments in broad-based rural infrastructure cuts post-harvest losses by about 50% in the region," Mr. Rosegrant said.

The resulting lower food prices could reduce the hungry by 16 million people in 2035, he added.

Tetsushi Sonobe, ADB Institute dean, said that agricultural subsidies should be minimized, and are better allocated to research, infrastructure and irrigation to insure long-term gains for the sector.

Mr. Rosegrant also cited the need to invest in irrigation and water use efficiency.

"When you have the same trajectory of investment in irri-

gation together with investment in water use efficiency, you can actually reduce water use by about 7.5% while maintaining the growth in irrigated areas," he told the forum.

Countries should also invest in agricultural research and design as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, he said.

"By 2050, we would have reduced the initial emissions in Asia Pacific by a third here, and that's because of landscape productivity growth, together with generation adoption of technologies such as conservation tillage, precision agriculture, and improved management of rice and livestock among others."

Xianbin Yao, director general of the ADB's Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department, said investment in all segments of the agricultural food chain, especially for rice, is crucial.

"There is still a challenge to increase the productivity for the rice yield in countries where there is high demand... that can resist the heat the water and flood and then at the same time to manage it minimize post-harvest loss," he said on the sidelines of the forum.

"One has to carry out a very thorough assessment to decide where to allocate the resources," Mr. Yao said. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Soy imports expected to increase on growing PHL demand for animal feed

THE Philippines is expected to import more soybeans this year due to increased demand from the livestock, poultry, and aquaculture industries, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) said.

According to a report by the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, soybean meal imports for the feed industry are expected to grow 4% to 3.2 million metric tons (MT) in the marketing year 2024-2025.

The Philippines imports most of its soy to meet domestic demand, especially for animal feed.

Due to the limited land set aside for production, mostly in the Caraga and Ilocos Regions, the local harvest may likely be unchanged at 1,000 MT.

"The United States is the preferred source with an 85% market share. About 15-40% of the feed ration of animal and aquaculture feeds is soybean meal," it said.



THOMAS KINTO-UNSPASH

It added that imports of soybean meal will help offset the 16% decline in copra meal production, mainly due to the ongoing effects of El Niño on coconut production.

Copra meal is a by-product of the coconut oil extraction process.

The government weather service, known as PAGASA, has said that El Niño is starting to weaken, though its effects may last until August.

"The El Niño weather disturbance will affect coconut production... Copra crushing will decline by 15%, which will also result in a 15% reduction in coconut oil supply," the report said.

It added that exports of coconut oil are estimated to decline to 900,000 MT.

Citing the Philippine Coconut Authority, it said that El Niño is not showing significant effects as of March. Its effect is expected to manifest 13 months after the conclusion of the weather phenomenon.

The USDA said that El Niño's effects on copra supply for milling will be seen in areas that have been affected by drought or dry spells.

"Coconut areas affected by dry conditions, dry spells, and drought will report low coconut production, which will affect the coconut supply to oil mills located in these areas," it added. — **Adrian H. Halili**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Support onion farmers — lawmaker

THE GOVERNMENT should prioritize supporting onion farmers from production to marketing their produce and only consider importation if there is a supply shortage, a congressman said on Tuesday.

“We should only be importing if there really is a need — if there is a supply shortage and we need to curb the rising prices of agricultural products,” Party-List Rep. Wilbert T. Lee’s statement read. “Instead of relying on importation, the government must strengthen our local production by supporting our local producers.”

Addressing Mr. Lee’s statement, Federation of Free Farmers National Manager Raul Q. Montemayor said that onion farmers are still in the harvest season, meaning there should be enough onion stocks to last a few months.

“We are still in the harvest period,” he told *BusinessWorld* in a Viber message. “Even if some crops were damaged, there should still be ample supply for the next few months.” —

Kenneth Christiane L. Basilio



IFAD: Small sum from ODA billions in agri goes to health

By CAI U. ORDINARIO [@caiordinario](#)

VERY little of the billions of dollars worth of Official Development Assistance (ODA) poured into agriculture is invested to improve health and nutrition worldwide, according to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

In the opening session of the four-day Asia and the Pacific Food Security Forum on Tuesday, IFAD Strategy and Knowledge Department Associate Vice President Jotsna Puri said nutrition and health only account for 9 percent of the total ODA received to invest in food systems.

Puri said helping boost nutrition and health results means investing in specific efforts to develop local food markets that will not only ensure affordability but access for more people in the region. She stressed that improving food security is not always about money, but how the money is used.

"If you look at the data that we are producing through impact assessments as well...yes, we are able to develop these agricultural value chains, that we are able to provide and deliver resources to small-holder farmers who are responsible for approximately one-third of the

overall food that we produce, that we consume but nutrition patterns in these targeted areas are not changing dramatically," Puri said.

"Nutrition patterns are still, not surprisingly, very dependent on access to markets and are becoming less diversified in these areas unless we pay attention to developing local markets," she added.

Apart from nutrition and health, investments in food systems, Puri said, also include social assistance which accounts for 31 percent; agricultural development and value chains, 26 percent; climate change and natural resources, 18 percent; and infrastructure and food systems, 16 percent.

Puri said IFAD data showed ODA invested in food systems have increased over time, by about 10 percent to \$44.3 billion in 2021 from \$40.3 billion in 2018. While the ODA for food systems was higher at \$48.7 billion in 2020, the investments have generally increased be-

tween 2018 and 2021.

"What we're recognizing is that clearly it's very important to track and understand how we can measure and how we can tag these. My last point here is to really nudge the multilateral and the international system into measuring our impact [and] where we are losing that [impact]," Puri said.

Access to healthy diets

IN his speech, ADB President Matsugu Asakawa said nearly 2 billion people in Asia struggle with access to healthy diets due to high costs. He added that over half of those affected by hunger globally live in Asia.

"Having enough nutritious food to eat is something many of us take for granted. But imagine you are a parent without the means to buy protein or vegetables for your family," Asakawa said.

"You can only feed your children grains or have no other choice but to skip meals for yourself. Rice prices soared more than 40 percent in 2023, eroding your purchasing power, and that of so many other poor families in Asia," he added.

Asakawa said food security also faces climate change threats that cause nature loss that lead to economic shocks. These shocks add to the pressures on "fragile food systems."

When disasters such as droughts and floods strike, farmers stand to lose their harvests, threatening not

only their livelihood but their and their families' survival as well.

This, Asakawa said, is a reality faced by 40 percent of the workforce of Asia and the Pacific who are employed in agri-food systems as farmers and workers in food processing and retail.

"Food insecurity is causing tremendous suffering and undermining the prospects for development. The world needs to act urgently to address this crisis, which has grown worse because of extreme weather events and geopolitical conflict," Asakawa said.

The ADB President said the multilateral development bank has committed \$7.6 billion of this \$14 billion and is on pace to deliver the rest by the end of 2025.

He said these investments are targeted to address the symptoms of food insecurity, like malnutrition, but also to transform the entire agri-food system.

Transforming food systems also needs to consider the environmental impact of agriculture. Asakawa said farming imposes great cost to the environment, such as water exploitation, land degradation, biodiversity damage, and emissions.

This is the reason for the support extended by 159 countries at the COP28 last year, including the majority of our developing member countries, to endorse the Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action.

Date: APR. 10, 2011 Page: 5



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Presyo ng manok at baboy, sumirit

Tumaas ang presyo sa kada kilo ng manok at baboy sa ilang pamilihan sa Quezon City partikular sa Nepa Qmart.

Ito ay makaraang madagdagan ng P10 ang kada kilo ng manok na nasa P190, mula sa dating P180 per kilo.

Tumaas din ang presyo sa kada kilo ng karne ng baboy na nasa P260 mula sa dating

P240 hanggang P250 kada kilo.

Ang liempo naman ay nasa P300 per kilo; butu-buto na nasa P150 hanggang P200 kada kilo; pata o paa ng baboy na nasa P160 hanggang P170 per kilo; at ribs na nasa P235 kada kilo.

Tumaas din ang per kilo ng giniling na mula sa dating P260, ngayon ay nasa P280 na ang

kada kilo.

Sa pahayag ng mga meat vendor, tumaas ang presyuhan sa kada kilo ng manok at baboy dahil sa dagdag bayad nila sa mga traders at suppliers bunsod pa rin sa nararanasang El Niño sa bansa, gayundin ang walang humpay na pagtaas sa presyo ng produktong petrolyo. (Angie dela Cruz)

Malaya Business Insight

Date: APR. 10, 2021 Page: A0



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Wheat drops 1%

SINGAPORE- Chicago wheat dropped for a second session on Tuesday, falling more than 1 percent as concerns over world supplies eased after a US government report showed the winter crop remained healthy despite dry weather conditions.

Soybeans lost more ground, while corn fell after closing marginally higher on Monday.

"For US wheat, it's mainly hard red winter wheat-growing region in Kansas which has been a bit dry in recent weeks, but it's still too early to draw any conclusions," said

one Singapore-based trader. "If it doesn't rain for another month, then we might have a problem."

The most-active wheat contract on the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) was down 1.2 percent at \$5.59 a bushel. Soybeans gave up 0.1 percent to \$11.80-1/2 a bushel and corn slid 0.2 percent to \$4.34-1/2 a bushel.

The amount of US winter wheat rated "good or excellent" by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) held steady from last week despite concerns over drier weather and wind, data showed on Monday. - *Reuters*



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Russian wheat prices up

MOSCOW- Russian wheat export prices rose again last week, with analysts again slightly downgrading their estimates of exports in March.

The price of 12.5 percent protein Russian wheat scheduled for free-on-board (FOB) delivery in May was \$210.0 a metric ton, up \$2.0 from the previous week, the IKAR agriculture consultancy said.

The Sovecon agriculture consultancy pegged the same class of wheat at \$210 to \$212 a ton FOB, compared with \$205 to \$208 a week earlier.

Russia, the world's largest wheat exporter, saw its overseas supplies growing to 1.03 million tons of grain last week, up from 1.02 million tons the previous week. The exports included 0.82 million tons of wheat, down from 0.84 million tons a week earlier, Sovecon wrote, citing port data.

The consultancy again lowered its estimate for wheat exports in March by 0.1 million tons, to 4.8 million tons, the same as it was in March 2023.

Some delays in wheat export shipments of wheat by one of the largest Russian exporters, TD RIF, have underpinned global markets.

"At this stage, we doubt that problems with the certificates will lead to substantial issues with exports in the current season. We have seen many similar stories in the past", Sovecon noted. - *Reuters*