

MANILA BULLETIN:

DA chief sets sights on doubling budget for 2025

BY GABRIELL CRISTEL GALANG

Apr 18, 2024 05:09 PM

The Department of Agriculture (DA) plans to more than double its budget next year to modernize farms, improve food security, and increase earnings for farmers and fisherfolk.

The DA is exploring a proposed expenditure program of P513.81 billion for 2025, a substantial jump from this year's budget of P208.58 billion. It noted, however, that this budget is still a work in progress and subject to revisions.

Given the amount, Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. called for support from the private sector during a consultation with other agricultural groups.

This sought-after support would allow the DA to construct more farm infrastructure like irrigation and postharvest facilities.

Tiu Laurel stated that the lack of agriculture investments in the past four decades substantially decreased the sector's contribution to the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

According to him, millions of Filipinos who depend on agriculture financially struggle with their livelihoods.

"Over the next few years, P93 billion is needed for postharvest facilities to reduce rice and corn wastage while around P1.2 trillion would be required to irrigate an additional 1.2 million hectares to boost rice production and reduce importation," the agri chief emphasized.

The proposed expenditure budget would be distributed to the DA's attached corporations, like the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), the National Food Authority (NFA), the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority (PFDA), and the National Dairy Authority (NDA).

Each attached firm will have a preliminary fund of P287.98 billion, which is P193 billion higher than this year's overall budget of P94.3 billion.

Meanwhile, the DA will double its expenditure plans from P114.28 billion to P225.83 billion to push through farm and fishery modernization, and food security, and strengthen the anti-smuggling efforts.

The rice subsector will then receive a proposed allocation of P294.21 billion, while the fisheries subsector will have an allotment of P50.6 billion.

The locally funded Agriculture sector projects will have a P45.48 billion proposed expenditure. Other DA subsectors will also have an increased allocation. Tiu Laurel earmarked P34.5 billion for cross-cutting programs, P32 billion for high-value crops, P28.56 billion for livestock, P13.7 billion for foreign-assisted programs, P11.3 billion for corn, and P3.38 billion for the agriculture credit program.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/4/18/da-chief-sets-sights-on-doubling-budget-for-2025>

MANILA BULLETIN:

For fuel subsidy: Solon tells DA to help farmers, fisherfolk enlist with RSBSA

BY **DEXTER BARRO II**

Apr 18, 2024 07:52 PM

AT A GLANCE

- AGRI Party-list Rep. Wilbert Lee is urging the Department of Agriculture (DA) to help register farmers and fisherfolk in the Registry System for the Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) to avail of the agency's fuel subsidy.



AGRI Party-list Rep. Wilbert Lee (Facebook)

AGRI Party-list Rep. Wilbert Lee is urging the Department of Agriculture (DA) to help register farmers and fisherfolk in the Registry System for the Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) to avail of the agency's fuel subsidy.

“Matagal na po nating panawagan na ma-update at ma-modernize na ang RSBSA registration dahil marami tayong mga magsasaka at mangingisda na di nakakatanggap ng ayuda dahil wala sila sa listahan o di kaya ay may mali sa detalye,” Lee said in a statement on Thursday, April 18.

(We have been calling for the RSBSA registration to be updated and modernized for a long time because we have many farmers and fisherfolk who have yet to receive aid because they are not on the list or there is something wrong with the details.)

“Sa bigat ng mga pasanin nila, sobrang nakapanghihinayang na hindi sila nakakatanggap ng tulong,” he added.

(With the weight of their burdens, it is very unfortunate that they do not receive help.)

The DA recently announced that it has allocated P500 million to provide a one-time P3,000 fuel subsidy for farmers and fishers who have their machinery and boats registered.

Lee pointed out that aside from assisting and encouraging prospective beneficiaries into the RSBSA, the DA should also streamline the requirements needed to be qualified.

However, since the department is still finalizing its guidelines for the subsidy, the Bicolano lawmaker said it should give farmers and fisherfolk ample time to register.

“At kapag nagsimula na ang pamimigay ng subsidy, gamitin po sana ng DA ang latest na listahan ng rehistro para walang mapagkaitan at mapag-iwanan,” he added.

(And once the distribution of the subsidy starts, the DA should use the latest registration list so that no one is denied or left behind.)

Lee also told the DA to consider giving another round of fuel subsidy in the second half of the year if the upsurge in fuel prices continues.

“Sa dalas at laki ng pagtaas ng presyo ng mga produktong petrolyo, hindi sapat ang one-time P3,000 na fuel subsidy,” the solon stressed.

(With the frequency and scope of price increases for petroleum products, the one-time P3,000 fuel subsidy is not enough.)

According to him, the House of Representatives should also consider providing an additional budget for the BSBSA in the upcoming budget deliberations.

He noted that updating and streamlining the registry list will enable the swift delivery of fuel subsidies to farmers and fishermen.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/4/18/for-fuel-subsidy-solon-tells-da-to-help-farmers-fisherfolk-enlist-with-rsbsa>

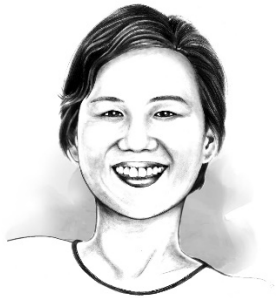
MANILA BULLETIN:

Cooperation is the way forward

BY **YVETTE TAN**

Apr 19, 2024 00:23 AM

AVANT GARDENER



I attended a webinar by the Agribusiness and Countryside Development Foundation, a non-government organization dedicated to generating jobs in rural areas, of which I am a member. Every two weeks, we invite an expert on an aspect of the agriculture industry to give a talk with the goal of learning from them and possibly connecting them to individuals and organizations who can help their cause, or vice versa.

This week's guest was educator and business consultant Bien Nito of Nitobe Business Consulting whose talk, "Philippine Cooperative Challenges and Way Forward" reminded us that when run well, a cooperative can spell success for its members.

According to Article 3 of the Republic Act No. 9520, which amended the "Cooperative Code of the Philippines" to the "Philippine Cooperative Code of 2008," a cooperative is "an autonomous and duly registered association of persons, with a common bond of interest, who have voluntarily joined together to achieve their social, economic, and cultural needs and aspirations by making equitable contributions to the capital required, patronizing their products and services and accepting a fair share of the risks and benefits of the undertaking in accordance with universally accepted cooperative principles."

Neto noted that by virtue of this, it is "a social business venture organized for a social purpose — mitigating [or] reducing a social problem or a market failure—and to generate social value while operating with the financial discipline, innovation, and determination of a private sector business."

In short, a cooperative harnesses the power of many to create businesses and services that will benefit its members. De La Salle University has an excellent primer on this (just google "cooperative Philippines" and the "Primer on Cooperatives" will be the second to come out on search.

Neto further explained that cooperatives serve complementary roles which include productive services such as offering members business loans, job generation, manufacturing, supplying of

inputs, produce marketing, and other general services; as well as supplementary roles or providential services like education, consumer products (hence, coop groceries and the like), and medical, housing, retirement, and even memorial services.

As of 2020, the Philippines has 18,848 coops, the top four areas/regions being Pampanga, NCR, CALABARZON (Region 4A), and Central Visayas (Region 7), with agriculture cooperatives being the third most popular. According to the Cooperative Development Authority, 11.5 million Filipinos belong to a cooperative, only 13.29 per cent of the Philippines' total population of 113.9 million (both as of 2021). This means there's still a lot of opportunities for people of different sectors to band together to form social businesses. Cooperatives can be beneficial for small farmers in particular because banding together can afford them more access to capital, marketability, business opportunities, tax breaks, and the like.

Neto outlined some rules for good governance, which include “sound business policies, active member participation, competitive products and services, adequate internal capital mobilization, observance and practice of ethical conduct and behavior, prevalent concern for the holistic development of members, and enhanced organizational credibility.” Basically the same rules for running a social business, which it is.

The common theme behind successful agriventures, big or small, is running it like a business. This seems to be one of the most difficult parts to get over, but once surmounted, can be a pathway to a stable business and safety net, two important things, especially during these times.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/4/19/cooperation-is-the-way-forward>

MANILA BULLETIN:

La Union aids farmers affected by drought

BY FREDDIE LAZARO

Apr 18, 2024 08:03 PM

SAN FERNANDO CITY, La Union – Farmers and fisherfolk affected by the El Niño phenomenon in this province will soon receive cash assistance from the provincial government.



DAVID (FB)

Gov. Raphaelle Veronica Ortega-David said they enacted Provincial Ordinance No. 425-2023 that provides cash assistance amounting to P8,000 or P10,000 to farmers and fisherfolk who have partial and total crop damages, respectively.

The ordinance, also known as the Agricultural Emergency Trust Fund, appropriated P3 million and will benefit around 300 farmers.

“The ordinance’s implementing rules and regulations were recently approved and hence we are now ready to implement it and provide timely assistance to affected agricultural workers,” said acting Provincial Agriculturist Sharon Vilorio.

To avail of the financial assistance, affected farmers must send an application letter and duly-accomplished application form to the Office of Provincial Agriculturist (OPAG). The applications shall be endorsed to the city or municipal agriculture office that will facilitate the validation of the reported damages to assess actual cost and losses.

The applicant must be a member of an accredited farmer or fisherfolk cooperative.

Passed into law on July 28, 2023, the ordinance aims to capacitate local farmers and fisherfolks whose livelihood are usually impaired by natural calamities that are frequent in the country such as the current El Niño.

OPAG continues to monitor and assess the reported damages of farmers in the province for the provision of the emergency trust fund.

“Our agenda to promote the welfare of our agricultural workers is aligned with the province’s vision to become the Heart of Agri-Tourism in Northern Luzon by 2025,” David said.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/4/18/la-union-aids-farmers-affected-by-drought>

MANILA BULLETIN:

BSP to set up 22 more Paleng-QRs this year

BY [LEE C. CHIPONGIAN](#)

Apr 18, 2024 03:56 PM

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) will establish and launch 21 to 22 additional Paleng-QR Ph Plus within the year, bringing to 68 the total Paleng-QR program in the country.

The incoming Paleng-QRs will include among others Cabanatuan City, General Santos City, Imus City, Kidapawan City, Laoag City, Valenzuela City, Vigan City, Tarlac, Bataan, Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte.

As of April 12, 2024 there are a total of 48 Paleng-QRs including the latest addition of Antipolo City.

Paleng-QR boosts digital payments and enables the digitalization of payment transactions in public markets, public utility vehicles (PUVs) and business establishments.

“Paleng-QR Ph Plus is a joint initiative of the BSP and the Department of the Interior and Local Government that encourages the use of Quick Response (QR) Ph, the national standard for QR code technology. This technology provides a secure, convenient, and efficient way for merchants and customers to make and receive payments,” said the BSP.

During the April 12 launch, BSP Governor Eli M. Remolona Jr. said that by using the QR Ph codes in daily payment transactions, business owners and their customers can expand their digital financial footprint.

“This will give them access to a wider range of financial services, such as credit, savings, insurance, and investments,” he said.

The City Government of Antipolo has passed an ordinance in 2020, requiring all business establishments in the city to adopt alternative modes of payment. In 2022, the resolution was amended by the Sangguniang Panlungsod to include Paleng-QR as one of the alternative payment options.

The BSP said Antipolo expects to onboard 676 market vendors and over 3,500 tricycle drivers and operators association members to the program.

Meanwhile, BSP Deputy Governor Bernadette Romulo-Puyat invited the people of Antipolo City or Antipoleños to open a Basic Deposit Account (BDA).

She said in Filipino that “isandaang piso lang, pwede nang mag-open ng savings account. Walang dormancy fee, walang maintenance fee. Sana ma-encourage natin ang lahat na magkaroon ng [bank] account. The BSP continues to advocate for the interest of our financial consumers. (For just P100, you can open a savings account. No dormancy fee, no maintenance fee. I hope we can encourage everyone to open a bank account).”

At the close of 2023, cities with Paleng-QR Ph Plus include the City of Alaminos in Pangasinan, Iloilo City, and Calamba City.

Other cities with Paleng-QR Ph Plus are Baguio, Davao, Tagbilaran, Naga, Lapu-Lapu, Pasig, Bacolod, Victorias, Mandaue, Ozamiz, Cotabato, and the towns of Camiling in Tarlac and Carmona in Cavite.

The nationwide program supports the BSP's thrust to convert half of the total volume of retail payments in the country into digital form and to onboard 70 percent of Filipinos to the formal financial system under the BSP's Digital Payments Transformation Roadmap 2020-2023.

As such, Paleng-QR is one of the priority programs under the BSP's National Strategy for Financial Inclusion (NSFI) 2022-2028, the guiding framework for all stakeholders working together to accelerate financial inclusion in the country.

Last May 2023, the BSP signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office-Cordillera Administrative Region to onboard farmers and other agricultural players to the Paleng-QR Ph.

The BSP said the MOA includes financial education programs on the effective use of digital payments in business, financial services for micro and small enterprises, and consumer protection.

The MOA expands the scope of Paleng-QR participants from Baguio City's public market vendors, public transport drivers, and other merchants who joined the program in August last year, to now include the region's agricultural supply chain players

To spread QR Ph use across the country, the BSP introduced the Paleng-QR program in mid-2022 with the DILG to help local government units bring QR Ph to public markets and transport hubs for tricycles.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/4/18/article-2182>

MANILA BULLETIN:

DA chief appoints BFAR OIC following Escoto's dismissal

BY [JEL SANTOS](#)

Apr 18, 2024 01:05 PM



BFAR OIC Isidro Velayo Jr.

Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has appointed Isidro Velayo Jr. as the officer-in-charge (OIC) of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) after the Ombudsman dismissed its national director, Demosthenes Escoto.

Laurel said Velayo was a former national coordinator of BFAR's seaweed program and previously the agency's regional director in Zamboanga Peninsula.

"OIC Isidro Velayo, director IV and assistant director for technical services, is a career professional and respected official of BFAR," the DA chief said in a statement released on Wednesday, April 17.

The immediate appointment of Velayo, he said, will ensure BFAR's continued operations and implementation of the agency's major projects.

According to Laurel, his marching order to Velayo is to ensure that the operations of the agency "will not be affected by this legal development."

Citing the order of the Ombudsman, the DA said Escoto was found guilty of grave misconduct in a graft case arising from BFAR's procurement of communications equipment in 2018.

"Escoto could still seek reconsideration of the Ombudsman's decision or directly appeal the decision to the Court of Appeals," the agriculture department stated.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/4/18/da-chief-appoints-bfar-oic-following-escoto-s-dismissal>

Tobacco industry supports plan to ban disposable vapes

[Delon Porcalla](#) - The Philippine Star

April 19, 2024 | 12:00am



Candon Mayor Eric Singson said he is open to the proposal of Finance Secretary Ralph Recto to ban disposable vapes, also known as e-cigarettes.

STAR / File

CANDON CITY, Ilocos Sur, Philippines — The tobacco industry has expressed its willingness to support a proposal of the Department of Finance to ban disposable vapes, especially if proven that these are hazardous not just to health, but to the environment as well.

Candon Mayor Eric Singson said he is open to the proposal of Finance Secretary Ralph Recto to ban disposable vapes, also known as e-cigarettes.

Several countries in Europe including the United Kingdom, Ireland and Belgium have imposed a ban due to the growing incidence of illicit vapes.

“If that is the trend, then maybe there is a very good reason for banning it. If it’s something of a health concern to the users, especially the minors, then I’m open to it,” Singson told The STAR in an interview in this tobacco-producing province in Northern Luzon.

“If it is really hazardous to a person’s health, then it’s OK with me, we will subscribe to regulation, just like the Tobacco Regulation Act,” Singson said.

Having been a long-time legislator, the brother of former Ilocos Sur governor Luis “Chavit” Singson said the proposal would still undergo a process.

“I think (the national government) will have to study it first. And they have to pass a law because this is new,” he said.

The Department of Health (DOH) has indicated support for the proposal, just like some senators, but the Department of Trade and Industry has yet to take a stand. The DTI is the chief enforcer of Republic Act 11900 or the Vape Law.

Both the Department of Agriculture and National Tobacco Administration have yet to issue a categorical statement on the proposal.

In Asia, disposable vapes are already banned in Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan and to some extent in Japan.

Recto, also a former senator and Batangas congressman, proposed the ban due to the alarming rise in the use of vapes among the youth and its impact on the environment, with illicit vapes further eroding tax revenues of the national government.

Among the risks of vaping are lung injuries and neurological symptoms, according to the US Food and Drug Administration.

The risks also include “fires and explosions” from electronic hazardous waste.

Vapes are handheld battery-powered electronic devices with heated metal coils that vaporize a liquid containing nicotine (an addictive stimulant found in tobacco) or cannabis products, known as e-liquid.

Disposable Vapes, described as an “electronic waste,” are single-use products powered by the same rechargeable lithium-ion batteries used in electric cars and cellular android phones.

The US-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Foundation reported that vape waste is a “growing environmental threat,” where, if based on sales estimates, lining up disposable vapes sold in a year would stretch it for 7,000 miles – long enough to span the continental US twice.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/04/19/2348696/tobacco-industry-supports-plan-ban-disposable-vapes>

El Niño shrinks egg sizes

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

April 19, 2024 | 12:00am



In this undated photo shows a poultry owner harvest chicken eggs to be sold in local market in San Jose del Monte Bulacan.

Philstar.com / Jovannie Lambayan

MANILA, Philippines — There is an oversupply of small eggs as sizes shrink amid the impact of El Niño, the Philippine Egg Board Association said yesterday.

Chicken layers are eating less due to the sweltering heat, affecting the production of large and extra-large eggs, PEBA president Francis Uyehara said in a radio interview.

“The effect of El Niño is felt by all farm producers, most especially in the northern part of the country,” Uyehara noted.

Egg producers reported a big mortality of chicken layers due to heat stroke, he added.

“The hot temperature has affected the feed consumption of our chickens. As a result, our production dropped and there was a significant decrease in the sizes. There was an imbalance in the sizes, more small-sized eggs were produced compared to big sizes,” he explained.

The production of big eggs has dropped between two and five percent, he said.

“This is big if it will be based on per piece because this is for the entire country,” he noted.

There is a low demand for eggs, he said.

“The consumption of our consumers dropped as there are no big occasions and the school classes are irregular, so not many eat eggs,” he explained.

The farmgate price of small eggs dropped between P4.50 and P5.40 per piece, Uyehara said.

“Since late January, the farmgate price of eggs dropped after the holiday. Until now, the decrease in the farmgate price persists,” he added.

Egg producers are hoping the farmgate price of eggs will stabilize this month until May, he said.

Based on the Department of Agriculture (DA)’s monitoring, the retail price of medium-sized eggs in Metro Manila ranged between P6 and P8.50 per piece.

Meanwhile, the DA and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) should resolve the issue of the bird flu vaccine, Uyehara said.

“We are continuously communicating with the DA. The processing (of the vaccine against bird flu) is complicated as it is not only the DA who has the authority, it also the FDA. Unfortunately, these are two different agencies. This complicates and delays the process as they do not jibe with the process,” he added.

The poultry industry is positive that the issue between the two agencies will be resolved, he noted.

“Since last year, we are appealing that they finally reconcile their differences so that our stakeholders can move forward on the issue of bird flu,” he said.

Some poultry raisers are resorting to illegally purchasing vaccines online, he noted.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/04/19/2348795/el-nio-shrinks-egg-sizes>

La Union government to aid drought-hit farmers, fisherfolk

[Artemio Dumlao](#) - Philstar.com

April 18, 2024 | 7:37pm



La Union is famous for its gorgeous sunsets.

BAGUIO CITY — Farmers and fisherfolk in La Union whose livelihood are suffering from the extreme weather condition brought by the El Niño phenomenon are set to receive financial aid from the provincial government.

La Union Gov. Raphaelle Veronica Ortega-David bared that the province enacted Provincial Ordinance No. 425-2023, seeking to provide P8,000 or P10,000 cash assistance to farmers and fisherfolks who recorded partial and total crop damages.

The ordinance, also known as the Agricultural Emergency Trust Fund, appropriated the total amount of P3 million, seen to benefit around 300 La Union farmers.

“The ordinance’s implementing rules and regulations were recently approved, and hence we are now ready to implement it and provide timely assistance to affected agricultural workers,” said OIC Provincial Agriculturist Sharon Viloría.

To avail of the financial assistance, affected farmers must send an application letter and duly-accomplished application form to the Office of Provincial Agriculturist. The applications shall then be endorsed to the respective city/municipal agriculture office which will facilitate the validation of the reported damages to assess actual cost and losses.

Villoria said that applicant must be a member of an accredited farmer/fisherfolks cooperative.

Passed into law on July 28, 2023, the provincial ordinance aims to capacitate local farmers and fisherfolks whose livelihood are usually impaired by natural calamities that are frequent in the country, such as the current El Niño.

Viloria said that provincial agriculture office continues to monitor and assess the reported damages of farmers in the province for the provision of the emergency trust fund.

"Our agenda to promote the welfare of our agricultural workers is aligned with the province's vision to become the Heart of Agri-Tourism in Northern Luzon by 2025," Ortega-David said.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/04/18/2348698/la-union-government-aid-drought-hit-farmers-fisherfolk>

Number of fishermen in West Philippine Sea up 60% – BFAR

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

April 19, 2024 | 12:00am



Filipino fishermen fetch MV Kapitan Felix Oca at a designated rendezvous point in the West Philippine Sea on December 11, 2023.

Michael Varcas / The Philippine STAR

MANILA, Philippines — More Filipino fishermen have begun dropping their nets again in the West Philippine Sea, with a ranking official from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) claiming they have increased by more than half – encouraged largely by greater government presence and support against Chinese harassment.

In an interview onboard the M/V DA-BFAR, BFAR spokesman Nazario Briguera said the fishers – especially those operating around the Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal area – now feel greater support from the government, particularly the BFAR and Philippine Coast Guard.

“If you can recall, I already stated last month the increase (in the number of fisherfolk), particularly at Scarborough as they already felt the presence of the government,” Briguera said.

He did not give specific details but he maintained that greater presence of the government has encouraged fishermen to resume their trade in the country’s waters.

“I do not have the exact figures, but based on the our estimate, the increase is between 50 and 60 percent and we can attribute this to the presence of both BFAR

and coast guard. It is important for our fishers to feel the presence of the government,” he pointed out.

According to Briguera, the fuel support for the fishers has significantly improved the operation of Filipino fishers in the West Philippine Sea.

“We expanded our support through this project, LAYAG-WPS (Livelihood Activities to Enhance Fisheries Yields and Economic Gains from the West Philippine Sea). This is a more comprehensive approach from the government like the distribution of big boats, basic postharvest equipment, including skills enhancement, capacity building for our fishers,” he said.

“BFAR is there with or without the conflict or any tension. Our mandate does not change, to give support to our fisherfolk. We are not affected by this issue (tension with China),” Briguera said.

Currently, the BFAR has at least 30 floating assets to carry out its function of providing support to the fisherfolk, he said.

Briguera said that livelihood intervention provided during the launch of LAYAG-WPS in Subic, Zambales reached P60 million.

“Overall, the government has allocated P2 billion funding to implement the LAYAG-West Philippine Sea,” he added.

Covered by the program, he said, are regions facing the West Philippine Sea, including Regions 1, 3 and Mimaropa.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/04/19/2348811/number-fishermen-west-philippine-sea-60-bfar>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Tech tapped in mapping farms, roads to boost food security

By: [Vincent Cabreza](#) - Reporter / [@Inquirer_Baguio](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:04 AM April 19, 2024



VEGGIE SOURCE Farming towns like Atok in Benguet province, where vegetable gardens are carved out of mountainsides, are being tapped as future “smart” communities by the Department of Science and Technology. The country’s information and communication technology players are partnering with the government to develop local agriculture. —NEIL CLARK ONGCHANGCO

BAGUIO CITY — The country’s technology experts have started digitally mapping all food producing areas and their supporting public works infrastructure to help sustain food security and accelerate production, an information and communication technology (ICT) group said on Tuesday.

At this year’s ClickConex (2024 Convergence of Luzon ICT Champions Conference and Exhibition), Iloilo businessman Jessraf Palmares, president of the National ICT Confederation of the Philippines (NICP), said they commissioned Project Sarai (Smarter Approaches to Reinvigorate Agriculture as an Industry in the Philippines) of the University of the Philippines Los Baños to chart the condition of Philippine farms, including marine and other aquaculture food producers.

Project Sarai is financed by the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD) and has been using satellite technology to provide daily weather forecasts, monitor crops, and acquire

applicable data to reduce the impact of extreme weather on farms in many regions. PCAARRD is an attached agency of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

NICP, meanwhile, is the umbrella organization of more than a hundred ICT councils operating in different towns and cities, representing both the public and private sectors.

The country harvests food from about 13.42 million hectares (ha) of agricultural land, but the sector grew only by 1.2 percent in 2023's gross domestic product (GDP) on the back of improved poultry and livestock production.

That figure was up from the sector's 0.6 percent growth in 2022, according to the DA in a February news release.

It said last year's growth was also influenced by "record rice harvests of 20.06 million metric tons (MT)," which lowered rice imports from 3.8 million MT in 2022 to 3.5 million MT in 2023.

DA also said farmers employ "25 percent (12.425 million) of the 49.7 million Filipinos in the labor force as of November 2023."

SCIENCE-DRIVEN AGRICULTURE A group of information and communication technology professionals has launched a digital mapping project of all food sources in the country, such as this vegetable garden in the mountains of Atok, Benguet, to increase productivity and identify where science can help improve farming. —NEIL CLARK ONGCHANGCO

'Serious problem'

"We have a serious food security challenge in the country," said Bukidnon businessman Roberto Tinsay, a member of the NICP board of trustees, during a news conference.

"Sarai is a Filipino platform that has been using satellites to get farm-precision data on the ground. Simply speaking, if you have no data, you cannot manage anything,"

Tinsay said. Currently, 56,000 ha of plantations in Bukidnon grow coffee, sugar, rice, corn, and cacao, he said.

However, Project Sarai would need the consent of a local government unit (LGU) before it could proceed with mapping activities there, Tinsay said.

The local government would need to shoulder part of the cost as its counterpart to the national government grant used by Project Sarai, he said.

Tinsay has opened talks regarding prospective technology partnership deals with the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Agrarian Reform, Palmares told the Inquirer.

Palmares said he talked to Agrarian Reform Secretary Conrado Estrella III and they discussed how to introduce digital technology to increase agrarian land productivity.

“We are also working with the University of Asia and the Pacific to come up with a framework as to how we will approach innovation from the point of view of the private sector,” Palmares said.

He said the framework would harness technology that has predictive capabilities concerning the weather and that identifies suitable crops for certain regions.

“We have to approach farming in a scientific way,” he stressed.

Palmares said NICP is helping the government “cultivate an atmosphere that is favorable to the progression of Filipino technology.”

<https://technology.inquirer.net/133861/tech-tapped-in-mapping-farms-roads-to-boost-food-security>

The resonance of Raffy Tulfo

By: [Gideon Lasco](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:15 AM April 19, 2024

Whenever I travel around the country, whether I'm hiking, doing anthropological fieldwork, or undertaking an academic trip, I take the opportunity to ask people what they think about the burning issues of the day; and many of their inputs ultimately find my way into my thinking and writing.

Without my leading them into the question of which politicians they admire the most, one of the politicians that figure prominently in their narratives is Sen. Raffy Tulfo.

“He was the first to point out the corruption in LTO (Land Transportation Office),” Nani, a driver in Laguna tells me. “And he even went to their office itself, he’s spoken out about the difficulties of getting a license and all those unnecessary fees.” Such issues may be deemed by others—including his colleagues—as secondary to “more pressing matters” like foreign policy—but not for those who drive for a living. Like the indefatigable Risa Hontiveros, he has taken up cudgels for a range of issues that matter to specific constituencies—whether it’s an overseas Filipino workers scam in Italy or a fertilizer scam in the Department of Agriculture; whether it’s motorcycles being held at checkpoints, or people deprived of liberty being abused inside prisons. Last I checked, he was calling attention to the “spaghetti wires” in electric posts that are ubiquitous in our towns and cities, warning of its risks and hazards.

And of course, many still remember his confrontation with Cynthia Villar over land conversion back in November 2022, which professor Randy David commended at the time: “Whether he meant to or not, Tulfo had touched a raw nerve in our premodern political order. This is the shameless interlocking of family-owned businesses and political dynasties, about which as little as possible is publicly said in the polite corridors of the legislature. Bravo to him!” (“Raffy Tulfo’s Senate debut,” 11/20/22)

Rightly or wrongly, what all of these episodes are depicting is someone who cares for issues that people care about—and someone who has the courage to go against his colleagues if needed. Seemingly corroborating the plaudits I hear from my

interlocutors, the latest surveys show him as having one of the highest, if not the highest, trust ratings of incumbent senators, and he is even matching or beating Vice President Sara Duterte in hypothetical 2028 matchups.

Of course, Tulfo being a Tulfo is enough to invalidate him in the eyes of many—especially those in the opposition—and there are those who are critical of the “Tulfo brand of justice,” given that many Filipinos equate it to justice—(“ipa-Tulfo”) and it short-circuits our justice system instead of reforming it and addressing its structural flaws. As the writer Gian Lao once pointed out, “It’s easy to argue why such a formula is unhealthy for any society. It’s trial by publicity. Instant justice—fallible, extralegal, and prone to abuse. It makes a spectacle out of suffering. It infects the general population with the idea that justice is faster and more just outside the justice system.” Lao goes on to add: “If you are raised without knowing what real justice feels like, you might mistake a great many things for justice. Yes, even instant, mob, radio-show justice. And yes, maybe even violence.”

Then there are also concerns about how the Tulfos are fast becoming a political dynasty, with Raffy’s brother Erwin—already a party list representative and deputy majority leader in Congress—poised to join him in the Senate next year; their sister Wanda was former president Rodrigo Duterte’s tourism secretary until she resigned in the wake of a scandal involving Erwin and another brother, Ben, regarding their show. This, too, is a valid concern, given, as I wrote in the space some years back, “[t]here are many other examples of women and men in our government, brilliant or otherwise, who espouse good and sensible principles—but they stop short of applying the same principles when it comes to their families.” (“In search of ‘walang kamag-anak’,” 10/18/18)

Still, Senator Tulfo’s decades of listening to people’s everyday grievances seems to be informing at least part of his political approach. Moreover, his mammoth social media presence—e.g., 27.7 million YouTube followers—has allowed him to maintain relative political autonomy, even as his popularity is already making him a target of politicking that will be more intense if he contemplates higher office. If he is somehow able to show his independence even from his family and their past allegiances and entanglements; if he can set himself apart from the law-and-order saviorism that catapulted him to the Senate by pushing for actual institutional and legislative reforms;

and if he demonstrates a willingness to listen, learn, and expand his constituencies, can he grow even more formidable?

Regardless of one's feelings about the neophyte senator and his reputation as a media personality, his brand of politics—which we can characterize as a “politics of small things”—is resonating with people and it is something that the opposition should learn from.

<https://opinion.inquirer.net/173064/the-resonance-of-raffy-tulfo>

Go Negosyo's Concepcion leads agri trade delegates in Malaysia

[INQUIRER.net](https://www.inquirer.net) / 07:19 PM April 18, 2024

ASEAN BAC members, together with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., Department of Trade and Industry Sec. Alfredo Pascual, House Speaker Martin Romualdez, and then-Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno at the signing of the MOU with Malaysia private sector last July 27, 2023 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The MOU paved the way for the series of collaborations set to take place between Philippine and Malaysian agriculture companies. Standing, from left, are ABAC Malaysia Chairman Tan Sri Nazir Razak, ABAC Philippines Chair Joey Concepcion, Group CEO of Capital A Tony Fernandes, and members of the Malaysian business community.

MANILA, Philippines — Leading Philippine agriculture companies are set to meet with Malaysian agriculture powerhouses this April 22 to 24, 2024 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in time for the 100th meeting of the Asean Business Advisory Council (BAC).

The meeting is a direct outcome of the Asean BAC Philippines's efforts to forge partnerships between the agriculture companies of the Asean-member states.

The three-day visit will involve a series of meetings to initiate strategic partnerships; technology and knowledge exchange of best practices and experiences; and expand market access and diversify agricultural enterprises in both countries. The delegation will visit plantations and manufacturing sites around Malaysia to further explore other possible partnerships. A Memorandum of Agreement on agarwood production technology will also be signed during the visit.

Asean BAC Philippines chair and Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion, who will lead the delegation, said the meetings will be important as the Philippines moves forward to ensure food security for itself and its neighbors in the region.

“This will benefit not just the agriculture industries of both our countries but also put us on a path toward developing cooperative relationships within the public and private

sectors to ensure food security for the region,” he said. “We will learn from each other and facilitate market linkages so that we can be a more productive, food-producing, self-reliant region. Starting with Malaysia, we will forge partnerships with the agri companies of the other Asean member states,” he said.

Joining Concepcion during the trade visit will be former Agriculture Secretary and now Go Negosyo Senior Adviser Dr. William Dar, the presidents, CEOs, and top executives of leading Philippine agriculture companies in commodities like rice, corn, coconut, cacao, poultry, flour, dairy, banana, durian, tobacco, agarwood, fertilizer and essential oils, as well as agriculture technology and manufacturing.

Philippines’s Ambassador to Malaysia Ma. Angela Ponce will also be joining the event.

The Malaysian delegation will be led by ABAC Malaysia Chairman Tan Sri Nazir Razak and B2B Connect Initiative (BCI) chairman and former Malaysia trade minister Dato’ Sri Mustapa Mohamed. They will lead a group of Malaysian companies engaged in rice, durian, pineapple, poultry, coconut, banana, agarwood, rubber, and palm oil production.

The trade visit follows the signing last year of a Memorandum of Understanding initiated by the Asean BAC Philippines with Asean BAC Malaysia, where both countries agreed to engage in promoting trade, investment, and other development partnerships in agriculture. The signing was witnessed by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. last year in Kuala Lumpur.

The visit is expected to kick off similar cooperation activities between ABAC Philippines and all the other signatories of the MOU – namely Indonesia, Singapore, Cambodia, Myanmar, Brunei, Laos, and Thailand.

In the Philippine delegation are Kennemer Country Head Jojo Josen, Lionheart Farms CEO Christian Moeller, Bounty Fresh SVP Carl Benedick Chung, Phil. Rice Industry Stakeholders Movement’s Rowena Sadicon, Yovel East CEO James Amparo, LT Group CEO Michael Tan, I’mpact Foods Business Devt Manager Nelben Moreno, Iba Botanicals CEO Ben Mead, BioPrime SVP Paul Tolentino, Universal Leaf

President Winston Uy, Highly Succeed CEO Maricar Malaki, RFM CFO Oliver Rey Matias, and YTMI Realty President Felcaster Torres.

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/232487/go-negosyos-concepcion-leads-agri-trade-delegates-in-malaysia>

BUSINESS WORLD:

DA to propose P513.81-billion infra-heavy budget for 2025

April 18, 2024 | 8:48 pm



PHILSTAR

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said Thursday that its significantly expanded budget proposal for 2025 will help address shortcomings in farm infrastructure.

In a statement, the DA said that it will propose a P513.81 billion budget for 2025. If approved, this would be more than double the DA budget of P208.58 billion in 2023.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said that the funds will support the construction of irrigation and postharvest facilities.

“(The budget) is still a work in progress but clearly shows the direction we are headed,” he added.

Under its proposed budget plan, the bulk of expenditures will go to the National Irrigation Administration, National Food Authority, Philippine Coconut Authority, Philippine Fisheries Development Authority, and the National Dairy Authority.

“The proposed combined budget for the eight DA attached corporations is P287.98 billion, more than triple their total budget of P94.3 billion for this year,” the DA said.

Mr. Laurel has said that P93 billion is needed for postharvest facilities to reduce rice and corn waste.

He added that about P1.2 trillion will be required to irrigate an additional 1.2 million hectares to boost rice production and reduce imports.

“For the DA itself, the envisioned budget for 2025 is nearly double at P225.83 billion... to allow various bureaus to cope with the need to modernize the fisheries and farm sectors as well as address food safety and anti-smuggling efforts,” the agency said.

The DA said that 57% or P294.21 billion of the proposed budget will be dedicated to rice.

Fisheries will get P50.6 billion, while locally funded projects will be allotted P45.48 billion.

It added that cross-cutting programs will be allocate P34.5 billion, high value crops P32 billion, livestock P28.56 billion, foreign-assisted projects P13.77 billion, corn P11.3 billion, and credit programs P3.38 billion. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/04/18/589222/da-to-propose-p513-81-billion-infra-heavy-budget-for-2025/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Well-milled rice prices average P57.03 per kilo in early April

April 18, 2024 | 8:39 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/WALTER BOLLOZOS

THE national average retail price of well-milled rice in early April was P57.03 per kilogram (kg), the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said in a report.

The average price was up from the P56.95 recorded between March 15 and 17, which the PSA refers to as the second phase of the month.

The highest retail price in the first phase was reported in Central Luzon, averaging P59.18 per kg during the period.

At the low end during the period was Ilocos Region with rice prices averaging P50.37 per kg.

The PSA reported that regular-milled rice averaged P51.39 per kg, up from P51.21 per kg during the first phase.

The highest price for regular-milled rice was recorded in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, with an average of P54.70 per kg.

ADVERTISING

Cagayan Valley posted the lowest price for well-milled rice at P46.69 per kg.

The Department of Agriculture has said that the retail price of rice is expected to remain elevated until midyear due to the impact of El Niño.

Meanwhile, the PSA said that brown sugar averaged P76.37 per kg, a 0.4% increase from the previous period.

The PSA reported that brown sugar prices were highest in Calabarzon at P88.3 per kg during the first phase of April.

The lowest average price was reported in the Caraga Region at P69.47 per kg.

The PSA reported that the national average retail price for refined sugar was P87.29 per kg.

For the first phase of April, prices in Calabarzon were the highest with sugar averaging P96.56 per kg.

Prices for refined sugar were also lowest in Zamboanga Peninsula, where they averaged P81.43 per kg. — **Adrian H. Halili**

https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/04/18/589218/well-milled-rice-prices-average-p57-03-per-kilo-in-early-april/#google_vignette

MANILA STANDARD:

New mango shipments to Australia face delay due to stricter regulations

BusinessAgri & Mining



By Othel V. Campos

April 18, 2024, 7:55 pm

CarabaoMango.Au announced Thursday a delay in the shipment of Philippine mangoes supposedly arriving within the week of April 15 to April 21, 2024.

“We understand this delay may be inconvenient, but it ultimately benefits both our customers and the environment,” the platform said in an announcement on its website, assuring the arrival of the delayed shipment on the week of April 22.

The delay stemmed from stricter regulations implemented by the Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) for exporting Philippine mangoes to international markets.

The regulations ensure that only the highest-quality mangoes, meeting stringent biosecurity standards are exported to countries of destination. Only a select few regions boast DA-approved mango growers certified to export their produce.

The meticulous process safeguards the integrity of Philippine mango exports and protects the biosecurity of importing countries like Australia.

Australia enforces stringent regulations overseen by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).

The DAFF mandates that all imported mangoes undergo rigorous monitoring throughout the farming process.

The DA's comprehensive data collection from all farms allows for thorough contact tracing, guaranteeing accountability at every stage of production.

The meticulous oversight ensures that any potential issues can be swiftly identified and addressed, protecting Australia's rich biodiversity.

The company said that while the delay may be disappointing to exporters and consumers, it reflects CarabaoMango.Au's unwavering commitment to delivering only the finest quality mangoes to our customers.

It also highlights the platform's dedication to environmental stewardship and biosecurity, both crucial for preserving Australia's rich biodiversity.

<https://manilastandard.net/business/314437273/new-mango-shipments-to-australia-face-delay-due-to-stricter-regulations.html>

MANILA STANDARD:

Drier and hotter this coming May — PAGASA

NewsNational



By Rio N. Araja

April 19, 2024, 12:40 am

Almost all areas across the country, including the National Capital Region (NCR), have been experiencing below-normal rainfall this April, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

From April 1 to April 16, nearly the entire country felt the impact of the ridge of a high-pressure area (HPA) with 40 percent or less than normal rainfall for the period, PAGASA said.

PAGASA said there were only localized thunderstorms in the past days.

The ridge of the HPA extending over the eastern sections of Northern and Central Luzon was responsible for the rainfall reduction, it added. Because of such, the public must brace for hot and humid weather.

“When the HPA ridge affects a specific area, we can expect lower cloud development, lower rainfall, resulting in higher temperatures in those areas,” weather specialist Veronica Torres said.

The ongoing El Niño phenomenon has triggered droughts and dry spells over vast areas of farmlands.

Temperatures in various areas have already surpassed government projections for the month of April.

The weather bureau said it expects the hottest days to come in May.

In its bulletin, PAGASA meanwhile said the following areas are expected to experience heat indexes ranging from 42°C to 45°C on April 18.

These areas include Aborlan, Palawan (45°C); Dagupan City, Pangasinan (44°C); Puerto Princesa City, Palawan (44°C); Catarman, Northern Samar (44°C); Tuguegarao City, Cagayan (43°C); ISU Echague, Isabela (43°C); Ambulong, Tanauan, Batangas (43°C); San Jose, Occidental Mindoro (43°C); Iloilo City, Iloilo (43°C); Dumangas, Iloilo (43°C); Guiuan, Eastern Samar (43°C); MMSU, Batac, Ilocos Norte (42°C); Bacnotan, La Union (42°C); Aparri, Cagayan (42°C); Sangley Point, Cavite (42°C); Coron, Palawan (42°C); Virac (Synop), Catanduanes (42°C); and Roxas City, Capiz (42°C).

The state weather bureau also said the heat index levels at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) in Pasay City and Science Garden in Quezon City are expected to reach 39°C to 40°C, respectively, on Thursday.

According to PAGASA, the heat index is the measure of the temperature that a person feels, which is different from the actual air temperature. The heat index is computed by factoring in the humidity and temperature.

Healthcare experts said dangerous heat index levels— from 42°C to 51°C—can trigger heat cramps and heat exhaustion, while heat stroke is also possible with continued exposure.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/national/314437410/drier-and-hotter-this-coming-may-pagasa.html>

Fuel subsidy for agri sector pushed amid high oil prices

Jovee Marie N. de la Cruz

April 18, 2024

IN light of the persistent surge in petroleum prices, a lawmaker has urged the Department of Agriculture (DA) to facilitate the registration of farmers and fishermen in the Registry System for the Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) to enable them to benefit from the agency's fuel subsidy program.

Rep. Wilbert T. Lee of the AGRI Party-list emphasized the need to modernize and streamline the RSBSA registration process, citing the unfortunate circumstance wherein many agricultural workers fail to receive assistance due to inaccuracies or omissions in the registry.

“Given the burdens they bear, it's regrettable that they're not receiving the help they deserve,” Lee said last Thursday.

Apart from urging and assisting the DA in RSBSA registration, Lee underscored the importance of expediting and simplifying the requirements for registering machinery and boats to qualify for the fuel subsidy.

The DA recently announced it has allocated P500 million to provide a one-time P3,000 fuel subsidy for farmers and fishermen who have their machinery and boats registered. The latter should have boats not exceeding three metric tons in order to qualify.

Diesel prices increased by P0.95 per liter this week, while gasoline prices rose by P0.40 per liter. Oil firms raised pump prices last week by P1.10 per liter for gasoline, P1.55 for diesel, and P1.40 for kerosene.

The lawmaker appealed to the DA to give time for farmers and fishermen to register their equipment as the department finalizes its guidelines for the subsidy.

“The DA should grant our agricultural workers the opportunity to register with RSBSA while subsidy guidelines are pending,” Lee said. “When the subsidy

distribution commences, the DA should utilize the latest registry to ensure equitable distribution.”

The lawmaker also urged the DA to consider giving another round of fuel subsidies in the second half of the year if fuel prices continue to soar.

“Given the frequent and substantial increases in petroleum prices, a one-time P3,000 subsidy is insufficient,” Lee said. “While the oil price surge persists, the DA should consider providing another round of subsidy before year-end to alleviate the burdens of our farmers and fishers, easing their worries about unforeseen expenses, particularly if a family member falls ill.”

During the past budget deliberations in Congress, Lee persistently called on the House leadership to provide an additional budget to update and streamline the effectiveness of RSBSA and for the swift delivery of fuel subsidies to farmers and fishermen.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/04/18/fuel-subsidy-for-agri-sector-pushed-amid-high-oil-prices/>

Philippines, New Zealand to level up bilateral relations

- Samuel Medenilla
- [April 18, 2024](#)



New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon

THE Philippines and New Zealand have agreed to forge a Comprehensive Partnership by 2026 to mark the 60th year of bilateral relations between the two Pacific nations.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. and New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said in a joint statement that they have agreed to “elevate” the bilateral relations between the Philippines and New Zealand.

“The leaders directed their Foreign Ministers and relevant officials to put in place a Roadmap to guide the establishment of the Comprehensive Partnership, including the elevation of the Foreign Ministry Consultations to the Vice-Ministerial level and the creation of new mechanisms including a Joint Economic Commission and a Maritime Dialogue,” the joint statement read.

Marcos and Luxon have also agreed to consider further visa facilitation between the Philippines and New Zealand.

The leaders committed to maintain and strengthen defense engagements while exploring new frameworks to deepen defense ties. Both sides committed to the signing of a Mutual Logistics Supporting Arrangement (MLSA) by the end of 2024, and to concluding a Status of Visiting Forces Agreement (Sovfa).

“As Pacific maritime nations, the two leaders recognized the Philippines and New Zealand’s shared interest in preserving peace and stability at sea, and in this regard, looked forward to cooperating on maritime law enforcement, including addressing common threats, such as piracy, IUUF [illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing], maritime terrorism, contraband smuggling, wildlife trafficking, and irregular human migration,” the joint statement read.

Marcos and Luxon expressed their shared serious concern over recent developments in the South China Sea. They affirmed the right of freedom of navigation and overflight and other lawful uses of the seas accorded by international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos).

They committed to further eliminate unnecessary barriers to trade and to work together to ensure that exporters fully utilize the comprehensive suite of free trade agreements, with a view to achieving a mutually beneficial increase of 50 percent in two-way trade by 2030.

can cooperate in agricultural technology and innovation, agribusiness, renewable energy, education and skills, and digital infrastructure.

“The Philippines also welcomes investments in priority sectors and collaboration in sectors where New Zealand’s expertise is most valued, such as agriculture, knowledge and skills, and disaster risk management,” Marcos said.

Luxon, for his part, acknowledged the contribution Filipinos make to New Zealand’s economy, including filling critical gaps in New Zealand’s workforce. The leaders agreed to discuss social security issues relating to Filipinos in New Zealand.

Marcos and Luxon said they will strengthen cooperation regarding the welfare of migrant workers, particularly Filipino nurses.

“Both Leaders looked forward to the review of the existing bilateral migrant worker arrangement which will facilitate the recruitment of Filipino workers to New Zealand and other initiatives,” the joint statement read.

Marcos said the expected visit by New Zealand's Foreign Minister to the Philippines later in 2024 could advance discussions on the Comprehensive Partnership further.

Luxon is in the Philippines for an official visit. Marcos welcomed the New Zealand leader in Malacanang on Thursday.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/04/18/philippines-new-zealand-to-level-up-bilateral-relations/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

DA eyeing ‘more than double’ 2025 funding to boost farms, fisheries

- [Andrea E. San Juan](#)
- [April 19, 2024](#)



A farmer transplants rice seedlings in Sumapang Matanda, Malolos, Bulacan.

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it is finalizing a proposal that will “substantially” increase its budget for 2025 to pursue its goal of modernizing the farm and fisheries sectors to produce more food, ensure food security, and increase incomes of farmers and fishermen.

In a statement on Thursday, DA said that in a consultative meeting with private agricultural groups, it presented a proposal that would “more than double” its expenditure plan for next year to P513.81 billion from the current P208.58 billion.

While the budget proposal is still a “work in progress,” Agriculture Secretary Franciso P. Tiu Laurel Jr. told participants at the consultative meeting that it “clearly shows the direction where we are headed.”

According to the DA, Tiu Laurel sought the private sector’s support for the budget that is seen to build more farm infrastructure such as irrigation and postharvest facilities.

The Agriculture chief also pointed to the “severe” lack of investments in agriculture for almost four decades now, which resulted in the “declining” contribution of the sector to the country’s gross domestic product (GDP).

“As a result, millions of Filipinos dependent on the sector have remained poor,” the DA said in its statement.

DA said Tiu Laurel estimated that P93 billion is needed for postharvest facilities over the next few years to reduce rice and corn wastage; while around P1.2 trillion would be required to irrigate an additional 1.2 million hectares to boost rice production and reduce importation.

Under the preliminary expenditure numbers for 2025, the bulk of the budget increase will go to DA attached corporations including the National Irrigation Administration, National Food Authority, Philippine Coconut Authority, Philippine Fisheries Development Authority and the National Dairy Authority, the DA noted.

“The proposed combined budget for the eight DA attached corporations is P287.98 billion, more than triple their total budget of P94.30 billion for this year,” the DA said.

For the DA itself, the agency noted that the “envisioned” budget for next year is nearly double at P225.83 billion, compared to P114.28 billion this year, to allow various bureaus to cope with the need to modernize the fisheries and farm sectors as well as address safety and anti-smuggling efforts.

Furthermore, the Agriculture department said the rice subsector will continue to account for the lion’s share of the budget proposal, with an allocation of P294.21 billion, or 57 percent of the total outlay for next year.

The fisheries subsector, meanwhile, is expected to get P50.6 billion while locally-funded projects will be allotted P45.48 billion, said DA.

Other subsectors and their budgets are cross-cutting programs, P34.5 billion; high-value crops, P32 billion; livestock, P28.56 billion; foreign-assisted, P13.77 billion; corn, P11.3 billion; and credit program, P3.38 billion.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/04/19/da-eyeing-more-than-double-2025-funding-to-boost-farms-fisheries/>

THE MANILA TIMES:

DA proposes P513.8-B budget for 2025

[By Janine Alexis Miguel](#)

April 19, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) is seeking a higher budget worth P513.81 billion for 2025 to pursue its goal of modernizing the agriculture sector and increasing the incomes of farmers and fishermen.

The department presented the proposed budget on Thursday, which is higher than this year's fund worth P208.58 billion, during a consultative meeting with private groups.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said in a statement that the proposed fund is "still a work in progress."

Tiu Laurel earlier said that around P1.2 trillion is needed to irrigate an additional 1.2 million hectares of rice land to boost rice production and reduce importation.

Additionally, he said that about P93 billion is needed for the next few years to build proper post-harvest facilities to reduce rice and corn wastage.

The Agriculture chief also emphasized the lack of investments in agriculture for almost four decades, "which led to the declining contribution of agriculture to gross domestic product."

"As a result, millions of Filipinos dependent on the sector have remained poor," he added.

With the new budget proposal, Tiu Laurel also sought the private sector's support for the budget that is envisioned to build more farm infrastructures, including irrigation and postharvest facilities.

Under the preliminary expenditure numbers for 2025, a portion of the budget increase will go to DA-attached corporations, including the National Irrigation Administration, National Food Authority, Philippine Coconut Authority, Philippine Fisheries Development Authority, and the National Dairy Authority.

According to the DA, the proposed combined budget for the eight DA-attached corporations is P287.98 billion, more than triple their total budget of P94.30 billion for this year.

"The rice subsector will continue to account for the lion's share of the budget proposal, with an allocation of P294.21 billion, or 57 percent of the total outlay for next year," it said.

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The fisheries subsector, meanwhile, will get P50.6 billion, while locally funded projects will be allotted P45.48 billion.

Other subsectors and their budgets are cross-cutting programs, P34.5 billion; high-value crops, P32 billion; livestock, P28.56 billion; foreign-assisted, P13.77 billion; corn, P11.3 billion; and credit program, P3.38 billion.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/04/19/business/top-business/da-proposes-p5138-b-budget-for-2025/1942281>

Retail farming

FINER POINTS



[By Dr. Fermin D. Adriano, PhD](#)

April 19, 2024

THE Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that headline inflation rose to 3.7 percent in March from 3.4 percent in February. It revealed that the main factor was high food prices, which contributed 57 percent to total inflation.

Rising rice prices, in turn, were the driving force behind higher food inflation. The PSA noted that rice inflation accelerated to 24.4 percent in March compared to 23.7 percent in February. It was described as the fastest rice inflation in 15 years since the record high of 24.6 percent in February 2009.

(The years 2008-2009 was a period when a global rice supply shortage was experienced because of a wrong policy move by major rice-exporting countries to ban exports of the cereal despite adequate supply).

If we are to believe Department of Agriculture (DA) reports, rice prices should be declining by now. The DA said that we had a bountiful palay (unmilled rice) harvest this first quarter. The PSA also projected that the first-quarter palay harvest would grow to 4.83 million metric tons (MT) from 4.78 million MT a year earlier.

In addition, the latest Food and Agriculture Rice Price Update for April 2024 noted that globally, "all price index averaged 138.1 points lower in March." It further said that even in South America, producers experienced a slump in rice prices of between 7 and 15 percent.

Rice imports also have reached a staggering volume of around 900,000 MT just this first three months of 2024. Curiously, no one among the bellyachers against the previous DA leadership refers to the DA as the "Department of Agriculture Importation."

We are now at the start of the second quarter and the peak of the dry season harvest (March and April), but why are rice prices in the Philippines not declining?

Before I answer this, let me first credit the person behind the bountiful harvest this dry season. The idea of early planting came from former DA undersecretary Leo Sebastian in response to the challenge of climate change. It was the same program that he pushed in Vietnam when he was an international rice expert there for over eight years.

Early planting aims to avoid severe damage to palay farms brought about by typhoons that normally visit the country during the last quarter of the year. If the dry planting season could be moved, starting November and December during the previous year, the harvest will occur in March and April. The next production cycle can begin in May and June, allowing farmers to experience peak harvest in August and September. This cropping pattern avoids the typhoons that usually hit the country in October, November and early December.

Pushing the dry planting season scheme means coordinating with the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) to release water early. Sebastian had to work closely with NIA officials to make this happen. With a doctoral degree in plant breeding, having served once as a director of the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) and also having worked as an international rice expert in several Southeast Asian countries, Sebastian knew what he was doing. This is the reason for the bountiful harvest this first quarter of the year.

The problem now is the next planting season, which should start in May or June. Unfortunately, Sebastian opted for an early retirement,

which left a vacuum in the planning and programming of the next production cycle.

With the El Niño phenomenon lasting till June, water supply will be a major problem. There is a possibility that the planting season might be postponed to July or August until the onset of the rainy season. This will mean that our rice supply will be thin starting May till September. Expect rice prices to further soar if the country does not resort to massive importation.

Going back to the question of why rice prices keep on rising in the Philippines, the first reason has something to do with the fact that our policymakers and agricultural officials refuse to recognize: demand simply outstrips supply.

The founder and first director of PhilRice, Santiago Obien, stressed that our population growth rate is so rapid compared to neighboring countries. He noted that our palay harvest had tripled from a low of 7 million MT during the Masagana 99 program in the 1970s to around 20 million MT now.

Our productivity is a bit higher than Thailand at around 4.1 MT per hectare. However, Thailand has three times the cultivable area for palay production. Moreover, while we had the same population with Thailand in the 1970s at around 45 million, the latter is now only around 70 million while ours is 115 million. That means the Philippines has to feed more than 45 million mouths.

The second is that our populist policymakers treat agricultural as a social justice program rather than an entrepreneurial activity. Thus, they pushed for the protracted implementation of the agrarian reform program, resulting in minuscule farm sizes that cannot enjoy economies of scale.

The result is basically retail farming. Modern machineries and technologies cannot be applied in these micro farms because they are too small. For them to survive, an endless array of subsidies will have to be extended by the government.

In contrast, our neighbors have mechanized their operations and applied modern technologies such as satellites and drones to boost their farm productivity and encouraged participation of agribusiness enterprises in their rice industry.

Third is the wrong policy framework in developing the rice industry. There is too much obsession in attaining rice self-sufficiency when our agro-climatic resources will only allow the attainment of that goal at an exorbitant price. This year, we estimate that P150 billion will be spent on rice production (combining the budget of all rice-related units and activities in the DA), leaving little to the development of other commodities where the country has a comparative advantage.

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I would bet that despite the massive resources (more than 70 percent of total agricultural budget) poured into rice productivity programs, we will continue to suffer from rising rice prices this year simply because we do not have enough water and land to produce the rice requirements of our ever-increasing population.

On another topic, it is worth mentioning to the readers that onion prices will go up again very soon as armyworm infestations affected the recent harvest in Nueva Ecija, the leading onion producer in the country. Someone forgot to remind our onion farmers that army worms breed faster during the warm and dry weather brought about by the El Niño.

It takes agricultural scientists to do that but we do not have an ample supply of them in government because our politics and culture do not value their services. Many instead prefer to listen to "haka-haka" (speculations) and "kuro-kuro" (opinions).

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/04/19/business/top-business/retail-farming/1942280>

DA seeks to double budget to P513B in '25

By

Jed Macapagal

-

April 19, 2024



Modernization. The DA says the higher budget for 2025 would fund activities that would modernize the farm and fisheries sectors. (DA Photo)

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is finalizing a proposal that will substantially increase its budget for 2025.

In a consultative meeting with private agricultural groups, the DA presented a proposal that would more than double its expenditure plan for next year to P513.81 billion from the current budget of P208.58 billion.

The higher budget would fund activities that would modernize the farm and fisheries sectors for increased productivity and food security.

DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the budget proposal “is a work in progress but clearly shows the direction” where the agency is headed.

Tiu Laurel said with the higher budget, the DA can build more farm infrastructure, including irrigation and post-harvest facilities.

Tiu Laurel earlier said P93 billion is needed for the next few years for post-harvest facilities to reduce rice and corn wastage. Another P1.2 trillion would be required to irrigate an additional 1.2 million hectares to boost rice production and reduce importation.

The DA said its preliminary expenditure figures for next year showed bulk of the budget increase will go to attached corporations National Irrigation Administration, National Food Authority, Philippine Coconut Authority, Philippine Fisheries Development Authority and the National Dairy Authority.

The proposed combined budget for the eight DA attached corporations is P287.98 billion which is more than triple the total budget of P94.30 billion this year.

For the DA itself, the envisioned budget for 2025 is nearly double at P225.83 billion from P114.28 billion this year.

The DA said the higher budget would help empower various bureaus to modernize the fisheries and farm sectors as well as address food safety and anti-smuggling efforts.

The rice sub-sector will continue to account for the lion's share of the budget proposal, with an allocation of P294.21 billion or 57 percent of the total outlay for next year followed by the fisheries sub-sector which will get P50.6 billion while locally-funded projects will be allotted P45.48 billion.

For the remaining sub-sectors, the proposed budgets for next year are at P34.5 billion for cross-cutting programs; P32 billion for high value crops; P28.56 billion for livestock; P13.77 billion for foreign-assisted projects; P11.3 billion for corn; and P3.38 billion for credit programs.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/da-seeks-to-double-budget-to-p513b-in-25/

Wheat futures climb

By

Reuters

-

April 19, 2024

CANBERRA- Chicago wheat futures rose on Thursday, recouping some of their losses from the previous session, as the US dollar weakened and an exchange in Argentina said less of the crop would be planted there than previously thought.

Still, prices remained close to their lowest levels since 2020 due to ample supply from top shipper Russia and lackluster demand for US exports.

Corn and soybean futures fell slightly, with both markets well-supplied despite rising concerns over Argentina's corn harvest, which has been hit by a stunt disease spread by leafhopper insects.

The most-active wheat contract on the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) was up 0.3 percent at \$5.54 a bushel, after a 2.2 percent fall on Wednesday. It was near a four-year low of \$5.24 reached in March.

Prices will likely remain stuck between \$5.25 and \$5.75 for the time being, said Ole Houe, director of advisory services at IKON Commodities in Sydney.

"It's unlikely that we'll go lower than \$5.25," he said, adding that the Middle East and Black Sea conflicts could still disrupt trade and push up prices, something that would wrong-foot speculators who have amassed large short positions.

The dollar slipped from Tuesday's 5-1/2-month high, but its strengthening in recent months has made US exports less attractive to global buyers with other currencies.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/wheat-futures-climb/

REMATE:

Presyo ng ilang bilingin tumaas nitong Abril

April 18, 2024 18:00



MANILA, Philippines- Iniulat ng Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) ang taas-presyo ng ilang bilingin tulad ng bigas at mantika sa mga unang araw ng Abril.

Sinabi ng PSA na ang average retail price ng kilo ng regular milled rice ay umakyat sa P51.39 sa pagitan ng April 1 at 5, mula sa presyo noong nakaraang buwan na P51.21 at P51.14.

Ang average cost naman ng fresh pork kasim ay tumaas din sa P336.42 kada kilo sa unang bahagi ng Abril, kumpara sa nakaraang average retail prices na P333.64 at P331.80.

Lumobo rin ang kilo ng hawaiian ginger sa nasabing period sa P130.39 kada kilo mula sa nakaraang presyong P121.62 at P119.31.

Gayundin, naitala ang taas-presyo ng mantika, na pumalo ang average retail price sa P156.78 kada litro sa nasabing period, mula sa P154.75 at P154.96 noong Marso.

Gayundin, nakapagtala ang average farmgate price ng palay ng year-on-year increase na 32 porsyento noong Marso sa P24.52 kada kilo mula P18.57 sa parehong buwan noong nakaraang taon.

Kasunod ito ng pagpalo ng rice inflation sa 24.4 porsyento mula sa 23.7 porsyento—halos katumbas na ng mataas na record na 24.6 percent readout noong February 2009. RNT/SA

<https://remate.ph/presyo-ng-ilang-bilihin-tumaas-nitong-abril/>

REMATE:

Isidro Velayo Jr. itinalagang BFAR OIC

April 18, 2024 17:20



MANILA, Philippines- Itinalaga ni Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. si Isidro Velayo Jr. bilang officer-in-charge (OIC) ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) matapos sibakin ng Ombudsman ang national director nito na si Demosthenes Escoto.

Sinabi ni Laurel na si Velayo ay dating national coordinator ng seaweed program ng BFAR at dati ring regional director ng ahensya sa Zamboanga Peninsula.

“OIC Isidro Velayo, director IV and assistant director for technical services, is a career professional and respected official of BFAR,” pahayag ng DA chief nitong Miyerkules.

Titiyakin umano ng agad na pagkakatalaga kay Velayo ang patuloy na operasyon ng BFAR at implementasyon ng major projects ng ahensya.

Ayon kay Laurel, ang marching order niya kay Velayo ay siguruhin na ang operasyon ng ahensya “will not be affected by this legal development.”

Batay sa kautusan ng Ombudsman, sinabi ng DA na hinatulang guilty si Escoto ng grave misconduct sa graft case mula sa procurement ng BFAR ng communications equipment noong 2018.

“Escoto could still seek reconsideration of the Ombudsman’s decision or directly appeal the decision to the Court of Appeals,” ayon sa agriculture department. RNT/SA

<https://remate.ph/isidro-velayo-jr-itinalagang-bfar-oic/>

REMATE:

tlog lumiliit sa tag-init

April 18, 2024 16:52



MANILA, Philippines- Hindi lamang nagdudulot ng pagkatuyot ng water sources at nagpapataas ng global temperatures ang ang El Nino phenomenon, nakaaapekto rin ito sa produksyon ng itlog sa Pilipinas, ayon sa Philippine Egg Board Association nitong Huwebes.

Sinabi ni Egg Board president Francis Uyehura na nagrerresulta ang matinding init sa pagkawalang-ganang kumain ng mga manok, na nagdudulot ng mas kaunti at mas maliliit na mga itlog.

“Generally, lahat ng farm producer ay nakakaranas na ng problema sa sobrang init. Number one na epekto ng sobrang init ay ‘yung paghina ng pagkain ng manok na resulta ng pagbaba ng egg production at pagliit ng sizes. Nagkakaroon ng imbalance, mas marami yung maliliit,” aniya sa isang panayam.

Nagbabala siya na tumaas ang chicken mortality bilang resulta ng matinding init, na mas malala sa hilagang bahagi ng bansa.

“The intense heat will not have an effect on the nutritional value of the egg, the problem is the eggs are getting smaller. If before, farmers are getting large or XL eggs, now there are more small or even extra small eggs,” anang opisyal.

Nahaharap ngayon ang poultry farmers sa labis na suplay ng maliliit na itlog, na kasalukuyang ibinebenta sa mas mababang halaga.

Binanggit niya na bumaba rin ang egg consumption dahil sa kakulangan ng kaganapan sa gitna ng maiinit na mga buwan maging pagtaas ng bilang ng kanseladong school days dahil sa init.

Sa kasalukuyan ay pumapalo ang presyo ng medium-sized eggs sa P4.50-P5.40 kada piraso, depende sa lugar, base kay Uyehura.

Binanggit niya na ang maliliit na itlog at tinutukoy na medium dahil inuuri ang mga itlog base sa timbang. “Kaya meron itlog na maliit pero mabigat at malaki na itlog pero magaan,” paliwanag niya. RNT/SA

<https://remate.ph/itlog-lumiliit-sa-tag-init/>

REMATE:

Rice Tariffication Law extension suportado ng Agri chief

April 18, 2024 12:30



UPANG mas mapabuti ang pagsasaka ng mga magsasaka sinusupportahan ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. ang iminungkahing pagpapalawig ng Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) sa loob ng anim na taon, kung saan ang panukala ay nakatakdang mag-expire sa susunod na taon pagkatapos maisabatas noong 2019.

Ayon sa Department of Agriculture (DA), itinutulak ni Tiu Laurel ang mas mataas na alokasyon para sa pagpapabuti ng competitiveness ng mga magsasaka, at para sa mga proyekto na isama ang postharvest facilities na maaaring magpalakas ng rice recovery.

“Definitely, I think dapat i-extend. But there should be adjustments so we can adapt to the times... Less waste means more income for our rice farmers,” ayon sa pahayag.

Nagkabisa ang Rice Tariffication Law noong Marso 5, 2019, matapos itong pirmahan ni dating Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa ilalim ng Republic Act 11203 noong Pebrero ng parehong taon.

Kaugnay nito ang panukala ay nagpapahintulot sa walang limitasyong pag-aangkat ng bigas hangga't ang mga negosyante ng pribadong sektor ay nakakuha ng phytosanitary permit mula sa Bureau of Plant Industry at nagbabayad ng 35-porsiyento na taripa para sa mga padala mula sa mga kapitbahay sa Southeast Asia.

Ang batas ay naglalaan ng P10 bilyon para sa Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), kung saan P5 bilyon ang ilalaan sa farm mechanization at P3 bilyon sa mga punla. Ang pondo ay naglalayon na tiyakin na ang pag-aangkat ng bigas ay hindi lulunurin ang sektor ng agrikultura at nakawan ang mga magsasaka ng kanilang kabuhayan.

Sa ulat ng Department of Agriculture (USDA) ng United States, tinatayang umaangkat ang Pilipinas ng 3.8 million metric tons (MT) ng bigas ngayong taon, matapos sabihin ng Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) na nakakuha ang bansa ng 3.22 million MT. ng bigas mula Enero 1 hanggang Disyembre 22, 2023. (*Santi Celario*)

<https://remate.ph/rice-tariffication-law-extension-suportado-ng-agri-chief/>

REMATE:

Sinibak na BFAR chief guilty sa paborableng kontrata – Ombudsman

April 18, 2024 07:50



MANILA, Philippines – Ipinag-utos ng Office of the Ombudsman ang pagpapatalsik kay Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Chief Director Demosthenes Escoto matapos mahatulang guilty sa grave misconduct sa pagbili ng mga transmitters at transceiver para sa Integrated Marine Environment Monitoring System Project ng DA-BFAR Phase II (Proyekto ng PHILO).

Ang PHILO ay nilikha upang itatag ang Vessel Monitoring System para sa mga komersyal na sasakyang pandagat na naglalayag sa loob at labas ng Exclusive Economic Zone ng bansa.

Nabatid sa 22 pahinang desisyon isinulat ni Graft Investigation and Prosecution Officer I Cezar M. Tirol II na inaprubahan ni Ombudsman Samuel R. Martires, napatunayan na grave misconduct.

Ang kasong administratibo ni Escoto ay nag-ugat sa ginawa niyang aksiyon habang chairman ng BFAR's Bids and Awards Committee noong 2918.

“Although the award of the contract to SRT-France was cancelled, the unwarranted benefit they gave to SRT-France to participate in the bid and to be post-qualified despite its ineligibility constitutes a willful violation of the law and established rule,” ayon sa Ombudsman.

Bunsod nito, kanselado na ang retirement benefits ni Escoto at diskuwalipika na rin siya na makapagtrabaho sa gobyerno at tanging ang naipon niyang accrued leave na lamang ang kanyang makukuha.

Ibinasura naman ng Ombudsman, ang kasong administratibo laban kay dating Agriculture Assistant Secretary Hansel O. Didulo dahil sa kakulangan ng ebidensiya.

Samantala, ni-appoint ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. si Isidro Velayo Jr. bilang officer-in-charge ng BFAR. *RNT*

<https://remate.ph/sinibak-na-bfar-chief-guilty-sa-paborableng-kontrata-ombudsman/>

ABANTE:

BFAR chief sibak sa P2B tongpats

- Abante News
- April 18, 2024



Ipinag-utos ng Office of the Ombudsman ang pagsibak kay Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) National Director Demosthenes R. Escoto dahil sa pagkakadawit nito sa maanomalyang P2-bilyong kontrata para sa vessel monitoring system (VMS) project noong 2018.

Sa 22-pahinang desisyon na sinulat ni Graft Investigation and Prosecution Officer I Cezar M. Tirol II at inaprubahan ni Ombudsman Samuel R. Martires, natuklasan ng anti-graft body na guilty si Escoto sa grave misconduct.

Agad namang itinalaga ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. ang career official na si Isidro Velayo Jr. bilang officer-in-charge ng BFAR upang matiyak ang tuloy-tuloy na operasyon ng ahensiya at implementasyon ng mga malalaking proyekto.

Sa pagkakasibak kay Escoto, kakanselahin din ang kanyang civil service eligibility, kukumpiskahin ang retirement benefits, perpetual disqualification sa public office, at bawal nang sumabak sa civil service examinations.

Ang administrative case laban kay Escoto ay nag-ugat sa mga ginawa nito noong nagsilbing chairman ng Bids and Awards Committee ng BFAR para sa

Integrated Marine Environment Monitoring System Project Phase 1, o PHILO Project na popondohan ng P1.6 bilyong loan mula sa French government.

Noong 2017, nanalo ang SRT-France, isang subsidiary ng United Kingdom-based SRT Marine Systems Solutions Ltd, sa bidding ng PHILO Project pero diniskwalipika ito matapos matuklasan na isang buwang gulang na kompanya lang ito na walang pasilidad sa France. Dahil dito, kinansela rin ang loan.

Sa sumunod na taon, nanalo naman sa bidding ang SRT-UK pero tumaas sa P2.09 bilyon ang kontrata na popondohan ng utang sa bangko sa Pilipinas.

Sabi sa findings ng Ombudsman, malinaw umano na binigyan ni Escoto bilang BAC chair ng “unwarranted benefit or advantage to SRT-France and SRT-UK.”

“Although the award of the contract to SRT-France was cancelled, the unwarranted benefit they gave to SRT-France to participate in the bid and to be post-qualified despite its ineligibility constitutes a willful violation of the law and established rule,” sabi ng Ombudsman.

Dahil umano sa ginawa ni Escoto, lumobo ang contractual obligation ng gobyerno kumpara sa inisyal na halaga ng proyekto. Aabot lang sana ng 3,736 units ng VMS transceivers ang bibilhin pero inobluga ni Escoto ang gobyerno na bumili ng 5,000 units.

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/04/18/bfar-chief-sibak-sa-p2b-tongpats/>

ABANTE TONITE:

El Niño sapol mga manok kaya matumal na, maliit pa itlog

- Abante Tonite
- April 18, 2024



Apektado na rin umano ng nararanasang El Niño ang produksyon ng itlog sa bansa.

Ayon kay Philippine Egg Board Association president Francis Uyehura nitong Huwebes, Abril 18, dahil sa matinding init, nawawalan ng ganang kumain ang mga manok.

Nagreresulta aniya ito ng mas kaunti at mas maliliit na itlog.

“Generally, lahat ng farm producer ay nakakaranas na ng problema sa sobrang init. Number one na epekto ng sobrang init ay `yung paghina ng pagkain ng manok na resulta ng pagbaba ng egg production at pagliit ng sizes. Nagkakaroon ng imbalance, mas marami `yung maliliit,” pahayag ni Uyehura sa panayam sa Teleradyo.

tumaas din aniya ang bilang ng namamatay na manok bunga ng matinding init at pinakamarami sa hilagang bahagi ng bansa. (Issa Santiago)

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/04/18/el-nino-sapol-mga-manok-kaya-matumal-na-maliit-pa-itlog/>