

MANILA BULLETIN:

DA: Egg supply enough despite shrinking sizes

BY GABRIELL CHRISTEL GALANG

Apr 19, 2024 03:46 PM

As small-sized eggs become more common during the summer months, the Department of Agriculture (DA) has clarified that this trend will not directly impact the overall egg supply in the country.

In an interview with PTV on Friday, April 19, Agriculture Assistant Secretary and Spokesperson Arnel de Mesa said that prolonged hot weather have some effects on egg production, potentially leading to smaller eggs being produced.

Nevertheless, Mesa assured consumers that eggs of varying sizes, including small, medium, and large, remain readily available to market demand.

“This is a natural occurrence which happens every summer. If the open space [areas] for chickens are heated, chickens will lose their appetite which, in turn, lessens their production,” he explained. Similarly, De Mesa stated that cooler temperatures would allow chickens to eat more and produce larger-sized chickens. However, the El Niño phenomenon does not directly impact the downsizing. “Not every coop is open-spaced. We have artificial or tunnel ventilation, so there are still enough medium and large-sized eggs in production.”

The average price for eggs is valued at P6 to P8.25 a piece according to the DA’s monitoring system.

Another price that has gone up is pork, as the African swine fever (ASF) continues to affect consumer value.

The DA noted that pork kasim is now at a P295 to P370 average, while liempo is at around P340 to P420 per kilo.

DA spokesperson also reported that there can be positive expectations with the rice prices, stating “the USDA projected that our imports would be at 3.9 million metric tons [MMT], lower than the initial 4.1 MMT.”

The agriculture sector explained that this was attributed to the harvest season, thus minimizing price hikes for rice.

The local well-milled rice is valued at around P48 to P55, while the regular milled is at P46 to P52. As small-sized eggs become more common during the summer months, the Department of Agriculture (DA) has clarified that this trend will not directly impact the overall egg supply in the country.

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<https://mb.com.ph/2024/4/19/da-egg-supply-enough-despite-shrinking-sizes>

MANILA BULLETIN:

El Niño's damage to Philippines' agri sector balloons to P3.94 billion

BY JEL SANTOS

Apr 19, 2024 05:53 PM



(MB FILE PHOTO)

As the wrath of the El Niño phenomenon continues to intensify, its damage to the Philippines' agricultural sector has swelled to P3.34 billion, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Based on the DA's Bulletin No. 7 on the Effects of El Niño, there are now 11 regions affected by the phenomenon with 73,713 farmers and fisherfolk affected.

“The latest El Niño bulletin estimates damage and losses to farms in 11 regions: Cordillera Administrative Region, Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, MIMAROPA, Bicol Region, Western Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Davao Region and Soccsksargen at P3.94 billion,” the bulletin, which was released on Friday, April 19, stated.

The agency noted that the potential production losses from 66,065 hectares affected by the dry spell are estimated at 98,243 metric tons (MT) for palay, 40,195 MT for corn, and 24,102 MT for high-value crops (HVC).

The DA said the impacted rice area of 43,659 hectares is 2.04 percent of the total target area planted of 2,137,046.77 hectares, while the production loss of 98,243 MT is approximately 1.07 percent of the target production of 9,218,358.28 MT.

In corn, the DA said the phenomenon affected 18,201 hectares or 1.65 percent of the overall target area planted of 1,101,695.90 hectares, and the production loss of 40,195 MT equals 0.89 percent of the target production of 4,493,026.90 MT.

So far, the agriculture department has distributed interventions totaling P1.09 billion, including support to production, financial and livelihood assistance, and water management.

To address the effects of El Niño on affected farmers and fisherfolk, the Department has distributed interventions totaling P1.09 billion, which include support to production, financial and livelihood assistance, and water management.

“As support to production, high-value crops with less water requirement (e.g. mungbean) were distributed to farmers in Iloilo and Negros Occidental amounting to P990,000,” the DA said.

Hybrid rice seeds worth P7.87 million and fertilizers worth P7.63 million have been given to non-vulnerable areas in Western Visayas, and corn seeds worth P1.16 million in Ilocos Region for maximization of production to compensate for incurred losses, the agency said.

Through its Philippine Native Animal Development (PNAD) Program, the DA has provided 60,013 native animals to 334 groups and 534 individual farmers around the country in terms of financial and livelihood support.

As such, the DA reported that 139,002 farmers in the Cagayan Valley received financial support from the Rice Farmers Financial Support (RFFA) Program totaling P701.96 million, and 71,795 farmers in the Mimaropa Region received financial aid totaling P362.56 million.

“As support to fisherfolk, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has provided a total of 111 diversified alternative livelihoods and technologies in Cordillera, Bicol, Central Visayas, and Zamboanga Peninsula Regions,” it went on.

The Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC), according to the DA, has paid out a total of P62.81 million in indemnification to 6,867 farmers in the regions of Davao, Soccsksargen, Zamboanga Peninsula, Central Luzon, Mimaropa, Western Visayas, Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Cordillera, and Western Visayas.

To alleviate the water shortage, the DA said its Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) is conducting cloud seeding operations, focusing on corn areas in Southern Cagayan, Northern Isabela, Quirino, and Magat Reservoir.

“The overall success rate is 90 percent resulting in light to moderate rains over the municipalities of Cabagan, Sta. Maria, San Pablo and Tumauini in Isabela Province; Enrile, Iguig, Peñablanca and Tuguegarao in Cagayan Province; and Nagtipunan in Quirino Province,” the agency stated.

On the other hand, the DA said the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) has installed 616 water augmentation pumps in Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Mimaropa, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, and Davao regions ensuring that there is a water source in these areas prior to installation.

“Concreting of irrigation canals is also ongoing, which improved 847.82 kilometers of irrigation canals, benefitting 40,621 farmers nationwide. Further, desiltation of irrigation canals is being undertaken, improving water flow of 3,167.95 kilometers of irrigation canals nationwide,” it noted.

The agency noted that the DA Regional Field Offices in Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, and Mimaropa regions have endorsed the list of affected farmers to the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and Department of Labor and Employment for other forms of assistance such as the provision of food packs and cash for work programs.

Rice prices may not decrease due to El Niño

Agriculture Secretary Francisco “Kiko” Tiu Laurel Jr. earlier said that the prices of rice in the country may not go down despite the harvest season and price downswing in the global market.

He said such was because of the agricultural damage caused by the El Niño phenomenon. Laurel said the world rice prices are currently going down but due to the “lingering effects” of the phenomenon, it is unlikely for rice prices to decrease in the Philippines.

He noted that the Philippines is now at the peak of the El Niño phenomenon so we could expect to monitor more agricultural damage.

^[1-7]_{SEP}“To be honest, pataas pa, we are at the height of the El Niño now. Hopefully, by end of May, patapos na 'yan, pababa na (To be honest, [the agricultural damage] is still increasing, we are at the height of El Niño now),” he explained.

LGUs under state of calamity

^[1-7]_{SEP}On April 5, Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Assistant Secretary Joey Villarama, the spokesperson of Task Force El Niño, said a total of 18 local government units (LGUs) in the Philippines had already declared a state of calamity due to the worsening effects of El Niño. These are: 11 municipalities in Occidental Mindoro; Bulalacao and Mansalay towns in Oriental Mindoro; San Vicente, Palawan; San Andres, Romblon; Mayoyao, Ifugao; Sibalom, Antique; and Zamboanga City.

According to Villarama, most of the LGUs that declared a state of calamity are from Luzon, as the island is where most of the areas with drought conditions are located based on the observation of the task force.

The number might further increase as four municipalities in Iloilo are also mulling to declare a state of calamity, but he noted that they should meet the criteria to do so, he added.

For an area to be declared under a state of calamity, the task force spokesperson said it must meet the criteria including: 15 percent of the population shall be affected, 30 percent of livelihoods shall be impacted, and there shall be damage to structures or vital installations.

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https://mb.com.ph/2024/4/19/el-nino-s-damage-to-philippines-agri-sector-balloons-to-p3-94-billion#google_vignette

MANILA BULLETIN:

Zubiri discusses stronger economic, security ties with New Zealand PM

BY DHEL NAZARIO

Apr 19, 2024 05:32 PM

AT A GLANCE

- Senate President Juan Miguel "Migz" Zubiri discussed with Prime Minister Christopher Luxon the forging of stronger and closer relations with New Zealand, specifically in the area of economy and security.

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(Photo from the Office of Senate President Juan Miguel "Migz" Zubiri)

This took place as Zubiri met on Friday, April 19 with Luxon, who visited the Philippines as part of his working trip across Southeast Asia.

Zubiri said the meeting with Luxon was a good opportunity to cultivate a deeper engagement with New Zealand as a partner in development in the Indo-Pacific region.

“We are especially interested in engaging New Zealand in deeper economic and agricultural cooperation,” Zubiri said after the luncheon he hosted for the head-of-state in Fairmont Hotel in Makati City.

“We have a lot to learn from New Zealand’s success as a global agricultural exporter. Coming from Bukidnon, which I always call the New Zealand of Mindanao, I am very eager to initiate more agricultural knowledge sharing, capacity building, and technology transfer initiatives between our countries,” the Senate chief added.

The Prime Minister came accompanied by a sizeable delegation from New Zealand’s business sector.

The Senate President and the Prime Minister also discussed bilateral security cooperation, with an emphasis on the fact that the Philippines and New Zealand are like-minded states that share in the goal of upholding a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific region.

“We count on New Zealand as an ally in peacekeeping in the region, and toward this end, we hope to establish stronger security cooperation with them,” Zubiri said.

This discussion comes in the wake of the agreement between President Marcos and Luxon to sign a Mutual Logistics Supporting Arrangement by the end of this year, and also to establish a comprehensive partnership by 2026.

For his part, PM Luxon said that as a trading nation, New Zealand is cognizant of the security issues in the region and how this is tied to the economy of Southeast Asia and its trading partners.

“What affects you, affects us,” he said.

The Philippines is the Prime Minister’s last stop in his tour of Southeast Asia before heading home to New Zealand. Joining him are Simon Watts MP, Minister of Climate Change and Revenue; and Paulo Garcia MP, New Zealand’s first Member of Parliament of Filipino descent.

Representing the Philippine side at the meeting were Majority Leader Joel Villanueva, Minority Leader Koko Pimentel, Senator JV Ejecito, Senator Mark Villar, Senator Cynthia Villar, Department of Trade and Industry Secretary Alfredo Pascual, Anti-Red Tape Authority Director General Ernesto Perez, Department of Agriculture Undersecretary Jerome Oliveros, and Philippine Ambassador to New Zealand Kira Christianne Azucena.

Last year, the Senate formed its own Philippines-New Zealand Parliamentary Friendship Association, which was headed by Senator Pia Cayetano.

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(Photo from the Office of Senate President Juan Miguel "Migz" Zubiri)

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<https://mb.com.ph/2024/4/19/zubiri-discusses-stronger-economic-security-ties-with-new-zealand-pm>

MANILA BULLETIN:

World Bank joins DOF in digitization efforts

Washington forms team to assist Philippines

BY CHINO S. LEYCO

Apr 20, 2024 02:10 PM

The Department of Finance (DOF) said that the World Bank Group (WBG) will assemble a team to assist the Philippines in enhancing its digital infrastructure, specifically its tax system.

In a statement on Saturday, April 20, the DOF said that WBG President Ajay Banga expressed support for the government's digitalization initiatives to increase revenue and reduce leakages.

"The President broached a proposal to form a dedicated World Bank team to work with the government in planning and prioritizing digitalization strategies focusing on increasing revenues and long-term benefits," the DOF said.

Banga also added the importance of developing a strong digital infrastructure for the future, such as a digital identity system, a real-time payment structure, and a dependable document storage system.

The World Bank chief said these measures would encourage citizen participation and improve the efficiency of public services provided by the government.

Meanwhile, Banga also committed to support President Marcos' infrastructure program and promote entrepreneurial opportunities for young Filipinos.

He also offered support for the agriculture sector to address food security while reducing emissions through technological practices.

These priorities will be reflected in the upcoming Country Partnership Framework developed by the World Bank for the Philippines, according to the DOF.

Banga likewise assured Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto of the WBG's continued support as the country advances towards becoming an upper-middle-income economy soon.

As of December 2023, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) of the World Bank is the Philippines' third largest official development assistance (ODA) partner, amounting to \$8.20 billion.

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<https://mb.com.ph/2024/4/20/world-bank-joins-dof-in-digitization-efforts-1>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA proposes over P500 billion budget for 2025

[Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas](#) - The Philippine Star

April 20, 2024 | 12:00am



Stock photo of a peso money bill

[Philstar.com](#) / Jovannie Lambayan

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is proposing a P513.81 billion budget next year, more than double its current allocation of P208.58 billion to improve the country's food security.

The bulk of the proposed budget will go to the rice sector with a proposed allocation of P294.21 billion, about 57 percent of the proposed total outlay for next year, the DA said.

It will be followed by the fisheries sector with P50.6 billion and locally funded projects with P45.48 billion, the DA added.

The DA's proposed budgets for other subsectors are as follows: 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.

Furthermore, the DA said it is proposing a P287.98-billion budget for its eight attached government-owned and controlled corporations that include the National Food Authority and the National Irrigation Administration.

“For the DA itself, the envisioned budget for 2025 is nearly double at P225.83 billion compared to P114.28 billion this year to allow various bureaus cope with the need to modernize the fisheries and farm sectors as well as address food safety and anti-smuggling efforts,” it said.

The DA said it is now finalizing the budget proposal this year that is aimed at addressing the “severe” lack of farm infrastructure nationwide.

The department presented its budget proposal to private agricultural groups during a recent consultative meeting.

“(The budget proposal) is still a work in progress but clearly shows the direction where we are headed,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said.

Tiu Laurel sought the private sector's support for the budget proposal of the department which it noted is “envisioned to build more farm infrastructures, including irrigation and post-harvest facilities.”

“The agri chief has often expounded on the severe lack of investments in agriculture for almost four decades, which led to the declining contribution of agriculture to gross domestic product,” the DA said.

“As a result, millions of Filipinos dependent on the sector have remained poor,” the DA added.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/04/20/2348946/da-proposes-over-p500-billion-budget-2025>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA: NFA rice sale probe to push through

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

April 20, 2024 | 12:00am



At the Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon briefing, Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said Willie Ann Angsiy, director of the DA legal service, and Assistant Secretary James Layug, head of the Project Management Office, would continue the probe.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The investigation into the alleged illegal sale of rice to some traders by the National Food Authority will not be affected despite the dismissal of former Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) director Demosthenes Escoto, who headed the probe panel.

At the Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon briefing, Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said Willie Ann Angsiy, director of the DA legal service, and Assistant Secretary James Layug, head of the Project Management Office, would continue the probe.

De Mesa said Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu-Laurel Jr. would announce the new head of the probe panel.

“In the meantime, the two remaining members of the panel will continue the investigation into the issue,” De Mesa said.

The Office of the Ombudsman dismissed Escoto for grave misconduct in connection with BFAR’s procurement of communication equipment in 2018.

Tiu-Laurel announced the appointment of Isidro Velayo Jr. as BFAR officer-in-charge.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/04/20/2348975/da-nfa-rice-sale-probe-push-through>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

EL Niño agriculture damage balloons to P3.94 billion

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

April 20, 2024 | 12:00am



At the Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon briefing yesterday, DA Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said Mimaropa was hardest hit, with losses reaching P1.7 billion, followed by Western Visayas with P800 million.

Philstar.com / Jovannie Lambayan

MANILA, Philippines — Damage to the agriculture sector due to El Niño has reached P3.94 billion, covering 66,065 hectares and affecting 73,713 farmers and fisherfolk, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

At the Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon briefing yesterday, DA Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said Mimaropa was hardest hit, with losses reaching P1.7 billion, followed by Western Visayas with P800 million.

Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro and Palawan suffered the biggest losses in Mimaropa.

The Cordillera Administrative Region, Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Bicol, Zamboanga peninsula, Davao and Soccsksargen are the other regions affected by El Niño.

“Potential production losses from 66,065 hectares affected by the dry spell are estimated at 98,243 metric tons for palay, 40,195 MT for corn and 24,102 MT for high-value crops,” the DA said.

Damage to palay production reached P2.36 billion, covering 43,659 hectares, followed by high-value crops, P868.84 million, covering 4,199 hectares; corn, P669.44 million, covering 18,201 hectares; fisheries, P33.83 million affecting 2,261 fisherfolk; livestock, P6.95 million, and cassava, P497,900.

The DA said it has provided assistance to affected farmers worth P1.09 billion, including support for production, financial and livelihood assistance and water management.

Affected farmers and fisherfolk in Cagayan Valley and Calabarzon received financial assistance worth P1.06 billion.

State of calamity

Amid the El Niño-induced drought, Kabankalan City in Negros Occidental and Sta. Catalina in Negros Oriental were placed under a state of calamity on Thursday.

The Sangguniang Panlungsod of Kabankalan adopted the recommendation of the City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council for the state of calamity declaration.

Damage to agriculture in 13 barangays reached P41.9 million. At least 1,214 farmers were affected.

In Negros Occidental, damage to crops was placed at P184.7 million.

The Negros Oriental provincial agriculturist office assured farmers in Sta. Catalina of financial assistance aside from tractors as well as rice and corn harvesters.

Emergency loan for GSIS members

State-run pension fund Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) has allocated P2.5 billion in emergency loan for members and pensioners affected by El Niño in Occidental Mindoro and the pertussis outbreak in Cavite.

A state of calamity was declared in Occidental Mindoro last month due to drought.

Latest data showed that 59 cases of pertussis, including eight deaths, were reported in Cavite.

GSIS members who have existing emergency loans may borrow up to P40,000 to pay off their previous balance to receive the maximum amount of P20,000.

Those with no existing emergency loan obligations, including pensioners, may apply for a loan of P20,000. — **Louise Maureen Simeon, Gilbert Bayoran**

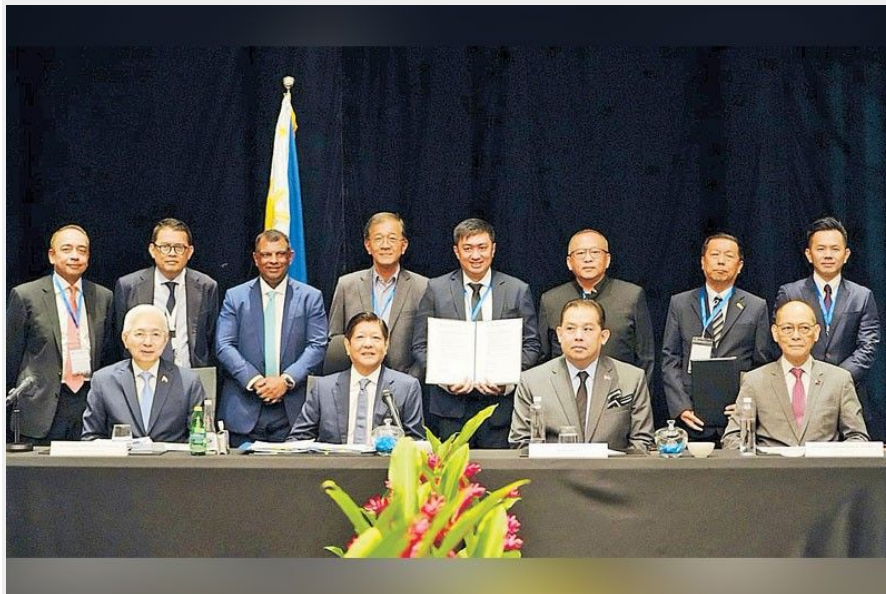
<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/04/20/2348977/el-nio-agriculture-damage-balloons-p394-billion>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Concepcion leads agriculture trade visit to Malaysia

The Philippine Star

April 20, 2024 | 12:00am



Asean business advisory council members join President Marcos, Trade Secretary Alfredo Pascual, Speaker Martin Romualdez and then finance chief Benjamin Diokno at the signing of a memorandum of understanding on July 27, 2023 with the Malaysian private sector 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 chair Tan Sri Nazir Razak, ABAC Philippines chair Joey Concepcion, Capital A Group CEO Tony Fernandes and members of the Malaysian business community.

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

The meeting is a direct outcome of ASEAN BAC Philippines' efforts to forge partnerships between the agriculture companies of 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.”

Joining Concepcion during the trade visit will be former DA chief and now Go Negosyo senior adviser 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. Philippine 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 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 Marcos 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 development 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://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/04/20/2349103/concepcion-leads-agriculture-trade-visit-malaysia>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

One condition in increasing the DA budget

By: [Ernesto M. Ordoñez](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 02:16 AM April 20, 2024

Last April 17, in an unprecedented move, the public-private Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF) approved the Department of Agriculture's (DA) P513.8-billion proposed budget for 2025—albeit with a condition.

They required an effective private sector monitoring of the agriculture funds to prevent a repeat of the very serious discrepancies uncovered earlier by the Commission on Audit (COA). The agency found out that for the years 2020, 2021 and 2022, one-third of the expenses were either unliquidated or unexplained.

A major reason why this happened is due to lack of private sector monitoring, a system in place in the past until it was terminated.

Fortunately, last Jan. 5, newly installed Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel, Jr. ordered the restoration of this effective practice. To ensure that this is implemented thoroughly, members of the PCAF unanimously agreed that it be made a conditionality for budget approval. For what use is a large budget if one-third is lost to corruption and waste?

To make up for the past negligence of the agriculture sector, the PCAF agreed that a bigger budget allocation was needed.

Let us look at three aspects to find out why this decision to increase was taken: agriculture growth, poverty incidence, and budget history.

Situation

Our gross domestic product (GDP) increased by 7.6 percent and 5.6 percent, respectively, in 2022 and 2023. Agriculture, however, grew by only 0.5 percent and 1.2 percent.

As a result of this slow growth, national poverty incidence reached 18.1 percent. It was much lower for farmers, at 30 percent, and fisherfolk, at 30.6 percent.

Compared to other countries where agriculture was given the right priority and governance, the poverty rate in the Philippines decreased slowly. From the 1970s to now, poverty in the country decreased from 40 percent to 18 percent; Vietnam's decreased from 70 percent to 4 percent; and Thailand's decreased from 58 percent to 7 percent.

Agriculture growth and its resulting impact on poverty is largely determined by the budget support it gets.

From 2016 to 2022, the sector received an average of only 1.8 percent of the total budget. Thankfully, this was corrected by the new administration.

Still, it pales in comparison to Thailand's 5-percent and Vietnam's 7-percent budget shares.

We often hear misleading (and sometimes insulting) statements that our farmers are spoiled and overprotected. These are farthest from the truth.

The average annual subsidy of a farmer in the Philippines is \$2,563.40, or approximately half of Thailand's \$5,919.20 and Vietnam's \$4,816.60.

Those who propose immediate tariff reduction without the corresponding support mistakenly believe that we will automatically become globally competitive.

If they open their eyes to the reality of support that countries like Vietnam and Thailand give their farmers and fisherfolk, they would stop their dysfunctional rhetoric that we are spoiled and overprotected.

Just consider Vietnam and Thailand's agriculture budget, and its impact on increasing agriculture growth and decreasing poverty.

Action

It is time we give agriculture the budget it needs for our nation's transformation and development. But we must also keep in mind our sad experiences in the last three years.

We must not allow one-third of our budget be lost to corruption and waste. The PCAF proposition must be implemented.

Sans transparency and vigilance, it will just be a feeling of deja vu. The proposed DA budget so well presented by Agriculture Undersecretary Asis Perez will be, as they say, much ado about nothing.

<https://business.inquirer.net/455385/one-condition-in-increasing-the-da-budget>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

DA: Agriculture losses due to El Niño impact now P3.9 billion

By: [Carla P. Gomez](#), [Jordeene B. Lagare](#), [Leah D. Agonoy](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:06 AM April 20, 2024



ALL DRY A farmer in Pagadian City in Zamboanga del Sur province visits her rice farm, now all dried up due to the absence of rain amid the El Niño weather phenomenon. The Zamboanga Peninsula is among the 11 regions in the country worst hit by the dry spell and drought. —PHOTO COURTESY OF PAGADIAN CITY AGRICULTURE OFFICE

As the prolonged dry spell and drought brought about by the El Niño weather phenomenon continues to ravage farms across the country, the Department of Agriculture (DA) on Friday said crop and livestock losses have hit P3.94 billion, up by 50 percent from P2.63 billion that the agency reported earlier.

In its latest bulletin, the DA said the impact of El Niño disrupted the livelihood of 73,713 farmers and fisherfolk as of April 16.

Among the worst-hit regions are the Cordillera, Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon) Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan), Bicol, Western Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Davao Region and Soccsksargen (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani).

The DA pegged production losses at 162,793 metric tons (MT) spanning 66,065 hectares of land. It said 76.87 percent of these affected areas had a chance of recovery.

Rice accounted for nearly 60 percent of overall losses with P2.36 billion while high-value crops followed with about 22 percent or P868.84 million.

Corn posted P669.44 million (16.98 percent) and subsectors including fisheries, livestock and poultry, and cassava accounted for the remaining 1 percent.

State of calamity

In Negros Occidental province, the city of Kabankalan has been placed under a state of calamity as crop damage from the dry spell reached P41.9 million.

With the declaration, the city government can now access its calamity funds to assist rice farmers in 13 of 32 villages worst hit by the dry spell.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development distributed 3,000 food packs to the affected farmers, including sugarcane farmers, said Mayor Benjie Miranda.

The city government is also distributing potable water to Kabankalan residents, he added.

Kabankalan was the second local government in Negros Occidental to be placed under a state of calamity after San Enrique town on April 8.

San Enrique Mayor Jilson Tubillara said the declaration would allow the local government to allocate its calamity funds to help farmers.

The San Enrique municipal council also passed a resolution asking the DA to conduct cloud seeding operations in Negros Occidental to induce rain.

Tubillara said the drought had dried up crops, wells and fishponds in the municipality and affected 90 percent of its agricultural lands.

He said some rice farmers shifted to planting watermelon, a drought resistant crop, while fishponds were transformed into salt beds to make ends meet.

Crops wiped out

In Zamboanga del Sur, farmers, like those in the towns of Dimataling and Dumalinao, are reeling from the drought with at least 3,300 ha of farms affected in the province.

Ramon Rodrigo Jr., Pagadian City agriculturist, said the dry spell had practically wiped out the city's rice, corn and high-value crops, especially in villages that are dependent on rains to water their plants.

According to Rodrigo, there has only been a few times of rain and "not enough to help the crops."

In all, the city's agriculture sector incurred some P44 million as of April 16.

Showing a net barely filled, fisherman Jundam Sajiwan of Barangay Kawit in Pagadian said El Niño had disrupted their livelihood.

"Normally, we can catch five to 15 kilos of fish to sell in the market. However with the current heat index, we only get less than five kilos, sometimes only half a kilo, just enough for our family's consumption," Sajiwan told the Inquirer.

Saying the situation is pushing them further into poverty, Sajiwan pleads for government assistance.

The long dry spell has affected 48 of Pagadian's 54 villages, from the fishing villages to upland farming communities.

Rodrigo called on the National Irrigation Administration to speed up the repairs of the irrigation system in Lison Valley and Lower Sibatang villages to prepare the farmlands for the next cropping season and enable the farmers to recover from their losses, especially those who contracted debt to finance their farming activities.

In Dimataling town, Mayor Avelino Yrauda said that all their 24 villages were affected by the drought "as farmers were not able to cultivate their lands."

He cited an initial assessment that even the irrigated lowland farms, spanning more than 3,000 ha, were affected as the irrigation facility did not have water.

Dimataling's crops are rice, corn, banana and coconut.

In Dumalinao town, Mayor Junaflor Cerilles told the Inquirer that most of their agriculture losses were reported by rice farmers who experienced radically reduced production due to the extreme heat and absence of rain.

She said the rice losses were estimated at P39 million.

Ramon Ochotorena, Office of Civil Defense regional director in Zamboanga Peninsula, said that in the region, only Zamboanga City and Siocon town in Zamboanga del Norte were able to declare a state of calamity due to the impact of El Niño.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1931547/da-agriculture-losses-due-to-el-nino-impact-now-p3-9b>

REMATE:

Badyet ng DA sa 2025 dodoblehin

April 19, 2024 18:38



MANILA, Philippines – Nais ng Department of Agriculture na taasan ang badyet nito para sa 2025 ng mahigit sa doble ng alokasyon ngayong taon.

Ito ay upang mapondohan umano ang mga proyekto na layong pagbutihin ang produksyon at bawasan ang post-harvest losses.

Sinabi ni DA spokesperson Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa na kabilang sa spending priorities ng ahensya sa susunod na tao ay ang pagpapalawak at pagpapabuti ng irrigation systems, post-harvest facilities, cold storage facilities at logistics.

“Prayoridad ngayon ‘yung expansion and improvement ng ating production areas. Tututok ang ating kagawaran sa improvement ng malalaking irrigation projects. Kasi alam natin ‘yung ating agriculture, naka-anchor ‘yan doon sa availability ng tubig,” paliwanag ni De Mesa.

“We will also be focusing on modernization ng agriculture. We will also be focusing on the improvement ng ating post harvest, and mabawasan ‘yung ating post harvest losses. Papasok din tayo doon sa improvement ng ating logistics, focusing on improvement and expansion ng mga bagong ports and piers, ‘yung ating cold storages. Very important din ‘yung digitalization, at ‘yung pag-balanse ng developmental and regulatory functions ng Department of Agriculture,” dagdag ng opisyal.

“So ang proposal natin ay doble ng budget from P170b to at least P250 billion next year.” *RNT/JGC*

<https://remate.ph/badyet-ng-da-sa-2025-dodoblehin/>

ABANTE:

Pork sumirit presyo sa P400 per kilo – Agri exec

- Abante News
- April 19, 2024



Binabantayan ngayon ng Department of Agriculture (DA) ang pagtaas ng presyo ng karneng baboy sa mga palengke kung saan may umaabot na umano sa P400 per kilo.

“Ito iyong tinututukan natin dahil iyong presyo ng ating farmgate hindi naman ganun katas, nasa a little over P200/kg,” sabi ni DA Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa sa Bagong Pilipinas Ngayong public briefing nitong Biyernes, Abril 19.

Bagama’t nagkaroon umano ng bahagyang pagtaas sa farmgate price mula sa P198 noong nakaraang linggo, sinabi ni De Mesa na hindi naman dapat na sumirit ang retail price ng karneng baboy.

“So, kung dadagdagan natin ito ng P100, ito kasi iyong ating benchmark. So, dapat nasa mga P320, P330 which is the correct price ng ating kasim,” ayon kay De Mesa.

Batay sa Bantay Presyo ng DA noong Huwebes, Abril 18, nagkakahalaga ang kasim ng P295 hanggang P370 per kilo habang ang liempo ay nasa P340 hanggang P420 per kilo. (PNA)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/04/19/pork-sumirit-presyo-sa-p400-per-kilo-agri-exec/>

El Niño farm damage nears P4B

[By Janine Alexis Miguel](#)

April 20, 2024

AGRICULTURAL damage caused by El Niño has surged to P3.9 billion with potential production losses covering 66,065 hectares, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Friday.

The DA's Risk and Reduction Management Office said the weather pattern, which brings dry spells and droughts, had affected 73,713 farmers and fisherfolk in 11 regions. Production losses were estimated to have hit 162,793 metric tons (MT).

Over half, or 98,243 MT, comprised rice or some 1.07 percent of the targeted production of 9,218,358.28 MT this year, it added. Corn losses accounted for 40,195 MT and 24,102 MT involved high-value crops.

These covered farms in the Cordillera Administrative Region, Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, Western Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Davao, and Soccsksargen.

The DA said that it had already distributed some P1.09 billion in interventions to help farmers and fishers affected by El Niño, which it expects to weaken by the end of this month.

Cloud seeding operations are also being conducted in cooperation with the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration and the Philippine Air Force, it said.

These have had an overall success rate of 90 percent, the department claimed, resulting in light to moderate rains over the municipalities of Cabagan, Sta. Maria, San Pablo and Tumauni in Isabela province;

Enrile, Iguig, Peñablanca and Tuguegarao in Cagayan province; and Nagtipunan in Quirino province.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/04/20/business/top-business/el-nio-farm-damage-nears-p4b/1942376>

Antique under state of calamity due to El Niño

April 20, 2024

ILOILO CITY: The entire province of Antique has been placed under a state of calamity due to the El Niño phenomenon and dry season on Thursday, April 18.

The declaration was announced after the provincial board signed the resolution on Monday, April 15, based upon the recommendation of the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRRMC).

With the declaration, the provincial government can now utilize its quick response fund (QRF) of P30 million to expedite aid delivery to areas affected by the extreme weather conditions.

According to the resolution, P10 million of the QRF will be used to procure movable water tanks, and food assistance, and to cover for the fuel expenses of fire trucks used in the delivery of water to communities.

Five of the 18 towns in the province have already been placed under a state of calamity such as Sibalom on March 13, Anini-y on March 27, Laua-an on April 12, San Remegio on April 16 and Tobias Fornier on April 17.

The Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office said the dry spell has impacted 12,552 families or 50,292 individuals across 281 barangay in the province.

Based on the latest report of the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (RDRRMC), Antique reported a production loss of P130 million from 299 hectares of totally damaged croplands and 2,534 hectares that are partially damaged.

Gov. Rhodora Cadio has previously urged collaborative efforts among partner agencies to ensure the effective delivery of aid to affected communities.

"We must ascertain whom we are targeting so that assistance does not overlap. The funds from the national government are being utilized and, unfortunately, sometimes exploited for personal interests. The distribution process should align closely with the current status of the El Niño phenomenon," she said.

Antique is the first province in Western Visayas to declare a provincewide state of calamity in response to El Niño.

RDRRMC data showed Western Visayas has incurred agricultural damage and losses amounting to P770 million.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development has so far distributed around 21,000 family food packs worth P12 million in the provinces of Aklan, Antique, Iloilo, and Negros Occidental.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/04/20/regions/antique-under-state-of-calamity-due-to-el-nio/1942438>

BUSINESS MIRROR

Climate change to cause \$38 trillion a year in damages by 2049, says PIK

- Laura Millan | Bloomberg
- April 20, 2024

Climate change will inflict losses to the global economy worth an annual \$38 trillion by 2049, as extreme weather ravages agricultural yields, harms labor productivity and destroys infrastructure, according to researchers at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK).

Planetary warming will result in an income reduction of 19% globally by mid-century, compared to a global economy without climate change, according to research published in *Nature* on Wednesday. The paper uses data from more than 1,600 regions worldwide over the past 40 years to assess future impacts of a warmer planet on economic growth.

“Climate change will cause massive economic damages within the next 25 years in almost all countries,” Leonie Wenz, the scientist at PIK who led the study, said in a statement. “We have to cut down our emissions drastically and immediately—if not, economic losses will become even bigger in the second half of the century, amounting to up to 60 percent on global average by 2100.”

Human-made greenhouse gas emissions have warmed the world about 1.1°C on average since pre-industrial times, leading to extreme weather events that cost about \$7 trillion over the past 30 years, according to Bloomberg Intelligence. Climate damages keep rising, averaging \$500 billion a year—or 2 percent of the US GDP—since 2016. Developing nations that contributed less to global warming are bearing the brunt of losses and damages.

The researchers said cutting emissions and limiting global warming to 2°C by the end of the century would be the most cost effective way to reduce further climate damages. “Protecting our climate is much cheaper than not doing so, and that is without even considering non-economic impacts such as loss of life or biodiversity,” Wenz said. “We will need more adaptation efforts if we want to avoid at least some of them.”

Countries least responsible for climate change are predicted to suffer an income loss 60 percent greater than the higher-income countries, and 40 percent greater than higher-

emission countries, according to the report. They also have the least resources to adapt to current impacts.

But the economic losses of the warming will be felt everywhere and “also in highly-developed ones such as Germany, France and the United States,” Wenz said. Only regions at very high latitudes will benefit from hotter temperatures.

The magnitude of the economic damages exceeds previous estimates because it takes into account not just temperature increases, but also additional climate variables like extreme rainfall and impacts of extreme weather events on agriculture and labor productivity, as well as human health.

“Structural change towards a renewable energy system is needed for our security and will save us money,” said Anders Levermann, a co-author of the study. “Staying on the path we are currently on will lead to catastrophic consequences.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/04/20/climate-change-to-cause-38-trillion-a-year-in-damages-by-2049-says-pik/>

MANILA STANDARD

DA plans to enhance promotion to attract younger farmers, fishers



Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

By Othel V. Campos

April 19, 2024, 8:40 pm

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is revamping its image to attract the younger generation to engage in farming, fishing and aquaculture.

“Farming now is not bankable. So, the aim is to make it cool, attractive to young people and, of course, bankable. It should make money in order for it to be sustainable,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. told members of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (AmCham) in a recent forum.

The aging agricultural workforce raises concerns on how they remained poor despite hard work, forcing them to dissuade their children from going into farming and fishing.

Tiu Laurel said farmers deserve to profit from their hard work.

The DA recognized that profitability is key to attracting young people and investors. A stronger agricultural sector would not only create jobs but also boost the Philippines economy, which currently relies on agriculture for one in four jobs but only eight percent of total output.

The recently-crafted four-year agriculture plan, presented to a separate forum with the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF), aims to empower the farming and fisheries sectors as “profitable industries.”

The department’s plan for modernization includes investments in mechanization, improved post-harvest systems, wider irrigation and better resource allocation.

An efficient logistics network is also crucial to ensure affordable food reaches consumers, it said.

“The Department of Agriculture continues to redouble its efforts in increasing the Philippines’ agricultural production. While instilling a vision aimed at modernizing the sector, we at the Department are also working hard on the price of agricultural commodities so that it will become affordable for stakeholders across the agricultural value chain,” the DA secretary said.

<https://www.manilastandard.net/business/314437561/da-plans-to-enhance-promotion-to-attract-younger-farmers-fishers.html>

Egg farmers nagbabala: Matinding init ng panahon 'nakakaliit ng itlog'

[James Relativo](#) April 19, 2024 | 5:01pm

MANILA, Philippines — Kapansin-pansin para sa ilang konsyumer at supplier ang pagtaas ng suplay ng maliliit na itlog sa mga palengke — bagay na dulot aniya ng matinding init ng panahon ayon sa mga nag-aalaga ng manok.

Sa [ulat](#) na ito ng ABS-CBN nitong Huwebes, idinaing ng ilang mamimili at negosyante ang naturang pangyayari sa gitna ng "[warm and dry season](#)" at [El Niño](#). At dahil may imbalance sa pagitan ng sizes, apektado na rin ang mga presyo nito.

"Ang pinakamalaking dahilan ay 'yung sobrang init ng panahon. Sumabay pa ang El Niño. Ang epekto po nito ay 'yung paghina ng pagkain ng ating mga alagang manok," ani Philippine Egg Board Association president Francis Uyehara.

"Yung epekto po nito ay ng pagbaba ng produksyon. Panagalawa po ay lumiliit din po 'yung sizes [ng itlog] na nakukuha natin."

Bukod pa rito, namamatay din sa heat stroke ang ilang manok dahil sa init. Bagama't nagmumura ang maliliit na itlog sa taas ng suplay, kasabay na tumataas nito ang presyo ng malalaki dahil kakarampot sa merkado.

Kung dating P240/tray ang mga "jumbo" na itlog sa Blumentritt, pumapalo na ito sa P260/tray. Sa kabila nito, P160/tray ang bentahan sa ngayon ng "medium" na itlog mula sa dating P190/tray.

Bagama't hindi gumalaw ang presyo ng "jumbo" eggs sa Murphy Market, [P1 kada piraso ang iminura ng "medium."](#)

Una nang sinabi ng [PAGASA](#) na nasa 12 na lugar sa bansa ang nasa "danger" category na ang [heat index](#) dahil sa init ngayong Biyernes. Pinakamainit na rito ang Ambulong, Tanauan Batangas at Aborlan, Palawan na posibleng umabot ng 44°C.

Mataas ang posibilidad ng "heat cramps" at "heat exhaustion" sa mga naturang erya. Gayunpaman, posibleng-possible rin ang nakamamatay na "heat stroke" kung patuloy nasa ilalim ng sinag ng araw ang mga residente.

Una nang nagbigay ang Department of Health ng mga sintomas ng tinatamaan ng [heat stroke](#), bagay na pwedeng lapatan ng akhang "first aid." — may mga ulat mula sa News5.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2024/04/19/2348929/egg-farmers-nagbabala-matinding-init-ng-panahon-nakakaliit-ng-itlog>

BFAR chief sinibak Ni President Marcos

[AKSYON NGAYON](#) - [AL G. Pederoche](#)

April 20, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Wala nang sasantuhing tiwaling opisyal si Presidente Marcos. Determinado siyang linisin sa mga dorobo ang kanyang administrasyon.

Sinampolan niya ang Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Director Demosthenes Escoto. Si Escoto na dawit sa maanomalyang awarding ng Php 2 bilyong kontrata para sa Vessel Monitoring System project noon pang 2018.

Napatunayan ng Tanggapan ng Ombudsman sa pangunguna ni Samuel Martires na nagkasala ng grave misconduct si Escoto. Sibak pa more Mr. President! Marami pang “anay” sa mga opisyal ng pamahalaan na sumisira sa imahe ng administrasyon.

Habang chairman ng bids and awards Committee ng BFAR si Escoto, nangyari ang anomalya na dahilan ng kanyang pagkakasibak. Kuwestyonable ang pag-aaward niya ng kontrata sa SRT Marine Systems Solution Ltd. ng United Kingdom.

Hindi umano kuwalipikado sa bidding ang kompanya ngunit pinalusot ni Escoto. Bukod diyan, ipinilit daw ni Escoto ang pagbili ng 5 libong units ng VMS transceivers gayung ang kailangan lamang ay 3,736 units.

Ito palang si Escoto ay bata-bata ni dating Presidente Duterte at siyang may pakana sa pekeng kakulangan sa galunggong kamakailan. Grabe, may mga remnants pa pala ng nakaraang Duterte administration sa rehimen ni Marcos. Dapat agapan iyan lalo pa’t puspusan ang pagsisikap na gibain ang Marcos administration.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/opinyon/2024/04/20/2349041/bfar-chief-sinibak-ni-president-marcos>