

MANILA BULLETIN:

Single mother from Iloilo empowers fellow women

BY TARA YAP

May 12, 2024 04:30 PM

ILOILO CITY – During the day, Mayflor Subong Janagap Cepeda works at the Iloilo provincial capitol here as safety and security officer.



MAYFLOR Subong Janagap Cepeda, from Calinog town, Iloilo province, and one of the top trainers of agri-based food development in Western Visayas region, with her products. (Tara Yap)

But in her spare time, she empowers women, especially mothers.

The native of Calinog town is one of the top trainers for community-based women entrepreneurs of the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) of the Department of Agriculture (DA) in making food by-products from agricultural products.

Her journey in empowering women began in the 2000s when she separated from her spouse and became a solo parent. The initial driving force was to earn extra to feed her child.

“But let us have an honest talk, especially for women. They should not be afraid to be on their own. It’s very painful to be separated when you are (financially) dependent on your partner. Women can survive as long as they strive and work,” Mayflor said.

The 47-year-old recalled that she had her initial training when she pursued an industrial education degree from the Calinog campus of West Visayas State University (WVSU).

Mayflor got the idea of food production as a rehabilitation officer when the provincial jail was still managed by the Iloilo provincial government.

She was sent to workshops intended to train lady jail detainees to become more productive during their incarceration with a livelihood program.

Mayflor would later start her own food development program by producing banana chips.

She also has other delicacies such as cassava cake, embutido (Philippine meatloaf), and atsara (pickled papaya). When she had enough products, she obtained proper permits and licenses from the government.

Mayflor was encouraged by the Provincial Planning and Development Office (PPDO) to display her products at the Iloilo Provincial Capitol where DA executives saw her and started hiring her to train women in other areas of Western Visayas.

From 2017 to 2018, Mayflor was the coach and mentor for the Western Visayas regional team that won a national award for the DA food development for corn and cassava.

Mayflor has been cited for her work over the years. She is a scholar of the Bayan Academy, the women entrepreneurship program of the ABS-CBN Bayan Foundation and backed by the Lopez Group of Companies.

https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/12/single-mother-from-iloilo-empowers-fellow-women#google_vignette

MANILA BULLETIN:

Marcos commitment gives solon high hopes for coconut industry

BY DEXTER BARRO II

May 12, 2024 02:11 PM

AT A GLANCE

- Camarines Sur 2nd district Rep. LRay Villafuerte lauded the renewed commitment of President Marcos to adequately fund the “ambitious” program of the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) to plant 100 million coconut trees by 2028 to help restore the Philippines’ status as the world’s top exporter and producer of coconuts.



(MANILA BULLETIN)

Camarines Sur 2nd district Rep. LRay Villafuerte has lauded the renewed commitment of President Marcos to adequately fund the “ambitious” program of the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) to plant 100 million coconut trees by 2028.

The PCA’s proposed coconut planting and replanting project (CPRP) seeks to reverse the lackluster productivity of coconuts while simultaneously lifting farmers out of poverty.

“Spending big on the proposed CPRP of the PCA, which aims to plant 100 million coconut trees by the time the President leaves office in 2028, is pivotal to the goal of the Marcos administration to finally energize this once robust agriculture subsector, lift at least 2.5 million farmers out of poverty, and return our country to its erstwhile glory as the world’s No. 1 coconut exporter,” Villafuerte said in a statement on Sunday, May 12.

The lawmaker says accelerating this program is a “surefire way” to help the ailing industry back on its feet.

With it, Villafuerte expects the Philippines can overtake Southeast Asian neighbor Indonesia as the world's top coconut producer. In 2022, Indonesia ranked first with 17.19 million metric tons (MT) of coconut produced, while the former produced a total output of 14.93 million MT. "In line with Mr. Marcos' vow to leave nobody behind in his government's quest for a peaceful and prosperous Bagong Pilipinas (New Philippines), putting the CPRP on the fast track will go a long way in attacking poverty and promoting inclusive growth in this industry that accounts for a sizable part of our agriculture sector," the Bicolano noted.

In a meeting with the Private Sector Advisory Council-Agriculture Sector Group (PSAC-ASG) on Wednesday, the President assured funding for the CPRP to enable the PCA to replace standing trees—millions of which are already senile and below the prime of their productivity. According to PSAC-ASG member Christopher Po—chairman of both Century Pacific Food Inc. and Shakey's Pizza Asia Ventures Inc.—the group advised Marcos to direct the PCA to enter into contract farming with local salt farmers to supply salt as fertilizer in coconut lands. The PSAC-ASG said a P2.5-billion budget will let the PCA fertilize 55 million coconut trees and double local salt production, resulting in a projected 25% increase in nut productivity and extra profits for farmers.

Under a previously signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with coconut-producing provinces and municipalities, the PCA encouraged local government units (LGUs) to implement their own projects on coconut planting and replanting, coconut fertilization, and seed farm development.

However, budgetary constraints only enabled the agency to plant or replant a maximum of three million coconut trees.

Under its 2023 to 2028 replanting initiative, the PCA aims to plant 20 million to 25 million trees annually over the five-year period, or a total of 100 million trees by 2028.

For 2024, the PCA seeks to replant 8.5 million coconut seedlings in 59,744 hectares (ha) and to fertilize 2.8 million trees in 28,341 ha.

Villafuerte, president of the National Unity Party (NUP), is also pushing for better promotion and marketing programs for coconut exports.

He said this will vastly improve earnings from the coconut sector, which averaged P1.4 billion annually over 2014 to 2018, mainly from virgin coconut oil and desiccated coconut—which represent a fourth of the country's total agricultural exports.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/12/marcos-commitment-gives-solon-high-hopes-for-coconut-industry>

Khonghun backs Marcos order to step up fight vs tobacco, vape smuggling

BY DEXTER BARRO II

May 12, 2024 02:35 PM

AT A GLANCE

- House Assistant Majority Leader and Zambales 1st district Rep. Jay Khonghun has expressed support for President Marcos' directive to strengthen efforts against the smuggling of tobacco and vape products.



Zambales 1st district Rep. Jefferson "Jay" Khonghun (PPAB)

House Assistant Majority Leader and Zambales 1st district Rep. Jefferson "Jay" Khonghun has expressed support for President Marcos' directive to strengthen efforts against the smuggling of tobacco and vape products.

"I commend President Marcos for his decisive action in prioritizing the fight against tobacco and vape product smuggling. This sends a clear message that our government is serious about protecting public health and ensuring the integrity of our markets," Khonghun said in a statement on Sunday, May 12.

Khonghun, a member of the so-called "Young Guns" in the House of Representatives, underscored the importance of combating the illicit trade of these products given its health risks and economic repercussions on legitimate businesses and government revenues.

"It is crucial that we address and end the rampant smuggling of tobacco and vape products, which not only poses health hazards to our citizens but also undermines the efforts of legitimate businesses and deprives the government of much-needed revenue," the lawmaker said.

He said smuggling in general is not only an economic issue, but also forms subversion that encourage lawlessness, promote syndicated crimes, and erode economic gains.

Khonghun stressed that concerned agencies, namely the Department of Finance (DOF) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), should help the President in handling this urgent concern.

During the Private Sector Advisory Council-Agriculture Sector Group (PSAC-ASG) meeting on Wednesday, Marcos stated the need to reinforce the anti-smuggling efforts of the government.

The PSAC-ASG made several recommendations and policy requirements to protect the tobacco industry. These include amendments to the Anti-Agri Smuggling Act of 2016 to include tobacco products, provisions on minimum retail price (MRP), and penalties for distributing and selling smuggled products.

Khonghun noted that under the leadership of Speaker Martin Romualdez, the House has made it a top priority to fight all forms of smuggling, including agricultural products.

To help combat this issue, he suggests the creation of a comprehensive approach that involves close cooperation between government agencies, law enforcement, and other stakeholders.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/12/khonghun-backs-marcos-order-to-step-up-fight-vs-tobacco-vape-smuggling>

MANILA BULLETIN:

House to begin plenary debates on Rice Tariffication Law amendments bill

BY ELLSON QUISMORIO

May 12, 2024 01:59 PM

AT A GLANCE

- The effort to pass key amendments to Republic Act (RA) No.11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) will kick into high gear this week as the House of Representatives begins the plenary debates on the bill.



(Ellson Quismorio/ MANILA BULLETIN)

The effort to pass key amendments to Republic Act (RA) No.11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) will kick into high gear this week as the House of Representatives begins the plenary debates on the bill.

This was announced Sunday, May 12 by Speaker Martin Romualdez, who has led the bid in the House to revise the RTL and in turn give Filipinos the choice of cheaper rice in the market from the National Food Authority (NFA).

“We recognize the urgency of addressing the challenges faced by consumers due to high rice prices. Through these plenary debates, we are taking decisive action to bring about meaningful change and ease the financial strain on Filipino households,” said Romualdez, who eyed the bill's second-reading passage by Wednesday.

The plenary debates will follow the approval of the amendments bill by its mother committee, the Committee on Agriculture and Food chaired by Quezon 1st district Rep. Wilfrido Mark

Enverga.

Enverga will get the ball rolling on the plenary debates once he sponsors the measure.

It was Last Tuesday when his committee approved the substitute measure for House Bill (HB) Nos. 212, 405, 1562, 9030, 9547, and in consideration of House Resolution (HR) No. 1614.

If successfully passed on second reading by Wednesday, May 15, then the measure could get approved on third and final reading before Congress' sine die adjournment on May 22. President Marcos had earlier expressed his intention to certify the bill amending RTL as urgent.

Romualdez said the plan was to have the RTL amended by July, aiming to lower rice prices to less than P30 a kilo and thereby making rice more affordable for every Filipino family. Currently, rice retails between P40 to 45 and sometimes exceeds P50 for more premium varieties.

“By amending the RTL, we aim to bring about tangible reductions in rice prices, ensuring that Filipino consumers are not unduly burdened by high food costs. Lowering rice prices to less than P30 is a crucial step towards ensuring food security and economic stability for all,” he added.

The substitute bill seeks to restore the NFA role in managing the country's rice supply chain under the proposed amended RTL. It empowers the agency to buy local milled rice as needed to maintain a rice buffer stock.

In cases of insufficient domestic supply, the NFA can procure rice from accredited importers at a set percentage of CIF (cost, insurance and freight) landed price. As a last resort, the NFA can directly import rice with explicit authorization from the President, solely to stabilize the national rice supply.

The bill also grants temporary powers to the NFA in cases of price spikes or acute shortages.

It likewise strengthens the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) to ensure warehouse compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary standards.

The bill suggests adjustments to fund allocations and the establishment of a Rice Industry Development Program Management Office.

Enacted in 2019, the RTL replaced quantitative restrictions on imported rice with tariffs, establishing the Rice Competitive Enhancement Fund or RCEF. However, it removed the NFA's market intervention powers, affecting public access to affordable rice varieties.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/12/house-to-begin-plenary-debates-on-rice-tariffication-law-amendments-bill>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Banks to ramp up lending to agriculture sector

[Keisha Ta-Asan](#) - The Philippine Star

May 12, 2024 | 12:00am



Despite scorching heat, farmers are busy putting their harvested rice inside the sacks in Calatagan, Batangas on March 30, 2024.

STAR / Jesse Bustos

MANILA, Philippines — Banks are looking to increase lending to the agriculture sector this year amid better economic conditions, higher demand for agricultural loans and consolidation of government programs that would boost banks' agricultural loan portfolio.

The results of the survey jointly conducted by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and the Department of Agriculture showed that 72 percent of respondent banks were planning to raise their loan volumes to the agri sector.

“The proportion of those expecting to increase agricultural loan volume vary by type of banks with rural and commercial banks (around 76 percent) being the most bullish with government banks following closely at around 73 percent,” the BSP said in the 2022 Countryside Bank Survey baseline report.

The proportion of banking units who saw growth in agricultural lending this year stood at 74 percent in 2024 for thrift banks, while universal and commercial banks were at around 38 percent.

“There is scope to consider that universal and commercial banks may be implementing a form of division of labor with agricultural lending being assigned to affiliated thrift bank and rural bank subsidiaries,” the BSP said.

Excluding digital banks, 42.6 percent of Philippine banks are looking to increase their agri loan volumes by up to 10 percent in 2024 while 15.3 percent of lenders plan to raise agri lending by 11 to 20 percent.

Around 7.5 percent of banks said they would ramp up agricultural loan volumes by more than 20 percent this year. Broken down, 13.6 percent were rural and commercial banks, followed by thrift banks (11.3 percent), government banks (4.1 percent) and big banks (1.2 percent).

Meanwhile, 23 percent of respondent banks said there would be no change in lending stance and one percent replied that they would lower loan volume to the agricultural sector.

According to the survey, banks want to target new borrower segments by expanding their agricultural loan volume this year.

Other factors that are encouraging banks to increase lending to the agriculture sector include improving economic conditions favorable to agricultural financing and higher demand for agricultural loans, the BSP said.

According to respondent banks, there is a need for more integration of government programs that could help optimize lenders’ agricultural loan portfolio this year.

But in order for banks to increase lending to the agriculture sector, respondents said there are necessary activities, programs, products or services that are crucial in expanding agricultural loans.

Banks also specified improvements in their current offerings. This includes increasing credit lines for borrowers with no collateral but with good track record, removing collateral requirement, lowering interest rate and aligning loan maturity with project life.

Lenders could also offer incentives for good loan repayment performance, streamline loan processes with the use of technology, educate borrowers and improve the skills of bank staff on agricultural lending.

“All in all, banks are refining their approach in lending to the agricultural sector in order to cater to more agricultural borrowers and further expand their agricultural loan portfolio,” the BSP said.

Data showed that the share of agriculture loans and services granted by the banking sector went up to 18.1 percent in 2022 from 17.6 percent in 2021.

Likewise, the total value of agriculture loans surged by 36.7 percent to P213.1 billion from P155.9 billion.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/05/12/2354359/banks-ramp-lending-agriculture-sector>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

EDITORIAL - More destructive La Niña

The Philippine Star

May 12, 2024 | 12:00am



EDITORIAL

by The Philippine STAR

With the country still feeling the lingering effects of the El Niño weather pattern, the Department of Agriculture is now bracing for what it describes as a “more destructive” La Niña. While El Niño intensifies the prevailing weather and typically induces severe drought during the dry season, La Niña causes heavier rainfall and stronger tropical cyclones in the Philippines.

This is bad news for a country that often serves as a welcome mat for tropical cyclones from the Pacific Ocean. The country is hit by an average of 20 cyclones every year, with some having the highest category in terms of intensity, such as Super Typhoon Yolanda, which flattened much of Eastern Visayas in November 2013.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration has warned of a possible strong La Niña this year, with a brief transition period from El Niño. Scientists have mapped out the areas at high risk of landslides, destructive floods and earthquakes around the country. While the weather remains dry and sunny, local government units must review those maps, which can

be accessed online, or coordinate with the scientists to ensure that high-risk areas are sufficiently prepared for natural calamities. LGUs can enhance coordination with relevant agencies on protocols for the release of dam water. An inspection of the condition of watersheds can also quickly pinpoint the communities at high risk of deadly mudslides and floods.

Preparing high-risk communities for disaster is not as simple as it sounds. Many people are aware of the risks of storm surges in coastal areas, of deadly flooding along riverbanks, and of mudslides near denuded watersheds or in mining areas. Yet their livelihoods often depend on the seas, rivers, forests and mountains, and they refuse to relocate to safer areas. Even during typhoons and possible flooding, many seek temporary shelter in evacuation centers only at the last minute.

Reducing crop damage during La Niña can also be challenging. Much of agriculture in this country is marginal and highly vulnerable to the whimsies of nature. The inadequacy of mechanized harvest, post-harvest and cold storage facilities makes preparation for a stormy season difficult for many farmers.

Despite all the challenges, national agencies and LGUs cannot afford to be lax in their preparations for disaster response and mitigation. Sufficient warnings have been aired about the possibility of a more destructive La Niña; there is no excuse for being unprepared.

<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2024/05/12/2354390/editorial-more-destructive-la-nia>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

El Niño agriculture damage climbs to P6.3 billion

[Romina Cabrera](#) - The Philippine Star

May 12, 2024 | 12:00am



Locals walk over the dry part of Intang Lake in Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija on April 22, 2024.

STAR / Walter Bollozos

MANILA, Philippines — Damage to agriculture due to the El Niño phenomenon has increased to P6.3 billion, the Department of Agriculture (DA) reported yesterday.

DA spokesman Arnel de Mesa said Mimaropa remains the most affected region, with damage placed at P1.7 billion followed by Western Visayas, with P1.5 billion, and Cordillera Administrative Region, P800 million.

Rice was the most affected crop, with losses totaling P3.3 billion; corn, P1.9 billion, and high-value crops, P1 billion.

De Mesa said 129,000 hectares of agricultural land were affected by drought.

He said the recorded losses were still below the estimates at the onset of El Niño.

De Mesa said palay production losses in the first quarter of the year were at around 100,000 metric tons compared to the estimate of 134,000 MT.

“Naging epektibo ang paghahanda ng kagawaran katuwang ang ibang sektor, lalo na ang lokal na pamahalaan at National Irrigation Administration,” he said during a news forum.

De Mesa said below normal rainfall resulted in fewer destructive cyclones since the last quarter of 2023.

Task Force El Niño spokesman Secretary Joey Villarama had said the number of cities and municipalities placed under a state of calamity due to the effects of El Niño has continued to increase.

As of Friday, 276 cities and municipalities are under a state of calamity.

Villarama said many of the provinces under a state of calamity are in Mindanao, including South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat.

He said fewer areas are expected to report losses as El Niño continues to weaken.

The DA had earlier said it is preparing for a “more destructive” La Niña.

The state weather bureau said La Niña has a 60 percent chance of developing from June to August.

Despite the weakening of El Niño, Villarama said the public would continue to experience extreme heat and drought in the coming weeks.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/05/12/2354398/el-nio-agriculture-damage-climbs-p63-billion>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Solon calls on DOF, DTI to assist Marcos with efforts vs tobacco, vape smuggling

By: [Faith Argosino](#) - Reporter / [@FArgosinoINQ](#)

INQUIRER.net / 03:20 PM May 12, 2024



INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

MANILA, Philippines — Zambales 1st District Rep. Jay Khonghun expressed his support for President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s order to intensify efforts against the smuggling of tobacco and vape products, as he called on concerned government agencies to help address the matter.

In a statement, Khonghun stressed the importance of protecting public health and upholding the rule of law as he urged the Departments of Finance (DOF) and Trade and Industry (DTI) “point out” the effect of smuggling the government’s economic gains.

“It is crucial that we address and end the rampant smuggling of tobacco and vape products, which not only poses health hazards to our citizens but also undermines the efforts of legitimate businesses and deprives the government of much-needed revenue,” the lawmaker, a member of the so-called House Young Guns, said.

“Smuggling in general is not only economic issues but also forms of subversion that encourage lawlessness, promote syndicated crimes, and erode economic gains,” he added.

Khonghun made the call as he emphasized “the need for a comprehensive approach that involves close cooperation between government agencies, law enforcement, and other stakeholders.”

Last Wednesday, Marcos highlighted the need to boost the enforcement against anti-smuggling, during the 6th Private Sector Advisory Council-Agriculture Sector Group (PSAC-ASG) meeting in Malacañang.

Following his directive, Special Assistant to the President on Economic and Economic Affairs Frederick Go said, “the DTI Consumer Protection Group has assured him that they will assign a significant number of people to monitor the vape industry.”

Under the directive, the advisory body is seeking the release of funds from the Department of Budget and Management pursuant to the Republic Act No. 4155 for the National Tobacco Authority Sustainable Tobacco Enhancement Program (STEP).

The body also sought amendments to the Anti-Agri Smuggling Act of 2016 to include tobacco products and wants provisions on minimum retail price and penalties for distributing and selling smuggled products.

Moreover, it also urged the DTI to impose a deadline for importers and manufacturers to register and the BIR to impose taxes and requirements on the said products.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1939813/solon-calling-on-dof-dti-to-assist-marcos-with-efforts-vs-tobacco-and-vape-product-smuggling>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

El Niño agri damage now pegged at P6.3B

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:12 AM May 12, 2024



WITHERED Rice fields in the Special Geographic Area of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) are withered amid the absence of heavy rain in the region due to the El Niño weather phenomenon. **PHOTO COURTESY OF OFFICE OF CIVIL DEFENSE-BARMM**

MANILA, Philippines — The agricultural damage caused by the El Niño phenomenon has already reached P6.3 billion, Department of Agriculture (DA) spokesperson Arnel De Mesa said on Saturday.

“We released the latest bulletin on El Niño yesterday. The latest damage now is P6.3 billion, still highest is the rice sector at P3.3 billion. Our corn crops are at P1.9 billion, and our high-value commercial crops are at P1 billion,” he said.

The highest reported damage was in Mimaropa with P1.7 billion, followed by Western Visayas with P1.5 billion, and the Cordillera Administrative Region with almost P800 million. De Mesa noted that 60,000 hectares of land were damaged by the El Niño so far, which is half of the 120,000 hectares projected by the DA.

“The latest report showed a reduction of 100,000 metric tons in rice production in the first quarter, which is similar to our projection of 134,000 metric tons,” he said.

While the circumstances are less than ideal, De Mesa said the figure was relatively smaller compared to the estimated 500 to 600 metric tons of reduced rice production whenever a typhoon hits the country. —*LUISA CABATO*

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1939674/el-nino-agri-damage-now-pegged-at-p6-3b>

MANILA STANDARD

House sets plenary debates on amendments to Rice Tariffication Law this week

By Rio N. Araja

May 12, 2024, 4:22 pm

The House of Representatives will begin plenary debates this week on a bill amending the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), a critical measure aimed at substantially reducing rice prices to ease the financial stress of millions of ordinary Filipino consumers.

Speaker Martin Romualdez said the legislative chamber would double its effort to hasten the plenary discussions and secure the bill's approval on second reading by Wednesday, May 15.

“We recognize the urgency of addressing the challenges faced by consumers due to high rice prices. Through these plenary debates, we are taking decisive action to bring about meaningful change and ease the financial strain on Filipino households,” he said.

Plenary debates will commence once the RTL amendment bill is sponsored by the committee on agriculture and food, chaired by Quezon District Rep. Mark Enverga.

Last Tuesday, the panel approved the substitute measure for the consolidated bills filed in the House of Representatives. The proposal aims to bolster the competitiveness and resilience of the rice industry while ensuring affordable access to the essential staple for all Filipinos.

The committee approval came a day after President Marcos expressed his intention to certify the bill amending RTL as urgent.

Romualdez said the intention was to have the RTL amended by July in a bid to lower rice prices to less than P30 to make rice more affordable for every Filipino family. Currently, rice retails between P40-45 and sometimes exceeds P50.

The substitute bill seeks to restore the National Food Authority's (NFA) role in managing the country's rice supply chain under the proposed amended RTL.

Enacted in 2019, the RTL replaced quantitative restrictions on imported rice with tariffs, establishing the Rice Competitive Enhancement Fund (RCEF). It removed the NFA's market intervention powers, affecting public access to affordable rice varieties.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is advocating for amendments to the RTL. One of its recommendations is to adjust the RCEF from P10-billion to P15-billion, according to information released by Malacañang.

The DA also seeks to enhance the NFA's role in stabilizing rice prices, regulating supply, and supporting agricultural modernization initiatives through increased funding and strategic interventions.

https://www.manilastandard.net/news/314446041/house-sets-plenary-debates-on-amendments-to-rice-tariffication-law-this-week.html?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAAR0h7GUUZmejLG15ftjyaRpm3kyAW2I9bIs7iMM7NNMNtNF6AgUQXJF3Poo_aem_AfjE0a4-tJLjfEHVdNe-U6spKaGPYRfFxq82q18cr1Mcw4frQ6Uu9mpyCb8UjUu_rtSGn1h2HYoYhndK8XR7kLx6

Pangasinan products showcased at expo

[By Philippine News Agency](#)

May 12, 2024

PANGASINAN has joined the International Food Exhibition (IFEX) Philippines as a province for the first time to help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) acquire a bigger market, especially in other countries.

Ten Pangasinan SMEs will be at the World Trade Center in Pasay City until Sunday, with food products such as deboned and processed bangus (milkfish) in various flavors, fish and chicken karage (deep-fried and marinated), natural sugarcane vinegar, processed organic herbs, processed catfish products, carabao dairy products and bagoong (fermented fish paste) products.

"These are well-chosen to give them the edge among the exhibitors at this expo," Pangasinan Provincial Administrator Melicio Patague II said in an interview over the weekend.



FOOD EXPERTS The owners and representatives of the 10 small and medium enterprises from Pangasinan pose in front of the province's booth at the International Food Exhibition Philippines at the World Trade Center in Pasay City on May 10, 2024. The expo, showcasing world-class and export-quality food products, will run until May 12. PHOTO BY PNA

Among them are naturally fermented sugarcane vinegar products by Dimalupig & Gabrielle Food Products Manufacturing of Pozzorubio town.

Founder Glaiza Velasco said their raw materials are sourced from farmlands in their town.

"We are renting out a farmland to ensure sufficient supply of locally grown sugarcane, which we ferment for about two to three months until we get its desired acidity," she said.

Velasco said the business not only helped her finish her studies, but also the farmers in their village.

Although it is their first time to join the expo, Mama Cili Enterprises from Anda town has been supplying bottled processed milkfish in various flavors to various clients, including an airline.

"Our products are being served in business class and first-class cabins," owner Cecilia Natividad said.

It is also the first time for Bernal Bagoong from Lingayen town to expose its bagoong products at the expo despite its 63 years in the local market scene.

Daniel Bernal Sr., a fisherman from Barangay Pangapisan North in Lingayen, started the fish paste business in the 1940s.

Genieleen Bernal, granddaughter of Bernal Sr., said the business has since become the bread and butter of their family and the fisherfolk's families in their community.

They currently have 100 employees.

"We are very proud that our manufacturing plant is clean and well-maintained to ensure the quality of our products. We are very thankful to the provincial government of Pangasinan for the exposure of the products and the opportunity to meet potential investors," she said.

Bantog Samahang Nayon MultiPurpose Cooperative Chairman Rolly Mateo Sr. said they are excited with the opportunity to share their products to the international market.

"We hope we could increase our market reach as we are preparing for greater demands, with support and provision from different national government agencies and the local government units," he said.

Houyang Food Corp. of Dagupan City, makers of bangus and chicken karage, said the IFEX has boosted her products' marketability since they first joined in 2023.

Owner Evelyn Co said they use an "innovation" in processing milkfish, about 2 tons weekly.

They are also open for expansion outside of the country.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/12/regions/pangasinan-products-showcased-at-expo/1945854>

Damage to Negros sugar industry hits P200M

By Eugene Y. Adiong

May 12, 2024

BACOLOD CITY – The dry spell that hit the country has inflicted severe damage to the sugar industry in Negros Occidental, the country's major producer of sugar.

The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) has estimated the damage at P200,178,856 in Negros Occidental.

The province supplies 60 to 65 percent of the domestic sugar consumption.

SRA Administrator Pablo Luis Azcona reported that the drought caused a total of P215,700,114 in damage to sugar and molasses in the entire Western Visayas.

Damage in Capiz was reported at P13,747,242 and Iloilo at P1,774,015 on April 15, but the SRA said the figures are expected to increase as the end of the El Niño phenomenon is nowhere near.

The SRA also reported that 3,283 sugar farmers in the region have been affected by the drought, including 2,392 from Negros Occidental.

The report also said the dry spell has affected 5,753 hectares of sugar land in Western Visayas, including 4,705 hectares in Negros Occidental.

Azcona said the SRA's projected sugar production for the crop year 2023-2024 is 1.85 million metric tons (MT), but as of April 28 it has

already hit 1.9 million MT as sugar production in Mindanao has made up for the losses in Negros Occidental.

There was an increase of 3,000 hectares of sugar land, which is the biggest contributor to the production increase for the crop year 2023-2024, he said.

Azcona said the bulk of the drought damage will be seen in the crop year 2024-2025 production report.

"The significant effect of El Niño right now is on what we will harvest next year, which we are supposed to have been planting since October 2023 until now," he said.

He also said that the problem right now is that those who don't have irrigation and don't have a source of water "have really had a big impact on their sugarcane plantations."

Negros Occidental is expecting a 30-percent drop in its standing crop output amid the extreme weather pattern.

Azcona said that his agency is currently conducting a survey to validate the reports from the field.

"If the El Niño continues to affect the local sugarcane industry, farmgate prices will have a slight increase," he said.

"But so far, the farmgate price went from P2,550 to P2,800 and the retail price went down and is stable for almost the whole year," Azcona said.

https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/12/regions/damage-to-negros-sugar-industry-hits-p200m/1945863?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAAR35dNsBZB0B6JCRU3iW1anpqTUgBSmPRSq5dW4181IgHSvi4ci1MgP8vG4_aem_AfiU6E046BTaWW6SotADP9EBg4fMy2dGYX6aRypsEeCtmK9dzCyAbBwVhq1KVD5cJRQGcsTfcsvry3_CwdsRNAqE

Farmers impressed by Canadian potato

By Dexter A. See

May 12, 2024

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet – The United Potato Producers of Benguet and Mountain Province Inc. (UPPBMPI), composed of 730 members, has experienced considerable change since Universal Robina Corp. (URC) introduced Canadian potato seed tubers into their farming in 2019.

The introduction of the Canadian potato was done in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture-Cordillera.

This collaboration goes beyond agricultural assistance as it serves as a holistic endeavor aimed at developing sustainability and prosperity in potato farming throughout the Philippines.

By providing access to high-quality farm inputs, comprehensive training and market opportunities, the partnership endeavors to uplift the local farmers and strengthen the agricultural industry.

Many of the farmers who adopted the program on including Canadian potatoes in their farms were impressed by the outcomes, as these potatoes, with their robust vegetation and pest-resistant stem, have not only boosted yields but also enhanced the economic outlook for these hardworking farmers.

A farmer said the yields from Canadian potatoes surpassed what he used to cultivate. Based on the farmers' declaration, nearly 60-percent increase in production and a corresponding 50-percent increase in income were achieved in planting Canadian potatoes.

In addition, Ardan Copas, manager of UPPBMPI, said that this collaboration isn't just a generous gesture but proof of URC's commitment to corporate social responsibility and gratitude toward

the government for facilitating the importation of processing potato varieties.

However, the partnership doesn't conclude with the distribution of seeds. UPPBMPI remains steadfast in its dedication to empowering its members, continually organizing training sessions on potato seed production technologies to ensure the sustainable provision of high-quality seeds from Canada.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/12/regions/farmers-impressed-by-canadian-potato/1945852>

USDA expects PHL to remain top global rice importer

Ada Pelonia

May 12, 2024

THE Philippines will remain as the world's largest importer of rice as it will purchase 4.2 million metric tons (MMT) in 2025, according to a report published by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

“The Philippines imports are forecast up to a record 4.2 million tons on continued growth in consumption. The Philippines is expected to again be the largest global rice importer,” the latest monthly report on global grains trade read.

The USDA has projected in its monthly report that the Philippines will import to feed its growing population and the increasing number of tourists who will visit the country.

Indonesia, the USDA said, will see the biggest change in rice imports next year due to larger crops and carry-over stocks.

“In 2025, the largest change for rice imports is for Indonesia where imports are forecast down 2.0 million tons to 1.5 million tons due to a larger crop and sufficient beginning stocks,” the report read.

The decline in Indonesia's rice import would impact the rice exports in Thailand and Vietnam, with USDA's projections down 900,000 metric tons (MT) and 500,000 MT, respectively.

“Thailand rice exports are forecast at 7.5 million tons, down 900,000 tons from the prior year. Lower demand is expected from Southeast Asia, particularly from Indonesia,” USDA said.

“Vietnam exports are forecast at 7.5 million tons, down 500,000 tons from the prior year, primarily due to sharply lower demand from Indonesia.”

The Philippines and China, which account for over 50 percent of Vietnam's exports, were expected to continue purchasing large amounts of rice.

The Philippines's unmilled rice production declined by 1.96 percent to 4.69 MMT in the first quarter of 2024 from the 4.78 MMT recorded in the same period in 2023, according to data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. earlier assured the public of sufficient rice supply through the first half of the year, with recent imports and the upcoming harvest that peaks in March and April, ensuring the stable price of the country's main food staple through June despite the ill effects of El Niño.

"We have enough rice supply so prices should remain stable through the first half of the year. Our priority now is market stability," Tiu Laurel said.

The Philippines earlier signed a five-year rice supply deal with Vietnam that ensures a source of 1.5 MMT to 2.0 MMT of rice a year. India, the DA said, also "promised" to provide the country with additional supply despite the import ban on non-basmati rice.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/12/usda-expects-phl-to-remain-top-global-rice-importer/>

Pangulong Marcos nagulat sa P50/kilo bigas sa Kadiwa

By [Gemma Garcia](#)

May 12, 2024 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Ikinagulat ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ang ulat na P50 kada kilo ng bigas sa halip na P29 ang ibinebenta sa Kadiwa centers.

Sinabi ni Pangulo na hindi niya alam na ganun halaga ang ibinebenta sa Kadiwa Centers, dahil noong nagpabili sila ay P29 kada kilo ang nabili nila.

Posible anya na ang P50 na binibenta ay hindi galing sa gobyerno kundi sa ibang source.

“Nagpapabili tayo --- ang binebenta natin na bigas is 29 pesos kaya’t hindi ko alam ‘yung 50 pesos baka hindi sa amin galing ‘yun, baka sa ibang source ‘yun,” sinabi pa ng Presidente.

Nanindigan si Marcos na P29 kada kilo ng bigas ang ibinebenta sa Kadiwa store.

Sa kabila nito, tiniyak naman ni Pangulong Marcos na aalamin niya ang ulat na P50 kada kilo ng bigas ang binebenta sa Kadiwa stores.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2024/05/12/2354429/pangulong-marcos-nagulat-sa-p50kilo-bigas-sa-kadiwa/amp>

ABANTE TONITE

El Niño huhumupa na pero delikado pa kaya naglilibot si PBBM

May 12, 2024

Tatagal pa ng ilang linggo ang nararanasang matinding init at tagtuyot sa bansa kahit pa humuhupa na ang El Niño kaya naman naglilibot si Pangulong Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. sa mga lugar na apektado nito.

Ito ang inihayag ni Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Assistant Secretary at Task Force El Niño Spokesperson Joey Villarama sa harap ng patuloy na pagbabantay sa sitwasyon ng matinding epekto ng tagtuyot sa bansa.

Ayon Kay Villarama, mararamdaman pa rin ang epekto ng El Niño sa agrikultura at industriya ng pangisda pati na rin sa kalusugan ng publiko kaya manatiling mapagbantay hanggang sa susunod pang mga linggo.

“Kahit sinabi ng Pagasa na pahina na ang epekto ng El Niño, nandiyan pa rin iyong damang init na may epekto sa kalusugan, may epekto sa agrikultura, pati na sa fishing industry kaya kailangan pa rin tayong magbantay,” ani Villarama.

Sinabi ng opisyal na ito ang dahilan kaya naglilibot si Pangulong Marcos sa mga probinsiya na matinding tinamaan ng tagtuyot para sama-samang harapin ang krisis na dala ng El Niño.

Ayon pa kay Villarama, nadadagdagan araw-araw ang mga bayan at lungsod na nagdedeklara ng state of calamity. Sa kabuuan, mayroon na aniyang 276 na mga munisipalidad at siyudad ang nasa ilalim ng state of calamity.

“Hangga’t nandiyan pa po ang El Niño at hindi pa tine-terminate iyong El Niño ay magta-transition na tayo to La Niña in the coming months eh dapat ay listo pa rin tayo at maghanda pa rin tayo,” dagdag ni Villarama.

Nitong nakalipas na mga araw ay binisita ni Pangulong Marcos ang Zamboanga Peninsula, Sultan Kudarat at General Santos City para personal na tingnan ang sitwasyon ng mga magsasaka at mga mamamayan na apektado ng tagtuyot at nag-abot din ng tulong at iba pang serbisyo sa mga tao. (Aileen Taliping)

https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/05/12/el-nino-huhumupa-na-pero-delikado-pa-kaya-naglilibot-si-pbbm/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR0erfIta4ItxHIb1-MOPX04RhW20uz07IM-2Y4xx-VEUZ0uUhiSaQvyhpU_aem_AfhyAw3FM-pOB5Z85b_Wz9_qIYTZI3TbpDBPUCiBdFEjrinuJGL5LHI-goMJuOGrsc1iR2cnAptVcE7KJkSX3Utc

REMATE:

Agri damage sa El Niño higit P6B na

May 12, 2024 09:00



MANILA, Philippines- Umabot na ang pinsalang dulot sa agrikultura ng epekto ng El Niño sa mahigit P6 bilyon, ayon sa Department of Agriculture (DA) nitong Sabado.

Subalit, sinabi ni DA spokesperson Arnel de Mesa na mas mababa ito kumpara sa inaasahan, base sa ulat.

Base kay De Mesa, inaasahan ng ahensya na aabot ang pinsala sa 120,000 ektarya ng pananim. Subalit, batay sa pinakabagong datos, halos 60,000 ektarya lamang ang napinsala.

Inihayag ni De Mesa na hindi nila inaasahang madaragdagan pa ang pinsala sa agrikultura matapos maobserbahan ng PAGASA ang mga senyales ng paghina ng El Niño sa tropical Pacific Ocean.

Gayundin, tapos na ang harvest season at naghahanda na ang mga magsasaka para sa susunod na planting season.

Sinabi ng opisyal na isa pa sa mga dahilan ng mababang pinsala sa agrikultura ay ang mga isinagawang paghahanda ng pamahalaan at ng iba pang sektor.

Paglalahad ng DA, naitala sa MIMAROPA Region ang pinakamalaking pinsala ng El Niño, na umabot sa P1.7 bilyon, sinundan ng Western Visayas sa P1.5 bilyon, at ng Cordillera Administrative Region sa mahigit P800 milyong halaga ng pinsala.

Pinakaapektado sa matinding init ang mga palayan, sinundan ng mais at ng high-value crops. RNT/SA

<https://remate.ph/agri-damage-sa-el-nino-higit-p6b-na/>

REMATE:

DA: Pagpayag sa NFA na bumili, magbenta ng bigas makapagpapatatag sa presyo ng kalakal

May 12, 2024 13:28



MANILA, Philippines- Inulit ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na ang hakbang na muling payagan ang National Food Authority (NFA) na bumili at magbenta ng mas murang bigas ay pinaniniwalaang magiging dahilan ng pagtatag ng presyo kapag ang retail price ay “masyadong mataas.” Sinabi ni DA Assistant Secretary at spokesperson Arnel de Mesa na ang panukalang amyendahan ang Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) ay “much-needed intervention” kung ang Pilipinas ay hindi babaling sa “marahas” na hakbang gaya ng price caps. “We don’t want iyong mga ganitong measures kasi iyong price cap, maganda iyon sa simula pero in the long term, mayroon iyong negative economic impacts sa ating bansa,” anito.

“So, kung magkakaroon ng opportunity ang NFA to intervene, mabilis iyong epekto,” dagdag na pahayag ni de Mesa.

Winika pa ni De Mesa na ang NFA rice na ibebenta ay magandang klase at “relatively priced lower” kumpara sa dating umiiral na market price para sa well-milled, sa pagitan ng P48 hanggang P53.

“Kasi noong una kasi, nakakapag-provide siya ng PHP27. But we are not expecting naman iyong ganoong presyuhan but we are expecting na relatively lower iyong presyo ng NFA prevailing market price,” aniya.

“Kapag naipasa itong amyenda sa RTL, puwede nang mag-intervene at magdala mismo sa retail outlets ang NFA,” wika pa ni de Mesa.

Sa ilalim ng batas, limitado ang mandato ng NFA at iyon ay ang tiyakin na ang buffer stocks para sa mga sakuna o kalamidad ay pinapayagan lamang na bumili ng dalawang uri ng ani mula sa lokal na magsasaka, fresh palay mula P19 hanggang P23; at malinis at tuyo sa pagitan ng P23 at P30.

“So, kung makakapamilya iyong NFA ng bigas mismo, mababawasan iyong gastusin ni NFA sa pag-dry, sa pag-mill at kapag bigas na iyan, mas madaling i-maintain at mas madaling i-dispose,” ang winika ni De Mesa.

Samantala, tiniyak naman ni de Mesa sa mga magsasaka na ia-apply lamang ito sa mga kaso kapag ang bansa ay mayroong isyu sa suplay o presyo.

“Ang normal function pa rin ng NFA is to buy palay from our farmers,” pahayag niya. **Kris Jose**

<https://remate.ph/da-pagpayag-sa-nfa-na-bumili-magbenta-ng-bigas-makapagpapatatag-sa-presyo-ng-kalakal/>