

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **NFA seeks P16 billion budget for palay procurement**

**BY [GABRIELL CHRISTEL GALANG](#)**

May 16, 2024 05:17 PM

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In order to secure the target quantity for the rice buffer stock by 2025, the National Food Authority (NFA) has sought a budget of P16.3 billion next year.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) recently proposed P24.85 billion to NFA, which is 77 percent higher than this year's allocation of P14.03 billion.

NFA Acting Administrator Larry Lacson stated that their proposed budget for next year would be able to fund the palay procurement from local farmers, as well as construct more storage and drying facilities to enhance the capacity of buffer stock.

According to the DA, the NFA must maintain a buffer quantity equal to 9 days' worth of national rice consumption.

At the moment, the NFA can dry up to 31,000 metric tons but can only purchase around 495,000 metric tons of rice.

About P9 billion has been set aside for the palay procurement this year, with the procurement price set at P23 per kilo.

Last April, the Food Authority Council increased the maximum purchasing to P30 so that the government could compete with private traders for the local rice supply, as well as provide fair support to farmers.

Meanwhile, restoring the NFA's control over rice importation and market price stabilization is still in the works, as the Congress would still debate over this decision. For their part, they believe that this power should be assigned to the DA instead.

The NFA has been restricted to a few actions as mandated under the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), including the acquisition of rice directly from rice farmers, inputs on stabilizing market prices, and rice importation for buffer stock.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/16/nfa-seeks-p16-billion-budget-for-palay-procurement>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **Ilocos Norte sustains P38.26 M in damage to agriculture from El Niño**

**BY [FREDDIE LAZARO](#)**

May 16, 2024 01:41 PM

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LAOAG CITY, Ilocos Norte – The provincial government of Ilocos Norte, through the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPAG), reported an initial P38.2 million in damage to agriculture due to the El Niño phenomenon.

Engr. Maria Teresa Bacnat, head of the OPAG, said 861.84 hectares planted to rice were affected, most of which are in Bacarra with 160.08 hectares.

Other areas with affected rice farms were Bangui, Burgos, Pagudpud, Pasuquin, Piddig, Vintar, Badoc, Banna, Dingras, Nueva Era, Batac City, and Laoag City.

Bacnat said 2,246 farmers in the province were affected by El Niño and they have been urged to grow short-term and drought-resistant crops due to insufficient water for irrigation.

To mitigate the impact of El Niño on farmers, the provincial government has distributed 140 water pumps, fuel subsidies, 103 small farm reservoirs (SFR), 285 units of water-harvesting facilities, 37 irrigation hoses, and spring development totaling P15.4 million.

Gov. Matthew Joseph Marcos Manotoc, through the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRRMC), has distributed at least 400 drums and pails in Solsona.

Solsona and Dingras have been placed under a state of calamity due to prolonged dry spell.

The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) is currently conducting water rationing in the two towns.

The governor called on the people of this province to conserve water and use rainwater harvesting facilities to gather water for non-drinking purposes such as gardening, washing clothes, dishes, and vehicles, and flushing toilets.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/16/ilocos-norte-sustains-p38-26-m-in-damage-to-agriculture-from-el-nino-1>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Gov't found solution to lower rice prices— Marcos

BY ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS

May 17, 2024 06:49 AM

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## AT A GLANCE

- According to Marcos, the Senate and the House of Representatives found a solution to allow the government to import rice to eventually reduce rice prices.
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President Marcos believes that the government has already found the best solution to lower the price of rice in the market amid plans to certify as urgent the proposed amendments to the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL).



*President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. (Malacañang photo)*

In an interview with reporters in Cagayan de Oro City, the President the said the Congress bicameral committee came up with measures to address rice prices.

“I don’t want to preempt the bicameral committee, but I think we have found the solution already,” he said.

“The mechanism will be different from that which is proposed but, in the end, and net effect pareho pa rin, makakapag-import ang national government,” he added.

According to Marcos, the Senate and the House of Representatives found a solution to allow the government to import rice to eventually reduce rice prices.

“Pagka mataas ang presyo ng bigas, magbibitaw tayo ng bigas, magbebenta tayo ng mababa para sumunod ang merkado (If the price of rice is high, we will sell in a lower price so the market would follow),” he said.

The President, however, has yet to identify which agency will be allowed to import rice and that it would be up to the bicameral committee.

“Syempre, nakikipag-ugnayan tayo (We are coordinating with them) and I think we may have found the solution and nakikita natin (we think) that we will be immediately able to bring down the price of rice,” he said.

Despite this development, Marcos said that he would [still certify as urgent](#) the proposed amendments to the RTL.

“Mase-certify talaga ‘yan (That will really be certified [as urgent]),” he said.

Early this month, President said amending the National Food Authority (NFA) charter and the RTL would give the government the ability to have a say when retail prices of rice go up.

"Mako-control natin, meron tayong influence doon sa presyuhan sa pagbili ng palay at sa pagbenta ng bigas (We can control and we'll have an influence in the price of the selling of rice). So that's what we are going to do," he said.

"I think it justifies the urgent certification," he added.

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According to the President, the price of rice is increasing because the government has no control over it.

Signed by former president Rodrigo Duterte in 2019, the RTL lifted quantitative restrictions on rice and introduced tariffs to protect local rice producers.

It established the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), which enhances rice productivity and supports farmers. It also mandated the NFA to manage a buffer stock sourced solely from local farmers.

However, critics thought the RTL failed to reduce the cost of rice and increased the number of cheaper imported ones in the market.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/17/gov-t-found-solution-to-lower-rice-prices-marcos>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **USDA expects Philippine demand for biofuels to increase**

**BY [GABRIELL CHRISTEL GALANG](#)**

May 16, 2024 03:41 PM

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The consumption of biofuel in the Philippines is expected to increase this year due to a rise in fuel pool and the expected adoption of higher blending standards, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) said.

The USDA projected that the demand for fuel ethanol in the country would rise by eight percent to 682 million liters, while biodiesel would have a marginal increase of 0.8 percent to 240 million liters from the 230 million liter expectation in 2023.

Additionally, ethanol production would likely jump to 395 million liters from 375 million liters predicted from last year.

The USDA also noted that the fuel pool expansion would cause the expected recovery of biofuel utilization would align itself with the country's economic recuperation, stating that there will be "potential for greater growth if higher blending standards are fully adopted."

Last January, the Department of Energy (DOE) announced its preparations to target a larger ethanol blend for gasoline products from 10 percent of volume to 20 percent, within certain standards.

These terms would get a collaborative effort with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Bureau of Product Standards (BPS), and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), among others.

"The feedstock problems remain and imported ethanol will fill the gap, growing by 14 percent to 280 million liters in 2024," the USDA reported.

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Feedstock consists of biomass generated from algae, plants, and animals that produce biofuels. Moreover, the American agriculture sector mentioned that the 20 percent ethanol for gasoline, or the E20 blend, and the 3 percent biodiesel (B3 blend) would still need the DOE's decision to release a circular stating the necessary guidelines on the roll-outs for these two fuel blends.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/16/usda-expects-philippine-demand-for-biofuels-to-increase>

MANILA BULLETIN:

# Reviving a lost textile may be key to reviving a lost crop

BY [YVETTE TAN](#)

May 17, 2024 00:01 AM

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AVANT GARDENER



## (Part II)

Last week, I talked about textile conservationist and cultural advocate Raffy Tesoro's bid to revive Philippine muslin, more commonly known as kulambo, the fabric used as mosquito netting before plastic became de rigeur, and how for this revitalization to happen, training weavers on the lost art of muslin making should be done parallel to the cultivation of Philippine cotton, which has also died out.

Tesoro enumerated the current challenges faced by folks who want to bring back both Philippine muslin and Philippine cotton. Because the Philippines currently doesn't grow enough cotton, nor does it have the ability to spin it to the needed thread, the project is forced to source thread abroad for now.

He also explained why it was easy for weavers to forget a traditional craft within the span of only one or two generations.

"...when government started giving our weavers set matrixes for weaving, you lost the creativity, one, and the technicals, because they're oh, you have to use this type of thread and here is a set type of weaves, so instead of understanding each region, each location, each personality, they were just giving standardized [patterns]. That doesn't make sense, especially when you try to create cultural products. When you're creating a mass product, yes, but when you're creating a cultural product, no."

He added, "And then they said 'use these threads,' and at the time, this was [the] 80s, they were mostly giving [weavers] polyester, nylon, so everybody lost touch with natural fibers, and of course, we lost natural fibers because they were replaced by other crops that were deemed more profitable like tobacco at that time and sugar.

"The requirements for cotton are the same as sugar, corn, and tobacco, so of course, what got transplanted? That's what happened, which is sad."

There's a bigger plan behind the revival of Philippine muslin beyond rediscovering a lost art, and that's adding premium fabrics to the roster of premium Philippine exports.

“The reason why we're doing this is... you want to have a return to a more sustainable premium economy. If you're looking at how economies of scale work, we are a country that cannot compete with larger countries in terms of mass production, cost, and stuff, but we have certain advantages over other countries, and we should be playing to those strengths instead, such as unique design, high quality premium workmanship and material.”

If produced and marketed correctly, the humble kulambo might join the ranks of piña, a premium fabric only found in the Philippines.

“[If] ... we're trying to sell ourselves as premium, that means we need to fix the steps that make it worthy of the price tag.”

Re-training weavers to create a fabric some of them barely remember from their childhood isn't easy.

“...we show them the original samples of the kulambo, then we go through a methodical process because now that the weavers of today are so used to synthetics, they don't realize that using natural fabrics requires much less force when you're weaving it. So there's a lot of breakage when they weave with natural fibers.... So we had to devise techniques to literally soften the blow of the loom and teach them how to be more gentle with the weaving process. It's still ongoing.”

Tesoro believes that there's economic and cultural potential in developing Philippine premium textile.

“That's what we should be selling instead of, and I'm sorry to say this, we keep pushing tribal looks..., which is not a bad thing, but if it's the only thing we're selling, especially to an outside market like Europe, Australia, or Japan, then they'll look at us as quaint... but they won't look at us as sophisticated,” Tesoro explained. “When you go beyond that like the Europeans did when they started doing tapestries and embroidery, or the Indians with muslin and the Chinese with silk, you call that high culture because the amount of technical and creative skill necessary to make that kind of product befitted the price tag.”

The push for premium isn't new, but in the industries where it's managed to gain a foothold, such as coffee and cacao, it's worked well.

“We actually have that ability. We have piña. We have kulambo. We have good abaca. Why are we pushing tribal culture all the time?” Tesoro said.

“But if you walk in there with a pina barong, you look better than anybody in a suit. It's as simple as that.”

Next week I conclude this three-part series by talking about Tesoro's plans with kulambo beyond mosquito netting, as well as the agricultural aspect of growing Philippine cotton.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/17/reviving-a-lost-textile-may-be-key-to-reviving-a-lost-crop-1>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

## Enable the producers



**CTALK - Cito Beltran - The Philippine Star**

May 17, 2024 | 12:00am

After a long search, I have finally tapped into several online communities of solar power equipment providers and judging from what's available, there is a reasonable amount of companies willing to provide goods and services nationwide.

The bad news is that even the most basic equipment or system costs a lot of money, mostly beyond the reach of farmers, producers and households. A simple stand-alone 300- to 500-watt spotlight costs about P2,500, water pumps are in the range of P30,000 to P75,000, depending on if you want an above ground pump or a submersible pump, solar collecting panels go from P3,000 to P5,500 and systems are anywhere from P75,000, P100,000 to half a million pesos.

Unfortunately for many in need, they also need to dig or drill for water and that also costs a lot of money, somewhere in the range of P75,000 to P300,000, depending on whether the drillers have a social conscience or if you have a site full of rocks, etc.

### **ADVERTISING**

In my previous columns, I often raised the issue of government not subsidizing residential or agricultural solar power set-ups and not even making the sacrifice of foregoing the duties and taxes on the various parts and equipment involved. What I failed to consider were the other taxes we take for granted.

When I asked an installer to send me a quote for a set-up that could alternately power a deep well pump then switch over to power a 2-hp power pump needed to filter a large pump, he made a guesstimate of P190,000.



I asked him to skip the bells and whistles and give me the lowest cost possible. That's when he asked me if I needed receipts, etc. because the Value Added Tax alone was 12 percent of total cost, not including all the other taxes.

As our Lord Jesus Christ told the Pharisees, "Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's, and give unto God what is God's." But in all honesty who would not be tempted to disregard a receipt in exchange for a whopping 12 percent added discount? Given how farmers, producers and households in the provinces are already struggling to find and utilize water, how can President Bongbong Marcos and his entire government collect taxes on solutions the government cannot and has failed to provide?

Water and electricity are essential needs and we have so many government agencies under the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Energy that are tasked to address the challenges of drought and unaffordable electricity rates, but all they do is spend taxpayers' money and achieve nothing.

If Filipino farmers, producers and households are forced by circumstance to go DIY or Do-It-Yourself, what are our legislators and political leaders doing to help? I am not suggesting that Senate President Miguel Zubiri and Speaker Martin Romualdez lead the procession for out-of-pocket of donations.

I am not even asking them to legislate subsidies for water and solar power development. From what I have seen online and in communities, almost all those seeking and wanting to drill for water, install solar power in farms and homes see it as an investment and a better solution than waiting for better times and lower electricity rates.

They are not asking for handouts; they are looking for information and solutions. At the very least, Zubiri, Romualdez and all legislators should legislate automatic tax exemptions for materials, equipment and services related to water drilling and solar power systems.

Government does not have to give subsidies and lost revenues from VAT etc. are essentially imaginary if the sale can't be closed because potential customers can't afford the added 12 percent to 20 percent on top of the equipment and services. The switch to solar from grid turns into savings that will be used in other areas of farming, production and household goods for better quality of life, something politicians can make claims to in future elections.

Aside from the automatic tax exemptions for these two specific undertakings, our representatives and senators can also pass one consolidated law requiring banks and financial institutions to provide financing and loans to cover the alternative water and power system for farmers, producers and households.

It is insane that commercial banks are now providing easy loans and terms for groceries, travel and even cars that probably won't last more than six years and can't move much because of our "state of calamity" on EDSA and Metro Manila.

Even government banks provide funds and loans to pay for "equipment," mostly upscale vans, high-end shuttle buses, executive cars for government and military officials, but I have not heard of a single bank, government or private, that has a dedicated loan package for individuals and communities in need of alternative water and electricity sources.

As an example of our twisted priorities, I have even been offered an installment or deferred payment plan for stem cell therapy! I could be wrong, and I hope I am, but has anybody heard of a "loan for solar power equipment and installation" or a "loan for deep well drilling for water?"

Whatever is available out there are not loans or funding available from banks but from a third party or in-house, which means that the terms and interests are surely higher than what banks and financial institutions can offer.

We must avoid the trap that exists in the motorcycle sales and loans system where interest rates are so high that people simply use the bikes for six months then bail and look for another dealer company to buy and borrow from. The dealers don't mind because they simply resell used equipment, at the same high interest, to another desperate or ignorant consumer!

<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2024/05/17/2355669/enable-producers>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Senators laud creation of climate change panel

[Marc Jayson Cayabyab](#) - The Philippine Star

May 17, 2024 | 12:00am



The climate resilient agriculture steering committee is tasked with providing strategic direction in mobilizing DA resources to address climate change.

Joven Cagande

MANILA, Philippines — Senators yesterday lauded the Department of Agriculture (DA)'s creation of a climate change panel amid La Niña's expected damage to the agriculture sector.

The climate resilient agriculture steering committee is tasked with providing strategic direction in mobilizing DA resources to address climate change.

"I commend the government and the DA for heeding our call to act now to prepare for the looming La Niña next year," Sen. Francis Escudero said yesterday.

"I hope that this will be completed soon because we need all the time we can gather to do much-needed preparations, not only in the area of agriculture but other aspects as well. I hope other line agencies will follow suit," he added.

Sen. Imee Marcos said a “climate change panel is always a welcome development given this time of extreme weather.”

“While we would have preferred such a committee to have been formed earlier in light of 131 local government units already declaring a state of calamity due to El Niño, we understand that the DA is preparing for much more extensive agricultural damage due to expected flooding,” she noted.

“We hope that the relevant agencies such as the National Irrigation Administration will not be caught flat-footed this time,” she added.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. operationalized the DA Climate Resilient Agriculture Office, which would harmonize the climate action of all DA operating units.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/05/17/2355691/senators-laud-creation-climate-change-panel>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# NFA to import rice only as last recourse – DA

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

May 17, 2024 | 12:00am



National Food Authority rice stocks.

File photo courtesy of NFA

MANILA, Philippines — Allowing the National Food Authority to import rice is a last option for the government, an official of the Department of Agriculture (DA) said yesterday amid opposition from farmers' groups to return the NFA's power to source the staple outside the country.

Arnel de Mesa, spokesman for the DA, said the NFA would only be authorized to import rice when necessity arises.

"It will only be allowed (to import rice) as a last recourse. It can also buy rice if there is shortage and during extraordinary events," De Mesa said.

Groups have opposed the move to allow the NFA to import rice.

Farmers' group Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) chairman Rosendo So said there is no need to give the NFA additional powers.

Rice watchdog group Bantay Bigas spokesperson Cathy Estavillo said the government should instead provide more budget to the NFA to buy more palay and sell it to the markets.

But De Mesa said the NFA would only be allowed to import rice upon the recommendation of different committees and approval of the DA secretary.

He gave assurance that there would be adequate safeguards once the NFA is allowed again to import the grains.

“The NFA has no sole authority to do this (importation) without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture,” he said.

De Mesa said that under the proposed amendments to the Rice Tariffication Law, the regulatory functions of the NFA would be returned including requiring grain warehouses to register with the agency.

“The NFA will be allowed to inspect warehouses to determine if the volume and quality of rice and palay stored therein are correct,” he said.

The DA also wants to return the function of the NFA on price stabilization and supply regulation.

“Under the proposed amendments, in case extraordinary events occur, and there is a spike in prices and acute shortage in the supply, the NFA can intervene,” De Mesa said.

He said the NFA should be given additional funds of up to 50 percent of its allocation for buffer stocks.

“This could be used to replenish (stocks), use it to intervene in the market,” De Mesa added.

He said aside from its function to procure palay, the NFA should be authorized to buy rice from traders.

Although they are supportive of the restoration of the agency’s mandate to regulate the retail price of the staple, SINAG and Bantay Bigas said the NFA should focus on the procurement of palay from farmers.

Estavillo said the government should not be dependent on rice importation, but instead boost the country’s local production.

She said the government could not rely on imported rice amid the high prices in the world market.

Estavillo reiterated her call to junk the Rice Tariffication Law or Republic Act 11203.

Meanwhile, So said the NFA failed to use its P8-billion budget for palay procurement last year, so the agency has P17 billion this year, which it can use to procure 566,666 tons of palay or 351,333 tons of rice.

He said that while SINAG supports the amendments to the RTL, these should only cover the increase in the funding allocated under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund from the current P10 billion to P30 billion.

## **NFA welcomes back 72 employees**

Meanwhile, the 72 reinstated employees of the NFA have returned to their posts following the lifting by the Office of the Ombudsman of their suspension.

Acting NFA administrator Larry Lacson led the welcoming of the employees.

“This means we have 72 more human power and this will greatly help our operation,” Lacson said.

He said that although up to 45 more employees remain suspended, he was happy that the 72 warehouse supervisors can resume their functions.

“I appealed to the ombudsman to lift the suspension order, because it paralyzed our operations. Hopefully, the suspension of other employees will be lifted soon and they be allowed to return to work,” he said.

The ombudsman lifted the six-month preventive suspension it imposed on 72 of 139 officials and employees of the NFA in connection with the allegedly anomalous sale of the government’s rice buffer stock to favored private traders.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/05/17/2355702/nfa-import-rice-only-last-recourse-da>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Philippines to save P16 billion annually from higher ethanol blend

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

May 17, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Increasing the ethanol blend in gasoline products from 10 percent to 20 percent could cut fuel prices by as much as four percent, resulting in as much as P16 billion in annual savings for Filipino vehicle owners, according to the United States Department of Agriculture-Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA-FAS).

The US government agency said the E15 and E20 blend in gasoline products may cut fuel prices by two percent and four percent, respectively.

The higher ethanol blend would result in an average annual savings of P7.947 billion for E15 blend and P15.893 billion for E20 blend, according to the international agency's Global Agricultural Information Network report.

“Such a move would have also facilitated an opportunity to share a portion of gained consumer welfare with local fuel ethanol producers via higher prices for locally produced fuel ethanol, which in turn, would have encouraged local producers to maximize production,” it said.

The Philippines is currently implementing an E10 blend, with government regulators signifying interest to hike the blend to a voluntary E20 mix. However, the Department of Energy has yet to issue the necessary circular to facilitate the discretionary use of higher ethanol blend in gasoline products.

To be driven by more car purchases, the Philippines' ethanol demand is expected to recover this year, growing by 8.42 percent year-on-year to 682 million liters.

USDA-FAS attributed the hike in consumption to “increased” fuel supply in anticipation of higher gasoline blends coupled by expansion in total fuel ethanol plant capacity.

“The expected growth relates to the increasing car purchases with double-digit growth in 2023, which continue to contribute to the increase in gasoline consumption,” it said.



The USDA unit said the present “overcapacity” of fuel ethanol plants is a result of the “unexpected” shift of seven potable alcohol producers to fuel ethanol production following the implementation of a 22 percent excise tax on potable alcohol.

Local fuel ethanol production is estimated to meet almost 58 percent of the country’s total requirement. The USDA-FAS projected domestic biofuel output this year to reach a record 395 million liters, two percent higher than last year’s 387 million liters.

The country’s fuel ethanol imports, meanwhile, could rise by 14 percent on annual basis to 280 million liters from 246 million liters, according to the report.

The Ethanol Producers Association of the Philippines has been pushing to raise the blend from 10 percent to 15 or 20 percent to further pull down gasoline prices and generate more savings from avoided greenhouse gas emissions.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/05/17/2355637/philippines-save-p16-billion-annually-higher-ethanol-blend>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# ‘Philippines 2028 milk production target on track’

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

May 17, 2024 | 12:00am



In 2023, at least 22.87 million liters of milk were produced compared to 21.93 million liters of total production in 2022, NDA officer-in-charge administrator Gavino Alfredo Benitez said yesterday.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines’ milk production target of 80 million liters by 2028 is on track after recording a four percent increase in 2023, according to the National Dairy Authority.

In 2023, at least 22.87 million liters of milk were produced compared to 21.93 million liters of total production in 2022, NDA officer-in-charge administrator Gavino Alfredo Benitez said yesterday.

“Of this, 78 percent came from cattle and 12 percent from goats, reflecting the animals currently supported by the NDA,” he noted.

The dairy animal herd grew by 12 percent, from 67,967 in 2022 to 75,798 in 2023, he added.

The NDA will celebrate World Milk Day with a dairy fair on May 31, showcasing products from its assisted cooperatives in northern and southern Luzon.

Since 2001, World Milk Day, established by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, has been marked on June 1.

Cooperatives participating in the May 31 dairy fair are DVF Dairy Farm, Catmon Multi-Purpose Cooperative, R.O. Valerio Dairy Farm, Batangas Dairy Cooperative, Aces Philproducers Corp. and Arrsaq Dairy Cooperative.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/05/17/2355696/philippines-2028-milk-production-target-track>

## Community fishing



### ROSES AND THORNS - Pia Roces Morato - The Philippine Star

May 17, 2024 | 12:00am

For the record, I am not a fish lover; however, I consider myself a lover of sea and sand. Having grown up with my family and spending most of our summers at the beach, eventually, and considering that my Spanish roots bring me back to a life by the sea, I saw a different view of such a life from the perspective of sustainable living and preservation of our planet. Especially in the middle of a pandemic, I watched how many of my friends were deeply involved in educating communities around the area on marine life and how certain practices needed to be developed in order to ensure not only the survival of their families but also the development of their community for the benefit of the future generations.

For the record, I have always been very interested in exploring new ideas as a result of the practice of lifelong learning as, after all, educators are supposed to be open to such a process. Having said this, one of the few things that had a huge impact on my observation of sea life was how much of fishing was done on a daily basis and how much access locals had to it. Not to mention the capability of fishermen to actually catch a sufficient amount of fish, making it possible for them to survive their day-to-day activities and make a good living.

Based on my humble observations, some fishermen were more productive than others because of their ability to navigate and – believe it or not – their ability to swim. As an honorary Navy Seal, at some point, my team and I even ventured into giving survival lessons to help communities in order to mitigate incidents of drowning.

In addition to all of these things, I was also very curious about the local community's knowledge of marine life where sadly, some local officials were not even aware of

conservation practices, specifically because in the first place, they had never even seen it, since they had no water skills whatsoever. Of course, I was rather surprised by this, considering that the community they serve mostly belong to the blue economy, since fishing was the main source of income.

Hence this is why eventually, we thought of how to establish some kind of community fishing and environmental initiative in order to help people out. It's easier said than done to be quite frank, but I was happy to see that for the past year, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has taken efforts to complete the Municipal Fisherfolk Registry of coastal LGUs nationwide. For someone such as myself who has taken notice of a few incidents in a span of a year or so, I am pleased to see this effort as it is responding to some very important issues that affect our fisherfolk.

It is also worth mentioning that while community fishing matters in sustaining communities, commercial fishing is also an integral component to the overall ecosystem. Community fishing is so important because it serves as the foundation of food security and at the same time, fisherfolk are able to participate in management measures that will allow their communities to thrive. For example, and from my own point of view, the initiative of the BFAR is designed to provide sufficient data that will enable communities to conserve their resources and to provide the best possible access to diverse opportunities for sustainable growth.

While my own experience questioned a few things about development in this regard, the BFAR is creating measures that will enable people in their respective communities to register and participate in a program that seeks to enhance and improve the lives of everyone who is involved in this industry – whether it be fishermen, commercial fishing crew and even fish operators.

I suppose I can properly say that this somewhat gives answers to my short stint in fishing expeditions but surely, as part of civil society, I saw the relevance of the necessary element of education in this sector due to the collective impact it has on society as a whole. Climate change is having a major effect on our oceans and marine life and, considering that almost 40 percent of the world's population lives in coastal communities, we have to pay some good attention.

<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2024/05/17/2355664/community-fishing>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Extreme heat stunts growth of seaweeds in CamSur town

By: [Rey Anthony Ostria](#) - Correspondent / [@RAOstriaINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:04 AM May 17, 2024



**HARVEST CHECK** Fausto Amaro checks his newly harvested seaweeds in the village of Paniman in Caramoan, Camarines Sur, in this photo taken early this month. Amaro, 63, is worried that he may not recoup his capital as the seaweeds are stunted and of poor quality due to the extreme heat brought about by the El Niño. —MARK ALVIC ESPLANA

CARAMOAN, CAMARINES SUR—Fausto Amaro, 63, knew he would never get back his capital, let alone earn any profit, from his seaweed farm this year.

His seaweeds, which he propagates attached to ropes and makeshift floaters in the waters off Sitio Gogon in Barangay Paniman here, have become thin and short because of the [extreme heat](#), Amaro said in an interview early this month.

He initially invested P35,000 to buy seaweed seedlings but he told the Inquirer that he thought he would barely earn P10,000.

Due to the extreme heat caused by the [El Niño weather phenomenon](#), many of the seaweeds, locally called “gulaman,” rot before they are harvested or do not grow as long as Amaro expected.

He used to grow his seaweeds at least 24 inches, but now, these do not not even reach 6 inches when he harvests them.

From being able to harvest between 200 and 500 kilos of seaweeds, he would be lucky if he could harvest more than 200 kilos.

Amaro is just one of the 1,863 seaweed farmers here. They represent almost 3 percent of the population in this town in the northeastern part of Camarines Sur province.

Ma. Christina Sumpay, the town's agriculturist, told the Inquirer on Monday that seaweed farmers here bring an estimated P25.5 million per year to the province's coffers.

### **Heat index**

On Tuesday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) forecast that the heat index in almost all Bicol provinces in the next few days would be between 41 and 46 degrees Celsius. Camarines Sur's capital town of Pili recorded a heat index of 46 C on Wednesday.

Since the onset of a "strong" El Niño that was reported by Pagasa in December last year, the heat index in different areas around the country have hit 40 to 48 C this year. The index combines both the temperature and the humidity in a given area.

Amaro would, however, be forced to sell these stunted and dried seaweeds, despite their poor quality.

"When the gulaman is not struck with illness, we have more than enough harvest in a month. In three months, we would earn P50,000 despite the heat. Now, I will have to work harder to get even P10,000," he told the Inquirer.

Amaro said local buyers would then sell their dried gulaman to other buyers in Binondo district in Manila.

Sumpay said a portion of their seaweed harvest would be turned into gelatin, while the rest would be used to produce agar for cosmetics and medicine.

## **‘Survivor’**

In order to supplement his income, Amaro now works as a part-time tourist guide.

Caramoan is famous among tourists, thanks to the publicity that the reality television show “Survivor” gave its white beaches and the islands of Bag-ing, Cagbanilad, Catanhawan, Cotivas, Lahus, Lahuy, Matukad, Minalahos, Pitogo and Sabitang-Laya.

In 2022, Caramoan welcomed 24,027 domestic and foreign tourists, according to data from the Department of Tourism in Bicol. This surged to 55,610 in 2023.

Jose Basister Rodriguez, the town government’s consultant on tourism affairs, said that there were many ways local fisherfolk and seaweed farmers could engage in tourism.

“Many of them have their own boats,” he said in a separate interview. “They are offering their boats to ferry tourists.”

Caramoan offers shorter trips for tourists who are only here for a day, but those who have time may opt for a “long trip,” where they can visit more islands. Some fishers sell their catch—usually fish, crab and lobsters—to tourists who sign up for these longer trips.

But Amaro has not completely given up on his seaweed farm. He said he sought training to be able to farm seaweed while adapting to the heat.

Jeva Hazel Antonio, Caramoan’s tourism officer, said that they were coordinating with other local government offices, like the Department of Trade and Industry, to train farmers so they can engage in small businesses, like production of taro chips.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1941507/extreme-heat-stunts-growth-of-seaweeds-in-camsur-town>



**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# NFA procurement shortfalls cast doubt on agency's ability to intervene in rice market

May 16, 2024 | 9:34 pm



PHILSTAR FILE PHOTO

By **Adrian H. Halili**, *Reporter*

THE National Food Authority's (NFA) inability to meet its rice procurement targets has raised questions about the agency's capacity to stabilize rice prices, an economist said.

"The government needs to find alternative ways of insulating our country from the vagaries of trade and, in the process, reducing the need for price supports and buffer stocks," Ateneo de Manila economics professor Leonardo A. Lanzona said in a Facebook Messenger chat.

He was referring to current plans to amend the Rice Tariffication Law of 2019 to restore the NFA's power to regulate rice prices,

Mr. Lanzona added that other forms of market intervention "because NFA has been notorious for missing its procurement targets."

In its quarterly procurement report, the NFA said it purchased 4,353 metric tons (MT) or 87,067 bags of palay or unmilled rice. The targets for the quarter were 67,145 MT or 1.34 million bags of palay.

It said that the low procurement during the period was due to "active participation" of traders offering higher farmgate prices compared to the government buying price.

The Rice Tariffication Law (Republic Act No. 11203) privatized the function of importing rice formerly carried out by the NFA. Instead, private traders were allowed to bring in their own shipments but had to pay a tariff of 35% on Southeast Asian grain.

The NFA had been reduced to maintaining an emergency inventory of domestically grown rice.

“We need to make sure that any market intervention by the NFA is not too costly, is not tainted again with corruption, and does not backfire on farmers,” Raul Q. Montemayor, national manager of the Federation of Free Farmers, said in a Viber message.

Mr. Montemayor added that the power to decide on where to buy, how much, and when to dispose of rice should be decided by the Secretary of Agriculture, and NFA officials, with NFA involvement limited to “providing logistical support to the DA.”

In a senate hearing, the DA proposed the return to the NFA of its power to intervene in the rice market. Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said such interventions would help correct price distortions.

On the other hand, Bantay Bigas Spokesperson Cathy L. Estavillo said that the restoration of NFA powers should come with increased funding to purchase domestically grown rice.

In a statement on Thursday, the NFA said that it would need P16.3 billion next year to procure the target volume for the national rice reserve and additional funding to upgrade its storage capacity.

“Currently, NFA only has the capacity to dry 31,000 metric tons but buys around 495,000 metric tons of palay. NFA is required by law to maintain a buffer stock equivalent to about nine days of national rice consumption,” it said.

The House of Representatives approved the amendments to the Rice Tariffication Law on second reading on Tuesday.

Amendments include authorization for the NFA to sell rice during emergencies and increased funding for the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund to P15 billion, while extending the life of the fund by six years.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/05/16/595803/nfa-procurement-shortfalls-cast-doubt-on-agencys-ability-to-intervene-in-rice-market/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Fisheries production slips 0.5% in first quarter

May 16, 2024 | 9:33 pm



PHILSTAR

FISHERIES production declined 0.5% year on year in the first quarter, driven by a decline in production in marine municipal fisheries, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said.

In a report, the PSA said fisheries output was 987.19 thousand metric tons (MT) from 992.33 thousand MT a year earlier.

“The decrease in production was noted in marine municipal fisheries, while commercial, inland municipal fisheries, and aquaculture reported increments in production during the period,” it said.

Commercial fisheries output was 188.92 thousand MT, up 10.7%. The segment’s output comprised 19.1% of fisheries production during the period.

The PSA said that aquaculture, which accounts for 55.3% of overall production, inched up 0.1%. Production during the three-month period was 546.4 thousand MT.

Inland municipal fisheries production rose 17.6% to 40.55 thousand MT. Its output was equivalent to 4.1% of overall fisheries production.

Meanwhile, marine municipal fisheries, which accounted for 21.4% of overall output, declined 12.4% year on year to 211.33 thousand MT.

Of the 20 major species, production fell for *tamban*, a type of herring (29.9%), milkfish or *bangus* (7.6%), *bisugo* (37.2%), blue crab or *alimasag* (29.5%), and seaweed (0.4%).

On the other hand, production increases were reported for skipjack or *gulyasan* (28.3%), tilapia (8.8%), frigate tuna or *tulingan* (29.6%), *tunsoy*, another type of herring (45.1%), and yellowfin tuna (13.3%).  
— **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/05/16/595801/fisheries-production-slips-0-5-in-first-quarter/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# PHL biofuel consumption expected to rise this year — USDA

May 16, 2024 | 9:33 pm



REUTERS

THE US Department of Agriculture (USDA) said Philippine biofuel consumption is expected to grow this year amid higher demand for ethanol and biodiesel.

“The primary driver of this growth will be increases in the fuel pool, with potential for greater growth if higher blending standards are fully adopted,” the USDA reported.

The USDA said ethanol fuel demand is expected to increase 8% to 682 million liters.

“The feedstock problems remain and imported ethanol will fill the gap, growing by 14% to 280 million liters in 2024,” it added, noting that the Philippines has no option but to continue to use molasses and sugarcane.

In a separate report the USDA is estimating that raw sugar production will be flat at 1.85 million metric tons (MT), while cane production is estimated at 21.6 million MT.

It said the sugarcane industry remains challenged in providing feedstock for the biofuel industry.

In 2024, fuel ethanol production is projected to increase to 395 million liters from 387 million liters the prior year, due to the increased capacity of some ethanol facilities.

“Fuel ethanol imports (will) increase to 280 million liters in 2024 due to the rise in gasoline pool consumption. Local ethanol remains the priority, but imports will continue to cover around 42% of the needed supply,” it added.

Additionally, biodiesel consumption is expected to rise 0.8% to 240 million liters in 2024. Production is projected to grow by 2% to 230 million liters amid the rise in consumption.

“Should the government mandate B5, the available biodiesel plant capacity is more than enough to supply the requirement,” the USDA said, referring to a 5% biodiesel — 95% diesel fuel blend.

At a meeting with President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., the Department of Energy said it will start moving forward with plans to increase the biodiesel blend to B5 in the next three years.

The increase in biodiesel blend to B3 is set for October.

“Given that it would occur in the last quarter of 2024, any volume uptake that would take effect would be minimal and growth would still be attributed to an increase in the overall diesel pool,” the USDA said.

However, it added that the bulk of coconut oil goes to traditional exports, reducing the available supply for biodiesel producers. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/05/16/595800/phl-biofuel-consumption-expected-to-rise-this-year-usda/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# **P87.6 million release approved for tobacco regulator**

May 16, 2024 | 9:28 pm



BW FILE PHOTO

THE Department of Budget and Management (DBM) on Tuesday approved the release of P87.632 million to fund the National Tobacco Administration's (NTA) second-quarter operations.

On May 9, Budget Secretary Amenah F. Pangandaman signed the release of a Notice of Cash Allocation (NCA) amounting to P87.632 million for the NTA.

"We understand that agriculture is part of the backbone of our economy. For this reason, our government ensures that every segment of our agricultural landscape receives the support and resources it needs to thrive," she said in a statement.

The fund release is in line with a call by President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. and the Private Sector Advisory Council-Agriculture Sector Group to strengthen government support for the domestic tobacco industry.

The agency has an authorized appropriation of P550.504 million covered under a Special Allotment Release Order. Of total, a separate NCA for P175.276 million was issued in the first quarter.

Last year's P550.5-million tobacco fund has been fully released, the DBM added.

NTA funding is sourced from 40% of specific taxes on Virginia-type cigarettes as well as tariff duties on imported leaf tobacco.

Earlier this month, tobacco farmers called on the government to pass the Anti-Agricultural Sabotage Act to address the rampant smuggling of tobacco products.

The measure only needs Mr. Marcos' signature to become a law.

The Internal Revenue bureau recently seized illegal cigarettes which dodged taxes estimated at P150 million.  
— **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/05/16/595798/p87-6-million-release-approved-for-tobacco-regulator/>



**MANILA STANDARD**

# **PBBM backs revised Rice Tariffication Law**



By Charles Dantes

May 17, 2024, 12:20 am

President Ferdinand Marcos on Thursday assured that he would certify the Rice Tariffication Law as urgent as part of the administration’s efforts to combat the rising rice prices.

“Yes. It will be certified, but it seems there has been a good discussion between the House and the Senate, we have found a solution so that the government can import for us to lower it,” President Marcos disclosed.

“When the price of rice is high, we will release rice, we will sell it at a lower price so that the market will follow,” Mr. Marcos explained.

While the specifics of the solution are yet to be finalized, President Marcos expressed confidence that it will effectively address the issue.

“Well, I don’t want to preempt the bicameral committee but I think we have already found the solution. So that somehow, maybe the mechanism will be different from what

was proposed but in the end, the net effect will still be the same, the national government will be able to import,” he stated.

President Marcos said he is currently coordinating with relevant agencies to implement the solution promptly.

“I don’t know which agency first. They will have to decide which is best. Of course, we are coordinating, and I think we may have found the solution and we will see that immediately,” the President explained.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/national/314447870/pbbm-backs-revised-rice-tariffication-law.html>

**MANILA STANDARD**

# Cheaper rice



By Norman Cruz

May 16, 2024, 11:50 pm

**A Kadiwa store inside the Bureau of Plant Industry in Malate, Manila sells rice at P29 a kilo, along with fish and vegetables at affordable prices.**

<https://manilastandard.net/gallery/314447863/cheaper-rice-2.html>

# Price freeze ordered in 31 LGUs in Western Visayas

By Rjay Zuriaga Castor

May 17, 2024

**ILOILO CITY** – The Department of Trade and Industry in Region 6 (DTI-6) announced on May 16 that it will impose a price freeze on basic necessities in local government units (LGUs) in Western Visayas placed under state of calamity.

"Under Republic Act No. 7581, the Price Act, prices of basic necessities are automatically frozen at their prevailing rates for 60 days when an area is under a state of calamity. This measure aims to protect consumers from undue price increases during calamities," the DTI-6 said in a statement.

The items affected by the price freeze include canned fish, processed milk, coffee, detergent, laundry soap, bread, instant noodles, salt, bottled water and candles.

The price freeze will take effect from March 13 to June 30, 2024 in the 31 LGUs in the region.

Out of the 31 recent declarations of a state of calamity, 30 are due to the impacts of the El Niño phenomenon, and one is due to the outbreak of the highly contagious pertussis or whooping cough.

It can be recalled that the provincial government of Antique declared a provincewide state of calamity due to the El Niño phenomenon and dry season on April 18.

The price freeze also extends to in the municipalities of Sara, Estancia, Barotac Viejo, Bingawan, Passi City, Balasan, and Dingle

in Iloilo province; San Enrique, Kabankalan City and Valladolid in Negros Occidental; and Buenavista and San Lorenzo in Guimaras.

Iloilo City, meanwhile, was placed under a state of calamity due to pertussis on March 26.

"The DTI Provincial Offices and the Consumer Protection Division are working closely with LGUs to monitor the implementation of the price freeze, ensuring consumer protection," said DTI-6 Officer in Charge regional director Rachel Nufable.

DTI-6 also warned that owners of businesses violating the price freeze could face imprisonment from one to 10 years, or fines as determined.

Consumers are encouraged to report any retailers charging more than the specified retail prices for basic necessities to the local DTI offices.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/17/regions/price-freeze-ordered-in-31-lgus-in-western-visayas/1947030>

# NFA seeks P16.3B procurement budget

By Janine Alexis Miguel

May 17, 2024

THE National Food Authority (NFA) is seeking a procurement budget worth P16.3 billion for next year to purchase target rice stocks and upgrade storage capacity.

In a statement on Thursday, NFA Acting Administrator Larry Lacson sought a higher funding to build additional storage and drying facilities to improve its buffer stocking capacity.

Currently, the agency's drying capacity is 31,000 metric tons (MT) but buys around 495,000 metric tons of palay.

Under the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), the NFA is mandated to maintain a buffer stock equivalent to about 9 days of national rice consumption.

Being under the Department of Agriculture (DA), the NFA this year received an allotment worth P9 billion for palay procurement, with an assumed procurement price of a maximum of P23 a kilo.

Last month, however, the NFA Council decided to raise the maximum purchasing price to P30 per kilo to allow the government corporation to effectively compete with private traders for local rice supply.

The NFA Council set the new buying price ranging from P17 to P23 per kilo (kg) for fresh or wet palay and from P23 to P30 per kg for dry, which are higher than the previous P23 per kg for dry and P19 per kg for wet.

The passage of the RTL in 2019 limited the NFA's role to procuring rice from local farmers to build a national buffer stock equivalent to

300,000 MT of rice to ensure a sufficient rice supply in case of an emergency.

The law also stripped the NFA of its responsibility to intervene in the market to stabilize prices or import rice to increase the buffer stock.

Some senators have suggested that the power to import and stabilize rice prices could be assigned to the DA, while other farmers' organizations, including the Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura or Sinag, oppose restoring the agency's power to import.

Likewise, the Federation of Free Farmers claimed that the NFA's rice distribution proposal could be detrimental to farmers and could cost the government P31 billion to P119 billion per year if implemented.

**Under the DA's proposed budget in 2025, the NFA is to receive P24.85 billion, a 77 percent increase from this year's budget of P14.03 billion.**

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/17/business/nfa-seeks-p163b-procurement-budget/1947060>

# **P16B needed for rice buffer**

By **Jed Macapagal**

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May 17, 2024

The National Food Authority (NFA) said it will need P16.3 billion next year to procure the target volume of rice buffer stock and additional budget to upgrade storage capacity.

Larry Lacson, NFA acting administrator, said aside from funding procurement of palay from local farmers, the agency will also have to build additional storage and drying facilities to improve buffer stocking capacity.

NFA's capacity to dry palay is only at 31,000 metric tons (MT) but it buys around 495,000 MT of palay in compliance with the law requiring it to maintain a buffer stock equivalent to about nine days of national rice consumption.

The Department of Agriculture's (DA) proposed budget for next year sets aside P24.85 billion for the NFA, a 77 percent increase from P14.03 billion this year.

Of the budget for this year, P9 billion has been set aside for NFA's palay procurement with an assumed procurement price at a maximum P23 per kg but the NFA Council raised the maximum purchasing price to P30 per kg last month to effectively compete with private traders for local rice supply.

The Rice Tariffication Law limited the role of the NFA to build a national buffer stock to ensure sufficient rice supply in case of emergency, procuring palay from local farmers.

Congress is hearing proposals to restore NFA's power to import rice or stabilize prices in the market.

[https://malaya.com.ph/news\\_business/p16b-needed-for-rice-buffer/](https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/p16b-needed-for-rice-buffer/)



# **N. Mindanao primed as agri, industrial hub**

By Jocelyn Montemayor

-

May 17, 2024

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. yesterday said the upgrading of airports and the rehabilitation of roads and ports will transform Northern Mindanao into a “leading agricultural hub” and a “major industrial, tourism, trade center.”

The President, in a speech during the distribution of aid to farmers and fisherfolk affected by the El Niño held at the Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology Gymnasium in Iligan City, said the National Economic and Development Authority has laid out and approved the different strategies and projects under the Northern Mindanao Regional Development Plan from 2023 to 2028.

The plan includes the expansion, rehabilitation and development of major airports in Ozamiz (Labo airport), Cagayan de Oro (Lumbia airport), Misamis Oriental (Laguindingan airport), Camiguin and Bukidnon which would hasten the flow of the economy and opportunities in Northern Mindanao.

In a separate speech during the distribution of aid to communities affected by El Niño held at the Pimentel Convention Center in Cagayan de Oro City, Marcos said P13 billion has been allotted for the improvement of Laguindingan Airport.

Other priority programs of the administration for the region include the P8-billion Panguil Bay Bridge project that would connect Tangub in Misamis Occidental and Tubod in Lanao del Norte; P2-billion Iligan City Coastal Bypass Road to ease traffic in the city; and the repairs on the CDO Coastal Road and CDO Diversion Road.

Marcos said the government is also undertaking the P700-million Cagayan de Oro Port Expansion Project which aims to ease port traffic and eventually lead to a more affordable and faster travel for people and delivery of products between Cagayan de Oro and the rest of Northern Mindanao.

He said the National Irrigation Administration is completing two solar pump irrigation projects in Salvador and Sapad totaling P30 million, while the government is constructing the Trauma and Multi-Specialty Centers at the Northern Mindanao Medical Center.

“We hope to turn the whole Region X into a ‘globally competitive’ and ‘leading agricultural hub,’ ‘major industrial, tourism, trade center,’” Marcos added.

As this developed, Marcos urged Filipinos to make use of social media in promoting all aspects of the country’s tourism industry.

The President said a simple social post about the products and services offered by the country's micro-, small and medium enterprises to destinations in the country could help promote the country's tourist attraction and reach a wider audience on social media.

He said Iligan City, for instance, is known for its toasted peanut and palapa and taking a photo of these items and posting them on social media could help promote them.

The President visited Region 10 yesterday to personally see the situation of those affected by the El Niño and led the distribution of P168.82 million worth of financial assistance and various government assistance to fisherfolk and farmers in Northern Mindanao.

[https://malaya.com.ph/news\\_business/n-mindanao-primed-as-agri-industrial-hub/](https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/n-mindanao-primed-as-agri-industrial-hub/)

# **NFA needs ₱16 billion to procure 2025 target buffer**

Ada Pelonia

May 17, 2024

**THE National Food Authority (NFA), a government corporation attached to the Department of Agriculture (DA), needs over P16 billion next year to procure the country's target volume of rice buffer stock and upgrade its storage capacity.**

**NFA Acting Administrator Larry Lacson said in a statement that the proposed allocation would fund the procurement of palay from local farms and build additional storage and drying facilities to improve its buffer stocking capacity.**

**“NFA only has the capacity to dry 31,000 metric tons but buys around 495,000 metric tons of palay. NFA is required by law to maintain a buffer stock equivalent to about 9 days of national rice consumption,” its statement read.**

**It added that the DA's proposed budget for 2025 will earmark P24.85 billion for the NFA, a 77-percent increase from P14.03 billion this year.**

**The DA earlier proposed to increase its budget to P513.81 billion, double its current budget of P208.58 billion. The proposed budget would be used for big-ticket infrastructures in a bid to achieve its goal of modernizing the farm and fisheries sectors.**

**With the proposed NFA budget, P9 billion will be reserved for the corporation's NFA palay procurement, with an assumed procurement price of a maximum of P23 per kilo. However, it added the NFA Council increased the maximum purchasing price to P30 per kilo to allow the government corporation to compete with private traders for local rice supply.**

**Under the Republic Act (RA) 11203 or Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), the NFA was stripped of its function of importing rice and selling it to the public, with its mandate reduced to keeping an emergency buffer stock of domestically produced rice.**

**The RTL also removed the NFA's mandate to intervene in the market for price stabilization or import rice to increase the country's buffer stock.**

**“Congress is still debating whether to restore the NFA's power to import rice or stabilize prices in the market. Some senators have suggested that the power to import and stabilize rice prices could be assigned to the DA,” the statement read.**

**<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/17/nfa-needs-p16-billion-to-procure-2025-target-buffer/>**

## **BUSINESS MIRROR**

# **DBM allots ₱87.632 million for NTA's operations**

Reine Juvierre Alberto

May 17, 2024

**THE Department of Budget and Management (DBM) announced having allocated P87.632 million to the National Tobacco Administration (NTA) to reinforce its support to the tobacco sector.**

**A statement issued by the DBM read that on May 9, Budget Secretary Amenah F. Pangandaman approved the release of Notice of Cash Allocation (NCA) for the NTA's second-quarter requirement.**

**According to the DBM, it expects the NTA to use the funds for its operational needs, which will be sourced from 40 percent of the balance of collections from specific taxes on locally-made Virginia-type cigarettes and tariff duties on imported leaf tobacco.**

**The allocation is in line with Section 5 of Republic Act 4155, as amended by Section 3 of RA 5447, after setting aside shares for local government units (LGUs) and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), the DBM noted.**

**“We understand that agriculture is part of the backbone of our economy. For this reason, our government ensures that every segment of our agricultural landscape receives the support and resources it needs to thrive,” Pangandaman was quoted in the statement as saying.**

**The DBM has authorized the appropriation of P550.504 million for the fiscal year (FY) 2024, which was already released with allotment through Special Allotment Release Order.**

**Of this amount, the DBM added that P175.276 million has been issued a corresponding NCA to fulfill the requirements for the first quarter.**

**The tobacco fund for Fiscal Year 2023 amounted to P550.504 million, which was fully released last year, the DBM added.**

**To recall, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. appealed to the BIR and the Bureau of Customs to ramp up their efforts in curbing tobacco and vape products smuggling to protect the country's local tobacco industry.**

**In the 6th Private Sector Advisory Council-Agriculture Sector Group (PSAC-ASG) meeting in Malacañang on May 8, PSAC-ASG called on the DBM to release the funds prescribed under RA 4155 to support the NTA's "Sustainable Tobacco Enforcement Program."**

**A government-owned and government-controlled corporation attached to the Department of Agriculture, the NTA oversees and regulates the growth and development of the tobacco industry.**

**According to Tabacalera Incorporada, the origin of the tobacco industry in the Philippines dates to 1592, "when the Spanish Galleon San Clemente brought 50 kilos of Cuban tobacco seeds to the country."**

**"The seeds were spread, along with the Catholic faith, by friars, who found that the crop flourished best in the Cagayan Valley in the province of Isabela. With a climate very similar to Cuba's Vuelta Abajo region, Isabela soon hosted a large tobacco-growing industry." (See <https://tabacalera.com.ph/pages/our-history>)**

**<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/17/dbm-allots-p87-632-million-for-ntas-operations/>**

**ABANTE TONITE**

# **PBBM pinasalamatan sa idineklarang Agriculturist month**

May 16, 2024

**Pinasalamatan ng ACT-Agri Kaagapay Organization si Pang. Ferdinand Bong Bong Marcos Jr. matapos na ideklara ang mga buwan ng Hulyo ng bawat taon, bilang “Philippine Agriculturists’ Month”, sa layuning palakasin ang awareness hinggil sa agriculture center ng bansa.**

**Nabatid na inisyu ni Pang. Marcos ang kautusan sa pamamagitan ng Proclamation No. 544 na nilagdaan noong Mayo 10, upang i-transform ang Philippine agriculture at gawing isang dynamic, high-growth sector dahil ito ang backbone ng ekonomiya dahil nakapagbibigay ito ng trabaho.**

**Ayon kay ACT-Agri-Kaagapay Organization founder na si Ms. Virginia Ledesma Rodriguez, na siyang author ng librong “Leave Nobody Hungry”, ang agricultural development ay isa sa maituturing na ‘most powerful tools’ upang tuldukan ang matinding kahirapan, at nagkakaloob sa atin ng pagkain, na pangunahing pangangailangan ng mamamayan.**

**“Modernizing the country’s farming and food systems is important to ensure strong food value chains, affordable and nutritious food, and a vibrant rural economy,” she said, adding “we are very fortunate that President Marcos is giving his full support to all the Filipino farmers by declaring July as agricultural month,” ani Rodriguez.**

**Dagdag pa ni Rodriguez, na apo ng yumaong si dating Senator at dating Supreme Court Justice Estanislao Fernandez, ang industriya ng agrikultura ay ikinukonsidera bilang isa sa pinakamalaking pinagkukunan ng hanapbuhay, maging sa pagsasaka man, harvester, technician para sa farm equipment, scientist, at iba pang uri ng employment.**

**Malaking porsiyento rin ng mga mamamayan ang nabibigyan nito ng hanapbuhay.**

**Sa ilalim ng Proclamation 544, ang pagdiriwang ng Philippine Agriculturists' Month ay sasabak sa mga propesyonal na agriculturists sa adbokasiya ng agrikultura, pagsasaliksik at pagbabalangkas ng patakaran at magbibigay ng paraan para sa pagbuo ng negosyo, pagsasanay sa komunikasyon, at pagpapaunlad ng komunidad.**

**Binigyang-diin ni Marcos, na nagsilbi rin bilang punong pang-agrikultura bago ibigay ang posisyon sa fishing tycoon na si Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., na ang agrikultura ay gumaganap ng makabuluhang papel sa pagtiyak ng seguridad sa pagkain, gayundin sa pagpapaunlad ng pangangalaga sa kapaligiran at balanseng urban at rural development.**

**Inaatasan ng proklamasyon ang Department of Agriculture, at ang Professional Regulation Commission at Board of Agriculture na pangunahan, i-coordinate, at pangasiwaan ang observance ng Philippine Agriculturists'**

**<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/05/16/pbbm-pinasalamatan-sa-idineklarang-agriculturist-month/>**



**ABANTE TONITE**

# **P100M ayuda pinamudmod ni PBBM sa Mindanao**

May 16, 2024

Sa pagpapatuloy ng malawakang programang tulong para sa mga Pilipinong tinamaan ng El Niño partikular sa mga magsasaka at mangingisda sa Mindanao, personal na naghatid si Pangulong Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. ng mahigit P100 milyon na ayudang pinansiyal sa pamahalaang lungsod ng Cagayan de Oro at mga pamahalaang panlalawigan ng Camiguin, Misamis Oriental at Bukidnon.

Ibinigay ni Pangulong Marcos ang tig-P10 milyon kay Cagayan de Oro City Mayor Rolando Uy at Camiguin Governor Xavier Jesus Romualdo; at P50 milyon bawat isa kay Misamis Oriental Governor Peter M. Unabia at Bukidnon Governor Rogelio Neil Roque.

Naghatid din ang Punong Ehekutibo ng mahigit P10,000 na cash assistance bawat isa sa mga piling magsasaka at mangingisda.

“Maliit na halaga, ngunit umaasa akong magagamit ninyo ito upang makapagsimula muli,” sabi ni Pangulong Marcos sa kanyang talumpati sa pamamahagi ng tulong sa Pimentel Convention Center sa Barangay Taguanao, Cagayan de Oro City.

Namahagi rin si House Speaker Martin Romualdez ng limang kilong bigas sa bawat isa sa mga dumalo.

Bukod sa tulong pinansiyal, inorganisa rin ng pamunuan ni Pangulong Marcos ang “Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair sa University of Science and Technology-Southern Philippines” sa pamamagitan ng Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) at Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

Lumahok din sa caravan ang Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) kasama ang Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Health (DOH) at iba pang ahensiya ng gobyerno.

**“Sa abot ng aming makakaya, gagawin ng lahat upang matiyak na ang suporta at tulong ay agad na maipaparating sa bawat apektadong pamilya, magsasaka, at mangingisda,” pahayag ni Pangulong Marcos.**

**Tiniyak ng Punong Ehekutibo sa mga residente ang patuloy na suporta at tulong ng gobyerno sa gitna ng mga hamon na dala ng El Niño.**

**<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/05/16/p100m-ayuda-pinamudmod-ni-pbbm-sa-mindanao/>**

# Marcos nagbigay ng higit P100 milyon sa magsasaka

[Gemma Garcia](#) May 17, 2024 | 12:00am

## Tulong sa Mindanao itinodo

MANILA, Philippines — Sa pagpapatuloy ng malawakang programang tulong para sa mga Pilipinong tinamaan ng El Niño partikular sa mga magsasaka at mangingisda sa Mindanao, personal na naghatid si Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. ng mahigit P100 milyon na tulong pinansyal sa pamahalaang lungsod ng Cagayan de Oro at mga pamahalaang panlalawigan ng Camiguin, Misamis Oriental at Bukidnon.

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“Sa abot ng aming makakaya, gagawin ng lahat upang matiyak na ang suporta at tulong ay agad na maipaparating sa bawat apektadong pamilya, magsasaka, at mangingisda,” pahayag ni President Marcos.

**Tiniyak ng Pangulo sa mga residente ang patuloy na suporta at tulong ng gobyerno sa gitna ng mga hamon na dala ng El Niño.**

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2024/05/17/2355740/marcos-nagbigay-ng-higit-p100-milyon-sa-magsasaka>

**REMATE:**

## **P16.3B pondo pambili ng palay sa 2025 hirit ng NFA**

May 16, 2024 17:32



MANILA, Philippines – Inihihirit ng National Food Authority (NFA) ang nasa P16.3-bilyong pondo sa susunod na taon para bumili ng palay gayundin para mapalakas ang storage capacity nito.

Sa isang pahayag, sinabi ng NFA na ang iminungkahing budget nito para sa 2025 sa ilalim ng Department of Agriculture (DA) ay nasa P24.85 bilyon, mas mataas ng 77% mula sa P14.03 bilyon ngayong taon.

Sa budget ng grains agency ngayong taon, P9 bilyon ang nakalaan para sa palay procurement na may assumed procurement price na P23 ang maximum na kilo.

Gayunpaman, noong nakaraang buwan, itinaas ng NFA Council ang pinakamataas na presyo ng pagbili sa P30 kada kilo upang payagan ang ahensya na epektibong makipagkumpitensya sa mga pribadong angangalakal para sa lokal na suplay ng bigas.

Dahil dito, mangangailangan ang ahensya ng P16.3 bilyon sa susunod na taon para sa pagbili ng palay.

Sa kanyang bahagi, sinabi ni NFA Acting Administrator Larry Lacson na bukod sa pagpopondo sa pagbili ng palay mula sa mga lokal na magsasaka, kakailanganin din ng ahensya na magtayo ng karagdagang storage at drying facilities upang mapabuti ang buffer stocking capacity nito.

Sa kasalukuyan, ang NFA ay may kapasidad lamang na magpatuyo ng 31,000 metriko tonelada ngunit bumibili ng humigit-kumulang 495,000 metriko tonelada ng palay.

Inaatasan ng batas ang NFA na magpanatili ng buffer stock na katumbas ng humigit-kumulang siyam na araw ng pambansang konsumo ng bigas.

Nilimitahan ng Rice Tariffication Law ang NFA sa pagkuha ng bigas mula sa mga lokal na magsasaka bilang pagtupad sa tungkulin nitong bumuo ng pambansang buffer stock upang matiyak ang sapat na suplay ng bigas sa oras ng kagipitan.

Inalis na rin ng RTL ang responsibilidad ng NFA na makialam sa merkado para patatagin ang presyo, o mag-import ng bigas para madagdagan ang buffer stock.

Kasalukuyang pinagtatalunan ng Kongreso kung ibabalik ang kapangyarihan ng NFA sa pag-angkat ng bigas o patatagin ang mga presyo sa merkado.

Ang panukalang batas sa House of Representatives ay nagbibigay ng awtorisasyon sa NFA na bumili at magbenta ng bigas sa mga emergency cases at pataasin ang productivity aid ng mga magsasaka sa P15 bilyon.

Nauna nang sinabi ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. na walang intensyon na buhayin ang kapangyarihan ng NFA sa gitna ng mga hakbang na amyendahan ang RTL. *Santi Celario*

<https://remate.ph/p16-3b-pondo-pambili-ng-palay-sa-2025-hirit-ng-nfa/>

**REMATE:**

## **N. M'danao target ng gobyerno na gawing leading agri hub ng Pinas**

May 16, 2024 13:06



MANILA, Philippines – Target ng administrasyon na gawing nangungunang agricultural hub ng Pilipinas ang Northern Mindanao.

Sinabi ito ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. kasabay ng kanyang pamamahagi ng tulong sa mga magsasaka, mangingisda, at pamilya sa Iligan City.

”Sa pangunguna ng NEDA, inilatag na ang mga estratehiya at proyekto na gagawin sa inyong rehiyon sa ilalim ng Northern Mindanao Regional Development Plan ng 2023 hanggang 2028,” ani Marcos sa kanyang pahayag.

”Hangad po nito na gawing ‘globally competitive’ at ‘leading agricultural hub,’ ‘major industrial, tourism, trade center’ ang buong Region 10,” dagdag pa ng Pangulo.

Binanggit ni Marcos ang ilan sa mga proyekto ng pambansa at lokal na pamahalaan, kabilang ang Panguil Bay Bridge, na magdurugtong sa Tangub, Misamis Occidental at Tubod, Lanao del Norte.

Sinabi rin ng Pangulo na mayroong expansion, rehabilitation, at development projects para sa mga paliparan sa Ozamiz, Camiguin, Lumbia, Bukidnon, at Laguindingan.

”Ang mga proyektong ito ay naglalayong mapabilis ang daloy ng ekonomiya at oportunidad para sa mga mamamayan ng Rehiyon 10,” ani Marcos.

Naghatid si Marcos ng iba’t ibang tulong ng gobyerno sa mga piling magsasaka, mangingisda at mga benepisyaryo ng pamilya mula sa Northern Mindanao sa isang ceremonial distribution sa Mindanao State University – Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT) sa Iligan City.

Kasama sa mga probisyong ito ang tulong pinansyal na nagkakahalaga ng P10,000 bawat isa para mapili ang mga benepisyaryo mula sa Iligan City, Lanao del Norte at Misamis Occidental.

Samantala, ang lokal na pamahalaan ng Iligan City ay nakatanggap ng P10.5 milyon bilang presidential assistance kasama ang mga pamahalaang panlalawigan ng Lanao del Norte at Misamis Occidental, na tumatanggap ng P13.9 milyon at P24.3 milyon, ayon sa pagkakasunod. **RNT**

<https://remate.ph/n-mdanao-target-ng-gobyerno-na-gawing-leading-agri-hub-ng-pinas/>

**REMATE:**

# **NFA palalakasin; Rice Fund sa RTL rerebisahin sa Senado**

May 16, 2024 09:45



MANILA, Philippines- Nakatakdang rebisahin ni Senador Robin Padilla ang karta ng National Food Authority (NFA) at Rice Fund sa Rice Tariffication Law upang palakasin ang programa ng pamahalaan sa food security.

Sinabi ni Padilla na ang pagpapalakas sa kapangyarihan ng National Food Authority (NFA) upang pangasiwaan ang suplay ng bigas, at pagpapaunlad ng Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) ang susi sa pagpapatatag ng presyo at suplay ng bigas, at gawing mas abot-kaya ang presyo ng bigas. Aniya, ito ang layunin ng Senate Bill 2672 na kanyang inihain na nagmumungkahi rin ng Rice Industry Development-Program Management Office (RID-PMO) para sa “holistic approach” ng mga ahensya at taong may kinalaman sa suplay ng bigas.



Pangunahing awtor ng batas si Senador Cynthia Villar na ipinaglaban ito sa nakaraang administrasyon.

“The present amendatory bill seeks to restore the NFA’s role in managing the country’s supply chain. With the renewed and strengthened mandate of NFA in the amendatory bill, the stabilization of the price of rice will be guaranteed and supply functions will be regulated. Ultimately, access to cheaper rice will be more feasible for poor Filipinos,” ani Padilla sa kanyang panukalang batas na nagmungkahi ng pagbabago sa Rice Tariffication Law (RA 11203).

Mungkahi rin ni Padilla na palakasin ang RCEF at i-extend ang validity nito ng anim na taon, para pagandahin ang competitiveness at kita ng mga magsasaka.

Sa panukalang batas, mungkahi ni Padilla na ang NFA ay bigyan ng kapangyarihan na tiyaking masunod ang regulasyon, gamit ang “expertise and nationwide network” nito para panindigan ang “national interest in rice buffer stocking and food security.”

Ilan sa kapangyarihan ng NFA ay:

- Pag-require ng registration ng grains warehouses at paggawa ng national database
- Pag-inspect sa warehouses mga bodega para tiyakin ang pagsunod sa mga
- Pangongolekta at pag-analyze ng datos sa rice trade activities para gumawa ng wastong polisiya.

Maaaring magdeklara ang kalihim ng agrikultura ng emergency sa rekomendasyon ng National Price Coordinating Council o Local Price Coordinating Council, sa mga sumusunod na kondisyon:

Pagkukulang sa suplay ng bigas;

Patuloy na pagtaas sa presyo ng bigas;

Pambihirang pagtaas sa presyo ng bigas

Maaaring gamitin ng NFA ang inventory para sa mga lugar na may “extraordinary price increases or acute shortages.”

Ang Bureau of Plant Industry naman ay maaaring maningil ng bayad para sa “low” at “non-utilization” ng Sanitary and Phytosanitary Import Clearance (SPSIC) para tiyakin ang napapanahong pagdating ng imported na bigas. Maaaring inspeksyunin ng BPI ang bodega kung saan nakaimbak ang milled rice. Tutulungan ng DA Inspectorate and Enforcement ang BPI sa “regular and unscheduled inspections.”

Ang NFA naman ay maaaring bumili ng local milled rice – o bumili ng porsyento ng bigas na pinasok ng accredited importers.

Bilang “final recourse,” maaaring mag-direct import ang NFA basta may “explicit authorization” mula sa Pangulo. Ito ay “solely in circumstances where domestic supply deficits necessitate such imports to stabilize the national rice supply and maintain optimal buffer stock.”

Ang RCEF naman ay ie-extend ng anim na taon, at may annual appropriation na P15 bilyon.

Makakasama sa mechanization component ng RCEF ang pagtatayo at pagpapaganda ng postharvest at processing facilities, kasama ang mga bodega, grain storage facilities, at drying facilities.

Gagawing revolving fund ang credit assistance component ng RCEF para tiyaking may pondo para sa utang sa “eligible beneficiaries.”

Ang Crop Diversification Program naman ay maaaring gumamit ng bahagi ng sobrang tariff revenues para sa rice-based crop diversification trainings, postharvest machineries and facilities, seeds and fertilizers assistance program, solar power irrigation, at small water impounding system. **Ernie Reyes**

<https://remate.ph/nfa-palalakasin-rice-fund-sa-rtl-rerebisahin-sa-senado/>

**REMATE:**

## **Mga magsasaka, mangingisda sa Mindanao nakatanggap ng tulong mula sa PH gov't**

May 16, 2024 08:59



MANILA, Philippines- Libo-libong mga magsasaka at mangingisda sa Mindanao ang nakinabang mula sa financial aid na ipinamahagi ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. sa naging pagbisita nito noong nakaraang linggo sa Zamboanga Peninsula at Sultan Kudarat.

Dalawang araw na namalagi ang Pangulo sa Mindanao, mula Mayo 9 hanggang 10, kung saan namahagi ng tulong sa mga naapektuhan ng El Niño phenomenon.

Unang binisita ng Chief Executive ang Zamboanga Peninsula at sumunod ang Sultan Kudarat province.

Nagbigay ito ng P60 milyong financial aid at iba't ibang government services sa mga magsasaka at mangingisda sa Zamboanga Peninsula.

Iniabot din ng Pangulo ang mahigit sa P80.9 milyon sa Camp Navarro General Hospital sa Zamboanga City para sa hospital equipment.

Sa P60 million, P10 million ang inilaan sa city government ng Zamboanga, P14.6 million sa lalawigan ng Zamboanga del Norte, P14.35 million sa Zamboanga del Sur, at P20.3 million sa Zamboanga Sibugay.

Sa sumunod na araw, pinangunahan naman ni Pangulong Marcos ang distribusyon ng P10,000 cash assistance bawat isa sa 30 benepisaryo mula sa Region 12 sa Sultan Kudarat. Nagbigay din siya ng P10 million sa General Santos city government, P50 million sa South Cotabato, at P50 million sa Sarangani.

Sinabi ni Pangulong Marcos na ang Sultan Kudarat ay pruweba na ang mga tao na may iba't ibang relihiyon o pamilya ay maaaring mabuhay nang mapayapa.

Idinagdag pa nito na ang resulta nito ay hindi lamang mapayapang lipunan kundi masaganang ekonomiya.

Sa kabilang dako, tiniyak naman ng Pangulo sa mga residente ng Mindanao at local government units (LGUs) na ang kanyang administrasyon ay sasaliksikin ang lahat ng posibleng opsyon para mabawasan ang paghihirap dulot ng El Niño.

Sisiguraduhin pa ng Pangulo na ang mga kakailanganing suporta ay available sa mga apektado ng labis na tag-uyot.

Samantala, dumalo naman sa dalawang events sina Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Laurel Jr., Presidential Assistant for Eastern Mindanao Leo Tereso Magno, Special Assistant to the President Ernesto Antonio Lagdameo Jr., Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Rex Gatchalian, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Benhur Abalos Jr., Presidential Communication Office (PCO) Secretary Cheloy Garafil, at Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) Secretary Suharto Mangundadatu. **Kris Jose**

<https://remate.ph/mga-magsasaka-mangingisda-sa-mindanao-nakatanggap-ng-tulong-mula-sa-ph-govt/>