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MANILA BULLETIN:

Coping with El Niño and climate change

BY [JAIME ARISTOTLE B. ALIP, PHD](#)

May 20, 2024 06:34 AM

FROM THE MARGINS



The Department of Agriculture (DA) reported last week that El Niño’s damage to agriculture has reached P6.35 billion. The prolonged dry spell is also drying up reservoirs, making communities struggle to meet basic water needs. El Niño has also disrupted schools and businesses; classes had been suspended and flexible work arrangements adopted to protect the population from heat-related illnesses.

Beyond the damage to our agricultural sector, the health risks, and the inconveniences caused by record-high temperatures, El Niño is also having a negative impact on our economy. In a recent article, “El Niño-nomics: How Intense Heat is Drying Up the Philippine Economy,” written by economist JC Punongbayan and published in Rappler, I found out that there is already a study by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) which quantifies the effects of heat increases on our macro-economic indicators. Apparently, increases in temperature reduces gross domestic product (GDP) growth and leads to higher inflation. It brings down productivity not just in agriculture, but in manufacturing and services production as well.

All these underscores the need for all of us to do our share in addressing the challenges of El Niño, La Niña and other climate change phenomena.

El Niño forum

Last month, I was invited to be one of the speakers in the “El Niño Resilience Forum for Microenterprises” that was organized by ARISE Philippines and Restart-Micro-Enterprise, Inc. (RestartME) – two organizations that have been at the forefront of disaster and resilience management in the country. ARISE Philippines is a local network of ARISE (the Private Sector Alliance for Disaster-Resilient Societies), while RestartME is an NGO that extends financial and non-financial assistance to microentrepreneurs affected by disasters through selected microfinance institutions (MFIs).

Attended by more than 100 participants representing MFIs, NGOs, government and practitioners in the field of disaster risk reduction, the forum was a productive venue to assess the impact of El Niño and the adaptation measures that are needed to mitigate its adverse effects. I congratulate the organizers for fostering a deeper understanding of the current status and impact of this phenomenon in the country, and for promoting stakeholder engagement, especially to help MFIs and microenterprises. These sectors are most vulnerable to the ravages of climate change, yet, their role in our economic development cannot be gainsaid.

The briefing by Ms. Ana Liza Solis, OIC of the Climatology and Agrometeorology Division of PAGASA, on the widespread effects of El Nino not only on agriculture but on our water supply was very informative. She showed maps superimposing the provinces worst-hit by El Nino and how long its effects will be felt. Thus, farmers may have to shift to drought-resistant crops or stop planting altogether so as not to suffer losses. I can confirm, from several farm visits, that the effects of El Nino are evident: water sources are dwindling, soil is dry and cracked, crops are withered, and livestock are suffering. I can only surmise the long-term devastating effects of El Nino in agriculture, and how the livelihoods of our farmers hang in the balance.

The situation calls for both government and private sector support to agriculture and agri-based microenterprises. Small farmers and microentrepreneurs are the most vulnerable to economic shocks, extreme weather events and natural disasters. They really need our help.

Developing resilience

MFIs provide financial and non-financial services to small farmers and microenterprises. How can they help their clients cope with El Niño and climate change?

First, they should encourage savings mobilization. MFIs can help their clients prepare for any eventuality by encouraging them to save more. Having savings means they have resources that they can draw upon to deal with the adverse effects of weather disturbances. MFIs should also provide clients with emergency funds and microinsurance. Agricultural insurance, as well as life and health insurance are critical safety nets for farmers and their families.

By conducting Credit with Education sessions during center meetings, MFIs can promote environmental awareness and understanding of climate change. Since MFIs operate at the grassroots level, this intervention will go a long way towards enabling people to mitigate the adverse effects of the El Niño and La Niña phenomena in their communities.

MFIs should partner with local government units, government offices and other groups to implement community projects like tree-planting, rain water harvesting, developing communal irrigation systems and similar activities.

MFIs could also encourage clients to plant trees and keep gardens in their backyards. There are more than 13 million microfinance clients nationwide, per Microfinance Information Data Sharing Inc (MIDAS) data. Imagine if all of them would plant one tree each. Perhaps, the two biggest MFI networks – MCPI and APPEND -- can collaborate and declare a one-day tree-planting activity for microfinance clients. What a great impact this could make!

* * *

“We don’t have time to sit on our hands as our planet burns.” – Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

(Dr. Jaime Aristotle B. Alip is a poverty eradication advocate. He is the founder of the Center for Agriculture and Rural Development Mutually-Reinforcing Institutions (CARD MRI).)

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/20/coping-with-el-nino-and-climate-change>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Chicken prices up by P10 per kilo – DA

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

May 20, 2024 | 12:00am



Based on the DA's latest monitoring of Metro Manila markets, the retail price of chicken ranged between P170 and P230 per kilo.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The retail price of chicken has increased by P10 per kilo as it is being sold for as high as P230 per kilo compared to the previous P220 per kilo, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Based on the DA's latest monitoring of Metro Manila markets, the retail price of chicken ranged between P170 and P230 per kilo.

On Thursday, it ranged between P170 and P220 per kilo.

Gregorio San Diego, chairman emeritus of the United Broiler Raisers Association (UBRA) and Philippine Egg Board, bewailed the disparity between the farmgate price and the retail cost of chickens.

“The retail price of agricultural products is always far from the farmgate price. Prices of live broilers in the farms ranged from P120 to P127 per kilo,” San Diego told The STAR.

Based on UBRA's monitoring of the farmgate price of chicken in Luzon, it is P119 per kilo in Tarlac, P125 per kilo in Batangas, Pampanga, P125 per kilo; Cavite, P125 per kilo and Bulacan, P121 per kilo.

"The broiler farmers decided to lessen their production as they are not earning. They are suffering losses for the last eight months," San Diego said.

Meanwhile, the DA's decision to add eggs in relief packs of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is a win-win solution amid oversupply and the continued drop in the farmgate price, San Diego said.

In 2010, egg producers proposed to former agriculture secretary Proceso Alcala to add eggs in DSWD's relief packs, San Diego recalled.

They recently proposed this to Agriculture Undersecretary for livestock Deogracias Victor Savellano, he noted.

The DA is eyeing a collaboration with DSWD to add eggs in disaster relief packs, Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said.

"During typhoons and disasters, it is important that the food that we distribute is not only food. Noodles, sardines and canned goods are easy to pack but we need to ensure that there is dignity in the food that we distribute to our fellow Filipinos during disasters so this is a win-win solution. You will be able to help the farmers and provide nutrition to those affected by calamities," he said.

"Once we determine the number of eggs needed by the DSWD, the (Department of Education), we can easily connect them with egg producers," he added.

The Batangas Egg Producers Multipurpose Cooperative has been producing roasted eggs that can last up to six months, De Mesa noted.

"It will cost more compared to raw eggs but efforts are being made to reduce the cost of producing roasted eggs so that it will be sustainable in the long run. It can be restored up to six months as it is already cooked," he said.

Crop insurance

Former agriculture secretary Leonardo Montemayor yesterday lauded President Marcos' decision to return to the DA the supervision of the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. (PCIC), saying former president Rodrigo Duterte's decision to transfer it to the Department of Finance (DOF) was illegal.

Executive Order 60 issued by Marcos declared the PCIC an attached agency of the DA.

Montemayor recalled being the principal author of the House version of Republic Act 8175 in 1995, which amended 1978's Presidential Decree 1467 that created the PCIC.

RA 8175 provided three representatives of small farmers in the PCIC board, he noted.

“Unfortunately, EO 148 issued by Duterte in 2021 transferred PCIC from DA to DOF and reduced farmers’ representatives to one (which), in my view, (is) illegal because an EO cannot amend a law,” he said.

EO 60 restored PD 1467

“Placing PCIC under DA makes better sense because DOF is more concerned with reducing subsidies for programs like insurance, while DA’s objective is to maximize support for farmers so that they can cope with damages caused by El Niño and other severe climate change events,” he explained.

“We are pleased that the PCIC is back under the wings of the DA. This gives us the scope to assure farmers, livestock and poultry raisers, aquaculturists and others in production so we could shield them from losses that may be caused by disasters, pests and diseases,” said Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/05/20/2356473/chicken-prices-p10-kilo-da>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

President Marcos transfers crop insurance corporation to DA

[Alexis Romero](#) - The Philippine Star

May 20, 2024 | 12:00am



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
**PHILIPPINE CROP
INSURANCE CORPORATION**

According to Marcos, streamlining and rationalizing the functional relationships of agencies with complimentary mandates is “essential to fostering organizational coherence, efficiency and cooperation within the bureaucracy.”

MANILA, Philippines — President Marcos has transferred the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. (PCIC) from the Department of Finance (DOF) to the Department of Agriculture (DA) and has made changes to its composition as part of the government’s efforts to ensure food security and to promote the welfare of farmers.

According to Marcos, streamlining and rationalizing the functional relationships of agencies with complimentary mandates is “essential to fostering organizational coherence, efficiency and cooperation within the bureaucracy.”

“A strong organizational link between the PCIC and DA (Department of Agriculture) is necessary to enhance agricultural insurance protection program highly responsive to the needs of small farmers and fisherfolk and other agricultural stakeholders, with policies and programs aimed at ensuring food security and

modernization of the agricultural sector,” the President said in Executive Order (EO) 60.

Under the EO, the PCIC, which was formed in 1978 through Presidential Decree 1467, is attached to the DA for policy and program coordination.

The PCIC Board now consists of the presidents of the Land Bank of the Philippines and PCIC, the executive director of the Agricultural Credit Policy Council, one representative from the private insurance industry appointed by the President upon nomination by the finance secretary.

The board will also have three representatives from the subsistence farmers’ sector, preferably representing agrarian reform beneficiaries, cooperatives or associations, who will be appointed by the President upon their nomination by different farmer organizations or cooperatives.

The naming of the chairperson, vice-chairperson and other officers of the board of directors shall be in accordance with the Government Owned or Controlled Corporations Governance Act of 2011, the EO said.

Before the issuance of the EO, the state-run corporation’s board is composed of the DOF secretary, who served as its chairperson; the DA secretary, its vice chairperson; the presidents of PCIC, Land Bank of the Philippines and Government Service Insurance System; and one representative of subsistence farmers.

The PCIC was established to provide insurance protection to farmers against losses arising from natural disasters, plant diseases and pest infestation.

The Administrative Code of 1987, meanwhile, mandates the DA to promote the Philippines’ agricultural development through policy framework, public investments and support services needed to advance the agriculture sector.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/05/20/2356362/president-marcos-transfers-crop-insurance-corporation-da>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Onion prices may drop on bumper harvest

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

May 20, 2024 | 12:00am



The country's onion production in the second quarter could double compared to last year to around 174,288.98 metric tons (MT), according to a unit of the Department of Agriculture.

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MANILA, Philippines — Onion prices are expected to remain stable or to even decline as the government forecasts another record harvest of bulbs in the second quarter, bringing nationwide supply to comfortable level.

The country's onion production in the second quarter could double compared to last year to around 174,288.98 metric tons (MT), according to a unit of the Department of Agriculture.

The projected output is 89,384.99 MT higher than the 84,903.99 MT recorded in April to June of last year.

The DA high value crops program estimated that bulk of the projected production would be harvested in April, reaching about 141,000 MT. This will be followed by a 17,803 MT and 15,364 MT production levels in May and June, respectively.

Based on the estimates, about 86 percent or nearly 150,000 MT would be red onions while 10,027.63 MT and 209 MT would be yellow onions and shallots, respectively.

If the projections materialize, then it would raise total onion output in the first half alone to over 370,000 MT, the highest in history. The country produced 201,000 MT of onions in the first quarter.

The total volume would be more than enough to meet the country's estimated onion requirement between 270,000 MT and 300,000 MT, which already takes into account the wastage.

The last demand survey of the Philippine Statistics Authority showed that each Filipino consumes 2.341 kilograms of onions annually.

Agriculture Undersecretary Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero attributed the increase to expansion in onion areas in the Central Luzon region. In Nueva Ecija alone, planted areas with onion rose to around 13,000 hectares from at least 9,000 hectares, she said.

“(The higher production will) not affect (farmgate prices) because the second quarter is not yet the peak season for onion and farmgate will still be good for farmers,” Caballero told The STAR.

“As for consumers, the increase in yield will assure them that prices will be stable,” she added.

In February, the DA projected that the country would produce more than 300,000 MT of onions this year.

The Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. (PCAFI) noted that the better onion production this year would be double-edged: it may depress farmgate prices but would keep retail prices stable.

“Retail prices will not go as high as what happened last year since this time we have surplus production,” PCAFI president Danilo Fausto told The STAR.

Fausto noted that there has been a 40 percent expansion in planted areas of onions this year after farmers were encouraged by high prices last year.

Retail onion prices in Metro Manila markets have been relatively stable throughout the year with a price range of P60 to P140 for red onions and P50 to P130 for yellow onions.

As of May 10, the country has 180,680.47 MT of red onions, 33,282.01 MT of yellow onions and 72.5 MT of shallots in cold storages nationwide.

Filipinos grappled with unprecedented onion prices that hit as high as P700 per kilogram between the latter part of 2022 and early months of last year.

The rise in onion prices was caused by insufficient supply after the government opted to disallow the entry of imports to protect local farmers.

The Philippines harvests bulk of its onion output during the first semester with minimal production during the second half of the year due to climatic conditions.

The total local onion production in the first half usually serves as the basis for the government in determining the amount of imports that would be allowed in a given year.

The government regulates the imports of onions in the country through the limited issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances (SPSICs).

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/05/20/2356363/onion-prices-may-drop-bumper-harvest>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

President Marcos signs AO improving inspection of imported goods

[Helen Flores](#) - The Philippine Star

May 20, 2024 | 12:00am



President Ferdinand Marcos Jr

[Bongbong Marcos / Facebook Page](#)

MANILA, Philippines — President Marcos has approved a single electronic invoicing system to expedite and improve the monitoring of all goods imported to the Philippines.

“A single electronic invoicing system controlled by the Philippine government is necessary to effectively monitor international trade transactions of all imported goods,” Marcos said in issuing Administrative Order 23.

The order seeks “to expedite the inspection of all imported goods entering the country and further strengthen national security, safeguard consumers’ rights, and protect the environment against sub-standard and dangerous imported goods.”

Signed on May 13 by Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, the AO creates the Committee for Pre-border Technical Verification and Cross-border Electronic Invoicing, to be chaired by the finance secretary.

The secretaries of agriculture, trade, energy, health, environment and natural resources and information communications technology, meanwhile, will serve as committee members.

Other members include the Bureau of Customs (BOC) commissioner, director general of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, and two non-voting representatives from duly recognized industry associations to be appointed by the chairperson upon recommendation of the committee.

The committee is tasked to formulate guidelines and implementing rules and regulations for the conduct of pre-border technical verification of all commodities by accredited testing, inspection and certification (TIC) companies prior to the export of these goods to the Philippines.

It is also mandated to formulate procedures for the procurement of cross-border electronic invoicing system, which will serve as the single electronic platform for the creation, uploading and storage of electronic invoices for imported commodities covered by a digital verification certificate from accredited TIC companies.

The conduct of pre-border technical verification and the procurement of cross-border electronic invoicing system “shall be at no cost to the Philippine government,” the order said.

The provisions of the order will be applied to all imported commodities in three phases: phase one for agricultural goods; phase two, non-agricultural goods with health and safety issues; and phase three, other goods with misdeclaration to avoid duties and taxes.

The BOC, as the primary government entity responsible for implementing customs procedures, is implementing the electronic invoicing system. BOC is an attached agency of the Department of Finance.

The electronic invoice is shared “transparently” and “in real time” with the BOC, the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Department of Agriculture, Department of Trade and Industry and other relevant government agencies, the order said

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/05/20/2356471/president-marcos-signs-ao-improving-inspection-imported-goods>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Teodoro warns hoarders, manipulators ahead of La Niña

[Pia Lee-Brago](#) - The Philippine Star

May 20, 2024 | 12:00am



Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. on June 16, 2023

STAR / Mong Pintolo

MANILA, Philippines — Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. has warned hoarders and price manipulators against profiting from people's misery as the country transitions to the La Niña weather phenomenon.

Teodoro, chairperson of the Presidential Task Force on El Niño, made the warning during the task force meeting.

He said the Department of National Defense is ready to provide support to agencies involved in the price monitoring of basic necessities and prime commodities.

Curbing price manipulation and holding hoarders accountable will be among the priorities in government response.

“Access to affordable basic commodities such as rice is exceptionally crucial to millions of Filipino consumers. Any sudden fluctuation in the price of rice resonates on the daily lives of Filipinos,” Teodoro said.

“Whatever support is needed by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Agriculture, rest assured we are here ready to assist them,” he added.

Teodoro said there is a need to intensify price and supply monitoring efforts in markets to protect consumers from profiteering amid the weather phenomenon.

President Marcos’ executive order directs the task force to develop a comprehensive disaster preparedness and rehabilitation plan for El Niño and La Niña to provide “systematic, holistic and results-driven interventions” to help the public cope and minimize their devastating effects.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/05/20/2356467/teodoro-warns-hoarders-manipulators-ahead-la-nia>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Powering Philippine growth and prosperity through tourism



[GO NEGOSYO PILIPINAS ANGAT LAHAT!](#) - [Joey Concepcion](#) - The Philippine

Star

May 20, 2024 | 12:00am

There were more than a thousand attendees at the Tourism Summit 2024 last Monday, majority of them MSMEs. They came to learn about the business opportunities in tourism and the challenges that might await them.

President Marcos sent his message of encouragement to the tourism MSMEs and congratulated the recipients of this year's Inspiring Tourism Entrepreneurs Awards. "You are serving our country well with your exceptional work," he said, adding that "you are also showing us what it takes to give the Philippines that edge over other destinations."

The President also echoed the call for stronger partnerships between the government and the private sector, something that has become a theme for all of Go Negosyo's activities over the last few years. He called on the private sector and government "to endeavor to bring the rewards of a thriving tourism industry directly to the Filipino people."

I am glad that more of our big brothers in the private sector are allocating their resources to helping our MSMEs, and I am elated to hear that more partners in government have included MSME development in their agenda.

With our combined efforts, the Philippines can become a powerhouse in tourism. This is especially important because developing the MSMEs in the tourism industry will have a multiplier effect on other industries like agriculture, manufacturing, retail and construction. Tourism has the potential to create jobs, especially in the provinces where jobs are most needed.

Tourism has the power to help us realize our dream of becoming an upper-middle class country. The Tourism Summit helps advance this by casting tourism within the framework of entrepreneurship, through the mentoring of MSMEs in the tourism industry and the facilitation of access to money and markets for MSMEs.

I have always asserted that we need to strengthen the base of our economy and help those at the bottom of the pyramid. My vision is for that pyramid to one day become a Circle of Prosperity, where everyone benefits, where everyone helps each other and each link is crucial to the health of the entire circle. More MSMEs being set up means more jobs. More jobs means more empowered consumers. Powerful consumers means more businesses being set up. It is a virtuous cycle where everyone, not just those at the top of the pyramid, benefit.

Last year, the Department of Tourism completed the National Tourism Development Plan for 2023-2028. It outlines a clear path toward establishing a sustainable, resilient and competitive industry that will transform the Philippines into a tourism powerhouse in Asia, and anchoring its efforts on Philippine culture, identity and heritage.

Already, we are seeing the fruits of this plan. As of end 2023, the Philippines exceeded its target of 4.8 million visitors and welcomed more than 5 million. In the first quarter of 2024 alone, the Philippines already had over 2 million tourists, marking an increase from the same period the previous year. These numbers are a testament to the industry's recovery and the country's emergence as a top-tier tourist destination; it puts the target of 7.7 million visitors in 2024 well within the realm of the possible. With hope, these will translate to economic activity that is spread all over the country and will deliver tangible benefits to Filipinos.

But as the President correctly pointed out, these numbers are also a challenge for us to step up. Can our infrastructure handle the increased volume of tourists? Are we up to the task of serving tourists who have seen the best the world can offer? Do we have something different and memorable to offer our visitors? Do we have what it takes to go head-to-head with our neighbors in Southeast Asia who are already tourism superstars?

Here is where upskilling and upscaling will be important. Our MSMEs are the frontliners in tourism; they offer visitors a glimpse of the everyday Filipino, in their products, their culture, their heritage. But, as the MSMEs who have been recognized in the Inspiring Tourism Entrepreneurs Awards over the years have proven, being small is no obstacle to providing world-class products and services.

On their own time and dime, the past and present recipients of the awards have proven that it is possible to elevate the game in tourism accommodations, food, retail, services, ecotourism and recreation. The content creator-awardees among

them showed how creatively conceived content can generate excitement about Philippine tourist destinations.

Just in our current batch of awardees, we have entrepreneurs who have built successful tourism enterprises; some capitalized on local flavors and heritage cuisine, another is a startup that created virtual explorations of tourist sites to encourage actual visits, while one practically built a permaculture tourism attraction out of an abandoned garbage lot.

Truly, every year that we hold the Inspiring Tourism Entrepreneurs Awards brings plenty of surprises that reinforce and strengthen our belief in Filipino ingenuity and industry. That is why the President's call to support MSMEs resonates so strongly, especially when seen through the framework of public-private sector cooperation. The presence of First Lady Liza Araneta Marcos, Tourism Sec. Christina Garcia Frasco, TPB head Marga Nograles and DTI Usec for MSMEs Cris Roque, there side-by-side at the Tourism Summit with the leaders of tourism industry groups, CEOs of large corporations, small business owners, students and travel vloggers, made the event feel inclusive and filled with hope.

The active participation of every stakeholder matters. When we harness the power of public-private sector cooperation to propel tourism to become a major contributor to Philippine economic growth, we help uplift the lives of the ordinary Filipino.

<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2024/05/20/2356386/powering-philippine-growth-and-prosperity-through-tourism>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

P29 rice sold at Kadiwa stores, says DA

By: [Melvin Gascon](#) - Reporter / [@melvingasconINQ](#)

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:38 AM May 20, 2024



Rice is the top staple food of Filipinos. —Inquirer stock photo

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is rolling out Kadiwa Centers through the Kadiwa Program in Metro Manila bannered by its sale of rice at P29 a kilo, the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) said on Sunday.

The DA said Kadiwa centers offer rice at P29 per kilo in certain areas, along with other basic necessities and prime commodities such as fish, eggs, onions, garlic, fresh vegetables and fruits at lower prices.

According to the PCO, the sale of rice at Kadiwa stores is aimed at bringing down retail prices of the staple in the country. This effort is supposedly in line with a campaign promise made by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to bring down the price of rice to P20 a kilo.

The P29-per-kilo rice is available at the ADC Building of the DA central office in Quezon City; Kadiwa Center at the Bureau of Plant Industry in Malate, Manila; Llano Road in Barangay 167, Caloocan City.

Kadiwa Stores may also be found in Amva Housing in Barangay Ugong in Valenzuela City and at the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority compound in Las Piñas City.

According to the DA, each household may purchase a maximum of five kilos of rice from Kadiwa centers, subject to supply availability, adding this is influenced by various factors including transport, packaging and logistics.

The agency expressed optimism that its sale of rice at P29 a kilo will continue as it projects to produce more than 100 million kilos of rice by August this year through contract farming agreement with Farmers' Cooperatives Associations.

The DA said about 265 regular Kadiwa stores have been opened nationwide and 119 Kadiwa “pop-up” stores that operate on a scheduled basis to respond to consumer demand.

Kadiwa, which means “of one spirit” in Filipino, is one of the flagship programs of the Marcos administration. It provides venues for farmers, fisherfolk and micro-small-and-medium-enterprises to sell their produce directly to consumers.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1942276/p29-rice-sold-at-kadiwa-stores-says-da>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Teodoro preps task force amid La Niña watch

By: [Frances Mangosing](#) - Reporter / [@FMangosingINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:30 AM May 20, 2024



Defense Sec. Gilberto Teodoro Jr. —Department of National Defense FB

MANILA, Philippines — Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. has warned that the government will crack down hard on hoarders and price manipulators as the country braces for the coming La Niña weather phenomenon that could wreak havoc on agriculture and disrupt transportation and services.

Teodoro, who also chairs the government's Task Force El Niño, issued the warning after the fifth meeting of the presidential task force for the preparations for La Niña held early this month, the Department of National Defense (DND) said on Sunday.

Teodoro stressed the need to intensify price and supply monitoring efforts to protect consumers from those who may take advantage of the weather phenomenon to jack

up prices of key commodities. He committed to help the Department of Trade and Industry and Department of Agriculture (DA) keep prices and supply steady.

“Access to affordable basic commodities such as rice is exceptionally crucial to millions of Filipino consumers. Any sudden fluctuation in the price of rice resonates on the daily lives of Filipinos,” he said.

On March 7, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) raised its La Niña Watch in the country.

La Niña (little girl in Spanish), is a weather phenomenon with the opposite effect of El Niño, wherein trade winds are more potent than usual, pushing more warm water and increased rainfall toward the Asian region, thus raising the risks of floods and landslides in vulnerable areas.

Increased rainfall may cause extensive damage to agriculture and upset supply chains as heavy rain and floods will make it more difficult to transport produce from the farms to the market. Unscrupulous traders may then take advantage of these forces to inflate their selling prices.

Neutral condition

According to the weather bureau, the transition from the current El Niño to La Niña is already underway and may shift to a neutral condition—when there is neither El Niño nor La Niña—around June then switch to La Niña by July.

The predevelopment signs of the La Niña weather phenomenon feature a below-normal rainfall weather outlook, while Pagasa added that the normal onset of the rainy season may be delayed with the current El Niño to around the middle of June.

Pagasa has not yet identified the provinces that would be most affected by La Niña. But once it fully sets in, the country will experience more destructive typhoons caused by stronger winds and heavier rains, according to Analiza Solis, head of Pagasa’s climatology and agrometeorology division.

Solis also said they were expecting fewer typhoons to make landfall this year, but warned that the lead time to prepare for any typhoon could be shorter since weather disturbances might form nearer the Philippine landmass.

Solis forecasts between 13 and 16 typhoons for 2024, below the annual average of 19 to 20.

‘Interventions’

Given the expected impact of these weather phenomena, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. had ordered the reactivation and reconstitution of Task Force El Niño in January through Executive Order No. 53.

Marcos recognized in the EO that the weather phenomenon “calls for the implementation of both short and long-term solutions to ensure food, water and energy security, safeguard livelihoods, and improve the country’s disaster and climate resilience.”

The EO directs the task force to develop a comprehensive disaster preparedness and rehabilitation plan for El Niño and La Niña to provide “systematic, holistic and results-driven interventions” to help the public cope and minimize their devastating effects.

According to the EO, the secretary of the DND will be the chair of the task force while the secretary of the Department of Science and Technology will serve as cochair.

Members of the task force include secretaries of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, DA, Department of Health, and the National Economic and Development Authority. —with a report from Inquirer Research

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1942266/teodoro-preps-task-force-amid-la-nina-watch>

BUSINESS WORLD:

El Niño mitigation measures also seen useful during La Niña

May 20, 2024 | 12:04 am



REUTERS

THE MEASURES implemented to curb the effects of El Niño will also help reduce La Niña's impact on agriculture.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort said that the government's mitigation measures for El Niño will also come in handy for the heavier-than-usual rains brought about by La Niña.

"Preparations for El Niño include pre-emptive imports of rice and agricultural products, extension of reduced tariffs on some imported agricultural products and simplified import procedures," Mr. Ricafort said in a Viber message.

As of May 8, damage and losses to agriculture due to El Niño hit P6.35 billion, affecting over 270,034 metric tons of crops. Rice and corn were the most affected commodities.

Last year, the government extended the lower tariff regime for rice, pork, and corn, via Executive Order (EO) No. 50.

The President also issued Administrative Order (AO) No. 20, which simplifies the procedures for agricultural imports, while removing non-tariff barriers.

Former Agriculture Undersecretary Fermin D. Adriano said that La Niña is expected to be delayed, as predicted by PAGASA, the government weather service.

“It (may) start July or August. Expect prices to increase because of the combined effect of rising production costs and climate change,” Mr. Adriano said in a Viber message.

In its latest bulletin, PAGASA said that there is a 60% chance of La Niña occurring between June and August as El Niño is weakening. El Niño’s impacts, however, such as hotter and drier conditions, may persist.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) said that it is preparing for a “more destructive” La Niña which could potentially affect crops late in the year.

The DA said it will focus on areas which were historically affected by previous occurrences of the La Niña.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary and Spokesperson Arnel V. de Mesa told reporters last week that if La Niña were to happen during the end of that year, it could potentially affect the dry season planting. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/05/20/596001/el-nino-mitigation-measures-also-seen-useful-during-la-nina/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Farmers want say in gov't sugar import plans

May 20, 2024 | 12:03 am



REUTERS

SUGAR producers said they need to be consulted on the Sugar Regulatory Administration's (SRA) sugar import plans.

In a statement, the Sugar Council said it recommended an import plan decided in consultation with the industry, with due consideration given to market conditions.

"If sugar imports are the last resort to fill the shortages that may be caused by El Niño, the Sugar Council emphasizes the need for a logical, transparent, and consultative import program," it said on Sunday.

Last week, the SRA said that it was studying to allow sugar imports during the end of the milling season to bolster supply.

SRA Administrator Pablo Luis S. Azcona said that the President had recommended allowing imports between 185,000 metric tons (MT) and 200,000 MT.

Administrative Order No. 20 tasked the SRA with streamlining and standardizing sugar import rules. It was also ordered to admit more traders into the sugar import program.

He added that the regulator and the Department of Agriculture will identify a trigger point for when to allow imports to enter the country.

“Unless the coming months see a spike in withdrawals (from inventory), the country might not need to import raw or refined sugar until the first quarter of 2025,” the group said. It added that if imports were to come in prematurely, it could cause the millgate price of domestically-grown sugar to drop.

“With local production predicted to be low in 2024-2025, sugar farmers are in for a double whammy,” it added.

The US Department of Agriculture is estimating that raw sugar production will be flat at 1.85 million metric tons (MT) during the 2024–2025 season, while cane production is estimated at 21.6 million MT.

Raw sugar production hit 1.92 million MT as of May 5, 9% higher than a year earlier.

The group added that excessive imports of sugar had caused the drop in millgate prices during the 2023-2024 milling season, prompting the government to directly procure sugar from farmers.

“While importing sugar can stabilize the retail market in the face of insufficient local production, it has to be a solution of last resort, done in consultation with stakeholders, especially sugar farmers, and its schedule and volume calibrated to avoid the milling season, it said.

The council is composed of the Confederation of Sugar Producers Associations, Inc., the National Federation of Sugarcane Planters, Inc., and the Panay Federation of Sugarcane Farmers, Inc. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/05/20/596000/farmers-want-say-in-govt-sugar-import-plans/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Space data fuel India's farming innovation drive

May 20, 2024 | 12:02 am



REUTERS

BENGALURU — Lokeswara Reddy, an Indian farmer with two decades of experience, has seen his crops flourish after lean years, thanks to earth-observation satellites.

Shifting climate patterns, high input costs, a scarcity of labor and erratic weather began to disrupt his earnings about 10 years ago, said Mr. Reddy, 52, currently a contract farmer with global giant Syngenta.

Satellite data, gathered and crunched by Indian startup Cropin and provided to him by Syngenta, now gives him optimal sowing times, weather warnings, and better use of irrigation and pesticides, he said.

Mr. Reddy said that over the last decade he has increased his net profit to 20,000 rupees (\$240) per acre on corn at his farm in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, up from 5,000 – 10,000 rupees.

“We are on a surer footing when it comes to agricultural practices; (using satellite data) safeguards us from climate change, pest and disease, problems with irrigation scheduling,” he said.

The Indian government, which just relaxed foreign investment rules for the space sector, is leaning heavily into the use of satellite data to solve problems on the ground, with agriculture a key focus.

Reuters spoke to 11 experts and farmers, six startups in the industry and three NGOs who said space technology and big data were primed to help Indian agriculture reach new heights.

“India’s path to leadership in the new space race lies in utilizing the power of data, and applications within the agricultural sector offer immense potential,” said Pawan Goenka, chairman of the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre, the country’s space regulatory body.

Market Research Future, an India-based data analysis firm, says the global space agriculture market will be worth \$11.51 billion by 2032, up from \$4.99 billion in 2023.

Although China holds the largest market share, the sector is growing faster in India than anywhere else in the Asia-Pacific region, it said.

Cropin, founded in 2010 and backed by both Google and the Gates Foundation, recently signed a deal with Amazon Web Services to crunch satellite data to solve for global food insecurity.

Cropin's partnership with farmers, the World Bank and the government of India in 244 villages digitized more than 30,000 farm plots, covering 77 crop varieties across climate zones, a company project analysis in 2019 showed.

The study showed 92% of the farmers involved increased their average yield by 30% and their farm revenue by nearly 37%. The company got similar results in Africa.

Cropin and others are tapping into a burgeoning sector. The use of satellite data for crop insurance and horticulture has a market potential of about \$1.35 billion over the next 5 years, Deloitte said in a report.

Baring Private Equity-backed SatSure, another Indian startup, crunches earth observation data to inform loan analysis. Chief Executive Officer Prateep Basu said there are about 70 million active farmer bank accounts in the country, representing roughly 38% of the total pool. That makes up about \$200 billion of all lenders' loan books, he said.

India has 2,743 agricultural tech startups, many of which incorporate satellite data or other space technology. Funding hit a high of \$1.3 billion in 2021; companies gathered \$394.4 million in 2023 and \$136.7 million so far in 2024.

But there are barriers to large-scale adoption of space technology in agriculture. The average landholding size for farmers in India is just 1.08 hectares. That fragmentation, coupled with poverty and low levels of literacy, pose challenges for tech adoption, industry experts said.

"Agriculture has never been a tech-forward sector and often farmers want to rely on traditional practices, or the wisdom of their forefathers," said Raghunath Reddy, a Syngenta manager.

In India, McKinsey says agricultural technology has the potential to grow farmers' incomes by 25% to 35%.

Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her 2023 budget speech, announced a 703 million rupee (\$8.42 million) accelerator fund to boost agritech startups. In March 2023, the government said the fund was supporting 1,138 such companies.

For farmers like Mr. Reddy, agriculture tech has meant better living standards — over the past few years he has bought a car and bought a new house in town.

"This increase in earnings also means better education for my son, who has plans to be a software engineer abroad, in the US or London. At the end of the day, we want a better future for our kids," Mr. Reddy said.
— **Reuters**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/05/20/595999/space-data-fuel-indias-farming-innovation-drive/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

China probes agri minister for suspected ‘disciplinary violations’

May 20, 2024 | 12:01 am



REUTERS

BEIJING — China’s agriculture minister is being investigated for suspected violations of law and discipline, the anti-graft regulator watchdog said Saturday.

Tang Renjian, 61, is under investigation for “serious violations of discipline and law” by the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) and National Supervisory Commission, CCDI said.

The term is CCDI’s typical euphemism for corruption. The notice gave no further details. It is uncommon for an official of Mr. Tang’s rank to be placed under investigation without first being removed from the post.

He most recently appeared in public on Wednesday at a conference on rural talent, where he gave a speech, according to a post on the agriculture ministry’s website.

Mr. Tang was governor of the western province of Gansu from 2017 to 2020 before being named minister of agriculture and rural affairs, according to official biographies. — **Reuters**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/05/20/595998/china-probes-agri-minister-for-suspected-disciplinary-violations/>

MANILA STANDARD

Kadiwa selling rice at P29-kilo in 5 NCR stores



By Manila Standard

May 20, 2024, 12:25 am

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is selling rice at P29 per kilo in five Kadiwa stores in Metro Manila, the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) announced Sunday.

In a statement, the PCO said the Kadiwa stores are at the ADC Building of the Department of Agriculture – Central Office in Quezon City; Kadiwa Center inside the Bureau of Plant Industry in Malate, Manila; Kadiwa Store along Llano Road in Barangay 167, Caloocan City; Kadiwa Store in AMVA Housing, La Mesa Street in Barangay Ugong, Valenzuela City; and Kadiwa Center in PhilFIDA Compound, Talon Dos, Las Piñas City.

The DA said each household may buy a maximum of 5 kilos of rice depending on its availability.

“The sale of rice at P29 per kilo will continue as the government projects to produce more than 100 million kilos of rice by August this year through contract farming agreement with Farmers’ Cooperatives Associations,” it said.

A flagship program of the administration, Kadiwa stores allow local farmers to sell their products directly to consumers. They also offer more affordable goods to consumers.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314448840/kadiwa-selling-rice-at-p29-kilo-in-5-ncr-stores.html>

Govt to run after price fixers — Gibo

By Vince Lopez

May 20, 2024, 12:40 am

Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro, Jr. has warned that authorities will go after hoarders and manipulators preying on consumers as the country transitions to the La Niña weather phenomenon.

The defense chief issued this warning during the fifth meeting of the presidential task force on El Niño response as the government gears up for La Niña.

During the task force meeting held at Camp Aguinaldo earlier this month, Teodoro said the Department of National Defense (DND) is ready to provide support to agencies involved in the price monitoring of basic necessities and prime commodities.

Teodoro, chairperson of the task force, said curbing price manipulation and holding hoarders accountable will be among the priorities of the government in its response.

“Access to affordable basic commodities such as rice is exceptionally crucial to millions of Filipino consumers. Any sudden fluctuation in the price of rice resonates in the daily lives of Filipinos,” Teodoro said.

“Whatever support is needed by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Agriculture, rest assured we are here ready to assist them,” the DND chief added.

Teodoro said there is a need to intensify price and supply monitoring efforts in markets to protect consumers from profiteering amid the weather phenomenon.

The Task Force El Niño already began last week its preparations for the possible onset of La Niña, which the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) forecasts by June until August this year.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314448844/govt-to-run-after-price-fixers-gibo.html>

Gibo warns hoarders as La Niña nears

By Francisco Tuyay

May 20, 2024

(UPDATE) DEFENSE Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. on Sunday issued a stern warning to hoarders and profiteers as the government gears up for the onslaught of the La Niña phenomenon.

Teodoro said authorities would not hesitate to run after hoarders and price manipulators preying on consumers as the country transitions to La Niña.

He issued the warning during the fifth meeting of the presidential task force on El Niño response.

In a meeting in Camp Aguinaldo, Teodoro said his department was ready to provide support to agencies involved in the price monitoring of basic commodities.

Manipulators and hoarders normally prey on residents affected by calamities by jacking up prices of goods.

Teodoro said curbing price manipulation would be among the priorities in the government's response during disasters and other forms of calamities.

"Access to affordable basic commodities such as rice is exceptionally crucial to millions of Filipino consumers. Any sudden fluctuation in the price of rice resonates in the daily lives of Filipinos," he said.

"Whatever support is needed by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Agriculture, rest assured we are here ready to assist them," he added.

Teodoro said there was a need to step up price and supply monitoring in markets to protect consumers from profiteering amid the weather phenomenon.

President Marcos Jr.'s Executive Order 53 directs the government to streamline, reactivate and reconstitute the old El Niño task forces under EO 16 (s. 2001) and Memorandum Order 38 (s. 2019).

Teodoro was appointed chairman of the task force, with Science and Technology Secretary Renato Solidum as co-chairman.

Signed on January 19, EO 53 directs the task force to develop a comprehensive disaster preparedness and rehabilitation plan for El Niño and La Niña to provide "systematic, holistic and results-driven interventions" to help the public cope with their devastating effects.

The President also designated as task force members Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, Agriculture Secretary Francis Tiu Laurel Jr., Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa, and National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio Balisacan.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/20/news/national/gibo-warns-hoarders-as-la-nia-nears/1947403>

Group: Iloilo rice processing complex faces challenges

By Rjay Zuriaga Castor

May 20, 2024

ILOILO CITY – The Iloilo Rice Processing Complex (IRPC) in Barangay Amamaros in Pototan is grappling with operational and financial challenges, the Pototan Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative (PFMPC) said.

The PFMPC, which oversees the management and business operations of the complex, claimed the IRPC has been on the losing end due to "misappropriation or mishandling of the operating fund" and "mismanagement of the operation."

In a letter addressed to the provincial government, the local government of Pototan, and the Department of Agriculture Region 6 (DA-6), Andrei Celiz, chairman of the PFMPC Board of Directors, cited primary issues in the complex.

"There was a legal problem concerning the mismanagement and misappropriation of funds by the IRPC personnel, thereby prompting the (DA-6) to file an estafa case against them," he said.

The case was dismissed by the Office of the Provincial Prosecutor of Iloilo, Celiz said.

He cited internal personnel problems such as the operations manager's absence without leave. The manager, who also served as the collections officer, allegedly "left with unliquidated accounts and collections on his shoulders."

The cooperative also faced difficulties in accessing the IRPC's bank account to deposit income into the special enterprise fund (SEF),

necessitating the creation of a new account under the name PFMPC-IRPC.

The SEF is intended for covering administrative expenses, personnel services, maintenance, additional equipment and other agricultural activities essential for sustaining the IRPC's operations.

The rice processing complex was built in April 2012 by the Korean International Cooperation Agency aimed at enhancing rice post-production efficiency, reducing postharvest losses and improving the overall rice distribution system in the province.

On March 5, 2015, PFMPC entered into a memorandum of agreement to manage the IRPC under the joint venture of the DA-6, the provincial government of Iloilo (PGI) and the municipal government of Pototan (MGPI).

PFMPC ceases operation

During its general assembly, Celiz said they had authorized the PFMPC Board of Directors to terminate the agreement and return the operation and management of the IRPC to the DA, PGI and MGPI.

"To avoid further business losses and damage to equipment, the PFMPC has ceased its operation (with skeleton office personnel to reconcile accounts and records for turnover) as it prepares for its irrevocable decision of terminating its obligation of taking charge of the business operation and management of the IRPC," Celiz said.

This decision is consistent with the agreement's provision allowing for management transfer in cases of operational failures due to financial or managerial issues.

Currently, the DA-6, PGI and MGPI are overseeing the complex's management.

Meanwhile, Gov. Arthur Defensor Jr. said discussions are underway

in the provincial government's plan to take over the operation of the "bleeding" rice processing complex.

"We are already starting our discussion for the complex to be returned to us and what we can do will become part of our rice hybrid program. [...] The direction is to return it back to the province," he said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/20/regions/group-iloilo-rice-processing-complex-faces-challenges/1947507>

Teodoro: Govt will run after La Niña hoarders

By **Victor Reyes**
May 20, 2024

GOVERNMENT will run after hoarders and manipulators who would prey on consumers once the country transitions to the La Niña weather phenomenon, Defense Secretary and National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) chairman Gilberto Teodoro Jr. has said.

Teodoro issued the warning during a recent meeting of the Presidential Task Force on El Niño, which he also chairs, at Camp Aguinaldo.

Teodoro said the Department of National Defense (DND) is ready to provide support to government agencies directly involved in the monitoring of prices of basic necessities and prime commodities during La Niña.

La Niña is a climate pattern that characterizes above average rains. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) has earlier said the phenomenon may start in the June-July-August period.

It has also said that the country is now transitioning to the rainy season, which it predicted may start in the first two weeks of June.

The country is still experiencing the El Niño, a weather phenomenon that increases the likelihood of below normal rainfall conditions that may lead to dry spells and droughts, which the weather bureau said has started to weaken.

Teodoro said curbing price manipulation and holding hoarders accountable will be among the priorities of the government in disaster response.

“Access to affordable basic commodities such as rice is exceptionally crucial to millions of Filipino consumers. Any sudden fluctuation in the price of rice resonates impacts on the daily lives of Filipinos,” he also said.

“Whatever support is needed by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Agriculture, rest assured we are here ready to assist them,” he added.

Teodoro said there is a need to step up price and supply monitoring efforts to protect consumers from profiteering.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_news/teodoro-govt-will-run-after-la-nina-hoarders/

Teodoro warns hoarders, price manipulators

Rex Anthony Naval

May 20, 2024

THE Department of National Defense (DND) is ready to help other government agencies going after hoarders of basic commodities and price manipulators, who are preying on consumers as the country transitions to the La Niña weather phenomenon, its Defense Secretary Gilbert C. Teodoro said on Sunday.

Teodoro issued this warning during the fifth meeting of the Presidential Task Force on El Niño as the government prepares for the La Niña weather phenomenon that is usually characterized by heavy rains.

He added curbing price manipulation and holding hoarders accountable will be among the priorities in government response.

“Access to affordable basic commodities such as rice is exceptionally crucial to millions of Filipino consumers. Any sudden fluctuation in the price of rice resonates on the daily lives of Filipinos,” Teodoro said.

During the task force meeting held at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, early this month, Teodoro said the DND is ready to provide support to agencies involved in the price monitoring of basic necessities and prime commodities.

“Whatever support is needed by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Agriculture... rest assured we are here ready to assist them,” he added.

Teodoro said there is a need to intensify price and supply monitoring efforts in markets to protect consumers from profiteering amid the weather phenomenon.

Under President Marcos’s Executive Order 53, which directs the government to streamline, reactivate, and reconstitute the old El Niño task forces under EO 16 (s. 2001) and Memorandum Order 38 (s. 2019), Teodoro was appointed chairman of the task force, with Science and Technology Secretary Renato U. Solidum designated as co-chairman.

Signed on January 19, 2024, Marcos’s executive order directs the task force to develop a comprehensive disaster preparedness and rehabilitation plan for El Niño and La Niña to provide “systematic, holistic, and results-driven interventions” to help the public cope and minimize their devastating effects.

The President also designated the following officials as task force members: Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga, Secretary of Agriculture Francis Tiu Laurel Jr., Secretary of Health Teodoro J. Herbosa, and Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/20/teodoro-warns-hoarders-price-manipulators/>

DA arm reports drastic drop in pork inventory to 50K MT

Ada Pelonia

May 20, 2024

THE country's pork inventory has declined by nearly a quarter, according to data from the attached agency of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Data from the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) showed that pork inventory in cold storage facilities nationwide dropped by 24.79 percent to 50,658 metric tons (MT) as of May 13 from last year's 67,359 MT.

Figures from the agency revealed that a chunk of the inventory during the period consisted of imports at 49,899 MT. This was lower than the 64,214 MT in the previous year.

Pork from local raisers plummeted to 758 MT, from 3,145 MT recorded last year since the African Swine Fever (ASF) continued to stunt the country's pork output.

On a monthly basis, the latest frozen pork inventory was 2.45 percent lower than the 51,929 MT recorded volume last April 15, NMIS data showed.

NMIS data also showed that dressed chicken inventory slid by 10.36 percent year-on-year to 43,632 MT.

The bulk of the inventory consisted of imports at 27,460 MT, lower than last year's 31,641 MT.

Cold storage facilities in Region 3 and Region 4-A held a chunk of the pork inventory during the period. Both regions also accounted for the bulk of the dressed chicken inventory, according to NMIS.

The agency said its latest frozen pork inventory came from accredited commercial and in-house cold storage, such as slaughterhouses and meat processing plants.

For the dressed chicken inventory, the agency said its data excluded freshly chilled chicken and mechanically deboned meat, adding that the inventory for those already in distribution channels was not included.

Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed that the seasonally adjusted value of livestock production recorded a 1.8 percent decrease.

“Hog was the top contributor to the contraction in the value of production during the first three months of 2024,” the PSA said.

The country’s local hog industry continues to grapple with the ASF which spurred culling activities and led to a decline in hog output to 1.793 million metric tons (MMT) last year. This is lower than the nearly 2.3 MMT of recorded hog production before the ASF hit the country.

ASF is a contagious swine disease with a 100 percent fatality rate which affects domestic pigs and wild boar. It has been reported in several countries around the globe.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/20/da-arm-reports-dramatic-drop-in-pork-inventory-to-50k-mt/>

New invoicing system for imports soon up

Samuel P. Medenilla

May 20, 2024

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has ordered a 2-year roll out period of the pre-border technical verification (PBTv) and electronic invoicing for imported goods.

It will be enforced in three phases. It will initially cover agriculture goods, then non agriculture goods with health and safety issues and, finally, other goods misdeclared to avoid duties and taxes.

Marcos gave the timeline to the newly-created Committee for Pre-Border Technical Verification and Cross-border Electronic Invoicing through Administrative Order (AO) 23 dated May 13, 2024, but only released to the media last Sunday.

Once implemented, the PBTv is expected to help decongest Philippine ports by making sure all imported commodities are screened before being shipped to the country. The Cross-Border Electronic Invoicing System (CBEIS), meanwhile, aims to monitor international trade transactions of all imported goods.

Chaired by the Department of Finance (DOF), the Committee will formulate the implementing rules and regulation (IRR) for the PBTv of imported goods by accredited testing, inspection and certification (TIC) companies before they are exported to the Philippines.

The members of the committee include the secretaries of agriculture, trade, energy, health, environment and natural resources and information communications technology. Likewise, the Bureau of Customs commissioner and the director general of Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) were designated members of the committee. Two non-voting representatives from duly-recognized industry associations, to be appointed by the committee chairman, upon recommendation of the body, would also be included as members.

BOC will serve as the main implementing agency of AO 23.

The Committee will also set the procurement procedures for the CBIES, which will serve as the single electronic platform for the creation, uploading and storage of electronic invoices of imported commodities covered by the digital verification certificate from accredited TIC Companies.

The Committee is also expected to issue the guidelines for third-party TIC accreditation. It must submit to the Office of the Executive Secretary a bi-annual report on the implementation of AO 23.

The President said that the “conduct” of the PBTV and the procurement of the CBEIS shall be at no cost to the Philippine government.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/20/new-invoicing-system-for-imports-soon-up/>

Report: PHL agri imports reach \$4.34B in Q1

BusinessMirror

May 20, 2024

The country's purchases of agricultural products from abroad again exceeded exports in the first quarter, according to the latest data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

PSA data showed that agricultural imports in January to March reached \$4.434 billion, larger than the \$1.722 billion the country earned from farm exports. Compared with the year-ago level, agricultural imports fell by 0.3 percent.

"The country's total agricultural trade in the first quarter of 2024, which amounted to \$6.07 billion, posted an annual increase of 2.6 percent. In the fourth quarter of 2023 and first quarter of 2023, the total agricultural trade recorded annual decreases of 0.8 percent and 8.4 percent, respectively," PSA said.

"In the first quarter of 2024, total agricultural exports was recorded at \$1.72 billion or 28.4 percent share to the total agricultural trade, while agricultural imports accounted for \$4.34 billion or 71.6 percent of the total agricultural trade."

Cereals, including rice and wheat, were the country's top food imports at \$1.172 billion or nearly 28 percent higher than the \$916.94 million recorded last year. It accounted for 27 percent of import payments in the first quarter.

The top five sources of cereals for the Philippines were Vietnam, the United States, Australia, Thailand and Brazil.

The other major agricultural imports during the period were residues and waste from the food industries, miscellaneous edible preparations, meat and edible meat offal, and dairy produce.

Agricultural exports during the period were higher by 10.7 percent compared with the \$1.56 billion recorded in 2023.

The top five farm exports were edible fruit and nuts; animal, vegetable, or microbial fats and oils and their cleavage products; preparations of vegetables, fruit, nuts or other parts of plants; preparations of meat, of fish, of crustaceans, mollusks; and tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes.

“Among the commodity groups, edible fruit and nuts; peel of citrus fruit or melons, which was valued at \$517.96 million, comprised the largest share of 30.1 percent to the total agricultural exports in the first quarter of 2024,” PSA said.

The top buyers of Philippine farm products were the European Union, the US, Japan, and countries belonging to Asean.

“Among the Asean member-countries, Malaysia was the top buyer of agricultural exports worth \$75.72 million or a share of 34.1 percent to the total value of agricultural exports to Asean member-countries in the first quarter of 2024,” PSA said.

“Among the EU member countries, Netherlands was the country’s top destination of agricultural commodities worth \$150.04 million or 47.3 percent of the total agricultural exports to EU member countries for this quarter of 2024.”

In the first quarter, the total balance of trade in agricultural goods was recorded at negative \$2.62 billion, which reflects a deficit with an annual drop of 6.5 percent. In the fourth quarter of 2023, the trade deficit went down by 6.6 percent, while the trade deficit in the first quarter of 2023 posted an annual increment of 9.8 percent, according to PSA.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/20/report-phl-agri-imports-reach-4-34b-in-q1/>

‘Poultry output will rise in Q2 despite ill effects of El Niño’

Ada Pelonia

May 20, 2024

The poultry subsector would be hard-pressed to repeat its strong performance in the first quarter, as El Niño is making it more challenging to raise broilers, according to the United Broiler Raisers Association (Ubra).

Ubra Chairman Elias Jose Inciong said, however, that poultry output could still expand by 4 percent year-on-year in the April to June period. The figure is slower than the 5.9-percent growth the subsector posted in the first quarter, when it buoyed the agriculture sector’s performance.

“The 4-percent growth is normal for the second quarter. There are [production] challenges because of El Niño,” Inciong told the BusinessMirror in a phone interview.

“[However], the rate of increase will be lower when compared with the first quarter. But there will be an increase unless conditions turn out to be extremely difficult for the whole country.”

Inciong noted that the last two weeks of April up to early May was daunting for the broiler sector despite the investment of growers in climate-controlled facilities.

“If your heat index is 42 [degrees Celsius], you’ll end up with 35 degrees Celsius, which will place your flock, especially broilers, under so much stress.”

He noted that climate-controlled facilities have an increased loading density to make up for the additional investments.

While the intense heat killed broilers, Inciong said the mortality rate is not yet “alarming.” He said, however, that El Niño caused a delay in harvest.

“In terms of mortality, it is not alarming. It is almost a regular scene in the industry during the dry season, when you will usually encounter challenges.”

Broilers would usually refuse to eat until night time, when the temperature is not stifling and this leads to a spike in mortalities.

“If you feed your chickens at noontime, your mortalities would be very high because of the heat stress,” Inciong said in a mix of English and Filipino.

In a recent report, the Philippine Statistics Authority said the crops, livestock, and fisheries subsectors recorded declines in terms of the value of their output in the first quarter.

The poultry subsector prevented the performance of Philippine agriculture from falling into negative territory.

Poultry output in the first quarter was valued at P68.76 billion, 5.9 percent higher than the previous year’s level.

“Interventions and assistance provided by the government allowed the agriculture sector to fare better this time compared to periods in the past when we had El Niño,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said in a statement.

“The impact of reduced rainfall and hotter temperatures were evident in lower crops and fisheries production in the first quarter. If El Niño will persist through the second quarter, we’re cautiously optimistic that the interventions we have taken will allow the agriculture sector to mend and return better results between April and June.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/20/poultry-output-will-rise-in-q2-despite-ill-effects-of-el-nino/>

ABANTE TONITE

PBBM pinatutukan mga imported pagkain

May 19, 2024

Upang masigurong hindi makalusot ang mga sub-standard at mga delikadong imported na produkto sa bansa, pinahigpitan pa ni Pangulong Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. ang pag-inspeksiyon sa mga ito.

Magpapatupad ang gobyerno ng digital at integrated pre-border technical verification at cross-border electronic invoicing sa lahat ng imported na mga produkto.

Nakapaloob ang hakbang na ito sa Administrative Order No. 23 ni Pangulong Marcos.

Ipatatupad ang AO 23 sa lahat ng imported goods partikular sa mga produktong agrikultura, non-agricultural goods na may health at safety issues, at iba pang produkto na may misdeclaration para makaiwas sa bayarin at mga buwis sa gobyerno.

Layunin ng kautusan na pabilisin ang pag-inspeksiyon sa lahat ng mga imported na produktong pumapasok sa bansa, palakasin ang pambansang seguridad at bantayan ang Karapatan ng mga konsyumer. Kasama sa AO 23 ang layunin na pangalagaan ang kapaligiran laban sa mga substandard at mapanganib na imported products.

“A single electronic invoicing system controlled by the Philippine Government is necessary to effectively monitor international trade transactions of all imported goods,” sabi ng Pangulo sa kanyang kautusan.

Sa pamamagitan ng AO 23 ay itatatag ang Committee for Pre-border Technical Verification and Cross-border Electronic invoicing na pamumunuan ng kalihim ng Department of Finance.

Kasama sa komite ang mga kalihim ng Department of Agriculture, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Energy, Department of Health, Department of Environment and Natural Resources at Department of Information and Communications Technology.

Kasama rin sa magiging miyembro ang Commissioner ng Bureau of Customs, Director General ng Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, at dalawang kinatawan mula sa mga kinikilalang industry associations.

Ang BOC ang magpapatupad ng electronic invoicing system alinsunod sa international standards at umiiral na batas at mga regulasyon. (Aileen Taliping/Prince Golez)

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/05/19/pbbm-pinatutukan-mga-imported-pagkain/>

Gobyerno naghahanda na vs La Niña

Joy Cantos

May 20, 2024 | 12:00am

Sinabi ni Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. na handa silang magkaloob ng suporta sa mga ahensiya sa price monitoring ng mga pangunahing bilihin at pangangailangan.

MANILA, Philippines — Nagbabala si Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. na tutugisin ang mga hoarders at price manipulators na nagsasamantala sa mga konsyumer ngayong naghahanda na ang gobyerno sa pagpasok ng La Niña phenomenon.

Sinabi ni Teodoro na handa silang magkaloob ng suporta sa mga ahensiya sa price monitoring ng mga pangunahing bilihin at pangangailangan.

Ayon kay Teodoro, chairperson ng Presidential Task Force on El Niño, ang pagsawata sa pagmamanipla ng presyo at pagpapanagot sa mga hoarders ay kabilang sa mga magiging tugon at prayoridad ng gobyerno.

“Access to affordable basic commodities such as rice is exceptionally crucial to millions of Filipino consumers. Any sudden fluctuation in the price of rice resonates on the daily lives of Filipinos,” saad ni Teodoro.

Anuman ang suportang kailangan ng Department of Trade and Industry at Department of Agriculture ay handa silang umasiste sa mga ito.

Binigyang diin ng Kalihim ang matinding pangangailangan na mapigilan ang pagsirit ng presyo ng mga pangunahing bilihin sa merkado upang protektahan ang mga konsyumer laban sa mga mapagsamantalang negosyante sa panahon na dumaranas ng hagupit ng La Niña ang bansa.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2024/05/20/2356418/gobyerno-naghahanda-na-vs-la-nia>