

MANILA BULLETIN:

Philippine livestock production to rise despite El Niño, says DA

BY [JEL SANTOS](#)

May 7, 2024 05:32 PM



Agriculture Undersecretary for Livestock Deogracias Victor Savellano (MANILA BULLETIN PHOTO/ JEL SANTOS)

The livestock production in the Philippines is expected to increase despite the devastation brought about by the El Niño phenomenon that led to the death of some livestock across the country.

In an ambush interview, DA Undersecretary for Livestock Deogracias Victor Savellano said the dry spell will not cause significant loss in the livestock industry.

“Kami positive kami na tataas [ang livestock production] kasi may programa tayong inimplement, eh, then ‘yung mga nakita naming challenges noon binibigyan namin ng solusyon (We are positive that the livestock production will increase because we have a program that we implemented, and the challenges we observed before, we are now providing solutions for),” he said when asked about the impact of the phenomenon to the domestic livestock.

“I’m very sure that it will go up,” he added.

Savellano said the program they implemented is “not just about stocks.”

He noted that they also took into account biologics, medicines, food, and water sources among others.

“May mga standards kaming sinusunod na dun then yung monitoring system namin before after bidding then plus monitoring nakikita namin na talagang tama yung naibibigay sa ating mga magsasaka (We follow standards there, and our monitoring system, before and after bidding, along with ongoing monitoring, shows that what we provide to our farmers is indeed correct),” the DA official stated.

The agriculture department, he said, also rolled out additional stocks to farmers.

“Ang nagpapatal lang yung proseso ng gobyerno na ang daming documents na kailangan then kailangan din pag-aralan. Iyong mga policy and guidelines kailangan ayusin, pag-usapan pero ‘yun nga ongoing na yung processing ng mga papers once na okay na then ro-roll out na kami (It's just the government process that delays it, with so many documents needed and requiring study. The policies and guidelines need to be sorted out and discussed, but once the processing of the papers is ongoing and everything is okay, then we'll roll out),” Savellano lamented.

“We will be distributing ‘yung mga para sa multiplier, nucleus, then may mga individual din na programs (We will be distributing those for the multiplier, nucleus, and there are also individual programs,” he continued.

However, he admitted that the lack of feed and forage due to El Niño would hinder the increase in the country’s livestock production.

Per the recent data of the DA, the damage caused by the El Niño to livestock and poultry has reached P7.93 million.

The data of the agency showed that a total of 391 livestock and poultry died due to the extreme heat.

On May 2, the DA said El Niño damage to agriculture has swelled to P5.90 billion, affecting 113,585 farmers and fisherfolk.

The 12 regions affected are: Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, MIMAROPA, Bicol Region, Western Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Davao Region, and Soccsksargen.

The agency said it has provided a total of P2.18 billion in interventions for devastated farmers and fisherfolk.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/7/philippine-livestock-production-to-rise-despite-el-nino-says-da>

MANILA BULLETIN:

'Puro tayo porma, kwento': Erwin Tulfo blasts Senate version of Rice Tarrification Law amendments bill

BY [ELLSON QUISMORIO](#)

May 8, 2024 04:56 AM

AT A GLANCE

- ACT-CIS Party-list Rep. Erwin Tulfo has vented his apparent frustration over the Senate when it comes to the proposal to amend Republic Act (RA) No.11203 or the Rice Tarrification Law (RTL), with the end goal of reducing of the price of rice.



ACT-CIS Party-list Rep. Erwin Tulfo (PPAB)

ACT-CIS Party-list Rep. Erwin Tulfo has vented his apparent frustration over the Senate when it comes to the proposal to amend Republic Act (RA) No.11203 or the Rice Tarrification Law (RTL), with the end goal of reducing of the price of rice.

“We're facing another uphill battle here. Nakalusot nga ho dito. Ang problem ho namin ngayon, is the Senate. Iba ho ‘yung version nila e (The bill is progressing here. Our problem right now is the Senate. They have a different version),” Tulfo told House of Representatives reporters Tuesday, May 7.

Earlier that day, the House Committee on Agriculture and Food approved the substitute bill on the proposed RTL amendments after just a few hearings.

A key revision to RTL that's being pursued is the restoration of the National Food Authority's

(NFA) power to directly sell relatively cheaper rice to the market. Such will pave the way for the return of "NFA rice".

"Yung version ho ng Senate, walang laman, eh. Eh, wala. Ang binabanggit doon na NFA. So, pumasa man ho dito, pagdating mo sa kanila, wala ring mangyayari," said Tulfo, the House deputy majority leader for communications.

(The Senate version of the bill is practically empty. There's nothing. About the mention of NFA. So, even if it gets passed here, nothing will happen once it gets transmitted to them.)

He then suggested to the senators to simply adopt the House version of the RTL amendments.

"Pakiusap po namin sa Senate, baka pwede naman ho, sumabay na lang ho kayo sa version namin. Isantabi ho muna natin 'yung mga business interest, personal interest natin. Unahin po muna natin 'yung interest ng mga tao, ng nakakarami ho sa atin," he said.

(Our appeal to the Senate: maybe you can just ride on our version. Let's set aside our business interest and personal interests for the meantime. Let's prioritize the interest of the people, who outnumber us.)

"Otherwise, wala ho mangyayari. Kaya tayo napupulaan ng taumbayan. Puro tayo porma. Puro tayo kwento. Why don't we just do our work? Let us unite. Para sa isang mission, ang mission natin, everybody can buy rice," Tulfo added.

(Otherwise, nothing will happen. That's why the people criticize us. All we do is posturing. All we do is talk. Why don't we just do our work? Let us unite. For one mission, and that mission is, everybody can buy rice.)

Some senators are worried that resorting the NFA's mandate to sell rice could lead to corruption in the agency.

But Tulfo said that corruption should instead be the worry of the agencies.

"Hindi na ho problema ng taumbayan 'yan (That's no longer the problem of the people). That is not the problem of the people. The problem of the people right now, cheap rice. And we have to answer this immediately," he said.

"We have to do something about this. Yes. Sayang po pagiging representatives natin. Sayang po pagiging senator natin (Our position as representatives and senators would go to waste) if we can't do anything. We have the power in our hands," he underscored.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/8/puro-tayo-porma-kwento-erwin-tulfo-blasts-senate-version-of-rice-tarrification-law-amendments-bill>

MANILA BULLETIN:

‘A House that listens’: Solons laud panel approval of Rice Tariffication Law amendments bill

BY [DEXTER BARRO II](#)

May 7, 2024 03:39 PM

AT A GLANCE

- Members of the House of Representatives hailed on Tuesday, May 7 the swift passage at the committee level of a measure that aims to amend the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) for the purpose of making rice more affordable for the poor.



House of Representatives (Ellson Quismorio/ MANILA BULLETIN)

Members of the House of Representatives hailed on Tuesday, May 7 the swift passage at the committee level of a measure that aims to amend the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) for the purpose of making rice more affordable for the poor.

During Tuesday’s regular press conference, Deputy Majority Leader and PBA Party-list Rep. Migs Nograles said that the bill’s approval proved that the lower chamber was a “House that listens”.

“We listen, you see that the House listens and the House really acts right away on these important issues and addresses these issues in the best way that we can,” said Nograles.

“Under the leadership of Speaker Martin Romualdez and of course, the leadership of the President na pinapakinggan naman natin yung direksyon ng (that we listen to the direction of) administration which at the end of the day, will really go back to the people,” she added.

That same morning, the House Committee on Agriculture and Food approved the still unnumbered substitute bill that sought to amend Republic Act (RA) No.11203, which embodies the RTL.

A vital revision to the RTL is the proposed revival of the National Food Authority's (NFA) authority to directly sell cheaper rice to the market.

“Mahirap magutom ang isang tao, mahirap din na since marami talagang kumakain ng bigas at mahal ito (It is difficult for a person to go hungry, it is also difficult for many people to eat rice since it's expensive). It's good to trickle down,” Nograles said.

For Zambales 1st district Rep. Jefferson Khonghun, the proposed amendments will help balance the financial assistance to farmers together with ensuring that the public, especially the poor Filipinos, can easily avail relatively inexpensive rice.

Meanwhile, fellow “Young Guns” member, 1-RIDER Party-list Rep. Rodge Gutierrez says he welcomes the amendments with "cautious optimism".

“Of course, we understand yung fears natin dito yung binabalik yung NFA. Alam naman po natin na issue dati yung NFA, but this seems to be the drive that we need right now kasi nga may problema tayong dito sa presyo,” said Gutierrez.

(Of course, we understand our fears here that the NFA is eyeing a return. We know that the NFA was an issue before, but this seems to be the drive that we need right now because we have a problem here with the prices.)

Gutierrez noted that even before President Marcos announced his intention to certify the measure as urgent, the House of Representatives already started to prioritize the bill.

“It's just in line with what we've always said, we're just putting action to our words na kapag priority ito ng (that when it is a priority of the) House, we do everything that we can within our powers,” he said.

While the House members move closer to amending the RTL, some of their colleagues in the Senate are seemingly in opposition to the move. These include Senators Imee Marcos and Cynthia Villar.

For his part, Bukidnon 2nd district Rep. Jonathan Keith Flores has asked the senators to present their basis of opposition to the amendments, which he says will significantly lower rice prices.

“Where moving in that direction to look for ways and we thought that this would be the best to do that. So, if the Senate opposes it or some Senators oppose, we would also like to know why there is an opposition to these moves,” Flores underscored.

Nograles says these senators should instead propose solutions that they deem are better than the current action of the House.

At the end of the day, it's all for the benefit of the Filipino people, she said.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/7/a-house-that-listens-solons-laud-panel-approval-of-rice-tariffication-law-amendments-bill>

MANILA BULLETIN:

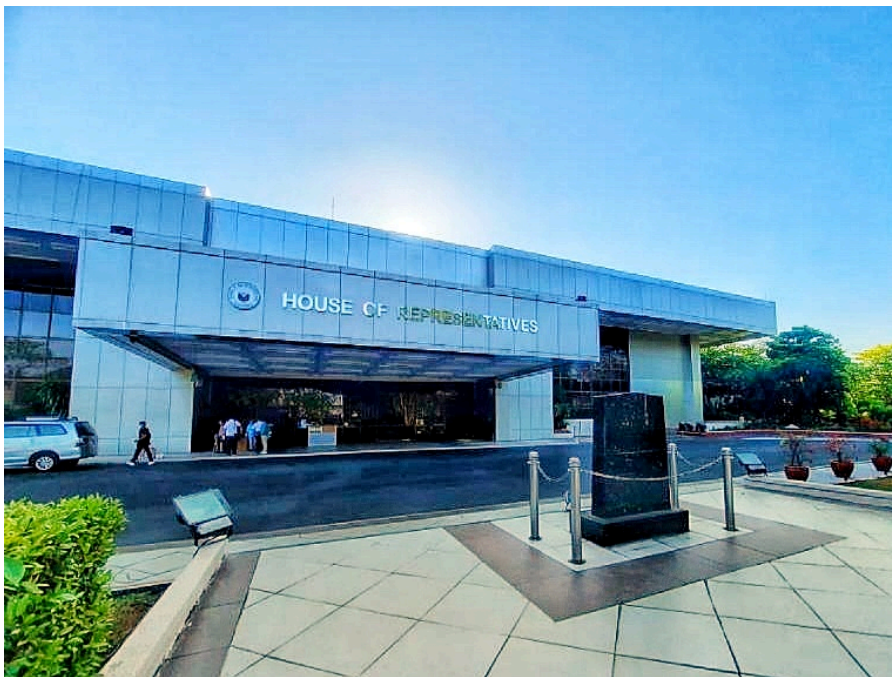
Rice Tarrification Law amendments bill moves swifly in House

BY [ELLSON QUISMORIO](#)

May 7, 2024 02:00 PM

AT A GLANCE

- The unnumbered substitute bill proposing amendments to Republic Act (RA) No.11203 or the Rice Tarrification Law (RTL) hurdled the Committee on Agriculture and Food and the Committee on Ways and Means in the House of Representatives in the same morning.
- A key revision to RTL that's being pursued is the restoration of the National Food Authority's (NFA) power to directly sell relatively cheaper rice to the market.



House of Representatives (Ellson Quismorio/ MANILA BULLETIN)

The House of Representatives took a huge step toward its goal of significantly reducing prices of rice for the sake of poor Filipinos on Tuesday morning, May 7.

This, after the Committee on Agriculture and Food chaired by Quezon 1st district Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga approved the substitute bill calling for the amendments to Republic Act (RA) No.11203 or the Rice Tarrification Law (RTL).

Shortly after that same morning, the Committee on Ways and Means also approved the still

unnumbered bill by virtue of it being a tariff measure. The ways and means panel is chaired by Albay 2nd district Rep. Joey Salceda.

It was only last week when Speaker Martin Romualdez, the leader of the 300-plus strong House, announced the chamber's intention to expedite the bills for RTL amendments, given that high prices of the staple grain continue to be a burden on Filipinos.

A key revision to RTL that's being pursued is the restoration of the National Food Authority's (NFA) power to directly sell relatively cheaper rice to the market. This will pave the way for the return of "NFA rice".

"As promised by the Speaker, this is a priority, that we will pass an amended RTL...Wherein we will ensure that there will be the presence of NFA to stabilize the price of rice. Para ito nga po (So that this), will be affordable to our countrymen," Enverga told reporters after the committee hearing.

"Kinakailangan that they should also be there para panlaban din po ng gobyerno sa mga mapagsamantalang mga traders sa merkado," he noted.

(The NFA must be there to serve as government counterbalance to the abusive traders in the market.)

Enverga says the substitute bill seeks to ensure NFA's presence in the market as a way to temper runaway prices of rice.

"I think we are still required to go through the Committee on Appropriations. But again, we thank Speaker Martin Romualdez na binibigyan niya talaga ng importansya ito (really giving importance to this)."

For months, Salceda has blamed local rice prices for the spike in inflation rate. April's inflation rate of 3.8 percent, a slight uptick from the previous month's 3.7 percent inflation rate, was no exception.

The substitute bill is expected to breeze through second and third reading in the House plenary once it gets endorsed by the committee.

The second regular session of the ongoing 19th Congress will adjourn sine die on May 22.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/7/r-ice-tarrification-law-amendments-bill-moves-swiftly-in-house>

Salceda: Inflation rate management must be focused on rice

BY [ELLSON QUISMORIO](#)

May 7, 2024 10:38 AM

AT A GLANCE

- Economist-solon Albay 2nd district Rep. Joey Salceda says all efforts to manage the country's inflation rate must be focused on the staple food of rice.



Albay 2nd district Rep. Joey Salceda (Facebook)

Economist-solon Albay 2nd district Rep. Joey Salceda says all efforts to manage the country's inflation rate must be focused on the staple food of rice.

Salceda, chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means, gave this input following the slight increase in inflation rate from 3.7 percent in March to 3.8 percent in April.

"It's still all about rice. The inflation rates of all major commodities are in the single digits, except rice, and rice alone," he said.

"The management of this rate -- within our inflation targets, but still painful for the poorest households -- must be centered primarily on rice," reckoned Salceda.

The House of Representatives under Speaker Martin Romualdez is leading the effort to amend Republic Act (RA) No.11203 or the Rice Tarrification Law (RTL).

The proposed amendments, which include restoring the National Food Authority's (NFA) power to directly sell

relatively cheaper rice to the market, is expected to give massive relief to consumers.

"The [RTL] amendments, certified as urgent by President Marcos, will improve the way we manage the massive P29 billion tariff revenues from rice imports so that it helps local farmers and consumers in a more direct way," Salceda said.

"The House acts on PBBM's instructions today, with the House Committee on Ways and Means approving the measures from the agriculture committee this morning," he bared.

He continued: "Moving forward, while corn prices are still decelerating year on year, I have observed an acceleration of poultry prices which will likely reflect on May figures when they come. Corn inflation will likely be positive next month. This is something to watch out for."

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/7/salceda-inflation-rate-management-must-be-focused-on-rice>

DOF: Rice prices ease after six-month upward trend

BY [CHINO S. LEYCO](#)

May 7, 2024 05:20 PM

The Department of Finance (DOF) noted a slowdown in rice inflation for April, ending a streak of six months of acceleration, largely driven by the falling global price of this essential food item.

Despite rice continuing to be the main contributor to headline inflation with 2.1 percentage points, the rate of price growth for rice eased for the first time since October last year to 23.9 percent in April from 24.4 percent in the previous month.

In particular, the DOF noted a reduction in prices for well-milled rice, which now stands at P56.42 per kilo compared to the previous price of P56.93.

Likewise, special rice, priced at P64.68 was down from the previous month's P64.79.

"The easing of rice inflation in the local market was mainly due to a gradual decline in the world price of rice during February and March of 2024," the DOF said.

Rice is a major food for more than half of the global population and a staple for 80 percent to 85 percent of Filipinos.

In Filipino households with lower incomes, rice is not just a staple food item but also the primary source of calories for many families.

Over the years, the Philippines has solidified its position as a major player in the global rice import market, currently holding the top spot as the world's largest importer of rice.

In response to soaring rice prices, the Marcos administration is exploring revisions to a recent law that restricted the government from intervening in the domestic rice market.

President Marcos announced on Monday his intention to prioritize the amendment of Republic Act (RA) 11203, commonly known as the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), to grant the government the authority to address the issue of high rice prices.

The proposed changes are aimed at empowering the government to take action to lower the market price of rice.

Congress is currently deliberating on reinstating the National Food Authority's (NFA) ability to purchase and sell rice at prices below those set by commercial retailers, with an emphasis on giving preference to locally-produced rice over imports.

The RTL, which became law in 2019, removed the NFA's power in this area and eliminated quantitative restrictions on rice imports, enabling private rice traders to freely import any quantity of rice.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/7/dof-rice-prices-ease-after-six-month-upward-trend>

Marcos admin done with 4,700 flood control projects; 4,000 others ongoing

BY [RAYMUND ANTONIO](#)

May 7, 2024 08:39 PM

The Marcos administration has already completed some 4,700 flood control projects from July 2022 to 2024, with 4,000 others currently being implemented, Palace press briefer Daphne Oseña-Paez said on Tuesday, May 7.

During a Palace press briefing after a sectoral meeting with President Marcos, Oseña-Paez disclosed that the government has been preparing for flood control since the Chief Executive took office.

“Maraming completed projects ang Marcos administration (The Marcos administration has completed many projects) from July 2022 to 2024, mga (around) 4,700 flood control projects have been completed,” she said.

Marcos assumed office since June 2022.

“There [are] 4,200 ongoing projects including big-ticket projects and then of course some proposed ones are in the line,” she added.

The sectoral meeting centered on discussions with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and other concerned government agencies about investment opportunities in the water sector.

There, the President expressed his concern about the flood control and management projects, and suggested that these projects be integrated into water conservation efforts.

National Irrigation Administration (NIA) head Eduardo Guillen said that the agency already finished constructing three dams, which they have started building before the Covid-19 pandemic.

“So, actually, mabilis lang naman iyon. ‘Yung mga nasa 100 meters na dam kaya nating tapusin iyan ng three years lamang. And of course mayroon din tayong mga 30 meters na dam mga one year to two years lamang po iyan (that’s just fast. The 100 meters dam can be completed in just three years. And of course we have 30 meters dam that takes only one to two years),” he explained.

This month, NIA will be turning over projects in Bohol and Quezon, as well as the Jalaur Dam in Iloilo, Guillen added.

He furthered that there are a lot of projects in Ilocos, too.

Earlier, the DENR-Water Resources. Management Office (DENR-WRMO), NIA, and other government agencies identified 247 potential water projects with an aim to repurpose excess

irrigation water for other uses.

These projects were offered for public private partnerships (PPPs) and presented to local and international stakeholders in the Water Investment Forum held last February.

Currently, the government has already received more than 90 letters of interest from local government units and six major water companies.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/7/marcos-admin-done-with-4-700-flood-control-projects-4-000-others-ongoing>

MANILA BULLETIN:

PBBM wants water conservation included in flood control projects

BY [RAYMUND ANTONIO](#)

May 7, 2024 01:28 PM

President Marcos has instructed the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to integrate water conservation into its flood control and management projects to ensure that flood water can be reutilized for irrigation, water supply, and power generation, Secretary Manuel Bonoan said on Tuesday, May 7.



President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. presides over a sectoral meeting on Natural Resources Development Transparency Strategy in Malacañang on Tuesday, May 7, 2024. (Photo from the Presidential Communications Office via Facebook)

In a Palace press briefing after his sectoral meeting with the President, the DPWH chief divulged that one of the topics discussed was how not to waste the flood collected.

“The President asked me that, you know, I think we have to integrate our flood control management programs with the other sectors so that the water that we manage in the flood control do not go to the sea indirectly and to the extent possible that we have to conserve and utilize it for the other purposes like for irrigation, water supply and power if necessary,” Bonoan said.

When asked by Marcos where the water will go from the flood control projects, the official answered him that it will be coursed through the sea.

The President, however, stressed that the flood water needs to be conserved and reused for other purposes.

“So, this is a direct instruction of the President to me that we have to integrate all these components in the... particularly in the major projects, flood control projects of the department we’ve been undertaking,” the official said.

The agency will be coordinating with the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) on its flood control projects that have to be integrated with water conservation facilities.

According to Bonoan, the DPWH has an allocation of P300 billion this year for locally-funded and foreign-assisted flood control projects in the whole country.

“I think this is a good source of what the President calls the integrated water resource management program for irrigation, water supply, and the power if necessary,” he said.

Palace press briefer Daphne Oseña-Paez added that the Marcos administration already completed 4,700 flood control projects from July 2022 to 2024. There are also 4,200 ongoing projects, including big-ticket projects.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/7/pbbm-wants-water-conservation-included-in-flood-control-projects>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

House panel OKs rice tariffication amendments

[Sheila Crisostomo](#) - The Philippine Star

May 8, 2024 | 12:00am



Workers unload sacks of rice at a warehouse in Tondo, Manila on May 7, 2024 STAR / Ryan Baldemor

MANILA, Philippines — A day after President Marcos certified as urgent the proposed amendments to the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), a House committee approved yesterday a bill amending the measure.

The House panel on agriculture and food, chaired by Quezon Rep. Mark Enverga, has approved a substitute bill that would restore the power of the National Food Authority (NFA) to buy and sell rice to consumers.

Speaker Martin Romualdez thanked the committee for the quick approval of the measure. “It is important that we provide our people, especially the poor, access to rice that is much cheaper than market prices,” he said.

Romualdez said such access would be provided by restoring the mandate of the NFA not only to buy palay from farmers but to sell rice directly to consumers.

He earlier estimated that with this, the prices of rice could fall from P10 to P15 per kilo.

The Speaker is eyeing to have RTL amendments approved by the lower chamber on third and final reading before Congress goes on its annual sine die adjournment this month.

According to Enverga, the still unnumbered substitute bill would be forwarded to the House committee on ways and means to discuss its tax provisions and to the appropriation panel for budget provisions.

In an ambush interview, Enverga said the presence of the NFA will be established in the market to stabilize the price of rice. He noted that NFA would be ready to intervene to bring down the prices of rice in the market, especially in emergency situations and this will be the government's tool to counter unscrupulous traders.

The lawmaker underscored the need for the local price coordinating councils and National Price Coordinating Council to monitor prices and to coordinate NFA's market intervention.

For his part, Deputy majority leader and ACT-CIS partylist Rep. Erwin Tulfo claimed that House efforts to bring down the price of rice could get derailed in the Senate.

"I am asking our counterparts in the Senate. Maybe they could tweak their version nearer to ours. Even just the NFA, let's not talk about the others," Tulfo added.

P29/K rice by August

The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) is eyeing to sell rice at P29 per kilo by August as it is seen to produce some 100 million kilos of the staple from a contract farming deal.

NIA administrator Eduardo Guillen said the rice would be sold in areas like Metro Manila, Cebu and Davao through the outlets of Kadiwa, a government program that seeks to help farmers and small businesses sell their goods and provide consumers access to lower-priced products.

"Based on our estimate, we can sell at P29 (per kilo) by August. And we have around 100 million kilos of rice that we are projected to produce by August," Guillen said at a Malacañang press briefing.

Once the rice is available in the Kadiwa outlets, each family may buy up to ten kilos, the NIA chief said.

As of yesterday, the price of local commercial rice ranges from P46 to P65 per kilo while that of imported commercial rice ranges from P48 to P65 per kilo, according to the agriculture department.

Guillen said irrigators have also started to sell rice for P20 per kilo at the Kadiwa outlets of the NIA.

“It is an initiative of our irrigators’ association. They said they are thankful for the numerous assistance they received from our government. They are offering P20 rice,” he said.

When he was running for president in 2022, President Marcos vowed to bring down the price of rice to P20 per kilo to make the staple accessible to ordinary Filipinos. While critics claim that the campaign promise is not attainable, the agriculture department still regards it as an “aspiration” and a “target.”

Rice, corn investments

The NFA would be given the power to regulate foreign investments in the rice and corn industries, based on a proposed amendment to the RTL.

During the fourth day of the deliberations of lawmakers on the proposed amendments to the RTL, Albay Rep. Joey Salceda proposed that the NFA shall be given the powers to regulate foreign investments in the two agricultural industries.

Under Salceda’s proposal, the NFA will have the power to authorize alien individuals or organizations to engage in the rice and/or corn industry subject to certain conditions.

The state-run grains agency will also have the power to certify the need for foreign investment in the rice and corn industries as well as prescribe minimum total investment required.

Salceda argued that at present there is no government agency overseeing foreign investments in rice and corn.

Salceda also proposed that the Bureau of the Treasury certifies the total tariff collections from rice imports not later than 30 days from the end of each fiscal year. This is earlier than the April 15 deadline given to the Bureau of Customs to certify the total rice tariff collections made in the preceding fiscal year. — **Alexis Romero, Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas, Delon Porcalla**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/05/08/2353413/house-panel-oks-rice-tariffication-amendments>

Inflation up slightly, but still within target

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

May 8, 2024 | 12:00am



Vendors are seen selling various fresh produce at the Baguio City Market on April 25, 2024. STAR / Andy Zapata Jr.

April's 3.8 percent print beats most forecasts

MANILA, Philippines — The rate of increase in the average prices of consumer goods and services typically purchased by Filipinos rose slightly to 3.8 percent in April from 3.7 percent in March, driven by faster increases in food and transport costs, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

This was the third straight month that inflation picked up, but the April inflation print was lower than the 6.6 percent in the same month last year and beat the forecast of over four percent made earlier by economists.

It was also within the 3.5 to 4.3 percent forecast of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

In a press briefing, National Statistician Dennis Mapa noted that the food and non-alcoholic beverages group was the primary driver of the higher overall inflation in April. Inflation for the heavily weighted commodity group posted a faster uptick of six percent in April from the previous month's 5.6 percent.

Inflation for food alone rose to 6.3 percent in April from 5.7 percent in March due mainly to the faster increase in vegetables, tubers, plantains, cooking bananas and pulses at 4.3 percent in April from 2.5 percent in the previous month.

Rice inflation eased, but remained elevated at 23.9 percent in April from 24.4 percent in March.

Mapa said the lower rice inflation might be due to the declines in world market prices in February and March after these peaked in January.

He also said two of the three varieties of rice in the country being tracked by the PSA – well-milled and special rice – registered slight declines.

The average price of well-milled rice went down to P56.42 per kilo in April from the previous month's P56.44 per kilo, while the average price of special rice decreased to P64.68 per kilo in April from P64.75 per kilo in March.

The average price of regular milled rice, meanwhile, increased to P51.25 per kilo in April from P51.11 in March.

“It would depend on local production and supply from the world market if it (rice inflation) would continuously go down,” Mapa said.

Also driving the higher inflation was the transport commodity group, which posted a faster uptick of 2.6 percent in April from 2.1 percent in March.

Core inflation, which excludes certain food and energy items, slowed to 3.2 percent in April from the previous month's 3.4 percent.

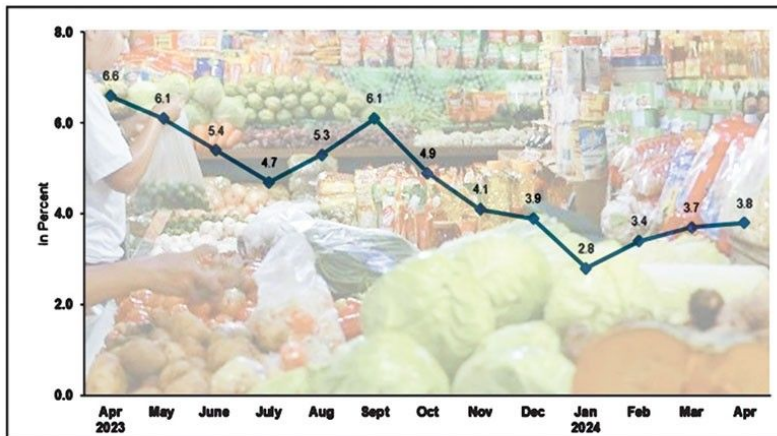
Despite April inflation remaining within the government's target range, National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio Balisacan emphasized the need to be vigilant.

“We are taking comprehensive measures to ensure food security amid geopolitical concerns and weather patterns worsened by climate change,” Balisacan said.

According to Balisacan, the government's strategies are aimed at boosting productivity, building the agriculture sector's resilience and making food systems efficient.

He also highlighted the need to augment local production during shortages to ensure affordable and sufficient food supply.

Headline Inflation Rates in the Philippines, All Items (2018=100)



Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, Retail Price Survey of Commodities for the Generation of Consumer Price Index

“Food insecurity extends beyond economic strain – it directly impacts the well-being of all Filipinos. Failing to augment local production during shortages perpetuates poverty and exacerbates vulnerability,” Balisacan said.

Headline inflation averaged 3.4 percent from January to April, well within the BSP’s two to four percent target range.

The central bank remains optimistic that average inflation for 2024 and 2025 will stay within the target band despite upside risks.

The BSP sees headline inflation breaching the target range temporarily in the next two quarters due to the negative impact of weather conditions on agricultural output as well as positive base effects.

“Nonetheless, the BSP expects average inflation to return to the target range for full year 2024 and 2025,” the central bank said.

Based on its assessment at its policy review on April 8, the BSP sees full-year inflation at 3.8 percent this year before easing further to 3.2 percent in 2025. Both forecasts are significantly below the six percent average in 2023.

However, if risks materialize, the BSP expects inflation to hit four percent in 2024 and 3.5 percent in 2025.

The BSP said risks to the inflation outlook continue to lean toward the upside.

“Possible further price pressures are linked mainly to higher transport charges, elevated food prices, higher electricity rates, and global oil prices. Potential minimum wage adjustments could also give rise to second-round effects,” it said.

The Monetary Board will also consider the April inflation data and the first-quarter gross domestic product (GDP) output, along with other information, during its next policy review on May 16.

After hiking policy rates by 450 basis points from May 2022 to October 2023, the BSP has kept the benchmark interest rate at a 17-year high of 6.50 percent to tame inflation, anchor inflation expectations and stabilize the peso.

Despite high interest rates, economic growth prospects remain intact for 2024 and 2025, the central bank also said.

“GDP growth is projected to remain robust in the first half, decelerate in the second half due to positive real interest rates following the BSP’s tightening cycle, and subsequently pick up in 2025,” the BSP said.

“This outlook is consistent with the expected shift to a slightly negative output gap in 2024 to 2025, suggesting that the growth momentum of the economy remains firm and that a hard landing appears to be unlikely,” it added.

The Philippine economy grew by 5.5 percent in 2023, falling short of the government’s six to seven percent target. The PSA will release first-quarter GDP data on May 9.

Oikonomia Advisory & Research Inc. president and chief economist John Paolo Rivera said inflation may continue to pick up “due to the full effects of El Niño on agricultural production, prompting supply constraints on food products.”

For his part, Oxford Economics economist Makoto Tsuchiya said inflation is expected to edge higher in May, largely due to base effects.

“Even with subdued sequential price momentum, the annual inflation rate will hover around four percent in the coming few months, before declining towards the end of the year,” he said, noting upside risks remain, particularly on commodity prices including fuel and rice, with high uncertainty around the supply-side.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/05/08/2353351/inflation-slightly-still-within-target>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

NSC: Aerial resupply mission in West Philippine Sea eyed

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) - Philstar.com

May 7, 2024 | 3:07pm



This frame grab from video footage taken and released on March 25, 2024 by the Philippine Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (PCG/BFAR) shows a Chinese helicopter hovering as Philippine scientists inspect a cay near the Philippine-held Thitu Island, in the Spratly Islands, in the disputed South China Sea. Deputy foreign ministers from China and the Philippines held a tense phone call on March 25, 2024, Beijing said, after Manila summoned a Chinese envoy over "aggressive actions" by the China Coast Guard in the contested South China Sea.

Photo by Handout / Philippine Coast Guard / AFP

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MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines is exploring aerial supply missions to Filipino troops at Ayungin Shoal in the West Philippine Sea, a top security official said on Tuesday.

National Security Council Assistant Director General Jonathan Malaya said there will be adjustments to the government's resupply efforts to troops stationed at BRP Sierra Madre, the grounded warship that serves as the country's outpost in the West Philippine Sea.

According to Malaya, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ordered for "certain adjustments."

"There is an operational mix that is available to us. We can do other types of resupply other than a naval resupply. We can do an airdrop, we can do other just to be able to

resupply our troops and keep BRP Sierra Madre in working condition," Malaya said in an interview with ABS-CBN News Channel.

"Those adjustments, of course, are there so that we are no longer placed in a difficult position when we do our resupply missions," he added.

Last week, the Philippines said the China Coast Guard (CCG) water cannoned and rammed vessels of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) headed to Bajo de Masinloc, also known as Scarborough Shoal, to assist Filipino fishers in the area.

Marcos on Monday rejected a proposal to equip Philippine vessels patrolling the West Philippine Sea with water cannons to assert the country's sovereignty in the waterway. The president stressed that the "last thing we would like is to raise tensions."

On Tuesday, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said that no cabinet-level official had approved a Chinese proposal concerning the Ayungin Shoal after Beijing claimed that Manila had agreed on a "new model" for handling their territorial dispute.

It also stressed that only the president can authorize agreements entered into by the Philippine government on matters pertaining to the West Philippine Sea and South China Sea.

"BRP Sierra Madre is not going anywhere. If the Chinese think that it's going to fade into the sea anytime soon, no it's not," Malaya said.

China claims almost the entirety of the South China Sea, rejecting competing claims from the Philippines and other countries, despite an international court ruling that found its assertions baseless.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/05/07/2353314/nsc-aerial-resupply-mission-west-philippine-sea-eyed>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Sugar farmers call for safety measures vs import liberalization

By: [Carla Gomez](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Inquirer Visayas](#) / 12:01 PM May 07, 2024



Sugar / INQUIRER FILES

BACOLOD CITY — An alliance of sugar groups has warned about an order issued by President Marcos Jr. removing non-tariff barriers on the importation of agricultural products that threatens to flood the country with excessive volumes of food imports.

In a position paper addressed to the President recently, the Sugar Council expressed concern that removing non-tariff barriers would result in import liberalization, leading to the death of local agricultural production at a time when most countries in the world are experiencing food supply shortage.

“The removal of the Sugar Regulatory Administration’s (SRA) existing importation rules and regulations, including its say on relevant fees and charges, would constitute a loss of SRA’s regulatory authority and revenues. This will undermine the agency’s wherewithal to fund programs that directly help sugarcane farmers,” it said.

The Sugar Council said it feared that Administrative Order No. 20 (AO 20) could undercut the ability of the SRA to deliver on its mandate under Executive Order No. 18, Series of 1986, which is “to establish and maintain such balanced relation between production and requirement of sugar and such marketing conditions as will ensure stabilized prices at a level reasonably profitable to the producers and fair to consumers.”

AO 20 issued on April 18 and took effect immediately enjoins government agencies to remove non-tariff barriers to make it easier to import agricultural products.

Among these agencies are the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Agriculture, particularly its attached agencies, the National Food Authority and the SRA.

While agreeing with the need to reduce red tape and further streamline importation procedures to help stabilize prices of basic necessities, the Sugar Council warned that, without “appropriate safety nets and effective competitiveness enhancement measures”, AO 20 cannot “ensure food security, maintain sufficient supply of agricultural products in the domestic market, and improve local production.”

The Sugar Council, an alliance of the Confederation of Sugar Producers Associations Inc., National Federation of Sugarcane Planters Inc. and Panay Federation of Sugarcane Farmers Inc., account for 67 percent of the country’s affiliated sugar production.

It urged the government to follow through with an administrative order that would lay down the necessary safety measures to make the sugar industry and the entire Philippine agriculture, competitive.

The Sugar Council reiterated its call for a Sugar Importation Program “anchored on the principles of transparency, inclusiveness, and timely and accurate data analysis in order to be properly calibrated in terms of volume and timing.”

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1937835/sugar-farmers-call-for-safety-measures-vs-import-liberalization>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Rice tariffication law amendments will enable NFA to stabilize prices – solon

By: [Gabriel Pabico Lahu](#) - Reporter / [@GabrielLahuINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 03:31 PM May 07, 2024



(INQUIRER FILE PHOTO / GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE)

MANILA, Philippines – The House committee-approved bill seeking to amend Republic Act No. 11203 or the [Rice Tariffication Law \(RTL\)](#) will allow the National Food Authority (NFA) to intervene and sell rice at a lower price during emergencies or when prices spike.

In an ambush interview on Tuesday, after the House of Representatives' committee on agriculture and food approved a substitute bill, Quezon 1st District Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga said that the bill will allow the presence of NFA so that rice will be affordable to the public.

The approval comes after several hearings conducted by the panel — which is headed by Enverga — on bills seeking changes to the RTL.

“We will ensure that there will be the presence of NFA to stabilize the price of rice. So that it will be affordable to our countrymen. They are also needed to be there so that the government can fight off traders taking advantage of the market situation,” he said.

“Well, in accordance with our bill, the presence of NFA is always there. So, it would depend on NFA — it could be subjective to the situation, it’s looming, they’re always there. So in areas and times where we see problems in the market, they have the power to enter so we can lower the prices,” he added.

When asked to clarify if NFA will now be present any time — which is a turn around from the RTL’s provisions barring NFA from selling rice directly — Enverga said it would depend on what the situation is for each locale.

“Well, actually, the emergency is there. And it’s up to the — the presence of the local price coordinating council is there so in the event that some provinces, some regions would encounter problems, they can trigger the emergency situation where the NFA can come in,” Enverga explained.

“It could be (NFA present without an emergency) but preferably, there should be an emergency. So in the declaration they should be there, it’s important that the local price coordinating council is active as well as the national price coordinating council, as provided for in the Price Act,” he added.

Deputy Majority Leader Erwin Tulfo — one of the lawmakers who pushed for the RTL amendments — said that the purpose of the NFA is still to stabilize prices.

“Let me just add to that. The purpose of the NFA here is to stabilize. If the prices of retailers are high, the NFA will enter. So, like right now, there is no emergency, but the way we look at it right now, the committee believes we are in an emergency situation, we’re at P56 (per kilogram) right? We need to bring it down,” he said.

During the committee’s hearing on Tuesday, House Bills (HB) No. 212, 405, 1562, 9030, and 9547 were consolidated to form the still unnumbered substitute bill.

It was Abono party-list Rep. Robert Raymund Estrella who made the motion to consolidate the bills, which was approved by Enverga after it was seconded.

According to Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, amending the RTL can result in [rice prices going down by P10 to P15](#) in June if the Rice Tariffication Law is amended.

Romualdez and Tulfo explained that the RTL amendment will allow NFA to directly sell rice to consumers — which was barred when the law was enacted.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1937948/rice-tariffication-law-amendments-will-enable-nfa-to-stabilize-prices-solon>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

House panels approve substitute bill amending Rice Tariffication Law

By: [Jeannette I. Andrade](#), [Krixia Subingsubing](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:15 AM May 08, 2024



INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

MANILA, Philippines — Two panels of the House of Representatives on Tuesday approved a substitute bill amending Republic Act No. 11203, or the rice tariffication law (RTL), particularly restoring the role of the National Food Authority (NFA) in stabilizing rice prices, a day after President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. certified the measure as urgent.

The House committee on agriculture and food, headed by Quezon Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga and Albay Rep. Joey Salceda's House committee on ways and means approved the draft law — a consolidation of House Bills 212, 405, 1562, 9030, 9547 and House Resolution No. 1614, which all seek to amend RA 11203.

Key provisions in the bill include the reinstatement of the NFA's price stabilization and supply regulation functions; authorizing the agency to buy local milled rice and directly import rice, as necessary, to ensure sufficient rice buffer stock and regulate

grains warehouses in the country; and extending the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) for another five years.

Marikina City Rep. Stella Quimbo sought the inclusion of “extraordinary price increase as well as possibly extraordinary supply shortage” in the definition of “emergency situations” within the context of buffer stocking in the RTL.

“We have the definition of buffer stock, optimal level of rice inventory that shall be maintained at any given time to be used for emergency situations. There’s reference to ‘emergency situations,’ however, it’s not defined,” Quimbo had noted.

She said including those conditions in the definition of emergency situations would also entail expanding the list of the NFA’s distribution outlets.

Funding, revenues

Nueva Ecija Rep. Mikaela Angela Suansing, a main proponent of the RTL review, told the ways and means committee that the most significant amendments to the law involved changes in the RCEF earmarking provisions.

“We’ve increased the lump sum base amount from the current P10 billion to P15 billion and we’ve changed the menu accordingly, so right now the mechanization component was increased from 50 percent to 53.5 percent, [while] the seeds component has been reduced from 30 percent to 28 percent; training, from 10 percent to 5 percent; and credit from 10 percent to 6 percent,” she added.

The RCEF has several key components: rice farm mechanization; inbred rice seed development, propagation and promotion; expanded rice credit assistance; and rice extension services, which pertain to training.

“In terms of tariff revenues, which we seek to allocate, it is currently averaging P29 billion every year so we have P15 billion, which we’re earmarking and then the rest of the ... excess tariff revenues would be allocated across the different menus, which includes crop diversification, provision of seeds and fertilizers, solar power irrigation, small water impounding programs, expanded crop insurance and other potential programs,” she said.

The ways and means panel added an amendment, which would allow the NFA to authorize the involvement of “alien individuals or organizations” in the rice or corn industry, certify the need for foreign investments at a prescribed minimum, and establish and extend the transfer of foreign equity participation to Filipino citizens.

‘Oversight functions’

Lawmakers welcomed with “cautious optimism” Marcos’ directive to fast-track the amendments to the RTL.

“The NFA has to make sure that we’re not just fooling around here,” PBA Rep. Margarita Nograles said. “I personally want to call on the NFA to make sure that once we restore that power back to them that they will do their job properly and they will not dupe the Filipino people.”

1-Rider Rep. Rodge Gutierrez said: “We will be passing the RTL [amendments] and you can rest assure that we will continue to monitor the situation through our oversight functions.”

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1938181/house-panels-approve-substitute-bill-amending-rice-tariffication-law>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

April inflation surprises at 3.8%

By: [Ian Nicolas P. Cigaral](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 03:09 AM May 08, 2024



INQUIRER PHOTO / GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

MANILA, Philippines — Inflation rose at a faster rate for the third straight month in April on the back of higher food prices and transport costs, although the reading came in lower than most market estimates.

Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), quickened to 3.8 percent last month, from 3.7 percent in March, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported on Tuesday.

The latest reading bucked market expectations that had pegged April price growth at a faster 4.1 percent. The figure also settled within the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) forecast range of 3.5 to 4.3 percent for April.

At the same time, this marked the fifth consecutive month that inflation stayed within the 2 to 4 percent target band of the BSP.

PSA data showed rice, a staple food of Filipino households, was still expensive after posting price gains of 23.9 percent in April, albeit a tad slower than 24.4 percent previously.

National Statistician Claire Dennis Mapa said lower world prices of the commodity, especially in exporting countries like Vietnam and Thailand, helped temper rice price inflation at home.

That pushed up food inflation to 6 percent last month from 5.6 percent previously, accounting for 75.7 percent of the uptick in the headline CPI.

Meanwhile, transport inflation inched up to 2.6 percent, from 2.1 percent, after local pump prices tracked higher global crude oil prices.

Breaching the target

Secretary Arsenio Balisacan of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) said the Marcos administration was taking steps to ensure food security amid geopolitical risks and extreme weather conditions that can crimp supply.

“The government’s major strategies aim to increase productivity, build the resilience of the agriculture sector, and improve the efficiency of food systems,” Balisacan said.

“Failing to augment local production during shortages perpetuates poverty and exacerbates vulnerability,” he added.

Despite the slower-than-expected price growth in April, BSP Governor Eli Remolona Jr. said the central bank still believes that inflation could “temporarily” overshoot its 2 to 4 percent target range in the next two quarters.

“The risks to the inflation outlook continue to lean toward the upside. Possible further price pressures are linked mainly to higher transport charges, elevated food prices, higher electricity rates, and global oil prices,” Remolona said.

“Potential minimum wage adjustments could also give rise to second-round effects,” he added. Second-round effects happen when wages increase in response to a fast increase in costs of living, which could lead to a dangerous cycle of high inflation once businesses hike their selling prices to offset bigger personnel costs.

The BSP will hold its next monetary policy meeting on May 16. Already, analysts are expecting the central bank to keep its policy rate unchanged at 6.5 percent, the tightest in 17 years, as inflation remains stubbornly high. This means borrowing costs would likely stay high for now to keep demand in line with limited supply and manage people’s inflation expectations. INQ

<https://business.inquirer.net/457703/april-inflation-surprises-at-3-8>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Solons seek suggestions from opponents to amend rice tariff law

By: [Gabriel Pabico Lala](#) - Reporter / [@GabrielLalaINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 08:11 PM May 07, 2024



PBA party-list Rep. Margarita “Migs” Nograles. PHOTO FROM FACEBOOK PAGE

MANILA, Philippines — Lawmakers from the House of Representatives have asked those who oppose the proposed amendments to Republic Act No. 11203, or the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), what other program can they suggest to bring rice prices down.

PBA party-list Rep. Margarita Nograles at a press briefing on Tuesday said that while they have no problem with people opposing the House’ legislative direction, suggestions must be made so that lawmakers can know what steps to make.

“They can oppose, of course they are entitled to that, but if they would oppose whatsoever I hope they give a reason to it, because many of our fellow Filipinos

struggle — so they should come up with a solution,” Nograles told reporters in the Batasang Pambansa complex.

“They cannot just oppose this measure, they should give a solution because at least here in the House, under the leadership of Speaker Martin Romualdez, we are proposing solutions to the immediate problems both short-term and long-term. So, if you are going to oppose it, I hope the good senators will propose solutions also that’s maybe better than what we are trying to propose here,” she added.

Zambales 1st District Rep. Jefferson Khonghun said that the RTL is being amended because some deficiencies were spotted — adding that there is no perfect law since the people who craft it are also imperfect.

“There is no perfect law and moreso, the people who come up with these laws are not perfect, that’s why we saw some shortcomings of this law, and we need to amend this law to improve the conditions and protect the welfare of our farmers,” Khonghun said.

“Of course we also want our consumers to have the right to the cheaper rice that can be offered by the National Food Authority (NFA). So, I hope they give a chance to the proposed amendments to the Rice Tariffication Law and I hope they do not close their minds to such proposals,” he added.

None of the lawmakers present specified who was against the amendments to the RTL, but it was Senator Cynthia Villar who warned that allowing NFA to sell cheaper rice directly to the public again might expose the agency to corruption.

Villar was one of the principal authors of the RTL, which was signed into law in 2019 by former president Rodrigo Duterte.

In response to Villar’s fears, Nueva Ecija 1st District Rep. Mikaela Suansing said last May 2 that amendments to the RTL would include safeguards — adding that there will be ways to task NFA with selling cheaper rice while monitoring its activities.

Meanwhile, Makabayan bloc member and Gabriela Rep. Arlene Brosas said that they prefer that the entire law be repealed, as it has harmed the livelihood of farmers.

Earlier, the House committee on agriculture and food approved a still unnumbered substitute bill, which will be a consolidation of five proposed amendments to the RTL. According to Quezon 1st District Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga, the committee-approved bill will allow NFA to intervene and sell rice at a lower price during emergencies or when costs are high.

Deputy Majority Leader Erwin Tulfo — one of the lawmakers who pushed for the RTL amendments — said that the purpose of the NFA is still to stabilize prices.

“Let me just add to that. The purpose of the NFA here is to stabilize. If the prices of retailers are high, the NFA will enter. So, like right now, there is no emergency, but the way we look at it right now, the committee believes we are in an emergency situation, we’re at P56 (per kilogram) right? We need to bring it down,” he said.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1938085/solons-seek-suggestions-from-opponents-to-amend-rice-tariff-law>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Proposed rice tariff law amendments approved at committee level

By: [Gabriel Pabico Lala](#) - Reporter / [@GabrielLalaINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 01:02 PM May 07, 2024

MANILA, Philippines — Proposed amendments to the Republic Act No. 11203 or the rice tariffication law (RTL) have been approved by the House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture and Food, with five bills being consolidated by the panel.

During the committee's hearing on Tuesday, House Bills (HB) No. 212, 405, 1562, 9030, and 9547 were consolidated to form the still unnumbered substitute bill.

It was Abono party-list Rep. Robert Raymund Estrella who made the motion to consolidate the bills.

“Mr. Chairman, we thank the committee for the many inputs being discussed, up to the night we are talking about this, but the public cannot wait for a long time before we have affordable commodities, especially with our basic staple like rice,” Estrella said.

“And so, subject to style and amendments, Mr. Chairman, I move to approve a substitute bill of House Bills No. 212, 405, 1562, 9030, 9547 and in consideration of House Resolution No. 1614,” he added.

Committee chair and Quezon 1st District Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga approved the motion after it was seconded.

House officials, including Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, have been calling for the amendment of the RTL. They say that if the law is amended, rice prices can go down by P10 to P15 in June.

Romualdez and Deputy Majority Leader Erwin Tulfo explained that the RTL amendment would allow NFA to directly sell rice to consumers — which was barred when the law was enacted.

READ: Romualdez: Rice prices down P15 if rice tariff law amended by June

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The committee approval comes a day after President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. vowed to [certify as urgent bills that seek to amend the law](#).

“The certification of this bill as urgent by President Marcos is a critical step forward in our concerted efforts to improve the livelihood of our local farmers and ensure food security for all Filipinos,” Romualdez said in a statement on Monday.

“This amendment will allow us to address the challenges and limitations of the current law, ensuring that it serves the best interest of the agricultural sector and the consumers,” he added.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1937860/proposed-rice-tariff-law-amendments-approved-at-committee-level>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Changing farming practices could cut almost a third of global emissions

Agence France-Presse / 03:45 PM May 07, 2024

WASHINGTON, United States — Changing the way food is produced around the world could significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the end of the decade, the World Bank said Monday.

The so-called agrifood industry is responsible for almost a third of all greenhouse gas emissions worldwide, the Bank said in a report.

Two-thirds of these emissions come from middle-income countries which take seven of the top 10 spots for greenhouse gas emitters worldwide — including the top three places for China, Brazil, and India respectively.

“To protect our planet, we need to transform the way we produce and consume food,” the Bank’s senior managing director Axel van Trotsenburg said in the forward to the report.

The Bank’s report said the agrifood sector has a huge opportunity to cut almost a third of global emissions through “affordable and readily available actions,” and urged countries to invest more money in tackling the problem.

Several changes needed

The report said middle-income countries should look to make several changes, including moving to low-emissions livestock practices and making more sustainable use of land.

“Simply changing how middle-income countries use land, such as forests and ecosystems, for food production can cut agrifood emissions by a third by 2030,” van Trotsenburg said in another statement.

To help pay for the shift to less-emitting methods, countries should consider cutting some of their wasteful agricultural subsidies, the World Bank's report said.

High-income countries like the United States — the world's fourth-largest greenhouse gas emitter — should do more to provide technical assistance, as well as “shifting subsidies away from high-emitting food sources,” the report said.

Meanwhile, low-income countries should look to “avoid building the high-emissions infrastructure that high-income countries must now replace,” it added.

<https://business.inquirer.net/457651/changing-farming-practices-could-cut-almost-a-third-of-global-emissions>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Two House committees approve amendments to Rice Tariffication Law

May 8, 2024 | 12:31 am



PHILIPPINE STAR/RYAN BALDEMOR

TWO COMMITTEES at the House of Representatives on Tuesday approved the proposed amendments to the Rice Tariffication Law of 2019.

The House committees on Agriculture and Food and Ways and Means on Tuesday in separate hearings okayed the amendments, with several measures on the amendments set to be consolidated into a substitute bill.

The unnumbered substitute bill will have to go through the Appropriations Committee before being deliberated in the plenary, Quezon Rep. Wilfrido Mark M. Enverga, who chairs the Agriculture Committee, told reporters on the sidelines of their panel hearing.

The approved amendments include a provision allowing the National Food Authority (NFA) to sell rice to retailers, Marikina Rep. Stella Luz A. Quimbo said in a chance interview, as well as a proposal to increase the annual funding of the Rice Competitive Enhancement Fund (RCEF) to P15 billion from P10 billion.

“Right now, the NFA can only sell (rice) to local government units,” Ms. Quimbo said. “We expanded the list of distribution outlets so they can sell to other entities, to more retail outlets.”

“Rice inflation is still high,” Ms. Quimbo said in mixed English and Filipino. “It’s about time that we passed... the amendments to the Rice Tariffication Law, which expands the power of the NFA so they can intervene in situations where we have extraordinary price increases.”

The House is currently fast-tracking its deliberations on amendments to the law, with President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. on Monday saying he would certify the proposal as urgent, in a bid to lower retail prices of rice products in the market.

House Speaker and Leyte Rep. Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez last week said amending the Rice Tariffication Law to allow the NFA to buy rice directly from producers would reduce rice prices by as much as P10 to P15 per kilo.

Changes to the law would also include allowing the NFA to import rice, Ms. Quimbo said.

“(The NFA) can rely on importing rice as a last resort if they can no longer buy rice locally,” she said.

Ms. Quimbo said the proposed measure also seeks to increase the annual funding allocation to RCEF to P15 billion as rice tariff revenues from imports reached around P30 billion in 2023.

The bill expands the NFA’s regulatory functions to include warehouse monitoring to prevent rice stock hoarding, she added.

“We expanded the regular mandate of the NFA to include warehousing,” Ms. Quimbo said. “This is one of the “holes” of the Rice Tariffication Law, where the functions of the NFA were removed and not transferred to other agencies.”

Antonio A. Ligon, a law and business professor at De La Salle University in Manila, said allowing the NFA to sell to consumers directly will lead to cheaper prices.

“For one, the distribution costs will be lessened as you eliminate other conduits in the sale of rice,” he said in a Viber message.

Meanwhile, Monetary Board member Bruce J. Tolentino said lawmakers should consider the NFA’s history in deliberating the proposed amendments as the agency was “never successful in ‘buying high’ from all farmers, or ‘selling low’ to all consumers.”

Only “very few favored farmers and consumers benefited” from the NFA’s precious buying power, he added.

“And NFA’s operations cost the Philippine budget a huge amount of money and borrowing, a significant chunk of debt which today remains unpaid,” Mr. Tolentino said.

Debt incurred by the NFA swelled to P165.6 billion from 2000 to 2010 from P5.7 billion from the 1970s until 1998 as the administration of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo gave the agency the power to buy palay at a high price and sell rice at a low price. This, against the backdrop of record 2.35 million metric tons of rice imports.

“The Philippines has the full history and experience with NFA and its performance, cost, and impact on rice prices for both consumers and farmers from the post-World War II years all the way to 2019,” Mr. Tolentino added.

“Congress also has the full record of the legislative investigations and discussions leading up to the passage of the Rice Tariffication Law,” he said. “I hope and trust that the lawmakers make use of the documentation and analysis as they tackle this important and consequential problem.” — **Kenneth Christiane L. Basilio and Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2024/05/08/593352/two-house-committees-approve-amendments-to-rice-tariffication-law/>

PHL inflation quickens to 3.8% in April

May 8, 2024 | 12:34 am



A woman shops for groceries at a supermarket in Quezon City. — PHILIPPINE STAR/MIGUEL ANTONIO DE GUZMAN

By **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**, *Reporter*

HEADLINE INFLATION picked up for a third straight month in April amid higher food and transport costs, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported on Tuesday.

While the annual rise was below market expectations, it supports the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) decision to maintain its hawkish pause, analysts said.

The pickup also “underscores the need for vigilance,” the National Economic and Development Authority said in a statement.

The consumer price index (CPI) quickened to 3.8% year on year in April from 3.7% in March, preliminary data from the PSA showed. Still, this was slower than the 6.6% print in the same month a year ago.

This was within the BSP's 3.5-4.3% forecast for April CPI and marked the fifth straight month that inflation settled within the central bank's 2-4% annual target range.

The April print was also below the 4.1% median estimate in a *BusinessWorld* poll of 16 analysts conducted last week.

Month on month, inflation inched down by 0.1%. Stripping out seasonality factors, month-on-month inflation picked up by 0.2%.

For the first four months, headline inflation averaged 3.4%, still below the BSP's 3.8% full-year forecast.

“The inflation outturn is consistent with the BSP expectations that inflation could accelerate temporarily above the target range in the next two quarters of the year due to the possible negative impact of adverse weather conditions on domestic agricultural output and positive base effects,” the central bank said in a statement.

“Looking ahead, the Monetary Board will consider the latest inflation and first-quarter 2024 GDP (gross domestic product) outturns, among other information, in its upcoming monetary policy meeting on May 16. The BSP also continues to support the National Government’s non-monetary measures to address supply-side pressures on prices and sustain the disinflation process,” the central bank added.

The PSA will release first-quarter GDP data on May 9, Thursday.

Core inflation, which excludes volatile prices of food and fuel, slowed to 3.2% in April from 3.4% in the previous month and 7.9% a year ago.

April inflation was mainly driven by the faster annual increase in the heavily-weighted food and non-alcoholic beverages index, National Statistician Claire Dennis S. Mapa said.

The index jumped to 6% from 5.6% in the previous month but was slower than 7.9% a year earlier.

Food inflation alone accelerated to 6.3% from 5.7% in March. However, this was slower than the 8% print in the same month in 2023.

One of the primary contributors to faster food inflation was vegetables, tubers, plantains, cooking bananas and pulses, which rose to 4.3% from the 2.5% decline in the previous month.

Mr. Mapa noted a rise in onion prices. “We saw onion prices slightly increase in April. Compared to last year, it’s lower, but we saw an increase from March to April.”

PSA data showed that the average price of onion was at P126.50 per kilo outside the National Capital Region (NCR) in April. Within the region, it averaged P90.30 per kilo.

The cereals and cereal products index was also a major contributor to food inflation, rising by 16.9% in April. This was slower than 17.3% a month ago but faster than 5.4% a year prior.

Rice inflation surged by 23.9% in April. However, this was slower than 24.4% a month prior.

“Rice has a substantial contribution, it contributed around 46.2% to overall inflation. In the 3.8% inflation rate, it contributed around 1.75 percentage points,” Mr. Mapa said.

The slight easing in rice inflation is attributable to the decline in world rice prices, he said.

“What we saw is that world prices of rice are going down slightly. It peaked in January and then it went down in February and March. That may have an impact on the decline of prices of rice,” Mr. Mapa added.

PSA data showed that prices of well-milled and special rice saw decreases on a month-on-month basis in April, while regular-milled rice posted an increase.

The average price of a kilo of well-milled rice dropped to P56.42 in April from P56.44 a month ago while special rice averaged P64.68 from P64.75. Meanwhile, regular milled rice rose to P51.25 from P51.11 in the previous month.

April inflation was also driven by faster increases in transport prices, the PSA said.

Transport inflation rose to 2.6% from 2.1% in the previous month and matched the 2.6% print a year ago.

This was primarily due to the faster rise in prices of diesel and gasoline, Mr. Mapa said.

Diesel quickened to 4.2% in April from the -0.1% print a month ago while gasoline accelerated to 3.3% from 0.8% in March.

In April, pump price adjustments stood at a net increase of P2.25 a liter for gasoline and P0.50 a liter for diesel.

Meanwhile, the inflation rate for the bottom 30% of income households quickened to 5.2% in April from 4.6% in the previous month. This was slower than the 7.4% print a year ago.

In the first two months, the inflation rate averaged 4.4% for the bottom 30%.

In the NCR, inflation slowed to 2.8% in April from 3.3% in March. Inflation in areas outside NCR accelerated to 4.1% from 3.8%.

INFLATION,

POLICY

OUTLOOK

The BSP said risks to the inflation outlook remain tilted to the upside.

“Possible further price pressures are linked mainly to higher transport charges, elevated food prices, higher electricity rates, and global oil prices. Potential minimum wage adjustments could also give rise to second-round effects,” it said.

Still, the central bank said it expects the inflation average to be within its target for this year and next.

Headline inflation averaged 6% in 2023, marking the second straight year that it breached the BSP’s annual goal.

“Inflation will likely continue to trend upwards and could possibly breach the target in mid-2024 due to unfavorable base effects unless there are significant price reversals,” Chinabank Research said in a report.

It cited weather conditions such as the El Niño dry spell and the emergence of the La Niña, which could affect local rice production.

As of April 30, agricultural damage due to the El Niño reached P5.9 billion. Rice was the most affected crop, accounting for 53.21% of total agricultural damage, equivalent to P3.14 billion.

Pantheon Chief Emerging Asia Economist Miguel Chanco said the uptick in April inflation was driven by the acceleration in food inflation, which will continue to persist.

“This statistical boost will persist in May — likely pushing the headline up temporarily and marginally above the 4% upper-bound of the BSP’s target range — before unwinding substantially from June to September,” he said in a note.

Following the April CPI print, analysts expect the central bank to keep borrowing costs steady for a fifth straight time at its meeting this month.

“(The) inflation report lessens the pressure on the BSP to resort to additional tightening to fend off price pressures,” ING Bank N.V. Manila Senior Economist Nicholas Antonio T. Mapa said.

“BSP Governor Eli M. Remolona, Jr. believes monetary policy settings are appropriate and we expect BSP to retain all policy settings at their policy meeting on May 16,” he added.

The Monetary Board in April kept its benchmark rate at a near 17-year high of 6.5% following cumulative hikes worth 450 basis points from May 2022 to October 2023 to help bring down inflation.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort said April inflation settling within the BSP’s target for the fifth straight month could support rate cuts later this year.

Mr. Chanco added that rate cuts could begin at the Monetary Board’s June 27 meeting.

“This call is also based on the assumption that Thursday’s first-quarter GDP report will disappoint markedly, ultimately weighing more on the Board’s thinking next month over a likely short-lived breach of its inflation target in the May CPI report,” he said.

A *BusinessWorld* poll of 20 economists and analysts conducted last week yielded a median GDP growth estimate of 5.9% for the first quarter.

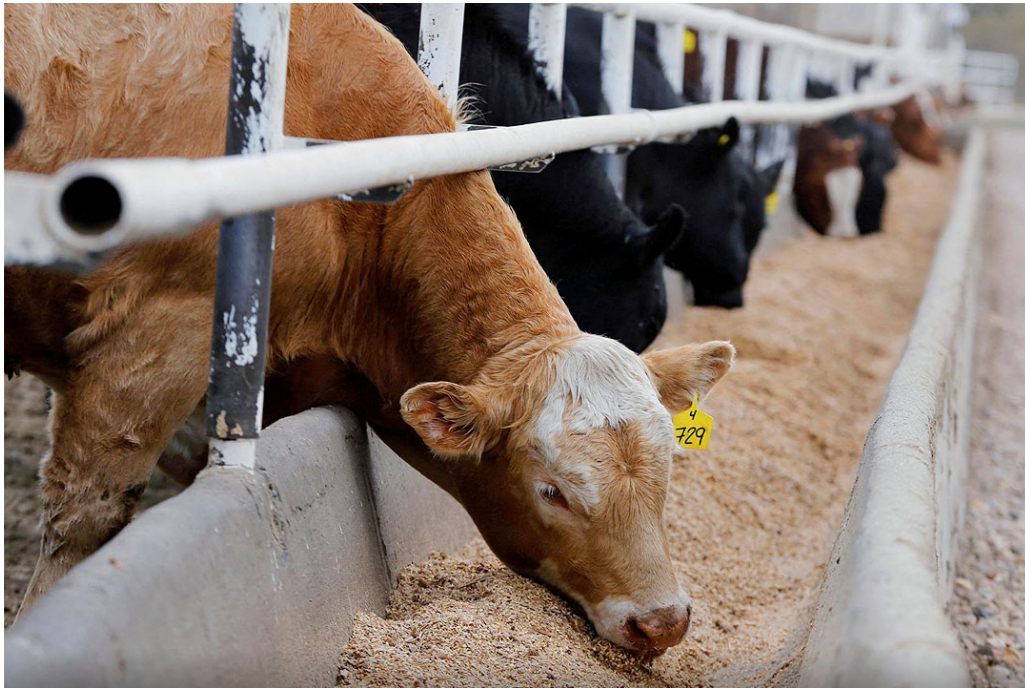
“We maintain our view that full-year inflation would settle within target this year, which would give room for the BSP to begin its monetary easing cycle, likely at the final quarter of the year,” Chinabank Research added.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2024/05/08/593427/phl-inflation-quickens-to-3-8-in-april/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Livestock output seen rising even as El Niño batters feed crops

May 7, 2024 | 8:55 pm



REUTERS

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Tuesday that it is expecting livestock production to rise this year even with El Niño putting pressure on animal feed production.

Agriculture Undersecretary Deogracias Victor B. Savellano told reporters that the DA is “positive” that production will increase because a number of programs are in place to address any possible challenges, providing growers with biologics, animal feed, and medicine.

Last year, livestock output rose 2.5%, against a 1.9% rise reported in 2022, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Hog output is expected to grow (3.7%), as is that of goat (1.3%). Lower production is expected for cattle (-2.6%) and carabao (-0.9%).

The DA has set a goal of growing livestock production by five times over the next five years, in a bid to minimize imports.

He added that the government will continue to extend aid to livestock growers.

Jonathan V. Sabiniano, program director for the National Livestock Program said El Niño has affected the production of animal feed.

The government weather service, known as PAGASA (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration), has said that El Niño is currently weakening, though its effects are projected to be felt until August.

“(There is) changing climate and changing landscape... agricultural areas are now shrinking. We have less space now for livestock raising as well as decreasing soil fertility (for) feed and forage,” Mr. Sabiniano added.

As of April 30, agricultural damage from El Niño was estimated at P5.9 billion by the DA. Damage to corn, a major component of animal feed amounted to P1.76 billion, with total volume losses of 97,937 metric tons (MT).

Yellow corn, which makes up about 50% of animal feed, posted output growth of 2% to 2.08 million MT during the first quarter, according to the PSA. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/05/07/593450/livestock-output-seen-rising-even-as-el-nino-batters-feed-crops/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

‘Green’ farming holds potential to reduce greenhouse gases by nearly a third — WB

May 7, 2024 | 8:53 pm



REUTERS

BROAD ADOPTION of “green” farming techniques by middle-income economies could help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by nearly a third, the World Bank (WB) said.

The bank said the opportunities to reduce agrifood emissions rest largely with middle-income countries should they choose to adopt sustainable land use practices.

The global agrifood system is viewed as a major contributor to climate change. However, large numbers of people also depend on it for food and job security.

The World Bank noted that financing for agrifood system mitigation remains “strikingly low” at \$14 billion, against \$660 billion in total climate financing.

To cut agrifood emissions by 2030 and achieve net zero emissions by 2050, annual investment must be increased to \$260 billion, it said.

“Action should happen across all countries to get to net zero, through a comprehensive approach to reducing emissions in food systems, including in fertilizers and energy, crop and livestock production, and packaging and distribution across the value chain from farm to table,” the bank said.

East Asia and the Pacific was reported to have some of the lowest rates of agrifood emissions per capita at 2 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂ eq), behind Latin America and the Caribbean (4.4 tCO₂ eq), and Europe and Central Asia (2.5 tCO₂ eq).

“While the food on your table may taste good, it is also a hefty slice of the climate change emissions pie,” World Bank Senior Managing Director Axel van Trotsenburg said in a statement.

“The good news is that the global food system can heal the planet — making soils, ecosystems, and people healthier, while keeping carbon in the ground. This is within reach in our lifetimes, but countries must act now: simply changing how middle-income countries use land, such as forests and ecosystems, for food production can cut agrifood emissions by a third by 2030.”

The report also calls on high-income countries to shift subsidies from high-emitting food sources and to provide technical assistance to low- and middle-income economies in adopting low-emission farming practices.

Low-income countries must focus on preserving and restoring rainforests, as most of its agrifood emissions are caused by forest clearing, the World Bank said. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/05/07/593446/green-farming-holds-potential-to-reduce-greenhouse-gases-by-nearly-a-third-wb/>

REMATE:

Laurel: DA ‘si kinonsulta sa AO 20

May 7, 2024 10:52



MANILA, Philippines- Inihayag ni Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel, Jr. na hindi siya sangkot sa pagbalangkas ng Administrative Order No. 20 at hindi siya kinonsulta hinggil dito.

“I understand this discussion was going on before my time. I was not consulted personally,” pahayag ni Laurel sa pagdinig sa Kamara.

“My team was not consulted. This AO is a band-aid solution...hindi ako masyadong kumporme diyan, and that is why we have asked the President for a 90-day extension. His specific instructions were to protect the farmers and fishermen,” dagdag niya.

Inilabas noong April 21, 2024, kinalos ng AO 20 ang non-tariff barriers sa pag-aangkat ng agricultural products upang matiyak ang supply at tugunan ang patuloy na pagtaas ng domestic prices. Inatasan din nito ang Bureau of Customs (BOC) na iprayoridad ang unloading at ang paglalabas ng imported agricultural products, alinsunod sa Customs Modernization and Tariff Act.

Batay sa kautusan, kailangang padaliin ng mga departamento ang licensing ng importers, tapyasan ang processing time ng mga aplikasyon, at i-exempt ang licensed traders sa pagsusumite ng registration requirements.

Inatasan din nito ang importasyon ng ilang agricultural products na lampas sa authorized minimum access volume o ang quota ng pumapasok na imported agricultural products sa bansa na pinapayagan ng pamahalaan, at pagbawas o pagtanggap ng administrative fees.

Sinabi ni National Economic Development Authority assistant director Rory Jay Dacumos na produkto ang polisiya ng konsultasyon sa mga miyembro ng isang inter-agency committee on inflation monitoring and outlook na kinabibilangan ng DA, Department of Finance, at Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. Inendorso umano ng panel ang findings nito na pabor sa pagpapalabas ng kautusan sa NEDA.

Giit ni AGAP party-list lawmaker Nicanor Briones, mas malala pa sa El Niño ang epekto ng polisiya sa kabuhayan ng mga magsasaka.

“Parang napakaluwag na, parang highway ng mga importers. Kapag binasa mo, parang drinaft ng importer eh. Nakonsulta ba ang ating mga farmers bago inilabas ang AO?” giit ni Briones sa parehong public hearings.

“Talo pa nito ang El Niño. Kasi hindi natin alam kailan ang expiration ng AO,” patuloy ng mambabatas.

“The proposal [for AO 20 issuance] was approved by the committee in December 2023,” dagdag ni Dacumos. Gail Mendoza

<https://remate.ph/laurel-da-si-kinonsulta-sa-ao-20/>

REMATE:

Pag-amyenda sa Rice Tarrification Law, agad umusad sa Kamara

May 7, 2024 19:17



MANILA, Philippines – Pasado na sa House Committee on Agriculture at Committee on Ways and Means ng House of Representatives ang substitute bill para sa panukalang pag-amyenda sa Republic Act (RA) No. 11203 o Rice Tarrification Law (RTL).

Layon ng pag-amyenda sa RTL na maibalik ang kapangyarihan ng National Food Authority (NFA) na makapagbenta ng murang bigas sa merkado.

Matatandaan na noon lamang nakaraang Linggo nang atasan ni House Speaker Martin Romualdez ang mga mambabatas na paspasan ang pag-amyenda sa RTL sa harap na rin ng nararanasang mataas na presyo ng bigas.

Alinsunud sa kautusan ni Romualdez ay agad na ipinasa ng dalawang komite ang panukala.

“As promised by the Speaker, this is a priority, that we will pass an amended RTL. Wherein we will ensure that there will be the presence of NFA to stabilize the price of rice. So that this will be affordable to our countrymen,” paliwanag ni House Committee on Agriculture Chairman Quezon Rep Mark Enverga.

Samantala, sinabi ni House Committee on Ways and Means Chairman Albay Rep Joey Salceda na asahan nang agad na maipapasa sa ikalawa at sa ikatlong pagbasa ang substitute bill para sa RTL bago ang adjourn sine die ng Kamara sa Mayo 22.

Una nang sinabi ni Salceda na ang pagtaas ng inflation rate ay dala ng paglobo ng presyo ng bigas.

Ang inflation noong Abril ay nasa 3.8 %, mas mataas ito sa 3.7 % noong Marso. *Gail Mendoza*

<https://remate.ph/pag-amyenda-sa-rice-tarrification-law-agad-umusad-sa-kamara/>

REMATE:

El Niño agri damage reports beripikado, walang underreporting – DA

May 7, 2024 17:46



MANILA, Philippines – Sumailalim sa beripikasyon ang lahat ng agricultural damage reports sa El Nino na isinapubliko ng Department of Agriculture.

“Walang underreporting, lahat ng damage na nare-report sa amin, after careful validation, nire-report iyan at nilalabas,” pahayag ni Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa sa ambush interview.

Ang pahayag ng opisyal ay kasunod ng sinabi ni dating agriculture chief Leonardo Montemayor kaugnay sa ulat na posibleng bumaba ng 30% ang sugar production sa Negros Occidental.

Ani De Mesa, biniberipika pa ang ulat sa mga taniman ng tubo, at ipinaliwanag na mahigpit na bineripika ang damage report noong katapusan ng Abril upang maiwasan ang misinformation.

“Ang DA, maingat sa mga datos,” sinabi ng opisyal.

Ayon sa Bulletin No. 9, nagtamo na ng P5.9 bilyong halaga ng agricultural damage ang bansa dahil sa El Nino. Pinakanapuruhan dito ang rice sector sa P3.14 bilyon.

Sinundan ito ng production loss sa mais sa corn P1.76 billion; high-value crops sa P958.06 million; P33.83 million sa fisheries, apektado ang 2,261 mangingisda; P7.93 million sa livestock at poultry; at cassava sa P3.25 million.

Naitala naman sa Mimaropa region ang pinakamalaking pinsala sa agrikultura dahil sa El Nino.

Sinundan ito ng Western Visayas sa P1.5 billion; Cordillera Administrative Region sa P768 million; at Cagayan Valley sa P562 million. *RNT/JGC*

<https://remate.ph/el-nino-agri-damage-reports-beripikado-walang-underreporting-da/>

Agripreneur bootcamp ignites



The Young Agripreneurs Building Opportunities, Nurturing Growth (YABONG) Bootcamp co-implemented by East-West Seed Philippines (EWP) and the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture ([SEARCA](#)) will close on May 9, 2024 with a pitching session, graduation, and innovation fair at SEARCA in Los Baños, Laguna. Twenty young farmers, selected out of 160 applicants from all over Luzon, joined the bootcamp to enhance their expertise in vegetable production and entrepreneurship. Almost half of them were women and their farms ranged from half a hectare to 12 hectares.

They mastered farming techniques and learned to devise business strategies, and believed in growth opportunities in vegetable farming and learning.

“May pera sa gulay,” said John Francisco, while Genivie Marqueses said, “Nasa agrikultura ang pag-unlad ng future.” Meanwhile, Bicol farmer Mildred Ninofranco anticipates substantial improvements in her farming business, emphasizing the importance of adopting new technologies and efficient farming practices.

The bootcamp combined online and hands-on sessions to offer a dynamic learning experience. Topics covered included seed management, soil nutrients, pests, and diseases. Hands-on activities included cross-pollination, mulching, transplanting, trellising, pruning, and vine management. Participants also toured the East-West Seed Philippines warehouse and

laboratories, gaining insights into seed variety development, packaging, and shipping processes for tropical vegetables.

Moreover, the participants learned the importance of developing business plans for various purposes including strategy creation, partner recruitment, fundraising, decision-making, cash flow tracking, and effective marketing.

Twenty-one sessions over three months spent crafting innovative business improvement plans for their farms will culminate in a pitch competition, with the top five earning a P50,000-boost to kickstart their farm enhancements. Judging will be based on completeness, feasibility, sustainability, entrepreneurial mindset, innovativeness, and delivery.

On graduation day, the young agripreneurs will also showcase their plans and products at the innovation fair, which is open to the public. The fair will feature value-added, farm-based products and services that visitors may purchase or order. Plant and farm doctors will provide free consultation.

<https://journal.com.ph/agripreneur-bootcamp-ignites-business-innovation/>

Household inflation edges higher in April—PSA

May 8, 2024, 1:00 am



The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported on Tuesday that the country's inflation rate for the bottom 30 percent income households increased to 5.2 percent in April 2024 from 4.6 percent in March.

This brings the average inflation for this income group from January to April 2024 to 4.4 percent, lower than what the nation posted in the same period last year at 7.4 percent.

PSA said the main driver of the upward trend for the overall inflation for the said income group was the high year-on-year growth rate of the heavily-weighted food and non-alcoholic beverages at 8.1 percent from 7.1 percent in the previous month.

“The slower annual decline in the housing, water, electricity,

gas and other fuels index at 1.9 percent during the month from a 2.5 percent annual decrease in the previous month also contributed to the uptrend of the overall inflation for this income group,” it added.

Food prices also moved at a faster pace at 8.5 percent in April compared to 7.4 percent in March. Its annual increase was observed at 7.8 percent. The PSA attributed this to the annual growth in various food items at 1.7 percent during the month.

Inflation for the same income group in Metro Manila, meanwhile, eased to 3.8 percent in April 2024 from 4.2 percent in March 2024.

The PSA said this downtrend of the inflation in the area was brought about by the lower annual increment in the food and non-alcoholic beverages index at 4.6 percent in April 2024 from 5.2 percent in the previous month.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314444482/household-inflation-edges-higher-in-april-psa.html>

House panel okays changes in rice tariffication law



House Speaker Martin Romualdez

By [Maricel Cruz](#) May 8, 2024, 12:50 am

The House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture on Tuesday approved the proposed amendments to the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) that aim to bring down rice prices.

The committee's approval came after President Marcos announced that he was prepared to certify the amendment proposals as urgent.

Speaker Martin Romualdez thanked the committee for approving the measure as quickly as possible, saying, "It is important that we provide our people, especially the poor, access to rice that is much cheaper than market prices."

Romualdez said such access would be provided by returning the mandate of the National Food Authority (NFA) not only to buy palay from farmers, but also to sell rice directly to consumers. He earlier estimated that rice prices could fall from P10 to P15 per kilo.

On Monday, Romualdez met with Department of Agriculture (DA) officials who agreed to the plan to sell cheaper rice through Kadiwa stores.

The House leader has also vowed to have the RTL changes approved on third and final reading by his chamber before Congress goes on its annual sine die adjournment this month.

The panel's chairperson, Rep. Mark Enverga of Quezon told reporters that the approved measure "will ensure that there will be the presence of NFA to stabilize the price of

rice,” so that people can buy rice at more affordable costs and the government can fend off exploitative market traders.

Enverga said the NFA should always be ready to intervene in the market to bring down prices, especially in emergency cases. He said the approved bill would still have to go through the committee on ways and means at “the soonest possible.”

“Of course, we know how important this is to Speaker Martin Romualdez. He wants to realize that we can lower the price. Likewise, as announced by the President, he is very much willing to certify this measure. So, this is our way to have affordable rice for our countrymen,” he said partly in Filipino.

For his part, Deputy Majority Leader for Communications and ACT-CIS party-list Rep. Erwin Tulfo said the House efforts to bring down rice prices could get derailed in the Senate.

“We’re facing another uphill battle here. It was passed at the House already. Our problem now is the Senate. The Senate has a different version, and we think it does not make sense to us. So, even if the bill is passed here, once it gets there, it seems to be a futile exercise,” Tulfo said.

He asked the Senate to just adopt the House version of the RTL amendments. As for corruption issues, Tulfo said these could be addressed by passing the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act.

Tulfo pointed out that time is clearly running out on the approval of the proposed RTL amendments, particularly by the Senate, with Congress going on its sine die adjournment in less than three weeks.

Editor’s Note: This is an updated article. Originally posted with the headline House panel approves RTL amendments to lower rice prices

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314444170/house-panel-approves-rtl-amendments-to-lower-rice-prices.html>

Romualdez's bid for cheaper rice

By [Louis "Barok" Biraogo](#) May 8, 2024, 12:05 am

The fate of millions hangs in the balance, suspended between the promise of a brighter tomorrow and the specter of disillusionment”

IN THE tangled thicket of Philippine legislative maneuvers, where the currents of economic policy and social welfare converge, Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez emerges as a steadfast harbinger of optimism, promising a tangible reduction in the price of rice for the Filipino masses.

His recent proclamation, veiled in the urgency of an impending deadline, echoes across the archipelago, stirring both anticipation and skepticism.

Romualdez's gambit, unveiled amidst the solemn corridors of the Batasang Pambansa complex, offers a tantalizing prospect: a potential drop of P10 to P15 in the cost of rice, a lifeline for impoverished households struggling to put food on the table.

The stage is set for a narrative of reform, of amendments to the rice tariffication law (Republic Act 11203), envisioned to usher in an era of accessible sustenance for all.

But beneath the surface of this grand design lies a tapestry of complexities, intricately woven by the hands of policymakers and stakeholders alike.

The rice tariffication law, heralded as a panacea for the agricultural sector, has engendered a contentious legacy.

While it has bestowed much-needed relief upon the shoulders of rice farmers through financial assistance, its embrace of importation has precipitated a flood of foreign grains, inundating local markets and precipitating a precarious imbalance.

Deputy Majority Leader Erwin Tulfo, his voice a clarion call amidst the political din, articulates the conundrum with clarity.

The very essence of the National Food Authority, once a bastion of affordability for the needy, now finds itself shackled by legislative constraints, relegated to the role of a mere custodian of reserves.

The irony is stark: a law crafted to empower has unwittingly enfeebled, leaving in its wake a populace grappling with the burden of exorbitant prices.

As Romualdez orchestrates the symphony of reform, summoning the forces of the House committee on agriculture and food to deliberate upon a suite of proposed amendments, the stakes could not be higher.

House Bill 212, the brainchild of Nueva Ecija 1st District Rep. Mikaela Angela Suansing, seeks to liberate rice imports from the fetters of quantitative restriction, while HB 404, championed by Gabriela party-list Rep. Arlene Brosas, advocates the repeal of the entire rice tariffication law—a radical proposition that threatens to upend the status quo.

Amidst the legislative labyrinth, Romualdez's vision crystallizes: to restore the agency of the NFA, to reclaim its erstwhile mantle as a purveyor of affordable sustenance.

Yet, the path to redemption is fraught with obstacles, with dissenting voices clamoring for divergent paths forward.

Can Romualdez navigate this treacherous terrain, steering the ship of state towards the promised shores of economic equity?

The specter of history looms large, casting a shadow of doubt upon the efficacy of legislative endeavors.

The rice tariffication law, conceived in the crucible of political exigency, stands as a testament to the perils of hasty decision-making.

Critics, emboldened by the failures of the past, question the feasibility of Romualdez's aspirations, citing the unfulfilled promises of yesteryears.

And yet, amidst the cacophony of skepticism, a glimmer of optimism persists.

Romualdez's impassioned plea for unity, his unwavering commitment to the welfare of the Filipino people, resonates deeply within the hearts of the nation.

As the wheels of legislative machinery grind inexorably onwards, propelled by the collective will of the people, the promise of affordable rice beckons on the horizon, a steadfast lighthouse piercing through the encroaching darkness with rays of hope.

In the crucible of uncertainty, Romualdez stands as a symbol of resilience, his gaze fixed unwaveringly upon the horizon.

The road ahead may be fraught with obstacles, beset by the vagaries of political intrigue and bureaucratic inertia, but the flame of progress burns bright within the chambers of the Batasang Pambansa.

As the nation awaits with bated breath, the fate of millions hangs in the balance, suspended between the promise of a brighter tomorrow and the specter of disillusionment.

<https://manilastandard.net/opinion/314444264/romualdezs-bid-for-cheaper-rice.html>

Recent rains not enough to revive crop lands

[By Eugene Adiong](#)

May 8, 2024

BACOLOD CITY: The recent light to moderate rains were not enough to revive the dried-up agricultural lands in Negros Occidental.

This was the assessment of Dina Genzola, officer in charge of the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPA).

"The rains did not penetrate the land, many of which have cracked due to the drought, especially those in the rainfed areas," she said.

Genzola reported that the drought brought about by the El Niño phenomenon continues to wreak havoc in the province and said that the damage to rice and corn crops has reached P213,150,252.20 as of May 3, 2024.

An OPA report showed that the damage to rice crops was estimated at P206,336,070.57 while damage to corn crops was P5,814,191.64.

Genzola said the drought has affected 5,574 farmers and 4,183.78 hectares of farm lands.

Cauayan remained the hardest hit locality in the province with damage of P66,139,789, affecting 20 barangay and 1,130 farmers tilling 562.48 hectares of rice land.

As to the irrigated lands, Genzola said that the effects of the drought "have been minimal" as the dry spell affected only the areas that have not been reached by the irrigation system.

"The National Irrigation Administration wants to ensure that the available water can benefit under its jurisdiction," she said.

"We are expecting that the irrigated areas can produce 5-6 metric tons per hectare of rice land."

The local governments in Himamaylan City, Kabankalan City, Moises Padilla, Candoni, Cauayan and Hinobaan have resorted to water rationing especially in upland villages as underground springs have been drying up.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/08/regions/recent-rains-not-enough-to-revive-crop-lands/1945191>

DA: Government wants to fast-track launch of vaccine vs ASF

Ada Pelonia

May 8, 2024

The Department of Agriculture (DA) wants to fast-track the approval process for the vaccine against African swine fever (ASF) as the local hog industry continues to grapple with the disease.

Agriculture Undersecretary Deogracias Victor Savellano said the DA and the Department of Health (DOH) are set to sign a memorandum of agreement that aims to hasten the rollout of the vaccine.

“Pinag-align na yung requirements ng Food and Drug Administration [FDA] at Bureau of Animal Industry [BAI] para minsanan na lang yung lakaran, kung ano yung requirements nila ‘yun na rin yung ginagawa namin para mapabilis para sa ating stakeholders,” Savellano told reporters on Tuesday.

“Gusto nga namin bukas na sana ma-approve pero syempre may mga protocols kasing sinusunod. [We want to get it approved as fast as we can, but we still have to follow the protocols],” he said, when asked about the timeline for launching the vaccine.

Savellano said the agencies are set to finalize the MOA possibly next week.

While waiting for the vaccine, he said the DA is continuously implementing biosecurity programs to prevent ASF outbreaks.

The FDA earlier confirmed that BAI had applied for certification of the Avac vaccine from Vietnam, with the application subject to pre-assessment.

ASF is a contagious swine disease with a 100 percent fatality rate which affects domestic pigs and wild boar. It has been reported in Vietnam, China, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, and Korea. The Philippines first confirmed the ASF outbreak in 2019.

The latest BAI monitoring released on April 26 showed that there are 78 barangays nationwide with active ASF cases. Since 2019, the BAI has confirmed ASF outbreaks in 5,324 barangays in 73 provinces and 17 regions.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/08/da-government-wants-to-fast-track-launch-of-vaccine-vs-asf/>

Inflation quickens to 3.8% on costly food

Andrea E. San Juan and Reine Juvierre Alberto May 8, 2024

More expensive rice and vegetables and higher transport costs caused inflation in April to accelerate to 3.8 percent, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said Tuesday.

The National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) and the Department of Finance (DOF) said the government is now fast-tracking interventions to beef up food supply to shield consumers from the ill effects of El Niño as well as La Niña.

Data released by the PSA indicated that inflation quickened for the third consecutive month in April. The inflation rate last month was faster than the 3.7 percent recorded in March, but slower than the 6.6 percent in April 2023.

Citing data from the PSA, Neda noted that April witnessed a “surge” in food inflation as it rose to 6.3 percent from the previous month’s 5.7 percent. Key contributors include vegetables, up by 4.3 percent; fish, up by 0.4 percent and ready-made products up by 4.8 percent.

While rice—a staple in Filipino households—recorded a lower inflation rate of 23.9 percent in April, down from 24.4 percent in March, it remained as the “primary driver” of inflation, accounting for 2.1 percentage points.

“Based on how we calculate the inflation rate of rice, it will be elevated simply because of base effect. Mababa kasi inflation natin nung rice last year mula January hanggang July. Tumaas siya nung August lang,” National Statistician Claire Dennis S. Mapa said in a briefing on Tuesday.

Mapa noted that the international rice prices peaked in January, but declined in February and March.

“It has been on the decline for two months so this might have an impact on (local) rice prices,” he added.

In April, he noted that the price of regular milled rice averaged P51.25 per kilo compared with P51.11 in March.

The price of well-milled rice is at P56.42 in April, slightly lower than the P56.44 recorded in March. Mapa said there was also a slight reduction in the price of special rice, which was at an average of P64.68 per kilo in April compared to P64.75 in the previous month.

NEDA Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan and Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto said the government has implemented “comprehensive measures” to ensure food security. Balisacan is chairman of the Inter-Agency Committee on Inflation and Market Outlook (IAC-IMO) while Recto serves as IAC-IMO vice chair.

“The government’s major strategies aim to increase productivity, build the resilience of the agriculture sector, and improve the efficiency of food systems,” said Balisacan.

He also said the country must “augment” local production during shortages to ensure an adequate food supply at affordable prices.

“Food insecurity extends beyond economic strain—it directly impacts the well-being of all Filipinos. Failing to augment local production during shortages perpetuates poverty and exacerbates vulnerability,” said Balisacan.

Meanwhile, the inflation rate for the bottom 30 percent income households accelerated to 5.2 percent in April from 4.6 percent in March. The year-to-date inflation rate for this income group stood at 4.4 percent.

Bracing for La Niña

The DOF said the government is taking all the necessary steps to counter the adverse impact of El Niño on food supply.

Recto said the IAC-IMO is “all hands on deck” in tackling the increase in prices and ensuring food security.

“We have kept inflation within the target band so far despite the ongoing El Niño season, and we will continue to do so while proactively preparing for La Niña,” Recto said in a statement on Tuesday.

The Finance chief added that the DOF is “strictly monitoring” food inflation, particularly rice and other key commodities, to know which areas to focus their efforts on.

To ensure adequate food supply, Recto said the DOF is working closely with the Department of Agriculture to fast-track interventions through improvements in agricultural production and timely importation of key commodities.

The DOF said that it is monitoring the implementation of Administrative Order 20 signed by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on April 18, 2024, along with other concerned agencies. This streamlines administrative procedures and policies, and removes non-tariff barriers to the importation of agricultural products, it added.

‘Within target range’

The BSP said Tuesday that the inflation rate of 3.8 percent in April is within its target range of 3.5 to 4.3 percent.

The inflation outturn, according to the central bank, is in line with its expectations that inflation may potentially surge above the target range during the next two quarters of the year. This is due to both positive base effects and the potential negative impact of adverse weather conditions on domestic agricultural output.

“Nonetheless, the BSP expects average inflation to return to the target range for full year 2024 and 2025,” the BSP added.

Furthermore, the BSP said risks to the inflation outlook remains tilted to the upside, such as possible further price pressures linked to increased transportation costs, higher food costs, elevated energy rates, and global oil prices.

The BSP also projected potential adjustments to the minimum wage adjustments, which could also give rise to second-round effects.

Moving forward, the central bank said that the Monetary Board (MB) will take into account the latest inflation as well as the GDP data for the first quarter in its upcoming monetary policy meeting on May 16.

“The BSP also continues to support the National Government’s non-monetary measures to address supply-side pressures on prices and sustain the disinflation process,” it added.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/08/inflation-quickens-to-3-8-on-costly-food/>

Bill allowing intervention of NFA in rice market gets nod

Jovee Marie N. de la Cruz

May 7, 2024

The House Committee on Agriculture and Food and the House Committee on Ways and Means approved on Tuesday a proposal that seeks to reinstate the price stabilization and supply regulation functions of the National Food Authority (NFA) and increase the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF).

The move came a day after President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. declared the proposed amendments to the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) as urgent.

House Committee on Agriculture and Food Chairman Mark Enverga said the approved substitute bill amending Republic Act (RA) 11203 reflects “extensive committee deliberations,” focusing on crucial aspects of rice buffer stock maintenance and addressing supply deficits.

Key provisions of the substitute bill include empowering the NFA to purchase local milled rice as needed to fulfill its mandate of maintaining the rice buffer stock, said Enverga.

He said this move underscores the government’s commitment to supporting local rice producers and ensuring sufficient rice supply within the country.

Moreover, Enverga said that in cases where local supply falls short of meeting the minimum buffer stock requirements, the NFA will have the option to purchase a certain percentage of rice brought in by accredited importers.

He said this provision aims to supplement domestic supply with imported rice, thereby stabilizing the rice market and mitigating potential shortages.

As a final resort, the NFA will be granted the authority to directly import rice, subject to explicit authorization from the President of the Republic. This authority will be

invoked only under “exceptional circumstances” where domestic supply deficits necessitate immediate action to stabilize the national rice supply and maintain optimal buffer stocks.

Additionally, the bill grants temporary powers to the NFA to address extraordinary increases in the price or acute shortages in rice supply.

This provision, Enverga said, empowers the NFA to take swift and decisive measures to safeguard the interests of consumers and ensure food security in times of crisis.

Bigger RCEF

Meanwhile, the bill will also increase the RCEF to P15 billion from the current allocation of P10 billion.

The proposed fund allocation will now designate 53.5 percent for farm mechanization components, 28 percent for seed components, 5 percent for training, 6 percent for rice credit assistance, 4 percent for soil, 2 percent for pest management, and 1.5 percent for the Project Management Office (PMO).

Nueva Ecija Rep. Mikaela Angela Suansing, one of the bill’s authors, said the government expects to collect some P29 billion in tariffs from rice imports annually.

Tariff revenues in excess of P15 billion should be allocated to certain agriculture programs, lawmakers said.

For his part, House Committee on Ways and Means Chairman Joey Sarte Salceda said his committee also approved the tariffication provision of the bill with amendments.

One of Salceda’s approved amendments states that “the Department of Finance, the Bureau of Customs, and the Department of Budget and Management shall submit to COCAFAM [Congressional Oversight Committee on Agricultural and Fisheries Modernization] an annual report on the tariffs collected from rice imports and the amount appropriated to the rice fund not later than 30 days from the end of the fiscal year covered by the report.

The Bureau of the Treasury shall certify the availability of funds from tariff collections from rice imports not later than 30 days from the end of each fiscal year.”

Salceda also wants to grant NFA powers to regulate investment in the rice and corn industries.

The bill will now be transmitted to the House Committee on Appropriations for deliberations on its revenue provision.

Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez announced that the lower chamber will give top priority to the approval of amendments to the RTL before the legislative break on May 24.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/07/bill-allowing-intervention-of-nfa-in-rice-market-gets-nod/>

Farmer groups from 4 Batangas towns get carrageenan materials from DOST

May 8, 2024



The farmer beneficiary group members from four Batangas towns are seen with the materials they got from DOST-Calabarzon after their training.

FOUR farmer associations from the Municipalities of Nasugbu, Laurel, and Lobo, Batangas, recently received carrageenan plant growth promoter (PGP) and knapsack sprayers from the Department of Science and Technology-Calabarzon through DOST-Batangas as support for their rice production aimed at enhancing crop yield and disease resistance.

Carrageenan PGP, derived from red seaweeds and processed via gamma irradiation, is a recognized plant growth enhancer. It is registered as an inorganic fertilizer by the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority, with manufacturing licensed to the DOST Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (DOST-PNRI).

A total of 198 liters of Carrageenan PGP, good for two cropping seasons, were distributed among four associations. The beneficiary farmer associations included the Looc Farmers' Association and Samahang Magsasaka ng Brgy. Calayo from Nasugbu, Batangas; Laurel Municipal Federation of Farmers Association Inc. from Laurel, Batangas; and Fabrica-Poblacion Irrigators Association from Lobo, Batangas. The activity was spearheaded by DOST-Batangas Provincial Director, Ms. Felina C. Malabanan, alongside Batangas Provincial Agriculturist, Dr. Rodrigo Bautista, as well as Municipal Agriculturists and representatives from the concerned

municipalities. A ceremonial signing of a Memorandum of Agreement formalized the technology transfer.

Additionally, a training session on the science and application of carrageenan PGP was conducted during the activity, to capacitate the farmer associations on the use of carrageenan PGP to improve rice growth and induce rice defense mechanisms in their rice fields.

The training session covered various aspects of carrageenan, including its composition, nutrient types, components of carrageenan PGP, benefits, research outcomes regarding its application, and scientific application methods. Eduardo C. David, the research technician of VVZ Corporation, a licensed technology adopter of DOST-PNRI's Carrageenan PGP, and Mr. Aaron S. Carandang, DOST-Calabarzon staff, facilitated the training.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/08/farmer-groups-from-4-batangas-towns-get-carrageenan-materials-from-dost/>

House panel approves bill amending rice tariffs law

By [Wendell Vigilia](#)

May 8, 2024

THE House Committee on Agriculture yesterday approved the proposed amendments to Republic Act No. 11203, or the Rice Tariffication law (RTL), a day after President Marcos Jr. acknowledged the urgency of allowing the National Food Authority (NFA) to again sell rice in local markets to bring down the price of the staple.

The panel chaired by Quezon Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga approved the still unnumbered substitute bill on the motion of Rep. Robert Raymond Estrella (PL, Abono) who said the committee has already thoroughly discussed the measure after holding marathon hearings.

The substitute bill is a consolidation of House Bill Nos. 212, 405, 1562, 9030, 9547 and House Resolution 1614. The measures were filed by Reps. Mikaela Angela Suansing, Arlene Brosas, Luis Raymund Villafuerte, Stella Quimbo, Rosanna Vergara and Lordan Suan.

The measures called for amendments to the RTL to bring down the price of rice to P30 per kilo by June or July this year, from the current prices of P40 to P50 per kilo, by lifting the prohibition on the NFA to sell cheap rice in local markets.

The bills' proponents noted that while the law allowed the unlimited entry of imported rice in the country, it prohibited the NFA from selling rice and limited its mandate to managing buffer rice stocks.

Aside from lifting the NFA restriction, the measures also seek to stabilize rice prices by reducing the influence of unregulated rice importation and curbing the ability of middlemen to inflate prices excessively.

Enverga said the substitute bill aims to ensure that "there will be the presence of NFA to stabilize the price of rice and make it affordable to our countrymen."

"(It provides) that they (NFA) should also be there para panlaban din po ng gobyerno sa mga mapagsamantalang mga traders sa merkado (as a government deterrent against unscrupulous traders in the market)," he said, adding that the NFA should always be ready to intervene in the market to bring down prices, especially in emergency cases.

Enverga said it is important that local price coordinating councils and the National Price Coordinating Council monitor prices and coordinate NFA's market intervention.

Speaker Martin Romualdez thanked the panel for quickly approving the measure, saying it is “important that we provide our people, especially the poor, access to rice that is much cheaper than market prices.”

The Speaker has also vowed to have the RTL changes approved on third and final reading at the House before Congress goes on its annual sine die adjournment late this month.

On Monday, Romualdez and Department of Agriculture officials led by Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel agreed to work together to reduce the price of rice to P30 per kilo in certain parts of the country starting in July through Kadiwa stores.

‘BUSINESS, PERSONAL INTERESTS’

Rep. Erwin Tulfo (PL, ACT-CIS) expressed apprehension that the efforts of the House to bring down rice prices might get derailed in the Senate like many other measures.

He pointed out that time is running out on the approval of the proposed RTL amendments, with Congress going on its sine die adjournment in less than three weeks.

Sen. Cynthia Villar has filed Senate Bill No. 2601 seeking to liberalize the importation, exportation, and trading of rice, and lifting the quantitative import restriction on rice.

“We’re facing another uphill battle here. Nakalusot nga ho dito, ang problem ho namin ngayon, is the Senate. Iba ho ‘yung version nila e. ‘Yung version ho ng Senate, walang laman, e (It was able to pass here, our problem now is the Senate. They’re version is different. The Senate’s version is empty,” he said.

He asked the Senate to just adopt the House version of the RTL amendments “and set aside business and personal interests.”

“Unahin po muna natin ‘yung interest ng mga tao, ng nakakarami ho sa atin. Otherwise, wala ho mangyayari. Kaya tayo napupulaan ng taongbayan. Puro tayo porma. Puro tayo kwento. Why don’t we just do our work? (Let’s prioritize the interest of the people, the majority. Otherwise, nothing will happen. That’s why the people are criticizing us, we always project, we’re all talk). Let us unite, para sa isang mission, ang mission natin (for one mission, our mission is) everybody can buy rice),” Tulfo said.

https://malaya.com.ph/news_news/house-panel-approves-bill-amending-rice-tariffs-law/

P29 kada kilo ng bigas mabibili sa Agosto

May 7, 2024

Inaasahang makakabili ng murang presyo ng bigas ang publiko na P29 kada kilo sa buwan ng Agosto.

Ito ang inihayag sa press briefing sa Malacañang ni Administrator Eduardo Guillen ng National Irrigation Administration bilang bahagi ng pagsisikap na mabigyan ng murang bigas ang publiko.

Ayon kay Guillen, mayroong project ngayon ang ahensiya kasama ang mga magsasaka kung saan ikinakasa ang pagbebenta ng murang bigas na P29 per kilo.

Mayroon aniyang tinatayang 100 milyong kilo na maaani ang mga magsasaka pagsapit ng Agosto na siyang panahon ng anihan.

“Ang sa atin sa NIA mayroon din kaming project na malaki ngayon– iyong ating contract farming. In fact, ang ating estimate diyan mga nasa P29 puwede na kaming magbenta,” ani Guillen.

Tuloy-tuloy din aniya ang pagbebenta ng P20 kada kilo ng bigas ng irrigators association sa mga Kadiwa outlet bilang pasasalamat sa tulong na natanggap umano ng mga ito sa gobyerno. (Aileen Taliping)

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/2024/05/07/p29-kada-kilo-ng-bigas-mabibili-sa-agosto/>

Inflation sumipa ng 38 porsyento nitong Abril - PSA

[Angie dela Cruz](#)

May 8, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Tumaas ang inflation sa bansa nitong nagdaang Abril sa 3.8 percent o pagtaas ng presyo ng mga bilingin na mas mataas sa 3.7 percent na naitala noong Marso, ayon sa Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Ito na rin ang pinakamabilis na inflation mula noong Disyembre 2023 na umabot sa 3.9 percent.

Sa tala ng PSA, tumaas ang presyo ng mga food and non-alcoholic beverages na umabot sa 2.3% na pangunahing dahilan ng pagtaas ng inflation. Sumunod ang transport prices na nasa 2.6%.

“Data from the Department of Energy (DOE) show that year-to-date adjustments stood at a per liter net increase of P7.75 for gasoline, P5.10 for diesel, and P1.05 for kerosene as of March 26, 2024,” saad ng PSA.

Naging dahilan din ang food inflation na nasa 57.9% o 2.2 percentage points sa overall inflation.

Tumaas din ang presyo ng isda, seafoods, bigas at iba pa.

“Ang nakita namin, bumaba nang konti ang world price ng rice. Nag-peak siya noong January 2024, and then may pagbaba nu’ng February and March, konti lang,” pahayag ng PSA.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2024/05/08/2353424/inflation-sumipa-ng-38-porsyento-nitong-abril-psa>

P29/kilo ng bigas mabibili sa Agosto - NIA

[Gemma Garcia](#)

May 8, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Inaasahang makakapagbenta na ng P29 kada kilo ng bigas ang kadiwa store ng National Irrigation Administration (NIA) sa Agosto.

Sinabi ni NIA Administrator Eduardo Guillen, na malaki ang kanilang proyekto at ito ay ang contract farming. Dito anya ay mayroong 100 milyon kilo ang inaasahang mapo-produce ng Agosto.

Habang target din ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na makapagbenta ng P29 kada kilo ng bigas dahil mayroon silang supply na darating sa Hulyo.

Sa ngayon ay nagbebenta ng P20 kada kilo ng bigas sa mga Kadiwa store sa NIA dahil sa inisyatibo ng mga irrigators association bilang pasasalamat nila sa anya ay napakarami nilang tinatanggap na mga ayuda mula sa gobyerno.

Tinanong naman umano ni Guillen ang mga magsasaka kung hindi ba sila lugi dito at ang sagot nila ay hindi dahil ang halaga ng inbred kapag nagtanim sila ay P30,000 at ang yield ay P5,000.

Kaya kung gagamitin anya ang 63% formula ng National Food Authority (NFA) ay mga 3,150 at kung ide-divide ito sa 30,000 ay nasa 10 porsiyento lamang ang production cost ng bigas at kahit na doblehin pa ito ay may kita pa rin ang mga magsasaka na 100 porsiyento.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2024/05/08/2353419/p29kilo-ng-bigas-mabibili-sa-agosto-nia>