

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Lower crop production hinders farm output growth

From January to March 2024

**BY GABRIELL CHRISTEL GALANG**

May 8, 2024 12:27 PM

---

The farm output growth has weakened in the first quarter of this year, primarily due to the decline in crop production, especially in palay cultivation, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said.

Based on the PSA report released on Wednesday, May 8, the total value of agricultural and fisheries production only posted a slight increase of 0.05 percent from January to March to P428.99 billion.

This meager growth contrasts sharply with the 2.1 percent expansion recorded in the same period in 2023.

The primary cause of the slowdown was the decline in crop production, which represents 57.6 percent of the agriculture and fisheries sector, the PSA said.

In the first quarter, crop production dropped 0.3 percent to P247.04 billion due to the 2.0 percent reduction in the value of palay production.

Despite these challenges, Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. remained positive about the growth performance given the impact of El Niño on agricultural yields.

Laurel said that modernization strategies and the assistance provided to farmers and fishermen supported the farm sector's growth.

Meanwhile, the Department of Agriculture (DA) noted the robust performance of the poultry subsector, which contributed to the overall growth in the agricultural and fisheries sector.

The production value increased by 0.05 percent, reaching P428.99 billion in the first quarter of this year.

"The impact of reduced rainfall and hotter temperatures were evident in lower crops and fisheries production in the first quarter," Tiu Laurel explained.

"If El Nino will persist through the second quarter, we're cautiously optimistic that the interventions we have taken will allow the agriculture sector to mend and return better results between April and June," he added.

On the other hand, the overall crop yields during the first quarter dropped to 0.3 percent due to the 2 percent decline in rice, while banana and coconut shrunk by 4.5 and 3.3 percent, respectively.

Other agriculture outputs, such as corn had a slight increase of 0.5 percent in the past three months, while onion, coffee, and sugarcane swelled up to double-digits.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/8/lower-crop-production-hinders-farm-output-growth>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Lower crop production hinders farm output growth

From January to March 2024

**BY GABRIELL CHRISTEL GALANG**

May 8, 2024 12:27 PM

---

The farm output growth has weakened in the first quarter of this year, primarily due to the decline in crop production, especially in palay cultivation, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said.

Based on the PSA report released on Wednesday, May 8, the total value of agricultural and fisheries production only posted a slight increase of 0.05 percent from January to March to P428.99 billion.

This meager growth contrasts sharply with the 2.1 percent expansion recorded in the same period in 2023.

The primary cause of the slowdown was the decline in crop production, which represents 57.6 percent of the agriculture and fisheries sector, the PSA said.

In the first quarter, crop production dropped 0.3 percent to P247.04 billion due to the 2.0 percent reduction in the value of palay production.

Despite these challenges, Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. remained positive about the growth performance given the impact of El Niño on agricultural yields.

Laurel said that modernization strategies and the assistance provided to farmers and fishermen supported the farm sector's growth.

Meanwhile, the Department of Agriculture (DA) noted the robust performance of the poultry subsector, which contributed to the overall growth in the agricultural and fisheries sector.

The production value increased by 0.05 percent, reaching P428.99 billion in the first quarter of this year.

"The impact of reduced rainfall and hotter temperatures were evident in lower crops and fisheries production in the first quarter," Tiu Laurel explained.

"If El Nino will persist through the second quarter, we're cautiously optimistic that the interventions we have taken will allow the agriculture sector to mend and return better results between April and June," he added.

On the other hand, the overall crop yields during the first quarter dropped to 0.3 percent due to the 2 percent decline in rice, while banana and coconut shrunk by 4.5 and 3.3 percent, respectively.

Other agriculture outputs, such as corn had a slight increase of 0.5 percent in the past three months, while onion, coffee, and sugarcane swelled up to double-digits.

[https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/8/lower-crop-production-hinders-farm-output-growth#google\\_vignette](https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/8/lower-crop-production-hinders-farm-output-growth#google_vignette)

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

**SPECIALSFEATURE**

# 4 lessons from the Philippines' most expensive farm

**BY MANILA BULLETIN**

May 8, 2024 06:44 PM

*By*

*JUNEP*

*OCAMPO*



**Louie Ocampo Gutierrez (right) and his Urban Farmers Ph team.**

Valued at half a million pesos per square meter of raw land, the 1,500-square-meter community farm situated in the heart of Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, stands as arguably the most expensive farm in the country. However, far from being an enclave for the affluent, the farm serves as a testament to one man's vision of promoting sustainability and the joy of farming for all.

That man is none other than Louie Ocampo Gutierrez, a third-generation jeweler from Pampanga and the CEO of Silverworks, a chain of stores retailing silver jewelry in malls. Louie serendipitously stumbled upon urban farming during the peak of the Covid-19 lockdowns. Three years after transforming his neighbor's cogon-filled lot into a vegetable community farm, Louie now oversees the BGC farm alongside other vegetable gardens sponsored by corporate donors.



**Volunteers get to experience farming in the city in this BGC Community Farm.**

“The urban farming movement in the Philippines is burgeoning,” remarks Louie, whose updated business card now bears the title of chief farming officer. “Companies such as San Miguel Corporation have recognized that their gardens can be transformed into productive sources of fresh food.”

Louie’s life has undergone a profound transformation since delving into farming. He shares with the Manila Bulletin four pivotal lessons he has gleaned from urban farming.

**Lesson 1: Farming is accessible to all**

Approaching the age of 60, Louie confesses he had never cultivated anything prior to his involvement with Urban Farmers PH. “I always believed farming was reserved for those with a proverbial green thumb,” he reflects. Yet, his venture into urban agriculture revealed that with some basic training and countless hours of watching YouTube tutorials, he could start to cultivate vegetables like lettuce and tomatoes.



**Harvesting herbs from the farm.**

**Lesson 2: Ask and you shall receive**

When intentions are clear amazing things happen. Louie never imagined people would willingly offer their land and their skills for urban farming. “You simply have to ask. It’s akin to the Biblical principle of asking and receiving. That’s been our approach over these three years, and people have responded generously,” he explains.

Even the charming aesthetic of Urban Farmers PH’s branding stems from this lesson. Louie approached artist Robert Alejandro with his urban farming concept, and Robert graciously



agreed to create artwork for the brand. “Everything unfolded organically, without much effort,” Louie recalls. “Robert was genuinely delighted to be part of the movement.”



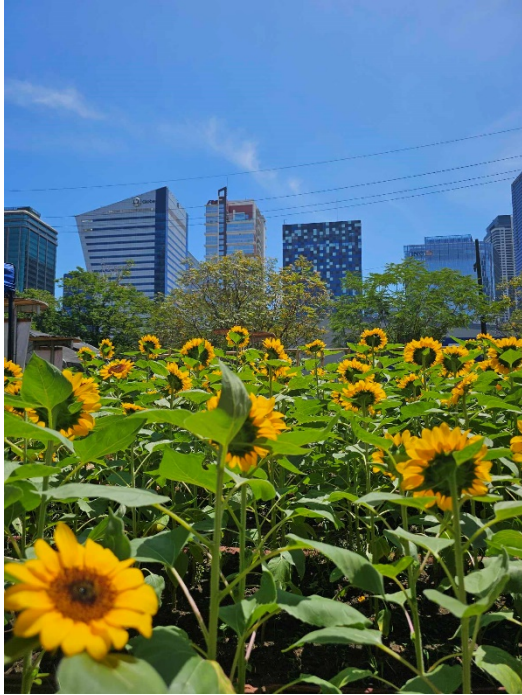
**True happiness comes from impacting the lives of others especially children who get to appreciate the joy of farming.**

**”Lesson 3: Creativity is crucial**

Louie soon realized that farming entails substantial financial costs, which the produce alone cannot sustain. “Our yield isn’t sufficient to cover the farm’s operational expenses.

Consequently, we had to devise alternative revenue streams. We began offering workshops to schools and families eager to experience farming, enabling us to support our team of 10 farm workers,” he elaborates. They also engage in farm consultancy to help start home gardens for residences and bigger edible garden projects from companies, schools and communities.

They have also converted the big greenhouse which used to be a parking garage of EastWest Seed into a multipurpose activity area. This cozy area can be rented out for private functions.



**Sunflowers at the BGC Community Farm.**

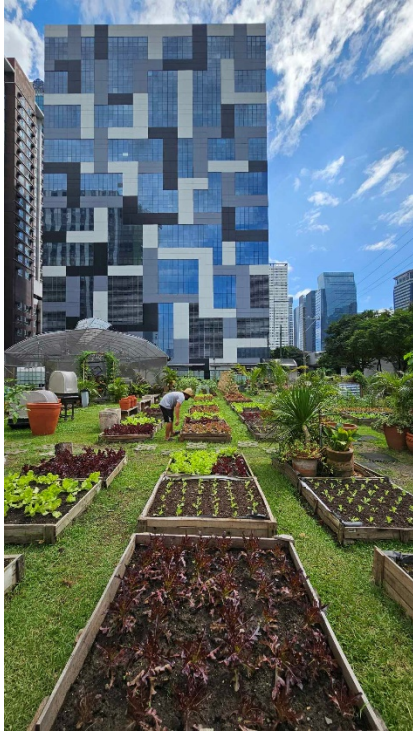
#### **Lesson 4: True happiness lies in impacting others**

Louie recognizes that genuine happiness stems not from wealth, but from the positive impact one's life has on others. “The farm’s impact on people is immeasurable. We witness students who have never interacted with soil discover the joy of cultivating food.

Even my children, who once eschewed vegetables, now embrace them. I couldn't have persuaded them to eat their greens had I not embraced farming myself,” he muses.

Louie has transformed Urban Farmers PH into a social enterprise and NGO that empowers communities to farm in unused spaces. It runs without funding from government or other agencies but it is able to sustain itself by creatively producing different income streams. With the assistance of volunteers, Louie and his team establish urban edible gardens in public schools and corporate premises. These initiatives, Louie asserts, instill hope and inspiration in urbanites to engage in farming and adopt a sustainable lifestyle.





**The BGC Farm makes use of raised beds to plant various types of vegetables sold at reasonable prices to the community.**

“We also emphasize upcycling and recycling, as 80 percent of materials used in our urban farms are repurposed,” he adds.

However, the most gratifying development occurring in Urban Farmers PH’s community farms is the revitalization of the natural environment in their vicinity. At the BGC Community Farm, for instance, indigenous pollinators such as birds and bees are gradually returning, restoring a sense of equilibrium and harmony absent in many urban areas.

“It’s high time we prioritized nature,” asserts Louie. “We owe it to ourselves and our children to nurture and safeguard our environment.”

The BGC Community Farm by Urban Famers PH is located at the corner of 5th and 34th Streets, BGC, Taguig. It is open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. Entrance is free. Follow them on FB and IG: urbanfarmersph.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/8/4-lessons-from-the-philippines-most-expensive-farm>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Marcos wants beefed-up drive vs tobacco, vape products smuggling

BY [ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS](#)

May 9, 2024 06:24 AM

---

## AT A GLANCE

- The tobacco industry provides livelihood to 2.2 million Filipinos. In 2023, the tobacco excise tax composed four percent of total government revenues or P135 billion.
- The government earmarks 50 percent of excise tax collection for Universal Health Care under the Department of Health (DOH) and PhilHealth as well as for the Health Facilities Enhancement Program (HFEP).

---

President Marcos told the Bureau of Customs (BoC) and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) to step up their efforts to protect the country's tobacco industry against the smuggling of tobacco and vape products.



*President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. (Noel Pabalate)*

Marcos said this during the sixth Private Sector Advisory Council-Agriculture Sector Group (PSAC-ASG) meeting in Malacañan on Wednesday, May 8.

In his remarks, the President recognized the government's anti-smuggling measures but asked the BOC and the BIR to intensify their enforcement.

"Enforcement and anti-smuggling and all that. You really have to beef them up and I think we're doing that," he said.

"There will be [more efforts] with the Bureau of Customs and BIR so that we can improve performance in that regard," he added.

In response, Special Assistant to the President on Economic and Economic Affairs Frederick Go said the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Consumer Protection Group will assign a significant number of people dedicated to monitoring the vape industry.

BIR Commissioner Romeo Lumagui Jr. told the President that his agency has intensified its crackdown against smuggled vape products and will implement a tax stamp system to fish out the illicit ones.

For its part, the PSAC-ASG made several recommendations and policy requirements to protect the tobacco industry.

The advisory body pushed a move tasking the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to release funds as prescribed under Republic Act No. 4155 for the National Tobacco Authority (NTA) Sustainable Tobacco Enhancement Program (STEP).

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

The body also called on the DTI to set a deadline for the registration of importers and manufacturers of vapor products and the BIR to start imposing tax requirements on tobacco and vapor products.

"There must also be sustained enforcement of laws against smugglers and retailers of smuggled tobacco and vapor products," the group said.

"Operations involving these products should also be reported to the Office of the President on a monthly basis," it added.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

The tobacco industry provides livelihood to 2.2 million Filipinos. In 2023, the tobacco excise tax composed four percent of total government revenues or P135 billion.

The government earmarks 50 percent of excise tax collection for Universal Health Care under the Department of Health (DOH) and PhilHealth as well as for the Health Facilities Enhancement Program (HFEP).

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/5/9/marcos-wants-beefed-up-drive-vs-tobacco-vape-products-smuggling>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# DA slashes palay output target to 20.4 million tons

Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas - The Philippine Star

May 9, 2024 | 12:00am



The new palay production target is about two percent lower than DA's earlier target, which was 20.8 million MT, according to Agriculture spokesman Arnel de Mesa. STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) slashed its palay production target for the year to 20.4 million metric tons (MT) after taking into consideration the impact of El Niño on domestic farms.

The new palay production target is about two percent lower than DA's earlier target, which was 20.8 million MT, according to Agriculture spokesman Arnel de Mesa.

De Mesa said the new palay production target is “more realistic,” considering the possible losses that rice farms may incur this year due to El Niño.

Nonetheless, De Mesa noted that it is still above the 20.06 million MT record palay harvest last year.

He said the country would have sufficient rice supply despite the reduction in output, thanks to imports that have already exceeded 1.5 million MT at the end of April.

The drivers for the higher palay output this year would be the anticipated expansion in area harvested as more farms are planted with hybrid and inbred seeds and higher mechanization level, De Mesa said.

He added that the actual impact of El Niño on rice production has been lower than what the DA initially expected.

Local palay output from January to March declined by two percent to 4.68 million MT from the 4.78 million MT recorded volume in the same period last year, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority.

El Niño has affected some 34,264 hectares of rice farms in the first quarter, resulting in production loss amounting to about 72,733 MT.

Meanwhile, National Irrigation Administration (NIA) administrator Eduardo Guillen on Wednesday said the government targets to sell a total of 100 million kilos of rice in Kadiwa centers at P29 per kilo in August as the retail price of the staple in the markets remains high.

In a radio interview, Guillen said the program is part of the contract farming entered into by NIA with farmers' associations covering 40,000 hectares of palay plantations.

Guillen added that the selling of affordable rice is part of the government's intervention amid the upward trend in the retail prices of the grains.

“Under the memorandum of agreement, they (farmers) will return to us at least five tons (of palay). Once they give the five tons, we will give them another P50,000 inputs and cash, or a total of P100,00,” Guillen said.

According to Guillen, NIA encourages farmers to form associations to enjoy the benefits of the program.

Watchdog group Bantay Bigas spokesperson Cathy Estavillo said the flooding of imported rice will continue with the amendments of the Rice Tariffication Law or Republic Act 11203.

In an interview with The STAR, Estavillo said that while Bantay Bigas supports the return of the power of the NFA, the proponents pushing for the amendments of the RTL failed to mention the sources of funding for the NFA subsidized rice.

Estavillo said the budget of the NFA will come from the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund. – **Bella Carias**

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/05/09/2353725/da-slashes-palay-output-target-204-million-tons>



# Public service is a public trust

Z-FACTOR - Joe Zaldarriaga - The Philippine Star

May 9, 2024 | 12:00am

The emergence of a science-based government agency in corruption headlines is more than just surprising – it's actually unexpected. Instances of misconduct in public office usually do not involve organizations steeped in technical expertise, such as those focused on research and the sciences.

Hence, when news broke of the dismissal of Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) director Demosthenes Escoto, shock rippled through the public.

According to reports, the Ombudsman ordered the dismissal of Escoto over the procurement of transmitters and transceivers in 2018 for the Integrated Marine Environment Monitoring System Project Phase II or the PHILO project. This PHILO initiative aimed to enhance the government's monitoring and surveillance capability over the country's marine resources, in a bid to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing activities within our territorial waters.

The PHILO project was initially intended to be financed by a French government loan and its strict criteria required French suppliers. However, the winning bidder, SRT-France, was later found to be ineligible, since it was simply a subsidiary of SRT-UK – a company based in the United Kingdom.

Rather than initiating a new bidding process to comply with the French loan requirements, Escoto, as chair of the bids and awards committee, reportedly terminated the contract instead. Consequently, the French loan offer was withdrawn, and in 2018, SRT-UK secured the contract through another round of bidding, with project financing shifted to the Philippine government.

A complaint was then filed against Escoto and other officials for alleged irregularity in the process and an investigation ensued. The Ombudsman ruled that the contract was disadvantageous to the government.

Meanwhile, Escoto's co-accused, former agriculture assistant secretary Hansel Didulo, was cleared by the Ombudsman due to insufficient evidence against him.

Following the dismissal, Department of Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel appointed Isidro Velayo Jr. as BFAR's officer-in-charge, ensuring the continuity of the agency's operations. This swift, decisive action aimed to address the leadership



vacuum promptly. BFAR currently operates under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture.

With Escoto's dismissal, he forfeits his retirement benefits and faces perpetual disqualification from holding public office. However, he still has the right to appeal the decision.

This case serves as a stark reminder to all public officials that exercising caution in safeguarding public funds is of critical importance. It underscores the necessity for vigilance throughout the procurement process and in awarding contracts, ensuring that they consistently prioritize the best interests of the Filipino people.

The Ombudsman's decision is commendable as it offers reassurance to hardworking Filipino taxpayers that their contributions are protected and valued.

Beyond the basic service delivery and fulfillment of duties, government officials must embody the qualities of honesty and integrity. No one should be exempt from upholding these fundamental principles while in public office.

This serves as an invaluable lesson for current and aspiring public servants alike. While strides have been made in combating corruption, much work remains. The foundational principle of public service, echoed by countless public servants throughout history, is: "Public service is a public trust." Every individual entrusted with public office must honor that trust with unwavering diligence and integrity.

I call on our public officials to be more circumspect and exercise greater discretion in their government dealings, and always be mindful that their decisions directly impact the welfare of the Filipino people. Our collective future depends on it.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/05/09/2353618/public-service-public-trust>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Agricultural reels from El Niño; Q1 farm output flat

Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas - The Philippine Star

May 9, 2024 | 12:00am



A resident walks on a dried up fish pond in Candaba town, Pampanga.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The value of local agriculture and fisheries output in the first quarter remained relatively flat as subsectors reeled from the El Niño phenomenon, with poultry being the lone subsector posting higher production.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said the value of agriculture and fisheries production at constant 2018 prices reached P428.99 billion, about P200 million higher than the P428.79 billion in the same quarter in 2023.

PSA said the value of production of crops, livestock and fisheries subsectors all contracted, but the poultry subsector registered an increase.

The crops subsector, which accounted for more than half of the total output, posted a slight dip in the value of its production year-on-year. Crops production was valued at P247.04 billion versus last year's P247.76 billion.

Meanwhile, the value of livestock production settled at P59.46 billion, 3.6 percent lower than the P61.66 billion in 2023. Fisheries output slipped by 1.3 percent to P53.73 billion from P54.42 billion.

Production in the poultry subsector rose by six percent to P68.761 billion from P64.94 billion.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the entire farm sector averted a contraction because of the interventions made by the government to help farmers and fisherfolk cope with the challenges brought by El Niño.

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

“The impact of reduced rainfall and hotter temperatures was evident in lower crops and fisheries production in the first quarter,” Tiu Laurel added.

Tiu Laurel said he is “cautiously” optimistic that the agriculture and fisheries sector would perform better in the second quarter as a result of the various interventions that the government made against El Niño.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said the overall performance of the agriculture and fisheries sector would have contracted if the government had not rolled out its mitigating measures against El Niño.

De Mesa said the Department of Agriculture (DA) remains keen on achieving an agriculture and fisheries output growth of about one percent and two percent this year. The agriculture and fisheries sector grew by 0.4 percent in 2023.

“We are still positive that despite all the challenges that we are facing, from El Niño to transboundary animal diseases, (the sector was able to grow) even (at) a very small positive (rate),” De Mesa told reporters.

Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. Danilo Fausto shared the same optimism that the farm sector would still be able to post a full-year growth as a result of the programs slated by the to various subsectors.

Fausto added that agriculture output for this year would grow by about one percent.

“That is why we are requesting already the operationalization of the private-public agricultural budget monitoring committee to monitor the projects of the DA,” Fausto said.

Fausto attributed the expansion in poultry output to higher demand by Filipinos for cheaper animal protein, as pork remains expensive due to supply woes caused by African swine fever.

As for fisheries, Fausto said the subsector's output contracted possibly because aquaculture operators reduced the volume of fingerlings they loaded to avoid fish kill due to lower oxygen levels in fish pens and ponds decreased caused by dryer and hotter weather.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/05/09/2353631/agricultural-reels-el-nio-q1-farm-output-flat>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Pagsibol 2024 and the blossoming of PH horticulture and urban agriculture

- BY [INQUIRER.net](https://www.inquirer.net) BrandRoom
- May 8, 2024
- 5:22 pm



Nearly 800 plant breeders, growers, sellers, and government policymakers convened at the newly opened Space at One Ayala Mall in Makati from May 3 to 5, 2024, for the inaugural Philippine Horticulture and Urban Agriculture Summit, which marks the flowering of the country's horticulture sector.

Supported by none other than First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos, who graced the opening ceremonies, and various agencies under the Department of Agriculture dealing with plant cultivation and trade, the event provided a platform for the horticulture sector to address crucial issues hindering its growth.



First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos, along with Bureau of Plant Industry Director Gerald Glenn F. Panganiban, Manila Bulletin President Dr. Emilio C. Yap III, Department of Agriculture



Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr., Agricultural Training Institute Director Engr. Remelyn R. Recoter, and Bukid Amara Owner and Chief Farmer Michael Caballes lead the ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially open the Pagsibol 2024: Philippine Horticulture and Urban Agriculture Summit at One Ayala Mall in Makati City on Friday, May 3, 2024. The event is set to become a groundbreaking event, aiming to unite key stakeholders, professionals, and enthusiasts in the fields of horticulture and urban agriculture, and is expected to showcase and highlight the current status, challenges, potentials, and innovations of horticulture and urban agriculture in the Philippines. (Arnold Quizol)

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel, in his keynote speech, emphasized the pivotal role of the horticulture and urban agriculture sector in the country's diversification and its potential as a major export opportunity.



“Horticulture, with its focus on cultivating high-value crops and ornamentals, offers a pathway to diversity. Our agricultural landscape is currently limited, but with this, we will definitely diversify and meet the evolving demands of domestic and international markets,” he stated.

### **Potential for Ornamentals**

The breeding and cultivation of ornamental plants constitute a fast-growing industry in the Philippines with vast potential. Mike Rimland, vice president of Costa Farms in Miami, Florida, highlighted that the ornamental plant business is a multi-billion-dollar industry that is even bigger than growing coffee or tea. He said the Philippines, with its diversity of plants, could serve as a source of various plant species in high demand in the Western world.





Dr. Teresita Amore, a breeder of orchids and anthurium from the University of Hawaii, affirmed that Filipinos possess the talent and capacity to breed new varieties that could become the next big thing in horticulture.

“The market is always seeking something new, something thrilling. And this could be any of the plants we have here in the Philippines,” she remarked.

### **Conservation by Cultivation**

Dr. Surawit Wannakrairoj, an expert in plant hybridization from Thailand, meanwhile, urged the Philippine government, especially the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, to allow “conservation by cultivation” or the protection of wild plants through responsible propagation.

“You will never know if a natural disaster such as a volcanic eruption or a forest fire could wipe out all these wild plant species. For example, the orchid *Vanda Luzonica* was destroyed by the Mount Pinatubo eruption. Fortunately, I have saved some of it and brought here tissue samples for local growers to cultivate,” he said.

### **From Pandemic to Plantdemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic unexpectedly benefitted the Philippine horticulture and urban agriculture sector. With Filipinos spending more time at home, cultivating plants became a popular pastime, leading to increased plant purchases.

Boyet Ganigan of Arids and Aroids noted that the hobby market transformed the pandemic into a “plantdemic,” bolstering the plant-growing business in areas such as Guiguinto in Bulacan, Bay in Laguna, and Silang in Cavite.



From this “plantdemic” emerged the trend of garden tourism, with destinations like Perlas ng Silang in Cavite and Bukid Amara in Lucban, Quezon, becoming instant favorites among plant enthusiasts.

### **Growing Market in Landscaping**

Another aspect of horticulture highlighted in Pagsibol 2024 was landscaping, with speakers from the country’s major real estate developers underscoring the substantial demand for plants and trees.

Noreen Lizano, Landscape Manager of Ayala Land Premier, and Norina Ocampo, Landscape Division Head of the Villar Group of Companies, expressed their perpetual search for suppliers of quality plants and trees for their real estate projects.

“We are collaborating with communities who are now growing for us,” stated Lizano.

Ocampo, on the other hand, mentioned that apart from suppliers, the Villar Group is establishing its own nurseries and aiming to cultivate millions of trees and plants for both outdoor and indoor use. She emphasized the necessity for a quality standard for planting materials, which the industry can develop.

### **The Rise of Urban Farming**

On its third day, Pagsibol 2024 focused on the growing trend of urban farming.

Louie Gutierrez of Urban Farmers Ph observed that an increasing number of Filipinos have recognized the importance of growing their own food right where they reside, leading to the establishment of community farms throughout Metro Manila.

Bureau of Plant Industry Director Glenn Panganiban remarked that these developments are evidence that horticulture and urban agriculture in the country are no longer just aspirations.



“We used to merely talk about it. But now it’s happening. Sumisibol na! (it’s now blooming). With this summit, we hope to foster a spirit of cooperation among the various sectors so we can continue to cultivate this industry and ensure food security for our people,” he concluded.

Pagsibol 2024 was co-organized by the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Plant Industry (DA-BPI), Bukid Amara, Manila Bulletin, the High-Value Crops Development Program, the National Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Program, and the Agricultural Training Institute.

***This article is brought to you by Horticulture.***

<https://lifestyle.inquirer.net/491208/pagsibol-2024-and-the-blossoming-of-ph-horticulture/>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Philippine farm output inched up in Q1

By: [Jordeene B. Lagare](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 09:58 AM May 08, 2024

MANILA, Philippines — The country's agriculture sector registered a slight increase in production in the three months ending March 2024 as three subsectors posted a decline during the period, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

In a report published Wednesday, the statistics agency said total agriculture output inched up by 0.05 percent in the first quarter. This was slower than the 2.1-percent growth in farm output in the same quarter in 2023.

The overall value of the sector's production in the first quarter was P428.99 billion.

The 5.9 percent gain made by the poultry sector failed to shore up the output of the country's farm sector as three subsectors—crops, livestock, and fisheries—slipped during the comparative period.

The livestock posted the biggest decline in output, dropping by 3.6 percent. Decreases were recorded in hog and production while those of dairy, carabao, and cattle inched up.

Fisheries dropped by 1.3 percent, with threadfin bream (*bisugo*), mudcrab (*alimango*), bali sardinella (*tamban*), blue crab (*alimasag*) and grouper (*lapu-lapu*) contracting the most.

Crops production fell by 0.3 percent mainly due to the shrinking in palay output.

Poultry production – chicken, eggs, and ducks – grew by 5.9 percent.

<https://business.inquirer.net/457811/philippine-farm-output-inched-up-in-q1>



## BUSINESS WORLD:

# Imee: Extend aid to rice farmers

May 8, 2024 | 8:40 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/ANDY ZAPATA JR.

SENATOR Maria Imelda “Imee” R. Marcos on Wednesday pushed for the extension of the P10-billion aid for farmers under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) up to 2031 to equip them with state-of-the-art farming technology and to modernize the rice industry.

“After six years, the tax did not go to the farmers,” she said in a statement in Filipino. “What we want is to extend this (RCEF) until 2031 not 2025, so that they can benefit from this, give it to the Philippine Rice Research Institute, to local government units and coops.”

The House Committee on Agriculture and Food and Ways and Means on Tuesday approved proposals to allow the National Food Authority (NFA) to sell rice to retailers and to increase the funding of RCEF to P15 billion from P10 billion annually.

The law, which took effect in 2019, allowed private traders to bring in rice shipments without restriction. At the time, they had to pay a 35% tariff on Southeast Asian grain.

The fund supports supplying farmers with farming equipment, seed and fertilizer, among others.

Ms. Marcos reiterated the need to address the disparity between farmgate and retail prices of rice, and proposed bringing back the Food Terminal Incorporated (FTI) and Kadiwa system.

She said the centralized collection and distribution of FTI-Kadiwa system allowed the discounted sale of agricultural produce at Kadiwa retail stores.

“What we need (to solve the rice price issue) is to have all hands on deck and help in any way,” said Ms. Marcos. “We don’t want the NFA since it always falls to corruption and other scams. Let’s not allow this.”  
— **John Victor D. Ordoñez**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/the-nation/2024/05/08/593756/imee-extend-aid-to-rice-farmers/>



## BUSINESS WORLD:

# Philippine Q1 farm output flat amid El Niño

May 9, 2024 | 12:31 am



PHILIPPINE STAR/EDD GUMBAN

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

PHILIPPINE AGRICULTURAL production growth was flat in the first quarter amid a prolonged dry spell induced by El Niño, according to the local statistics agency.

In a report on Wednesday, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said the value of farm output at constant 2018 prices rose by 0.05% to P428.99 billion from a year earlier. Expansion was 2.1% a year ago and 0.9% in the previous quarter.

The PSA attributed the growth to higher poultry production values.

At current prices, the value of production in agriculture and fisheries rose by 6.7% year on year to P659.02 billion.

“The impact of reduced rainfall and hotter temperatures were evident in lower crops and fishery production in the first quarter,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said in a statement.

“If El Niño will persist through the second quarter, we’re cautiously optimistic that the interventions we have taken will allow the agriculture sector to mend and return better results between April and June,” he added.

The state weather bureau has said El Niño is weakening though its effects are expected to last until August.

“One major factor impacting crops is El Niño, including the delayed distribution of input subsidies,” former Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar said in a text message.

Crops, which accounted for 57.6% of total farm output, slid by 0.3%, a reversal of the 1.7% growth a year earlier and 0.3% advance in the fourth quarter.

Production of palay or unmilled rice contracted by 2%, reversing the 5.2% growth a year ago.

“When you have less water and you have El Niño... there’s also the prevalence of pests and diseases in crops, so that affected their productivity,” Danilo V. Fausto, president of the Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food, Inc., said by telephone.

Palay production declined to 4.69 million metric tons (MT) from 4.78 million MT a year earlier, the PSA said. Corn output growth slowed to 0.5% from 5.2% a year ago.

The Department of Agriculture estimates damage from El Niño at P5.9 billion, with rice and corn as the most affected crops. Losses for rice were valued at P3.4 billion, while corn losses reached P1.76 billion.

The value of other crops also increased including onion (28.6%), coffee (25.2%), sugarcane (17.2%), tobacco (9.5%), cabbage (8.2%), calamansi (6.3%), cacao (2.7%), mango (2.6%), pineapple (1.2%), rubber (1%) and tomato (0.5%).

On the other hand, declines were reported for sweet potato (9%), cassava (8.9%), mongo (6.4%), banana (4.5%), ampalaya (4%), eggplant (3.6%), coconut (3.3%), abaca (1.5%) and potato (0.7%).

## **TRADE**

## **POLICY**

Crop output decline should be blamed on the state’s import policies, not on El Niño alone, said Leonardo A. Lanzona, economics professor at the Ateneo de Manila University.

“A lot of attention is given to the agricultural sector as inflation is heavily caused by food inflation,” he said in a Facebook Messenger chat. “A significant proportion of the resources has been spent on getting imports, especially for rice, to reduce prices.”

Rice imports have reached 1.51 million metric tons as of April 25, according to the Bureau of Plant Industry.

“As a result, overall agricultural production has remained at a standstill because trade policy has offset domestic agricultural policy,” he added.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. has ordered the Agriculture, Finance and Trade departments to ease requirements for farm imports.

PSA data showed poultry production grew by 5.9% during the period, compared with a year earlier and 7.8% in the fourth quarter.

The poultry sector was the sole gainer last quarter, accounting for 16% of the total farm output.

“Although you have poultry imports, the local industry is resisting these,” Mr. Fausto said. “People still prefer fresh over imported frozen food.”

Most subsectors under poultry posted growth last quarter except for duck eggs, which declined by 4.3%. Chicken (7.7%), chicken eggs (2.4%) and duck (1.6%) all gained.

“The poultry industry was better prepared for El Niño,” Roy S. Kempis, director of the Center for Business Innovation in Angeles University, said in a Viber message. “The investment and actual poultry operations using climate-controlled poultry housing systems prevented chicken mortalities.”

Livestock output, which accounted for 13.9% of the total farm output, fell by 3.6% during the period, reversing the 4.1% gain a year earlier and 2.7% growth in the previous quarter.

PSA data showed an increase in the value of production for dairy (3.7%), carabao (1%) and cattle (0.3%), while hog and goat declined by 4.3% and 4.1%.

The PSA said fishery production declined by 1.3% in the first quarter, reversing the 0.5% growth a year earlier. Fisheries accounted for 12.5% of the total farm output.

“The decline in fishery production was not because of El Niño,” Mr. Kempis said. “This could be attributed to the fishing ban that was still in effect in January and February for some fish species like sardines and mackerel including round scad.”

Agriculture contributes about a tenth to the country’s economic output.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2024/05/09/593790/philippine-q1-farm-output-flat-amid-el-nino/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# House bill raising RCEF funding to P15B a year clears committee

May 8, 2024 | 9:15 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/KRIZ JOHN ROSALES

THE House Appropriations Committee approved an unnumbered substitute bill on Wednesday amending the Rice Tariffication Law of 2019, including an expansion of funding for rice industry modernization to P15 billion a year from P10 billion.

The bill also extended the life of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) which is due to expire this year, for another six years. Under the law, RCEF receives its funding from tariffs generated from imports.

The original law liberalized private imports of rice, though it required importers to pay a 35% tariff on their shipments of Southeast Asian grain. The tariff has since been modified to apply to shipments from any country of origin as an inflation-control measure.

The amendment also seeks to reinstate the National Food Authority's (NFA) power to regulate the rice market when needed to keep prices from rising unduly.

The amendments modify the way RCEF is allocated, proposing to grant 53.3% of its disbursements to farm mechanization, up from 50%. RCEF also funds seed development, farm credit, and extension services.

The new allocation for rice seed is 28%, and now allows the distribution of hybrid seed. The current version of the law only allows the distribution of inbred seeds.

“(The Rice Tariffication Law’s) focus really is to lower the cost of production, improving productivity, increasing yield, and increasing farmer income,” Nueva Ecija Rep. Mikaela Angela B. Suansing told *BusinessWorld* on the sidelines of the committee hearing.

The amendments are considered a means of easing the inflationary pressures blamed mainly on rice prices.

The average retail price of the grain currently ranges between P50 and P60, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority.

Speaker and Leyte Rep. Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez said last week that the amendments have the potential to cut rice prices by at least P10 to P15 per kilo.

Allowing the NFA to regulate the market would allow the government to intervene during times of high retail prices, Quezon Rep. Wilfrido Mark M. Enverga told *BusinessWorld*.

“If this is enacted, it will be a big deal because (the government will regain) influence on the market through the NFA,” he said on the sidelines of the committee hearing.

Mr. Enverga, who also chairs the House Agriculture and Food Committee, said the NFA would make the rice prices more rational.

“We have to remember that it’s not only about the market interventions of the NFA... what we want to realize in the future... is that we fix our supply chain to lower the cost of rice production,” he said.

Commenting on the tweaks to the fund’s allocation, Ms. Suansing said: “The mechanization is still lacking... Even with the P30 billion allocated over the last 6 years, the mechanization coverage is only 14%... that’s why we increased it effectively.”

The new allocations also include 6% for credit assistance, 5% for extension services, 4% for soil health improvement, 2% for pest management, and 1.5% for the creation of a rice development office.

Mr. Enverga said he is hopeful that the amendment can go before plenary next week. — **Kenneth Christiane L. Basilio**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/05/08/593789/house-bill-raising-rcef-funding-to-p15b-a-year-clears-committee/>



**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# PHL import dependence seen leading to market abuse, price shocks

May 8, 2024 | 9:14 pm



PHILSTAR

THE Philippines' dependence on imports to address food shortages leaves it exposed to price shocks and food market manipulation, the World Food Programme (WFP) said.

In a report, "Feeding Resilience: Unraveling the Asia-Pacific Food Crisis," the WFP said the Philippines' "unique contextual specificities of being a net food importer, particularly for staple commodities like rice, contribute to vulnerabilities in its food system."

Heavy reliance on food imports, especially staples like rice, expose the country to price manipulation and artificial shortages, leading to economic impacts and corruption within government food procurement programs," the WFP said.

"Opportunistic traders exploit market dynamics by hoarding essential supplies, exacerbating fluctuations in prices and availability," it added.

Earlier, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. issued Executive Order (EO) No. 20 to ease the import process for agricultural products.

Farmers have opposed the EO, citing further exposure to smuggling and price manipulation.

Food inflation averaged 8% last year, a major factor being onion prices, which hit P600 to P700 a kilogram. A House of Representatives investigation pointed to an alleged onion cartel for the price surge.



Meat and egg production are also under strain from bird flu and African Swine Fever, it said.

It also noted the high costs of animal feed, which accounts for up to 70% of total production expenses in poultry, livestock, and aquaculture operations.

The WFP also cited a decline in the Philippines' "resilience capacities" for food security, while its infrastructure and social capital have "better coped" with shocks.

"Unequal capacities among local government units (LGUs) in implementing government programs highlight the need for a more inclusive approach for urban and rural populations," the WFP said.

LGUs should expand urban gardening, diversify staple food promotion, and strengthen local governance to ensure food security and nutrition, it said.

The Philippines was also noteworthy for its high consumption levels of food and beverages with poor nutritional value, such as fast food, processed food, and sugar-sweetened beverages.

"During the pandemic, the government's distribution of food baskets aimed to assist the population in meeting its food needs, but unfortunately, many of these provisions failed to offer nutritious options," according to the report.

"Despite the existence of a national policy on sugar sweetened beverages, with proceeds directed towards public health nutrition, the industry has seized the opportunity during this period to increase its sales."  
— **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/05/08/593787/phl-import-dependence-seen-leading-to-market-abuse-price-shocks/>

## **BUSINESS WORLD:**

# **Rice inventory drops 11% in early April as corn stocks rise**

May 8, 2024 | 9:10 pm



THE national rice inventory declined 10.9% year on year in early April, while corn stocks rose 21.2%, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said.

In a report, the PSA said the rice inventory was 1.64 million metric tons (MT), with a sharp fall noted in the quantity of rice held by the National Food Authority (NFA).

“Of this month’s total rice stocks, 57.1% were by households, 40.3% were from the commercial sector, and 2.5% were from the NFA depositories,” it said.

Rice held by the NFA fell 57.1% year on year to 641.56 thousand MT, while household rice stocks fell 7.6% to 938 thousand MT.

Commercial warehouses held 662 thousand MT for the period, dropping 9.1% from a year earlier.

Corn stocks in early April rose to 602.14 thousand MT from 496.74 thousand MT a year earlier.

It added that 84.8% of the total consisted of corn held by the commercial sector, while the remaining 15.2% were held by households. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/05/08/593781/rice-inventory-drops-11-in-early-april-as-corn-stocks-rise/>

# Agri damage in Region 6 hits P1.5B

By Rjay Zuriaga Castor

May 9, 2024

**ILOILO CITY:** Damage to agriculture in Western Visayas has reached P1.5 billion because of El Niño.

Data from the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (RDRRMC) showed that as of May 6, production loss has climbed to 67,603 metric tons, affecting 37,223 farmers and fishers.

Iloilo is the hardest-hit area, with losses reaching P857 million, followed by Antique with P210 million, Capiz, P203 million and Negros Occidental, P117 million.

Meanwhile, Guimaras reported agricultural damage worth P69 million, and Aklan incurred losses of P36 million.

Office of Civil Defense Western Visayas (OCD-6) Director Raul Fernandez said that water scarcity was the biggest challenge confronting the region.

"Most of our local government units (LGUs) report that they have little to no water to use these days," he said.

Fernandez said the RDRRMC, under a blue alert status since April 25, is collaborating with various agencies, including the Bureau of Fire Protection, to deploy water tankers for distribution.

"Our LGUs and Department of Agriculture are also providing water pumps to tap underground water sources," he added.

The OCD-6 director said they are still awaiting the geo-resistivity survey results of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau to identify areas with potential for groundwater development.

At least 18 towns in the region were placed under a state of calamity, with nine from Iloilo, five from Antique, and two each from Negros Occidental and Guimaras.

Iloilo City declared the entire city under a state of calamity on April 22 due to water scarcity, allowing the use of a P12.5 million quick response fund for the procurement of 696,900 liters of water.

The city government has so far delivered 186,900 liters of water to 26 villages.

Antique is the only province so far to declare a province-wide state of calamity due to the impact of El Niño.

The declaration on April 18 authorized the provincial government to utilize its quick response fund of P30 million to expedite aid delivery to affected areas.

Iloilo is also moving toward a province-wide calamity declaration, with the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRRMC) passing a resolution on April 29.

PDRRMC head Cornelio Salinas said in an interview on Tuesday, May 7, that they have requested offices of the affected sectors to devise their rehabilitation plans before a resolution is forwarded to the provincial board.

"One of the requirements to elevate it to the provincial board is to come up with a budget requirement so that it will mitigate the impacts of El Niño on the affected sectors," he said.

"They first have to come up with appropriate interventions in their departments so that we can lessen the impact of El Niño," Salinas added.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/09/regions/agri-damage-in-region-6-hits-p15b/1945387>

# Nueva Ecija, Pampanga to have onion storage

By Jerry M. Hernandez  
May 9, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) is set to build a 20,000-bag capacity onion cold storage worth P41.5 million each in Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija, and Bacolor, Pampanga.

In Gabaldon, farmers belonging to Dupinga Sierra Madre Irrigators Association (DSMIA) in Barangay Tagumpay stand to benefit from the project funded under the High-Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP).

The project includes the provision of 100 pieces of pallets and 1,000 pieces of plastic crates worth P1.2 million.

DSMIA Chairman Victorino Costales thanked the DA, saying they will no longer be forced to sell their produce when the price is too low, leading to considerable losses.

He said that, with the help of the facility, they would be able to store their products and keep up with the market.

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, Nueva Ecija remains the top onion producer in the country, with an estimated 54.67 percent contribution. This is equivalent to 138,028 metric tons of total production volume in 2023.

DA Regional HVCDP focal person AB David said the project seeks to help increase the income of onion growers, reduce postharvest losses and maintain onion supply in local markets.



"Dupinga Sierra Madre Irrigators Association was one of the fortunate recipients of the largest value facility awarded by the agency," she said.

"Upon completion in six months, the facility will be able to store 540 to 600 metric tons of onions or equivalent to 36 to 40 hectares of onion production," David added.

In Bacolor, Mayor Eduardo Datu lauded the farmers for their efforts to produce onions despite threats. He added that these farmers are expected to enjoy an increase in income from their produce in the months to come when the facility is finished.

"During these times, the farmers really feel the help coming from the national, provincial and municipal governments," he noted.

The facility, to be given to the Bacolor Onion Farmers Association, is seen to provide safer storage for onions to ensure their quality and prevent them from rotting.

Besides providing cold storage facilities, DA supports farmers grappling with pest infestations, particularly the onion armyworm or harabas.

It distributes pheromone lures and plant growth enhancers with insecticidal content among affected communities.

The agency also provides buffer stocks of red creole and yellow granex onion seeds to affected farmers and trains them on effective pest control techniques.

In addition, DA is facilitating market linkage to directly connect onion farmers to markets where they can sell their products to ensure that products will not pass through traders and will be sold at lower prices.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/09/regions/nueva-ecija-pampanga-to-have-onion-storage/1945381>

# Rice tariffication law revision ok'd

By Ire Joe Laurente

May 9, 2024

**CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro:** The House Committee on Agriculture and Food approved a proposed bill seeking to amend Republic Act 11903 or the Rice Tariffication Law during their hearing on Monday, May 6.

In a message on Wednesday, May 8, Oriental Mindoro 1st District Rep. Arnan Panaligan told The Manila Times that the committee had approved the amendments that seek to address the flaws of the law and the ill effects it generated on rice farmers and buyers.

"In the draft bill, we want to empower the Department of Agriculture and the National Food Authority to act or intervene in the market of palay and rice to stabilize the prices and not to be taken advantage of by traders and importers or rice cartels that manipulate the prices," said Panaligan.

The draft bill also expands the programs and projects that the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund can fund like support facilities and infrastructure of mechanization program, solar-powered and small irrigation systems, fertilizer subsidies, soil health improvement, pest and disease management, loans to farmers, and other programs that would increase rice production.

"After the approval at the committee level, the proposed bill will be voted in the House of Representatives and will be brought to the Senate," said Panaligan.

"I am 100 percent confident that the bill would be passed in the Lower House," added Panaligan, stressing that the revision of the RTL is one of his campaign promises.

"Coming from an agricultural province where farmers suffer the brunt of the problem generated by the law, I am just fulfilling my promise to those who trusted me and elected me to Congress," he said.

"The law that promised to lower the price of rice and increase the price of palay is nowhere near its supposed benefits. The price is at P60 per kilo now while the buying price of palay is only at P19–P23 per kilo," Panaligan said.

The amendments to the RTL were certified as urgent by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/09/regions/rice-tariffication-law-revision-okd/1945378>

# PH agri sector presented to EU investors

By Janine Alexis Miguel

May 9, 2024

THE Philippines is presenting its agriculture sector as an attractive investment destination for European investors and is set to conduct a follow-through promotion mission in the region, Trade Secretary Alfredo Pascual said on Wednesday.

He said that investment opportunities in the Philippine agriculture sector included natural health products, seaweed or carrageenan, plant-based foods, cold storage, modern agriculture and biotechnology.

The trade chief said the Board of Investments (BoI) was set to conduct a follow-through outbound mission to Europe for investment promotion with a focus on key markets in Paris, London and Berlin.

"We can potentially welcome even more renowned European brands like Danone SA, Narayan Foods, and Arla," Pascual said.

He added that the country currently hosts various global agribusiness and food giants, like Nestle, Unilever and FrieslandCampina.

The trade chief said that the mission aimed to conduct sectoral various meetings with top global players in Europe and to acquaint European investors of the current economic performance and opportunities for investments in the Philippines.

Pascual noted that while details had yet to be finalized, the meetings would generate fresh investment leads or advance discussions with existing leads.

The government also wants stronger collaboration with the European Union (EU) on skills recognition, validation and qualification alignment to cater to the needs of European businesses operating in the country.

"In 2023, our gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate surged to 5.6 percent, outpacing several Asian countries. This growth puts us on track to become a \$1-trillion economy by 2033, establishing the Philippines as a significant global player," Pascual said.

This year, total investments approved by the BoI increased annually by 15 percent, with significant growth in the renewable energy and information technology, and business process management sectors.

Additionally, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority reported a 19-percent increase in investment, particularly in manufacturing and expansion projects.

"I am confident that investors can rely on our young and talented Filipino workforce and our rich natural resources, which represent immense growth potential for investors," Pascual said.

Earlier this year, the resumption of the PH-EU trade talks was announced and hoped to be finalized by 2027.

"With the PH-EU FTA on the horizon, a promising opportunity exists to enhance and broaden our partnership. Looking ahead, the chief negotiators' meeting scheduled in June can lay the groundwork for the upcoming negotiation rounds," Pascual said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/09/business/top-business/ph-agri-sector-presented-to-eu-investors/1945331>



# Rice wastes eyed for bioenergy

By Leander C. Domingo

May 9, 2024

A PROJECT to utilize waste from rice farms as biofuel has taken off the ground through a collaboration involving the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) and three more entities.

The Rice Straw Biogas Hub (RSBH) project also involves Straw Innovations Ltd., Koolmill Systems and Aston University in the United Kingdom.

Searca Center Director Glenn Gregorio said this groundbreaking collaborative project aims to significantly reduce greenhouse gases (GHG) by transforming agricultural rice production residue and straw into clean energy resources such as biogas through cutting-edge technologies.

According to Searca, the project will help reduce 300 million–400 million tons of rice straws, or "dayami," burned every year across Asia, which is a source of GHG.

It cited a Philippine Rice Research Institute report in 2016 showing that 70 percent of rice farmers in the Philippines burned rice straws despite the environmental laws prohibiting the improper disposal of such wastes. The laws include the Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (Republic Act 9003) and the Clean Air Act of 1999 (RA 8749).

"The RSBH project, beyond introducing advanced technological development, emphasizes understanding the farmers' viewpoints and involving them as crucial partners in the global fight against climate change," Gregorio said.

Biogas can also be an alternative to liquefied petroleum gas and other fossil-based energy sources commonly used for household cooking.

Earlier this year, the Emerging Innovation for Growth Department (EIGD) of Searca conducted a two-day event, "Training on Biogas Production from Agricultural Wastes," focusing on imparting the technical know-how of converting and utilizing rice straw and other agricultural wastes into useful energy.

Participated by 19 agricultural officers and lead farmers from Laguna and Nueva Ecija, the training included lectures at Searca's Umali Auditorium in Laguna and practical and hands-on sessions on biogas production at the Pacwood Site's biogas facility in Tunasan, Muntinlupa.

During the training, Nur Azura Binti Adam, Searca deputy director for programs, highlighted the economic uses of rice straw, stating that "burning dayami is burning money."

Searca EIGD program head Eric Reynoso also gave an overview of the RSBH initiative and introduced the center's role in analyzing the rice value chain from pre-planting to marketing and creating an enabling environment to improve rice straw management.

In his lecture, a biogas expert, Victor Luis Jr., explained that converting rice straw into renewable energy anaerobically or without oxygen is possible, citing the use of acid- and methane-forming microbes.

In an interactive discussion of how different anaerobic digesters work, Luis said that although any organic material could be a potential substrate, dried leaves such as rice straws are among the raw materials that can produce burnable biogas.

### **Viable digester model from Vietnam**

Ngo Thí Thanh Truc, Faculty of Environment and Resource Economics deputy head in the School of Economics at Can Tho

University in Vietnam, presented her team's farmer-friendly digester utilizing rice straw and water hyacinth as inputs.

She said the university's digester model, made from high-density polyethylene or HDPE and called Subprom, can potentially replace digesters made from concrete and plastic.

Truc said that Subprom requires low maintenance, has been proven more sustainable, and costs just a little more than \$400, with a lifespan of up to 15 years.

She said this is unlike common digesters that need animal manure from cows or swine because Subprom digesters can run up to two months with hyacinth and rice straw as feedstocks.

"This is an impressive innovation, especially for households that own less than three swine or none," said Truc, adding that Subprom digesters are being adopted by Vietnam's Ministry of Agriculture and Development.

Along with EIGD program specialist Lichelle Dara Carlos, Luis suggested partnering with Truc's team to introduce Subprom digesters to the Philippines.

### **Looking at Muntinlupa's model**

At Tunasan, the RSBH team and the participants from Nueva Ecija and Laguna learned more about the biogas conversion process through the waste management initiative of the city's Environmental Sanitation Center (ESC).

Engineer Vincent Alon, Muntinlupa's ESC Solid Waste Management Division head, demonstrated the city's waste segregation and management initiatives.

In essence, Muntinlupa's initiative to attain a circular economy also includes using kitchen, market, and sometimes industrial and

agricultural wastes for the consumption of animals and as feedstock for its portable digester.

Specifically, feedstocks and animal manure are converted to biogas that can be used for cooking, while the digestate can be turned into compost or fertilizers for use in vegetable or horticultural gardening. Its 1-cubic meter biogas digester undergoing pilot testing was designed by the Department of Science and Technology's Industrial Technology Development Institute (DoST-ITDI).

"The digester can process 210 kilograms of the substrate into methane, fueling half an hour of cooking," said David Herrera, DoST-ITDI senior engineer.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/09/business/agribusiness/rice-wastes-eyed-for-bioenergy/1945276>

# Feeds cost reduction key to livestock development

By Conrad M. Cariño May 9, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) hopes to improve the productivity of the livestock sector by lowering production costs and applying technology, with a reduction in the price of feeds being one of the major focuses.

There is also a measure pending in Congress to integrate the development of the livestock and poultry industries and the feed sector.

Agriculture Undersecretary Deogracias Victor Savellano said that increasing the domestic production of livestock and poultry would need a reduction in the cost of feeds.

"Right now, mostly we are still importing corn; we have to produce more corn. We have to invest; we have to subsidize farmers to increase the production of soybeans. And even malunggay can be part of the feeds, [even] seaweeds. There [is] ongoing [research] for this, to reduce the production cost of feeds," he said.

Currently, corn is still the dominant feed source for livestock and poultry, but domestic crop production cannot cope with local demand.

Savellano also sees the need for the integrated development of the livestock and feed industry, which at present are treated as separate industries by the government and private sector. He said a law is pending in Congress to integrate the development of the livestock and feed industries, with the DA taking the lead.



"There's a proposal now in Congress and Senate, the Livestock and Feed Industry Act. Because right now, here at the department, the group handling livestock and feeds are separate. The group handling the components for feeds is separate. We have to really combine both," Savellano said.

"So, when we have to think of the development of the livestock industry, we have to think of the development of [the] feeds industry," he added.

The DA official said that lowering the cost of feeds will need technology adoption and that more efficient production of livestock and poultry can pave the way for the country to export meat products.

"[It has to be] technology-driven. We have so many resources; we maximize, lessen importation, increase local production, and export," Savellano said.

The DA official sees countries with consumers demanding halal products as potential export markets for local livestock products.

"We will be boosting production of goats and sheep to increase its processing, especially for halal-eating countries," he added.

### **Local consumption increasing**

Rungphech Chitanuwat, the country general manager of Informa Markets in the Philippines, said that meat consumption in the Philippines is increasing, which will require increasing the local production of livestock and poultry that can be attained with better government-private sector collaboration.

"We see the consumption pattern; the consumers prefer to have meat as their choice of everyday meal. This creates an opportunity for the industry," she said.

Chitanuwat also sees the need to lower the cost of feeds and ensure biosecurity so the industry can attain better production.

"Imagine if we can get government to support, give them (livestock and poultry producers) education, protecting, help them survive in different scenarios. For example, what government has done during African swine fever, during bird flu [crisis], this is also helping them to sustain their farming business," she said.

Such measures, combined with more government-private sector collaboration, can also help the Philippines export livestock products.

"Thailand, they are exporter, [for] pork exports and poultry. The way they are collaborating, they are working closely with government," Chitanuwat said.

"Private sector has to get up and think about collaborating [with government]," she added.

Chitanuwat said Informa Markets is staging this year's Livestock Philippines and Aquaculture Philippines trade show at the World Trade Center on May 22–24 to help foster more collaboration between the government and private sector to develop both sectors further.

Savelleno said the trade show will give industry players access to technology and markets.

"This will provide a comprehensive platform for local and international manufacturers and suppliers to explore business opportunities and establish links with potential distributors, partners and buyers," he said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/09/business/agribusiness/feeds-cost-reduction-key-to-livestock-development/1945274>

# WB sees need to transform farming practices

By Agence France-Presse

May 9, 2024

**WASHINGTON, D.C.:** 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 on Monday (Tuesday in Manila).

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.

The report said middle-income countries should look to make a number of 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://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/09/business/agribusiness/wb-sees-need-to-transform-farming-practices/1945272>

# CLSU program transfers farm tech to villages

By Leander C. Domingo

May 2, 2024

HE Central Luzon State University (CLSU) in Nueva Ecija is making farmers more adept and knowledgeable in the application of technologies through its Techno Village Development Program (TVDP), a unified university extension program to accelerate countryside development.

Edgar Orden, CLSU vice president for research and extension, and director of the University Extension Program Office (UEPO), said the university's techno village program was inspired by the Adopt-a-Barangay concept wherein an institution selects a community to serve and deploys its human and material resources to help the locality.

"The program takes the journey further by accentuating the role of innovations and proactive community engagement in the process of helping people and communities develop themselves," Orden said.

He added that the techno village program also aims "to harness and mobilize expertise not only from university's core research and development offices and specialized centers but also the academic program, making it a unified effort to facilitate development."

Orden also explained that the program is an extension modality conceptualized by CLSU to create a hub for the application of matured technologies from the university, where local farmers can adopt options such as producing ducks, tilapia, special rice, soybean, goats with upgraded breeds, pellet feeds and mushrooms. Also, CLSU has matured technologies for forage and pasture development.



He said the program is in collaboration with other research and extension centers, colleges and college-based research and development centers, local government units, city and municipal agriculturists, community-based organizations and farmer associations.

"We want these techno villages in different communities to become a hub of applicable CLSU technologies and be a model to other villages," he added.

One of the project components of TVDP of UEPO is the Itik Pinas (IP) egg production. One of these is set up in the backyard of a farmer-partner in Barangay Cabisuculan in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija.

An improved Philippine mallard duck developed through strategic breeding and selection, the IP is a genetically superior breeder duck characterized by uniform physical appearance, predictable egg production performance and consistent product quality.

Compared to traditional mongrel ducks, IP produces more eggs up to 55 pieces per duck per year.

### **Tilapia production for 'tilading'**

"Tilading" is a salted dried product whose name came from the combination of the words "tilapia" and "daing." It is a processed tilapia product made from 20 to 30 grams of split tilapia that is mildly salted and dried.

The UEPO Team said the product is healthy and cleanly processed, with brine solution used. The processing system was also introduced to the community of Cabisuculan with the university's team ready to assist the technology adopters.

### **Special rice production**

Also developed by CLSU, the Special Purpose Rice CLS2 is one of several specialized rice varieties, including CLS1 and CLS3, being introduced this year through the TVDP.

According to UEPO, these varieties are intended to thrive in lowland irrigated areas during both wet and dry production seasons. Also, the rice variety is the result of extensive research and development in specialized rice breeding to provide high-quality rice options to consumers.

### **Soybean production**

Citing a report from the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics in 2014, UEPO said soybean market in the Philippines is worth billions of pesos annually but only 5 percent of the total supply requirement is produced locally. Also, most soybean-producing areas in the country are in Mindanao.

CLSU has been promoting soybean planting for more than three decades and its extensive research yielded the SJ2 or CLSoy-1 variety with a concomitant package of technology. CLSoy-1 has been registered and recognized as a regional variety because it is adaptable to the local climatic conditions.

The UEPO Team said production and postproduction technologies have also been developed by CLSU, the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), and the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PHilMech), among others, to make soybean farming more productive and profitable. BAR and PHilMech are agencies under the Department of Agriculture.

The team said these technologies must reach more local farmers so that they can be motivated to go into soybean production as a livelihood enterprise.

"With the steady demand for soybean by-products that lead processors to develop newer products, demand for soybean seeds

shall no doubt persist, hence the big potential for soybean seed production," the team said.

### **Goat production**

Another TVDP project component is goat production. CLSU has granted milking goats to TVDP farmer-partners in Barangay Calabalabaan in Muñoz. Five milking goats — three Anglo-Nubian and two Saanen — and a milking stand were awarded to Mauro Reyes, farmer-partner of TVDP dairy goat production.

Ryan Enriquez, also a farmer-beneficiary from Barangay Villa Isla in Muñoz, reported that his dairy goats produced 36.5 liters of milk in seven days and sold at P150 per liter.

### **Mushroom production**

According to the UELO Team, CLSU also actively promotes mushroom production using rice straw-based technology.

CLSU also conceptualized the establishment of a Science and Technology Village in the community "to alleviate poverty and unemployment through training and demonstration of the university's proven and matured technology to the rural community."

UELO said the project will showcase the mushroom technology developed by CLSU and will provide capability-building activities and extension work on establishing a mushroom production industry in the countryside.

A TVDP farmer-partner, Raymundo Cayapan, is an ambulant driver who now has a mushroom production facility in Talavera, Nueva Ecija. At first, Cayapan grew mushrooms as a hobby and for family consumption, but eventually shifted to doing it as a business and now has almost 300 fruiting bags.

He also learned to sell mushrooms online and is known as the "online mushroom seller" in his municipality.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/05/02/business/agribusiness/clsu-program-transfers-farm-tech-to-villages/1944249>

## **MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT**

By **Jed Macapagal**

May 9, 2024

Agriculture production value in the country grew by 0.05 percent in the first quarter of the year, mainly due to the performance of the poultry subsectors, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority.

At constant 2018 prices, the growth was equivalent to a value of P428.99 billion.

The poultry subsector was the only variable that recorded an improvement for the period at P68.76 billion, a 5.9 percent growth at constant 2018 prices for the quarter, accounting for 16 percent of total agricultural output.

The performance of the subsector was pushed by growths in the production of chicken, chicken eggs and duck, leaving duck eggs as the only segment with lower production.

Chicken production reached 506.28 metric tons (MT) from 470.21 MT, up by 7.7 percent, while chicken eggs increased by 2.4 percent to 179.88 MT from 175.73 MT.

Meanwhile, the livestock sub sector, which contributed 13.9 percent or P59.46 billion to the total value of agricultural production at constant 2018 prices, recorded the biggest decrease in value for the period at 3.6 percent.

Hog production weakened by 4.3 percent to 419.37 MT from 437.99 MT and goat by 4.1 percent to 14.32 MT from 14.94 MT. However, other contributors in the sector such as dairy, cattle and carabao noted improvements.

On the other hand, the decline in the fisheries subsector was due to a 1.3 percent drop in the production value at constant 2018 prices. It contributed P53.73 billion or 12.5 percent to the total agricultural output.

Declines were recorded for bisugo, mud crab, tamban, blue crab, lapulapu, sapsap, milk fish, matangbaka, squid and seaweeds.

Production increases were observed for tambakol, fimbriated sardines, tulingan, skipjack, yellowfin tuna, tilapia, galunggong, talakitok, alumahan and tiger prawn.

Lastly, the crops subsector's production value declined by 0.3 percent to P247.04 billion and accounted for 57.6 percent or more than half of the total value of production of the country's agriculture and fisheries.

Weaker production was noted for palay at 2 percent to 4.69 million MT from 4.78 million MT, but corn grew by 0.5 percent to 2.53 million MT from 2.52 million MT.

Growths were also recorded for onion, coffee, sugarcane, tobacco, cabbage, calamansi, cacao, mango, pineapple, rubber and tomato.

However, declines in production were noted for sweet potato, cassava, mongo, banana, ampalaya, eggplant, coconut, abaca and potato, among others.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said government efforts to modernize agriculture and assist farmers and fishermen helped the sector achieve growth in the first quarter despite challenges brought by the El Niño and higher input costs.

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

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

[https://malaya.com.ph/news\\_business/agri-performance-slightly-up/](https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/agri-performance-slightly-up/)



# The bite of inflation: Filipinos struggle as food prices rise

BusinessMirror Editorial

May 9, 2024

The recent news of surging inflation is a cause for concern, particularly for the poor and ultra-poor segments of society. The impact of inflation on poverty cannot be underestimated, as a rise in prices erodes the purchasing power of consumers, making it increasingly difficult for them to afford basic necessities.

The latest data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reveals that inflation in April accelerated to 3.8 percent, driven by the rising costs of rice, vegetables, and transportation. This marks the third consecutive month of increasing inflation, although it is lower than the alarming 6.6 percent recorded in April 2023. Of particular concern is the surge in food inflation, which rose to 6.3 percent in April, with key contributors being vegetables, fish, and ready-made products. **(Read the BusinessMirror report: “Inflation quickens to 3.8% on costly food,” May 8, 2024).**

Rice remains the primary driver of inflation, despite a slight decrease in the inflation rate from the previous month. National Statistician Claire Dennis S. Mapa explains that the elevated inflation rate of rice is due to a base effect, which refers to the impact of inflation in the corresponding period of the previous year. When the inflation rate was exceptionally low in the previous year, even a slight increase in the Price Index will result in a disproportionately higher inflation rate at present.

While international rice prices have declined in recent months, the impact on local rice prices has yet to be fully realized. The high cost of rice directly affects the majority of Filipinos and adds to the challenges faced by those living in poverty.

Recognizing the urgent need to address these issues, the government, through the National Economic and Development Authority and the Department of Finance, is implementing comprehensive measures to enhance food supply and ensure food security. NEDA Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan emphasizes the importance of increasing productivity, building resilience in the agriculture sector, and improving the efficiency of food systems. These strategies aim to augment local production during shortages, ensuring an adequate food supply at affordable prices.

However, it is crucial that the government's efforts go beyond short-term interventions. Sustainable and long-term solutions are necessary to address the root causes of inflation and poverty. Investing in agricultural development, supporting farmers, and promoting modern farming techniques are essential steps toward achieving food security and reducing dependence on imports.

Additionally, it would do well for the government to explore policies that promote competition in the market, encourage innovation in agricultural practices, and enhance logistics and infrastructure to reduce transportation costs. These measures will not only contribute to stabilizing prices but also create opportunities for economic growth and job creation.

The government's commitment to closely monitor food inflation, particularly rice and other key commodities, is commendable. By proactively addressing price pressures, the Department of Finance can make informed decisions and take timely actions to mitigate the impact on consumers.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has acknowledged the current inflation rate as within its target range of 3.5 to 4.3 percent. However, it is crucial for the BSP to remain vigilant and continue to support the government's non-monetary measures to address supply-side pressures on prices. The coordination between fiscal and monetary policies is vital to ensure a comprehensive and effective approach to managing inflation and promoting economic stability.

Moving forward, the Monetary Board should carefully consider the latest inflation data and its impact on the overall economy in its upcoming monetary policy meeting. Balancing the need for price stability with the imperative of supporting economic growth is a delicate task, but it is essential to strike the right balance to protect the most vulnerable sectors of society.

Ultimately, taming inflation is critical, but the imperative must be to do so in a way that prioritizes the welfare of the poorest Filipinos. Their struggles cannot be overlooked, lest the country's hard-won development gains be jeopardized. With coordinated, equitable policy responses, the government can ensure high inflation does not undo the progress made in reducing poverty and inequality.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/09/the-bite-of-inflation-filipinos-struggle-as-food-prices-rise/>

# **El Niño's devastating impact highlights need for government intervention**

BusinessMirror Editorial

May 8, 2024

South American fishermen who first noticed periods of unusually warm water in the Pacific Ocean named the weather phenomenon El Niño de Navidad. The term is Spanish for “Christ child” or “Little Boy” given its tendency to arrive around Christmas, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the United States.

Aside from its effect on marine life, the weather phenomenon named after the Christ child is currently wreaking havoc on farms in the Philippines and damaging crops, particularly rice. In a bulletin it released recently, the Department of Agriculture reported that the country's staple crops—rice and corn—suffered the brunt of El Niño. Of the crops it destroyed, rice recorded the biggest damage estimated at around P3.1 billion (**See, “DA: Key crops bear El Niño brunt, damage hits P5.9 billion,” BusinessMirror, May 3, 2024.**)

As the debate on introducing amendments to the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) heats up, the latest bulletin of the DA should serve as a reminder to policymakers of the need to fasttrack the implementation of interventions to enable the country to cope with the adverse impact of severe weather conditions. Chief among the aims of those interventions is to raise the productivity of local rice farms to minimize the risk posed by the country's dependence on rice imports. And while there have been improvements in terms of output, more needs to be done, particularly if the Philippines wants its rice sector to be competitive.

The Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) reported during a recent hearing on RTL amendments at the House of Representatives that the average rice yield per hectare is currently at 4.36 per metric tons, some 21 percent higher than the 3.63 MT recorded in 2019, the year when RTL or Republic Act 11203 came into effect. The improvement in yield and the rollout of other interventions allowed the Philippines to produce a record 20 million metric tons (MMT) of palay last year. This despite the fact that the cost of inputs, particularly fertilizer, remained elevated.

While the increase in yield was significant, the Philippines continued to import millions of tons of rice because domestic output was still unable to meet the requirements of local consumers. The country imported 3.8 MMT of milled rice to supplement its domestic production of 13.43 MMT in milled terms, according to the Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department, which cited data from the Asean Food Security Information System. One of its sources was Southeast Asian neighbor Vietnam, whose rice yield averaged 6 MT per hectare in 2018-2023, according to data from the United States Department of Agriculture.

NOAA said El Niño and La Niña events occur every two to seven years, but they don't occur on a regular schedule. However, El Niño occurs more frequently than La Niña. We hope that policymakers will do what is necessary to further increase palay yield and cut postharvest losses to shield rice-consuming Filipinos from the ill effects of these weather phenomena.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/08/el-ninos-devastating-impact-highlights-need-for-government-intervention/>

# Rice stockpile shrinks in April—report

Ada Pelonia

May 8, 2024



A worker at a rice warehouse in Divisoria, Manila, takes a break from loading rice sacks onto a truck. The Philippines is expected to import a higher amount of rice than initially estimated this year, solidifying its position as the world's leading importer of this staple grain. According to the latest report by the United States Department of Agriculture, the projected rice import for the Philippines is 3.9 million metric tons this year, up from the earlier estimate of 3.8 million MT in January.

The Philippines started April with a lower rice stockpile compared to last year as households, the commercial sector and the National Food Authority (NFA) had a smaller inventory.

Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed that rice stocks fell by nearly 11 percent to 1.64 million metric tons (MMT) as of April 1, from last year's 1.84 MMT.

“This month's rice stocks inventories registered annual decreases from the NFA depositories by 58.0 percent, from the commercial sector by 9.1 percent, and from the households by 7.6 percent,” the PSA said.

On a monthly basis, however, the country's rice stockpile was higher by 20.2 percent compared with the volume recorded in March.

“Of this month’s total rice stocks, 57.1 percent were from the households, 40.3 percent were from the commercial sector, and 2.5 percent were from the NFA depositories,” the PSA said in its regular rice and corn inventory report.

**Rice held by the commercial sector reached 662,600 metric tons (MT) while households accounted for 938,010 MT. NFA depositories had 41,560 MT of rice.**

“In comparison to the March 2024 rice stocks levels, month-on-month increments were noted from the households by 35.0 percent, from the commercial sector by 5.1 percent, and from the NFA depositories by 0.7 percent.”

In the same report, the PSA said the country’s total corn inventory as of April 1 reached 602,140 MT. The figure was 21.2 percent higher than last year’s 496,740 MT.

“Corn stocks inventory exhibited a month-on-month increase of 10.1 percent relative to its previous month’s inventory level of 546.90 thousand metric tons.”

The PSA noted that about 84.8 percent of the corn inventory was from the commercial sector, while the remaining 15.2 percent came from households.

Corn stocks held by the commercial sector reached 510,340 MT while those stored in households reached 91,800 MT.

“From the same month of the previous year’s level, corn stocks inventory in the commercial sector recorded an annual increase of 29.6 percent. On the other hand, corn stocks inventory in the households declined by 10.8 percent,” the PSA said.

“Relative to the inventory level in March 2024, the volume of corn stocks in the household and commercial sectors registered month-on-month increases of 72.1 percent and 3.4 percent, respectively.”

Meanwhile, the country’s unmilled rice production in the first quarter fell by 2 percent to 4.69 million metric tons (MMT) from the 4.78 MMT recorded in the same period last year.

Central Luzon remained the country’s top producer of palay with 775,640 MT or 16.6 percent share to the total palay production.



“This was followed by Cagayan Valley and Western Visayas with corresponding productions of 754.83 thousand metric tons (16.1 percent) and 648.14 thousand metric tons (13.8 percent). These regions had a collective share of 46.5 percent to the country’s palay production during the quarter,” the PSA said.

Central Luzon also registered the highest yield in the first quarter with 5.09 MT per hectare (ha), with the Ilocos Region and Cagayan Valley trailing behind with yield per ha at 4.94 MT and 4.90 MT, respectively.

“Area harvested with palay from January to March 2024 was estimated at 1.17 million hectares. This indicates a decrease of 0.1 percent from 1.18 million hectares area harvested in the same quarter of 2023,” the PSA said.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/08/rice-stockpile-shrinks-in-april-report/>

## **‘Congress can finish Rice Tariffication Law reform before 2025’—Villar**

Butch Fernandez

May 8, 2024



**REVIVING HOG INDUSTRY:** Sen. Cynthia Villar, chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform and sponsor of Senate Bill No. 2558 otherwise known as Livestock, Poultry, and Dairy (LPD) Industry Development and Competitiveness Act, explains to Minority Leader Aquilino “Koko” Pimentel III that bees are included in the definition of livestock under the definition of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization. During plenary session Wednesday, May 8, 2024, Villar said the government is trying to help revive the hog industry because it was heavily affected by the African Swine Fever (ASF). She said 65 percent of the industry are small-scale farmers. According to her, the government increased the National Livestock Program from P1 billion to P4.1 billion due to the ASF that swept the country. (Bibo Nueva España/Senate PRIB)

The chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food expressed confidence that lawmakers can pass a measure amending the rice tariffication law (RTL) before the expiration of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund next year.

Senator Cynthia A. Villar also pushed for the prompt passage of the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Law, saying there is a need to punish greedy merchants amid the continuing reports of hoarding and profiteering.

In a radio interview on Wednesday, Villar also clarified that the RTL simply took out the authority of the National Food Authority (NFA) to import, but this is not the one being restored by the proposed RTL amendments. The amendments would instead mandate NFA to boost its purchases from local producers to free farmers from exploitative middlemen while stabilizing market prices for consumers reeling under high inflation.

The senator wants the agency to focus on the acquisition, maintenance, and distribution of rice for buffer stocking sourced from local farmers and for calamity assistance, for which it has a yearly budget of P9 billion.

“The NFA has not proven itself to be taking care of the welfare of the rice farmers and consumers,” she said in a statement last Monday.

Relatedly, the biggest agricultural coalition expressed support for the tweaking of NFA’s mandate in the amendatory law.

“On the role of NFA, we’d rather that their function be limited to buffer stocking, procuring palay directly from local farmers,” the Samahang Industriya at Agrikultura (Sinag) said in a statement sent to the BusinessMirror.

While saying it welcomed the President’s certification of the RTL extension proposal as urgent, “Sinag is proposing to increase the fund allotment from P10 billion per year to P30 billion per year so more public support can be given to our rice farmers and the local rice industry.”

Its executive director, Jayson Cainglet, said the P30 billion should be allotted for seeds (P6 billion), machineries (P5 billion), credit (P1 billion), extension (P1 billion) and cash assistance that will be given directly to farmers tilling 3 hectares and below (P7 billion).

The rest of the excess funds or P10 billion, Sinag said, can include support for post production facilities (dryers, warehouse and milling equipment); small water impounding projects; and pest management and fertilizer support.

Besides the tweaking of the NFA’s mandate, Villar said she is pushing for the allocation of more resources for seeds, ramping up modernization through the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization, and expanding the campaign to encourage farmers to produce their own fertilizers through massive composting, to cut their reliance on imported fertilizers.

‘Economic saboteurs’

Villar also noted that Senate Bill (SB) 2432 or the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act, was passed by the Senate in December 2023, and has been certified as urgent by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. On March 20, 2024, the representatives of both Houses held a pre-bicameral conference for the bill but the measure still hangs.

According to Villar, the Senate version imposes “severe sanctions on the nefarious acts of smuggling, hoarding, profiteering, and cartel of agricultural and fishery products.”

The sanctions in the enabling bill are meant to guard against “the manipulative scheme of economic saboteurs, protect the livelihood of farmers, and plug leakages in tax and duty collection. The bill likewise protects the State from tax evaders and non-payers of duties, and ensures the well-being of our agricultural producers and welfare of the consumers, and the economy as a whole.”

In Wednesday’s radio interview, Villar recalled a time when she and other senators were buying rice from the NFA to give to calamity victims in Mindanao, “and we were told that they have no stock, only to find out that they sold the rice stocks to traders.”

“Recently, there was a report on the irregular sale of NFA Stocks to Selected Commercial Traders namely G4 Rice Mill Corp., and NBK San Pedro Ricemill. They passed this sold palay as deteriorating or aging stocks, and without undergoing a bidding process after purchasing the grains in palay form at P23.00 per kilo and sold as milled rice for P25.00 per kilo. This even as government was said to have incurred a P12,500,000 loss because of this.”

Villar noted that 139 NFA officials were suspended in March pursuant to an order issued by the Office of the Ombudsman.

Several Senate Resolutions related to the matter have been filed, among them SRN-968: Citing Anomalous Sale of Rice Stock, by Senator JV Ejercito; SRN-947: National Food Authority (NFA) Resolution Directing the Appropriate Senate Committee to Conduct An Inquiry in Aid of Legislation on the Anomaly in the Sale of the Stocks of Rice by the National Food Authority (NFA) filed on March 4, 2024 by Villar; and SRN-940: National Food Authority (NFA) Resolution Directing the Appropriate Senate Committee to Conduct An Inquiry, in Aid of Legislation, Into the Irregular Disposition and Sale of the National Food Authority (NFA)

Repackaged Rice Stocks to Certain Rice Traders at Low Prices, filed by Senator Imee Marcos on March 4, 2024.

“All these were referred to the Blue Ribbon Committee which are yet to be heard,” Villar said.

The Congressional Oversight Committee on the Agricultural Fund for Modernization Meeting of both houses has been set on May 14, 2024 in the Senate.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/08/congress-can-finish-rtl-reform-before-2025/>

# Dry spell causes agriculture, fisheries 1 million job loss

Cai U. Ordinario

May 9, 2024

THE severe dry spell has caused the agriculture and fisheries sector to shed more than a million jobs in March 2024, according to the latest data released by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Based on the March Labor Force Statistics (LFS), the number of employed Filipinos increased by 572,000 to 49.15 million in 2024 from the 48.58 million posted in the same period of 2023.

However, agriculture and forestry, as well as fishing and aquaculture, posted the largest declines in employment with a combined 1.33 million jobs lost in March 2024.

Among the most affected] in terms of employment is the agriculture sector, including fisheries,” said National Statistician Claire Dennis S. Mapa, partly in Filipino.

“[This is really] related to planting, harvesting, growing paddy rice and vegetables. The report on the value of production of agriculture and fisheries has been released, and one sees from there that, in crops and fisheries, including also livestock, particularly hog farming, there has been a reduction in value of production. So the value of production of agriculture and fisheries is consistent with labor statistics. So yes, they were affected by the El Niño,” Mapa explained.

Based on the data, jobs in agriculture and forestry declined by 881,000 to 9.04 million in March 2024 from 9.92 million in March 2023.

On a month-on-month basis, agriculture and forestry also posted the largest decline in employment — estimated to be around 318,000 lost jobs in the sector from the 9.36 million recorded in February 2024.



In terms of fishing and aquaculture, the number of employed workers reached 1.03 million in March 2024, a decline of 449,000 from 1.48 million in March 2023.

### **El Nino link far-fetched**

One expert disagrees with the PSA view. “It seems far-fetched to attribute the increase in unemployment in March to El Niño given that the impact of the heat wave was in April,” Ateneo de Manila University economist Leonardo Lanzona, however, told BusinessMirror.

“Because the government depended more on importation in order to reduce inflation, instead of strengthening the domestic environment, agricultural activities have naturally declined,” he added.

It is the government’s “institutional inflexibility,” Lanzona said, that will worsen the

As early as last year, Lanzona said, the government has already been apprised of the El Niño and thus should have adjusted its policies to ensure that jobs in the sector are not lost.

If this “inflexibility” continues, the same trend in job losses could be expected or even worsen at the onset of the La Niña weather phenomenon next month.

“In fact, El Niño had been predicted since last year, and the failure to adapt institutionally to these worsening climate conditions was already reflected last March, but this institutional inflexibility will more likely be felt in April,” Lanzona told this newspaper. “[Given t]his inability to respond immediately to changing climate and social conditions, the agricultural unemployment picture will get even worse in June with the onset of La Niña,” he added.

### **Planting season**

De La Salle University economist Maria Ella Oplas told BusinessMirror, however, that the next few months will see an increase in agriculture jobs due to the planting season.

Oplas said planting may have already started in some areas as farmers have begun setting aside cash to prepare planting. Some farmers, she said, have redirected funds from housing construction to capital for planting.

She also expected the rainy season to increase farmer’s productivity, especially in

areas where irrigation remains a problem. The only caveat is that heavy rains could inundate and destroy crops.

The face of jobs in the farm sector, Oplas said, is also changing through mechanization. Instead of hiring farm hands, some farmers who have access to machines now prefer using these to increase farm productivity.

“It’s not the employment that we used to have, considering that instead of hiring people now, they just rent or buy machines to do the planting,” Oplas said. “Technology plays an important role in agriculture.”

Ibon Foundation Inc. also noted that for the past three consecutive months of 2024, the number of employed persons in the farm sector has significantly dropped year-on-year by 697,000 in January, by 1.32 million in February, and now by 1.33 million to 10.1 million in March 2024 from 11.4 million in March 2023.

It noted that the majority or one million of the 1.7-million decrease in part-time workers was in the agriculture sector. “The huge job losses in agriculture show how volatile employment in the sector is due to its backwardness and vulnerability to weather conditions like El Niño,” Ibon said.

### **Hunger**

Ibon also said amid the rise in employment, the government needs to address wage issues since millions remain hungry and consider themselves poor.

Citing data from the Social Weather Stations (SWS), Ibon said Filipino families that experienced involuntary hunger at least once in the past three months increased to 14.2 percent in March 2024 from 12.6 percent in December 2023.

Ibon noted that SWS showed 46 percent of Filipino families rated themselves poor and 33 percent as borderline poor in March 2024.

Across all regions, the average minimum wage is only P441 or around one-third (36.5 percent) of the P1,208 average family living wage (FLW) for a family of five, as of April 2024.

In the NCR, the P610 nominal minimum wage – the highest nationwide – is just 51.2 percent of the P1,192 FLW. Meanwhile, BARMM has the lowest minimum wage nationwide at P361, which is only 17 percent of the region’s P2,069 FLW.

“By choosing to ignore the harsh reality of millions of poor and vulnerable Filipinos, the government shows that it is avoiding and not really interested in implementing

meaningful measures that could actually improve the people's welfare," Ibon said.

## **Government**

The National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) said given the steady decline in unemployment, the government will focus on underemployment.

Neda said, however, that the country's underemployment rate has declined to 11 percent in March 2024, compared to 11.2 percent in March 2023.

"We will continue to prioritize creating high-quality and well-paying jobs to address the rising issues of vulnerable employment. We will focus on attracting job-generating investments from the private sector and scaling up social and physical infrastructure to improve our people's employment prospects to achieve this goal. These will be accompanied by reskilling and upskilling programs to increase employability," said Neda Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan.

He also reported that a medium- and long-term Foreign Investment Promotion and Marketing Plan (FIPMP) is underway and targeted to be completed by June 30.

The Inter-Agency Investment Promotion Coordination Committee, established following the amendment of the Foreign Investment Act, leads the formulation of the FIPMP.

Together with the private sector, the government plans to enrich the content of training programs for workers and employers by integrating courses on advanced productivity tools such as data science, analytics, and artificial intelligence, Balisacan added.

"For the government to sustain a robust labor market and reap the benefits of the demographic dividend, it must ensure that people are healthy, educated, and skilled. To facilitate the development of soft and hard skills among workers and create a more agile and adaptive workforce, we at Neda continue to advocate for the passage of the Apprenticeship Bill, Lifelong Learning Bill, and the Enterprise Productivity Act," Balisacan said. The Neda chief also seeks passage of the Konektadong Pinoy Bill, which Neda expects to reduce costs and expand access. "Digital connectivity can provide the workforce with more opportunities, particularly for individuals engaged in care work and other household responsibilities," he said.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/09/dry-spell-causes-agriculture-fisheries-1-million-job-loss/>

# Q1 farm output inches up 0.05% despite El Niño

Ada Pelonia

May 9, 2024



**The resilient Filipino farmer stands as a testament to the indispensability of experience in modernizing agriculture, particularly amidst the challenges posed by the El Niño phenomenon. Despite the harsh conditions, these farmers demonstrate their essential role and irreplaceable expertise, embodying the spirit of innovation and sustainability in farming practices.**

THE country's farm output posted a slight gain in the first quarter despite the havoc wreaked by El Niño on local plantations, based on data released by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) on Wednesday.

PSA data indicated that farm production inched up by 0.05 percent in terms of value using constant 2018 prices.

The crops, livestock, and fisheries subsectors recorded declines in terms of value, according to PSA data. The poultry and fisheries subsectors prevented the performance of Philippine agriculture from falling into negative territory.

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

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

**The value of agriculture and fisheries production was estimated at P428.99 billion in the first quarter of 2024, slightly higher than last year’s P428.69 billion.**

Data showed crop production, which amounted to P247.04 billion, declined annually by 0.3 percent, with the value of palay production posting a 2-percent decline.

Livestock production amounted to P59.46 billion and contracted by 3.6 percent during the period, with the value of hog production recording a 4.3-percent decline.

The value of fisheries production reached P53.73 billion, a contraction of 1.3 percent during the poultry, which amounted to P68.76 billion, posted growth of 5.9 percent with every poultry commodity recording increments in the value of production, except for duck eggs.

“I think everybody was projecting some expansion in poultry but nobody I think expected it will be almost 6 percent,” Roehlano Briones, a senior research fellow at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, told BusinessMirror via phone call.

Briones said commercial poultry growers may have invested in technology to shield chickens from the ill effects of El Niño.

He added that crops and hogs, the biggest sub-industry of livestock, were also affected by the weather phenomenon.

“Many of the backyard growers are having problems sourcing water these days, and then many animals are suffering heat stress so mortality is going up and growth is slowing,” he explained, speaking partly in Filipino.

In terms of volume, poultry production recorded a 6-percent increase to 705,300 metric tons (MT) from the previous year's same period level of 665,540 MT.

“Chicken production, with a 71.8-percent share to the total volume of poultry production, grew by 7.7 percent. This primarily contributed to the annual increment of poultry production during the period,” the PSA said.

Crop production in the first quarter increased by 4.9 percent to 25.07 million MT from last year's 23.89 MMT, with sugarcane production at 17.2 percent as its main driver.

Livestock production recorded a 3.4-percent decrease to 523,780 MT from 542,310 MT in the same period last year.

“The top contributor to this decrement was hog production, which dropped by 4.3 percent annually,” the PSA said.

The volume of fisheries production dipped by 0.5 percent to 987,190 MT from the 992,330 MT output in the same quarter of 2023.

“The decline in the volume of fisheries production during the period was mainly brought about by the annual reductions in bali sardinella [tamban] and milkfish [bangus] at 29.9 percent and 7.6 percent, respectively,” it said.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/05/09/q1-farm-output-inches-up-0-05-despite-el-nino/>



# Tulfo sa Senado: Ipasa House version ng amyenda sa rice tariff law

[Joy Cantos](#)

May 8, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Nanawagan si House Deputy Majority Leader Erwin Tulfo sa kanilang counterpart sa Senado na madaliin na ang pag-amyenda sa Rice Tarrification Law (RTL) kasabay ng apela na dapat ding itulak ng Senado ang kanilang panukala na ibalik sa merkado ang murang bigas ng National Food Authority (NFA).

Ginawa ni Tulfo ang pahayag matapos aprubahan nitong Martes ng House Committee on Agriculture and Food sa pamumuno ni Quezon province Rep. Mark Enverga ang pag-amyenda sa RTL. Agad din itong naaprubahan sa Committee on Ways and Means sa pamumuno naman ni Albay Rep. Joey Salceda.

“Nakalusot nga ho dito (sa Kongreso), ang problem namin ngayon is sa Senate. Iba ho ‘yung version nila eh. Yung version noon ng Senate, walang laman eh. Eh wala ho binabanggit doon na NFA,” ayon sa pahayag ni Tulfo ng ACT-CIS partylist.

“So pumasa man ho dito, pagdating ho sa kanila, wala rin mangyayari siguro. Eh 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,” dagdag ni Tulfo.

Inaprubahan sa Kongreso ang naturang panukala matapos ipag-utos ni Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez na madaliin ang pagpasa nito, isang araw matapos i-anunsyo mismo ng pangulo na ise-certify niyang “urgent” ang panukalang pag-amyenda sa RTL.

Kasama sa pag-amyenda ang pagbabalik sa merkado ng mababang presyo ng bigas mula sa NFA para ma-solusyunan ang patuloy na pagtaas ng presyo ng bigas na aabot na sa mahigit P50 kada kilo.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2024/05/08/2353423/tulfo-sa-senado-ipasa-house-version-ng-amyenda-sa-rice-tarrif-law>

# P20 kada kilo ng bigas tutuparin ni BBM?

[AKSYON NGAYON](#) - [Al G. Pedroche](#)

May 9, 2024 | 12:00am

Mukhang patutunayan ni Presidente Bongbong Marcos sa kanyang mga kritiko na kaya niyang maibaba sa P20 bawat kilo ang presyo ng bigas gaya ng kanyang campaign promise. Iyan kasi ang laging ikinakantiyaw ng mga kalaban sa pulitika ng Presidente na isang “pangakong napako”.

Inihayag mismo ng Presidente na sa Agosto, magbebenta na sa mga Kadiwa outlet ng bigas sa halagang P29 kada kilo. Ayon kay National Irrigation Administration chief Eduardo Guillen, ang ani ng palay na nakuha sa Contract Farming na umaabot sa 100 milyong kilo. Talaga namang nakasalalay sa rami ng production ang ikabababa ng presyo ng bigas.

Sa panig ng Department of Agriculture, may balak din itong magbenta ng bigas sa nabanggit na presyo sa pagdagsa ng supply ng butil sa Hulyo.

Kuntento na ako sa halagang iyan na mataas lang ng siyam na piso kaysa naipangako. Kung mangyayari iyan, at least mababawasan ng dahilan sa pangangantiyaw ang mga kritiko ng Presidente.

Ang kuwestiyon ay kung ito’y magiging pangmatagalan. Mahalaga kasi ang sustainability ng pagbebenta ng murang bigas.

Sana rin, hindi magiging pahirapan sa paghahanap ng outlets na mabibilhan ng murang bigas.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/opinyon/2024/05/09/2353671/p20-kada-kilo-ng-bigas-tutuparin-ni-bbm>

**REMATE:**

# Import ban sa sibuyas target palawigin ng DA

May 9, 2024 07:52



MANILA, Philippines – Sinabi ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na tinitingnan nito ang alinman sa pagpapalawig ng imports ban sa sibuyas o pagbaba ng import volume kasunod ng masaganang panahon ng ani mula Marso hanggang Abril.

Para sa unang quarter ng 2024, nagtala ang industriya ng sibuyas ng 28.58 porsiyentong pagtaas ng produksyon katumbas ng P8.098 bilyon, mas mataas sa P6.298 bilyon na output para sa parehong panahon noong nakaraang taon, ayon sa Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Sa isang panayam, sinabi ni Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa na sasangguni sila sa Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) para i-account ang aktwal na supply sa Mayo.

“Matandaan natin, sinabi ni Secretary (Francisco) Tiu Laurel na walang importation hanggang May, at pwedeng i-extend hanggang July, depende sa magiging performance. So this could be one way of saying na we have enough supply,” sabi ni de Mesa sa isang panayam.

Aniya, ang pagtaas ng produksiyon ay maiuugnay din sa 40 porsiyentong pagtaas ng lupang itinanim sa mga sibuyas mula 2023.

Sa Central Luzon lamang, nasa 10,388 ektarya ang produksyon ng sibuyas ngayong taon.

Nauna nang hiniling ng Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. (PCAFI) na mag-import ng mga sibuyas sa Mayo dahil pinalala ng El Niño phenomenon ang epekto ng armyworm infestation.

Nitong Marso, naapektuhan ng armyworm infestation ang 18 ektarya ng plantasyon ng sibuyas. *Santi Celario*

<https://remate.ph/import-ban-sa-sibuyas-target-palawigin-ng-da/>

**REMATE:**

## **P30 kada kilong bigas target ng DA sa Hulyo**

May 8, 2024 13:13



MANILA, Philippines – Layon ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na pababain pa ang presyo ng bigas sa P30 kada kilo pagsapit ng Hulyo.

Ito ay makaraang tanungin si DA spokesperson Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa kung posible ba ang P30 kada kilo na bigas, matapos sabihin ni House Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez na posible ito.

“Ito naman ay ginagawa na ng National Irrigation Administration, Kadiwa dahil meron silang tinatawag nating contract farming,” sinabi ni De Mesa sa isang panayam.

Aniya, sa pamamagitan ng contract farming sa pagitan ng National Food Authority (NFA) at farmers’ cooperatives, bibigyan ng pamahalaan ng subsidiya ang production inputs ng mga ito.

“In return ay ibebenta nila ‘yung palay sa NFA. Sigurado tayo na mas magiging mura ‘yung production input at dahil dito ay merong pagkakataon talaga na maibenta ng mas mura sa pamilihan ‘yung palay,” dagdag niya.

Nitong Linggo, sinabi ng DA na ang presyo ng local regular milled rice ay nasa P50 kada kilo, at P48 hanggang P55 kada kilo naman para sa local well-milled rice.

Para naman sa imported commercial rice, ang regular milled rice ay mula P48 hanggang P51 kada kilo, at ang well-milled rice ay mula P51 hanggang P54. *RNT/JGC*

<https://remate.ph/p30-kada-kilong-bigang-target-ng-da-sa-hulyo/>



**REMATE:**

## **Higit 3K rabies patient naitatala kada-araw sa San Lazaro Hospital**

May 8, 2024 10:24



MANILA, Philippines – Umapela ang San Lazaro Hospital sa mga local government units na buksan ang kani-kanilang animal bite centers para maibigay ang kaukulang pangangalagang medikal sa ibang mga lokasyon.

Ito ay sa gitna ng pagdagsa ng mga pasyente sa naturang ospital upang nagpaturok ng anti-rabies vaccines dahil sa dami ng nakakagat o nakakalmot ng mga alagang hayop ngayong summer season. Nitong mga nagdaang mga araw, umabot sa higit 3,000 pasyente kada araw ang pumipila sa naturang ospital upang magpabakuna laban sa rabies.

Karamihan sa mga nagtutungo sa San Lazaro Hospital upang magpabakuna ng anti-rabies ay mula pa sa ibat-ibang lugar o non-residents ng Manila.

Sinabi ni David Suplico, officer-in-charge of the San Lazaro Medical Services, na ang bilang ng mga nagpapabakuna ng libreng anti-rabies



ngayon ay sobrang hindi pangkaraniwan dahil maari lamang tumanggap ng 800 pasyente kada araw ang pasilidad.

Noong Abril, punong-puno rin ang San Lazaro Hospital, na umaasikaso sa humigit-kumulang 1,800 hanggang 2,000 pasyente bawat araw na naghahanap ng pagbabakuna laban sa rabies.

“Umaapela po ako sa ating mga local government units na sana po ‘yung kanilang animal bite treatment center ay handa po sa pag-surge ng pasyente po ngayon. Dapat po sila ay mayroong mga gamot para po [sa] anti-rabies,” sabi ni Suplico.

Ayon sa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ng Estados Unidos, ang mga anti-rabies shot ay dapat ibigay sa apat na dosis pagkatapos ng exposure.

Ang rabies ay nakakaapekto sa central nervous system kung hindi ginagamot. Sinabi ng CDC na ang incubation period ay maaaring tumagal ng ilang linggo hanggang buwan depende sa lugar ng pagkakalantad.

Bukod sa San Lazaro Hospital, nag-aalok din ng libreng anti-rabies vaccines ang Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) sa Muntinlupa City at Amang Rodriguez Hospital sa Marikina City.

Sinabi ng Department of Agriculture noong nakaraang buwan na hihingi sila ng P110 milyon mula sa Kongreso para mabakunahan ang 22 milyong aso, na may pag-asang mapupuksa nito ang rabies sa bansa. (*Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden*)

<https://remate.ph/higit-3k-rabies-patient-naitatala-kada-araw-sa-san-lazaro-hospital/>