

## **CLIPPINGS FOR TODAY APRIL 19, 2025**

### **A. PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

**Philippine Coconut Authority mulls over policy to ensure supply security**

**Agrilever harnesses digital tech for farmers' financing**

### **B. THE MANILA TIMES:**

**NIA drops Aboitiz proposal for Iloilo bulk water**

### **C. BUSINESS MIRROR:**

**Sinking supply sends smoked fish prices sizzling**

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Philippine Coconut Authority mulls over policy to ensure supply security

By: **Jordeene B. Lagare** - Reporter / [@jordeenelagare](#)

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 07:18 AM April 19, 2025



The Philippine Coconut Authority is considering a proposal to bar coconut oil exports if domestic demand has not been met

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) is considering to implement a policy to secure the country's coconut supply due to supply constraints and increasing prices.

The PCA has yet to formally request the Department of Energy (DOE) to suspend the mandated increase in biofuel blend scheduled for October.

However, the agency is leaning toward a percent retention policy. That means a portion of the domestic coconut oil supply will be reserved for domestic demand, including biofuel blend requirements, before exporting any surplus.

“This proposal is seen as a proactive measure to safeguard the needs of the transportation and logistics sectors amid rising demand and tightening supply,” the PCA told the Inquirer.

The agency is looking at the proposal's viability and broader economic implications. The objective is to secure supply and stabilize prices without disrupting the country's export commitments.

## **Proposals and consultations**

“These measures will only be implemented after more thorough consultations with concerned industry actors,” it added.

Deferring the scheduled 1-percentage-point increase in the coco-methyl ester (CME) blend in all diesel products this October is one of the proposals from industry stakeholders.

According to the PCA, stakeholders advocated for an immediate dialogue with the National Biofuels Board to assess the impact of the increased blend on domestic coconut oil supply and pricing. They suggested a potential temporary adjustment to prioritize cooking oil availability for consumers.

prices of cooking oil and other coconut products. This could strain the operations of processors and affect Filipino consumers if not addressed.

Data from the PCA show that farm-gate, mill site and retail copra prices have been rapidly increasing due to a combination of factors. These include strong overseas demand for coconut oil and tight local supply due to adverse weather.

As of April 10, farm-gate copra prices averaged P60.71 per kilogram. This means a twofold increase from P30.43 per kg a year ago.

Average mill-gate prices reached P79.72 per kg, surging by over 100 percent from P39.65 per kg.

### **Mandated biodiesel blend**

Under the Biofuels Act of 2006, all industry players are [mandated to blend CME with all diesel sold in the country](#).

CME is a form of biodiesel derived from coconut oil, making it a renewable fuel source.

The CME blend in diesel was raised to 3 percent from 2 percent starting Oct. 1, 2024.

The mandated ratio will be raised further to 4 percent by volume by Oct. 1, 2025 and 5 percent by Oct. 1, 2026.

The DOE had said that higher CME blend is expected to benefit coconut farmers, biodiesel producers and other industry stakeholders .

It noted that about 900 million additional coconuts are needed to produce 100 to 120 million liters of CME requirements to meet the mandatory increase in CME blend.

“Consumers will benefit with an increase in mileage from the average of 10 kilometers per liter of diesel to less than 11 kilometers,” it added.

<https://business.inquirer.net/520293/philippine-coconut-authority-mulls-over-policy-to-ensure-supply-security>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Agrilever harnesses digital tech for farmers' financing

By: **Jordeene B. Lagare** - Reporter / [@jordeenelagare](#)

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 06:50 AM April 19, 2025



Agri-tech startup firm Agrilever is targeting to help more rice farmers gain access to financing to boost their income and productivity

MANILA, Philippines — Agri-tech startup firm Agrilever wants to help more rice farmers gain access to financing to boost their income and productivity.

In an email correspondence with the Inquirer, Agrilever said the current target areas are top producing regions in the Philippines such as Central Luzon and Cagayan Valley.

“Agrilever targets all rice farmers within the Philippines, and our monthly focus shifts depending on the harvest season,” Agrilever CEO Ruel Amparo said.

“For now, our initiatives solely focus on rice farmers, as that’s what our technology currently supports,” Amparo said.

The company plans to bridge the gap between farmers and financial institutions to support them with technological resources and farming essentials.

In this arrangement, Agrilever serves as an intermediary to manage the relationship between banks or credit providers and rice farmers.

## **So that farmers can pay their loans**

“It helps ensure that farmers can pay their loans by providing them with the technology, on-the-ground help, and fertilizers that they need to have a more productive harvest,” Amparo said.

To date, loans have been provided to farmers in several areas. There cover over 10,000 borrowers in Cagayan, Isabela, Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Pampanga, Bulacan, Agusan del Sur and South Cotabato.

“We hope to reach rice farmers nationwide and provide them with the financial tools, fertilizers and weather analytics they need [to navigate climate challenges](#) and boost their yields,” Amparo said.

The group has partnered with banks and government-run institutions to achieve its target. These include the Agricultural Credit Policy Council under the Department of Agriculture and New Rural Bank of San Leonardo in Nueva Ecija.

Last year, Agrilever worked with BPI Direct BanKo Inc., the microfinance arm of the Bank of the Philippine Islands. They launched the Agri NegosyoKo Loan Program aimed at helping farmers strengthen their agricultural practices and improve their livelihoods.

“We are continuing to expand to more rural banks and government institutions, but we can’t name them at this time,” Amparo said.

Citing data from the World Bank, Agrilever said two out of three Filipino farmers are uninsured.

The startup said the agricultural sector received only 2.6 percent of the country’s total loans outstanding in the banking sector in 2022.

### **Farming with a mobile app**

It also launched a platform designed to provide crop management protocols and advanced weather intelligence to farmers.

“This technology-based information is vital to allow them to mitigate the effects of extreme weather events and rising temperatures on their crops,” Ampara said.

“The app allowed them to gain insights into seasonal growing protocols, which are tailored by agronomists to the farmers and their farm fields,” he added.

Through this app, farmers will receive an alert on when to apply fertilizers or perform the second harrowing.

<https://business.inquirer.net/520300/agrilever-harnesses-digital-tech-for-farmers-financing>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# **NIA drops Aboitiz proposal for Iloilo bulk water**

**April 19, 2025**

**ILOILO CITY** — The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) has declined the unsolicited proposal by Aboitiz InfraCapital Inc. (AIC) to develop the bulk water supply project in Iloilo, citing conflicts with its plans and agreements.

In a letter dated March 31 obtained by The Manila Times, NIA administrator Eduardo Guillen informed AIC first vice president Francis David Roque that the agency is "unable to move forward" with the proposal due to misalignment with the NIA's comprehensive development plan and a potential conflict with the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

**Guillen said that NIA has an existing Transaction Advisory Service (TAS) Agreement with ADB signed in September 2024.**

The TAS allows ADB to provide NIA with technical assistance and project preparation support for public-private partnership (PPP) infrastructure projects.

Under this arrangement, ADB ensures that projects like the Jalaur River Multipurpose Project Phase 2 (JRMP 2) are competitively procured and are technically and financially viable.

Projects covered under the TAS include the bulk water supply components of JRMP 2 — the first large-scale water reservoir project outside Luzon.

JRMP 2 is designed to supply approximately 86 million liters of water per day to meet the commercial and industrial needs of Iloilo.

AIC's proposal involves the construction of a highline canal and a raw water supply system designed to complement JRMP 2. These are integral parts of the company's P8.45-billion Bulk Water Supply Project, which is currently under negotiation with the Iloilo City government.

The highline canal proposal includes AIC stepping in to complete sections left unfinished by JRMP 2's previous contractor, Daewoo Engineering and Construction Co. Ltd.

The company's unsolicited proposal aims to supply 80 million liters of potable treated water per day through an 80.74-kilometer highline canal connecting three dams in Calinog, Iloilo.

It also includes the development of a Bulk Raw Water Intake Facility (BRWF), with water to be distributed to local water districts under a user-pays model.

However, Guillen noted that AIC's proposal would require NIA to make fixed "Availability Payments" in exchange for the construction and eventual turnover of the BRWF — an arrangement the agency views as less financially sustainable.

NIA stressed that it prefers a user-revenue model, where consumers pay only for what they use, which it sees as more adaptable to the region's evolving water demand.

Despite the stalled status of its proposal, AIC in a statement to The Manila Times on Tuesday, said it remains committed to pursuing water infrastructure in the region.

The firm said it is working closely with NIA and other stakeholders to align its proposals with broader development goals.

"[Our] proposal to NIA aligns with the agency's goal of maximizing benefits for irrigation and bulk water resources," the AIC said.

"Recognizing the interconnection of both initiatives, AIC continues to engage and collaborate with each Implementing Agency to ensure alignment of both proposals towards attaining the ultimate goal of delivering sustainable water supply to Ilonggos," the firm added.

Earlier this year, the Iloilo City government's Pre-Qualifications, Bids, and Awards Committee approved AIC's PPP proposal to construct and operate a bulk water supply project for the city.

On April 15, Metro Pacific Iloilo Water, the utility servicing Iloilo City and nearby towns, conducted a stakeholder meeting to discuss AIC's bulk water plans.

**RJAY ZURIAGA CASTOR**

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2025/04/19/regions/nia-drops-aboitiz-proposal-for-iloilo-bulk-water/2094960>

## BUSINESS MIRROR:

# Sinking supply sends smoked fish prices sizzling

Katherine Chan and Kaela Patricia Gabriel | University of Santo Tomas  
April 19, 2025

*TINAPA* has long been considered by producers and vendors as the “golden fish” with its smoked, crispy skin evoking colors of royalty.

But recently, the likes of Renz Dela Cruz, a 24-year-old *tinapa* vendor, have been seeing the smoked fish take on a different glimmer as its cost continues to rise akin to a gold price rally.

The price of *tinapang galunggong* (roundscad) in Quiapo markets has doubled on an annual basis to P100 for a pack of five to seven pieces.

The reason? *Galunggong* supply has been tight with imports deemed insufficient to plug the shortfall in local production.

“*Ramdam po talaga ’yan kasi nawalan tayo ng isda eh. Matagal. Isang buwan. Ngayon lang ulit tayo nagkaro’n [ng tinapang galunggong], nitong buwan lang* [That lack is really felt because we didn’t have the fish...for a month. It’s only now that we’re seeing it again, just this month...],” said Dela Cruz, whose family has been in the *tinapa* business for 25 years already.

Dela Cruz buys *galunggong*—whether imported or locally-produced—from Navotas for their *tinapa* production in Tondo.

*Tinapa* or smoked fish is a popular local dish that usually use *galunggong* or *bangus* (milkfish).



A VENDOR at a Quiapo wet market arranges packs of tinapang galunggong, now priced at P100 for five to seven pieces—double last year’s rate—as dwindling local supply and costly imports **push the**



“golden fish” beyond the reach of many households. Despite the rise, consumers still seek out the smoked delicacy, a staple in Filipino meals.

### **Fish prices rise**

Kim Villeza, a fish vendor at Agora Market in Navotas City, said she experienced the *galunggong* supply crunch after the new year as prices nearly doubled year-on-year.

“*Pag isang cooler po mga nasa dose mil [P12,000] po ’yun.... Dati mura lang po nasa P7,000,*” Villeza said, noting that each cooler contains about 50 kilos of the fish.

The average price of locally produced medium-sized roundscad in Metro Manila markets in the week of March 17-22 reached P312 per kilo, about 40 percent higher than the P222 per kilo recorded in the same period last year, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Meanwhile, the average price of imported roundscad during the same reference period expanded by more than half year-on-year to P300 per kilo from P193 per kilo, DA price monitoring reports showed.

A kilogram of medium-sized roundscad is about 12 to 14 pieces, according to the DA.

The country’s roundscad production in 2024 declined by almost 10 percent to 172,417 metric tons from 191,073 metric tons in 2023, Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data showed.



### **Improve local production**

Roberto Ballon, a fisherfolk and chairperson of the Kapunungan sa Gagmay’ng Mangingisda sa Concepcion, said the government should boost its support for local fisherfolk instead of relying on imports to ease the *galunggong* supply problem.

Late last year, the DA approved the importation of about 38,000 metric tons of small pelagic fish, including *galunggong*, to ensure adequate supply in wet markets.

The DA authorized the importation after the government projected a shortfall in domestic stocks caused by the series of typhoons amid the annual closed fishing season, which was only lifted last quarter.

“Actually, in general, *hindi tayo kinakapos ng supply sa Pilipinas. Ang kulang talaga sa atin [ay] suporta ng post-harvest at facilities kung paano madala sa mga area na kinakapos sa supply ng isda,*” Ballon, a Ramon Magsaysay awardee, said in an interview.

“That’s why our appeal was, stop importation of *galunggong*. Instead, let’s help and strengthen aquaculture,” he added, partly in Filipino.

### **Smoked salinas**

*Tinapa*NG *galunggong* vendors fear that they will be unable to take advantage of the huge demand for the fish product due to insufficient supply.

To cope with the supply situation, producers and vendors alike opt to sell other smoked fish products, like *salinas* or fimbriated sardines.

“*Ito, minsan salinas [fimbriated sardines] kapag wala talagang supply ng galunggong,*” said Sunshine Centeno, 19, also a *tinapa* vendor in Quiapo.

“*Ayos lang [ang benta] kaso may iba nagreklamo na kasi medyo mataas nga [ang presyo]. [May mga] tumatawad kaso hindi rin pwede kasi wala ring kaming kikitain,*” Centeno added. Centeno sells *tinapang galunggong* for P100 per pack of five to seven pieces depending on the sizes.

### **Household staple**

For consumers like Mary Jo Terrazola, 49, *tinapang galunggong* remains as a key ingredient or partner of Filipino dishes like *ginisang munggo* or *palabok*.

And despite the price spikes, Terrazola said she will still buy the fish product since it is a household staple.

“*Mataas ngayon [ang tinapa] kasi mahal ang galunggong. Ginto ngayon, ginto. [Pero] kahit tumaas ’yan bibili ka pa rin lalo na kung gusto mo kumain ng tinapa lalo pang-almusal. Wala kang choice,*” Terrazola said.

In the last two months, she has observed that the price of her favorite *tinapang galunggong* in Cavite has increased to P100 for four pieces, the same with prevailing cost in Metro Manila but with fewer quantity.

To cope with the rising prices, Terrazola limits their family’s consumption of the commodity rather than increase their food budget.

*“Yung isang balot kung apat [lang ‘yung laman], e di ‘yun na lang. Tapos hihimay-himayin na lang o kaya aamuy-amuyin,” she said.*

*This story was produced by Katherine Chan and Kaela Patricia Gabriel, graduating journalism students at University of Santo Tomas – Department of Journalism, for their agriculture journalism elective class.*

Image credits: KATHERINE CHAN & KAELA PATRICIA GABRIEL

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/04/19/sinking-supply-sends-smoked-fish-prices-sizzling/>