

Farm sector sustains growth, still falls below gov't target

THE AGRICULTURE sector managed to post growth numbers in 2019, but failed to meet the government's target due to El Niño and the African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak.

The agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector's output, as measured by gross value added based on constant 2018 prices, increased by 1.2% to P1.78 trillion in 2019 from P1.76 trillion the year before, data from the Philippine Statistics Authority showed.

The 2019 performance marked the sector's third straight year of growth, but was still lower than the 10-year-high growth of 4% in 2017. It was also way below the sector's 2019 growth target of 2.5-3.5% under the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022.

The sector's contribution to the country's total economic output continued to decline. As of 2019, agriculture made up 9.2% of gross domestic product (GDP), lower than 9.7% in 2018. To put this into perspective, the sector make up 14.2% of GDP just a decade ago in 2009.

Moreover, its contribution to economic growth remains low at 0.12 percentage point out of the 6% growth in the country's GDP in 2019.

Among agriculture's 20 subsectors, 14 managed to post gains in 2019 led by "other animal production" (31.8% year on year growth); poultry and egg production (5.8%); support



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activities to agriculture, forestry, and fishing (5.8%); and forestry and logging (5%).

Bucking the trend were sugarcane including "muscovado sugar-making in the farm" (-8.9%); palay (-5.9%); cassava (-3.4%); banana (-2.1%); coffee (-1.7%); and livestock (-0.8%).

Then Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto M. Pernia said the sector's growth was tempered by delayed planting and harvesting of crops due to the El Niño phenomenon in the first half of 2019, as well as the African Swine Flu outbreak that constrained the livestock sector that year.

Eleven agriculture firms made it to this edition of the *Top 1000 Corporations in the Philippines* with combined revenues of P62.15 billion in 2019, up by 3.5% from the previous year.

Bounty Fresh Food, Inc. led in this sector with P15.75 billion in gross revenues in 2019, higher by 5.5% from 2018. For this edition, Bounty Fresh secured the No. 183 spot.

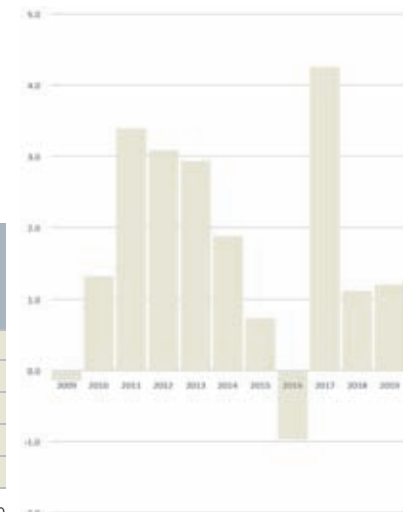
At No. 236 overall, Sumifru (Philippines) Corp. followed suit with P11.96 billion, inching up by 0.5% from the previous year.

Rounding out the top five agriculture companies are Tagum Agricultural Development Co. (No. 306); Universal Leaf Philippines, Inc. (No. 398); and SL Agritech Corp. (No. 509). — **Mark T. Amoguis** □

GROSS VALUE ADDED

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing

Growth in Percent (at constant 2018 prices)



SECTOR AT A GLANCE

YEAR	GROSS REVENUE % change	NET SALES % change	NET INCOME P billion	TOTAL ASSETS % change	TOTAL LIABILITIES % change	STOCK-HOLDERS' EQUITY % change	RETURN ON EQUITY	RETURN ON SALES	DEBT-TO-EQUITY RATIO
2015	(9.1)	(9.1)	3.54	1.0	(13.3)	23.3	0.1	0.0	1.1
2016	5.1	4.9	1.72	7.6	9.0	6.1	0.1	0.0	1.2
2017	11.1	11.4	4.97	14.8	15.0	14.6	0.1	0.0	1.0
2018	10.8	11.3	6.95	34.2	39.6	28.4	0.1	0.0	1.1
2019	3.5	4.0	1.70	11.6	20.7	(0.7)	0.0	0.0	1.7

Source: Financial statements from the SEC and companies included in the Top 1000