

Agri output falls for 1st time since 2016

AGRICULTURE was not spared from the economic recession as its full-year output declined for the first time since 2016 following the damage brought by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, a series of devastating typhoons, and the continued outbreak of the African Swine Fever (ASF).

The agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector's gross value added (GVA) based on constant 2018 prices fell by 0.2% to P1.78 trillion in 2020, data from the Philippine Statistics Authority showed.

This was the first time agricultural output posted an annual decline since 2016 when the sector contracted by 1%.

Nevertheless, the decline in agriculture's output was small compared with those in other sectors. This was reflected in its contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) climbing to 10.2% from 9.2% in 2019 despite the contraction in its GVA. This was also shown in its contribution to the full-year 9.6% GDP decline in 2020, wherein agriculture only chipped in less than a tenth of a percentage point.

Thirteen of agriculture's 20 sub-sectors posted decline in 2020 led by livestock (-6.9%); forestry and logging (-4.3%); other animal production (-3.2%); coconut including copra (-2.8%); and poultry and egg production (-2.4%).

Bucking the trend were sugarcane including "muscovado sugar-making



PHILIPPINE STAR / MICHAEL VARGAS

in the farm" (21.3%); cacao (9.9%); support activities to agriculture, forestry and fishing (5%); palay (3.1%); rubber (3.1%); corn (2.4%); and coffee (0.8%).

In a statement earlier this year, Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar said that despite the Taal Volcano eruption, the COVID-19 pandemic, and continued incidence of the ASF, the country's agriculture and fishery sector has "remained pliant and resilient..."

Besides the pandemic, last year saw some strong typhoons that caused at least P1 billion in crop damage. As of Jan. 29 this year, some

436,423 hogs have been culled since the detection of ASF in 2019, the Department of Agriculture said.

Mr. Dar has blamed the ASF for the depletion of the pork supply, which caused prices of sold in Metro Manila to top P400 per kilogram.

The Department of Agriculture looks to post a 2.5% year on year in agricultural output this year after missing 1.5% growth target in 2020.

Fourteen agriculture firms made it to this edition of the *Top 1000 Corporations in the Philippines* with a combined gross revenue of P82.67 billion in 2020, down 4.5% from 2019.

Charoen Pokphand Foods Philippines Corp. led this sector with P18.22 billion in gross earnings last year, higher by 5.4% from the previous year. For this edition, it secured the No. 130 spot.

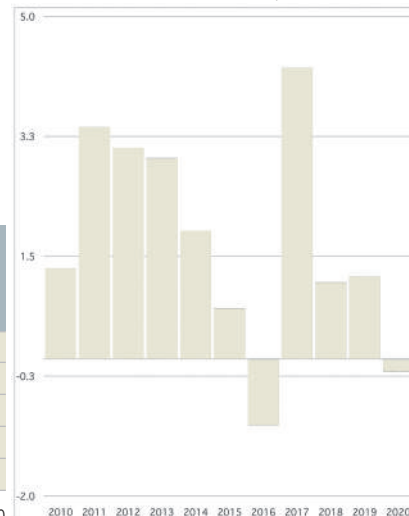
Second is Bounty Fresh Food, Inc. (No. 172) with P13.65 billion, albeit 13.3% lower from the year before.

Rounding out the top five firms in this sector are Sumifru (Philippines) Corp. (No. 244), Tagum Agricultural Development Co., Inc. (No. 309), and Universal Leaf Philippines, Inc. (No. 311). ■

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
2016	5.1	4.9	1.72	7.6	9.0	6.1	0.1	0.0	1.2
2017	11.13	11.39	4.97	14.81	15.03	14.60	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
2020	(4.5)	(5.6)	1.20	5.0	6.9	1.7	0.0	0.0	1.8

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