

Government pressed on agri subsidies, stockpiling

By Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson

THE government needs to provide subsidies to help agricultural producers survive rising costs resulting from the Russia invasion of Ukraine, while stockpiling food in anticipation of possible supply disruptions, farmer and fisherfolk organizations said.

“Stockpiling food means supporting, incentivizing and promoting local production. Subsidizing local agriculture is our only way to weather this crisis,” Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura Executive Director Jayson H. Cainglet said in a Viber message.

“We are the only country with an importing mindset amidst a crisis that is disrupting global food supply and logistics. Countries may reduce or suspend their exports as a way of (addressing) their food needs,” he added.

Mr. Cainglet said that rising fuel costs because of the Ukraine crisis are already affecting the agriculture sector because production costs have spiked.

“Oil is not only used in transporting agricultural goods, but is an essential input for the industry, (for production of) fertilizer and feed additives... and is lifeblood of farm machinery... water pumps for irrigation, aquaculture and fish farming,” he added.

An association of small fishermen, the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA), said rising fuel prices are forcing fisherfolk to seek other sources of livelihood.

“There are significant numbers of small fisherfolk abandoning their boats and leaving their fishing grounds in search for other jobs that won’t cost them a lot of fuel money,” PAMALAKAYA said in a statement.

“This trend of labor out-migration in the fishing sector is a cause of concern as it might have a domino effect on fisheries production, market prices, and ultimately domestic food security,” the group added.

Russia and Ukraine account for about 25% of the global wheat trade and about 20% of the corn trade.

“Ukraine is a major agricultural exporter. Of particular interest to us is their wheat and corn. Corn is the most important input for the livestock industry,” Mr. Cainglet said.

He said the price of corn, used widely in livestock and aquaculture feed, has increased to about P22 per kilogram from P14 previously.

Fertilizer prices have also increased to about P2,250 per bag from P850 per bag before the crisis.

Wheat is a primary ingredient in bread and other foods, as well as animal feed, according to former Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Undersecretary Asis G. Perez.

“The common animal feed ingredients include corn, rice bran, copra meal, feed-wheat, cassava, soybean meal, fishmeal, coconut oil, salt, and assorted vitamins and minerals,” Mr. Perez said in a virtual briefing.

The Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) said the government should not

resort to imports and instead support domestic producers.

“The government is pushing for lower tariffs on food imports. This means they have no confidence in our local producers. They entice our farmers with fuel and fertilizer subsidies but at the same time leave the door open to unlimited and cheap imports. Farmers will again be at the losing end. There is enough time to produce our food but the government’s primary strategy is imports,” Raul Q. Montemayor, FFF national manager, said in a Viber message.

“Since last year, we’ve been asking the government to suspend the excise tax and 12% value-added tax (VAT) of fuel. Instead, the Department of Agriculture (DA) authorized 3 million metric tons (MT) of imported rice and over 400 million kilos of pork,” Mr. Cainglet added.

Food security group Tugon Kabuhayan said support from the private sector is necessary to aid the government in ensuring adequate food supply.

“We have to ask the government and the private sector to work together in securing supply. The government must start to negotiate to secure supply and ingredients,” Tugon Kabuhayan Co-convenor Norberto O. Chinguanco said in a virtual briefing.

“If we don’t act fast, we will have a shortage of feed. Less feed means less production in the animal and aquaculture industries. Our country will once again resort to imports of fish and meat. We want to cushion the impact of the Russian-Ukraine war on our industries,” Tugon Kabuhayan said in a statement.

Israel calls for more support to unlock potential of foreign-trained farm experts

THE PHILIPPINES needs to find a way to effectively employ the skills of its agriculture experts trained overseas, according to the Israeli ambassador, whose country trains 400 Filipino university graduates a year in farming techniques.

Israel’s Ambassador to the Philippines, Ilan Fluss, said on Friday that many of these graduates return without working in the agricultural sector or benefitting the Philippines despite their advanced studies.

Such students typically complete a business proposal during their stay in Israel, he said of the Filipino graduates of Israel’s Agrostudies International Centre.

The Philippines, via the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, nominates the 400 trainees to study in Israel, where they work for 11 months alongside Israeli farmers to generate ideas for upgrading commercial farming via technology and other best practices.

“For me, the important thing is to make sure that we have a platform or some kind of program so that when they come back, they are offered opportunities to stay here, to grow, and to be successful in the Philippines,” he said

at a media roundtable discussion, noting the absence of jobs in their field that pay well.

“This is something that has to be led by the Philippine partner,” he added.

He floated the idea of an online platform which matches potential employers with trained experts, in order to achieve a better retention rate for the 400 returning trainees or anyone else who might be interested.

“When we see this, then we can start negotiating to have more (interns),” he added.

Mr. Fluss said he is looking for more partners in the Philippines. “I want to find a good partner which is willing to invest, which is open to change and is ready for that, then we’d be happy to come in and work with (them).”

Israeli delegations have been looking in Davao, Bataan, and Laguna to identify partners, he added.

“We’re trying to see what else we can do,” he said. “So basically, what we’re building is a long-term plan.”

At the same roundtable discussion, Nina Lehmann, an expert from Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation (known by the acronym MASHAV), said farmers in the Philippines are old, with the younger

generation less interested in agriculture. She noted that even parents who are farmers tell their children not to take the same path.

MASHAV is exploring how to promote agriculture with a business mindset to make it more appealing to young people.

During a visit to Tarlac and Nueva Ecija, Ms. Lehmann and Moshe Broner, another MASHAV expert, explored how to incorporate Israeli technology in Philippine farms.

Their project, known as PICAT, aims to establish extension and training centers for agriculture and related fields in the region that will focus on farm productivity, profitability, and sustainability, thereby improving living standards of farm families and their communities.

“In order to have better agriculture, we need to bring the high-tech to the low-tech, and this is where we need the young generation. We can help give good advice, but it is their role to create the next generation of agriculture,” Ms. Lehmann said.

“Everywhere we are going, we tell the farmers or any other people, we didn’t come to teach you, we came to share knowledge. We can learn from farmers not less than we can give them,” Mr. Broner said. — **Alyssa Nicole O. Tan**

PHL waives P23.4 billion worth of duties on pandemic-related imports

THE Department of Finance (DoF) said it approved P23.4 billion worth of import tax and duty exemptions in 2021, close to the pre-pandemic total, after the approval of exemptions for coronavirus vaccine shipments.

The DoF approved 254 coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) tax exemptions valued at P8.7 billion last year, it said in a statement on Saturday. This represents 37% or nearly two-fifths of the total import tax exemptions processed by the department’s revenue office.

The P23.4 billion in estimated total foregone revenue from imports

in 2021 is close to the pre-pandemic total of P23.9 billion in 2019.

“However, this is primarily due to the foregone revenue attributable to imports of COVID-19 vaccines, as well as imports of items related to the COVID-19 response,” Finance Assistant Secretary Dakila Eltene Napao said.

The office also approved over 800 applications for value-added tax exemptions for COVID-19 medicine and medical devices. Total foregone revenue from these exemptions hit P382.1 million.

Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III has included COVID-19 vaccines in the revenue office’s

express lane, making such shipments eligible for tax exemption processing within 24 hours, as against the usual three-day process. Filing fees for express lane applications have been waived for vaccines.

The department announced in February 2021 that the vaccines had been granted tax and duty exemptions.

The Bureau of Customs collected P645.77 billion in revenue in 2021, up 20% as import volumes gradually improved. The 2020 total had declined by 14% as the pandemic slowed down international trade. — **Jenina P. Ibañez**

Patent filing assistance program extended to Dec. 31

THE Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL) said patent filing assistance on offer to inventors under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) has been extended until Dec. 31, facilitating such registrations across multiple jurisdictions.

The IPOPHL said in a statement on Sunday that Memorandum Circular 2022-007 was issued on Jan. 24, authorizing the program for PCT registrants.

Under the PCT system, inventors can file a single patent in multiple or all 155 contracting states for reduced fees.

“With the continued reopening of the economy, we hope to encourage more inventors and companies to seek global op-

portunities,” IPOPHL Director General Rowel S. Barba said.

IPOPHL’s filing assistance initiative, which is implemented by the Bureau of Patents (BoP), waives the fees for an International Search Report (ISR), which normally costs \$400 for small entities and \$1,000 for large entities, as well as those for an International Preliminary Examination Report (IPER), which costs \$200 for small entities and \$500 for large entities.

“An ISR identifies the existing patents and prior art which may affect an invention’s patentability. Meanwhile, an IPER is an initial assessment of an application’s novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability prepared according to international standards. Both reports help an

applicant evaluate the chances of the invention being patented under the PCT,” IPOPHL said.

Eligible beneficiaries under the filing assistance program are individual Filipino inventors, higher educational institutions that are members of IPOPHL’s Innovation and Technology Support Office Program, and foreign inventors from PCT contracting states that designate the IPOPHL as an International Searching and Preliminary Examining Authority and select the IPOPHL as their selected office of first filing from Feb. 1 to Dec. 31, 2022.

According to preliminary IPOPHL data, international applications processed under the PCT system increased 137% to 45 last year. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochove**

A newspaper is a public trust. Follow us on:



facebook.com/BusinessWorldOnline
twitter.com/bworldph



Republika ng Pilipinas
LUNGSOD NG MAKATI
SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD OF MAKATI

PRESENT:

Vice Mayor
Councilor
Councilor
Councilor
Councilor
Councilor
Councilor
Councilor
Councilor
Councilor
Councilor
LNB President
SK President

HON. MONIQUE YAZMIN MARIA Q. LAGDAMEO – Presiding Officer
HON. DENNIS B. ALMARIO
HON. MARIA DOLORES M. ARAYON
HON. MARTIN JOHN PIO Q. ARENAS
HON. SHIRLEY C. ASPILLAGA
HON. BENEDICT B. BANIQUED
HON. ARNOLD J. CRUZ
HON. ISRAEL S. CRUZADO
HON. VIRGILIO V. HILARIO, JR.
HON. LUIS S. JAVIER, JR.
HON. LEONARDO M. MAGPANTAY
HON. ARMANDO P. PADILLA
HON. TOSCA CAMILLE T. PUNO-RAMOS
HON. RENE ANDREI Q. SAGUISAG, JR.
HON. KRISTINA T. SAROSA
HON. JOSE C. VILLENA, IV
HON. ANNA ALCINA M. YABUT
HON. MARIBEL F. VITALES
HON. RODOLFO C. SAN PEDRO, JR.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Secretary to the Sanggunian ATTY. DINDO R. CERVANTES

Upon motion of Hon. A.J. Cruz, duly seconded, the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Makati unanimously approved City Ordinance No. 2022-035 on third and final reading.

CITY ORDINANCE NO. 2022-035

Authors: Hon. A.P. Padilla, Hon. R.A.Q. Saguisag, Jr., Hon. B.B. Baniqued, Hon. V.V. Hilario, Jr., Hon. L.S. Javier, Jr., Hon. D.B. Almario, Hon. A.J. Cruz, Hon. J.C. Villena, IV and Hon. R.C. San Pedro, Jr.

Co-Authors: Hon. M.D.M. Arayon, Hon. M.J.P.Q. Arenas, Hon. S.C. Aspillaga, Hon. I.S. Cruzado, Hon. L.M. Magpantay, Hon. T.C.T. Puno-Ramos, Hon. K.T. Sarosa, Hon. A.A.M. Yabut and Hon. M.F. Vitales

AN ORDINANCE DECLARING THE ANNUAL INVESTMENT PROGRAM FOR C.Y. 2022 OF BARANGAY EAST REMBO TO BE IN CONFORMITY WITH EXISTING LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS.

WHEREAS, R.A. No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, provides that the barangay development council shall prepare the barangay development plans based on local requirements;

WHEREAS, Section 114 (a) of the same Code states that the policies, programs, and projects proposed by local development councils shall be submitted to the sanggunian concerned for appropriate action;

WHEREAS, the pertinent provisions of the abovementioned law likewise imply that the that the Sangguniang Panlungsod shall have the power to review/approve the public investment programs of the barangays;

WHEREAS, the Sangguniang Barangay of East Rembo, by virtue of Barangay Resolution No. 1221-074 Series of 2021, adopted its Annual Investment Program for C.Y. 2022, a copy of such Resolution, including its supporting documents, is hereto attached and made an integral part hereof as **Annex “A”**;

WHEREAS, the Honorable Members of the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Makati extensively reviewed the abovementioned document, including its attachments;

WHEREAS, after careful perusal of available documents, it was ruled upon by the Members of the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Makati that the proposed Annual Investment Program for C.Y. 2022 of the Sangguniang Barangay of East Rembo is compliant with the minimum requirements as prescribed by existing laws, rules and regulations; hence, this Ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED, AS IT IS HEREBY ENACTED BY THE SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD OF MAKATI, METRO MANILA, BY VIRTUE OF THE POWERS VESTED IN IT BY LAW, IN SESSION ASSEMBLED, that:

Section 1. The Annual Investment Program for C.Y. 2022 of Barangay of East Rembo is hereby declared to be in conformity with existing laws, rules and regulations.

Section 2. The *Joint Endorsement* issued by the Urban Development Department (UDD) and Budget Department dated 4 March 2022, which attests that the Annual Investment Program for C.Y. 2022 of Barangay East Rembo substantially complies with the provisions of pertinent laws, rules and regulations, is hereby adopted *in toto*, a copy of such *Joint Endorsement* is hereto attached and made an integral part hereof as **Annex “B”**;

Section 3. The provisions of this Ordinance are hereby deemed separable. If any provision hereof should be declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 4. All ordinances, resolutions and executive orders which are inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 5. Let copies of this Ordinance be furnished to the Office of the Mayor, Office of the City Administrator, Law Department, Budget Department, Accounting Department, Urban Development Department, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)–Makati City, Liga ng mga Barangay, Sangguniang Barangay of East Rembo and other departments, offices, and agencies concerned for their information, guidance and reference.

Section 6. This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its approval.

ENACTED BY THE SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD OF MAKATI, METRO MANILA, in its Regular Session held on 9 March 2022.

Certified true and correct by:

ATTY. DINDO R. CERVANTES
Secretary to the Sangguniang Panlungsod

Attested by:

HON. MONIQUE YAZMIN MARIA Q. LAGDAMEO
Vice Mayor & Presiding Officer

Approved by:

HON. MAR-LEN ABIGAIL S. BINAY
City Mayor