

NGO seeks to end ban on fish feed ingredient



PHILIPPINE STAR/MICHAEL VARGAS

By Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson

FOOD SECURITY advocacy group Tugon Kabuhayan said the import ban on porcine processed animal protein (PAP) from Italy, imposed during the African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak, needs to be lifted to keep fish feed prices in check.

PAP, a key raw material in producing aquaculture feed, is safe because its manufacturing in Italy is regulated under European Union rules.

"PAP is made from food-grade meat including bones, skin and blood and falls under the European Union's Category 3 meat classification, which means they come from disease-free animals," Tugon Kabuhayan Convenor Asis G. Perez said.

Italy accounts for 70% of the 150,000 metric tons of PAP imports shipped in by the feed industry, he said.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) banned PAP imports this year after the emergence of a confirmed case of ASF in Italy.

Mr. Perez said the blanket ban imposed by the DA on pork products from Italy should be modified to exempt PAP imports, as they pose no threat to the domestic swine industry.

"To make PAP powder, the mixture of meat and other animal parts is processed at 130°C, almost double the 70°C at which the ASF virus is killed. During the feed manufacturing process, PAP is further 'cooked' at temperatures reaching 200°C to make floating fish food," he said.

Domestic manufacturers produce around 1.6 million metric tons of feed for the aquaculture industry, whose output of 800,000 metric tons of fish services around 40% of annual fish consumption, the group said.

The high protein found in PAP compared to other protein sources allows for higher feed conversion and reduces water pollution from aquaculture.

Mr. Perez said that the import ban could raise the price of fish sold in the market.

"The biggest impact of the ban on imported PAP from Italy is the higher cost of aquaculture feeds. Every P1.00 of additional feed cost roughly translates to over P2.00 per kilo of fish because a fish farmer needs two kilos of feed for a fish to reach one kilo," he said.

PAP contains up to 90% protein, higher than the levels supplied by other protein sources like vegetable or fish meal. Lower protein means higher amounts of feed is needed to grow fish to harvestable size, which leads to increased fish effluent that pollutes the water, Tugon Kabuhayan said.

The group said that the country has been using porcine PAP since 2008 due to the inadequacy of the domestic fish meal supply or processed fish scraps.

"We understand that the swine industry needs to be protected. But a blanket ban on imported PAP from Italy because of a single ASF-infected wild boar isn't backed by science. And if there's no strong scientific basis, why make the aquaculture industry and, consequently, fish consumers suffer?" he added.

Rules for rabbit slaughter, inspection issued

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it has set a standard for the humane and hygienic slaughter of rabbits for human consumption.

"There is a need to ensure the hygienic slaughtering of rabbits to safeguard the health of the consuming public from zoonoses and other hazards including the development of standards for hygienic and humane slaughtering of rabbits and inspection," the DA said in an administrative order.

According to the order, rabbits to be slaughtered need to be sourced from farms certified for good animal husbandry practice (GAHP).

Meat inspection will be conducted in the slaughterhouse premises by authorized National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) or local government unit (LGU) meat inspectors.

The documentary requirements include veterinary health certificates and shipping permits.

"Only healthy rabbits which are free from any animal diseases, veterinary drug residues, hormones, growth promotants, heavy metals and pesticides and other physical biological and chemical hazards or contaminants shall be allowed to be slaughtered for food," according to the order.

Rabbits awaiting slaughter must also be handled in cruelty-free conditions, the department said. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**

Cooking-oil chaos exacerbates looming world hunger crisis

THE world's supply of cooking oil — already squeezed by war — is getting smaller.

Two months after Russia's invasion of Ukraine upended global agricultural trade, Indonesia is set to ban exports of cooking oil in the wake of a local shortage and soaring prices, adding to a raft of crop protectionism around the world. The country accounts for more than a third of global vegetable-oil exports, with China and India, the two most populous countries, among its top buyers.

Indonesia's supply of edible oil to the world is "impossible to replace," said Carlos Mera, head of agricultural commodity markets research at Rabobank. "It's definitely a big blow." Indonesia is the biggest producer of palm oil, the world's most consumed edible oil. The southeast Asian nation's announcement of the ban on Friday sent US futures tied to soybean oil, an alternative to palm, soaring to the highest price on record for a third straight day. In the UK, some supermarkets are limiting purchases of cooking oils, like sunflower, olive and rapeseed.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has thrown the trade of sunflower oil into chaos and is squeezing already tight supplies of other vegetable oils used in food, biofuels and personal care products.

Weather woes across the world's major producers of edible oils are adding to fears of shortages. Drought has crimped the size of soybean harvests in South America, the world's biggest producer, and drought in Canada shrank production of canola, leaving little available supply.

While limited supply and soaring prices are set to worsen inflation of food items like salad dressing and mayonnaise in wealthy economies like the US, developing nations like India are set to feel the worst impacts. Such countries depend on imports of palm oil as a cheaper alternative to more costly soybean, sunflower and canola oil.

"We are terribly shocked by this decision of Indonesia," said Atul Chaturvedi, president of Solvent Extractors' Association of India, and edible oil trade group. "We were not expecting a ban like this."

The surge in core food costs is also leading to the biggest debate in a decade over using farmland to grow crops for producing fuel. The American Bakers Association, whose members produce 85% of US baked goods, is warning about empty grocery store shelves.

"We desperately need the US Environmental Protection Agency

to take the right action to allow soybean oil stocks to shift back into food instead of being diverted to biodiesel production," said Robb MacKie, the trade group's president.

Food-versus-fuel tensions are also flaring in other regions, including Indonesia.

The latest action by Indonesia is certain to "aggravate" food inflation that's already at a record high, said Tosin Jack, commodity intelligence manager at Mintec in the UK. Tight vegetable oil supplies are already prompting food manufacturers to improvise with their products, including trying to come up with new formulations and switch to substitutes when possible, according to Jack.

For makers of packaged items like chips — whose ingredient lists often allow flexibility by stating the food can contain multiple vegetable oils — the move by Indonesia takes one more oil off an ever-shrinking list. Changing food recipes though can be daunting and "does not necessarily produce a product with the same sensory characteristics," said Jeannie Milewski, executive director for The Association for Dressings & Sauces, an Atlanta-based trade group that represents makers of products that most often rely on soybean oil.

Soybean oil futures in the US have nearly doubled since the start of 2021, driven in part by higher demand for ingredients to make biofuel. Prices then shot up to the highest on record after Russia's attack on Ukraine disrupted sunflower oil shipments and set off demand for alternative commodities.

Canadian canola had already climbed to an all-time high last year as devastating drought shrank crops across North American prairies. Palm oil in Asia has risen about 50% and rapeseed in Europe 55% in the past 12 months.

Still, "despite record prices overall, vegetable oil demand remains high because vegetable oils are an essential part of diets in all countries and particularly in countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh," said John Baize, an independent analyst who also advises the US Soybean Export Council.

Mr. Baize calls Indonesia's restriction on palm oil exports a "big deal" but expects it won't last long. He noted that Indonesia exported 26.87 million metric tons of palm oil in 2021 compared with consuming 15.28 million metric tons domestically.

For now, Indonesia's ban intensifies worries about food costs and shortages, with expectations that other countries are likely to make similar moves as the war in Ukraine drags on. — **Bloomberg**

Dairy giant Arla wants to pay farmers more for low-emission milk

DAIRY GIANT Arla Foods is willing to pay European farmers extra for milk based on how many carbon-reducing activities they can tick off a company list.

The reward program would cover about 20 variables, such as using natural additives in feed to cut methane emissions by cows or following precision farming techniques, Chief Executive Officer Peder Tuborgh said in an interview. The bonus amounts still need to be determined, and the plan could be implemented as soon as next year.

The incentives, which are still being hashed out, are meant to help the Denmark-based cooperative achieve its target of reducing farm-level emissions by 30% this decade. The agriculture industry is being pushed to become greener, and Arla has committed to using fossil-free trucks, renewable sources of electricity and low-energy operations at its sites.

"The more activities you do that reduce the climate impact, the better the milk price you get from us," Mr. Tuborgh said. "We know it will make a huge difference to the farmers if they are financially motivated to do the right thing."

The Nordic region's biggest dairy company also is researching how to remove carbon from the atmosphere using plantings and how to make energy production greener by converting manure into biogas or installing solar panels. Those actions could be included in the upcoming milk-price model.

The closely-held producer's brands include Castello cheese, Lurpak butter and Cocio chocolate milk. It reported revenue of 11.2 billion euros (\$12.1 billion) last year, an increase of 6% from 2020.

Arla raised milk prices in April, saying inflation was adding pressure on farmers wanting to invest in animal welfare and sustainability initiatives.

Almost 9,000 producers in Arla's European network already receive one extra euro cent per liter (34 ounces) of milk in exchange for allowing annual checks of their climate-related practices. Those reviews ask 200-plus questions about herds, feed, crop production, fertilizer use, manure handling, electricity and fuel. The answers are put into a social network-like database, launched in 2020, so farmers can compare their performance.

"They can benchmark themselves up against other farms and see where they are and how they can improve," Mr. Tuborgh said. That competition is prompting many farmers to adopt practices that not only reduce carbon-dioxide emissions but also improve efficiency, he said. Using 2015 as a baseline, the company has cut emissions from its own production processes and from its energy usage by almost a quarter, according to its annual report for 2021.

Arla's producers emit about half the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂)-equivalent per kilogram of milk than the global average, the company said. And Mr. Tuborgh believes those emissions can be reduced even more. "We may even end at the point where this can be CO₂-neutral," he said. — **Bloomberg**

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Meralco Group powers Mitsubishi's first Dendo Drive Station in Ph

Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corporation (MMPC) has officially unveiled its first Dendo Drive Station in the Philippines — a project made possible through its partnership with Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), the country's largest electricity distribution utility.

Piloted at the Mitsubishi dealership under Peak Motors Philippines, Inc. (PMPPI) in Pasay City, the Dendo Drive Station features a clean energy ecosystem enabled by the services provided by Meralco subsidiaries eSakay, Spectrum, and MServ.

The next generation dealership uses solar panels and vehicle to home (V2H) equipment with bi-directional chargers. The V2H system enables the charging of electric vehicles (EVs) or plug-in hybrid EVs (PHEVs) at home using solar energy, while also supplying electricity from the EV or PHEV to an entire house or in the case of the Dendo Drive Station, the Mitsubishi branch.

Meralco subsidiaries provided the tailor-fit sustainable solution for the pilot station. Spectrum's services involved the installation of a 28-kilowatt peak solar panel and the facility's inclusion to the net-metering program, while eSakay provided two EV charging pods. Putting them together was MServ, which handled the electrical works and system integration for the Dendo Drive Station.

Mitsubishi's flagship plug-in hybrid SUV, the Outlander PHEV, which was launched in 2020, is also part of the Dendo Drive Station. When



Officials demonstrated how the Dendo Drive Station works as they plug in the Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV into the Vehicle-to-Home system. In the photo (from L-R) are PMPPI Vice President and Chief Operating Officer John Mabasa, Meralco First Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer Ferdinand O. Geluz, Pasay City Mayor Imelda Calixto-Rubiano, and MMPC President and Chief Executive Officer Takeshi Hara during the inauguration held in Pasay City on April 18.

purchased, the Outlander PHEV will come with a conventional charger, allowing it to be charged directly from a home socket.

"We are very happy to have achieved this milestone with our dealer partner PMPPI and energy provider Meralco. Mitsubishi Motors has always been dedicated to continuously studying technologies and gaining expertise when it comes to vehicle electrification. The Dendo Drive Station is a manifestation of this, bringing a new kind of value in terms of eco-mobility," MMPC President and CEO Mr. Takeshi Hara said.

"Designed to be part of our commitment to help achieve a sustainable society by 2030 while at the same time impact the communities where Mitsubishi dealerships are located. We hope to get more sup-

port in helping install confidence among Filipinos when it comes PHEVs and more importantly shed some light on environmental sustainability," he added.

Engr. Ferdinand O. Geluz, Meralco FVP and Chief Commercial Officer, for his part, said: "The Dendo Drive is a testament to the shared commitment of Mitsubishi and the One Meralco Group to promote a new energy ecosystem where consumers can generate, store, and share energy."

"You can be assured that Meralco will continue to drive renewable energy solutions as a way forward to augment the capacity of our generators and to support the sustainability endeavors of our customers through decarbonized energy sourcing, as together we journey towards economic recovery," he concluded.