Foreign HEIs operating PHL campuses granted SIPP perks

By Justine Irish D. Tabile Reporter

FOREIGN higher education in-

stitutions (FHEIs) that establish branch campuses in the Philippines with local partners have been declared eligible for incentives outlined in the amended 2022 Strategic Investment Priority Plan (SIPP).

In a statement on Monday, the Board of Investments (BoI) said the changes to the SIPP were effected via Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 2024-08 issued on Dec. 18.

Under the MC, FHEIs that establish campuses in the Philippines may now register with BoI and receive incentives, provided that the local partner is at least 60% Filipino-owned.

The incentives cover the development of education cities as well as branch campuses, the BoI said.

"The guidelines include provisions for the establishment of branch campuses in the Philippines, as defined under the Republic Act (RA) No. 11448 or the Transnational Higher Education (TNHE) Act," it added.

With the MC in place, education cities - defined as the development of a contiguous area of education facilities and buildings with digital infrastructure - are now classified as SIPP infrastructure and logistics investments.

Such cities include research, healthcare, athletic, cultural, and art facilities, as well as the provision of auxiliary services that will enhance the educational experience for students.

Bol Industry Development Services Executive Director Ma. Corazon Halili-Dichosa said education cities will be classified as Tier-I strategic investments.

"The new guidelines will enhance opportunities for international collaboration that would facilitate access to expertise and knowledge relevant to global industry trends, empower students, and bridge the gap between academe and industry," she added.

She said that the guidelines will support and incentivize the establishment of education cities and campuses, which the BoI considers its contribution to workforce development.

According to BoI, the Philippine population, which a median age of 26 years, makes it an attractive destination for investment and a reliable source of global talent.

"The inclusion of education cities and branch campuses in the SIPP will help nurture this talent pool while fostering international ties," it added.

The Philippines produces 750,000 graduates every year, with 10-12% of them in engineering and technology courses.

PHL's 11-month meat imports up 19%

MEAT IMPORTS rose 19.4% by volume in the 11 months to November, led by pork and beef, according to the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI).

The BAI reported meat shipments of 1.33 billion kilograms in the first 11 months. Meat imports in November grew 46.7% to 141.34 million kilos.

Accounting for about 50.4% of all imports, pork shipments rose 21.9% to 671.56 million kilos for the period.

Brazil supplied around 184.81 million kilos of pork, followed by Spain (158.14 million kilos) and Canada (92.94 million kilos).

Beef imports increased 39.7% to 187.71 million kilos during the 11 months accounting for 14.1% of meat imports.

Imports of beef from Brazil amounted to 80.68 million kilos, followed by Australia (49.59 million kilos) and Ireland (15.54 million kilos).

Shipments of chicken totaled 435.5 million kilos in the 11 months, up 10.7% and accounting for 32.7% of meat

imports. Brazil remained the top supplier of chicken with 216.9 million kilos, followed by the US (145.73 million kilos) and

Australia (9.32 million kilos). Imports of turkey meat more than doubled to 1.27 million kilos. Shipments accounted for 0.1% of total meat imports.

On the other hand, shipments of duck, lamb, and buffalo meat declined during the 11-month period.

Buffalo imports, which accounted for 2.6% of total volume, slipped 9.65% during the period to 35.2 million kilos.

Shipments of duck declined 25.8% to 208,792 kilos, while lamb imports fell 13.4% to 613.448 kilos. - Adrian H.



2024 palay output hits four-year low of 19.09 million MT

By Adrian H. Halili Reporter

OUTPUT of palay, or unmilled rice, declined to a four-year low of 19.09 million metric tons (MMT) in 2024, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported, citing preliminary data.

The PSA said that palay output dropped 4.84% from 2023, the weakest production since the 19.29 MMT report-

Full-year rice output came in under the Department of Agriculture's (DA) 19.3 MMT revised estimate for 2024.

The PSA added that the harvest from irrigated areas was 14.56 MMT, down 4.71%, while palay production in rainfed areas fell 5.23% to 4.53 MMT.

The region with the top palay production was Central Luzon with 3.48 MMT. followed by the Cagayan Valley with 2.92 $MMT and the Ilocos\,Region\,with\,1.97\,MMT.$

Rounding out the top five rice producers were the Western Visayas with 1.89 MMT and Soccsksargen with 1.21 MMT.

Agriculture was negatively impacted by dry spells and droughts caused by El Niño in the first half, and heavy rains and typhoons in the latter part of 2024, analysts said.

"I expected it to be a bit lower given the series of typhoons in the fourth quarter," Federation of Free Farmers National Manager Raul Q. Montemayor said via Viber.

"In any case, output already dropped by 5.5% in the first semester mainly due to El Niño and was projected also to drop in the second semester due to La Niña," he added.

Agricultural damage caused by El Niño was estimated at P15.3 billion on lost volume of 330,717 MT, across 109,481 hectares of farmland, according to the DA's final estimate. Damage to the rice crop was 38.8% of the total, or P5.93 billion.

Mr. Montemayor said that the 970,000 MT drop in rice production is equivalent to about 15 days' national consumption.

He added that the lost rice output for the year was offset by a big bump in imports.

The Philippines imported a record 4.78 MMT of rice in 2024, according to the Bureau of Plant Industry.

"Production in 2025 will simply have to try to recover but potentially large imports at low tariffs may dampen farmgate prices and incentives for farmers to intensify production," he said.

Earlier, the Agriculture department said that it is targeting palay output of 20.46 MMT this year, which could be fulfilled with P10 billion in additional funding for its National Rice Program.

Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura Executive Director Jayson H. Cainglet said that better farmgate prices for palay could also encourage more rice farmers to continue planting.

"We are hoping for a good harvest starting at end of February or March, so that our rice farmers can earn money ... The dark side of an unlimited import policy, via Executive Order (EO) 62, is the tendency to depress farmgate prices across commodities," Mr. Cainglet said via Viber.







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