

Drought tolerance being developed in sugarcane

THE Philippine Sugar Research Institute Foundation, Inc. is seeking to develop sugarcane varieties tolerant of drought and resistant to disease, the Department of Science and Technology (DoST) said.

One of the projects will utilize in-vitro techniques to identify sugarcane with the desired qualities, the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD), an arm of the DoST, said.

Sugarcane-growing areas in the Philippines experience dry periods lasting four to six months, making drought tolerance a vital trait for sustainable production.

Diseases such as downy mildew and smut can cause significant yield losses, the DoST, which is helping funding the project, said.

The second project will seek to develop a hybrid of wild and conventional varieties to achieve disease resistance and high sucrose content.

— **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

Ban on S. Korean pork products lifted

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it lifted a 2019 ban on imports of processed pork products from South Korea, following a risk assessment of Korean efforts to contain African Swine Fever (ASF).

Memorandum Order No. 23 permits the entry of pork items subjected to high-level heat treatment.

The restriction was imposed in 2019 to shield the hog industry from ASF.

The DA said it reconsidered its stance following the findings of the recent Import Risk Analysis dated April 8, 2025, which concluded that sterilized pork products from South Korea intended for export meet World Organization for Animal Health standards and are deemed a "safe commodity."

The report cited South Korea's "robust" veterinary oversight and ASF control systems.

It also noted the shelf stability and secure packaging of South Korean pork products.



"With these assurances, sterilized pork products from South Korea are permitted for import in accordance with existing Philippine regulations," the DA said in a statement.

"With this policy shift, more pork products are anticipated to be available to consumers in the Philippines. It may also indicate a potential thaw in agri-trade relations between the two countries," the DA said.

— **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

"Ours is about 48.8%, while in Vietnam it is actually 72.5%. So can you just imagine how much more human capital we could add if we could actually increase the LFPR for women?" she added.

The TPB Plan is also targeting to improve the country's domestic industry diversification and production, as well as export complexity.

Citing the Global Innovation Index, Ms. Edillon said that the two factors measure the level of sophistication of the economy.

"That is actually the goal, that we will be a more competitive country before 2034. So that is actually the goal of the National Innovation Agenda and Strategy Document," she added.

The TPB Plan outlines priority strategies that aim to address labor demand, supply, and governance, as well as how to future-proof labor demand, supply, and governance.

Strategies to ensure labor demand include expansion of market access, encouraging investments in priority sectors, ensuring ease of doing business, establishment of a dynamic innovation ecosystem, and promotion of technology adoption and enterprise-based education and training.

To improve labor supply, the TPB Plan recognized the need to expand lifelong learning opportunities, upgrade the design of skills training programs, enhance overseas Filipino reintegration programs, and increase program take-up among disadvantaged sectors.

Meanwhile, the TPB also cited 18 policy recommendations, which are seen to create an "inclusive and dynamic labor market environment."

These policies include the Konektadong Pinoy bill, the Lifelong Learning Development Bill, tax incentives for employees on a work-from-home program, the Freelancers' Protection Act, and the Amendment of the Maternity Leave Law, among others. — **Justine Irish D. Table**

by Mr. Trump, Mr. Go said, "Let's allow the process to take place."

"I ask for your patience; let's just wait for the outcome," he added.

He refused to divulge if the US promised anything during the dialogues due to confidentiality agreements but noted it will take several negotiations to reach a favorable resolution.

The Foreign Trade Office of the DTI will now handle the negotiations with their American counterparts, he noted.

"We have to let the technical working groups work on a framework for discussions... both sides will have to work together to put a framework before the 90-day moratorium period is over," he added.

Mr. Go noted the Philippine delegation was "well prepared" for the meeting, adding they discussed with Cabinet officials and the business sector before flying out.

Meanwhile, Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev) Undersecretary Rosemarie G. Edillon said that the meeting with the USTR showed the Philippine government's intention to strengthen trade relations with the US.

"We are very interested, especially in our trade relations, and to inform them of our initiatives to reduce, if not totally eliminate, what they call nontariff barriers," she added.

Asked to comment, former Trade Undersecretary Rafaelita M. Aldaba said that the Philippines should get "as many products as possible in the exemption list."

"In exchange we can offer zero tariffs on products that are important to the US," she added.

In previous statements, Ms. Roque said that the Philippines might increase imports of US products, particularly soybeans and frozen meat, in exchange for lower tariffs.

Jobs, from SI/1

"Taking out the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) years, our LFPR is about less than 65%, but for the other countries, it is actually in the high 60s. You have Vietnam over there with an LFPR in the high 70s," she added.

Preliminary data from the Philippine Statistics Authority showed that LFPR in February was estimated at 64.5%. For the first two months, the average LFPR stood at 64.2%.

However, the new jobs masterplan did not indicate any targets on how many jobs will be created until 2034.

"The problem with having a target with respect to jobs is that it's very difficult, especially since we are moving towards a framework for flexible work arrangements where it would be possible for you to hold more than one job," said Ms. Edillon.

"We're also moving towards having a framework for part-time jobs. So, it's difficult [to see] how it will translate into the number of jobs," she added.

Labor Secretary Bienvenido E. Laguesma said that there have been previous targets to create a million jobs.

"But this does not ensure there will be enough jobs created for the new entrants (to the labor market)," he said.

"It's not that simple to say that we want to create one or two million jobs by a certain year. What we want to see is that every Filipino family will have a job," he added.

The TPB Plan also set a target of decreasing the unemployment rate to 3% by 2034 from 3.8% in 2024 and the underemployment rate to 7-9% from 13.3% last year.

In addition, the masterplan also aims to increase the female LFPR to 59% by 2034, which Ms. Edillon said is the lowest in the ASEAN region.

Tariff, from SI/1

Last month, US President Donald J. Trump announced higher reciprocal tariffs on most of the country's trading partners, with Philippine goods facing the second-lowest rate in Southeast Asia at 17%.

However, the reciprocal tariffs have been paused for 90 days until July. A baseline 10% tariff remains in place.

At a Palace briefing, Mr. Go said there will be more meetings with the USTR, although the Trade Undersecretary Allan B. Gepty would lead the talks.

He did not elaborate on a timeline.

Mr. Go said the meeting with the USTR focused on the local semiconductor and electronics industries since these are the top exports to the US.

Discussions also centered on the coconut, garment, furniture, food processing, and automotive industries, he added.

"The coconut industry is very important to us because it is our number one agricultural export to America," he said in Filipino. "We brought up all the concerns and issues of our stakeholders, and as I said earlier, I believe it was very well received."

In 2024, the US was the country's top export market, receiving \$12.12 billion worth of Philippine goods. The US was the Philippines' fifth-largest source of imports accounting for \$8.17 billion.

The Philippines' top exports to the US are semiconductors, electronic integrated circuits, and insulated wire and other insulated electric conductors.

The country's top imports from the US are soya beans, electronic integrated circuits, and wheat and meslin.

When asked if the USTR had committed to lowering the 17% reciprocal tariff imposed



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES CITY GOVERNMENT OF MAKATI

SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD OF MAKATI

PRESENT:

Vice Mayor
Councilor
LnB President
SK President

HON. MONIQUE YAZMIN MARIA Q. LAGDAMEO – Presiding Officer
HON. DENNIS B. ALMARIA
HON. MARIA DOLORES M. ARAYON
HON. MARTIN JOHN PIO Q. ARENAS
HON. JOEL M. ARIONES
HON. BENEDICT B. BANIQUED
HON. VIRGILIO V. HILARIO, JR.
HON. LUIS S. JAVIER, JR.
HON. EDRALYN M. MARQUEZ
HON. CARMINA C. ORTEGA
HON. ARMANDO P. PADILLA
HON. RENE ANDREI Q. SAGUISAG, JR.
HON. KRISTINA T. SAROSA
HON. JOSE C. VILLENA, IV
HON. ANNA ALCINA M. YABUT
HON. ROLANDO D. ALVAREZ, JR.
HON. JEROME TRISTAN G. PANGILINAN

N.B.:

Councilor HON. SHIRLEY C. ASPILLAGA – Absent

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Secretary to the Sanggunian ATTY. DINDO R. CERVANTES

Upon the motion of Hon. A.P. Padilla, duly seconded, the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Makati, by a unanimous vote, approved City Ordinance No. 2025-060 on its third and final reading.

CITY ORDINANCE NO. 2025-060

Authors: Hon. A.P. Padilla, Hon. R.A.Q. Saguisag, Jr., Hon. D.B. Almario, Hon. B.B. Baniqued, Hon. V.V. Hilario, Jr., Hon. J.T.G. Pangilinan, Hon. E.M. Marquez, and Hon. A.A.M. Yabut

Co-Authors: Hon. M.D.M. Arayon, Hon. M.J.P.Q Arenas, Hon. J.M. Ariones, Hon. L.S. Javier, Jr., Hon. C.C. Ortega, Hon. K.T. Sarosa, Hon. J.C. Villena, IV, and Hon. R.D. Alvarez, Jr.

AN ORDINANCE DECLARING THE ANNUAL BUDGET FOR C.Y. 2025 OF THE SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN OF BARANGAY OLYMPIA TO BE OPERATIVE IN ITS ENTIRETY, SUBJECT TO EXISTING LAWS, RULES, AND REGULATIONS.

WHEREAS, Sec. 13, Art. II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that the State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. It shall inculcate in the youth patriotism and nationalism, and encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs;

WHEREAS, Sec. 20 (d) of R.A. No. 10742, otherwise known as the "Sangguniang Kabataan Reform Act of 2015", provides that "(T)he Sangguniang Bayan or Sangguniang Panlungsod shall, within sixty (60) days upon receipt hereof, review the annual budget and supplemental budget of the Sangguniang Kabataan on their compliance in the immediately preceding provision and other existing laws, rules and regulations.;"

WHEREAS, the Sangguniang Kabataan of Barangay Olympia, by virtue of Sangguniang Kabataan Resolution No. 2025-002, Series of 2025, approved its Annual Budget for C.Y. 2025, a copy of such Resolution, including its supporting documents, is hereto attached and made an integral part hereof as Annex "A";

WHEREAS, the Budget Department, in a *Certification* dated 2 April 2025, recommended that the Annual Budget for C.Y. 2025 of the Sangguniang Kabataan of Barangay Olympia be declared to be operative in its entirety, a copy of such document is hereto attached and made an integral part hereof as Annex "B";

WHEREAS, after a careful perusal of pertinent documents, the Members of the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Makati ruled to adopt *in toto* the abovementioned recommendation of the Budget Department; hence, this Ordinance.

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

Section 1. The Annual Budget for C.Y. 2025 of the Sangguniang Kabataan of Barangay Olympia is hereby declared to be operative in its entirety, subject to existing laws, rules, and regulations.

Section 2. 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 3. All ordinances, resolutions, and executive orders inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 4. Let copies of this Ordinance be furnished the Office of the Mayor, Office of the City Administrator, Law Department, Budget Department, Accounting Department, Urban Development Department (UDD), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)-Makati City, Sangguniang Kabataan Federation of the City of Makati, Liga ng mga Barangay, Sangguniang Kabataan of Barangay Olympia, Sangguniang Barangay of Olympia, and all other departments, offices, and agencies concerned for their information, guidance, and reference.

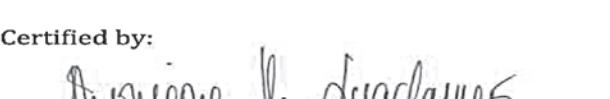
Section 5. This Ordinance shall be posted and published in accordance with the provisions of R.A. No. 7854, otherwise known as the Charter of the City of Makati.

ENACTED BY THE SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD OF MAKATI, METRO MANILA, in its Regular Session held on 23 April 2025.

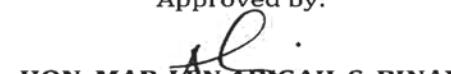
Attested by:


ATTY. DINDO R. CERVANTES
Secretary to the
Sangguniang Panlungsod

Certified by:


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

Approved by:


HON. MAR-LEN ABIGAIL S. BINAY
City Mayor

Date of Approval: 23 APR 2025