

Cocolisap pest seen inflicting P280M in production losses

THE coconut scale insect (CSI) infestation across nine regions could result in P280 million in lost production, according to the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA).

As of May, about 516,000 coconut trees were struck by the pest, also known as cocolisap, PCA Chief Executive Officer and Administrator Dexter R. Buted told reporters.

Calabarzon was the most affected region. Others were Mimaropa, Bicol, the Central Visayas, the Eastern Visayas, the Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao, Soccsksargen, and Caraga.

Mr. Buted said 1,000 individual insects can multiply to about 200,000 in 45 days, with each female having the potential to lay 200 eggs.

PCA Deputy Administrator for Operations Roel M. Rosales said the infestation of the 516,000 coconut trees could result in a yield loss of 60%.

“We are looking at a loss of about 14 million nuts and that

could be about P280 million,” he said, assuming a valuation of P20 per coconut.

He said 3,600 farmers have been affected by the infestation.

A previous infestation in 2014 took place in Basilan. It was later detected in Calabarzon.

Drought as a result of climate change likely triggered the current spread of the CSI infestation, he said.

The PCA said it expects more such instances due to changing weather patterns.

Mr. Rosales said the transfer of planting materials likely contributed to the cocolisap spread.

Aside from cocolisap, the PCA is also dealing with the coconut spike moth, which was detected in over 20,000 trees in Calabarzon.

The PCA has a P94-million budget for pest mitigation in 2025, P60 million of which is for cocolisap. — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

Agriculture seen providing reduced cushion for exports

By Justine Irish D. Tabile  
Reporter

THE Export Marketing Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said the outlook for agricultural exports is less positive this year because the coconut industry is facing supply challenges.

“We are not as optimistic because of the coconut supply issues,” EMB Director Bianca Pearl R. Sykimte told reporters on the sidelines of the Business Issues Forum.

Growth in agricultural exports had helped mitigate the decline in manufacturing exports last year.

“As you know, coconut has been one of our export winners in the past few years. But unfortunately, we have been facing significant supply constraints,” she added.

In 2024, she said the Philippine agro-based exports of \$6 bil-

lion offset a \$1.5 billion decline in manufactured goods.

“These figures underscore the urgency to innovate and move up the value chain, particularly in our agri-based sectors,” she said.

“By investing in research, sustainable practices, and product development, we can transform basic agricultural outputs into high-value, globally competitive products. This shift is essential, not only to diversify our export base but also to build resilience against external shocks and market volatility,” she added.

She said coconut supply has been a concern for some months.

“But the demand is there. In fact, we have been participating in a couple of shows, and the demand from international markets is high,” she said.

“So the question is, how fast can we supply it? There are challenges like that... coconuts are not only exported but are also being used in local manufacturing,” she added.

She said that the issue is also having an impact on food manufacturers, who are major users of coconut oil.

Asked to comment, Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) Deputy Administrator Roel M. Rosales said the extended El Niño in previous years has adversely affected output.

“There was a slight reduction in last year’s harvest. During the same time, demand and prices for coconut also increased, for domestic and export, thus the reduced output, though minimal, was felt,” he said via Viber.

“However, it is expected that recovery in production will be seen by the second semester of this year,” he added.

He said that the PCA is currently implementing a salt fertilization program as a “quick turnaround intervention.”

“Effects of fertilization will be seen in terms of increased production a year after application,” he added.

Ms. Sykimte said the EMB has proposed an annual allocation of P200 million under the General Appropriations Act to support exporters in accessing new markets.

“The idea is to help them in terms of getting the certifications they require to access markets because without those certifications, you cannot export,” she said.

She said that both the Philippine Development Plan and the Philippine Export Development Plan (PEDP) are undergoing recalibration, not only for exports but also for other indicators.

For the PEDP, she said that the DTI has been running simulations but is hopeful that the targets will be finalized by the third quarter.

“It’s a whole set of recalibrations. But definitely, (exports) will be aligned, whatever that number is,” she added.



FREEPIK

The Philippines is the world’s second-largest exporter of coconut products, next to Indonesia. — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

Regulator backs suspension of biodiesel blend hike

THE National Biofuels Board (NBB) said it supports the suspension of the 1-percentage-point increase in the coco-methyl ester content of biodiesel blend, citing the potential impact on inflation.

Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) Laboratory Services Division Chief Celia M. Raquipo said at a briefing that the NBB arrived at the recommendation at a recent board meeting, in which it had taken note of the high price of copra, the raw material for coconut oil, and the possibility that these costs may filter into the price of fuel.

The Biofuels Act of 2006 requires all liquid fuel to contain a set proportion of biofuel. The blend rose to 3% in October 2024, from 2% previously. It’s set to further increase to 5% in October this year.

Director Rino Abad of the Oil Industry Management Bureau said the NBB’s recommendation is “not yet official until approved by the Secretary of Energy.”

Secretary Raphael P.M. Lotilla left the Department of Energy in late May after being appointed to head the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Ms. Raquipo said the price pressures on copra are not a function of the coconut supply, which she said was “sufficient.”

The per-liter price of diesel rose by 95 centavos on Tuesday, marking the fourth straight week they had increased.

Copra’s monthly average millgate price was P75.34 per kilo in March, surpassing peak levels at the height of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022.

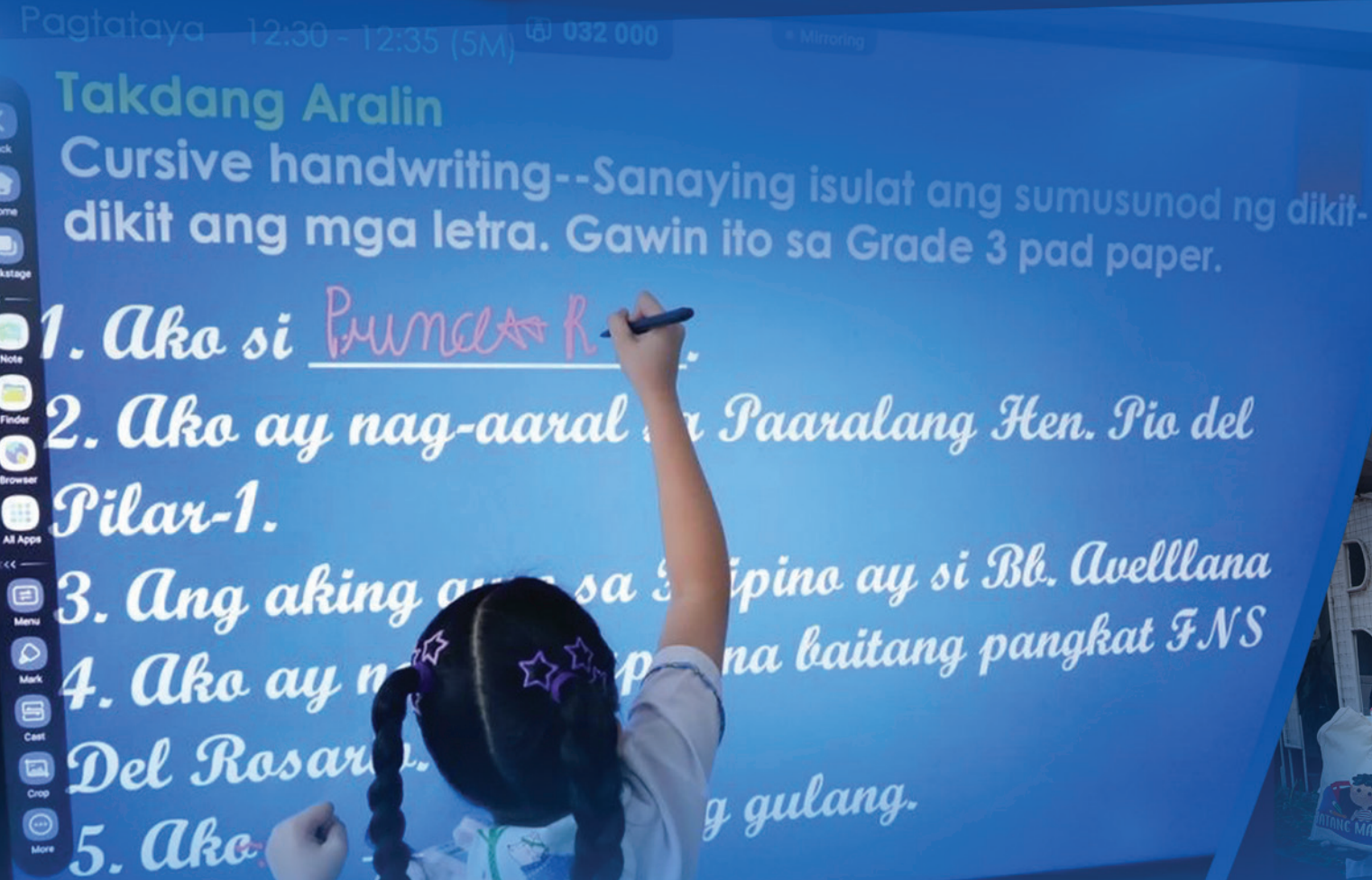
The PCA in March had called for an assessment of the potential impact of the scheduled increase in the bio-

diesel mandate, in light of the need to “prioritize cooking oil availability for consumers.”

Rosella B. Villaruel of the PCA’s Trade and Marketing department said the global demand for coconut oil has been increasing. Revenue from exporting coconut oil this year could top the record \$2.22 billion generated in 2024, she said.

Coconut production slipped by 0.3% in the first quarter of 2025, nearly reversing the 3.3% decline a year earlier.

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