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Philippines ink 5 yr MOU with IRRI to boost regional rice production

02 January 2026 | News

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Philippines Department of Agriculture (DA) and International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) entered into a collaborative agreement to help boost rice production in the Philippines.

The partnership seeks to boost the countryâ??s rice industry through sustainable practices that will enhance yield, reduce production costs, minimize post-harvest losses, and improve marketing efficiency and value addition.

The five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. and IRRI interim Director General Dr. Ajay Kohli on scientific and technical collaboration in support of enhancing Philippine rice industry competitiveness.

The MOU requires both agencies to carry out activities that would improve extension services and enhance the capacity of public institutions to scale up adoption of farm technology, practices, and services. Both parties also agreed to help develop the skills and knowledge of Filipino research and extension workers.

â??This agreement with IRRI will help DA realize its vision of a food-secured, globally-competitive, and climate-resilient Philippines, where rice farmers reap the fruits of their labor and more investments are poured into agriculture to attract the younger generation of farmers,â?• said Secretary Tiu Laurel.

DA will conduct research for development projects with IRRI that will assist the agency in realizing its mandate and priorities as well as strengthen the scientific capabilities of various DA research agencies. All research for development initiatives will have sustainability mechanisms embedded in them to ensure efficient utilization of outputs during and after project implementation.

Meanwhile, the transfer of genetic research materials and biological materials will be guided by existing rules of intellectual property developed by either of the parties. Further, the results of joint research for development projects will be jointly published for maximum impact.

The DA and IRRI will also sign separate agreements for specific project proposals using the DA-prescribed format. Funding for projects, on the other hand, will be shared by both parties.

The MOU will undergo review by an external organization designated by the DA in the third year of implementation. After consultations with the concerned stakeholders, the MOU may be extended upon written agreement by IRRI and DA.