

Philippines to fortify 2025 Agri budget with added boost for local food production

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Philippines Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. has expressed the significant changes in the department's 2025 budget to achieve President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.'s goal to modernize agriculture, increase food production and ensure food security.

"The budget in 2025 will be very different from this year," the agri chief told members of the Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. (PCAFI) recently.

Apart from pushing the production of rice, the country's national staple, Sec. Tiu Laurel envisions a budget that will increase livestock, poultry and high value crop output, widen irrigation coverage using solar-powered systems, improve post-harvest facilities for rice and corn, and rationalize use of fertilizers.

The agri chief wants to undertake extensive soil mapping and testing to determine which areas in the country are better suited for cultivation of rice, corn and other crops, and which locations could be used for other agricultural purposes. He said the budget for fertilizers needs to be reviewed since fertigation—using fertilizer solutions with irrigation water—has proven a more cost-effective agriculture practice.

Since it takes several years for large irrigation projects to be completed, Sec. Tiu Laurel said he is looking to quickly irrigate 180,000 hectares by using solar-powered irrigation systems. He earlier estimated that these additional irrigated area will yield as much as 1.2 million metric tons of palay per year or more than 6 metric tons per hectare a year compared with the national average yield of 4.1 metric tons in 2023.

The DA was given a budget of P197.84 billion this year, with P118.66 billion earmarked for rice-related initiatives. PCAFI has recommended a reduction in rice-related budget and redistribute it to high-value and other crops and livestock and poultry, whose contributions to agriculture output of 33.8 percent and 30 percent, respectively, are higher than rice's 23 percent share. The 2024 budget of the DA has set aside P5.03 billion of high-value and other crops and P6.15 billion for livestock and poultry. Sec. Tiu Laurel acknowledged the industry group's recommendations and even invited PCAFI to send a representative during the DA's budget preparation conference