

## Philippines invests more than P75M to support Bicol farmers with farm equipment

15 April 2024 | News

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Philippines continues to support Bicolano farmers with financial aid and farm equipment to be distributed in Pili, Camarines Sur on April 12, 2024, by Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr.

The grant includes P10.64-million financial aid under the Department of Agriculture's (DA) Rice Farmers Financial Assistance to benefit 2,128 rice farmers from the municipalities of Gainza, Mialor, Bombon, Camaligan, Magarao, Naga City and Pili.

Each rice farmer will receive P5,000 from the Rice Fund as temporary relief and compensation for the projected reduction in farm income due to the Rice Tariffication Law, which will end this year. Rice farmers cultivating two hectares or less are qualified to receive direct cash assistance.

In addition, DA and the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization awarded 28 units of 4WD tractors worth P64.4 M as part of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund's Mechanization Component.

The farm equipment aims to enhance farmers' productivity, thereby increasing production and income of Filipino farmers.

To attain the national government's goal towards food security and developed farm and fishery sectors, the agri chief stressed that the DA will provide other interventions like fertilizer discount vouchers and technical assistance. The Philippines is aiming to meet these objectives by expanding and improving our available agri-fishery areas for increased production. We will also mechanize and modernize agri-fishery production systems.

Sec. Tiu Laurel added that the national government will improve post-harvest systems and infrastructure, and develop efficient logistics systems. The distribution of DA farm assistance was witnessed by local government officials led by Camarines Sur Gov. Luigi Villafuerte, Rep. LRay Villafuerte, and DA Regional Executive Director Rodel Tornilla.