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Philippines explore potential public-private collab to boost regional agri-food industry

29 July 2024 | News

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With the shared vision of a prosperous Philippine agriculture and food industry, the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Philippine Chamber of Food Manufacturers, Inc. (PCFMI) discussed possible areas for collaboration at the DA Central Office, Quezon City. To achieve nationwide food access, affordability, and security, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. directed the government to strengthen public-private partnerships.

â??Definitely, we look forward to partnerships with private corporations especially with the expansion of our Kadiwa Program as well as the expansion also of our institutional partners for farmer- and fisherfolk-cooperatives that we are supporting. And maybe we can also welcome the farmers and fishermen who have not yet formed or are not yet part of organizations because mostly, the ones we give subsidies to, we would like them to be organized" said Assistant Secretary Velicaria-Guevarra.

There were several potential areas for cooperation identified, including developing market links between local food producers and PCFMI member companies, conducting training sessions for agri-youths and cooperatives through DA's Young Farmers Challenge (YFC) Program, and promoting healthy eating habits.

The two institutions also explored the potential expansion of the DAâ??s Kadiwa Program by tapping PCFMI member-companies as suppliers of affordable, safe, and nutritious produce, thus allowing for a wider variety of products to be sold at the Kadiwa Centers nationwide. Should this materialize, the partnership will be crucial in attaining the Departmentâ??s goal of establishing 1,500 Kadiwa Centers nationwide by 2028.

â??We really would like to help these public-private partnerships especially since agriculture is an input to our processes,â? PCMFI Chairman and President Marites Director expressed.

The PCFMI envisions to be the lead and voice of the food industry and advocates for safe, nutritious, and sustainable supply of food that are compliant to local, national, and international laws and regulations. To date, it is composed of 102 member-companies that are engaged in the local manufacture and distribution of essential commodities of various food categories.

With its strategic focus being on innovation, food safety and nutrition, robust and scientifically-based regulations, and sustainability and food security, the PCFMI has been partnering up with different stakeholders including the government sector for a more sustainable and resilient food industry.