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# Philippines initiates Agri Sec banks on potatoes as alternative source for carbohydrate

05 August 2024 | News

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Philippines Department of Agriculture (DA) signed a the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Universal Robina Corporation (URC) on July 29, 2024 to harness the potential of potatoes as a source of carbohydrate and an alternative to rice, making it a valuable crop for addressing food needs of the Filipinos.

â??I am very hopeful that this will continue, because we need an alternative to rice, and potato is one of the best solutions available to us today. There are many things you can do with potatoes, from the normal table potatoes to local chips, then French fries, etc,â?• said Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr., Agriculture Secretary.

Agriculture Secretary has already approved the implementation of the potato seed tissue culture program, which will significantly boost potato production in the country.

â??By June next year, tissue culture will be in production to produce 2 more million seedlings. This should be able to increaseÂ our hectareage with with 6,600 hectares to additional 2,000 hectares" he stated.

The DA and the Universal Robina Corporationâ??the food manufacturing arm of the Gokongwei Groupâ??signed a five-year MOA to jointly establish and continue the Sustainable Potato Program (SPP).

The SPP, which began in 2019, seeks to develop dependable seed systems, strengthen potato farmersâ?? organizations, and boost farm productivity and incomes. Under the MOA, DA regional offices and URC will collaborate to identify and select farmersâ?? groups for capacity building, training in good agricultural practices, seed multiplication, pest and disease management, storage, handling, and marketing