

## Philippines DA-HVCDP enhances ginger yield in QC urban farms

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Building on the successful distribution of ginger seedlings to farmer-beneficiaries in Porac, Pampanga, and Taguig City, the Department of Agriculture-High Value Crops Development Program (DA-HVCDP) has now extended its efforts to Quezon City, providing 50 high-quality, disease-free ginger seedlings to urban farmers across all six districts. These seedlings were cultivated at the Nueva Vizcaya Experiment Research Station of DA-Regional Field Office II.

DA Undersecretary for High Value Crops, Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero, emphasized the vital role of urban agriculture in addressing food security and the rising costs of food in Metro Manila.

In her message, Usec. Caballero also commended Quezon City's Ordinance No. SP-2972, Series of 2020, also known as the "Idle Land Use Ordinance," which encourages landowners to convert unused land into urban agriculture spaces by offering tax exemptions for gardening or composting activities that last at least three years. The initiative, part of the city's strategy to improve food security, promotes the use of vacant lots for personal or community food production.

"In urban agriculture, the DA's focus is to have the production of vegetables that are usually expensive in the market. These are the vegetables that are often used for cooking at home. Aside from production, of course, we also want our farmers to earn," she added.

Usec. Caballero expressed interest in the potential value-adding properties of ginger, noting that extracts from ginger leaves could be utilized for other products, such as in candle-making.