

## Philippines to fast-track key agricultural and financing projects to ensure their successful implementation

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Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. has called on officials of the Department of Agriculture (DA) to fast-track the implementation of critical projects and ensure the actual disbursement of funds, rather than merely obligating them.

A directive issued by Secretary Tiu Laurel at the end of April during DA's Management Committee (ManCom) meeting stressed the urgency of delivering results, particularly for key programs such as P20-per-kilo rice, the construction of cold storage facilities, streamlining guidelines for the Daily Price Index, a key component of the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage law, and fine-tuning proposals to conform to the new procurement regulations.

To ensure timely delivery, the DA chief stressed the need to prioritize its most important projects. Secretary Tiu Laurel's directive comes at a time when the department is under increased pressure to deliver tangible results, particularly in relation to rice affordability.

P20 rice initiative was one of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s most notable commitments, a program designed to make rice more accessible to Filipinos at a time when prices are rising. A top priority for the department is the success of the affordable rice program. The rice initiative was followed by a brief discussion of the importance of accelerating the development of cold storage facilities and ensuring all projects meet the latest procurement regulations. In the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage law, the Daily Price Index is integral to stabilizing agricultural prices.

Secretary Tiu Laurel focuses on strengthening the department's internal performance evaluation system. A unified Performance Rating System across the entire department was recognized as a necessity by DA Management, which developed the Performance Appreciation System. Initially, the Planning and Monitoring Service, Financial and Management Service, and Field Operations Service collaborated to develop the evaluation criteria. Finalizing the criteria later involved additional oversight offices.

As part of the regional field office category, Regions III and I were recognized, as were the Bureaus of Agriculture and Fisheries Engineering and the Bureaus of Agricultural Research. The National Fisheries Research and Development Institute, Agricultural Credit Policy Council, National Dairy Authority, Philippine Rice Research Institute, and National Tobacco Administration are all attached agencies.