

Philippine invest P13 million on a flagship program to boost agricultural and fishery sectors

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Philippine Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. led the Department of Agricultureâ??s (DA) visit to Batanes, one of the northernmost provinces of the Philippines, to roll out critical support for the local farming and fishing communities.

The visit marked the official launch of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.â??s **flagship food programâ??â??P20 Benteng Bigas, Meron Nalâ??** in the province, along with the distribution of over P13 million worth of agricultural and fisheries interventions aimed at boosting production and strengthening local livelihoods.

â??The P20 Rice Project is proof of the Presidentâ??s compassion for every Filipino family. This is not just about rice. It is about dignity, equality, and hope for every Filipino familyâ??no matter how far they are." said Secretary Tiu Laurel.

Under the program, senior citizens, solo parents, PWDs, 4Ps households, minimum wage earners, farmers, fisherfolk, and transport workers can purchase high-quality rice at â??±20 per kilo. Batanes joins over 350 rollout sites nationwide.

In addition to the rice initiative, the DA provided motorized fishing boats, chest freezers, chilling tanks, and various farming tools and inputs to 374 beneficiaries.

The DA also turned over the inaugural Soil Fertility Map of Batanesâ??a key tool for science-based planning that identifies nutrient gaps like phosphorus and potassium, helping guide appropriate fertilizer and land-use strategies to improve yield and soil health.

Secretary Tiu Laurel recognized the province's unique agricultural challenges, such as limited irrigation and climate-related constraints. "We know Batanes faces unique challenges. But we also know that the Ivatans are resilient, hardworking, and have hearts willing to give their all for their province."