

## Philippines deploys Rs 22.3 Cr agricultural relief shield as input inflation batters Negros Oriental farmers

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In a significant fiscal intervention aimed at insulating vulnerable farming communities from intensifying global economic turbulence, the Philippine government has activated an agricultural relief package exceeding PHP 155 million (approximately Rs 22.3 crore) for nearly 67,000 farmers across Negros Oriental.

The initiative, rolled out under the Presidential Assistance for Farmers and Fisherfolk Program (PAFFP), underscores mounting state concern over the accelerating transmission of geopolitical instability into domestic agricultural economics, particularly through surging fuel prices, fertiliser inflation and rising commodity costs.

Officials from the Department of Agriculture's Provincial Agriculture Technical Coordinating Agency (DA-PATCO) confirmed that disbursement operations commenced last month, with approximately 80 per cent of identified beneficiaries already covered.

As of May 22, more than 50,900 smallholder rice, corn and sugarcane farmers had received emergency financial assistance under the programme, signalling one of the province's largest recent rural-support mobilisations.

The intervention spans 25 local government units across Negros Oriental, with distribution already completed in 17 municipalities while the remaining areas are scheduled for imminent rollout.

Each beneficiary is entitled to receive PHP 2,325 in direct cash assistance, designed to partially offset the mounting cost pressures confronting small-scale agricultural producers amid persistent volatility in global energy and input markets.

Officials clarified that recipients retain discretionary authority over fund utilisation, enabling farmers to deploy the assistance toward operational farm expenses, input procurement, transportation costs, debt obligations or household sustenance.

The programme arrives against a backdrop of intensifying pressure on Asian agricultural systems, where energy-linked inflation is increasingly reshaping production economics across fertiliser-intensive and logistics-dependent crop sectors.

Beyond direct fiscal transfers, DA-PATCO has simultaneously expanded the distribution of subsidised seeds and fertilisers in an effort to stabilise productivity and mitigate the risk of deeper farm-level distress during upcoming cultivation cycles.

Agricultural policy observers note that the Philippine intervention reflects a broader regional trend wherein governments are being compelled to strengthen subsidy frameworks, emergency support mechanisms and rural-protection architectures to contain the cascading effects of global commodity disruptions on food security and agricultural stability.

The Negros Oriental relief rollout also illustrates how local farm economies are becoming progressively exposed to external geopolitical flashpoints, with energy market disruptions now exerting direct influence over cultivation costs, farmgate economics and rural livelihoods across developing agricultural regions.