

## Philippines Agri dept, seed council to strengthen partnership for quality seeds

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The Philippines Department of Agriculture (DA) has developed a longstanding and fruitful partnership with the National Seed Industry Council (NSIC) over the years, Domingo F. Panganiban DA Senior Undersecretary said during the opening ceremony of the 5th National Seed Summit.

According to the DA official, DA's alliance with the group has supported the government's operation that has benefitted 1.6 million rice farmers, 692 corn growers, and 100,000 individual farmers. He added that it has also maintained granary research and increased agricultural production and income of farmers.

Panganiban announced that the DA-Bureau of Plant Industry (DA-BPI) is gearing up for a special program which will develop the National Seed Industry Development Program.

"The main purpose of this undertaking is to provide swift action and immediate relief for both farmers and consumers as the country grapples with converging prices. This new program presents logical and useful steps in our continuing and various efforts to ensure national food security to Filipino," he said.

Panganiban said the seed program will strengthen the NSIC's five fundamental goals, to bring and develop and maintain improved varieties that are suitable for low and high output; multiply and distribute a sufficient supply of good quality seeds of high yielding varieties that are resistant to disease and insect; to promote farmers acceptance in this improve varieties of

seeds; to support the development of public and the private sector through research, training, and special finance services to Filipino farmers; and to promote appropriate technology by providing training and technical support in seed production all over the country.

Meanwhile, Senator Cynthia Villar, who chairs the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food highlighted the importance of providing high-quality seeds to farmers. She cited a study from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation which states that the seed system is one of the pillars of agricultural development and food security.

“Continuous production and development of seed are necessary because the availability of quality seeds is the key to successful farming which results to increase production and income for farmers. Good seeds play an important role in maintaining the resistance to pest diseases and climate change,” Villar said.

The two-day summit was organised by NSIC and the Philippine Seed Industry Association (PSIA), to convene the academe, private seed companies, farmers and seed growers, government sector, and other key industry players for a discussion on urgent issues and challenges affecting the sector, exchange best practices and learn about the newest innovations and developments in the seed industry.