

NINETEENTH CONGRESS)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



23 NOV -8 P 6 :47

SENATE

RECEIVED BY.

S.B. NO. 2481

Introduced by **SENATOR JOSEPH VICTOR G. EJERCITO**

AN ACT
MANDATING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL CROP PROGRAM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XII, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that, "The State shall promote industrialization and full employment based on sound agricultural development and agrarian reform, through industries that make full and efficient use of human and natural resources, and which are competitive in both domestic and foreign markets."

With a large portion of Filipinos living in rural areas, the agricultural sector holds considerable importance within the Philippine economy, engaging approximately 40 percent of the workforce and making an average contribution of 20 percent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as per the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.¹

The Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) recognized that the agriculture sector lacks productivity and is no longer adequate to sustain the food industry in the Philippines; such is the case of over-supplying crops or agricultural goods.²

To address the problem, the Department of Agriculture must establish a national agricultural crop program that takes into account the country's existing agricultural lands and the crop or farm products responsive to its natural resources.

This bill aims to maximize the potential yield of our agricultural lands through a National Crop Program. The Department of Agriculture will play a significant role in the formulation and implementation of this program that takes in consideration natural

¹ <https://www.fao.org/3/ae946e/ae946e03.htm>

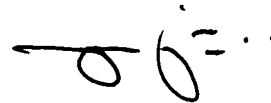
² <https://www.pids.gov.ph/details/news/press-releases/technology-investments-key-to-modernizing-agri-sector-pids-studies>

resources, and topographical settings of each region. To achieve food sufficiency and food security, our country needs to focus on our agricultural industry.

Every stage of the farming process shall be guided accordingly in a comprehensive and systematic program: from the inventory of lands; selection of the seeds; and selling of the harvest, the Department of Agriculture shall assist our farmers.

Furthermore, the program is recommended to encompass the assessment of the necessary quantity to be produced for each harvest season; analyze and formulate diversification or variety of agricultural crops; and equip farmers with sufficient support and resources in order to improve the agricultural competitiveness of the country.

Hence, for this reason, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



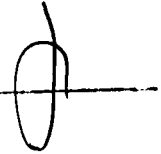
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Be it enacted in the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in the Congress assembled:

1 Section 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “National Agricultural Crop
2 Program of 2023”.

3
4 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to boost the
5 agricultural sector as one of the prime movers of the country’s economic development.
6 A sustainable agriculture is a sure indication of food security for our people. Hence,
7 agricultural productivity and enhanced food quality should be promoted and protected,
8 in order to ensure brighter and healthier nation.

9
10 Sec. 3. *The National Agricultural Crop Program.* – There shall be a
11 comprehensive agricultural crop program in the country. For this purpose, the
12 Department of Agriculture is mandated to identify existing agricultural lands, recognize
13 and determine the specific agricultural crop or farm products responsive to each
14 region’s natural resources, assess the corresponding quantity to be produced for each
15 harvest season, and analyze and formulate diversification or variety of agricultural
16 crops, based on the topographical features of each region in the country.

17
18 Pursuant to this Program, the Department of Agriculture shall, as far as
19 practicable, identify the municipalities, cities, or provinces for each region, that would
20 plant, cultivate, nourish, and harvest selected varieties of vegetables, fruits, and other
21 agricultural crops, based on the topographical features of each area, and its
22 corresponding climate conditions.

1 In consultation with the local government units, farmers' groups and
2 cooperatives, and other farm growers, traders and consumer groups, there shall be
3 an assessment of the quantity of agricultural crops to be produced for each harvest
4 season.

5
6 The end goal of this Program is to properly manage crop growth, seed
7 germination, sustained productivity, and manage pre-harvest and post-harvest
8 marketing all over the country. It aims to provide sufficient supply of agricultural
9 products, and avoid overabundance of production of goods.

10
11 *Sec. 4. Objectives of the Program.* – The Department of Agriculture, in
12 formulating the National Agricultural Crop Program, shall be guided by the following
13 objectives:

- 14 a) Maximize agricultural production based on each region's natural resources,
15 and topographical settings;
- 16 a) Monitor agricultural produce and crop maintenance in each region;
- 17 b) Properly manage agricultural crop cultivation and harvest in each municipality
18 or city or province in every region;
- 19 c) Avoid unnecessary overproduction of vegetables, fruits, and other food crops
20 and other local agricultural products in one area;
- 21 d) Strictly monitor price stability of agricultural products;
- 22 e) Ensure steady supply of agricultural crops to consumers;
- 23 f) Assist farmers' groups, cooperatives, and local growers and traders in
24 transporting goods from farm to market, and access to other institutional
25 buyers; and
- 26 g) Equally distribute oversupply of produce, if there is any, to consumers,
27 exporters, restaurants, hotels and other institutional buyers.

28
29 *Sec. 5. Coverage.* – The Program envisioned under this Act shall cover seeded
30 plants, trees, vegetables, fruits, root crops, and other food crops planted, cultivated,
31 and harvested in different regions in the country, which shall be commercially available
32 to retail and wholesale purchases.

33
34 *Sec. 6. Inventory of all agricultural lands.* – The Department of Agriculture, in
35 coordination with the local government units, shall conduct an inventory of all existing
36 agricultural lands in the country, including the present crops planted, cultivated and
37 harvested in each region. Such inventory shall be maintained and regularly monitored
38 and updated by the Department of Agriculture.

39
40 *Sec. 7. Continuing Research and Development.* – The Department of
41 Agriculture, with the assistance of the Department of Interior and Local Government,
42 Department of Science and Technology, Department of Environment and Natural
43 Resources, and other related government agencies, shall conduct a continuing
44 research and development on the propagation of other agricultural products that may
45 be planted, cultivated and harvested in the country. Likewise, an in depth-study and
46 investigation shall be made on applicable technological advancement in the field of
47 agricultural crops.

1 *Sec. 8. Technical and Financial Assistance by the Department of Agriculture.* –
2 Upon completion of the Program, the Department of Agriculture shall provide the
3 necessary technical and financial assistance to farmers' groups, farmers' cooperatives,
4 local government units, non-government organizations involved in agricultural crops.
5 High quality seedlings, organic fertilizers, irrigation, soil, may likewise be provided by
6 the Department of Agriculture.

7
8 Accessibility to organic fertilizer, cold storage facilities, equipment to load vegetables
9 and fruits, and other post-harvest activities and facilities, may likewise be extended to
10 farmers' groups and cooperatives by the Department of Agriculture.

11
12 *Sec. 9. Appropriations.* – The initial amount necessary to implement the
13 provisions of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the
14 Department of Agriculture. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the
15 continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the succeeding General
16 Appropriations Act.

17
18 *Sec. 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Department of
19 Agriculture, together with the Department of Interior and Local Government,
20 Department of Science and Technology, Department of Environment and Natural
21 Resources, shall within ninety (90) days the effectivity of this Act, promulgate the
22 rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

23
24 *Sec. 11. Separability Clause.* – If any portion of this Act is declared
25 unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provisions not affected thereby, shall
26 remain in force and effect.

27
28 *Sec. 12. Repealing Clause.* – All existing laws, rules and regulations or parts
29 thereof deemed inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed or
30 modified accordingly.

31
32 *Sec. 13. Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
33 following its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general
34 circulation.

Approved,