


FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

8 MAY -5 AM 1988

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: 

S. No. 2238

Introduced by **Senator Richard J. Gordon**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The country is now in the throes of a rice crisis. Faced with skyrocketing international demand for rice and the emergence of an international rice cartel, our people and country are now experiencing spiraling prices of this staple food. This has led to a precarious food security level in our country. This recent experience tells us that we cannot simply depend on our neighboring countries to meet our food requirement.

Unless addressed decisively and clearly, the rice crisis threatens to unleash adverse political and economic consequences for our country and for the Filipino people. The times call for us to seize the bull by the horns and deal with the problem with a comprehensive and long-term solution.

Recently, the Philippine government embarked on a Five Billion peso (Php 5,000,000) program to fund major agricultural programs in response to the impending food shortage. The fund is intended to address concerns related to FIELDS- fertilizers, irrigation, agricultural extension system, loans, driers and seeds. All these represent an integrated approach to solving the rice crisis.

With the enactment of the Local Government Code of 1991, all extension personnel of the Department of Agriculture (DA) were devolved to provincial and municipal government units. Thus, the function of providing technical services to farmers is the responsibility of local government units.

For some reason, however, the expertise of LGU personnel in most regions of the country has deteriorated to alarming levels. In some LGUs, the agriculture extension office does not even have even the minimum complement or expertise, much less an effective fund allocation for agriculture. LGUs have also expressed discontent over devolution because while the extension function has been devolved, the appropriate agriculture funds still emanate from the DA.

This impasse has been the status quo in terms of agricultural extension for some decades now and it is hurting the overall performance of our agricultural sector. The question of how farmers can access new and innovative technologies is a critical issue in the Philippines.

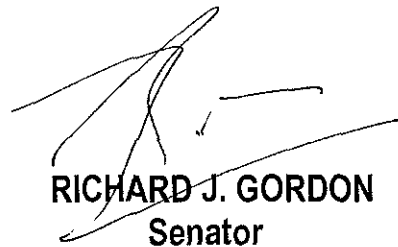
The challenge confronting the government is how the government can provide technical services to our farmers on a national scale to effect positive growth in response to the impending food security crisis.

This bill proposes the creation of a national cooperative extension service to address the problem of effective delivery of extension services to our farmers. This shall be a collaboration between the DA, State Universities and Colleges (SUC's) and the LGUs. Each component of the cooperative extension performs a unique function to ensure that our farmers receive the latest extension service support available in the country.

The bill also seeks to introduce other reform measures in the area of agricultural extension such as seed quality testing, soil analysis, remote testing and GIS facilities and support for bio-based fertilizers that shall supplement the extension services provided under this bill.

While the rice crisis is a complicated international and local problem which brooks of no easy solutions, the provision of technical and research inputs to our farmers through the proposed cooperative extension services is a step in the proper direction. This, in consonance with other allied reforms, will hopefully reverse the rice crisis and set our country on the path of food security and rural development.

For the foregoing reasons, the passage of this measure is earnestly sought.



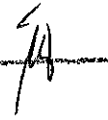
RICHARD J. GORDON
Senator

FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
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**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, STATE AGRICULTURAL
COLLEGE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
RESEARCH SERVICE, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

1 **SECTION 1. Title.** - This Act shall be known as the "Agricultural Cooperative
2 Research Extension Act of 2008."

3 **Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy.** - It is hereby declared the policy of the State
4 to accelerate the growth and development of the rural areas, improve agricultural
5 modernization as a key strategy to increase agricultural productivity, and address
6 national food security and rural poverty. Towards this end, the State shall undertake
7 the establishment of an agricultural cooperative extension service to provide
8 technical services to farmers and other stakeholders in the agricultural sector.

9 **Sec. 3. The Cooperative Extension Research Service.** - There shall be
10 created a Cooperative Extension Research Service composed of the Department of
11 Agriculture (DA), designated State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and the Local
12 Government Units (LGUs).

13 **Sec. 4. Components and Functions of the Cooperative Extension
14 Research Service.** - The LGUs, in line with the devolution of extension personnel
15 under Republic Act No. 7160, or the Local Government Code of 1991, shall provide
16 extension services to farmers.

17 The DA is tasked with planning and monitoring, knowledge management and
18 training of extension personnel of the various LGUs.

1 The SUC of a designated province shall be responsible for providing technical
2 assistance to the LGU and DA of that province. The SUC shall also be responsible
3 for providing technical as well as operational assistance in the overall planning,
4 implementation and monitoring of the agricultural program of the province.

5 **Sec. 5. Purpose of the Cooperative Extension Research Service.** - The
6 purposes of the Cooperative Extension Research Service are as follows:

7 (a) Ensure the cooperation between the DA, the LGUs and the SUCs at the
8 local level to ensure the direct provision of research and extension services to the
9 farmers;

10 (b) Establish and implement a nationwide extension system to service
11 farmers at the local level;

12 (c) Link the extension service to sources of new information and technologies
13 from the SUCs;

14 (d) Conduct downstream and on-farm research to address location-specific
15 constraints to increase productivity and profitability that are fine-tuned to the
16 practices of local farmers/stakeholders.

17 **Sec. 6. Structure of the Cooperative Extension Service.** - National level
18 extension programs shall be orchestrated by the DA in close collaboration with the
19 UPLB.

20 At the regional level, the Regional Field Unit (RFU) together with the DA
21 Regional Integrated Agricultural Research Center (RIARC) and the Agricultural
22 Training Institute (ATI) shall orchestrate the program in cooperation with the
23 designated provincial SUC and local governments.

24 Provincial level SUCs and their municipal level counterparts can host the
25 Rice, Corn and Livestock Action Center (RCLAC) where farmers can obtain initial
26 solutions to their technological problems. The RCLAC shall host the seed
27 laboratories, pest clinics, soil quality laboratories, veterinary clinics, grain quality
28 testing laboratories, agricultural machinery services and other such agricultural
29 support services. These shall be housed in municipal centers to be as near to the
30 farmers as possible.

31 There shall be agricultural extension services at the barangay level to be of
32 direct and accessible service to the farmers.

1 **Sec. 7. Funds.** - Funds from for the research-extension service shall be from
2 different sources: the DA, Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the LGUs.

3 There shall be a new regular fund in the amount of Ten Million Pesos
4 (P10,000,000.00) shall be made available to SUCs to be used as incentives to their
5 experts to conduct extension in their area of assignment or to recruit additional
6 manpower to increase the coverage of their extension work. This may also be used
7 to leverage as counterpart with LGU and DA funds to come up with a unified
8 agricultural development plan for the province.

9 Additional funds shall also be provided SUCs for the construction of
10 laboratories, clinics, facilities and for the training of technical personnel.

11 **Sec. 8. Agricultural Radio Programs.** - There shall be established an “On
12 the Air” Agriculture School Radio Program as an important support to on-farm
13 extension services. This program shall be hooked to national radio networks to
14 ensure a national coverage.

15 **Sec. 9. Remote Sensing and GIS Facilities.** - There shall be a Remote
16 Sensing and GIS Laboratory established at UP Los Banos (UPLB) to service and
17 assist the SUC-DA-LGU in its agricultural planning and monitoring programs in the
18 province.

19 **Sec. 10. Support for Bio-based Fertilizers.** - The State shall provide
20 support for the UPLB to strengthen its capacity to produce bio-based fertilizers
21 specially the BIO-N and BIOCON technologies by upscaling its production facilities
22 and providing a laboratory to handle quality assurance of bio-fertilizers.

23 **Sec. 11. Soil analysis.** - Soil analysis services shall be provided to farmers
24 through soil analysis laboratories in the regions and through the provision of soil
25 analysis kits developed by the UPLB for use by the local governments in soil quality
26 assessment. SUCs can train the LGUs in the use of soil test kits and in the
27 interpretation of the results.

28 **Sec. 12. National Seed System and Seed Quality Assurance Program.** -
29 Certified or good selected seeds shall be produced at the UPLB and other SUCs in
30 order to assure farmers of steady and adequate supply of these seeds.

31 **Sec. 13. National Grain Quality Assurance Program.** - The SUC-LGU-DA
32 shall also establish a laboratory for grain grading and certification. The SUC-LGU-DA
33 shall also provide for good drying facilities to ensure the quality of grains of farmers.

1 **Sec. 14. National Crop Pest Disease Surveillance and Monitoring**
2 **System.** - A nationwide crop pest and disease surveillance and monitoring system
3 shall be established to assist farmers in pest management decisions. The system
4 shall also inform researchers of new strains of pests and diseases that may be
5 brought about by climate change.

6 The National Crop Protection Center of the UPLB can take leadership in this
7 program in collaboration with the Regional Crop Protection Centers and the
8 provincial SUCs.

9 **Sec. 15. National Livestock Pest Disease Surveillance and Quarantine**
10 **Program.** - A national quarantine system shall be established to prevent the spread
11 of disease among livestock. The College of Veterinary Medicine of UPLB shall take
12 the leadership in this program in coordination with the relevant SUCs and the private
13 sector.

14 **Sec. 16. Repealing Clause.** - All laws or parts thereof, decrees, orders, rules
15 and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or
16 modified accordingly.

17 **Sec. 17. Separability Clause.** - If any of the provisions of this Act is declared
18 invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

19 **Sec. 18. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect immediately following its
20 publication in a newspaper of general circulation or the Official Gazette, whichever
21 comes first.

22 Approved,