

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasang Pambansa, Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2991

INTRODUCED BY REP. JOSEPH VICTOR G. EJERCITO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill aims to establish a National Agriculture Education System (NAES), which is an approach to stratify institutional goals, upgrade standards and increase the school's effectiveness in instruction, research and extension within the nation, region or province. Through the NAES, the State commits to the exposure of all aspects of agriculture to teachers, students and the community to create and maintain an understanding and appreciation of agriculture and related industries. It is a great opportunity to promote agriculture awareness and an understanding of the importance of agriculture to all members of society.

Soil is one of our most precious resources. Therefore, we have to work on changing farm policy to emphasize its proper use. We must get farmers into classrooms. We must strive to move student out of the classroom and onto farms which model sustainable systems. Together, we can work toward the goal of sustainable agricultural systems.

The bill seeks to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of agriculture education programs while preserving the concern for equity or democratized access to higher education in the rural areas. It is also a response to the call for greater productivity, higher rural incomes and better quality of life for the Filipino people.

In view of the foregoing, early passage of this bill is earnestly requested.



JOSEPH VICTOR G. EJERCITO

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AN ACT
RATIONALIZING AGRICULTURE EDUCATION IN THE PHILIPPINES BY
ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL SYSTEM OF AGRICULTURE EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS, PROVIDING FOR MECHANISMS OF IMPLEMENTATION,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

CHAPTER 1. TITLE AND POLICIES

SECTION 1. Title. - This Act shall be known as the ***"Agriculture Education Act of 2010"***.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policies. -

a) The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens, regardless of sex, and creed to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.

b) The State shall establish, maintain, and support a complete and integrated system of agriculture education relevant to the needs of the economy, community and society.

c) The State shall provide non-formal education and training to farmers, farmworkers and out-of-school youths in the rural areas. Agriculture education shall be coordinated with agricultural policies of the State and shall be oriented particularly towards improvement of the productivity and incomes of small farmers and increased self-sufficiency of rural communities.

CHAPTER II. COVERAGE

SEC. 3. Scope. - This Act shall apply to and govern both formal and non-formal continuing agriculture education programs being offered in all public and private educational institutions in the country.

SEC. 4. Definition of Terms. - The following terms shall mean as defined herein:

a) Agriculture - means cultivation of the soil, planting of crops, growing of fruit trees, management of forests, raising or catching of livestock or both, poultry or fish; including the harvesting and post harvest handling of such products and other activities and practices performed by a farmer/fisherman/forester in conjunction with such operations done by persons whether natural or juridical.

b) Agriculture and Environmental Education - pertains to organized and institutionalized instructions relating to professional, technical and vocational skills development, research for technology development, and extension of technologies in the various fields disciplines in agriculture and allied sciences such as crop science, animal science, agricultural engineering, fisheries, forestry and veterinary medicine. Environmental concerns are integrated in each discipline.

CHAPTER III.

THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURE EDUCATION SYSTEM (NAES)

SEC. 5. Purpose. - Qualified existing public and private institutions, colleges and universities shall be developed into a network of an integrated system of agriculture education to respond effectively to agriculture and rural development needs of the country.

SEC. 6. The National Agriculture Education System (NAES) – The network of qualified public and private education institutions shall be formed and established into a National Agriculture Education System (NAES), in order for agriculture education to have a unified, coordinated and improved system of implementation of academic program thrusts geared toward achieving agriculture and rural development of the community and country. However, in case there is no institution offering agriculture education in the service area which corresponds to the provision of Section 7 of this Act, the same shall be created or established according to implementing rules and regulations of this Act.

SEC. 7. Components of the System. - From among the qualified agriculture education institutions, regardless of the institution's system of governance as authorized by law, the network shall be composed of five (5) subsystems, namely: agriculture, agricultural engineering, fisheries, forestry and veterinary medicine. However, administrative organization and structures of the designated institutions shall be governed by their respective charters unless otherwise provided in this Act.

a) The Agriculture Education Sub-system shall be composed of one (1) designated National College of Agriculture, one (1) designated Regional College of Agriculture in each region, and at least one (1) designated/converted/created Technical Institute of Agriculture per province as the case may be.

b) The Agricultural Engineering Education Sub-system shall be composed of one (1) designated national College of Agricultural Engineering and a designated Regional College of Agricultural Engineering per region to be located within the network of the agriculture education sub-system.

c) The Fisheries Education Sub-system shall be composed of one (1) designated Regional College of Fisheries to be located strategically in three (3) selected regions and a designated converted/created Regional Institute of Fisheries Technology per region.

d) The Forestry Education Sub-system shall be composed of one (1) designated National College of Forestry and a designated Regional College of Forestry per region to be located within the agriculture education sub-system, if possible.

e) The Veterinary Education Sub-system shall be composed of one (1) designated National College of Veterinary Medicine and four (4) designated regional College of Veterinary Medicine to be located strategically in four (4) selected regions within the agriculture education sub-system.

CHAPTER IV.

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF INSTITUTIONS IN EACH LEVEL OF THE NETWORK

SEC. 8. *The National Colleges (NCs) shall:*

a) Concentrate on the post-graduate programs and curricular models in the tertiary level;

b) Be responsible for the conduct of basic and applied researches and other scientific innovations;

c) Assist the Regional Colleges and institutions in their development efforts towards excellence, effectiveness and relevance in instruction, research and extension or technology transfer;

c) Link up with national and international agencies to keep abreast of local needs and scientific advances; and

d) Share its expertise and facilities with the Government and the private sector as far as policy recommendations, program planning and evaluation, and staff training are concerned.

SEC. 9. *The Regional Colleges (RCs) shall:*

a) Concentrate on Bachelor of Science degrees with reasonable involvement in the post-graduate and model technology courses;

b) Focus on adaptive researches needed in the region with reasonable involvement in basic and applied researches and verification projects;

c) Assist technical institutes in strengthening their institutional capabilities towards relevance, effectiveness and excellence in instruction, action research and technology transfer; and

d) Link up with, and assist government regional offices in planning and evaluating their programs and in training their staff for agriculture activities.

SEC. 10 . *The Regional Institutes of Fisheries Technology (RIFT) shall:*

a) Concentrate on the Diploma in Fisheries Technology designed for the training of fisheries technicians on technical skills required of the fisheries industry;

b) Conduct verification tests of new techniques developed by research institutions and transfer positive results to field technicians, fishermen and fishfarmers;

c) Assist the Fisherman's Training Center of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) in planning, implementing and evaluating their programs and training;

d) Assist high schools with fishery practical arts subjects in the development of their instructional materials.

SEC. 11. *The Provincial Technical Institutes (PTIs) shall:*

a) Concentrate their curricular programs on technical and technology courses designed for farming and extension work with reasonable involvement in selected degree and non-degree, post-secondary advanced technology-related courses in agriculture;

b) Conduct pilot/action researches and verification trials to demonstrate advances in agricultural technology and transfer the same to technicians and farmers through fields days, short courses and training programs;

c) Serve as a learning and technology resource for development agencies in the province in planning and evaluating programs and in training technicians, small farmers, agricultural producers and entrepreneurs; and

d) Extend improved appropriate agricultural technologies to secondary and vocational high schools.

SEC. 12. *Other Roles and Functions of the institutions.* - In addition to their regular roles and functions, all the member institutions mentioned above shall also serve as the agricultural training centers in their respective areas and offer continuing and adult education courses for related line agency staff/farmers/fisherfolk and community leaders to hasten technology transfer, improve attitudes towards farming, and inculcate the importance of agriculture in nation building in support to the Magna Carta for Small Farmers. It shall also be the function of the institutions to provide assistance to students in conducting their income-generating projects as well as placement of their graduates.

CHAPTER V.

IMPLEMENTING AND COORDINATING MECHANISMS

SEC. 13. *Agricultural Education Development Council (AEDEC).* - The existing Technical Panel for Agricultural Education (TPAE) is hereby transformed into the Agricultural Education Development Council (AEDEC) as the governing advisory policy body which is autonomous and attached to the Department of Education (DepEd) with the following composition and functions:

a) composition. - The AEDEC shall be composed of the following members to be appointed by the Secretary of Education as its Ex-Officio Chairman:

1) One (1) outstanding scientist, educator or practitioner from each of the fields of Crop Science, Animal Science, Agricultural Engineering, Fisheries, Forestry, Veterinary Medicine and Agriculture Teacher Education, who shall be

nominated by heads of faculties, scientific or professional groups for a term of three (3) years, and from among them a Vice-chairman shall be chosen;

2) One (1) representative each from the Department of Agriculture, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Budget and Management and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA);

3) One (1) representative from the Commission on Higher Education;

4) One (1) representative from the Professional Regulation Commission;

5) One (1) representative from the Philippine Federation of Professional Associations;

6) One (1) representative from the Federation or Association of Colleges of Agriculture in the Philippines; and

7) One (1) representative from the Fund for Assistance to Private Education.

b) Functions. - The AEDEC shall have the following duties and functions:

1) To study and review the overall philosophy and goals of agriculture and environment education in relation to the regional, national and international developments in agriculture and industry and formulate alternative directions and plans;

2) To assess and identify the agriculture and environmental education, training and employment needs of the country in consultation with the NEDA and other concerned agencies;

3) To undertake policy, educational and evaluation research and recommend measures to improve agriculture and environmental education;

4) To formulate and recommend guidelines and minimum educational standards with respect to curricula, faculty, equipment and facilities, library resources, student services, quality of output and other related criteria which shall be applicable to all NAES member-institutions;

5) To develop and implement coordinative and collaborative mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation of activities of NAES;

6) To establish and operate a Management Information System (MIS) for the NAES;

7) To provide technical assistance to educational institutions in the planning, development and implementation of agriculture and environmental education programs in cooperation with appropriate agencies;

8) To receive or recommend grants or both for the funding of educational research and development following the existing accounting and auditing manual for research operations;

9) To appoint AEDEC staff and employees upon the recommendation and endorsement of the Executive Director; and

10) To formulate implementing rules and regulations of this Act and recommend the same to the Commission on Higher Education within six (6) months after the effectivity of this Act; and

11) To perform such other functions as may be deemed necessary.

SEC. 14. Secretariat. - The AEDEC shall be assisted by technical and administrative staff with appointment on permanent status to be headed by an Executive Director. The Secretariat's office shall be at the University where the National College of Agriculture is located. The services of a pool of experts/consultants/resource persons on full-time or part-time status shall be provided on special detail or secondment subject to the guidelines approved by AEDEC.

SEC. 15. Budgetary Scheme shall be as follows:

a) The current appropriations or budgets of the public educational institutions in the NAES designated as the national colleges and regional colleges shall continue and shall be modified or adjusted in succeeding years in order to meet the standards of the rationalized programs of the institutions as approved by the Department of Budget and Management and shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

b) The PTIs/IRFTs in the NAES which are designated or newly created under this Act shall likewise be provided budgetary support based on their programs and new staffing pattern as approved by the Department of Budget and Management and shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act. Additional institutes that may be established in the province shall solely be supported by provincial government funds.

c) This Act shall hereby allocate an endowment lumpsum amount of Five Million Pesos (P5,000,000.00) per annum for the next ten (10) years and shall be included in the General Appropriations Act starting calendar year 2008. This fund shall be called as the Agriculture Education Program Development Fund to support the development, improvement and implementation of priority agriculture education and farmers' entrepreneurial training programs of NAES member institutions: *Provided, further,* That such fund shall be invested in government bonds and securities and managed by AEDEC using only the interest earnings of the said fund.

d) The operations of the AEDEC shall be funded initially from the CHED budget allocation for the Technical Panel for Agricultural Education (TPAE). Upon the effectivity of this Act, TPAE shall be replaced by the AEDEC and all equipment, qualified personnel and projects of the TPAE shall be transferred to AEDEC. Subsequently, the initial amount of at least Three million pesos (P3,000,000.00) shall be allocated for the AEDEC in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 16. Fiduciary, Endowment and Revolving Funds. -The Fiduciary and Revolving Funds centralized under P.D. 711 are hereby authorized and reallocated to the institutions in NAES to encourage them to demonstrate the technologies that they develop in their laboratories, experimental farms and income-generating projects, furthermore endowment funds shall be authorized to be accumulated in the institutions, out of any funds generated from unallocated savings, earnings or from any other external sources to be used as incentives for

professorial chairs, teachers/employees incentives award systems, faculty fellowship programs and the like. Such funds shall be disbursed in accordance with law and guidelines set by AEDEC and the Commission on Audit.

CHAPTER VI.

INCENTIVES, PRIVILEGES AND BENEFITS

SEC. 17. *Incentives for Private Institutions.* - Private colleges or universities that may be designated to perform any role in the system shall basically be supported out of their private funds raised and solicited for its operations. They shall be supported through the Fund for Assistance to Private Education (FAPE), national grants, educational development subsidies, and other forms of incentives such as deregulation of tuition and other fees and tax exemptions especially on importation of books and equipment.

SEC. 18. *Incentives for Agriculture Education Graduates.* - The following incentives are hereby provided to graduates to facilitate and maximize their contributions to agriculture and national government:

a) **Agriculture Education Entrepreneurial Loan.** - Graduates desiring to establish agribusiness enterprises shall be provided with a loan not exceeding One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) upon submission of an authenticated diploma, a good feasibility study and is secured by a chattel mortgage of assets acquired from the loan. Mechanisms to operationalize said loan shall be provided by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas through the Land Bank of the Philippines and other interested commercial or cooperative banks with the assistance of the AEDEC.

b) **Tax Incentives.** - Graduates venturing into priority agribusiness processing and manufacturing industries may avail of tax incentives under the Board of Investments priority plan as provided by law and the Kalakalan 20 under R.A. No. 1648.

CHAPTER VII. SPECIAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 19. By virtue of this Act, the non-chartered CHED managed colleges that may be designated to perform the role of a regional college in the NAES shall follow the structure of a state college as provided for in the guidelines of the Department of Budget and Management starting at level four.

SEC. 20. *Provincial Technical Institutes.* - This Act shall hereby authorize the Chairman of CHED upon endorsement of the AEDEC through the recommendations of the provincial government or the regional development councils as the case may be in the designations and/or change of status of potential institutions into Technical Institutes of Agriculture in each province and Institutes of Fisheries Technology in each region within the NAES: *Provided, however,* That such designations including the institutions identified within the NAES be published in the Government's official gazette: *Provided, further,* That such institutes shall be headed by a Director and shall be allowed to adopt the existing titles and academic ranks accorded to a college faculty: *Provided, furthermore,* That such institutes which are attached to mother units shall have a Director by designation whereas those independent institutes shall have a Director with a plantilla position.

SEC. 21. *Repealing Clause.* - All existing laws, rules, and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, superseded, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 22. *Separability Clause.* - If any part, section or provision of this Act shall be held invalid or unconstitutional, no other part, section or provision hereof shall be affected thereby.

SEC. 23. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,