

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 3258

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE JEFFREY P. FERRER**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Interest in organic farming has now developed into a national industry in the Philippines. The public and private sector consumers are now very much aware of the environmental and public health effects of agricultural chemicals and the so-called "factory farming" methods. Private and public research organizations have begun scientific investigations into non-chemical and non-intensive farming techniques, and the results play a significant role in the growing number of farmers that have begun to adopt organic production systems, putting premium prices on organically grown products higher than the usual crops thus opening a new opportunity for growth in Philippine Agriculture.

Organic Farming, as defined in the law establishing the U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Organic Program (NOP), as "a production system that is managed in accordance with the [Organic Foods Production] Act and regulations ... to respond to site-specific conditions by integrating cultural, biological and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity. This definition indicates that organic agriculture is both an approach to food production based on biological methods that avoid the use of synthetic crop or livestock production inputs and a broadly defined philosophical approach to farming that puts value on resource efficiency and ecological harmony.

This bill therefore seeks to establish a national policy on the practice of Organic Farming to be known as the National Organic Farming Act of 2010.

The immediate approval of this bill is therefore recommended.


JEFFREY P. FERRER
4th District of Negros Occidental

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Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE JEFFREY P. FERRER

**"AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL ORGANIC FARMING PROGRAM,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES"**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. - *This Act shall be known as the "National Organic Farming Act of 2010."*

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - *It shall be the policy of the state to establish a national organic program that will direct the production and certification standards of the organic farming industry, adopt uniform cultural practices and production of organic farm products which will unite the organic farming industry to internationally accepted standards, maintain product integrity and eliminate market confusion on the use of different marketing standards for organic food which will involve the manufacturers, importers, exporters and processors of multi-ingredient organic products for export and domestic use and for purposes of labeling and directions.*

SEC. 3. National Organic Farming Program. - *There is hereby established a national organic farming program which shall act as the template and basis of policy to enforce regulations and to respond to site-specific conditions by integrating cultural, biological and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity as an approach to food production based on biological methods that avoid the use of synthetic crop or livestock production inputs.*

SEC. 4. Creation of the Bureau of Organic Farming. - *The Department of Agriculture within a period of 30 days upon the passage of this act shall create a Bureau of Organic Farming. The bureau of organic farming will be mandated to formulate internal operating rules and procedures to assure that the National Organic Farming Program will achieve its intended objectives and that organic products will meet consistent and uniform standards, it will be responsible in the execution of the National Organic Farming Act in terms of promoting the use of the organic technology and the setting of production standards.*

SEC. 5. Creation of the DA Agricultural Marketing Service. - *Upon the passage of this act the Department of Agriculture is mandated within a period of 30 days to create an*

agency for Agricultural Marketing Services which will help regulate the organic farming industry, do research and development, expand product lines and increase market opportunities for export in the lucrative international organic market. The DA AMS will establish a 15 member National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) coming from the DOST, DTI, DA, DAR, ORGANIC FARMER ASSOCIATIONS, PRIVATE SECTOR, PRIVATE AND PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES to assist in the development of standards for substances in organic production and to recommend to the Secretary of Agriculture key policies for its implementation. Under the framework of the program, producers, processors and handlers who will market their products as organic are required to follow production standards embodied in the rules and regulations to be formulated by the Department of Agriculture.

SEC. 5. Power to accredit private and government certification agents.- The Bureau of Organic Farming and DA Agricultural Marketing Services shall formulate rules and regulations for accrediting certification agents and shall have the exclusive authority to appoint, deputize and designate, screen and accredit private and government certification agents in the provincial and municipal levels to ensure that organic products are compliant with the national and international standards set forth in marketing organic products.

SEC. 6. The use of the "RPDA Organic Seal".- The Republic of the Philippines Department of Agriculture Organic Seal shall be the "official seal" use in certifying organic products that pass the standards impose by law. The presence of the "RPDA Organic Seal" on a product means it is ninety five (95%) percent or more organically produce or process and it shall be illegal for anyone to use the word "organic" on a product if it does not meet the standards set by law. Labels on products having 70% to 95% organic content can say "made with organic (specified ingredients or food groups)," but cannot carry the seal. Foreign organic producers and handlers wishing to export products to the Republic of the Philippines may be certified by a DA-accredited certification agent in their own country, if there is one; or the DA may accept certification by agents accredited by a foreign government; or it may negotiate an equivalency agreement with another nation's organic program.

SEC. 7. Privileges and credit assistance.- The National Government shall extend incentives to manufactures, producers and users of organic farm inputs by setting aside an annual procurement budget in the DA of one billion (1,000,000,000.00) pesos to be allocated to the different DA Regional Field Units as incentive for the promotion and support of Organic Farm Inputs production, likewise the DBP, Land bank and Quedan corporation is mandated to open credit assistance as incentive for using organic farming methods.

SEC. 8. Penalties. -any act that will violate the provisions of this law shall be sentence to a penalty of imprisonment equivalent to prision mayor and a fine of not less than Five hundred thousand pesos including the cancellation of their business licenses and permit to operate.

SEC. 9. Funds and Appropriations.- *The sum of Fifty million pesos (P50, 000,000.00) is appropriated as operations budget of the Bureau of Organic Farming and the Agricultural Marketing Services for the proper and effective implementation this Act to be source from the General Appropriations Act and the Budget of the DA.*

SEC 10. Separability Clause.- *If any provision of this Act or the application of such provision to any person or circumstance is held invalid for any reason, the other provisions or their application to other persons or circumstances and effect.*

SEC 11. Repealing Clause.- *All laws, decrees, orders, rules, regulations and issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.*

SEC. 12. Effectivity.- *This shall take effect upon its approval.*

Approved,