

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 3587

Introduced by **Hon. Rodolfo G. Biazon**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The continued importation and use of chemical or inorganic fertilizers, pesticides, weedicides, and other farm inputs has long been a source of protest and debate within the agricultural sector. It is well known now that increased use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers have created a chain of problems of soil, environment and water degradation. Intensive chemical agriculture is causing heavy pollution of our food, drinking water and air. The life expectancy has improved but the quality of life has substantially deteriorated.

This bill seeks to establish a comprehensive bio-organic farming program as an alternative to chemical agriculture.

Bio-organic farming is defined as an agricultural production system which avoids the use of chemical or inorganic farm inputs, pesticides, weedicides, and feed additives and relies on biological means of conditioning and enriching the soil, and controlling pests.

The program is aimed at reducing the possible damage caused by chemical or inorganic farm inputs, which may have irreparable or irreversible effects on the environment and living organisms in the ecosystem. Moreover, the program seeks to help farmers reduce their expenses by decreasing their dependence on inorganic fertilizers and thereby increase farm yield and income.

To provide the direction and guidelines for the program as well as supervise its implementation, the Bio-Organic Farming Authority (BOFA) shall be created under the Office of the President, with the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture as Chairman, and the Secretaries (or their representatives) of the following as members: Department of Science and Technology, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Education, Department of Interior and Local Government, as well as representatives of small farmers, non-government organizations, and state colleges and universities.

It would be to the advantage of our environment, our economy, and ultimately our people to adopt this measure providing for the promotion of bio-organic farming in the Philippines.

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


RODOLFO G. BIAZON
Representative

Lone District, Muntinlupa City

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE PROMOTION OF BIO-ORGANIC FARMING IN THE
PHILIPPINES

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

SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the Policy of the State to promote, propagate and assist the practice of bio-organic farming in the Philippines that will cumulatively condition and enrich the fertility of the soil, increase farm yields, reduce pollution and destruction of the environment, prevent the depletion of natural resources, and reduce our dependence on imported farm inputs. Towards this end, a comprehensive program for the production and distribution of bio-organic fertilizers, pesticides and other farm inputs shall be undertaken in order to meet the country requirements.

Sec. 2. *Bio-Organic Farming.* – For purposes of this Act, “bio-organic farming” shall mean an agricultural production system which avoids the use of chemical or inorganic farm inputs, pesticides weedicides and feed additives and relies on biological means of conditioning and enriching the soil and controlling pests, such as but not limited to the use of beneficial organisms, the utilization of plant and animal wastes through composing, crop rotation, intercropping, multiple cropping, and the adoption of integrated pest management (IPM) or pesticide-free community ecology approach to pest management. It also covers

areas such as but not limited to, soil fertility management, varietal breeding and selection under chemical and pesticide-free conditions, and other cultural practices that enhance productivity without destroying the soil and harming farmers, consumers, and the environment.

Sec. 3. *Program.* – There is hereby established a comprehensive bio-organic farming program which shall adopt and develop the propagation of bio-organic cultivation and production methods, the education of more and more farmers thereon, the extension of assistance to individuals and groups who are practicing and promoting these methods as well as those who are willing to do so, other pertinent activities, and documentation and evaluation of the program.

Sec. 4. *Bio-Organic Farming Authority.* – To carry out the policy and the program provided in this Act, there is hereby created a Bio-Organic Farming Authority (BOFA) under the Office of the President. The BOFA shall have a juridical personality and shall consist of a Board Directors, hereinafter referred to as the Board, which shall provide the direction and general guidelines for the program. It shall have an Executive Directorate which shall implement the program in its various aspects in accordance with the direction and guidelines of the Board. The various government departments and agencies and the officials thereof named in this Act, in collaboration with private individuals and groups also herein named, are hereby directed to intensify and coordinate their activities with the program of the BOFA.

The BOFA shall ensure the full participation of people's organizations (POs), non-government organizations (NGOs), and the general public through mechanisms, such as but not limited to, public hearings, meetings, and joint projects.

Sec. 5. *The Board.* – The Board shall consist of:

- the Secretary of Agriculture, Chairman;

- the Secretaries (or their representatives) of the Department of Science and Technology, of the Environment and Natural Resources, of Education, and of the Interior and Local Government;
 - two (2) representatives of small farmers;
 - the Chairman of the Fertilizer and Pesticides Authority (PFA);
 - two (2) representatives of non-government organizations involved in sustainable agriculture for at least three (3) years; and
 - two (2) representatives of agricultural state and private colleges and universities,
- Members.

The representatives of small farmers, NGOs and of agricultural state and private colleges and universities, shall be chosen by the Secretaries of Agriculture and Science and Technology, respectively, from among nominees submitted to the agency concerned by their respective national organizations. They shall be conversant with bio-organic farming and committed to the policies and programs provided under this Act.

Sec. 6. Organization of the Board. – Within sixty (60) working days from the effectivity of this Act, the national organizations of small farmers, of NGOs, and of agricultural colleges and universities shall submit their respective nominees to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Science and Technology, as the case may be, who shall evaluate the qualifications of the nominees and appoint the most qualified members to the Board

The Chairman shall call the members of the Board, or a majority thereof if not all have been designated, to a meeting to organize themselves and prescribe its rules and procedures for the attainment of the objectives of this Act. A majority of all the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

The Board shall also determine its budget, including travel expenses, allowances and per diems of its non-governmental members when attending official Board meetings or attending to matters assigned to them, and costs of office space, equipment and supplies.

The Board may appoint full-time assistants and other employees, subject to existing Civil Service rules and regulations.

Sec. 7. Executive Directorate. – The Executive Directorate, hereinafter referred to as the Directorate, shall be headed by a full-time Executive Director who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines not later than thirty (30) working days after the Board's organizational meeting and whose compensation shall be fixed by the Board. The Executive Director shall be assisted by the members of the Directorate, who shall be composed of the following public officials and representatives of private groups, and who are hereby directed to extend full support and cooperation;

- The Director, Bureau of Soils and Water Management;
- The Director, Bureau of Plant Industry;
- The Director, Agricultural Training Institute;
- The Director, Bureau of Agricultural Research;
- The Executive Director, Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA)
- A representative, to be designated by the Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology;
- A representative, to be designated by the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources;
- A representative, to be designated by the Secretary of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports; .
- A representative, to be designated by the Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government;

- The Executive Director, Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD);
- A representative from the Farmers Cooperative Sector;
- Two (2) representatives of other NGOs involved in sustainable agriculture or development for the past three (3) years to be chosen by the Secretary of Agriculture and Food from among the nominees of the NGO sector;
- A representative each of agricultural state and private colleges and universities, to be chosen from among the nominees of national organizations of said colleges and universities; and
- Three (3) representatives of small farmers to be chosen by the Secretary of Agriculture from among the nominees of national organizations of small farmers;

All the members or representatives in the Executive Directorate shall be conversant with bio-organic farming and committed to the policies and program provided under this Act.

The Executive Director is hereby empowered to call upon any government agency for assistance in the performance of his tasks.

The Departments of Agriculture and of Science and Technology shall jointly provide an office and staff for the Directorate.

The salary and office expenses of the Executive Director and the members and staff of the Directorate as well as the traveling expenses, allowances and per diems of private representatives in the Directorate attending official Directorate meetings and performing other tasks assigned to them, shall be taken from the appropriations provided under this Act.

Sec. 8. *Apportionment of Tasks.* - The Executive Director shall apportion and coordinate the tasks embraced by the program provided in this Act among the various members of the Directorate according to their fields of specialization. Such tasks shall

include, but shall not be limited to, research, education, extension, training of farmers, training of trainers including the giving or acquisition of scholarships and observation grants here and abroad, pesticide-free IPM, small scale and commercial production of organic farm inputs, an accreditation system to insure their quality, and sustained promotional campaigns. The members of the Directorate shall at all times observe cooperation with one another, complement and/or supplement each other's tasks, and involve their offices and/or organizations in the accomplishment of such tasks.

Sec. 9. *Work Plan.* – Within sixty (60) working days after assuming office and after the first organizational meeting of the Directorate, the Executive Director shall submit to the Office of the President for approval;

- a) A report on the setting-up and organization of the Directorate and staff;
- b) A scheme of distribution and complementation of functions among the members of the Directorate;
- c) A plan of bringing the program down to the grassroots, utilizing available personnel and facilities on the local level and those of local government units;
- d) A pattern of cooperation and mutual assistance with local government units, POs and NGOs, which will maximize people empowering and participatory approaches to program formulation, implementation and monitoring; and
- e) A schedule of short-term, medium-term and long-term targets.

Sec. 10. *Bio-organic Farming and Protection of the Environment.* – The BOFA shall constantly devise and implement ways and means not only of producing bio-organic fertilizers and other farm inputs and needs on and off the farm, but also of helping to alleviate the problems of industrial waste and community garbage disposal through appropriate methods of sorting, collecting and composting.

Likewise, the BOFA in coordination with the Department of Education, Culture and Sports shall set-up Bio-Organic demonstration farms in various schools nationwide.

The Executive Director shall conduct continuing studies, with consultations among the people and officials involved as well as POs and NGOs, in order to advise local governments from the Barangay to the Provincial level, on the collection and disposal of garbage and waste in such a way as to provide raw materials for the production of organic fertilizer and other farm inputs.

Sec. 11. *Incentives.* – The Government shall extend incentives for the manufacture and propagation of bio-organic farm inputs by maximizing their use in all government and government-supported agricultural production, research and demonstration programs. The Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Education (DepEd), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Land Bank, and other government lending and non-lending institutions shall also assist organic input producers through the provision of adequate financial, technical, marketing and other services and resources.

Sec. 12. *Appropriations.* – The sum of Fifty million pesos (P50,000,000.00) for the effective implementation of this Act is hereby appropriated out of any funds in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the continuous implementation of the program shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

At least seventy-five percent (75%) of the BOFA's budget shall be allotted for integrated scientific research, information, education, and training of farmers and demonstration on the farm level, including the provisions of full-time bio-farming extension workers who will work with farmers' associations and cooperatives, POs, NGOs, barangay assemblies, rural communities, and other groups.

Sec. 13. *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 not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

Sec. 14. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules, regulations and issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

Sec. 15. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect upon its approval

Approved,