

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 3702

Introduced by **HONORABLE ANGELO B. PALMONES**

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE AGRI-KABATAAN SCHOLARSHIP FOR FOOD
PRODUCTION PROGRAM IN THE AGRICULTURE CURRICULA OF STATE
UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippine government has declared its commitment to give utmost priority to modernize the agriculture and fisheries sectors, in accordance with the principles of poverty alleviation and social equity, food security, rational use of resources, sustainable development and people empowerment as provided for in Republic Act (RA) 8435, otherwise known as the "Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997". The Department of Agriculture (DA) with the implementation of its various programs and projects is now concretizing such commitment on the ground. However, investment on programs intended to develop a highly competent workforce that will deliver tangible and expected outputs is still wanting.

About 70% of the rural population is dependent on agriculture, and most of these are considered poor or subsistence farmers. The sons and daughters of these poor farmers have completed secondary education in agricultural and vocational high schools because it is practically given free. Unfortunately, after finishing high school, majority of them can no longer pursue higher education because of poverty, and as a result find themselves employed in blue collar jobs other than farming, if any job is available at all.

On the other hand, observed through the years is the alarming downtrend in human resource capability in the agriculture sector. There has been a steady decline in the enrolment in the agriculture and related courses, and the perceived low employment opportunities after graduation from these courses by both students and parents, is making the situation worse. If this scenario will continue unabated, it will eventually redound to the limited human resource capital that is badly needed to develop the agriculture sector, in the long term.

In view of the aforementioned issues and concerns, opportunities in agriculture have to be created and made more lucrative to attract more students to enroll in agriculture courses. Agricultural education policies and curricular programs have to be revised to produce graduates who will become agribusiness managers and entrepreneurs that will generate employment rather than job-seekers. Likewise, progressive and aggressive farmers can be developed in the process.

This proposed Republic Act is aimed at providing opportunities for poor high school graduate students to pursue careers in agriculture as agribusiness managers and agri-entrepreneurs.



ANGELO B. PALMONES

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
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H.B. No. 3702

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UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. Title - This Act shall be known as the Agri-Kabataan Scholarship For Food Production Program in the Agriculture Curricula of 2010.

SECTION 2. Statement of Policy – The State shall give priority to education, science and technology to accelerate social progress, and promote development. To give realization of this policy, government shall provide opportunities to all to obtain quality education especially those who are poor but qualified students through the provision of scholarships. It is also the policy of the State to develop graduates who will become agribusiness managers and entrepreneurs that will generate employment rather than job-seekers.

SECTION 3. Objectives – The following are the objectives of this Act:

1. Develop competency skills and knowledge of students in agricultural technologies and agribusiness;
2. Provide opportunities to poor but deserving students to realize their potentials in agribusiness and entrepreneurship;
3. Increase food production utilizing idle lands of state universities and colleges (SUCs);
4. Commercialize proven viable technologies to increase food production and income of rural communities through the development of livelihoods and markets,
5. Provide income to students while doing experiential learning and on-the-job; training which form part of their degree programs;
6. Link young farmer-students with credit, financing and marketing institutions; and
7. Contribute to the alleviation of poverty.

SECTION 4. Definition of Terms – In this Act the following terms shall have the following meaning:

Agri-kabataan scholarship – a scholarship programs designed to benefit poor but deserving graduates of agricultural and vocational high schools including similarly situated freshmen students in agriculture and allied courses

Agribusiness venture laboratory – laboratory classes of agricultural subjects are designed as business ventures in agricultures such as raising of poultry, goats, corn or rice or crop production and counted as satisfying the laboratory requirement of a course

Small enterprise technology upgrading program (SET-UP) – a technology transfer program being implemented by the Department of Science and Technology designed to assist small and medium enterprises by providing packages of technologies and interest free capital for the acquisition of technologies

SECTION 5. Establishment of a Agri-Kabataan Scholarship Program in State Universities and Colleges in Agribusiness Management and/or Entrepreneurship – A scholarship program in agriculture and related fields shall be established. A ladderized program in Diploma in Agricultural Technology (DAT), Bachelor in Agricultural Technology (BAT) and Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness (BSAgrib) will be prescribed to the student-scholars. The DAT-BAT curriculum will be enhanced with agribusiness and entrepreneurship components but likewise comply with the minimum standards and guidelines prescribed by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

Target beneficiaries are high school graduates from agricultural and vocational high schools with average high school grades of at least 80 per cent. College freshmen already enrolled in agricultural courses in the State Universities and Colleges (SUC) will be considered for as long as their weighted grade average is at least 2.5.

SECTION 6. Entrepreneurship Components of the Program – To enhance the entrepreneurship components of the curriculum about 25% of the entire curriculum shall be in the form of on-the-job training or related learning experience. Laboratory components of various agricultural subjects shall be in the form of agribusiness ventures. Proven viable agribusiness ventures shall be packaged for students to engage in, and these shall serve as their laboratory classes under a supervised farming scheme. Each agribusiness venture shall be under the supervision of a faculty who is also a technology expert in the chosen commodity.

The agribusiness venture laboratory to be developed must have short gestation, 3 to 12 months, should be science and technology based agribusiness, the end products should be highly marketable and the facilities needed are present/existing within the SUC.

SECTION 7. Scholarships and Agribusiness Venture Start-up Financing – The Department of Agriculture (DA) issued Administrative Order (AO) No. 19 series of 2008 covering the implementing guidelines on the utilization of the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF) which was created under RA 8178 and amended through RA 9586. Under the new guidelines (AO No. 19) 10 percent of the ACEF shall be used for the funding of a comprehensive undergraduate scholarship program in agribusiness, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary medicine, and graduate studies in environmental and marine sciences, hydrology, renewable energy and agribusiness management programs.

There shall be allocated from the ACEF three hundred fifty million pesos (PH350 million) over the first 4 years of the program, of which PH300 million will be used for full scholarship of 5,000 student beneficiaries and the PH50 million for start-up venture capital for the agribusiness venture laboratory.

The Department of Science and Technology shall assist the Program by providing additional technology packages and making available funds allocated for the Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program (SET-UP) under its own guidelines for funding small enterprises.

SECTION 8. Management of the Scholarship and Agribusiness Venture Start-up Funds

– The scholarship funds shall be managed by CHED and will be paid directly to participating SUCs based on billings of tuition and other fees. The venture financing shall be released to the SUCs to be deposited as trust fund for the purpose. It will also be treated as revolving fund. Student-beneficiaries are required to pay back the venture capital after each cycle of the agribusiness project.

SECTION 9. Use of Idle Lands for the Agribusiness Venture Laboratory – The SUCs shall provide the lands and facilities to be used by the students under the Program. Where appropriate and viable the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) shall make available untenured public lands under its jurisdiction for the use of students in their agribusiness ventures under appropriate arrangements with CHED and the participating SUCs.

SECTION 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations – The CHED shall prepare the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of this Act and promulgate it within 180 days after approval of this Act. The DOST and the DENR shall assist in the preparation of the IRR in respect to their specific rules in the implementation of this Program.

SECTION 11. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the provisions hereof which are not affected shall continue to have force and effect.

SECTION 12. Repealing Clause. All laws, decrees, orders, rules or regulations thereof, inconsistent with this Act are hereby modified or repealed accordingly.

SECTION 13. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect on the day following its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved