

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 417



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ARTHUR C. YAP

EXPLANATORY NOTE

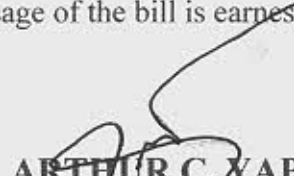
The Philippines until today remains largely an agricultural country with 70% of its population dependent on farming and fishing activities and are considered poor. In the countryside, children of subsistence farmers and fishermen can hardly pursue higher education because of poverty and most stop from going to school after completing elementary or secondary education. As a result, they end up as subsistence farmers or fishermen themselves in bondage to the land they till for others, or find themselves doing menial jobs in the cities.

Meanwhile, it has been observed that there is a steady decline in enrolment in agriculture and related courses due to perceived low employment opportunities for graduates of these courses. Enticed by so-called sunrise industries such as business processing and information technology industries, many young people prefer landing in blue or white collar jobs than working the farm lands. If left unchecked, this trend could lead, in the long run, to a limited human resource capital necessary to drive and develop the agricultural sector in the country.

To address these concerns, there is a need to create and develop more lucrative and materially rewarding opportunities in agriculture to attract more students to consider it as a worthy career path. Agricultural education policies and curricula have to be revised and geared towards the production of agribusiness managers and entrepreneurs who will generate employment opportunities for others and strengthen the base of the country's agricultural sector. To sustain their education, financial assistance in the form of scholarships should be made available to deserving students who are willing and interested in staking their future in agribusiness and agricultural production.

In sum, this bill aims to provide opportunities to poor but deserving high school students, as well as graduate students, to pursue careers in agriculture as successful entrepreneurs and agribusiness founders and managers.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of the bill is earnestly urged.


ARTHUR C. YAP
Representative

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE AGRI SCHOLARSHIP FOR
AGRIBUSINESS AND ENTERPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMS IN
THE AGRICULTURAL CURRICULA OF STATE UNIVERSITIES
AND COLLEGES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 **SECTION 1. Title** – This Act shall be known as the ‘Agri Scholarship Program
2 Act of 2013’.

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

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

- 11 1. Develop competency skills and knowledge of students in agricultural technologies
12 and agribusiness;
- 13 2. Provide opportunities to poor but deserving students to realize their potentials in
14 agribusiness and entrepreneurships;
- 15 3. Increase food production utilizing idle lands of state universities and colleges
16 (SUCs);

- 1 4. Commercialize proven viable technologies to increase food production and
- 2 income of rural communities through the development of livelihoods and markets;
- 3 5. Provide income to students while doing experiential learning and on-the-job
- 4 training which form part of their degree programs;
- 5 6. Link young farmer-students with credit, financing and marketing institutions; and,
- 6 7. Contribute to the alleviation of poverty.

7 **SECTION 4. *Definition of Terms*** – For purposes of this Act, the following

8 terms shall mean:

- 9 1) **Agri scholarship** – a scholarship program designed to benefit poor but deserving
- 10 graduates of agricultural and vocation high schools including similarly situated
- 11 freshmen students in agriculture and allied courses.
- 12 2) **Agribusiness venture laboratory** – laboratory classes of agricultural subjects
- 13 designed as business ventures in agriculture such as raising of poultry, goats, corn or
- 14 rice or crop production, and credited as satisfying the laboratory requirement of a
- 15 course.
- 16 3) **Small enterprise technology upgrading program (SET-UP)** – a technology
- 17 transfer program being implemented by the Department of Science and Technology
- 18 designed to assist small and medium enterprises by providing packages of
- 19 technologies and interest free capital for the acquisition of technologies.

20 **SECTION 5. *Establishment of Agri Scholarship Programs in State***

21 ***Universities and Colleges in Agribusiness Management and/or Entrepreneurship***

22 ***Courses*** – A scholarship program shall be established and integrated in a ladderized

23 program in Diploma in Agricultural Technology (DAT), Bachelor in Agricultural

24 Technology (BAT) and Bachelor of Science in-Agribusiness (BS Agrib) prescribed to

25 the student-scholars of state universities and colleges. The DAT-BAT curriculum will be

26 enhanced with agribusiness and entrepreneurship components and comply with the

27 minimum standards and guidelines prescribed by the Commission on Higher Education

28 (CHED).

1 Target beneficiaries are high school graduates from agricultural and vocational
2 high schools with average high school grades of at least 80 percent. College freshmen
3 already enrolled in agricultural courses in the state universities and colleges will be
4 considered for as long as their weight grade average is at least 2.5.

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

13 The agribusiness venture laboratory program to be developed must be
14 implementable within 3 to 12 months, should be science and technology-based
15 agribusiness, the end products shall be highly marketable, and the facilities needed are
16 present/existing within the SUCs.

17 **SECTION 7. *Scholarships and Agribusiness Ventures Start-Up Financing*** -
18 Ten percent (10%) of the Agricultural Competitiveness and Enhancement Fund (ACEF)
19 created under Republic Act No. 8178, as amended by Republic Act No. 9586, and
20 implemented by the Department of Agriculture Administrative (DAO) Order No. 19,
21 Series of 2008, shall be used for the funding of undergraduate scholarship programs in
22 agribusiness, forestry, fisheries, veterinary medicine, and graduate studies in
23 environmental and marine sciences, hydrology, renewable energy and agribusiness
24 management programs in state universities and colleges in the country.

25 Likewise, there shall be allocated from the ACEF Three hundred fifty million
26 pesos (P 350,000,000) over the first 4 years of the Program, of which Fifty million pesos
27 (P 50,000,000) shall be used as start-up capital for agribusiness venture laboratory.

1 The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) shall assist the Program by
2 providing additional technology packages under its Small Enterprise Technology
3 Upgrading Program (SET-UP).

4 **SECTION 8. *Management of the Scholarship and Agribusiness Venture Start-***
5 ***up Funds*** - The scholarship funds shall be managed by CHED and remitted directly to
6 participating SUCs based on billing of tuition and other fees. The venture financing shall
7 be released to SUCs to be deposited as trust funds for the purpose. Student-beneficiaries
8 shall pay back the venture capital for each cycle of the agribusiness project.

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

15 **SECTION 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations*** - Within one hundred
16 eighty (180) days from the approval of this Act, the CHED, in coordination and
17 consultation with the DOST and DENR, shall promulgate the rules and regulations
18 necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

19 **SECTION 11. *Separability Clause*** - If any portion or provision of this Act is
20 declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions hereof not affected thereby shall
21 remain valid and effective.

22 **SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause*** - All laws, presidential decrees, executive
23 orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act,
24 are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

25 **SECTION 13. *Effectivity Clause.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15)
26 days after its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.