

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 2051



Introduced by Hon. Delphine Gan Lee

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Agri-tourism may be defined as any farming activity that seeks to bring visitors to the place where the cultivation of plants or animals take place for business. During last year's First National Agritourism Research Conference in the Philippines, University of the Philippines Asian Institute of Tourism (UP-AIT) professor Paolo Fresnoza stated that agri-tourism translates to wealth creation in and rejuvenation of hinterland economies, job generation and higher income for farmers, and food security. Miguela Mena, Dean of the UP-AIT, has been quoted in news reports in saying that the combination of agriculture and tourism "presents a massive potential for economic development in rural areas."¹

During the Philippine Development Forum hosted by the World Bank last February, the consensus was that at least 14.6 million jobs will be created if the business environment improved especially for agriculture and tourism. Recently, the Department of Agriculture (DA) allocated P28.8 million to develop agri-tourism sites under a multi-sectoral collaboration called "Green Initiative." This will include commercial-scale organic vegetable production gardens and livestock pens where native pigs and chicken are raised. The vegetable gardens, and native pig and chicken farms would serve as additional attraction, where tourists could 'pick-and-harvest' fresh organic vegetables.² This bill seeks to improve the Philippine Agri-Tourism sector by providing for a long-term legislative framework for its development.


HON. DELPHINE GAN LEE
Representative, AGRI Party-List

¹ <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/389367/bukidnon-bengueta-batangas-eyed-as-agri-tourism-sites>

² <http://www.da.gov.ph/index.php/2012-03-27-12-04-15/2012-04-17-09-30-59/3863-da-allots-p28-8m-for-agri-tourism>

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AN ACT
PROMOTING AGRI-TOURISM BY IDENTIFYING AREAS THAT ARE VIABLE
FOR DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING THE INDUSTRY AS A WHOLE

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This shall be known as the “Agri-Tourism Development
2 Act of 2013.”

3 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policies.* – The State recognizes that the agriculture and
4 fisheries sector are vital to the economy;

5 The State also recognizes that tourism is a primary source of income for our people
6 particularly those in remote and underdeveloped areas of our country;

7 It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote, propagate, develop further and
8 implement the agri-tourism centers in the Philippines that will cumulatively help farmers by
9 creating other sources of income apart from their harvests. Towards this end, a
10 comprehensive program for the creation of agri-tourism sites is hereby established.

11 The State recognizes and supports the central role of the farmers, indigenous people
12 and other stakeholders at the grassroots in this program.

13 SECTION 3. *Definitions.* – As used in this Act, the term “agri-tourism” shall refer to
14 the practice of inviting visitors to any stage of the agricultural process for purposes of
15 encouraging the sale of agricultural products or to earn income through their visit;

16 For purposes of this Act, the term “Secretary” shall refer to the Secretary of the
17 Department of Agriculture.

1 SECTION 4. *Creation of the Position of Undersecretary for Agri-Tourism.* - There
2 is hereby created in the Department of Agriculture the position of Undersecretary for Agri-
3 Tourism, solely for the purpose of attending to the needs of the agri-tourism industry, to be
4 appointed by the President. Such Undersecretary shall have the following functions:

5 (a) set policies and formulate standards for the effective, efficient and
6 economical operations of the agri-tourism industry in accordance with the programs
7 of the government;

8 (b) exercise overall supervision over all functions and activities of all offices
9 and instrumentalities and other offices related to agri-tourism including its officers;

10 (c) establish, with the assistance of the director, such regional, provincial and
11 other agri-tourism officers as may be necessary and appropriate and organize the
12 internal structure of Bureau of Agri-Tourism in such manner as is necessary for the
13 efficient and effective attainment of its objectives and purposes; and

14 (d) perform such other functions as may be necessary or proper to attain the
15 objectives of this Act.

16 SECTION 5. *Creation of the Bureau of Agri-Tourism.* - The Bureau of Agri-
17 Tourism (BAT) is hereby created with the following functions:

18 (a) prepare and implement a Comprehensive National Agri-Tourism Industry
19 Development Plan;

20 (b) recommend to Congress and to the President the areas that are prime for agri-
21 tourism but require infrastructure projects such as farm to market roads;

22 (c) provide for the registration and the issuance of identification cards to agri-tourism
23 farmers;

24 (d) monitor and review agri-tourism agreements between Filipino citizens and
25 foreigners who seek to invest in the agri-tourism sector;

26 (e) formulate and implement a Comprehensive Agri-Tourism Research and
27 Development Program, such as, but not limited to, organic farming, sea farming, sea
28 ranching, tropical/ornamental fish and seaweed culture, plantation tours, livestock and
29 farm fieldtrips, aimed at increasing resource productivity, improving resource use
30 efficiency, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the country's agri-tourism
31 program;

32 (f) establish and maintain a Comprehensive Agri-Tourism Information System;

- (g) provide extensive development support services in all aspects of agri-tourism creation and marketing;
- (h) provide advisory services and technical assistance on the improvement of the industry;
- (i) advise and coordinate with LGUs on the maintenance of proper sanitation and hygienic practices in agri-tourism sites;
- (j) coordinate with LGUs and other concerned agencies for the establishment of productivity enhancing and market development programs in agri-tourism communities;
- (k) enforce all laws, formulate and enforce all rules and regulations governing the conservation and management of agri-tourism sites;
- (l) assist the LGUs in developing their technical capability in the development, management, regulation, conservation, and protection of agri-tourism sites;
- (m) perform such other related functions which shall promote the development, conservation, management, protection and utilization of agri-tourism sites.

SECTION 6. ***Composition of BAT.*** - As a line bureau, the BAT shall be headed by a Director and assisted by two (2) Assistant Directors who shall supervise the administrative and technical services of the bureau respectively. It shall establish regional, provincial and municipal offices as may be appropriate and necessary to carry out effectively and efficiently the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 7. ***Educational campaign at all levels.*** - The Department, the CHED, the DECS and the Philippine Information Agency shall launch and pursue a nationwide educational campaign to:

- (a) help realize the policies and implement the provisions of this Act;
- (b) promote agri-tourism and inform the public of new agri-tourist destinations; and
- (c) promote the principle of sustainable development;

SECTION 8. ***Infrastructure Support.*** - The Department in cooperation with concerned agencies shall:

- (a) prepare and implement a nationwide plan for the development of agri-tourism fishing ports and markets;

1 (b) prioritize the construction of farm-to-market roads linking the agri-tourism sites to
2 markets, bus terminals, train stations, airports, coastal landing points and arterial
3 roads/highways;

4 (c) establish and maintain quality laboratories in identified areas and prescribe the
5 highest standards for the operation and maintenance of such agri-tourism sites;

6 (d) arrange and make representations with appropriate funding institutions to finance
7 such facilities for the use of the agri-tourism cooperatives/associations;

8 (e) develop and strengthen marketing facilities and promote cooperative marketing
9 systems; and

10 SECTION 9. *Strict Compliance with Environmental Laws.* – The utilization and
11 development of all areas under this Act shall be regulated by the DENR pursuant to all laws
12 and statutes on the utilization and protection of natural resources and the environment, and
13 must strictly comply with the land use plan approved by the local government unit concerned
14 and the requirements imposed by existing DENR rules, regulations, and other issuances,
15 taking into consideration the sustainable use and development of the area.

16 SECTION 10. *Incentives for Municipal and Small-Scale Agri-Tourism Businesses.*
17 – Municipal and small-scale agri-tourism farmers shall be granted incentives which shall
18 include, but are not limited to, the following:

19 (a) a capability-building program for targeted parties shall be developed by the
20 Department to promote greater bankability and credit worthiness of municipal and
21 small-scale agri-tourism farmers. Such program shall include organizing activities,
22 technology transfer, and skills training related to agri-tourism, as well as credit
23 management; and

24 (b) an information campaign shall be conducted to promote the capability
25 building and credit programs. The campaign shall ensure greater information
26 dissemination and accessibility to targeted agri-tourism farmers.

27 SECTION 11. *Funding.* – The amount of two hundred fifty million pesos
28 (P250,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated for the initial year of this Act. Every year
29 thereafter, Congress shall allocate an amount not less than thirty million pesos
30 (P30,000,000.00) to be included in the budget of the Department for the implementation and
31 continued expansion of this program.

1 SECTION 12. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Secretary shall adopt
2 rules and regulation to implement the provisions of this Act within ninety (90) days from the
3 date of effectivity of this Act.

4 SECTION 13. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act or the application of
5 such provision to any person or circumstance is declared invalid, the remainder of the Act or
6 the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected by
7 such declaration.

8 SECTION 14. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance,
9 executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or
10 inconsistent with this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

11 SECTION 15. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
12 its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Adopted,