

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. **2167**



Introduced by Hon. Mark Llandro L. Mendoza

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to advance agricultural industries for prisoners by mandating all penal institutions with areas suitable for agriculture to implement an agricultural program for prisoners.

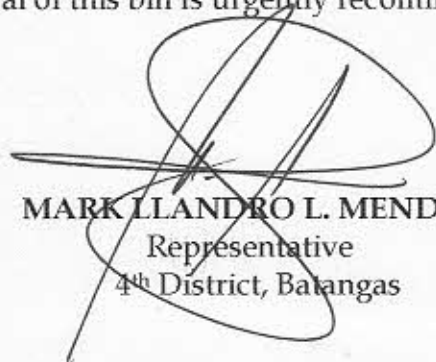
Over the past few weeks, soaring rice prices and looming decline in rice supply have been forcing the government and people to worry about rice shortage. The shortage in rice, our nation's staple food, will continue to haunt us and the solution lies not only in producing more out of the present base of lands being cultivated, but also in identifying other potential lands suitable for farming.

Collorarily, it is common knowledge that the living condition in all our jails is deplorable. This fact is made even more true with regard to food rations. It is the duty of the State as mandated by the Constitution, that it respects and protects the physical and spiritual well being of our citizens. This includes prisoners and detainees. Thus, a program that will alleviate their sub-human conditions should be implemented.

Some of our penal institutions and regional prisons are endowed with large tracts of arable lands which could be used for agricultural purposes, particularly, the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa City with land area of 208.86 hectares, the Correctional Institution for Women in Mandaluyong City with land area of 15 hectares, the Sablayan Prison and Penal Farm in Occidental Mindoro with land area of 8,327.40 hectares, the Davao Prison and Penal Farm with land area of 5,426.97 hectares, the San Ramon Prison in Zamboanga City with land area of 1,414.68 hectares and the Leyte Regional Prison with land area of 861.6 hectares. There is so much to gain if we will utilize and allow our prisoners to cultivate the arable lands in these penal institutions and regional prisons.

The implementation of the agricultural programs in the penal institutions will increase rice and food production and will help ease the problem on rice shortage. Further, it will reduce the cost of confinement of the prisoners by making them productive and self sufficient. It will provide opportunities for the inmates to earn, reduce their idle time, increase their morale, learn agricultural skills and work attitudes that will assist them in their successful rehabilitation and re-integration into society upon their release. The proposal will set the basis for the development of an efficient and effective rehabilitation and reintegration program for prisoners.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is urgently recommended.



MARK LLANDRO L. MENDOZA
Representative
4th District, Batangas

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House Bill No. _____

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AN ACT

**MANDATING ALL PENAL INSTITUTIONS WITH AREAS SUITABLE FOR
AGRICULTURE TO IMPLEMENT AN AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM FOR
PRISONERS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. *Prison Agricultural Program.* - The Bureau of Corrections shall, in coordination with the Department of Agriculture, implement an agricultural program in all penal institutions with areas suitable for agriculture. The program shall provide training within their respective penal institution to prisoners who will be allowed to work and cultivate the arable areas and perform farming activities to produce crops and goods for their own consumption or to be sold for profit. The profits derived from the program shall be credited to the Prison Agriculture Revolving Fund.

SEC. 2. *Role of the Department of Agriculture.* - The Department of Agriculture shall supply the seeds, fertilizers, equipment and other implements necessary for the agricultural program and shall provide technical support and advice to prison personnel on the management and maintenance of the prison farm. It shall also provide the prisoners who will participate in the program the necessary training on agriculture, equipment operations, and farming procedures.

The head of the penal institution shall act as the custodian of the agricultural supplies and equipment.

SEC. 3. *Participation of Prisoners and Their Wages.* – The prisoners who will work in the farm as recommended by the head of the penal institution shall be paid the minimum wage rate that is prevailing in the area where the penal institution is located. The compensation shall be paid from the Prison Agriculture Revolving Fund.

SEC. 4. *Prison Agricultural Revolving Fund.* – Every penal institution implementing the agricultural program shall establish the “*Prison Agriculture Revolving Fund*,” consisting of the earnings derived from the program.

The Prison Agriculture Revolving Fund shall be exclusively and primarily used for the following:

- a) Payment of wages of inmates who work in the prison farm; and
- b) Acquisition of agricultural inputs, seeds and fertilizers and other provisions for farming.

At the end of the year, fifty percent (50%) of the Prison Agriculture Revolving Fund shall be given as dividends to all inmates who participated in the agricultural program; twenty percent (20%) shall be utilized for the improvement of the penal or prison facility; and the remaining thirty percent (30%) shall be the start-up funds for the succeeding year.

SEC. 5. *Reportial Requirement.* – The Bureau of Corrections shall, in coordination with the Department of Agriculture, conduct a review of the prison agricultural program every two (2) years and submit a report to both House of Congress. Said report shall contain the following information:

- a) Rate of success, failure of the program;

- b) Expenses incurred in the implementation of the program per cropping season;
- c) List of inmates who participated in the program;
- d) Benefits of the program;
- e) Problems encountered in the implementation of the program; and
- f) Recommendation of the heads of each of the penal institutions.

SEC. 6. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations for the Department of Agriculture. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Justice shall, in coordination with the Secretary of Agriculture, issue such rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations and issuances, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 9. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,