

ORIGINAL

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Sixteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **5489**



**Introduced by Rep. Antonio F. Lagdameo, Jr., and
Rep. Anthony G. Del Rosario**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to establish the Philippine National Banana Research Center in Panabo City, Province of Davao del Norte to be known as the Antonio O. Floirendo, Sr. Banana Research Center.

The banana industry is a very important source of income, employment and export earnings for the Philippines. The country's banana industry is worth \$720 million a year, provides employment to 240,000 workers and contributes P830 million in taxes to local government units.

According to the Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA), there are now 13 out of 26 provinces in Southern Philippines which are dedicated to banana production. The industry employs 240,000 workers and thereby pays at least P21 Billion in wages every year. The industry pays almost P1 Billion in local taxes yearly for business permits, real estate taxes, and other fees on top of the P900 Million in taxes paid by contractors and suppliers. The Philippine banana industry also supports 30,000 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) and small landowners under various contract-growing arrangements or lease arrangements.

For over 44 years, the banana industry has been integral to the socio-economic development of Southern Philippines and of the whole country as well. Mindanao is home to about 81 percent of the country's banana production and generates export income largely from banana exports. Although Mindanao continues to dominate the Philippine banana industry, local banana growers and producers have voiced their concerns on the industry's sustainability. More importantly, stakeholders see a pressing need to put up a banana research center that will undertake scientific research and analysis to further develop the industry. This will address the vital issues of food security and stability of the banana industry.

The industry has suffered from the recent setbacks of economic embargo of the US over Iran, the El Niño phenomenon, the devastation of Typhoon Pablo and the recurrence of the uncontrollable spread of Panama disease. Also known as fusarium wilt, Panama disease has been dormant for about 50 years, but a virulent

strain has now reappeared in plantations in the Philippines, having spread from Australia to countries in Southeast Asia and Taiwan. This type of disease could also spread to other banana varieties, threatening the livelihood of thousands of farmers in the country.

This bill therefore seeks to establish a specialized banana research center which shall be responsible for the conduct of comprehensive studies and scientific approaches to attain sustainable banana farming. The establishment of the Antonio O. Floirendo, Sr. Banana Research Center is a concrete response towards addressing concerns in the banana industry such as prevention of diseases that infest banana farms, improved farming techniques and post-harvest practices as well as the exploration of potential banana varieties.

Naming the Philippine National Banana Research Center as the Antonio O. Floirendo, Sr. Banana Research Center is in appreciation of Antonio Floirendo, Sr.'s contributions to the banana industry in the country. He is recognized as the "*banana king*" for transforming vast tracts of raw land in Mindanao into fruits-for-export plantations. He has successfully accomplished his dream of feeding most of the globe with Philippine bananas.

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



Rep. Antonio F. Laglameo, Jr.



Rep. Anthony G. Del Rosario

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANANA RESEARCH CENTER IN
PANABO CITY, PROVINCE OF DAVAO DEL NORTE TO BE KNOWN AS THE
ANTONIO O. FLOIRENDO, SR. BANANA RESEARCH CENTER AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. **Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “*Philippine National Banana Research Center Act.*”

SEC. 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote industrialization and full employment based on sound agricultural development and agrarian reform through industries that make full and efficient use of human and natural resources, and which are competitive in both domestic and foreign markets. Toward this end, the establishment of a national banana research center is necessary in order to develop a more balanced and integrated program for the banana industry and to have a specialized institution which shall undertake research programs and provide relevant, efficient, and strategic approaches to enhance banana productivity in the country and improve the livelihood of banana farmers.

SEC. 3. ***Philippine National Banana Research Center.*** – The Philippine National Banana Research Center, hereinafter referred to as the Center, is hereby established in Panabo City, Province of Davao del Norte under the Department of Agriculture to provide research and development techniques for crop improvement, protection, production, post-harvest handling and the maintenance of germplasm collection and gene bank that are capable of producing good quality varieties of banana.

The Center shall be known as the Antonio O. Floirendo, Sr. Banana Research Center in recognition of the many contributions made by Antonio O. Floirendo, Sr. to the banana industry in the country.

SEC. 4. ***Duties and Functions.*** – The Center shall exercise the following duties and functions:

- a) Integrate, collate and support research programs and studies on the banana industry;
- b) Conduct continuing research on developing productive, high yielding, disease-resistant and good varieties of banana;
- c) Conduct comprehensive studies and research on banana diseases and how to efficiently and effectively address the same;
- d) Undertake research and generate relevant, efficient, cost-effective, and scientific approaches to achieve sustainable banana farming;
- e) Establish and maintain germplasm collection and gene bank for banana;
- f) Accelerate the transfer of improved banana technologies to farmers and other stakeholders through on-farm research;

g) Upgrade the skills of development facilitators and banana farmers through trainings, seminars and workshops on farming techniques, banana production and postharvest handling and processing;

h) Establish national and international linkages for banana research, development and production activities;

i) Coordinate with local government units, non-government organizations and the private sector involved in the development of the banana industry; and

j) Receive and manage grants, aid, donations or any kind of assistance from donors, either foreign or domestic, to achieve the Center's objectives.

SEC. 5. *Executive Director.* – The Center shall be headed by an Executive Director who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Agriculture. The Executive Director shall be a recognized agriculturist with experience in banana research development or a specialist banana grower actively involved in banana farming and production technologies.

All other officers and employees of the Center shall be appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture upon the recommendation of the Executive Director and in accordance with existing Civil Service law and rules and regulations.

SEC. 6. *Duties and Responsibilities.* – The Executive Director shall exercise the following duties and responsibilities:

a) Exercise over-all supervision and direction over the implementation of all research and development programs of the Center and in general to supervise and direct its management, operation and administration;

b) Execute contracts, incur obligations, acquire and dispose of assets and deliver documents on behalf of the Center;

c) Approve the organizational structure, staffing pattern, operating and capital expenditures of the Center;

d) Recommend the appointment of the officers and employees of the Center on the basis of the highest possible standards of merit and fitness for public servants subject to the civil service laws, rules and regulations;

e) Implement and enforce policies, decisions, orders, rules and regulations issued by the Department of Agriculture; and

f) Exercise such other powers and functions and perform such other duties as may be authorized, delegated, or assigned by law.

SEC. 7. **Annual Report.** – The Executive Director shall submit to the President of the Philippines, through the Secretary of Agriculture, an annual report generally dealing with the activities and operations of the Center, together with the audit report on the relevant accounts.

SEC. 8. **Donations and Solicitations.** – The Center may solicit and receive donations or endowments of money, property or services which shall be exempt from income or gift taxes and all other taxes, charges or fees imposed by the government or any political subdivision or instrumentality thereof.

Government corporations are hereby authorized to give grants to the Center from the unimpaired surplus of funds at their discretion.

SEC. 9. **Appropriations.** – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations for the Department of Agriculture. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the operation and maintenance of the Center shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 10. **Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 11. **Separability Clause.** – If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 12. **Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations and other issuances, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 13. **Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,