

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

_____ Regular Session
House Bill No. **6506**



Introduced by: **Rep. EVELIO R. LEONARDIA**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Agriculture in the Philippines employs 47% of the Filipino workforce as of 2013, according to World Bank statistics. The largest sugarcane areas are found in Negros which accounts for 51% of sugarcane areas planted.

Farming, one of the oldest professions, is oftentimes associated with poverty because of the present situation of our small farmers and limited financial support and development compared to other countries.

It is a fact that farmers who are employed seasonally and usually on contractual basis are subject to poverty. It is ironic that the people who plant, cultivate the soil and harvest are often the ones who lack food for their family. They are living in a system where there is no security for work and assurance of a source for their families' sustenance and basic needs.

The State affirms labor as a primary social economic force, thereby affording protection to the rights of workers and promote their welfare. The role of seasonal farm workers is significant in the context of production and agriculture but they are frequently neglected. Therefore there is a need to look into the welfare of these farmers.

The bill seeks to recognize and provide assistance to seasonal farm workers during off season to serve the need for other source of income by providing them benefits and work opportunity.

As such, the approval of this Bill is earnestly sought.


REP. EVELIO R. LEONARDIA
Lone District, Bacolod City

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**AN ACT
GIVING SPECIAL ASSISTANCE AND BENEFITS TO SEASONAL FARM
WORKERS**

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

Section 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as the "Seasonal Farm Workers Act of 2016".

Section 2. Long Title. An act providing for special assistance and benefits in addition to any existing assistance to deserving, dedicated and hardworking farmers.

Section 3. Seasonal Farm Workers Defined. For the purposes of this Act, Seasonal Farm Workers are those who are employed in agricultural related industry where work is subject to the needs during the particular season usually in a contractual term.

Section 4. Benefits. The noble profession need not only be given credit but it must be able to provide them with enough resource to support their family. They must be given standard wages in accordance with law and additional benefits in order to support their family with the basic necessities.

Section 5. Special Assistance and Benefits. The special assistance and benefits referred to in this Act shall refer to financial grants and benefits including subsidy for planting growing source for food which include grant of seedlings, materials for soil cultivation and rice subsidy during off season for work.

It shall also include special training for them to develop skills which they could apply not just in farming but as well as in earning additional income during the off season. Encourage them backyard gardening or organic farming to grow fruits and vegetables which will not only alleviate poverty but will also improve the environment and health of people.

Section 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* The Secretaries of Department of Agriculture and Department of Labor and Employment in consultation with the heads and leaders of duly recognized organizations of the local government, shall promulgate the rules and regulations to implement this Act.

Section 7. *Budget.* The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the budget of concerned government agencies in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

Section 8. *Separability Clause.* If any part, section or provision of this Act is declared invalid or on unconstitutional, other provisions not affected therein shall remain in force and effect.

Section 9. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees and executive orders inconsistent with this act is repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 10. *Effectivity Clause.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.