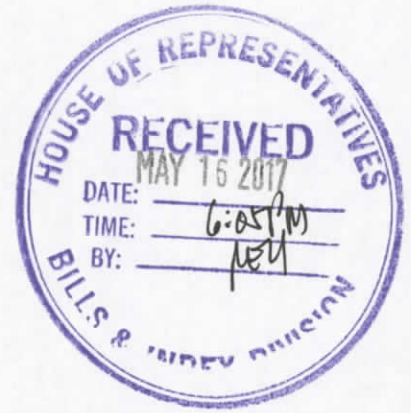


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5659



Introduced by Rep. Cecilia Leonila V. Chavez
Butil Farmers' Party

EXPLANATORY NOTE

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FARM SCHOOL IN EVERY TOWN IN THE COUNTRY AND PROVIDE AGRICULTURAL SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS AS PART OF THE TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL TRAINING FUNDS OF THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

The development and institutionalization of farm schools in the Philippines is imperative to achieve economic growth and development and ensure food security considering that we are basically an agricultural country where 32 % of our land is devoted to agriculture. This is also an effective strategy for poverty reduction as it could significantly provide employment for our 11.8 million labor force which comprise 30% of the total work force in the country. Latest statistics show that 70% of the rural poor can be found in the rural areas.

This representation believes that farm schools can also fill the gap in the mismatch of the economy and education. It puts together local families and people concerned to work toward education and training of young people or adults, social and professional integration, and the long-term development of the area where it is located.

In farm schools, students can spend part of their time in school and a longer period in actual work situations. In some cases, for example, it means one week in school and three weeks in the farm or two weeks in school and three weeks in the farm or work shop. Such schedule takes into consideration the reality where the students, young or adults, need to attend to work for a living. Yet, they can now go to school to enrich their knowledge on agricultural production which ultimately redounds to greater agricultural productivity, better living conditions for farmers' and fisherfolk families and economic growth and development for the entire nation.

This representation also believes that farm schools shall produce a new breed of young Filipino farmers cognizant that, at the average, most our farmers are 57 years old with only five years of elementary education. Through farm schools a new crop of Filipino farmers who are educated, technologically advanced to improve farm productivity and equipped with entrepreneurial with management skills.

The concept of farm schools are not entirely new even in the Philippines. In fact, several farm schools have already been in existence through the years through the initiative of farmers' organizations and cooperatives. Moreover, The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), in cooperation with the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) of the Department of Agriculture (DA), is set to establish farm schools throughout the country to make our farm workers and fisherfolk better skilled and competent in the face of the ASEAN economic integration.

The development and institutionalization of farm schools is essential in keeping with our Constitution which provides that the goals of the national economy are a more equitable distribution of opportunities, income and wealth; a sustained increase in the amount of goods and services produced by the nation for the benefit of the people; and an expanding productivity as the key to raising the quality of life for all, especially the underprivileged.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate consideration and passage of this bill is earnestly requested.



CECILIA LEONOILA V. CHAVEZ

Representative

Butil Farmers' Party

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

SECTION 1. Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Farm School and Agriculture Training Scholarship Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - Section 1, Article XII of the 1987 Constitution states:

"The goals of the national economy are a more equitable distribution of opportunities, income and wealth; a sustainable increase in the amount of goods and services produced by the nation for the benefit of the people; and an expanding productivity as the key to raising the quality of life for all, especially the underprivileged.

Towards this end, the State shall endeavor to assist the country's small farmer sector by providing greater assistance and new opportunities for learning updated agricultural skills, as well as capacity building in order to hasten the absorption and adoption of farm technologies that contribute to raising farm yields and overall rural productivity. The state shall take the necessary appropriate steps to make education and training accessible to all.

The State recognizes the vital and strategic importance of the private sector, civil society groups and local government units as key partners in the provision of human resource development programs, including formal and non-formal education and trainings, with the end in view of establishing a more productive rural sectors and an agricultural system geared towards higher productivity.

SEC. 3. Objectives. - The objectives of this Act are as follows:

- a. To promote rural and agricultural productivity by way of empowering human development in the countryside;
- b. To give support and assistance to providers of agricultural learning systems of technical-vocational or non-formal education for farmers;
- c. To formulate the long and short range skills and technical training programs calculated to achieve major self-sufficiency, efficiency, and stability in the food production system;
- d. To formulate and establish comprehensive support programs and policy guidelines for the development of the technical training institutions and human resource development support for farmers, including the rural non-farm sectors, especially for crops, animal and fisheries production, farm mechanization, farm management using new and scientific technologies, post-harvest processing and marketing activities, financial literacy and how to access socialized credit;
- e. To coordinate, integrate, and establish the effectiveness of the human resource policies and programs of all government agencies charged with the implementation thereof

SEC. 4. Farm School Promotion and Accreditation. - TESDA shall facilitate the promotion and development and accreditation of Farm Schools nationwide and encourage farmers' participation through:

- a. A system of accreditation to ensure the quality of agricultural education instruction and learning;
- b. Special modules on agricultural technology, farm mechanization, financial literacy and how to access socialized credit; and,
- c. A scholarship program that will fund the farmers' involvement in human capacity building programs for enhanced farm productivity and income.

SEC. 5. Minimum Requirements on Farm Schools.- In order to ensure and enhance the effectiveness of the Farm Schools, the following features shall be considered as minimum requirements for accreditation, to wit:

- a. One farm lot with at least a hectare as a technical site;
- b. A classroom that can accommodate 25 trainees at a time;
- c. A library that can provide reference materials on the particular focus of the school;
- d. At least one (1) resident trainer who has an agricultural degree or one with a trainer certificate from the TESDA or the DA-ATI;

- e. Minimum security and safety facilities and equipment; and,
- f. Standard registration and clearances, such as local business licenses, barangay and police clearances, registration from DA-ATI or any government agency giving recognition to train such as the DOLE, DAR, DTI.

SEC. 6. *Scholarship Funds.* - The TESDA shall henceforth set aside at least thirty percent (30%) of its training funds for scholarship in the accredited farm schools.

SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within three (3) months from the effectivity of this Act, the Director General of the TESDA, and the National Director of the DA-Agricultural Training Institute and the Undersecretary of the Department of Agrarian Reform in-charge of the development and capacity building of Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) shall form an ad hoc committee composed of two representatives from each of their agencies to formulate the implementing Rules and Regulations of this Act. Two representatives from the Agriculture Committee of both Houses of Congress shall join the meetings as observers.

SEC. 8. *Appropriations.* - An initial fund of P500 million shall be appropriated for the immediate implementation of this Act. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued operations and maintenance of the program shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act; Provided that thirty (30) percent of the training and scholarship funds in the TESDA shall henceforth be set aside for the training and scholarship programs under the Farm School Act.

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, degrees, executive orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 10. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions thereof which are not affected thereby shall continue in full force and effect.

SEC. 11. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,