

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 7199



Introduced by HON. ALETA C. SUAREZ

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Several studies suggest that the Philippines' human resource in the agriculture sector is aging as the younger populations opt to work in the industry and services sector. A recent study reported that the average age of Filipino farmers today, particularly rice farmers, is 53 years old -- way older than the average age of rice farmers in 1966 which is 46 years old.¹ This phenomenon may have serious implications in the country's food security and sustainability in the future as consumption continues to grow while the capability of our farmers to produce a sufficient supply of food is vulnerable.

In order to attract more youth to engage in agriculture, the State shall pursue a program to encourage enrolment in agriculture and fisheries programs and support youth-led entrepreneurial endeavors in the sector.

¹ http://philjournalsci.dost.gov.ph/images/pdf/pjs_pdf/vol149no2/aging_filipino_rice_farmers_.pdf

This measure aims to pursue the above through the establishment of a Young Farmers Program which will extend holistic support and services to the youth in their decision to participate in agricultural work. This assistance shall encompass socialized tuition schemes for agriculture and fisheries courses, career guidance and development for agriculture students, capacity-building on agricultural entrepreneurship, and technical and resource assistance to agribusiness start-ups led by the youth.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Suarez', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

ALETA C. SUAREZ

Representative

Third District, Quezon Province

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1 **AN ACT**
2 **INSTITUTIONALIZING THE YOUNG FARMERS PROGRAM,**
3 **PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

4 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** - This Act shall be known as the "*Young Farmers Program Act of*
5 *2020*".

6 **SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
7 imbue among the Filipino youth a new perspective on farming and fishing, to provide
8 them career guidance, to equip them with entrepreneurial skills, and to maximize their
9 learning from school-to-work opportunities in the university's academic, research, and
10 extension activities, to the country's agriculture and fishery sector.

11 **SECTION 3. *Statement of Objectives.*** - This Act shall have the following objectives:

- 12 A. To attract incoming students to choose and complete a field in agriculture
13 and fishery as a college course;
14 B. To prepare career options for students and graduates of agriculture and
15 fishery courses;
16 C. To involve agriculture and fishery students in the extension work of the
17 university; and

- 18 D. To support students, graduates, and out-of-school youth with an academic
19 background in agriculture and fisheries in their entrepreneurial pursuits
20 in agribusiness.

21 **SECTION 4. *Definition of Terms.*** – The following terms shall be defined under this Act:

22 A. “Program” refers to the Young Farmers Program or YFP as established
23 under this Act;

24 B. “Young farmers” refer to:

- 25 1. State universities and colleges (SUCs) enrollees with a commitment
26 to finish college, diploma, or certificate program in agriculture and
27 fisheries under a socialized tuition fee scheme of the Young
28 Farmers Program;
29 2. Bachelor degree, diploma, or certificate course graduates of any
30 agriculture or fishery courses of SUCs or private colleges and
31 universities enlisted by the Commission on Higher Education -
32 National Agriculture and Fisheries System as members of the
33 Young Farmers Program; and
34 3. Out-of-school youth who finished at least two years of college
35 education in agriculture and fisheries and are enlisted by the
36 NAFES-SUCs as members of the YFP.

37 C. National Agriculture and Fisheries Education System (NAFES) refers to
38 the integrated system of agriculture and fishery education covering both
39 public and private institutions in all three levels of education chaired by
40 the Commission on Higher Education and created under the Agriculture
41 and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997.

42 **SECTION 5. *Young Farmers Program.*** – The Department of Agriculture, in
43 coordination with the Young Farmers Program Committee, convened under Section 6 of
44 this Act, shall formulate a program to promote agriculture and fisheries courses among
45 the youth, provide career assistance and guidance services for agriculture and fishery
46 students, and extend technical and resource assistance to youth-led agribusiness
47 endeavors.

SECTION 6. *Young Farmers Program Committee.* – The Young Farmers Program Committee, hereinafter referred to as the Committee, shall be constituted under the Office of the President will be composed of the following:

- A. Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA) as the Chairperson;
- B. Commissioner of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as the Vice-Chairperson;
- C. A representative from the National Agriculture and Fisheries Education System (NAFES);
- D. Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
- E. Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST); and
- F. Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

The Committee shall oversee and monitor the implementation of the Program.

SECTION 7. *Young Farmers Organization.* – A Young Farmers Organization (YFO) shall be established in all SUCs and private educational institutions offering agriculture and fishery courses. Students enrolled in agriculture and fishery courses may seek membership in the organization.

Graduates of agriculture and fishery degrees, as well as those who have finished at least two years of either of these programs and are now considered out-of-school youth, shall be invited to become members of their university or college YFO.

SECTION 8. *Socialized Tuition Fee Scheme.* – All SUCs and private educational institutions offering agriculture and fishery programs shall create socialized tuition fee schemes for their enrollees.

SECTION 9. *Extension Partnerships with Local Agriculture Offices.* – All SUCs and private educational institutions offering agriculture and fishery courses shall conceptualize and implement an extension program in partnership with the Provincial Agriculture Office (PAO) and/or the Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO) and shall be participated by agriculture and fishery students.

SECTION 10. *Basic Grants and Assistance to Youth-led Agribusiness Endeavors.* – A standard set of grants and assistance shall be provided to all requesting youth-led

77 agribusiness start-ups which may include, but are not limited to, the provision of
78 seedlings, fertilizers, other farm inputs, farm or fishery tools and equipment, startings
79 stocks, small irrigation projects, post-harvest facilities, and crop insurance. Members of
80 YFOs shall be given priority in the provision of the aforementioned grants and
81 assistance.

82 **SECTION 11. *Agribusiness Capacity-building Programs and Other Necessary***
83 ***Assistance.*** – Members of the YFOs shall be provided with training programs aimed to
84 capacitate them to be able to conceptualize and propose agribusiness ideas, prepare
85 comprehensive business plans, and set up and launch their start-up agribusiness
86 endeavors. Assistance in the promotion of their products and services to domestic and
87 international markets shall be extended. Technical and other forms of assistance for
88 product development, quality control, and packaging shall also be provided to these
89 youth-led agribusinesses.

90 **SECTION 12. *Role of the LGUs.*** – The LGUs shall endeavor to support the program
91 through additional counterpart funding assistance. The MAO shall identify farms or
92 fish farms in need of assistance to those colleges and universities which do not have
93 laboratories of their own.

94 **SECTION 13. *Appropriations.*** – The amount of Fifty Million Pesos (P50,000,000.00) is
95 hereby appropriated out of any savings or unexpended balance in the National
96 Treasury not otherwise appropriated, to cover the amount as shall be needed for the
97 program shall be included in the budget of the SUCs. All funds currently being
98 appropriated for the Young Farmers Program in the Department of Agriculture shall be
99 transferred to the Committee. Scholarships of students in private colleges and
100 universities shall be in the form of vouchers.

101 **SECTION 14. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – The Committee is hereby
102 mandated to promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations within 90 days after
103 the approval of this Act.

104 **SECTION 15. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or
105 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall
106 remain valid and subsisting.

107 **SECTION 16. *Repealing Clause.*** – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
108 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or is
109 inconsistent with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended
110 accordingly.

111 **SECTION 17. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect either thirty (30) days after its
112 publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general
113 circulation.

114 Approved.