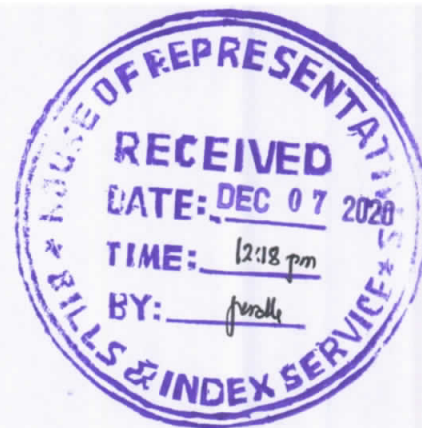




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 8152

Introduced by Representative Elisa "Olga" T. Kho, M.D., FPCCP

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The early generation of Filipino farmers' ingenuity practiced animal biotechnology with native carabaos and carabaos from mainland China for breeding purposes.

The Philippines is the first country in the ASEAN to initiate a Biotechnology Regulatory System under Executive Order No. 430 in 1990 establishing the National Committee on Biosafety in the Philippines to review and assess the impact of the new technologies on health, agriculture, chemical and pharmaceutical, environment and natural resources. Our country has a prestigious performance track record of following strict scientific standard which proudly continues to be a model of other countries. The serious efforts of Filipino scientists, concerned national agencies, and the private sector engaged in the development of biotechnology to benefit the health and nutrition of ordinary Filipinos was further pursued in Executive Order No. 514 of 2008 which prescribing the Strict Implementation of the Guidelines on Biosafety Regulations, and Reorganizing the National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines.

In a recent webinar on the "Global State of Animal Biotechnology", the South East Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study for Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) invited the House of Representatives, the Judiciary, and field experts to gather information and recommendations to explore the potentials of animal

biotechnology in the Philippines. As one of the key resource persons, this humble representation took the opportune time to equate the importance of science based studies as an initial guide in crafting sound policies and legislative initiatives with a primary aim of improving our understanding of how animal biotechnology benefits the lives of the ordinary Filipinos.

We anchor this further on the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)'s recognition of the significance of biotechnology to advance sustainable agricultural growth and its benefits to improve public health, food security and mitigate the impact of climate change, thus its inclusion in the Research and Development agenda in the national strategies in the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022, and the Ambisyon 2040.

The urgency of seriously drawing our attention to the benefits of animal biotechnology to human kind, brings us back to the crisis in September 2019, when the hog industry was affected by the African Swine Fever (ASF) wherein 300,000 pigs were culled to prevent further contamination in Luzon. Recent reports this year disclosed that the AFS infection spread to some parts of Visayas and Mindanao. The economic consequence of the AFS threatened the Philippine's biggest industry which has an annual earning at P268M. The crisis affected the food value chain from the stable sources of earnings of pork producers' federation and hog farmers' organizations, the income derived by small backyard raisers, and the shortage on the availability, accessibility and affordability of pork meat in the local market upsetting household consumers' daily budget. We take note also of other animal disease outbreaks in the Philippines such as the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), bird flu, among others.

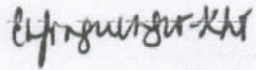
Thus, this representation seeks to raise the sense of urgency for the National Government Agencies like the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines (NCBP), the Department of Agriculture (DA), and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to go to the forefront of the promotion of animal biotechnology based on the following important reasons:

1. Animals have been used for years to produce medicines to advance human health
2. Improved animal health and welfare for vaccines, medicines and diagnostic tests resulting to safer foods for consumption.
3. The Animal Health Industry has developed medicines to prevent and treat diseases

4. Conservation of environment and protection of endangered species.

This noble intention can be achieved through this house bill seeking to establish a national policy framework on ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY, recognizing and advancing its global significance on the health and welfare of humans and animals welfare, its benefits in the field of medicines which is a powerful tool in the prevention and treatment of diseases, and mitigate the impact of climate change on agriculture and the environment. The aforementioned national agencies will be tasked to come up with a national policy framework on animal biotechnology, set guidelines and strategies for its advancement and implementation.

The passage of this house bill is earnestly sought.



REP. ELISA "OLGA" T. KHO, M.D., FPCCP



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AN ACT

ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROMOTION OF ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY, TO RECOGNIZE, TO FOSTER, AND TO ADVANCE ITS SIGNIFICANT HEALTH AND WELFARE BENEFITS FOR ANIMALS AND HUMANS, PROVIDING MECHANISMS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE

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

SECTION 1. Title. — This Act shall be known as the "Animal Biotechnology Act".

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. — It shall be the policy of the State to give priority support and appropriations to scientific and technological studies and capabilities, and its application to the country's national agenda to address poverty alleviation, protect public health, and the mitigating effects of climate change. Towards this end, the State shall pursue the sound promotion of animal biotechnology, accelerate the progress of its science based studies to conserve, propagate, and protect the health and welfare of animals which has immensely contributed globally to advance human health, prevent and treat diseases, produce safer food, and protection of the environment and its endangered wildlife.

SEC. 3. Objectives. — In pursuit of this policy, this Act shall have the following objectives:

a) Establish a National Policy Framework and A Ten Year Plan of Action on Animal Biotechnology, its science based benefits and current national and international studies and endeavors among the concerned national government agencies, namely: The Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines (NCBP), the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and the Department of Health (DOH).

The National Policy Framework shall have the essential components, as follows:

- Advancement of Human Health
- Improvement of Animal Health and Welfare
- Safer Food and Sustainable Food Security Value Chain
- Protection of the Environment vis-à-vis Conservation of the Wildlife
- Mitigation on Climate Change

b) Provide support and appropriations to existing and new programs through clinical research by acknowledged institutions with expertise on animal biotechnology, related diverse fields of medical/pharmaceutical capacities, vaccines and diagnostic tests, treatment and prevention of diseases especially on cancer, among others;

c) Provide specific support and funding for existing and new programs on animal genomics, and genetic engineering of animals of concerned national government agencies, the academe, the private sector, and international organizations.

SEC. 4. Definition of Terms. — As used in this Act:

a). *Animal Biotechnology* - refers to the use of science and engineering to modify living organisms with the goal improving animals and to develop microorganisms for specific agriculture use, explore drugs and vaccines for prevention and treatment of diseases, and food technology;

b). *Biotechnology* – refers to the broad area of biology involving the use of organisms to develop other products, manufacturing process to create products to solve health, industrial, and environmental problems;

c) *Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety*- refers to the international agreement which aims to ensure the safe handling, transport and use of living modified organisms (LMO) resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on biodiversity and risks to human health;

d). *Genomic* - refers to the complete make up of an animal;

e). *Genetic engineering* - refers to the modification of an organism's characteristics by adjusting its genetic material;

f). *Transgenic* - refers to the transfer of a gene from one organism to another.

CHAPTER II

POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

SEC. 5 — To implement the provisions of this Act, the DOST, NCBP, DA, DENR, and DOH shall form a National Committee on Animal Biotechnology which shall review existing programs of concerned national departments and its attached agencies engaged in animal biotechnology in order to rationalize and integrate relevant studies, programs and recommendations for the establishment of a national framework, as provided in Sec. 3 of this Act.

It shall have the following functions:

a) Formulate strategies and guidelines in the implementation of the envisioned national policy framework with priority on the advantages of animal biotechnology in the field of health and medicine, animal health and welfare, sustainable agriculture and environment, as provided for in letter a, Sec. 3 of this Act;

b) Ensure that the strategies and guidelines adhere to international agreements entered into by the Government of the Philippines i.e Cartagena Protocol on

Biosafety. For this purpose, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) shall assist the government agencies named above in interpreting, applying and keeping abreast of treaties, agreements and other pertinent international developments on animal biotechnology and related fields;

c) Support and integrate existing studies and undertakings on animal biotechnology of government education and research and development (R&D) institutions anchored on the national government's holistic approach on long term economic and development plans;

d) Support and integrate existing government education and R&D institutions to sustain appropriate funding for long term programs on animal biotechnology;

e) Extend recognition and support multi-sectoral inputs of science based studies undertaking of the academe, and the private sector on animal biotechnology for potential collaboration projects;

f) Engage in a systematic efficient and effective media strategy on information and education on animal biotechnology, and conduct of public consultations to raise public awareness. For this part, the Department of Interior and Local Government shall be called upon to assist the National Committee in engaging the local government units (LGUs) to mobilize the active participation of the barangays; and

g) Conduct periodical and annual monitoring and assessment reports every three (3) years on the impact of the plans and strategies based on the National Policy Framework.

SEC. 6. Members of the National Committee — In pursuance of this Act, the DOST Secretary shall Chair the National Committee, and the following *ex-officio* members are tasked, and shall be appointed by the President, upon the recommendation of the Secretary of DOST, for a five-year term, renewable for another term or more in exceptional cases:

- a) The DOST Secretary or a designated Undersecretary;
- b) The Head of the NCBP;
- c) The Secretary or designated Undersecretary of the DA
- d) The Secretary or designated Undersecretary of the DENR
- e) The Secretary or designated Undersecretary of the DOH
- f) Four members to be recommended by the National Academy of Science and Technology of the Philippines (NASTPhil); and
- g) Two (2) representatives of the private sector engaged in Animal Biotechnology for the past ten (10) years.

SEC. 7. Secretariat. — A Secretariat shall be headed by an Executive Director to be appointed by the DOST Secretary. The Executive Director should have at least ten (10) years of professional experience in managing R&D programs.

CHAPTER III

IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS

SEC. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. — Within six (6) months following the effectivity of this Act, the Committee shall be activated by the DOST Secretary and the designated Executive Director. All members as stated in Sec. 6 of this Act shall work together to produce the implementing rules and regulations within three months after the Committee has been constituted.

SEC. 9. Appropriations — The amount of Four Hundred Million Pesos (P400M) is hereby allotted to initially implement the provisions of this Act. Thereafter, the funding needed to fully implement the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

SEC. 10. 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. 11. Repealing Clause — All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, and issuances, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of the Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 12. Effectivity— This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,