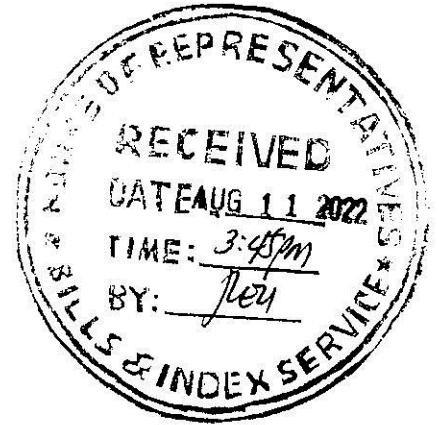




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session
HOUSE BILL NO. **3549**



Introduced by Representative Lex Anthony Cris A. Colada

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), suggest that the Philippine agriculture sector is aging as senior and middle-aged farmers find it harder and harder to pass on their work to young people who find farming tedious, unsustainable and unglamorous compared to other jobs.

According to recent studies by the STI Education Services Group Incorporated, the average age of farmers in the Philippines is 57 years old. This is alarming as it foreshadows a future agricultural labor shortage, which can lead to serious food security and sustainability issues, this on top of other issues like climate change, urbanization and the growing consumption of the country.

Data from the Philippine Statistic Authority show a dwindling share of agricultural employment out of the country's total number of laborers. As of April 2017, agricultural workers comprise just 26.1% of the labor force, from a high of 32.4% in 2006, and 41.7% in the 1997.

Majority of the youth are simply not inclined to pursue a career or business opportunities in the agricultural field. This is clearly evident in the decline in enrollment of agriculture-related courses in colleges and universities.

This bill seeks to rectify the issues above by providing an institutionalized scholarship program for agriculture and fisheries courses in State Colleges and Universities (SCUs) as well as Private Education Institute. The bill also provides for support of agri-business and agri-entrepreneurship endeavours of the youth. Through this we hope to impart to the youth enough incentives and inspiration to plant more seeds, both literally and figuratively, for a more vibrant and youthful future of our agricultural sector.

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

LEX ANTHONY CRIS A. COLADA
AAMBIS-Owa Partylist



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HOUSE BILL NO. 3549

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

4
5 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in*
6 *Congress assembled:*

7
8 **SECTION 1. Title.** - This Act shall be known as the "Young Farmers
9 **Program Act of 2022."**

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

16 **SEC. 3. Statement of Objectives.** – This Act shall have the following
17 objectives:

- 18 a. To attract incoming college students to choose and complete a field in
19 agriculture and fishery as a college course;

- b. To prepare career options for students and graduates of agriculture and fishery courses;
- c. To involve agriculture and fishery students in the extension work of the university; and
- d. To support students, graduates and out-of-school youth with academic background in agriculture and fisheries in their entrepreneurial pursuits in agribusiness.

SEC. 4. Definition of Terms. - The following terms shall be defined under this Act as follows:

- a. "Program" refers to the Young Farmers Program or YFP as established under this Act,
- b. "Young Farmers" refers to:
 - 1. State Colleges and universities (SCUs) enrollees with a commitment to finish college, diploma or certificate program in agriculture and fisheries under a socialized tuition fee scheme of the Young Farmers Program;
 - 2. Bachelor degree, diploma or certificate course graduates of any fishery Courses of SCUs and private colleges and universities enlisted by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) – National Agriculture and Fisheries System (NAFES) as members of the Young Farmers Program; and
 - 3. Out-of-school youth who finished at least two finished at least two years of college education in agriculture and fisheries and are enlisted by the NAFES-SCUs as members of the YFP.
- c. National Agriculture and Fisheries Education System (NAFES) refers to the integrated system of agriculture and fishery education covering both public

1 and private institutions in all three levels of education chaired by the
2 commission on Higher Education and created by the Agriculture and Fisheries
3 Modernization Act of 1997.

4 **SEC. 5. *Young Farmers Program Committee*** – The Young Farmers
5 Program Committee, hereinafter referred to as the Committee, shall be constituted
6 under the Office of the President and composed of the following:

- 7 a. Commissioner of Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as
8 Chairman;
- 9 b. Representative of National Agriculture and Fisheries Education System
10 (NAFES) as Vice-Chairman;
- 11 c. Secretary of Department of Agriculture (DA);
- 12 d. Secretary of Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
- 13 e. Secretary of Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
- 14 f. Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government
15 (DILG).

16 **SEC. 6. *Implementation of the Program.*** – The Committee is hereby
17 mandated to promulgate the rules and regulations, implement and adopt procedures
18 and guidelines to effectively carry out the program. It shall also oversee and monitor
19 the proper compliance of the NAFES-SCUs, and other implementing offices.

20 **SEC. 7. *Role of SCU and Private Education Institutions.***– The NAFES-
21 SCUS shall:

- 22 a. Establish a Young Farmers Organization (YFO) out of their respective
23 agriculture and fishery enrollees;
- 24 b. Create a socialized tuition fee scheme for agriculture and fishery enrollees;

1 c. Trace graduates and those who finished at least two years of their
2 respective agriculture and fishery program and invite them to become
3 members of the university/college YFO;

4 d. Conceptualize and implement an extension partnership with the Provincial
5 Agriculture Offices (PAOs) and Municipal Agriculture Offices;

6 e. Conceptualize a career path for the young farmers as agriculture and
7 fishery entrepreneurs, support their start-up agribusiness and forge a
8 contract of service with them stipulating their assistance to small farmers
9 and fisherfolks in exchange of government support.

10 **SEC. 8. Role of the DA** – The Department of Agriculture (DA) shall prioritize
11 the beneficiaries in the provision of grants or assistance such as, but not limited to,
12 seedlings, fertilizers, and other farm inputs, farm/fishery tools and equipment,
13 starting stocks, small irrigation projects, post-harvest facilities, and crop insurance.

14 **SEC. 9. Role of the DTI** – The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) shall
15 lend support to the members of Young Farmers Organizations (YFOs), particularly
16 when it comes to launching start-up agri-businesses, such as assisting them in the
17 preparation of a comprehensive business plan and training them in setting up and
18 managing the proposed agri-business endeavor. The DTI shall also assist
19 beneficiaries in promoting their products to the domestic and foreign markets.

20 **SEC. 10. Role of the DOST** – The Department of Science and Technology
21 (DOST) shall provide assistance in product development, quality control, and
22 packaging.

23 **SEC. 11. Role of LGUs.** – The LGUs shall endeavor to support the program
24 through additional counterpart funding assistance. The Municipal Agriculture Office

1 (MAO) shall identify farms or fishfarms in need of assistance to have not yet chosen
2 laboratories of their own.

3 **SEC. 12. *Funding.***- The sum of FIFTY MILLION PESOS (P50,000.000.00) is
4 hereby appropriated out of any savings or unexpended balance in the National
5 Treasury not otherwise appropriated, to cover amount as shall be needed for the
6 program shall be included in the budget of the SCUs. All funds currently being
7 appropriated for the Young Farmers Program in the Department of Agriculture shall
8 be transferred to the Committee. Moreover, the Committee and the Agriculture
9 Competitive Enhancement Fund (ACEF) National Committee shall develop a
10 rationalization scheme to allot a portion of ACEF from both the seed fund as well
11 from repayments of loans to the Young Farmers Program. Scholarships of students
12 in private college and universities shall be given in the form of voucher.

13 **SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid
14 or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected
15 shall remain valid and subsisting.

16 **SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.*** – Any law, presidential decree or issuance
17 executive Order, letter of instruction, administrative Order, rule or regulation contrary
18 to or is inconsistent with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or
19 amended accordingly.

20 **SEC. 15. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall effect thirty (30) days its publication in
21 the Official Gazette or in at least (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

22 *Approved,*