

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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10675



Introduced by **ANG PROBINSYANO**
Partylist Representative Alfred Delos Santos

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The agricultural landscape of the Philippines is richly endowed with a vast diversity of crops, many of which remain underutilized despite their significant nutritional, environmental, and economic potential. Recognizing the importance of crops such as *Moringa oleifera* (malunggay), *Ipomoea batatas* (sweet potato), *Vigna unguiculata* (cowpea), among others, this bill aims to harness these crops' potential to address food security and sustainability, enhance nutritional outcomes, and bolster rural economies.

For instance, *Moringa oleifera*, widely known for its high vitamin C, vitamin A, protein, and calcium content, represents a powerful tool against malnutrition. *Ipomoea batatas* is not only rich in beta-carotene but also has a high vitamin C content, providing essential nutrients through both its tubers and leaves. *Vigna unguiculata*, on the other hand, offers significant amounts of protein and iron, vital for combating anemia and other micronutrient deficiencies.

The economic ripple effect of promoting these crops is substantial. Encouraging SMEs to source and innovate with these crops can open new market opportunities, create jobs, and increase farmers' incomes. A vibrant sector focused on underutilized crops can stimulate rural development, reduce poverty, and promote sustainable agricultural practices.

This bill aligns with the Philippine government's broader goals of sustainable development, poverty reduction, and food security, underpinning the importance of agricultural diversity and innovation.

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


ALFRED DELOS SANTOS

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**AN ACT TO ADVANCE THE DEVELOPMENT, UTILIZATION, AND
COMMERCIALIZATION OF UNDERUTILIZED CROPS THROUGH
RESEARCH, INCENTIVES, AND DATABASE SUPPORT, PROMOTING
AGRICULTURAL DIVERSITY AND ENHANCING FOOD SECURITY**

*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 “*Comprehensive Agricultural Development and Support for Underutilized Crops Enhancement Act.*”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to promote agricultural biodiversity, enhance food security, and support economic development through the sustainable use of underutilized crops. The State shall provide comprehensive support for the cultivation, processing, and marketing of these crops, aiming to maximize their contribution to nutritional health, economic growth, and environmental sustainability.

SECTION 3. *Establishment of the National Underutilized Crops Database* – The Comprehensive Agricultural Development and Support for Underutilized

Crops Enhancement Act mandates the creation of a National Underutilized Crops Database. This shall be jointly developed and maintained by the research arms of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). The database will consolidate and disseminate information concerning underutilized crops' cultivation practices, nutritional profiles, market potentials, research findings, unified plans, agenda and other researchable areas for underutilized crops. The database shall include information on real-time and simulated production and yield data as well as the types, varieties, or cultivars of underutilized crop in each region to provide relevant data for policy formulations or advisories.

Any information regarding new and emerging pest and disease, efforts in germplasm collection, characterization, and conservation, as well as value-added products, processing techniques and commercialization efforts done by various agencies related to underutilized crops shall likewise be included. The database shall be continually updated with the latest research findings, cultivation techniques, and market trends to serve a wide array of stakeholders, including farmers, researchers, policymakers, and entrepreneurs.

SECTION 4. *Research and Development Fund for Underutilized Crops* – There shall be included in the budget of the Department of Agriculture an amount for the establishment of a Research and Development Fund for Underutilized Crops. The fund shall allocate grants for research activities aimed at enhancing crop yields, developing new crop varieties, improving nutritional content, and establishing sustainable farming practices. Any research fund for the development, refinement, or scaling of underutilized crop technologies with a regional/provincial/municipal focus shall be directly allocated to the research division of the DA-Regional Field Offices who has jurisdiction. On the other hand, for research that is national in scope, the funds shall be allocated to the Bureau of Agricultural Research and/or Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) of the Department of Agriculture.

SECTION 5. *SME Incentive Program for Use of Underutilized Crops* – To stimulate economic activity and encourage the integration of underutilized crops into the market, the Act establishes an incentive program specifically designed for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The program shall offer financial and non-financial incentives, including tax breaks, start-up grants, and concessional loans, to SMEs engaged in processing, distributing, or selling products derived from underutilized crops. The program shall also provide technical support and business development services to help these enterprises scale up their operations, improve product quality, and expand market reach.

SECTION 6. *Implementation* – The DA, in collaboration with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the DOST, and other relevant government agencies, will be responsible for the implementation, monitoring, and periodic review of this Act to ensure its effectiveness and relevance.

SECTION 7. *Appropriations*. – The amount necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the Department of Agriculture. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the continued implementation of the Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations* – The DA, in consultation with DTI and DOST, and other relevant stakeholders, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act within ninety (90) days from its enactment.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause* – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause*. – All laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, and other issuances, or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions of this Act

are repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette, or in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,