

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **5497**



Introduced by Representatives ERIC G. YAP and EDVIC G. YAP

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill mandates all penal institutions with suitable land areas to implement a Prison Agricultural Program, in close coordination with the Department of Agriculture. The program provides seeds, fertilizers, equipment, and technical training to participating inmates, while also establishing a Prison Agriculture Revolving Fund to sustain operations.

Food is a basic right of every individual, and this extends even to persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) who remain entitled to proper sustenance while under custody. With the increasing inmate population and the limited budget allocated for their daily meals, prison facilities continue to struggle in meeting the food requirements of all inmates. The rising cost of basic commodities further strains the capacity of penal institutions to provide proper nourishment, making it urgent to explore self-sustaining measures that can reduce expenses while ensuring food security within prisons.

This bill mandates all penal institutions with suitable land areas to implement a Prison Agricultural Program, in close coordination with the Department of Agriculture. The program provides seeds, fertilizers, equipment, and technical training to participating inmates, while also establishing a Prison Agriculture Revolving Fund to sustain operations.

This measure aims to maximize the idle and arable lands within penal institutions through agricultural livelihood programs. By allowing PDLs to voluntarily engage in farming, prisons can produce food for their own consumption, generate savings in operational costs, and even contribute to the broader national goal of food security. At the same time, it restores dignity to PDLs

by giving them meaningful work and livelihood opportunities that will aid their reintegration into society.

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



HON. ERIC G. YAP



HON. EDVIC G. YAP

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AN ACT
MANDATING ALL PENAL INSTITUTIONS WITH AREAS SUITABLE FOR
AGRICULTURE TO IMPLEMENT AGRICULTURAL LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM
FOR PRISONERS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

Section 1. *Prison Agricultural Program.* — The Bureau of Corrections shall in coordination with the Department of Agriculture, implement a voluntary agricultural livelihood program in all penal institutions with areas suitable for agriculture. The program shall provide training within their respective penal institution to prisoners who will be allowed to work and cultivate the arable areas and perform farming activities to produce crops and goods for their own consumption or to be sold for profit. The profits derived from the program shall be credited to the Prison Agriculture Revolving Fund.

SEC 2. *Role of the Department of Agriculture.* — The Department of Agriculture shall supply the seeds, fertilizers, equipment and other implements necessary for the voluntary agricultural livelihood program and shall provide technical support and advice to prison personnel on the management and maintenance of the prison farm. It shall also provide the prisoners who will participate in the program the necessary training on agriculture, equipment operations, and farming procedures.

The head of the penal institution shall act as the custodian of the agricultural supplies and equipment.

SEC. 3. *Voluntary Participation of Prisoners and Their Wages.* — The prisoners who will work in the farm shall be chosen upon the recommendation by the head of the penal institution concerned based on a criteria that shall be determined by the Department of Justice (DOJ)

The chosen prisoners shall work on a voluntary basis only, in which case the participant shall be paid the minimum wage that is prevailing in the area where the penal institution is located. The compensation shall be paid from the "Prison Agricultural Revolving Fund.

SEC. 4. *Prison Agricultural Revolving Fund.* — Every penal institution implementing the agricultural program shall establish the "Prison Agricultural Revolving Fund," consisting of the earnings derived from the program.

The Prison Agriculture Revolving Fund shall be exclusively and primarily used for the following:

- a. Payment of wages of inmates who work in the prison farm; and
- b. Acquisition of agricultural inputs, seeds and fertilizers and other provisions for farming.

At the end of the year, fifty percent (50%) of the Prison Agricultural Revolving Fund shall be given as dividends to all inmates who participated in the agricultural program; twenty percent (20%) shall be utilized for the improvement of the penal or prison facility; and the remaining thirty percent (30%) shall be the start-up funds for the succeeding year.

SEC. 5. *Reportorial Requirement.* — The Bureau of Corrections shall, in coordination with the Department of Agriculture, conduct a review of the Prison Agricultural Program every two (2) years and submit a report to both Houses of Congress. Said report shall contain the following information:

- a. Rate of success, failure of the program;
- b. Expenses incurred in the implementation of the program per cropping season;
- c. List of inmates who participated in the program;
- d. Benefits of the program;
- e. Problems encountered in the implementation of the program; and
- f. Recommendation of the heads of each of the penal institutions.

SEC. 6. *Appropriations.* — The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations for the Department of Agriculture.

Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Justice shall, in coordination with the Secretary of Agriculture, issue such rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* — Should any part of this Act be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions hereof that are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* — All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, and issuances, or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC 10. *Effectivity.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper or general circulation.

Approved,