

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6821



Introduced by **ANG PROBINSYANO**
Party-List Representative Alfred Delos Santos

EXPLANATORY NOTE

“The State shall recognize the right of farmers, farmworkers, and landowners, as well as cooperatives, and other independent farmers’ organizations to participate in the planning, organization, and management of the program, and shall provide support to agriculture through appropriate technology and research, and adequate financial, production, marketing, and other support services.” (Article XIII, Section 5, 1987 Constitution)

Agriculture remains a cornerstone of the Philippine economy and society, yet the sector continues to face declining participation and an aging workforce. The average age of Filipino farmers is now close to sixty years old, and fewer young Filipinos are entering the industry due to limited opportunities, low income prospects, and the perception that agriculture is less attractive compared to other sectors. This trend threatens the long-term sustainability of food security and rural development.

Republic Act No. 10618, known as the *Rural Farm Schools Act of 2013*, sought to address this challenge by establishing rural farm schools as an alternative delivery mode of secondary education. Its purpose was to integrate agricultural skills and farm-based learning into the curriculum, making education more relevant to rural communities. While RA 10618 provides a foundation for agricultural education, its scope is limited to rural farm schools and does not establish a nationwide framework that systematically connects schools, farmers, and communities through farm-to-school programs. As such, it does not fully address the need to immerse the youth in agriculture as a viable and innovative future.

The legislative gap lies in the absence of a national program that links agricultural production directly to schools, both as a source of nutrition and as a platform for experiential learning. Current initiatives remain fragmented, often

dependent on local government or pilot projects, without a statutory mandate for nationwide implementation. This leaves untapped the potential of schools as hubs for agricultural awareness, youth engagement, and community empowerment.

This proposed measure seeks to fill that gap by establishing a *National Farm-to-School Program*. Through in-school farm initiatives, school feeding programs sourced from local farmers, and structured farm visits, the bill aims to create an immersive and enabling environment for the youth to explore the innovative possibilities of agriculture. By doing so, it not only introduces young Filipinos to the sector but also strengthens local economies, supports farmers, and promotes food security. The program envisions agriculture as a future not only for the youth themselves but also for their communities and the broader Filipino society.

This measure advances provincial empowerment, uplifts marginalized farmers, and ensures that the next generation sees agriculture as a dignified, sustainable, and innovative path. It bridges education, livelihood, and community development, making agriculture central to nation-building once again.

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



ALFRED C. DELOS SANTOS

Representative, Ang Probinsyano Partylist

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**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Farm to School Program Act of 2025.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* — It is hereby declared the policy of the Philippines to protect the right to health of the people and promote proper nutrition, while recognizing the importance of agricultural productivity and the valuable contribution of local farmers and producers to national development. Towards this end, the government shall establish a comprehensive and integrated program that connects schools, children, farmers, and communities to promote nutrition, strengthen agricultural productivity, stimulate local economies, and provide cross-sectoral benefits in public health, education, and the environment.

SECTION 3. *Objectives.* — This Act shall pursue the following objectives:

- a) Ensure that schoolchildren receive proper health and nutrition education throughout their formative years;
- b) Improve child nutrition by creating a healthy food environment in schools and early care institutions;
- c) Support children’s development of healthy eating habits through education on food sources and informed food choices;
- d) Establish and maintain school gardens as accessible sources of nutritious food;

- e) Provide supplementary school-based feeding programs to mitigate malnutrition; and
- f) Strengthen community well-being by encouraging schools and families to purchase from local producers, thereby stimulating rural economies and supporting agricultural livelihoods.

SECTION 4. *Establishment of the Farm-to-School Program.* — To carry out the policy under Section 2, there shall be established a Farm-to-School Program in all public primary and secondary schools nationwide. The program shall consist of the following components:

- a) In-School Farm Program — Establishment of school gardens and integration of agriculture into the curriculum;
- b) National School Feeding Program — Provision of supplementary meals sourced from in-school farms and local producers; and
- c) Farm Visits Program — Structured educational tours to farms and agricultural enterprises to provide experiential learning.

For the purpose of this Act, “farm to school program” refers to an alternative approach of enriching the connection that school communities have with fresh and healthy agricultural food and their local producers by educating and undertaking experiential learning activities with the goal of improving the nutrition and food purchasing practices of children and at the same time strengthening the local economy. It includes health and nutrition promotion through integrated academic lessons on vegetable production, farming, and animal rearing as well as hands-on and practical application through in-school projects and out-of-school excursions, provision for supplementary nourishment for school children, sectoral collaboration and partnership with community organizations.

SECTION 5. *In-School Farm Program.* — The Department of Education (DepEd) shall establish and maintain school gardens in every public elementary and secondary school. These gardens shall serve as:

- a) Hands-on laboratories for teaching agriculture and nutrition;
- b) Sources of fresh produce for school feeding programs; and
- c) Platforms to raise awareness among students about the value of agriculture, nutrition, and sustainability.

The DepEd shall be the lead agency in the implementation of the in-school farm program and shall formulate guidelines in the implementation of the

program. The DepEd shall structure a timetable to ensure that primary and secondary schools have their own garden for healthy fruits and vegetables.

DepEd shall coordinate with the Department of Agriculture (DA), the National Nutrition Council (NNC), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and local government units (LGUs) for technical support, funding, and land resources.

SECTION 6. *Role of the Department of Agriculture.* — The Department of Agriculture shall identify and accredit farmer organizations and cooperatives to supply provisions for school gardens, provide technical assistance, and conduct training for students, teachers, and parents. It shall also provide technology and technical assistance and conduct training and seminars to teach students, teachers, and parents about school gardening.

SECTION 7. *Role of the National Nutrition Council.* — The National Nutrition Council shall identify priority crops and vegetables to address malnutrition and guide schools in their planting programs.

SECTION 8. *Role of the Department of the Interior and Local Government.* — The Department Interior and Local Government and the local government units shall assist the schools by providing idle government lands and land resources to be used in the in-school farm program.

SECTION 9. *Inclusion of Vegetable Production in Academic Curriculum.* — Subjects and lessons on vegetable production, farming, and agricultural literacy shall be integrated into the curriculum for primary and secondary students in both public and private schools to help students develop skills and knowledge in vegetable production and promote agricultural literacy.

SECTION 10. *Product Utilization.* — Products from the in-school farm programs shall be primarily used for the National School Feeding Program. Surplus vegetables may be sold to generate income for the purchase of other food supplies for the national school feeding program or additional resources for the improvement of the school gardens.

SECTION 11. *National School Feeding Program (NSFP).* — The National School Feeding Program is hereby established to provide free supplementary meals to students. The DepEd shall design a program menu using the product from the in-school farm program and other healthy foods sold by local producers. The DA, NFA, DILG, NNC, and FNRI shall provide support in sourcing, nutrition planning, and implementation. Priority shall be given to LGUs with high malnutrition rates.

In coordination with the DepEd, the following national government agencies are tasked to make available such resources as may be necessary to ensure the successful implementation of the NSFP:

- a) The DA and the National Food Authority shall tap farmers associations and cooperatives in the locality for possible sources of food supplies and shall share with the DepEd any available resources and facilities that may be used for the NSFP;
- b) The DILG shall enlist the support of LGUs as DepEd partners in the operation of the NSFP, including the possibility of utilizing the services of barangay nutrition scholars and barangay health workers; and
- c) The National Nutrition Council, in coordination with the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI), shall provide the menu consisting of a combination of foods that meet the recommended energy and nutrient intake of children and use locally produced food and food products as far as possible.

SECTION 12. *Priority LGUs.* — In case of shortage of funds, priority in the implementation of the NSFP shall be given to municipalities and cities which are determined by the National Nutrition Council or by any competent government agency to have high malnutrition rates.

SECTION 13. *Participation of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs).* — The DepEd shall promote the involvement of parents through the PTAs in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the school feeding program.

SECTION 14. *Procurement, Storage, and Handling System.* — The procurement, storage, and handling of appropriate food supplies by the DepEd shall be upon the recommendation of the National Nutrition Council, the FNRI, and other appropriate government agencies.

In the procurement process, priority shall be given to the utilization of locally produced food supplies, as well as the products of the in-school farm program and the products of community gardens as part of convergence efforts to increase food supplies at the local level.

The DepEd shall issue guidelines for procurement, storage, and handling of food supplies, giving priority to locally produced goods and products from school and community gardens.

SECTION 15. *Farm Visits Program.* — The DepEd shall require that at least 25% of educational tours and field trips to be conducted by public and private

primary and secondary schools every academic year shall be devoted to local farms and factories of local food producers or in those places involved in the planting, growing, harvesting, processing, packaging or distribution of food products from agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries; this also includes those involved in the raising, rearing or of animals and livestock including pork, beef, poultry, and other farm animals.

This further includes Farm Tourism Camps, as defined in RA 10816, which refer to any farm area that allows visitors and tourists to visit, get involved in farm activities, and to enjoy and learn rural lifestyle.

SECTION 16. *Monitoring and Evaluation System.* — The DepEd shall establish a monitoring and evaluation system for the nationwide implementation of the Farm To School Program, which shall incorporate periodic reports from the schools' division and regional offices. The report provides, among others, the needed information that may determine whether or not the program has achieved its objectives, including the identification of issues and constraints as well as the corresponding appropriate recommendations.

SECTION 17. *Appropriations.* — The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriation of the DepEd. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 18. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the Secretary of Education shall, in coordination with the Secretary of Agriculture and consultation with the heads of government agencies, formulate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 19. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions or parts unaffected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 20. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees or issuances, letters of instruction, administrative orders, rules, and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 21. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,