



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 8422

Introduced by Representative Howard A. Guintu

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall provide support to agriculture through appropriate technology and research, and adequate financial, production, marketing, and other support services.

By virtue of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, extension services related to agriculture and fishery activities devolved from the national control down to the local government units (LGUs). Consequently, local governments are primarily tasked with the implementation of agricultural extension programs, thereby bringing these services closer to farmers and fisherfolk.

However, experience over the past decades has shown that many LGUs lack the technical capacity, resources, and personnel necessary to effectively carry out these functions. As a result, extension services intended to improve farm productivity have weakened, contributing to the country's continuing agricultural trade imbalance. Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority show that agricultural exports in 2024 amounted to approximately US\$7.8 billion against imports of US\$19.46 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of US\$11.71 billion¹. Globally, the Philippines lags behind neighbors such as Vietnam and Thailand, whose agricultural exports reached US\$62 billion and US\$52 billion², respectively.

Despite the country's agricultural potential, the sector has underperformed due to years of underinvestment in research, weak agricultural extension services, and the lack of sustained national support. There is therefore a pressing need to strengthen coordination between the national government and LGUs to ensure the effective delivery of extension services, which provide farmers with technical advice, training, and access to inputs.

This measure seeks to modernize and strengthen agricultural extension services through the establishment of the Philippine Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Agency, which shall serve as the national apex organization responsible for providing direction in the development of a national extension policy in agriculture and fisheries. It also aims to enhance the economic

¹ Ordoñez, E. M. (2025, November). *Agriculture: Exports, not imports*. INQUIRER.net.
<https://business.inquirer.net/555854/agriculture-exports-not-imports>

² *Ibid.*

rights of farmers, by providing them with access to new technologies, education, and financing to improve production, expand market opportunities, and ensure food security for all Filipinos.

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



HOWARD A. GUINTU
Representative, First District of Capiz



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AN ACT
STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES
EXTENSION SYSTEM TO ACCELERATE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES
DEVELOPMENT, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Act of 2025."

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - The goals of national economy are a more equitable distribution of opportunities, income and wealth; a sustained increase in the amount of goods and services produced by the nation for the benefit of the people; and expanding productivity as the key to raising the quality of life for all, especially the underprivileged.

The State shall promote economic modernization and full employment based on sound agricultural development and agrarian reform, through industries that make full and efficient use of human and natural resources, and which are competitive in both domestic and foreign markets. In pursuit of these goals, all sectors of the economy and all regions of the country shall be given optimum opportunity to develop.

Thus, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to enable those who belong to the agriculture and fisheries sector to participate and share in the fruits of development and growth

in a manner that utilizes the nation's resources in the most efficient and sustainable way possible by establishing a more equitable access to assets, income, basic and support services, and infrastructure.

The State shall give priority to promote science, technology and human resource development as essentials for national development and progress.

The State shall utilize research results through information, education, extension and communication services. It shall support the development of a national extension system that will help accelerate the transformation of agriculture and fisheries sectors of the country from a resource-based industry to a knowledge based and market-oriented industry.

The State shall adopt a market approach as the enabling framework for the agriculture and fisheries sector to attain food security, poverty alleviation, sustainable development and environmental protection, and balanced urban and rural development while addressing the welfare of the consumers for more affordable nutritious food especially among the lower income groups. The State shall promote market-oriented policies in its agricultural development program to enable agriculture producers to transform their enterprises into technologically advanced profitable ventures.

The State shall empower the agriculture and fisheries sector to develop and sustain itself to meet present and future needs of the country. Towards this end, the State shall ensure the establishment and development of the agriculture and fisheries extension system that increases and sustains its contributions towards the achievement of the goals of agriculture modernization as mandated by Republic Act 23 No. 8435: a) Poverty Alleviation and Social Equity; b) Food Security; c) Rational Use of Resources and Sustainable Development; d) Global Competitiveness; and e) People Empowerment.

Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms.* - As used in this Act, the term:

- a. *Agriculture Development Worker (ADW) or Agriculture Extension Worker (AEW)* refers to a person who is a graduate of at least a bachelor's degree in agriculture, agricultural engineering, agricultural economics, or any related course, registered and licensed with the Professional Regulation Commission or Civil Service Commission, who performs communication, curriculum development, agricultural/coastal community organizing, econometrics, water management, veterinary work, statistical work, training and extension work in agricultural production, trade, and processing,

including crop and animal protection, food safety, agriculture and natural resource economics, and marketing. For purposes of this Act, the term "Agriculture Development Worker (ADW)" is interchangeably used with "Agriculture Extension Worker (AEW)."

- b. *Agricultural Engineer* refers to a person registered with the Professional Regulation Commission or Civil Service Commission performing training and extension work in agricultural and fisheries mechanization, irrigation, drainage, soil and water conservation, agricultural buildings and structures, agricultural processing, and post-harvest facilities.
- c. *Agriculture Extension* is an educational and information service aimed at the transformation of the behavioral traits or characteristics of agriculture and fishery producers, consumers, or traders as a consequence of new knowledge or research results. Agriculture extension services include all those provided by both national and local governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.
- d. *Agroforester* refers to a person who is a graduate of a four-year course in forestry, agroforestry, or related fields and licensed with the Professional Regulation Commission or Civil Service Commission.
- e. *Barangay Technician* refers to a successful agriculture/fishery producer who volunteers and is assigned to assist farmers and other agriculture producers in their respective barangays towards the modernization of their respective agriculture and fisheries enterprises. The barangay agricultural technician works closely with the barangay agriculture committee for the planning of projects to be implemented at the barangay level.
- f. *Catalytic Financing* refers to the provision of financial assistance by the National Government as a counterpart grant to the resources provided by local government units to achieve increased investment by the private sector in the implementation of agriculture and fisheries extension services to accelerate the achievement of national goals.

- g. *Civil Society* refers to the group of organizations whose voluntary collective action revolves around shared interests, purposes, and values. Civil societies are organizations composed of community groups, women's organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions, and advocacy groups.
- h. *Consumers* are those who acquire goods or services for direct use or ownership rather than for resale or use in production and manufacturing.
- i. *Empowerment* is the expansion of assets and capabilities of people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives. It involves providing authority, responsibility, and information to people directly engaged in agriculture and fishery production, primarily at the level of farmers, fisherfolk, and those engaged in food and non-food production and processing, in order to give them enhanced economic rights.
- j. *Extension System* for Agriculture and Fisheries refers to the extension service delivery system of the country that includes all services provided by national, local, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.
- k. *Farmer-to-Farmer or Fisher-to-Fisher Extension Approach* refers to the modality of extension where farmers or fishers systematically learn from their successful peers new knowledge or skills to improve the productivity and income of their enterprises.
- l. *Fisheries* refers to all interrelated activities which include the production, growing, harvesting, processing, marketing, developing, conserving, and managing of all aquatic and fisheries areas.
- m. *Fisheries Technologist* refers to a person who is a graduate of a four-year course in Fisheries and registered and licensed with the Professional Regulation Commission or Civil Service Commission.

- n. *Food Security* refers to the national policy objective of meeting the food requirements of the present and the future generations of Filipinos in substantial quantity, ensuring the availability and affordability of safe and nutritious food for all, either through local production or importation, or both, based on the country's existing and potential resource endowment and related production advantages, and consistent with the overall national development objectives and policies.
- o. *Formula Grants* refer to financial transfers from the National Government to the local governments to enable them to meet national standards in the provision of Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Services (AFES), especially among the poor. The funding formula takes into consideration, among others, the financial capacity of a municipality or a province.
- p. *Knowledge Management* is a systematic approach which invents, understands, shares, creates and utilizes knowledge in order to create values such as producers value, customer's value, employee's value, stockholder's value, business partner's value and social value to achieve the vision and goal of the organization.
- q. *Partnership* refers to the relationship between and among agencies that is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility towards the achievement of shared goals.
- r. *RBOs* are rural based organizations or people's organizations composed of various sectors of the rural community such as farmers, fisherfolk, growers, seed producers, women, and youth.
- s. *Targeted Financial Transfer* is a financial support provided by the National Government to the LGUs to enable them to plan and implement projects in agriculture extension aimed at helping the poor and economically disadvantaged rural beneficiaries.

- t. *Value chain* is a process from seed to shelf or from the producers to the consumers, showing activities and interventions of/for a chosen commodity/ties based on understanding the needs for such interventions.
- u. *Veterinarian* refers to a person registered with the Professional Regulation Commission performing professional services related to the practice of veterinary medicine including training and extension on disease prevention control and animal health.

Sec. 4. *Statement of Goals.* - Agricultural Extension is a policy instrument for agriculture and fisheries development aimed at empowering individuals and organizations; public agriculture extension shall contribute towards the achievement of the national goals of agriculture development.

Sec. 5. *Statement of Objectives* – Agriculture and fisheries extension shall contribute to the following objectives:

- a. To enhance the economic right of producers, especially the poor, to use the most appropriate technologies they feel will give them the best profit and to choose the most affordable loans in producing the quality and quantity of products and to sell their products freely; traders, to move goods in the expectation of profits unconstrained by serious lack of knowledge and information; and consumers, regardless of their geographic location, to buy safe and nutritious foods at the lowest prices possible.
- b. To manage knowledge in strengthening the individual and organizational capabilities of producers, traders and consumers; and
- c. To help create an enabling environment that strengthens the linkage between knowledge generation and knowledge use, and encourages increased investment in agriculture extension by the private sector, civil society, and local governments.

Sec. 6. *Clients.* - The clients of Philippine agricultural and fisheries extension system are the producers (farmers, fisherfolk, and agricultural processors), traders and consumers along the value chain. Public extension shall focus on the delivery of public goods. The priority clients shall be the economically and socially disadvantaged groups in agriculture and fisheries.

Local government units shall put primary attention to these groups in the provision of extension services.

ARTICLE II

STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

Sec. 7. *Creation of the Philippine Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Agency (PAFEA).* - The Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) is hereby strengthened and transformed into the Philippine Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Agency (PAFEA). It shall serve as the national apex organization for a unified and efficient agriculture and fisheries extension system of the country. It shall ensure that public extension services meet the national standards of performance and effectively contribute towards the achievement of the national goals of agriculture and fisheries modernization and sustainable development.

Sec. 8. *Powers and Functions –*

- a. Provide direction in the development of national extension policies in agriculture and fisheries;
- b. Orchestrate the development of an extension strategic plan including its financing in coordination with the Department of Budget and Management and stakeholders;
- c. Develop and implement national policies and programs aimed at the continuous improvement of the quality of extension methods, products, and services towards a more efficient and client-responsive national agriculture and fisheries knowledge management system;
- d. Develop a system towards the management of the country's extension resources for agriculture and fisheries to ensure a sustainable, participatory, and efficient system of funding for information, education, and communication materials (IEC); and to help achieve optimal efficiency along the value chain;
- e. Provide leadership in the development and implementation of the National Agriculture and Fisheries Knowledge Network (NAFKN) of the Department through a system of partnerships that may include, but is not limited to, the Local Government Units (LGUs), the Regional Development Council (RDC), the Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Councils (RAFCs), the academe especially the State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) of agriculture and fisheries, the Civil

Society Organizations (CSOs), producers, Rural-Based Organizations (RBOs), and the private sector;

- f. Provide national leadership in developing extension partnerships towards increased investment and robust private sector participation, in consultation with Agriculture and Fisheries Councils (AFCs);
- g. Harness centers of research excellence in collaboration with SUCs of agriculture and fisheries for the implementation of national programs, particularly in the areas of extension innovations, national training, impact assessment, and monitoring and evaluation of extension institutions, programs, and projects;
- h. Provide leadership in developing and implementing a national system of strengthening institutional extension capacities at all levels of implementation; and
- i. In coordination with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the Local Government Units, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and other stakeholders, the PAFEA shall set up a review mechanism for all agriculture and fisheries extension programs and budgets of national agencies to determine cost-effectiveness of operations and impacts on national and local goals.

Sec. 9. *Structure of PAFEA.* - The PAFEA shall be headed by a Director General (DG) with a rank of Assistant Secretary who shall be assisted by two Deputy Director Generals (DDG) who shall be appointed by the President upon recommendation of the Secretary of Agriculture from a list submitted by an Independent Search Committee organized and based on the qualification standards set by the Council of Extension Research Development in Agriculture and Fisheries (CERDAF). They shall have a fixed tenure of six (6) years and may be re-appointed for an additional term of four (4) years based on very satisfactory performance.

Sec. 10. *The Council for Extension Research Development in Agriculture and Fisheries (CERDAF).* - The Council for Extension Research Development in Agriculture and Fisheries (CERDAF) is hereby strengthened. It shall ensure that the agriculture and fisheries research, development and extension policies and programs of the Department are consistent with national policies and priorities. As part of its functions and duties, the Council for Extension Research Development in Agriculture and Fisheries (CERDAF) shall:

- a) Recommend to the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture policies covering program priorities and resource allocation in agriculture and fisheries research and extension of all agencies of the Department;
- b) Enhance coordination and linkage of government institutions involved in agriculture and fisheries research, development and extension;
- c) Strengthen the participation of various stakeholders, especially the civil society, local government units, and private sector in the development of the National Research Development and Extension (NRDE) agenda and programs;
- d) Strengthen the institutional efficiency of the NRDE system, including the creation of a monitoring and evaluation system on the effectiveness and efficiency of its various components; and
- e) Set guidelines for the use of services and facilities, collection of fees, and the utilization of income.

Sec. 11. *Composition of the Council for Extension Research Development in Agriculture and Fisheries (CERDAF).* - The Undersecretary for Policy and Planning of the DA shall be the Chair of the Council. There shall be a Vice Chair to be elected from among the other members of the Board. The Executive Director of the Philippine Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Agency (PAFEA) and the Director of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) shall be the ex officio members, and the Chair shall appoint the Executive Director of PAFEA as Secretary of the Council.

The CERDAF shall have the following members:

- a. Designated Undersecretaries for Policy and Planning of the following Departments:
 - 1. Department of Science and Technology;
 - 2. Department of Environment and Natural Resources;
 - 3. Department of Interior and Local Government;
- b. Presidents of the following LGU organizations:
 - 1. League of Provinces;
 - 2. Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP);
- c. Four (4) CSO representatives or one each from the rural youth, rural women, farmer, and fisherfolk as identified. and selected by the Department of Agriculture;
- d. One (1) private sector representative appointed by the DA Secretary;

e. One representative each from the following national professional scientific societies/ organizations as recommended by the Secretary of the Department of Science & Technology:

1. crops;
2. agriculture economics/economics;
3. fisheries & aquatic science;
4. livestock/ animal science;
5. plant protection;
6. sociology/anthropology/communications

Sec. 12. *Offices under the PAFEA.* - To carry out and discharge its functions, the PAFEA shall have four technical offices as follows:

- 1) Policy Development;
- 2) Extension Innovations and National Training;
- 3) Knowledge Products and Services Development; and
- 4) Extension Governance and Partnerships.

The PAFEA shall maintain a small regional office to:

- a. Liaise with Department Regional Field Units (RFUs), which should serve as the principal arm of the Department in the implementation of extension policies and programs in the regions;
- b. Provide technical assistance in the efficient implementation of PAFEA policies and programs; and
- c. Monitor and evaluate extension programs and projects funded by the DA that are being undertaken in the region.

The PAFEA is authorized to utilize existing Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) plantilla positions and to convert them into positions most appropriate to the Agency to provide national technical and managerial leadership.

ARTICLE III

ORGANIZATION OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXTENSION SERVICES

Sec. 13. *Province as the LGU Unit of Operation for Agriculture and Fisheries Extension.* - To achieve efficiency and to provide more responsive services, the planning and implementation unit of the extension services at the level of the LGUs shall be the province through a Provincial Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Services under the Office of the

Governor. Towards this end, all technical and financial assistance for agriculture and fisheries development from the National Government to the LGUs shall be coursed through, and coordinated by, the province. The Provincial Agriculture and Extension Services shall be headed by a technically qualified career Provincial Agriculturist & Fisheries Officer (PAFO).

The PAFO shall have two deputies or Assistant PAFOs: one for fisheries and one for agriculture development. The PAFOs shall be appointed by the Director General of PAFEA chosen from three qualified nominees per position submitted by the Governor. Its staff shall be composed of technically qualified career agriculturists, economists, statisticians, agricultural engineers, fishery technologist, and veterinarians appointed by the Provincial Governor.

Sec. 14. *Extension Personnel in Municipalities & Non-chartered Cities.* – Upon the effectivity of this Act, all municipal and non-chartered cities agriculture and fisheries extension personnel shall become provincial government employees unless the LGU concerned chooses to retain these personnel under their own plantilla and budget. Municipal and city extension employees transferred to the province shall be issued a new appointment by the Governor as organic personnel of the Provincial Agriculturist & Fisheries Office (PAFO). Transferred extension personnel may continue to serve their respective municipalities and non-chartered cities as detailed employees of the province based on a rationalized organizational structure submitted by the LGUs and approved by the PAFEA and the DBM. Existing employees of municipalities or cities that opt to retain their personnel do not need to issue new appointments to staff of the same positions. The Municipal/City Agriculture and Extension Services shall be headed by a technically qualified career Municipal/City Agriculturist & Fisheries Officer (M/CAFO) based on the criteria set by the PAFEA. They shall be appointed by the PAFEA chosen from three (3) qualified nominees submitted by the governors. Existing MAOs or CAOs who are not reappointed for reasons other than for just cause, shall serve as Supervising Agriculturists with salaries equal to that of their existing positions. M/CAFO whether under the plantilla of the province or the municipalities/ cities shall have direct day-to-day supervision of all extension municipal/ city personnel whether organic or detailed to the municipalities. On the other hand, the PAFO shall have direct technical supervision of all M/CAFOs in the province regardless of their sources of salaries. As such, M/CAFOs and their personnel are obligated to attend meetings, workshops, seminars, and other activities organized by the province that require their participation. In addition, they shall, on a periodic basis, submit data and reports required by the province or the national government. In cooperation with the PAFEA and the state colleges and universities of agriculture, all provinces are required to

design and implement a periodic external or third party evaluation of all municipal and city extension programs and services.

Sec. 15. *Salaries and Wages of Extension Personnel.* - The salaries and wages of all agriculture and fisheries technical extension personnel under the payroll of the provincial government shall be paid by the National Government through an annual grant-in-aid to be paid out of the regular appropriation of the PAFEA of the Department of Agriculture; Provided, however, That during the first year of the effectivity of this Act, the local government concerned shall reallocate its savings from the personal services for agriculture personnel to its agriculture and fisheries extension; Provided, further, That every year thereafter, the concerned LGU shall appropriate the equivalent funds paid by the national government as the minimum amount for its agriculture and fisheries operation or counterparts to national grant-in-aid in agriculture and fisheries, without prejudice to the provision of additional funds that may be allocated by the LGUs for this purpose. The salaries and wages of technical extension personnel for both agriculture and fisheries shall be standardized so as to equal or be comparable with similar positions of national employees without prejudice to the provision of additional staff benefits by concerned LGUs where their finances warrant. The provision of grants in aid to pay for the salaries and wages of the technical personnel of the LGU extension services shall be subject to external review and evaluation every five (5) years to determine its impact to the quality of services, its cost-effectiveness, and impact on the goals of AFMA. A copy of the report shall be provided to Congress, and serve as the basis for the continuation or modification of the grants-in-aid.

Sec. 16. *Structure of the Provincial Extension Services.* - The provincial and municipal agriculture and fisheries extension services shall organize and structure its services based on the agricultural and extension needs of the province and on the standards set by the PAFEA. The technical positions of the Provincial & Municipal Extension Services shall be rationalized to provide the appropriate number of positions for agriculturist, mixed crop-livestock/tree specialist, communication and curriculum specialist, community organizers/anthropologists, economists/agribusiness economists, agricultural engineers, fishery technologists, and veterinarians.

Sec. 17. *LGU Livestock Production Services.* - In recognition of the need to provide an integrated extension approach to total farm development, the LGU livestock production

services shall be part and parcel of the Provincial Agricultural Office (PAO). In cases where these functions were earlier integrated into the Provincial Veterinary Services, they shall be returned and re-integrated to the rest of the PAO services. This is to prevent conflict of interest between regulatory functions and livestock extension functions.

Sec. 18. *Strategic Plan in Agriculture and Fisheries.* - To provide coherence of all government plans in agriculture and fisheries and to achieve efficiency in the use of resources, all provincial governments are required to develop a five-year strategic plan in agriculture and fisheries based on the framework and principles provided by the Department of Agriculture (DA). The Strategic Plan shall serve as the basis for the Provincial Annual Work Program & Budget and for the DA to provide short-term and long-term assistance.

ARTICLE IV

AGRICULTURAL SERVICE CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Sec. 19. *Professionalization of Extension Services.* - The State shall support the development and professionalization of agricultural services by providing the necessary compensation and benefits to various extension workers based on their duties, responsibilities and qualifications. For this purpose, the PAFEA, in coordination with Civil Service Commission, shall develop qualification standards beyond the minimum set by the Civil Service Commission for the various managerial, technical and non-technical positions of the extension services of the country including that of all local government units. The PAFEA shall also develop a career path of all technical extension personnel that will allow them, regardless of assignment or location in government, to move vertically in the promotion system. Managerial positions shall be open to all qualified personnel regardless of geographic or agency assignment.

Towards this end, the PAFEA shall issue guidelines for the creation of a merit promotion boards in all extension agencies/ office to include representatives of civil societies and the SUCs of agriculture and fisheries. In determining the salaries of agriculture and fishery development workers, the provisions of Joint Resolution No. 4, Series of 2009, entitled, "Joint Resolution Authorizing the President of the Philippines to Modify the Compensation and Position Classification System of Civilian Personnel and the Base Pay Schedule of Military and Uniformed Personnel in the Government, and for Other Purposes, " shall apply.

Sec. 20. *Mandatory Managerial Positions for Agricultural Services in Local Government Units.* - The creation of the following positions are hereby made mandatory in addition to the prescribed positions under the Local Government Code of 1991

- a. Provincial Agriculture & Fisheries Officer (PAFO)
 - 1. Asst. PAFO for Fisheries Development
 - 2. Asst. PAFO for Agriculture Development
- b. City Agriculturist & Fisheries Officer (CAFO)
- c. Municipal Agriculture & Fisheries Officer (MAFO)

Sec. 21. *Transfer of Geographical Reassignment of Agricultural Officers and Employees of the LGUs.* - No transfer or geographical reassignment shall be made or effected without prior written notice to the personnel concerned stating therein the reason therefor: Provided, That said written notice shall be made thirty (30) days prior to the date of transfer or reassignment: Provided, further, That if the employee concerned disagrees with the order of transfer or reassignment, he/ she may appeal said order with the Civil Service Commission or the Department of Agriculture, as the case may be: Provided, further, That pending appeal, such transfer or reassignment shall be held in abeyance: Provided, furthermore, That no transfer or reassignment shall be made three (3) months prior to any local or national elections: Provided, finally, That the necessary expenses of the transfer and/ or reassignment of the agricultural worker or employee and his/her immediate family shall be paid by the Government.

Sec. 22. *Security of Tenure.* - An agricultural extension worker holding a permanent position shall not be terminated except for just cause: Provided, That in the event he/ she is found to be unjustly dismissed as verified by the Civil Service Commission, he/she shall be entitled to reinstatement without loss of seniority rights and back wages with twenty per centum (20%) interest to be computed from the time compensation has been withheld. In cases, however, where the agricultural extension worker does not desire to be reinstated, he/she shall be entitled to back wages and separation pay with twenty per centum (20%) interest.

Sec. 23. *Discrimination Prohibited.* - An agricultural extension worker shall not be discriminated by reason of creed, sect, political belief, civil status, and ethnic grouping in the exercise of his/her profession.

Sec. 24. *Safeguards in Administrative Proceedings* - In every administrative proceeding, an agricultural extension worker shall have:

- a) The right to be informed of the charges;
- b) The right to full access to evidence against him/her;
- c) The right to defend himself/herself through counsel of his/her choice;
- d) The right to be given adequate time to prepare his/her case, which shall not be less than seven (7) days from receipt of the formal charge;
- e) The right to appeal to designated authorities;
- f) The right to cross-examine witnesses and to processes for the production of witnesses;
- g) The right to reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred in his/her defense in case of exoneration or dismissal of the charges; and
- h) Such other rights provided by other national agencies and local government units to their respective officers and employees to ensure fairness and impartially in prosecution.

Sec. 25. Code of Conduct. - All agricultural extension workers shall be guided by a code of ethics not contrary to law, morals, safety, health, public policy and public order, which shall be prepared by the Secretary of Agriculture in consultation with the recognized national associations of agricultural extension workers;

Sec. 26. Training and Scholarship Programs. - The Department of Agriculture through the PAFEA shall undertake training and scholarship programs for agricultural extension workers, which shall be provided adequate budgetary support by the National Government;

Sec. 27. Married Agricultural Extension Workers. - Whenever possible, the proper authorities shall take steps to enable married couples both of whom are public agricultural extension workers, to be employed or assigned in the same municipality.

ARTICLE V

INCENTIVES AND REWARDS SYSTEM

Sec. 28. Criteria for Incentives and Rewards System. - The PAFEA shall develop a reward and incentive system for agricultural extension workers provided under this Act, to

encourage them to stay in the service, promote their productivity and reward them for extraordinary performance.

Sec. 29. *Other Compensation and Benefits.* - All agricultural extension workers shall be entitled to the following additional compensation and benefits:

- a. Representation Allowance and Traveling Allowance (RATA) - All Provincial/City/Municipal AF Officers shall be entitled to RATA equivalent to the Department Head of the equivalent Local Government Units.
- b. Hazard Allowance - All agricultural extension workers assigned in difficult areas, strife-torn or embattled areas, distressed or isolated stations, animal/plant/ fisheries breeding station, plant nurseries, plantations and demonstration farms, laboratories especially those handling x-rays, radioisotopes, chemicals, etc., sea-borne patrols, construction and installation of agricultural infrastructure projects, and other areas declared under a state of calamity or emergency which exposes them to great danger, occupational risks of perils of life shall be compensated with hazard allowance equivalent to at least twenty per centum (20%) of the monthly basic salary.
- c. Subsistence Allowance - All agricultural extension workers who are required to render services in the communities, institutions, animal and plant breeding nurseries, plantations and demonstration farms and other barrier programs and projects of the Department of Agricultural in order to make their services available at all times, shall be entitled to full daily subsistence allowance of three (3) meals, which shall be computed in accordance with the prevailing circumstances.
- d. Longevity Pay - A longevity pay equivalent to five per centum (5%) of the monthly basic pay shall be paid to an agricultural extension worker for every three (3) years of continuous, efficient and meritorious services rendered.
- e. Clothing Allowance - All agricultural extension workers shall be entitled to a clothing allowance in accordance with the approved laws and regulations or as mandated by law.
- f. Housing - All agricultural extension workers who are on tour of duty and those who, because of unavoidable circumstances, are forced to stay in the institution or community shall receive housing allowances unless the government is able

to provide free public accommodation. Housing allowance shall be reviewed periodically and adjusted accordingly.

- g. Motor and Vehicle Loan. – All agricultural development workers shall be entitled to avail of the motor and vehicle loan of the Department of Agriculture. The National Government shall provide adequate budgetary support for this purpose.

ARTICLE VI

THE FARMER-TO-FARMER EXTENSION APPROACH

Sec. 30. *The Farmer-to-Farmer Approach.* – The farmer-to-farmer approach in extension is hereby institutionalized. The PAFEA, in cooperation with centers of research excellence and interested LGUs, shall take leadership in developing a highly flexible and innovative system. It shall pilot the approach until it becomes an integral part of the national system in no more than ten (10) years.

For the initial implementation of this provision, an initial budget of Twenty Million Pesos (P20,000,000.00) is hereby allocated for the first year. Every year thereafter, the budget shall be adjusted accordingly depending on the needs and response of the LGUs and non-governmental organizations, subject to review by the CERDAF.

ARTICLE VII

FUNDING FOR EXTENSION SERVICES

Sec. 31. *Initial Appropriation.* -- For the first year of implementation of this Act, the amount of Ten Billion Pesos (P10,000,000,000.00) shall be appropriated out of the total budget of the Department of Agriculture (DA) for personal services, grants-in-aid to the LGUs, operation, and capital outlay requirements of the Philippine Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Agency (PAFEA).

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is hereby mandated to include annually in the President's program of expenditures for submission to Congress and release, an amount not less than Ten Billion Pesos (P10,000,000,000.00) or one percent (1%) of the gross value added in agriculture and fisheries, whichever is higher, for the implementation of this Act. Five Billion Pesos (P5,000,000,000.00) of this amount shall be allocated to the salary grant to LGUs for the local extension personnel and the operation of the PAFEA. The Department

of Agriculture is hereby tasked accordingly to rationalize its budget to meet the requirements of this Act.

The PAFEA is authorized to utilize part of its yearly appropriation to set up or upgrade necessary facilities to improve the provision of national extension services. All assets, resources both human and financial of Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), shall be transferred to the PAFEA.

All revenues generated out of the use of services, facilities and equipment shall be utilized by the Agency to augment its maintenance and operating expenditures subject to the approval of the Governing Board.

ARTICLE VIII FINAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 32. *Phased Implementation.* --The implementation of this Act shall be phased over a period of five (5) years.

Sec. 33. *Oversight Committee.* – The Congressional Oversight Committee for Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization (COCAFAM) shall oversee the implementation of this Act for a period not exceeding five (5) years from its effectivity.

Sec. 34. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) shall be formulated by the Department of Agriculture in close coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Leagues of Governors and Mayors, and relevant members of the civil society, which shall include an implementation plan indicating a phased approach to provide smooth transition from the present to the reformed extension system under this Act. The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture shall furnish a copy of the IRR to the Committee of Agriculture of both Houses of Congress.

Sec. 35. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

Sec. 36. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

Sec. 37. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (30) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,