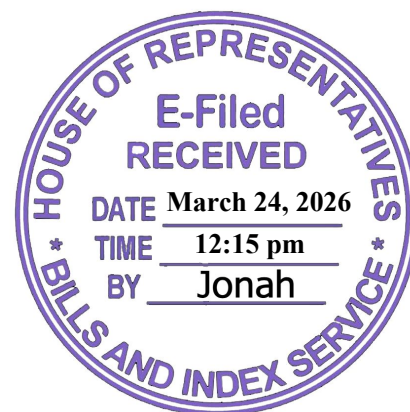


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **8749**



Introduced by **REP. NATHANIEL “Atty. Nat” M. ODUCAO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines’ agricultural trade landscape in 2024 continues to reflect a strong dependence on imports. Agricultural imports accounted for approximately 71.5 percent of total agricultural trade, which was valued at around US\$19.46 billion, while exports were only about US\$7.75 billion. This significant imbalance widened the domestic agricultural trade deficit to nearly US\$11.71 billion, highlighting the country’s continued reliance on foreign agricultural products to meet domestic demand. Such dependence not only affects the country’s trade position but also exposes local farmers and rural communities to vulnerabilities in global markets and price fluctuations.

Concurrently, the agricultural sector is experiencing a notable demographic shift. The average age of Filipino farmers has declined from 57 years to approximately 49 to 50 years, signaling that a new generation of younger individuals is entering the field of agriculture. While this trend reflects a potential rejuvenation of the sector, these young farmers face considerable and compounding challenges in securing sustainable livelihoods. They encounter limited access to affordable credit, inadequate availability of land or insecure land tenure, high input and production costs, and market conditions that often favor imported goods over local products. These constraints create structural barriers that hinder productivity, reduce profitability, and discourage long-term engagement in farming.

Furthermore, technological gaps and the pressures of climate change pose additional threats to agricultural productivity and resilience. Without targeted interventions and structural support, many young farmers risk abandoning the sector altogether. Such a scenario could exacerbate food insecurity, weaken rural economies, and undermine the sustainability of the nation’s agricultural systems.

Recognizing these challenges, this bill seeks to establish institutional mechanisms that will prioritize and support young farmers in the formulation and implementation of national policies and programs. Specifically, it proposes the creation of the Young Farmers Council and the National Young Farmers Roadmap to ensure that the needs, perspectives, and rights of young farmers are formally integrated into decision-making processes. The bill affirms the right of young farmers to equal access to technology, affordable capital, secure farmland, and market opportunities, while

¹The Philippine Star (2025) DA: Import-heavy agriculture harms farmers, urges import limits. Available at: <https://www.philstar.com/business/agriculture/2025/09/15/2472992/da-import-heavy-agriculture-harms-farmers-urges-import-limits> (Last accessed September 23, 2025)

²Philippine Communications Office (2025) PH farmers getting younger – DA. Available at: https://pco.gov.ph/news_releases/ph-farmers-getting-younger-da/ (Last accessed September 23, 2025)

also providing protection against discrimination. By empowering this new generation of farmers, the State not only strengthens food security and preserves employment in agriculture but also upholds its commitment to sustainable, inclusive, and equitable rural development.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Oducado', with a small blue circular stamp containing the number '8' to the right.

REP. NATHANIEL “ATTY. NAT” M. ODOCADO
1Tahanan Party List

Republic of the Philippines
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HOUSE BILL NO. **8749**

Introduced by **REP. NATHANIEL “ATTY. NAT” M. ODUCAO**

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE MAGNA CARTA OF YOUNG FARMERS

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “*The Magna Carta of Young*
2 *Farmers.*”

3 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to recognize
4 the economic, political, and socio-cultural conditions affecting young farmers and affirm their vital
5 role in nation-building, environmental sustainability, and the attainment of food security. It shall
6 formulate and implement plans, policies, programs, and mechanisms that will ensure the
7 empowerment, productivity, and competitiveness of young farmers in both local and international
8 markets

9 The State acknowledges the role of young farmers as contributors to household income
10 and as key participants in the agricultural value chain, from production and processing to value-
11 adding and marketing. It further recognizes their role as advocates of environmental protection
12 and practitioners of sustainable farming.

13
14 The State likewise affirms the indispensable contribution of young farmers to national
15 food security, rural development, and the overall economy. Towards this end, the State
16 recognizes young farmers as a distinct basic sector with the right to participate in policy
17 formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of programs, projects, and
18 services that directly affect them.

19
20 Finally, the State shall establish and strengthen mechanisms for the promotion and
21 protection of the rights of young farmers, and ensure their full inclusion in development
22 processes.

23
24 **SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.*** – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

25
26 a) *Agriculture* refers to the prudent endeavor of cultivating plants and animals
27 which includes the tillage of the soil, dairy, production, cultivation, growing, and
28 harvesting of any agricultural, aquacultural, floricultural or horticultural

1 commodities, the growing and harvesting of forest products upon forest lands, the
2 raising of livestock including horses, the keeping of horses as a commercial
3 enterprise, the keeping and raising of poultry, swine, cattle and other domesticated
4 animals used for food purposes and any forestry or lumbering operations,
5 performed by a farmer;
6

7 b) *Discrimination* refers to any distinction, exclusion, or restriction which has the
8 effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise
9 by young farmers, irrespective of their age, status, or income, on a basis of equality,
10 human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural,
11 civil, or any other field. It includes any act or omission, including by law, policy,
12 administrative measure, or practice, that directly or indirectly excludes or restricts
13 young farmers in the recognition and promotion of their rights and their access to
14 and enjoyment of opportunities, benefits, or privileges. A measure or practice of
15 general application is discrimination against young farmers if it fails to provide for
16 a mechanism to offset or address the disadvantages or limitations of young farmers,
17 as a result of which they are denied or restricted in the recognition and protection
18 of their rights and in their access to and enjoyment of opportunities, benefits, or
19 privileges: Provided, That discrimination compounded by or intersecting with other
20 grounds, status, or condition, such as ethnicity, age, poverty, or religion shall be
21 considered discrimination against young farmers under this Act;
22

23 c) *Eco-warrior* refers to the staunch advocates of environmental protection and
24 practitioners of sustainable farming;
25

26 d) *Family Farming* is a means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries,
27 pastoral, and aquaculture production which is managed and operated by a family
28 and predominantly reliant on family labor, including both women and men;
29

30 e) *Farm work* refers to the land cultivation and tillage, dairying, production,
31 growing, harvesting, plowing, planting, application of fertilizers, and farm
32 supervision performed by an individual or a group of people;
33

34
35 f) *Food Security* refers to the condition in which all people, at all times, have
36 physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that
37 meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (as
38 defined by the United Nations Committee on World Food Security);
39

40 g) *Lessee* refers to a person who, by themselves, or with the aid available from
41 within their immediate farm household, cultivates the land, belonging to or lawfully
42 possessed by another, with the latter's consent, for purposes of agricultural
43 production, for a price certain in money or in produce or both. The term is
44 distinguished from a civil lessee as understood in the Civil Code of the Philippines;
45

46 h) *Organic* refers to the particular farming and processing system, described in the
47 standards and not in the classical chemical sense. The term "organic" is
48 synonymous in other languages with "biological" or "ecological". It is also a
49 labeling term that denoted products considered organic based on the Philippine
50 National Standards for organic agriculture;
51

52 i) *Organic Agriculture* refers to all agricultural systems that promote the

1 ecologically sound, socially acceptable, economically viable, and technically
2 feasible production of food and fibers. Organic agriculture dramatically reduces
3 external inputs by refraining from the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and
4 pharmaceuticals. It also covers areas such as, but is not limited to, soil fertility
5 management, varietal breeding and selection under chemical and pesticide-free
6 conditions, the use of biotechnology and other cultural practices that are consistent
7 with the principles and policies of this Act, and enhance productivity without
8 destroying the soil and harming farmers, consumers and the environment as defined
9 by the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movement (IFOAM):
10 Provided, That the biotechnology herein referred to shall not include genetically
11 modified organisms or GMOs;

12
13 j) *Red-tagging* refers to the practice of the State of branding or malicious
14 blacklisting of regular individuals or organizations critical or not fully in support
15 of the government— they could be branded as anti-government, insurgents, and
16 members of the leftist groups.

17
18 k) *Sustainability* refers to meeting the needs of the present without compromising
19 the ability of future generations to meet their own needs as defined by the United
20 Nations World Commission on Environment and Development;

21
22 l) *Tenant* refers to a person who, themselves, or with the aid available from within
23 their immediate farm household, cultivates the land belonging to, or possessed by
24 another, with the latter's consent for purposes of production, sharing the produce
25 with the landholder under the share tenancy system, or paying the landholder a price
26 certain or ascertainable in produce or in money or both, under the leasehold tenancy
27 system;

28
29 m) *Young Farmer* refers to an individual whose primary source of income comes
30 from agriculture, with an age range of 15-35 years old, is owner, tenant, lessee, or
31 worker of the land in which they personally cultivate and till.

32
33 **SEC. 4. *State as Primary Duty-Bearer.*** – The State, as the primary duty bearer shall:

34
35 a) Recognize, promote, and protect the rights of young farmers defined and
36 guaranteed under this Act;

37
38 b) Lead against the discrimination and coercion or violence, be physical, verbal,
39 sexual, emotional, psychological, spiritual, or cultural in nature of young farmers;

40
41 c) Endorse farm products produced by young farmers for economic development
42 nationwide;

43
44 d) Promote, protect and fulfill the rights of young farmers in all aspects including
45 but not limited to their rights to food security, education and training, access to
46 land, social justice, employment, health services, and participation.

47
48 The State shall take measures and establish mechanisms to promote the coherent and
49 integrated implementation and enforcement of this Act and related laws, policies, or other measures
50 to effectively recognize young farmers as a distinct basic sector, stop discrimination against young
51 farmers and farming in general, and advance their rights and responsibilities.

1 **SEC. 5. Duties of State Agencies and Instrumentalities.** – The abovementioned duties of
2 the State shall extend to all agencies, offices, and instrumentalities at all levels, as well as
3 government-owned and controlled corporations, subject to the Constitution and pertinent laws,
4 policies, or administrative guidelines that define the specific duties of the concerned state agencies
5 and entities.
6
7

8 **SEC. 6. Duties of Private Sector.** – It is the duty of the private sector to support young
9 farmers' agenda through social partnerships between people's organizations and industries. The
10 private sector is encouraged to assist in reform mechanisms and rural development initiatives which
11 include livelihood strategies sensitive to the plight of young farmers, as part of their corporate
12 social responsibility duties.
13

14 **SEC. 7. Non-Diminution of the Rights of the Young Farmers.** – All other young farmers'
15 rights and programs provided under existing laws shall remain in full force and effect: Provided,
16 That it follows the definition of a young farmer as stated in this Act.
17

18 **SEC. 8. Education and Training.** – The State shall ensure equal access to quality education
19 and training of young farmers and encourage partnership and linkage with state universities and
20 colleges (SUCs) on information and technology transfer to young farmer individuals and
21 organizations.
22

23 a) Curriculum. - To ensure better quality education and training for young farmers
24 and aspiring farmers, the following shall be incorporated in curriculums:

- 25 1. K to 12 High Schools offering Technology and Livelihood Education
26 (TLE) Track with specialization in Agriculture-Fisheries Arts shall be
27 required to create laboratories for agricultural science and technology
28 research.
- 29 2. Climate Smart and Resilient Agriculture and Agricultural Laws and
30 Farmers Rights shall be incorporated in both K to 12 and Tertiary
31 Education Curriculum.

32 b) Scholarship. - K to 12 students under TLE Track with specialization in
33 Agriculture-Fisheries Arts shall be entitled to scholarship grants and incentives
34 through the Department of Agriculture (DA) upon compliance with the conditions
35 set by the department.
36

37 c) Agricultural Training Service Extension. - Agricultural SUCs shall serve as an
38 extension service provider for practical application, learning seminars, hands on
39 training, and knowledge on technological advancements of young farmers'
40 organizations and individuals through the proper facilitation of the Department of
41 Agriculture (DA).
42

43 **SEC. 9. Right to Resources for Food Production.** – The State shall guarantee young
44 farmers' vital role in food production and food security by prioritizing their rights to access
45 technology, credit, and capital. It shall ensure that young farmers are provided with the following:
46

- 47 a) Equal access to support for farm inputs and agricultural tools;
- 48 b) Equal access to farm technologies and mechanization;
- 49 c) Ensure innovation, development, and proliferation of young farmer-friendly
- 50
- 51

technologies and mechanization of agricultural production and processing;

d) Equal access to formal sources of credit and capital including forms of clean loans and Mortgage, Redemption and Insurance (MRI); and,

e) Equitable share of the produce of farms and aquatic resources.

SEC. 10. Access to Information. – Young farmers' access to information regarding policies, programs, projects, subsidies, and funding outlays that affect them, shall be ensured. The DA-Regional Field Offices (RFOs), Provincial Agricultural Offices (PAOs), and Municipal Agricultural Offices (MAOs) shall endeavor the strengthening information dissemination of agricultural projects benefiting young farmers. Moreover, these offices shall offer assistance to farmers to access agricultural services offered whether offline or online.

SEC. 11. Right to farmland. – The land rights of young farmers shall be prioritized. In doing so, the State shall guarantee the following:

a) Improve access to low-cost farmland. – Create more flexibility within CARP/CARPER to allow land trusts to protect farmland quickly and facilitate a new farmer. The DAR shall also ensure to protect the affordability of conserved lands and ensure that it remains in farming.

b) Land Transfer Tax Exemptions. – Transactions including, but not limited to, purchase, inheritance, and donation of land, which is one (1) hectare and below, to young farmers, as defined under this Act, are hereby exempt from all taxes of whatever kind: Provided, however, That the beneficiary guarantees that the land will be kept and maintained by him or her for at least five (5) years.

c) Land and Farm Planning Management. – The Department of Agriculture (DA), together with the LGUs and other related agencies, shall provide full assistance to young farmers, from the national scale down to community levels as regards in farm planning and management to ensure maximum utilization, production, profitability, and sustainability of their farms. The department shall utilize the existence of Farmer Field Schools and Agricultural Extension Training Centres as learning sites to ensure full-scale assistance to young farmers.

SEC. 12. Access to Market Development Services. – The State shall guarantee the young farmers' rights for market spaces, farm-to-market roads, and other mechanisms that will ensure that farm produce will reach the family table. In doing so, the state shall provide the following:

a) Establishment of Farm-to-Market Roads (FMR). – The DA, DPWH, and LGU shall endeavor to hasten the creation of farm-to-market as per the Farm-to-market Road Network Plan (FMRNP) and Comprehensive FMR National Master Plan 2020 to 2030.

b) Creation of a Provincial Market. – The DA Regional Office and the Governor's 10 Office shall establish a central market within each province. These markets shall cater to all registered farmers of the different municipalities of the province who wish to sell their farm produce.

c) Establishment of Municipal Cold Storage and Post-Harvest Facility. – The DA through the support of the LGU shall ensure the establishment of cold storage and post-harvest facilities that are accessible to the local farmers.

1 d) National Young Farmers Roadmap. – The DA through the National Young
2 Farmers Council, including its attached agencies and corporations, in
3 coordination with the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Department of
4 Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Trade and
5 Industry (DTI), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department
6 of Education (DepEd), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP),
7 National Youth Commission (NYC), Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA),
8 Commission on Higher Education (CHED), National Anti-Poverty
9 Commission (NAPC) and all agricultural-related agencies attached under the
10 Office of the President (OP) shall formulate and implement a National Young
11 Farmers Plan within one hundred and twenty (120) days from the creation of
12 the National Young Farmers Council. The roadmap shall serve as the
13 convergence program of government line agencies to ensure the maximum role
14 of young farmers in food security. It shall also present measures that will
15 allocate a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a
16 sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice. The
17 plan shall include the following:
18

19 **SEC. 13. *Environmental Protection.*** – DA, in partnership with DENR and DOST shall
20 establish model farms that feature sustainable farming practices such as integrated and diverse
21 organic farming systems, climate-smart and resilient agriculture, organic urban farming systems,
22 and the like to serve as knowledge transfer and training institutions for young farmers and
23 agricultural workers and provide an avenue for the active participation of young farmers in
24 environmental protection and practice of sustainable farming.
25

26 **SEC. 14. *Recognition and Preservation of Cultural Identity and Indigenous Farming***
27 ***Traditions.*** – The State shall respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations, and practices
28 of indigenous and local communities of young farmers embodying traditional lifestyles relevant to
29 the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. These shall be considered in the
30 formulation and implementation of national policies and programs.
31

32 **SEC. 15. *Protection from Discrimination, Red-tagging, and Violence.*** – The State shall
33 ensure that all young farmers shall be protected from all forms of discrimination, red-tagging, and
34 violence as provided for in existing laws. They shall be ensured access to free legal services from
35 the Public Attorney's Office (PAO).
36

37 **SEC. 16. *Representation and Participation.*** – The State shall ensure young farmers'
38 involvement in the planning and design stages of agri-food development projects from
39 conceptualization to implementation. It shall also ensure the participation of young farmers in the
40 decision-making and policy-making processes at regional, national, and international levels
41 initiated by the government and private entities including but not limited to the National and Local
42 Agrarian Reform Councils, National Organic Agricultural Board, National Youth Commission,
43 and the National Anti-Poverty Commission to fully realize their roles as agents and partners for
44 development.
45

46 **SEC. 17. *Strengthen Young Farmer Organizations.*** – DA, together with DAR, DTI,
47 DOST, NYC, DepEd, CHED, and CDA shall create a training module on organizational
48 management and development specific to the sensitivity and needs of young farmer organizations
49 within one hundred twenty (120) days upon the effectivity of this Act to assist and provide young
50 farmer organizations capacity-building, organizational management and development schemes.
51

52 **SEC. 18. *Creation of the National Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Council.*** – There is

1 hereby created the National Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Council which shall be attached to the
2 DA. The Council shall have the following powers and functions:

3
4 a) Formulate, recommend, and implement national policies, plans, programs, and
5 guidelines to ensure young farmers' empowerment, productivity, and
6 competitiveness in local and international trade.

7
8 b) Support and assist the DA and relevant government agencies in building strong
9 and harmonious partnerships with foreign counterparts and relevant agencies, non-
10 government organizations, and civic groups in order to facilitate the
11 implementation of strategies and programs for the protection and promotion of the
12 rights and well-being of young farmers.

13
14 c) Develop an online self-service portal for young farmers to access, apply for, and
15 implement the different DA programs and services.

16
17 d) Establish Young Farmer Coordinators in each municipality to direct outreach
18 and help young farmers access information on agricultural and fisheries programs
19 and services.

20
21 e) Spearhead the drafting and finalization of the National Young Farmer's
22 Roadmap.

23
24 **SEC. 19. *Farm Insurance.*** – Young Farmers shall automatically become members of the
25 Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC) as protection from losses of non-crop agricultural
26 assets from force majeure.

27
28 **SEC. 20. *Legal Protection on Negotiations and Trade Partnership Agreements.*** – The
29 State shall ensure the provision of safeguard clauses for vulnerable, sensitive, and volatile sectors
30 to preserve the family farming model of the Philippines.

31
32 **SEC. 21. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within one-hundred twenty (120) days
33 from the effectivity of this Act, the DA shall, in coordination with Philippine Council for
34 Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), DAR,
35 DENR, DTI, DOST, DepEd, CHED, NYC, and NAPC and with the participation of representatives
36 from non-government organizations (NGO) and civil society groups with a proven track record of
37 involvement and promotion of the rights and welfare of young farmers, issue the necessary rules
38 and regulations for the implementation of this Act.

39
40 **SEC. 22. *Appropriation of Funds.*** – The amount necessary for implementing this Act shall
41 be charged from the budget allocation of the DA including its attached agencies and corporations,
42 DAR, DENR, DTI, DOST, DepEd, CHED, and NAPC. Such amounts necessary for the continued
43 implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

44
45 **SEC. 23. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or
46 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision or part not otherwise affected shall
47 remain valid and subsisting.

48
49 **SEC. 24. *Repealing Clause.*** – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive orders,
50 letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the
51 provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

1 **SEC. 25. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in
2 the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.
3
4 *Approved,*