

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 9330



Introduced by Representative Timothy Joseph Cayton

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Presidential Assistance for Farmers and Fisherfolk Program (PAFFP), funded under the 2026 General Appropriations Act,¹ provides a vital cash cushion to Filipino agricultural producers grappling with rising fuel prices, volatile input costs, and uncertain farm gate returns. Under its current rollout by the Department of Agriculture (DA), each qualified beneficiary receives Two Thousand Three Hundred Twenty-Five Pesos (₱2,325.00), with the program reaching more than 4.17 million registered farmers and fisherfolk nationwide.

The program, however, presently extends only to rice farmers cultivating up to two (2) hectares, corn and sugarcane farmers enrolled under the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA), and municipal fisherfolk registered under the National Program for Municipal Fishing Vessels and Gears Registration (BoatR). **Vegetable farmers, despite their indispensable contribution to the country's food supply and rural economies, are excluded from the program's coverage.**

This exclusion is difficult to justify on either economic or equity grounds. Vegetable farmers face the same, and in many respects more severe, exposure to the cost pressures that PAFFP was designed to address. The perishability of their produce creates acute cash flow pressure at planting; their input costs (certified seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, fuel for irrigation and transport) have risen sharply alongside global energy prices; and their farm gate prices remain volatile, often determined by intermediaries and seasonal gluts beyond the farmer's control. In the province of Nueva Vizcaya, a recognized vegetable-producing area within the Cagayan Valley Region, these pressures

¹ Republic Act No. 12314, General Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2026, Special Provision No. 17, vol. 122, no. 1, p. 82.

are well documented and continue to threaten the viability of vegetable farming as a livelihood.

The author has formally raised this gap before the Department of Agriculture, including in a committee meeting of the North Luzon Growth Quadrangle, and the DA has indicated openness to expanding PAFFP coverage to vegetable farmers subject to the availability of additional appropriations. This bill seeks to convert that administrative openness into a legal entitlement, so that the inclusion of vegetable farmers in the PAFFP, and in any successor or analogous program of cash assistance to the agricultural sector, is no longer contingent on annual budget discretion or executive prioritization.

To this end, the bill (1) institutionalizes the PAFFP as a permanent statutory program under the DA, (2) expressly includes vegetable farmers as among its qualified beneficiaries, (3) establishes minimum standards for cash assistance pegged to actual production cost pressures, and (4) installs transparency, anti-leakage, and accountability mechanisms to ensure that benefits reach legitimate RSBSA-registered farmer-beneficiaries.

The measure is consistent with Republic Act No. 7900,² Republic Act No. 7607,³ and the State's constitutional obligations under Article II, Section 21 and Article XIII, Section 5 of the 1987 Constitution to promote comprehensive rural development and protect the rights of farmers and farmworkers to a just share of the fruits of their labor.

Every sector of agriculture must have the opportunity to receive support and protection from the government. Passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


ATTY. TIMOTHY JOSEPH E. CAYTON, PhD.
Representative
Lone District of Nueva Vizcaya

² Republic Act No. 7900, February 23, 1995.

³ Republic Act No. 7607, June 4, 1992.

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

**AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANCE FOR
FARMERS AND FISHERFOLK PROGRAM (PAFFP), EXPANDING ITS
COVERAGE TO INCLUDE VEGETABLE FARMERS, AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR**

SECTION 1. Short Title.

This Act shall be known as the “*Vegetable Farmers Financial Assistance Act.*”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.

It is hereby declared the policy of the State, consistent with Article II, Section 21 and Article XIII, Section 5 of the 1987 Constitution, Republic Act No. 7607 (Magna Carta of Small Farmers), and Republic Act No. 7900 (High Value Crops Development Act of 1995), to ensure that all sectors of Philippine agriculture, including vegetable farmers, have equitable access to government cash assistance programs designed to cushion farmers against rising production costs, volatile input prices, and uncertain farm gate returns.

The State recognizes the indispensable contribution of vegetable farmers to national food security and rural livelihoods, and finds no principled basis for excluding them from existing cash assistance programs extended to other agricultural producers similarly affected by cost pressures.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms.

As used in this Act:

(a) *PAFFP* refers to the Presidential Assistance for Farmers and Fisherfolk Program, a cash assistance program for registered farmers and fisherfolk implemented by the Department of Agriculture, as initially funded under the 2026 General Appropriations Act (Republic Act No. 12314), and hereby institutionalized under this Act;

(b) *Vegetable farmer* refers to a natural person who derives primary or substantial income from the cultivation of vegetable crops, including but not limited to tomato, onion, garlic, cabbage, potato, carrot, ampalaya, eggplant, pechay, beans, and pepper, and other high-value vegetable crops as designated by the Department of Agriculture pursuant to Republic Act No. 7900;

(c) *Smallholder vegetable farmer* refers to a vegetable farmer cultivating not more than five (5) hectares of agricultural land, whether as owner, tenant, lessee, or usufructuary;

(d) *RSBSA* refers to the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture maintained by the Department of Agriculture; and

(e) *Department* refers to the Department of Agriculture.

SECTION 4. Institutionalization of the PAFFP.

The Presidential Assistance for Farmers and Fisherfolk Program is hereby institutionalized as a permanent program of the Department of Agriculture. The Department shall implement the Program on a continuing basis, subject to annual appropriations under the General Appropriations Act, and shall ensure its sustained availability to qualified beneficiaries.

The institutionalization of the PAFFP shall not preclude the President or the Department from continuing to deploy the Program in response to specific calamities, force majeure events, or sudden shocks to production costs; however, such targeted deployments shall not diminish the regular entitlement of qualified beneficiaries under this Act.

SECTION 5. Inclusion of Vegetable Farmers as Qualified Beneficiaries.

Vegetable farmers duly registered under the RSBSA shall be deemed qualified beneficiaries of the PAFFP, on equal footing with rice, corn, and sugarcane farmers and municipal fisherfolk currently covered by the Program. The Department shall, within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, issue the implementing rules necessary to integrate vegetable farmers into the Program's master lists and distribution systems.

Priority within the vegetable farmer beneficiary class shall be given to:

- (a) Smallholder vegetable farmers cultivating five (5) hectares or less;
- (b) Farmers in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs);
- (c) Women vegetable farmers and solo parents;

(d) Farmers belonging to indigenous peoples communities; and

(e) Farmers affected by natural disasters or calamities in the preceding cropping season.

SECTION 6. Amount and Form of Assistance.

Each qualified beneficiary, including vegetable farmers covered under this Act, shall receive cash assistance per cropping season in an amount not less than the prevailing PAFFP per-beneficiary rate, which as of the effectivity of this Act is Two Thousand Three Hundred Twenty-Five Pesos (P2,325.00) per beneficiary.

The Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the Department of Budget and Management and the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, shall review the per-beneficiary amount at least once every two (2) years and adjust it to reflect changes in production costs and inflation, provided that no adjustment shall reduce the real value of assistance below the level prevailing at the effectivity of this Act.

The Department shall continue to disburse assistance through its Interventions Monitoring Cards or such other electronic and traceable mechanisms as it may adopt in coordination with the Land Bank of the Philippines and other authorized financial institutions.

SECTION 7. Eligibility Requirements.

A vegetable farmer shall be entitled to assistance under this Act upon satisfaction of the following:

(a) Active registration under the RSBSA, verified as current by the Department;

(b) Demonstrated active cultivation of vegetable crops on the registered farm area during the cropping season for which assistance is claimed;

(c) Non-receipt of the same category of cash assistance from another government program for the same cropping season, to prevent double subsidy; and

(d) Such additional eligibility requirements as the Department may prescribe in the Implementing Rules and Regulations, provided that such requirements are consistent with the purposes of this Act and do not impose unreasonable barriers to access.

SECTION 8. Implementation.

The Department of Agriculture shall be the primary implementing agency of this Act. The Department shall:

(a) Promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, in consultation with the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), the High Value Crops Development Program, relevant Local Government Units (LGUs), and accredited farmers' organizations;

(b) Update and maintain the RSBSA to ensure that vegetable farmers are properly classified and that their registration is verified at least once per cropping season;

(c) Coordinate with LGUs for last-mile distribution and beneficiary verification, with LGUs required to issue certifications of receipt; and

(d) Establish a grievance mechanism accessible to farmers who are denied benefits or experience irregularities in distribution.

SECTION 9. Transparency, Monitoring, and Accountability.

(a) The Department shall publish, on its official website and through accessible public channels, the complete list of beneficiaries per region, province, and municipality for each cropping season, including the amounts disbursed.

(b) The Commission on Audit shall conduct an annual audit of the Program and publish its findings.

(c) The Department shall submit a semi-annual report to the Committees on Agriculture and Food of both Houses of Congress detailing the number of beneficiaries reached, disaggregated by commodity class (including vegetable farmers), total funds disbursed, incidents of misallocation or leakage, and corrective actions taken.

(d) Any public officer who misappropriates Program funds or facilitates the distribution of assistance to non-qualified individuals shall be liable under the applicable provisions of the Revised Penal Code, Republic Act No. 3019 (Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act), and other pertinent laws.

(e) Whistleblowers reporting misallocation or corruption in Program implementation shall be accorded protection under Republic Act No. 6713 and other applicable laws.

SECTION 10. Appropriations.

The amount necessary for the continued implementation of the PAFFP, as institutionalized and expanded under this Act, shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Department of Agriculture under the 2026 General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary, including the additional amounts required to cover vegetable farmer beneficiaries, shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

The Department of Budget and Management is directed to ensure adequate funding for the expanded coverage authorized by this Act.

SECTION 11. Separability Clause.

If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect.

SECTION 12. Repealing Clause.

All laws, executive orders, administrative orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. Effectivity.

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

Approved.