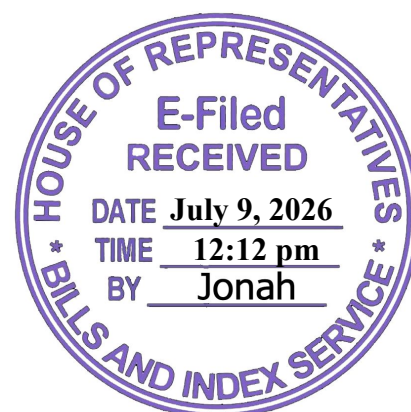


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **10042**



Introduced by Representative LEILA M. DE LIMA

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE MAGNA CARTA OF YOUNG FARMERS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The country's agriculture sector plays a significant role in the nation's food security. However, in recent years, the country's dependence on agricultural exports has been steadily increasing, from \$17.91 billion in 2023 and \$19.46 billion in 2024, to \$20.37 billion in 2025.¹ This increasing rate of imports is brought about by several factors, including the inability of the domestic agricultural market to sufficiently meet the food demands of a growing population.

In light of the country's experiences with global issues, such as the crisis in West Asia, the Ukraine-Russia war, and COVID-19, which have heavily affected global trade restrictions and prices, the country's dependence on importation is concerning. Thus, there is a need to continue addressing the problems facing the agricultural sector to reduce importation dependence and work towards food self-sufficiency.

In 2022, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported a drop from 9.73 million agriculture and forestry workers in July 2022 to 9.22 million in October 2022, marking a loss of over 511,000 workers.² These declines reflect not just seasonal factors but are largely due to workers leaving the agriculture industry.³ The Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) found that population growth, diminishing farm size, and declining incomes in agriculture incentivize the "shift out of agriculture."⁴

¹ Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). (26 March 2026). Annual Agricultural Export and Import. Retrieved from <https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/agricultural-export-import/annual>.

² Viloan, M.E. (10 June 2025). Aging Farms, Shrinking Fields: The Philippines' Farming Crisis. Medium. Retrieved from <https://medium.com/@b3nt3.lang/aging-farms-shrinking-fields-the-philippines-farming-crisis-91caf8876af7>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Baclig, C.E. (8 December 2022). PH farms getting empty: Agriculture job loss a worrying trend. Inquirer.net. Retrieved from https://pidswebs.pids.gov.ph/CDN/document/1687311912_64925628d5a2f.pdf.

A survey has found that 65% of Filipino farmers believe their kids would not have a bright future if they became farmers.⁵ Young Filipinos opt out of farming, preferring careers in medicine, IT, or business, because they associate farming with “hard work and poverty.”⁶ A 2021 science journal study found that the average Filipino farmer is 53 years old, while a Department of Agriculture (DA) report stated 56 years old.⁷ If these trends persist, the country may face a bigger problem in the agricultural sector and food security in the coming years.

This bill seeks to create the Magna Carta of Young Farmers to institutionalize mechanisms and policies that directly address the challenges faced by young farmers and uphold their rights. The bill creates the Council and the National Young Farmers Roadmap to ensure that young farmers are adequately prioritized in the formulation and implementation of national policies and programs that empower them. The bill also guarantees equal access to technology, credit, and capital among young farmers. Furthermore, the bill focuses on the land rights of young farmers by guaranteeing improved access to low-cost farmland. To make young farmers more competitive, the bill also provides them with assistance in farm planning, management, and access to market spaces. Finally, to uphold young farmers’ rights against discrimination and violence, the bill ensures their access to free legal services.

In the 20th Congress, similar bills were filed by Representative Nathaniel Oducado in the House of Representatives, and Senator Francis “Kiko” Pangilinan and Senator Risa Hontiveros in the Senate. This bill fully adopts Senator Pangilinan’s Senate Bill No. 719.

Early approval of this measure is earnestly sought.



LEILA M. DE LIMA

⁵ Viloan, M.E. (10 June 2025). Aging Farms, Shrinking Fields: The Philippines’ Farming Crisis. Retrieved from: <https://medium.com/@b3nt3.lang/aging-farms-shrinking-fields-the-philippines-farming-crisis-91caf8876af7>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

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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:

CHAPTER I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

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

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State recognizes the economic, political, and sociocultural realities affecting young farmers' current condition and affirms the role of young farmers in nation-building and attaining environmental sustainability and food sufficiency. It shall endeavor to develop plans, policies, programs, measures, and mechanisms to ensure young farmers' empowerment, productivity, and competitiveness in local and international trade;

The State recognizes young farmers as supplemental income earners on the family farms, playing a major role in augmenting their family's income. Doing so entails working odd jobs to sustain the family's source of income, most especially in non-harvesting seasons;

The State acknowledges the invaluable role of young farmers who are present in the value chain process, starting from production, to processing, to value-adding up to marketing;

The State recognizes the role of young farmers as eco-warriors and staunch advocates of environmental protection; and,

25 The State recognizes the indispensable contribution of young farmers to the
26 overall food security and national economy.

27
28 Towards this end, the State reaffirms the right of young farmers as a separate
29 basic sector with its own distinct rights and responsibilities to participate in policy
30 formulation, planning, organization, implementation, management, monitoring, and
31 evaluation of all programs, projects, and services targeting young farmers as
32 stakeholders.

33
34 Further, it shall establish mechanisms for the promotion and protection of young
35 farmers' rights.

36 37 CHAPTER II 38 Definition of Terms

39
40 SEC. 3. *Definitions.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- 41
42 a) *Agriculture* refers to the prudent endeavor of cultivating plants and
43 animals which includes the tillage of the soil, dairy, production,
44 cultivation, growing, and harvesting of any agricultural, aquacultural,
45 floricultural, or horticultural commodities, the growing and harvesting of
46 forest products upon forest lands, the raising of livestock including
47 horses, the keeping of horses as a commercial enterprise, the keeping
48 and raising of poultry, swine, cattle, and other domesticated animals
49 used for food purposes and any forestry or lumbering operations,
50 performed by a farmer;
51
52 b) *Farm work* refers to the land cultivation and tillage, dairying, production,
53 growing, harvesting, plowing, planting, application of fertilizers, and farm
54 supervision performed by an individual or a group of people;
55
56 c) *Discrimination* refers to any distinction, exclusion, or restriction which
57 has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition,
58 enjoyment, or exercise by young farmers, irrespective of their age,
59 status, or income, on a basis of equality, human rights, and fundamental
60 freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other
61 field. It includes any act or omission, including by law, policy,
62 administrative measure, or practice, that directly or indirectly excludes or
63 restricts young farmers in the recognition and promotion of their rights
64 and their access to and enjoyment of opportunities, benefits, or
65 privileges. A measure or practice of general application is discrimination
66 against young farmers if it fails to provide for a mechanism to offset or
67 address the disadvantages or limitations of young farmers, as a result of
68 which they are denied or restricted in the recognition and protection of

69 their rights and in their access to and enjoyment of opportunities,
70 benefits, or privileges: *Provided*, That discrimination compounded by or
71 intersecting with other grounds, status, or condition, such as ethnicity,
72 age, poverty, or religion shall be considered discrimination against
73 young farmers under this Act;

74
75 d) *Eco-warrior* refers to the staunch advocates of environmental protection
76 and practitioners of sustainable farming;

77
78 e) *Food Security* refers to the condition in which all people, at all times,
79 have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and
80 nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for
81 an active and healthy life;

82
83 f) *Family Farming* is a means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries,
84 pastoral, and aquaculture production which is managed and operated by
85 a family and predominantly reliant on family labor, including both women
86 and men;

87
88 g) *Lessee* refers to a person who, by themselves, or with the aid available
89 from within their immediate farm household, cultivates the land,
90 belonging to or lawfully possessed by another, with the latter's consent,
91 for purposes of agricultural production, for a price certain in money or in
92 produce or both. The term is distinguished from a civil lessee as
93 understood in the New Civil Code of the Philippines;

94
95 h) *Organic* refers to the particular farming and processing system,
96 described in the standards and not in the classical chemical sense. The
97 term "organic" is synonymous in other languages with "biological" or
98 "ecological". It is also a labeling term that denotes products considered
99 organic based on the Philippine National Standards for organic
100 agriculture;

101
102 i) *Organic Agriculture* refers to all agricultural systems that promote the
103 ecologically sound, socially acceptable, economically viable, and
104 technically feasible production of food and fibers. Organic agriculture
105 dramatically reduces external inputs by refraining from the use of
106 chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and pharmaceuticals. It also covers
107 areas such as, but is not limited to, soil fertility management, varietal
108 breeding and selection under chemical and pesticide-free conditions, the
109 use of biotechnology, and other cultural practices that are consistent with
110 the principles and policies of this Act, and enhance productivity without
111 destroying the soil and harming farmers, consumers and the
112 environment as defined by the International Federation of Organic

Agricultural Movement (IFOAM): *Provided*, That the biotechnology herein referred to shall not include genetically modified organisms or GMOs;

- j) *Sustainability* refers to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, as defined by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development;
- k) *Tenant* refers to a person who, themselves, or with the aid available from within their immediate farm household, cultivates the land belonging to, or possessed by another, with the latter's consent for purposes of production, sharing the produce with the landholder under the share tenancy system, or paying the landholder a price certain or ascertainable in produce or in money or both, under the leasehold tenancy system;
- l) *Young Farmer* refers to an individual whose primary source of income comes from agriculture, with an age range of 15-35 years old, who is an owner, tenant, lessee, or worker of the land in which they personally cultivate and till;
- m) *Red-tagging* refers to the practice of the State branding or maliciously blacklisting individuals or organizations, whether critical or not fully supportive of the government. They could be branded as anti-government, insurgents, and members of leftist groups.

CHAPTER III

Duties Related to the Rights of Young Farmers

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

- a) Recognize, promote, and protect the rights of young farmers defined and guaranteed under this Act;
- b) Lead initiatives to eliminate all forms of discrimination, coercion, and violence, including physical, verbal, sexual, emotional, psychological, spiritual, and cultural, affecting young farmers;
- c) Endorse farm products produced by young farmers for economic development nationwide;
- d) Promote and fulfill the rights of young farmers in all aspects, including but not limited to their rights to food security, education and training, access to land, social justice, employment, health services, and participation.

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

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

SEC. 6. Duties of Private Sector. – It is the duty of the private sector to support young farmers' agenda through social partnerships between people's organizations and industries. The private sector is encouraged to assist with reform mechanisms and rural development initiatives, including livelihood strategies sensitive to the plight of young farmers, as part of their corporate social responsibility.

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

CHAPTER IV Rights, Productivity, and Empowerment

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

a) Curriculum. – To ensure better quality education and training for young farmers and aspiring farmers, the following will be incorporated in curricula:

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

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

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

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

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

243 exempt from all taxes of whatever kind: *Provided*, however, That the
244 beneficiary guarantees that the land will be kept and maintained by him
245 or her for at least five (5) years.

- 246
- 247 c) Land and Farm Planning Management. – The DA, together with the
248 LGUs and other related agencies, shall provide full assistance to young
249 farmers, from the national scale down to community levels, regarding
250 farm planning and management to ensure maximum utilization,
251 production, profitability, and sustainability of their farms. The Department
252 shall utilize the existence of Farmer Field Schools and Agricultural
253 Extension Training Centers as learning sites to ensure full-scale
254 assistance to young farmers.

255

256 SEC. 12. *Access to Market Development Services*. – The State shall guarantee
257 the young farmer's rights to market spaces, farm-to-market roads, and other
258 mechanisms that will ensure that farm produce will reach the family table. In doing so,
259 the State shall provide the following:

- 260
- 261 a) Establishment of Farm-to-Market Roads (FMR). – The DA, DPWH, and
262 LGU shall endeavor to hasten the creation of farm-to-market as per the
263 Farm-to- Market Road Network Plan (FMRNP) and the Comprehensive
264 FMR National Master Plan 2020 to 2030.
- 265
- 266 b) Creation of a Provincial Market. – The DA Regional Office and the
267 Governor's Office shall establish a central market within each province.
268 These markets shall cater to all registered farmers of the different
269 municipalities of the province who wish to sell their farm produce.
- 270
- 271 c) Establishment of Municipal Cold Storage and Post-Harvest Facility. –
272 The DA, through the support of the LGU, shall ensure the establishment
273 of cold storage and post-harvest facilities that are accessible to the local
274 farmers.
- 275
- 276 d) National Young Farmers Roadmap. – The DA, through the National
277 Young Farmers Council, including its attached agencies and
278 corporations, in coordination with the Department of Agrarian Reform
279 (DAR), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR),
280 Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Science and
281 Technology (DOST), Department of Education (DepEd), National
282 Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), National Youth
283 Commission (NYC), Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), Commission
284 on Higher Education (CHED), National Anti-Poverty Commission
285 (NAPC), and all agricultural-related agencies attached under the Office
286 of the President (OP), shall formulate and implement a National Young

Farmers Plan within one hundred and twenty (120) days from the creation of the National Young Farmers Council. The roadmap shall serve as the convergence program of government line agencies to ensure the maximum role of young farmers in food security. It shall also present measures that will allocate a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice. The plan shall include the following:

1. A color-coded map of the national status of the country's food security;
2. Baseline data research on young farmers through a Young Farmers Registry System, which includes young farmers' socio-economic status;
3. Community-based Food Security Plan that shall identify viable food security systems, particularly in the roles of young farmers along the food value-supply chain; and
4. Index of programs of identified government agencies for the development of young farmers.

e) Young Farmer Community Seed Banks. – DA shall facilitate the selection, establishment, and management of strategic community-based seed banks to ensure sustainable food and agricultural resources for young farmers.

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

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

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

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

339
340 SEC. 17. *Strengthen Young Farmer Organizations.* – DA, together with DAR,
341 DTI, DOST, NYC, DepEd, CHED, and CDA, shall create a training module on
342 organizational management and development specific to the sensitivity and needs of
343 young farmer organizations within one hundred twenty (120) days upon the effectivity
344 of this Act to assist and provide young farmer organizations with capacity-building,
345 organizational management, and development schemes.

346
347 CHAPTER V
348 INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM
349

350 SEC. 18. *Creation of the National Young Farmers Council.* – There is hereby
351 created the National Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Council, which shall be attached
352 to the DA. The Council shall have the following powers and functions:

- 353
354 a) Formulate, recommend, and implement national policies, plans,
355 programs, and guidelines to ensure young farmers' empowerment,
356 productivity, and competitiveness in local and international trade.
357 b) Support and assist the DA and relevant government agencies in building
358 strong and harmonious partnerships with foreign counterparts and
359 relevant agencies, non-government organizations, and civic groups in
360 order to facilitate the implementation of strategies and programs for the
361 protection and promotion of the rights and well-being of young farmers.
362 c) Develop an online self-service portal for young farmers to access, apply
363 for, and implement the different DA programs and services.
364 d) Establish Young Farmer Coordinators in each municipality to direct
365 outreach and help young farmers access information on agricultural and
366 fisheries programs and services.
367 e) Spearhead the drafting and finalization of the National Young Farmers'
368 Roadmap.

369
370 SEC. 19. *Farm Insurance.* – Young Farmers shall automatically become
371 members of the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC) as protection from
372 losses of non-crop agricultural assets from force majeure.
373

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

377
378 SEC. 21. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within one-hundred twenty
379 (120) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DA shall, in coordination with Philippine
380 Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic
381 Resources (BFAR), DAR, DENR, DTI, DOST, DepEd, CHED, NYC, and NAPC and
382 with the participation of representatives from non-government organizations (NGO)
383 and civil society groups with a proven track record of involvement and promotion of
384 the rights and welfare of young farmers, issue the necessary rules and regulations for
385 the implementation of this Act.

386
387 SEC. 22. *Appropriation of Funds.* – The amount necessary for implementing
388 this Act shall be charged from the budget allocation of the DA, including its attached
389 agencies and corporations, DAR, DENR, DTI, DOST, DepEd, CHED, and NAPC.
390 Such amounts necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included
391 in the annual General Appropriations Act.

392
393 SEC. 23. *Separability Clause.* – If any section or provision of this Act is declared
394 invalid or unconstitutional, the sections or provisions not affected thereby shall
395 continue to be in full force and effect.

396
397 SEC. 24. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive and
398 administrative orders, letters of instruction, rules and regulations, or parts thereof
399 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended
400 accordingly.

401
402 SEC. 25. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its
403 publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the
404 Philippines.

Approved,