



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives

20th CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 11320



Introduced by Hon. Charisse Anne C. Hernandez

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The agriculture and fisheries sector remains fundamental to the Philippine economy and to the country's food security. Yet despite the sector's importance, farmers and fisherfolk continue to face persistent challenges in productivity, technology adoption, market access, climate resilience, and access to timely and appropriate technical assistance.

The latest data of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) show both the importance of the sector and the continuing need to strengthen the systems that support our agricultural producers. In 2025, the value of production in Philippine agriculture and fisheries reached approximately P1.79 trillion at constant 2018 prices. Agriculture, forestry, and fishing likewise grew by 3.1 percent in 2025 and accounted for 7.9 percent of the country's GDP. However, growth in the sector remains uneven. The PSA reported that in 2025, the value of livestock production declined by 2.3 percent, while fisheries production declined by 0.3 percent in value. The volume of crop production also registered a decline in the fourth quarter of 2025, with palay production down by 5.2 percent during the period.

The PSA's latest 2025 Official Poverty Statistics estimate that 9.7 percent of Filipinos, or approximately 11.08 million people, were living below the national poverty threshold in 2025. While national poverty has declined, poverty reduction must continue to reach the communities whose livelihoods depend heavily on agriculture and fisheries.

At the same time, the government already recognizes the importance of agricultural extension as a means of transferring knowledge, technology, skills, and innovations from government institutions, researchers, and other stakeholders directly to farmers and fisherfolk. The Agricultural Training Institute continues to conduct capacity-building programs for agricultural extension workers and has been strengthening digital planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the agriculture and fisheries extension system. In 2026, ATI undertook initiatives to strengthen the competencies of agricultural extension resource persons and improve the use of its extension planning and monitoring system. Despite these efforts, there remains a need for a stronger, more coherent, adequately funded, and professionalized national extension system.

The proposed measure therefore seeks to strengthen the national agriculture and fisheries extension system by transforming and strengthening the Agricultural Training Institute into a **Bureau of Agricultural Extension (BAE)** that will serve as the national apex organization for a unified and efficient extension system.

The measure provides for a national **Agricultural Extension Development Roadmap** covering ten (10) years, stronger coordination among the Department of Agriculture, Commission on Higher Education, state universities and colleges, local government units, national government agencies, farmers and fisherfolk organizations, civil society, and the private sector, and a more systematic delivery of education, training, technology transfer, farm and business advisory services, and other extension interventions.

It likewise seeks to professionalize agricultural extension work by establishing a dedicated plantilla of personnel, providing opportunities for training and scholarships, developing career paths, strengthening qualification standards, and providing appropriate incentives and benefits to agricultural and fisheries extension workers. Particularly important is the provision requiring a minimum of three (3) agricultural and fisheries extension workers in every municipality, while giving existing LGU extension workers the opportunity to join the national system without diminution of their existing benefits.

The proposed institutionalization of the Bureau of Agricultural Extension is therefore not simply an administrative reorganization. It is a strategic investment in the people who produce the country's food.

A strong agricultural sector requires not only seeds, machinery, irrigation, credit, infrastructure, and markets. It also requires people on the ground who can bring knowledge and technology to farmers and fisherfolk, understand their problems, connect them with institutions and markets, and help them adapt to changing economic, technological, and climatic conditions.

By strengthening the national agricultural and fisheries extension system, this measure seeks to ensure that government assistance reaches farmers and fisherfolk more effectively, that public investments in agriculture generate greater impact, and that Filipino agricultural producers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and support necessary to become more productive, competitive, resilient, and economically secure.

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


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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. **11320**

Introduced by Honorable Charisse Anne C. Hernandez

AN ACT
STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES EXTENSION
SYSTEM TO ACCELERATE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT,
CREATING THE BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION, AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR

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.**”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. — The goals of the 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 ensure the country's food security. It shall encourage and assist local food producers, particularly the multitude of small farmers and fisherfolk, in meeting the country's food requirements by equipping them with essential and applicable knowledge and building their capabilities.

To this end, the State shall strengthen initiatives for a sustained, efficient, and effective delivery of such interventions, by enlisting the broadest participation of all segments of society and guaranteeing the morale and welfare of those participating in such interventions. It shall strengthen the agricultural extension system to assist farmers and fisherfolk in production and post-production activities. It shall provide budgetary support to secure the country's food supply through an empowered and economically prosperous agricultural sector.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. — As used in this Act:

(a) **Agriculture and Fisheries Extension** refers to the system of support that equips farmers, fisherfolk, and other agriculture and fisheries stakeholders with knowledge, skills, and practices needed to improve their livelihoods and well-being; and plays a critical role in organizing, developing, strengthening, and transforming Farmers and Fisherfolk Cooperatives Associations (FFCAs) into viable, profitable, and bankable enterprises.

Agricultural extension encompasses activities that strengthen the technical, organizational, and managerial capacities of FFCAs and communities, enabling them to make informed decisions, adopt innovations, and enhance productivity and sustainability.

Consistent with the four (4) core services defined under Republic Act No. 8435, otherwise known as the “Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA),” agricultural extension includes training services, farm and business advisory services, technology demonstration, and information and communication support services that facilitate learning, innovation, and problem-solving;

(b) **Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Worker (AEW)** refers to a person who has acquired the necessary competencies for agricultural and fisheries extension through formal education, accreditation, or other legally recognized pathways, including the Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP), and who holds at least a bachelor's degree in agriculture, agricultural and biosystems engineering, agricultural economics, food technology, veterinary medicine, fisheries, or other related courses, including an agricultural technician or technologist and quarantine officer, and is registered or licensed with the Professional Regulation Commission or the Civil Service Commission, as applicable.

An AEW includes all personnel, whether under plantilla or contract of service, at the national, regional, and local levels, performing extension-related functions under the Department of Agriculture and the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), who perform direct technical assistance, facilitation, and capacity-building functions, including communication and information services, curriculum and training development, agricultural and coastal community organizing, econometric and statistical analysis, water and natural resource management, veterinary and animal health services, and other training and extension activities related to agricultural and fisheries production, trade, and processing, including crop and animal protection, food safety, agricultural and natural resource economics, and marketing.

For purposes of this Act, the terms “Agriculture Development Worker (ADW),” “Agriculture Extension Worker (AEW),” “Agriculture and Fishery Development Worker (A/FDW),” and “Agriculture and Fishery Extension Worker (A/FEW)” are used interchangeably;

(c) **Department** refers to the Department of Agriculture;

(d) **Local Development Hub (LDH)** refers to a farming zone or transport infrastructure, generally far from formal markets, that serves approximately five hundred (500) to one thousand (1,000) farmers, and links them to, among others, buyers, traders, processors, and export companies;

(e) **Roadmap** refers to a strategic, time-bound, specific, targeted, and measurable plan that defines a goal or desired outcome, which shall include the steps needed to reach such goal or outcome; and

(f) **Secretary** refers to the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture.

SEC. 4. Creation of the Bureau of Agricultural Extension. — The Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) is hereby transformed and strengthened into the **Bureau of Agricultural Extension (BAE)**, a line bureau of the Department, under the supervision of the Undersecretary for Operations. The BAE shall maintain physical offices at the national, regional, provincial, and municipal levels.

The BAE shall be headed by a Bureau Director and assisted by two (2) Assistant Directors at the national level, who shall head the Technical Service, and the Administration and Finance Service, respectively. It shall also be composed of such other personnel nationwide, as indicated in the plantilla under Section 9 of this Act.

The Bureau Director and the Assistant Directors shall have at least ten (10) years of experience in the fields of agricultural or fishery education, research, or training, while regional directors shall have at

least five (5) years of such experience. They shall be appointed by the President, upon the recommendation of the Secretary.

SEC. 5. Powers and Functions. — The BAE shall:

- (a) Serve as the national apex organization for a unified and efficient agriculture and fisheries extension system. 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;
- (b) Provide education and training to BAE personnel, particularly those engaged in grassroots education and training, to strengthen their professional competence and development, and enhance their knowledge and expertise, which shall, in turn, be shared with farmers and fisherfolk;
- (c) Conduct and administer to farmers and fisherfolk education and training activities in the fields of collective organizing and undertaking, production skills and techniques, product value-adding, value and supply chain concepts and practices, agri-entrepreneurship, agri-industrialization, export readiness, Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, transfer of information and technology, digital farming, sustainable environment, and climate change resilience, among others;
- (d) Establish and maintain working relationships with state universities and colleges (SUCs) at the national and local levels, local government units (LGUs), business groups, non-government organizations (NGOs), and other entities that can contribute to the enrichment of BAE's education and training system, and in turn, derive benefits from the products and outputs of local farmers and fisherfolk;
- (e) Craft, enrich, and maintain the Roadmap for Agricultural Extension Development, in collaboration with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), SUCs, business groups, and civic organizations, among others;
- (f) Utilize outputs of centers of research excellence, in collaboration with agricultural and fisheries SUCs for the implementation of programs and projects in extension innovations, national training, impact assessment, monitoring, and evaluation;
- (g) Provide leadership in the development and implementation of a national system for strengthening institutional extension capacities at all levels;
- (h) Conduct studies and establish and maintain databases on agricultural and fisheries extension and development; and
- (i) Exercise all other powers necessary to achieve the purposes of this Act.

SEC. 6. Agricultural Extension Development Roadmap. — Within one hundred twenty (120) days from the effectivity of this Act, the BAE, in collaboration with the CHED and the agricultural and fisheries SUCs, shall finalize the ten (10)-year Roadmap for Agricultural Extension Development. The Roadmap shall serve as both a guide to the implementation of its programs and projects and as a means of apprising and educating the public of the mission and work of the BAE. The Roadmap may be updated earlier than the end of its ten (10)-year period, as circumstances may warrant.

The Roadmap shall contain, among others, measurable performance indicators, annual implementation targets, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, periodic review provisions, and annual projected budgetary requirements, including the establishment of the Local Development Hub.

The Department shall allocate the required budget to formulate and update the Roadmap.

SEC. 7. Authority of the Secretary. — Upon the recommendation of the Undersecretary for Operations and the BAE Director, the Secretary shall have the authority to create advisory, coordinative, or similar composite bodies or councils from within or outside the Department, through interdepartmental or inter-agency collaboration, to assist in and strengthen the BAE's service delivery. The Secretary is hereby authorized to allocate funds for the creation and operation of such bodies. The heads of the other departments or agencies are likewise authorized to allocate funds for the same purpose, subject to relevant budgeting laws, rules, and regulations.

In the interest of economy and efficiency, the Secretary is authorized to reorganize the Department's internal offices to determine whether existing offices should be integrated into the establishment of the BAE, subject to the provisions of Republic Act No. 12231, or the "Government Optimization Act," and other applicable laws, without diminution of vested rights, benefits, and security of tenure of affected personnel.

SEC. 8. CHED and the Agricultural and Fisheries SUCs. — The CHED and the agricultural and fisheries SUCs are hereby mandated to collaborate with the BAE in delivering extension services to local farmers and fisherfolk. They shall provide assistance to the overall thrust of agricultural extension through education and training curricula enrichment, transfer of knowledge and skills, sharing of outputs of applied research, actual conduct of trainings, and provision of venue for extension-related activities, among others.

Upon the effectivity of this Act, the Department, CHED, and the agricultural and fisheries SUCs shall integrate their respective internship and on-the-job student programs into the overall extension system of the BAE.

The Department, CHED, BAE, and the agricultural and fisheries SUCs shall enter into Memoranda of Agreement or other similar instruments to implement their collaboration under this Act. The CHED and the agricultural and fisheries SUCs shall allocate the necessary funds for the fulfillment of this mandate.

SEC. 9. Plantilla of BAE Personnel. — The BAE shall have a plantilla of positions consisting of a Bureau Director, two (2) Assistant Directors, Regional Director, Provincial Agricultural Extension Officer (PAEO), Assistant PAEO, and AEWs. The Department shall determine the details of the plantilla positions which shall include a minimum of three (3) AEWs in every municipality in the country.

The AEWs currently employed by LGUs who opt to join the BAE shall be given preference in the filling of plantilla positions. Their absorption into the BAE shall not, in any way, result in the diminution of benefits already received as an AEW.

Consistent with Republic Act No. 12215, or the "Philippine Agriculturist Act," the basic salary grade for Agriculturist I shall be Salary Grade 13 in the updated Salary Schedule for civilian government personnel.

SEC. 10. Training and Scholarship Programs. — The Department, through the BAE, shall undertake training and scholarship programs for AEWs, for which the National Government shall provide adequate budgetary support.

Consistent with its mandate and subject to existing laws, rules, and regulations, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) shall assist the BAE in the development and implementation of technical-vocational, competency-based, and certification programs for AEWs, farmers, and fisherfolk.

SEC. 11. Other Compensation and Benefits. — AEWs shall be entitled to the following additional compensation and benefits:

(a) **Representation and Transportation Allowance.** — All agricultural extension officers and workers shall be entitled to appropriate representation and transportation allowance (RATA) in accordance with existing regulations.

(b) **Hazard Allowance.** — All AEWs assigned to difficult, strife-torn, or embattled areas; distressed or isolated stations; animal/plant/fisheries breeding stations; plant nurseries; plantations and demonstration farms; laboratories, particularly those handling x-rays, radioisotopes, chemicals, among others; sea-borne patrols; construction and installation of agricultural infrastructure projects; and areas under a state of calamity or emergency which exposes AEWs to great danger and occupational risks to life shall be compensated with hazard allowance equivalent to at least twenty percent (20%) of the monthly basic salary.

(c) **Subsistence Allowance.** — AEWs required to render services in communities, institutions, animal and plant breeding nurseries, plantations and demonstration farms, and other programs and projects of the Department and whose duties require the continuous availability of their services, 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 percent (5%) of the monthly basic pay shall be paid to an AEW for every three (3) years of continuous, efficient, and meritorious services rendered.

(e) **Clothing Allowance.** — All AEWs shall be entitled to a clothing allowance in accordance with laws and regulations.

(f) **Free Living Quarters or Quarters Allowance.** — All AEWs who are on tour of duty and those who are forced to stay in the institution or community because of unavoidable circumstances shall receive quarters allowance which shall be reviewed periodically and adjusted accordingly.

(g) **Salary Increase Three (3) Months Prior to Compulsory Retirement.** — All AEWs in regular plantilla positions shall be granted salary increase corresponding to one (1) salary range or grade higher than his/her basic monthly salary. This shall serve as the basis for his/her retirement and terminal leave benefit under existing laws.

(h) **Salary Step Increment for Completion of a Postgraduate Degree.** — All AEWs in regular plantilla positions shall be entitled to one (1) salary step increase to be integrated into the basic salary, in recognition of his/her efforts towards professional advancement.

(i) **Motor and Vehicle Loan.** — All AEWs shall be entitled to avail of the motor and vehicle loan of the Department. The National Government shall provide adequate budgetary support for this purpose.

SEC. 12. Professionalization of Extension Services. — The BAE, in coordination with the CSC, shall develop qualification standards for the managerial, technical, and non-technical positions in the extension services that are higher than the minimum standards prescribed by the CSC. It shall also develop a career path for all technical extension personnel to enable their vertical advancement within the promotion system.

To this end, the BAE shall issue guidelines for the creation of a merit promotion board that will include representatives from civil society organizations and agricultural and fisheries SUCs.

SEC. 13. Criteria for Incentives and Rewards System. — The BAE shall develop an incentives and rewards system for AEWs under this Act to encourage their retention in the service, promote productivity, and recognize their exemplary performance. The Department shall allocate the budgetary requirement for incentives and rewards.

SEC. 14. Code of Conduct. — All AEWs shall be governed by a Code of Conduct consistent with law, morals, safety, health, public policy, and public order. The Code of Conduct shall be prepared by the Secretary in consultation with their recognized national associations.

SEC. 15. The Farmer-to-Farmer Approach. — The farmer-to-farmer approach to agricultural extension is hereby institutionalized. It shall refer to a modality where farmers or fisherfolk systematically learn new knowledge or skills from their successful peers to improve the productivity and income of their own enterprises.

The BAE, in cooperation with centers of research excellence and interested LGUs, shall take the lead in developing a highly flexible and innovative system for the implementation of this approach. It shall pilot the approach until its integration into the national system within ten (10) years.

For the initial implementation of this section, the amount of Twenty million pesos (P20,000,000) is hereby appropriated for the first year. Thereafter, the amount shall be adjusted accordingly, taking into account the needs and response of the LGUs and NGOs.

SEC. 16. Appropriations. — For the first year of implementation of this Act, the amount of Ten billion pesos (P10,000,000,000) shall be appropriated for personnel services, operations, and capital outlay requirements of BAE. It shall be sourced from the total budget of the Department.

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is hereby mandated to include in the President's annual expenditure program for submission to Congress and to ensure the release of an amount not less than Ten billion pesos (P10,000,000,000) 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) of this amount shall be allocated for the salaries of extension personnel and the operations of the BAE. The Department is hereby tasked to rationalize its budget to meet the requirements of this Act.

The BAE may utilize a portion of its annual appropriation to establish or upgrade necessary facilities to improve the delivery of national extension services. All assets, resources, personnel, and funds of the ATI shall be transferred to the BAE.

All revenues generated from the use of its services, facilities, and equipment shall be utilized by the BAE to augment its maintenance and operating expenditures.

SEC. 17. Phased Implementation. — The implementation of this Act shall be phased over a period of five (5) years.

SEC. 18. Oversight Committee. — The Congressional Oversight Committee on Agricultural and Fisheries Modernization (COCAFM) shall oversee the implementation of this Act for a period not exceeding five (5) years from its effectivity. For this purpose, the BAE shall submit to the COCAFM an annual report on the implementation of this Act, including fund utilization, performance outcomes, progress in achieving the targets under the Roadmap, and key implementation challenges.

SEC. 19. Implementing Rules and Regulations. — The rules and regulations necessary for the effective and efficient enforcement of the provisions of this Act shall be formulated by the Department, in coordination with **the** CHED, relevant national government agencies, LGUs, SUCs, the private sector, farmers and fisherfolk organizations, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders, and shall be implemented within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

The IRR shall include, among others, the phased implementation of the transition from the ATI to the BAE, personnel transition mechanisms, asset and resource transfer procedures, institutional coordination protocols, qualification standards, and safeguards to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of agricultural and fisheries extension services.

Unjustified or willful failure or refusal of the concerned government agencies to promulgate the IRR within the specified period shall subject the heads of these government agencies to administrative penalties under applicable civil service laws.

Should the IRR contain provisions that are contrary to this Act, the heads of the government agencies responsible for such provisions, when done in bad faith or with gross negligence, shall be held administratively liable.

SEC. 20. Separability Clause. — If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder hereof not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 21. Repealing Clause. — All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, letters of instruction, proclamations, or administrative regulations that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 22. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.