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Enriched copra meal production for animal feed targeted for Q4

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#### PHILSTAR

THE Department of Agriculture said it has set a fourth-quarter target for commencing commercial production of protein-enriched copra meal (PECM) to reduce the need to import animal feed.

“It aims to replace feed, particularly soya. We import a lot of soya. Soya is around 20-40% of the feed ratio,” National Livestock Program (NLP) Director Ruth S. Sonaco told reporters last week.

“If we can replace it with protein-enriched copra meal, there would be a huge difference in feed cost, around 40% less,” she added.

Copra meal is a by-product of the coconut oil extraction process.

The United States Department of Agriculture projected Philippine imports of soybean meal at 2.90 million metric tons (MT) this year, up from an initial forecast of 2.87 MT.

Copra meal production is expected to decline to 1 million MT from 1.13 MT in the previous year due to falling copra output.

Prices of feed grain have been affected due to the Russia-Ukraine war. The two countries are among the top suppliers of feed grains.

“The DA perceives PECM as a possible avenue (for easing) the pressure brought by feed inflation, and thereby cushion the effects of unprecedented feed cost spikes on small, medium to large scale farmers,” the department said in memorandum circular.

According to Ms. Sonaco, the construction of two production facilities is ongoing in Batangas and North Cotabato, targeted for completion within the next two quarters.

Each facility has a budget of P50 million while another two facilities are set to be established next year, she said.

In November, the Department of Budget and Management approved the allocation of P69.7 million to support the project.

#### POULTRY OUTLOOK

Ms. Sonaco said that the poultry industry’s recovery is outpacing that of livestock.

“The recovery is easier in poultry because remember, broilers only need 28 days. Even if they are culled, poultry farms recover fast,” she said.

The NLP projects chicken this year to be in surplus by about 557,000 MT, equivalent to 128 days of chicken demand.

Domestic production of chicken is expected to hit 2.08 million MT on a liveweight basis, with demand at nearly 1.6 million MT.

The Bureau of Animal Industry said six barangays currently have active cases of type H5N1 avian influenza (AI) as of April 20.

Since the first AI outbreak in January last year, the Philippines has recorded cases in 160 barangays across nine regions. — Sheldeen Joy Talavera

CEDTyClea  
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