



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



EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3371

Introduced by Representative Sharon S. Garin

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is still a primarily agricultural country, with around 39.8% of the entire country's labor force employed in any of the four (4) agricultural sub-sectors, namely farming, fisheries, livestock and forestry, and the sector contributing around 20% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

With the great contribution of agriculture to our nation's development, it is only proper that the government give prime importance to projects and programs that support this sector. And support it it has, as evidenced by the countless programs coursed through the Department of Agriculture and other related agencies. Some of these support go directly to the farmers, in the form of social and financial aid, and others are for the development of the industry, to create a more efficient and profitable agriculture sector.

But whatever assistance the government provides, it shall be for naught if these services are not properly delivered to the intended beneficiaries. At the forefront of these services are the local city/municipal/provincial agricultural development workers that provide a bridge between farmers and the government. Recent trends however, show that most of these local positions are left vacant by LGUs in an effort to save money which result in a less efficient delivery of agricultural support.

This bill seeks to strengthen the rights of agricultural development workers, giving them additional benefits in terms of compensation, proper working hours, and other various incentives and rewards. These positions include the following: Agricultural Technicians, Agriculturists, Aquaculturists, Nutritionists, Agricultural Engineers, Agricultural Technologists, Fisheries Officers in the city, municipal and provincial levels.

A better and more efficient delivery of government assistance would lead to a more vibrant agricultural sector.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly requested.



SHARON S. GARIN
AAMBIS-Owa Partylist



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**AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A MAGNA CARTA OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
WORKERS**

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

ARTICLE I

TITLE OF THE ACT AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

SECTION 1. Title. — This Act shall be known as the "Magna Carta of

Agricultural Development Workers."

13 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is hereby declared a policy of the State to
14 accelerate the development and modernization of Philippine agriculture and improve
15 the economic and social well-being of agricultural development workers as well as
16 their working conditions and employment status. The State shall likewise develop their
17 skills, knowledge, orientation and capabilities so that they will become more
18 responsive and effective in providing the necessary Services for countryside
19 development.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.*

21 a) *Agricultural Development Workers* – shall mean all persons who are engaged
22 in agricultural development activities and all persons employed in the
23 Department of Agriculture including its bureaus and attached agencies. Local

1 Government Units (LGUs) and concerned government and private institutions,
2 and shall include aquaculturists, veterinarians, agricultural engineers,
3 nutritionists, agricultural extension workers, agricultural technicians and
4 operators, allied agricultural professionals, administrative and support
5 personnel employed regardless of their employment status.

- 6 b) *Agriculturist* – shall refer to a person who is a graduate of a four year course in
7 agriculture or any related course performing any of the specialized activities
8 such as agronomy, horticulture, animal husbandry, entomology, plant
9 pathology, plant breeding, agricultural economics, agricultural extension and
10 marketing.
- 11 c) *Veterinarian* – shall refer to a person registered with the Professional
12 Regulation Commission performing professional activities on veterinary
13 services such as disease prevention control, animal health care, etc.
- 14 d) *Agricultural Engineer* – shall refer to a person registered with the Professional
15 Regulation Commission performing engineering activities in agriculture,
16 particularly on areas of farm power and machinery, irrigation and drainage, Soil
17 and water conservation, agricultural buildings and infrastructure, agricultural
18 processing and post-harvest facilities.
- 19 e) *Aquaculturist* – shall refer to a person who is a graduate of a four year course
20 in fisheries and performing activities on fisheries and aquaculture and fishery
21 production and processing.
- 22 f) *Nutritionist* – shall refer to a person registered with the Professional Regulation
23 Commission performing activities related to dietary and proper nutrition.

- g) *Agricultural Technician* – shall refer to a trained or skilled agricultural worker but not necessarily a college graduate, performing activities Such as plant/nursery propagator, plant breeder, farm mechanic, etc.
 - h) *Agricultural Extension Worker* – shall refer to an agriculturist, veterinarian, agricultural engineer, aquaculturist, nutritionist or home extensionist who helps farmers and fishermen in the promotion of agricultural and fisheries development plans, programs and projects through the use of extension methodologies, concepts and principles.
 - i) CSC – refers to the Civil Service Commission.
 - j) DOLE – refers to the Department of Labor and Employment.
 - k) NLRC – refers to the National Labor Relations Commission.
 - l) DA – refers to the Department of Agriculture.
 - m) LGU – refers to the Local Government Unit.

ARTICLE II AGRICULTURAL SERVICE CAREER DEVELOPMENT

SEC 4. Magna Carta for Agricultural Development Workers

17 **Committee.** – The Magna Carta for Agricultural Development Workers Committee,
18 hereafter referred to as the Committee, shall be constituted under the Office of the
19 President and composed of the following:

- 20 a) Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA);
 - 21 b) Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG);
 - 22 c) Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE);
 - 23 d) Commissioner of the Civil Service Commission (CSC);
 - 24 e) Representative of the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC);
 - 25 f) Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM);

1 g) Representative from recognized national association of Agricultural
2 Development
3 Workers.

4 **SEC. 5. Professionalization of Agricultural Services.** – The State shall
5 support the development and professionalization of agricultural services by providing
6 the necessary compensation and benefits to various agricultural development workers
7 based on their duties, responsibilities and qualifications. For this purpose, the
8 Committee, particularly the Civil Service Commission in coordination with the
9 Department of Budget and Management, Department of Agriculture, Department of
10 Interior and Local Government and the recognized national associations of agricultural
11 development workers shall review the existing functions, responsibilities, position titles
12 and qualifications of the agricultural development workers employed at the
13 Department of Agriculture, Local Government Units and concerned government
14 agencies, and match them with appropriate position titles and compensation:
15 *Provided*, that the following benchmark position titles of agricultural development
16 workers with corresponding salary grades shall be used.

	<u>Position</u>	<u>Salary Grade</u>
17		
18	Agricultural Technician I	11
19	Agriculturist	12
20	Aquaculturist I	12
21	Nutritionist I	12
22	Veterinarian I	13
23	Agricultural Engineer I	13
24	Agricultural Technologist	15
25	City Agricultural Engineer	24

1	City Veterinarian	24
2	City Agriculturist	24
3	City Fishery Officer	24
4	Municipal Agriculturist	24
5	Municipal Veterinarian	24
6	Municipal Agricultural Engineer	24
7	Municipal Fisheries Officer	24
8	Provincial Agricultural Engineer	26
9	Provincial Agriculturist	26
10	Provincial Veterinarian	26
11	Provincial Fisheries Officer	26

12 SEC. 6. Mandatory Positions of Agricultural Development Workers in the

13 Local Government Units. – The creation of the following positions is hereby made
14 mandatory in addition to the prescribed position under the Local Government Code of
15 1991:

- 16 a) Provincial Agricultural Engineer;
- 17 b) Provincial Fisheries and Aquacultural Officer;
- 18 c) City Agriculturist;
- 19 d) City Agricultural Engineer;
- 20 e) City Veterinarian;
- 21 f) City Fisheries and Aquacultural Officer;
- 22 g) Municipal Agriculturist;
- 23 h) Municipal Agricultural Engineer;
- 24 i) Municipal Veterinarian;
- 25 j) Municipal Fisheries and Aquacultural Officer.

1 *Provided*, that in the case of fourth (4") class LGUs, financial subsidy shall be
2 provided by the national government for the personnel services needed in the hiring
3 of the above mentioned mandatory position: *Provided further*, That the funding
4 requirement shall be incorporated in the annual appropriations of the Department of
5 Agriculture.

6 **SEC. 7. Recruitment and Qualifications.** - The selection and appointment of
7 agricultural development workers shall be in accordance with the merit and fitness
8 principle: *Provided*, that he/she has the appropriate civil service eligibilities and/or
9 professional license, educational qualification, skills and experiences.

10 **SEC. 8. Performance Evaluation and Merit Promotion.** - The Committee,
11 particularly the Secretary of Agriculture upon consultation with the Civil Service
12 Commission and the recognized national associations of Agricultural Development
13 Workers shall prepare a uniform career and personnel development plan applicable to
14 all Agricultural Development Workers. Such career and personnel development plan
15 shall include provisions on merit promotion, performance evaluation, in-service
16 training grants, job rotation and incentives awards system.

17 **SEC. 9. Transfer of Geographical Reassignment of Agricultural Officers
18 and Employees.** – No transfer or geographical reassignment shall be made or
19 effected without a written notice to the agricultural development worker concerned
20 stating therein the reason for such: *Provided*, that said written notice shall be made
21 thirty (30) days prior to the date of transfer or reassignment: *Provided further*, that if
22 the employee concerned disagrees with the order of transfer or reassignment, he/she
23 may appeal said order with the Civil Service Commission or the Department of Labor
24 and Employment, as the case may be: *Provided further*, that pending appeal, such
25 transfer or reassignment shall be held in abeyance: *Provided furthermore*, that no

1 transfer or reassignment whatsoever shall be made three (3) months prior to any local
2 or national elections: *Provided finally*, that the necessary expenses of the transfer
3 and/or reassignment of the agricultural worker or employee and his/her immediate
4 family shall be paid by the Government.

5 **SEC. 10. Security of Tenure.** – An agricultural worker holding a permanent
6 position shall not be terminated except for cause: *Provided*, that in the event the
7 agricultural development worker is found to be unjustly dismissed by the Civil Service
8 Commission, he/she shall be entitled to reinstatement without loss of seniority rights
9 and back wages with twenty per centum (20%) interest to be computed from the time
10 compensation is withheld up to the reinstatement.

11 However, if the agricultural worker does not desire to be reinstated, he/she shall
12 be entitled to back wages and separation pay with twenty per centum interest.

13 **SEC. 11. Discrimination Prohibited** – An agricultural worker shall not be
14 discriminated by reason of creed, sex, political belief civil status, and ethnic grouping
15 in the exercise of his/her profession.

16 **SEC. 12. No Understaffing and/or Overloading of Agricultural Workers.** –
17 There shall be no understaffing and/or overloading of agricultural workers. The ratio of
18 staff to clientele shall be such as to reasonably effect a sustained quality of agricultural
19 service at all times without overworking the agricultural development workers and
20 over-extending their services.

21 Only qualified professional and eligible agricultural workers shall occupy the
22 agriculturist and other agriculture-related positions in all government agricultural
23 agencies and institutions and/or government-owned and controlled corporations:
24 *Provided*, that the government shall allocate the necessary funds for the hiring of

1 additional agricultural development workers in cases of over-loading of personnel in
2 specific areas of assignment.

3 **SEC. 13. Safeguards in Administrative Proceedings.** – In every
4 administrative proceeding, an Agricultural Worker shall have:

- 5 a) the right to be informed of the charges;
- 6 b) the right to full access to evidence against him/her;
- 7 c) the right to defend himself/herself through counsel of his/her choice;
- 8 d) the right to be given adequate time to prepare his/her case, which shall in no
9 case exceed twenty (20) days;
- 10 e) the right to appeal to designated authorities;
- 11 f) the right to cross-examine witnesses and to processes for the production of
12 witnesses;
- 13 g) the right to reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred in his/her defense
14 in case of exoneration or dismissal of the charges; and
- 15 h) such other rights provided by other national agencies and local government
16 units to their respective officers and employees to ensure fairness and
17 impartially in prosecution.

18 **SEC. 14. Code of Conduct.** – All agricultural workers must be guided by a
19 code of ethics not contrary to law, morals, Safety, health, public policy and public order.
20 The code of conduct of agricultural development workers shall be prepared by the
21 Secretary of Agriculture in consultation with the recognized national associations of
22 agricultural development workers.

23 **SEC. 15. Normal Hours of Work.** - The normal hours of work of an agricultural
24 development worker shall not exceed eight (8) hours a day or forty (40) hours a week.
25 Hours of work shall include:

- a) the time the agricultural workers is required to be on active duty or to be at a prescribed workplace;
 - b) the time which an agricultural worker is permitted to work; and
 - c) the time which an agricultural worker is required to work in a place other than the prescribed workplace.

6 **SEC. 16. Overtime Work.** - Where the exigencies of the service so require, any
7 agricultural development worker, whether in government or non-government service,
8 may be required to render Service beyond the normal eight (8) hours a day, inclusive
9 of Saturday and Sunday and non-working holidays. In such cases, the agricultural
10 development worker shall be given additional compensation in accordance with
11 existing laws on the matter.

SEC. 17. Training and Scholarship Program. - The Committee, particularly the Department of Agriculture through its scholarship committee and the Agricultural Training Institute shall undertake trainings and scholarship programs for the agricultural development workers, which shall be given adequate budgetary support by the Government.

17 **SEC. 18. *Married Agricultural Workers.*** – Whenever possible, the proper
18 authorities shall take steps to enable married couples both of whom are public
19 agricultural development workers, to be employed or assigned in the same
20 municipality.

ARTICLE III INCENTIVES AND REWARDS SYSTEM

SEC. 19. Criteria for Incentives and Rewards System. - The reward and incentive system for agricultural development workers provided under this Act, which will encourage them to stay in the service, promote their productivity and reward them for extraordinary performance shall be governed by the following criteria:

- 1 a) *Honorarium* - form of remuneration for services rendered beyond the
2 established workload of agricultural development workers whose broad and
3 superior knowledge and expertise contribute to agricultural productivity and
4 innovativeness;
- 5 b) *Incentive pay* – form of remuneration given to individuals whose services in
6 management, administration, policy making and support contribute to the
7 efficient and effective implementation of the agricultural and fisheries
8 programs of the government;
- 9 c) *Performance Bonus* - form of remuneration given to agricultural development
10 workers for performance that exceeds established targets; and
- 11 d) Other incentives that the Department of Agricultural and Local Government
12 may establish.

13 **SEC. 20. Other Compensation and Benefits.** – All agricultural development
14 workers shall be entitled to the following additional compensation and benefits:

- 15 a) *Representation Allowance and Traveling Allowance* – All
16 Provincial/City/Municipal Agriculturist, Veterinarians, Agricultural Engineers,
17 and Fisheries Officers shall be entitled to Representation Allowance and
18 Travelling Allowance (RATA) equivalent to the Department Head of the LGUs.
- 19 b) *Hazard Allowance* – All agricultural development workers assigned in difficult
20 areas, strife-torn or embattled areas, distressed or isolated stations,
21 animal/plant/fisheries breeding station, plant nurseries, plantations and
22 demonstration farms, laboratories especially those handling X-rays,
23 radioisotopes, chemicals, etc., sea-borne patrols, construction and installation
24 of agricultural infrastructure projects, and other areas declared under a state of
25 calamity or emergency which exposes them to great danger, occupational risks

1 or perils of life shall be compensated with hazard allowance equivalent to at
2 least twenty per centum (20%) of the monthly basic salary.

3 c) *Subsistence Allowance* – All agricultural development workers who are required
4 to render Services in the communities, institutions, animal and plant breeding
5 nurseries, plantations and demonstration farms and other barrier programs and
6 projects of the Department of Agriculture in order to make their services
7 available at all times, shall be entitled to full daily subsistence allowance of three
8 (3) meals, which shall be computed in accordance with the prevailing
9 circumstances.

10 d) *Longevity Pay* – A longevity pay equivalent to five per centum (5%) of the
11 monthly basic pay shall be paid to an agricultural worker for every (3) years of
12 continuous, efficient and meritorious services rendered.

13 e) *Clothing Allowance* – All agricultural development workers shall be entitled to a
14 clothing allowance in accordance with approved laws and regulations or as
15 mandated by law.

16 f) *Housing* – All agricultural workers who are in tour of duty and those who,
17 because of unavoidable circumstances, are forced to stay in the institution or
18 community with living quarters shall be entitled to such quarters for free:
19 Provided. That if such living quarters are not available, the workers shall receive
20 housing allowances: Provided further, That said allowance shall be reviewed
21 periodically and adjusted for inflation.

22 g) *Compensation for injuries* – Agricultural development workers shall be
23 protected against work-related injuries in accordance with the Labor Code or
24 the Civil Code as the case may be.

h) *On-Call Pay* – In cases of "On-Call" status, the agricultural development worker shall be entitled to an "On-Call" pay equivalent to fifty per centum (50%) of his/her regular wage. On-Call status refers to a condition when an agricultural officer or employee is called upon to respond to an urgent or immediate need or relief work during emergencies such that the agricultural Worker cannot utilize his/her time for personal needs: Provided. That no agricultural worker shall be placed in an "On-Call" status beyond seven (7) days.

i) *Motor and Vehicle Loan* – All agricultural development workers shall be entitled to avail of the motor and vehicle loan of the Department of Agriculture. The government shall provide adequate budgetary support for this purpose.

ARTICLE IV MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SEC. 21. Right to Join Organizations. – Agricultural Development Workers

14 shall have the right to freely join organizations or unions for purposes not contrary to
15 law, in order to protect their mutual interest and to seek redress of grievances through
16 peaceful concerted
17 activities.

SEC. 22. Freedom from Interference or Coercion. – It shall be unlawful for any person to commit any of the following acts of interference or coercion.

20 a) to require as a condition of employment that the agricultural development
21 worker shall not join an organization or union;

22 b) to discriminate in order to encourage or discourage membership in any
23 agricultural development workers organization or union;

24 c) to prevent an agricultural development worker from carrying out his duties and
25 functions in his/her organization or union or to penalize him/her for any lawful
26 action performed in that capacity;

- 1 d) to harass or intimidate an agricultural development worker or prevent him/her
2 from performing duties and functions; and
3 e) to perform acts that will diminish the independence and freedom of the union or
4 organization to direct its own affairs.

5 **SEC. 23. *Consultation*.** – The Committee shall consult professional and
6 Agricultural Workers Organizations or unions in formulating policies to govern the
7 welfare and security of the Agricultural Development Workers.

8 **SEC. 24. *Human Resource Development*.** – The Committee, including
9 Government and non-government agencies shall conduct human resource
10 development and management studies in the following areas:

- 11 a) Types and amount of facilities and resources to render quality agricultural
12 Service to the clientele;
13 b) Venue and opportunities for the agricultural development workers to grow and
14 develop their potentials and develop a sense of self-worth and dignity in their
15 work;
16 c) Mechanisms for democratic consultation;
17 d) Ways and means of giving rank-and-file agricultural development workers
18 viable opportunities for education, personal growth and development; and
19 e) Staffing patterns and standards of welfare for Agricultural Development
20 Workers welfare to ensure that they receive quality care.

21 **SEC. 24. *Rules and Regulations*.** – The Committee shall formulate and
22 prepare necessary rules and regulations in implementing the provisions of this Magna
23 Carta.

24 **SEC. 25. *Monitoring of Implementation*.** – The Committee shall monitor the
25 implementation of the provisions of this Act. Provided that, the Committee shall submit

1 semi-annual reports on the status of the implementation of this Act to the Committee
2 on Agriculture and Food of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

3 **SEC. 26. *Penal Provisions.*** – Any person who shall willfully interfere with,
4 restrain or coerce any agricultural development worker in the exercise of his/her rights
5 or shall violate any of the provisions of this Act shall upon conviction, be punished by
6 a fine of not less than Twenty Thousand Pesos (P20,000.00) but not more than Forty
7 Thousand Pesos (P40,000.00) or imprisonment of not more than one (1) year, or both,
8 at the discretion of the court.

9 If the offender is a public official, the court, in additional to the penalties provided
10 in the preceding paragraph, shall impose the additional penalty of disqualification from
11 office of such offending public official.

12 **SEC. 27. *Funding.*** – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this
13 Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its
14 enactment into law and every year thereafter.

15 **SEC. 28. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is declared
16 unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions thereof affected thereby shall continue
17 to be in full force and effect

18 **SEC. 29. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders,
19 rules and issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are
20 hereby repealed or modified accordingly.