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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

383

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. ____



Introduced by
BAYAN MUNA Party-List Rep. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE,
Rep. FERDINAND R. GAITE and Rep. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION,
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE SPREAD OF AFRICAN SWINE FEVER (ASF)
IN THE PHILIPPINES AND ITS POSSIBLE DISASTROUS EFFECTS ON THE
LOCAL HOG INDUSTRY

WHEREAS, based on records, the existence and outbreak of African Swine Fever or ASF dates back to the year 1907 in the African region and believed to have originated from the interaction of wild pigs and ticks. Settlers from Europe brought in breeding pigs to the African region with the intent of massive production. As pig farming grew in volume in the region, which was free range at the time, the susceptibility of contracting the deadly disease became imminent and evidently without any immediate cure. The emerging infectious disease became an epidemic when reports of the disease reaching the Iberian Peninsula, as far as Eastern and Western Europe, then parts of Asia and reaching across the Atlantic to the South American and Caribbean regions;

WHEREAS, in 2018, the disease re-occurred massively in Eastern and Western Europe until it hit the biggest producer, China and later to almost every Southeast Asian nation;

WHEREAS, when China was massively hit with the deadly disease as early as late 2018, all East Asian country switched to Code Red including the Philippines. The China outbreak sent chilling effects to every neighboring country hence strict quarantine programs and procedures were implemented by each host government in the hope of averting any contamination. In spite of those stringent measures applied to prevent entry of ASF in their respective AOR, the continuing inter and intra trading of live animals, meat carcass and other processed pork products within the Far East Asia region proved to be Damocles sword for the livestock industry in the region including the Philippines;

WHEREAS, after China in late 2018, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam were next to be infected with ASF in the first quarter of 2019 on a massive scale. The land-based cross border trading between these countries including Thailand, despite their preventive programs, accelerated the entry

of ASF into each of the host countries rendering their quarantine measures ineffective against the infectious disease. Millions of infected pigs in many of their respective provinces were condemned, burnt, killed and buried causing millions of economic losses to pig growers, job losses within and its allied industries, financial losses to traders, exporters and importers, closing down some livestock producers and stagnating growth of everything related to the industry;

WHEREAS, there has been no reported infected areas in Japan although unconfirmed reports about sporadic infections in Korea and Thailand abound;

WHEREAS, in the Philippines, as early as the late 2018, local industry leaders and agriculture officials have already been warned to take measures to prevent entry of the deadly disease;

WHEREAS, the then Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol was strongly urged to take every drastic preventive measure, if needed, so that its entry into the country would be averted and protect an estimated more than P143 trillion-industry with almost 120,000 farm workers affected all over the country;

WHEREAS, despite the supposed cooperation between concerned officials, particularly the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), and the leaders of the industry, it was no secret that the DA's inadequate courses of action, their lackadaisical implementation of preventive measures and its propaganda of trying to downplay the imminent danger posed by ASF contributed partly to the entry of the deadly disease;

WHEREAS, after relieving Secretary Piñol from his post, few days after confirming the presence of ASF, the burden of house cleaning rests upon his successor;

WHEREAS, ASF was actually a sleeping time bomb for the swine industry just waiting to explode. It was not a matter of how but a matter of when it hits. Since its confirmation by a British laboratory, every single player in the industry is panicking from the lowly farm hand to the CEOs of big companies involved in the industry;

WHEREAS, the preventive measures initiated and implemented by the DA together with industry players were not sufficient enough to parry the entry of ASF into the Philippines hence the finger pointing. It is now apparent that the deadly disease poses a massive threat to the whole swine industry including the pockets of everyone involved in the business of producing and selling pork;

WHEREAS, the following are the guidelines and preventive measures formulated by the DA and the industry leaders to block the entry of ASF:

1. Put in place a foot bath in all entry points all over the country including airports;
2. Confiscate all meat products coming from countries known to be infected with ASF;
3. Prevent entry of imported meat without import permits (smuggled);
4. Conduct a massive info campaign through mass media;
5. Report any suspicious symptoms similar to ASF disease;
6. Implement in house quarantine and disinfection program;
7. Constant monitoring of slaughterhouses and wet marketplaces; and
8. Confiscate pork meat without National Meat Inspection Commission (NMIC) markings;

97 **WHEREAS**, the following are the factors which the DA and the industry failed to check
98 deliberately or unconsciously:

- 99
- 100 1. Importation of meat and bone meal, meatmeal, bloodmeal, blood plasma and their
101 unregulated use in animal feeds;
- 102 2. Continuous importation of other products for swine from countries affected with ASF e.g
103 micro feed ingredients and raw materials from China other swine products from European
104 countries;
- 105 3. Ninety-five percent (95%) of backyard and commercial farms do not follow environmental
106 laws most specially in proper waste disposal. Most of them do not have a water treatment
107 process; and
- 108 4. Widespread use of banned drugs like salbutamol and phenbuterol for growing pigs. The DA
109 is inutile in regulating and policing swine growers from using these drugs;
- 110

111 **WHEREAS**, while Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) openly prohibits usage of porkmeal products
112 from ASF infected countries, the agency granted import permits for these importers. There are
113 many big import companies like K Pro, JSN Group of Companies, United Pharma Chem,
114 Feedmate, and a number of smaller companies that are continuously granted by the BAI with import
115 permits to import the abovementioned pork by-products as protein source;

116
117 **WHEREAS**, to circumvent regulations and avoid detection, these companies label their products as
118 produced in countries free of ASF but these are actually produced in ASF-infected countries in
119 Eastern Europe and then transported to their sister companies in neighboring European countries
120 for export to Philippines;

121
122 **WHEREAS**, these "meal" products are actually waste materials collected from several different
123 slaughterhouses all over Europe like blood, fatty tissues and bones livestock and poultry in nature.
124 These are produced in a process called rendering. Although producers and importers claim that
125 these are contaminant-free due to stringent quality control measures, the fact that the raw materials
126 are collected from several different slaughter houses in different places all over Europe does not
127 guarantee that these rendered products are free from any infectious disease or ASF for that matter;

128
129 **WHEREAS**, pig growers and feed millers are partly to blame too as they keep using these products
130 to produce finished feeds though knowingly aware that these "meal" products are collected from a
131 cocktail of sources anywhere intentionally ignoring the fact that there is possible contamination;

132
133 **WHEREAS**, the Philippine swine industry is estimated to have about 850,000 active sows in
134 commercial-sized piggery farms and 600,000 active sows in backyard piggery farms scattered all over
135 the country producing a combined estimated 3.50 million finishing pigs for meat consumption
136 annually. Commercial-sized piggery farms are classified as 300 sows or more while a backyard raiser
137 is any farm ranging from 1 sow to below 300 sows or those who raise 30-day old piglets to
138 commercial weight of at least 80 to 95 kgs;

139
140 **WHEREAS**, of the almost 120,000 farm hands, about 15,000 to 20,000 are directly hired by
141 backyard piggery farms not to count the labor force of commercial feed mills which produce 100%
142 of the backyard's feeds requirements and about 40% of the commercial farms;

143

WHEREAS, the total estimated size of the swine industry is about more than P143 trillion including sow and boar stock, finishing pigs, feed ingredients, veterinary meds, feed milling but excluding allied sectors directly involved like shipping, trucking, food processing, equipment fabricators and importers, consultancies, sales and services personnel of trading and production companies;

WHEREAS, the sheer size of the industry, which is always downplayed by industry players and underestimated by pundits, shows how it impacts the whole Philippine economy in case the industry goes down with the ASF as being currently experienced by China and Vietnam, two hardest hit Asian countries. China alone is estimated to have lost 1 million sows while Vietnam is said to have lost 80% of its pig population which is about 75% of the Philippine's;

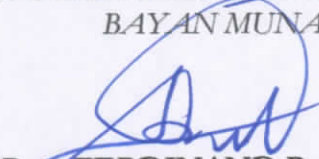
WHEREAS, the infected areas are a few towns in Bulacan and some in Rizal but given the proximity of pig growers within an area including the backyard raisers, the infection will most likely spread like wildfire. Most of the backyard growers with 30 or less heads to feed rely on pig swills and whose growing practices are devoid of any conformity with generally accepted operations may contribute to the spread of the deadly disease;

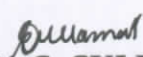
WHEREAS, appropriate measures like enforcing environmental laws, strict quarantine and hygienic measures, stoppage of the feeding with pig swills, implementation of complete vaccination program, stoppage the practice of in house slaughtering and complete stoppage of importation of "meal" pork products from infected countries, regulate importation of other requirements from China until such time it is clear with ASF;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the House of Representatives, through its Committee on Agriculture and Food to conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the spread of African Swine Fever on the Philippines and its possible disastrous effects on the local hog industry.

Adopted,


Rep. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
BAYAN MUNA


Rep. FERDINAND R. GAITE
BAYAN MUNA


Rep. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT
BAYAN MUNA