

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 1205



Introduced by Representative JUAN MIGUEL MACAPAGAL ARROYO

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE YOUNG FARMERS PROGRAM, PROVIDING
FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

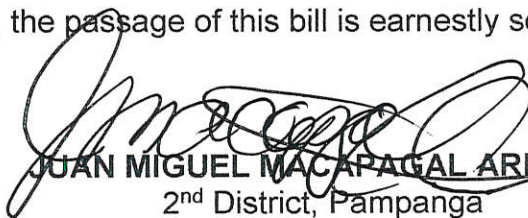
EXPLANATORY NOTE

Statistics show that despite the upsurge of the services sector and rapid worldwide industrialization in recent years, the Philippine agriculture sector remains foremost in the country's economy and national development. In 2006, agriculture, which is largely composed of farming and fisheries activities, employed nearly 11.78 million persons or about 32.4 percent of the labor force. The agriculture sector also contributes an average of 20% to the country's Gross Domestic Product.

This, notwithstanding, there remains huge tracks of unutilized and under – utilized farmlands in the country. This has been attributed to the lack of competent farmers and farm laborers. Also, it has been observed that the youth have become reluctant to venture in agriculture due to the false notion that farming is not a lucrative livelihood. Thus, for the past years, the Philippines has experienced a steady decline in the enrolment in agriculture courses and this trend is perceived to continue in the coming years.

In light of the status quo, the proposed Bill seeks to re-introduce the Filipino youth to farming and fishery as a means of livelihood. Specifically, the Bill mandates the creation of a scholarship program for agriculture and fisheries students as well as establish support mechanisms in agribusiness in exchange of extension services for farmers and fisherfolks.

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


JUAN MIGUEL MACAPAGAL ARROYO
2nd District, Pampanga

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

SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Young Farmers Program Act"

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to imbue among the Filipino youth a new perspective on farming and fishing, to provide them career guidance, to equip them with entrepreneurial skills and to maximize their learning from school-to-work opportunities in the university's academic, research and extension activities, to the country's agriculture and fishery sector.

SECTION 3. *Statement of Objectives.* - This Act shall have the following objectives:

- A. To attract incoming college students to choose and complete a field in agriculture and fishery as a college course;
- B. To prepare career options for students and graduates of agriculture and fishery courses;
- C. To involve agriculture and fishery students in the extension work of the university; and
- D. To support students, graduates and out-of-school youth with academic background in agriculture and fisheries in their entrepreneurial pursuits in agribusiness.

SECTION 4. *Definition of Terms.* – The following terms shall be defined under this Act as follows:

- A. "Program" refers to the Young Farmers Program or YFP as established under this Act;

B. "Young Farmers" refers to:

1. State colleges and universities (SCUs) enrollees with a commitment to finish college, diploma or certificate program in agriculture and fisheries under a socialized tuition fee scheme of the Young Farmers Program;
2. Bachelor degree, diploma or certificate course graduates of any fishery courses of SCUs and private colleges and universities enlisted by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)-National Agriculture and Fisheries System (NAFES) as members of the Young Farmers Program; and
3. Out-of-school youth who finished at least two finished at least two years of college education in agriculture and fisheries and are enlisted by the NAFES-SCUs as members of the YFP.

C. National Agriculture and Fisheries Education System (NAFES) refers to the integrated system of agriculture and fishery education covering both public and private institutions in all three levels of education chaired by the commission on Higher Education and created by the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997.

SECTION 5. *Implementation of the Program.* – The Extension Offices of the members of the National Agriculture and Fisheries System are hereby mandated to implement the Young Farmers Program.

The NAFES Committee shall oversee and monitor the implementation of the Program. It shall likewise promulgate the rules and regulations, implement and adopt procedures and guidelines to effectively carry out the program.

SECTION 6. *Role of LGUs.* – The LGUs shall endeavor to support the program through additional counterpart funding assistance. The Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO) shall identify farms of fishfarms in need of assistance to have not yet chosen laboratories of their own.

SECTION 7. *Role of SCU and Private Education Institutions.* – The NAFES-SCUs shall:

- A. Establish a Young Farmers Organization (YFO) out of their respective agriculture and fishery enrollees.
- B. Create a socialized tuition fee scheme for agriculture and fishery enrollees.
- C. Trace graduates and those who finished at least two years of their respective agriculture and fishery program and invite them to become members of the university/college YFO;
- D. Conceptualize and implement an extension partnership with the Provincial Agriculture Offices (PAOs) and Municipal Agriculture Offices;
- E. Conceptualize a career path for the young farmers as agriculture and fishery entrepreneurs, support their start-up agribusiness and forge a

contract of service with them stipulating their assistance to small farmers and fisherfolks in exchange of government support.

SECTION 8. *Funding.*- The sum of FIFTY MILLION PESOS (P50,000.000.00) is hereby appropriated out of any savings or unexpended balance in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated, to cover amount as shall be needed for the program shall be included in the budget of the SCUs. Amounts needed by CHED-NAFES. All funds currently being appropriated for the Young Farmers Program in the Department of Agriculture shall be transferred to CHED-NAFES. Moreover, the CHED-NAFES and the Agriculture Competitive Enhancement Fund (ACEF) National Committee shall develop a rationalization scheme to allot a portion of ACEF from both the seed fund as well from repayments of loans to the young Farmers Program. Scholarships of students in private college and universities shall be given in the form of voucher.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.*- If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance , executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or is inconsistent with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall effect thirty (30) days its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,