

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**3926**

House Bill No. \_\_\_\_\_



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Introduced by Congressman Alfred Vargas

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

According to the Food and Fertilizer Technology Center for the Asian and Pacific Region, the average age of farmers in the Philippines is pegged at 57 years old. Assuming an average life span of 70, a shortage of farmers is expected in 15 years. It is said that the Filipino youth tend to turn away from the agricultural profession because of the level of difficulty and the supposedly low income associated with farming. Moreover, the average level of education of a farmer is primary level only. This makes Filipino farmers less receptive to new farming technologies that can boost the industry. This poses a threat to food security in the country.

This bill seeks to attract the Filipino youth to the agriculture profession by creating a scholarship program for agriculture students. It also provides graduates with support mechanisms to pursue agri-entrepreneurship.

Through this initiative, we are not only ensuring that the new generation of Filipinos will have food on their tables but also secures the future of the Philippine agriculture industry.

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

  
**ALFRED VARGAS**

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**AN ACT**

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

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

SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Young Farmers Program Act of 2016.”

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, thus, inspiring and making them productive partners in the development of 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 the 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. Enrollees of state universities and colleges (SUCs) with a commitment to finish a 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 agriculture and fishery courses of SUCs 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 years of college education in agriculture and fisheries and are enlisted by the NAFES-SUCs as members of the YFP.
- c. The 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 or fish farms in need of assistance to become the field laboratory of currently enrolled Young Farmers in case they have not yet chosen laboratories of their own.

SECTION 7. *Role of SUCs and Private Education Institutions.* – The NAFES-SUCs 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 programs and invite them to become members of the university/college YFO;
- d. Conceptualize and implement an extension partnership with the Provincial Agricultural Offices;
- e. Conceptualize a career path for the young farmers as agriculture and fishery entrepreneurs, support their start-up agri-businesses and forge a contract of service with them stipulating their assistance to small farmers and fisher folks 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 the amounts needed for the initial year of implementation of this Act. Thereafter, such amount as shall be needed for the Program shall be included in the budget of the SUCs. Amounts needed by the CHED for the management of the program and those of the requirements of private colleges and universities for scholarships shall be released to the 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 Agricultural Competitive Enhancement Fund (ACEF) National Committee shall develop a rationalization scheme to allot a portion of ACEF from both the seed fund as well as from repayments of loans to the Young Farmers Program. The scholarship of students in private colleges and universities shall be given in the form of vouchers.

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 inconsistent with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

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

*Approved,*