

Govt, private sector team up to strengthen dairy industry

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Reporter

The government is partnering with the private sector in beefing up dairy herds to sustain the Philippine dairy industry's strong growth, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Monday.

In a statement, Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala said the National Dairy Authority (NDA) had been tasked to coordinate its programs with dairy farmers' groups and the National Dairy Confederation (DairyCon) to support the local dairy industry and meet its liquid-milk requirement.

"The NDA, in partnership with dairy farmers' groups and DairyCon, will embark on sustaining dairy herd build-up through the introduction, upgrading and preservation of local stock, augmented by the importation of dairy animals, embryos and equipment, and the establishment of more multiplier and grow-out farms," Alcala said.

According to him, these farms will be responsible for breeding, milk production and processing, including the rearing of male calves for fattening.

This, Alcala said, will result in the establishment of sustainable dairy enterprises and the animal-trading industry.

The agriculture chief's statement comes after the 16th National Dairy Congress and Exposition was held in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental province, on February 7. Five hundred farmers and industry stakeholders, as well as 60 exhibitors, attended the event.

NDA Administrator Oracio Cenas said the country has 45,606 dairy animals that produced 18.45 million liters of milk in 2012, or 12 percent more than the year before.

Cenas said local milk production had been growing at an annual average

of 7 percent in the last five years. She added, however, that this was still less than 1 percent of the country's total annual dairy requirement.

"Despite this, the future looks bright as the DA has increased the budget of the NDA to P267 million this year, P90 million more than in 2012," the NDA chief said.

"With this budget, the NDA will accelerate local dairy development, further increase fresh-milk production, provide dairy farmers (with) more income and livelihood, and supply Filipino consumers with quality fresh milk," she added.

On international cooperation, Cenas said the DA is finalizing a dairy-development agreement with New Zealand. The Philippines regularly imports to New Zealand dairy cows and various milk products that amounted to more than \$200 million in 2011.

"We are finalizing the terms of the project where we can share our support and expertise to upgrade the Philippines' milk production," New Zealand Ambassador to the Philippines Reuben Leverson said at the three-day congress.

The congress—spearheaded by the DA, NDA, DairyCon and the Negros Federation of Dairy Cooperatives—served as a venue for the country's dairy farmers and industry stakeholders to exchange ideas and forge partnerships.

The event also showcased the latest dairy technologies, as resource persons discussed various topics that included genetic improvement, herd build-up, reducing calf mortality, increasing cow-calf profitability, better management, disease prevention and control, forage and pasture development, dairy feeds and mineral supplementation, milk quality standards and collection system, modern development, feedration of farm animals, economics of goat production, health benefits and curative effects of goat's milk, and goat cheese production.

