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Biofuel expansion complements country's food self-sufficiency goal

Manila, Philippines – “Lands devoted to food crops shall not be utilized to biofuels production.”, declared by Mr. Marriz Agbon, President of the Philippine Agricultural Development and Commercial Corporation (PADCC), during the Asia Biofuel Investment Summit 2009 held last April 1, 2009 in Manila Diamond Hotel.

In his speech, he confirmed that the biofuel production would never bring conflict to the existing agro-initiatives of various stakeholders. In support to this claim, he presented the accomplishments of the Arroyo administration's FIELDS (Fertilizer, Irrigation and Other Infrastructure, Education and Extension, Loans, Dryers and Other Postharvest Facilities, Seeds and Other Genetic Materisl) program as of 2008 parallel to the development of the biofuel industry in the country.

Mr. Agbon reported the demand for biodiesel and bioethanol and its equivalent feedstock volume and area for production. “Projected lands requirement for biofuel production by 2014 is only at 660,000 has, some 5% of total food crops land.”, he identified. Further, he emphasized that the biofuel development program would not interfere with the country's food self-sufficiency.

Relative to this, he presented, through the DA-DAR-DENR Convergence Initiative, the food crops and biofuels feedstock production complementation scheme namely intercropping and crop rotation. “Our crop scientists are recommending intercropping with the end view of helping augment farmer's income through the utilization of spaces in between crops.”, Mr. Agbon explained. “This is now reflective of an effort towards an integrated approach to food and energy crops production, with food self-sufficiency as the primordial concern.”, he added.

The accreditation procedures for biofuel feedstock producers, the criteria for land certification, and the eligibility of potential biofuel producers were also enumerated during the presentation. Mr. Agbon informed the audience on the biofuels consumption in 2008. According to the Department of Energy, the CME biodiesel consumption summed up to 64M liters while bioethanol use reached 12.7M liters of sales volume.

He provided facts based on the biofuel projects monitoring from 2007 to 2009. The actual area requirement exceeded its target by 80.12 % while the area planted for biofuel crops only reached 1.77 % or 11,669 hectares in contrast to the 660,000 hectares target area.

“We realize the economic impact of this biofuels initiative on our farming communities.”, he uttered. The projected income for coconut farm is PhP 18,000 per hectare for copra production and PhP 22,579 for crude coconut oil production. Sugarcane, cassava, and sweet sorghum could generate an annual income of PhP 30,000, PhP 14,000, and PhP 69,000 per hectare respectively. By presenting the latest biodiesel and bioethanol accounts, Mr. Agbon encouraged the interested clients to not let the precious opportunity to invest pass them.

The summit was participated by different key players on the biofuel industry including Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri who gave his keynote speech; Sec. Angelo Reyes of the Department of Energy; Adm. Rafael Coscolluela of the Sugar Regulatory Authority and Vice-Chair of the National Biofuels Board; and Chairman Jose Maria Zabaleta of Bronze Oak and San Carlos Bioenergy.



Mr. Marriz B. Agbon assures that biofuel expansion will not create conflict on the existing agro-initiatives during the Asia Biofuel Investment Summit 2009 at the Amethyst Room, Manila Diamond Hotel last April 1, 2009.