

DA eyes pension plan for farmers

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The Department of Agriculture (DA) plans to implement a pension scheme for farmers and fishermen across the country.



Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Pinol said the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. (PCIC) ‘has started designing a pension program which would provide retirement benefits to millions of people who produce food for the country.’

“I have always emphasized that while government workers have the Government Service Insurance System and private company employees and self-employed workers have the Social Security System, farmers and fishermen are not covered by any pension fund,” Pinol said.

Initially called the Farmers and Fishermen’s Pension Fund (FFPF), the program is aimed at providing security to farmers and fishermen in the country who retire from food production work because of old age,” he added.

Piñol said the FFPF could be funded through the tariffs and duties imposed on imported agricultural and fisheries products which could be done through Congressional action.

“I asked PCIC to prepare the proposal for the pension fund so that it could be submitted to Congress for enactment into law,” Pinol said.

PCIC president Jovy Bernabe said they are now ironing out the details of the proposal including the budget needed but did not give a specific timeline.

The proposal follows the implementation of the Life and Accident Insurance program which provides financial benefits of up to P50,000.

PCIC primarily provides insurance protection to farmers against losses arising from natural calamities, plant diseases and pest infestations of palay, corn and other crops.

Meanwhile, Vice President Leni Robredo is urging the government to consider giving more subsidies to rice farmers nationwide.

Speaking to reporters following a dialogue with stakeholders in Bulacan, Robredo proposed providing more funds to the National Food Authority (NFA) to enable it to buy rice from local

farmers at a higher price.

“My proposal is for the government to subsidize the NFA so it can buy from farmers (beyond the current rate of P17 per kilo),” Robredo said.

Robredo said investing in Filipino farmers is a significant step towards addressing the possibility of rice shortage in the country.

Asked for her opinion on proposals to remove the limit on rice importation, the Vice President urged the government to consult first with stakeholders and weigh its impact before approving such a policy.