

QC, Caloocan eyed as next pilot sites for urban-farming program

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AFTER successfully establishing a vegetable farm at a football field in Tondo, Manila, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) is eyeing the establishment of a similar food production area in the heart of the “urban jungle” in Quezon City and Caloocan.



In a news statement, DAR Secretary John R. Castriciones said will launch on January 8, 2021, its second urban vegetable farming project dubbed “Buhay sa Gulay” at a 7-hectare land in Bagong Silangan, Quezon City.

The second launching of urban vegetable farming is a precedent to the success of Buhay sa Gulay project at St. John Bosco Parish in Tondo.

The project aims to promote the significance of farming in urban areas to help marginalized barangays fight poverty, hunger and contribute to the country’s food security.

Self-help livelihood project

THE DAR chief said the project is not a dole-out but a self-help start-up livelihood project where concerned government agencies and organizations will converge, share resources, and offer an opportunity to enable urban farmers to produce and eat fresh healthy vegetables and provide them with an additional source of income.

The DAR and Department of Agriculture has recently linked arms with the local government unit of Quezon City, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Bread Society International, Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organizations (ARBOS) of DAR and residents of Barangay Bagong Silangan to develop the 7-hectare idle land into a vegetable production hub of Quezon City.

Food production targets

THE DAR estimated that an annual vegetable production per hectare would yield 765 metric tons of vegetables broken into 29.7 metric tons (MR) eggplants; 0.7 MT string beans; 350 MT Pechay; 280 MT Mustasa; 25 MT Squash; 80 Okra; and 20 MT Ampalaya. “This project is a huge help for our Quezon City residents to provide them with an alternative source of income and source of affordable food supply,” Castriciones said.

For this project to become successful, the DAR chief explained that the urban residents would receive support from the government for their agricultural needs such as machinery, tools, and farm inputs. The technical know-how would be provided by farmer-scientists and agrarian reform beneficiaries of the DAR- Calabarzon.

We launched the first “Buhay sa Gulay” last November 22 last year and in just over a month, we successfully harvested spinach, snow cabbage, kangkong, mustard among other vegetables on January 3, of this year,” Castriciones said.

He added that after the launching in Quezon City, the next location for this project would be in nearby Caloocan City.

“We are positive that other cities in Metro Manila would replicate this project because this is a strategic solution to address issues of food production and sufficiency, and livelihood needs of Filipinos in the urban communities,” the DAR secretary said.