

## QC waives rental fees of meat retailers affected by price cap in public markets

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THE Quezon City government has announced that it will waive the rental fees in public markets of meat retailers who are unable to sell pork meat due to the price cap imposed by Malacañang on meat and chicken.

Mayor Joy Belmonte made the pronouncement after inspecting the prices of pork in Commonwealth Market and Mega Q Mart, together with representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Department of Trade and Industry and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

“We have decided to waive their rental fees to help them cope with the current crisis, and we enjoin our private markets to do the same,” Belmonte said.

She also instructed the Market Development and Administration Department (MDAD) to coordinate with market vendors on other forms of assistance they could be given while waiting for the subsidized supply of pork from the DA.

Belmonte earlier ordered the MDAD, headed by Procopio Lipana, to step up its inspection of private and public markets in the city to ensure the strict enforcement of President Duterte’s Executive Order 124.

The President’s directive placed the price ceiling of kasim/pigue at P270 per kilo, liempo at P300 per kilo and dressed chicken at P160 per kilo for 60 days.

“We are making sure that meat retailers do not take advantage of our consumers and we will intensify our monitoring and enforcement in order to protect our consumers’ rights,” Belmonte said.

“Our local price coordinating council which was activated in December 2019, will be working closely with the Department of Agriculture to monitor the price and supply of basic goods and commodities. I-imbestigahan natin ang mga retailer na mag-o-overprice ng mga produktong ito at ’yung suppliers nila,” she added.

Lipana, for his part, said meat retailers who will not comply with the mandated price ceiling will receive a notice of violation.

“Mayroon po tayong mga nakatalagang team, araw-araw po nag-iinspeksyon ang mga tao natin upang makasiguro tayo na tama ang presyo ng mga produkto sa market,” Lipana said. Lipana also reported that one market in District 1, 2 markets each in Districts 2 and 3, three markets in District 4, nine markets in District 5 and seven markets in District 6 earlier informed MDAD that they won’t sell pork meat if their respective suppliers will deliver high prices of meat.

The MDAD conducts random inspections of the city’s markets to ensure that retailers only sell quality products and do not overprice other goods and commodities.