

QC CREATES MORE URBAN FARMS FOR FOOD SECURITY

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THE number of urban farms in Quezon City under the “Joy of Urban Farming Program” saw a dramatic jump in the second half of 2023, increasing from 754 in June to 1,026 in December, according to the **Quezon City government**.

“This is a most welcome development, especially in addressing food security in our communities,” said **Mayor Joy Belmonte**, who expanded the urban agriculture program as part of the GrowQC food security initiative during the pandemic to provide food for the most vulnerable communities in the city.

Initially launched on September 27, 2010, the urban farming program started with just a 750-square-meter area near the chain of restaurants at the Quezon Memorial Circle (QMC), and was relocated to a 1,500-squaremeter site in QMC in 2014. Though there is no longer an urban farm within QMC, the farms can now be found in all the 142 barangays in Quezon City. Belmonte said the increase can be attributed to the passage of an enabling law, City Ordinance No. SP-2972 in 2020, that exempts land owners from Idle Land Tax if they use their idle properties for urban agriculture for a minimum period of three years.

“Instead of letting their idle lands go unused while paying taxes, many property owners have decided to join our GrowQC kasama ka sa pagunlad ng pagkain, kabuhayan at kalusugan food security initiative by utilizing their idle properties through urban agriculture and food production,” Belmonte pointed out.

To enjoy the tax incentive, the entire land should be devoted to urban agriculture for a minimum of three years, and should yield agricultural produce for personal or public consumption.