

- Urban agriculture

## QC mayor pushes urban farming

The Manila Times · 23 Jan 2024 · A9 · ARLIE O. CALALO

QUEZON City Mayor Maria Josefina “Joy” Belmonte on Monday urged lot owners to convert their idle lands into urban farms and enjoy tax exemption.

Belmonte told The Manila Times the city’s Food Security Task Force (FSTF) has implemented a simplified procedure in applying for idle land tax exemption to landowners who use their land for urban farming.

In 2020, Belmonte approved an ordinance which provided for tax exemption to landowners who use their idle lands for gardening and composting for a minimum of three years.

The produce from their land can be used for personal or public consumption, she said.

The mayor saw the concept as “a win-win solution for both the landowners and the city.”

Under the simplified process, landowners applying for idle land tax exemption must submit via email an application letter, a duly accomplished application for waiver of idle land tax for food security, the latest photos of their property, and at least one copy of any of the following documents: latest real property tax official receipt/ tax bill; tax declaration; or land title.

The FSTF will send an inspector to validate the application by visiting the idle land.

The applicant will then be issued an urban agriculture activity certification (UAAC) signed by the mayor.

The UAAC will be forwarded to the City Assessor’s Office for idle land tax delisting.

“We highly encourage landowners of idle lands to make use of their land for urban agriculture, which can help the city achieve its food security goals, especially now that we simplified our process,” FSTF co-chairman Emmanuel Hugh Velasco said.

There are 1,026 urban farms in the city being managed by 25,650 urban farmers.