- Urban agriculture

QC now has 1,026 urban farms

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From 754 in the first half of the year, the number of urban farms in Quezon City has reached 1,026, the local government said yesterday.

"This is a most welcome development, especially in addressing food security in our communities," said Mayor Joy Belmonte, who expanded the city's urban agriculture program through the "Joy of Urban Farming" initiative.

According to the local government, the city's urban farming program started with a 750-squaremeter area at the Quezon Memorial Circle in 2010. Urban farms are now located in all the city's 142 barangays.

Belmonte pushed for the expansion of urban farms during the pandemic as part of the city's GrowQC food security initiative. It seeks to provide food sources for vulnerable communities.

In 2020, the city passed an ordinance exempting land owners from paying the idle land tax if they use their idle properties for urban agriculture for at least 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," the mayor said.

Under the program, the entire property should be used for urban agriculture and must yield agricultural produce for personal or public consumption.

Belmonte said the program also provided livelihood opportunities to around 25,000 urban farmers.

According to Belmonte, the city will further boost its food security initiative by promoting other programs, including beekeeping, mushroom production, aquaculture, hydroponics and smart farming.

It will also implement more environment-friendly circular economy principles, such as composting of biodegradable waste through various methods.

The city will also push for "food surplus rescue" efforts "where excess food to be thrown away will be redirected to feed the hungry and vulnerable," she added.