



Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Voluntary Report - public distribution

Date: 12/3/2002

GAIN Report #RP2079

Philippines

Agricultural Situation

New DA Leadership

2002

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Report Highlights:

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo recently announced the replacement of Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary, Leonardo Q. Montemayor by Luis P. Lorenzo Jr., the current presidential adviser on job creation as well as chairman of the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice).

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Manila [RP1], RP

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo announced 30 November 2002 the replacement of Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary, Leonardo Q. Montemayor by Luis P. Lorenzo Jr., the current presidential adviser on job creation. Mr. Lorenzo is also the cabinet officer for regional development in Northern Mindanao, chairman of the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) and the private sector representative to the World Trade Organization and ASEAN Free Trade Area advisory commissions. The appointment reportedly took effect immediately. Mr. Lorenzo is the eighth Philippine agriculture secretary in the last 13 years.

Mr. Lorenzo obtained his master's degree in international business at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and hails from the southern Mindanao city of Zamboanga. Mr. Lorenzo's family is involved with Lapanday Holdings Corp., holding company of Lapanday Foods Corporation, the country's largest fruit exporter as well as Del Monte Philippines Inc., a corporate pioneer with a vast pineapple plantation in Mindanao island.

The new agriculture secretary is a respected agribusiness entrepreneur with a seed-to-shelf, market driven vision for Philippine agriculture. Policy directions at DA are expected to be influenced by his agribusiness marketing background. However, the new DA chief is expected to advocate continued protection for sensitive products, such as rice, sugar, corn, poultry and pork. According to local newspapers, he has stated that local farmers need to be provided with government support to enhance their competitiveness in a liberalized trade environment, and part of that support includes keeping tariff rates for major local commodities at current levels. The new secretary reportedly stated "we cannot lower tariffs on goods coming in that are given large subsidies in their own country."