



Assisting the Filipino masses.....

Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo mobilizes military trucks to distribute rice; orders use of state schools' gym as warehouse

MANILA, April 3 (PinoyGlobal) - President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo ordered today all state universities and colleges (SUCs) to make their gymnasiums available for use as rice warehouses and all the lands SUCs teaching agriculture as farm demonstration labs to bolster the administration's food security and stability program.

The President issued the directive to SUCs through Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap when she made a routine inspection Thursday afternoon of a private warehouse owned by the Isabela Greenfield Corporation, situated at the corner of Figueroa and Perdigon Streets in Paco, Manila.

"I am instructing the SUCs to make their gyms available for warehousing and also their land for demonstration, techno-farm...", the President said.

She also ordered Yap to coordinate with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) through Armed Forces Chief of Staff Hermogenes Esperon Jr. to make military trucks and aerial logistics available for delivery and distribution of rice around the country.

The President told the staff and an unnamed lawyer of the warehouse that her visit in Isabela Greenfield Corporation is part of her daily routine inspection to check the veracity of the reports that there is rice shortage, and to verify a rice warehouse does not engage in rice hoarding.

The President observed that the rice shortage report is more imaginary than real because, at the time of inspection, Isabela has 7,733 sacks of rice, that included 102 sacks of American Delight and 225 sacks of Jasmine rice, both imported rice.

Even then, the President tasked the NFA to look

into the inventory and accounting book of the warehouse after one of the staff presented only the xerox copies of sales invoice and delivery receipt of their rice stocks.

The warehouse also failed to present the original copies of Isabela's license to operate as rice warehouse, permit to import and export rice, and inventory book on the daily incoming and outgoing of rice stocks. The President then ordered NFA to oblige the owner of Isabela Greenfield Corporation of the original copies of their business license and permit to import rice.

Meanwhile, Yap instructed Khalil al-Rashid Lucman, head of the NFA Business and Regulatory Department to look into the account of the rice warehouse they are inspecting especially on the incoming and outgoing volume of their rice stocks and trace the place of origin of the rice stocks they had purchased.

"You have to account for all, lagi nating ginagawa iyan kapag pumapasok tayo (to any warehouse) sabi binili nila locally hingin mo ang imbentaryo," Yap told Lucman.

Meanwhile, Lucman said Isabela is now under investigation by the NFA and NBI after it was found that they purchased rice from a warehouse that was raided last Tuesday in Bulacan for alleged rice hoarding and price gouging.

Aside from Secretary Yap, other officials who assisted the President in the inspection were National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Director Nestor Mantaring, Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group (PASG) Assistant Secretary Danny Mangila, National Food Authority (NFA) Administrator Jessup Navarro, and NFA Business and Regulatory Department head Khalil Al-Rashid Lucman. #

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