

Philippines to build more urban Agri sites nationwide to strengthen food security

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In line with the food security agenda of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., the Philippines Department of Agriculture (DA) is partnering with the private sector to pursue food production initiatives on a larger scale.

DA signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on May 29 with SM Supermalls and SM Foundation, Inc. (SMFI) in an effort to develop more urban farming areas in the Philippines.

Under the said agreement, the DA, through its National Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Program (NUPAP), shall provide agricultural inputs, capacity-building activities, and informative materials and training that are necessary for the maintenance, compliance with existing regulations, and continuity of the identified project sites.

DA Undersecretary Domingo F. Panganiban explained that the partnership aims to ensure that food is affordable, accessible, nutritious, and safe for all Filipinos.

"With the current issues of food insecurity in the country, fostering innovative and sustainable urban farming methods with the help of private sectors is a solution to improve food accessibility. With the assistance of the private sector, the DA is able to reach new heights in implementing the program through sustainable and environment-friendly approaches," said Senior Usec. Panganiban.

Meanwhile, the SMFI will incorporate the DA-NUPAP into its Kabalikat sa Kabuhayan on Sustainable Agriculture Program (KSK-SAP), which provides skills enhancement, sustainable livelihood, and employment for local farmers. A total of 25 participants-beneficiaries will be selected from the barangay where the project site is located to become Barangay Trainers.

Furthermore, SMFI will work with institutional markets to link production from urban gardens, as well as train Barangay Trainers to cascade their learning to households. The SM Supermalls will identify and secure the project sites, as well as provide other logistical support for the urban gardens to be established under the MOA. Through its numerous platforms, it also campaigns for urban agriculture. The MOA covers the establishment of 20 more urban gardens in select SM malls.