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Philippines Agriculture department implements water management strategy to improve irrigation

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The Philippines Department of Agriculture (DA) reinforced water management strategies to facilitate adaptation and mitigation efforts on the effects of the El Nino phenomenon on agricultural production. A Mitigation Plan for El Nio is to be released by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr, so the public can take part in national measures to mitigate the effects of the said weather event.

El NiÃ±o is a naturally occurring phenomenon of periodic warming of sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern regions of the Pacific Ocean. Weather experts are anticipating unusual sea surface temperatures in the coming months, which could lead to the strengthening of the abnormal weather phenomenon caused by El Nio in the Tropical Pacific. Consequently, droughts and dry spells are expected in some parts of the country due to below-normal rainfall. Western Philippines, however, may still receive above-normal rainfall due to the enhanced Southwest monsoon season or Habagat.

Rainwater harvesting is one strategy that DA is advocating, instead of letting rainwater run off, by collecting it and storing it. With an average rainfall volume of 2,348 millimeters, the DA encourages food producers to take the opportunity to stock rainwater for future use.

Aside from this, the DA is also implementing other water management projects including the improvement of irrigation canals and other small scale irrigation projects. It is also banking on the Alternate Wetting and Drying (AWD) technology, which relatively uses much less water. AWD is the controlled and intermittent release of irrigation water.

Other mitigation projects that are underway is the replacement of unserviceable pump and engine sets. Director Manalo added that DA has been working closely with operating units under the Department to address the possible effects of the El NiÃ±o.

â??These are just some of the measures that the government has been doing early on to prevent production losses due to the dry spells that El NiÃ±o entails. We are constantly coordinating with different bureaus and agencies under DA so we can come up with a unified strategy to help our food producers improve production and increase income even during the possible drought, â?• said DAâ??s National El NiÃ±o Team (DA-NENT) chairman U-Nichols Manalo.