

## Philippines to streamline administrative policies, remove non-tariff barriers on farm imports

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Philippines Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. has created a technical working group tasked to further streamline administrative procedures and policies and remove non-tariff barriers on agri imports.

The DA chief designated Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and Regulations Asis Perez to head the TWG that would make it easier for importers to secure licenses or exempt licensed importers from submission of registration requirements.

The TWG was also mandated by Sec. Tiu Laurel to consult with the National Economic and Development Authority's Committee on Tariff and Related Matters to support the followings:

- allow importation of certain agricultural products even beyond the quantity allowed under the Minimum Access Volume and reduce, if not remove, administrative fees pertaining to such importation;

- streamline the process and requirements for the issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary permits needed for the importation of agricultural products and;

- take steps to improve logistics, transport, distribution and storage of imported agricultural products.

Special Order No. 768 requires concerned DA agencies to publish in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of national circulation their respective guidelines on the streamlined procedures, requirements, and policies.

The agri chief also ordered the creation of the TWG's secretariat, to be led by lawyer Jomila May Fugaban. The team is responsible for regular reporting to the DA Secretary including the efficient functioning of the TWG.