

Philippines plots a ‘White Revolution’ to boost vegetable supply

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Philippines Department of Agriculture (DA) is plotting a ‘White Revolution’ – a sweeping agricultural transformation roadmap designed to ensure a stable, year-round supply of affordable vegetables and high-value crops.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. took cognizance of a demand-driven, market-enabled strategy to feed the growing population complementing conventional farming with protected cultivation systems (PCS). Connected to strategically located food hubs and efficient logistics, the plan shall leverage best management practices, adopt appropriate technologies and strengthen social networks to ensure sustainability and scalability.

‘This is the essence of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.’s vision – a modern, climate-resilient, tech-powered agriculture sector that truly supports our farmers while ensuring food security for every Filipino,’ said Secretary Tiu Laurel.

Central to this plan is the establishment of new food corridors strategically located closer to urban markets. These zones will feature greenhouses, refrigerated storage, and improved post-harvest systems – allowing farmers to grow crops regardless of climate conditions, extend crops’ shelf life, and minimize spoilage. These efforts aim to reduce price volatility and ease inflationary pressures linked to food supply disruptions.

Climate change has made this shift urgent. In August, a series of storms and floods caused major production losses and disrupted vegetable supply chains, pushing up prices. ‘We cannot afford to rely on good weather anymore. Protected

cultivation is no longer optionalâitâs a necessity,â Tiu Laurel said.

In 2024, the Philippines imported USD461.8 million worth of processed vegetables, fruits, nuts and other plant parts. Despite a slight drop from the previous year, the country remains a net food importer with an agricultural trade deficit of USD11.71 billion. Slashing even 10 percent of that deficit could redirect at least P60 billion back into the hands of local producers.

Undersecretary Cheryl Marie Caballero, who oversees high-value crops, has ordered a full inventory of all existing greenhouses under past DA programs to identify which facilities can be rehabilitated to provide the strategic initiative a head start.

The name âWhite Revolutionâ is inspired by the white plastic films used in greenhouses, mulch, and tunnelsâtechnologies that transformed vegetable farming in South Korea between the 1970s and 1990s. The DA expects procurement for infrastructure and equipment to begin by late 2025, with the first food corridors up and running by the second half of next year