

NFA ramps up palay buying in WV to secure enough buffer stocks amid a pandemic

National Food Authority (NFA) 6 regional manager Dianne Silva is urging the local farmers to sell their produce to the agency to build up adequate buffer stocks as the global health emergency continues.

“We are inviting our farmers to sell their clean and dry palay with 14 percent moisture content to NFA at P19 per kilogram. More than one million bags of palay that we purchased in 2019 had significantly helped the relief operations of the government agencies when lockdown happened because of the pandemic,” she said.

NFA is now on an aggressive procurement drive to help stabilize the price of palay at this peak of the harvest season, and also to make cheaper yet quality rice available to the Department of Social Welfare and Development, local government units (LGUs), and other organizations for their rice subsidy distribution.

The DSWD is buying NFA rice for only P1,250 per bag that is lower than the commercial rice, according to Silva.

With enough buffer stocked rice from 2019 procurement, NFA in Region 6 was able to supplement the rice shortage in the regions of Central and Eastern Visayas.

This November, local NFA will be sending rice supply to Tawi-Tawi, Basilan, and Jolo in Mindanao to augment their supply.

As the price of palay plunges to as low as P10 per kilo in some areas in the region, the NFA opens its 27 palay buying stations and warehouses to provide rice farmers the right compensation for their labor and high production costs.

LGUs in Western Visayas are offering transport vehicles to farmers who cannot bring their harvested palay to NFA warehouses. They are also devising programs to help facilitate continuous and smooth procurement transactions with the NFA.

Guimaras provincial government had spent P500,000.00 for the provision of P1 per kilogram price support to NFA procurement this harvest season.

Provincial agri information officer Judy Bulquiren said that they are going to earmark another P1.5 million to reinforce NFA palay purchases starting January 2021.

Meanwhile, Negros Occidental provincial agriculturist Japhet Masculino mentioned that their rice farmers can dry their fresh palay for free at the government Rice Processing Center in Bago City.

Since October 2019, the Mangunguma Sapnayon: Palay Price Support Program of the Iloilo provincial government had released a P56 million agri loan to 11 farmers’ cooperatives engaged in palay trading.

“We are happy to share that Western Visayas ranks second to Cagayan Valley Region in terms of NFA palay procurement this September. We were able to buy 369,478 bags of palay that is more than 180 percent of our target for the month,” Silva shared.

Farmers in Aklan were able to sell 23,376 bags to NFA, Antique - 20,987 bags, Capiz - 63,268 bags, Iloilo and Guimaras - 241,815 bags, and Negros Occidental - 20,041 bags when harvest season commenced in September.

Not all NFA buying stations, however, have drying facilities. Therefore, Silva advised farmers to have their palay dried before delivering to the NFA warehouses. In warehouses with solar dryers, farmer-clients can avail of the palay drying service for free.
