

Farmers cite study: Tiu's case proof of CARP failure

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Militant farmers on Sunday confirmed businessman Antonio claim before the Senate panel that he has other farms with bigger yields and in fact has foreign investors as his partners, making him one of the biggest landlords in the country.

But the KMP said for Tiu to be able to acquire ownership of vast tracks of land only showed the Aquino administration's dismal failure in implementing agrarian reform and breaking the monopoly of big landlords over productive agricultural lands.

KMP chairman Rafael Mariano cited a study made by GRAIN showing that Tiu has entered into a joint venture with China and Saudi governments.

"In March 2012, China's ambassador to the Philippines was in Central Luzon cutting a ribbon at a new hybrid rice demonstration farm. This was not a simple case of international cooperation," Mariano lamented.

"The farm is owned by Beidahuang, one of China's largest agribusiness companies and perhaps its most aggressive seeker of global farmland, and its local partner is AgriNuture," the GRAIN study said.

AgriNuture Inc. (ANI) is owned by Tiu, Mariano said.

For now, Mariano said, the companies' farms in the Philippines, covering 2,000 hectares, will produce Chinese hybrid rice seeds and supply them to Filipino farmers under contract production arrangements.

"But eventually the two companies plan to produce the hybrid rice on their own farms. They say that they could have 10,000 hectares under hybrid rice production by the end of 2012," said Mariano, citing the GRAIN study.

According to Mariano, GRAIN is a small international non-profit organization that works to support small farmers and social movements in their struggles for community-controlled and biodiversity-based food systems.

Mariano said this was just one of the joint ventures that AgriNuture has set up over the past few years with foreign companies for the production of food crops in the Philippines.

The company also has a multi-million-dollar banana plantation venture in the works in Mindanao with the People's Government of Tianyang, Guangxi, China, and another joint venture with the Far Eastern Agricultural Investment Company, a consortium of Saudi companies.

These consortiums plan to acquire 50,000 hectares in Mindanao for the production of fruits and cereals, Mariano said, quoting the GRAIN study.

"Since he established the company (ANI) in 2008, Tiu has quickly built it into one of the country's leading food exporters, with a focus on fresh fruit," GRAIN said.

Exports account for about half of the company's revenues, and about half of those exports go to China, it said.



Tiu

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