

## Saudi Wants 200,000 Hectares Of PH Ricefield

Manila Bulletin - Wednesday, May 9, 2012



A Saudi company is interested in leasing up to 200,000 hectares of rain-fed government land and private farms to produce 1.2 million metric tons (MMT) of rice for the Saudi Arabian market.

Dante Delima, assistant secretary at the Department of Agriculture (DA) and coordinator of the National Rice Program (NRP), has already endorsed to Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala a proposal to create a technical working group (TWG) to study the matter.

The proposal for the long-term land lease was advanced by Dr. Khalid Abu al-Saud of Dar Al-Maskukat Trading of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, through a letter dated April 1, 2012 and coursed through Dr. Eduardo C. Sison, chairman of the Madecor Group of Los Baños, Laguna.

Al-Saud broached the idea of entering into a joint venture agreement (JVA) with the government for large-scale rice production, with the Saudi side, saying the volume to be produced would be equivalent to the country's annual rice imports.

Saudi Arabia heavily favor basmati rice varieties, the very same varieties that the DA is now seeking to propagate in at least 10 rice-producing provinces nationwide.

In response to al-Saud's letter, Alcala's letter dated May 7, 2012 said: "We share your enthusiasm toward this project, considering that such a joint venture will definitely boost our farmers' income and provide opportunities to modernize their production and post-harvest capabilities."

Alcala added: "We recognize that in the long run, this partnership could result in a mutually beneficial arrangement for both our countries as we cope with the international realities of food scarcity."

In all probability, the JVA offer could spur the production of basmati rice varieties, three of which are now being propagated, with the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) developing the seeds for distribution to rice farmers.

Alcala also told al-Saud that the proposal will be considered in the light of the special rice varieties required by Saudi consumers and "the availability of large tracts of land that can be leased on a long-term basis."

Delima submitted a memo to Alcala on the same day to suggest the creation of the TWG, arguing that a thorough study should be undertaken "considering the possible impact on our rice sufficiency campaign vis-à-vis our desire to encourage investments, boost agricultural production for the export market and raise farmers' income."

The TWG, Delima stressed, would "study, validate, evaluate and implement the preparatory work for this prospective JVA."

He proposed that the members of the TWG come from the following: DA Secretary's Technical Advisory Group, DA's International Relations Division, NRP, Agricultural Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS), National Agribusiness Corp. (Nabcor), Philippine Agricultural Development and Commercial Corp. (PADCC), and a representative of Dr. Khalid Abu al-Saud.

### 527 comments



buti p ang saudi arabia nakikita ang potensyal ng agrikultura ng ating bansa samantalang ang sarili nating gobyerno walang suporta sa mga magsasaka pati feritlizer fund kinukurakot pa

Jessie, Thursday, May 10, 2012



Noong 2005 mga Koreano para sa kanilang temperate vegetable and strawberry needs, ngayon Arabo naman. what will become of our local farmowners... mga laborers nalang sila sa sarili nilang lupa-in. Ano ba ang lohika sa agrarian reform. Why not produce ourselves the needs of the Arabs?

Pete, Cebu,Central Visayas,Philippines,PH Thursday, May 10, 2012



simulan nang gibain ang mga skwaters sa Maynila at palipatin. magtrabaho sila sa bukid. pero wag nalang sana ipa renta.. export nalang tayo. please be wise para walang gulo.

Pinoy Chefs, Thursday, May 10, 2012



This is good news for the corrupt government officials.

Jerem, Thursday, May 10, 2012

 Vast rice lands are now converted into housing units by developers, thus reducing our rice production, now PH will lease 200K hectares for Saudi, where do we get supply of rice for Filipinos? If we have enough rice lands why are still importing rice? Remember few years ago Vietnam studied rice production in PH now they are the ones who import rice to us, What happened?

[Ako Mismo Ini](#), Thursday, May 10, 2012

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- Discipline is the key. Let's clean up!
- Great urban planning will help a lot.
- Nothing we can do, it's climate change.

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