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Saudi firm seeks nation's rice

Posted by Online on May 10th, 2012 // Comments off

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Manila, Philippines – 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 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 coursed through Dr. Eduardo C. Sison, chairman of the Madecor Group of Los Banos, 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 towards 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." (Marvyn N. Benaning)

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