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Implementation of Palay Marketing Assistance for Sustainable Rice Supply and Price Stability

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ABSTRACT

As a newly implemented program of the National Food Authority (NFA), PALLGU was organized to help raise the buying price of palay and motivate farmers to sell to NFA. This study was conducted to determine the level of implementation of the PALLGU program as perceived by their farmer-beneficiaries and to find out their challenges encountered. This was particularly conducted to aid Roxas City in gaining insights from the result of the study towards ensuring a sustainable buffer rice supply. This study was descriptive and employed the mixed method, utilizing a validated and reliability tested researcher-made survey questionnaire translated to local dialect and conducted to 321 farmer-beneficiaries. Data were supplemented by interviews with 6 implementers from NFA and Local Government Units in Roxas City. The results revealed that farmer-beneficiaries perceived the PALLGU program as implemented as a whole and in terms of inputs, outputs, and mechanisms employed and that the challenges encountered as a whole and in terms of their profile was moderately challenged. These challenges acted as predictor of the perceived level of implementation of the PALLGU program and insights were focused on procurement procedures and requirements, provision of drying equipment/facilities during rainy season, and moving the buying station nearest to the farmers' farm area or providing transportation support.

Keywords: Palay procurement, Challenges encountered, and Sustainable rice supply.

INTRODUCTION:

For millions of Filipinos living in the Philippines, rice is a basic food that is always available. According to Navata and Turingan, (2013) it is grown on around one-third of alienable and disposable land in the country. Because of its significance, rice has emerged as the food that is most responsive to social, political, cultural, and economic factors in this country. As a result, guaranteeing a sufficient, consistent, and inexpensive supply is vital. The low cost of rice, as

noted by Mendoza and Torres, (2019) has a severe impact on wages and living conditions of Filipino farmers. The Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) has caused rice prices to fall, which has impacted net sellers, or rice growers. The removal of quantitative rice import limits has put pressure on farmers' incomes as a result of increased competition from imported rice. These conditions make it difficult for Filipino farmers to retain their means of subsistence and achieve economic security. The Palay Marketing Assistance

for Legislators and Local Government Units (PALLGU) initiative was put into effect, according to a 2023 report by the National Food Authority (NFA) to boost palay prices countrywide by PhP1.00 to PhP5.00, depending on the capacity of Local Government Units (LGU). The Palay Marketing Assistance for Legislators and Local Government Units (PALLGU) implemented a PhP1.00 incentive program in Roxas City and province of Capiz to encourage farmers to sell to the NFA. Local governments assist rice farmers through the PALLGU Palay Procurement Plan, governed by a Memorandum of Agreement with the NFA. For every kilogram of delivered palay with a moisture content of 14%, a purity of 90% or more, and only 7% of damaged and discolored grains, the farmer receives PhP23.00, the maximum amount set aside for buffer stocking incentives. The program's objectives are to develop controllable buffer stock, purchase farmers' produce and ensure their livelihood during times when farm gate prices for produce are low, and support government disaster relief programs during natural or man-made tragedies. This is in accordance with the NFA's mandate to maintain an ideal level of buffer stock at all times for use in emergency situations. To achieve these objectives, it uses a range of tactics and methods, such as buying palay coming from individual farmers as well as from farmer associations, processing, and buffer stocking, transporting milled rice and paddy to key sites, and distributing the produce to different marketing outlets at suitable seasonal intervals (Bhuiyan et al., 2024).

There are, however, insufficient data accessible to measure the impact of pricing policies on the movement of Palay in markets along with a determination as to its benefit to farmers and price stability, despite the apparent importance of rice in the market and the government's responsibility in stabilizing its prices as the primary objective of the NFA. To obtain insights into sustainable rice production and supply in Capiz, this investigation was carried out to assess the level of implementation of a new program called PALLGU, as well as to learn about the difficulties farmer-beneficiaries faced when taking part in the program. This study assessed how well the PALLGU program was being implemented in terms of its activities, inputs,

intended results, outputs, and mechanisms. It also examined how the farmer-beneficiaries in Roxas City were categorized based on factors like age, gender, family income, educational attainment, and the quantity of cavans of palay produced annually. The study also examined the difficulties the farmer-beneficiaries faced while attempting to use the PALLGU program after being categorized based on their profile. Likewise, it determined whether the level of implementation of the PALLGU program acted as predictor of the level of challenges encountered by the farmer-beneficiaries and to gain insights towards sustainable rice supply and price stability for the province of Capiz.

The Premium Incentive and Rice Assistance (PRICE) of the National Food Authority, in collaboration with the PALLGU, were found to be a suitable framework for incorporating this idea into the study. Local Government Units (LGUs) are encouraged to join PALLGU by the National Food Authority. The NFA maintains rice buffer reserves that can only be obtained from nearby farmers and purchases palay from the farmers. During emergencies, disasters, lean months, and when rice prices are high, the LGUs use NFA to provide food to their residents. Under the LGU's PALLGU program, the farmer sells the palay they produce to NFA.

METHODOLOGY:

The study employed a mixed-method research approach. This study was conducted at the different barangays of Roxas City, Capiz, where farmer-beneficiaries availed of this Palay Marketing Assistance for Legislators and Local Government Units (PALLGU) program. This was participated by 321 farmerbeneficiaries of PALLGU from a population of 1,633 in the province of Capiz. This sample size was calculated using the Cochran formula. Data were gathered through a researcher-made survey questionnaire as research instrument, validated by six experts in the field of public administration, the Department of Agriculture, the National Food Authority, the PALLGU, and the psychometrician of Capiz State University Main Campus. The statements in the survey questionnaire were retained, revised, or removed as recommended by the validators. The validated survey questionnaire was then reliability tested to 30

participants from the municipalities of Pontevedra, Dumarao, and Roxas City, Capiz not included in the actual survey. A reliability coefficient of 0.885 proved the questionnaire was reliable and was conducted to the respondents. Further, the study enjoined the participation of five (5) Municipal Agriculturist and one (1) Acting Assistant Branch Manager of National Food Authority (NFA) as informants. They were interviewed to gather information about the implementation of Palay Marketing Assistance for Legislators and Local Government Units (PALLGU) program and the challenges encountered for not joining PALLGU program. To analyze the data gathered, statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, and mean were used as descriptive statistics, while regression analysis was employed to determine whether the challenges encountered by the farmerbeneficiaries acted as predictors of the level of implementation of the Palay Marketing Assistance for Legislators and Local Government Units (PALLGU) program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The level of implementation of Palay Marketing Assistance for Legislators and Local Government Units (PALLGU) as a whole is presented in **Table 1**. The result of the study revealed that the level of implementation of the PALLGU had a grand mean score of 3.94, verbally interpreted as "implemented".

The three components of the level of implementation had total mean scores ranging from 3.86 to 4.03, all of which were interpreted as "implemented". The component program activities/inputs had a total mean score of 3.94, while intended outcomes/outputs had 3.86, and mechanisms employed had 4.03. The result implies that the farmer-beneficiaries of PALLGU in Roxas City believe that the PALLGU implementation was implemented at an observable level because its intended outcomes/output benefited 1,633 farmerbeneficiaries in 2023 and availed of the PhP1.00 price support per kilogram of palay. However, this also suggests that the implementation was not able to maximize its capacity since some of the rice farmers were not able to sell to them and had to sell to traders in the area.

Moreover, the result further indicates that the National Food Authority (NFA) was reliable in their pricing and that the farmers were aware of this, the classification of palay is well-implemented and that local farmers were given priority when buying palay. The result supported the conclusion of Alam *et al.* (2014), who found that local rice procurement should be supported by the government in order to help rice farmers support their income. However, Sabur *et al.* (2003) contended that in the absence of a procurement system, intermediaries like traders and millers benefit instead of the farmers.

Table 1: Level of Implementation of PALLGU as a Whole.

Components	Total Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Program Activities/Inputs	3.94	Implemented
Intended Outcomes/Outputs	3.86	Implemented
Mechanisms Employed	4.03	Implemented
Grand Mean	3.94	Implemented

4.21 - 5.00 Highly Implemented; 3.41 - 4.20 Implemented; 2.61 - 3.40 Moderately Implemented; 1.81 - 2.60 Less Implemented; 1.00 - 1.80 Least Implemented. Source: Data from the researcher

The level of challenges encountered by the Palay Marketing Assistance for Legislators and Local Government Units (PALLGU) farmer-beneficiaries as a whole is illustrated in **Table 2**. The 22 items on the level of challenges encountered by PALLGU farmer-beneficiaries received a grand mean of 2.80, verbally interpreted as "moderately challenged". This result implies that the farmer-beneficiaries met some challenges in availing the program of PALLGU but

these challenges did not stop them from availing these benefits. An itemized analysis of the result further indicated that 3 out of 22 items got a mean score with verbal interpretations of "highly challenged", 6 were interpreted as "challenged", 1 item was "moderately challenged", 6 were "less challenged" and another 6 items were interpreted as "least challenged". The highest mean scores with verbal interpretations of "highly challenged" were noted on item number 5 with

a mean score of 4.65 on "There are additional incentives for farmers in selling palay to National Food Authority. This was followed by item number 6 with a mean score of 4.29 on "There are available post-harvest facilities like dryers during rainy season", and item number 1 with a mean score of 4.22 on "NFA's Palay Procurement Quality standard is properly followed." These results imply that aside from the PhP1.00 additional rate offered by PALLGU, no other benefits were identified by farmer-beneficiaries, which may motivate them to sell their produce to National Food Authority (NFA). Additionally, the second statement highest score implies that there is the absence of post-harvest facilities offered by NFA to serve the palay drying needs of farmers during rainy season for them to comply with the moisture content requirement of the NFA, which the latter strictly implements to avoid long-term storage problems. Unlike with the traders, farmers were able to sell their produce even if they are wet and newly harvested. This means that farmers were spared from additional cost of drying just to comply with the moisture content requirement.

On a positive note, the researcher found out that three (3) of the lowest mean scores of 1.24, 1.42, and 1.47, all of which were verbally interpreted as "least challenged" were on item number 22, "The National Food Authority directly buys palay from individual farmers and farmer organizations or cooperatives at a set price plus the Palay Marketing Assistance for Legislators and Local Government Units", item number 19 "The assigned classifier checks the palay immediately upon the delivery", and item number 8 "Local farmers are the first priority in selling palay to NFA". The result further indicates that the National Food Authority (NFA) was reliable in their pricing and that the farmers were aware of this, the classification of palay is well-implemented and that local farmers were given priority when buying palay. This supports the earlier findings that the implementation of the Palay Marketing Assistance for Legislators and Local Government Units (PALLGU) program with NFA is implemented. The result of the study agreed with the study of Robel, (2013) that in Bangladesh, the real players in the rice market are the millers. Millers then buy the paddy that farmers Frias and Bepeparis sell to packers.

Table 2: Level of Challenges Encountered by PALLGU Farmer-Beneficiaries as a Whole.

Statements		Verbal Interpretation
NFA's Palay Procurement Quality standard is properly followed.	4.22	Highly Challenged
NFA palay buying price is favorable to the farmers.		Challenged
There are available NFA trucking services during mobile procurement or pick-up		Less Challenged
scheme.		
There are available transport services of farmers in bringing their produce to NFA		Challenged
buying stations.		
There are additional incentives for farmers in selling palay to NFA.	4.65	Highly Challenged
There are available post-harvest facilities like dryers during rainy season.	4.29	Highly Challenged
Drying fee is affordable for farmers.	3.87	Challenged
Local farmers are the first priority in selling palay to NFA.	1.47	Least Challenged
NFA warehouse is easily accessible to farmers.	3.08	Moderately Challenged
Palay stocks are picked up from the farm right after harvest.		Challenged
NFA officials are visible during campaigns about the palay buying operations and		Less Challenged
PALLGU program.		
Palay procurement is fast.	1.80	Least Challenged
Processing of payment is on time.		Less Challenged
There is available manpower and logistics during procurement of palay.	2.15	Less Challenged
The farmers' palay met the NFA's quality requirements.		Challenged
Processing of farmers' passbook is easy.	2.47	Less Challenged
Daily schedule of palay procurement is properly observed.	1.73	Least Challenged
The NFA calibrated the weighing scale and moisture meters properly.		Least Challenged

The assigned classifier checks the palay immediate upon the delivery.		Least Challenged
The capacity of NFA trucking services is sufficient to the palay procured from farmers		Less Challenged
during mobile procurement, and pick up schemes.		
There are available palay buying station in remote locations.		Challenged
The NFA directly buys palay from individual farmers and farmer organizations or		Least Challenged
cooperatives at a set price plus the PALLGU.		
Grand Mean		Moderately Challenged

4.21 - 5.00 Highly Challenged; 3.41 - 4.20 Challenged; 2.61 - 3.40 Moderately Challenged; 1.81 - 2.60 Less Challenged; 1.00 - 1.80 Least Challenged. Source: Data from the researcher

Reflected in **Table 3** is the level of challenges encountered by farmer-beneficiaries of PALLGU in Roxas City when grouped according to their profile such as age, gender, educational attainment, family income, and number of cavans produced yearly. The result revealed that level of challenges encountered by the farmer-beneficiaries was moderately challenged as a whole and when grouped according to their profile. However, although the level of implementation was implemented and the challenges encountered were moderately challenged, the regression analysis reflected that level of implementation acted as predictor of the level of challenges encountered by the farmerbeneficiaries of the Palay Marketing Assistance for Legislators and Local Government Units (PALLGU) program in Roxas City. When it comes to the age of farmer-beneficiaries, age group 18 to 30 years old were more challenged compared to other age group with above 56 years old being the least challenged among them. The result infers that age is a factor that affects the level of challenges encountered and because most of the time, younger farmers lack the documents and the experiences about processing, so they find it challenging to comply with National Food Authority requirements. Consistently, the more mature the group of farmers having been in the industry for many years, they are less challenged because they bank on their experience, are more prepared, and can easily decide when confronted with issues such as drying palay, transporting them, selling or not selling and were quite acquainted with a number of traders, government officials, and other partners. Regardless of gender, all of the farmer-beneficiaries find the level of challenges equally challenging for them with male farmers being more challenged at times on particular issue and female farmers at another. This can be explained in situations, which female farmers may be less challenged in processing documents because of UniversePG | www.universepg.com

their being patient in nature compared to men, while they can be more challenged in physical issues related to selling palay such as transporting them to palay buying stations compared to men because men can help with carrying, driving vehicles or finding equipment, while women have limited attributes on this area.

Those with lowest and highest educational attainment encountered less challenges compared to those in the middle bracket. This can be related to the circumstance, which those with lowest educational attainment usually would ask someone to accompany them when processing documents, request someone to write or read for them, seek immediate assistance by telling processing officers that they are unable to comprehend in English, cannot read well or even write well. It is also in the observation of the researcher that these farmers would outright ask for assistance even before starting with a process making them less challenged. They also, most of the time, plan out their steps to be ready with challenges. Those with highest educational attainment, on the other hand, may find themselves able to adapt to situations, armed with knowledge and ability to read well, write, fill out forms, and converse with local officials to make their transactions faster with high degree of success. Those in the middle bracket of the educational attainment categories do lag far behind. All were interpreted to have encountered moderate level of challenges, which may be assumed to vary depending on the nature of the challenge. The result of the study of Octania, (2021) supported the result of this study that low levels of education among farmers results to difficulties in adopting new technologies and to gather market information. Alimoeso, (2020) also stated that farmers with low education do not have the capability to access markets

directly and depends on middlemen when selling their harvest.

Moreover, farmer-beneficiaries belonging to the poor category encountered more challenges, though these challenges were viewed by them as moderate. The nature of these challenges may come from them having less funds to invest in selling their produce to National Food Authority (NFA) like renting harvesting facilities, hiring vehicles to bring their produce to the NFA buying stations, and it is in this income group also, which most of the produce were promised to lenders and traders, leaving them with almost nothing to sell and enjoy the Palay Marketing Assistance for

Legislators and Local Government Units (PALLGU) benefit. Furthermore, the NFA and PALLGU program implementers need to give this income group more considerations in enhancing their program implementation so that their level of challenges may be reduced. The result of the study conformed to the feedback received by National Food Authority (NFA) (2023), which farmers were compelled to sell their produce to traders who take advantage of their predicament by giving them low prices, particularly during the busiest times of the harvest season when there is a surplus of supply.

Table 3: Level of Challenges Encountered by Famer-Beneficiaries of PALLGU when Respondents were Grouped according to Profile.

Variables	Mean	Verbal Interpretation				
Age						
18 to 30 years old	2.95	Moderately Challenged				
31 to 43 years old	2.79	Moderately Challenged				
44 to 56 years old	2.83	Moderately Challenged				
Above 56 years old	2.79	Moderately Challenged				
	Gender					
Male	2.80	Moderately Challenged				
Female	2.80	Moderately Challenged				
	Educational Attainment					
Some High School	2.74	Moderately Challenged				
Completed High School	2.81	Moderately Challenged				
Some Vocational	2.83	Moderately Challenged				
Completed Vocational	2.82	Moderately Challenged				
Some College	2.80	Moderately Challenged				
Completed College	2.80	Moderately Challenged				
	Family Income					
Below Php10,957	2.84	Moderately Challenged				
PhP10,957 to PhP21,913	2.78	Moderately Challenged				
PhP21,914 to PhP43,827	2.73	Moderately Challenged				
Number of Cavans of Palay Produced Yearly						
Less than 200 cavans	2.81	Moderately Challenged				
201 to 400 cavans	2.74	Moderately Challenged				
401 to 600 cavans	2.67	Moderately Challenged				

4.21 - 5.00 Highly Challenged; 3.41 - 4.20 Challenged; 2.61 - 3.40 Moderately Challenged; 1.81 - 2.60 Less Challenged; 1.00 - 1.80 Least Challenged. Source: Data from the researcher

Reflected in **Table 4** is the result of the regression analysis made to determine the degree of influence of the level of implementation of Palay Marketing Assistance for Legislators and Local Government Units (PALLGU) on the level of challenges encoun-UniversePG | www.universepg.com

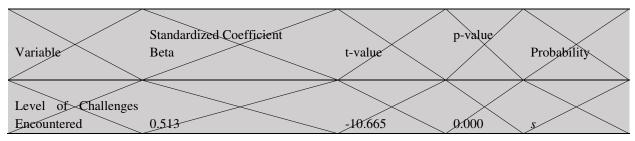
tered by farmer-beneficiaries. The result disclosed that the regression coefficient was significant because the p-value of 0.00 was lesser than the significant value of 0.05. This result rejected the hypothesis stating that the level of implementation of Palay Marketing Assistance

for Legislators and Local Government Units (PALLGU) do not act as predictor of the challenges encountered by the farmer-beneficiaries on the PALLGU program. The level of implementation of the Palay Marketing Assistance for Legislators and Local Government Units (PALLGU) program also affects the level of challenges encountered by the farmer-beneficiaries so that when the implementation of the program is poor or low, the level of challenges encountered is high and vice versa. Furthermore, if PALLGU and National Food Authority (NFA) want this program to succeed, they need to examine and work on the causes of these challenges encountered by farmers and review the areas that cause such

challenges so that preventive measures and/or interventions may be implemented to minimize the challenges and increase the perceived level of implementation of the program.

Since the interview with the Local Government Unit (LGU) implementers revealed that most of the challenges encountered by farmers were on processing requirements and procedures, drying equipment, and transporting palay from harvest areas to buying stations, PALLGU and NFA may look into these issues and find solutions so that these challenges would no longer be the reason for farmers to perceive the program implementation as poorly implemented.

Table 4: Level of Implementation of PALLGU Program Act as a Predictor to the Level of Challenges Encountered by Farmer-Beneficiaries.



Source: Data from the researcher

Insights towards Sustainable Rice Supply and Price Stability

This study reviewed the implementation of Palay Marketing Assistance for Legislators and Local Government Units (PALLGU) program to help farmers in selling their produce at higher price and help the government secure its rice supply, which the Local Government Unit (LGU) had continuously implemented rice assistance program during disaster and calamities. This determined the level of implementation of PALLGU program and the challenges encountered by farmer-beneficiaries to gain insights that can be used by food security implementers in attaining sustainability of rice supply in Roxas City, which neighboring municipalities in Capiz and the region may replicate (Hossain *et al.*, 2022).

One of the issues was the difficulty encountered by farmer-beneficiaries in selling palay to National Food Authority (NFA). It has been the same issue for years now that farmers chose not to sell to NFA because the process was difficult. The areas mentioned were on UniversePG | www.universepg.com

processing documentary requirements, absence of mechanical dryers to meet required moisture level before palay is accepted by NFA, distance between farmers' farm areas and NFA buying stations, and the very attractive offer by traders that entices farmers to sell to them instead to NFA. These offers range from providing farmers financial linkages to finance farm expenses, buying freshly harvested palay, providing vehicles/trucks to pick up the produce right at the farm gate, and buying palay at a reasonable price. These offers may have cost the same in monetary value when selling with the National Food Authority (NFA) but reduces the work and stress farmer experiences when selling with NFA. To increase patronage to NFA and availment from Palay Marketing Assistance for Legislators and Local Government Units (PALLGU), it is important for program implementers to address these issues.

Enough rice has been guaranteed by NFA's Capiz Branch Office to meet the Capizeños' daily consumption needs. In addition to supply from domestic and

commercial sources, the agency's buffer stock can help meet the requirements for rice sufficiency. As required by Republic Act No. 11203, also known as the Rice Tariffication Law, commodities are stocks kept to provide food security in times of emergencies and calamities. These stocks are subsequently given to relief organizations so that they can provide aid to affected households during disasters. Every stock is fit for human consumption and of high quality. To promote the nation's food security as outlined in RA 11203, the NFA continues to purchase high-quality, clean, and dry palay at its new purchasing price of PhP30.00 per kilogram with the added buffer stocking incentive (BSI). The NFA higher officials should seek help to the lawmakers to amend the Rice Tariffication Law to enable NFA to stabilize prices. To prevent traders from taking advantage of the state of the market, the NFA ought to step in and act. Here, the NFA wants to maintain stability. The NFA will intervene if retailer pricing is excessive.

CONCLUSION:

The implementation of the PALLGU program is mediocre in the perception of its farmer- beneficiaries and this led to their challenges encountered. The additional PhP1.00 to PhP3.00 is not enough to entice the farmers to sell to NFA. There is a need to expand the program from mere financial nature. In working towards its improvement, implementers need to focus their attention to the young farmer-beneficiaries, the women, those with higher education, and with income below PhP10,957 and who produces less than 200 cavans. These groups require more inputs and observed outcomes to perceive the program as well implemented. The major issue that limited the availment of the program was on the absence of drying equipment for their produce to qualify and be sold to NFA and avail of the program. Farmer-beneficiaries struggled with bringing their palay to the buying station of NFA due to lack of assistance in transporting their produce from the harvest location. Additionally, some requirements, both individual and from the organization, were found difficult to process and comply, resulting to the farmer giving up their opportunity to sell with NFA and enjoy the PALLGU additional income. These circumstances also limit the impact of the program to the farmers, agriculture

sector and local government in terms of economic benefit and ensuring food security. The young farmers, those with some education earning below PhP21,913 and producing less than 200 cavans, are more challenged due to their limited resources and capabilities. The implementers need to focus on this group to motivate them to sell again to NFA and avail of the program. Focus maybe targeted in the processing of documentary requirements, reducing difficulty in complying with Palay moisture requirement and bringing the buying station near the farmer or assist them in bringing their produce to the buying stations.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

The author has declared that she has no conflicts of interest.

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