

13 February 2024

HON. FRANCISCO TIU LAUREL, JR.

Secretary
Department of Agriculture

Dear Secretary Laurel, Jr.:

Greetings from the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP)!

Over the years, the Philippines' food security has been a top priority for ECCP. Given the current global geopolitical situation that is impacting the availability of inputs to help countries achieve stable and accessible food supplies, the Chamber is more committed than ever to helping the Philippines achieve a stable agri-food value supply chain. Additionally, we underscore that it is imperative that policies that are put in place are aimed at helping cushion the economic repercussions against the backdrop of a highly inflationary market and to ensure that the country remains on the track of recovery.

The Chamber recognises the socioeconomic importance of the corn and swine industries in the country as it provides livelihood opportunities for various sectors including food manufacturing, processing, and trading sectors, among others, as well as its relevance to other key industries' production process.

It is for this reason that we are writing to convey our position to reconsider the proposed temporary suspension of the minimum access volume (MAV) for pork and corn this year. We believe that the proposed measure will have an adverse impact on the prices and supply not only of pork but also chicken, as corn prices constitute the biggest cost of livestock production. We likewise regard that this measure will have an impact on the country's trade relations with bilateral and multilateral partners.

In relation to this, we also echo our support for the continued full implementation of Executive Order No. 50 which provides for the extension of lower tariffs for pork, corn, and rice. Moreover, we reiterate our support for the passage of the **Livestock Industry Development and Competitiveness Act** pending at the House of Representatives and Senate which aims to propel the development of the said sector through the institutionalisation of a clearer and streamlined regulatory framework and foster an attractive investment and business environment in the sector.

Relatedly, we look forward to the enactment of the **Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act** which aims to curb agricultural smuggling in the country. We believe that the passage of the said legislation will strengthen the country's regulatory framework and contribute to the development of a more equitable and sustainable agricultural sector in the Philippines as well as help in

addressing rising prices of agricultural products caused by hoarding, smuggling and other illegal activities.


The ECCP and its Agriculture Committee look forward to contributing to important discussions on bolstering the Philippine agriculture sector. To this end, we remain steadfast in our commitment to fostering a close collaboration with the government as we work towards our shared goal of helping the Philippine agriculture sector in raising its productivity and competitiveness, thereby helping achieve food security, enhanced farmer incomes and livelihoods, as well as environmental and economic sustainability, including in the corn and meat industries.

Thank you for your kind attention. We look forward to your support on this matter.

Sincerely,



Florian Gottein
Executive Director
ECCP



Ruth Novales
Chairperson
ECCP, Agriculture Committee



Dr. Mary Ann Sayoc
Co-Chairperson,
ECCP, Agriculture Committee