

Eighteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6721

Introduced by Representative Lorenz R. Defensor

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Agriculture remains one of the three main sectors of the Philippine economy, and also one of the biggest sources of income and employment. As President Duterte recently declared, *“agriculture is the backbone of the economy. It forms the basis for food and nutrition security and provides raw materials for industrialization.”*

Sadly, agriculture’s contribution to the national economy has been steadily declining. Growth in the agricultural sector went down from 1.83 percent in 2014 to 0.56 percent in 2018. The decline in growth has worsened due to cheaper import alternatives, lack of investments, and outdated agricultural data gathering procedures in the local government unit level that would otherwise have been used for better production and marketing planning and policy-making.

The lack of complete, real-time data on agricultural products available in the barangay-level and inadequate support for marketing linkages to small farmers and farm cultivators have led to a mismatch between production and demand, resulting in minimal gains.

In Mina, Iloilo, the local government unit and its Municipal Agriculture Office have initiated the necessary reforms to address such problems through the Municipal Agriculture Information System or MAIS. MAIS serves as a database


decision-making tool with an up-to-date inventory of all agricultural commodities in the local government unit and provides for the easy access to a commodity's real-time supply and production situation at all times.

The MAIS directly supports organized farming communities by promoting information transfer and exchange of commodity flows, supply and demand, and real-time inventory. The system can also be used as an analysis tool to forecast market demand which can aid farmers in crop planning.

During the Seventeenth Congress, Rep. Gary C. Alejano, of the Magdalo Party-list filed House Bill No. 7835 which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture and Food. The proposed measure intended to realize the potential of MAIS in the national level through an enabling law establishing the Agriculture Information System in all cities and municipalities in the country. The end goal was to integrate and link all systems into one centralized database under the Department of Agriculture in order to rationalize the country's agricultural planning process.

This current proposed measure builds on the endeavors of House Bill No. 7835, adopting the same spirit and intent but taking into account the improvements in the system and processes that the MAIS has to undergo in order to accomplish the objective of improving the welfare of the farmers and empower them to become a vital sector in the overall development and progress of the country.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



LORENZ R. DEFENSOR

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AN ACT

**ESTABLISHING THE AGRICULTURE INFORMATION SYSTEM IN
ALL CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in
Congress assembled:*

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Agriculture
Information System Act.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to uplift the
socio-economic conditions of farmers and farming communities nationwide in
order to promote their welfare and empower their sector in the overall
development and progress of the country. Pursuant to this, an integrated,
computerized, web-based agricultural commodity supply inventory and registry
system linking farmers and organized communities all over the country needs to
be established to provide an easy-to-access local and global real time
information for agricultural commodities, with an end view of creating a wider
range of market linkages among farmers and agricultural buyers. Furthermore,

1 through a synchronized agriculture information system, the National
2 Government shall have access to real-time agricultural information which can
3 rationalize the objectives and policy directives in the agricultural sector.

4 SEC. 3. *Objectives.* – This Act aims to attain the following objectives:

- 5 (a) Provide an up-to-date database of agricultural products in a locality;
- 6 (b) Facilitate linkages from farm-to-market among local government
7 units;
- 8 (c) Provide data specific commodities readily available in a particular
9 locality for stakeholders;
- 10 (d) Secure to the farmers additional sources of income;
- 11 (e) Encourage the farmers to engage in synchronized agricultural mass
12 production to meet the voluminous demands of the market;
- 13 (f) Provide a modern web application that may be accessed through multi-
14 platform support or cross-platform devices online;
- 15 (g) Streamline training and seminars in the management of the
16 operations;
- 17 (h) Monitor the use of inputs given to farmers;
- 18 (i) Facilitate information sharing on commodity flows, specifically,
19 supply and demand; and
- 20 (j) Ensure that government financial assistance is given only to duly
21 formed cooperatives and farmers groups.

1 SEC. 4. *Agriculture Information System.* – All cities and municipalities
2 are hereby mandated to establish an Agriculture Information System, hereinafter
3 referred to as Information System, which shall serve as a dynamic online
4 computer database where information on the demand for specific agricultural
5 commodities is gathered simultaneously with the production data from farmers
6 in every barangay. The Information System shall merge and synchronize
7 agricultural data from different sources into a cohesive database designed to
8 facilitate linkages from place of origin or the farm to local, and ultimately, global
9 markets.

10 The information system shall have the following features and contents:

11 (a) Municipal and city-wide identification of farmers who are producing
12 specific farm products in small or large quantities;

13 (b) Crop harvest, volume, and type forecasting;

14 (c) Inventory of specific classification of crop varieties planted and
15 livestock raised in a particular local government unit;

16 (d) Farmers' demographics, including age group, gender, and seminars and
17 trainings attended;

18 (e) Selected reports presented in both tabular and graphical form:

19 (f) Registry of farmers' contact details and farm location to facilitate
20 market linkages;

1 (g) Search engine which allows farmers to search for potential buyers and
2 actual buyers to search for farms, farmers, and available agricultural products;
3 and

4 (h) Customizable dashboard which is accessible only to registered farmer
5 clients and contains the farmer's profile, farm details, farm's land area, crops
6 planted and livestock raised.

7 SEC. 5. *Registration.* – All cities and municipalities shall encourage and
8 facilitate the free registration of all farmers and buyers transacting within their
9 respective area in the information system.

10 SEC. 6. *Functions and Responsibilities of Local Government Unit.* –
11 The local government unit shall exercise the following functions and
12 responsibilities:

13 (a) Gather, encode, and consolidate the profile and demographics of
14 farmers and buyers as well as other pertinent agricultural data;

15 (b) Monitor and control farm inputs including machineries and
16 equipment;

17 (c) Prepare and submit real time reports to the provincial office of the
18 Department of Agriculture; and

19 (d) Establish farmer and buyer linkages and act as a gatekeeper at the city
20 or municipal level in the nationwide marketing of agricultural products.

1 SEC. 7. *Functions and Responsibilities of the Provincial Government.* –

2 The provincial government shall have the following functions and
3 responsibilities:

4 (a) The Provincial Planning and Development Office is the web
5 administrator at the provincial level and is responsible for integrating farm
6 locations into the geographic integration system maps for agriculture;

7 (b) The Local Economic and Investment Promotion Office acts as the
8 lead administrator of the Agriculture Information System in the provincial level
9 and serves as the market mitigator to maintain the balance between supply and
10 demand; and

11 (c) The provincial office of the Department of Agriculture monitors the
12 submission of reports from the local government units ensuring the
13 completeness and validity of data, and accuracy of reports submitted by the
14 Municipal Agricultural Office.

15 SEC. 8. *Functions and Responsibilities of the Regional Office of the*
16 *Department of Agriculture.* – The regional office of the Department of
17 Agriculture shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

18 (a) Collaborate with different market linkages from other regions,
19 integrating geographic integration system data on project intervention, soil map,
20 suitability map, and commodity maps within the region;

1 (b) Recommend to the central office of the Department of Agriculture
2 appropriate interventions in the form of marketing, importation, and training
3 assistance needed at the provincial level; and

4 (c) Validate the data from the provincial offices of the Department of
5 Agriculture, acting as the system administrator at the regional level and provide
6 real time report to the central office of the Department of Agriculture.

7 **SEC. 9. *Functions and Responsibilities of the Central Office of the***
8 ***Department of Agriculture.*** – The central office of the Department of
9 Agriculture shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

10 (a) Allocate funding for the operation and maintenance of the information
11 system.

12 (b) Approve the prioritized interventions by the regional offices and
13 allocate corresponding funding;

14 (c) Collaborate with other agencies for the creation of market linkages in
15 the domestic and international markets; and

16 (d) Provide safety nets in the import and export of agricultural products in
17 order to support farmers.

18 **SEC. 10. *Duties of the Secretary.*** – The Secretary of Agriculture shall
19 monitor and ensure the compliance of all cities and municipalities as provided
20 under this Act and shall, as soon as practicable, establish a centralized
21 Agricultural Information System that shall integrate and link all existing
22 information systems in the country.

1 SEC. 11. **Reports.** – The Secretary of Agriculture shall prepare and submit
2 to the President and both houses of Congress an annual report on the program's
3 performance which shall contain the list of accomplishments and
4 recommendations.

5 SEC. 12. **Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within ninety (90) days
6 after the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall promulgate the
7 necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

8 SEC. 13. **Appropriations.** – The amount necessary for the effective
9 implementation of this Act shall be charged to the annual appropriations of the
10 local government units.

11 SEC. 14. **Repealing Clause.** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive
12 orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the
13 provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

14 SEC. 15. **Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
15 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

16 Approved,