

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE LIVESTOCK PHILIPPINES 2023**

[Delivered at the World Trade Center in Pasay City | 05 July 2023]

Thank you very much, Usec. Panganiban. *[Please take your seats.]*

The Excellencies of the Diplomatic Corps who have joined us here today; our Senate Chairperson on the Committee on Agriculture for Food and Agrarian Reform Senator Cynthia Villar; and the House Chairperson for the Committee on Agriculture and Food in the House of Representatives Congressman Mark Enverga; AGAP Party List Representative Nicanor Briones; and of course, our constant companion these days, Pasay City Mayor Imelda Calixto-Rubiano; of course, this is all – we could not have had any of this occasion that we are enjoying today without the organization zeal of the Informa Markets Philippines. So, we greet their General Manager Gerard Leeuwenburgh *[Did I get that right?]*; our partners and exhibitors of the Livestock and Aquaculture Philippines 2023; fellow workers in government; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

I am very happy to join you to preside over the opening of the “Livestock Philippines: International Trade Fair for Innovative Production and Processing for Poultry and Livestock.”

Sa pangalan pa lang, alam natin malaki ang trabahong hinaharap na... I’m sorry, just the title already gives us an indication of how much work it is that we need to do.

We come together today for this Trade Fair to promote our commodities in the livestock, poultry, and related subsectors to buyers and industry players here and around the world. Through free training and other capacity-building initiatives, we hope to empower our farmers, our fisherfolk, and other stakeholders to realize their full potential and play an integral part in building the livestock industry back up.

On that note, we of course recognize the tireless work of the Department of Agriculture and Informa Markets Asia in their successfully spearheading this extremely important event. It is only through cooperation such as this that we can realize our dreams of progressively expanding and modernizing the poultry and livestock industries in the Philippines.

It is imperative to highlight the role of this sector in our nation’s pursuit of food security and global competitiveness. This sector not only puts food on the table for millions of Filipinos; it also provides a means of livelihood for countless farmers and other ancillary service providers.

We also acknowledge the urgent need to revitalize the sector considering the problems that we face, particularly the effects of African Swine Fever and Avian Influenza.

With the goal of detecting and preventing the spread of these diseases, we have implemented the Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion, also known as the INSPIRE Program.

To date, more than 430 farmers' cooperatives and associations with more than 13,000 members and an estimated 27,500 individual farmers have benefited from this program.

Relatedly, we are also happy to announce the completion of Phase One of the safety and efficacy trials for the ASF vaccines. The Bureau of Animal Industry has found to produce sufficient antibodies and to be safe for use. And as it stands, the Philippine FDA is on track to issue a certificate of product registration for these vaccines while Phase Two trials are underway.

This gives us great hope as we have been waiting for this for a very long time. However, it is not a reason for complacency as we are being continuously warned by those who have studied the vaccine. The vaccine is 80 percent effective. There is still a 20 percent that we need to look out for very carefully. So, it will be... Do not get me wrong. Do not underestimate or downgrade the importance and the big advantage that the vaccines bring us.

But nonetheless, there is still a danger and it is something that we need to look out for.

We are also making progress in our procurement of Avian Influenza vaccines, with the BAI calling for manufacturers to register their products with the FDA while the guidelines to administer the same are being finalized.

As we identify the shortcomings that we have and acknowledge that there is much work to do, we at the Department of Agriculture shall continue to forge partnerships with the academe and private sector to devise solutions to eradicate these diseases that continue to wreak havoc on our livestock and poultry subsectors.

I also urge all concerned government agencies and stakeholders to engage in productive dialogue and share our best ideas, practices, and technologies to advance our poultry and livestock industries.

Rest assured that the government stands firm with you in overcoming our present challenges by implementing data and science-based policies and programs.

We aim to streamline our value chain systems, ease our access to local produce, and cushion the impact of food inflation on the lives of our farmers and our consumers.

And to this end, we are continuing to coordinate and apply the principle of all of government to approach any challenges that are faced by any single sector or multitude of sectors. We bring the entire government to bear and all the resources to bear, all the skills, and all the expertise to bear so that we can be able to mitigate the problems that these challenges bring and to solve the problems that we need to solve.

So lastly, we will work to find ways to increase our farmers' incomes so that they can lead a dignified and comfortable life and return to the profession a sense of pride that has been lost over the years. It is our hope to bring back nobility to a profession that has sacrificed so much to feed and to nourish us for many, many generations.

Let us make the most of the knowledge and tools made available at this trade fair so that we can establish a more food-secure, sustainable, and resilient Philippines in the years ahead.

Thank you once again for this opportunity to highlight the technologies, the new techniques, and the new knowledge that is out there and now to be made available here in the Philippines.

Maraming, maraming salamat sa inyong lahat! Mabuhay po kayong lahat! [applause]

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