


NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )



22 JUL 18 A9:37

SENATE  
S. No. 675

RECEIVED BY: 

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**Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada**

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**AN ACT  
ESTABLISHING THE YOUNG FARMERS AND FISHERFOLK CHALLENGE  
PROGRAM, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE YOUNG FARMERS AND  
FISHERFOLK CHALLENGE COUNCIL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS  
THEREFOR**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The 1987 Constitution provides under Article XIII, Section 5 that, "The State shall recognize the right of farmers, farmworkers, and landowners, as well as cooperatives, and other independent farmers' organizations to participate in the planning, organization, and management of the program, and shall provide support to agriculture through appropriate technology and research, and adequate financial, production, marketing and other support services."

The Department of Agriculture (DA) launched in April 2021 the "Young Farmers Challenge: Kabataang Agribiz" through its Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service. It aims to "encourage more youth to participate in the development of agriculture sector" in the belief that the youth has the power to transform Philippine agriculture.<sup>1</sup> The Challenge grants "competitive financial assistance to the youth who will engage in agri-fishery based enterprises". The DA is optimistic that the

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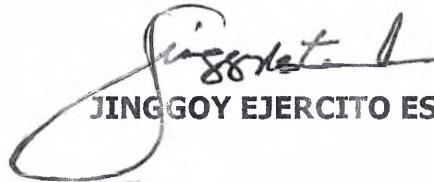
<sup>1</sup> [NCR young agripreneurs win regional level of 'Young Farmers Challenge' | Official Portal of the Department of Agriculture \(da.gov.ph\)](https://www.da.gov.ph)

institutionalization of the competition will make it a regular program of the DA with appropriate budget.<sup>2</sup>

The "*Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Act*" seeks to establish a Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Program that will support and empower the young farmers and fisherfolk to be active partners in food security and agricultural development and modernization. To effectively implement the program, the bill proposes to create a Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Council chaired by the Secretary of the DA and composed of various concerned government and non-government organizations. The measure likewise grants to young farmers and fisherfolks a one-time waiver of government fees and charges pertaining to the application for and granting of licenses, proofs of identification, clearances, certificates or other documents usually required in the course of employment locally and abroad.

This measure was reported out by the Committees on Youth; Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform; Ways and Means; and Finance in the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress.

In this light, the immediate passage of this bill is highly recommended.



**JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA**

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<sup>2</sup> [DA hails top innovative agribusiness models of youth farmers | Official Portal of the Department of Agriculture](#)

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THEREFOR**

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

1           Section 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Young Farmers and  
2 *Fisherfolk Challenge Act*".

3           *Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to  
4 recognize and engage the role of the youth in nation building and rural development,  
5 providing for this purpose access to knowledge, information and education, access to  
6 land, new sources of financial services and capital, green jobs, access to new and  
7 niche markets, and participation in policy dialogue.

8           *Sec. 3. Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Program.* - There is hereby  
9 established a Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Program, hereinafter referred  
10 to as the Program, that shall support and empower the young farmers and fisherfolk  
11 to be active partners in food security and agricultural development and modernization.  
12 The Program shall encourage the youth to pursue a career or engage in activities  
13 related to agriculture, ensure young farmers and fisherfolk participation in policy  
14 formulation and program implementation relative to the agriculture sector, and  
15 provide institutional support for agri-business and agri-entrepreneurship initiatives of  
16 the youth to fully realize their role as agents and partners for development.

1           Sec. 4. *Beneficiaries of the Program.* – The Program is intended to support  
2 young farmers and fisherfolk between eighteen (18) to thirty (30) years of age, who  
3 are engaged in farming and fisheries activities, and are included in the Registry System  
4 for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA). The Department of Agriculture (DA) shall  
5 update its existing database to reflect these indicators.

6           Sec. 5. *Creation of a Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Council.* – There  
7 is hereby created the Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Council, hereinafter  
8 referred to as the Council, to properly oversee the implementation of the Program.  
9 The Council shall be composed of the following:

- 10       (a) Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA) or a duly authorized  
11       representative who is at least an Undersecretary, who shall be the Chair;
- 12       (b) Representative of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) who shall  
13       likewise be an Undersecretary;
- 14       (c) Representative of the Department of Education (DepEd) who shall likewise be  
15       an Undersecretary;
- 16       (d) Representative of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
- 17       (e) Representative of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- 18       (f) Representative of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR);
- 19       (g) Representative of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority  
20       (TESDA);
- 21       (h) Representative of the Department of the Interior and Local Government  
22       (DILG);
- 23       (i) Representative of the Department of Information and Communications  
24       Technology (DICT);
- 25       (j) Representative of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
26       (DENR);
- 27       (k) Representative of the National Youth Commission (NYC);
- 28       (l) Representative of the League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP);
- 29       (m)       Representative of a national organization of young farmers' cooperative  
30       or association, provided that the representative shall be between fifteen (15)  
31       to forty (40) years of age;



- 1 (n) Representative of a national organization of fisherfolk's cooperative or  
2 association, provided that the representative shall be between fifteen (15) to  
3 forty (40) years of age;
- 4 (o) Representative of a farmers' women organization or cooperative, provided that  
5 the representative shall be between fifteen (15) to forty (40) years of age;
- 6 (p) Representative of a national organization for agritourism;
- 7 (q) Representative of state universities and colleges (SUCs);
- 8 (r) Representative of private educational institutions (PEIs); and,
- 9 (s) Representative of a national organization of food, restaurant, and business  
10 sectors.

11 The Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF) shall serve as its  
12 Secretariat.

13 *Sec. 6. Powers and Functions of the Council.* – The Council shall have the  
14 following powers and functions:

- 15 (a) Formulate the "Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Program", hereinafter  
16 referred to as the "Program", in consultation with research institutions such as  
17 the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in  
18 Agriculture (SEARCA), Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural  
19 Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD), University of the Philippines  
20 – Los Baños (UPLB) and other relevant SUCs;
- 21 (b) Develop, in coordination with various department and agencies, specific action  
22 plans for unambiguous tasking and quick implementation;
- 23 (c) Create special programs for marginalized sectors such as youth from urban  
24 poor, women, indigenous people, and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of  
25 Muslim Mindanao (BARMM);
- 26 (d) Develop initiatives in new farm sectors such as "smart farming" farm tourism,  
27 agro-, aqua-, and hydroponics, organic and boutique vegetables;
- 28 (e) Identify relevant training and livelihood budgets in the different departments  
29 and agencies, including start-up capital;
- 30 (f) Implement the departments' and agencies' action plans, engaging the  
31 assistance of the Local Government Units (LGUs) and Sangguniang Kabataan  
32 (SK);

- 1 (g) Identify the best practices in the implementation of the program as well as  
2 emerging best practices in agriculture such as smart farming and farm tourism  
3 in compliance with Republic Act No. 10816, or the "Farm Tourism Development  
4 Act of 2016";
- 5 (h) Foster the formation of new ideas and technologies by assisting agricultural  
6 enterprises of qualified young farmers and fisherfolk entrepreneurs, pursuant  
7 to Republic Act No. 11337, otherwise known as the "Innovative Start-up Act of  
8 2018";
- 9 (i) Initiate new packaging, promotion, and marketing events;
- 10 (j) Ensure scholarships and subsidized tuition fees for young farmers and fisherfolk  
11 in SUCs;
- 12 (k) Package incentive and recognition programs and awards system for the youth;
- 13 (l) Participate in agri- and food tourism marketing events, nationally and  
14 internationally;
- 15 (m) Provide on-the-job training programs for young farmers and fisherfolk in  
16 areas such as "green jobs", reforestation, coastal management, fisheries, and  
17 other rural-based jobs, through the DOLE's Special Program for Employment of  
18 Students (SPES) and other livelihood and training programs;
- 19 (n) Establish linkages with agricultural representatives of the Association of South  
20 East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other international farming youth associations;
- 21 (o) Engage national and international leaders in formulating policies directly  
22 addressing young farmers and fisherfolk concerns; and,
- 23 (p) Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of this Act as well  
24 as its impact on the participants and beneficiaries.

25 *Sec. 7. Access to Knowledge, Information, and Education.* – A whole-of-  
26 government approach shall be utilized to inform and enlist young farmers and  
27 fisherfolk in agriculture:

- 28 (a) Role of the DepEd – The DepEd shall include at all levels, but particularly in its  
29 K-12 program, elective subjects focused on agriculture, such as garden  
30 farming, urban greening, reforestation and coastal management;
- 31 (b) Role of the TESDA – The TESDA, in coordination with the DICT and the DOST,  
32 shall add subjects in their training centers for agricultural entrepreneurship,

1 "smart farming", and other advanced farming technologies, prioritizing  
2 programs focused on agriculture. The TESDA shall also provide scholarships  
3 and subsidized tuition fees for young farmers and fisherfolk;

4 (c) Role of the DOLE – The DOLE shall provide on-the-job training (OJT) programs  
5 for young farmers and fisherfolk, including the SPES;

6 (d) Role of the CHED, SUCs, and Agricultural Schools – The CHED, SUCs, and  
7 agricultural schools shall provide scholarship grants, stipends, and subsidies to  
8 qualified young farmers and fisherfolk. Likewise, the CHED, SUCs, and  
9 agricultural schools shall provide schemes for distance, remote, and digital  
10 learning. The CHED shall likewise encourage the private colleges and  
11 universities to provide similar opportunities and schemes to qualified recipients.  
12 The CHED shall include agriculture in its National Service Training Program  
13 (NSTP) curriculum, such as garden farming, urban greening, and coastal  
14 management. CHED shall likewise promulgate the policies, standards and  
15 guidelines for agricultural courses which shall focus on sustainability and the  
16 achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Scholarships for  
17 post-graduate and doctoral degrees shall be provided by CHED: *Provided*, That  
18 private universities and colleges are also enjoined to provide the same.

19 (e) Role of the DA, Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), and PCAF – The DA,  
20 through the 4-H Club of the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) and the  
21 Agricultural and Fishery Youthpreneur Council (AFYC) of the PCAF, shall  
22 provide for scholarship grants and stipends to qualified young farmers and  
23 fisherfolk, targeting specific marginalized sectors such as women, indigenous  
24 people, and persons with disabilities (PWDs);

25 (f) Roles of the DOST and DICT – The DOST and DICT shall develop portals, utilize  
26 social media, and exploit other electronic technologies, to publicize the  
27 Program; and,

28 (g) Role of the LGU and the SK – The LGU shall inform and enlist the SK who shall  
29 act as trainer-leaders to qualified and interested young farmers and fisherfolk.

30 *Sec. 8. Access to Land.* – Short-leases, free land and agrarian reform schemes  
31 shall be developed to provide access to land for young farmers:



- 1 (a) Role of the DENR – The DENR shall explore the possibilities of extending short-  
2 term leases of public land to young farmers, provide free or subsidized land for  
3 cultivation, and develop such other packages as would allow young farmers to  
4 use available or unutilized agricultural land. In coordination with the LGUs and  
5 SK, the Department may also create lease-to-buy programs;
- 6 (b) Role of the DAR – The DAR shall facilitate and expedite the lease, distribution,  
7 and award of agrarian reform land to young beneficiaries;
- 8 (c) Role of the LGU and the SK – The LGU shall prioritize the lease and acquisition  
9 of land for cultivation by young farmers. Further, the LGU and SK shall  
10 distribute hillside or other undercultivated lands to young farmers, for farming  
11 and other agricultural purposes;
- 12 (d) Roles of the SUCs – Whenever SUCs own or occupy excess landholdings, young  
13 farmers shall be given first option to use and cultivate such landholdings for  
14 agricultural purposes.

15 *Sec. 9. Access to Financial Services.* – Young farmers and fisherfolk shall be  
16 provided financial assistance and given access to financial services:

- 17 (a) Role of the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) – The LBP shall develop favorable  
18 financial projects for young farmers and fisherfolk, waiving collateral, salary  
19 and other typical bank requisites;
- 20 (b) Role of the DA – The DA shall develop financial packages specifically targeting  
21 young farmers and fisherfolk;
- 22 (c) Role of the DTI – The DTI, through the Small Business Corporation (SB Corp),  
23 shall extend loans to the young farmers and fisherfolk for the trade and  
24 marketing of their agricultural products;
- 25 (d) Role of the DOST, DICT, and DTI – The DOST, DICT and the DTI, pursuant to  
26 Republic Act No. 11337, otherwise known as the “Innovative Start-Up Act of  
27 2018”, and other programs shall include agricultural enterprises for qualified  
28 young farmer- and fisherfolk-entrepreneurs in the incubation efforts;
- 29 (e) Role of CHED and TESDA – CHED and TESDA shall provide financial literacy  
30 trainings particularly in handling and managing loans and grants;
- 31 (f) Role of the Private Sector – The private sector is encouraged to subcontract,  
32 partner, and extend financial grants, initiate social partnerships and rural



1 development initiatives, as well as mentor young farmers and fisherfolk on  
2 livelihood strategies, as part of their corporate social responsibility and other  
3 community participation;

4 (g) Role of the LGU – The LGU, in coordination with the SK, shall provide funding  
5 and livelihood opportunities to young farmers and fisherfolk;

6 (h) Role of the SK – The SK, using its ten percent (10%) Development Fund, and  
7 other funds, shall provide entrepreneurial and finance packages for young  
8 farmers and fisherfolk;

9 (i) Role of the NYC – The NYC, in tandem with potential youth agri-entrepreneurs,  
10 shall initiate donation and fundraising drives for the Program, exploiting for this  
11 purpose online advertising, "crowd-sourcing", and other digital means to  
12 generate funds for the Program.

13 Sec. 10. *Access to "Green Jobs"*. – Young farmers and fisherfolk shall be given  
14 priority in access to green jobs, as follows:

15 (a) Roles of the DOLE – The DOLE, through the SPES, shall include "green jobs",  
16 reforestation, coastal management, fisheries, and other rural-based jobs, in  
17 cooperation with LGUs. The DOLE shall prioritize young farmers and fisherfolk  
18 for employment in public projects or private agro-industries and corporations.  
19 The department shall also offer returning youth Overseas Filipino Workers  
20 (OFWs) with a menu of possible investment projects where they will be assisted  
21 in terms of proposal packaging, training, and management assistance during  
22 the early stage, marketing and linking with government financial institutions  
23 (GFIs) and investment promotion agencies in case they qualify for fiscal and  
24 nonfiscal incentives pursuant to Republic Act No. 11534 or the Corporate  
25 Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) Act;

26 (b) Role of the TESDA – The TESDA shall develop on-the-job trainings, job fairs,  
27 employment bridging initiatives, and private partnerships in producing,  
28 processing, packaging, and marketing youth products;

29 (c) Role of the DOT – The DOT shall prioritize the employment of young farmers  
30 and fisherfolk in eco- and agro-tours, and encourage youth entrepreneurship  
31 in farm and fishery tourism;

1 (d) Role of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) – The PEZA shall  
2 prioritize young farmers and fisherfolk for jobs in agro-industrial ecozones,  
3 provide access to modern farm technology, promote linkages in agriculture-  
4 related enterprises, and accelerate the creation of “green jobs” for young  
5 farmers and fisherfolk;

6 (e) The DA and the ATI – The DA, particularly the 4-H Club of the ATI, shall provide  
7 jobs and embark upon farming start-ups and in new and niche agricultural  
8 sectors such as organic farming, agroponics, aguaponics, hydroponics, dairy,  
9 livestock, coffee, cacao, and other areas of farming and fishing. The DA and  
10 ATI shall also create opportunities for youth leaders to harness their leadership  
11 skills especially during the international month for youth.

12 Sec. 11. *Access to Markets.* – Young farmers and fisherfolk shall have access  
13 to markets through the following:

14 (a) Role of the DTI – The DTI shall assist young farmers and fisherfolk in the  
15 packaging, marketing and promotion of their products, including branding,  
16 advertising, and subsidizing their participation in trade fairs and exhibits;

17 (b) Role of the LGU – The LGU shall provide subsidized rental rates for public retail  
18 areas and public markets, encourage agricultural tourism, and develop other  
19 opportunities for young farmers;

20 (c) Role of the Department of Tourism (DOT) – The DOT shall promote the  
21 products of young farmers and fisherfolk through tourism conventions, events,  
22 and other tourist souvenir sales opportunities;

23 (d) Role of the Private Sector – The private sector is encouraged to market and  
24 promote the products of young farmers and fisherfolk, as part of their Corporate  
25 Social Responsibility (CSR) and other development efforts;

26 (e) Role of the Media – The media shall promote and advertise the products of the  
27 young farmers and fisherfolk and the Program.

28 Sec. 12. *Engagement in Policy Dialogue.* – The young farmers and fisherfolk  
29 are encouraged to participate in policy dialogues, as follows:

30 (a) Role of the NYC – The NYC shall ensure that young farmers and fisherfolk are  
31 represented in all decision-making bodies relating to the establishment of

1 mechanisms for the promotion and protection of the rights of young farmers  
2 and fisherfolk;

3 (b) Role of the SK – The SK, through local and Congressional youth representatives,  
4 shall liaise with the Local Government Leagues and the Congress of the  
5 Philippines to consult and engage young farmers and fisherfolk in policy-  
6 making;

7 (c) Role of the DA – The DA shall ensure that young farmers and fisherfolk are  
8 equitably represented and consulted in its decision-making process to fully  
9 realize the young farmers’ and fisherfolk’s role as agents and partners for  
10 national development.

11 *Sec. 13. Waiver of Government Fees and Charges.* – Subject to the exception  
12 provided in Section 8 of Republic Act No. 11261, otherwise known as the “First-Time  
13 Jobseekers Assistance Act” all government agencies and instrumentalities, including  
14 government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), LGUs, and government  
15 hospitals shall not collect fees or charges from any young farmer and fisherfolk:  
16 *Provided,* That such fee or charge is paid in connection with the application for and  
17 the granting of licenses, proofs of identification, clearances, certificates or other  
18 documents usually required in the course of employment locally or abroad: *Provided,*  
19 *further,* That the benefit provided shall only be availed of once.

20 *Sec. 14. Annual Report.* – The Council shall submit to the President and to  
21 both Houses of Congress, not later than the 30<sup>th</sup> of March of every year following the  
22 effectivity of this Act, a report giving a detailed account on the effective  
23 implementation of this Act, and recommended legislation where applicable and  
24 necessary.

25 *Sec. 15. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from  
26 the effectivity of this Act, the DA and DAR, in coordination with the DOST, DICT, DOLE,  
27 DENR, DepEd, CHED, LBP, and NYC shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for  
28 the implementation of this Act which shall include the creation of a database of youth  
29 involvement and interventions provided by government agencies, a special desk for  
30 the youth, and an aggressive communication plan to upscale youth involvement.

31 *Sec. 16. Appropriations.* – The amount needed to initially implement the  
32 provisions of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the current year

1 of the concerned departments and agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be  
2 necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the appropriation of  
3 the concerned departments and agencies in the annual General Appropriations Act  
4 (GAA).

5       Sec. 17. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or  
6 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision or part not otherwise  
7 affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

8       Sec. 18. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance,  
9 executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary  
10 to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or  
11 amended accordingly.

12       Sec. 19. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
13 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*