

MURANG PAGKAIN SUPER COMMITTEE: ADDRESSING FOOD PRICES AND IMPORTATION TRANSPARENCY



House of Representatives Unites to Ensure Affordable Food for Filipinos

The House of Representatives established the Murang Pagkain Super Committee, also known as the Quinta Committee, to address the rising cost of essential food items, particularly rice, meat, poultry, and other protein sources. This committee consolidates the efforts of five key House Committees—Ways and Means, Trade and Industry, Agriculture and Food, Social Services, and the Special Committee on Food Security—to implement decisive actions against price manipulation, smuggling, importation issues, and food insecurity.

Addressing Historical Price Manipulation Cases

The Committee is revisiting historical cases of price manipulation, including the 2016-2018 import permit monopoly that allegedly caused artificial shortages and price surges. Rep. Joey Salceda, Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, highlighted that during this period, traders controlled up to 80% of import permits, limiting competition and driving prices higher. He noted, ***“The biggest case of price manipulation in the agricultural sector remains to be the cornering of import permits, and we must ensure it does not happen again.”***

Impact on Food Prices and Market Response

The Committee's intervention has led to initial improvements in food affordability:

- Rice prices: A 0.7% month-on-month decrease was recorded in December 2024 due to stricter oversight.
- Pork prices: Declined by 2.1% in Q4 2024, attributed to improved transparency in importation.
- Chicken prices: Experienced a 3.5% drop, following the review of import policies and increased local production support.

Beef prices: Remained stable but continue to be monitored due to limited local supply and reliance on imports.

Cracking Down on Rice, Meat, and Poultry Price Manipulation

January, 28, 2025, the Committee has uncovered alarming trends in food pricing. Based on 2024 data from the Department of Agriculture (DA), the reported landed cost of rice stands at ₱36 per kilogram, while market prices range from ₱50 to ₱55 per kilogram. The disparity suggests possible market manipulation by traders and importers. Similarly, the meat and poultry sectors have seen price fluctuations despite a steady supply. The Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) reported that as of 2023, the Philippines imported 1.3 million metric tons (MT) of meat, broken down as follows: *Pork: 710,000 MT, Chicken: 550,000 MT, and Beef: 40,000 MT.*

The Committee suspects collusion among industry players to control supply and artificially raise prices. Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez emphasized accountability, stating,

“Wala tayong sasantuhin. We will pursue those involved in price manipulation and hoarding.”

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Importation and Food Security Measures

With 22% of national meat consumption dependent on imports, the committee is reassessing import policies for pork, poultry, and beef to ensure price stability while protecting local farmers. The 2024 import breakdown by volume and key suppliers is as follows:

- Pork: 710,000 MT (Brazil - 35%, Spain - 28%, Canada - 20%, Others - 17%)
- Chicken: 550,000 MT (USA - 40%, Brazil - 30%, Netherlands - 15%, Others - 15%)
- Beef: 40,000 MT (Australia - 50%, USA - 30%, Brazil - 20%)

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has been directed to enhance monitoring of cold storage facilities, where hoarding practices have been suspected. House Committee on Agriculture and Food Chair Rep. Mark Enverga stated, **"We need to prevent artificial shortages caused by hoarding and smuggling to ensure stable food prices."**

A Commitment to Economic Stability and Consumer Welfare

The Murang Pagkain Super Committee remains steadfast in its mission to combat artificial price hikes and ensure that every Filipino has access to affordable food. With comprehensive investigations, stricter regulations, and proactive policy measures, the House of Representatives is determined to safeguard economic stability and consumer welfare.



NEXT STEPS...

- Continued monitoring of rice, meat, and poultry prices through a monthly reporting system.
- Strengthening coordination with the Department of Finance (DOF) and the Bureau of Customs (BOC) to prevent smuggling and fraudulent import declarations.
- Developing a national food security strategy to reduce dependency on imports and enhance local production.
- Intensifying investigations into past and ongoing price manipulation cases.

Stay tuned for further developments as the committee reinforces its policies to achieve murang pagkain at murang kuryente for every Filipino.



Expanding the Fight: Murang Kuryente Supercommittee

In response to widespread concerns over high energy costs, the House is also establishing the Murang Kuryente Supercommittee to investigate excessive electricity rates. Representative Aurelio Gonzales Jr., House Majority Leader, emphasized the urgency of this initiative, stating, **"Consumers are burdened not only by food costs but also by high electricity prices. We will take action to address both issues."**

....Quinta Committee holds Congressional Hearing (cont.)

Representative Mark Enverga, Chair of the Agriculture and Food Committee, stressed: **"The government must ensure that legal importers operate in a level playing field. We will not tolerate smuggling or tax evasion in the food industry."** January 19, 2025



Quinta Committee holds Congressional Hearing to Address Food Price Manipulation

The Murang Pagkain Super Committee, known as the Quinta Committee, convened a high-level Congressional hearing on January 19, 2025, to investigate price manipulation in the food sector, particularly focusing on rice, meat, and poultry. Lawmakers, government agencies, and industry stakeholders, including Jesus Cham, President Emeritus of the Meat Importers and Traders Association (MITA), provided expert insights on importation trends, market supply, and price stability.

Price Manipulation in Rice & Meat Industry

Speaker Martin Romualdez emphasized the urgent need to dismantle cartels and unfair trade practices, stating:

"We will not allow any group to exploit Filipino consumers. Whether it's rice, pork, or chicken, we will hold those responsible accountable."

Lawmakers cited major discrepancies between import costs and retail prices, particularly:

- ★ Rice: Landed cost ₱36/kg → Retail price ₱50-₱55/kg
- ★ Pork: Landed cost ₱170/kg → Retail price ₱300-₱350/kg
- ★ Chicken: Landed cost ₱110/kg → Retail price ₱200-₱230/kg

The National Price Coordinating Council (NPCC) and Bureau of Customs (BOC) flagged irregularities, suggesting possible hoarding, supply bottlenecks, and artificial price hikes.

Meat Importation Statics & Market Outlook

Jesus Cham, President Emeritus of Meat Importers and Traders Association, presented an industry report on the state of meat importation:

- Pork Imports (2024): 710,000 metric tons (MT)
 - Top Suppliers: Spain, Canada, Brazil, USA
 - Landed cost: ₱170/kg
 - Retail price: ₱300-₱350/kg
- Chicken Imports (2024): 550,000 MT
 - Top Suppliers: USA, Brazil, Netherlands
 - Landed cost: ₱110/kg
 - Retail price: ₱200-₱230/kg
- Beef Imports (2024): 40,000 MT
 - Top Suppliers: Australia, USA, Brazil
 - Landed cost: ₱250/kg
 - Retail price: ₱450-₱500/kg

"Global supply chain disruptions and import restrictions have contributed to higher costs, but local inefficiencies and regulatory hurdles are also major factors." — Jesus Cham, MITA, President Emeritus. Cham called for policy reforms that would ensure a fair and transparent importation process, preventing price distortions caused by excessive red tape and middlemen.

Anti-Smuggling and Warehouse Inspection

The Bureau of Customs (BOC) and National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) presented findings on:

- 1,500 MT of smuggled rice intercepted in December 2024 from China and Myanmar.
- Frozen pork and poultry shipments undervalued by 30% to avoid tariffs.
- Hoarded meat stocks discovered in storage facilities in Bulacan and Cavite, leading to legal cases against traders.

Price Monitoring and Legislative Reforms

- ✓ Real-time Price Monitoring – Digital dashboard tracking wholesale & retail prices.
- ✓ Import Tariff Review – Balancing farmer protection & consumer affordability.
- ✓ Cold Storage Regulation – Mandatory stock reporting to prevent shortages.
- ★ Speaker Romualdez: **"We will enact laws and hold price manipulators accountable."**

MITA Annual Christmas Gathering 2024: A Night of Celebration, Camaraderie, and Success



The Meat Importers and Traders Association Philippines (MITA) once again brought the industry together for a spectacular evening of celebration and connection at its Annual Christmas Gathering held on December 9, 2024, at the Cervantes & Shakespeare Banquet Hall, Discovery Primea, Makati City. The event was nothing short of a success, filled with meaningful conversations, festive entertainment, and a shared commitment to strengthening the meat trade industry.

A Gathering of Industry Leaders and Dignitaries

The evening saw the presence of esteemed dignitaries, key industry players, and valued members of MITA, all coming together to celebrate the year's achievements and discuss future collaborations. Representatives from government agencies, international trade organizations, and private sector partners were warmly welcomed, emphasizing the strong alliances that continue to drive the industry forward.



In his opening remarks, Jess Cham expressed gratitude for the unwavering support of the members and partners throughout the year. "This gathering is a testament to the resilience and unity of the industry. As we celebrate tonight, we also look ahead to new opportunities and a brighter future for the sector," he said.

An Evening of Fellowship and Festivities

Beyond the formalities, the night was filled with laughter, entertainment, and holiday cheer. Guests enjoyed a sumptuous feast, lively music, and exciting raffle draws that kept the energy high throughout the evening. The program also featured heartwarming messages of appreciation and recognition for members and partners who have contributed significantly to the industry's growth.



One of the highlights of the evening was the speech from all notable guest from different embassies and organization, as well as the fun-filled group games, which added an extra layer of excitement and camaraderie among attendees. Many guests expressed their joy in reconnecting with peers and forging new connections that will pave the way for further collaboration in the coming year.



Looking Ahead to 2025



As the event came to a close, the sense of optimism for the future of the meat importation and trading industry was undeniable. MITA reaffirmed its commitment to supporting its members and advocating for continued growth and innovation in the sector. ***"This gathering is more than just a celebration—it's a reminder of the strength of our community and our shared vision for the future,"*** said President, Sherwin Choi in his closing remarks.



With another successful Christmas Gathering in the books, MITA looks forward to a promising 2025, filled with new initiatives, strengthened partnerships, and continued progress. The evening was a true reflection of what the association stands for—unity, excellence, and a thriving industry.

Thank You to Our Members & Partners

MITA extends its heartfelt gratitude to all attendees, partners, and sponsors who made the Annual Christmas Gathering 2024 a resounding success. Your unwavering support and participation continue to drive the industry forward. Until next year—cheers to another successful celebration and an exciting year ahead!



CHECK THE MITA WEBSITE FEATURES:

News & Articles

Laws & Policies

Price Watch

Event Gallery

MITA Reports



Emergency Meeting on Importation was held last February 5, 2025 at Milkyway



Polish and Uruguay Delegation Meetings

- ◆ MITA Meeting with Customs Brokers
Feb 17 Date: February 19, 2025
🕒 Time: 3:00 PM
📍 Venue: Milkyway
- ◆ Meeting with the Beef Delegation from Uruguay
Feb 17 Date: February 25, 2025
🕒 Time: 9:30 AM
📍 Venue: Makati Diamond
- ◆ Meeting with the Polish Delegation
Feb 17 Date: February 26, 2025
🕒 Time: To be determined
📍 Venue: Dusit Thani
- ◆ MITA General Membership Election Meeting
Feb 17 Date: February 27, 2025
🕒 Time: 3:00 PM
📍 Venue: TBD



CHECK THE MITA WEBSITE FEATURES:

