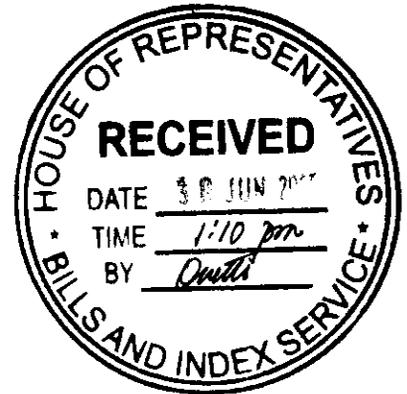


Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 312**



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Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Lockdowns at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic have disrupted global and domestic food supply chains, highlighting the need to leverage technological innovation to ensure sustainable and resilient food systems.

One example of how food supply networks adapted to this disruption was how farmers utilized digital technologies platforms to sell their produce directly to consumers, as cited by the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development.<sup>1</sup>

The Food and Agriculture Organization also noted that “[d]igital trade services, like e-commerce and associated delivery companies, are becoming more relevant during the pandemic and are playing a key role in agricultural value chains and the interaction between different markets (e.g. labour, production and consumer)”.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, the Technical Working Group for Anticipatory and Forward Planning (TWG-AFP) of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-MEID) has recognized the role of digital technologies in shaping the post-pandemic world. “E-commerce will play a big role in the new normal scenario as businesses and consumers increase the use of online transactions, including the expanded use of cashless payment system and other financial Page 39 technology platforms,” the group said in its “We Recover as One” report.<sup>3</sup> “The increased reliance on online/digital transactions for food commodities is expected to continue, even in the post-ECQ scenario,” it added.<sup>4</sup>

Accordingly, the Department of Agriculture launched the e-Kadiwa in May 2020, an online marketing platform that directly links producers and agripreneurs to consumers nationwide.

There is need, however, to institutionalize and localize e-Kadiwa to connect small-scale farmers to consumers in their municipality or city and adjacent local government units (LGUs). The experience of the Municipality of Mina in Iloilo province is the benchmark for LGU-led digital marketing of agricultural produce and digitalization of agricultural data. Mina’s

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<sup>1</sup> OECD (2020). Food Supply Chains and COVID-19: Impacts and Policy Lessons.

<sup>2</sup> FAO (2020). Policy responses to keep input markets flowing in times of COVID-19

<sup>3</sup> IATF-MEID TWG-AFP (2020). We Recover as One.

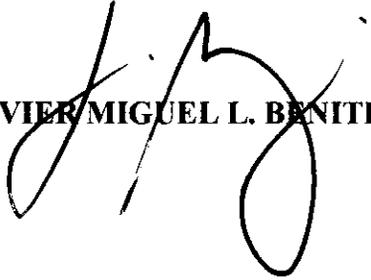
<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Municipal Agriculture Information System (MAIS) serves many purposes – as online marketplace for farmers to sell their produce, as database of information on crop production and sales volume, as real-time inventory of agricultural commodities, and ultimately, as analytical tool that promotes evidence-informed LGU decision-making. The MAIS helps the Mina LGU understand local agricultural commodity flow, and forecast market demand that guide crop planning.

This bill aims to replicate Mina’s MAIS nationwide to broaden market access of small-scale farmers to increase their household income, and promote local food security. This bill has been approved by the House of Representatives on third and final reading in the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress, after vigorous committee and TWG deliberations.

Furthermore, this bill is in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.’s priority agenda to modernize Philippine agriculture and to accelerate digital transformation of our economy and our government bureaucracy. In his first State of the Nation Address, President Marcos said, “Ipa-prayoridad natin ang modernisasyon ng mga sakahan sa pamamagitan ng mga makabagong teknolohiya para sa ating mga magsasaka.”

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

  
**JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ**

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

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

- (a) Provide an up-to-date database of agricultural and fisheries products in a locality;
- (b) Foster information sharing between farmers and potential buyers of agricultural and fisheries products;
- (c) Secure a market for agricultural and fisheries products and ensure appropriate return of investment for farmers and fisheries stakeholders;
- (d) Allow local government units to manage a secure and independent platform that creates linkages for farmers and fisheries stakeholders;
- (e) Provide data on specific commodities that are readily available in a particular locality for purposes of production monitoring in order to meet the demands of the market;

- (f) Provide a secure, transparent, and independent modern web application that may be accessed anytime by the public through a multi-platform support or cross-platform support devices which can be linked to existing systems in the Department of Agriculture (DA);
- (g) Streamline training and seminars in the management of the operations;
- (h) Monitor the use of inputs given by producers, buyers, and other segments of the value-chain including information during post-harvest and processing; and
- (i) Ensure that all forms of assistance given to local government units (LGUs), registered cooperatives and other qualified individuals and organizations are monitored.

**SEC. 4. *Agriculture Information System.*** – All cities and municipalities are hereby mandated to establish an Agriculture Information System (AIS), hereinafter referred to as Information System. The AIS shall serve as a dynamic online computer database where information on the demand for specific agricultural and fisheries commodities is gathered and uploaded simultaneously with the production data from farmers in every barangay. The AIS shall merge and synchronize agricultural data from different sources into a cohesive database designed to facilitate linkages from place of origin or the farm to local, and ultimately, global markets. The AIS shall also be integrated with the existing systems of the DA.

The Information System shall have the following features and contents:

- (a) Municipal and city-wide identification of individual farmers, fish breeders, and fisherfolk as well as qualified organizations which produce specific farm and fisheries products, regardless of quantity;
- (b) Crop harvest, volume, and type forecasting;
- (c) Inventory of specific classification of crop varieties planted, livestock and type of fish raised in a particular LGU;
- (d) Farmers' and fisherfolk demographics, including age group, gender, ethnic group, income, seminars and trainings attended, and assistance received;
- (e) Selected reports presented in both tabular and graphical form;
- (f) Registry of farmers' contact details and farm location to facilitate market linkages;
- (g) Search engine which allows farmers, fish breeders, and fisherfolk to look for potential and actual buyers and for such buyers to search for farms, farmers, and available agricultural and fisheries products; and
- (h) Customizable dashboard which is accessible only to registered farmers and fisherfolk clients and contains the farmers' and fisherfolk's profile such as the area of the farm or fishpond, crops planted, livestock and type of fish raised.

**SEC. 5. *Registration.*** – All cities and municipalities shall encourage and facilitate the free registration of all farmers, fisherfolk, as well as buyers transacting within their respective areas in the Information System.

**SEC. 6. *Functions and Responsibilities of Cities and Municipalities.*** – The LGU shall exercise the following functions and responsibilities:

- (a) The Municipal Agriculture Office, in coordination with the Municipal Agrarian Reform Office, shall gather, encode, and consolidate all pertinent data on the profile and demographics of farmers, fisherfolk as well as buyers;
- (b) Monitor and control farm inputs including machineries and equipment;
- (c) For municipalities and component cities, prepare and submit real-time data under (a) and (b) to the provincial agricultural office and to the respective regional offices of the DA;
- (d) For highly urbanized cities, submit real-time data to the respective regional offices of the DA;
- (e) Establish farmer and buyer linkages and act as a gatekeeper at the city or municipal level in the nationwide marketing of agricultural products; and
- (f) Serve as the web administrator at the municipal or city level and be responsible for integrating farm and fisheries locations into the geographic integration system map.

**SEC. 7. *Functions and Responsibilities of the Province.*** – The provincial government shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

- (a) The Provincial Planning and Development Office (PPDO) is the web administrator at the provincial level and is responsible for integrating farm and fisheries data into the geographic integration system maps for agriculture and fisheries;
- (b) The Local Economic and Investment Promotion Office (LEIPO) acts as the lead administrator of the AIS in the provincial level and ensures the balance between supply and demand;
- (c) The Provincial Agricultural Office monitors the submission of reports from municipalities and component cities, and ensures the completeness, accuracy, and validity of data submitted by the Municipal Agricultural Offices and the Municipal Agrarian Reform Offices; and
- (d) Except for highly urbanized cities, prepare and submit such data to the regional office of the DA.

**SEC. 8. *Functions and Responsibilities of the Regional Office of the DA.*** – The regional office of the DA shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

- (a) Integrate the data provided by the provinces and highly urbanized cities in the existing information systems of the DA such as the National Farmers and Fisheries Information System (NFFIS) which is a web-based data collection system that serves as a platform for updating the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA);
- (b) Collaborate with the regional offices of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in order to facilitate the availment of the various programs of the DTI as well as strengthen market linkages through such programs;
- (c) Recommend to the central office of the DA appropriate interventions in the form of marketing, importation, and training assistance, as may be needed;
- (d) Validate the data from the LGUs acting as the system administrator at the regional level and provide real-time report to the central office of the DA; and
- (e) Endorse for financial assistance the qualified fifth and sixth class municipalities that can be given assistance in establishing and maintaining their respective MS.

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

- (a) Allocate funding for the integration of the AIS with existing information systems;
- (b) Coordinate with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) to upgrade, expand, and integrate its information systems;
- (c) Ensure that the implementation, appropriate verification processes and information safeguards are in place pursuant to existing laws and regulations, in coordination with the DICT, Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), National Privacy Commission (NPC), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DIG) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
- (d) Approve the prioritized interventions by the regional offices and allocate corresponding funding;
- (e) Collaborate with other agencies for the creation of market linkages in the domestic and international markets; and
- (f) Provide safety nets in the import and export of agricultural products in order to support farmers.

**SEC. 10. *Duties of the Secretary.*** – The Secretary of the DA shall monitor and ensure the compliance of all cities and municipalities as provided for under this Act and shall, as soon as practicable, establish a centralized AIS that shall integrate and link all existing information systems in the country.

**SEC. 11. *Reports.*** – The Secretary of the DA shall prepare and submit to the President and both Houses of Congress an annual report on the implementation of the program which shall contain the list of accomplishments and recommendations for improvements.

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

**SEC. 13. *Appropriations.*** – The Secretary of Agriculture shall include in the Department's programs the establishment of the integrated and centralized AIS, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. The LGUs shall provide the necessary funds for the establishment of an AIS in their respective annual budgets.

**SEC. 14. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected by such declaration shall remain in full force and effect.

**SEC. 15. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**SEC 16. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,