VIRTUAL SENATE HEARING BY AGRI COMMITTEE ON PRICE INCREASE FOR PORK AND CHICKEN

Monday, 01 February 2021

At the virtual Senate Hearing under the Joint Committees of Agriculture, Food & Agrarian Reform and Trade, Industry & Entrepreneurship via CISCO WEBEX on 1 February 2021, the 3-hour Meet consulted all the stakeholders & government agencies concerned in the abrupt increase in the price of pork and chicken. Among the 125 attendees were Senators Villar, Pangilinan, Zubiri, Hontiveros, Marcos, Binay and Cayetano; Secretaries Lopez (DTI) and Dar (DA); Usec. Castello & others from DA; Rosendo So & Jason Cainglet/SINAG, Chester Warren Yeo Tan/NFHRI, Edwin Chen/ProPORK, Jesse Cham/MITA, Gregorio San Diego/Egg Board, Jose Elias Inciong/UBRA, former Bats. Rep. Nicanor Briones, Ernesto OrdoÃ±ez, Alfred Ng, DTI's Ann Claire Cabochan, Atty. Victorio Dimagiba/LKI, MMDA GM Jojo Garcia, Senate Staff Joshel Regodon & Atty. Philip Lina and representatives from the BAI, BoC, NEDA, the Tariff Commission, NMIS, PSA, Toll Reg. Board, etc. Discussions revealed that prices began their uptick in October 2020. Fear of ASF contamination coupled with COVID-19 infection prevented the swift transfer of hogs from ASF-free GenSan to MM. DILG was tasked to coordinate with LGUs to allow the unhampered passage of trucks carrying hogs. DA was instructed to set aside budget for border facilities to guard against technical smuggling as MAVs were known to be abused/sold by unscrupulous traders and savings from cheaper imported meats not passed on to consumers. Senate was not in favor of tariff reduction (which favors imports) and MAV expansion (which will tilt heavily against local farmers when the smoke clears).