

## INTERVIEW ON RICE PREDICAMENT

Tuesday, 05 September 2023

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In the early morning of 5 September 2023, PAGASA President Steven T. Cua was interviewed live over TV5 by veteran newscaster Ted Faylon and DJ Chacha over the controversial Executive Order (EO) No. 39 which takes effect on the very day of said interview. President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. issued the EO just three days earlier pegging the price of regular-milled rice at a ceiling of P41.00 per kilo and well-milled rice at P45.00 per kilo nationwide. Current prices for these commodities range from P48.00 to P56.00.

Mr.

Faylon got hold of a Letter from the Presidential Management Staff (PMS) addressed to PAGASA (c/o its President) requesting the latter to endorse the new EO and encourage supermarket operators to sell rice at the aforementioned regulated prices. He asked if Mr. Cua responded to the request. The reply: "I politely declined." Mr. Cua predicts that with the implementation of this EO, regular- and well-milled rice will be a thing of the past in the next few days as rice traders and retailers will refrain from carrying these. "There is a strong need to carry out long-term food security programs to avoid these quick-fix solutions to staples as crucial to the population as rice."