

Philippines launches garden-to-table cooking caravan

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Philippines Department of Agriculture (DA) showcased culinary demonstrations by Filipino chefs as well as best practices being implemented in Rizal Park's Urban and Rice Gardens during the launching of its Garden-to-Table Cooking Caravan in Manila.

With the theme, "Panalo ang Nutrisyong Pilipino," the cooking caravan is an information and advocacy campaign that was made possible through the collaborative efforts among three DA operating units—the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), the National Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Program (NUPAP), and the High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP)—as well as the National Parks Development Committee (NPDC) and Pilimico Foods Corporation.

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DA Undersecretary for High-Value Crops Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero underscored the importance of the Garden-to-Table Cooking Caravan in localising solutions for food insufficiency and nutrition deficiency and in adhering to every Filipino's right to food—which the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) defines as "the right to feed oneself in dignity."

"The Philippines' undernutrition is recorded at 29 per cent of the population. Isa kada tatlong bata younger than five years old suffer from stunting. Micronutrient deficiency is also a problem—38 per cent of infants, 26 per cent among children aged 12 to 23 months, and 20 per cent of pregnant women are anaemic. So we aim to address this by looking at ways to repackage our Gulayan sa Barangay, sa Paaralan, at sa Bayan in a way that is now connected to food consumption. Itong Urban and Rice Gardens natin ang magiging living testimony that food need not be expensive and can be grown locally in your backyard," the DA official shared.

Established in March 2021 by the DA-BPI, the DA-Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), the NPDC, and private sector partners, the two gardens are located at the west end of the Burnham Green of Luneta. They serve as food production areas,

green spaces, and learning hubs on best agricultural practices in the middle of the bustling metro.