



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **AGRICULTURE SECRETARY VILSACK ANNOUNCES \$8.5 MILLION IN DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR THE PHILIPPINES IN AFTERMATH OF TYPHOONS**

*Donations through Food for Progress Program will Provide Meals for an Estimated 438,000 People for 60 Days*

MANILA, PHILIPPINES, October 26, 2009—Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced plans for \$8.5 million in international assistance under USDA’s Food for Progress Program for the Philippines in the aftermath of recent typhoons that have caused severe flooding in the country. Vilsack made the announcement at a meeting in Manila with Philippines President Gloria Arroyo and Secretary of Agriculture Arthur Yap. The commodity donations will provide food to an estimated 438,000 people for 60 days.

“The United States understands the importance of international assistance in the aftermath of disasters like the typhoons that recently hit the Philippines,” Vilsack said. “The food aid I am announcing today will help the people in the most need of assistance, and as a longstanding friend and partner of the Philippines, the United States stands ready to continue our cooperation and assistance in the future.”

The Food for Progress allocations announced today are for roughly 7,000 metric tons of U.S. rice and 680 metric tons of non-fat dry milk that is produced in the United States and donated by USDA. The donated commodities will be processed into Ultra High Temperature milk and biscuits and distributed to flood victims. The Philippines is the largest recipient of USDA food aid programs in Asia, with programs dating back to 1995. Title I, Section 416(b) and Food for Progress assistance totaled \$217 million since fiscal year 2000. In FY 2009, USDA signed three Food for Progress agreements in the Philippines valued at \$25 million.

Vilsack is in the Philippines to open a U.S. Trade Mission to further solidify direct commercial relations between U.S. and Philippine producers, processors, traders, and investors. After leaving the Philippines, Vilsack will be heading to China to participate in bilateral meetings on agricultural trade and development.

Food for Progress has consistently helped developing countries advance economic reform and expand private enterprise. It has, in its 24 years of existence, played an important role in helping developing countries support their agricultural sectors.

The Food for Progress Program provides U.S. agricultural commodities to developing countries and emerging democracies committed to introducing and expanding free enterprise in the agricultural sector. Commodities are currently provided on a donation basis to foreign governments, private voluntary organizations, non-profit organizations, cooperatives or intergovernmental organizations. Projects are chosen based on their agricultural focus, the country's needs, the proposal's quality and the organization's management, experience and financial and technical capabilities.

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