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RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Manny B. Villar

RESOLUTION

URGING THE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE RESULT OF THE SUPER BUFFALO AND ANIMAL CLONING PROJECTS CONDUCTED BY THE PHILIPPINE CARABAO CENTER (PCC), THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY-PHILIPPINE COUNCIL FOR AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (DOST-PCARRD) WITH THE END IN VIEW OF IMPROVING THE LIVESTOCK SUPPLY OF THE PHILIPPINES

Whereas, one of the goals of the national economy is the sustained increase in the amount of goods and services produced by the nation for the benefit of the people; and an expanding productivity as the key to raising the quality of life for all, especially the underprivileged (1987 Constitution, Article XII, Section 1);

Whereas, it is further stated in our Constitution that the State shall provide support to agriculture through appropriate technology and research, and adequate financial, production, marketing, and other support services (Article XIII, Section 5);

Whereas, much of the cattle meat being consumed in the Philippines today is imported, with the Philippines merely producing 59% of the country's total requirement;

Whereas, more so, milk and dairy products are mostly imported with the Philippines producing a measly 2% of the overall requirement;

Whereas, on the average, it is reported that the country is importing 26 billion pesos worth of milk and dairy products and another 24 billion for carabeef (carabao meat);

Whereas, in view of the increasing need of the country to be self reliant with meat and dairy, in 2007, the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC), the Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (DOST-PCARRD) worked together to create a breed of cloned "super buffalos" for use primarily to improve the country's livestock supply;

Whereas, these super buffalos are actually the regular carabaos that have been naturally bred specifically to yield more milk and meat, they are likewise resistant to carabao diseases and are not genetically modified in any way;

Whereas, the cloning technique reportedly employed by scientists from the PCC and PCARRD is called Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer, the same method used by British genetic engineers to create Dolly, the first artificially cloned mammal;

Whereas, the procedure involves extraction of animal cells from an adult animal and then placed into oocytes or immature ovum that will serve as its host. It is similar to *in vitro* fertilization but instead of using live sperm from a male, the cell is extracted from any part of the animal, including skin and hair;

Whereas, the extracted cell contains the blueprint of all living things, and is thus used as a primary cell whose genetic material is directly copied into the new animal. Afterwards, the cell and the oocyte, now called the embryo, is placed into a healthy host carabao which will serve as a surrogate parent for the maturing super carabao embryo;

Whereas, although the expected success rate was reported to be very low at 5%, since recipient animal might reject the embryo, PCC supervising science research specialist Edwin Atabay, was hopeful that the first live cloned specimen, which would be female, will be born within a year or two from the time the project was launched which was last October 2007;

Whereas, if the project is successful the country can start producing its own requirements for beef, milk and dairy products, which will help not just the consumers but also the local livestock industry;

Whereas, this project should be monitored and supported as it has a potential advantage to the economy as the cloning of carabaos can help the livestock industry improve its cattle and milk yield, which is already in decline in the Philippines;

Whereas, exactly three years has passed, and the public is keen to know the success or failure of this project as this procedure can be replicated across different types of livestock to drastically improve the Philippine livestock supply;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, to urge the Committees on Agriculture and Food and Science and Technology to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation, on the result of the Super Buffalo and animal cloning projects conducted by the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC), the Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (DOST-PCARRD) with the end in view of improving the livestock supply of the Philippines

Adopted,


Manny Villar