



GAMEFOWL BREEDERS DEPLORE IATF DOUBLE STANDARD POLICY ON COCKFIGHTS

Submitted by j.vincent on 09.22.2020

NEWS MATERIAL

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WHILE illegal online operations of cockfights remain very rampant and unabated, the country's enforcers of COVID-19 health protocols have kept a closed eye on the petition of legitimate industry stakeholders to operate legally and safely.

The more than 10,000-member International Federation of Gamefowl Breeders' Association issued the allegation today in reference to what it called as 'apathy and coldhearted' treatment of the IATF on FIGBA's plea to resume its sports events called locally as 'sabong.'

"Lahat na government agencies na nilapitan ng FIGBA para makonsidera ang aming proposal para sa pagbukas ng mga derby, 'tulad ng NEDA, Games and Amusement Board, DILG at mga lokal na pamahalaan, ay palaging itinuturo ang IATF na siya lang umano ang pwedeng mag-aprub sa aming kahilingan," said Ricardo Palmares, Jr., the federation president.

Palmares stressed that FIGBA's petition for the resumption of its gamefowl derbies has outlined a comprehensive adaption of and conform with the maximum standard of the IATF's health protocols, like retrofitting of and modular setting in cockpit arenas for physical distancing, wash and alcohol areas in derby sites and the strict observance for wearing face mask and face shield.

"FIGBA and some lawmakers who're sympathetic to our plight, like Reps. Sonny Lagon and Joseph Bernos, have also appealed for the imprimatur of President Duterte to whom we've shared the woes of our 42 provincial associations of breeders and the economic paralysis gripping the P75-billion gamefowl industry in this more than 6 months of COVID-19 pandemic, but until now we are still in limbo" stressed Palmares.

Local gamefowl breeders for their part, took a swipe at what they described as 'intentional neglect' by the law enforcers to curb the prevalence of illegal online 'sabong' and their obvious display of alleged favor to its operators with whom they accused of undermining the survival of the gamefowl industry by offering an inconsiderate and insignificant amount for the fighting birds.

"Nagtataka kaming mga lehitimo at law-abiding breeders na naghihintay at sumusunod sa utos ng IATF kung bakit nakapikit ang kanilang mga mata sa laganap na illegal online sabong na araw-araw naglalaban nang walang pagkilala sa health protocols at walang ambag na buwis sa ating gobyerno," lamented an officer of a local breeders' association in Central Luzon, who also criticized the inaction of the National Bureau of Investigation and the Philippine National Police to contain such illegal activities.

Earlier, the gamefowl industry that counts a million of direct and indirect beneficiaries and that has never bothered



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Published on FIGBA - International Federation of Gamefowl Breeders Associations

(<http://www.beta.omb.gov.ph>)

the government for any social amelioration or financial assistance since the start of the corona virus pandemic in March has appealed for the President's approval to resume its sports events called 'sabong' after the IATF reportedly ignored its petition.

Addressing President Duterte in his appeal for understanding, Palmares said he would assure His Excellency and the health authorities that even if COVID-19 vaccine becomes available, the more than 10,000 breeders joining FIGBA derbies will still be required to observe the maximum health protocols imposed by the government.

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