



Republic of the Philippines  
**DEPARTMENT of AGRARIAN REFORM**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 16  
Series of 1989

SUBJECT: RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING CUTTING OF COCONUT TREES AND/OR CHANGE IN USE OF LANDS PRIMARILY DEVOTED TO COCONUT

Pursuant to Republic Act No. 6657, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) covers all public and private agricultural lands regardless of tenurial relations and commodity produced. As a general rule, the change of crop or the shift to other agricultural purposes does not exempt subject agricultural land from CARP coverage. Therefore, the cutting of coconut trees will not in any way prevent the acquisition and distribution of landholdings in excess of the retained area and/or the application of leasehold provisions under existing agrarian reform law. Considering that the cutting of coconut trees could lead to unlawful ejectment of tenant-tillers and/or farmworkers, including other cases that may arise therefrom, the following rules and regulations are hereby promulgated and/or reiterated:

1. The authority to approve or disapprove conversion of agricultural lands for residential, commercial, industrial, and other land uses is exclusively vested in the DAR Secretary.
2. Except where allowed and provided for under the rules and procedures governing conversion of private agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses, the following acts are prohibited:
  - 2.1 Unlawful ejectment of tenant-tillers and/or farmworkers;
  - 2.2 The conversion by any landowner of his agricultural lands into non-agricultural use with intent to evade the application of R.A. 6657 to his landholdings;
  - 2.3 The change of the nature of lands outside of urban centers and city limits either in whole or in part after the effectivity of R.A. 6657.
3. Conversion of agricultural lands primarily devoted to coconut into other uses may be allowed in cases where the majority of the coconut trees in the subject land has become senescent and economically unproductive as determined and certified by the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA); Provided, that the affected farmer-tenants, lessees and regular farmworkers shall be furnished a copy of the written findings and

recommendations of the PCA; Provided, further, that the security of tenure of the tenant-tillers and regular farmworkers shall not be undermined as a result of the change in crop and cultivation; Provided, finally, that in case of conversion into non-agricultural uses, tenant-tillers, lessees and regular farmworkers shall be entitled to the rights and benefits provided for by law.

4. Any person, association, or entity who knowingly or willfully prevents or obstructs the implementation of these rules and regulations shall be liable for contempt and other penalties provided for by law.

All parties concerned are advised to report such cases to the nearest Provincial Agrarian Reform Office covering the area.

5. This Administrative Order shall take effect ten (10) days after its publication in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

All orders, circulars, rules and regulations inconsistent herewith are hereby revoked, amended or modified, as the case maybe.

Diliman, Quezon City. 06 November 1989.

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Secretary