



# Umanasenso

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## DA honors farmers in festival

**SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR** – In celebration of the annual Farmers and Fisherfolk's month this May, the Department of Agriculture Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) spearheaded a two-day Farmers' Festival or Agri Trade Fair at the DA Bicol

grounds here on May 15-16, 2017.

A total of 45 exhibitors brought in their agricultural and handicraft products which garnered a total sales of P546,392.00. Most of the exhibitors came from the Provincial, Municipal and Barangay Food Terminals,

Irrigators Associations, Organic Farmers Associations from the provinces of Masbate, Sorsogon, Albay, Camarines Norte and Camarines Sur. Organic farmers associations include the GAPPA, TAPFPAT, CAANDUYOG, Pecuaría Development Coop; and the

*(Please turn to page 11)*



## Ligao City bags P1 million in National Rice Achievers search

The Local Government Unit of Ligao City in Albay won in the outstanding city/municipality category in the 2016 National Rice Achievers Search and received P1 million cash prize and trophy. Senator Cynthia Villar, chairperson of the senate committee on agriculture led the awarding ceremony held at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) on May 23, 2017.

The DA gave away over P52 million in cash prizes to seven provinces, 15 municipalities and cities, four Irrigators Associations (IAs), and three Small Water Impounding System Associations (SWISAs).

OIC City Agriculturist Dexter A. Mendoza received the award. Mayor Patricia Alsua was represented by Ligao City

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## National Convergence Initiative recognizes RCI-Bicol for its convergence area dev't plan in Castilla, Sorsogon

**VIGAN CITY, ILOCOS SUR**---The National Convergence Initiative for Sustainable Rural Development (NCI-SRD) recognized the efforts and support of the Departments of Agriculture-5 (DA); Agrarian Reform-5 (DAR); Environment and Natural Resources (DENR); and Interior and Local Government-5 (DILG) in the

*(Please turn to page 7)*

*DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Elena B. delos Santos received the plaque of recognition for the Bicol Regional Convergence Initiative for the completion of the convergence area development plan of Pili Watershed in Castilla, Sorsogon. Director delos Santos received the plaque from DAR Secretary Rafael V. Mariano and DA Undersecretary for Special Concerns and Chair of NCI-SRD Alternate National Steering Committee Atty. Ranibai D. Dilangalen.*





## Rice sufficiency by 2020 may no longer be an elusive dream

The Department of Agriculture has promoted rice hybridization sometime in the early --- . But just when it was gaining ground , the government all of sudden decided to go slow on hybridization and concentrated more on certified seeds. Thus, the much hyped target of attaining rice-self sufficiency for the country in 2014 was not realized.

Today, the DA is again campaigning for the intensified use of hybrid rice to achieve its goal of attaining rice self-sufficiency by 2020. Agriculture Secretary Manny F. Pinol himself is leading the promotion of rice hybridization as one of the four strategies to attain the sufficiency goal. The three other strategies are: farmer's access to credit or loans; access to right marketing and provision of post harvest facilities.

Already, the DA has forged partnership with private companies and launched a rice derby contest among seed companies to determine which variety produces more yield per hectare. These seed companies will also assist in technology transfer.



Side by side with rice hybridization program the DA will now implement a credit window called Production Loan easy Access (PLEA) Program designed to address the financial needs of marginal and small farmers for a fast, convenient and affordable credit. It has also launched the Survival and Recovery (SURE) Assistance Program for calamity-stricken farmers and fishers. This is a non-collateral, zero interest loan payable in three years.

To give farmers or producers access to market, the DA is now organizing rice farmers into-highly functioning organizations and assisting them in setting-up farmer-owned outlets in key areas. This is to reduce multiple layers in the market system.

The DA has now been awarding farm equipment and post-harvest facilities that will enable the farmers reduce their production and post-harvest facilities. Secretary Pinol promised farmers that the DA will not be distributing equipment which are not functional and which are not needed.

With the farmers industry, resiliency, innovativeness and receptiveness to improved technologies and good agricultural practices plus the government's sustained and unwavering determination to promote hybridization and deliver the goods, services and interventions align with this the goal of achieving rice self-sufficiency by 2010 will no longer be an elusive dream.



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## PRDP turns over 20 non-motorized fiberglass boats to calamity-affected fishfolk in Sorsogon

SORSOGON CITY -- Colorful buntings and festive music signal that it is no ordinary day in Sitio Purakay, Brgy. Pamurayan, Sorsogon City on May 15, 2017. Amid scorching summer heat, residents flock the shores of Sorsogon Bay and look over the horizon. After three hours of breathless waiting, everyone was filled with cheers as 20 red and blue non-motorized fiberglass boats parade the sea. Among the crowd, two men moved closer to the seashore, clapping their hands in amazement—Roberto Salgado, president of the Samahang Mangingisda ng Tomalaytay (SMT) and Mariano Saldy Jesoro, president of the Samahang Mangingisda ng Gimaloto (SAMAGI). Salgado and Jesoro are the recipients of the fiberglass boats from the Philippine Rural Development Project's (PRDP) microenterprise subprojects for calamity-stricken areas in Bicol.

During the Turn-Over Ceremony of Fiberglass Non-motorized Boats, PRDP Project Support Office South Luzon Director Shandy Hubilla announced that the 20 non-motorized fiberglass boats are initial deliveries out of the 50 non-motorized fiberglass boats that the Project will provide to fisherfolk in Sorsogon. SMT and SAMAGI are two of the five proponent groups venturing in seaweed production that will receive 10 non-motorized fiberglass boats each.

“Pagkatapos ng Typhoon Nona medyo naghirap at bumaba ang income ng mga seaweed farmers at ng mga mangingisda



ng aming barangay. Itong project na ito ay talaga namang makakatulong na maiangat ang kabuhayan ng mga seaweed farmers ng Tomalaytay. Sa pamamagitan nito maliban sa dati naming mga bangka, meron na kaming additional na sampu na magagamit namin para sa pagpapalawak ng aming mga taniman. Ang mga bangkaang ito ay mas matibay kumpara sa aming mga ginagamit at magiging kaaagapay ng bawat farmer sa paggabay sa kanilang hanap-buhay sa pang-araw-araw na pangangailangan” said Roberto A. Salgado, president of the Samahang Mangingisda ng Tomalaytay (SMT) in Castilla, Sorsogon.

Meanwhile, Mariano Saldy L. Jesoro, president of the Samahang Mangingisda ng Gimaloto (SAMAGI) recalled how fisherfolk and seaweed farmer-members of his cooperative struggled to plant, maintain and harvest their seaweeds after Typhoon Nona wrecked their boats.

“Naghihirap yung mga mangingisda. Nung wala pa ang PRDP, halos naglalakad lang sila. Pag high tide hindi makapaglinis ng maayos sa gulamanan dahil malalim ang tubig. Yung ibang mga miyembro umuupa sila nang mahal halimbawa P25 ang bangka kada isang araw” he said.

With the 10 non-motorized fiberglass boats, Jesoro saw a glimmer of hope for the fisherfolk members of SAMAGI.

“Sa ngayon mas lalong mapapaganda namin ang tubo ng seaweeds dahil meron na kaming mga bangka na maaari naming gamitin anumang oras,” Jesoro added.

About 74 members of SAMAGI and 71 members of SMT will benefit from the non-motorized boats which they can use in carrying planting materials as well as in the daily maintenance and monitoring of their seaweed culture. PRDP will also provide

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June 15, 2017

Dr. Elena B. delos Santos  
Regional Executive Director  
Department of Agriculture RFO 5

Dear Madam:

In God's grace!

I would like to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated April 19, 2017, in regard to my request for assistance from DA. As directed I went to your office last June 6 and was cordially assisted by Ms. Angie Belleza for the requested female carabao. To date, I am just waiting for its delivery.

As to the hybrid palay seeds I was graciously attended by Maam Elenita Jane Ramos, and sir Fermin for the Bigante seeds which I brought home the day to Daet. Regarding the 100 pcs pili seedlings, I was gladly assisted by Engr Frias, Maam Naning and Kuya Dodong of RIARC in Calasgasan.

I am scheduled to pick them up by last week of June 2017, together with the 14 bas of vermicast which I was able to obtain thru the assistance and goodwill of Engr. Oliven Oco and his very courteous and helpful personnel.

All in all, my experience in dealing with your personnel at these DA offices has been a memorable one, truly inspiring and encouraging. It humbled me and restored my faith and deep respect and admiration of our government personnel. Nakakataba po ng puso ang inyong paglingap, pagtulong at pagmamalasakit sa aming mga ordinaryong mamamayan at magbubukid.

God bless you po at Mabuhay!

Lubos na gumagalang at nagpapasalamat,

(Signed) IRENEO N. PAPRIGON  
Celestino Enverga Street, Daet, Cam.Norte

Cc: Sec. Manny Piñol, Engr. Frias, Engr. Oco

## Letters





LEGASPI CITY - The 3-year foreign -assisted STANDZ project to control and eliminate rabies in the Philippines in particular the Bicol region officially ended on June 21 in simple ceremonies in a hotel here attended by the implementers, partner agencies and other stakeholders .

Launched on September 1, 2014 the project under the name “Stop Transboundary Animal Diseases and Zoonoses” or STANDZ was initiated by the World Organization for Animal Health or OIE in partnership with the Australian government as donor and the Philippine government through the Bureau of Animal Industry and the Department of Agriculture RFO 5 as the implementing agencies. Its primary objective is to control and ultimately eliminate dog rabies cases in the Philippines through massive vaccination , advocacy and information campaign on Responsible Pet Ownership and strengthening inter-sectoral collaboration among implementers, partner institutions and LGUs.

Dr. Emerlinda Lopez, National Rabies Project Coordinator presented the highlights of accomplishment of the Project based on the four frameworks under the ASEAN Rabies Elimination Strategies which are : Socio-cultural, Technical, Organizational and Political (STOP). Under the Socio-Cultural component, STANDZ was able to produce baseline data through a Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) survey which served as guideline on the

## Foreign assisted STANDZ- rabies project ends but efforts to be sustained

by (Emily B. Bordado)

public’s understanding .

Under the technical component the project has greatly influenced the understanding of the LGUs towards implementing the Rabies program with the adoption of the strategies adopted by the project. For the organizational component the project facilitated and encouraged

Dr. Lopez also lauded the efforts and commitment of the Bicol team especially, Dr. Rona Bernales, the Regional Project Coordinator for the big success of the project.

Dr. Ronello Abilla, who represented the OIE Sub-Regional Office in Southeast Asia said that significant strides have been made with the

government have manifested continued support to the project.

Dr. Rubina Cresencio, former BAI director under whose term the STANDZ project was implemented said that the STANDZ project followed disease control model used to eliminate the Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) which also affected the swine industry in several regions of the country. Dr. Cresencio who is now a consultant of OIE explained



*Dr. Ronello Abilla, representative of the OIE Sub-Regional Office in Southeast Asia*



*Department of Health Assistant Director Dr. Ernie Vera*



*Dr. Rubina Cresencio, former BAI director*

the creation of Barangay and Municipal Rabies Prevention and Control Committees and protocol and flowchart of practical inter-sectoral linking have been finalized and initially rolled out.

For the political component, the project was able to attain an increase in local chief executive’s (LCEs) support to the rabies program through manpower and financial support. Moreover, ordinances were made to guide and direct LGUs on the responsibilities of each sector.

implementation of the project but they will still be reviewing the accomplishments and their impact . These will be the basis for the declaration by the OIE if an area or country is rabies free. He explained that an area declared as rabies free has a big impact on its tourism industry and Bicol which has a thriving tourism industry will stand to benefit from a rabies – free declaration. He added that although there is no assurance of future support from donor countries the national and local

that Bicol was chosen as the pilot region because of the high incidence before of rabies cases in the region and because of its strategic location being the gateway from Luzon to Visayas and Mindanao and vice-versa.

DA Bicol Regional Executive Director, Dr. Elena de los Santos in her message read by Luz Marcelino, chief of the Research Division acknowledged the efforts and contributions of the implementers, partners and

*(Next page pls.)*





## Farmers Summit caps end of Bicol Agri Water Project

To cap the completion of the 5 year implementation of the Bicol Agri-Water Project (BAWP), a Farmers' Summit was conducted last July 14, 2017 held at the Macagang Business Center in Nabua Camarines Sur. It was attended by 462 project beneficiaries and Climate Field School graduates; 56 representatives from project partners agencies, institutions and universities.

This project entitled: Water Security under Climate Risks: A Philippine Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Agriculture Sector or simply BAWP is funded by the United State Agency for International Development (USAID) and is a collaborative undertaking of government agencies, academic and research institutions and selected LGUs. These include the University of the Philippines Los Baños Foundation Incorporated (UPLBFI), Department of Agriculture Regional Office 5 (DARFO 5), the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), the International Research Institute - Columbia University (IRI-CU), the Central Bicol State University (CBSUA), and the Bicol University College of Agriculture and Forestry (BUCAF), LGU of Buhi, Polangui and Nabua.

The primary objective of the project is to enhance the resiliency of farmers and local decision makers to adapt to climate variability and change. It envisioned to showcase climate adaptation strategies within the farming communities and promote improved watershed management strategies within the Buhi-Barit Watershed Reservation of Buhi, Camarines Sur and Quinale A Watershed of Polangui, Albay, and to minimize the effects of climate risks on lowland rice farming communities of Nabua, Camarines Sur.

The event featured exhibit of the One Town One Products (OTOP) of the three project partner LGUs namely, Buhi and Nabua in Camarines Sur and Polangui in Albay. It provided market matching and promoted local products. It also showcased good agri-practices and climate resilient strategies of the respective LGUs.

One of the highlights of the event is the turnover ceremony of the Climate-Smart Farmers' Field School – A Facilitator's Manual for Lowland Irrigated Agro-Ecological Zone and for Upland Agro-Ecological Zone. The said manuals were developed under the auspices of the Bicol Agri-Water Project, in collaboration with partner agencies and universities.

The interventions discussed in the manuals came from available recommended interventions coupled with local experiences and practices designed and produced as guide for instruction. This would help the trained Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) to provide a comprehensive, enhanced agriculture and climate information and interpretations for farmers' guidance in their farming activities. The use of this manual is a big step towards BAWP's goal of empowering agriculture stakeholders to be climate-resilient.

The Department of Agriculture, Regional Field Office 5 (DARFO5) distributed agri-inputs, each farmer received 1 bag certified palay seeds, 1 bag fertilizer, 2 fruit bearing seedlings and backyard vegetable seeds. Registered farmer association in the three (3) project municipalities also received

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stakeholders especially the LGUs. She said that aside from attaining a high percentage of dog vaccination, what is also an important indicator of the success of the project is the heightened LGU and community engagement and involvement in the project as evidenced in the creation of Barangay and Municipal Rabies Prevention and Control Committees.

In behalf of the governor, provincial board member and chair of the agriculture committee Howard Imperial presented the initiatives and efforts of the provincial government in addressing the rabies problem. He gave assurance of the PLGU's continuous support to the efforts of eliminating rabies. Department of Health Assistant Director Dr. Ernie Vera deplors that rabies has been around for years and could not be totally eliminated. With the gains made by the STANDZ project he urged everyone to work together to sustain the efforts that have done even without the external funding support.

Also present during the event were researchers from the University of Warwick in UK: Michael Tildes Ley and Kristyna Rysava who presented the results of Rabies Mathematical Modeling in Bicol region. Dr. Daphne L. Jorca of the BAI also presented the results of post vaccination monitoring in the Bicol region. Mayor Patricia Gonzales of Ligao City also graced the occasion along with the provincial, city and municipal veterinarians, agricultural technologists and municipal agriculturists some of whom gave their testimonies and shared their experiences in the project implementation and vowed to sustain their efforts even after the projects has already been terminated. Each participating municipality were awarded certificates of appreciation and one unit megaphone and customized jacket as a token of appreciation for their participation in the project.



University of Warwick researchers Michael Tildes Ley and Kristyna Rysava.



# 2017 National Convergence Initiative Summit held

VIGAN, Ilocos Sur-- Over 400 government and non-government organizations delegates and graduates of the Master in Public Management major in Rural Development (MPM-RD) listened to inspiring messages and success stories of hope, rural transformation, and unity during the 2017 National Convergence Initiative for Sustainable Rural Development (NCI-SRD) Summit held on June 20, 2017 at the Vigan Convention Center here with the theme "Sustaining Convergence Towards Rural Development."

Held every two years since its launching in 1999, the summit presented an overview of the NCI-SRD to President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's administration and showcased success stories of convergence sites at different stages of implementation highlights of key effective strategies and major challenges encountered.

Overwhelmed with the number of attendees during the summit, Vigan City Mayor Juan Carlo S. Medina said that such event showed the "impact of convergence and a show of strong and united government agencies participation for rural development."

DA Undersecretary for Special Concerns and Chair of NCI-SRD Alternate National Steering Committee Atty. Ranibai D. Dilangalen disclosed that according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the country is faced with a 21.9% poverty incidence of which 60% of this are experiences by farmers and fisherfolks in the rural areas.



DAR Secretary Rafael V. Mariano suggested that "we should create economic opportunities that is environmentally sustainable and answer the needs of the Filipinos especially the rural folks."

DENR USec for Policy Planning and International Affairs Atty. Jonas R. Leones reported that they were able to plant more forest trees with less areas. The 1,400 trees/hectare target of their agency which was attainable will benefit not only the present but the future generations to come.

DILG Usec for Local Government Austere A. Panadero said that their agency is targeting a decrease of 40% poverty incidence by 2022 through aggressive implementation of programs on health, education, and employment.

According to Senator Cynthia A. Villar, the major challenges the Philippines is facing right now are income poverty, poverty in rural areas, weakness in employment generation, quality of jobs, failure to fully develop rural areas, increasing poor families in urban areas, and lack of access to market areas.

"Kailangan nating iahon sa kahirapan ang mga mahihirap the soonest possible time," she said.

Villar is pushing for the approval of Republic Act No. 10816 or the Farm Tourism Act wherein the farm becomes a learning site, a tourist spot, a market, and a farm school. Farm Tourism is a sunshine



industry.

If tourism is coupled with agri-extension, this will propel the improvement of farming communities and will provide additional income to them.

She also bared her plans to urge the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority to allocate P500 Million Pesos a year as scholarship fund for farmers to study in farm schools. She will

(represented by Dilangalen), DAR, DENR (represented by Leones) and DILG (represented by Panadero) signed joint resolutions on the Designation of the MPM-RD Scholarship Program graduates as members of the national and regional Technical Working Groups of the NCI-SRD; Recommending for the Endorsement of the Consolidated Budget for the Ligawasan Marsh for Fiscal



try to legislate this plan this year.

"In France, there are thousands of family farm schools, what more here in the Philippines which is an agricultural country," she related.

She also promised that she will continue to propose laws for farmers and fisherfolks like free agricultural insurance and review the farm mechanization legislation and the Agri-Agra law.

There were four major highlights of the summit---(1) the secretaries of DA

Year 2017 under the General Appropriations Act(GAA) and Requesting the National Steering Committee to Source Out Funds of Proposed Plans and Projects Outside of GAA, and one Convergence Area per region. The Department of Tourism (DOT) represented by Usec for Farm Tourism, Faith-based Tourism, and Eco-Tourism Dr. Vince Q. Tejada also signed the NCI-SRD-DOT Memorandum of Agreement which will include the DOT in the four major agencies of NCI; (2) the

(Next page pls)

Search for Best Convergence Site of 2018 was launched to recognize successful convergence initiatives in Javier, Leyte; Piddig, Ilocos Norte; Siayan-Sindangan-Roxas; Central Antique, and Isabela as well as the seven RCIs with Convergence Area Development Plan; (3) the Institutionalization of District-Wide Agro-industrialization, Innovation, and Tourism (IDAIT) as Convergence Area was also launched; and (4) exhibit of success stories of convergence sites, testimonies of stakeholders and programs underscoring the ridge-to-reef approach at Hall B of the convention center.

Since the DOT will be part of NCI-SRD starting this year, Tejada presented the three market needs of tourism--travelers for adventure and nature; religious/pilgrimage/missionary; and farm tourism. With tourism, "rural economies will gain strength," he said.

During the summit, the LGUs of Piddig, Ilocos Norte; Javier, Leyte; Siayan-Sindangan-Roxas in Zamboanga del Norte; Central Antique; and the province of Isabela were given awards because of their successful implementation of local

convergence strategies which successfully improved the lives of the residents.

Moreover, the RCIs of the Bicol Region, the Ilocos Region (Region I); Cagayan Valley (Region II); Region VII (Central Visayas); Region VIII (Eastern Visayas); Region IX (Zamboanga Peninsula); and Region X (Northern Mindanao) because of their Convergence Area Development Plan were also awarded.

DA-Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation representative Manuel J. Cortina presented the learnings generated from the success stories of the five LGUS during the one-day event which include operationalization of functional committees; synchronized plans and programs of stakeholders in the convergence areas; strong community support; conduct of agri-business investment forum; inter-agency and stakeholders cooperation and commitment to implement deliverables.

Bureau of Soil and Water Management OIC-Director and National NCI Focal Person Angel C. Enriquez lauded the summit as the most successful in terms of attendance and accomplishments. **(Jayson M. Gonzales)**

## PRDP turns over ... (from page 1)

one motorized fiberglass boat to each proponent group for the delivery of raw dried seaweeds to target markets.

SAMAGI projects an increase of P4,821.22 average income in four cropping of seaweeds from its previous average on-farm and off-farm income prior to Typhoon Nona worth P1,600. On the other hand, SMT is eyeing an increase of P4,842.49 or equivalent to 223 percent raise from their previous monthly income amounting to P1,500.

Governor Robert Lee Rodriguez of Sorsogon expressed his gratitude to the Department of Agriculture

and the PRDP for the support extended to the province. He reiterated the Sorsogon government's thrust to develop the agri-fishery sector as he observed that many farmers and fisherfolk in the province belong to the poor and vulnerable sector. He also discussed Sorsogon's potentials in pili, abaca and silkworm production and called for unity in promoting sustainable development and environment conservation among the stakeholders.

Sorsogon was hardly hit by Typhoon Nona in December 2015 which devastated about P2 million-worth of

## National Convergence Initiative ... (from page 1)

completion of the Convergence Area Development Plan (CADP) of Pili Watershed in Castilla, Sorsogon during the 2017 Summit on June 20, 2017 at the Vigan Convention Center, Vigan City, Ilocos Sur. DA-5 Regional Executive Director Elena B. De los Santos received the plaque of recognition from DA Undersecretary for Special Concerns and Chair of NCI-SRD Alternate National Steering Committee Atty. Ranibai D. Dilangalen, DAR Secretary Rafael V. Mariano, DENR USec for Policy Planning and International Affairs Atty. Jonas R. Leones, and DILG Usec for Local Government Austere A. Panadero.

Aside from the Bicol Region, other regions that were recognized by the NCI which include the Ilocos Region (Region I); Cagayan Valley (Region II); Region VII (Central Visayas); Region VIII (Eastern Visayas); Region IX (Zamboanga Peninsula); and Region X (Northern Mindanao).

NCI also awarded the LGUs of Piddig, Ilocos Norte; Javier, Leyte; Siayan-Sindangan-Roxas in Zamboanga del Norte; Central Antique; and the province of Isabela for the successful implementation of local convergence strategies which improved the lives of the residents.

Dilangalen stressed the impact of the convergence

vegetables and root crops and damaged houses and boats in communities located near the coastal zones. PRDP has approved 10 microenterprise subprojects with a total amount of P10.74 million for calamity stricken areas in the province to help affected communities recoup from their losses and eventually, increase their income. **(Annielyn L. Baleza)**

initiative. She cited the case of Siayan-Sindangan-Roxas which has a 20% decrease from their poverty incidence of 90% because of the support of DA, DAR, DENR, DILG, Departments of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and Education (DepEd).

She also cited the ease and convenience in mobility of people through transportation development; the 100% electrification of the municipality; and the increase in rice production of farmers in Javier, Leyte.

In the case of Piddig, Ilocos Norte, the convergence strategy of increasing the areas for organic coffee production jumpstarted the generation of 10,000 jobs and enticed a lot of business investors. At present, the LGU has more than 1,600 hectares planted with coffee. Dilangalen also posed a challenge to the Mindanaons present during the summit. Since Mindanao is the food basket of the Philippines--"we have to create and provide opportunities to alleviate poverty, hunger and unemployment; and empower the youth so that they will not be lured into twisted ideology as they are our future leaders."

Dilangalen also requested the DA as the lead convener of NCI to immediately convene all stakeholders. LGUs and leaders to also convene especially the Provincial Convergence Initiative (PCI) and the municipal convergence initiative (MCI). "I believe that rural areas, once developed, would address the societal ills of poverty and drugs and even the perennial road traffic problem in Manila," she said.

This year's theme is "Sustaining convergence towards rural development" and was participated in by more than 400 government and private representatives. **(Jayson M. Gonzales)**



## Bicol Agri-water ... (from page 5)

4 threshers for Buhi Camarines Sur, 1 hand tractor for Nabua, 1 corn sheller and 1 hand tractor with trailer for Polangui, Albay. 196 heads of Mallard ducks were also given to each LGU for dispersal to the 14 project barangays.

In behalf of the Agricultural Training Institute Director, Dr. Luz Taposok, Mr. Vicente Dayanghirang Jr., Assistant Division Head, Policy and Planning Division, delivered Dr. Taposok's message and grateful appreciation to the BAWP's funding agency, project implementers and partners. He said that "One key response to the threat of climate is improving the management of irrigation water through the conduct of this Bicol Agri-Water Project. We are aware that water is one of the most valuable resources in sustaining agricultural production and climate change have resulted to inequitable distribution and inadequate supply of irrigation water, affecting rice production and sharing of water resources in the watersheds here in Camarines Sur and Albay. Climate change will definitely alter the agricultural productivity and it summons us to also change and keep up with it. Being in the agriculture sector, we are at the forefront in the country's quest to end poverty and attain sustainable development. We are sustaining the lives of our countrymen and we must act now if we do not want to crumble or be swept away by the next flood that comes. It is up to us to build a world we want for ourselves and for our children to remember. And this project which infuses climate resilient technologies and adaptation strategies are "public goods" that our principal clienteles – the farmers, will forever be a part of their mainstreaming activities in the farms."

In behalf of the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 5 and Regional Director Dr. Elena B. De Los Santos, Mr. Rodel Tornilla, OIC-Regional Technical Director for Operation & Extension, expressed his gratitude to the USAID for funding the project as well as to the project partners for the collaborative efforts to make this project a success. He



*Mr. Timothy Marlowe, Acting Chief, USAID Executive Office USAID Philippines giving his message to BAWP partner agencies and farmer beneficiaries.*



*Dr. Agnes C. Rola, Project Director of Bicol Agri-Water Project and Professor of the University of the Philippines Los Baños, giving the closing remarks during the BAWP's Farmers' Summit.*



*Mr. Rodel Tornilla, OIC-Regional Technical Director for Operations & Extensions, Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 5, expressing his gratitude to the USAID for funding the project as well as to the project partners for the collaborative efforts to make this project a success.*

said that "the output of this project will be integrated to our regular activities starting next year, particularly the extension activities that were developed such as the farmers field school of the rice program which would be converted to a Climate Smart Farmers Field School. DA 5 will use the modules that were developed during the duration of the project. In addition, the DARFO5 will adapt the Climate Extension Advisory (CLEA) developed through this project and integrate it to our regular extension activities to expand the coverage of this to more barangays and municipalities"

Mr. Timothy Marlowe, Acting Chief, United States Agency for International Development Executive Office, USAID Philippines expressed his appreciation to the different partner agencies, institutions and universities. He said that "the project's achievements would not have been possible without the significant contribution of its partners, especially to the confidence in the leadership of the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 5, through Regional Director Dr. Elena De Los Santos, to sustain the initiatives of the project within the region. The U.S. Government looks forward to a continuing partnership to improve the resilience of Filipino communities to natural disasters and achieve long-term food security."

Dr. Cely S. Binoya, Co-Principal Investigator and Gender Specialist of BAWP presented the Climate Field School-A Facilitator's Manual for Lowland while Dr. Antonio Payonga, Dean, Graduate School, Bicol University and Co-Principal Investigator and Upland Specialist of BAWP presented the manual for upland.

Dr. Agnes C. Rola, BAWP Project Director expressed her appreciation to partner agencies for their cooperation. She said that "In behalf of UPLBFI, in behalf of our partners, in behalf of USAID, I would like thank you all, especially to the farmers who became part of this project. The assistance will just not the end here, cause through the MAOs, through the Climate Field Schools, through the ordinances of our LGUs, though, Seasonal Climate Extension and Advisory, hopefully we will continue what we had started and learn together."

Panel discussions with the experts and representatives from different partner agencies and institutions together with CFS graduates and beneficiaries was also conducted to primarily answers the queries and understand the initiative of every partners institutions to sustain the BAWP's initiative.





# DA inaugurates two new office buildings in Masbate



**MASBATE** – The Department of Agriculture regional office top officials trooped to this province on June 29, 2017 for the inauguration of the two newly rehabilitated office buildings that comprise the research outreach station in the province now known as Masbate Center for Livestock Development. The Masbate Breeding Station located in barangay Asid in Masbate City and the Regional Carabao Breeding Center located in barangay Mabato-bato, Mandaon, Masbate, 44 kilometers away from Masbate City are the department's implementing arms in Masbate.

The Masbate Breeding Station is a 22.8 hectare livestock facility focusing on production of superior breeds of small ruminants such as goats and sheep. Meanwhile, the 187 hectares Regional Carabao Breeding Center produces

particularly the island provinces of Masbate and Catanduanes emanated from her predecessor former DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Abelardo R. Bragas. During the term of director Bragas, the DA allocated some funds for the rehabilitation of the six research stations of the DA after typhoon Yolanda devastated the whole Bicol region. The P5 million worth two-storey



and individual small ruminant raisers. Currently, Masbate has more than 70 goat raisers and 130 cattle ranchers.

Masbate Provincial Administrator Filemon Abelita III said the improvement of the DA facilities in the province is a big step towards the

realization of its aim to improve the livestock industry. "We are mindful of the big impact of the department of agriculture in Masbate as it is primarily an agricultural area. We are very thankful

that DA has given the attention Masbate rightfully deserves," Abelita added. He also said that there is no other way but up for Masbate as it aggressively pursues farm tourism.

Masbate has a total land area of 4,151.78 sq kms. roughly 23% of the Bicol region. It is considered as livestock champion of the region as it is a source of live animals like goat, cattle and carabaos. Coconut, rice, corn, cassava and mango are its main agricultural products. (Source: <http://drive.daprdp.net/iplan/>

MasbatePCIP)

Lorenzo Alvina, Superintendent of the Masbate Center for Livestock Development hopes that with the strong support of the LGU and the farmers, the big potential of Masbate will be harnessed.

Also present during the inauguration were Jonel Orteza, Masbate Provincial Agriculturist; Nora Aribon, multi-awarded chairperson of the Provincial Agricultural and Fishery Council of Masbate; City Councilor Andrei Diez who represented Mayor Rowena Tuazon; Joaquin Dequilla, MAFC Chairperson of Milagros; Adonis dela Cruz representative of the Masbate Rice and Corn Seed Growers Association; Edgar Magallanes, representative of Masbate Small Ruminant Raisers Association; DEBESMSCAT Vice President for Administration and Finance Dr. Efren Cajurao; Hermilo Azansa, former station superintendent.

DA Bicol RTD for Research and Regulations Edgar R. Madrid; OIC RTD for Operations and Extension Rodel P. Tornilla; division chiefs and DA region 5 staff were also present during the occasion. **(Lovella P. Guarin)**



genetically superior breeds of buffaloes, and serves as source of planting materials of forage grasses for the province's numerous cattle ranches, making it the rodeo capital of the country. At present, the center has over 200 buffaloes.

DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Elena B. delos Santos said the idea of improving structures of DA stations in all the provinces

administration building both in Masbate Breeding and Regional Carabao Breeding Center are equipped with training halls and offices which are structurally sound, modernized, and climate resilient – in line with the DA's thrusts and vision.

Director delos Santos also mentioned of a possibility to establish a diagnostic laboratory for livestock to cater to the needs of cattle ranchers





## Bicol cassava farmers and industry players to revitalize the industry

**TINANGIS, PILI, CAMARINES SUR** - “May Pera sa Cassava”, this was the assurance made by the representatives of the San Miguel Foods, Inc. (SFMI) and Agribusiness Development Group as well as the cassava farmers and assemblers who gave testimonies during the Cassava harvest festival and market forum held in this barangay recently.

Over 100 farmers from Camarines Sur, Masbate, Albay, and Camarines Norte attended the event held at the F.B. Montenegro Farm owned by retired fiscal, Felimon B. Montenegro who is now an SFMI assembler. Montenegro who originally owned and manages about 5 hectares of cassava plantation bares that as assembler he has now aggregate area of about 31 hectares which include those owned by farmers from neighboring municipalities and provinces who are now supplying him cassava chips. He shared his experiences and insights in his

new undertaking after retiring from government service. He invited other farmers to bring their cassava to him and expand their production area as there is a great demand for this crop.

Alfredo Rillo, the designated Farmer-Regional Executive Director (RED) of the Department of Agriculture for the month of May, also graced the occasion to represent DA RED Dr. Elena B. de los Santos. He expressed hope that this time around the cassava farmers would not be put at a disadvantage. Rillo, a former regional manager of the Phillippine Coconut Authority cited the unpleasant experience of cassava farmers before who entered into contract growing with private companies but incurred losses when their produce were rejected or bought at much reduced price. As also the current chairperson of the Regional Agriculture and Fishery Council, a private sector-led policy and monitoring body for the agriculture sector,

he underscored the need to reorganize a new cassava board as industry issues and concerns emanates from the ground. The board can elevate these to the RAFC who in turn can relay them to the top – the policy makers.

The SFMI representatives headed by Raymond Joseph Britanico, Area Operation head for Luzon, and Ben Brasales, area coordinator for South Luzon assured the farmers that under their new scheme farmers will be given the necessary assistance from securing the quality planting materials, production, harvesting and up to the processing and assembling of the chips to ensure that what are produced conformed with the quality standards set by their company. He urged farmers to work with them to revitalize the cassava industry in the region.

Meanwhile, newly designated DA- OIC Regional Technical Director for Operations, Rodel Tornilla said that the agency is

aggressively promoting farm mechanization and providing the necessary farm equipment and postharvest facilities such as tractors, flatbed dryers, chippers, to ensure that quality cassava chips are processed and production losses are avoided or reduced. He cited the many

industrial and commercial uses of cassava aside from being a major raw material for animal feeds. A field demonstration of some cassava equipment being provided by the DA was later conducted by the Regional Agricultural Engineering Division and the farm machinery companies.

As a culminating activity, the attendees organized and elected the officers of the Cassava Commodity Board namely: Felimon B. Montenegro, president; Jerry M. Mercado, vice president; Lea M. Beltran; secretary; Mutya Roqueza M. Montenegro, alternate secretary; Thereza Z. Oliver Treasurer; Dan D. Ribas, auditor; Teresa D. Panuelos PIO; Mike B. Coribilion and Ramon Gaudiol, business managers. Also elected as members of the board are: Luis D. Belarmino and Adonis F. de la Cruz, both of Masbate; Nickson Mallorca of Albay; Epinia P. Sandoval of Camarines Sur and Ruel de Jesus of Camarines Sur. **(Emil B. Bordado)**

### Ligao City won P1 million... (from page 1)

Vice Mayor Sherwin Quising during the awarding.

They were accompanied on the stage by Usec. Segfredo R. Serrano, DA Undersecretary for Policy and Planning; Usec. Ranibai Dilangalen, DA Undersecretary for Special Concerns; Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) national director Luz A. Taposok; and Usec. Ariel Cayanan, Undersecretary for Operations.

Also present were DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Elena B. de los Santos; ATI Bicol OIC Center Director Vivien Carable and DA Bicol OIC Regional Technical Director Rodel P. Tornilla.

The City of Ligao was awarded in recognition of its important contributions in sustaining and increasing rice production in the country which is vital in the attainment of food

security and increased farmers' income. Ligao City has 143% rice self-sufficiency and 2.5% contribution to the regional rice production. It recorded a 2.5% increase or 31,548 metric tons in rice production from 2015 to 2016. The increase in yield was 5% for irrigated areas and 2% in rainfed areas.

Also included in the roster of National Rice Achievers Awardees were 32

Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) and five Local Farmer Technician (LFTs) from the Bicol Region.

Director de los Santos said that a separate awarding by cluster is slated in August. **(Lovella Guarin)**



## DA honors farmers

— (from page 1)

Pensumil Sugar Planters Association and other entrepreneurs. The DA-funded Agripinoy Trading Center based in Vinzons, Camarines Norte also displayed its products. JL Trading displayed its combine harvester while rice seed companies such as SL Agritech and FMC exhibited their best hybrid rice varieties while GRJC displayed its agro industrial machineries.

“More farmers and associations participated this year compared to last year,” said Adelina A. Losa, chief of the AMAD.

Dr. Elena B. de los Santos, DA Bicol Regional Executive Director said the farmers festival has already been institutionalized as one of the major activities of the DA to showcase tradeable products, foster market linkages, and gain broader perspective and insights on how to further improve the farmers products to help them increase their income.

One avid participant of the Farmers Festival was Jose Yaneza. He proudly showed his gray hair as silent testimony of his seven years of participation in the tiangge at DA, when Director Ellen asked the audience who is the oldest among participants. He is the caretaker of their Barangay Food Terminal in Talobatib, Labo, Camarines Norte, being the Barangay Agricultural and Fishery Council chairperson and chairperson of Municipal Farming and Fishery Council of Labo.

A new exhibitor was the Kabihug Crafts. Owned by Glenn Jimenez, the Kabihug Crafts sells handcrafted jars and bags made from nito. The raw materials are being supplied by the Kabihug indigenous tribe in Labo, Camarines Norte.

Meanwhile, another farmer, Damian Lagdaan, proved that



age does not matter for a farmer like him, as he danced with the veteran singer Eva Barrameda of Sorsogon during her lively rendition of “Rolling” in the opening program. Damian, president of Guibasan Irrigators Association in Camarines Norte has 212 members tilling 471 hectares of rice areas in five barangays of Labo.

Alfredo R. Rillo, RAFC Bicol Chairperson designated as Farmer Director of DA Bicol for the month of May underscored the resiliency of the farmers. He said the festival is a thanksgiving for the bountiful harvest received by the farmers despite the calamities such as the typhoon Nina in December. The festival also shows the other side of a farmer who is

versatile and can adapt to any situation. “Pag pinabayle mo, mabayle. Wika nga, kalabaw lang ang tumatanda.”

Products displayed during the festival include fruits and vegetables, root crops, seedlings of budded and grafted plants.

The farmers were also treated with give aways such

as planting materials and seeds during the two day fair. A training on vegetable processing was conducted by the DA Food Laboratory at the Regional Technology Commercialization Center (RTCC).

Also present

during the opening program were Albay Provincial Agriculturist Cheryl Rebeta; Camarines Sur Civil Service Provincial Director Jocelyn Marifosque; DA Bicol Regional Technical Director (RTD) for Research and Regulations Edgar R. Madrid and OIC RTD for Operations Rodel P. Tornilla. **(Lovella P. Guarin)**





## HML: Preserving and Promoting Bicol's best, authentic and traditional delicacies

By Emily B. Bordado



There is a saying that “when a door closes a new one opens.” The story of the family of Heriberto and Annie Laguno in barangay Ilawod, in Daraga, Albay is an example of this truism. Their family used to engage in abaca handicraft making and processing but when the industry suffered a slump they have to close their enterprise. But knowing that their workers together with their families depend on them for their livelihood, the Laguno couple thought of ways so they can provide employment to their loyal but displaced workers.



They then decided to venture into restaurant business where they can employ their former workers and at the same time earn income for the family. Thus, the Pares King and Pares Queen restaurants were established in Tabugon, Camarines Norte and in Legaspi City respectively under the name HML Foods which was derived from the initials of the Laguno patriarch. Mostly Bicolano dishes were served in their restaurants and customers loved these dishes and would often order for take home. Balikbayan friends would also order to be brought back to their respective countries.

Thus, the idea of cooking or processing and bottling these favorite Bicol dishes for a much longer shelf life was considered by the Laguno family. In 2012, with an initial capital of only P5,000 and some borrowed utensils the family produced weekly 25 bottles of bicol express pork and spicy laing (taro leaves cooked in coconut milk). They became instant hit and were briskly sold. New variants and products were added the following year: the Bicol express tinapa, laing regular and the Bicol chili paste.

With their newly acquired 2.7 hectare rolling and hilltop farm planted with coconut in a nearby barangay Gabawan, the family decided to establish the Farm Plate Nature Corporation (FPNC) under the supervision of son, Nico. The farm was planted with sili haba, sili labuyo, and gabi which are some of the primary materials for their bottled food products.

Every month HML needs 3,500 kgs of sili haba; 1,200 kgs sili labuyo, 1,300 kgs fresh gabi leaves and unlimited quantity of dried gabi leaves and 50,000 matured

coconuts all of which they get from local farmers in nearby towns of Camalig, Guinobatan, Legazpi City, Tabaco in Albay and Nabua in Camarines Sur provinces.

In 2014; Katrine Louise the 24-year old daughter of the family who tucked a degree in business management from a prestigious school in Manila was designated to take over the helm as operations head of the family enterprise. Her experience and stint in a private enterprise engaged in packed cookies and biscuits proved very useful. It was her idea that their products should adopt the brand name “Bicol’s Best.”

To live up to its brand name, the HML sought the assistance of the Department of Science and technology (DOST) to enhance the product quality, extend the shelf life and improve the production capacity through automation of some of the processes. With a loan amount of two million pesos (P2M), DOST provided them with vegetable slicer, boiler, filling machine, and kettle. The shelf life of each product has been extended to one year using the DOST’s commercial sterilization method. Each bottle is also assigned with number codes for easy monitoring and tracing of any defect in their product.

The caps used for the products they get from the Philippine Export Zone Authority is made from materials which pop if there are breaks in the glass bottles.

The HML products have obtained Certificate of Good Manufacturing Practice after passing the rigid requirements by the Food and Drug Authority in the Bicol region. These products have zero Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) and no preservatives. Recently, they passed the

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Food Facility registration of the United States Food and Drug Administration. The Low Acid Canned Food Registration which is equivalent to the Philippines' Certificate of Product Registration is currently on process.

Meanwhile, the Department of Agriculture in Bicol through its Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) has been helping in their product promotion. They were given opportunities to participate in trade fairs, international expositions, and investment fora. Likewise the Department of Trade and Industry has helped them in improving their packaging and the Department of Tourism has also been assisting them in promoting their products during tourism events.



Because of these the HML Food Enterprise is not only expanding but gaining financially. In 2015, its gross sales was over P8.2M. The following year this almost doubled to P15.7 attaining a staggering 97% growth sales and a net worth of P5.4M.

In addition to these income HML also generate an aggregate monthly income of over P26,000 from coconut by products such as rejected coconut which are used for copra, grated coconut waste

(sapal) and coconut shell for coco charcoal. They also sell their used plastic and cans to junkshop. This is also how they manage or dispose of their waste.

Their participation and exposure to local and international fair gave them new ideas and better practices. But they believe in the inherent ingenuity, industry and productivity of the local farmers. Thus they have adopted the business mantra **SUPPORT LOCAL FARMERS, BUY LOCAL and LOVE LOCAL.**

They not only support the local farmers, they also take good care of their very own staff and workers. Their 20 regular employees are all covered with PhilHealth, Pag-Ibig and SSS. And as an incentive for the loyal service of their personnel who have been with them for over 12 years they are provided with a Mediacard and some perks like vacation with their family in any part of the country or abroad.

The Llaguno family believes that satisfied and happy employees will be more productive and committed as they will not consider their work a drudgery and will thus contribute more to the success of their company. They also keep an open and regular communication with their workers through constant meeting, dialogues and capacity enhancing activities and socialization.

They have made an aggressive media promotion of their product thru tarps and billboards conspicuously and strategically positioned along main highways, public places and tourist stop overs practically all over Bicol and even in Metro Manila. Their products are displayed in more than 50 establishments and malls all over the country.

The Llaguno siblings Nico and Katrine are doing also great job as endorsers of their own products. Nico's



youthful and cheerful face is immortalized on the tarps and billboards. On the other hand Katrine with her refreshing and pretty face as the spokesperson of the company is the one giving all the TV and radio interviews. She is either a participant or resource person to fairs and exhibits, investment fora and seminars locally and international.

The company has also made its presence felt by being a major sponsor in regional tourism, social and sporting events such as the October Swell fest in Gubat, Sorsogon, Caritas Margin, Green Babes, Mt. Mayon Triathlon and Ibalong Car Show.

No wonder their products are now being patronized by popular celebrities and well known personalities like former Senator Manny Villar, Kris Aquino, and Amy Perez. Their company and products have been featured in TV programs such as Umagang kay Ganda, Island Living, Graceful Living with Cory Quirino, ANC News, RX Plus of ABS CBN Sports and Action and recently the Agri tayo Dito

hosted by Ruben Gonzaga. HML has shown that our traditional and authentic local delicacies such as laing, bicol express, and chili paste are the Bicol's best products with great potential not only in the local but also in the international market. Theirs is a home grown business enterprise that best demonstrates the Bicolano's resiliency, innovativeness, resourcefulness and ingenuity.





## Rebecca Purisima - IP chieftain is Bicol's 2017 outstanding rural woman by Lovella P. Guarin

**R**ebeca Sanchez Purisima, more popularly known as “Vicky” is a Bicolana chieftain of the Agta Tabangnon since 2002. Agta Tabangnon is an Indigenous People’s (IP) tribe composed of 110 families and is registered with the National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP) as Tinawagan Tribal Component.

For 15 long years of service as chieftain of her tribe, Vicky has been a steadfast defender of the rights of the Indigenous People, refuge of the oppressed, and a passionate educator and mentor for her tribal members. She is also a multi-awarded farmer cooperador and a seasoned resource speaker often tapped by the Department of Agriculture (DA) municipal, provincial and regional offices, Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), and Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in various seminars for farmers.

As she grew up in a farming family of six children, in a house made of woven coconut leaves, she saw the plight of her tribal group who are often deprived of basic services in the community and always at a disadvantage in many things such as in division of landholdings. Through farming her father was able to send her to college where she took up and finish Bachelor of Arts in Political Science to follow her

long-cherished ambition to be a lawyer for her tribe. Alas, fate led her to a different course and she got married and moved to the town of Tigaon. Although she was not able to fulfill her dream to be a bonafide lawyer, she still lives most her life as a strong defender of her people like her mother who is also a tribal chieftain in Turague, Sangay, Camarines Sur.

Vicky is happily married to Bayani. Through long years in farming they were able to construct a concrete house at barangay Tinawagan.

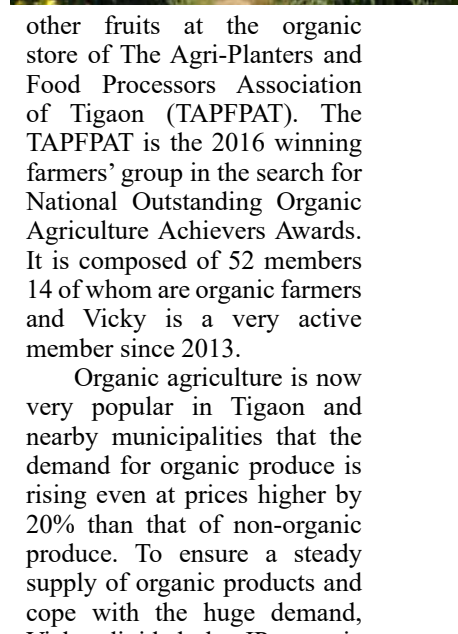
Vicky’s farm is popularly known in the locality as VK’s Organic and GAP certified farm. Located at the foot of Mt. Isarog, the two (2) hectare fertile land they obtained through the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), is planted with diverse crops. One hectare is planted with rice and fruit bearing trees which are certified as organic by the Organic Certification Center of the Philippine (OCCP) on

October 28, 2016. Another one hectare is planted with corn, pinakbet vegetables and herbs and spices which have passed Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification on October 2016.

Considered as one of the best agro-tourism sites in Tigaon and accredited learning site of the ATI, the VK’s farm accommodated a total of 1,400 visitors for the past four years. There is no entrance fee, and the visitors are treated to free healthful organic drinks and snacks. But on their way out, there is an exit fee of P20.00.

Vicky also get a substantial income from herbs and spices. She learned the art of growing and processing of herbal plants and kitchen spices from one of the numerous trainings conducted by the DA Bicol in support to Gender and Development (GAD) Program in the past. Vicky is one of the most successful adopters of the technologies being widely imparted by GAD program led by its focal person Aloha Gigi Bañaria to empower a greater number of rural women in Bicol. From these trainings, she was able to come up with her own processed products such as malunggay polvoron, peanut brittle, pickles, cocojam, and sili-suka. She also learned the craft of flower arrangement which gives her a huge income on some occasions.

She also sells organic rice, citrus, dragon fruit and



other fruits at the organic store of The Agri-Planters and Food Processors Association of Tigaon (TAPFPAT). The TAPFPAT is the 2016 winning farmers’ group in the search for National Outstanding Organic Agriculture Achievers Awards. It is composed of 52 members 14 of whom are organic farmers and Vicky is a very active member since 2013.

Organic agriculture is now very popular in Tigaon and nearby municipalities that the demand for organic produce is rising even at prices higher by 20% than that of non-organic produce. To ensure a steady supply of organic products and cope with the huge demand, Vicky divided the IP organic farmers into 4 clusters, each focusing on different organic crops such as upo, sitao, ampalaya, sili and upland rice. Each cluster has a farmer leader who sees to it that the production of priority commodity is sustained alongside with the cash crops. Her efforts have been complemented by the Community Based Participatory Action Research (CPAR) of the DA Bicol Research Division. Vicky served as cooperador of the seed enhancement program and buffer seed stocking of DA. Thus, in 2015 she has

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The ATI accredited learning center



been awarded by the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) as Natatanging CPAR Farmer Cooperator.

Vicky has learned new technologies in organic farming by attending various trainings and participating in local and national trade fairs and annual regional and national organic congresses. The VK's farm has also been supplying herbs and seedlings to the DA which are being distributed to the participants of trainings and seminars and other beneficiaries.

Her farm speaks of her creativity. From the impressive farm lay out, to the array of products the tourists can take home with them. The entrance going to the learning site and nursery is lined with golden sunflowers and sweet scented citronella on both sides. A tourist's visit would not be complete without snapping a selfie at the great view with the mysterious Mt. Isarog as the backdrop.

She hires three (3) permanent IP laborers whom she pays P200 daily. But their group can also carry on with their farm works even without capital as they practice "Hurunglunan" where all members will work on each members' farm without a fee.

Her feats in agriculture precede her and she has been awarded as Sustainable Agricultural System (SAS) model by the DAR in Camarines Sur. With the help of the LGU of Tigaon, her request for a three-month Farmers Field School in vegetable for 30 IPs was granted by DAR. After the FFS, 23 farmers adopted the technologies and put up their own farms, and nine (9) of them have already obtained the Organic Certification from the OCCP. All these nine organic farmers are women IPs. The other farmers have already applied for the organic certification.

She shifted to organic farming as she is also an advocate of environment conservation. She follows an

Integrated Diversified Organic Farming System (IDOFS) being introduced by the ATI. She prepares her own concoctions of fish amino acids, FPJ, FFJ, Bokashi and vermi tea. She plants insect resistant varieties of OPV corn and other crops.

In her community, she is known as champion of women empowerment having served as barangay councilor for four terms. She is also designated by the Department of Justice provincial office as Parole and Probation Officer Aide since 2003 covering the



*Vicky shows her improvised sticky insect trap made from bio-adhesive spray.*

towns of Bula, San Jose and Garchitorea, all in Camarines Sur.

Vicky is also the president of the Rural Improvement Club of Tinawagan composed of 43 members. She once served as Local Farmer Technician (LFT) in 2012-2014 and covered two barangays although she is not an agriculture graduate.

She was once an Enumerator of the NCIP in the National Statistics Office census serving as interpreter and advocate of census in the seven IP barangays of Tigaon as the IPs do not want to interact with the enumerators from the agency.

Even at present, the tribal members course their transactions outside the tribe to her first. Such as resolution of marital conflicts, that the discords do not reach barangay courts. She is also currently appointed as Para Legal by the Department of Agrarian Reform to help settle land disputes among IPs. Vicky also

sits in the Municipal Planning and Development Council of Tigaon as representative of the Vegetable Growers, one among the four Civil Society Organizations given the seat in the MPDC. During the national evaluation of Tigaon in relation to their application for the Seal of Good Governance, she was chosen as the lone representative of the four CSOs. One of her tangible accomplishments as CSO representative was her motion to request funds for the vegetable farmer groups.

She is the president of the



examination set by the NCIP. Norwel Cronico is one of the IP scholars who recently finished Bachelor of Science in Education. During his qualifying exams, only nine applicants were chosen out of 380 examinees, and he was one of them.

To date, Vicky has endorsed a total of nine (9) IP scholars who were enrolled in tertiary schools in Camarines Sur and Albay. Seven of them have already graduated in college. Vicky also endorsed five IP graduates to pass the height requirement in the Philippine National Police and Bureau of Fire Protection.

She has her share of life's ups and downs. When her eldest daughter died at a young age of 19 in year 2012, she was severely depressed causing her to suffer a stroke in 2012 which paralyzed half of her body. But her mission in her community drove her to bounce back to life, and continue with her farming and noble mission.

Another hurdle she endured was the recent typhoon Nina that hit the municipality in December 2016 which wiped out most of her crops, the ATI IDOFS learning center, and some structures in her farm.

Yet amidst these hardships, her passion in helping improve the lives of her people, contribute to food security in her community and save the environment through organic farming, remains burning. Indeed, Vicky is an embodiment of a truly empowered Bicolana aboriginal, an absolute proof that agriculture, which is the industry of today and the future, is full of amazing and purposeful individuals.



## DA summer youth internship culminates

**SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR** - The Summer Youth Internship Program (SYIP) sponsored by the Department of Agriculture Bicol culminated with a simple graduation ceremony held at the DA conference room on May 18, 2017. With Hawaiian theme and a tag line "Aloha Auina (a-oeeyaa) La", these youths prepared a short program showcasing their talents and shared what they have learned in the 22 days journey as public servants.

A total of 30 students from various schools were given opportunity to experience government service. They were assigned to different divisions where they were given clerical or technical tasks depending on their background and interest.

"Dreaming to be graduates is not impossible" Rosario Sales, DA Admin and Finance Chief said in her message. She thanked the youths for being part of the agency's work force and wished them luck to be

real graduates someday. Edgar Madrid, RTD for Research & Regulations presented a brief video showing the values of Hard-work rated as 98%, Knowledge 96%, Love 54%, Attitude 100% and Love of God 101% giving emphasis on Attitude and Love of God which are important tools in honing ones personality. "It is our attitude towards work that makes our life 100%" he said.

The interns expressed their gratitude to the DA for giving them the best experience as young adults. They had a taste of what the real world is. Teamwork and respect are the values they will bring along as they return to their classes in June this year. They were accompanied by the division chiefs or representatives (where they were assigned ) as they received their certificates.

Aside from their exposure to government culture, the interns will take home a net compensation of P9,980. **(Blesilda A. Nuñez)**

## DA 5 middle supervisors attend Supervisory Development Course

**NAGACITY**—Human resource is the most important resource in any organization. Thus, the DA invests in maintaining competent personnel equipped with technical expertise and knowledge to carry out the agency's gigantic task as food provider.

In tandem with the Civil Service Commission (CSC), the DA Human Resource Management Section (HRMS) spearheaded the 4-day Supervisory Development Course (SDC) Tracks 2 and 3 in one of the hotels here on June 19-22, 2017. This was attended by some 25 2nd level or middle supervisors of the department. Marilou D. Bordon, chief of the HRMS said that the participants have previously attended the Track 1 of said course.

Rosario C. Sales, chief of the Administrative and Finance Division in her welcome remarks said that supervisory training programs are crucial in an organization. Supervisor skills need to be honed to produce and to maintain quality employees. Capability building is also important for future leaders as without it, the organization cannot

produce best performers and measurable output.

Sales also said that DA Bicol regional executive director Elena B. de los Santos has already approved a number of trainings not only for the supervisors but also for all the levels in the rank and file personnel to upgrade public service delivery with international standards.

The training program consisted of three modules which are aimed to equip the participants with advanced supervisory skills, knowledge on the levels of competency in the workplace and human resource management towards organization integrity and excellence.

Experts from the Civil Service Commission served as facilitators. Dir. Jocelyn Marifosque, Director II of Camarines Sur CSC field office discussed topics on Power, Leadership and Management and Employee Development Principles and Processes.

Dr. Rosalini Moneda, Director II of Camarines Norte CSC field office discussed Coaching, Counseling and Mentoring; Faces and Process



of Employee Empowerment.

Meanwhile, Dr. Ma. Lourdes Salud discussed the topics: Making Presentations; Handling Audiences with Problems; Handling the Q and A Period; Workshops/ Exercises on Presentation; Making Meetings Productive; and Planning and Leading Meetings.

In closing, DA Bicol OIC Regional Technical Director for Operations and Extension

Rodel P. Tornilla thanked the CSC and the DA - HRMS for spearheading such activity. Being a new supervisor himself, Tornilla asserted that the hardest hurdle in being a supervisor is the transition period from being a regular staff to becoming the leader of a unit or division. Indeed, the SDC course is a very big help to new supervisors in their ascent to higher positions. **(Lovella P. Guarin)**



## PWDs in rural areas train on meat processing

CADLAN PILI CAMARINES SUR. the Department of Agriculture Bicol in partnership with the Provincial Government of Camarines Sur conducted a 2 day Basic and Advance Meat Processing & Preservation Training at the Convention Center, Capitol ground, this municipality on May 10-11, 2017.

Spearheaded by the Research Division in coordination with the Animal Products Development Center (ACDC) of the Bureau of Animal Industry, said activity aimed to provide technical assistance and improve their livelihood particularly to persons with disability (PWD) in the rural areas.

Some 137 participants from San Fernando, Canaman, Milaor, Ocampo, Pili and Bombon Camarines Sur, actively took part in the lecture, discussion with audio visual presentation and actual cooking demonstration. Out of 137 participants, 68 of them were persons with disability. They were given the opportunity to try their

hands on the actual preparation of various meat recipes such as skinless longanisa, siomai, tocino, meat loaf, embotido, chicken nuggets and other chicken dishes. Meat and Ingredients were provided by the DA Regional Technology Commercialization Center (RTCC) headed by Arlene de Asis, Science Research Specialist II who also served as resource person and trainer during the activity.

Luz Marcelino, chief of Research Division, in her message, said that no matter how simple is the undertaking, it is important to take it by heart, commitment and passion. She said that these people with impairment are very special in our society and should be given special treatment and recognition.

Further, Emily Bordado chief of DA RAFIS, lauded the participants for their



willingness to compete. That despite their condition, they willingly showed up and ready themselves to excel in their chosen field. She encouraged them to engage in other projects such as corn cob craft making for additional income since the materials needed are not expensive. Brochures on Meat Processing and related reading materials were also distributed to the participants.

Meanwhile, Rodel Tornilla who represented DA Regional Executive Director Ellen de los Santos, explained that the DA is one with the LGUs in supporting PWDs. He said that

the agency focuses not only on farmers but also other sectors. "Mawot ta na umuswag sa gabos na sector" (we aim to be progressive in all sectors), he quipped.

Darlyn Orido, participant from Milaor Camarines Sur shared that she had suffered various forms of discrimination. This has not stopped her to avail of livelihood trainings. She thanked the DA and the Provincial Government for initiating livelihood projects and trainings. She now looked forward to be empowered and competitive. "Gusto ko patunayan na maski may kapansanan, kaya ko guibuhun an naguiguibo kan normal na tao" (She wanted to prove that she can do what other normal individuals do)

The cooked products were later distributed for free taste. The Provincial government gave away packages containing 3 kilos rice and grocery items to each PWD participant. **(Blesilda A. Nuñez)**

## Bicol food processors train on product packaging and labeling

The Department of Agriculture Bicol through the Agribusiness and Marketing Division conducted a one day Seminar-Workshop on Product Packaging and Labelling on May 25, 2017 at the DA library. Participated by some 25 food processors/entrepreneurs mostly organic practitioners from Albay, Masbate, Sorsogon and Camarines Norte, the activity aimed to instil the importance of using appropriate packaging and labelling. Aside from this, new techniques were introduced to enhance competitiveness.

Resource person was Melany Reyles from Twin Pearls Advertising Services who discussed the different types of Packaging Materials and the Standard Label Requirements. She explained the value of branding, consumer profile and purchasing

behaviours giving details on the techniques and examples.

During the lecture, Reyles explained the many uses of High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) which is well

suited in packaging products with a short shelf life such as milk, Low Density Polyethylene (LDPE) which is excellent resistance to acids, bases and vegetable oils, Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) resistant to grease, oil and chemical, Polystyrene Polypropylene (PP) used as containers for yoghurt, margarine, takeout food, etc. The participants were also given insights on the basics of branding and the mandatory labelling requirements.



During the workshop, the participants were provided set of packaging materials to identify what type is used for a certain product. Each group was also given a product to protect and promote, determine appropriate packaging and later come up with a brand name and label. Labelling and Packaging are important marketing tools in promoting products as they also project the company's impression and interest. **(Blesilda A. Nuñez)**





## DA 5 Sportsfest 2017 & Santacruz





# DA joins 5th regional biodiversity challenge

The Department of Agriculture Bicol through its employees' association (DAEA Bicol Chapter) joined DENR's 5th Regional Biodiversity Challenge held in Legazpi City on June 9, 2017.

The winners received P20,000 cash award -1st prize, P15,000 cash award - 2nd prize and P10,000 cash award - 3rd prize. The DA team received certificates.

The DA team were among the 32 teams from the different government agencies and LGUs that competed in the timed race which started at Sumlang Lake in Camalig, Albay and ended at Embarcadero de Legazpi.



The DA Team was composed of Raymond Adversario (left), Teodorico Ramos (center) and Grace Sinahonon (right).

The race included fishing, swimming, running, biking, and tree planting.

The event was in celebration of Environment Month. (photos by Mitoy Privaldos)





## Farmer Director assumes DA post for the whole month of May

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI CAMARINES SUR—As

one of the highlights of the Farmers' and Fishermen's month celebration this May, a Farmer Director has been designated by agriculture Secretary Emmanuel F. Piñol in every DA regional field Office. The incumbent chairperson of the Regional Agriculture and Fishery Council or RAFC (RAFC) is automatically designated to assume the roles and tasks of the DA Regional Executive Director (RED) in the implementation and dissemination of key programs of the agency.

In the Bicol Region, Alfredo R. Rillo, RAFC chairperson officially accepted and

assumed his new designation on May 2 after the flag raising ceremonies where he was introduced by RED Elena B. de los Santos to the DA officials and personnel. Director de los Santos explained that the designation of a farmer director is a token of recognition and aims to further strengthen the Department of Agriculture's partnership with the Agricultural Fishery Councils or AFCs, a consultative body composed of agri-fishery sector representatives.

Rillo, former regional director of the Philippine Coconut Authority and now an upland farmer. He has been an active volunteer leader and currently the chairperson of



the Regional Agriculture and Fishery Council (RAFC), a private-led organization which has been working with the DA in identifying issues and concerns of the agri-fishery sector and has been helping in the monitoring of agri programs and projects.

He said that he feels overwhelmed by the task ahead considering that unlike his former office, the DA is such

a big agency which is highly decentralized. He thanked the DA for recognizing and supporting the AFCs and for the opportunity to be at its helm even for just 27 working days. He said before accepting the post he sought God's guidance and blessing and negotiated with Him that he be granted three wishes: that while serving as the DA director, the employees and those under his watch be healthy, cooperative and happy.

Based on the implementing guidelines issued by Secretary Piñol, the authority of the farmer-director shall be limited to non-policy determining activities which should not in any way affect the government accounting rules and procedures as well as the civil rules and regulations governing regular government employees. **(Emily B. Bordado)**

## Farmer Director Rillo Ends Term and Renders Report

Farmer Regional Executive Director (RED) designate, Alfredo Rillo who served as the Department of Agriculture's RED for the whole month of May ended his term by rendering a report to the DA regional officials and his fellow officers of the Agriculture and Fishery Councils in a simple ceremony.

He said that the DA personnel staff whom he had the chance to work and interact with during his short stint at the DA regional office and some of its provincial outreach stations were generally courteous and polite. He also observed that there were no idle personnel and that the officers and officials were focused and performing the jobs they are supposed to do. In his visit to some of the ROS in the provinces he said that the facilities and the on-going projects being implemented by these are presentable. But he noted that some facilities, machineries and production areas need repair and improvement.

Rillo also commended the DA Bicol regional Office for receiving an over-all rating of 8.5 to 9 points (in a scale of 10) from the national

PCAF monitoring team which conducted a project monitoring of various projects being implemented in the region while he was serving his term as acting RED. Likewise, He commended the DA Bicol team for having the highest in the number of Value Chain Analysis completed among the region in South Luzon.

While serving his term as RED he has presided over the management committee meeting of the DA regional officials which included the division chiefs, program coordinators, section chiefs and focal persons of various special projects. He has also been representing the DA as guest of honor in various regional, provincial, city and municipal agri-fishery fairs, farmers fora and consultations and other agri-related events.

While he looks forward to returning to his normal life and usual routine as a fulltime farmer he said he will cherish the experience. "Di ko sukat akalain na after nine years after I retired from government service I have this chance to be at the helm of the DA which is much bigger than the PCA regional office I had supervised

He recommends that DA Bicol must sustain its efforts as a transparent and committed institution and must continue to value the participation of the private sector.

DA regional executive director Dr. Elena delos Santos, thanked Rillo for accepting the job and the challenge of being at the helm of the agency at least for a month. She said that the experience has probably shown Mr. Rillo how gigantic the tasks and responsibilities are in running the DA. She assured Mr. Rillo that the DA will continue engaging the AFC's participation in the planning, implementation and

monitoring of the DA programs and likewise will continue to support AFC's activities.

Also present during the exit conference of Mr. Rillo were: Regional Technical Director, Dr. Edgar R. Madrid, RAFC Secretary Peter Theodore Caro, RAFC executive officer and DA chief planning officer Aloha Gigi Bañaria, the provincial AFC coordinators : Alfredo Oben of Albay; Edgar Canet of Camarines Sur; Virginia Oanzon of Sorsogon; AFC sector representatives and DAD division/section chiefs. **(Emily B. Bordado)**



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RE-ENTERED  
AS SECOND CLASS  
MAIL MATTER  
at Pili, Post Office,  
Pili, Cam. Sur  
under Permit No. 2017-18  
on March 17, 2017