



Conduit banks of the DA-ACPC's Production Loan Easy Access (PLEA) Program and the Survival Recovery Assistance Program (SURE) started releasing loan proceeds in the form of cash to farmers affected by Mayon eruption in Albay.

## DA-ACPC releases almost P37 M as loan to farmers under PLEA & SURE

by Jayson M. Gonzales

The Department of Agriculture (DA) through its Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) released a total of P36,993,000.00 as PLEA and SURE loans to 1,119 farmers in the provinces of Albay and Camarines Sur this year.

The PLEA Program is a credit program to address the financial needs of the marginal and small farmers and fisherfolk for a fast, convenient and affordable credit.

According to ACPC representative Michael Jordan O. Roquid, the PLEA Program

released a total amount of P30,148,000.00 as loan to 830 farmers in Camarines Sur and Albay.

Roquid added that for the SURE Program, 686 farmers in Albay benefitted from the loan total of Php 6,845,000.00.

The identified conduit

banks for PLEA include Banco Santiago De Libon (BSDL), Camalig Bank (CB) and Rural Bank of Guinobatan (RBG). For the SURE Program, the identified conduit banks include BSDL and CB.

## DA bares credit programs, turns over P15.8M interventions during Bicol agri summit

by Lovella P. Guarin

### PILI, CAMARINES SUR

- Close to 3,000 farmers witnessed the finale day of the First Bicol Agriculture Summit at the Capitol Convention Center here on Aug. 25. The Agri Summit was the highlight or culminating activity of the month-long Camarines Sur Business Expo, initiated by the Camarines Sur Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (CSCCI) in partnership with the provincial government of Cam. Sur, which took place from July 27, 2018 to August 25, 2018. DA Bicol was a major sponsor in the conduct of

the said summit.

The guest of honor in the grand finale day was Special Assistant to the President Bong Go but he has an urgent appointment, thus, he sent Atty. Karlo S. Bello, Undersecretary of Field Operations Office of the Department of Agrarian Reform. Usec. Bello underscored the support services of the DAR and DA to the agrarian reform beneficiaries. "Hindi magtatagumpay ang proyekto ng DAR kung wala ang mga support services na nakakatulong para maiwasang ibenta ng mga magsasaka

ang lupang nakamit nila. Hindi dapat nagtatapos ang repormang agraryo sa pagbibigay ng lupa kundi sa patuloy na suporta mula sa mga

(Please turn to page 4)



## Bicolanos not only resilient to climate change but also to inflation

The Bicol region recently hogged the limelight when it topped the list of regions on the third quarter of the year having the highest inflation rate at nine percent. Despite the surge in inflation rate in the region the Department of Agriculture declared that there is no food shortage. DA regional executive director Elena B. de los Santos assures consumers that agricultural products such as rice, meat and other food items are available at prices lower than in Metro Manila and Mindanao.

She stressed that there is no shortage of supply of agricultural goods/products in the region citing that Bicol has consistently attained rice self-sufficiency level at an average of 115% since 2011. Although increase in price is noted especially in vegetables which is reported at 26.7 percent price increase she explains that this is due to freight and fuel costs. She explained that "chopsuey" vegetables such as cabbage, carrots, celery, baguio beans "mostly came from Baguio as they thrive in upland and high

temperature. But locally produced vegetables are available and some of these are even being transported to Manila as they are bought by viajeros at higher price.

De los Santos explains that even before the surge in the inflation rate, the department has already provided adequate interventions and inputs to farmers organizations, individuals and other clients including schools, LGUs and communities for the Gulayan sa Paaralan and Gulayan sa Barangay. These interventions were meant to augment the food supply especially vegetables among Bicol households and provide additional income.

While there were many local government units who have supported the Gulayan program it is noteworthy that a number of LGUs have even launched their own food program. The provincial government of Albay for example launched the Albay Family-based Food production Program which engaged every barangay to establish

their own organic vegetable gardens. Although this program was undertaken in partnership with the DA the provincial government took the lead in implementing it. No wonder many Albayanos did not feel much the impact of the high cost of vegetables at the height of the inflation surge. In fact there were instances when there was an over supply of vegetables in some barangays.

Way back in 2016 the Women for Progress Movement consisting of women mostly housewives from the 3rd district of Albay with the support of Dist. Representative Fernando V. Gonzales also engaged in vegetable crops production and established communal gardens in all barangays of the district. The vegetables not only provided food for the families but also gave them additional income. And at the height of Mayon eruption in the early part of 2018 these vegetables from the garden tended by the women help feed the Mayon evacuees.

This demonstrates that Bicolanos are not only resilient to climate change but also to inflation.



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## Casco boats from PRDP to boost Panganiban Catanduanes' mangrove crab

**PANGANIBAN, CATANDUANES** — Creating Road of Advanced Bureaucracy (CRAB). This is a catchphrase describing the Municipality of Panganiban, a fifth class municipality located approximately one hour and 30 minutes away from Virac, the provincial capital. Being a major source of “King” type crablets, Panganiban aims to become the province’s crab capital by translating its local crab industry into a booming business enterprise.

The Philippine Rural Development Project in Bicol (PRDP-Bicol) is



likewise convinced of the municipality’s development thrust. On July 26, 2018, PRDP Deputy Project Director Shandy Hubilla of the Project Support Office (PSO) South Luzon, together with a team from

PRDP-Bicol travelled to the municipality to deliver 40 casco boats to the Panganiban Fisherfolk Association, Inc. (PFA). This is part of the P6.78 million-worth Mangrove Crab Production and Marketing Enterprise.

“Saindo na po ining project. Urgolyo iyan na kamo digdi sa Panganiban ang mag-escosar na maging capital kita kang mangrove crab na masiramon (This project is yours. It is your pride to exert efforts toward becoming the capital of this delicious mangrove crab),” Hubilla said, claiming that the crablet in Panganiban locally known as “kinis” is the tastiest crab he ever tried.

He further encouraged the association to work together for the sustainability of the enterprise subproject.

The casco boats, which cost P17,000 each, will benefit 80 PFA members engaged in mangrove crab production. A pre-bid conference was also conducted on July 26 for the P2.67 million-worth trading center to be constructed in Brgy. San Vicente in Panganiban, designed to systematize production, buying and marketing of the marketable-sized crabs produced by PFA.

One of the member-beneficiaries of the Mangrove Crab Production and Marketing Enterprise subproject is 43-year-old Alma F. Morales, a mangrove crab gatherer for 23 years. A fisherman’s wife and mother to 11 children, Alma starts her day at 3 a.m. to prepare food for her family and the mangrove crabs, which feed on mollusks. She walks for 10 minutes daily to reach the aquasilvi farm and spends at least five hours there to feed and gather her stocks. Oftentimes, she rents a non-motorized boat for P100 per day to gather mangrove crabs and sells them to market buyers for P6 to P24 per piece, depending on their size classification.

*(Please turn to page 10)*

Partido State University  
Goa, Camarines Sur

Letters

August 28, 2018

**DR. ELENA B. DE LOS SANTOS**  
Regional Executive Director, DA RFO 5

Dear Dr. Delos Santos:

Good Day!

We, 4th year students of Partido State University, currently taking Bachelor of Science in Computer Science under the College of Arts and Sciences is currently working on our Senior Thesis entitled "Web-based Expert System to Determine Rice Disease and Infestation".

In connection to this, we would like to request permission from your good office to allow us to gather data and information that will support our project. The researchers would like to know the processes of the present conduct of the University Admission Test Examination. This matter will be of great help in developing the proposed system.

Rest assured that all information will be treated with outmost confidentiality. Your affirmative response will greatly help us validate and obtain actual evidences, processes and information that will benefit our university.

Thank you and God bless.

Sincerely,

Panuelos, John Dennis G.  
Olores, John Rey A.  
Tejares, Leonel B.

Noted by:

**NICOLAS A. PURA**  
Senior Thesis Adviser and  
Program Director, BSCS



## DA honors Rice AEWs and LFTs

MATAAS NA KAHAY, BATANGAS - The Department of Agriculture recognized the outstanding contributions of the Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) and Local Farmer Technicians of CALABARZON, MIMAROPA and Bicol region in a cluster awarding ceremony of the 2017 Rice Achievers Awards held at Shercon Resort and Ecology

Park in San Sebastian in this municipality on July 29 to August 1, 2018.

A total of 64 AEWs and 7 LFTs were honored for their achievements in rice production for the contest year 2017.

From the Bicol Region, 27 Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) were hailed as Outstanding Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs)

and given P20,000 cash award and trophy. The 23 awardees came from Cam Sur, 1 from Masbate and 2 from Albay and 1 from Cam. Norte.

They are: Engr. Janice B. Orciga, Jocelyn Comprado, Eva R. Laurente, Annie Lomanog, Celedonio O. Elevedo Jr., Julieta Deris, Cesar Miraña, Hector Llagas, Ma. Nercy C.

Alvaro, Sylvia Oaferina, Elsa Cabrera, Rodolfo Nuñez Jr., Anicia P. Mancita, Ma. Rexie P. Jesalva, Rowena C. Otamias, Maria Ailine C. Bombon, Rosa V. Belgica, Gregorio H. Beldad, Mary Christine B. Mallapre, Alexander B. Baldoza, Catherine A. Comia, Rodrigo V. Pandes Jr., Engr.

*(Please turn to page 6)*

## DA bares credit ... *(From page 1)*

ahensya ng gobyerno,” Usec. Bello added.

Rodel P. Tornila, OIC RTD for Operations and Extension disclosed that the DA Bicol turned over a total of P15,845,266 worth of various interventions to individual farmers, farmers’ associations and 37 LGUs of Camarines Sur. The Rice Program, headed by OIC RTD Tornilla, distributed a total of P7,210,000 consisted of 3 units combine harvester, 1 unit 4WD mini tractor, 9 units handtractor, 6 units thresher, 8 units PISOS, 4 units shallow tube wells, 1 unit rice color sorter, seed spreader and 100 bags 0-0-60 fertilizer and 18 bags rice seeds.

The High Value Crops Development Program, under its OIC Chief Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez, gave a total of P3,016,400 worth interventions consisted of 12 units rainshelter, 5 units multi-commodity solar dryer, 1,400 kgs ginger planting materials, and vegetable seeds. The Livestock Program headed by Dr. Josefina Bañadera gave

P1,143,500 worth of animals earlier at the DA regional office to save the animals from unnecessary stress in their transport. Livestock included 10 heads cattle, 30 heads swine, 2,950 heads native chicken. The Corn and Cassava Program under its program coordinator Lorenzo Alvina, distributed a total of P2,041,000 worth of intervention consisted of 150 bags OPV white corn seeds, 420 bags hybrid corn seeds, 2 units PISOS and 2 units cassava grater. The Organic Agriculture program led by Adelina Losa distributed a total of 920 bags vermicast, 40 packets Bio-N, and 10 bags corn seeds.

On the same occasion, Adelina A. Losa, chief of the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) discussed the different loan windows of the DA through the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC). These are: Production Loan Easy Access (PLEA); Survival and Recovery (SURE) Assistance Program; Working Capital



Loan Easy Access (CLEA) for cooperatives; Mechanization Loan Easy Access; and Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF). Losa added that all these loan windows provide easy access to credit for marginalized and small farmers and fisherfolks by tapping lending conduits such as rural banks, cooperatives, NGOs and Associations registered with the DOLE.

The purpose of loan may be to finance production of crops, poultry, livestock and fishery. Up to P50,000 could be availed for short gestating crops while up to P150,000 for high value crops and long gestating crops at 6% interest

per annum. Farmers can re-avail loans without having to undergo credit/background investigation. Small farmers who can avail of these loans are those who own or amortizing not more than 3 hectares. They could be tenants, leaseholders, stewards or engaged in backyard poultry and livestock.

During the opening of the Agri Summit, Governor Miguel Luiz Villafuerte of the host province of Camarines Sur warmly welcomed the exhibitors, participants and visitors to the agri summit which revolved around the theme “Bicol Agriculture in the Phase of Globalization.” *(More photos on page 5)*



## Opening of the 1st Bicol Agri Summit

Senator Cynthia A. Villar, chairperson of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, was the guest of honor during the opening day on August 23. She discussed her programs and advocacies on agriculture in the country and imparted recommendations to help Bicolano farmers become globally competitive.

The three day Bicol Agri Summit featured trade fairs, trade exhibit of innovative products and technologies and techno seminars to help farmers improve farm productivity. The DA AMAD invited a total of 21 exhibitors who showcased and sold their products. Losa revealed that the DA exhibitors garnered a total sales of P454,987 from the 3 day trade fair.



Senator Cynthia A. Villar



RED Elena B. de los Santos



## Distribution of native animals to farmers





# More farmers showcase products in ASPIRE year 2



NAGA CITY – On the second year of the Agribusiness Support for Promotion and Investment in Regional Expositions (ASPIRE) implementation in Bicol, a total of 38 exhibitors participated in the 4-day trade fair garnering over P1.2 million from the sales of various agricultural products.

Junibert De Sagun, chief Administrative Officer of the DA General Services Division in Manila graced the opening ceremonies of the ASPIRE held at SM mall here on July 18. In his keynote speech, he said that ASPIRE envisions a market driven agriculture sector where the producers, processors and consumers are happy in

a healthy industry. He added that through the project, Bicol's priority commodities like gabi or laing, pineapple, pili and abaca are being promoted through conduct of trade fairs and market matching to create strong linkages among the key players of the value chain of these commodities. The DA is currently preparing a database of producers, processors, suppliers and buyers to hasten the effectivity of ASPIRE in the pilot regions.

Rodel P. Tornilla, DA Bicol OIC RTD for Operations and Extension thanked the members of the Metro Naga City Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MNCCI) for having the DA and ASPIRE as one of the highlights of the month-long Bicol Business Month celebration. Tornilla added that this public private partnership inspires farmers and fisherfolks to engage in value adding activities and put up their own small and medium enterprises.

Adelina A. Losa, Chief of the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) of DA Regional Office, said that ASPIRE, which was first launched in the Bicol region last year, aims to integrate market development services to farmers, fishers, micro small and medium enterprises (MSME); develop the capacities of local farmers and fisherfolks and MSMEs to optimize market opportunities; and promote investment opportunities to encourage investments.

In attendance during the opening program were Aleli Manguilin, ASPIRE Program Coordinator from Manila; BFAR Regional Director Dennis Del Socorro; Ferdinand D. Sia, President of the Metro Naga Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Clarine P. Tobias, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry regional governor; KBP Cam. Sur Chairperson Bong Echaloze; members of the media and representatives from the Local Government Units of Camarines Sur. **(Lovella P. Guarin)**

## DA honors Rice ... *(from page 4)*

Sheryl M. Almario, Mat D. Peñaflor, Ronnel A. Gacer, Aira T. Rivero, Grace Santilleces.

From the Bicol region also, 5 LFTs received P20,000 cash and trophy. They are: Librado B. Banastao, Jr.; Arnulfo D. Bernas; Genaro A. Tamon Jr.; Dominador R. Paa and Miguel R. Dotillos, all of Camarines Sur.

Meanwhile, 10 AEWs and 1 LFT from CALABARZON and 27 AEWs from MIMAROPA were also awarded.

Dr. Santiago R. Obien, Senior Technical Adviser of DA National Rice Program in his speech, congratulated the Regional Directors, AEWs and LFTs of the DA in all regions for helping produce the highest yield production of the Philippines ever in rice in 2017 which was 19.28 million metric tons. Dr. Obien emphasized that it was 3.15 million metric tons on top of the rice production

in 2010, raising our rice sufficiency from 86% in 2010 to 96% in 2017.

Dr. Obien added that two key factors propelled this achievement in rice production, namely: 1) use of certified seeds; 2) use of high yielding hybrid seeds.

Dr. Obien especially commended the efforts of the AEWs. "They are very very good, because despite the fact that our production area is only 30% of the land area of Thailand, we were able to feed 105 million Filipinos. That is 37 million more than the population of Thailand which is 69 million.

"Our problem is not on rice production but on the human population growth which is 1.6% per year compared to Thailand with only 0.3% population growth per year," Dr. Obien added.

The participants were

warmly welcomed by DA CALABARZON RTD for Operations and Extension, Milo delos Reyes in behalf of RED Arnel De Mesa. Meanwhile, RED Antonio Gerundio led the delegates from DA MIMAROPA and RED Elena B. delos Santos led the delegates from the DA Bicol.

Also included in the Bicol delegation were OIC RTD Rodel P. Tornilla; OIC Chief of Field Operations Division Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez; Rice Program and RAFIS staff. **(Lovella P. Guarin)**



# DAEA Bicol leads Sportsfest 2018 & Family Day





# DA relaunches Gulayan sa Paaralan in all Bicol provinces

by Emily B. Bordado

SORSOGON CITY - To promote vegetable production in public elementary and secondary schools the Department of Agriculture (DA) launches the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) in this city to signal the re-launch of this DA- and Department of Education (DepEd) joint undertaking nationwide. Participating schools will establish school gardens as ready food baskets or source of vegetables in sustaining the schools feeding program especially for the malnourished or undernourished school children. The DA will spearhead the implementation of the program and provide the production inputs such as seeds, organic fertilizers and garden tools and facilitate the conduct of trainings. The excess vegetables harvested could be sold by the school to generate income for the sustenance of the project.

Some 90 school heads and officials from 60 elementary schools and 30 secondary or senior high schools from the different municipalities of Sorsogon attended the launching activity cum training on vegetable gardening and nursery establishment held at the DepEd compound here on August 16.

Provincial Governor Robert Lee Rodriguez



Governor Robert Lee Rodriguez of Sorsogon.

personally graced the occasion and affirmed his support to the project saying that agriculture and education are priority thrusts of his administration. He added that Gulayan sa Paaralan also compliments his program for the province on nutrition, waste management and tourism. The provincial government as one of the partners of this program will help in the implementation and monitoring of the program through its extension workers and may also provide assistance and resources.

Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez, DA's Officer-in charge of the Field Operations Division and Regional Coordinator of the High Value Crops Development

Program (HVCDP) explained that Gulayan sa Paaralan which is under the HVCDP also aims to address malnutrition among school children by promoting the production of nutritious and safe foods. It will serve as a laboratory for students to know and apply their knowledge on vegetable production and showcase small-scale food production models. It will also inculcate among the students the values of gardening, wellness and care for environment.

In addition to the assorted vegetable seeds, the DA provided each participating school with materials for green house: seedling trays; organic fertilizers and garden tools.



Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez, DA's regional Gulayan sa Paaralan coordinator.

Aside from establishing a vegetable garden in a 200 sq. meter area, the school shall establish a seedling nursery enclosed with plastic where the vegetable seedlings will be germinated in trays before they are transplanted to the seed plots/beds.

Dr. Rodriguez announced that as an incentive to the participating schools two best "Gulayan projects in the province will be chosen and given awards at the end of the cropping period.

Assistant Division Superintendent Jenny Postrado urged the school officials and teachers to support this program and inculcate among the children the value of farming and the importance of good nutrition. As a show of support to the program she asked the participants to show the thumbs up sign while declaring "thumbs up for green thumb" to urge everyone to plant vegetables and other crops.

After the opening program, Nestor Nava, the provincial Vegetable Coordinator started his lecture on Vegetable production and Cultural Management and Seedling Nursery Establishment.

(Next page pls.)





On same occasion the DA through Dr. Rodriguez turned over to Jose Delloso, President of the San Juan East Person with Disability association of Sorsogon City. Delloso who is blind due to diabetes received assorted vegetable seeds. The association also received tunneling film for their proposed greenhouse.

The GPP was implemented by the DA and DepEd since 2007 and its implementation was strengthened in 2016. The program prescribes the participation of parents and other members of the community in the conduct of educational programs related to nutrition education, basic pest management, food preservation techniques, composting and environmental conservation among others.



## ...in Cam. Sur

**PILI, CAMARINES SUR** – A total of 230 public elementary and secondary schools in Camarines Sur will participate in this year's Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) which had its provincial launching on August 25, 2018 at the Capitol Convention Center here.

During the launching, the

Department of Agriculture in Bicol thru the HVCDP distributed assorted vegetable seeds, materials for green house, seedling trays, garden tools and organic fertilizers.

The DA will help each participating schools in establishing at least 200 sq meter vegetable gardens and seedling nursery enclosed with

poly-ethylene UV tunneling film where the seedlings will be germinated in seed trays before they are transplanted to the plots.

To inspire the participating schools to innovate and come up with model gardens, the DA HVCDP will select two best Gulayan projects per province at the end of cropping period to be given awards. **(Lovella P. Guarin)**

## ...in Albay



*Governor Al Francis Bichara of Albay graced the launching of GPP.*

**LEGAZPI CITY, ALBAY** – With the rising inflation rate nationwide, Bicol hitting nine percent in August, the Department of Agriculture in Bicol is banking on students in public elementary and secondary schools to help augment the country's food security.

A total of 725 schools in Albay will engage in the DA-Bicol's Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) 2018. According to Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez, Regional High

Value Crops Development Program Coordinator and OIC-Chief of the Field Operations Division, the GPP was relaunched as part of the DA's priority agenda under the Duterte administration to reintroduce basic agriculture in the primary and elementary grades of the Philippine schools system.

During the Farmer's Forum, Distribution of DA Interventions and Launching of Gulayan sa Paaralan Program held on September 17, this

city, Albay Governor Al Francis Bichara expressed his support to the program saying "Darating ang oras matindi ang pangangailangan sa pagkain at malaki ang savings kung kayo mismo ang magtatanim ng sarili ninyong halaman,"

Christopher Dalaguit, Project Development Officer II, who represented Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs Secretary Francis Tolentino, cited the importance of the activity in strengthening the agriculture sector in the

province of Albay and Bicol region. He expressed his high hopes that the launch of the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program will encourage the public especially the youth to learn vegetable farming and soil cultivation.

The DA-Bicol under the HVCDP Program provided P1.28 million-worth of interventions (vegetable seeds, seedling trays, garden tools and 555 bags organic fertilizers **(Annielyn L. Baleza)**





*The HVCDP distributed garden tools to the participating schools in Albay.*

## ...in Masbate

MASBATE CITY---Milagros West Central School Principal Bienvenido S. Jumao said that “our existing school garden plays a vital role in showing to the children the value of hardwork; encourages them to have their own home garden in order to lessen their expenses in food and to have available fresh vegetables on their table.”

Same sentiment came from the 127 teachers from 101 government elementary and high schools in the province of Masbate during the launching of the Gulayan sa Paaralan sa Program (GPP) on October 2, 2018 at the Masbate National Comprehensive High School (MNCHS) here.

One of the challenges that agriculture is facing right now is the aging farmers. The average age of farmers now is 58-59 years old.

This is also the present worry of Senior High School Teacher Frederick G. Ramos if Dimasalang High School. A licensed agriculturist, Ramos applied his learnings in his school garden which made their school the 2016 and 2017 Best Implementer of Gulayan sa Paaralan.

His vegetable garden boosted the waning interest especially of the millenials in pursuing agriculture.

Quoting this famous local adage “kung may itanim, may

aanihin” literally, he shared that the income from the harvest of their school vegetables were given to those who helped in the development of the vegetable garden.

Thus, with GPP’s impact on the younger generation, more young people will appreciate and venture into agriculture.

The program also encourages the participation of parents and other members of the community in the conduct of educational programs related to nutrition education, basic pest management, food preservation techniques, composting and environmental conservation, among others.

DA-Bicol distributed assorted garden tools, vegetable seeds, seedling trays, PUV plastic film, organic fertilizer and mosquito nets to each school.

The DA-HVCDP and DepEd will be recognizing the Best Gulayan sa Paaralan in the province at the end of the cropping period.

Meanwhile, the Masbate City Division of DepEd will also have a Division Search for Best Gulayan sa Paaralan Implementers for School Year 2018-2019. **(Jayson M. Gonzales)**



*Teachers from 101 public elementary and high schools in Masbate joined the launching of the Gulayan sa Paaralan sa Program (GPP).*

## Casco boats from PRDP... *(from page 3)*

“Nagpapasalamat po ako sa suporta ng PRDP sa pamamagitan ng bangka na yan at sa pagkakaroon ng trading center. Makakatulong po ito ng malaki kasi ang mga bangka nandyan na naghihintay na sa daungan hindi tulad noon na kung kailan nakahanda na kami ng pain at sagwan tapos wala na kaming marentahan na bangka kasi puno na. Hindi na rin kami maghahanap pa ng buyer.” Morales said.

She added that the casco boats will be very useful in site preparation, feeding and crablet

gathering.

“Masuwerte ang Panganiban na tayo ang may asosasyon na nakapaloob sa crab. Ang tanging hangad ko lang na sana maumpisahan ng tama ang programa na naibigay sa atin ng national government at mabiyayaan ang ating bayan na magkaroon ng hanap-buhay tungkol sa alimango. Sa tulong ng PRDP, OPAG at sa tulong ng PFA siguro maipagpapatuloy natin ang crab grow-out dito sa Panganiban,” Mayor Robert A. Fernandez remarked.

PFA president Jesus

Ceballo hopes that through the enterprise development project, the organization will be known as a supplier of high quality crabs which will redound to higher income for the gatherers.

“Pangarap din namin na sa pamamagitan ng proyektong ito, makilala ang Panganiban sa mapa ng Pilipinas,” he said. Part of PFA’s sustainability plan is requiring the member-beneficiaries to sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and Supply Contract. “Kailangan po namin yun para sa maintenance at kapag kumikita na kami madadagdagan pa ang

mga yan,” he said. PFA will assign two members per boat to alternately feed or gather mangrove crabs daily.

The Mangrove Crab Production and Marketing Enterprise is one of the four enterprise subprojects in Catanduanes funded under PRDP. The Project also supports the province’s Abaca Fiber Processing and Trading Enterprise in Virac, the TAFIA Broiler Production and Marketing in Pandan, and the Commercial Palay Production in Gigmoto. **(Annielyn L. Baleza)**





## Rebecca Purisima speaks before world GAD advocates in Papua New Guinea

Rebecca Purisima, DA's 2017 national Outstanding Rural Woman talked on the challenges and opportunities of rural women in the Philippines during the Women in Agriculture and Fisheries (WiAF) Dialogue held at Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (PNG) on August 4, 2018.

Promoting Women in Agriculture and Fisheries was initiated from the sectoral space in aligning to PNG

APEC 2018 priority which is Promoting Sustainable and Inclusive Growth with particular reference to the work stream on Gender Inclusivity and Advancing Food Security.

With the WiAF dialogue's theme "Supporting Women's Economic Empowerment and Inclusion in Agri Fishery Value Chain," PNG has invited numerous speakers to address a total of 150 APEC audience from 21 APEC member economies.



The Philippine delegates included Atty. Hansel O. Didulo, Asec for Regulations of DA; Janet Garcia and Charito Ampil from the Office of the Undersecretary for Policy and Planning; and Aloha Gigi I. Banaria, Chief of PMED of DA RFO 5 and GAD & GREAT Women Focal Person of DA 5 (photo above).

## DA-Bicol turns-over pili processing facility in Sorsogon

CASIGURAN, SORSOGON--"Dapat yumaman tayo sa Sorsogon dahil sa Pili (We should get rich here in Sorsogon because of Pili)!"

This was the challenge of Steven Garcia of the Provincial Agriculture Office of Sorsogon

posed to the more than 60 attendees and representatives of the regional and provincial offices of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Trade and Industry during the Inauguration and Turn-Over Ceremony of the Pili Processing

Facility held recently here.

He also assured them that other regions and countries may get the variety and technology on Pili but it is only in Sorsogon that pili thrives well because of Type II Climate and Volcanic Soil. Although there are only four provinces in the Philippines that have such type of climate, only Sorsogon has volcanic soil from an active volcano (Mt. Bulusan).

According to DA-Bicol High Value Crops Development Program Regional Coordinator Rose M. Imperial, the facility is first in the Bicol Region because of its high production capacity.

Imperial also shared that 50 years ago, there were only 1,200 hectares of pili. At present, there are 7500 hectares planted to pili and this continues to expand every year. Despite

the expanding production areas for Pili, the region cannot supply the high demand for the pili. With the P2M-worth facility, the members of the Pili Processors Association of Sorsogon, Inc. (PPAS) will be able to produce, process and market their pili products.

L G U - C a s i g u r a n Administrative Officer Angel Ayala cited the different plans and programs of the local government to support the farmers. Every year, more than 200,000 tourists come to Casiguran and frequently ask where they can buy their "pasalubong."

The facility is a collaborative project. Since this is a grant, DA-Bicol will train the members of the PPASI on the operation, maintenance and sustainability of the facility. (Jayson M. Gonzales & Marilene Dimaculangan)







## A former OFW turned farmer learns to cope and be resilient

By Emily B. Bordado

Faced with various risks and challenges in farming such as adverse impacts of climate change and erratic market prices, local farmers have learned to cope and be resilient. One such farmer is 52-year old Clemente Rodriguez, Jr. of Barangay Sta. Cruz the town of Ocampo, Camarines Sur. An agriculture graduate from the Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (formerly CSSAC) he did not have the chance then to practice his profession instead, he landed a job as security guard in one of the big government banks in Naga City. After several years in this job he tried his luck overseas where he also worked as security guard. Part of his earnings from his job overseas he used to purchase

farm lands or invest them in land mortgage.

After his four -year stint abroad when he thought he has already saved enough money he decided to return and stay home for good and go into farming. He started with rice farming for their family consumption and for additional income. His farm located at the slopes of Mt. Isarog is flanked with streams on both sides. For the past four years he has been into corn production as yellow corn was commanding a good price. He was quite content with the income he was deriving from his three hectare corn farm as the price was stable.

But without any warning the price of corn suddenly dived last year and worse there were no takers of the

locally produced corn. He learned that imported corn at much lesser price was brought into the province by some traders. Just like his fellow corn farmers most of his corn harvest got rotten because there were not enough drying, storage post harvest facility in their locality.

He incurred a big financial loss but he was not disheartened. He thought of shifting to other crops. One of his colleagues suggested

to him to venture into watermelon production. His problem was he has no capital. This colleague then offered to provide him capital and to be his business partner. They agreed on a 60:40 sharing.

Thus, on June this year he began planting watermelon in three parcels of his land which are just a stone throw away from each other and with an aggregate area of about three hectares. Being  
(Next page pls.)







an agriculture graduate major in agronomy and having lived and reared in a farm is really familiar to him. Moreover, he has been attending seminars and Farmers' Field Schools conducted by the DA and the Agricultural Training Institute. He is being assisted by the Agricultural Extension workers in the locality one of which is Mario Abordo who happens to be his neighbour.

His farm land has a rolling topography which is ideal for watermelon which thrives well in loamy and well drained soil. Watermelon is also known to be tolerant to a wide range of soil acidity. So even if the farm land of Mr. Rodriguez was already quite acidic after successive planting of yellow corn still watermelon thrived well in his farm. Mr. Rodriguez explained that watermelon could neutralize soil acidity.

What is surprising though is the time of planting. The regular planting season for watermelon is from October to January. Off season planting usually starts in August. But in this case, Mr. Rodriguez planted in June and by early August he has begun harvesting and because it is already off season he commanded higher price. The truckful of his first harvest from only one parcel (of the three parcels of land) with an area of more than one hectare gave him an income of over P40,000. For the succeeding

harvests in the forthcoming weeks he estimates that his income could increase to four or five folds that would give him a gross income of about

P220,000. Subtracting the production cost of P140,000 which he said he spent, for that 1 parcel alone he will derive a net income of about P90,000.

Five laborers are currently working on his watermelon farm two of which are from Camarines Norte who are knowledgeable and well experienced in watermelon production. The three others are local laborers.

Despite the high potential income that he will get from melon production Mr. Rodriguez intends to plant squash after watermelon. "Para mabigyan ng panahon maka recover ang lupa pakatapos ng sunod- sunod na pagtanim ng mais," he explained.

*"Pero babalik din uli ako*

*sa pagtanim ng mais kasi mas mataas talaga ang kita sa mais at hindi masyado magastos at ma-trabaho.*" he added

"Dapat ang magsasaka bukas sa lahat na oportunidad at mayroong fallback kung sakali mayroong aberya gaya ng pagbagsak ng presyo ng mais. Ngayon ko nalaman na pwede pala ang pakwan dito sa lugar namin at kahit wala sa tamang panahon," he enthused

Indeed farming is a risky undertaking. But with the right knowledge, attitude, industry, determination and sense of optimism farming can be a very rewarding and fulfilling occupation.

## Banko Sentral recognizes DA-Bicol as an outstanding partner

**LEGAZPI CITY**---The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) awarded the Department of Agriculture in Bicol for the second time as an Outstanding Partner for Report on Regional Economic Developments in the Philippines (REDP) for Region 5 during the 2018 Awards Ceremony and Appreciation Lunch for BSP Stakeholders as a seal of gratitude and trust held in July this year.

The DA-Bicol bested the National Economic and Development Authority 5 (NEDA) and the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) in the Source of Information Category.

The roster of regional winners include BIGG's Inc for Outstanding Respondent among Large and Medium Firms; New Naga Alta Agri Corp for Outstanding Respondent among Small Firms; Land Bank of the Philippines-Legazpi Branch and Metrobank-Cash Management Services Unit-Naga Branch for Outstanding Regional Partners (ORP) for



(L-R) DA Reg'l Exec. Director Elena B. delos Santos and DA Regional Information Officer Emily B. Bordado proudly show the BSP trophy.

Currency Programs Clean Note Policy; Department of Education-5 and Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (CBSUA) as ORP for Implementing BSP Advocacy on the conduct of public information campaigns; Ateneo de Naga University as ORP for Knowledge Resource Network (KRN); Provincial Government of Masbate as ORP for Demonetization of the New Design Series; DepEd-

Albay Division Office and the Camsur Bankers Club, Inc as ORP for Coin Recirculation;

The DA-Bicol was recognized for its cooperation, relevance, completeness, timeliness and valuable information to the BSP necessary in the annual publication of the REDP.

The trophy was designed by Ferdinand Cacio. (**Jayson M. Gonzales**)



## DA Bicol and CNSC collaborate to help pineapple farmers increase income and produce bigger fruits

**DAET, CAMARINES NORTE** – Pineapple, like banana and mango, is a major fruit export commodity of the Philippines both in fresh and processed forms. It has immense export potential. A study in India reported that about 97% of the world output is utilized by the processing industry. Next to peaches, pineapple is the most important among the canned fruits.

With these scenario, the pineapple industry in Camarines Norte could have been a sunshine industry for the 1,416 farmers who grow pineapple in a total of 2,505 hectares in some of the municipalities of the province. But this is not the case now.

Loreto Ilan, 54 years old, is a pineapple grower from Lugi, Labo, Camarines Norte. He started in pineapple production 12 years ago. At present, he maintains 3 hectares coconut and a separate 2 hectares of pineapple plantation with 65,000 suckers planted at a distance of 12 inches per plant and 24 inches between rows. He planted the pineapples in an open field as experience taught him that the more sunlight that penetrates the plant, the sweeter the fruit gets. After 18 months at the most, the pineapples are ready for harvest. But even at the start of planting, Loreto has already made an agreement with a middleman or trader who will buy all the harvest regardless of the sizes of the fruits in a straight buying scheme or “all in”. In this scheme, the trader dictates the price and the farmer, in a haste to earn a lump sum money in just one day, remains at the losing end.

This scheme also results to smaller pineapple fruits as the farmers are cutting on the recommended rate and frequency of fertilizer application to save on production cost. Despite the efforts of the farmers to enhance their yield, the agreed price dictated by the traders prevails.

This dilemma of the pineapple farmers is being addressed by the Camarines Norte Lowland Rainfed Research Station, one of the many Research Outreach Station (ROSeS) of the DA-Bicol based in Calasgasan, Daet. The station came up with different studies to enhance the yield and profitability of the Queen Formosa variety of pineapple which is mainly being planted in most of the municipalities of

by *Lovella P. Guarin*

Cam. Norte.

Under the program Enhancing Productivity and Marketability of Queen Pineapple being funded by DOST-PCAARRD for 2016-2019, the CNLRRS represented by Maria Cristina Campita as project leader, collaborated with the Camarines Norte State College (CNSC) and Visayas State University (VSU). Various studies are being conducted under the program. The DA's main focus is on optimization of planting density and fertilizer management of queen pineapple; the CNSC deals on policy and waste utilization and the VSU specializes on tissue culture and pest management.

During the Public Consultation for the Development of the Explanatory Brochure on Fresh Pineapple, the CNSC presented their draft of the ordinance entitled “An Ordinance Implementing the Queen Pineapple Grades and Standards for Trading in Camarines Norte” to strengthen the implementation of the Philippine National Standard for Pineapple in the province. If the PNS will be strictly implemented in this province, farmers will get more than P20,000 increase in their annual income, said Dr. Maria Cristina Azuelo, the leader of the study. At the current practice of straight buying scheme of pineapple, there are only 2 standards – the “Good” pegged at P6.00/piece and the “Out” which command a very low P1.00. If the said ordinance will be approved there will be six grades of Queen pineapple: 1) Extra Large (1,000

grams above), Large (851-1000 grams); Medium (701-850 grams); Small (551-700 grams); Extra Small (351-550 grams); and Batterball (350 grams and below). The selling price of the Queen Pineapple should be in accordance with DTI baseline price or based on prevailing prices as monitored by DA. This proposed grading will also be adopted by the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS) in the finalization of the Explanatory Brochure on Queen Pineapple.

The enactment and approval of this ordinance will ensure the implementation of grading standards for pineapple set by BAFS through the PNS and will also safeguard the welfare of the farmers and the future of the entire pineapple industry.

Aside from research and technical assistance to pineapple farmers, the DA Bicol has continued to pour different interventions to free the farmers from being hostage of the traders. The P15 M fund from the DA Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) for the Cam. Norte Pineapple Trading and Processing Project with the Labo Progressive Multipurpose Coop (LPMPC) as proponent, will help the province regain its place in the global export arena.





# DA-Bicol Regulatory Division strengthens Integrated Pest Management

SORSOGON CITY, SORSOGON – The Department of Agriculture Regulatory Division will reactivate the Integrated Pest Management (IPM). This time, with focus on multi-commodity crops.

This was announced by DA-Bicol Regulatory Division Chief Rosita M. Imperial during the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Consultative Meeting Cum Planning Workshop held on August 23, 2018, this city. The said activity was attended by IPM Coordinators from nine municipalities in the province, the Provincial Agriculturist Dr. Ma. Teresa V. Destura, and agriculturists from the Provincial Agriculture Office.

The consultative meeting cum planning workshop aims to strengthen the DA's partnerships with LGUs on IPM Management. With the DA's institutional restructuring and paradigm resetting, the Regulatory Division was designated to conduct plant pests and diseases surveillance and monitoring which used to be one of the Regional Crop Protection Center's (RCPC) functions.

IPM is intended to reduce the levels of crop pests and diseases and limit the inappropriate use of chemicals, provide alternatives for pest and disease management and boost product yield and quality, thereby increasing farmers' income. It also contributes to

a healthy, safe and resilient ecosystem through sustainable pest management.

DA-Bicol Agriculturist Cyndie Pardo shared insights on common insect pests of rice and their management. Among the insect pests on rice are whorl maggot, leafhopper, armyworm, grasshoppers, planthoppers, leafhoppers, black bug, mole cricket, stem borer and rice bug. Pardo highlights that cultural practices such as good land preparation, fertilizer management and planting of resistant varieties; habitat manipulation or ecological engineering and use of pesticide as the last resort are effective IPM for rice.

Meanwhile, Science Research Specialist Norman Concepcion discussed the pests and diseases on corn. Some of the common insect pests on corn are the corn borer, corn earworm, corn seedling maggot, white grub, armyworm, corn semilooper, corn aphids, and oriental migratory locust. Concepcion also noted the cultural and chemical control methods in pest management such as proper disposal of infected plants at harvest, treating seeds with slurry with thiram or captan at 120 grams per 50 kilogram seeds, selecting resistant varieties like the Philippine DMR Composite 2.

Moreover, Senior Agriculturist Edith Pelin lectured on the pests and



diseases of cacao. These include the symptoms and control measures for cacao pod borer, mealy bug, mired bugs, twig borer or coffee carpenter, cacao podrot, stem canker and vascular streak dieback (VSD).

Pelin underscored that prevention, identification of plant disease, diagnosing severity and application of appropriate treatments are the key steps of integrated disease management.

Justine Guerrero, IPM Focal Person of Gubat and Nikka Angelu H. Torres, IPM Focal Person of Magallanes said that the consultation meeting and planning workshop was very beneficial to them because it refreshed their knowledge on crop pests and diseases and IPM.

Since frontline service provider ako sa LGU, it will help especially sa mga farmers who depend greatly,

*DA-Bicol Regulatory Division Chief Rosita M. Imperial enjoins the IPM Coordinators' cooperation in conducting plant pests and diseases surveillance and monitoring during the IPM Consultative Meeting cum Planning Workshop held on August 23, 2018 in Sorsogon City.*

if not solely, sa paggamit ng chemicals to control yung pest and diseases sa crops. Bukod sa mababawasan ang gastos nila, somehow magiging sustainable po yung way of farming nila (Since I am a frontline service provider at the LGU, it will help especially to farmers who depend greatly, if not solely, in using chemicals to control crop pests and diseases. It will reduce their production costs and will somehow, make farming more sustainable)," Guerrero said.

Guerrero and Torres plan to disseminate the information on IPM to farmers in their respective municipalities during Farmers' Meeting. They will also train and orient local farmer technicians and Barangay Agricultural and Fishery Council (BAFC) on IPM.

LGU and PLGU-IPM Coordinators are required to submit monthly reports on plant pest and diseases surveillance to the Regulatory Division. **(Annielyn L. Baleza)**





## DA, UPLB to boost market potentials of GAP certified produce through bar coding

With the implementation of bar coding of all products coming from PhilGAP certified farms, consumers will be able to easily identify which products are safe and healthy and has been produced following Good Agricultural Practices (PhilGAP). The project is a collaboration among UPLB Foundation, DA – Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) and DA – Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR).

At present, PhilGAP certified commodities sold fresh or as processed products do not have distinguishing marks against vast array of products. The bar codes on PhilGAP certified products will also serve as a traceability system tool which will help trace fresh produce back to its source which may be growers, handlers, wholesalers and retailers, thereby preventing or eliminating hazards that pose risks to human health. Dr. Edralina P. Serrano, retired UPLB professor and project leader of UPLB Foundation said that a web-based traceability system for this purpose has already been developed and is being put in place.

Dr. Serrano also stressed that the need for traceability

cropped up due to food safety concerns, changes in lifestyle, increased demand and consumption of fresh foods and vegetable, and outbreaks of food borne illness attributed to consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.

### Move to make Quality and Safety Assurance Programs mandatory

Dr. Serrano added that unlike in European and Asian countries where PhilGAP certification of farms is mandatory, in the Philippines, it is voluntary. To be competitive in the midst of trade liberalization, the Department of Agriculture has a move to enforce compliance to Quality and Safety Assurance Programs such as PhilGAP for fresh fruits and vegetables; Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) for processed produce; Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) for the food industry. HACCP certification is an international standard defining the requirements for effective control of food safety.

Dr. Digna Sandoval, Assistant Director of Bureau of Agricultural Research who represented Dr. Nicomedes Eleazar, pledged the 100%

support of the DA-BAR to the new project.

### Training on Traceability System for Fruits and Vegetables

To jumpstart the barcoding project in the region, the DA Regulatory and Research Divisions in collaboration with UPLB conducted a Training on Traceability System for Fruits and Vegetables from PhilGAP Certified Farms on July 11, 2018 at Sonrisa Farm in Magarao, Camarines Sur. Three representatives from each of the GAP certified farms in Bicol learned how to properly record their farm data and information starting from selection of planting material, fertilizer application, irrigation, pest and disease control to harvesting and packing in the record book provided by the UPLB. Dr. Serrano, who served as resource speaker, stressed that record keeping is

an essential part and the start of traceability. The information in record book should be captured in photo and sent by the farmer to the DA regional office for encoding. As the regional data hub of the production and postharvest practices applied in the farms, the DA regional office will send the captured data to the Bureau of Plant Industry which will process and release the bar code back to the DA regional office.

Rosita Imperial, Chief of the DA Regulatory Division in Bicol said that PhilGAP refers to the practices that address environmental, economic and social sustainability for on-farm processes, and which result in safe and quality food and non-food agricultural products. PhilGAP follows four (4) modules: 1) Food safety; 2) Product quality 3) Environmental management; and 4) Worker's health, safety and welfare.

Application and costs of required analysis for PhilGAP certification are free and the certificate is valid for two (2) years.

### PhilGAP certified farms in Bicol

Numerous farms in the region have been certified as PhilGAP compliant. These include: Mauswag Agribusiness, Inc. in Pili, Camarines Sur processing moringa as food supplement; Abalayan rice and corn farm in

*(Next page pls....)*







## DA, UPLB ...

(from page 16)

Calabanga, Cam. Sur; NVAC farm in Naga City, Cerilo's farm in Tigaon, Portugal farm in Buhi and Adante's farm in Iriga City all in Camarines Sur and are engaged in corn production; VK's farm in Tigaon producing pinakbet vegetables; Mikeliz farm in Calabanga, Cam. Sur and JayArchel farm in Basud, Cam. Norte both engaged in dragon fruit farming; Rosalina Tan of Pili, Cam. Sur; La Huerta Farm in Baao, Cam. Sur and Pilar, Sorsogon municipal nursery, both engaged in vegetable production; and Labo Progressive Multipurpose Coop (LPMPC) in Camarines Norte. The coop is exporting decorticated pineapple fiber to an international textile company based in United Kingdom. It has 8,235 farmer members. Some 33 pineapple farmer members are PhilGAP certified since 2012 and they were among the first batch of GAP certified farms in the country.

Also present during the training were AEWs supporting DA-BPI PhilGap certification; Luz R. Marcelino, Chief of the Research Division; Corazon A. Orbon, CBES Superintendent; and staff of DA Regulatory and Research Divisions who will constitute the Regional Data Hub of the project. **(Lovella P. Guarin)**

# Cacao stakeholders convened in forum

"There is no substitute for cacao to make chocolate." This was a statement made by Melencio Santos of Sikwate Plantation de Cacao, Cebu City.

Since Bicol has the biggest cacao production in Luzon, there is a need to empower the local growers to be responsive to the demand for this shade loving tree crop. Thus, the Department of Agriculture Bicol thru the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division, conducted a Cacao Stakeholders forum on August 31, 2018 at a hotel in Naga City.

200 cacao growers from

different associations and commodity group attended said forum to listen to updates on the status of the cacao industry in Bicol which was discussed by Ronald Coprada, DA- High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) staff. To see the larger picture of the cacao industry, the following topics were also discussed: Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for Cacao by Editha Pelin, HVCDP staff; Production, Fertilization and Cultural Management of Cacao by Raymund de los Santos, Manager, Tala Orchid Inc.; Sustainable Cacao Farming by Melencio Santos, Sikwate

Plantation de Cacao; Cacao Value Chain and Marketing Linkages and Programs for Cacao Industry discussed by Valente Turtur, Chairman, National Cacao Council and Updates on the Bicol Cacao Council by Eduardo Pilapil, Regional Chairman, Cacao Council.

According to Ronald Coprada, the DA will not be providing cacao seedlings to prospective recipients this 2018 without undergoing training as per directive from the central office to ensure that the seedlings will be planted in conformity with the Philippine National Standard on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). He disclosed that 181,366 planting materials have been released this 2018. Other DA interventions include; GAP training for Cacao, rehabilitation of old cacao trees, extension support, education and trainings.

Meanwhile, Valentin Turtur narrated that the Philippines' cacao recently was declared the best beans in the world during the chocolate academy held in the United States. Aside from the popular and best variety "criollo" which means native, he encouraged the cacao growers to plant as many varieties that thrive in their areas. **(Blesilda A. Nuñez)**

## Bicol delegation (from page 20)

farmers a variety of choices and help them achieve the highest yield possible through the use of hybrid rice coupled with modern technology.

Various topics were presented during the technology forum in the afternoon which included Hybrid Rice Technology presented by Dr. Leylani M. Juliano, Supervising Science Research Specialist of PhilRice. The DA programs and services were Dir. Marina T. Hermoso, DA 7 Regional Technical Director for Operations.

DA RFO 7 Regional Executive Director Salvador D. Diputado who represented

secretary Manny F. Piñol shared the secretary's marching orders during their last meeting which is to come up with a food security plan for every town/province/region to be submitted to the President.

In attendance during the 7th NRTF were Governor Edgar M. Chatto of Bohol; Hon. Leoncio Evasco Jr, Secretary of Cabinet; Bohol 2nd district Congressman Erico Aristotle C. Aumentado; Mayor Restituto Auxtero of Talibon; and Bohol Acting Provincial Agriculturist Larry M. Pamugas. The Bicol delegation is composed of ten participants. **(Lovella P. Guarin)**



# SAAD promises come true in Cat'nes, Masbate, Sorsogon

True to the essence of the DA's newest program Special Area for Agricultural Development or SAAD, which is a Visayan word meaning "promise", the promised interventions to the beneficiaries in Bicol were recently distributed at the beneficiaries' doorsteps.

In the province of Catanduanes, a total of 286 beneficiaries from the most marginalized sector of the towns of Bagamanoc, Baras, Bato, Gigmoto, Panganiban, and San Miguel received various interventions. After the completion of series of trainings on Upland Rice Production, some 70 upland dwellers received rice seeds at one sacks each along with complete fertilizer. The pre-selected beneficiaries are cultivating an average landholdings of one hectare. Also in Catanduanes, 56 groups received packets of vegetable seeds which include okra, pechay, bush and pole sitao and ampalaya.

Meanwhile, in Masbate, a total of 2,300 bags of upland rice, 1,270 bags of complete fertilizers and 430 bags corn seeds were distributed to the

pre-selected beneficiaries from the municipalities of Esperanza, Balud, Pio V Corpus and Mandaon.

In the province of Sorsogon, 550 bags of upland rice seeds were distributed to the beneficiaries in the municipalities of Donsol (75 beneficiaries), Pilar (187 beneficiaries), Magallanes (51 beneficiaries), Juban (93 beneficiaries), Sta. Magdalena (70 beneficiaries) and Matnog (74 beneficiaries).

Earlier, the SAAD area coordinators in the three provinces conducted a house-to-house interview of the beneficiaries to assess their needs and available resources as well as identify the potential areas where the project can have the greatest impact.

Having identified the needs and available resources of the beneficiaries, a number of trainings on upland rice and vegetable production and have been conducted in coordination with the DA RFO 5 banner programs to prepare the mindset of the beneficiaries and equip them with the necessary skills to sustain the project. **(Lovella P. Guarin)**



Turn over of interventions in Catanduanes



The beneficiaries in Catanduanes.



Turn over of corn seeds in Sorsogon



The beneficiaries in Masbate.



Distribution of fertilizers in Masbate.



Reclassification (SEMLUR) held on September 26-28, 2018, this city.

Thirty-six RTECLUM and NTECLUM members and secretariat from CALABARZON, MIMAROPA, and Bicol attended the activity. SEMLUR is a three-year project worth P10.850 million spearheaded by the BSWM Agricultural Land Management and Evaluation Division (ALMED) that aims to develop a national protocol, enhance and mainstream the technical evaluation aspect and fast track the process of issuance of land use reclassification.

According to BSWM Soils Survey Division Chief Dominciano D. Ramos Jr., the activity is the first of a series of consultation workshops to be conducted nationwide to finalize the guidelines for the issuance of certificate of land use reclassification.

"Land use reclassification and land conversion is a sensitive issue... Lumiliit na nang lumiliit ang ating production area and wala tayong kasiguraduhan kung yan ba ay hihinto o hindi," he said.

Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, OIC Chief of the Department of Agriculture (DA)- Bicol Field Operations Division, underscored the essence of balanced actions toward sustainable development.

"Our population increases exponentially but our food increases geometrically. Hindi sya nakasabay sa pag-increase ng population considering na ang land natin hindi naman nag-i-increase. The challenge is lumiliit pa ang agricultural areas natin because of the applications on reclassification, nako-convert sya... Yung ating actions toward sustainable development should always be economically feasible but also socially acceptable and environmentally viable," she said.

She also highlighted

the importance of food self-sufficiency.

"Hindi tayo pwedeng lahat i-iimport. Kailangan we produce our own food. If we import a bulk of our supply from the outside, what if sila naman ang magkaroon ng disaster? O baka masyado tayong masakal na sa kanila. We really need to produce our own food," she added.

Both agreed that having clear guidelines and process on land use reclassification will safeguard the Department from

DA-Bicol Regional Technical Director for Research and Regulations Dr. Edgar R. Madrid noted that the control mechanism on land use reclassification lies on how the national government could further implement guidelines and laws in order to secure land than to sacrifice its interest towards food security.

"We want to safeguard agricultural lands because most of the areas reclassified are prime agricultural lands," he added.

(K) (NPK) and rice suitability. The RTECLUM is an inter-agency committee that receives, reviews and ensures the completeness of documentary requirements on land use reclassification application. Composed of the DA Regional Executive Director as Chairperson and technical staff from the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) and Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA), the RTECLUM



***The RTECLUM and NTECLUM members.***

external pressures causing land conversion disputes.

Meanwhile, Enriquez encouraged the RTECLUM and NTECLUM members to exercise due diligence in reviewing and issuing certificates of land use reclassification, which is a requirement for land conversion. She also announced that the Bureau is currently updating the Network of Protected Areas for Agricultural and Agro-industrial Development (NPAAD) and Strategic Agriculture and Fisheries Development Zones (SAFDZ). She mentioned that based on initial updated data, most areas planted to rice are now owned by developers. She warned that if this activity will not be discouraged, the country's food security will be compromised.

Among the topics covered by the consultation-workshop are the issues and concerns as well as proposed refinements on the Guidelines on the Issuance of Certification for Land Use Reclassification. The Bureau also consolidated suggestions on management of information on applications for land use reclassification.

Ramos and Enriquez turned over an Atlas of Soil-Based Agricultural Guide Maps of Luzon Island to DA RFO V through Dr. Madrid. The atlas is an output of the BSWM National Soil Sampling and Testing for Rice Project Phase I and II which contains fertility map, fertilizer recommendation, soil pH and status of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium

conducts field investigations and convene as a Committee to process, evaluate and provide initial recommendation as to eligibility or non-eligibility for land use reclassification.

The NTECLUM, on the other hand, is chaired by the BSWM director with the NIA Operations Manager as Vice Chairperson and technical staff from NIA, PCA, SRA, BSWM, DA Field Operations Service, Office of the Secretary, DA Legal Service and principal and alternate representative. It evaluates and recommends eligibility and non-eligibility for reclassification of agricultural lands for the Secretary's approval. **(Annielyn L. Baleza)**



# BSWM Director: Preserve and conserve the remaining agri area for food security

**NAGA CITY** – “Please help us preserve and conserve the remaining prime agricultural area for food security. How can we attain food security when our prime agricultural lands cannot be used anymore?” This was the challenge given by Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) Director and National Technical

Committee on Land Use Matters (NTECLUM) Chairperson Angel C. Enriquez to Regional Technical Committee on Land Use Matters (RTECLUM) members present during the Consultation Workshop of the Project Strengthening and Mainstreaming Evaluation Mechanism on Land Use

(Turn to page 19)



BSWM Soils Survey Division Chief Dominciano D. Ramos Jr. underscores that having clear guidelines and process on land use reclassification will safeguard both the RTECLUM and NTECLUM from external pressures.

## Bicol delegation participates in 7th rice derby

**TALIBON, BOHOL** – A total of 2,800 participants composed of rice farmers, LGU officials and DA employees from all over the country have witnessed and personally experienced the 7th National Rice Technology Forum (NRTF) held here on September 19-20, 2018.

The forum kicked off with a field demonstration of high yielding rice varieties and field tour of 28-hectare techno demo at Barangay San Jose this

municipality.

With the theme “Increased Rice Production through Hybrid Rice Technology,” the rice derby showcased 28 hybrid rice varieties being distributed by the country’s 15 private seed companies, which are locally adapted in the province’s soil and climate. Recher E. Ondap, Rice Board president said that the NRTF is held in different regions twice a year to give

(Turn to page 17)


## Luz R. Marcelino bestowed with Marcos R. Vega award

The Weed Science Society of the Philippines, Inc. bestowed the Marcos R. Vega award to Luz R. Marcelino, Chief of the DA RFO 5 Research Division during the 50th conference of the Pest Management Council of the Philippines held in Iloilo City. Marcelino received P20,000 cash and plaque in recognition of her

outstanding achievements in research and extension in weed science and pest management.

Her achievements in research and extension led to development of package of technologies that reduced weed diseases and insect infestation, increased farm’s yield and improved the lives of farmers.





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on March 17, 2017

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