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*Triumphant DA employees pose with the CSC assessors after the PRIME HRM on-site assessment which was passed by the DA Bicol with flying colors.*

## DA-5 hurdles CSC Level II accreditation in PRIME HRM

The Department of Agriculture recently passed the assessment of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) for Level II accreditation with flying colors under the commission's Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME HRM).

Four assessors headed by Director Sharon Farida A. Flores from the Civil Service Commission regional office V conducted the PRIME HRM on-site assessment on April 10-11, 2019. The team evaluated the maturity level of the DA RFO 5 competency, systems and practices in four areas of

*(Please turn to page 6)*

## Poverty level in SAAD areas dips over the past 3 years

by **Lovella P. Guarin**

SORSOGON CITY – “We are the actors on the ground. I encourage you to evaluate and qualify your interventions, to look at the impact of the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) in relation to the target – the poorest of the poor,” said DA Assistant Secretary for Special Projects Lerey A. Panes to the SAAD implementors during the 1st Quarter National Physical and Financial Assessment held at Villa Isabel, in this city on April 29 – May 3, 2019.

“SAAD should not stop with mere production, rather it should be market driven, as SAAD is DA's armor in

*(Please turn to page 6)*



## San Jose Cam. Sur wins Rice Achievers award 2018

PICC, MANILA. The Municipality of San Jose, Camarines Sur was hailed as Outstanding Municipality which performed well in rice production and received P1 Million in the recently concluded Rice Achievers Awards awarding ceremony in

this city on May 30, 2019.

Meanwhile, the Kuta Pawa Small Water Irrigation System (SWISA) Association Inc of Sorsogon was recognized as Outstanding SWISA and received P500,000.

Special recognition were awarded to the Provinces of

Sorsogon and Camarines Norte for Provincial Category and Maulawin SWISA, Inc. of Camarines Norte for SWISA category.

Senator Cynthia Villar and DA Undersecretary for Field Operations Ariel Cayanran led

*(Please turn to page 7)*

## DA Bicol primed to institutionalize meritocracy and excellence in HRM

After the rigorous and tedious review, catching up and compliance and preparations with the various requirements, the DA-Bicol, officials, staff and personnel of the DA-Bicol were euphoric as the team of assessors from the Civil Service Commission Regional Office 5 announced that the agency has hurdled the Level 2 maturity level of its competencies, systems and practices under the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM0).

This PRIME-HRM is a mechanism that empowers government agencies by developing their human resource management competencies, systems, and practices toward HR excellence. Under the program, the CSC assesses the maturity level of an agency in the four HR systems namely: 1) Recruitment, Selection and Placement, 2) Learning and Development, 3) Performance Management, and 4) Rewards and Recognition.

The level 2 maturity level or Process-Defined HRM hurdled by DA Bicol by far indicates that there is a set of defined and documented Standard Operating Procedures established in our agency, though this needs improvement. It is characterized by goal-oriented decision making and there are some automated system but little integration of data.

The challenge now is for the DA-Bicol to sustain the current maturity level or to move up to the 3rd level - the Integrated HRM or even to the 4th level, the strategic HRM. While the next assessment will be after three years the processes, systems and practices towards achieving higher maturity levels should now be in place and be institutionalized. This entails consistency and continuous effort to be aligned with our agency's program's goal and objectives. This also entails sustained, continuous and greater

engagement not just of the resource management officers but also of the officials and the rank and file employees of our agency.

We have overcome our fears and anxieties and learned a lot of lessons from the experience of preparing for the CSC evaluation. We have become closer not only as a workforce but as team aiming for the same goal. It was a challenge as well as an opportunity. We have proven that we are fit and ready to be primed. And we are primed for the next challenge and level of maturity.

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# Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP)

## Newly completed farm-to-market road reduces travel time by 38%

LIBMANAN, CAMARINES SUR –

A year after its completion, the farm-to-market road (FMR) funded by the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) in this municipality now reduces the travel time of residents within the road influence area. This was one of the findings of the Rapid Appraisal of Emerging Benefits (RAEB) conducted by a team from the PRDP National Project Coordination Office (NPCO), Project Support Office (PSO) South Luzon and Regional Project Coordination Office (RPCO) Monitoring and Evaluation Unit on the Rehabilitation of San Isidro to Pag Oring Nuevo FMR on April 22 to 26, 2019.

The RAEB, an evaluation initiative of the Project management, focuses on determining the successes of individual subproject (SP) and their relevance to the Project Development Objectives. In collaboration with PRDP staff from other components and units and their counterparts in the Provincial Project Management and Implementation Unit (PPMIU) of Camarines Sur, the team conducted key informant interview (KII) with the Provincial Local Government Unit, household surveys to farmer-beneficiaries, KIIs and focus group discussion with farmers, barangay officials, traders and Project Affected Persons (PAPs). PRDP staff from CALABARZON and MIMAROPA also assisted in the conduct of the weeklong activity.

According to PSO South Luzon M&E Specialist Arvin San Juan, quick findings of the RAEB show that travel time decreased by 38 percent. This exceeded the SP objective of attaining an average of 23 percent reduction in travel time. Coconut and livestock farmer and barangay councilor Rhoderick Alvaro of Brgy. Pag-Oring Nuevo in Libmanan, Camarines Sur attested that the FMR helped hasten the transportation of agricultural products and made travelling more comfortable for commuters.

“Isa po sa mga pagbabagong idinulot ng proyekto ay napabilis ang transportation. Kumbaga, dati one hour kapag balikan, ngayon po 30 minutes na lang. Hindi na rin gaanong bugbog sa byahe ang katawan ng mga byahero lalung-lalo na nung mga sumasakay sa motor o habal-habal di tulad noong lubak-lubak pa ang kalsada at abala

ang byahe. Ngayon po mas maganda na ang pagbayahe kasi hindi na paalon-alon ang kalsada,” Alvaro said.

However, the RAEB team noted a 32 percent increase in hauling cost and 15 percent decrease in household income from farming. San Juan cited inflation, high fuel cost, increased rate of labor, an ordinance setting load limit on 10-wheeler trucks, and low demand for copra as causal factors. The team also identified some issues and concerns which include existing damages in some portions of the road, frequent road accidents caused by repairs made on the scaled road, and higher hauling and labor cost due to the enforcement of the aforementioned municipal ordinance.



The RAEB results were presented to the PLGU officials and will be submitted to the PRDP management to deliver feedback which may aid decision-making on adjustments and better approaches to make Project efforts and interventions more sustainable. The six-kilometer Rehabilitation of San Isidro to Pag Oring Nuevo FMR was completed on April 30, 2018. The P44.28 million-worth FMR was the first completed PRDP I-BUILD SP in Bicol, projected to benefit 1,514 households and 7,287 individuals. **(Annielyn L. Balez)**

## Letters

July 4, 2019

RODEL P. TORNILLA  
Regional Executive Director  
Department of Agriculture  
Regional Field Office No. 5  
San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur

Dear Dir. Tornilla,

Greetings!

We wish to express our sincerest gratitude and appreciation for the trucking assistance you have extended to our provincial offices in Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur and Sorsogon during the peak of the summer palay harvest season and until its termination on June 30, 2019.

With your six-wheeler, 100 bags capacity trucks, we were able to penetrate narrow barangay roads leading to farm sites where palay harvests were ongoing. We were able to reach remote areas of the region. Newly harvested palay of farmers were picked up by our mobile procurement teams.

We hope for your continuous assistance and support this coming main harvest season as we continue with our aggressive palay procurement activities for buffer stock build up in the Bicol Region.

Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Henry H. Tristeza, ACPE, ASEAN Engr.  
Regional Manager II

# DA Bicol launches Gulayan sa Paaralan 2019 in Sorsogon...

SORSOGON CITY---“Gulay is life” said DA-Bicol OIC-Field Operations Division Chief and Regional High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) Coordinator Dr. Marygrace DP Rodriguez during the launching program of the Gulayan sa Paaralan (GPP) 2019 and Training on Vegetable Production held on June 11, 2019 at the Department of Education (DepEd) Conference Hall here.

The GPP aims to promote vegetable production in public elementary and secondary schools. The GPP was started by the DA and DepEd in 2007 and its implementation was strengthened in 2016.

Sorsogon Agriculture Program Coordinating Officer Florentino Ubalde said that 100 schools were selected based on the nutritional status of the municipality. The participating government schools came from the municipalities of Pilar, Juban, Sorsogon City, Castilla, Bacon, Casiguran, Irosin, Gubat, Magallanes, Prieto Diaz, Bulan and Matnog.

DA National GPP Coordinator Gerard Neri B. Arañas underscored the need to



teach agriculture and farming to the young generation for them to have a different perspective on agriculture as a mixture of science and business.

Rodriguez cited that each school will receive vegetable seeds; seedling trays; a wheelbarrow, a set of garden tools (hoe, shovel, rake, sprinkler); plastic drum to store water since there is El Niño; 50 meters of water hose; and organic fertilizer, totalling P10,000.

After the opening program, Sorsogon HVCDP Coordinator Nestor Nava conducted the Training on Vegetable Production through Urban Gardening. Nava said that the participating teachers in the program will be given a Training of Trainers (TOT) on Vegetable Production in the coming months.

Meanwhile, during the distribution of the farm inputs, Sorsogon 1st District representative Evelina G. Escudero encouraged the teachers to try decorative

vegetable production which is attractive to the youth and to teach them in making their own vegetable seeds by simply drying the seeds and planting them.

Rodriguez announced that DA and DepEd have already prepared guidelines for the Best GPP which will be awarded at the end of the cropping period. Both agencies have separate and different guidelines and prizes.

The DA allocated Php 9.04Million for GPP and targeted 1,000 schools for the whole region. (**Jayson M. Gonzales**)



## ...in Catanduanes

The Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) in the province of Catanduanes was re-launched on May 30, 2019 in time for the Brigada Eskwela at San Isidro Pajo, Virac, Catanduanes. It was attended by 96 public elementary and high schools from 11 municipalities. It was graced by the Department of Education Representative and Gulayan sa Paaralan Focal Person Myrna Carilimdiliman, LGU Virac Representative and HVCDP Coordinator Mario Asuncion, and PLGU Representative and HVCDP Provincial Coordinator Ariel Tabuso.

Dr. Mary Grace DP.

Rodriguez, DA 5 Regional HVCDP Coordinator added that the activity can support the school's feeding activities especially during harvest time of the planted vegetables. It can also be an income generating project of the school with the sales from the produced crops.

The GPP Coordinators were also trained on Vegetable Gardening by Mr. Tabuso. The last part of the activity was the distribution of the Gulayan sa Paaralan package which included vegetable packets and various farm implements.

Dr. Rodriguez said that the participating schools in this

year's GPP were those not included in last year's GPP allocation. The GPP will also be relaunched in the other five provinces of the Bicol Region as part of Nutrition Month celebration.





## ... in Albay

CAMALIG, ALBAY - With the start of classes for the new school year, the Gulayan Sa Paaralan Program (GPP) of the Department of Agriculture and Department of Education was again set into motion. Over the week GPP was re-launched in this province in simple ceremonies at the Albay Farmers Bounty Village in this municipality. It was attended by Governor Al Francis Bichara, over 220 school officials, teachers, officials from the DA, TESDA, and the Provincial Government and members of the local media.

The event was highlighted by the distribution/ turn over of the vegetable seeds, fertilizers and sets of garden tools to the 125 schools represented in the occasion which came from the four schools divisions namely Albay, Legaspi City, Tabaco City and Ligao City. Before the distribution of the inputs and tools, Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez discussed the rationale, objectives and mechanics of the GPP. She



*Albay Governor Al Francis C. Bichara.*

said that it is in support to the feeding activity of the DepEd for malnourished and indigent school children. She added that program will provide income for the school and the children. Likewise, she underscored that this program is one way of developing children's appreciation for farming and recognizing the efforts of the people who produce our food. She enjoined the teachers to help in eradicating the negative



things or expression being alluded to agricultural products like: "Nangamote sa klase or nangalabasa, parang nalantang gulay" when referring to poor performance in school or with physical incapacity.

Governor Bichara in his message announced that with his fresh mandate as the re-elected governor he will give priority on agriculture citing the Albay Farmers Bounty Village

food production is not in step with tourism development. Moreover, he cited the GPP as one way of mitigating hunger especially this time that there is again an upward trend in the inflation rate in our country as a result of the occurrence of El Nino. He announced that as an incentive to the schools, the provincial government will be giving awards to the best implementer of the GPP.

Albay Provincial Agriculturist Cheryl O. Rebeta, acknowledged and commended the collaboration of the DA and the DepEd and other partners who have been helping the province especially the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist in its various programs and projects. **(Emily B. Bordado)**



which he is developing as a one-stop-shop for agriculture and fisheries activities is the best legacy he can leave behind for Albay farmers and fisherfolk. He explained that even if Albay has now a thriving tourism industry this will not be sustained if

## ...in Cam. Sur

A total of 300 schools from Camarines Sur province which were enlisted in this year's Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) of the Department of Agriculture (DA) were awarded vegetable seeds and garden tools worth P10,000 during the re launch of the program at the DA regional office compound here. The teacher representatives who were designated GPP coordinators also underwent training on Vegetable Gardening.

According to Dr. Mary

Grace DP. Rodriguez, the DA and provides the production inputs like seeds, organic fertilizers and garden tools and facilitates the conduct of trainings.

DA RTD for Operations Rodel P. Tornilla thanked the teachers for accepting the task to implement the program. "This is one way of bringing back the interest of our younger generation in agriculture and food production," he underscored. He added that "by engaging the schools and the young in



food production we are making headway towards our goal of achieving food security for our country and people."

For his part, William Villare who represented, Cecille Bernadette P. Rivera the Schools Division Superintendent thanked the DA for partnering with the DepEd to implement this noteworthy undertaking and for providing the needed goods and inputs.

Last year 230 public schools from Camarines Sur were also enlisted and provided

with the production inputs and garden tools under the same program thus, a total of 530 schools in the province have already been recipients of this program.

Also present on said occasion were: Amancio V. Doblón, GPP Focal Person. DepEd, Cam. Sur, Luzena Bermeo, OIC- Provincial Agriculturist, Cam. Sur, Felipe Vargas, Agrarian Reform Officer of DA Cam. Sur who also served as the resource person on vegetable gardening. **(Emily B. Bordado)**





## Poverty level in SAAD ... (from page 1)

poverty reduction,” added Asec. Panes.

Meanwhile, Director Bernadette F. San Juan, SAAD national program director lauded the efforts of the SAAD Regional Project Management Offices in the regions in connection with Philippine Statistics Authority’s report on the dramatic decrease of poverty incidence in the areas where the SAAD was implemented.

Rodel P. Tornilla, DA Bicol OIC Regional Technical Director for Operations and Extension and SAAD focal person of Bicol, cited that per PSA report, the three Bicol provinces under SAAD, namely Sorsogon, Masbate and Catanduanes recorded a noticeable decline in poverty incidence in the first semester of 2018.

Sorsogon’s poverty incidence dropped by 16.8% from 41.3% in 2015 to 24.5% in 2018, while the poverty level of Catanduanes was down by 24% from 43.4% in 2015 to only 19.4% in 2018. The province of Masbate also recorded a 16% decline from 45.4% in 2015 to 29.5% in 2018.

During the assessment, the eight regions that implemented the SAAD program in 2018 were ranked according to financial obligation, disbursement and physical accomplishments. The DA RFO 5 (Bicol Region) ranked third (3rd) in overall



*DA Assistant Secretary for Special Projects  
Lerey A. Panes*

performance and first (1st) in financial obligation. The first placer was Cordillera Administrative Region and second place was Region 8.

Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez, SAAD Action Officer and OIC Chief of Field Operations Division received the certificate of award.

The national assessment which was hosted by the SAAD RPMO of DA RFO 5 was attended by Regional Technical Directors Andrew Rodolfo T. Oraís of Region 8, Ferdinand Gamorot of Region 9, Carlota S. Madriaga of Region 10, Marila L. Corpuz of Region 11, Zaldy M. Boloron of Region 12, Alberto D. Ocampo Jr. of Region 13; Chiefs of Field Operations Division; SAAD focal persons and staff from the



*DA 5 OIC RTD Rodel P. Tornilla*

*SAAD implementors of DA RFO 5 received a certificate of award as 3rd place in overall performance and 1st place in financial obligation among all regions nationwide. Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez, SAAD Action Officer and OIC Chief of Field Operations Division received the certificate of award from SAAD national program Director Bernadette San Juan.*

National Program Management Office, Regional and Provincial Program Management Office. (Lovella P. Guarín)



## DA Bicol hurdles ... (from page 1)

human resource (HR) namely: 1) Recruitment, Selection and Placement; 2) Learning and Development; 3) Performance Management and 4) Rewards and Recognition.

During the exit conference, Director Flores announced that the DA RFO 5 obtained 100% rating in all of the four HR systems and competencies.

Level II accredited agencies satisfactorily implementing CSC human resource management systems shall be granted authority to take final action on appointments. (L Guarín)



*DA 5 OIC RTD Rodel P. Tornilla expresses gratitude to the CSC Prime HRM assessors (seated) while RED Elena B. delos Santos looks on.*



## Marcelino receives awards from PCAARRD and Phil. Army

More feathers have been added to the cap of Luz R. Marcelino, chief of the Research Division of the Department of Agriculture Bicol after recently being conferred new recognition and awards. The first was for placing third in the Best Research and Development (R&D) Paper Awards under the Development Category Award given by the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD). Her winning paper was entitled "Enhancing Mungbean Production in Bicol Region" which she co-authored with Henrilyn R. Yamson, Danilo Bordon, Nellie Passion and Dr. Edgar R. Madrid. The awarding ceremonies was held on June 19, 2019

at the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City Metro Manila. She received a trophy and a cash prize of P100,000. DA Bicol Regional Executive Director, Dr. Elena B. de los Santos joined Marcelino in receiving the award.

The second award she received on June 16, 2019 was a Plaque of Recognition from the 83rd Infantry (Matikas) Battalion of the 9th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army based at barangay Malodbalod, Tigaon, Camarines Sur for her untiring support to the battalion which immensely contributed to the accomplishment of its mission.

On March 22 this year she



Luz R. Marcelino (3rd from left) and Henrilyn R. Yamson (4th from right), received the 3rd place Best Paper award from PCAARRD for their study "Enhancing Mungbean Production in Bicol Region." DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Elena B. delos Santos (4th from left) joined Marcelino and Yamson on stage.

was also bestowed a Command Plaque of Recognition (Stakeholders' Award) by the Philippine Army during the 122nd PA celebration held at Fort Bonifacio, Metro Manila. Last year Marcelino has been conferred by the PA the honorary title as Major (

Reserve) for her all-out support to the many projects and activities of the said military institution and currently sits as one of the members of the Multi Sectoral Advisory Board of the 51st Engineers' Brigade based at Camp Atienza, Libis Quezon City. (**Emily B. Bordado**)



### San Jose ... (from page 1)

The Kuta Pawa Small Water Irrigation System (SWISA) Association Inc of Sorsogon was recognized as Outstanding SWISA and received P500,000.

the conferment of awards.

The winners from Bicol were accompanied on stage by DA 5 OIC Regional Technical Director for Operations Rodel P. Tornilla and ATI Bicol Director Elsa Parot.

Special recognitions were awarded to the (Clockwise) Provinces of Sorsogon and Camarines Norte for Provincial Category and Maulawin SWISA, Inc. of Camarines Norte for SWISA category.





## DA 5 shows gratitude to farmers thru festival

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR---Over 72 exhibitors participated in this year's Farmers' Festival and Tienda 2019 with the theme "Magsasaka't Mangingisdang Pilipino, saludo ang buong bansa sa sipag, tibay at lakas ninyo" on May 20, 2019 at the DA Bicol grounds.

According to Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division Chief Adelina A. Losa, the exhibitors included Rural Improvement Clubs (RICs), Barangay Food Terminal (BFT), and private agricultural companies which showcased products and services including

Santos said that this annual farmers' festival will not only show the agricultural products of the farmers but will open doors for new farming technologies and ideas to farmers and would-be agripreneurs. It will also link farmers and fisherfolks to a broader market.

Farmer-Regional Director Alfredo R. Rillo reminded the farmers that opportunities like this festival are blessings from God.

"Tayong mga magsasaka ay dapat pagyamanin, tangkilikin, alagaan ang mga binibigay na asistensya ng gobyerno upang



fresh fruits and vegetables, root crops, ornamental plants, herbs and spices, planting materials, processed food, plant-based cosmetics, dried fish, dairy products, and inorganic farm inputs.

"Naipakita namin ang produkto namin sa San Pascual at nakatulong pa kami sa mga magsasaka at mangingisda dahil naibenta namin ang produkto dito sa Camarines Sur," said BFT in-charge Alieda A. Lorenzo of San Pascual, Masbate.

Aside from exhibitors, the event was attended by representatives of government agencies, and provincial and municipal agriculture offices.

Regional Executive Director Dr. Elena B. De Los

mapakinabangan natin," he added.

Keynote speaker Undersecretary of the Office of the Presidential Adviser for Bicol Affairs Judge Marvel C. Clavecilla underscored the need for government assistance to the farmers and fisherfolks due to El Niño. He added that he is requesting 50 fishing boats to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) for the fisherfolks of Calabanga since the said municipality is known for its dried fish products like "Biti", a by-product of the popular "abo".

He assured the farmers and fisherfolks that interventions will always be given to them since this is one of the  
(Please turn to page 10)







Sarah Apuli of AMAD is being crowned as 2019 Reyna Elena by former Reyna Elena Arlene Inocencio of Research Division.



## Santacruznan 2019

Thirteen DA women employees elegantly dressed as Sagala participated in this year's Santacruznan sa DA as a culmination of the month-long celebration of Flores De Mayo and St. Isidore's feast in the month of May.

The festive Santacruznan which was initiated by the Department of Agriculture Lady Employees Association (DALEA) was held on May 29. Sarah Apuli of the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division was hailed as Reyna Elena garnering a total of 94,959 points during the first and last canvassing on May 24, 2019. Thirteen women employees representing their respective divisions vied for the Reyna Elena crown.

According to Imelda Acompañado, DALEA President, a total of P538,000 was raised during the fund raising and half of the amount will be donated for the improvement of the DA chapel and purchase of equipment.

The Flores De Mayo started with a holy Mass in the afternoon followed by a procession along the DA compound and Pili town proper. The highlight of the event was the coronation night. The arch of Reyna Del Santisimo Rosario (Arlene San Buenaventura) was adjudged as best arch for its unique design and was awarded

a cash price of P6,000. During the program, 2017 Reyna Elena Arlene De Asis of the Research Division turned over her crown to the 2019 Reyna Elena.

Farmer Director Alfredo Rillo lauded the DA Ladies Association for the worthwhile activity.

Aside from the Reyna Elena, other sagala include: Reyna de las Flores - Janet Solano of the Engineering Division; Reyna de los Angeles - April Joy Palmiano, Operations Division; Reyna del Santisimo Rosario - Arlene San Buenaventura, Research Division; Reyna Candelaria - Dominica Camposan, Central Bicol Experiment Station; Reyna de la Paz - Danica Mae Abad, Administrative Division; Rosa Mystica - Heizel De Dios, Planning & Monitoring Division; Reyna de las Estrellas - Lourili Castro, Regulatory Division; Reyna Esther - Jyne Evangelista, Cam Norte Lowland Research Station; Reyna Sheba - Jennylen Rebutiaco, Albay Research Development Center; Reyna Caridad - Sunshine Mae Repuesto, Office of the Regional Executive Director; Reyna Esperanza - Arles Boaloy, Integrated Laboratories Division; Reyna Fe - Merabel Dalinog, Masbate Lowland Development Center. **(Blesilda A. Nunez)**

### Procession St. Isidore's feast day on May 15



### Holy Mass



Parlor Games



# Phils. warned against destructive Fall Army Worm in crops

SAN AGUSTIN, Pili, Camarines Sur---In view of the continuous and rapid spread of Fall Armyworm (FAW) (Spodoptera frugiperda) in neighboring countries and Philippines' climatic condition conducive to the growth of the pest, Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) OIC-Director George Y. Culaste issued a memorandum to advise all agricultural offices to engage in pest surveillance and monitoring through detection survey.

FAW is a native to the Americas and studies showed that it is a major pest to cereals and forage grasses. It eats 186 plant species from 42 families like maize, rice, sugarcane, sorghum, beet, tomato, potato, cotton, millet and pasture grasses.

Thus, it poses a risk to subsistence and cash crops in large parts of the world.

In 2016, FAW is reported to be in Africa, India and several Asia Pacific countries, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Thailand and China. It poses a threat outside its range particularly in temperate regions because it can travel several hundred kilometers in a single flight by flying to and maintaining an elevation of several hundred meters which transports them in a directional manner.

In Thailand alone, it was recorded that FAW spread-out in just four months.

Studies also showed that it is difficult to control because it has natural levels of tolerance to some insecticidal proteins and demonstrated ability to develop resistance to insecticides and traits.

Two strains are morphologically similar but with different host ranges, mating behavior and pheromone composition. It is capable of cross-hybridization.

Both strains occur in Africa on maize. The Maize strain prefers maize, cotton, sorghum, and other similar crops. The Rice strain prefers rice and pasture grasses such as Bermuda grass and Johnson grass.

Other important crops that can be affected by FAW include cotton, soybean, wheat, barley, alfalfa, peanut, oat, clover, tobacco, tomato, potato, cabbage, lettuce, beet, onion, apple, grape, peach, papaya, orange and ornamental crops.

According to the BPI for an effective FAW management, farmers should have multiple approaches like preventative and avoidance approach; monitoring and detection of an infestation for prompt action using threshold levels; and actions to suppress and control the pest once it is detected in a field.

Regulatory control should be conducted through inspection, quarantine, and destruction of infested material.

Cultural methods include early planting to avoid heavier pest densities in late season; eliminate weed hosts that sustain larval populations before their migration to a new maize crop; avoid adjacent sequential planting to prevent migrations of larvae from a maturing crop to new fields; proper fertilization, irrigation, and cultivation.

In monitoring adult populations, farmers should track the flight migration of adult FAW to prepare ahead of a potential infestation. To trap adult FAW, farmers can use synthetic pheromones (natural molecules produced by insects). They can use a green lid/yellow funnel/white bucket unitrap to trap the adult FAW. **(Jayson M. Gonzales)**

## FALL ARMYWORM



## DA 5 shows gratitude ... (from page 8)

mandates of President Rodrigo R. Duterte to have food always available and affordable to sustain the nutritional needs of the Filipinos.

"Araw-araw kailangan natin kumain kaya, araw-araw natin kailangan ang mga farmers" said Regional Technical Director for Research and Regulations Dr. Edgar R. Madrid during the opening program.

The Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) awarded a plaque Gawad Lingap Awards to outstanding Production Loan Easy Access (PLEA) partner lending conduits like the Banco Santiago De Libon represented by Cristina Salvamente.

Since its launch in

2018, the PLEA has already disbursed about P1.7 billion to 168 lending conduits all over the country benefiting 38,000 small farmers and fisherfolk in 291 municipalities in 16 regions nationwide.

ACPC also awarded a check worth a million pesos as trading capital of Rice Processing Center-Polangui represented by Pablo Santor, President of Palayamanan Farmer Field School.

An Orientation on the Incentive Scheme for NFA Palay Procurement and Credit Programs was conducted by the DA-Rice Program, ACPC, NFA and Land Bank of the Philippines in the afternoon to more than 150 rice farmers. **(Jayson M. Gonzales)**



# Hybrid rice's performance amazes farmers in rice techno forum

SAN RAMON, BULA, CAMARINES SUR – The DA RFO 5 Rice Program together with San Agustin – San Ramon Farmers Coop (SARFC) in this municipality staged the first ever Regional Rice Technology Forum – a rice derby participated in by five seed companies to showcase the higher yield and impressive traits of the hybrid rice such as more resilience to adverse ecological conditions, superior flavor and improved shelf life.

Three farmer cooperators experimented on five hybrid rice varieties, namely: PH 77 from Pioneer Hybrid Intl., Inc.; SL 18 from SL Agritech Corp.; Bigante Plus from Bayer; US 88 from Seedworks Phils, Inc.; and 6003 from Syngenta on April 22, 2019 in this municipality.

Arthur S. Rabeje, Manager of the SARFC said that the idea of holding a rice techno forum dawned on him when he was sent by the DA Bicol Rice Program to the National Rice Technology Forum in Bohol last year. The SARFC has over 500 active members and they cover 436 hectares rice areas in the municipality of Bula. The coop received a Rice Processing Center (RPC) 1 with milling facilities and bodega, along with 2 units flatbed dryers from DA Bicol Rice Program. The RPC was established in 2014

*Hybrid rice showcase in Bula, Cam. Sur*



and has since then helped the rice farmers in the community in drying and milling their palay.

farm management. While the inbred rice varieties can only produce a maximum yield of 100 cavans per hectare with the

hybrid against inbred rice varieties. “Magayunun talaga ang ani sa hybrid. Su una di talaga arog kayan an tubo kan paroy.” (Hybrid rice is really very amazing. The varieties that I used in the past are not as good). She thanked the DA Bicol for the free fertilizers. The seed companies provided the hybrid seeds and technical assistance, and the LGU technicians also assisted the farmers during the trial. Other cooperators, namely: Gerardo Del Juana, and Jesus Olayres also shared their experiences in planting hybrid rice.

Representatives of each seed companies presented their new products and raffled off freebies for the farmer participants.

Also present during the rice techno forum were Atty. Ma. Lourdes Pacao, regional director of Cooperative Development Authority; Municipal Agriculturist Mency Madrid of Bula, RAFC Chair Alfredo R. Rillo, Marcial Bustarga of the DA 5 Rice Program, Provincial Agriculturists, Provincial Agricultural and Fishery Council Leaders, LGU representatives, leaders of various cooperatives, irrigators associations and farmers associations, members of the SARFC and farmers of Bula. (Lovella P. Guarin)



DA Bicol OIC RTD Rodel P. Tornilla said that based on studies, improved rice production is possible with proper irrigation, sunlight, use of good seeds, application of required fertilizer and good

*DA-5 OIC RTD for Operations Rodel P. Tornilla.*

presence of above mentioned conditions, the hybrid rice varieties can give up to 200 cavans per hectare especially during dry season.

Hybrid rice can also perform well during wet season, OIC RTD Tornilla added, as evidenced by the National Rice Technology Forum conducted at Balanguibang, Polangui, Albay which showcased wet season hybridization.

Teresita Llagas, 61 year old widow, was one of the cooperators who testified on the great difference of using





## A small women's group was enabled and now expands their opportunities

By Emily B. Bordado

The town of Tiwi is known for its hot springs and one of the country's biggest Geothermal Power plants. Because of its clayey type of soil some of the local residents are also engaged in ceramic making. But this town also lies along the Lagonoy Gulf which is a rich fishing ground and an ideal location for seaweeds production. Thus, most of the residents along the coast are engaged in fishing and seaweeds production as a source of their livelihood. But most of the time there is an oversupply of seaweeds which leads to a dip in the price of these commodity and subsequently a decrease in the income of the seaweed gatherers. Moreover, the local folks did not know what to do with the excess supply of the seaweeds so often they are just left to rot.

A group of women, mostly wives of the fishermen gathered together and discussed how they could earn additional income for their families using the available resource in their locality – in particular the seaweeds. They started out as an all-women organization with only 35 members called the Rural Improvement Club (RIC) which was being assisted then by the Office of the Municipal Agriculturist and the Department of Agriculture. As the association president was also a member of the Municipal Agriculture and Fisheries Council, the private sector-led policy making body affiliated with the Department of Agriculture the club raised their need

for training and equipment as they are making the seaweed noodles manually. The matter was brought to the attention of the Municipal Agriculturist and subsequently to the local chief executive which paved the way for the necessary training on food handling.

In 2008 they had their first training on seaweeds conducted by the Office Municipal Agriculturist in partnership with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR). About 50 women attended said training on seaweeds processing. This was followed by a second training the following year but only 35 attended. After the second training the 35 women decided to venture into processing of seaweeds as a part-time business undertaking. Fidela Zeth Conde was elected president and her house served as the working area. They started with a very small capitalization pooled from the contribution of members. As they have no machines they have to do things manually. During harvest season which is every 45 days they can buy 50 to 100 kilograms of fresh seaweeds which they dry using a dehydrator. For every kilo of seaweeds puree they mix with 1 sack of flour.

Initially their products were sold within the locality but soon it became known in the entire town and neighboring municipalities as they began participating in local trade fairs and events. Soon, other national government agencies aside DA like, DTI and DOLE and the Tiwi Geothermal Power Corporation (TGPC) took notice and offered their

(Next page pls.)







assistance to the group. The LGU of Tiwi offered a lot, a government property at the Nag Park in Barangay Naga and the TGPC assumed the cost for the construction of a building. The association's contribution was the labor with the husband and other family members of the women doing it for free. The TGPC also provided the group with a dehydrator for the drying of the seaweeds. Their association is now registered with the DOLE and has been granted Sanitary permit by the Local Government Unit of Tiwi.

They have developed three variants of seaweeds noodles the plain, with malunggay and with squash. Their noodle products have already been approved by the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD). Likewise, they have submitted

samples of their products to the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) for nutritional analysis which will be included in their product packaging with a net weight of 500 grams. Asked why their packaging of their noodles is only 500 grams, Mrs. Conde explained: "Kasi yung ganyan packaging kasya na sa isang pamilya. Di kasi gaya ng ordinary noodles young seaweed noodles ma alsa at madaling nakabusog. At saka magaan pa sa bulsa kasi P50 ang presyo ng 500 grams."

Aside from noodles they also have seaweed chips and atsara or pickles. Their products are being marketed to various government offices and school on a consignment basis. They also participate in trade fairs during fiestas and other special events in neighboring

towns and provinces.

The group is promoting and advocating consumption of seaweeds especially among children because this commodity is a rich source of essential minerals such as magnesium, calcium, copper, potassium, zinc, selenium iodine and iron. It is also very low in fats but rich in fiber content, antioxidants, phytonutrients required by the body. The vitamins present in seaweed are vitamin A, B, C, E and K. It is also said to contain omega 3-fatty acids and amino acids necessary for the body.

Because seaweeds are harvested every 45 days, according to Mrs. Conde the group decided to venture into processing of other crops like arrowroot which are made into flour and processed into pastries and cookies. With the expansion of their enterprise into other crops, the officers have also decided to rename their club as Tiwi Food Processors Association. About 15 of their members are engaged in baking cookies and pastries from arrowroot. Fifteen of their members are also engaged in sardine making of bangus and tuna which are packed in bottles. Meanwhile, they have nine male members and one female who are engaged in honey bee production who also bring their products to their office.

"Nagsimula kami sa maliit na grupo. Ngayon kami nag evolve into a community enterprise. Kahit mas marami pa rin ang mga kababaihan may mga miyembro na ring lalaki. At hindi lang seaweeds ang commodity na pinaprocess naming", related Mrs. Conde.

Where before their work and service for their association were for free, today the manager and other staff of the association are now being paid for by the association.

From a meager capitalization pooled from the original members of the association, it has now an

asset of about P1million. Its membership has grown to 100 and still counting

The association is also currently enrolled with the Great Women Project which is funded by the Canadian government and implemented by the DA and the Philippine Commission for Women.

They are being assisted in improving or enhancing their product in terms of content, packaging and presentation and even in marketing.

The association regularly supplies the Albay Bounty Village and other market outlets in Albay and even the neighboring provinces. They are also invited to sell and showcase their products in local fiestas and events. Their products had also caught the attention of some foreigners who had made known their interest about them.

Big things start from small things. The Tiwi Food Processors Association, Inc. started from a small group with a very meager capitalization but it has evolved into a community enterprise and is no longer just concern with profit and providing income for its members. It is now committed to produce safe, affordable and nutritious food for the consumers.

**S**eaweed has many health benefits. It contains fucoxanthin compound which helps in reducing the accumulation of fats and aids in weight loss. Due to its ability to promote oxidation of fats, it is used in making prescription diet pills. Seaweeds also helps combat influenza and radiation poisoning. It helps improve digestive, dental and cardiovascular health. It is also maintains healthy skin and hair.



## Beneficiary of DA's 50-50 scheme now reaping the fruits of his labor

by Lovella P. Guarin

LIGAO CITY – If you drive along the Sabloyon road at the foot of Mt. Mayon going to Tabaco City or Sorsogon, you will be amazed at the numerous fruits and vegetable stands lined up along both sides of the road. Motorists are tempted to stop by the stalls to buy freshly picked fruits and vegetables. In this upland area, the summer heat is not so scorching unlike in other parts of Bicol.

One of the stall owners is Danilo B. Palma, 43 years old farmer who is now reaping the fruits of his labor – literally and figuratively speaking. At the back of his fruit stand is his 0.75 hectare orchard which is the source of some of his agricultural products.

“Galing pa sa DA ang mga tanim ko. Mga 5-6 na taon na ang nakaraan, may 50-50 program ang DA. Kapag bumili ka ng pomelo, kalamansi o pili, may 50% discount. Bumili ako noon ng 200 na puno ng grafted pili seedlings sa halagang P5,500.00. Ang laki ng tuwa ko noon dahil may librang 100 na pomelo at 100 na kalamansi,” Danilo recalled.

Now, his orchard is full of fruit trees which are heavily laden with fruits even at their

young age. He now gets a decent income from selling fruits. A small sized pomelo is sold at P15/kilo, while medium sized is sold at P25/kilo and large size command higher price at P35/kilo. From pomelo alone, Danilo obtained over P10,000 net income in 2018.

He also planted watermelon, cacao and calamansi in between the fruit trees, which also gave him added income. In 2016, he was able to lease a 1.5-hectare coconut plantation adjacent to his farm for a 3-year contract. He cultivated the area under coconut using the 4 wheel drive tractor of the LGU Ligao and planted it with squash and cucumber. He was so elated when he harvested 15,000 kilos of squash which were delivered to a wholesaler in Manila.

From the over 200 coconut trees, he also earn by selling them as fresh buko as the current selling price of copra is very low.

He also derived substantial income from selling potted planting materials like potted siling labuyo (chili pepper), from which he gained over P15,000 sales and P5,000 from papaya seedlings. He also

sells grafted cacao and pili scion. He learned the grafting technology when he attended a training sponsored by the City Agriculture Office and the DA 5.

He was also one of the 500 farmers who attended the training on Protective Culture for Vegetable Production for the farmers who were affected by Mayon eruption in February 2018 conducted by the DA 5 HVCDP. The training was DA's quick response during the eruption. After the training, Danilo received vegetable seeds, organic fertilizer, garden tools, UV plastic, plastic mulch, and bamboo sticks.

With the close monitoring of multi-awarded City Agriculturist of Ligao Engr. Dexter Mendoza, Danilo is strictly practicing organic agriculture and is just awaiting the result of his application for third party organic agriculture certification. The city of Ligao is a strong contender in this year's National Organic Agriculture Achievers (NOAA) search for outstanding city LGU, while Engr Mendoza is the 2018 NOAA outstanding city OA focal person. To

support his organic farming, he was provided by the DA Organic Agriculture program with a vermi composting facility.

His income from farming alone finances their daily household needs as well as the education of their 4 children. His wife is a full time housewife and helps him in manning their fruit stall.

Despite his tight daily schedule at his orchard, coconut plantation and vegetable areas, Danilo still finds time to help his fellow farmers as he is the President of the Kawakawa Organic Planters and Processors Association. He is also the Vice President of the Masaraga Organic Farmers Association.

### Free Planting Materials

Five years ago, the planting materials from DA can be availed at a low cost. Nowadays, they are given free. Planting materials of fruit trees such as pili, pomelo, rambutan and calamansi can be availed by farmers for free if there are available stocks at the DA nursery.

(Turn to page 19)



*Danilo B. Palma, vegetable farmer of Ligao City*





# HVC farmer go big time after Mayon eruption

by Lovella P. Guarin

**LIGAO CITY, ALBAY** – Over a year after the Mayon eruption spewed widespread ashes over all kinds of vegetation in this city, particularly in barangay Amtic, the farmers are now fully recovered and are going big time. The temperate climate favoring planting of fruits and vegetables helped the farmers here.

Noel Buenavente, 38 years old of Barangay Amtic is one of the many farmers being supported by the City Local Government Unit of Ligao, particularly the City Agriculture Office headed by City Agriculturist Dexter Mendoza with the strong support of the Department of Agriculture RFO 5 High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP).

He was also one of the 500 farmers who attended the training on Protective Culture for Vegetable Production for the farmers who have been affected by Mayon eruption in February 2018 conducted by the DA 5 HVCDP. The training was DA's quick response during the eruption. After the training, Noel received vegetable seeds, organic fertilizer, garden tools, UV plastic, plastic mulch, and bamboo sticks. These inputs helped him rebuild his 1.2 hectare farm.

Noel was also one of the top graduates of the 3-month



*Noel Buenavente, vegetable farmer of Amtic, Ligao City*

long Farmers Field School (FFS) on Vegetable Production. He employed his knowledge and skills in developing his farm which is the bread and butter for his family.

He maximized the use of the land through relay cropping where a new crop is planted under a standing crop so that when the first crop has been harvested, the intercrop will take its turn to be productive. He also practices mulching, a technology he learned from the protective culture training, that's why his crops were not affected by the recent El Niño.

As an innovation in his farm, he devised a rain collector attached to the rain shelter which was also provided by the HVCDP. He left a one foot

portion hanging along both sides of the plastic roof of the rainshelter and folded them upwards forming a downspout that serves as water collection channel directing the rain water towards a hole in the ground which was covered with laminated sack.

In 2018, he harvested approximately 5,000 kilos of squash which were delivered to wholesalers in Manila at P25.00/kilo. He also harvested 1,000 kilos of snap beans which he sold at P50.00/kilo; 5,000 kilos tomatoes were sold at P20.00/kilo; and 90 kilos sili haba sold at P30.00/kilo. Harvesting for other crops like tomato was done everyday and lasted up to 10-15 harvests. For ampalaya, he harvested 15

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**In 2018, Noel Buenavente harvested approximately 5,000 kilos of squash which were delivered to wholesalers in Manila at P25.00/kilo. He also harvested 1,000 kilos of snap beans which he sold at P50.00/kilo; 5,000 kilos tomatoes were sold at P20.00/kilo; and 90 kilos sili haba sold at P30.00/kilo.**

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times at 300 kilos per harvest which were sold at P30.00/kilo. The 100 kilos papaya were sold at P15.00/kilo. He also maintains 800 cacao trees and 50 pili trees which he obtained from the LGU of Ligao City.

While 86% of the Filipinos households do not have a bank account because they do not have enough cash to spare for keeping (according to Central Bank), Noel has kept a decent savings at a bank in Ligao City. He was also able to send his children to school and improve their abode.

Indeed, Noel is one proof of the Bicolano's resiliency and courage to rise above the challenges in life.





# Trainings

## DA Bicol trains staff to make climate, weather advisories

SAN AGUSTIN, Pili, Camarines Sur---The Department of Agriculture-Bicol through the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) conducted the Training on Development of Climate and Weather Outlook and Advisory for DA staff and DA-Funded Disaster Risk Reduction-Climate Change Adaptation (DRR-CCA) Projects on June 13-14, 2019 to present a Climate Outlook for June-November 2019 and train its staff on the crafting of climate advisory.

DA-Bicol DRR-CCA

Regional Focal Person Lorenzo L. Alvina said that the output of this training will intensify the climate information as an accessible early warning system for the farmers and fisherfolks in the specific area.

The precise and proper use of weather and climate information can help make effective and efficient policies and decisions that will greatly affect the farmers and fisherfolks. It will also reduce related risks, production losses and dangers, and improve the

use of resources.

According to DA-Bicol OIC-Chief of the Field Operations Division Dr. Marygrace DP Rodriguez, this special training will equip the staff with skills to craft weather and climate advisories to provide location and crop specific action and weather and climate services.

Alvina urged the

participants to learn new tools and develop strategies which will benefit the end-users.

More than 50 participants from DA-Bicol, provincial agriculture offices of Camarines Norte and Camarines Sur, and representatives from CBSUA, Bicol University and Partido State University attended the two-day training. (**Jayson M. Gonzales**)



## DA employees learn drone technology

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR— The Department of Agriculture in Bicol (DA-Bicol) through the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Unit under the Field Operation Division Conducted the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Practical Operations and Image Processing Training on May 21-23, 2019 here.

The three-day training was geared towards skills development on the operation and maintenance of drones needed in running, surveying and processing maps; and identifying doable and possible stratifies in addressing issues and concerns on operations during extreme events.

According to DA-Bicol

Disaster Risk Reduction-Climate Change Adaptation (DRR-CCA) Focal Person Lorenzo L. Alvina, using UAV or Drone Technology can capture highly accurate images needed in the collection of

data in agricultural areas. A single flight can capture highly accurate images needed in the collection of data in agricultural areas. A single flight can cover up to hundreds of hectares to assess crop damages, aerial monitoring, field validation of site and intervention.

presented the Flight Planning-Ground Station Pro, Mission Planner and Drone Deploy, Creating Flight Plan, Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) Rules and Regulations, and Flight Procedures Patterns and Technique.

Drone-enable aerial mapping system is the ideal solution to generate high-resolution, highly-efficient aerial data, including crop scouting, topographic mapping, contouring, vector mapping and textured 3-d modelling.

Moreover, with agricultural drone technology, farmers will be able to analyze their crops and make educated decisions

given the accurate information. This gives the farmer the time to focus on the big picture of production instead of spending time surveying their farms manually. Thus, the government agencies and agricultural academe can directly decide on what intervention will be given to the farmers.

The training was attended by more than 35 employees and staff from the different banner programs, special projects, research centers and divisions of DA-Bicol, and representatives from the Central Bicol State University of Agriculture, Partido State University, and Bicol University. (**Jayson M. Gonzales**)



DA-Bicol DRRMU-GIS Specialist Borris D. De Los Sanatos discussed the Fixed Wing and Multi-Rotor RC Aircraft, UAV Operations and Key Terms and Image Processing.

DA-Bicol DRRMU-IT Staff Alton Bascuña



# AEWs learn new app on pest management

NABUA, CAMARINES SUR--The Regulatory Division of the Department of Agriculture-Bicol conducted the Pest Risk Identification and Management (PRIME) Project Crop Health Assessment Retooling Training on June 13-15 to introduce a new app for data gathering and report submission.

Close to 30 agriculturist and extension workers from Bula, Libmanan and Minalabac; staff of PhilRice, IRRI and DA-Bicol attended the three-day training.

PRIME is a four-year (2017-2021) project funded by DA-Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) in collaboration with DA, PhilRice, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) to improve rice productivity, welfare, and

competitiveness of Filipino farmers by mitigating risks of major pest outbreaks.

PRIME is focused on 5 rice pests/diseases---rodents, bacterial blight, blast, tungro/ green leafhopper; brown planthopper.

According to RTD for Research and Regulations Dr. Edgar R. Madrid, this training will enhance the field workers' skills in data collection. While the farmers will benefit from the output of the field workers because they will come up with information essential in planning, decision making and scheduling for proper pest management.

The pilot areas include 31 sampling sites of 45 farmers in Minalabac; 29 sites of 34 farmers in Libmanan, and 25 sites of 30 farmers in Bula.

He added that advance



and regular monitoring and surveillance of rice field can prevent pest outbreak.

Resource speakers were IRRI Information System Specialist and app developer Abel Callejo and PhilRice Sr. Science Research Specialist Leonardo Marquez cited that one of the challenges.

Topics include identification of major pests, weeds, rats,

viral diseases, bacterial and fungal diseases, site selection, insect pest and damage, application of geo-tagging, assessing and updates on Prime Collect Application and data validation.

The other speakers include Jay Ar Baldoza, Emma Caning, Marquez, Hansel Arcilla, and Borris De Los Santos. (**Jayson M. Gonzales**)



## Corn production to be intensified and expanded in Siruma town

SIRUMA, CAMARINES SUR - With the bright prospect of the corn industry in the region the Department of Agriculture intensifies its efforts to expand the corn areas in the region by opening new areas and developing new corn cluster. The municipality of Siruma which has a vast expanse of hilly and sloping areas suitable for corn production and which is now very accessible because of the newly constructed road network is being eyed by the DA to be developed into a corn cluster.

Local farmers who were already engaged in corn production and prospective corn farmers, and stakeholders were invited to participate in the drafting of their municipal medium term (2019-2023) corn cluster development plan. The members of the technical team from the DA regional office headed by Dean L. Medrano, Asst. Reg'l. Corn Program coordinator briefed the participants about the government interventions and assistance and prospects of the industry and production,



harvesting and post-harvest management and practices. Lolit Pama of the Regional Crops Protection Center discussed the Integrated Pest Management while Alden Jesus Ragay of the Agribusiness Division discussed Marketing and Investment Opportunities for Corn and Cassava.

Medrano said that 46 corn clusters are now organized and operational in Bicol most of which are in Camarines Sur and are engaged in yellow corn production. The corn cluster to be developed in Siruma will be the 47th.

According to Mun. Agriculturist Lorna V. Avellana they are targeting 500 hectares for their corn cluster from 22 barangays.

Meanwhile mayor Sandy SP. Ondes expressed his support to the program and acknowledged that their municipality has great potential for corn production. Also present during said activity were: Councilor Roselo Abad, chair of Agriculture committee, Provincial Corn Coordinator, Ruel M. de Jesus and Emily B. Bordado, DA chief Info. Officer.





# Seed growers briefed on Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund

DARAGA, ALBAY--More than 60 members of the National Rice Seed Growers Federation of the Philippines, Inc. (PHIL Palay) and representatives from DA, PhilRice, and the Bureau of Plant Industry-National Seed Quality Control Services (NSQCS) convened June 19, 2019 in one of the hotels here.

The aim is to discuss the approved Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF)-Seed Component and the Revised Guidelines for the Accreditation of Inbred Rice Seed Growers/Producers.

seed.

Seed grower associations/cooperatives should be accredited by BPI-NSQCS and registered with either the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) or the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The association/cooperative should be owned, managed, and operated by Filipino citizens with active members accredited by NSQCS and engaged in seed production in the last three years. It should have a BIR tax clearance/tax exemption and official receipts;

area capacity, variety, location, and planting schedule. Certified inbred seeds will be sourced from the nearest seed grower association/cooperative to enhance timely distribution.

The contracted seed grower associations/cooperatives will follow the PhilRice and NSQCS recommended inbred seed production protocol and prescribed certification process; and should use the prescribed packaging (20 kg & print design). Included in the packaging is a printed direction/instruction for use as recommended by PhilRice. All certified seeds to be acquired must pass the NSQCS certification.

The contracted seed grower associations/cooperatives will deliver the seeds to designated

and may deputize permanent staff from C/MLGUs and/or DA-RFOs for the purpose.

Borday assured the attendees that PhilRice will continue to engage in dialogues with all accredited seed grower associations/cooperatives; guide them in their seed production and synchronize the seed requirement of the program to the availability of seed supply.

BPI-NSQCS Center Chief Ruel C. Gesmundo presented the Department Circular No. 09 series of 2018 or the Revised Guidelines for the Accreditation of Inbred Rice Seed Growers/Producers which will ensure and provide a sustainable and adequate supply of quality seeds. **(Jayson M. Gonzales)**



According to PhilRice Deputy Executive Director for Research Dr. Flordeliza H. Borday, the RCEF will strengthen farmer organizations engaged in seed production and trade, and will support the government's program on promoting agriculture enterprise development. Her agency will tap local seed grower associations/cooperatives in propagating certified seeds.

PhilRice shall be the exclusive source of Rice Seeds (RS) of recommended varieties to ensure quality of certified seeds for propagation. PhilRice shall enter into direct contracting agreement with all eligible seed grower associations/cooperatives using the government authorized buying price of certified inbred

and PhilGEPS registration. It should have a physical area within the Philippines for seed production, with working seed postharvest facilities (e.g., dryer, thresher, seed cleaner-blower, and storage); and has good performance in seed-related transactions with DA-RFOs in the last two years.

Only in case of shortfall in PhilRice Rice Seed (RS) production that the eligible seed grower associations/cooperatives participating in the program will be allowed to source from DA-accredited RS producers who obtained foundation seeds from PhilRice.

PhilRice will allocate the seed production volume requirement to all contracted seed grower associations/cooperatives proportional to

drop-off points within the region in consultation with DA-RFOs, local government units and field offices within the set schedule. PhilRice will designate delivery inspectors

*Ariel B. Dorlores,  
Secretary, National  
Federations of Seed  
Growers*



*Consultant Valentino Perdido awarded a P50,000 cheque to Gil Del Barrio, a seed grower from Camarines Norte who was awarded last March 28 by the National Seed Industry Council as Outstanding Seed Grower Innovator for Seed Grower Category for Luzon.*



## DA Bicol turns over P3M building to pili producers coop

TABACO CITY - The Department of Agriculture Regional Office V (Bicol) recently turned over a newly constructed building worth P3 million funded under the High Value Commercial Development Program to the Mt. Mayon Pili Producers Multi-Purpose Cooperative (MMPPC). As stipulated in the memorandum of agreement between the DA and the coop, the latter shall use the building for its commercial pili processing operations. It shall take the lead and supervise the operations and management of the facility and shoulder the corresponding expenses.

The building located in a 500 square meter area within the compound of the DA Albay Research and Development

Center (ARDC) in Barangay Buang, is envisioned to help the pili farmers and processors in the province develop new pili and pili-based products/by products and give added value to these products. The DA through the ARDC shall monitor and evaluate the progress of the commercial operations of the facility and provide technical assistance and conduct research and related activities on pili and its by products.

In his message during the turn-over ceremonies, DA Regional Technical Director for Operations and Extension Rodel P. Tornilla emphasized that “for this building to be operational machineries and equipment should be put in place.” This was reiterated by Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodrigues,



OIC chief of the Operations Division and HVCDP regional program coordinator as she said that “the challenge is how to make this processing center operational.”

Roberto Pacis one of the board of directors of the MMPPC, who represented the chairperson, Verda Imperial Saw thanked the DA for entrusting to their coop said building to be used for their processing operations but added that they need DA’s assistance in procuring the needed equipment for said facility. He urged his fellow coop members and their other partners to continue supporting the efforts and plans of the Coop.

Meanwhile, Grace Tordilla

executive director of PhilPili shared that “there is a big demand for pili oil in the global market and we have to catch up with the global requirement”. She added that after the successful conduct of the 1st Pili Scientific Conference held in Naga City, a lot of foreign investors have been contacting her group about pili.

Also present during the turn-over were: Hilda Lopez, Assistant Provincial Agriculturist of Albay; Maria Ailene C. Bombon, OIC, City Agriculturist of Tabaco Albay; Jania Elatico, Center Chief of Albay Research and Development Center; officers of MMPPC, DA regional staff and AREC staff and personnel. **(Emily B. Bordado)**



## Rice corn blend ... (from page 20)

Corn Blend to address poverty and reduce rice consumption. Rice Corn Blend is packed in 3 variants or ratio which are 70:30, 40:40 & 50:50 for consumers to choose from. Engr. Earl Rafael Labilad from DA- PhilMech discussed the latest technology in Rice Corn Blend Preparation. “It is not due to poverty that we will consume the said blend but it is for health and wellness” he said.

Bert Puncia of Arrow Feeds shared that six years ago, aside from other health issues he was also diagnosed as diabetic. When he started introducing corn grits to the market as part of his business,

he experimented on blending 70% rice with 30% corn grits and has been consuming it for more than a half -decade. He later noticed upon regular check-up that his high blood sugar level dramatically dropped to normal. He is now promoting the consumption of the Rice Corn Blend. “kapag dumagdag kayo ng corn grits sa kanin dagdagan nyo din ang tubig para maganda ang resulta. I highly recommend the 70:30 ratio kasi hindi halata na may halong mais ang bigas pag kinain” he said. He challenged the DA to massively implement the propagation and production of white corn to widen its market and boost income of farmers. **(Blesilda A. Nunez)**

## Beneficiary of DA's 50-50 (from page 8)

Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez, OIC Chief of the Field Operations Division and HVCDP regional coordinator said that individual walk-in clients at DA may avail of 5 pieces of each kind. For farmers who are willing to use their farms as a techno demo site of the DA, they can avail of 500 pieces cacao seedlings (UF 18 variety)/hectare; 100 pieces grafted pili/hectare; and 500-1,000 pieces coffee seedlings Robusta variety /hectare.

One of the requirements is a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Agriculture High Value Crops Development Program to be validated by the Municipal or City Agriculturist of the area.

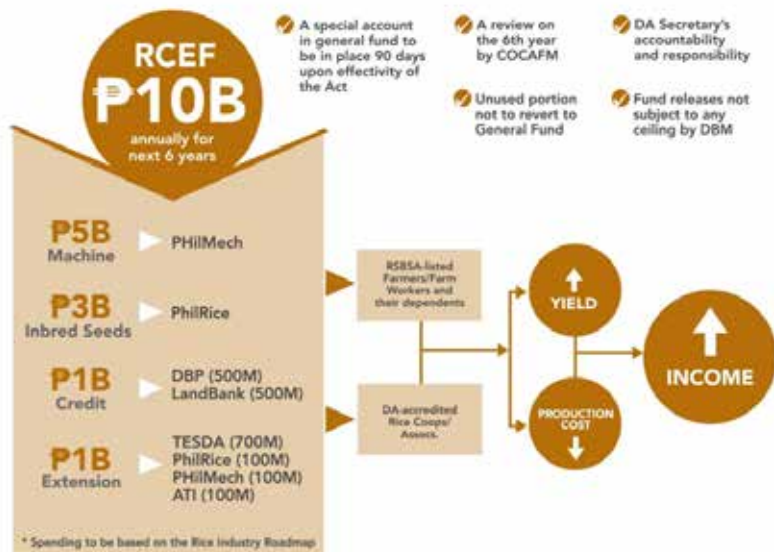
In 2017-2018, the DA HVCDP has distributed a total of 13,786 seedlings of rambutan, 9,710 pomelo, 580,000 grafted pili, 17,134 calamansi, 1,116,380 cacao and 97,080 coffee, either at a cost or for free.



# How farmers can benefit from the RCEF

or Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund

Republic Act No. 11203 otherwise known as the “Rice Tariffication Law” has created the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) or Rice Fund to improve rice farmers’ competitiveness and income amidst liberalization of the Philippine rice trade policy that lifted quantitative restrictions on rice imports and replaced it with tariffs, among others.



## 4 Key Programs of RCEF

1. Rice farm machinery and equipment;
2. Rice seed development, propagation, and promotion;
3. Expanded rice credit assistance;
4. Rice extension services, which shall be implemented in an integrated manner.

Eligible beneficiaries under the 4 key programs of RCEF are rice farmers listed in the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA), and rice cooperatives and associations accredited by the Department of Agriculture.



## Palakihin ang Ani at Kita, Magparehistro na!

Magparehistro sa Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) para makasali sa mga programa ng Kagawaran ng Pagsasaka.

### PAANO MAGPAREHISTRO?

1. Pumunta sa C/MAO na sakop ng inyong sakahan.
2. Sa tulong ng C/MAO, punan ang enrollment form at dalhin ang mga sumusunod:
  - government-issued ID o sertipikasyon mula sa barangay
  - orihinal na kopya ng titulo ng lupa, kasunduan ng renta ng may-ari o anumang ligal na dokumentong patunay ng pagmamay-ari ng lupa
3. Matapos tanggapin ang RSBSA enrollment stub, ikaw ay kwalipikado nang makalahok sa anumang programa ng kagawaran.



## Rice corn blend: substitute food staple and healthier option

**NABUA CAMARINES SUR.** To raise awareness on the benefits of Rice Corn blend, the Department of Agriculture Bicol thru the Agribusiness & Marketing Division (AMAD) conducted a one day forum at a business center here.

More than 30 selected Municipal Agriculturists, Municipal Development Officers/Nutritionists and Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) participated in the said activity. The meeting is called to promote food staple sufficiency while providing healthier option particularly to diabetic persons.



According to Julieta Casaul, Professor & Health Food Testing Laboratory Head of Central Bicol University of Agriculture (CBSUA), the social notion that rice corn blend is a poor man's staple hinders the acceptance of

the consumers to patronize the said blend. “We can all work together to educate the consuming public of its health benefits and introduce it to the local market” she said. “The glycemic index in rice is 73%, corn has only 53% and contains poly unsaturated fat

which is good for the heart” she continued.

The Corn Program Staff also gave updates on Rice Corn Blend and Corn & Cassava Program Implementation. The DA is pushing the utilization and consumption of the Rice (Please turn to page 19)



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