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Lab test confirms 1st ASF outbreak in Cam. Sur

by Emily B. Bordado

SAN AGUSTIN PILI, CAMARINES SUR - After almost 7 months of aggressive and sustained efforts by the Regional Quick Response Team (RQRT) FOR Animal Disease and Emergencies to prevent the incursion of this of this dreaded disease into Bicol region, the first positive case from barangay Sto. Domingo in Bombon, Camarines Sur was finally confirmed by Agriculture Secretary William Dar based on the result of the sample tested at the BAI

laboratory in Quezon City.

In consonance with the "1-7-10" radius control protocol, immediately after the declaration of the ASF infected premises, DA regional Executive Director Tornilla has declared a 1-km radius from the site of infection or ground zero to be the quarantine area. Culling out or depopulation of all swine within the identified radius commenced. Director Tornilla assured that affected

(Please turn to page 8)



Amidst ECQ farmers sell crops via Kadiwa Centers and on Wheels

by Lovella P. Guarin

To help farmers sell their produce and at the same time promote food security in the midst of the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ), the DA in Sorsogon rolled on the Kadiwa on Wheels.

Now on its second day of roaming the towns of Sorsogon, the KADIWA on Wheels here is an old white H100 van of the Regional Dairy Production and Technology Center (RDPTC). At 9:00 AM, the first stop of the KADIWA on Wheels was the farm of Gilda Martires Hamos of barangay Escuela, Casiguran, Sorsogon.

Newly harvested vegetables and rootcrops were already packed and ready for pick up. These consisted of 500 kilos of cassava tubers, 58 kilos

of sweet potato, 23 kilos of gabi roots, 121 kilos of squash, 20 kilos of ampalaya, 10 kilos of cucumber, 10 kilos of winged beans, 4 kilos of okra, 6.5 kilos of tomatoes and 5 kilos of corn.

Gilda cannot believe her fortune when she received the cash payment of P22,145, (Please turn to page 9)

DA-Bicol thru the Land Bank starts distributing cash assistance to qualified small rice farmers

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR - To help farmers and tide them over this difficult time the Department of Agriculture will be giving cash assistance of P5,000 each to small farmers cultivating rice areas of not more than one (1) hectare.

Agriculture secretary William D. Dar explains that "our farmers will receive it as a direct cash transfer that they can use to buy either farm inputs, food for their families or anything they need."

Dubbed as the Financial Subsidy for Rice Farmers (FSRF), the cash assistance is part of DA's initiative to assist small farmers in 24 provinces not covered under the Rice Farmers Financial Assistance (RFFA) Program.

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What COVID-19 pandemic has taught us

The COVID 19 pandemic has made us realize that despite the technological advancements, the comfortable and sophisticated lifestyle and the seemingly impenetrable walls we have built along with many devices and gadgets we have acquired to shield ourselves from life's dangers, we as human beings and the modern society we are living in are not invincible but still very vulnerable to virus and diseases and other invisible enemies.

This pandemic has led us to some painful insights that despite the claim of most advanced and developed countries that they are ready for any disaster or calamity and that they are foolproof for any eventuality, they are not really ready, prepared or capable for an unseen enemy with global magnitude and impact as the COVID 19. Indeed diseases do not know borders. We have seen how rich and poor countries alike have to helplessly grapple with the COVID crisis. We are confronted with the sad reality of the vulnerability of human life and existence.

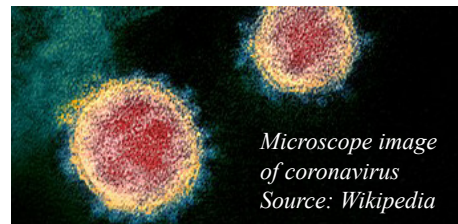
But while this pandemic exposes our vulnerability it also brought forth the best in most of us – our resilience, indomitable spirit, creativity, innovativeness and dynamism. The crisis also drew latent benevolence in each one such as simple acts of kindness, generosity and even heroism and other essential virtues most often relegated to the sidelines. The pandemic made us appreciate the true value of many people whose role in society tend to be undervalued – the medical personnel and health workers who were at the frontline in ministering to the sick; the military personnel who were manning the checkpoints, the security personnel, the delivery crew, the farmers who never stopped producing food, the skeleton workforce in every government and

non-government agencies and institutions who ensured the unhampered delivery of basic services to the public and countless others who offered help to the vulnerable and needy.

COVID 19 has adversely impacted the economy, disrupted agriculture and supply chain halted operations of industries and businesses which resulted to work stoppage, and restricted movement of people. For a while, we hit a pause on most of our business-as-usual activities. As community quarantine and lockdowns were imposed these triggered panic buying and hoarding – as people were alarmed by a potential food shortage.

But the Department of Agriculture under the leadership of Secretary William D. Dar swiftly responded and mounted aggressive and elevated efforts and measures to keep agriculture running, ensure that food is available, accessible and affordable to every Filipino. It immediately put into motion the Ahon Lahat, Pagkaing Sapat Contra Covid” also known as Plant, Plant, Plant Program. Under this program market outlets for agricultural goods called KADIWA ni Ani at Kita were established – some positioned in strategic places others as mobile or on wheels.

Food passes for delivery trucks and vehicles were issued to ensure unhampered movement of agricultural goods and IATF IDs were likewise issued to farmers, agricultural workers and employees of agricultural, animal and fishery establishments. Delivery of some agricultural products from the region to specific drop off points in different parts of the country was also facilitated. Continuous price monitoring was also undertaken to ensure implementation of price freeze and consumer protection. Implementation of programs/projects



Microscope image of coronavirus
Source: Wikipedia

and delivery of services also proceeded unhampered even with the enforcement of the ECQ and GCQ.

The COVID 19 crisis taught us that keeping the supply chains functioning well and facilitating farmers access to markets were crucial to food security. Exempting farm operations and supply chain in the lockdown restriction was a correct move. We also realized that technology proved to be the light of hope for most of us. It kept us, connected, educated and informed. Social media with all its flaws became a saving grace. Even without our physical presence in our workplace we continued to work using our computers and gadgets. From face to face meetings we shifted virtual meetings and TV streaming which proved to be less expensive and not time consuming. A new business trend has emerged as demand has risen for home deliveries of food and groceries and e-commerce.

This pandemic has a life changing impact which forced us to a new reality which we are slowly adapting to as we transition through a “new normal.” It has given us a lot of lessons and insights to contemplate on. It makes us realize that human health system and food system are interconnected and fragile and that solutions must be developed together. Our experience with this pandemic has enabled us new ways of seeing and opened windows of new opportunities.



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PRDP-led trainings help Albay coco geonets enterprise manage COVID-19 crisis

LIBON, ALBAY – The Albay Coco Geonets Manufacturing Enterprise, an enterprise development (I-REAP) subproject funded by the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP), was still in the rehabilitation process from the devastation caused by typhoon Tisoy in December 2019 when the national government ordered the implementation of the Luzonwide enhanced community quarantine (ECQ). Yet, the Tunay Tapat Lahing Pilipino Cooperative (TTLPC), the proponent group in charge of the enterprise's operations, did not crumble. According to Operations Manager Jerome Pedrocillo, they were prepared for this scenario.

"Actually, nung nagkaroon tayo ng typhoon, hindi kami masyadong

nagkaroon ng problema kasi kumbaga naging prepared si TTLPC. With the help ng PRDP sa mga disasters na ganitong crisis, nakapag-apon naman kami kahit papaano," said Pedrocillo in a phone interview.

Pedrocillo shared how the PRDP's training on business continuity planning helped them manage the COVID-19 crisis amid the lockdown.

"Malaking tulong nung nagkaroon tayo ng training and proper management pagdating sa mga funds at sa paggastos kung paano kami gagalaw sa operation, kung paano yung tamang cash flow, yung safety measures sa fund. At the same time, sa mga tao na rin-na kailangan magtabi tayo kahit paunti-unti though medyo nahihirapan tayo sa operations,

okay lang just go. Basta ang importante sa mga ganitong sitwasyon meron tayong maibibigay sa mga tao," he added.

A Business Continuity Plan includes data on operations (activities, processes and procedures), list of employees (details and contact information), list of customers, suppliers and vendors, finances, and list of assets, equipment, and machineries should a disaster occurs. The PRDP provides training on business continuity planning to its I-REAP subprojects to achieve its goal of establishing a climate-smart agriculture and fishery sector. It entails gathering and analyzing hazards and vulnerabilities associated with production challenges, climatic trends and cropping calendars as well as review of feasible interventions to address risks and hazards.

To comply with ECQ protocols, TTLPC temporarily stopped its operation. Nevertheless, the enterprise sustained their business using their husk stock since December 2019. The Management has also assigned authorized members to man the production site, monitor the status of its farmer-members, and provide the necessary relief assistance. According to Pedrocillo, the TTLPC has allocated 5 to 10 percent of its net income as emergency fund to support its members while on quarantine.

"Of course, pinakaimportante talaga sa atin yung safety, lalo na 'yung safety ng mga tauhan natin kasi kung wala sila, wala ring mangyayari sa operations natin," he said.

He also mentioned that once the ECQ is lifted, the enterprise will resume its full operation and pursue its business expansion in Oas, Albay in partnership with Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), which will benefit rural families, particularly coconut farmers in eight barangays.

The P5.79 million-worth Albay Coco Geonets Manufacturing Enterprise is the PRDP's pioneer I-REAP subproject in the region. Currently, it employs 26 regular workers to sustain its production and operation. As of February 2020, the enterprise has generated P56,324 gross sales.

A report from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, cited in an article

(Please turn to page 4)

Letters

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

REP. ARNULFO BRYAN "ARNIE" B. FUENTEBELLA
4th District, Camarines Sur

15 January 2020

RODEL P. TORNILLA
Regional Director
Department of Agriculture
San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur

Dear Director Tornilla:

Greetings!

On behalf of the people of Partido, I gladly convey our overwhelming gratitude for the support you have so generously given to the Partido Progress Caravan.

We are optimistic that by adopting a strong approach to understanding and supporting reform initiatives that is based on an analysis of the local context, we shall be able to bridge the gaps, and effectively address rural development challenges.

Your involvement in our convergence agenda shall translate to expanding opportunities for our district's growth.

Dios Mabalos po.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) **ARNULF BRYAN B. FUENTEBELLA**

Outstanding implementing schools of Gulayan sa Paaralan Program awarded

DARAGA , ALBAY - The Basud National High School in Camarines Norte bagged the grand prize of P30,000 cash prize and P50,000 worth agricultural inputs for being adjudged as the top winner in Implementing the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) jointly implemented by the Department of Education (DepED) and Department of Agriculture. All this was accompanied by marketing and media with professional marketingmyway.com support.

Adjudged as second best implementer was the Alejandro de los Reyes School from Masbate which was given a cash prize of P20,000 and agricultural inputs worth P30,000. The Ragay National High school placed third and was awarded a cash prize of P10,000 and agricultural inputs worth P20,000.

The cash awards were provided by the DepEd while the agricultural inputs were provided by the DA. The awarding ceremonies was held at Casa Lorenzo of this town on January 30 this year and

was attended by DepEd and DA officials and school heads.

Dr. Jessie L. Amin, Schools Division Superintendent and Officer-in-charge of the Office of the assistant Regional Director represented Regional Director Gilbert Sadsad during the awarding ceremonies. He said that the GPP is one of the neglected programs of their agency because of its meager budget. But he acknowledged the support now being given by the DA and other partners which made possible the sustained implementation of the program. He laments that “we are producing mere consumers as children do not appreciate planting and producing food.” He thus, underscored the importance of teaching gardening to the students and inculcating the value and dignity of labor.

For her part, Luz Marcelino, newly appointed Regional Technical Director for Operations and Extension of the DA who also represented Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla shared that the Gulayan sa Paaralan

program is aligned with the thrusts and Paradigms of the DA to engage the youth in agriculture and develop them to become young agri-entrepreneurs. She suggested that the GPP should focus on planting indigenous vegetables. She



Winners of the Gulayan sa Paaralan 2019 Search. 1st - Basud Nat'l HS. 2nd - Alejandro delos Reyes Sch, Masbate. 3rd - Ragay Nat'l HS.



announced that the DA targets a total of 3,885 schools in 3 years time (2018 to 2021) to participate in the GPP.

The GPP aims to promote vegetable production in public elementary and secondary schools. It was started by the DA and DepEd in 2007 but its implementation was intensified and strengthened in 2016. According to Dr. Mary Grace DP Rodriguez, chief of the Operations Division of the DA Bicol regional office and focal person of the GPP this program also aims to support the feeding activity of the DepEd for

malnourished for malnourished and indigent school children. It can also provide income for the school and the children. Moreover, Rodriguez said “this is one way of developing children’s appreciation for farming and in the future, there will be younger generations serving as farmers and agricultural workers”.

Schools which participated in the GPP were provided by the DA with assorted vegetable seeds, set of garden tools, seedling trays, drums and other inputs worth P10,000 each. The teachers involved in the program also underwent training on vegetable production and urban gardening. **(Emily B. Bordado)**



PRDP led trainings... (from page 3)

by Sean Peek published in business.com claims that 40 to 60 percent of small businesses close permanently after a disaster. Hence, Pedrocillo urged fellow cooperatives and business organizations to take the COVID-19 crisis as a challenge and opportunity to apply the trainings provided by the Project.

“So kailangan always remember, trust yourself, trust God and apply the [learnings from] trainings kasi talaga dito na natin magagamit yung mga pinag-aralan natin na trainings. Hindi lang dapat sa isip lang kumbaga dapat i-apply po natin lahat ng mga natututunan natin sa mga ganitong sitwasyon,” he added. (Annielyn L. Baleza)

DA holds press con on African Swine Fever

DA Bicol holds a Press Conference on African Swine Fever (ASF) in Naga City on Feb. 21, 2020 following the declaration of the first case of ASF in Bicol.

Rodel P. Tornilla, DA Bicol Regional Exec Director was joined by Governor Migz Villafuerte of Camarines Sur, Mayor Nelson Legacion of Naga City, NMIS regional director Alex Templonuevo and BAI Veterinary Quarantine Officer Emmanuel Villafuerte. Governor Villafuerte assures the public that ASF is not a human health concern. Tornilla on the other hand said that elevated response and biosafety measures are already

in place to contain, control and manage this animal disease.

Depopulation of all breeds of swine (including those apparently healthy) within the 1-kilometer radius from the site of infection in Sto. Domingo, Bombon has already commenced on Feb. 20.

Director Tornilla also announced that owners of swine from 1 km radius which will be depopulated will receive P5,000 for every head of swine. But only a maximum of 20 heads per farmer will be granted. Suckling piglets are not included in the indemnification. Governor Villafuerte announced during the press con that the Provincial Government

will add P3,000 indemnification for every head of swine depopulated. Close to 60 members of local media and private sector participated in the press briefing which was facilitated by Emily Bordado, chief of RAFIS.



(L-R) Naga City Mayor Nelson Legacion; Cam. Sur Governor Migz Villafuerte; DA Bicol Reg'l Exec. Director Rodel Tornilla; NMIS Director Alex Templonuevo; and BAI Veterinary Quarantine Officer Emmanuel Villafuerte.



Tsokolate at Pandesal supports DA's anti-ASF drive

LEGAZPI CITY—"We are one with you (DA) in your drive to stop the spread of ASF."

This was the message of the LtC Charlieen B. Delamido of the 9th Civil Military Operations Battalion of the Philippine Army during the 3rd Session of the *Tsokolate at Pandesal* (TAP) during the presentation of the Agricultural Programs Coordinating Officer (APCO) for Albay and Sorsogon Florentino Ubalde Jr. on African Swine Fever and on the recent case in the municipality of Bombon, Camarines Sur.

Ubalde said that the DA Regional Quick Response Team (RQRT) for Animal

Disease and Emergencies confirmed positive for African Swine Fever (ASF) the organ samples from hogs in Barangay Sto. Domingo in Bombon based on the official statement of the DA-Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla on February 20, 2020.

He added that the team together with the provincial government of Camarines Sur and LGU-Bombon already instituted biosecurity measures to prevent further spread of the disease. The team already implemented the "1-7-10 km" radius control protocol.

Although ASF is not a human threat, but it will greatly affect the swine industry in

the region. It is fatal, highly contagious for pigs and with no known cure or vaccine. It can be transmitted through contaminated feeds, and even through non-living objects such as shoes, clothes and knives due to the virus' high resistance.

The different member-agencies vowed support through information-dissemination. The military also committed to assist the DA in their anti-ASF drive and checkpoints.

TAP is an inter-agency initiative of 9th CMO composed of government agencies, local government units, the military and non-government agencies in the Bicol Region. (Jayson M. Gonzales)



Florentino Ubalde, Jr. DA Agricultural Programs Coordinating Officer (APCO) for Albay and Sorsogon presents the ASF situation during the 3rd session of Tsokolate at Pandesal.



The representatives of the different agencies participating in the Tsokolate at Pandesal (TAP) vowed support to DA's anti-ASF drive.

DA Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita - saving grace for farmers in Cam. Norte

CAMARINES NORTE – Aboard his carabao pulling a cart heavily loaded with newly harvested pineapples, Romeo Reyes slowly approached the hanging bridge connecting barangays Maisog and Mamporog in San Lorenzo Ruiz, this province. He breathed a sigh of relief as he saw a white dusty truck with a tarpaulin hanging on its front that reads “DA Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita on Wheels”.

The Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita on Wheels, which is being operated by Engr. Bella B. Frias, Superintendent of the Camarines Norte Lowland Rainfed Research Outreach Station (CNLRRS), has scheduled to buy Reyes’ produce today.

He was very thankful when he received the P17,500 cash from Engr. Frias, immediately after all the pineapple were transferred to the truck.

Reyes used to sell his produce to pineapple traders from Manila. But due to the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ), the trader who was supposed to buy his produce cannot travel to San Lorenzo Ruiz. He also learned that demand for pineapple in Manila has declined. Thus, he sought the help of Municipal Agriculturist Ed Canamero to look for prospective buyer of his produce.

Like Reyes, some farmers from Camarines Norte have also been aided by the Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita on Wheels, as the latter serves as farmers’ refuge and saving grace at this trying time of COVID-19 pandemic.

Rolando Malunas was able to sell 40 kilos of melon fruits to the Kadiwa. Eden Hernandez earned P55,357.00 and Yolanda Bayani, earned P65,514.00, from selling watermelon. All three farmers were from Vinzons. Meanwhile, Zoraida Paday

of Mercedes sold her smoked fish worth P16,310.00

Engr. Frias brings these products to the DA Regional Office Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita Center at San Agustin, Pili everyday.



Before she reaches the regional office in Camarines Sur, she needs to pass several checkpoints. In Basud, Cam. Norte – the boundary of the two provinces – a checkpoint in barangay Tuaca is issuing a Car Pass, with the name of the driver, point of origin and destination. And upon return, the car pass holder shall surrender the same at the Tuaca Chekpoint. But she understands that this is necessary as a



preventive measure against the spread of the disease. Perhaps, this very strict ECQ checkpoint implementation is one of the reasons why Camarines Norte remains to be COVID-19 free as of this writing.

Engr. Frias operates the Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita on Wheels even on weekends. Sometimes, the farmers’ production area is very far and the terrain is difficult to traverse. The daily travel time to the regional office in Pili has also become longer due to the numerous checkpoints and oftentimes it is late in the evening when she returns home. But Engr. Frias never



complains.

“Sinumpaang ko po itong trabaho, at masaya po akong nakakatulong tayo sa mga magsasaka dito sa Camarines Norte,” Engr. Frias happily quipped.

Buying the produce of the farmers is one of the IATF-approved measures on agriculture which is being implemented by the DA RFO 5 in all provinces of Bicol to connect the food producers to the consumers thereby lessening the cost of the products. This measure has back-to-back benefits as the farmer producers instantly gain profit while the buyers or consumer can enjoy the fresh and nutritious fruits at lower prices.

The Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) of DA Bicol implements this Kadiwa project.

Adelina A. Losa, Chief of the AMAD, chief of the AMAD, said that there are 12 Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita operating in Bicol - five Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita Centers and seven Kadiwa on Wheels. The Kadiwa Centers are located at: DA RFO 5; DA Regional Dairy Production and Technology Center (RDPTC) in Sorsogon; Albay Research and Development Center –Albay Experiment Station; and Kadiwa at CNLRRS in Daet. The seven Kadiwa on Wheels are being operated by: DA 5; CNLRRS; Cam. Sur Multi-purpose Cooperative; LGU Daet; Agripreneurs Farmers and Producers Association in Libmanan; CHUDS in Catanduanes; and Masbate Center for Livestock Development. BFAR also participated in the Kadiwa at DA RFO 5.

As of April 12, 2020, all the Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita in Bicol garnered a total sales of P4.6 Million. (Lovella P. Guarin)



Engr. Bella Frias, Superintendent of the Cam. Norte Lowland Rainfed Research Station (CNLRRS).

Albay mayors buy locally-produced veggies to sustain constituents in ECQ

CAMALIG, ALBAY--- Local Government Units in Albay heeded to the appeal of Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar to include locally-produced vegetables in their distribution of food packs to their community under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ).

“On top of distributing canned goods and processed products, we urge our LGUs to prioritize buying fresh produce from our farmers. It’s a win-win situation for both consumers and producers,” Dar said.

He added that aside from providing a sure market to farmers, these vegetables are nutritionally beneficial in strengthening the human immune system against the pandemic COVID-19.

In the Facebook posts of Tabaco City Mayor Cielo Krisel Lagman Luistro and Councilor Gio Ong Bongao, the local government purchased 27 kgs of ampalaya, 96 kgs of beans, 950 kgs of squash, and 45 kgs of sayote from vegetable farmers of Barangays Magapo and Oras. These vegetables will be included in the relief goods to be distributed to their constituents.

Libon Municipal Mayor Wilfredo Maronilla posted in his FB account that the vegetables and other relief items will be distributed to their tricycle operators and drivers.

Meanwhile, the Department of Agriculture-Bicol (DA-Bicol) through its High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) started distributing assorted vegetable seeds since March 17, 2020 to the different LGUs in the region to ensure food availability in their localities in the coming months.

DA-Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla echoed the appeal of Sec.Dar for the LGUs

to buy the produce of local farmers. He had instructed the superintendents of the DA’s research outreach stations in the provinces to serve as drop off points for the agricultural produce of farm-ers. He also invited coopeartives and associations to operate their rolling stores or KADIWA on wheels which has been started in Camarines Sur province and will be launched regionwlie.

Albay Provincial Agriculturist Cheryll Rebeta meanwhile encouraged households under ECQ to pro-



duce their own food by planting vegetables in their house. The DA-Bicol has downloaded to



the province assorted vegetable seeds to be distributed to households who will engage in backyard gardening.

According to the FB post of Mariano Reario Jr, Oas Municipal Mayor Domingo R. Escoto Jr. disclosed that they are ready to distribute the vegetable seeds to families in 53 barangays.

Pio Duran Mayor Alan Arandia, in the fb post of Rosalina Sariola, urged his constituents to plant vegetables as the seeds are ready for

distribution and for free--- “Magtanom para may anihoon ngan di magutom.”

In an interview by DZGB News Online, Rebeta assured the Albayanos that there is still sufficient supply of agricultural products in the province like sweet potato, kangkong, tomatoes and other crops. **(Jayson M. Gonzales** with photos grabbed from FB accounts of Cielo Krisel Lagman-Luistro, Gio Ong Bongao and Rosalina Sariola)




Roberto Sesgimundo
Farmer
Barangay Buga, LIBON, ALBAY

BICOL Region 

Malaking tulong sa aming pamilya ang tulong na pinapaabot ng Department of Agriculture sa Bicol sa pamamagitan ng mga libreng pantanim bago pa man magka-COVID-19 ang ating mundo.

Lalo akong humanga sa DA-Bicol at sa Provincial Government dahil kahit ipinapatupad na ang ECQ, hindi sila huminto sa pagtulong, pag-monitor at pagbibigay ng asistensya sa amin dito sa aming lugar.



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE REGIONAL FIELD OFFICE NO.5

Masaganang ANI Mataas na KITA

“A food-secure Philippines with prosperous farmers and fisherfolk”

DA Bicol confirms first ASF... *(from page 1)*

animal owners will be given an indemnification of P5,000 per head. But only a maximum of 20 heads per farmer will be granted. Suckling piglets are not included in the indemnification.

The infected area was immediately locked down, wherein there transport and sale of hogs, pork and processed pork and by products from the municipality was prohibited. Within seven-kilometer radius from infected site, hogs were under surveillance with restricted movements, and blood testing was done. For the 10-kilometer radius from ground zero, mandatory monitoring and reporting of swine disease occurrences shall be implemented.

The death of 2 pigs in the barangay was reported to the DA regional Office on February 10 and immediately the RQRT monitoring and surveillance team went to the site and took blood samples and sent it to the Animal Disease Diagnostic Reference Laboratory in Quezon City. The farm was closely monitored and even prior to the release of the laboratory tests when subsequent deaths of hogs in the area were noted Dir. Tornilla alerted the LGU and requested Mayor Angeles to instruct the PNP to assist the RQRT in setting up and manning a checkpoint to prevent the movement of pigs from Bombon to neighboring areas. The adjacent town of Calabanga was likewise alerted and advised to set a checkpoint to restrict the entry of live pigs from Bombon.

Since the first reported outbreak of ASF July last year, the Bicol Regional Quick Response Team has been activated and has been aggressively implementing the directives issued by DA Secretary William Dar. The Regional Quick Response Team on ASF is composed of composite group headed

by DA Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla and include the Bureau of Animal Industry in the region headed by Dr. Emmanuel Villafuerte, Regional Veterinary Quarantine Officer of BAI; the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) headed Regional Director Alex Templonuevo; Dr. Edgar R. Madrid, Regional Technical Director for Research and Regulations; the Chief of DA's Livestock Program, Dr. Maris Guillermo; the chief of the Integrated Laboratories Division; chief of Regulatory Division Rosita Imperial and Dr. Josefina Banadera; RADDL Chief Dr. Rona Bernales; and other technical and support staff of the DA.

With the approval and full implementation of the National Zoning and Movement Plan for the Prevention and Control of ASF last Feb 2020, the RQRT vigorously conducted monitoring and surveillance of pork meat and meat products being brought illegally into the region through public utility vehicles like buses and other conveyances. The team in tandem with the PNP and the provincial and city veterinarians was able to confiscate a total of 8,307 kilograms of meat and meat products amounting to approximately P1.7 million without proper permit and veterinary certificates mostly coming from ASF infected zones. These inspected goods were automatically disposed of in the designated disposal pit even as the RQRT team continually receive threats and harassments and have to endure bullying and insults from the owners of the goods. These illegally transported meat and products from recalcitrant traders are the biggest deterrent keeping Bicol ASF Free. (**Emily B. Bordado**)

DA Bicol thru Land Bank... *(from page 1)*

The DA Regional Office in compliance with the criteria and based on the master list of farmers enrolled in the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) shall identify, endorse and submit qualified list of rice farmers under the FSRF program to the DA Field Operations Service at DA Central Office which in turn will submit the list to the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP). The LBP shall then issue Cash Cards loaded with cash grants the LBP shall also handle the distribution of these cash cards.

During the distribution DA Regional Office representatives shall be present to conduct the

as the Rice Liberalization Law. It was originally intended to help farmers affected by the decline in the price of palay with the influx of imported rice last year. The first batch of farmers in major rice producing regions have already received cash assistance. Bicol region is in the second batch.

Farmers from the four provinces covered by the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Program namely Camarines Sur, Albay, Masbate and Sorsogon are included in this cash assistance.

Aside from the FSRF, The DA continues to implement major programs to help



Know-Your –Customer (KYC) procedures and certify identity of the beneficiaries using any government issued IDs acceptable to LBP before the issuance of the cash card.

According to Adelina A. Losa, DA-Bicol focal person for this project initially, 1,000 farmers from the Camarines Sur province will receive this cash assistance which will be given either this week or after the Holy Week. Distribution will be done by municipality and the prescribed social distancing will be strictly observed.

DA-Bicol regional executive director Rodel P. Tornilla explained that the amount of P3Billion has been earmarked for the FSRF by the DA pursuant to the enactment of RA 11203 otherwise known

farmers such as the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Program the Expanded Survival and Recovery program for marginalized small farmers and fisherfolk and for agri-fishery based micro and small enterprises Assistance Program. It is also setting in motion the ALPAS Program aptly dubbed Ahon Lahat Pagkain Sapat Laban sa COVID 19 or Plant, Plant, Plant Program which is intended to sustain food production and make food available, accessible and affordable during and after the implementation of the Enhanced Community Quarantine. (**Emily B. Bordado**)

DA Bicol staff improvise disinfection misting device as biosafety measure vs. COVID-19

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR - As the agency responsible for food production, the Department of Agriculture in Bicol did not close its office to the public since the declaration of Enhanced Community Quarantine.

It is business as usual for the skeleton staff of the DA in Bicol and the working days were even extended up to Saturdays and Sundays (halfday). Based on the mandated 25% of the workforce who can serve as skeleton staff, 160 personnel of DA RFO 5 are manning the regional office on weekly rotation to ensure the unhampered service delivery to our farmers and the general public.

On the average, up to 200 clients still visit the regional office everyday for different purposes such as availment of farmers' or farm workers' ID, food passes, vegetable seeds and other services. Suppliers, mostly coming from outside the region, are also submitting their bid documents personally, as the government bidding continues to facilitate procurement of goods and services.

Seeing the hazard to which the DA Bicol personnel are exposed to everyday, DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla ensured that strict biosecurity measures are in place at the office.

Recently, the creative staff of the General Services Section headed by Michael Angelo delos



Misting device and foot bath at DA 5 gate.

Santos devised a Disinfection Misting Equipment which they installed at the entrance gate of the regional office.

They assembled several PPR pipes to form a rectangular arch along the insides of the entrance gate. Nine fine mist nozzle sprayers were strategically positioned along the pipes which were connected to a power sprayer.

Everytime a car enters the entrance gate, the operator will

switch the power sprayer on and presto - fine mists or aerosols are sprayed into the vehicle. This modern and practical method of disinfection is not costly and leaves the air and objects virus-free as possible.

The total cost of the device was only P8,000.00. Delos Santos disclosed that they are using a powerful brand of disinfectant solution for this biosecurity measure. **(Lovella P. Guarin)**

Albay & Sorsogon farmers to benefit from SURE AID

LEGAZPI CITY—More than 60 rice farmers from Legazpi City applied for the Expanded Survival and Recovery Assistance Program for Rice Farmers (SURE Aid) loan program on January 23, 2020 at the City Agriculture Office here during the Orientation on SURE Aid Program.

According to ACPC-5 Project Assistant Michael Jordan O. Roquid, each farmer will be receiving a one-time Php15,000.00 loan without interest and payable for eight years.

He added that the SURE Aid Loan Program is very affordable for the small rice farmers as they need to set aside P1,875.00 per year from their income to pay their loan. Moreover, the National Food Authority (NFA) will buy their produce so they have no more problem in selling their palay.

Roquid disclosed that the Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Credit Policy Council (DA-ACPC) through

the Landbank of the Philippines (LBP) allocated 45M pesos for for the 3,000 small rice farmers from Sorsogon and Albay.

This loan program will help rice farmers regain their capacity to continue their rice production, as they were affected by the initial impact of low palay prices resulting to the reduction or loss of their farm income.

Under the SURE Aid, rice farmers who are farming an area of not more than one hectare and registered to the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) in their respective municipalities can avail of this loan.

Letecia A. Medallon, 68, said that the loan will help her recover from her rice and other crop production (vegetables, coconut, cassava and banana) that were completely destroyed by typhoon Tisoy last year.

A total of 3771 farmers from Camarines Sur, Albay, Camarines Norte and Sorsogon availed of the

Amidst ECQ farmers sell crops via Kadiwa...

(from page 1)

from RDPTC Superintendent Dolores Ricafranca, as payment for her products.

"Maraming salamat po sa DA dahil madali kong naibenta ang aking mga produkto, at hindi na rin po ako nagproblema at nagastusan sa pagtransport ng aking mga produkto." Tunay pong hulog kayo ng langit sa aming mga magsasaka ngayong panahon ng krisis sa COVID-19," said the smiling Gilda Martinez.

loan program amounting to Php56,565,000.00. "Dakulaon an tabang kaining programa sa samong mga parauma," Medallon related about this easy-credit access, free fertilizer, seminars, and palay seeds which she received from DA through the Legazpi City Agriculture Office. **(Jayson M. Gonzales)**

The products collected from the farmers are being sold at the KADIWA ni ANI at KITA located at the RDPTC in Cabilan, Sorsogon City. Selling starts at 7:00 AM. Ricafranca said that the prices of the products sold at the KADIWA are lower than the running price in commercial supermarkets as KADIWA directly buys from the farmer producers.

KADIWA ni ANI at Kita stalls serve as drop off points or depository of the agricultural products from the farmers on a consignment basis. But in Sorsogon, the farmers get paid immediately after the DA Sorsogon team pick up the agri commodities.

KADIWA which stands for "Katuwang sa Diwa at Gawa para sa Masaganang Ani at Mataas na Kita" is a marketing strategy of the DA which directly connects the food producers to the consumers thereby lessening the cost of the products.

Spirit of solidarity alive among rural women in Castilla, Sorsogon amid COVID-19 threat

CASTILLA, SORSOGON — While many families locked their homes and municipalities and cities closed their borders in an instinctive effort to protect themselves against COVID-19, in the spirit of solidarity, members of the Rural Improvement Club (RIC) of Brgy. San Roque in this municipality opened their communal garden to feed their community.

“Umpisa pa lang po ng quarantine, inopen na namin sa lahat ang communal garden and nagdecide na kami na huwag na muna ibenta para makatulong na din hindi lang sa mga miyembro kundi pati na rin sa iba... Basta magpapaalam lang pag mamimintas,” Joselyn M. Relente, RIC President said in an online interview.

Currently, around 12 families benefit from free vegetables like string beans, eggplant, tomatoes, kangkong, and okra as well as chili and onions planted in the RIC’s 0.5-hectare communal garden, which was intended as one of its livelihood projects. As a way of honoring the frontliners in their locality, the RIC also give them free agricultural products.

Relente also led the intensification of home gardening in their community by improving her backyard garden and personally distributing the vegetable seeds provided by the Department of Agriculture Bicol’s High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) through the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist and Municipal Agriculture Office. According to Relente, over 48 households in her community are now actively engaged in backyard gardening by following her example.

“Nakita at naramdaman nila yung kahalagahan nang may gulayan sa paligid ng bahay para kahit papaano, may mga masustansyang pagkain para sa pamilya,” she added.

Since February 11, 2015, members of the Rural Improvement Club (RIC) of Barangay San Roque in Castilla, Sorsogon, in coordination with the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist, have been engaged in various livelihood projects like agriculture and product processing, swine fattening, backyard gardening and sari-sari store. Through their hardwork, unity and teamwork, the RIC of Brgy. San Roque’s investments soar from a starting capital of P340.00 generated from their membership fees to P1.2 million within four years. Along with the increase in their assets



Hindi man tayo makatulong pagdating sa pinansyal at least sa suporta at pagiging inspirasyon ng bawat isa. Tayo po ay magtanim sa ating mga bakuran dahil mas masarap pong kainin ang mga gulay na tayo mismo ang nagtanim,” Relente added.



is the over 50 percent growth in their membership. Thus, the group was adjudged as the 2019 Regional Outstanding Gawad Saka Awardee.

“Sa mga katulad naming kababaihan, tayo po ay hindi lamang para sa loob ng bahay.

Initially supported by the local government unit (LGU) and the Department of Agriculture, the RIC is a rural or barangay-based non-government organization in the Philippines that aims to bring

about effective involvement and participation of rural women in home and community projects through participatory and collective efforts. Department of Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar recently called on big businesses, seed and fertilizer companies, state universities and colleges (SUCs), and professional organizations in agriculture to adopt a city or town and invest in vegetable gardening, commercial crop production, small ruminant raising and native chicken production to ensure food security amid the extension of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ). This is a strategy under the P31-billion Plant, Plant, Plant Program designed to massively promote urban and community agriculture to guarantee available and accessible food nationwide. (Annielyn L. Baleza)

March is Women's Month

2020 National Women's Month Celebration

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Legazpi City launches Diversified Farming Project on Free-range Chicken

LEGAZPI CITY—“If Nabua, Bato and Baao are the commercial egg capitals of the Bicol Region, this program will make Legazpi City the capital of Free-range chicken and egg in the whole country. Babahain natin ang bansa ng free-range chicken.”

This was the message of OIC-City Veterinarian Dr. Emmanuel V. Estipona to more than 1,200 farmers from 70 barangays in Legazpi City who attended the Project Launching and Training on Free-Range Chicken on January 22, 2020 at the Legazpi City Convention Center here. The project is part of the Disaster Resiliency Through Diversified Farming Program of the Legazpi City Veterinary Office.

Legazpi City Mayor Noel E. Rosal considered this project “the start of an alternative source of income” because the Department of Agriculture has approved the initial budget of Php12M pesos to fund the four components of the program—Multiplier Breeder Farm/Research and Development; Hatchery with 3000-5000 egg capacity; Dispersal and Training Component; and Poultry Dressing Plant.

Agriculture Undersecretary for Consumer Affairs Ernesto S. Gonzales was the guest speaker of the program and was joined by Adelina Losa, chief of the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division of the Department of Agriculture-5; National

Meat Inspection Service-Bicol Regional Director Dr. Alex Templonuevo; Albay OIC-Provincial Veterinarian Dr. Pancho Mella; Legazpi City Councilor for Food and Agriculture Diego Obido; and Legazpi City OIC-City Agriculturist Shiela Nas.

These components will establish a fully-diversified farming to make the farmers, stakeholders as well as veterinary and agricultural services personnel, resilient. The project is hoped to improve and sustain livelihood and improve the livestock industry in Legazpi City.

Multiplier Breeder Farm/Research and Development Component

This major component will develop the poultry industry through research and development and genetic improvement of breeds that are disease resistant, will promote high production rate and good taste of chicken eggs.

Estipona disclosed that the first demo-farm will be in barangay Banqueroohan in a two-hectare lot and that Mayor Rosal is targeting 25-30 hectares in barangay Mariawa for this component.

Feeds will be derived from leftovers from restaurants and

groceries and will be based on organic feeding system.

Hatchery Component

The incubator has a capacity to hatch 3,000-5,000 eggs and is estimated to produce 5,000 chicks every 51 days (21



Agriculture Undersecretary for Consumer Affairs Ernesto Gonzales.

days incubation and 30 days brooding period). This project is likewise cost efficient and environmental-friendly since it will utilize renewable solar energy which can withstand prolong brownouts without affecting its hatchability.

The hatchery was designed by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

Dispersal and Training Component

The targeted 5000 eggs from the Multiplier Farm and Hatchery will be given out free to the 300-500 farmers. Each farmer will receive 20 chicks monthly. These farmer-

beneficiaries will be trained on organic range chicken and/or livestock management technology before receiving the chicks to teach them on proper caring of the animals and making it sustainable and profitable. The City Vet Office will adopt a criteria and implement policies to ensure a fair and proper way of dispersal. Vermiculture will be maintained by the project and will be positioned in the slaughterhouse of the city for propagation.

Trainings and skills development on Disaster Preparedness and Response, Mitigation Measures, Disaster Resiliency, Farm Management, Poultry/Livestock Raising and Diversified farming system will be conducted to farmers; and personnel of the Multiplier farm, Hatchery and Poultry Dressing Plant.

Poultry Dressing Plant Component

Estipona said that the Poultry Dressing Plant is the heart of the program and is hoped to make the program a profitable and sustainable livelihood in view of the growing demand for organic range chicken.

The plant will be funded by the DA RFO 5 through the approval of Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla in 2021.

Legazpi City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Officer Miladee N. Azur also committed to allocate funds annually for this program.

In four or five years, this program will eventually become a revenue-generating project of the city with an expected monthly income of more than a million pesos with 1000 breeder stocks.

Rosal disclosed that a new building for organic products will be established in the future only if the Legazpeño farmer is “desidido at pursigido (interested and determined)” in this project. **(Jayson M. Gonzales)**



Have a taste of Yulaik's beverages - for sure, you'll like them

By Emily B. Bordado

Lorna Daud is nearing seventy but she doesn't look it. She is a petite but smart, stylish and energetic woman. Most of all she has lot of ideas on how to improve and diversify her products - the home made wines and beverages she herself concocted using locally available fruits and other food products.

A graduate of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration major in Marketing from one of the big universities in Naga, Lorna used to be a vegetable dealer. She supplied Baguio vegetables to big restaurants in the city. Her Muslim husband Usop, was employed at the Pili airport. Their family also owns a 7-hectare agricultural land in Tinambac, Camarines Sur which was planted with mangoes and other fruit trees. The salary of her husband plus her income provided them a comfortable life and afforded quality education for their two children.

But after the death of her husband she had to keep herself preoccupied to fend off the loneliness and sense of loss. To while away her time she frequently visits her farm in Tinambac. She was delighted to see the mango trees already bearing fruits. She became even more delighted as she sells them and derives income from them. But there were times when there was an oversupply of mangoes in the market and its price would dip. Some of the excess harvest of mangoes are sometimes just left to rot or given away to friends and neighbors. That was when she thought of processing mango into wine as she is also a wine lover. Thus, the mango wine became the first processed product from her farm. At first her mango wine was intended for family consumption during special events and as gifts to friends.

A balikbayan friend from Canada who is into a business of producing urban wines

taught Lorna how to improve her mango wine. She then began attending trainings and seminars on wine making and processing of beverages. She was able to obtain a loan from the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) which she used to buy a machine for wine processing. In addition to her mango wine she produced Lipote (locally known as baligang), and bignay as wines. What started as a hobby soon became her passion.

With her background in marketing she focused not only in improving her product but in improving its packaging. She came up with her own label and brand name - Yulaik Food Products derived from the names of her two children Yusuf and Zhulaika. She used not just ordinary bottles or container for her products but special bottles adorned with abaca fibers or water lily braided stalks that gave

her products a local touch but classy and elegant appeal.

Aside from the DOST she also linked up with government agencies like the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) which provided her technical assistance, trainings and helped in promoting her products via agri-trade fairs and other special events. It was through the Department of Agriculture, one of the partner agencies that she was able to join and enroll in the GREAT Women Project funded by the Canadian government and supervised by the Philippine Commission on Women. GREAT Women stands for Gender Responsive Economic Actions for the Transformation of Women. It engages government and private sector partners to support women micro-entrepreneurs to improve their products and refine their business ideas.

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Her wine collection now include santol, rambutan, lemon grass, malunggay, turmeric, langka, banana, and pineapple. She has also produced vodka using mango, bignay and lipote. Her juice concentrate include pink lemonade which is a mix of camote tops and kalamansi (calamondin); blue lemonade, a mix of blue ternate and kalamansi; green lemonade, a mixture of malunggay and kalamansi. She has also a dalandan concentrate. Her other products include mango puree, mango sauce with basil leaves. She has also three (3) variants of balsamic vinegar (the very dark concentrated and intensely flavored vinegar namely : the plain balsamic vinegar, the balsamic lipote vinegar and balsamic blue mango vinegar . The two other variants are the Lipote doble, a blend of lipote juice and lipote vinegar and the Mango Sorpreso, a blend of mango juice and mango vinegar.

As most fruits are only seasonal Lorna has preserved them by processing them into jams or fermenting them into



pickles or sauces and making them into dip or sauces like her mango salsa, the rimas plum berries and pickled santol. She also preserves local raw honey in bottles.

Moreover she has tried home made ice cream using vegetables like kalabasa, malunggay, camote, ampalaya and rimas. Rimas is a family of bread fruits which has a creamy flesh. It was the Department of Agriculture which actually encouraged her to go into commercial production of

Rimas ice-cream after its Food Laboratory through Arlene I. de Asis developed a recipe for Rimas ice cream as one of the product development output for its Special project on Rimas. Lorna became a partner of the DA.

“This is one way of incorporating nutrients into the food that children love to eat,” she explains. “As we all know children are ice-cream lovers so why not fortify or enhance it with vegetables or fruits which are rich sources of nutrients.

She has three regular workers and two on call workers usually during summer time when there is an abundance of fruits. Her products have already been introduced and promoted not only locally but also internationally through her participation in local, national and international expositions like the Food and Beverage Expo (FABEX) and other trade fairs through the help of the DA and DTI. The DOST also provided her some equipment . All her products have an FDA certification.

Her products have also been recognized and bestowed awards. In 2012 her products

were recognized by the City of Naga through the Mayor John Bongat Award “for excellence in product development and production packaging design in the production of native fruit wines, achieving multi-level promotion and marketing to the city and promoting Naga City using of brand Naga-made products”. In 2014, her wine collections and beverages were again recognized and awarded as Most Innovative Products during the Bishop Francisco Gainza Agri Fair.

She recently inaugurated a new store for her products. This store which is just adjacent to her house and very near the central bus terminal of Naga city was funded by the Bureau of Agricultural Research.

Although she is nearing seventy she has still so many ideas and plans and she still loves to travel and go places to learn new ideas for her beverage enterprise. For her it is not really the big margin of profit that matters but the satisfaction and fulfillment she derives.

Come and have a taste of Maam Lorna’s Yulaik wines and beverages and not only you’ll like them. You’ll love them.





Nabua upland farmers achieve 3 cropping with Solar Powered Irrigation

by Lovella P. Guarin

Barangay Malawag in Nabua, Camarines Sur is an upland area and farmers usually wait for the onset of rain to plant rice. But with the continuous operation of the Aguik-ican Malawag Solar Powered Irrigation System (SPIS), farmers are now able to plant rice in three cropping seasons.

“Dati, isang cropping lang ang kaya namin. Ngayon ay nakaka- tatlong cropping na kami sa isang taon,” said Casiano Cendon, Jr, member of the Aguik-Ican East Farmers Association (AEFA), the recipient of the SPIS.

“Hindi na rin nakakapagod ang pagsasaka dahil pag nagbukas na kami ng SPIS, tuloy tuloy na ang daloy ng tubig at hindi na kailangan bantayan,” added Cendon.

The said SPIS is one of the 14 SPIS installed by the DA in the Bicol region.

capacity of 220 cubic meters water.

The pump, connected to a creek, can discharge 35.42 liters per second, while the supply pipe can discharge 20.62 liters per second. Maximum tank volume could be achieved in 1.73 hours when the supply pipe is closed and 4.13 hours when the supply pipe is open.

According to Edgardo Ruin, president of the Aguik-Ican East Farmers Association, their SPIS has been able to irrigate 35 hectares of upland rice areas which used to be rainfed areas being cultivated by the association’s 42 rice farmer members. The SPIS has been in operation for a year.

“Noon, wala pa sa 20 ektarya ang natataniman namin dito sa Malawag dahil umaasa lang kami sa ulan. Ngayon, 35 ektarya na ang napapatubigan namin sa tulong ng Solar Powered Irrigation System,” said Ruin. “Halos lahat ng 42 myembro



ng AEFA ay nakikinabang sa SPIS,” added Ruin.

The SPIS is also not expensive to maintain as it is not dependent on fuel or electricity. It is also environment-friendly as it uses renewable energy from the sun using solar panels instead of burning fossil fuels that emit greenhouse gases. With proper maintenance, the benefits of SPIS can last over a long period. Studies show that SPIS can last for 30 years or more with minimum maintenance cost.

Increased Income

In the past, the rice farmers in barangay Malawag used Shallow Tube Wells to pump water from the nearby Aguik-Ican creek directly to the rice fields. More or less 180 liters of diesel is consumed in a hectare of ricefield in one cropping if a farmer irrigates his field 15 times using 12 liters of diesel per day. At P42.00/liter, a farmer spends P7,560/hectare on fuel every cropping.

With the establishment of the SPIS, the Malawag farmers do not have to

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spend a centavo on diesel. Collectively, the Malawag farmers, cultivating the 35 hectares covered by the SPIS, were able to save P226,800 in one cropping and P453,600 in two croppings. From the third cropping, which they were able to achieve lately with their SPIS, the farmers collectively earned P487,500.

The average recorded increase in yield was 500 kilos per hectare per cropping. But there were some who got 1,000 kilos increase per hectare. Rice buffer stocks generated by the Aguik-ican Malawag SPIS in three croppings based on the increase in harvest per hectare could be 52,500 kilos of palay (525 cavans rice) for every 500 kilos increase; and 105,000 kilos of palay (1,050 cavans rice) for every 1,000 kilos increase.

If all the 14 Solar Powered Irrigations Systems established by the DA RFO 5 will reach the same productivity level, these SPIS serviced sites will collectively generate an additional 1,102,500 kilos of palay or 11,025 cavans rice.

Another benefit of SPIS is that water could be accessed anytime even during summer – when there is more need of irrigation water - due to abundance of sunlight which powered the solar panels.

“Noon, pag walang pera ay hindi kami makapagtanim ng palay dahil walang pambili ng diesel para sa pagpapatubig. Ngayon, kahit wala akong pera ay nakakapani pa rin dahil may Solar Powered Irrigation na kami,” said 73-year old farmer Jose Rebolado. “At tumaas din ang aming ani ng mahigit sa 20 kaban (1,000 kilos) sa isang ektarya,” he enthused. He used to get 30 cavans in his 1 hectare area, but now he can attain 50 cavans in the same area.

Engr. Nilda Albaño, chief of the Regional Agriculture Engineering Division (RAED) said the SPIS provides adequate water throughout the rice growing season resulting to higher yields. The farmers were also able to plan their planting and harvesting to avoid adverse weather conditions. More farmers were also encouraged to plant as they now have reliable source of irrigation water, resulting to increase in area planted to rice.

The establishment of SPIS in Bicol Region which started in 2017 is being implemented by the RAED. Big ticket projects such as construction of SPIS which is part of the Small Scale Irrigation Project (SSIPs) are among the top priorities of the Department of Agriculture to boost rice productivity and farmers income, hence the DA battle cry Masaganang Ani at Mataas

na Kita.

Edgardo Ruin admitted that when he submitted their request to the DA Regional Office in 2017, he only wished for a Shallow Tube Well (STW). He was very happy when aside from the STW, the DA regional office also identified his association as a qualified recipient of the Solar Powered Irrigation.

The AEFA only needs a 120 square meter lot area and source of irrigation water as their counterpart. Luckily, a woman member, the 80 year-old Milagros Balatong has an idle land adjacent to the Panganiban creek. All the barangay officials led by barangay captain Virgilio Nilo, together with the AEFA officers, persuaded her to donate a portion of her land. Convinced of the huge benefits of the SPIS, Aling Milagros executed a deed of donation for the 120 square meter portion of her lot where the SPIS now sits.



To contribute to the daily operation and maintenance expenses of the SPIS, the AEFA members voluntarily give one cavan for every 10 cavans of their harvest.

Clamor for more SPIS

Nabua Municipal Agriculturist Jesse Arnel P. Duran said that he is still scouting for farmers' associations that can qualify for the SPIS. “There are over 40 active farmers' associations in Nabua. The LGU is very dependent on the DA banner programs – Rice, Corn, High Value Crops, Livestock and Poultry and Organic Agriculture. But rice is the most dominant crop in Nabua as 3,600 hectares are irrigated areas, 600

hectares are rainfed and 26 hectares are upland areas. In his project proposal submitted to the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), MA Duran cited the 210 hectares potential irrigable areas which are possible sites of SPIS.

“With the diminishing agricultural areas, farmers need to embrace farm mechanization if they want to increase their income and if we want to achieve food security,” said Duran.

The municipality of Nabua is very lucky to be included in the beneficiaries of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Program (RCEP). As of January 2020, a total of 4,250 bags of certified rice seeds (RC 10, RC 18, RC 222) funded under the RCEP were distributed to the farmers in Nabua. “In my whole life as municipal agriculturist, I never had the opportunity to distribute over 4,000 bags of seeds. But with the RCEP, this is only the beginning,” MA Duran happily shares.

Duran's sentiment is also being shared by the members of the AEFA. “Nasa Department of Agriculture na ang lahat ng

pangangailan naming mga magsasaka – seeds, fertilizers, teknolohiya at makinarya, pestisidyo na lang ang kulang. Ang kailangan na lang namin ay magsipag,” said 73 year old rice farmer Abdon Zuniga.

The AEFA has full of hopes and aspirations for their further success. President Ruin has clear vision for his association which includes shifting to farm mechanization, addition of solar or mechanical dryers to accommodate the increasing harvest, and use of 4 wheel drive tractor to hasten land preparation of their growing rice areas. (sources: RAED 5 data)

Trainings

Training on Poultry, Swine, Small Ruminant Production and Pasture Dev't held

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR—Over 60 employees and animal farm caretakers of the Department of Agriculture (DA-Bicol), and walk-in clients from different Bicol provinces participated in the Training on Poultry, Swine, Small Ruminant Production and Pasture Development on February 11-13, 2020 at the Training Hall of DA here.

According to OIC-Chief of the Field Operations Division Dr. Mary Grace DP Rodriguez, this training will equip the participants especially those assigned in animal farms of the DA with the necessary skills

in administering proper care, management and maintenance of the farms. This is also DA's response to the clamor of the public to have trainings on livestock and poultry production as additional source of income.

Jayvee Bathan of Panganiban, Camarines Norte said that the training has updated his knowledge and basic skills in raising goat, sheep, and free-range chicken. Bathan is a management trainee of JSMS Organic Farm.

DA-Bicol Agriculturist and resource person Marianito A. Tesorero disclosed that there



DA-Bicol Agriculturist Marianito A. Tesorero serves as one of the resource persons during the 3-day Training on Poultry, Swine, Small Ruminant Production and Pasture Development at DA Bicol grounds.

is a required amount of feeds for swine depending on the brand of feeds.

Catanduanes Hilly Upland Development Station (CHUDS) Agricultural Technician Christian Ollet assigned in the poultry, small ruminants and native pig farm shared that the training will enhance his skill in carrying out his responsibility in the station.

Ollet added that "Isa

kasi ang Catanduanes kaya, mahirap makakuha ng mga kagamitan na kailangan sa pag-aalaga ng mga hayop, kaya, sa tulong ng training na ito, may karagdagang-kaalaman akong natutunan lalo na sa paggagamot ng mga may sakit na hayop. Malaking factor kasi ang klima at panahon sa Catanduanes sa estado ng kalusagan ng mga hayop, lalo na't lagi itong dinadaan ng bagyo."

One of the topics discussed was economics and record keeping.

Another resource person and Agricultural Program Coordinating Officer (APCO) of Masbate Wilfredo Nelmida said that farmers do not keep records of their production expenses and income so they do not know if they are making or losing money. This aspect is important in the operations of small-scale farmers because it would make their farming sustainable.

Other topics discussed include Poultry Industry Situationer, Native Chicken Production, Health Management, Duck Production Guide, breeds and breeding, reproduction, feeds and feeding, selection and culling, nutrition and feeding, Herd Management, goat raising and identification of forages. A hands-on Pasture Development workshop was also conducted on the last day. Dr. Fermin Rabusa, Jr. was also one of the speakers. (Jayson M. Gonzales)



Participants to the 3-day Training on Poultry, Swine, Small Ruminant Production and Pasture Development at DA Bicol grounds pose with the resource speakers (seating at front row).

DA Bicol supports COVID-19 frontlines

DA 5 High Value Crops Development Program donated four knapsack sprayers to the Bicol Medical Center in Naga City to aid in the disinfection of the hospital's premises.



SAAD helps Sorsogon farmers sell their produce thru Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita

Lack of access to markets due to the very strict enforcement of quarantine checkpoints and very limited option for transportation are just few of the current woes of our farmers particularly in the far flung areas.

“Nakapag-ani nga kami pero kung hindi mabenta ay mabubulok lang,” lamented Aling Fe Guardian of barangay Binanuahan, Juban Sorsogon. “Mahirap din lalo sa tulad kong walang sasakyan dahil hindi ako pwedeng kumuha ng Food Pass sa DA kung walang sasakyan,” she added.

Manang Fe Guardian is one the 243 individual beneficiaries of the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) for CY 2019. Her group, the Binanuahan Vegetable Farmers Association, where she is President, is also one of the 45 group beneficiaries of SAAD. The planting materials she

used were interventions from SAAD.

Her watermelon, pole sitao, raddish, pechay and garlic are ready for harvest soon. And her biggest problem is a market for her produce.

Luckily, on Monday, March 23, the team of the Special Area for Agricultural Development in Sorsogon headed by Regional Dairy Production and Technology Center (RDPTC) Superintendent Dolores Ricafranca, visited Manang Fe's farm and bought her farm produce.

On that lucky day alone, she was able to sell 363 kilos watermelon, 35 kilos squash, 3.75 kilos pole sitao, 8 kilos raddish, 130 kilos pechay, and 5 kilos native garlic to the SAAD team.

The said products were displayed the following day in the KADIWA NI ANI AT KITA post at the RDPTC, and Ricafranca reported that all agri



products were sold out on the same day. Ricafranca also said that the SAAD team will do their daily rounds in the whole province of Sorsogon and buy the farmers' produce until all of them have been given access to market and buyers in this trying time.

Following Sec. Dar's directive to help farmers by buying their produce, DA Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla instructed the ROSes in the six provinces to put up a KADIWA post and the AMAD at the regional office

in San Agustin, Pili, Cam Sur. These KADIWA stores will serve as drop off points or depository of the agricultural products from the farmers on a consignment basis.

KADIWA which stands for “Katuwang sa Diwa at Gawa para sa Masaganang Ani at Mataas na Kita” is a marketing strategy of the DA which directly connects the food producers to the consumers thereby lessening the cost of the products. (Lovella P. Guarin, photos courtesy of SAAD Sorsogon)

DA Bicol distributes 4,700 kilos of peanuts to vegetable farmers

The Department of Agriculture Bicol through the High Value Crops Development Program distributed 4,700 kilos of peanuts to vegetable farmers on February 11, 2020 at the DA covered court. Said distribution is part of the rehabilitation assistance of the DA for farmers affected by Typhoon Tisoy that hammered the region in December last year.

According to a study, peanut which is popularly known as a ground nut is actually a vegetable belonging to the legume family that includes peas and beans. Peanut and peanut products are inexpensive source of protein. Peanut growing is also economical and affordable.

Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez,

Chief Operations Division & HVCDP Regional Coordinator pointed out that vegetable farmers must be vigilant in growing their crops because aside from natural calamities, the presence of pests and insects are everywhere. She added that the popular Fall Army Worm (FAW) that attacked several corn plantations in other regions has a large host range that can also affect other crops.

Recipients of peanut under the Typhoon Tisoy Rehabilitation and Recovery Program were from Polangui, Daraga Albay; Bula, San Jose, Baao, Nabua Camarines Sur; San Miguel, Virac Catanduanes; Castilla, Sorsogon City. A total of 47 hectares of peanut plantation will receive interventions



Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez, Chief Operations Division & HVCDP Regional Coordinator gives a brief message.

from DA of 100 kilos of peanut per hectare. Aside from peanuts, the DA has already distributed garden tools and vegetable seeds earlier this year. (Blesilda A. Nuñez)



DAEA Bicol Chapter gives relief assistance to Taal victims

On January 12, 2020 Taal volcano erupted spewing ashes across Calabarzon, Metro Manila and some parts of Central Luzon and Ilocos Region. Classes and works were suspended. The PHILVOLCS subsequently issued an Alert Level 4.

The DA Employees Association Bicol Chapter conducted a donation drive for the benefit of the DA 4A -Calabarzon employees and their families affected by the eruption. DAEA Bicol also purchased P20,000 worth of hygiene kit which were included in the packed relief goods.

On January 29, 2020, the DAEA Bicol officers personally delivered the relief assistance to Lipa Agricultural Research Experiment Station (LARES) in Lipa City.



DAEA 5 officers led by its president Lovella P. Guarin (2nd from right) turned over the relief assistance to Avelita M. Rosales (3rd from left), Superintendent of Lipa Agricultural Research Experiment Station (LARES) in Lipa City, Batangas. Also in photo are Digna Narvacan (2nd from left) Chief of Research Division of DA RFO IV- CALABARZON; Ellen Villareal (left), DAEA 5 Treasurer and Nelia Bustarga (Auditor).



DAEA officers repacking rice which were donated by the members.

DAEA Bicol Chapter gives Vitamin C to members and JOs



Luz R. Marcelino is new ... (from page 20)

She has been honored, several times, by the different Infantry Divisions of the Philippine Army. On March 22, 2019, Marcelino received a Command Plaque of Recognition from the Philippine Army during their 122nd anniversary held at Fort Bonifacio in Manila.

In 2018, she received the Marcos R. Vega award from the Weed Science Society of the Philippines during the 50th conference of the Pest Management Council of the Philippines.

In 2015, she received the prestigious PAGASA

Award from the Civil Service Commission for her outstanding research and development activities on the production and promotion of quality seeds for rice, vegetables, legumes, and fruit trees. The awarding was held at the Malacañan Palace on the occasion of the 115th

Anniversary of the Phil. Civil Service.

She has also been designated as the focal person of the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD), a special project of the DA being implemented by the Operations Group. (Lovella P. Guarin)

DA Bicol honors its 2019 retirees

The retirees for 2019 of the DA Bicol were honored and given tribute in a simple but meaningful ceremonies held at the Training hall of the DA Regional Office on February 3, 2020. The 12 honorees was led by former Regional Executive Director Dr. Elena B. de los Santos who retired in November last year, 2 years before the mandatory retirement age of 65 .

The tribute to retirees dubbed as “Salamat, Paalam” Program which is also prescribed by the Civil Service Commission through Memorandum Circular no. 07 series of 1998 for adoption by all government agencies and institutions is intended to honor retirees whether under mandatory or optional retirement in recognition of their contribution to public service.

For first time that the tribute was held not during the Christmas program or the year end celebration which is also dedicated to giving of recognitions and awards to individuals, the different divisions, programs, operating units of the DA regional office and Research Outreach Stations (ROS) for their outstanding performances and accomplishments.

“We opted to hold this tribute to our retirees on a separate occasion to really give them special day and time to be honored. They are on the spotlight all by themselves unlike during Christmas celebrations when they have to share the stage with other awardees,” explains Emilia B. Bordado, chief of the RAFIS and incumbent president of the DA Senior Citizens and PWD Association which took the lead in organizing the tribute in coordination with the Human Resource Management Unit and the focal person/coordinator for senior Citizens and PWDs, Nena P. Adupe.

Aside from Director de los Santos last year retirees included: Eng. Arnie C. Ilan, Supervising Agriculturist and former chief of the Regional Agricultural Engineering Division; Imelda T. Peña, former Administrative Officer V assigned at the Research Division; Edgar V. Ollet, Senior Science Research Specialist at ROS Catanduanes; Miriam B. Catanay, Science Research Specialist II at ROS Albay; Divinia D. Espinida, Livestock Inspector at ROS Sorsogon;



Former Regional Executive Director Dr. Elena B. de los Santos led the 12 honorees.

Arlene S.A. Almeda, Agriculture Center Chief II assigned at Agribusiness



and Marketing Assistance Division; Priscilla A. Alcantara, Farm Worker but designated as Personnel Clerk assigned the HRM Section and, Corazon P. Velarde Laboratory Aide I at the Research Division. A posthumous award was also given to the late Angel S.A. Balisoro, Senior Agriculturist assigned at the Livestock Program who succumbed to a lingering illness.

Director de los Santos who delivered the response for and behalf of the retirees shared the valuable lessons, insights and

memorable experiences she had while working in the DA. She thanked God for always granting her ardent prayers. She urged everyone to always value time – to always be prompt and to respect the time of others by not making them wait.

Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla thanked the retirees for their contribution to the attainment of the goals of the agency and their dedication to public service. Regional Technical Director for Research and Regulations Dr. Edgar R. Madrid also honored them for setting a good example to the younger and new breed of public servants.



Luz Marcelino is new Regional Technical Director for Operations

The Department of Agriculture in Bicol has a new full-fledged Regional Technical Director for Operations and Extension in the person of Luz R. Marcelino.

Although Marcelino's plantilla position, Director III or RTD is at Region 4B (MIMAROPA), Secretary William Dar assigned her to the DA Regional Office in Bicol by virtue of Special Order No. 28 series of 2020 dated January 10, 2020.

Marcelino graduated Cum Laude with the degree of BS in Agriculture major in Agronomy at the Bicol University College of Agriculture in Guinobatan, Albay. She took her Master of Science in Agriculture Agronomy specializing in Plant Physiology/Weed Science at the University of the Philippines at Los Baños.

She also took her fellowship in Root Physiology at University of Negev, Jacob Blaustein Institute for Desert Studies in Israel.

She started her stint in government service as Agronomist I at the Department of Agriculture in 1984. She also held various technical positions as Agricultural and Food Technologist, Agriculturist II, and Senior Agriculturist. In 2006, she was promoted to Agricultural Center Chief III, and in 2014, she was appointed as Chief of the Research Division with the position Chief Science Research Specialist, the position she held until she was appointed as RTD in December 2019.

She has authored numerous researches, most of which garnered Best Paper awards in the regional and even national Research and Development reviews sponsored by the



Luz R. Marcelino takes her oath as RTD for Operations before Agriculture Secretary William Dar.

Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) and the Phil. Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD).

Marcelino has also been conferred by the Philippine Army the honorary title - Major

(Reserve) for her all-out support to the projects and activities of the said military institution and as one of the Advisory Board of the 51st Engineers Brigade based at Camp Atienza, Quezon City.

(Please turn to page 18)

24 farms in Bicol are GAP certified

A total of 24 farms in Bicol are now GAP certified. This was the confirmation made by the Department of Agriculture during the turn over ceremony on January 27 at the DA-RFO 5 compound. Rodel Tornilla, Regional Executive Director together with Raymund Marcelino, Supervising Agriculturist, Regulatory Division led the turn over ceremony. The farm owners were represented by the Agricultural Extension Workers in their area who played an important role in achieving said certification.


Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) are production standards that were developed to minimize risks of contaminating agricultural products due to harmful microbes. According to Ailene Babilonia, Agriculturist II & Deputized National Inspector, the farms underwent four modules of GAP which were: food safety, workers welfare, right quality of produce and

caring about environment. The farms were carefully assessed and evaluated through voluntary audit procedures.

GAP certified farms approved by the Bureau of Plant Industry were: Arsenas Farm, Mardith Farm, Necitas Farm, Cuatro's Farm, Trining Farm, De Los Santos Farm, Calatrava's Farm, Bertulfo's Farm, Deloverges Agri Farm, Iriga City Oragon Farm, Susan's Farm, Ave-Lino's Farm, Rival's Farm. Farms with renewed certificates were:

Culmor Farm, Vks Farm, Mauswag Agri Business Inc., Mikeliz Integrated Farm, Pebre's Farm, Pilar Municipal Nursery, Cerillo's Farm. GAP certified farms since 2018 were: Sonriza Farm, Pebre's Farm, NVAC (Naga View Adventist College), Labo Progressive Multi-Purpose Cooperative.

(Blesilda A. Nuñez)




Department of Agriculture
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 Reg'l Agriculture and Fisheries
 Information Section
 e-mail: darafid5@yahoo.com

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