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DA Sec. William D. Dar turns over P38M agri support and signs MOA with partners in Bicol

by Emily B. Bordado



About P38 million worth of production inputs, farm equipment and interventions were turned over by Department of Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar to

various farmers groups, irrigators associations, cluster associations and Local Government Units during his visit to the province of Albay on October 19, 2021.

The secretary also turned over to the Albay Provincial Agriculture Office the prizes for the winners of the province-wide contest under the Albay Family-Based Food Gardening Program.

Secretary Dar likewise led the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement with the parties involved in the implementation of the Provincial-led Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Systems (PAFES) which is the modality of implementing the agriculture and fisheries extension services in the provinces with the impending implementation of “full devolution” as stipulated

(Please turn to page 6)

DA-Bicol gives sentinel piglets, feeds to ASF-affected farmers in Albay

by Jayson M. Gonzales

“Madadangog ko na naman an ugik kan orig pakatapos kan pirang bulan na dai akong ataman dahil sa ASF (Now I will be hearing again the squealing of a pig after months without raising one due to ASF),” related Rey Barcillano of Barangay Hindi, Bacacay, Albay as DA-Bicol Regional Technical Director for Research and Regulations Dr. Edgar R. Madrid handed him a piglet and a sack of starter feed during the Distribution of Sentinel Pigs as a prerequisite for African Swine Fever (ASF) Free Declaration/Rehabilitation Program.

Each raiser receives a sentinel piglet weighing 15-20 kg each and a starter feed for free. Each municipality will also receive disinfection paraphernalia. The sentinel piglets were sourced out from BAI-accredited farms and had undergone PCR Tests.

DA-Bicol Regional Technical Director for Research and Regulations Dr. Edgar R. Madrid said that the distribution of these animals was based on

(Please turn to page 7)

FEATURE:
Bicol's Kabataang Agribiz finalist strives for sustainable impact to community and environment via social enterprise p14

Derbies by private companies provide technology options to Bicol farmers

p10

RED Rodel P. Tornilla, conferred Outstanding Public Servant Award of the Year

p3

Catanduanes strawberry farmer wins National Outstanding Rural Woman 2021 award

by Lovella P. Guarin

QUEZON CITY –The Bicol Region took center stage once again as a 28-year old strawberry farm owner from Catanduanes was hailed as the grand winner in the 2021 DA's Search for National Outstanding Rural Women. The award was dubbed as “Gawad Parangal sa Katangitanging Kababaihan sa Pagsasaka

at Panginisda sa Kanayunan.” Cristina Torreda, Bicol's contender to the search is only 28 years old but she was able to establish a flourishing strawberry farm in San Andres, Catanduanes—a typhoon-prone island known as the Land of the Howling Wind.



(Please turn to page 12)

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Consolidation to bring about higher productivity and efficiency gains

One of the four pillars that is vital to the transformation of Philippine Agriculture is consolidation. It is necessary to spur the continued growth, modernization and industrialization of the agriculture and fishery sector. **Through consolidation, there will be better utilization of assets and resources and more purchasing and distribution advantages for the agri-stakeholders in the value chain.** Thus, the Department of Agriculture under the leadership of Secretary William D. Dar gives priority to

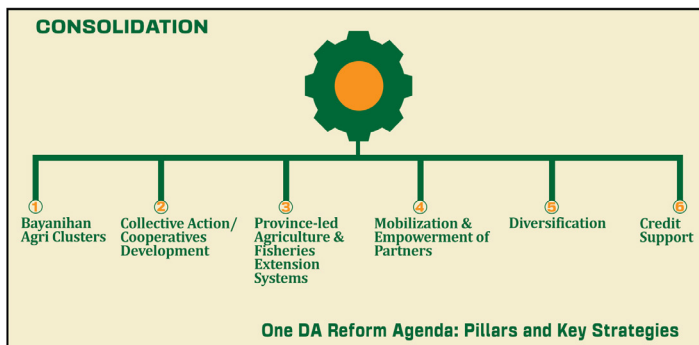
consolidation which involves farmers/fishers organizing into cooperatives or associations, and consolidating their farms into clusters to attain economies-of-scale in a potential partnership with private sector to produce more cost-efficient products, and generate bigger revenues and income.

By organizing farmers and fisherfolk into cooperatives or business entities, they become viable units of production and yield more cost-efficient products, and generate bigger revenues and income. Government interventions would thus be easier to be integrated into organized farmers' and fisherfolk's groups and the impact would be greater. The DA in Bicol has started this via the Bayanihan Agri Clustering. To date, there are already 105 agri-clusters; for rice 20, for corn 57, for livestock 5 and 23 for HVCDP.

Another strategy being pursued under the consolidation approach is mobilization and empowerment of partners with the participation of private sector in the establishment of more agri-based industries in the rural areas. Here in the Bicol region, the Local Chamber of Commerce and Industry, business groups, private seed companies and people's councils

and civil society organizations and other industry players are working in partnership with the DA to empower and capacitate farmers associations and provide them better access to new technologies and services.

The Province-led Agriculture



and Fisheries Extension Systems (PAFES) which is the modality of implementing the agriculture and fisheries extension services in the provinces with the impending implementation of full devolution as stipulated in the Mandanas ruling to take effect in 2022 is now being piloted in the Province of Albay. No less than Secretary William D. Dar led the signing of the MOA with the four other partners namely the Albay Provincial Government, the Bicol University, the Provincial Agriculture and Fishery Council, the Albay Business Club and the Albay Agriculture Cooperative.

Interventions and support are also now being provided to encourage farmers to venture into diversification particularly those involved in rice, corn and coconut sectors. Alongside with the interventions, policy framework for credit support is also now put in place to encourage active participation of the banking sector and government financial system. Partnership opportunities both upstream and downstream will assure a steady and stable supply of agricultural commodities and goods and minimize risk throughout the length of the supply chain and make the value chain more effective and sustainable.

RED Rodel P. Tornilla, conferred Outstanding Public Servant Award of the Year

DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla received the Dangal ng Bayang Filipino award as Outstanding Public Servant of the Year during the 16th GAWAD FILIPINO AWARDS held on December 27, 2021 at the Aberdeen Court, Great Eastern Hotel, Quezon City.

RED Tornilla personally received the prestigious award from Dr. Danilo B. Mangahas, CEO and President Gawad Filipino.

The Gawad Filipino envisions to establish a royal heritage, not only as a monument in trophies, but also to intensify internationalization and provide world-class breed of personalities and organizations thru their heroism during the pandemic time.

The Gawad Filipino aims to recognize an individual's excellence as demonstrated in passion and work ethics that greatly caused



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT
Field Office V
Serbisong Oragon sa Lahat ng Panahon

11 October 2021

DIRECTOR RODEL P. TORNILLA, MABE
Regional Executive Director
Regional Advisory Council Member
Department of Agriculture, Regional Field Office No.V
San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur 4418

Dear **Dir. Tornilla**

Greetings from DSWD Field Office V!

The Department of Social Welfare and Development through Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program would like to express our sincere and grateful appreciation for the support provided to the department during the conduct of Online Kumustahan: A Regional Advisory Council Online Monitoring and Engagement with Pantawid Beneficiaries last October 4-6, 2021 thru the DSWD Singko Family Development Learning Hub.

We look forward for a continuous partnership with your good office.

Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,
(signed)
LEO L. QUINTILLA, CESE
OIC-Regional Director
DSWD Field Office V

an impact on The 16th Gawad Filipino Awards' theme was "Filipinos in times of struggle, uplifting the nation through humane pursuits".
Philippine cultures, tradition and in the society for humane innovations.

Letters

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Camarines Sur
Municipality of Goa, Barangay Lamón
OFFICE OF THE PUNONG BARANGAY

16 November 2021

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

Sir,

I would like to extend my grateful thanks and high appreciation for the financial assistance from your good office for the construction of small water irrigation system in our barangay to transform this killing field to a productive land making it as a playground of our younger generations.

I pray to the Lord to help the hard working personnel of the Department of Agriculture to feed our people.

God Bless the Philippines!

Very truly yours,
(signed)
VITO TRIBIANA Jr.
Barangay Kagawad

DA Bicol distributes P9.7M interventions to Catanduanes farmers

VIRAC, CATANDUANES – DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla led the distribution of a total of P 9.7M worth of interventions under the Quick Response Fund (QRF) including Fertilizer Discount Vouchers to the farmers affected by typhoons Quinta, Rolly, and Ulysses.

The Rice Program distributed a total of P7.8M worth of Fertilizer Discount Voucher and interventions under QRF; the Corn and Cassava Program turned over P631,320.00 worth of interventions; P194,185.00 from HVCDP; P997,500 from Livestock and Poultry Program; and P63,000 from Balik Probinsya Program/AMIA. An initial 100 rice RSBSA-listed rice farmers cultivating 2-hectares and below and have availed of rice seeds from the Rice Program were

a total of 951 rice farmers will receive fertilizer discount voucher amounting to P2.99M before December ends.

The Office of the Provincial Agriculturist as well as all the 11 municipalities received various interventions consisting of 50 bags urea fertilizer, 50 bags zinc sulfate (25 kg/bag), 10 units knapsack sprayer, 100 pcs laminated sacks, 50 packs plant growth enhancer and 24 liters foliar fertilizer from the QRF- Rice Program.

Under the Corn and Cassava Program, the Pandan

2 units cassava granulator amounting to P631,320.00. Under the High Value Crops Development Program, Luzviminda Oropeza of Baras, Catanduanes received P65,685.00 worth of interventions consisting of vegetable seeds, 1 roll green net, 1 roll UV

interventions, the DA has already provided various assistance to the Catanduanes farmers immediately after the successive typhoons ravaged the province in November and December 2020. The distribution was held at the Catanduanes State



plastic film, and 1 unit grass cutter. Under the Livestock and Poultry Program, 100 heads of goats worth P997,500 were distributed to typhoon-affected farmers in the 11 municipalities.

Meanwhile, the Balik Probinsya Bagong Pag-asa Program turned over incubators to Biong Farmers Association in Gigmoto and Peñafrancia Farmers and Fisherfolk's Association in Viga.

Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez, Chief of the Field Operations Division said that aside from the aforementioned

University on December 6, 2021.

In attendance were Nelia B. Teves, Provincial Agriculturist; Camille Andrea R. Gianan representing Cong. Hector Sanchez; Alma Villanueva, representing TGP Partylist Congressman Jose Bong Teves, Jr.; Lemuel Sortida, representing Governor Joseph C. Cua; PAFC Chair Anita Tassara; Catanduanes State University President Patrick Alain T. Azanza; Earl Vincent P. Vegas, newly designated Rice Program regional coordinator; Dean Medrano, CHUDS Superintendent and Rafael Magallanes, APCO of Catanduanes. Also present were Municipal Agriculturists who assisted the farmer-beneficiaries.

(Lovella P. Guarin)



given Fertilizer Discount Vouchers. For the province of Catanduanes,



Cassava Cluster Association received 2 units chipper and

Cam.Norte Rice Farmers receive Financial Assistance

DAET, CAMARINES NORTE – Some 7,843 rice farmers in this province will start getting P5, 000.00 cash assistance from DA as the Rice Farmers Financial Assistance (RFFA) was formally launched here on December 10, 2021.

Rice farmers who are registered with the RSBSA or Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture and whose farms are two hectares and below, are entitled to receive the RFFA which can be withdrawn through the Interventions Monitoring Card (IMC) that will be provided to the farmers. This IMC will serve as an identification and cash card.

Luz R. Marcelino, Regional Technical Director for Operations who represented DA Bicol during the launching said that the funds for the RCEF-RFFA came from the excess tariffs from the P10 Billion Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) institutionalized through RA 11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law. The

law seeks to improve rice farmers' income and lower the cost of

This project is in partnership with the Development Bank of the



rice production by 30% through the provision of machineries, seeds, credit and extension.

A total of 111,880 rice farmers nationwide will receive the P5,000 cash assistance—28,296 farmers in Albay; 7,843 in Camarines Norte; 5,605 in Catanduanes; 17,829 in Masbate; 18,705 in Sorsogon; and 33,602 in Camarines Sur.

Philippines and the Land Bank of the Philippines. The DBP and LBP also partnered with the USSC this time for the payment of the cash assistance. The distribution of cash assistance will continue until the end of December this year.

The launching of the RFFA was held at the Agro Sports Center in Daet which coincided with the

2021 Year-end Assessment for the 182 Barangay Agricultural Extension Workers of the province.

Governor Edgardo A. Tallado said that in Bicol and even in the Philippines, only Camarines



Norte province has Barangay Agri Extension Workers. Governor Tallado added that these volunteer workers are receiving a P1, 500 monthly incentive from the provincial government aside from the incentives from their respective barangays and municipalities.

(Lovella P. Guarin)



Agriculture Secretary William Dar leads roll-out of Rice Farmers Financial Assistance in Bicol

Agriculture secretary William D. Dar led the initial roll-out of the P5,000 Cash assistance to Bicol rice farmers who qualified to the Rice Farmers Financial Assistance Program (RFFA) under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Program.

The first 100 farmers from the 3 districts of Albay province received the cash assistance of P5,000 after they were issued their respective Interventions Monitoring Card (IMC).

The Development Bank of the Philippines and the Land Bank of the Philippines are the conduit banks for this project. The IMC card will also serve as identification card and cash card.

For Albay province alone, a total of 28, 296 farmers who are tilling a rice area of 2 hectares and below and are enrolled in the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture are eligible to avail of the cash assistance amounting to P141, 480 million. For the entire Bicol a total of 111,880 farmers are eligible with a total amount of over P559 million.

Sec. Dar said that although the Rice Tarrification Law was met with a lot of resistance it is actually a game changer and rice farmers are now benefitting from it. He explained that the funds for the RFFA were taken from the excess amount from the yearly P10 billion RCEF fund allocated to help rice

farmers through provision of seeds, fertilizers, capability enhancement or extension services and credit.

Secretary Dar also announced that the requested funds for the rehabilitation of the abaca industry in Bicol which was severely affected by the series of typhoons last year has already been released by the DBM. Of the P110 million released for the rehab, P70 million is allocated for Catanduanes

thousand; check incentives for the Participatory Coconut Planting Projects from PCA worth over P444 thousand; 4 units motorized bancas complete with accessories; 72 sets bottom set sets gill nets; 16,200 pcs seaweed seedlings and processing area for sea urchin, abalone, sea cucumber and other fishery commodities with equipment and accessories from BFAR all-in-all amounting to over P2.5 million; 13 units threshers from



and P40 million is for Albay.

Secretary Dar likewise led the distribution to individual beneficiaries and associations /cooperatives of production inputs, machines and other interventions worth P45.79 million provided by various attached agencies of the DA. These include abaca planting materials and vermicasts from PhilFIDA worth over P508

PhilMech amounting to over P2 million; and 52,940 bags of inbred palay seeds worth over P40 million from PhilRice.

He thanked and commended the farmers for being the heroes of our times as they continue producing food for the Filipinos even amid the pandemic and urge them not to lose hope as he avers “ *Ang ating bansa ay babangon. Ang ating*

agrikultura ay babangon.”

During his interaction with the local media he explained that the DA is now taking measures to address or cushion the effects of the increasing cost of fertilizers and fuels which have big impact on agriculture. He said that DA is promoting balanced fertilization strategy which recommend the combination of organic, inorganic and bio-fertilizers. Also, he bared that the DA management team has written President Duterte requesting additional budget from unutilized funds of the national government to be used by the DA for fertilizer subsidy.

Sec. Dar added that DA management is also considering the granting of fuel subsidy for farmers and fishers and he has written the senate to formally request for additional budget.

The secretary was accompanied by Assistant Secretary for Operations Arnel V. de Mesa and Assistant Secretary for Strategic Communications Noel O. Reyes. Also present during the event were Albay Governor Al Francis Bichara; vice-governor Edcel Greco Alexandre Lagman, Fernando

T. Cabredo, representative, 3rd district; Alfredo A. Garbin, Jr. representative AKO Bicol Party List; Jose J. TEVES Jr., representative, Talino at Galing ng Pinoy (TGP) partylist ; Jun Bandal, senior vice-president, DBP; Mayor Andy Mariscotes of Polangui, Albay. Provincial Agriculturist Cheryl Rebata and all the regional heads of the DA attached agencies.

(Emily B. Bordado)

DA Sec. William D. Dar turned over...(from page 1)

in the Mandanas Ruling to take effect in 2022. Sec. Dar has declared PAFES as the institutional arrangement in integrating DA's various programs in the provinces. Through PAFES, DA will help boost the capabilities of LGUs.

PAFES is now being piloted in selected provinces. In the Bicol region, the province of Albay has been selected as the pilot province. Aside from the DA which is being represented by Sec. Dar the other parties and signatories to the MOA are: the Albay PLGU represented by Governor Bichara, Bicol University, represented by its president, Dr. Arnulfo M. Mascariñas, the Provincial Agriculture and Fisheries Council represented by its chairperson Rene A. de los Reyes, the Albay Business Club represented by its president Atty. Fiona Mae Corral-Bobis and the Albay Agriculture Cooperative represented by its chairperson Jose C. San Jose.

Secretary Dar commended the Albay province under the leadership of Governor Bichara for investing in agriculture and for "showing the way and showcasing what must be done to ensure food security". *"Kailangan ang mahusay na liderato to make PAFES work as it is intended to be, he added. The DA will do the steering and the LGUs will do the rowing,"* he underscored. Dar also took note of the suggestion of Albay 2nd district representative Joey S. Salceda who also joined the activity to have a Bureau of Agricultural Coop under the DA. The secretary said that there is indeed a plan to create a Bureau of Agricultural

Industry Coop under the DA. Dar also commended DA-Bicol under the leadership of Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla for its consistent outstanding performance obtaining an over-all ranking either first

officials and staff of the school. Some of the big ticket interventions distributed by the DA banner programs during the secretary's visit were: 1 hauling truck for the Albay Pili and Cacao Industry Association worth P1.9m from the High

farmers associations. These include 14 units of 4Wheel Drive tractors and 6 units of Rice Combine Harvesters with an aggregate total amount of over P29.5 M. The other production inputs distributed were: foliar fertilizers, plant



or second among regions. Also present during the MOA signing aside from Governor Bichara and Rep. Salceda were the province's political luminaries; Vice Governor Drex Lagman, 3rd district Representative Fernando "Didi" Cabredo; Ako Bicol Partylist representative Alfredo Garbin, Jr., and a number of municipal mayors. Also in attendance were the heads of the DA attached agencies.

The Secretary also visited the Albay Farmers Ville Farm School Extension-Albay Rice Station in Ligao City and interacted with the students currently enrolled in the farm school and the

Value Commercial Program (HVCDP); Multi Commodity Drying Pavement worth almost P497,000.00 for the Daraga, Albay corn cluster; Pump and engine set for Mapaco Corn Cluster Association; Corn Sheller worth over P198,000 for Oas Corn Cluster; hammer mill worth P85,000 for Oas Upland cluster all of these from the Corn Program; and 3 units incubator worth P102,000 for the TIBOLI Association in Tiwi, Albay from the Livestock & Poultry Program.

Meanwhile, farm machineries and equipment from the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech) were turned over to various

growth enhancers, laminated sacks, corn seeds (OPV glutinous and sweet corn) garden tools, assorted vegetable seeds, cordless chainsaws, grass cutters, wheel barrows, plastic mulch, plastic crates, water hoses and plastic pails.

The Secretary was accompanied by Assistant Secretary for Strategic Communications Noel O. Reyes and other staff. Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla, Regional Technical Director for Operations Luz R. Marcelino and RTD for Research and Regulations Dr. Edgar R. Madrid and senior officials and staff of the DA regional office also joined the activities.

DA Bicol consistently in top 5 performing regions

Agriculture Secretary William Dar awarded plaques of recognition to the top performing Regional Field Offices (RFOs) of the Department of Agriculture (DA) during the first day of the Management Committee Meeting on

November 23, 2021.

DA Bicol was top 5 among all regions of the country in terms of overall (physical and financial) performance with a rating of 83.75 % equivalent to outstanding performance.



Photo from William Dar Facebook Account

DA Bicol gives sentinel pigs...(from page 1)

zero-reported case in the municipalities for at least 90 days. The sentinel protocol checks if a virus or disease is still present in the area. The repopulation of hogs can only be allowed if the pigs could survive and progress to maturity without any trace of ASF virus based on the close monitoring and laboratory results of blood samples. Madrid added that the sentinelling and repopulation program in the province of Albay is part of the 'Bantay ASF sa Barangay'

Operations Division Chief Dr. Mary Grace DP Rodriguez, DA-Bicol allocated P1,445,000.00 for this rehab program to ensure the continuous swine production of backyard raisers in the province to increase pig population which was adversely affected with the outbreak of the African Swine Fever last year. This will subsequently stabilize pork supplies and prices in the province.

A total of 170 sentinel piglets were distributed to the



City, Daraga, Tabaco, Malinao, Bacacay, Oas and Malilipot) of Albay. Aside from the piglets and starter feeds, ASF-affected farmers already received their indemnification assistance of P5,000.00 for every culled swine at a maximum of 20 swine per farmer.

Farmer Santiago Salinas of Kilicao, Daraga, Albay shared that the indemnification assistance he received for his 20 culled pigs, gave him hope and helped him cope with the negative effects of the pandemic to his livelihood. *"Tapos, yading makukuku ko na libreng orig sa Department of Agriculture, masasabi ko na blessing dahil magapon na naman ako sa pag-oorig. Dagdag sa income pa barang sa*

abot na mga panawn (And then, this swine dispersal from DA, I consider as a blessing because I will start again with swine raising as an added income in the coming years)," Salinas said.

Based on the data presented by Albay Veterinary Office staff Dr. Manny Victorino, the first ASF case in the province was reported on September 22, 2020 in Pioduran and eventually spread to two cities, seven municipalities, 27 barangays, 23 index cases that resulted to 1,219 hogs depopulated which peaked in February 2021. *"Yet, the situation improved because since March this year, there is no reported case in the province,"* Victorino added.



or BABay ASF program launched early this year. According to Field

ASF-affected swine raisers from the nine municipalities (Pioduran, Polangui, Ligao

DALEA Gives Back

The tradition of giving back still goes on even on difficult times

Ms. Imelda Acompañado, the president of the Department of Agriculture Lady Employees Association (DALEA), together with the officers and representatives from each division/section, lead the distribution of gift pack to its members on December

17, 2021 at the Department of Agriculture, RFO 5. The DALEA has 146 members including the 25 members from Research Outreach Stations (ROS) of DA. According to Ms. Acompañado, every year, during Christmas season, the DALEA prepares

something that they can give back to each member of the association. This year, the gift

pack is themed "spaghetti galore" and it is the first time that the 8 retired lady employees are also given the same gift pack. Last year, their gift pack is called "salad galore".





Inauguration of the facilities recently established at the BIARC in San Agustin, Pili CamSur and at the ARDC in Camalig, Albay under the BAR funded project *“Enhancing Technology Transfer and Capacities in Bicol region”*. The project leader was Corazon A. Orbon, Chief of the Research Division. She was assisted by Dr. Elsa C. Maranan and Doris V. Yap.

Bayanihan 2 funded facilities to enhance techno transfer and capacities in Bicol



Twelve modern facilities with a total worth of P37.5 million funded under the Bayanihan 2 to Recover as One Act 2 or Bayanihan 2 given by the DA-Bureau of Agricultural Research were completed and are now operational. The Bayanihan 2 fund lapsed on June 30, 2021. The project was implemented by the Research Division led by its chief, Corazon A. Orbon under the supervision of Regional Technical

Director for Research and Regulations Dr. Edgar R. Madrid. Eight facilities were established at the Bicol Integrated Agricultural Research Center (BIARC) inside the DA RFO 5 compound in Pili, CamSur and four facilities were established at the Albay Research and Development Center (ARDC) –Albay Breeding Station in Cabangan, Camalig Albay. At the BIARC inside the DA compound, the newly constructed

facilities included three Solar Powered Irrigation Systems for the upland area and irrigated lowland areas supporting seed production for vegetables, legumes and rice; R4D trials for rice and varietal evaluation. Orbon said that the completion of 1 unit 30 Hp and 2 units 3 Hp submersible solar-powered irrigation pumps worth P10.49M including rehabilitation of 4 irrigation canals consisting of 2,000 linear meter canal worth P5.5M will boost the agency's R&D trial for rice as well as production and distribution of stress-tolerant inbred rice seeds and high value crops to marginalized communities.

Meanwhile, the old motor pool was rehabilitated and turned into a state-of-the-art Crop Postharvest and R4D Facility to enhance GAP-compliance activities of rice, corn, and high value crops produced at the station. Orbon said that this will realize the long-time vision of the Research Division to produce safe products with reduced microbial contamination.

Orbon added that the completion

of this facility was very timely as the Research Division is currently producing volumes of seeds and planting materials for distribution to farmers in response to Plant, Plant, Plant Program or ALPAS kontra COVID-19. Also completed were the 2 units Native Chicken Research and Development Facility measuring 13 meters x 16 meters worth P1.99M each. It is equipped with cabinet-type incubators to ensure 100% hatchability of eggs.

Meanwhile, the completion of the second floor of the Mushroom R4D center will give way to more commercialization activity for mushroom production leading to enterprise development as the two-storey building has a spacious conference/ training room, an appropriate venue for mushroom production and value adding trainings. Upscaling of community-based production and processing of mushroom are on-going in the provinces of Albay and Sorsogon with 15 MSMEs engaged into mushroom production and processing.

Meanwhile, in Albay Research and Development Center (ARDC) at Cabangan, Camalig, Albay, four modern facilities were constructed including the P 5.9 million 2-storey Multi-purpose R4D

(Please continue to page 19)

DA-Bicol partners with CamSur Chamber of Commerce to boost and sustain economy in 4th Bicol Agri Summit

The Department of Agriculture (DA) in Bicol through the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) and the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) partnered with the Camarines Sur Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CSCCI) to promote its programs, projects, services, and advocacies during the 4th Bicol Agri Summit, live streaming via CSCCI Vortex, Facebook Live and YouTube Live on October 21 to 23, 2021.

According to 4th Bicol Agri Summit Chairperson Regina V. Melchor, the three-day activity aims to support the agri-fishery sector in driving economic recovery and development amid challenges like climate change, the global COVID-19 pandemic, and the declining interest in agriculture among the youth. With the theme eAgri Summit 2021: Yield, E-nnovate and Sustain (YES!), the 4th Bicol Agri Summit offers free webinars on animal health care particularly the prevention and mitigation of African Swine Fever (ASF), investment opportunities such as free range chicken and duck raising, hydroponics and aquaponics, government programs for the youth in agriculture, virtual information caravan on agri-credit programs, innovative farming focused on modern technologies for better yield in crop production, eKadiwa Digital Marketing with CSCCI Muramart. It will also feature product presentations as well as success stories and best practices for productive and profitable agribusiness.

Among the speakers during the plenary sessions were University Researcher Proceso H. Manguiat of the University of the Philippines Los Baños Institute of Plant Breeding who lectured on hydroponics and Dr. Liza G. Battad Officer in Charge Executive Director

of the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF) who discussed the Agricultural and Fishery Youthpreneur Council.

Meanwhile, Michael Jordan O. Roquid, DA RFO V ACPC Focal Person, Dick Allen Bernas, Account Officer of the Land Bank of the Philippines Camarines Sur Lending Center, and Mark Bragais, Development Bank of the Philippines Focal Person and Account Officer provided information on the credit facility and loan windows for agriculture, Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF) and Swine Lending Program, and Expanded

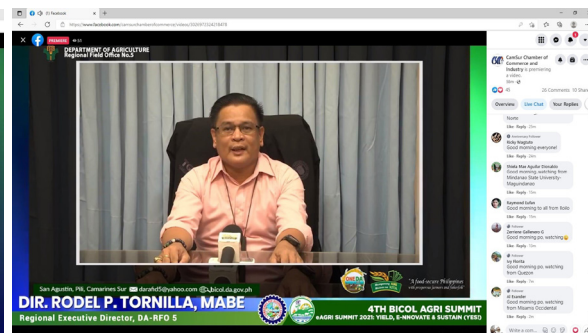
"In the performance of our tasks, we must always be reminded of our updated vision and mission: A food-secure and resilient Philippines with prosperous and empowered farmers and fishers to make farming and fishing more profitable, productive, and competitive so that future shocks such as this pandemic do not threaten food security and nutrition of the Filipino," Secretary Dar said.

Likewise, DA-Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla shared some of the regional field office's activities, programs and services amid the COVID-19 pandemic. He also recognized the contribution of each segment of the value chain

cooperation and unity among all stakeholders saying *"Kailangan lang po natin ang kooperasyon upang matupad ang layunin natin na patuloy na magkaroon ng masustansya at murang pagkain sa bawat mesa ng mamamayang Pilipino at makamit ang minimithing magkaroon ng masaganang ani at mataas na kita."*

Present during the virtual Opening Ceremonies were CSCCI President Maria Soledad V. Magtuto, CSCCI 4th Bicol Agri Summit Vice-Chairperson Gaudencio Iriola Jr., Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) Regional Governor for South Luzon Region V Mergie N. Moraleda, and PCCI Area Vice President for South Luzon Clarine P. Tobias, who also imparted their messages.

The 4th Bicol Agri Summit is co-sponsored by the



Rice Credit Assistance-Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ERCA-RCEF), respectively.

Keynote speaker DA Secretary William D. Dar lauded the 4th Bicol Agri Summit organizers and sponsors' initiative and foresight to keep abreast with the new mode of agriculture undertaking amid the sector's continuous effort to adjust to the new normal. He stated how the pandemic renewed the society's recognition of the vital and critical role of the agri-fishery sector in the endless mission to guarantee food security and lead the economy towards faster economic recovery under the new normal. He also shared some of the agency's strategies guided by the One DA Reform agenda,

especially the farmers and fisherfolks to economic and social sustainability. He expressed hope that the 4th Bicol Agri Summit will serve as a venue in knowledge sharing and in finding solutions and strategies towards the goal of building a sustainable economy

Provincial Local Government Unit of Camarines Sur, other government agencies, non-government organizations, animal feeds companies, and private individuals. It is one of the highlights of the five-month Camarines Sur Business Expo 2021 on July



and ensuring food security. He also called for 22 to November 12, 2021. (Annielyn L. Baleza)

Derbies by private companies provide technology options to Bicol farmers

....Hybrid Rice varieties derby for wet season cropping

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR—The Department of Agriculture-5 through its Rice Program conducted the Hybrid Rice Seed Derby on November 26, 2021 at the Central Bicol Experiment

Station (CBES) here to promote to the rice farmers high yielding and cost reducing technologies and the importance of using hybrid rice seeds to enhance rice productivity in the region amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

the Integrated Laboratories Division, represented DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla who was in Manila. He said that this is the second Hybrid Rice Derby at the DA RFO5 to

Secretary William D. Dar's marching order to promote the use of organic fertilizer through balanced fertilization to help farmers save on fertilizer cost.

Regional Rice Focal representatives of seed companies and the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA).

The 17 hybrid rice seed varieties include Bioseed's Biorice 453; Syngenta's NK 5017 and S6003; Bayer's AZ 88433 DT, Habilis Plus and Bigante Plus; DOSEPCO's Mestizo 20; Seedworks' TH 82 and US 88; Corteva's PHB 77 and PHB 79; SL Agritech's SL 19, SL 20 and SL 68; Longping's Longping 205 and Longping 937; and Leads Agri's Jackpot.

The techno-demo covered 5.95 hectares with each seed variety planted in an area of 3,500-sqm. The technicians of seed companies used their package of technologies.

The farmer-participants were from the municipalities of Bula, Buhi, Goa, San Fernando, Magarao, San Jose, Minalabac, Pamplona, Libmanan and Lagonoy. DA Bicol distributed knapsack sprayers, plant growth enhancers, foliar fertilizers and laminated sacks to the 14 farmers' associations and cooperatives.

According to IRRI, hybrid rice is a type of rice that has been bred from two different parents. It can significantly outyield other rice varieties. When the right parents are selected, the hybrid will have both greater vigor and yield that either of the parents.

(Jayson M. Gonzales)



Station (CBES) here to promote to the rice farmers high yielding and cost reducing technologies and the importance of using hybrid rice seeds to enhance rice productivity in the region amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lorenzo Alvina, Chief of

convince rice farmers to adopt hybrid rice technology.

The use of hybrid rice seeds together with recommended amount of fertilizer has been proven to increase farmers' income by up to 20%. Alvina reiterated Agriculture

Person Earl Vincent Vegas said that this initiative will show the farmers that the hybrid seed variety is adaptable to our environment.

Alvina said that the nine seed companies showcased their rice varieties to more than 77 farmers, municipal agriculturists,

.....Vegetable seeds derby for off season planting

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR – To show that vegetable production thrives well even during rainy season, the Department of Agriculture conducted an Off-season Vegetable Production Technology Demonstration Seed Derby and Harvest Festival. The harvest festival was held on October 8, 2021 in a 0.25 hectare area inside the DA compound.

Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez, Chief of the Field Operations Division and High Value Crops Development Program regional coordinator said that **off-season vegetable cultivation or production of vegetables before or after its normal season is possible with the adjustment in the planting time, selection of improved varieties and creation of a controlled environment.**

Four seed companies, namely: Allied Botanical Corporation, Eastwest Seed Philippines, Seedworks Philippines and Ramgo International Corporation, participated in the vegetable derby which started in mid June 2021. Main vegetable crops agreed upon to be showcased by the seeds companies included squash, eggplant, ampalaya, hot pepper (panigang and tingala varieties). The seed companies also planted other crops to showcase their other products: pole sitao and sweet corn for Eastwest Seed Phils; pole sitao, okra, cucumber, and sweet corn for Allied Botanical Corp; pole sitao, cucumber and watermelon for Seed Works; and pechay and sweet corn for Ramgo International. Agronomic and other pertinent data such as variety, date of

harvest and quantity were recorded by the HVCDP.

A field tour gave the participants a chance to see

of these vegetables. He added that DA is encouraging vegetable growers to try off-season planting to help lower

She encouraged not only the commercial vegetable growers but also families to adopt this off-season planting which is



for themselves the stand of the crop in the field and to ask questions and clarifications as each seed company set up exhibits and a representative was given 15 minutes to discuss their products and technology and also impart some tips. Amazement was evident in the faces of the participants as they saw with their own eyes the vegetable plants heavily laden with fruits.

DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla who led the harvest festival, said that the bountiful harvests from the 106 demo plots are tangible proofs that with the right variety and technology, farmers can still plant vegetables during rainy season. He added planting off-season vegetables can assure farmers of high income due to the high selling price

the prices of vegetables which is a major contributor to the high overall inflation rate in Bicol in September 2021. He also said that the increasing prices of vegetables from September to October could be attributed to the reluctance of farmers to plant during rainy or typhoon season. He urged the farmers present to adopt the technologies they learned in the seed derby to boost their yield. *"We at the DA continuously develop and showcase technologies like this off-season planting to increase farmers' income,"* Tornilla added.

Luz R. Marcelino, DA Bicol Regional Technical Director for Operations in her closing remarks, commended the seed companies for selflessly imparting their technologies, knowledge and expertise thru the seed derby.

not only a step towards food security but also an answer to nutritional imbalance among children and adults.

Among the 70 participants were Agricultural Extension Workers from Camarines Sur LGUs. Also present were presidents of clustered organizations presently engaged in commercial vegetable production, namely: Robert Buayaban, president of CLLS Federation of High Value Crops Growers, Inc.; Gilberto Ramboyong, president of Federation of Vegetable Growers in Iriga City; Henry Pandes, president of Pilinio Vegetable Growers Assn. Inc.; Leonardo Cachero, president of Federation of Vegetable Growers in Tinambac; and Edgar Lotivo, president of Polangui Federation of High Value Crops Growers.

(Lovella P.Guarin)

Research Division holds In-house RDE Review virtually

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR-The Bicol Integrated Agricultural Research Center (BIARC) conducted the 32nd In-House Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) virtually on December 15-16, 2021 to assess and disseminate the results of research for development (R4D) initiatives and activities of the Department of Agriculture-Bicol. **Seven completed researches funded by the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) were showcased and evaluated.**

The research entitled *"Community-based Participatory Action Research on Integrated Crop-Livestock Production in Lowland Rain-fed Rice Growing Area in Napilihan and Calangcawan Sur, Vinzons, Camarines Norte"* of Jasmin M. Dacillo, Segundo Sorita, Joy Villagen, Christina F. Campita and Luz Marcelino won the Best Paper award and received a cash prize of P10,000.00 pesos, and a Certificate of Recognition.

The research of Engr. Eula D. Rada, Campita and Marcelino on the *"Fruit Size and Quality*

Enhancement of Spanish Red Pineapple through Cultural Management Practices"; and



the *"Technology Interventions to Strengthen the Production and Utilization of Ilocos White and Batangas Purple Garlic Varieties in Southern Bicol"* by Agnes D.

Espinola, Nelia D. Desalesa, Arnold O. Hapal, Dolores E. Ricafranca and Marcelino won the second and third place, respectively.

Aside from the Certificate of Recognition, the second Best

results of completed researches, the poster showcasing the *"Support of Mass Propagation of Pineapple Quality Planting Materials Through Mass Propagation Technique and/or Protocol in Camarines Norte"* by Behilda E. Balisoro, Bella B. Frias, Corazon O. Orbon, Mary Jane B. Besmonte, Mary Jane Q. Serrano, Judian V. Saut and Jovani S. Salaver was awarded Best Poster and received a cash prize of P5,000.00 pesos.

Placing second and third in the poster category were the research on the *"Biological Characterization of Fall Army Worm and its Impact in Corn Production"* by Ailyn Adante, Christian Saldo, and Gina Q. Bustamante which received P4,000.00 pesos; and *"Rapid Propagation of Taro Through Tissue Culture Techniques"* by Balisoro, Frias, Orbon, Serrano, Saut and Salaver which received P3,000.00 pesos, respectively. All winning posters received a Certificate of Recognition.

Dr. Hector M. Sales from Ateneo De Naga University; and Dr. Fe B. Perlas from the Central Bicol State University of Agriculture served as evaluators.

(Jayson M. Gonzales)

Photo by Liezl De La Torre

For the technical posters of

Paper received a cash prize of P7,500.00 pesos and the third place winner, P5,000.00 pesos.

Catanduanes strawberry farmer wins..(from page 1)

The awarding ceremony was held at the BSWM on December 2, 2021, where Torreda received a plaque of recognition and a P150,000.00 cash award from the DA.

Agriculture Secretary William Dar, in his recorded keynote speech, recognized Torreda's resiliency amidst adversities which sets her apart from the 11 other nominees from the other regions of the country.

Torreda started her strawberry farm in San Andres, Catanduanes in 2018 using a mere P15,000 personal loan she spent on her original 130 mother plants. Today, her 1.5 hectares "Cristina's Strawberry Farm" is now teeming with different varieties of strawberries, blueberry, mulberry, raspberry, pomegranate, lettuce, dragon fruits and lowland vegetables.

Hydroponics technology sustains her year-round production. Local and foreign tourists keep coming back to enjoy picking berries and making their own fresh salad. The strawberry farm also accommodates overnight stay for photoshoot and camping.

During the awarding ceremony, Undersecretary of High Value Crops and

Rural Credit Evelyn Laviña, who is also the chair of both the DA Gender and Development (GAD) focal point system and the award's board of judges, was joined by Commissioner Sandra Sanchez Montano, Chairperson Phil. Commission on Women, and Deputy Executive Director Annray V. Rivera Program Director of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI). *"The search is a fitting tribute to remind our womenfolk in agriculture and fishery how valuable and precious they are not only to the DA but also to the entire country,"* Laviña said.

The annual search aims to recognize the role of women in food production that contributes to food security, reduction of hunger and malnutrition and poverty as enshrined in the RA 9710 (Magna Carta of women).

The evaluation of the credentials of the nominees was done virtually with the stories of the nominees in their written profiles and video presentations. The National Technical Committee was composed of top officials/representatives of East-West Seed, Food and Agriculture Organization Landbank of the Philippines,

Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan, Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards, and Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation.



They evaluated the nominees based on three criteria: 30% contribution to food security and agricultural development; 30% contribution to sustainable development; 40% impact to rural development

According to the guidelines, the DA regional field offices will also grant

the Outstanding Rural Women winners with projects that could enhance their agribusiness undertaking in the form of production inputs, production

or postharvest machineries, equipment and facilities.

The awarding rites was attended by the National Technical Committee members and DA GAD focal persons of all the regions. Bicol region was represented by DA 5 GAD focal person Aloha Gigi I. Bañaria.

RAFC Bicol bares achievements for 2021, awards best performers

NAGA CITY – As the year 2021 draws to a close, the Regional Agricultural and Fishery Council (RAFC) in Bicol recognized the unwavering support of the AFC volunteer partners during its Year-end Performance Review on December 17.

Aloha Gigi I. Bañaria, RAFC Bicol Regional Executive Officer (REO) thanked the AFC volunteers whom she said are “truly the voice of the people put into action.” She added that despite the COVID-19 pandemic the AFCs’ hardwork has really paid off as Secretary William Dar has approved numerous resolutions from RAFC 5. “RAFC will follow up with concerned agencies for the implementation of the approved resolutions,” Bañaria added. Jerace Espinola, Development Management Officer II of PCAF said that among the Luzon B AFCs, RAFC Bicol has the highest number of resolutions endorsed to PCAF and Secretary Dar, as well as consultations and sectoral meetings conducted in 2021. RAFC Bicol has endorsed 35 resolutions that are 40% higher than the targeted 25 resolutions. This was presented during the AFC Luzon B Planning Workshop & Assessment, Espinola added.

The awards were: Best performing MAFC—given to MAFC of Dimasalang, Masbate; Best Performing MAFC Coordinator—Carlito D. Pepito, Jr.; Best Performing Chairperson—Cecilia M. Nuñez; Best Performing Coordinator—Grace Graciana P. Tagnipez; Best Performing Sectoral Committee Chairperson—Rene B. Hermo; Most Improved Award—PAFC Albay; Certificates

of Recognition were given to Hilda A. Lopez—PLGU Coordinator and Josephine A. Manlangit—DA-based Coordinator.

On the same occasion, RAFC Bicol also awarded various communication and ICT equipment to PAFCs and ICCAFC Naga.

Oanzon of Sorsogon; Maria Emily Galgal of ICCAFC Naga City.

RAFC Sectoral Committee Chairpersons present during the event were: Engr. Raul Carreras, chairperson of the Committee on Agricultural and Fishery Mechanization; Rebecca S. Purisima, committee chairperson



Jose R. Cordero, Chairperson of RAFC salutes the PAFC and MAFC chairpersons, saying “*Kahit may pandemic, maganda ang performance ng RAFC 5 dahil magagaling at committed ang PAFC at MAFC Chairpersons. It's also good na maganda ang relation ng RAFC sa DA RFO 5 especially kay Director Rodel P. Tornilla. Sa akin, the greatest joy that I can get is when a farmer says to me “Thank you for helping me”*”

Provincial AFC Chairpersons presented their respective accomplishments: Rene delos Reyes, PAFC Chair of Albay; Efrén Mago of PAFC Camarines Norte was represented by Benny Palmares; Carlito Aquino of Camarines Sur; Anita T. Tasarra of PAFC Catanduanes; Cecilia M. Nuñez of Masbate; Virginia

of the High Value Crops sector; Bernadette delos Santos, chairperson of the Committee on Climate Change; and Annielyn Panerio, Chairperson of Rice Sector.

Rice Sector chairperson Annielyn Panerio who is also the General Manager of CamSur Multipurpose Coop said that the year 2020 and 2021 have been very challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the birth pains of the Rice Tariffication Law which removed quantitative restrictions on rice imports, but the Bicol rice sector has “weathered the storm” through close collaboration with different sectors and consolidation of resources. In 2018, Panerio federated the 12 cooperatives engaged in palay trading in Bicol to consolidate their buying power. Through this

federation, the CamSur coop has influenced other coops to set the minimum buying price of fresh palay to P14.00 regardless of fluctuations in palay farmgate price.

The CamSur coop also collaborated with the DOST and FNRI in upgrading its milled rice into iron-fortified rice. Thus, this December, the coop got certified as producer of iron fortified rice—the first not only in Camarines Sur but also in the Bicol Region. “Attendance to regular virtual meetings with the National Rice Program has kept me updated on DA programs and policies which made dissemination of information to the AFCs and cooperatives easier,” Panerio added.

Meanwhile, Peter Theodore Caro, RAFC 5 Vice Chair urges the volunteers to transform AFCs into more relevant and essential partners by giving extra effort to improve and empower the council, make meetings more effective, craft resolution with greater impact, enhance leadership skills, and innovate.

RAFC is a network of private sector-led consultative councils at the regional, provincial and municipal levels composed of stakeholders of agri-fisheries including NGOs, people's organizations, civic groups, academe and business organizations.

The AFCs are strategic partners of the regional and local governments and the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF) to ensure success in the implementation of agri-fishery policies, programs and projects. For three decades, the AFCs have served as consultative/feedback mechanism on policies, plans and programs of the DA and also help in monitoring agri-fishery project implementation.

(Lovella P. Guarin)

DA Bicol gets CSC bronze award for attaining Maturity Level II in PRIME-HRM

LEGAZPI CITY—The Department of Agriculture Bicol along with eight government agencies and institution, local government units and state universities in

the Bicol region received the Bronze Award for achieving a process-defined Human Resource Management in the four core HRM systems under the Enhanced Program



to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in HRM (PRIME-HRM) on October 13, 2021 from the Civil Service Commission (CSC) here.

According to DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla, the award signified that DA Bicol met the PRIME-HRM Maturity Level II indicators on the various HR processes, practices, requirements and competencies based on the assessment of the CSC. It is a manifestation of good and harmonious collaboration, coordination and cohesive teamwork.

CSC Regional Director Atty. Daisy Punzalan Bragais assured the awardees that CSC will continue to support and guide them to maintain their meritocracy and excellence in public service to gain the trust, satisfaction and confidence of the public.

She challenged all government agencies, academe and LGUs to continue to get motivated of doing their best in public service.

The simple ceremonies was attended virtually and in-person by heads and representatives of the Camarines State Polytechnic Colleges (CSPC); Bicol University (BU); DA-5; Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources-5 (BFAR-5); City Government of Masbate; Municipal Government of Bulusan, Sorsogon; Department of Social Welfare and Development-5 (DSWD), Department of the Interior and Local Government-5 (DILG), and the Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital (BRTTH) and their provincial CSC offices.

(Jayson M. Gonzales)

Bicol's Kabataang Agribiz finalist strives for sustainable impact to community and environment via social enterprise

by Annielyn L. Baleza

Twenty-eight-year-old Kabataang Agribiz national finalist Sandino M. Guinto of Daet, Camarines Norte was a young college student when he started to find his niche and realized that what he actually wanted to do in life was to uphold his family's advocacies on environmental conservation. *"Sa dinami-dami po ng problema sa Pilipinas, I decided na i-build up 'yung advocacies namin sa family and 'yung business namin dito sa family para 'yung business ay hindi lang para sa kumikitang kabuhayan kundi nakakatulong din siya sa maka-Kalikasang adbokasiya para may sense po,"* Guinto said.

With strong influence from his father who worked in several non-government organizations prior to teaching Agriculture in Camarines Norte State College, Guinto has found his purpose: To make a positive impact to his community and to the environment. This inspired him to establish Bahay Teknik: A Garden to Kitchen Social Enterprise in a 1,000

degree in Bachelor of Landscape Architecture, Guinto, a licensed landscape architect, worked as a permaculture designer and trainer at the Philippine Permaculture Association in Marikina City, Metro Manila where he immersed in integrating permaculture to various farms nationwide.

Equipped with skills in participative design workshops, community-based planning and permaculture training, he decided to develop the business model for Bahay Teknik Product Development Services when he moved back to his home province before the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) was imposed. Having a family who has diverse gifts but mutual advocacies worked to his advantage as they shared ideas and strategies on building the agribusiness during family dinners.

"Habang namimili sa palengke napansin namin na napakaraming basura, mula sa prutas, sa gulay, maski sa isda, sa iba't ibang materyales pa na itinatapon lang. Nakita



enterprise that aims to provide practical solutions to issues confronting Filipino families.

Registered with the Department of Trade and Industry in March 2020, the enterprise has three business components: Organic gardening, brick stoves and ovens, and waste recycling. Kitchen waste from cooking are recycled. Vermicast and compost are harvested and added to the garden to increase soil fertility. Garden produce are then harvested and cooked using brick rocket stove and oven.

Currently, the social enterprise offers easy to use products to help farming and gardening enthusiasts start their own organic gardening journey. It also promotes efficient cooking using cheap fuel and clean rocket stoves as well as woodfire brick ovens. Bahay Teknik also produces efficient tools for waste to resource production. Its existing product lines include pocket garden or multi-storey garden available for P1,500, vermibucket to make vermicast using kitchen scraps for P850, potting mix which costs P210 per 30 kilogram sack, and briquette press designed to turn scratch paper into fuel or seedling pods which they sell for P6,500. They also sell pizza hex oven (P8,000), a portable firebrick oven for pizza making and rocket stove for efficient, non-charcoal cooking worth P4,500, 13 diameter pizza stone for P500, double deck oven for P10,000, and large dome oven for P35,000.

Among Bahay Teknik's new income streams are vermicast for P25 per kilogram, black soldier fly box for P1,500 per unit and dried BSF larvae for chicken feed available at P300 per 500 gram.

Currently, Bahay Teknik's product markets include middle to high income households with access to the internet and are connected to their social media accounts. They plan to engage in Farm School on Wheels to promote its advocacies on organic farming to more rural communities in the province and



square meter area in Brgy. Mancruz Daet, Camarines Norte.

After graduating from the University of the Philippines with a

namin na ang laking sayang at ang laki ng impact nito sa ating kalikasan," Guinto said.

Bahay Teknik, which Guinto personally manages, is a social

establish its social capital. The Farm School on Wheels also intend to serve as a marketing strategy by introducing Bahay Teknik's innovations and products to more markets and building more networks. *"Yun 'yung target namin sa business na hindi lang kami mag-function para maging sustainable sa usapin ng pera kundi makatulong din kami. Yung maka-integrate yung waste recycling and waste reusing mula sa ibang industriya magagamit namin*

kasi napabilis at napaayos 'yung operations namin," he related. Guinto shared that it reduced their product losses and provided a better and healthier working environment for his co-workers. Currently, Bahay Teknik employs four full-time workers and one part-time laborer. **As a young agripreneur, Guinto hopes to achieve his social and environmental goals of reducing improperly disposed kitchen waste in the municipality while increasing**

difference in the community. *"Ang dami-daming problema ng Pilipinas na nakikita natin sa news, sa Facebook. Hindi sapat na mag-comment, hindi sapat na mag-share, hindi sapat na simply mag-like sa Facebook posts para mabago ang Pilipinas. Maliban sa pagboto sa darating na eleksyon, hanapin natin kung saan tayo magaling at gamitin natin 'yung skills na 'yun. Hanapin natin kung saan swak 'yung ating skill set para makatulong sa kapwa. Hindi tayo nabubuhay para sa ating sarili. Gamitin natin kasi, nakaka-fulfill sya emotionally, spiritually tapos dahil ginagawa nating enterprise or business, hopefully, financially nakaka-fulfill din,"* he added.



tapos pagkakakitaan pa," he said. With the P50,000 cash grant he received as provincial awardee of the Kabataang Agribiz competitive grant assistance program, he was able to start the construction of a small warehouse, develop a garden, fabricate his own compost tumbler/sieve, and pay for professional product shots of his existing product lines.

urban gardens. By doing this, he also aims to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals of Zero Hunger, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production and Climate Action. *"Magkakaibang sistema pero magkaka-konekta, 'yun 'yung Bahay-Teknik! Teknolohiya mula sa Kalikasan para sa bayan, patungo sa kinabukasan,"* he added.

Guinto was among the top 15 finalists nationwide of the DA, through the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service's (AMAS) Young Farmers Challenge: Kabataang Agribiz. He received a cash grant worth P150,000 plus certificate during the 1st National Young Farmers Summit and Young Farmers Challenge: Kabataang Agribiz Awarding Ceremony held on December 17, 2021 in Calasiao, Pangasinan. The two other regional winners from Bicol are Mark Andrew Cano of Bagamanoc, Catanduanes for his proposed agri-enterprise Pap's Cassava Chips Processing and Monalisa G. Balon of Daet, Camarines Norte for her agribusiness proposal J&M Free Range Chicken.

The Young Farmers Challenge: Kabataang Agribiz is a competitive



"Napakagandang inisyatibo ito ng DA para ma-push 'yung mga like-minded youth para sa food sustainability at mga adbokasiya natin sa agrikultura. Malaking tulong 'yung grant



Guinto advised his fellow youth to be diligent and seize the opportunities being offered by the government to develop their potentials. He also encouraged them to use their energy, time, and skills to make a

financial grant assistance program launched by the DA in April 2021 aimed at encouraging the youth to engage in agriculture as well as in profitable and sustainable agri-fishery based business ventures.

Meet the 2021 National Outstanding Rural Woman from the Bicol Region

by Lovella P. Guarin

Cristina Lato Torreda, 28 years old, hails from the island province of Catanduanes formerly known as the land of the howling winds due to frequent typhoons. But this did not deter her indomitable spirit.



“Kung sa farming ka nadapa, sa farming ka rin babangon. No one is going to win the battles for you. This award is not just about the prize. It's not just about the title. It's really about the heart and interest of the youth na mag-venture sa farming”

-CHRISTINA LATO TORREDA

(on winning the National Outstanding Rural Woman 2021 award)

She does not have a background in agriculture as she is a graduate of Hotel and Restaurant Management, but through trainings and self learning through Youtube and Google she was able to acquire skills in producing exotic crops. In fact she has been invited by TESDA and other schools in Catanduanes to serve as resource speaker on strawberry production, fertilization and

both fruits and runners with net income of P207,830 in 10 months. From other crops like dragon fruits and other



She started her farm in San Andres in 2018 from P15,000 personal loan which she used to buy her original 130 mother plants. Her 1.5 hectare farm production area is now teeming with different varieties of strawberries, blueberry, mulberry, raspberry, pomegranate, dragon fruits and lowland vegetables.

hydroponics for so many times already. She completed a month-long training on NC II in Organic Agriculture in September 2019 but she is still waiting for the assessment which was put off due to pandemic.

She has also underwent Good Agricultural Practices training in May 2021 to obtain GAP certification.

Her farm has been a major source of livelihood supporting her family of 13. Her huge profitability is evident from the restoration of their house where she spent close to

berries she got 906% ROI for a net income of P40,980. From vegetables she earned P16,850 or 591% ROI.

She derived most of her income from online selling of strawberry runners which she shipped to customers from as far as Cebu and in Luzon area during the pandemic. She also sells her planting materials to farm tourists and at trade fair exhibits.

820 adults who visited her farm paid the entrance fee of P30.00 which gave her additional P24,600, while 130 kids paid P10.00 entrance fee. She invested P100,000 on detachable greenhouses in anticipation of strong typhoons. Hydroponics technology sustains her lettuce and other crops.

To maximize sloping areas, she practices contour farming. Crops are enclosed in nets to control pests. Strawberries are planted in pots for easy transfer in case of typhoon. Empty bottles are used as pots. For organic fertilizer, she uses chicken and carabao manure, carbonized rice hull and coco peat.

She also invested in farm landscaping and establishment of cottages to accommodate visitors opting for overnight stay. Local and foreign tourists are delighted by interesting activities such as pick and pay, fresh salad making, photo shoot and camping.

She is looked up to in the community as “*madiskarte sa buhay*” and strong willed. She is Vice President of Catanduanes Gardeners for the Environment with 100 members. She is a member of the Mahigos Farmers Assn.



Her farm is now a popular tourist destination and meeting place of youths who want to learn and experience agriculture.

P500,000 and in the education of her 3 siblings whom she sent to college also from the income of her farm. She got 205% ROI from strawberries

MAF Coop turns adversity into opportunity

by Emily B. Bordado

"In every adversity lies the seed of an equal or greater opportunity" thus says Napoleon Hill. Inspired by this dictum, the Multi-Agri Forest and Community Development Cooperative board of directors did not lose hope even as it incurred income loss as a result of the suspension of its air ticketing operations and catering services due to the onslaught of Covid-19 pandemic. Instead, the BOD thought of ways and means to recoup the loss and shift to other economic activity in addition to its primary service of providing loans/credit to its members. With their available one-hectare lot located in *sitio* Salangguigui, Barangay Cararayan, Naga City which was intended to be developed as an eco-friendly housing village for the members.

Last year, the BOD and management after careful study of the feasibility and viability of the undertaking decided to utilize the lot for vegetable production. Part of the produce or harvest will be used in the canteen it operates at the DA compound for its catering services. The rest will be sold to members or other outlets.

The move of the MAF Coop to go into vegetable production was also in response to the call of Agriculture Secretary

11 and ended on December 29. The period was extended due to the granular lockdown imposed in the city. Eighteen



participants consisting of 9 males and 9 females (*six of which were youths*) completed the module and did hands-on application of their learning right at the coop farm.

The vegetables initially planted in the farm were ampalaya, tomato, sili, eggplant and squash. The seeds and garden tools were provided by the Department of Agriculture Regional Office through the High Value Commercial Program. The office of the City Agriculture Office of Naga provided technical assistance and one of its Agricultural Technicians served



Photo from MAF Coop

William D. Dar for collective action by cooperatives and other business entities so that they can become viable units of production. It was also inspired by other coops and micro/small enterprises whose agri-production undertakings thrive despite the pandemic.

As a preparatory step to the venture, the coop established a learning center inside the compound where prospective farmer members who will be engaged in vegetable production underwent the Farmers Field School (FFS) on vegetable production which started on September

as the resource person assisted by some of the board of directors of the Coop who have previously completed the Training of Trainors on vegetable production conducted by the Agricultural Training Institute. After completing the course, each of the 18 participants also received from the DA a starter kit for their vegetable production activity in their household. MAF Coop with over 700 members consisting mostly of current and retired employees of the Department of Agriculture Regional Office, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources

(BFAR), Department of Agrarian Reform, devolved agricultural extension workers and micro and small entrepreneurs has been primarily engaged in extending loan and credits to its members. But in the recent years, it has expanded and diversified its operations. It has gone into canteen and Kangen water operation, catering services and air ticketing which has been the major contributor

to the spike in its net income.

Although this vegetable production venture was established only last September 2021 and the first harvest was done only last December and some plants are just beginning to sprout, yet it shows much promise. The once grassland was transformed into a productive garden teeming with various vegetables such as pechay, winged bean, patola, eggplant, bush sitao, spring onion, red onion, taro (*gabi*), cassava, okra, some pili seedling and mulberry along borders and flowering plants which serve as insect repellent and give color to scenery like marigold, sunflower and citronella, zenia. Herbal plants and spices are also planted such as oregano, artamisa, turmeric, lagundi, basil, mint and rosemary.

Attractive color but discarded plastic soft drink bottles are also hanged along the trellises of vines to attract insect but also serve as repellent because these are sprayed with chemicals that entrap and kill insects once they got stuck on those hanging bottles. Other discarded bottles and car and bicycle tires were used as decorative items in the garden.

Initial harvest from farm included 10 kilogram (kg) sili; 28.17 kg tomato; 80 kg squash; 30.64 kg ampalaya; 5.15 kg eggplant; 2.53 kg pechay and 32.5 kg mongo. The coop was able to generate almost P10,000.00 from sales of these

(Please continue to page 18)



DA-PRDP Bicol conducts social preparation to PLGU and FCAs in Catanduanes, Masbate for enterprise development

With the release of the second additional financing worth 280 million dollars (P14 billion) for the implementation of the Department of Agriculture Philippine Rural Development Project's (DA-PRDP), the Project's enterprise development (I-REAP) component in Bicol is now conducting social preparation activities to stakeholders including proponent group officers and members and implementing Provincial Project Management Units (PPMIU) of Catanduanes and Masbate.

PRDP-Bicol I-REAP Business Development Officer Victoria Eugene Florece and Project Development Associate Angelica Peñano conducted a consultation and orientation as well as business modelling with Provincial Agriculturist Nelia Teves and its selected PG, ARDCI Microfinance Inc. represented by its Project Manager Dennis Timbal in Virac, Catanduanes on September 27 to 30, 2021.

ARDCI is a non-government organization (NGO) with 892 members

engaged in backyard swine raising. PPMIU-Catanduanes is seeking for I-REAP funding for its plan to invest in integrated swine enterprise and feed mill processing. The proposed I-REAP subproject targets to benefit 124 farmer-members in three adjacent barangays in Virac, Catanduanes with an expansion plan to include all farmer-members provincewide.

Florece and Peñano also visited the 2.3-hectare site for the proposed swine facility, feed mill and processing center in Virac. Florece also met with Municipal Agriculturist Eduardo V. Taopo, Jr. of Bato, Israel Dela Rosa, OIC-Municipal Agriculturist of Caramoran, and Agricultural Technician Robert Glenn Padilla of San Miguel to discuss the priority commodity of the province and possible I-REAP interventions in their respective area.

Likewise, PRDP-Bicol I-REAP Business Development Officer Glenn Balana conducted a planning and orientation with Engr. Jonel Orteza, the Provincial Agriculturist of Masbate and Irish Cabrera, Municipal Agriculturist of Dimasalang

on October 15, 2021 to prepare them for I-REAP subprojects implementation.

The province eyes for I-REAP investments in support to its priority commodities including goat, coconut charcoal, native chicken, seaweeds, and swine.

retrofitted second additional financing with EU co-financing grant Operations Manual, financing mix for I-REAP subprojects will be divided into 60 percent (World Bank Loan Proceeds), 20 percent (Department of Agriculture) and 20 percent



Aside from social preparation activities, PRDP will also provide its I-REAP subproject beneficiaries and partner local government units with capacity building program which includes business plan preparation, financial management, geotagging, and social and environmental safeguards to equip them in implementing PRDP-funded enterprises.

Under the PRDP I-REAP

proponent group counterpart in cash or in-kind.

I-REAP is one of the four components of PRDP, a World Bank-assisted project being implemented by the DA, designed to strengthen and develop viable agri-fishery based enterprises through efficient value chains of key agri-fishery products in targeted project areas.

(Annielyn L. Balezza)

MAF Coop turns..(from page 17)

vegetables. The rest were brought to the MAF canteen and used as part of the menu served in the canteen and catering purposes, thus generating saving for the coop.

The farm also provides employment opportunity. Today, the coop has hired a caretaker; Cecilia de Leon who lives nearby. Another farm hand is assisting in the maintenance of the farm and additional laborers/workers are on call as needed.

In addition to the electric water pump already installed in the farm, Naga City Mayor Nelson Legacion who attended

the FFS graduation also committed to give another unit of electric water pump.

The farm which is located in a newly opened middle class subdivision and housing area for school personnel of a university is still a work in progress. But already it has served its purpose of



vegetable for the coop's canteen and catering needs and for household consumption of members who regularly buy the produce. The farm likewise serves as a show window of diversified farming promoting balanced fertilization, sustainable farming and good agricultural practices.

Indeed, for every adversity there is an opportunity. We only have to be resilient and find ways and means to uncover potentials that are awaiting to be discovered, nurture and developed.



Matnog and Sta. Magdalena farmers earn from poultry project



SORSOGON—New poultry raisers from Matnog and Sta Magdalena earn an initial P19,159 after starting a free-range chicken egg production project from the Department of Agriculture—Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program covering the months of November and December 2021.

In August 2021, the Hidhid Farmers' Association in Matnog and the San Eugenio and Animal Farmers' Association (SEAFA) in Sta. Magdalena received 400 free-range Kabir chickens each from the Free-range Chicken Production Project.

The SAAD team administered

biologics to prevent chicken respiratory diseases while the associations purchased additional biologics and rice bran that serves as feed alternative.

Meanwhile, the SEAFA was divided into four (4) groups rearing 100 chickens per group. The chickens were raised in their respective communal gardens measuring 192 square meters (sqm) for group 1, 72sqm for group 2, 105sqm for group 3, and 110sqm for group 4. After three months of management, the chickens started to lay eggs. According to SEAFA President Ronaldo Favor, their group sold eggs sorted as medium, large,

and extra-large sizes with a price range of P5-7/piece (pc). Trays of eggs were also sold at P180-210.

The eggs harvested were sold within the neighborhood at barangay San Eugenio in Sta. Magdalena. In a span of two months, the association has accumulated an initial income of P10,628. To sustain their chicken egg production enterprise, the association plans to make salted egg, leche flan, and pickled egg as their value-adding products. *"(Our enterprise must grow. We can't lose these chickens so when the time comes, they will have a replacement from our own stocks. We can also add some products from the chicken eggs like salted*

egg, leche flan, and pickled egg. We are thankful to SAAD because without their help, there is also no opportunity like this.)" Favor said

In Matnog, the Hidhid Farmers' Association is also generating income from their egg production managed in a 1,000sqm communal area. They collected at least 1,800pcs of chicken eggs and sold them at P180-200/tray (30pcs) from November to December 2021.

As of December 31, 2021, the association earned an initial income of P9,000, selling 60 trays containing 30pcs eggs, covering the months of November-December. According to Annabelle Dioleta, a 20-year-old student and farmer-member of the Hidhid FA, the group intends to grow their earnings so that they can venture into value-adding products such as puto flan and salted egg in addition to their enterprise. *"Bilang isang estudyante, malaking tulong po sa akin ang pagiging magsasaka sa aming barangay. Nakakatulong din ang aming asosasyon sa aming mga ka-barangay na magbenta sa kanila ng mga itlog na mabibili sa mababang presyo lamang kaya maraming salamat po talaga sa SAAD Program,"* she added.

To grasp more knowledge in proper management and raising of free-range chicken, both associations attended the DA-SAAD's Training on Poultry Production and Product Development conducted from November 16 to 18, 2021.

(Pauline Trixia D. Borja)

SAAD Program Sorsogon Information Officer
Photos: Sta. Magdalena and Matnog farmers

Bayanihan 2 funded facilities...(from page 8)

facility (11m x 9m), equipped with offices, and conference rooms. Also constructed was one unit native chicken house worth P1.99 M and a 5 KVA Grid Tie Solar Power source and Solar Power Pump. Dr. Elsa Maranan, Station Head of the ARDC-ABS said that the solar powered facilities have ensured a sustainable supply of water and energy for all animal houses in the ARDC-ABS.

The ARDC focuses on the production of good quality breeder swine, native pigs, and native chicken for sale or for distribution to interested raisers. The ARDC-ABS also provides extension services such as promotion of biogas technology, and serves as a learning



site for On-the-Job Trainings on basic animal husbandry practices. Bayanihan to Recover as One

or Bayanihan 2 was designed to provide economic relief measures as a follow up to Bayanihan to Heal

as One or Bayanihan 1 which was signed into law in March 2020 when Pres. Duterte placed Luzon under Enhanced Community Quarantine to contain the spread of COVID-19.

"Nagpapasalamat kami nang lubos sa Bureau of Agricultural Research led by Director Vivencio Mamaril for generously funding our project entitled "Enhancing Technology Transfer and Capacities in Bicol," Dr. Edgar Madrid said. He added that the upgrading of the R4D facilities and ICT equipment will boost R4D making it responsive in promoting and enhancing agri-preneurship strategy for agricultural development in the region.

(Lovella P. Guarin)

100 indigent families get food assistance



SAN JOSE, CAMARINES SUR – In anticipation of the World Food Day celebration on October 16, the Department of Agriculture in Bicol provided food assistance that delighted some 100 indigent families from this town.

The food distribution was in compliance to a Memorandum issued by Engr. Ariel T. Cayanan, DA Undersecretary for Operations, directing the conduct of preparatory activities in line with the World Food Day celebration such as the provision of food assistance to the 41 families in the poorest provinces of the country based on the 2018 Philippine Statistics Authority data. Masbate, Eastern Samar and Zamboanga were identified as the poorest among the

provinces in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, respectively. But in consideration of the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in Camarines Sur and the number of DA workforce who will be crossing the strict border of the island province of Masbate to facilitate the food distribution, the DA Bicol management opted to conduct the event in San Jose, Camarines Sur which is also a 4th class municipality.

The beneficiaries came from the barangays of Sabang, Danlog and Bagacay. Held on September 28, 2021 at the spacious covered court of Sabang Elementary School, the event kicked off with a short briefing and compliance of health protocols such as temperature check and disinfection of hands with alcohol.

Each family received 1 sack rice, 10 kilos of assorted fruits and vegetable, rootcrops, canned goods, dressed chicken, coffee, sugar, powdered milk and 1 liter fresh milk. The High Value Crops Development Program also provided each family with vegetable garden starter kit consisting of vegetable seeds and 1 set garden tools to encourage the recipient families to grow their own food.

Though their faces were covered with masks, their

Division chief Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, who led the food distribution, said that the event was a nationwide activity of the Department of Agriculture to highlight its quest for food security and safety so that no Filipino family will be hungry. She also emphasized the importance of planting short term crops in every family's backyard to sustain food production.

This is the 41st celebration of the World Food Day. This year's celebration revolved on



smiles were still evident as they went from table to table to present their claim stubs and collect each good.

the theme: *"Our actions are our future. Better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life."*

DA Bicol Field Operations

(Lovella P. Guarin)

DA Bicol rolls out Fertilizer Discount Voucher for rice farmers

VIRAC, CATANDUANES –DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla led the ceremonial distribution of the Fertilizer Discount Voucher under the National Rice Program. The distribution was held at the Catanduanes State University on December 6, 2021.

The fertilizer discount voucher will be given to RSBSA-listed rice farmers cultivating 2-hectares and below and have availed of rice seeds from DA Rice Program in the previous months.

RED Tornilla added that for every hectare of certified seeds planted, a farmer will receive P2,000-worth Fertilizer Discount Voucher. For every hectare of hybrid seeds planted, a farmer will be

given P3,000 worth of voucher. He added that DA provides timely fertilizer support to rice farmers to ensure higher productivity.

An initial 100 rice farmers from the municipalities of Caramoran, Gigmoto, Panganiban, San Andres, Viga and Virac received the vouchers.

For Catanduanes, a total of 951 rice farmers who availed of hybrid or certified seeds from DA Rice Program will receive fertilizer discount voucher amounting to P2,993,043.00 to fertilize 1,048 hectares of rice areas.

Nelia Teves, Provincial Agriculturist of Catanduanes said that the fertilizer subsidy was very

timely as dry season planting has just started in the province.

Congressman Hector Sanchez, in his message read by Camille Andrea R. Gianan, said that being top 4 in the overall performance nationwide, "ay isang katunayan ng magandang kalidad ng serbisyo ng DA". He added that the fertilizer discount voucher is an early Christmas gift to the farmers devastated by typhoons.

Earl Vincent Vegas, newly designated Rice Program Coordinator of DA Bicol said that farmers can claim the

fertilizer at the DA and FPA accredited merchants stationed in the different municipalities. Farmers just need to present valid IDs and they can select the kind of fertilizer they prefer.

Vegas added that fertilizer discount voucher distribution will also commence in the five other provinces of Bicol and the Rice Program targets to distribute a total of P348,854,000 worth of fertilizer vouchers to 118,000 rice farmers in Bicol before the end of December 2021.

(Lovella P. Guarin)

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