



DA Bicol hosts 14th National Rice Techno Forum

by Emily B. Bordado



Photo by: Z. Abogado

USEC. Ariel T. Cayanan-Undersecretary for Operations, Department of Agriculture together with RED Rodel Tornilla, Mr. Recher E. Ondap-President, Rice Board, Dr. Frisco M. Malabanan-Adviser, Hybrid Rice Program and Santiago Obien are all ears as Mr. Anthony Tan, Founder/Director of New Hope Precision Agriculture Corporation explains the specifications and functions of the DJI Agras T30 drone sprayer displayed at their booth.

To showcase the best and latest rice farming technologies and practices and push the adoption of hybrid rice

technology, the Department of Agriculture Rice Program and the Agricultural Training Institute – Bicol in partnership

with the Rice Productivity Advocacy Incorporated or

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DA Bicol launches fuel subsidy for corn farmers and fishers

by Lovella P. Guarin

To enhance farmers' resiliency and cushion the impact of oil price hike, the Department of Agriculture Corn Program launched the Fuel Discount Voucher Program for corn farmers and fishers. Fuel discount cash cards containing P3,000 were distributed to the RSBSA-listed corn farmers and fishers. A total of P500 Million has been allocated nationwide for this fuel discount for corn farmers and fishers who own and operate agricultural and fishery machinery individually or through a farmer organization, cooperative or association (FCAs).

In Bicol, 3,880 corns farmers will receive the P3,000 fuel subsidy with a total allotted funds of P11.6M. Farm machineries for fuel discount include pumps, engines, tractors, combine harvesters, and corn shellers among others.

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Abonong SWAK techno demo starts in Bicol

by Lovella P. Guarin

SAN JOSE, CAMARINES SUR – To promote balanced fertilization which combines organic and inorganic fertilizers, DA Bicol rolls out Abonong SWAK through the establishment of a 10-hectare rice techno demo area in this municipality. Abonong SWAK urges farmers not to rely so much

on inorganic fertilizer which are imported, thus very expensive and scarce nowadays. By following the Abonong SWAK combos, farmers can save P2,000 – P4,000 per hectare. Eight rice farmers belonging to Rangas Agricultural Cooperative will serve as cooperators of the techno



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ADVISERS

Rodel P. Tornilla, MABE
Regional Executive Director

Luz R. Marcelino
Regional Technical
Director for Operations

Edgar R. Madrid, DPM
Regional Technical Director
for Research and Regulations



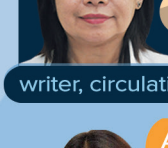
EMILIA B. BORDADO
Editor-in-Chief



LOVELLA P. GUARIN
writer



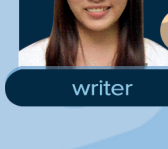
JAYSON M. GONZALES
writer



BLESILDA A. NUÑEZ
writer, circulation



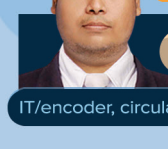
ANNIELYN L. BALEZA
writer



MICHELLE ANGELA G. ALFIGURA
writer



ZANDRA G. ABOGADO
graphic designer



VINCENT EMIL A. PASUMBAL
IT/encoder, circulation



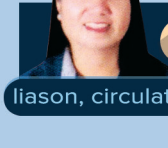
EDUARDO D. COLLANTES Jr.
IT/photographer



RAMON C. ADVERSARIO Jr.
photographer



HERMITO ANTONIO T. PRIVALDOS
photographer



MARITES C. DILLA
liason, circulation



LITA V. ESTRELLA
circulation



EDITORIAL

Keep our hopes alive amidst post-election blues and sad realities of our times

As in previous elections, the recent one has caused divisiveness among Filipinos. But as the political exercise has ended even with still lingering doubts in the minds of some of our people, it is time to move forward and continue with our lives, accept the realities and face the challenges of our times.

It is a sad reality though in our country that the sting, the sense of vindictiveness and the conflict among the political rivals brought about by the election would not easily dissipate. Only a few of the victors would have the magnanimity to reach out to their opponents to sincerely engage them in crafting programs for the benefit of the country or community.

It is the usual practice of the new or incoming administration, be it in the national and local level of governance to do an overhauling or scrapping off not only of the people but all existing programs and projects and even systems of the previous administration no matter how good and effective they were and introduce their own programs and bring in new people.

As a result the momentum and continuity of any good program and best practices are often stalled or totally scrapped off and everything is back to square one.

Only a number of national government programs initiated in the past by previous administration were sustained by the succeeding administrations. One is the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program or 4Ps which started as a pilot program of DSWD in 2007 under President Arroyo's administration, then carried through under President Aquino's administration and institutionalized through a senate Bill in 2018 and approved by President Duterte.

Another national Program is the Build, Build, Build Program which started during President Pinoy's administration and continued by the Duterte administration.

We hope that national agricultural programs like the Plant, Plant, Plant Program, the many agricultural programs for the youth and young and upcoming entrepreneurs will be

continued.

The 4Ks for the Indigenous People, we also hope to be continued, sustained and enhanced by the incoming administration. There are also successful local programs and initiatives by LGUs, NGOs and the private sector that could be upscaled through public-private partnership, mainstreamed into the national government and replicated or implemented nationwide if only politics would be set aside.

While the past programs of previous administration may be resurrected, this should be done in good faith and for the interest of our people and our country and not merely to perpetuate the memory of somebody or to ride on the perceived success of a previous program not based on facts or not with supported empirical data.

While it is the prerogative of the incumbent or those who currently hold power and authority as duly elected officials to initiate their own programs and choose their own people it would be for the best interest of our country and people that this prerogative be exercised with great prudence, in good faith and with magnanimity.

Exclusivity or Regionalism, specially the practice of favoring or giving priority to the "*kababayan*", political allies and relatives by the appointing authority should not prevail as this will bring about more divisiveness not unity.

As shift in loyalty to the new bosses or superiors is expected especially among government personnel, as public servants we should remember but that our loyalty and accountability is foremost to our people, our country and our God. Let us continue to serve with integrity and dedication.

As we enter another chapter in our country's history let us keep our minds open to new ideas and possibilities. Let us be part of the solution and not compound the problems we are facing. Let us be firm and steadfast in affirming what is true, just and morally upright. And now more than ever let us invoke God's blessing to guide and enlighten our leaders.

DA Bicol launches fuel...(from page 1)

Fuel discount cards containing P3,000 were issued by the USSC to the farmer-beneficiaries.

According to Earl Vincent Vegas, DA Bicol Corn Program coordinator, this subsidy must only be used to buy gasoline or diesel from the participating or accredited gasoline stations.

To qualify for the fuel subsidy, a corn farmer must be registered in the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) and encoded in the Farmers and Fisherfolk Registry System (FFRS). The beneficiary or his/her association must also own machinery which can be proven by the following proof of ownership: Certificate of Agricultural and Fishery Machinery and Equipment Registration from LGU; Certification from the Municipal Agriculture Office that the farmer/fisher or association is the owner of the machinery; Sales/Cash Invoice/Official Receipt of the machinery; Memorandum of Agreement including Property Transfer Receipt; or deed of donation. The machineries including proof of ownership and geotagged photo of the farmer shall be enrolled in the Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering Management Information System (ABEMIS).

During the distribution of fuel subsidy cash cards, the beneficiaries are required to present a valid ID during the Farmer On-Boarding or face-to-face Know-Your-Client (KYC). Fintech partner shall conduct an on-site farmer verification to have a liveness check before the issuance of the cash cards. One farmer-recipient of the fuel subsidy is Jaymar Rivera, 30 years old President of Kilomaon Integrated Farmers Association in Sangay, Camarines Sur. He expressed his appreciation for the subsidy saying *"Malaking tulong po itong fuel subsidy sa amin dahil mayroon po kaming corn sheller, thresher at recirculating dryer na binigay din po sa amin ng DA nang mga nakaraang taon. Doon po namin gagamitin itong natanggap naming*

fuel subsidy." His association has been included in the Farm and Fishery Clustering and Consolidation (F2C2) under the DA - Corn Program in 2021. *"Salamat po sa DA dahil yung programa ng gobyerno ay nakakarating sa amin kahit nasa bundok kami,"* Rivera added.

most important components of the operating cost in farming and fishing.

The launching was also attended by DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla; RAFC 5 Chairperson and Farmer-Director Bernadette de los



The DA has been extensively promoting mechanization to modernize and enhance productivity in the agriculture and fishery sector. Fuel expenses are therefore one of the

Santos; BFAR Director Nelson Bien; BFAR Farmer Director Imelda R. Belda; RTD Luz R. Marcelino; and Noel Fedalizo, USSC area manager in Bicol.

LETTERS

Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER FOR BICOL AFFAIRS

15 June 2022

MR. RODEL P. TORNILLA, MABE

Regional Executive Director
Department of Agriculture RFO5
San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur

RED Tornilla:

Good day!

With the Office of the Presidential Adviser for Bicol Affairs (OPABA) cessation as an office on June 30, 2022 being co-terminus with the President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's administration, OPABA would like to extend utmost gratitude for the generosity extended by you and the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office V throughout our team. Surely, your unwavering and unparalleled generosity made possible the mandate of the Office in providing government linkages to the 34 regional offices in the Bicol Region and other multi-sectoral organization in addressing socio-economic issues, programs, projects and other developmental endeavors.

Dios Mabalos!

Sincerely,
(signed)
MARVEL C. CLAVECILLA
Undersecretary
Presidential Adviser

DA Bicol holds 1st Corn Derby



SAN AGUSTIN, Pili, Camarines Sur-The Corn Program of the Department of Agriculture (DA) Bicol staged its 1st Corn Derby Harvest Festival for the Dry Season on April 5, 2022 at Romulo Cambaya's Farm, Tinangis, Pili, Camarines Sur to showcase high-yielding corn varieties that are available in the

market and teach farmers of proper and location-specific technology adaptation.

DA Bicol Regional Corn Focal Person Earl Vincent Vegas said that the corn derby is a project of their agency in which different seeds from various companies compete with each other in order to give

farmers an idea which corn variety they prefer to plant. Vegas said that this activity will also showcase the corresponding technologies that the seed companies have used in order to come up with the best harvest and attain higher yield.

The six seed companies in the region that participated in the yellow corn derby were the Advanta Seeds Philippines (Super 999), Asian Hybrid Seed Technologies (J505), Syngenta Philippines (N K 6 4 1 0), Bioseed Research Philippines (Healer 101G and 102G), Pioneer (Corteva) (3585YHR), and Bayer Crop Science (DK88282S) with Yara and

JL Corporation. For the white corn or for food production, Allied Botanical Corporation and East-west Seed Corporation, Inc. competed.

The one-day activity was attended in by provincial and municipal corn coordinators, corn growers, representatives of San Miguel Corporation and other agricultural companies. The yellow corn seed variety DK88282S from Bayer Crop Science was hailed as



top performer in terms of yield and farmers' choice. (Jayson M. Gonzales)

Multi-awarded Organic farmers' group in Bicol train for PGS

TIGAON, CAMARINES SUR – Six years after being awarded as NOAC National Outstanding Organic group, the multi-awarded association of organic practitioners in Bicol sustained its operation and now aims to be a pioneer core group in Participatory Guarantee System (PGS).

The Agri Planters and Food Processors Association of Tigaon (TAPFPAT) won the National Outstanding Organic Farmers' Group in 2016 and 2019. It is also a DA-CSO accredited association. It started its operations in June 2013 and registered with DOLE in November 2015. It is composed of 51 members coming from 12 barangays of Tigaon. Eight members were certified as organic farmers by the OCCP in March 2022. Certified organic crops included lettuce, cucumber, assorted vegetables, paddy rice, and rootcrops. The association produces

chili garlic sauce, pickled cucumber, and coco vinegar with chili. The members process their products

In April, they delivered 900 bottles of each product (2,700 bottles) to the Office of Vice President Leni Robredo.

PGS in the region. Hence, five of their members including Salazar and four members,



at the DTI's Shared Facilities inside the DA-HVCDP funded Cacao Processing Center in Barangay Caraycayon, Tigaon.

Elmer Salazar is currently the president of TAPFPAT. The present goal of the TAPFPAT is to become a Core

namely: Emilia Borabo, Isidro Delfino, Jennifer Lopez, and Norma Bautista underwent a (Next page please)

DA Bicol hosts...(from page 1)

Rice Board and the Local Government Unit of Bula, Camarines Sur, private seed companies, PhilRice, and the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority is staging the 14th National Rice Technology Forum on April 18-22, 2022.

The event was held in the clustered rice area covered by the San Agustin, San Ramon Farmers Cooperative (SARFC) in Bula, Camarines Sur. Said site with a total rice area of 104.30 hectares served as the technology demonstration area where 12 seed companies planted 27 hybrid seeds to showcase the advantages and benefits of hybrid rice which can give a higher yield than ordinary inbred palay seeds by 10 to 15%. The Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) likewise participated in the technodemo with their 4 inbred varieties. Also showcased were cost-reducing technologies and the efficiency of using modern farm equipment and machineries, drone, and other digital tools.

According to DA-Bicol Regional Executive Director, Rodel P. Tornilla what is noteworthy about this year's conduct of this Rice Techno Forum is the operationalization of the Consolidation scheme or

the Bayanihan Agri-Clustering which is one of the four pillars that will support the One-DA Reform Agenda initiated by Secretary Dar which is now gaining ground. This involves farmers/fishers organizing into cooperatives or associations

country are participating in this event", says Earl Vincent P. Vegas, Regional Rice Focal Person & Corn Coordinator. "They will walk through the rice areas, witness the actual field demonstration, make queries and listen to



and consolidating their farms into clusters to attain economies of scale in potential partnership with the private sector to produce more cost-efficient products and generate bigger revenues and incomes and fast track delivery of government interventions and services.

In Bicol region, there are already 20 rice clusters. "Over 700 farmers, rice program implementers and delegates from the various regions of the

lectures and updates on the Rice industry situationer, yield optimization in hybrid rice production, Farm and Fisheries Clustering program, Balanced Fertilization Strategy and Drone Technology. Product and technology exhibits and information booths will also be set up. A Press Conference will likewise be held," he added.

Invited to deliver the keynote message is DA Secretary William D. Dar.

Other guests and DA officials to grace the event or give messages are: Ariel T. Cayanana, DA Undersecretary for Operations; Senator Cynthia A. Villar, chairperson, Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food; Arnel de Mesa, DA Assistant Secretary for Operations; Shandy Hubilla, National Program Director of Farm and Fisheries Clustering and Consolidation Program (F2C2) and concurrent National Deputy Project Director of the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP); Dr. Rosana P. Mula, Director IV, Agricultural Training Institute; Recher E. Ondap, president Rice Board; Camarines Sur Governor Miguel Luis R. Villafuerte; and 5th district Representative Jocelyn F. Fortuno.

The participating seed companies are: LEADS Agri ventures, Corteva, Bioseed, Syngenta, Longping, Bayer, Philscat, Seedworks, SL Agritech, ALJAY, and New Hope Incorporated, One partner company complementing with seed companies is INAVET.

Camarines Sur is one of the 15 provinces selected for hybrid rice planting with an expected yield advantage of at least 1 ton per hectare against the traditional inbred seed varieties.

Multi-awarded Organic farmers'...(from page 4)

10-day Trainors Training on PGS on April 18-29, 2022 conducted by the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) RTC 5.

On May 16-17, they attended the Workshop on the Finalization of the PGS Manual of Operations and Internal Standard for Core Group conducted by the DA-Organic Agriculture Program at the Sonrisa Farm in Magarao, Camarines Sur.

Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) refers to a locally-focused quality assurance system which is developed and practiced by people actually engaged in organic agriculture. It is built on a foundation of trust, social network, and knowledge exchange. It is used to certify producers and farmers as actual

and active practitioners of organic agriculture.

The PGS shall be the mechanism by which small farmers/fisherfolk, their farms/associations/cooperatives shall be certified as engaged in organic agriculture and as producers of organic agriculture products.

The PGS was launched by Secretary William D. Dar on June 4, 2021. He said that RA 11511 opened opportunities for the small farmers and fisherfolk who want a sustainable and environment-friendly organic practice through PGS as it will significantly reduce the cost of maintaining organic certification. It will also actively involve farmers and fisherfolk with

like-minded stakeholders and advocates of organic agriculture by maintaining the integrity of organic products available in the market.

Income from Organic Farming

One organic farmer member is Emilia Borabo who has been a member since 2013. She grows sweet potato in the half portion of her 1-hectare farm area. Recently she harvested 1,500 kilos sweet potato which she sold at their local market at P20.00 per kilo. She was able to harvest five times before replanting. In another portion of her upland farm, she grows lettuce in 12 plots measuring 1 x 12 meters. She sells fresh lettuce at P50.00 per 200

grams giving her an estimated income of P3,500 per plot.

Norma Bautista, Secretary of the TAPFPAT and also incharge of processing projects, is also one of the members of the PGS Core Group. Bautista also owns the Herbas Immaculada, an ATI-accredited Learning Site located at her residence and farm in Zone 3, San Antonio, Tigaon. These farmers were also registered with the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards as producers of organic rice seeds and assorted vegetables and are also compliant to the Philippine National Standard (PNS) for organic agriculture since 2011.

(Lovella P. Guarin)

Abonong SWAK techno...(from page 1)

demo and initial recipient of certified rice seeds (RC 222); 10 bags organic fertilizer per hectare; 2 bags urea per hectare; and other farm inputs.

Developed by the PhilRice and the DA, the Abonong SWAK or balanced fertilization strategy advocates three principles, namely: preservation of the soil nutrients thru the use of combined organic and inorganic fertilizer; save on farm inputs; and attain high yield. Three options based on yield target were presented under Abonong SWAK, namely: Combo 1 which can give the farmer 3,000-4,000 kg per hectare target harvest; Combo 2 offers 5,000 – 6,000 kg harvest per hectare; and Combo 3 – can give farmers 7,000 – 8,000 kgs per hectare target yield. All combos require scattering at least 3,000 up to 8,000 kg rice straws on the field to decompose within 30 days, with application of 10 bags chicken manure, organic fertilizer or vermi compost 14 days before transplanting. Earl Vincent Vegas, regional

Rice and Corn Program Coordinator said that Abonong SWAK could give farmers better options to reduce production cost and at the same time achieve optimum yield. "Rangas Agri coop will be the first to showcase this Abonong SWAK in the region.

Meanwhile, Christopher Nuñez, CamSur provincial officer of Fertilizer & Pesticide Authority, urged the farmers to use FPA registered fertilizer. He also said that there are many kinds of soil fertility enhancers available in the market and even in the environment such as bio-stimulants, controlled release fertilizer, soil inoculants, and soil conditioner. Other sources of fertilizers can also be green manuring, compost and natural farm inputs.

Melvin Purcil, 43 year old, farmer is one of the cooperators. He is happy to try the Abonong SWAK. "Mahirap ngayon mag-saka dahil magastos. Kung hindi naman ako bibili ng abono,

mas lalong lugi ako dahil konti ang ani," he said. He received a fertilizer voucher from the DA recently equivalent to 4 bags of urea, 1 bag 14-14-14, and 1 bag 17-0-17 for his 1.5

and hybrid rice seeds from DA. During the briefing of the cooperators, Mary Elizabeth Banda, Chief of the Regional Soils Laboratory emphasized the importance of soil testing



hectare area. He purchased additional 4 bags of same fertilizer to follow the fertilizer requirement for his rice.

Haide Melgarejo, 73 year old farmer, on the other hand used to buy fertilizer for her 1.5 hectare rice, but now she only relied on the fertilizer voucher

before planting and fertilizer application to ensure that only the needed fertilizer is applied. Meanwhile, Ailyn Adante of Research Division discussed the procedure of the Abonong SWAK Combo 2.

(Lovella P. Guarin)

Photos by: Z. Abogado

Vets and Livestock Technicians train on Avian Flu and New Castle Disease

LEGAZPI CITY –About 50 veterinarians and Livestock Technicians from the different provinces of Bicol attended the training on Avian Influenza (AI) and New Castle Disease Surveillance held in one

of the bed and breakfast inns in this city on April 27 to 28.

The activity was initiated by the Regional Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (RADDL) of the Department of Agriculture in partnership with the Bureau of Animal Industry.

According to RADDL Chief, Dr. Rona P. Bernales the objective is to refresh the knowledge of the participants on the highly contagious Avian Influenza or Bird Flu and the New Castle Disease and provide updates on the status of these diseases. Dr. Arlene V. Vytiaco, National AI Focal Person from the Bureau of Animal Industry Manila discussed the National AI status and the AI



Protection Program Manual. Dr. Maria Erlinda T. Llamas also discussed the protocol on the Conduct of Disease Surveillance. Dr. Keryl B. Perlas on the other hand talked about sample collection, storage and transport of laboratory samples including their proper labelling.

Meanwhile, Bjorn Borris de los Santos discussed the Global Positioning System (GPS) or Geotagging and its principles. GPS is now being

used to determine the radius or range of ground zero or infected area; the control area and the surveillance area.

The second day of the training was actual or hands on sample collection, storage and transport. The activity culminated with the distribution of the sample collection paraphernalia.

(Emily B. Bordado)

Photos by: J. Gonzales

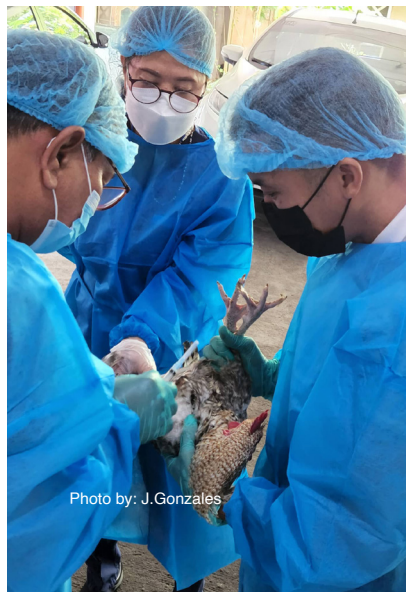


Photo by: J. Gonzales

DA Bicol joins first Bicol Tourism Expo

CADLAN, PILI CAMARINES SUR –The Department of Agriculture Bicol participated in the first Bicol Tourism Expo held at the Capitol Convention Center, this municipality on June 16-17, 2022. With the theme: “Exploring New Frontiers and Extraordinary Experiences”, the activity aimed to promote tourism which also included Agri Tourism thru innovation and continued collaboration with valued partners.

Sponsored by the Camarines Sur Chamber of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with the Department of Tourism and the Provincial Local Government Unit of Camarines Sur, the said activity was attended by over 1,000 participants, mostly members of the academe, students, farmers, fisher-folks and other stakeholders. Top officials and guests of said sponsors also showed their support during the opening program.

In her keynote speech, Atty. Maria Anthonette Velasco, COO, Tourism Promotions Board, challenged everyone to be open and do better since the tourism industry is one of the most affected Industries during the pandemic. In order to recover, she presented strategies like, strengthening digital platforms and Program Partnership as pathways. *“We have to change our mind-set, and accept the*

experiences during those difficult times as gifts of the pandemic” she added. In her inspirational message, Elsa Parot, Regional Director,



Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), lauded the emergence of Agri Tourism sites despite the many challenges. She

health and wellness with high quality farm-produced food. He enjoined everyone to visit agri-tourism



said that the emergence of the Agri tourism farms are new breakthroughs that capture the fruits of farming. She encouraged those who have farm lots to involve in farm diversification and convert to Agri-tourism sites.

spots in Bicol and enjoy the farm-to-plate or farm-to-table experience without going to a store or market. Exhibits showcased local tourism destinations and promotions from airline companies promising discounts on tour packages. Talks and lectures were also sponsored by the Department of Agriculture on the first day and the Department of Tourism on the second day.

Meanwhile, Rodel P. Tornilla, DA-5 Regional Executive Director in his virtual message, stressed that combining tourism with agriculture promotes environmentally friendly, efficient, and sustainable farm practices, provides alternative recreation facilities and farm tourism activities for families, students, and other clients, and promotes

For its part, the DA Bicol, thru the Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Information Section (RAFIS) showcased GAP certified farms and Agri-tourism sites. Likewise, and distributed over 4,500 copies of IEC materials and 900 sets of assorted vegetable seeds while the High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP), raffled off garden tools to the participants.

(Blesilda A. Nuñez)
Photos by: Z. Abogado



One of the highlights of the event is the raffle draw where exciting prizes awaits the lucky winners. Mrs. Leonora P. Corpuz, a 73 year old rice farmer from Busak, Libmanan Camarines Sur won a round trip ticket to Manila sponsored by Cebu Pacific; but instead, she chose the brush cutter from DA RFO5 to claim as her prize. *“Tama yan, ta dae na kami nakaka gabi”*, said Corpuz.

Farm clustering and consolidation key to HVC farmer assoc's success

The Department of Agriculture's out-of-the-box strategy of farm clustering and consolidation arrangement is helping farmers achieve the agency's twin objectives of increased productivity and high income, said Robert S. Buayaban, president of CLLS Federation of High Value Crops Growers Inc., the region's pilot Farm and Fisheries Clustering and Consolidation program (F2C2) farm cluster for high value crops. *"Dahil sa tulong ng Department of Agriculture, nagkaroon po tayo ng consolidation area. Napagaan po ng F2C2 'yung hanap-buhay ng mga farmers*

natin. Sa kabila ng sobrang kabigatan na dinadaan ng mga farmers, inaalalayan po nila tayo mula sa teknikal hanggang sa mga inputs at ngayon naman po ay sa marketing," Buayaban said during the Visit and Orientation

at Agri-Village and Trading Post of CLLS Federation of High Value Crops Growers Inc. on April 11, 2022 in Brgy. Sigamot, Libmanan, Camarines Sur. The activity marks the opening of the High Value Crops Week (HVC) 2022 with the theme "Farm Diversification With High Value Crops: Key to Recovery and Sustained Growth."

The development of the Agri-Village and Trading Post in Libmanan, Camarines Sur was initiated by the 17 primary organizations composed of 538 farmers from Cabusao, Libmanan, Lupi and Sipocot, Camarines Sur. After series of consultation and meetings, the farm cluster agreed to construct the structure through "rabus," a community activity similar to the bayanihan system. They also agreed to provide financial contribution to build the said

structure. Buayaban shared that since the soft opening of its Agri-Village and Trading Post in March 21, 2022 to April 9, 2022 the organization has generated a total sales worth P1.80 million from assorted fruits and vegetables delivered by the farm cluster members. These products were sold to local buyers from Camarines Norte, Sariaya, Quezon, Naga City and Libmanan.

According to DA-Bicol Field Operations Divisions Chief and Regional HVCDP Coordinator Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, CLLS Federation of High Value Crops Growers

ang inspirasyon mi" she said.

Tornilla, for his part, reminded the organization that its success story should not end in farm clustering. *"Kita ang nagco-compose kan value chain. One of the most important sectors in the value chain is the production-farmers. But the farmers alone, dae man siya ma-perform sa entire chain kun mayo ning suporta hale sa ibang sektor,"* he said. He encouraged the farmer-members of the CLLS Federation of High Value Crops Growers Inc. to maximize the input supply and services offered by the DA HVCDP, the Agricultural Credit Policy

office such as information on agribusiness opportunities, trainings and advisory services online, loan access, and product and enterprise registration assistance. ACPC Project Assistant IV Michael Jordan O. Roquid oriented the participants about the agribusiness credit programs that the CLLS Federation of High Value Crops Growers Inc. farmer-members may avail.

Moreover, the Municipal HVCDP Coordinators of Libmanan, Lupi, and Sipocot presented their accomplishment report as well as the production, processing, and marketing activities of CLLS Federation of High Value Crops Growers Inc. farmer associations in their respective municipalities.



Council (ACPC), and the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) through its Katuwang sa Diwa at Gawa para sa Masanang Ani at Mataas na Kita (Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita) program. He also thanked the farmers for their sustained commitment to ensure the country's food security amid the impact of the pandemic, infectious diseases, typhoons, and war to the agriculture sector.

Meanwhile, Malazarte shared an overview of the MuraMart hyperlocal marketplace mobile app developed by the (CSCCI) and cited the prospects of the organization's partnership with them using the digital platform. Maria Christina F. Campita, Supervising Agriculturist of DA-Bicol AMAD discussed the agribusiness development services offered by their

A ceremonial planting of calamansi and vegetable seedlings at the two-hectare Agri-Village and Trading Post of the CLLS Federation of High Value Crops Growers Inc. was conducted to cap the activity.

Buayaban expressed his gratitude to the DA-Bicol and his farm cluster's partners saying *"Maraming salamat po sa lahat ng bumubuo ng Department of Agriculture at sa lahat ng mga farmers na tumutulong para maging maganda ang resulta ng proyektong ito. Malaki po ang aking paniniwala na dahil nandyan po kayo na laging sumusuporta sa amin, mas yayabong pa po ito at mapapatunayan po natin 'yung masagang ani at mataas na kita ng ating mga."*

(Annielyn L. Baleza)

with reports from Dr. Irma D. Intia, LGU-Libmanan and Angelica Blanco, DA RFO V ORED



DA 5 stages *Kadiwa Master Chef Cook-Off* in celebration of Filipino Food Month

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR –Eight mouthwatering Bicolano dishes with a twist were featured through a Kadiwa Master Chef

Assistance Division (AMAD) on April 28, 2022, and was participated by DA employees representing its eight divisions. It revolved on the theme: *“Pagkaing Pilipino Susi sa Pag-unlad at Pagbabago.”*

The P5,000 cash prize for the first place was garnered by Alvin Milan and Anthea Jill Felices of the Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation Division. Milan and Felices cooked Sinanglay 2.0 using tuna belly. The second-place winner who received P3,000 were Clarenz Sabio and Eddie Paul Carullo of the Regulatory Division and their winning dish was Ginataang Libas. The third place with a cash award of P1,500 was garnered by Ian Darrel Bordon and Wilbina Barnedo of the Research Division. Their winning menu was dubbed as Bicol Express Delight. All other contestants received a P500 consolation prize. Other participants in the Kadiwa Master Chef Cook-Off were: Richard Romualdo

hours to cook their chosen dish.

The criteria for judging included taste and nutritional value (50%); creativity in presentation and use of garnish (20%); and technique (30%) which was sub-divided into execution (10%), amount of highlighted ingredients (10%), and cost efficiency (10%).

The Board of Judges during the Kadiwa Cook-Off were: husband and wife Marcon Joseph De Lima and Ma. Angela De Lima, owners of Chef's Kitchen in Naga City. Mr. De Lima has a Diploma in Culinary Arts APICIUS while Mrs. De Lima has a Diploma in Culinary Arts from the International School for Culinary Arts and Hotel Management. Another judge was Arlene Gabriela San Andres, retired DA-AMAD employee and owner of Gabriela's Corner.



and Ralph Roriel Belason from the Administrative and Finance Division; Ruben Fajardo and Joey Vasquez from Field Operations Division; Mary June Cadag and Miguel Rosales from the Integrated Laboratories Division; Aleck De Luna and Sharmaine Nacario from the Regional Agricultural Engineering Division; and Edgar Fajardo and Froilan Rempillo from the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP).

Before the cook-off, the participants were given P1,000 each to buy their ingredients at the Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita outlet at the DA 5 grounds. Then they were given two

On April 13, 2018, President Duterte signed Proclamation No. 469 declaring the month of April every year as “Buwan ng Kalutong Pilipino” or Filipino Food Month to promote our vast culinary tradition and treasures and ensure their transmission to future generations while supporting various industries, farmers and agricultural communities. The National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009 also recognizes culinary tradition as part of the country's cultural heritage which can highlight our nation's character.

(Lovella P. Guarin)
photos by: Z. Abogado

Cook-Off as the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office Bicol joins the nationwide celebration of the Filipino Food Month in April. The cooking contest was spearheaded by the Agribusiness and Marketing



Photo by: R. Adversario

Agri-trade fair highlights *Farmers and Fisherfolk Month* '22 celebration

PILI, CAMARINES SUR - To recognize the contribution of farmers and fisherfolk as the backbone of the Philippine economy, the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office in Bicol conducted the DA Agrifiesta 2022 on May 16 to 17, 2022, in this municipality. This is in line with the annual Farmers and Fisherfolks' Month celebration and the Feast Day of St. Isidore, the patron saint of farmers and rural communities. DA-Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla and Farmer-Director Bernadette B. De los Santos led the ribbon cutting ceremony for the two-day activity on May 16, 2022.

DA Agrifiesta 2022 kicked off with the opening of the agri-trade fair featuring the products of DA-Bicol's Kadiwa partners and exhibitors consisting of 23 farmer and fisherfolk associations and cooperatives, Agri-Pinay and GREAT Women and beneficiaries, Young Agripreneurs and Young Farmers regionwide.

According to Adelina A. Losa, Chief of the DA-Bicol Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD), the two-day Agrifiesta fair generated a total sales worth P 5 1 0 , 8 9 5 . 0 0

Among the Agrifiesta exhibitors were the Agri-Preneur Farmer Producers Association, Bakiad Rice and Vegetable Growers Association, Bicol Federation of Dairy Cooperative, and Bikolanas Agriculture Cooperative. Other exhibitors that participated were Buang Farmers Association, Bulawan Sr. Farmer's Association, Camarines Sur Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Cristo Rey-San Pedro Vegetable Growers'

Association, Danawin Agrarian Reform Cooperative (DARCO), Goa Agri-Producers and Processors Association,

High Value Commercial Crops Growers Association, Mauswag Agribusiness Inc., Pecuaría Development Cooperative



Photo by: Z. Abogado

and Labo Progressive Multi-Purpose Cooperative.

The Agrifiesta fair also showcased products from Lupi

Inc., Peñafrancia Sugarmill Inc., Polangui Kalamay and Muscovado Producer and Farmers Association, and the Agri-Planters and Food

Buwan ng Magsasaka at Mangingisda

Processors of Tiganon (TAPFPAT). Agripinay beneficiaries Fe Carranza and Marilyn Haya as well as GREAT Women beneficiaries Myrna Peñaflorida and Rebecca Purisima also joined the exhibit. Other featured exhibitors were Hayahay Food Products and J. Farms Spicy Taro Chips of the Young Farmers Challenge and young agripreneurs composed of the Provincial 4H Club of Albay, Municipal 4H Federation of Bacacay, Albay, Municipal 4H of Libon, Albay, Municipal 4H Federation of Malinao, Albay, and Tinawagan 4H Club.

As part of the celebration, Kadiwa Retail Stores offered several promos including Basket All You Can on selected products for only P299 and 10 percent off for meat, fish and fruits on May 16 to 17, 2022.

In his message, Tornilla thanked the farmers and fisherfolk for their resilience amid the series of typhoons that struck the region, the COVID-19 pandemic, and animal diseases such as the African swine fever

maglapigot na magkaigwa kita nin kakanon sa satuyang lamesa sa aroaldaw. Kun mayo sinda, magugutom kita,” Tornilla said. He also encouraged the participants to be grateful for the graces they received and to imitate St. Isidore by being willing to sacrifice one's convenience to serve the community.

Farmer-Director De los Santos, for her part, acknowledged the farmers as the Philippines' modern-day heroes. She also called for their commitment and perseverance to strive to be the best farmers and fisherfolk for the country. *“Nasa kamay po natin ang kinabukasan ng ating bansa. Wag tayong bibitaw sa ating kagampanang ito,”* she said.

Meanwhile, as part of the Farmers and Fisherfolks Month celebration, DA-Bicol, through Regional Mushroom Coordinator Peter Oliver also distributed pure culture and mushroom spawn to three mushroom growers association namely Bicol Entrepreneur Association for Mushroom, St. Francis Mushroom Growers Association, and Omasenso

of chick booster feeds, and two rolls of range nets to the Calangatnon San Agustin Farmers Association from Pili, Camarines Sur and Cabangal Palsong Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries and Fisherfolk Cooperative from Bula, Camarines Sur.

Moreover, the Del Menor Farmers Cooperative from San Jose, Camarines Sur; Danawin Corn Farmers Association, Sinuknipan Cacao Farmers Association, D'P Farmers Palaspas Food Armed in Every Situation, Kinalangan Nagkakaisang Magsasaka from Del Gallego, Camarines Sur; Sipaco Farmers and Fishermen Association from Lagonoy, Camarines Sur; Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish from Naga City, and the Marilag Integrated Farmers Organization from Sipocot, Camarines Sur received a total of 155 bags of chick layer feeds.

Furthermore, about 30 farmers from the Municipality of Pili, Camarines Sur attended the seminar on Agricultural Credit Policy Council's (ACPC) loan programs and MuraMart E-Kadiwa while over 100 farmer-leaders and members of various cooperatives and farmer associations were oriented on the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority's (FPA) Balanced Fertilization Strategy (BFS) Program as part of the activity.

Pursuant to Presidential Proclamation No. 33, May was declared as Farmers and Fisherfolks' Month to recognize the farmers and fisherfolks' contribution and role in the country's development.

(Annielyn L. Baleza)

with reports from Alden Jesus D. Ragay and Joann S. Velasco, DA AMAD V



Photo by: Z. Abogado

(ASF), and avian influenza. *“Nagkakakarakon pa kita gustong sabihon an satuyang mga tugang na mga farmers and fisherfolk dae nagpopondo na*

Farmers Mushroom Grower. Likewise, the Livestock Program headed by Dr. Mariz Guillermo distributed 100 heads chicken, two bags



Photos by: Z. Abogado

Agri-Tourism: the beacon of hope in Agriculture and Tourism Industry

by Emily B. Bordado



One positive thing that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about is that a lot of people learned to appreciate things which were just around them but they took for granted before. The restrictions in movement during the pandemic has compelled many to limit their

activities within the confines of their homes, their neighborhood and their community. But some began to take notice of their idle and unproductive lands or areas around them and bright ideas sparked in their mind to make these idle assets productive not only to get them preoccupied but also to tide them through pandemic as these could be their source of food and income.

This paved the way to the emergence of many vegetable and ornamental gardens. It also opened

doors for the development of agri-based lands into agri-farms or agri tourist sites. With the closure of the usual tourists destinations, resorts, recreation centers during the pandemic most people turn to their own farms as their refuge, for family bonding, recreation and for productive activities. Also, most of the those urban residents who lost their jobs decided to return to their respective hometowns.

What started as a family get away and recreation sites scaled up to pave the way for the development and rise of agri-tourism farms which were eventually opened to the public with the easing of restrictions. Stories abound in the social media about people from the urban cities who lost their jobs and decided to return to their home provinces and try

their luck there using whatever resources that are available. The hidden beauty and potentials of the farm and countryside were unfolded giving way to the rise of many agri – or farm tourism sites.

Although tourism was one of the most affected industries during the pandemic it is now bouncing back. With the emergence of Agri-tourism, it is now a very promising industry in the Bicol region. This new industry involves any agriculture-based, undertaking or events that lure or attract visitors and tourists to a farm, ranch, agri-fishery sites in the countryside or rural areas for production, educational or recreational purposes.

Agri tourism can help strengthen local economy, create job opportunities and new businesses and enterprises. It can also promote learning, training and certification programs which are now being done by government institutions like the TESDA, Agricultural Training Institute, Department of Tourism and Department of Agriculture. This emerging industry is

also introducing to the youth the importance of agriculture and will foster appreciation of farming, our natural resources, and indigenous resources and practices and our historical and cultural heritage, promoting physical and mental health and fostering community participation or *bayanihan* spirit.

Our national government has been supporting the agri-tourism industry with the enactment of the Republic Act 10816 or the Farm Tourism Development Act which provides the framework for developing and promoting farm tourism. It will pave the way to inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development as it opens possibilities for diversification for small farmers, while promoting sustainable agriculture systems and community involvement and participation (SEARCA 2017n).

According to Rommel A. Natanaun, Chief Tourism Operations Officer of DOT Bicol, **there are three elements in an agri-tourism farm. First, it must be productive with thriving agricultural crops, animals and aquaculture. It must be compliant to tourism standards as set by the DOT. Moreover, it must come up with its own “gimik” or special features or attractions. In addition, the agri-farm must be situated in a peaceful environment,**

accessible and with access road and must have a parking area.

Some of the thriving and popular agri tourism sites are: Sonrisa Farm in Magarao, Mike and Liz Integrated Farm in Calabanga, VK'S Organic Farm in Tigaon; Angeli's Farm in Goa, Deer Farm, Strawberry Farm and Parto De Irriol Agri-Tourism and Family Farm in Ocampo all in Camarines Sur province; the Farm Plate in Daraga; El Miro de Shie Integrated Farm and Farmers' Bounty Village in Camalig; Joros Farm in Ligao, Mirisbiris Garden and Organic Farm and the Aguas Farm in Sto. Domingo all in Albay province; Arellano's Nature Farm in Castilla and Grajo's Bee Farm in Casiguran both in Sorsogon province; Baluzo's Organic Farm in Daet Camarines Norte; and Cristina's Strawberry Farm and Teston Farm in Catanduanes

The newest agri-tourism sites which are now making waves are the Nesting Place Integrated Farm in Calabanga, the Viani Farm & Resort in Sangay and the Vintage Farm at West Garden in Virac,

Catanduanes and many more.

While the tourism industry was one of the most affected industries during the pandemic and it is now making a rebound and agri-tourism appears to signal a brighter gleam.

As Atty. Maria Anthonette Velasco - Allones, Chief Operating Officer, Tourism Promotion Board of the Philippines, underscored in her keynote speech during the recent 1st Bicol Tourism Expo: *“We have to change our mindset and accept the experiences during these difficult times as gifts of the pandemic and cultivate attitude of openness”.*

Instead of being discouraged devastated by the adverse effects of the pandemic let us rediscover, nurture and enrich more God's given resources and make them productive, rejuvenating and a

wellspring for our health and wellness. Agri-tourism is the way forward.



PHOTO CREDITS:

.Ramon Adversario Jr.
-Sonrisa Farm
-The Colony
-VK's Organic Farm

.Vincent Emil Pasumbal
-Mike and Liz Integrated Farm

.Jayson Gonzales
-El Miro De Shei Integrated Farm

.Emily Bordado
-Mirisbiris Garden and Nature Center
-Vintage Farm

.The management
-Farm Plate

.Zandra Abogado
-Deer Farm

.Annielyn Baleza
-Cristina's Strawberry Farm

Farmers' association in Sipocot, Camarines Sur benefit from farm clustering

by Lovella P. Guarin

One of the strategies of the Department of Agriculture to ensure food security amidst the Ukraine-Russia crisis is the Farm Clustering and Consolidation (F2C2).

One of the farmers' associations clustered under the High Value Crops Development Program is the Awayan Farmers Association; composed of over 70 members, 30 of whom are engaged in vegetable production covering 15 hectares in barangay Awayan in Sipocot, Camarines Sur.

"Dati, noong traditional pa ang aming pagsasaka at kulang pa kami sa gamit at makinarya, maliit lang ang kinikita namin. Ngayon, dahil sa F2C2, nabigyan kami ng mga training at farm inputs, domoble and income namin. Sa aking isang ektaryang gulayan, nakapag-harvest na ako ng mahigit 15 tons sa isang taon," Aureus said. He is happy that through farming, he was able to send his children to college. "Ang magsasaka ay hindi dapat

Sipocot has received and implemented a total of P143.5 million peso projects.

"Napakalaking tulong po ang mga naibigay na pondo at programa ng DA Regional Office dito sa Sipocot at nagpapasalamat po kami kay Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla at sa mga bumubuo po sa DA Regional Office sa Bicol. Dahil kung wala po ang suporta ng DA, ay konti lang po ang maipapamahagi namin sa mga magsasaka. Nagpapasalamat po kami kasama na ang aming mga rice farmers sa tinaggap na hybrid and certified palay seeds, fertilizer voucher, foliar fertilizer and financial assistance.

Ang isa pang malaking tulong talaga sa amin ay itong High Value Crops Development Program kaya



Awayan Farmers Association is one of the 17 associations that composed the CLLS Federation of Vegetable Growers Inc. CLLS stands for Cabusao, Lupi, Libmanan, Sipocot, neighboring municipalities in Camarines Sur province.

The members grow pinakbet vegetables like eggplant, okra, squash, string beans, and hot pepper, as well as melon and sweet corn. Danilo Aureus, the Awayan FA President, said that they market their produce at the Kadiwa Center at DA compound and in Manila such as Divisoria and Balintawak markets with the help of the trucks from the DA Bicol. *"Halos kumpleto na po ang naibigay ng High Value Crops Development Program sa aming grupo simula nang naging bahagi kami ng CLLS cluster. Nabigyan kami ng farm machineries tulad ng shallow tube well, PISOS at multi-cultivator, wheel barrow, hose at sprinkler. Meron din pong mga assorted vegetable seeds, UV plastic for mulching at seedling trays,"* added Aureus. *"Sa LGU ng Sipocot naman po particularly sa Municipal Agriculture Office, nabigyan kami ng fertilizer at training. Patuloy din po ang regular na monitoring nila sa aming mga taniman."*

mag-isip na siya ay abang magsasaka lamang. Kailangan maging negosyante tayo para umangat ang ating pamumuhay," he advises his fellow farmers.

Local Government Unit of Sipocot

Sipocot is one of the towns of Bicol which strongly supports the programs

nagpapasalamat po kami kay Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez, Chief ng Field Operations Division at focal person ng High Value Crops Development Program. Kasama po sa nabigyan ng higit P1.6M na interventions gaya ng vegetable seeds packets, organic fertilizer at various farm implements ang apat (4) na Big Brothers (farmers



of the Department of Agriculture and its bureaus and attached agencies. Engr. Caesar Franco Leonardo, Municipal Agriculturist, said that for FY 2022, the Municipal Agriculture Office of

associations) ng Sipocot na kabilang sa CLLS, namely: Awayan Farmers Association; Bulawan FA, Bagong Sirang FA, at Tara FA," said MA Leonardo.

Economic Impact of F2C2

Inter-agency convergence opens more opportunities for Camarines Norte's priority commodities



The Camarines Norte Provincial Project Management Implementation Unit (PPMIU) recently conducted a convergence meeting with the different national government agencies, local government units, and non-government associations to support the identified Provincial Commodity Investment Plan (PCIP) of the province. Said meeting aims to monitor the PCIP implementation and ensure that all the gaps in the project are addressed to harmonize and avoid overlapping of the interventions given to the farmers and fisherfolk organizations. Since 2017, the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) facilitated the preparation of the PCIPs in all provinces. These investment documents have been the main basis for identifying and developing subprojects of the I-REAP and I-BUILD components. Representatives from the Philippine Coconut Agency, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Trade and Industry, Camarines Norte State College, Local Government Unit of San Lorenzo Ruiz, Basud, Daet, and the Department of Agriculture presented their respective interventions already included in the PCIP which have already been funded and executed.

Some Municipal Agriculturists and Municipal Planning and Development

Coordinators also attended the meeting to know about the projects of various agencies on the identified priority commodities of the province such as pineapple, coconut, swine, native chicken, seaweeds, and smoked fish.

According to the Provincial Administrator of Camarines Norte, Roberto Sale, this convergence meeting will help create a holistic and integrated

The Municipal Planning and Development officer of LGU San Lorenzo Ruiz, Rico Brizo said that the meeting was able to give them an idea of how they can better implement and sustain their projects with the help of different agencies.

The use of PCIP has gone beyond DA-PRDP for it has become an instrument by LGUs and other partner agencies for leveraging resources to support the



plan among all the stakeholders, especially in preparing the intensified action plan and intervention activities to attain the objectives of the PCIP.

agricultural sector. The interventions for value chain upgrading of priority commodities are now being funded by the partner agencies and other stakeholders.

(Michelle Angela G. Alfiguera)

Masbate Farmers train on production and enterprise development



The Department of Agriculture –Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program conducted a series of training on rice and corn production and enterprise development with the goal to improve the farmers' management of production, and open opportunities for enterprise development through value-adding activities.

The training was conducted in three batches benefitting a total of 90 participants from three FAs.

Rice Training

Thirty (30) members of Barangay Pajo Farmers'



Association in Pajo, Balud participated in the training on March 29-30, 2022 at Barangay Pajo Plaza. Moreover, another 30 participants from Dayao Farmers' Association in Brgy. Dayao, Mandaon and Cabitan Farmers' Association in Brgy. Cabitan, Mandaon underwent the same training from March 31 to April 1, 2022 conducted in Brgy. Nailaban, Mandaon.

Mr. Ulysses Cabrera from the Provincial Agriculturist Office discussed topics on rice production and management practices while Mr. Emman Aguilar of the same office discussed rice pest and disease management. Farmers were able to acquire knowledge on nutrients, as well as pest management for their rice production.

They also actively engaged in a cooking demo conducted by SAAD Regional Program Management Support Office (RPMSSO) staff, Ms. Jenny Delmiguez, and were able to produce various rice-based products such as suman moron, putobao, piuto calasiao, and rice kropek.

(Please turn to page 16)

Corn Training

Meanwhile, 30 members of the San Pedro Rice and Corn Farmers' Association in Brgy. San Pedro, San Pascual participated in the Corn Production and Enterprise Development Training on March 30-31, 2022. Mr. Arvin A. Nolasco of the DA Regional Field Office discussed topics on corn and cassava production, and management while topics on integrated pest management were discussed by Ms. Ma. Cristina P. Solomon of the Regional Crop Protection Center.

The topics helped the participants acquire knowledge on managing their corn and cassava production in case of a pest or disease infestation. Also, a cooking demo was conducted by Ms. Honey Leah Cantoria of SAAD RPMO who demonstrated various corn-based products like suman mais, cassava cheese roll, corn dog, cassava yema and cassava sesame ball.

The most immediate need that the training addressed was to provide an avenue for farmers to

earn additional income, improve utilization, and sustain their production. The specialized training under different

the livelihood projects, transform farming practices towards sustainable community enterprises.



commodities is part of the Food Production and Livelihood Component of the SAAD Program which aims to capacitate farmers in managing

Finally, more groups are scheduled to undergo training in the province this year.

(Jay A. Ogaya, PPMO Masbate Information Officer)
Photo by: Jay A. Ogaya

SPECIAL PROJECT



4Ks Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran
ng Kababayang Katutubo

IPs from Ocampo learn urban gardening & diversified farming

SAN AGUSTIN, Pili, Camarines Sur—More than 70 Indigenous Peoples from Camarines Sur completed the Training on Urban Gardening and Diversified Farming this June 2022 to enhance their farming skills especially on the production and management of community gardens while conserving the indigenous ecosystem and promoting biodiversity.

The participants were IPs from barangays Del Rosario, Hanawan, San Jose Oras, Gatbo and Sta. Cruz in Ocampo, Camarines Sur. The training was essential for the IPs because their communities received assorted vegetable seeds, garden tools and other farm inputs needed for the establishment of their community garden.

According to technical staff Marion Noceda, a hands-on training will equip the IPs with the appropriate technologies to maximize the use of the ancestral agricultural lands and transform it into productive, profitable, and sustainable farm areas. The interventions they received are from the Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran ng Kababayang Katutubo (4Ks) Program of the Department of Agriculture (DA) Bicol in coordination with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) which is a national

comprehensive program for the IP communities with ancestral domains.

This program for IPs is being

Research Division discussed the basics of Urban Gardening, integrated and diversified organic farming systems and



implemented in the provinces of Albay, Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte and Sorsogon. "Dipisilun an buhay mi bilang sarong agta pero natawan kaming pag-asa kaining mga tabang kan gobyerno para mapakaray asin mapagian an pagbuhay mi," shared 74-year-old Dolores G. Candelaria, 74 of barangay Gatbo, Ocampo. Candelaria participated in the said training held at the organic garden of DA Bicol last June 16-17, 2022. Lecturer Rosita C. De Lumen of the

natural farming technology systems. She urged the participants to maximize their vacant space in their area. "Hangga't may espasyo an daga nindo, tanuman."

After the training, the IPs had a hands-on field practice in their respective venue. The participants were also provided with assorted vegetable seeds to start their own urban gardens.

(Jayson M. Gonzales)
Photos: Jayson M. Gonzales

Treading the Path of Retirement

by Emily B. Bordado

For most people, retirement is something to look forward to and it excites them. For some, it is something that is fearful as it means changes, uncertainties and departure from the usual routine and there's the prospect of being idle, being unproductive, yung feeling mo wala ka nang silbi and you will be lonely as your circle of friends will now become smaller. That is why I have also a mixed feeling of eager anticipation, excitement at the same time reservation and fear. After spending 44 years doing my job and loving it, I am about to take a respite from it all: busyness or preoccupation with so many tasks with the accompanying stress and tension as deadlines have to be met; the challenges of accomplishing targets with every little budget or resources and dealing with various and complex personalities of the people I work with, and sometimes the disappointment of not getting even a simple thank you or tap on the shoulder for a job well done or for obstacles surmounted and defying the odds.

But retirement for us is an inevitable reality that we must face cheerfully. Being in the government service has of course good compensation, privileges, opportunities, charms and perks. There are also some frustrations and difficulties to hurdle, but overall it was an exhilarating and fulfilling journey for me.

I started out working then at BAEX (now ATI) as a Media Researcher immediately after graduation. At first, I thought being young would be a liability especially when I became the youngest section chief during my early years in service by unexpected turn of events. I became a supervisor to a staff who were much senior than me. But somehow I managed to navigate through. From a neophyte, timid and idealistic employee, I have evolved and become more confident, wiser, practical, more grounded and mellower-chastened and chiselled by the rich experiences and luster of years which has lightened up and tempered my life's view.

Having led a life of discipline, dedication, commitment, faith in God and love of country and fellowmen I did not feel very much the weight of years as I take every endeavour as a noble service and offering to God our country and people. I loved and enjoyed my work and the people I work with. Although there were some people who were hard to deal with, I learned to accept them as they also learned to accept me for what I am. I was forthright and upright, frank and transparent-traits which endeared me to some but caused resentment and animosity and uneasiness to others.

As I look back and ponder over, I could say that the experiences and lessons both pleasant and unpleasant I have accumulated through the years are the priceless things I will treasure. And of course those memories of days gone by: the aspirations, hopes, failures, mistakes, joys, sorrows, challenges and victories, travel opportunities, also the love story of my life which blossomed here and my journey through marriage and parenthood. All these I will cherish as they are interwoven in my memories of DA- which I consider not only my workplace, my bread and butter but my second home and my life for the past 44 years.

According to Beth Rosen: "As you get older, you realize that you don't need all the things that fill your space but rather the things that fill your heart". Indeed, all those equipment, laptop, gadgets, cellphones, documents, books, hardwares, and softwares etc. that filled my office- although they have served their purpose, I would not be needing them now and I am leaving them all behind either to be disposed or be passed on to the next user. What I will bring with me are those which filled my hearts-the rich experiences, lessons and memories of the people I



worked with : my staff including our JOs, my peers, my bosses, mentors, colleagues and friends and our clients-the people I worked for. I will keep them in my treasure box.

I hope that in one way or another, I have touched some of you and I have made my mark and humble contribution to this institution and to our community I wish everyone the best. Sana umabot din kayo ng 40-44 years sa service with no rancour or regrets. Whatever the future has in store for the DA and for each one of you, face and bear it cheerfully and gracefully. Love and enjoy your work with poise and dignity.

For now, I am taking off my hat as Chief of the RAFIS, the editor of UMASenso newsletter, Deputized Resident Ombudsman, Head of the InfoAce Unit of PRDP; Value Restoration Officer and President of the Association of Senior Citizens and Differently-Abled Employees of DA-Bicol. I am also signing off as the official spoke person. But I am not yet writing -30- which in journalism parlance means the END of an article or the end of the life of a writer. Only God knows when my life story and narrative will end and when my time is up. But I am ready to embrace it gracefully and gratefully.

To all of you, thank you so much for being part of my journey and for enriching me. And to God, Be Praised and Glory for a fulfilling, rewarding, meaningful and beautiful life He has given me.



Champion
Peach Team
Total Points : 220



2nd RUNNER-UP
Yellow Team
Total Points : 175



1ST RUNNER-UP
Aqua Blue Team
Total Points : 180



3RD RUNNER-UP
Mint Green Team
Total Points : 160



DA RIOs from different regions

DA Info Officers visit Bicol

The DA Regional Information Officers from various regions of the country visited the DA Regional office in Bicol for a benchmarking activity on June 27-29, 2022.

The group also proceeded to Nabua, Camarines Sur and visited the Polytechnic State University Broadcast Center equipped with state-of-the-art facilities for digital radio and TV programming. Owned and operated by the Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges (CSPC), the FMR University Radio 94.3 FM with an authorized power of 5,000 watts and equipped with digital TV antenna. The

P. Cadag and Ms. Hejie Andalis-Dimabogte, PSUB Executive Operating Officer.

The Department of Agriculture (DA), and Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) has an on-going agreement with the CSPC. This was initiated by Emily B. Bordado, the Regional Information Officer and Chief of RAFIS, in response to the directive of Sec. William Dar to jointly pursue aggressive technology transfer and strategic communication employing the newly inaugurated Polytechnic State

In his message during the opening program, DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla stressed the importance of media and information technologies as important tools in disseminating accurate and timely information to the public.

Cheryl C. Suarez, Chief of Agriculture and Fisheries Information Division (AFID) Central Office, expressed her gratitude to the DA 5 Executive

Meanwhile, Lovella P. Guarin, incoming OIC of RAFIS Bicol discussed the DA, ATI and CSPC collaboration.

Prima Lou Imperial, chief of the Info Service Section of the ATI discussed ATI's media platforms.

Present also was Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez, Chief of Operations Division who extended her appreciation to the information group who, like soldiers, are always ready



RED Rodel P. Tornilla



Dr. Mary Grace B.P. Rodriguez, FOD Chief

Director and key officials who greatly support the advocacies of the Information group. She lauded the collaborative

to be deployed anywhere just to capture important events of the department.



Cheryl Suarez, Chief of AFID



Lovella P. Guarin, OIC-RAFIS

group was welcomed by CSPC President Dr. Charlito

University Broadcast Center.



Visit at CSC-PSU Broadcast Center

effort of the DA, ATI and the CSPC for coming up with such an amazing project. "Having such support will inspire the information officers and media practitioners to spread more good stories", she narrated.

As it was also the week for the retirement of RAFIS Chief, Emilia B. Bordado, the RIOs together with some regional staff and the RAFIS staged a surprise tribute for her.

(Blesilda A. Nuñez)

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Starting July, 2022, the UMAseño will have a digital format-**UMAseño Online**.

You can watch it live, every **Monday, 10:00 AM** at the official social media sites of DA Regional Field Office No.5



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You can also tune in to
Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges
87.5 Mhz. DZCC FM
FMR University FM
94.3 Mhz.



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San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur
Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Information Section (RAFIS) 5

darafid5@yahoo.com

Agriculture Bicol
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