



DA increases fertilizer subsidy

From 1,131.00/hectare for inbred rice planted
From 2,262.00/hectare for hybrid rice planted

now P6,600.00/hectare

By Lovella P. Guarin

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR – The DA National Rice Program has increased the amount of fertilizer subsidy to rice farmers to P6,600 per hectare in the Dry Season Cropping (September 16, 2022-March 15, 2023).

Qualified beneficiaries are those rice farmers registered in the Registry System for basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) and beneficiaries of seeds distributed by DA and PhilRice, validated farmers who planted using their own or self-purchased seeds and those farmers who signified their intention to plant for the covered cropping season.

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EDITORIAL

Cooperation among hog raisers LGU, private and gov't sectors, key to full recovery of swine industry

Filipinos love to eat pork, and we have many ways to cook a pig – from the traditional lechon, sisig, and pork barbecue. That is why hog raising is a very popular enterprise in the Philippines. In the Bicol Region 90% are backyard producers.

With the approximately 700,000 metric tons annual volume of hog meat production, the Bicol Region contributes 3.63% share to the total volume of production in the country (Source: DA 5 Livestock Program).

Before the African Swine Fever (ASF) hit the country in 2020, the Philippine swine industry is a 260 billion peso industry – a major contributor to local economic growth. Studies have shown that almost 60% of the meat consumption is swine as every Filipino consumes 15 to 16 kilos of pork meat annually.

With the increase in population comes also the increase in the demand for pork meat.

But there is the ever present threat of ASF which is a highly contagious viral disease of pigs.

From 2020 to 2022, the total number of hogs depopulated due to ASF reached 17,556 heads. The DA Bicol paid a total of P 87.9 million as indemnification to 3,530 affected hog raisers.

As of December 31, 2022, some 22 municipalities/cities out of the 65 towns/cities in Bicol previously affected by the ASF have progressed from red zone to pink zone. The DA Bicol also started with its calibrated swine repopulation wherein each affected hog raiser was given 3 piglets and 6 bags of feeds.

As the swine industry recovers, the hog raisers experienced a price disparity where the farmgate price of liveweight is very low, the retail price of pork remains high at P280 per kilo.

In the national scene, the PSA reported that the farmgate price in December 2022 was at P166.53 per kilo, liveweight, while pork (kasim) was P280 and pork (liempo) was P300 per kilo in December 2022.

As the larger part of the swine population is raised in backyard farms, most of these are sold to viajeros. These middlemen are the ones making good profit as they market the swine to butchers. These butchers in turn, supply the retailers who sell directly to the consumers. Each channel in the supply chain - from traders to butchers to retailers, add in the cost of production, resulting to higher price of the pork meat.

This dependence on middlemen (particularly from other regions) should be minimized if we want to increase the price of pork liveweight and shorten the disparity vs. retail pork price. More livestock auction markets should be established where strict implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary measures, surveillance and monitoring for disease prevention and control are strengthened.

The DA has Bantay Presyo team composed of heads of attached agencies and operating units of DA Bicol, but it has no police power to control the operations of the middlemen.

Section 7 of the RA 7581 or the Price Act stated that only the President of the Philippines, upon the recommendation of the implementing agency, or the Price Monitoring Council, may impose a price ceiling on any basic or prime commodity if any of the following conditions so warrants: impendency or existence of a calamity, emergency, widespread acts of illegal price manipulation, event causing unreasonable increase in price, and whenever any basic or prime commodity has risen to unreasonable levels.

In determining the reasonable price ceiling, the following factors are taken into consideration: average price in the last three months, supply availability in the market, cost to the producer or seller including increase in cost of transport of the basic or prime commodity to the area of destination; and other factors which will aid in arriving at a just and reasonable price ceiling.

The hog raisers who are on a losing end also have a huge part to play in our battle against ASF. They should be our first line of defense in this battle.

Backyard hog producers need to improve on its production and management systems. Other factors that define success in hog raising include the kind of feeds, type of housing and quality of the environment, genetic potential of the pig and disease prevention and control.

Feed cost accounts for 65%-75% of production costs as feeds primarily define meat quality. With the still on-going conflict between Russia and Ukraine, fuel prices continue to rise creating a domino effect to several commodities, particularly those exported by the two warring countries such as fertilizer and grains. These price increases come on top of already tight markets driven by the demand of other countries recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the DA's response to this problem is the new program entitled "Corn Production Enhancement Project" (CPEP) to be implemented by the National Corn Program for CY 2023. This will hopefully help to lower cost of feed ingredient especially the yellow corn, improve local corn output and thereby lessen the country's dependence on imported feed ingredients.

The collective efforts of the Livestock Program and Corn Program is seen to boost the local hog industry. On the other hand, the cooperation of the backyard and commercial hog producers, the Local Government Units and the private sector is the key to the full recovery and revitalization of the swine industry towards a better life for the Bicolano hog raisers.





Bicol's KADIWA widens operation amidst rising agri commodity prices

By Lovella P. Guarin

The Kadiwa on Wheels of the Agripreneur Farmers & Producers Association of Libmanan, Camarines Sur continuously participates in national caravans at the National Capital Region.

Dubbed Kadiwa ng Pasko, the said caravan was launched by President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. in December 2022. It is a marketing initiative of the government that will continue to assist the Filipino people even after the Christmas season.

Robert Buayaban, President of the Agripreneur Farmers & Producers Association said that his association's Kadiwa on Wheels has been at DA Central Office, Malacañang Park and Novaliches, Caloocan and other parts of Metro Manila to offer affordable vegetable such as onions, fruits and other prime commodities.

He promised that in January, 2023, his association in coordination with other Kadiwa network in the country, will bring to the Kadiwa at the DA regional office and at their Kadiwa outlet in Sipocot onions priced at P170/kilo, refined sugar at P70/kilo and NFA rice at P25/kilo.

Kadiwa is the brainchild of the DA, established to provide urban residents fresh food items at lower prices. It also gives food producers an opportunity to be agri-preneurs and directly sells their fresh harvests.

Kadiwa has been implemented by the Department of Agriculture intensively since the start of the pandemic in 2020 to ensure food accessibility, affordability, and availability; likewise, to protect the consumers against fluctuation of prices of agricultural commodities.

For the whole year 2022, a total of 2,732 metric tons (MT) of agricultural commodities worth P156 Million were traded in Bicol through the Kadiwa program which benefitted 507,292 Bicolanos.

At present, there are 30 Kadiwa retail outlets and Kadiwa on Wheels operating in the Bicol Region. There are 19 Kadiwa outlets or mobile Kadiwa in Cam. Sur, four (4) in Cam. Norte, three (3) in Albay, one (1) in Masbate, and three (3) in Sorsogon.

These Kadiwa outlets and Kadiwa on wheels are buying farmers' produce and selling basic and agricultural commodities at prices generally lower than prevailing market prices.

Available products include rice, sugar, cooking oil, pork, chicken, fresh fish, dried fish, canned goods, fruits, vegetables, rootcrops, processed agricultural products and other basic commodities.

According to Adelina A. Losa, Chief of the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD), there were 46 beneficiaries of KADIWA Financial Grant Assistance Program such as Farmers and Fisherfolk Cooperative and Association (FCAs) and Local Government Units (LGUs) that were provided with a total of P53,850,000.00 from 2020 to 2022 to finance their retail and distribution activities (trading/working capital), procurement of transport/delivery vehicle and/or purchase of produce, machinery or equipment.



DA Bicol bestows first high value crops achievers awards

By Lovella P. Guarin



Director Gerald Glenn F. Panganiban, OIC Director of the Bureau of Plant Industry and Program Director of NUPAP personally bestows the awards to the HVC achievers.

Five outstanding Agricultural Extension Workers of Bicol received P20,000 cash prizes as pioneer recipients of the first ever High Value Crops Achievers Awards. The award was given by the DA 5 -High Value Crops Development Program.

The awarding was personally graced by Director Gerald Glenn F. Panganiban, OIC Director of the Bureau of Plant Industry and Concurrent Program Director of National Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture and High Value Crops Development Program. "Nag trailblaze ang Region 5.....I commit my support to push for this incentive/award hindi lamang sa Region 5 kundi maging sa ibang regions," he said. Panganiban also added that food security is not only the responsibility of Region 5 or NCR but of the whole nation.

The five Outstanding AEWs who received a P20,000 cash prize, plaque and mist blower were: Mario D. Asuncion, HVCDP AEW of LGU-Virac, Catanduanes; Maricris S. Bernardino, HVCDP Coordinator of Polangui, Albay; Sienna C. Sombrero, HVCDP Coordinator of Tigaon, Camarines Sur; Engr. Rommel M. Nacario, HVCDP Coordinator of Pili, Camarines Sur; and Irma D. Intia, HVCDP Coordinator of Libmanan, Camarines Sur.

Dr. Irma D. Intia of LGU Libmanan has organized five HVC farmers organizations which have all joined the CLLS Federation of HVC Growers, Inc. She helped link the farmers to both government and non-government organizations. Paving the way also for the establishment of the CLLS Agri-Village and Trading Post that serves as the consolidating and marketing area of the CLLS members of the four (4) municipalities of Cabusao, Libmanan, Lupi and Sipocot.

Engr. Rommel Manzano Nacario of Pili has established the baseline data of his handled barangays including the profile of every farmer to facilitate better planning, monitoring and validation. He continued and initiated various LGU-funded projects including 1) Nursery Development Project, 2) AgriDoc Phase 3, 3) Introduction of Drip Irrigation System, and the 4) Vegetable Enhancement Project. He is a member of the council of Regional Extension Service Provider of the ATI. In 2021 he organized the federation of the high value crops grower of Pili composed of 10 associations that qualified to the DA's Farm and Fisheries Clustering and Consolidation (F2C2) program.

Sienna C. Sombrero is the HVC Coordinator of the LGU of Tigaon since 2008. She conducted Farmers Field School for vegetable production for the 4Ps, IPs, GPP Coordinator to share her knowledge with the farmers. She always monitors their farms and extends technical assistance like pest and disease prevention and control, relays new technologies to the farmers, encourages farmers to register in the RSBSA and help them ensure their crops in PCIC.

Mario D. Asuncion is the HVC Agriculture Extension Worker in the Municipal Agriculture Office of Virac, Catanduanes from December 2013 to the present. He is responsible for planning and supervising of all HVCDP activities such as Gulayan sa Paaralan and Gulayan sa Barangay Programs, Farmer Support Program and the Climate Change & Mitigation Reforestation Program.

Maricris Bernardino is the municipal HVCDP coordinator of Polangui, Albay covering 44 barangays. She organized the different farmers' associations into Polangui Federation of Growers Assn. Inc.



ATI-RTC 5 Center Director Elsa A. Parot gives an inspirational message.

DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla said that this HVC Achievers Awards is the first in the country and the funds came from GAA allotment for the HVCDP of Region 5. "This is our way of saying thank you to our Local Government Unit partners in the implementation of the High Value Crops Development programs in their respective municipalities. This is also in recognition of the AEWs' dedication and exemplary performance in the delivery of agricultural services to our common clientele – the farmers and the public in general," Tornilla added.

Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, Chief of the Field Operations Division and regional HVCDP coordinator said that the HVC Achievers' Award is open to all Municipal HVCDP Coordinators with at least 3 years experience. "I hope that in the coming years, mas marami pa pong Agri Extension Workers ang sumali," she enthused.



Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, Chief of the Field Operations Division and Regional HVCDP Coordinator enjoins other AEWs to join the search.



DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla said that the HVC awards is the first in the country and is the agency's way of extending gratitude to the hardworking AEWs.

The awardees' respective LGUs were also honored during the ceremony. Also present during the awarding were ATI-RTC 5 Center Director Elsa A. Parot, Camarines Sur APCO Marcial Bustarga, Albay Provincial Agriculturist Rose Beludo, Albay Provincial HVCDP Coordinator Cesar Cordenete, Albay Asst. APCO Jayson Gonzales; Municipal Agriculturists Lea Beltran, Arvin Salvino, Rexie Jesalva of Libmanan and John Carlo Dasigan of ROS Catanduanes.

The High Value Crops Achievers Awards is being implemented by the DA High Value Crops Development Program in collaboration with the ATI.



Bicol's calibrated swine repopulation nearing completion

By Lovella P. Guarin

Three months after the last active African Swine Fever (ASF) case in Bicol was contained, the Department of Agriculture in Bicol is halfway through its calibrated swine repopulation program. The Livestock Program has targeted to distribute 4,275 piglets to the hog raisers previously affected by ASF to propel the hog industry towards complete recovery.

According to Dr. Marissa Guillermo, Livestock Program regional coordinator, a total of 3,345 piglets have been distributed to 23 municipalities as of this writing. Ten (10)

municipalities in Cam. Sur; 9 in Albay; 1 in Cam. Norte; and 3 municipalities in Sorsogon. The hog raisers from Pili, Cam. Sur were the latest recipients of the 2-month-old piglets which were distributed at the LGU offices. Three heads of piglets were given to the smallholder or backyard hog raisers supported with six bags of feeds (3 starter feeds and 3 grower feeds) to help them start anew in their livelihood.



The piglets are being distributed to the beneficiaries from municipalities that had no reported ASF cases for at least 80 days. To date, 36 towns/cities are in the pink zones or ASF-free, out of the 65 towns/cities that battled ASF from 2020 to 2022. The rest are waiting for ASF free declaration upon their submission of pertinent documents for zone progression, such as a copy of the municipal ordinance/executive order on the adoption of BaBay ASF Program; a copy of the farm registry of the municipality; a summary of the ASF history in the municipality (outbreaks, surveillance and disease control measures); and list of training on Swine Biosecurity attended by hog raisers and LGU staff. The DA's Calibrated hog repopulation and Bantay ASF sa Barangay (BABay ASF) program are in partnership with the local government units (LGUs), hog raisers' groups and the private sector.

The zero ASF incidence in Bicol is a result of the strict surveillance and monitoring efforts being conducted by the DA Bicol in collaboration with the Bureau of Animal Industry, the provincial and municipal LGUs as well as barangay officials, hog raisers' groups, and the private sectors involved in the swine industry.

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This one-time use fertilizer vouchers shall be used by the farmer-beneficiaries to claim urea fertilizers at their preferred DA-accredited dealers, distributors, and outlets. The voucher value for assistance will be computed based on the actual area planted by the farmer and should not exceed the area registered in the RSBSA. However, to serve more farmers, an eligible farmer-beneficiary can receive a maximum voucher value of Php13,200.00, equivalent to two (2) hectares.

During the Wet Season Cropping (March 16 – September 15, 2022), the value of fertilizer discount voucher provided to farmers was Php 1,131.00 per hectare for those who planted inbred rice, while Php 2,262.00 per hectare for those who planted hybrid rice. The increase in the fertilizer subsidy was DA's immediate support to rice farmers amidst the hike in fertilizer prices due to larger demand from other countries as well as higher freight cost.



DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla said that for the Wet Season Cropping (March 16-September 15, 2022), DA Bicol Rice program generated 66,549 fertilizer discount vouchers amounting to Php105.3 million covering 63,812 hectares. Out of the generated voucher, 66,301 were claimed by 55,573 farmers from Cam. Norte, Cam. Sur, and Catanduanes comprising 99.64% of the target for the Wet Season 2022.

For Dry Season Cropping (September 16, 2022-March 15, 2023), additional fund of Php 376M was allocated for Bicol Region to cover 56,998 hectares of rice areas in Albay, Masbate and Sorsogon. This is in addition to the funds allocated under the General Appropriations Act (GAA) which was

allocated to the provinces of Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur and Catanduanes. As of this writing, a total of 99,774 fertilizer vouchers have been generated wherein 63% have already been claimed by 50,547 rice farmers from all over Bicol amounting to Php 301.3 million covering 45,650 hectares.

DA Bicol joins 5th Bicol Agri Summit

P20.00/kilo
rice was sold
by Maying's
Rice Mill



DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla addresses the crowd at the 5th Bicol Agri Summit.

PILI, CAMARINES SUR – The Camarines Sur Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (CSCCI) in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture Bicol and the Provincial Government of Camarines Sur opened the 5th Bicol Agri Summit on September 29 to October 1, 2022 as part of the Cam. Sur Business Expo 2022. The expo was held at the Capitol Convention Center in Cadlan, this town.

Various products from the agriculture, industry and services sectors were sold during the three day expo. The Department of Agriculture through the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) has invited 27 exhibitors for the summit.

One of the highlights of the expo was the P20.00 per kilo rice sold by Maying's Rice Mill and Comprada, a local trader from Tigaon, Cam. Sur.

In his message, DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla rallied the entrepreneurs and farmers to face the challenges brought by the Ukraine-Russia conflict not with fear and doubt, but rather with an entrepreneurial spirit that is resilient and innovative.

"With strong partnership and determination I am confident that we will be able to hurdle these difficulties. Despite the challenges we are facing today, our agency never cease to carry out its mission to ensure food availability, sufficiency, accessibility and safety. Ensuring continuous flow of essential goods is also our priority. We also provide seeds, inputs and other assistance and interventions to farmers and households to encourage them to plant during these times of adversity," he added.

"We greatly recognize the contributions of our farmers and food producers to sustain value chains for food. Value chains contribute to economic & social sustainability," said RED Tornilla.

The three-day event was graced by Camarines Sur Governor Luigi R. Villafuerte; George Barcelon, president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Emma Llorin, President of the Camarines Sur Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc.; Maria Francia O Casin, Vice Chair of the CSCCI; Gaudencio A. Iriola, Jr. Chair of the 5th Bicol Agri Summit; and Elsa A. Parot, ATI-RTC 5 Center Director.

DA PRDP-Bicol reports 2022

By Annielyn L. Baleza

The Department of Agriculture Philippine Rural Development Project (DA PRDP) Bicol highlighted its gains for 2022 and gears up for the implementation of the PRDP Scale-up in 2023.

During the Project Support Office (PSO) Regional Project Coordination Office (RPCO) Year End Assessment and Planning Workshop held in Metro Manila and RPCO Year-End Assessment for CY 2022 held recently in Pili, Camarines Sur, DA PRDP Bicol presented its accomplishments for 2022.

As of December 31, 2022, DA PRDP-Bicol has 19 approved value chain analysis that were translated into Provincial Commodity Investment Plans (PCIPs) of six provinces and one chartered city. Currently, Bicol has 40 commodities with PDC endorsement. PRDP-Bicol ranked first in terms of non-PRDP investment by value chain enablers as of October 28, 2022 with P11.3 billion reported leveraged resources from other non-PRDP enablers.

Also, PRDP-Bicol's infrastructure development (I-BUILD) component has completed 19 subprojects amounting to P1.65 billion while 21 SPs are ongoing. Of these, two I-BUILD subprojects worth P219.14 million are financed under the original loan while 19 SPs which cost P3.83 billion are funded under the 2nd additional financing 2 (AF2). Meanwhile, PRDP-Bicol has seven I-BUILD subprojects that are under procurement.

On the other hand, the enterprise development (I-REAP) component has completed a total of 28 subprojects amounting to P140 million. The said completed I-REAP subprojects now benefit 16,121 households. PRDP-Bicol has two approved subprojects under AF2 with an aggregate amount of P25.72 million.

Three microenterprise subprojects under PRDP Global Environment Facility (GEF) have completed their 100 percent physical targets namely the Seaweeds Nursery and Production Marketing Project in Magallanes, Milkfish Culture and Marketing in Pilar, and Seaweeds Production Project and Grouper Culture Proponent in Matnog. Meanwhile, Butag Green Grouper Fish Cage Production Project in Bulan, Sorsogon has reported 87.3 percent physical accomplishment.

Also highlighted during the said year-end meetings were the recognitions given to two marine protected areas in



DA PRDP-Bicol Deputy Project Director Adelina A. Losa presents the accomplishments of the region during the PRDP PSO-RPCO Year-End Assessment and Planning Workshop 2022 held in Manila on December 14, 2022.

DA PRDP NPCO Project Director Asec. Arnel V. De Mesa encourages the RPCOs to take the lessons learned from the project implementation during the previous years and upgrade their performance for the PRDP Scale-Up implementation.



DA PRDP South Luzon Project Director Shandy M. Hubilla presents the concept note for the PRDP Phase 2 Project.

PRDP-Bicol I-PLAN Component Head Aloha Gigi Bañaria presents the accomplishments of the I-PLAN component during the RPCO Year-End Assessment for CY 2022 held in Pili, Camarines Sur on December 19, 2022.



DA PRDP-Bicol I-BUILD Head Engr. Teodoro C. Eleada presents the accomplishments of the I-BUILD component during the RPCO Year-End Assessment for CY 2022 held in Pili, Camarines Sur on December 19, 2022.

gains, commits to scale up performance in 2023



DA PRDP-Bicol I-REAP Head Patrocinio B. Collao I presents the accomplishments of the I-REAP component during the RPCO Year-End Assessment for CY 2022 held in Pili, Camarines Sur on December 19, 2022

DA PRDP-Bicol Social and Environmental Safeguards Officer Teresita Blaqueza presents the accomplishments of the SES Unit during the RPCO Year-End Assessment for CY 2022 held in Pili, Camarines Sur on December 19, 2022.



DA PRDP-Bicol Information, Advocacy, Communication and Education (InfoACE) Unit Writer Annielyn L. Baleza presents the accomplishments of the unit during the RPCO Year-End Assessment for CY 2022 held in Pili, Camarines Sur on December 19, 2022.

DA PRDP-Bicol Procurement Officer Jestin Bergantin presents the accomplishments of the Procurement Unit during the RPCO Year-End Assessment for CY 2022 held in Pili, Camarines Sur on December 19, 2022.



DA PRDP-Bicol Deputy Project Director congratulates the RPCO team for their performance in 2022 and encourages them to keep the momentum as the Project prepares for the implementation of the proposed 600 million dollar-worth PRDP Phase 2.

the region namely the Matnog Marine Protected Area in Matnog, Sorsogon which garnered the 1st place National Award for Coral Cover Condition Category and the San Fernando Fish Sanctuary and Marine Reserve in San Fernando, Masbate which received the 2nd place National Award for Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) and Management Effectiveness Assessment Tool (MEAT) category.

DA PRDP Bicol Deputy Project Director Adelina Losa lauded the team's performance and encouraged them to keep the momentum as the Project prepares for the implementation of the proposed 600 million dollar-worth PRDP Scale-Up.

"You have done a very good job in 2022, now we have another four years for PRDP Scale-Up especially in 2023. We are looking forward to its implementation along with the PSO and NPCO heads as well as the World Bank," said.

According to Losa, a total of 44 Municipal Local Government Units (MLGUs), and two Provincial Local Government Units (PLGUs) have expressed their intent to participate in the PRDP Scale-Up. She added that she is counting on the local government unit's support in clustering and strengthening farmers' cooperatives to avail of PRDP-funded projects. PRDP-Bicol will be conducting a series of orientation in January for the LGUs that expressed their intent earlier. The RPCO team will also schedule a joint technical review to assist the participating P/MPMIUs in preparing their documentary requirements.

"With this PRDP Scale-Up, we are targeting big-ticket projects. So kailangan talaga established and strong ang ating mga magiging partner cooperatives so that they can manage big common service facilities. Sana ang mga LGUs, tulungan talaga sila especially on counterpart. We are looking forward for big common service facilities that will really help develop 'yung mga commodities natin sa Bicol so that we can increase the volume of production and produce quality products not only for local markets but also for export," she added.

The PRDP Scale-Up aims to improve farmers and fisherfolks' market access and raise their income from agri-fishery activities. It will be implemented from 2024 to 2028.

(Annielyn L. Baleza, DA RAFIS V/PRDP RPCO V InfoACE Unit)

Photo Credits: Annielyn L. Baleza and Michelle Angela G. Alfiguera, PRDP RPCO V InfoACE



DA-Bicol showcases natural and organic products at Bicol Natural and Organic Products Expo 2022

By Annielyn L. Baleza

NAGA CITY, CAMARINES SUR -- Twenty organic practitioners from five provinces in Bicol joined the Bicol Natural and Organic Products Expo (BNOPE) 2022 conducted by the Department of Agriculture (DA)-Bicol Organic Agriculture Program on December 7 to 9, 2022. DA-Bicol collaborated with the Camarines Sur Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. (CSCCI) and the Agricultural Training Institute Regional Training Center V for the event which aims to serve as a platform in strengthening the natural and organic agriculture industry.

According to National Organic Agriculture Program (NOAP) National Program Coordinator Bernadette F. San Juan, aside from showcasing all natural and organically produced products in response to the increasing demand for safe food and environment-friendly farming practices, BNOPE is also an opportune activity to promote and raise the general public's awareness on organic agriculture's benefits on health, environment and the agri-fishery

sector's economic growth, particularly on farmers' income.

She added that BNOPE was conducted in compliance with Republic Act 11511 known as "An Act Amending RA No. 10068 or the Organic Agriculture Act of 2010" designed to promote and further develop the organic agriculture practice in the Philippines.

"It is very timely that we are gathered here today to feature and promote the result and outcome of those technologies and research—the natural and organic produce and products and to link our farmers to market opportunities... Doon po kasi sa batas, sa RA 11511, mayroon doon na nakalagay na P1 billion. Out of the P1 billion, P50 million is for marketing assistance. I'm very happy to find out, annually pala dito sa Region V, talagang ginagawa nila kahit wala pa 'yung batas yung market assistance for organic farmers," she said.

She also bared that if the proposed P1 billion NOAP budget for 2023 will be approved, around P400 million will be allocated for livelihood grants for qualified organic farmers and practitioners. The approval of livelihood grants worth P5 million below will be at the regional level while those which will cost more than P5 million but below P10 million will be approved by the Board at the Central Office. In addition, she mentioned her appeal to allot at least P2 million budget per region to subsidize their exhibits including the Regional Organic Agriculture Board (ROAB), agricultural extension workers (AEWs), as well as the municipal and provincial organic agriculture focal persons.

According to San Juan, starting 2023, NOAB also plans to provide scholarship grants to 10 qualified youths nationwide ages 18-35 to engage them in organic farming



and food production for 21 months in collaboration with organic and chemical-free farm hosts. DA will deploy two interns to each farm host for nine months. In turn, they will receive P5,000 per month for each intern. Each intern will also receive P5,000 monthly. At the end of the nine-month training, the intern will get P150,000 each to start their own agri-project. While waiting for the harvest, DA will continue to provide P10,000 each for one year.

She also underscored the value of feeding the soil rather than directly feeding the plants as well as healthy farming and food consumption rather than focusing on increasing production. She urged everyone to calculate cost-reduction to sustain the soil and increase the profit margin. Moreover, she enumerated other initiatives and priorities of NOAP including the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) certification, establishment of OA livelihood projects, massive production of organic fertilizer, inventory and promotion of OA zones per municipality to aid the needs of practitioners and boost OA production.

“Everyone has a role to play. Our farmers are making sure that we have food in our table while also protecting our environment. Let us help by supporting them. By doing so, we can guarantee that our food is safe, at the same time we are helping the farmers increase their income and we also contribute in protecting Mother Earth. Organic agriculture has boundless benefits. But it will be more beneficial if we will work altogether in the promotion, propagation and further development implementation of organic agriculture in the country,” she added.

Meanwhile, DA-Bicol Field Operations Division Chief Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez highlights the relevance of organic agriculture in attaining food security, sustainable development, and food sovereignty.

“Natural and organic products are the perfect components to perfect the formula for food security, sustainable development, and food sovereignty,” she added.

Moreover, DA-Bicol Regional Technical Director Edgar R. Madrid thanked the agency’s partner institutions in promoting organic agriculture in the region. He also expressed his hope that the activity would create awareness on the benefits of natural and organic products particularly on health and environment and increase in income.

Other highlights of the three-day event include the Agri-Talk on Participatory Guarantee System (PGS), a locally focused quality assurance system designed to serve as an alternative to third-party organic certification. During the Agri-Talk, Regina Carla S. Padre of ATI RTC V and LGU-Goa Camarines Sur Organic Agriculture Focal Person Arlene M. Dayo shared information about the PGS. They mentioned that it was developed and practiced by organic



agriculture practitioners. They added that using PGS, accredited OA practitioners will be authorized to certify organic product producers and farmers.

For the second day of BNOPE 2022, Hands and Earth owner Daisy Donna L. Ramos demonstrated the process of producing organic lettuce and cucumber chips as well as passion fruit gummy candies. About 30 organic agriculture enthusiasts and practitioners participated in the activity.

The Opening Ceremony of BNOPE 2022 was also aired via live stream at the Department of Agriculture-Bicol Facebook page. NOAP is one of the DA's banner programs that advocates promoting an alternative agricultural system that is environmentally sound and protects citizens' health.

DA Bicol turns over Bicol's first Calamansi Processing Facility to LACAFA

By Blesilda A. Nunez

LAGONOY, CAMARINES SUR - The Department of Agriculture Bicol thru the High Value Crops Development Program, turned over a P6 million worth Calamansi Processing Facility to the Lagonoy Calamansi Farmers Agriculture Cooperative (LACAFA) on December 1, 2022. The processing facility was established in Barangay Sta. Maria, Lagonoy Camarines Sur.

Organized in 2020, the Lagonoy Calamansi Farmers Agricultural Cooperative is now composed of 62 members who are all calamansi growers covering a total of 64 hectare. According to Roy Nelson Ramos, General Manager of LACAFA, the association has more than 39 regular members and a total of 80 hectares production area. "Sa buong Lagonoy po ay halos 124 hectares ang natatamnan ng calamansi," Ramos said. They started processing calamansi juice at the Partido State University (PSU) Shared Service Facility. At present, the LACAFA has three variants of calamansi juice: concentrated calamansi, ready to drink and calamansi puree – all bearing the brand name Calman-C. He gave credit to the Department of Trade and Industry for training them particularly in the marketing field.

"Labis ang aking pasasalamat at kami ang napiling mabiyayaan na ganitong fasilitas. Malaking tulong ito sa amin upang maparami at mapabilis ang pagproseso ng aming produkto" Ramos said. "Mag-iisang taon pa lang ang aming operasyon at nakitaan na ito ng potential" he added.

Gerald Glenn Panganiban, DA OIC –Director of Bureau of Plant Industry and concurrent Program Director of the National Urban & Peri-Urban Agriculture and High Value



Crops Development Program, thanked the DA Bicol and the agencies that collaborated in realizing the project. "Bukod sa pagproseso ng kalamansi, kailangang pagtuunan din ng pansin ang ibang pananim at produkto at pag aralan din ang pagiging negosyante" he quipped.

Lagonoy Mayor Delfin Pilapil III lauded the DA and other agencies that made the Calamansi Processing Facility a reality. "Hindi ako nagdalawang isip na pagkalooban ang kooperatiba ng loteng pagtatayuan ng facilidad sapagkat ang bayan ng Lagonoy ay isa sa pinakamalaking producers ng kalamansi at patuloy akong tutulong at susubaybay upang magtiwala ang ibang mga tutulong", he said.

Meanwhile, Rodel Tornilla, DA-5 Regional Executive Director challenged the officers and members to sustain the operation of the said facility. "Ito ay mapapatakbo nang maayos sa tulong ng iba't ibang ahensya lalo na sa pagpapalakas ng institutional development at malaking challenge din kung papano nila pararamihin ang kanilang myembro upang matulungan hindi lang ang mga myembro kundi ang buong bayan ng Lagonoy, he added.

Other guests and representatives of partner agencies present who gave their messages of support were: Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez, Chief, of DA Bicol Field Operations Division and Regional HVCDP coordinator; Bimbo Punzalan, Municipal Agriculturist of Lagonoy; Rosemarie de la Trinidad of Department of Trade & Industry; Salvador Valeroso from Cooperative Development Authority; Joaquin Pilapil, Shared Facility Coordinator; Raffy Magno - Executive Director, Angat Pinas Inc.; Jay Percival Ablan, Prov'l Caretaker, Department of Trade & Industry Cam Sur; Victor Francia, Agricultural Extension Worker; Archt. Giovanni Per, Chairman of LACAFA, and the officers and members of the association.





Close to 600 farmers of Sorsogon graduate from SAAD

By Lovella P. Guarin

PILAR, SORSOGON – “Papayag ba kayo?” Mayor Carolyn C. Sy-Reyes jokingly asked her constituents during the first ever Graduation Ceremony of the beneficiaries of the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) in Bicol.

Sixteen (16) farmers associations consisting of close to 600 farmers, all from the municipality of Pilar, were the first group of beneficiaries of SAAD to “graduate” from the program.

Pilar, Sorsogon was one of the 18 pioneer municipalities of SAAD Phase 1 in Bicol that were selected in 2018 based on 2015 poverty incidence. The other municipalities in Sorsogon included Magallanes, Sta. Magdalena, Donsol, Juban and Matnog. Pilar will not be included anymore in Phase 2 of SAAD which will run from 2023 to 2028.

In 2018, these close to 600 farmers barely knew each other. They seldom received government interventions due to the remoteness of their areas. But SAAD came into their lives, organized them into bonafide associations which are now registered in the DOLE, and provided them with complete packages of interventions to increase food production and income and ultimately build sustainable community-based enterprises.

Aside from consistent production of high value crops, corn and rice, livestock raw products such as eggs and meat, these associations are now engaged in food processing and are now producing cassava chips, peanut brittle, peanut butter, vegetable pickles, and corn chicharon, among others.

These 16 associations are: Pootol Backyard Farmers Association – with 33 members; Samahang Pangkabuhayan at Pangkaunlaran ng Calpi- 29 members; Naspi Agricultural Workers Association – 32 members; Pangpang Farmers Association – 25 members; Abucay Farmers Association – 25 members; Cagdongon Farmers Association – 31 members; Salvacion Integrated Farmers Association – 43 members ; Comapo-capo Integrated Farmers Association – 42 members; Esperanza Farmers Association – 30 members; Nabuntogan Farmers Irrigators Association Inc.- 99 members; Dapdap Farmers Association – 52 members; Brgy. Pineda Productive Farmers Association – 22 members; Lumbang Farmers Association

– 30 members; Maralitang Magsasaka Association (Brgy. Mabanate)- 50 members; Brgy. Bayawas Farmers Association – 20 members; and Pilar Farm Workers Association (Brgy. Sta. Fe) – with 35 members.

One of the association presidents bravely expressed his gratitude to the DA and the SAAD despite the sadness which was evidenced in his face and voice. But he said he was consoled by the knowledge and assurance that DA Bicol, particularly the Banner Programs will not leave them on their own. “Makaka-asa po kayo na itong ibinigay ninyo sa amin ay aming iingatan at pagyayamanin. Hinding hindi po namin malilimutan ang SAAD,” he added.

Mayor Sy-Reyes also expressed the strong commitment of the LGU of Pilar to sustain the momentum set by the SAAD in terms of project implementation.

The Graduation Ceremony was held at the Pilar Gymnasium and was attended by Former Sorsogon APCO Florentino Ubalde, Jr. newly designated APCO for Sorsogon Roser Rebellon, Tomas Diesta – representative of OPAG Sorsogon, OIC-MA Marites Rebellon, Pilar Administrator Arthur Garchitorena, Renato Acasio of DA-Bicol High Value Crops Development Program and the SAAD Sorsogon warriors.

Some of the highlights of the graduation were the turn over of 1 set garden tools, 1 unit wheelbarrow, 1 roll plastic mulch, 300 packets vegetable seeds to each of the associations and the lively competition for the search for Ms. SAAD Sorsogon’s crown won by Minerva V. Pineda, member of Salvacion Integrated Farmers’ Association.

SAAD is DA’s armor against poverty. It has four components, namely: Program Management, Social Preparation, Marketing Assistance & Enterprise Development, and Production and Livelihood Interventions.

Sources: Maribeth Mangalino – SAAD Report Officer
Pauline Trixie Borja – Sorsogon Information Officer
Mary Rose Detera – SAAD Sorsogon Coordinator
Photo credits: Eduardo Collantes, Jr. (RAFIS)





BICOL, January 23, 2023 – As part of the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA - SAAD) Program's preparatory activities for the implementation of its phase 2, orientation meetings were held in the provinces of Catanduanes, Masbate, and Sorsogon which was participated by local government unit (LGU) representatives and the program's stakeholders from November 2022 to January 2023.

The neighboring provinces of Catanduanes, Masbate and Sorsogon were previously included as SAAD's priority provinces for its phase 1 implementation from fiscal years (FY) 2018-2022. For 2023-2028, all three provinces will remain as SAAD's selected areas and will cover new and existing municipalities. The selection of areas under phase 2 falls under the new guidelines set by the National Program Management Office (NPMO) in which selected municipalities must be in the 5th to 6th classification, alongside areas in the top one-third poorest municipalities based on the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) 2018 Small Area Estimates.

To properly orient representatives from selected municipalities under SAAD Phase 2, various orientation meetings were conducted by the SAAD Regional Program Management Support Office (RPMSO) along with the Provincial Program Management Support Office (PPMSO) staff. The activity was spearheaded by the SAAD Assistant Regional Focal Person and DA Regional Field Office 5 (RFO 5) Field Operations Division Chief, Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, Ph.D.

Sorsogon

In September 2022, the Phase 2 orientation for the province of Sorsogon was held at the Provincial Capitol of Sorsogon which was participated by Municipal Agriculture Officers (MAOs) from the selected SAAD Phase 2 municipalities of Barcelona, Bulusan, Castilla, Matnog, and Prieto Diaz. Sorsogon Provincial Agriculturist, Maria Teresa V. Destura was also present in attendance. Out of the 5 municipalities, only LGU Matnog was part of SAAD Phase 1.

SAAD Technical Working Group (TWG) member, Florentino Ubalde, Jr. discussed the background of the SAAD Program and its accomplishments to brief the new SAAD covered municipalities regarding its implementation. The guidelines for Phase 2 were discussed by SAAD Bicol Report Officer, Maribeth Mangalino thereafter.



Masbate OIC - Provincial Agriculturist, Graciana Tagnipez

Catanduanes

Catanduanes conducted its orientation with SAAD stakeholders on October 11, 2022 at the province's capital town, Virac.

The SAAD Program identified the municipality of Viga as its new covered area in Catanduanes, while retaining the Phase 1-covered areas of Bagamanoc, Baras, Bato, Gigmoto, Panganiban, and San Miguel.

The first part of the meeting was led by the Agricultural Program Coordinating Officer (APCO) for Catanduanes, Mr. Rafael Magallanes where he discussed the goals, strategies, the 4 major components of SAAD, as well as the accomplishments of the program for Phase 1. It was followed by the discussion on the guidelines and criteria for Phase 2 area and beneficiary selection led by SAAD Bicol Report Officer, Maribeth Mangalino.

Masbate

SAAD's final Phase 2 orientation meeting was conducted in Masbate City in January 17, 2023 and was participated by Provincial and Municipal Local Government Unit (P/MLGU) representatives from the Phase 2 covered municipalities in the province; Batuan, San Fernando, Baleno, Balud, Dimasalang, Palanas, Pio V. Corpus, and Esperanza.

Masbate Breeding Station (MBS) Superintendent, Engr. Jerry Eboña was in attendance along with Masbate Agricultural Program Coordinating Officer (APCO) Wilfredo Nelmida, and Masbate OIC - Provincial Agriculturist, Graciana Tagnipez.

Similar to the orientation for Sorsogon, SAAD TWG Representative, Mr. Ubalde and Ms. Mangalino discussed the background of the SAAD Program and enumerated its accomplishments and directives for its first phase of implementation as well as the guidelines for the Phase 2 implementation. An open forum was also conducted to address the questions and concerns of the invited stakeholders.



Also present was Masbate Vice Governor Hon. Elisa Kho. She formerly served as the 2nd District Representative of Masbate where she chaired the Philippine House Committee on Rural Development (PHCRD) and authored the House Resolution No. 1421 (HR 1421) titled "A Full Resolution Strongly Urging the House Leadership through the Committee on Rural Development to Extend the Implementation of the Department of Agriculture's Special Area for Agricultural Development Program for Six (6) Years from 2023-2028." Her notable work paved the way for the approval of the SAAD Program's six-year extension.

The SAAD Bicol RPMSO staff, accompanied by PPMSO Masbate, also paid a courtesy visit to the LGU offices of Baleno, Dimasalang, Palanas, and Pio V. Corpus where they met with the respective Mayors and Municipal Agriculture Offices (MAOs) to elaborate the program's implementation in the said Phase 2 SAAD-covered municipalities.

It was emphasized in the various orientations that associations will receive various packages of livelihood interventions and training depending on the results of the conducted social preparation activities which will still comprise of the program's recurring commodities - rice, corn & cassava, high-value crops, organic agriculture, and livestock and poultry production. Livelihood production will be the main focus for the target beneficiaries for FY 2023 while enterprise development will be introduced in the succeeding years.

Dr. Rodriguez expressed her gratitude to the continued support and acceptance of the stakeholders in the SAAD covered municipalities for FY 2023-2028. With the success of SAAD Phase 1, she assured the steadfast commitment of the SAAD implementers in helping the marginalized communities in the region. The region has targeted a total of 60 farmer associations (FAs) for this year from the 20 identified municipalities.

With the conclusion of the program's preparatory agendas for Phase 2, the SAAD Bicol RPMSO and PPMSO staff look forward to initiating social preparation activities in the region during the 1st Quarter of FY 2023. ###

Writer: Juan Paulo A. Quizana, DA-SAAD Bicol Information Officer
Source: Maribeth A. Mangalino, DA-SAAD Bicol Report Officer
Photos: SAAD Bicol RPMSO
 Jonas Guañizo, DA-SAAD Sorsogon Area Coordinator



DA-Bicol joins simultaneous nationwide launch of **Green Revolution 2.0** to promote food security

By Annielyn L. Baleza



DA-Bicol Regional Technical Director for Operations Luz R. Marcelino (right) and DA-Bicol Field Operations Division Chief Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez (2nd to the left) lead the distribution of various agricultural intervention as part of the nationwide simultaneous launch of the Green Revolution 2.0: Plants for Bountiful Barangays Movement held on October 26, 2023 in Pili, Camarines Sur.

PILI, CAMARINES SUR -- The Department of Agriculture-Bicol through the High Value Crops Development Program participated in the nationwide simultaneous launch of the Green Revolution 2.0: Plants for Bountiful Barangays Movement held on October 26, 2023.

According to DA-Bicol Field Operations Division Chief Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, the Green Revolution 2.0 or the Luntiang Ani ng Mamamayan aims to improve the nutrition of Filipinos, promote edible landscaping in communities, and encourage them to engage in urban gardening.

DA-Bicol Regional Technical Director for Operations Luz R. Marcelino and Rodriguez led the distribution of various agricultural interventions to some 40 beneficiaries from Brgy. San Agustin in Pili, Camarines Sur. Each package costs P3,000 each consists of assorted vegetable seeds, garden and hand tools, and calamansi planting materials.

Meanwhile, Rosita De Lumen, in-charge of the DA-Bicol Organic Research and Development Center, lectured on urban gardening. De Lumen shared some concepts on urban agriculture as well as tips on edible landscaping, container gardening, tunnel gardening, vertical gardening and crop diversification.

Ma. Lourdes Diaz, one of the program beneficiaries expressed her gratitude to DA-Bicol saying *"Nagpapasalamat po ako sa ibinigay na benepisyo ng Department of Agriculture sa amin. Kahit po backyard gardening lang po kami, malaking bagay na rin po 'yun at saka lalong-lalo na po 'yung calamansi, meron na din po kasi akong dating lima, natutuwa po ako na nadagdagan siya at saka 'yung mga anak ko po kasi mahilig magtanim-tanim kaya maraming maraming salamat po sa programa ng DA!"*

Meanwhile, Brgy. Kagawad Mariano Narvaez Jr., Chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture in Brgy. San Agustin, also assured the DA-Bicol of his support to the program.

Moreover, Rodriguez, sought the public's continuous support to DA's programs esigned to ensure food security in the region.

“Ang Green Revolution actually ay hindi lang ngayong panahon. It even started in the 1970s, pero naka-focus siya sa rice. For this year and for the past years pa, pati ang High Value Crops ay ininvolve na rin sa Green Revolution. Now for DA RFO V, we opted na ang gawin natin dito sa Green Revolution, 'yung mga bakanteng lupa or even 'yung backyard gardening in the barangays, 'yun 'yung mataniman para magkaroon po ng self-sufficiency even at the local level,” Rodriguez said.



“Ang panawagan po namin sa lahat ay huwag po tayo magsawang suportahan ang pagtatanim po—ang agrikultura kasi ito po ang napatunayan na natin lalo na nung nagkaroon ng pandemya na kailangan nating mayroon tayong abot agad na pagkain sa ating bakuran, sa ating kapaligiran. Kung tayo po ay magtatanim sa mga bakanteng lupa o kahit na po sa mga paso, sigurado pong mayroon tayong aanihin, sigurado pong mayroon tayong source ng ating pagkain,” she said.

The DA Bureau of Plant Industry led the nationwide simultaneous launch of the Green Revolution 2.0 in partnership with the National Parks Development Committee in October 2022.



Photo Credits: Annielyn L. Baleza, DA RAFIS V

Agripreneur from Casiguran, Sorsogon hailed as 1st runner-up National Outstanding Rural Woman 2022

Photo Credit: Department of Agriculture-Philippines

By Annielyn L. Baleza

Leizel E. Grajo, a 39-year-old agri-entrepreneur from Brgy. Tigbao Casiguran, Sorsogon won 1st runner-up in the 2022 Search for National Outstanding Rural Women of the Department of Agriculture (DA). The awarding ceremony dubbed as “Gawad Parangal sa Katangi-Tanging Kababaihan sa Pagsasaka at Pangisdaan sa Kanayunan” was held at the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija on Dec. 8, 2022.

The contender from Bicol currently serves as the operations and marketing manager of Grajo's Farm, a Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA) of the Agricultural Learning Institute (ATI). Grajo's Farm also operates as a farm enterprise accredited by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and with license to operate from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It specializes in stingless bee production and is engaged in small-scale seasonal crop production, value-addition, and agri farm tourism.

Grajo received a plaque of recognition and cash award worth P100,000 from DA.

In his message, DA Senior Undersecretary Domingo F. Panganiban congratulated the awardees and recognized their exemplary contribution to the country's agriculture sector.

“I hope that you will maintain the same agility that you showed when you were searched on to be the most outstanding rural women in agriculture. This gathering is a celebration of the brave and brilliant women who continue to help transform the landscape of our national right for the betterment of many. Our country's workforce is strengthened by the talents and contributions of those extraordinary mothers, daughters and sisters who are some of the best entrepreneurs and farmers in the country today. We recognize them as role models who pave the way for Filipino women of the future to succeed while inspiring others to do the same,” Panganiban said.

Meanwhile, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Program Director and Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority Deputy Executive Director Annray Villota-Rivera congratulated the winners and contestants of this year's search.

“You have thoroughly earned the awards and cash prizes with the qualifications you've presented to the selection committee. You empower women everywhere with what you have achieved. And everyone applauds you for coming this far. The judges were able to see strong, resilient women as strong as a bamboo that can weather any storm and calamities. Despite the hardships in their past, these rural women persevered and gained success in their agricultural pursuits and able to match the capabilities of their male counterparts,” she said.

Grajo was chosen from the top five candidates who were shortlisted by the national technical committee (NTC) from the top 10 regional winners. The NTC judged them based on the following criteria: contribution to food security and agricultural and fishery development which includes productivity, profitability of economic activities, and quality of products and services (30%); contribution to sustainable development such as efforts to protect the environment, use of environment friendly technologies, efforts to adapt to climate change or emerging conditions and innovativeness and creativity (30%); and impact to rural development consisting of promotion of women empowerment and gender equality, improvement in family life, excellence in character or ability to hurdle difficulties and contribution to local economy (40%).

The annual search is one of the DA Gender and Development Focal Point System's (GFPS) client-focused activities as stipulated in the Magna Carta of Women (MCW). It aims to give due recognition to Filipino rural women with excellent and outstanding accomplishments and contributions to agri-fishery development and made a positive impact in the lives of people in the rural areas. This year's search focused on outstanding rural women in areas with high poverty incidence, particularly in the 4th to 6th class municipalities nationwide.

Philippine Commission on Women Executive Director Atty. Kristine E. Yuzon-Chaves, PhilRice Executive Director Dr. John C. De Leon, and Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization Dr. Dionisio G. Alvindia also graced the awarding ceremony. Members of the GAD Focal Point System and GAD Focal Persons from DA and attached agencies and bureaus along with the concerned local government officials and members of the NTC also attended the said event.

Congratulations

*to the top three winners
of the DA-Bicol's*

TikTok BE RICEponsible Dance Challenge!

1st prize:

RSBSA RFO V

**Rubee Ann J. Iraula, Clarisse Mae V.
Alfonso, Heide Gonzales,
Angelica Norado, Manasseh Acasio**

2nd prize:

Barby Ann Valera and Aira Mia Cortezano

3rd prize:

Angela Mae Oblinda

The 1st prize winners received BE RICEponsible gift packs of 2 kilograms brown rice and 1 kilogram adlai, P500-worth of cellphone load and P1,000 cash award. Meanwhile, the 2nd and 3rd prize winners received BE RICEponsible gift packs of 2 kilograms of brown rice and P500 cash prizes, respectively.

DA-Bicol Regional Technical Director for Operations Luz Marcelino, Regional Rice Program Focal Person Earl Vincent P. Vegas, RAFIS Chief Lovella Guarin, Agricultural Program Coordinating Officer (APCO) of Camarines Sur Marcial T. Bustarga awarded the prizes to the top three winners.

The TikTok BE RICEponsible Dance Challenge was conducted to support rice farmers, promote healthier rice, and lessen rice wastage in celebration of National Rice Awareness Month.



Congratulations RAFC Bicol

for bagging eleven (11) National awards during the
**8th National Agriculture & Fisheries
Volunteers' Day**

held at Century Park Hotel, Malate, Manila.

Change Maker of the Year

1. Change Maker of the year Award (RAFC) - RAFC Bicol
2. Change Maker of the Year Award (PAFC) - PAFC Camarines Norte
3. Change Maker of the Year Award (MAFC) - MAFC Talisay, Camarines Norte

Outstanding Sectoral Committee Award

1. Outstanding PAFC/ICCAFC Sectoral Committee 1st runner-up ICCAFC Naga City Sectoral Committee on High Value Crops

Awards for Outstanding Chairperson, Regional Executive Officer and Regional Coordinator

1. Outstanding RAFC Chairperson
Ms. Bernadette De los Santos
2. Outstanding PAFC Chair
Mr. Benedicto Palmares [PAFC Cam. Norte - Chairperson]
3. Outstanding MAFC Chair
Mr. Roberto Abierta [MAFC Chair of Talisay, Cam Norte]
4. Outstanding RAFC Executive Officer Award
Ms. Aloha Gigi I. Bañaria
5. Outstanding RAFC Secretariat - Coordinator
Ms. Gladys Regondola-Guzman
6. Outstanding PAFC Secretariat - Coordinator
Ms. Melinda Jerez of PAFC Cam. Norte
7. Outstanding MAFC Secretariat - Coordinator
Ms. Lilian G. Maesa of MAFC Talisay, Cam. Norte



Photo shows DA Senior Undersecretary Domingo Panganiban (3rd from right) poses with the AFC Bicol Region team led by this year's Outstanding RAFC Chairperson Bernadette Delos Santos (4th from left) and Outstanding National Committee Chairperson awardee NBPC on Poultry, Livestock and Corn Chairperson Dr. Arnulfo Frontuna (2nd from right). PCAF Executive Director Nestor Domenden (4th from right). PCAF OIC Deputy Executive Director Julieta Opulencia (6th from right), and Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency Executive Director Donald James Gawe (utmost right) also joined the awarding.

PCAF

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