



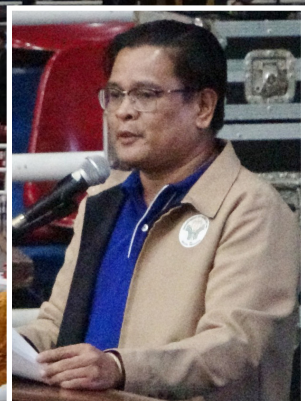
President Marcos urges DA to provide livelihood at evac sites, ensure the health of evacuated animals

By Lovella P. Guarin

LEGASPI CITY – President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. met with the heads of the National Government Agencies (NGAs) and Local Chief Executives for a situation briefing on Mayon Volcano activity at the Albay Astrodome on June 14, 2023.

“We have to take the load off the province and the municipalities, Wag na natin hintayin maubos ang pera ng LGUs. Ang hihingin lang natin sa LGUs is to identify the critical

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DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla presents the Mayon pre-disaster report before President Marcos.



Mayon Volcano at night.

REGIONAL SEASONAL CLIMATE OUTLOOK AND ADVISORY

CLIMATE OUTLOOK SUMMARY		WEATHER SYSTEMS THAT MAY AFFECT	
March to August 2023		March	April
El Niño continues to weaken and transition to ENSO-neutral conditions by February – April 2023 is expected.		Tropical Cyclones	Proton
El Niño may cause the likelihood of having above normal rainfall conditions that could lead to potential adverse impacts (such as heavy rainfall, floods, landslides and landslides) over highly vulnerable areas.		Mar	Apr
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EDITORIAL

Forewarned is forearmed:

Combating El Niño thru climate information and farmer preparedness

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) declared that the country will be affected by the El Niño phenomenon in the later part of the year and to ensue until early part of 2024.

Based on Climate Risk Vulnerability Assessment in 2019, the areas mostly affected during the recent El Niño phenomenon were the municipalities of Oas Ligao, Pio Duran, Libon, Guinobatan and Rapu-Rapu in Albay. In Camarines Norte, the most affected areas were Labo, Sta. Elena, Capalonga, Jose Panganiban, Paracale and Basud. In Camarines Sur, the towns of Ragay, Libmanan, Tinambac, Lagonoy and Caramoan. In Catanduanes, Caramoran, Viga, Gigmoto, Virac, San Andres and Pandan. In Masbate, the towns of Milagros, Aroroy, Mandaon, San Pascual and Baleno. In Sorsogon, Matnog, Irosin, Bulan, Sorsogon City, Juban, Magallanes, and Prieto Diaz were previously severely affected by drought.

For this year, the AMIA in Bicol declared that upland and lowland rainfed areas and those rice farms at the tail end of irrigated areas will be the most vulnerable to drought or dry spell forecasted by PAGASA to occur in September.

The National Irrigation Administration reported that as of this December 2022, the total service area of NIA in Bicol is 145,680 hectares which accounts to 60.79% of the total potential irrigable area of 239,660 hectares. Some 103,241 hectares are being assisted by NIA (NIS, Communal, NIP) while 17,328 hectares are serviced by irrigation facilities constructed by other government agencies; and 25,112 are being serviced by private irrigation system.

The Department of Agriculture in Bicol already prepared an El Niño Contingency Plan and submitted an Action Plan to the Central Office. Seed reserve for rice and corn and other planting materials were immediately pre-positioned, and technical and marketing assistance were also extended to the farmers. Valuable information on El Niño preparedness for farmers were also aired over numerous radio stations regionwide and advertised in local newspaper to forewarn the farmers and educate them on drought resistant crop varieties, livestock care and water saving tips such as practice of alternate wetting and drying, aeroponics and hydroponics, and use of plastic and biomulch. Farmers were also encouraged to ensure their crops and livestock with Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC).

Early planting is also advised for farmers to take advantage of the rainy days before the onset of the possible dry condition.

The DA Bicol Adaptation Mitigation Initiatives in Agriculture (AMIA) Program continuously provides Regional Seasonal Climate Outlook Advisory for farmers containing PAGASA issued weather forecasts and impact outlooks for the agriculture sector, as well as climate-resilient agricultural practices. This advisory can be downloaded in the DA Bicol website <http://bicol.da.gov.ph>. A 10-day rainfall forecast for the six provinces of Bicol is also being issued regularly through the program's social media page AMIA DA RFO 5.

Using scientific knowledge and being updated on weather patterns can help farmers brace for the El Niño phenomenon and prevent millions of pesos of losses in case the dreaded dry spell really takes place as forecasted by PAGASA.



DA Bicol braces for Mayon eruption

By Lovella P. Guarin



SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR – The Department of Agriculture Regional Office in Bicol prepares for any eventuality after the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) raised Mayon Volcano's Alert Level from 2 to 3 on June 8.

As early as Monday, June 5, DA Bicol Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla activated the Mayon Quick Response Team and designated the Albay Breeding Station (ABS) in Cabangan, Camalig, Albay as Livestock Evacuation Center.

Livestock raisers within the six-kilometer danger zone are advised to evacuate their carabaos, cattle, horses, goats and other ruminants to the ABS where drugs and biologics, vitamins and mineral blocks for livestock as well as ropes and animal feeds were already prepositioned. Rice, corn and vegetable seed reserves are also being maintained. Animals can also be brought to Local Government Unit-designated animal evacuation centers in Muladbuad

Grande, Pequeño, and Masarawag in Guinobatan; and Nasisi in Ligao City.

Hauling trucks were previously stationed at the ABS and at the DA Research Outreach Station in Tabaco City to help in the transport of animals and crops.

Farmers are advised to harvest all harvestable crops with the aid of nine Rice Combine Harvesters previously distributed by DA Bicol to farmers' cooperatives and associations in Albay. Farmers may also avail of the services of the three Rice Processing Centers (RPC) established in Balinad and Balangibang in Polangui, and in Maporong, Oas, Albay.

There are 25,457 RSBSA-listed rice, corn and coconut farmers in the eight municipalities and cities along the 6-8 kilometer danger zones, namely Camalig, Ligao City, Tabaco City, Daraga, Guinobatan, Legazpi City, Malilipot and Sto. Domingo.

Thank You Letter

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

Dear Dir. Tornilla,

Pagbati ng mapagpalang araw,

Ang Sangguniang Barangay ng Tuaca, Basud, Camarines Norte ay ipinapaabot ang lubos na pasasalamat sa ipinagkaloob ninyong Limampung sisiw ng Kaber (50 kaber chicks) sa Tuaca Livelihood Coco Pine Crops Organization (TLPCO) at mga farm tools and vegetable seeds sa Tuaca Farmers Sagip Kalikasan Organization (TFSKO) sa aming barangay na lubhang kailangan at pakikinabangan ng aming mga kabarangay lalo ng mga magsasaka na kasapi ng samahan.

Nawa'y marami pang asosasyon ang inyong matulungan at mabigyan ng inyong tanggapan. God Bless and More Power!

Lubos na nagpapasalamat

LIGAYA D. RADA
Barangay Secretary

DANILO A. BARRAMEDA
TLPCO President

ISAGANI A. REVILLA
TFSKO President

Noted:

KGG. EDNA V. BARRAMEDA
Punong Barangay



Rice Program, ATI Bicol hold Rice Techno Transfer Workshop

By Lovella P. Guarin

LEGAZPI CITY – The National Rice Program, Rice Board, DA RFO 5 and the Agricultural Training Institute has gathered over 200 rice program officials and stakeholders from the three regions - Regions 4A, 4B and Region 5, for the Rice Technology Transfer Workshop dubbed as Rice Tektok.

The two-day activity was held at Ninong's Hotel at Penaranda Park on June 6-8, 2023. National officials of Rice Program and national attached agencies and bureaus involved in rice production were in attendance to impart their insights on different rice technologies.

DA Undersecretary for Rice Industry Development Usec. Leocadio S. Sebastian discussed the Four-point strategy of the Masagana Rice Program.

PhilRice Executive Director Dr. John C. de Leon discussed "Ok ang forty sa angkop na barayti;" Rice Board President Recher Ondap discussed "Teknolohiya ng Hybrid para sa Mas Maunlad na Pagbubukid;" Dr. Eduardo Jimmy P. Quilang, OIC –Deputy Executive Director for Research of DA-Philrice discussed PRISM: Farmers' Eye in the Sky; Alicia G. Ilaga, Director of DA – CRAO talked on "Lamang ang May Alam! Maagang Abiso para Iwas Perwisyo"; Ulysses Duque of DA- Bureau of Plant Industry talked on "Peste, Peste kailan ka aatake?"



Under the topic Healthy Soil, Healthy Rice, Dr. Manuel Jose Regalado Scientist at DA-Philrice discussed "Less Water, Same yield: Sa AWD Tipid!. Meanwhile, Wilfredo Collado also of DA-Philrice discussed "Sa Tamang Sustansiya Mas Mataas ang Kita." From Rice Board, Dr. Narciso Intal discussed Microbio: Positibong Tulong sa Pagsasaka.

On the second day, a workshop on the plan technology scaling based on the four key strategies was participated in by staff from DA RFO 5, NIA, Provincial Agriculturists, LEMMCAP Provincial Presidents, RAFC Chair and SUC participants.

Different seed companies displayed their products during the exhibit at the Penaranda Park while the DA – RAFIS 5 and attached agencies and bureaus such as PhilRice also put up information booths for the benefit of the public. (Lovella P. Guarin)





National workshop on Adaptation-Mitigation Initiatives in Agriculture held in Albay

By Lovella P. Guarin

LEGASPI CITY - DA Bicol hosted the Workshop on AMIA Decision Support Tools and Development Pathway held in a hotel in this city in Albay on April 17-20, 2023. The weeklong workshop was attended by AMIA focal persons, technical staff and Planning Officers from all the regions of the country.

Dir. Alicia Ilaga, Director of Climate Resilient Agriculture Office (CRAO) based at DA Central Office in Quezon City delivered a message via online platform. Dir. Ilaga reiterated the need to complete the remaining 13 provinces without CRVA. Currently, CRVA is mainstreamed and being used by DA Planners.

Perla Baltazar, Senior Technical Officer of CRAO said that there is a need to capacitate the DA personnel on Climate Risk Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA). "These are maps. The CRVA is a tool where climate projections are embedded in these maps. Kaya ito magsilbing guide for our planning and investments in the future," she said.

Luz R. Marcelino, Regional Technical Director for Operations in her message, recalled their experiences in the establishment of the first AMIA village in Bicol located in barangay Cagbunga, Pamplona, Camarines Sur. "The most significant contribution of AMIA 2+ in 2019 was the development of the Climate Information System which was rolled out in the different regions of the Philippines," she added. Lorenzo Alvina, AMIA focal person of DA Bicol welcomed the participants. He said that effective communication and popularizing CRVA at the Local Government Units are crucial in inclusion in the annual plans and budgets at the LGU level to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

There are 14 AMIA villages in the Bicol Region as of this writing. Two in Albay, located in Joroan, Tiwi and Marigondon, Pio Duran; two in Camarines Norte – located in Labnig, Paracale and Alayao, Capalonga; three in Camarines Sur, located in Cagbunga, Tampadong, and Veneracion, all in Pamplona; two in Catanduanes, located in Peñafrancia, Viga and Biong, Gigmoto; two also in Masbate, located in Alas, Mandaon and San Mateo, Uson; and two also in Sorsogon province located in San Isidro, Prieto Diaz and Dinapa, Castilla. These AMIA sites were selected due to their vulnerability to extreme weather conditions such as flooding, saline water intrusion, landslide or drought prone areas.

Various value-added products of the AMIA villages were displayed in an exhibit during the workshop.

Zelso dela Cruz, CRAO Project Development Officer presented the AMIA Pathway. Jane Girly Balanza, Geospatial Analyst and Data Management Specialist of CIAT discussed the overview and how to conduct the Climate Risk Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA) such as the exposure to changes in temperature and precipitation (crop occurrence, suitability and sensitivity). Dr. Roscinto Ian Lumbré, Professor IV and concurrent Director of the Center for Geoinformatics, Benguet State University discussed Assessing Hazard Risk and Generating Hazard Index Maps; Carl Earvin Carada, GIS specialist at UPLBI FI, discussed the Conduct of Vulnerability Assessment.



DA Bicol joins the national High Value Crops Week: Green Revolution Road towards Exportation

PACOL, NAGA CITY, CAMARINES SUR – The DA in Bicol kicks off the weeklong celebration of the National High Value Crops Week through a tree planting activity here on April 17, 2023.

The second National HVC week with the theme, “Green Revolution Road towards Exportation,” was celebrated nationwide from April 17 until April 21 this year.

Spearheaded by the DA Bicol Field Operations Division and High Value Crops Development Program both headed by Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, the event kicked off with a tree planting activity which was graced by Naga City Mayor Nelson Legacion. Also present was Joseph Limuel Lumibao, the son of Lydia and Joseph Lumibao who own the J. Emmanuel Pastries, the pioneer in pili export.

Dr. Rodriguez emphasized Pili as one of Bicol’s champion commodities since 90% of such are found only in our region. She also shared, “Dae man po lingid sa kaaraman kan gabos na nag-open na ang EU market for Pili products, halawig ang proseso, taon ang binilang pero kan February 8, 2023, na-gain ta na ang market access sa European Union with 27 members.”

Other than Pili, the HVCD program also promotes pineapple and gabi as potential exportable commodities in the world market.

“From the Department of Agriculture, rest assured that the DA through HVCDP will continue to develop our very own HVC industry. Kasubago po sa prayer, we hope na magkaigwa kitang bastanteng pagkakan and ini po saro ning road paduman. So, we would like to seek help and support to increase HVC commodities and continue to engage our HVC farmers to export-related activities and mark the position of High Value Crops in the world market,” Dr. Rodriguez added in her welcome address.

Mayor Nelson S. Legacion extended his hope to continue this activity “not just because of our role as government employees but because of our love for our community, city, and country,” he said.

Meanwhile, Lumibao thanked the DA for choosing the J. Emmanuel Pastries to set an example to other private sectors implementing tree-planting activities like this. Moreover, Lumibao highlighted the value of growing trees that will benefit everyone in the long run.

A turn-over ceremony of Pili was also conducted as a symbol of strong commitment and partnership among the participating entities.

OIC City Agriculturist, Frank Mendoza accepted the challenge of DA to promote commodities worth exporting worldwide. In his speech, he said, “we are accepting this program from DA through the HVC particularly an pagpromote kan mga exportable products like Pili. Ina-assure mi po ang DA na magigi kaming katuwang sa pagpapalago kan programang ini bako lang digdi pati po sa ibang lugar kan Naga, kabali na si mga FOM sites kan City Government.

The week-long celebration of HVC week also featured seminars and webinars on the production and processing of high-value crops, good agricultural practices key points, and the importance of food safety via face-to-face and online seminars. **(Ma. Edelyn Bongalos)**



Naga City Mayor Nelson Legacion and DA Bicol HVCDP focal person Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez led the tree planting activity.

Corn Production Enhancement Program launched in Bicol

The Department of Agriculture Corn Program launched the Corn Production Enhancement Program (CPEP). During the launching of CPEP in the four provinces of Bicol - Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte, Albay, and Masbate on March 29-30, 2023, Pump Irrigation System for Open Source (PISOS) were also distributed to corn farmers.

The CPEP aims to increase the grain yield of white and yellow corn by 3% annually, to have an adequate supply of corn for animal and human consumption, and increase the income of corn farmers. Under this program, the farmer-beneficiary will receive a package of two bags of yellow corn seeds at nine kilograms per bag, one bag of Urea and one bag of Complete fertilizers for yellow corn producers, and a package of one bag white corn seeds, one bag of Urea and one bag of Complete fertilizers for white corn producers.

According to Engr. Amabel N. Bombase, the Regional Corn and Cassava Program Coordinator, a farmer must be registered in the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) with a minimum corn production area of 0.5 hectare and a maximum of one (1) hectare, and must be an active member of corn cluster associations with Cluster Development Plans and CSO registration to qualify as a beneficiary.

In the province of Albay, the launching of CPEP and the distribution of PISOS were held at the Albay Breeding Station, Camalig on March 29, 2023. Six units of PISOS were turned over to Pioduran Corn Cluster Association, Inc., Tula Tula Pequeño Farmers Association, Itaran Palayamanan Farmers Association, Lomacao Guinobatan Albay Farmers Association, Lawinon Agriculture Development Association, and Tablon Oas Farmers Association.

On the same day, four associations in Camarines Norte received the same machinery unit. The Unlad Magsasaka ng Mais Sagana Farmers' Association Inc. and Camarines Norte Integrated Farmers Agriculture Cooperative both received one unit of PISOS while PCN Corn and Cassava Producers Inc. and Labo Corn Producers Association, apart from PISOS also received 60 bags of yellow corn seeds, 30 bags Complete and 30 bags Urea.

In the province of Camarines Sur, the same activity was conducted at the DA Covered Court on March 30 where 19 units of PISOS were turned over to SAGLODAB Corn Farmers Association, Partido-Sapa



Agriculture Cooperative (PASAPAACOP), Cabangal Palsong Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries and Fisherfolks Cooperative, Lanipga Integrated Rice, Vegetable and Corn Farmers Association, Palestina People's Multi-purpose Association Inc., MIGSCA Incorporated, Communal Corn Farmers Association, Bagong Sirang, Curry, Del Rosario, Sto. Niño, Corn Farmers Association, Bato Farmers Federation, Fabrica Farmers Fisherfolks Association Inc., SagmonRey-An Communal Irrigators Association, Inc., Del Rosario Corn Farmers Association, Upland Rice Farmers Organization of Nabua, Inc., Amlongan Upland Corn Farmers Association, Cagmaslog Upland Farmers Association, Gabas Farmers Association, Burocburoc Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization, KCC Multi-purpose Cooperative and Banasi Farmers Association.

Likewise in Masbate, four units of PISOS were turned over to Cabitan Masipag Farmers Association, Batuan Corn and Cassava Cluster Organization, Burabod Farmers Association and Tagbun Peoples Organization.

"Nagpapasalamat ako kay Director Rodel Tornilla at lalong-lalo na sa aming Corn Program Coordinator na si Engr. Amabel Bombase at sa mga kasamahan kong magsasaka sa mga benepisyong binibigay sa amin ng DA. Sana magampanan namin ang obligasyon bilang magsasaka," said Julie M. Peñas, President of SAGLODAB Corn Farmers Association, Lagonoy, Camarines Sur.

The PISOS distributed to farmer associations were 3x3 feet non-self-priming pumps with 7.0 horsepower water-cooled diesel engines amounting to almost P100,000.00 per unit.

"Ini po sarong tabang sa satuyang mga paraoma, na igwa sindang pwedeng maging source of irrigation sa saindang pagmamaisan. Makakatabang ini lalo na ngunyan na papa-abot na El Niño," share by Marlie Corporal, Acting Head of City Agriculture Office, Iriga City.

The Corn Program has already provided interventions to corn farmers and associations such as seeds, fertilizers, fuel subsidy and machineries, and will continue to roll out the programs aiding the farmers in Bicol. **(Zandra G. Abogado)**

RAFC 5 Chair delos Santos assumes Farmer Director post

By Lovella P. Guarin

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR - Ms. Bernadette delos Santos, Chairperson of the Regional Agriculture and Fishery Council (RAFC) assumed as Farmer Director of DA RFO 5 for the month of May. This is in observance of the Farmers' and Fisherfolk's Month celebration for the whole month of May 2023.

DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla personally turned over the DA banner to Ms. Delos Santos on May 2, immediately after the flag ceremony. The turn over was witnessed by the RTDs, division chiefs and other DA personnel.

In his message, RED Tornilla urged the RAFC Bicol, particularly RAFC Regional Executive Officer Aloha Gigi Banaria to come up with a proposal to include two Farmer Regional Technical Directors in the Farmer Director program, who will help Director Delos Santos in running the regional office.

Meanwhile in her acceptance speech, Farmer Director delos Santos recalled how she started as first woman RAFC Chair of the Bicol region and also the only female RAFC Chair in the entire country.

Under her leadership, the RAFC Bicol team bagged eleven (11) National awards during the 2022 National Volunteers Day held in Manila last December, which included the Change Maker of the Year award. "Yes, it is such a glory! Also, it is such a challenge and responsibility," she said.



".. the task of holding the reins of running this huge regional agency is passed on to me by the regional director Tornilla, with full trust and confidence, the days ahead look daunting and exciting as well," she added.

"We have proven, last year, that a woman can do it! This year, I humbly ask for your undying support and your endless assistance to the office that I have been entrusted with, for the period that I am the Farmer Director. Let us first and foremost remember, that all that we do is for the sake of our farmers and fisherfolk, who continue to toil and risk limbs and lives to feed the nation. Let us also remember that we are volunteers, we can only do so much, thus, we count on you! As I take on this role, and with your and my fervent and zealous love for our country, I will, by the grace of the Almighty, face the nitty gritty of being the farmer director as efficiently, creatively and graciously as I can. It will be, as it is, my daily mantra to do my best and show the world or us here at the Department that if men can do it, so can women! Thank you so much! Filled with eagerness and enthusiasm and willingness to work hand in hand with you all, I start today as your farmer director. Let us give our best in what we do. Let us be the best of who we are," Director delos Santos eloquently said.

The Farmer Director will perform routinary functions that would not affect the government accounting rules and procedures. These include representing the RED during launching activities; preside over management meetings; conduct visitation to various DA facilities in the provinces and issue memoranda on events that are supposed to be held in May.



DA Bicol distributed over P9.7M-worth of interventions to Albayano farmers during Albay Farmers' Festival

By Jayson M. Gonzales

CABANGAN, Camalig, Albay--- Pedro Lomerio, a rice farmer from barangay San Vicente Grande, Daraga, Albay cannot contain his happiness when he received his Php5,000.00 Rice Farmers Financial Assistance from the Department of Agriculture (DA) Bicol.

"I am so blessed that I always receive assistance from the government, especially from the Department of Agriculture like Palay seeds, vegetable seeds and seminars," The 84-year old farmer said. Lomerio was one of the participants during the Agri-Fiesta 2023 highlighting the various assistance and interventions of government agencies at the AFBVille here.

In support of this event, the Department of Agriculture in Bicol distributed various agricultural inputs and interventions amounting to Php9,701,226.89.00 during the Albay provincial celebration of Farmers' Festival from May 29-31, 2023 at the AFBVille here.

The interventions consisted of zinc sulfate, foliar fertilizer, laminated sacks, and certified seeds from the Rice Program. White corn seeds, urea fertilizer, complete fertilizer, Bio-N fertilizer and Pump Irrigation Open Source (PISOS) from the Corn & Cassava Program. The High Value Crops

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Pres. Marcos urges DA to provide livelihood... from page 1

areas na dapat unahin. The minimum working number is 45 days or 6 weeks. Three months ang evacuees sa site, we have to think in the longer term. We have to give alternative activity and livelihood." President Marcos said.

For the Department of Agriculture (DA) Regional Office, DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla presented the pre-disaster report. According to him, prices of major agricultural commodities are stable despite the Alert Level 3 pronouncement. The Provincial Government of Albay headed by Governor Edcel "Grex" Lagman has already placed the entire Albay under the State of Calamity on June 9. Prevailing prices of major commodities are frozen for 60 days. Prices of major agri commodities may also be frozen in the event that spikes in prices are observed. Tornilla added that the DA Command Action Center is working 24/7 to closely monitor the situations in the affected areas and to provide the needed assistance at the animal evacuation sites.

As the Secretary of the DA, President Marcos was satisfied with the current interventions of the DA Regional Office but he said to continue to assess the damage to crops and livestock. "Para makapaghandang tayo ng dapat gawin. In the animal pooling sites, we have to be very careful, and conduct testing for all animals. Mahirap na kung magkasakit at maghawa-hawa," President Marcos said. He also urged DA to provide vegetable planting

materials in the evacuation centers.

Meanwhile, Director Tornilla also reported that a total of 5,760 hectares of agri crops are vulnerable in case Mayon activity intensifies. Vulnerable areas for crops are 1,377 hectares of rice; 703 hectares of corn; and 626 hectares of vegetable areas. For coconut, 55,416 hectares are vulnerable with 29,255 farmers; and 1,944 hectares abaca of the 1,259 abaca farmers. For livestock, 9,822 heads of large ruminants (cattle and carabao) and 413 small ruminants (goats, sheep) are vulnerable; including 30,000 heads poultry, and 7,179 heads swine. Also vulnerable are 40 hectares freshwater aquaculture owned by 1,311 operators.

Tornilla added that the DA Regional Office has at present P35.5 Million buffer stocks composed of rice seeds, corn seeds, vegetable seeds, agri supplies, fertilizer, animal feed, drugs and biologics.

The DA Bicol has already established an evacuation site for animals at the Albay Breeding Station. There are also 30 LGU-identified animal pooling sites in the eight municipalities under the permanent 6 to 8-kilometer danger zones. In the pipeline are the conduct of Kadiwa ng Pangulo near the evacuation sites. Establishment of communal gardens or Gulayan sa Paaralan and conduct of livelihood training with starter kits at the evacuation centers.



DA Bicol celebrates weeklong Farmers' Festival

By Lovella P. Guarin

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR - In celebration of the feast of St. Isidore, the Patron Saint of the Department of Agriculture (DA) as well as the farmers, the DA Bicol staged this year's Farmers' Festival cum Kadiwa sa DA on May 15 – 18, 2023.

The weeklong festivities were ushered by a thanksgiving mass celebrated by Rev. Fr. Rex Hidalgo followed by the opening of the Farmers' Festival and Kadiwa sa DA. The Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) invited 36 exhibitors composed of Kadiwa partners, accredited civil society organizations (CSOs), farmers' cooperatives and associations, Young Farmer Challenge winners, organic agriculture practitioners, MSMEs, several Municipal Local Government Units and the Provincial Government Units of Albay, Camarines Norte and Masbate. The two-day Kadiwa sa DA garnered a total sales of P567,388.

DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla together with 2023 Farmer Director Bernadette B. delos Santos led the festivities. True to its reputation as a trailblazer, DA Bicol again introduced another first in the installation of Farmer Technical Directors (FTD) for Farmers Month. RED Tornilla appointed RAFC's Rebecca S. Purisima (Chairperson of RAFC Food Value



Chain Sectoral Committee), and Engr. Raul T. Carreras (Chairperson, RAFC Farm Mechanization Sectoral Committee and RAFC Vice Chairperson) as FTD for Operations and Research respectively. Both of them are national Gawad Saka achievers (Purisima – Outstanding Farm Family 2019 and DA's national outstanding Rural Woman 2017; while Engr. Carreras – Outstanding Sugarcane Farmer 2004).

In her speech, Farmer Director delos Santos paid tribute to the farmers who are producing our food. "Farming and agriculture are the backbones of our society: not law, nor medicine, not accountancy, nor religion. We, because am one of you, are the backbones of our society," she said. She added that according to the Food and Agriculture Organization, small-scale farmers produce about 80% of the food in developing countries like the Philippines, making them critical to global food security. Without farmers, we wouldn't have access to food and other necessities. So we take a moment, a month, to really appreciate this profession and all the hard work and dedication the farm life requires. Let us take this time of the year to really celebrate us, farmers and fisherfolks. And how else can we show such celebration and appreciation than by purchasing locally grown fruits, vegetables, plants and trees. Let us support our local farmers!" delos Santos quipped.





Another highlight of the first day was the mass distribution of P134.9 M worth interventions consisting of hybrid palay seeds, fertilizers, laminated sacks, knapsack sprayers, all from the Rice Program; multi-cultivators and pump irrigation system open source (PISOS) from High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP); and free ranged chicken from the Livestock and Poultry Program.

Meanwhile, the Research Division together with the six Research Outreach Stations showcased their matured technologies and priority agri commodities that are products of research studies in the Rice Technology Festival held at the Central Bicol Experiment Station (CBES). In the afternoon a forum on “Pesticide Safe

Handling to Ensure Public and Food Safety” was conducted by the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority.

On May 17, the 3rd Vegetable Seed Derby and Harvest Festival spearheaded by the HVCDP was held at Curry, Pili where 14 seed companies were allotted with 1,500 sq. m each to showcase their best vegetable varieties. In the afternoon, pet owners brought their dogs and cats for free anti-rabies vaccination and castration courtesy of the Regulatory Division. On May 18, the Regional Agricultural Engineering Division will have an agri-machinery demonstration in the morning, to be followed by the opening of the DA employees Sportsfest.





DA-Bicol HVCDP raffled off 242 sets of agricultural inputs, equipment and supplies worth a total of P400,000 to all the farmer-participants.

Vegetable farmer Mario Añes of Brgy. Sto. Niño Pili, Camarines Sur thanked the DA-Bicol for the learning opportunity saying “Dakula po na tabang sa samo ining okasyon na ini dahil na-improve po ang samong mga kaaraman. Maliban sa seminar mi dangan sa aktuwal na namasdan mi po, sa nailing mi dakulaon pong maray na tabang samo (This activity will greatly benefit us because it enriched our knowledge. Both the seminar and what we observed from the actual farm tour will significantly help us)” he said.

The DA HVCDP has been conducting on-site technology demonstration projects since 2021 as a strategy to boost vegetable production, showcase modern vegetable farming methods and technologies, improve farmers’ agricultural productivity and raise their income.



DA Bicol distributed over P9.7 M...

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Development Program awarded plastic crates, pallets, sweet potato and bamboo planting materials under the regular program, and organic fertilizer, garden tools, foliar fertilizer, knapsack sprayer, wheel barrow and laminated sacks under Quick Response Fund. The National Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture Program awarded rabbit house, rabbits and feeds; while the Livestock Program awarded mallard ducks.

Aside from these interventions, 500 rice farmers received their Rice Farmers Financial Assistance worth Php5,000.00.

More than 4000 farmers, traders, local leaders and representatives of various government agencies participated in the three-day event which showcased their best agricultural products through Kadiwa ng Pangulo, trade fair, farmers’ trainings, games, talent and beauty pageant.

“Today is a smorgasbord of interventions to be shared with the local farmers and community.” Albay Governor Atty. Edcel Greco A. B. Lagman said in his message, highlighting the various assistance and interventions of government agencies.

Meanwhile, DA Bicol Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) Chief Adelina Losa representing the Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla challenged the Albayano farmers to step up their contributions to the supply chain and come up with value-adding products to expand their market reach -- both locally and globally.

A total of 36 exhibitors displayed and sold their local industries’ fresh and processed agricultural products,



handicrafts and home decors, ornamental and fruit-bearing plants and abaca products.

Trainings on Food Processing on Fish with Mushroom, Stingless-bee Production with Value-Adding Products, Establishment of Pili Scion Grove and Pili Inarching Propagation, Agarwood Production, El Niño Information Caravan, Boat Admeasurement, Abaca Production, Cacao Production, Bookkeeping, Swine Fattening, Management of Swine Breeder, Rabbit Production, Range Chicken and Goat Production, and Dairy Production were also conducted.

Other participating government agencies include Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center 5 (ATI-RTC 5), Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority-5 (PhilFIDA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources 5 (DENR), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Philippine National Police, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI5), National Food Authority (NFA), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and the National Dairy Authority (NDA).



DA Bicol holds Provincial Corn Derby in Cam. Norte

Daet, Camarines Norte—The Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 5 hosted again the Provincial Corn Derby in this province to showcase different cultural practices of 10 varieties of corn and technologies to boost the corn industry production.

Recently, the harvest festival was held at Dogongan, Daet, Camarines Norte, participated by five (5) seed companies, including Advanta Seeds Philippines, Bayer Crop Science, Bioseed Research Philippines, Inc., Corn World, Corteva Agriscience, and Syngenta Philippines, Inc.

They competed for three (3) categories mainly on the return on investment (ROI), shelling recovery, and yielding performance.

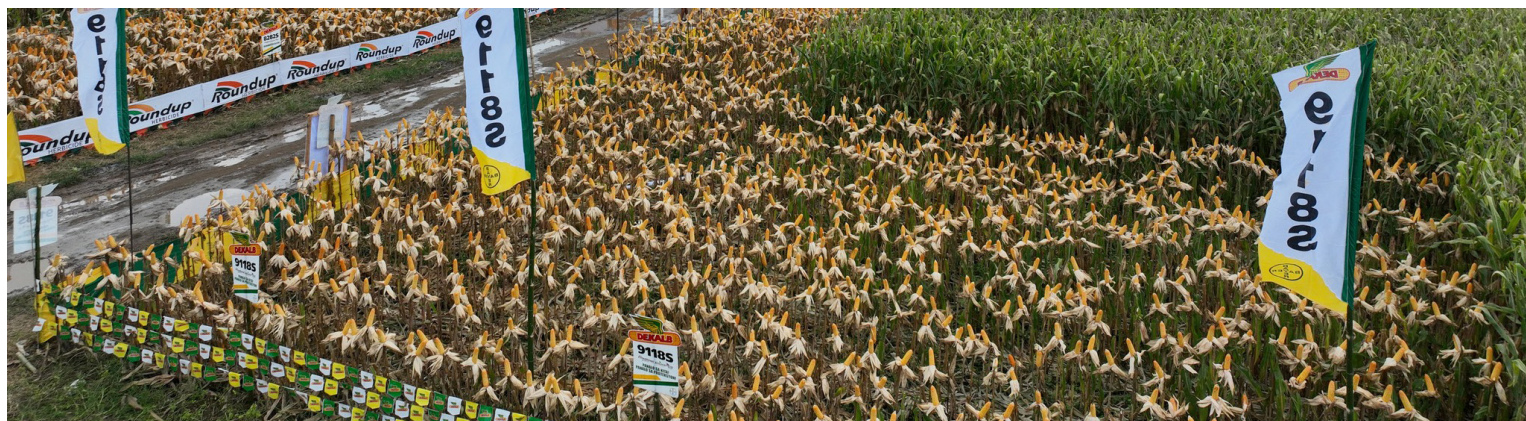
Engr. Amabel N. Bombase, the Regional Corn and Cassava Program Coordinator shared the Corn Industry Status in Daet, Camarines Norte. She said, “Noong 2022, ang ating production ay nasa 2,273.30 metric tons, ang area naman ay nasa 1,004.12 hectares, at 612 farmers ang registered na sa ating RSBSA.”

She also highlighted the importance of conducting corn derby, she explained, “Kaya tayo nagka-conduct ng corn derby ay hindi lang para matulungan namin kayo ng

tamang technology sa pagtatanim, kundi para rin malaman natin ang farmers’ preference na ginagamit natin sa procurement ng ating mga corn seeds para maiwasan natin na magkaroon ng low germination, at low yielding varieties. Yung magagandang varieties lamang po ang para sainyo upang di kayo malugi at makahabol kaya sa kahit 12 metric tons/ha na yield sa pagmamais.”

A farmwalk was also conducted for the seed companies to explain further the quality of the varieties that they promote during the derby.

Governor Ricarte R. Padilla noted that conducting activities like this will help boost the agriculture sector of Camarines Norte. In fact, the Provincial Government will venture with Charoen Pokphand Foods (CPF) Philippines Corporation to buy the harvests of the corn farmers. He further explained that the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) will lend capital to the farmers, and the CPF will issue purchase order. After the harvest, the CPF will buy the farmers’ harvest, after which the farmers will be able to pay their DBP loan. Thus, this will be the ultimate solution for the usual problem of the farmers which is capital.



Engr. Raul Careras, Vice Chair of RAFC, encouraged the farmers to continue their hardwork and efforts in planting corn since this will help them improve their lives in the future. He emphasized, “Noong panahon kapag magsasaka ka, hindi ka raw yayaman, pero dun ko nakita na mali ang pagkakaintindi nila. Totoong may pera sa agrikultura.”

The result showed that DEKALB 8282S of Bayer Crop Science ranked 1st place in the Agronomic and Yield Performance of Hybrid Yellow Corn Varieties, while PAC 339 of Advanta Seeds Philippines placed 2nd and NK 6410 of Syngenta placed 3rd. In shelling recovery, PAC 339 got the first rank, CW 320 of Cornworld and DEKALB 8282S tied for 2nd rank, and DEKALB 9118S of Bayer Crop Science won the third place. In terms of Return on Investment (RIO) for fresh or wet grains, DEKALB 8282S ranked 1st, NK 6410 ranked 2nd, and PAC 339 bagged 3rd place. DEKALB 8282S still won the dry grain for ROI, followed by PAC 339, and NK 6410 as third place.

Engr. Henry Espinar of the Regional Agricultural Engineering Division demonstrated various agricultural machineries for corn production. The corn derby promotes the “Masaganang Ani, Mataas na Kita” program of DA for the corn farmers. (Eds Bongalos)



DA PRDP-funded road paves the way for dev't in Ph's abaca capital

Abaca cultivation is the basic source of income of Florinda Onan, 70, and her husband, Alpjo, 64, of Brgy. Panique in Caramoran, Catanduanes. To transport their produce to Brgy. Sabangan, they used to travel for three hours via motorcycle with top down sidecar.

“Ang nakagisnan ko ditong tinampo talagang masikip, tapos grabe ang nasasakitan arog kang mga naga-abaca, mga tricycle, grabe ta ang tinampo bako-bako,” Florinda told DA PRDP Bicol in an interview in 2019.

The Department of Agriculture Philippine Rural Development Project (DA PRDP) funded the construction of the P126.98 million-worth Concreting of Junction Sabangan-Datag East Farm-to-Market Road (FMR). The project was designed to address post-harvest processing and logistical issues affecting abaca, the province's primary commodity, and other commodities such as coconut, rice and tiger grass that are also abundant in the four barangays within the road influence area namely Brgy. Datag, Brgy. Maui, Brgy. Panique, and Brgy. Sabangan.

Almost four years later, Florinda warmly welcomed the DA PRDP team conducting the Rapid Appraisal of Emerging Benefits (RAEB), an evaluation initiative of the PRDP management, to share how her family benefited from the completed subproject.

“Ang daming pagbabago po kasi nakonkreto na ‘yung kalsada. Noon matagal makaabot ka sa palengke pero ngayon, madali na. Sa top down (motorcycle), madali lang walang isang oras may kalahati. Dati, bago kami magdadala ng abaca sa tindahan, mangungutang muna kami ng kakainin. Ngayon, (nakakabili) na kami ng pagkaing masasarap,” she related.

Onan is among the 503 farmer and fisher household-beneficiaries of the DA PRDP-funded subproject which

was completed in January 10, 2021. The 7.37-kilometer infrastructure development (I-BUILD) subproject in Caramoran has a carriageway of 5 meters with 1.5 meters shoulder on both sides. It also features a drainage slope protection and road warning signs.

Initial results of the RAEB show that the DA PRDP-funded FMR significantly improved the efficiency of delivery and transportation of agricultural products, especially abaca.

“Dati, yun talaga ang problema dito kasi ‘yung mga production area ng ating mga abacaleros is ang pinag-uusapan natin dito is mga dalawang oras na lakad, medyo malayo talaga. Marami ‘yung sakripisyo kaya konti lang ‘yung naibababa nilang produkto. Ngayon na may FMR na, naengganyo sila na magproduce nang magproduce ng abaca fiber para maibaba po sa kanayunan,” Provincial Agriculturist Ace William Tria said.

Abaca trader Jesus Borbe also related his observation saying, “Dati nahihirapan kami magpick up ng abaca banda doon sa papunta ng Datag kasi lubak-lubak ang kalsada tapos madulas pa lalo kapag maulan. Pero ngayon, pag magpipickup kami doon, maganda na ‘yung daanan. Hindi na kami nahihirapan. Pag maganda ang daan, nakatatipid kami sa krudo, sa oras, mas mabilis kami makarating dito.”

Moreover, Israel De la Rosa, Municipal Agriculturist of Caramoran, mentioned the impact made by the FMR on the quality of life of the communities within the RIA.

“Malaki ang impact ng farm-to-market road na Junction Sabangan to Datag East... Accessible na ang ating daan sa tulong ng farm-to-market road na proyekto ng PRDP at masasabi ko talaga na malaki ang pagbabago at napaganda ang pamumuhay ng mga barangay sa Maui, Panique and Datag East.”

Intermediate results of the RAEB show that the FMR contributed to the significant decrease in the cost of transportation within the RIA. Residents from Brgy. Panique used to spend P200 from Brgy. Panique to Brgy. Sabangan. Now, a tricycle ride only costs P50 per trip.

RAEB findings also indicated that the Concreting of Junction Sabangan-Datag East FMR led to several socio-economic benefits like better access to government



1,500 SAAD Bicol farmers undergo values formation training

As preparatory for the Phase 2 implementation, the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program in Bicol Region conducted values formation training for Catanduanes, Masbate and Sorsogon beneficiaries to ensure collective participation, and build a sense of duty before project inputs receipt.

The activity was facilitated by Jovinel M. Gianan, an experienced values formation speaker, and currently SAAD Regional Information Officer, along with nine (9) Parish Deacons as resource speakers. Said training which was conducted from April to June 2023 was attended by 1,500 farmers from 60 farmers associations (FCAs) and Agricultural Extension Workers from Municipal Agricultural Office (MAO) of Catanduanes.

The activity is part of the social preparation component of the program using an interdisciplinary approach that instills collective values and ethics among participants in a group-specific setting. In this aspect, capabilities and goals acquired by each member were extracted and later used for reflection sessions.

Essence of Values Formation

As a holistic approach to community development, SAAD looks beyond economic development through livelihood assistance, but advances overall welfare and prioritizes readiness of its beneficiaries and their communities.

Values formation training provides perspective useful for groups to build a moral compass that guides them in decision-making, shapes group behavior, and cultivates a positive organizational culture. By integrating values into the SAAD projects, it empowers farmers to become agents of positive change by nurturing skills and knowledge,

programs and services, healthcare facilities and emergency response, courier services and lending institutions and other financial services.

“Marami na pong pagbabago kasi po ‘yung kalsada sementado na, hindi na baku-bako katulad noon. Mabilis na rin ang response ng barangay kasi hindi na sila mahihirapan sa mga daanan. Gaya ng pag-rescue. Matagal noon kasi wala pang mga sasakyan, kung saan-saan pa maghahanap. Eh ngayon, mabilis na kasi mayroon na silang mga sasakyan,” Susan Rubio, barangay health worker from Brgy. Sabangan, said.

Governor Joseph Cua of Catanduanes expressed his gratitude to the World Bank and DA PRDP for the I-BUILD subproject. He said that the FMR provided the Abaca Capital with an opportunity to promote the mechanization of abaca stripping.



promoting collaborative partnerships, and fostering entrepreneurial mindset.

Topics such as capabilities, weaknesses, and strengths enable the farmers to reflect on their financial struggle and realities on the ground.

The participants also engaged in workshops which assessed their interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts such as having low self-esteem, which can potentially affect the productivity of their group. These concerns were addressed through the discussions on values and ethics, conflict management, and goal setting. The participants were reminded that having patience, understanding and a professional attitude are key factors in achieving group success.

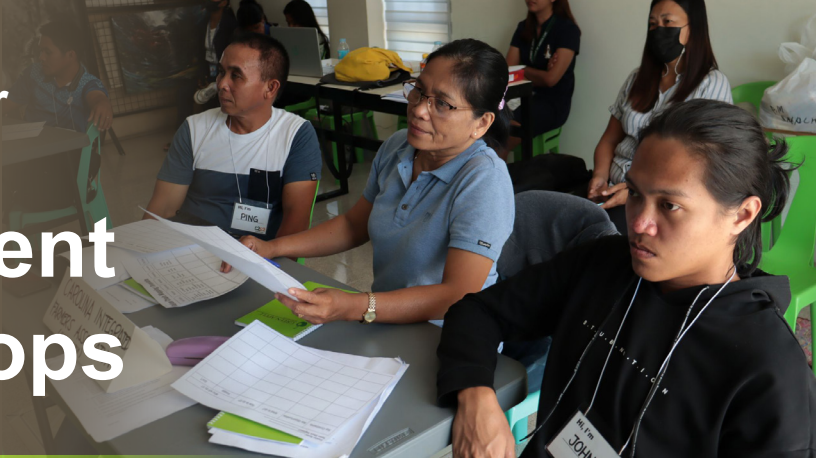
Bobsoler Osida, member of Samahang Manggugulay ng Abni, said that the activity helped him gain better understanding about teamwork and how their group can find success through farming. As a first-time attendee, Osida also said that he looks forward to more SAAD activities in Sorsogon. **(Juan Paulo A. Quizana)**

Currently, the construction of the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA)-funded Abaca Tuxy Buying Special Project (ATBSP) Fiber Processing Facility in Brgy. Sabangan is underway. Abaca rehabilitation is also ongoing through collaborative efforts with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). Moreover, the Municipal Agriculture Office in partnership with the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist is planning to establish a 50-hectare abaca nursery in the area.

Caramoran is the highest producer of abaca in the province with 5,126 metric tons or 19 percent of the total production. The municipality also has the biggest abaca production area in the province with 6,408 hectares of land. (Annielyn L. Baleza, DA RAFIS V)

Photo Credits: Annielyn L. Baleza, DA RAFIS V/PRDP RPCO V InfoACE Unit and John Victor D. Millendez, PRDP PSO South Luzon

Corn Clusters formulate Cluster Development Plan through F2C2's Development Planning Workshops



Unity is strength.

Grouping together the small farmers and fishers on the basis of proximity in production areas, similarity of inputs, shared production activities and processes, and common final products provide an increased overall productivity of the sector, higher incomes, and better access to resources, technologies and markets. This is the ultimate goal of the Farm and Fisheries Clustering and Consolidation (F2C2) Program of the Department of Agriculture.

With this, the F2C2 Program continuously implements various activities supporting the clusters established in the Bicol Region, among them were the series of Development Planning Workshop conducted in March 2023. These planning workshops enabled the clustered associations to create a Cluster Development Plan (CDP) which is the main requirement for the delivery of major DA interventions for the clusters.

Four (4) commodities from the banner programs are being catered by F2C2; corn, high-value crops, livestock, and rice. From 2021 to 2022, 156 clusters were established, and there are 64 target clusters development plan to be consolidated this year.

As of writing, there are 59 existing corn clusters in the entire region subjected for the Development Planning Workshop. 16 corn clusters completed the said workshop. The first cluster included the Tinawagan Corn Farmers Association, Aniog Farmers Organization, Kilomaon Integrated Farmers Association, Maymatan Farmers MP Cooperative, SAPA Agricultural Cooperative, and Saripongpong Gubat (SAGLODAB) Corn Farmers

Association. The second cluster was comprised of the Bombon Corn Farmers Association, Carolina Integrated Farmers Association, Golden Highlands Agriculture Cooperative, Comaguingquing Farmers Association, Lugsad Upland Farmers' Association, and Tomagotod Farmers' Association; and the third cluster includes Lanipga Rice, Vegetable and Corn Integrated Farmers Association, Nabua Corn Cluster Farmers Association, Buluang Corn Growers Association, Inc., Divino Rostro Upland Farmers Association, and San Rafael (San Crisanta) Corn Farmers Agriculture Association. The abovementioned clusters met the required 75 hectares of combined land resources/areas for the corn commodity.

During the Development Planning Workshop, the participants learned the process and significance of the CDP. They formulated a masterplan for the growth and development of the cluster through its business enterprises. Further, they identified their long-term plan that addresses the clusters' needs for marketing, improvement in productivity, operation, and organizational development, financing, and sustainability.

Other than formulating the CDP, the F2C2 program aims to forge stronger linkages among farm and fish producers to their commodity's markets and the bigger global value chain. It also promotes the "Big Brother-Small Brother" partnerships wherein the cluster can be linked up with the established business entities that can provide relevant support and expertise in terms of production, processing, and storage technologies and equipment, transport and logistics, and better access to finance and marketing networks.

Moreover, Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) I-PLAN Planning Officer Peter Theodore D. Caro tackled the principles of value chain analysis, SWOT analysis, and strategic planning while PRDP I-REAP Component Head Patrocinio B. Collao I and Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) Youth Farmers Challenge Program Technical Staff Jaynard S. Manlangit shared their expertise in formulating development plans.

On June 26-30, 2023, F2C2 will conduct another Development Planning Workshop for the corn clusters in Albay. (**MA. EDELYN F. BONGALOS** / with reports from **DEBBIE M. PANTE** - F2C2/Corn Program)



RAFC 5 organizes Speaker's Bureau...

The Regional Agricultural and Fishery Council (RAFC) in Bicol organized another first in the country – a speaker's bureau comprised of 10 multi-awarded resource speakers/experts of the highest caliber who can be tapped to tackle different topics in agriculture.

On top of the list of RAFC 5 Speaker's Bureau is Bernadette delos Santos, RAFC 5 Chairperson her expertise lies in Agri-entrepreneurship, digital marketing and design, among others. Another high caliber speaker is Rebecca S. Purisima, RAFC 5 Food and Value Chain Sectoral Committee Chairperson whose expertise lies in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Integrated Diversified Organic Farming System (IDOFs). Next is Rossini M. Obligacion, proprietress of Joross Farm in Ligao City, Albay. She is an expert in Organic Agriculture, culinary herbs and medicinal plants, health and wellness, meat processing and agri consultations. Also included is Dr. Georgina J. Bordado, former CBSUA president whose expertise lies in agribusiness, agricultural economics, agritourism development, institutional development as well as gender and development. Meanwhile, Maria Daisy G. Geolin can be a speaker on cooperativism, research and development, community organizing, and green health technology –based entrepreneurship.



Another speaker is Annielen L. Panerio whose expertise lies in food value chain in agriculture, financial literacy, basic bookkeeping and accounting, good governance and management, and entrepreneurial management. Benedicto A. Palmares, of Camarines Norte can be a speaker on vegetable production, leadership and organizational management; and Granwell N. Pitapit whose expertise lies on community development, capability building, and values formation.

Also included in the Speaker's Bureau is Aloha Gigi I. Bañaria, REO and Chief of PMED whose expertise lies on development plan formulation, project monitoring and evaluation, and gender and development. Gladys R. Guzman of PMED whose expertise is on business formulation and project proposal preparation.



...swears in new members

Confirmed new members of the Regional Agricultural and Fishery Council (RAFC) in Bicol are: Santiago K. Cervantes, President of Carmel Agri-Learning Farm, Inc. in Pili, Camarines Sur; Dr. Georgina J. Bordado, former President of Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (CBSUA) main campus; Mr. Granwell Pitapit, Chief Executive Officer, Oragon Farmers Agriculture Cooperative in Libmanan, Camarines Sur; Rossini M. Obligacion, Proprietor of Joross Farm in Ligao City, Albay; Marilyn A. Haya, proprietor of M.A. Haya's Delights.

The installation of the speaker's bureau and the oath taking of the new members were held at the PMED Conference Room on May 30, 2023. Witnesses to the occasion were the officers and sectoral committee chairpersons of the RAFC, PAFC and ICCAFC chairpersons and RAFC Executive Officer Aloha Gigi I. Banaria. Also present were DA Bicol Regional Technical Director (RTD) for Operations Luz R. Marcelino; RTD for Research and Regulations Dr. Edgar R. Madrid; and chiefs of the different divisions of DA Bicol.

The RAFC is a group of volunteer-leaders serving as an advisory body of the Department of Agriculture (DA) that is tasked to provide inputs on DA's major programs, projects and policy directions with an established region-wide network of Agriculture and Fishery Councils. The RAFC also serves as bridges and voices of the farmers and fisherfolk. With the oath taking of the new members the total number of RAFC members working as volunteers increased to 23.

RAFC envisions a community of strong AFC leaders creating opportunities for economic growth through sharing of knowledge, skills and expertise. (Lovella P. Guarin with reports from **Jessa Mae Siano**)



DA Bicol hurdles ISO 9001:2015 certification

By Lovella P. Guarin

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR – After two days of rigorous on-site evaluation of the Department of Agriculture Bicol's procedures and processes, the PT AJA Sertifikasi Indonesia has recommended the DA Bicol for ISO 9001:2015 certification.

The 3rd party certifying body was headed by Robert Jarquio together with Czharina Buaquena, Jericho Santiago and Rhoda Vi Borela- Demesa.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is an international standard – setting body that promotes worldwide standards. This international standard will help improve the effectiveness of the agency's Quality Management System (QMS) to enhance client satisfaction.

Amidst the overlapping activities of the agency, DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla pushed for this ISO certification to ensure not only excellent service delivery and client satisfaction but also conformity to the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.



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