



UMA *senso*

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Regional Field Office No. 5

ISSN-0119-2752 2002 PAJ Binhi Awardee

San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur | darafid5@yahoo.com <http://bicol.da.gov.ph>

F2C2 summit, cacao & coconut fair showcases farm clustering results in Bicol

By Lovella P. Guarin

To showcase the gains of the Farm and Fisheries Clustering and Consolidation (F2C2) Program in Bicol, the Department of Agriculture RFO 5 staged a 3-day "1st Regional Cluster Summit and Cacao and Coconut Fair on December 1 to 3, 2023 at the Robinsons Mall in Naga City.

The event was in collaboration with the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI-RTC 5) and the Department of Trade in Industry (DTI) Camarines Sur.

The DA Bicol F2C2 Program invited over 250 leaders of Farmers Cooperatives and Associations (FCAs) engaged in various commodities such as rice, corn, vegetables, pili, pineapple, and livestock and poultry, as well as cacao and coconut farmers, Provincial/Municipal Agriculturists and Provincial/Municipal commodity coordinators from all over Bicol Region for the summit.

TO PAGE 13



AMIA farmer of Tiwi, Albay receives Philippine Resilience Award

STORY ON
PAGE 15





UMASENSO EDITORIAL STAFF

LOVELLA P. GUARIN
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ANNIELYN L. BALEZA
VINCENT EMIL A. PASUMBAL
WILLIAM S. LAVAPIE
WRITERS

EDUARDO D. COLLANTES JR.
RAMON C. ADVERSARIO JR.
HERMITO ANTONIO T. PRIVALDOS
ZANDRA G. ABOGADO
PHOTOGRAPHERS

ROGER A. BANDOJO
LAYOUT ARTIST

MARITES C. DILLA
LITA V. ESTRELLA
CIRCULATION

CONTRIBUTOR:

MA. EDELYN F. BONGALOS
Corn Program

ADVISERS:

RODEL P. TORNILLA, MABE
Regional Executive Director

LUZ R. MARCELINO
Regional Technical Director for Operations

EDGAR R. MADRID, DPM
*Regional Technical Director for
Research and Regulations*

EDITORIAL

How prepared are we for El Nino?

The analysis of PAGASA forecast rainfall by the Adaptation Mitigation Initiatives in Agriculture (AMIA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) of DA Bicol showed that by end of February, dry spell will be experienced in the provinces of Albay, Masbate and Sorsogon. By the end of Mar, all provinces will have dry condition. This condition will continue through April and May for the provinces of Cam. Norte, Cam. Sur and Catanduanes. While by the end of April and May, drought will be experienced in Albay, Masbate and Sorsogon.

The last El Nino occurrence in the Bicol Region was in 2019 where P1.82 B worth of losses was reported in agriculture affecting 7,652 farmers. The rice crop suffered the most incurring 76.74% of the total damage.

Meanwhile, the drought hazard map of DA Bicol showed that 56,604 hectares of rice or 35% of the total area are prone to drought. These are the rainfed areas as well as areas at the tail end of irrigation systems.

This time, the Bicol region will not be caught unaware as DA Bicol has implemented various measures such as early planting for rice this December so that by March, some rice areas are already ready for harvest. Rice planting in December was very favorable with the continuous rain due to shearline although some production areas especially vegetable production areas were damaged by the continuous rains in some parts of the region.

Some 59,761 bags of hybrid rice were distributed by the Rice Program for the dry season 2023-2024 from November to December 2023.

Farmers were also encouraged to apply their crops for insurance with the PCIC, before planting to minimize risk as they could claim indemnification once their crops or livestock are affected by El Nino.

Buffer stocks of rice, corn and high value crops are being maintained at the regional office as a contingency plan for any natural disasters that may occur.

Irrigation pumps, green houses and solar powered irrigation system were also installed in various clustered areas and FCAs.

As early as June, the DA has been gearing up the farmers to be ready for the dry months. Among the climate resilient agriculture practices introduced by DA were alternate wetting and drying technology; use of stress tolerant or drought resistant seeds; climate controlled greenhouse, hydroponics, and use of bio and plastic mulch. Diversified farming is also being pushed so that farmers will have a fallback in case one crop is damaged by dry spell.

Irrigation is not a problem anymore as all farmers with landholding of eight hectares and below are exempted from paying irrigation service fee for water derived from National Irrigation Systems (NIS) and Communal Irrigation Systems (CIS).

For the remote areas not being served by NIA, small scale irrigation projects and Solar Powered Irrigation System (SPIS) were established. There are 29 units SPIS installed all over the region. With the very high cost of diesel, these SPIS are heaven sent to the rice farmers as this facilities do not use electricity nor fuel.

Farmers are also advised to report to their respective agriculture offices any observed effect of drought in their crops or livestock for proper documentation and reporting to facilitate the provision of rehabilitation assistance. Prompt reporting will also mean immediate assistance from the Integrated Laboratory Division particularly the Regional Crops Protection Center which produces bio control agents for the control of insect pests such as rice black bug, brown plant hopper, corn plant hopper, corn borer, and fruit flies that thrive and multiply in dry, hot weather.

There are also tools that can help farmers combat the ill effects of El Nino such as the Rice Crop Manager Advisory Service (RCMAS) which can provide system generated recommendations or solutions to crops.

Several villages which are drought prone areas, established under the AMIA Program, now serve as model of climate resilient agriculture practices.

These tools, practices, technologies and interventions from the government constitute early action and response plan to El Nino and its possible effects.

DA, PLGU Cam. Sur turned over P79.9 M worth agri interventions to farmers



By Lovella P. Guarin

PILI, CAMARINES SUR – The Department of Agriculture in Bicol headed by Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla together with Camarines Sur Governor Luigi Villafuerte distributed and turned over various interventions worth P79.9 M to over 3,000 farmers from the five municipalities of Cam. Sur on December 18, 2023.

The distribution and turn over were held at the Ka Fuerte Stadium, Capitol Compound this municipality.

The DA 5 Rice Program distributed P42,038,082 worth Fertilizer Discount Voucher and P380,000 worth inbred palay seeds. Accredited merchants also brought their fertilizer products to the venue so that the farmers could already claim the fertilizer.

Some 1,000 rice farmers who have not received the P5,000 Rice Farmer Financial Assistance for CY 2022 were also given the chance to get their cash assistance. The total RFFA amounted to P5 Million.

The Corn Program turned over three (3) units hauling trucks totalling P5,055,000 to Mantila Agrarian Reform Farmers Assn. of Sipocot, Cam. Sur; Macalidong Rice, Corn and Vegetables Farmers Association of Ligao City, Albay and Sagladab Farmers Association of Lagonoy, Camarines Sur.

The HVCDP under the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Program (CFIDP) distributed fertilizer, gardening tools and cacao planting materials worth P3,211,505.

The Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) turned over P5M worth Kadiwa Financial Grant to three qualified farmers groups, namely: San Fernando SWISA Agriculture Cooperative (P2M); LGU San Jose, Camarines Sur (P500,000) for Partido Sapa Agri Coop; LGU Iriga City (P500,000) for Tadyong Farmers Assn. Inc.; and Cabangal Palsong ARB and Fisherfolk Cooperative.

Meanwhile, the Phil. Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (Philmech) turned over 11 units of combine harvesters worth P19,250,000 to qualified farmers' cooperatives and associations. These combine harvesters were funded under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF).

DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla thanked the farmers whom he say are the “modern day heroes” for working very hard to bring food in the table of every Bicolano home.

TO PAGE 15



Dear Director Tornilla,

Greetings from the Bureau of Agricultural Research!

Dr. Junel B. Soriano, DA-Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) director, greets everyone a warm and joyous Christmas! “I would like to extend my well wishes to each and every one of you as we gather to celebrate this Christmas season. Your dedication and hard work have been the foundation of the bureau’s success, and as we reflect on the past year, we are grateful for the milestones we’ve achieved together. Your collaborative works and unparalleled efforts have paved the way toward food security, fueled by a technology-empowered agri-fisheries sector. Acknowledging the hard work you pulled off this year, may this Christmas be a time of joy, gratitude, and well-deserved rest for you and your loved ones. We appreciate your unwavering commitment and the contributions you’ve made to our shared goals. To our valued stakeholders and partner research and development institutions, thank you for your trust and collaboration throughout the year. Your partnership is instrumental to our success, and we look forward to continued growth and achievements in the coming year. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. May the holidays bring you happiness, good health, and moments of joy that linger throughout the year.”



New hybrid rice varieties showcased in DA Bicol's Hybrid Rice Techno Demo Field Day in Baao and Tigaon, CamSur

By Annielyn L. Baleza

Over 600 rice farmers in Bicol explored new hybrid rice varieties showcased during the two Hybrid Rice Technology Demonstration Field Day held on October 5 and 6, 2023 in Baao and Tigaon in Camarines Sur respectively.

Sixteen hybrid rice varieties were showcased in Baao while 19 hybrid rice varieties were displayed by nine seed companies to rice farmers from Rinconada and Partido districts who participated in the said activity.

According to DA Bicol Agricultural Program Coordinating Officer for Camarines Sur Marcial Bustarga, who represented DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel Tornilla and Regional Rice Program Coordinator Earl Vincent Vegas, the program aims to showcase localized packages of high yielding hybrid rice seeds and technologies. He added that it was also one of the agency's strategies to increase the farmers' adoption of hybrid rice technology and improve their productivity.

One of the highlights of the activity was the conduct of field tour to the 100-hectare demonstration project sites in Brgy. Sagrada in Baao and Brgy. San Rafael in Tigaon, Camarines Sur featuring the seed companies' nine stations. Among the seed companies that joined in the said activity were: Seed Works Philippines Inc. (TH82, Quadro Alas, US 88), Bayer Crop Science Philippines (Bigante Plus, Habilis Plus, AZ7888, AZ8433DT*), Bioseed Research Philippines Inc. (BioRice 453, BioRice 650*), Leads Agri Ventures Corp. (LAV 777, Jackpot 102), Corteva Agri Science (PHB 85, PHB 87), LongPing Tropical Rice Development Inc. (LP 2096), Allied Botanical Corp. (MESTIZO 30), SL AgriTech Corp. (SL 19H, SL 20H*), and Syngenta Philippines (NK 5017, S6003). Each of them provided a technical staff who discussed their package of technologies. They related that with favorable weather condition, proper farm management and right amount of fertilizer, these new hybrid rice seed varieties can give farmers a potential yield as high as 14 tons per hectare with rice crop maturity of 104 to 118 days after sowing. They added that aside from increased yield, hybrid rice has higher tolerance against drought, flood, strong wind and heavy rain. Moreover, hybrid rice is aromatic, palatable, and soft when cooked.

These hybrid rice attributes convinced Virgilio Beliber, president of Sagrada Waras Dam Irrigators Association Inc. in Baao, Camarines Sur;

Augusto Respeto, president of Bahay Madie Cumon Exiomo Irrigators' Association in Lagonoy, Camarines Sur and Gloria Cleofas, president of Oragon Farmers' Association in Tigaon, Camarines Sur that it is high time for rice farmers to fully adopt the hybrid rice technology.

"Sa aking mga kapwa magsasaka na hindi pa naka-try ng hybrid rice, i-try natin para maikumpara natin kung ano ang mas magandang ani kaysa doon sa inbred. Huwag tayong mag-atubili na i-try natin 'yung hybrid rice para dumami naman 'yung ating kita,'" Beliber said.

"Tangkilikin niyo na po ngayon ang hybrid kasi po ito ang panahon ngayon para gamitin natin ang hybrid para tumaas po ang kita natin at ani," Respeto related.

"I-adopt na po natin ang hybridization kasi maganda po talaga 'yung hybrid at saka nakita ko po talaga 'yung ani. Ito po ay hindi ang huli kundi ito po ang umpisa," Cleofas added.

Engr. Aline Bravo, Municipal Agriculturist of Baao, Camarines Sur and Lea Beltran, Municipal Agriculturist of Tigaon, Camarines Sur also expressed their gratitude to DA Bicol for the opportunity to serve as techno demo area for the agency's rice hybridization program. They added that the activity will greatly help intensify the promotion of hybrid rice not only in their area but in adjacent municipalities.

"Ito pong demo na ito ay makakapagbigay ng impormasyon sa food security dahil ngayon, uso ang import, maraming foreign na bigas na dumarating sa atin pero kung matutunan ito ng farmers, darating ang panahon na hindi na tayo mag-i-import kasi kung magsosobra ang production ng Philippines, baka tayo ang mag-export ng bigas," Bravo said.

"Dakulaon po ining bagay na pig-conducir para maheling po nindo ang performance. Sana nag-enjoy kamo maski mainit, and dakol kamong nanudan na pagbalik nindo i-adaptar ta po sa satuyang tanuman," Beltran noted.

Participating rice farmers were also given the chance to select their top five hybrid rice seed varieties based on the hybrid performance evaluation forms. According to DA Bicol Rice Program Regional Coordinator Earl Vincent P. Vegas, its result will be the basis of the farmers in claiming seeds thru the voucher system in 2024.

The DA Bicol Rice Program has also conducted similar activities in rice clustered areas with a minimum of 100 hectares in Brgy. Manangle in Sipocot, Camarines Sur; Brgy. Calintaan in Talisay, Camarines Norte; Brgy. Bonga in Ligao City, Albay; Brgy. Ponong in Casiguran, Sorsogon; Brgy. Bat-ungan in Mandaon, Masbate; and Brgy. Salvacion in Panganiban, Catanduanes from September to October 2023. (with reports from Engr. Gina C. Nufiez and Luzgel R. Adriano)



DA Bicol Agricultural Program
Coordinating Officer, Marcial Bustarga





SAAD beneficiaries join Kasanggayahan Trade Fair

By Lovella P. Guarin

SORSOGON CITY –Coinciding with the Kasanggayahan Festival's 1st regional drum and lyre competition that brought the festive air here, the opening of the Agri-trade, Travel & Tourism Expo on October 13 at the Capitol grounds has been extra colorful and lively.

The trade fair is one of the colorful activities of the Kasanggayahan Festival - a cultural celebration of the founding anniversary of the province of Sorsogon headed by Governor Jose Edwin B. Hamor. The agri exhibits at the Sorsogon Capitol grounds will last until October 17.

Eight organized groups of Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Phase 1 and Phase 2 beneficiaries joined the trade fair and displayed their agricultural products in their respective booths they themselves decorated intricately using indigenous materials like anahaw, coconut and banana leaves.

Trade fair exhibitors from SAAD Phase 1 were the Green Thumb Catanagan Farmers Association; Taboc Organic Farmers Association; Añog Corn Farmers Association, all of Juban. Also from SAAD Phase 1 were Sta. Elena Mallard Duck Assn. of Magallanes; and Naspi Agricultural Workers FA of Pilar. The new beneficiaries of SAAD Phase who joined the trade fair were San Antonio Farmers Association of Barcelona; San Vicente Corn, Cassava & Crop Association and San Isidro Farmers Association of Castilla. The products on display included fruits and vegetables, rootcrops, eggs, processed food products, and planting materials.

The opening of the trade fair was led by Board Member Maria Nini O. Ravanilla; DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla; DTI Bicol OIC Regional Director Dindo G. Nabol; DTI Provincial Director Maria Lourdes Pancho; and Annie C. Guab, President of Sorsogon Travel and Tours Association (STOA) Inc.

According to Director Tornilla, Sorsogon is one of the three pilot provinces of DA's Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) in Bicol when it started in 30 priority provinces in the

country in 2018. Currently, the five municipalities of Castilla, Barcelona Bulusan, Prieto Diaz and Matnog are still included as SAAD Phase 2 beneficiaries.

"DA's assistance is not only up to production. We are also teaching our farmers to be successful entrepreneurs. That's why our SAAD beneficiary associations here are very eager to participate in this Agri Trade Expo. Matagal na po silang naghanda para sa Kasanggayahan Trade Exhibition. Celebration like this Kasanggayahan is an opportunity for them to showcase their products and be introduced to prospective alliance. Kasanggayahan is also a season to celebrate as we have many favors to be thankful for," added Director Tornilla.

The other farmers groups that participated in the trade fair were the Bacon Believer Farmers Cooperative; AMIA Village of Dinapa FA-Castilla & AMIA Village of San Isidro Pto. Diaz FA-Pto. Diaz; Grei's Farm; Vines and Branches; Sorsogon Fruits and Vegetables; Casiguran Pineapple Growers Association; Martha Fish Processing and Candelaria Seaweeds Association.

The opening ceremony was attended by Sorsogon Provincial Agriculturist Maria Teresa Destura; Adelina A. Losa, chief of the DA Bicol – Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD); and Pedro Oliver, OIC – Superintendent of Sorsogon Dairy Production and Technology Center. The RSBSA team of DA Bicol also put up a booth during the Agri-trade, Travel & Tourism Expo.

Source: Maria Ligaya Renegado, SAAD Associate Project Officer 1



DA celebrates Food Safety Awareness Week, strengthens Food Safety group

By Lovella P. Guarin

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR – The Department of Agriculture celebrates October 23 to 27 as Food Safety Awareness Week.

According to the World Health Organization, over 200 diseases including diarrhea and cancer are caused by eating food contaminated with bacteria, viruses, parasites or chemical substances such as heavy metals. These diseases contribute significantly to the global burden of disease and mortality.

“Foodborne diseases are caused by contamination of food and occur at any stage of the food production, delivery and consumption chain. They can result from several forms of environmental contamination including pollution in water, soil or air, as well as unsafe food storage and processing.”

As the agency mandated to implement the Food Safety Act of 2013, the Department of Agriculture in Bicol revitalized the inter-agency composition of the Regional Food Safety Focal Group (RFSFG) through a consultative meeting held on October 10, 2023 at the CBES, DA Compound. It was attended by the heads or representatives of the Regulatory Agencies under DA in Bicol such as the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS), Agricultural Training Institute (ATI RTC 5), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA), National Food Authority (NFA), Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA), Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI).

Dr. Edgar R. Madrid, Regional Technical Director for Research and Regulations said that the meeting was a meeting of minds to ensure leveling of knowledge and to delineate each concerned agency’s role in the implementation of the Food Safety Act. “We are already doing food safety measures since 2013,” he added.



Rosita M. Imperial
Chief Regulatory Division



Lorenzo L. Alvina
Chief, ILD



Dr. Alex Templonuevo
NMIS Regional Director

Rosita M. Imperial, Chief of the Regulatory Division discussed RA 10611 or the “Act to strengthen the food safety regulatory system in the country to protect consumer health and facilitate market access of local foods and food products” otherwise known as “Food Safety Act of 2013” which is being implemented jointly by the DA and the Department of Health (DOH).

“Food safety starts at the farm. Napakalaki ng role ng DA to ensure that the fresh foods we are producing in the farms will not cause harm to its consumers,” Imperial said. She added that there are many challenges in food production including anti-microbial resistance for both humans and animals, and hazards in food production such as harmful residues and contaminations.

One of the efforts of the DA in ensuring food safety is the establishment of the Integrated Laboratories Division which conducts tests on soils, water, animal diseases and pesticide residues in fruits and vegetables. Meanwhile, the Regulatory Division is advocating for and helping farms comply with Good Agricultural Practices and Good Animal Husbandry Practices to promote safe and healthy food and non-food agri products while also considering the safety of the workers and the environment.

Section 28 of RA 10611 entitled Licensing, Registration of Establishments states that appropriate authorizations shall be developed and issued in the form of a permit, license and certificate of registration or compliance that would cover establishments, facilities engaged in production, post-harvest handling, processing, packing, holding or producing food for consumption in accordance with the mandated issuances of regulatory agencies issuing such authorizations.

The act further stipulates that (Rule 28.2) as part of their regular mandates, the Local Government Units (LGUs) shall issue business permits to food business operators (FBOs) indicating compliance with the sanitation code and such other food safety requirements that may be prescribed. Such permit authorizes FBOs to market their products within their territorial jurisdiction.

During the meeting, Dr. Alex Templonuevo, NMIS Regional Director reported the efforts of the NMIS in providing modernized meat inspection service to protect the consuming public while promoting the livestock and poultry sector to ensure adequate supply of meat. On October 16, the NMIS Region 5 celebrated its 51 years of dedicated service with the theme: Safe Meat Healthy Nation.

The meeting was also attended by Lorenzo L. Alvina, Chief of the Integrated Laboratories Division and the Agricultural Program Coordinating Officers of the six provinces of Bicol.



Animal Welfare Week features Paw-shion Show dubbed Pets @ DA Runway

By William Lavapie

PILI CAMARINES SUR - In celebration of the Animal Welfare Week, the Department of Agriculture (DA) Bicol Regulatory Division organized the first Paw-shion Show: Pets @ DA RUNWAY on October 20, 2023 at the DA Covered Court with the theme Engage, Educate and Transform.

Diana, an American Bully owned by Christine U. Madrona, emerged as the over-all Champion and recipient of three special awards for being an early bird registrant, best dressed, best owner-pet-look-alike and Yummy Ambassador Award. Ferrari, a Siberian Husky owned by Maria Cyrel Nicolas was the 1st runner up and the People's Choice awardee. Meanwhile, Cola, a Poodle owned by Aprille Temporal was the 2nd runner up, Most Dashing female pet and Nutribon Ambassador. Lucas a pug owned by Eric Cliff Guzman was the Most Talented Pet; Gus a pug owned by Roger Lloyd Divina was the Best Mannered Pet; Hiro, an Akita owned by Josefina Belleza was the Most Dashing Male pet.

The winners received dog foods, treats, vitamins, cages and also gift certificates for free check-up and grooming at partner veterinary clinics.

All 15 participating dogs received giveaways as consolation prizes from TopBreed, Nutribon (Vast), Yummy (UNAHCO) and Nutrichunks.

The 9th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army also brought five K9 dogs that demonstrated the fundamental dog obedience techniques in explosive detection, prohibited drug detection, and search and rescue operations. They also showed the five basic commands: heel, sit, sniff, stay, and come.

Rosita M. Imperial, Chief of the Regulatory Division discussed Republic Act 8485, also known as 'The Animal Welfare Act of 1998,' which promotes animal welfare in the Philippines. She added that the dog show also aimed to educate the people on proper handling of pet dogs and cats.

Dr. Edgar R. Madrid, Regional Technical Director for Research and Regulation, showed his gratitude to the 9th Infantry Division for being DA's constant partner not only in this kind of activity but also in the Food Security Program of the government.

Dr. Ma. Rachele Jane C. Conejo-Mangading, College Dean of CBSUA College of Veterinary Medicine, expressed her gratitude to the Department of Agriculture, the participants, and everyone involved in the first-ever Paw-shion Show: Pets @ DA Runway in her closing message.

The sponsors that helped in the success of the dog show included Dr. Cza Andal of Pet Villa Animal Clinic, Dr. Princez and Dr. Vivien Alvina of Oragon PET Clinic, Dr. May Christine of BPL Veterinary Clinic, Dr. Maan Silerio of Pet Point Animal Clinic, Dr. Willie of Kho Veterinary Clinic, Dr. Louie Tias Escamillas of Doc Lui Veterinary Clinic, and Dr. Marie Villavicencio-Relleta of Barks & Cuddles Pet Clinic.

The dogs were judged based on the criteria, namely: costume, showmanship, participation of handler and pet, originality and over-all impact. The board of judges were: Bernadette Delos Santos, RAFC 5 Chairperson, Lovella P. Guarin, Chief of RAFIS and Regional Information Officer and Dr. Rona P. Bernales, Chief of RADDL.



DA Bicol warns the public to buy only ASF-free meat for safe Christmas holidays



By Lovella P. Guarin

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR – Christmas is in the air. So is African Swine Fever (ASF) which is recurring from time to time in the previously upgraded pink zones in Camarines Norte and Camarines Sur.

As pork lechon, ham and other pork dishes are the favorite Noche Buena food of many Bicolano families, the Department of Agriculture in Bicol is warning the consuming public to buy only meat from meat vendors who can show a Certificate of Meat Inspection or COMI or Meat Inspection Certificate. Or look for the seal of the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) on raw pork meats.

Para “Iwas perwisyo, iwas ASF.”

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN), ASF virus can live for 105 days in raw ground pork, 30 days in smoked meat, 300 days in dried meat, 1,000 days in frozen pork meat, 182 days in salted meat, 110 days in chilled meat, 105 days in offal, 300 days in skin and fats of raw meat, 18 months in blood stains in refrigerators, 15 days in blood of infected hog and 11 days in manure of ASF affected hog.

Refrain from buying processed meat from ambulant vendors whose product source is not known, as the products might be coming from infected areas. Safe meats are those butchered at accredited slaughterhouses. For meat processors, do not buy meat from ASF-affected areas and do not process double-dead meat from a pig that has died of disease, particularly ASF. Maintain the cleanliness in the working area by regular cleaning and disinfection.

For the hog raisers, do not feed hogs with kitchen wastes as these might be contaminated with animal diseases such as ASF. A hog that has eaten food (swill) that is contaminated with ASF will surely get infected and it will infect not only the whole hog population in the farm but also those nearby piggeries within 1-kilometer radius.

Some hogs will not manifest symptoms of ASF until 4 to 19 days. According to the World Animal Health (WOAH), the incubation period of the ASF virus is 4-19 days. Some ASF-infected hogs show symptoms such as red, discolored skin or skin lesions, diarrhea, vomiting, high fever, difficulty breathing, heavy discharge from the eyes and nose, and loss of appetite. Infected hogs may die within 2 to 10 days, and oftentimes, mortality is 100% of all hog population.

If any of this happens or is observed in the piggery, immediately report to the Municipal Agriculture Office so that blood collection will be carried out by the municipal veterinarian or extension worker and the blood samples will be sent to the DA RFO 5 Regional Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (RADDL) to identify the disease.

There is no cure for ASF yet. The least we can do is prevent it by observing strict biosecurity measures. Clean and disinfect the piggery every day using bleach. Do not let viajeros or other unauthorized persons inside the piggery. The Veterinary Quarantine Service has previously identified pick-up points of hogs along the national roads so that hog dealers or viajeros need not go to individual piggeries.

As of December 8, there is a reported ASF case in Bgy. Mabini, Libmanan, Camarines Sur. There are also positive cases in Bgy. Pawala and Tagbak in Donsol, Sorsogon; and Bgy. Umabay Exterior in Mobo, Masbate. Surveillance, cleaning and disinfection are being carried out in these areas.

In Camarines Norte, 17 barangays from seven towns namely: Daet, Labo, Basud, Mercedes, Vinzons, Paracale, and San Vicente have ASF cases.

Some 178 hogs owned by 45 hog raisers were depopulated by the respective LGUs and Provincial Veterinary Offices from November 14, 2023 to December 6, 2023.

On November 30, 2023, DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla sent the DA Regional Quick Response Team headed by Regulatory Division Chief, Rosita Imperial to Daet, Camarines Norte to establish an ASF Command Center for two weeks to help in the depopulation, surveillance, cleaning and disinfection and establishment of animal checkpoints. The RQRT also had a dialogue with Governor Ricarte Padilla, Vice Governor Joseph Ascutia, Provincial Veterinarian Ronaldo Diezmo, and the Municipal Agriculturists of the 12 towns of Cam. Norte. Dr. Alex Templonuevo, NMIS Regional Director also provided disinfectants and carried out the disinfection of slaughterhouses in affected municipalities.

Since 2021, the indemnification program for ASF-affected hogs was transferred to the Philippine Crops Insurance Corporation (PCIC). Under the PCIC Livestock Insurance Program, RSBSA-listed swine raisers are qualified to insure for free and to receive indemnification of up to P14,500 per head for swine breeder (1-10 head maximum) and up to P10,000 for swine fattener (1-20 heads maximum).

The DA is implementing the Bantay ASF sa Barangay or BABay ASF program in collaboration with the Local Government Units that are mandated to enact and implement local ordinances to prevent and control ASF.

All sectors of society – the consumers, hog raisers, meat vendors, viajeros, and the LGUs - have vital roles in the prevention and control of ASF.



Farmers & seed growers train on OPV seed production

By Ma. Edelyn F. Bongalos

PILI, CAMARINES SUR - To encourage new corn seed growers in the region, the Department of Agriculture 5 - Corn and Cassava Program is conducting more training to enhance farmers' knowledge and promote the Open-Pollinated Variety (OPV) of Corn seeds.

A three-day Training on OPV Corn Seed Production and Certification for Seed Growers was held at the DA Compound on October 10-11, 2023. Aside from lectures, the training included a practicum, field inspection, and roughing in OPV Corn Seed Production on October 12, 2023 in Baao, Camarines Sur, attended by 15 participants composed of farmers, seed growers, aspirant growers of corn, and representatives from other agricultural institutions.

The training covered integrated pest management, mechanics, policies, and guidelines related to seed certification for OPV Corn Seed Production. Furthermore, the participants learned about seed testing methods, procedures, laboratory standards, seed sampling, sample preparation, roughing in OPV corn seed production, field inspection, seed bagging, tagging of OPV corn seed lots, and the proper completion of BPI-NSQCS forms.

According to Engr. Amabel N. Bombase, Corn and Cassava Program Regional Coordinator.

Open-pollinated varieties of corn seeds are usually more genetically diverse resulting to remarkable variations within its populations. These seeds are pollinated naturally, primarily by wind or insects, and produce offspring with traits similar to the parent plant. It ultimately allows the OPV corn seeds to adapt to local growing conditions and climates every year. They are often referred to as heirloom or traditional corn varieties, known for producing corn cobs with multiple colors of kernels. Seeds coming from an open-pollinated variety of plants can be replanted and produce the same exact plant growing out of it.

Furthermore, OPV Corn is used in producing alternative staple foods such as rice-corn blends, which contribute to food security in the Bicol Region. In some far-flung municipalities in the province of Masbate, residents are already processing rice-corn blends as alternative to pure rice. This alternative blend is rich in protein, carbohydrates, and fiber and also helps in preventing diabetes and obesity.

Robert L. Valler, Jr. of Dr. Emilio B. Espinosa Sr. Memorial State College of Agriculture and Technology (DEBESMSCAT) in Masbate shared his insight on the training. He said, "Malaking opportunity ito sa amin lalong-lalo na nabigyan kaming pagkakataton para maging seed grower at mapataas ang kalidad ng aming produkto. Meron din po tayong sure market, ito ang kinagandahan ng aming produkto. Ma-produce lang naman tayo ng mais, bakit hindi pa yung mas mahal. Dito nagpapasalamat po ako sa opportunity coming from our institution para magamit po ng aming mga students para sa tamang pag-aalaga ng mga OPV Corn."



The primary goal of the training is to invigorate local OPV corn seed production within the entire region, as this variety is currently more abundant in other regions. Furthermore, the program aims to guide farmers toward achieving higher yields and income.

One of the participants, Ms. Lilia Baylon of Mt. Isarog Grains Small Corn Association (MIGSCA), shared her experience, "Nagpa-invite talaga ako sa training na ini dahil gusto ko talagang makanuod dahil bago akong planter nin corn kaya lang hybrid. Naoogma ako

dahil kadakulon pa akong dae naaraman tungkol sa pagtanom lalo na ining tungkol sa white corn. Very interesting, challenging at the same time sa part mi na first-time seed growers."

The Department of Agriculture remains committed to supporting farmers and agricultural producers in their efforts to produce high-quality corn and corn seeds by conducting training sessions, and workshops, and by providing necessary assistance and interventions. (Ma. Edelyn F. Bongalos)



WB to PRDP Bicol: 'Continue commitment, professionalism to create more impact in project areas'

By Annielyn L. Baleza



"Salamat sa iyong 'ambag.' Napakalaking message nun sa akin. I have to continue to be sure that I have my own 'ambag' in my own little way. Ang Project na PRDP, you are in the frontline, and the biggest ambag and the biggest impact would come from you. Please do continue 'yung ipinapakita ninyong commitment, 'yung professionalism ninyo. Of course, hindi naman tayo laging perfect whenever we do part of the work but let's always keep that in mind that I have done it right, or correctly this time, the next time I have this opportunity, I'll do it better."

World Bank Co-Task Team Leader Maria Theresa Quiñones wrapped up the 16th PRDP and 1st PRDP Scale-Up World Bank Implementation Support Mission for South Luzon with this message during the activity's Exit Meeting held in Legazpi City on November 15, 2023.

Quiñones together with World Bank Senior Social Development Specialist Marivi Amor Ladia, WB Rural Infrastructure Engineer Raoul Azanza and officials as well as concerned officials and staff from PRDP National Project Coordination Office headed by I-BUILD Component Head Engr. Roy Abaya, Project Support Office South Luzon directed by Engr. Milo Delos Reyes, and Regional Project Coordination Office led by Bicol Regional Executive Director and PRDP Project Director Rodel Tornilla conducted a field visit and consultation with Project Affected Persons (PAPs) to the P247.97 million-worth Concreting of Segment (A) Palobandera to Dalipe and Segment (B) Calumpang to Iraya Farm-to-Market Road (FMR) in Cawayan, Masbate on November 13, 2023.

The WB commended the implementation of the 15.79-kilometer infrastructure development (I-BUILD) subproject. According to Quiñones, based on their initial assessment, the WB is very happy and satisfied with what they have seen particularly in terms of physical accomplishment.

"Nakita namin na tipong maganda 'yung implementation in terms of quality at saka timeliness... We had a very good meeting with some of the representatives of the beneficiary groups. They are also very happy. In fact, vinalidate po naming kanina whether the farm-to-market road is their number one priority among the different priorities and they have confirmed that it is and that there are already some initial benefits that have been generated. What we have seen on the ground actually speaks a lot of your quality implementation and construction management," she added.

The WB team also assessed the progress of and process undertaken in implementing the 11.16-kilometer Concreting of Dao to Bunganaway FMR With Bridge in Balud. They lauded the local government unit of Balud for exercising due diligence and strict compliance to the DA PRDP's Social and Environmental Safeguards (SES) standards.

"Over-all po, very well naman po 'yung implementation sa social safeguards," Ladia said.

Meanwhile, WB Rural Infrastructure Engineer Raoul Azanza provided technical assistance and guidance to the I-BUILD team and contractor of the featured FMR subprojects. He underscored that the approval of the province's proposed subprojects under PRDP Scale-Up will depend on the quality and schedule of implementation of its ongoing PRDP-funded subprojects.

Governor Antonio Kho expressed his gratitude to the World Bank and to the DA PRDP for making an impact to the communities in the province.

"On behalf of the people of Masbate, I would like to extend our thanks and gratitude as far as these PRDP projects are World Bank projects wherein the provincial government put up 10 percent equity to the total construction cost amounting to P400 million. Malaki ang impact nito sa probinsya. With these projects na ininput ninyo in a couple of billions not millions, Masbate palagay ko, before, from the poorest province to the next economic tiger of the South," he said.

He also guaranteed that the PPMIU in collaboration with the PSO South Luzon and RPCO Bicol will comply with the World Bank's site findings and recommendations and prepare a catch-up plan and monitoring plan to ensure timely completion of its subprojects. "As far as your observation is concerned, if there are (construction

NEXT PAGE



DA Conducts Regional Corn Derby Harvest Festival in Tigaon, CamSur

By Ma. Edelyn F. Bongalos

Tigaon, Camarines Sur — With the goal of showcasing the diverse cultural practices associated with 14 different varieties of corn from seven (7) seed companies, as well as the innovative technologies geared towards enhancing corn industry production, the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 5 recently hosted the Regional Corn Derby in Huyon-Huyon, Tigaon, Camarines Sur.

Advanta Seeds Philippines, Asian Hybrid Seed Technologies, Inc., Bayer Crop Science, BioSeed Research Philippines, Inc., Corn World, Corteva Agriscience, and Syngenta Philippines, Inc competed for three categories such as the best varieties in terms of return on investment, shelling recovery, and yielding performance. Moreover, BioPrime and Gemini also participated and shared their technology in the corn derby.

Close to 300 farmers from the different municipalities of Camarines Sur were invited for the festival. They were accompanied by their Municipal Agriculturists. For the host municipality of Tigaon, Municipal Agriculturist Lea M. Beltran led the contingents.

Luz R. Marcelino, Regional Technical Director for Operations applauded the very good complementation of the Field Operations Division and Research Division for this activity. She also mentioned that this is the first time having a uniform fertilizer recommendation which showed what varieties performed well since it is based on the soil analysis. Further, the season-long corn derby experienced drought in its first month, however, all varieties still performed well. The yields ranged from 4.2 metric tons for the lowest and up to 7.6 metric tons for the highest yield.

Marcial T. Bustarga, APCO of CamSur highlighted the importance of implementing proper management of corn fields. He said that even

issues) to be corrected, it's just a matter of extending to the contractor or sending them a catch-up program pero as of today, there will be no slippage," he added.

In her message during the exit meeting, DA PRDP Deputy Project Director Adelina Losa thanked the World Bank, NPCO and PSO South Luzon for their support. She also commended the RPCO Bicol for their unity. Moreover, she assured the World Bank that the team will take immediate action on areas that need improvement. "We will have an assessment kung saan tayo nagkulang at kung ano pa ang dapat nating gawin para mag-improve na at the end of the day, ipagmamalaki natin ang PRDP. Ipagmamalaki natin na we are part ng PRDP," Losa said.

Bicol hosted the 16th PRDP and 1st PRDP Scale-Up World Bank Implementation Support Mission for the South Luzon Cluster, which aimed to review the DA PRDP-funded subprojects' accomplishments, progress and implementation performance. The mission was however cut short due to the low pressure area, shearline and Northeast Monsoon that brought prolonged rain in the region. During the Wrap-Up Meeting held on November 22, 2023, WB announced that DA PRDP got an overall rating of Satisfactory. (PRDP RPCO V InfoACE Unit)



if the corn field were bombarded with interventions, and with proper fertilizer application if the care and management is weak, the harvest will also be decreased," he elaborated.

Engr. Amabel N. Bombase, Regional Corn and Cassava Program Coordinator underscored the importance of the corn derby. She added that its objective goes beyond the introduction of suitable farming technologies as it also serves to identify farmers' preferences when selecting seeds, thereby averting problems like poor germination and low-yield.

Engr. Raul Carreras, Vice Chair of RAFC, and farmer-cooperator of the derby shared his success story to motivate the corn farmers present and encourage more farmers to engage in the corn industry. "For 38 years, ginibo akong outstanding kan DA. Twice akong naging Regional awardee, nag- national outstanding Sugarcane farmer man ako, asin in-awardan din ako nin DA and DOST as a farmer scientist kaya may mga innovations talaga akong ginibo."

He also advised the farmers on the proper management of corn; proper land preparation, good seeds, soil analysis, the right time of fertilizing, and spraying of herbicides are some of the secrets to high-yielding corn.

The harvest festival started with a farm walk where the participants listened to the short briefings from each seed company on the qualities of the corn varieties being showcased.

Engr. Henry Espinar of the Regional Agricultural Engineering Division showcased various agricultural machinery for corn production during the activity.

The results of the derby revealed that NK 6130 of Syngenta Philippines secured 1st place in the Agronomic and Yield Performance of Hybrid Yellow Corn Varieties. In shelling recovery, PAC 339 of Advanta Seeds Philippines claimed the top position. NK 6130 of Syngenta dominated the Return on Investment (ROI) category for both fresh and dry grains.

issues) to be corrected, it's just a matter of extending to the contractor or sending them a catch-up program pero as of today, there will be no slippage," he added.

In her message during the exit meeting, DA PRDP Deputy Project Director Adelina Losa thanked the World Bank, NPCO and PSO South Luzon for their support. She also commended the RPCO Bicol for their unity. Moreover, she assured the World Bank that the team will take immediate action on areas that need improvement. "We will have an assessment kung saan tayo nagkulang at kung ano pa ang dapat nating gawin para mag-improve na at the end of the day, ipagmamalaki natin ang PRDP. Ipagmamalaki natin na we are part ng PRDP," Losa said.

Bicol hosted the 16th PRDP and 1st PRDP Scale-Up World Bank Implementation Support Mission for the South Luzon Cluster, which aimed to review the DA PRDP-funded subprojects' accomplishments, progress and implementation performance. The mission was however cut short due to the low pressure area, shearline and Northeast Monsoon that brought prolonged rain in the region. During the Wrap-Up Meeting held on November 22, 2023, WB announced that DA PRDP got an overall rating of Satisfactory. (PRDP RPCO V InfoACE Unit)



MARIA THERESA QUIÑONES
World Bank Co-Task Team Leader

YFC Bicol awardees complete DA, CSCCI's mentorship program

By Annielyn L. Baleza



"Mentoring should be a fulfilling relationship between somebody with more experience and somebody with less, with the goal of helping both individuals become elevated versions of themselves." -Janice Omadeke, founder & CEO of The Mentor Method

Twenty-nine Young Farmers Challenge (YFC) Bicol awardees completed the Mentor Me, Idol Season 2, a five-day mentorship program organized by the Department of Agriculture Bicol in partnership with the Camarines Sur Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (CSCCI).

According to DA Bicol Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division Chief and YFC Focal Person Adelina A. Losa, only DA Bicol has a mentoring activity of this kind because of its strong partnership with the CSCCI. She also shared her vision for the YFC awardees which entails the experience and talents of private partners.

"Tinitingnan namin na ang projects ninyo hindi lang ganyan. It will grow. Sa ngayon nagsisimula pa lang kayong mag-implement kasi binigyan namin kayo ng pasimulang capital so kunin natin sa experience ng CamSur Chamber of Commerce kasi they are successful businessmen. Paano sila naging ganyan? Sana ma-appreciate ninyo at ma-implement ninyo sa inyong mga projects," Losa said.

The Mentor Me, Idol Season 2 training was held in Naga City on December 11-15, 2023. It included a series of modules designed to equip the young agripreneurs with the essential skills, inculcate in them the right mindset in managing their enterprise, and orient them on innovative strategies necessary in building resilient and sustainable businesses.

Among the powerhouse speakers and mentors who shared their knowledge and expertise to the YFC awardees were CSCCI Executive Vice-President Kristan Carl Malazarte who discussed Entrepreneurial Mindset and Supply and Value Chain Management and Inventory Management; DTI Camarines Sur Trade Industry

Development Specialist German Celeres Jr. who spoke on Good Governance and Business Ethics; Online marketing consultant Bryden Elizan of Naga City Guide who lectured on Marketing Management and DOST Camarines Sur Provincial Director Patrocinio Felizmenio, Food and Beverage Category Account Management Manager Gio Miguel Ocampo and TikTok Shop Philippines Health and Personal Care Account Manager Marc Castillo who talked about Market Innovation and Digitalization. Meanwhile, Regina Melchor and Glorina Lorilla taught Operations Management while Maria Francia Casin oriented them on Human Resource Management.

As part of the Mentor Me, Idol Season 2 training, the participants also had a workshop on Business Innovation Plan preparation followed by a panel presentation of their outputs to CSCCI mentors.



"Ngayon po na graduate na kami, feeling ko, I'm a businessman na. Paglabas namin dito, lahat kami could proudly say na businessman na kami. Thank you sa mga ibinigay ninyo sa aming tips, sa pagtuturo about sa business strategy. Isinapuso po namin 'yun and sinisigurado po namin na ia-apply namin po 'yun sa mga business namin. In the future, I'm looking forward na, let's say five years, sana kagaya na nila tayo." Albert Sabalboro, Mentor Me, idol Season 2 batch president and owner of Albert Hito Hatchery in Pili, Camarines Sur, told the organizers and resource speakers as well as his fellow graduates.

Meanwhile, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry Regional Governor and CSCCI Past President Hoover S. Picar encouraged the Mentor Me, Idol Season 2 graduates saying "Ito, it's not about us. Sainyo ito, sana pagyamanin ninyo. And sa pagkakataong ito, puwede bang maniwala na lang kayo na kahit paano, may mabubuti pa ring tao sa mundong ito na gusto lang tumulong at pagka may pagkakataon na rin kayong makatulong at one or two or three years from now, kayo na 'yung mentor, do it."



NEXT PAGE

Director Shandy M. Hubilla, Program Director of F2C2 from DA Central Office is expected to grace the event together with Edgardo Navarozza, Chairman of Camarines Sur Cacao Council and Roy Nelson Ramos, General Manager of Lagonoy Calamansi Farmers Agriculture Cooperative (LACAFA).

Aside from the plenary sessions, 24 FCA exhibitors invited by the DA will display various agricultural products for sale. Meanwhile, the DTI Camarines Sur has invited 11 exhibitors from FCAs, one from the academe and 29 entrepreneurs for the three-day exhibit.

A Training on Digital Marketing for F2C2 Clustered Farmers and AEWs will be conducted on the morning of the second day to be facilitated by the ATI. In the afternoon, Market Matching and Investment Opportunities will be presented by the DA-Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division.

Product demand and quality specifications and standards shall also be presented by key market players and institutional buyers in the region.

Farm clustering and consolidation is one of the key strategies of the Department of Agriculture to level up the Philippine agriculture sector. It aims to empower farming and fishing clusters all over the country through the preparation of the Cluster Development Plan (CDP), market facilitation and linkage, and capacity building and extension support through the different farmer cooperatives and associations. Convergence meetings with various government agencies and private sector are also being done to level-off updates, projects and programs for future interventions and support services for the clustered groups.



Mentor Me, Idol Season 2 Chairperson Seth Aguinillo expressed his gratitude to DA Bicol for its trust and continuous partnership with the CSCCI. He mentioned that the training marks the start of the journey of future members of the Chamber.

“Dakulon pasikot-sikot, dakulon formulation ang sarong journey be it on a positive way, on a negative way, ang importante, you win if you stay. You win the game if you stay in the game. Dae po madali ang magnegosyo pero through the efforts, assistance, mentorships, mas nagigian,” he said.

Malazarte on the other hand, asked the participants to pass on their knowledge to future young entrepreneurs.

“Because of this experience na ibinigay namin sainyo, we are hoping that you will pass (it) forward. Let’s say three years, five years, kayo na din ang mentor. You are not remembered by how much you made, you are remembered by how much you gave. Congratulate yourselves. Talagang tiniyagaan ninyo ‘yung program. I’m very proud of you,” he said.

Clustered and consolidated farmers are priority in the distribution of DA interventions such as farm inputs, tools and farm equipment and machineries; installation of irrigation facilities; and establishment of post harvest and processing facilities.



According to Marilene Dimaculangan, F2C2 Regional Focal Person, some 26,335 hectares of agricultural areas in Bicol are already clustered under the F2C2 as of this writing . These comprises the 128 clusters established since 2020 benefitting 221 FCAs and 32,482 member-farmers. There are 25 rice clustered farms, 61 corn and cassava clustered farms, 31 High Value Crops clustered farms, and 11 livestock clustered farms. In Camarines Sur – 69 clusters were established, 12 in Camarines Norte, 21 in Albay, 9 in Sorsogon, 2 in Catanduanes and 20 in Masbate.



CSCCI organized the participants with the batch name “Talubo,” which means to grow in Bicol. Malazarte assured the graduates that the CSCCI will monitor the Mentor Me, Idol Season 2’s progress every quarter.

Moreover, Losa urged the participants to learn from their mentors and follow their advice and recommendations.

“Ang hinihingi ko lang, open your mind. I-consider ninyo ‘yung mga sinabi nila. Malaki ang expectation ko na sa grupong ito marami ang magiging successful businessmen. Pag-isipan ninyo. Pag-aralan ninyo. Bigyan ninyo ng time ang business ninyo kasi diyan kayo yayaman,” she said.

YFC is a competitive financial grant assistance program being implemented by the DA in collaboration with the Office of Senator Maria Imelda Josefa Remedios “Imee” R. Marcos that aims to develop the youth’s participation and passion in agriculture. The program also intends to address the issue on the aging Filipino farmers and the high youth unemployment rate of 12.3 percent.

Bicol RPAB approves P412.7M worth PRDP subprojects



By Lovella P. Guarin

LEGASPI CITY – The Bicol Regional Project Advisory Board (RPAB) approved and endorsed four LGU-proposed infrastructure subprojects worth P412,730,355.89 for funding under the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) during the RPAB meeting held in this city on October 27, 2023.

Three subprojects, namely the construction of Maysua to Balinad Farm-to-Market Road (FMR) in Polangui, Albay; rehabilitation of Iriga City AA Abattoir in Cam. Sur; and Vinzons slaughterhouse in Cam. Norte are being proposed under the PRDP Scale Up. While the establishment of Pili Abattoir in Camarines Sur is under the second additional financing.

The four infra projects are under the PRDP component Intensified Building Up of Infrastructure and Logistics for Development (I-BUILD).

The Local Government Unit (LGU) of Polangui, Albay proposed for the construction of Maysua to Balinad Farm-to-Market Road (FMR). According to Mayor Adrian Salceda who personally presented the proposal before the RPAB members, the 8.5-kilometer FMR worth P275,101,164.30 will traverse Barangay Maysua and Balaba, Sitio Maylangka, Cotmon and Sitio Garayon and Sitio Hacienda Mandarietta of Barangay Balinad. Mayor Salceda emphasized that the FMR will reduce the hauling and transport cost of farm produce by at least 50%; reduce postharvest losses in agricultural crops; and reduce the travel time of commuters by one (1) hour.

The LGU of Iriga City, Camarines Sur proposed for the Upgrading and Rehabilitation of its AA Abattoir located in Bgy. Sta. Cruz, amounting to P 54,555,501.52. Dr. Mark Badiola, city veterinarian said that the project would help maintain and sustain the required standards set by the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) in order to maximize the premium quality native cattle and beef and other meat products that can be shipped out of the city as frozen meat instead of live animals. It will also provide the consumers with clean, fresh and quality meat (carcass) in compliance with hygienic slaughtering stipulated in RA 10611, the Food Safety Act).

The LGU of Pili, Camarines Sur proposed for the establishment of Pili Abattoir in barangay San Isidro also worth P 49,351,073.93. Municipal Agriculturist Arvin Salvino said that the goal is to

maximize the production of premium quality swine, cattle and other meat products; facilitate ease in carcass traceability; and triple the hog production in Pili in 2024. Salvino also disclosed that the construction of the new Pili Public Market is underway. The project worth P240M is a grant, together with P37 M fund for the construction of the meat section.

Meanwhile, the LGU of Vinzons also proposed for the establishment of a slaughterhouse in Bgy. Calangcawan Norte worth P 33,722,616.14. Engr. Wilner Ferrer who presented the proposal said that the absence of a slaughterhouse in their town constrains the trade of livestock products to a small local market in the community.

Dr. Alex Templonuevo, Regional Director of NMIS fully supported the three slaughterhouse subprojects as he said that Pili and Iriga City can be potential large-scale producers of meat to satisfy the demand of the large shopping malls in nearby Naga City.

Adelina A. Losa, PRDP RPCO 5 Deputy Project Director presided over the RPAB meeting which was attended by RPAB members from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR); Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and Regional Agriculture and Fishery Council (RAFC) Chairperson Bernadette delos Santos. The RPAB which is headed by DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla, is composed of Regional Directors of the different government agencies that provide guidance to the RPCO, review and approve subprojects for funding.

PRDP is a World Bank- supported special project of the Department of Agriculture. Since it started in Bicol in 2014, a total of 80 sub-projects were funded – 43 subprojects were completed and two projects were cancelled under the Original Loan which ended in 2022; four (4) sub-projects were completed under the First Additional Financing (2018-2022); and two sub-projects were already completed under the Second Additional Financing (AF2) approved in 2022 which extended the PRDP implementation until 2025. Under the AF2, 26 sub-projects are on-going, two are under procurement and one was cancelled.

The PRDP Scale-Up will further extend the project up to 2029.



AMIA farmer of Tiwi, Albay receives Philippine Resilience Award



By Lovella P. Guarin

A Bicolana farmer-cooperator of the Adaptation-Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) was hailed as one of the Top 10 recipients of the 2023 Philippine Resilience Awards during the recent awarding ceremony at the SMX Convention Center in Pasay, City.

Mila V. Bognalbal, AMIA Village president of the Joroan Farmers and Fisherfolks Association in Tiwi, Albay is the sole Bicolana to get the said award.

The Philippine Resilience Awards (PRA) is a pioneering awards program that honors and promotes the resilience-building excellence of local leaders in the country. Its primary goal is to recognize champions of resilience who made significant contributions to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and mitigation in their respective communities.

She received a plaque of appreciation and P50,000 from the Climate Change Commission. She was joined at the stage by National Resilience Council Members, DA Usec Leocadio Sebastian, and DA RFO 5 AMIA Staff - Sandy B. Bobier, Bryan M. Oro, and Lord Angelo O. Nolasco.

Aside from Mila, DA CRAO (Climate Resilient Agriculture Office) Director Alicia G. Illaga was also hailed as one of the awardees.

Mila was considered a transformative leader and champion of innovation. She led her association in partnering with the Municipal LGU of Tiwi, the Department of Agriculture through the AMIA, NGOs and other government agencies to help her community deal with the different climatic disruptions such as drought, landslide, sea-level rise and saline water intrusion.

Through her efforts, dikes were constructed in the area to address the problems on sea-level rise and saline intrusion. She also initiated the clearing of waterways to prevent flooding. She lent her second house to the association (for free) to serve as their agricultural store.

In 2023, the association established “Joroan Ville”, a diversified farming enterprise showcasing climate-resilient agriculture practices and enterprise such as lettuce production using hydroponics technology. It also engaged in farm diversification such as swine production, and fish production, and poultry egg production in partnership with the Balik Probinsya Bagong Pagasa Program.

To further develop the group’s various enterprises, a multi-crop processing center is currently being constructed and funded by DA RFO 5 through the AMIA Program. In partnership with the Food Laboratory and IRDF, capacity building and equipment on food processing were also provided. *(with reports and photos from Sandy Bobier)*

DA, PLGU Cam. Sur ...

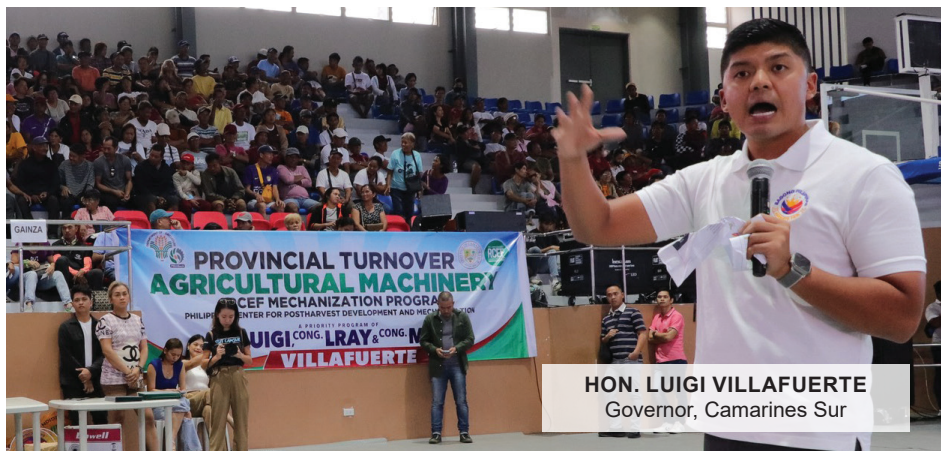
FROM PAGE 3

It will be recalled that Governor Villafuerte was one of the ten governors of the country who was called on a meeting with DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel, Jr. as Camarines is one of the top 10 rice producing provinces of the country.

Also present during the awarding and turn over were Hilda Pacis representing Senator Cynthia Villar; Vice Governor Sal Fortuno, Jr.; Board Members of Camarines Sur; DA RTD Luz R. Marcelino; DA AMAD Chief Adelina A. Losa; DA Field Operations Chief Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez and APCO for Camarines Sur Marcial Bustarga.



RODEL P. TORNILLA, MABE
Regional Executive Director, DA



HON. LUIGI VILLAFUERTE
Governor, Camarines Sur

Orientation on the implementation of the second CADP in Bicol held in Cam. Norte



By Vincent Emil Pasumbal

The success of the Convergence Area Development Plan (CADP) of Pili Watershed Convergence Area in Sorsogon brought about the identification of the second convergence area in Bicol - the Talisay Watershed. This was according to the members of the Regional Convergence Initiative (RCI) technical working group who conducted the orientation meeting with the Provincial and Municipal representatives of Camarines Norte at Daet town on December 12, 2023.

The group identified the Talisay Watershed in Camarines Norte which traverses three Municipalities namely Talisay, Daet and Mercedes as a possible second convergence area in Bicol.

The orientation meeting was attended by Nestor Franz Fortuno, Concepcion A. Romero and Sydney Joseph Torrenueva of DENR; Beda Guinto, Nilla S. Percil, Erlinda Lee of DAR; Engr. Harold Gestiada and Dina Baleza of the Provincial LGU of Camarines Norte; Mark Gerald Pastor of DTI; Enrique Jose, Jr. and Jose Porfirio Mercado of DILG.

Standing from left to right Sydney Joseph Torrenueva, Dr. Maria Christina Campita, Jose Porfirio Mercado, Ailyn Rafer, Rowena Obias, Nilla S. Percil, Erlinda Lee, Mark Gerald Pastor. Sitting from left to right Engr. Harold Gestiada, Florentino Ubalde, Jr., Nestor Franz Fortuno, Concepcion A. Romero, Beda Guinto and Dina Baleza.

Meanwhile, the RCI TWG of the DA RFO 5 was composed of Florentino Ubalde, Jr., Dr. Maria Christina F. Campita, Maria Rowena Obias and Ailyn Rafer, APCO of Camarines Norte.

The National Convergence Initiative for Sustainable Rural Development (NCI-SRD) is the government's response to the fragmented delivery of rural development services through watershed and major river basin management and rehabilitation using the ridge-to-reef approach. It is a collaborative effort of four government agencies namely the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), and Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) together with other agencies, academe and other stakeholders.

DA-CRAO, UPLBFI gear up for Agro-Climatic Advisory Portal roll out in the country

By Vincent Emil A. Pasumbal



The DA Climate-Resilient Agriculture Office (CRAO) recently organized a capacity building on the roll out of the Agro-Climatic Advisory Portal (ACAP) in the regions.

Developed by the University of the Philippines Los Baños Foundation Incorporated (UPLBFI) for the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture Program (AMIA), ACAP is a web-based application which guides LGUs and farmers in their decision making as it provides a 10-day Weather Forecast from PAGASA, Seasonal Forecast, and Special Weather Outlook and Advisory.

The first phase of ACAP was piloted in the Bicol Region in 2021 to 2022. The second phase which focuses on the improvement of the portal started in April this year.

Thus, the CRAO in collaboration with AMIA conducted a training at the NCR on November 20-23, 2023 for the computer programmers, field assistants and Climate Information Services (CIS) focals of the different regions of the country to familiarize them further on the implementation of ACAP in their respective regions.

Jonathan Austria, Data Management Specialist of UPLBFI presented a walk-through of the different functions of the ACAP website. A breakout session was held separately to teach the programmers and the CIS focals of their functions.

Domic Lapitan, Computer Programmer of UPLBFI discussed ACAP's Technology Stack components and guided them on the step-by-step process on ACAP's development.

RPCO 5 is best-performing region in South Luzon PRDP implementation

By Lovella P. Guarin

NASUGBU, BATANGAS – The Regional Project Coordination Office 5 (Bicol) received the Best Overall Performance Award in the implementation of the DA - Philippine Rural Development Project for CY 2023 during the South Luzon Year End Assessment held here on December 5, 2023.

The DA Bicol also received seven major awards bestowed by the Project Support Office (PSO) of South Luzon.

The other awards garnered by DA – PRDP RPCO 5 were: Best Performing Region in terms of Processing LGU Billing; Most Efficient in the Implementation of Procurement Timelines for I-Build; Most Number of Operational Sub-projects; Best Performing RPCO in terms of Physical Target Progress under Additional Financing 2; Highest Inter-agency Convergence & Non-PRDP Uptake Facilitation; Highest Number of PCIP Updated in 2023.

The I-Build component was recognized for having the most number of projects financed under Additional Financing 2 amounting to P4.69 Billion for 30 sub-projects implemented for CY 2023.

The I-Plan Component was awarded for having the highest Interagency Convergence and Non PRDP Uptake Facilitation with P20.3 Billion investments identified from other agencies and LGU funding sources; as well as the highest number of Provincial Commodity Investment Plans (44 PCIPs) updated in 2023.

The I-Reap Component was cited for having the highest number of Operational Subprojects. The I-REAP team is monitoring a total of 28 completed I-REAP subprojects.

A total of 19 awards were given by the NPCO. South Luzon Project

Support Office Director and Regional Executive Director of DA RFO 4A Milo D. Delos Reyes and PRDP Deputy Project Director Shandy M. Hubilla awarded the certificates.

The Year End Assessment was attended by Project Directors/Deputy Project Directors as well as component heads and selected staff of RPCO 4A, 4B and 5.

The RPCO 5 delegation was headed by Adelina A. Losa, Deputy Project Director of PRDP in Bicol. Also present were Engr. Teodoro C. Eleda, I-Build Component Head; Patrocinio Collao, I-REAP Component Head; Mary Ann R. Cuya, I-PLAN Planning Specialist, and other PRDP staff.



Meanwhile Austria taught the CIS focals and field assistants on data collection and management as well as inputting data to the database that are presented in the portal like the Seasonal Climate Outlook Advisory and 10-Day Farm Weather advisory.

Dr. Winifredo Dagli, Assistant Professor of the UPLB Collage of Development Communication discussed the importance of the data that the CIS focals and field assistants were gathering. He added that data should be properly presented so that the LGUs would easily interpret it and convey the information to the farmers in a manner that would be easily understood.

Experts from PAGASA also discussed the different climatic conditions which affect the weather system in the Philippines. They also discussed the different applications that would help in the weather data gathering.

The said activity was attended by Sandy Bobier, AMIA Bicol Assistant Program Coordinator, Aileen Ibo, Technical Staff and Sam Bonos, ACAP programmer.

As of this writing the ACAP application is being improved and customized according to the needs of the different regions. You can access the ACAP Bicol portal at <https://amia-cis.github.io>.



DA Bicol reinforces CSO accreditation and CSOs' role in community dev't at 1st CSO Summit and Awarding Ceremonies

By Annielyn L. Baleza

The Department of Agriculture Bicol conducted its 1st DA Bicol Civil Society Organization (CSO) Summit and Awarding Ceremonies to highlight the value of CSO accreditation and engagement in implementing its programs, activities and projects (PAPs). About 69 DA-accredited CSOs participated in the activity which was held in Magarao, Camarines Sur on December 6, 2023. According to Aloha Gigi Bañaria, Chief of the DA Bicol Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division and Head of the DA CSO Accreditation Regional Technical Working Group, the event institutionalizes the annual conduct of the CSO Summit in the region and emphasizes the importance of CSO accreditation.

"With the farmer-leaders here and the local AFC leaders from the different provinces, tulungan niyo po kaming maikampanya na we need the accreditation ng mga CSOs. Why? Para po ma-safeguard naman natin ang public funds. Sa dami ng interventions, limited resources ng gobyerno, tama lamang po na pahalagahan natin kung ano man ang puwedeng itulong sa atin," she said.

She called for the local government units' financial support in organizing, strengthening, as well as ensuring the growth and development of rural-based organizations (RBOs) as stipulated in the Mandanas ruling. She also guaranteed that the DA Bicol remains committed in implementing PAPs that are responsive to the needs of the agri-fishery sector.

Among the highlights of the activity is the awarding of certificates of accreditation to 20 newly-accredited CSOs and one that renewed its accreditation.

DA Bicol also recognized the Outstanding CSO co-implementers and beneficiaries during the event.

The Outstanding CSO Co-Implementers was awarded to CamSur Multi-Purpose Cooperative, San Agustin San Ramon Agrarian Reform Farmers Cooperative (SARFC), and Magarao Multi-Purpose Cooperative. Meanwhile, the Mambalite Palangon Farmers Irrigators Association, Bikolanas Agriculture Cooperative, and Nabua West Multi-Purpose Cooperative were recognized as Outstanding CSO Beneficiaries. Moreover, Special Awards were given to the Camarines Sur Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. and the

Pilipinas Shell Foundation Inc. Each awardee received a certificate of recognition and P10,000 cash award.

Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries OIC-Executive Director Julieta Oplencia graced the occasion. She lauded the CSOs in Bicol as well as the DA Bicol CSO Accreditation Regional Technical Secretariat for the successful conduct of the 1st DA Bicol CSO Summit and Awarding Ceremonies.

"Impressed na impressed po talaga ako. Talaga pong tuwang-tuwa ako dahil nakita ko na ang daming outstanding which means talaga pong you worked together as a team," she said.

She also sought the CSOs' accountability and integrity in implementing DA-funded programs and projects.

"Dahil napakalaki po ng trust na ibinigay sainyo, ipinagkakatiwala ng gobyerno ang pera sainyo at ang mga proyektong ito. Naniniwala po kami at umaasa na ang inyong integrity sa pag-implement ng mga proyekto ay pananatilihin po ninyo kasi alam niyo po naman na kapag nagkaroon kayo ng isang project na hindi ninyo na-implement ng maayos, tapos na po, hindi na po kayo ulit bibigyan. Kasama po 'yun kasi sa requirements for accreditation. Kailangan po na-accomplish ninyo, maayos ang performance ninyo sa mga co-engagement activities ninyo with DA," Oplencia said.

As part of the activity, DA Bicol invited some resource speakers to lecture on subjects relevant to the effective and efficient management and operation of CSOs.

RAFC Bicol Resource Speakers' Bureau member and Oragon Farmers Agriculture Cooperative Chief Executive Officer Fr. Granwell Pitapit exhorted on the Importance of Values Formation and Moral Recovery Among CSOs. He stressed the CSOs' roles in influencing the state and the market. He also oriented them on the types, roles and formation of values as well as the stages of moral development.

Meanwhile, Arlyn Joy Alarcon, Information Officer from Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and Maricho Pobre, Chief of the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) Bicol Supervision and Examination Section, discussed their registration process and guidelines on the compliance with reportorial requirements.





Congratulations RAFC Bicol for bagging Fourteen (14) National awards during the **9th National Agriculture & Fisheries Volunteers' Day** held at Midas Hotel, Pasay City

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outstanding RAFC Achiever Award
RAFC Bicol 2. Outstanding RAFC Chairperson
Ms. Bernadette B. De los Santos 3. Outstanding RAFC Executive Officer
Ms. Aloha Gigi I. Bañaria 4. Outstanding RAFC Secretariat-Coordinator
Ms. Gladys Regondola-Guzman 5. Outstanding PAFC Achiever Award
1st Runner-up
PAFC Albay 6. Outstanding PAFC Chairperson
Mr. Rene B. De los Reyes (PAFC Albay) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Outstanding PAFC Secretariat-Coordinator
Ms. Arminda Padilla (PAFC Albay) 8. Outstanding MAFC Achiever Award
1st Runner-up
MAFC Dimasalang, Masbate 9. Outstanding MAFC Chairperson
Mr. Rudito Guio (Dimasalang, Masbate) 10. Outstanding MAFC Secretariat-Coordinator
1st Runner-up
Mr. Carlito Pepito (Dimasalang, Masbate) 11. Outstanding RAFC Sectoral Committee
1st Runner-up
RAFC Bicol Women Sectoral Committee | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Outstanding RAFC Sectoral Committee
2nd Runner-up
RAFC Bicol Climate Change Environmental
& Natural Resources Sectoral Committee 13. Outstanding PAFC Sectoral Committee
1st Runner-up
PAFC Albay Fisheries & Aquaculture
Sectoral Committee 14. Outstanding PAFC Sectoral Committee
2nd Runner-up
PAFC Albay Poultry and Livestock
Sectoral Committee |
|--|--|--|

Albay Young Farmers' Organization Executive Director Josh Barcelon shared their journey as the first youth organization accredited by the DA Bicol. He also shared the RBO's best practices in implementing the Edible Landscaping project in the 2nd district of Albay.

Moreover, DA RFO V Senior Agriculturist Salvadora Gavino oriented the participants about the DA Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion (INSPIRE) Program.

Annielen Panerio, General Manager of the CamSur Multi-Purpose Cooperative and Sectoral Chairperson of RAFC Bicol Rice Sectoral Committee, thanked the DA and its personnel for their compassion, commitment, passion and professionalism in assisting CSOs to attain their vision, mission and objectives. She also encouraged her fellow CSOs to stay connected with the DA to align their plans, programs and services with the agency's.

A total of 92 CSO officers and members participated in the 1st DA Bicol CSO Summit and Awarding Ceremonies. Also present were RAFC Bicol Chairperson Bernadette De Los Santos and RAFC Bicol Vice-Chairperson Benedicto Palmares.

CSOs are domestic corporation, organization, association, labor organization, workers' association, farmers' organization or cooperative duly registered with either the SEC, CDA, or Department of Labor and Employment-Bureau of Rural Workers (DOLE-BRW), expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on socio-economic, ethical, cultural and scientific considerations. The DA, through the PCAF, encourages CSOs to get accredited to qualify as DA's beneficiaries or co-implementer of its PAPs. As of December 2023, DA Bicol has 121 accredited CSOs. (with reports from Gladys R. Guzman and Jallisa Nosil, DA RAFC V)





DA Bicol brings joy to IPs of Cam. Sur

By Lovella P. Guarin

It is indeed a joyful Christmas to some 50 families of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) of Tadyong Tribal Farmers Association, Inc. who were surprised as they received simple presents from the Department of Agriculture through the Kadiwa ng Pangulo.

The simple gift-giving (amidst the heavy downpour) was held at the foot of Mt. Asog in San Pedro Iriga City, Camarines Sur. It was one of the directives of Agriculture Secretary Francisco “Kiko” Tiu Laurel, Jr.

The site was almost two hours drive from the DA Regional Office in Pili, Cam. Sur. The DA team onboard the Kadiwa truck also handed the same tokens to a number of farmers who happened to be along the road, working on their farms.

The simple token consisted of 10 kilos rice and grocery items. DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla and AMAD Chief Adelina A. Losa spearheaded the activity.



Published quarterly by the:

Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Information Section (RAFIS)
Department of Agriculture - Regional Field Office No. 5

Re-entered as a Second Class Mail Matter
at the Pili Post Office, Pili, Camarines Sur
under Permit No. 2019-17 on March 05, 2019.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - RFO5

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

✉ darafid5@yahoo.com

📍 Department of Agriculture Bicol

📱 Agriculture Bicol

🌐 bicol.da.gov.ph

🏢 Department of Agriculture-Bicol

WATCH:

UMAsenso Online

Live, every **Monday, 10:00 AM** at the official social media sites of
DA Regional Field Office No.5

📘 • Department of Agriculture-Bicol
• Agriculture Bicol

📺 • Department of Agriculture Bicol

