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

DA Bicol joins Lab for All caravan, distributes P7.8M worth interventions

DA Bicol distributes P47.9M Agri-interventions to farmers of Catanduanes

By Annielyn L. Baleza

STORY ON
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By Lovella P. Guarin

SORSOGON CITY – First Lady Louise “Liza” Araneta - Marcos personally led the first Lab for All (Laboratoryo, Konsulta at Gamot para sa Lahat) caravan in Bicol, held at the Sorsogon Provincial Gymnasium here on July 18, 2024.

Senate President Francis “Chiz” G. Escudero; Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Chairman J. Prospero Devera III; Congressman Bernadette Escudero; and Governor Edwin Hamor graced the event.

Also in attendance were Sorsogon City Mayor Ester Hamor and the Local Chief Executives of the 14 municipalities of Sorsogon.

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HVCDP Bicol launches Gulayan sa Paralan 2024 and distributes ₱17.3M worth of Interventions to FCAs

By Vincent Emil Pasumbal

San Agustin, Pili – In time for the opening of classes for the School Year 2024-2025 the Department of Agriculture through the High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) launched the Gulayan sa Paaralan Project (GPP) 2024 and conducted Mass Distribution of HVCDP

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EDITORIAL

Biofertilizer: cheaper and pro-environment substitute for inorganic fertilizer

Most rice seed varieties are voracious fertilizer eater and with high prices of synthetic fertilizers in the market, farmers choose not to buy the required amount of fertilizer. They only rely on what the DA provides them, that is, depending on the number of hectares registered in their RSBSA registration.

The introduction of biofertilizer therefore will help the farmers save on fertilizer. Biofertilizers are substances that contain living microorganisms that when applied to seeds or soil, colonize the interior of the plant and promote growth by increasing the availability of nutrients to the host plant. Biofertilizers also enhance water-holding capacity of the soil and add essential nutrients, such as nitrogen, vitamins, and proteins.

The Rice Program has staged technology demonstrations to showcase the potential of these biofertilizers. Aside from its cost effectiveness, biofertilizers can address soil degradation, can enhance soil fertility, environment-friendly and has no ill effects to the environment and humans.

One biofertilizer that was developed by a Filipino is the Bio N. It was developed by Dr. Mercedes Umali-Garcia of the National Institute of Molecular Biology (Biotech), at the University of the Philippines Los Banos. Bio N is commercially available in 200-gram sachets. It contains organisms capable of converting nitrogen from the air into ammonium nitrogen in the soil. It enhances shoot growth and root development and can replace 30 to 50 percent (%) of total chemical nitrogen requirement of crops, according to UPLB-Biotech.

Five to six sachets of Bio N can replace two 50-kg bags of urea per hectare (ha) planted to rice. Urea currently retails at P 1,609/bag (source: FPA average weekly prices of six major fertilizer grade on September 2-6, 2024). The total fertilizer cost would mean P6,436.00 at the average of four bags/hectare. With Bio N, priced at P100 per sachet, rice farmers could save P5,836 per hectare for utilizing six sachets.

Aside from rice, it can be used for corn and vegetables, too. Seeds are mixed or “inoculated” with Bio N powder before sowing or planting. Seedlings can also be dipped in Bio N water solution.

DA Memorandum Order No. 32 series of 2023 prescribed the implementing guidelines on the distribution and use of biofertilizers.

The objective of this project is to improve productivity of rice farmers in spite of the high price of fertilizers. The distribution of these biofertilizers will complement the use of inorganic fertilizer and will support the balance fertilization program of the agency.

In Bicol, biofertilizers were already distributed to hybrid rice clusters. Hybrid rice cluster has a minimum of 100 hectares which are in close proximity and performing similar production activity. The member farmers cooperatives and associations (FCA) should be registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) or Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) for at least a year and whose members are registered with RSBSA. Aside from biofertilizers, these clusters may also avail of other interventions such as hybrid rice seeds and other interventions from Rice Program.

DA Bicol distributes P47.9M agri interventions to farmers, fisherfolk in Catanduanes



By Annielyn L. Baleza

VIRAC, CATANDUANES--The Department of Agriculture Bicol delivered about P47.9 million-worth of agri-fishery interventions to farmers and fisherfolk in Catanduanes during the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Pay-Out and Distribution of Agricultural Interventions held in this province on September 12, 2024.

DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel Tornilla led the turn-over ceremony of various agricultural interventions from the banner programs. A total of P15,055,640 from the Rice Program which included 1,500 bags of hybrid palay seeds for dry season cropping 2024-2025, fertilizer discount vouchers for 1,500 hectares rice area, soil ameliorants and biofertilizers for over 1,000 hectares of rice area, 55 units of knapsack sprayer, and 264 liters of foliar fertilizer – were turned over to the 11 municipalities of Catanduanes.

Meanwhile, under the High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP), 24 sets of garden tools, two wheel barrow, two plastic drums, and assorted vegetable seeds each for the 11 local government units of Catanduanes were turned over. Also, 25 schools from 11 municipalities received Gulayan sa Paaralan packages. Three Farmers Cooperatives and Associations (FCAs) namely Agrarian Livelihood Services Technology Organization in Viga, Catanduanes; Maligaya Village Rural Improvement Club (RIC) in San Miguel; and Genitligan Upland Farmers Association in Baras, Catanduanes were given a total of 2,500 pieces of grafted

pili and a total of 50 bags of organic fertilizer with an aggregate amount of P1,182,625-worth of HVCDP interventions.

DA Bicol also provided 39 heads of caraheifer as rehab assistance to farmers affected by the shear line in LGU-Bato, Viga, Panganiban, and San Miguel, 200 piglets for hog raisers impacted by African Swine Fever (ASF) in the province, and one unit of Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion (INSPIRE) and Compact Feed Mill to PLGU-Catanduanes worth a total of P13,065,000 from the Livestock and Poultry Program.

In addition, the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program turned over four units of brush cutter and two units of multi-cultivator with mulcher worth a total of P860,000 to four FCAs namely Pagsangahan Organic Farmers Association in San Miguel; Tindog Tilis Farmers Association in Bato; Paraiso Community Based and Livelihood Farmers Association in San Miguel; and Sibol Farmers Association in Bato.

Three of DA's attached agencies also delivered various interventions for their beneficiaries: the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice)-Bicol distributed Certificates of Award for 5,671 bags of certified inbred rice seeds for dry season 2024-2025 worth

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NEW MASSBA MULTI-PURPOSE COOPERATIVE
Sagrada Familia, Minalabac, Camarines Sur
CDA Reg. No. 9520-05007076
TIN No.004-186-980-000

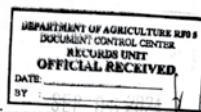


BY: _____ TIME: _____

EXCERPTS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING HELD LAST AUGUST 16, 2024 AT NEW MASSBA MPC OFFICE, SAGRADA FAMILIA, MINALABAC, CAMARINES SUR.

PRESENT:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------|
| 1. JESUS S. PRIVALDOS | - | Chairperson |
| 2. GERARDO T. PANUGAO | - | Board of Director |
| 3. NELSON G. QUIÑANO | - | Board of Director |
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| 8. MELODY LL. CEDILLA | - | General Manager |
| 9. ARIANE H. OLIVA | - | Secretary/Clerk |



RESOLUTION NO. 23
Series of 2024

A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING GRATITUDE & THANKS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE THRU REGIONAL DIRECTOR RODEL P. TORNILLA DA RFO5, SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR, AND LIKEWISE TO RAED THRU ENGR. JERRY EBOÑA OIC CHIEF, AND RICE PROGRAM THRU SIR MARCIAL BUSTARGA.

WHEREAS, the New MASSBA MPC family is expressing sincere and deepest thanks and gratitude to our very own **Regional Director Rodel P. Tornilla** for granting projects to our coop.

WHEREAS, the project wherein the turn over is nearly coming of the Solar Power Irrigation System (SPIS) located at Sitio Tagodtod, San Jose, Minalabac, Camarines Sur, worth more or less **P 10M**.

WHEREAS, still at present we had approved project from RAED a recirculating dryer to our coop and an overwhelming support the time we requested seeds to Sir Marcial Bustarga from the Rice program.

WHEREAS, your unwavering support is really matter to our coop and for our small farmer members. Hoping that our depressed coop can move forward and help to the calling of rice sufficiency program of the government.

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Bicolano farmers and fishers affected by El Niño get P10K PAFF

By Lovella P. Guarin

SORSOGON CITY – Some 1,300 RSBSA-registered farmers and fisherfolk of Sorsogon province previously affected by the recent EL Niño phenomenon received the P10,000 cash assistance dubbed as Presidential Assistance to Farmers, Fisherfolk and Families (PAFF) during the pay out held at the City Gymnasium here on July 2, 2024.

The beneficiary-farmers came from the 14 municipalities and 1 city of Sorsogon. Vice Governor Krunimar Antonio Escudero and Sorsogon 1st and 2nd district representatives Bernadette Escudero and Cong. Manuel Fortes graced the event. Sorsogon Asst. APCO Roser Rebellon represented DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla.

Among the recipients were 157 farmer beneficiaries of Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Phase 2 from the municipalities of Bulusan (46 beneficiaries), Barcelona (9), Juban (39), Pilar (27) and Matnog (36 recipients). They were very happy because aside from the cash assistance from President Bongbong Marcos, Governor Edwin B. Hamor of Sorsogon also gave P300 transportation allowance to all 1,300 farmers and fishers.

Meanwhile, in Albay, 4,155 farmers and fishers received the P10K assistance during the PAFF distribution in Ligao City on July 1, 2024 for 3,155 farmers and fishers of Albay 2nd and 3rd district; and in Tabaco City on July 2, 2024 to 1,000 farmers and fishers of Albay 1st district. Governor Edcel Greco Lagman and Provincial Agriculturist Cheryll Rebeta led the distribution. Albay Assistant APCO Jayson Gonzales represented Director Rodel P. Tornilla.

In Masbate, Governor Antonio T. Kho led the distribution of PAFF to initial 700 farmers and fishers from all municipalities of Masbate during the distribution held in Cataingan on June 24, 2024. Masbate APCO Wilfredo Nelmidia witnessed the distribution. Masbate OIC Provincial Agriculturist Sheryl Almario said that pay out will be completed in the coming weeks.

It will be recalled that President Ferdinand Bongbong R. Marcos, Jr. personally turned over a total of P161.85 Million-worth checks from the Office of the President to the six Governors of Bicol on June 7, 2024 during his visit to Pili, Camarines Sur and Legazpi City in Albay. A total of P41.55M check was turned over to the province of Albay; P10.28 M for Camarines Norte; P50M for Camarines Sur; P10.23M for Catanduanes; P36.79M for Masbate; and P13M for Sorsogon. *(with reports from Mary Rose Detera of SAAD Sorsogon)*





Bicol RDP 2023-2028 Camarines Sur Provincial Roadshow

By Angela Mae Lafuente

The final leg of the Bicol Regional Development Plan (RDP) 2023-2028 Roadshow, with the theme “Sararo, Sarabay, Pasiring sa Marhay na Buhay,” was held in the Province of Camarines Sur at the Fuerte CamSur Sports Complex, Pili, Camarines Sur on August 27, 2024.

The event was spearheaded by the Regional Plan Advocacy Committee (RPAC) V in collaboration with the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Region V. Michelle B. Brosas, Senior Economic Development Specialist of NEDA, discussed the Development Planning Process and provided an overview of the Bicol RDP 2023-2028, highlighting the development planning process, planning parameters, and overall strategic framework.

In addition, Armylene B. Posada of NEDA discussed the topic Investment Programming and Budgeting, emphasizing the process

of identifying and prioritizing programs, activities, and projects (PAPs) that address the goals and strategies of the Bicol RDP 2023-2028.

Marita G. Hermoso, Coordinator of the Camarines Sur Provincial Planning and Development, shared the CamSur Provincial Development and Physical Framework Plan. She said that the vision of the Province of Camarines Sur is to become a gateway to development, a prime destination for those seeking richer opportunities whose people are competence, capacity, creativity, and high trust to participate in all aspects of development efforts.

The goal of the provincial roadshow was to deepen appreciation and understanding of the public on the Bicol RDP 2023-2028 and AmBisyon Natin 2040 to achieve a “stable, comfortable, and secure life for all.”

LGU Workshop on the Localization of the National Farm-to-Market Road Network Plan 2023-2028 held

The Bureau of Agricultural and Fisheries Engineering (BAFE) was in Bicol recently to lead the Provincial/Municipal/ City Local Government Unit (P/M/CLGU) Workshop on the Localization of the National Farm-to-Market Road Network Plan 2023-2028. The workshop was in collaboration with the Regional Agricultural Engineering Division (RAED) led by Engr. Jerry Eboña and was held at Villa Caceres Hotel, Naga City last August 13-15, 2024.

The three-day workshop was attended by representatives of Local Government Units. More than 100 LGU Officials and Agricultural Extension Worker (AEW) participated from the Province of Camarines Sur and 30 from Province of Camarines Norte.

Kevin R. Remorosa, presented the GeoAgri System. GeoAgri, is an interactive mapping application that displays information on Farm-to-Market Roads (FMR) projects. This could include information on Agri-Fisheries Machinery and Rural Infrastructure Projects, such as irrigation, post-harvest facilities, fisheries facilities, livestock facilities, renewable energy in Bicol.

Engr. Rustom G. Villegas shared the criteria for processing proposals for FMRs and the Digitalization of DILG Local and other Road Networks. Hands-on Activities were also conducted to input data and update network maps by province/district/city and municipality in agricultural production areas, fisheries, coastal areas, facilities and markets. Some selected municipalities in Camarines Norte and

Camarines Sur also made a presentation of their output. Meanwhile, Engr. Michaelangelo Severa of DILG discussed the Comprehensive Land-Use Plan (CLUP).

Engr. Juana T. Tapel, Assistant Director of DA-BAFE discussed the policy and directives on the creation of the positions of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineers (ABE) in the provinces, cities and municipalities. Some mayors shared their ABE Appointees, such as Libmanan in Camarines Sur, Labo and Vinzons in Camarines Norte. The workshop culminated with the signing of the Commitment Wall participated by DA-BAFE and members of the Regional Management Councils (RMC) such as Department of Agriculture

(DA), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and mayors. (Angela Mae Lafuente – RAFIS 5)





DA BICOL JOINS... FROM PAGE 1

Department of Agriculture Undersecretary Deogracias Victor “DV” Savellano was represented by OIC Regional Technical Director Lorenzo L. Alvina. He turned over a total of P7,878,500 - worth of interventions to walk-in clients and pre-selected farmers cooperatives and associations (FCAs) and LGUs.

The DA Bicol has distributed 500 pcs grafted pili seedlings from the Sorsogon Dairy Production and Technology Center; 3,000 packets vegetable seeds and 100 pcs bamboo planting materials from the High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP); and 2,500 copies IEC materials from RAFIS. RSBSA registration was also conducted on site.

Meanwhile 10 FCAs received Lab for All Livelihood Package from First Lady Louise Araneta – Marcos. The livelihood package consisted of 48 heads ready-to-lay pullets, 1 set egg machine cage to house 48 pullets, 8 bags poultry express feeds, 1 disinfectant, 1 liter multi-vitamins, 100 grams antibiotic.

These are: Gimagaan Indigenous People’s Farmers Association of Donsol; Bgy. Gogon Farmers Association of

Donsol; Pangpang FA of Pilar; Minanticaan FA of Castilla; Samahang Mangingisda ng Bgy Kuwatro (SAMBAK) of Sta. Magdalena; Bgy. Fabrica Livestock, Poultry and High Value Crops Farmers Assn. of Barcelona; Porog Rural Fisherfolks Assn of Bulusan; Alyansa kan mga Parasira sa Sorsogon (from municipality of Bulan); Cabiguhan Poultry FA of Gubat, Sorsogon; and Green Thumb Catanagan Community Farmers of Juban, Sorsogon.

15 Municipal and City Local Government Units of Sorsogon also received 200 heads mallard ducks (worth P100,000 totalling P1.5M) for distribution to qualified FCAs. While 8 LGUs, namely: Bulan, Gubat, Sorsogon City, Castilla, Prieto Diaz, Barcelona, Irosin and Sta. Magdalena received a total of P6M project under the swine calibrated repopulation. Each LGU received 45 heads swine for 15 individual recipients, P22,500 worth feeds, P21,000 worth piglets and P6,500 worth animal drugs.

The caravan was participated in by numerous government agencies and private sector following a whole of the nation approach. It is being supported by the Office of the President and the Department of Health.

DA BICOL DISTRIBUTES... FROM PAGE 3

a total of P4,740,956 that will be distributed to the 11 municipalities of Catanduanes on September 16.

Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA) turned over 979 units of 3 in 1 Modified abaca stripping knife and nine units of portable modified spindle stripping machine for nine abaca farmers association worth a total of P12,040,000. The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) distributed P1,041,000-worth of interventions consisting of 120,000 pieces of freshwater tilapia fingerlings for the municipalities of Bato, Caramoran, Gigmoto, San Miguel, and Viga; 50,000 pieces of brackishwater tilapia fingerlings for the Municipality of Panganiban, 120,000 bangus fingerlings for the Municipalities of Bagamanoc, Baras, Bato, Caramoran, Panganiban, and Pandan, and 10 units of 22-footer fiberglass reinforced plastic boat with complete accessories and 7.5 horsepower marine engine for 10 individual fisherfolk.

In his message, Tornilla highlighted DA Bicol’s priorities to boost food security not only in the region’s mainland provinces but also in island provinces including Catanduanes.

“Prayoridad po namin sa Kagawaran ng Pagsasaka sa Bicol na iangat ang antas ng seguridad sa pagkain hindi lamang sa mga mainland provinces nito kundi maging sa mga islang probinsya sa rehiyon kabilang na ang Isla ng Catanduanes. Ito po ay sa pamamagitan ng pagpapataas ng produksiyon, pagsulong

ng makabagong teknolohiya, at modernisasyon sa sektor ng agrikultura,” he related.

He also thanked the Provincial Local Government Unit of Catanduanes headed by Governor Joseph Cua, Provincial Agriculturist Ace William Tria, and the staff of the Office of the Municipal and Provincial Agriculturist for their tireless efforts to develop, grow, and nurture the agriculture and fishery sector in the province.

Tria, for his part, said that the agri-fishery interventions will enable the farmers and fisherfolk to recover from damages caused by natural calamities.

“Nagpapasalamat po kami sa ating butihing Secretary, Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. sa mga interventions na ibinigay sa probinsya ng Catanduanes. Malaki po ang maitutulong nito sa agri-fishery sector industry ng Catanduanes. Alam naman po natin na nitong mga nakaraang buwan ay nagkaroon tayo ng mga natural calamities. Nandyan ‘yung drought, nandyan ‘yung bagyong Enteng so malaking tulong po ito para ma-boost ang local economy ng Catanduanes,” Tria said.

Senator Ramon ‘Bong’ Revilla Jr., Deputy Majority Leader and Talino at Galing ng Pinoy (TGP) Party-List Representative Jose “Bong” Teves Jr., Governor Joseph C. Cua, and Virac Mayor Samuel Laynes joined Tornilla together with BFAR Regional Director Ariel U. Pioquinto and Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA) Bicol OIC Regional Director Mary Anne R. Molina. *(with reports from Marissa Joy O. Villano-Beriña, DA RFO V Monitoring and Special Concerns Unit)*

Grade 6 pupil of Salvacion Elem Sch in Baao, Cam. Sur wins WFD Regional Poster Making contest

By Lovella P. Guarin

The Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office No. 5 in collaboration with the Department of Education Region 5 conducted the 2024 Regional On-the-Spot Poster Making Contest in preparation for the celebration of the World Food Day in October.

The poster making contest was held on September 5, 2024 at the CBES bldg., DA 5 grounds and participated in by 11 grade 5 to grade 6 students from the 11 divisions of Bicol Region -namely: Albay province; Ligao City; Legaspi City; Tabaco City; Camarines Sur province; Naga City; Iriga City; Masbate province and Masbate City; and Sorsogon province and Sorsogon City.

The first Place was garnered by Clarence C. Bricenio, a grade VI student of Salvacion Elementary School in Baao, Camarines Sur. He received P5,000 cash award and certificate of Recognition. His coach Rod Francis Mesoga received a token from the HVCDP.

The Second Place was garnered by Bea Lei C. Adra of Ligao West Elementary School in Ligao City, Albay. She received P3,000 cash award and certificate.

Third place was garnered by Mariah S. Salting of Polangui South Central School. She received P1,500 cash prize and certificate. Consolation prizes of P500 and certificates of recognition were given to all other contestants.

This year's World Food Day theme is "Right to Foods for a Better Life and a Better Future: Leave No One Behind."

The contest was witnessed by DA OIC RTD for Research and Regulations Lorenzo L. Alvina who welcomed the participants;



Christie L. Alvarez, Education Program Supervisor of DepEd Region 5 who served as the over-all coordinator for DepEd; Lovella P. Guarin, Chief of the Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Information Section (RAFIS) who discussed the rationale and overview of the event. Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, OIC RTD for Operations led the awarding ceremony and gave the closing remarks.

Also present were coaches and Education Program Supervisors of each division.

The board of judges was composed of Christian Tosoc of Agricultural Training Institute (ATI); Genieses B. Campos from the CBSUA; and Blesilda A. Nuñez former PRO of RAFIS. The criteria for judging were originality – 30%; creativity – 30%; visual impact – 20%; and relevance to the theme – 20%.

Clarence Bricenio will represent the Bicol Region in the National On-the-Spot Poster Making contest in Manila on October 14 – 16 in celebration of the World Food Day.



UNLOCKING PILI'S... FROM PAGE 12

"Pangarap namin na makatulong sa mga pili growers and ma-promote ang pili internationally. Even naman talagang meron nang market pero sana maging kahilera din siya ng ibang nuts talaga tulad ng macadamia kasi 'yung pili talaga natin is one of the healthiest nuts," Alcazar said.

The Tigaon Pili Growers Association headed by Reyes is among the three recipients of the DA Bicol HVCDP's pili foundation scion grove package worth P184,750 which includes 100 pieces pili seedlings, five sets garden tools, five rolls water hose, one roll black net, 10 pieces bolo, 10 pieces water plastic drum, 10 bags vermicast, 20 liters foliar, 20 pieces soil conditioner, five gallons herbicide, and 67 rolls cyclone wire. They also received a greenhouse-type solar dryer amounting to P500,000 from DA HVCDP.

"We are very thankful sa DA kasi kung hindi dahil sainyo, hindi namin alam kung paano magstart. Nang dahil sainyo, natuto kami ng proper way ng pagtatanim, 'yung knowledge sa pili, and then siyempre sa mga taong nakasalamuha namin, thankful kami," Alcazar said.

Beltran, for her part, is confident that with DA Bicol HVCDP's support to pili growers like Sanoy, Alcazar, and Reyes, pili can hurdle economic obstacles, flourish both locally and internationally, and complement the municipality's abaca and corn industries, especially in its hilly areas. She shared her aspirations for the municipality's pili industry saying, "Sa ngayon, okay na ang production ng pili, pangarap ko na mag-expand na lang doon sa area and siyempre, 'yung processing, value-adding, mapataas ang quality at shelf-life, magkaroon ng municipal nursery and maipa-register 'yung magagandang varieties na mapagkukunan ng scion para ma-upgrade 'yung mga pili na itatanim," she added.

DA turns over 1st Bamboo Curing Facility and Bamboo Nursery to Bula, Cam. Sur farmers

By Angela Mae Lafuente

The month of September is celebrated as Philippine Bamboo Month and September 18 is World Bamboo Day.

In line with these observance, the Department of Agriculture under the High Value Crops Development Program inaugurated and turned over the ₱6.5M worth of Bamboo Curing Facility and Bamboo Nursery to the Samahang Organisasyong Pang Kalikasan (SOK) in Ombao Heights, Bula, Camarines Sur on September 17, 2024.

DA and LGU Officials, Farmer Cooperatives and Association, representatives from other agencies and farmers witnessed the inauguration.

Rodel P. Tornilla, DA Bicol Regional Executive Director, said that Bula is known as producer of bamboo crafts, and furnitures made of bamboo - the bamboo being the OTOP “One Town, One Product” of Bula. “We support bamboo as raw material for livelihood construction purposes due to its physical characteristics and the ability to grow in diverse climate and habitats. Ang tawag nga sa bamboo ay “super grass” because it is the fastest growing plant na pwedeng tumubo ng hanggang 3 piye kada araw.” He mentioned that bamboo is a very resilient plant and can withstand typhoons. He urged the farmers continue to support the projects of the Department of Agriculture.

Edmundo LI. Visitacion, Barangay Chairman of Ombao Heights, Bula, Camarines Sur, acknowledged the DA for granting the



facility. He said that it will benefit bamboo growers in the three barangays namely: Ombao Heights, Sto. Niño, and Kinalabasahan. He also thanked Consolacion Onquit who donated the lot for the construction of the facility.

“Sa lahat ng opisyal ng SOK, magtulungan tayo kasama ang konseho ng barangay, alagaan at ayusin ang programang ito ng Department of Agriculture para mas ma-pursige ang mga estruktura na nandito na sa atin. So, nakita natin na ang Ombao Heights ang pinakamaraming tanim na kawayan. Sa lahat ng barangay dito, ang Bula ay mayroon 33 barangays at halos 20





HVCDP BICOL ... FROM PAGE 1

out of 33 dito ang may maraming tanim na kawayan.” He added that their association has 100 hectares of bamboo plantation.

Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, OIC RTD for Operations and HVCDP Focal Person, said that the bamboo facility was worth ₱4.2M while over ₱2M was spent on the equipment that will serve as a startup enterprise for the association and could become the primary source of bamboo slats that they can use in various products.

In his inspirational message, Jesus Alfonso Carpio, Internal Vice President of Philippine Bamboo Society of Advocates and President of International Movement of Development Managers Sustainable Development Projects Inc., emphasized the potential of engineered bamboo as export product and encouraged the farmers to share what they have in order to achieve a world-class level facility and maybe an industry of bamboo in the region.

Rocky T. Arcega, Agricultural Technician and Bamboo Focal Person of LGU Bula, demonstrated the step-by-step process of bamboo cutting and treating.

Also present during the inauguration were Edna Mora representing Mayor Amelita Ibasco; Municipal Agriculturist of Bula Joel Serrado; Municipal Agriculturist of Siruma Joel Balasta; DTI CamSur Representative Mark Adrian Pontanal; Banco Santiago de Libon Manager Liza Dycoco; Baao HVCDP Coordinator, Jinky Bisenio; and Brgy. officials of Sto. Nino, Kinalabasahan and Ombao Heights.

Interventions to different Farmers Cooperatives and Associations (FCA’s). The activity was held at the DA grounds on July 8, 2024.

Gulayan sa Paaralan Program is the establishment of school garden in public elementary and secondary schools nationwide. It has been implemented since 2007 by the Department of Education in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture through the High Value Crops Development Program.

A total of 100 elementary and junior high schools from five congressional districts of Camarines Sur received the GPP packages. The GPP package is composed of 58 packets of assorted vegetable seeds, 2 rolls of vegetable twine, 1 plastic crate, 1 bag of vermi cast, 10 pieces seedling tray, 1 roll garden hose, 1 pruning shear, 1 shovel, 1 rake, 1 sprinkler, 1 hoe, 1 bolo, 2 pieces hand trowel, 2 pieces hand fork & hoe cultivator, and 2 pieces hand sprayer amounting to ₱11,305.00 per package with the total of ₱1,130,500.00.

According to Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, OIC-Regional Technical Director for Operations and HVCDP Regional Coordinator through the GPP the DA aims to promote food security through the production of nutritious food. It also aims to inculcate the appreciation of agriculture among students to make them appreciate the importance of eating vegetables.

Meanwhile the HVCDP also turnover ₱17.3M worth of interventions comprised of plastic crates, soil conditioner, organic fertilizer, lowland vegetables seeds, plastic mulch, grass cutter, and mini-chainsaw to 19 FCAs and grafted pili seedlings to 3 LGUs from Camarines Sur.

In his welcome message Marcial T. Bustarga, Agricultural Program Coordinating Officer (APCO) for Camarines Sur emphasized that there is a need to expose the students to agriculture for most of them are only into gadgets. He said that through the GPP program student will learn how to plant vegetables and their gained knowledge can be also be implemented in their own homes.

Also present were Maricris C. Reforba, HVCDP Assistant Regional Coordinator, Renato D. Acasio, HVCDP Report Officer and Rosita C. De Lumen, Organic R & D Center in-charge, who discussed Urban Agriculture and the different techniques in maximizing the use of limited space for gardening. Also present were Municipal Agriculturists and Agricultural Technologist of Camarines Sur.



DA-AMIA Bicol hosted benchmarking, roving workshop of DA Visayas Regions, CRAO

By Zandra G. Abogado



The Adaptation, Mitigation and Initiatives in Agriculture (AMIA) of the Department of Agriculture (DA) in Bicol hosted the Benchmarking Cum Roving Workshop of Climate Resilient Agriculture Office (CRAO), and Regions 7 and 13 on August 12-16, 2024 to provide a platform for exchanging knowledge, experiences, and best practices between the participants and beneficiaries of AMIA Program in Region 5.

Over 42 AMIA Focal Person, program implementers, Agriculturists, Agricultural Technicians, Municipal and Provincial Local Government Unit representatives, farmer-beneficiaries of AMIA Village, and DA Personnel participated in the said activity.

DA CRAO Planning Officer Wendy Dunasco said that “ang AMIA gumagalaw po nationwide. Kasama natin ang dalawang rehiyon para saksihan at tignan ano ba ang meron sa mga AMIA Villages sa Region 5. Para makita rin nila kung ano yung pwede nilang ma adapt, pwede nilang gayahin at higit sa lahat ano din yung pwede nilang mabitbit sa Region nila at ano rin yung pwede nilang ibahagi sa atin.”

AMIA-Bicol showcased the AMIA Villages established by Cagbunga, Veneracion, Tampadong (CVT) Agri Resilient Farmers Organization Inc. in Pamplona, Camarines Sur; Joroan Farmers and Fisherfolks Association (JFFA) in Joroan, Tiwi, Albay; and Purok Palayan AMIA Village Dinapa Farmers Association (PPAVDFA) in Barangay Dinapa, Castilla, Sorsogon.

OIC-Regional Technical Director for Research and Regulations and AMIA-Bicol Focal Person Lorenzo Alvina emphasized that members of the community are key players in securing funds for a project and that the effort to ensure long-term success is through consistency.

“Kung may kaunti kang pera, may kaunti kang savings, may inaasahan ka sa negosyo ninyo, may masasandalan kayong kooperatiba, yun siguro ang magpapaunlad ng mga komunidad lalo na nung mga nasimulan,” he added.

During the visit to the three AMIA Villages, AMIA Bicol Assistant Focal Person Sandy Bobier presented and turned-over the AMIA Tool Kit which is intended to program implementers.

“If the PLGU or MLGU plans to expand AMIA villages in their respective municipality, this will serve as their guide kung papano ma-i-empower ang ating program implementers especially the Agricultural Extension Workers”, he added.

In Joroan, Tiwi, Albay, the participants witnessed the opening of the P4M worth Multi-Crop Processing Facility (MCPF) with P1.04M worth of processing equipment from the Integrated Rural Development Foundation, Inc. (IRDF) which will benefit the 40 farmer-members of JFFA.

The PPAVDFA in Dinapa, Castilla, Sorsogon also showed the ongoing construction of their P4M worth MCPF which will benefit the 40 farmer-members of their association. IRDF Executive Director Arze Glipo also turned-over the Business Plan and equipment worth over P805, 993 as a start-up for the association once the facility is finished.

Aside from the AMIA Villages, the group also visited the Albay Provincial Agriculture Office (APAO), Cабangan, Camalig, Albay and facilities in the DA Regional Office in San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur.

One of the participants, Eduardo M. Luspo from Region XIII, said that it was a great opportunity and exciting to participate in a benchmarking activity as he was able to gain some farming techniques and share their best practices with other farmers. Luspo added that the AMIA Villages in Bicol are different from the ones they have in their Region. “Hindi namin akalain na ganito pala dito, may mga facilities. Salamat sa AMIA, sa lahat ng impormasyon na natanggap namin. Ganito pala kalawak ang programa nila. Salamat sa DA”,-Eduardo M. Luspo,

Since 2017, the DA RFO 5 AMIA Program has established 15 AMIA Villages in the six provinces of Bicol. These villages are at various phases of implementation, and some served as models worth replication. DA RFO 5 has also piloted decision support tools such as the Climate Information Services (CIS), and Agro-climate and Advisory Portal (ACAP).



DA Bicol's Summer Youth Internship Program 2024 a success!

By Angela Mae Lafuente

The Summer Youth Internship Program (SYIP) of DA Bicol concluded this Monday, August 5, with a joyful and memorable graduation ceremony.

The SYIP was implemented by the Human Resource Management Section led by Janet Pasamba. During the graduation, Pasamba recognized the dedication and hard work of the selected students in completing the Summer Job Program.

Camille Grace Nacario, the representative of the entire batch of interns, shared her impressions and experiences in the division where she was assigned. She expressed gratitude to DA for providing the opportunity to learn and gain new experiences that they will carry into their daily lives. They learned about each other's strengths and weaknesses, and Nacario mentioned that the SYIP helped them become aware of the real world. The values of teamwork and respect are what they will bring back to their classes this year.

The interns also gave performances that added color to the occasion. The division heads and their representatives awarded certificates and simple gifts to their respective interns.

Earlier in May, approximately 400 applicants went to the Department of Agriculture to submit their requirements to be part of the Summer Youth Internship Program 2024. This program, initiated by the DA in 2016, provides students with the opportunity to serve the government and learn from various departments where they are assigned.

Due to the unexpectedly large number of applicants, they were divided into two groups, with examinations starting on May 6 and May 7. Interviews for the successful applicants were conducted on May 13. Their internship began on June 3, with a total of 22 students from various schools qualifying for the Summer Youth Internship Program 2024.

According to Lorenzo Alvina, OIC Regional Technical Director for Research and Regulations, in his opening message, the students are fortunate to receive a salary for their 45 days of stay at DA.

In her closing message, Maria Christina Campita, head of the Research Division, shared three Ps to carry with them daily to achieve their goals: Prayer, Persistence, and Purpose.



NEW MASSBA...

FROM PAGE 3

NOW THEREFORE, on joint and collective motion of the members of the Board of Directors of the New MASSBA Multi-Purpose Cooperative,

BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to express the sincere thanks and deepest gratitude of the NEW MASSBA MPC to the Department of Agriculture DA RFO5, San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur.

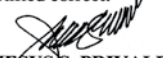
RESOLVED FINALLY, that a copy of this resolution be furnish the Department of Agriculture DA RFO5, San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur.

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED, this 16th day of August, 2024 at New MASSBA MPC office, Sagrada Familia, Minalabac, Camarines Sur.

AFFIXED hereunto our names and signatures of conformity.


ARIANE H. OLIVA
 Secretary/Clerk

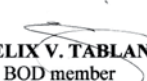
Certified correct:


JESUS S. PRIVALDOS
 Chairperson


NELSON G. QUIÑANO
 BOD member


GERARDO T. PANUGAO
 BOD member


JEAN F. CERINO
 BOD member


FELIX V. TABLANTE
 BOD member


TOMAS P. QUIÑANO
 BOD member


LEALYN MASARQUE
 BOD member


MELODY L.L. CEDILLA
 General Manager

Unlocking pili's potential to flourish from a traditional livelihood to a global commodity in Tigaon

By Annielyn L. Baleza

Nestled at the foot of Mt. Isarog, the volcanic soils of Tigaon is home to 3,778 pili trees. With 37.78-hectare of agricultural area planted with pili, pili farming and trading is one of the traditional livelihoods of about 34 farmers in the municipality.

Seventy-nine-year-old Shirley R. Sanoy, also known as the “Pili Queen of Tigaon,” has been engaged in pili consolidation and trading for over 50 years. She buys and sells fresh pili for P50 per 100 pieces from 20 farmer-suppliers in Tigaon. She owns 10 pili trees that yield an annual harvest of approximately 20,000 pili nuts. Sanoy delivers dried pili nuts to Naga City Public Market for P700 per ganta. Sanoy revealed that her highest income reached P300,000 for 300 ganta of pili nuts.

According to Lea M. Beltran, Municipal Agriculturist of the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Tigaon, due to recent price fluctuations, pili consolidators such as Sanoy are at a disadvantage. Currently, local price of dried pili nuts range from P500 to P1,200 per ganta.

“Minsan mataas, minsan mababa ang presyo pero mahalaga na maipagpatuloy ang negosyo kasi nakakatulong ito sa mga tao,” Sanoy said.

Notwithstanding this obstacle, a young couple from Brgy. Gaao in Tigaon, Camarines Sur is willing to raise the stakes to boost the pili industry both domestically and globally. The 7.3-hectare Bicoganic Farm was a pre-pandemic idea turned into reality by former Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW), Cherrylyn L. Alcazar and her partner, former seafarer Dennis Reyes. They bought the property in November 2020 and developed it into a pili farm in February 2021.

Throughout her eight years as a nanny tutor in Russia, Alcazar developed the custom of bringing confections and pili candies as souvenirs. Her employers and colleagues were very delighted

with the pili products that when she made the decision to move back to the Philippines, they stay connected and volunteered to assist her in marketing pili products in Europe.

“In 2019, I had an idea to invest in pili and sell abroad. When the pandemic came, doon talaga namin na-realize na as an OFW, hindi ka naman lifetime talaga na gusto mo sa abroad. Dapat mayroon ka ring alternative plan for your future,” Alcazar said.

Reyes coordinated with the Office of the Municipal Agriculturist in Tigaon, Camarines Sur and the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office in Pili, Camarines Sur. He also sought technical assistance from his childhood friend, Provincial High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) Coordinator Engr. Cesar Cordenete of the Albay Provincial Agriculture Office (APAO) in preparing the farm layout.

The couple participated in several seminars and trainings on proper pili propagation and good agricultural practices from DA Bicol and Agricultural Training Institute (ATI). Finally, in 2022 they were able to avail 1,200 pili seedlings from DA Bicol. They planted 900 pili seedlings to the farm and shared 300 planting materials to their neighborhood. While waiting for their pili farm to produce fruits, Alcazar and Reyes ventured in exporting pili products in partnership with Leslie Pili Products Owner Melinda A. Yee of Sorsogon City. They were able to outsource and ship four boxes of pili nuts at P1,400 per kilogram in February and July 2024. Each box contained 23 kilograms of dehydrated, honey-glazed, and pili nuts with Himalayan salt.

Recently, Alcazar and Reyes have also began the establishment of their own pili processing facility in collaboration with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). To support this plan, they started buying fresh pili from 15 pili growers in Goa, Sagñay, Tinambac, Ocampo, Iriga, and Tigaon and 20 from their neighborhood.

TO PAGE 7



DA 5 seeks hog raisers' and LGUs' cooperation as ASF recurs in some Bicol towns



By Lovella P. Guarin

San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur – The Department of Agriculture in Bicol calls for strong support and cooperation from the Local Government Units in the implementation of the Bantay ASF sa Barangay or BABay ASF program to prevent and control African Swine Fever as recurrences were reported in 12 municipalities of three provinces.

In Camarines Sur, seven towns – Baao, Pili, Nabua, Ocampo, Bula, Libmanan, Presentacion have active ASF cases that were detected from July to August 2024.

Meanwhile, in the island province of Catanduanes, the three municipalities of Caramoran, Virac and Pandan posted recurrence of ASF cases in three barangays.

In Masbate, the towns of Claveria and San Pascual have active cases that surfaced this August.

A total of 209 heads of swine have been depopulated from July to August 2024.

Meanwhile, 11 municipalities, namely: Camaligan, Cam. Sur; Labo, Daet, Mercedes, San Vicente, San Vicente, and Talisay in Camarines Norte; San Jacinto, Milagros, Mobo and San Fernando in Masbate; Donsol in Sorsogon are still red zone although it has been more than 90 days after the last positive ASF case.

These LGUs need to submit the required documents before they can be upgraded to pink zone. Zone progression from red to pink zone by the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) requires the LGUs to submit a copy of municipal/city ordinance or executive order on the adoption of BaBay ASF Program; city/municipal farmers' registry including proof of the existence of farmers' coops or associations, if there is any and RSBSA registration; summary of ASF history in the municipality including outbreak, surveillance, and disease control measures; and list of training on Swine Biosecurity attended by farmers and LGU staff.

To immediately control the recurrence of ASF in the aforementioned towns, depopulation of hogs within 500 meter radius of the ground zero was carried out by the DA Bicol and the Municipal LGU. Border control within the boundaries of the affected municipalities are strengthened by the LGUs and being monitored by the BAI - Veterinary Quarantine Service.

The abovementioned cases have already been coordinated with the concerned provincial and municipal Local Government Units for the implementation of BABAY ASF protocols and guidelines.

According to the Republic Act 7160 or the Local Government Code of 1991, "Local government units shall share with the national government the responsibility in the management and maintenance

of ecological balance within their territorial jurisdiction...these LGUs shall enjoy genuine and meaningful local autonomy to enable them to attain their fullest development as self-reliant communities and make them more effective partners in the attainment of national goals."

To ensure that decentralization contributes to the continuing improvement of the performance of local government units and the quality of community life, the national government is mandated to support the LGUs by way of technical assistance and regular monitoring.

Consumers have important role

The meat consuming public also has a vital role to play in the prevention and control of ASF as some recurrence were traced back to contaminated processed meat apprehended by the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS).

DA warns the public to 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.

Hog Raisers as first line of defense

Meanwhile, the hog raisers should be the first line of defense in the battle against ASF. The DA urges them to improve production and management practices. Practice daily or regular cleaning and disinfection of pig pens using disinfectant such as chlorine. DIY disinfectants are also proven effective such as pure vinegar, soda ash (1 kilo soda ash mixed with 25 liters of water), and bleach (1 spoon bleach dissolved in 1 liter of water). Limit visitors to the hog production area. Do not feed hogs with kitchen wastes as these might be contaminated with ASF.

In recent reports, the ASF-infected hogs did not show the usual symptoms such as red, discolored skin or skin lesions, diarrhea, vomiting, high fever, difficulty breathing, heavy discharge from the eyes and nose. Only loss of appetite was observed and immediate death after a day without food.

If any of these 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 Bicol Regional Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (RADDL) to identify the disease.



DA Bicol caps 124th CSC Month celeb with healthy workplace campaign

By Annielyn L. Baleza

Napakaimportante po ang self - love — ang alagaan natin ang sarili muna natin, ang ating kalusugan para maalagaan natin ang bayan. A successful and well-developed Philippines starts with a healthy nation. Dapat ang bawat Pilipino mismo ay malusog. Ang bawat Pilipino mismo, kayang alagaan ang sarili. Hindi pabigat sa iba, hindi rin tayo pabigat sa sarili. The best person to look after you is you.”

This was underscored by Dr. Liza P. Palencia, nephrologist based in Daet, Camarines Norte and member of the Philippine Society of Nephrology-Bicol Chapter during the Seminar on Healthy Workplace conducted by the Department of Agriculture (DA) Regional Field Office Bicol on September 30, 2024. About 80 DA Bicol employees attended the seminar which capped the agency’s 124th Civil Service Month celebration.

According to DA Bicol Administrative and Finance Division OIC-Chief Imelda Acompañado, the Seminar on Healthy Workplace is also designed to support the implementation of the Department of Health Bicol Center for Health Development’s (DOH-CHD) Healthy Workplace Program and as part of the service continuity plan of the office to ensure healthy workforce and safe workplace. The program was launched in collaboration with the Civil Service Commission (CSC) Regional Office V and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) on August 16, 2024 in Legazpi City.

The activity commenced with a Zumba followed by Palencia’s discussion on Prevention and Management of Kidney Diseases. She highlighted the impact of kidney failure on patients’ physical, mental, and social well-being. Palencia also stressed the importance of kidney health awareness, early identification, screening and diagnosis, as well as kidney health partnership, kidney supportive care, and regular checkups. She shared the Eight Golden Rules to Prevent and Manage Kidney Diseases. These include doing regular exercise, drinking adequate water, quitting smoking, avoiding pain reliever abuse, and having regular checkups. She also announced that Bicol Medical Center (BMC) has a Charity Clinic for patients with renal diseases every Monday, Tuesday, and Friday.

Meanwhile, Dr. Monrey Isaiah Mancilla, Medical Officer IV of DOH-CHD, lectured on Healthy Workplaces. He cited the Department of Health’s 8-Point Action Agenda to achieve its vision for the Health Sector: Filipinos to be among the healthiest people in Asia by 2040 through better health outcomes, stronger health systems, and access to all levels of care.

“Para masabi natin na tayo ay malusog, dapat po meron tayong kumpletong physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely ‘yung absence lang po ng disease or infirmity,” Mancilla said.

He emphasized the relationship of health and work. He mentioned that working for 40 hours a week is equivalent to spending one-fourth of one’s life in the workplace weekly. Thus, if a worker lacks awareness and has unhealthy behavior, socio-economic, and biophysical activities, being in an unhealthy workplace puts him more at risk to disease, disability, and death. On the contrary, a worker with healthy behavior as well as socio-economic and biophysical activities in a healthy workplace will likely enjoy health and wellness. He also enumerated the DOH’s seven priority areas under its Universal Health Care (UHC) program namely diet and exercise, environmental health, vaccines and immunization, substance use, mental health, sexual and reproductive health, and violence and injury prevention.

In her message, DA Bicol OIC-Regional Technical Director (RTD) for Operations Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez commended the initiative saying “With the busy schedule, we sometimes disregard health topics and health issues... This is very timely and very relevant. We really need this in our workplace. Lagi kaming output-oriented, may mga targets, may timelines. Totoo po talaga na ‘Health is wealth.’ Maraming salamat po kasi this is one way of saving our lives.”

DA Bicol OIC RTD for Research and Regulations Lorenzo Alvina encouraged all the participants to observe a healthy diet, exercise regularly, get adequate sleep, and reduce stress.

“I hope huwag nating pakinggan lang ‘yung lecture but we need to really change the way we live,” he said. He also urged the Management and the DA Employees Association (DAEA) to develop a sustainable program that will promote a healthy lifestyle among employees.

The Philippine Statistics Authority Integrated Survey on Labor and Employment in 2017 shows that back pain, essential hypertension, and neck-shoulder pain are the top three occupational diseases in the country. According to reports from the DOH’s Field Health Services Information System in January 2022, the top causes of mortality in the Philippines are ischemic heart diseases, cerebrovascular diseases, and COVID-19. Acute respiratory infections, hypertension, and animal bites rank among the leading causes of morbidity.

The DOH, DOLE, and CSC issued Joint Administrative Order 2023-0001 or the National Policy on the Promotion of Healthy Workplace on April 5, 2023. It defines a healthy workplace as one in which the workers and managers collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote worker health, safety, and well-being, and workplace sustainability.

RAFC Bicol commemorates the 2024 Nutrition Month Celebration with an Orientation on Nutritional Value cum Feeding for Agta-Tabangnon Children of Tigaon, Cam. Sur

By Jonnah Kriz P. Ravago

TIGAON, CAMARINES SUR - The Regional Agricultural and Fishery Council (RAFC) Bicol thru its Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Sectoral Committee successfully sponsored a community outreach activity last July 18, 2024 at the Eco Park of Brgy. Coyaoyao of this municipality.

This event showed the council's support to the 2024 Nutrition Month celebration with the theme "Sa PPAN: Sama-sama sa Nutrisyong Sapat Para sa Lahat!" (Together in the Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition: Ensuring Adequate Nutrition for All!), emphasizing the importance of nutritional education and support for vulnerable communities.

The Agta-Tabangnon Tribe called Agta Kami extended a warm and heartfelt welcome to the visiting team, fostering an atmosphere of genuine hospitality. With smiles on their faces, Agta-Tabangnon children lined up to present handpicked flowers to the visitors, symbolizing their appreciation and joy. The tribe also delighted the guests with a beautiful serenade, enriching the welcoming tribute with their exceptional musical talents.

Following the warm reception, RAFC Bicol organized a series of lively parlor games that engaged children and teenagers from the tribe. These activities were meticulously designed to be both engaging and enjoyable, fostering a sense of community and camaraderie among the participants. Parlor games added joy to the community. Prizes in kind were awarded to the winners, adding an excitement to the event.

Rebecca S. Purisima, Chairperson of the RAFC GESI Sectoral Committee, in her opening remarks, underscored the importance of supporting the Indigenous People (IP) community, emphasizing the need for inclusive initiatives that promote their well-being and development.

As part of the activity, the team distributed malunggay seedlings, assorted vegetable seeds, and garden tools generously provided by

the Department of Agriculture. These resources aim to encourage sustainable gardening practices within the community.

Aloha Gigi I. Bañaria, the Chief of PMED, DA-RFO 5 and Regional Executive Officer of RAFC Bicol, in her inspirational message underscored the importance of the initiative, emphasizing its critical role in enhancing the lives of the Agta-Tabangnon community. Bañaria also shared insights into future projects by the Department of Agriculture (DA) aimed at benefiting the Indigenous Peoples (IP) community, highlighting the department's ongoing dedication to their progress through its Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran ng Kababayang Katutubo (4Ks) Program led by Focal Person Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez. Additionally, Bañaria announced the celebration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People on August 9. This day is dedicated to honoring and recognizing the contributions of Indigenous Peoples globally. She emphasized the importance of acknowledging and celebrating the rich cultural heritage and contributions of Indigenous communities, reinforcing the event's commitment to promoting awareness and support for Indigenous Peoples.

Furthermore, Bañaria introduced the potential for a collaborative partnership of DA and RAFC Bicol with the Hansel and Gretel Foundation Inc., a renowned non-profit organization dedicated to offering free education to children, youth, adults, and cultural minorities. This proposed alliance seeks to uplift marginalized communities through food production and livelihood training to help empower this marginalized group.

In response to this promising initiative, Carmen I. Dapilos, President of the Hansel and Gretel Foundation Inc., expressed her profound gratitude to RAFC Bicol for selecting their organization as the beneficiary of the outreach activity. She conveyed heartfelt appreciation for the recognition and support, emphasizing the significant impact this collaboration would have in advancing their shared goals of providing quality education and fostering



TO PAGE 19

DA holds vaccination drive to celebrate World Rabies Day



By Angela Mae Lafuente



I RIGA CITY – The Department of Agriculture in Bicol through the Regulatory Division in collaboration with the Iriga City Veterinary Office celebrated the World Rabies Day 2024 at CDRRMO Covered Court, Sta. Cruz Sur, Iriga City on September 26, 2024.

Veterinarians of the DA Regulatory Division, LGU Iriga City; CBSUA College of Vet Med, AFP, BCAVPA (Bicol Companion Animal Veterinary Practitioners Association), volunteer doctors, and volunteers from private clinics vaccinated and dewormed over 700 dogs and cats for anti-rabies. Furthermore, over 210 of these animals offered free spaying and neutering services.

“Sa datos po ng City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (CDRRMO) mula 2023-2024 nananatiling pangalawa sa pangunahing rason ng aksidente sa motorsiklo ang mga galang aso,” said Dr. Mark Kevin Badiola, Acting City Veterinarian. “Sa datos naman ng City Health Office (CHO), umaabot sa mahigit 2,000 ang nakakagat ng aso at pusa kada taon. Kung susumihin ang gastos talo ang gobyerno. Umakyat naman sa 18 positibong kaso ng rabis ngayong 2024 mula sa dating pito lamang noong

2023. Sa kabila ng maraming programa na ating isinasagawa, ang panganib na sakit na rabis at problemang dulot ng stray animal o galang aso ay nananatili,” Badiola stressed.

Meanwhile, Rosita Imperial, Chief of Regulatory Division said that at the Regional Level Iriga City has the highest rabies cases in Bicol. “Our theme, breaking rabies boundaries not only in terms of rabies cases but breaking rabies boundaries between sectors highlights the vital role of one health approach. One health approach involves a joint action across sectors towards eradication of rabies. Breaking rabies boundaries also emphasizes cooperation and collaboration among our stakeholders both the local, national and even the international community - the World Health Organization (WHO). Breaking rabies boundaries of limited public knowledge, and also breaking the boundaries of advocacy increases awareness about rabies,” Imperial added.

Vice-Mayor Edsel S. Dimaiwat, also expressed his gratitude to DA RFO V for bringing the World Rabies Day in their City for the first time. “The City of Iriga has an existing Dog Pounding Ordinance na every now and then yung mga taga DA, and our vets, may schedule dates yan nanghuhuli yan ng mga stray dogs at yan po ay dinadala sa dog-pounding area namin. Indeed, today’s activity will help you na ang mga pet niyo ay mabakunahan ng anti-rabies, sa ngayon po nagkakaubusan ng vaccine sa anti-rabies, even in the pharmaceutical here in Iriga,” he said.

“Sana maging responsible pet owners tayo at sana po ay iwasan makakagat at sana maturuan ng anti-rabies ang inyong mga alagang mga animals,” he added.

In conclusion, the collaboration with private sponsors and trade partners—such as Iriga Animal Clinic, Vetzone Animal Clinic, Nutrichunks, Universal Robina Corporation-AIG, UNAHCO, St. Roch Animal Bite Center, RabVaxx Animal Bite Center, St. Jude Animal Bite Center, and VAST Agro—demonstrates a strong commitment to animal welfare and community support.



DA-PRDP turns over the P43.9M double-A slaughterhouse in Buhi, Camarines sur

By Shaira Enimedez

Buhi, Camarines Sur – Regional Executive Director and Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) Bicol Project Director Rodel Tornilla led the turnover of the second AA slaughterhouse funded by the DA-PRDP. This PhP43.9M I-BUILD subproject financed by the World Bank was also the second PRDP-funded slaughterhouse in the Philippines.

In his message, Director Tornilla emphasized the importance of having a slaughterhouse in combating the African Swine Fever (ASF) in the Bicol region. He also gave updates on the status of ASF in the Rinconada area where only the municipalities of Buhi, Balatan, and Bato were not affected by the ASF.

“Ang construction ng AA slaughterhouse ay makakatulong upang ma-control at mapuksa na natin and ASF dito sa Rinconada area at maging sa Bicol Region. Our slaughterhouse guarantees the

once double-A accredited po ang ating slaughterhouse you can transport your meat anywhere in the Philippines”, he said.

In his acceptance speech, Mayor Rey Lacoste, thanked the DA-PRDP and the NMIS. “Ito ay isang grant na ibinigay po sa atin with the corresponding equity ng lokal na gobyerno”, he said

The municipal government of Buhi put up 10 percent equity to the total construction cost amounting to PhP4.3 million.

Also, According to Mayor Lacoste, the LGU is aiming to improve the slaughterhouse through innovations with the help of the Department of Agriculture (DA). They are also planning to propose a cold storage facility.

The construction of the facility started on October 17, 2022 and it was completed on January 30, 2024. The double-A



safety and cleanliness of meat. Mahalaga po ito sa food safety and public health”, Tornilla said.

According to Director Fidel Libao, PRDP South Luzon Project Director, through this project it will not only ensure the food security and safety of the hog industry, but also generate more income in the community especially in the municipality of Buhi.

“Ang atin pong tungkulin ay magkaroon ng food secured Philippines, magkaroon po ng food safety at maunlad na pamayanan lalo po sa ngalan ng pagsasaka”, he said.

Dr. Roberto Umali, National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) Deputy Project Director, was grateful to the municipality of Buhi for proposing the project and accepting the challenges during its planning and construction phase. He added that he will monitor and facilitate the documents to expedite the issuance of license to operate as a double-A NMIS slaughterhouse.

“Hangad po naming na mabigyan ng safe at malinis na karneng kakainin ang mga tao o consumers dito sa Bicol region and

slaughterhouse will benefit 1,365 livestock raisers, over 20 meat vendors, and other establishments and businesses. The project will benefit a total of over 77,000 individuals or more than 16,500 households.

Located in Zone 1, Brgy, San Rafael, the lot was purchased by the Municipal Government of Buhi with an area of 3,000 square meters located 4.5-kilometers from the town center where the commercial establishments such as the public market and other commercial stores are located.

Also present during the inauguration were PRDP Bicol Deputy Project Director Adelina Losa; Dr. Alex Templonuevo, NMIS Bicol Regional Technical Director; NMIS Bicol Meat Inspector III and Infrastructure Focal Person Antonio Suarez; Engr. Teodoro Eleda, PRDP Bicol I-BUILD Component Head; Project Support Office (PSO) South Luzon staff; Regional Project Support Office (RPCO) 5 staff; Vice-Mayor Jose Alfred Balagot; Dr. Ely Yapan, MPMIU Head; Members of Sangguniang Bayan ng Buhi; and livestock farmers. (Shaira Enimedez, PRDP Bicol InfoAce)

Photo Credits: Annielyn Baleza and Shaira Camille Enimedez, PRDP Bicol InfoACE



Young Sorsogon farmer's journey in Vermicast farming

By Nonie Lyn Nuñez

In the agricultural community of Bulusan, Sorsogon, Gil Malines, a 23-year-old member of San Roque Natural Farming Association (SRNFA), a Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program Phase 2-assisted organization, is making waves in the local agriculture industry.

Despite facing financial challenges, the young farmer has dedicated himself to promoting sustainable farming practices. This endeavor was well supplemented as his association was selected as Organic Agriculture production package beneficiaries of the SAAD Program Phase 2 in 2023 – having undergone various training on organic farming practices throughout the group's two-year tenure in the program.

Gil's journey into agriculture began at a young age, inspired by his father's love for the practice. Growing up on their farm, he learned the intricacies of farming and developed a deep appreciation for the industry. His passion for agriculture grew stronger as he pursued a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Technology.

For him, agriculture is more than just a livelihood; it's a way to contribute to the sustainability of his community. He believes that encouraging younger generations to embrace farming can ensure a secure future for their families and the environment.

One of Malines' significant contributions to sustainable agriculture has been his work with vermiculture. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he sought a safe and effective way to fertilize his vegetable and herb garden. After extensive research, he discovered vermiculture and decided to try it.



With his savings, Gil purchased African Night Crawler worms, built a worm bin, and began producing organic fertilizer. Despite the initial investment of Php 8,000, he persevered and eventually expanded his vermiculture operation.

Balancing his studies with his farming endeavors has been a significant challenge for Gil. However, his unwavering determination and passion for agriculture have kept him motivated. He has become a respected member of the SRNFA, actively sharing his knowledge and ideas with other farmers.

In 2023, Gil participated in the Young Farmers Challenge and emerged victorious in the mushroom and vermicast production categories. This achievement provided him with opportunities to attend training programs and seminars, further enhancing his agricultural skills.

Gil's motivation stems from a desire to inspire younger generations to embrace agriculture. He believes that by showcasing the potential of sustainable farming practices, he can encourage more young people to pursue careers in the industry.

"Para sa mga kapwa ko Kabataan, wag po sana natin maliitin ang agrikultura dahil kagaya ko, marami ang naitulong nito saakin. Alam kong kapag ito'y inyong tinangkilik, nasisisiguro ko na mapapaganda din ang inyong buhay at mas uunlad ang ating bayan," he said.

(To my fellow youth, do not underestimate the potential of agriculture. Like me, it has provided me with countless opportunities and has been invaluable to my agricultural pursuits. Agriculture can offer you a better life and contribute significantly to the development of your community.)

With a vision for a thriving agricultural community, Gil aims to establish his farm, expand his product offerings, and support other farmers in Bulusan. His unwavering commitment to sustainable agriculture and his leadership in the SRNFA make him a rising star in the industry.

The SAAD Bicol Program's continued support for Gil and other young farmers is instrumental in empowering them to reach their full potential and contribute to the development of their agricultural communities.

Writer: Nonie Lyn M. Nuñez, DA-SAAD Bicol Information Officer



RAFC Bicol holds 1st Bicol Youth Day

By Angela Mae Lafuente

BINANUAANAN NORTE, PILI, CAMARINES SUR - The 1st Regional Agricultural Fishery Council (RAFC) Bicol Youth Day with the theme “From Click to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development” was held at Unica’s Haven Agricultural Farm this municipality. It aims to highlight and foster the role of the youth in advancing sustainable agricultural and fishery practices through digital innovation.

Aloha Gigi Bañaria, Chief of PMED and RAFC Bicol Regional Executive Officer, acknowledged the presence of the 4H youths and the members of FVLP coming from different provinces. She also emphasized the adaptation of digitalization in farming.

“Digitalization is in na talaga. For sustainable development, for advanced technologies. There is digitalization and even in the agri-center we’re adapting digital agriculture”, she said.

Rudy Mostar, President of International Farm Youth Exchange Philippines encouraged the youth to continue what they have started. “Hopefully, sana pagdating ng panahon na every time

may activity and hindi na kayo youth, andyan pa rin kayo because dapat mai-continue yung 4H or youth not only 4H.” He also mentioned that the government offers a lot of grants.

Meanwhile, in the segment #GettingToKnowYOUthinAgriculture, Christian T.R. Tosoc, Digital Farmers Program Focal Person from the Agricultural Training Institute – Regional Training Center 5, discussed the Digital Farmers Program. On the other hand, Carine O. Virtus, Youth Farmers Challenge Awardee from Bula, Camarines Sur, presented Digital Agriculture and also shared her experiences and how she won in the Young Farmers Challenge.

The 1st RAFC Bicol Youth Day was an exceptional opportunity to engage the youth in meaningful discussions about digital tools and sustainable practices in agriculture and fisheries. By embracing digital pathways, the event seeks to empower the next generation to contribute to sustainable agricultural development in the region. The event was conducted by the RAFC Bicol on August 12, 2024.

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empowerment within marginalized communities. In a gesture of thanks, she also awarded a certificate of appreciation to RAFC Bicol, acknowledging their commitment to uplifting and supporting underserved populations through meaningful partnerships. She said that among NGAs, the DA has been very supportive to her foundation in providing assistance to this Agta Tabangnon community like farm animals, vegetable seeds and others.

As a gesture of gratitude, the Agta-Tabangnon tribe prepared a captivating intermission performance, featuring traditional tribal rites, dances, and original songs. These performances not only highlighted their creativity and talent but also showcased the rich cultural heritage of the Agta-Tabangnon tribe. Through their vibrant and heartfelt expressions, the tribe offered a profound glimpse into their unique traditions and artistic legacy, further enriching the event with their cultural depth and diversity.

The program featured an orientation on the nutritional value of various foods, aimed at educating the children and their families about making healthier dietary choices. Ms. Purisima, a national

outstanding rural woman and a Tribal Chieftain of Tinawagan Agta Tabangnon in same municipality, provided insights into the essential nutrients required for growth and development, along with practical tips on incorporating these nutrients into everyday meals. Following the orientation, a feeding activity was conducted, where nutritious meals were distributed to the children.

Concluding the outreach activity, Marion Noceda, Project Development Officer I and 4Ks Technical Staff, delivered the closing remarks. She extended heartfelt thanks to the entire community for their participation and support in making the event a success. Ms. Noceda also announced that the community could look forward to future initiatives designed to further empower Indigenous Peoples (IP) communities, reinforcing the ongoing commitment to their growth and development.

Through such initiative, the RAFC Bicol and the GESI Sectoral Committee continue to promote health and well-being of the Agta-Tabangnon Community. *(Jonah Kriz P. Ravago, DA- PMED 5)*

DA Bicol to roll out biofertilizer for clustered rice farms

By Lovella P. Guarin

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR – The Department of Agriculture in Bicol is gearing for the roll out of biofertilizer following the successful conduct of Foliar Fertilizer and Biofertilizer Technology Demonstration Derby and Field Day inside the DA Compound on July 5, 2024.

The participants invited to the biofertilizer field day were Municipal Agriculturists and LGU Technician as well as Local Farmer Technicians from the mainland provinces. Also present were representatives from FPA, NIA and PhilRice.

Earl Vincent Vegas, Rice Program focal person and OIC Chief of the Field Operations Division said that the techno demo aimed to showcase the potential of biofertilizers as alternative to synthetic fertilizers.

“Among the factors that could help increase agricultural productivity is the capacity of the soil to provide nutrients that area essential for plants growth. However, continuous cropping can deplete the soil’s nutrients leading to reduction in crop yield. The use of biofertilizers is seen to address soil degradation,” Vegas added.

It could also enhance soil fertility, as biofertilizers are “substances containing variety of microbes having the capacity to enhance plant nutrient uptake by colonizing the rhizosphere and make the nutrients easily accessible to plants root hairs.” Biofertilizers are also known for its cost effectiveness and can therefore be a better alternative to synthetic fertilizers.

“These biofertilizers are already available in the market, and it is necessary to assess their efficacy through this technology demonstration,” said Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, OIC Regional Technical Director for Operations in her welcome message.

Among the Biofertilizer products used in the techno demo and displayed in the exhibit booths during the plenary sessions were: Avatar Bio Inoculant fertilizer by Aldiz, Inc.; Adaboost by Ada Manufacturing Corp.; Bio N by Agri Specialist Inc.; Vital N by Allied Botanical Corp.; Nitroprotek Synergy by Scuderia Marketing;

BioSpark Trichoderma by Gemini Agri Farm Solutions Corporation; and EMAS by Global Green Organic Fertilizer, Inc.

To determine the yield and growth performance of rice using different biofertilizer and foliar fertilizer that are available in the market, the Rice Program used two treatments in the techno demo: Treatment 1 – 50% dose of recommended fertilizer based on Rice Crop Manager + biofertilizer and Treatment 2 Biofertilizer only. The area for treatment was approximately 343 square meters. The rice variety used was S6003 planted on March 22, 2024.

Seven biofertilizer products and 15 foliar fertilizer products were used in the techno demo.

As early as 6:00 AM the participants toured the 2.4 hectare techno demo area to select the top 3 performing biofertilizer and foliar products under the two treatments.

Meanwhile, Alex Atian, technical staff of Rice Program discussed the Hybrid Rice Cluster Farms requirements. He said that a Farmers Cooperative and Association (FCA) that is registered with CDA, DOLE or SEC for at least one year and whose members are registered in the RSBSA may avail of the interventions such as hybrid rice seeds and biofertilizers, fertilizer discount vouchers and other interventions from Rice Program. The hybrid rice seed companies are also involved in the monitoring and provision of package of technology of their products and specially for aftersales services to maximize the potential yield of their respective varieties. He added that hybrid rice cluster should be a minimum of 100 hectares which are in close proximity and whose farmers perform similar production activities. These FCA clusters may be involved in four different levels: Level 1) production and processing of fresh palay; Level 2) trading of milled rice; Level 3) Value adding, dry palay and milled rice trading; and Level 4) seed production or the FCA will act as service provider working across the value chain.

For CY 2024, the DA Bicol Rice Program targets to distribute biofertilizer to cover 66,154 hectares of rice areas particularly in clustered areas in the whole region.



USAPANG AGRIKULTURA

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
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