



UMAsenso

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

Pres. Marcos and Sec. Kiko lead the PAFF distribution to 5,000 farmers of Cam. Sur



By Lovella P. Guarin

PILI, CAMARINES SUR – President Ferdinand Bongbong Marcos, Jr. together with his cabinet secretaries led by Department of Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. personally handed over the cash assistance dubbed as Presidential Assistance to Farmers, Fisherfolk and Families (PAFF) for some 5,000 TS Kristine-stricken farmers from Camarines Sur on November 6, 2024.

In his speech Pres. Marcos reiterated his directives to the government agencies to come up with integrated and future proof plans to combat climate change. “Umaasa ako na sa tulong at suportang iniaabot namin sainyo ngayon, kayo ay

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TS Kristine-affected farmers, fisherfolk in Albay receive P50M-worth cash assistance

By Annielyn L. Baleza



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DA Bicol fast tracks distribution of interventions to typhoon-hit farmers

By Lovella P. Guarin



SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR – To accelerate Bicol agriculture sector’s recovery from the devastation caused by the successive super typhoons Kristine and Pepito, the Department of Agriculture in Bicol hastens distribution of interventions for the farmers in the six provinces.

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DA Bicol turns over 22 units 4-wheel drive tractors to Bicol FCAs this Christmas

By Lovella P. Guarin



SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR – Twelve Farmers’ Cooperative and Associations (FCAs) from Camarines Sur received 38 horsepower and 95 horsepower four-wheel drive tractors from Rice Program and Corn Program, respectively, as CY 2024 draws to a close. Another 10 units will be delivered to recipient FCAs in Albay, Cam. Norte, Masbate and Sorsogon.

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UMASENSO EDITORIAL STAFF

LOVELLA P. GUARIN

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ANNIELYN L. BALEZA

VINCENT EMIL A. PASUMBAL

ZANDRA G. ABOGADO

ANGELA MAE LAFUENTE

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EDUARDO D. COLLANTES JR.

RAMON C. ADVERSARIO JR.

HERMITO ANTONIO T. PRIVALDOS

PHOTOGRAPHERS

ROGER A. BANDOJO

LAYOUT ARTIST

CECILE G. DELMIGUEZ

CIRCULATION

ADVISERS:

RODEL P. TORNILLA, MABE

Regional Executive Director

MARY GRACE DP. RODRIGUEZ, PhD

OIC-Regional Technical Director for Operations

LORENZO L. ALVINA

*OIC-Regional Technical Director for
Research and Regulations*

EDITORIAL

More rice farmers to benefit with RCEF extension and fund augmentation

With the approval and signing of RA 12078 “An Act Amending Republic Act No. 8178 or the Agricultural Tariffication Act” by president Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. on December 9, 2024, the Rice Tariffication Law will be extended until 2031 while the nationwide annual allocation for the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) will increase from P10 B to P30 B. This will be sourced from all tariffs collected from the importation of rice.

About P6B will be allotted to providing high quality seeds, P9B will go to farm mechanization, while P15B will be used for extension and training programs, cash assistance distribution and establishment of solar-powered irrigation systems, and water impounding projects.

The DA Bicol is urging more farmers cooperatives and associations (FCAs) to apply for RCEF Accreditation at the regional office to qualify as eligible beneficiaries of RCEF interventions such as free farm machineries from PhilMech, inbred rice seeds from PhilRice, credit through the LandBank of the Philippines, extension services from the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), TESDA, PhilMech and PhilRice.

Rice farmers will surely be happy with this development as another amendment to the law was the increase of the Rice Farmers Financial Assistance (RFFA) cash assistance from P5,000 to P7,000.

The RFFA is a financial assistance designed to support Filipino rice farmers in the midst of increasing costs of farm inputs such as fertilizer and pesticides, and to sustain their production despite the threat of calamities and climate change like El Nino and La Nina. But only the RSBSA – registered rice farmers whose rice areas were 2-hectares and below are qualified for the RFFA.

Starting 2021, hundreds of thousands of farmers were given the cash assistance through the collaboration of the Department of Agriculture, Land Bank of the Philippines, Development Bank of the Philippines, the USSC and the provincial and municipal local government units.

About 88,086 rice farmers were able to get the RFFA cash assistance in CY 2021; some 121,103 rice farmers in CY 2022; and 156,794 rice farmers in 2023 get the P5,000 cash assistance.

For the year 2024, the Department of Agriculture in Bicol targets to provide the increased amount of P7,000 to some 186,309 rice farmers from all over the Bicol Region.

It is interesting to note that the number of RFFA beneficiaries from all the provinces in Bicol has increased from 2021. It is hoped that this unconditional cash assistance – though once a year – may help our farmers in their daily family expenses.

DA, agri-fishery stakeholders reaffirm shared commitment to ensure Bicol's food security

By Annielyn L. Baleza

"Gabos po kita may taya. Sabi ngani po kan satuyang presidente, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., ini po na mga issues na inaatubang kan agriculture and fisheries, gabos po kaipuhan whole-of-nation approach. Ibig sabihon, gabos kita, kaipuhan na magtao nin suporta, gabos kita kaipuhan magtao nin oras para po masolusyunan ining mga issues na ini."

This was underscored by Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary for Operations U-Nichols A. Manalo during the Regional Food Security Summit 2024 held in Albay Farmers' Bounty Village in Camalig, Albay on November 25, 2024.

Over 200 agri-fishery stakeholders from the local government units, national government agencies, farmers, fisherfolk, private sector representatives, agriculture and fishery councils, and civil society organizations attended the event which aimed to discuss urgent issues and concerns of the agriculture and fisheries sector. The summit was initiated by the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Bicol Regional Development Council (RDC), in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture (DA), National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), to identify the gaps and interventions on supply and demand of agricultural and fisheries commodities, determine sufficiency levels, and secure commitment of stakeholders in ensuring food security in Bicol region.

NEDA Bicol Regional Director and RDC Vice-Chairperson Edna Cynthia S. Berces, in behalf of the Bicol RDC Bicol Chairperson Gov. Ricarte R. Padilla, said that the summit is not merely a platform for discussion, but a call to action.

"We must translate our collective knowledge and insights into concrete steps, into tangible commitments that will secure the future of our food systems," she emphasized.

Anna Liz B. Bellen of NEDA Region 5, oriented the participants on the highlights of the Regional Development Plan 2023 to 2028 with emphasis on agriculture as well as the strategies to modernize agriculture and agribusiness as stated in Chapter 7 of the RDP 2023 to 2028. She also introduced the National Innovation Agenda and Strategy Document (NIASD) 2023 to 2032, particularly the third innovation priority area: food and agribusiness.

"Food security is a condition where all individuals have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs for an active and healthy lifestyle," she said.

DA Bicol Agricultural Program Coordinating Officer (APCO) for Albay and Sorsogon Florentino D. Ubalde Jr., who represented Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla, and BFAR Director Ariel Pioquinto shared an overview of the Bicol Agriculture and Food Security Situation in terms of agriculture and fisheries, respectively.

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RODEL P. TORNILLA
Regional Executive Director
DA Regional Field Office 5
San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur

Attention: **BERNADETTE DELOS SANTOS**
RAFC 5 Chairperson and Farmer Regional Director

Dear Regional Executive Director Tornilla,

On behalf of the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), we extend our sincerest gratitude for your invaluable participation in our 50th Founding Anniversary Celebration held last January 7, 2025.

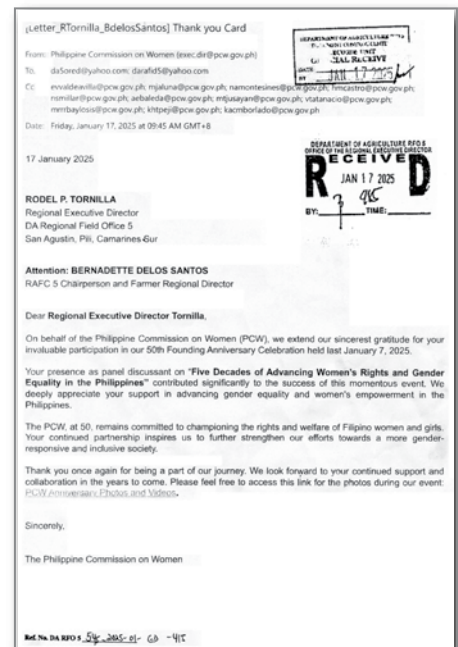
Your presence as panel discussant on "**Five Decades of Advancing Women's Rights and Gender Equality in the Philippines**" contributed significantly to the success of this momentous event. We deeply appreciate your support in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the Philippines.

The PCW, at 50, remains committed to championing the rights and welfare of Filipino women and girls. Your continued partnership inspires us to further strengthen our efforts towards a more gender-responsive and inclusive society.

Thank you once again for being a part of our journey. We look forward to your continued support and collaboration in the years to come. Please feel free to access this link for the photos during our event: [PCW Anniversary Photos and Videos](#).

Sincerely,

The Philippine Commission on Women



HVCDP honors top-performing AEWs, BLGUs at 3rd High Value Crops Achievers and Gulayan sa Barangay Best Implementers Awarding Ceremony

By Annielyn L. Baleza

Three agricultural extension workers (AEWs) and three barangay local government units in Bicol were recognized by the Department of Agriculture High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) in collaboration with the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) for their exemplary contributions to the HVC industry during the 3rd HVC Achievers Award (HVCAA) and Gulayan sa Barangay Best Implementers Awarding Ceremony held in the DA Compound in Pili, Camarines Sur.

At the municipal level, eight HVCDP coordinators received the HVC Achievers Award. Four of the awardees hailed from Camarines Sur: Alvin Alvaro of the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Naga City, Sienna Sombrero of LGU-Tigaon, Dr. Irma Intia of LGU-Libmanan, and Engr. Rommel Nacario of LGU-Pili. Two winners were from Albay: Maricris Bernardino, HVCDP Coordinator of LGU-Polangui and Engr. Ailine Llagas, HVCDP Coordinator of LGU-Daraga. Nerissa Villaluz, Municipal HVCDP Coordinator of Daet, Camarines Norte and Mario Asuncion, HVCDP Coordinator of Virac, Catanduanes, also earned the award.

The HVCAA Hall of Fame Award was given to five HVC achievers: Sombrero, Intia, Nacario, Bernardino, and Asuncion. The award was conferred upon AEWs who have received the HVCAA for three consecutive years.

Each of the HVC Achievers received a cash prize worth P20,000, a plaque of recognition, and various agricultural inputs including one portable sprayer, three sets of garden tools, 1 unit of wheelbarrow, five sacks of organic fertilizers, and 100 packs of assorted seeds while the HVCAA Hall of Famers received a cash prize worth P50,000 and one unit of brushcutter in addition to their agricultural input prizes.

At the provincial level, the HVCAA was given to Engr. Cesar Cordenete Jr., Provincial HVCDP Coordinator of the Province of Albay and Marilyn Puatu, Provincial HVCDP Coordinator of the Province of Camarines Norte. They also received a cash prize worth P20,000, a plaque of recognition, and various agricultural inputs including one portable sprayer, three sets of garden tools, 1 unit of wheelbarrow, five sacks of organic fertilizers, and 100 packs of assorted seeds.

Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez
OIC Regional Technical Director for Operations
and DA Bicol HVCDP Regional Coordinator

DA HVCDP also recognized the Best Implementers of the Gulayan sa Barangay. Brgy. Paulba, Ligao City, Albay won third place while Brgy. Asuncion, Viga, Catanduanes bagged the second place. They received P30,000, P50,000 as well as agricultural inputs worth a total of P48,970 and P72,235, respectively. Brgy. San Roque, Bacon District, Sorsogon got the first place. Brgy. Captain Rolfo Dogillo together with other barangay officials and Provincial Agriculturist Dr. Maria Teresa V. Destura received P100,000 as well as agricultural inputs worth a total of P115,970.

DA Bicol also acknowledged the PLGU-Camarines Norte's adoption and approval of Provincial Ordinance No. 24-2024. An Ordinance Institutionalizing Gulayan sa Barangay Program in the Province of Camarines Norte also known as the "Gulayan sa Barangay Ordinance." As stipulated in the ordinance, the provincial government shall allocate P1.2 million to the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist headed by Engr. Almirante A. Abad to reinforce GSB program for FY 2025 and may increase yearly.

In his message, Rodel P. Tornilla, DA Bicol Regional Executive Director, represented by Lorenzo L. Alvina, OIC RTD for Research and Regulations, thanked the AEWs, provincial, municipal and city agriculturists, and partner local government units for their support to the DA's HVCDP. He also underscored the contribution of HVCDP, particularly the Gulayan sa Barangay, in promoting the importance of food security and having emergency food reserves in the rural areas especially during times of calamities.

"Your laudable contribution to food security in your community is worthy of emulation. These are small steps towards ensuring that all Bicolanos will have access to safe and nutritious food. Always bear in mind that the Department of Agriculture is ever ready to support your endeavors towards increased agricultural productivity and profitability upang sabay-sabay po nating makamit ang masaganang agrikultura at maunlad na ekonomiya," he said.

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Research Division recognizes outstanding Researches

By Vincent Emil A. Pasumbal

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR– The Department of Agriculture (DA) Bicol Research Division recently concluded its 34th In-House Research and Development Review, recognizing outstanding research projects and researchers.

Nine completed researches vied for the Best Paper Awards as well as the Best Poster award. The event was held at Lanuza Hall, DA Compound on December 17-18, 2024.

The In-house Review is an annual undertaking of the Research Division as the center for the conduct and implementation of agricultural research in the region. Headed by Dr. Maria Christina F. Campita the Research Division oversees eight Research Outreach Stations (ROSeS). According to her, the In-house Review is being conducted to ensure that the researches address the needs of their intended beneficiaries. The review also serves as a critical platform for assessing and evaluating the completed projects.

The Best Paper award was garnered by the research entitled “Growth and Yield Performance of Queen Pineapple using Different Rates and Combinations of Vermicast, Chicken Dung, Foliar Fertilizer, and Organic Concoctions in Organic Production System” by researchers Eula D. Rada, Jyne E. Ramos, Jasmin M. Dacillo et.al of Cam. Norte Lowland Research Station (CNLRRS). This groundbreaking research has the potential to revolutionize pineapple



farming practices in the region. The same team also received the Best Poster award, highlighting the exceptional quality of their work. They received ₱10,000 cash prize for Best Paper award, grocery, plaque and certificate of recognition. While they received ₱5,000 cash award for Best Poster award.

The 2nd Best Paper award went to “Technology Adaptation of Pineapple-based Farming System (Queen Pineapple + Taro + Corn + Peanut) in Camarines Norte” by Jasmin M. Dacillo, Josephine A. Manlangit, Eula D. Rada and Joy Villagen. They received ₱7,500 cash award, plaque and certificate.

The 3rd Best Paper Award went to the paper entitled “Assessing the Market Potential of Pili Milk” by Engr. Agnes Espinola, Rosela Formento and Engr. Henrilyn R. Yamson. They received ₱5,000 cash award.

The 2nd Best Poster award was garnered by the poster “Assessing the Market Potential of Pili Milk,” and received cash award of ₱4,500. The 3rd Best Poster was the study “Validation of Pelletized Alternative Low-Cost Grower Feed Ration using Jute Leaf Meal for Camarines Strain Native Chicken (Phase 2)” by Arlene T. San Buenaventura, Melvin Verdad, and Sybil No-O. They received ₱3,000 cash award.

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CamSur LGUs train on digital reporting system of agri damage and losses

By Annielyn L. Baleza

To elevate the accuracy and quality of damage reports produced at the municipal, provincial, and the regional level, the Department of Agriculture Bicol Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Unit conducted a Training Cum Workshop for Disaster Risk Reduction Management and Information System (DRRMIS) in Nabua, Camarines Sur on November 27 to 29, 2024. About 40 report officers from 17 municipalities in the first to third districts of the province attended the training.

The DRRMIS is a web-based system that enables DA Operating Units to submit automated reports of agricultural damages and losses during calamities.

According to Lorenzo L. Alvina, DA Bicol OIC Regional Technical Director for Research and Regulations and DRRM Focal Person, the DRRMIS is designed to digitalize the existing processes and workflows. During disasters, it will also serve as the main portal to collect and generate reports on agricultural damage and losses. Bicol already has a systematic reporting system in place, but Alvina said that using the DRRMIS will improve the accuracy and quality of the damage reports being produced and submitted to the DA Central Office.

“With the age of digitalization, graphic information, technology development, masakit kung mahuri kita. Kumbaga halangkaw man



ang quality kang mga reports ta, ang iba nganing region iniling si mga ginagamit tang tools and inaarog ninda. Pero at any rate, gusto ta pa din gibohon siyang mas madali, mas accurate,” he added.

DA Department of Agriculture-Field Programs Operational Planning Division (DA FPOPD) Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Section and Operations Management Information System (OMIS) Section Project Development Officer II Mark Adrian De Jesus and DA FPOPD DRRO Information Systems Analyst I Edison M. Tuazon provided the participants with user accounts and granted them with access and permission to the DRRMIS. They oriented

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Ducks, chickens from 1-km surveillance areas in Cam. Norte found negative for H5N2

By Lovella P. Guarin

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR – All 137 oropharyngeal swab samples collected from domesticated avian species within the 1 Kilometer surveillance area in Camarines Norte province were found all negative for the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Type A H5N2 virus previously detected in Talisay, Camarines Norte.

This was announced by DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla after the negative results of the real time PCR for influenza Type A test conducted by the Department of Agriculture RFO 5 Regional Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (RADDL) on the surveillance samples were transmitted to him on December 12.

Director Tornilla said that the 1-kilometer radius surveillance areas from the 2 ground zero included the barangays of San Nicolas, Binanuaan, and San Francisco in the town of Talisay; barangays Awitan and Gahonon in Daet; and Bgy. Ginacutan in Vinzons all in Camarines Norte.

The oropharyngeal swab samples were taken from domesticated avian species such as ducks, gamefowl, and chicken from various owners in the aforementioned barangays.

The DA Bicol Regional Quick Response Team (RQRT) will continue to conduct active surveillance in the next 7-kilometer radius from the 2 ground zero in Camarines Norte.

The public is still urged to observe biosecurity measures such as proper handwashing after exposure to any kinds of birds, poultry. Report any unusual sickness or deaths in birds to the Department of Agriculture or to the Bureau of Animal Industry of local and provincial agriculture offices in your area.

DA Bicol addresses H5N2 Avian Influenza incidence in Camarines Norte

By Lovella P. Guarin

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR - The Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 5 (DA RFO-5) instituted rapid response and control measures after the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) confirmed a positive incidence of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N2 in backyard ducks in Talisay, Camarines Norte. The blood samples were collected as part of routine surveillance being conducted by the DA Bicol Regulatory Division.

This is the first recorded incidence of H5N2 in the Bicol Region.

DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla immediately activated the DA Bicol Command Center and implemented rapid response and control measures through its Regional Quick Response Team for Animal Disease & Emergencies (RQRT-ADE) upon confirmation of the Avian Influenza case.

Disease control measures include: Immediate culling of the affected ducks in Talisay and Vinzons, Camarines Norte to contain the spread of the virus. Active surveillance and monitoring within 1-km radius of the affected areas to identify any further cases. Restriction in movement within the quarantine zone to prevent the transport of potentially infected poultry was also put in place.

The DA RFO-5 is working closely with the Provincial Local Government Unit (PLGU) of Camarines Norte, the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), Department of Health (DOH) and municipal agriculture offices to implement a coordinated response. Proper indemnification will also be provided to the affected farmers.

One does not get bird flu from thoroughly cooked chicken meat. No evidence of transmission of the virus to humans from raw, chilled or frozen poultry foods. Still, look for the Meat Inspection Certificate issued by the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) Meat Inspection Officers and Deputized Meat Inspection Officers when buying chicken meat.

Poultry owners are advised to strengthen biosecurity measures on their farms to protect their flocks. Practice proper hand hygiene. Cook poultry thoroughly. Report any unusual sickness or deaths in birds to your Municipal Agriculture Offices or Provincial Veterinary Office.

DA RFO-5 assures the public that it is committed to controlling this Avian Influenza incidence and urge the public to help prevent further spread of the virus by observing biosecurity measures. We will continue to provide updates and information to the public as the situation develops.





DA turns over 8 INSPIRE Projects in Bicol

By Angela Mae Lafuente

The Department of Agriculture – National Livestock Program recently completed the turn over of eight sites of P5.5M –worth Bio-Secured Finisher Swine Facility under the Integrated National Swine Production Initiative for Recovery and Expansion (INSPIRE) to eight beneficiary cooperatives.

Marianito Tesorero, DA Bicol Livestock Program regional focal person identified the eight beneficiary cooperatives from Camarines Sur province as Dolorosa Guild of Farmers Incorporated of Nabua with 63 members; Higus Agriculture Cooperative of Balatan with 73 members; Bahi Farmers and Fisherfolks Organization of Garchitorena; San Vicente-Gabao Farmers Irrigators Association and Toytoy-Pambuhan-Canlong Farmers Organization also of Garchitorena with more than 150 member beneficiaries; the Sipocot Council of Women Inc. of with 1,000 members including 45 Brgy. Women Organization and Gawad Kalinga Community; Sipocot Farmers Agricultural Coop; and the Bikolanas Agriculture Cooperative in Del Rosario, Banao, Iriga City.

Mr. Fortunato Ines, Usec Executive Assistant of National Livestock Program personally came to share the message from Deogracias Victor Savellano Undersecretary for National Livestock Program. “Unang-una nais kong ipaabot saaming taos-pusong pasasalamat sa bawat isa sainyo, lalong-lalo na sa mga lokal na pamahalaan, mga miyembro ng komunidad at mga pribadong sektor na buong pusong sumusuporta at nakikiisa sa mga proyektong ito.” he said.

“Ang INSPIRE Project ay nilikha upang tugunan ang mga hamong kinakaharap ng ating industriya ng babuyan lalong-lalo na ang pagkalat ng African Swine Fever na labis na nakakaapekto sa ating pagbababoy. Layunin ng proyektong ito na muling buhayin at palakasin ang ating produksyon ng baboy sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay ng suporta at kaalaman sa ating mga magbababoy,” he added.

Maria Daisy Geolin, Chairperson of Bikolanas Agriculture Cooperative thanked the DA Bicol. “Nais naming magpasalamat sa Department of Agriculture – National Livestock Program through the leadership of Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla dahil ang Bikolanas po ay isa sa mga naging beneficiaries ng tinatawag nating INSPIRE Project. “This is a P5.5M grant kung saan meron na pong Swine Facility na naconstruct and meron pa pong 100 piglets that would be supplied with complete feeds for 1 cycle.” she added.

“Ang maging isang big brother ng INSPIRE Project ay isa pong napakalaking challenge sa isang kooperatiba na lahat ay puro kababaihan,” said Maria Cristina Trillanes, General Manager of Bikolanas Agriculture Cooperative. “Hindi po ito mangyayari lahat kung walang collaboration, tulong-tulong po talaga. Hindi magagawa ng kooperatiba kung wala yung tulong ng DA, Livestock Department at ng LGU,” she added.

A total of 23 beneficiaries of the Bio-Secured Finisher Swine Facility under the INSPIRE Community-based Swine Production thru Clustering and Consolidation is funded by the National Livestock Program (from DA Region 2 funds). Fifteen more sites are being constructed and shall be turned over in the coming months.

DA BICOL RESEARCH... FROM PAGE 5

Special awards were also given, including the Best Presenter award to Engr. Eula D. Rada who received ₱2,000 cash and the Social Media Engagement Award to the team behind “Verification of the Integrated Farm Attribution for Risk and Resource Monitoring and Management (iFARM) System in corn production vulnerable areas in Pioduran, Albay (Phase 1).” They also received ₱2,000 cash award.

The event was graced by a distinguished panel of judges, headed by Dr. Ramona Isabel Ramirez, Vice President for Research and Innovation of Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (CBSUA), together with Dr. Margarita Fajardo, Mr. Noel Amador, both of Ateneo De Naga University; and Dr. Niño Martin P. Obrero of Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges (CSPC).

In his speech Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla underscored the true reward of research which are the satisfaction and gratitude and of farmers. He emphasized that the ultimate goal of research is to contribute to “Masaganang Agrikultura at Maunlad na Ekonomiya” (Prosperous Agriculture and a Thriving Economy).

ATI Director Elsa Parot, in her message which was delivered by Dr. Emmanuel L. Orogó, ATI Bicol Assistant Director, emphasized the crucial role of research in driving agricultural innovation. She

encouraged the researchers to ensure that their findings are disseminated through extension activities, ultimately benefiting farmers and the wider community.

Meanwhile Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, RTD for Operations challenged the researchers to push the boundaries of agricultural science and develop new inventions that could elevate them to scientist level.

Regional Technical Director for Research and Regulations Lorenzo L. Alvina has a vision for the DA Bicol Research Division: to become a world-class institution. To achieve this goal, he emphasized the importance of capacity building through training programs and improved research facilities.

Also present were the Research Outreach Station Superintendents, Unit heads, researchers and their research assistants.

The DA Bicol Research Division remains committed to promoting agricultural innovation and sustainable development in the region. By recognizing and rewarding outstanding research, the division aims to inspire future generations of researchers to contribute to a brighter agricultural future. (RAFIS 5)

Bicol organic agriculture practitioners participate in first international PGS Summit

By Lovella P. Guarin

QUEZON CITY – “Our effort is beyond typhoons and other calamities, as organic agriculture is a sustainable solution for our environment,” said Bernadette F. San Juan, Director of the National Organic Agriculture Program of the Department of Agriculture during the opening program of the first International Participatory Guarantee Summit (PGS) held in Quezon City on November 26, 2024.

Foreign delegates from the different countries supporting the PGS led by Mathew John, President of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement (IFOAM) Organics Asia, as well as local delegates from all the regions of the country, clad in Filipiniana attire, actively took part in the opening program and plenary sessions during the international summit that will run until November 29, 2024.

The Bicol delegates led by Adelina A. Losa, Chief of the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) and Organic Agriculture focal person were composed of Provincial and Municipal Organic Agriculture focal persons, members of the core group of the two PGS Organic Certifying body, namely Camarines Norte Federation



of Dairy Cooperatives (CANOFECO) and Pecuaría Development Cooperative. Also present were representatives from The Agri Planters and Food Processor Association of Tigaon (TAPFPAT).

Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) Bicol center director Elsa A. Parot and Justine Rose Tubig, OA focal person of ATI were also present.

Participatory Guarantee Systems are locale focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange.

The enactment of RA 11511 on December 23, 2020 recognized PGS as a legitimate organic certification process. The amendment offers smallholder farmers and fishers an affordable certification alternative. RA 11511 clearly defines the procedures for certifying Core PGS Groups and accrediting them as Organic Certifying Bodies (OCBs). These PGS-OCBs are authorized to inspect, peer-review, and certify their farmer members as practitioners of organic agriculture. Certified members can label and market their products as “guaranteed organic” providing greater access to organic markets.

The web-based Organic Agriculture Marketplace was also launched – an online platform where organic farmers can sell their products directly to consumers. Spiced natural coconut vinegar of TAPFPAT (375 ml) and organic pigmented rice of Pecuaría Development Cooperative are among the organic products for sale online.



PRES. MARCOS...

FROM PAGE 4

Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, OIC Regional Technical Director for Operations and DA Bicol HVCDP Regional Coordinator, for her part, urged the awardees to nurture not just crop but also hope and inspiration in their communities.

“Your stories of success can ignite the belief in the transformative power of agriculture and its profound impact on our lives,” she said.

Director Elsa A. Parot, Center Director of the DA Bicol ATI, challenged the HVCDP to adopt and anchor the program implementation to the Top 555 or emerging high value crops. She also reminded the awardees to stay grounded and treasure their awards.

HVCAA Hall of Fame Awardee Dr. Irma D. Intia thanked the DA Bicol HVCDP for recognizing the efforts of AEWs.

“I’m very thankful na sa likod kaitong kapagalan mi, may sarong institusyon na dakulaon ang tabang and at the same time, tigre-recognisar talaga ang samuyang mga efforts. Sa gabos pong arog mi, si mga baguhan, sana ipadagos ta, go lang, dawa dakol na interventions, psychologically but despite of that, ginigibo mi man po ang gabos,” she said.

DA Bicol piloted the HVCAA in 2022. The first two years only cover the municipal and city LGUs. The contest was extended this year to include the provincial AEWs. They were evaluated based on their performance from January to December of the previous year in terms of provision of technical assistance initiated by the LGU (35 points); provision of post-harvest, processing, logistics and marketing support initiated by the LGU (25 points); submission of accomplishment, status reports, and data (20 points); contribution to social development (10 points); and employee’s self-growth and development (10 points).

Meanwhile, the Best GSB Implementer was conducted among rural barangays of municipalities implementing the GSB. The contest aims to identify and promote best practices in barangay and household vegetable production. They were evaluated based on the following criteria: garden component (55 points); PLGU/MLGU/BLGU and community participation (10 points); project’s outcome (10 points); sustainability plan (10 points); design and layout (8 points); and record-keeping (7 points).

DA Bicol urges public to lessen rice consumption, avoid wastage



SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR – In observance of the National Rice Awareness Month which is being celebrated this whole month of November, the Department of Agriculture in Bicol staged a simple yet meaningful celebration at the regional office.

The highlight of the activity was the recitation of BeRiceponsible pledge and the dance showdown among the eight divisions of the agency. Adjudged overall winner was the Agribusiness ang Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD). They received one sack rice as prize.

“As we gather here today, let us take a moment to appreciate not only the grain that nourishes millions but also the hard work and dedication of the farmers who cultivate it. It is more than a staple food, it is a cornerstone of nutrition and food security. As we celebrate this month I encourage each of you to explore new recipes or share rice facts on social media. Every small action contributes to a larger purpose,” said Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, OIC – Regional Technical Director for Operations Dr. Rodriguez in her welcome remarks.

DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla underscores the importance of rice being the staple food of the Filipinos. “Pag-isipan natin kung paano mababawasan ang atin konsumo sa bigas o kanin. Para na din sa health natin at upang makatulong na maging sapat ang ating bigas,” he added. “Pasalamatang din natin ang mga magsasaka na hindi tumitigil sa pagtatanim, kahit may bagyo, o mga kalamidad,” he said.

Meanwhile, Lovella Guarin, Chief ng Regional Agriculture ang Fisheries Information Section (RAFIS) discussed the BeRiceponsible campaign. She said that NRAM is not just an observance but an advocacy towards better management of demand on rice which can be achieved through mixing rice with other foods such as adlai, banana, corn and sweet potato. The campaign has three goals: 1. Help in the attainment of rice self-sufficiency; 2. Improve farmers’ income; and 3. Promote better health of rice consumers. Guarin added that rice is high in carbohydrates and has high glycemic index, which leads to diabetes, the top 4 killer in the country today.

Through the BeRiceponsible campaign, the DA is urging the policy makers and local chief executives to pass ordinances and implement the serving of half cup of rice in restaurants. The public is also urged to minimize or eliminate food wastage as DOST- Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) reported that every Filipino wastes 3 tablespoon of rice daily.

The kick off activity was a joint efforts of the RAFIS and the Rice Program which provided the prizes for the contest. The Rice Program personnel also conducted a simple feeding program for the selected families within the rice clusters of Minalabac, Bula and Magarao, Camarines Sur on November 25, 2024.

Over 600 Cam Sur farmers benefit from DA Info Caravan 2024

By Lovella P. Guarin

PILI, CAMARINES SUR – Over 600 farmers and LGU representatives from Cam. Sur participated in the second leg of the Department of Agriculture Information Caravan 2024 held at the Provincial Capitol Sports Complex, this town on October 10, 2024.

Streamed live over DA Philippines and DA - Bicol FB pages, the info caravan with the theme: Masaganang Agrikultura, Tungo sa Bagong Pilipinas aims to update and prepare the farmers as well as the public on the new and existing programs and strategies of DA and to impart knowledge on digital agriculture.

Eight relevant topics were discussed by high caliber resource persons from DA Central Office and from DA Bicol. Emerson Yago, Director for Rice Clustering and Consolidation of DA Central Office discussed Clustering and Convergence Initiatives in Rice Clusters; Christine Empig, Program Development Officer of National Rice Program discussed the mechanics of Drone Voucher. This is in preparation for the implementation by the Rice Program of precision rice farming with the use of agricultural drone technology. Chari Ann Maestre of the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) discussed the importance of composting and the Composting



Facilities for Biodegradable Wastes which are being provided by the BSWM to interested farmers associations nationwide.

Engr. Roy Abaya, National I-Build Alternate Component Head of the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) discussed the objectives and components of the PRDP Scale-Up.

Other topics discussed in the afternoon sessions were: Corn Fuel Assistance, by Debbie Pante of DA 5 F2C2; Farmers’ and Fishers’ Clustering and Consolidation Program (F2C2) by Marilene Dimaculangan, F2C2 focal person of DA 5. African Swine Fever (ASF) by Dr. Claire Sales-Rivera, focal person for ASF of DA 5; and Meat Safety by Dr. Alex Templonuevo, NMIS 5 Regional Director.

Lots of raffle prizes consisted of farm inputs, tools and equipment worth a total of over P1 Million courtesy of the DA Bicol banner programs were raffled off to farmers

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Farmer-leader from Catanduanes hailed as Bicol's Outstanding Rural Woman

By Annielyn L. Baleza



Pacita U. Juan - ECHOstore founder

Sonia S. Padilla, a 55-year-old mother and farmer-leader from the 5th class municipality of San Miguel in Catanduanes, was hailed as regional winner of the Bicol Region 2024 Search for Outstanding Rural Women.

Department of Agriculture Bicol OIC-Regional Technical Director (RTD) for Operations and Regional Search for Outstanding Rural Women 2024 Board of Judges Chairperson Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez and DA Bicol

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division Chief and Gender and Development Focal Point System Vice Chairperson Aloha Gigi I. Bañaria led the awarding ceremony held in Magarao, Camarines Sur on November 11, 2024.

Poverty and disasters that hit the island of Catanduanes did not deter Padilla from dreaming big for herself, her family, and her community. From a single pack of pechay seeds she availed from the Municipal Agriculture Office of San Miguel, she managed to invest in a 2.9-hectare family farm that engages in diverse agricultural activities. Now, she maintains a stable and thriving livelihood through high-value crop production, rice production, abaca production, aquaculture, and livestock production.

Through Padilla's farming activities, she was able to send all her four children to college. Two of them are now professionals and degree holders. Her eldest son is the Municipal Engineer of the

Municipal Local Government Unit of San Miguel while the second now works as an Agriculturist II at the Municipal Agriculture Office. Her eldest daughter pursued a career as a Computer Engineer. Her youngest daughter is currently enrolled in college as an Agribusiness student.

A women's rights advocate and active farmer-leader, Padilla devotes her life to the agricultural development of her community. She currently serves as the Chairperson of the Municipal Agricultural and Fishery Council (MAFC) of San Miguel and Treasurer of the Provincial Agricultural and Fishery Council (PAFC) of Catanduanes. She is also the Chairperson of the PAFC Rice and Other Food Staples Sectoral Committee; President of Buhi Integrated Farmers Association; active member of the Buhi irrigators Farmers Association and Buhi Coconut Farmers Association and Board of Director of Catholic Women's League (CWL).

As Bicol Region 2024 Search for Outstanding Rural Women regional winner, Padilla received a cash award worth P50,000 and a Plaque of Recognition.

DA Bicol also recognized other regional winners namely Deorita Pillarda, a mother and farmer-leader from Brgy. Caratagan in Pioduran, Albay, 1st runner-up, and Marites A. Sandig, a mother, farmer, and entrepreneur from Brgy. Pinanaan in Aroroy, Masbate, 2nd runner-up. They received a plaque of recognition and cash award worth P30,000 and P20,000, respectively. In addition, special awards were given to Eden G. Naing, a farmer from Brgy. Pamorangan in Daet, Camarines Norte; Marle L. Almario, a farmer from Brgy. Calabad in Dimasalang, Masbate; and Concepcion S. Palma, a farmer-leader from Brgy. Fabrica in San Vicente, Camarines Norte. Each of them received a cash award worth P5,000 and a certificate of recognition.

ECHOstore founder Pacita U. Juan graced the occasion. She expressed her admiration for Bicolano rural women's resilience after typhoon Kristine ravaged the region. She also congratulated the Search for Outstanding Rural Women 2024 regional winners saying "I want to tell all the awardees, congratulations kasi alam ko po, hindi madali ang maging isang ina, asawa, community leader, teacher, and trainor, so from my partners at ECHOstore, congratulations to all the rural women."

Rodriguez, for her part, acknowledged the rural women's efforts to swiftly recover from calamities in order to guarantee the region's food security.

"This ceremony is not only a moment to recognize the achievements of a few but also to honor all rural women who work in the face of adversity and against limitations ensuring that agriculture thrives for future generations," she said.





Regional Agricultural and Fishery Council (RAFC) Bicol Chairperson Bernadette B. De Los Santos called for solidarity toward building more sustainable communities.

“Let us continue to support, uplift, and champion each other so that together, we can make our communities even brighter and more sustainable,” she related.

In her acceptance speech, Padilla conveyed her gratitude to everyone who made an impact on her journey as a rural woman.

“Maraming salamat po sa karangalang ito at umaasa akong maisusulong pa natin ang ating iisang adhikain para sa mas masigla at matatag na mga komunidad sa kanayunan. Maraming salamat po sa Poong Maykapal na siyang nagbigay-lakas sa akin at inspirasyon. Layog San Miguel! Sulong Catandungan! Bangon Bicol!” she said.

Another highlight of the Bicol Region 2024 Search for Outstanding Rural Women Awarding Ceremony was the launch of “Kakan Kita: Bicol’s Resilient Food,” a coffee table book, authored by former DA Bicol RTD for Operations Luz R. Marcelino, who now serves as the president of the RAFC Bicol Speakers’ Bureau or Be! Speak!. The book features the edible weeds and other resilient crops in Bicol. According to Marcelino,

it is designed to encourage and promote the use of sustainable and resilient practices in using indigenous species, highlight the importance of indigenous crops and edible weeds and identify areas for future research, development, and extension work, as well as nurture nature and local resources.

DA National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) Regional Director Dr. Alex B. Templonuevo, other DA Bicol and attached agencies, as well as P/MLGU officials, members of the RAFC sectoral committees, former SORW national awardees, women agripreneurs and Agri-Pinay beneficiaries also attended the awarding ceremony.

The Search for Outstanding Rural Women or the Gawad Parangal sa Katangi-tanging Kababaihan sa Kanayunan is an annual search of the Department of Agriculture that gives due recognition to rural women who made outstanding accomplishments in agri-fishery sector development and created a significant impact on rural communities. They were adjudged based on three major criteria: Contribution to food security/ agricultural and fishery development (30%), contribution to sustainable development (30%), and impact to rural women (40%). Padilla is now strongly vying for this year’s national award. *(with reports from Anthea Jill P. Felices and Gabrielle Imperial, DA PMED V) Gabrielle Imperial, DA PMED 5*





AMIA Leader Quipayo wins Philippine Resilience Award 2024

SMX Convention Center, PASAY ---- Cecilia G. Quipayo, Board Member of CVT Agri Resilient Farmers Organization Incorporated (CARFI) in AMIA Village at Barangay Cagbunga, Pamplona, Camarines Sur, is one of the awardees of this year's Philippine Resilience Award (PRA). Organized by the National Resilience Council, the awarding ceremony was held on November 25, 2024.

The Climate Change Commission, in partnership with the Office of Senator Loren Legarda, National Resilience Council, Philippine Commission on Women, Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies, Women's International Network on DRR Philippines, and SM Prime conducted the Philippine Resilience Award (PRA) 2024 which recognizes individuals and organizations making significant contributions to building climate resilience in the Philippines. The event aims to celebrate the significant milestones that have shaped the country's climate change and disaster risk reduction policies and its leadership in global stage and salute our outstanding women and youth champions of PRA 2024 whose grassroots work in disaster resiliency, climate change adaptation, and mitigation have shown significant impact in building community resilience.

Under Quipayo's leadership, CARFI has implemented various strategies to combat the impacts of climate change on local agriculture. These initiatives have not only increased the resilience of local agriculture but have also significantly improved the livelihoods of farmers in Barangay Cagbunga. Quipayo's work serves as a model for other communities seeking to adapt to the challenges of climate change.

The Department of Agriculture Bicol Regional Organic Agriculture Program in collaboration with the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) and Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (CBSUA) amplified its advocacy for organic agriculture to mark the 10th year of Organic Agriculture Month celebration in the Philippines. With the theme "Kabuhayang OA, Kinabukasang OK: PGS Pinalakas Para sa Bagong Pilipinas," about 100 organic agriculture young farmers, Agriculture students, organic agriculture practitioners, and farm partners participated in the 10th Bicol Organic Agriculture Month celebration held at the CBSUA Agriville in Pili, Camarines Sur on November 22, 2024.

In his keynote address delivered by DA Bicol OIC Regional Technical Director for Operations Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez, Regional Executive Director Rodel Tornilla recognized the organic agriculture practitioners in Bicol for their efforts to promote environment-friendly and safe sustainable farming system. He also highlighted the contributions organic agriculture in sustainable agriculture.

"Ang celebrasyon pong ito ay isang pagpupugay sa inyong mga nagtataguyod ng organikong pagsasaka – sa inyong mga pawis, pagod at dedikasyon sa pagsusulong ng sustainable farming system na makakalikasan at ligtas para sa lahat... Sana po sa susunod na taon ay mas dumami pa ang mga magsasakang susubok at yayakap sa organikong pagsasaka bilang isang pangmatagalang solusyon sa mga hamon ng climate change. Nawa'y patuloy nating itaguyod ang pagtutulungan—mula sa mga magsasaka, mga tagapamahala, at mga mamimili—upang ang ating kinabukasan ay tunay na maging "OK," he said.

DA Bicol Regional Organic Agriculture Program Focal Person Adelina Losa shared some of the milestones of the program's implementation in the region such as the certification of Pecuaría Development Cooperative and the Camarines Norte Federation of Cooperatives (CANOFECO) as Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) core groups.

"Dati, napakamahal magpa-certify but with PGS, this is a peer certification by farmers. Ang Pecuaría at ang CANOFECO na mismo ang magce-certify sa mga peer farmers nila," she said.

PRES. MARCOS...

FROM PAGE 1

magkakaroon ng sapat na kakayahan upang makabangon muli. Naglaan po ng P50 M ang Office of the President na ipapamahagi ng DSWD sa mga nasalanta ng bagyo. Makakatanggap ng tig P10,000 ang 5,000 magsasaka, mangingisda at iba pang pamilyang naapektuhan. Talaga pong nagpupursige tayo na maibalik sa normal ang kondisyon sa lalong madaling panahon. Tayo po ay nakakaranas ng epekto ng climate change. Hindi lang po Pilipinas ang tinatamaan ng pagbabago ng panahon na ito kundi buong daigdig. Nagbigay ako ng direktiba sa mga ahensya ng gobyerno na gumawa ng mga proyektong akma sa ating pang malawakang matinding pagbaha at nang maiwasan na ang matinding pagbaha," he said.

"Inatasan ko ang DPWH na muling pag-aralan ang Bicol River Basin Development Program. Upang gawin itong akma sa mga hamon ng pagbabago ng klima natin. Sa kasalukuyan ay inaayos na ang detailed engineering design na inaasahang sisimulan sa 1st quarter next year. Inatasan ko ang DPWH, DILG at DENR kasama ang local na pamahalaan upang maging integrated at future proof ang



DA Bicol collab with ATI, CBSUA to amplify organic agriculture advocacy

By Annielyn L. Baleza

She also announced that DA Bicol Organic Agriculture Program is implementing an incentive scheme of P3,000 for every PGS-certified farmer.

Agricultural Training Institute Regional Training Center (ATI-RTC) 5 Center Director Elsa Ani Parot and Dr. Philip Talay, Dean of the CBSUA College of Economics and Management and Vice President for Research and Innovation, also graced the occasion.

As part of the 10th Bicol Organic Agriculture Month celebration, Robert Diesta, owner of the Diesta Melipoliculture Apiary in Guinobatan, Albay oriented the participants on the Mokusaku or wood vinegar technology. According to Diesta, using a chamber, heated organic materials such as wood, bamboo, coconut shell, grass, and other plants are converted into a pyrolygneous acid called mokusaku. This can be used as soil enhancer, compost activator, and fertilizer. It can also serve as pest repellent or deodorizer and fungicide and can aid in seed germination. Meanwhile, Arch. Marlon Longabela's Kalikasan Farm in Daraga, Albay, shared his expertise on Black Soldier Fly Production. Black soldier fly larvae are good sources protein that can serve as fish, livestock, and poultry feed. Compost that black soldier flies produce are also used as organic fertilizers.

Another event highlight was the Organic Agriculture Master Chef Cook-Off where contestants prepared snacks using organic malunggay as main ingredient. Shyra Laya and Joanne Pante from the CBSUA Organic Agriculture Center won first place with a cash prize worth P7,000 for their Cheesy Butter Moringa Fritters with Cinnamon and Custard Dip. Concepcion Palma, farm partner from Palsa's Nature Farm, and Jenelyn Benitez, a Youth Internship Program on Organic Agriculture (YIPOA) Batch 2 representative, took the second place for their Malunggay Pesto while Jayko Noveno, another YIPOA Batch 2 representative, won third place for his Moringa-Squash Pancake. They received cash prizes worth P5,000 and P3,000 respectively. Non-winners were given consolation prizes worth P500.00.

The National Organic Agriculture Month is celebrated every November under Presidential Proclamation No. 1030, signed by former President Benigno S. Aquino III on May 21, 2015. This is to promote the organic agriculture farming system as an instrument for development, environmental preservation, and health protection of farmers, consumers, and the general public. (Annielyn L. Baleza, DA RAFIS V with reports from Julie Pobocan, Ken Justine Balbuena, and Ladyvine Balbuena, DAAMAD V)

Photo Credits: Angela Lafuente, DA RAFIS V

kanilang proyekto para sa Bicol River Basin," he added.

"Sa DPWH at DTI, dapat maseguro natin na ang mga imprastruktura ay matitibay at pinag-aralang mabuti. Ang DBM naman ay sisiguruhin na tuloy tuloy ang pag tugon sa mga ahensya ng gobyerno sa pamamagitan ng quick response fund," Pres. Marcos said.

Meanwhile, DA Secretary Kiko Laurel, Jr. turned over indemnity checks worth P16.89 M to some 1,589 farmers of Camarines Sur who have applied for crop insurance with the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation. Maria Janice Obias, PCIC Bicol Regional Manager said that her office has already approved P24.41 M claims for 2,645 farmers nationwide and distribution of these checks are on-going in other provinces as well.

DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla who also graced the event said that DA Bicol has selected the 15 municipalities of Camarines Sur that were severely devastated by Typhoon Kristine based on the submitted damage reports.

The beneficiaries of the P10K PAFF assistance were RSBSA -listed farmers whose crops were severely damaged and with no chance of recovery.

Also present during the PAFF distribution were Department

of Social Welfare and Development Secretary Rex Gatchalian; DILG Secretary Jonvic Remulla; and Special Asst. to the President Secretary Anton Lagdameo. Press Sec Cesar Chavez; Governor Luigi Villafuerte; Cam Sur 2nd District Rep. LRay Villafuerte; 3rd District Rep. Migz Villafuerte; and 1st District Rep. Hori Horibata.

As of this writing, DA Bicol has recorded a total of P3.2 B losses in agriculture affecting 69,386 hectares of agricultural crops in Bicol, and P1.8 B of which was incurred by Cam. Sur farmers and fishers.



TS Kristine-affected farmers, fisherfolk in Albay receive P50M-worth cash assistance

■ By Annielyn L. Baleza



LEGAZPI CITY, ALBAY -- William R. Baranda, rice farmer from Brgy. Balogo, Oas, Albay, used to harvest 50 cavans of palay from his half-hectare farm. However, tropical storm Kristine caused heavy flooding in his area leaving his farm with only 12 cavans of palay harvested this cropping season, which he sold for only P7,000.

"Dahil po sa malakas na hangin at ulan, dumapa po lahat ng palay, wala po kaming masyadong naani. Malaki po ang nalugi sa amin. Kaya po nagpapasalamat po kami kay Presidente BBM na nabigyan po kami ng ganitong benepisyo sa mga magsasakang nalugi sa aming sakahan," he shared.

Baranda was among the 5,000 farmers and fisherfolk from Albay who received the Presidential Assistance for Farmers, Fisherfolks, and Families (PAFFF) worth P10,000 each. His Excellency President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. and Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel, Jr. led the ceremonial distribution of the immediate cash assistance to beneficiaries from 15 municipalities and three cities in the province on November 6, 2024 in this city. A total of P50 million PAFFF will be distributed to qualified beneficiaries identified by the Department of Agriculture (DA) Bicol in coordination with the provincial and local government units through the Department of Social Welfare and Development's Ayuda sa Kapos ang Kita Program (AKAP).

Also, the DA Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. (PCIC) has started the issuance of indemnity cheques to 416 farmers with approved insurance claims worth a total of P2.925 million.

Albay was one of the provinces devastated by TS Kristine with damages valued at P443,896,726.39. About 4,691.13 hectares of the agricultural area in the province was affected while 4,141.60 hectares were totally damaged.

In his message, the President expressed his sympathies with the typhoon victims in the province.

"Bagama't ilang araw na ang lumipas, alam ko pong malaking pasakit pa rin ang iniwan na pinsala ng bagyo sa inyong mga tahanan at pamayanan. Kaya po naparito ako upang makapagbigay ng tulong para sa inyong muling pagbangon at pagtahak ng panibagong simula," he said.

He added that aside from relief efforts, the Office of the President has already taken the necessary measures to strengthen the country's disaster preparedness amid the impact of climate change. He urged the national government agencies particularly the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Transportation (DOTr), and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to ensure the quality and safety of materials in order to build climate-proof infrastructures. He also announced that the DPWH has already completed the master plan and feasibility study for the Bicol River Basin Development Program in July and currently, the agency is working on its Detailed Engineering Design. The said Project is targeted to start by first quarter of 2025.

"Kapag nabuo po natin itong proyektong ito, unang-una, hindi na masyadong babaha; at pangalawa, kung babaha man ay mas mabilis ang labas ng tubig para lahat ng naaapektuhan ay matulungan natin kaagad," he said.

He also mentioned that he already directed the Department of Budget Management to allocate additional funds to sustain the release of the Quick Response Fund to the government units.

"Hindi tayo magpapatnag sa mga trahedyang ito; bagkus, palalawigin pa natin ang ating paghahanda at bibilisan ang ating pagkilos upang mapigilan ang pag-ulit ng ganitong epekto ng mga





kalamidad. Kaya't sa pagkakataong ito, hinihikayat ko ang bawat ahensya ng pamahalaan at ang bawat Pilipino: Magtulungan tayo upang matiyak na walang maiiwan sa ating laban kontra sa mga hamong dulot ng pagbabago ng klima," he added.

He also acknowledged the efforts and thanked both the government and the private sector for their help and support to guarantee the welfare and safeguard the rights of the typhoon victims.

OIC-Governor of Albay Baby Glenda Ong-Bongao thanked the President for his efforts to extend assistance to the typhoon victims in the province, particularly the farmers and fisherfolk.

"Ang pagbisita po ng ating pangulo ngayong araw ay isang patunay kung gaano kayo kahalaga, aming mga magsasaka at mangingisda... Tunay na inaalagaan niyo po ang mga "oragon" na Bicolano. Sa ngalan po ng aming probinsya kasama po ang labing-walong magagaling na alcalde at ang bawat masipag na magsasaka at mangingisda, nais ko pong ipaabot ang aking pasasalamat sainyo, pangulong Bongbong Marcos," she said.

Likewise, Albay Provincial Agriculturist Cheryll O. Rebeta expressed her gratitude to the President and the DA Secretary saying, "Salamat po ng marami from the bottom of our hearts. Marami po itong maidudulot na kaginhawahan sa ating mga farmers at fisherfolks."

As of November 5, 2024, DA Bicol has reported P3.2 billion initial damage to the agriculture sector. Aside from the PAFFF, the agency is preparing to deliver immediate interventions such as rice, corn, and vegetable seeds to affected farmers. (with reports from Marissa Joy O. Villar and Mary Grace S. Milan, DA Field Operations Division Monitoring and Special Concerns Unit V)

Photo Credits: Annielyn L. Baleza, DA RAFIS V and Jayson M. Gonzales, DA RAFIS V and APCO Albay



As of this writing over P45.3 M worth of hybrid, certified and registered palay seeds, corn seeds, assorted vegetable seeds, garden tools and farm equipment were initially delivered to various Local Government Units (LGUs) particularly provincial and municipal Agriculture Offices for distribution to RSBSA-listed farmers.

A total of 8,090 bags of 15 kilos hybrid rice seeds were delivered to the five provinces in time for the dry season cropping. For Albay – 1,750 bags, Camarines Norte – 1,376 bags, Camarines Sur – 3,316, Masbate – 388 bags, Sorsogon – 1,260 bags. In Camarines Sur, the Rice Program also distributed 976 bags of 20 kilogram certified seeds, and 156 bags registered seeds. The rice seeds distributed amounted to P41,478,800.

Meanwhile, P1.8M worth yellow corn seeds (at 9 kilos per bag) were initially distributed by the Corn Program to Albay province (50 bags), Camarines Norte (50 bags), and Camarines Sur – 200 bags.

The High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) initially distributed 28 units knapsack sprayers and 28 units wheel barrow to 14 LGUs; 168 sets garden tools and 14 packages of assorted vegetable seeds to 14 municipal LGUs of Albay. The packages of vegetable seeds consisted of hybrid ampalaya and hybrid eggplant, patola, kangkong, and open pollinated varieties (OPV) of pole sitao, okra, upo, squash, pechay, eggplant and hot pepper. All these interventions amounted to P988,680.00.

For Catanduanes farmers, the HVCDP delivered P1.2 M worth of assistance consisted of 168 sets of garden tools, 30 units wheel barrow, 30 units knapsack sprayer, and 12 packages of assorted vegetable seeds.

DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla said that distribution will continue in the following weeks to complete the delivery of a total of P471.3 M worth of interventions to accelerate the recovery of the agriculture sector in Bicol. Farmers should visit the Municipal Agriculture Office in their area to avail of the interventions.

The Philippine Crops Insurance Corporation (PCIC) has also distributed insurance P31.881 M worth indemnity checks to 3,535 farmers nationwide.

The Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) offers P25,000 Survival and Recovery (SURE) Assistance in provinces under state of calamity such as Camarines Sur and Albay. This loan program, which is payable in three years without interest but with 3% service charge, is in addition to the existing loan programs of ACPC such as AgriNegosyo Loan Program and Kapital Access for Young Farmers (KAYA). Visit their website [www://acpc.gov.ph](http://acpc.gov.ph) for details.

Earlier, the DA Bicol submitted its proposed rehabilitation plan to the Office of the Civil Defense 5, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council for possible funding support.

Typhoon Kristine left a total P5.1 Billion worth of damages to crops, livestock and agri infrastructure which affected 59,337 farmers and fishers; while initial damage reported for the Super typhoon Pepito amounted to P527.2 M, most of which were abaca of Catanduanes province with initial report of P432.6 M losses.

DA supports campaign to end violence against women and children



■ By Angela Mae Lafuente

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR – In support of the nationwide 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC), the Department of Agriculture – Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division headed by Aloha Gigi I. Bañaria, Gender and Development Focal System Vice-Chairperson held a seminar on December 9, 2024 at PMED Conference Room.

The one-day event was in line with the 2024 theme “VAWC Bigyang Wakas, Ngayon na ang Oras.” About 35 representatives from different DA operating units attended the said event.

Atty. Michelle Alen O. Callo-Alejo, Attorney IV of Commission on Human Rights 5 served as resource speaker. She provided a comprehensive discussion of Republic Act (RA) 9262, also known as the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004, which seeks to protect women and children from various forms of violence, including physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse.

In her presentation, Atty. Callo-Alejo emphasized the important role of various sectors in ensuring the proper enforcement of the laws on VAWC. She urged women and mothers to report to any authorities any form of violence they have experienced. She also talked on the challenges faced in the implementation of RA 9262 and highlighted initiatives to report cases of abuse and how to access legal and psychological support.

“Kun siisay man na igwa nin personal na kaaraman sa mga ginibong pang-aabuso sa aki, kapwa babae, kapamilya asin ka-barkada pwedeng magsangat nin reklamo huli ta ini ay sarong pampublikong krimen.” She urged any citizen having personal knowledge of violence committed may file a complaint because violence against women and their children is considered a public crime.

The 18-day campaign, which run from November 25 to December 12, was a significant annual initiative aimed at raising awareness about gender-based violence and promoting active measures to end it.

DA BICOL CAPACITATES... FROM PAGE 5

the participants on the proper encoding and updating of data in the Damage and Losses Assessment (DALA) forms which cover damage and losses information on crops, livestock and poultry, fisheries, and infrastructures, machineries, and equipment. The participants were taught on how to use the Data Capture Template as well as how to upload data in the system while DA Bicol DRR staff were trained on the review and verification of reports submitted by data encoders from the LGUs. They also underscored the importance of accurate, comprehensive, and timely reports to management decision making.

With the DRRMIS, initial assessment reports using quantified estimation and approximation should be submitted six hours after the disaster impact. DA Central Office will serve as the approving officer in charge of creating the calamity profile in the system while the OMIS, as system administrator, will be responsible for the system and database maintenance.

Among the participants of the said training was Juliet B. Caringal, agricultural technologist of LGU-Del Gallego. She said that the DRRMIS training will simplify the process of damage report preparation.

“Thankful kami kay DA, thankful kami sa LGU na sumusuporta, lalo na sa mga national agencies kasi nandoon ‘yung full support nila na ang pinaka-way na (makuha nila ‘yung) data na kailangan nila para mabigyan ng asistensya (ang mga farmers) is ‘yung damage report. Pansin nga doon sa damage report (using DRRMIS), magi-generate na ‘yung total damage kung magkano ‘yung losses para doon namin mapansin na ganito pala talaga ang nawawala sa farmer kapag nagkakaroon ng sakuna,” she said.

Francis Abasola, agricultural technologist from LGU-Naga City, agreed saying “Yung DRRMIS, isa po itong tool na makakatulong lalo na sa mga LGU na maipaabot ng mas madali, mas accurate ‘yung mga data na aming ibibigay.”

Meanwhile, Lisa Marie A. Paet, Agriculturist II from LGU-Ragay related that the DRRMIS’ features will be beneficial to new agricultural extension workers.

“Sa part po ng LGU namin, magiging helpful siya kasi ‘yung iba naming mga AEWs baguhan pa. With the help of the drop-down list po doon sa template, hindi na sila mahihirapan kung ano pa ba ‘yung ilalagay doon sa template then sa computation... At least ‘yung template po, nandoon na, meron na tayong pwedeng basis, mag-iencode na lang tayo ng mga nakalap nating mga data,” she said.

The first batch of trainees may now use the DRRMIS. DA Bicol DRR Unit plans to finish training the second batch of report officers from the fourth and fifth district of Camarines Sur before they officially roll out the system nationwide.

Bicol Region is one of the most vulnerable to climate risks in the country. In 2024, the region experienced El Niño and severe impacts from typhoon Enteng, tropical depression Kristine, and supertyphoon Pepito with total damage amounting to P6.92 billion. This rationalizes the need for digital tools such as the DRRMIS in achieving accuracy and timeliness of the damage reports. (with reports from Zyra Floriano and Joseph Villegas, DA DRR V and Sandy Bobier, DA AMIA V) Photo Credits: Annielyn L. Baleza, DA RAFIS V

Barangays in Tiwi, Albay to benefit from PRDP's potable water system

By Shaira Enimedez



Tiwi, Albay – “Okay ang feedback at excited na ang mga residente at benepisaryo sa patubig na PWS.” This was underscored by the Municipal Mayor of Tiwi, Albay Jaime Villanueva during the courtesy call for the punchlisting activity of the I-BUILD subproject Level II Potable Water System (PWS), a project funded by the World Bank under the Department of Agriculture Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP).

The potable water project will benefit 14 barangays of Tiwi with a total population of 24,113 individuals composed of 5,331 households. The project has 785 tap stands with 1,184 faucets. In a single faucet there will be 4-6 households who will use the water.

The project composed of one (1) unit Reservoir (Small Impounding Dam); two (2) units Spring Intake Boxes; one (1) unit Header/Collection Tank; one (1) unit Water Filtration/Treatment Facility; Seven (7) units Break-Pressure Tank, two (2) units Junction Tanks; Five (5) units Distribution/Storage Tanks; and six (6) freeway fire hydrant.

During the punchlist, majority of the faucets have water running. The residents were already using it for washing, cleaning, and laundry. The water needs to be tested first before declaring that it is good for drinking.

During the exit meeting PRDP Project Support Office (PSO) South Luzon and Regional Project Coordination Office (RPCO) Bicol I-BUILD, Social Environmental Safeguards (SES), and Geo-mapping and Governance Unit (GGU) team facilitated an exit conference with the contractor and the Municipal Project Management Implementation Unit (MPMIU) to present the findings and address issues affecting project completion prior to turnover. They suggested that the LGU need to create Barangay Water and Sanitation Association (BAWASA) to operate and maintain the water system in the community. They also reminded the LGU and the contractor that the project should be completed on or before December 31, 2024.

Punchlist inspection is usually conducted when the project is at least 95% completed based on the feasibility studies, Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), and detailed engineering design, drawings, specifications and program of work (POW).

Present during the punchlisting activity were Engr. Rhishel Peñara, PSO South Luzon Rural Infrastructure Engineer (RIE); Jonnah Pagdanganan, PSO South Luzon SES Officer; Engr. Jan Marie Lavadia, PSO South Luzon Project Development Associate (PDA); Teresita Blaqueza, RPCO Bicol SES Officer; Engr. Joel Catimbang, RPCO Bicol GGU Officer; MPMIU, and representative from the contractor. (Bicol InfoACE)

OVER 600 CAM SUR...

FROM PAGE 9

in between talks. The Rice Program raffled off 10 units knapsack sprayer, 100 bottles of 1 liter foliar fertilizer, and 100 packs AMO Plant Growth Enhancer. The Corn Program gave 50 bags GMO Yellow Corn seeds. The High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) distributed assorted vegetable seeds and raffled off 36 sets garden tools, 36 bottles of 1 liter foliar fertilizer, 5 units wheel barrow and the mist blower worth P25,000 as grand prize went to Elito Bergantin of Pili, Camarines Sur. The Livestock Program raffled off 100 heads Mallard Ducks and 100 heads Native Chicken.

The banner programs – Rice, Corn, HVCDP, Livestock and Organic Agriculture also put up info booths where the farmers enjoyed trying their luck in the raffle. The BSWM booth gave away 100 Soil Test Kits to 100 FCAs that attended the caravan, while the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC), RSBSA and RAFIS booths gave away info leaflets and brochures. Meanwhile, the booths of the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) and Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) sold their farmer beneficiaries' products.

DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla's message was read by OIC Regional Technical Director for Research Lorenzo L. Alvina. “This information caravan is a very timely and appropriate

avenue to discuss to our farmers, new technologies, as well as new programs and strategies of the Department such as the clustering approach and use of agricultural drones in farm operations.”

“Sa tama at napapanahong impormasyon, sama-sama nating maipatatupad nang maayos at epektibo ang mga programa ng Kagawaran ng Pagsasaka sa ating rehiyon. Samantalain po ninyo ang pagkakataon na ito upang madagdagan ang inyong kaalaman, matuto ng mga bagong estratehiya, proseso, sistema, at teknolohiya sa pagsasaka pati na rin ng mga kaukulang programa at serbisyo ng aming ahensya na makakatulong sa inyong pagsasaka at negosyong pang-agrikultura. Ito po ang aming munting paraan upang maipaabot sainyo ang aming malaking pasasalamat sa inyong pagsusumikap na masigurong may sapat na sariwa, malinis, masustansya, at abot-kayang pagkain sa hapag ng bawat pamilyang Bicolano.”

Also present were Earl Vincent P. Vegas, Regional Rice Program focal person; Marcial T. Bustarga, APCO for Cam. Sur; Adora Rodriguez, Asst. Chief of AFID together with Florencia Gemma Garcia; Elsa A. Parot, ATI 5 Center Director; Adelina A. Losa, AMAD 5 Chief and PRDP Deputy Director; Rose Imperial, Regulatory Division Chief; Municipal Agriculturists and members of the media.

The caravan was spearheaded by the Agriculture and Fisheries Information Division of DA Central Office, in collaboration with the Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Information Section (RAFIS) and DA Bicol Banner Programs. (Lovella P. Guarin – RAFIS 5)



Patuloy ang pagsasagawa ng consultation meetings ng Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Phase 2 Program sa mga sakop na probinsya nito. Ngayong linggo, nagsimula ang nasabing konsultasyon kasama ang mga kinatawan ng mga 9 farmers' association (FA) sa Sorsogon.

Sinimulan ang aktibidad noong Agosto 28 at Agosto 29 kasama ang ilang representatives mula sa mga asosasyon sa bayan ng Barcelona, Bulusan at Matnog. Ang consultation meeting ay ginawa sa mga center houses ng host association sa kada munisipyo.

Pinangunahan ng regional at provincial implementers ng SAAD Bicol ang pagpupulong kung saan tinalakay ng mga FA representatives ang kalagayan, estado at mga output ng kanilang asosasyon.

Ibinahagi din nila ang kanilang mga major accomplishments ng nakaraang buwan at datos ng mga nalikom na kita. Kasama din sa tinalakay nila ay ang action plan na gagawin sa mga susunod na buwan ng taon.

Kasama sa mga dumalo ang Municipal Agriculturists at ibang Barangay representatives upang magbigay gabay sa mga kalahok na benepisyaryo.

Samantala, nagkaroon naman ng courtesy call sa alkalde ng mga nasambit na munisipalidad upang makapagbigay-alam sa layunin ng aktibidad. Pinangunahan ito nina SAAD Bicol Food Production and Livelihood (FPL) Cluster lead, Florentino D. Ubalde, Jr., SAAD Bicol Report Officer Maribeth Mangalino, at SAAD Sorsogon Provincial Coordinator, Mary Rose A. Detera.



DA BICOL TURNS OVER... FROM PAGE 1

Rodel P. Tornilla, DA Bicol Regional Executive Director personally lead the turn over at the DA Regional Office compound on December 27, 2024. The farm machineries were received by the presidents or chairperson of the Fabrica Farmers Fisherfolk's Association, Inc.; San Agustin-San Ramon Agrarian Reform Farmers Cooperative; Lirag Agrarian Reform Farmers Beneficiaries Cooperative; San Jose Farmers Association of Iriga City; Antipolo Minalabac Farmers Association; Tagas Agri Farmers Association; Comaguingking Farmers Association; Pagluwas Planters Association, Inc.; Kilomaon Integrated Farmers Association; Buhi Diversified Farmers Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Cooperative; Libod Agta-Tabangnon Indigenous People Producers Cooperative.

Also present during the turn over were Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, OIC- Regional Technical Director for Operations; Earl Vincent P. Vegas, OIC Chief of Field Operations Division and Rice Program Regional Focal Person; Engr. Amabel N. Bombase, Regional Corn and Cassava Program Coordinator; Engr. Jerry A. Eboña, OIC –Chief of the Regional Agricultural Engineering Division (RAED).



Meanwhile, two FCAs in Albay; two in Cam. Norte; three in Masbate and three FCAs in Sorsogon will also receive the same four-wheel drive tractor.

The Rice and Corn Program funded a total of 22 units of four-wheel drive tractor – 14 units under the Rice Program worth P1.98M each and eight units under the Corn Program amounting to P3.32M each - with a total worth of P54,397,040 in the last quarter of 2024.

CONGRATULATIONS RAFC BICOL!

RAFC 5 received 18 national awards, including five champion titles during the 10th National Agriculture and Fisheries Volunteers' Day held on December 3, 2024 at Summit Galleria, Cebu City.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outstanding Executive Committee – Regional Level Champion: RAFC Bicol Region 2. Outstanding RAFC Executive Officer – Champion: Aloha Gigi Bañaria, RAFC 5 REO 3. Outstanding RAFC Chairperson – Champion: Bernadette B. delos Santos, RAFC 5 Chair 4. Most Supportive Accounting Office – 2nd Runner-up: DA-RFO 5 5. Most Supportive DA-Regional Field Office – DA-Regional Field Office 5 6. Most Supportive PGLU Award – Provincial Local Government Unit (PLGU) Albay 7. Outstanding PAFC Chairperson – Champion: Rene De los Reyes (PAFC Albay) 8. Outstanding PAFC Co-Chairperson – Cheryll O. Rebeta (PAFC Albay) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Outstanding Executive Committee – Provincial Level 2nd Runner-up: PAFC Albay 10. Outstanding Sectoral Committee – RAFC Level Champion - Climate Change and Environment Natural Resources (CCENR) 11. Outstanding Sectoral Committee – RAFC Level 2nd Runner-up - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) 12. Outstanding Secretariat Coordinator – ICCAFC/HUCAFC/PAFC Level - 2nd Runner-up Francis T. Abasola - ICCAFC Naga 13. Outstanding Sectoral Committee – ICCAFC/HUCAFC/PAFC Level - 1st Runner-up Corn and Other Feeds Crops - ICCAFC Naga | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Outstanding Sectoral Committee – ICCAFC/HUCAFC/PAFC Level - 1st Runner-up GESI-ICCAFC Naga 15. Outstanding Chairperson MAFC/CAFC Level – Judith Mangalino - MAFC Sipocot, Camarines Sur 16. Outstanding Executive Committee – MAFC/CAF Level 2nd Runner-up MAFC Sipocot, Camarines Sur 17. Special Recognition Regional/Provincial Monitoring RAFC Bicol 18. Special Recognition Regional/Provincial Monitoring PAFC Camarines Norte |
|---|--|--|

DA, AGRI-FISHERY...

FROM PAGE 3

Ubalde announced that based on the first semester DA Bicol 2023 Rice and Corn Data, Bicol has 109.84 percent sufficiency level on rice, 94.63 percent sufficiency level on yellow corn, and 78.28 percent sufficiency level on white corn. He also discussed the production performance of selected high value crops as well as livestock and poultry.

Meanwhile, Pioquinto disclosed that Bicol has a total of 104,912.06 metric tons of fisheries production in 2023 equivalent to four percent of the country's production. About 30,909.16 metric tons or 29.5 percent of which is from commercial fishing, 63,114.39 metric tons or 60.2 percent is from municipal fisheries, while 10,888.51 metric tons or 10.4 percent is from aquaculture.

"In terms of municipal and commercial which are capture fisheries, they depend more on the resources coming from the wild. We have 233,000 registered fisherfolk and 46,000 registered fishing boat dependent on this certain percentage of capture fisheries," he said.

Lorenzo L. Alvina, DA Bicol OIC-Regional Technical Director for Research and Regulations and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Center Chief, lectured on Food Security Amidst Disasters and Climate Change. He mentioned that among the impacts of climate change on food security are reduced food availability and increased food prices. He also enumerated the top three future climate-related risks for food security in the Philippines based on the Alliance of Biodiversity and International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and World Food Programme namely increased rainfall variability, frequency, and severity, rising mean temperatures, and extreme weather events. He also shared some of DA's programs, projects, and strategies to address climate change such as the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) Village Approach, AMIA-CREATE Framework, as well as adoption of early warning systems and plans, and decision support tools. Moreover, he cited some recommendations to improve the resilience of the agriculture sector in the region. These include investing in climate-smart agriculture, prioritizing agricultural and research development, fostering regional cooperation on food security, integrating food security into climate action plan, and strengthening disaster preparedness.

RDC Private sector representatives (PSR) Santiago Cervantes of the farmers sector and Rev. Fr. Eric B. Martillano of the fisheries sector; Bernadette B. De Los Santos, chairperson of the Regional Agricultural and Fishery Council (RAFC); Lea Beltran, president of the League of Municipal Agriculturists; and Arnel Bitome, Chairperson, Municipal Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council of San Andres, Catanduanes, expressed their commitment to work together to achieve food-security in the region.

The participants joined an inter-active real-time engagement to share the issues and challenges on food security concerning the agri-fishery sector and what they can contribute to attain food security in the Bicol region.

RDC Bicol EDC Chairperson Romeo S. Tan, Acting Governor of Albay Baby Glenda Ong-Bongao, Albay Assistant Provincial Agriculturist Daryl John O. Buenconsejo, and National Meat Inspection Service Regional Director Dr. Alex Templonuevo also graced the occasion. According to Governor Bongao, food sustainability is a primary key to stability. Thus, PLGU-Albay is committed to support its agri-fishery sector in order to ensure food security in the province. "A place without food security is a place without peace." Kung meron na sektor na dapat pagtuunan ng mas malaking pansin, ito po ang sektor ng agrikultura at ng pangingsda. At saka sinabi ko naman talaga na ang sektor na ito, kahit kelan, parating kayo ang inuuna. Hindi totoong nakakalimutan, bagkus kayo ang laging una sa listahan," Bongao related.

Tan, for his part, stressed that after the summit, what is more important will be the clarity of action plan, as well as responsibility, monitoring, commitment, and accountability to the Filipino people in implementing agri-fishery programs.

The activity capped off with the recitation and ceremonial signing of the Pledge of Commitment to promote food security and accessibility, foster public-private partnerships, embrace sustainable and climate-resilient practices, strengthen convergence and collaboration, and advocate for the welfare of farmers and fisherfolk for a food-secure and prosperous Bicol region.

Issues and concerns raised during the Regional Food Security Summit 2024 will be processed and classified as to issues for policy recommendation, for resolution, and action by the DA Bicol and NEDA Bicol to be discussed during the RDC Bicol Economic Development Committee meeting in February 2025. (with reports from Alnee Joy O. Adan and Jaime Ramon B. Caro, DA RFO V PMED) Photo Credits: Zandra G. Abogado, DA RAFIS V

FCAs in Cam. Sur get support for cacao production and rehabilitation



■ By Angela Mae Lafuente

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR – A total of 39 Farmer Cooperatives Associations (FCAs) participated in the Regional Launching and Awarding of Interventions for the Year 3 Implementation of the Coconut Farmers Industry Development Plan (CFIDP). The launching was held at the Department of Agriculture Regional Office on November 29, 2024.

For Year 3 (2024) of the CFIDP, 15 FCAs were awarded ₱3.6 million worth of interventions aimed at expanding cacao production. Each association received a comprehensive support package, which includes foliar fertilizer, soil conditioner, organic fertilizer, black net, pruning shears, grass cutters, and grafted cacao seedlings. Meanwhile, 22 other FCAs involved in the Expansion of Year 1 and Year 2 initiatives also received grass cutters to continue supporting their cacao farming operations.

In addition, two FCAs engaged in cacao rehabilitation efforts also received ₱581,528.20 worth of interventions. The rehabilitation package includes a variety of tools such as foliar fertilizers, soil conditioners, pruning shears, a mini chainsaw, grafting knives, and traditional tools like shovels and bolos. These resources are aimed at rejuvenating underperforming cacao trees and ensuring a sustainable, long-term increase in production.

Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, OIC Regional Technical Director for Operations and Focal Person of the High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP), who led the launching and distribution, emphasized the importance of the CFIDP project.

“Isa itong magandang araw para sa atin dahil may mga interventions tayo na pwedeng gamitin ng ating mga association. Ito po ay under ng CFIDP which is funded through the Coco Levy Fund. Ito pong mga interventions na ito ay itinalaga para sa mga farms under coconut,” she said.

She encouraged the farmers to take good care of the resources provided and collaborate within their groups to maximize the benefits from the government’s initiatives.

She also highlighted the need for innovation and collaboration among farmers to achieve long-term success. “Mag-usap-usap kayo sa grupo kung paano mapapahaba ang buhay ng mga ina-award sa inyong interventions. Salamat po sa pagsuporta sa amin, at sa ngalan po ng aming Regional Executive Director, pinapaabot niya po sa inyo ang pasasalamat sa inyong patuloy na pagsuporta sa agrikultura,” she concluded.

Renato D. Acasio, HVCDP Report Officer, emphasized that the interventions will undergo strict monitoring to ensure their proper use. “Kung mapapansin niyo ang binigay ngayon ay okay na brand, ingatan po natin ito. Magkakaroon po ito ng monitoring. Random lang ‘yan, hindi natin alam kung sino ang i-monitor, pero sana pagdating ng monitoring, makita na ang gamit ay hindi madumi kundi ginagamit talaga,” he said. He stressed that the program’s success hinges on the careful handling and effective use of the provided resources, ensuring that they benefit the associations and the broader farming community.

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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
 Agriculture Bicol
 Department of Agriculture-Bicol

Department of Agriculture Bicol
 website: bicol.da.gov.ph