



BAR Chronicle

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

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BAR Delivers in CY 2000

The onset of the millennium has been a productive year for BAR.

An analysis on the overall performance of the Bureau's divisions showed favorable increases in targets and accomplishments in CY 2000.

This and the detailed accomplishments by each division and unit were reported and discussed as the Bureau's think tanks converged in Vista del Mar, Alaminos, Pangasinan on 28 February – 3 March 2001 for the Annual Planning Workshop.

Highlights of Accomplishments

Majority of the Bureau's divisions recorded above-target performances.

The increase in demand of in-house publications led to the top-rating performance of the Knowledge Products and Services Division (KPSD). The number of distributed copies of BAR publications such as BAR Chronicle, Information Bulletin, Techno Calendar, and brochures, flyers, kits, and proceedings all exceeded its respective targets by at least 100%. Moreover, the

number of scientific literature acquired reached a total of 757, far exceeding its target of 100 or a 757% accomplishment.

The National Programs Division (NPD) likewise exceeded its goal, with a 109.52% accomplishment, by establishing 23 RDE networks - two more than its target - following the Department of Agriculture Secretary's initiatives. Last year 16 out of the 22 NIRDEAPs formulated by the networks were approved by the Council for Extension Research and Development for Agriculture and Fisheries (CERDAF).

NPD, through the Implementation of the National RDE Agenda Program, reviewed 249 new proposals, way surpassing its 150 mark or a 166% accomplishment. The program likewise delivered a 161% accomplishment by approving 161 new proposals, 61 more than its target.

The Institutional Development Division (IDD)

likewise delivered well. IDD evaluated 54 degree scholarships, 14 more than its target, recording an accomplishment of 135%. Moreover, it evaluated 56 regional institutional development grants, six more (112%) than its goal.

The Information and Communication Technology Division (ICTD) performed in a similar fashion. Eleven member-institutions of the Agriculture and Fisheries Research and Development Information System (AFRDIS) were upgraded, exceeding three, or 137.5%, from its target. ICTD likewise recorded a 120% accomplishment in web page development, producing 38 web pages more than its 190-page target.

Aside from the assessment of the CY 2000 performance, the planning workshop likewise covered a mandate review of BAR and the formulation of each division's action plan.

More Noteworthy Accomplishments

The Regional Programs Division (RPD) facilitated the

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ERP Reappointed as BAR Director

During a simple ceremony last 8 March, Dr. Eliseo R. Ponce took his oath, for his second term as the Director of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR). Dr. Ponce was sworn in with another re-appointee, Dir. Rogelio Concepcion of the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) by the new Department of Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor.

Considered as the "Father of Networking in R&D" (as quoted from Dr. Concepcion's speech), Dr. Ponce made a significant mark as he initiated and set directions towards the formulation of the now established national research, development, and extension (RDE) networks under which a set of National Integrated Research Development and Extension Agenda and Programs (NIRDEAPs) were developed. Through the one-system-one-program approach, researchers link to an integrated R&D program that is being coordinated by the networks to produce new technologies that can be readily utilized by our farmers and fishers.

On his second term, Dr. Ponce hopes to continue and

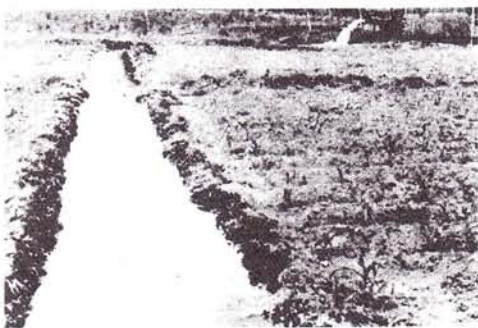


DA Sec Montemayor leads the oath taking of two reappointed directors, Dir. Eliseo Ponce (BAR) and Dir. Rogelio Concepcion (BSWM), joining them are DOH Sec. Manuel Dayrit and SEARCA Executive Dir. Ruben Villareal.

add to what has been achieved in the past years.

Present during the ceremony were Department of Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit, and SEAMEO Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) Executive Director Ruben Villareal. (Rita T. dela Cruz)

Irrigation and Drainage RDE Agenda



Members of the newly created Irrigation and Drainage RDE Network presented their proposed National Integrated RDE Agenda and Programs (NIRDEAPs) in the 1st Consultation Workshop with the Farmers/Fisherfolk Industry Advisory Committee (FIAC) last 8 March.

Present were Asst. Network Leader Dr. Victor Ella, BAR Director Eliseo Ponce, selected staff from the BAR National Programs Division (NPD) and representatives from the Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers & Distributors Association (AMDA), and the Comprehensive Irrigation Research and Development Umbrella Program (CIRDUP).

In the absence of Network Leader Wilfredo David, Dr. Ella presented the drafted NIRDEAP. According to Dr. Ella, five major issues will be addressed in the field of irrigation and drainage development: poor performance and drainage development; high cost of

irrigation development; absence of credit to shallow tube well (STW) advocates; high tariffs on irrigation equipment; and negative policies to irrigation.

The agenda will be anchored on two points: strengthening the irrigation and drainage RDE network and the continuous collection, management and upgrading of land and water resources/data for irrigation and drainage system design and technology development.

A 10-point program shall be followed:

a. Aquifer characterization

Collection and analysis of information on groundwater levels and lithology shall be conducted. However, Dr. Ella mentioned that there should be more data collection in order to generate full baseline information.

b. Assessment of surface water potentials for irrigation and drainage development

This shall involve the identification of potential sites for diversion dams and storage reservoirs, studies on land use changes, improvement of hydrologic data, and climatologic characterization of the catchment areas.

c. Identification and zoning of potentially irrigable areas where various modes of irrigation are technically feasible

d. Development and performance improvement of irrigation and

drainage systems and technologies

Specifically, pumps and prime movers for irrigation and drainage shall be improved. This will involve improvements on the technique on small-scale high lift pumping systems and low cost drilling rigs.

e. Identification, suitability assessment, packaging and field demonstration of appropriate irrigation and drainage system technologies

f. Development of improved irrigation and drainage design criteria and parameters

The focus will be on small water impounding projects, small farm reservoir, shallow tube well irrigation, and national and communal irrigation systems.

g. Irrigation water resources protection and capacity enhancement for sustainable development

Development of operationalization of an irrigation and drainage sub-sector monitoring and evaluation system

i. Enhancement of institutional technical capability, mechanism and arrangement for irrigation and drainage systems

j. Development of policy recommendations based on socio-economic, environmental and gender-related concerns in irrigation and drainage development

Prior to approval, the NIRDEAP is still to be reviewed by the Senior Scientists Advisory Committee and the Council on Extension, Research and development for Agriculture and Fisheries. (*Thea Kristina M. Pabuyan*)

FIDA Corporate Planning

BAR to Support FIDA in Reorienting its R&D Focus

The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) recently pledged to support the Fiber Industry Development Authority (FIDA) in the conduct of its first Corporate Planning Workshop on 01-06 April 2001. The support is part of BAR's commitment to provide institutional development support to members of the National Research and Development System for Agriculture and Fisheries (NaRDSAF).

The workshop will serve to reorient FIDA's research and development focus of becoming a more effective and efficient body in the fiber research and development system in the country.

Participants include management officers and staff of the FIDA and representative of ten regional offices. They shall convene to collectively determine the internal and external environmental factors that would help FIDA's management and staff at the

central and field offices towards becoming an R&D oriented FIDA. Also, the group will review its current corporate objectives and refocus its vision and mission in accordance to the AFMA's mandates.

The six-day activity will also serve as a venue for the members to identify a set of strategic priorities and measures that will be the basis for managing institutional transition and planning process.

The Corporate Planning Workshop will adopt an extensive use of participatory planning strategies and techniques for consensus building. This is found important to facilitate exchange of viewpoints and recommendations that will broaden perspectives and new insights on research and development needs of their target clientele.

The FIDA's Corporate

Planning Workshop expected outputs include: restructured FIDA vision, mission and goals; a common understanding of FIDA vision, mission and goals among its management and staff; significant changes in R&D oriented FIDA and its implications; and organizational functions, responsibilities and structure identified and assessed.

Support for this activity is under the Bureau's Institutional Development Program (IDP) in the form of a professional fee for the organizational management expert who will act as the over-all facilitator for the activity expenses.

This corporate planning workshop is the second BAR funded strategic workshop under the non-degree program. (*Mary Charlotte O. Fresco*)

ACAP Holds Biennial Convention

The Association of Colleges of Agriculture in the Philippines (ACAP) held its Biennial Convention on 21-23 February 2001 at the University of Southern Mindanao (USM), Kabacan, Cotabato.

With a theme entitled: "Gearing ACAP Towards Supporting the Modernization of Agriculture," the convention was a venue for identifying feasible projects and strategies under instruction, research, extension, and production programs that ACAP institutions can put to work to promote the government's initiative of modernizing the agriculture sector of the country.

Participants to this three-day convention were the officials of 37 government and private colleges of agriculture that are members of the ACAP.

Dr. Eliseo R. Ponce, director of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) was one of the resource speakers for the convention. Dr. Ponce discussed the role of Research and Development in Agricultural Modernization.

Former Department of Agriculture Secretary Domingo F. Panganiban was the guest-of-honor. Other invited speakers were North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol, Kabacan Mayor Wilfredo Bataga, USM President Dr. Virgilio Oliva, and Dr. Feliciano Rosete, president of the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC). (*Junelyn S. de la Rosa*)

BAR Delivers...

establishment and maintenance of 15 agricultural regional RDE networks, a 100% accomplishment.

The Impact Evaluation and Policy Division (IEPD) likewise recorded a 100% accomplishment, by establishing five of its target databases of completed researches from NaRDSAF member-agencies. IEPD likewise organized the First CERDAF Meeting in November 2000 and the National Agriculture and Fisheries R&D Week in October 2000.

The Project Development Unit (PDU), on the other hand, led the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Winrock International to commence the P21.5-M Pinoy Business Farmer Development Project in October 2000. Moreover, PDU facilitated the approval of the Corn Research Component of the Grains Sector Development Program, a five-year project supported through a loan with the Asian Development Bank and the Philippine government.

The Public and International Relations Division (PIRD) likewise organized a major event, the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Bureau and Thailand's Department of Agriculture in September 2000.

Support services staffs such as the Internal Control Unit, Administrative Division, and Financial Management Division were similarly commended for contributing to the Bureau's overall performance.

The Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation Unit (PMEU) organized and facilitated the workshop. (*Laarni C. Anenias*)

MSI Scientist...

and books that can be availed by members of the NaRDSAF.

Publication grants of the Bureau are managed by its Knowledge Products and Services Division (KPSD-BAR). Requests for publication grants are reviewed by the Publication Grants

Committee to ensure that policies are being observed and to recommend appropriate action to the BAR Director. (*Junelyn dela Rosa*)



Carageenan

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Philippine Society for Microbiology (PSM), Inc., invites all interested parties to the 4th Asia-Pacific Biotechnology Congress and the 30th Annual Philippine Society for Microbiology, Inc. Convention on 16-18 May 2001 at the Waterfront Cebu City Hotel, Cebu City, Philippines. This year's conference will focus on promoting awareness and wider acceptance of microbial biotechnological breakthroughs.

The Congress will feature plenary paper and poster presentations. Meanwhile, the Convention shall provide direct input to the policies and future programs for the PSM. Pre-registration starts on March 31. For more information, please contact Dr. Lourdes M. Tapay of BIOTEH, UPLB, College, Laguna, call/fax her at (049) 536-2884 or (049) 536-2721 or e-mail her at lmt@laguna.net.

The Asian Crop Science Association (ACSA) and the Society for the Advancement of Breeding Research in Asia and Oceania (SABRAO) invite all scientists/researchers in their joint Asian Agriculture Congress on 24-27 April 2001 at the Westin Philippine Plaza, Manila. This year's scientific conference will focus on the theme, *Food Security and Environment Protection in the New Millennium*. The congress aims to disseminate information on technological advances, share solutions to common crop production constraints, forge scientific cooperation, and foster friendship among scientists to promote human welfare. Expected participants are top agriculture scientists from all over Asia.

Registration may be done through mail, fax, or e-mail. For more information and details, please contact The Secretariat at Asian Agriculture Congress, Institute of Plant Breeding, College of Agriculture, UPLB, College, Laguna or call at telephone number (049) 536-3304 or e-mail at asian@laguna.net.

WebNEWS

Unapproved Corn Found in Veggie Corn Dogs

<http://www.science@cnr.com>

Scientist Champions Food-and-Mouth Vaccination

<http://www.dailynews.yahoo.com/h/sc/nm>

Mexico Says Monarch Butterflies Killed by the Cold

<http://www.dailynews.yahoo.com/h/sc/nm>

Scientists Set to Defeat Millennium-Long Problem of Locust and Grasshopper Plagues

<http://www.futureharvest.org/news>

Degraded Agricultural Lands Threaten World's Food Production

<http://www.futureharvest.org/news>

BAR Awards P1.5 M Publication Grant to MSI Scientist

The Philippines is considered the top producer and supplier of carageenan in the world market today having developed and improved the production potential of the seaweed industry in the early 80s. Unfortunately, it will just be a matter of time before the country loses its share of the pie to its more vigorous Asian neighbours. Thus, it is imperative to explore other seaweed species that can produce economically attractive natural products.

To achieve this goal, it is important that information on the seaweed resources in the country be properly gathered integrated and condensed into publications to allow fisherfolk, carageenan producers, students, scientists, and R&D people easy access to relevant information. In an effort to realize this vision, the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) of the Department of Agriculture (DA) awarded a publication grant worth P1.5 million pesos to Dr. Gavino C. Trono,

Jr., professor emeritus of the Marine Science Institute, College of Science, University of the Philippines (UP-MSI) to publish a book on seaweed resources in the Philippines.

Entitled: "Biodiversity (Taxonomy) and Distribution of the Seaweed Resources of the Philippines" (Volume II), the book will feature 222 species of seaweeds and important baseline information needed to develop seaweed resources. This book is a continuation of the first volume that was published in 1997 funded by BAR.

A recognized seaweed expert, Dr. Trono has authored more than 136 technical publications on seaweeds and other marine flora. His most important contributions to the research and development sector of the marine industry are the biodiversity studies on the seaweed flora of the Philippines and the culture technologies for economically important seaweed species. The publication grant is one of the three types of grants given by BAR to support the government initiative for modernizing the agriculture and fisheries sector of the country. These grants are given to an organization or institution to cover the cost of publications of scientific proceedings/symposia, refereed scientific journals, manuals on research methodologies,

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BAR to Hold First Quarter Meeting of RIARCs Managers and Regional Directors for R&D

On 15-18 March 2001, the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) through its Regional Programs Division (RPD) will hold the first quarter meeting of the Regional Integrated Agricultural Research Centers (RIARCs) managers, assistant managers and regional technical directors for R&D at the Legenda Hotel, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan.

At present, there are 15 established Regional RDE networks with members from the regions, State Colleges and Universities (SCUs) and Local Government Units (LGUs). In consultation with the Farmer-Industry Advisory Committee (FIAC), each network has drafted their respective Regional Integrated RDE Agenda and Programs (RIRDEAPs). Through several interface workshops, the national R&D networks reviewed the coherence of the regional programs with that of the national programs.

The first quarter meeting will assess the status of implementation of the Regional RDE Networks including accomplishments, signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), creating regional commodity networks and identifying issues/problems and possible courses of actions. Relevant issues and concerns in support of the regional priority R&D programs shall be tackled including fund appropriations and allocation of seed money to establish Advance Technology Development Projects (ADPs) and On-Farm-Researches (OFRs).

Participants are 15 Regional Technical directors for R&D, 15 RIARC managers, 15 assistant RIARC managers, and two invited consultants--Dr. Art Salazar and Dr. Romy Labios. (Rita T. dela Cruz)

Chronicle

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

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1st Quarter Regional R&D Management Meeting

Roles and Functions of RIARCs Strengthened

The Regional R&D institutions are now facing a bigger challenge of improving the quality of governance in the whole regional R&D system.

This has been the point of convergence between the Regional Integrated Agricultural Research Center (RIARC) Managers/Assistant Managers and the Regional Technical Directors (RTDs) as they convened for the First Quarterly Meeting on 15-18 March 2001 at the Legenda Hotel, Puerto Princesa, Palawan.

Culminating the three-day affair were plenary sessions and interactive workshops designed to reorient and prepare the participants in the drafting of new course of actions and set of strategies that will help them streamline their roles and responsibilities in the regional R&D community. The major concerns covered by the workshop activities included: strategies for improving the quality of R&D governance; new partnership arrangements with the civil societies for increased efficiency; improving accountability; defining the outputs and general scheduling of the regional R&D function; improving research focus and budget allocation; and improving the quality of science, M&E and Research-Extension Interface.

BAR Director Eliseo Ponce reiterated the importance of improving the quality of governance within the DA subsystem to achieve efficiency. The DA subsystem is composed primarily of the RIARCs, DA attached agencies, regional State Colleges and Universities (SCUs), and private and civil societies, which are governed by a common agenda and programs for research and development. He pointed out that members of the subsystem must have a clear understanding of the roles and functions they should perform. Likewise, Ponce tackled the issue on new partnership arrangements that should be established with the civil societies such as NGAs, SCUs, LGUs, NGOs and private sectors to strengthen research-extension linkage.

The participants from 15 regions were grouped into four to develop a framework or strategies in meeting the desired outputs for each workshop. Among the important points generated from the first workshop on improving the quality of R&D governance include the prioritization of R&D projects with great impacts; establishing functional/organizational structure uniform to all regions; adoption of bottom-up participatory approach



Participants during the R&D Management Meeting

Philippine Mariculture Industry Regulation Criteria Proposed

At present, there is no water quality standard for mariculture sites in the Philippines, making it prone to exploitation, and possibly contributing to the environmental degradation problems faced not only by our own country, but the world.

Like any other sectors of the food industry, mariculture (the cultivation of sea animals and plants in their usual habitats, generally for commercial purposes) products need to have a good image, which means an industry that is "well regulated, environmentally-sensitive, controllable, maintained by responsible operators and economically and politically sustainable." With this in mind, it is imperative that proper monitoring and regulation be required of the industry.

The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) through the Marine Science Institute in UP Diliman and UP Visayas embarked on a three-year study to develop marine environmental quality criteria for mariculture areas. Through this study, researchers will develop, adopt and propose water and sediment quality criteria that can be used as a basis for evolving standards for the mariculture industry. Launched in May 2000, major activities, which include assessment of water quality criteria and standards of mariculture sites used in other countries, water and sediment toxicity studies, and estimation of environmental capacity, have already started. Proponents of the study further stressed the significance of a set of guidelines since other countries already have policies on the export of fish and fish products. In the US, a

Understanding Genes, their Effects & Behavior Thru Molecular Bio

This was the main theme of the presentation of Dr. Saturnina Halos, senior project development adviser of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) during the recently held seminar-workshop on Molecular Basis of Life at the Central Philippine University, Iloilo. Dr. Halos discussed the concept of molecular biotechnology which provides a better understanding of genes, their effects and behavior, and how such knowledge can be used in various ways, particularly in plant breeding. Plant breeding, as she elaborated, intends to increase the farmers income by increasing their crop yield, improving food or product quality, improving production and processing, and increasing the marketability of the produce.

By knowing and understanding molecular biology, Dr. Halos said that several applications in plant breeding can be fully utilized. Among these include the use of molecular diagnostics, molecular markers and the development of genetically engineered crops, popularly known as genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Application of Molecular Diagnostics

In her report, Dr. Halos emphasized the need for diagnostics, stating that planting materials need to be clean to ensure the breeding work can proceed. At present, researchers have developed methods to detect pathogens in tissues, one of which is the ELISA technique. This involves procedures and principles similar to those for detecting diseases in human. Another technique is through DNA-based diagnostics wherein the presence of a pathogen is detected by making short single-stranded DNA fragments or a probe complementary to

the short DNA sequence specific to the species.

Application of Molecular Markers

Molecular markers are DNA sequences that are easy to detect in plants. In plant breeding, molecular markers play an important role as tags for desirable traits to indicate the degree of genetic variation of a species and to predict the sex of a plant. Conventional processes of selecting desired offspring in cross breeding would usually take three months before final results are observed, but through these markers, the long agony is cut to a month. Another important use of markers, according to Dr. Halos is for identification of variety.

Genetic Engineering as a Breeding Technique

This process is similar to breeding, but the method is more precise since it allows the transfer of a specific trait into a known genotype, the genetic makeup of an organism. Dr. Halos illustrated the technique by transferring an insect toxin gene from the soil bacterium to a crop plant, making it resistant to the pest insects.

The process of genetic engineering uses the recombinant DNA technique, a.k.a. rDNA which involves a series of steps wherein a desirable gene is isolated and linked to a small DNA molecule, the final spliced DNA product which is referred to as *rDNA* is then introduced into a particular cell.

Aside from the different applications, Dr. Halos also discussed the topic on transgenic crops, its production techniques, and issues and concerns. (Rita T. dela Cruz)

New DOST Head Speaks in Women's Seminar

"Integrate the issue of gender in every aspect of science and technology. Provide role models for young people. Engage in proactive information campaigns."

These were the main message of newly appointed Secretary Estrella F. Alabastro, of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), to encourage women in taking up careers in science and technology (S&T). She said these during the Seminar on Promoting the Role of Women in S&T, held on 26 March 2001 at the Executive Lounge of the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), where she served as the keynote speaker.

She also cited the need for more R&D initiatives on women's health and gender mainstreaming to address the prevailing gender issues in S&T. Human resource utilization in the country will be more efficient when more women are engaged in the male-dominated S&T field, she added. Dr. Alabastro is the first woman secretary of DOST.

The event was part of the Women's Month Celebration of PCA. The Joint Organization of Women Inventors, Scientists, and Technologists, also known as JOWISTS, organized the event. (Laarni C. Anenias)



COGENT Visits BAR

The External Review Team of the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute- International Coconut Genetic Resources Network (IPGRI-COGENT) visited the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) on 20 March 2001 as part of its itinerary to review the achievements and effectiveness of the COGENT in the last five years and determine its strategic role in a proposed global coconut research program.

The external review is timely following the call for COGENT to establish a leadership role in the proposal to establish a global research program on coconut during the 37th COCOTECH meeting of the Asian and Pacific Coconut Community (APCC) in Chennai, India on 24-28 July 2000.

The proposed initiative or program is entitled PROCOCOS and will address coconut-based farming system, crop protection, postharvest and processing, and socio-economics. A member of the team will evaluate COGENT's performance in implementing the recently completed IFAD-funded project and the possible funding support for a Phase 2 project.

Consonantly, the Review Team visited the Philippines to evaluate collaborative projects as a methodology of assessing the performance of the COGENT. It will also assess the country's commitment to COGENT projects and coconut research.

The Team will gather important indicators to assess whether the Philippines is qualified to participate in the proposed IFAD/ADB-funded coconut project which is scheduled in 2002.

The COGENT External Review Team was composed of Dr. Mike Foale, Dr. Randy Hautea, ISAAA regional coordinator and Dr. Dene Cuthbertson, IFAD staff. Accompanying the team were Dr. Carlos Carpio, deputy administrator of the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) and chairman of the COGENT Steering Committee and Dr. Ponciano Batugal, senior scientist of the IPGRI and COGENT coordinator.

The Review Team raised several issues during the meeting with Director Eliseo R. Ponce. Among these were: BAR's synergy with other DA agencies, BAR's commitment to IPGRI, and BAR's role in diffusing technologies to the countryside. (Junelyn S. de la Rosa)

A Need for an Institution -- SSAC

Irrigation and Drainage RDE Programs Reviewed

"The DA should create an institution over this." Thus emphasized by Dr. Fernando Bernardo, chairperson of the Senior Scientists Advisory Committee (SSAC) during the review of the Irrigation and Drainage RDE Agenda and Program held on 23 March 2001.

The SSAC sees the need for an institution crucial to the development of the network's manpower complement in order to hasten the integration, planning, design, and operation activities of the newly created Irrigation and Drainage RDE Network.

Network Leader Wilfredo David presented the 10-point program proposal encapsulating the network's overall goal of identifying and formulating appropriate solution strategies and measures to address the technical, economic, environmental, social and political dimensions of irrigation problems and constraints in the country.

Each program covers specific projects, corresponding objectives, budget, implementing agencies and number of target years for implementation. These programs are designed to address the country's long-standing problems in irrigation and drainage systems such as lack of irrigation-related baseline information; poor performance of existing irrigation and drainage systems and technologies; high cost of irrigation and drainage development; lack of water resources capacity enhancement measures for sustainable development; and inadequate institutional capability for effective monitoring, coordination and management of irrigation and drainage systems.

Another major point that was raised by the Committee during the review was the proper presentation of the program's proposal that will "convince" the Department of Budget Management (DBM) and Congress to allocate

more funds to support the projects that have great impact. Dr. Bernardo suggested that the network should improve the presentation of data by showing the impact of irrigation to farm productivity and how irrigation indirectly affects crop productivity and profitability.

Likewise, Bernardo suggested that prioritization among the program's projects should be made since the Government is in the process of realigning its budget as it deals with large budget deficit.

In connection with the development of new irrigation systems, SSAC member Florendo Quebral pointed-out that cheaper sources of energy needed to run minor irrigation technologies should be considered since the price of fuel is becoming more expensive.

Also present during the review were BAR Director Eliseo Ponce, Asst. Irrigation and Drainage Team Leader Dr. Victor Ella, network technical staff, and BAR National Programs Division staff. (Mary Charlotte O. Fresco)

RIARCs...

in program planning; defining the powers and functions of the regional institutions with reference to Executive Order 338; adoption of RDE pyramid when it comes to budget allocation; establishment of an integrated R&D database/system for the region; and realignment of personnel on need basis following the new organizational structure.

On the other hand, significant results from the second workshop on new partnership arrangements showed that the role of provincial and municipal offices as research partners should be strengthened and reactivated.

As for strategic outputs of the workshop on improving the research focus and budget allocation, each region was directed to identify its banner commodities that are highly productive and at the same time most profitable to the local farmers.

An open forum was facilitated to integrate all the issues and concerns and device appropriate ways to effect research-extension interface. Suggestions/recommendations among the regions were found crucial to ensure that research outputs at the midstream level are relevant to the farmer's needs and shall reach the farming and fishing communities.

Other workshop participants were BAR Assistant Director Jovita Corpuz, staff of BAR Regional Programs Division (RPD), who served as over-all coordinator for all activities and Mr. Jesus Fernandez who served as facilitator/moderator. (Mary Charlotte O. Fresco)

BAR Prepares for 22nd SOM-AMAF Meeting

Department of Agriculture (DA) Assistant Secretary Segredo Serrano called all concerned units of DA and other agencies to a preparatory meeting for the coming 22nd Special Senior Officials Meeting-ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture & Food (SOM-AMAF) held on 19 March 2001 at the DA Compound.

Participants discussed the provisional agenda, which include interventions, inputs, and comments about particular entries of the plan for the SOM-AMAF meeting. SOM-AMAF Country Leader, Serrano set the deadline for the presentations of the comments and inputs of those units who failed to come to the summon.

The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), represented by Mr. Victoriano Guiam of the Public International Relations Division (PIRD) presented a brief description of the proposal on the Strengthening R&D Partnership through the Southeast Asia Forum on Agricultural Research (SEAFAR). The establishment of SEAFAR will serve as the venue for an active partnership among R&D institutions in the region as well as with the other agricultural research fora, National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) within SEA and of China, Korea and Japan, and International Agricultural Research Centers (IARCs).

SEAFAR is set on three specific objectives: to foster the exchange of information and promote knowledge management in the region; to ensure a successful partnership among stakeholders of agricultural research; and to increase awareness among policymakers and donor institutions on the critical role of R&D in regional development.

The SEAFAR proposal was handed on to the ASEAN secretariat for possible inclusion in the upcoming SOM-AMAF meeting on 24-26 April 2001 in Cambodia, and the SOM-AMAF+3 Meeting (will include participants from China, Japan and Korea) on 26 April 2001. (Rita T. dela Cruz)

Mariculture...

guideline preventing the shipment of fish and fishery products without a government accredited Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) was released by the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA). "If fully implemented, the US FDA will not only consider the quality of the fishery products but also the quality of the environment where the products are obtained or cultured," they added.

Existing marine water quality criteria

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BAR Launches Plant Genetic Resources Network

In a bold move to put a serious effort to conserve the country's dwindling plant genetic resources, the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) in cooperation with the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) launched the National Network for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) in a ceremony held at the BPI compound on 23 March 2001.

National Scientist and UP Professor Dolores Ramirez explained the urgency of the situation, saying "This is the first time that there is a serious effort on PGR... we have to conserve our resources - fast (because) there is permanent loss of genetic diversity due to industrialization and land conversion

practices."

Guest of honor was DA Undersecretary Ernesto Ordoñez who represented DA Secretary Montemayor to the affair.

Ordoñez encouraged and congratulated BPI for their initiatives on PGR, which is in harmony with Montemayor's two main agenda that deal on improving the plight of poor farmers and fisherfolk, and people empowerment. "As we conserve (our PGR), we continue to develop the best varieties that we can produce and multiply it. However, these would be of no use if we cannot spread it, thus the need to commercialize," he added.

As part of the ceremony, symbolic cheques to fund the network were turned over by Ordoñez and BAR Director Eliseo Ponce to BPI (P3 million), the network's major partner Institute of Plant Breeding (IPB) (P3 million) and the National Plant Genetics Resources Laboratory in UPLB (P4 million).

The PGRFA network was created to support the country's efforts to sustainably conserve its biodiversity. Under the network, a national system for collection, conservation, regeneration, multiplication, characterization, documentation, and utilization of PGR shall be established.

The network shall be composed of various research centers and institutions in the country. The National Plant Genetics Resources Laboratory shall maintain the national base collection of all crops, which shall include duplicates of all collections and information of the centers. Network Leader Ceferino Baniqued however stated that, the centers' activities are quite disconnected, causing a lot of duplicates and gaps in the conservation efforts. "It is imperative therefore, for the institutions to choose which collection to maintain based on their financial capabilities, manpower complement and facilities," Baniqued said.

"Should the PGR network be operational, the first thing to be done is training," Ramirez added. "Most centers just collect, they don't know their limit- only few are trained on PGR. Many of the collections are elite germplasm without a wide range of genetic diversity. With proper training, PGR should then be imbibed and internalized by the centers," she said. (Thea Kristina M. Pabuayan)

17 NaRDSAF Members Receive Scholarship Grants

Seventeen members of the National Research and Development System for Agriculture and Fisheries (NaRDSAF) recently passed the screening for the scholarship program on master's and doctor's degrees.

The DA-BAR NaRDSAF Scholarship Committee composed of experts and heads of DA national centers, staff bureaus and partners state colleges and universities (SCUs) conducted the screening of 27 applicants from the national and regional R&D institutions and SCUs.

Nine (9) applicants were approved for the Ph.D. while eight (8) were approved for the Master's degree. The scholars will be entitled to a monthly stipend, matriculation and other school fees, thesis and dissertations support, book allowance, graduation fees and relocation allowance. The scholars will also be provided with full basic salary and other benefits by their respective mother agency for the duration of the grant. The grantees are required to submit a program of study and list of proposed thesis/dissertation topics prior to his/her admission.

Six Ph.D. scholarship grantees are from the national and regional SCUs namely Mr. Edwin Mituda, Mr. Jonar Yago, Ms Zenaida Gonzaga, Mr. Melchor Da Jose, Ms Virgilia Aberin, and Mr. Francisco Gil Garcia. The remaining three are from the regional R&D centers and Provincial Technology Institute for Agriculture and Fishery (PTIAF) namely, Mr. Allan Poquita, Ms Aileen Alvarez and Mr. Silvestre Escueta.

On the other hand, five scholarship grantees for master's degree came from the national and regional R&D centers namely, Ms Juvy Salazar, Mr. Marianito Doydora, Ms Grace Gutierrez, Ms Grace Payumo and Mr. Frenciso Vasquez. The three remaining grantees are from

the national and regional SCUs namely, Mr. Nathaniel Alibuyog, Ms Sorhaila Latip and Mr. Arnolfo Monleon.

The Human Resources Development Program is one of the institutional development initiatives of BAR to develop a pool of highly competent researchers and research technical staff equipped with a degree in agriculture, fisheries and other related fields relevant to the attainment of a more efficient and effective R&D system in the country. (Mary

Mariculture...

of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the ASEAN interim guidelines for marine water were obtained. Results showed that the proposed criteria value for oxygen for ASEAN is 20% lower than the current DENR value of 4 mg/l versus 5 mg/l. DENR does not have criteria values for nutrients while there are proposed values for ASEAN for the parameters nitrate, nitrite and phosphate. Criteria values for metals and cyanide proposed for ASEAN appear to be much more stringent, being ten times lower for many of these parameters."

Likewise, pertinent references and documents were obtained from other countries: Regulation and Monitoring of Marine Cage Farming in Scotland - A Manual of Procedures; Improved Environmental Manual of Best Practice; and Quantification and Reporting of Nitrogen and Phosphorus Discharges/Loses from Aquaculture Plants. (Thea Kristina M. Pabuayan)

(For complete results, please see the paper on "Development of Marine Environmental Quality Criteria for Mariculture Areas" at the Marine Science Institute or the Bureau of Agricultural Research.)

Chronicle

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