



BAR director sets down 7-point agenda



Dr. William Medrano, new BAR director, presents his 7-point agenda during the turnover ceremony.

The winds of change have again come to the Department of Agriculture (DA). Last February 17, Dr. William C. Medrano assumed directorship of the DA's Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), the lead agency that manages the country's agriculture and fisheries research and development.

Medrano succeeded Dr. Eliseo R. Ponce who assumed office in 1998.

With only 15 months to lead the Bureau, Medrano is intent on having BAR play a more proactive and dynamic role

coupled with urgency to realize President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's mission of a modernized Philippine agriculture. "BAR shall institute bold and urgent steps in making R&D significantly contribute to Secretary Luis Lorenzo's goal of

increasing income of farmers and fisherfolk, generating more jobs, greater food sufficiency, and stable food prices in basic commodities," Medrano explained.

Towards this end, Medrano is set to implement a seven-point agenda, namely:

- Appropriate more resources on the conduct of applied and on-farm researches (OFRs) following the farming system perspective to fast track technology promotion, adoption and create immediate impact on farmers and fisherfolk.

"This has been the policy pronouncement of the (DA) Secretary - to focus our resources on applied and adaptive research. From the very words of the Secretary, we should not focus so much on classroom research," Medrano said. "I know that it will be fulfilling for all of us when we'll see our farmers and fisherfolk flash the smile of contentment on their faces and by then, we have partly fulfilled our mission at BAR and in our careers," he added.

- Support priority high impact R&D projects that have

see BAR director sets ... page 3

Inside...

- ☛ Luzon Zonal Research Center...page 4
- ☛ Seeds of change planted by...page 5
- ☛ Coping with *El Niño* the Isabela...page 6
- ☛ Cracking the coconut oil...page 7
- ☛ Medrano takes over the chair of...page 8

BAR strategically charts plan for 2003

To ensure the consistency and relevance of the programs and activities with the priorities of the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) strategically mapped out its plans for the first quarter of the year through an evaluation and planning workshop on 6-8 February 2003, Makiling Highlands, Calamba, Laguna.

The plans were mapped out,

the Bureau's performance in 2002 was assessed and the resource allocation was rationalized. The rationalization of resources provided clearer options in the prioritization of programs and activities given the limited funding for research and development (R&D).

Following a participatory approach in the conduct of the workshop, participants identified three specific points in mapping out the plans

see BAR strategically charts...page 7

Continuing where one takes off

Is it human nature to slow down on what one is doing when there is an impending change? Is this because we fear there would be no continuity of policies, and thus, the programs and activities? Or is it a plain slackening syndrome? This was the general feeling when we learned that there are changes to be made at the top. And we waited long for the changing of the guards so that when it came, everyone has been conditioned and we were ready for the change.

Always the professional, the exits and entrances are graceful. The pawns, silent with anticipation, watch the changing of the guards with the wish that whatever the changes, they are for the better. In the words of that wizened institution builder who is BAR's senior technical adviser, he admonished that in situations like this, we must have the right attitude as we deal with an organization that is destined to grow and prosper in the service of the farmers and fisherfolk. We must continue to build a BAR that leads, he said.

Putting now everything in context and using a neutral and scientific perspective, the scenario falls rightly into how things should be in the continuum of research and development. Maybe I was dazzled by one man's brilliance without giving the benefit of doubt for another one's ability. And now, I see that without any conscious effort, where one leader takes off, the other continues on. Is this a normal phenomenon in this chaotic universe? Or we, in the scientific world, are a different breed where one easily fits in without destroying the other. Each person has valuable knowledge and experience to contribute.

The new director said that we should now intensify the conduct of community participatory action research (CPAR) to fast track technology promotion. This is not a new thing. We did it in tobacco

more than two decades ago where the farmers were our partners in the conduct of technology verification and dissemination. We used his field as the research area, trained him to gather and analyze the data, and prepared him to present his findings in scientific fora. The vision of the director is different. With BAR leading, we move the matured and appropriate technologies on the six identified commodities to the farmers for these to be locally tested with them, determine their effectiveness and support and strengthen indigenous research skills. In so doing, the farmers are made aware of the changes brought about by the change in practice. He can actually experience the relative advantage of the new practice in terms of productivity, ease of application and efficient use of resources. And finally, when the farmer adopts the technology and can increase his yield and the quality of his produce, he can become globally competitive. This is the new director's vision.

How is this different from the technology promotion of the Philippine Rice Research Institute? Theirs is an awesome undertaking cutting across all regions in the country. When I synthesized their voluminous data in 2000, they have already conducted techno demo in more than 9,000 sites and they proved that with the new technologies, the rice farmers can increase their yield from a mere 2.5 tons per hectare to even more than 7 tons when all we need to produce to become self sufficient in rice is 5 tons per hectare. The budget for the project, however, is also awesome. But the benefit is rice, rice, and more rice.

There is no 'trickle down' or 'ripple' effect in the strategy. The CPAR is envisioned to spurt the flow of development to make the less fortunate live and not just to survive. The more important lesson is: there is research, learning, and action partnership. The researchers, farmers, and the local government officials learn to collaborate and converge for positive personal, institutional, and social change. (VAD)

ANNOUNCEMENT

Call for Proposals State of the Art: Agricultural Commodity Research

The Bureau of Agricultural Research is accepting proposals for the project State of the Art: Agricultural Commodity Research. The project should be a compilation of the latest technologies developed in research for specific agricultural commodities, together with a brief description of each technology. It should also include an assessment of the state of knowledge already achieved from the past and on-going researches based on published and as much as can be gathered from unpublished reports, both local and international. It should include an analysis of the validity of some of these reports. The commodities to be studied are either a combination of corn and coconut or a combination of banana and abaca. The deadline for the submission of proposals is on April 30, 2003. Interested researchers may submit their proposals to:

Governance, Impact Evaluation and Policy Division
Bureau of Agricultural Research, 3/F
ATI Bldg., Elliptical Rd.
Diliman, Quezon City 1104

For more information visit:
<http://www.bar.gov.ph>

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BAR director sets...



Outgoing BAR Director Eliseo Ponce (left) shakes hand while passing the symbolical logo to new BAR Director William Medrano (right) during the official turnover.

direct bearing on the development of small and medium enterprises and, more importantly, the income generating capabilities of resource-poor farmers and fisherfolks.

Accordingly, this will focus on the six basic commodities that the DA Secretary has given emphasis: rice, corn, coconut, sugarcane, vegetable, and aquaculture.

- Develop collaboration among existing R&D systems, consortia, networks, and SCUs at the national and local levels to enhance sustained growth in agriculture.
- Strengthen the capability of the DA R&D system and foster active partnership with the LGUs and other concerned institutions in the region.

"I understand that BAR was initially created to manage the DA R&D system and therefore, we must strengthen it to effectively cater to the needs of the people," Medrano said. Along this line, Medrano reveals that selected RIARCs and RIFRCs shall be developed to become centers of excellence in R&D focusing on

strategic commodities like what is already being done in rice. "It is because there is a specific and world-class research facility institution that takes care of this commodity (rice) that makes it so successful in this approach. This should be true for all major commodities," Medrano explained.

- Institutionalize the planning and implementation of an integrated and unified R&D agenda of both DA-BAR and DOST-PCARRD/PCAMRD.
- Develop mechanisms using information and communication technology (ICT) and other means to enhance sharing and exchange of relevant information and technologies to fast track decision making and technology adoption.

Medrano noted Dr. Ponce's efforts in bringing BAR, including its networks and partner institutions, throughout the country to the level of ICT development that it has today. "All that is left is to further develop mechanisms to enhance sharing and exchange of relevant information and technologies using this ICT to fast track decision-making and

technology adoption," said Medrano.

Advocate policies that promote sustained growth in agriculture and to develop strategies to increase investments in R&D both from the government and private sector here and abroad.

Patterning from DA's "*May dating na, may aksyon pa*", Medrano wittily coined BAR as an acronym for "*Bigay Agad Resulta*."

Concluding the presentation of his agenda, Medrano credited his predecessor for leading BAR to what it is today. "The direction has been clearly set; the plans strategically laid out and ready to be implemented for the year and next years to come or until there is another change of guards after the next 17 months or so. I am emboldened with the thought that he has made my work, and thus, my life easier as the next director," Medrano said.

Likewise, Medrano expressed confidence in working with BAR's existing circle of networks and "the same people will be working with me. I am certain of the pleasure and privilege of working with this select group of people. Let us join together, firm in our conviction and certain to where we want to go," Medrano added. (*Thea Kristina M. Pabuyan*)

BAR directorship is now Medrano's responsibility

A change gently rocked the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) as Dr. Eliseo Ponce ended his five-year term of leadership to give way to Dr. William Medrano. The handing over of responsibility was made official during a formal turnover ceremony on 17 February 2003 at the BPI Seed Lab Conference Room. The occasion was attended by the staff of the Bureau, the national team leaders, and representatives from the Regional Integrated Agricultural Research Centers (RIARCs) and other support groups of BAR.

➤ see BAR director sets ... page 4

Luzon Zonal Research Center readies for action

The Luzon Zonal Research Center for Agriculture (ZRCA) is set to hold its 1st quarter meeting for 2003 on February 25-28 at Lucap, Alaminos, Pangasinan. DA Regional Field Unit (DA-RFU) II's Cagayan Valley Integrated Agricultural Research Center (CVIARC) is coordinating and organizing the activity.

Newly appointed director of the Bureau of Agricultural Research Dr. William Medrano, BAR-Regional Programs Division Chief Dr. Rustico David, Regional Programs Coordinator for Luzon Mr. Domingo Caliweg, and Technical Adviser Dr. Danilo Baldos will grace the event. In attendance are regional technical directors for R&D, regional technical advisers, and regional integrated agricultural research center (RIARC) managers and assistant managers from the DA-RFUs in the Luzon area.

The workshop officially kicked off on February 26 with field

visits to various on-farm research and R&D project sites in Pangasinan. The succeeding days are devoted to business meetings and workshops on various policy pronouncements following the change of guards at BAR and other matters. These include the finalization of the Zonal Framework Plan, conceptualization of zonal RDE projects common to all regions, planning zonal activities for 2003, and discussing actions taken on identified issues during its last meeting in September 2002.

The ZRCAs were designated last year through Administrative Order No. 24, Series 2002, in line with BAR's mandate of consolidating and integrating all RDE programs and activities in both national and regional levels under its 'one system, one program' initiative.

One ZRCA was designated each for Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. These are DA-RFU II: CVIARC, DA-RFU VII: Eastern Visayas Integrated Agricultural Research Center, and DA-RFU X: Northern Mindanao Integrated

Agricultural Research Center, respectively.

Accordingly, the ZRCAs were created to promote an integrated research agenda program through the regional agricultural centers that address cross regional R&D issues and problems within the zones. With the ZRCAs, BAR can decentralize decision-making in R&D planning, monitoring and evaluation, and the implementation of projects within the zones. Likewise, the ZRCAs will develop a system of coordination and management among the zonal RIARCs, and recommend R&D policies for adoption at the zonal and national levels.

The ZRCAs provide technical assistance to RIARCs in planning, implementing and evaluating R&D projects. Likewise, the ZRCAs assist BAR in identifying and implementing other strategies to improve the RIARCs' networking, research, and linkage activities. *(Thea Kristina M. Pabuyon)*

BAR director sets...

Highlighting Dr. Ponce's farewell speech were five important points that, according to him, were attributed to the great transformation of the Bureau, namely: 1) setting high standards of performance; 2) participatory decision-making and transparency of budget allocation; 3) establishment of a planning, monitoring, and evaluation system; 4) focusing on the core values of the Bureau; and 5) investing in the advancement of information technology.

According to Dr. Ponce, these key points served as his central instruments in molding what the Bureau is today. What he did during the past years of his management was to

introduce seeds of changes with great optimism that in the end, the Bureau is able to reap the fruits of these changes. He also emphasized that although he is leaving the Bureau, he has no "heartaches" with the Department of Agriculture. He simply puts the whole situation as that of a daughter who is about to get married; Dr. Medrano as the groom and he as the father. He asked the new director to take good care of his daughter, now that she'll be under his supervision.

In response, Dr. Medrano recognized the remarkable achievements of the past management of Dr. Ponce and added that "taking over Dr. Ponce's responsibility is much easier now

because I have lesser things to do."

Providing the closing remarks for the occasion was DA Undersecretary for Policy, Planning, and Research Arsenio Balisacan. He acknowledged the achievements of Dr. Ponce and mentioned that the past years have been a great witness to the transformation of BAR as an institution that evolved from mediocrity to what it is now. He added that, BAR has achieved a place in the arena of international agricultural research excellence and hoped that with the new management under the leadership of Dr. Medrano, it will be able to sustain its good reputation in the research communities. *(Rita T. dela Cruz)*

Seeds of change: Lessons learned



Dr. Eliseo Ponce (second from right) with some BAR staff after the despedida party in his honor.

He's leaving the Bureau without a heavy heart because he has planted the seeds of change.

Dr. Eliseo R. Ponce, former director of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), said in his farewell speech on February 17, 2003 during the turnover ceremony, "The seeds of change have been planted. They have germinated. It's our individual and collective responsibility to ensure that the reforms envisioned by AFMA are going to bloom, are going to bear fruits."

The former director told the audience that so much have changed in the years that he was with the Bureau. In 1998, he arrived at dripping ceilings with rags strewn about in the Office of the Director and the staff members were barely computer literate. But now, he said, someone approached him and asked if her staff members could have on-the-job training with the Bureau. She wants her staff to develop the work ethics that BAR has. The staff in BAR do overtime, they do stay in the office during lunch hours, and they are good with computers.

How did BAR do the transformation? Dr. Ponce shared some lessons learned.

First, he said that he set high standards of performance. To set high standards, the people must be trained and see if the standards are met, he said. A

step in setting high standards is by coming out with the manual of operations per division (administration, finance, etc.) and per regional research centers or the Regional Integrated Agricultural Research Centers (RIARCs). "Before, there were no manuals or guidelines that set the parameters of behavior and performance," Ponce said. These manuals guide the staff on the day-to-day activities. The manuals are not perfect, he said, and they have to be modified from time to time.

"Many of my staff about three years ago would have to draft their letter three or four times before it gets accepted by my office. This is because the language of the communication did not come up to the standards of that of a national institution," Ponce related, "But today I can tell you that they write beautifully."

In setting high standards, Ponce said, "Don't compromise because there is no end to perfection. I remember what Peter Grackel said that, in any organization to be meaningful, seek high standards of performance. Because to be less will bring us down to the road to mediocrity."

The second step to excellence in the organization is participatory decision-making and transparency. "They think that BAR has so much money so that in my room, I just make a subjective decision on who gets what. Now every week, during our ExeCom meetings, we discuss the

by *Likha C. Cuevas*

performance of every division. How much money do we have? Where will it go?" Through this system, the budget allocation process is demystified by ensuring that at the beginning of the year divisions get their budgetary allocation through a process of discussion. "The allocation for national programs is done using a formula. It's not a perfect formula. We use the congruence ratio modification but it has served us well," Ponce said. "Our system may not be perfect but we have tried our very best to remove the subjectivity of allocation so that it is going to be governed by a system of objective sets of guidelines and procedures."

As part of this participatory approach, division heads evaluate the staff members and staff members evaluate the division heads using an objective set of criteria.

Another point Ponce made was the establishment of the planning, monitoring, and evaluation system. During the first corporate planning exercise, the staff could not distinguish milestones from outputs, outputs from products and products. "But we have gone a long way from that," he said. "During our last corporate planning exercise, I know that we have come full circle. We were no longer discussing about outputs because they know what are their outputs. They are going to measure them. They are not going to seek outputs out of the blue because we know all of our outputs are accounted for. We now focus on the improvement of our products-- the qualitative products of BAR." The divisional outputs are then translated into section outputs. From section outputs, staff members are asked to translate these into individual outputs. That is how they are going to be evaluated: outputs are derived from organizational outputs.

Focusing on the Five Core Values (customer service, teamwork and commitment, work excellence, resource stewardship, and learning and

see *Seeds of change* ... page 8

Coping with *El Niño* the Isabela way

by *Likha C. Cuevas*

With proper strategies and good local governance, provinces in the Philippines can cope with natural calamities like *El Niño*.

This was proven by Mr. Danilo B. Tumamao, provincial agriculturist of Isabela province, as he presented his paper, "*El Niño* Impacts and Coping Strategies: Isabela Experience," during the In-house Seminar on *El Niño*: Impacts and Coping Strategies on February 7, 2003. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific – Course Grains Pulses Roots and Tubers (UNSECAP – CGPRT) Centre sponsored this seminar held at the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) Conference Hall, Diliman, Quezon City. Other organizers of this event were BSWM and the Farming Systems and Soil Resources Institute (FSSRI) of the College of Agriculture, UP Los Baños (UPLB).

Twenty-nine percent of the total agricultural land area of the province of Isabela is devoted to rice, yellow corn, and other crops. In 1999, Isabela ranked first among the 40 rice and corn-producing provinces in the country. According to Tumamao, from October 1982 to March 1983, a significant drought in Isabela was recorded. It extended from April to September 1983 with severe damage to crops. A severe drought hit the province in the last quarter of 1989 to the first quarter of 1990. During the wet season of 1996, a dry spell hit Isabela that damaged the corn farms at a value of P647.30 million in losses. Recently, a moderate drought was experienced during the wet season of 2002.

Before the province was declared under a state of calamity in July 2002, a series of consultation and planning were

already held. According to Tumamao, the affected areas and measures necessary to mitigate the negative effects of the extended dry spell were discussed. The Local Disaster Coordinating Councils (LDCCs) were responsible for this systematic response to the impending calamity. Some of the strategies employed were:

Strategy of convergence. The region was reputed, said Tumamao, to have a well-organized disaster workforce. The Regional Management Committee (RMC) composed of various groups met regularly to assess and describe the situation, formulate measures/strategies, review implementation, and monitor the developments. The LDCCs assessed the situation that resulted to commitment setting and role delineation.

Strategy of counterparting. Stakeholders in Isabela provided seed subsidy and other rehabilitation measures. Some of these seeds were assorted vegetable seeds and mungbean seeds. The Department of Agriculture (DA), National Irrigation Administration (NIA), and other agencies also contributed seeds, fertilizer subsidy, and irrigation scheduling. The local government unit (LGU) also purchased other seeds.

Strategy of providing policy support. The province and municipalities initiated and approved resolutions that authorized the use of calamity funds (5% of the calamity fund for prevention/mitigation and rehabilitation) to procure materials and other inputs. These were the SP Resolution declaring Isabela under the state of calamity and the Rice Loan Memorandum of Agreement between San Mateo town and National Food Authority (NFA) Isabela.

Stratification and offsetting strategy. The vulnerable and/or affected areas were properly identified and this enabled the offsetting of impending losses

from vulnerable areas to lessen the damage by *El Niño*. The strategy also provided the farmers alternative crops and pressurized irrigation pumps in affected areas.

Continuous monitoring and feedback. With the local government, the execution and monitoring becomes systematic and unnecessary delays are minimized and the integrity of the instituted actions was sustained.

The measures in mitigating the effects of *El Niño* were also beset by problems. Some of these were: limited funds to address the needs of sectors affected by the calamity; rehab measures were short-term, deficiency of database particularly on vulnerable crops that affected the prioritization and focus of rehab and development measures; over dependence of LGUs to national agencies for rehab programs; and, the absence of comprehensive rehab programs with long term development action plans, especially the 4th to 6th class municipalities.

For effective programs on *El Niño*, Tumamao recommended that there should be a review of vulnerable areas by municipality and mapping of the degree hazards, like drought levels. There should also be seed buffering and the LGU must stock pile seeds of short maturity like mungbean and other legumes ready for rehabilitation. There should also be equipment and facilities on standby for immediate response to affected areas. The comprehensive rehabilitation plans (convergence, counterparting, etc.) should be institutionalized. There should be accountability, that the municipal agriculture offices must know the over-all situation and be persistent in pursuing the needed rehabilitation actions in their respective areas. ■



Cracking the coconut oil myth

by Junelyn S. de la Rosa

The talk that coconut oil is bad for the health is pure myth.

Scientists from Michigan State University found that coconut oil has many unique nutritional and health benefits. It enhances our immune systems making us more resistant to diseases such as coronary heart disease and cancer.

Nearly half of the fatty acid in natural coconut oil is lauric acid, which converts to fatty acid monolaurin in the body. Monolaurin destroys lipid-coated viruses such as herpes, cytomegalovirus, influenza, and various pathogenic bacteria and protozoa. It is a main component of human breast milk and helps protect children from illness during infancy.

The misconception that coconut oil increases one's cholesterol levels and results to heart disease was based on an overblown hypothesis that all saturated fats are bad for the body. Coconut oil has a high level of saturated fat. However, scientists soon discovered that not all saturated fats are alike.

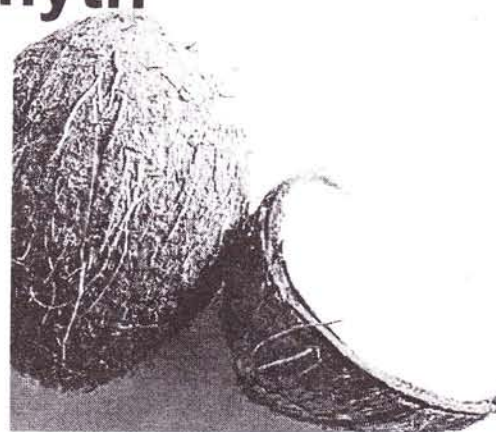
The fatty acids in coconut oil are medium chain triglycerides that do

not raise serum cholesterol or contribute to heart disease like the long chain triglycerides found in seed oils. Also, most research done on coconut oil was not done on natural coconut oil but on hydrogenated coconut oil, which has been altered from its original form.

Hydrogenated coconut oil contains trans fatty acids (TFAs). TFAs are bad for the body. They lower the "good" HDL cholesterol and raise the "bad" LDL cholesterol, raise total serum cholesterol levels; increase blood insulin levels, increase risk for diabetes; affect immune response by lowering efficiency of B cell response and increasing proliferation of T cells; interfere with utilization of essential omega-3 fatty acids; and escalate adverse effects of essential fatty acid deficiency.

Processed foods such as margarine, potato chips and baked goods usually contain hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oil.

In a related study, scientists from the Institute of Biological Sciences, Institute of Plant Breeding and Institute of Chemistry of the University of the Philippines at Los Baños (UPLB) recently cloned and characterized the gene in coconut



responsible for producing the lauric acids in coconut oil.

The gene is called the acyl-ACP thioesterase gene in coconut. Scientists are determined that identifying the gene will set the groundwork for identifying other coconut genes and is a step nearer to their ultimate goal of creating a transgenic coconut which will have more lauric acids. ■

Source: *Cloning and Partial Characterization of the ACYL-ACP Thioesterase Gene in Coconut (Coco nucifera L)* by Marni Cueno, Rita Laude, Antonio Laurena, Ma. Jamela Revilla and Evelyn Mae Mendoza of the Institute of Biological Sciences (IBS), Institute of Plant Breeding and Institute of Chemistry of the University of the Philippines at Los Baños (UPLB); *Health and Nutritional Benefits from Coconut Oil: An Important Functional Food for the 21st Century* by Dr. Mary Enig of Michigan State University

BAR strategically charts...

for the Bureau. These are: consistency of unit/division's programs with that of the Bureau, thorough analysis of last year's performance vis-à-vis the key factors that affected production of outputs, and well-defined targets and expected outputs for 2003.

Culminating the first day was the presentation of each division's/unit's accomplishments in 2002 and the performance measures and program of activities in 2003.

To strengthen the

relationship of the staff, a whole session was allotted to a team building exercise wherein they analyzed their relationship with their associates and come up with doable strategies to further improve them.

To develop the long-term strategies and objectives, the Bureau adheres to a set of core values that defines its commitment to deliver programs. The discussion of the five core values and guiding principles, namely, customer service, teamwork and commitment, work excellence, resource stewardship, and learning and innovation dominated day two of the workshop. Each group was assigned to discuss one

core value and how it could be well implemented in the Bureau. Day three of the workshop consisted mainly of the integration and presentation of workshop outputs.

Attending the workshop throughout the three days were Dr. Eliseo Ponce who provided the opening remarks and guidance in all the activities and Asst. Dir. Nick Eleazar who participated fully and then gave an inspirational closing remarks. Facilitating the whole activity was Dr. Jess Fernandez of the SEAMEO Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA). (Rita T. dela Cruz)

Medrano chairs CABI's Executive Council

The Philippines was re-elected as Chair of the Executive CAB International for this year. The meeting was held at the CABI Center in Wallingford, United Kingdom in December.

The director of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) of the Department of Agriculture is the Philippines' official representative to CABI. Last year, former Director Eliseo Ponce was the Chair of the Executive Council. This year, new BAR Director William Medrano is the Chair of the Executive Council.

Established in 1913, CABI is a global technical agency that supports the generation, access to and use of knowledge for sustainable agriculture, environment management and human development.

CABI focuses on meeting the needs of communities and institutions in each member-country at the same time works with extension and rural development organizations, NGOs, civil society organizations, national research institutions,

universities and the private sector as well as international organizations such as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

At present, CABI is supported by 40 member-countries including Australia, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cyprus, Gambia, Ghana, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sultanate of Oman, Switzerland, Tanzania, Trinidad & Tobago, Uganda, UK Overseas Territories, United Kingdom, Vietnam, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. (*Junelyn S. de la Rosa*)

Source: Minutes of 375th Meeting of the Executive Council of the CAB International, CAB International Center, Wallingford, UK

Web NEWS

New policy framework should assist development of biosafety regulations
(<http://www.futureharvest.org>)

Agriculture in Afghanistan: restoring alternatives to poppy
(<http://www.futureharvest.org>)

DA taps state schools in drive to create jobs, raise farm income
(<http://www.da.gov.ph>)

DA tightens issuance of import permits
(<http://www.da.gov.ph>)

Plants as natural pesticides
(<http://www.pcarrd.dost.gov.ph>)

Hongkong mart remains promising for RP mango
(<http://www.pcarrd.dost.gov.ph>)

Seeds of change...

innovation) is another key to organizational excellence, according to Ponce. "And it is important that all members of the staff internalize these values. I believe that no institution for that matter can move forward in terms of quantity and quality unless their core values are founded in the hearts and minds of every person in a particular institution."

Ponce is proud to say that BAR has one of the most advanced Information and Communication Technology Division (ICTD) and that the Bureau has influenced not only the DA but also the universities. "We had been in the World Wide Web for three years now and I do not think that we had a day that it went out. And even our email has been working 99.99% efficient. We have people who work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In other words, the ICTD is managed in such a way that we have reliable service."

On hindsight, the former

director asked, "Was it easy doing all these, aiming at a high standard? To return papers, to coach? It was not easy but it was very enjoyable on my part. I'm not sure with my staff if they have enjoyed these revisions. But every time that my staff makes progress, I always find joy. The Bureau can only be strong as its staff."

"Finally, let me say that I am not leaving the Department of Agriculture with heartache," Ponce said, "But on one hand, just like I said a father whose daughter is going to be married, in fact, married already, you wish that you could do other things for your daughter. But you know, in

life, even marriage of our daughter, cannot always be planned. God has His own timing."

In closing, Ponce paraphrased a quotation by Claro M. Recto: "Let us plant trees knowing we will never sit under their shade. Let us plant trees knowing we are not going to harvest their fruits. But let us be happy with the thought that someday, someone among the young people would say, 'When the nights were dark and when the nights were long, there were those who did not sleep so that progress will come to this country.'"

BAR Chronicle

A bi-monthly publication of the
Bureau of Agricultural Research
3/F ATI Bldg., Elliptical Road
Diliman, Quezon City 1104

Entered as a second class mail at the Quezon City Central Post Office under permit no. 753-01 NCR