



BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
Department of Agriculture

BAR Chronicle

Visit the official website at <http://www.bar.gov.ph>

Vol. 4 No. 4

A monthly publication

March 2003

BAR implements re-org for efficiency

Director William C. Medrano implemented a new BAR organizational structure with corresponding staff realignment. This re-organization, he said, hopefully is for better efficiency in governance. The proposed re-organization is a product of various Executive Committee Meetings (ExeCom) and consultations with the director's council of advisers.

In Dir. Medrano's latest meeting with the ExeCom, he explained that a re-organization is necessary to streamline operations and realign the assignment of staff towards a more effective and efficient performance. He mentioned that the new structure can harness the capability of BAR regular employees in the implementation of its programs. The new structure is geared toward a more sustainable handling of staff since the Bureau lacks enough regular staff.

Dir. Medrano emphasized that while the expertise of the detailed staff is recognized in handling existing administrative positions, they may be recalled to their respective agencies anytime. But with this set-up, he said, a lapse in the administration of programs and projects of BAR is avoided.

The new structure of BAR is not totally different from the original set-up since the re-organization mainly focused on the clustering of divisions and units that are interrelated.

Under the Office of the Director (OD), are the: Technical Assistance Group (TAG), composed of the Bureau's consultants who are assigned to work in the division where their expertise is most needed; Internal Control Unit (ICU); Legal Unit (LU); Executive Support Staff; Public and International Relations Unit (PIRU); and the Policy and Planning Unit (PPU).

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Dir. Medrano mentioned that, these units play a very crucial role in intensifying BAR's role in R&D.

In a recent meeting with the ExeCom, he stressed the need to strengthen the Bureau's public and international relations by producing more press releases that highlight significant contributions of BAR in modernizing the Philippine agriculture. He pointed out the importance of image building and strengthening partnerships with local and international R&D institutions in enhancing resource generation of the Bureau. He acknowledged various accomplishments of BAR under the previous management. He encouraged an effective documentation system to facilitate

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BAR holds press conference



The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) held a press conference on 24 March 2003 at the CERDAF Conference Room, ATI Building, Diliman, Quezon City. BAR Director William C. Medrano presided over the conference with various members of the print media attending. During the press conference, the new BAR director was introduced to the press. The meeting also aimed to strengthen ties between the media and the Bureau.

The guests were briefed through the BAR Story, an audio-visual presentation about the Bureau, its role and main thrusts in research and development (R&D). Medrano also presented to the press his seven-point agenda, which outlined the path BAR is going to take during his term. An open forum followed wherein the journalists asked issues involving BAR and research and development (R&D), such as funding and implementation of community-based participatory research.

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A short view from inside

Dateline: Kyoto, Japan – I was met by a biting cold weather at the Kansai airport. I knew it would be this cool but never imagined how a 5 or 7°C is, being from a tropical country and who just left behind the beginnings of a harsh summer. And the people could be as cold as their weather. It has not been a long time for me coming from Hawaii so I can compare its people who are as warm and sunny as their weather, even for people they have just met. It is the Aloha spirit, they say, and it was really infectious leaving one smiling at anybody every time, with the sign of the thumb and the little finger outstretched.

For my first day, my son brought me to their laboratory to meet his sensei and his labmates. And after the many bows which I felt so clumsy doing (I was not obliged to do so anyway), then they are back to work unlike our Filipino way where we would dilly dally and try to charm a visitor doing everything we can as part of that proverbial hospitality. I took the attitude positively, even thinking that this kind of discipline could be a contributory factor to the technological success of Japan. If bowing is a sign of respect, then the Japanese have plenty of this.

I am used to the laboratory of PhilRice having worked there as a research fellow and perhaps will always use it as my parameter as I look at other laboratories. In it, one could freely talk and could easily negotiate movement from end to end and any where one moves about. Here at Kyoto, space is a luxury or perhaps, as years went by more and more equipment were acquired and more researchers are accommodated thus, the compulsive saving of space. Unlike in Philippine lab where there are chatters, sounds and

music, here silence is deadening. No conversations. No interactions. It is work. Work. Work. It is Japanese discipline that other cultures and other societies could try.

Bicycles are many and cars are few at the Kyoto University, both at Uji and at the main campus, a polar comparison with that of any university campus in the Philippines. And to think that Japan is the manufacturer of Honda, Isuzu, Toyota and other vehicles, it looks as if our country is the richer one. Actually, it is not whether one can afford a vehicle or not but more on the policies set by government and the cooperation of its citizens. Japan just like the Philippines is a small country and space is a highly expensive commodity. Houses can not have space for a garage. Parking is too expensive thus, dissuading the people from owning a vehicle. Public transport is so efficient and comfortable that punctuality and tidiness are consequential attributes. Train and bus stations are so clean that one would not think twice in taking a mass transport. They are even more convenient than driving one's vehicle, minus the tension and expense in maintaining a vehicle.

Since there are few vehicles, then there is no pollution in the area that I miss the black soot as I wipe my runny nose and teary eyes brought about by the cold environment. No amount of clothing worn over the other could keep the innards from shivering. (I think this is a minus point as I view Japan closely for one could not do much under a very cool environment). Streets are clean. Houses that look unimposing but proportionately constructed look immaculate. Garbage, segregated by type, is collected on the dot and on specific dates. Ah, the Japanese discipline. There is compulsive discipline to what is set by its society. But how long will this last?

On my walking escapades (to keep down the blood glucose) on early

mornings, I have seen cans and bottles of drinks as well as cigarette butts along the streets. Could this mean that the young are beginning to rebel against the discipline? In a public place near a world-known temple, the young are no longer ashamed to display affection. Is the tenaciously regimented life that characterizes Japanese society slowly giving way to the sweet uncontrollable freedoms that many of our youths possess? Maybe suicides in this country will then be a phenomenon of the past.

A week from now, the Sakura or cherry blossoms will open into their majestic beauty. Now, the branches are bare but with little buds sprouting on all branches and threatening to burst into splendor. They say that this is the attraction of Japan. And honestly, this is the main invitation for me to come, forsaking my work at home but which I am doing now in one of the laboratories of Kyoto University.

And rightly so, with many trees lining the streets and filling many spaces in Japan, I can imagine how beautiful it will be when all burst into blossom. Japan is both beautiful and rigid. Somehow, the cherry blossoms will soften the rigidity of the society. This is a view from an outsider who is so used to her freedom of thought,

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ICTD participates ASTI in school-on-the internet

The Information, Communication Technology Division (ICTD) of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) joined the Advanced Science and Technology Institute (ASTI) in a virtual class lecture of the School On the Internet (SOI) Asia Project – Realtime ASEAN Interaction. The online lecture was held at the ASTI Building, Technology Park Complex, UP Campus, Diliman, Quezon City on 20 February 2003. BAR and ASTI participated in the on-going videoconference of several SOI Asia Partner Organizations.

Japan Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi designated year 2003 as “ASEAN-Japan Exchange Year”. An ASEAN-Japan initiative, the WIDE University School of Internet based in Japan, with the cooperation of the Embassy of Japan in Myanmar organized the “ASEAN-Japan 2003” commemoration program on the SOI-Asia network infrastructure.

“Through this program, we hope to convey to the world how IT technology can assist in developing human resources and creating a human network. This project is also one way of enhancing friendship & trust among neighboring ASEAN nations and Japan.”

The lecture was, “IT Networking for Human Resources Development and Cooperation in ASEAN.” Professor Jun Murai of Keio University discussed the impact of networking on human resources development.

Ten students from ASEAN countries and Japan joined the discussion (floor session) wherein they answered the question, “Assuming that the broadband Internet connection is available in the future ASEAN, what is your plan to use it for human resource development in your university, your country, or in the region?” A friendly real-time discussion followed, among participants from the University of Computer Studies in Myanmar, Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand, and

Keio University in Japan. Students and staff from fellow SOI Asia partner countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines (through ASTI).

The SOI was developed in October 1997 with the start of WIDE University’s program. Its aim is to provide a unique educational opportunity for students all over the world to study using the Internet’s digital infrastructure. Most of the working group members are based at Keio University in Shonan Fujisawa Campus.

SOI digitizes all the educational resources used in a physical university and provide these to WIDE University students on the Internet. The goal is to create a campus environment without the restrictions of time or place. Currently SOI is conducting research to develop the implementation tools in order to efficiently and effectively accomplish this goal. (*Likha C. Cuevas*)

BAR holds press...



Reporters from the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philippine Star, Manila Bulletin, Today, Manila Times, Tribune, Manila Standard, Malaya, and Business World were present in the press briefing. Also present in the briefing were Mr. Rudy Fernandez, an agricultural columnist of the Philippine Star, and Prof. Arun Kumar Tiwari, director of the Cardiovascular Technology Institute in Hyderabad, India. Prof. Tiwari is in the country to study on Philippine health issues and to identify possible collaborative areas in health with the Philippine government.

The press conference was organized by the Office of the Director (OD) of BAR, Department of Agriculture (DA) Press Office, and Mr. Rudy Fernandez. (*Likha C. Cuevas*)

BAR attends GEF Biodiversity Indicators workshop

The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), through Mr. Angel Morcozo, head of the Knowledge Management Division (KMD) and Ms. Ligaya Santos of the Regional Programs Section (RPS), participated in the, "Philippine Inception Workshop of the GEF Biodiversity Indicators for National Use Project," at the Visitors Center, Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Nature Center, Diliman, Quezon City on 26-28 February 2003.

The activity served as venue to enhance efforts in conserving the country's marine and coastal resources. It was sponsored by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB).

The workshop is part of the project entitled, "Biodiversity Indicators for National Use – Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Project" implemented by BFAR and PAWB under direct supervision of the United Nations Environmental Program – World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP – WCMC).

Topics include: the GEF biodiversity indicators for national use

project (aims, objectives, expected outputs, and overview of the indicators); existing and development of biodiversity indicators in the Philippines; linkages, institutional arrangements, and Philippine goals of the Project; introduction to indicator frameworks; issues in selecting indicators and designing monitoring systems; exploring different types of indicators; how to conduct effective consultations with decision-makers; and information users on the utility of the indicators produced, and producing guidelines for indicator development and final reports (documenting the process and technical outputs).

Participants identified key information needs and questions of decision-makers and users of biodiversity, designed monitoring systems for selected ecosystems, and produced a workplan for developing biodiversity indicators.

BFAR and PAWB produced the workplan for July 2003 to December 2004 which presented likely problems and solutions; key decision points; key institutions and people; communication with policy makers; and scheduling for the project. (*Likha C. Cuevas*)

BAR implements...

technology promotion and transfer.

One major change in the new structure is the delineation of the function of the assistant director. Under the new structure, there is only one assistant director. The Office of the Assistant Director (OAD) oversees the operations of both technical and administrative divisions but with special focus on the administrative and financial concerns of the Bureau.

The 10 divisions (NPD, RPD, IEPD, PIRCD, ICTD, PMED, KPSD, IDD, FMD, AD), were clustered into four divisions only, namely, the Program Development Division (PDD), Institutional Development Division (IDD), Knowledge Management Division (KMD), and Administrative and Finance Division (AFD).

Under PDD are four sections, namely, the National Program, Regional Program, Project Development, and Monitoring and Evaluation. Under IDD are two sections, the Infrastructure Development and Human Resource Development while KMD consists of Information and Communication Technology and Knowledge Products and Services. Meanwhile, AFD consists of two sections— administrative and finance.

Dr. Medrano hopes that with the new organizational structure, BAR can speed up the work process and lessen bureaucracy in implementing programs and activities. (*Rita T. dela Cruz*)

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>

No more bananas in ten years?

by Junelyn S. de la Rosa

Can you imagine life without the luscious, sweet bananas or a banana split without the delicious banana in the middle? I certainly couldn't and I am not even one of the 400 million people from tropical and sub-tropical countries who eat bananas or plantain as part of their staple food.

Bananas going extinct in the next decade might not be a very far-off scenario. According to Dr. Emile Frison, assistant director of the International Network for the Improvement of Banana and Plantain (INIBAP), bananas hasn't had sex in 10,000 years and that without scientific help, seedless bananas could disappear within ten years.

However, Dr. Desiree Hautea, director of the Institute of Plant Breeding (IPB) at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) disagreed by saying that seedless bananas have sex all the time, but they cannot have offsprings or seeds. In short, seedless bananas are sterile.

Scientists theorized that common bananas descend from a single seedless mutant that was propagated by prehistoric farmers through asexual means using cuttings or "suckers" growing from the base of the plant.

Our ancestors chose to propagate the seedless bananas without knowing that they were sterile and that this could cause their survival or extinction in the next thousands of years. It was mainly through man's efforts and nomadic activities that seedless bananas were brought from Southeast Asia to Europe, Africa and to the rest of the world.

Since bananas are asexual clones, there is little or no genetic variation making them more vulnerable to pests and diseases. Thus, if one *Cavendish* banana is susceptible to a disease, then all the billions of *Cavendish* bananas are susceptible to the same

disease.

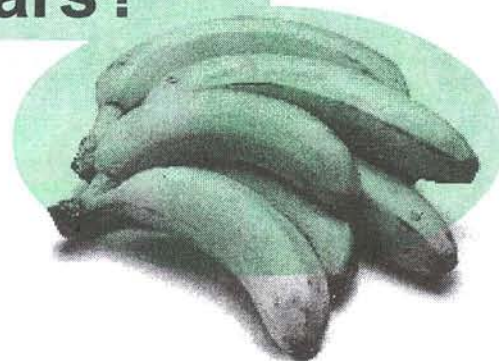
Today, there are many factors that could threaten the bananas' survival—the *Black Sigatoka* fungus, weevils, worms and viruses that routinely attack bananas in the tropics. An attack of *Black Sigatoka* in the tropics where the producers are mostly subsistence farmers could mean starvation for millions of people. The fungus has spread to almost every banana-growing region in the world and reduces yield by 30-50 percent.

To combat this problem, INIBAP is working with scientists from 11 countries to decode the banana's genome within the next five years. Dr. Frison said that identifying the genes of each of banana's 11 chromosomes could help in looking for solutions to prevent the disease.

In the Philippines, Dr. Hautea assured banana consumers that a disease won't wipe out certain banana varieties as the country is still home to the two parents of banana plants. The two seeded parents are *butuhan* and *saging-matsing*. While their pulp is edible, it is not pleasurable to eat them as their fruit is packed full of peppercorn-hard seeds. In the northern part of the country, however, the *butuhan* type is sliced thinly then pickled to become a delicacy.

The (IPB) gene bank has a collection of more than 140 edible bananas, some with duplicates. There are 91 unique varieties in the Philippines, of which less than 10 are grown commercially such as *lakatan*, *latundan*, *bongolan* (local Cavendish, for export) and *saba*.

Other varieties are the *inabaniko* whose fingers in the bunch are attached to each other, *kinamay dalaga* or candy banana of Laguna, the *sabang puti* or the *mestizo of Zamboanga*, and *basilan* or the *Holandes of Davao* which are commonly cooked.



Scientists say that the seeded parents can save our bananas from extinction if a pest or disease attacks the vulnerable seedless bananas. Seedless bananas can be developed using the *butuhan* or the *saging matsing*.

"Banana-wise, we are blessed. Even if a worldwide extinction takes place, our *saba* will survive along with our *saging matsing*," Dr. Altoveros of INIBAP said.

We can now heave a sigh of relief. The bananas will never be a threatened species and we can still find them in our dinner table. Surely, I can still enjoy a banana split in my old age. ■

Source:

- 1) *Lack of Sex Life Threatens Banana Crops* by Steve Conner, July 27, 2001 *The Independent* (London)
- 2) *Banana Lack Sex?* In RP, *Plenty* by Tessa R. Salazar, February 18, 2003 *Philippine Daily Inquirer*

Sciencescoping...

movement, expression, feelings and emotions. Different societies have different cultures; one does not have a monopoly of the good nor the bad. Only one set of parameter to judge all societies would not work. What is important is the happiness and contentment one feels as one lives in its folds. One thing is certain. There are a lot of things to appreciate in Japan and many more to emulate for developing countries like ours so that we, too, could follow the path it traversed into what it is today. (VAD)

Aerobic rice: growing rice with less water

by Junelyn S. de la Rosa

Farmers can soon grow rice using half the amount of water they use in lowland paddies today.

Scientists from the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) are now testing aerobic rice, a high-yielding rice plant that can grow on dry irrigated land instead of the traditional flooded paddies.

Rice is a very thirsty crop. Dr. Bas Bouman, water scientist of IRRI, said rice uses three times more water than wheat or maize. Rice is planted in 20 to 24 inches of water for three to six months thus, to produce one ton of rice, one needs two-olympic-sized swimming pools.

This poses an immense challenge for farmers, scientists and agricultural researchers as populations continue to rise and water levels fall in the next 25 years. Producing enough rice would be harder for farmers in the next decade without a technology that could adjust to the looming water crisis.

IRRI's Aerobic Rice Working Group composed of plant breeders, plant physiologists, and water and soil scientists has a formidable task to tackle. They need to take out lowland rice from its natural environment and make it fit in a new environment without sacrificing the yield.

According to Dr. Bouman, the group needs to test tropical varieties that grow in dry soil, understand the problem of yield collapse and work out an effective crop management system.

The group has identified foremost obstacles in their task of developing aerobic rice and the rice management system that would complement it. At present, they have been studying aerobic varieties from China and Brazil that are suited for subtropical and temperate zones and test how these varieties could adapt to a



source: <http://www.irri.org>

tropical climate.

Dr. To Phuc Tuong, water management engineer and part of the team says, "We already have upland rice varieties that can withstand drought, but they are low yielders and they don't respond to fertilizer inputs".

Aerobic rice would not only thrive in dry soil but would respond to irrigation and fertilizers and produce high yields.

Another problem is managing the weeds. Without the water to suppress them, weeds would be more rampant in dry land and the rice plants would have to compete for the nutrients from the soil. Thus, aerobic rice would have to be harder than its predecessors so it could dominate the weeds.

Next is the problem of "yield collapse" which the group says is the most important obstacle. Without the assurance of high or a better yield, it would be very difficult to convince farmers to adopt the new variety.

Yield collapse happens when dryland rice is not planted in rotation with other crops.

Results of experimental plots show that harvest is good in the first season but drops by 20 percent in the second and may fall a further 70 percent in the third. After the first season, rice

plants' performance becomes poorer- plants don't develop properly, grow enough tillers or set grain.

Scientists are studying yield collapse from all angles. IRRI Plant Physiologist Dr. Renee Lafitte says that solving the problem of yield collapse involves finding the correct germplasm of new varieties that are resistant to yield collapse as well as finding an agricultural system suitable to these plants.

This project will first target areas where water is scarce such as Northern China and some parts of India. The researchers are mapping the potential areas where aerobic rice will be grown in the future.

In the Philippines, this technology would have far-reaching benefits since there is only enough water for half of the irrigated ricelands during dry season. "With aerobic rice, we could encourage rice farmers to make better use of their land and produce more food", Dr. Tuong explains.

Also, aerobic rice technology will not end at saving water but would benefit the environment by reducing water percolation problems. Water percolation from traditional flooded paddies raise the groundwater table and usually cause salinity problems.

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Namnama 1: Cagayan Valley's first high-yielding peanut

by Rita T. dela Cruz

After going through preliminary and advance yield trials both on-station and on-farm, Cagayan Valley introduced its first high-yielding peanut variety that is likely to bring benefits to smallholder farmers in Region 2. The high yielding variety is called *CV Pn 90320 (CV Pn 1)*, locally known as *Namnama 1* or "Hope". Indeed, *Namnama 1* could be the hope that Cagayan Valley farmers have been waiting for.

There is worldwide demand for peanuts. In fact, in the Philippines alone, according to the Institute of Small Farms and Industries (ISFI), 76,216 tons of peanuts is required per year and in the last 10 years, the national average yield of peanut in the country remains low, 0.70-0.86 mt/ha. A big chunk of the distribution is consumed as food (26%), feed (26%), and seeds (8%).

Regions 1 and 2 are the leading producers of peanut in the country accounting for 67% of the country's production.

In terms of the unit of land allotted to peanuts, Cagayan Valley ranked first. Primary buyers include local peanut processors and feed manufacturers and more than half of them are from the National Capital Region (NCR).

Since domestic production is low, the country is getting more than half (57%) of its required amount from other countries. Last year, the Philippines imported 46,000 mt of peanuts from China, India, and Vietnam.

According to the Department of Agriculture-Cagayan Valley Integrated Agricultural Research Center (DA-CVIARC), there are various reasons why domestic production of peanut is low. Among the major reasons

are: farmer's use of low level technology, poor quality seeds and traditional varieties, use of peanut as intercrop rather than a primary crop, and it's a seasonal crop.

Before *Namnama 1* was introduced, DA-CVIARC requested germplasm materials from the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in 1996.

ICRISAT released a total of 99 breeding lines of peanut varieties which were used for the generation advancement and screening. Forty (40) promising entries were selected and subjected to yield trials in 1997-1999. The final stage was the National Cooperative Test (NCT) wherein three top yielding varieties of peanuts were tested. Out of these tests, one high-yielding variety emerged—*Namnama 1*.

Namnama 1 is an all-season variety, high-yielding (2,485.2 kg/ha), short, growing to about 38.6 cm to 56.5 cm only, resistant to foliar disease and cutworm insect pest, and drought-

resistant.

Compared to other varieties, *CV Pn 90320* was a consistent top yielder during wet and dry season with a mean yield of 2,337.7 kg/ha during the wet season and 2,485.2 kg/ha during the dry season. Moreover, the variety did not only perform well in Region 2 but in other regions as well.

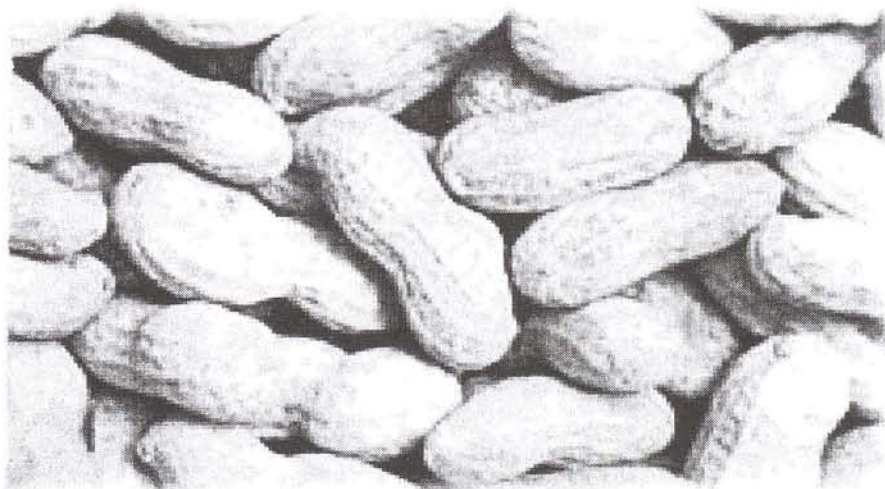
In 2001, *Namnama 1* was recommended by the Field Legumes Technical Working Group (FLTWG) for seed multiplication and sent for approval to the National Storage Industry Consortium (NSIC) in 2002. ■

Sources:

1. Aquino, R.G., et al., 2002. "*CV Pn 1: First Cagayan Valley High Yielding Peanut Variety.*" Paper presented during the 14th National Research Symposium, BSWM, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines on 27 November 2002.

2. "Realizing the promise of green biotechnology for the poor" http://www.uneca.org/harnessing/chapters/chap3/Chapter3_97_102.pdf.

3. Institute for Small Farms and Industries (ISFI). "Peanut postharvest, processing and marketing" <http://www.isfi.cjb.net>



Medrano sets policies with regional R&D officials

Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) Director William C. Medrano met with the regional R&D officers to present and discuss his policy pronouncements particularly on the planning and implementation of regional R&D programs. This is part of the on-going reorientation of R&D officials following the change of leadership at BAR last February.

The special regional R&D management meeting was held on 18-19 March 2003 at the JICA Training Room. ATI Building. The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) assistant regional directors, regional fisheries R&D center managers, Regional Integrated Agricultural Research Center (RIARC) managers, assistant managers and regional technical directors for R&D, and the National Fisheries R&D Institute (NFRDI) head and staff participated in the meeting.

According to Medrano, the reorientation is to further improve BAR's efficiency and effectiveness in managing the country's R&D. Likewise, the workshop was held to institute bold and urgent steps to make

R&D contribute significantly to farmers and fisherfolk productivity, discuss and address common problems in relation to R&D, and come up with logical and workable implementation strategies that can be the bases for approving the R&D plan in agriculture and fisheries.

During the meeting, Medrano presented and discussed his seven-point agenda. He solicited and discussed with the group appropriate strategies in support of his policy pronouncement.

One of Medrano's seven-point agenda is to appropriate more resources on the conduct of applied and on-farm researches (OFR) following the farming system perspective to fast track technology promotion and adoption, and create immediate impact on farmers and fisherfolks. In relation to this, the participants discussed the framework and action plan of the OFR and community participatory action research programs, focusing on the six priority commodities of DA Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo. The priority commodities are rice, corn, vegetables, coconut, sugarcane, and aquaculture. *(Thea Kristina M. Pabuyan)*

Aerobic rice...

Now commercially used in China and Brazil, the aerobic rice technology and its management system was first launched on 13 March 2003 at a special farmers field day in Paniqui, Tarlac, attended by Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr., International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) Director General Ronald Cantrell, Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) Executive Director Leocadio Sebastian, National Irrigation Administration (NIA) Administrator Jess Paras, Tarlac Governor Jose Yap, and other local officials.

The aerobic rice project is a joint project involving farmers,

scientists, and researchers from PhilRice, NIA, and IRRI. As a team, they will further develop aerobic rice and the management system it needs.

"We want to develop an integrated aerobic rice package for farmers to solve all the main problems that will confront them when they start growing aerobic rice," Dr.

Bouman explains. ■

Source:

1) *Aerobic Rice: preparing for the water crisis* by Dr. Bas Bouman et. al of the International Rice Research Institute, <http://www.irri.org>

2) *Water-Crisis Rice Technologies for the Philippines* (press release on March 12, 2003), <http://www.irri.org>

Web NEWS

A first in Southeast Asia 'Aerobic rice technology' now in RP, seen to boost Palay output despite drought
(<http://www.da.gov.ph>)

Thai-Filipino farmers visit Bt corn plantings
(<http://www.searca.org/~bic>)

"Hotspots" strategy for biodiversity preservation
(<http://www.scidev.net/archives/editorial/comment54.html>)

Spain approves five new GM corn
(<http://www.fundacion-antama.org>)

Spinach in anthrax vaccine production
(<http://www.greenvaccines.org>)

Canada approves Monsanto's gm corn
(<http://www.monsanto.com>)

Policies on forest-based raw materials to benefit furniture and handicraft industries
(<http://www.pcarrd.dost.gov.ph>)

Agri agencies join effort against poverty
(<http://www.pcarrd.dost.gov.ph>)

RP-Korea pursue scientific exchanges
(<http://www.pcarrd.dost.gov.ph>)

BAR Chronicle

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

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