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BAR evaluates policies, refines targets

In its effort to evaluate its performance for last year and draw effective plans, the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) held its annual evaluation and planning workshop at the Development Academy of the Philippines, Tagaytay City, January 27-29, 2004.

Director William C. Medrano, in his opening remarks, provided policy directions by presenting again his seven-point agenda, which are the following: a) appropriating more resources for on-farm and applied research; b) supporting priority high-impact projects; c) collaborating with other R&D players; d) strengthening the capability of the R&D system by forging partnership with the LGU; e) institutionalizing the DA-DOST convergence efforts; f) developing research sharing using ICT; and, g) supporting policies that support agricultural growth and increased investment for R&D.

Director Medrano also challenged the participants to respond to the immediate needs of the Agency's clients given the state of the country's R&D vis-à-vis the shift in government priorities on matters of budget allocation. He expressed confidence that the activity would enable the Bureau to pinpoint policies or guidelines where it falls short. This lays the ground for effective planning for the Bureau to usher in the new year with refined targets.

External Program Management Review (EPMR) chair, Dr. Feliciano B. Calora, in his inspirational message, stressed the need for the Bureau to work under a good policy framework. He also reminded the participants to work with sincerity and vigor in the interest of the Filipino farmer.

During the presentation of the 2003 accomplishments of each division, a leveling-off on how highlights of each division's accomplishments is to be presented was also made. The forum reached a consensus on the components of the highlight presentation, which included the divisions's functions, major key results areas (KRAs), outputs, and

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Inside...

BAR's 5-year investment trend in R&D

The External Program Management Review (EPMR), at the planning workshop held at the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP), presented its analysis of the five-year financial investment trend of the Bureau of Agricultural Research(BAR).

BAR's R&D investment by sector

For crops, from a 61.62% in the 1999 allotment of the budget, it rose to 73.43% in 2000, fell to 56.18% in 2001, rose to 57.93% in 2002 and again fell at 55.60% in 2003.

For fisheries, it had 16.21% of the total budget for R&D investment in1999, fell drastically to 1.21% in 2000, rose to 25.75% in 2001, it went downhill from this point with 14.60% in 2002, and 12.09% in 2003.

The livestock sector, having been given low priority in the budget is largely explained by the fact that the private sector is also investing in livestock. From a budget allocation of 2.68% in 1999, it rose to 10.54% in 2000; fell to 3.30% in

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SCIENCESCOPING

Roads to convergence

Talks about duplication and overlapping of functions among agencies of the government have been a predilection for sometime but not much has been done about this issue thereby continuing to waste dwindling resources, confusing accountability and ownership of honor and recognition, and dissipating impact. A little effect here and a little there do not create an impact. This is one strong reason why critics say that agriculture has not moved as fast as expected even with all the scientists that this sectors has produced. Finger pointing is not necessary because in the first place, it was never our fault. We only have to look at our past mandates that a landmark law tried to correct.

Before the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) then President Corazon Aquino merged many government agencies together through an executive order. Among these were the eight tobacco agencies that became the National Tobacco Administration (NTA). I particularly cite this agency because I saw how the merging created one unified group that could have become very strong if not for the lack of government support as a result of the campaign against cigarette smoking that gradually is killing the tobacco industry in the country. Raw nerves, dissatisfaction, favoritism, political interventions, and non-cooperation rocked the newly merged agency and operation was stalled for sometime, Some were demoted in position but not in salary while others were reshuffled for one reason or the other and those most affected were from the research group and those who benefited most were from the absorbing agency. In time, homeostasis settled in and the capable ones surfaced and were given key responsibilities. This happened when there was a change in administration and the one sitting at the top no longer had preconceived notions of the agency and its people and saw his staff as they are.

This agency I am citing is a microcosm of the RDE world- from technology development to technology utilization, complete with credit and market services. At its peak and during its most effective stage, it conducted its own researches both to discover new knowledge and information and to answer specific problems in the field that are identified through regular consultations with the farmers. It conducted its own trainings for its extension workers, researchers, partners, and farmers and ensured that the technologies developed are utilized by the farmers in its contract growing program. It implemented technology promotion and demonstration activities and invited farmers to see the effect of new technologies during field days. It produced communication materials that are written in the language of the users and aired a school-on-the-air to supplement training and extension. It linked with the private sector for production financing and marketing so there is no overproduction and the quality of leaves needed by the market is what was produced. It conducted an annual research review and planning workshop so the direction is not lost. There may have been flaws and loopholes as well as corruption along the way but what was important was, the development continuum is sustained. While working in this institution, I did not see that wisdom of the whole development process. It is only looking from afar and when I am no longer with the agency that I can appreciate what we were doing. Or is it maturity and wisdom gained through the years?

We can no longer sit complacently and contentedly in our turfs if we want to really make a difference in the life of our farmers and fisherfolk. We had been helping them, no doubt, but we have not made a noticeable difference. The efforts were scattered and dispersed considering the various institutions working toward the same goal. The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) through the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Resources Research and Development (PCARRD) and the Philippine Council for Aquatic and Marine Resources Research and Development (PCAMRRD) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) through the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) and the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) have taken the initiative to unify their efforts, thus, the convergence initiatives they are trying to work out starting the last quarter of last year. Representatives from these agencies form the committee on delivery services.

The committee on delivery services (CDS) has made a head way if judged by the output and the stage where it is in. The other committees must have done similarly but I can only write about the CDS of which I am a member. (To be continued)-VAD

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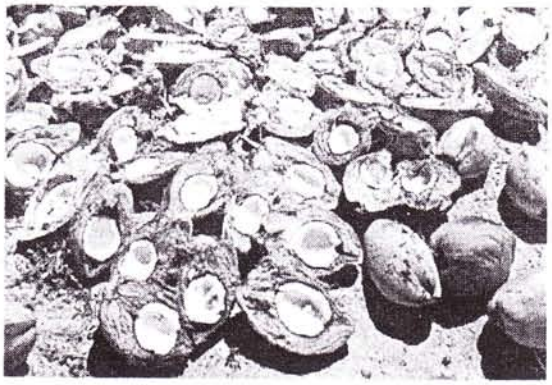
Projection of coconut production for the next three years



The Research, Development and Extension Branch (RDEB) of the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) has recently released its draft projection of coconut in the country for 2004 to 2006. The projection was based on the *copra* terms from 2000 to 2003. The projection was based mainly from historical and actual data of the coconut industry collected by the Philippine Cococnut Association (PCA) and the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines (UCAP). Other sources were: PCA-BAS survey, Small Coconut Farms Development Project (SCFDP-REHAB) by fertilization experience 1991-1998 and Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (DOST-PAGASA) weather outlook and *El Niño* advisories in 2003. To project coconut yield, the paper of Dr. Severino S. Magat of PCA-RDEB on the residual effect of previous fertilization was used as a guide.

Based on the historical performance of coconut production in the country, *El Niño*, that occurred during the period of October 1997 until April 1998 severely stressed the coconut areas. It resulted to a reduced coconut production level, which is as low 1.374 M metric ton in *copra* terms during the 1999 cropping year.

The marked recovery in years 2000 and 2001 with 2.572 and 2.868, respectively, was attributed to the high residual effect, which is 1.83 – 2.01 tons copra/ha per year yield, of the SCFDP fertilizers applied in previous years in farms covering about 350,000 ha combined with highly favorable rainfall in the same period. However, productivity of these fertilized farms have been declining at the rate of 8-9% annually. By year 2007, the level of yields is projected to reach the 1991 level of 0.94 tons copra/ha, and further down to 0.70 tons in year 2010, if nothing is done to initiate an extensive and efficient crop nutrition program.

According to the draft projection, in 2004, the estimated total coconut production of the country will be 2.386 M tons copra (without *El Niño* effect), which is lower compared to the 2.425 M tons copra production in 2003. In 2005, the projected coconut supply is 2.231 M tons at 5% average reduction in yield due to *El Niño* occurrence which is likely to take place as predicted from October 2004-April 2005. For 2006, production is projected to decrease even more with 1.7137 M tons copra at 25% average reduction in yield due to *El Niño*, which is likely to have the highest negative impact after a year from its peak or tail-end of the severe drought that recurs every four to six years in the country.

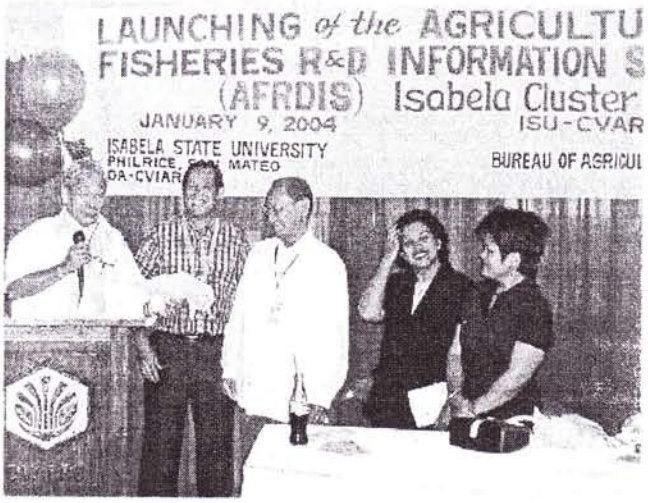
The report has also come up with assumptions to compare the demand production forecast with the supply production forecast. One, if drought takes place starting October 2004 and ends in April 2005 this should have a no or very little effect on yield yet. For 2005, based on past year's experience, an average reduction of about 5 % (nationwide) over production of 2004 is expected; and in 2006 the reduction in yield is projected at 25%. Without the fertilization of coconuts, the 350,000 ha SCFDP farms contribute 1.13 – 1.50 ton copra per ha to the supply of coconuts, the rest (about 2.75 M ha) are very likely to produce an average of only 0.70 t copra /ha per year due largely to nutrient deficiencies and senility of trees (15 %, nationwide). Lastly, it is projected that the effect of new plantings and replantings (about 35,000 – 50,000 ha) is not expected yet to contribute significantly in the supply of harvestable coconuts in the field even up to year 2007. Generally, these are unmanaged and delay in growth and fruiting has been very likely limited by lack of proper nutrition (balanced fertilizer application).

On the other hand, the demand-supply projection showed that in 2004 production in nuts is 12, 673 M and 2.360 M tons for copra. It will further decrease in 2005 with the projected value production of 10, 005 M for nuts and 1.908 M tons for copra. The market-based demand valued at 2.321 M tons is lower, compared to the 2.401 M tons in 2003.

The market-based demand production projection or forecast are influenced by market forces and demand, prices of coconut products, and to some extent the availability of coconut supply. Traditionally, the coconut production forecast or projection in coconut statistical information is that of the market demand and not the potential coconut supply at the field level (farms). This should be clear to every user of coconut production information.

see Projection of coconut...page 5

AFRDIS strengthens Cagayan Valley's knowledge management



ISU Consultant Fortunato Battad (at the rostrum) awards the Php150M check to ISU President Miguel Ramos (third from left) for the Ramos Forest Park. The amount was approved by BAR Director William Medrano (second from left). Looking on were Drs. Masipiqueña and Rimando of ISU.

In its commitment to strengthen the knowledge management capability of the National Research and Development System for Agriculture and Fisheries (NaRDSAF) member-institutions, the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) launched the Agriculture and Fisheries Research and Development Information System (AFRDIS)-Cagayan Valley Cluster on 9 January 2004 at the Isabela State University (ISU) Campus, Echague, Isabela.

AFRDIS, a comprehensive information system for R&D, is a partnership among institutions for easy information exchange and immediate technology sharing and transfer. It's a virtual repository of knowledge that serves as gateway of information among coordinated networks of institutions and systems.

The launching started with a ribbon cutting ceremony led by BAR Director William Medrano and ISU President Miguel Ramos followed by a tour of the new ICT facilities and short demonstrations on browsing the internet, sending e-mail, and video conferencing.

The program proper started with an overview of the AFRDIS by Mr. Ric Castro, assistant head of the Information and Communication Technology Section (ICTS) of BAR.

Highlighting the activity were messages from Dr. Fortunato Battad, ISU consultant and Dr. Medrano who expressed his enthusiasm in bringing ICT to the network for them to use it as their tool in information dissemination.

In his speech, Dr. Medrano mentioned the importance of information sharing in attaining development. He also touched on how researchers can fully utilize ICT in responding to the challenges of food security, poverty eradication, and sustainable development. He said that, "if we are going to move forward and modernize our agriculture and fisheries sectors, then there should be cheap, easy, and fast access to knowledge and information."

As for future direction, Dr. Medrano hopes to establish a central data bank of information in R&D, wherein all partner-institutions can have easy access. This data bank, he said, will contain completed R&D researches, technology-generated materials, inventories of all the scientists/experts, and catalogues of all R&D facilities, laboratories, and equipment available.

Meanwhile, Dr. Battad expressed the importance of having a vision as an important guide towards success. He mentioned that, "a vision without action is a dream and action without vision is but a waste of time."

Cagayan Valley is the fifth cluster where AFRDIS was launched since its inception in 1999. The clusters launched earlier include: Northern Luzon, Central Luzon, Eastern Visayas, and Central Mindanao. ISU serves as the lead agency for the Cagayan Valley cluster.

BAR invested Pph 2.5M for the Cagayan Valley cluster and will shoulder the PLDT-DSL subscription cost amounting to Pph30, 000 a month for one year. It will also continue its technical assistance in the customization of information in the form of trainings, consultation-workshops, maintenance of networks, and strengthening the GIS capability of the region. *(Rita T. dela Cruz)*

BAR evaluates...

problems/issues encountered.

The Bureau's Technical Advisory Group (TAG) reviewed and streamlined each division's functions to eliminate overlapping and duplication of functions. The Major Final Output (MFO) indicators initially presented by Policy and Planning Division Chief Braulio Tamayo was also subjected to an open discussion and were enhanced in the bid to institutionalize the MFOs for better evaluation of each division's accomplishments with respect to its targets, at the year end.

A deadline on setting-up of the monitoring and evaluation database was also set, which was by the end of February. Keeping in mind the policy agenda of Director Medrano, the gathering also decided on the Bureau's allocation policy and made realignments in the BAR 2004 budget.

The Bureau's bid for ISO certification was also discussed, where facilitator Richard Juanillo, PCARRD's Planning and Development Division chief, gave a brief background of how such recognition for institutional

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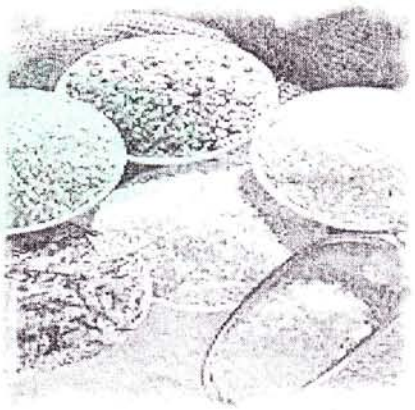
2004 is International Year of Rice



This year marks the *International Year of Rice (IYR)*. Its celebration is organized by a group of government and major international organizations led by the United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

According to FAO, the *International Year of Rice* aims to, "promote improved production and access to this vital food crop, which feeds more than half the world's population while providing income for millions of rice producers, processors and traders. Development of sustainable rice-based systems will reduce hunger and poverty, and contribute to environmental conservation and a better life for present and future generations."

In 1999, the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) requested FAO's collaboration in having an IYR declared. This was prompted by the growing concerns over the serious issues facing rice development. The Philippines, with other 43 countries, submitted this request to the Fifty-Seventh Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), which subsequently declared 2004 the IYR on 16 December 2002.

FAO was invited to facilitate IYR implementation in collaboration with other organizations like the IRRI, International Rice Commission (FAO/ IRC), West Africa Rice Development Association (WARDA), International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), Latin American Fund for Irrigated Rice (CIAT/FLAR), French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), The European Union (EU), International Agri-Food Network (IAFN), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The theme, "***Rice is life***", reflects the importance of rice as a primary food source and that rice-based systems are essential for food security, poverty alleviation and improved livelihoods. Half of the world's population has rice as the staple food and in Asia, more than 2 billion people obtain 60 to 70 percent of their energy intake from rice and its derivatives. The rice industry (rice-based production systems and associated post-harvest operations) employs nearly 1 billion people in rural areas of developing countries and small-scale farmers in low-income countries grow about four-fifths of the world's rice.

According to IYR conceptual framework, the interdependent relationships among agriculture, food security, nutrition, agro-biodiversity, the environment, culture, economics, science, gender and employment can be seen by having rice as the focal point. To realize this, IYR would promote and guide the sustainable development of rice and rice-based production systems and the IYR strategy focuses on the following intermediary objectives: a) increasing public awareness of the contributions that rice-based systems make to food security, better nutrition, poverty alleviation and livelihood improvement; b) increasing public awareness of the diversity and complexity of rice-based production systems, and the challenges and opportunities for their sustainable development and; c) promoting and providing technical support to ensure the sustainable development of rice and rice-based systems at the global, regional, national and community levels; promoting the conservation and enhancement of rice-based products in order to derive economic, social, cultural and health benefits for the world's human population.

"The IYR will act as a catalyst for country-driven programs throughout the world," FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf said. "We aim to engage the entire community of stakeholders, from rural farmers to the scientific institutions that mapped the rice genome, in the mission to increase rice production in a manner that promotes sustainability and equity. Many member countries have already formed National Committees for the International Year of Rice and they will serve as the dynamic link between our international vision and the practical realities in local people's lives." *(Likha C. Cuevas)*

Source: *http://www.fao.org/rice2004/index_en.htm*
For more information on IYR, contact:
International Year of Rice Secretariat, FAO, Room C-789
Via Delle Terme Caracalla, 0100 Rome, Italy,
Telephone: + (39) 06 570 55133, Fax: + (39) 06 570 56347, e-mail: *rice2004@fao.org*

Projection of coconut...

RDEB, at this point is only capable of farm- based supply (production) forecasting. The PCA through its field offices still needs to estimate production based from sample trees (at least 25 trees per selected municipalities) in each province in the region, with all these regional data integrated to come up with national production forecast. The PCA-BAS initiative in the past on supply-based production forecasting should be sustained, with an office or unit to handle database management and utilization for coconut industry development. *(Dr. Severino S. Magat of PCA-RDEB and Rita T. dela Cruz).*

BAR's 5-year...

2001, rose to 17.96% in 2002. There was no allocation for livestock in 2003.

The rest of the budget was allocated under the category of "Others", which include other disciplines like social sciences. This category had an allocation of 19.50% that fell to 14.82% in 2000, and 14.77% in 2001. It further fell to 9.51% in 2002, and rose to 32.30% in 2003.

The budget for these sectors was 92.40M in 1999, and dropped slightly to 90.45M in 2000. The budget rose to 151.28M in 2001, dropped to 75.34M in 2002, and dipped further to 3.7M in 2003.

R&D investment by centers of excellence

The University of the Philippine Los Baños (UPLB) was given the highest percentage of investment with 70.05% in 1999, and fell slightly to 61.13% in 2000. Investment rose to 79.36% in 2001 and fell slightly to 76.36% in 2002, and rose to 87.39% in 2003.

Investment in the University of Southern Mindanao (USM) was 15.21% in 1999, to 12.71% in 2000, to 6.65% in 2001, and rose to 10.36% in 2002. It fell to 3.07% in 2003. The Central Luzon State University (CLSU) was allotted 7.77% in 1999, 11.51% in 2000, fell to 5.38% in 2001, and rose slightly to 6.32% in 2002, then decreased to 5.05% in 2003. Leyte State University (LSU)'s 6.97% allocation in 1999 rose to 14.65% in 2000, dropped to 8.14% in 2001, and then fell steadily to 6.97% in 2002, and 4.49% in 2003.

The budget allotted for centers of excellence was 118.84M in 1999; it increased slightly to 122.2M in 2000, the largest allocation for this sector in the span of five years. It went down to 120.7M in 2001, fell to 75.2M in 2002, and dropped further to 12.9M in 2003.

R&D investment by institutions

The state colleges and universities (SCUs) had 47.89% of the total allocation in 1999, which fell to 39.60% in 2000, rose to 50.94% in 2001, dropped to 38.86% in 2002, and fell further to 21.92 in 2003.

The Department of Agriculture's Regional Field Units (DA-RFUs) were given 20.84% of the 1999 budget. It fell slightly to 19.87% in 2000, and dropped further to 14.09% in 2001. It rose to 29.25% in 2002 and went up further to 34.60% in 2003.

DA attached agencies had 8.84% in 1999. This allocation rose to 19.96% in 2000, fell slightly to 13.51% in 2001. It rose again to 17.68% in 2002 and dropped slightly to 16.37% in 2003.

R&D investment by program

These programs comprise of networking and linkage development, research conduct, strengthening capacity, agricultural R&D policy development, support to scientific and professional societies, improving R&D governance, and international partnership and linkages.

Of the seven programs, strengthening capacity had the biggest allocation in 1999 with 44.50%. It rose to 52.66% in 2000, dropping drastically to 19.33% in 2001, again rising to 33.63% in 2002, and fell slightly to 29.61% in 2003.

Twenty-eight percent was given to research conduct in 1999. It fell slightly to 25.47% in 2000. It rose to 51.43% in 2001, dropped to 36.37% in 2002, and further fell to 31.54% in 2003.

For improvement of R&D governance, 21.40% was allotted for 1999, and fell to 8.94% in 2000. It rose slightly to 10.14% in 2001, and consistently fell to 5.24% and 2.07% in 2002 and 2003, respectively.

see AFMA dough...page 8

ANNOUNCEMENT

P106M grant for programs on environment and tropical forests

The European Commission (EC) has issued a call for proposals for programs on environments and tropical forests in developing countries. For both programs, approximately 1.5 Million (P106 Million) is available for individual grants (at Euro 1 = P 70.70).

This grant is open to all non-government organizations (NGOs), people's organizations (POs), cooperatives, local communities, and associations representing local people. Government agencies like the Bureau of Agricultural Research are not eligible to apply for these programs; however, they can be classified as associates.

Associates may contribute to the proposed projects in terms of implementation. They are also entitled to per diems and travel costs but they are not allowed to receive funding from the grant.

BAR is looking for partner NGOs and POs for this grant. As an associate, BAR will offer its expertise on farming systems and agricultural technologies, project development and international collaborations, and its pool of scientists, experts and researchers.

The Bureau hopes to provide agriculture-based alternative sources of income for the inhabitants of tropical forests and other vulnerable physical environments.

The EC's deadline for the receipt of applications is 9 March 2004.
If you are interested, please visit our website www.bar.gov.ph for the guidelines and application forms.
For more information, contact:

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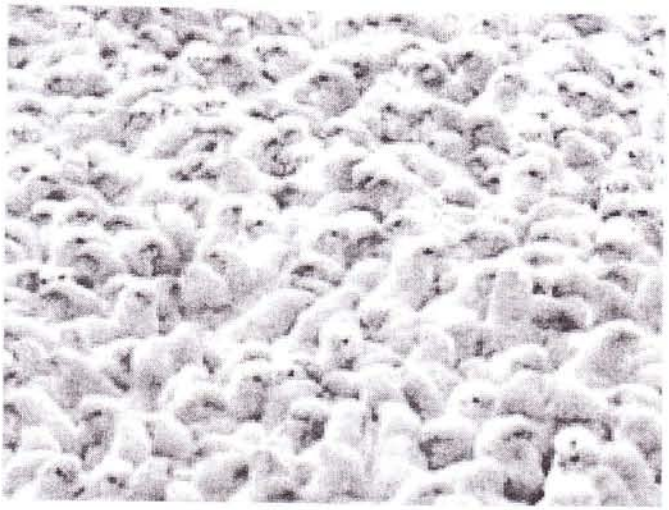
Bird flu: Facts and prevention



Despite fears that bird flu will become the new pandemic in Southeast Asia, the Department of Health (DOH) is still confident that the country will remain free from the dreaded disease. The government confirmed this even after reports that ten people have already died- two in Thailand and eight in Vietnam and millions of chickens have been slaughtered in various parts of Asia. And to combat any disease, it is important that we know more about the disease and learn ways by which we can protect ourselves from becoming infected.

What is bird flu?

Avian influenza or bird flu is an infectious disease affecting all kinds of birds though it is more deadly for domesticated chickens. In fact, some wild birds do not exhibit symptoms but become only carriers of the disease.

It is spread through infected saliva, nasal secretions and feces. However, fecal-to-oral transmission is the most common mode of spread. Bird flu can range from mild to a highly contagious form called the "highly pathogenic avian influenza". This form causes 100% mortality and is caused by influenza A viruses of subtypes H5 and H7.

Avian influenza in humans have ranged from typical influenza-like symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, sore throat and muscle aches) to eye infections, pneumonia, and acute respiratory diseases.

A constantly mutating virus

Influenza viruses especially the H5N1 virus mutate easily. This is because they lack mechanisms for "proofreading" or checking and repairing errors during replication. Hence, their genetic composition changes as they replicate in human and animals. This characteristic is called the antigenic "drift".

Another characteristic that concerns scientists is the ability of A viruses, including subtypes from different species, for antigenic "shift" – a process where they can swap or "reassort" genetic materials and merge. This leads to new strains that are immuned to the old vaccines.

Scientists believe that the phenomenon where viruses "jump to humans" or "jump species" is caused by humans' close proximity to domestic poultry and pigs. While pigs were thought as the only "mixing vessel", new evidence suggests that humans, too, are the "mixing vessels". This means that humans can also be the medium by which new strains of influenza viruses are developed.

Protecting yourself

Like any other disease, the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from bird flu is to practice sanitation measures especially if you have contact with birds or fowl.

For poultry raisers, scientists of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommend a "Keep an all-in, all-out philosophy of flock management" by protecting flocks from coming into contact with wild fowl, only allowing workers to enter the poultry houses. Other management measures include providing clean clothing and disinfecting facilities for farm workers or helpers; cleaning and disinfecting equipment and vehicles regularly; not loaning or borrowing equipment or vehicles from other farms; and avoiding visits to other poultry farms. After visiting another farm or live-bird market, always change footwear and clothing before working with your own flock.

For people who frequent the wet market (buyers, sellers, and consumers) where live birds are sold, the scientists recommend the following preventative measures: use plastic instead of wooden crates for easier cleaning; keep scales and floors clean of manure, feathers, and other debris; clean and disinfect all equipment, crates, and vehicles before returning them to the farm; keep incoming poultry separate from unsold birds, especially if birds are from different lots; clean and disinfect the marketplace after every day of sale; do not return unsold birds to the farm.

For more specific information about cleaning and disinfecting practices, contact the nearest field office of the Bureau of Animal Industry. *(Junelyn S de la Rosa)*

Sources:
1) Avian Influenza - Fact Sheet. 15 January 2004
© Copyright 2004 World Health Organization
2) Bird flu crisis: Mass cull needed
3) Avian influenza A (H5N1) in Humans and Poultry in Vietnam.13 January 2004
4) Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, February 2002 by the Veterinary Services of the United States Department of Agriculture

BAR evaluates...

excellence can be achieved. He said that the ISO certification will give BAR the chance to whip up its operations into a level of quality and excellence.

The planning workshop was attended by Director William Medrano, Assistant Director Nicomedes Eleazar, Dr. Feliciano Calora, the BAR Technical Advisory Group, and division and unit heads. *(Ma. Lizbeth J. Baroña)*

Advisory Council approves OPAPA two-year workplan

The Open Academy for Philippine Agriculture (OPAPA) technical working group (TWG) had a workshop meeting on January 13-14, 2004 at the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD) Headquarters in Los Baños, Laguna.

During the workshop meeting, a two-year work plan (2004-2005) was developed for the operation of the Open Academy. The TWG also drafted the organizational plan for the management of OPAPA. These outputs were presented and approved during the Advisory Council meeting, 23 January 2003, at the Conference Room, Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR). The four workshop groups (Content Development, Social Mobilization, Network and Databases, and Research and Documentation) prepared the work plan.

A log frame for OPAPA was also developed and this contained project strategies for the next two years with objectively verifiable indicators and measures for verification. These project strategies include: goals, purposes, and output. The strategies identified under output were: training and educating agriculture stakeholders; provision of E-extension services, advisory, and general knowledge on agriculture; dissemination of relevant information and knowledge; and enhancing linkages among policymakers, researchers, extension workers, service providers, markets, business organizations, and farm communities. Timetable of activities and key persons were also identified.

A plenary was held wherein the organizational structure of OPAPA was developed. A project management office (PMO) with Project Director and project staff would be under the Advisory Council while the TWG would serve as the advisory body of the Project Director. In the implementation level in five pilot provinces, a local PMO or project implementing unit would be composed of these lead agencies: Isabela State University (ISU), Pampanga Agricultural College (PAC), Central Luzon State University (CLSU) and the University of Southern Mindanao (USM). *(Likha C. Cuevas)*

Web news

UE boosts its environmental technologies
(http://www.europabio.org/pages/white_biotech.asp)

Consumers in Slovakia think GMOs are useful
(http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200401/146105237.pdf.)

USDA-ARS: Prospects and challenges for soybean oil
(http://www.agbioforum.org/v6n12/v6n12a04-cahoon.htm)

Biotechnology in the soybean market place
(http://www.agbioforum.org/v6n12/v6n12a09-sonka.htm)

Legumes leveraged: Linking farmers with markets in East Africa
(http://www.futureharvest.org)

BAR's 5-year...

Networking and linkage received 5.29% allocation in 1999. It consistently rose to 8.48%, 10.68%, and 18.02, and 27.77 in years 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003, respectively.

Agricultural R&D policy development was allotted 0.54% in 1999, and fell slightly to 0.51% in 2000. It rose to 3.57% in 2001, again dropped to 2.07% in 2002, and rose to 7.63% in 2003.

The highest allotment given to international partnership and linkages was in 2001 when it was given 4.41% of the total budget for programs. In 1999, it was given 0.11% in 1999, and rose to 3.61% in 2000. From its highest in 2001, the allotment fell slightly to 3.90% in 2002 and further fell to 0.84% in 2003.

R&D investment for strengthening capacity

Throughout the 5-year period, upgrading of facilities consistently got the highest allotment. From 73.69% in 1999, it rose to 81.09% in 2000. It fell to 45.52% in 2001, again rose to 79.29% in 2002, and fell to 57.23% in 2003.

Grants-in-kind received allotments only in years 1999 with 25.52%, and 2001 with 4.71%. The same with Information Technology (IT) equipment package. These allotments were in 2001 and 2003 with 16.69% and 2.42%, respectively. Agriculture and Fisheries R&D Information System (AFRDIS) had no allotment in 1999. It was given 16.07% in 2000, and falling slightly to 12.685 in 2001. It went up to 15.52% in 2002, and further rose to 21.22% in 2003. Human Resource Development (HRD) had 0.79% in 1999, rose consistently for two years to 2.84% in 2000, and 20.14% in 2001. It fell drastically to 5.19% in 2002 and rose to 19.12% in 2003.

For a better interpretation of the trend, BAR's budget through the years, was presented giving emphasis to the 60% cut in its budget in 2003. *(Ma. Lizbeth J. Baroña)*

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