



Sec Lorenzo gives recognition to 6 successful Bt corn farmers

Six corn farmers who were successful in the growing of Bt corn were recognized on 18 May 2004 at the BSWM Convention Hall. No less than the Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo, Jr. handed them their plaque of recognition during the *Kasaganaan sa Mais Pangkabuhayan Tekno Fair*. The activity was part of the Farmers and Fisherfolk Month celebration, which opened on 17 May 2004. Various agricultural products and the latest innovations on agricultural and fishery technology and agricultural equipment were exhibited.

The six corn farmers were: Francisco Piagola, Carlos Guevarra, Peviano Soriano, Jay Narciso, Jesus Gavino, and Carmelito Dinopol. The award was given in recognition of their successful use of the biotech/hybrid corn that brought them increased production and income.

Planting corn on his four-hectare land in Lanao del Sur, *Francisco Piagola* started using hybrid corn in the 90s, increasing his yield from 1.5 tons to a whopping 4-6 tons/ha. Not satisfied with this increase, he tried the NK, a hybrid corn developed by *Syngenta* and produced an even higher yield, 8-9 tons/ha. With the enormous increase of corn yield, he decided to quit his 8 am to 5 pm job and became a



Francisco Piagola, hybrid corn farmer, receives his plaque from DA Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo, Jr. (second from left). In the picture are Mr. Rosalino Rondon, president of Crop Life Philippines, Inc. (left) and Dr. Art Salazar, (right) director of GMA-Corn and national team leader for Corn RDE of DA-BAR.

full time corn farmer. Now, he is able to send all his children to school and acquire some pieces of property.

Carlos Guevarra was almost in tears when he started his testimony about the wonders of using biotech corn. His 10-hectare land became productive when he started planting a biotech-enhanced corn variety, *Pioneer*, Hybrid 30Y73 with *YieldGard** corn borer protection during the dry season. He was proud to tell his audience that using this hybrid corn increased his average yield to 10.25 tons/ha earning him a net of P50, 000/ha.

Like the other happy farmers present during the activity, *Peviano Soriano* was all smiles when he shared his story. He used to be a seaman who

decided to go full-time in corn farming after discovering the benefits of hybrid corn. According to him, planting NK 8840 earned him an average of 8,568 kilos of corn/ha, which is high compared to his previous yield of 6,000 kilos/ha.

Jay Narciso was thankful that when he decided to try Monsanto's *YieldGard 818* last cropping season, he never regretted his decision. He was not satisfied with the average yield of 7 tons/ha that he was harvesting using the regular corn. With *YieldGard* he happily announced that he harvests 9-10 tons of corn/ha, which he considers a "phenomenal harvest increasing his income by 30%."

Like many Filipinos who had worked as Overseas Contract Workers (OCW), *Jesus Gavino* wanted to invest his
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A scientist 'on the ground'

by Virginia A. Duldulao, Ph.D



Dr. Reynaldo C. Castro

For people who casually know him, he is the "rey" (a Spanish term meaning king) who remains calm and looks unhurried, doting on his three intelligent daughters. But what they do not know is, his dynamic and agile mind has gone way ahead processing data and information, planning on how things could be done better, designing strategies to attain goals more effectively, and pursuing what he has set his mind to do to the end. Silently. No grandstanding. It is only when he gains recognition and has clinched awards after awards that people begin to notice that the guy

wearing thick glasses has more substance than meets the eye. A part of his minimally furnished office containing all the plaques, trophies, and citations can attest to what this man is made of.

For people who have worked with Rey, like me, he is the simple younger brother who addresses older officemates respectfully with a personal note that one wants to hug him like a kid brother. When his brow is not creased and looked not oblivious of his surroundings, then he cracks intelligent jokes that sometimes leave his listeners not laughing but thinking deeply. But more than all this, the person featured in this issue, **Dr. Reynaldo C. Castro**, is the agricultural scientist and manager of PhilRice Batac, the Institute's Dryland Agriculture Research and Development Center, who has found a better way to promote technologies that are adopted.

Rey is a scientist 'on the ground'. A concept in development and popularized by Dr. Gelia T. Castillo, a Filipino international rural sociologist, 'on the ground' means research results have reached the farmers and are now benefiting them.

Workers in R&D agree that lack of

technology is not the reason why farmers continue to cling to their old farming practices. Technology transfer strategies were tried and they seemed to work at the start only to be discontinued after some time. It took Dr. Castro, an agricultural scientist, to develop an approach to location specific technology generation and transfer ultimately resulting to real learning and transformation and reaching more farmers with the least cost.

"We call this unique approach **REAL** Learning for Real Farming, a philosophy advanced by the Group Publishing, Inc. This is learning that is Relational, Experiential, Applicable, and Learner-Based," Dr. Castro said. "Because of its success, it is now being used by the Bureau of Agricultural Research to enhance its Community-based Participatory Action Research program. It is also the anchor model of the National Working Group for Sustainable Agriculture," he added.

Who is Dr. Rey Castro? From Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, he went to the University of the Philippines Los Baños for his BS in Agricultural Engineering on a National State Scholarship. He finished his MS in the same field as his BS at the same school in 1983 under a Philippine Council for Agriculture and Resources Research and Development (PCARRD) scholarship. It is unthinkable for a student to be doing three courses at the same time but Dr. Castro did it. While working for his MS degree, he was also pursuing a Master's degree in Public Administration at UP College of Public Administration under a Philippine Tobacco Research and Training Center (PTRTC) scholarship, and a Research Management Course at the Research Management Center (RMC), UPLB. He started his PhD in Energy Engineering at U.P. Diliman with 12 units. He finished PhD in Agricultural

Engineering at Clemson University, United States of America.

Of his numerous awards, his most recent under the professional category is the Executive Directors Award given by PhilRice for transforming PhilRice Batac into an acknowledged leader in rice research and development in just three years of operation and with minimal resources. For his research on REAL Learning for Real Farming, his paper romped away with the 2004 Best Paper Award given by the Crop Science Society of the Philippines. His works on tobacco such as the multi-crop solar dryer, particleboard from tobacco stalks, windmill for tobacco-based farming system, low-cost solar-aided flue-curing barn, and others have given him national and international acclaim.

To be 'on the ground' and really help the farmers to a high-caliber scientist like Rey may not just be a passion. It is an obsession. For it takes a farmer to understand and feel like the farmers. ■

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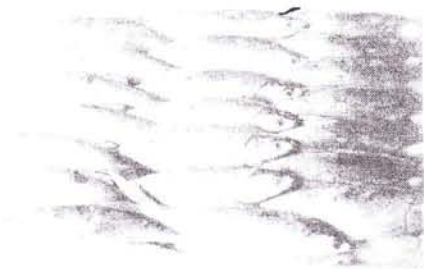
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BAR, Worldfish Center project boosts local milkfish industry



Cooperating milkfish producers and processors in Region 1 stand to benefit from technical assistance and training support on milkfish aquaculture technology through a project jointly undertaken by the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR) and the WorldFish Center.

The project, "Dissemination and adoption of the milkfish aquaculture technology in the Philippines", aims to promote the adoption of technological

development in milkfish hatchery and grow-out production systems that can be transferred or replicated in other parts of the Philippines. The dissemination and transfer of technologies for production and post-harvest processing will be tried in two selected municipalities in the region. These technologies are currently being developed by the National Integrated Fisheries Technologies Development Center in Binloc, Dagupan and other milkfish research centers including those in Indonesia and Taiwan.

The Malaysia-based WorldFish Center, an international non-profit research center under the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), plays a pivotal role in consulting international research institutions in developing countries. Indonesia and Taiwan along with the

Philippines are Southeast Asia's top three producers of milkfish with a total production valued at \$697 M.

The project also includes review and analysis of the current structure of the milkfish industry, trade and marketing, and cross-country comparison with Indonesia and Taiwan, among others.

The three-year project is financed under the restricted grant funds provided by the Philippine government to CGIAR and counterpart support provided by collaborating agencies. Under the coordination and supervision of DA-BAR, the project is implemented by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) through collaborative arrangements with the Philippine Council for Aquatic and Marine Resources Development (DOST-PCAMRD), the Institute of Aquaculture of the University of the Philippines Visayas (UPV) and the Aquaculture Department of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC-AQD). (Rudyard R. Roxas)

DA-BAR, Landbank sign MOU for national technology commercialization program

To facilitate the immediate promotion and utilization of R&D results to the farmers and fisherfolk, the Bureau of Agricultural Research of the Department of Agriculture (DA-BAR) signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) with LandBank of the Philippines (LBP) to implement the "DA-BAR-LBP National Technology Commercialization Program". This is a joint program in coordination with the local government units (LGUs) and selected state colleges and universities (SCUs), which aims to adopt and pursue rural-based development strategy in alleviating poverty particularly in the countryside.

This program aims to promote

and finance suitable and viable technologies for the livelihood activities of farmers and fisherfolk especially on high value fruits, vegetables and ornamentals and other related activities. On the part of BAR, this program is in line with the management's priority to put more focus in the implementation of On-Farm Research (OFR) and strengthen its enterprise development component.

Stated in the agreement were three objectives that this program hopes to achieve: 1) promote appropriate, updated, and sustainable technologies that will generate and enhance production and post-production efficiencies and



BAR Director William C. Medrano (left), DA Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo, Jr. (middle) and Landbank President and CEO Gary B. Teves (right) sign the Memorandum of Agreement for technology commercialization.

guarantee increase in income to farmers and fisherfolk; 2) enhance the LBP's lending programs through technology validation delivery/transfer of technologies to rural farmers, fisherfolk and entrepreneurs; and 3) facilitate technology transfer by showcasing sustainable technologies for farmers and fisherfolk. (Rita T. dela Cruz)

DA celebrates Farmers' and Fisherfolk's Month

The Department of Agriculture (DA) Farmer's and Fisherfolk's Month kicked off with the Agri-Aqua and Agri-Machinery Fair on May 17, 2004 at the DA Compound, Elliptical Rd., Diliman, Quezon City. The theme for this year's celebration is, "*Sigla't Yaman sa Sakahan at Pangisdaan, Pagkaing Sapat Para sa Lahat.*" DA Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo led the ribbon-cutting ceremony followed by a thanksgiving mass at the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) Convention Hall.

The Agri-Machinery exhibits by the Bureau of PostHarvest Research and Extension (BPRE), University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), and AMMDA were showcased from May 17-27, 2004.

There were also exhibits from the DA *Gintong Masaganang Ani*

(GMA) Project Management Office (PMO), Support Services, and DA Regional Field Unit (RFU) Clusters. Other participating agencies under Support Services are: BSWM, Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS), Agriculture Training Institute (ATI), Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Products Standards (BAFPS), Agricultural Credit and Policy Council (ACPC), Quedan Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation (QUEDANCOR), National Nutrition Council (NNC), Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC), Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA), National Irrigation Authority (NIA), Livelihood Corporation (LIVECOR), and National Agricultural and Fishery Council (NAFC).

Different institutions and regional units took charge of the exhibits each day during the celebration. On May

18, Rice and Corn Day was observed with the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), National Food Authority (NFA), and Rice/Corn PMO as lead agencies. The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and Philippine Fisheries Development Council (PFDA) led the observation of the Fisheries Day on May 19. High Value Commodity Crops (HVCC) were given importance on May 20 with the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), Fiber Industry Development Authority (FIDA), Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA), National Tobacco Administration (NTA), Cotton Development Authority (CODA), and HVCC PMO showcasing their respective commodities. The Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), Livestock Development Council (LDC), National Meat Inspection Commission (NMIC), National Dairy Authority (NDA), and the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) were in charge of the Livestock and Poultry Day on May 21. (*Likha C. Cuevas*)

Region 2 GIS technicians undergo hands-on training

Geospatial Information System (GIS) technicians were given a hands-on training under the Regional Geographic Information Network (RGIN) Capability Building Program. The Department of Agriculture - Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR), Isabela State University (ISU), and the Regional Development Council (RDC) 2 sponsored this training conducted by Dr. Steeve Godilano, BAR GIS specialist. The training (third phase) was held on April 26-30, 2004 at ISU, Cabagan Campus, Cabagan Isabela.

The participants, all from Region 2, were given the opportunity to learn and practice the various applications of the ArcView 3.2 (software used in GIS). The training's main purpose was to have the participants master ArcView 3.2 so that they

can apply it in their respective provincial GIS centers.

Topics discussed in the training were: Earth's Surfaces; GPS and GIS; Topological Overlay and Cartographic Modeling; Spatial Analysis and Topological Overlay; Metadata Concepts and Standards; Modal Builder in ArcView; and GIS Cost and Benefits.

During the training's exercises, participants worked on some GIS projects like a) Identification of forest land areas in Region 2 as sites for immediate rehabilitation; b) Mapping of irrigation



and water-based infrastructure for food security and sustainability; c) Delineation of protected areas in Region 2; d) Flood-prone areas in Region 2 and potential damage to infrastructure; e) Rice area and available agricultural consumption in Region 2 in relation to population and labor; f) Using GIS technology as a tool

see Region 2...next page

Importance of soil and water highlighted; Medrano keynotes 7th PSSST confab



BAR Director William C. Medrano giving the keynote address during the opening program of the 7th PSSST Annual Meeting and Symposium

The country's foremost soil scientists and soil researchers assembled on 20-21 May 2004, Benguet State University (BSU) for the 7th Philippine Society of Soil Science and Technology, Inc. (PSSST) Annual Meeting and Symposium. This scientific meeting provided the venue for the exchange of scientific ideas and in being aware of the

Region 2...

in locating the most suitable rice and corn growing areas and potential erosion site in Region 2; and g) Proposed Cagayan Valley expressway.

Before the advent of GIS, planners relied on statistical processing in viewing the demographic and socio-economic conditions of the region. With GIS, planners can now have a clearer view of important data since digitized maps for different thematic and spatial relationships are now available. (Likha C. Cuevas)

current status of soil science research in the Philippines. This meeting enabled participants from the different sectors i.e., academe, government, and private sectors, to interact and share important research outputs and expand scientific orientation on soil science.

The two-day activity was composed of scientific sessions wherein PSSST members were invited to present scientific papers addressing the theme, "Likas-kayang Pangangalaga ng Tubig at Lupa: Susi sa Kasaganaan". There were six simultaneous sessions to cover various subtopics. The business meeting reviewed the PSSST constitution and by-laws to make it more relevant to the Society's management and operations. The agenda include: redefining an "active member" to an inactive status, retaining the definition of "member in good standing," and reorganizing the scientific divisions from eight to four.

Providing this year's keynote address was Bureau of Agricultural

Research (BAR) Director William C. Medrano. In his speech, he highlighted the importance of water and soil as two of the most important resources we have right now. He stressed that soil is a key natural resource, however, its importance has not been fully recognized as much as the other natural resources. Compared to the attention given to water and air, public attention given to soil is but minimal. He cited two important bills of national significance that have been signed recently in recognition of the importance of air and water: the Clean Air Act of 1999 (R.A. 8749) and the Clean Water Act of 2004 (R.A. 9275). These two landmark laws, he said, only show the importance of these two valuable resources—air and water. He then questioned the lack of an Act to protect the Philippine soil and posted it as a big challenge to the soil experts during the confab.

He also mentioned three major issues and concerns regarding soil erosion and how our soil experts could address them immediately, such as: land degradation, soil exhaustion, and soil erosion. He also emphasized the thrusts of DA-BAR on the issue of soil management. He proposed agroforestry as the main solution. According to him, one way to do this is through the landcare approach, a technical and institutional innovation for conservation farming, which had been successfully implemented in Northern Mindanao. He mentioned how this type of approach could greatly improve the adoption of resource conservation practices, reduce resource degradation, and most importantly, provide guidance in the future development and effective delivery of extension services to small landholders.

Also attending the meeting and symposium were Mayor Nestor B. Fongwan of La Trinidad, BSU President Rogelio D. Colting, and PSSST President Clarita P. Aganon. (Rita T. dela Cruz)

Woes and chances of the agriculture sector

Economic stability.
Poverty reduction.
Strong republic.

Do we know what it needs to steer this country to the direction that points to these elusive ends?

A study conducted by the SEAMEO-Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEAMEO-SEARCA), commissioned by the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) developed a long term-policy framework as an indicative investment plan for agriculture and fisheries research, development, and extension (AFRDE). The study indicated agricultural growth as a result of a robust increase in productivity as the key to development.

Productivity, or the lack of it

Productivity is a crucial measure to gauge the performance of a sector or an economy. The study identified the country's low productivity as a vital factor in the low agricultural growth, in the same way as the study identified a robust productivity as a key to a revitalized agricultural industry, an over-all economic growth and ultimately, poverty reduction.

Our corn, sugar, rice, vegetables, coffee and cacao, and citrus annual yield per hectare all lag behind our neighboring countries like Malaysia and Taiwan. To surmount this productivity problem is not only to be competitive with our neighboring countries, but also to meet a rising domestic demand. This is because the Philippine also has the second-highest population growth in the region.

The huge productivity shortfall and the growing demand for these products made us a net importer in a wide range of agricultural products.

This crisis points to one reason:

insufficient investment on the agriculture sector, particularly in agriculture research.

What do we do?

The country's agriculture research intensity (ARI) ratio (the ratio of R&D expenses versus value of agriculture value added or gross value added) *needs to be raised* to at least 0.75% by 2010, and to 1.5% by 2020, the study suggested.

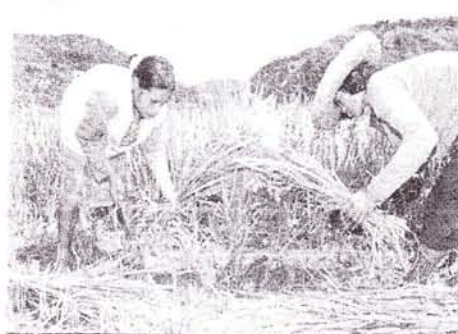
While Malaysia's and Thailand's agricultural research intensity or ARI ratio is at 1.1 and 1.45 %, respectively, the Philippines' is at 0.4% - way below the standard ARI ratio set by the World Bank, which is at 1%. China's ARI ratio is at 2% - and it is the fastest growing economy in the region.

The study also said the government and the private sector should forge a partnership in funding and directing agricultural R&D. All countries, whether developed or developing have the government as the biggest source of funding for agriculture research, development, and extension (RD&E).

Still, the private sector cannot be discounted from the equation. The fate of a new technology - and its diffusion to the clientele lies greatly in their interests. While the government funds agricultural research, it is an undertaking that the private sector tends to underinvest in, precisely because the firm or institution conducting the study cannot obtain the benefits of the research sooner. Instead, the private sector should be left to technology development, it being familiar with the demands of the market, and the interest in diffusing of the technology to their clientele.

Meantime, with the meager budget that we have...

The study gave a list of priority commodities where the government can invest the limited money that it has. The



prioritization is based on the importance of consumption and food security, and comparative advantage.

The study gave high priority to coconut, tropical fruits, and fisheries. These commodities have high export potential, and are also enjoying huge demand in the home front. Rice and white corn - the basic food grains that are developed for food security reasons are the second priority. Import substituting goods that are also hugely demanded by the market, like sugar, livestock and poultry, root crops, and yellow corn are the third priority. Less dominant commodities that have export potential are fourth priority, and commodities like cotton and soybean are placed last.

The study also recommended for the R&D system to be thought of as an "enterprise" that seeks not only to develop technologies but also to produce products that gives high rates of returns. The study also hoped to help the cash-strapped agriculture research industry in justifying the appeal for increased R&D investments. (Ma, Lizbeth J. Baroña)

Sources:

Formulation of an investment policy framework and indicative plan for agriculture and fisheries research, development and extension for 2001-2010, Dr. Ponciano Intal, Team Leader, SEAMEO-SEARCA, November 2003

<http://www.fao.org>

<http://www.tbr.co.uk>

Is your soy sauce safe?

A NO answer would probably send the whole country into a tailspin since almost all Filipino dishes are flavored with the versatile soy sauce. While this issue was relatively resolved a couple of years ago when the local Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) declared that all BFAD-registered soy sauce products are safe, there is still a lingering paranoia that some sauces might not be safe since some countries banned our export soy sauce products a couple of years ago.

To solve the problem, scientists from the Department of Chemistry at the Ateneo de Manila University developed a simple, accurate, and inexpensive analytical method to test whether soy sauce and other sauces contain high levels of 3-MCPD- a dreaded cancer-causing chemical.

What is 3-MCPD?

3-MCPD or 3-monochloropropane-1, 2-diol belongs to a group of chemical contaminants known as chloropropanols. 3-MCPD can be found in some soy sauces that are produced through a process called "acid hydrolysis". Acid hydrolysis is a modern processing method used to treat proteins such as soya in making soy sauces. However, soy sauces produced using the traditional (natural) fermentation process are safe since they do not contain the chloropropanols.

A study conducted by Australia's New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA) reported that two-thirds of the samples containing 3-MCPD also contained smaller amounts of another chloropropanol (1,2-DCP). While these substances are present in very minute amounts in many foods and food ingredients, it has been found that they can cause cancer in laboratory animals fed large amounts over their lifetime.

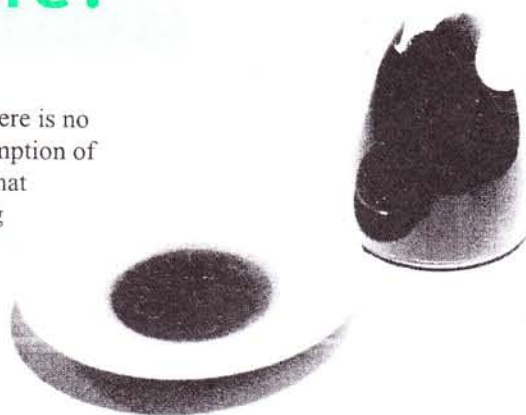
Scientists said that there is no need to fear occasional consumption of contaminated soy sauces but that regular consumption over long periods of time can be a potential cause of cancer.

Europe's Scientific Committee for Food said that a person could consume only 0.002 mg/kg bodyweight/day of 3-MCPD over a lifetime without harm to health. Further studies stated that safe consumption levels for 3-MCPD can be set because it does not directly affect genetic material. However, people should be more careful of 1,3-DCP since it is harmful to genetic material. Scientists said that cancer found in reproductive cells caused by 1,3-DCP could be passed on to children.

Banned sauces

In 2001, various studies abroad reported that popular sauce brands contain unsafe levels of 3-MCPD. ANZFA found that some sauces' 3-MCPD levels were above 3.5 milligrams per kilogram which was way above the level of safe use. Some soy sauce products that were banned abroad included: Amoy seafood soy sauce from Hong Kong, Gia Minh seasoning soy sauce from Vietnam, Kimlan soy sauce and dark soy sauce from Taiwan, Knorr seasoning from Hong Kong, President creamy soy sauce from Taiwan, Silver Swan soy sauce from the Philippines, Ta Tun soy bean sauce from Taiwan, Tau Vi Yeu seasoning sauce and Soya bean sauce from Vietnam, Zu Miao Fo Shan soy superior sauce and Mushroom soy sauce from China and Golden Mountain and Wanjashan Soy Sauces.

Other soy sauces that were removed from the shelves were: Golden Mountain soya bean sauce, King Imperial dark soy sauce, Pearl River Bridge mushroom soy sauce, Jammy Chai pure soy sauce, XO soy sauce, Golden Mark superiro soy sauce, Lee



Kum Kee oyster sauce, Tung Chun gold label soy sauce, Golden Swan superior dark soy sauce, Golden Mountain Seasoning sauce, Pearl River Bridge shrimp flavor soy sauce, Pearl River Bridge superior soy sauce, Kimlan Lo Chau, Lee Kum Kee chicken marinade, Sinsin oyster sauce.

Testing for 3-MCPD

To test for the presence of 3-MCPD, the scientists from Ateneo de Manila University have developed an analytical method using gas chromatography-mass spectrometry at a concentration range of 1-5000 ng g⁻¹ using 4-heptanone as a derivatizing ketone and 3-MCPD as an internal standard. Gas chromatography is a method of separating the volatile constituents of a substance by means of gas, for the purpose of analysis. Mass spectrometry, on the other hand, is a method of identifying the chemical constitution of a substance by means of the separation of gaseous ions according to their differing mass and charge. The scientists said this method is safe, simple, and effective. Finally, they are optimistic that this method can be used in the near future to make sure that soy sauce products found in the shelves are safe. (Junelyn S de la Rosa)

Source: Development of an analytical method for 3-monochloropropane-1-2,-diol in soy sauce using 4-heptanone as derivatizing agent by Fabian Dayrit and Milady Niñonuevo of the Department of Chemistry, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City

ALAP strengthens data management capacity in agriculture

Web
news



Impact of GM crops in Argentinean agriculture

(<http://www.agbioforum.org/v6n3/v6n3a01-trigo.htm>.)

Canada SC sides Monsanto on patent case

(<http://www.monsanto.com/monsanto/layout/media/04/05-21-04.asp>)

Farmers organization in support of GM wheat

(<http://www.growersforwheatbiotechnology.org>.)



There exists an urgent need to consolidate agricultural knowledge and make it electronically accessible for promoting agricultural research and development.

To pursue this goal, the Philippine Agricultural Libraries and Information Services Network (PhilAgriNet) and Agricultural Information Services (AGRIS) strengthened its capacity building through a two-day training workshop held on 20-21 May 2004, Benguet State University (BSU), La Trinidad, Benguet.

The seminar was organized by the Agricultural Librarians Association of the Philippines (ALAP) and sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. Co-sponsoring the training were: the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), the Philippine E-Lib Project, and the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR).

Established in 2003, PhilAgriNet is a collaborative effort among information management professionals in the field of agriculture. Its major thrust is to create and maintain a central electronic database of Philippine technical agricultural literature and link this with agricultural scientists worldwide. AGRIS, on the other hand, is an international information system for the agricultural sciences and technology, created by FAO

in 1974 to facilitate information exchange and to bring together world literature dealing with all aspects of agriculture.

What PhilAgriNet and AGRIS hope to achieve is to create an awareness of the existence of free tools for database management and to develop the knowledge and skills of information providers of prospective PhilAgriNet member institutions on the use of the

WebAGRIS. Through this activity, PhilAgriNet and AGRIS look forward to an active involvement and contribution of the participants to manage their databases.

Giving significance to the presence of the training workshop were: BSU President Rogelio Colting, ALAP President Salome Ledesma, and BAR Director William Medrano who provided the keynote address. (Rita T. dela Cruz)

Sec. Lorenzo gives...

savings into something that would earn him big bucks. Already with a piece of land, Mang Jay started acquiring a tractor and conventional seeds. His harvest would average to a low 5 tons/ha. Later, he tried *YieldGard 818* and started harvesting an average of 9-10 tons/ha, which put him in good lead among the other farmers in Lubao, Pampanga.

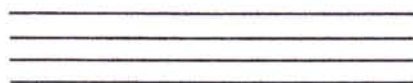
Meanwhile, Carmelito Dinopol, also an awardee for that day, was not able to come. He is from Koronadal, South

Cotabato and has been planting hybrid corn for the last two years, starting with only five hectares. At present, he is now financing almost 300 hectares of land allotted to hybrid corn, particularly the *Pioneer*, Hybrid 3014 and 30M50s.

Handling over the plaques of recognition, aside from Sec. Lorenzo were Dr. Art Salazar, director of GMA Corn and DA-BAR's national team leader for corn, and Mr. Rosalino Rondon, president of Crop Life Philippines, Inc. (Rita T. dela Cruz)

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