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BAR faces greater challenges ahead

IN THIS ISSUE

Operationalizing BAR's plan of activities for the year, strategic planning for 2005 was conducted to clarify and resolve common issues and concerns in its operation and management and to identify measures for improving the Bureau's performance. BAR took guidance from Goals 1 and 2 of the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan. The activity was held on 17-18 February 2005 at Loreland Farm Resort, Antipolo City.

BAR aligns R&D plans and programs

In response to the new directive of the Department of Agriculture (DA) to address the concerns of the agriculture and fisheries sector, BAR recently reviewed its R&D plans and programs for 2005. During the two-day activity, BAR realigned its plans and programs which strongly support the DA's two main goals: 1) develop at least 2M hectares of new land for agribusiness to contribute 2M out of 10M jobs in 2010 and, 2) reduce costs of wage goods through productivity enhancement, more efficient logistics, and improved retailing linkages.

All proposed and on-going R&D programs shall be geared toward these concerns in order to maximize the utilization of R&D funds at the same time to generate and develop technologies that could be commercialized and adapted by the private sector and the R&D community. In addition, BAR identified activities to support the smooth operation and management of R&D. These include the following: 1) appropriate R&D budget allocation for priority commodities with the Regional Integrated Agricultural Research Centers (RIARCs) and Regional Integrated Fishery Research Centers (RIFCs), state universities and colleges (SUCs), DA research units of staff bureaus and attached agencies and other research outreach stations; 2) consult with the RIARCs/RIFRCs and ROSes on R&D issues and concerns regarding existing and emerging R&D policies for better operation; 3) prepare and package R&D proposals that would enhance the human resource capabilities through local and foreign travels and other technical assistance programs ; 4) strengthen the resource

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EDITORIAL

Meet the partners

by Victoriano B. Guiam

They say that no man is an island, entire of itself. In these days when agricultural research has acquired global dimensions, a National Agricultural Research System (NARS) can ill afford to be isolated from the rest of the world. It can do this only at the peril of denying itself of opportunities that may be obtained from interaction with the international agricultural research community.

From the standpoint of a developing country, maintaining ties with foreign R&D organizations and international agricultural research centers has proven to be a good strategy for shortcutting the path and time needed to respond to technology and knowledge needs of agriculture. Many local advances have been made possible through international linkages. Most of these have been in:

1. development of local technology through technology sharing and technical assistance
2. improvement of the country's germplasm through access to biological resources;
3. improvement in the quality of science through the participation of local scientists in international conferences, fellowships, scientist exchange programs; and
4. research capacity development through joint research activities and access to training courses for researchers which ordinarily would not be readily available elsewhere.

Thus, from the time that it was established, the BAR Directors have always seen to it that BAR connects with the global agricultural research environment. BAR views itself as a facilitator in linking the Philippine NARS to the rest of the world.

In this and succeeding issues of the BAR Chronicle, we shall have articles describing some of the partnerships of BAR with foreign and international organizations.

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Speaking of partnerships, something's afoot in this issue of the BC. Two things: several of the articles are from staff of the bureau other than its Applied Communication Section. And, there is less of the technology promo stuff and more of BAR's experiences.

We would like to keep this up – getting more articles from the people who keep BAR running. Not only is it refreshing, but readers get the advantage of getting the news straight from our people who not only are closer to the action but are often in it.

Editorial Staff

CAPSA...

player in its collaborative efforts with CAPSA, which was formerly known as CGPRT (Centre for Research and Development of Coarse Grains, Pulses, Roots and Tuber Crops in the Humid Tropics of Asia and the Pacific). The BAR Director has been representing the Philippine government in its governing board since 2001. The Philippines is a founding member of CGPRT (now CAPSA).

Dirs. Eleazar and Bottema both welcomed the idea of working together. "Future collaborations would be beneficial to the agencies," echoed Dir. Eleazar. Working together to benefit the poor than would be achieved in solo work produces a greater impact. Combining strengths is one important strategy to achieve the level of synergism that both directors desire to achieve. After all, both organizations are looking at the same direction—that is to alleviate poverty in the Region.

CAPSA, established as the UN's Economic and Scientific Council for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Regional coordination centre for R&D, aims to promote a more supportive policy environment among its member countries to enhance the living conditions of rural poor populations in disadvantaged areas, particularly those who rely on secondary crop agriculture for their livelihood. The Centre also focuses on the promotion of research and development related to agriculture to alleviate poverty in the Asian and Pacific Region. *(Angela E. Obnial)*

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BAR links with AMAS for lower prices of wage goods

BAR Dir. Nicomedes P. Eleazar discusses ideas on how to make valuable information available to consumers during a brief meeting with DA Asec. Salvador Salacup.

BAR forged ties with the Department of Agriculture-Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service (DA-AMAS) to bring down the prices of wage goods like rice, pork, chicken, carabeef, bangus, and tilapia. Wage goods are items available in the market, which are often purchased by *daily wage earners.*

Assistant Secretary Salvador Salacup, who also heads DA-AMAS, discussed the challenges and opportunities in addressing this concern with BAR Director Nicomedes Eleazar and other BAR staff during a brief meeting on 7 February 2005, RDMIC Conference Room, Diliman, Quezon City. In the discussion, Asec. Salacup emphasized that purchasing these commodities at lower prices would immediately create a positive impact on the ordinary buyer, if given immediate priority. Thus, more people are convinced that DA programs are beneficial to those who need it the most, specifically the daily wage earners who often go to market to buy food .

Asec. Salacup added that putting affordable food on every table entails the reduction of market prices of wage goods, which can be done through **productivity enhancement**, **efficient logistics**, and **improved retailing linkages.**

"BAR can give these three areas an R&D angle, " Asec. Salacup recommended. Adding more samples of priority wage goods, BAR and other research institutions could bring focus to the research programs and activities, i.e., vegetables, which is one of the priority commodities for RDE attention. Corn, a non-wage good, is also considered a priority crop due to its impact on the livestock sector.

Director Eleazar reiterated Asec. Salacup's challenge and provided him a list of mature technologies generated from BAR-funded projects. AMAS shall be consulted on technologies involving priority wage goods to identify which of these technologies are ready for commercialization.

How are technologies commercialized?

BAR and AMAS shall work together on the initial stages of commercialization through: technology assessments, verifications, feasibility studies, policy researches, and technology fora. BAR shall spearhead the packaging component, while AMAS shall lead in marketing the produce arising from technology utilization to interested clients.

Aside from technology commercialization, the proposed BAR-AMAS tie up shall also include the fine-tuning of websites dedicated to online farming guides, like **Agritech Online** (www.bar.gov.ph/agritech/home.html). Asec. Salacup advised that BAR meet with the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS) and AMAS to discuss the dovetailing of BAR's technology information content with BAS and AMAS data in order to provide technoguides that will cater to the information needs of farmers, fisherfolk, researchers, and policymakers. *(Carmela B. Brion)*

NEWS

BAR hosts DA ExeCom

Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Arthur C. Yap along with undersecretaries, assistant secretaries, and bureau directors conducted its Executive Committee (ExeCom) meeting on 17 February 2005 at the RDMIC Conference Room. The meeting focused on DA's programs, specifically their implementation in accordance with Goals 1 and 2[1], along with other issues and concerns of each DA agency and staff bureau. Sec. Yap emphasized that the DA efforts should now be in consonance with President GMA's declared national goals.

"Keep me abreast (through monitoring and validation of agriculture programs)," said Secretary Yap. He wanted the chiefs of DA offices and agencies to regularly update and push for quick implementation of programs on rice, corn, coconut and R&D among others. Keeping the Secretary abreast on developments is one way to facilitate accomplishments of programs initiated by the DA. Through this, he enjoined the Department to establish itself as a well-knit and collaborative institution that does its job well. (BAR joins the Secretary in uplifting the standards of the Department).

"This is the first time that the ExeCom meeting is held in a DA staff bureau and we are honored that BAR was chosen as the venue for the ExeCom," said BAR Dir. Nicomedes Eleazar in his welcome to the meeting group. Designed for short decision making only, the high-level ExeCom meeting is a regular management meeting presided over by the DA Secretary that serves as a venue for threshing out issues and concerns of the DA and its agencies and staff bureaus.It may be one of the austerity measures practiced by the Department but, as one assistant secretary quipped, they could have the meetings conducted at BAR regularly.

The Bureau transferred to its new building in August 2004 which boasts of high-tech facilities and new structures. *(Angela E. Obnial)*

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[1] of the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan

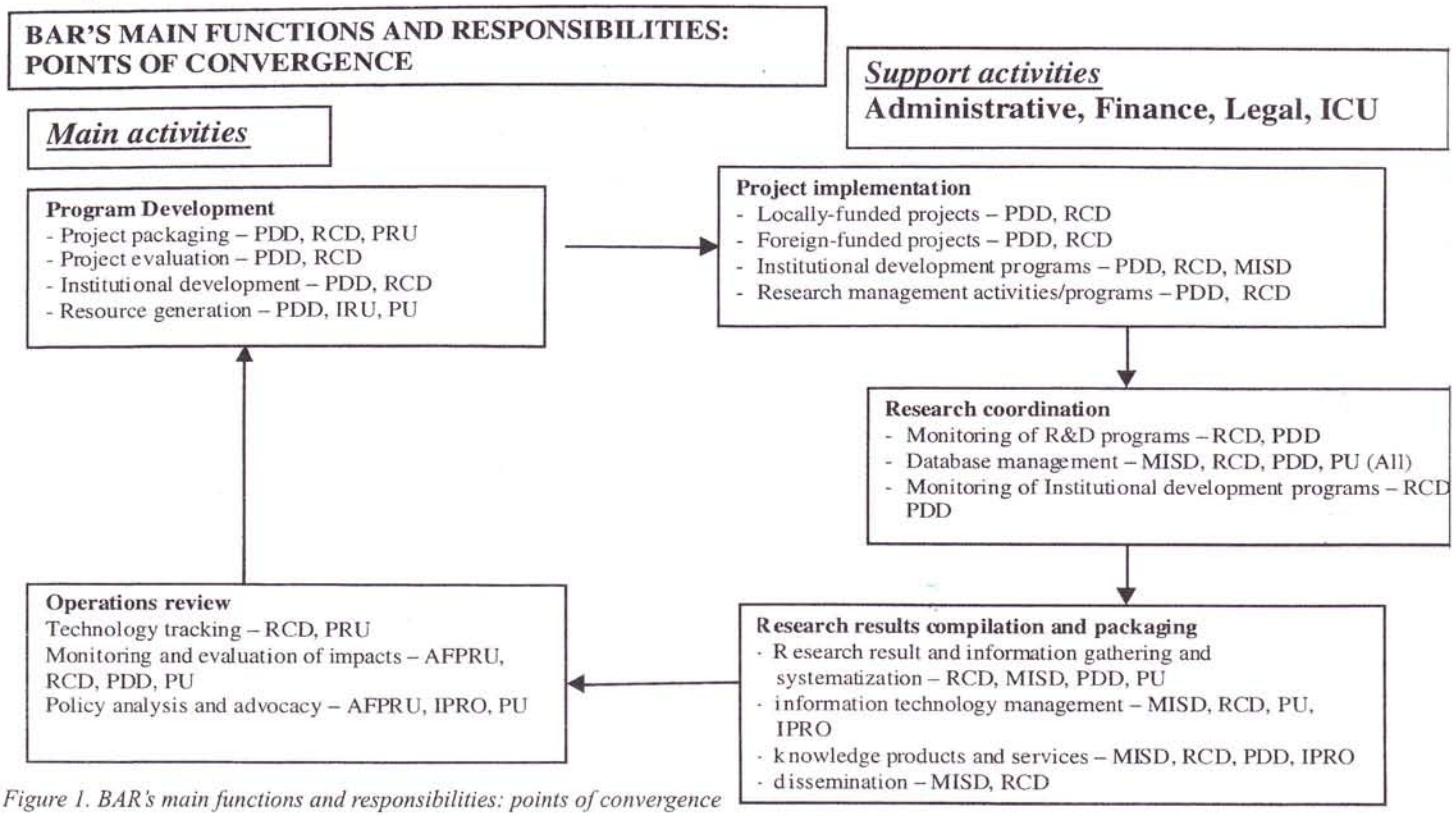


Figure 1. BAR's main functions and responsibilities: points of convergence

mobilization activities of the Bureau for R&D use; and 5) systematize the R&D proposal evaluation, project implementation and improve the monitoring and evaluation mechanism of new and on-going researches.

Functional structure for improved management of R&D programs

The emerging of system-oriented cum output-oriented focus of the BAR in support to the eight point strategies and the DA's priority areas for R&D, the bureau reorganized its structure from the existing five (5) divisions to three (3) divisions. These divisions were organized to enhance BAR's organizational structure and to support the different functions of the Bureau in addressing the needs, plans and programs of R&D. The new divisions are the Program Development Division (PDD) headed by Dr. Amy Kagaoan, Research Coordination Division (RCD) headed by Mr. Rolly Labios, and Management Information Systems Division (MISD) headed by Mr. Vic Guiam. These divisions are supported by the administrative units (AU), financial management unit (FU), internal auditing unit (IAU), executive support staff (ESS), legal services (LS), intellectual property office (BAR-IPO), international relations unit (IRU), and agriculture and fisheries policy research unit (AFPRU) all of which are under the office of the director. The rationalized divisions are a spin off of the previous organizational structure from 1998-2004 which addressed the earlier concerns of modernizing the agriculture and fisheries sector through research excellence and output-oriented results for the National Research and Development System for Agriculture and Fisheries, and for its constituents and clientele.

The new functional structure of BAR is presented in the figure above together with the management of operations within the bureau for a more systematized and client-oriented strategy.
(Please refer to Figure 1)

Technology commercialization program takes shape

In a related story in the realignment and prioritization of R&D programs, the Bureau was challenged by Secretary Arthur C. Yap to take the lead in the technology commercialization program (TCP) of the Department through R&D activities. The TCP is a joint effort of BAR and DA-AMAS. Initially, the TCP shall identify and package mature technologies ready for commercialization and support the requirements of the identified commodities and existing potential productive areas as pointed out in the two main national goals adopted by the DA. Presently, BAR is developing strategies on technology commercialization that shall assist individuals, private sector and R&D community to organize collaborative mechanism towards a more socially acceptable, environment-friendly, and economically feasible technologies for end-users. Activities to do this include consultations, meetings, field visits and preparation of an operations manual.
(Marlowe U. Aquino, Ph.D.)

BAR re-focuses regional R&D priorities for 2005

Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) Director Nicomedes P. Eleazar and OIC Asst. Dir. Teodoro Solsoloy met with the Bureau's four new on-call technical advisers to re-focus and identify regional R&D priorities for CY 2005. The meeting was held on 24 February 2005 at the RDMIC Conference Hall. The four on-call technical advisers include: Drs. Roberto Rañola (UPLB), Rey Velasco (UPLB), Louie Divinagracia (DLSU), and Teodoro Abilay (Madecor Group).

Specifically, the consultation aimed to identify priority researchable areas in the 15 regions of the country, validate the commodity-specific problems of the farmers in the field, identify which technologies have high potential for commercialization, and seek ways to enhance participation of various stakeholders from planning up to implementation of R&D agenda.

Dir. Eleazar emphasized that the regional R&D priorities for 2005 must first be in accordance with the vision of the Department of Agriculture (DA), particularly Goal 1 and Goal 2 of the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan or MTPDP 2004-2010. Goal 1 of the MTPDP specifies the development of at least 2M hectares of new lands for agribusiness to contribute 2M out of 10M jobs in 2010. Meanwhile, Goal 2 affirms the reduction of costs of wage goods through productivity enhancement, efficient logistics, and improved retailing linkages.

On-call technical advisers: Drs. Teodoro Abilay (front right), Louie Divinagracia, and Rey Velasco (slightly hidden)

According to Director Eleazar, the prioritization of regional R&D must go hand in hand with BAR's eight R&D strategies, namely: fast track technology promotion and adoption; strengthen partnership with the NGOs, POs, LGUs and other concerned institutions at the regional level; encourage the development of small and medium enterprises; intensify collaboration among existing R&D systems at the national and local levels; develop and strengthen human resource and R&D infrastructure; institutionalize a unified R&D agenda of BAR, PCARRD and PCAMRD; Enhance information exchange by using the latest ICT tools and; advocate policies that will promote sustained agricultural growth and create strategies that will increase investments in R&D.

Upon consultation with the technical advisers, Dr. Carmencita Kagaoan, head of the Project Development Division (PDD), led the benchmarking on how to go about the whole priority identification and validation process. At the end of the consultation meeting, the group was able to come up with the mechanics/framework/ flowchart on how the process of regional R&D prioritization should take place. Likewise, they were able to identify important details for validation i.e., field visits to the different regions.

Among the important roles of BAR, which were identified during the consultation meeting are: to cross-check priority commodities of DA Goals 1 and 2 vis-à-vis the Regional Integrated Research, Development, and Extension Agenda Program (RIRDEAP); and to coordinate with Regional Field Units (RFUs) regarding the list of cross checked commodities, prioritization of problems and industry situationers.

Also in the meeting were: Salve Ritual, assistant.head of PDD and head of the Project Packaging Section (PPS) and Carmela Brion, technical staff of PPS. *(Rita T. dela Cruz)*

Thai researchers visit BAR

Bureau of Agricultural Research OIC Assistant Director Teodoro Solsoloy welcomed a team of researchers and professors from two universities in Thailand, the Silpalkorn University and the King Mongkut University of Thailand, at the Research and Development Management and Information Center last February 22.

The team was presented with the BAR Story, a documentary about BAR's history and mandate, and BAR's Vision and Strategy, including Dir. Nicomedes P. Eleazar's 8-point agenda on research and development.

The Thai team, led by Dr. Supanee Chayabutra, Director of Research of the Silpalkorn University in Thailand cited examples of the Thai government's efforts in their research and extension program particularly on coconut-based enterprises. OIC Asst. Dir. Solsoloy, along with Dr. Marlowe Aquino and Mr. Victoriano Guiam, led the discussion for BAR. Dr. Chayabutra also expressed optimism on possible areas of convergence on coconut product research that the Philippine and Thai governments can work together.

Officials from BAR who also attended the meeting were Mr. Rolando Labios, Ms. Illuminada Ching, Ms. Josefina Lantican, and Ms. Julia Lapitan. The visit was part of a study tour on coconut conducted under the auspices of the RP-Thailand cooperation in agriculture and facilitated by the Philippine Coconut Authority. *(Ma. Lizbeth J. Baroña)*

FEATURE

Understanding watersheds through GIS

by Ma. Lizbeth J. Baroña

It is a patch of land that catches rain and drains or seeps the deposited water into a marsh, stream, river, lake or groundwater. Watersheds are not just natural repositories of last night's rainfall. They are also one of the main sources of irrigation water.

A recent study conducted by the RIARC of the DA's Regional Field Unit in Region 8 in Babatngon, Leyte (EVIARC) employed the Geographic Information System software to map out the 36 watersheds located in Eastern Visayas. The researchers, Jecella Demegillo and Rufino Ayaso III, hoped that this study would help users in Region 8 understand watersheds better for more effective use of these natural irrigation systems.

Effective irrigation it is

It is a known fact that a good and well-designed irrigation system translates to a healthy farm productivity. If the farm gets an adequate dose of moisture all year-round, the tillers can go on for a second or third cropping.

Efforts by the government to implement irrigation programs before did not quite solve the low-productivity level. It also wasn't sustainable. Apparently, large-scale irrigation projects had proven to be costly to develop, operate, and maintain. Through the leadership of the National Irrigation Authority (NIA) in the 80s, large multipurpose dams were built. But this large project would mean that only the national government can provide or maintain them. A study found out in 1997 that estimated benefits of these large-scale projects were overstated.

Also, there are no precise estimates of areas under irrigation because of unreliable or conflicting data. This can be traced to differences in the definitions of terms, misinterpretation of data and erroneous information.

Future development of irrigation should put a premium on low cost of installation, and better understanding of the climatologic nature and delineation of existing watersheds.

GIS hastens the understanding of watersheds

In the study conducted by Demegillo and Ayaso, the objective was to map-out climatologic zones in selected watersheds in Eastern Visayas. Doing so entailed compiling and analyzing secondary climatologic information from the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA)'s different stations and mapping out the climatologic zones that exist in the area.

Using records of climatologic data of 15 years, the researchers were able to map out 27 of the 36 identified watersheds in the region. These watersheds were also classified into climatologic zones. The zones derived from the data show that atmospheric conditions in the watersheds vary. This, the researchers say, can be attributed to many different factors like latitude, weather or climate, ocean currents, and vegetative cover.

The researchers were confident that understanding the nature of local watersheds would lead not only to better use of these depositories of water in farm irrigation, but the information could also help in other development projects like hydro-electric power plants.

Equally important, aside from aiding the farmers increase their farm productivity, is that information like this would help in the conservation of this natural resource.

Sources:

1. *Using GIS mapping of climatologic zones of watersheds in Eastern Visayas, Jecela A. Demegillo and Rufino B. Ayaso III, Eastern Visayas Integrated Agricultural Research Center (EVIARC), Department of Agriculture, Reigonal Field Unit VIII, Babatngon, Leyte,*
2. *Retrieved from: http://water.usgs.gov/wsc/ on 02.18.05*

CAPSA, BAR forge 'synergistic partnerships' for R&D collaboration

"Synergistic partnerships among the member countries as there are good opportunities in collaboration." Thus, was the main point of Dr. Taco Bottema, director of the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Secondary Crops' Development in Asia and the Pacific (CAPSA), during his brief visit to the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) to explore possible R&D collaborative efforts between CAPSA and the Bureau on 23 February 2005, Office of the Director.

Dir. Bottema emphasized that for 'synergistic partnerships' to continue, all the other member countries in the Region should be willing to collaborate in this effort as well.

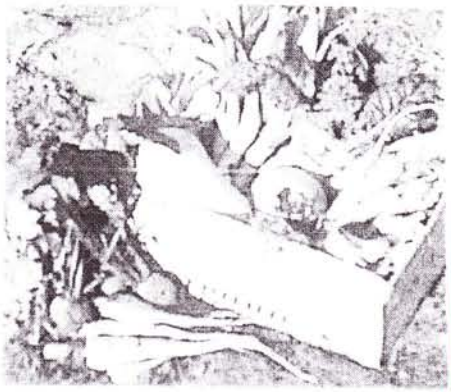
Needing "to go forward," Dir. Bottema, who took over the directorship of CAPSA five months ago, wanted to explore the possibilities of BAR's deeper involvement in line with its eight-point agenda.

On BAR's part, Dir. Eleazar explained that BAR has been an active

see CAPSA page 2

Cheap, clean, and green is the way to go

by Ma. Lizbeth J. Baroña



FEATURE

"I give them nothing with chemicals in it. I do not feed them food that I could not eat myself."

Eva Pua, owner of a restaurant that serves only organically produced food, was not talking about her pets when she said these words at a seminar sponsored by the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) about months ago.

She was referring to the chickens she raises in her farm, which she cooks and serves in her organic restaurant located at a five-star hotel in the heart of Manila. Ms. Pua's ardor to organic farming was brought about by personal losses, which she related in the said forum. But the rest of the farming community need not go into painful episodes in life to realize the fact that organic farming not only ensures healthy food on the table, it also helps efforts to protect our environment.

The low-down on organic farming

Organic farming gained quite a reputation amid concerns on increasing cost of chemical fertilizers and alarm on decreasing soil fertility as a consequence of the unabated use of chemical and synthetic fertilizers.

If you are embarking on organic farming, you are raising your crop using sustainable production practices while developing biological diversity in the field to disrupt habitat for pest organisms as a means of pest and disease control. Organic farming does not allow the use of pesticides and synthetic fertilizers. In the process, you are also ensuring maintenance and replenishment of the soil's nutrients.

Recently, the web portal of BAR's partner in its Rice Network, the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) in Agusan reported the development of a technology involving organic farming that farmers in Northern Mindanao are adopting.

The Waste Management, Organic Farming, Microbial Technology and Biomass Utilization, or WOMB technology increased farmers' yield to as much as 6.8 t/ha. This technology is teaching farmers that organic fertilizer from waste, is a cheap and more practical alternative to commercial and chemical fertilizers.

Every cropping season, farmers gather organic materials like rice hulls, banana peelings, sawdust, chicken manures, old newspapers, which are later made into organic fertilizer. With the help of a solution called Effective Microorganisms (EM), fertilizers were produced from these materials that contain nutrients vital to growing rice. This way, the farmers are also helping in the proper waste management efforts of their localities. The PhilRice web portal reports that WOMB is being demonstrated extensively to increase rice production in Agusan.

Organic faming also applies to livestock and poultry. In the case of Ms. Pua, she organically raises corn that she feeds her poultry by feeding them organically-grown yellow corn. Organic livestock and poultry are not given antibiotics or medications, but they may be vaccinated against disease. Livestock diseases and parasites are controlled primarily through preventive measures such as rotational grazing, balanced diet, sanitary housing, and stress reduction. In the case of chickens, pests and diseases may also be controlled through the all-in-all-out method of production.

Organic farming and trade

Apart from addressing health issues that usually arise from ingesting conventionally-grown agriculture products, organic farming products also have high market potential, especially in international trade. The downside of pursuing this market, though, is that the Philippines does not have the benefit of a policy framework that ensures quality and competitiveness of organically-grown products against products from developed countries.

The Department of Agriculture, along with the private sector, is taking the initial steps in establishing this much-needed framework by adopting the guidelines and procedures based on the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) basic standards.

IFOAM-Philippines has come up with a draft on basic standards for the Philippines. The DA also released a special order in May 2001 creating a National Task Force for Organic Agriculture. Although standards for organic production and processing are yet to be formulated, the implications of having a regulatory body for organic products is a good "come on" for the world market.

What it all boils down to

If you are about to dig into your crisp, organically grown greens, salad time need not be stressful time if you are one who worries about ingesting and, consequently, building-up chemicals in your body.

Organic produce contains significantly lower levels, or none at all, of pesticide residues than food produced conventionally. The United States has set strict guidelines on manure use in organic farming: either it must be first composted, or it must be applied at least 90 days before harvest, which allows ample time for microbial breakdown of any pathogens that may affect humans or livestock. This way, being free from chemical build-up would not mean vulnerability to pathogens. It would still be a worry-free dining after all.

Sources:

1. *WOMB Technology births inexpensive farming, retrieved from http://www.philrice.gov.ph/features.php?newsTag=74 on 02.21.05*
2. *Organic Farming Research Foundation, retrieved from http://www.ofrf.org/general/about_organic on 02.21.05*

Who's new at BAR

(L-R) Evelyn Juanillo, Rodolfo Fernandez, Loricel Sambo,Rhea Aileen Neo, Rogelio Mercado, and Reynoso Catalan

Six new staff have been added to the growing family of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR). Wonder no more about these unfamiliar faces you may bump into along the corridors of the office as they're here to boost the manpower of BAR. They are: Evelyn Juanillo, Loricel Sambo, Rodolfo Fernandez, Rogelio Mercado, Rhea Aileene Neo, and Reynoso Catalan.

A natural head-turner with her long, silky, black hair, **Evelyn Juanillo** or "Eve" as she prefers to be called, is the new senior executive assistant at the Office of the Assistant Director (OAD). Although this isn't her first job, working in the government is totally new to her as she was previously involved with the private sector for 10 years. She graduated from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) with a degree in B.S. Agricultural Business and has masteral units in Public Affairs.

Also assigned at OAD is **Loricel Sambo** or simply, "Lori". She's also a product of UPLB finishing with a degree in B.S. Biology. This is her first job and when asked about her expectations, she simply wants to build a harmonious relationship with the BAR staff and hopefully jive in. As for her hobbies, she enjoys reading books, surfing the net and, most of all, engaging in an unusual sport, taekwondo. This young lady is a taekwondo blackbelter and has been a member of teakwondo associations like the Philippine Taekwondo Association, Taekwondo Blackbelt Sorority and UPLB Taekwondo Varsity.

His face may not be totally new for some as **Rodolfo Fernandez,** or 'Budi' as he is fondly called, was previously employed by BAR during the time of Dr. William Dar and was then assigned at the Information Systems Division. From BAR, he worked at DENR for three years, afterwhich it was an NGO, DAR, and then back to BAR. He is now assigned at the Institutional Development Section of PDD. He graduated from UPLB with a degree in B.S. Agricultural Engineering.

Rogelio Mercado is also assigned at IDD as a clerk. He graduated from the University of Regina Carmeli, Malolos City with a degree in BSC-Management. When asked about his hobbies he simply says, "I like to fix things." At BAR he expects to learn more and hopefully contribute his own experiences to the development of this institution.

At the Property and Supply Unit is **Rhea Aileene Neo**, who hails from Legazpi City. Her face is hard to miss, as her reflexive yet simple smile will greet you as you pass each other along the corridor at the ground floor. She graduated from FEU-FERN College with a degree in B.S. Information Management. Previously, she worked as an encoder at a private software company. When asked about her expectations, she shrugged and said, "Nothing much, really." This petite lady's hobbies include watching television and sleeping.

The last of the bunch is **Reynoso Catalan** or "Adonis" as he is popularly known among his colleagues. He is assigned at the General Services as records clerk. He is fond of reading books, most of them non-fiction and technical. When asked about his aspirations, he said that all he really wants is to do his job well and eventually help his parents financially. *(Rita T. dela Cruz)*

Web news

Pioneering marker-assisted breeding results in pearl millet hybrid resistant to downy mildew
http://www.icrisat.org/web/asp/Whatsnew.asp

UK expert assesses environmental risks from GMOs
http://www.pcarrd.dost.gov.ph/

Council heeds call on job and agri business opportunities with R&D
http://www.pcarrd.dost.gov.ph/

DA to launch "Organikong Abono"
http://www.da.gov.ph/

BPI says cooking cassava properly removes toxin
http://www.da.gov.ph/

Carabao mango dice
http://www.philstar.com/

'Sexy' tomatoes gaining acceptance among farmers
http://www.philstar.com/

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