



DA revitalizes national rubber development program

The Department of Agriculture's (DA) Convenor Group on the National Rubber Development Program (NRDP) held a consultative meeting to discuss the line-up of activities prior to launching of the program and to identify the Technical Working Group (TWG) that will draft the 10-year NRDP plan, at the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) Conference Room, 31 July 2006.

According to Mr. Bong Ramos, director of the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS) and chairperson of the organizational meeting, DA Secretary Domingo F. Panganiban is keen on carrying out the launching of the NRDP which aims to integrate and consolidate all rubber programs in the country.

Mr. Allan Javellana, president of the National Agribusiness Corporation (NABCOR), in a meeting with Secretary Panganiban, he emphasized the need for the commitment of investors/private sector, local government units (LGUs), and other concerned agencies to come up with a common NRDP that will serve as the single working document for nationwide implementation.

The demand for natural rubber in the world market is high and the commodity commands an increasing price. Ramos said that in the Philippines, production of natural rubber is high but still limited to Mindanao.

In the same meeting, BAR Director Nicomedes Eleazar stated that

rubber is now a priority commodity in agriculture research, development, and extension (RDE). "We are now promoting rubber production in Luzon and Visayas. In collaboration with Dr. Eugenio Alcala, rubber expert from the University of Southern Mindanao (USM) and Philippine Rubber Board Inc. (PRBI), we have identified suitable areas in Luzon particularly at Mt. Arayat, Magalang, Pampanga," he said. He also informed the core group that on-farm trials in the 2-ha area identified as suitable to rubber production is on-going.

Other member-agencies and collaborators of the program include the High Value Commercial Crops (HVCC) Program, Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), National Agricultural and Fishery Council (NAFC), Bureau of Soils and Water

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BAR's staff wins merit prize in IRRDB photo competition



Mr. Ricardo Bernardo of ACS-MISD shows his merit winning entry in the IRRDB's photo competition.

Mr. Ricardo G. Bernardo of the Applied Communication Section-Management Information System (ACS-MISD) of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) won a merit prize during the recently concluded "Global Rubber Photography Competition". With the theme, "The beautiful world of rubber", the photo contest was organized by the International Rubber Research and Development Board (IRRDB), a voluntary association of national research institutions from 16 countries concerned with R&D of natural rubber, which is based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Mr. Bernardo is one of the six

merit prize winners and the only winner from the Philippines who will take home a cash award of US\$500. Other merit prize winners are: Mr. Tumpal HS Siregar (Indonesia), Dr. Amir Hashim Mohd Yatim (Malaysia), Mrs. Mary Uzo B. Mokwunye (Nigeria), Dr. S.

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BAR Chronicle

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It provides regular updates on the activities on BAR's activities as R&D coordinator and news and features concerning NaRDSAF-member institutions.

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2006 first semester performance reviewed

The Bureau of Agricultural Research held its mid-year strategic planning workshop in Hotel Dominique, Tagaytay City, 6-7 July 2006.

The planning workshop, spearheaded by the Bureau's Planning Unit, reviewed the Bureau's performance in relation to performance targets committed at the start of the year and planned for major activities to implement BAR's major programs for the 2nd semester of CY 2006.

The planning workshop also was a venue to identify adjustments in organizational policies and systems necessary to enhance and achieve overall BAR productivity.

Director Nicomedes Eleazar, in his opening remarks, cited areas where the Bureau will focus its work on, while soliciting support of the divisions and units.

Some of the areas of concern that the Director suggested were: intensification of technology sourcing from completed and on-going projects; strengthening the monitoring and evaluation of projects; updating of database in AF technologies and projects and R&D human resource; and, strengthening CPAR implementation and agribusiness development.

Director Eleazar also mentioned BAR's role on high-impact

projects, which include: the Diversified Farm Income and Market Development Project Technology Cluster; the BIOTECH project for production of superior water buffaloes through in-vitro fertilization in collaboration with the office of Sen. Ramon Magsaysay and the Philippine Carabao Center; sweet sorghum propagation for ethanol production; commercialization of sweet tamarind; development of different products from oregano; pursuing active partnership with the Asian Vegetable Research Development Center; introduction and promotion of the production of "Asha" peanut variety; the community-based watershed project with the Bureau of Soil and Water Management; and the intellectual property training being spearheaded by the Bureau for the Department of Agriculture.

All divisions and units presented their accomplishments in the January to June 2006 period, and their plans for the rest of the year. Each presentation was subjected to an open forum by the body.

Assistant Director Teodoro Solsoy capped the event with a closing message, thanking the BAR staff for their service, and providing inspiring words for a genuine public service. (*Ma. Lizbeth J. Baroña*)

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Dharmakeerthi (Sri Lanka), and Mrs. Rasamee Suravanit (Thailand).

Grand prize winners (cash award of US\$ 1,500 each) include: Dr. Vinoth Thomas (India), Dr. Anoma Thewarapperuma (Sri Lanka), and Mr. Hoang Huu Hai (Vietnam).

Prizes will be presented on 13 November during the launching

of the **Global Rubber Industry**, a coffee table book, in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The book launching is part of the program for the International Rubber Conference (IRC) which is scheduled on 13-14 November 2006 at the Legend Hotel, 2A Ton Duc Thang Street, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Aside from the cash prize, the winning images will also be exhibited during the conference. (*Rita T. dela Cruz*)

Private sector, BAR forge alliance

In line with the goal of reducing the use of chemical fertilizers in agriculture, two private sectors—Exquisite Focus Philippines, Inc. and Barachiel Enterprises, have been promoting biofertilizers in the country. Department of Agriculture (DA) Undersecretary for Field Operations Jesus Emmanuel M. Paras endorsed these two enterprises to the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) for further research of their products and assistance that it can extend.

Dr. Teodoro S. Solsoloy, BAR's assistant director, together with Dr. Marlowe U. Aquino, head of Technology Commercialization Unit (TCU) and Ms. Digna L. Sandoval, coordinator for crops met with Mr. Chong Ken Foo, president of Exquisite Focus Philippines, Inc., 17 July 2006. A distributor of probiotics, the company includes exquisite soil conditioner, biofertilizer, probiotics for livestock, poultry, and aquaculture. Exquisite soil conditioner and biofertilizer are primarily used for agricultural crops and has been proven to be effective on sugarcane, mango, including fisheries such as prawn, tilapia and milkfish. The product has been known to increase yield from 30 to 50%, enhance resistance to diseases with better characteristics of plants. Mr. Foo added that, the products also improve the natural flavor and aroma

of the crops. Exquisite products had been tested by different state universities in the north.

Exquisite is a Chinese technology that was introduced in the country in 2000. Although the technology has been in existence for six years, its utilization is still limited. The primary reason that limits the commercialization is the unwillingness of the agricultural store owners to market the product.

A different meeting was held with another private sector on 20 July 2006. Mr. Rene Jao, general manager of Barachiel Enterprises, introduced Stevia, a Korean technology which also promotes organic farming for sustainable agriculture. The product comes in liquid and powder form for rice. Tests show similar benefits with those of the Exquisite products.

Stevia is now being widely used in ASEAN countries like China, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and Burma. Tests have been conducted on crops such as lettuce, watermelon, etc. The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) Los Baños expressed interest on Stevia and BPI Malate allotted

five plots of crops for testing. Mr. Jao's concern is the registration and licensing of the product. The sample products given will be tested on garlic.

Initially, Dr. Aquino suggested to Mr. Foo that DA- BAR will package a proposal for the Regional Integrated and Agricultural Research Centers (RIARCs) to test Exquisite soil conditioner and biofertilizer. The results of the study will be given to the company. The strategies include technology demonstration to introduce the technology and encourage agribusiness development, and information campaign through farmers' field day and trainings. The same activities will be undertaken for Stevia as suggested by Dr. Solsoloy. (Ma. Eloisa E. Hernandez and Maria Noriza Q. Herrera)



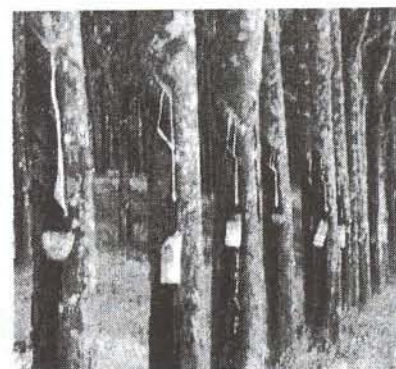
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Management (BSWM), Department of Agriculture – Field Operations Service, ZNAC Rubber Estate Corporation (ZREC), Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC), Philippine Rubber Industries Assn., Inc. (PRIA), local government units, state colleges and universities (SCUs), DA Regional Field Units (RFUs), and private sector.

The proposed activities prior to the launching of the NRDP on Aug.

31 include the drafting of the 10-year plan and a week-long national rubber workshop. The workshop and launching are set to be held in Davao City.

Javellana is tasked to draft the special order for the identified members of the TWG for the program to be signed by Secretary Panganiban. The core group also identified members of the secretariat from AMAS and NABCOR. (Miko Jazmine J. Mojica)



BAR receives Aduyon Award for partnership in agriculture

The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) received the Aduyon Award for partnership in agriculture during the Benguet State University's (BSU) week-long 90th foundation day celebration through exhibits, June 26-30 2006.

BAR through its Applied Communication Section (ACS) participated in the celebration by putting up an exhibit.

Director Nicomedes Eleazar along with BSU President Rogelio Colting and alumni of the University led in ribbon-cutting for the exhibits. The exhibits showcased important technologies developed by the host university's partners, and other products developed both by partners in the public and private sectors.

The celebration also showcased how deeply imbedded in the culture of the BSU the unique culture and history of Benguet province.

Dr. William D. Dar, BAR's former director and now director-general of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), was the University's most distinguished alumnus.

Dr. Dar, in his message, thought back to his early days as a young instructor, and thanked the University for paving the way for him by entrusting him the job.

BSU also honored their alumni from different fields of service, which included journalism, military, community development, research, and the academe. (*Ma. Lizbeth J. Baroña*)

2nd project review Nutrient mgt for maize evaluated

The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) participates in the Second Project Review and Planning Workshop for the project, "Site-specific nutrient management for maize in the Philippines" on 25-27 July 2006 at the SEAMEO Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) Dormitory, University of the Philippines Los Baños, Laguna.

Site-specific nutrient management (SSNM) is the dynamic approach of applying fertilizer specifically containing nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K), with the amount of each adjusted according to the location- and season-specific needs of the crop. It aims to increase the profit of farmers through higher yield and reduced disease and insect damage.

The workshop had three objectives: evaluate the agronomic and economic performance of crop and nutrient management strategies tested at all project sites during 2005-2006; develop a site-specific nutrient management approach for maize in the Philippines; and develop crop and nutrient management recommendations and participatory approaches for delivery at key locations in 2007 and beyond. The focus of the project is to identify major production constraints in the main maize growing areas and the development of tools to overcome them in a site-specific approach.

The duration of the project is from 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2008. The National Corn RDE Network implements the project in collaboration with BAR, AFC Fertilizer and Chemicals Inc. (AFCI), Potash and Phosphate Institute/International



Phosphate Institute – South East Asia Program (PPI/IPI SEAP), Regional Integrated Agricultural Research Centers (RIARCs), and PhilRice.

BAR's responsibility in the project includes the provision of additional funds for research and assessment activities, monitoring and evaluation of the project, and support the publication of major results in scientific papers. It currently funds the research in the following maize-producing sites with PPI/IPI SEAP: Ilagan, Isabela; Malaybalay, Bukidnon; and Ramos, Tarlac. For its part, the AFCI funds and implements other project sites located in Bukidnon, Isabela, and Zamboanga.

According to PPI, the total area planted to maize in Southeast Asia is currently about 8.6 M ha (FAOSTAT 2006) with largest areas in Indonesia (41%), the Philippines (29%), Thailand (13%), and Vietnam (12%). "The growing demand in the Philippines cannot be met despite the increase in domestic production and yield of maize in the last 15 years," PPI added. Studies conducted indicate that the average national yield in the country is only 2 t/ha compared to 3-4 t/ha in Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam. The PPI recommends that knowledge on yield potential, exploitable yield gaps, and constraints to improving productivity at the field level be enhanced. (*Miko Jazmine J. Mojica*)

BAR reviews 17 completed UP Diliman projects

The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) through its Project Development Division (PDD) reviewed 17 completed projects implemented by the University of the Philippines Diliman, 28 July 2006, BAR Conference Room, Visayas Ave., Diliman Quezon City. The purpose of the activity is to answer these questions: 1) after the project is completed, what is the next step; 2) are these technologies, research results ready for commercialization.

The 17 completed projects reviewed include: 1) Enhancing Sustainable Fisheries Through Improved Marine Fishery Reserves (MFRs): Investigation of the Long Range Effects of MFRs (Dr. Porfirio Aliño); 2) Ocean Color Sustainable Fisheries (Dr. Laura T. David); 3) Development of Culture for Small Size and/or Mucilaginous Seaweed Species and Screening for their High Value Natural Products (Dr. Gavino S. Trono Jr.); 4) Biodiversity (Taxonomy) and Distribution of the Seaweed Resources of the Philippines (Dr. Gavino S. Trono Jr.); 5) Screening and Development of Natural Products from *Halymenia durvillae* Bory de Saint Vincent and *Protieria hornemannii* (Lyngbye) P. C. Silva (Dr. Nemesio Montaña); 6) Development of

Quality Criteria for Cultured *Carageenophytes* Based on Harvest Time (Dr. Nemesio Montaña); 7) DNA Based Approaches for the Detection of Pathogens in Aquaculture and Vaccine Production of Hog Cholera (Dr. Cynthia Hedreyda); 8) Development of Mitigating Strategies for Seaweed Diseases to Sustain/Enhance Production in Farm (Dr. Edna G. Fortes); 9) Development of Marine Environmental Quality Criteria for Mariculture Areas (Dr. Gil S. Jacinto); 10) Authentication Techniques for Indigenous Export Food Products (Prof. Blanca Villarino); 11) Net Sea Level Change in the Pampanga Delta Region: Causes and Consequences (Dr. Fernando Siringan); 12) Risk Assessment of Genetically Modified Organisms and Potentially Harmful Exotic Species Related to Agriculture and Fisheries (Dr. Nina G. Barzaga); 13) Assessment of Coastal Polyculture Systems to Reduce Environmental Impact and Increase Production (Dir. Ma. Lourdes San Diego Mc-Glone); 14) Identification and Initial Validation of an Analytical Method for the Determination of Lead and Cadmium Fish and Rice Samples to be Used for Monitoring and Regulatory Purposes (Dr. Evangeline Santiago); 15) Assessment of Genetic Variability of Wild and Hatchery



Fed Philippine Milkfish Population Towards Increased Sustainable Production (Dr. Marie Antonnette J. Meñez); 16) Pilot Testing of Sea Urchin (*Tripneustes gratilla*) Grow-Out Culture in Bolinao, Pangasinan (Dr. Marie Antonnette J. Meñez); 17) Development of Pilot Scale Multi Species Hatchery to Some Commercially Important Sea Cucumbers Gastropods (Dr. Marie Antonnette J. Meñez)

The panel of project evaluators were Dr. Catalino dela Cruz, BAR's technical adviser for fisheries, Dr. Saturnina Halos, technical adviser for biotechnology, Dr. Carmencita Kagaoan, head of BAR's PDD, representatives from BAR's Technology Commercialization Unit (TCU) and Intellectual Property Office (IPRO). (Rita T. dela Cruz with reports from PDD)

Projects review identifies technologies for dissemination

Eight completed BAR-funded projects of the Central Luzon State University (CLSU) were reviewed and presented last 14 July 2006 at the RET Cafeteria, Conference Hall, CLSU, Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija. The major objective of the review is to identify technologies or outputs that can be disseminated and commercialized.

The following were the projects presented and reviewed: 1) Development of Improved Breeds of Tilapia for Culture in Saline Waters (Component I) by Dr. Tereso A. Abella; 2) Ecological Studies on Mango Twig Borer and Its Natural Enemies by Dr. Aurea Roxas; 3) Socioeconomics and

Policy Analysis of Small Ruminants Sector Development by Dr. Ma. Excelsis M. Orden; 4) Socioeconomics and Policy Analysis of Mungbean and Peanut Production and Marketing in the Philippines by Dr. Fe Porciencula; 5) Ecology and Management of Agromyzid Leafminers in Onion and Garlic by Dr. Elaida Fiegalan; 6) Structure, Conduct, and Performance of the Seed Industry (Phase I) by Prof. Alma dela Cruz; 7) Development of Clean Seed Production System for Shallots by Dr. Quirino dela Cruz; and 8) Development of Integrated Pest Management Strategies for Mungbean Podborer (*Maruca testiales* Geyer) by Dr. Jaime Quilantang

The projects were recommended either for commercialization, to be continued, for intellectual property rights (IPR) application, suspension, or deferral.

The panel of project evaluators was composed of Dr. Rodel G. Maghirang, Dr. Marlowe U Aquino, Mr. Tito Arevalo, Ms. Ligaya Santos, Dr. Carmencita V. Kagaoan and Dr. Catalino dela Cruz.

There are still four completed projects of CLSU which were not presented during the review. The evaluators agreed that these be presented and reviewed on 3 August 2006 at the BAR Conference Room in Quezon City. (Miko Jazmine J. Mojica with reports from Ms. Leoncia del Mar)

1st Agri Fisheries Policy Summit maps out areas for policy reform



The Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Ateneo Economic Policy Reform Advocacy (EPRA) Project organized the first "Agriculture and Fisheries Policy Summit" on 5-6 July 2006, BSWM Auditorium, Visayas Avenue, Diliman Quezon City. The Summit gathered key players and stakeholders in agriculture and fisheries for an in-depth discussion of the current realities of Philippine agriculture, its accomplishments, issues and bottlenecks as well as the challenges facing the sector. Most important, was the mapping out of areas for policy reforms for a transparent, participatory, and multi-stakeholder approach needed to improve service delivery and to achieve substantive growth in Philippine agriculture.

The pre-summit on the first day kicked off with the opening of exhibits of outstanding local government unit (LGU) agriculture projects led by DA Assistant Secretary for External and Legislative Affairs Catherine Mae C. Santos and LGU officials. Also highlighting the day was the presentation of two outstanding LGU agriculture projects: 1) Looc, Romblon Coastal Resource Management Project (Dr. Leila M. Arboleda, mayor of

Looc, Romblon) and, 2) Barangay Agriculture Development project of Negros Oriental project (Mr. Gregorio P. Paltinca, provincial agriculturist of Negros Oriental).

The two outstanding LGU projects were both awarded the Galing Pook Foundation, which gives tribute to innovation and excellence in local governance. The *Looc, Romblon Coastal Resource Management Project* is a trailblazer in marine resource conservation and management. Looc, meaning cove, the fourth municipality in the southern part of Tablas Island, encloses 23,000 sq km of municipal waters, thus a major fishing ground for around 1000 households. The municipality was able to abate rampant illegal and destructive methods of fishing that led to the depletion of the bay's productivity.

The second project, *Barangay Agriculture Project* of Negros Oriental Province was able to surmount problems of food shortage and insufficient supply of fresh fish protein. With initiatives in fisheries and agriculture confined in the lowlands, most people in the uplands suffer from poverty, consequently, migrating to the cities and worsening the urban social problems. This was the challenge faced and overcame by the project.

Other highlights of the pre-summit activities include a presentation of the "Synthesis of Regional Consultations and Recommendations for Philippine Agriculture Reform" of Dr. Cielito F. Habito, project director of EPRA and a consensus building workshop on "Key Actions to Accelerate Philippine Agriculture Reform".

The consensus workshop was participated in by four groups taking on the issues of policy reforms. Specifically, each group answered the three key questions: what are the sector's most important/critical problems, what major reforms need to be done in the sector, what concrete actions can one do in the sector within a year to accelerate Philippine agriculture and fisheries reform, and what concrete actions can the sectors do within a year to accelerate Philippine agriculture and fisheries reform. The groups include: Group 1 (DA Asecs, Usecs, Regional Directors, Head of Attached Agencies and Bureaus), Group 2 (Division Chiefs, Service Chiefs, and their representatives), Group 3 (Other National Government Agencies and State Colleges and Universities) and, Group 4 (Civil Society Organizations, Farmers, Fishermen, and Peoples' Organizations).

Meanwhile, the policy summit activities, which took off on July 6 was highlighted by the presence of DA Secretary Domingo F. Panganiban giving light to issues raised during the pre-summit activities. Concerned groups asked him on the promises he made during his assumption to office. In his address he said "I had promised no easy answers. I had asked only for hard work and sincere public service." His speech was clear on sufficient measures and he continued on reporting the good progress his administration made for the last year and its future strategies for improvement.

"We ended 2005 with a slight downturn as the rate of agricultural growth fell below 2004 levels at 2%. We began this year on a high road to recovery, as agricultural production marched forward with a 3.94% increase through the first semester," he remarked

"We have made a strong beginning – but we have only begun.

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DA Secretary Domingo F. Panganiban delivers his keynote address during the policy summit.

Now the time has come to turn vision into achievement. This year, therefore, we will move firmly along a path toward a higher rate of growth and rural employment," he added. In his speech, he was adamant and determined to demonstrate that it is both possible and imperative to adopt new and more effective measures within the confines of DA's budget.

He was also clear on core strategies for the future that revolve around four central tasks: 1) ensure national food security; 2) work for the prosperity of our farmers and fisherfolks; 3) improve the competitiveness of our farm and fishery products; and 4) ensure the sustainability of agricultural progress.

In the international trade policy front, he stressed the importance of confronting issues of the sector by remaining committed to openness and fair trade and maintain adequate protection measures for all sectors of Philippine agriculture. Finally, he announced the rationalization of the rules governing the ACEF. He said, "The new rules will provide for dedicated funds for small farmers and their associations, as well as for specific public investments to enhance competitiveness."

Also present during the Summit proper was DA Undersecretary for Field Operations Jesus Emmanuel M. Paras who delivered the welcome address and DA Undersecretary for Policy and Planning Segfredo R. Serrano who introduced the Secretary. (Rita T. dela Cruz)

Stakeholders' forum highlights biotechnology

Public and private partnership, coherent R&D strategy, diagnostics, intellectual property rights—were the topics highlighted during the Stakeholders' Forum on Biotechnology on 7 July 2006 at BSWM Convention Hall in Diliman, Quezon City.

The forum is part of the National Biotechnology Week celebration that carries the theme "Securing the Philippines' Niche in the Global Bioenterprise". Currently, there is a need to develop a biotechnology industry in the Philippines that caters to the need of the local and world markets, according to the forum.

According to Dr. Segfredo R. Serrano, Department of Agriculture (DA) Undersecretary for Regulations and R&D, for the Philippines to occupy a position in the global bio-enterprise, we need to focus on two activities, namely: 1) targeting the world market for natural ingredients with the application of traditional and modern biotechnology; and 2) improving the competitiveness of traditional Philippine agri-fisheries products through bio-processing and modern biotechnology.

In order to implement these activities, Dr. Serrano outlined eight strategies: 1) support for the development of natural ingredients industry; 2) promote integrated multi-product processing of traditional crops; 3) strengthen three biotech facilities: Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), Philippine Carabao Center (PCC), and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources- Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (BFAR-SEAFDEC); 4) accelerated and directed manpower development; 5) focused R&D; 6) private-public sector link in R&D; (7) established science policy; and 8) biotech fund.

The R&D priority program in biotechnology and the importance of supporting our R&D institutions and increasing funding for biotech R&D

were discussed by Dr. Reynaldo Ebor, executive director of the Philippine Council for Advanced Science and Technology Research and Development (PCASTRD) of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). Dr. Ramon L. Clarete of the University of the Philippines (UP), on the other hand, focused his presentation on the sources of competitive advantage in biotechnology. These sources, however, must be coupled with the necessary investment climate, proper infrastructure, and intellectual property policies to encourage the uptake of new technology by firms, Dr. Clarete said.

Ms Ma. Antonia Odelia G. Arroyo of Hybridigm Consulting highlighted connectivity between public and private institutions as the most important yet lacking in the Philippines today. According to Ms Arroyo, the best way to secure the Philippines' niche in the global bioenterprise is to form a strategic partnership with the private sector. The private sector, in collaboration with other research institutes, can act as a source of innovation and provide a path for technology transfer in the national system.

The other speakers from the private sector and international research organizations emphasized the critical role of the government in developing a technology-explicit agenda and coherent R&D strategy, fostering innovations, and encouraging private sector investments by creating favorable and relevant policies and regulations to be able to tap the increasing market for natural products, diagnostics, nutraceuticals, and cosmeceuticals where the Philippines has a clear competitive advantage. A major shift from a purely R&D orientation to technology businesses that generate income and revenue is also being encouraged.

Representatives from the DA, DOST, Intellectual Property Office, schools and universities, and the private sector attended the gathering. The Philippine Council for Industry and Energy Research and Development (PCIERD) of DOST organized the forum. (Mariko M. Ramos)

Corn-based technologies win 36th CSSP Best Poster Award



Dr. Romeo V. Labios of UPLB accepts the award for "Best Poster (Extension Category)" during the recently concluded 36th Crop Science Society of the Philippines (CSSP) scientific conference.

The poster titled, "Enhancing the Adoption and Utilization of Corn-Based Technologies by Corn Farmers Through Partnership with Local Government Units and Private Industries" authored by Rolando V. Labios of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), Drs. Romeo V. Labios and Artemio M. Salazar of the University of the Philippines (UPLB) won the Best Poster Award (Extension Category) in the recently concluded 36th Crop Science Society of the Philippines (CSSP) scientific conference held in Puerto Princesa City.

This is part of the project titled, "Systematic Coordination of On-Station and On-Farm Corn Research, Development and Extension Programs in the Philippines," which is being implemented through the National Corn RDE Network and funded by GMA Corn program through BAR.

The award was given for the project's significant depiction of adopting and utilizing corn-based technologies by farmers through collaborative efforts from various government agencies, state colleges and universities (SCUs), local government units (LGUs), and private industries.

Sharing the same spot for the Best Poster Award is the "Integration of International Rice Genebank Collection

Information Systems (IRGCIS) to International Rice Information System (IRIS) for Crop Improvement" authored by R.H. Prantilla, A. Alcantara, M.C. Habito, F. de Guzman, T. Metz and R.S. Hamilton. The poster won due to its outstanding illustration of the development of the IRGCIS in managing the tremendous volume of rice cultivars collected and developed at IRRI which is at par with global crop data integration and internationalization.

Other winners include the poster entitled "Organic, Virus-Free and True-to type Tissue Cultured Garlic (*Allium sativum* L.)" by L.F. Patena, G.S. Rodulfo, L.M. Dolores, R.N. Garcia, J.L. Juanillas, and R.C. Barba of UPLB for the downstream category. The team developed a technology in producing disease-free and true-to-type garlic planting materials adopted for mass



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Agriculture is projected to grow by 4.5 to 5 percent for the first semester

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production for farmers. This has an added value of having been produced organically which can be a promising alternative to the other garlic types available at the local market. Meanwhile, the poster entitled "Strategies in the Further Improvement of Beta-Carotene Rice" emerged as winner for the upstream category. The study was authored by R.R. Aldemita, S. Al-Babili, R. Welsch and P. Beyer of the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) and Albert Ludwigs Universität, at Freiburg, Germany. The study probed on two possible rate-limiting genes (*psy* and *crtl*) involved in the β -carotene synthetic pathway to enhance the β -carotene content of rice.

A total of 124 posters competed for the three categories. Selections of winners were based on originality, presentation, design, and its relevance to the conference's theme, "Value Added Crop Science for Sustainable Agricultural Development". (Rita T. dela Cruz)

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