

# UPLBAA-Metro Manila Chapter inducts new officers and board of directors

The University of the Philippines Los Baños Alumni Association-Metro Manila Chapter (UPLBAA-MMC) inducted its new set of officers and board of directors with a simple oath taking ceremony held on 24 September 2009 at the 2/F Conference Room, RDMIC Bldg., Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

The new officers are: Dr. Clarito Barron of the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) (president), Dr. Teodoro Solsoloy of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) (vice president), Ms. Lina Lapitan of BPI (secretary), Ms. Josephine Garcia of BPI (treasurer), Mr. Rolando Labios of BAR (auditor), and Rita dela Cruz of BAR (public relations officer).

Meanwhile, the selected nine-

member board of directors include: Romeo Dizon, Paulino Resma, Teodorico Escobar, Norlito Gicana, Francis Laurel, Manuel Rocha, Thelma Soriano, Tito Arevalo, and Leoncia del Mar.

In a written message, Director Nicomedes P. Eleazar extended his greetings and congratulations to all the new officers and members of the board and UPLB alumni who were present during the induction.

He expressed his enthusiasm and felt honored for BAR chosen to host this activity. "It is through this kind of organization that we keep our link to one another intact and with commitment to serve the nation. More than the technical training we received

from UPLB, I am proud to say that UPLB enhanced our professional and moral commitment toward responsible action."

In the brief message of the new UPLBAA-MMC President, Dr. Barron enjoined all the officers and directors to continue to sustain what this association started two decades ago and promote strong commitment among the members while not forgetting the camaraderie and creating a friendly environment among its members.

The new officers and members of the board of directors will man their respective posts for the next three years, 2009-2012. *(Rita T. dela Cruz)*

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Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) and Leyte State University (LSU) as implementing institutions in the Philippines, while South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI), Charles Sturt University (CSU) and New South Wales Department of Primary Industries (NSW-DPI) are the key participating institutions from Australia.

According to ACIAR, SCF is very important in the context of agriculture. It helps minimize the risk of crop production failure during bad

outcomes and aids farmers in taking advantage of the opportunities during good outcomes. It provides information on whether the coming season is likely to be wetter or drier and warmer or cooler than normal. In some cases, SCF can indicate whether there is an increased likelihood of extreme events such as El Niño or La Niña and can give early warning to farmers and other agricultural decision makers about future risks in order for them to make appropriate preparations for their farm and related activities.

Since agriculture is vulnerable to climate variability, farmers may benefit from SCF by being able to choose what crops to plant and when to

plant them. Levels of farm input can also be determined after considering the weather in the coming season thru SCF. While the risks may not be completely eliminated, information from SCF can lessen the costs that would have been incurred and may even enable farmers to make substantial yields and higher incomes, the ACIAR people added. *(Edmon B. Agron)*

For more information about SCF you can visit the nearest PAGASA weather station, or log on the PAGASA website [www.pagasa.dost.gov.ph](http://www.pagasa.dost.gov.ph) or call 434-0955, 9291953.



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## Getting positive about climate change

According to Dr. Rosa Perez, irrigated fields could perform better than rainfed agriculture.

PHOTO: RDELACRUZ

Talk about getting a positive out of something negative. "Climate change also has a positive effect," said Dr. Rosa Perez, Senior Climate Specialist of the Regional Climate Systems at the Manila Observatory, in the recent symposium on climate change sponsored by the Philippine Institute of Development Studies on 22 September 2009.

Dr. Perez talked on the topic, "Climate Change and Policy Responses". She discussed how this phenomenon has been affecting the Philippines and she presented highlights of the United

Nations Framework on Climate Change (UN FCC). The country's Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) are now being modified to include climate change.

So how can climate change be positive? Dr. Perez says, "Yes, it is true that climate change will result to adverse impacts in most cases, but it can also bring along opportunities, mostly from the private sector, and some real tangible business opportunities in areas ranging from energy efficiency to water conservation, for those who are flexible enough to respond."

She further adds, "In agriculture, carbon fertilization may increase yield provided other factors are present, for example water. Irrigated fields could perform better than rainfed agriculture. There is also an opportunity to innovate in technology and infrastructure in addressing the challenges of climate change."

Different sectors have found ways to adapt and mitigate its effects. Rice scientists are now developing rice varieties that are resistant to drought, salinity, submergence and heat waves.

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## Effective tool to determine risk of climate change in agri identified

An efficient and helpful tool to determine the future risks of climate change in agriculture was reported by experts from the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) during the symposium titled, "Climate Variability and Change," organized by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) during its celebration of the 7<sup>th</sup> Development Policy Research Month (DPRM).

According to the ACIAR

resource person, climate variability is one of the major factors affecting crop production resulting to crop damage and yield losses to farmers in the Philippines.

However ACIAR indicated that, significant developments have been made towards understanding the atmospheric and oceanic processes causing the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), the occurring factor resulting to climate variability

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## YAP ADDRESSES THE MEDIA: Always strive for balanced story



Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap

Attended by media practioners all over the country, Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap graced the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bright Leaf Agriculture Journalism Awards' night as the guest of honor on 11 September 2009 held at the Hyatt Hotel and Casino, Manila.

"Founded only three years ago the Bright Leaf Awards has grown into one of the most prestigious and widely participated agricultural journalism competitions in the country today," the Secretary said.

Yap stressed the importance of the media (radio, print, television) in promoting agricultural development and sustainability in the country and enjoined the press people to always strive for balanced story and that, while they report the bad news, they should also report developmental news in the agriculture sector.

The Bright Leaf Agriculture Journalism Awards is an annual

competition on news, features and photography giving due recognition to the very best agricultural journalists in the country thus promoting agricultural development and sustainability in the Philippines.

This time with bigger and more exciting prizes, winners were selected from a field of 648 entries by a board of judges, composed of noted academics, scientists, journalists and government officials.

Welcoming the attendees and participants was Mr. Chris J Nelson, managing director of Philip Morris Marketing Philippines, Inc. (PMPI), sponsor for this annual event.

"When we planted the seeds of Bright Leaf Awards three years ago, we had a sense of hope and urgency. We know that our commitment to honor the best agriculture journalists in the country finds its fulfillment in pushing agriculture to the forefront of our national consciousness," Nelson said.

He added that, with the increased number of entries this year, the organizers are proud at how the competition has grown over the years, at more than 100 percent increase from last year's 284 entries.

"This is an indication that, indeed, the harvest is great. There is so much positive development in the field of agriculture today, especially innovations toward sustainable practices," he added. (Rita T. dela Cruz)

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Stress-resistant crops and livestock are also being developed. We have also heard of energy efficient devices & appliances and Green Architecture. The search for climate change adaptive strategies will not end.

Sometimes, a half-empty glass can be viewed from a half-full glass perspective and remember that necessity is the mother of invention, according to Dr. Perez.

Nowadays, people are more aware of the effects of the continuing destruction of the environment. The recent typhoon "Ondoy" that devastated most of Metro Manila and left neighboring provinces under floodwaters is just one of the many possible consequences that the country could experience. All of us wouldn't want events like this to always happen. Aside from adaptive measures, we must not forget that we have a role to play in protecting the environment. (Johanna B. Benavente)

**"Sometimes, a half-empty glass can be viewed from a half-full glass perspective and remember that necessity is the mother of invention."**



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## 2009 PAFT annual confab highlights global trends in food industry

To reassess the Philippine food industry in view of the worldwide economic recession and new international food safety regulations vis-à-vis the global trends of the food industry, the Philippine Association of Food Technologists (PAFT) conducted its 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention at Heritage Hotel, Manila on 21-25 September 2009, with the theme "Reshaping the Food Industry – A Perspective for the Next Decade".

The event emphasizes the role of food technologists to ensure national food security by providing appropriate technologies - considering affordability, yet nutritious dietary requirements - that would empower food production and the food service industries to respond appropriately to the global challenges of food security, quality and safety.

Attending the event were Mr. Nandu Nandkishore, CEO of Nestle Philippines who served as keynote speaker, Hon Gilberto C. Teodoro, secretary of the National Defense, Dr. Ramon M. Quesada, executive director of Business Economics Club, Mr Simplicio P. Umali Jr., president and general manager of Gardenia Bakeries Philippines, Mr Sudip Mall, president and general manager of Kraft Foods Philippines, other industry leaders, experts and student fellows in the academe as well as a multitude of representatives from the different private food and non-food industries.

Highlighting the event were the informative, on-time and relevant seminars covering a wide range of topics such as, innovations on food ingredients, organic agriculture, "green" manufacturing practices, nanotechnology, affordable nutrition, food safety, nutricosmetics, pre and probiotics, laboratory diagnosis of food-borne pathogens, consumerizing health and nutrition, practical tips on marketing, and the different laws and policies that might have possible impact on the Philippine food industry.

An exhibit that showcased food and non-food innovative products were also included in the events.

According to Mr. Marty M.

Panganiban, PAFT President, the event could serve as a venue for learning, sharing of experiences, technical information and strategic knowledge for the industry to grow and become stronger to prevail over the complex challenges concerning global food security, safety and the environmental sustainability.

Mr. Panganiban emphasized the need to create more products to cater to the demand supporting the trend of a "greener" and "healthier" lifestyle as shown by the proliferation of health oriented products, both food

and non-food in the market. There is an increasing number of consumers that require a healthier alternative anchored on the virtue of natural and organic foods and the growing awareness of the important role of proper nutrition in achieving physical fitness and wellness.

The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) sponsored the event to give support as a staunch ally of progressive institutions and organizations in reaching the goals of food security and sufficiency, alleviate poverty and sustain economic growth in the country. (Edmon B. Agron)



Defense Secretary Gilbert C. Teodoro, guest speaker during the PAFT Convention, visits the BAR booth and graces a photo op with BAR staff members from TCU, IRU and ACD. PHOTOS: EAGRON



# BAR writer's piece on climate change wins Bright Leaf's Best Feature Story



BAR writer, Miko Jazmine J. Mojica, receives her trophy and cash prize during the 3rd Brightleaf Agriculture Journalism awarding ceremony held at Hyatt Hotel and Casino, Manila. PHOTO: DLEJANO

Miko Jazmine J. Mojica, one of the writers of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), won in the best agriculture feature story category (national level) in the recently concluded 3<sup>rd</sup> Bright Leaf Agriculture Journalism Awards. Her winning piece, "When Fish Catch a Cold, the Rest of the World Sneezes" was published in the third quarter issue (July-September 2008) of the *BAR R&D Digest*, the official quarterly publication of BAR.

The awarding ceremony, which was held on 11 September 2009 at the Hyatt Hotel and Casino, Manila, was graced by Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Arthur C. Yap who served as guest of honor. BAR officials and staffs, headed by Dir. Nicomedes P. Eleazar, were present to give support to Mojica.

"This is really unexpected but I welcome this recognition with great pride. May this serve as an inspiration for all of us to continue promoting Philippine agriculture through journalism," said Mojica.

The other recipients of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bright Leaf Agriculture Journalism Awards are as follows: Melpha Abello,

"A housing material made from chicken feathers" (Agriculture Magazine, Manila Bulletin), Agriculture Story of The Year; Zac Sarian, "Something new to Virginia tobacco" (Agriculture Magazine, Manila Bulletin), Tobacco Story Of The Year; Edgardo Espiritu, "Spice Scarecrow," Agriculture Photo of

the Year; Andy Zapata, "Among the Best," Tobacco Photo of the Year; Neil Jerome Morales, "Mango exports reel from pesticide curbs", Best Agriculture News Story (National); Francis Martin, "Most outstanding farmer practices indigenous farming", Best Agriculture Feature Story (Regional); Gloria Tuazon, "The scent that heals", Best Agriculture Feature Story (Regional); Inez Magbual, "Corn (Crafts from corn husks)", Best Agriculture TV Program/Segment; and Salvador Cruzana Jr., "Carera's Farm: Big Time at 200", Best Agriculture Radio Program/Segment.

The Bright Leaf Agriculture Journalism Awards, sponsored by Phillip Morris Philippines, is an annual competition which aims to give due recognition and honor to journalists whose works are geared towards the development of sustainable agriculture in the Philippines.

Serving as hosts for the event were ABS-CBN news personalities Tony Velasquez and Cecille Lardizabal. (Don P. Lejano)



Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap (left) and BAR Director Nicomedes P. Eleazar (right) pose with the happy awardee, Miko Jazmine J. Mojica and her proud mother. PHOTO: DLEJANO

# BAR takes a closer look at anthracnose disease in mangoes

The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) led by Assistant Director Teodoro S. Solsoloy facilitated a consultation meeting among PHILFOODEX President and President and CEO of Hi-Las Marketing Corporation Roberto C. Amores, Bureau of Postharvest Research and Extension (BPRE) Director Ricardo L. Cachuela, Dr. Kevin Yaptengco of the Institute of Agricultural Engineering, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), representative from the Bureau of Plant and Industry (BPI) and technical personnel from BAR to discuss and find solution to combat dreadful diseases found on fresh mangoes. The meeting also dealt on Hot Water Treatment's (HWT) effectiveness as a quarantine protocol. The meeting-dialogue centered on how to address *Anthracnose* disease, also known as *black spots*, detected on fresh mangoes exported to Japan.

Anthracnose is caused by a fungus called *Colletotrichum gloeosporioides* and thus considered serious fungal disease of mango. Among the symptoms of this disease are flower blight, fruit rot, and leaf spots. Infections on the panicles or flower clusters start as small black or dark brown spots. These can enlarge, coalesce, and kill the flowers, greatly reducing yield.

In the Philippines, *anthracnose* and stem-end rot are considered the most serious and destructive diseases of mango. Researchers also claimed that *anthracnose* infects almost all mango parts, including floral panicles, twigs,



*Anthracnose* also known as "black spots" is caused by a fungus, *Colletotrichum gloeosporioides* and is considered a serious fungal disease in mango. PHOTO: RDELACRUZ

leaves, and fruits of mature and immature trees.

The Hi-Las Marketing Corporation top executive said and claimed that Philippine mangoes are being subjected (lately) to series of production and postharvest threats like their physiological characteristics, which is susceptible to bacteria contamination; proper and poor handling method; quarantine protocol; volume of export and effects of climate changes to a certain degree. These scenarios are affecting the local mango industry, he said.

BPRES Director Ricardo Cachuela on the other hand reported that they are now conducting studies on the application of non-chemical treatment on fresh bananas under HWT and still have to test same treatment on fresh mangoes and added that one possible treatment to eliminate or completely eradicate *anthracnose* is the use or application of *chlorine*. Their studies showed positive results in terms of quarantine measure.

Given *anthracnose* contamination as reported, Dr. Kevin Yaptengco of UPLB recommended to study further the variables of lowering the heating temperature of HWT and provide longer time for immersion and

vice-versa. Dr. Yaptengco added that they will conduct trial period taking into consideration the temperature and time protocols.

The consultation meeting concluded with the proposed submission of a Feasibility Study on the Cultural Management of *Anthracnose*. The endeavor would be a collaborative effort among BPRES, UPLB, Hi-Las Marketing Corporation, BPI, and BAR. Among the expected action plan would include the study on re-designing HWT facility, temperature and immersion protocol of HWT, use of chlorine and other non-chemical treatment and pest and disease management.

The technical side of the proposed study will be initiated by BPRES and UPLB while the research component will be undertaken by BAR in collaboration with other agencies. It is expected that the results of the study would serve as viable input to the local mango industry in terms of *anthracnose* elimination.

Asst. Dir. Solsoloy requested the group to submit and forward to Director Nicomedes P. Eleazar the proposed feasibility study as soon as possible for the Bureau's further study and added that BAR would take a closer look. (Patrick A. Lesaca)



Mango leaves infected with *anthracnose*. PHOTO: RDELACRUZ



# Water lily in Lake Buhi now source of community livelihood in CamSur



(Clockwise): Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*); dried fibers from the stalks of water lily which are used as material in producing handicrafts; slippers, mats, ropes – products from water lily; water hyacinth found in Lake Buhi in Camarines Sur.

Known to many as the freshwater home of the world famous smallest fish, *Pandaka pygmaea*, Lake Buhi is now also the source for raw materials for a new community livelihood.

Considered a weed, the water hyacinth, commonly called “water lily” can be processed into handicrafts and is now a source of livelihood for people along the lake's adjacent barangays. Invasive at the start, the plant was transformed into a material source for a profitable small-medium enterprise through peoples' initiative, creativity, and artistry.

Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) is an aquatic plant which can live and reproduce while floating on the surface of freshwaters. The plant size ranges from 6 inches to 38 inches depending on its growing condition. Its rate of proliferation under certain growth habitat is extremely rapid and could cause vast infestation of large areas of water in no time, creating various

problems. However, the local government and its people in Lake Buhi in Buhi, Camarines Sur used their creativity and developed a booming industry that utilizes the stalks of water hyacinth for processing into new alternative livelihood for the community.

Based on existing research and proven to local handicraft industry practices, the water lilies are processed into useful products. Through the Buhi municipal government and Buhi Ecumenical Development Association, Incorporated (BEDAI), the people are mobilized and capacitated to make beautiful pieces of artwork. The BEDAI members are women who are wives of farmers engaged in the development projects of the Department of Agriculture (DA) in the municipality. In order to maximize their time, the members sought the help of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and a local non-government organization to start a local water lily-based small- to medium-sized

enterprise.

During BAR's recent visit to the municipality, the members were processing the water lily from drying, curing, dyeing, and to weaving. The products prepared included table runners, placemats and canisters, bags, slippers, and wall decors. These products will be displayed at the newly inaugurated Bicolandia Regional Technology Commercialization Center located at the DA-RFU 5 Compound in San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur.

Given the positive effect of the weed-turned crop on local communities, the Department of Agriculture through the Bicol Integrated Agricultural Research Center (BIARC) and provincial governments of the region, are continuing to support the initiatives to showcase agri-fisheries related products that will ultimately boost the social and economic condition of farmers and their families. (Marlowe U. Aquino, PhD).

PHOTOS: MAQUINO AND MONGKEE.ORG

# IRRI, BAR donate children's books to promote the value of eating brown rice

PHOTOS: RDELACRUZ



Grade 3 students of Bayog Elementary School are happy to receive their own copies of the books, *Popong Eats His Rice* and *Popong Eats Brown Rice*.

After launching the book, “Popong Eats Brown Rice” on 27 August at the SM Megamall, staff members of the Community and Employee Relations Services (CERS) of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the Applied Communication Division (ACD) of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), visited Bayog Elementary School in Los Baños, Laguna on 16 September 2009 for a storytelling session and distribution of the books.

The book, authored by Chat Garrido-Ocampo and illustrated by Grace C. Dy, narrates the story of a young boy named Popong, and his adventures in his grandfather's farm where he learns the benefits of eating brown rice. It is a follow-up to “Popong Eats His Rice” also by Ocampo, which was published last year. Both publications were published by BAR under the leadership of Director Nicomedes P. Eleazar.

This activity is part of CERS' month-long conduct of storytelling sessions in 10 public elementary schools in Los Baños and Bay, Laguna with the said book as material.

According to Ocampo, she wrote the book to support the information campaign of the Brown Rice Advocates (BRADS) on the benefits of eating brown rice and, once again, dedicates the book to her two sons, Anthony Manuel and Alvin Carlos.

BRADS is a coalition of non-government organizations (NGOs), farmers' groups, business, academe and research institutions, Local Government

Units (LGUs) and government agencies which advocate better nutrition by promoting the health benefits of eating brown rice for the more deprived and vulnerable sector of society.

Welcoming the group from IRRI and BAR were Grade 3 students from three sections, their respective advisers, and Ms. Lucia Anjai, the school principal.

Ms. Kitchie Victoria of IRRI did the storytelling while Mr. Lito Platon also from IRRI facilitated the distribution of books to the students.

Meanwhile, Ms. Julia A. Lapitan, head of BAR's Applied Communication Division, delivered a brief message to the students and teachers in behalf of BAR Director Nicomedes P. Eleazar. In her message,

she emphasized the importance of reading books and having a wide collection of reading materials to satisfy every student's curiosity for “new knowledge”. In closing, Ms. Lapitan handed over various BAR-supported publications to Principal Anjai to increase the literature collection of the school's library. Anjai expressed her gratitude to BAR and IRRI for choosing their school as one of the beneficiaries of their activities. The books, according to her, will go a long way in helping the children in learning new things particularly “the health benefits of rice and brown rice”.

The crew of NBN's *Mag-Agri Tayo* program led by Mr. Patrick B. Daffon, executive producer, was also present to document the activity. (Rita T. dela Cruz)

BAR's Applied Communication Division Head Julia A. Lapitan (left) hands over BAR publications to Ms. Lucia Anjai (center), the school principal. Also in the photo is Chat Garrido-Ocampo (right), author of the books.



PHOTO: RDELACRUZ



## CPAR Review, Mindanao Zonal RDE Meeting held



CPAR evaluators composed of (R-L) Dr. Liza Battad, Dr. Enrico Supangco, Dr. Catalino dela Cruz, Dr. Roberto Rañola, Dr. Teotimo Aganon, and Dr. Zosimo Battad (not in photo) talk with the implementers of the CPAR project on "Improved Coco-based Farming System" during a site visit conducted in Ilaya, Dapitan City, Zamboanga del Norte.

PHOTO: DLEJANO

Mibang Hotel, Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte – The 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Mindanao Zonal Research and Development Extension (RDE) Meeting and Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CPAR) Review was conducted here last 2-4 September 2009.

Dr. Francisco B. Geromo, Center Manager of the Western Mindanao Integrated Agricultural Center (WESMIARC) welcomed the guests and participants from all the regions of Mindanao.

Dr. Carmencita V. Kagaoan, head of Program Development Division (PDD) of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) gave a welcome message in behalf of Dir. Nicomedes P. Eleazar while Mr. Tito Z. Arevalo, head of the Research Coordination Division (RCD) provided the guests and participants with BAR updates.

Different agenda were tackled during the Zonal Meeting proper. Among these were the National Research Symposium (NRS) papers, the updating of the Regional Integrated Research and Development Extension Agenda and Programs (RIRDEAP) and the Organic Agriculture Program for Mindanao.

While the zonal meeting was ongoing, various CPAR sites in Dapitan City and Zamboanga Sibugay were

visited by a team of CPAR evaluators composed of Dr. Roberto M. Rañola and Dr. Enrico P. Supangco of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), Dr. Liza G. Battad of the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC), Dr. Teotimo M. Aganon of the Cetrul Luzon State

University (CLSU), Dr. Zosimo M. Battad of Pampanga Agricultural College (PAC) and Dr. Catalino R. dela Cruz, technical adviser of BAR.

Back in Dipolog City, implementers of all CPAR projects from Regions 9, 10, 11, 12, CARAGA and ARMM were given 15 minutes each for presentation. CPAR evaluators and other participants were allowed to raise questions after every presentation.

The objectives of this CPAR Review are 1) to evaluate the accomplishments of on-going and completed CPAR projects from 2007-2009, 2) to identify what went well, what needs improvement and lessons learned, and 3) to classify successful CPAR stories for IPR, dissemination and commercialization.

Among the recommendations that were given during the plenary were: 1) evaluation must cover all aspects of the CPAR principles including the culture of the area, 2) integration of the proposed technologies, 3) market integration, 4) restatement of objectives as research objectives, and 5) result-oriented and not process-oriented of CPAR projects.

The Zonal RDE Meeting for Luzon and Visayas Zones will follow in the coming months. (Don P. Lejano)

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in tropical Pacific regions including the Philippines.

ENSO is a periodic change in the atmosphere and ocean of the tropical Pacific region. Though it is a complex process, it involves the unusual warming and cooling of the ocean's surface temperature. The El Niño is the warm phase of ENSO while La Niña is the cool phase. The changes in temperature that these phases bring affect the weather and climate in many parts of the world, the ACIAR staff stated.

Fortunately, advances in science and technology and improvements in the understanding of ENSO, shed light in the predictability of climate fluctuations. New knowledge is now being used to generate Seasonal Climate Forecast (SCF), the ACIAR experts added.

SCF is an estimate of how rainfall or temperature in a coming season is likely to be different from the prevailing average climate. SCFs use dynamical (based on laws of physics) or statistical (based on historical patterns) methods to predict the climate. They usually forecast "above median" or "below median" rainfall. Seasonal climate forecasting is usually done three months to a year in advance or longer.

In the Philippines, SCF is made possible through a multi-collaborative project, "Bridging the gap between seasonal climate forecasts (SCFs) and decision makers in agriculture" led by ACIAR and the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD), in collaboration with the

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## Filipino USDA expert develops environment-friendly technique to produce quality leather from cowhide

An export winner, the leather industry, which is the primary market for the tannery industry, is an important sector in Philippine commerce specifically the leather footwear industry. Unfortunately, due to insufficient local supply of leather from the tanning industry, the country's leather market has to rely on leather imports.

In a seminar conducted at the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), Dr. Mila Aldema-Ramos, senior scientist and an expert from the Easter Regional Research Center, Agricultural Research Services of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), discussed a recent research endeavor on making quality leather from cow's skins.

The study, "An Environment Friendly and Molecular Level Approach to Improve the Quality of Leather Made from Bovine Hides" tries to address the quality and environment aspects of leather making through molecular approach.

According to Dr. Ramos, the major environmental concern in the leather industry comes from the early part of the production process wherein sulfide is used to dehair bovine hides which is hazardous for both human health and the environment.

The group of Dr. Ramos developed a dehairing process that can solve the problem and, likewise, produce high quality bovine leather. This novel system has the potential to replace the hazardous chemicals used during the dehairing stage making it more environment-friendly.

"Using the alternative environment-friendly oxidative dehairing process can solve the problem of sulfide toxicity with its environmental consequences, while at the same time improve the quality of leather if co-treated with proteolytic enzymes," Ramos revealed.

In terms of the quality of leather, Ramos said that results of their study showed that "in general, the lower the residual décorin content the better the quality of leather. As the décorin content decreases, the leather product becomes softer, more stretchable, and yet as tough as and sometimes even tougher than the control-leather tanned without co-treatment with proteolytic enzymes." Décorin is a minor proteoglycan (part protein and part carbohydrate) found in the cow's skin.

BAR Director Nicomedes P. Eleazar welcomed the attendees and participants. He was enthusiastic about this research endeavor. He provided some insightful information on the leather industry particularly on the challenges and opportunities.

"In this industry there has always been a lack of adequate supply of cow hides due to lack of structured cattle farming industry. This is also because of the improper system in the

slaughter houses and the decreasing number of livestock in the country, Eleazar explained.

Eleazar also elaborated that "one of the problems faced by the leather industry is that the hides and skins are not given much importance, leading to unacceptable quality."

Still in its refining stage, Eleazar hoped that the technology will greatly benefit the country's leather industry and provide the local producers a bigger chance in entering the world market. (Rita T. dela Cruz)



BAR Director Nicomedes P. Eleazar (left) awards the certificate of appreciation to Dr. Mila Aldema-Ramos, senior scientist and expert from USDA after her lecture at BAR.

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PHOTO: RDELACRUZ



## BAR officials, staff train on community dev't and knowledge mgt for sustainable agri and fisheries



BAR Director Nicomedes P. Eleazar (3rd from right); Dr. Emmanuel Luna (2nd from left), one of the resource persons of the three-day training from UP-CSWCD; Dr. Marideth R. Bravo (right, training director of UP-SURP); and Ms. Dina C. Magnaye (2nd from right), training specialist of CLRG-NCPAG together with participants from BAR.

A three-day "Training on Community Development as an Approach in the Application of Knowledge Management and Community-Based Initiatives for Sustainable Agriculture and Fisheries" was held at the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor of the RDMIC Building on 9-11 September 2009.

This training was participated in by staff members from the Applied Communications Division (ACD), Research Coordination Division (RCD), Technology Commercialization Unit (TCU), Planning Unit (PU), Program Development Division (PDD) and the Information Management Unit (IMU) of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR). Also present during the training was Dr. Manuel A. Bonifacio, BAR technical consultant.

Serving as lecturers for the training were Dr. Angelito "Ka Lito" G. Manalili, Dr. Ma. Theresa V. Tungpalan and Dr. Emmanuel M. Luna. They are all professors of Community Development at the College of Social Work and Community Development (CSWCD) of the University of the Philippines Diliman (UPD).

Ka Lito explained to the training participants the Community

Development-Community Organizing (CD-CO) Framework. The topic was divided into two sessions: 1) Community Development Framework and 2) Community Organizing and Organization Development.

Dr. Tungpalan, on the other hand, was tasked to talk about Participatory Action Research (PAR)-Knowledge Management (KM) Strategies. The topic was further divided into 1) PAR-Knowledge Management Concepts and Strategies and 2) Selected Methods for Participatory Knowledge Management.

Meanwhile, Dr. Luna discussed about the Application of CD-CO and PAR-KM to Agriculture, Fisheries and Enterprise Development. He dissected the topics into 1) Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM) Strategies in Enterprise Development and Agribusiness Management and 2) Proposals for Improving Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CPAR) Practices.

"I understand that this training will be conducted in three key points in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. But I wanted our BAR staff and officials to undergo the same training so that we

would know the right thing to do upon entering the communities in the regions.

"More so, we would know how to be one with the village people so that we could implement our CPAR endeavors with them harmoniously. By doing this, we are ensuring the success of our projects," said BAR Dir. Nicomedes P. Eleazar in his speech.

The next batches of this training will be conducted in Pampanga (October 12-16), Cebu City (November 9-13) and Davao City (November 30-December 4). Attending these trainings are the different Regional Integrated Agricultural Research Centers (RIARC) Managers and the Community-based Participatory Action Research (CPAR) implementers from three key regions in the country.

Facilitating the training were Dr. Marideth R. Bravo, Training Director, School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP), Ms. Dina C. Magnaye, Training Specialist of the Center for Local and Regional Governance, National College of Public Administration and Governance (CLRG-NCPAG), and John Ermin S. Francisco, also from CLRG-NCPAG. (Don P. Lejano)

## PIDS convenes concerned sectors for climate change symposium

Various sectors such as government, media, non-government organizations and research and development (R&D) agencies participated in a symposium on climate change held on 22 September 2009 at the National Economic Development Authority Building in Makati City. The Bureau of Agricultural Research was invited to this activity organized by the Philippine Institute of Development Studies (PIDS).

With the theme, "Coping with Climate Variability and Change", the experts tackled the emerging issues brought about by climate change, and measures to adapt and mitigate its effects in the Philippine setting. According to Dr. Josef Yap, PIDS president, the symposium is just one of the many ways to increase awareness and disseminate information about this global issue. This activity is part of the Development Policy Research Month (DPRM) celebrated every September together with the PIDS Founding Anniversary.

Assistant Weather Services Chief Edna Juanillo of PAGASA-DOST presented the concepts of climate variability and change. She clarified that climate change means the variation in the earth's global climate or regional climates

spanning over decades or millions of years. A more timely definition she added is that climate change is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere.

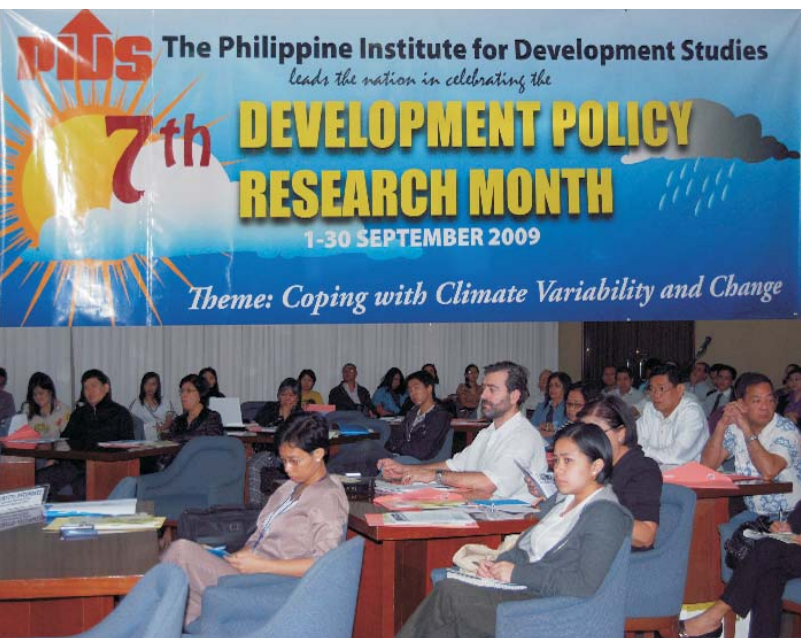
In the Philippines, extensive droughts, massive floods, abnormal rainfall, stronger typhoons, and rise in sea levels have been felt over the last forty years. Since 1975, an increase of 0.74 °C in the global surface temperature has been noted. Chief Juanillo also pointed out that our country is very susceptible to the effects of climate change.

A specific tool that can help in adapting and mitigating the effects of climate change was also presented. Called the Seasonal Climate Forecast (SCF), it is a forecast for a 'season' that may range from one month to one year. SCF can predict if there would be a longer dry or wet season and the amount

of rainfall. Christian Mira of the PIDS discussed the significance of using SCF in the rice importation policy decision while Dr. Canesio Predo of the Institute of Renewable Natural Resources in UP Los Baños presented the application of SCF at the farm level.

Dr. Rosa Perez, Senior Climate Specialist at the Regional Climate Systems Program of the Manila Observatory, discussed Climate Change and Policy Responses. Dr. Perez also presented the impacts of climate change in the Philippines as well as the highlights of the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UN FCC). She further challenged the different sectors to act and do their part.

An open forum was conducted after every presentation with the participants voicing their opinions, questions and suggestions. A climate change exhibit was also launched on the same day. (Johanna B. Benavente)



## BAR participates in Asia Food Expo 2009

The Bureau of Agricultural Research participated in this year's Asia Food Expo (AFEX) 2009 at the World Trade Center in Pasay City held on 23-26 September 2009. An exhibit about BAR, its projects and products from different regions were showcased.

The AFEX 2009 is also the 18<sup>th</sup> International Exposition on Food Processing, Packaging and Handling Machinery, Equipment and Technology Exposition. The Trade Association Pavilions such as

Philippine Food Processors & Exporters Organization, Inc. (PHILFOODEX), Philippine Association of Food Technologists (PAFT), Association of Food Cart Owners & Suppliers, Inc. (AFO) and Philippine Franchise Association (PFA) were present in this event.

The AFEX gathered companies and key players in the food manufacturing, processing and packaging industry. It also featured various food products, condiments and additives as well as equipment for the

food service business and kitchen. Participants were thrilled by the many free food samples, cooking demonstrations, product presentations and seminars throughout the duration of the exposition.

Activities like this are relevant to BAR since the bureau is helping farmers and farmer-entrepreneurs in the development of their products including packaging. These also help promote the projects and activities of BAR. (Johanna B. Benavente)