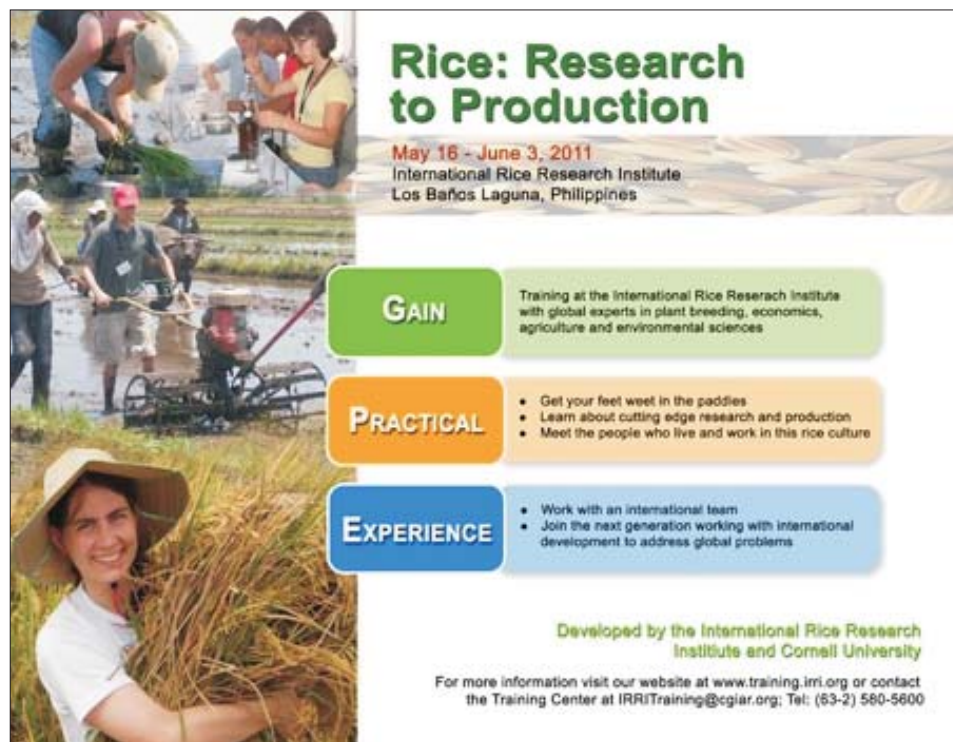


Int'l training scholarship for rice scientists, extensionists now open



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The Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR) and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) have collaborated in conceptualizing a special program dubbed as, “2011 Global Rice Science Scholarships (DA-BAR and IRRI Training Scholarships)” to provide opportunities and support for training the new generation of Filipino rice scientists and extension workers. The training scholarship program aims to improve the capacity of Philippine academe and local government institutions in rice science and development.

According to Dr. Carmencita V. Kagaoan, head of BAR's Institutional Development Division (IDD), the scholarship covers an internship and on-the-job training at IRRI which, as the leading global rice research organization, is an excellent training ground for young rice researchers and graduate students. Students from eligible state universities and colleges (SUCs) may apply for the internship while the on-the-job training is for qualified rice scientists and extension workers, and instructors and professors from eligible Philippine agricultural

agencies and universities. Women applicants are particularly enjoined to avail of the training scholarship at IRRI.

“This is a good opportunity for Filipino researchers and scientists as they can be developed under the supervision of some of the leading scientists in a world class scientific environment,” Dr. Kagaoan added.

The training scholarship period is from two weeks to three months depending on the topic and rigor of the research in the areas of rice science and related systems.

The scholarship covers the round trip airfare to/from Manila (if applicable); monthly stipend to cover lodging, laundry and food/subsistence; local medical and accident insurance; local travel if required; computer and network access; and research support.

The closing date of application is on 31 March 2011. ### (Rita T. dela Cruz)

Interested applicants may send their applications with original copies of all the required documents to:

Global Rice Science Scholarships (DA-BAR and IRRI Training Scholarships)
Office of Scholars' Affairs, Training Center
International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)
DAPO Box 7777
Metro Manila, Philippines

For more information please email: IRRITraining@cgiar.org
or visit: <http://www.training.irri.org> or <http://www.bar.gov.ph>



DA,IRRI rice self-sufficiency collaboration in full swing

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Dennis Araullo, also the national program coordinator for rice and corn, recently visited the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) for the presentation of the DA-IRRI Joint Accomplishments for 2010 on the Rice Self-Sufficiency Program (RSSP) at the IRRI Headquarters in Los Baños, Laguna on 27 January 2011.

Dr. William Padolina, IRRI deputy director general for operations, congratulated DA for aligning the efforts of its different agencies in support to the RSSP. “In my 10 years of tenure at IRRI, this is the first time that I've seen and felt the presence of the concerted efforts of the different agencies of DA which play important roles in making an impact for a program as big and as significant as this,” he said.

Asst. Secretary Araullo, who assured IRRI of its commitment to achieving rice self-sufficiency, came with the five bureau directors of the DA providing vital inputs in the sub-projects and components of the RSSP. Present during the IRRI visit were: Dir. Asterio Salio, Agricultural Training Institute

(ATI), Dir. Nicomedes Eleazar, Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR); Dir. Clarito Barron, Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI); Dir. Silvino Tejada, Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM); and Deputy Exec. Dir. Jose Manuel Regalado, Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) who represented Exec. Dir. Ronilo Beronio.

IRRI scientists took turns in presenting their research agenda and specific reports on the progress of RSSP. Mr. Julian Lapitan, IRRI project coordinator on RSSP and senior manager, National Program Relations, presented the RSSP 2010 accomplishments and plans for 2011-2012. The project is being implemented by IRRI and PhilRice with DA agencies and regional field units (RFUs), and local government units (LGUs). There are three sub-projects under RSSP which are strategic assessment, development and adoption of high-yielding rice varieties and technologies, and capability building that includes ICT applications and training.

Dr. Achim Dobermann, acting director general and deputy dir. general

for research of IRRI, presented the institute's research agenda and gave recommendations on how best to achieve rice self-sufficiency and the necessary conditions that need to happen for the RSSP to be implemented successfully.

Other presenters were IRRI scientists involved in the project including Dr. Parminder Virk on new rice varieties that can withstand environmental stresses such as drought, flooding, heat, cold, and salinity; Dr. Roland Buresh on nutrient management; Dr. Grant Singleton and Dr. Flor Palis on

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DA, IRRI...from page 1

the Integrated Rice Research Consortium; and Dr. Noel Magor on the Pinoy Rice Knowledge Bank (Pinoy RKB).

Both IRRI and DA are especially proud about their joint accomplishments in capacity building particularly on strengthening ICT for farmer's use such as the Nutrient Manager for Rice Mobile (NMRiceMobile) and the Pinoy RKB. The NMRiceMobile, launched at ATI earlier this month, is the world's first mobile application that allows farmers easy access to information about rice specifically on fertilizer management. On the other hand, the Pinoy RKB collaboration between PhilRice and IRRI is already accessible online and provides up-to-date information on rice production using the PalayCheck system.

The team of IRRI experts, headed by Dr. Padolina, also showed the DA delegation its long-term cropping trials, international rice genebank, ecological engineering field trial, DA-IRRI seed production experiment site, and the geographic information systems (GIS) office.

One of the notable outcomes of the meeting was BAR Dir. Eleazar's



Dr. Roland Buresh (right), IRRI principal scientist, Crop and Environmental Sciences Division (CESD), briefs the DA delegation on the Long-term Continuous Cropping Experiment (LCCE), the most intensively cultivated experimental site in the world where three crops of high-yielding rice are grown each year with irrigation and best management practices. **photo: MMOJICA**

proposal to expand the scope of IRRI's ecological engineering research activities to the DA's Regional Integrated Agricultural Research Centers (RIARCs) which implement R&D projects nationwide particularly those funded through BAR.

Ecological engineering is the design of ecosystems for the mutual benefit of humans and nature. It involves restoring floral biodiversity to provide resources for natural enemies against pests and diseases in the field. IRRI is now looking at sesame as among the natural enemies of rice pests. Incidentally, BAR has on-

going project through the RIARC based in Bicol on sesame production and it is now looking into the possibility of also promoting sesame's benefits on crop protection.

The group looks forward to follow-up meetings on seed production and distribution through IRRI and BPI's collaboration, and to invite IRRI's GIS experts to discuss the use of satellite images in validating and confirming actual area planted and harvested to rice by season through collaboration with the BSWM. On its own, BAR is already monitoring and evaluating four on-going special projects with IRRI. ###
(Miko Jazmine J. Mojica)



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PRODUCTION TEAM

Managing Editor/Layout: Rita T. dela Cruz
Consulting Editor: Victoriano B. Guiam
Writers/Contributors: Ma. Eloisa H. Aquino, Patrick L. Cabrera, Rita T. dela Cruz, Patrick R. A. Lesaca, and Miko Jazmine J. Mojica
Reproduction/Printing: Ricardo G. Bernardo and Anthony A. Constantino
ACD Head: Julia A. Lapitan
Adviser: Nicomedes P. Eleazar, PhD, CESO IV

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 For subscription and inquiries please contact us: Tel. Nos: +63 (2) 928-8505, 928-8624, 920-0234
 local numbers 3011, 3012, 3027 Fax No. +63 (2) 927-5691
 Email: acd@bar.gov.ph

Articles are also available online, visit our official website: <http://www.bar.gov.ph>

Onion farmers face bright, lucrative prospects

The onion industry is off to a good start, as dozens of farmers in Bongabon, Nueva Ecija are set to harvest their crop of hybrid onions earlier than most of their counterparts in the province, and thus earn more.

As it is still off-season, onions (hybrids or the traditional Red Creole and Yellow Granex) fetch higher prices, at P100 per kilo and P60 per kilo, respectively.

Quirino Francisco of Brgy. Vega, Bongabon, Nueva Ecija, who expects to harvest up to 28,000 kilos of hybrid red onions and 42,000 kilos of yellow hybrid onions from his two-hectare farm, would earn millions.

The current bright prospects of onion farmers in Bongabon and other towns in Nueva Ecija are a result of several initiatives implemented by Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala.

Firstly, the Department of Agriculture (DA) through the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) has restricted the issuance of permit to import onions, said BPI Asst. Director Dante Delima, who is the concurrent coordinator of the National High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP).

Secondly, late last year Secretary Alcala offered direct assistance to Bongabon farmers by providing them P15-million worth of hybrid onion seeds, P4.5-million worth of Red Creole and Yellow Granex seeds, and P500,000-worth of onion seeds to farmers in nearby towns, said Fernando Lorenzo, coordinator of DA HVCDP Region 3.

As hybrid onions mature earlier than traditional varieties, those who planted in November last year will begin harvesting end of February and onto

April, explained Lorenzo.

Since supply is still low, prices are relatively high, favoring farmers like Francisco and other Bongabon farmers who planted hybrid onion, noted Lorenzo.

"This is good news for them, especially those who planted early, as they are so used to selling their produce at a measly price of P30-50 per kilo in previous years," Lorenzo added.

Overall, Delima said the DA though the HVCDP will concentrate this year in participatory production technology development and providing onion farmers with appropriate postharvest and storage techniques and facilities.

"These efforts aim to maximize the production area in the different regions suitable for onion production to attain sufficiency and maximize export potential in the near future," Delima said.

To date, the DA is assisting close to 2,500 onion growers in Bongabon and other towns in of Nueva Ecija, who suffered huge losses in previous years due low prices during harvest, compounded by the entry of cheap imported onions from China.

Bongabon is considered as the country's onion capital, with about 3,000 hectares planted to the crop, which is more one-half of Nueva Ecija's total onion hectareage.

In 2009, total onion production amounted to 127 million kilos, of which 57 percent (or 72.7M kilos) came from Nueva Ecija.



Starting in November 2010, DA has been encouraging farmers to plant hybrid onion varieties as these could yield up to three times than traditional varieties.

"With hybrids, farmers could harvest up to 1,200 sacks (of 28 kilos each) per hectare compared to only 400 bags of ordinary varieties," said Lorenzo. "Napakalaki ng diperensya (There's really a big difference)," he emphasized.

The only problem with hybrids, Lorenzo stressed, is its short storage life. Hybrids can be stored from three months to a maximum of six months. Traditional varieties can be stored beyond six months.

This is one of the issues that the government wishes to address, added Delima.

As such, research and development (R&D) for drying technology, storage facilities and other postharvest systems will be undertaken by DA through the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), the DA regional offices, and other private institutions. ### (DA Information Service)

Upland farmers...from page 10

For this CPAR project, the aim is to establish rubber plantations with specific components geared towards increasing productivity and income of farmers. Among the package of technologies (POTs) introduced in the project site are crop and poultry production and crop-animal production management. This package of technologies were developed and generated locally for easy adoption and verification in other areas with similar bio-physical and socio-economic conditions.

The demo farm on rubber-

based farming system is farmer-managed which serves as a model farm for other farmers and nearby communities to emulate. The project introduced various interventions to improve the production management of upland farmers including plowing and harrowing, proper planting distance, and appropriate spacing of intercrops.

Meanwhile, for the crop-animal integration, improved native chicken production or upgraded breeds of swine and/or small ruminants were introduced to augment

the income of the farmers. Upgrading of animals was conducted through artificial insemination in collaboration with the Office of the Provincial and Municipal Agriculturist.

It is hope that through this project, there will be more than a ripple effect in the nearby communities.

 For more information, please contact:
 Roger O. Bagaforo
 CPAR Regional Coordinator
 DA-WESMIARC, Sanito, Ipil
 Zamboanga Sibugay
 Telefax: 062-333-2537
 E-mail: robagaforo@yahoo.com



Uplifting the lives of upland farmers through rubber-based farming system

Story and Photo by:
RITA T. DELA CRUZ

Situated outside the typhoon belt, Region 9 or the Zamboanga Peninsula has a good agro-climatic condition and a favorable soil type suited for planting high value crops. Despite these advantages, agricultural production, particularly in the uplands, remains unproductive and the farmers are still living on subsistence level. One of the identified problems is that, most upland farmers still practice the mono-cropping system resulting to low production and poor soil nutrient due to continuous planting of the same crop throughout the cropping season.

Given the major thrusts of the government on hunger mitigation, poverty alleviation, and ecological rehabilitation in the uplands, there is a need to develop practical farming systems, sustainable farm practices, and intensive extension services. Hence, a Community-based Participatory Action Research (CPAR) was introduced to empower marginalized upland farmers to make use of their locally available resources, plan their activities and

execute their plans in a participative way.

With funding support from the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), the project titled, "CPAR in Promoting Upland Resource Management and Increasing Farmer's Income in Rubber-Based Farming System at Zamboanga City" was implemented by the Department of Agriculture-Western Mindanao Integrated Agricultural Research Center (DA-WESMIARC). In collaboration with the local government units, and farmers association, the project hopes to improve the lives of upland farmers by increasing their production and profit through community-based participatory activities and initiatives.

The CPAR project was implemented in Calabasa, Curuan District and Sibulao, Vitali District in Zamboanga City. Although these two adjacent barangays produce high-value agricultural crops including fruit trees, corn, upland rice and rubber, they are considered among the

economically-depressed areas in the region. Since most farmers are only committed to traditional upland farming practices of monocropping short-term crops, most of the farms are left idle and unproductive after corn cropping season.

An important component of this CPAR project is the establishment of a rubber-based farming system that serves as a show window of the interventions introduced vis-à-vis the farmers' existing practices.

Planting rubber is already an income-generating activity but since it is a perennial crop, intercropping it with shorter duration annual and cash crops such as banana, fruit trees, corn and legumes offers a win-win scenario. Intercropping of rubber with cash crops has been well-practiced and greatly benefitted the farmers. Earlier studies showed that intercropping not only accelerated rubber growth and prolong the rubber production period, but also bring high economic, ecological and social benefits in a short time.

next page

Eleazar presents *Adlai* R&D program to private sector

Prompted by the big interest from the private sector about the latest program of the Department of Agriculture (DA), which is the promotion of *adlai* as a viable alternative food crop for Filipinos, Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) Director Nicomedes P. Eleazar served as the resource speaker on the potentials of this novel plant during the weekly forum of the Management Association of the Philippines-Agribusiness and Countryside Development (MAP-ABCD) Foundation, Inc. at the Metropolitan Club, Makati City on 25 January 2011.

Adlai, which comes from the same family of grass as wheat, corn, and rice, grows organically in many parts of the country. The plant is now endemic in the Philippines but it remains underutilized. In his presentation, Director Eleazar introduced the uses, benefits, and potentials of *adlai* as well as the objectives and initial R&D activities of BAR on the crop.

"We are promoting *adlai* as one of the important alternative food crops as part of the DA's food staple self sufficiency program. But since we are only in the initial phase of its

development, we are focusing our activities on its adaptability under different agro-climatic conditions nationwide," Eleazar said.

At present, BAR is supporting adaptability trials in Regions 2, 4, 5, and 10 through the DA Regional Integrated Agricultural Research Centers (RIARCs). Given the nutritious qualities of *adlai*, BAR is likewise supporting the development of different food products such as *sinaing na adlai* (which is similar to cooked rice) and other recipes using the glutinous variety of *adlai*.

Adlai is processed into flour, coffee, tea, wine, beer, and vinegar in other countries such as South Korea, Japan, China, and Korea. It is also valued for its medicinal uses with its anti-allergic, anti-cancer, and anti-diabetic properties. Aside from its use as a food source, the hard shelled *adlai* variety is meanwhile made into accessories such as necklaces, bracelets, and rosaries by local handicraftsmen.

"The objectives of the R&D program on *adlai* include developing the technologies on its cultural management practices, postharvest and



BAR Dir. Nicomedes P. Eleazar discusses the potentials of *adlai* and the bureau's R&D initiatives during the weekly forum of MAP-ABCD in Makati City. photo: MMOJICA

processing, and seed production systems. Moreover, it aims to promote *adlai*'s use as feed for livestock and poultry, and recommend promising *adlai* varieties for registration in the National Seed Industry Council (NSIC).

During the open forum, some members of the MAP-ABCD recommended exploring the full potential of *adlai* as a feed source and address its social acceptability. Some of its members expressed interest on introducing *adlai* production and processing technologies to farmers who can benefit from this program.

The MAP-ABCD expressed their appreciation to Director Eleazar for sharing information about *adlai* through their weekly forum. The forum was presided by MAP-ABCD Chairman Ramon K. Ilusorio who is known as the Father of Philippine Money Market and founder of Multinational Investment Bancorporation, the oldest and only independent investment bank in the Philippines. ### (Miko Jazmine J. Mojica)



Attendees at the MAP-ABCD forum discuss their interest on the potential of *adlai* and other viable crops such as sweet sorghum with Director Eleazar. photo: MMOJICA

BAR Chief encourages staff to continue improving, innovating



BAR Director Nicomedes P. Eleazar (center) leads the session as he encourages everyone to throw in their fresh ideas and suggestions on how to better improve the current operations at the bureau. Also in the photo are: Asst. Dir. Teodoro S. Solsoloy (left) and Planning Unit Head Joell H. Lales (right). photo: RDELACRUZ

In any organization that strives for excellence and quality service, change is a crucial and constant element to achieve success in all aspects of its being. "And we, at the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), must welcome change so that we'll continue to innovate and be better in what we do," hence, the message of Dir. Nicomedes P. Eleazar as he led key staff in the conduct of BAR's Annual Review and Planning Workshop on 12-14 January 2011 in Tagaytay City.

The three-day activity was aimed at planning the key activities vital to the implementation of the Bureau's major programs, and at identifying adjustments in organizational policies and systems to achieve the overall productivity goals of BAR and the DA. The activity was also conducted to assess the bureau's performance in the previous year.

One of the important adaptations to change that the bureau is doing is realigning its R&D plans and programs to the latest policy pronouncements of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and be more responsive to the challenges and issues that are happening in world agriculture.

In view of this, Planning Unit Head Joell H. Lales, presented the *Agrikulturang Pinoy (Agri-Pinoy)* Framework to update BAR's key staff on its fundamentals. This framework now serves as the backbone or foundation on

which the DA programs and initiatives are to be built on and implemented in accordance to the priority needs of the agriculture and the fishery sectors.

Agri Pinoy is actually a set of principles focused on developing Philippine agricultural resources and capabilities to meet Philippine needs. The framework is anchored on four guiding principles: 1) food security; 2) sustainable agriculture and self-sufficiency; 3) natural resource management; and 4) local development. Mr. Lales presented the accomplishments of *Agri-Pinoy* in the



BAR staff listen as Mr. Joel H. Lales, head of BAR's Planning Unit, presents the *Agri-Pinoy* Framework which serves as the backbone or foundation of the DA programs and initiatives. photo: RDELACRUZ

first six months of Secretary Proceso J. Alcala and strategic plans including the challenges that must be addressed to achieve sustainable agriculture.

Other presentations highlighted during the activity to provide direction and guidance to BAR included: R&D Flowchart for Rice, Guidelines on the Availment of the National Rice Program R&D Fund, Updates from the National Budget Forum organized by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and new policies on financial management issued by the DA and DBM.

Meanwhile, to improve productivity and management in the bureau, a proposed restructuring of the bureau's internal *ad hoc* organogram was presented to the body for consultation and finalization.

Director Eleazar led the sessions and enjoined everyone to throw in their freshest ideas and suggestions on how to enhance the current operations of the bureau. A group workshop was conducted the outputs of which were presented during the plenary for comments and suggestions.

BAR Asst. Dir. Teodoro S. Solsoloy concluded the activity on a positive note at the same time stating the need for working harder given the huge tasks ahead. ### (Rita T. dela Cruz)

Food for All: From FIELDS to Agri Pinoy



Story by:
PATRICK R.A. LESACA
Photo from:
DA-AFIS

In the previous administration, the Department of Agriculture (DA) was blessed with dedicated public stewards and programs crafted to enhance the living conditions of the Filipino people particularly the farmers and fisherfolk. In this period, the DA posted positive gains in all sectors and sub-sectors of agriculture.

The challenge to attaining food sufficiency and security was taken on by every DA bureau, field unit and line agency. Countless meetings and planning assessments called by the then DA chief were thoroughly implemented under the prime objective - "Food for All". The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) was in the thick of the action.

The year 2010 also marked the end of an era in which the 2004 - 2010 Medium Term Agricultural Development Plan that provided the overall blueprint for agricultural development proved to be sound.

The new national leadership brought about by the May 2010 national elections is now shaping anew the economic and political landscape of the land. Agriculture was squarely in the center of this big change.

Former Secretary Arthur C. Yap left a legacy of a vibrant and responsive sector as he intensified all the components under the FIELDS program (Fertilizer, Irrigation, Extension Loans, Dryers and Seeds) under his watch. The program laid down the premise that, in order to promote viable agriculture and fisheries development, there is need to generate technologies that will eventually create market niches. And, along this school of thought, linking these technologies to the proper channels (market linkages) was seen as imperative in the fight against poverty and in ensuring that the supply of food was adequate. To Secretary Yap, agriculture is business.

It was also during this time that BAR intensified its own banner

programs, the Community-based Participatory Action Research (CPAR) and the National Technology Commercialization Program (NTCP). These succeeded in generating the needed momentum to translate into reality the AFMA-driven framework of transforming the agriculture and fisheries sectors from being resource-based to technology-based. In a nutshell, BAR responded to the call of people empowerment.

The shift from Yap to Secretary Proceso 'Procy' J. Alcala is seen as another challenge and an opportunity for the Bureau to continue to be of service to the country's marginalized farmers and fisherfolk through its R&D thrusts and initiatives.

The new agri chief, who was an elected representative of the 13th Congress, came to the halls of the Department with a mission to re-invigorate his given portfolio. Sec. Alcala received his marching orders from the President of the Republic who emphasized ensuring that there is enough food for all. To highlight its importance, this was even pronounced by His Excellency during his first State-of-the-Nation Address in Congress.

Upon his assumption to office, Sec. Alcala re-defined the definition of public service. To him, public service is a duty and a mission to make a difference. For the DA, this means the

delivery of effective and efficient "agri-service".

To keep track and be abreast of the responses to challenges, the Department of Agriculture, under the guidance of Sec. Alcala, has crafted the *Agri-Pinoy* Framework, an agricultural development modality that focuses on sustainable agriculture, local development, food security and natural resource management. This framework will serve as the new guiding principle of the Department in propelling the nation's agriculture to where it should be and where food would be available and enough for all.

Guided by the *Agri-Pinoy* Framework and its working philosophy, BAR will continue to fulfill its given mandate and align its thrusts and strategies. BAR can be counted on to deliver the needed R & D results to serve as key drivers for the further development of agriculture. ###

To keep track and be abreast of the responses to challenges, the Department of Agriculture, under the guidance of Sec. Alcala, has crafted the *Agri-Pinoy* Framework, an agricultural development modality that focuses on sustainable agriculture, local development, food security and natural resource management.

BAR intensifies support to R&D human resource development

The strength of any research institution depends on its having and maintaining the right people with the right skills to handle particular jobs. More than the infrastructure, developing and strengthening human resources in R&D is an endeavor worth investing on.

The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), being the mandated national coordinating body for agriculture and fishery R&D, recognizes the need for the research community to have qualified and highly trained people to do the jobs crucial to the generation of new knowledge and technology. This is true for both BAR and other units of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Since 2000, BAR has been implementing a degree scholarship program for the members of the National Research Development System for Agriculture and Fisheries (NaRDSAF). NaRDSAF-member agencies include: the DA R&D Subsystem that consists of national (staff bureaus/attached agencies) and regional R&D centers (RIARCs/RFRDCs); the national and regional state universities and colleges (SUCs) and Provincial Technological Institutes for Agriculture and Fisheries (PTIAFs); and other government agencies with an agricultural R&D function.

Under this program, the bureau may provide financial support to a NaRDSAF member's staff who wants to pursue an MS or PhD degree in any of 11 accredited Philippine universities. These accredited universities/colleges are: UP Diliman, UP Los Baños, UP Visayas, Central Luzon State University, University of Southern Mindanao, Mindanao State University-Naawan, De La Salle University, Ateneo de Manila University, Siliman University, Visayas State University, and University of San Carlos in Cebu City.

Through this scholarship which enables researchers and technical staff to pursue graduate degrees in agriculture and fisheries sciences, and/or other related fields, BAR aims to develop a



photos: RDELACRUZ

To date, 136 scholars benefitted from BAR's Degree Scholarship Program since it started in 2000 from which 86 have completed their studies (46 PhD and 40 MS).

cadre of highly competent agricultural R&D workers in the country.

Would-be scholars are evaluated based on these selection criteria: relevance of the course to agriculture and fisheries modernization; capability of the applicant to pursue and successfully complete graduate studies; relevance of trainings attended to his or her R&D responsibilities; and number of research projects/studies conducted.

To date, 136 scholars have benefitted from BAR's Degree Scholarship Program since it started in 2000. Out of these, 86 have completed their studies (46 PhD and 40 MS). From these graduates, 58 are from DA, while 28 are non-DA staff/employees.

Aside from the degree scholarship, BAR also provides financial assistance to researchers and scientists through its non-degree program. This enables them to attend specialized training programs (local or foreign), represent the country in collaborative R&D undertakings, or present research papers in international

scientific fora.

The bureau also provides financial support for the conduct of thesis or dissertation studies that address major problems and concerns in agriculture and fisheries through its thesis/dissertation assistance program. This benefits students who need financial assistance for the conduct of their research or who have minimal support from their mother institutions/agencies.

The Bureau's human resource development program for researchers responds to the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) where the Act aims to develop the skills and knowledge of scientists, researchers, and technical staff for the attainment of a more responsive and efficient R&D system in agriculture and fisheries. ### (Rita T. dela Cruz)

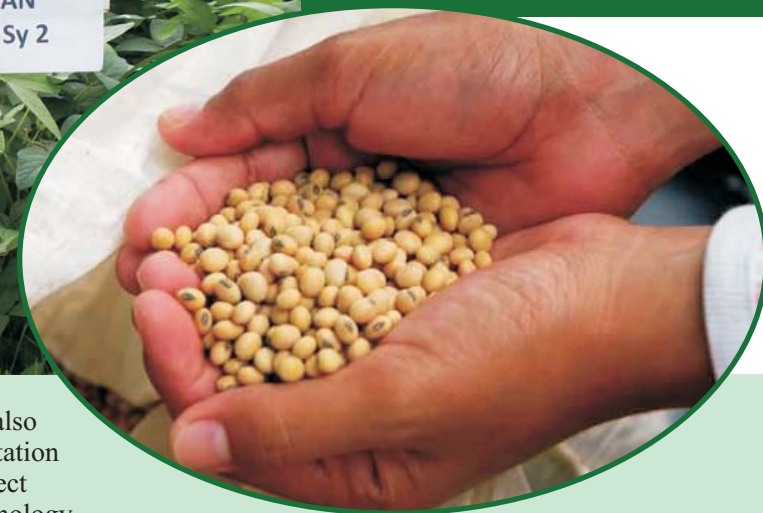
For more information about the BAR Scholarship Programs, please visit: <http://www.bar.gov.ph>

Cagayan Valley & Central Mindanao start soybean varietal testings



PSB Sy 2 or *Tiwala 6* is one of the NSIC-approved varieties tested and was found to be the most preferred and acceptable variety among the farmers in Region 2 due to its high-yielding attribute.

photos courtesy of: RAQUINO/DA-CVIARC



As part of the on-going activities under the Philippine Soybean Roadmap, the Department of Agriculture-Cagayan Valley Integrated Agricultural Research Center (DA-CVIARC) started the conduct of varietal testing of soybean in the region.

"DA-CVIARC is continuously participating in the multi-location testing of soybean through the conduct of National Cooperative Test (NCT) in support to variety recommendation to the National Seed Industry Council (NSIC). It is also active in the production of registered and certified seeds," Ms. Rosie Aquino of DA-RFU II said.

NSIC-approved varieties used were PSB Sy-2 or *Tiwala 6*, PSB Sy 6 or *Tiwala 8*, PSB Sy 7 or *Tiwala 10*, NSIC Sy 9 or *Mapusyaw*, PSB Sy 3 and BPI sy 4. Of all the varieties tested, PSB Sy 2 or *Tiwala 6* was found to be the most preferred and acceptable variety among the farmers in Region II due to its high-yielding attribute.

Together with DA-CVIARC, the DA-Central Mindanao Integrated Agricultural Research Center

(CEMIARC) is also in the implementation stage of the project (conduct of technology demonstrations or techno demos and seed production activities).

The DA is now crafting the Philippine Soybean Roadmap for 2010-2014 titled, Building Sustainable Soybean Industry in the Philippines, in order to build a strong community-based sustainable production of the commodity and establish a viable soybean processing industry thru public-private partnership initiatives. The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) will serve as the focal unit in the conduct of various activities under the program.

"The creation of the National Soybean Development Program supports the government's advocacy for sustainable agriculture and the attainment of food security in the country," Ms. Aquino said.

For the farmers, she cited four beneficial impacts of soybean production and utilization: 1) productivity enhancement; 2) soil fertility improvement; 3) improvement of household nutrition as a result of the consumption of a protein-rich product; and (4) income augmentation through the utilization of soybean meal in backyard swine raising.

To date, BAR has conducted meetings with other implementing agencies on the R&D aspects of the roadmap. "The draft roadmap is undergoing final critiquing/editing to accommodate other suggestions made in the last technical working group meeting," Ms. Aquino said. ### (Ma. Eloisa H. Aquino)

"The creation of the National Soybean Development Program supports government's advocacy for sustainable agriculture and the attainment of food security in the country," ~ Aquino

HVCDP will now have a synergistic approach ~ Delima

The HVCDP, in response to the clamor for change, will now have a synergistic approach in implementing the program. There will now be new energy, new talent, new skills and new resources in their proper places to maximize the program's potentials. Collaboration and unity shall be encouraged and there will be detailed agreements for program implementation in the regions. For each commodity, a roadmap shall be crafted," said Dante S. Delima, director of High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) during the conduct of its program orientation and direction setting activity on 20-21 January 2011 in Butuan City.

The activity was held to harmonize the banner programs of the Department of Agriculture (DA) in attaining food safety and self-sufficiency and to finalize intervention plans and programs in all regions.

Participants included staff and officials from the HVCDP Management Office, Regional Field Units-Regional Executive Directors (RFU-REDs), Regional Technical Directors (RTDs), Regional HVCDP Coordinators, and representatives from the DA attached

agencies and staff bureaus including the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR). The participants were welcomed by Butuan City Mayor Ferdinand Amante, Jr.

Formerly known as High Value Commercial Crops Program (HVCC), the program's name was returned to the original - High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) in keeping with the High Value Crops Development Act of 1995 (RA 7900) which mandates the program to promote the production, processing, marketing, and distribution of high value crops.

With the main goal of increasing production, income and livelihood opportunities among small producers and establishing access to affordable, safe and health food, HVCDP specifically aims to: 1) deliver appropriate development support services; 2) facilitate and harmonize development interventions in strategic production zones/areas; 3) facilitate and promote access to local and international markets; and 4) provide proactive management actions on demand and supply situations on the high value commodities.

Under the program, the



Dante S. Delima, director of High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP)

following are the priority commodities: industrial crops (rubber, coffee, cacao, and abaca), vegetables (spices, lowland, upland, and indigenous), local priority fruits, and staple food crops and legumes (*saba* banana, several rootcrops, *adlai*, and soybean).

Dir. Delima presented the HVCDP development plan which details all the specific interventions in the regions. With regard to R&D, he laid emphasis on its intensification by local and regional partners. The national and local R&D agenda should be consolidated and should jive with each other. He also mentioned that agencies that can contribute to marketing of the agricultural produce will be tapped by the HVCDP.

Also discussed were the processes of project development, evaluation and approval under the program which will guide and assist the regions in proposing and implementing their respective HVCDP regional projects.

To show his full support to the HVCDP, Secretary Proceso J. Alcala attended the Program Orientation and Direction Setting exercise and reminded the regions to put emphasis on the agricultural products that are very marketable and have industrial uses. This is in relation to the "farm to table" concept in the *Agri-Pinoy* strategic framework of the DA.

Sec. Alcala envisions that the HVCDP will contribute highly to strengthening the linkage between the DA and LGUs through collaborative efforts/projects from the national down to the local levels under the program. ### (Raymond Patrick L. Cabrera)



Sweet sorghum training-seminar in Negros Occidental kicked-off

As an offshoot activity of the project, "Sweet Sorghum validation trials in collaboration with ethanol stakeholders in Negros Occidental", the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), in cooperation with two state universities, the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and the Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU), conducted a training-seminar on "Cultural Management/Scientific Planting of Sweet Sorghum" in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental.

BAR's Technology Commercialization Division Head, Mr. Anthony B. Obligado, delivered the opening remarks on behalf of BAR Director Nicomedes P. Eleazar. "With sweet sorghum being a viable alternative raw material for bioethanol production and a competitive feedstock with high potential in terms of bioethanol yield, it is crucial that we prepare planters and agriculturists on sweet sorghum production here in Negros where some of the biggest bioethanol plant distilleries in the country are situated," Obligado said.

MMSU Vice President Heraldo L. Layaoen discussed the importance of sweet sorghum as food and feed, as feedstock for bioethanol, and its unique features as a field crop. He also talked about the soil and climatic requirements of sweet sorghum as well as the cane and grain production of the crop.

Meanwhile, UPLB Prof. Rex B. Demafelis, the sweet sorghum project leader, shared his knowledge on the potentials of the crop as source bioethanol



BAR TCD Head Anthony Obligado reports on the bureau's initiatives on sweet sorghum production for bioethanol. photo: AOBLIGADO/TCD

feedstock.

Representatives from the sugarcane companies in Negros, farmer-entrepreneurs, provincial and municipal agricultural officers, and local government unit (LGU) technicians attended the activity.

BAR serves as the focal agency of the Department of Agriculture (DA) for the R&D component of its Biofuels Program. Since the introduction of sweet sorghum in the country by the International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in 2005, BAR has been promoting the crop through various research initiatives and activities particularly in the initial production of sweet sorghum feedstock.

Negros Occidental, dubbed as the sugar capital of the Philippines, is the

country's top sugar producer with most of its vast agricultural land planted to sugarcane. This is an equally important crop as sweet sorghum because sugarcane is presently the major source of the raw material for bioethanol. Negros Occidental is the home of two of the biggest bioethanol plants in the country.

In collaboration with the bioethanol companies in Negros Occidental, the project aims to conduct pre-commercial crop validation trials to show sweet sorghum's potential as a complement to sugarcane as bioethanol feedstock.

"This project is crucial in providing a viable support and options for those who will be involved in sweet sorghum planting either as a complementary or alternative to sugarcane as bioethanol feedstock," Mr. Obligado said.

Activities incorporated in the project include on-site assessment visits to the cooperators' pre-selected plantation trial areas in Negros Occidental (San Carlos, La Carlota, Victorias, Murci and Sagay City) to be conducted by BAR-commissioned experts. These experts will also conduct training on planting and other cultural management of sweet sorghum and will provide continuous technical assistance and supervision on the crop's planting in the selected areas. While BAR will provide the needed seeds and fertilizer, the companies will provide the labor and land. ### (Ma. Eloisa H. Aquino)



UPLB Prof. Rex B. Demafelis (left), sweet sorghum project leader and MMSU Vice President Dr. Heraldo Layaoen (center) during their field visit in Negros Occidental. photo: AOBLIGADO/TCD