

DA-PIOs consultative meeting held; updates on DA banner programs

Acknowledging the importance of information officers as channels of relevant and updated information on the Department of Agriculture (DA)'s latest initiatives and programs, a consultative meeting of public information officers (PIOs) was held on 3-4 May 2012 in Puerto Princesa Palawan. The DA-Agriculture and Fisheries Information Service (AFIS) led by OIC-Director Noel O. Reyes spearheaded the event.

The PIO meeting, which is done twice a year, encourages PIOs of concerned DA attached agencies, staff bureaus, and attached corporations to regularly produce updates and success stories on their activities contributing to DA's major programs and initiatives. With AFIS at the helm, the activity hopes to develop an efficient, working network among PIOs in spreading the "good news" and keeping the public updated.

Dr. Yvonne G. Vinas, regional technical director for planning and research of DA-RFU 4B, delivered the opening message in behalf of Regional Executive Director Cipriano G. Santiago. In the speech, Dr. Santiago commended the information champions of DA and encouraged them to intensify



Participants of the "First Semester Consultative Meeting of PIOs" composed information officers from DA attached agencies, staff bureaus, and attached corporations.

the role of DA through the dissemination of relevant information to the public.

AFIS Director Noel O. Reyes gave an overview of the activity and reported on the recent directives of Secretary Proceso J. Alcala for 2012. He also discussed the protocols and guidelines in disseminating communication releases to the media and the public in general.

Presentations on the various updates of the DA Banner Programs highlighted the rest of the sessions. Presentations included: 1) updates on rice program/rice achievers/DA-Food Staples Sufficiency Program; 2) corn program/cassava project; 3) livestock

program; 4) biotechnology program; and 5) postharvest program.

The second day was a continuation of the seminar updates on the various DA Programs. Presentations composed of updates on 1) marketing/agribusiness initiatives; and 2) irrigation program.

Dr. Karen Barroga, head of the Development Communication Division of the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice); presented "Knowledge Sharing and Learning: The PhilRice Experience"

Capping of the activity were discussions of agency's information advocacy activities. (Rita T. dela Cruz)

BAR chairs 7th ATWGARD Meeting; collaborative R&D initiatives forged



7th ATWGARD Chair and BAR Director Nicomedes P. Eleazar (3rd from left); DA Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning and BAS Director Romeo S. Recide (4th from left); ASEAN Secretariat Pouchamarn Wongsanga (2nd from right); and BAR Asst. Director Teodoro S. Solsoloy; (right) with the ATWGARD participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand; and key officials and staff from BAR. PHOTO BY ABRION

Enhancing knowledge sharing and coming up with collaborative research and development initiatives are needed for the improvement of the agriculture sector, especially on addressing issues related to productivity, production and food security. Hence, in 2003, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Technical Working Group on Agricultural Research and Development (ATWGARD) was established. It was participated in by member countries including Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The Philippines, through the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the

Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), spearheaded the 7th ATWGARD meeting held on 16-18 May 2012 at Century Park Hotel, Malate, Manila. BAR Director Dr. Nicomedes P. Eleazar chaired this international event.

DA's Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning and Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS) Director Romeo S. Recide warmly welcomed the delegates. In his message, he highlighted the importance of the agriculture and fisheries sector in helping achieve inclusive growth and poverty reduction. He also pointed out the focus of the meeting which includes the following: 1) inclusion of climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies in projects and programs; 2)

strengthening information technology, and 3) fostering strong cooperation and partnership among member countries.

Dr. Eleazar subsequently opened
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Dr. Nicomedes P. Eleazar (left), chair of the 7th ATWGARD Meeting. Sitting next to him is co-chair, Dr. Teodoro S. Solsoloy. PHOTO BY ABRIION

the program. In his remarks, he emphasized that part of ATWGARD's task is the "development of policy inputs for effective decision-making and framework for efficient prioritization in agricultural research and development". He furthered that in order for ATWGARD to effectively address food scarcity and hunger in the regions, it should exhaust the sector's collaborative R&D undertakings and intensify its human resource development.

During the meeting, each member countries presented the updates on the progress of their agriculture-related activities and projects. They also offered recommendations and inputs on new initiatives for ASEAN cooperation in agricultural R&D. The delegates also exchanged information regarding the status of research and development (R&D) in their respective countries.

Delegates from Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and ASEAN Secretariat attended the meeting. Among them were Dr. Idha Widi Arsanti, head of program and evaluation of Indonesian Centre for

Horticultural Research and Development, Ms. Erlita Adriani, assistant deputy director for data management of Indonesian Agency for Agricultural Research and Development, Dr. Faridah Salam, principal research

officer of the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute, Mr. Wanchai Thanomsub, senior expert in crop production management for Central Region of Thailand's Department of Agriculture, Mrs. Pissamai Chandhanamutta, director of research system group of the Planning and Technical Division of Thailand's Department of Agriculture and ASEAN Secretariat Pouchamarn Wongsanga. Also present were BAR's Assistant Director Dr. Teodoro S. Solsoloy, Mr.

Joell H. Lales, head of Planning and Project Development Division (PPDD), Mr. Anthony B. Obligado, head of Technology Commercialization Division (TCD), Ms. Digna L. Sandoval, head of Institutional Development Division (IDD), Mr. Victoriano B. Guiam, assistant head of IDD, and other BAR staff.

Assistant Secretary Recide, Dr. Eleazar, Dr. Solsoloy, and all of the delegates received certificates and tokens of appreciation for their active involvement and valuable contributions during the said activity. Dr. Eleazar and Dr. Solsoloy thanked each and everyone for their participation. The delegates, in turn, expressed their gratitude for the hospitality and the arrangements made by the host country.

The 8th ATWGARD meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held in Singapore in June 2013 where Singapore will be the chair and Thailand will serve as co-chair. (Anne Camille B. Brion)



Participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Philippines during one of the meeting sessions. PHOTO BY ABRIION



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Integration of livestock (goat) component



Rubber-based farming system in Brgy. Bugso, SNA

PHOTOS BY ACONSTANTINO and ROELACRUZ

between the rubber plants, four rows of *Robusta* coffee were planted at 3x3 meter distance. Coffee planting materials came from the farmer cooperators as part of the counterpart schemes, since coffee trees are already established in the farming system.

To capacitate the farmer cooperators on IFS and the technology component of the project, CEMIARC conducted a series of trainings and capacity building activities. Among the topics were: technology options for rubber, peanuts and upland rice, and hands on training on cultural management and propagation. Farmer-cooperators were also trained on how to enhance their skills and encourage them to establish livelihood activities for added income.

To sustain the project so that other qualified farmers will also benefit from CPAR, a repayment scheme was adopted. "Whatever number of provisions, the same will be paid," explained Ernesto Casas, a farmer cooperator and member of the Bugso-Kuden CPAR Farmers Association (BKCFa) that manages the collections of repayments.

During the start of the CPAR project, there were 20 farmer cooperators, 10 each from Brgy. Bugso and Brgy. Kuden. Majority of them (80 percent) lives by farming as main

source of livelihood. "A total of 9200 budded seedlings of rubber, 40 kg of peanut seeds, 18 heads of doe, 2 heads of buck (Anglo Nubian) were distributed to the 20 farmer-cooperators," reported Abrazado.

Farmers were given options to select among the cash crops (rice, peanut, corn) that will be integrated in their farms for the cropping season, although all of them were provided peanut seeds as start up source of seed for the adaptability trials.

Results of the first cropping season showed that among the rubber clones planted by the farmer cooperators, *PB206* and *USM 1* are the top performers in the area. ###

This article was based on the study, "Community-based Participatory Action Research on Upland Diversified Farming Systems in Sultan Kudarat, Region XII" by Angelita F. Abrazado and Jocelyn F. Torres of the Department of Agriculture-Central Mindanao Integrated Agricultural Research and Development Center (DA-CEMIARC), Amas, Kidapawan City. For more information, please contact them at (064) 278-7036 or email: bbette_24@yahoo.com

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Promotion..from page 6

encountered and the different products developed by Adlai proponents were among the topics discussed. The Technical Working Group (TWG) composed of Dr. Tim Aganon of Central Luzon State University (CLSU), Ms. Rose Mary Aquino of Cagayan Valley Integrated Agricultural Research Center (CVIARC) and Mr. Elmer Enicola of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) served as the evaluators. They provided general observations and suggestions on how to improve each project.

For the second session, the participants were divided into three groups according to geographical location. The Northern Luzon cluster was composed of CAR, Regions 1, 2 and 3. Included in the Southern Luzon cluster were Regions 4A, 4B and Bicol. Lastly, Regions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, ARMM, including MASIPAG made up the Visayas and Mindanao cluster. Each cluster was tasked to provide inputs for the Adlai Roadmap 2012-2016 which sets the direction and identifies the targets for Adlai projects and activities for the next four years. Each region also did the Work and Financial Plan for 2012-2013. A representative from each cluster presented their group's outputs which were critiqued and evaluated by the TWG afterwards. While the workshop was in progress, Adlai research proposals were simultaneously reviewed by the TWG. Helping in the assessment of the proposals were BAR Assistant Director Teodoro S. Solsoloy, Ms. Jallyn Remoquillo of HVCDP, and other BAR technical staff.

As part of the activity, participants were able to taste some of the developed products made from Adlai including *suman* and *maja*. Engr. Samuel Barut, Jr. from CVIARC also demonstrated how an Adlai micromill works. Dr. Solsoloy concluded the event by thanking everyone for their full cooperation in the activity towards uplifting the status of Adlai. He furthered that everyone should continue to persevere in promoting and making Adlai well-known in the country. (Anne Camille B. Brion)

CPAR..from page 17

productivity and farm income notwithstanding the benefit of environmental conservation,” explained Abrazado.

Following the IFS design for upland farming, the CPAR project has three components: rubber-based IFS, coffee-based IFS, and product processing and development. The project is being implemented in the two barangays of SNA, namely: Brgy. Bugso and Brgy. Kuden.

Rubber and coffee were chosen as the main crops for the IFS design since they were found to be potential crops with promising production performance suited to the agro-climatic condition in Sultan Kudarat.

“Sultan Kudarat, being the lead producer of coffee in the Philippines, contributing 22 percent to the country's coffee production, this is also an important move to strengthen the coffee industry in our area through this CPAR project. Moreover, since rubber and coffee are permanent crops, planting them promotes soil and water conservation system,” added Abrazado.

Integration of cash crops like rice and peanuts and livestock like goats were also recommended as part of the interventions in the CPAR to provide the farmer cooperators with income while waiting for the plantation crops (rubber and coffee) to be productive and to sustain the operation of the farm.

Another important component of the project is the product and processing development, which is crucial in sustaining the project. “If the farmers have already established a sustainable production of their crops, through value-adding, farmers will have additional source of livelihood and income,” she said.

CPAR interventions and beneficiaries

Considering that SNA is far from the provincial capital, deprived from the major amenities of a developed municipality, assistance from the government, such as the CPAR, was able to reach them. Majority of the municipality's inhabitants are settled within simple yet sturdy houses made of wood, no electricity, and vast land area that they tediously tilt for a living.

“This CPAR on upland diversified farming system is a first of a kind in SNA,” revealed Abrazado. Adhering to the principle of CPAR, the project hopes to increase the income of farmers in SNA making their production not only profitable but sustainable. Through diversified farming system approach, farmers are expected to increase productivity and efficiency thereby improving their living conditions.

Through the project, CEMIARC provided the inputs to the farmer-cooperators including the crops and livestock components. “Farmer-cooperators were given 460 pieces of budded rubber seedlings (PB260, PB330, USM, 1 and PRIM 600), 2 kilogram peanut seeds, and goats.

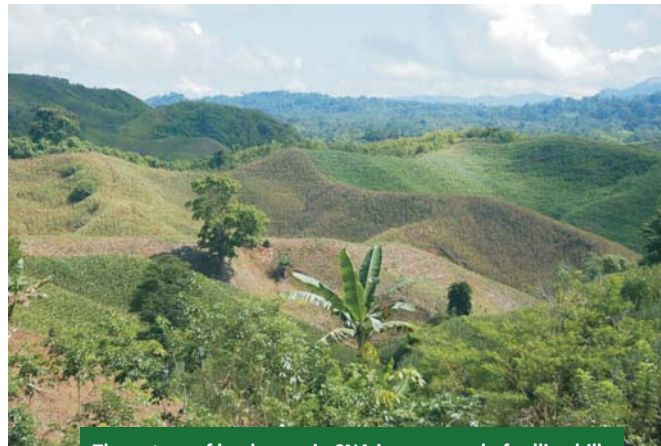
As a counterpart, the farmer cooperators provided the labor inputs, construction of goats' sheds, upland rice seeds, and other related activities needed to establish the CPAR.

Meanwhile, the local government provided the other inputs like 75 kg fertilizer as recommended based from the soil analysis result, and extension support.

As part of the interventions and technology introduced for the rubber-based IFS, the Alcala model (2x3x21 meter distance) was introduced for establishing the model farms. In

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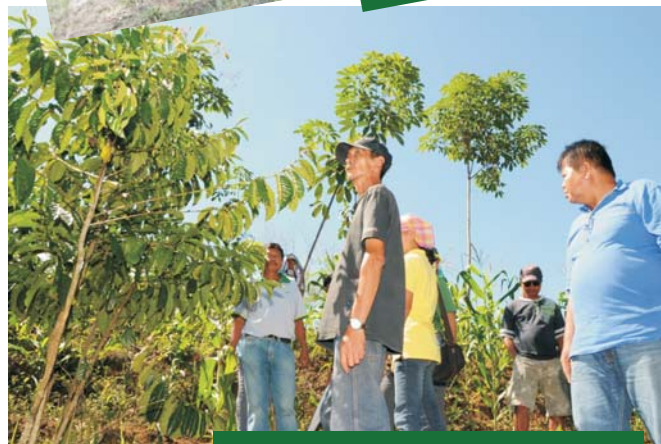
PHOTOS BY ACONSTANTINO and RDELACRUZ



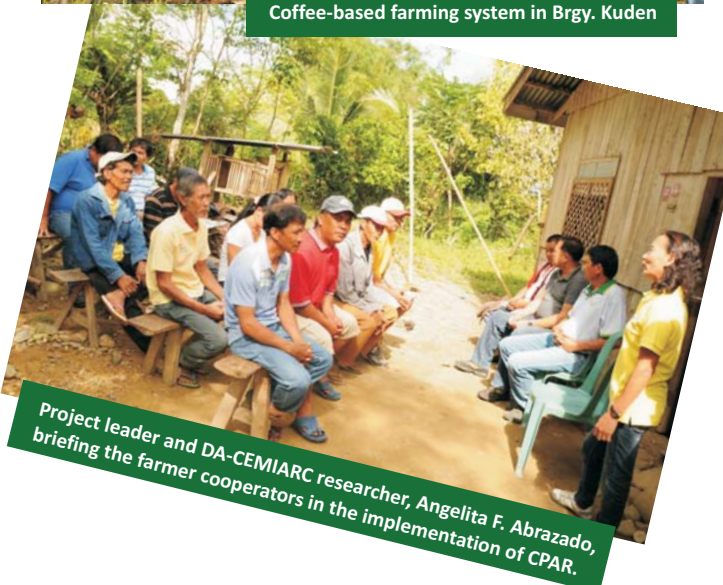
The nature of land areas in SNA is composed of rolling hills.



Farmer cooperators in Brgy. Bugso



Coffee-based farming system in Brgy. Kuden



Project leader and DA-CEMIARC researcher, Angelita F. Abrazado, briefing the farmer cooperators in the implementation of CPAR.

Phl commercially produces first anhydrous ethanol from sweet sorghum

After the successful conduct of sweet sorghum trials in Negros Occidental, the commercial production of sweet sorghum is now reaping success and was able to produce the first ever anhydrous ethanol from sweet sorghum in the Philippines.

A sugarcane-producing region, Negros Occidental opened its doors to commercial scale production of sweet sorghum with a devoted area of 30 hectares planted in Sagay City, Negros Occidental.

In 2011, the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR) funded the sweet sorghum trials in Negros Occidental and showed promising result as a viable and complementary feedstock to sugarcane and prompted the commercial scale production of sweet sorghum in the region. This serves as an offshoot activity for the “1st Sweet Sorghum Summit and Plantation Showcase” in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental in June 2011.

These activities were implemented by the University of the Philippines Los Baños Foundation, Incorporated (UPLBFI) to showcase sweet sorghum's complementary

potential compared to sugarcane as bioethanol feedstock.

Since 2006, BAR has been funding and coordinating different projects on sweet sorghum. The bureau started supporting R&D activities for sweet sorghum from its initial production, its adaptability testings to its commercialization. Sweet sorghum is dubbed “smart” and “wonder” crop and can be utilized as food, feed, fuel, and fertilizer.

“This sets another milestone in R&D initiatives of BAR, strengthened by our collaboration with R&D partner-institutions such as the state universities and colleges (SUCs) and other stakeholders,” said BAR Director Nicomedes P. Eleazar.

The project implemented a parallel-system with sugarcane harvesting practices to easily introduce, hence, adopt sweet sorghum by the farmers. Convinced with the promising future of sweet sorghum, the local government unit of Sagay and private farm land owners of sugarcane areas tried planting sweet sorghum. “The whole production cycle entailed a manpower of 92 workers in a day for four days during the harvest time that provided income opportunities,” explained Prof. Rex Demafelis of the UPLB Alternative Energy Research, Development and Extension convenor and chair of the UPLB Energy Systems Committee.



PHOTO BY ACONSTANTINO

“Other than the beneficial uses of sweet sorghum, the locals were encouraged to plant the said crop since it requires less input (fertilizer, water, etc.),” added Mr. Anthony B. Obligado head of the Technology Commercialization Division (TCD) of BAR. He mentioned that sweet sorghum provides three cropping seasons compared to the 11 months of sugarcane resulting to a faster return of income.

After harvesting 480 tons of sweet sorghum cane, OPTION Muscovado Plant Cooperative (MPC) facilitated the milling to produce sweet sorghum syrup. The syrup was sent and processed in the San Carlos Bioenergy Inc. (SCBI) producing 15,231 liters of bioethanol.

Funded by DA-BAR, the production of sweet sorghum syrup to bioethanol is a collaborative work between UPLBFI, SCBI, and OPTION MPC. (Ma. Eloisa H. Aquino)

PHOTO BY ILAPITAN



“This sets another milestone in R&D initiatives of BAR, strengthened by our collaboration with R&D partner-institutions such as the state universities and colleges (SUCs) and other stakeholders.” ~ Dr. Eleazar

BAR showcases R&D products in **Horti Asia 2012**



Looking into the importance of promoting products generated from research and development (R&D), the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) joined the Horti Asia 2012, an international exhibition that showcases the latest and sophisticated technologies and know-how's in horticultural and floricultural production and processing.

For this year, Thailand served as the host country for the event which was participated in by 12 more countries, namely: Australia, Israel, China, India, Germany, Malaysia, USA, Italy, France, The Netherlands, Taiwan, and Philippines.

One of the objectives of the exhibition was to provide a venue for the ASEAN horticultural and floricultural operators and exporters to expand their markets by finding new export markets among the ASEAN and international buyers.

The three-day event was attended by thousands of participants from which various exhibitors from the sectors of plant breeding, crop protection, disease control, seed improvement, irrigation system, research and development, postharvest among others were able to promote their respective products.

The Philippine delegation is composed of 20 companies from the public and private sector. The Philippine pavilion showcased the horticultural products and services that the country can best offer. The exhibitors promoted their skills on landscaping concepts and techniques; the other displayed their horticultural products such as coconut, banana, mangoes, and herbal products among others. As this is an opportunity to look for potential clients, the delegates exerted their effort to make their products stand above the rest.

Horti Asia 2012 is the first international exhibition that the Bureau

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CPAR in Senator Ninoy Aquino: Providing better opportunities for upland farmers

BY RITA T. DELA CRUZ

Senator Ninoy Aquino (SNA) the political figure may have easily rang a bell. But SNA the place might take a while before one figures out that it's actually a municipality in the province of Sultan Kudarat in Region 12 SOCCSKSARGEN (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos).

Senator Ninoy Aquino (formerly Kulaman) was named as a municipality on 11 July 1989 through Republic Act 6712. The town is named in memory of the Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. who at that time became the modern hero of Filipinos and was instrumental for the downfall of a dictatorial government.

With a population of around 35,000 residents, SNA is about 42 km south-west of Isulan or a five-hour drive from its provincial capital.

In a participatory rural appraisal (PRA) conducted by a group of researchers from the Department of Agriculture-Central Mindanao Integrated Agricultural Research Center (DA-CEMIARC) led by Angelita F. Abrazado, it was found that farming remains the

main source of livelihood of the residents in SNA.

"Majority of the farmers in SNA are growing coffee, upland rice, peanut, corn and are into monocropping system. This is quite alarming given that the nature of the land areas in SNA is rolling. The continuous monocropping practice of the farmers greatly contributes to soil erosion and low soil fertility in the area," explained Abrazado.

Given this, a Community-based Participatory Action Research (CPAR) was established in SNA following the Integrated Farming System (IFS) design for uplands. IFS is a system or technique that properly combines and integrates permanent tree crops, cash crops, livestock to maximize the use of land and optimize farm productivity and incomes of the farmers.

Implemented by DA-CEMIARC, in close collaboration with the Provincial Local Government Unit (PLGU) of Sultan Kudarat and the Municipal Local Government Unit (MLGU) of Senator Ninoy Aquino, the project titled, "CPAR on Upland

Diversified Farming Systems in Sultan Kudarat, Region 12" was established in SNA. The project is funded and supported by the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR).

From monocropping to diversified farming

In implementing the CPAR in SNA, the group of Abrazado had to convince the farmers to shift from their old ways of monocropping system to crop diversification. The researchers from CEMIARC conducted trainings on values re-orientation and instilled to the farmers the disadvantages of monocropping and how it defies environmental conservation initiatives to make the uplands sustainable.

"The DA has adopted crop diversification as a strategy to promote and hasten agricultural development. One aspect is planting a cash crop after the main crop and the other is planting intercrops (permanent or cash crops) in-between the main crop, usually a permanent crop. We teach our farmers this strategy to attain increased

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Turmeric...from page 15

ointment proves to be a necessity in your everyday first aid kit (based on personal experience). And to lower uric acid and for liver detox, turmeric could also be your cup of tea.

With promising product lines from basic herbs and spices, everyone is given the opportunity to make a livelihood from your own backyard. Simple though as it may be, R&D initiatives on identification and testing had to be initially performed to ensure that these plants will be beneficial for our health. Support from the local government, and cooperation within and among regional offices guarantee that we are able to attain not only food security but also able to live healthy, disease-free lifestyles.

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PHOTOS from www.heavenly-products.com and www.ediblyasian-info.com

PHOTO BY ZREYNOSO

First quarter coco water export up by 300 percent

Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) Administrator Euclides G. Forbes has announced that volume of this year's first quarter coco water export increased by 300 percent with 4,498,158.00 liters compared with last year's figures of 1,125,451.00 liters.

The Administrator added that the value likewise increased by 260.56 percent with this quarter's earnings of \$4,783,443.00 compared with 2011 figures of \$1,326,672.00.

Coco water export to the United States this quarter registered the highest increase of 426.75 percent in value with \$3,940,487.00 compared with last year's first quarter figures of \$748,076.00. The export volume likewise registered a 367.37 percent for this quarter with 3,724,428.00 liters as against last year's figures of 796,887.00 liters.

Export increases to other destinations for first quarter this year compared with last year's figure

include: Netherlands – from 32,000.00 liters to 189,800.00 liters – an increase of 493.13 percent with earnings from \$28,000.00 to \$208,602.00 a good 645.01 percent increase. Australia registered volume increase from 362.55 liters to 65,219.00 liters which is 362.55 increase with value from \$16,350.00 to \$80,430.00 which is a 391.93 percent increase.

Administrator Forbes is confident that this year's coco water export figures will even exceed that of total 2011 figures which registered 16,685,350 liters in volume and \$15,113,152.00 in value considering that international demand for coco water continue to rise as more people turn health conscious.

The Administrator added that it is beneficial to drink coconut water which is a natural beverage that is rich in potassium and magnesium. He added that coco water contains a considerable amount of vitamin B such as thiamine which aids in strengthening the muscles,

delaying fatigue and maintaining normal heart function. It is regarded as a good source of electrolytes and glucose and have been found suitable for intravenous rehydration.

Administrator Forbes reiterates the need to plant more coconut trees to meet the growing demand for many coconut products and by-products and not only coconut water. He reaffirmed commitment in the aggressive implementation of various PCA programs involving planting, replanting and fertilization of coconut farms which will increase coconut productivity. The programs have the farmers as active participants and partners in the development process.

The Administrator is confident that this will generate new job opportunities for millions of farmers dependent on the coconut industry for their livelihood. (Coconut Media Service)

of Agricultural Research (BAR) participated in. The BAR booth showcased various products generated from its R&D endeavors. These included: oregano products (soap and tea), ginger tea, *kalamansi* and guava soap, sapinit products (jam and juice), makapuno strains, and mango products (dried and pickled).

The oregano products, ginger tea, *kalamansi* soap and guava soap are results of the R&D projects of Southern Tagalog Integrated Agricultural Research Center (STIARC), Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Unit (DA-RFU) IVA. The *sapinit* products and *makapuno* strains are from DA-Quezon Agricultural and Experiment Station (QAES), STIARC while mango products are from Mr. Lito Arenas of LA Tradings. All of these products are funded under the banner program of BAR, the National Technology Commercialization Program (NTCP).

In the NTCP, R&D breakthroughs and mature technologies generated by various institutions are packaged into enterprise development and agribusiness ventures. Given the fact that these products are still new in the market, the opportunity to promote them in the international market has been a good opportunity that the bureau grabbed. Assisting small and medium enterprise (SME) in exploring and expanding market potentials for their products is part of the mandates of the program.

Participating in the exhibit was the Labo Progressive Multi-purpose Cooperative (LPMPC) which is famous for their Queen Pineapple products. The products showcased in the exhibit included pineapple juice, processed bottled pineapples (rum pineapple, salsa pineapple, pickled pineapple, and syrup pineapple), and pineapple fabric. LPMCP is an institution which focused on livelihood creations through pineapple production and processing. The BAR and LPMCP have been long known for their partnership in further developing and enhancing the queen pineapple industry. To promote the products, BAR held a free sample tasting of pickled and dried mangoes.

The event is highlighted by the Horti Asia 2012 opening ceremony. Delivering her welcome remarks was Ms. Ladda Mongkolkehaivivat, general manager of VNU Exhibitions Organizer

Asia Pacific Co. Ltd. Delivering their messages of support were: Mr. Thingchai Sridama, Board of Director acting president of Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau; and Ms. Daphne Dernison, agricultural counsellor of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The highlight of the ceremony was the speech of Mr. Nattawut Saikuar, deputy minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Thailand.

The Philippine pavilion was graced by Philippine Ambassador to Thailand Linglingay F. Lacanlale and Philippine Embassy Agricultural Attaché, Ms. Ana Abejuela. Ambassador Lacanlale visited the BAR booth and gave some pointers on how to promote the Philippine products in Thailand particularly on the importance of product packaging. She said that the packaging is important as it is what the people first see. It is therefore important to focus on this aspect.

Thailand's Agriculture and Cooperatives Deputy Minister Nattawut Saikuar was able to see the products promoted by BAR. Ms. Digna Sandoval, OIC of Institutional Development Division of BAR, discussed briefly the products exhibited.

As the host country of the

event, Thailand pavilion emanated its high regards on food safety. Being the country-hub of horticultural commodities, the country is very particular in terms of ensuring the quality and safeness of their food products. This is highly visible with their systematized accreditation and certification in food safety. They are highly compliant to Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP).

In the exhibition, it is notable to look at the highly attractive packaging materials of the products displayed. Every booth has its unique way of making the product marketable to the consumers' eyes. Almost every booth had the same horticultural products, the difference lies on the presentation of these products.

Due to trade liberalization and the still increasing world population, markets both in horticultural and floricultural products will not cease to exist. The exhibition only shows on how broad the opportunities that the Philippine exporters/operators can capitalize on. However, it is also served as a caution that without a competitive product, there are a lot of competitors which can grab these opportunities. (Diana Rose A. de Leon)



Ms. Digna Sandoval (right) of BAR discussing briefly the products exhibited to Thailand's Agriculture and Cooperatives Deputy Minister Nattawut Saikuar (2nd from left). PHOTOS BY DDELEON



Promotion of non-rice staples highlighted in the Adlai Nat'l Review

The Philippine Food Staples Self-Sufficiency Roadmap (FSSR) 2011-2016 of the Department of Agriculture (DA) serves as a guide for the agriculture sector to address hunger incidence in the country. As stated in this roadmap, the country must be able to manage rice consumption to be food self-sufficient. This could be done by diversifying staples through an increase in the production of non-rice staples such as Adlai.

With the implementation of the Adlai R&D Program coordinated by the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), various research and development (R&D) projects have been undertaken to discover the potentials of the said crop. Hence, to assess its accomplishments needed for future collaborative activities, BAR organized the National Adlai Review and Planning Workshop held on 29-31 May 2012 at Hotel Vida, Clark, Pampanga.

Participants present during the event included the Regional Technical Directors (RTDs), Regional Integrated Agricultural Research Center (RIARC) managers, High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) regional coordinators, Adlai focal persons and proponents, agriculturists, researchers, and BAR staff.

Dr. Nicomedes P. Eleazar, director of BAR, opened the program.

In his message, he recalled the moment when DA Secretary Proceso Alcala told him “*Nick, paki-research mo nga yung Adlai*” (Nick, can you research on Adlai) which marked the beginning of research and project undertakings on Adlai. He stressed the importance of the crop as a potential food source and as an alternative for rice and corn. “Adlai can be one of the answers towards addressing the issue on food security and attaining the goal of being food self-sufficient”, he said.

Ms. Jennifer Remoquillo, OIC-Director of HVCDP, also gave a

message and noted that the partnership between BAR and HVCDP has resulted in good coordination on the implementation for high value crops. She also emphasized the essence of the workshop which is to answer the question “*Nasaan na ba tayo?*” (Where are we now?) in terms of what Adlai projects have accomplished so far which would be the basis for future activities.

The first session of the workshop entailed the presentation of each region regarding the results of their respective Adlai RDE for the year 2011-2012. Positive outcomes, problems



Dr. Nicomedes P. Eleazar opening the program.
PHOTO BY ABRION



Engr. Samuel Barut, Jr. of CVIARC showing the participants how to operate the Adlai micromill.
PHOTO BY ABRION



Turmeric: Bringing more color to healthier living

BY ZUELLEN B. REYNOSO

Commonly known in the country as *luyang dilaw* (yellow ginger), turmeric (*Curcuma spp.*) is more than just a food coloring ingredient. Widely popular in India as a spice for making curry, turmeric is gradually making its name as a natural healer around the world.

In a globalizing society where diseases are borderless and breakthrough medicine seem to scratch only at the surface, we return to the basics of Mother Nature and begin to reconsider organic herbs for possible treatment.

Largely used as a culinary herb (mainly as a food colorant in the Philippines), turmeric comes from the ginger family thriving in tropical countries such as those in South Asia. This herbaceous perennial plant is boiled, dried, and then ground to its popular orange-yellow powdered form that is slightly bitter and slightly peppery hot to taste. The turmeric plant, also called “Spice of Life” in India is considered sacred in the country and belongs to the major spices category together with cardamom, ginger, pepper, etc.

At the forefront of the organic movement, research and development (R&D) initiatives around the world dedicated to discovering more about turmeric and its possible medicinal qualities have brought this simple crop into its own spotlight. Research has shown the potency of turmeric to prevent dementia and Alzheimer's disease. It is also a natural antibacterial and antiseptic agent for burns, cuts and other skin illnesses; could help prevent certain cancers; could serve as a natural pain killer, and may even help in weight management.

BAR supports turmeric

Under the Research and Development Extension Agenda and Program (RDEAP) 2011–2016 of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), product development for turmeric is supported as a medicinal and indigenous plant. R&D initiatives to test and identify pharmacological effects of turmeric will increase its marketability and provide for the demands of a more health-conscious country, while supporting our local

communities.

BAR collaborates with senior researcher, Dr. Estela C. Taño of the Department of Agriculture- Quezon Agricultural Experiment Station (DA-QAES), to promote the utilization of indigenous plants for culinary and medicinal values through its banner program, the National Technology Commercialization Project (NTCP).

Arising from the initial product development of oregano into wine and soap, turmeric has also been developed. A special cream and tea made of turmeric has also been manufactured and enhanced for the market. With the help of the Green Rescue Organic Association, Inc. in Tiaong, Quezon created to provide sustainable livelihood programs for local farmers, 15 g pots of Turmeric Natural Healing Cream are now available for distribution.

The Turmeric natural healing cream is a yellowish balm inside a green plastic container that provides relief from insect bites, pimples, wounds, and other skin impurities. With barely the odor of ginger, this all around

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PHOTOS FROM BLISSTREE.COM and AIDANBROOKSPICES.BLOGSPOT.COM



PHOTO BY ZREYNOSO

Persistent...from page 13

“Thesis!” In most cases, a thesis is a student's key to graduation. His thesis, entitled “Farmers' Participation in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) under the Palayamanan Program in Camarines Sur”, determined the levels of farmers' participation in IPM. His study recommends encouraging more farmers to practice IPM and further increasing their trainings, technical and financial assistance under the said program.

But there is more to it than his diploma. Peter is also a recipient of the “Outstanding Service Award”, an award given to a person who is actively involved and has given valuable contributions to the Graduate School Student Association. Peter once served as a representative to the Graduate School Student Council in 2009-2010. He also became both Vice President and President of the Internal House Residents' Association in 2009-2011.

With all the experiences he had, “More than the knowledge I have acquired, I think it is when I learned to be simple and humble -- that is what made me become a better person,” he says. According to him, he cannot attribute his success to himself alone. That is why he has his understanding bosses, academic advisers, DA-RFU 5, DA-BAR, friends, family, and most especially God, to thank for all the support and encouragement that they have given him. He advises those who want to pursue their studies to never give up in following their dreams. Just like what he did, he persisted and persevered. He also plans to continue his PhD as soon as paper works have been finalized and approved. As of now, persistent Peter still enjoys the fruits of his labor. ###



A proud, Pedro F. Oliver of DA-RFU 5, receiving his MS Community Development diploma during the 40th UPLB Commencement Exercises.

PhilRice...from page 9



PHOTO BY JMANALO/PHILRICE

farming family, and 3) vision for the farm. This means that the youth cares about the farming status and communities of our country.

“To many [of the participants], farming has already developed a symbolic value. So symbolic that they cannot detach themselves away from it. They want to be involved [in farming] – directly or indirectly,” Mr. Manalo expounded.

Deduced from the perceptions of the participants, the research proposed to encourage indirect involvement of the youth in rice farming since direct involvement is much difficult to empower and less attractive to the youth. According to the discussion, indirect involvement has two forms: short-term and long-term.

In light of the long-term involvement, the educated youth should be seen as and empowered to be future rice farming investors who can further advance the progress of Philippine rice farming. On the other hand, the short-term involvement promotes the idea of mobilizing the youth as infomedaries or the people who access information and communications technologies (ICTs) for those who cannot access them. Through this proposed role, the educated youth can greatly help their parents as well as the farming community they belong to, in learning about new ways to improve crop yield and to cut farming costs.

In summary, Mr. Manalo ended with a statement, “The fear that the youth might abandon farming one day might easily happen if we will not involve them. The proposal to mobilize the youth as infomedaries, which was drawn from the findings of this study, can, if proven effective, serve as a new strategy in extension.” (Leila Denisse E. Padilla)

CIMMYT comm specialist visits BAR



BAR officials and staff, namely: (clockwise) IDD OIC Digna Sandoval, IDD Asst. Head Victoriano Guiam, ACD Head Julia Lapitan, PMED Technical Staff Rodolfo Fernandez meet Ms. Michelle DeFreese, (right) communication assistant to the director general of CIMMYT. Assisting her is Dr. Artemio Salazar, (2nd from right) deputy director of the IPB-UPLB. PHOTO BY LPADILLA

A communication specialist from CIMMYT (Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maiz y Trigo) or the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center visited the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) for an orientation of its National Corn Program and research and development (R&D) initiatives on 29 May 2012.

Ms. Michelle DeFreese, communication assistant to the director general of CIMMYT visited the bureau in view of developing audio-visual media materials that are linked to how CIMMYT will be able to assist the local maize industry through technology development and research collaborations. This is also in view of strengthening linkage and collaboration particularly on intensifying R&D on maize.

Assisting Ms. DeFreese was Dr. Artemio Salazar, deputy director of the Institute of Plant Breeding-University of the Philippines (IPB-UPLB).

The Institutional Development Division (IDD) of BAR, led by its OIC, Ms. Digna L. Sandoval and assistant head, Mr. Victoriano B. Guiam. Also joining in the meeting were Ms. Julia A. Lapitan, OIC-head of the Applied Communication Division (ACD) and; Mr. Tito Z. Arevalo (*not in the photo*) and Engr. Rodolfo Fernandez both from the Project Monitoring and Evaluation Division (PMED).

During the meeting, Ms. DeFreese talked about some of the new technology developments on maize that CIMMYT is currently implementing. According to her, “The Seeds of

Discovery” is focused on enhancing the gene bank of maize while the “Take It To The Farmer” is a project that brings information technology and other forms of technology closer to the farmers. Ms. DeFreese also mentioned that CIMMYT has great interest in Asia, wherein maize or corn is one of the popular food staples.

Putting emphasis on strengthening partnership, Dr. Salazar pointed out the great potential of exploring areas of collaboration with CIMMYT, particularly on maize R&D. “Nutrition, climate change, and food security are among the most important research areas that we can explore together,” he said.

In support to CIMMYT's interest in creating information materials on how they have helped the

local maize industry, Ms. Lapitan talks about the communication and development function of ACD wherein various forms of information, education, and communication (IEC) materials on agriculture and fisheries R&D are being produced and disseminated to stakeholders. “The increasing number of technology adaptors is a good indicator of how important and successful knowledge management and information dissemination is,” she noted.

CIMMYT, which is based in Mexico, is a non-profit research and training institution specializing on corn and wheat which is affiliated with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Its headquarters are based in Mexico and it has 13 regional offices all over the world. (Leila Denisse E. Padilla)



Ms. Michelle DeFreese, communication assistant to the director general of CIMMYT

PHOTO BY LPADILLA

Balingasag women's association benefits from *bangus* postharvest capability training



PHOTO BY DDELEON

Milkfish, locally known as *bangus*, is one of the most commercially viable marine species in the Philippines especially in Balingasag, Misamis, Oriental which is considered the *bangus* capital of Northern Mindanao.

Balingasag is home to a 195-hectare Mariculture Park which covered 5 coastal barangays. Launched in 2007, the park serves as the center of fishery-related activities such as aquaculturing, mangroves growing, sea ranching, and sea sanctuary. It now has 243 cages in which majority is occupied for milkfish cultivation. In 2010, the volume of milkfish production reached more than 900 metric tons.

In a recent visit of Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala in Balingasag Mariculture Park, one of the problems raised by the fisherfolk and the women association was the lack of trainings on postharvest processing of *bangus*. The municipality housed a processing plant in which the local government unit (LGU) wanted it to be utilized for *bangus* processing.

With this, the Department of

Agriculture (DA) collaborated with the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) to conduct a capability-training on milkfish value-adding for the identified members of Balingasag Federated Women's Association.

The main objective of the training was to empower and capacitate the members of the women's association of Balingasag in milkfish postharvest technologies, specifically on processing, value-adding, food safety, and packaging techniques in a fish processing plant set-up.

Gracing the event was Balingasag Mayor Alexis S. Quina, Vice-mayor Marietta Abogado, Regional Fisheries Research and Development Center (RFRDC) 10 Manager Gigi C. Albor, Misamis Oriental Provincial Fisheries Officer Bebot Cabio, Regional Fisherfolk Director Gregorio Pablito and BFAR 10 Asst. Regional Director Asuncion J. Maputol. Representing BAR were technical staff members, namely: Ms. Ma. Elena M. Garces of the Technology

Commercialization Division (TCD), Ms. Marinelle S. Espino of the Planning and Project Development Division (PPDD), Ms. Marnelli A. Gadong of the Project Monitoring and Evaluation Division (PMED), and Ms. Diana A. de Leon of the Applied Communication Division (ACD).

The five-day training was attended by 34 members of the women's association. The training was divided into two parts. The first half was allocated to lectures in which topics such as basic plant processing, sanitation codes, national standards for milkfish, good manufacturing practices, product packaging and labeling, among others were discussed. The other half of the training focused on the hands-on practice of making *bangus* relleno, *bangus* smoking, deboning, and bottling (*bangus* sardines).

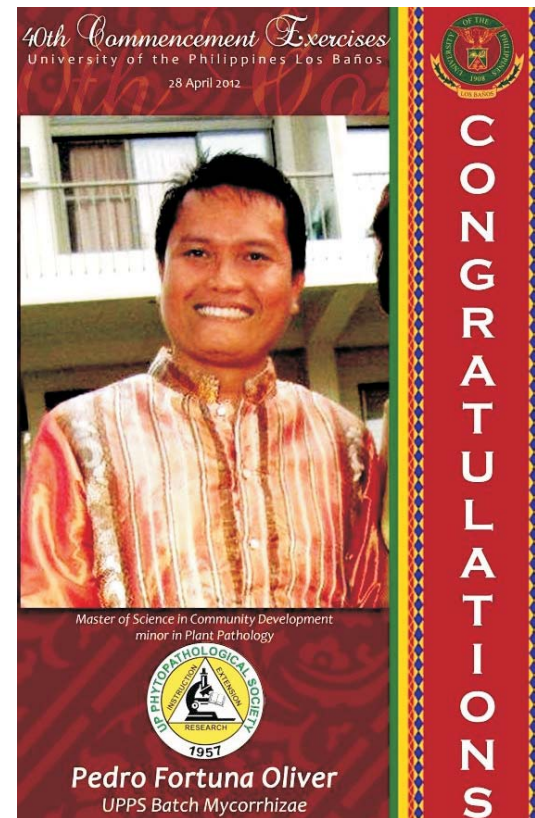
Highlight of the training was the turn-over of training kit to the women's association. The training kit was composed of chopping boards, knives, boots, gloves, mask, dressing gowns, hair nets, trays, and deboning scissors. After the capability building,

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Persistent Peter: A BAR scholar

BY ANNE CAMILLE B. BRION

One must not stop in pursuing their dreams. If there's a will, there's a way, even if obstacles are on the way.



Education is an important aspect in a life of a person. It enables him to adapt to his environment and be prepared on what the world has to offer. However, as poverty continues to exist, there are still who lack the resources to be educated. One must not stop, however, in pursuing their dreams. *If there's a will, there's a way*, even if obstacles are on the way.

On 28 April 2012, the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) grounds was filled with over a thousand of Bachelor of Science (BS), Master of Science (MS), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) graduates. It is perhaps the day that many of them will never forget as it marks the end of all the struggles and hardships they experienced as a student. The feeling that you get upon walking on the stage and receiving your hard-earned diploma is simply hard to explain.

Persistence, along with perseverance, best describes how Pedro F. Oliver, one of the graduates, achieved his diploma with flying colors.

Peter, as what his friends and colleagues call him, is already an achiever at an early age. He graduated as Fourth Honorable Mention both during his elementary and high school days. In college, he decided to take

Agriculture and majored in Crop Protection for he wanted to help his fellow Bicolano farmers and of course his family. He also received a Science Excellence

Award which is given to graduates who did exemplary achievements in research and development. After graduation, he started his work at the Department of Agriculture - Regional Field Unit 5 where he assumed the post of a research assistant. He is currently employed in this office, now as a researcher, project leader and extension worker.

Peter's journey

The Department of Agriculture - Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR) is providing scholarship grants and assistance to qualified and deserving people from the National Research and Development Systems for Agriculture and Fishery (NaRDSAF)-member institutions.

The Degree Scholarship Program is for R&D employees who want to pursue MS and PhD studies. Meanwhile, the Non-Degree Scholarship Program supports the conduct of thesis/dissertation studies which will aid in addressing issues on agriculture and fisheries. The program also helps researchers and scientists to represent the country on trainings, presentations and other R&D undertakings held locally and abroad, as well as short-term basic research through postdoctoral or fellowship awards. These BAR scholarship

programs realize the importance of human resources in organizations and aim to strengthen their capacities to be highly competent employees as they play a major role in enhancing the agriculture and fisheries sectors.

Peter is one of BAR's scholars. It all started when Ms. Dolores Ricafranca, superintendent of Research Outreach Station (ROS) for Upland Plan Development Zone in Region V, introduced Peter to Dr. Nicomedes P. Eleazar, BAR's director. Ms. Ricafranca asked Dr. Eleazar if BAR could help Peter with pursuing his studies. Upon approval and accomplishing a series of requirements, Peter was awarded the scholarship and took up MS Community Development minor in Plant Pathology at UPLB.

His first semester as a student was a struggle. Aside from being an "alien" to the UPLB environment, it also took him 18 years before finally taking his MS. With this very long gap, it became difficult for him to memorize the concepts and principles during lectures. He also had a hard time following the usual study habits that a student normally does. These, however, did not stop him from achieving his goals. Instead, he worked hard and proved himself that he can successfully complete his studies. After a period of adjustments, he became accustomed to UPLB's environment and the rest, they say, is history.

When asked what the most difficult part of being an MS student was, he immediately answered,

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Legumes project progresses to Phase 3



Strengthening partnerships is one of the many tools to ensure that goals are attained. In full commitment to pursuing research and development (R&D) excellence and achieving food security and sustainability in the country, the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR), through its Project Monitoring and Evaluation Division (PMED), in cooperation with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and DA-Regional Field Units (RFUs) discussed and planned the conclusion of phase 2 and the establishment of phase 3, respectively, of the DA-BAR and ICRISAT project on the field testing of legumes.

The “Terminal Review of Field Testing of ICRISAT Legume Varieties and Technologies in Selected Regions of the Philippines Phase II and Planning Meeting for Phase III” was held on 2-3 May 2012 at the 2/F BAR Office, Visayas Ave., Diliman, Quezon City.

In attendance were Dr. William D. Dar director general of ICRISAT; Dr. CL Laxmipathi Gowda, research program director for grain legumes of ICRISAT; RIARC representatives and project proponents from all over the country.

ICRISAT is a non-profit organization based in India, which promotes and supports agriculture R&D initiatives in Asia and Africa. Years of partnership with BAR have resulted to numerous projects from rainfed agriculture to the development of different varieties of legumes

throughout the Philippines. Successful and ongoing collaborative projects between the two institutions include commercialization of peanut, pigeonpea, and sweet sorghum, among others.

Dr. Gowda stressed the importance of these initiatives in legume production development. As food insufficiency contributes to the malnutrition problems in the country, “legumes can compensate for the lack of nourishment in people, and at the same time, promote sustainable agriculture”.

During the meeting, representatives from projects on peanut (Regions 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10), chickpea (Regions 1, 9, and 10), and pigeonpea (Regions 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10) presented their respective reports and updates on the on-going legume projects. Although issues and

developments vary from one region to another, recommendations from experts centered on the appropriate use of legume variety in their area to improve productivity. In Region 5 for instance, it was recommended that proponents select the top two varieties of peanuts that will be used in the next phase of the project. Yield performance is the main priority of development in these legumes under field testing.

From phase 2 where numerous varieties of pigeonpea, chickpea, and peanut were used during field testing, Dr. Gowda urged proponents to select only two varieties for the phase 3 of their projects and focus on “large scale seed production”. And as majority of the legumes showed good adaptation results, selecting the top two performers in their respective projects will allow for more development of the variety, and in turn provide a better yielding crop.

Dr. Dar also shared a few words during the meeting where he emphasized the marketing side of product development. He explained that while initiatives such as field trials that pursue seed development are already a huge effort, it would be pointless if the products remain unknown to most people. Collective action to promote seed production and product development should be shared to the bigger market, to create a bigger demand for the utilization of legumes and support the industry. (Zuellen B. Reynoso)



Dr. William D. Dar and Dr. CL Laxmipathi Gowda during terminal review of the legumes project.

PHOTO BY DBATTAD

PhilRice shows *Pinoy* youth's involvement in rice farming



Mr. Jaime A. Manalo IV of PhilRice
PHOTO BY ACONSTANTINO

Scholars believe that there is now a massive exodus of youth from the rice farm. This is partly validated by the evident decrease in enrollment in agriculture courses. This belief has resulted in at least two consequences: fear that we might have a scarcity of future food producers, and the minimal to zero efforts to engage the youth in agriculture.”

This was articulated by Mr. Jaime A. Manalo, IV, science research specialist at the Development Communication Division of the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), in a seminar series organized by the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) held on 17 May 2012 at the 4/F BAR Conference Hall, Visayas, Ave, Diliman, Quezon City.

The presentation, “Really, they hate farming?: Challenging dominant orthodoxies on Filipino youth's perceptions on rice farming”, is a research conducted by Mr. Manalo with Dr. Eske van de Fliert, principal research fellow in and co-director at the Centre for Communication and Social Change and associate professor at the University of Queensland in Australia.

Concerned stakeholders from state universities and colleges (SUCs), Department of Agriculture (DA)

attached bureaus and partner agencies, local government units (LGUs), and other institutions attended the seminar to know more about Filipino youth's outlook towards rice farming.

To farm or not to farm

The research featured in the seminar, which won the Best Papers during the 42nd Crop Science Society of the Philippines (CSSP) Scientific Conference held in Palawan earlier this year, aimed to investigate and dig more on the query: Is it a case that they do not want to farm, or do they just want to

do farming differently?

In the pursuit of finding answers, the research applied the qualitative approach (i.e., primary data sources are people and their

perceptions, meanings, understandings, and interpretations) making use of participatory methodologies like time transect, mobility map, photo voice, and group discussion.

A total of 68 participants residing in Aurora and Albay took part in the study. The research sought assistance from the PhilRice-led Open Academy for Philippine Agriculture (OpAPA) in Aurora and the Children International in Albay.

After analyzing the gathered data, Mr. Manalo found two important points. “The first one is on rethinking youth's perceptions. The second one is about the infomediary proposal, which is an offshoot of the analysis on the first section,” he said.

The key: Youth involvement and mobilization

In rethinking youth's perception, it was found that the participants have: 1) some time on the farm, 2) heart for the

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Balingasag...from page 8



PHOTOS BY DDELEON

these training kits will be added to the processing plant.

“Kami ay nagpasalamat dahil may mga ganitong pa-training. Ito ay mabuti para sa aming mga kababaihan na ngayon ay nakakapagtrabaho. Ito ay malaking tulong sa aming pamilya” one of the participants said. (We are thankful for this kind of

training. It is good for us women because we can now work. It will be a big help for our family.)

After the training, RFRDC 10 Manager Albor said that they will conduct a small-group meeting with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and LGU to discuss on how to improve the packaging of the processed bangus products and the marketing of these products. Ms. Albor added that once the Balingasag bangus products pass their inspection, it will be included in the National Technology Forum and Exhibition, which is annually being organized by BAR every August. (Diana Rose A. de Leon)

Region 2 hosts 1st National Staples Festival

PHOTOS BY LPADILLA



Field demonstration and plot visitation of various staple foods.



Hon. Edilberto M. de Luna (right) visits the field sites with Engr. Adriatico (middle) and Dr. Orlando J. Lorenzana, regional technical director (RTD) for research and regulatory of DA-RFO 02.

Whether it's *palay* (grown in the field or if it is freshly harvested), *bigas* (milled and polished), or *kanin* (cooked) — rice remains to be a constant among Filipinos. But aside from rice, the country also rears within its vast agricultural lands other staples that could provide Filipinos with sufficient vigor and energy that they need every day.

To recognize these other staple crops, a first-ever “National Alternative Staple Foods Grand Festival” was held on 2-3 May 2012 in Ilagan, Isabela to promote other staple crops in the Philippines aside from rice. With the theme, “*Wasto at Ligtas na Produksyon ng Alternatibong Pagkain sa Pagbabago ng Klima, Tungkulin ng Bawat Isa*” the festival was organized by the Department of Agriculture-Cagayan Valley Integrated Agricultural Research Center (DA-CVIARC).

Among the other staples promoted in the festival were: adlai, white corn, banana, sweet potato, peanut, soybean, and cassava. These

crops are promoted by DA in line with its goal to achieve food self-sufficiency and —security in 2013.

The activity was held in support of and in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture (DA), Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), Ilagan Municipal and Isabela Provincial Government, Cagayan Valley Regional Field Office (RFO 2), Regional Agricultural and Fishery Council (RAFC 2), Isabela State University (ISU), MGSK Health Food Products, selected Rural Improvement Clubs (RICS), and other concerned agencies and institutions.

The festival was open to the public and was attended by various stakeholders including policymakers, farmers, agriculturists, researchers, extension workers, students, and private individuals.

“We envision helping the farmers as well as various stakeholders by educating them on the proper and safe production of alternative staple crops,” explained Engr. Virgilio E. Adriatico, CVIARC manager, who was vital in the conceptualization of the grand festival.

Keynote speaker, Hon. Edilberto M. de Luna, DA Assistant Secretary for Field Operations and National Program Coordinator for Corn, emphasized on the importance of the event. “This staple foods festival is important as we have already crafted the Food Staples Sufficiency Plan wherein an overall strategic plan has been developed to ensure that Filipinos will have sufficient food supply beginning 2013. This festival is a way to inform and educate people about the Food Staples Self-Sufficiency Program (FSSP) and food staples,” explained Asst. Sec. de Luna.

In support to DA's goal to uphold the alternative staples, BAR Director Dr. Nicomedes P. Eleazar in his message underscored the various R&D initiatives of the bureau particularly in strengthening and intensifying the production of alternative staple crops. “We give utmost priority in widening and developing our technological capabilities in order to adapt with the effects of climate change in our country. Through R&D, climate

change resilient varieties of these staples can be discovered and farming practices can be improved so that every Filipino farmer will always be prepared to combat the impacts of climate change,” cited Dr. Eleazar as read by Ms. Ligaya C. Santos, assistant head of the BAR Project Monitoring and Evaluation Division (PMED), who represented the bureau chief in the event.

The staple crops were also featured during the field demonstration led by Engr. Adriatico. The field demo was conducted within the crop fields of DA-CVIARC. Every demo station had a technical staff member who was in charge of discussing about the crop featured and of answering the queries of the participants.

The festival held three stakeholders forums, the Luzon-wide Soybean Forum, the Alternative Staple Crops Forum, and the Organic Vegetables Production Forum.

The Luzon-wide Soybean Forum was participated in by representatives from the National Soybean Technical Working Group

(TWG), DA-High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP), BAR, University of the Philippines Los Banos (UPLB), Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech), MGSK Health Food Products, Organico, Cooperative for Rural Development (CORDEV), and Esperanza MPC. Individuals from the public and private sectors attended the forum to learn more about the roadmap of the Philippine soybean industry.

BAR was invited to present on “The Soybean Development Program Targets and Interventions in Luzon”, which was discussed by Ms. Ma. Elena M. Garces of the BAR-Technology Commercialization Division (TCD).

The Organic Vegetables Production Forum, which focused on the organic vegetables industry prospect and marketing was held concurrently with the Alternative Staple Crops Forum. (Leila Denisse E. Padilla)



Ms. Ligaya C. Santos, assistant head of PMED (right), Ms. Ma. Elena M. Garces of TCD (2nd from right), and Ms. Jennilyn Castañeto of TCD (3rd from right) during the festival.