

BARChronicle

The fortnightly newsletter of the DA-Bureau of Agricultural Research

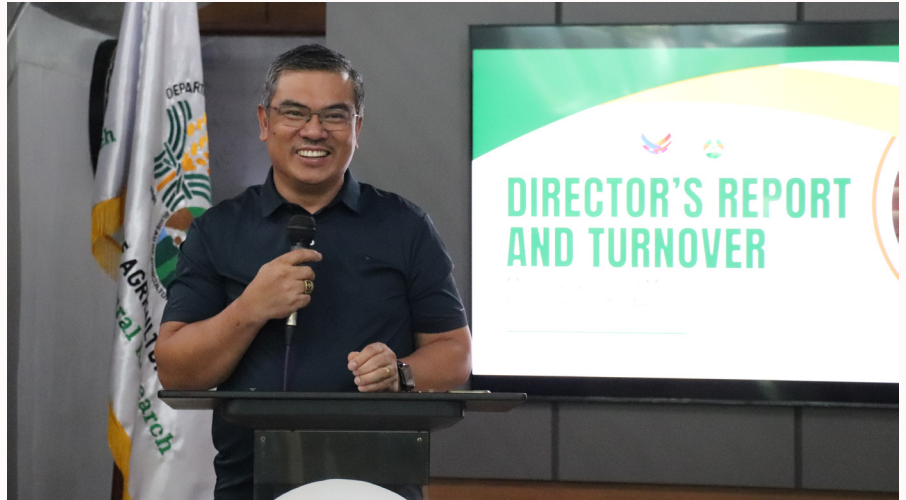
Outgoing DA-BAR director caps reform-led term, pushes for stronger R4D agenda

Outgoing Director Junel B. Soriano of the DA-BAR capped his term on May 16, 2025 with a transition report that outlined the bureau's institutional milestones and ongoing reforms, emphasizing research for development (R4D) as central to agricultural transformation.

In his report delivered before DA-BAR officials and staff, Soriano emphasized that continuity is crucial to scaling R4D initiatives. "What I leave behind is not perfection, but purpose. Not a finished work, but a living institution, shaped by your resolve and ready for its next chapter," he said.

During his nearly three year-leadership, Soriano led key structural shifts, including the strategic alignment of research investments with national goals, streamlining of internal processes, and revitalization of knowledge management systems. He also highlighted the bureau's push for a stronger public-private-academe partnership ecosystem and the strengthening of regional R4D corridors.

A notable reform was the harmonization of research and extension programs across DA agencies, state universities and



colleges, and local government units, which aims to minimize duplication, make better use of resources, and speed up getting new technologies on the ground.

Under his term, Soriano institutionalized two critical frameworks: the Research-to-Policy for Development platform, which aims to accelerate evidence-informed policymaking, and the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) tool, which aims to guide project selection based on scalability and impact potential.

"Our programs must not only generate outputs; they must lead to outcomes that change and positively impact lives," Soriano stressed. He called for the continued expansion of proven programs like the

Community Participatory Action Research (CPAR) and SCALE-UP, which directly engage farming communities and support agri enterprise development.

As he steps down, Soriano expressed confidence in the bureau's direction. "Never stop creating. Continue to design mechanisms that embed R4D into decision-making and innovation pipelines," he said, urging the incoming leadership to uphold the bureau's mandate as the DA's R4D think tank.

Soriano concluded with a symbolic handover, not only of position but of the "trust, networks, and institutional weight" built under his watch.

DARYL LOU A. BATTAD

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DA-BAR, IRRI host global dialogue for agri-fisheries R4D agenda

The DA-BAR and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) hosted the Symposium on International Partnership for Agriculture-Fisheries Research for Development (R4D) 2025, on May 27 to 29 at IRRI Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines, convening national and international partners to align R4D priorities and further strengthen collaborations for impact.

The three-day event gathered key players from national agriculture agencies, programs, and international research organizations, providing opportunities for collaboration, innovation, and collective action for R4D. With invited international partners, the symposium set the stage for knowledge sharing on how local and international institutions can align expertise and resources on mutual interests.

DA-BAR OIC-Director Joell H. Lales stressed the need for sustained investment and cross-sector coordination. “Investing in R4D is no longer optional. It is our moral duty anchored in science and in justice. Research is shaped not only by science alone, but by priorities, by governance, and by public trust.”

With the theme “Strengthening Agriculture-Fisheries Collaboration for Sustainable Impact,” the symposium opened with plenary discussions by IRRI Director General Yvonne Pinto and DA-BAR Program Monitoring, Evaluation, and Linkaging Division Head Raymond Patrick Cabrera, outlining respective institutional priorities and integrated R4D efforts across sectors.



A message from DA Undersecretary for Operations and Agri-Fisheries Mechanization Roger Navarro urged stakeholders to adopt “shared responsibility” in R4D agenda setting, implementation, and sustained delivery.

The dialogue featured presentations from national commodity programs of the DA and global R4D partners including International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics, International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center, International Livestock Research Institute, World Vegetable Center, and WorldFish. Breakout sessions followed, where participants from key sectors—vegetables, corn, legumes, livestock and poultry, aquaculture and fisheries—worked to identify and

harmonize research goals and priorities.

Among the identified areas for joint collaboration include climate change mitigation and adaptation, varietal development and improvement, soil and plant health, access to research facilities, capacity development, information management and data exchange, knowledge sharing and learning journeys/workshops, scholarships, and participation in global research networks and fora.

Culminating the event was the signing of a Joint Statement of Commitment led by DA Undersecretary for High Value Crops Development Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero to bolster global partnerships in agriculture and fisheries R4D. The statement affirms ► **3**

Agri-fisheries R4DE Network highlights unified R4DE agenda at nat'l level



Aimed to outline and align strategic priorities, key research for development and extension (R4DE) agencies convened for the First National Agencies Agriculture and Fisheries Resources, Research, and Extension for Development Network (AFRREDN) Committee Meeting on May 22, 2025 at the RDEC Main Function Hall, ATI Building, Quezon City.

Led by the DA-BAR and DA-ATI, the initial Committee meeting aligned strategic directions and operational priorities of national research and extension agencies, marking a key step in institutionalizing a unified R4DE system across the network.

"Research becomes responsive when extension is actively

shaping its direction. One informs the other. One strengthens the other. With this network, we are now creating a system that does not only produce knowledge and generate technology, but transforms it into livelihood, productivity, and, ultimately, food security," DA-BAR Assistant Director Joell H. Lales said.

The plenary tackled vital enablers of the rollout including presentations from Dr. Hazel B. Alfón on Intellectual Asset Management, Atty. Armando R. Crobalde, Jr. on strategies on Plant Genetic Resource Management, and Romermart Aubigne M. Peñamora on the Revised Guidelines for Learning Sites for Agriculture.

Institutionalized through Memorandum Circular No. 02 Series of 2024, AFRREDN harmonizes and unifies DA-BAR's Regional Research and Development Extension Network and DA-ATI's Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Network, streamlining R4DE efforts and accelerating growth in the agri-fisheries sector.

To date, the majority of the regions have already signed a Regional Memorandum of Understanding to establish a structured partnership and define roles and responsibilities for effective implementation, and enhance collaboration in research, extension, and technology transfer. **MA. ELOISA H. AQUINO**

◀ **2 ... DA-BAR, IIRRI host global** the shared goal of developing mutually beneficial agriculture and fisheries R4D programs for the Philippines and its growing partners across the globe.

In his closing address, IIRRI Deputy Director General - Philippines Representative Dr. Junel B. Soriano described the

symposium as the turning point: "This gathering strongly signals a shift from project-based thinking to systems-level transformation."

He underscored that integrated R4D has already yielded measurable results, citing innovations like RCM Advisory Service, PRIME, WaterRice, and RiceStrawPH as examples of how

science and systems thinking converge for farmer impact.

The symposium concluded with a tour of IIRRI's research facilities, including the Long-term continuous Cropping Experiment site, Plant Growth Facility, and International Rice Gene Bank. **MA. ELOISA H. AQUINO**

Calderon, Alvindia recognized as nat'l finalists for 50th Gawad Saka

Vanessa Joy F. Calderon of DA-Cagayan Valley and Dionisio G. Alvindia, PhD of DA-Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization were recognized as national finalists for the 50th Gawad Saka: Parangal sa mga Natatanging Magsasaka at Mangingisda under the Outstanding Agricultural Researcher and Scientist category on May 26, 2025 at the Philippine Trade Training Center in Pasay City.

Calderon's research on mungbean has significantly contributed to agricultural advancements. Their work includes developing improved cropping systems that boost productivity and soil health, establishing a robust seed system to enhance storability and expand the number of accredited seed growers, and promoting better access to certified mungbean seeds and legume intercropping systems, all of which support sustainable agribusiness models.

Dr. Alvindia accomplished significant breakthroughs in agriculture by pioneering the isolation of a growth-promoting microorganism for various crops, fisheries, and livestock, developing and commercializing microbial control agents for crop disease management, and introducing prebiotic and probiotic products to combat antimicrobial resistance in the poultry industry.

Launched in 1970, the Gawad Saka, which is the DA's most prestigious annual award, has recently returned after being suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It not

only acknowledges excellence, innovation, and sustainable practices but also promotes success stories and supports the department's broader development goals for the sector.

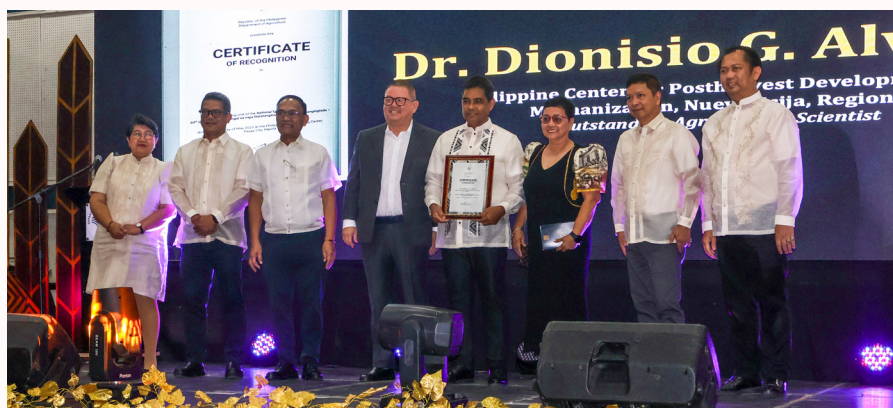
"For five decades, Gawad Saka has stood as a beacon of recognition for those who till our soil and harvest our crops. After the hardships of the pandemic, we gather now—stronger and more determined—to celebrate your victories in the spirit that has carried us through uncertainty," said DA Chief Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr.

"Today, we are not only celebrating the achievements of our awardees but also upholding our continued passion,

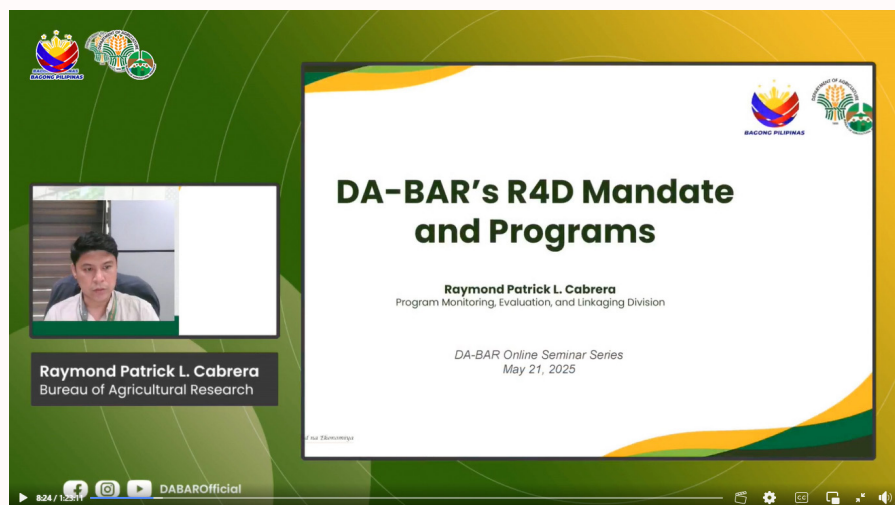
resilience, and unity—as we work together to build a stronger, inclusive, and more food-secure nation," said DA Undersecretary for Administration Allan Q. Umali.

Nominees underwent a desk evaluation based on the National Technical Committee's (NTC) criteria for each subcategory. Field validation then further verified their information. The NTC then deliberated and endorsed the shortlisted nominees to the National Executive Committee. After which, the BOJ deliberated for the final winners.

DA-BAR served as the NTC for the Outstanding Agricultural Researcher and Scientist category. **RENA S. HERMOSO, MARIA ELENA M. GARCES**



Seminar series relaunched, kicks off with BAR's R4D initiatives



Highlighted R4D innovations included the Multi-Purpose Seeder for rice-based rainfed and water scarce environment; Ready-to-Eat Retorted Gourmix; Zero Energy Cool Chamber; and CGUARD White Corn Variety. The bureau has funded 223 research facility grants and supports institutional growth through scholarships and personnel development programs.

R4D policy support initiatives cover sustainable agriculture, technology transfer, and strategic communication. Key partners include DA regional offices, bureaus, LGUs, farmers' cooperatives, NGOs, and international groups.

Looking ahead, the seminar series will serve as a platform to discuss R4D governance, technology management, and evidence-based policymaking.

LEA BAÑARES-CALMADA

The DA-BAR has relaunched its flagship seminar series with focus on research for development (R4D) management. The kickoff session, held virtually on May 21, 2025, centered on reintroducing the bureau's R4D programs, institutional mandate, and strategic priorities.

Led by DA-BAR's Knowledge Management and Information Systems Division, the initiative aims to deepen awareness of the bureau's role in guiding national R4D investments, partnerships, and policies. Raymond Patrick Cabrera, head of the Program Monitoring, Evaluation, and Linking Division served as the resource speaker.

Cabrera shared that the relaunch aligns with DA-BAR's core mission under EO 116 of 1987, to coordinate and strengthen agriculture and fisheries R&D systems across the country. He walked the participants through the bureau's structure, functions, and programs that advance innovation from the ground up.

Key initiatives presented were the Community-based

Participatory Action Research (CPAR), Sustainable Community-Based Action Research for Development and Extension for Livelihood Enhancement, Upliftment, and Prosperity (SCALE-UP), and Agricultural Technology Business Incubators (ATBI). These initiatives help bring technologies to communities and strengthen enterprises, innovation, and stakeholder capacities.



EXPERT SAYS

Considering the limited number of kalumpit trees, how vital are your efforts to grow more trees for the future success and potential global recognition of *kalumpit* products?

Growing more *kalumpit* trees is essential not just for ensuring a stable supply, but for building a sustainable and authentic brand. It safeguards the future of *kalumpit*-based products while strengthening our case for global recognition rooted in conservation, culture, and community impact.

CHERRY C. FAVOR, PhD
Assistant Director for Research, Extension, Production,
Development and Innovation
Southern Luzon State University-Judge Guillermo Eleazar



2 DA-BAR staff underwent IPOPHL IP mgmt seminar



knowledge of licensing, audit, valuation, and IP management to their respective case studies. The LAV IP speakers served as panelists, meticulously evaluating each group's presentation, posing clarifying questions, and offering valuable suggestions for improvement.

The case study for Tojo Motors earned the coveted Best IP Management Case during the revalida, receiving an impressive score of 99.4%. Among the members of this winning team was project development officer Chrystel Venus F. Fonseca from the DA-BAR.

Fonseca said, "I'm grateful to be one of the participants selected for this batch, which provided advanced insights on auditing, managing, valuing, and commercializing technologies from BAR-funded projects."

She added, "It strengthened our confidence in assisting partner RDIs in IP management while ensuring technologies benefit their intended users, especially Farmers and Fisherfolk Cooperatives and Associations. The group activities and discussions also offered valuable lessons from the experiences of fellow participants and resource speakers." **RENA S. HERMOSO**

"The Licensing, Audit, Valuation, and Management of Intellectual Property Rights (LAV IP) Seminar equipped me with the knowledge to effectively recommend and manage technology transfer activities for the projects supported by DA-BAR," said senior agriculturist Glacelle Alyne C. Malinao. "It also significantly enhanced my understanding of IP Management, which I can apply in adopting the DA's Intellectual Property Policy in our services," she shared these insights during the culmination of the LAV IP seminar on May 20, 2025.

Organized by the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL), the comprehensive

four-part LAV IP seminar ran from March to May 2025. The program engaged 21 professionals from government, academe, and the private sector, benefiting from the expertise of resource speakers Maria Minda G. del Rio, Engr. Aldrex L. Aviso, Michael Viccil B. Junsay, and Adrian H. Sablan. Their sessions covered crucial topics including IP management, audit, valuation, and licensing and franchising.

The seminar concluded with a revalida, a dynamic assessment that replaced the traditional post-test. Participants were divided into four groups, each assigned a specific topic, and tasked with presenting how they applied their acquired

TECH HIGHLIGHT



Mushroom Crackers

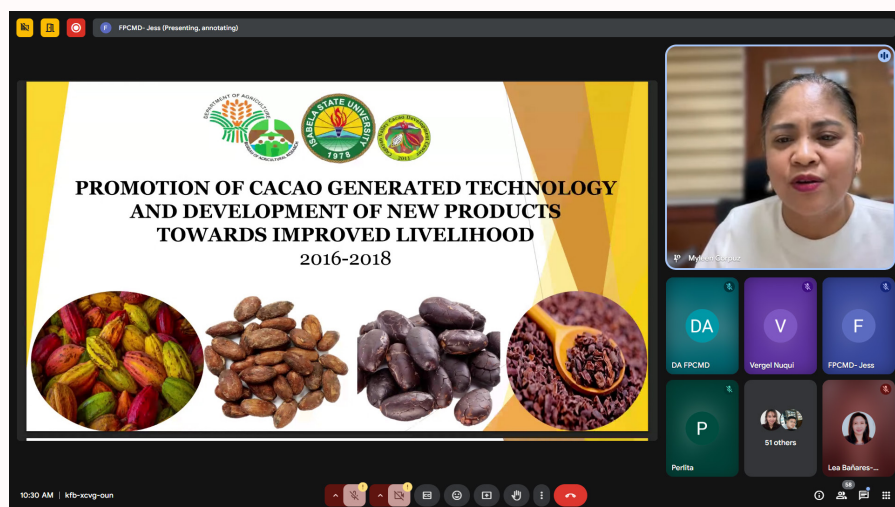
Made from oyster mushrooms and vegetable flour cultivated in Carranglan, Nueva Ecija, this R4D product offers a light, crunchy, and nutritious alternative to regular chips. It provides additional income for farmers and promotes sustainable food innovation. This initiative empowers women farmers, equipping them with technical and entrepreneurial skills for their agri-based enterprise.

TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPER
DA-Central Luzon

TECHNOLOGY TAKER
Binbin Women Gardeners' Association

For more details, please contact Veronica P. Mangune through email vpm.cliarc@gmail.com

DA-BAR showcases cacao R4D in 2025 Farmers, Fisherfolk Month



titled “Get R.E.A.L. Cocoa: Real People. Real Impact of Cacao Project in Cagayan Valley,” where Dr. Myleen R. Corpuz, center director of the Cagayan Valley Cacao Development Center (CVCDC) at Isabela State University, presented compelling insights on how cacao initiatives have transformed the lives of farmers and communities in the region.

To complement the virtual seminar, the DA-BAR hosted a free tasting event at the JR Escaño Hall, allowing guests to sample cacao products developed by the CVCDC, emphasizing the crop’s R4D potential and sustained market appeal. **LEA BAÑARES-CALMADA**



To mark this year’s National Farmers and Fisherfolk Month (FFM), the DA-BAR showcased cacao research for development (R4D) impact through a week-long celebration held from May 19 to 23.

In partnership with the DA-Field Operations Service and the High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP), the event featured a webinar focused on hybrid cacao, product showcase, and public tasting of locally-made chocolates and drinks.

Cacao took centerpiece of this year’s FFM, proving

its rising export value and potential for transforming rural economies in the Philippines. DA Undersecretary for Administration Allan Q. Umali described cacao as a “source of pride and promise,” citing its global quality and recognition.

“Our cacao is gaining international acclaim for its quality, and with sustained support, it can be a leading source of livelihood and innovation for our communities,” Umali shared.

A major highlight of the week was the free webinar

BUREAU BULLETIN

Lales, Cabrera to lead DA-BAR as new chief, deputy

Effective May 19, 2025, Assistant Director Joell H. Lales has been designated as the Officer-in-Charge (OIC), Director of the DA-BAR, in accordance with DA Special Order No. 751, series of 2025.

Following this, chief agriculturist Raymond Patrick L. Cabrera, formerly the OIC-Program Monitoring, Evaluation and Linkaging Division Head, has been designated as the OIC, Office of the Assistant Director for DA-BAR effective May 30, 2025, per DA Special Order No. 840, series of 2025.

DA-RARES R4D facility to showcase gains of smart farming in high value crops



Beyond its improved aesthetics, the smart greenhouse facility of the DA-Rizal Agricultural Research and Experiment Station (RARES) has a clear goal—to make digital and precision farming beneficial to fruit and vegetable farmers.

Also known as the Smart Greenhouse Project of Philippines, the DA-RARES smart greenhouse facility was originally built to produce high-value commodities like cherry tomatoes, bell pepper, lettuce, and other commercial crops. Concurrently, the facility accommodates farmers, entrepreneurs, researchers, and other clientele on season-long training and capacity-building activities in producing these high-value crops.

To initiate and ensure the smooth implementation of this significant undertaking, the DA-RARES research team, in collaboration with DA-BAR focal persons and key partners, held an inception meeting on May 23, 2025, in Rizal. The meeting clarified roles, targets, deliverables, and the

work and financial plans for the BAR-supported project.

Funded by the DA-BAR's Research Facility Development Grant program, the facility is upgrading both its functionality and services to its clientele and partners. This involves fully automating its irrigation and nutrient delivery, crop management, remote monitoring and control, environmental control, and security systems.

"The automation of these systems is very instrumental as we aim to demonstrate the efficiency of these technologies in increasing crop productivity, thus promoting smart agriculture," stated Alexandra Q. Jamoralin, OIC-Agricultural Center Chief of the DA-RARES.

With its improvement underway, the facility will serve as a training hub for farmers, researchers, and other interested individuals, demonstrating and promoting digital agriculture and precision farming in vegetable production.

ANGELO N. PADURA



BAR Chronicle highlights the bureau's activities as the country's national coordinating agency for agriculture and fisheries R4D, and provides updates on NaRDSAF-member institutions.

We welcome and appreciate your comments and suggestions. Reach us via email ikm@bar.gov.ph.

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Key activities at a glance

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- 20** Exploratory meeting on abaca R4D in Catanduanes
- 21-23** M&E visit of UPLB-led HVCDP and L&P projects
- 26** Inception meeting for the improvement of DA-Caraga's Tagbina Research Station