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All for one, Always number one!

VISION

A prime-mover towards a modernized and competitive agriculture sector

MISSION

We provide suitable, timely, and innovative interventions for a sustainable and vibrant agriculture in the Ilocos.

CORE VALUES

Dedication -	Serving with a heart
Resiliency -	Overcoming challenges
Integrity -	Valuing public trust
Vigilance -	Responding to clients' needs
Excellence -	Raising the bar



This quarter's cover was taken at one of the sites of the on-going Carrageenan project being conducted by the DA-RFO 1's Research Division in Vintar, Ilocos Norte. This is just one of the interventions of DA in pursuit to a competitive Philippine rice industry.

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DA consults stakeholders to finalize drafting of Rice Trade Liberalization Law

The Rice Tariffication Law has been signed, we understand your worries but I assure you, DA is here and we will respond to your needs.’

This is the reassuring statement of Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel F. Piñol to the rice industry stakeholders during the Consultation on RA 11203 also known as the Rice Trade Liberalization Law held at the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija. RA 11203 provides the drafting of Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) within 45 days from the effectivity of the Act, in consultation with stakeholders.

The RA 11203 has been signed into law by Pres. Rodrigo Duterte on February 14, 2019 which has now opened the Philippine market to imported rice. Under said law, anybody can import rice without having to get import permit from the National Food Authority (NFA). They need only to secure Sanitary & Phytosanitary Import Clearance (SPIC) from the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) then pay corresponding importation fee to the Bureau of Customs.

With this scenario, rice farmers, rice and feed millers and small rice traders in the country now fear that influx of cheap imported rice in the market would significantly affect their income.

In his presentation of data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), Sec.

Piñol informed that possible impact of imported rice influx in the markets would decrease wholesale price of milled rice from an average of P42.25 to P35.31 kg. and lower farm gate price of rice from P20.93 to P16.94.

“Let us discuss together what we can do outside the Tariffication law. We have to proceed. We cannot abandon our rice industry because it is our basic staple food,” urged Sec. Piñol amidst farmers’ uncertainty of whether producing rice would still be viable since they now have to compete with cheap imported rice in the market.

Sec Piñol gave assurance of various strategies now being crafted by DA to help rice farmers be competitive and more productive to cushion the adverse effect of the Rice Tariffication Law. What DA will do he said is to focus in improving competitiveness & farm income of farmers, enhance resiliency to disasters and climate risks and ensure access to safe & nutritious rice. To implement this, various core supports will be given on irrigation, input subsidy, capability enhancement trainings, easier access to credit, improvement of farm to market roads, provision of crop insurance support, among many others. He also specifically mentioned the establishment of Solar Powered Irrigation System in major rice

producing provinces in the country and the creation of national ID system for individual farmers to properly monitor interventions given to them.

Meanwhile, Sec Piñol also mentioned positive side of the implementation of the Rice Tariffication Law where a P10 billion fund will be appropriated annually for the next six years following the approval of the Act to support farmers through the Rice Competitive Enhancement Fund (RCEF).

With the implementation of RA 11203, the NFA has been stripped off of its regulatory and licensing powers/functions as the Food Safety Act has now been given to the BPI as the implementing authority. NFA has now been tasked primarily to maintain and manage buffer stocking of rice supply to be sourced solely from local rice farmers.

During the consultation, rice farmer leaders and LGU rice program implementers expressed their concerns on how they can cope with the effect of the Tariffication law. They gave suggestions and recommendations to be possibly included in the RA 11203 IRR that could somehow safeguard the interest of the rice stakeholders and the entire rice industry of the country amidst the looming threat of massive imported rice influx in the Philippine market.//



Ilocos Region hosts 8th NRTF

Thousands of rice farmers and industry stakeholders from all over the country gathered in Asingan, Pangasinan on March 20-22, 2019 to participate in the 8th National Rice Technology Forum hosted by DA Ilocos Region.

Participants, especially the farmers, benefited in getting a first-hand experience from the field demo of various rice technologies highlighting the use of hybrid rice varieties seen at the 37.5-hectare demo area at Brgys. Bactad East, Urdaneta City and Domampot, Asingan in the province of Pangasinan.

An activity led by the Rice Board and the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office I in collaboration with the Provincial Government Unit of Pangasinan and the City/Municipal Government of Urdaneta and Asingan, the conduct of the techno forum was also in tandem with 14 participating seed and fertilizer companies that showcased their technologies with the use of hybrid and high quality inbred seeds, fertilizer and nutrient management featuring manual transplanting, mechanical and direct seeding.

The three-day rice techno forum also provided an avenue for rice farmers and other stakeholders to interact with agri-

extension providers both from private sector and government as they learn and be informed on the latest technologies in rice production and witness the differences of each rice variety adopting different seeding rate, distance of planting, and how each showcased areas would differ in yield per hectare during harvest.

DA Assistant Secretary Designate for Operations, Agribusiness and Marketing, Dr. Andrew Villacorta represented DA Secretary Emmanuel Piñol as the Guest of Honor and Speaker.

In his message during the opening program, ASec Villacorta informed the participants about the P52 billion proposed budget of DA for CY 2020 which is ten times higher than the current DA allocation.

This bold move was made by Sec. Piñol upon the instruction of President Duterte. Asec Villacorta expressed high hopes that the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) would consider the proposal.

Villacorta also mentioned DA's National Fertilizer Support Program upon the marching order of President Rodrigo Duterte using the plant now pay later or roll-over scheme.

"Mismong ang President ang nagsabi na

ang kailangan ng ating mga magsasaka ay binhi at pataba. Kaya naman nasa Russia ngayon ang ating Kalihim Manny Piñol upang makipag negotiate sa pagbili ng fertilizer; bukod pa sa paghahanap ng investment opportunities sa mga produktong niyog," Villacorta informed.

Villacorta likewise mentioned the strategies being polished by DA through the Rice Industry Road Map that is now being crafted to help cushion the impact of the Rice Tariffication Law. He mentioned that the low price of palay in the market at present is not yet a direct effect of the rice Tariffication law as the law is yet to be fully implemented upon approval of its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

'Ang ating Kalihim po ay ginagawa lahat ng paraan para ang ating mga magsasaka ng palay ay lubos na matulungan. We will focus on improving the quality of palay produced by farmers, we will help them increase their yield and lower their cost of production through various interventions so they can still compete in the marketing of their rice produce,' Villacorta added.

Meanwhile, to provide the techno-forum participants with the latest programs, projects and services of DA and other major agencies relative to the



The 37.5-hectare demo area at Brgys. Bactad East, Urdaneta City and Domampot, Asingan in the province of Pangasinan.

development of the rice industry, topics on hybrid rice production including credit, financing and crop insurance were discussed by invited resource speakers from PhilRice, Land Bank of the Philippines, and Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation, among others.

Having viewed and assessed the standing crops staged in the field demo, farmer-attendees are waiting for the final result of production yield for every seed variety demonstrated to determine the top yielding varieties which could be recommended for adoption in Ilocos Region.

Why adopting rice hybridization matters

"Kabaleyan, man Hybrid Rice ti la" (Kabayan, mag hybrid rice na tayo).

This is the battle cry of the organizers of the 8th National Rice Technology Forum (NRTF) as they encouraged the farmer-attendees to use hybrid rice seeds for higher yield and production.

As the Department of Agriculture gears towards food security, the adoption of hybrid rice was seen as another means to provide adequate food for the Filipino population.

In collaboration with the 14 seed, fertilizer and nutrient companies in

both private and public agencies, the technology forum served as an avenue to promote the various technologies in rice production including the use of quality seeds, fertilizer and nutrient management, as well as rice mechanization project to optimize rice yield and production.

Featuring the 25 hybrid rice varieties, eight inbred rice varieties using the manual transplanting, direct seeding, and mechanical planting technologies were showcased. The techno-forum also gave opportunity for the rice farmers and other industry stakeholders to see for themselves the standing crop of the showcased varieties giving them the option to choose what varieties and technologies they would want to adopt in their own fields.

Using the evaluation and assessment form provided by the techno-demo and field tour committees, farmer-attendees were asked to give their assessment based on the physical standing crop that they observed during the field tour including the panicle formation and reaction to the pest of the crop varieties showcased.

Farmer-attendees were asked to provide their ratings based on the criteria set by the committee on Field Tour and Techno-demo with five as the highest

and one as the lowest rating.

Mr. Rodolfo "Jun" Estrada, Chairman of the Committee on Techno-demo and Field Tour said that the consolidation of the result of the evaluation and assessment shall be done to determine the preferred farmers' varieties for a recommendation in Ilocos Region.

Meanwhile, Mr. Jimbo Lantano, 31, farmer-cooperator from Brgy. Bactad East, Urdaneta City, Pangasinan in his testimony said that through this activity, he was able to learn about hybrid rice and appreciated more the use of such for he was able to double his yield from his previous planting using the hybrid rice variety.

Ms. Soledad dela Cruz, 66, one of the farmer-cooperator from the same barangay was also thankful for the conduct of the NRTF as she experienced better yield now through the proper guidance of the assigned technician in her area.

"Nakarecover din kami sa aming pagkalugi dati dahil sa mga free inputs na binigay sa amin ng mga organizers nitong techno-demo," Ms. Dela Cruz added.

The NRTF was initially launched in January 24 and was attended by over 600 farmers//



RED Lucrecio R. Alviar alongside representatives of the regional offices: DILG, DOST, and DOT in the successful launching of the Sunflower farm, Food Factory School, and graduation of scholars for the Training for Work Scholarship Program.



DA-RFO I builds meaningful partnership with Piddig officials; agri-dev't agenda sealed

We can make things happen now, we want a meaningful and productive partnership, and so let's do it,"

Top performing Regional Executive Director Lucrecio R. Alviar, Jr. noted this in his recent visit in Piddig for a consultation-dialogue with former Piddig Mayor Eddie Guillen on February 13-14, 2019 at the Municipal Hall of Piddig, Ilocos Norte.

Pulling together his operations, planning, market and information development officers and managers, Director Alviar affirmed his commitments in the realization of Piddig's thrusts and vision for a dynamic and progressive agriculture town in the region.

Alviar pledged to provide the needed support for farmers to realize targeted projects that will be established through

DA's partnership with Piddig.

With capital as one of the crucial component in the farming sector, RED Alviar instructed Ms. Wilhelmina Castañeda of the Agribusiness Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) to assist the Piddig Organic Coffee Processors and Producers Cooperative as possible conduit of the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) for capital loan that can be availed of by members of the cooperative.

In support to the livestock industry of Piddig, DA will enhance the livelihood opportunities for livestock raisers in the area through trainings like feed formulation, among others.

"We will make your coop as the model of all cooperatives in the region," Alviar said.

To sustain the partnership, DA-RFO I will organize a Task Force to focus on

the development plans and programs of Piddig and will work closely with the officials and staff of the municipality.

The Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division of DA-RFO I shall also spearhead the conduct of a workshop in the preparation of a roadmap or strategic plan to determine the gaps and needs of Piddig in so far as the development and sustainability

More on the sealed agreement with Piddig

On a look out for a larger expansion area for garlic in Ilocos Region, DA-RFO 1 also found the answer in Piddig through former Mayor Eddie Guillen who committed a 200-hectare area in their municipality for garlic production.

Former Mayor Eddie Guillen, as Municipal Consultant, briefly presented

to Alviar the Piddig's Agribusiness Model during the said meeting highlighting major features of their consolidated farming project which the former mayor claims to be one of the successful strategies of the MLGU of Piddig in increasing income of both the farmers and the municipality as far as rice production is concerned at the same time gaining the trust and confidence of the farmers to the administration in Piddig.

Getting insight of a good leadership and productive tandem of the former Mayor with his wife, current Mayor Georgina Salazar-Guillen, Alviar offered possible assistance and partnerships for DA-related projects to be established in the said municipality like the expansion area for garlic.

For 2019, DA-RFO I through the High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) targeted to have an expansion area of around 850 hectares for garlic all throughout the region. Expected to realize this target is the 200 hectares committed by Piddig and the 100-hectare expansion area in Bacarra, both in Ilocos Norte.

As expansion area for garlic, Piddig farmers who will opt to plant garlic this year will be provided with free planting materials, fertilizers and ameliorants by DA through the High Value Crops Development Program.

Likewise, crop suitability test using soil sampling will be made before the onset of garlic planting season to determine the suitability of the commodity in the area.

With the additional 300-hectare area for expansion committed by Piddig and Bacarra, in Ilocos Norte, the DA-RFO I is still looking for 550 hectares to complete the target expansion area of Region I on garlic production.

This is part of the agreement made by RED Alviar with Guillen during his visit to attend the scheduled launching

of the Piddig Agrotourism Farm on February 14, 2019.

DA-RFO 1 celebrates with Piddig

The successful launching of the Grand Opening of the Food Factory School, Agrotourism Farm and graduation of the Training for Work Scholarship Program (TWSP) Scholars on February 14 in Brgy. Maruaya called for a celebration which was gladly celebrated by the municipality alongside DA RFO I among other key stakeholders.

"Malaki ang tulong ng project na ito sa mga farmers natin dito sa Piddig. Sa ngayon we have around 30 farmers who are currently working here para sa maintenance ng area," said Dr. Cresencio M. Figurascion – President, Piddig Organic Agriculture Practitioners Association, pertaining to the Agrotourism farm which is the Sun Flower Maze Farm and the Pick and Pay of Organic Vegetables.

The Sun Flower maze in Piddig is the fourth sunflower farm in the country and second in Region I- first farm was in Tayug, Pangasinan.

Some organic vegetables available in the Pick and Pay area were: *upo*, tomato, string beans, squash, bitter gourd, Baguio beans, corn, among others. These vegetables were planted by the 69 graduates of TWSP scholars for the completion of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) course - Organic Agriculture Program NCII.

"At ang naipoproduce pa lamang dito sa food processing natin ay, pickeled mushroom at coffee. But sooner gagawa na din tayo ng mga biofertilizers na gagamitin din sa mga tanim," Figuracion shared in his discussion about the food processing center of the Food Factory School in the site.

"It is really benefiting for the people. Actually this Food Factory School

was the idea of the Senate Committee Chairman on Agriculture - Sen. Cynthia Villar thus we will sustain this project and promote organic agriculture as well," he added.

Meanwhile, former Mayor Eduardo Guillen and currently the Municipal Consultant who's behind the idea of the project said that this convergence project was his way to ask funds from the National Government Agencies, his answer to the question why he put up a project like this in a remote area.

"Alam niyo I have reasons why I put this project here. Una, para ichallenge yung mga farmers. Because I told them that we will place a sunflower farm here. They insisted at first kasi hindi daw compatible ang sunflower sa area. But, tingnan niyo naman ang imposibleng akala nila ay naging posible," Guillen said proudly.

"Secondly, this is my way para humingi ng pundo sa gobyerno. Tignan niyo naman madami pang puwedeng gawin para sa development ng project na ito especially the road coming here. We have 23 barangays in Piddig and we only have 20 million na fund, kulang ang almost 1 million sa isang barangay para sa ganitong project," Guillen jokingly added.

This project as a whole is a convergence project of the different government agencies in the region and was graced by the Regional Directors and their representatives from the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and Municipal Mayor of Piddig, Ilocos Norte - Hon. Mayor Georgina Salazar-Guillen who spearheaded the formal launching of the project thru a ribbon cutting ceremony.//

DA-INREC leads research to increase Ilocos garlic prod'n

Joining efforts to meet the increasing demand vis a vis addressing the declining supply of garlic commodity in the country, researchers of the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office I through the Ilocos Norte Research & Experiment Center (INREC) based in Batac City, Ilocos Norte are currently conducting six garlic-related research studies that aim to expand potential areas for garlic production and enhancing the growth and yield of garlic in the region.



The research projects “Multi-location Adaptability Trial of Garlic Varieties and Other Cultivars in Region I” and the “Selection, Purification and Multiplication of Garlic Cultivars for Planting Materials in Region I” are meant to identify suitable garlic varieties and other garlic cultivars as planting materials in the identified potential growing areas leading to the increase of the existing 2,014 hectares garlic production areas in Ilocos Region.

Using the seven registered garlic varieties and four (4) garlic cultivars, the research study on Multi-location Adaptability Trial was established in thirteen (13) sites in the region composed of three sites in Ilocos Norte, two sites each in Ilocos Sur and La Union and six (6) sites in Pangasinan.

Ms. Sylvia Igarta, one of the project leaders of the two researches identified the seven registered garlic varieties used in the study to include among others the NSIC 2017 Gr01 to GR07 such as Ilocos White locally known as “*Balitok*”, Batanes Red, Ilocos Pink also known as “*Gameng*”, Mexican (*Sanikua*), VFTA 275 M76 (*Bang-ar*), Ilocos Tanbolters and the MMSU

Gem (Miracle).

“Aside from the seven registered garlic varieties, we also used four (4) garlic cultivars collected for characterization, to be purified and multiplied and ultimately for registration later on to the Bureau of Plant and Industry,” Ms. Igarta said.

She identified these four cultivars as the Native garlic, Sarang, Romblon and Batanes White which were planted in Batac station to evaluate their yield performances.

“Upon evaluation of the yield performance of these cultivars, we may be able to encourage more farmers to plant garlic as we will distribute these cultivars to garlic seed growers for mass production. Hence, garlic farmers have ready and available planting materials,” Ms. Igarta added.

The other four researches – Growth and Yield Performance of Garlic Applied with Different Foliar Fertilizers and Growth Promoters, Potential Yield of Garlic Using Goat Manure Tea in Combination with In-organic Fertilizer, Effect of Organic Foliar Fertilizer on the Growth and Yield of Garlic under GAP Management, and

Enhancing Garlic Production through Good Agricultural Practices Interventions in Ilocos Norte – are all conducted to enhance the volume of garlic production using good agricultural practices and cost-saving technologies in growing garlic in the region.

Garlic, known to the Ilokano farmers as the most valued cash crop because of its high profitability especially during dry season is currently facing major setbacks brought by the fluctuating price in the market, flooding of imported garlic, declining of area and production and the high price of planting materials.

With the conduct of these research projects, they could somehow contribute to the development of the industry to benefit not only the garlic farmers but also to the consumers.

Aside from Ms. Igarta, other researchers who focuses on the development of the garlic industry in the region were Ms. Wilma Ibea, Chief of INREC, Mr. Ireneo Mandac, Ms. Reinamae Banquirig, Mr. Jay-ar Baligat, and Ms. Vannesa Joy Marquez.//



Farmers check the bales compressed by the harvester with baler machine.

AMIA project reaches Solsona farmers

The Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture or AMIA is a project that aims to mainstream climate change mitigation strategies in agriculture. It will likewise address the issues on the adverse effects of climate change in the agriculture sector.

In Ilocos Region, AMIA was first piloted in the municipality of San Emilio, Ilocos Sur in December 2016. Since AMIA has developed the area into a climate-resilient village, the project was expanded in Solsona, Ilocos Norte. The municipality is composed of 22 barangays with a vast agriculture sector and a leader who is a farmer by heart.

Solsona Mayor Alexander Calucag informed that their municipality was selected as recipient of AMIA project because their focused agenda is agriculture. The municipality is engaged

in crop-livestock integration which is an important component of a climate resilient agriculture. In addition to this, the upscaling of AMIA in their area includes the provision of farm machineries that aids in their labor-intensive activities.

“When the evaluators came here, they saw that we have a multiplier farm wherein we use and produce our own silage,” said Calucag.

“So when they introduced AMIA project, I immediately accepted it because with this, it will speed up farm activities and we can cater more farmers through harvesting their corn with the use of the machines” he added.

A total of nine million (P9M) pesos was downloaded to the LGU-Solsona by DA-System Wide Climate Change Office (SWCCO) headed by Director

Unicols Manalo for the procurement of machineries and facilities that will be used to mitigate the contribution of crop and livestock production in gas emission.

As of now, the harvester with baler machine is being used by the rice farmers. It is a machine used to compress a cut and raked crop such as hay or silage into compact bales that are easy to handle, transport, and store.

Other machineries and facilities provided under the project include the four-wheel drive tractor with 100hp, generator set, and a storage facility for rice and corn silage amounting to P1,000,000. These machineries will be part of the multiplier farm project of the LGU and will serve as a common service facility to be used by farmers in the locality.//

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Saan kami pwedeng makabili at kailan magiging available ang Carrageenan PGP sa merkado?

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Farmers clamor for carrageenan PGP to increase rice prod'n



Farmer attendees of the field day on Field Verification Testing of Carrageenan Plant Growth Promoter (PGP) for Enhanced Growth and Induced Pests and Diseases Resistance in Rice clamored this to the Carrageenan Techno Demo Team after hearing the testimonies of the farmer-cooperators who have tried and tested the Carrageenan PGP in their own field during the field day program conducted at the DA-Ilocos Norte Research and Experiment Center in Dingras, Ilocos Norte on March 14, 2019.

The Carrageenan PGP is a plant food supplement extracted from red edible seaweed that can be treated to break its particles down into very small pieces which are readily absorbed by plants. Discovered by the Department of Science and Technology - Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) and funded by the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Aquatic Natural Resources Research & Development (PCARRD), the product with a brand name Carrageenan PGP foliar fertilizer

is used for rice production.

The Carrageenan Techno Demo Team composed of the National Crop Protection Center (NCPC) – University of the Philippines in Los Baños, the DOST-PNRI and DOST-PCARRD gladly answered that the product will be made available soon in the market after ending the field verification in all the regions with the help of a private company which will mass produce and commercialize the product.

“This is the last field verification that the team is conducting from the nine selected regions in the country and hopefully it will be made available next year for commercialization,” Mr. Angelito Carpio, Supervising Research Specialists of PCARRD, has confirmed.

Director Gil Magsino, the project leader and Director of the NCPC in UPLB, in his message during the program underscored the essential functions of the carrageenan PGP in enhancing the growth and development of rice plant as it supplies the needed nutrient requirements of the plants in

absorbing all other essential elements.

“The plant could absorb 95-98% of the essential nutrients it requires when the carrageenan is applied to the rice plant,” Magsino said.

Serving as vitamins of the plant, Magsino said that the carrageenan consistently provides 15% increase in yield in all the field testing trials conducted by the Carrageenan Team.

Aside from this benefit, Magsano also emphasized that a farmer could save 18% on its cost of production with the reduction on the use of pesticides as the product could attract natural enemies.

“Right now, we are also on process of conducting trials on corn production in Isabelita and eventually in all other crops like banana, sugarcane and vegetables to improve the production of these crops,” he added.

Based on the result of the field trials established in Laoag City, Dingras, Bacarra, Solsona, Marcos and Vintar in Ilocos Norte in both wet and dry cropping seasons, the use of carrageenan PGP have consistently

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enhanced the yield of inbred seeds because of the plants' resistance to leaf blight, thickening and increasing of rice straw and panicle and shows more vigorous plants.

The on-station trials as managed by the researchers of INREC in Dingras gained an increase of 14% in yield with the combination of full recommendation of inorganic and nine liters/ha. of carrageenan during wet season while 15% increase in yield using the same fertilizer combination in the on station-trials conducted at Pangasinan Research and Experiment Center in Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan.

In terms of the agronomic characteristics of the inbred rice planted in both stations, a significant performance of the rice plant was observed in terms of the plant height, number of tillers, panicle length, and the weight of 1,000 grams of seeds as compared to the non-usage of carrageenan PDP.//

Ilocos stakeholders get updates on Biotech 101, Joint Department Circular

Over 150 stakeholders, farmer leaders, students, members of the academe, DA representatives, and members of the local government units from selected municipalities in the region were convened during the conduct of Biotechnology 101 and Joint Department Circular (JDC) Public Briefing at Plaza Del Norte, Laoag, Ilocos Norte on March 28, 2019.

The activity was sponsored by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), DA Biotechnology Program Office, and the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) in coordination with the DA RFO I and the Provincial Government of Ilocos Norte.

The JDC covers subjects on the rules and regulations for the research and development of biotech, its handling and use, transboundary movement, release into the environment, and management of Genetically-Modified Plant (GM – Plant) and plant products derived from the use of modern biotechnology.

The activity aims to create awareness among stakeholders about Biotechnology and help them be familiarized with the new guidelines on biotech crops since biotechnology is now seen as a way of improving the quality and quantity of produce. It also

contributes to food security and sustainability for the rising population. Moreover, the advances in biotechnology do not only provide benefits in agriculture but also in other areas of living.

However, despite the advantages of planting GM crops, issues on its negative impacts continuously arise.

One of the highlights of the activity was the open forum where issues and concerns of the general public on biotech was addressed by the panel members from DA, DOH, DENR, DILG, and DOST.

Among the queries that emerged was the possibility of using GM seeds for organic agriculture. As a response to the issue, Fr. Emmanuel Alparce of DA - Biotech Program cited Mr. Juanito Rama (an outstanding corn awardee from Tarlac) as an example. Mr. Rama planted GM corn varieties way back 2014 and used only a minimal amount of chemical fertilizer with additional organic-based liquid fertilizer but still posted a yield of 20.6 tons per hectare.

With the use of biotech crops, there would be lesser usage of chemicals since the plants' genetic composition has already been altered.

Among the genetically modified crops that are planted globally, maize or GM corn has dominated the country having a total of 812,000-hectare area planted. //

Enhancing the production while promoting the utilization of soybean and soybean products in Ilocos Region, the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office I through the Research and Development (R&D) Division engaged Ilocano farmers in the research project, “Enhancing organic soybean production and processing for improved local supply and utilization in Region I.”

Led and managed by Ms. Melinda Calumpit, the project covered a total of eight municipalities with 9.5 hectares

involving 10 farmer-cooperators in the region.

Funded by the DA-Bureau of Research (BAR), the project aims to enhance organic soybean production and processing for improved local supply and utilization in Region 1, improving the soil properties such as physical, chemical and biological properties, as well as providing health benefits to humans and animals for its food and feed use.

Soybean (*Glycine max*) is a leguminous crop that can fix nitrogen from the atmosphere thru the bacteria living in the

roots. It can be made into *tokwa*, *taho*, soya milk, soy sauce, cookies and texturized vegetable protein (TVP) and other sepal-based products. A protein-rich foods and with high lunacin content (anti-cancer), this crop is a versatile crop because all of its parts can be converted into something that is useful.

“The residues when threshed is a good substrate in mushroom production while its hull or the soybean pods when ground can be used for feeds of animals,” Calumpit said.

Mr. Ruel Atanacio, 38, one of the farmer-

DA-RFO1 engages farmers in organic soybean research



Ms. Melinda Calumpit joins the farmer-cooperators of Sto. Domingo during their harvest season for soybeans.

cooperators from Brgy. Bacsil in San Juan, Ilocos Sur was among the ten farmer-cooperators who was encouraged to plant soybean in his 3.5-hectare farm.

The other farmer-cooperators came from Labrador, Pangasinan and Luna, La Union who planted 1.5 has. and 1 ha., respectively. In Ilocos Sur, the farmer cooperators came from Candon City and San Emilio who planted 0.7 ha and 0.3 ha., respectively. Also, farmers in San Nicolas and Burgos in Ilocos Norte planted 1 ha. and 3 has., respectively.

To encourage them to plant this



A soybean plant, up-close, ready for harvest.

emerging crop, DA through the R&D Division provided planting materials with seeding rate of 50 kg per hectare using the plant now and pay later scheme. Aside from seeds, another intervention of the project is the provision of seed inoculants, biocontrol agents, concoctions, organic fertilizers and technical assistance which were given prior to planting.

The variety used in the project is the PSB SY2 variety which was considered by Ms. Calumpit as the most adaptable soybean variety in Ilocos Region.

With the allocated budget of P1 million, the project leader hopes to sustain the production, product development as well as promotion and advocacy of the project as it sets to provide processing and production machineries and equipment such as grinder, extractor, tofu maker, oven for cookies, sealer and freezer. The harvester, sorter and other farm machinery equipment needed in the production and post-harvest production shall also be provided to the farmers to enhance their production yield from the existing 1.2 tons/ha to 1.7 tons/ha under organic system of production and 1.5 to 2.5 tons/ha. under the conventional way of planting soybean.

“Once all these interventions will be in place, we are optimistic that we could add up to the more than a thousand-hectare area planted with soybean nationwide,” Calumpit said.//



IS farmers see brighter prospects with DA's corn model farm

Giving farmers the necessary technologies in corn production to increase their yield while reducing their cost of production by means of farm mechanization, the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office I through the Corn Banner Program established its Corn Model Farm Project (CMFP) in the province of Ilocos Sur in partnership with the Ilocos Sur Corn Cluster Association, Inc. (ISCCA-I).

As its basic component so that farmers would be able to appreciate the showcased technologies in this corn model farm, a field day was conducted on March 29, 2019 where various stakeholders of the corn industry have attended including corn farmers and corn seeds and machineries suppliers.

Established at Brgys. Tamorong in Caoayan and Nagpanaoan in Santa, Ilocos Sur on a 50-hectare area owned and managed by the members of ISCCA-I, the CMFP showcased the production technologies of both yellow and flint corn using the varieties registered to National Seed Industry Council.

Showcasing the technologies on seed selection, planting and plant spacing, water and pest management as well as fertilizer application using the Site Specific Nutrient



Management (SSNM) or the Nutrient Expert Application, the corn model farm also served as a show window of the corn production and post-harvest machineries and equipment to improve the quality of corn in the model farm as compared to that of the farmers' practice.

In showcasing the corn production technologies, farm inputs such as fertilizers, soil ameliorants and bio-control agents were provided by the DA-

RFO I. In tandem with the Agricultural Training Institute, necessary trainings on increasing production, farm mechanization, post harvest operation and business management including strengthening of organization and other capacity-building activities were conducted.

In support to the irrigation facilities of the project, DA has also established a solar power irrigation system



amounting to P4,860,074.00. A facility that was constructed in support to the corn model farm project, it could serve around 10 hectares that could benefit at least 48 farmer-association members.

Giving updates as to how the farmers could benefit if the technologies showcased in the farm will be strictly followed, the Corn Banner Program's Cost and Return Analysis on a hectare basis for corn production revealed that

there was an increase in production of about 740 kgs. in yield and a reduction of P4,534.00 in the cost of producing corn.

It was also revealed on the cost and return analysis of the Corn Banner Program that for every peso invested in corn production, a farmer could get a maximum of P98.29.

Mr. Mario Alibin, one of the farmer-leaders of the ISCCA-I noted in his testimony as partner of the DA's Corn



Showcasing of machineries and equipment during the establishment of the Corn Model Farm in the province of Ilocos Sur.



An aerial view of the 50-hectare corn demo farm in Caoayan, Ilocos Sur.

Model Farm the relevance of the project in their corn production as they saw brighter prospects in producing corn.

"Hindi lang namin nakita ang mga iba't-ibang klase ng makinarya na magagamit namin upang mas mapagaan ang aming pagsasaka ng mais, kundi nabigyan kami ng pag-asa na lahat ay aangat sa pagkakaroon namin ng pagkakaisa at pagtutulungan na ipinapabatid sa amin ng clustering program ng DA," Alibin said.

Meanwhile, the Group of the Agribusiness Marketing Assistance Division of DA-RFO I shall facilitate the market linkages between the cluster-cooperators and the potential market/buyer to assists farmers with their marketing needs.//



DA-BAR Dir. Nicomedes Eleazar leads the groundbreaking ceremony together with RED Alviar and other DA-RFO I key officials.



The Crops Research and Development Center by 2020

Groundbreaking ceremonies for Crops R&D Center held

The Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office I (DA-RFO I) through the Research and Development Division successfully conducted the groundbreaking ceremony for its P56M-worth Crops Research and Development Building located at DA-Pangasinan Research and Experiment Center, Tebag, Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan.

Held on March 28, 2019, the groundbreaking ceremony was led by the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) Director, Nicomedes Eleazar and DA-RFO I's Regional Executive Director Lucrecio R. Alviar, Jr.

The Crops R&D Center is a state-of-the-art and research-friendly facility which will serve as a showcase window of technologies, quality cultivars that

will benefit LGU extension workers, the academe, NGOs, farmers and other peoples' organizations.

Jointly funded by BAR and DA-RFO I in an effort to modernize and upgrade research facilities relevant to DA's goal of increasing productivity as well as income of farmers in the region, this facility shall also enhance linkages and networking of all stakeholders in the agriculture sector for sustainable development.

A three-story building which will house the seed processing and sensory evaluation lab situated on the first floor, the tissue culture lab on the second floor and the audio-visual room on the third floor; construction of the edifice is expected to complete in CY 2020.

In his message during the event, BAR

Director Eleazar lauded the efforts of DA-RFO I through its R&D Division under the leadership of RED Alviar and RTD for Research & Regulations Orlando Lorenzana in pursuing the research and development project to improve services provided for Ilocano farmers.

Taking after what Dir. Alviar has done in Cagayan Valley Region with the establishment of their state of the art Integrated Agricultural Research Laboratory that supports the R&D activities in Region 2, Director Eleazar is optimistic that this development shall bring fruitful research efforts in Ilocos Region under the leadership of Alviar.

"Marami pang magagandang mangyari dito sa Ilocos Region. Sa loob ng 20 months na pamumuno ni Director Alviar, madami nang nangyari. Noon, parang ang dilim ng station, ngayon ay buhay na buhay. Sana ay patuloy ang mga pagbabagong ito and we are willing to support all these initiatives," Eleazar said.

Alviar in his message expressed his gratitude to the BAR Director for investing in Ilocos Region with the establishment of the Crops R&D Center.

With this milestone of DA-RFO I under his stint, Alviar is also optimistic that more similar projects for R&D will be established with the support of the Bureau Director.

Meanwhile, Ms. Cathy Pastor, Senior Science Research Specialist, in behalf of R&D Division Chief, Dr. Jovita Datuin conveyed R&D Group's commitment to continually develop project proposals that focuses on cost-reducing and yield boosting technologies, as well as mass propagate clean and disease-free tissue cultured planting materials for distribution to intended beneficiaries. Likewise, the R&D Group shall also enhance dissemination of research outputs through techno-forum and other related activities.//

Giving updates on the Ilocos Region's economic development situation and informing some of the latest programs, projects and policies on agri-fishery, trade, tourism and investment related concerns, members of the Economic Development Sectoral Committee (EDSeCom) met on February 27 at the DA-RFO I 3rd Floor Conference Room, City of San Fernando, La Union.

Chaired by Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office I Regional Executive Director Lucrecio R. Alviar, Jr., the EdSeCom is composed of 42 member-agencies as well as private and non-government institutions that are tasked to plan out programs, projects as well as policy reforms to further enhance the economic conditions in Ilocos region.

In her discussion of one of the agenda of the meeting relative to the proposed creation of the Local Economic Investment Promotion Officer (LEIPO) in the Provincial and City Governments, Ms. Mayanne Flores, Senior Science Research Specialist of the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) sought support from the group for the endorsement of the Regional Development Council (RDC) to encourage Local Government Units to create a plantilla position for LEIPO.

According to Flores, the creation of LEIPO would enhance the economic, investment and promotion programs of the LGUs especially if there will be an assigned officer who would focus solely on the tasks and functions as LEIPO that would orchestrate the development and conceptualization of the LGU's economic and investment programs and activities.

"Right now, the LGUs are only designating their LEIPOs and most of the time, they are not able to function well due to multi-tasking," Flores said.

Addressing this concern, the body agreed to endorse the proposal to the RDC for approval and to pilot this in the four provinces and cities including first class municipalities that are capable of financing the needed funding requirements in implementing this proposal.

EdSeCom members talk on Ilocos' economic status



Meanwhile, Ms. Analiza Ramos, Rice Focal Person of DA-RFO I, presented details of the Republic Act 11203 otherwise known as the Rice Trade Liberalization Law which opens the country for rice importation.

One of the salient information that Ms. Ramos shared during the meeting is the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund or RCEF – which provides funding support of the key interventions in rice production such as mechanization, seeds, financing and extension to improve productivity, competitiveness and income of the rice farmers amounting to P10B annually for the next 6 years.

From these P10B, fifty percent (50%) of this amount shall be released to the Philippine Center for Post-Harvest and Mechanization. "This shall be released to provide eligible farmers and farmer organizations and associations, LGUs and cooperatives farm machineries and equipment to improve their rice production," Ramos said.

Likewise, the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) will be given thirty-percent (30%) of the P10B to develop, propagate and promote inbred rice seeds while 10% will be released to the Land

Bank and the Development Bank of the Philippines for the Expanded Rice Credit Assistance that can be availed by farmers, cooperatives with minimal interest rates and minimum collateral requirements.

The remaining 10% or P1B shall be shared by TESDA (70% of the total P1B), Agricultural Training Institute, PhilRice and PhilMech (10% each of the total P1B) to improve their extension services by teaching rice farmers modern rice farming techniques and technology transfer.

Meanwhile, to further update the EdSeCom members with the 5-year Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Plan of the DA-RFO I, Ms. Doris Joy Garcia, Chief of the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division presented the agency's plans, programs and projects for the next five years.

Mr. Sulpicio George Terrado, Jr. of the National Food Authority (NFA) also discussed the NFA's Palaya Procurement Program while Engr. Gregorio de Vera of the Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Administration (PAG-ASA) provided updates on the El Niño Forecast this year.//

IN farmers receive livestock; Multiplier Farm launched



As part of the rehabilitation program for the affected farmers of the Typhoon Ompong, the DA – RFO 1 thru the Provincial Government of Ilocos Norte distributed 1,200 heads of ducks, 30 heads of native pigs and 60 heads of cattle on March 6-7, 2019 in Laoag City and Solsona, Ilocos Norte.

During the distribution, Hon. Angelo Marcos Barba – Vice Governor, Province of Ilocos Norte said that farmers in Ilocos Norte are lucky to receive such livestock (intervention) because it is given for free. He added that as a counterpart, Hog Grower Pellets will be provided by the Provincial Government of Ilocos Norte for the recipients of native pigs.

“The DA quickly provides project for our farmers. This distribution of ducks and native pigs is just one of their projects not only for the farmers here in Ilocos Norte who were affected by Typhoon Ompong but to all farmers in the province,” Barba said as he expressed his gratitude to DA.

On the second day, the Livestock Multiplier Farm was launched in Barangay Nalasin, Solsona, Ilocos Norte hand-in-hand with the distribution of the 60 heads of cattle to the 60 farmer beneficiaries.

The Livestock Multiplier Farm is a project of the Livestock Banner Program last 2017 and is composed of Goat Multiplier Farm, Native Pig Multiplier Farm, Free Range Chicken Multiplier Farm and Foreign Cattle Multiplier Farm.

The project is a joint effort of the Municipality of Solsona and DA – RFO 1 that aims to increase the cattle inventory of the

municipality, upgrade the indigenous breeds of cattle, increase farmers’ income and provide livelihood opportunities for the farmers.

Mr. Juanito Malazo, Jr. – Livestock Focal Person who represented Regional Executive Director Dir. Lucrecio R. Alviar, Jr. announced that Pres. Rodrigo Duterte in particular has ordered DA Secretary Emmanuel F. Piñol to propose a budget ten times to DA’s current budget.

“So we expect that we will be having ten times increase in our budget,” Malazo said.

“Actually, before we establish a project we propose first to the mayors. Other mayors are sometimes reluctant to support the project as sometimes it is difficult to look for qualified recipients. But here in Solsona, when we proposed this Multiplier Farm, Mayor Calucag agreed immediately and asked for the needed requirements, then after two weeks they were able to facilitate the requirements. So immediately, the project came through,” he added.

Meanwhile, Solsona Mayor Alexander A. Calucag mentioned that the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) allocated 1.2M for the training on cattle raising and other related trainings in agriculture. He envisions the Multiplier Farm to become an Agri-tourism site soon.

“Adu ti madamdag kun nga um-umay ditoy agbisbista ken umay da agpicture picture. Isu nga kailangan lang nga adda ti ordinansa nga maaramid tapno agbalin isuna nga agritourism nga isu pay nga pangalaan iti pundo iti munisipyo ken agbalin nga livelihood iti umili,” (I have heard that a lot of people are coming over here taking pictures of the site and maybe we could create an ordinance to transform it into agri-tourism site as it can be a source of additional fund for the municipality and can also become a livelihood for our constituents) Calucag said.

To date, the Multiplier Farm consists of 11 heads of goats, 40 heads of native pigs, eight heads of foreign cattle for fattening, and 60 heads native chicken.//

10-ha hybrid rice demo farm established in Baclig

“As of today, 20% pa lang ang nagtatanim ng Hybrid rice dito sa Region. Ang target ng DA ay 50% dapat to be more sufficient on rice para hindi na tayo mag-angkat,” stressed by Mr. Rodolfo Estrada, Jr. - Senior Agriculturist of the Rice Banner Program at the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 1 during the Hybrid Rice Derby on February 1, 2019 at Brgy. Baclig, Cabugao, Ilocos Sur.

The Hybrid Rice Derby and Provincial Techno Forum were attended by 17 cooperators in the Province of Ilocos Sur and participated by nine seed companies showcasing their respective varieties namely; Seed Works (TH-82, US-88);

DA Ilocos joins 15th Goat Festival; launches cook book for chevon

The Research Division of the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 1 (DA – RFO1) Pangasinan Research and Experiment Center (PREC), Tebag, Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan headed by Dr. Jovita Datuin – Chief, Research Division launched on March 22, 2019, the cook book, “100 ways of cooking chevon” during the 15th Goat Festival in the Municipality of Balungao, Pangasinan.

“The project started when they saw the successful result of the DA’s project which was the Goat Technology Commercialization here in Balungao in the year 2015 to 2017. This project taught

Bio Seed (BioRice 650, BioRice ZARAP, BioRice 453); Pioneer (PHB 79, PHB 77, PHB 73); Syngenta (Frontline S6003, Frontline NK5017); Taipan Brand Farm Inc., (ADV 8112, PAC 801); Long Ping(LP205, LP357); SL Agritech Corporation (SL-8H, SL-18H, SL-12H); Bayer (Arize AZ7888) and PhilRice (NSIC Rc204H).

The techno demo area covered a total of 10 hectares and allowed the farmers to learn management practices for hybrid rice varieties.

In her message, Ms. Larina Zabala – Agricultural Programs Coordinating Officer (APCO) of Ilocos Sur said, “We have vision in the Department of Agriculture and that is to increase rice self-sufficiency around the region and to maintain the Ilocos Region as one of the top 10 producers of rice in the country.”

the farmers and goat raisers the proper slaughtering, goat production, among others,” said Ms. Cathy Pastor – Senior Science Research Specialist II, the project leader of the cook book.

“Every year, a chevon cooking contest is held during Goat Festival. The 20 barangays in Balungao are required to have five recipes each. That is why, last year, we decided to produce a cook book containing the recipes with its procedures and ingredients by each barangay. And this also served as one counterpart of the DA,” she added.

Meanwhile, Regional Technical Director (RTD) for Research and Regulations Orlando J. Lorenzana commended the Municipality of Balungao especially the farmers and goat raisers for the success of

Meanwhile, Mr. Efren Rafanan – Sangguniang Panlalawigan Member of the Province of Ilocos Sur and Committee on Agriculture Chairman encouraged the farmers to use hybrid rice with support on farm mechanization program offered by the Department of Agriculture to lessen the work of the farmers.

“We are training farmers in other countries but still we are importing rice to them, that is why we need to practice more about technology,” emphasized Rafanan.

The Hybrid Rice Derby is one of the strategies of the DA to attain a climate smart agriculture vis-a-vis increase the yield of farmers in Region 1.//

the activity as it is the only goat festival being held in the country. He also said that DA’s is set to make the municipality as center for goat production.

“If the DA will build a nucleus farm project for goat, you will be the first recipient,” Lorenzana assured to the goat raisers of Balungao.

The chevon cooking contest culminates the festival. Each barangay presented one recipe as their entry by which Barangay Angayan Sur won first place with their recipe Deep Friend Goat Dumplings, Barangay Ragal as second place with their recipe Sweet and Sour Chevon, and Barangay San Aurelio as third place with their recipe Bola-Bola de Tercero.//

NextGen project gives farmers new choices on seed varieties

“Napakalaking bagay ang nangyari sa buhay ko bilang magsasaka sa pagkakaroon ng NextGen Project na inilunsad ng DA. Bukod sa nakita ko ang mga bagong barayti ng palay, tumaas ng 30 porsiento ang aking ani at bumaba ang aking gastos.”

Mr. Rodrigo Nortares, DA-RFO I’s NextGen Project Cooperator noted this in his testimony during the conduct of Field Day on the Accelerating Development & Adoption of Next Gen Varieties for the major ecosystem held on March 5, 2019 in Brgy. Bagut, Dingras, Ilocos Norte.

“Kung noon, gumagamit ako ng 10-12 sakong abono kada ektarya, ngayon ay naging 4-8 sako na lang ang aking nagamit. Higit sa lahat, nakapili na ako ng barayti ng palay na aking itatanim at sana mabigyan kami ng mga barayting ito ng DA para gamitin sa susunod pang naming pagtatanim,” Mr. Nortares said.

In his briefing on the NextGen Project, Mr. Ireneo Mandac, DA-RFO I’s Senior Agriculturist based in Ilocos Norte Research and Experiment Center in Batac City, said that the Next Gen Project involves the process of selecting newly released varieties in the major ecosystems involving rainfed, irrigated, saline-prone and submerged ecosystems using the criteria set by the farmers in order to identify high yielding and

adoptable varieties.

Based on the performance of the ten newly released inbred varieties tested in the project, the NSIC Rc442, NSIC Rc238, NSIC Rc216 and NSIC Rc438 were among the highest yielder with an average yield of 6 tons per hectare at 14% moisture content basing from the crop cut yield conducted by the researchers.

In determining the yield performance of these newly released seed varieties, the researchers used the yield and yield components such as length of panicle, number of productive tillers, number of field grains and the weight of the 1,000 grains.

As to the farmers’ choice, the NSIC Rc216, NSIC Rc226 and NSIC Rc436 have emerged as the top three best varieties based on the result of cut crop conducted prior to the field day.

Likewise, the NSIC Rc490H, PSB Rc18 (Farmer’s Variety) and NSIC Rc222 (Nat Check) were among the top choices of the farmers in Bgy. Bagut based on the standing crop.

Having determined the best three varieties, the researchers would again conduct the same activity in both dry and wet seasons through technology demonstrations and this time in cooperation with the seed growers prior to recommendation for commercialization.//

DA-Ilocos takes pride for being number 1

Sharing with pride and joy for being the FY 2018 Over-all Excellent Performer Region in the entire Department of Agriculture (in terms of physical and financial accomplishments), top performing Regional Executive Director Lucrecio R. Alviar, Jr. presented the plaques and certificates of recognition to all DA-RFO I employees on February 11 during the regular flag raising ceremonies held at the DA-RFO I 5th Floor Conference Room, San Fernando

City, La Union.

An award he received during the National DA-wide Assessment on February 8, 2019 at the Bureau of Soils and Water Management, Diliman, Quezon City, all five major programs (Rice, Corn, High Value Crops Development, Livestock and Organic Programs) have consistently placed first in terms of physical and financial accomplishment.

Given the opportunity to give a message, each major Banner Program

representatives thanked everyone for their support and pledged to continue doing their best efforts if only to sustain the region's excellent performance.

In his message, RED Alviar thanked the entire DA-workforce for their 100 percent commitment and support as he encouraged them to do their share in sustaining the performance not only for this 2019 but for the succeeding years.//

Malasakit Help Desk for Ilocos farmers launched

Employees of the Department of Agriculture Ilocos Region continue to strengthen their services, support, and love for the Ilocos farmers as the Malasakit Help Desk is launched in a simple ceremony coinciding with Valentine's Day, February 14.

Farmers in the region can now direct their concerns and queries through the DA-RFO1's Malasakit Help Desk hotline (072) 242 1045.

In a memorandum signed by Secretary Emmanuel F. Piñol, the launching of the help desk is a realization of President Rodrigo Duterte's commitment to farmers and fisher folk in providing speedy and inclusive assistance.

The memo further explains that under the help desk, all existing similar services of the agency will be combined into one assistance counter and will embody public service that is accessible,



Ms. Jinnefer Pulmano of the Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation Division assists the first farmer-clients after the launching of the Malasakit Help Desk.

effective, and handled with 'malasakit' or genuine concern.

The personnel assigned therefore in the Malasakit help desk will not only accept queries and facilitate requests but will also offer clients services which involve other government agencies and corporations.

Services imposed under the helpdesk are access to information and data which shall be provided by the concerned staff of all DA's programs and projects, bureaus, attached agencies, and corporations; application for

registration and accreditation which should be processed immediately by all accreditation-giving offices and units such as DA's Regulatory Division; Agri-profiling and accreditation which can be rendered by the Bureau of Soils and Water Management; access to credit facilities and crop insurance which can be availed at the Agricultural Credit Policy Council & Philippine Crop Insurance; scholarship programs by the DA's Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund; and free trainings and seminars provided by the Agricultural Training Institute.//

RTD Manipon and NMIS Dir. Mildred Saligan awards the certificate and key of turn-over to the key officials of Tayug, Pangasinan.



DA turns-over Php13.5M-worth facility to LGU Tayug

The Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office I turned-over on January 25 the Php13.5M worth of “AA” Slaughterhouse and Trading Center to the municipality of Tayug in Pangasinan led by Regional Technical Director for Operations Erlinda F. Manipon representing DA-RFO I Regional Executive Director Lucrecio Alviar, Jr. and Sixth District Congresswoman Marlyn Primicias-Agabas representing Tayug Mayor Tyrone Agabas.

The project is initiated by the Local Government Unit of Tayug in collaboration with the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) and funded by the DA-Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service (DA-AMAS). The establishment of the project aims to realize DA’s mandate of not only providing

the Filipino people with available, accessible and affordable but also nutritious and safe food for the people at all times.

Established in 2014 under the Agri-Pinoy Trading Center Project, the P10M fund came from DA-AMAS and the P3.5M was the counterpart of the LGU-Tayug in the form of lot where the project was established.

RTD Erlinda F. Manipon emphasized in her message the essential role of the Barangay Captains in promoting the facility to the people of Tayug in order to sustain the operation of the slaughterhouse.

She also encouraged the hog raisers and meat vendors to patronize the facility to ensure the quality and safety of the meat they are selling in the market while noting the

relevance of the livestock production data in the formulation of future policies in the agriculture sector especially in the livestock industry.

She also enjoined Tayug’s Municipal Engineer, Municipal Agriculturist and the Budget Officer to allocate for yearly maintenance fund for the facility in order to sustain its operation.

Meanwhile, Dr. Mildred Saligan, Acting Director of the National Meat Inspection Service commended the LGU of Tayug and the DA for having this project in the region and offered the technical assistance of NMIS in the operation of the facility.

She likewise encouraged the LGU of Tayug to work-out the documentary requirements needed in the facility’s accreditation to operate as “AA” slaughterhouse giving the opportunity for LGU-Tayug to transfer the meat butchered in the facility not only in Tayug but in other neighboring towns in Pangasinan.

She likewise encouraged the LGU Tayug to have additional operators to be trained on meat inspection to sustain the operation of the facility.

The “AA” Slaughterhouse and Trading Facility in Tayug is one of two slaughterhouse facilities funded by DA-AMAS in the region. The other facility was established in Candon City, Ilocos Sur.//

Movers MPC receives P6M-worth RPC

To help minimize postharvest losses and improve farmers’ quality of rice produced through modern and efficient milling facilities, the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office I awarded a P6-M-worth Rice Processing Center (RPC) to the Movers Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Calapugan, Natividad, Pangasinan on March 14, 2019.

The RPC is comprised of multi-pass rice mill with rice hull bin, portable moisture meter for rice and corn equipped with one-ton capacity weighing scale.

Basing from the conducted performance test on January 31, 2019, to determine the

machine’s conformity to the Philippine National Standards (PNS), the multi-pass rice mill has an output capacity of 1.052 tons per hour and milling recovery of 66.27%.

Mr. Dante Pagal, Movers MPC Chairperson, emotionally expressed his gratitude to RED Lucrecio Alviar because of the completion of the project. He also made a commitment to do their best in helping their co-farmers as to how the government helped them through its support and services.

On the other hand, Alviar told coop members that the DA is willing to provide support to them however he emphasized that they must also compensate what the DA has provided for their cooperative for it to grow faster and so to benefit more farmers.

He also mentioned about the newly crafted DA-NFA non-cash incentive scheme for farmer cooperatives and organizations who would deliver their rice to NFA.

“We want to add these interventions given to you but in one condition, sell your produce to NFA, if you want a machinery like a combine harvester, there is a condition, you have no counterpart, just sell your palay to NFA. NFA now buys palay at P20.70 per kilo including the incentive.”

“*Nakabenta na kayo, may premyo pa kayo,*” he added.

Aside from the RPC, an additional 1-M pesos was also awarded to Movers MPC members which will serve as their initial capital.//

MR. JOEY RAMOS

Region I's nominee to the
Search for Outstanding Seed
Innovator - Seed Grower
Category



The Search for Outstanding Seed Innovator of the BPI-National Seed Industry Council (NSIC) is in line with the Republic Act 7308 otherwise known as the Seed Industry Development Act of 1992. This Law requires the NSIC to recognize the significant contributions of the key

industry players in the realization of its goals and objectives after 25 years of implementation.

Composed of three categories, namely: (1) Breeding Institution, (2) Seed Grower, and (3) Plant Nursery Operator; the Search Committee led by the Chairman of the National

Evaluation Committee is conducting field validation among the top three shortlisted entries submitted by the Regional Field Offices in coordination with the Regional Field Offices of the BPI-National Seed Quality Control Services.

As Ilocos Region's entry in the Seed



Grower Category, Mr. Ramos has qualified for field validation after having passed the major qualification as an active accredited Filipino seed grower from 2011 to 2017. Being a member of the National Federation of Seed Grower Cooperative and a non-government employee, he is evaluated along with

Twelve years after being named as the country's Gawad Saka Most Outstanding Rice Farmer in 2002, Mr. Joey Ramos of Brgy. Tay-ac, Rosario La Union is again aspiring for another title - this time as the country's Most Outstanding Seed Grower through the Bureau of Plant and Industry's (BPI's) Search for Outstanding Seed Innovator.

the three other entries from Central Luzon, Cagayan Valley and the Bicol Region. Each major Island shall declare one winner.

Having submitted all the pertinent requirements of the search including his portfolio as seed grower, Mr. Ramos was evaluated based on his management practices in the farm, his seed production record, seed certification record, the cost and return analysis of his farm enterprises as well as his involvement in the community that has immensely contributed in the development of seed production industry.

As a seasoned seed grower, his major consideration in selecting the rice varieties he grows is to look into the seed varieties most preferred by the farmers and the DA who are buying his produce.

Among the registered seed varieties he produces include: NSIC Rc160, NSIC Rc216, NSIC Rc300 and NSIC Rc358. Using all these varieties planted in his

eight (8) hectare farm-lot, (partially owned and tenanted), he plants at three croppings for a year.

The quality of seed is his foremost consideration in having better rice yield and production, and Mr. Ramos' ingenuity earned him his credibility as rice seed producer.

Having established his name as credible seed grower in the region, he always makes sure that his produce will pass the rigid standards and requirements for rice certification and accreditation.

Thus, his produce has been sought after by many farmers in need of seed materials, leaving him secured and confident in marketing his rice seeds.

Waiting for the result of the Search, Mr. Ramos is more than hopeful that he could bring home the bacon. Should he succeed as the winner, he will receive from BPI-NSIC a cash prize of P50,000.00 and a Plaque of Recognition.//

National Women's Month Celebration | March 2019

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women

