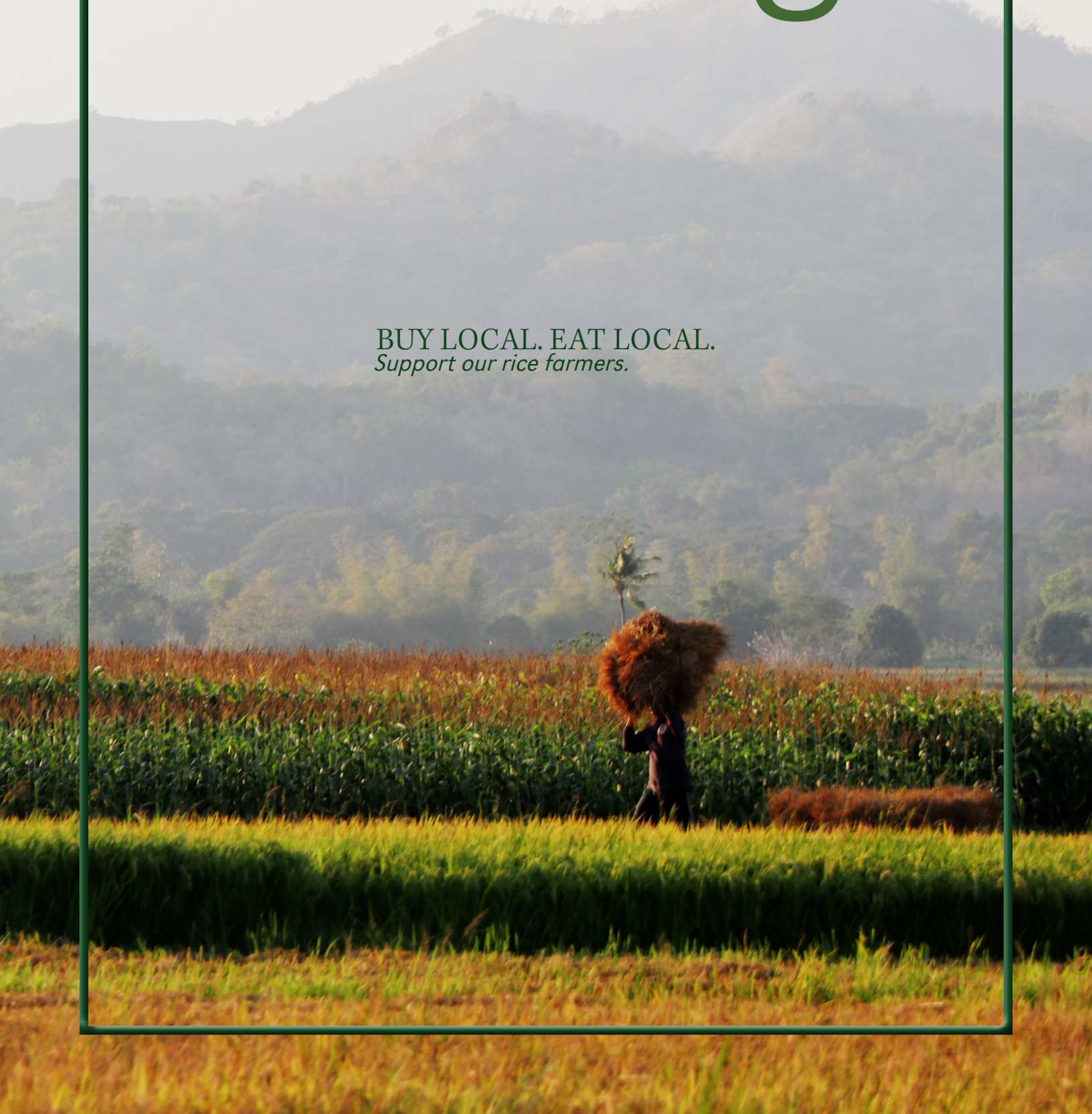


The Official Publication of the Department of Agriculture - Regional Field Office 1

DAMAGagri

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BUY LOCAL. EAT LOCAL.
Support our rice farmers.



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



THE COVER

This quarter's cover photo was taken in Dingras, Ilocos Norte in one of the sites of the NextGen project spearheaded by DA-RFO1. It was established to help farmers increase their production and income. But as consumers too, one way in which we can also support our farmers is to patronize their harvests as this year's celebration of National Rice Awareness Month advocates: 'Buy local. Eat local.'



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DA-RFO I PASS SURVEILLANCE AUDIT FOR ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFICATION

“You are really determined to move forward towards performance excellence. With that, you are again recommended for renewal of your ISO 9001:2015 Certification.”

Lead Auditor of the Certification International Philippines (CIP) Mr. Florante P. Zarate announced this during the closing meeting with the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 1 (DA-RFO I) Top Management and staff, together with his co-auditor Ms. Lyn Angela Cayetano, after concluding the surveillance audit on November 27, 2019 at the regional

office.

The Surveillance Audit is part of a three-year certification cycle that DA-RFO I has to undergo to be able to renew its ISO 9001:2015 certification which was issued last January 2019.

The certification is only valid for three years, hence, DA-RFO I must be able to

comply with all the requirements of the standards in a three-year period before it can renew the certification once it lapses.

Prior to the conduct of audit at the regional office, the Ilocos Integrated Agricultural Research Center (ILIARC) in Bacnotan, La Union and the Pangasinan Research & Experiment Center (PREC) in Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan were the focus of the Surveillance Audit on November 26, 2019.

The DA-RFO I's enrolled processes were subjected for audit to ensure that the department's Quality Management System (QMS) is in place and faithfully



Auditor Zarate and the DA-RFO1 employees stationed in ILIARC-Bacnotan during the surveillance audit.

implemented in its everyday operations conforming to the requirements of the standards.

With only four minor non-conformities observed at the regional office and one from PREC, Dir. Lucrecio R. Alviar, Jr., DA-RFO I Regional Executive Director, is very optimistic that the department can be able to sustain its certification.

‘We are all in this together, for as long as we remain committed and adhering strictly to our Quality Management System’s compliance to the requirements of ISO 9001:2015, we can achieve our goal to remain ISO certified,’ Alviar said.

As a result of the Audit, out of the 13 minor non-conformities during the stage two audit, the DA-RFO I has trimmed it down to only 4 minor non-conformities.

The auditors shall submit their conclusion and make the final report within seven working days after the surveillance audit. After that, DA-RFO I is required to make corrective actions to address the minor non-conformities and submit a response within 30 calendar days.

Of all the 16 DA-Regional Field Offices entire the country, only DA-RFO 1 and DA-RFO 2 are ISO 9001:2015 Certified at the moment. Both offices were headed by Dir. Alviar and acquired their certification in his term as Regional Executive Director.//

There have been delays in Region 1’s hog trading since the provinces of Pangasinan and La Union issued executive ordinances stating that live swine and all pork meat products are not allowed to enter in the region.

However, during the Information Education and Communication (IEC) and Awareness Seminar on African Swine Fever (ASF), Dr. Alfiero P. Banaag, Head of the Animal Disease Surveillance of the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 1- Regulatory Division, cleared to the hog traders and livestock raisers that it is all right to transport swine from Region 1 to other regions.

“Maaari po tayong magtransport ng ating mga baboy na galing po dito sa atin depende lang po kung papayagan ng mga quarantine officers po sa lugar na pagdadalhan. Ang bawal po ay ang magpasok ng baboy dito sa Pangasinan at La Union (You can transport pigs from Region 1 depending on whether the quarantine officers will allow you to deliver in their area. The prohibition is to import pigs here in Pangasinan and La Union),” said Banaag as he answered a query



Livestock handlers and hog traders from the provinces of Pangasinan and La Union were gathered for an information caravan on the proper handling of the animal and ASF prevention in the region.

DA- REGULATORY: HOG TRADERS CAN “EXPORT” SWINE FROM REGION 1

from the participants regarding the transportation of swine in and out of the region.

Meanwhile, Mr. Rufino D. Gagni III, Agriculturist II, discussed the legal obligations of Livestock, Poultry and By-product's Handlers and Transport Carriers where he tackled the different requirements when transporting animals.

He said that when transporting animals, veterinary health certificate, proof of ownership, livestock handlers license, and livestock transport carrier and shipping permits are required.

Gagni also discussed the application requirements for the handler's license. These are as follows: the handler must be a single proprietorship; must have

a certificate from partner who are persons with authority to bind the partnership; article of partnership; Certificate from the Board of Directors who are persons with authority to bind in the corporation; article of incorporation; notarized application form; 2 pcs. 1" x 1" recent ID pictures; Tax Identification Number (TIN) of the applicants and Company; Business Permits/Mayor's Permit; and the applicants must also attend seminar. For renewal of license, photocopy of the approved certificate of registration is required.

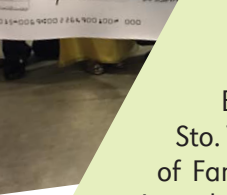
For the documentary requirements on the shipment of live animal, Dr. Benjamin Ike P. Paguyu, Officer-in-Charge of the Bureau of Animal Industry-National Veterinary Quarantine Services 1 (BAI-NVQS 1) said that when

shipping live animals for breeding purposes, the source must be from a BAI Accredited Swine Breeder Farm, Negative test result but not limited to Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS), Pseudorabies (PRV), Brucellosis, and Vaccination Program. Swine must also have Veterinary Health Certificate, Livestock Handler's Certificate and Registration of Transport Carriers.

For slaughter purposes, it is only required to have a veterinary certificate and ASF Free Status Certificate.

The IEC and Awareness Seminar on ASF was attended by 63 livestock handlers and hog traders in the Province of Pangasinan and La Union on November 7, 2019 at Hotel Trish, Mangaldan, Pangasinan.//

ILOCOS ANEW



Cognizant of an excellent performance in the development of the corn industry as a result of a strong and efficient DA-LGU collaboration, the Ilocos Region shines anew during the 7th National Quality Corn Achievers Award (NQCAA) bagging the Outstanding Awards for two municipalities, two cities, one province and two AEWs during the NQCAA awarding ceremony held on November 12, 2019 at the Iloilo Convention Center, Iloilo City.

Leading the awardees is the Province of La Union which bagged the Outstanding Province Award for the first time and received P3M cash incentive for projects plus a plaque of recognition.

Provincial Agriculturist Col. Ramon F. Laudencia received the award together with DA-RFO I Regional Technical Director for Operations Erlinda F. Manipon and Regional Corn & Cassava Focal Person Ms. Rhoda Galvan.

With the Outstanding Province Award for La Union, Provincial Corn Coordinator Ms. Gloria Salanga also received the Outstanding Provincial Corn Coordinator Award and received a plaque of recognition plus P30,000 cash award.

Bringing honor and pride to Region I are also the Municipalities of Sto. Tomas, Pangasinan and Burgos, Ilocos Sur, both recognized as Hall of Famer Awardees for having achieved the Outstanding Municipality Award for three consecutive years. Each municipality received P2M cash incentives for projects plus plaque of recognition.

With the Hall of Fame Award for their municipalities, Municipal Corn

Coordinators Jojo A. Ayson of Burgos, Ilocos Sur and Ramil R. Bustamante of Sto. Tomas, Pangasinan were also recognized as Outstanding Municipal Corn Coordinators and both received P40,000 cash incentive plus Plaque of Recognition.

For the Outstanding City/Municipality Award, the cities of Vigan, Ilocos Sur and Laoag, Ilocos Norte bagged the award receiving P1M cash incentive for projects each plus plaque of recognition. City Agriculturists Mr. Rodolfo C. Peralta (Vigan City) and Ms. Marilyn G. Martin (Laoag City) received cash awards of P30,000 plus plaque of recognition as Outstanding Municipal/City Agriculturists while City Corn Coordinators Mr. Lito A. Forneas (Vigan City) and Sheila Marie N. Opelac (Laoag City) each received P25,000 cash award plus plaque of recognition as Outstanding Municipal/City Corn Coordinators.

For their exceptional performance as Agricultural Extension Workers under the Corn Banner Program, Manuel O. Luis, Jr. of Binalonan, Pangasinan and Janet C. Paulino of Laoag City, Ilocos Norte were awarded as Outstanding Agricultural Extension Workers. Both received cash award of P20,000 plus plaque of recognition.

DA Undersecretary for Operations Engr. Ariel T. Cayanán who represented DA Secretary William D. Dar handed out the awards to the winners and read the message of Sec. Dar where he lauded the

REGION SHINES AT NQCAA 2019

efforts of the Local Government Units in supporting the programs and projects of DA under the corn banner program.

One of the measure of success of an undertaking he said is the number of years it has successfully staged an event. Hence, he congratulated the Philippine Maize Federation Inc. (PhilMaize), in coordination with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) as it holds the 15th Philippine National Corn Congress incorporating the 7th NCQAA, the 3rd Cornucopia Award and the 3rd Cassava Cluster Management Excellence Awards.

Also mentioned in the Secretary's message is that DAs efforts in pursuing Food Security also reflects the President's desire on how food should be provided to everybody in four forms. It should be made available, accessible, affordable and must satisfy the nutritional requirement. Cayanan then mentioned the various goals to further boost quality production of corn in the country not only for human consumption but also as feeds for animals and how the country can successfully penetrate the export market by complying to Good Agricultural Practices and other requirements of the export market.

Cayanan encouraged the participants to seize the opportunity to learn and likewise share the lessons from the congress.

"With the conduct of this congress, amid all the awards, what matters most is that there should be outcomes,

inputs and outputs as a result of this activity," he said.

Sharing his insights on what makes one outstanding as he congratulated the winners, Cayanan said "It is when one works hard to acquire it (knowledge), when you apply it and when you teach it."

This perhaps is what makes Region I outstanding as far as corn production is concerned. Achieving 237% sufficiency level in corn since 2018, and having the best quality corn grain in the country, the continued partnership between DA-RFO I and the Local Government Units, hand-in-hand with the sustained efforts to improve corn production in the region, empowerment of corn farmers and sharing its best corn production practices to other regions, Region I remains a formidable contender in the National Quality Corn Achievers Awards.//



DA-RFO I RESEARCHERS WIN SILVER AWARDS IN NAT'L SYMPOSIUM



OIC-RTD for Research and Regulations, Dr. Jovita M. Datuin (From L-8th person), along with the other DA-RFO I researchers poses for posterity with BAR officials during the awarding ceremony for the BAR-hosted event, the 31st National Research Symposium.

Bringing pride and honor to the DA-Ilocos Region family, the research group led by Ms. Melinda Calumpit, Senior Science Research Specialist, bagged the Silver Award for Best Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) Paper under the Organic Agriculture Category during the 31st National Research Symposium held at The Sulo Riviera Hotel, Quezon City.

An award concurred by the Bureau of Agricultural Research, their paper titled “Technology Promotion and Utilization of Organically-Grown Soybean in Region I” is among the 27 paper-finalists that qualified for presentation at the national level after passing the 85% and above rating from the Board of Judges

consists of agricultural research-experts.

For this year’s selection of research papers, a total of 199 researches were submitted by various research institutions in the country to BAR for the research-experts’ evaluation and scrutiny.

Out of these number of papers, 80 papers passed the 80% qualifier-rating.

Aside from the paper of Calumpit, two other researches from the DA-RFO I were included as qualifier-papers which were written and presented by the researchers led by Dr. Debbie Aloha Davalos, Ruel Ramos, and Lu Jane Inso. The two papers

were titled “Validity of Site-specific Nutrient Management (SSNM) Generated from Nutrient Expert for Hybrid Maize: A Management Decision Support Tool for Corn Farmers in Pangasinan” and the “Utilization of *Metharizium anisopliae* (Metschn.) Sorokin for the Management of Rice Black Bug (*Scotinophara coarctata* Fabricus) of Rice in Region I.”

Meanwhile, as a second place winner, Calumpit received P75,000 cash award and a citation during the Opening Program plus P10,000 cash prize and a plaque of recognition. The group of Davalos and Inso, as qualifiers, also received from BAR cash incentives of P10,000 each plus a citation. //

DA – RFO1 CULMINATES NRAM 2019



November 22, 2019 – In support to the annual celebration of the National Rice Awareness Month every November, DA Ilocos once again spearheaded a 5K Fun Run activity and this time, included the Rice MasterChef challenge in response to this year's theme of "Buy local. Eat local. Support our Rice Farmers."

Rice farmers in the country has been greatly affected by the impacts of the implementation of the Rice Tariffication law, the inevitable dropping of price of palay, onslaught of typhoons, among others causing tremendous downfall on their income.

Being one with the farmers, RTD for Operations Erlinda F. Manipon noted the noble role of farmers in the Filipino society.

“Our farmers are the one who produce what we eat in our daily lives, however, they are still the one who are in the bottom. So, we should also do our small share as consumers. We should share and promote our sense of ‘Riceponsibility,’” she said.

The 5K runners competed for the top three prizes for both men & women category worth P3,500, P2,500 and P2,000. All runners got certificates, free singlet and breakfast.

For the men category winners were Mr. Jenmark Daprosa as the first placer followed by Mr. Mark Lester Quigao, 2nd placer, and Mr. Michael Castro third placer.

For the women category, Ms. Amie Tacla bagged the 1st place award, followed by Ms. Evelyn Gavina as 2nd placer and Ms. Cathy Pastor as 3rd placer. Other than the cash award, winners also received certificate of recognition.

For the Rice MasterChef Challenge, DA-RFO I employees were grouped into five teams, each team is composed of five members from different division offices. The participants presented their best cookeries in the main and side dish categories highlighting the use of brown rice or rice-corn mix in their dishes.

OUR FARMERS ARE THE ONE WHO PRODUCE WHAT WE EAT IN OUR DAILY LIVES, HOWEVER, THEY ARE STILL THE ONE WHO ARE IN THE BOTTOM. SO, WE SHOULD ALSO DO OUR SMALL SHARE AS CONSUMERS. WE SHOULD SHARE AND PROMOTE OUR SENSE OF ‘RICEPONSIBILITY’



Winners for the fun run in the men and women category.



For the first place in the main dish category, the 'Pan Fried Bangus Spanish Rice' of Team ILIARC & Research Division was chosen by the judges, followed by the 'Lu-ki ni INREC' of Team INREC - second, 'Corn-mix Arroz Valenciana' of Team FOD - third, and 'Seafood Paella' of Team AFD - fourth.

On the other hand, side dish category was again dominated by Team ILIARC & Research Division having the first place with their 'Fried Tofu with Spicy Oyster Sauce Glaze' dish. Other dishes that won in this category were the 'Corn Mix Latik' of Team FOD as second placer, 'Corn Pudding' of Team INREC as third placer, and 'Rice

Cake with Caramel' of the Team AFD as fourth placer.

In each category, winners brought home cash prizes worth Php 5,000 for the first place, Php 3,750 for the second place, Php 3,000 for the third place, Php 2,500 for the fourth place. The board of judges were spearheaded by DA-RFO 1 RTD for Operations Ms. Erlinda F. Manipon and RTD for Research & Development Dr. Jovita M. Datuin.

The competition not only promoted patronage of local rice but fostered teamwork as well among the competing teams.//



DAR LEADS PANGASINAN LECHON FESTIVAL

Assuring the public that Pangasinan's pork products and by-products are safe to eat, Department of Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar led the conduct of Lechon Festival through "boodle fights" held in Urdaneta City and Rosales, Pangasinan on December 1, 2019.

Organized by the Federation of Hog Raisers Association in Pangasinan and the local government units of Urdaneta and Rosales, in partnership with the Abono Partylist, the Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) and private entities, the Lechon Festival is among the strategies of DA and private entities to put at rest the uncertainties of pork consumers regarding the effects of

African Swine Fever (ASF).

In his message during the activity, Dar urged the public to help the government in preventing the spread of ASF by reporting cases of abnormal hog deaths in their areas to the City or Municipal Offices or the Office of the Provincial Veterinarian for them to coordinate with the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI).

With the established quarantine measures and observing the 1-7-10 protocol, he reminded the traders to stop buying ASF-infected hogs, more so in slaughtering them to stop spreading the disease.

"Sa mga traders po natin, huwag bumili ng mga baboy at kakatayin

ang mga may sakit na dahil kayo ang magkakalat na ng sakit," Dar urged.

Dar assured the public that there is enough supply of pork meat and meat products this Christmas season as there is even a reported over production by the hog raisers.

"The hog industry is P260 billion industry. Kaya dapat lamang na pangalagaan natin ang industriyang ito," he added.

Meanwhile, of the 13 million total hog population in the country, Dar announced that only less than one percent is infected with ASF.//



Sec. Dar leads the boodle fight along with the key officials of the city of Urdaneta and municipality of Rosales, Pangasinan.



DA PROVIDES PROTOCOLS ON RCEF

With the intent to discuss and inform the stakeholders with regard to the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), DA RFO I thru the rice banner program convened the municipal and city agriculturists and rice program coordinators in the region for a special meeting held at the Farmers' Pavilion, Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan and Philrice, Batac, Ilocos Norte on October 17 and 18, respectively.

Dr. Annie Q. Bares, Chief of the DA-RFO I Operations Division, underscored the RCEF program and how it can benefit farmers.

RCEF is a program which allows farmers to gain more interventions from the tariffs collected on rice imports.

However, an individual farmer must be included in the Registry System for Basic Sector in Agriculture (RSBSA) and farmers' group must be accredited by the Department of Agriculture to be considered eligible.

With this, Ms. Josephine Cabanban, Supervising Agriculturist, presented the guidelines for the accreditation of farmers' cooperative and associations (FCAs) as beneficiaries of the rice fund.

She briefly discussed the general requirements which include: letter of intent, valid certificate from recognized government agency, farmer association profile with names of officials and members,

omnibus sworn certification and endorsement from the MAFC or LGU.

Duly registered FOs/FAs, irrigators associations/SWISAs/ARBOs, government-organized NGOs/POs accredited by RFOs, and agriculture-based MPCs are the entities that can apply for DA accreditation.

Also highlighted during the meeting was the updating of the said data system wherein Ms. Leah P. Coloma, discussed the protocol for registration and updating of the RSBSA.

Upon the provision of the official enrollment form by the ICTS, Regional Field Offices are in-charge



RCEF IS A PROGRAM WHICH ALLOWS FARMERS TO GAIN MORE INTERVENTIONS FROM THE TARIFFS COLLECTED ON RICE IMPORTS.

of the distribution of enrollment forms with control numbers to local government units.

The enrollment forms will be distributed to their respective areas for the farmers and FCA's that are not yet included or registered in the registry system.

Requirements needed in the application for registration are 2x2 ID pictures, a copy of the land title or any written proof or agreement for the lessee/tenant, and any of the following government-issued IDs: national ID, SSS ID, GSIS ID, UMID card, postal ID, TIN ID, passport, PRC ID, OWWA ID, DOLE, voter's ID, senior's ID, and school ID for students.

Completely filled out forms shall

be certified true and correct by the MAO/CAO, MAFC/CAFC, or barangay officials before submitting to the respective LGU. Farmers will be given enrollment stub with control number and official stamp by the MAO/CAO upon submission of fully accomplished forms. MAO/CAO shall then endorse the enrollment forms to RFOs.

The RSBSA is a registry of farmers, fisher folk, and farm laborers that will be used by DA and other agencies in identifying beneficiaries for the provision of interventions under the RCEF and other government programs and services including farm machinery, high-quality seeds, trainings and services, and loan programs. //

PANGASINAN FAs RECEIVE MORE THAN PHP 66M WORTH OF MACHINERIES



The Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 1 (DA – RFO1) through its three banner programs – Rice, Corn and the High Value Crops and Development Program, distributed Php 66,219,357 worth of farm machineries and equipment to 48 farmer associations from the fifth district of Pangasinan on October 4, 2019 at the Pangasinan Research and Experiment Center (PREC), Tebag, Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan.

The distributed farm machineries were four-wheel drive tractor, combine harvester, hand tractor, riding-type transplanter, walk-behind transplanter, mobile dryer, hauling truck, seed cleaner, compact rice mill, water pump, corn planter, corn sheller, two-row planter, power sprayer, knapsack sprayer, HDPE pipes, plastic drum, plastic crates, fermentation box, pole pruner, and moisture meter.

During the program, Ms. Erlinda F. Manipon – OIC Regional Technical Director for Operations assured the farmer associations that the DA will continually respond to the needs of the farmers especially on their request for equipment and machineries that will improve their productivity.

"May these projects help you increase your productivity and income so that we can achieve our Secretary of Agriculture's goal which is, 'Masaganang Ani, Mataas na Kita.'

"Together we can achieve this goal if we unite," Manipon emphasized to the farmers.

Meanwhile, Hon. Ramon V. Guico III, Congressman of the 5th District of Pangasinan expressed his gratitude to the Department of Agriculture for this kind of project

on farm mechanization as it will provide greater opportunities for farmers to achieve efficient farming. He also assured that he will support whatever project/programs that the DA would implement to improve the agri-sector in the province.

"The government is giving you free interventions, you must work harmoniously together so that every member in your association will feel the impact of this kind of project," Guico said.

"Everyone must be able to freely use the machinery/equipment given to your association," he added.

In addition to the machineries distributed, the DA also provided Php2,781,600 worth of inbred seeds and Php 6,072,000 worth of hybrid seeds to the qualified beneficiaries. //

PANGASINAN FARMERS RECEIVE 22.4M FROM SURE AID LOAN PROGRAM



A total of 1,497 farmers of Pangasinan particularly from the Municipalities of Alaminos, Balungao, Bolinao, Bautista, Calasiao, Dasol, Mabini, Malasiqui, Mangaldan, Mangatarem, Natividad and San Manuel received their Survival and Recovery Assistance (SURE Aid) Program Loan cash cards worth 22.4M from the Department of Agriculture - Agricultural and Credit Policy Council (DA - ACPC) on October 30, 2019 thru the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) during the Launching and Awarding of the SURE Aid Program at the Sison Auditorium, Lingayen, Pangasinan.

During the program, Ms. Filipina B. Monje – Senior Vice President of the Northern Central Luzon Lending Group-LBP, explained that the SURE Aid aims to provide immediate relief to rice farmers affected by the impact of low palay prices as a result of the Rice Tariffication Law.

Meanwhile, Dir. Alicia G. Ilaga – ACPC Director II also explained that the program which is a one-time loan assistance of P15,000 is extended to rice farmers who are farming one hectare and below at 0% interest rate payable for eight years.

“The payment is made easy for you kasi isang cavan lang ng bigas ang ibabayad niyo kada anim na buwan,” Ilaga said.

According to the LBP, for the other farmer-beneficiaries of the Municipalities of Pangasinan who were not included during the launching of the program, LBP personnel will set another schedule and personally go to their respective municipalities to distribute their cash card loan.//



DA-ACPC-LBP ROLL OUT FIRST SET OF SURE AID CASH CARDS

Around 179 farmers in Ilocos Norte affected by the rice tariffication law received assistance from the government through the expanded Survival and Recovery or SURE Aid loan program on October 17, 2019 at the Provincial Agriculture Office in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte.

SURE Aid provides one-time loan assistance of P15,000 to rice farmers tilling one hectare and below at zero percent interest rate payable in eight years.

Mr. Cesar N. Ulpindo, assistant Vice President of Landbank Ilocos Sur lending center, told farmers that payment will start a year after the issuance of their cash cards. Each farmer is required to pay P1,000 every six (6) months.

Out of the targeted allocation for Ilocos Norte, 744 farmers are yet to receive their cash cards once made available for distribution.

RTD for Operations, Erlinda F. Manipon made clear to farmers that not every farmer affected by rice tariffication law will receive the financial assistance.

The program will initially benefit farmers listed in the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture or RSBSA prioritizing those who are severely affected by the law.

The SURE aid loan program aims to provide loan assistance for immediate relief to small rice farmers that are affected by rice liberalization. This program also intends to help farmers regain their capacity to continue their production.

As part of the loan program, the National Food Authority will buy all the palay harvest of the farmers as mandated by DA Secretary William Dar.//



FARMERS JOIN NEXT-GEN VARIETY SELECTION



The Department of Agriculture-RFO I through the Ilocos Norte Research and Experiment Center (INREC) in Batac City, Ilocos Norte engaged farmers in the selection of the next generation varieties of palay seeds through the participatory varietal selection activity under its NextGen Plus Project entitled “Efficient Deployment Systems for NextGen Varieties Enhanced Genetically Through Modern Breeding Technologies Contributing to Increased Productivity in the Philippines.”

A collaborative project of the DA, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), the Provincial Government of Ilocos Norte and Local Government Unit of Laoag City, the research-managed participatory varietal

selection aims to evaluate the yield performance, agronomic characteristics, and adaptability conditions of new generations rice varieties produced by the plant breeders as bases for recommendations for commercial development and production.

On its field day on October 9, 2019, result of the study revealed that Laoag City farmers preferred NSIC Rc512 as their palay seed to be used for planting based on the standing crop that they have seen during the field day. The NSIC Rc222, a variety which is familiar to the farmers was the least preferred variety due to its non-shattering ability.

Nonetheless, in the report made by Ms. Rheina Banquirig, the Project Coordinator of the NextGen Plus project of INREC as a result of the crop cutting activity that her team conducted, they have identified

the NSIC Rc514 as the highest yielder from among the eight varieties tested in the study with 7.23 tons per hectare of yield. With a productive tiller of 19 and a plant height of 104 cm., this variety is an early maturing type for it can be harvested within 108 days.

Another high yielding variety that was tested in the project is the NSIC Rc512 variety posting an average yield of 7.13 tons per hectare followed by NSIC Rc510 with the highest plant height of 126 cms.

Considering the yield, days of maturity and plant height – among the major consideration for recommending rice seeds to be planted, the varieties such as the NSIC Rc514, NSIC Rc512 and NSIC Rc510 were among the varieties recommended by the project coordinator for further production by the seed growers which can be distributed in irrigated areas such as Brgy. Vira in Laoag.

Mr. Rhollie Pidong, the farmer cooperator of

the project, in his testimony, expressed his appreciation on the conduct of the varietal selection project as it provided him and his fellow farmers the opportunity to use new technologies in rice production especially on balance fertilization and the use of Rice Crop Manager (RCM) with the guidance of the researchers from DA and LGU Laoag.

RCM is a computer-generated recommendation on the use of fertilizer in rice production to optimize yield and production. Comparing this technology on the usual farmers' practice, Pidong was able to save on his cost of production as the technology provides guidance on the right amount and proper timing of fertilizer application.

Giving farmers another consideration in selecting their preferred varieties of rice for planting, the DA-INREC in cooperation with the farmer-cooperator will also be conducting a sensory evaluation of the eight varieties tested through the conduct of taste test to determine the eating-quality of the eight varieties tested. //



NEXTGEN PLUS PROJECT GIVES FARMERS BETTER RICE VARIETY CHOICES

Giving farmers better options of seeds for rice planting, the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office I through the Ilocos Norte Research and Experiment Center (INREC) based in Batac City, Ilocos Norte, conducted a Participatory Varietal Selection (PVS) through the NextGen Plus Project of the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

A project in collaboration with the Provincial Government of Ilocos Sur and the Local Government Unit of Sinait, it aims to identify suitable varieties for rainfed ecosystem based on the enhanced varieties genetically produced through modern breeding technologies to increase rice production and yield.

Established during the wet cropping season in Brgy. Teppeng, Sinait, Ilocos Sur, the PVS under the NextGen Plus project showcased seven varieties newly developed by the rice experts of PhilRice and IRRI, with IR64 and NSIC Rc27 as among the check varieties.

The other six varieties planted include NSIC Rc346, NSIC Rc416, NSIC Rc418, NSIC Rc478, NSIC Rc480 and PSB Rc82.

Based on the result of the varietal selection participated in by the farmers of Sinait including technical experts in the municipality and in the province as reported by Ms. Reina Banquirig, the Project Coordinator from the DA-RFO I during its Field Day on October 6, 2019, the NSIC Rc 418 and the NSIC Rc480 were among the preferred rice seed varieties of the farmers based on the observed physical standing of the crops planted.

However, Mr. Everlito Coloma, the farmer cooperador of the

project revealed that from among the eight varieties planted, the NSIC Rc346 gave the highest yield of 6.61 tons/ha. followed by NSIC Rc416 with 6.39 tons/ha. based on the crop cutting activity conducted by the project coordinator.

“Although NSIC Rc346 gives



the highest yield from among the tested varieties, farmers preferred other variety due to the lodging issue of the NSIC Rc346. This may be because of their concern in harvesting their crops. Lodge crops tend to be more laborious during harvesting time as compared to non-lodge crop,” Banquirig said.

Lodging is the bending over of the stems near ground level of grain crops, which makes them very difficult to harvest, and can dramatically reduce yield.

Having validated and identified

the preferred rice varieties for the specific ecosystem in Sinait, Mr. Oscar Tobia, the Provincial Agriculturist of Ilocos Sur, encouraged the seed growers of Ilocos Sur to consider producing the preferred varieties of the farmers including the highest yielder for possible distribution to the farmers who wanted to plant the identified varieties.

Other than the high yield as the foremost consideration in choosing seed varieties to plant, Tobia also considered the resistance to drought, resistance to pests and

diseases as among the major consideration.

“The good eating quality will come next as one of the consideration and its demand in the market,” he added.

To determine the eating quality of the eight varieties tested in the research study, farmers from LGU Sinait were invited for a taste test to better identify which of the varieties planted would be preferred by the consumers. //





Established in a 10-hectare area, involving 24 farmer-cooperators, this cassava model farm project used the golden yellow cassava variety and 1m x 1m distance of planting following three treatments that focused on varied fertilizer applications.

ADDING FARMERS' INCOME THROUGH CASSAVA PRODUCTION

"Cassava farming is a profitable enterprise if given the right technology," noted Mr. John Leo Bungubong, the Project Leader of the Cassava Model Farm established in Binalonan, Pangasinan, as a result of the cost and return analysis of the one-hectare cassava farming that he presented during the farmers' field day on October 25, 2019.

The Cassava Model Farm is a project initiated by the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office I in collaboration with the Local Government Units that aims to showcase mechanized farming in cassava production while improving the productivity of the commodity and consequently increase the production and income of

farmers in the region.

Established in a 10-hectare area, involving 24 farmer-cooperators, the project used the golden yellow cassava variety and 1m x 1m distance of planting following three treatments that focused on varied fertilizer applications.

Treatment 1 involves the



This model farm project in Binalonan, Pangasinan aims to showcase mechanized farming in cassava production for an increased income and production of farmers.

general recommendation or the farmer's practice in the area (use of urea fertilizer only), while treatment 2 uses the general recommendation plus the use of 8 bags complete and one bag muriate of potash. Treatment 3 includes the general recommendation, plus the use of soil ameliorant.

Based on the computed yield per hectare cassava production as a result of the crop cut conducted by the DA team, treatment 3 yielded the highest productivity as it recorded 24.0 tons/ha followed by treatment 2 with 18.5 tons/ha yield.

Treatment 2 showed the lowest computed average yield as it only recorded 17.5 tons/ha., but way higher than the regional cassava average yield with only 9 tons/ha according as per data of Philippine Statistics Authority.

With a cost of production ranging from P32,950 – P33,650 in all

the three treatments, Bungubong revealed that treatment three or the general recommendation plus the use of soil ameliorant gives a high return of investment with 390.84% for every peso invested.

Having realized the potential of cassava farming as a profitable business enterprise, farmers in Binalonan like Mr. Riley Navarro and Mr. Loreto Aradanas expressed gratitude to the DA-RFO I and the LGU of Binalonan for the conduct of the cassava model farm.

"Nagpapasalamat kami sa DA at sa LGU-Binalonan sa proyektong ito at sana mabigyan kami ng soil ameliorant na ginamit namin dito sa model farm dahil napatunayan namin na epektibo ito sa kamoteng kahoy at iba pang uri ng pananim (We're very grateful to DA and the LGU-Binalonan for this project and we hope to be given soil ameliorant which we used for this model farm as we seen how effective it

is for cassava and other crops)," Aradanas enthused.

To encourage more farmers to engage in cassava production, Ms. Rhoda Galban, Focal Person on Corn in Ilocos Region, announced the readiness of DA in providing production support to farmers like machineries and equipment such as cassava planter and digger to ease their cassava production.

She also encouraged the farmers' organization in the area to organize and form into cluster for them to have a chance in winning the DA's Cassava Cluster Excellent Award which provides winning cluster associations with P5M cash prize.

"As early as now, you need to prepare your cluster development plan, register your association into cluster for you to have more chances of winning in the said excellent award." Galban said.//



Agriculture Chief, Sec. William D. Dar visited the Province of Ilocos Sur particularly the Municipality of Tagudin and Sta. Maria for two consecutive days on December 27-28, 2019 to attend and distribute Department of Agriculture's (DA) projects and programs.

Sec. Dar led the Awarding Ceremonies for the Outstanding Tobacco Growers of the Year (TGY) at the newly established National Tobacco Administration (NTA) Tobacco Farmers Training building in Tagudin, Ilocos Sur which was also inaugurated on December 27, 2019.

DAR VISITS

The Tobacco Grower of the Year is a competition among tobacco farmers of the same tobacco type and sub-type which aims to inspire excellence and innovativeness among the tobacco farmers and encourage them to develop entrepreneurial skills in their farming project,

In his message during the program, Sec. Dar lauded the tobacco farmers who really deserve to be recognized "because they have the highest contribution in the government through the RA 7171", he said.

The Department of Agriculture brings more aid to rice farmers affected by the low buying price of palay as it gave P5,000 financial assistance to farmers during the launching of the Rice Farmers Financial Assistance (RFFA) Program.

Agriculture Secretary, William D. Dar said that RFFA is not a loan program but an unconditional cash transfer to farmers affected by RTL. "This is part of the nationwide response of the national government to assist palay farmers in the

ILOCOS SUR; DISTRIBUTES DA PROJECTS

He also urged the farmers to encourage their children to embrace agriculture and support for the tobacco industry.

"We need also to encourage our children to go back into farming. I know the process is hard. But if you compare the income of rice farming from tobacco farming, there is double income in tobacco farming. This could be made possible if we introduce to them the Agri-business incubation for sustainable and economic development," Sec. Dar

added.

On his second day of visit, he led the distribution of the different interventions of the agency for the Lingap sa Barangay program held at Barangay Danuman West, Sta. Maria, Ilocos Sur.

Lingap sa Barangay is a program of the Department of Agriculture for the remote areas where interventions from DA are directly handed out to the beneficiaries.

A total of Php12,149,605.50

worth of projects were distributed through the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 1 under the Rice, Corn, and the High Value Crops and Development Program.

The distributed projects consist of Hybrid and Certified Seeds worth of Php140,160.00; Yellow and White Corn Seeds worth Php144,445.50; Assorted Vegetable Seeds and Mango grafted/fruit bearing seedlings with Php480,000.00 and three (3) units combine harvester worth Php11,385,000.00.//

RFFA LAUNCHED IN PANGASINAN

country", he said.

There are 33 provinces affected by the implementation of the rice tariffication law and farmers who are tilling two hectares and below will receive the cash aid.

"There are provincial governments who are helping in managing palay prices and provide assistance to farmers, we will also provide support to them by incentivizing them", Sec. Dar added.

The government allocated a total

fund of 3 billion pesos for 2019 and another 3 billion will be allocated for next year.

The launching was held in Lingayen, Pangasinan on December 23, 2019 with an initial of 500 rice farmers from the town of Mangataram who received their cash cards from the Landbank of the Philippines.

For the province of Pangasinan, around 87,175 farmers are qualified to receive the P5,000 cash assistance until March 2020.//

One of the beneficiaries of the RFFA cash grant successfully withdraws his Php 5,000 worth of cash assistance.



PROPOSED CONVERGENCE INITIATIVE SET IN NATIVIDAD



OIC-RTD for Operations Erlinda F. Manipon along with the officials of the municipality of Natividad, Pangasinan leads the ribbon cutting ceremony for the launching of the Lipad Natividad Convergence Area Development Plan.

The Regional Convergence Initiative for Sustainable Rural Development (RCI-SRD) led by the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office I launched on December 12, 2019 the Lipad Natividad Convergence Area Development Plan (CADP).

This CADP is a comprehensive plan which addresses the management and rehabilitation of the Caraballo Mountain as a watershed within the jurisdiction of the convergence area through forest protection and restoration. It will likewise uplift the socio-economic well-being of the people within the convergence area mainly those living near the Caraballo Mountain.

This convergence is a strategy to help reduce poverty and enhance the implementation of sustainable rural development in the area through various proposals which include the construction of small water impounding system (SWIS); reforestation of open areas suited for high-value tree crops; establishment of high-value crop plantations; establishment of nurseries; production of organic fertilizers; construction of tourist attractions, trails and hanging bridges; assistance to the mushroom growers; establishment of renewable energy sources and multiplier farm, construction of farm to market roads and irrigation canals and provision of machineries.

The proposed convergence will benefit six barangays in the Municipality of Natividad which include San Eugenio, Salud, Batchelor East, Cacandongan, San Macario Norte, and San Macario Sur.

The program was jointly participated by the RCI-SRD members spearheaded by DA, DAR, DENR, and DILG including the expanded members such as the DOST, DSWD, DTI, DOLE, ATI, and PSU. The project beneficiaries which comprises of different cooperatives in the area also came in full force to support the launching of the CADP.//



DA-RFO1 HOSTS DA-HVCRC ASSESSMENT

“Focus, unify, collaborate and coordinate.”

Executive Assistant and Chief of Staff of the High Value Crops Programs and Rural Credit (HVCRC) of the Department of Agriculture, Atty. Joycel Panlilio addressed this to the Regional High Value Crops Programs Coordinators, Focal Persons and Report Officers of the 16 regions in her Opening Remarks during the Opening Program of the 2019 Annual Assessment and Planning Workshop conducted at Pangil Beach Resort, Brgy. Pangil, Currimao, Ilocos Norte.

Held on Dec. 9-12, 2019, the activity aims to assess the catch-up plans made by the Regional Coordinators from the previous assessment under the HVCRC Programs and to plan the road map of both programs for implementation this coming CY

2020.

In drawing out the road map of both programs, Sec. Panlilio reminded the participants of the planning workshop to consider the priority programs of Sec. William Dar in making their plans/programs and projects in their respective regions anchored on the DA's battle cry “Masaganang Ani at Mataas na Kita.”

Making a big leap in the performance of the High Value Crops from 56% in CY 2017 to 74% in CY 2018, Atty. Panlilio expressed his congratulations to the HVCDP group for their support and commitment in realizing their plans and programs that benefit high value crops farmers.


Meanwhile, in her message during the Opening Program, DA-RFO I's Regional Technical Director for Operations, Ms. Erlinda Manipon reminded the participants to consider the whole value chain in making their plans and programs which should focus on the “seed to table” concept in order to realize higher production and income.

With the presence of private sectors and the members of the Secretary's Transition team during the event who were able to share their expertise on Entrepreneurship, Farm Consolidation and other Farming Technologies for High Value Crops Production, Ms. Manipon encouraged everyone to actively participate as this activity provides good learning opportunity for both the private and public sectors.

In her message during the 2nd day of the event, Undersecretary for HVCRC, Ms. Evelyn Laviña underscored the importance of good production value chain.

“We need to know and understand the agricultural value chain. Ang dapat mangyari ngayon (what we need to do now) is to produce quality, quantity, GAP certified and ready for the world market agricultural products,” Usec La Viña said.

Among the priority commodities that the DA-HVCRC would focus in the coming years according to Usec La Viña include bananas, pineapple, coffee, cacao, vegetables and abaca.//



L to R page. Sites visited in Adams, Ilocos Norte during the pre-assessment jointly conducted by the DA-RFO1 Regulatory staff and BPI.

FARMS IN ADAMS, ILOCOS NORTE QUALIFY FOR GAP CERTIFICATION

12 farms in Adams, Ilocos Norte are qualified for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification after the pre-assessment held on October 14-18, 2019.

All of the 12 farm-applicants gained 87-91% score which means that the farms are qualified to be GAP certified, however, they still need to comply on some lacking requirements to be 100% GAP certified.

These farms were located particularly in the sitios of Malaggao, Maligligay, Bantay, and Centro.

Names of the farms were: Inuwayan Farm 1,2 & 3; Wilma's Farm 1 & 2; Yao's Farm 1 & 2; Rona's Farm; Cardom's Farm; Evelyn's Farm; and Hill side & Hill top farm.

Owners produce commodities such as bugnay, rambotan, lansones, pineapple, dragon fruit, roselle, herbs, among others.

GAP is a certification given to farms producing crops in a way that it does not compromise the safety of the environment hence does not use farm inputs that is harmful to the environment at the same time producing quality and safe food.

The standard specifies the requirements of GAP with respect to all types of fresh fruits and vegetables covering activities such as production, harvesting and post-harvest, handling of farm produce and packaging of their produce prior to marketing.

One good advantage of a GAP certified farm is that it commands a higher price for the commodity produced compared to those from non-GAP certified farms.

This was jointly conducted by the staff members of the DA-RFO 1 Regulatory Division and Bureau of Plant Industry. //



DA CHIEF EYES 2.5-3% Q4 2019 AGRI GROWTH

Story taken from Sec. Dar's Official FB page

The Philippines' agriculture sector is set to post a robust growth of at least 2.5 percent (%) in the last three months of 2019, despite natural and man-made challenges.

Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar said the country's agri-fishery sector is expected to grow modestly from 2.5% to 3.0% in the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2019, a big jump from the 1.8% growth posted during the same period in 2018.

"We are hopeful that favorable conditions were sustained in the fourth quarter, allowing us to attain a full-year growth target of at least

2%," Dar said.

To recall, the farm and fishery sector grew by only 0.64% in the first three months of 2019 and contracted further to -1.23% in the second quarter, mainly due to the adverse effects of El Niño on the crops subsector.

The sector recovered during the third quarter, posting a faster-than-expected 2.87% growth.

Since August 2019, or barely five months in office, the newly-confirmed agri chief faced major challenges that included falling

prices of palay and copra, high retail price of rice, outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF), fall armyworm infestation in corn, and typhoons that wreaked havoc in major crops.

"Our prompt implementation of decisive measures to arrest falling prices of palay, as well as the imposition of strict biosecurity and quarantine measures to manage, control and contain ASF were the key factors in upturning the crops and hog subsectors, respectively," said Dar.

Early warning announcements have also helped minimize losses

— THE —
SECRETARY'S
CORNER



THE STORY OF PHILIPPINE AGRICULTURE IN 2019 IS THAT OF HOPE AND A GROWING SENSE OF OPTIMISM ON THE FUTURE OF THE SECTOR THAT HAS BEEN — FOR THE LONGEST TIME — THE BIGGEST DRAG ON OUR ECONOMY.

from typhoons.

For instance, he cited during 'Typhoon Tisoy,' the agriculture sector was able to save P12-billion (B) worth of crops in Luzon and the Visayas due to early preparations made by the DA and local government units (LGUs) prior to the storm's landfall.

This included P11.6-B worth of palay harvested from 157,000 hectares and P109-million worth of corn crops planted in 2,000 hectares.

"The Department of Agriculture was able to meet head-on and temper the effects of both man-made and natural calamities through the strong cooperation with LGUs, agri-fishery industry leaders, the academe, farmers' and fishers' groups, and with the full support of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, finance secretary Carlos Dominguez, and colleagues in the Cabinet, particularly the economic development cluster," the DA chief said.

"We remained firm and focused on our vision of a food-secure Philippines with prosperous farmers and fishers, advocating our battlecry: 'Masaganang ani at mataas na kita'," he added.

"The story of Philippine agriculture in 2019 is that of hope and a growing sense of optimism on the future of the sector

that has been — for the longest time — the biggest drag on our economy," he said.

"We are optimistic that the growth will be sustained in the last two and a half years of the Duterte administration, as we improve productivity and increase incomes of farmers and fishers, attract more investments, and encourage more local chief executives to perform their role as food security czars," the DA chief added.

"Indeed, as Finance Secretary Dominguez said at the recent Agribusiness Summit in Davao City, the agriculture sector is a sleeping giant. But with the right policy and mechanisms and, more importantly, vigorous support from all quarters, this sleeping giant can become the force by which more contribution to the gross domestic product will happen," Dar said.

To realize this target, he intends to lead the DA with laser-like focus to carry out programs faster and with greater precision.

For 2020, the DA proposed a P71.8-billion budget, 12% higher than the P64-billion appropriation given in 2019. This budget puts forth measures designed to encourage small business initiatives, facilitate credit, and stimulate economic progress through the competition.

For the remaining years of the Duterte administration, Dar assured effective and proper implementation of various components of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) program, including the revision and finalization of the Philippine Rice Industry Roadmap.

Dar also aims to consolidate smallholder farmers to allow them to compete in a liberalized trade environment, enhance disease prevention and surveillance systems to protect crops and animal industry from major disease, and establish strong and functional animal diagnostic laboratories nationwide.

He is also pushing for the crafting of up-to-date and strategic industry and commodity road maps guided by the goals of productivity, competitiveness, profitability, resilience, and sustainability. The DA will also implement a youth entrepreneurs' financing program to attract young Filipinos to actively engage in agri-fishery and agribusiness ventures.

"Rest assured that these programs and plans of actions will be guided by the principles of good governance, transparency, consultative engagement and most importantly, with a greater sense of urgency, as we continue to create a much better narrative for Philippine agriculture," Dar said.//

The rice sector for 2019 has suffered tremendous downfall due to the impacts of the Rice Tariffication Law and onslaught of typhoons along with the series of monsoon rains. Amid these challenges, however, DA has been active in implementing interventions to help farmers recover from their losses. Some of these include loan programs, distribution of seeds, and cash assistance, among others.

