



DAMAG-AGRI

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Region 1 launches BROWN4good Challenge

Be RiCEP[®]NSiBLE





In its consistent effort to promote the healthy benefits of eating brown rice alongside with other good agenda that comes with the challenge, the Department of Agriculture in Ilocos Region launched the BROWN4good Challenge last August 30, 2016 at the DA Regional Office 1 in San Fernando City, La Union. The launching was simultaneously held by all other DA Regional Field Offices in the country.

The Brown4good Challenge is a social media campaign that aims to promote brown rice as good food. Around four hundred (400) guests from the DA attached agencies, national agencies, and Local Government Units from all over the region joined the DA-RFO 1 employees in the regional launching program.

DA-RFO 1 Regional Executive Director Valentino C. Perdido encouraged the participants to eat brown rice not only for the sake of the challenge but to make it as a permanent substitute for white rice considering the higher nutritional value of brown rice as compared to white rice.

According to study, brown rice has more protein, good fats,

vitamins B1, B2, B3, B9 and E, fiber, minerals and antioxidants than white rice. Regular consumption reduces the risk or incidence of type 2 diabetes, cancer, cardio-vascular diseases, lowers blood pressure; and reduces the chance of over-eating because one gets full easily when brown rice is the main staple food.

Aside from the promotion of brown rice for good health and help address the country's problem on undernourishment, the challenge also aims to help the farmers derive higher or additional income by producing brown rice because brown rice demands higher market price than white rice but can be produced in a single rice milling process. The challenge hopes to encourage more demands for brown rice in the market.

Ms. Gloria C. Parong, Regional Information Officer of DA-RFO I discussed among others, how netizens can join the challenge. Through the use of social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, she explained that anyone can participate in the challenge just by eating brown rice. Participants will just have to take photo of their brown rice meal, post it on social



WHAT ARE THE 4 GOODNESS IN THE BROWN4good Challenge?

#BROWN4good #Region1



media either on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, caption the photo with #BROWN4good(space)#region1, and tag their friends.

The other two goodness that come from joining the BROWN4good Challenge aside from the health benefits and raising the incomes of farmers are addressing the problem on hunger because every post of the brown rice meal with the correct caption is equivalent to 100 grams or 1 cup of brown rice which the DA will donate to chosen charities in the region.

Rice Sufficiency is the ultimate goal of the challenge since brown rice has 10% higher milling recovery rate than white rice. More brown rice means more supply for the Filipino people.

A press conference was likewise held as part of the launching program to further intensify the campaign on brown rice. Meanwhile, DA-RFO 1 provided a free lunch of brown rice meal to all the participants which gave an opportunity for the participants to get on with the BROWN4good Challenge as they posted photos of their brown rice meal on social media.###



- ◆ Nutritionally superior in terms of protein, dietary fiber, B1, B2 & B9 vitamins and Vitamin E; minerals, & anti-oxidants
- ◆ Helps reduce the incidence of type 2 diabetes, cancer, and cardio-vascular diseases
- ◆ Lowers blood pressure
- ◆ Reduces the chance of over-eating



- ◆ Higher income for farmers because of direct marketing



- ◆ Helps achieve self-sufficiency because of the 10% higher milling recovery



- ◆ For every hashtag (#), the Department of Agriculture will feed one less fortunate Filipino with brown rice through charities



La Union Provincial Government supports BROWN4good Challenge during Family Day Celebration



Ready...get set...Feast! La Union Provincial Capitol employees with Gov. Francisco Emmanuel R. Ortega III (in white polo and sunglasses) with wife Abono Partylist Representative Vini Nola A. Ortega and their daughter, are all smiles as they get ready for the boodle fight

San Fernando City, La Union – Unified with the advocacy of the Department of Agriculture to promote Brown Rice as a good food and help the government achieve its goal on Rice Sufficiency, the Provincial Government of La Union celebrated its PGLU Family Day via the provincial launching of the #Brown4good Challenge and feasted on brown rice in a boodle fight lunch held at the La Union Provincial Capitol grounds on September 16, 2016.

No less than Provincial Governor Francisco Emmanuel R. Ortega III with his wife ABONO Partylist Representative Vini Nola A. Ortega and their daughter, together with Vice Governor Aureo Augusto Q. Nisce, other key officials, department heads and all employees of the Provincial Capitol Office participated in the launching of the Brown4good Challenge which capped the whole day affair of the province.

The launching activity was spearheaded by the Provincial Agriculture Office and prior to the boodle fight, Provincial Agriculturist (PA) Ms. Imelda Sannadan gave the overview of the Brown4good Challenge. She encouraged the employees to eat brown rice and explained how brown rice differs from white rice, its many nutritional benefits and how it is produced.

One of the reasons why very few are eating brown rice as compared to white rice is because of its availability in the

market. With this, PA Sannadan informed where consumers can avail brown rice aside from the One Stop Agribusiness Center (OSAC) at DA-RFO 1 and with the establishment of a Rice Processing Complex in the province which is soon to open, Sannadan is confident that brown rice will be readily available and accessible to the public at a more affordable market price.

Meanwhile, DA-RFO 1 Regional Executive Director Valentino C. Perdido who was invited as guest speaker was represented by Ms. Gloria C. Parong, the Regional Information Officer.

Ms. Parong conveyed DA's gratitude to the unwavering support of the Provincial Government of La Union to all the programs and projects of the Department and most particular in its bid to attain rice sufficiency.

She explained how everyone can join in the Brown4good Challenge just by taking photos of their brown rice meal, post it on Social Media via Facebook, Twitter or Intstagram accounts and with a caption of #Brown4good #region1. She further explained that every successful post for the Brown4good challenge is equivalent to 1 cup or 100 grams of brown rice which the DA will provide and at the end of the challenge which will be on October 31, 2016, generated proceeds of brown rice will be donated to a chosen charity in the region.

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Provincial Agriculturist (PA) Imelda J. Sannadan (extreme left) with staffs and DA-RFO 1 Regional Information Officer Ms. Gloria Parong (2nd from left) who represented Regional Executive Director Valentino C. Perdido as Guest Speaker during the event. (right photo) A provincial capitol employee serves brown rice at the table as the rest eagerly await the start of the boodle fight.

With much anticipation from the crowd to finally have their feast, Gov. Ortega briefly thanked the DA for a much stronger partnership towards achieving not only rice sufficiency but food security for the whole country, and then later on announced the start of the boodle fight.

Through the BROWN4good Challenge, DA hopes to gather 1 million hashtags from FB, Twitter and Instagram combined and generate a total of P3.5 million worth of brown rice which will be donated to local charities.###

BAFPS consult Ilocos farmers to create national standards for non-food agricultural commodities



Comments/suggestions of stakeholders of non-food agricultural commodities in Region 1 are given much consideration and importance by BAFPS in the development of the standard for GAP of Non-food agricultural commodities.

Bantay, Ilocos Sur – The Bureau Of Agriculture & Fisheries Standards (BAFPS) in coordination with the Department of Agriculture – Regional Field Office 1 (DA-RFO 1) thru the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) met with local non-food agriculture producers in Ilocos Region as well as representatives from concerned agencies and the academe to consult the stakeholders for the development of the Philippine National Standards (PNS) for the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) of Non-Food Agricultural Commodities.

The public consultation was held at the Fiesta Garden Resort Hotel in Bantay, Ilocos Sur last August 31, 2016.

Ms. Farlash Pancho, a Science Research Specialist II of BAFPS explained that the development of standard for GAP of Non-Food Agricultural commodities is based on the mandates embodied in the Consumer Act of the Philippines of 1992 and the Agriculture & Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) of 1997 which aims to ensure consumer safety and promote competitiveness of agricultural products.

The BAFPS together with designated technical working group conducted series of meetings to come up with the initial draft of the standard prior to the conduct of public consultations.

The Technical Working Group is chaired by the Agriculture Secretary, BAFPS is designated as the Secretariat (*to page 13*)

DA pushes agri-enterprise development for better farmers' income



Having been equipped with the technical know-how in processing their cassava produce, Cassava Food Processors in the region are now ready to level-up their agri-based enterprises with the assistance of the Department of Agriculture-RFO I through the Agribusiness Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD).

In a 2-day agri-based enterprise development training and orientation held at Hotel Trish in Mangaldan, Pangasinan, cassava growers and processors from the province learned the salient features in putting up a business in consonance with the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) standards. The two-day live-in activity was the last batch of the 4 batches of training separately conducted in the four provinces of the

region.

In her overview of the activity, Ms. Edilyn Goldara, Chief of the Agribusiness Enterprise Section of AMAD underscored the great potential of cassava processing business as means of augmenting additional incomes to improve the living conditions of the cassava growers and the cassava processors as well.

With the high acceptance and good market niche as well as the massive promotion of cassava as one of the staples in the country, Ms. Goldara said that AMAD is seizing all opportunities to strategize the promotion and commercialization of cassava processing as a profitable and sustainable agri-based enterprise.

Dr. Ma. Cynthia Rivera, Senior Trading Specialist of the Department of Trade

and Industry (DTI) explained the do's and don'ts in putting up a business enterprise with the MSMEs magna carta as basic guide.

In her discussion of the MSMEs, Dr. Rivera emphasized the total assets value of an enterprise to be considered whether a business is a micro, small or medium enterprises as defined in the Magna Carta for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises or RA 6977 as amended by RA 9501.

MSMEs plays a major role in economic building, rural development and employment opportunities in the countryside. On this note, Dr. Rivera called on the participants to take full advantage of the prospects and brighter opportunities from the MSMEs.

Dr. Rivera described the *(next page)*

best qualities and characteristics of a business owner may it be a micro, small, or medium enterprise. "Owning a small business gives a number of advantages like working in flexible hours, but a good businessman must have to take the right plan and direction, values the essence of hard work, dedication and commitment to generate the expected profit," Dr. Rivera said.

"The key to finding success in putting up an agri-based enterprise are the combination of time invested in the business, good product or service plus the well-managed effort and energy. Going through all of these, you can be rewarded with a very good income for your venture," Dr. Rivera added.

One important aspect in putting up a business aside from the commitment you put into it is the need to register the business. Dr. Rivera shared to the participants the step-by-step procedure in registering their business enterprise with the various government agencies.

Likewise, she emphasized in her discussion the Food Safety and Good Manufacturing Practices; the specific hazards, standards and measures to ensure the safety of products provided to the customers.

Meanwhile, to increase productivity and competitiveness in the marketing aspects of cassava products, the Department of Science & Technology through Mr. Alexander Apostol also introduced the agency's Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program.

The participants also undertook table exercises on Business Planning and Bookkeeping strategies giving them basic skills and knowledge in managing their business especially on financial matters.

To complete the acquired knowledge and skills of the participants in agri-based enterprising and access on funding sources, three lending institutions shared their financing facility programs inspiring them and encouraging them to avail of these programs towards more successful business venture.####

DA evaluates food terminal projects to improve operations

Joining efforts to strengthen the operations of the Food Terminal Projects (FTP) established in Ilocos Region, the Department of Agriculture through the Agribusiness Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) conducted a two-day Assessment cum Project Implementers' Forum on July 13-14, 2016.

The assessment activity provided an avenue for the FTP operators to present their current status in terms of their trading activities, the benefits they derived from the project as well as their implementing strategies that contributed to the smooth operation of the FTP in their areas.

In her briefing/orientation about the activity, Ms. Wilhelmina Castañeda, Chief of AMAD updated the participants with the current status of the 37 established FTPs in the region.

According to AMAD's data, of the 37

FTPs established in the region, 25 of these are operational, seven are non-operational but with chance of revival, four is no longer operating and are no chances of revival while one is scheduled for launching.

Of the 25 operational FTPs, only 22 have reported the status of their projects, highlighting their trading operations with emphasis on their income vis a vis their expenses as well as their issues and concerns relative to their operations and management.

In his report on the status of the Batac City Food Terminal, Mr. Cecilio Cesar, one of the officers of the Batac City Onion and Vegetables Association informed the group that there was a decline in the volume of traded vegetables during the months of January-June 2015 from 3,402 kgs to only 1,504 kgs in the same months of 2016. **(to page 15)**



Ms. Wilhelmina Castañeda, Chief of the Agribusiness Marketing Assistance Division reminds the FTP operators to honestly report the status of the food terminals in their respective areas for DA-RFO 1's information and proper action necessary to improve the FTP's operation. She likewise requested the operators to include in their reports the advantages as well as disadvantages of the project to their associations, to their members and to the community as well.

LGU implementers get updates on HVCDP project guidelines



Regional HVCD Program project implementers together with their LGU counterparts met once a quarter necessary to improve project implementation.

To be properly informed and updated on the program's accomplishments as well as to learn the program's forthcoming directions and strategies under the present dispensation of government, the High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) directorate from the DA-RFO 1 and the LGUs in Region I met for their 2nd Quarter Assessment & Planning Workshop.

Also aimed at identifying the strengths and weaknesses in project implementation, the assessment and planning workshop provides an avenue for the program implementers to ventilate issues and concerns encountered to propel growth and development in the major vegetables and fruit industries in the region.

Major concern taken up assessment was the timely and accurate submission of reports by the Municipal and Provincial HVCDP Coordinators.

Considering the number of commodities to be provided with report as required by the National Directorate, Ms. Emely Lucero, staff of the HVCDP in the region requested the LGUs to follow the standard format as well as to comply with the deadline of submission to give them enough time to consolidate and analyze report prior to the submission at the DA-Central office.

She likewise showed the right way of computing the yield and production for every commodity to guide the implementers in

their preparation of an accurate report. To set the standard computation for every province in the region, Ms. Lucero let the LGU staff to come up with their standard yield for every commodities produced as well as the standard production cost for a hectare to facilitate the reporting system.

Meanwhile, to provide the LGU implementers a guide in the provision of the HVCDP interventions, Ms. Maricar Bongais, HVCDP Report Officer discussed the approved implementing guidelines of projects under the said Banner Program.

Among the three major interventions that the HVCDP provides to high value crops farmers are the provision of vegetable seeds and planting materials; flower inducer and the agricultural production; post harvest and processing facilities. The guidelines provide priority to farmers group and associations as beneficiaries of these projects. As a general rule, Ms. Bongais said that individual farmers shall be entertained after satisfying the requirements of the organized group.

The HVCDP implementers were also informed of the rules to be followed in availing of HVCDP interventions.

To determine if beneficiaries are entitled to avail of the HVCDP interventions, the city or municipal HVCDP Coordinators shall identify and prepare a masterlist of beneficiaries duly certified by the city or municipal agriculturists/officer. Nonetheless, DA-RFO I in coordination



with the Provincial Agriculturist has the option to counter-check the submitted pre-masterlist of beneficiaries.

Having determined the allocation by each municipality, DA-RFO I in consultation with the concerned LGUs will then distribute the seeds and planting materials at identified drop-off points after inspection by the assigned DA Inspector.

To qualify as recipient of seeds and planting materials, the farmer beneficiary must have at least 1,000 sqm to 2,500 sqm. planting area. Farmers tilling less than the said area may join with other farmers who have the same case since the basis of computation of the rate for distribution is on the recommended seeding rate per hectare.

Although DA provides the seeds as grant, the association has the option to design and impose other scheme to source out fund for the benefit of their association. However, the garlic and shallot planting materials will be loaned out and payable after harvest under the roll over scheme.

In the case of availing the flower inducer, beneficiaries are preferably active mango growers' association member as identified by the Provincial LGU. In addition to the requirements, the beneficiary must have undergone trainings on Pest Management conducted by the DA and other training institutions.

Just like in the distribution of seeds and planting materials, DA also gives the flower inducers for free to the qualified beneficiaries but the associations or group beneficiaries have the option to design their own scheme of distribution where farmers may pay their allocated flower inducers directly to the associations. In return, this scheme will serve as additional source of fund for the association.

In availing of the agricultural production, post harvest and processing facilities projects under the High Value Commercial Crops Program, the guidelines requires the beneficiaries to have at least 30 hectares effective area for vegetable production especially if the recipient association is requesting for a farm tractor. With a counterpart of 10% of the total cost of the farm machinery, the recipient association must enter into agreement with the Department of Agriculture.

In the case of availing for small farm equipment such as plastic drum, plastic crates and knapsack sprayer, DA gives this as grant to the qualified recipients but the latter must provide an in-kind equity such as shed, repair and maintenance of the equipment or machinery.

With all these requirements, Ms. Bongais gave emphasis on the recipient's no derogatory records in previous HVCDP initiated projects to continue availing of the facilities, farm machineries as well as production and post-harvest equipment distributed through the HVCD Program.###

Rice AEWs get updates on Rice Program's new directions



Coinciding with the onset of the dry cropping season that starts on September 16, the Rice Banner Program of the Department of Agriculture convened once more their counterparts in the Local Government Units to map out their plans and strategies for the second cropping season via the conduct of the 3rd Quarter Assessment and Planning Workshop.

A 2-day planning workshop that was jointly attended by the Municipal Agriculturists and Municipal Rice Program Coordinators in the region, this activity aims to update the DA's partners on the new directions and strategies that the Rice Program would intend to do to carry out the Program's strategies and objectives.

In his message, Dr. Valentino Perdido, Regional Executive Director of DA-RFO I emphasized the need for coordination and collaboration with the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) especially in reflecting the number of hybrid seeds distributed to the farmers to "effect" the total regional production.

According to Director Perdido, the region has distributed close to 50,000 -60,000 bags of hybrid seeds during the wet cropping season. "So, I hope PSA has captured this number," Dir. Perdido said.

Knowing those inputs that the DA distributed to have a direct impact on the production performance of the region and to maintain the region's high sufficiency level, Director Perdido said that there is a need for a closer coordination with the PSA since they are the official data generator in the agriculture sector.

Region I's sufficiency level in 2014 is at 182% but went down to only 178% in 2015 due to the effect of calamities such as El Niño, floods and typhoons from the previous year. In all the four provinces of the Region, Ilocos Norte registered the highest sufficiency level of more than 200%. *(to page 13)*



Bringing a deeper insight to the #BROWN4good Challenge



On August 30, 2016 various regional field offices of the Department of Agriculture launched the Brown4good Challenge. It is a campaign strategy of DA to advocate the consumption of brown rice using the social media.

Participating in the so called #BROWN4good challenge is as easy as counting one, two, three. With the popularity of facebook, twitter and instagram, anyone who can connect to the internet using their computer or cellphone can participate in the challenge by uploading photos of their brown rice meal with a caption of #BROWN4good #(your Region: ex. #Region1), tag friends to do the same, then the challenge is done!

To give the challenge a “heart” and make people feel that they can be a part of a great deed of helping their less fortunate *kababayans*, every post entitles a 100 grams of brown rice to be donated to charities through the DA.

Every region in the country is expected to generate at least 50,000 hashtags from Aug. 30 to Oct. 31. This will secure at least 5,000 kilograms of brown rice donated to charities.

Indeed a good challenge for a good cause, but there’s more to it than simply the hashtag equals a hundred grams of brown rice..

DA relates the consumption of brown rice in addressing four problems of the country related to the food sector such as undernourishment, low income of farmers , rice self-insufficiency, and hunger.

(1)Undernourishment

Glaring facts about undernourishment as cited by the Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) states that about 15.6 million Filipinos were undernourished from 2011-2013. Also recorded in the FAO 2013 World Food Insecurity Report showed Philippines has the 2nd biggest undernourished population next to Indonesia.

Other facts are:

- ♦ A third of school children in the Philippines are undernourished” – *Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI)*
- ♦ “One in four Filipino children skip meals and as many as 1.5 million children often spend a whole day without a single meal” – *Save the Children Charity study*
- ♦ “1.8 million Filipino children suffer from severe malnourishment – *Department of Education*
- ♦ “Under nutrition is behind the high dropout rates in elementary and high schools” – *Health & Nutrition Center, Department of Education*

According to a report released by FAO, some 13.7 million Filipinos will likely become undernourished by 2016. The FAO said undernourished Filipinos account for 13.5 percent of the country’s population. This, however, means that the country was only able to reduce 17.9 percent of the undernourished population since 1990.



Why BROWN RICE?

(2) Low income of rice farmers

Facts & Figures

♦ "Farmers and fishermen are among the least paid workers in the Philippine economy with an average daily wage and salary of P156.8 and P178.43 in 2011– National Statistical Coordination Board.

♦ "The average Filipino farmer is 57 years old with an educational attainment of Grade 4" – NSCB

♦ The average Filipino farmer makes roughly Php50,000.00 per annum - PhilRice

(3) Rice Self Insufficiency

Rice Sufficiency level of the Philippines in 2014 was recorded at 96% or 18.998 MMT. It was considered the highest record in the history of rice production in the country. However, in 2015, it declined to 94% which was attributed to the occurrence of calamities.

(4) Hunger

Facts & Figures

According to the Social Weather Stations Survey:

" More than 3 million families are estimated to have suffered from involuntary hunger during the 3rd quarter of 2015."

"15.7% of total respondents have experienced involuntary hunger during the months of July until September and is considered as the highest mark for 2015. "

"Hunger was more prevalent in Mindanao with 21.7% or 1.1 million

families suffered severe hunger while Metro Manila remained constant at 18.3% or 553,000 families affected."

The Brown for good Challenge encourages Filipinos to eat brown rice. And in address to the four problems of the world as mentioned, the Brown for Good Challenge highlights four goodness.

Good for the Body because brown rice is known to be more nutritionally superior than white rice. Hence, addresses the problem on undernourishment.

Good for the farmers because it can help increase the income of farmers through direct marketing of their brown rice through the assistance of DA and price for brown rice is higher than white rice in the market.

Good for the country because it helps achieve self-sufficiency because of the 10% higher milling recovery.

Good for the less fortunate because it will help them fight hunger since for every *hashtag*, the Department of Agriculture will feed one less fortunate Filipino with brown rice through charities.

WHY BROWN RICE?

Apart from the nutritional value and health benefits in eating brown rice, its contribution to our rice self-sufficiency is a prime consideration in the promotion and advocacy for brown rice.

Brown rice has a higher milling recovery rate of 80% since only the husk which is 20% of the rice kernel is

removed in the milling process. White rice has a lower milling recovery rate of 70% since the husk and the bran which constitute 30% of the rice kernel are removed in the milling process .

This is equivalent to 10% additional rice volume that could augment the gap between domestic rice supply and demand, a potential contribution to our rice self-sufficiency.

Brown rice is more filling. As a whole grain, it contains more nutrients per calorie than polished and refined grains, so people need less of it to fill their hunger.

A cup of Brown Rice provides:

- ♦ 3.5g of fiber that promotes digestion and eases constipation, and regulates blood sugar
- ♦ Proteins and carbohydrates for healthy nervous system and sex hormone production
- ♦ 86 mg of magnesium which makes up the mineral content of bones, along with calcium
- ♦ •1.2 mg of Zinc that acts as anti-oxidant that neutralizes free radicals in the body
- ♦ •0.3 mg. Of vitamin B6 which is involved in bodily processes, including the formation of the neurotransmitter serotonin, red blood cell synthesis, and the production of DNA

Eating 50g of brown rice a day lowers by 36% the risk of Type 2 diabetes.

So eat brown rice and do the BROWN4good Challenge to make the goodness overflow! ####

Five municipalities in Ilocos Sur eyed for new convergence area in Region 1



DA Regional Executive Director Valentino C. Perdido presides the 3rd RCI Meeting held at Hotel Salcedo in Vigan City, Ilocos Sur on September 23, 2016

The Piddig Inclusive Organic Coffee Production is the pilot convergence initiative project in Region I. Gaining a solid ground for a successful project implementation due to the converging efforts of various national agencies pouring out their support to the project, the National Convergence Initiative – for Sustainable Rural Development (NCI-SRD) now refers to it as the mother of all convergence.

The NCI-SRD is a collaborative effort enabling the Local Government Units to pursue local economic development in the countryside. It is led by four major rural development agencies namely the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Environment & Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

The Piddig convergence initiative project went beyond gaining the support of the four lead agencies. With other national government agencies joining the force, the project has become a role model of development that other provinces in the region wish to adopt.

Noting the impact of the project in creating livelihood opportunities for the project-beneficiaries as well as the preservation, protection and development of the eco-system within the project area, 1st District Ilocos Sur Congressman Deogracias Victor B. Savellano expressed his interest to implement a convergence project in Ilocos Sur.

This was reported by NCI Secretariat Ms. Claire Febidal during the 3rd Quarter meeting of the Regional Convergence Initiatives - for Sustainable Rural Development (RCI-SRD) held last September 23, 2016 in Vigan City, Ilocos Sur.

Ms. Febidal informed that Cong. Savellano wrote a letter to DA

informing DA Secretary Emmanuel Piñol of his request to the offices of DA, DAR, DENR and DILG to prepare a comprehensive plan of programs and projects under NCI-SRD to be adopted in the province of Ilocos Sur.

Cong. Savellano particularly cited in the letter the municipalities of Sinait, Cabugao, San Juan, Magsingal, and Sto. Domingo to be the focus of the NCI-SRD.

With the approval of the Alternate Steering Committee, Fabella further informed that a new convergence area in the region covering the abovementioned municipalities must be properly identified to accommodate Cong. Savellano's request.

Meanwhile, OIC-Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO) of Ilocos Sur, Mr. Raymundo Gayo who also attended the meeting informed that the office of the Congressman coordinated with their office requesting the identification of municipalities that can qualify as convergence area. He also said that the possible project for a convergence as mentioned by Cong. Savellano will be the establishment of a bamboo plantation in the province since there is already an initially allocated forest land for bamboo plantation.

In response, Dir. Oscar Paraoan, the NCI Consultant, suggested for the RCI to look into the possibility of conducting a Convergence Area Development Plan (CADP) workshop specifically on the priority area identified by Cong. Savellano.

The CADP is a comprehensive plan which addresses the management of the watershed and the ecosystem in a holistic and sustainable manner. This will be done through the implementation of interventions and activities that will promote sustainable management of all resources within the convergence area.

Paraoan further explained that since almost all over the country, the regions already have the Comprehensive Watershed Development Plan, the preparation of the CADP can be fast tracked if the DENR have accomplished the watershed characterization including river systems and river basins for the province of Ilocos Sur.

The CADP should relate to the CWDP because the convergence is an eco-system based planning and if the proposed project area is watershed-based then the interventions will be complete from the highlands to the lowlands. The CADP serves as a guide for all implementers on the activities to be implemented and the synchronization of inputs from the four (4) lead government agencies, the LGUs and all groups and institutions involved.

As a guide, DA-RFO I Regional Executive Director Valentino Perdido likewise suggested to the province to consider the minimum requirements so that the identified areas can be considered as a convergence site. He added that if the province does have an existing data of their Forest land Use Plan, this will be a one step ahead for the development of a convergence project in Ilocos Sur.###

RICE AEWs GET UPDATES ON RICE ...*(from page 9)*

Aiming to contribute more in the attainment of higher sufficiency level, Dir. Perdido expressed hopes that farmers could increase their productivity and yield since the current average yield in the region is only 4.3 mt/ha.

Reiterating the marching order of DA Secretary Emmanuel Piñol in producing available, accessible and affordable foods for around 105 M Filipinos, Dir. Perdido informed the LGU counterparts of the strategies, programs and projects of DA that will be implemented for the dry cropping season.

During the dry cropping season, Perdido announced that DA will be giving seeds without the fertilizer while the distribution of the machineries and equipment will be pushed through especially on those machineries that would support the reduction of cost of production.

He likewise informed the agricultural extension workers that most of the machineries will be given free to the beneficiaries except for those high-end machines such as tractor and combined harvester.

He called on the MAOs to evaluate properly the recipients of DA projects and make sure that documents are available prior to the validation and awarding.

One critical requirement in availing of the farm machineries and equipment is the Certificate of Good Standing to be issued by the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Cooperative Development Authority. The DOLE certificate of registration is no longer acceptable when availing of the projects.

With the advent of climate change that posts negative impact in the agriculture sector especially in rice production, Director Perdido advised the MAOs to be pro-active in reporting damages especially on the damage of pests, diseases, and calamities such as La Niña and El Niño phenomenon. He called on the MAOs to consult IPM experts in controlling pests and diseases and do more farmers' class to inform the best practices that they could do to control such incidence.

He also called on the AEWs' support on the color coded map that the Bureau of Soils and Water Management is working upon to determine the Key Production Areas that would tell the appropriate crop for every location or farm as well as the fertility status of the soil to determine the suitable crops that will be planted in a certain area.

Giving all these updates in Rice Program's implementation, Dr. Perdido expressed his high hope that the country would attain its sufficiency level in staple food in 2019. "Computing it scientifically, we can make it, *basta huwag lang bumagyo*," Dir. Perdido added.###

BAFPS CONSULT ILOCOS FARMERS...*(fr. page 5)*

and members include the DA agencies/Bureau, DOH, DOST, Academe, Private Sector and NGO.

The public consultation in Ilocos Region is just one among other scheduled consultations to be undertaken by BAFPS specifically at focal areas where all of the stakeholders of the concerned non-agricultural commodities are tapped to participate and provide their inputs through comments and suggestions.

During the consultation, BAFPS explained that the standard is being developed to provide specific guidance to promote quality; ensure workers' health, safety and welfare; and minimize environmental impact associated with the production, postharvest handling /on-farm processing, and transport of non-food agricultural crops which include abacca, ornamentals, rubber and tobacco.

At present, BAFPS has so far developed a total of 183 Philippine National Standards that include standards for fruits, vegetables, cut flowers, plantation crops cereals, nuts and grains, root crops, natural ingredients, sugars, livestock/animal by-products, fish and fishery products, non-food products, codes of practice/codes of hygienic practice, among others.

To ensure a thorough and well-developed standard for GAP of Non-food Agricultural Commodities, BAFPS presented the draft and noted down the suggestions, corrections and other inputs of the participants as they carefully scrutinized the draft by section.

The draft has a total of eight sections where each section were presented by particular expert/authority on the matter being discussed and whatever suggestions given by each participant were considered. Section 1 and 2 contains the Objective, Uses and Definition; Section 3 is the Primary Production concerns; Section 4 & 5 is the Post-harvest handling, packaging, storage and transport concerns; Section 6 is about the Establishment: Design and Facilities; Section 7 tackles Worker's Health Training and Welfare and Section 8 contains the Documentation and Records.

Request for a new or revision of a standard can be made through either of the following: The Philippine Culture for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF), DA Banner Programs, DA Regulatory Agencies, Private Sector Groups and/or the ASEAN Sectoral Working Groups, other international and regional bodies like APEC, CODEX etc.##



PANGASINAN GOVERNOR SIGNS ENDORSEMENT ON ADDITIONAL US\$450M PRDP FUND

Lingayen, Pangasinan- Expressing his full support to the implementation of the Philippine Rural Development Project in the Province of Pangasinan, newly elected Governor Amado I. Espino III signed the endorsement letter supporting the request of the Department of Agriculture to avail additional US\$450M loan financing from the World Bank to fund additional infrastructure development subprojects proposed under PRDP.



Region 1 PRDP Focal Person & RTD for Operations Dr. Paz L. Mones with Pangasinan Gov. Amado I. Espino III

Focal Person and Regional Technical Director for Operations Dr. Paz L. Mones, met with the Governor on August 22, 2016 in a courtesy call at his office to orient him about PRDP and elicit his full support to the project.

As a national policy, the PRDP request for additional funding must be endorsed by the Regional Development Council (RDC) and be supported as well by the endorsement from the governors. If approved, the additional funding will enable PRDP to fund other infrastructure subprojects including those which have not been pipelined, amounting to about P4.73 billion. Ilocos Region alone has a total of P2.08 billion infrastructure portfolio under PRDP.

"We are committed to support projects that aim to improve the lives of our constituents.", Espino said. Taking in the very welcoming gesture of Gov. Espino to the RPCO 1 during the meeting, Dir. Mones took the chance to further seek the assistance of the province in providing fund assistance to cooperatives with proposals under the Small Livelihood Project (SLP) which is under the Enterprise Development (I-REAP) Component of PRDP but have limited fund for their counterpart.

Dr. Mones explained that there are still four pending 2015 SLP proposals of San Fabian, Pangasinan from its total of eight (8) proposals, which could not yet be submitted because the proponent cooperatives could not produce the entire amount of the needed counterpart amounting to P800,000.

With this, Gov. Espino referred the matter to Dr. Benita M. Pizarro, the Provincial Project Management and Implementing Unit (PPMIU) head of Pangasinan and asked if they could accommodate said request and upon learning that there are available funds allocated for PRDP counterpart that can be provided to help the cooperatives, he then gave his approval to shoulder the additional funds for the counterpart.

The Province of Pangasinan currently has two Infrastructure subproject proposals approved under PRDP. The Rehabilitation of Gonzales-San Juan Farm-to-Market Road (FMR) in Umingan, Pangasinan worth P112.6 million and the Construction of Oraan Bridge with approaches worth P20.6 million. Both have already been issued with No Objection Letter (NOL 1) hence, they can now proceed with the procurement process.

Under the Enterprise Development, Pangasinan has one Small Livelihood Project (SLP) proposal already approved and issued with No Objection Letter. This is the Farm Mechanization Service Facility worth 1.2 million proposed by the Women's Unity for Progress & Farmers MPC in Mapandan, Pangasinan.###

DA evaluates food terminal projects..

(from page 7)

The reduction in volume was attributed on the limited supply of volume of products because of the insufficient trading capital of the association. Meanwhile, Mr. Cesar said that there was a decline in the FTP's net income which only recorded at Php5,569 in 2016 against the P20,227 in 2015.

In the case of Binalonan FTP, Mr. Primitivo Bautista, the Market Supervisor of Binalonan reported that the FTP only operates during Wednesdays and Sundays and that management converted the 2/3 of the space into food stalls for rent.

Food stall rental defeats the purpose of the project, according to Ms. Castañeda, hence, she asked Mr. Bautista to look for an organized farmers association to be tapped as consolidators so that farmers will be surely benefitted from the project and that the facility will serve its real purpose – to provide direct market of the farmers' produce to generate higher income while giving consumers fresh and affordable agri-food products.

In Sitio Mapita, Laoag, Aguilar BFT, Ms. Lita Macay, the BFT Manager raised several issues and concerns in managing the project. Among her issues include the limited trading capital, no storage facility for perishable goods, limited managerial and operational skills among the officers and operators especially on the financial component of the enterprise and the high maintenance cost incurred in their second hand transport vehicle that the DA provided to the organization.

Taking all these concerns into consideration, Ms. Castañeda advised Ms. Macay to make the representation to the

DA-RFO I officials through a letter coupled with the necessary documents and project proposals for the DA top management's information and immediate action.

Ms. Castañeda also recognized the need for a managerial and business financial operations training for all the BFT to improve their skills and knowledge in operating the FTPs, hence, she advised all FTP operators to inform DA should they need retooling courses.

From all the FTPs report, only the San Marcelino FTP in Dingras Ilocos Norte shared positive feedback on how the project benefitted the farmers and consumers in the area.

According to Ms. Mary Rose Lampitoc, the Operations Manager of the BFT, the project operates daily as a mini-public market which provides the residents of the barangay and adjacent barangays an accessible one-stop shopping center where almost all the basic necessities are available and at the same time, farmers are given opportunity to market their produce without passing through the burden of transporting them in the town's public market.

The presence of the slaughterhouse where butchered hogs recorded ranges from 3-5 heads daily eases the consuming public burden in commuting while saving them from high transportation costs that ranges from P250-300.

To date the total assets of the San Marcelino FTP is at P356,000 and the loans receivable amount to P87,450.00

With the good standing and well-organized operation of San Marcelino FTP, Ms. Castañeda happily announced that the project is the Region's entry to the National Gawad Saka Most Outstanding BFT. ####

PRDP BRIEFING WITH NEW ...*(fr. page 16)*

Upon the presentation of PRDP goals, approaches, organizational structure and composition by RPCO 1 I-SUPPORT Head Sharon Vilorio, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan Members raised inquiries on the identification of infrastructure subproject sites and the prioritization of commodities.

The PRDP utilizes several tools like the Value Chain Analysis (VCA), the Provincial Commodity Investment Plan (PCIP), the Expanded Vulnerability and Suitability Assessment (EVSA) and the Geo-tagging Technology to identify subproject sites. Likewise, the priority commodities in PRDP emanate from the Regional Agriculture and Fisheries

Modernization Plan (AFMP).

Moreover, to inspire the PGLU officials to support and participate in the PRDP, a video presentation of the on-going implementation of the Rehabilitation of the Balebec-Basca Farm to Market Road was showcased. The infrastructure subproject is the first of its kind in Ilocos Region and is located in the Municipalities of Naguilian and Aringay, La Union.

Meanwhile, regular DA programs were also presented to PGLU officials and their staff members by Planning & Monitoring Evaluation (PMED) Chief Ms. Doris Joy Garcia.

In the next days, the RPCO 1 will also conduct PRDP Orientation/Brief with newly elected officials of other provinces in the Ilocos Region.####



PRDP Briefing with New PGLU Officials

Newly elected La Union Gov. Francisco Emmanuel R. Ortega III (extreme left) intently listens to DA RFO I Regional Executive Dir. Valentino C. Perdido as he give orientation on the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP).

The Regional Project Coordination Office 1 (RPCO 1), led by Department of Agriculture (DA) Regional Executive Director Valentino C. Perdido, briefed the newly elected Provincial Government of La Union (PGLU) officials and their staff members on the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) at the Diego Silang Hall, Provincial Capitol of La Union, on August 2, 2016.

After the May 2016 national elections, many local government units are under new administration. With this, RPCO 1 saw the need to conduct Project Orientation/Brief with newly elected officials to encourage them to participate in the PRDP. The cooperation of local government units' (LGU) officials are needed to implement PRDP subprojects as the project employs counter-parting scheme.

"We are partners," said La Union's newly-elected Gov. Francisco Emmanuel R. Ortega III during his welcome speech to the staff members of PRDP. Gov. Ortega wants to bring about real change in the Province of La Union through the pursuit of sustainable agriculture and resilient infrastructure, and combatting climate change.

Also, he aims to develop the local economy of La Union by transforming the province into the heart of agri-tourism in Northern Luzon. He added that there are many opportunities to achieve this goal through the PRDP.

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