

Damagrin

Welcome to Region 1 Secretary Tiwa!



A person is seen from the side, carrying a large, heavy bundle of harvested rice stalks on their back. The bundle is secured with a light-colored, woven fabric strap. The person is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt and a matching dark blue cap. The background is a blurred field of rice plants, suggesting a rural setting. The lighting is warm, indicating it might be late afternoon or early morning.

Kanin kayo diyan!

Tuwing buwan ng Nobyembre, ating ipinagdiriwang ang National Rice Awareness Month (NRAM). Taon-taon, patuloy pa rin nating inaanyayahan ang bawat isa na maging parte ng kampanyang “Be RICEponsible.”

Bakit nga ba? Maliban sa ang kanin ay karaniwang pagkain ng bawat Pilipino, isa rin ito sa mga pangunahing pananim sa bansa. Kaya naman sa paglabas ng Presidential Proclamation No. 524, kinikilala ng pamahalaan ang mahalagang papel ng mga magsasaka sa produksyon ng pagkain at pagtulong na mapababa ang kahirapan.

Sa pagiging RICEponsible, lahat tayo ay maaaring makatulong na mapabuti pa ang industriya ng bigas sa bansa. Bawat isa sa atin ay may kakayanang maging RICEponsible sa pamamagitan ng pagbili ng lokal na bigas, hindi pag-aaksaya ng bigas, at sa pagkain ng brown rice o kanin na hinaluan ng iba.



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Rice assessment in Dagupan City

Pangasinan municipal agriculturists and rice banner focal persons convened on December 11-12 for an assessment and planning workshop in Dagupan City.

This activity was held to gather data on the rice areas in Pangasinan province, categorized as irrigated, non-irrigated, and vulnerable to climate change. The consolidated information will serve as the basis for the Department of Agriculture (DA) in allocating seeds, fertilizers, and other interventions to be distributed in the locality.



As stakeholders of the DA, they were also consulted for their opinions on converting regular seed interventions to seed disbursement vouchers (SDV). Results will be forwarded to the DA-Central Office

to determine the best ways of implementing the program.

Similar activity was conducted on December 4-5 in Ilocos Norte and December 14-15 in Iloos Sur.

Basic self-defense training for DA-RFO1 women employees



In observance of the 18-day campaign to end violence against women (VAW), DA-RFO1 in partnership with the Police Regional Office 1 (PRO1) held a training on basic self-defense among women employees of the agency.

Self-defense tactics using basic judo and karate movements were

demonstrated by Police Staff Sergeant Gideon N. Notario, Police Corporal Marichu T. Bacoco, and Patrol Woman Gelli B. Campos.

Each year, the effort to put an end to violence against women is observed, spanning from November 25 to December 12.

Gulayan sa barangay winners and outstanding HVCDP coordinators awarding ceremony

On December 7, the High Value Crops Development Program of Region 1 recognize the outstanding achievements of the HVCDP coordinators and winners for the Gulayan sa Barangay through an awarding ceremony.

Exceptional HVCDP coordinators from municipal and provincial levels



were acknowledged for their dedication with a plaque of recognition and a cash prize of P20,000.

Meanwhile, Barangay Aluling in Cervantes, Ilocos Sur secured the first place for Best Gulayan sa Barangay, followed by entries from La Union,

Ilocos Norte, and Pangasinan.

The winning entries received a plaque of recognition, cash prize and agricultural interventions such as pump and engine sets, net mesh, and assorted vegetable seeds among others.

Fostering collaboration

DA-RFO1 on November 16, invited stakeholders in a joint planning exercise ahead of the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2025.

Present agencies include NEDA, DOST, DTI, DOT, DILG, CHED, DENR, PCIC and DPWH along with representatives from the Local Government Units, Civil Society Organizations, and State

Universities & Colleges.

This planning workshop aims to make sure that programs and activities of various government agencies at the local, regional, and national levels are aligned to the identified issues affecting farmers and fisherfolk and be able to propose interventions that are responsive to the needs of the agri stakeholders.



Gender advocacy seminar on VAW

On November 28, 50 DA employees participated in a Gender Advocacy seminar on Anti-Violence Against Women held at the 5th floor conference room of DA-RFO 1.

This activity was organized by the Gender and Development Unit of DA-RFO1 in observance of the annual 18-Day Campaign mandated by Proclamation 1172 s. 2006.



Salamat, mabuhay to all DA-RFO1 retirees!

To give due credence to the contribution of its present and former employees, the DA Ilocos Region once again conducted its bi-annual "Salamat, Mabuhay! Thanksgiving Tribute."

In her message, Regional Executive Director Annie Bares, a Loyalty Service Awardee herself, said that the ceremony aims to recognize the invaluable and unparalleled dedication of colleagues in the government service. Doc Annie has been in the service for 35 years.

Twenty employees received the Loyalty Service Award for being in the civil service for ten to 40 years, eight employees who pursued further studies received the Personnel Development



Award, and eight retirees were given the Plaque of Distinction.

Among the retirees include Director Evelyn Fernando, Ms. Margarita Quinzon, former Agriculturist II, Ms. Lucia Peralta, former Agriculturist I, Mr. Juventino Valerio, former Administrative Assistant III, Ms. Berna Palaganas,

former Administrative Assistant III, Mr. Roosevelt Peralta, former Project Evaluation Officer IV, Ms. Arlene Castillo, former Senior Science Research Specialist, Ms. Lilibeth Del Rosario, former Science Research Technician I, and Ms. Marilou Cabalteja, former Science Research Specialist I.

Global Action for Fall Armyworm Control terminal workshop

Policy makers, including experts from the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry, Food and Agriculture Organization, as well as representatives from local government agencies and corn farmers, convened on October 27 for the terminal workshop focused on the Global Action for Fall Armyworm Control (GA-FAW).

During this event, Ms. Marcela Navasero of the National Crop Protection Center presented the significant achievements and key highlights of the GA-FAW Control Project. On the other hand,



Dr. Peter Magdaraog, the Division Chief of BPI-CPMD, elaborated on the sustainability plan for this initiative.

Furthermore, Dr. Buyung Hadi from the FAO headquarters, provided comprehensive insights into the global

FAW situations and the coordinated global actions being undertaken to combat them. He emphasized the role of robust and efficient coordination at global, national, and regional levels, along with the imperative need to engage and enhance the capacities of stakeholders in such programs.

La Union provincial rice techno forum



To underscore the role of the hybrid rice in ensuring food security, a Provincial Rice Technology Forum was conducted on October 3 in Barangay San Felipe, San Juan, La Union. To cater the needs of the farmers of La Union, two demo sites were established, one for each district, with a second site in Sto. Tomas La Union.

The activity also marked the

culmination of the hybrid rice challenge, bringing together over 100 farmers from La Union, providing them with firsthand opportunity to observe and evaluate the performance of various hybrid rice varieties.

The activity was a collaborative effort between the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 1, the provincial and local government, and various hybrid seed companies to identify the best-performing and suitable hybrid rice varieties for the province of La Union.

Additionally, the techno-forum sought to raise awareness about the benefits of adopting hybrid rice, recognizing that many farmers still require tangible evidence or are still attached to the notion of seeing is believing before embracing a new technology.

On the said activity, the farmers

assessed each variety based on specific criteria, including crop stand, panicle formation, and their response to pests and diseases.

A total of 14 hybrid seed companies actively participated in the event, showcasing 31 different hybrid seed varieties. To ensure fair and comprehensive evaluations, each of these varieties was planted in a quarter-hectare area.

During the forum, Hon. Mayor Arturo Valdriz of San Juan urged the attending farmers to share the best variety with their fellow farmers so that everyone would prosper. Moreover, Mayor Valdriz posed a challenge to the participating seed companies, asking them to consider which hybrid varieties might be most suitable for non-irrigated areas, noting that Barangay San Felipe, where the techno-demo took place, is an irrigated area.

Mango and onion credit caravan in Ilocos Norte

The Department of Agriculture High-Value Crops Development Programs spearheaded another leg of the Onion and Mango Credit Caravan for farmers in Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur at the Centennial Arena in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte, Thursday, October 19.

Approximately 150 mango and onion farmers attended the credit caravan, serving as a platform to disseminate current information on the agricultural credit programs provided by the DA-Agricultural Credit Policy Council (DA-ACPC), Land Bank of the

Philippines (LBP), Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), along with the insurance program under the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC).

Partner lending institutions of the DA-ACPC, such as the Ilocos Consolidated

Cooperative Bank (ICCB), Nueva Segovia Consortium of Cooperatives (NSCC), and the Sta. Cruz Savings and Development Cooperative (SACDECO), were also present during the program to assist farmers with their inquiries, conduct on-site evaluations, and facilitate the loan application process.

Through this activity, the farmers were informed about the financial services provided by the government. And they were provided with guidance and clarity on how to utilize these services, as well as the responsibilities associated with borrowing.

DA Senior Usec. Domingo Panganiban, in his message read by Director U-Nichols Manalo, emphasized,



“Gaya ng dati, makatitiyak kayo na lubusang walang pasubalit ang pagiging tangkilik ng amin kagawaran sa mga local na pamahalaan at magsasaka ng Ilocos region, magkaisa tayo na isulong ang masagang agrikultura at maunlad na ekonomiya tungo sa bagong Pilipinas (Just as before, you can be assured of our unwavering commitment to support the

local government and farmers of the Ilocos region. Let us unite in promoting bountiful agriculture and a prosperous economy for a new Philippines).” He also reiterated the President’s mandate to strengthen and expand financial services for the farmers to achieve a bountiful harvest.

RCI-SRD3rd quarter meeting



Strengthening the identified convergence sites of Pangasinan and Ilocos Sur, members of the Technical Working Group under the Regional Convergence Initiative for Sustainable Regional Development (RCI-SRD) of Region I converged in a 3rd Quarter Regular meeting at the 5th Floor DA-RFO I Conference Room, Sevilla, City of San Fernando La Union on November 10, 2023.

Presided over by Regional Technical Director Dennis I. Tactac, the meeting was attended by 13 TWG member agency representatives including the representatives from Cabugao, San Manuel, Mangatarem and Caoayan and the representative of the National Convergence Initiative-SRD via online.

As an initial plan to strengthen the two identified convergence sites, agency-members of the TWG agreed to assess the CADP or the Convergence Area Development Plan of the identified convergence sites for Natividad and San Manuel while the convergence sites for Sinait, Cabugao and Caoayan must discuss among the local government units their plans whether or not to push through with the original name - IDAIT or modify it that best suited for the three municipalities.

While there were resolutions have been submitted already by the 2 convergence sites to the Regional Convergence Committee, the group resolved that they shall have to submit their work and financial plans incorporating therein their

accomplishments from that plan so as to determine those programs, projects and activities that were already conducted and interventions provided prior to the approval of their resolutions.

To further strengthen the coordination and collaboration among the RCI member-agencies, a validation is set to be conducted on the later part of November this year in the proposed convergence sites to determine and assess other needs and interventions from the other RCI member-agencies.

Meanwhile to reinforce the strategies being undertaken in the implementation of RCI-SRD in the region, members of the Technical Working Group agreed to utilize the graduates of Masters in Public Management Major in Rural Development sponsored by the NCI-SRD especially in providing technical assistance in the preparation of CADP.

Further, the Knowledge Management Component Group of the RCI is required to enhance its activities especially in disseminating programs/projects/activities of the RCI as they shall form part in the work and financial plan for next year and in the coming years.



DA-RFO 1 pass 1st surveillance audit for ISO 9001:2015 certification

In its bid to retain its ISO 9001:2015 Certification for the 3-year cycle, the DA-RFO I proved once again its consistent compliance to the ISO standards after passing its 1st Surveillance Audit with only two minor Non-Conformity (NC) findings from three external auditors who conducted the audit on December 18-19, 2023 at the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office I (DA-RFO I).

The external audit was spearheaded by Ms. Janet N. Safranca, the audit team leader, together with Ms. Mae C. Ascan and Mr. Fernando F. Garrido. “With your faithful compliance to the standards as evidenced by strict adherence to your Quality Management System (QMS), you are still being recommended

for continuing certification for ISO 9001:2015.”, Ms. Safranca declared during the closing meeting for the two-day external audit.

In response, DA-RFO I Regional Executive Director Dr. Annie Q. Bares thanked the auditors for their guidance and recommendations to improve the Department’s delivery of services to the Agri-Fishery sector.

“In behalf of the DA-RFO I, thank you for recognizing our efforts to maintain our compliance to ISO 9001:2015 standards and we will take note of all your valid recommendations to be able to continually ensure a quality service to our stakeholders. We have prepared for this and we are happy to see the positive result of our team effort,” Bares said.

DA-RFO I obtained its re-certification for ISO 9001:2015 last March 2023 and must undergo two surveillance audits as part of the 3-year certification cycle to ensure its consistent compliance to the requirements of the standards.

According to the requirements for ISO 9001:2015 Certification, once an organization is awarded an ISO certification, it is valid for three years. A QMS established for certification must be maintained regularly to stay compliant and achieve intended objectives. QMS must be maintained for both continuous improvement and for recertification.

DA-RFO I secured its ISO 9001:2015 Certification in 2019.

Cacao farmers get Php1.49M worth agri support

Cacao farmers in Pangasinan have received a total of Php1.49M worth of interventions as part of the Coconut-based Coffee and Cacao Enterprise Development Program (C3EDP) of the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan (CFIDP) of the Department of Agriculture.

Under this program, the Anacletus Agricultural Association, Inc. of Dasol, Pangasinan, was provided with 12,821 cacao seedlings and 3,700 kg of organic fertilizer. Similarly, the Tupa Farmers Agriculture Cooperative in Bolinao, Pangasinan, received 7,750 cacao seedlings along with 2,300 kg of organic fertilizer.

A planting and distribution ceremony was held on December 5 in Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan, led by DA-Agricultural Program Coordinating Officer for Pangasinan, Mr. Marvin G. Quilates, C3EDP/CFIDP focal person, Mr. David John T. Rondal, Philippine Coconut Authority representative, Mr. Bonlizardo E. Cabrera, Bureau of Plant Industry representative, Mr. Christopher S. Cruz, and Agricultural Training Institute representative, Ms. Josephine K. Aben.

As per Philippine Statistics Authority survey from April to June 2023, Ilocos Region ranks 12th in cacao production in the country out of the 16 regions, contributing 15.29 metric tons.



DA orients planners, focal persons, LGU partners in developing project concept notes, business plan

A good project proposal is crucial for effective project planning, resource allocation, stakeholder engagement, decision-making, and project success. It plays a significant role in ensuring that projects are executed efficiently, with clear objectives and desired outcome.

It is along this line that the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office I (DA-RFO I), through its Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Division (PMED), has convened selected focal persons under the Field Operations Division, Research Division, Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division as participants in the Technical Writeshop on the Business Plan Preparation, Formulation and Development of Project Concept Notes for Agriculture & Fisheries Project held on November 22-24, 2023 in Baguio City.

The technical writeshop is also part of the mainstreaming of PRDP tools particularly on Business Plan Preparation to DA's regular program implementation, hence, included among the participants were selected representatives from Local Government Units and accredited Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as target recipients of enterprise subproject under the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP).

"It is important that we strengthen our (DA) capability to develop project proposals that will ensure that interventions being implemented to support the agriculture and fishery sector are more cohesive with higher order plans, target-oriented, and objective-driven," shared by PMED staff Ms. Milagros G. Dela Rosa as she presented the overview of the technical workshop.

Through the said workshop, the participants were taught the crucial elements on how to craft project proposals. Among the lectured topics and workshop outputs done were on Stakeholders Analysis, Problem Tree Analysis, Objective Tree Analysis/Solution Path, SWOT Analysis and Strategy Formulations, Logical Framework and the preparation of Project Concept Note.

Invited lecturers were Ms. Mariam H. Camaso and Ms. Reina Joy Rome of the DA Central Office Project Development Service while the Business Plan Preparation was discussed by PRDP-IREAP/AMAD staff Mr. Reynaldo Ancheta.

The technical workshop was scheduled in two batches and the second batch involve planners from the Local Government Units and Farmer Cooperatives/Association members scheduled on November 28-30, 2023.

7 FAs in La Union 2nd district receive Php10-M worth of agri-support

The scarcity of solar dryers has always been a challenge for farmers, particularly during the harvest season. Recognizing this issue, the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 1 has once again provided support for the farmers, specifically those who were affected by typhoon Egay.

On Wednesday, 240 units of collapsible dryer cases (CDC), with a total worth of Php10,573,560, were distributed to farmers' associations in the 2nd district of La Union. These CDC are expected to be a substantial relief for the farmers, offering them the convenience of instant access to solar dryers whenever they need them.

Prior to the distribution,



representatives from GrainPro demonstrated and discussed the proper usage of the drying technology.

The recommended capacity of this drying technology is approximately 18-20 palay sacks, each weighing 50kg. The recipients of these solar dryers are FAs from the municipalities of Agoo, Sto. Tomas,

Bauang, Naguilian, Pugo, Rosario, and Tubao, with each association receiving two collapsible dryers.

The distribution event was graced by RED Annie Bares, RTD for Operations Dennis Tactac, and APCO for La Union Juanito Malazo, Jr. along with Congressman Dante Garcia.

DA-RFO I hosts UNAIP's review, assessment

Assessing the performance of the 16 regions in terms of implementing the programs, projects and activities under the United National Artificial Insemination Program (UNAIP) of the Bureau of Animal Industry, the Regional Artificial Insemination Coordinators for every region convened at the JLP Resort in Paoay, Ilocos Norte on Nov. 20-24, 2023.

A 4-day activity hosted by the Department of Agriculture- Regional Field Office I (DA-RFO I), the performance assessment was funded by the DA-Bureau of Animal Industry (DA-BAI) that aims to update the regional UNAIP coordinators with the



new policy guidelines and procedures and discuss other issues and concerns in the implementation of UNAIP in the regions.

Gracing the occasion is DA-RFO I Regional Executive Director, Dr. Annie Bares, who underscored the importance of conducting review and assessment for every programs and projects so as to determine the

challenges and opportunities towards improving the implementation of the activities under UNAIP.

Having been exposed with the UNAIP as a Veterinarian herself, Dr. Bares enjoined her colleagues to be more proactive in realizing the goals and objectives of the program as she committed her full support in all of UNAIP's endeavors.



DA seeks TODA's support in "be ricepensible" campaign

Drumming up support from the transport group to widely spread the "Be Ricepensible Campaign" in celebrating November as Rice Awareness Month (NRAM), the DA through the Regional Agriculture & Fisheries Information Section in collaboration with the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPag) in the Province of La Union conducted a briefing about NRAM to the Presidents of the Tricycle Operators and Drivers Association (TODA) at the OPag La Union Conference Room, San Fernando City, La Union on November 16, 2023.

Fifteen TODA Presidents out of the 19 municipalities and one city in the province attended the briefing where they received tarpaulins bearing the Be Ricepensible Campaign theme this year spelled as the ABKD that stands for A-Adlay, mais, saba atbp. ay ihahalo sa kanin, B-Brown rice ay kaninin, K-Kanin ay huwag sayangin, D-Dapat bigas ng Pilipinas ang bilhin.

Dubbed as the Healthy Rice Ride

Promo, the activity engaged 200 tricycle drivers in La Union. They are asked to hang the 200 tarpaulins given to them in their respective tricycles, providing the general public information about the Be-Ricepensible campaign.

To sustain their interest of joining the campaign, the DA also provided info advocacy materials such as NRAM t-shirts, training kits that contained a kilo of Malusog Rice provided by the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) and various IEC reading materials.

Ms. Eva Agustin, Information Officer II of the DA shared in her briefing the important role of the tricycle drivers in helping the DA to promote NRAM's Be RICEpensible campaign.

"Maaring simple lang ang bagay na ito para sa inyo, pero para sa amin sa DA, napakalaking bagay ito na matulungan kami na maipalaganap ang maaring gawin ng bawat isa upang

makamtan na natin ang pagkakaroon ng sapat na bigas sa ating bansa," Ms. Agustin in her message.

In addition to the training kits and other campaign paraphernalia, the OPAG-La Union also distributed various kinds of vegetable seeds for backyard gardening in support to the Urban Gardening Program of DA.

The Healthy Rice Ride Promo is among the many activities set by the DA-RAFIS this month of November along with the Briefing on NRAM, Masagana Rice Industry Program and Golden Rice on the 20th and the NRAM Quiz Bee that shall be participated in by the DA-RFO I personnel.

The NRAM celebration is an annual activity of the DA to raise awareness on the importance of supporting various activities to address malnutrition, food insecurity and poverty in the countryside.



ATI, DA-RFO1 launch Rice Awareness, Nat'l OA month celebrations

Following the national launching of the National Rice Awareness Month (NRAM) and the 9th Organic Agriculture Month at the Central Office, the Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center in Ilocos region in partnership with the Department of Agriculture Region 1, also kicked off the month-long celebrations for these events in the region on November 13, Monday.

With the theme “Be RICEponsible,” the NRAM celebration emphasizes the public’s role in reducing food wastage and promoting responsible rice consumption. The initiative aims to support local farmers, enhance the local rice industry, and work towards achieving rice sufficiency in the country.

“Nawa ay magtagumpay tayo na mapataas ang bigas sa bansa. Kung tayo

ay magkakakaisa, makakamit natin ito” mentioned Senate Committee Chair on Agriculture Cynthia Villar in her recorded message.

On the other hand, the Organic Agriculture Month highlights the economic benefits of organic farming. The government encourages organic agriculture enterprises among the youth and farmers’ cooperatives and associations, aligning with the theme “Kabuhayang OA, Kinabukasang OA!”

Throughout the month, ATI-RTC 1 has lined up various activities to raise public awareness about the significance of NRAM and OA Month. These activities encompass a promotional video-making contest, a digital art-making contest, and paper and oral presentations of best OA practices. Other engaging activities

include the Kabataang OA quiz bee, poster competition, and Be RICEponsible tiktok challenge. Additionally, a webinar on rice-based farming systems is also scheduled. These initiatives are designed to actively engage the community and foster a deeper understanding of the importance of sustainable and responsible agricultural practices.

Meanwhile, a forum on organic agriculture is set to take place alongside the awarding of winners of the various competitions during the culmination activity on November 28, 2023.

Representatives from the Provincial local government units, PGS certified organic operators, farmers, and youths from various State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in the region were present during the event.



ABKD, ready go!

Some 20 students from Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University-Bacnotan Campus and 20 La Union farmers joined DA-RFO1 staff on Monday for the conduct of the National Rice Awareness Month (NRAM) Briefing cum Training on Be RICEponsible.

This is in line with the observation of the National Rice Awareness Month (NRAM) 2023.

Providing a better understanding of the advocacy of NRAM, Ms. Vida V. Cacal, Chief of the Regional Agriculture & Fisheries Information Section presented the overview of the NRAM Campaign which carries the theme “Be RICEponsible and promotion of the “ABKD” movement.

Mr. Alex Rigor, Technical Consultant and DA-National Rice Program Luzon Coordinator for MRIDP discussed the Masagana Rice Industry Development Program (MRIDP). MRIDP is one of DA's strategies to achieve 90% rice self-

sufficiency and 97.5% by 2028.

Meanwhile, Ms. Vida Grace Taguda of Batac PhilRice shared about the Malusog Rice also known as the Golden Rice which was created to address the prevalence of Vitamin A deficiency in the country affecting the urban population by 13.6% and 16.9% in rural areas.

Also part of the activity is the launching of the Rice Menu Booklet produced by DA-RFO I through the

RAFIS which contains various healthy menus with focus on rice as the main ingredient.

DA-RFO I Regional Executive Director Annie Q. Bares enjoined the participants to do their share in helping the government on its efforts towards its rice self-sufficiency goal by reducing wastage on rice, supporting local farmers by patronizing their produce, and for the public to be healthy and responsible rice





DA conducts YFC summit, awarding ceremonies

The Department of Agriculture in Ilocos Region conducted a two-day summit and regional awarding ceremonies of the Young Farmers Challenge Program.

Held at the DA-RFO I's 5th Floor Conference Room on October 19-20, 2023, the YFC Summit and Awarding Ceremonies recognized the 11 vibrant and active young farmers in the region with their proposed agri-based enterprises evaluated and scrutinized by the technical working group of the program and panel of the Board of Judges from the academe, the DA and farming advocate and practitioners.

Leading this year's awardees is a lass from Bacnotan La Union Ms. Geneva S. Gañalon, owner and manager of G's Duckery, an enterprise

concentrated on the production and processing of duck meat.

From the three categories of the Young Farmers Challenge, namely: YFC Start-up, YFC Scale-up and YFC

Intercollegiate, Ms. Gañalon emerged as top 1 winner under the YFC Scale-up category along with the couple Mr. and Mrs Frederick Uyaan of the Vel Seirra Integrated Farm and Mr. Mergene Ferrer of the Kahit Munti



Integrated Farm from Bacnotan, La Union and Mapandan, Pangasinan, respectively.

As winners, they brought home a plaque of recognition and cash awards in the amount of P300,000 which shall be credited in their respective ATMs to further finance their existing agri-based enterprises.

Under the Start-up Category, seven (7) new enterprises also passed the requirements of the program and emerged as winners and were also given a plaque of recognition and a cash prize in the amount of P150,000.

Of the seven winners, three enterprises came from the province of Ilocos Norte, two from Pangasinan and one each from the provinces of Ilocos Sur and La Union.

The YFC Intercollegiate Awardees came from the students

of the Mariano Marcos State University in Batac City, Ilocos Norte whose enterprise is the CUP-SD in Nagbacalan, Paoay, Ilocos Norte.

The YFC Program is an annual activity of the DA through the Agribusiness Marketing Assistance Division that aims to provide access to financial grant assistance for the youth as they venture into profitable agri-fishery based enterprises. To sustain their operations, these enterprises are being assessed and monitored every year and are recognized as DA's partner in pushing for more developmental and innovative projects in the agri-sector.

A DA's pet project that started in CY 2021 initiated by the Office of Senator Imee R. Marcos, the YFC Program provided an opportunity for the youth to realize their full potential to innovate towards becoming successful agri-based business owners

through the support that the program provides.

In the two-year implementation of the program, recipients of the project have reached to a total of 245 young farmer-entrepreneurs managing around 158 enterprises.

Joining the awarding ceremony is no less than La Union Governor Raphaele Veronica Ortega-David who inspired the awardees with her personal journey as a young leader who have excelled in her chosen field of leading the province.

“Patunayan natin sa ating mga ginagawa na tayong mga kabataan ay talagang pag-asa ng bayan. We can make a difference; we are innovative and can contribute to the needed change in our society. Break the barriers,” she encouraged.

More than 3000 farmers get hybrid rice seeds

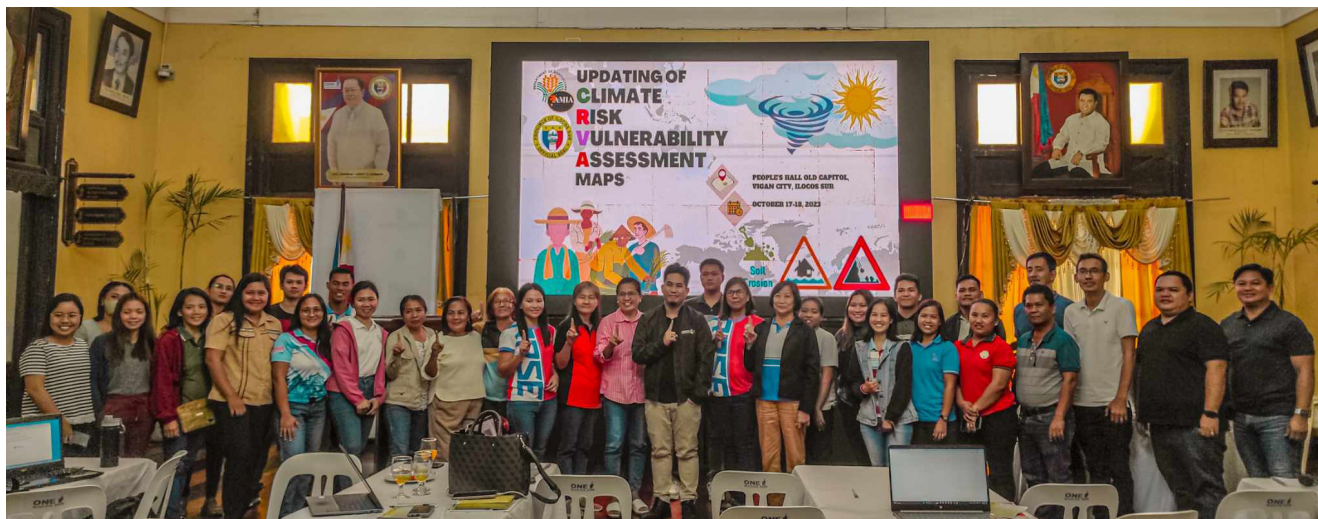
Around 3,906 farmers are expected to benefit from the hybrid rice seeds distributed by the Department of Agriculture-RFO1, Monday, in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte.

The intervention has a total cost of Php 29.2M with recipients coming from the municipalities of Bacarra, Bangui, Burgos, Carasi, Dumalneg, Laoag City, Pagudpud, Pasuquin, Piddig, Sarrat, and Vintar.

With the continuous provision of free farm inputs by the DA, these activities are projected to result in an increase in rice production and income for farmers in the country.



AMIA partners with LGUs to update climate risk vulnerability assessment maps



The Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) Program, in collaboration with the Geographic Innovations for Development Solutions, Inc. (GRIDS) in October, has initiated a series of training sessions aimed at updating Climate Risk Vulnerability Maps in the provinces of Ilocos Sur, La Union, and Ilocos Norte.

This activity brought together representatives from the offices of Provincial Agriculturists and City/Municipal Agriculturists where they were also apprised of the manipulation and utilization of the Quantum Geographic Information System (QGIS).

Quantum GIS (QGIS) empowers users to engage in a wide array of geospatial tasks, ranging from urban planning and environmental management to natural resource exploration, spatial analysis, and map design. Its support for various data formats facilitates comprehensive geospatial analysis and enables the

production of professional-quality maps. This not only enhances decision-making processes for local governments but also provides valuable insights into potential climate vulnerabilities in their respective regions.

Moreover, users can efficiently create, edit, analyze, and publish maps, and it supports various data formats, making it a cost-effective choice for both GIS professionals and enthusiasts. Its 3D visualization capabilities and plugin support further extend its utility in diverse applications.

Ms. Maybelyn Libong, DA-RFO I AMIA focal person, highlighted the primary objective of these training sessions. “The training primarily aims to evaluate the climate risk vulnerability status within a geospatial landscape at the provincial level by integrating field data and secondary data. This assessment was based on three key components used to measure vulnerability, namely: sensitivity, climate hazards, and adaptive capacity,”

Ms. Libong shared.

Meanwhile, the Climate Risk Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA) serves as a vital tool in identifying risks within specific areas based on preliminary specifications and site conditions. This method specifically determines the likelihood of vulnerability to climate-based risks within an area. This information is crucial for identifying suitable Climate-Resilient Agriculture (CRA) practices that should be adopted by farmers to enhance productivity and income on their farms.

In conclusion, the AMIA Program’s efforts to enhance the capacity of local government officials in leveraging GIS and QGIS for climate risk assessment and adaptation are crucial steps towards building more resilient agricultural systems. These initiatives empower local communities to make informed decisions, reduce vulnerability, and pave the way for a sustainable and climate-resilient agricultural future.

1st F2C2 Regional Summit held to strengthen unity among regional farm clusters



Underscoring the power of unity and collaboration, the 1st F2C2 Regional Summit brought together farmers and fisherfolks from across the region to foster stronger connections and encourage partnerships with institutional buyers. With the theme, “Building Bridges: Strengthening Farm and Fisheries Networks,” this initiative seeks to establish a better market linkage and encourage big brother and small brother relationships among agricultural stakeholders.

“If we unite as one, we have greater strength, increased opportunities, and stronger market linkages” Dir. Florentino Adame, OIC-RTD for Research and Regulations stressed this in his message, highlighting the main objective of strengthening the agricultural sector through solid bonds between different associations and cooperatives.

On the other hand, Director Shandy Hubilla, F2C2 Program Director, through his representative, reported on the remarkable progress of the F2C2 program since its establishment in 2020. The program has identified 82 regional farm clusters in the region, with 54 of

them already validated. These clusters collectively represent 21,452 farmers managing over 16,000 hectares of land.

“Inaasahan natin na sa pamamagitan ng F2C2, mas makakamit natin ang layunin na madadagdagan ang ani at kita ng ating mga magsasaka at mangingisda at matiyak na laging may pagkain sa hapagkainan ng bawat pamilyang Pilino (We believe that through F2C2, we can achieve our goal of increasing the income and productivity of our farmers and fisherfolks, and ensure that every Filipino family has an adequate supply of food on their tables),” said Dir.



Hubilla, emphasizing the potential of this initiative to transform the agricultural sector.

Throughout the summit, farmers had the opportunity to showcase both fresh and processed products. This served as a platform for potential collaborations and partnerships between Farmers’ Cooperatives and Associations (FCAs) and institutional buyers, contributing to a more interconnected and efficient agri-fishery value chain.

One of the highlights of the event was the sharing of product demands of institutional buyers and presentations of demand clusters by various government agencies.

This activity provided an opportunity for farmers and fisherfolk to widen their horizons and strengthen their connections within the agricultural community.

The summit was held on October 20-21 at the Monarch Hotel in Calasiao, Pangasinan.



Use of biofertilizers determined better approach in Region 1 through balance fertilization strategy challenge

In collaboration with participating biofertilizer companies and Longping seed company, the Department of Agriculture - Ilocos Region, through the Rice Banner Program, conducted a Balance Fertilization Strategy Challenge field day in Brgy. Namboongan, Sto. Tomas, La Union on October 11.

According to Mr. Rodolfo Estrada Jr, Regional Techno Demo Coordinator, this challenge, only one rice variety was used for the wet and dry season all throughout Region 1, which is the Longping 937 (NSIC Rc 456H).

“Ang main objective ng challenge na ito ay para malaman kung anong balance fertilization strategy ang effective sa Region 1. Kaya each province may site. All management practices are the same. The only difference is yung pag-abono” he said.



Meanwhile, Science Research Specialist II Mr. Melvin Agngarayngay, reported the results of the challenge. “May potential ang paggamit ng Biofertilizer. Not only na nakapagreduce tayo sa paggamit ng synthetic, but also napaganda pa niya yung ani ng palay natin.” Mr. Agngarayngay said.

Based on the results, 6 to 8.8 tons can be harvested per hectare, with product costs ranging from 54,000 to 78,000 pesos per hectare if treatments are applied.

“Nakita naman natin na competitive ang mga biofertilizers, kasi base sa na-compute na cost of produce, mas mura ang mga biofertilizers kumpara sa controlled (DA-RFO1 managed recommendation),” he added.

The cost to produce of the biofertilizers ranges from 8.01 to 11.15 pesos while the controlled treatment is at 11.21 pesos.

In conclusion, this challenge is beneficial since it has determined which balance fertilization approach is effective in Region 1.

Seven bio-fertilizer companies, including LM Arenas Agri-Products Corporation, St. Ruiz, UAL, Bio Prime, Global Green, JJEAA Agriventures Co., and Sagrex Corporation were also able to promote their own products during the event.

The activity was also attended by LeMMCAP Region 1 Lead Ms. Rizalina Quiros, Provincial Rice Coordinator Ms. Myrna Gacutan, representative of Governor Raphaele Veronica “Rafy” Ortega-David, OIC - Municipal Agriculturist of Sto. Tomas Mr. Rodolito Estrada, SB Member STLU - Committee in Agriculture Ms. Celia Flor Bejar, Brgy Captain Bienvenido Carbonell, other 2nd district Municipal Agriculturists, La Union farmers, AEWs, OPAG staff, and DA-RFO1 Rice Banner Program staff.



Pangasinan, La Union farmers take part in onion, mango credit caravan

At least 150 farmers from the provinces of Pangasinan and La Union convene for the onion and mango credit caravan on October 17 in Bayambang, Pangasinan.

The activity was held to intensify information dissemination among farmers on credit services in support to their agricultural activities, Ilocos farmers being the top producers of mango and second in onion across the country.

In 2022, mango farmers in the

region produced 23.3% of the national production, while onion farmers contributed 16.3%.

The caravan was spearheaded by the DA-RFO1 High Value Crops Development Program in partnership with the LandBank of the Philippines, Development Bank of the Philippines, Agricultural Credit Policy Council, Ilocos Consolidated Cooperative, Nueva Segovia Consortium of Cooperatives, Sta. Cruz Savings and Development Cooperative, and the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation.





Welcome to Ilocos Secretary Tiu!

On November 3, 2023, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. appointed Frabelle Fishing Corporation President Francisco Tiu Laurel, Jr. as the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture.

A month after his appointment, Laurel made his first official visit to the Ilocos Region on December 1, 2023. The Agriculture Secretary led the groundbreaking ceremony for the NFA post-harvest facility and the distribution of various interventions in Ilocos Norte.





Ilocos Sur farmers receive 17M worth of aggie interventions

In preparation for the dry season, the Department of Agriculture - Regional Field Office 1 (DA-RFO1) distributed a total of Php17,720,952 worth of agricultural interventions during a distribution activity held at the DA-Ilocos Sur Research and Experiment Center (ISREC), San Juan, Ilocos Sur on October 6, 2023.

2,009 bags of hybrid palay seeds worth Php9,643,200 were distributed to nine municipalities in Ilocos Sur's first district.

Aside from hybrid seeds, the DA-RFO1's Rice Banner program also distributed three (3) pump and engine sets, a recirculating dryer, and a combine harvester for a total of Php4,597,052.

Corn growers from Sto. Domingo also received a four-wheel tractor from Corn Banner Program, and three egg incubators were given to the Ilocos Sur Provincial Organic

Producers under the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program.

The activity was led by 1st District of Ilocos Sur Congressman Ronald V. Singson, along with San Juan Municipal Agriculturist Rommel Hilario, representative of San Juan Mayor Ma. Elaine Sarmiento, Provincial Rice Program Coordinator

Engr. Julius Bragado, representative of Governor Jeremias "Jerry" Singson, and Agricultural Programs Coordinating Officer (APCO) for Ilocos Sur Mr. Jomar Dayap. Representatives from the MLGUs and various farmers associations also attended the distribution.





SHSC in Ilocos Sur is Region I's bet in the national Search for Outstanding CoCMEA

Verifying the compliances of the Ilocos Region's contender to the technical requirements of the nationwide Search for Outstanding Corn Cluster Management Excellence Award (CoCMEA), the technical working group of the Search Committee conducted a one-day field validation to the Sacred Heart Savings Cooperative (SHSC) on October 5, 2023.

Led by the team leader, Mr. Ace Wilfred Abarro II of the Bureau of Soils and Water Management, the 4-man team of evaluators include Dr. Rhea Desalesa, Ms. Hershey Turda and Mr. James Bacara from the Bureau of Agricultural Research, Agricultural Training Institute and the National Corn Program, respectively.

The SHSC is a 51-year old cooperative based in Galimuyod, Ilocos Sur with prime services that

include lending through agri-capital and input, agricultural production and trading, processing along with other non-agricultural activities using the clustering approach that directly benefits its 6,300 members to date.

Along with the value adding activity of the cooperative is corn trading where farmers in the area could sell their produce in support to the feed mill that the coop maintains and correspondingly supports their hog production project with a thousand hog fattening stocks.

To date, the SHSC has around P4.3 billion in asset and maintaining the newly built Banaw Resort, feedmill, grocery store and other agribusiness development enterprises.

Prizes at stake are P2million worth of projects for the champion

in support to the corn cluster development in their area plus plaque of recognition. Meanwhile, the first runner up will bring home P1.2 million worth of projects plus plaque while the second runner-up will receive P650,000 worth of projects and also a plaque of recognition.

The Search for Outstanding Corn Cluster is part of an annual activity of the National Corn Program to recognize the outstanding contributions of corn farmers' organization and cooperatives in the development of the corn industry in each region in time for the conduct of the annual Corn Congress scheduled in November.

Joining the evaluation team is the Regional Corn Program Coordinator, Mr. Florante Gallebo.



Add'l cattle given to FA in the highland town in La Union

The Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) has recently given a boost to the livelihood of another farmer association (FA) beneficiary by delivering a new set of cattle to be raised by the members of the FA.

Seven upgraded male Brahman were handed over to Dina Pascua, the president of the Sinabugan Farmers Association, Inc., in the highland town of Bagulin, La Union. These large ruminants are in addition to the 26 cattle given to the association in June 2023 that are being reared alternatively by each of the 87 members.

Expressing her gratitude, Dina thanked the DA SAAD program for the continued support and could not hide her excitement about raising yet another set of large ruminants. She mentioned that one of her aspirations for their association is to be known as

a dairy farm someday.

“Maragsakanak ta adda manen ti naawatmi a bakbaka. Sapay koma ngarud ta mapaadumi daytoy ta arapaapko ti makaibangonto koma iti dairy farm. Isu nga agpaspasalamatak unay ta naam-ammomi ti SAAD ken nagbalinkami a benepisarioda; saanda koma a maum-uma a mangtutulong kadakami (I am glad to have received these additional cattle for our group. I hope that we can multiply them

and our association succeed because I dream of establishing a dairy farm. We are lucky to have been chosen as a beneficiary of SAAD; I wish the interventions we receive would not falter.),” Dina said.

The Sinabugan Farmers Association, with 87 members, would alternately feed and herd the cattle.

“Gapu ta aggaaddayo ti balbalay, nagtutulagkami: maysa a grupo,



uppat a baka. Makaammodanto metten a mangaywan basta adda ti responsibilidad ti tunggal mayasa (Since the houses of the members are remote from each other, the farmers agreed to rear the cattle by group and by schedule.).”

The cattle given to the association will be raised for fattening. Once sold, they plan to purchase female cattle for breeding and soon, milk production.

Aside from the large ruminants, the FA has already received drugs and biologics for the cattle, vegetable seeds, and other farm inputs.

The association has also undergone various trainings on cattle raising and vegetable farming. In November 2023, they are set to undergo financial management training in order to upskill each member in the proper management of their livelihood.

With the mountainous terrain of the place where the association members reside, livestock raising is a very viable enterprise that would augment their meager income on crop production. Cattle raising has been one of the identified choices of enterprise by the FA as a result of the conducted Beneficiary Needs Assessment by SAAD during its pre implementation phase. The program’s objective to alleviate poverty in the rural communities is expected to be achieved with the success of the given enterprise to the FA.



Pangasinan FA receives more cattle from SAAD for fattening project



STO. TOMAS, Pangasinan -- In another move to continuously support its beneficiaries, the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) has recently delivered six additional upgraded male Brahman to the United Barangay San Antonito Sto. Tomas Farmers’ Association, Inc. (UBSASTFAI) in Sto. Tomas, Pangasinan on October 18, 2023.

Said cattle is part of the integrated Cattle Fattening project initially given to the FA last May.

Prior to this, the cattle raisers of UBSASTFAI were subjected to rigorous trainings on cattle production and management to equip them with enough knowledge on the proper handling of the large ruminants, especially in treating common diseases and keeping the cattle healthy.

The additional cattle are expected to be distributed to other members of the association who will take turns in rearing the said ruminants.



45 Kankana-ey IP farmers in La Union receive vegetable production training

To improve farmers' skills and knowledge in crop cultivation, forty-five (45) beneficiaries of indigenous Kankana-ey farmers in Bagulin, La Union were provided with training on vegetable production through the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Designed to improve farmers' capacity in managing and sustaining their vegetable project and at the same time increase supply of fresh and nutritious vegetables in their communities, the participants who are members of the Sinabugan Farmer's Association (FA) received actual on-site demonstration on how to cultivate short and medium-term crops.

Mr. Joni Belino, technician from the East West Seed Company, served as the training resource person. He discussed proper ways of seed sowing, seedling preparation, and pest and disease management. He also showed

a more suitable way of mulching, since most of the farms in the said municipality are situated along hilly slopes.

Experts from the supplier also demonstrated to the farmers the operation and maintenance of the multipurpose cultivator which will contribute a lot to their farming activities, specifically in the soil preparation.

Sinabugan Farmers' Association is a beneficiary of FY 2023 Enhanced Cattle and Vegetable Production Project worth Php 3,254,578 funded under SAAD Program Phase 2.

During the Beneficiary Needs Assessment (BNA) conducted by SAAD Ilocos in May this year, it was found out that Sinabugan FA's farmlands are usually planted with rice from the months of May to November, and thereafter, farmers cultivate vegetables such as cucumber, tomato,

and sweet pepper for additional income. They also plant tiger grass along the high slopes of their farms and its stalks are processed into soft brooms. Given their remote location, Sinabugan farmers do not travel often to the town's public market to buy their daily needs as well as trade their produce, hence, cattle rearing and vegetable cultivation are valuable additions to their income sources.

After receiving inputs in September and training in October, the Sinabugan farmers with consolidated gardens of 7,770 square meters have started their individual vegetable production. At present, four members initially harvested 1,785 kilograms of tomato sold at Php 15 and 200 kilograms of cucumber at Php 20, giving them Php 30,775 gross income. For the meantime, said vegetable yield was sold within the community and nearby barangays but the FA plans to market their produce to other partner-buyers as the program progresses.



Ilocos Sur farmers venture in ube, goat production through SAAD

Purple yam, locally known as ube, is a staple crop in Sugpon and considered as the town's one-town-one-product (OTOP). This tuberous root crop is processed into wine, halaya, pastillas, jam, and powder for desserts and pastries, making it a sought-after commodity, especially in pasalubong centers.

With the demand for ube and its value-added products in the market, the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Phase 2 awarded the FY 2023 Ube Production Project worth Php 1,256,816 to 45 members of the Pangotan Farmers' Development Association, Inc. (PFDAI).

Mr. Victor Ancheta, president of PFDAI, said during the Beneficiary Needs Assessment that they already established connections with ube jam processors whom they supply their produce with, such as the popular Good Shepherd in Baguio City. Thus,

the agricultural interventions from SAAD are expected to supplement their purple yam production.

Prior to receiving the livelihood project, training sessions on ube production as well as capacity-building for Pangotan farmers were provided to prepare them both for organizational and livelihood project management.

During the training, researchers from Benguet State University (BSU) led the training and identified some of the purple yam diseases and pests that usually threaten the farmers' production, including irregular tuber shapes, poor tuber quality due to bruises and scratches, discoloration, high incidence of rotting, worm-eaten, wilting of newly-emerged leaves, leafhoppers, and rodents. Resource Speaker Dalen Meldoz of BSU Northern Philippines Root Crops Research and Training Center (NPRCRTC) recommended the establishment of a rapid multiplication nursery should the association plan

to expand its market and increase the volume of purple yam it provides for buyers.

On the other hand, Ms. Grace Backian, Senior Science Research Specialist from the BSU NPRCRTC demonstrated the proper ways of preparation and production of planting materials and modern methods of ube production using the minisett technique, tissue culture, vine cuttings, and aeroponics, whichever is the most convenient and ideal for the landscape of the production area.

On June 8, 2023, the group received 15,000 ube cut setts (small whole tubers) and various farm tools. They planted the crop weeks after the distribution in a consolidated 7,600-square individual farms in Barangay Pangotan using the Minisett Technique that involves cutting the mother tuber into small setts to be propagated in their proposed communal area. With hardwork and

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DA-SAAD Ilocos to cover 7 more priority municipalities

In pursuit of community-led agricultural development initiatives for the marginalized sectors, the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Ilocos Region identified seven (7) new municipalities for its area expansion in FY 2024 program implementation.

With an aim to contribute to poverty reduction and local food production of 5th-6th income class and top-third poorest municipalities as priority areas, SAAD Ilocos will cater next year to beneficiaries from Sta. Catalina, Sigay, Gregorio del Pilar, Lidlidda, and Nagbukel in Ilocos Sur, and Carasi and Adams in Ilocos Norte.

Sta. Catalina is a coastal municipality while Lidlidda, Gregorio del Pilar, and Nagbukel are all landlocked municipalities. Farming and fishing are the most common livelihood of rural communities in these towns. Only Nagbukel belongs to

the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC). Meanwhile, the town of Carasi is a highland area while Adams is a landlocked town, both having Indigenous People (IP) communities.

“Napili namin ang naturang mga munisipyo sa Ilocos Sur at Ilocos Norte dahil sila ang may highest poverty incidence sa region kumpara sa hindi pa naco-cover ng SAAD. Natutuwa rin kami dahil sa mainit na pagtanggap at pakikipagtulungan ng mga LGUs sa paghahanda natin sa SAAD expansion sa susunod na taon,” said SAAD Ilocos Region Focal Person Ms. Lorena A. Olveña.

(We selected these towns in Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte having the highest poverty incidence in the region compared to those that have not yet been covered by SAAD. We are also happy because of the warm welcome and cooperation of the LGUs in our preparations for the SAAD expansion

next year.)

Mrs. Olveña together with Agricultural Program Coordinating Officer (APCO) for Ilocos Sur Mr. Jomar Dayap, APCO for Ilocos Norte Mr. Medardo Pablo, and SAAD regional implementers led a series of consultative meetings and project orientations for officials of local government units (LGUs) from October 11-18, 2023.

During the meeting, the LGUs through the Municipal Agriculture Office endorsed potential SAAD beneficiaries based on their existing baseline data. One farmer association from each municipality with members having an income below the poverty threshold were initially targeted. Pre-selected farmers through the conduct of Beneficiary Needs Assessment (BNA) in November and December will undergo a full-blown Participatory

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When blessings come when you least expect it

What was supposed to be a simple turnover of the last tranche of interventions for this year turned out to be a surprise for the farmer-beneficiaries from the far-flung hills of Bagulin, La Union.

On December 28, 2023, members of the Sinabugan Farmers' Association from Sitio Sinabugan in Barangay Tio-angan, Bagulin, are supposed to receive only the additional farm inputs as part of their livelihood projects under the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program Phase 2, which include two forage choppers, trowels, sprinklers, and mineral blocks (for livestock).

However, during the distribution, Bagulin Municipal Agriculturist, Engr. Juvy Sagapan informed that their Interventions Monitoring Cards (IMC) for the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund - Rice Farmers Financial Assistance (RCEF-RFFA) are already funded and ready to be released for the farmers present during

the event.

"Maragragasakanak ta nairanrana a bimmaba dagiti farmers tayo manipud bantay ket apag-isu isu nga adda gayam ti pondo dagidiay (IMC) cards dan, uray kaskasano ket adda ti sagut a naawatda iti umay a baro a tawen. Dakkel met ti panagyamanko ta personal nga immay ni Director nga isu ti nangiyeg kadagitoy a tulong, lalo iti Sinabugan farmers ta manmanoda a talaga makaawat iti intervention ta adayo gamin [I feel elated because coincidentally, they traveled down from their barrio to receive the interventions, and it so happened that their cash cards were already funded. This serves as an advance gift for the new year. I am also thankful to the Regional Director for personally handing over these farm inputs. Honestly, the Sinabugan farmers seldom receive interventions because of the distance of their area, so they are lucky because of SAAD.]" Sagapan said.

An unconditional cash transfer program from excess tariffs collected from the implementation of the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), the RFFA aims to provide P5,000 to rice farmers tilling two hectares and below.

In Bagulin, 1,791 farmers are recipients of the RFFA out of the 15,088 total recipients in the entire province of La Union.

DA-RFO1 Field Operations Division (FOD) Chief Ms. Analiza Ramos said that the town of Bagulin is the first municipality in La Union to receive the said assistance for 2023, and it is quite coincidental that today is also the last distribution of the final interventions for this year.

"Few days before the year ends, we feel happy to have met with the farmers of Bagulin because we learned about their concerns. As the Director has instructed, we have already

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from page 27, Ilocos Sur farmers venture in ube, goat production through SAAD

proper planting techniques, the group expects to have their first harvest in January next year. Their initial yield will be intended for mass propagation and the succeeding harvests will be used for trading as well as processing of value-added products such as ube powder and wine.

Aside from ube, the Pangotan farmers also received FY 2023 Goat Production Project worth Php 605,340 as part of SAAD's initiatives on farm

diversification. The project includes 35 does and 3 bucks, including vitamins A, D, E, and Fenbendazole.

With the high demand for purple yam in food processing as well as goat for its meat and milk, the Ube and Goat Production Projects awarded to the FA through SAAD are great opportunities for the association to build crop and livestock-based enterprises that offer competitive income and food access to the community.



from page 29, When blessings come when you least expect it

coordinated with other operating units to seek any possible inputs we could provide.”

Aside from the ICM cards and SAAD interventions, DA-RFO I Regional Executive Director Dr. Annie Q. Bares also delivered food packs to the members of the association and her assurance that the agency will continue to support farmers to achieve higher productivity and income.

During her consultation and dialogue with the farmers, Dr. Bares learned that the primary need of the farmers in Sitio Sinabugan is water supply for the vegetables and other crops planted on top of the hills. Hence, she assured the association to send a

team from the engineering division to assess the area and determine which intervention is suitable for the farms.

“One of these days, we will be sending our engineers to inspect the area for the possible establishment of an irrigation system or provision of pump and engine sets. Also, we will refer you to the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) for the linkage of your produce to prospective buyers or sell through our Kadiwa market,” Dr. Bares said.

“Saanmi a ninamnama a makaawat kami iti card ita nga aldaw. Mayat ta adda ti igatangmi iti alikamen iti talon kas iti abono ken dadduma pay. Agyamankami iti agtultuloy a suporta ti DA kadakami.

Sipud idi adda ti SAAD limmag-an ti panagbiagmi iti talon ta immadu tib aka idia Sinabugan. Adda payen ti us-usarenmi a makinaria iti talon, (We never expected to receive our cash card today. We are thankful because we have additional budget to buy fertilizer and other farm needs. We also appreciate the DA for their constant support, especially SAAD. Because of the SAAD interventions, there are more cows in our place, and we have additional machinery to perform our activities in the fields.),” Marison Piloy, one of the members of the association, said as he expressed his gratitude to the department.

Since the month of October this year, the Sinabugan farmers have already harvested cucumbers and tomatoes (the interventions they received from SAAD), but they could only sell their produce at low prices because of the lack of a competitive market.

Alongside Director Bares during the activity are FOD Chief Ramos, La Union Agricultural Programs Coordinating Officer (APCO) Juanito Malazo, Jr, staff from SAAD Ilocos Region and Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Information Section (RAFIS), and from the Bagulin Municipal Agriculture Office.



from page 28, DA-SAAD Ilocos to cover 7 more priority municipalities

Rural Appraisal (PRA) in February 2024 to ensure accurate selection of beneficiaries and strategize provisions of livelihood projects based on assessed needs of the farmers.

Carasi Municipal Agriculturist Engr. Alvin D. Bondoc acknowledged the importance of social preparation activities and training that ensure efficient and effective project implementation.

“Maragsakankami ditoy programa a SAAD gapu ta adda ti social preparation na. Nakasaganan dagiti beneficiaries sakbay pay a maited kadakuada ti intervention (We are glad for SAAD because of its social preparation [component] ensuring that the beneficiaries are well-prepared prior to the distribution of interventions.),” said Mr. Bondoc.

Under its Phase 2 implementation this year, SAAD Ilocos Region covered four (4) priority municipalities including Sto. Tomas in Pangasinan, Bagulin in La Union, Sugpon in Ilocos Sur, and Dumalneg in Ilocos Norte. In these towns, four (4) farmers’ associations with 270 members were selected as beneficiaries of commodity-specific interventions ranging from crops and livestock. Enterprise building remains to be the peak goal of these sustained livelihood projects.

Onion cold storage to rise in Ilocos Sur

An onion cold storage with an 810 metric ton capacity will soon rise in Caoayan, Ilocos Sur.

The facility costing more than Php 111.8M was proposed by the Nueva Segovia Consortium Cooperative (NSCC) to the Philippine Rural Development Project through its Investment in Rural Enterprises and Agriculture and Fisheries Productivity (IREAP) component.

The three main cooperatives that will gain from this intervention are the 66-member NSCC MPC, the 40-member Sacred Heart Savings Cooperative, and the 34-member Pantay Onion Producers Cooperative.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held last week, November 24.

The event was led by Ilocos Sur Vice Governor Hon. Ryan Luis Singson, DA-RFO1 Regional Executive Director Annie Q. Bares, DA-RFO1 RTD for Operations Dennis I. Tactac, 2nd District of Ilocos Sur Sangguniang Panlalawigan member Hon. Gina Cordero, Caoayan Sangguniang Bayan member Hon. Ernelina Quilana, and NSCC CEO Dr. Divina Quemi.

The construction of the storage is expected to be completed by November 2024.





Seven proposed subprojects for PRDP Scale-Up funding get RPAB approval

Seven proposed subprojects (SPs) for Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) scale-up funding were approved by the Regional Project Advisory Board 1 (RPAB 1) in a meeting, October 24.

With an amount of about Php967, 236,375, this marks a new milestone for the PRDP in Region 1 in terms of having the most funds granted.

In Pangasinan, proposed subprojects include the construction of three provincial multi-purpose drying pavement costing Php126.8M. A rehabilitation and road opening in San Vicente-Viga FMR with bridge was also proposed at Php290.4M. In addition is the construction of provincial bangus breeding hatchery at Php239M.

Other approved subprojects are



the construction of San Jose Multi-purpose warehouse in Ilocos Norte estimated at Php11.9M and the rehabilitation of Ramot-Puguil FMR in La Union at Php298.9M.

These subprojects will be endorsed to the National Project Coordination Office for the issuance of No Objection Letter 1. Once released, procurement activities for the subprojects will commence.

The Regional Project Advisory

Board members/representative who were present during the meeting were Mr. Pedro Gonzales of DILG, Engr. Charlie Javier, Jr. of DPWH, Atty. Glaiza Bernadeth Tadeo of DAR, Mr. Benjamin Campaño of RAFC, Ms. Basilya Liwanag of DENR, and Ms. Aple Panes of DTI.

The meeting was presided by Engr. Dennis Tactac, DA-RFO I's RTD for Operations at the same time the PRDP-RPCO I Deputy Project Director.

There is a growing demand for **Juan Tamad's crop**

If Juan Tamad was a farmer, guess what he planted?

Mung bean.

Mung bean or locally known as 'munggo' in Filipino and 'balatong' in Ilokano is described by Eduardo Balanag, San Fermin ARB MPC manager from Caba, La Union, as the crop of a lazy person. "You just sow the seeds after rice planting and it grows on its own. You will meet again once it's harvest time," he said.



E. BALANAG

MUNGBEAN



250g

Date Harvested: _____
Best Before: _____

Contact Person: Eduardo C. Balanag
Contact No. : 09922037342
Facebook : Eduardo Balanag
Address: San Fermin, Caba
La Union

This hard, dark green to yellow green colored legume makes up the typical Filipino diet specially during the rainy season. In Ilocos Region, it is usually boiled until soft then sauteed in onion, garlic, tomato, and pork slices then topped with bagnet and malunggay leaves. The variety 'labo' or 'kusapo' is preferred for this recipe. It is considered Class A and is usually exported. The other variety is 'kintab,' which is Class B and powdered as an ingredient to bread and noodles.

According to Eduardo, mung bean is a cheaper source of high-quality protein, folate, iron, and other nutrients. It is also ideal as a crop in rotation with rice or corn as it increases yield by fixing the atmospheric nitrogen to the soil.

Nitrogen is a macronutrient essential for plant growth and development.

In 2017, the San Fermin ARB MPC received a mung bean enterprise subproject from the Philippine Rural Development Project amounting to more than Php3.3M. Six years forward, the cooperative established markets in La Union, Baguio City, Urdaneta City, Vigan City, and to as far as Tanza, Cavite.

Over the years, the demand for mung bean has increased as shared by Eduardo. "There is income and demand for the crop," he said. To date, their cooperative is still looking for other farmers who can help them meet the required supply at the local and international market.

The cooperative strives hard to cope with the required production by visiting other mung bean farmers like those in San Fabian, Pangasinan to buy their produce. Asked what other solutions he could think of to solve the production gap, Eduardo mentioned the need for better storage facilities and influencing farmers to plant the crop.

"Even though farmers see the benefit of planting mung bean, it is still difficult to influence

them. We created a program to strengthen the camaraderie of farmers planting mung bean as there is really an increasing market however, the production is still not enough even if production areas were expanded. The mindset of people is different. They prefer other crops," he shared.

"With vegetables for example, you can already harvest after a month, but for mung bean, it takes at least two to three months," he further explained. As to how he can persuade them, "I need to talk to them personally," he added.

The cooperative's top buyer is the ISEED Marketing Cooperative in Vigan City. Eduardo said that their deliveries to this cooperative is exported to Denmark.

"Most of what was exported to Denmark is consumed by Filipinos residing there," he shared.

Recently, Eduardo and the members of their cooperative were asked to comply 1,125 kilograms to ISEED however, they were not able to complete the required volume. "We only transported 800 kilograms," he uttered.

Although Ilocos Region is the top producer of mung bean in the country with 33.5% contribution to the national production, much from the efforts of farmers is still essential.

To date, Eduardo continues to look for more farmers with whom they may collaborate to fulfill the expected volume. "We encourage other farmers to sell their mung bean to us as long as they follow the required quality and for sure, we will give them a good price," he warmly said.

Interested buyers of mung bean could also reach out to Eduardo at a price of Php 25.00 per 250 grams and Php2,125 per 25kgs via their Facebook Page (San Fermin Arbmmpc) and contact number at 09922037342.

Meet Mr. Nelson Domingo, a 55-year-old farmer from San Joaquin, Balungao, Pangasinan. Despite being a graduate of mechanical engineering, he made the decision to pursue farming due to his family background in the field.

Since he started farming in 1995, Mr. Domingo has actively participated in meetings and training sessions related to farming. In 1998, he became an inbred seed grower after being convinced by a local government unit (LGU) friend.

Mr. Domingo is the chairman of the Pangasinan Organic Seed Growers and Nursery Multipurpose Cooperative located in San Vicente, Urdaneta, Pangasinan. The cooperative boasts 281 active members and has been under his leadership since 2013. Through his efforts, he has provided livelihood opportunities to farmer-laborers in their community and has increased their income. Additionally, he has advocated for other municipalities to receive government interventions and has represented the concerns of his fellow farmers during national activities.

In the country, Region 1 farmers are among the first to harvest their produce. Their cooperative is partnered with PhilRice, and as part of their commitment, they supply 58,476 bags of certified seeds, weighing 20kg each, for the RCEF seed program.

When asked about his success as a farmer, Mr. Domingo humbly

expressed that he is content with what he does. “Ang masasabi ko lang, masaya ako sa ginagawa ko, nakakatulong ako sa kapwa ko magsasaka” (All I can say is I am happy with what I am doing; I am able to help my fellow farmers). He finds fulfillment in helping his fellow farmers and has been able to achieve personal milestones such as purchasing his desired vehicle, a 4-hectare land and a tractor, and sending his daughter to a good university.

With support from the Department of Agriculture, they have received valuable assistance, including four circulating dryers that are crucial for seed growers like them, as well as a transplanter, harvester, and training sessions.

Mr. Domingo expresses his gratitude to the DA for their unwavering support. He acknowledges that without the provision of machinery, their progress would have been hindered. He is thankful to the agriculture sector for not neglecting their needs and for the opportunities they have been provided with.

In conclusion, Mr. Nelson Domingo serves as an exemplary farmer in his community, dedicated to his work, and passionate about assisting his fellow farmers. “Salamat sa DA kasi hindi sila nagpabaya. Nagbigay sila sa amin ng counterpart hanggang sa fully subsidized ang mechanization, hindi kami umunlad kung di sila nagbigay ng mga machinery, kaya nagpapasalamat kami sa Department of Agriculture na hindi kami pinabayaan”.



VOLUME 22, ISSUE 4 | OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2023

A successful farmer's wisest pursuit:
Sowing good seeds



Stories from the field: *The joy in farming rice*

Is planting rice not that fun?

“Magtanim ay ‘di biro,” says the lyrics of that widely known Filipino folk song on farming. And when continued into the next line, it says “Maghapon nakayuko.”

The difficulty in rice farming is clearly depicted throughout the entire lyrics of the song.

‘Di man lang makaupo. ‘Di man lang makatayo. A literal description of how backbreaking and laborious rice planting is after a whole day’s work.

But the times are changing. The rice sector too. But is still met with multi-faceted challenges due to lack of modernized facilities, extreme weather conditions, and high input cost, to name a few.

In 2022, the country was classified at a low-mechanized level as per report by PhilMech. Although it has posted a growth in June 2023 with a 2.68 horsepower per hectare (hp/ha), it was just a slight increase from 2013 with 2.31 hp/ha.

Several contributing factors according to PhilMech (2022) were farmers’ low purchasing power, high availability of rural labor, expensive cost of machineries, and very small landholdings per farmer.

As such, strengthened efforts to shift the agriculture sector from manual labor to mechanized farming is being pursued by the government.

The Agricultural Mechanization Law of 2013, or Republic Act 10601, has made the government’s commitment to strengthen efforts in modernizing the agriculture sector and be at par with the ASEAN neighbors.

In 2020, the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) was also created under the Rice Tariffication Law. Tariffs collected from imports were used to intensify provision of interventions to rice farmers. The biggest chunk of this fund is allocated for mechanization.

DA’s regular rice banner program also continues to provide support. In 2022 alone, DA-RFO1 distributed 182 farm equipment and machineries valued at Php107M.

Among the recipients of the intervention is the Bengcag Farmers Association in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte.

Mr. Romulo Juan, 52, president of the association shared that their association received a 4-wheel drive tractor and hand tractor.

“Malaking tulong po talaga yung machineries na natanggap namin.





Ito po'y nakakagaan ng gastos kasi malaking bagay iyong konti lang ang babayaran namin sa asosasyon," he said.

To also help in addressing the increasing price of input cost, the agency distributed free seeds and fertilizers. Mr. Juan said that with the free inputs he received, he was able to earn more.

"Malaking bawas sa gastos namin yung binibigay ng DA na libreng binhi. Kasi ung naibigay ng gobyerno, bale iyong gastos namin na kunwari 20,000 sa isang isang ektarya, ngayon nasa 5,000 na lang. Iyong labor na lang binabayaran namin," he shared.

With the hybrid rice seeds received, he also shared, "Mas mataas talaga ang yield na nakuha namin."

Mr. Juan also admitted that because they didn't have enough capital to buy inputs before, the recommended fertilizer in cultivating rice was not strictly followed.

"Tinitipid namin ang gastos namin noon kasi mahal ang fertilizer. 3,000 mahigit. Ngayong nabigyan kami ng libre, naibigay namin lahat nung kailangan ng palay," he said.

Other factors that have contributed to Mr. Juan's bountiful harvest this year is also attributed to the lesser typhoons that had passed through Ilocos Norte this year. Although Super Typhoon Egay caused a Php648.1M agricultural damage in Ilocos Region in July, his farm wasn't hardly hit.

"Hindi pa masyadong namumulaklak iyong mga tanim namin noon," he recalled.

Other factors mentioned by Mr. Juan was also his access to irrigation with reduced fees.

"Libre na iyong pagbabayad namin ng irigasyon. Meron lang iyong kontribusyon namin na P2,500 per hectare. Dati P9,000 at P10,000. Malaking bagay na po iyon na naibigay," he said.

But notably, he shared that in his own point of view, farmers are happy.

Sa ngayon happy ang farmers kasi ang benta namin ngayon Php24.50 at meron pang Php25. Iyong dry na. Iyong wet Php19 at meron pang P20 kaya mas maraming kita ang farmers ngayon kasi ang presyo noon P19 ang dry at P14 tsaka P15 iyong wet," he shared.

Although Mr. Juan has identified other interventions that are still necessary for them to be better at work, he is still grateful with the interventions received. "Maraming naitulong ang gobyerno, pero sana meron pa kaming combine harvester para mas mapadali pa ang pag-ani namin," he honestly said.

If such a request was granted, perhaps one day, Mr. Juan could revise that song and sing. "Magtanim ay kay saya. Maghapong nagmakina. Nakaupo, nagmamaneho. Pagtayo'y uwi ng masaya."



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