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July 23, 2020

100-hectare demo farm to showcase hybrid rice technology now in Butuan City

Published July 23, 2020, 9:09 AM
by [Mike Crismundo](#)

BUTUAN CITY – A 100-hectare demonstration farm to showcase hybrid rice technology has been established in Butuan City.



13-Caraga Regional Executive Director Abel James I. Monteagudo (center) leads the ceremonial planting yesterday to officially kick-off the preparations for the 11th National Rice Technology Forum in October, 2020, hosted by the Caraga region. (Photo courtesy of DA 13-PIO via Mike U. Crismundo/Manila Bulletin)

With Caraga Region hosting the 11th National Rice Technology Forum (NRTF) in October this year, **DA-Caraga** Regional Executive Director (RED) Abel James I. Monteagudo led the ceremonial planting to officially kick-off the preparations for the forum in Barangay Lemon, Butuan City yesterday.

This is in collaboration with the Rice Productivity Advocacy Incorporated or the Rice Board and the Local Government Unit of Butuan.

For the 2020 wet cropping season, 61 participating Farmer-Cooperators (FCs) from the Barangays of Ampayon, Basag, and Lemon in Butuan City are taking part in establishing a 100-hectare area rice technology demonstration farm.

“The techno demo area is a learning site for the farmers to see the advantages of hybrid rice. With this, Caraga rice farmers will have the opportunity to personally see the result and choose which among the best practices and technologies introduced are applicable to their farm conditions,” said RED Monteagudo.

Currently, the farmer-cooperators are on their pre-planting activities. They are provided with seeds, input requirements, crop protection as well as technical assistance following the package of technology recommended for a particular hybrid rice variety by the seed companies and rice institutions.

The farmer-cooperators will also take the responsibility of the labor cost and expenses for the maintenance and the growth of hybrid rice until its harvesting.

Private seed companies such as SL Agritech Corporation, Seedworks, Bioseed, Ramgo, Bayer, Pioneer, Syngenta, Advanta, and LongPing are the partners of the farmer-cooperators in the development of the demonstration farms.

Alongside the private seed companies, DA-Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) – Agusan and Phil-Sino Center for Agricultural Technology (PhilScat) also participated in the technology demonstration.

Since water is very important in hybrid production, the DA, together with the National Irrigation Administration – Caraga, is working closely to ensure water availability in the production sites.

As the country is facing the new normal, Monteagudo encouraged the key players by reiterating Secretary William Dar's three principles in surpassing the global crisis.

“The participation of the rice industry stakeholders is crucial to the success of the 11th NRTF. Together we will survive, reboot, and grow,” Monteagudo said.

He said the DA continuously provides all options for the Filipino rice farmers to select technologies that will improve their productivity. One of these is the adoption of high-end technology for the rice industry – the use of hybrid.

In 2017, hybrid rice utilization is at 9.78%. For the following years, it posted an increase of 12.04% in 2018 and 17.11% in 2019 based on the DA-National Rice Program rice performance report.

The historical data of hybrid utilization in the country calls for a more strategic approach to convince more farmers to adopt the practices and technology of hybrid rice given that the wide-scale adoption of such technology could help attain the country's rice sufficiency goal.

The Manila Times®

July 23, 2020

Cane cutters get assistance

By Eireene Jairee Gomez

WITH the advent of the milling season come September, the sugar industry has sought help from the government to facilitate the immediate processing of travel documents for the sacadas or cane cutters amid strict travel protocols brought by the coronavirus pandemic.

According to **Sugar Regulatory Administration** board member Dino Yulo, the sugar industry sought the help of the provincial governments of Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental and Antique.

“There is already an agreement between Gov. Eugenio Jose Lacson of Negros Occidental and Gov. Rhodora Cadio of Antique to facilitate the immediate processing of travel documents for the sacada who are expected to start coming in by the first week of September,” he said in a statement on Tuesday.

The sacada are migrants from Antique, and records show that there are about 3,000 of them who are listed with the Department of Labor and Employment (DoLE).

Yulo, however, said there were about 5,000 to 6,000 sacada from Antique, several of them undocumented.

“With this agreement between our LGUs (local government units), we can now legally document migrant sugar cane cutters as they will have to follow the ‘no ID, no entry’ policy that has been agreed upon,” Yulo added.

Juliana Cepe, provincial planning and development coordinator of Antique, said a system would be created for the legal deployment of sacada, which will be processed by millers' representatives from July 15 to August 15.

The system, Yulo said, would give time to Negros Occidental to prepare the Certificates of Acceptance for the sacada.

He said DoLE will also assist "contractors" to secure "Authority to Hire" permits before recruiting workers so they will not be accused of illegal recruitment. Once the list has been prepared, this will be submitted to the respective municipalities in Antique so that each LGU will have their own database through the Public Employment Service Office or PESO.

After approval by the LGUs, the sacada will now have to submit their birth certificates, mayor's permit, police clearance and medical certificates duly signed by a government or private physician before they can be given the authority to travel and a provincial ID signed by Governor Cadiao.

Yulo said they were also coordinating with Gov. Arthur Defensor of Iloilo and Bacolod Mayor Evelio Leonardia for a "provisional transit" permit for the cane cutters.

July 23, 2020

Fund lack could stymie PSA rice stocks survey

By Jasper Y. Arcalas



A stall at the San Andres public market sells assorted varieties of rice in this BusinessMirror file photo.

LIMITED budgets may constrain the government from surveying rice stocks held by commercial warehouses, which are owned and run by private traders and importers, according to a Congress official.

Novel Bangsal of the Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department (CPBRD) revealed that the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) may face challenges in conducting the commercial rice stocks survey (CSS), partly because of limited funding.

The CSS is a survey of the rice stocks held by commercial warehouses. Its conduct was turned over to the PSA from the **National Food Authority (NFA)** as mandated by the rice trade liberalization (RTL) law that took effect in 2019.

Under the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the RTL law, the final turnover of the CSS from the NFA to PSA shall be on July 1. The IRR also stipulated that the budgetary requirement for conducting the CSS starting this year “shall be provided” in the annual budget of the PSA.

Citing PSA, Bangsal said a 2020 budget for the PSA’s CSS was approved under the agency’s Tier 2 fund.

However, Bangsal added that whether the CSS indeed got appropriation for this year would still need to be verified amid government's spending for Covid-19 efforts.

“Whether the PSA will be able to conduct the CSS this year is still something that we need to verify,” he said at a webinar about the RTL law hosted by various farmers groups on Wednesday.

Less frequent

Bangsal disclosed that due to PSA's “low” budget for 2020 the agency may opt to reduce the frequency of the CSS from monthly to quarterly basis.

Citing PSA, Bangsal added that the agency may also just conduct the CSS at a national level instead of the planned provincial level, again, due to limited funds.

Bangsal also raised concern on how efficiently PSA can conduct the CSS since the rice industry has been deregulated and commercial warehouse owners may not easily cooperate unlike before, when NFA oversaw their licenses.

Bangsal pointed out that the PSA has yet to come up with a methodology for its CSS and a new methodology would mean the new rice stocks data could be incomparable to previous figures.

“Because there are changes in methodology, the new data won't be comparable in previous stocks data since PSA does not have a methodology on how to do the CSS yet. This will be a challenge for the PSA,” he explained.

Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) National Manager Raul Q. Montemayor said the PSA may also have a hard time finding the right warehouses to survey since commercial warehouses no longer need to get a license to store rice.

“The law removed the licensing requirements for importers. This means that even if you do not have a license you can import rice. And this could be a challenge for PSA as they will not be easily able to track where the imported rice went and stored,” Montemayor said at the webinar.

Based on the latest memorandum order of the Department of Agriculture, interested rice importers should now submit as an additional requirement the list of their distribution points and warehouses.

July 23, 2020

Green thumb cops, families begin harvesting 'go, grow, glow' foods in their backyards

Published July 23, 2020, 10:54 AM
by [Marie Tonette Marticio](#)

TACLOBAN City – With the increasing prices of commodities and the movement restrictions due to the community quarantine in the last four months, many families, including policemen have started growing their own food at home and in the office.



PHOTO VIA MARIE MARTICIO/ MANILA BULLETIN

P/Cpl. Marvin Makabingkel who is assigned at the Police Regional Office 8 headquarters, together with other police officers, planted vegetables on the vacant lot in their motor pool using old tires as plant boxes.

He shared that aside from fixing vehicles, he also loves to cook that is why he started planting herbs and vegetables that they can use during the quarantine.

“We made use of the things that are available around us to plant. After working, we sow some seeds, which is fun because we get to see them grow each day. It is also an effective way to de-stress,” he shared. Roselle Tupa, an accounting graduate from Dulag, Leyte who is reviewing for her board exams decided to make use of her time at home to plant because her parents kept complaining about the rising prices of vegetables.

“My struggle was the seeds. I got some from the Department of Agriculture (DA), but they were limited. We also lack fertile soil because our space is cemented,” she said as she was starting her home garden.

Roselle said planting has become their family’s way to bond. Her father, who does not work on Fridays, and her younger sibling, helped prepare the land, while her mother and sister helped plant and maintain their garden.

“It is somehow costly to start a garden, but I sought financial help from my parents. I told them that once we harvest, I think it will pay off,” she said.

Roselle has already harvested pechay, bell pepper, kangkong. She has now started propagating ampalaya, patola, squash, and other vegetables.

Wanting to grow their own food while staying at home has motivated Cherry Catherine Gagarin’s family to plant.

“We could save a lot if we grow our own food, and we can ensure that our children eat vegetables because we can prepare what they eat at home,” Gagarin said.

She and her husband took advantage of the quarantine implemented in the city to teach their daughters how to plant, feed their pets, and do household chores.

With the increasing demand for seeds, Brgy. 81, Marasbaras, through the Youth for Human Ecological Society (YHES) organization has distributed vegetable seedlings to families.

Their village chair, Atty. Iris Ting, shared that they purchased seeds that they sowed on egg trays and distributed among 72 families who took interest in home gardening.

“We just tried but many wanted to plant. Some of them even went directly to the barangay hall to ask for the seedlings. Most of them have already started harvesting vegetables,” she said.

These initiatives have helped the Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ (DENR) call for a change in the Filipino diet by switching to plant-based meals as an effective measure to lessen the ecological footprint of human food consumption.

DENR-8 Regional Executive Director stressed that the need to lessen the people’s carbon footprint has never been as important and as urgent today “especially so that we made some headway in our effort to fight climate change during the long period of community quarantines brought by the corona virus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.”

This coincides with the nationwide celebration of July as Nutrition Month which encourages the public to include more vegetables and fruits into their diet as recommended by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) in proportion with three main food groups of “go, grow, and glow foods.”

A month-long public information drive was launched by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) dubbed as “Plant-Based Solutions for Climate Change”.

During the celebration of Month of the Planet Earth in April this year, they initiated activities with similar objectives dubbed as “EMB 8’s Home Gardening” where they distributed vegetable seeds to their employees and encouraged them to plant vegetables in their homes.

The produce of which is donated to poor communities together with additional seeds for them to plant.

“Instead of dole-out activities, the challenge is for the people themselves to plant and grow vegetables then learn to share the seeds to other members of their respective communities. In a way, we encourage them to make vegetables the main component of their diet and in effect, reduce their carbon footprints,” Letecia Maceda, EMB-8 Regional Director noted.

According to the 2013 study by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, meat, and dairy—particularly from cows—account for around 14.5 percent of the global greenhouse gases each year. That is said to be roughly the same amount as emissions from all the cars, trucks, airplanes, and ships in the world combined.

A recent study by the University of Oxford suggested that cutting meat and dairy products from a person’s diet could also reduce the carbon footprint from food by up to 73 percent.

As shared by Brent Logan, global food lead of World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and author of Diet for a Better Future Report, producing food for earth’s 7.7 billion people is responsible for a quarter of the global carbon emissions that drive climate change.

From that, DENR-8 said about 40 percent comes from livestock production and food waste, with the rest generated by rice production, fertilizer use, land conversion, and deforestation to accommodate commercial crops.



July 23, 2020



In a letter to Agriculture Secretary William Dar, USDA agricultural counselor Morgan Haas said they have examined the newly restructured program and agreed to include cattle and carabao to boost the country's milk output.

STAR/ File

US OKs restructured Philippine dairy program

[Louise Maureen Simeon](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 23, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has approved the restructured program to be implemented by the **National Dairy Author(NDA)** to accelerate the development of the country's dairy industry.

The program, which will focus on providing access to dairy goats, infrastructure technology and other inputs to increase milk production, will be funded by the USDA.

In a letter to Agriculture Secretary William Dar, USDA agricultural counselor Morgan Haas said they have examined the newly restructured program and agreed to include cattle and carabao to boost the country's milk output.

The Department of Agriculture will utilize the P1.56 billion under the US Public Law 480, a fund granted by the American government. The fund, which has been with the National Treasury, remains intact due to lack of concrete programs of the government.

Beneficiaries of the US PL 480 program are developing countries which are experiencing difficulty in providing the food needs of their citizens.

The program will also involve more farmers to complement the government's efforts to address poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

Of the P1.5 billion fund, NDA will get P987 million, while the Philippine Carabao Center will have P512 million.

The remaining P67 million will be used by the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries for its monitoring and evaluation activities consistent with the approved US PL 480 fund utilization guidelines.

The restructuring is part of Dar's efforts to improve milk sufficiency through increased dairy animal production and enhanced animal genetics.

Over a period of four years, the project seeks to produce 27.7 million liters of milk and increase dairy cattle inventory by 7,323 heads and dairy goat inventory by 9,611 heads through importation and expanded animal breeding programs.

The project also aims to increase dairy carabao inventory by 922 heads through importation and local procurement of purebred and crossbred buffalos, and increase average family income of dairy farmers by 20 percent annually through the development of carabao-based enterprises.

Last year, the country's dairy sector produced 23,690 metric tons of milk, up 5.4 percent.

Despite this, the Philippines still hiked its imports of dairy products by 21 percent last year amid increasing consumption coupled with favorable global prices.

The country imported some 3.5 million MT liquid milk equivalent. Skim milk powder and whole milk powder imports comprised about 57 percent of total dairy imports.

This year, liquid milk imports are seen to increase due to rising consumption and increased use in food service, particularly in coffee shops.

The average Philippine milk production per animal at eight liters per day remains low mainly because of poor feed and management practices, compounded by high production costs and lack of adequate dairy infrastructure.

Dairy products are currently the country's third largest agricultural import after wheat and soybean meal. Major suppliers are New Zealand at 39 percent, US 21 percent and Australia seven percent.

July 23, 2020

Instant coffee 'still king' in PHL amid virus

By **Ma. Stella F. Arnaldo**



In this file photo, customers line up with their shopping cart to pay for their items in a grocery in Antipolo City.

COVID-19 has reduced the market for fresh roasted coffee in the Philippines, with consumers choosing the cheaper alternative of drinking instant variants while stuck at home during the government-imposed community quarantine.

“Instant coffee is still king, especially in the Philippines,” said Emmanuel Torrejon, board director of the Philippine Coffee Board (PCB) at the recent webinar on *Cafe, Coffee, Covid-19 —Roasting Ideas for a New Normal*. “So if they can’t have their coffee in a café or in a lounge or in the business meetings, they have instant coffee. So we’re sliding back from regular roasting ground fresh coffee to a bit of three-in-one instant coffee again.”

While this may be good news for companies producing instant, three-in-one coffee, he said, “It would not be the best for cafés, especially the specialty coffee shops who have lost their clientele, and they’ve been selling a lot of these coffees together with a lot of gadgets. That’s really the trend, [selling] a lot of home gadgets [like] pour overs.”

A 29-gram pack with 30 sachets of three-in-one coffee sells for about P175, while roasted ground coffee will cost anywhere from P350 to P500 per 250-gram pack. At cafés, a small cup of regular brewed coffee will cost at least P110.

Torrejon noted an increase in online selling of roasted beans or roasted ground coffee especially from small start-ups. These are mostly consumed at home, but “the house market is small; it’s very insignificant.... The bigger market is where it’s drunk together with friends, family, associates, business meetings, hotels airlines and that’s all lost.”

He said Philippine coffee roasters suffered a 90-percent loss in business in April, although the market recovered a bit in May and June. “I hope we can recover early next year, but it will be a hard time for us to recover that lost market.” Government has already allowed the reopening of restaurants and cafés at 50 percent dining capacity, although the BusinessMirror has observed there are still very few people getting together in these establishments, possibly due to health concerns.

On the upside, Pacita U. Juan, president and co-chairman of the PCB, pointed out that coffee farmers were back to planting because of Covid-19. “They have nothing to do but plant, which is good for the Philippines, where demand is so much higher than production.”

Data from the Bureau of Plant Industry indicated that 117,454 hectares of farmland are currently planted to coffee, yielding an average of 300 kilograms per hectare.

According to the PCB web site, the Philippines now produces about 30,000 metric tons of coffee a year, in four varieties: Arabica, Liberica (Barako), Excelsa and Robusta. The country, along with Asean neighbors Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand and Laos, produced some 41.8 million bags of coffee in 2018, accounting for 24.54 percent of the world’s production of coffee, as per data from the International Coffee Organization, of which the Philippines is a member.

Torrejon, meanwhile, predicted that worldwide coffee prices will likely decrease, with Brazil announcing record-high production and Vietnam still having a surplus production. “As we see now, the market trading in New York [is] at the 90s [US\$ per pound] level and therefore directing it to go towards south at the \$85 [per pound] level. So I’m not very optimistic about green coffee prices, and probably we will see some cutbacks in production from other countries like Colombia and Indonesia. [And with] people going back to farms, this means more production and maybe lower prices in the Philippines,” he underscored.

Other countries such as Singapore and Malaysia have seen a rising trend towards bottled fresh coffee drinks like cold brews, and packaged ready-to-drink coffee, according to its representatives in the webinar.

Torrejon also forecasts the same for the Philippines: “We’re going to see more of that being consumed at home and outside. And it’s readily available in supermarkets, which is the main channel [for F&B retail] nowadays.”

July 22, 2020

LandBank boosts agri loans by 4% to P227.47 billion

Published July 22, 2020, 10:00 PM
by [Madelaine B. Mirafior](#)

The amount of loans that state-run Land Bank of the Philippines (LandBank) has lent to the agriculture sector slightly increased from January to June, mostly benefiting agribusinesses and projects of several small to large enterprises and local government units (LGUs).

In a statement, LandBank said the loans that it lent the agriculture sector during the first half of the year increased by 4 percent to P227.47 billion from the P219.62 billion during the same period last year.

Of these loans, only P35.63 billion was provided directly to small farmers, fishers, cooperatives, and farmers associations, including outstanding loans of farmers and fishers which grew by P219 million or 18.37 percent from P1.19 billion in May to P1.41 billion in June.

Meanwhile, loans to other players in the agri-business value chain stood at P191.84 billion, of which P141.67 billion was lent to small, medium, and large agribusiness enterprises, while P50.17 billion went to agri-aqua related projects of local government units (LGUs) and government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs).

Nevertheless, LandBank is claiming that it assisted 1.97 million cumulative small farmers and fishers as of June, representing a 98.8 percent accomplishment over the two million cumulative target for the year.

This included the new farmers assisted under the **Department of Agriculture's (DA)** Financial Subsidy to Rice Farmers (FSRF) program, the agency's one-time emergency cash assistance for the COVID-19 pandemic.

The rest were supported through LandBank's various regular loan offerings and lending programs jointly implemented with the DA and the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR).

Moving forward, LandBank is aiming to assist an additional one million new farmers and fishers for the rest of the year.

"Now more than ever, LandBank continues to exert greater focus on driving support for the agriculture sector amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the whole-of-government approach, our strong partnerships with the Department of Agriculture and Department of Agrarian Reform have allowed us to fulfill our mandate of reaching and assisting more small farmers and fishers nationwide than ever before," President and CEO Cecilia C. Borromeo said.

LandBank is a government financial institution with the social mandate of promoting countryside development, servicing the financial needs of small farmers and fishers, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), countryside financial institutions (CFIs), LGUs, and government institutions.

P133-million FMR to boost agri production in Surigao del Norte

Published July 23, 2020, 9:19 AM
by [Mike Crismundo](#)

BUTUAN CITY – The regional office of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) based here reported on Thursday that the more than P133 million farm-to-market (FMR) roads that are set to be constructed in the province of Surigao del Norte will surely boost the agricultural production in that fast-rising province in Northeastern Mindanao or Caraga region.

“This convergence project with the **Department of Agriculture (DA-Caraga)** and DPWH will surely inspire and increase the agricultural production of farmers and fisherfolks,” DPWH 13 Regional Director Engr. Pol M. Delos Santos told The Manila Bulletin on Thursday.

Gov. Francisco T. Matugas and Surigao del Norte 1st District Rep. Bingo Matugas hailed the FMR projects in the province and thanked DPWH Secretary Mark A. Villar for giving much weight and boost to the needs of farmers and fisherfolks in the province.

“We are realizing the promise of President Rodrigo R. Duterte to the Filipino people that he will strongly support the development of agriculture as the main economic driver of the country and uplift the condition of the farmers,” Villar said.

With the improved farm roads, farmers will be empowered to be more productive while inclusive growth will be realized in the localities and will mirror the national economy, Villar added.

“We, the provincial officials, extend gratitude and thanks to President Duterte and Sec. Villar for giving much attention to the needs of our farmers and fisherfolks,” Gov. Matugas said.

In his progress report to Secretary Villar, Director Delos Santos said the agency is implementing the 10 FMRs amounting to a total of P133 million in the province.

These FMRs will be implemented by the DPWH 1st and 2nd District Engineering Offices (DEOs) in Surigao del Norte province, the region’s top DPWH 1 official said.

Initially, these FMRs will be constructed in the towns of Alegria, Gigaquit, Claver, Alegria, Malimono, and Bacuag in Surigao del Norte province

“When all these are completed, these FMRs will surely boost agricultural production in the province and reduce the handling cost and ease the transport of farm products to market centers in the province,” Delos Santos said.

The Manila Times®

July 23, 2020

PHilMech seeks to lure youth to farming

By Eireene Jairee Gomez

THE Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization's (PHilMech) "Youth for Mechanization (Y4M) Advocates" online campaign is gaining traction, demonstrating the youth are appreciating the application of technologies like farm mechanization in improving crop production.

"This online campaign of PHilMech using its Facebook pages is gaining feedback from millennials and Gen Zers, and this also shows that mechanization is one good way to attract more of the youth into farming," said engineer Aldrin Badua, head of the Applied Communications Division and Chief Science Research Specialist at PHilMech.

Under the campaign, PHilMech posts questions about mechanization that young people into farming or aspiring to be farmers answer with a selfie photo beside a farm machine of their choice.

The PHilMech sees the potential of millennials and Gen Zers in helping the agency in assisting farmers adopt to online platforms for training and information dissemination, Badua said.

"The youth of today are very up-to-date and highly adaptable to technologies, including the new ones. And we can explore a role for them to help educate and inform farmers on the latest technologies available to improve farm productivity, including online learning systems," he explained.

So far, PHilMech has gotten very interesting and engaging answers from young people on the questions posted in its Facebook page for the Y4M Advocates campaign.

The two questions posted so far are: “As a youth, how does rice machines/mechanization change the way you think about agriculture?”; and “As a young person, if you would be given a chance by the government and fund your idea, what kind of mechanization-related project you would suggest to bring back the interest of youth into agriculture?”

“Integrating mechanization to traditional rice farming practices allowed myself to view farming not just fun and enjoyable but most importantly rewarding and fulfilling. The idea that I get to have fun while working, greatly enticed my willingness to be involved in this modernization,” said Ariel Langcauon of Albay.

Other advocates include who were featured on the DA-PHilMech page were Alpha Rosanes from Bataan, engineer Cloie Ann Cabiguen of Palawan, Liezel Pinkihan of Nueva Vizcaya, Ryan Escuadro of Negros Occidental, Jean Tado of Agusan del Norte, Erjhon Dinglasan of Cavite, Mia Basilio of Ilocos Norte, Mary Madrio of Misamis Occidental, John Majesterio of Laguna, Dimple Durias of Leyte, Nica Macabale 2nd of Nueva Ecija, Dominiku David of Mabalacat, Pampanga, and Gzel Cantavieja of Laguna.

PhilMech is the leading institution for farm mechanization in the Philippines, as mandated by Republic Act 10601 or the “Agriculture and Fisheries Mechanization Act.” The agency develops protocols and processes, wherein technologies produced by the agency and locally-available equipment are tapped for easier adoption by farmers, cooperatives and agribusiness enterprises.

July 23, 2020

Red tide warning up in 4 waters of E. Visayas

Published on July 23, 2020 08:23 AM

By [Elmer Recuerdo](#)



The **Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources** in Eastern Visayas warned fishermen in four bodies of water in Leyte and Eastern Samar provinces to refrain from gathering, selling and eating all types of shellfish that were found contaminated with red tide toxins.

In an advisory, BFAR said the coastal waters of Guiuan town at the southernmost tip of Samar island are now contaminated with red tide, an algae that causes paralytic shellfish poisoning.

The fisheries bureau has also declared high presence of red tide in the waters of Cancabato Bay in Tacloban City last 1 June, Matarinao Bay in the towns of General MacArthur, Hernani, Quinapondan and Salcedo in Eastern Samar last 25 June and in Carigara Bay covering the towns of Babatngon, San Miguel, Barugo, Carigara and Capoocan in Leyte last 14 July.

BFAR regional director Juan Albaladejo said tests done in both seawater and shellfish meat show toxins presence are beyond the regulatory limit.

The agency issues red tide warning when tests show toxins are beyond the regulatory limit of 60 micrograms for every 100 grams of shellfish meat to warn that prohibition on shellfish harvesting is in effect.

BFAR also bans the trading and consumption of *Acetes* sp. locally known as “alamang” harvested affected bodies of water to avoid possible poisoning.

Local government units are advised to regulate gathering, marketing, and transporting of shellfish in affected areas.

Fish, squid, shrimp, and crab are safe to eat “provided that they are fresh and washed thoroughly and internal organs such as gills and intestines are removed before cooking,” BFAR advisory said.

July 21, 2020



The regional team from the DA-7's Regional Crop Protection Center (RCPC) and Regulatory Division is inspecting and validating infested corn farms as to the extent of damages caused by FAW.

STAR/File

Farmers told: Monitor crops

[Mitchelle L. Palaubsanon](#) (The Freeman) - July 21, 2020 - 12:00am

CEBU, Philippines — **The Department of Agriculture (DA)-7** has urged farmers and agriculture officers in the different municipalities and cities of the region to regularly conduct field inspection and monitor their crops for any presence of insect pests and diseases, especially on Fall Army Worm (FAW).

DA-7 Regional Executive Director Salvador Diputado, in a statement, said the agency is now conducting field validation and monitoring on the extent of damage caused by FAW.

The regional team from the DA-7's Regional Crop Protection Center (RCPC) and Regulatory Division is inspecting and validating infested corn farms as to the extent of damages caused by FAW.

FAW mostly feed on plants, like corn, rice and other crops.

Bienvenido Acabal, chief of the RCPC, said that based on the corn farms inspected, FAW damages are not yet alarming and still at manageable level.

"Upon our assessment of the area, we will provide recommendations such as the use of physical control like handpicking, use of biocontrol agents such as the use of Metarhizium and earwigs or the chemical method to control and contain army worm," Acabal said.

Of the 687.7 hectares corn area planted and monitored from the 12 barangays of the eight municipalities of Cebu, only around 76.47 hectares were affected and were already treated for the month of June.

“It is very important to report right away any farm infestation to prevent severe damages which will result to yield loss,” Acabal explained.

He said that infestation can be identified if caused by FAW because the worm has dark head with a pale, upside-down Y-shape on the front and the four dark spots forming a square on the second to the last body segment, among others.

Oslob farmers Buenaventura Cagot Jr, Antonio S. Balansag and Endriqueta Licayan have expressed their worries as their corn farms were attacked with worms.

Diputado has encouraged the farmers to report immediately any farm damages caused by FAW or any insect pest or diseases to their respective municipal agriculture officers (MAO). The MAO will then inform the regional office for immediate actions. **GAN (FREEMAN)**

The Manila Times®

July 23, 2020

Youth group bolsters agribusiness in Isabela

By Leander C. Domingo, TMT

Members of the Quirinian Youth in Action (QYA) in Quirino, Isabela province are leveling up their involvement in agribusiness with financing from the Department of Agriculture (DA)-Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) and the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) of the department.

Recently, an orientation on the Kapital Young Access for Young Entrepreneurs (KAYA) program was conducted by DA-Region 2 in collaboration with ACPC for QYA members who were assured of capital through a loan program to boost their agri-based businesses.

Adonis Fajardo, ACPC focal person for KAYA, facilitated the orientation on credit policy during the orientation held at Barangay Santo Domingo in Quirino.

Fajardo said QYA members were qualified to avail of the loan program where they can borrow up to P500,000 individually with zero interest and payable in five years.

“Provided that all the required documents as a basis to qualify in this program were complied with, each member can avail up to half-a- million pesos capitalization to put up their agribusiness,” he said.

“There is no harm in trying to venture in the agribusiness sector because there are dedicated agencies that are willing to support so that we reach our goal in life,” he added.

Fajardo explained KAYA aims to finance the working capital and/or fixed asset acquisition requirements of start-up or existing agri-based projects of young entrepreneurs and agri-fishery graduates.

Rose Mary Aquino, DA Regional Technical Director for Research and Regulatory, said QYA's agri-based activities in collaboration with Santo Domingo village and the Qurino local government also supports the DA's Plant, Plant, Plant Program that was launched after the quarantines to contain the coronavirus disease 2019 were enforced.

Since KAYA was launch last May 28 in the illage, Aquino said QYA's activities became more productive with parents also getting involved.

"We were amazed to see a sustainable garden in Quirino town prospering, which was a result of the youth group's hard work and determination and for loving what they do," Aquino said.

She said they are looking forward to QYA expanding its influence to neighboring villages.

"We need not always depend on what the government can give us especially during a crisis.

In planting, we have something to harvest and even sell. We may have good employment, but we need to have a business where we can have extra income," Aquino said.

The DA-Agribusiness Marketing Assistance Division (DA-AMAD) can also provide assistance in the packaging, labeling, proper sorting, among others, of QYA's products once their businesses become sustainable.

Cherrybel Cubero of DA-AMAD said QYA members can also engage in large- scale agriculture so they can have more produce to trade with the Kadiwa outlets established by the department, helping them earn better based on the best prices for their produce.

Cubero said DA-AMAD can also assist in QYA in learning good manufacturing practices and branding.

For her part, Quirino Vice Mayor Maria Nerizza Callangan said her locality has incorporated in an ordinance the patronage of farmers' produce from the municipality.

"Quirino residents need not go to neighboring towns to buy vegetables from because we have farmers producing them here in our town, and sell them at the right price," she said.

Callangan added the good news is Quirino farmers can now connect with institutional buyers of their organic and naturally grown produce.

QYA founder Johnly Cacho said they are thankful to the DA for supporting they have received.

“Part of our vision is to move the younger generation to venture into agribusiness especially now that there is capital provision. In the past, QYA’s goals and programs were achieved and proved it to the national level that we can,”

Cacho said.

The Manila Times®

July 23, 2020

Agribusiness firm taps biodigester

By Antonio G. Papa, PH.D.

Through the use of a biogas digester, Wellisa Farm in Bantayan Island, Cebu province was able to solve the problem of pollution caused by hog manure and chicken dung through a biodigester that now supplies 60 percent of the energy requirements in the farm.

Also, majority of the animal housings of Wellisa Farm have solar panels.

Furthermore, the biogas sludge is being converted into organic fertilizer branded as Wellgrow Bio-Organic Fertilizer, packaged in 40-kilogram bags. The organic fertilizer is registered and certified by the Organic Materials Review Institute based in Oregon.

The two dome-shaped biogas concrete digesters were constructed through the help of the PlanET Biogas Global GmnH, a German company. Each tank has a capacity of 5,600 cubic meters. The digesters produce about 400 kilowatts of energy per hour.

Wellisa Farm is owned by spouses Wellington and Elisa Chan Lim that has an animal stock of about 15,000 hogs and 400,000 layers. Hence, waste management in the farm is a big challenge for them.

Wellington, chairman and chief executive officer of Wellisa Farms, said the company is also the top egg producer in Cebu

“We are supplying more than 380,000 table eggs per day not only for the whole province of Cebu but also in other provinces of the Visayas and in some parts of Mindanao,” he said.

The farm also operates a feedmill with part of the output sold to other growers; produces its own paper pulp egg trays for packaging eggs; sells day-old chicks and ready-to-lay pullets; and distributes pork products to markets in Cebu and suburbs.

Welisa Farms produces an average of 20,000 pieces of paper pulp egg trays per day by adopting the pulp moulding system using the Silfurton machine, which reduced the cost of egg trays by 50 percent.

AgriNurture acquires 51% of IT company Pay8, Inc.



LISTED agricultural firm AgriNurture, Inc. (ANI) has acquired 51% of information technology (IT) company Pay8, Inc. in efforts to serve farmers living in rural areas across the country.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange on Tuesday, the company said it had forged a memorandum of agreement with Hatchasia, Inc. and Pay8, Inc. for the acquisition of P377.91 million of the latter's authorized capital stock.

ANI said the acquisition is part of its plan to complete the agricultural ecosystem it envisioned. Further, the company said the financial platform that will be introduced aims to reach the farmers in the “unserved” rural areas of the country.

“The valuation, among other standard matters, shall be subject to ANI’s conduct of due diligence before the execution of definitive agreements. Further, other matters such as the mode of acquisition shall be finalized after satisfactory outcome of due diligence,” the disclosure said.

According to the disclosure, Hatchasia Inc. is a major shareholder of Pay8, Inc. The two companies are engaged in information and technology that provide multiple systems of ad platforms to various industries.

— **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

July 23, 2020

AgriNurture, Inc. issues Notice of Annual Meeting of Stockholders

By **BMPlus**





AGRINURTURE, INC.

#54 National Road, Dampol II-A, Pulilan, Bulacan

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS:

NOTICE is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of Agrinurture, Inc. (the "Corporation") will be held on 14 August 2020 at 10:30 am at its principal office located at No. 54 National Road, Dampol II-A, Pulilan, Bulacan. The agenda for the said meeting shall be as follows:

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. CERTIFICATION OF NOTICE AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM
3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
4. ANNUAL REPORT BY THE CEO
5. APPROVAL OF THE CORPORATION'S MATERIAL RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS POLICY
6. APPROVAL OF THE AUTHORITY TO NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO JOINT VENTURE OR ANY SIMILAR ARRANGEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE THROUGH THE BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED AGRI-TOURISM CORN PLANTATION IN PALAWAN
7. APPROVAL OF THE AUTHORITY TO NEGOTIATE AND ACQUIRE INTERESTS IN NUTRICEUTICAL FOOD CORPORATION
8. ISSUANCE AND LISTING OF UP TO SIX MILLION ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY TWO THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED (6,172,800) PRIMARY SHARES IN FAVOR OF PLENTEX PHILIPPINES, INC.
9. APPROVAL OF THE AUTHORITY TO DIVEST INTEREST FIRST CLASS AGRICULTURE CORPORATION
10. APPROVAL OF THE CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF UNDERLYING COMMON SHARES IN THE CORPORATION'S DEPOSITARY RECEIPTS PROGRAM
11. APPROVAL OF THE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT UNSOLICITED PROPOSALS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (DA) AND NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA)
12. APPROVAL OF THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE INTENT OF VNESTO CAPITAL TO FINANCE THE AGRINURTURE, INC. EXPANSION PROGRAM
13. APPROVAL OF THE AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH ABACUS CAPITAL INVESTMENT CORPORATION
14. APPROVAL OF THE AUTHORITY TO SUBSCRIBE SHARES IN BINANGONAN RURAL BANK, INC.
15. APPROVAL OF THE CONDUCT OF STOCK SPLIT AND RECLASSIFICATION OF SHARES
16. APPROVAL OF THE AMENDMENT OF THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE STOCK RIGHTS OFFERING
17. APPROVAL OF THE AMENDMENTS OF THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE ISSUANCES AND LISTINGS OF WARRANTS
18. MATTERS NOT REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED
19. ADJOURNMENT

By resolution of the Board of Directors, the close of business on **15 July 2020** has been fixed as the record date for the determination of the stockholders entitled to notice of such meeting and any adjournment thereof, and to attend and vote thereat.

All stockholders who will not, are unable, or do not expect to attend the meeting in person are urged to fill in, date, sign, and return the enclosed proxy to the Company at its principal office at 54 National Road, Dampol II-A, Pulilan, Bulacan. The proxy need not be a shareholder. A stockholder who is entitled to cast two (2) or more votes may appoint two (2) proxies and must specify the proportion of votes each proxy is appointed to exercise. All proxies must be received on or before **4 August 2020**. Proxies received after the said deadline will not be recorded. Corporate stockholders are requested to attach to the proxy instrument their respective Secretary's Certificates containing the Board Resolution vis-à-vis the authority of the proxy(ies). Validation of proxy(ies) shall be held on **7 August 2020 at 2:00 p.m.** at the Company's principal office. **Management is not asking you for a proxy nor is it requesting you to send a proxy in its favor.**

For convenience in registering your attendance, please bring your identification card containing your picture and signature, and present the same at the registration desk. Registration shall start at 1:00 p.m.

Pursuant to Securities and Exchange Commission Notice dated 20 April 2020, the electronic copies of the Company's Information Statement (SEC Form 20-IS), Notice and Agenda, Proxy Form, 2019 Annual Report (SEC Form 17-A), 2019 Sustainability Report, Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2020, Quarterly Report for the period ended 31 March 2020 (SEC Form 17-Q), and other pertinent documents related to the Annual Stockholders' Meeting may be viewed and/or downloaded on the Company's website at www.ani.com.ph, and PSE Edge portal at <https://edge.pse.com.ph/>.

Very truly yours,

SGD.
MARICRIS CONNIE B. PUA
Corporate Secretary

July 23, 2020

ANI buys into payment unit of DFNN via share-swap deal

By **VG Cabuag**

Agrinurture Inc. (ANI), the agribusiness arm of businessman Antonio Tiu, said it has signed a deal with a unit of DFNN Inc., for the acquisition of shares in one of its financial platforms via a share-swap transaction.

In its disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, ANI said it is acquiring 51 percent of Pay8 Inc.'s authorized capital stock after increasing its capitalization, through a share swap.

Based on current valuation, the deal is valued at P377.91 million, but is still subject to ANI's due diligence, the company said.

"The intended acquisition is part of completing the agricultural ecosystem being envisioned by ANI. The financial platform that will be introduced is anticipated to reach the farmers mostly in the unserved rural areas of the country," ANI said.

Pay8 is majority owned by Hatchasia Inc., which in turn is owned by DFNN, a company that supplies software and technology to many gambling firms and also runs its own gambling joints.

Hatchasia and Pay8 are companies primarily engaged in the business of information and technology that provides multiple systems and platforms to various industries, DFNN said in a separate disclosure.

"The financial platform that will be introduced is anticipated to reach the farmers mostly in the unserved rural areas of the country and is targeted to have a major impact in the drive for financial inclusion of the much-neglected banking requirements of our agribusiness sector by enabling farmers, producers, distributors and end users to make cashless payments within its closed looped ecosystem," DFNN said.

"More importantly, this platform should address the steady decline in revenue of the agricultural sector by providing much needed access to financial services."

Under the agreement, ANI will buy up to 71 million common shares of Pay8 after it effected an increase in its authorized capital stock to P141.12 million from P100 million at par value of P1.

In return, the agribusiness company will swap its shares of equivalent value based on a P12 per share valuation of ANI shares.

It will also acquire of up to 24.5 million shares or 20 percent of the shares of Hatchasia at P5 apiece.

July 23, 2020

ANI buys stake in IT company

By **Malaya Business Insight**

DFNN Inc. said it has sold to agri-trade firm Agrinurture Inc. (ANI) a 51 percent of unit Pay8 Inc., through a share-swap deal.

The transaction will give ANI a payment platform that will be introduced to farmers mostly in the unserved rural areas of the country.

The platform is seen to have a major impact in the drive for financial inclusion of the much neglected banking requirements of our agri- business sector by enabling farmers, producers, distributors and end users to make cashless payments within its closed looped ecosystem, according to DFNN.

“More importantly, this platform should address the steady decline in revenue of the agricultural sector by providing much needed access to financial services,” it said.

Pay8 is a majority-owned unit by DFNN unit Hatchasia Inc. Hatchasia and Pay8 are primarily engaged in the business of information and technology that provides multiple systems ad platforms to various industries.

Under the agreement, ANI will buy up to 71 million common shares of Pay8 after it effected an increase in its authorized capital stock to P141.12 million from P100 million at par value of P1.

In return, ANI will exchange its shares at a share-swap price of P12 per ANI shares. ANI will also acquire up to 24.5 million shares Hatchasia at P5 apiece, equivalent to 20 percent of the latter.

“The intended acquisition of shares in Hatchasia, Inc. will give the company participation in the management of Pay8 Inc.’s parent company to ensure alignment,” ANI said.

ANI said the acquisition will help the company play a big role in the creation of an agricultural ecosystem, in which accredited merchants and farmers can trade goods and where orders and payments will be facilitated.

“The company wants to reach the farthest rural areas to maximize the opportunities for both the farmers and the company and to fully support the government’s agenda on boosting the agricultural sector,” the company said.

The transaction is estimated to be worth P377.91 million, subject to ANI’s due diligence.

BSP urged to unlock stimulus potential of Agri-Agra



LEAN S. DAVAL JR

A PARTY-LIST legislator said the central bank needs to treat the Agri-Agra Law as a potential driver of the economic recovery, and exert more effort to ensure bank compliance with the lending quotas set for the agriculture and agrarian reform sectors.

Manila Teachers Representative Virgilio S. Lacson, vice chairman of the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries, asked the Bangko Sentral ng Pilpinas (BSP) to ensure compliance with the quota of at least 10% of lending being extended to agrarian reform beneficiaries and 15% to farmers and fisherfolk.

“I think that’s the solution so I think we ask the BSP to be strict with this Agri-Agra Law, so it can help stimulate the economy immediately,” he said during a committee hearing.

“The compliance of banks is very low. As of 2017, it’s just P573 billion of all the banks combined, in 2018, it’s P707 billion, if all the banks are compliant we can have P1.034 trillion.”

Quirino Rep. Junie E. Cua, panel chairman, said the lapses in compliance will be addressed by House Bill No. 6314, which strengthens the financing system for agriculture, fisheries and rural development.

Mr. Cua said currently banks prefer to pay the penalty for non-compliance or under-compliance rather than lend to borrowers they deem risky.

“This is the reality we’re trying to solve in this bill that we have passed, it is now in the Senate, to amend that Agri-Agra law. We are trying to address the basic problem of why banks are not willing to lend and (prefer to be) penalized,” he said.

“Based on our study, (banks) feel the small farmers, if they are not organized... are poor credit risks (with very low) ability to repay,” he said.

“The cost of lending is also very high because instead of lending P25 million to one organization you need to deal with 1,000 people borrowing P25,000,” he added.

Mr. Lacson also asked the resource persons why micro- and small-sized enterprises are getting a small proportion of bank loans aimed at small businesses.

BSP Managing Director for Policy and Specialized Supervision Lyn I. Javier said the smaller businesses are receiving a proportionate amount of funds.

“Since the micro enterprises are really small businesses, the loans they may have availed of are also small relative to the loans availed of by the medium-sized enterprises,” she said.

“Another factor could be the appetite of the banks also in lending to these sectors... as well as the access to financing (and) availability of banking services in their respective areas.” — **Charmaine A. Tadalán**



Chicken business

[CTALK - Cito Beltran](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 22, 2020 - 12:00am

A young office executive in his late forties came by the house last weekend to talk cars and restoration. During lunch I served him tender baboy damo cooked adobo-style, brown rice and cabbage with apples, raisins bathe in apple juice and turmeric. My guest was surprised that the baboy damo actually came from our backyard farm in Lipa. I also shared that I had the beginnings of a vegetable garden on the roof deck. My guest declared that he plans to do exactly the same when he retires from the company! If you happen to be like-minded, I strongly suggest: Don't wait until you can't! If you're going to wait until retirement before starting on a backyard farm or your next new business, do it now because we have no guarantees of a tomorrow.

At the beginning of the year 2020, end of January to be exact, I was already finishing sketches of a 200 square meter breeding station for F1 Free Range chickens alongside an egg-layer housing. I already spoke to an established supplier of chickens, we had cleared and laid out the area, and we were ready to go and get prices for construction materials. And then ECQ happened and stopped us on our tracks. Ironically, when all that disruption took place, I seriously considered designing and building a hygienic pest-proof growing pen for traditional 45-day broiler chickens. But I resisted the idea because the government kept saying that quarantines would only go from 14 to 21 days at the most. That was back in February to March. But over 120 days later, I now feel like kicking myself in the rear for not doing it. I could have harvested two to three batches of chickens during the entire quarantine period.

One thing is for certain, I will be revisiting my plans and updating my information about putting up my "Chicken project" in Lipa, Batangas. While I have been blessed by God and by the MVP group to have my TV show on Cignal and this column for the Philippine STAR, I always believed in maximizing the productivity and benefits of all the talents and resources that God gives us. For many people who have found themselves out of a job, they might want to consider putting up an egg layer facility since this is more profitable and gives you cash flow subject to the size or number of layers you decide to work with. Since I regularly travel with my friends from BMeg, the country's top manufacturer of animal feeds, I've learned from many backyard farmers that having an egg layer facility is very manageable if you design your shelters to be hygienic and systematic so that it require very little maintenance.

The beauty of the egg layer concept is that you can start with a dozen, two dozen, 100 heads just to learn or familiarize yourself. If you want it for business begin with 1,000 heads and a capital of P710,000++. Or 3,000 heads with a capital of P2,130,000++. Or 5,000 layers where you'll need P3,550,000++. The numbers may have changed ever since Covid lockdown happened but they're still good guesstimates for pencil pushing and studies. It all depends on your level of knowledge and the people who will work with you. The two most important things to remember are to make sure you have a market or multiple buyers to sell the eggs to (non-negotiable). And most important of all, make sure you and your team or workers know what you're doing and what you are getting yourselves into. Do not be blind men leading the blind! This is a business that can give you cash flow if you pay attention to it, so study the market, get the best material, watch your birds, keep the facility clean and monitor the productivity.

While there are a number of suppliers and a variety of supplies, the only ones I would endorse are the ones I have tried for many years. As far as layers and meat type chicks or pullets go, I turn to Dr. Erwin Cruz of the Superior F1 Chicken fame. You can find him on Facebook and he is very generous with knowledge and information. As a volunteer trainer of BMeg for backyard hog raising for several years, I have unabashedly endorsed BMeg's line of feeds for hogs, sows and piglets especially their premium line that I personally use in our farm. I also use the different high quality feeds of BMeg for game fowl and poultry as I continue to raise fighting cocks more in memory of my Dad Louie Beltran, although I also maintain several pens of hybrid Peruvian/free range poultry chickens and we also regularly raise batches of 50 broilers for meat that's restocked every 15 days. When it comes to egg layers, BMeg has one of the best quality feeds for the purpose and many game farm owners swear by it.

I only have a few dozen layers on and off and they are actually let loose. But because of the great nutritional quality of the BMeg feeds, my team in Lipa literally "pick money" from the ground in terms of

eggs. So if you happen to be my age, worrying about the future or how to keep busy, you might consider studying poultry or backyard hog raising. Get in touch with my friends at BMeg via Facebook and I'm sure you will learn much. Raise your own and taste the fruits of your labor!

July 23, 2020

N. Ecija farmers get P1.9M worth of seedlings, fertilizer

Published on 01:56 PM

By [Jonas Reyes](#)



CABANATUAN CITY, NUEVA ECIJA – A total of P1.9 million worth of vegetable seedlings and fertilizers were distributed by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) to farmers here.

This is part of the department's program dubbed as "The PaSSOver: ARBold Move for the Deliverance of our Farmers from the COVID-19 Pandemic", said Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officer I Jocelyn Ramones.

Aside from the seedlings and fertilizers, the agency also provided seedling trays to 881 farmers in Nueva Ecija.

Every farmer beneficiary received seven packs of seedlings, seven seedling trays and fertilizers.

Ramones said that around 44 hectares of farm land can be utilized by the number of seedlings in various areas in Nueva Ecija.

She said that it is during this pandemic that the value of farmers is seen, adding that they are the heroes not just because the country is experiencing a pandemic, but rather they are the foundation of the country's economy.

"So we should always support our local farmers who have been instrumental in ensuring food security in the country by supporting the agency's programs," she said.

The Manila Times®

July 23, 2020

SEARCA:

Knowledge economy to boost food security

By Eireene Jairee Gomez

THE Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) is urging the government to tap the “intellectual capital” of higher education institutions (HEIs) to boost food security and economic recovery by fostering a “knowledge economy (KE)” amid the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) crisis.

The top 10 countries in 2008 that have high knowledge economic index (KEI) based on a criteria of the World Bank Institute are Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Canada, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia. The Philippines ranked 79.

KEI measures the conduciveness of an environment to use knowledge for economic development. It maximizes use of human capital to enrich productivity and aid food production, and the manufacturing and services industries.

“A country like the Philippines needs an adequate cadre of researchers who appreciate the need to shorten the gap between research productivity and its translation to economic development,” the Food Security Amid the Covid-19 Pandemic (FSACP) report said.

“Various modalities of academe-industry-government interconnectivity models need to be explored,” the report added.

The FSACP recommendations are being pushed by Searca Director Glenn Gregorio and Rico Ancog who is also with the University of the Philippines Los Banos (UPLB).

Their recommendation is for HEI’s human capital to contribute to the development of priority areas relevant to four pillars of food security: food availability; access to food; stability of food supply; and utilization of food for nutrition, health and safety.

To foster this advanced KE economic phase, Searca stressed that “incentives” must be given so intellectual capital in HEIs, such as faculty and researchers, can generate commercialization tools that will meet Filipinos’ imminent needs — food security, in particular, amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

It added incentives empower researchers to partner with venture capitalists, financiers, investors and investment houses that offer initial public offerings, and startups/entrepreneurs so their technology will be sold to consumers or end users.

While many agencies considered HEIs are also administered by the government, like state colleges and universities, Searca said researches must not be done just for academic exercise. These, it noted, should reach out to the needs of society — produce food, solve hunger and malnutrition, and help transform farmers into profitable entrepreneurs.

Long-established agriculture HEIs in the Philippines need to partner with the government that provides policies and funding for initiatives in technologies, according to Searca. The agency also noted HEIs should also partner with the private sector that has the know-how in sustaining economic activities through business and commercial tools.

Agricultural researches should have a “reorientation as seen from business perspective to afford systemic change of the agriculture sector,” said Gregorio and Ancog.

“For universities and research organizations managing scientific journals, investment towards real-time online publications or advanced online publication is a must to be relevant in this time where researchers need to publish their research results as early as possible and make it readily accessible to all,” they further said.

Malaya Business Insight

July 22, 2020

Soybeans down, wheat slide continues

By **Reuters**

SINGAPORE- Chicago corn and soybean futures slid on Tuesday after a better-than-expected US Department of Agriculture (USDA) report on the condition of both crops.

Wheat fell for a fourth consecutive session as harvest across the US Great Plains continued to weigh on the market.

The most-active corn contract on the Chicago Board Of Trade (CBOT) fell 0.6 percent to \$3.33-3/4 a bushel, having closed 1.2 percent lower in the previous session.

Soybeans were down 0.4 percent at \$8.96-3/4 a bushel and wheat lost 0.3 percent to \$5.20-1/2 a bushel.

The USDA raised its good-to-excellent rating for the nation's soybean crop on Monday and kept its corn rating unchanged, surprising analysts who expected a decline in the condition of both crops from a week ago.