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## LGUs buy P245M worth of agri products from local farmers and coops

by: Lovella P. Guarin

As COVID-19 made its unprecedented impact on our economy and the various sectors of our country, the Bicolano farmers still have reason to smile.

Starting with the department's Plant, Plant, Plant program – DA's centerpiece initiative to ensure food availability, accessibility and affordability amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the department also made sure that farmers are able to market their produce.

With the strong and continuous support from the Local Government

*(Please turn to page 8)*



Thirteen units of these completed SPIS worth Php 75 million funded under the Rice Program were recently completed and 10 of which were formally turned over to 10 farmers associations in Camarines Sur and Sorsogon by DA Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla.

## 13 completed Solar Powered Irrigation Systems to boost rice production in Bicol

by: Emily B. Bordado

For years, many Bicolano farmers especially those in the upland areas have to rely on rainfall to irrigate their farms. Those who can afford have to spend quite a sum to use a gasoline- or diesel-powered engine to pump water from the source to their rice fields.

Solar Powered Irrigation System (SPIS) which is more affordable and practical in remote areas.

Using solar-energy is one of the cheapest, sustainable and most accessible means farmers can use to produce energy and make water accessible in their area.

It is thus a great relief to Bicolano farmers that the Department of Agriculture Bicol has invested on Solar-

Powered Irrigation System (SPIS) which is more affordable and practical in remote areas. Thirteen units of these completed SPIS worth Php 75 million funded under the Rice Program were recently

completed and 10 of which were formally turned over to 10 farmers associations in Camarines Sur and Sorsogon by DA Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla. The other three units two from Camarines Norte and another one in Camarines Sur are to be formally turned over anytime soon to their recipients. Each unit with a minimum cost of Php 6 million can irrigate a minimum of 10 hectares up to 50 hectares of potential irrigable

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Organic agriculture technologies showcase right in the DA compound

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## DA-Bicol assists NFA, mobilizes RPCs to mitigate palay price plunge

by: Emily B. Bordado

In a meeting with NFA official, Regional Manager, Edna R. de Guzman bared that their procurement budget and allocation has been increased this cropping and the buying price is fixed at P19.00 per kilo for clean and dried palay but they don't have enough trucks to haul palay from the field, they lack drying facilities and

their warehouses cannot accommodate all the palay stocks they are buying. Dir. Tornilla and Regional Technical Director for Operations Luz R. Marcelino thus offered logistical support through deployment to the NFA four (4) of its hauling trucks currently assigned in its provincial research stations



and those in the regional office to be used for the palay procurement operations: 2 in Camarines Sur; 1 in Albay; 1 in

*(Please turn to page 11)*

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# EDITORIAL

## Increase in production should be translated into increase in farmers' income

As the world and our country grappled with the paralyzing and devastating effects of COVID 19 pandemic not only on the human health but also on the economy, the prospect for growth and recovery seemed bleak and unlikely.

But it is a heartening to know that despite the adverse impact of the pandemic which put all sectors and almost all aspects of human and economic activities at a standstill there is this bit of good news that the major crops in the Bicol region posted positive growth during the first half of 2020.

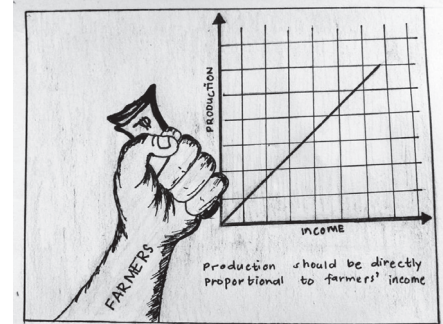
Per report of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) regional palay production increased by 10.74% and corn production by 24%. High value crops also posted positive production growths: pineapple by 13%; sweet potato by 12%; peanut by 7%; okra 6% and mongo 4%.

The good performance of the crop sub-sectors is attributed to the farmers adoption of improved technologies such as the use of quality and high yielding seed varieties, appropriate technologies, good agricultural practices and their availment of production and postharvest equipment, infrastructure-support, financial assistance and other services provided by the DA and other government agencies.

Despite the initial resistance, snags and birth pangs in the implementation of the Rice Tarrification Law, its good intentions are now being realized and the efforts are now paying off with the roll out of interventions for farmers through the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund.

Of course, big credit should go to the farmers themselves who proved their resiliency, undaunted spirit and determination to continue planting and producing crops despite the limitations, difficulties and challenges they have to grapple with.

With the production of our major crops in the region now performing well despite the odds and challenges



brought about by COVID 19 pandemic, extreme weather conditions and other setbacks what should be addressed is ensuring that our farmers get a fair price and ready market for their produce.

The low or unstable price and lack of market outlets for their produce comes harvest time has been the perennial problem of our farmers and producers.

The establishment of more KADIWA centers which is being institutionalized by the DA after it served as vital role as the source and dispenser of food supply at the height of community lockdowns.

The farm consolidation and clustering approach being prescribed by Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar is also one of the strategies which could help farmers enhance their bargaining capacity and competitive advantage in the marketing of their produce because with the consolidation of their resources and efforts they can come up with the required volume and high quality products.

**Increasing production is not the ultimate measure of success for our farmers and producers. Increase in production should go hand in hand with increase in income and this is point that Secretary Dar emphasizes that is why he has rallied the farmers and the agri stakeholders and program implementers to aim for "Masaganang Ani, Mataas na Kita.**

Unless translated to higher income for the producers and farmers increase in production would have not much impact.



# Bicol palay and corn production up by 11% and 24% respectively in the 1st half of 2020

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR – Despite the onset of COVID 19 pandemic on the early part of this year, palay and corn production in Bicol are up by 11% and 24% respectively in the first semester of 2020.

In its latest report, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) noted that the regional palay production attained a 10.74% increase from the 2019 volume of production of 570,386 Metric Tons (MT) to 631,671 MT in the first semester of 2020.

Area harvested contracted to 1.26% from last year's 172,365 hectares to 170,186 hectares in 2020. Nevertheless, average palay yield in Bicol posted a 12.16% increase from 3.31 MT/hectare in 2019 to 3.71 MT/hectare in 2020.

On the other hand, corn registered

24% production increase from last year's 115,815 MT to 143,521 MT in the first semester of 2020.

At the national level palay production increased by 7.1% while corn production expanded by 15.4% based on the PSA report.

## PALAY PRODUCTION

All the provinces, except Catanduanes, registered an increase in volume of palay production. Camarines Sur achieved the highest palay production at 317,290 MT which is 14.3% higher than last year's 277,519 MT as it has also the biggest area harvested (81,923 hectares) although there was a 2,175 hectares (2.5%) reduction in the harvest area in the first semester of 2020.

Albay, the second largest contributor in palay production registered a 14% increase from last year's 85,259 MT to this

year's 97,615 MT despite the 468 hectares (3.6%) decline in palay harvest area.

Masbate is the third largest contributor of palay in the region with 77,402 MT palay production in the first sem of 2020 registering a 1% increase from its 28,229 hectares harvest area.

Meanwhile, Sorsogon recorded a 2.1% increase from last year's 69,366 MT to this year's 70,860 MT production.

The harvest area also increased from 16,683 hectares in 2019 to 16,828 hectares in the first sem of 2020. Camarines Norte recorded a 17% increase from last year's 46,842 MT to this year's 54,906 MT. The harvest area also increased by 2.9% from last year's 11,983 hectares to this year's 12,336 hectares.

Catanduanes' palay production contracted by 8.4% from 14,851 MT in the first sem last year to this year's 13,598 MT. A decrease in area harvested from 5,098 hectares to 4,226 hectares in 2020 was observed.

DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla said that **the increase in palay production in the region is largely the result of DA's aggressive campaign on the use of high yielding rice seed varieties and appropriate technologies as well as favorable weather conditions.**

Under the National Rice Program and Quick Response Fund, the following were distributed to rice farmers from 3rd quarter of 2019 to 2nd quarter of 2020: 76,839 bags Hybrid Palay seeds amounting to PHP384.1M; 15,226 bags Certified Palay seeds amounting to PHP23.1 M; and 467 bags Registered Palay seeds amounting to PHP0.859M, all under the implementation of Model Farms, Seed Exchange Program, Seed Reserve and Rice Resiliency Program.

The regional increase in palay production was also attributed to the high production in rainfed areas (27.57% increase) and irrigated areas (4.79% increase) which were priority in the distribution of high quality seeds under various projects of the Rice Program. Various production and postharvest

*(Next page please)*

## Letters

ORAGON ORGANIC FARMERS ASSOCIATION  
Dugcal-Gogon, Camaligan, Camarines Sur

December 20, 2020

### RODEL P. TORNILLA

Regional Executive Director  
Department of Agriculture-RFO 5  
San, Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur

Dear Director Tornilla:

*Greetings of Peace!*

The Oragon Organic Farmers Association of barangay Dugcal, Camaligan, Camarines Sur, would like to express our sincerest gratitude for the support given to our association. May we please acknowledge the seeds from Rice program (Hybrid seeds) and machineries from Philmech (Combine Harvester) that you have given to us.

Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,

*(Signed)* SALVADOR ESPIRITU

Chairman

Oragon Organic Farmers Association



equipment and infra-facilities amounting to PHP 370.4 M were likewise distributed to the Bicolano rice farmers from 3rd quarter of 2019 to 2nd quarter of 2020.

Director Tornilla also added that the interventions extended to the rice farmers as provided under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) in particular the quality seeds and extension services are paying off.

As of July 29, 2020, a total of 54,650 rice farmers have already received free certified rice seeds under the Seed Component of RCEF, which were distributed by the PhilRice with the assistance of the DA regional office.

Lorenzo Alvina, Rice and Corn Program Coordinator of DA Bicol said that the increment in palay showed an increased productivity per unit area despite the 1.26% decline in area harvested. *“A portion of the high harvest area in 2019 was due to replanting in the areas damaged by typhoon Ompong and Usman in 2018 and areas damaged by El Nino in Feb 2019,”* he added.

### **CORN PRODUCTION**

The latest PSA data also showed that all the six provinces, except Catanduanes, registered an increase in volume of corn production. Camarines Sur recorded a 28% increase in corn production from 75,505 MT in the first

semester of 2019 to this year’s 96,717 MT from total harvest area of 23,845 hectares.

Albay recorded 15% increase from last year’s 23,370 MT to this year’s 26,924 MT from total harvest area of 12,441 hectares.

Masbate recorded a 16.6% increase in corn production from 15,410 MT in the first sem of 2019 to 17,971 MT in 2020.

Camarines Norte recorded a 35% increase in corn production (1,508 MT in 2020) in its 657 hectares area harvested. Catanduanes produced 224 MT corn from 153 hectares in 2020 while Sorsogon produced 176 MT from 84 hectares harvest area.

Alvina said that **the increase in production was**

**partly attributed to the postharvest facilities and farm machineries provided to the farmers by the Corn Program and the absence of severe weather disturbances in the first semester of 2020 except typhoon Ambo.**

Corn area harvested contracted by 0.53% which can be attributed to the damage brought by typhoon Ambo in May 2020 where 349 hectares of harvestable crops from late planting were totally damaged.

*(Lovella P. Guarin)*

Source: PSA data and DA Bicol Rice and Corn Program

## **BAR approves P3.4M project of CNLRRS to produce pineapple seedlings thru tissue culture**

The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), one of the Department of Agriculture’s bureaus based in Quezon City, has recently issued the notice to proceed for the research project entitled “Support to Mass Production of Pineapple Quality Planting Materials through Mass Propagation Technique and/or Protocol in Camarines Norte”.

The DA-BAR will infuse a total of PhP3,473,755.20 for the said project which has a two-year duration starting from July 2020 until June 2022. **With the use of tissue culture and macro-propagation technology, this project will ensure the availability of quality planting materials of pineapple and solve the problem on limited supply of quality planting materials as local farmers mainly rely on conventional planting materials like suckers and slip, which can be very limited.**

Project proponent, Engr. Bella B. Frias, Superintendent of the DA-operated Camarines Norte Lowland Rainfed Research Station (CNLRRS) in

Daet, Camarines Norte, said that under the project, the CNLRRS will develop 10,000 pieces of Queen Pineapple and MD-2 pineapple seedlings through tissue-culture technology, as well as 5,000 pieces of Queen Pineapple and MD-2 pineapple seedlings through macro-propagation technology.

DA Bicol Regional Director Rodel P. Tornilla said that the Tissue Culture Laboratory under the Research Division of DA Bicol in San Agustin,

Pili, Camarines Sur will also be involved in the project. Behilda Balisoro, in-charge of the laboratory said that they will use pineapple crowns in the production of tissue culture derived seedlings which are targetted to be distributed during the third year of the project implementation.

Camarines Norte is considered as Bicol’s pineapple capital as it is home to the Queen Pineapple or Formosa variety which is touted to be

the sweetest pineapple variety in the Philippines. Farmers in the municipalities of Basud, Daet and San Lorenzo Ruiz continue to produce pineapple fruits both for local and international market.

According to Engr. Frias, based on the report of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), Bicol Region, contributed 7.5 % to the national production of pineapple in the third quarter of 2019. Frias also cited that Bicol is also among the top pineapple-producing regions, with Northern Mindanao as the leading producer and followed by SOCCSKSARGEN.

Bicol Region increased its



*(Next page please)*



# Bicol's high value crops grow by as high as 13% in the first half of 2020

*Bicol is biggest contributor of sweet potato in the Philippines.*

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR - The major high value crops commodities in Bicol posted notable growth in production based on the preliminary data of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Pineapple and sweet potato posted the highest production growths among the high value crops in Bicol.

Pineapple registered 13% growth from last year's 95,082 MT to 107,357 MT volume of production in the first semester of 2020. Sweet potato or camote posted 12% growth from last year's production of 62,974 MT to this year's production of 70,645 MT.

Peanut posted a 7% growth from last year's 815MT to 875MT in 2020. Mungbean or mungo recorded a 4% increase in production from 110 MT in 2019 to 115 MT in 2020.

Okra posted a 6% increase in production from 755 MT in 2019 to 804 MT in 2020. Commercial scale vegetable production in Bicol also increased. Native pechay posted a 3% increase from last year's 10,318 MT to 10,635 MT in

2020. Squash posted a modest 1% increase from 15,622 MT in 2019 to 15,849 MT in 2020.

Eggplant production also grew by 1% from 5,445 MT in 2019 to 5,515 MT in 2020. Tomato posted a 2% production growth from 3,544 MT in 2019 to 3,621 MT in 2020.

Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, DABicol High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) regional coordinator said that **the increase in production of the mentioned crops were attributed to the combined efforts of farmers, local government units, institutions and other government agencies providing direct support to the high value crops farmers.**

Bicol is biggest contributor of sweet potato in the Philippines. The Bicol region posted the largest production as well as growth rate in sweet potato in both first and second quarters of 2020 according to the PSA.

Bicol's sweet potato production of 24.89 thousand MT in the first quarter of 2020 is the largest among all regions, equivalent to 21.4 percent of the total output of the Philippines (116.52 thousand

MT). Bicol's sweet potato production grew by 3.8 percent, from 112.29 thousand MT in the first quarter 2019 to 116.52 thousand MT during the same quarter of 2020 (PSA Major Vegetables and Rootcrops Quarterly Bulletin Vol 14 No 1).

The bulk of sweet potato production in Bicol came from the province of Albay. One recipient of DA HVCDP interventions was the Camote Creations Farmers and Entrepreneurs Producers Cooperative (CCFEPC) based in the town of Daraga which gave sweet potato a new branding as a "food gourmet and high-end processed food for pasalubong", from being a mere household's simple food snacks.

Nolan Belaro, Manager of the coop expressed his appreciation to the DA Bicol HVCDP as the P2 Million worth rootcrops processing facility building which was turned over to the coop in 2017 has greatly helped them in developing new value added products out of sweet potato. HVCDP interventions to increase farmers' income

Luz R. Marcelino, DA Bicol Regional Technical Director for Operations said that the increased production

in pineapple is partly a result of the adoption of best practices in pineapple production from series of researches conducted in the past years.

Likewise, to increase productivity of our farmers, the HVCDP program established production facilities such as 8 units greenhouse given to 8 vegetable grower organizations. Another intervention of the HVCDP is the irrigation network services to help combat drought.

In 2019 the HVCDP distributed 14 Pump Irrigation System for Open Source (PISOS) to 14 vegetable growers. The intervention irrigated additional 42 hectares devoted to high value crops.

In the first semester of 2020, the HVCDP distributed 1 PISOS to Guisican Farmers Association, and 7 units multi-cultivator to 7 farmers associations.

To support the DA's Plant, Plant, Plant Program, the HVCDP distributed a total of 5,666 kilos of assorted vegetable seeds, 3, 700 pieces garden tools, and 949 bags fertilizers to farmers regionwide from January to September 30, 2020.

**(Lovella P. Guarin)**

Source: PSA data and HVCDP Bicol

## BAR approves P3.4M project...(from page 4)

production from 151,217 MT last 2018 to 163,274 MT last 2019.

In 2018, the total land area utilized for pineapple production in Bicol reached 4,773 hectares, with Camarines Norte (4,231 ha used in pineapple production) as the leading pineapple producer in the region.

Pineapple production provides livelihood and job opportunities to a big number

of local farmers, and allows several farmer cooperatives and associations to engage in different value adding enterprises consisting of buying and selling of freshly picked pineapples and processing them into juice, wine, vinegar, marmalades. The leaves are decorticated and turned into fibers which are manufactured into pina cloth or exported to other countries as raw materials

for shoe manufacturing.

The other components of the project include the establishment of nursery for pineapple and demonstration farm at the CNLRRS to showcase the package of technology of MD-2 pineapple variety using the macro-propagated and tissue cultured derived planting materials; conduct of trainings on macro propagation and tissue culture technology, pineapple

production practices and nursery management as well as marketing; production of IEC materials; and establishment of an informal seed system profile.

To sustain a continuous supply of quality planting materials, farmer beneficiaries will return equivalent number of quality planting materials to be distributed to the next beneficiaries.

**(Lovella P. Guarin)**



# HVCDP bares winners of the “Gulay Mo Post Mo” contest

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR – The High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) announced the winners of the three categories for the Gulay Mo Post Mo contest. A total of 98 contestants joined the contest.

The winners under the **Gulayan sa Barangay category** were: **First place** – Reverend Father Rex Ramos of St. Vincent Ferrer Parish in Ombao Polpog, Bula, Camarines Sur; **second place** - Almera Orlanes of Doña Mercedes, Guinobatan, Albay; and third place – Mary

Joy Dio Valledor of Cabuyoan, Panganiban, Catanduanes. Meanwhile, the winners under the **Gulayan sa Bakuran (backyard) category** were:

**First place** – Christian A. Saballegue of Poblacion 2, Gainza, Camarines Sur; **second place** – Albert M. Banania of Buraguis, Legazpi City; and **third place** – Romer Oquendo of Busac, Oas, Albay.

The winners under the **Gulayan sa Pamilya category** were: **First place** – Sandria Barnedo of Calayucay, Sto.

Domingo, Albay; **Second place** - Luna M. Camain of San Jose, Bombon, Camarines Sur; and **Third place** - Alvin Bricia of Buluang, Baa, Camarines Sur.

Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, regional coordinator of the DA Bicol High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP), personally delivered

the promised prizes to the first prize winners within Camarines Sur on August 5, 2020.

The prizes for the

other winners will also be delivered to their places.

The contest was launched online through Facebook page HVCDP Bicol on April 14, 2020 and ended on July 30, 2020. Contestants were directed to post photos of their vegetable gardens in social media.

The posts which garnered the most number of reactions were declared winners in the three categories. Dr. Rodriguez said that the contest was in support to the DA's Plant, Plant, Plant Program.

(Lovella P. Guarin)



## High School student's container gardening won DA's contest

**GAINZA, CAMARINES SUR**– A grade 12 student of CamSur National High School taking Agriculture strand won the first place in the “Gulay Mo Post Mo”– Bakuran category contest launched by the DA High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) during the ECQ.

Christian A. Saballegue of San Francisco Poblacion 2, in Gainza gained the highest number of Facebook reactions (over 6,500) for his entry which was posted on FB June 27, 2020.

Christian converted the approximately 80 square meter rooftop of their house into a vegetable garden. He created an improved raised bed as germinating medium. He recycled various discarded materials such as plastic containers, used tires, bottles, shoes, dish drainer, softdrink bottles and cases, discarded pail and basin as improvised pots for his eggplant, pechay,

cabbage, lettuce, strawberry, tomato, carrots, radish, celery, garlic, onion chives, okra, bell pepper chili pepper, peanut, lemon grass and herbs such as sambong and ashitaba. He enclosed the perimeter of the area with improvised trellises made of plastic twines attached to bamboo poles where squash ampalaya, patola, and pole sitaw, Baguio beans and cucumber were made to cling and grow vertically. He also planted Fuji apple, lemon and mulberry in used sacks. He also made use of self-watering pot bottles using 1.5 liter softdrink bottles cut into halves. Pechays are mounted on discarded electric fan grills hanging upside down on top of short plants such as upland kangkong. The fan grills were supported by bamboo poles.

Instead of spending money on mesh net, he installed an improvised

greenhouse made of patched old mosquito nets to protect his plants from heavy rains and scorching heat of the sun. He also planted various vegetables, pineapple, coffee, corn and grapes in their backyard and along the perimeter of their fence. He also concocted his own organic fertilizer from banana peel, Oriental Herbal Nutrient (OHN), kakawate extract and “hugas-bigas”.

He learned the said technology from his lessons in school as he specializes in agri-fishery.

During the lock down, he was able to earn money from selling his produce such as lettuce, bell pepper and chilli pepper. While he gave some of his produce to his cousins and friends who happen to visit his rooftop garden. “Dito na po kami madalas mag hang out ng mga friends ko,” Christian quipped.

On August 5, 2020, he had had a very special visitor. The regional coordinator of the DA Bicol High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez personally awarded Christian's prize composed of 30 sets assorted vegetable seeds, 30 pieces seedling trays, 1 set garden tools, 1 set mini garden tools, 5 pieces plastic crates, 5 bags organic fertilizer, 2 pieces plastic drum, and 1 roll garden hose.

Christian was very happy that he was able to showcase his talent and at the same time receive the prizes which he will use to expand his rooftop and backyard gardens. He thanked Municipal Agriculturist Alex Togño for the technical support and the vegetable seeds he used.

Christian also thanked his teacher who encouraged him to join the contest. He hoped that his urban and vertical gardening will inspire his fellow youth to appreciate agriculture and motivate them to start their own gardens at home.

The Gulay Mo Post Mo was launched online on April 14 through the Facebook page HVCDP Bicol.

(Lovella P. Guarin)



areas and can benefit over 225 farmers. Increase in production by 20 percent to 30 percent (from 60 cavans even up to over 100 cavans) were attained by the farmers in the region who are now enjoying the benefits of this project.

Director Tornilla who personally went to the sites and turned over to the 11 farmers associations/recipients of the project underscored the **two major objectives of the project which are to increase rice production and subsequently increase the income of farmers.** He challenged them to consolidate their resources or group themselves into cluster so that they can maximize or optimize the use of the various interventions being provided by the DA and other agencies. He announced that DA's interventions will now be coursed through to groups or associations. He also took the opportunity to thank the farmers for their critical role in providing food for our people amidst the threat of the pandemic and the restricted movements and mobility. *"Kung tumigil kayo sa pagtatanim wala sanang makakain and ating mga kababayan."*, he acknowledged.

Domingo Cordial, president of the Bahay and Quitang Farmers Association in the municipality of Pasacao considered it a great blessing for small farmers like him: *"Dakulang grasya inisamong mga saradit na paraoma."*, he enthuses. *"Papadanganon mi ining proyektong ini"* (We will treasure and take good care of this project), he added.

The project will give a big savings to them according to the farmer beneficiaries. *"Super tipid na kami sa gastos sa oma"*, gushes Evelyn Lumapag,



president of Cabangal Palsong Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries and Fisherfolk Cooperative in Bula Camarines Sur.

*"Dati nagagastos kami average na PhP6,000 per hectare per cropping sa fuel lang. Ngonian na libre na su gastos mi sa krudo. Kaya dakulang kaganaan ini samo."*, (We used to spend an average of P6,000 per hectare per cropping for fuel alone. Today we don't have to spend for it.) she shared. *"Dati ang naani mi mga 60 sakos sana nin paroy kada cropping. Kan igwa nakaini nakaka-ani na kami abot 100 sakos kada ektarya"*, (We used to harvest an average of 60 sacks per hectare per cropping. Now we harvest up to 100 cavans per hectare) she narrated.

Clifton Sison, president of Sta. Remedios Farmers Association in Bulan, Sorsogon bared that their association will be collecting from their members voluntary contributions to be reserved for the maintenance of the SPIS.

Just like the other farmer beneficiaries from the other municipalities he is very hopeful that the average rice production of their upland rice farmer members will significantly increase from an average yield of 40 to 60 cavans per hectare and even more than 100 cavans per hectare. *"Maraming salamat po, kahit napakalayo ng lugar*

*naming nakarating kayo para tulungan kami at saka malaking bagay itong binigay ninyo at marami pang ibang tulong na naibigay na ninyo. Wala naman masasandalan kaming mga magsasaka kundi kayo. Maraming Salamat DA."* Sison gratefully acknowledged.

For his part, vice mayor and concurrently acting mayor Ronaldo Franco of Pamplona who witnessed the turn over of the SPIS to the Veneracion Farmers and Urban Poor Association in their municipality acknowledged the importance of the project citing that it is low maintenance and can boost production as farmers can plant and fertilize their farm anytime with the availability of water from the SPIS.

But he also called on the need to focus not only on rice farmers but also on vegetable farmers who abound in their municipality. He offered that LGU can also as allocate funds as counterpart to DA's assistance for rice and vegetable seeds and other interventions. *"Ini an tunay na partnership between DA and LGU."*, he underscored.

Mayor Niño A. Tayco of Pasacao, Camarines Sur who also graced the turn over to Bahay and Quintang Farmers Association also committed the LGU's support to the project beneficiaries of the SPIS in terms of project maintenance, technical assistance and strengthening the farmers organization. He also acknowledged the support of the DA: *"Halos lahat ng tulong at suporta ay ibinigay na"*, he declared.

The other farmers associations which received the SPIS through their

respective presidents are: Baliuag Nuevo Farmers Association in Minalabac headed by Julio Rabiñan; M a n g k a w a y a n Irrigators Association Inc. of Libmanan headed by Dante Geverila; Cagmanaba Agrarian Reform

Farmers Beneficiary Association in Ocampo headed by Luiz Borromeo; Banasi Farmers Association in Bula headed by Randy Cirlo; Nabua Coconut Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative in said municipality headed by Trinidad Sarzoso; Aguik-ikan Farmers Association in Nabua headed by Edgardo Ruin; and Lupi-Sakayan Beberon Farmers Association in San Fernando headed by Glorioso Cado.

The three more units of SPIS set to be turned over anytime soon to the following associations: the Napundan Farmers & Fisherfolk Association in Talisay headed by Edwin A. de la Cruz and the Samahan ng Magsasaka at Magniniyog at Mangingisda ng Basiad (SMMM) in Sta Elena headed by Felimon Padel and; Baliuag Nuevo Farmers Association in Minalabac, Camarines Sur headed by Julio Rabiñan Since thi SPIS was launched in Bicol in 2018 there are already 14 units constructed which are already operational. Four more units are under construction.

The Regional Agricultural Engineering Division (RAED) takes charge of validating, evaluating project proposals and applications for these projects.

While Bicol has 176,656.88 hectares physical rice area only 109,032.91 hectares are irrigated. About 57,000 hectares are rainfed and over 10,600 hectares are upland.

**The SPIS are indeed the best option in areas where big irrigation systems are not feasible and they can contribute significantly to increase yield of rice and other crops in rainfed and upland areas.**





## LGUs buy P245M worth...*(from page 1)*

Units, the department was able to help our farmers in marketing their produce amidst the mobility restrictions imposed by the Enhanced Community Quarantine.

In the Bicol region, the Local Government Units has purchased a total of 68,372 metric tons of rice, pork and chicken meat, eggs, assorted vegetables, fresh and dried fish amounting to P245,104,021.00 as of June 5, 2020.

DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla confirmed that 50 provincial and municipal LGUs in Bicol heeded Secretary William Dar's call to patronize the products of our farmers and fishers and include them as part of the relief good distributed to their constituents during the height of the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) starting March 16, 2020. *"On top of distributing canned goods and processed products, we urge our LGUs to prioritize buying fresh produce from our farmers. It's a win-win situation for both consumers and producers,"* Secretary William Dar said in a facebook post.

For instance, in San Fernando Camarines Sur, the LGU purchased P2,493,290

worth of agricultural produce directly from the local farmers from April to June 2020. Municipal Agriculturist

Allan Salvador said that the purchased goods consisted of 1,137 bags rice; 59 heads of hogs/pork; 510 kilograms of ampalaya; 910 kilos eggplant, 284 kilos pechay; 200 kilos tomato; 60 kilos bottle gourd; 20 kilos okra; 60 kilos lettuce; 48 trays brown eggs; and 89 kilos dried fish.

Municipal Agriculturist Salvador said that the LGU downloaded its Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) funds to the 22 barangay councils of San Fernando. It was the barangay councils which directly bought the agricultural produce from the farmers and traders identified by the Municipal Agriculture Office.

The purchased rice, fish and vegetables were distributed as relief assistance by the barangay councils to its 35,258 constituents as part of its efforts to combat COVID-19.

Meanwhile, in the town of Sipocot, Camarines Sur, the municipal Local Government Unit (LGU) purchased P21,718,030.00 worth of rice and eggs from private rice traders and poultry farm in the municipality through emergency procurement or public bidding.

Municipal Agriculturist Franco Leonardo said that the LGU bought 9,910 bags rice and 18,822 trays of eggs which were distributed to the 74,063 populace composed of 18,117 households in three tranches during the months of March, April and May as COVID-19 response. *"Nakakuha tayo ng mas murang bigas dahil yun lowest bidder po ang binilhan natin ng bigas at yung nasaved na pera ay idinagdag sa pambili ng bigas ng LGU,"* MA Leonardo added.

In the province of Camarines Norte, the LGU of Daet infused P11, 627,625.00 for the procurement of 3,100 bags rice, 300 kilos assorted vegetables and 40,000 kilos dressed chicken from local farmers under its COVID-19 efforts.

Also, the LGU of San Lorenzo Ruiz spent a total of P3.8M for the procurement of 1,695 bags of rice, 2,500 kilos smoked fish, and 1,885 kilos dried fish from local farmers.

In Albay province, Legazpi City LGU procured 4,500 bags of rice worth P8,325,000.00 from a farmers' cooperative, while the Ligao City LGU bought 2,813,250.00 worth of rice and vegetables from local farmers.

In the province of Masbate, a total of P24,507,000.00 worth of farmers' produce were purchased by a number of LGUs such as Aroroy, Balud, Cataingan, Placer, Milagros, Mobo and Dimasalang.

The commodities purchased and distributed as part of relief assistance included rice, dried fish and assorted vegetables.

In the province of Sorsogon, P 17,960,550.00 of rice and fresh fish were purchased direct from the farmers and distributed as relief assistance to the constituents.

Republic Act (RA) 11321, or the Sagip Saka Act mandates national and government agencies to directly purchase agri-fishery products from accredited farmers and fishermen cooperatives and enterprises.

The farmers are happy with this initiative as they have a ready market for their produce and they can sell them at the prevailing market price.

Director Tornilla hoped that more LGUs will adopt this scheme and that LGUs will continue buying farmers' produce even after we have moved on to the "new normal."

## DA rolls out KAYA loan program and partners with PayMaya to facilitate disbursement



To make agriculture an attractive, or "kaaya-ayang" undertaking for the young Filipinos and encourage them to venture into profitable agribusiness or agri-enterprise, the Department of Agriculture rolls out the Kapital Access for Young Agripreneurs or (KAYA) Loan Program to provide financial assistance for their economic undertakings.

**It aims to entice the younger generation to be key players in accelerating**

**agricultural and economic growth in their respective local community.**

Under the management of the DA's Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC), KAYA Program offers up to P500,000 loan at zero percent interest payable in five years to young individuals 18-30 years old.

Said loan should be used to finance working capital and/

or fixed asset acquisition requirements of start-up or existing agri-based projects of young entrepreneurs and agri-fishery graduates of either formal or non-formal agri-fishery schools.

To apply for this loan, applicant must submit the filled-up application form, a simple business plan, one government-issued ID with picture and proof of registration under the Registry System for Basic

Sector in Agriculture (RSBSA) or Farmers and Fisherfolk Enterprise Development Information System (FEDIS).

DA-Bicol Agribusiness Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) CHIEF, Adelina Losa explains that FEDIS is a database of registered accredited farmers and fisherfolk enterprises including the

*(Please turn to page 11)*





## DA-Bicol and LGU of Libon train & equip Farmers with Soil Testing Kits

While most local chief executives are more interested in agricultural infrastructures and farm machineries and even production inputs for their farmers, Mayor Wilfredo ‘Das’ Maronilla of Libon, Albay

opted to request Soil Testing Kits (STKs) for all the 47 barangays of his municipality.

He requested for the STKs from the Department of Agriculture Bicol after

spearheading the conduct of training on the use of STKs in 2018. By then only 7 units of the STKs were available. This year he made a follow-up letter to Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla for the additional 40 STKs.

On September 16, 2020 the DA through the Integrated Laboratory Division-Regional Soils Laboratory delivered to the LGU of Libon the 40 STKs and turned them over to the barangay officials after conducting an

orientation on their proper use.

Each kit using the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) formulation costs P5,000 is capable of determining the soil pH which indicates the acidity or alkalinity of soil and in determining the availability of plant nutrients in particular Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium present in the soil.

In his letter to Director  
(Please turn to page 13)

## Egg scholars get P3M poultry package

The Department of Agriculture Livestock and Poultry Program in Bicol recently gave scholarships in a form of complete poultry package to 10 college students taking agriculture courses.

Dubbed as “Egg Scholars”, these lucky students were selected from numerous applicants from the six provinces who have submitted their letter of intent or application together with a business plan.

Dr. Marissa E. Guillermo, DA Bicol regional coordinator of Livestock and Poultry Program said that each scholar received worth P250,000.00 poultry package consisting of 200 heads ready to lay pullets (White Leg Horn); layer cage good for 240 chickens ; 36 bags feeds which will last for three months; and drugs and biologics.

Each set of six feet housing composed of four layer cages (which can accommodate 4 hens), each measuring 14 inches x 18 inches with PVC feeders and waterers was installed at the areas of the scholars.

The total poultry package



amounted to P3 million.

The recipients were Erica Bertes of Guinobatan, Albay studying at Bicol University College of Agriculture (BUCAF); Aileen Joy Bathan of San Lorenzo Ruiz, Camarines Norte, studying at Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (CBSUA); Ella Mae Bitantes of Castilla,

Ceejay Vega Vargas of Virac, Catanduanes enrolled at Catanduanes State University (CSU).

Meanwhile, five recipients came from Camarines Sur

province and are currently enrolled at CBSUA in Pili, CamSur. They are: Bryan Matthew Diaz from Goa, CamSur; Mark Dominick Himantong of Tinambac, Cam. Sur (studying at CBSUA Calabanga campus); Jessa Monforte of Pili, Cam. Sur; Anna Marie Victorino of Ocampo, Cam Sur; and Julie

made of light materials.

The start up egg laying business will help the scholar’s family earn extra income by selling eggs which are considered as important basic commodity particularly at this pandemic time as they are rich in protein, vitamins and minerals.

Over the week, DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla also turned over 2 poultry packages to CBSUA President Alberto N. Naperi to serve as technology showcase and venue of hands on learning for agriculture students.

Director Tornilla said that *this project is a collaboration with the State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in a bid to encourage more youths to pursue agricultural courses and put up their own agricultural enterprises in the long run. Poultry is one of the most lucrative businesses in agriculture.*

Although starting a poultry business may appear daunting, aspiring agripreneurs can surely succeed with perseverance and determination.

(Lovella P. Guarin)



Sorsogon studying at Sorsogon State College; Ruby Joy Morados of Palanas, Masbate studying at DEBESMSCAT;

Ann Reyes of Nabua, Cam. Sur.

The students’ counterpart was the housing for the chicken that could be



# DA-ACPC grants P140M loan aid to 2,045 farmers and fisherfolk, 14 agri-fishery based MSEs



PILI, CAMARINES SUR –The Department of Agriculture-Bicol (DA-Bicol) through the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) released a total of P140.13 million-worth of loan assistance to 2,045 marginalized small farmers and fisherfolk (MSFF) and 14 agri-fishery based micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in Bicol under its Expanded SURE Aid and Recovery Project (SURE COVID-19).

According to DA-Bicol Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) Chief Adelina A. Losa, as of July 9, 2020, the DA-ACPC has already downloaded P51.13 million-worth of credit funds to four rural banks and two cooperatives nationwide which will serve as lending conduits in implementing the loan program.

Among the DA-ACPC’s partner lending conduits in Bicol are the Rural Bank of Paracale in Camarines Norte, the Banco Santiago de Libon (BSDL) in its branches in Camarines Sur and Albay, the Rural Bank of Guinobatan in Albay, the Rural Bank of Pilar in its Albay and Sorsogon branches as well the Irosin Market Vendors and Farmers Development Cooperative

in Sorsogon and the Gubat Saint Anthony Cooperative (GSAC) in its branches in Albay and Sorsogon.

Loans funded under the DA’s SURE COVID-19 program were already released to 720 qualified MSFFs in Camarines Norte, 30 in Camarines Sur, 292 in Albay, and 1,003 in Sorsogon who till less than three hectares of land.

Likewise, as of September 2020, a total of P82 million worth of SURE COVID-19 loans were approved for 14 MSEs in the region to finance their working capital for palay procurement and acquisition of delivery equipment.

Priority was given to MSEs located within provinces that have existing lending conduits to facilitate loan program application and availment.

MSEs that participate in DA’s Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita program particularly the accredited rice processing centers (RPCs) were also prioritized.

*“As of now, most of the farmers and MSEs especially the RPCs are short of capital to sustain their operations because*

*of the negative impact of the pandemic to the economy. This loan assistance will serve as their capital in order for us to achieve our shared goal of providing sustainable, affordable and accessible food,”* Losa said.

Moreover, she reminded them to strive for timely and 100 percent repayment to establish good credit standing.

Nabua West Multi Purpose Cooperative, an accredited RPC in

Nabua, Camarines Sur with 350 members received P5 million loan assistance for the acquisition of delivery truck and working capital for the procurement of palay.

According to Julian B. Abonal Jr., the cooperative’s chairman, through the



SURE Aid, they were able to buy, store and deliver farmer-members’ palay produce to various markets including the Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita, in neighboring towns and in Naga City.

*“During the COVID-19 pandemic, we’re limited with mobility but with the SURE Aid and Recovery Project, we actually got the working capital needed to keep on*

*moving with our business. It made us a working enterprise during the time of pandemic. The farmers benefitted actually because of our buying capacity. Malaking tulong po yung SURE Aid hindi lang sa aming co-members kundi pati na rin sa buong Rinconada at sa iba pang lugar na dineliveran namin dito sa Bicol,”* he said in a phone interview.

**SURE COVID-19 is the DA’s emergency and recovery loan assistance program which aims to provide MSFFs and MSEs with working capital to tide them over amid the quarantine caused by the COVID-19 health crisis.**

Under the expanded loan program, individual farmers and fisherfolk are entitled to P25,000 non-collateralized loan at zero interest and payable in 10 years.

Eligible MSEs, whether single proprietorship, partnership, corporation,

cooperative or association may borrow up to P10 million at zero interest and payable in five years.

**(Annielyn L. Baleza)**

with reports from Engr. Norbert Bryan S. Elgario, DA-AMAD and Michael Jordan O. Roquid, ACPC-Bicol Focal Person  
Photo credit: DA ACPC



## DA Bicol assists NFA, mobilizes RPCs....(from page 1)

Camarines Norte 1 in Masbate.

The DA will provide initially logistical support, i.e. the TEVs of drivers or gasoline of the trucks.

Moreover, the DA offered the NFA to utilize the available and operational postharvest machineries and facilities and will link NFA to the DA-funded Rice Processing Centers being operated by cooperatives and farmers. Aside from the warehouse and building these RPCs are equipped with recirculating dryers for 6-ton capacity, multi-pass rice mill and multi-purpose drying pavement and also provided with a Php 1 million capitalization for the procurement of palay. These palay are milled and sold by the coop or association as rice.

According to Adelina Losa, chief, of the Agribusiness Marketing and Assistance Division, **these RPCs could serve as buying stations and absorb some of the palay from local farmers and can help stabilize the price of palay. There are now 30 RPCs operational in the Bicol region.**

Aside from these RPCs, farmers can also utilize available postharvest facilities already distributed by the DA-Bicol namely; 21 units Recirculating Dryers, 136 units Flatbed dryers; and 35 units multi-purpose drying pavements.

In a separate meeting with the operators and managers of the RPCs Director Tornilla calls on them and other partners of the DA to prioritize first and foremost the welfare of the



rice farmers and explore ways to buy the harvest of farmers higher than the prevailing buying price of private traders.

He encouraged the RPCs to complement DA's and NFA'S

efforts to stabilize the price of the local palay grains by making available their postharvest facilities even to farmers who are not their members.

He likewise urged the RPCs to participate in the farm clustering and consolidation (about 100 hectares) to improve their bargaining power, forge stronger linkages among agri-producer and markets and achieve the benefits of economies of scale.

*downs of the rice industry”*

According to Losa, the DA will also help farmers to sell their palay to the NFA and at the same time link the RPCs to institutional buyers who procure milled rice in great volume such as the Bureau of Jail and Management, the DSWD which maintains a buffer stock of rice to be distributed during calamities; some hospitals which maintain canteens and serve food for their patients and other government and private institutions like the PNP and banks which provide rice allowance to their employees, and the LGUs who provide rice to their constituents especially during calamities and emergencies like the Covid 19.

Possible partnership with Pasig Agricultural Development Supply Corporation (PADISCOR) and rice farmers of Camarines Sur is also being worked out.

He emphasized *“that collaborative efforts are urgently needed at this time not only as partners of the DA but as one family, because at the end of the day we are all affected by the ups and*

## DA rolls out KAYA loan...(from page 8)

process of registration which is stipulated in Republic Act No. 11321 an act “Instituting the farmer and Fisherfolk Enterprise Development Program” or the Sagip Saka Act. She adds that information and forms on this can be accessed from their office.

The ACPC has partnered with lending conduits to manage the credit program, disburse the funds, monitor and collect loans from the borrowers. These include government financial institutions (GFIs), non-government financial institutions including cooperative banks, rural banks, NGOs, cooperatives and other lending institutions.

According to ACPC-Bicol Focal Person Michael Jordan O. Roquid in the Bicol region the partner lending conduits are Banco Santiago de Libon, Rural Bank of Paracale, and Producers

Bank Savings Corporation.

The DA-ACPC has also partnered with digital finance and service leader, PayMaya to provide innovative disbursement platform for this KAYA Program.

**The PayMaya will allow the partners lending conduits (PLCs) to disburse loans to borrowers digitally through their PayMaya enabled prepaid payment cards.**

The loan disbursement solution for PLCs is 24/7 and has a real time crediting through the PayMaya PayOut web-based portal.

On the other hand, KAYA loan beneficiaries will enjoy various functionalities of the PayMaya Card that allows them to make on-line and in-store payments, pay bills, buy load, send money,

and withdraw funds which will allow them unhampered transactions even in the face of pandemic related restrictions.

*“With this digital platform, we will be able to reach out and convince more Filipino millennials to engage in agriculture, fishery and agribusiness ventures, and more importantly bankroll their respective projects”,* said DA secretary William Dar during the virtual launching of the KAYA digital card on July 6, 2020.

Aside from the financial support to the applicant the ACPC shall provide capacity building support by engaging state universities and colleges, government agencies and non-government business development services providers to extend business advisory/technical

assistance services such as mentoring, entrepreneurship training, financial literacy, product packaging etc.

*“We need young people who have vision,”* says Sec. Dar. *“The youth will have a huge contribution in advancing the farming and fishing sectors since they are great with technology”,* he added.

**Application forms can be accessed via this link:**  
<https://bit.ly/ACPCloans>.

**Inquiries may be coursed through:**  
[mjroquid@acpc.gov.ph](mailto:mjroquid@acpc.gov.ph) or  
[amad.bicol@gmail.com](mailto:amad.bicol@gmail.com).

(Emily B. Bordado)

# New ASF cases surges in Camarines provinces *spills over* to Albay

**PILI, CAMARINES SUR** – As the Department of Agriculture here is gearing up for the declaration of ASF-Free status in some of the municipalities of Camarines Sur previously affected by this swine virus, **new outbreaks and cases surged in six additional municipalities and 1 in Camarines Sur and spilled over in one barangay in Albay province.** Recurrence was also noted in 3 municipalities.

The new confirmed cases based on laboratory tests to date are in 56 barangays in 9 municipalities and 1 city: 3-in Milaor; 8 in Minalabac; 20 in Bula; 11 in Pili; and 4 in Nabua; 1 in Iriga; 2 in Baao, 3 in San Fernando and 3 in Sta. Elena in Camarines Norte and 1 barangay in Pio Duran, Albay. Based on the field investigation report, the case in Sta. Elena was likely a spillover from the adjacent Calauag, Quezon where a river traverses through their boundaries.

**The case in Pio Duran was a spillover from Camarines Sur where pigs from infected municipalities were clan destinedly transported through the back door or newly opened routes connecting the two provinces.**

The DA Regional Quick Response Team on ASF and other Emerging Animal Diseases presided by Regional Technical Director for Regulations & Research, Dr. Edgar R. Madrid made its assessment on the sudden spike of new cases.

**One of the reasons identified is the influx of viajeros coming from outside the Bicol region who have contacts or agents in every municipality who buy live pigs at a higher price than the local buyers.**

These agents establish holding or pooling pens where pigs bought from different municipalities are temporarily held while awaiting

for the viajeros to pick them up.

Upon investigation by the DA team it was found out that these viajeros would bring their carrier trucks and stand by or linger in an uninfected municipality and there buy some healthy pigs and secure veterinary health certificates for the healthy pigs they bought while waiting for their agents to bring in the pigs bought by their agents from infected municipalities.

It has also been noted that most LGUs have already dismantled their local checkpoints citing that their funds are already depleted with expenses incurred mostly on COVID related interventions.

Moreover, some LGUs have been lenient and slow in the implementation of mandatory depopulation in their affected barangays. Some reasons cited is the unavailability of supplies and machines needed such as disinfectants, limes and back hoe and the difficulty in identifying the disposal or burial site as this has to be approved by the DENR.

According to DA Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla in compliance with Memorandum Order No. 24 issued by Secretary William Dar on April 17, 2020 depopulation should immediately be undertaken by the LGU once the positive laboratory test result has been forwarded to them by DA Regional Executive Director.

Depopulation entails the rapid and deliberate killing of infected and potentially infected, or contact animals in an attempt to “stamp out” disease and prevent it from spreading to a healthy population while employing

prescribed means of humane culling in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act.

This has to be undertaken by the LGU concerned, assisted by the Provincial and Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council and with the technical support of the DA through the Regional Quick Response Team for Emerging Animal Diseases within 7 days after the confirmation of positive case.

For the new and recent



ASF cases depopulation has been conducted starting August 8 to date with an initial count totaling to 1,153 pigs owned by 220 raisers.

**Another reason for the fast spread of the virus especially in this second wave is the clandestine slaughtering and selling of pigs in the ASF areas already declared ASF infected instead of surrendering them for depopulation which is a violation of the Meat Inspection Code and the Food Safety Act.**

Already the Regulatory Division of the DA headed by Rosita Imperial has recommended to BAI for the revocation of licenses of meat traders who have violated said law.

The RQRT has also coordinated with the local officials for the mobilization of Task Force “Bantay Karne” in their respective areas.

The National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) Team headed by Dr. Alex Templonuevo are also making regular rounds

in the affected municipalities and conducting inspections and confiscations of hot meats and meat products.

To date, the regional NMIS has already confiscated and condemned 49,882.74 kg of meat and meat products.

Dr. Templonuevo said they are also closely monitoring on-line selling of meat and meat products and admonish the public from buying through this mode especially if the sellers have no legit documents.

On the other hand the Quarantine personnel headed by Regional Veterinary Quarantine Officer, Dr.

Emmanuel Villafuerte of the Bureau of Animal Industry who are manning the 23 DA veterinary checkpoints, to date, has already confiscated and condemned 40 heads of pigs and 28,806.52 kg. meat coming from ASF infected.

In addition a total of 36,488.94 kilograms of meat and meat products and 7,695 heads of pigs and chicken were apprehended and ordered returned to origin for lack of necessary documents such as veterinary health certificate, local shipping permit, livestock handler’s license and transport carrier accreditation.

With this recent development the RQRT through RTD Madrid has recommended to Dir. Tornilla to invite the local chief executives for a virtual meeting via zoom to discuss the problems and measures to be undertaken to stem the further spread of the virus.

The first ASF case in Camarines Sur was confirmed and declared on February 20, 2020 in Bombon Camarines

(Next page please)



Sur and since then it has affected 17 municipalities of CamSur and one barangay along the Quezon-Bicol border in Sta. Elena Camarines Norte.

An almost flattening of the curve in the occurrence of positive cases was noted between May and July when the average positive case was only 5.3.

To date, DA Bicol has already paid P45,510 million indemnification for

9,102 depopulated pigs owned by 1,738 farmers in the first ten municipalities affected by the ASF.

In addition, it has extended assistance package consisting of 3,720 heads of free-ranged chicken and mallard ducks to 364 ASF-affected farmers who did not qualify for indemnification.

It has again requested the BAI for the next tranche of release of

indemnification funds.

The confirmatory tests on samples collected from suspected infected pigs were conducted at the Regional Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (RADDL) based in Camalig, Albay.

The RQRT Surveillance Team has so far collected and analyzed 2,465 blood samples and 113 organ/tissue samples and diagnosed 2,589 animals suspected for

ASF. It has also conducted 462 field investigations.

Information dissemination via virtual meetings with provincial and city vets, municipal agriculturists, radio interviews, distribution of IEC materials and issuance and posting of news releases and advisories and infographics are also being aggressively being done.

(Emily B. Bordado)

## DA Bicol acts fast to control Fall Armyworm

Halfway through the wet season 2020, Fall Army worm (FAW), an invasive pest that attacks corn and other crops, was sighted in at least nine (9) municipalities in the Bicol region.

Still, there is no cause for alarm as the total 64.15 hectares total affected area in Bicol only represent less than 1% of the present 22,103 hectares total standing corn crops in the region, according to Dr. Edgar R. Madrid, co-chairperson of the FAW Regional Quick Response Team (RQRT) of DA Bicol during its recent meeting.

Of the total 64.15 hectares affected, 30.37 hectares are yellow corn while 33.78 hectares are white corn.

The task force noted a surge in FAW sightings at the onset of wet season 2020 (May to June) when the corn were at seedling to vegetative stage. Due to the early detection and reports from the Local Government Units (LGUs), the

DA task force was able to contain the infestation immediately.

Recently, other FAW sightings were reported in Tuburan and Pandan both in Ligao City, Albay where 5 hectares of glutinous and sweet corn variety were affected by FAW.

The DA RFO 5 through the Regional Crops Protection Center (RCPC) has released earwigs, set-up pheromone traps at the said farms and provided botanical pesticides to the affected farmers on August 12.

According to the DA RFO 5 Corn Program, Albay has a total of 1,663 hectares currently planted to corn. In Camarines Sur, agricultural technicians reported to the RCPC that FAW was sighted in a total of 29 hectares corn cluster areas in the municipalities of Bula, Baa, Ocampo and Pili.

The estimated damaged area was only 0.19% of the total 15,435 hectares standing corn crops as of press time.

The RCPC staff applied insecticides to contain the pest.

In a report submitted by the Masbate provincial Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to the RCPC on July 10, close to 30 hectares representing 0.68% of the total 4,328 hectares standing corn crops were damaged by FAW in the towns of Palanas and San Fernando. The RCPC also provided insecticide for pest control.

The FAW task force is strengthening its pest surveillance and management activities as crop damage could be avoided through regular monitoring of the presence of pests and diseases.

The very first sighting of FAW in Bicol Region was in August 2019 in a half hectare corn farm in Ragay, Camarines Sur.

The FAW infestation did not affect nearby corn areas as the pest was immediately contained by the RQRT and DA RFO 5 Corn Program.

Giovanni Valenciano, Chief of the Regional Crops Protection Center of DA Bicol said that surveillance and early detection of FAW before they can cause economic damage is the key in the prevention and control of FAW.

Valenciano advised corn farmers to report immediately the suspected fall armyworm sightings to the Municipal Agriculture Office and send a report including photos to the RCPC to facilitate identification and immediate validation.

Valenciano said corn is susceptible to FAW infestation at its vegetative to reproductive stages. At these stages, the FAW feeding on the whorl of the corn plant can cause severe defoliation.

He added that DA is encouraging farmers to plant early to avoid the onslaught of pests during the last season of the year. Intercropping and rotating corn planting with non-host crops like vegetables may also help.

(Lovella P. Guarin)

Tornilla, Mayor Maronilla explained that "through the use of the STKs farmers will be able to apply proper and needed fertilizer."

With the provision of fertilizers as one of the components of the Rice Resiliency Program soil testing should be a prerequisite as it serves as the basis for recommending

the kind, amount and rate of fertilizer application.



Thus, farmers can save money, conserve energy by

applying only the needed amount and appropriate type of fertilizer.

The distribution of STKs in barangay San Pascual, Libon, Albay was witnessed and facilitated by barangay Captain

Oscar Maronilla and Municipal Agriculturist Alejo Serrano.

Also present were the members of the committee on agriculture and some farmers. The DA regional staff from the Integrated Laboratory were: Ailene Babelonia, Limberly Bermillo, Raymond Dalisay and Ruben Velasco.

(Emily B. Bordado)



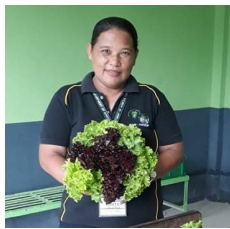


# Organic agriculture technologies showcase right in the DA compound

by Emily B. Bordado

In keeping with the dictum “we should practice what we preach”, the Department of agriculture Regional Office has established and maintained as Organic Agriculture Research and Development Center where organic agriculture technologies are showcased. It also undertakes continuous production and distribution of organically or naturally grown crops or products and quality organic seeds.

The center is located inside the sprawling 70-hectare compound of the DA Regional office and Central Bicol Experiment Station. A one-storey building has been constructed and inaugurated on October 20, 2016 funded by the Bureau of Agricultural Research. But the Organic Agriculture (OA) Program provides the budget for the the improvement of the center and operational expenses of most of the projects being implemented by the center in



support to the OA program. The center is being supervised by Rosita “Tet” de Lumen who is also the study leader of some of the research studies being conducted by the CBES in partnership with other institutions and other banner

programs such as the seed buffer stocking. She is being assisted by one technical staff and 4 Job Order personnel. According to de Lumen, there are four major activities/projects being implemented and showcased by station-based Organic Agriculture facility namely: vermicomposting, organic vegetable and legumes seed production; organic urban container gardening and edible landscaping.

## Vermicomposting

A small scale vermicomposting facility



has been established to serve as an avenue to develop a self-sufficient fertilizer in the crop production area of 1,000 square meters. A small building at the back of the main building has been constructed where the vermicomposting activities are done. There are four worm bins measuring 1.3mx1.45m. The substrates used are banana trunks, rice straw, cow manure, kakawate and ipil-pil leaves. Anaerobic decomposition or pre-decomposition of the substrates is done 15 days prior to the application of 4 kgs of African Night Crawler. Harvesting starts 35 days after where about 4.1kg to 4.5kg is harvested.

The harvested vermicast are then air-dried, sieved and bagged. The center also showcases crop technologies using organic fertilizers aside from vermicast.



## Organic Vegetable and Legumes Seed Production

The purpose of this activity is to produce good quality organic seeds to increase the volume and quality of seeds derived from cultivars suited for organic farming. A 1, 00 square meter area around the center was collected for this purpose. For 2020, mungbean and okra were planted in July at a layout of 16m per plot each and 12, 14, 16 and 26 rows respectively. Organic fertilizers were applied as basal before planting. Organic concoctions were also used.

In the month of August after mungo and okra were harvested the area was planted with soybean, tomato, eggplant and pepper. Marigold plants were planted along the borders or hedge rows as a natural insect pest repellent.

According to de Lumen who is Agro Forest major and has a great passion for plants and gardening, insects usually attack during the vegetative stage of the vegetables and other crops. Thus, to divert the attention of the destructive insects from the vegetables or edible crops,

they plant bright colored plants like the celosa commonly known as palong, chichirica and marigold. They also served as pollinators. During harvest of the crops, tagging per variety was done for easy identification and to prevent mixing.



## Organic Urban Container Gardening

Also showcased in the center is organic urban gardening. For this year, four types of container gardening were established: two (2) stair type, tire type, tunnel type and the use of polyethylene container. Vegetables, spices and herbs were planted to showcase the organic container gardening technology. These include pechay, cauliflower, eggplant, radish, pepper, garlic chives, tarragon and lemon grass. Other plants like malunggay, cassava and banana were also planted to serve as buffer zone, windbreaker and perimeter boundaries and as additional. Banana substrates for vermi composting.



## Edible Landscaping

This year, the DA vigorously campaigned for the Plant, Plant, Plant Program as one of the strategies to ensure food security and availability at the community and household level in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. DA-Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla thus, instructed de Lumen and her staff to showcase edible landscaping right at front grounds of the DA administration building. Vegetables like radish, okra, upland kangkong and pepper, garlic chives are planted alternatively.

The adverse effects of the COVID 19 pandemic and its continuous threat not only on our life but practically on all aspects of human existence might have dampened our spirit and has cast a cloud of gloom and uncertainty but a visit to the center is heart-warming and as one is welcomed by a myriad of bright colors of flowering plants interspersed with fresh and succulent vegetables neatly and beautifully arrayed. It gives you a sense of hope amidst the crisis we are in. For where flowers bloom and plants thrive so does hope.



PILI, CAMARINES SUR – “Napakalaking tulong ng Rice Processing Centers (RPC) na ibinigay ng Department of Agriculture sa aming kooperatiba dahil sa tulong ng mga dryers at warehouses na kasama ng RPC ay nakakaya naming bumili ng fresh palay sa mga magsasaka sa presyong P14.00,” Annielen Panerio, General Manager of the CamSur Multipurpose Coop said. The CamSur Multi-purpose Cooperative (CMPC), based in Cadlan, Pili, Camarines Sur is one of the recipients of DA’s 37 Rice Processing Centers established all over rice producing areas of Bicol region.



## This DA assisted Rice Processing Center helps raise buying price of palay

by Lovella P. Guarin

The coop is currently operating two units of RPC 1. The first RPC is situated in Minalabac, Camarines Sur which was turned over to them in 2016 along with P1M working capital. The second RPC 1 recently turned over by DA Bicol to the coop is located in Pinit, Ocampo, Camarines Sur.

The P6 million-worth RPCs have one set multipass rice mill with minimum output capacity of one ton/hour milled rice; one 300 square meter warehouse and weighing scale.

**Rice Processing Centers were established to reduce rice quality deterioration and post-harvest losses by providing farmers with access to efficient drying and milling facilities to help raise their income.**

The coop started their rice milling operation and palay buying from farmers in 2016. In that year the coop purchased P10.6 million from

farmers and sold dried palay worth P4.1 Million and milled rice worth P10.4 million. In 2017, the coop started supplying rice to the 4Ps beneficiaries of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) who are members of the coop in 10 municipalities of Camarines Sur. In the same year, it purchased P29.8 million worth of paddy palay from farmers. It has also sold dried palay worth P13.3 million and milled rice worth P28.1 million in partnership with other RPCs.

In 2018, the CMPC has procured P16.1 million worth of palay from farmers and sold palay worth P4.4 million as well as P31.9 million milled rice.

In 2019, the coop purchased P7.4 million palay but the sales of palay and well milled rice plummeted to P1.8 million and P7.3 million respectively. Panerio said that their sales has been affected partly by the influx of imported rice in the market in 2019 and when the DSWD stopped requiring Official Receipts from the 4Ps beneficiaries as proof that part of the cash grant they received was used to buy rice for their rice subsidy.

The coop’s palay trading bounced back during the pandemic on the first half of 2020. During the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ), the CMPC supplied 31,000 bags of rice worth P62.3 million and P3.4 million worth of vegetables and fruits to LGUs and other government agencies for their relief assistance.

The coop has also been a very active operator of Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita on Wheels, DA’s program under Ahon Lahat Pagkaing Sapat (ALPAS) Kontra Covid-19 program.

The CMPC has bought the produce of their farmer members and sold them to different communities in the Bicol Region. Starting March 2020 until October 8, 2020, the coop has sold a total of P48.9 million worth agricultural commodities. Starting mid-September this year, the coop bought 14,200 bags fresh palay from farmer members and even non-members in the municipalities of Pili, Baao, Bato, Ocampo, Minalabac, Milaor, Gainza, San Fernando and Libmanan, all in Camarines Sur at price ranging from P13.00 to P14.00 per kilo.

As of September 30, 2020, the CMPC has purchased P9.6 Million worth of palay from farmers and sold P677,000 worth of dried

worth P4.9 M and 1 unit combine harvester P2 M and recirculating dryer worth P2.4M respectively.

Aside from palay trading, the coop also provides economic services such as time deposits and savings deposit; and lending services. Panerio said that as of September 2020 the CMPC has P25.6 million loan exposures to farmers who availed of cash loans or farm input loan at 3% per month interest. For a 1-hectare farm, a farmer member can avail of maximum of P25,000 loan which will be paid with palay during harvest time. Farmer borrowers also have the option to sell their produce to NFA or other private buyer and pay their loans in cash.

Panerio was also thankful to the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) and DA–Agribusiness Marketing

and Assistance Division in Bicol led by Adelina A. Losa for the P10 M interest free working capital loan granted to the CMPC in April 2020 under the Expanded SURE AID program. “Nakabili po kami ng mga bigas hindi lang sa CamSur kundi sa iba pang mga probinsya tulad ng Albay, Sorsogon at Camarines Norte,” added Panerio. “Akala namin ay magiging threat sa aming business ang pandemic dahil magsasara ang aming operations. Fortunately, ang laki palang opportunity lalo na sa agriculture and agribusiness sectors kase magsara man ang ibang ng negosyo, ang pagkain o pagsasaka ay mananatili,” Panerio enthused. “Sa mga magsasaka, patuloy po tayong magtanim, mas galingan at sipagan pa po natin. Alam in ang mga teknolohiya sa pagsasaka. Maraming ibinabahagi ang DA at AT1 na tulong para mas umangat ang ating ani at lumiit ang gastos,” Panerio urged the farmers.



Organized in March 2000, and registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) on May 26, 2000, the CMPC has P180.3 million assets as of December 2019 and net surplus of P2.6 Million. It has 33 full time staff and 10 on-call laborers for each of the two RPCs during harvest time. As of August 2020, the CMPC has 2,475 members composed of 1,672 females and 803 males. Some 1,403 members are rice farmers cultivating 1,666 hectares rice areas; 221 members are corn farmers tilling 322 hectares corn areas; and 609 members are micro and small entrepreneurs.

palay, plus P62.3 million worth of milled rice.

The coop also earned income from various services such as drying, milling, and farm machinery rental. From 2014 to 2020, the CMPC earned an aggregate income of P8.5 Million from all these services.

Aside from the RPCs, the CamSur MPC has received various interventions from DA regional office in Bicol from 2013 to 2018 totalling P30.2 million. These included 2 warehouses; 3 flatbed dryers; mobile recirculating dryer and recirculating dryer; combine harvesters (35hp and 60hp); 2 hand tractors with trailer; 3 units mini 4WD tractor; seed spreader; walk behind transplanter; and 2 multi-purpose drying pavement. In 2019 and 2020, the CMPC also received 1 warehouse

The coop has also received numerous awards, namely: Outstanding Primary Coop in Bicol Large Scale category (3rd place) CY 2019.; Outstanding Coop in the Region Medium Type category for CY 2016, 2015, 2014 and 2013; Most Outstanding Agricultural Cooperative in the Bicol Region and Citation on Social and Community Development from Cooperative Development Authority last August 19, 2018. Outstanding Cooperative in Agriculture 2018 from Tofarm Foundation and Universal harvester Inc as Silver Partner on Kabalikang Magsasaka Award last October 2018; Best Performing Cooperative by Metro Naga Chamber of Commerce, Inc. Halyao Awards 2014; Top CCT conduit in 2014; and Most Outstanding Coop (3rd place in national level) in 2012; and National awardee for Gawad Parangal 2011.



# DA-Bicol engages pili stakeholders in a bid to regain EU market access

As our government exerts efforts to regain market access for pili nuts in Europe as well as present business opportunities for pili in the European Union (EU) market, the Department of Agriculture-Bicol Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) hosted the "Better Training for Safer Food: a Re-echo Webinar on the European Union (EU) Rules Applicable to the Authorization and Placing on the Market of Novel Food and Traditional Foods Coming from non-EU Countries" on September 11, 2020.

## This is to keep pili industry stakeholders abreast with current market trends and trade protocols and regulations.

The activity gathered pili producers and processors as well as concerned representatives from local government units and government agencies, including the DA High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP), Albay Research and Development Center (ARDC), AMAD, and the Department of Science and Technology in Bicol.

According to AMAD Chief Adelina A. Losa, who attended a similar training in Bangkok, Thailand in early February 2020, the activity was also designed to raise awareness and better understanding on existing EU rules pertinent to the authorization and placing of novel food on the EU market. She added that the Philippines is currently working on the completion of a dossier or data package on pili nuts which would comply with the European Commission's (EC) traditional food regulations.

EU Regulation 2015/2283 of the European Parliament and of the Council or the New Novel Food Regulation (EU) issued on November 25, 2015 lays down the rules for the placing of novel foods on the EU market. Novel food refers to food that has not been used for human consumption to any significant degree in the EU before May 15, 1997.

Pili nut, as an export product in the EU has been blocked and temporarily stopped following the said regulation. The webinar re-echoed the seminar on EU regulations for novel food and traditional foods coming from non-EU countries held in

Bangkok, Thailand. Dr. Jocelyn M. Sales, Director of the National Food Authority Food Development Center gave an introduction about novel foods and traditional foods from third world countries which put emphasis on consumer safety, proper labelling, and nutritional quality. Losa, on the other hand, discussed the procedure for determination of novel food status, the consultation request on the novel food status of a food or ingredient, and novel food application preparation. Jay-R Millanes, senior agriculturist at the Bureau of Plant Industry National Plant Quarantine Services Division shared information on the preparation of a traditional food dossier.

He also discussed the EU rules applicable to the authorization and placing on the market of incoming novel foods from non-EU countries

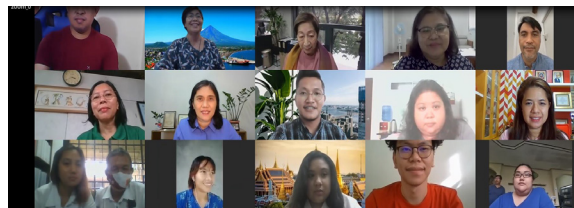


including the Philippines. Rivka Hanna S. Pintuan, Foreign Research Specialist at the the DA International Affairs Division European Desk lectured on the authorization procedure.

Amelita Natividad, Supervising Science Research Specialist at the DA Food Development Center talked about the European Commission's online system for submitting a dossier as well as the regulations for novel food labelling. André Wielink, managing partner of Frischebox GMBH based in Germany, whose business is in the importation and distribution of nuts and seeds in Germany, Austria, Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Spain, provided an overview on the hazard analysis and critical control

points (HACCP) quality standards in Europe.

Jerome Bunyi, Agriculture Counsellor-Designate at the Embassy of the Philippines in Belgium and Luxembourg and Mission to the European Union Philippine Agriculture Office, noted that organic certification is



the direction that he would like Philippine producers and authorities to look forward to with the increasing sophistication of the EU regulations especially that the Green Deal is about to further increase the focus to organic production consumption in Europe.

Currently, the DA team is waiting for the results of the FDC and BPI's safety assessments such as nutritional analysis, aflatoxin analysis, heavy metals analysis and microbial analysis.

Results of which will be included in the dossier together with some documents for the gap analysis on pili nut's history of use. The DA team is collecting materials and recipes published in the Philippines in addition to those already published by DA-Bicol to prove that pili nut is safe for consumption for the last 25 years.

A similar webinar and follow-up meeting will be conducted on September 25, 2020 to fast-track the dossier preparation. Once finalized, the Philippine

government through the DA will submit the application to the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) for evaluation and for approval by the European Commission member states. Pili is a fruit tree crop indigenous in the Philippines particularly in the Bicol region.

As of 2015, the Philippines is the only country known for commercial production and processing of pili-based food products and by-products, with Bicol contributing 80 percent of the total output volume.

Pili is considered as one of the country's most important nut tree crop next to cashew.

(Annielyn L. Baleza)

# Cam Norte AgriPinoy Trading Center takes on new management

The operations of the DA-funded Camarines Norte Agri-Pinoy Trading Center (CN APTC) has been turned over to the Labo Progressive Multipurpose Cooperative (LPMPC) effective August 1, 2020.

The Department of Agriculture regional office in Bicol has funded the establishment of the said P 34.85M AgriPinoy Trading Center at the Sitio Mat-I, barangay Sto. Domingo in Vinzons Camarines Norte in 2013. It is equipped with warehouses, loading stations and cold-storage facilities.

The Provincial Government (PG) of Camarines Norte (CN) infused the working capital funds and manpower in their operation of the APTC starting July 1, 2014. The total

expenses incurred by the PG from 2014-2020 is P24.3M.

The recent turnover of APTC management was under the Memorandum of Agreement between the PG of Camarines Norte and the DA RFO 5 dated 2013 wherein the PG CN will run the trading operation for five (5) years and shall turn it over to a qualified coop afterwards.

The Memorandum of Agreement was signed by Governor Edgardo A. Tallado; Fe V. De Mesa, chairperson of the LPMPC; DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla; CamNorte Provincial Agriculturist Engr. Almirante A. Abad; Mario M. Espeso, General



Manager of LPMPC; and Efren S. Mago, PAFC CamNorte Chairperson on June 29, 2020.

In his letter to Agriculture Secretary William Dar, Camarines Norte Governor Edgardo A. Tallado thanked Sec. Dar and the Department of Agriculture RFO 5 for the full support and assistance to farmers and traders.

The LPMPC was chosen to take over the

(Next page please)





## DA, CBSUA ink MOA for farm mechanization, Bicol agri development partnership

**“This practice is a testament to our commitment to help improve the facilities of the university.”** This sums up Department of Agriculture-Bicol Rodel P. Tornilla’s message during the Memorandum of Agreement Signing for the DA and Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (CBSUA) Collaboration under the Farm Mechanization Program (AF Mech Law) held on August 26, 2020 at the CBSUA in Pili, Camarines Sur.

Funded under the Rice Program of the DA, the MOA signing seals the partnership between the agency and the CBSUA in pursuing agricultural development in Bicol with the DA providing one unit of 4WD tractor with 35 horsepower (hp) and one combine harvester with 35 hp worth a total of P2.19 million which

the latter may use to enhance their instruction and extension programs as it will provide opportunity for agricultural students to use these machineries and make them appreciate the benefits of mechanization.

According to Tornilla, the partnership is one of the DA’s strategies to address the ageing population of Filipino farmers. He hopes that these efforts will renew the youth’s interest in agriculture. He added that **the collaboration aims not only to showcase the machineries being used by the agriculture sector**

today but to develop the CBSUA into a regional testing center for agri-machineries as well as generate additional income for the university.

Tornilla noted that the Agricultural Machinery and Evaluation Testing Center (AMTEC) in Los Baños, Laguna is the country’s only reference testing center of agricultural and fisheries machinery for procurement by the government.

In his message, Dr. Alberto N. Naperi, CBSUA president, thanked the DA for the technologies it has delivered to the university including the hybrid rice technology demonstration in Calabanga and Sipocot campus as well as the chicken production techno demo.

He also assured the DA of their commitment to fulfill their shared mission to extend agricultural technologies to the community.

(Annielyn L. Baleza)



## CamNorte AgriPinoy Trading Center....(from page 16)

operations of the trading center as it garnered the highest point on the different criteria set-up by CDA, DA RFO 5 and CN-OPAG among the eight (8) nominees vying to operate the CN-APTIC.

The LPMPC which is based in Malasugui, in the town of Labo has 7,000 members and has been operating in the whole Camarines Norte for over 30 years. More than 70% of LPMPC members are composed of famers and fisherfolks. It has more than P100 million assets.

The LPMPC is a longtime partner of LGUs and different government agencies like DA, DTI, DOST and DSWD in implementing different developmental projects that provide livelihood opportunities and employment to many small farmers and fisherfolks.

The PG CamNorte also turned over to the LPMPC P2.5 M working capital which was generated from trading fees and initial capital used by the interim management for the past five years operation.

The provincial government through Governor Edgar A. Tallado also donated office supplies and equipment for the center’s operation.

Throughout its six-year operation, the CN-APTIC has made available adequate supplies of basic agricultural products produced by local farmers and items not produced in Camarines Norte which are being imported by the APTIC from other provinces and regions, and reduced the marketing intermediaries such as agents and middlemen along the value chain, so that farmers could enjoy the right price for their produce.

In a report submitted by the PG CamNorte to the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD), the trading center has purchased a total of P46,447,881.87 worth of agricultural commodities from over 700 farmers and over 800 bulk buyers during the six years of operations of the CN-APTIC.

The CN-APTIC also generated a total sales of P 47,579,716.81 from July 2014



to December 2019, and earned a total income of P454,355.32 from trading fees.

The peak of operation was in 2015 and 2016 when the trading center procured a total of P11.2M and P10.3M agri produce respectively. On these years also, the APTIC has sold P10.6M and P10.7M worth of agri commodities respectively.

Engr. Almirante Abad, Provincial

Agriculturist of CamNorte said that they have initiated various programs for the farmers of the province to encourage them to bring their produce to the APTIC such as conduct of trainings on vegetable and crops production, organization of individual farmers into groups, provision of seeds, fertilizers and farm equipment, extending loan assistance and other technical assistance.

As incentive to farmers, the top grossers of the year or the three farmers who have highest earnings from delivery of agri products to the APTIC were given cash prizes, appliances and token annually by PG Cam. Norte.

To further promote the APTIC, the PG CamNorte allocated P2,635,000.00 capital loan for its contract growing scheme with 15 farmers associations namely: Maria Christina Campita, former APTIC Coordinator said that the Camarines Norte Lowland Rainfed Research Station (CNLRRS) facilitated the expansion of vegetable plantation in over 50 hectares area funded under the DA 5 High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) in partnership with the PG of CamNorte.

The CNLRRS also maintained a 1.5 hectare production area at the back of the APTIC for two years. Adelina A. Losa, Chief of the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) who facilitated the establishment of the trading center said that the APTIC is a first in the Bicol region and DA plans to put up this kind of trading center in Camarines Sur this year.

(Lovella P. Guarin)





**construction of coprahan or tapahan, charcoal processing center and warehouse.**

The Project also provided a truck, charcoal briquetting machine, charcoal kiln, manual deshellers, rake, flat shovel, wheel cart, and sack sealers. Moreover, the Project procured 260,000 whole nuts to serve as the enterprise's raw materials for its first month of operation.

*"Sa pamamagitan ng pag-operate ng coco charcoal (enterprise) dito, inaasahan ko na tataas ang kita kasi meron na kaming buyer ng coco charcoal, pati na rin copra at saka coco mat...*

*hindi po naagrabyado sa presyo kasi kami-kami po ang magpapatakbo ng negosyo. So bale maiiwasan na po yung hindi makatarungang presyo ng niyog na minsan sa bilihan sinasamantala ng malalaking negosyante. Dito makikinabang na sila ng tama at mabibigyan ng tamang presyo dahil kami-kami lang ang magkukuwenta kung paano tutubo ang produkto nang nararapat o mas malaki pa sa dati nilang kinikita, mas pabor po sa aming mga miyembro. Kung dati parang per thousand kumikita lang sila ng P500 siguro ngayon, P1,000 at higit pa dahil sa kami-kami mismo ang*

### PRDP-Bicol turns over P13.45 million-worth I-REAP enterprise to coco farmers in Aroroy, Masbate

AROROY, MASBATE – Small-scale mining used to be the bread and butter of members of the Luy-A, Balete, Concepcion (LUBACON) Agro Scale Miners and Gold Processors Multi-Purpose (MP) Cooperative. However, they had to stop when the Masbate Gold Project-Filminera Resource Corp. (MGP-FRC) began its operation in their area.

require at least 118 metric tons to sustain their operations for one year. This inspired the establishment of the Lubacon Coco Charcoal Production and Marketing Enterprise, an enterprise subproject funded under the Department of Agriculture Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) enterprise development (I-REAP) component.

*"Hindi na po namin kinaya ang pressure ng large scale mining. Ang lupa kasi nila dun din kami nagmimina so kailangan na nila yung area kaya nagkawatak-watak na rin kami,"* Arnel Morado, Chairman of LUBACON Agro Scale Miners and Gold Processors MP Cooperative, narrated.

While other business enterprises worldwide are reeling under the blow of the COVID-19 pandemic to the economic sector, coconut farmer-members of the LUBACON Agro Scale Miners and Gold Processors MP Cooperative were expectant as the DA-PRDP in Bicol headed by Regional Executive Director and PRDP-Bicol Project Director Rodel P. Tornilla officially turn over the P13.45 million-worth I-REAP enterprise to them on September 8, 2020 in Brgy. Malubi, this municipality. **The start-up small enterprise was completed one month ahead of schedule. It will be managed and operated by the LUBACON Agro Scale Miners and Gold Processors MP Cooperative will concentrate on producing charcoal used for cooking on stoves and furnaces. Among the interventions provided by the PRDP-Bicol I-REAP were the**

In their search for alternative sources of income, Arimado and the 60 members of the LUBACON Agro Scale Miners and Gold Processors MP Cooperative-mostly farmers before engaging in mining activities, found new hopes in black gold or coconut charcoal. According to Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) data, 12,097 households in Aroroy use charcoal while 33 restaurants and 65 canteens use charcoal to minimize their production cost. Restaurants demand about 240 metric tons of charcoal while canteens



*Dati kung kumikita kami ng P2,000 siguro by estimate ko dadagdag yun mga P4,000 pataas pa kada buwan,"* Ruel Bobiles, a coconut and rice farmer from Brgy. Panique Aroroy, Masbate, said. He added that without the I-REAP subproject, they have meager profit left because hauling their produce to Masbate City costs them P100 per bag. *"Mas magaan na ngayon kesa dati kasi hindi ka na mag-iisip kung saan ka magbebenta ng produkto,"* he added.

*nagpoproseso,"* he remarked. PRDP Project Support Office (PSO) South Luzon Procurement Unit Head Michael Gregory Vargas, PRDP PSO South Luzon I-BUILD Head Engr. Allan Tatierra, PRDP-Bicol Deputy Project Director Adelina A. Losa, PRDP-Bicol I-BUILD Head Engr. Ted C. Eleda joined RED Tornilla and Mayor Arturo B. Virtucio in gracing the blessing and turnover of the I-REAP facility.

Arimado, on the other hand, believes that the enterprise would empower coconut farmers in Aroroy to command the right prices for the commodity. *"Malaking bagay po ito na merong nabebentahan na ng produkto yung aming mga miyembro na direkta nang*

I-REAP is one of PRDP's four components designed to strengthen and develop viable agriculture- and fishery-based enterprises by providing technical, financial and infrastructure support to eligible groups in targeted project areas within the priority value chains.

**(Annielyn L. Baleza)**





### SAAD distributes P8.2M livestock project in Catanduanes, Masbate and Sorsogon

The Special Area for Agricultural Development is a locally funded program of the DA intended to help

A total of 273 individual beneficiaries of the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) in the remote areas of Catanduanes, Masbate and Sorsogon received various assistance amounting to PhP 8.2 M from the Livestock Production Project component of SAAD, DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla reported over the week.

In the province of Masbate, each of the 7 beneficiaries from San Pascual and 9 from Monreal received 20 heads mallard ducks.

In Masbate also, 54 individual beneficiaries from five municipalities received a goat production package consisting of 4 heads doe and 1 buck.

Eleven (11) farmers from each of the municipalities of San Pascual, Mandaon, Balud and Esperanza and 10 beneficiaries from Pio V. Corpuz received the livestock production package.

Another intervention under the livestock production project was the distribution of



native piglets to 144 individual beneficiaries from the six municipalities of Masbate namely San Pascual, Monreal, Mandaon, Balud, Esperanza, and Pio V. Corpuz. Some 24 beneficiaries from each of said municipalities received seven (7) heads of native piglets.

In Catanduanes, 12 beneficiaries from Gigmoto and also 12 from Baras received 20 heads of Mallard Ducks for their duck egg production project.

In Sorsogon, 35 beneficiaries from Juban and Pilar received the goat

production project consisting of 3 heads doe (partial delivery) and 1 buck per beneficiary.

Supplemental drugs and biologics were also included in the assistance to the target beneficiaries.

Dr. Mary Grace DP. Rodriguez, OIC Chief of the Field Operations Division and SAAD Action Officer in Bicol, said that **these are partial deliveries only out of the total project cost of P39M for FY 2020 Livestock Production Project of SAAD.**

alleviate poverty among the marginalized sectors of agriculture and fishery. One of its various components is the livestock production package which aimed to provide sustainable livelihood support to the beneficiaries in the remote areas of Catanduanes, Masbate and Sorsogon through egg production and genetic improvement as well as repopulation of animals in the target areas.

*(Lovella P. Guarin)*

#### Bamboo now a priority crop....(from page 20)

Dr. Mary Grace Rodriguez, OIC Chief of DA 5 Field Operations Division and regional coordinator of the HVCDP said that DA Bicol HVCDP has allocated P3M for CY 2020 to 2021 for the development of the bamboo industry as a source of income for farmers and entrepreneurs through the showcase of bamboo technologies and creation of a venue for agri-learning and development. Dr. Rodriguez also added

that HVCDP has proposed to establish a total of 10 hectares bamboo technology demonstration sites in the Bicol region. This will include a 1-hectare techno demo areas at the five DA-operated Research Outreach Stations (ROSeS).

One techno demo site was also proposed to be established in Ligao City in Albay and also 1-hectare each in Bula, Ocampo and Pili, all in Camarines Sur.

*(Lovella P. Guarin)*







## Albay farmers receive P34M worth of agri interventions from DA

Crops Development Program

CABANGAN, Camalig, Albay-  
*“An masalbar sa satong ekonomiya, agrikultura man sana!”*

This was the resounding message of the Department of Agriculture (DA) Bicol Regional Technical Director for Operations and Extension Luz R. Marcelino to various representatives of farmers’ associations, cooperatives, 4-H Clubs, Philippine Army and the Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) during the Distribution Agricultural Interventions which included production inputs, farm

machineries and equipment on September 16, 2020 at the Albay Farmers Bounty Village here.

Albay Provincial Agriculturist Che Rebeta said that this intervention will further boost the agricultural sector in the province because this will support the various local projects of the provincial government like the Albay Family-Based Food Production Program (AFBFPP); and the Albay Family-Based Food Garden (AFBFG) program.

From the Rice Program, a total of 4,509 bags of Hybrid

Palay Seeds intended for individual farmers for planting for the Dry Season amounting to over Php 22.5 million were turned over to the 18 LGUs through their representatives.

From the High Value

cooperatives and TESDA.

From the Corn and Cassava Program, six farmers associations from Polangui, Libon, Oas, Ligao City and Tabaco City received conventional hybrid corn seeds, 4 WD Corn Tractor, mobile recirculating batch type dryer with generator set, moisture meter, vacuum pack sealer, corn husk sheller, corn mills and open source pumping set which amounted to over Php 8 million.

From the Livestock and Poultry Program, the assistance was from Typhoon Tisoy Rehabilitation fund.

The LGUs of Tabaco, Daraga, Camalig, Oas, Polangui, Ligao City, Jovellar, Guinobatan and Libon received cara-heifers, heifer and mallard ducks which amounted to 1,925,000.00 pesos.

(Jayson M. Gonzales)



## Bamboo now a priority crop under HVCDP

DA’s six banner programs in line with Agriculture Secretary

SAN AGUSTIN, PILI, CAMARINES SUR – DA Bicol Regional Executive Director Rodel P. Tornilla led the bamboo tree planting activity early this morning at the Central Bicol Experiment Station (CBES) inside the DA regional office compound.



William D. Dar’s memorandum effecting the inclusion of bamboo under the HVCDP.

Bamboo belongs to the grass family and is one of

the fastest growing plants. It has many uses and has a potential as alternative to lumber. *“Bamboo is also a paragon of strength which symbolizes the resilience of the Filipino farmers amidst the pressing problems they are facing today.”* Marcelino added.

(Please turn to page 19)

The nationwide tree planting activity kicked off the celebration of the World Bamboo Day 2020 on September 18, 2020.

In the Philippines, the celebration was led by the Philippine Bamboo Industry Development Council.

This year’s theme is *“Kawayan Tugon sa Hamon ng Panahon”*. Luz R. Marcelino, DA 5 Regional Technical Director for Operations introduced bamboo as a high value commodity under the High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP), one of the

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RE-ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MAIL MATTER at Pili, Post Office, Pili, CamSur under Permit No. 2019-17 on March 25, 2019