

## DA aims rice sufficiency, no imports by 2013

Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala vows to increase palay (unmilled rice) production in the next three years, and subsequently reduce rice imports to nil.

He said this could be achieved by opening up more areas planted to high-yielding rice varieties. The expansion will cover rainfed and irrigated areas, including uplands and marshlands.

"We have already crafted a plan to achieve rice self-sufficiency by 2013. Part of it involves gradually expanding rice farms planted to certified seeds. From the current 20 per cent (%) of total rice areas, we aim to push it to 45% by 2011, and further to 65% by 2012," the DA chief said.

He said the DA through the Philippine Research Institute (PhilRice) will launch a massive campaign to convince farmers to use quality certified and hybrid

rice seeds, instead of home-saved or traditional seeds, coupled with location-specific technologies.

Likewise, as "irrigation is directly proportional to rice production" he said the DA through the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) will vigorously pursue the rehabilitation and repair of old irrigation systems, and possibly extend, where applicable, the irrigation canal systems and tributaries to cover more areas.

For his part, PhilRice executive director Ronilo A. Beronio said Secretary Alcala's goal is achievable as shown by the favorable results of the agency's location-specific technology development (LSTD) program in 22 provinces during the just-concluded 2010 dry season.

The program benefited 100,000 farmers, as their palay  
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*"Sa agrikultura, makapagtatayo na tayo ng mga grains terminals, refrigeration facilities, maayos na road networks at post-harvest facilities. Kung maisasaayos natin ang ating food supply chain sa tulong ng pribadong sektor, sa halip na mag-angkat tayo ay maari na sana tayong mangarap na mag-supply sa pandaigdigang merkado."* - President Benigno C. Aquino III, State of the Nation Address, July 26, 2010.

## DA chief swears in 6 officials

Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala on August 3, 2010 swore in six officials of the Department of Agriculture, who were recently appointed by President Aquino.

Of the six, three were re-appointed, namely: Dr. Segfredo Serrano, as Undersecretary for Policy, Planning, Research and Regulation; Joel Rudinas, Undersecretary for Field Operations; and Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, as Undersecretary for Special Concerns.

The other three are new appointees: Antonio Fleta, as Undersecretary for Administration and Finance; Claron Alcantara, as Undersecretary and Chief of Staff; and Leandro Gazmin, as Director of the DA Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service.

"They are the first batch of DA officials who will form part of our new and revitalized DA management team that will pursue the

food security program of President Aquino," said Secretary Alcala.

"Sila ang ilan sa ating magiging katuwang upang isulong ang minimithi ni Pangulong Aquino na kasapatan sa pagkain, lalong-lalo sa bigas," added Alcala, who vowed to end rice imports by 2013.

Previous to his new post, Fleta was undersecretary and executive director of the Coordinating Council for Private Sector Participation, under the Office of the President (April 2000 - March 2001).

An accountant-banker, he finished an advance management program at Wharton School of Business, Univ. of Pennsylvania, USA, in 1994, and advance banking management at the Asian Institute of Management in 1988. He served as a consultant at Equitable PCI Bank, and  
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## DOJ, NBI to help audit NFA

The National Food Authority (NFA) is seeking the help of the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to look into the alleged over-importation of rice.

NFA Administrator Angelito Banayo said he has requested Justice Secretary Leila de Lima and NBI Director Magtanggol Gatdula to help audit his agency. He also asked the assistance of lawyers, financial experts and other professionals in the conduct of the audit.

The move is in response to President Aquino's disclosure during his first State of the Nation Address that the NFA over-imported rice, at 900,000 tons in 2004 and 1.827 million tons in 2007 to address the estimated

shortage of only 117,000 tons and 589,000 tons, respectively.

He said the excess supply was left to rot in warehouses, while the government had to deal with a debt of P171.6 billion in rice importation costs, as of May 2010.

Banayo said the investigations will involve a system and management audit to identify the problems inherited by the food agency from the previous administration.

The investigations will also look into the purchase and importation protocol regarding timing and volume requirements; inventory system to prevent waste and spoilage of stocks;

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## 'Balik-Kabukiran'

**"Walang wang-wang, walang counter-flow, walang tong!"**

Ito ang mga linyang binitiwang ni President Benigno Aquino III sa kanyang *inaugural address* na umani ng positibong pagtanggap kalakip ang masigabong palakpakan mula sa mga Pilipino saan mang panig ng mundo noong July 1, 2010.

Mahigit isang buwan ang nakalipas, diretso, walang pasikot-sikot at payak na maituturing ang administrasyong Aquino.

Tila ang kapayakang ito ang hinangaan at nagustuhan ng mga Pinoy na sawa na sa magarbo at ma-iskandalong pamumuno noong mga nagdaang taon.

Simpleng pamamaraan ang tugon nito sa mga problema ng bansa.

Katangiang angkin rin ng kaniyang gabinete, kabilang na ang ating Kalihim, Procy Alcala.

Sa ngayon, sandigan ng pamamahala ni Sec Procy ang pagiging *transparent* at *hands-on*.

Isa rin siyang **man of the fields** na bukas sa mga konsultasyon upang higit na mapagtibay ang pagkakaisa ng pamahalaan sa maliliit na magsasaka at mangingisda.

Sa kasalukuyan, malalaking hamon ang nakapatong sa kaniyang balikat: maabot ang kasapatan sa bigas sa loob ng tatlong taon, maitaas ang kita ng mga magsasaka at mangingsida, at mabawasan ang bilang ng mahihirap nating kababayan sa mga kanayunan.

At para ito'y matugunan, diretso at walang pasikot-sikot ang estratehiyang ipatutupad ng DA sa

pamamagitan ng maliliit ngunit siguradong mga hakbang.

**Baby steps** ika nga.

Sa isang pagtitipon ng pasasalamat at bahaginan na ginanap sa lalawigan ng Quezon, ilang beses na tinuran ni Sec ang mga katagang: **"let's go back to basics."**

Ibig sabihin, bumalik tayo sa pundamental... sa saligan...sa batayan.

Kung atin ngang iisipin, tunay ngang marapat na bumalik tayo sa *basics* upang matugunan ang mas malalaking suliranin.

Gawing simple ang mga gawain at hakbang at magpatupad ng mga programa na agarang magbibigay ng positibong epekto at resulta.

Isa na dito ang *vegetable production program* na ipinatutupad ng DA katuwang ang Department of Education at ilang *non-government organizations*.

Sa ilalim nito, binibigyan ng binhi, pagsasanay at mga babasahin ang mga pamilya ng mga mag-aaral para matuto at makapagsimula ng sariling taniman sa kanilang bakuran. Ang ani ay maaring kainin o kaya nama'y ibenta.

Mainam din na magpatupad ng programa hinggil sa wastong pamamahala ng *organic farming* dahil tugon ito sa patuloy na pagtaas ng presyo ng *chemical fertilizer*.

Ilan lamang ito sa mga panimulang gawain na ipapatupad upang unti-unting kamtin ang mas malalaking tagumpay para sa sambayanan.

Para sa ating matatayog na layunin, kailangan na nating simulan ang ating maliliit na hakbang.

## RP eyes veggie exports

The Philippines is eyeing to export organic and non-organic vegetables to South Korea, Hongkong and Singapore.

Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala said Seoul has extended an offer that will assist local producers in shipping out vegetables to South Korea.

"The Ambassador from South Korea paid me a visit recently and he said he's willing to put in place a program that will allow them to import vegetables from us, especially during the winter," Alcala said.

Alcala said the DA is also looking at Hongkong and Singapore

as possible export markets for local vegetables.

He said in Hongkong, most of their dishes contain vegetables, which it imports from mainland China and Thailand.

To increase export revenues, Alcala said his department hopes to encourage farmers to go into organic vegetable farming.

As per the Organic Agriculture Act of 2010 (Republic Act 10068), which he authored, the government will take the lead in assisting farmers who are keen in organic farming. (*Business Mirror*)

### DA aims rice sufficiency ... (from p1)

harvests and incomes increased by 25% to 36%, particularly in Abra, Cagayan and Albay.

"PhilRice is fulfilling its part to helping the country attain rice self-sufficiency. Of the targeted annual rice production increase of seven percent, PhilRice can deliver about three percent," said Beronio. "Our contribution is attributed to appropriate technology and effective extension services," he added.

The remaining 4% increase would be derived from support infrastructure such as irrigation, farm-to-market roads, and transportation. These will be contributed by other DA agencies, bureaus and regional field units.

Last year, the country produced 16.27 million tons of palay. This year, the DA targets to increase it to at least 17.4 million tons, as long as the country's major rice producing areas will not be adversely affected by strong typhoons in the next few months.

Under the LSTD program, PhilRice assists farmers in developing and packaging technologies and new farm practices suited in their areas. They plant certified seeds and employ cost-

saving technologies, such as minus-one element technique (MOET) and leaf color chart (LCC).

Using certified seeds, seed germination rate is improved and uneven rice plant growth is minimized, resulting in increased income of P9,000 per cropping, mainly attributed to increase in yield and savings from reduced expenses. (*DA Info Service, PhilRice*)

### Attn: DA Ag Engrs

As required under Republic Act No. 8559, or the *Philippine Agricultural Engineering Act of 1998*, the Professional Regulatory Board of Agricultural Engineering (PRBoAE) is currently updating the registry of all agricultural engineers in the country.

Submit your updated Agricultural Engineer's data or profile to: Engr. Ariodear Rico, Chairman, Board of Agricultural Engineers, Professional Regulation Commission, P. Paredes St., Sampaloc, Manila.

### AggieTrends

is published monthly by the Department of Agriculture Information Service, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City. Tel. nos. 9288741 loc 2148, 2150, 2155, 2156 or 2184; 9204080 or tel/fax 9280588. This issue is available in PDF file. For copies, please send requests via email: da\_afis@yahoo.com.

Editor-In-Chief : **Noel O. Reyes**

Associate Editors: **Karenina Salazar & Cheryl C. Suarez**

Writers: **Adora D. Rodriguez, Jo Anne Grace B. Pera, Arlhene S. Carro, Mc. Bien Saint Garcia**

Contributors: **DA-RFU Info Officers, Public Info Officers and Staff of DA Bureaus, Attached Agencies & Corporations, Foreign-Assisted Projects**

Photographers: **Jose Lucas, Alan Jay Jacalan, & Kathrino Resurreccion**

Lay-out Artist: **Bethzaida Bustamante**

Printing & Circulation: **Teresita Abejar & PCES Staff**

## LGUs to receive insecticides, sprayers to lick armyworms

As reports of armyworms attacking farms in Regions III and IV started to come in, Secretary Proceso Alcala immediately ordered the distribution of an initial P900,000-worth of knapsack sprayers and recommended insecticides for use in affected areas in Batangas, Cavite and Quezon.

He also instructed DA Undersecretary Joel Rudinas and Assistant Secretary and concurrent DA-Region 4-A director Dennis Araullo to monitor the infestation.

Likewise, Sec. Alcala also instructed the DA Regions IV-A (CALABARZON) and III (Central Luzon), and the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) to coordinate closely with concerned LGU officials and agricultural technicians in Bataan, Cavite, Batangas, and Quezon to assist farmers in controlling the spread of armyworms.

Rudinas and Araullo assigned

two experts--Wilma Cuaterno, BPI Crop Protection Division chief, and Cecille Manzanilla, chief of the DA-RFU IV-A Regional Crop Protection Center (RCPC)--to provide the technical information needed by the LGUs, farmers and the general public on how to effectively control armyworms and other pests.

Cuaterno and Manzanilla said armyworms are most destructive during the larval stage and can be controlled by applying recommended insecticides such as Carbaryl and Pyrethroids.

The chemicals should be sprayed directly to the armyworms or to the vegetation where the pests are visible during late afternoons when these are most active.

"We are urging extension workers and farmers to follow proper procedures in the application of recommended



DA assistant secretary Dennis Araullo (right) and agricultural extension workers assess armyworm (inset) infestation in a farm in CALABARZON region.

chemicals as indicated in their labels. We are also urging farmers to always wear protective gears during insecticide application," the two experts said.

Aside from the spray, other non-chemical solutions recommended by DA-RCPC include the cutting of vegetation and digging of shallow ditches.

Armyworms are nocturnal moth larvae that travel in multitudes, destroying any kind of vegetation including grass and grain on their path. One egg mass is equivalent to 100 to 300 eggs, which turn into voracious defoliators once hatched. They are most destructive during their larval stage, which lasts 14 to 24 days, Manzanilla said.

The initial attack of armyworms in the first district of Batangas was reported early July.

Since then, the DA through the BPI and RCPC has been conducting monitoring and assessment activities to prevent further damage.

Cuaterno said that the BPI has been conducting a series of seminars since the 2nd quarter of 2009 until the first quarter of 2010.

During the seminars they forewarned and enjoined regional, provincial and municipal agriculturists, crop protection specialists and technicians, and Integrated Pest Management or Kasakalikasan farmer-cooperators to prepare for the occurrence of pests and diseases as a result of the prolonged dry spell due to the El Niño.

Aside from armyworms, BPI has been conducting seminars

to control other pests such as cutworms, locusts and field rats, and crop diseases like tungro and bacteria leaf blight.

## DA commissions survey to know rice per capita

Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala said he has commissioned a survey to determine accurately the country's rice per capita consumption.

"We have commissioned an independent survey on our rice consumption," the DA chief said.

The DA's Bureau of Agricultural Statistics uses the current per capita rice consumption of 128 kilograms (kg) per year, which is computed via the so-called 'supply disappearance method.'

However, another government agency, the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) of the Department of Science and Technology uses 112 kg as per capita based on actual consumption survey conducted in 2008.

"We are validating the data so we won't have to import rice after three years. Our target is to reduce imports by 50 percent next year," Alcala said in a press briefing.

The survey will focus in Metro Manila, where 65 percent of the country's rice supply is consumed.

Hence, the current rice per capita consumption of 128 kg is suspected to be way above the actual consumption of most Filipino households.

(Pls turn to p4)

## NFA: 'We have enough rice through the lean months'

The National Food Authority (NFA) assures the public that the country has enough supply of rice during the July-September lean season, citing the agency has a 56-day rice buffer — aside from those with households and commercial warehouses.

NFA Administrator Angelito T. Banayo said the stable rice supply is a result of the agency's intensive palay buying during the summer harvest, in addition to imports.

Presently, NFA warehouses and depositories had some 2 million metric tons (MT) or 40.7 million bags of rice, sufficient for the country's daily needs of 36,300 MT of rice for 56 days.

"NFA stock inventory at present is almost double the required 30-day food security buffer at the start of lean months," Banayo said in a statement.

Rice stocks in NFA warehouses and depositories accounted for 59% of the country's rice inventory of 3.4

million MT as of the first week of July, Banayo said.

Rice stocks in households account for 28% or 972,700 MT, while those in commercial warehouses account for 13% or 460,200 MT.

He noted that NFA was able to buy from local farmers 3.29 million bags of rice from April to June, more than double its target of 1.34 million bags.

Total inventory as of June 1, was 3.36 M tons, 25% more than the 2.68 M tons last year, according to the DA's Bureau of Agricultural Statistics.

The inventory consisted of 1.926 M tons MT with the NFA, 972,700 M tons with households, and 446,900 MT with commercial warehouses.

Palay output dropped 11% to 3.49 million MT in the first quarter from 3.94 million MT year on year.

The DA projects a further drop of 9% to 3.11 million MT in the second quarter, and a 4% dip to 3.39 million MT this quarter. (*BusinessWorld*)

# DA to strengthen crop insurance program

Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala plans to strengthen the DA's crop insurance program as a necessary component of its rice, corn and other high-value commercial crops production programs.

In an interview, Alcala said, "we have to review the program. If we have to strengthen our planting programs, we also need to strengthen crop insurance."

However, as far as Alcala is concerned, he would prefer a simple and direct insurance program that allows farmers to be compensated as soon as possible for damages they incur due to certain events.

"What is needed is fast release (of insurance claim payments) and (insurance) personnel," Alcala said, elaborating "if one area is hit (by a calamity), recall others, (deploy) full blast there. We need to put up a (quick response) mechanism."

Alcala, however, remained non-committal on repeated request of the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. (PCIC) for additional funding support.

Alcala was also wary about a proposed weather-based crop insurance.

According to the DA chief, "from what I see, what we should have is something that the ordinary farmers understand."

Thus, from the viewpoint of the ordinary farmers, Alcala said that the ordinary farmers only want to see the repayment of what they had spent on their destroyed farm, notwithstanding the time and effort they had already put in, so that they can buy the necessary inputs to start all over again.

The DA, however, has been exploring the possibility of adopting a new insurance for agricultural crops that would allow for a more effective and efficient insurance coverage.

Agriculture Undersecretary Segfredo Serrano, who has been tasked to study the new insurance scheme, had noted that the present crop insurance scheme is expensive.

According to Serrano, the DA is studying the proposed weather-based crop insurance system to see if it is the more efficient way of ensuring farmers.

Serrano pointed out that the current system is expensive.

"It is expensive to administer kaya if it is expensive to administer and if it expensive to farmers, then you have limited coverage... while ang goal naman natin is to be able to expand insurance so this is another modality that we are trying to see whether it is viable," Serrano said

Furthermore, Serrano explained, under the present crop insurance system, farmers pay an insurance premium for insurance coverage for which the government contributes additional coverage through the PCIC.

Unfortunately, Serrano explained, if the farmer's crop is devastated, an adjuster is needed to assess the actual damage which will be the basis for the insurance compensation.

The adjuster process, Serrano said, becomes expensive because it takes time for the adjuster to evaluate the extent of the damage especially if the insured crop area is located in a remote area and there are several claims to be investigated and evaluated.

However, in the new insurance system that the DA is studying together with Swiss Re,

## Farm investments needed for rice sufficiency

The Philippines has the capability to be self-sufficient in rice as long as the government would invest in farm-to-market roads, extension work and irrigation, the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) said.

IRRI director general Robert S. Ziegler said the timely delivery of crop-management information to farmers would also boost efforts of the Philippine government to wipe out rice imports.

"I wouldn't say that rice self-sufficiency could be achieved in three or five or 10 years. [But] to achieve this, there has to be proper infrastructure, continuous investment in farm-to-market roads, extension work and irrigation," said Ziegler in an interview on the sidelines of Investment Forum for Food Security in Asia and the Pacific at the ADB Headquarters in Pasig City.

He said the Philippine



**RP-Korea Partnership in Agriculture.** Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala (right) shares a light moment with Lee Hye Min, newly-installed ambassador of Republic of Korea to the Philippines, as they discussed opportunities to further expand partnership in agriculture, including the setting up of Multi-Industry Clusters (MICs) in selected provinces funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). Said initiative is on top of the current KOICA grant that involves construction of four modern rice processing centers. Ambassador Min was accompanied by Korean Embassy economic counsellor Kim Myoung Joon.

Serrano elaborated, one system would involve "an area unit that will be defined, let us say a district or a municipality or a province for which the historical yield would be determined."

Under such a system, the insurer such as Swiss Re, agrees to a "trigger" like a 10 percent below yield in the coverage area.

If that trigger is met, Serrano

said, all of the farmers (who enrolled would be paid) whether they suffered damage or not. That is one modality."

Another modality, Serrano continued, is a weather-based insurance scheme which is actually under pilot-testing in Cagayan Valley and Panay. (*Philippine Star*)

government also needs to ensure that rice farmers would receive good prices for their produce.

While the motivation of the Agriculture department behind the emphasis on upland rice farming is good, the IRRI official advised against focusing on planting rice in upland areas.

"I wouldn't recommend the focus on rice in upland areas. Farmers should grow crops that can [guarantee] better returns," said Ziegler.

These crops could include fruits, vegetables, high-value commercial crops and maize, he said.

The IRRI noted that the Philippines has the capacity to prop up rice production and wipe out rice imports, as it is a "leader in rice-technology development and rice technology adoption."

Meanwhile, Ziegler noted that global rice prices should settle at around \$300 to \$350 per

metric ton if it is to become affordable to poor consumers all over the world.

"[That price range] is something that consumers can manage. Prices had been anywhere from \$200 to \$300 per metric ton for about a decade, and people were able to manage that," he said.

To prop up global rice production, Ziegler said there is a need to expand yield on remaining rice areas. (*Business Mirror*)

## DA commissions ... (from p3)

Alcala said the survey will also ask the people's perception on the DA's performance.

"I want to know how acceptable the DA is to the farmers. I will gauge our performance after that. I have to gauge myself. Farmers should get to directly feel the impact of our program in six months," he added. (*Manila Bulletin*)



## Fire razes DA buildings

At least 300 families lost their houses, while two buildings at the Department of Agriculture compound were destroyed in a July 20, 2010 fire that razed a community of illegal settlers, along the corner of North Avenue and Elliptical Road, in Diliman, Quezon City.

QC fire department superintendent Bobby Baruelo said the fire broke out at 1:27 pm in the house of Felipe Saguisag on Asparagus Street, Sitio Planas A, Barangay Vasra, and was contained at 3:30 pm.

The National Agriculture and Fisheries Council (NAFC) motorpool, property and auditing sections, and offices of the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Minimum Access Volume (MAV) was totally burned down, while the two-storey building of the Livestock and Development Council was half-burned. The fire also destroyed the DA's printing section.

Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala witnessed the fire when it was still raging until it was contained. He commended the joint efforts of the Bureau of Fire Protection, QC fire department, and fire brigade volunteers, and DA, NAFC and LDC employees, and Dear John janitorial services.

Estimated damage was placed at P10 million.

The displaced NAFC and LDC employees are temporarily housed at the DA-ITCAF and fourth floor of the main NAFC building. (*Phil. Daily Inquirer, DA Info Service*)



*The July 20 fire, which lasted for almost two hours, tore down parts of the LDC and NAFC offices and resulted to P10M-worth of damages. Sec. Alcala who witnessed the raging fire, commended the united efforts of the BFP, QC fire department, Dear John janitorial services and other volunteers.*

## DA chief swears in ... (from p1)

president of Far East Savings Bank.

Alcantara has worked at the Presidential Management Staff since President Corazon Aquino's time, and thereafter as chief of staff of Sec. Alcala, during his term at the House of Representatives.

He finished economics at the University of the Philippines (UP) in 1987, and Masters in Development Management at the Asian Institute of Management in 1997.

## DOJ asks to pursue case vs. Chinese poachers

Stakeholders of the fisheries sector have requested Justice Secretary Leila De Lima to reverse former DOJ Secretary Alberto Agra's decision of dropping the case against nine Chinese nationals caught poaching in Philippine waters.

Director Malcolm I. Sarmiento, Jr., of the DA's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said his agency together with the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff (PCSDS) have officially filed a motion for reconsideration at the DOJ to set aside the earlier ruling of former Sec. Agra.

The Chinese nationals were caught fishing and in possession of endangered marine turtles in May, off Balabac Island in Palawan, by BFAR and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG).

Consequently, BFAR, PCG and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources filed a criminal complaint at the Palawan Provincial Prosecutors Office for violations of Philippine fisheries laws particularly Section 87 of RA 8550 or the *Philip-*

*Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala (left) is shown with the six DA officials (from left): undersecretaries Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, Segfredo Serrano, Antonio Fleta, Joel Rudinas and Claron Alcantara, and director Leandro Gazmin.*

Gazmin, a UP mechanical engineering graduate and an organic farming advocate, has done a joint project with the UPLB-Institute of Plant Breeding on commercial snap hydroponics.

*pine Fisheries Code.*

In June 29, 2010 former DOJ secretary Agra granted the petition for review by a Chinese lawyer and directed the Provincial Prosecutor of Palawan to withdraw the information that were filed against the respondents for lack of criminal intent.

However BFAR and PCG filed a motion for reconsideration, citing the following:

·Agra's resolution failed to consider that RA 855 is a special law. Violation of its provisions shall be considered *mala prohibita* or acts that are punishable only because they are prohibited by law and not *mala en se* or acts that are inherently immoral.

·The resolution erroneously took the respondents' claim that the place of apprehension is not within the territorial sea of the Philippines, when such issue can be properly ventilated during a full-blown trial as it is evidentiary in nature.

·There was deprivation of the right to due process of the com

*(Pls turn to p11)*

## 'Let's go back to basics'

Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala urged farmers, fishers, and local officials to go back to basics during the *Pasasalamat and Bahaginan* assembly held at the Kalilayan Hall in Lucena City, Quezon on July 17, 2010.

"We have to go back to the bedrock of agriculture," Alcala stated stressing the importance of agri and fisheries to the national economy of the Philippines during the one-day gathering where he laid out parts of his master plan as a hands-on

## Coco oil fuels power generators

The Philippine Coconut Authority said a village in Jomalig island, Quezon Province, is now enjoying electricity as a result of successful experiments on the use of filtered coconut oil as bio-fuel in stationary and mobile engines.

PCA administrator Oscar Garin said Barangay Apad was given a Filtered Coconut Oil (FCCNO) plant with a one-ton copra capacity and a 25 KVA (kilovolt-ampere) generator set or genset. One KVA is equivalent to 1,000 watts.

The 25-KVA genset was provided by the Department of Energy through the Quezon Electric Cooperative together with the Asian and Pacific Coconut Community, an inter-governmental organization with 15 member-countries.

Garin said the pilot project on the production and demonstration of FCCNO now provides electricity to 47 of the target 56 households.

Dina Masa, PCA product development department manager, said Jomalig was chosen as site since copra is affordable.

She said to make the processing plant's operation financially feasible, the copra price should not be higher than P20/kilogram and the fuel price P40/liter. (Malaya)

Secretary and organic farming advocate.

Alcala reiterated his earlier announcement that DA will gradually stop rice importation and achieve its goal of rice self-sufficiency by 2013 as part of the main agenda being pushed by the Aquino government.

The DA chief said he will push for the expansion of rice hectareage, the rehabilitation and upgrade of irrigation systems, as well as encourage the planting of better-yielding rice varieties, including indigenous varieties.

"We will strengthen the seed certification and hybridization programs of the government to purify our crops," he said, inviting seed growers to form groups so they can be protected and be given proper incentives.

"Kaya naman pong gawin, kailangan lang re-education ng ating mga farmers and extension workers," he said.

Alcala, who represented the 2<sup>nd</sup> district of Quezon for two terms, vowed to carry an all-out war against smuggling which has affected the lives and livelihood of small farmers and fishers nationwide. He also intends to establish grains terminals that will provide cheaper raw materials for feeds production and trading post for vegetable and other agri products.

"We will replicate the Sentrong Pamilihan in the Visayas and Mindanao regions to show to everyone why we're so proud of our trading post here. Ilalagay po natin itong mga trading posts na ito sa mga strategic locations," he said.

The *Sentrong Pamilihan ng mga Produktong Agrikultural sa Sariaya* was established to provide a venue for veggie trading and marketing as well as an agri input depot and education and training center to farmers. Minus your usual middlemen, the center is able to sell about 50 tons of agricultural products daily.



Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala (3rd from left) partakes a lunch of boiled vegetables, grilled fish, pork adobo, and banana with farmers, local officials and other agriculture and fishery industry stakeholders during the 'Pasasalamat at Bahaginan' in Lucena City. Flanking him are DA-4A Regional Technical Director Abelardo Bragas (3rd from right), Ariel Mañalac (left, partly hidden), manager of Sentrong Pamilihan ng Produktong Agrikultura ng Quezon, and farmer-leaders.

## Bio N replaces chemical fertilizer

Rice and corn farmers can now save up to 45% and 38% respectively of the fertilizer cost per hectare and still achieve optimal production with the Bio N technology.

Five to six packs of Bio N organic fertilizer which cost P60 per pack are sufficient to replace half the recommended four bags of chemical fertilizer per hectare of land planted to rice or corn that cost over P1,000 per bag.

With the continuous rise in chemical fertilizer cost, Bio N serves an ideal alternative in increasing crop production. Currently, there are 68 Bio N mixing plants to keep up with the growing demand of farmers nationwide.

Bio N has been extensively tested in different varieties of rice and corn at the National

Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology (BIOTECH) demo sites and in various areas nationwide before its commercialization in 2002. Various studies and farmers' experiences proved the superior performance of the product in significantly increasing rice and corn production. With Bio N alone, rice farmers can yield an average of 21% higher than sans fertilizer. While, replacement of 50% of the required chemical fertilizer with Bio N gives an average of 14% higher rice yield compared to chemical fertilizer alone.

Bio N has also been proven beneficial to corn, producing 12% yield increment than of chemical fertilizer, while replacement of 50% of chemical fertilizer with Bio N in-

creased corn yield by an average of 15% over the use of the chemical fertilizer alone.

Bio N is a microbial-based fertilizer that contains *Azospirillum* and soil charcoal. It was developed by Dr. Mercedes Umali-Garcia and Teofila S.J. Santos of BIOTECH, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in 1985 in response to high cost chemical fertilizers.

Bio N comes in powder form in a 200-gram packet. It is environmentally safe and ideal for seed immunization, direct broadcasting, or root dip when mixed with water. Bio N is also capable of supplying 50% of the nitrogen requirement of rice, corn and other high value crops. For further inquiries please call UPLB BIOTECH at (49) 536-1620.

## Raise 'organic' pigs, chicken

Recent findings and evaluation by the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) show that a plant scientifically known as *Trichantera gigantea* can be used economically for the production of organic pigs and chicken.

Whole leaves of *Trichantera* could be fed to pigs, but need to be chopped for chicken.

Research at the BAI's National Swine and Poultry Research and Development Center (NSPRDC) in Tiaong, Quezon showed that pigs fed with *Trichantera* at twenty (20) percent level of replacement of commercial feed in growing-finishing rations produced cheaper liveweight gain, with cost per kilogram gain lower by Php2.00 compared to those fed 100% commercial ration. Pigs in both rations have similar liveweight gain and meat quality.

*Trichantera* is also palatable to and good for

chicken and ducks. Mr. Ricky Malolos of Sto. Tomas, Batangas raises native chicken and ducks but could only feed *Trichantera* to his free-range chicken due to limited area for growing the plant.

He feeds chicken, with 50 % *Trichantera* and 50% commercial feed which costs him an average of sixty centavos per head per day.

Selling his chicken at 5 to 6 months old for 250 pesos/ head, he gets an average net return of 100 pesos/ head.

Last June, he was able to sell 500 heads for Php125,000.00 which gave him an income of Php50,000.00.

These results and observations prompted BAI Director Efren C. Nuestro to direct Dr. Rene C. Santiago (Center Chief, NSPRDC) to go into massive propagation of the plant.

"Planting materials of *Trichantera* should be made readily available to enable farmers to benefit from the results of our research" Director Nuestro said following his recent visit to the Center and Ricky's farm.

"This is consistent with the program on organic farming of the new Department of Agriculture Secretary, Honorable Proceso J. Alcala," Director Nuestro further stressed.

*T. gigantea*, known as Nacedero or Madre de Agua in Colombia and Argentina was introduced to the Philippines in 1995.

It is a non-leguminous fodder tree which grows well in tropical conditions in a wide range of soil types, even under shade between plantation crops and elevations of up to 1,800



Top two photos show chicken and pigs fed with *Trichantera*. Shown above are Bureau of Animal Industry officials led by director Efren C. Nuestro (2nd from left) with ass't. dir. Dalmacio Tibay, planning officer Louie Mariano and research division chief Frank Moog.

meters.

It can produce 40 to 60 tons of fresh leaves with a protein content of 16 to 22 percent of protein in dry basis.

It is easily propagated by cuttings with at least 2 nodes grown in plastic

bags or planted directly in clean field.

Rooted cuttings of *Trichantera* are available at the BAI Central Office, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City and at NSPRDC, Lagalag, Tiaong, Quezon with prior arrangement.

## New peanut variety now available

*Asha* (*Arachis hypogaea*), a new certified peanut variety seed, is now being planted by farmers in Isabela, Sorsogon, and Quezon through a project funded by the DA's Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR).

*Asha*, which means 'hope' in the Hindi language, was introduced from India through the International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropic (ICRISAT) in 2005.

It was successfully field-tested in Isabela, where it produced nuts larger than those traditionally grown in the country. Given its size and high-yielding qualities, *Asha* shows great potential in increasing the harvest and incomes of farmers, said BAR director Nicomedes P. Eleazar.

*Asha's* package of technology (POT) was developed by the DA-Cagayan Valley Integrated Agricultural Research Center (CVIARC) through a three-year project.

Just recently, BAR, led by Dr. Eleazar and CVIARC, distributed 15 sacks of *Asha* peanut seeds to 15 marginal farmers representing six municipalities of the second district of Quezon to try and cultivate in the province.

The project will be implemented by the Earthkeepers, a non-government organization (NGO) on organic farming, based in Tiaong, Quezon, in cooperation with the CVIARC, which will provide technical assistance to farmer-cooperators.



*Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) assures farmer-leaders and rice industry stakeholders that the DA will continue to promote hybrid rice, as it forms part of the Aquino administration's holistic strategy to attain rice self-sufficiency by 2013. With him from left are farmer-leader Ricardo Buenaventura of the Nagkakaisang Magsasaka sa Tabucao, Talavera, Nueva Ecija, Nelson Licup of Candelaria, Quezon, and Henry Lim, president of SL Agritech.*

Dr. Eleazar said "with *Asha* peanut adapting well in the Philippine soil and the developed POT, peanut yield has increased dramatically from 600 to 1,100 kg/ha."

This is equivalent to P15,000 to P27,000 per hectare increase in farmers' income, according to CVIARC experts.

Each farmer-cooperator has allotted an area of 1,000 square meters to plant their *Asha*.

Cooperators were provided a one-day hands-on training last August 3, 2010 to teach them the appropriate POT on the production and management of *Asha* peanut.

Ms. Rose Aquino of CVIARC served as the resource person during the training which was attended by 15 farmer-beneficia-

ries and community organizers of Earthkeepers.

As part of the repayment scheme of the project, each farmer-cooperator will have to give back two sacks of seeds after harvest to ensure seed multiplication so that other farmers can also avail of the POT and benefits of cultivating *Asha*.

Dir. Eleazar said: "We hope that through these seeds we will be able to help the marginal farmers in Quezon by providing them alternative livelihood to improve their incomes. Hopefully, after Isabela, Sorsogon, and now Quezon Province, we will be able to promote the technology on *Asha* peanut production nationwide so that more farmers will be benefited."

He added that this project on *Asha* peanut production is in line with DA Secretary Proceso J. Alcala's initiatives to promote agricultural crops and products that have potentials to improve farmers' incomes, but are not yet in the mainstream market.

*Asha* peanut is one of the technologies highlighted at the 6<sup>th</sup> Agriculture and Fisheries Technology Forum and Product Exhibition, at SM Megatrade Hall, August 5-8, 2010.

Alcala was represented by Dir. Leandro Gazmin of the DA-Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS) who commended BAR for its initiatives on bringing viable technologies to farmers and other agriculture industry stakeholders. (Rita dela Cruz, DA-BAR)

## EU project benefits rainfed farmers

The European Union recently funded a farmers' field school (FFS) in the towns of La Paz and Victoria, in Tarlac.

To date, there are dozens of FFS that benefit 4,000 farmers in 32 municipalities in Luzon.

The setting up of FFS is a component of the EU-funded project called, 'Increasing Rice Yield and Productivity through the Promotion of Small Scale Irrigation and Integrated Crop Management Systems in Rainfed Areas.'

The project is implemented in Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan, Pampanga, and Tarlac--where average rice yields are below 2.9 tons per hectare.

It is jointly implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization, DA and attached agencies (PhilRice, Bureau of Soils and Water Management, and Agricultural Training Institute) and local government units.

The project provides farmers surface water pumps and shallow tube wells or small farm reservoirs to improve irrigation and help increase yield by an additional one ton per hectare.

Under the project, half of the cost of the water pumps is subsidized, while the other half is shouldered by the farmers, payable in installment basis.

With shallow tube wells and pump sets, farmers can plant a second crop of rice, or corn or vegetables during the dry season, and thus earn additional income.



*Veggie Seeds for QC backyard gardens. Agriculture Undersecretary Berna Romulo-Puyat (4th from left) hands over to Quezon City Vice Mayor Joy Belmonte assorted vegetable seeds for distribution to different barangays as part of the DA-QC joint food security program. With them are QC Mayor Herbert Bautista (4th from right) and Councilors Allan Reyes, Anthony Crisologo, Raquel Malangen, Jaime Borres, Godofredo Liban, Alfred Vargas and Edcel Lagman, Jr.*

## DA-10 offers dairy loans

To enhance and sustain the development of the local dairy industry and complement the government's effort of mitigating hunger and minimizing nutrition problems in the countryside, the DA Regional Field Unit IX launched the Dairy Goat Development Project (DGDP). The project gives emphasis on herd build-up through an appropriate animal loan scheme in cooperation with the DA's attached agencies.

A total of 170 dairy goats from Australia and Davao del Sur were dispersed to Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga City, and Isabela City in Basilan. The animal loan scheme is based on the recommendation of the livestock technician coursed through the Municipal Agriculturist which, however, has to pass the initial and final validation conducted by the offices of the City and Provincial Veterinarians and the DA regional office, respectively.

### Loan criteria

A beneficiary for an imported dairy goat should be an existing commercial goat raiser within the dairy zone area; preferably a member of the association affiliated with the Federation of Goat and Sheep Producers Association of the Philippines, Inc. (FGASPAPI), and has attended the project briefing/ seminar and training.

A recipient for a locally purchased upgraded dairy goat must have engaged and/or have had knowledge and skill in raising goats; ensure that sources of grasses or legumes and other forage materials are readily available and sufficient; have a shed or goat houses; and that he/she must be financially capable of

providing feed supplements and biologics, and of repaying the loaned animals.

### Repayment Scheme

According to Dr. Victorino Guillermo, DA-Livestock Banner Coordinator, the repayment scheme for first-line beneficiaries consists of two sets of option. The first option is to repay with three bucks (male goat) for every buck received; buck should be at least 75% upgraded, at least 20kg and 6-8 months old or, three does (female goat) for every doe received, with each doe at least 75% upgraded, weighs at least 20kg and 6-8 months old.

The second option is to repay with two bucks for every buck received; should be purebred offspring, each weighing at least 20kg and 6-8 months old.

Or, two does for every doe received, purebred offspring at least 20kg each, and 6-8 months old.

A recipient of locally upgraded goats, however, must repay with one doe for every doe received. This may be an offspring of the doe received or out-sourced. The doe must be at least 5 months old, weighing at least 20kg, and 50% upgraded dairy goat.

A recipient of a buck must repay with one offspring or out-sourced. If the loaned buck has produced 50 kids within one and a half years upon receipt, the recipient/beneficiary need not make a repayment. This instance, however, must be certified by the technician in the area.

The primary responsibility of a beneficiary is to maintain the animals in good health in order to maximize their capability to produce milk. (DA-RFU IX)



**Sustained DA-UPLB Partnership Towards Food Security and Self-Sufficiency.** *Sec. Proceso J. Alcala (center) welcomes the offer and assurance of continued support by the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) through Chancellor Luis Rey Velasco (left) and Vice Chancellor Roberto Rañola to sustain the growth and modernization of the country's agriculture sector to attain food security and self-sufficiency. Velasco said UPLB will continue to provide available research and development (R&D) field-tested and mature technologies, technical expertise, advice on major agricultural policy issues, and continuous conduct of R&D programs to produce high-yield, sustainable, pest-resistant and sturdy crop varieties, including efficient farm production, processing and marketing systems.*

## More greenhouses rise in EV

Not long after the first launching of the Greenhouse project in Catbalogan City, Samar last month, more of the same project were turned over in the provinces of Biliran, Leyte and Southern Leyte.

Twelve greenhouses have already been turned over to different recipients in the region specifically the LGUs of Sta. Rita, Catbalogan and Calbayog, in Samar; Naval, Biliran; Ormoc City, Baybay City, Palo, Kananga, Bato and Barugo, in Leyte; and Maasin City, Southern Leyte.

Regional Executive Director Leo P. Cañeda revealed that 33 more greenhouses are slated to be awarded to different LGU-applicants. "We commit to establish more in keeping with the interest of other LGUs to have the same project for their farmer-constituents. Perhaps, this is indicative of their realization of the benefits that can be derived from this project," he claimed.

The greenhouse project is a protective techno-demo and training program designed to provide the necessary technology on greenhouse cultural management of short-term, high value crops as well as open field

planting using plasticulture to ordinary farmers.

"This is a hedging technique against the adverse effects of climate change, a cultivation option under a controlled environment insulating vegetables from prolonged extreme weather changes," he clarified.

If fully maximized and properly managed, the greenhouse technology would make vegetable farming a much more profitable venture for farmers, thus increasing the region's productivity.

Regional HVCC Program Coordinator Dr. Veronica J. Berenguer disclosed that the P180,000-worth greenhouse project comprises 3 components: a greenhouse, drip irrigation and training program. At least 1,000 sq.m. area, on the other hand, must be provided by the LGU-recipient to accommodate the greenhouse which requires only 144 sq.m.

The remaining area would serve as an open field where the same crops as those grown in the greenhouse would be planted so that there would be a comparative showcase between the two sets of vegetables grown under different conditions. (DA-RFU VIII)



*Saanen dairy goats from Australia*

## FAO: RP should increase rice yield to meet demand

To meet the needs of the growing population, the Philippines needs to increase its grain production by at least 1.8 percent every year for the next 20 years, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

In a press briefing, Hiroyuki Konuma, FAO assistant director general and regional representative for Asia and the Pacific, said “food production will need to double or post a 100-percent increase by 2050 to feed the growing population.”

Konuma said that for the past 10 years, rice production in Asia and the Pacific region had only grown by 0.8 percent and wheat production, only 0.2 percent.

“We need to increase at least 1.8 percent per year, for grain production, in the next 20 years. This is the average in Asia and the Pacific region,” Konuma clarified in an interview after the briefing.

The FAO said world population is expected to increase to 9.1 billion by 2050. This means the world needs to increase food production by around 70 percent by 2050.

Konuma said the world must increase investments in agriculture to over \$200 billion every year until 2050. Of this amount, around \$120 billion every year is needed for Asia and the Pacific.

Konuma said investments in the farm sector in Asia and the Pacific had averaged \$80 billion every year for the past three years.

To meet the \$120-billion annual investment, investments in the farm sector in the region must rise by 50 percent, he said.

Increasing investments is also important in bringing down food prices.

Haruhiko Kuroda, Asian Development Bank (ADB) president, cited FAO figures showing that while food prices have stabilized, they were still 85 percent higher than 2003 levels.

FAO figures also showed that food prices will remain high for the next 10 years.

Kuroda said FAO data showed food prices will remain 15 percent to 40 percent over the 1997-2006 levels from 2010 to 2019.

The increased investments, Konuma said, should go to re-

search and development and agriculture infrastructure, like irrigation facilities, farm-to-market roads, postharvest facilities and other associated infrastructure.

Investments must be geared toward financing agriculture insurance, marketing chain facilitation, and other agriculture support services.

Some investments should be in education, health care and other known agriculture income-generating activities.

“Achieving food security at regional, national and household levels has long been a struggle for the region, even during the best of economic times.

A sustainable and balanced rebound in Asia, coupled with the hard lessons we learned during the 2008 food crisis, presents us with a golden opportunity to harness our collective resources in order to achieve food security,” said Kuroda.

The forum, co-organized by ADB, FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, gathered hundreds of policymakers, development experts and representatives from the public and private sectors. (*Business Mirror*)



## China turns into corn importer

China will import some 1.7 million tons of corn this year, 5.8 million tons next year and as much as 15 million tons in 2014-2015. This is according to Hanver Li, chairman and chief consultant of Shanghai JC Intelligence Co. Ltd. (JCI) when he spoke at the U.S. Grains Council's 50th Annual Board of Delegates Meeting.

He said demand for corn in China is simply outstripping production. China's economy continues to grow, he explained, which is driving an increase in demand for meat, milk and eggs because as incomes rise, food is one of the first items people look to buy.

JCI estimates that meat consumption per capita will grow from 59 kilograms (kg) in 2005 to 61.7 kg this year to 63.1 kg in 2015.

Milk consumption will grow from 22.0 in 2005 to 30.1 and 33.4 in that same time frame, while

aquatic products will grow from 39.2 to 44.1 and 48.9.

Li said rural areas will drive meat demand, while urban centers will drive milk and aquatic products demand. (*US Grains Council website*)

## Vietnam rice prices fall due to oversupply

Over-production and lower exports have left rice farmers in Vietnam's Mekong Delta holding on to their stocks in the face of lower prices, analysts say.

Vietnam is the world's second-largest exporter of rice with Mekong Delta accounting for more than half of the country's production.

But surpluses, in the beginning of the wet season, and a shortage of places for drying wet rice are adding up to heavy potential losses, said Vo Tong Xuan, an international rice expert. He fears Vietnam will lose one million tons of the grain this season.

The country hopes to sell about six million tons in the international market in 2010, similar to last year's, but shipments fell in the first half. Between January and June, Vietnam exported more than three million tons, down to 8.76 percent versus last year.

Le Van Binh, director of the Mekong Delta Rice Research Institute, said that competition from other exporters leaves less room for Vietnamese grain abroad, while at home “we have an abundance of rice so the prices are relatively low.”

One kilogram of paddy or unmilled rice currently sells between Vietnam Dong (VND) 3,200 and 3,300 (about US \$ 0.18 or roughly P 8.40). That is a drop from VND4,000 to 4,200 last year.

To help farmers, the government has announced loans to local businesses for buying up to one million tons of rice. (*Agroviet*)

## Int'l law fails to protect coral reefs, tropical fish

International law has failed to protect coral reefs and tropical fish from being decimated by a growing collectors market, but U.S. reforms can lead the way towards making the trade more responsible, ecologically sustainable and humane.

Using data from the United Nation's conservation monitoring program, the authors say trade in coral and coral reef species is substantial and growing, removing 30 million fish and 1.5 million live stony corals a year. The aquarium industry alone targets some 1,500 species of reef fishes. Many die in transit, leading collectors to gather even more animals to compensate for their losses.

The result is some species have gone “virtually extinct. The Banggai cardinalfish, which is unique to a remote Indonesian archipelago, has had its

numbers reduced and even eliminated through much of its range after it became a popular aquarium fish in the late 1990s.

With U.S. buyers accounting for more than half the trade in live coral, reef fish and invertebrates, the authors recommend leveraging U.S. market power to reduce the trade's environmental effects. They suggest laws to protect a wider variety of species, better enforcement that includes tracking a product's chain of custody, and reforms in source countries. They also recommend changes in marketing to promote sales of species certified as being humane and sustainable.

The U.S. should assume its role as an international leader in coral reef conservation and take steps to reform the international trade it drives. (*ScienceDaily*)

## DA-MRDP offers new local chiefs investment options to reduce poverty

The Department of Agriculture, through the Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP), has prepared a package of development investments for its flagship program on poverty alleviation, a component of the second phase of the said project for Southern Philippines.

In line with this, the DA-MRDP has conducted a series of briefings to attract investments as an option for the new local government chief executives to hinge their development plans.

“The program is a good option for the newly installed LCEs (local chief executives),” program director Lealyn Ramos said, “as it is a holistic approach to development, which is designed to open up economic opportunities for rural communities and also to capitalize on the rich natural resources on their respective localities.”

The MRDP is a long-term alleviation program funded jointly by the national government, the local government units, and a loan portfolio from the World Bank. The program has four major components, namely: Rural Infrastructure (RI), Natural Resource Management (NRM) and Investment for Governance reform (IGR).

The Rural Infra component focuses on the relevant and much needed infrastructure seen to improve productivity and farmers’ incomes like irrigation, farm-to-market roads and post-harvest facilities.

The CFAD focuses on peoples’ organizations, empowering these groups so they will develop the initiative to venture into agri-based enterprises. While the NRM implements environmental conservation projects, the IGR is geared toward reinforcing the mandates of the Local Government Code.

Currently, the local government executives of the provinces of North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and South Cotabato are attending the orientation



*The DA regional information officers (RIOs) held their recent 3rd quarter meeting, July 28-30, in Dipolog City, hosted by DA-RFU 9, where they shared the initial pronouncements and directives of Sec. Proceso J. Alcala, and discussed other major initiatives such as: rice and commercial crops production program; national farmers’ registry system; automated import permit application, processing, approval and issuance; tariff exemption on agri equipment and machineries and other related services; agri-fishery market info system and Nokia data gathering solution. Shown above (1st row, from left) are: RIOs Melba Wee of DA9, Dhigs Abdullah (ARMM), Mabelle Ilan (DA5, representing Emily Bordado), Jun Espiritu (DA3), Tecs Vidal (DA11), Claire San Felipe (DA4B), Flor Cablar (DA-PMED), Joy Mogado (DA-ITCAF), Nelly Ylanan (DA12), Francis Rosaroso (DA8), and Juvy Gaton (DA6). Others (2nd row, from left) are: Hector Tabbun (DA2, representing Edito Banares), Gloria Parong (DA1), DA-AFIS OIC-Director Noel Reyes, Grace Sta. Elena (DA10), Mar Samar (DA-AMAS), Francis Lopez (InterCommerce Network), Grace Dagala (DA7), and Becky Atega (DA-CARAGA). National rice program director Dr. Frisco Malabanan also served as a resource person during the meeting. RIOs Robert Domoguen (DA-CAR) and Pat Bulanhagui (DA4A) were not able to attend.*

course of the program; likewise the other regions across Mindanao shall have similar activities in the ensuing weeks. “What we desire is for LCEs to avail of the whole investment package to maximize its impact on the community,” Ramos said. Further, she said, “By putting infrastructure on production areas or where CFAD projects are implemented, plus the instituting governance reform to better improve collection of revenues, it won’t be long for the communities to see the social and economic impact of the program.”

As proof of the positive effect of such program, Mr. Romy Zaragoza, chairman of the Sultan Kudarat provincial planning and development office said, “We have seen how the program has improved many rural people’s lives and we now fully understand and appreciate its procedures.

That’s why we in the province help promote it among the

towns in our area.

This year, the MRDP is set to achieve P2 billion worth of agricultural infra, which will benefit 151 towns that will implement various livelihood projects.

It has also earmarked P42 million for environmental conservation projects.

The five-year phase II program, which kicked-off in May 2007, has a total of 225 enrolled municipalities in six regions of Mindanao.

### **Fisheries sector ... (from p5)**

plainants because they were not given a chance to file a comment to the petition for review filed by the respondents.

Samiento said if the resolution is not withdrawn, it would create serious implications, since the respondents claimed they were in Chinese territorial waters, when it was clearly established and, in fact, admitted by them that they were in coordinates that were only 50 miles west of Balabac, Palawan. (DA-BFAR)

### **DOJ, NBI ... (from p1)**

and methods and procedures of selling the stocks.

Among specific concerns that will be investigated are overstocked warehouses, the P177-billion debt as of June 30, spoilage of imported rice, allegations of irregularities and possibility of corruption, and smuggling.

Banayo requested Jesus Posadas--commodities trading expert and former San Miguel Corp. vice president for purchasing--to head the investigation.

Meanwhile, the NFA has asked an importer (Vietnam Southern Food Corp.) to defer delivery until September because there are no available warehouse space.

“The lack of warehouses is proof of oversupply,” he said.

Banayo added that it will be the last batch of rice to be imported for the year.

The NFA rice inventory is good for 56 days, while the households and private sector’s supply are good for 25 and 30 days, respectively.

# BSWM begins mapping

## La Niña areas

The DA's Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) has started mapping upland and lowland farms vulnerable to flooding and landslides in a bid to reduce the impact of the onslaught of La Niña.

La Niña causes prolonged heavy rains due to the cooling of sea surface temperatures.

The Philippine weather bureau (PAGASA) has already issued an advisory, saying there is an increasing probability of La Niña occurrence beginning the third quarter that may result to above normal rainfall, especially in the eastern parts of the country.

La Niña conditions also favor tropical cyclone formation over the Western Pacific that enters the Philippines.

Residents in low-lying areas and those near mountain slopes are advised to take precautionary measures against

possible flash floods and landslides during heavy rains.

BSWM Executive Director Dr. Silvino Q. Tejada said they have lined up activities to mitigate the adverse effects of La Niña.

These measures would be centered on coastal provinces with moderate and severe flooding as well as mountainous and upland or hilly areas.

BSWM has already identified and mapped areas that are prone to flooding and vulnerable to erosion and landslides.

The maps will serve as tool to help the DA and local government units implement plans to prevent damage to lives and property, and crop losses in agriculture and fisheries.

Tejada said the BSWM proposes to construct 990 small farm reservoirs (SFRs), totaling P61 million, for harvesting rainwater and surface runoff.



**DA Chief thanks UN for continued support.** On behalf of President Benigno Aquino III and Filipino farmers and fisherfolk, Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala (right) extends his gratitude to officials of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Development Program (UNDP) for their continued technical and financial support through the years in implementing food production and rural development programs in the country. The UN officials are (from right): Hiroyuki Konuma, FAO assistant director-general and regional representative for Asia and the Pacific; Kazuyuki Tsurumi, FAO representative in the Philippines; and Dr. Jacqueline Badcock, UN resident coordinator and UNDP representative in the Philippines.

These structures could minimize soil erosion and flood during the wet season.

The water stored in SFRs can be used for irrigation. (Manila Bulletin)

### **Past rice imports padded**

### **Blamed for NFA's debt to P171 B**

The Arroyo administration used "bloated" rice-consumption statistics to justify its rice importations during the last nine years, Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala said.

The Philippines is now regarded as the world's top rice importer. This year, it is importing some 2.4 million metric tons of rice to plug a production shortfall and beef up the stocks of the National Food Authority (NFA), an agency under the Department of Agriculture.

Before Alcala was appointed Agriculture secretary, the department had revealed that the country's rice self-sufficiency was 81 percent.

He said that he believed the country would not have imported that much rice had the Arroyo administration not used "bloated" statistics on rice consumption.

Alcala said that the bloated rice-consumption statistics resulted in the huge P171-billion debt of the NFA this year, up from just P28 billion in 2003.

"I just don't know if it's done intentionally or not. But I think that the figure they used for

the multiplier is too much," he noted, referring to the 128 kilos capita consumption provided by the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS).

Alcala said that he had commissioned an independent survey company to study why the NFA's debt load increased more than six times in as many years.

"Heads will roll if they find any irregularities in the figures," he warned.

Alcala, however, said that he was giving the BAS the benefit of the doubt.

Meanwhile, he assured that there would be a continuing decline in rice importations in the next two years, while expressing hope that the country would be self-sufficient in the staple by 2013 by producing at least 21.6 metric tons of rice that year.

"The price of rice shoots up because we import rice at very high prices," he said, referring to the country's helplessness when importing rice from countries that have a surplus production of the staple. (Manila Times)

## BAI celebrates FMD-free status

The DA's Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) celebrated on July 28, 2010 the recognition of Zones 1 and 3 of Luzon as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) free zones where vaccination is not practiced.

The zones were recognized by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) on May 25, 2010, during the World Assembly of Delegates of the OIE.

Zone 1 covers north Luzon, particularly the Cordillera Administrative Region, Cagayan Valley (Region 2), and the province of Aurora in Region 3 and Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur and La Union in Region 1.

Zone 2 or mid-Luzon covers Region 3 except Aurora province, Region 4-A, National Capital Region, and Pangasinan in Region 1.

Zone 3 or south Luzon includes Regions 4-B and 5.

The OIE is expected to act on the pending application of the Philippines to declare Zone 2 as FMD-free.

Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala was represented by Assistant Secretary Salvador Salacup during the affair held at Great Eastern Hotel, in Quezon City.

Among those present were BAI Director Efren Nuestro, AusAID Counsellor Andrew Egan, FAO Representative in the Philippines Mr. Kazuyuki Tsurumi, and OIE Sub-Commission President for FMD in South East Asia, Dr. Gardner Murray.

Partner agencies, stakeholder groups and associations, and counterparts in the local government units were also present during the occasion.

Nuestro said the DA-BAI will continue to undertake initiatives to address the challenges of emerging and re-emerging diseases, while maintaining efficient animal production systems.

"Although the industry still has a lot of work to do, we are very grateful for this opportunity to express our appreciation to everyone who has been a part of the government's FMD Eradication Program," Nuestro said.

He said the country's FMD-free status will scale-up the DA-BAI's animal health programs and strengthen border control measures to prevent the entry of dreaded animal diseases.

With the opportunity lent by disease freedom in the country, the Philippines will soon be engaged in trade with other neighboring countries.

FMD is endemic in South East Asia.

The Philippines, parts of Malaysia, and Indonesia have been recognized by the OIE as FMD-free areas, entitling them to trade with countries with similar freedom status or with lower status.

In the past 15 years, the FMD eradication program activities have contributed to establishing disease freedom throughout the country, and has re-stabilized the production of swine.