

## PGMA delivers on 'BEAT THE ODDS' targets

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has successfully delivered on the 'BEAT THE ODDS' targets during her nine-year watch, creating more than 4.4 million jobs, developing into productive use 1.8 million hectares of formerly idle lands, and stabilizing the supply and prices of basic commodities for the benefit of low-income consumers.

Said accomplishments were reported by Agriculture Secretary Bernie G. Fondevilla, noting that from 2001 to 2004, the DA was able to generate 1.8 million jobs and another 2.61 million from 2005 to 2009, in compliance with President Arroyo's 'Beat the Odds'

agenda and the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP).

'Beat the Odds' stands for **B**alanced budget, **E**ducation for all; **A**utomated elections; **T**ransportation; **T**ermination of hostilities with the NPA and MILF; **H**ealing the wounds of EDSA; **E**lectricity and water for the whole country; **O**pportunities for 10 million jobs; **D**econgest Metro Manila; and **D**evelopment of Subic and Clark.

Fondevilla said that on creating opportunities for 10 million jobs and decongesting Metro Manila, the DA was able

(Pls turn to p11)

## Entire RP may soon be FMD-free

With only one area in Luzon remaining, the Philippines has inched closer to being declared entirely free of the dreaded Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), as the Department of Agriculture in May 2010 received a certification from

the Paris-based *Office Internationale des Epizooties* (OIE) or World Organization for Animal Health that declares Zones 1 and 3 in Luzon as FMD-free without vaccination.

Agriculture Secretary Bernie G. Fondevilla received the certificate during the 78th General Session of the World Assembly of OIE Delegates in Paris, May 23 to 28, 2010.

The certificate was issued on May 27 and signed by OIE Director General Bernard Vallat and its President Carlos A. Correa Messuti.

Secretary Fondevilla was accompanied by Assistant Director Victor C. Atienza of the DA's Bureau of Animal Industry (DA-BAI) and head of the national FMD task force; and Dr. Reildrin G. Morales, deputy head and national coordinator of the national FMD task force.

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 prov

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President Arroyo hands over a Presidential Citation to Agriculture Secretary Bernie G. Fondevilla on behalf of the Department of Agriculture for successfully implementing poverty alleviation programs that provided the poor and marginalized sectors of society, including small farmers and fisherfolk, and greater access to basic services. Looking on are DA Undersecretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat (right) and Sarangani fisherfolk Romulo Idan-Santos.

## DA cited for successful anti-poverty program

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo awarded a presidential citation to the Department of Agriculture and six other government agencies for successfully implementing poverty alleviation programs and providing millions of poor and marginal Filipinos nationwide greater access to basic services.

Agriculture Secretary Bernie G. Fondevilla and Undersecretary Berna Romulo Puyat received the DA's citation from President Arroyo at Malacañang Ceremonial Hall, June 2, 2010.

The DA is cited for anti-poverty programs under the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (RA 8435).

These include the construction of 6,305 kilometers of farm-to-market-roads; generation of 23,390 hectares of new irrigated areas; rehabilitation and restoration of old irrigation systems, providing water to 415,409 hectares;

and distribution of 41.4 million kilos of organic fertilizers and 3.56 million fertilizer discount coupons, benefiting 1.78 million farmers.

The DA also provided 2.23 million farmers subsidized hybrid and certified seeds for a total of 3.2 million hectares; distributed 85,478 head of various farm animals, and 452 million fingerlings and four million pieces of broodstock; installed 2,016 flatbed dryers nationwide that helped farmers minimize post-harvest losses and released P4.9 billion worth of loans to 141,916 farmers and fisherfolk, which increased their capacity to invest more in agribusiness.

The other awardees were the departments of social welfare and development (DSWD), health (DOH), trade and industry (DTI), National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth). (OPS)

## DA turns 112

With the theme, 'Sapat na Pagkain ang Tunay na Kalayaan,' the Department of Agriculture celebrated its 112th anniversary, June 23, 2010, in simple ceremonies led by Secretary Bernie G. Fondevilla.

The day-long activities kicked off with the unveiling of new and refurbished DA bronze markers and photo exhibit of agriculture secretaries, from 1898 to the present, at the DA lobby.

Thereafter, DA officials, employees and guests attended a thanksgiving mass in honor of San Isidro Labrador, patron saint of peasants, at the DA-BSWM convention hall.

A simple program followed,

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## FIELDS: Matibay na haligi ng agrikultura

Maligayang pagbati sa mga opisyal at kawani ng Kagawaran ng Pagsasaka sa pagdiriwang ng ika-112 taon ng paglilingkod.

Sa pagsisimula ng aking panunungkulan bilang Pangulo nuong 2001, may sapat na tayong mga batas at programa para mapaunlad ang sektor ng agrikultura.

Kaya naman, ang naging malaking hamon ay kung paano paano pagaganahin ang mga regulasyon na ito, nang maging sapat ang ating pagkain at umunlad ang mga magsasaka at mangingisda.

Sinikap nating baguhin ang kaisipan sa paglalagay ng kapital sa agrikultura.

Mula sa pagbibigay tulong pinansiyal sa mga magsasaka tuwing panahon ng taniman, mas pinili nating maglaan ng pondo sa imprastruktura, para masiguro ang pagsulong ng sektor di lang sa isang taniman, kundi sa matagal na panahon. Ito ang layunin ng ating programang FIELDS.

Kasama ang DA at sa pakikipagtutulongan sa mga lokal na pamahalaan at pribadong sektor, naisusulong natin ang layon na pambansang kasapatan sa pagkain at pagiging malaya sa pag-aangkat.

Kaya halos dinoble ang pondo ng Kagawaran na umabot sa P21 bilyon kada taon mula sa P11 bilyon noong panahon ni Pangulong Ramos at P17 bilyon sa ilalim ni Pangulong Estrada.

Nagbigay daan ang pondong ito sa dagdag na lupang natubigan (1.6 milyong hektarya), pautang para sa magsasaka (P465 bilyon) at pagsasagawa ng kinakailangang pagsasanay



(23,000 trainings).


Bukod dito, naramdaman ng mga magsasaka ang asenso. Higit sa isang milyong hektarya ang naibukas at naihanda para sa agribusiness mula 2005 hanggang 2009, nagbunsod para magkaroon ng higit dalawa at kalahating milyong (2.5 milyong) dagdag na trabaho.

Ginawan din ng paraan na maibaba ang gastusin sa pagsasaka. Higit sa labingwalong libong kilometro (18,000) ng farm-to-market roads at dagdag na cold chain systems, cold freezers ang naibigay. Nakapagpatayo ng higit walumpung (80) Bagsakan Centers at higit limang daang (500) Barangay Bagsakan.

Ang mga ito ang nagsilbing matibay na haligi ng agrikultura, na inaasahan nating mapapaunlad pa lalo ng mga susunod na pinuno ng bansa.

Nais nating ipagpatuloy nila ang pagtulong sa mga magsasaka at mangingisda, nang matupad na ang ating layon na sapat na pagkain sa mesa ng bawat pamilyang Pilipino.

**Muli, maligayang anibersaryo sa inyo, mabuhay kayong lahat!**

  
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO  
Pangulo  
Republika ng Pilipinas

## Ibayong pagtutulongan tungo sa patuloy na kaunlaran ng kanayunan

Ikalalulugod kong batiin ang mga kawani at iba pang pinuno ng Kagawaran ng Pagsasaka sa paggunita ng ating ika-112 anibersaryo, na may temang "*Sapat na Pagkain ang Tunay na Kalayaan.*"


Nang lagdaan ni Pangulong Emilio Aguinaldo ang proklamasyon na nagtatag sa *Department of Agriculture and*

*Manufacturing* noong ika-23 ng Hunyo 1898, nilikha niya ang isang institusyon na ang kahalagahan sa buhay ng bawat Pilipino ay tumitingkad sa paglipas ng panahon.

Dumanas man ang napakaraming pagbabago at pagsubok sa pagdaloy ng mga taon, ang Kagawaran ay nanatiling isang matatag na haligi ng pamahalaan na tunay na nagmamalasakit sa kapakanan ng mga maliliit na magsasaka, mangingisda at iba pang taga-nayon.

Kapuri-puri na mula noon, hanggang ngayon, ang kalayaan ng sambayanan mula sa kagutuman, karukhan at kawalang-pag-asa ang siyang matibay na pinaninindigan ng Kagawaran.

Sa katunayan, sa loob ng aking mahigit apat na taong paglilingkod sa Kagawaran--mula sa pagiging pinuno ng National Agricultural and Fishery Council hanggang sa pagiging Kalihim--ay

  
Atty. Bernie G. Fondevilla  
Kalihim  
Kagawaran ng Pagsasaka



nasaksihan ko ang inyong pagsisikap na matupad ang mga adhikaing sapat at abot-kayang pagkain at mas mataas na kita sa kanayunan.

Sa pagdiriwang na ito, panibagong kabanata ang magbubukas para sa lahat ng bumubuo at umaagapay sa Kagawaran, upang harapin ang mga suliranin at matinding hamon kagaya ng pabago-bagong klima ng mundo at tumitinding kumpetisyon sa pandaigdigang kalakalan.

Kaya, hangad ko ang ibayong pagtutulongan ng Kagawaran, mga magsasaka, mangingisda at iba pang sektor na katuwang ng pamahalaan sa pagsusulong ng tunay at malawakang kaunlaran at modernisasyon ng sektor ng agrikultura.

**Isang maligaya at makabuluhang anibersaryo sa ating lahat!**

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## DA steps up measures to mitigate La Niña on palay production

The Department of Agriculture is stepping up the implementation of measures to mitigate the impact of *La Niña* weather phenomenon on the farm sector in the second half of 2010 to ensure that its palay production program remains on track.

Agriculture Secretary Bernie Fondevilla said the preparations for *La Niña* include the repair and rehabilitation of irrigation systems and farm-to-market roads, as well as early positioning of seeds for farmers for the wet season main crop.

However, he is confident that even with the drought damage from *El Niño* and the possible effect from *La Niña* this year, the agriculture sector would likely manage to expand by 2.5 percent — barring any storm of “*Ondoy*-like” proportions.

Tropical storm *Ondoy*, which struck mostly Metro Manila and Central Luzon in September last year, brought a month’s worth of rain in just six hours, causing massive floods and billions of pesos worth of property damages and crop losses, particularly on the palay and corn subsectors.

“For *La Niña*, among the

preparations are the rehabilitation work on irrigation and farm-to-market roads,” Fondevilla said.

“After that, what’s important is the pre-positioning of seeds for our farmers because the rains have already started to come, and some of them are already preparing to plant,” he added.

The DA’s Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) rice program’s proposed budget of P12.3 billion would allow the implementation of various initiatives, including *La Niña* mitigation measures.

The budget is on top of what would be spent in the event that calamities strike the farm sector in the remaining months of the year, Fondevilla said. (*Phil. Star*)



*President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo holds a copy of ‘FIELDS of Glory,’ chronicling the major achievements in the area of food security and sufficiency during her nine-year tenure. Flanking her are Agriculture Secretary Bernie G. Fondevilla (2nd from left) and former DA chief and Congressman-elect Arthur C. Yap (extreme right), during the book launch at the DA-BSWM in Quezon City.*

## ‘FIELDS of Glory’ is off the press

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo received a copy of the ‘*Fields of Glory*’ coffee table book from Agriculture Secretary Bernie Fondevilla and former DA chief congressman-elect Arthur Yap, during its launch, June 18, 2010, in Quezon City.

The 246-page book chronicles the major accomplishments of her administration during the past nine years, focusing on food security and sufficiency, including success stories of farmers, fishers, and agri-entrepreneurs.

FIELDS is the acronym of government’s six major interventions to increase farm productivity and incomes: Fertilizer; Irrigation and Infrastructure; Education and Extension Services; Loans and Credit; Dryers and other Postharvest Facilities; and Seeds.

During the book launch, beneficiaries and stakeholders personally narrated their respective stories of triumph made possible thru the intervention and support of the Arroyo government, particularly the DA and its regional field offices, bureaus and attached agencies.

Under the fertilizer component, Ronello Bartasan of Gen. Natividad, Nueva Ecija, said he and fellow farmers are now producing their own organic fertilizer which they use, enabling them to raise and harvest chemi-

cal-free rice and other crops produce.

Bartasan is an officer of the National Farm Center, one of the agri-socio projects of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines-National Secretariat for Social Action.

Under the irrigation component, Ariel Dolores of Guimba, Nueva Ecija, said he and fellow farmers were able to trim their production costs, thanks to FIELDS.

With their properly maintained irrigation system, Guimba rice farmers no longer spend much for fuel for their irrigation pumps. Further, they are now able to optimize farm inputs such fertilizers.

Another farmer, Efraim Acacio, from Sta. Ana, Cagayan, said he was hesitant at first to undergo farmers’ training. He narrated how he got free technical assistance provided by the DA thru local agricultural extension workers. With new technologies, he was able to increase his farm yield and income.

Judy Aruta, loan-beneficiary from Valencia City, Bukidnon, said the easy-to-pay credit provided by government financial institutions to small farmers has helped him expand his farm. He was also able to provide for his family’s basic needs, send his children to school, and maintain

enough savings for his family’s future use.

Miller Bicaldo boasted of the benefits of dryers and postharvest facilities in minimizing losses after harvest. He was able to store good quality palay and earn more because of said facilities.

Another farmer from Nueva Ecija, Gelises Ladores, recalled how he was able to harvest more than 100 cavans of palay from his 1.5-hectare farm with the use of submergence-tolerant rice seeds developed by the DA’s Philippine Rice Research Institute. While Ladores’ farm is flood-prone, now he can make it productive.

Other testimonials were given by: Jose Maria Zabaleta, Pres. and CEO of Bronzo Oak Clean Energy, who spoke on renewable energy, citing the favorable impact of government’s biofuels program; and outstanding Gawad Saka sugarcane farmer Preciosa Maturan, who lauded the DA’s program for sustaining the productivity and incomes of sugarcane farmers.

Also present at the book launch were other successful farmers: Edwin Paraluman of South Cotabato, for biotechnology; Ramil Barte of Sariaya, Quezon, for market linkage; and Lorenzo Plotado of Sta. Cruz, Camarines Sur, for fertilizer. (*Adora Rodriguez, DA Info Service*)

### ‘There’s enough sugar’

The country has enough sugar with the additional supply of 150,000 metric tons of imports, until the start of the milling season in November.

Administrator Bernardo Trebol of the DA-Sugar Regulatory Administration said with the arrival of imported sugar in July, “there is no justifiable reason for the increase in prices of sugar”.

He explained that although production for this crop year is only 1.97 million metric tons (MT), down by 6 percent from previous crop year, there are still about 600,000 MT (12 million 50-kilogram bags) available, as of June 2010, which is more than enough to cover the country’s domestic requirements for three to four months. (*DA-SRA*)

# DA-IRRI hi-tech project to boost palay yields

With the use of mobile phones or internet, farmers and agricultural extension workers anywhere in the country, and anytime of the day, would know what kind, type and amount of fertilizers they need to apply to their rice crop.

This will be made possible through a one-year project between the Department of Agriculture and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), called 'Electronic Extension Services for Agricultural Extension Workers on Proper Nutrient Management for Rice in the Philippines.'

Through this initiative, extension workers and farmers will have access to technical information on proper nutrient management for palay in only 15 minutes through the use of an information technology-based resource support tool developed by IRRI, called 'NMRice' or Nutrient Management for Rice.

Agriculture Secretary Bernie Fondevilla and IRRI Director General Robert Zeigler recently forged an agreement to implement the project that will also tap the exist-

ing *Farmers' Contact Center* (FCC) managed by the DA's Agricultural Training Institute (ATI).

The IRRI has developed the *NMRice* or fertilizer management guidelines and recommendations based on data gathered from various rice-growing Philippine provinces, rice varieties, production practices, and yields.

Fondevilla said the project would be useful in improving palay production as farmers would know what kind and how much fertilizers they need to apply, depending on type of soil, location and season.

The system is user-friendly, as farmers and extension workers will only have to answer 10 to 15 simple questions either by clicking on a computer or pressing numbers on a cellular or landline phone.

Their request will be answered within 15 minutes.

For his part, ATI Director Saliot said the IRRI will provide the data on improved production practices, while the DA will promote the *NMRice* system and put in place the mechanism for delivering the information to farmers.

The DA, through the ATI, will release P1.8 million to the IRRI to carry out the project.

For this project, the DA and IRRI will tap the services of Globe



**Agriculture Secretary Bernie Fondevilla (left) and International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) director-general Robert Zeigler sign a memorandum of agreement on 'Electronic Extension Services for Agricultural Extension Workers on Proper Nutrient Management for Rice in the Philippines,' at IRRI, Los Banos, Laguna. Through the project, extension workers and farmers will get timely and relevant information on the proper nutrient management for paddy rice or palay through an IRRI-developed IT-based system. Looking on are DA-Agricultural Training Institute director Asterio P. Saliot and IRRI principal scientist Dr. Roland J. Buresh.**

Telecom to provide information to farmers through Interactive Voice Response via a four-digit hotline number which will be announced soon.

The DA through ATI has set up the FCC to allow farmers to talk extensively with the DA experts or LGU agricultural technicians to get guidance and information on various concerns.

Farmers don't have to worry about high prices on call rates when contacting the FCC, as the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT) has agreed to set a flat rate of only P7 per call.

Both the *NMRice* and FCC projects are part of the extension component of the DA's *FIELD*S program.

Through the FCC, farmers, fishers, and the general public, can ask anything on agriculture, fisheries and related issues and concerns, such as current prices of commodities, schedule of irrigation water releases, marketing of farm produce, and control measures for crop pests and animal diseases.

The FCC may be accessed through the following hotlines:

- **1-800-10-982AGRI (or 1-800-10-982-2474)** for provincial tollfree calls using PLDT lines;
- **982AGRI (or 982-2474)** for calls within Metro Manila;
- **391DA (or 391-32)** for text messages using Smart and Talk & Text;
- **0920-946AGRI (0920-946-2474)** for mobile calls and text messages using Globe, TM and Sun Cellular;
- **info@e-extension.gov.ph** for inquiries through email;
- **www.eextension.gov.ph** and **www.ati.da.gov.ph** for online discussion fora and instant messaging.

## NAFC leads dialogues on water concerns

The DA's National Agricultural and Fishery Council (NAFC) successfully conducted an area-wide conference in Cagayan de Oro City, covering northern Mindanao, entitled "Charting Our Water Future: A Multi-Stakeholder Policy and Program Dialogue."

It was the first of the scheduled six-leg regional series, in partnership with two other DA agencies (Bureau of Soils and Water Management, and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources), National Water Resources Board, National Anti-Poverty Commission, and SN|Aboitiz Power Group.

The dialogues aim to develop a plan of action to achieve water security for the agriculture and fisheries sector, and encourage stakeholders to adapt integrated water resources management practices such as water use efficiency, demand management and watershed protection. (DA-NAFC)

## PGMA creates Bamboo Council

The pliant bamboo, often used to symbolize the resiliency of Filipinos because of its ability to adjust and easily recover from all kinds of stress and pressures, is now given due recognition and support it deserves with the creation of the Philippine Bamboo Industry Development Council (PBIDC) by President Arroyo thru Executive Order No. 879, signed on May 14, 2010.

The PBIDC is tasked to promote the sustained development of the country's bamboo industry.

EO 879 directs the Department of Education to use bamboo for at least 25 percent of the desk and other furniture requirements of public elementary and secondary schools. It likewise instructs government facilities to prioritize the use of bamboo in furniture, fixtures and other construction requirements.

The PBIDC shall be composed of the secretaries of the departments of agriculture, trade and industry, environment and natural resources, education, science and technology, and labor, chairperson of the League of the Municipalities of the Phils., two representatives from NGOs, and a representative each from two bamboo industry associations.

The DA shall identify idle and marginal areas suitable for bamboo plantations, without sacrificing areas used for food production.

It will also assist in establishing bamboo nurseries and propagation of bamboo shoots.

EO 879 sets an initial fund of P20M for the operations of PBIDC, which shall be provided by the Department of Budget and Management. (Emily B. Bordado, DA-RFU5 Info Div.)

## New DA attached agency

# Rubber research institute created

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo recently signed Republic Act No. 10089, creating the Philippine Rubber Research Institute (PRRI), which will be under the control and supervision of the Department of Agriculture.

Based at the Mindanao State University in Naga, Zamboanga Sibugay, PRRI is mandated to initiate and administer research and development (R&D) programs to increase the productivity and improve the quality of local rubber to benefit small producers and processors.

The agency is also tasked to develop and propagate quality rubber tree seedlings, and promote the planting, maintenance, and proper use of rubber trees as source of latex and finished products.

It should also provide training and capability building programs to rubber producers, processors and cooperatives, and help in the establishment of barangay-based enterprises to generate livelihood opportunities.

The Institute is also mandated to promote cooperative development among smallholders and initiate R&D projects to address technology and policy gaps. It shall ensure production standards to meet domestic and global market demands.

Moreover, the PRRI is tasked to establish strong linkages with other research institutions and government agencies, and industry stakeholders in formulating strategies to jump-start the development growth of the country's rubber industry.

## Dryland crops from India show promising results in RP

Dry-tolerant but high-yielding varieties of peanut, pigeonpea, and chickpea, from India are performing well in the Philippines.

The DA's Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) said the varieties were developed by the International Crop Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), in Andhra Pradesh, India.

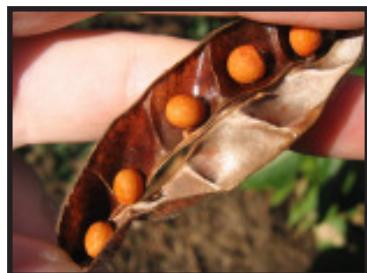
BAR Director Nicomedes Eleazar said the finding was the

result of a one-year "Field Testing of ICRISAT Legume Varieties and Technologies in Selected Regions of the Philippines."

The project tested several varieties of peanut, pigeonpea (*kadyos*), and chickpea (*garbanzos*) for their suitability under local conditions in seven pilot regions, namely: Regions 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

Package of technologies (POT) for growing these crops are also being developed to ensure high yield under different Philippine climate types.

With the introduction of the



*At left are dried chickpea or garbanzos, and below are standing crop of pigeonpea or kadyos. (DA-BAR photos)*



*Agriculture Secretary Bernie Fondevilla hands over to Education Secretary Mona Valisno initial sets of posters on six vegetables at the DepEd office, in Pasig City. Totaling 45,000 pieces, the posters--on munggo, dahon ng gabi, malunggay, saluyot, kangkong and ampalaya--were funded by the DA-Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) under its Gulayan sa Paaralan program and will be distributed to public schools nationwide. Looking on (from left) are BPI planning and management chief Rhoda Grace Pintuan, BPI Dir. Larry Lacson, DepEd-Health and Nutrition Center OIC Thelma Navarres and OIC-assistant Dir. Dr. Maria Corazon Dumlaog.*

new crops, the project aims to develop alternative crops that will help Filipino farmers cope with increasing dry spell events in the country and address food inadequacy in the rural areas.

Dir. Eleazar said several ICRISAT varieties introduced in the country for field testing have already shown promising results and have been identified for their potential breeding lines.

These breeding lines, if found stable in producing high yield in the succeeding yield trials, could be included in the national screening preliminary to their introduction to farmers nationwide.

The adaptability yield trial on peanut showed that *ICGV 00350* and *ICGV 99046* peanut lines were consistent high-yielders among the four ICRISAT entries evaluated.

Noticeably, these two promising selections significantly out-yielded most of the national and local check varieties (NSIC Pn 11, NSIC Pn 12, NSIC Pn 14, and NSIC Pn 15) in almost all the test stations.

The two promising lines will be considered for further yield and adaptability test on-station and on-farm to obtain more reliable results for inclusion as test entries under National Cooperative Test (NCT) in the Philippines.

In the adaptability trial for pigeonpea, it was found that four genotypes (ICPL 88034, ICPL 88039, ICPL 81 and ICPL 161)

bore flowers and developed into pods in all locations, where the lines were tested.

These genotypes produced a seed yield of 0.87-1.28 t/ha.

Although ICP 7035, ICPL 87091, ICPL 87051 and ICPL 87119 did not perform well in the Visayas, these genotypes performed better in Regions 5, 9 and 10.

Results of the adaptability yield trials for chickpea showed very encouraging results and with bright future for chickpea production, particularly in trials conducted in Northern Mindanao.

Initial results revealed similar performance of chickpea with those in Benguet Province and noted that the agro-climatic condition is ideal for chickpea production.

The Philippines imports about 735 tons of chickpea per year (valued at US\$ 442T or P20M) to meet local demand for garbanzos.

Dr. William D. Dar, director general of ICRISAT and former DA secretary, is hopeful about this project endeavor with BAR.

"We hope that through this project, we will be able to identify varieties for peanut, chickpea, and pigeonpea that we could recommend to our farmers in the drier areas of the country so they could get stable yields and higher incomes," he said. (*Rita T. dela Cruz, DA-BAR*)

DA-BPI's Malunggay Lugaw and Ice Cream tasting for schoolchildren



Unveiling of the DA marker



# Department of Agriculture 112th Anniversary Pictorials



Ribbon-cutting of the "DA Then and Now" exhibit, featuring former Secretaries and their respective accomplishments.



Wine tasting and flairtending showcasing tropical wines



Sapat na Pagkain ang Tunay na Kalayaan

Awarding of Top Sales Performers of DA Agribusiness Exports Showroom



Renewal of Pledge on DA's Mission/Vision



Launch of AFMIS and Nokia Mobile Data Gathering Solutions

Launch of Online Import Application, Processing and Approval of Permit



Awarding of loyalty plaques to DA family employees (20-45 yrs.)



Recognition of DA-OSEC blood donors



Presentation of OIE Certificate to the Philippines declaring parts of Luzon as FMD-free

112th

DA Anniversary

## Mariculture park to rise in Cagayan

The DA's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) will establish a mariculture park in Barangay Racat, Sta. Ana, Cagayan.

The agency and the DA's National Fisheries Research and Development Institute have both found the area feasible to set up said project.

Mariculture parks are marine-based industrial estate subdivided into sections or lots for various marine enterprises with communal storm-resistant mooring system and boundary markers.

DA-BFAR national director Malcolm Sarmiento said the establishment of mariculture parks is an "important adaptation strategy to cushion the impending adverse and widespread effect of climate change."

These industrial estates in the sea are BFAR's intervention to wean fishermen away from capture fisheries and turn them from being fish hunters to fishfarmers.

DA-BFAR Region 2 Director Jovita Ayson said that they have already completed the installation of a fish cage (10 m x 10 m x 5 m) as a test unit to confirm the suitability of the proposed mariculture site.

Full operation of the mariculture park will commence after site validation.

The initial techno-demo will use the 'rope frame fish cage' method developed by BFAR Region 1, as it is cheaper and more sturdy compared to GI pipe frame cages.

Around 300 hectares have been assessed and considered as potential site for Cagayan Valley's first ever mariculture project.

As of April 20, 2010, the DA-BFAR has set up a total of 54 mariculture zones throughout the country, with 9 more set for launching. These are located in 12 regions, namely: 1, 3, 4A, 4B, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, and ARMM.

The DA-BFAR through its "rent-a-cage" program makes available 1 fish cage (10m x 10m x 5 meters) plus inputs (fingerlings and feeds) for each qualified municipal fisherfolk association beneficiaries.

The fish cage is amortized for two years, while the inputs are payable after every harvest. One cage could earn a net income of P90,000 a year.

Small investors, on one hand, are offered two mooring points that can hold a cage with maximum surface dimension of 20 meters x 20 meters.

Big players, on the other hand, should shoulder all the costs from the installation of the moors and cages to operation of fish cages. DA-BFAR will provide technical assistance.

Potential species for culture in mariculture parks are bangus, grouper (lapu-lapu), abalone, pomfret (pompano), siganid (malaga), sea bass (apahap), snapper (mangagat), mud crab, seaweeds, sea horse, mussel (tahong), lobster, oyster (talaba), giant clam, sea urchin, sergeant fish (tasi), caranx (talakitok), saline tilapia, and blister pearl production.

Apart from fish cage operation, investors in a mariculture zone could also engage in ancillary industries like fish hatchery and nursery, transport services, processing plant, fabrication of cages and other equipment, postharvest facilities, feed mills, and aqua-tourism.

According to business models prepared by BFAR at 2007 prices, a 5m x 5m x 5m bamboo frame cage requires a total investment of P447,060 for three croppings, with net income projected at P211,917 for a return of investment (ROI) of 49 percent.

The bamboo frame could last two years, while the net cage is good for five years.

A set of seven units of GI pipe fish cages, on the other hand, requires a P2.1-million investment, and input costs of P7.95 million for three croppings. Fish production is estimated at 157,500 kilograms of bangus, with net income at P4.12 million and ROI of 48 percent. GI pipe cages could last for 10 years. (Manila Bulletin)



DA Region 3 Director Redentor S. Gatus (2nd from left) and DA-HVCC National Program Coordinator Rene Rafael Espino (3rd from left) pose with Ricardo Buenaventura (middle), Central Luzon's outstanding hybrid rice farmer. Flanking them (from left) are DA-RFU3 RTD Eduardo Gonzales, Butil Party-list Representative Agapito Guanlao, DA-RFU3 RTD Rolando Imperial and DA-BFAR 3 Dir. Remedios Ongtango.

## DA-RFU3 conducts week-long agri-aqua trade fair

The Department of Agriculture Regional Field Unit 3 (DA-RFU 3) has successfully conducted a week-long Agri-Aqua Trade Fair celebration, with the theme *Isang Linggong Pagdiriwang Bago ang Araw ng Kalayaan*, from June 7 to 11, 2010, in San Fernando, Pampanga.

DA-RFU 3 Regional Director Redentor S. Gatus led the opening of the trade fair, which showcased various products from the seven provinces of the region, including fruits and vegetables, native handicrafts, delicacies,

beverages, wines and herbal supplements, among others.

Information booths and exhibits from the different DA attached agencies were also set in place.

Livelihood and entrepreneurial lectures and demonstrations were also conducted.

Highlighting the event was the awarding ceremony for the 2009-2010 Regional Gawad Saka winners who have achieved outstanding feats, in terms of productivity and incomes, in their respective farming enterprises.

## DA Bicol celebrates 112th Anniversary

Department of Agriculture Region 5 officials and personnel celebrated the agency's 112<sup>th</sup> year of existence and 'World Environment Day' in simple but meaningful activities.

The celebration showcased photo exhibits on various programs of the department depicting the theme: "*Sapat na Pagkain ang Tunay na Kalayaan.*"

The FIELDS program, which is the centerpiece program of the Arroyo administration, was the main feature of the exhibits.

A short program attended by the employees was opened with a message by Director Edgar Madrid, RTD for Research and currently officer-in-charge. This was followed by a presentation of DA's history and milestone.

The second part of the day-long activity was the conduct of symposium on 1) Understanding the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (RA 9003 dis-

cussed by Engineer Nanette A. Tidon of Environment Management Bureau of the DENR regional office; and 2) Stress and Time Management discussed by Dr. Ma. Dolores Detera-Salud, Supervising Personnel Specialist from the Civil Service Commission.

On the same occasion, the "BIDA KA" program was launched, which aims to recognize significant role and contribution of an individual, group, or functional unit within the DA organization which have significant impact on the agency's performance and the agriculture sector.

The celebration was capped by physical fitness activities like dance, exercises and sports which gave opportunity to the employees to unwind, re-charge and flex their muscles and drive away stress. (Emily B. Bordado, DA-RFU 5 Info Div.)

## DA-MRDP2 invests on human resources

The most important aspect in the implementation of any program is human resources."

This was emphasized by Department of Agriculture Region 9 (Zamboanga Peninsula) Executive Director Oscar O. Parawan during the coordination meeting and workshop of the DA's Mindanao Rural Development Program 2 (MRDP2), June 17-18, 2010, in Pagadian City.

About 80 municipal mayors, provincial and municipal program development officers, municipal agriculturists, and provincial DA-MRDP2 component heads attended the two-day workshop.

Dir. Parawan said that capacitating both implementers and recipients is a primordial concern for project sustainability.

"This is on top of the machineries and facilities targeted for the beneficiaries.

"We are glad that one of MRDP's strategies is to enhance the skills of the primemovers and the beneficiaries, who will maintain and sustain the projects.

"Our strength is in the implementing units from the barangays to the municipal and provincial levels," Parawan noted.

MRDP2 is a poverty-alleviation program of the DA, jointly funded by the World Bank and the national and participating local governments.

It is currently implemented in 225 poor farming and fishing municipalities in 27 provinces in all six regions of Mindanao.

The program has four major components: rural infrastructure (RI), community fund for agricultural development (CFAD), natural resources management (NRM), and investment for government reforms and program administration (IPGPA).

It seeks to raise rural incomes and achieve food security through setting up of needed infrastructure, livelihood enterprises, and biodiversity conservation

projects.

Alongside poverty-reducing initiatives, the Program likewise reinforces the implementation of the Local Government Code and Agricultural Fisheries Modernization Act.

Parawan said DA-MRDP2 encourages participating LGUs to take advantage of the package of investments and projects that the program offers.

In turn, they should provide respective counterparts to bring a sense of ownership of the projects, and at the same promote the program's core values of participation and accountability.

For his part, Region 9 Technical Director Constancio G. Alama, who also serves as MRDP2 Regional Program Coordinator, said responsibilities of players should be understood for them to give their full commitment in project implementation.

"Participation and complementation of knowledge will give stakeholders a sense of belonging and ownership of task," he added.

In Zamboanga Peninsula, MRDP2 covers the cities of Zamboanga and Isabela, and 28 municipalities in the provinces of Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga Sibugay.

To date, under CFAD, Region 9 has 86 sub-projects amounting to P20 million, 66 of which were implemented during MRDP1.

For rural infrastructure, 13 farm-to-market road (FMR) projects are implemented, with a total length of 64.31 kilometers, worth P102.87 million.

Two FMRs are already completed: in Tigbao (1.9 km) and in Vincenzo Sagun (2.72 km), both in Zamboanga del Sur, amounting to P7.84 million. The rest are ongoing.

Construction of potable water system projects are also ongoing at V. Sagun and RT Lim in Zamboanga Sibugay, amounting to P38.2 million. (Melba B. Wee, DA9 Info Div.)

## DA7 hosts AFMIS national assessment

The DA's Agriculture and Fisheries Market Information System (AFMIS) shifts to a higher level with the integration of information technology (IT) in disseminating fast, reliable, accurate and relevant market data and information.

This was the main agenda during the recently concluded national AFMIS workshop, held June 1 to 4, 2010, in Bohol, attended by national representatives of concerned DA agencies, collectively known as Market Development Cluster (MDC).

The MDC is composed of the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS), Information Technology Center for Agriculture and Fisheries (ITCAF), Agriculture and Fisheries Information Service (AFIS), Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS) and the National Agricultural and Fishery Council (NAFC).

The MDC representatives met with their counterparts in the four focus regions: Cordillera, Central and Western Visayas, and Northern Mindanao.

Together, they reviewed and improved on the implementation of various AFMIS activities, and drew up plans for the launch of the DA-NOKIA Mobile Data Gathering Solution (MDGS) during the DA 112th anniversary celebration, June 23, 2010, at DA-BSWM convention

hall.

DA Assistant Secretary and BAS Dir. Romeo Recide introduced to the regional teams the MDGS, which aims to realize an efficient, integrated IT and cluster-based system of collecting, processing, packaging and analyzing market information for dissemination on a timely and regular basis to target clients through various media.

With MDGS, using a mobile phone (NOKIA E series) serving as the main tool for transmitting data, it hopes to enhance fast data transfers from remote locations and obtain greater data accuracy and security.

The DA has commissioned Woodfields Consultants, Inc. to provide technical guidance in the implementation of AFMIS.

The MDGS is primarily envisioned to facilitate an effective system for price monitoring, crop damage reporting and inventory during typhoons and calamities.

It can also be used for human health disease isolation, monitoring, and vaccination; ports security; disaster and natural calamity status data and monitoring; census gathering and elections monitoring. (Grace Dagala, DA-RFU7 Info Div.)

## DA8 sets up 18 greenhouses

"The best way and time to hedge against the adverse effect of climate change is to act on it before it happens."

Thus said Department of Agriculture Region 8 Executive Director Leo P. Cañeda, noting the DA has to date put up 18 greenhouses in Eastern Visayas, and 33 more are slated to be awarded to qualified LGUs.

With the use of greenhouses, he said the adverse effects of global warming are tempered, stabilizing production and minimizing crop losses.

Cañeda noted that greenhouse literally serves as a 'roofing' device to overcome weather changes and modifies natural environmental components, such as temperature, humidity, light and carbon dioxide to allow the plant to attain its optimum growth.

In putting up a greenhouse, DA shoulders P180,000 for the shelter, complete with drip irrigation. It also conducts among farmer-beneficiaries a 10-week training

on greenhouse management and vegetable production.

The participating farmers are identified by their respective LGUs, who subsequently manage and maintain the greenhouses.

As its counterpart, the LGU provides the project site, of at least 1,000 square meters, with a good water source. (DA-RFU 8 Info Div.)

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***"Agriculture, for an honorable and high-minded man," says Xenophon, "is the best of all occupations and arts by which men procure the means of living."***

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**- Amos Bronson Alcott**

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## El Niño has small impact on world rice output-FAO

A drought in parts of Asia is not having much of an impact on the rice crop, and world rice trade should be in balance soon, a senior official from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said.

Output this year is expected to be 707 million tonnes of paddy, slightly down from a forecast of 710 million tonnes made in April, Hiroyuki Konuma, the FAO regional representative for Asia and the Pacific, told Reuters.

"We have no problem this year," he said.

Severe drought caused by the El Niño weather phenomenon was dissipating and the affected areas were limited, mostly to the Mekong river sub-region and the Philippines, and any impact would be offset by an overall positive outlook in Asia and Africa.

Rice production in China and India was forecast to rise by 2 percent and 13 percent respectively, mainly because of ample rain, Konuma said.

This year's expected 707 million tonnes of paddy, up from 682 million tonnes in 2009, would be equal to 456 million tonnes of milled rice and slightly higher than expected world consumption of 454 million tonnes, he said.

"Production is close to utilization, which is good," Konuma said.

The FAO estimated overall

global rice stocks of 123.5 million tonnes, compared with 123.0 million tonnes last year.

Overall rice stocks in major exporting countries declined to 24.8 million tonnes, from 32.9 million tonnes the previous year, resulting in falling world rice trade, he said.

The 2010 world rice trade was expected to drop to 30.0 million tonnes, down from 31.3 million tonnes forecast in April.

"We assume it will not create a major problem as what happened in 2007 when rice prices went very high, because in 2007 it was a combination of low stocks of wheat and rice both together," Konuma said.

In 2007, rice stocks in exporting countries dropped below 20 million tonnes when India, which used to rank as the world's number two rice exporter, faced a production shortfall, forcing it to ban exports.

The Indian export ban meant about 4 million tonnes of rice did not come onto the market, sparking fears of shortages across the world which pushed the price of benchmark 100 percent B grade white rice to a record high of \$1,080 a tonne in early 2008.

The price has fallen nearly 60 percent to \$450 a tonne on Thursday on thin demand, and rising supply in major producing countries. (*Manila Bulletin*)



## New sub1 rice lines developed in less time

PHILRICE, Nueva Ecija—The Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) have developed the rice line PSB Rc82-Sub1 through marker-assisted breeding approach that makes the transfer of submergence-tolerant gene (sub1) significantly less time-consuming.

Rice breeding typically takes eight to 11 years to complete.

Loida Perez, lead author of the paper titled "PSB Rc82-Sub1: A New Submergence Tolerant Rice Cultivar Developed Through Marker-Assisted Breeding," said that DNA marker-assisted breeding is estimated to save at least three to six years in the breeding process.

She explained that DNA markers are "landmarks that point plant breeders to a specific region of interest in the chromosome, thereby lessening the process."

"With the strong partnership of scientists between PhilRice and IRRI and funding from Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the IRRI-Japan Submergence Tolerance Project of Dr. David J. Mackill, we have embarked on the project of transferring the sub1 from NSIC Rc194 (IR64-Sub1) into PSB Rc82, a popular and high-yielding irrigated rice cultivar with known resistance to major rice pests and diseases," she said.

PhilRice and IRRI identified four PSB Rc82-Sub1 materials.

Initial morpho-agronomic traits such as grain quality revealed that the improved PSB Rc82-

Sub1 materials were comparable to the original PSB Rc82 (non-sub1).

All four lines had fixed sub1 and were established in 2010 dry season at PhilRice Central Experiment Station to determine yield and yield-related parameters and to produce seed for evaluation and promotion in submergence or flash flood-prone areas in the country.

The paper discussed that sub1 is responsible for submergence tolerance in rice at vegetative stage for up to two weeks.

From Indian rice variety FR13A, it was successfully transferred to IR64 via marker-assisted breeding at IRRI producing IR64-Sub1, which was recently registered as commercial variety by the National Seed Industry Council of the Philippines as NSIC Rc194 with a local name "Submarino 1" for the flood-prone ecosystems in the country.

With the release of Submarino 1, however, Perez said researchers continued to develop other lines or varieties with submergence tolerance such as the PSB Rc82-Sub1 for farmers to have options on the variety to use in pest and disease-stricken rain-fed areas in the country.

Submergence or flash flood-prone rice areas in the Philippines are estimated at around 300,000 hectares.

In addition to damage brought by typhoons and floods in lowland farms, rice farming productivity is very low in these areas because farmers there plant rice only once a year. (*IRRI*)

## Genetically engineered papayas to hit store shelves as early as summer

Japan—The government has decided to apply its genetically modified (GM) food labeling rules to papayas, opening the way for the import of modified papayas as early as this summer.

The fruit would be the first GM food meant for raw consumption to be allowed distribution in Japan.

The decision by the Cabinet Office committee for consumer affairs clears the way for the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare to recognize the GM papayas for import and distribution under the Food Sanitation Act once the plan passes a public input phase.

The decision applies specifi-

cally to papayas genetically altered for resistance to harmful viruses. The modified fruit is now being grown in Hawaii, and has been on sale in the United States since May 1999. Japan's Food Safety Commission ruled in July last year that the papayas did not present a health risk. If the fruit go on sale in Japan, they must carry a label stating they are GM products.

There are currently seven fresh and 32 processed GM foods approved for import to Japan, though most are ingredients for processed goods or animal fodder, and are not marketed as food for raw consumption by humans. (*SEARCA*)

## NEDA: Agriculture is key to sustain employment

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) underscored the importance of agriculture in the sustainability of employment opportunities--as employment in April 2010 inched up by 1.2 percent from last year and unemployment rate increased, even alongside election spending and global economic recovery.

Acting NEDA Director-General Augusto B. Santos said with the increasing concerns on climate change, there is a need to employ strategies to mitigate negative effects.

"With the end of the *El Niño* episode and the increasing possibility of a transition to *La Niña* in the second half of 2010, there is a need to implement disaster risk management strategies and other precautionary measures against floods and rain-induced landslides in hazard prone areas in order to mitigate as well as prevent any further adverse effects of natural disasters on the country's economy, especially in agriculture and employment," he said.

The *El Niño* dry spell dampened employment, resulting in total employment of almost 35.4 million in April from 35 million last year. The unemployment rate meanwhile rose 8.0 percent from 7.5 percent for a total of 3.1 million in April 2010, according to the results of the latest Labor Force Survey.

"Workers in the agriculture, fishery and forestry sectors decreased by 6.5 percent as the intensifying *El Niño* took its toll on employment in the sector," Santos added.

The agriculture, hunting and forestry, and fishing subsectors suffered net employment losses of 771,000 and 31,000, respectively.

He also noted that the government must increasingly prioritize the implementation of the necessary policies and programs that support the creation of decent and quality employment. "Policies and programs to sustain an economic environment that, in turn, encourages more resources for physical and human capital investment should be in place," Santos said.

Moreover, he said that greater team-up, partnership and collaboration with the private sector

to ensure that the education, training, and scholarships of young men and women are not only attuned to the needs of the market but would also provide them the appropriate skills and career guidance, even for entrepreneurship.

"The government must provide the necessary infrastructure to encourage investments that create employment, sustain and boost high business and consumer confidence and promote a stronger, stable and deeper financial system," Santos explained. (NEDA)

### DA turns 112 ... (from p1)

with the following highlights:

- Welcome remarks by Ass't. Sec. Clayton Olalia;
- Renewal of pledge on DA Mission / Vision, led by Undersecretary Joel Rudinas;
- Awarding of loyalty plaques to DA family employees (who rendered 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 years of service);
- Recognition of DA-OSEC employees who regularly donate blood to the National Kidney Transplant Institute;
- Launch of DA-AFMIS and Nokia Mobile Data Gathering Solution; and 'Online Import Application, Processing and Approval of Permit';
- Presentation of OIE Certificate to the Philippines, declaring parts of Luzon as FMD-free;
- Awarding of top sales performers of DA Agribusiness Export Showroom; and
- Keynote Speech of Sec Fondevilla.

Exhibition basketball and volleyball games were held at the DA gym, from 2-4 pm; and 5 pm, cocktails, wine-tasting and flairtending of tropical wines at the DA lobby.

The anniversary celebration started Monday, June 21, with the distribution and feeding of dairy milk and '*malunggay lugaw*' and '*malunggay*' and '*saluyot*' ice cream to dozens of elementary schoolchildren. The milk was provided by the DA's National Dairy Authority, while the '*malunggay lugaw*' and ice cream were sponsored by the DA's Bureau of Plant Industry.

There was also a week-long 'tiangge' at the DA parking lot.



Agriculture Secretary Bernie Fondevilla (right) proudly shows a replica of the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) Certificate declaring parts of Luzon as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) free zones, during the 112th DA Anniversary celebration, June 23, 2010, at the DA-BSWM Convention Hall in Quezon City. Assisting him is DA-Bureau of Animal Industry Director Efren Nuestro, while BAI mascot 'Super Pig' looks on.

### Entire RP ... (from p1)

ince, 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.

Fondevilla said the total eradication of FMD in the country would pave the way to the expansion of the swine industry, and will open up exports of hogs to other countries.

The country has maintained its FMD-free status for the last 53 months, since the last recorded outbreak on December 28, 2005 in Quezon province.

The FMD outbreak that struck the Philippines in 1995 had

### PGMA delivers ... (from p1)

develop 1,799,361 hectares of idle lands into various productive agribusiness uses from 2005 to 2009, on top of creating a total of 4.4 million jobs.

He said these achievements have met the MTPDP's goal of "developing at least two million hectares of new lands for agribusiness in order to contribute two million out of the 10 million jobs targeted as a legacy by 2010."

On the President's MTPDP's goal of "making food plentiful at competitive prices," Fondevilla said the DA was able to establish alternative market outlets like 543 *Barangay Bagsakans* (BBs) and 82 *Bagsakan Centers* (BCs) to

reached epidemic proportions spreading to 27 provinces, with reported outbreaks of 1,553.

In 1996, the DA created the National FMD Task Force (NFMDTF) to oversee joint efforts in eradicating the disease, composed of four imperatives: disease monitoring and surveillance; public awareness; animal movement management; and vaccination.

The DA's sustained efforts in partnership with commercial and backyard hog raisers and LGUs has led to the continued decline in FMD outbreaks.

Such favorable development paved the way to the declaration by the OIE of Mindanao as FMD-free without vaccination in 2001, and Visayas, Palawan and Masbate, in 2002.

reduce the cost of consumer goods and provide better income for farmers, fisherfolk and other stakeholders.

The DA also set up 14,581 *Tindahan Natin* outlets that sell basic food items like rice and noodles at prices lower than those in regular retail outlets.

As a result of these initiatives, the average nominal rice prices in 2001-2009 were 14% lower than in 1992-1998.

Likewise, the setting up of BBs and BCs has made it convenient for consumers to buy basic food commodities at affordable prices, at P5 to P20 per kilo cheaper than those sold in regular wet markets.

## SEARCA study shows FIELDS benefited farmers

President Arroyo's centerpiece agriculture program, dubbed as FIELDS, benefits farmers in terms of higher yields, lower production losses and increased profits.

Thus, is the finding of the Los Baños-based Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA).

"The farmers said the benefits include the tangible increases in the family's net profit and the non-tangible capacity enhancement in the farming systems," said SEARCA in its study.

Launched in April 2008, FIELDS stands for government's six major interventions to increase farm productivity and farmers' incomes: fertilizer, irrigation and other rural infrastructure, extension and education services, loans, dryers and other postharvest facilities, and seeds and other genetic materials.

Agriculture Secretary Bernie Fondevilla said "the outcome of the SEARCA study proves that the Arroyo government has, through FIELDS, delivered on its commitment to the farm sector.

In the province of Albay, for instance, the SEARCA study showed that the net income of farmers increased by P20,528 per hectare for one cropping.

Another impact assessment done for the Community-based Participatory Action Research (CPAR) program of the DA's Bureau of Agricultural Research showed that average incomes of farmer-cooperators increased by 45 percent compared with farmers in non-CPAR areas.

From P18,313 per hectare, the average incomes of CPAR farm-

ers in Cagayan, Calabarzon and Northern Mindanao regions almost doubled to P33,482 per hectare.

"The increases in average income accrued not only from the increase in profitability, but also from decreases in total production costs, ranging from 14 to 59 percent per hectare due to the use of cost-reducing technologies," SEARCA said.

### Hybrid rice program should continue

The Aquino administration should continue to implement the hybrid rice program to make the Philippines self-sufficient in rice and save on imports.

This was suggested by Dr. Frisco Malabanan, director of the DA's Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) rice program, noting that government could save as much as P9.41 billion in rice imports in 2011 if the hybrid rice program is continuously implemented.

The initiative would be able to produce an additional 2.6 million (M) metric tons (MT) from a planned hectareage of about 605,450 hectares in 2011.

"For just an investment of P1.77 billion, the government could save around P8 billion in rice imports by 2011," Malabanan told reporters in a recent briefing in Quezon City.

In 2009, out of the total national palay production of 16.26 MMT, hybrid rice accounted for 1.18 MMT or 7.3%.

### RP has enough rice for 2010

The Philippines has more than enough rice to meet its needs until the end of 2010.

National Food Authority (NFA) Administrator Jessup P. Navarro said the current total national inventory stands at 3.56 million (M) metric tons, two million of which or 56% of total inventory is in NFA warehouses.

Also, he said rice prices remain stable, with regular-milled rice ranging from P30.65 to P31.18 per kilo, and P34.20 to P34.59 per kilo for well-milled

rice, from January to June 2010.

The Philippines has imported a total of 2.495 million tons of rice for 2010. This includes 2.475 million tons through NFA tenders and private sector importation, as well as 20,000 tons of premium rice importation through the Philippine International Trade Corp.

This year's importation exceeded the 1.775 million tons recorded in 2009, and the 2.4 million tons in 2008. (*Phil. Daily Inquirer*)



Agriculture Secretary Bernie Fondevilla (2nd from left) enters a password into a laptop computer to launch the Nokia Mobile Data Gathering Solution (MDGS) during the DA's 112th anniversary celebration. The first in the world, the project will use mobile phones for data gathering to provide real-time and accurate agricultural data to end-users and clientele. Witnessing the launch are (from left): H.E. Heikki Hannikainen, Ambassador of Finland; Nokia officials Greg Elphinston, Nikka Abes, and Simo Hoikka; and DA-ITCAF OIC-director Honorio Flameño.

## DA gets Nokia software for farm data gathering

The Department of Agriculture, Nokia and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-Philippines) are pioneering the use of the Nokia data gathering solution in the Philippines, featuring collection and sharing of farm data anytime and anywhere in the country.

Malabanan attributed the increase in rice production in the past nine years to the government's support for the hybrid-rice program.

Rice production, he noted, grew at an average of close to 3 percent annually since 2001.

"That is why we hope that the [next administration] will continue providing support to rice farmers to encourage them to use rice technologies that seek to increase yield," he said.

By 2013, the DA under its 'Rice Master Plan' targets to produce 21.6 MMT of palay through the continued provision of seed subsidy, promotion of sturdy seeds that could withstand flood, drought and saline soils, and other production inputs and postharvest facilities.

By 2013, estimated national demand for palay is placed at 21.54 MMT, factoring in a 2-percent annual increase in population.

Last year, the Philippines' self-sufficiency level was pegged at 81 percent. The production shortfall was filled in by imported rice. (*Business Mirror*)

The DA will distribute Nokia E71 phones to 100 regional field officers, who will report farm conditions and prices that would help the department respond quickly especially when natural disaster strikes.

Agriculture Secretary Bernie Fondevilla said climate change impacts, from droughts to typhoons, had greatly hampered government efforts to increase farm productivity and ensure food sufficiency.

"The Nokia data gathering solution will augment and, eventually replace our data-gathering systems so we can concentrate on crafting programs and solutions to further boost farm yields despite the erratic weather patterns," Fondevilla said.

"The Philippines is an archipelago with over 1,500 municipalities, most of which are separated by water.

"Tracking each area's grain and water distribution, monitoring productivity and market prices pose a huge logistical challenge to the DA," he said.

"Eventually we wish to apply the technology to health, agriculture, education, emergency services, census and so forth. Our ambition is to service all 1,500 Philippine municipalities within a decade," said Nokia Finland's corporate social investment director Greg Elphinston. (*Phil. Daily Inquirer*)