

## El Niño mitigation efforts continue; damage tops P11B

The Presidential El Niño Task Force, chaired by Agriculture Secretary Bernie G. Fondevilla, continues to pursue efforts to mitigate the adverse effects of the prolonged dry spell spawned by El Niño phenomenon.

To date, estimated agriculture damage has reached almost P11 billion, according to the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) in its April 21, 2010 El Niño situation report No. 12.

The NDCC said 12 regions (1, 2, 3, 4-A, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 and Cordillera) have been adversely affected, trimming down production of rice, corn, fruits, high value commercial crops (HVCC), cutflowers, other crops, fishery and livestock—with an estimated production loss of P10.997 billion.

The weather phenomenon, which is expected to continue until June 2010, has affected 247,719 farmers, fishers and

their families, tilling a total of 772,538 hectares.

The worst-hit region is Cagayan Valley (Region 2), with total damage of P6.84 billion, affecting 306,344 hectares of rice, corn, vegetables, fishponds and fish cages.

Region 6 (Western Visayas), came in second, at P1.35 billion in crop loss, affecting 61,308 hectares.

The DA – through the Field Operations Service and the Bureau of Soils Water Management (BSWM) – continues to monitor the various mitigation efforts of the DA family and other member-agencies of the Presidential El Niño Task Force.

Undersecretary for operations Joel Rudinas said the DA through the BSWM and Regional Field Units (RFUs) sustains cloud seeding operations to induce rains and quench parched farmlands and fishponds, and refill the major dams in Luzon and other parts of the country.

As of April 13, 2010, a total of 462 cloud seeding sorties were completed, covering 10 regions (Cordillera, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11 and 12). These were done in coordination with the Philippine weather bureau or PAGASA and

*(Pls turn to p2)*

### NFA sets up more buying stations

To reach and benefit more farmers this *palagad* or summer harvest, particularly in far-flung areas, the Department of Agriculture through the National Food Authority (DA-NFA) will set up more mobile palay-buying stations.

NFA administrator Jessup P. Navarro said these will supplement the agency's current 480 permanent buying stations, mostly in key rice-producing re-



*Agriculture Secretary Bernie G. Fondevilla (2nd from left) distributes water pump sets to El Niño-affected farmers in San Simon, Pampanga. With him are (from left) DA-Region 3 Dir. Redentor Gatus, Pampanga Representative Anna York Bondoc and Butil Party-list Representative Agapito Guanlao.*

### DA allots P420M for STWs

The Department of Agriculture (DA) will earmark a total of P420 million for the establishment of shallow tube wells (STWs) and procurement of water pump sets to help El Niño-affected farmers offset crop production losses due to the prolonged dry spell.

In a report to Agriculture Sec-

retary Bernie G. Fondevilla, Undersecretary for Operations Joel Rudinas said of the amount, P120 million has already been used to procure water pumps. DA is also seeking approval from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to realign another P300 million for the STW and water pump projects.

"Each water pump ranges from P8,000 to P80,000, depending on the horsepower and brand," Rudinas said. "And the cost of installing water pumps for STWs will depend on whether a community will rely on self-running engines or electricity to power them," he added.

"Water in El Niño-stricken communities may be scarce," Rudinas noted, "but farmers should tap rivers and streams, or dig shallow wells to draw out water for irrigation."

### DA, KOICA to set up pilot agri clusters

The Department of Agriculture (DA) and Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) will jointly establish agriculture-based multi-industry clusters (MICs) in pilot provinces that will showcase modern integrated agribusiness ventures, from production to manufacturing, processing and marketing.

The initial phase of the project entails the conduct of a feasibility study, funded by a \$1-million grant provided by KOICA.

DA officials led by Undersecretary Berna Romulo Puyat recently met with their KOICA counter-

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## Let's remain focused, united

The current El Niño episode has morphed into a national crisis, exacting huge losses and counting, and placing in jeopardy the country's food requirements, as well as the livelihood and incomes of small farmers and fishers.

As of latest official report of the National Disaster Coordinating Council, the prolonged dry spell has affected more than 247,700 farmers, creating production loss of more than 776,000 tons of palay, corn, vegetables, and other crops – with an estimated value of roughly P11 billion.

It continues to parch farmlands, fishponds, reservoirs and waterways, shut down power plants, and trigger red tide.

All told, the current dry spell is exacting a heavy toll on hundreds of thousands of small farmers and fisherfolk – shrinking their sources of livelihood, income and food.

And Agriculture Secretary Bernie G. Fondevilla knows exactly what it feels to be deprived of much-needed sustenance, being a son of a fisherman from Corcuera town, Simara Island, in Romblon.

Hence, against this grim backdrop, he has urged DA family officials and staff to remain focused and resilient.

In fact, he enjoined them to be more innovative, and move forward with greater resolve and enthusiasm.

For instance, he has asked DA regional directors – in tandem with the local government units and farmers' groups – to sustain the implementation of El

Niño mitigation measures.

These include the distribution of water pumps, establishment of shallow wells, and distribution of seeds, fertilizers and other inputs to small farmers and fishers adversely affected by El Niño.

He also asked them to start preparing this early for the wet planting season.

Over the long term, Sec. Fondevilla believes that the DA should continue to insulate the country from the adverse effects of climate change by pouring more investments in rural infrastructure, and setting aside substantial funds for the conduct of needed research to develop more drought-resistant and sturdy crop varieties, livestock animals and fish species.

Further, he said, we should ably protect our gains.

This includes keeping the Philippines safe from dreaded global crop and animal diseases and pests.

In these trying times, therefore, we – the members of the DA family, along with other agri-fishery stakeholders and partners – must remain united and focused to keep the wheels of progress rolling in the countryside.

And as we cast our vote on May 10, let us choose those who have the heart, sincerity and resolve to helping small farmers and fishers improve their productivity, livelihood and income – to ensure food on their table and more importantly provide them and their children a better future.

## El Niño mitigation ... (from p1)

and engines (P&E) sets for shallow tube wells (STWs).

In Region 2 (Cagayan Valley), of the total 1,935 P&E sets procured, 1,154 sets were already distributed to farmers.

Under the GMA-HVCC program, the DA has also distributed 48 units of drip sprinklers, 133 STWs, and 3 ram pumps in different regions.

Meanwhile, the BSWM is set to buy an additional 1,500 STWs for distribution to other El Niño affected regions.

The DA also provides fuel subsidy through the municipal and provincial governments so farmers can run their P&E sets to draw out water from open source wells (OSWs) or STWs.

Also the DA through the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) has been advising farmers to adopt the 'rotational irrigation' scheme to efficiently distribute limited water from affected irrigation systems.

The other mitigation efforts of the DA family and Presidential El Niño Task Force are:

- Provided more than 4 tons of rice, corn and assorted vegetable seeds to farmers in regions 3, 5, 9, and 12; more than 6,590 kilos of assorted vegetable seeds in regions CAR, 2, 6, 10 and 11; and distributed 23,038 bags of certified rice seeds to farmers in Cordillera.

- LGUs & DA-regional crop protection centers (RCPC) were alerted on the possible incidence of pests and for them to monitor regularly since March 2, 2010. On-going activity by LGUs & RFUs thru RCPCs. Procured 400 kgs. rodenticide and 200 kgs. insecticides. 168 kgs. Rodenticides are already distributed to 337 rat infested barangays covering 11,000 hectares. Infestation now under control in Region 2.

- Provision of inputs and livelihood assistance to fisherfolk in El Niño affected provinces such as smokehouses and production facilities (i.e. fishing gears, mariculture parks, hatcheries, and rent-to-own fish cages);

- Conducted symposium on climate change in relation to

Aquaculture Production cum training on Damage Assessment and Reporting System and workshop on Target Fishing on Fisheries Production attended by Provincial Fishery Officers, LGU extension Workers, BAS-Regional Statistics Officers/Provincial Agricultural Statistics Officers and BFAR IV-A Project Leaders and staff;

- Promoted the establishment of mariculture parks in Padre Burgos, Batangas and Tagkawayan, Quezon through the conduct of investment and techno-demo seminar on the culture of high value marine species, and rent-a-cage project;

- Distributed more than 1.5 million fingerlings, and established four solar dryers in Cagayan;

- Continue to enjoin affected LGUs to provide counterpart funds for the provision of P&E sets for OSWs and STWs, fuel subsidy, and seeds and other planting materials (corn, vegetables, and rootcrops);

- Conduct information drive/advocacy campaign how to mitigate effects of El Niño, production and distribution of posters and leaflets, airing of radio and television plugs, through the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), and radio and television interviews of DA officials led by Sec. Fondevilla and Undersecretary Rudinas, including other officials of the Presidential El Niño task force member-agencies.

The respective crop damage and affected area per region are:

Region 1 - 6,444 hectares of rice and corn were affected, with production loss of P282 million (M);

Region 3 - 311,250 hectares of rice, corn and HVCC; production loss, P693M;

Region 4-A - 19,440 hectares of rice, corn and HVCC; production loss, P603M;

Region 5 - P466.6M worth of rice, corn, HVCC and livestock;

Region 7 - 4,371 hectares of crops, worth P131.2M;

Region 9 - 8,506 hectares of rice and corn; production loss, P211.7M;

Region 10 - 2,256 hectares of rice, corn and HVCC; production loss, P1.7M;

Region 11 - 7,334 hectares of rice, corn and HVCC were affected;

Region 12 - 46,730 hectares of rice, corn and HVCC; production loss, P378M; and

Cordillera - 45,705 hectares of rice, corn and HVCC; production loss, P39M.

### AggieTrends

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*Belgium is providing the Philippines through the Department of Agriculture a \$1.5-million grant to assist and 'put back on their feet' farming communities in Ilocos and Cordillera regions that were flooded due to typhoons Ondoy and Pepeng last year. Agriculture Secretary Bernie G. Fondevilla (seated, left), along with Food and Agriculture Organization representative to the Philippines Kazuyuki Tsurumi and Belgian Ambassador to the Philippines Christian Meerschman, show the document to implement said project. Behind them are Belgian and DA officials.*



## DA, EU, Belgium, FAO forge P335-M agri projects

The Department of Agriculture and the UN-Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), European Union (EU), and Belgium have forged respective agreements to implement three projects, totaling P335 million, that will benefit rainfed rice farmers, flood-hit communities in Ilocos and Cordillera, and swine raisers.

The first project involves a €4.2-M (P248M) grant from the European Union (EU) that aims to increase rice yields in rainfed areas by promoting small-scale irrigation and integrated crop management systems.

Agriculture Secretary Bernie G. Fondevilla and FAO representative to the Philippines Mr. Kazuyuki Tsurumi signed the project agreement, and witnessed by Ms. Charlotte Minasyan-Pekovits, attaché for Operations Section of the EU delegation to the Philippines.

The project will benefit 4,200 farm-families in five provinces: Pangasinan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga and Tarlac.

It will be jointly implemented by the municipal governments of the beneficiary-provinces, DA-RFUs in Ilocos and Central Luzon regions, and three DA agencies (Bureau of Soils and Water Management, Philippine Rice Research Institute, and Agricultural Training Institute).

The second project involves a \$1.5-million (P67.5M) grant from the government of Belgium through the FAO.

The fund will be used to provide assistance to farmers in Ilocos and Cordillera regions adversely affected by massive floods spawned by typhoons *Ondoy* and *Pepeng* last year.

The project document was signed by Secretary Fondevilla, Mr. Tsurumi, and witnessed by Belgian Ambassador Christian Meerschman.

The project will also support agriculture emergency efforts and rehabilitation coordination programs implemented by the DA in said regions.

The third project involves a \$445,000 (P20M) grant from the FAO to undertake diagnosis and management of porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PPRS) and other swine diseases.

The project document was signed by DA's Bureau of Animal Industry Dir. Davinio Catbagan and Mr. Tsurumi.

The project is regional in scope, as it will also be implemented in Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR and Vietnam.

To be implemented in 18 months, the project involves four components:

- Improve the capacity of the DA and livestock raisers in diagnosing swine diseases through field and laboratory surveillance;
- Develop a network of laboratories on swine diseases;
- Come up with a clear picture of the swine health status in the country; and
- Craft a manual on herd health management and hog production practices.

## Gov't defends decision to import pork

The government stands firm on its decision to import pork, amid the opposition of hog raisers.

Agriculture Ass't. Secretary Salvador Salacup said the shortage in production and the prohibitive retail prices of pork prompted President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to authorize the importation through the DA's Food Terminal Inc. (FTI), by issuing Executive Order No. 875 on April 12, 2010.

Salacup said the retail price of pork as of mid-April ranges at P180 to P190 per kilogram, based on the monitor of wet markets in Metro Manila by the DA's Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS).

He noted such price level were similar or even higher than those during the 2009 Christmas season.

The Pork Producers Federation of the Phils., Inc. (PPFPI, formerly the National Federation of Hog Farmers Inc.), said it "vehemently opposes" the decision of the President to authorize the importation of 5,000 metric tons (MT) of pork, through

The imports are expected to arrive before June.

PPFPI president Albert Lim Jr. said they are now consulting with our leaders and members to discuss how we can stop the pork importation.

Lim said they were not consulted by government prior to issuing EO 875.

"At the very least, they should have informed us about their intention. The importation could cause a free fall in prices," said Lim.

Salacup, however, denied this, saying industry representatives

were presented the "shortfall scenarios" in a meeting held third week of April.

Government estimates released in early 2010 pointed to a possible shortfall of some 30,000 MT in January to June 2010.

The DA's Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) regularly monitors the actual supply-and-demand situation of pork and chicken.

On February 27, 2010, the FTI issued a notice published in major newspapers for the bidding of some 1,500 MT of various pork cuts and pork bellies.

Salacup said this was done to ease the tightness in the supply of pork.

FTI said the importation is open to all interested hog raisers, producers and other private importers.

They could import under the so-called tax-expenditure sub-

*(Pls turn to p11)*

# DA, LBP join hands to promote mariculture

The Department of Agriculture (DA) encourages small fishers to shift to mariculture or sea-cage farming, which is cheaper, more productive, and sustainable despite El Niño.

In a report to Agriculture Secretary Bernie Fondevilla, Director Malcolm Sarmiento Jr. of the DA's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said the agency recently forged an agreement with the Land Bank of the Philippines to promote mariculture livelihood ventures, by providing small fisherfolk and entrepreneurs with affordable credit to establish and/or expand their existing projects.

To date, the DA-BFAR has set up 52 mariculture parks (MPs), and targets to set up by five more this year, Dir. Sarmiento said.

The joint project with Land Bank, he added, will greatly help small fisherfolk, especially this current dry spell due to El Niño, which continues to parch farmlands, lakes and ponds, as well

raise the salinity of fishing grounds, which has affected fish growth and production.

"Shifting from fishing to marine cage farming will help our fisherfolk tide over the El Niño dry spell, and at the same time, help lower their production costs," he said.

"Over the past two years, the DA leadership has directed heads of its attached agencies and of its regional field units (RFUs) to retool their respective budgets and give priority to intervention programs that will best help farmers, fisherfolk and other agriculture and fisheries stakeholders cope with the twin challenges of climate change and increasing global free trade," Fondevilla said

He said the DA, for one, has crafted and started carrying out a mitigation program meant to sustain farm growth and yields despite the latest El Niño attack and to provide immediate aid to farmers and fisherfolk reeling from the dry spell.

Sarmiento explained that as freshwater fishponds dry up during El Niño, brackishwater fishponds, which are the backbone of Philippine aquaculture, are also affected because heat raises salinity levels, which affect the growth of fish.

The solution to these woes now plaguing the fisheries sector is mariculture, which allows fish grown in sea cages to live in fairly constant salinity and temperature levels throughout the year.

Floating sea cages, as opposed to land-based pond farms, which require more resources to maintain and develop, also have high water exchange levels that make water pumps and tanks unnecessary, Sarmiento said.

"Thus, this means lower production costs even with fuel and electricity rates going up, which also translates into lower fish prices for consumers," he pointed out.

Sea cages, Sarmiento noted, are also flexible and environment-friendly, unlike land-based fish farms, because they can easily be moved to new areas in the sea to prevent the buildup of biological wastes.



Director Malcolm I. Sarmiento, Jr. of the DA's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) and Land Bank of the Phils. (LBP) President and CEO Gilda E. Pico formalize the partnership between the DA-BFAR and LBP to promote fishery and livelihood ventures in 49 mariculture parks nationwide by providing fishers and entrepreneurs much-needed and affordable credit.

## DA-BFAR props up seaweed prod'n

The Department of Agriculture through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) is priming up the production of seaweeds this year by providing financial assistance to seaweed farmers and people's organizations (POs).

In a report to Agriculture Secretary Bernie G. Fondevilla, BFAR Director Malcolm Sarmiento, Jr. said the agency will initially focus on three areas: Central Visayas, Oriental Mindoro Guimaras.

In Central Visayas, DA-BFAR is investing P3 million this year under the seaweed program. It is currently monitoring seaweed projects of 60 POs in the region, Sarmiento said.

The DA-BFAR under the Fisheries Financing Program (FFP) — in partnership with the DA's Agricultural Credit Policy Council (DA-ACPC) and Land Bank of the Philippines — is likewise implementing a seaweed processing venture in Balatasan, Oriental Mindoro, with an approved loan of P500,000 that would benefit 30 seaweed producers.

Likewise under the FFP, a seaweed farming expansion project in Sibunag, Guimaras, was granted a P2.5-million loan that will benefit 162 seaweed farmers.

### Industry Situationer

The Philippines is currently the world's third leading seaweed

producer, next to China and Japan.

Dried seaweeds are processed into fine, white powder, popularly called carageenan.

It serves as a gelling agent, and used extensively as a thickener or emulsifier in a wide range of commercial products—from medicines, toothpaste, ice cream, chocolates, cosmetics, and even beer.

Carageenan has recently been included in the organic food list of the US Department of Agriculture.

For the past seven years, the Philippines has remained the world's top supplier of carageenan.

However, despite these impressive rankings, Philippine seaweed production still falls short compared to the rising demand in the global market.

Some local seaweed processing companies have even resorted to importing raw seaweeds from nearby Asian countries to meet local and export demand for carageenan.

The US remains the biggest market for Philippine carageenan, followed by Europe, Australia, Japan, Mexico and Russia.

Seaweed farming is a low capital business venture that does not require feeds or fertilizer inputs.

The average production of

### PGMA strengthens 'butanding' protection

Government will intensify efforts to protect whale sharks (*rhincondon typus*), popularly known as *butanding*, from being killed for its meat.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo signed Administrative Order No. 282, last March 16, 2010, after an incident in Tingloy, Batangas, last February 15, 2010, when fishermen killed a whale shark.

AO 282 directs all Local Government Units (LGUs) and agencies, including the DA's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), to render mandatory rescue efforts to any wounded shark and provide proper care, treatment and eventual release.

The directive also calls for the LGUs and DA-BFAR to coordinate with the academe and marine fisheries expert to locate, monitor, and protect the whale shark's pathways in Philippine waters.

The government also encourages local and foreign

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*Agriculture Secretary Bernie G. Fondevilla (left) swears in new DA officials led by (from left) Undersecretary for Operations Joel Rudinas, Ass't. Secretary Romeo Recide (still concurrent Dir. of the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics), Bureau of Plant Industry Dir. Larry Lacson, Bureau of Animal Industry Dir. Efren Nuestro, and National Meat Inspection Service Exec. Dir. Pedro Jerry Baliang.*

## New DA officials take oath

Agriculture Secretary Bernie G. Fondevilla recently administered the oath office to new DA family officials appointed by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, led by former Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) Director Joel Rudinas, who was appointed as Undersecretary for Field Operations. He replaced former Undersecretary Jesus Emmanuel Paras, who is vying for a seat in Congress, representing 1st district of Cagayan de Oro City.

The other new officials sworn in by Sec. Fondevilla were:  
 \* Romeo Recide, Assistant Secretary and concurrent director of the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics;  
 \* Salvador Salacup, Assistant Secretary;  
 \* Efren Nuestro, Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) director;  
 \* Dr. Larry Lacson, BPI director;

\* Bernardo Trebol, Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) administrator;  
 \* Pedro Jerry Baliang, National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) executive director;  
 \* Atty. Marilyn Sta. Catalina, Regional Executive Director (RED), DA-Region 5;  
 \* Constancio Maghanoy, Jr. RED, DA-CARAGA;  
 \* Lucrecio Alviar, Jr., RED, DA-Cordillera;  
 \* Cesar Rodriguez, general manager of Human Settlements Devt. Corp.;

## DA hosts AFACI's 1<sup>st</sup> General Assembly

The Department of Agriculture successfully hosted the 1st General Assembly of the Asian Food and Agriculture Cooperation Initiative (AFACI), held April

\* Elizabeth Tortosa, FIDA deputy administrator for support and regulatory services;  
 \* Atty. Gavino Barlin, Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA) deputy exec. dir. for fertilizer;  
 \* Augusto Canlas, FPA deputy exec. dir. for pesticide;  
 \* Nestor Casela, National Tobacco Administration (NTA) deputy administrator; and  
 \* Several members of the Board of Directors (BOD) and Board of Trustees (BOT) of DA attached agencies such as the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), National Dairy Administration (NDA), Phil. Fisheries Devt. Authority (PFDA), NTA and FIDA.

15-16, 2010, at the Summit Ridge Hotel, in Tagaytay City.

Forty officials from 12 member-countries and Korea's Rural Development Administration (RDA) attended the two-day assembly to discuss sustainable agricultural development, eradicating poverty, and technological cooperation in the agriculture and food sector in Asia.

Aside from the Philippines, the other AFACI member-countries are Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Korea, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

During the affair, Korea's RDA presented a grant worth \$65,000 (about P3 million) to the Philippines' Department of Agriculture for the project, "Extension of Shelf-life and Enhancement of Fruit Quality Through the Development of Postharvest Techniques on Mango and other Tropical Fruits."

## DA, Nestlé to promote coffee in 3 provinces

The Department of Agriculture in partnership with Nestlé Phils. Inc. will establish coffee mother plant gardens and nurseries, and train farmers in Aurora, Bohol and Oriental Mindoro — aimed at making them major producers in succeeding years.

This initiative is part of the DA's coffee development program, spearheaded by the GMA-High-Value Commercial Crops (HVCC) Program directorate.

In Bohol, the GMA-HVCC plans to establish a 300-hectare coffee plantation. To date, about 9,000 coffee seedlings were distributed and transplanted in key municipalities.

In Oriental Mindoro, a total of 41,675 coffee seedlings were already planted, comprising 25% of the 100-hectare target.

In Aurora, 500 seedlings are in place at the "mother coffee plant garden," which will serve as source of planting materials

*(Pls turn to p11)*



*DA Undersecretary Berna Romulo-Puyat receives a facsimile check, representing the P3-million grant, from Mr. Jae-Soo Kim, administrator of Korea's Rural Development Administration. With them is University of the Phils. Los Baños Chancellor Luis Rey Velasco.*

# PhilRice promotes sturdy varieties

The Department of Agriculture through the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) vigorously promotes among farmers the use of newly-developed varieties that can withstand adverse environments, such as drought, flood and saline soils.

Adverse environments and climate change have direct effects on rice production, said Thelma F. Padolina, head of PhilRice Plant Breeding and Biotechnology Division.

Decrease in rice yield is expected when sea level increases, temperature intensifies, and rainfall patterns become erratic, she added.

With the theme, *Addressing Climate Change thru Rice Science*, at the recent PhilRice field day, the agency highlighted varieties recommended for environments prone to saline, drought, and flood.

The saline-resistant varieties for irrigated lowland include NSIC Rc182 (Salinas 1), Rc184 (Salinas 2), Rc186 (Salinas 3), Rc188 (Salinas 4), and Rc190 (Salinas 5).

The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) developed Salinas 1, while PhilRice bred the other four varieties. The varieties have good milling recovery and good eating quality.

To achieve maximum yield, ranging from 3.8 to 6.3 tons per hectare, proper cultural management are needed, PhilRice said. However, said varieties are susceptible to tungro.

For rainfed lowland- and drought-prone areas, PhilRice recommends NSIC Rc192 (Sahod Ulan 1), which was bred by IRRI.

Sahod Ulan 1 has a maximum yield of 5.5 tons/ha and matures at 106 days. It could be planted either via dry seeding, wet dry-seeding, or transplanting.

For submergence-prone areas, PhilRice promotes the cultivation of NSIC Rc194 (Submarino 1). A cross of IR64 and an Indian variety with *Sub1* gene, Submarino 1 can tolerate 10 days of complete submergence.

Meanwhile, Dr. Josie A. Valdez, president of Bulacan Agricultural State College, is encouraging farmers to adopt the aerobic rice technology, which involves cultural management practices to produce more rice with less water.

Using this technology, that reduces water use by 30% to 50%, Valdez said farmers can harvest up to 5 tons/ha during the dry season, and 4 tons/ha during the wet season.

For his part, PhilRice deputy exec. director for development Ruben B. Miranda is also encouraging to plant certified seeds of recommended varieties that respond to specific environment conditions.

## Care for smoked *tamban*, malunggay powder?

Consumers would soon find two new innovative, yet nutritious food products in the market, namely: smoked *tamban* enhanced with herbs, and *malunggay* powder with *dilis*.

These will be available as soon as the researches are completed by a university that recently received funds for the purpose from the DA's Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) under its National Technology Commercialization Program (NTCP).

DA-BAR Dir. Nicomedes P. Eleazar said once the research is done and commercialized by the Southern Luzon State University Judge Guillermo Eleazar (SLSU-JGE) in Tagkawayan, Quezon, it will encourage the setting up of enterprises to produce the two new products in Quezon.

He recently signed an agreement with the university president, Dr. Cecilia N. Gascon, to commence the project.

The *tamban* project also aims to improve the traditional fish smoking technique in Quezon, and promote sustainable demand for fish products through the production of herb-enhanced smoked-fish. *Tamban* (*Sardinella longiceps*) is rich in Omega 3.

Meanwhile, the healthful benefits of *malunggay* (*Moringa oleifera*) prompted SLSU-JGE researchers to fortify it further with *dilis*.

Both projects will be completed in 18 months. Thereafter, the products will be promoted and commercialized among interested farmers' and fishermen's cooperatives, and rural workers' groups. (DA-BAR)



Agriculture Secretary Bernie G. Fondevilla (2<sup>nd</sup> from right), former Sec. Arthur Yap and Undersecretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat (left) pose with Ms. Virginia Imbarnate (middle) and Ms. Rosalia Camangeg (right), both of Cordon Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Isabela, one of the awardees of the 'Outstanding Agricultural Guarantee Fund Pool (AGFP) Conduits,' during simple ceremonies held March 19, 2010, at the DA-BSWM convention hall, in Quezon City.

## DA honors 10 AGFP conduits

The Department of Agriculture (DA) recently recognized 10 groups that continue to provide accessible and affordable credit to small farmers and fisherfolk in their respective communities.

Known as the 'Outstanding Conduits' of the DA's Agricultural Guarantee Fund Pool (AGFP), they are:

- Don Bosco Foundation for Sustainable Development, Inc. and the Narang-ay Ti Amianan Irrigators Association, Inc. (North Cotabato)--for the NGOs/farmers' organization category;

- Mr. & Mrs. Orlando and Ruena Tolentino (Sultan Kudarat) and Mr. & Mrs. Antonio and Joselyn Angeles (Oriental Mindoro)--small and medium enterprises;

- La Castellana 1 Personnel Multi-Purpose Coop. (Negros Occidental) and Cordon Multi-purpose Coop. (Isabela)--cooperatives;

- People's Bank of Caraga (Agusan Sur) and Cabanatuan City Rural Bank--rural banks;

- Bukidnon Cooperative Bank and Cooperative Bank of Bulacan--cooperative banks category.

"It is but fitting to give due recognition to our program partners who, through their tireless efforts, have not only encouraged their old borrowers to avail themselves of loans to expand their production, but also provided new borrowers credit to pursue agribusiness and/or agrifishery related projects," said DA Undersecretary Bernadette

Romulo Puyat, chair of the AGFP Governing Board.

DA Sec. Bernie G. Fondevilla said the AGFP is an innovation compelled by the need to mitigate the risks involved in agriculture.

"The AGFP is important in addressing the inherent risks in agriculture, such as climate change, particularly the prolonged dry spell due to El Nino," he said.

During the awarding ceremony, former DA chief Arthur Yap was also given a plaque of appreciation for his judicious leadership in implementing the AGFP by the Rural Bankers' Ass'n. of the Phils., Cooperative Banks Fed. of the Phils., and National Confederation of Cooperatives.

After more than a year, the AGFP has benefitted 31,419 farmers, fisherfolk, and poultry and livestock raisers.

As of March 2010, the AGFP Governing Board has approved over P4.6 billion in guarantee lines for 460 lending conduits. Of the amount, P1.6 billion lent has guarantee coverage.

The AGFP was created in May 2008 by Administrative Order 225-A signed by Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. It mandates gov't. owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs) and gov't. financial institutions (GFIs) to allot 5% of their 2007 surplus to rice and food production projects.

It is intended to provide guar  
(Pls turn to p10)

# San Antonio BB provides basic food at cheaper prices

By Adora D. Rodriguez

On display atop wooden tables are trays of fresh vegetables that include eggplant, ampalaya, carrot, pipino, tomato, onion, garlic, sitao, and a variety of root crops such as gabi, camote and kamoteng kahoy. Also available are fresh pond-grown tilapia, meat and poultry products.

These are the products offered daily by the San Antonio Barangay Bagsakan (BB) in Iriga City, a humble four-walled depot and distribution center, which serves 900 households of the community, as well as those from four neighboring *barangays* of San Vicente Sur, La Trinidad, La Medalla and Salvacion.

Established in June 2008, the San Antonio BB has since been providing the basic food needs of the residents, less the hassle of traveling all the way to Iriga City's public market, more than five kilometers away, and incurring a P20-round trip transport fare.

Today, the BB serves as a trading post and showcase area for the local's backyard-grown veggies and tilapia, giving farmers and their families additional income, and at the same time ensuring regular customers with high-quality farm products.

The store came into being when the Barangay Council of San Antonio sought for projects that would empower their constituents and enable them to keep a sustainable means of livelihood.

Along came the Barangay Bagsakan Project, which is implemented by the Department of Agriculture under the Accelerated Hunger Mitigation Program of the Arroyo administration.

The project's objectives and vision stirred the interest of the council members.

The Barangay Bagsakan is one of the food supply chain and marketing initiatives undertaken by former DA Sec. Arthur Yap, and continued to this date by newly-appointed DA Sec. Bernie G. Fondevilla.

Led by Kapitana Loreta Agapito, the San Antonio



*Satisfied customers, young and old, get the best deals from the San Antonio Barangay Bagsakan, in Iriga City, which offers various farm products at affordable prices.*

barangay council immediately coordinated with the DA-Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS), the DA-Regional Field Unit V, and AMAS' regional counterpart—the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) to pursue the collective endeavor.

After the usual evaluation process, Barangay San Antonio was awarded by the National Agribusiness Corporation a P100,000-loan for the establishment of the store, while the Barangay provided P53,000 in counter fund.

Aside from financial support, the DA awarded the BB important equipment necessary for its operation.

"Nabiyayaan din po kami ng chest freezer, chiller, timbangan, pangkayod ng niyog at mga plastic crate," Chairman Agapito said,

thankful for the support that the DA has been providing them. (We were also awarded a chest freezer, chiller, weighing scale, coconut grater and plastic crates.)

Thus, in barely two years, the BB has created a corps of regular satisfied customers.

*Malaki po ang natitipid namin magmula nang itayo dito sa aming barangay itong Bagsakan,* exclaimed a regular customer. (We have saved a lot with the establishment of the Bagsakan.)

*Menos na sa gastos, menos pa sa abala ng pagpunta sa palengke dahil hindi na kami bumabayad sa pamasaha.* he added. (We don't need to go to the market anymore, and so we save on transport cost.)

Latest monitoring reports provided by the DA-AMAS and RFU V-AMAD show that goods sold at the San Antonio BB are P5 to P20 cheaper

than those being sold at the city market. With such savings, more consumers are enticed to buy their fresh vegetables, fish, meat and other food requirements from the San Antonio BB seven days a week.

On the average, the San Antonio BB earns close to P23,000 weekly.

According to Leny Pecson of DA-AMAS, the BB Project's success relies partly on community participation.

*"We strongly urge the residents of San Antonio and adjacent communities to take part in this cause, and patronize the commodities sold at their Barangay Bagsakan,"* she said.

As an annex will soon be constructed adjacent to the store, the San Antonio BB will hence provide its consumers and traders bigger space for their produce, and a bigger opportunity for economic growth and stability in this part of Bicolandia.

# Pinoy firms sold \$88M in int'l trade fairs

Filipino food processors and exporters were able to book sales of about \$88.4 million last year, as a result of their participation in international trade fairs, with the assistance of the Department of Agriculture.

In a report to Agriculture Secretary Bernie G. Fondevilla, Undersecretary Berna Romulo-Puyat said that the DA's participation in 15 trade fairs last year led to total sales of \$88.36 million, or 54.3% higher than the 2008 figure of \$57.25 million.

The trade fairs were held in Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, Japan, the United States (Boston and California), China (Hong Kong, Shanghai, Xiamen, Jiangsu and Nanning), Taiwan, South Korea and Germany.

Puyat said the increase in sales may be traced to a more careful study of the strength of demand in target markets such as China, Japan, the US and Middle East prior to participation in said trade fairs.

The DA also focused on countries with a strong demand for 'Pinoy' products.

At the same time, Puyat noted, the DA maintained and strengthened the presence of Philippine products in traditional markets like the United States, Japan and South Korea.

In addition, as directed by former DA Sec. Arthur Yap himself, Puyat said the DA also made it a point to include new Filipino exporters with novel products in each trade fair as a way of increasing consumer interest in Philippine products.

For instance, as strongly suggested by former Sec. Yap, she said the DA took advantage of the growing income and buying power of China and participated in three more trade fairs in the latter half of 2009 than it did in 2008.

In particular, she noted the DA participated in four big trade fairs (the International Boston Seafood Show, Natural Product Expo West, Foodex Japan and Seoul Food), where they reaped total booked sales

of almost US\$30.8 million.

Added Puyat: "Finally, in conformity with the Secretary's instructions, the DA adopted a strategy of including new Philippine exporters with novel products in each trade fair.

One example is the inclusion of Sagrex's Microwavable Saba Bananas at the 2009 Seoul Food Fair.

The DA through the Philippine Agricultural Dev't. and Commercial Corp. (PADCC) also helped fledgling agri-exporters through the subsidized display and promotion of new products in the *Pinoy AgriKart* in various trade fairs abroad, Puyat noted.

## Sumitomo lauds PGMA

Japanese-affiliated Sumitomo Fruits Corporation (Sumifru) Philippines, a major fruit producer in Southern Mindanao, has credited President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, her "strong leadership" and positive economic policies for the steady expansion of the firm's operations since 2006.

A subsidiary of the giant Sumitomo Corporation of Japan, Sumifru, in a recent letter to President Arroyo, made no pretense in asserting that her economic visions and policies enabled the company to triple its investments to P12.7 billion in four years and increased employment opportunities to 20,806.

"We want to thank Your Excellency for creating a very positive atmosphere for business through a grand economic vision and strong leadership, and thereby allowing Sumifru to operate in an environment conducive for investments and growth," said Paul Cuyegkeng, Sumifru Chief Executive Officer, in an April 22 letter to the President wherein he updated her of the firm's plans.

Cuyegkeng said that Sumifru's foreign direct



**AGRI KART IN SINGAPORE.** Philippine Ambassador H.E. Minda Calaguian-Cruz (far right) visits the Pinoy Agri Kart on display at the Philippine booth during the 17th Food and Hotel Asia (FHA) 2010 held at the Singapore Expo Center last April 20-23, 2010. FHA is Asia's largest international food and hospitality trade event, which is held every two years in Singapore. With Amb. Cruz are Fannie Guanzon, Pres. Herbs Best International, Inc.; Deputy Consul General Nathaniel Imperial, Evangeline Floro of the Philippine Agricultural Development and Commercial Corporation; and Beverly Aquinas-Salazar, Business Development Officer, Phil. Trade & Investment Centre. (inset) Amb. Cruz tries the pickled green mango of Zamboanga del Norte's Polyfruits, Inc. With her is Polyfruits' President Rosalina Salaveria.

investments of P4.867 billion which it committed in 2006 has tripled to P12.7 billion this year, while the company's direct employment figure rose from 12,050 also in 2006 to 20,806.

At present Sumifru's banana plantations in South Cotabato, Davao City and North Cotabato total 6,061 hectares, up from 4,000 hectares in 2006. An additional 1,320 hectares is being planned to increase the banana hectareage to 7,381 hectares this year.

The firm's pineapple plantations which cover 165 hectares will be expanded by 2,000 hectares. The firm also has 160 hectares devoted to papaya.

Overall from its 2006

commitment of 4,000 hectares, Sumifru projects a total of 9,706 hectares allocated for banana, pineapple and papaya. The Philippines is among the major exporters of banana and fresh fruits to Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Middle East, Hong Kong and China.

Apart from employment generation and direct investments, Sumifru is also engaged in social and community programs such as building roads and education to various communities that are in the vicinity of their operations.

Sumifru is also establishing a special agro-industrial zone in Davao city to augment its banana and vegetable exports. (OPS/PIA)

# DA-MRDP benefits 6,000 IPs

More than 6,000 indigenous peoples (IPs) in Mindanao are among the beneficiaries of livelihood, capacity-building and anti-poverty projects implemented by the Department of Agriculture through the Mindanao Rural Development Program (DA-MRDP), now on its second phase.

The IPs comprise 43 percent of the 14,185 total beneficiaries of the MRDP under its Community Fund for Agricultural Development (CFAD).

The MRDP2, which runs for five years, is jointly funded by the World Bank, the National government, local government units. Close to US\$30 million is allotted for CFAD projects.

A WB mission was recently in the country to review the progress of the various MRDP projects.

DA-Region 10 exec. director Lealyn Ramos serves as concurrent MRDP manager.

She said CFAD is a community-driven initiative, where beneficiary-residents identify their own projects, tapping available resources and skills of their members.

Of the IP-beneficiaries, 2,640 or 46% are female, while the rest (3,415) are male. They are mostly from Regions 10 (28%); 11 (26%); 12 (22%); 9 (7%);

Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (10%); and Caraga (8%).

On a per tribe basis, the CFAD beneficiaries belong to the *Ata*, *Manobo*, *Mansaka* and *Mandaya* tribes, in Davao region; *Teduray* in Sultan Kudarat; *T'boli* in South Cotabato;

*Subanen* in Zamboanga peninsula; and *Higaonon* from Northern Mindanao and Agusan provinces.

They are engaged in the production of banana, vegetables, peanuts and fruits, and cattle and swine raising.

Other tribes opted to acquire farm implements.

"Empowering the marginalized sector through agribusiness activities expands the strength of rural economy since agriculture is the mainstay of economic activities in rural areas," said Dir. Ramos.

Ramos added that the program has exceeded its IP target beneficiaries, as CFAD sets only 35 percent of the total beneficiaries for the tribal or IP communities.

Likewise, Ramos said MRDP-CFAD projects involve rural women as they play a key role in food production, efficient operation of livelihood enterprises, in addition to keeping their family's well-being. (DA-MRDP)



This newly established 15-meter bridge in Brgy. Anibongan, Maco, Compostela, is one of the many rural infrastructure projects funded jointly by the DA-MRDP and local government units.

## 3rd mariculture park rises in Tawi-Tawi

Another mariculture park (MP) was set up recently in the municipal waters of Barangay Tando, Panglima Sugala, in Tawi-Tawi, by the DA's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources-Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BFAR-ARMM) in collaboration with the provincial government.

BFAR-ARMM Regional Dir. Keise Usman said the P2.5-million mariculture project, the third in Tawi-Tawi, consists of 16 units of fish cages (4mx4mx5m), with a mooring system, and several anchors, sinkers, floaters and platforms. Each cage has a capacity of up to 1,200 pieces of fry.

This year, another MP will be set up in the municipal waters of Languyan.

Last year, two MPs were set up in the municipalities of Sibuto and Sitangkai.

Among the ARMM officials who graced the launch Vice Governor Ruby Sahali-Tan, who said the mariculture park is the realization of their continuing efforts to protect, conserve and manage the pristine coastal and environment resources of Tawi-Tawi.

In her message, she said, "continue preserving and conserving our natural environment, and continue ensuring food security, as we continue to make Tawi-Tawi a better place to live in, and attract investors."

Meanwhile, BFAR-ARMM Ass't. Regional Dir. Janice Desamito-Musali said last year ARMM ranked first as the country's highest fishery producer, at 889,000 metric tons, representing 28 percent of total national fishery production.

Roughly one-half (47%) of the region's fish harvest comes from Tawi-Tawi, Musali said.

To mitigate the adverse effects of climate change on fisherfolk, she said the DA-BFAR will continue to establish mariculture parks, undertake coastal resource management projects, and produce quality seaweeds--Tawi-Tawi's major fishery product.

For his part, Nurbert Sahali, the local chief executive of Panglima Sugala, expressed his all out-support to protect and maintain the newly-constructed mariculture park.

The launch was highlighted by the distribution of certificate of (Pls turn to p11)

## Former DA chief:

### 'Unlock potentials of dry lands'

"We have to unlock the potentials of our dry lands, as they are the frontiers for food sufficiency and security."

Such is the suggestion of former acting agriculture secretary William D. Dar, in a recent briefing of agriculture and science beat reporters, in Quezon City.

He said drylands could produce up to five tons of palay (unmilled rice) a year, with needed irrigation systems in place.

He also urged the Philippine government to take a pro-active stance in climate change issues particularly the El Niño phenomenon.

In his presentation, "El Niño and beyond: Towards food sufficiency and security in RP," Dar emphasized the need to implement vigorously sustainable pro-

grams for food sufficiency and security, as well as focus on infrastructure development, policy support, and increasing public investments in research and development.

Dar, who is currently Director General of the India-based Int'l Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), added that investments must be poured into the country's dry lands, which could contribute up to 40% to national food supply.

He also called for the vigorous implementation of long-term (10-year) agriculture and fishery

Former acting Agriculture Sec. William Dar (middle) stresses a point during a recent media briefing in Quezon City. With him is Dr. Santiago Obien, former exec. director of DA-PhilRice.



## DA wins 6 Binhi agri journ awards

Six awards out of the eight individual and institutional categories were won by two information officers, two agencies and a regional office of the Department of Agriculture, at the recent *Binhi Awards for agricultural journalism*, sponsored by the Philippine Agricultural Journalists, Inc. (PAJ), held April 16, 2010, at the DA-Bureau of Soils and Water Management convention hall, in Quezon City.

Rita dela Cruz of the DA's Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) and Noel Provideo of DA-Region 11 (Davao Region) won 2nd and 3rd place, respectively, as 'Agricultural Journalist of the Year.'

For their feat, dela Cruz and Provideo received a cash prize of P12,000 and P8,000, respectively, including a PAJ Binhi Award trophy.

Ms. dela Cruz also won the 'Agri Photo Journalist' award, with a cash prize of P15,000 and a Binhi trophy.

The DA also clinched all the four institutional awards, with a cash prize of P15,000 each and a Binhi trophy.

The winners are

\* *BAR Chronicle – Agricultural Newsletter*, of the DA-BAR;

\* *PhilRice* (of the DA-Philippine Rice Research Institute) (PhilRice) - *Agricultural Magazine*;

\* *MRDP InfoACE* (of the DA-Mindanao Rural Development Program) - *Agricultural Info/Media Campaign*; and

\* *Palay-Aralan sa Radyo* (of PhilRice) – *Agricultural Radio Program*.

The other individual Binhi winners are:

\* *Agricultural Journalist* – 1st place, Anselmo Roque (*Phil. Daily Inquirer*);

\* *Agribeat Reporter* – 1st place, Neil Jerome Morales (*BusinessWorld*); 2nd place, Amy Remo (*Phil. Daily Inquirer*)

\* *Environment Journalist* – Nestor Cuartero (*Manila Bulletin*).

*Binhi Awards* was launched by the PAJ in 1978 to improve the craft and standards of agricultural journalism in the Philippines. Founded in 1976, the PAJ is an association of more than 250 mainstream media practitioners covering the agricultural, environment and agrarian beats, and information officers of government agencies, as well as corporate media officers of private institutions and agri-fishery and environment industry associations.

The PAJ is affiliated with the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ) and Asian Agricultural Journalists and Writers Assn.

### New PAJ Officers

Meanwhile, the PAJ also held its annual general assembly and elections, April 16, 2010, at the DA-BSWM convention hall, with about 100 members in attendance.

Elected president for 2010-11 was Jennifer Ng of the *Business Mirror*. She replaced Sanny Galvez of *Manila Bulletin*.

The other officers and board of directors are:

Vice President for internal affairs – Noel O. Reyes (DA Information Service); Vice President for external affairs – Dr. Matilde Maunahan (UP Los Baños);

Secretary – Ruby Lumongsod (Quedancor); Treasurer – Inez Magbual (National Agribusiness Corp.);



Agriculture Secretary Bernie G. Fondevilla (3<sup>rd</sup> from left) leads the chopping of a lechon (roasted pig) to commence the opening of the 19<sup>th</sup> Hog Convention, in Davao City. With him are (from left) Emiko Purdy of USDA, Dr. Richard Yu of Bulacan Swine and Poultry Producers Ass'n, PROPORK President Albert Lim, Representative Nicanor Briones of AGAP Party-list, and Edwin Chen of PROPORK.

### PGMA ... (from p4)

shipping and fishing vessels to protect such pathways.

The government will offer reward and incentives to anyone who will provide information on anyone who harms and kills a whale shark.

Moreover, the National Bureau of Investigation and National

Auditor – Thelma Tolentino (Phil. Coconut Authority); Business Manager – Girlie Hilario (Phil. Fisheries Devt. Authority); and PRO – Divine Reyes (Feati University).

The board of directors are: Rudy Fernandez (Phil. Star), Conrad Cariño (Manila Times), Riza Olchondra (Phil. Daily Inquirer), Fermin Diaz (LaMB Magazine), Johnny Goloyugo (Int'l. Rice Research Institute), Charisma Gado (PhilRice), and Melba Wee (DA-Region 9).

Prosecution Service of the Department of Justice are tasked to intensify investigation, filing and prosecution of criminal cases against violators of laws and regulations on the protection of whale sharks.

A total of P15 Million in funds will be pooled from the Presidential Social Fund as support for capacity building, monitoring and enforcement activities for whale shark protection.

The presence of *butanding* in the Philippines proves the richness of the country's marine biodiversity.

Further, the gentle whale sharks have become top tourist attractions, thus providing coastal communities with needed livelihood and employment.

### DA honors ... (from p6)

antee cover to unsecured loans extended by financial institutions and other conduits, such as rural and cooperative banks, cooperatives, NGOs, SMEs.

The AGFP guarantees up to 85% of unsecured loans, in case of default or non-payment due to weather, pest and diseases and other fortuitous events.

From the initial P588 million committed by 10 GOCCs and GFIs in 2008, the AGFP now totals P4.5 billion, P4B of which came from the Malampaya revenues/royalties and the *Katas ng VAT*.

The DA in coordination with the Land Bank of the Philippines provides direction and exercises supervision over the AGFP. (DA-ACPC)



DA Undersecretary Joel Rudinas (2nd from left) hands over a trophy to Noel Provideo of DA-Region 11 (Davao) for placing 3rd as 'Agricultural Journalist of the Year' in the PAJ Binhi Awards for agricultural journalism. At right, Rita dela Cruz of DA-BAR receives her trophy and cash prize from SL Agritech Corp. President and CEO Henry Lim for winning 2nd as 'Agricultural Journalist of the Year.'

## **DA-BFAR props up ... DA, KOICA ... (from p1)**

seaweeds per hectare for a 45-day cropping period is 26,000 kilos.

### **Financing Program**

Created by the DA-ACPC in 2007, the FFP is an innovative lending program under the Agro Industry Modernization Credit and Financing Program (AMCFP), the government's umbrella financing program for agriculture and fisheries.

The program started when the ACPC placed P33 million in Land Bank as a deposit hold-out (DHO) fund to cover the exposure to new conduits that have not been accredited by the Bank.

Qualified conduit organizations then either retail the funds as microfinance loans to small fishing households, or as loans to finance any of the activities in the value chain of small players in the fisheries industry.

### **NFA sets up ... (from p1)**

in the first week of February to 57,611 bags in the second week of April.

In February, the NFA was able to buy 353,307 bags or 98% of its target (360,250 bags) for the month.

In March, it bought 431,633 bags (80% of targeted 540,250 bags).

The agency buys clean and dry palay at P17 per kilogram (kg) and gives an additional P0.20 per kg each for drying and transport incentives to individual farmers and cooperatives.

It also grants P0.30 per kg to members of farmer-groups as cooperative development incentive for their post harvest facility build-up.

"These translate to P17.70 per kg, or P885 per 50-kg bag," Navarro said.

From January to second week of April, the NFA has bought the biggest volume of palay from farmers in Southern Tagalog and the Bicol region, at 653,677 and 343,615 bags, respectively.

The other top regions are: Ilocos, 187,646 bags; Central Luzon, 82,072 bags; and Central Mindanao, 57,770 bags.

The NFA aims to buy a total 11.6 million 50-kg bags of palay for the entire 2010. (*NFA Public Affairs*)

parts to discuss project activities and timelines.

They agreed that the projects' regional review and site selection will be completed by July 2010. The prospective sites are Isabela, Quirino, Aurora, Bohol, Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental.

The feasibility will be finished by March 2011.

Puyat said the establishment of MIC models would lead to increased farm production and emergence of manufacturing sectors, and subsequently provide additional employment.

In South Korea, she added, the MICs led to a productive synergism among agriculture, infrastructure, manufacturing and knowledge-based industries, and the same could be achieved if we adopt it in the Philippines.

Capacity building, including an international workshop in December 2010--to be participated in by DA, KOICA and other partner-agencies--will be undertaken as part of the activities of the feasibility study, Puyat said.

Among those who attended the meeting held April 21, 2010, at



**DA Undersecretary Berna Romulo-Puyat (middle) presides a meeting to discuss the establishment of agri-based multi-industry clusters in selected provinces to be funded by Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). Flanking her are Mr. Jinhoo Kim (left), KOICA Philippine resident representative, and Ms. Soomi Choi, second secretary of the Korean Embassy in the Philippines.**

the DA were, for the Philippines: Dir. Zenaida Villegas of the DA's Project Development Service (PDS), and officials from the DA-Phil. Agricultural Dev't. and Commercial Corp. (PADCC), Nat'l. Economic and Dev't. Authority, Board of Investments, Phil. Economic Zone Authority, University of the Phils, and departments of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Agrarian Reform (DAR), Energy (DOE) and Finance (DOF).

The Korean government was represented by: Ms. Choi

Soomi, Second Secretary of the Korean Embassy; Jinhoo Kim, KOICA Philippine resident representative; and officials of the Saman Corp. and Korea Planners Association, who will conduct the feasibility study in tandem with the DA and Philippine agencies.

The Korean government through KOICA has provided a P649-M grant for the construction of modern rice processing centers in four provinces: Pangasinan, Iloilo, Bohol and Davao del Sur.

### **Gov't defends ... (from p3)**

sity, which means that the products will effectively come in at zero duty.

Pork imports that are within the so-called minimum access volume committed to the World Trade Organization are slapped a tariff of 30 percent. (*Business Mirror*)

### **Making Pinoy Pork Competitive**

Meanwhile, Malacanang is amenable to helping the Philippine meat industry produce quality and reasonably priced pork that is sufficient to meet local demand.

"It's good to talk with the DA and see what support the industry players need to improve their production and lower cost," deputy presidential spokesperson Gary Olivar said.

He noted the DA undertakes research and development activities aside from farm extension services so it can help identify priority support measures that government must extend for boosting the industry's performance.

Olivar raised this point as public concern surfaced over the possible negative effects of pork imports on local pork producers.

EO 875 authorizes Food Terminal Inc. to conduct among interested private traders, bidding for the right to import pork so domestic demand for this commodity can be met.

The government will allow such importation until end of June.

Malacanang assured authorities concerned studied this importation move so it won't compromise local producers' operations but will still enable more people to buy pork at affordable prices.

"This will lower pork cost," Olivar said, noting that government authorized the importation to augment existing local supply so a surge in prices could be prevented.

Pork will be more expensive if demand for this commodity exceeds available supply, he said.

To maximize public benefit from the importation, Olivar said marginalized communities will be the priority markets for pork to be sourced abroad.

He also urged local producers to continue improving their operations so they can better supply at affordable prices pork that is of high quality and in sufficient quantity.

"The challenge for them is to be competitive," he said. (*PNA*)

### **DA, Nestlé... (from p5)**

for distribution to interested farmers.

Meanwhile, the DA and Nestlé are set to conduct two batches of coffee production technology training workshops among farmers from the three provinces, in Tagum City, where Nestlé maintains a modern coffee breeding and techno-demo farm and training facility.

During the workshops, farmers will learn the economic importance of coffee, plantation care and maintenance of a nursery, harvest and post harvest operations, quality control and marketing.

The DA and Nestlé—through an agreement signed on July 11, 2009, by then Agriculture Sec. Arthur Yap and Mr. Doreswamy Nandkishore, Nestlé chairman and CEO—have been supporting coffee farmers in expanding, enriching and transforming farms into productive plantations.

### **3rd mariculture ... (from p8)**

entitlement to the 16 MP cage operators, ceremonial stocking of 6,000 fry of grouper, and distribution of fishing gears (multiple hook and line) to 20 beneficiaries and inputs to another group of 20 seaweed farmers. (*NKDilangalen, DA-BFAR ARMM*)

# Livestock sector faces bright prospects

The country's livestock industry faces bright prospects this year and beyond, owing to its vast export potentials, increasing local demand, and entry of new players.

Agriculture Secretary Bernie Fondevilla said the country is eyeing exports of Halal food and animal meat products such as chevon and processed products to the Middle East and other Islamic states.

Secondly, domestic demand is growing for semi-processed and processed beef, pork and chicken, all due to increasing population, influx of foreign tourists, and establishment of more hotels, restaurants and other commercial institutions in Metro Manila and other major cities in the country.

Thirdly, major Filipino agribusiness companies are upbeat, and thus are expanding and adding more product lines.

For one, San Miguel Foods Inc. is intensifying its export of chicken meat and semi-processed poultry products.

Secondly, Universal Robina Corp. has entered the broiler retail market with its "Super Saver" brand.

## Integrated Livestock Program

Hence, Secretary Fondevilla said efforts should be sustained by both national and local governments to craft and implement

## Unlock potentials ... (from p9)

of Philippine agriculture," he added.

Dar explained that funding and political will must be focused on the setting up of long-term infrastructure projects, such as irrigation systems and rainwater catchment facilities which will help farmers in their water requirements during dry months.

Water catchment system is the harvesting, gathering and storing of rainwater in a simple depot, which may later be used for livestock and irrigation activities, and even drinking.

Dar also called for the empowerment of young farmers who will take over agriculture.

"Today, the farmers are aged, and younger generations will soon take over to feed the people," he said.

"There is hope in climate change, we just need to put together a lot of effort," he ended.

demand-driven and integrated livestock industry programs that address the entire supply chain — from input and feed supply, animal production, to processing, marketing and consumption of meat and meat products.

For its part, the DA's Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI)—in partnership with the local government units, livestock and poultry raisers, and other industry stakeholders—will vigorously keep the Philippines free from avian flu, foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), and *ebola reston* virus.

Further, the DA-BAI will continue to pursue other major initiatives such as:

- Genetic resource improvement program for cattle and small ruminants;

- Breeder livestock loan program;

- Strengthening and upgrading of livestock production centers through continuous provision of quality stocks and equipment, rehabilitation of facilities, development of improved feed resources and nutrition, and human resource development;

- Implementation of hunger mitigation program, climate change and other environmental concerns; and

- Development of modern technologies on breeding and selection, improved feed resources and nutrition, animal waste management, and improved utilization of meat, edible and non-edible animal by-products.

## Industry Situationer

Last year, the country's livestock and poultry subsectors grossed P340.3 billion at current prices, contributing 28.5% to the total value of agriculture output of P1.2 trillion.

The livestock and poultry industries expanded by 6.5% and 10%, respectively, versus 2008 in terms of value.

Through the combined efforts of the DA-BAI, the private sector and poultry farmers, the Philippines remains bird flu-free, enabling it to export poultry meat and poultry products to Japan, Hong Kong and the Middle East, and breeder chicks to Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Nepal and the Middle East.

Further the islands of Mindanao, Visayas, Palawan



DA Ass't. Secretary Salvador Salacup (left) joins executive director Libertado Cruz (right) of the DA's Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) during the launch of a book, entitled 'Appreciating the Carabao,' as part of the PCC's 17<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, in Munoz, Nueva Ecija. The book was written by Dr. Anselmo Roque (middle), a retired professor at the Central Luzon State University (CLSU), a multi-awarded agriculture journalist, and correspondent of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

and Masbate remain free from FMD for the past 50 months.

The government expects Luzon to be declared FMD-free by the Office Internationale des Epizooties (OIE) or World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

## Rigid Disease Control

Hence, Secretary Fondevilla is urging the BAI and the country's livestock and poultry industry stakeholders to maintain rigid disease control and prevention systems to ensure increased production of safe, disease-free and world-class quality Philippine meat and meat products.

Besides eliminating the threat of zoonoses, he said that the

BAI should also continue its rabies eradication efforts; vaccination programs against Newcastle Disease, hog cholera, Hemosep, and other animal diseases; implementation of stringent biosecurity measures from farms, sites, migratory birds, meat processing plants, quarantine check points at airports and sea ports; and the operation and rehabilitation of livestock auction markets.

Equally important, he said, is for the BAI to implement hunger-mitigation and livelihood programs that benefit poor rural families such as "Kambingan at bakahan sa niyugan" and "Manukang bayan."

## PGMA fetes ex-DA chief, outstanding Pinoys

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo recently conferred the *Order of Lakandula* with the rank of *Grand Cross* (Bayani) on former agriculture secretary Arthur C. Yap and eight other former Cabinet members, in ceremonies held in Malacañang.

They include: Cabinet Secretary Silvestre Bello III; Agnes Devanadera (Justice);

Hermogenes Ebdane, Jr. (Public Works), Hermogenes Esperon, Jr. (Presidential Management Staff);

Peter Favila (Trade), Angelo Reyes (Energy), Augusto Syjuco (TESDA), and Edgardo Pamintuan (Presidential Ass't.).

President Arroyo also conferred the *Order of Lakandula* on distinguished individuals from the private sector, namely: National Scientist Fe del Mundo; and Shoichiro Toyoda, Honorary Chairman of Toyota Motors Corp.

She likewise conferred the *Order of Sikatuna* on Francis Chua, Chairman Emeritus of the Philippine Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and on Masaaki Furukawa, president of Japanese trading house Toyota Tsusho Corp.

The *Order of Lakandula* is one of the highest honors given by the Republic of the Philippines to its citizens and other foreign nationals.

It is an order of political and civic merit, in memory of *Lakandula's* dedication to the responsibilities of leadership, prudence, fortitude and courage in the service of one's people.

The *Order of Sikatuna*, on the other hand, is conferred on diplomats, officials and foreign nationals, who have rendered significant services in fostering and strengthening relations between their country and the Philippines. (OPS/PIA)