

Mindanao LGUs propose P6.4-B projects

Provincial and municipal governments in Mindanao have proposed a total of P6.38-billion worth of rural infrastructure projects under the second phase of the World Bank funded-Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP2), implemented by the Department of Agriculture.

"The total project proposals have exceeded our original target of P4.3B by 50%," said Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala in his report to President Benigno S. Aquino III.

Such favorable development, Secretary Alcala added, was a result of the DA's strategy to help Mindanao LGUs raise the required counterpart of 50% for every infrastructure project.

Participating or 'enrolled' municipalities need only to raise 10% of project cost as equity, while the DA will shoulder 40%. The MRDP will provide one-half from the WB loan.

"In a way, this also shows the trust and confidence of Mindanao local executives on His Excellency's administration, as participation in MRDP projects from 2007 to 2010 was only 15%," noted Sec. Alcala in his report to President Aquino.

Of the total P6.38-B infrastructure projects, P1.22B are either completed, ongoing and under procurement; P2.1B-worth are under review; and P3.04 B are being packaged for submission by LGU proponents.

100 LGU Chiefs Attend Forum

Meanwhile, more than 100 Mindanao LGU executives attended the MRDP consultation, January 27, in Cagayan de Oro City.

The one-day event was unprecedented, as it gathered nine governors, seven congressmen and more than 80 city and municipal mayors, and vice mayors, discussing ways and mutual cooperation to speed up the implementation of various MRDP infrastructure and livelihood projects.

The MRDP2 covers Mindanao's
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Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala (left) shares with World Bank country director Bert Hofman (2nd from right) and Mark Woodward (right), WB sustainable development leader, the success stories of two lady farmers who now live comfortably as their incomes have increased considerably by selling their produce directly at the Sentrong Pamilihan ng Produktong Agrikultural sa Quezon (SPPAQ) in Sariaya, one of the country's major trading posts.

DA allots P12.8B for irrigation

The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) is getting the lion's share of the 2011 budget of the Department of Agriculture, at P12.79 billion, representing roughly 37% of the DA's total

budget for the year.

"As irrigation is directly proportional to rice production, we should provide it the needed funds so we can attain our rice self-sufficiency target by 2013," said Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala.

Of the total NIA budget, about 61% or P7.75B is allotted for 43 locally-funded projects (LFPs), while the rest is for six foreign-assisted projects (FAPs), added NIA administrator Antonio Nangel.

Altogether, Sec. Alcala said the projects will contribute to increasing rice production this year and in succeeding years, as additional areas will be irrigated, totalling some 156,000 hectares.

At an average yield of five tons of palay per hectare per cropping, and two croppings a year, such additional hectareage will contribute at least 1.56 million tons of palay annually, Nangel said.

When completed, the local and foreign-funded irrigation projects will irrigate a total of 27,131 hect-

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PCIC pays P245M in crop claims

The Department of Agriculture through the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. (PCIC) has paid a total of P245.5 million to 28,419 farmers, enabling them to recover and start anew, from crop damages due to El Niño in the first semester and typhoon 'Juan' in the latter half of 2010.

In a report to Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala, PCIC president Jovy Bernabe said the amount was the biggest indemnification the agency has paid in the last 30 years.

Despite this record, Sec. Alcala has instructed the PCIC to further reduce the processing time, ranging from 9 to 19 days, to seven to 10 working days.

He issued the order during a meeting of the regional management committee (RMC) in CARAGA, middle of January.

In all, the PCIC in 2010 insured P5.95-B worth of agricultural investments, 13% more than in 2009, at P5.2B.

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Senator Francis Pangilinan (right), chair of the Senate agriculture committee and Congressional Oversight Committee on Agricultural and Fisheries Modernization (COCAF), suggests some topics to be discussed at the COCAF organizational meeting, Jan. 30, 2011, at the DA-BSWM convention hall. With him are (from left) Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala, COCAF co-chair Rep. Mark Llandro Mendoza, and COCAF members Rep. Jesus Sacdalan and Rep. Imelda Quibranza Dimaporo. (Pls read story on page 3.)

Game na!

Mula sa dating pagbibigay ng subsidyo at pinansyal na tulong sa mga magsasaka, mas inuuna na ang pagsasaayos ng imprastruktura para mas matagal ang benepisyo at mas marami ang makinabang.

Ito ang isa sa mga malaking pagbabago sa direksyon ng Department of Agriculture.

Kasabay nito ay ang patuloy na pagsuporta sa mga magsasaka at lokal na industriya, kahit pa sabihin na mas murang bumili ng bigas sa ibang bansa.

Ganito ang layon ni Sec. Proceso 'Procy' J. Alcala sa pamunuan ng DA, alinsunod sa balangkas o 'framework' ng Agri-Pinoy.

Mula ngayon, ani Sec 'Procy,' ang anumang programa ng DA ay dapat tutugon sa apat na prinsipyo ng Agri-Pinoy.

Ang mga ito ay:

- 1) Food security and self-sufficiency;
- 2) Sustainable agriculture and fishery;
- 3) Natural resource management;
- 4) Local development.

Maliban sa mga prinsipyong ito, ang bawat programa ng DA ay kailangang tumugon sa mga sumusunod na 'check list:'

- 1) Broad-based o marami ang nakikilahok at makikinabang;
- 2) May pagtutulongan sa mga samahan ng magsasaka, lokal na pamahalaan, at iba pang ahensya ng gobyerno;
- 3) Tumutugon sa mga pangangailang binhi, kagamitan, teknolohiya at sistema sa produksyon, postharvest, processing at marketing o tinatawag na 'farm-to-table;'
- 4) Sustainable farming systems
- 5) Resilient o tumutugon sa mga pagbabago ng

panahon at sa pandaigdigang kalakalan.

Ilan lamang ito sa mga direktiba ni Sec 'Procy' sa mga kasapi ng DA management committee o ManCom nitong unang linggo ng Enero.

Inilatag niya ang ilan sa mga guideline upang mas maiging maipatupad ang mga programa at adhikain ng DA, lalung-lalo na ang mga pamamaraan upang makamit ang kasapatan sa bigas sa taong 2013.

Binigyan niya rin ng diin sa bawat pinuno ng DA na dapat nilang ipaalam sa mga lokal na pinuno--Governor, Congressman, Mayor at maging Kapitan ng Barangay--ang anumang programa o proyekto na ipapatupad ng DA sa kanayunan.

Sa pakikipag-ugnayan sa kanila, makasisiguro na magkakaroon ng isang kaisipan, layunin at galaw ang pagpapatupad ng anumang programa, mas maluwat at matagumpay na maisasagawa ang anumang adhikain at proyekto.

Gayundi din dapat ang antas ng pakikipag-tulungan at ugnayan sa mga samahan ng magsasaka at mangingisda, NGOs at pribadong sektor.

Totoo nga na napakalaki ng hamon na hinaharap ng buong pamunuan at kawanihan ng DA, lalung-lalo na ni Sec Procy.

Mabigat ang nakaatang na responsibilidad at mataas ang expectation sa kanya ng taong bayan.

Halimbawa, ngayon pa lamang ay marami na ang nagsasabing hindi natin makakamit ang kasapatan sa bigas sa 2013.

Kaya naman, buong puso nating ibigay ang ating pakikiisa at anumang tulong kay Sec Procy at sa buong Kagawaran.

Game na!



Sec. Alcala (top, left) keynotes the MRDP consultation in Cagayan de Oro, attended by more than 100 Mindanao governors, congressmen, mayors and vice mayors (bottom).

Mindanao LGUs ... (from p1)

26 provinces and 225 municipalities. It commenced in 2007 and ends in 2012.

To date, the MRDP has approved and currently implements various projects, totalling 15% of program loan. This level, Secretary Alcala said should be increased to 60% by March 31, 2011.

One major concern proposed during the consultation was the concreting of critical portions of FMRs, allotting up to 75% of total project cost, and the remaining 25% for maintenance.

Hence, the cost of 'pipelined' FMRs will be revised accordingly, said MRDP director Lealyn Ramos.

For his part, MRDP deputy program director Arnel de Mesa said a workshop involving provincial, city and municipal engineers, and MRDP project coordinators will

be held on February 7 to 11, 2011, in Davao City. The group will revise and evaluate existing FMR and other infrastructure projects, finalize project proposals and submit these for approval, on or before March 31, 2011.

Sec. Alcala, who is a civil engineer by profession, said he will from hereon act as the MRDP's 'playing coach' and personally oversee the implementation of various projects. He committed to visit Mindanao at least once every two or three weeks to monitor MRDP projects.

Among the governors present were: Oscar Moreno (Misamis Oriental), Rodolfo del Rosario (Davao del Norte), Adolf Edward Plaza (Agusan del Sur), Esmael Mangudadatu (Maguindanao), Ronaldo Yebes (Zamboanga del Norte), Antonio Cerilles (Zamboanga del Sur), Corazon Malayanon (Davao Oriental),

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DA chief issues marching orders

Provide self-less service.

Stay 'clean' and govern well to cleanse the DA's image.

Improve the lives of small farmers, fishers, and provide a better future for their children.

These are some of the initial marching orders of Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala to all DA regional, bureau and service directors, and heads of attached agencies and corporations, and foreign-assisted projects, during the DA family's first national 'command conference' or management committee (ManCom) executive meeting, January 6, 2011, at the DA-Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) convention hall.

He said the DA family officials and staff have a lot to do in the area of good governance, and provision of quick and efficient service to clienteles, and quality farm inputs, equipment and infrastructure to farmers' and fishers' groups and local governments.

During the meeting, he also presented the "Agri-Pinoy" strategic framework that will set the direction of all existing and new DA programs.

He said Agri-Pinoy has four guiding principles, namely: food security and self-sufficiency; sustainable agriculture and fishery; natural resource management; and local development.

These guiding principles should serve as the barometer or 'measuring stick' of current and new DA initiatives and programs.

He urged concerned national coordinators of major commodity programs (rice, corn, high value crops, fishery and livestock) to finalize their respective commodity roadmap, taking into account the four guiding principles of Agri-Pinoy.

He told all DA regional executive directors (REDs) and other DA family officials to regularly inform their respective provincial, city and municipal executives of any DA project or activity--to gather their support and cooperation, more particularly so they could provide needed support and counterpart funds to implement more farm and fishery projects as possible.

He asked the DA-REDs to lead the regular meetings of the Regional ManCom (RMC), com-



Sec. Alcala (3rd from right) presides over the DA family's first national ManCom executive meeting, January 6, 2011, at the BSWM convention hall. With him (from left) are USec. Antonio Fleta, NFA Adm. Angelito Banayo, USec. Joel Rudinas, STAG member Ed dela Torre, and USec. Bernadette Romulo-Puyat.

posed of respective head of DA family agencies in the region--including the regional or district manager of the Land Bank of the Philippines (as the DA Secretary serves as a member of the LBP Board of Directors)--to discuss major agricultural and fishery concerns and issues.

One such critical RMC meeting, Sec. Alcala said, should be held weeks before the start of the cropping season to discuss the interventions and assistance that the DA should provide farmers.

He asked the REDs to help strengthen the seed industry in their respective area, particularly the seed growers' associations. He told them to conduct an inventory of seed banks or storage warehouses, if any.

Under his watch, he said the DA should build at least one seed bank per province to ensure a ready supply in times of calamities.

He said planting quality seeds is the 'bedrock of agriculture,' followed by irrigation and sustainable farming technologies and practices.

He rallied all DA officials to contribute their share in attaining Aquino government's rice self-sufficiency goal by 2013.

He asked the National Agricultural and Fisheries Council (NAFC) to coordinate with other agencies so it could streamline and refine its proposed AKBay livelihood program intended to benefit poor and marginal farming and fishing communities.

Floods damage P463-M crops; DA provides seeds, other farm inputs

Continuous rains due to a lingering cold front early this month flooded farmlands and fishponds in several regions of the country, exacting an estimated loss of P463-million worth of various crops, livestock and fish stocks.

Field reports submitted to the Department of Agriculture Central Action Center (DACAC) show that the floods submerged some 47,480 hectares of crop lands in eight regions (4-B, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 13), damaging a total of 2,795 tons of rice, corn, and high value crops.

Minimal damage was reported in the fisheries and livestock sub-sectors, with damages at P2.9M and a little over P0.5M, respectively.

To enable affected farmers to replant again, the DA has extended assistance to seven regions (Bicol, Western Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao, Davao, and CARAGA), where farmlands were flooded due to continuous rains early this month.

Sec. Alcala personally distributed said assistance when he visited St. Bernard, in Southern Leyte, along with President Aquino, and in other provinces.

(Pls read related stories on pp 10-11.)

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COCAFAM tackles updates on AFMA, ACEF, Organic Act

For its first organization meeting, the Congressional Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization (COCAFAM)--chaired by Senator Francisco Pangilinan and co-chaired by Rep. Mark Llandro Mendoza--discussed respective updates on the three major laws that impact on the country's agriculture and fishery sector.

The committee members, welcomed by Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala, were briefed on the implementation of the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) by DA Undersecretary (USec) Segfredo Serrano, followed by USec Antonio Fleta on the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF), and Dir. Gilberto Layese of the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards on Organic Agriculture Act. Also present was DA USec Bernadette Romulo Puyat.

The meeting commenced with Sec. Alcala welcoming Senator Pangilinan, Rep. Mendoza, and other COCAFAM members.

Thereafter, COCAFAM OIC-executive director Jocelyn Badiola gave an overview of the committee's tasks, among them to oversee and monitor the implementation of the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA), and other agri-related laws, as well as provide legislative support to the respective committee on agriculture at the Senate and House of Representatives.

Senator Pangilinan said that under his chairmanship the COCAFAM will conduct regular consultations and dialogues with farmers, fishers and other industry stakeholders to gather their pulse and feedback on how government and the legislature can sustain the development, modernization and com-

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SPJA urges hog raisers to link with corn farmers

To ensure regular supply of corn for feed, Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala is urging hog raisers to link with corn farmers by forging contract-growing and marketing agreements.

He assures them that the Department of Agriculture will provide the needed technical support to institutionalize and strengthen such partnerships between hog raisers and corn farmers.

Sec. Alcala made the commitment at the 'Pig Summit,' held January 26, 2011, in Cebu, attended by more than 100 hog raisers from Central Visayas and other parts of the country to discuss and thresh out industry problems, in consultation with national and local officials.

Senator Francis Pangilinan, chair of the Senate agriculture committee, keyed the affair.

It was also attended by several Representatives, among them: Llandro Mark Mendoza, Lorenzo Tañada III, Angelo Palmones, Roberto So and Nicanor Briones.

Sec. Alcala was joined by other DA officials, namely: ass't. sec. for livestock Davinio Catbagan; Dir. Jane Bacayo of the National Meat Inspection Service; Dir. Efren Nuestro of the Bureau of Animal Industry; Dir. Manuel Jarmin of the Livestock Development Council; Administrator Grace Cenas of the Nat'l. Dairy Authority; and DA-Region 7 Dir. Ricardo Oblena.

Sec. Alcala said the DA will consider a program to provide small hog raisers, as they comprise 70% of the country's hog industry, with subsidized vaccines, and other veterinary, technical and logistics support.

He encouraged them along with other livestock and poultry raisers to seize the country's comparative advantage as the Philippines remains free from the dreaded foot and mouth disease (FMD) and avian flu.

He requested the hog raisers' group to identify their representatives who will meet regularly with the DA (to be led by A/Sec Catbagan) to prioritize major industry problems, come up with possible solutions, and respective timelines.

He instructed Asec Catbagan to coordinate with big commercial hog raisers and their respective associations so they could make proper representations with

the Senate and Congress of the Philippines to draft a proposed legislation against technical smuggling of pork and chicken and other meat products in the country. They can also seek the opinion of the Department of Justice on the matter.

He said the DA will consider recommending that tariff rates be increased for all types of meat (including offals, jowls and skins, etc.) but with particular consideration of the Minimum Access Volume (MAV), which is a commitment of the Philippines under the World Trade Organization.

During the forum, hog raisers recommended that meat imports should first be inspected by the DA-BAI quarantine officers instead of the Customs examiners to determine if these are offals, jowls or skin and not prime cuts, which have a higher tariff. On this, Sec. Alcala said the DA will formally request Customs Commissioner Angelito Alvarez;

On the issue of traces of banned drugs (e.g. Salbutamol and costeroids) in local meat, A/Sec Catbagan urged the hog raisers to police their ranks. On this, Sec. Alcala instructed BAI Dir. Nuestro to recommend a composite technical working group (government and the private sector) to convene and come up with concrete action plans.

For his part, NMIS Dir. Bacayo said they are now drafting a DA administrative order for the mandatory accreditation of cold storages and warehouses.

More corn seen in 2011, at 7 M tons

Corn harvest in 2011 is expected to reach at least seven million tons, 10% more than last year's 6.38 M tons, due to better weather conditions that will encourage more farmers to plant, according to Roger V. Navarro, president of the Phil. Maize Federation, Inc.

He is urging government to implement infrastructure projects nationwide to reduce postharvest losses, guarantee corn quality, and longer shelf life.

DA assistant secretary Dennis R. Araullo, rice and corn program national coordinator, agrees with Navarro's projection.

The University of Asia and the Pacific Center for Food and Agri Business, in its Agricultural Sce-



Sec. Alcala (2nd from left) appreciates milk blends produced by Lanao Foundation Inc. (LFI) at MINCOCO, Bangaan, Lanao del Norte. LFI processes various milk and dairy products which are sold in commercial outlets and through government milk-feeding programs of the departments of agriculture (DA), education (DepEd), and social welfare and development (DSWD), benefiting to date more than 100,000 pre-schoolers and grade 1 pupils in Lanao del Norte and adjoining provinces. Shown with him are (from left) DA-Nat'l. Dairy Authority administrator Grace Cenas, Land O'Lakes Phils. country manager Qazi Yawar Naem, USDA agricultural counselor Philip Shull, former Lanao del Norte governor Abdullah Dimaporo, and Lanao del Norte 2nd Dist. Rep. Fatima Aliah Dimaporo.

High value crops program sets aside P160M for R&D

To prepare the high value crop sector for the ill effects of climate change, the Department of Agriculture through its high-value crops development program (HVCDP) program is setting aside at least P160 million (M) or 20% of its 2011 P800-M budget for research and development (R&D).

Dante Delima, national HVCDP coordinator, said as per instruction of DA Sec. Proceso Alcala

he has realigned the program's priorities, focusing on R&D.

"We have a lot of initiatives [but] these are anchored on the need for climate-change adaptation and mitigation," Delima said.

Meanwhile, former DA chief Dr. William Dar, and currently director general of ICRISAT, handed over to Sec. Alcala new cultivars of sweet sorghum, peanut and pigeon pea for field testing in the Philippines.

(Pls see photo story on p14)

Dar said the Philippine government's agricultural policy for the past 40 years heavily favors rice. While rice is good, it is not enough. Filipinos should have other sources of protein and calories, he added.

Apart from providing protein and calories, dryland crops developed by ICRISAT have the potential to increase the incomes of Filipino farmers, said Dar.

ICRISAT scientists said the Philippines can consider following the footsteps of Myanmar, which exported 445,520 tons of pigeon pea, mostly to India in 2008, valued at \$234M.

Meanwhile, Dar is advocating for the creation of a Philippine Rainfed Agriculture Institute (Philrai) to institutionalize strat-

narios 2010-2011 report, said it also expects 2011 corn output to rebound to at least 7 M tons, driven by increase in area and yield, and favorable market prices and weather conditions.

For its part, the DA's Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS) forecasts a higher first semester corn output of 3.29M tons, 36.4% more than 2.42 M tons last year, citing an increase in harvest area and improvement in yield due to favorable weather.

Harvest area is expected to increase to 1.118 million hectares in the first semester, from 967,000 hectares last year, while yield per hectare may increase to 2.95 MT from 2.5 MT last year.

(Business World)

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DA to put up seed banks in every province

The Department of Agriculture (DA) through Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) will strengthen efforts to attaining rice self-sufficiency in 2013 by establishing seed banks all over the country.

Secretary Proceso J. Alcala, in a speech during BPI's 81st anniversary, January 19, 2011, said the BPI, together with the DA Regional Field Units, should establish at least one or two seed banks in each province.

This will ensure that farmers will have immediate access to good seeds, especially when their respective areas are hit by typhoons.

"We experienced the lack of ready source of seeds when typhoon Ondoy hit us two years ago. It took us six months to recover from the damage it brought, and there were no quality seeds available," Alcala said.

Setting up seeds banks will also be among the country's major tools in adapting to the challenges brought about by climate change, he added.

"As rice is site-specific, it is important that different sites in the country should have their own supply of good seeds that adapt well in a particular location," Sec. Alcala noted.

"Each seed bank should have good drying facilities," he said.

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ATI @ 24, launches NMRiceMobile

An interactive SMS (short messaging service) format mobile phone concept for rice farmers, the first in the world, was launched on January 24 at the 24th anniversary of the DA's

Agricultural Training Institute (ATI).

Dubbed as the NMRice Mobile (Nutrient Manager for Rice), the toll-free text messaging service is DA-ATI's part of bringing said electronic program to rice farmers, said ATI Director Asterio Salio.

Powered by Globe Telecoms and SMART, the free SMS can be accessed by both Globe and SMART subscribers.

A rice farmer can make a call and receive fertilizer recommendations through text even if the subscriber's Peso account balance is zero.

To make a call, subscribers should dial 2378 for SMART and 2378 for Globe.

The DA's partners in this collaborative undertaking are: International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and PhilRice; Globe Telecoms; SMART Communications, Inc.; and University of Southeastern Philippines and West Visayas State University.



Usec. Bernadette Romulo-Puyat leads the unveiling of NMRiceMobile's toll-free numbers to officially open it to the public. With her are (from left): Ramon Isberto of Smart Communications, Inc; Karen Eloisa Barroga, PhilRice; Dr. Achim Dobermann, IRRI Deputy Director General for Research; ATI Dir. Asteriot Salio; and Jose Luis Reyes of Globe Telecoms.

PCA puts up P216M coconut dev't center in Aurora

The Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) inaugurated recently a P216-million Aurora Province Coconut Development Center (APCDC), at a 133-hectare public land in Dinalungan.

Newly-sworn in PCA Administrator Euclides G. Forbes led the ceremonial ribbon cutting, along with Aurora Congressman Juan Edgardo Angara, DA Ass't. Sec. Edilberto M. De Luna and Dinalungan Mayor Tito Tubigan.

Forbes said the APCDC is a collaborative venture between the DA-PCA, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and

the Local Governments of Aurora and Dinalungan.

Commenced in 2008, the funds earmarked are for site development, planting of mother coco palms, construction of laboratories and other facilities, and for initial operation.

He expressed gratitude to Senator Edgardo J. Angara and Congressman Sonny Angara for their conceptualization of the project, and for their initiative of securing the needed funds.

"This pioneering facility will be the center for seed nut production that will cater to the needs

for planting materials, not only in the province of Aurora, but also of the whole of Luzon" Forbes said.

The APCDC will be the PCA's base in the massive coconut planting and replanting as ordered by DA Secretary Alcala.

"As the PCA first and only coconut development center in this part of our country, APCDC will showcase all the matured technologies generated from all our other research centers" Forbes said.

The Center will engage in embryo culture of makapuno for

(Pls turn to p15)



Sec. Alcala (left) lauds the Bureau of Plant Industry for its contribution to the sustained development of Philippine agriculture particularly in the field of research and development and innovative approaches to preventing and controlling crop pests and diseases, increasing crop production, and providing sources of livelihood and incomes to farmers and ruralfolk, during the agency's 81st anniversary celebration. Listening at the head table are (from left) BPI ass't. dir. Dante Delima, Usec. Joel Rudinas, BPI dir. Clarito Barron, BPI asst. dir. Henry Carpio and Asec. Edilberto De Luna.

Rowena Castillo, of IRRI, said the mobile phone application will use an IVR or interactive voice response, an automated communication technology. She said the electronic extension service is geared toward accelerating the transfer of rice production technology through a "quick guide."

The quick guide is a set of questions with multiple choice answers. The subscriber is guided by a recording in his preferred language: Tagalog, Cebuano, Iloko or English.

Dr. Achim Dobermann, IRRI Deputy Director-General for Research, said with this interactive communication through mobile phone, the science and technology of rice production can now be appreciated fully such that fertilizer application can now be precise, that is "done in the right way, at the right time, with the right amount."

Years ago, Dr. Dobermann recalled that he was amazed to find out that Filipino farmers apply fertilizer differently everywhere in the country.

Now, with the NM Rice Mobile, he said "this is the first type of application in the world. This is a true milestone for the rice farmers in the world."

Undersecretary Berna Romulo-Puyat, who represented Sec. Proceso Alcala, pushed the button to a video clip demonstration on how the NMRice Mobile operates, said that the project will initially cover five provinces, namely Isabela, Nueva Ecija, Bohol, Iloilo and Agusan del Norte.

Winding his short message, Dr. Dobermann said with optimism: "I look forward that this [NMRice Mobile] application work extensively." (ATI)

‘Bridging the gap, feeling the pulse’

Thus is the continuing mission of Secretary Proceso ‘Procy’ J. Alcala, as he resumed his regional visits from January 14 to 28, which took him to several provinces and four regions — consulting, mingling and sharing light moments and jokes with farmers, fisherfolk, local officials and other agri-fishery stakeholders.

On January 14, a day after meeting with fishery industry officials at Navotas Fish Port — Sec. Alcala joined President Benigno S. Aquino III in **Southern Leyte**, at St. Bernard Central Elementary School, where they comforted flood-affected ruralfolk and farmers, sharing with them relief goods, certified rice and vegetable seeds, and other farm inputs and implements.

Below are the highlights of Sec Procy’s regional and provincial field visits:

• **Jan. 17 (Pagbilao, Quezon)**

At Pueblo Por La Playa, he was briefed by Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP) officials, led by DA Region 10 Dir. Lealyn Ramos and MRDP deputy director Arnel de Mesa, on the status of MRDP project implementation, and discussed strategies to speed up the program.

He met over lunch with the DA agriculture attaches and international relations division staff, led by Jojo Lazaro, who presented their workshop outputs. Sec Procy asked the agri attaches to continuously seek export markets for traditional and emerging Philippine fresh and processed farm and fishery food products.



President Aquino hands over relief goods to families displaced by flashfloods at Saint Bernard Elementary School in Guinsaugon, Southern, Leyte. (Malacañang photo)



With agricultural attaches

He presented the National Farmers Registry System to Quezon Governor David ‘Jay-Jay’ Suarez and dozens of Quezon municipal mayors, as the province is one of the three pilot areas where farmers and fishermen will be surveyed as part of the DA national project, entitled “Unified and Enterprise Geospatial Information System (UEGIS).”

• **Jan 18 (Tiaong & Pagbilao, Quezon)**

He hosted breakfast meeting with World Bank (WB) and US Dep’t. of Agriculture officials, led by WB Philippines country director Bert Hoffman and USDA counselor Philip Shull, at Earthkeepers’ Farm in Tiaong and then visited its organic farm. He accompanied the group at the Sentrong Pamilyan ng Produktong Agrikultura ng Quezon.

He was accompanied by DA region 8 Dir. Leo Cañeda and Ass’t. Dir. Dante Delima of the Bureau of Plant Industry.

Later in the afternoon, he attended a farmers’ forum and multi-sectoral consultation in Calbiga, **Samar**.

Among the local officials present were: Governor Sharee Ann Tan de los Santos, Vice Governor Stephen James Tan, Rep. Milagros Tan, Calbiga Mayor Melchor Nacario.

Later in the evening, he traveled to the Visayas State University (VSU) campus, in Baybay, **Leyte**, had dinner and thereafter discussed possible joint projects with local executives and VSU officials.

Among the local officials present were: Rep. Jose Carlos Cari and former Rep. Carmen Cari.

The following day, he had a breakfast meeting with the members of DA Region 8 Management Committee (RMC), led by Dir. Cañeda, and thereafter visited several facilities of the VSU, before flying back to Manila.



With World Bank and USDA officials

• **Jan 20 (Agusan del Sur)**

After several postponements last year, Sec Procy finally visited CARAGA, staying for three days, starting off with a dialogue with local chief executives led by Governor Adolf Edward Plaza and Reps.



Sec. Alcala (2nd from right) appreciates a giant ube at Visayas State University (VSU), along with (from left) VSU Pres. Jose Bacusmo, DA Region 8 Dir. Leo Caneda, PhilRootcrops RTC Dr. Emma Data, and High Value Commercial Crops Program National Coordinator Dante Delima.



With Agusan del Sur officials

Maria Valentina Plaza and Evelyn Mellana, and a dozen Agusan del Sur municipal mayors, a provincial training center, Patin-ay, Prosperidad. He was accompanied by DA-CARAGA dir. Reinerio Belarmino, Jr. and other DA officials and staff.

After lunch, at a nearby gymnasium, he greeted about 1,000 farmers, fishers and ruralfolk, and thereafter distributed several farm inputs, implements, tractors and postharvest equipment to farmers through their respective local officials and Gov. Plaza.

- He keynoted a Hog Raisers Summit, at Waterfront Hotel, along with Senator Francis Pangilinan, chair of the Senate agriculture committee. Attended by about 300 hog raisers, the forum was also graced by several members of the House of Representatives.

- He had a lunch meeting with DA region 7 officials and staff, and other stakeholders, where he listened and reacted to outputs of the Central Visayas Vegetable Stakeholders Workshop, led by Dir. Dante Delima of the HVCDP.



With Surigao del Norte officials and farmers

• Jan 21 (Surigao del Norte)

- He consulted with Surigao del Norte farmers, fishers and local officials, led by Gov. Sol Matugas, along with Rep. Francisco Matugas, Rep. Guillermo Romarate, and Surigao City mayor Ernesto Matugas.

• Jan 21 (PhilRice, Agusan del Norte)

- After lunch, he consulted with farmers and officials and staff of the Philippine Rice Research Institute experiment station at RT Romualdez, Agusan del Norte, where he also distributed some farm inputs and implements. Also present were Agusan del Norte Gov. Erlpe John Amante, PhilRice Dir. Ronilo Beronio, and PhilRice-Agusan branch manager Abner Montecalvo, Dir. Belarmino, and local officials.

• Jan 21 (Butuan City)

- He had a dinner meeting with Agusan del Norte local chief executives, led by Butuan City Mayor Ferdinand Amante, Jr., Rep. Angel Amante-Matba, Rep. Jose Aquino, and several municipal mayors.

• Jan 22 (Butuan City)

He had a breakfast meeting with the members of the DA-CARAGA Regional Management Committee (RMC), led by Dir. Belarmino, where he issued several directives, among them was the attainment of rice self-sufficiency target by 2013, repair of irrigation systems, reducing the processing and payment of crop insurance claims,

and provision of quality, efficient and fast service to farmers, fishers and other stakeholders.

Thereafter, he met with the local media for a brief press conference.

Finally, he has a dialogue with dozens of NGOs in the region, where possible collaborative projects were proposed and discussed.

In all, during his three-day visit, Sec Procy has committed at least P29-million of various agricultural and infrastructure projects, on top of the cost repair and rehabilitation of irrigation systems, upon the validation and recommendation of NIA administrator Antonio Nangel.

•January 25 (Bohol)

- He keynoted the Bohol Organic Agriculture Summit and 11th Ubi Festival, at the Bohol Cultural Center, where some 1,000 farmers, stakeholders and local officials attended, led by Bohol Gov. Edgar Chatto.

- After lunch, he visited several agricultural projects such as the Organic Rice Marketing Center of the Carmen Samahang Nayon Multi-Purpose Cooperative, the BOATech Center of the Provincial Government, Bayungan Dam, and the DA-Central Visayas Integrated Agricultural Research Center.

- He also visited the Dairy Multiplier Farm in Ubay Stock Farm, accompanied by National Dairy Authority administrator Grace Cenas. His visit was auspicious as a calf was born that day. It was christened 'Procy' by Adm. Cenas.



With Bohol Gov. Edgar Chatto (3rd from left) and a newborn calf at the DA Ubay Stock Farm. Also shown are NDA administrator Grace Cenas (4th from left) and DA technical assistant Teresa Saniano .

- Thereafter, he had a dinner cum dialogue at 'The Barn,' Bohol bee farm, in Dauis, with Gov. Chatto, and officials of NGOs in the organic agriculture movement. The dialogue was moderated by with DA-ATI Region 7 Director Carolyn May Daquio, and BISAD President Eulale Albuladura.

• Jan 26 (Cebu City)

- He keynoted a Hog Raisers Summit, at Waterfront Hotel, along with Senator Francis Pangilinan, chair of the Senate agriculture committee. Attended by about 300 hog raisers, the forum was also graced by several members of the House of Representatives.

- He had a lunch meeting with DA region 7 officials and staff, and other stakeholders, where he listened and reacted to outputs of the Central Visayas Vegetable Stakeholders Workshop, led by Dir. Dante Delima of the HVCDP.



With Sen. Francis Pangilinan and Rep. Mark Llandro Mendoza at Hog Raisers Summit, Cebu.

(Pls turn to p13)

DA writer, 3 others win agri journ awards

Three writers and a TV agriculture program of the Department of Agriculture won in the 4th Bright Leaf Agricultural Journalism Awards, sponsored by Philip Morris Fortune Tobacco Corp., January 18, 2011, at Sofitel Hotel, Manila.

DA Information Service staff Adora Rodriguez won as the 'Best Regional News Story' for her article (at right), 'Greening' Mt. Banahaw.'

The article—published in *The Philippine Star* agriculture section, September 20, 2009—relates the success story of a wholesale vegetable trading post, called *Sentrong Pamilihan ng Produktong Agrikultura ng Quezon*, built by Sec. Alcalá when he was then a Congressman of the 2nd district of Quezon.

The facility paved the way in developing and expanding the vegetable industry in Quezon, providing comfortable incomes to hundreds of farmers and their families, particularly in the five towns at the foothills of Mt. Banahaw.

To date, *Sentrong Pamilihan* is one of the country's model agricultural trading posts.

The three other DA winners are:

- Regional Feature Story - "Bringing Back the Grains" by Charisma Love Gado of the Philippine Rice Research Institute



Adora Rodriguez poses with her trophy.



'Greening' Mt. Banahaw

By ADORA D. RODRIGUEZ

'Holy Mountain' makes bid as alternate supplier of Baguio vegetables'

Mt. Banahaw is considered by many Filipinos as a "Holy Mountain," as well as a "red area" or a lair of communist rebels.

Today, portions of the picturesque slope of Banahaw have turned "green," as wide tracts of idle lands are planted to various semi-temperate, *pinakbet* and "chopsuey" vegetables.

Now, the farm cluster is considered as one of Southern Luzon's major vegetable producing areas, supplying the requirements of Metro Manila, Bicol and adjacent provinces. And more recently, it serves as the alternate supplier of "Baguio vegetables."

What prompted it all is the establishment three years ago of a wholesale market and processing center, known as the *Sentrong Pamilihan ng Produktong Agrikultura ng Quezon* (or SPPAQ), at Barangay Sampaloc 2, in Sariaya. It sprang up in May 2006, as a brainchild of Rep. Proceso Alcalá (2nd district, Quezon), to provide a ready market for various farm commodities.

With *Sentrong Pamilihan* in place, dozens and later hundreds of farmers were encouraged to develop hectares of idle lands into vegetable gardens at the foothills of Mt. Banahaw, spanning the five towns of Mamala, Bugon, Sampalok, Dolores and Candelaria.

'Vegetable carpet'

Soon the area was carpeted with lush vegetation of eggplant, tomato, beans, ampalaya, cauliflower, broccoli, lettuce and carrots, among other popular vegetables.

Hence, vegetable farming and trading has been a major source of income and livelihood of 300 or so Quezon farmers and their families.

"Gusto namin talagang tulungan ang aming magsasaka, na pagtatanim lang ang ikinabubuhay," (We are indeed keen on helping our farmers, whose main livelihood is farming), said Cong. Alcalá in his native Batangueño tongue.

"Sa ngayon ay napakaganda ng aming partnership," (Now, we have a very good partnership), he added, referring to the relationship he built with about 300 pioneering farmers who partnered with SPPAQ as contract growers.

To nurture its partnership with them as well as with entrepreneurs and traders, the *Sentrong Pamilihan* gives them marketing, merchandising and transport assistance, including education and training programs, according to Ariel Mañalac, SPPAQ market administrator.

"Para dun sa mga ka-lalawigan naming nagtatanim at nagdadala ng mga produkto dito sa Sentro, binibigyan namin sila ng mga pagsasanay sa values formation at entrepreneurship. Nagbibigay din kami ng environmental training," Mañalac said. (We provide training on values formation and entrepreneurship, as well as environmental training.)

These capacity-building programs do not only equip farmers with modern tech-

nologies, but also impart to them socio-civic and environmental responsibilities, as they are taught to employ sustainable and environment-friendly farming methods, Mañalac added.

180 tons of veggies weekly

With the joint efforts of the national and local governments, as well as the perseverance and determination of the SPPAQ farmer-partners, their families and entrepreneurs, the volume of vegetables produced and traded peaked at 40 tons every Tuesdays and Fridays, their market days.

On ordinary days, volume traded reaches 20 tons. Hence, for the entire week, up to 180 tons of vegetables are produced and traded at the *Sentrong Pamilihan*.

Aside from Metro Manila, the vegetables are transported to Bicol and Marinduque.

Thus, since May 2006 the SPPAQ has compiled a host of stories to encourage other farmers.

One worth sharing is the triumph of Felipe Heli of Mangalang Tulo-Tulo in Sariaya, who borrowed P70,000 worth of tomato seedlings and farm inputs from SPPAQ. Combining his diligence and learned farm technologies, he was able to gross more than P160,000.

Dahil sa Sentro, nakapagpatayo s'ya ng maraming na bahay. Ngayon may sari-sari store pa s'ya, Mañalac boasts of Heli's accomplishment as a farmer-trader. (Because of the Center, Heli was able to put up a decent house. Now, he also has a sari-sari store.)

In the years to come, SPPAQ and Alcalá commit to help more Quezonians in their quest for a better life.

Tuloy-tuloy lang po itong mga proyekto nating ganito (We will continue to pursue similar projects), Alcalá said.

Likewise, he expressed his gratitude for the firm support and assistance extended by Secretary Arthur C. Yap and the Department of Agriculture, as the agency has helped linked the SPPAQ farmers directly with markets and bag-sakan centers in Metro Manila.

In addition, the DA has provided *Sentrong Pamilihan* a cold storage facility and a refrigerated truck.

"Napakalaki na po ng ipinagbago ng industriya ng paggugulay sa lalawigan ng Quezon, at malaking bahagi po nito ay dahil sa tulong ng DA at ng national government" (The industry of vegetable farming in the province of Quezon has developed and improved dramatically because of the assistance of the DA and national government.) Alcalá said with a smile.

— DA Information Service

- National Features Story - "Efforts to manage and restore sea cucumber population underway" by Edmon Agron of the Bureau of Agricultural Research

- Television Program - "Bagong Maunlad na Agrikultura" of the DA-National Agribusiness Corp. aired on IBC-13

The other 4th Bright Leaf awardees are:

- National News Story - "DA banks on ratooning technology for RP's rice self-sufficiency in 2013" by Jonathan Mayuga (*The Business Mirror*)

- Agriculture Story - "NGO promotes ducks as solutions to global warming, rice sufficiency" by Mach Alberto Fabe (*Business Mirror*)

- Tobacco Story - "Tobacco not just for making cigarettes" by Teddy Molina (*The Philippine Star*)

- Radio Program Segment - "Life in Tobacco Farming" by Jun Villanueva of Bombo Radyo

- Tobacco Photo - by Fernando Zapata (*The Philippine Star*)

- Agriculture Photo - "Luntiung Daan" by Edgardo Espiritu (*The Philippine Daily Inquirer*)

Solar dryer improves corn production in Maguindanao

Postharvest facilities are much needed infrastructure that benefit many small farmers.

For corn farmers in Barangay Ganasi, Upi in Maguindanao, the establishment of a solar dryer facility was a sight of relief as they can now overcome years of several farm losses due to absence of a postharvest facility.

"We used to dry our harvested corn directly on the ground or use *trapal* [tarpaulin] in drying our produce. This practice is not only laborious but also affects the quality of our produce," said Lato Khalid the president of Ganasi Agri-Development Multi-Purpose Cooperative (GADMP).
GADMP(C).

Kahlid said their area being hilly and with abundant rain year round is ideal for corn production. However lack of postharvest facility prevented farmers from producing grains sufficiently.

To address their need for postharvest facility, the GADMP sought the assistance of their municipal agriculture office and endorsed their proposal to the Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP).

MRDP is a long-term poverty alleviation initiative implemented under the Department of Agriculture (DA). Through its Community Fund for Agricultural Development (CFAD),

livelihood assistance are provided to boost rural incomes of small farmers across Mindanao .

MRDP and the local government of Upi established a multi-purpose solar drying pavement to address the postharvest needs of some 60 cooperative members.

"The establishment of the solar dryer is a big help to us corn farmers as drying grains is no longer laborious as before. The facility has also the ability to dry more grain in shorter time so we can easily store our produce before heavy rain comes," he said.

He added that market-value of their produce has also improved since the drying pavement has improved the quality of their corn grains.

"We are glad that the MRDP, DA-ARMM, and our local officials teamed up to provide us this much needed facility and will surely help us in boosting our income," he said.

MRDP program director Lealyn Ramos said corn postharvest is one of the priority initiatives of the DA as it helps increase farmers' income and at the same time reduce postharvest losses.

Ramos said corn is one of the most important crops as it is not only use as second staple but also has an increas-

ing demand as a source of feeds for the growing livestock industry.

"The postharvest intervention such as provision of solar dryers is one of the best ways we can increase corn production in the country and raise our farmers' income which is the best way to fight rural poverty," she said. (Noel T. Provide/DA-MRDP).



The solar dryer facility had been a big help to this farmer-beneficiary in Brgy. Ganasi, Upi, Maguindanao as it hastens the drying of his corn produce and improved the quality of grains. The facility had been established through the partnership of DA-MRDP and local town and provincial officials. (Sherwin Manual)

Abaca gives hope to Sarangani Lumads

Abaca fiber is known for its versatility.

It is used to make bags, ropes, tea bags, paper, furniture, hammocks, and world-class textiles.

Many people may not know that it is also used to make x-ray negatives, optical lens, wire insulator, and automobile components.

For the Lumads of Kiamba, Sarangani Province, this ivory-colored, long fiber is more than just a material but a cord of life. They have been planting abaca since the time of their forefathers.

"It has been our crop and source of income," says Erdelina Abobol, a member of the Kapate Abaca Farmers' Association (KAFA).

KAFA sells abaca fibers to a local consolidator. Abobol, however, admits that before, their production was very meager due to the small number of abaca planted and lack of proper equipment and training.

"Our practice before was to sell our abaca fibers as raw materials produced by our manual stripper.

But since it was not of good quality, it was bought very cheap, for P35 per kilo," says Abobol. "We wanted to expand but because we are really poor, we cannot buy additional planting materials and other inputs to expand the number of our abaca plants."

So when they learned that the Department of Agriculture (DA) had given poor farmers financial assistance, they decided to try their luck and hoped to access funding that they had been waiting for. "We thought we might qualify," adds Abobol.

With the help of the municipal agricultural technician, KAFA prepared their proposal and other requirements and sent them to the office of the Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP).

MRDP is a long-term poverty (Pls turn to p13)



Members of the Kapate Abaca Farmers' Association produce quality abaca fibers using the brand new stripping machine procured through the funding assistance of the MRDP. (Noel T. Provide) (Inset) Erdelina Abobol, a T'boli beneficiary of the abaca production project of the DA-MRDP shows off one abaca bale locally named tinagak that sells at the local market at P250.00 a kilo. Members of their farmers' association consolidate and sell these bales in the small organization-owned sari-sari store where Abobol is the assigned shopkeeper. (Sherwin B. Manual)

PNoy turns over farm inputs, implements to CARAGA LGUs

President Benigno S. Aquino III turned-over various farm machinery and inputs to four provinces and one city in Caraga that were ravaged by floods during his visit, January 14, 2011 at Bancasi Airport, Butuan City.

Together with DA Caraga Regional Director Reinerio B. Belarmino, Jr., Pres. Aquino handed the certificates of turn-over to Butuan City Mayor Ferdinand Amante, Jr., Agusan del Norte Governor Eripe John Amante, Agusan del Sur Governor Adolf Edward Plaza, Surigao del Sur Governor Johnny Pimentel, and Surigao del Norte Governor Arturo Carlos Egay.

Each of the above-mentioned local government units received agricultural inputs to include three sets of pump and engine, 200 bags of certified seeds and two boxes of assorted vegetable seeds to augment the efforts of each LGU to help its constituents

particularly the farmers to start anew after the flood.

The President, likewise, gave medicines and relief goods to the flood victims.

Regional Director Blanche Gobenciong of the Office of the Civil Defense (OCD) said the estimated damage due to the floods on the agricultural sector amounted to more than P160 million, broken down as: for rice and corn, P72.5M; other crops, P14.8M; livestock, P3.4M; fisheries, P16.7M; and irrigation, P58M.

Caraga region posted an estimated total agricultural damage of P165.6M, with Agusan del Sur having the biggest damage in agriculture, at P105.6M; followed by Agusan del Norte, P27.85M; Surigao del Sur, P21.33M; Surigao del Norte, P10.5M; and Dinagat Islands, P346,000.



President Aquino (2nd from left) presents a certificate of turn-over of farm implements to Butuan City Mayor Ferdinand Amante, Jr. on behalf of farmer flood victims. Also shown (from left) are DA Region 13 Director Reinerio Belarmino, Jr., DSWD Secretary Dinky Soliman (partly hidden), and DILG Sec. Jesse Robredo.

DA to irrigate more areas in E. Visayas

Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala has committed to expand irrigated areas in Eastern Visayas, starting in Samar, to boost the province's rice self-sufficiency level to 100 percent by 2013.

He made the commitment during a multi-sectoral forum in Calbiga, Samar, attended by 300 farmers, fishers, municipal agriculture officers and extension workers, seed growers, livestock raisers, and LGU officials, led by Samar Governor Sharee Ann Tandelos Santos, Vice Governor Stephen James Tan, Congresswoman Milagros Tan and Calbiga Mayor Melchor Nacario.

He instructed the DA's National Irrigation Administration

(NIA) Regional Manager Romeo G. Quiza to submit the feasibility study through NIA Administrator Antonio Nangel.

The goal is to expand the region's irrigated areas by 6,000 hectares in the next three years to benefit initially Calbiga and four adjoining towns in Samar.

Sec. Alcala said the DA-BFAR will expand the Mariculture Park (MP) program in Eastern Visayas, particularly in Maqueda Bay and San Juanico Strait, and appropriate coves and coastal waters.

Also, the DA-BFAR will put up six multi-species freshwater fish hatcheries, one each in the municipalities of Calbiga, Villareal, Talolora, Daram, San Sebastian

and Pinacbacdao, all in Samar.

He also instructed the DA-BFAR Region 8 to put up more fish cages in mariculture parks to be rented by small fishermen.

Before visiting Samar, Sec. Alcala joined President Benigno Aquino in St. Bernard, Leyte, where the President was briefed by regional officials on the extent of flooding as well as government initiatives to help the victims, and plans to avoid similar occurrences in the future. DA Region 8 Dir. Leo Cañeda briefed them on the extent of damage on the agriculture sector.

Dir. Cañeda and Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) Assistant Director Dante Delima distributed farm inputs to flood affected farmers consisting of 500 packs of assorted vegetable seeds and 100 bags of certified rice seeds to farmers.

Alcala's visit to Leyte and Samar forms part of a series of consultations and 'town hall meetings' to promote President's agriculture agenda, and seek the support of provincial governors, congressmen, and women, district representatives, city and municipal mayors and other agricultural stakeholders to attain self-sufficiency and food security goals by 2013.

(IGFSC) to North Cotabato Federation of Free Farmers Cooperative.

The multi-million project includes two units of farm tractor; two units of biomass fed mechanical grain dryers; and other corn development fund components.

The project was funded under the DA's National Food Authority-Corn Development Fund.

Secretary Alcala extended his gratitude to former DA secretary Leonardo Montemayor, President of the Federation of Free Farmers for the initiative in making this project possible.

"Through this initiative, the project will benefit local farmers to produce and earn more through better and safer quality corn grains and reduce postharvest losses," Alcala added in his speech read by ASec. Araullo.

He likewise hoped that with the facilities, the national corn production of 7.26 million metric tons will be attained in 2011, and will help make the country self-sufficient in corn as early as 2014.

"We will invest in infrastructure, post-harvest, technical and research, credit and marketing support," Alcala added.

Meanwhile, the DA will expand farmlands devoted to corn, especially the white variety by encouraging more farmers to use organic and microbial fertilizers to reduce production costs and increase their income.

The DA will continue to promote hybrid corn, and construct more postharvest processing and trading centers nationwide. (DA-RAFI 12)



Sec. Alcala (left) answers a query of a livestock raiser (standing, right photo) from Leyte during a consultation with farmers, fishermen, livestock raisers, municipal agriculturists and extension workers, and local officials, in Calbiga, Samar, January 14, 2011.

CARAGA gets P30M

Close to P30 million in funds will be invested by the Department of Agriculture in the provinces of Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Norte to enable small farmers and fishers increase their productivity and incomes.

"President Aquino wants speedy help delivered to the agriculture sector here," Alcalá said during a farmers' congress attended by more than three thousand Caragaons composed of farmers, fisherfolk, and other stakeholders, congressmen, governors and other officials of the local government.

A total of P10M will be initially allotted to a P25M-Surigao City irrigation project.

"To attain our self-sufficiency target in rice, we have to give importance to the water systems, as it remains to be on top of our priorities," Alcalá stressed.

Another P7.6M will be allotted for the rehabilitation of affected agricultural infrastructure, P2.1M for farm to market road projects, and P9.4M for various projects including the establishment of a

Liquid Nitrogen Plant under the United Artificial Insemination Program under the Bureau of Animal Industry.

"We will also provide support for high value vegetable production in such a way that more farmers would have the opportunity to plant cauliflower, broccoli, lettuce, bulb onion and ginger, and in return earn more," Alcalá said.

Alcalá announced that Mindanao will also benefit from the mariculture program of the DA thru the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) which aims to increase the production of various marine and aquatic species.

He directed BFAR Director Malcolm Sarmiento to immediately conduct site visits and validation to identify additional requirements needed to successfully implement the mariculture project.

The farmers' congress served as a venue for farmers and officials from the local and national government to discuss issues and propose measures to address agri-fishery concerns. (DA-CARAGA RAFID)



DA Region 4A Dir. Abelardo Bragas (3rd from right) spearheads the dispersal of 60 female piglets to recipients from the 4th district of Batangas, January 10, 2011, in Padre Garcia. This is the third tranche of the livelihood program started August 2010 in Lucena City. The project is jointly implemented with Batangas 4th District Rep. Mark Llandro Mendoza, Quezon 2nd District Rep. Irvin Alcalá and Rotary Club of Lipa City.

Bicol flood damage tops P13M

Some 2,900 hectares of rice areas in 12 municipalities in Albay were flooded early this month, causing an estimated damage of about P13.38 million.

This was reported to Sec. Proceso Alcalá by DA Bicol Regional Technical Director for Operations and Extension, Marilyn Sta. Catalina.

She said majority of the affected rice crops are either newly planted and in their vegetative stages as the cropping season has just started.

She added that out of the total affected areas, 86% or 2,500 hectares have a chance to recover and only 400 hectares have no chance of recovery.

Rice areas affected by floods were: Tobaco City with 932 hectares; Legaspi City, 592 hectares; and Malinao, 420 hectares.

Other affected areas are the towns of Camalig, Daraga, Guinobatan, Manito, Malilipot, Oas, Polangui and Sto. Domingo.

Meanwhile, DA Region 5 director Jose V. Dayao urged farmers, whose rice crops have

no chance of recovery, to replant again.

Those who have not yet planted can still avail of the discounted palay seeds under the DA's Rapid Seed Supply Financing Project (RaSSFIP).

Under this program, eligible farmers are entitled to a bag (40 kg) of certified inbred seeds per hectare.

The DA through the NFA will provide a seed subsidy of P600, while the other half of P600 shall be paid by farmers as equity.

Eligible to avail of this seed subsidy are farm owners, farm tenants, leaseholders and administrators, who are actually tilling the land and whose farms are located in rainfed areas and lowland irrigated areas, with an average yield of less than 3.8 metric ton per hectare.

RaSSFIP, which will end on March 16, 2011, is funded through a loan from the International Fund for Agriculture and Development (IFAD) and grant assistance from the European Commission. (DA-RAFID 5)

SPJA vows support to Regn 12 farmers

Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcalá, in his recent visit to SOCCSKSARGEN, committed full support to improving the living conditions of the region's small farmers and fisherfolk.

He urged them to work closely with local and DA officials so they can synchronize efforts to achieve the agriculture roadmap that the DA is trying to achieve.

"From seeds to marketing, kasama po ninyo ang DA sa pagplano kung ano ang itanim, kung paano makakaharvest ng mahusay, at sa paghahanap ng merkado" emphasized Sec. Alcalá during a farmers' dialogue in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat and in Koronadal City, South Cotabato.

He also enjoined upland farmers to plant coffee and cacao.

Though seed subsidy is being suspended, Sec. Alcalá mentioned other interventions to help the farmers.

One of these is the Rapid Seed Supply Financing Project (RaSSFIP), funded through a loan and grant respectively provided by the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) and implemented by the DA and NFA.

Through the RaSSFIP, farmers can avail of subsidized certified inbred seeds.

Other interventions which the

he mentioned are: irrigation, particularly in the repair and rehabilitation of communal irrigation systems (CIS), postharvest facilities, organic fertilizer and seed production assistance, and expand marketing assistance.

While in Sultan Kudarat, Sec. Alcalá turned-over several farm equipment and inputs to farmers through the Provincial Government

These include: 20 units of shallow tube wells, 23 units of shredder, one unit of overhead sprinkler irrigation, 10,000 pieces of coffee planting materials, 2,000 sachets of assorted vegetable seeds and 50 crates of mango flower inducer. (DA-Region 12 RAFID)

New techno to cut shrimp prodn cost

The DA-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) technology is trying a technology that would cut the cost in producing Pacific white shrimps (*Penaeus vannamei*).

The technique is being experimented on by researchers at BFAR's National Integrated Fisheries Technology Development Center (BFAR-).

(Pls turn to p12)



To enable flood-stricken farmers in CARAGA recover and start anew, the DA has provided them farm equipment and inputs such as certified rice and vegetable seeds. Photo shows Sec. Alcala (top left, middle) handing over keys of two tractors to Agusan del Sur Governor Adolph Edward Plaza, as DA-CARAGA director Reinerio Belarmino looks on; and certificates of entitlement to farm equipment, livelihood projects, and inputs (bottom photo) to Agusan del Sur Reps. Maria Valentina Plaza (1st District) and Evelyn Mellana (2nd Dist.), Vice Gov. Santiago Cane, Jr. and municipal mayors, during a consultation with hundreds of farmers, fishers and ruralfolk (right).

DA-BSWM, LGUs to rehab watersheds

The DA through the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM), in partnership with concerned local government units will rehabilitate three watersheds in Mindanao, namely: Linamon in Lanao del Norte, Gigaquit in Surigao del Norte, and Nasipit in Agusan del Norte.

In a report to Secretary Proceso Alcala, BSWM Dr. Silvino Q. Tejada said the rehabilitation will be undertaken as part of the natural resource component of the Mindanao Rural Development Program 2 (MRDP2), jointly funded by the World Bank, National Government and LGUs.

He said the BSWM has finished the evaluation of the three watersheds, which should be rehabilitated and protected to prevent soil erosion, and thus provide farmers and ruralfolk sustained source of livelihood, and most importantly water.

If a watershed area is not in good condition, it would be very impossible for it to support a farming community especially with climate change and excessive rainfall caused by La Nina, Tejada added.

The BSWM's survey of the Kinabangan Watershed in Nasipit, Agusan del Norte showed that its soil, land and water resources are "over exploited beyond its capacity resulting to low productivity of various farm areas."

About 4,250 hectares (68.5%

of its total area) could be planted with fruit trees and vegetables like sweet pepper, pole sitao and ampalaya, including industrial crops.

For Linamon watershed, some 1,825 hectares (88% of total area) could be planted also to high value crops.

The same is true for Gigaquit Watershed in Surigao del Norte, where some 15,770 hectares (67% of total area) could be developed.

The BSWM and LGUs plan to implement joint initiatives to preserve, protect and develop the three watershed areas.

These include: proper organic and inorganic balance fertilization, and composting; provision of support services such as construction, improvement and rehabilitation of the farm machinery equipment and post harvest facilities; introduction of improved and modern farming technology; and facilitation of credit and market assistance.

With a total 21,840 hectares that could be planted to high value crops, the three watersheds could greatly contribute to providing food and livelihood to tens of thousands of farm-families in Lanao del Norte, Surigao del Norte and Agusan del Norte. Tejada said. (DA-BSWM)

New techno to ... (from p11)

The experiment which is on a commercial scale will determine the growth performance of the white shrimp at different climatic conditions and culture densities (intensive, semi-intensive and extensive), said Dr. Westly R. Rosario, NIFTDC chief in Bonuan Binloc, Dagupan City.

He said they are now working on ways where water changing of the hatchery would not be as frequent.

"Since last year, we did an experiment where we wouldn't have to change water every so often. Though we have the luxury of space in the Philippines for ponds. The down side of this is that these ponds are designed for milkfish production," said Rosario.

Even with different densities, white shrimp could grow within 10 to 30 square foot. Rosario said it is ideal to have a 10 square foot, as it would not require electricity to operate the paddle wheels.

The white shrimp project is no longer being conducted by the BFAR, and it is now up to businessmen to adopt it.

Fishfarmers are advised to buy broodstock from BFAR-accredited hatcheries. Potential growers are also required to secure operation permits.

There are nine accredited hatcheries that are strategically located in the Philippines, said Rosario. (Malaya)

SPJA swears in new DA family officials

Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala has sworn in a new batch of officials of the Department of Agriculture, bureaus and attached agencies and corporations, who were recently appointed by President Benigno S. Aquino III. a

They are:

- Amalia Datukan - DA Region 12 Director;
- Ahadulla Sajili, Al-Haj - BFAR Regn. 9 Dir.;
- Jose Balatucan, Jr. and Jimmy Olivio, DA Ass't. Dirs., both of Regn 12;
- Jennilyn Malateo-Dawayan, DA-CAR Ass't. Dir.;
- Atty. Euclides G. Forbes -Phil

ippine Coconut Authority Administrator;

- Atty. Rodolfo T. Paz - Philippine Fisheries Development Authority General Manager;
- Lorna Grace Rosario - National Irrigation Administration Dep. Adm. for Finance;
- Dr. Alicia Lustre - Technical Consultant on DA Food Safety and CODEX; and
- Phil. Sugar Corp. Board Members: Augusto B. Araneta, Jr., Joseph Conrad F. Ledesma, Cornelio V. Toreja, Francis P. Treñas, Freddie W. Zayco, Robert G. Abello, Andrew O. Regalado, Joseph Edgar M. Sarrosa, and Teotimo Ballesteros.

Govt eyes release of pest list for intl market access in 2011

The government is planning to release a specimen-based pest list of agricultural crops that could facilitate the shipment of local farm products within the year, the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) said.

Wilma R. Cuaterno, chief of the BPI's crop protection division, said the list of pests that usually affect Philippines crops is consistent with the rules of the World Trade Organization on sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

"Importing countries of Philippine farm products usually require list of pests that affect or threaten a particular product. The compendium of pests would make it easier for business people to draw up that list", said Cuaterno.

Clarito M. Barron, BPI director, noted that specimen-based pest list enables importing countries to see the list of pests and diseases that might affect their agricultural crops.

Barron said the list can also serve as a basis for assessing whether it is safe to import an agricultural commodity or not.

Aside from making it easier for local business people to access markets, Cuaterno said the compendium of pests that affect local plants and crops

would also be valuable to students and scientists.

The first batch of agricultural crops for inclusion in the list includes exportable crops such papaya, pomelo, durian, banana, dragon fruit, rambutan, mango, okra, lanzones, melon, watermelon, asparagus and mangosteen.

According to Barron, there are about 3,000 preserve specimens of pests of respective commodities that are being managed by the Crop Protection Division in relation to the activity. The whole collection of preserved pests and diseases, he said, is more than 35,000.

"The compendium is a preliminary effort of the BPI to address the needs of the country's exporters, plant industries, plant quarantine, agricultural enterprises, and other stakeholders, including the farmers," said Barron.

The BPI noted that the development of the specimen-based pest list was inspired and initially assisted by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) three years ago. The attached agency of the Department of Agriculture, however, could not provide the initial amount provided by AusAID. (*Business Mirror*)

Bridging the gap ... (from p7)

• Jan 26 (Cagayan de Oro)

- He visited the Cagayan de Oro Cooperative Market Place, Wild Life Reservation Center, Zoological and Botanical Park, which is operated by the Xavier University College of Agriculture.

- At a post-dinner meeting, he was briefed on the updates of the Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP), led by Dir. Lealyn Ramos and deputy dir. Arnel de Mesa.

• Jan 27 (DA Regional Office, Cagayan de Oro)

- Over breakfast at the DA region 10 office, he met with the DA Regional Management Committee members, officials and staff, and agri-fishery industry stakeholders. He also swore in the officers of the DA-RFU 10 Employees Association.

- At 9 am, he keynoted the MRDP2 Consultative Meeting with more than 100 Mindanao local chief executives in attendance. (Pls see related story on page 1.)

- After lunch, he opened a consultation with Bukidnon local chief executives regarding the forthcoming survey as part of the National Farmers Registry System. The province is among the three pilot provinces (the tow are Leyte and Quezon) where the exhaustive survey will be conducted.

• Jan 27 (Tubod, Lanao del Norte)

- He dialogued with farmer-leaders and local officials of Lanao del Norte, led by Gov. Mohamad Khalid Q. Dimaporo, and Representatives Imelda Quibranza Dimaporo and Fatima Aliah Dimaporo, and former governor and Rep. Abdullah D. Dimaporo. He also handed over 600 bags of certified rice seeds to flood-affected farmers.

• Jan 28 (Sultan Naga Dimaporo, Lanao del Norte)

- He visited the milk processing facility and dairy farms of Lanao Foundation Inc. (LFI's), along with Reps. Imelda and Fatima Aliah Dimaporo, and former Gov. Abdullah Dimaporo, Lanao del Sur Gov. Antonio Ceriles and Rep. Aurora Ceriles, USDA agriculture counselor Philip Shull, and Land O'Lakes Philippines country manager Qazi Yawar Naem.

He led the distribution of milk to 300 children at Bangaan Primary School, and thereafter led the inauguration of several LFI facilities (cheese plant, dairy farm 1 and 2 milking parlors, and liquid nitrogen plant).

- Finally, he visited a provincial grain processing center, a project of Gov. Khalid Dimaporo, at SND, Lanao del Norte, before flying back to Manila via Cagayan de Oro.

Abaca gives hope ... (from p9)

alleviation initiative implemented by DA to give poor farmers and fisherfolk in Mindanao agribusiness opportunities.

It also helps local government units institutionalize an effective delivery of services to communities by capacitating municipal facilitators and attached agencies like the Fiber Industry Development Authority (FIDA). This program has a fund of US\$123.752 million. US\$83.75 came from a loan portfolio from the World Bank and the rest is the equity share of the national government and LGUs.

MRDP granted KAFA P250,000. Abobol says KAFA used this to procure 2,750 tissue-cultured abaca suckers distributed to the first 11 beneficiaries, organic fertilizer, and a mechanical stripper.

"Using our old manual stripper is time-consuming, very laborious and costly as half of the total sale of abaca is paid to the stripper," Abobol says. That is why KAFA is very grateful to the financial assistance they received.

KAFA is also thankful to FIDA for training them on pest management, plant care, planting, harvesting, postharvest handling, and processing of abaca fiber.

Moreover, "with the help of FIDA, we now make tinagak, which sells for P250 per kilo," Abobol says.

Tinagak is a continuous thread of fine quality, similar-sized fiber formed into small bales that weigh a kilo each. It takes at least four days to make one bale of tinagak. (*Sherwin Manual*)



SPJA carries a schoolboy over his shoulder, as he leads the distribution of milk to schoolchildren at Bangaan Primary School, in Sultan Naga Dimaporo, Lanao del Norte. With him are (from right) Land O'Lakes Philippines country manager Qazi Yawar Naem, Lanao del Norte 2nd Dist. Rep Fatima Aliah Dimaporo, and former Lanao del Norte governor and representative Abdullah Dimaporo.

IRRI, GrainPRO join hands to promote rice PH techno

The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and GrainPro, Inc. signed an agreement to promote the adoption and dissemination of rice storage technologies in the Philippines.

Between 15 and 25% of rice harvest is lost due to inefficient and outdated postharvest operations.

The agreement is part of an ongoing collaboration between IRRI and GrainPro to develop storage and other technologies that reduce postharvest losses.

"The joint agreement allows us to better provide farmers, farmers' groups, processors, and seed producers with cost-effective technologies that help reduce postharvest losses and maintain the quality of rice and seeds," said Martin Gummert, IRRI scientist and head of postharvest unit. His group pilots improved storage of rice grains and seeds.

"Working in partnership with the private sector allows us to reach end-users in a way we cannot do alone, thus helping enhance food security and improving livelihoods for rice farmers and consumers," he said.

The non-exclusive agreement with GrainPro in the Philippines will hopefully lead to other agreements and partnerships in the region.

GrainPro, Inc. is engaged in the development, manufacture, and commercial distribution of airtight storage systems for rice and

other crops.

"We greatly value this new co operation with IRRI, the world's foremost institute in improving and protecting rice," GrainPro Philippines' President Tom De Bruin said.

"It will ensure that farmers and consumers alike will promptly benefit from the latest research on rice production and protection."

IRRI and GrainPro have cooperated on the development of small-scale airtight storage systems for Asian rice farmers, seed producers, and the commercial sector since 2002.

Research has shown that airtight storage reduces storage losses from insects and other pests, while maintaining grain quality for at least a year. (IRRI)



Sec. Alcala receives from Dr. William Dar, former DA Secretary and currently director general of the Int'l. Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), seeds of 'Asha' peanut variety developed by ICRISAT, based in India. Alcala thanked Dar for bringing over to the Philippines ICRISAT seeds and technologies for the benefit of small Filipino farmers. It has to date provided five varieties each of peanut, pigeonpea (kadyos), and sweet sorghum.

IPPM program in West Africa makes headway

West African farmers have succeeded in cutting the use of toxic pesticides, increasing yields and incomes, and diversifying farming systems--as a result of an international project promoting sustainable farming practices.

Around 100,000 farmers in Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal are participating in a community training program implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Smallholders are developing and adopting 'good agricultural practices' through experiments in Farmer Field Schools (FFS).

To grow healthy crops, IPPM promotes soil improvement and alternatives to chemical pesticides such as the use of beneficial insects, adapted varieties, natural pesticides and cropping practices. Marketing and food safety issues are also part of the training programme.

"Trends in agriculture over the past decades in West Africa have seen an increasing use of highly toxic pesticides in higher-value, frequently irrigated crops.

There is a general lack of knowledge in the region of the negative impacts

of pesticides on the production, economy and health of communities and the environment," said William Settle, FAO Senior Technical Officer.

production, which will contribute to increased food security and improved livelihoods in the region, an important step towards achieving the first Millennium Development Goal."

A group of around 25 farmers coordinated by a trainer prepares two training plots in their village, one using local conventional farming methods and another plot using best practices appropriate to the crop and location based on IPPM, to observe and compare results from the two plots.

Over 2 000 trainers coming from dozens of local government, private sector and civil society organizations have been taught to support farmers in applying sustainable farming methods. (FAO)

High value ... (from p4)

egies of government agencies on climate-change mitigation and adaptation.

"One of the ideas behind Philrai is to jumpstart efforts to develop crops that are suitable for rainfed areas.

The Philippines has almost two million hectares of rainfed areas where dryland crops can be planted," he said.

Delima said the DA-HVCDP is setting aside P20 million to jumpstart the Philrai initiative.

There's an order from Sec. Alcala to allocate P20M for research on dryland crops. This could jumpstart Philrai, he said.

Currently, a draft bill on Philrai's establishment has yet to be filed in Congress. (Business Mirror)



Sec. Alcala (standing, 5th from left) urges DA agri attaches to continuously promote exports of both traditional and non-traditional Philippine products, during their national workshop, at Pueblo Por La Playa, in Pagbilao, Quezon. With him are the agri attaches and analysts--posted in WTO in Geneva, FAO in Rome, EU in Brussels, USA, Middle East, and Japan--along with staffmembers of the DA International Relations Division, headed by Lupino Lazaro (front row, 3rd from left).

DA allots ... (from p1)

ares of new areas; irrigation systems that will be rehabilitated will create additional service areas of 100,680 hectares; and systems that will be restored will provide irrigation to some 28,290 hectares

Of the six FAPs, the biggest is the Agno River Integrated Irrigation Project, in Pangasinan, with a total budget this year of P3.2B; followed by the Participatory Irrigation Dev't. Project Phase 1, which is implemented nationwide, at P1.06B; and Malitubog Maridagao phase 2 (Maguindanao and the North Cotabato), P550 million. The Department of Agriculture (DA) has extended assistance to seven regions affected by the continuous rains in January. (DA-NIA)

DA to put up ... (from p5)

Aside from establishing seed banks, Alcala stressed the importance of having strong seed growers association in every province, which should produce quality seeds.

During the BPI anniversary, he also inducted the new set of officers of the federation rice seed growers associations.

They are: Arthurito Batalla, of CAR; Jean Marie Miranda, Region I; Crispulo Santos, Region II; Lorenzo Duqueza, Region III; Rodolfo Ploponio, Florito Crisostomo, Region IV-A; William Petallo, Region V; Rodolfo Rorrada, Jr., Region VI; Larry Pamugas, Region VII; Marolo Alfaro, Vidal Luna, Region XIII; Nasser Barodi, ARMM.

Mindanao LGUs ... (from p2)

Herminia Ramiro (Misamis Occidental) and Arturo Uy (Compostela Valley).

Also present were Secretary Luwalhati Antonino, chairperson of the Mindanao Development Authority, and seven representatives, namely: Jesus Emmanuel Paras and Florencio Flores (Bukidnon), Yevgeny Vincente Emano and Peter Unabia (Misamis Oriental), Aurora Enerio-Cerilles (Zamboanga del Sur), Jorge Almonte (Misamis Occidental) and Maximo Rodriguez, Jr. (Abante Mindanao party list).

To date, a total of 709 MRDP infrastructure projects are of various stages of implementation, most of which are FMRs, with a total length of 2,200 kilometers, worth P4.55B.

Other projects include bridges, communal irrigation and potable water systems, solar dryers, post harvest and storage facilities, hanging bridges, piers and culverts.

PCIC pays ... (from p1)

More than 100,000 farmers insured their crops and livestock: 88,843 for rice; 8,595 - corn; 1,131 - high value crops; and 46,173 head of livestock.

It also insured P1.421-B worth of agricultural equipment and assets.

PCIC started last year to insure fishery and mariculture projects.



Sec. Alcala (center) appreciates the ubi products of farmers Basilia Yasay (2nd from right) and Ernest Mendez (right), of Pres. Carlos Garcia, Bohol at the Bohol Organic Agriculture Summit and 11th Ubi Festival in Bohol Cultural Center, Tagbilaran, Bohol. Looking on are Bohol Governor Edgar Chatto (left) and his wife Maria Pureza.

COCAFAM ... (from p3)

petitiveness of the country's agriculture and fishery sector, all for the benefit small Filipino farmers, fishers, and their children.

In particular, Sen. Pangilinan said the COCAFAM will monitor how the DA would pursue its plan to achieve rice self-sufficiency by 2013, and the other commodity roadmaps for corn, high value crops, livestock and fisheries.

It will also explore alternative funding for AFMA, formulate the 2011 legislative agenda based on the results of meeting and consultations with stakeholders, strengthen the DA's Young

Farmer's Program, and initiate other beneficial COCAFAM programs.

Meanwhile, the committee in tandem with the DA and National Agricultural and Fishery Council (NAFC) will spearhead the conduct of the "Philippine Agriculture and Fisheries 2025," on February 10-11, 2011, at Eugenio Lopez Center, Antipolo City..

Committee members present were: Sen. Sergio Osmena, and Reps. Nur G. Jaafar, Rolando Andaya Jr., Imelda Quibranza Dimaporo Lanao Norte, Jesus Saccalan, Robert Raymund Estrella, and Agapito Guanlao.

The other members of 14-man COCAFAM are Senators Edgardo Angara, Manuel Lapid, Gregorio Honasan, Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto.

PCA inaugurates ... (from p5)

seedling production, integrated coconut-based farming, coconut products processing, and farmers' training and technical support, among many others.

The PCA maintains other research centers in Albay, Davao Ciy and Zamboanga City and a coconut seed production center in South Cotabato.

Congressman Angara expressed his high optimism in the key role that the APCDC will play in the development of the coconut industry in Northern Luzon, citing the various infrastructure that are already in place making Dinalungan accessible.

Mayor Tito Tubigan expressed his gratitude and that the people of Dinalungan will provide full support to the project, as it would elevate the stature of their town as a major player in coconut production and research, an in providing stable employment to farm workers and laborers in the locality. (PCA Coconut Media Service)

Floods damage ... (from p3)

As of January 20, the DA has distributed the following farm inputs and assistance:

- 1,100 bags certified seeds
- 210 kilos of vegetable seeds
- 3,350 seedlings of various crops (papaya, saba, latundan,
- 550 bags organic fertilizers
- 320 units various farm tools and implements
- 18 sets water pumps, engines
- Dozens of kilos and bottles of rodenticides and pesticides, respectively

The concerned DA regional offices continuously validate the damage reports in partnership with concerned local government units to ensure that assistance benefits those who were adversely affected.



Sec. Alcala (left) hands over two units of Global Positioning System (GPS) to Mayor Ricarte Padilla of Jose Panganiban, Camarines Norte, to be used by Bantay Dagat volunteers to monitor and apprehend illegal fishermen and poachers. Looking on are Dir. Malcolm Sarmiento, Jr. (right) of the DA-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and Dr. Alma Dickson, chief of the DA-BFAR National Marine Fisheries Development Center.

Agri sector slips by 0.12% in 2010

The gains attained by the agriculture sector in the 4th quarter of 2010 were not enough to overcome the negative effects of the El Niño phenomenon during the first nine months of the year.

Hence, the sector slipped by 0.12%, based on estimates by the DA's Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS).

Crop production declined, while the livestock, poultry and fisheries subsectors managed to post gains.

At current prices, the gross value of production amounted to P1.25 trillion, 5.3% higher than last year.

The crops subsector, which contributed 45.5% to total production, dipped by 2.8%.

Production of palay went down by 3%; corn, by 9.3%; coconut and sugarcane, by 0.8% and 19.7%, respectively.

Gross value of crop production was P666.8B at current prices, 5.6% more in 2009.

Livestock production was up by 1.5%. The subsector accounted for 12.7% of total agricultural production. Hog production grew by 1%, while goat, cattle, carabao and dairy production posted gains, ranging from 1.4% to 9%.

The livestock subsector grossed P211B at current prices, 7.4% more than in 2009.

The poultry subsector, which shared 14.9% in total agricultural output, grew by 3.7%. It grossed P152.1B, 4.8% more than last year.

Production of chicken and chicken eggs increased by 4% and 5%, respectively.

The fisheries subsector, which shared 27% to total agricultural output, expanded by 1.7%.

It grossed P221.3B, 2.6% higher than in 2009.

Aquaculture production grew by 2.7%, while municipal fisheries was up by 1.6%. Commercial fishing declined by 0.5%.

On the average, farmgate prices of all agricultural, livestock, poultry and fishery products increased by 5.4%.

Prices of various crops went up by an average of 8.6%; livestock prices, by 5.9%; while prices of poultry and fish products, increased slightly by 1% and 0.9%, respectively.

DA to finalize Halal food standards

The Department of Agriculture is doubling efforts to finalize three halal food standards to boost the country's competitiveness in the halal world market, estimated at \$2.3 trillion.

Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala said entering the lucrative halal market will considerably contribute in increasing Philippine food exports, and revitalize agribusiness enterprises that will benefit Filipino farmers and fisherfolk.

It will also pave the way to the establishment of more halal food processing enterprises that will create needed employment opportunities to thousands of our countrymen, Alcala added.

The DA through the Halal Food Industry Development Committee, chaired by BFAR 12 Regional Director Sani D. Macabalang, is conducting a series of consultations to refine the three proposed draft standards.

These are: Halal Agriculture and Fishery Products; Code of Halal Slaughtering Practices for Poultry; and Code of Halal Slaughtering Practices for Large Ruminants.

The first consultation was held January 24, 2011 at the Bureau of Plant Industry in Quezon City, attended by about 50 Muslim scholars, officials and representatives from the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF), partner agencies, and the private sector.



Secretary Proceso J. Alcala discusses the government's plans on the improvement of the fishery sector with PFDA Gen. Manager Petronilo Buendia, Engr. Augusto Natividad of the National Tuna Industry Council, and other industry leaders during his ocular inspection at the Navotas Fish Port Complex.

SPJA consults with big fishers

To forge better partnership with fishery industry leaders, Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala said he will also give his full support to commercial fishermen.

"I will personally look into the status and current problems of your group," he told commercial fishers during dialogue January 13, at the Navotas Fish Port.

He said the DA—through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and Philippine Fisheries and Development Authority (PFDA)—will always consult with small and big fishermen, traders, fishing vessel operators,

and other stakeholders in the crafting and implementation of policies and programs in fisheries and aquaculture industry.

"This way, we promote participation and ensure transparency," Alcala said.

The DA is set to look into overlapping and interrelated regulations implemented by different government agencies on commercial fishing vessel operations.

"We will also include certification requirements and labor issues," the DA chief added.

The other major concerns that the DA through BFAR and PFDA will look into are:

- Guidelines on fish importation;
- Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements of importing countries;
- Upgrading of fishing ports and post harvest facilities;
- Implementation of the National Tuna Management Plan and RA 9379 (Handline Fishing Law);
- Negotiation for fishing access to the high seas as well as with the Pacific Island states;
- Compliance with the EU regulation to prevent, deter and eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing;
- Designation of Philippine permanent representatives to the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMO);
- Institutionalization of the National Tuna Industry Council;
- Delineation of municipal waters;
- Provision of credit assistance and livelihood for fisherfolk; and
- Implementation of sustainable fishery resource management programs in preparation for challenges due to climate change.

Farmers, fishers avail P32.3-B loans

With renewed support and aggressive lending, the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) lent a total of P32.3 billion last year, benefiting more than 800,000 small farmers and fisherfolk.

The amount exceeded the P29.5B released in 2009, said LBP president Gilda Pico.

The loans were coursed through 988 farmers' and fisherfolk's cooperatives and 356 countryside financial institutions.

Loans for crop production increased to P17.9B; and agri-processing loans topped P1.4B.

Regions with the highest loan releases were Central Luzon (P7.4B), Cagayan Valley (P3.9B), and Central Visayas (P3.3B).

LBP released a total of P12.5B for palay production, P700M more than in 2009. (LandBank)