

## RP, Brazil seal 5 deals on agri, energy

As fruits of the successful four-day state visit of President of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to Brazil, five bilateral agreements were forged between the Philippines and Brazil to expand the two countries' cooperation in agriculture, energy, business and industry.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva witnessed the signing of the agreements in Brasilia, Brazil, June 24.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap and Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes signed the accord on agriculture and bioenergy, respectively, that aims to facilitate technical cooperation in the production, trade and investments on biofuels, particularly ethanol.

The Philippines also forged two memoranda of understanding (MOU) to enhance agricultural productivity, and promote trade and investments in agriculture.

The first is between the Department of Agriculture and Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply; and the second, between the DA's Philippine Agricultural Development and Commercial Corporation (DA-PADCC) and



*Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap (left) and Jose Donato Dias Filho (right), president of the Brazilian Association of Girolando Breeders, sign the donation document of Girolando cattle semen to the Philippines, part of several agreements sealed during the state visit of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (middle) to Brazil, June 22-25, 2009. Looking on are Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (2nd from right) and Foreign Affairs Secretary Roberto Romulo (2nd from left).*

(Photo from www.girolando.com.br)

the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA).

The first MOU involves collaboration in livestock and animal health, biofuel feedstock development, dairy, horticulture, food safety, agribusiness and sustainable land management, genetics and biotechnology, processing and post-harvest technologies, and agricultural machineries, and

*(Pls turn to p2)*

### NFA bent to buy 20M cavans palay

The government through the Department of Agriculture's National Food Authority (DA-NFA) is sticking to its plan to buy 20 million cavans (50 kilos each) of palay this year, up from last year's 13.2 million bags.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said the NFA will maintain this higher procurement volume, as palay harvest in the first quarter of 2009 increased by 5.13% versus last year.

Overall, the DA expects the 2009 total palay production to surpass the record yield of 16.82 million metric tons in 2008.

For one, summer harvest is likely to reach 7.3 million MT, 2.8% higher than last year.

"This is because of the fast-track implementation of the restoration and rehabilitation of irrigation systems and intensified cultivation of both hybrid and inbred rice certified seeds nationwide," said Dr. Frisco Malabanan, DA's national coordinator of the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) Rice Program.

As for the seed intervention, he said 557,373 hectares were planted to certified seeds.

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### World Bank approves \$70-M irrigation loan

The World Bank (WB) recently approved the first phase of Adaptable Program Loan (APL), known as Participatory Irrigation Development Project (PIDP), worth US\$70.36 million.

For its share, the Philippine government will put in a counterpart of \$43.23 M, for a total project cost of \$113.59 M.

The PIDP aims to improve the country's irrigation service, boost agricultural productivity, help attain food security, and strengthen the financial viability and institutional capacity of the DA's National Irrigation Administration (DA-NIA).

The project is composed of three components: Irrigation Sector Restructuring and Reform; Irrigation Infrastructure Development; and Project Management and Coordination.

In particular, the PIDP will promote the rehabilitation of irrigation systems, and hasten the transfer of operation and maintenance (O&M) of secondary canals and on-farm facilities to Irrigators' Associations (IAs), while the DA-NIA will continue to maintain and operate the headworks and main canals of national irrigation systems (NIS).

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### RP sees more sugar output, exports

Production of raw sugar may increase by 5% to 2.2 million metric tons in the 2009-2010 crop year due to cheaper fertilizers and more favorable weather, said Administrator Rafael L. Coscolluela of the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA), an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture.

For the current crop year, which started in September 2008 and ends in August 2009, sugar yield is estimated to reach 2.09 million MT.

Raw sugar production in the 2007-2008 crop year hit a 25-

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# Building on legacy etched in time

Eleven days after proclaiming the Philippine Independence, then President Emilio Aguinaldo of the First Philippine Republic issued a proclamation creating the Department of Agriculture and Manufacturing, among other national offices.

If he were alive today, he would be more than pleased to see that the institution he created 111 years ago, on June 23, 1898, has survived and stood the test of time, journeying through several transformations under 14 Presidents of the Republic, from him through President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, and stewardship of about three dozens of agriculture secretaries.

They, together with various industry stakeholders and partners, have contributed and continue to log in their respective share in building up and nurturing the solid foundation from which the Department of Agriculture stands today.

The DA family—currently composed of more than 50 regional field units, bureaus, attached agencies and corporations, and foreign-assisted projects—remains as the government's lead agency tasked to modernize the agricultural and fishery industry, transform it into a globally competitive sector, attain food security and self-sufficiency, and more importantly improve the lives of millions of small farmers, fishers and their families, other ruralfolk and entrepreneurs, and agri-fishery industry stakeholders.

It will not survive this long without the sustained support and cooperation extended by major partners that include farmers' and fishers' groups, local government units, the private sector, industry associations, NGOs and POs, other national

government agencies, the academe, other international and domestic food-related, financial and R&D institutions, and of course, national and local leaders, including the Filipino people.

Its challenges, however, remain huge—against the backdrop of the current global economic order, climate change, ever-increasing population, dwindling farm lands, and inadequate financial resources.

Thanks to the Congress of the Philippines and the Arroyo administration, the DA was given this year the biggest budget in its history (of over P40 billion) to implement hard infrastructure projects and other initiatives prescribed under the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) and President Arroyo's holistic agricultural program, dubbed as 'FIELDS' (fertilizers, irrigation and other rural infrastructure, extension, loans, dryers and postharvest facilities, seeds and other superior, high-yielding genetic materials of crops, livestock and fishery).

And as observers put it, history will once again judge the DA family—its officials and staff under the stewardship of Secretary Arthur C. Yap—as it continues to deliver services and share technologies to clienteles, stay free of graft and corruption, ensure a food-secured and sufficient nation, increase the productivity and incomes of farmers and fisherfolk, and provide Filipino families with adequate, accessible, affordable and nutritious food.

With a strong track record etched in time, observers likewise say the DA would not likely get off track.

To fellow workers in the DA family, past and present, congratulations and let's all move on!

## RP, Brazil... (from p1)

plant and animal science.

### Dairy cattle semen donation

Secretary Yap said the Brazilian Association of Girolando Breeders, through its president Jose Donato Dias Filho, will donate 2,000 doses of semen of Girolando dairy cattle to help upgrade and expand the Philippines' cattle and dairy industry.

Brazil is among the world's leading cattle producers, while the Philippines is a net importer of dairy and feeder cattle, sourced mainly from Australia and New Zealand.

### MOA on Sugarcane Varieties

In addition, Secretary Yap said the Philippine Sugar Research Institute Foundation (Philsurin) through its chairman, Bernard Trebol, has forged a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Brazil's *Centro de Tecnologia Canavieira* (Sugar Cane Technology Center or CTC) through its Director William Lee Burnquist.

The CTC and Philsurin have agreed to share their respective sugarcane germplasm so they could develop hybrid varieties that are resistant to pests, insects and diseases, adapt well in both countries' varying environments, and more importantly produce more cane with higher sugar content per unit area.

"For each CTC variety introduced through this program and planted to an area of 400 hectares in the Philippines, CTC will be recognized as the developer by Philsurin

in all promotional materials.

This holds true for all Philsurin varieties planted to 400 hectares or more in Piracicaba, Brazil," the MOA stated.

Secretary Yap said the CTC may also share technologies such as on cellulosic ethanol production.

Philsurin and CTC also agreed that the hybrid varieties they would eventually developed would not be released commercially without each other's consent.

### Coffee Agreement

Further, he said the DA has also forged technical cooperation with the Instituto Agronomico de Campinas or (IAC) in the area of coffee production. IAC will share with the DA and the Philippine Coffee Board several new, high-yield Brazilian coffee varieties, particularly Robusta, Excelsa and Arabica.

Brazil is the world's top leading

(Pls turn to p11)



Photo by Nolet Fulgencio

Secretary Arthur Yap (right) listens, as Director William Lee Burnquist, of Brazil's Sugar Cane Technology Center, explains the qualities of CTC-developed high-yielding sugarcane varieties.

## AggieTrends

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## RP, KOREA sign accord on multi-industry to generate investments

Manila and Seoul are undertaking a feasibility study on a proposed program initiated by Korea that aims to generate investments in Philippine agriculture and other sectors in the country through a multi-industry cluster approach.

USec Berna Romulo Puyat said that the Multi-Industry Cluster Program (MIC) "is envisioned to serve as a catalyst for the establishment of major industries through high-level cooperation between major actors in the agriculture sector."

"The MIC aims to create synergy among major industries like manufacturing and services to drive economic growth," she said. "It also seeks to address the underdeveloped sectors in the country by putting up investments in areas such as agriculture, labor, and manufacturing."

A memorandum of understanding on this MIC feasibility study was signed by DFA Secretary Alberto Romulo on

behalf of the Philippines and Minister Yu Myung-hwan of Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) during the official visit of President Arroyo to South Korea last May 30-31.

Puyat said that this feasibility study was proposed by Korean Ambassador Choi Joong-Kyung during the celebration of the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Korea at the Blue House last January.

Besides the DA, the other agencies involved under the proposed MIC are DAR, DTI, DOE, DENR, DPWH, the Board of Investments, NEDA and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority.

The Records of Discussion regarding the MIC was signed last May 12 by Puyat, Ambassador Choi, Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) Resident Representative Kim Win, and Philippine Agricultural Development and Commercial

Corporation president Marriz Agbon.

## DA-PADCC, Ecorntech sign MOU for biomass resources consolidation

The Department of Agriculture through its designated corporate arm for agribusiness, Philippine Agricultural Development and Commercial Corporation (PADCC), has signed a memorandum of understanding with Ecorntech Inc. for the identification and consolidation of biomass resources specifically corn stalks or stover.

Ecorntech Inc. is a green technology company with a technology and processes that utilizes corn stover to create Ecornfiber.

It is an intermediary product sold to manufacturers of composite board paper and paper based goods which are also in the business of research, development, manufacturing, distribution, and marketing of fiber based products.

Corn stover serves many purposes in today's agricultural economy and will continue to do so in the future.

The engagement between DA-PADCC and Ecorntech foresees a more inhabitable environment

*(Pls turn to p11)*



**Ecorntech Inc. chief operating officer Mr. Robert Rieth (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) and DA-PADCC President Marriz Agbon (middle) during the signing ceremony of MOU held on DA-OSEC Building in Quezon City last June 19, 2009.**



**Secretary Arthur C. Yap talks to the producer of ubi processed powder, Teodora de Villa (right) of the Institute of Plant Breeding (IPB)-Food Science Cluster in UP Los Banos, Laguna, during the IPB 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Yap said Villa's simple technique of processing ubi powder would benefit people in the Visayas region. Looking on is assistant director Dennis Cantre of IPB-Food Science Cluster D.**

Corporation president Marriz Agbon.

This document aims to launch a feasibility study for the application concept of the MIC candidate areas, which include the provinces of Isabela, Quirino, Nueva Vizcaya, Aurora, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Bohol, Misamis Occidental, Camiguin, Bukidnon, and Misamis Oriental, Puyat said.

Three more agriculture-friendly accords were signed during PGMA's visit to Korea and were witnessed by Secretary Arthur Yap.

Manila and Seoul formally sealed a commitment to implement a Korea-funded project

involving the construction of four rice processing centers that aim to reduce postharvest losses and raise the incomes of over 5,000 farmers in four Philippine provinces.

The Exchange of Notes regarding this P649M grant from KOICA was signed by the DFA and the MOFAT during PGMA's visit.

The DA also forged an agreement with Environment Plasma Co. Ltd., a Korean bioenergy company.

The accord involves over P14 billion in investments to develop lands for biofuels feedstock and improve the living standards of Filipino farmers tilling these areas.

## RP, Korea ink aggie, scientific, technical cooperation agreement

The Philippines and Korea signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for a five-year cooperative agreement to promote and develop agricultural, scientific, and technical cooperation through mutual assistance in the areas of R&D, technology transfer, education and personnel training.

The MOU, which was signed in Seoul, Korea, for the Philippines by DA Secretary Arthur Yap and for the host country by Director Jae-Soo Kim of the Rural Development Administration, urges both parties to "propose joint projects aimed at specific areas of cooperation" that can be undertaken in tandem with other organizations, including international funding agencies.

Dr. Rene Rafael C. Espino, program director of the GMA-High Value Commercial Crops Program and his counterpart, Hong Kil Moon, director of Korea's International Technology Cooperation Center, were assigned as the officials responsible for the implementation of the MOU in their respective countries.

The MOU calls on both parties to carry out R&D projects on agriculture and livestock comprising the following: engineering/automation; plant science; animal science; genetic resource development and advanced biology; bioenergy; agri-ecology and environmental sciences; and post-harvest technologies to prolong the shelf life of tropical fruits.

## DA opens 2 websites for agri-entrepreneurs

The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) of the Department of Agriculture (DA) has launched two new websites— Biofuel and AgFish Tech online—that feature information on biofuels research and development, and technologies on the crops, livestock and fishery production.

BAR Director Nicomedes Eleazar said the Biofuel Online provides relevant information on the DA's National Biofuel Feedstock Program, BAR's interventions that include technical assistance for potential investors in producing viable feedstock for biofuels and related initiatives by other government agencies and the private sector.

The DA is part of the National Biofuels Board comprising government agencies tasked with the implementation of the Biofuels Act of 2008.

The Biofuels Act mandates the minimum blend of 5% bioethanol to gasoline by 2009, and a minimum 10% blend by 2011.

In his report to Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, Eleazar said the BAR is currently concentrating its initiatives on the identification and development of feedstock for ethanol such as sweet sorghum and cassava.

Meanwhile, the AgFish Tech online provides information on various technologies on the production of agriculture and fisheries commodities. The website still needs to be enhanced, Eleazar said.

Thus, he instructed the BAR web team to post query forms to be filled by users who want to get additional information on a particular commodity.

The queries will be forwarded to experts who will provide the appropriate responses.

"The goal of the websites is to give their users easy access to information, which will, in turn, pave the way for the dynamic development of our agribusiness enterprises," Eleazar said.

Earlier, the DA-BAR has teamed up with a private agribusiness company to speed up the delivery of new technologies to farmers through the E-Pinoy Farm Resource Management System (or e-Pinoy

FARMS®). It is a proprietary integrated farm resource management system, designed and developed by Optiserve Technologies, Inc. for agribusiness.

An interactive software-based system, e-Pinoy FARMS® helps farmers and their organizations effectively organize, allocate and manage vital resources for sustainability, increase profitability and achieve agribusiness development.

It is also customized to automate information management and feedback mechanism between the BAR and Research Integrated Agricultural Research Centers or RIARCs.

The e-Pinoy FARMS® platform helps planners and decision-makers compile useful information from raw data, documents, personal knowledge, and business models to identify and solve problems and make decisions, he said.

The project, Director Eleazar said, highlights the value of community participation and strategic management of resources as it

## DA Kambingan project targets 3,600 beneficiary-families

Over 3,600 households are expected to benefit from a proposed goat dispersal project of the Department of Agriculture (DA) that forms part of the fresh stimulus initiatives of the Arroyo administration to help Filipinos in the countryside cope with the global economic slide.

In a report to Secretary Arthur Yap, executive director Carlos Mendoza of the Livestock Development Council said the goat dispersal program will allocate a module consisting of one buck and 30 does per municipality covered by the project.

Each module will have 15 beneficiaries or an equivalent of 45 beneficiaries per province, Mendoza said.

"This project is one of the D.A.'s contribution to President Arroyo's Comprehensive Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program (CLEEP), which is a component of President Arroyo's P330-billion stimulus program to energize the domestic economy and help Filipinos



encourages proactive and multi-stakeholder participation in research, development and extension.

In order to flesh out the vision

of DA "to make agriculture business," he said BAR has to come up with a unified information system that is vital to meeting the needs of multi-level decisions.

ride out the deepening US-induced global recession," Mendoza said.

The biggest number of beneficiaries under the goat dispersal project will come from Central Luzon with 315 low-income households being targeted to take part in this initiative, he said.

Mendoza said the Cordillera Administrative Region, Bicol, Western Visayas, Eastern Visayas, and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao will each have 270 beneficiary-families, he said.

A total of 225 families each are being targeted in the regions of Cagayan Valley, Cavite-Laguna-Batangas-Rizal-Quezon (Calabarzon), Mindoro-Marinduque-Romblon-Palawan (MIMAROPA), Northern Mindanao and Caraga, he added.

Mendoza said the Ilocos Region, Central Visayas, Davao and Central Mindanao will have 180 families each benefiting from the project, while the Zamboanga region will have 135 household beneficiaries.

Yap had earlier ordered DA regional directors to immediately bid out its labor-intensive, high-impact projects as part of the Arroyo government's economic resiliency program.

"The plan is for the DA to speed up the implementation of these intervention projects in the first semester of the year to create a lot of jobs and stimulate economic activity in the countryside by the time the full brunt of the global financial crisis is expected to be felt in the Philippines," Yap had said.

He noted that expediting the bidding process would help speed up the release of funds for such projects, given that under government auditing rules, no disbursements could be made unless the bidding processes are completed and the winning bidders are named.

The DA would closely monitor the implementation of its high-impact projects to ensure the judicious disbursement of funds particularly to its program partners in the private sector.

## Tissue cultured rubber for rapid propagation studied

Rubber tree, (*Hevea brasiliensis*) being presently the only commercial source of natural rubber and holds an important position in tire consumption, is requiring a big demand for the local and international markets. Unfortunately, with the setbacks in production, the Philippine rubber supply is not enough to meet such demand.

For more than 60 years now, propagation of rubber is done through budded clones. But propagation through budding has its drawbacks according to experts.

Stock and scion relationships showed some problem because the scion may possibly be budded to unselected seedling which leads to low vigor and yield. Cutting does not work due to the lack of tap root which is essential for rubber tree anchorage. When budded clones are used, time will come that there will be shortage of good quality rubber. There are also periods within the year wherein rubber seeds are damaged due to disease and fluctuating climatic conditions.

Given this drawback in rubber propagation, Dr. Romulo L. Cena and Dr. Rhodora S. Manceras from the University of Southern Mindanao (USM) Mindanao in Kabacan, Cotabato, are now developing simple and efficient tissue culture technique (somatic embryogenesis) for rapid propagation in rubber. Field trials of promising clones of rubber via propagated somatic embryogenesis will also be conducted.

Somatic embryogenesis is a useful tool for mass propagation of rubber that helps improve rubber yields through the production of vigorous, uniform plants growing on their own roots.

This endeavor is made possible through a project titled, "Rapid Propagation of Rubber via Somatic Embryogenesis" funded by the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR).

Specifically, the project intends to test the performance of tissue culture derived rubber clones in terms of root development and anchorage, resistance to lodging,



growth and branching habit and yield potential; and to rapidly propagate outstanding rubber via somatic embryogenesis.

"Tissue culture, also known as micropropagation, is the technique of producing plants from small (micro) pieces of plant tissues," Dr. Cena explained as he present their DA-BAR-funded project during the First National Review and Consultation Workshop on Rubber RDE (Research, Development and Extension) Agenda and Program held at RDMIC Building, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

Different parts of the plant such as embryo, anther, shoot tip, and integument can be used for tissue

culture. "In this project, somatic embryogenesis (tissue culture) in *Hevea* for rapid clonal propagation as an alternative budding technique will be studied," he said.

The study will be utilizing existing methods of somatic embryogenesis following the new protocols for somatic embryogenesis in *Hevea*. The steps involved in short method of somatic embryogenesis will be strictly followed. These include: 1) induction of embryogenesis, days 0 to 25; 2) expression of embryogenesis, days 26 to 50; 3) development of the proembryos, days 51 to 80; and 4) maturation of the embryos, days 81 to 105.

Five recommended rubber clones namely: USM 1, RRIM 600, PB 260, PB 235, PB 330 will be used in this study. Plantlets developed via somatic embryogenesis and micro-cutting experiments will be tested both in the nursery and field condition. Nursery data like root growth and development, girth and girth increment, plant height and resistance to nursery pest and diseases will be gathered for eight months.

The project started its implementation in January 2009. (Christmas B. de Guzman, DA-BAR)

"The technology of sea farming is simple and the fishermen could easily learn it.

Adoption of the technology does not require a lot from the fishermen since they are not weaned from their usual source of livelihood", Sarmiento added.

For the past 8 years, the bureau has been promoting the culture of fish in sea cages in mariculture parks.

## BFAR urges fishers to shift to fish farming as threats from climate change intensify

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Director Malcolm I. Sarmiento, Jr. urges fishermen to venture into fish farming in the wake of the increasingly

pal and commercial fisheries sectors have been greatly affected by the erratic weather disturbances experienced by the country due to climate change.

Farmers and Fisherfolk's Month last May.

Citing the findings of world renowned scientists, Sarmiento stressed that climate change is drastically affecting fishing; making fishing trips more perilous as fishermen are forced to venture farther in the seas to catch fish.

"Climate change would definitely affect the fish stocks because the spawning habit of the fishes as well as their migratory patterns may change drastically. Already, many fishermen are reporting that catching fish is becoming more difficult", Sarmiento stressed.

"The farming of fish in sea cages ensures the fishermen of a more regular harvest and therefore a more regular source of income. Unlike in fishing that would require the use of expensive fuels, fish farming using fish cages only requires constant caring and feeding of the fish stocks in a specific location," he said.

"The fisheries sector, particularly the municipal fisherfolk is the most vulnerable to climate change," Sarmiento

to l d some 50 fisherfolk leaders from all over the country in Davao City.

Seventeen fisherfolk leaders led by Felizardo "Ka Zardo" Lim acted as BFAR's national and regional Fisherfolk Directors during the month-long observance of the



unpredictable and debilitating weather disturbances in the country in the just concluded Mangingisdang Direktor Program.

In a report to the Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Arthur Yap, Sarmiento said that fish catch, particularly in the municipi-

# The success story of Linda Corsiga

By Emily B. Bordado

Former Trade and Industry Assistant Secretary Linda Corsiga, was once a teacher who later held significant posts in private companies before becoming the successful and award-winning entrepreneur that she is today.

As the owner of the multi-million enterprise that produces organic coconut vinegar products which sell well not only in Manila, Bicol and Tarlac, but even in the United States, Japan, and other countries, Linda (and her products) have been featured in various broadsheets, magazines, TV documentaries, online sites as well as local shows and events.

She has also been invited as guest and resource speaker time and again. Back in the 1950's Linda's mother, Aling Conching, started the production of organic coco nectar vinegar as a backyard industry.

Decades later, Linda ventured into vinegar production herself and started a small family enterprise under the Sorsogon Food Enterprise (SFE) trade name.

## Getting started

Linda admits she never regretted that she became an entrepreneur. "It was one of the best decisions I made," she said. "I was culturing Australian honey bees before. *Na-engganyo ako kasi maraming bees dito dahil malawak ang coconut plantations,*" she said adding that nectars can be sourced from coconut blossoms.

Unfortunately, the project flopped. And although her first venture proved to be futile, she never lost heart, thus, she decided to follow the footsteps of her mother.

Before Linda embarked into coco products entrepreneurship, she prepared herself by undertaking intensive research and study on vinegar production, attending seminars and training on Honey Culture, Entrepreneurship, and Vinegar Processing/Production.

She also consulted with the Philippine Coconut Authority

and the Department of Science and Technology.

## The Golden Goal

Linda is an advocate whose mission is "to rescue the vanishing breed of tuba gatherers from extinction and save the dying art of tuba and vinegar-making". And so unlike common entrepreneurs, gaining huge profits from her products was not a priority for her.

More importantly, she committed her enterprise into the cause of lessening people's exposure to chemically-treated food and to help protect the environment by propagating organic agri/aquaculture espousing organic practices and natural methods in food production.

And over the years, SFE has lived up to its mission to lessen people's exposure to chemically-laden foods by maintaining its organic positioning in the market. All its products are certified by the Organic Certification Center of the Philippines (OCCP) for the domestic market and their application for organic certification for the US market is being processed by CERES, a German organic certification company.

## Fruits of Labor

Since 2004, after joining the Organic Producers Trade Association, SFE has participated in trade fairs and exhibits locally and abroad. Its leading product, Lola Conching's vinegar, has evolved into a variety of specialty vinegars with variants such as the raw wild honey, chili and ginger, garlic, and lemon grass.

SFE currently carries other products like the Coco Nectar Honey, Coco Nectar Health and Energy Drink, Coconut Gel Chutney, and Coconut Palm Cabbage Chutney which are considered Pinoy World Class Agri-Products and have won distinguished awards. Linda herself has been recognized and given the Product Processor Innovator Award in 2006.

Today, SFEs wide-array of merchandise is being sold in leading stores in the Metropolis

including Rustan's Supermarket, Waltermart, Gateway, and Shopwise. Also, Lola Conching's vinegar is available in top organic food shops in Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog cities down to Boracay Island.

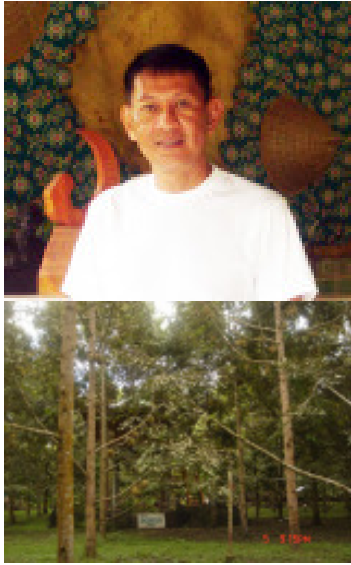
Every two months, a truckload of delivery consisting 10,000 of properly labeled and sealed bottles of this product is transported to Metro Manila for distribution of outlets. A separate shipment of 50 specially packaged boxes containing 24 bottles each is being shipped every 45 days to Minnesota, USA.

The success of Linda as a product processor is truly inspiring and worth emulating.

Surely, Aling Conching is one proud mother.



(From top to bottom)1. The coco vinegar production of the Corsiga's has generated employment in Sorsogon. Gatherers are employed to gather coconut nectar. They have mastered the skill of balancing themselves while atop the coconut palm; 2. Linda personally supervises the production of the organic vinegar ensuring that their products are safe and chemical-free as she is a staunch advocate of health and wellness and promote health and wellness; 3. The vinegar are naturally fermented inside the production plant; 4. The five variants of her organic vinegar are: raw wild honey, chili, ginger, lemon grass and garlic. 5. Linda Corsiga poses with her organic vinegar products.



## Roger Estabillo Rivera : National Gawad Saka Awardee for HVCC

learning so that he can reach out more to the needs of his farm and his fellow farmers as well.

More importantly, he remains humble and grateful as he still credits the DA for giving him technical assistance, providing updated technology guides and IECs, and guiding him time and again.

He added that it was the vision of the Department that encouraged him to be focused on his undertaking, be confident in agricultural endeavor, and above all, be proud as a farmer.

And when all is said and done, Roger will undoubtedly remain as he is an outstanding farmer in every sense of that word; someone who always knows how to look back and pay tribute to the golden earth where he truly belongs, and whose story will keep on inspiring more farmers to be successful, too. (EPGALAS-OPAg, S. Cotabato)

*"Farmers are the founders of civilization because the cultivation of the earth is the most important labor of man. When tillage begins, other arts will follow."* -Daniel Webster

But what does it take to be an outstanding farmer? What makes a great "founder of civilization" whose foot steps will soon be followed by his fellows?

For Roger E. Rivera of South Cotabato, it was hard work, determination and patience.

With his exemplary farm practices and exceptional achievements, Roger stood out and proved to the nation that he is an outstanding farmer worthy to be recognized and emulated.

Being raised by parents who were rice and corn farmers, he developed the same dignity of labor and innate love for farming.

Now, Roger owns a 2.5 hectare orchard that is teeming with different varieties durian, mangoes, lanzones, mangosteen, rambutan, and pummelo integrated with fishery and livestock products.

Named after his wife Yolly, the **Yolanda Golden Farm** located at Bololmala, Tupi, South Cotabato is a paradise of high value crops. Through the years, it has consistently implemented agricultural projects for additional income and livelihood.

Today, aside from growing fruits, the farm has been successfully implementing other projects which include hog fattening, Pangasius culture, and vermicomposting.

In collaboration with DA-RAFID (Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Information Division) 12, Roger has also developed

an indigenous technology at the Koronadal Farmers Information and Technology Center and the Information Unit of the Provincial Agriculture Office of South Cotabato.

The said technology, the Bottle against the Bat, has been conceptualized following the theory of echolocation.

Roger believes that hanging empty bottles near the durian flowers and young fruits will work like active sonar.

As the sound waves hit the bottles, it will bounce back to the bats. Hence, they will try to avoid the empty bottles being evenly distributed in the farm thereby saving the durian fruits from the harm that could be done by the bats.

Aside from his indigenous technology, Roger has also adopted a lot of farm practices which are products of his own innovations in his farm.

These include the organic fertilizer utilization, indigenous pesticide utilization, fruit fly control solution, bagging, fruit separator, bark removal, and the use of trichoderma harzianum, among the others.

Furthermore, he never fails to perform his duty as a father and role model to his family. His three sons Jeremiah, Joshua, and Jonathan, as well as his wife Yolly had been his co-workers in the farm activities during the establishment of their orchard way back in 1996 until they finally tasted their labor of love when they started harvesting durian fruits in 2001.

Indeed, as a farmer, Roger has already reached the zenith of his success. Not to mention his other accomplishment as

the current Senior Vice President (SVP) and Chief Operating Officer (COO) of RDEX Food International, Philippines.

But in spite of all these achievements, Roger is still unstoppable because he keeps on being better as time goes by. He keeps on improving and

### Victoria emerging as model for growing tomato

Tomato production is usually associated with areas like Baguio and Bukidnon, which are known for cool climate which makes ideal for large-scale vegetable production.

But Art Roquea, maverick councilor in Victoria, Tarlac, thinks his locality can establish itself as major tomato growing area that can serve the major vegetable markets in Luzon, particularly Metro Manila.

He has already kicked off a major tomato planting project using the 'diamante' hybrid variety.

"By using the hybrid variety suited for the areas and climate in Victoria, Tarlac, we were able to implement the project successfully, which benefits many farmers in the area," Roque said.

The tomato produced by Victoria end up in large markets in Metro Manila, and major drop off points like Balintawak and Commonwealth market.

A total of 5 hectares have been devoted to the production of diamante tomato in Victoria.

Roque said much attention has been given to the quality of tomato produced in the locality, so as to improve the marketability of the tomatoes.

"When it comes to meeting the demands of the market, we give equal emphasis to quality and volume production.

Roque also addressed the marketing of the tomatoes, to make sure that the farmers involved in the tomato-growing project get their fair share of income.

It is common knowledge that scrupulous traders try to drive down the buying prices of vegetables at the farm gate, but sell the produce at a much higher price at the wholesale centers. This makes farmers earn less while penalizing consumers with high vegetable prices at the retail outlets.

Roque said marketing arrangements that do away with numerous middlemen was put into place to make sure the tomatoes produced in Victoria are bought at a fair price at the farmgate.

"My vision for this project is to make farmers earn more, so we addressed the marketing arrangements for the tomatoes produced in Victoria," he said.

Truly, the tomato project of Councilor Roque in Victoria is emerging to be a farming model for other localities in the Philippines to emulate.

## DA-12 and GMA-7 grant “Wish Ko Lang” Agri-Kabuhayan showcase to Pigcawayan family



DA-RFU 12 RED Tommy A. Ala and staff together with the Librada Family.

### InfRES project succeeds in Davao del Norte

A third class, agriculture-based municipality, New Corella in Davao City has benefited from the development programs sponsored by national agencies and the provincial government.

However, these have not fully alleviated the farmers from poverty due to the level of constraints in their area.

Farmers suffered from high transport and hauling costs because of nearly impassable existing roads and the absence of facilities—until the LGU participated in the Infrastructure for Rural Productivity Enhancement Sector (InfRES) Project.

The subproject covers three of the municipality’s 20 barangays, namely: Poblacion, Carcor, and New Cortez. It involves the upgrading and construction of 8.80 km of farm-to-market roads—Purok 5 Poblacion to Purok 5 Kauswagan (4.36 km), Purok 7 Carcor to Purok 10 Poblacion (2.80 km), and Purok 4 Poblacion to Purok 8 Carcor (1.64 km) with total project cost of P23.79M and serves 11, 769 individuals or 2, 402 households.

“InfRES Project has a huge economic impact here in New Corella. Residents are now inspired to farm because of easy road access. All they have to do is to text, and trucks are sent to their farms to collect their products. Many of our farmers receive financial support because investors can now visit their farms and production sites.” adds New Corella Mayor Nestor Alcoran.

InfRES Project is an ADB funded project under Loan 1772-

PHI. It aims to increase rural incomes with distributional gains favouring the poor in areas with high agricultural potential. The Project comprises 9 Regions in Visayas and Mindanao. (*Libni Marcoleta, Source LGU New Corella*)

### Hybrid squash seeds to accelerate Cagayan farmers’ production

Squash or kalabasa, also botanically known as Cucurbita maxima Duchesne ex Lamk., an indigenous vegetable and an important source of vitamins and minerals.

DA-BAR implemented in November 2008 a project, involving production of Hybrid Squash Seeds in Sto. Niño, Cagayan.

Sto. Niño is one of the poorest and nutritionally-deficient towns of Cagayan. Lowland farmers plant rice during the rainy season (July-October), while those at the uplands and flood plains along the Chico River plant corn, from May-August and December-March.

In both cropping systems, net farm income is around P5,000 per hectare, which is very low to provide a modest way of life for a farming family.

Funded by the DA’s National Agricultural and Fisheries Council (NAFC) and implemented by the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), which tapped an NGO, Farmers Community Development Foundation International (FCDF), based in Los Baños, Laguna.

The Department of Agriculture RFU12 in partnership with the GMA-7’s Wish Ko Lang TV program worked out to grant the aspiration of Mr. Romeo Librada of Barangay. Renibon, Pigcawayan, North Cotabato.

Mr. Librada struggled to earn a living as a stand up comedian in Manila and has not gone back to his hometown for the past seven years.

He related that it is a dire need of the family in order to sustain their living. “My father is a farmer and I wanted to augment their source of income to sustain their needs, mahirap talaga kami”. He believed that it would help his family in their day-to-day survival.

Considering the noble request, DA-RFU 12 officials and staff headed by OIC Regional Executive Director Atty. Tommy Ala together with the staff and crew of GMA-7’s Wish Ko Lang went to the place of Mr. Librada in

Renibon and formally turned-over the agricultural “Pangkabuhayan” showcase.

DA provided the Librada family three piglets, a dozen of chicken, five goats, one sack of corn seeds, planting materials such as mango, durian, coffee and others. They also received swine and poultry feeds, organic fertilizer, a sack of rice, reading materials and others.

The assistance given by the DA came from the Hunger Mitigation Program of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo which has been implemented by the DA under the leadership of Secretary Arthur C. Yap.

Mr. Librada’s father promised to take good care of the project saying “we are lucky to have been chosen as the beneficiary of the DA-RFU 12 and GMA-7 Wish Ko Lang program”.

“Wish Ko Lang” is a reality-based TV show of GMA-7 which aim is to inspire its audience by featuring stories of hope and dreams of less fortunate families and communities. Thus, DA and GMA-7 working together gave the Librada family a chance to fulfill their aspirations and assist them in starting life a new.

The life story of Romeo “Dondon” Librada was aired on June 20, 2009, 4:30-5:30 pm, GMA-7 Wish Ko Lang. GMA-7 through Karl Emmanuel Carascal thanked DA for responding to their request to help indigent family who is in dire need. (*Sophia U. Paguital/RAFID*)

The project is one of the many funded by the DA-NAFC using grant funds from the Government of Japan under the 2KR-Grant Assistance for Underprivileged Farmers.

Then came FCDF and East-West Seed Company (EWSC), who taught farmers to produce hybrid squash seed yields (150-200 kg seeds per hectare); and (*Pls turn to p9*)



Secretary Arthur C. Yap receives sample of the newly harvested heirloom rice from Brgy. Captain Wilan Cominga of Pandey, Mt. Province. Looking on is NIA-CAR manager Dr. Abraham Akilit.

## Ampatuan signs executive order to develop fisheries in ARMM

Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Governor Datu Zaldy Uy Ampatuan has ordered the creation of a technical working group (TWG) to work on a comprehensive plan to develop sustainable fisheries in the region.

Signed on June 22, 2009, Executive Order 03 or "An Act Creating the Technical Working Group (TWG) in the Formulation of the Comprehensive Regional Fisheries Development Plan (CRFDP) in ARMM" designates the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF)-ARMM as chair of the TWG with the Regional Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (RBFAR)-ARMM as vice-chair.

Member agencies include the Regional Planning and Development Office (RPDO), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Bureau of Public Information (BPI), Regional Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (RFARMC) and the Technical Management Services of the Office of the Regional Governor.

The TWG will also include representatives from the private sector particularly from the municipal fisheries, commercial fisheries, post-harvest and aquaculture.

The CRFDP will serve as "framework for the protection, utilization,

development and management of the region's fisheries and aquatic resources". It will also enumerate means to enhance the region's efforts to develop its halal food industry.

Developing the region's agriculture is crucial to ARMM's effort to become the country's halal industry hub, Ampatuan said.

The formulation of the CRFDP is in compliance to Article IV, Section 7 of Muslim Mindanao Autonomy Act 86 (MMA Act 86) or the "ARMM Aquatic and Fisheries Code of 1999" and the Comprehensive National Fisheries Industry Development Plan (CNFIDP) adopted in 2008.

Agri-fishery in the region remains at a very productive level.

The latest data from the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS) show that ARMM leads other regions in the country in terms of agri-fishery and seaweeds production.

DAF-ARMM Secretary Keise Usman said the plan would ensure that fisheries in the region will remain at a healthy and productive level.

"We will see to it that increase in production would not exhaust our natural resources," he said.

Among primary tasks of the TWG would be the preparation of "policies, plans, programs and projects for the development of the fishery industry."



**DA Secretary Arthur C. Yap locating the site of Bayongan Dam on a scaled model of the Bohol Integrated Irrigation System with provincial Agriculturist Liza Quirog, NIA Region 7 Regional Manager Modesto Membrane, and DA7 Regional Director Ric Oblena.**

### RP sees more ... (from p1)

year-high of 2.455 million MT, which resulted in a surplus of some 611,000 MT.

Fertilizer prices have dropped back to P700 to P1,300 per bag early this year and have maintained that level since.

"We will still have 'D' allocation for export sugar, and the overall stock would be back to normal. Therefore, we anticipate better beginning prices at the start of season," Coscoluella said.

Raw sugar currently sells at almost P800 per 50-kilogram bag, higher than the P600 to P650 50-kg. bag early last year and P700 per 50-kg late last year.

The SRA classifies sugar into "A" for sugar for export to the US, "B" for domestic consumption, "C" for reserves, "D" for export to markets other than the US, and "E" for bioethanol production.

SRA estimates that exports of D sugar will be higher, at 154,000 to 220,000 MT.

Coscoluella added that 'A' and 'D' sugar next crop year are likely to get good prices, so it will encourage for the producers.

"For instance, prices of raw sugar in the world market increased to \$396.83 per MT, or P952 per 50-kilogram bag, from \$241.40/MT or P579.36/Lkg bag late last year."

Moreover, prices of raw sugar in the United States also increased to \$507/MT or P1,216 per 50-kg bag last month from the

### Hybrid ... (from p8)

post-harvest and processing technology to maintain quality seeds;

The project started with 10 farmer-cooperators, who were provided with loans in kind such as fertilizers and pesticides.

Due to the favorable weather condition and suitable type of soil, the results confirmed the economic advantage of squash hybrid seed production, compared to predominant corn-crop raised in the area, generating a net income of P50,000 to P70,000 per hectare in a period of four months. Farmer-cooperators successfully harvested 150-200 kg per hectare of hybrid squash seeds.

According to Ms. Angelina Batugal, director of research of FCDF, the project is progressing very well.

A 1.75 hectare demonstration farm was already put up at Brgy. Centro Norte, one of the eight project sites, wherein male and female parent seeds provided by EWSC were planted on November 2008.

Hand pollination was done to ensure optimum hybrid seed production. the pollinated plants are in their fruit development stage. (Christmas B. de Guzman, DA-BAR)

\$463/MT or P1,111/Lkg bag in the same period last year, he added. (With excerpted report from Manila Bulletin)



**Secretary Arthur C. Yap swears in last 09 June 2009 Dr. Andrew B. Villacorta, CESO IV, former Regional Technical Director (RTD), as the new Regional Executive Director (RED) of the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Unit No. 02 (DA-RFU II), Tuguegarao City, Cagayan Valley.**

# Agriculture more resilient to global crisis than other sectors

Paris, Rome - Because food is a basic necessity, the agriculture sector is showing more resilience to the global economic crisis than other industries. But the risks could increase if the economic downturn deepens, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Falls in agricultural prices and in the production and consumption of farm goods are likely to be moderate as long as the economic recovery begins within two to three years, says the OECD-FAO said in its

Agricultural Outlook 2009-2018. Its major projections include the following:

**\*\*As the downturn lowers food prices, pressure is eased on recession-hit consumers who have less money to spend**

**\*\*Food prices have come down from the record peaks of early 2008, but they would remain high in many poor countries. Over the coming decade prices of all farm commodities except beef and pigmeat are unlikely to fall back to their average levels before the 2007-08 peaks.**

**\*\*Average crop prices are projected to be 10 to 20% higher**

in real terms (adjusted for inflation) for the next 10 years compared with the average during the last decade (1997-2006).

Prices for vegetable oils are expected to be more than 30 percent higher.

**\*\*The key drivers that would underpin agricultural commodity prices and markets over the medium-term are expected economic recovery, renewed food demand growth from developing countries and the emerging biofuel markets**

**\*\*Episodes of extreme price volatility similar to the hike in 2008 cannot be ruled out in coming years, particularly as commodity prices have become increasingly linked to oil and energy costs as environmental experts warn of more erratic weather conditions.**

**\*\*Agricultural production, consumption and trade are expected to increase in developing countries. Food insecurity and hunger will still be a growing problem for the world's poor.**

**\*\*However, report argues that the longer term problem is access to food rather than food availability, with poverty reduction and economic growth a big part of the solution. Thus, agriculture growth is key for sustainable development and poverty reduction, since 75 percent of the poor in developing countries live in rural areas.**

**\*\*The report says that governments can best support domestic agricultural development through targeted policies such as infrastructure investment, establishing effective research and development systems and providing incentives for sustainable use of soil and water, in addition to more effective international aid.**

**\*\*There is a need for greater opening of agricultural markets and broadening economic development beyond farming in poor rural regions. (FAO website)**



## 1.02 billion people hungry

One sixth of humanity undernourished - more than ever before.

World hunger is projected to reach a historic high in 2009 with 1 020 million people going hungry every day, according to new estimates by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UN-FAO) today.



of hunger in the world and to take the necessary actions."

"Poor countries must be given the development, economic and policy tools required to boost their agricultural production and productivity. Investment in agriculture must be increased because for the majority of poor countries a healthy agricultural sector is essential to overcome poverty and hunger and is a pre-requisite for overall economic growth," he added.

For his part, Kanayo F. Nwanze, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) said: "Many of the

world's poor and hungry are smallholder farmers in developing countries. Yet they have the potential not only to meet their own needs but to boost food security and catalyze broader economic growth. To unleash this potential and reduce the number of hungry people in the world, governments, supported by the international community, need to protect core investments in agriculture so that smallholder farmers have access not only to seeds and fertilizers but to tailored technologies, infrastructure, rural finance, and markets,"

"For most developing countries investing in smallholder agriculture is the most sustainable safety net, particularly during a time of global economic crisis, Nwanze added. (FAO website)

The increase is not the consequence of poor global harvests, but caused by the world economic crisis that resulted in lower incomes and increased unemployment, and this reduced access to food by the poor, the UN agency said.

"A dangerous mix of the global economic slowdown combined with stubbornly high food prices in many countries has pushed some 100 million more people than last year into chronic hunger and poverty," said FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf. "The silent hunger crisis — affecting one sixth of all of humanity — poses a serious risk for world peace and security. We urgently need to forge a broad consensus on the total and rapid eradication

### ICRISAT's science help prevent desertification and land degradation

As events mark the World Day to Combat Desertification on 17 June, cutting edge scientific innovations of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) deliver impact towards conserving land and water hence sustaining and increasing productivity.

The World Day to Combat Desertification with the theme "Conserving land and water: Securing our common future" focuses international attention to combat desertification and land degradation.

Desertification is one of the world's most serious contemporary challenges affecting more than one billion people. It reduces the ability of the land to support life, affecting animals, crops and rural people.

According to Dr. William Dar, Director General of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and the Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), land degradation and desertification adversely affect small farmers of the semi-arid tropics.

"The health of our lands is the basis of our food chain and climate, and the livelihoods of our small farmers and poorest people. The positive impact on combating land degradation can come only with the development and application of good science," Dr Dar said.

## NFA bent to buy 20M... (from p1)

### Monitor rice distribution

Meanwhile, the NFA will closely monitor the distribution and sale of its subsidized rice in major urban centers, particularly Metro Manila and Cebu, in anticipation of an upsurge in demand due to school opening and onset of the lean months (July to September).

The NFA's "Palengke Watch" teams have been mobilized to keep track of the supply and prices, and ensure that NFA rice is not diverted and sold as commercial rice.

To keep the supply and prices of rice stable during the lean months, Navarro said the NFA will sell more NFA high-end imported rice (5% and 15% broken), side by side with commercial rice with 25% broken.

He said the current rice supply price situation is more stable than last year, as the private sector is very active in their palay milling and rice trading activities.

For its part, the NFA has been increasing its sales, averaging more than 145,800 bags daily.

In Metro Manila alone, sale of NFA rice totals close to 21,800 bags per day, comprising the bulk sales for the National Capital Region. In Cebu, sales amount to 6,100 bags daily, or more than half of the total rice requirement of Central Visayas.

Further, the DA assures the public that NFA has sufficient rice stocks during the July-September lean period.

Its inventory stands at 1.3 million tons, good for 35 days, five days more than the required buffer stock of 30 days.

Navarro said the NFA will continue to sell 100% Iron-Fortified Rice NFA rice at Tindahan Natin outlets (TNs) to help eradicate malnutrition among urban and rural poor families.

The concept of TN outlets exclusively selling IFR was piloted in Misamis Occidental and in provinces under the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). It will now be implemented nationwide following orders from the NFA Council, the agency's policymaking body.

IFR is also being distributed to pre-school and elementary grade pupils under the Food-for-School Program (FSP), a joint project of the DA-NFA, Department of Education, and Department of Social Welfare and Development.

The NFA has so far issued 5.5 million bags of IFR, worth P5.5 billion, from November 2004 up to March 2009.

TN outlets sell IFR at a subsidized price of P18.25 per kilo exclusively for families with Family Access Cards issued by the DSWD in the NCR, and those listed in the TN Rice Allocation Ledger in the provinces.

As of June 15, 2009, more than 6 million bags of rice worth P 4.9 billion were issued by the DA-NFA to the TN outlets.

## NFA to cancel license of 'violators'

The National Food Authority will strictly monitor *Tindahan Natin* (TN) outlets and accredited rice retailers as a deterrent against grains trading violations.

NFA administrator Jessup P. Navarro said the initiative will be part of the agency's operational plan for the next four months.

He discussed the move, along with other NFA programs, during the recent NFA regional director's meeting in Bacolod City.

He said the NFA shall implement the "One-strike" policy, which means that any TN or accredited retail outlet found violat-

ing trading rules and regulations will be outright blacklisted and its accreditation cancelled.

At present, there are 14,581 TN outlets, located mostly in depressed areas in the National Capital Region (NCR) and food-poor provinces, and about 9,219 accredited retail stores.

Violations include diversion of NFA rice, unreasonable depletion of stocks, refusal to sell NFA rice, selling of commercial rice alongside NFA rice, and engaging in the grains business without valid NFA license. (NFA Public Affairs Dep't.)

## RP, Brazil ... (from p2)

coffee producer and exporter.

The Philippines imports about 35,000 metric tons (MT), representing one-third of its annual coffee requirement, to augment local production, which in 2008 totaled 97,435 MT.

Meanwhile, the MOU between the DA-PADCC and EMBRAPA

entails joint research, information exchange and technology transfer in high value crops, fisheries, livestock, biofuels, and other agricultural crops. It was signed by DA-PADCC president Marriz Agbon and EMBRAPA president Silvio Crestana. (With reports from PIA-MMIO)

## World Bank approves .. (from p1)

The DA-NIA will gradually transfer to capable IAs the O&M of 58 selected NIS.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, and concurrent NIA board chairman, lauded the WB for approving the PIDP, as it is consistent with government's thrust to increase agricultural productivity and farmers' incomes, as called for under the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA).

For his part, World Bank Philippines country director Bert Hofman said the PDIP is aligned with the Bank's Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for fiscal year 2010-2012.

The PIDP will contribute to the CAS strategic objectives of improving the investment climate by supporting agricultural productivity and infrastructure investments, as well as instituting better governance in the irrigation sector.

He added the PIDP fits well into WB's strategy of making growth for the poor, majority of whom are farmers, who will directly benefit from it.

Meanwhile, NIA Administrator Carlos Salazar said the PIDP will help establish policy and institutional reforms to improve the corporate viability of NIA.

The entire APL will run for 15 years, broken into three phases.

The second phase will focus on deepening institutional and policy reforms in the irrigation sector and expanding the modernization of various NIS.

The third phase entails consolidating the reforms in the first two phases, ensuring sustainability of the impacts, and completing the modernization of all NIS and transfer of O&M to qualified IAs. (World Bank)

## DA-PADCC... (from p3)

by utilizing biomass resources for the production of a cost efficient and earth-friendly composite board and paper pulp based products.

Aside from environmental concerns, both PADCC and Ecorntech considered the provision of new opportunities to the stakeholders to engage their agricultural residues to long-term productive use, thus, encouraging them to earn additional income for an improved quality of life.

DA-PADCC President Marriz B. Agbon and Mr. Robert Rieth, Chief Operating Officer of Ecorntech Inc. inked the MOU on June 19, 2009 at the Agribusiness Lands Investments Center Office, DA-OSEC building.



Sec. Arthur Yap receives a prototype of the 'High Yield and Protein' (YAP) corn or IPB Var 6, from principal corn breeder Dr. Artemio Salazar, deputy director of the Crops Science Cluster-Institute of Plant Breeding (IPB), during the 34th anniversary of IPB, UP Los Baños, Laguna. The new variety contains 66% lysine (a type of protein), higher than of normal corn varieties and comparable with meat protein.

## 5-year cassava program aims 100% self-sufficiency

A five-year cassava production program set to double the area planted to this crop to over 500,000 hectares is now in place.

This project aims to attain 100% self-sufficiency in cassava as feed ingredient and in meeting the full requirements of the cassava industry.

Asec Dennis B. Araullo, GMA Corn Program National Coordinator and is concurrently the Cassava Program Coordinator, said that under the plan, the target increase in cassava production is 10.477 million metric tons (Mmt) by 2014, estimated requirement of the industry by that period, from 1.941Mmt in 2008.

Cassava, which can substitute as much as 20% of corn in animal feeds, is also used for bioethanol production and for human consumption.

He added that the government needs to spend P26 million to P70 million per year until 2014 to reach this target of 100% sufficiency and increase areas planted to 500,000 hectares from the 230,000-hectare target in 2009.

"The government has to address a slew of challenges that threatens this goal of cassava self-sufficiency, such as low

productivity, limited supply of planting materials of new and high yielding varieties and limited supply of cassava dryers and other postharvest equipment," Araullo said.

The plan involves the establishment of postharvest equipment to increase the quality of produce in major cassava-producing regions like Northern Mindanao, Bicol, Central Visayas, and Caraga.

As part of the plan, the DA propagated high-yielding cassava varieties like NSIC Cv22 (KU-50), Lakan I and Golden Yellow in 53 hectares last crop year.

"These high-yielding varieties," Araullo said, "will help increase the national yield average to 21mt/ha in five years from the current 9mt/ha."

Last year, the DA signed a P3-million deal with the Visayas State University-based PhilRootscrops to produce 5.6 million cassava plantlets per year.

The domestic demand for cassava, Araullo added, is projected to increase to some 10.0Mmt in 2014 from 8.820Mmt in 2013; 7.448Mmt in 2012; 6.132 Mmt in 2011; and 5.016 Mmt next year, given a steady hike of demand for feeds to 8.294 Mmt in 2014 from 4.0 Mmt next year. The



Photo by Nolet Fulgencio

**Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap (center) and Rosario Mayor Belarmin Flores (left) hold up the biggest cassava and gourd that won prizes in a farm fair in Rosario, La Union.**

hog and poultry sectors account for 79% of total domestic cassava consumption.

Meanwhile, in its January-March report, the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics said that in terms of volume, the biggest

gainers in the crops subsector in the first quarter of 2009 were cassava, followed by banana, palay, tomato and pineapple. In terms of gross values outputs, cassava came in 3rd at 32.62% to P2.106 billion.

## NFA to buy certified palay seeds

The Department of Agriculture through the National Food Authority will now buy and handle the distribution of inbred certified palay seeds to farmers, under its Rapid Seed Supply Financing Project (RaSSFIP).

To be implemented initially in four selected regions (5, 6, 8 and 10), the project will help promote the use of high-yielding palay varieties to further increase the country's rice production, in tandem with the DA's GMA rice program.

NFA administrator Jessup P. Navarro said his agency will buy the certified seeds from seed growers and producers accredited by the DA.

RaSSFIP is funded through a US \$16.54M, composed of a loan from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and a grant from the European Commission (EC). The DA will provide the project funds to NFA for seed procurement, along with the list of certified and registered seed producers accredited by the DA's Bureau of Plant Industry (DA-BPI), and the master list of farmer-beneficiaries of the program.

It will set the buying price for the certified seeds.

The project will in part contribute to achieving the targeted 2009 palay production of 17 million metric tons.

The provision of pest-resistant and high-yielding rice varieties to farmers is one of the major components of the DA's FIELDS program—that entails the provision of needed fertilizers, irrigation, extension, loans, dryers and other post harvest facilities, and seeds—to food security and self-sufficiency in major food commodities such as rice, corn, vegetables, livestock, poultry, and fisheries. (NFA Public Affairs Department)

*"Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bands." (TJ to John Jay, B.8.426)*



**Smuggled Onions. Undersecretary for Operations Jesus Emmanuel Paras (2<sup>nd</sup> from right) inspects smuggled onions, part of the 15 apprehended 40-foot container vans, worth over P24.6M, at the Manila International Container Port (MICP). The shipment has no import permit issued by the Department of Agriculture (DA) through the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI). With him are DA-BPI Director Joel Rudinas (left) and BPI MICP Plant Quarantine officer Gregorio Marajas (right). Also present during the inspection is Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales (not in photo).**