



SAADvocacy

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SPECIAL AREA FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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DA-SAAD seeks to standardize marketing and enterprise development initiatives through AMAS consultation

by Jessamie Gabon, Jennifer Valcobero | NPMO

QUEZON CITY, July 3, 2023 – The Department of Agriculture (DA), and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program presented its proposed Marketing and Enterprise Development (MAED) guidelines before the DA-Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS) on June 29, 2023, for consultation.

MAED focuses on providing market studies, training, and other related activities to prepare SAAD beneficiaries

for enterprising, as one of its culminating goals for the livelihood projects designed for farmers and fishers' associations (FFAs). This stems from the fulfillment of the ultimate goal of SAAD for the FFAs to sustain operations through the creation of Community-based Enterprises (CBEs), addressing economic sustainability, diversifying income sources, and aiding in the socio-economic conditions of the target communities and beneficiaries.

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EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

SAAD CALABARZON in Tingloy, set to form FAs after completing PRA activities

by Pamela Faith M. Garcia | CALABARZON

CALABARZON, June 30, 2023 – As beneficiary requisite in receiving livelihood assistance, the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Phase 2 in CALABARZON is set to begin organizing farmers into associations after completing Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and profiling activities in Tingloy, Batangas.

A total of 635 participants from ten (10) barangays...*continue to p. 2*



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underwent a PRA community study from April 12 to May 11, 2023, aimed to gather essential communities' basic agricultural information and identify the project rationale. Carefully considering the community resources and experiences, the PRA study revealed goat production, banana production, and coconut production as the most feasible agricultural livelihood in the community.

PRA directly involves community members in the analysis of their socio-economic and agricultural conditions, allowing them to develop a shared understanding of their realities and formulate ways to address this. SAAD conducts this as a platform for farmers' perspectives to be heard, ensuring that the upcoming livelihood interventions are tailored to the needs of the community.

Verifying the information gathered

during the focused group discussions to match the actual farm areas of the respondents, site validation was conducted together with farmers, barangay officials, and representatives of the Provincial Agriculturist of Batangas.

Alongside, SAAD CALABARZON identified facilities and land use through barangay mapping, history, and socio-agricultural trends, cost and return of major commodities, agricultural practices, and existing problems in their area. Through this, the team found out that the members have land areas suitable to grow various crops which, however, are often only planted for personal consumption.

Following the completion of PRA, SAAD CALABARZON is gearing up to implement a comprehensive livelihood intervention plan. With the aim of empowering the farmers in the area, the program is set to provide training and support in various aspects of agricultural development.



Recognizing the need to enhance capacity and knowledge of farmers, the program will conduct a series of training covering values formation, community organization, and the formulation of by-laws. Further, to facilitate effective collaboration and collective actions, SAAD CALABARZON intends to assist the identified farmers in forming 10 farmers'

associations (FAs).

Meanwhile, livelihood intervention is set to roll out in 2024, focusing in three (3) key areas: boosting goat farming, improving high-value crop production, and ensuring food security. ###



SAAD 9 delivered the last wave of livelihood assistance to 7 groups of farmers in Patikul

by Ellaine L. Quiamco | REGION 9

SULU, June 28, 2023 - The Department of Agriculture - Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program in Region 9 delivered its final set of livelihood assistance to 325 farmers in Patikul, Sulu, supporting food production and food availability for the formerly "bakwit" communities who just recently reclaimed their land that became a setting for lawless elements' activities.

Seven (7) farmer associations (FAs) including the Langhub FA (65 members), Maligay FA (45 members), Alindang Buhanginan FA (45 members), Latih FA (45 members), Tugas FA (45 members), Panglayahan FA (45 members), and Bakung FA (35 members) received packs of assorted vegetable seeds under the Vegetable Production Project.

The intervention serves as complementary support to their Banana, Corn and Layer Chicken Egg Production

Project which aims to provide the former "bakwit" or Internally Displaced People (IDP) a sustainable livelihood support and help increase their income through vegetable production. The intervention comprises 800 packs of OPV assorted vegetable seeds (1g of ampalaya, 30g of okra, 1g of eggplant, 1g of tomato, 1g of pechay, 8g of pole sitao, 4g of calabasa, and 12g of upland kangkong per pack) worth Php 214,400.00. Each member will start to cultivate vegetables in their individual backyard gardens for consumption and market enterprise.

Background

The seven (7) SAAD groups of farmers with a total of 325 members are Internally Displaced People (IDP) communities some in a maximum of 20 years in Patikul, Sulu, a remote and armed conflicted area. There are 1,954 households and IDPs who are beneficiaries of the Balik Barangay Program (BBP) of the Municipal Task Force to End Armed Conflict (MTF-ELAC) of the Armed

Forces of the Philippines (AFP) since August 2020.

BBP is one of the many programs of the MTF-ELAC of the Joint Task Force (JTF) Sulu headed by the 11th Infantry Division to attain inclusive and sustainable peace. It encourages displaced locals to return to their barangays by rehabilitating their communities, setting up infrastructures sustainable such as roads, water sources, prayer houses, and livelihood opportunities among others.

The DA-SAAD Region 9 was among the first to implement livelihood projects that promote development in Patikul to aid the Tausug communities to resume farming as livelihood, equipping them with complete farm inputs and quality planting materials.

In 2022, the seven (7) FAs were formed and included as beneficiaries of the SAAD program and were initially awarded agricultural inputs on Banana Production, Corn Production, and Layer Chicken Egg Production Project amounting to a combined Php 11,423,250.50 under FY 2022.

The said interventions are part of the Department of Agriculture's initiatives to support Executive Order No. 70 in attaining

inclusive and sustainable peace and socio-economic development of the farmers in marginalized and armed conflict areas in the country.

Patikul is an agricultural town where rice, corn, and fish are the major products. Usually, vegetable farmers in Sulu produce these crops for food consumption, while some sell their product for additional income to cover daily household expenses.

The Vegetable Production Project is the last intervention that the DA-SAAD Program Phase 1 under the RFO 9 commits to deliver in Patikul under the FY 2022 continuing fund to boost vegetable production for consumption and enterprising purposes.

For SAAD Phase 2, Sulu is no longer included in the DA-SAAD Region 9 coverage area. As of writing, the FAs were endorsed to their respective LGUs in the said province for support. In response, the LGUs committed to provide continuous monitoring and coordination to sustain and enhance the groups' operations. ###



DA-SAAD CAR takes course on beneficiary needs assessment

by Maria Elena G. Catajan | CAR

BAGUIO CITY, June 5, 2023 – Dedicating the first year of implementation to laying strong foundation of program implementation through social preparation, the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program Phase 2 in Cordillera underwent Beneficiary Needs Assessment (BNA) workshop, aimed at improving the planning strategies.

BNA is an approach that opens the planning stage through social research, a method that seeks to provide the most suited projects to the target communities. The weeklong training, held on May 23 to 26, 2023 was led by the Operational Planning Budget, Monitoring & Evaluation Unit (OPBME) team of National Program Management Office (NPMO) – Ms. Marie Abigail G. Dela Cruz, Social Preparation and Program Management (SPPM) Sub-Unit Lead and Engr. Jonalyn Racelis, Associate Project Officer.

Emphasizing the role of implementers, 24 implementers from the Regional Program Management Support Office (RPMSO) as well as representatives from the Research Division, Agricultural Program Coordinating Office (APCO), Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Division (PMED) attended the training.

Utilizing the essence of BNA, Ms. Dela Cruz discussed the document review, interview and



observation, and site validation and the approach incorporated to each tool.

All mentioned tools will be triangulated to effectively validate collected information and arrive at the most objective project design of the beneficiaries. Through this, BNA serves and helps the farmers with their needs by giving them opportunity to communicate their socio-economic perspectives.

Importance of BNA on the ground

To further experience first-hand, participants conducted BNA simulation in Balluay, Sablan and Basil Tublay, Benguet. They were divided into two (2) groups and were given the chance to rehearse

the guide questions using the pre-identified projects such as poultry, livestock, and crops production.

Regional Executive Director, Cameron P. Odsey, in his message, reminded implementers to immerse themselves in the community in order to understand the farmers. "Dapat maintindihan natin na ang ating pinagtatrabahuhan ay isang project na may simula at may katapusan. Ang kagandahan ng pagkakataon na ito, pwede tayong maki-dialogue muna sa mga farmers. Mayroong panahon na kausapin sila at malaman ang kanilang priorities," Mr. Odsey shared.

(We must understand that what we are working on is a project that has a beginning and an end. We must help the FCAs

toward greater sustainability. We must inspire them to continue the livelihood project. The beauty of this opportunity is that we can have a dialogue with the farmers first. There is time to talk to them and find out their priorities.)

For the second quarter of 2023, SAAD CAR will conduct social preparation activities and beneficiary needs assessment in the identified 82 barangays of the municipalities of Abra, Benguet and Ifugao, while continuing to serve the provinces of Apayao, Mt. Province, and Kalinga from Phase 1. For Phase 2, DA-SAAD CAR targets to serve 2,280 farmers in the five (5) covered provinces. ###

SAAD Caraga-assisted farmers receive abaca and banana inputs

by Mark Angelo C. Pineda | Caraga

CARAGA, June 21, 2023 – Aiding 125 abaca and banana farmers in time for land preparation and signaling official beginning of their journey under the program, the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development Program (DA-SAAD) Program Phase 2 in Caraga delivered Php 3,056,150 worth of farm inputs to Agusan del Norte (ADN) and Surigao del Norte (SDN) covered areas.

On June 6-7, 2023, the DA-SAAD headed by the Regional Field Office Caraga distributed initial farm inputs including pesticides, fertilizers, farm tools, and knapsack sprayers, which are components of the Banana and Abaca Production Projects funded under FY 2023.

The recipients are farmers from the following five (5) FAs in municipalities namely: Remedios T. Romualdez, ADN (2 FAs); and Tagana-an (1 FA) and Sison (2 FAs), SDN, which form part of the 28 FAs assisted by the Program



in the provinces of SDN, ADN, and Dinagat Islands.

SAAD Caraga Phase 2 prioritizes municipalities with high poverty incidence (5th and 6th class) per 2018 data from the Philippine Statistics Authority and those severely affected by Typhoon Rai (Odette) in 2021. Of the 28 FAs, two (2) are in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs), and another two (2) with members belonging to the Manobo and Mamanwa Indigenous groups.

Mr. Guillermo Gumatay, Chairman of BAFO from RTR, ADN,

expressed gratitude for the inputs they have obtained in support of their Banana Production project. It will be the first time the group members will plant the lakatan variety, which the program funded.

"Daghang salamat SAAD sa oportunidad nga makatnong aning Lakatan. Limitado lang among nahibalaan ani maong dako among pasalamat kay kompleto ang assistance sa Programa. Adunay training sa grupo, kabahin sa saging, ug karon niabot ning materyales para land preparation," Mr. Gumatay said.

(Thank you, SAAD, for giving us the

opportunity to try out and plant the Lakatan variety. We do not have much experience with this variety. We are thankful that besides the training, we have received various inputs to aid us in our land preparation.)

The inputs were in time for the land preparation activities of the groups before the delivery of their abaca and banana planting materials later this month. Before this, the groups also underwent organizational development and technical training in banana and abaca productions to improve their knowledge and skills in project management and their commodities. ###

SAAD-NPMO conducts validation of farmers enterprises on abaca, livestock, and poultry raisers turned agripreneurs in Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur

Aside from its substantial contribution to the Philippine economy, abaca is a vital crop that can also provide numerous ecological advantages. In the Caraga Region where the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program of the Department of Agriculture in Phase 1 operated from 2017-2022, upland farmers have expressed their strong interest in adopting the abaca production project for sustainability, improving income and helping revitalize the industrial crop's production in the Philippines.

Farmer groups in Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur turned to agripreneurs through pre- and post-production support from SAAD. Prior, individual planters grow the crop at an average area of 500 square meters, alongside banana and falcata trees as their main source of income. After Local Government Units (LGUs) endorsement for support, through the Municipal Agriculture Office, these farmers were able to expand their areas, increase production and income, and improve the quality of fiber production.

For Muritula USAD Farmer's Cooperative (MUFC), Cecilia Abaca and Corn Planters Association (CeADCOPA), and Culi-ram Farmers Association, the project provided by the Program allowed improvements in their livelihood such as through the ultraviolet shed facility, securing and improving the quality of fiber production. In addition, the project allowed the expansion of production areas from 0.5 hectares (ha) to 3 hectares; producing planting materials and generating additional income among members through abaca nursery. Modern technologies helped beneficiaries reduce cost, time, and effort for producing quality fiber; and the series of technical training conducted by the Program helped them gain knowledge and skills they can practice in their farms.

In the economic aspect, the farmers were able to provide food on their table – not just root crops as their staple food, but extra income for rice, consumable until their next abaca harvest, aiding children's school fees, and other basic needs in their homes.

With good project execution and management, the FAs established their enterprises such as abaca fiber consolidation within their barangays, buying and selling of abaca fiber, and microfinancing from their savings with 5-10% monthly interest.

With the conclusion of the Program's Phase 1, the beneficiaries currently turned over to their respective LGUs are linked to the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA) – the government agency in charge of developing and sustaining the fiber industry in the country; DA's Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) for possible farm-to-market road projects; and series of training related to



their project and organizational management that can be accessed by the groups from various supporting agencies.

Livestock and poultry commodities in Surigao del Sur

Aside from abaca, farmers in the rural areas of Surigao del Sur also thrived in livestock and poultry production. These include goat for live weight production, ready-to-lay chicken for egg production, and free-range chicken for egg, chicks, and meat production.

The Goat Raisers Association of Mabog (GRAM) in Sitio Mabog, San Roque Bislig City sustains SAAD Phase 1's goat project by selling some of the stocks and offering microfinancing with their members as immediate borrowers and rolling over original stocks to the next-in-line beneficiaries. The group now moves toward increasing stocks to sustain the project.

One of the members, a senior, Melenciana Ladao, 66, has established a general merchandise store out of her share dividends from the group's lending service.

Antao Swine Raisers Association, Cancavan Corn Growers Association (CACPA), and Balete Chicken Growers Association (BACGA) who received chicken projects from the Program were able to augment their income through egg and live weight chicken enterprise. True to the primary goal of the Program, which is improving the food production in areas with high poverty incidence, the poultry project in Cabugo serves as an additional food source for its residents, all the while diversifying the agricultural production in the locale.

A total of eight (8) Phase 1 FAs in the Caraga Region were visited by the National Program Management Office (NPMO) staff for their inclusion in the Unlad Lokal Coffee Table Book to recognize groups turned agripreneurs during program implementation. This reference book will also allow the program management to lobby its former beneficiaries to partners, stakeholders, policymakers, and other agencies responsible for national and local development planning. ###



SAAD Western Visayas rolls out agricultural interventions to beneficiaries

ILOILO CITY, June 30, 2023 – The Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program starts distribution of livelihood projects on corn, high-value crops, livestock, and poultry in five (5) provinces in Western Visayas region to 34 farmers' associations (FA).

With the assistance of Municipal Agriculture Offices, various farm tools and agricultural inputs were turned over to 1,020 member beneficiaries in nine (9) priority municipalities of Iloilo, Guimaras, Antique, Aklan, and Negros Occidental; six (6) of the towns belong to 5th income class municipalities while the other two has two communities belonging to Geographically-Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs).

Regional Operational Planning Budget, Monitoring & Evaluation (OPBME) Unit Lead Sheryl Mae Gaylan noted the completion of Beneficiary Needs Assessments (BNA) and Capability Building trainings as part of the Social Preparation component of SAAD prior to the delivery of interventions. These preparatory activities are designed to prepare the beneficiaries for project implementation and encourage them to actively participate and prepare their community, and set personal responsibilities and commitment in managing the group and SAAD's livelihood projects.

"With the core objectives to contribute to poverty reduction and local food production of 5th-6th income class and top-third poorest municipalities in the region, our implementers here in the region have already commenced in delivering agricultural inputs to our beneficiaries as partial fulfillment to their livelihood projects," said Ms. Gaylan.

To make sure that livelihood projects address the needs of identified beneficiaries, regional implementers used the existing baseline data of LGU counterparts as the primary basis for formulating agricultural interventions. Then, the results of the BNA study were utilized through triangulation to further validate the suitability and feasibility of the projects.

Aklan and Antique Cluster

With a striking range of fertilizer prices that range from Php 2,000 – Php 3,000, one of the essential components of the assistance, SAAD Western Visayas turned over 105 sacks of inorganic fertilizer to the Municipal Agriculture Office of Tangalan (5th income class),

by Christ John B. Gamarcha | REGION 6



Aklan to help alleviate the burden on farmers of the rising cost of the farm inputs.

These fertilizers were then distributed on May 19-20 to Pudiot Farmers' Association (FY 2023 Banana Production), Tagas Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative (FY 2023 Vegetable Production), Panayakan Lanigpa Multi-Purpose Cooperative (FY 2023 Corn Production), and Dumatad Farmers' Association (FY 2023 Vegetable Production).

In the town of Buruanga (5th income class), SAAD regional implementer Mylene Sangcap together with OIC-MAO Jorgia Amor Dagohoy distributed over 150 sacks of inorganic fertilizer on May 19 and various farm tools on May 29. These interventions were received by Bagong Bayan Vegetables Farmers' Association (Native Chicken and Coffee Productions), and Tag-osip Farmers' Association (Pineapple Production).

Bagong Bayan Vegetables Farmers' Association Chairman Paladin Bionzo expressed his gratitude to the SAAD Program since his group was identified as a recipient of native chicken and coffee production. They partially received farm inputs such as farm tools and inorganic fertilizers which they temporarily stored at the barangay center while the construction of their storage facility is ongoing. The group assured their cooperation and vowed they will put the said inputs into good use.

In Antique and Aklan, baseline data from LGU counterparts revealed that identified beneficiaries have small-scale crop production and some tend to native chicken but their yields are often intended for household consumption. These crops such as vegetables, corn, pineapple, ginger, among others, are sustainable in their areas but farmers lack the capital to buy seeds, slips, rhizomes, and seedlings because their harvests are just enough to make ends meet.

Results derived from the BNA study confirmed that beneficiaries indeed need access to agricultural inputs in their crop production. Thus, implementers formulated livelihood projects aimed to increase farmers' productivity, especially in growing the said crops like vegetables, pineapple, corn, and banana as well as managing poultry production.

Negros Occidental Cluster

On May 26, SAAD regional implementers led the turnover of 40 bags of inorganic fertilizer with farm tools in Moises Padilla (top-third poorest municipalities) with the assistance of the Municipal Agriculture Office.

In La Castellana (top-third poorest municipalities), three (3) associations received assorted farm tools and two (2) units of granular applicators during the initial distribution conducted by SAAD regional implementers with the assistance of MAO.

Utilizing the BNA results, implementers confirmed that the said livelihood projects in crop and livestock production are viable in the identified communities having fertile lands to grow high-value crops such as vegetables and peanuts while the majority are already managing small-scale livestock production. Lack of access to farm inputs and equipment poses a challenge to the productivity of beneficiaries which will be provided by SAAD, alongside training activities both in organizational and production aspects to usher transformation to an enterprise.

Iloilo and Guimaras Cluster

In Iloilo, the towns of Bingawan (5th income class), San Rafael (5th income class), and Batad (5th income class) received inorganic fertilizers, various farm tools and materials, and agrochemicals on May 24, 26, and 29 respectively as part of the partial deliveries

of interventions under the Calamansi, Chicken Egg, Native Chicken, Pineapple, Duck, and Corn and Vegetable Production Projects.

Most farmers' associations with small-scale production in the province of Iloilo are focused on three major commodities – corn, poultry, and high-value crops such as vegetables and pineapple. Anchoring on the baseline data of the LGU counterparts, the regional implementers formulated livelihood projects that would supplement and enhance the existing production of beneficiaries.

BNA results support that the targeted interventions are feasible and viable in the community as well as addressing the needs of the identified farmers.

In the island province of Guimaras, a turnover ceremony was conducted at the Municipal Gym of San Lorenzo (5th income class) on June 6, 2023. Present during the activity were SAAD Regional OPBME Lead Sheryl Mae Gaylan with RPMISO staff, APCO Guimaras Arlene Escuadra, Provincial Office for Agricultural Service (POAS) Chief Alvin Nava, Alyn Joy Tupaz from ROS Guimaras, Acting Mayor Constantino Cordero Jr., SB Member, and 4 Punong Barangays.

Arlene Escuadra, in her message, challenged farmers to live up to the "Strong Association, Attitude, Direction" mantra so they could achieve the goal of the program which is to establish community-based enterprises.

The whole month of June is intended for the delivery of interventions prior to the conduct of needs-based training and will continue in the remaining months of 2023 until such time that the whole package will be completed. ###



July is National Nutrition Month. In SAAD, we consistently forward initiatives for sustainable agricultural development targeting the improvement of the quality of life of rural communities by ensuring a sufficient source of healthy food for families, generating sufficient income, and improving the nutrition among our beneficiaries.

To improve the nutrition and health of marginalized communities, agriculture and rural development are both important. Thus, SAAD Phase 2 centered its implementation through the provision of food production and livelihood projects in its 56 covered provinces (619 municipalities) with the highest poverty incidence. These interventions, ranging from crops to animals and fisheries, are productive resources that farmers and fishers can use to consistently meet food consumption requirements by eating a variety of food products for at least three meals a day. Local production turned into community-based enterprises also resulted in opportunities for employment and additional income for their families.

Agriculture and nutrition share a common entry point - food. Food is a key outcome of agricultural activities and, in turn, is a key input to good nutrition. Given that the genesis of agricultural development is to provide food "adequate for the health and strength of all people," we assure that SAAD will remain steadfast in helping farmers and fishers attain food security.

In this material, we have compiled SAAD's initiatives and achievements so that we could foster a stronger connection with all of you. Together, we press on towards a better and more nourished future for all through agricultural development in rural communities.

ULYSSES J. LUSTRIA, JR.
Director, SAAD-NPMO

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Continuing sustainable agricultural development in Mountain Province through SAAD

by Maria Elena G. Catajan | CAR

MOUNTAIN PROVINCE, July 11, 2023 – With the approval of the Phase 2 implementation, collaboration with stakeholders in Mountain Province (MP) shall continue with the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program organizing a meeting with regional implementers, and representatives from provincial and local government units to effectively communicate the guidelines and directives necessary for the program implementation.

Held on June 7, 2023, said orientation was led by the Regional Program Management Support Office (RPMISO) and was participated by 35 representatives from the Provincial and Municipal Agriculturist Offices, and Provincial Governor's Office of Mountain Province.

SAAD Phase 1 implementation in Mountain Province

SAAD Phase 1 was launched in 2019 in Mountain Province providing livelihood

projects such as livestock, swine repopulation, poultry, and high value crops production. The province has assisted 4,436 beneficiaries belonging to 52 Farmer Cooperatives and Associations (FCAs) across 10 municipalities, and 54 barangay units.

Over three (3) years, SAAD established a total of 23 community-based enterprises (CBEs) in MP alone. After SAAD Phase 1, the groups were endorsed to the Local Government Units for assessment and validation by other government agencies, private companies, and non-government organizations.

SAAD MP coordination for next implementation

Ms. Aida Pagtan, Regional Agriculture and Fisheries Information Section (RAFIS) Chief, led the orientation, discussing the implementing guidelines of the SAAD Phase 2, new areas to be covered, and new criteria for selecting





areas and beneficiaries.

Meanwhile, Representative Maximo Dalog Jr., member of the House Committee on Poverty Alleviation expressed his support during the orientation and highlighted that he bid for the extension of the program through house resolution during Phase 1.

"We are happy that the MP is still included in SAAD Phase 2. I can see that there are actually success stories in SAAD MP and I know that is why the Department of Agriculture heeded the request of the 18th Congress, which is to extend the program. They saw the potential of our local farmers," expressed Mr. Dalog Jr.

Meanwhile, Ms. Beverly Pekas,

Agricultural Program Coordinating Officer (APCO) welcomed the start of the SAAD Phase 2 in the province and vowed to continue the success of the SAAD Phase 1.

"We hope that the direction of SAAD Phase 2 will contribute to its success as in Phase 1, we are here to serve our farmers better. Our success factors, our teamwork, our cooperation we have to continue in Phase 2. Today is a milestone for SAAD Phase 2 to formally open the implementation in the province," Ms. Pekas expressed.

Allow this endeavor, this activity to walk us through the goals and objectives, guidelines of the program and the crafting of the project itself to avoid misrepresentation and also to have a common understanding and vision, especially to our target farmer beneficiaries. With this we can be guided by embracing

another challenge for a successful and strong SAAD Program Phase 2 in our Mt. Province," she added.

For SAAD Phase 2, the province will cover 5th income class municipalities of Barlig, Besao, Sabangan, Sadanga, and Sagada as well as Paracelis which has a 30.6% poverty incidence rate, and ranks 321th poorest area according to Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) 2018 data. Through this, a total of 24 FCAs from 12 barangay units, all falling under the selection criteria – will be catered by the program.

Representatives of the LGUs pledged their full support to the program and committed to assist in the conduct of social preparation and municipal orientations, which is scheduled to be conducted by the SAAD staff in July, 2023. ###



BFAR SAAD-CAR midterm assessment reports 100% target beneficiary coverage

by Jessamie Gabon | NPMO
Eleanor Bognay | CAR

ILOCOS SUR, July 28, 2023 – The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources – Special Area for Agricultural Development (BFAR-SAAD) Program Phase 2 Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) conducted its First Semester Physical and Financial Assessment in Santiago, Ilocos Sur, on June 22-24, 2023 reporting 100% rate of coverage across six (6) expanded provinces in the Cordillera Administrative Region.

Regional Director Lilibeth L. Signey acknowledged the unwavering dedication of the SAAD implementers, surpassing even the highest expectations set forth for the Phase 2 program implementation. RD Signey also commended the spirit of collaboration that resonated among the team and extended her gratitude to the positive performance delivered by the BFAR SAAD-CAR for the fisherfolk communities in Cordillera despite its highland location.

Further, RD Signey highlighted that this assessment activity stands as a powerful narration of capturing unique stories as well as the revelation of "behind the scenes" of SAAD experience as staff set foot in their assigned municipalities.

Meanwhile, BFAR SAAD-CAR Program Coordinator Michelle A. Peralta provided an overview of the program's accomplishments in the first semester. Expanding its reach from three (3) provinces during Phase 1, to six (6) provinces (covering all provinces in the region), BFAR SAAD Phase 2 tapped 38 municipalities, 98 barangays, 47 fisherfolk associations (FAs), involving 1,405 fisherfolk beneficiaries.



Further, Ms. Peralta reported completion of the social preparation phase and 100% coverage among target fisherfolk associations (FAs) for FY 2023. Of the reported 47 FAs, BFAR SAAD-CAR organized 29 new groups. The specialized training focusing on commodity-specific skills and practices refinement target exceeded 114% accomplishment rate, in line with the goal of strengthening production not only through modernization but also skills enhancement among fisherfolk.

Additionally, 22 groups shall undergo prescribed training modules through Fish N' LEarn, a continuous financial education campaign promoted by the BFAR in partnership with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

Similarly, the livelihood projects distributed have shown significant progress, surpassing the semestral target of 14 units noting a 236% accomplishment rate. The over-achievement is a result of the extensive measures

taken by the Bureau to reach the target 10% annual increase on fisheries production nationwide.

BFAR CAR Planning Officer Arnold A. Paleng proposed for the utilization of the 'PESTLE analysis' as a tool or framework in presenting different issues and concerns for resolution based on Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental.

The assessment was attended by BFAR-CAR Chief Aquaculturist, Lois June B. Fermin commending the implementers' eagerness to learn and maintain a positive mindset. She likewise expressed her hope that the SAAD staff would continue to exhibit the same dedication and join and serve the fisherfolk communities in their SAAD journey.

Moving forward, the implementation is currently on the Food and Livelihood Production component where stocking of fingerlings, harvest activities will be monitored in the coming semester. ###

HVC farmers harvest 3.7MT tomatoes through SAAD Phase 1 project

ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE, July 28, 2023 – The 35-member group of vegetable growers recorded a 3,771 kilograms (kg) total staggered harvest of tomatoes in Sergio Osmeña, Zamboanga del Norte, as part of the Vegetable Production Project from the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program Phase 1.

The Diamante Max tomato variety was cultivated in a one-hectare communal garden of the Buenavista Farmers Association (BFA), which started the production of tomatoes in April. The area owned by a Sergio Osmeña local, is rented by the FA, located just a kilometer away from their residences.

The tomato harvest was sold to some private buyers at varied prices ranging from Php 22-33 per kilogram (kg) depending on its size. The association earned a gross income of Php 107,992 from the tomatoes alone from June 4-22, 2023, while also waiting for the last three (3) batches of weekly harvests. The remaining tomatoes are about 5,000 hills or around 1,500 kg once harvested.

BFA is one of the pilot groups to receive livelihood projects through the SAAD Program in 2017 and continues to reap income after five (5) years in vegetable production.

by Aimee Lou D. Madjus | REGION 9



As a result of the municipal-wide consultation conducted by the SAAD implementers in 2017, the BFA was granted an initial Php 68,570 worth of startup agri-inputs under the Vegetable Production Project.

In 2018, 2020, and 2021, BFA received Php 577,124 worth of fertilizers, and farm equipment such as hand tractors and a shredder machine for vermicomposting.

BFA established an agri-enterprise through the constant provision of agri-inputs, mentoring, and monitoring initiated by SAAD, led by the DA Regional Field Office

9. The projects continue to flourish with the combined hard work, unity, and perseverance of the farmers.

In 2017 and 2018, the members planted vegetables in their individual gardens and eventually established a communal garden in 2019 up to present.

Although the BFA reported failure in some cropping cycles due to inevitable factors such as weather and pest infestation, they managed to continue and sustain the project through knowledge sharing among the members on pest control methods, among

other farming techniques. Over the years, they shared a total of Php 21,500 as their incentives.

The BFA purchased quality seeds from their previous cycle's income to ensure quality produce. From land preparation to harvesting, all members do the farm work and later get a share for every cropping.

After the Phase 1 implementation, SAAD endorsed the BFA to the Local Government Unit (LGU) through the Municipal Agriculture Office for continued support and technical assistance. ###

SAAD Bicol FAs generate Php 61K during the launch of Kadiwa ng Pangulo

by Juan Paulo A. Quizana | REGION 5

BICOL, July 27, 2023 – Fostering sustainable growth in the agricultural sector, seven (7) farmers' associations (FAs) under the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program Phase 1 collectively earned Php 61,017.00 during the launching of the Department of Agriculture's Kadiwa ng Pangulo in the Bicol Region.

The event held on July 17, 2023 was simultaneously conducted in the provinces of Catanduanes, Masbate, and Sorsogon. Kadiwa ng Pangulo is a market linkage facilitation program of the DA, which aims to establish a market for small farmers and fisherfolk to sell their products directly to the consumers.

Joining the event are the program beneficiaries from Embarcadero Agri-Itik Farmers Association, Naspi Agricultural Workers Association, Kiliikilian Poultry Raisers Association, Balatohan Vegetable Growers Association, San Marcos Vegetable Farmers Association, Nagkakaisang Mamamayan Tungo sa Kaunlaran ng Brgy. Panubigan (NAMATUKA), Samahang Pangkaunlaran ng Tagpu at Nanipsan (SAPANGTANAN). Through this, a total of 336 program beneficiaries were encouraged to participate in said event.

During the event, FAs from Sorsogon, Catanduanes, and Masbate were able to showcase their agricultural products such as live ducks, chicken eggs, fresh vegetables like upo, eggplant, ampalaya, and squash, as well as value-added products, such as taro chips, cassava chicharon, and salted eggs. With this, a total of Php 61,017 worth of revenue were acquired by the association members.

Naspi Agricultural Workers Association (NAWA) member, Marilyn Magalona shared her thoughts regarding the KNP: "Nakatabang po an Kadiwa ng Pangulo samuyang sararadit na negosyante ta natawan po nin halaga an samuyang pinagsakitan. Dakulang pasasalamat po pirmi sa SAAD ta kun bako dahil sainda, dai kami magkaka-igwa nin talent sa food processing. Maongmang experience po ini para samuyang mga parauma ta padit-diit, namimidbidan an samuyang produkto," she expressed.

(Kadiwa ng Pangulo helped boost our small business. We are always thankful to the SAAD Program for the knowledge they shared to us, most especially in food processing. We are delighted that people are starting to recognize our products.)

Moreover, San Isidro Vegetable Farmers Association with 26 members and San Antonio

All eggs in a basket: Dabawenyo FA's im-peck-able investment from SAAD's chicken project

by James Brian R. Flaga | REGION 11



DAVAO DE ORO, July 11, 2023

- Dabawenyo farmers association (FA) recipients of the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) convergence project constructed a roadside "bagsakan" to consolidate their upgraded native chicken and tilapia products.

This "bagsakan" houses consolidated products from members of the farmers association in Compostela. The Quarry Highlander Farmers Association spent

more than Php 10,000 for the bagsakan structure construction.

"Pagkusog sa itlog, nakit-an namo nga dako iyahang potential nga maka-income ang asosasyon. Nag-initiate mi kay para dili lang saligan ang manok, kani amoang gigastohan, kaning bagsakan" (When income from the eggs boomed, we saw that it has great potential for the group to earn. We initiated this so that we won't be depending on the chicken alone, we started to fund this commissary), Joseph Esperada, chairperson for the group said.

After finishing the building's flooring, Mr.

Esperada told SAAD Davao Region they plan to launch the "bagsakan" later this year.

According to Mr. Esperada, the decision to build a vegetable and fruit commissary stemmed from the increased influx of economic activity in Barangay Ngan from travelers going to and fro Davao Oriental. With temperate weather all year round except for the wet season, the barangay has seen a surge in tourist stops alongside highways in the past five years. Designed to carry 14 spaces, the bagsakan already has all the spaces reserved for its members. Each space costs Php 10/day in rent.

A year after the chickens arrived, the association has listed more than Php 75,000 in income. Esperada said that most of it has gone to feeds. The association pulled from their seasonal income from the inland fishery, of which the FA was also a BFAR-SAAD Davao Region beneficiary. See the related article here <http://bitlywvs/L2ir>.

"Higayon kaayo nga nag-invest mi ani. Amoang mga abot gikan sa bukid, diri ibutang. Among harvest sa mais, mga prutas, ug uban pa, diri namo i-display" (It's opportune that we invested in this. We'll put our produce here, the corn harvests, fruits, and other, this is where we display them).

Quarry Highlands FA

Formed in August 2016, Quarry

Highlander FA is a locally-formed, farmers' group in Ngan, Compostela, Davao de Oro. The association has more than 30 regular members as of June 2023.

In 2022, SAAD Davao Region chose the group to receive upgraded native chicken and Open-Pollinated Variety corn projects comprising 320 chickens, 50 sacks of feed, and veterinary drugs from the program as well as corn seeds.

The chicken started laying eggs in July last year. At peak production, Mr. Esperada reported that the association could harvest more than 80 eggs a day. The association has a standing arrangement with a local grocer that consigns the eggs at Php 6.00 across the board regardless of size.

But selling eggs alone could not sustain the upkeep of the chicken. The feed requirement for laying hens, if maximized, would sink the FAs profit to a loss.

"Dako kaayo ang gasto sa feed. Amoang income sa itlog ibalik sa pagkaon, tapos naa pay pasweklo sa nag-maintain. Kinahanglan namo ug uban pang gikanan sa income" (Rising feed prices directly affected our production costs. The income from eggs will cycle as an expense for feed, notwithstanding the wages of the caretaker. We needed another income generator), Mr. Esperada related.

This is where the association looked into hatching and selling chicks for additional income. SAAD Davao Region, in turn, provided the incubator. "Mas dako amoang income sa mga pisa. Diri pa lang mismo, daghan na ug mamalit."

(We get most of our profit from the chicks. A lot of buyers here in our area alone)

The FA sells the chicks at Php 90 each and has started priming some to increase the existing flock. Once culling season starts, the current hens will reach their unproductive stage, wherein they will be sold off. The new hens will continue the next cycle.

Of the original 320 poultry stocks, 110 were dispersed to 10 individual members, with an arrangement with the FA to replace them with chicks. A hundred and thirty-eight (138) chickens remain with the association, situated in a coop coincidentally overlooking the bagsakan.

"Kaning atong chicken program is para madugangan ang panginabuhian sa atong mag-uuma," Naomi Lamata, SAAD Davao Region Alternate Assistant Focal said. "Nalipay ta kay naa juy mga asosasyon nga napadako nila ang proyekto ug kana, natuman ang tumong sa SAAD."

(Our chicken program is aimed to augment the livelihood of our farmers. We're elated that there are groups that prospered through the project, hence the purpose of the program).

The province of Davao de Oro has been the sole province of implementation of SAAD in Davao Region in its Phase 1 of operations. In some municipalities like Compostela, DA and BFAR converged to champion local farmers and fisherfolk groups, with the end goal of creating community-based enterprises (CBEs). Quarry Highlanders FA, for all intents and purposes, appears on the way to becoming one. ###



Farmers Association with 27 members, newly organized groups, and Vegetable Production Projects beneficiaries of SAAD Program Phase 2 also joined the event. Being new to the program, the groups accumulated total revenue was Php 10,920.

FAs under Phase 1 are now under the care of their respective Municipal Agriculture Offices (MAOs) and Local Government Units (LGUs) for further assistance. ###



SAADvocacy Feature

The Anatomy of an Area Coordinator

by Allanes Bagoso | NPMO

QUEZON CITY, June 21, 2023 - In an agricultural development program like the Department of Agriculture - Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD), the people considered the key actors in pursuing and realizing the very goal are, of course, the farmers and fisherfolk themselves.

SAAD not only acknowledges the vital role of the farmers as the key actors of agricultural development change, but it also recognizes them as primary movers to help pursue the very goals of prolific yield, progressive consolidation, mechanization, and professionalization, upliftment of the farmers and fishers marginalized condition, all subsequent to food sovereignty.

It is in the embodiment of the Area Coordinators (ACs) of the program, who possess the qualities and characteristics of primary movers of agricultural development that will closely work with the farmers to achieve such goals.

The ACs of the program play a critical role in the successful implementation and management of SAAD projects within a specific geographical area. This position holds significant responsibilities and functions to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of agricultural development programs to marginalized and underserved communities.

Dissecting the anatomy

The minimum requirement of becoming an AC in SAAD includes but not limited to a Bachelor's degree in the following field: Agriculture, Agribusiness Management, Agricultural

Economics, and Agricultural Engineering. ACs are preferable with extension work and community organizing experience in an agriculture-related field. Regional and provincial management support offices are the ones responsible for filtering potential ACs as per the program's Phase 2 Human Resource Manual.

ACs are expected to cover an average of 5 municipalities, which will account for an average of four (4) to six (6) farmers' associations (FA) to manage.

From identifying beneficiaries from the SAAD Phase 2 set criteria as ratified in the Department Order No. 6, series of 2023 to organizing the farmers in the area as an association and assisting them in the necessary procedures of getting accredited; all of these as part of the social preparation component of the program.

In the social preparation period, from profiling, geo-tagging, interviewing, site validation, and assessing possible farmer beneficiaries until finally getting validated as formal beneficiaries of the program, the ACs have to assist, monitor, and walk through the farmers' association up until the conduct of beneficiary needs assessment (BNA) or Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) to uncover the most suitable projects for the farmers and their community.

Following the social preparation is the food production and livelihood (FPL) component where there is provision of the livelihood projects tailor-fit and responsive to the FAs assessed condition, as well as specialized training necessary for upskilling the FA's capability into managing the projects and operating it; to ensure the success and sustainability of the projects.

In the overall process of being a SAAD FA beneficiary, the journey will be intimately accompanied by the ACs, accordingly the need to equip ACs is a rudimentary factor in the implementation and functioning of the program.

The AC impact on project implementation In the third-party assessment of the

program's social preparation and enterprise development conducted by the Central Luzon State University (CLSU), results revealed the correlation between the high adoption rate of the implemented livelihood projects and the effectiveness and closeness of the AC to the farmer's association (FA). This entails clear and established communication between the AC and the FA, one that must spring from trust and understanding of the program's goal.

The AC outlook

Currently, the program employs a total of 126 Area Coordinators who are managing 619 municipalities across the 15 covered regions for Phase 2.

For this write-up, ACs were interviewed to share their insights into their role in the Program's goal in the countryside and how they perceived their line of work's significance in the overall implementation.

MIMAROPA

SAAD MIMAROPA has made a striking contribution to providing services to the marginalized farmers and fishers in the province of Occidental Mindoro. During Phase 1, the Program has successfully delivered 281 livelihood projects ranging from rice, corn, high-value crops, and livestock and poultry to a total of 59 farmers' associations.

Livelihood provisions include rice, corn, high-value crop production, and livestock and poultry-related projects, as well as organizational development and specialized training to effectively equip FAs in managing their projects.

All these strides to contribute to reducing poverty in the province of Occidental Mindoro were made possible with the dedication of the region's ACs.

Mr. Vilmar J. Robes, the AC of the municipalities of Agutaya and Magsaysay, has been part of SAAD since 2019. Vilmar has helped in forming a total of 13 FAs, one (1) of which is from the Indigenous People's group of Mangyan.

When asked about his experience as an AC, he shared, "As an AC, good communication skills and quality interaction with beneficiaries will help in the program implementation in order to discuss its project purpose and their responsibility to be achieved and proper dissemination of the DA livelihood program to the target farmer's beneficiary," referring to what personal skills he often uses when conducting field visit in the beneficiaries' communities.

Mr. Vilmar also shared his vital qualities like readiness and willingness to provide time and effort to support and monitor every activity the FAs make relating to managing their livelihood projects.

He also stressed how proper coordination with the FA and partner agencies is crucial to the program implementation.

SAAD MIMAROPA was able to usher 15 community-based enterprises (CBEs) as it rounds off its Phase 1 implementation. For Phase 2 the region is set to cover two (2) provinces namely Romblon and Palawan.

Bicol

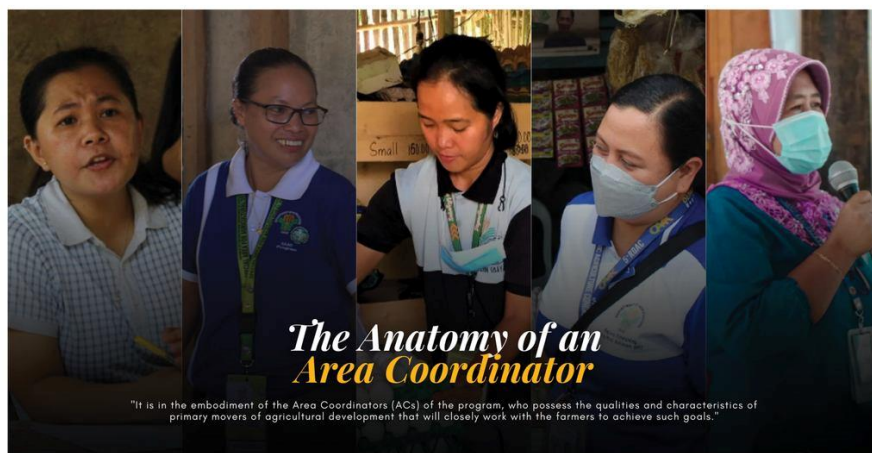
SAAD Bicol was able to usher the establishment of 37 CBEs. The program was able to navigate and render service to 22 Regional Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (RTF-ELCAC) areas and Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs), providing access to agricultural inputs and various training to 286 FAs.

Ms. Maria Ligaya Renegado is the designated AC in the municipality of Juban, province of Sorsogon during the Phase 1 implementation. Ms. Renegado has been with SAAD Sorsogon since 2017 and she has been instrumental in the establishment of 21 FAs in Sorsogon, particularly in the municipality of Juban.

When asked what are her qualities that helped her as an AC, she responded: "Sa pagiging makatao ko sa parauma madali kong nakukuha ang loob nila at napapasunod kung ano layunin ng SAAD program" (By being humane to the farmers, I can easily win their hearts and make them follow the purpose of the SAAD program).

Ms. Maria also expressed that her shared vision with the program for the farmers is the reduction of poverty in the countryside which entails the sustainability of the projects of the FAs.

Presently, SAAD Bicol Phase 1 six (6) FAs participate in the agri-trade in SM City Sorsogon every Sunday of the week. Ms. Renegado along with other DA programs in the province coordinates and links the FA to the organizer of the agri-trade. The said trade becomes an opportunity for the FAs to further engage in economic activities and establish new market linkage outside their community.



The Anatomy of an Area Coordinator

"It is in the embodiment of the Area Coordinators (ACs) of the program, who possess the qualities and characteristics of primary movers of agricultural development that will closely work with the farmers to achieve such goals."

SAAD SOCCSKSARGEN realizing goals on food security and increased farmers' income

by Jennifer Valcobero | NPMO

In the small agricultural communities of Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat, farmers don't get their produce to market faster and easier due to poor road access. They had to travel to and from the nearest town by motorcycle, chariot, horse, or foot along slippery, muddy roads, and a knee-deep river (during sunny weather). They would also spend Php 100 for every sack of goods they needed to transport. This agony existed even before the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) project was implemented in these rural areas.

A woman farmer revealed that her son, who is in school, was compelled to live with her grandparents, who lived near the facility.

Another problem faced by small-holder farmers is the lack of resources to cover high input costs such as fertilizers, pesticides, and other costs. As a result, many resort to microfinance or, worse, money lenders that charge as much as 10-20% interest every month or during the harvest of their crops. This often leaves them in debt.

How SAAD provided basic access to these farmers

Far-flung areas, mostly belonging to the End Local Communist Armed Conflict (ELCAC) and Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs) were included in SAAD's...*continue to p. 12*



Relative to marketing, Ms. Renegado has helped the FAs to create a social media presence to market their products. Ms. Renegado also regularly creates TikTok videos promoting the FAs' products.

Moreover, in the current Phase 2 implementation Ms. Renegado is now assigned to the municipality of Barcelona, Sorsogon.

Caraga

In SAAD Caraga, program implementers in its Phase 1 implementation were able to generate a total of eight (8) CBEs engaged in abaca, livestock, and poultry production. SAAD Caraga was able to cater agricultural development opportunities to 6 ELCAC and GIDA areas accounting for 13 FA beneficiaries.

Mr. Richard Lalisan, AC covering the municipalities of Sison og and Malimono, province of Surigao del Norte (SDN). Mr. Lalisan has been an AC since 2019, assisting a total of four (4) FAs, two (2) each of the municipalities he was assigned to.

When asked about the qualities he possessed that helped him as AC, Mr. Lalisan shared: "Ang maayo nga pakig halubilo og kapwa-tao sa atong mga farmer's beneficiaries og lain pang mga sector nga ahensya nga nakatabang sa implementation sa SAAD Program. Ang pagka simpli sa tanan panahon aron makasabot sa sa kahintang sa kalisod nga

gisagubang sa atong mga farmers og makahatag tah og mga suhestiyon arun nga masolusyonan nila kining problema."

(The good relationship between our farmer's beneficiaries and other sector agencies that helped in the implementation of the SAAD Program. Being simple [with explaining] all the time so that we can understand the situation of difficulty that our farmers are dealing with and can give suggestions so that they can solve this problem.)

Mr. Lalisan also shared his strengths as an AC, "Adunay gugma, willingness sa trabaho, taas nga pasensya. Ang gugma nimu sa imuhang trabaho mao ang usa ka pundasyon arun magpabilin ka nga malig-on og magpadayun ka sa matarong nga panerbesyo sa atong farmers beneficiaries og wiling ka muhatag."

(There is love, willingness to work, and long patience. Our love for our work is a foundation for you to remain strong and continue to provide fair service to our farmer-beneficiaries and your willingness to give.)

In a day-to-day implementation, Mr. Lalisan also acknowledges the challenges they face as implementers, one of which is the security and safety risk considering some of the beneficiaries are situated in conflicted areas.

Further, Mr. Lalisan adds his shared vision with the program: "Ang SAAD gituman nah, salig lang, mao ni nga linya ang permi namu gipasabot sa mga farmers beneficiaries og ginabitbit inubanan sa programa sa SAAD aron mapadayog namu kung unsa kanindot

nga mahimong usa ka benepisaryo sa kani nga programa nga makahatag jud kuni og dakung tabang sa atong mga farmers og makadugang sa ilahang inadlaw-adlaw nga pangawarta aron makatabang kuni sa paghaw-as nila sa kalisod."

(SAAD is being implemented with trust, this is the line that we always explain to the farmers' beneficiaries and carry along with the SAAD program so that we can realize the outcomes as beneficiaries of the program, one is to provide assistance to our farmers, increase their daily income and help them assuage their hardships.)

Final diagnosis

It can be observed how ACs are the frontliners of the program in implementing the livelihood projects, they are the persons who represents the program in front of the farmers, conducting meetings, turnover, coordination with partner stakeholders, collecting the report of yield and financial report; indeed a healthy relationship between the AC and the farmers is a crucial key in the success of the program.

In an interview with the National Program Management Office (NPMO) Deputy Director, Dr. Pedro "Doc Pete" Dumaraos Jr., he shared how he has such high regard for the ACs for they are the backbone of the program directly dealing with farmer-beneficiaries.

Doc Pete also discussed the several qualities ACs possess, one is being passionate and always doing everything from the heart. Doc Pete sees ACs as community development

workers of the program, therefore, must emulate love in their work and, of course, love for the farmers. The Deputy Director also stressed that ACs should be comfortable talking with the farmers, and farmers should also feel comfortable talking with the ACs for them to share their plight and actual conditions, as well as get the comprehensive condition of the farmers that the ACs can use to craft plans suitable and responsive to their needs. Because ACs must be good planners, he added.

Additionally, during fieldwork, an AC should be flexible since the condition in the community is very dynamic. Hence having effective skills in coordination, facilitation in focused-group discussion, writing, and documentation are all ACs should have in their day-to-day fieldwork.

Dr. Dumaraos underscored how given any circumstances and conditions ACs should have a bag of tricks filled with various approaches.

Lastly, he reiterated how everything must be done with the heart, hence ACs as SAAD development workers should be an embracer of the concepts and principles of participatory development and must be a firm believer in the statement development for all. ###

SAAD SOCCSKSARGEN realizing goals...from page 1



priority communities to receive integrated livelihood projects ranging from corn, rice, high-value crops, poultry, and livestock aimed at providing farmers access to food production and food sustenance.

The Napnapon Corn Farmer's Association in barangay Napnapon, Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat, explained that the hybrid corn provided by the Program helped them to reduce their production costs because the inputs were already free. This means that they will only pay for postharvest services and product transportation.

Similarly, other farmer group beneficiaries visited by National Program Management Office – Public Relations and Development Communication (NPMO-PRDC) Unit staff attested that the project's immediate impact on them was food on the table, and allowing them to buy their basic needs and their children's school needs, as secondary.

SAAD Unlad Lokal Catalog

By highlighting inspirational stories and best practices of existing farmers in the region, DA-SAAD hopes to

perpetuate stories and progress that can be replicated in other programs and projects for the most marginalized communities. For its Unlad Lokal Coffee Table Book content creation, SAAD collects information, experiences, and stories from Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat farmer groups that have demonstrated exemplary results in livelihood projects.

Seven (7) farmer groups who operate small-scale agribusinesses on corn and upland rice commodities were visited for the Unlad Lokal documentation. Most of them belong to the indigenous Aromanon, Teduray, B'laan, Monobo, T'boli, and Tagakaulo communities, as well as areas identified as ELCAC sites and GIDAs. These are Kalamongog Teduray Farmers Association, Napnapon Corn Farmers Association, Malegdeg Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries and Diversified Farm Owners Association, Tribal Christian Farmer's Association, Lomoyon United Farmer's Association, and Kabulanan Highlanders Association and Sustainable Incorporated, and Galilee Rural Improvement Club. These FAs have shown sustainable agricultural practices and food systems for improved household consumption

and increased income, SAAD Phase 1's twin goals of contributing to poverty reduction, pursued from a holistic and integrated perspective.

A gleaming story of success in enterprise in Antipas, Cotabato is shown by Ms. Florencia Galinato, also known as Manay Olong, founder of the Galilee Rural Improvement Club, and who used to make chichacorn to serve as a snack whenever she had visitors.

Before SAAD, the lack of storage and drying facilities limited the group from processing their chichacorn and banana chips. Since both products require sunlight to dry, they were unable to process during the rainy season. The raw corn would likely be attacked by insects and weevils, thus, putting them to waste.

Now with SAAD's Php 1.5 million support for food processing building, the group is earning Php 15,000 a day from chichacorn and banana chips-making – producing 200 kilograms (kg) of chichacorn and 500kgs of banana chips per day to cater to the provincial demand. ###

SAAD's recipe for enterprise development

by Allanes Bagoso | NPMO

QUEZON CITY, June 12, 2023 – In its Phase 1 implementation until its renewed Phase 2, the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) has been a staunch mover of its four (4) components namely: (a) social preparation; (b) food production and livelihood; (c) marketing assistance and enterprise development; and (d) program management.

The four (4) components serve as the guiding principles of the program in rendering agricultural development services in the top 30 provinces that recorded the highest poverty incidence rates from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) 2012 data.

As it rounds off its Phase 1 implementation, the program across its 11 covered regions was able to assist in the establishment of 465 community-based enterprises (CBEs) from 2017 to 2022. Presently, the 465 CBEs are continuously conducting economic activities as well as providing access to agricultural-related services to their community from mechanized land preparation, to offering value-added products, to diversifying the community's food source.

In ushering in the establishment of the farmers' associations' (FAs) enterprises, the third component, marketing assistance, and enterprise development (MAED) ensures the viability of the said goal. MAED component encompasses

SAAD's contribution to crop diversification

by Allanes Bagoso | NPMO

QUEZON CITY, June 2, 2023 – Crop diversification not only brings farmers an additional source of income but also provides a variety of food sources for the community, increases productivity while being adaptive to environmental challenges, as well as being responsive to environmental conservation.

National situation of crop diversification

It is an undisputed fact that the Philippine economy is largely dependent on agriculture. In the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data the sector holds 22.9% of employment status in the country as of 2020. This 22.9% tantamounts to 9.70 million workers in the country.

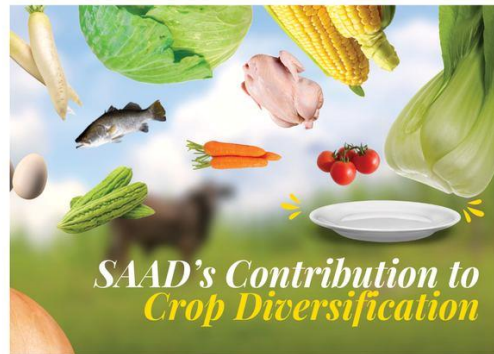
Further, according to the PSA Census of Agriculture and Fisheries 2020 data, there are about 13.42 million hectares (ha) total of land area used for agricultural crop cultivation in the

country, and roughly 55% of it is used for growing temporary crops (rice, corn, root crops, high-value, pineapple, sugarcane, etc.) while 41% is used for permanent crops such as (e.g., coconut, mango, abaca, coffee, etc.).

As the primary government agency mandated for the promotion of agricultural development by providing the policy framework, public investments, and support services needed for domestic and export-oriented business enterprises, the Department of Agriculture (DA) is the main vehicle for employing various mechanisms in the advancement of agricultural production, regulation, and research and development (R&D).

SAAD's endeavors in diversification

When the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD)



capped its Phase 1 implementation, it brought a total of 3,602 projects to its 11 covered regions across the country from 2017 to 2022. The 3,602 livelihood projects implemented are mostly in packages, such as a combination of two or more commodities given in a complementing and integrated approach.

The 3,602 projects, if deconstructed, account for 14,416 commodities, and these figures are equivalent to 2,310 rice projects, 1,366 corn projects, 2,319 HVC projects, 4,831 livestock and poultry projects, and 3,590 fisheries projects.

economic-related activities that assist and support livelihood projects to progress into enterprises, as well as conducting a series of training from financial literacy and management to value-adding products.

MAED sub-unit head and regional counterparts also outline mechanisms for CBEs to find means to sustain the source of income subsequent to improving the socio-economic status of the beneficiaries.

This could be in the form of mapping out markets and market trends in a certain locale that is in the direction of expanding the market network and economic opportunities of the CBEs and garnering partnerships for further market visibility. All these are made possible with strong linkage to local government units (LGUs), other DA agencies and programs, and even private entities and non-government organizations (NGOs).

Value-adding scene

Value-adding in agricultural produce is not a foreign concept, considering agricultural produce is the very state of raw materials or ingredients, hence value-adding them is not a cutting-edge concept and is pretty much the default practice. However, despite the existing need to value-add agricultural produce, not all farmers have access to capital and credit or mere necessary tools and equipment to actualize value-adding enable to increase the value of their products.

As an agricultural development program that aims to contribute to poverty reduction in 30 provinces in the country that recorded high poverty incidence rates, by thoroughly assessing target beneficiaries, and providing them agricultural inputs and training (organizational and technical) that are

responsive to their needs and community, building an environment for farmers and fisherfolk to venture in marketing and enterprise development.

SAAD in its overarching aim to economically empower farmers and fisherfolk, lay the groundwork to generate agripreneurs and cooperatives in the countryside that will continuously sustain their basic needs and in essence food security for all.

In its Phase 1 implementation, SAAD was able to conduct a total of 195 training related to value-adding, marketing, and enterprise development to a total of 8,084 FA members across its 11 covered regions. The value-adding training varies from meat processing, chip making, rice cake, dairy products, winery, ice cream, noodles, broom, soap, herbal tea, coffee, and more, depending on the commodities the FAs are engaged with.

Bicolano FAs value-adding endeavor One of the successful community-based enterprises (CBEs) in Sorsogon, Bicol is the Añog Corn Farmers' Association situated in the municipality of Juban. Añog Corn FA members are mainly corn farmers and as for their second crop, the FA members also plant cassava.

The FA was formed in 2020 with 34 members. In the same year, they already received white and yellow corn seeds, fertilizer, cassava seedpieces, corn grits miller, mechanical corn sheller, cassava chipper, and draft animals, all under the Upland Corn Production of FY 2020.

Subsequently, with the provision of agricultural inputs from the program, the FA has seen an incremental increase in their harvest. Later in 2021, SAAD Bicol introduced the value-adding corn and cassava crops to the FA, facilitated by the SAAD Regional Program Support Office (RPMSO). In April 2021 SAAD Bicol conducted a value-adding training under the Training on Corn



Production and Enterprise Development FY 2022. The training introduces the FAs to a variety of recipes like chips or kropek, kakainin (rice cake) like puto and biko, and polvoron. Further, the FA members were able to utilize social media platforms to engage in marketing activities.

In times of calamity

When Mt. Bulusan in Sorsogon erupted in June 2022 the Office of the Civil Defense in Bicol reported that the region incurred an estimated Php 17 million agricultural losses. Precedently, the Añog Corn FA which is situated in the municipality of Juban had endured agricultural loss. FA members were unable to immediately go back to their farmlands since it was all covered with ashes from the eruption.

The value-added products of the FAs like cassava cake and taro chips, became the main profit-generating activity for the members since only cassava crops survived the eruption. It took a couple of months before the FA members could finally access their devastated farmlands and continue farming activities.

From the recent field visit of the SAAD National Program Management Office (NPMO) – Public Relation and Development Communication (PRDC) team in their

community for the creation of the Unlad Lokal Coffee Table Book, the FA members shared how some of them were able to buy a television from their income, some were able to fund the repair of their houses. The additional profit-generating opportunity for the FA members brought by the SAAD intervention only contributes to uplifting the economic capacity of the members.

It's all about giving access

SAAD Program understands how giving farmers access to inputs, and machinery from land preparation to post-harvest until value-adding paves the way to a multitude of opportunities in the countryside, prompting effective and efficient production resulting in wider possible profit-generating opportunities for them.

To further showcase the value-adding of FAs, SAAD NPMO PRDC is set to publish Unlad Lokal Coffee Table Book that will highlight progressive community-based enterprises (CBEs) from the 11 regions Phase 1-covered areas, Añog Corn FA will be one of the featured CBEs in the said coffee table book that will be published in January 2024. ###

The SAAD program is an initiative aimed at promoting agricultural development in marginalized as well as conflict-affected areas of the country. The program focuses on enhancing food security, improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, and helping reduce poverty in its covered regions, hence must also implement projects by this virtue.

Therefore, determining and crafting projects must involve calculation of sustained income-generating livelihood to provide beneficiaries with multiple sources of profit.

Crop diversification is one of the mechanisms the program employs. The program provides two (2) or more crops with a varying time frame of yield. One is typically considered as a main crop like rice, coconut, abaca, corn, fruit trees, etc.

The main crops are usually incorporated with short-term yielding crops or cash crops like vegetables (pavito, bell pepper, peanuts, onions, beets, carrots, radishes, sweet potatoes, turnips, etc)

The cropping arrangement varies depending on the farmland availability and the crops' ideal season. Crops considered secondary are alternately sowed post-harvest of the main crop, like in the case of Samahan ng Magsasakang Katutubong Monteclaro (SMKM), an Indigenous People's (IP) group beneficiary in Occidental Mindoro who received agricultural inputs under Organic Rice Production through Farming Enterprise FY 2022.

SMKM's main crop is upland rice, while their secondary is leguminous crops like mungbean and peanut. The FA alternately plants the main and secondary crops.

Further, leguminous crops are known for having nitrogen-fixing properties for the soil not only providing an additional income source for the FA but also aids the soil condition.

Another FA in the province of Occidental Mindoro adapts a similar arrangement but with rice and cassava crops. This is the Mal-Anggatan Tanuman Orayan sa Mamangan FA, an Indigenous group FA from Abra

de Ilog. The FA received a lowland rice production from the program incorporated with cassava production. The FA was also provided post-harvest equipment and facility as well as training in how to operate and adequately take care of the equipment.

Moreover, aside from the mentioned benefits of crop diversification from an additional income source to improving the farm topographical factors, the mechanism also diversifies the food source in the community.

Livestock, poultry, and crops

In diversification, SAAD also provides either livestock or poultry with crops, like in the case of the Cabugo Chicken Production Association (CACPA) in Bayabas, Surigao del Sur. CAPCA was a recipient of abaca production and native chicken production projects. Poultry production was the first site of such in their barangay in Cabugo, paving poultry produce access not only for the FA members but also to their community.

Similar case with Hugpong sa mga

Makugihon nga Magbabaol sa Cang-asa in Siquijor, Central Visayas where they were provided corn, HVC, and swine production projects. The group, composed of 50 members, also engaged in value-adding their post-harvest produce, especially corn, and peanut. The farmers were able to produce peanut butter and roasted corn as alternative coffee. Not only did the intervention provide diverse food sources but also a flavorful one.

The large-ruminant incorporated with crops is also an often observed pattern of diversified livelihood projects.

SAAD's direction

The mentioned strides of SAAD in diversification underscored various possibilities but uplifting the lives of the farmers in the most unreachable rural areas remains the primary motivation, hence must be upheld whatever possible mechanisms the program adapts to innovate and improve the crafting of projects for its beneficiaries. ###

DA-SAAD seeks to standardize marketing...from page 1

experience, and now operating in 15 regions, SAAD recognizes the need to standardize the functions and deliverables of the component, insert thorough market studies, mainstream the marketing activities, create enterprise profiles and means for its evaluation, and other tools to maximize the assistance in enterprise establishment of SAAD farmers and fishers. This will allow FFAs to participate and prepare their micro-enterprises to access institutionalized services such as financing and market linkages.

On the other hand, AMAS is the lead service responsible for providing market development and investment assistance, and promotion services mechanisms to the agriculture stakeholders. In place overseeing the regional operations is the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD). In the current structure of SAAD, AMAS, and AMAD are members of the National and Regional Program Advisory Committees (NPAC and RPAC).

AMAS and AMAD contributed to SAAD's entrepreneurial activities by assisting beneficiaries in the registration to the Kadiwa Agribiz portal during the pandemic, Kadiwa ni Ani and Kita centers – a market system that sells major agricultural goods at reasonably low prices to help poor Filipino households, other business-to-business transactions, and the Farmers and Fisherfolk Enterprise Development Information System (FFEDIS) – which contain the list of possible and implemented programs and projects, and a roster of private companies engaged in agri-based enterprises.

AMAS and SAAD partnership entails:

1) complementation of AMAS, AMAD, Fisheries Industry Development and Support Services Division (FIDSSD), and Fisheries Production and Support Services Division (FPSSD), 2) introduction of other strategies tailored for SAAD CBEs, 3) simplification and enhancement of market-related processes, and 4) alignment with the current government budget cycle of the Department of Budget and Management.

During the consultation, AMAS Director Junibert E. De Sagun commended the SAAD-NPMO for coming up with a detailed draft of the guidelines underscoring the ambition of the Program to engage and develop a pool of micro-enterprises for its beneficiaries. Further, he recommended dissecting the scopes and categorization of enterprises that will fit the resources and capability of the program.

He stressed the importance of having a market study based on similarities of products performance in the marketplace and acknowledged the challenge of upgrading the enterprises of the beneficiaries when it reaches the plateau mode of being a micro-enterprise.

This means that resource management is vital – ensuring that the Program has all the necessary tools to meet its objectives, including scheduling, budgeting, and planning of relevant marketing projects.

From the preliminary meeting, AMAS will review the SAAD Phase 1 CBEs' profiles for further study and to grasp and assess its performance and readiness for further marketing activities tied to DA's internal and external resources.

Ms. Joyce Bengo, Officer-in-Charge of the AMAS-Market Development Division (MDD), also added that in terms of identifying

markets and competitors, the Program has to exhaust all information present in the regional AMADs, market-matching of potential products derived from the livelihood projects that the farmers and fishers can sell to the market segments that are most likely to purchase them, and market-sharing for the possibility of existing but unidentified markets.

Assistant Chief of Agribusiness Investment Promotion Division, Ms. Ludivina Rueda also said that in the marketing aspect, the guidelines shall include stages to identify the growth of an emerging agri-business until it reaches the large-scale enterprise.

BFAR-SAAD National Focal Person Ms. Elymi-Ar-J Tuñacao pointed out some important steps in the process flow toward CBE establishment, and suggested that the prior profiling of SAAD beneficiaries in the Food Production and Livelihood component should be the baseline for the series of activities in order to reach CBE establishments such as market identification and benchmarking, market plan/market area survey, market-related and enterprise development training, market linkage and access, and market mapping.

The guidelines presentation was led by Operational Planning, Budget, Monitoring, and Evaluation (OPBME) head Mr. Darwin Pamatmat, together with its co-authors MAED Lead Ms. Ashley Mae Apigo and Mr. Gio Renzo Caballero.

Said consultation puts the program in an advantageous position, starting early as MAED comes later in the implementation after Social Preparation and Food Production and Livelihood provision. Further, SAAD National Program Director, Ulysses J. Lustria, Jr., committed to providing all support and documents needed to establish clear MAED guidelines for SAAD Phase 2 implementation. ###

SAAD Bicol farmers undergo values formation training

by Juan Paulo A. Quizana | REGION 5

BICOL, July 6, 2023 – Strictly accommodating organized farmer-groups for the Phase 2 implementation, the Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Program in Bicol Region conducted values formation training to Catanduanes, Masbate and Sorsogon beneficiaries to ensure collective participation, and build a sense of duty before project inputs receipt.

The activity was facilitated by Mr. Jovinel M. Gianan, Philosophy major, an experienced values formation speaker, and currently SAAD Regional Information Officer, along with nine (9) Parish Deacons as resource speakers. Said training which was conducted from April to June 2023 was attended by 1,500 farmers from 60 farmers associations (FCAs) and Technicians from Municipal Agricultural Office (MAO) of Catanduanes.

The activity is part of the social preparation component of the program using an interdisciplinary approach that instills collective values and ethics among participants in a group-specific setting. In this aspect, capabilities and goals acquired by each member were extracted and later used for reflection sessions.

Essence of Values Formation

As a holistic approach to community development, SAAD looks beyond economic development through livelihood assistance, but advances overall welfare and prioritizes readiness of its beneficiaries and their communities.

Values formation training provides perspective useful for groups to build a moral compass that guides them in decision-making, shapes group behavior, and cultivates a positive organizational culture. By integrating values into the SAAD projects, it empowers farmers to become agents of positive change by nurturing skills and knowledge, promoting collaborative partnerships, and fostering entrepreneurial mindset.

Through training, experts led the discussions on topics such as capabilities, weaknesses, and strengths of farmers to be able to





DA advances collaboration among its units to maximize impact

by Jessamae Gabon, Jemiema D.R. Arro | NPMO

QUEZON CITY, June 20, 2023 – The Department of Agriculture through the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Operations, Engr. Arnel de Mesa moves toward institutionalizing mechanisms to advance synergistic approach to development among the DA agencies, banner programs and projects to improve service rendering, strengthen impact, and maximize initiatives reach.

The DA is composed of agencies and units that implement various agriculture-oriented programs and projects up to the ground level following the mandate of the Department to facilitate agricultural development in the country. Further, these programs and activities advocate for food sovereignty at the national level, and economic development at the sectoral level by increasing production, and generating employment among the local farmers and fishers.

This organizational direction was set in February 2023 by Senior Undersecretary Domingo F.

Panganiban during the Management Committee (ManCom) meeting encouraging collaboration inside the institution to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of the services of various programs, projects, and DA agencies.

This was followed by a collaborative meeting held on June 20, at FOS Conference room, Old building, Department of Agriculture, Quezon City led by Asec. De Mesa, and concerned offices specifically Farm and Fisheries Clustering and Consolidation Program (F2C2), Special Project Coordination and Management Assistance Division (SPCMAD), Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD), Philippine Rubber Research Institute (PRRI), Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA), Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran ng Kababayang Katutubo (4Ks), and Mindanao Inclusive Agriculture Development Project (MIADP). The meeting was attended by officials: Dir. Shandy Hubilla from PRDP and F2C2, Dir. Ulysses J. Lustria Jr. of SAAD Program, Dir. Lucia A. Campomanes of 4Ks Program, Executive Dir. Cheryl L. Eusala from PRRI, Jocelyn A.

Agra, Statistician II of PhilFIDA, Division Chief Angelita D. Martir from SPCPAD, and Anrray V. Rivera, Technical Adviser of OAS-Operations.

Concerns tackled in the meeting include efficient use of resources, promotion of coordination and harmonization efforts, and enhancing the impact of the programs and projects of the DA by employing approaches that will back the implementation such as social preparation, livelihood generation, food production enhancement, and marketing and enterprise development.

Moving forward, a project steering committee responsible for monitoring progress, addressing challenges, and making decisions regarding the joint initiative shall be created. The Technical Working Group (TWG) will be composed of the National Directors and Deputy Directors spearheading coordination among offices. Further, the F2C2 shall be appointed as secretariat which will be entrusted with administrative tasks, organizing meetings, and facilitating information flow among the collaborating units. Finally, the Regional

Executive Directors will play a crucial role in overseeing the implementation of the initiatives at the regional level ensuring proper execution, monitoring progress, and addressing any challenges encountered during the implementation phase. A knowledge exchange and collaboration, workshops, and regular meetings will also be conducted to keep the offices abreast of the collective goals, ensuring the success of the planned activities.

Further, a collaboration framework developed during the meeting will be set for review for the upcoming Operations Management Group (OMG) meeting on July 12-14, 2023 in Cebu City. This framework includes the management process, implementation, and monitoring and reporting. ###



reflect on their financial struggle and realities on the ground.

The participants also engaged in workshops which assessed their interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts such as having low self-esteem, which can potentially affect the productivity of their group. These concerns were addressed through the discussions on values and ethics, conflict management, and goal setting. The participants were reminded that having patience, understanding and a professional attitude are key factors in achieving

group success.

Mr. Bobsoler Osida, member of Samahang Manggugulay ng Abni, said that the activity helped him gain better understanding about teamwork and how their group can find success through farming. As a first-time attendee, Mr. Osida also said that he looks forward to more SAAD activities in Sorsogon.

As a way forward, SAAD Bicol will complete the specialized training on food production and farm management in the third quarter of 2023, essential for production development. ###



about saadvocacy

SAADvocacy is a monthly newsletter produced by the SAAD Program to provide an overview and information on the program's important activities and events toward realizing its goal of contributing to poverty reduction of farmers and fisherfolk groups in the 56 provinces (619 5th-6th income class municipalities) covered by SAAD.

The SAADvocacy Editorial Board reserves the right to edit and finalize all stories prior to publication.

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DA-SAAD 6 trains 30 coffee growers in Aklan to bolster their production

by Cedie C. Bataga | REGION 6

AKLAN, July 25, 2023 – Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) Western Visayas conducted Coffee Production Technology Training for 30 coffee growers in the municipality of Buruanga, to foster good agricultural practices for better yield of coffee beans and to attain enterprising and commercial quality.

The training happened on June 23, 2023, in Buruanga, Aklan, led by Agriculturist II, Jairus Sirue of the DA Western Visayas sharing technical expertise and opportunities in coffee production and the current status of the coffee industry. Techniques for growing coffee, nursery and plantation establishment, plantation care and maintenance were introduced.

Further, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for coffee production from pre-planting operations to obtain maximum yield up to postharvest handling, proper fertilization, harvesting methods, postharvest operations, equipment, and various marketing strategies were also discussed.

"It is best to have your soils analyzed before planting to check the soil's pH and fertility status," said Mr. Sirue.

Using wordplay on kape, he quoted "Sa KAPEgaduho, dapat my KAPEsan" (In poor situations, there must be hard work), emphasizing the significance of hard work to uplift one's livelihood, and the importance of cooperation and finding common ground within the coffee community to overcome obstacles and achieve shared goals.

Using the results of the Beneficiary Needs Assessment (BNA), regional implementers endorsed the project to the beneficiaries for the following reasons: (1) the members are existing coffee growers, (2) the group owns land suitable for coffee production, and (3) the group showed interest on said project and are eager to be guided on marketing their produce.

Under the FY 2023 Native Chicken and Coffee Production Project with a proposed total amount of Php 927,800, the group received various farm tools on May 18, including 60 sacks of inorganic fertilizer on May 19, and 2,500 coffee seedlings on June 14.

These agri-interventions and training were among the components of the coffee production project intended for Phase 2 beneficiaries and part of the program's efforts to support local agricultural development in Buruanga, Aklan.

As of present, the group has planted 350 seedlings in their 1-hectare (ha) communal area. The members met during the weekend to dagyaw or work together in the field and accomplished land preparation. The 650 seedlings left unplanted will be targeted for their two communal areas in the same barangay and the group expects harvest after 9 months, around April 2024. The native chicken stocks, however, are still under ongoing procurement and target delivery is around August this year.

Barangay Captain Dante E. Dominguez ended the session by expressing his gratitude to the SAAD Program. He thanked Mr. Sirue for sharing his knowledge and expertise during the training and acknowledged the fortunate opportunity for the group being beneficiaries of the SAAD Program Phase 2 in their municipality.

The one-day activity was facilitated by Ms. Apple Joy C. Cobrador and Michael Deve C. Perez, Technical Staff of the SAAD Program, and staff from the local government unit of Buruanga. ##



Your new SAADvocacy Volume 5, Issue 7 is now up!

SAADvocacy is the official newsletter of the SAAD Program. Get updates and new topics about our progress on the field through stories of development, progress, and success among farmers, fisherfolk, and partners of the program.

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